

UNDER ONE SCEPTRE

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The Story of the Lord of the Marches

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Under One Sceptre
Or
Mortimer's Mission
The Story of the Lord of the Marches

BY
EMILY SARAH HOLT

AUTHOR OF
"MISTRESS MARGERY," "THE WHITE ROSE OF LANGLEY," ETC.

"The gesture was heroic. If his hand
Accomplished nothing—well, it is not proved—
That empty hand thrown impotently out
Were sooner caught, I think, by One in Heaven,
Than many a hand that reaped a harvest in,
And keeps the scythe's glow on it."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

NEW EDITION

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PREFACE.

A great authority once pronounced *Don Quixote* to be the saddest book ever written. The very word quixotic has come to imply not only unusual, but absurd action. Yet what would the world be if all the Quixotes, secular or religious, were taken out of it? There are not a few of them among the ranks of those of whom the highest authority has pronounced that the world is not worthy. They generally come to be understood at last—but it is often not till the next century.

This is the story of a Don Quixote who lived, fought, and died, five hundred years ago. Like his prototype, he too tilted with the windmills and tried to liberate the captive lions. And the windmills stood firm against his spear, and the lions

turned upon and tore him. It usually is so. The energy seems totally wasted—the heroism vain and lost. Yet now and then the windmill falls, discovered to be really an enchanter’s castle, revealing rotten foundations and evil things: and then men remember the dead knight who gave the first stroke. Or, more often, they do not remember him.

He would be thought indeed quixotic who should set before him as his life-work what Roger Mortimer did. Yet who can declare it impossible? Some day, the castle of the enchanter may fall, and the free air of heaven may blow into the dark dungeons and dispel the fetid mists. Ireland may be free with that freedom which Christ only gives, and which many an English heart longs to secure to her. But will any one remember the hand which was the first to strike the frowning portals of the fortress, and which has been dust for five hundred years in the vaults of the Abbey of Wigmore?

It is well for him that he has won the better reward of his Father which is in Heaven. And we know, on the word of our Master Himself, that the unfading garland will be all the fairer because no human hands wreathed earthly bays for the head which it is to crown.

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THE LORD OF THE MARCHES.

CHAPTER I. THE TWO BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY.

"O guide me through this life's uncertain wild!
And for aught else beneath the circling sun,
So Thou in Thine own bosom keep Thy child,
Father! Thy will be done!"

That every baby enters the world with a spoon of some metal in its mouth, is an old saying which is easy of interpretation. And in the ancient town of Usk, in Monmouthshire, on the first day of September, 1373, were born two babies, not many yards apart, whose spoons were made of exceedingly diverse metal.

The baby who was born in the morning of that day, in the Castle of Usk, brought with him a spoon of gold, beautifully embossed, and exquisite in shape. He found the world—as represented by the mantle in which his nurse enveloped him—soft, rich, velvety, and fur-lined. If he cried, the sound won immediate attention; and the faintest sign of illness on his part struck despair into hearts which beat with the bluest blood.

The baby who was born in the evening, in a squalid mud hovel, one of a dozen which nestled close under the Castle wall, was accompanied by a battered old spoon of the very rustiest iron. His world was a sheepskin, extremely dirty, and not particularly fragrant. His cries were answered—when they were answered—by a rough toss in the arms of his eldest sister, a slipshod, shock-headed girl of eleven years; and the possibility of his early death neither dismayed nor grieved any one, for even his mother was of opinion that he was one too many in the hovel, which could scarcely find room for the nine persons who occupied it.

Baby Number One was baptized in the chapel of the Castle, borne in his velvet wrapper by a lady of title, with the accompaniment of sweet music and joyous bells. His sponsors were a bishop, an abbot, and a prioress. He received the family name of Roger; for a hundred and fifty years back, the heirs of that family had been Rogers and Edmunds alternately, and it was the turn for the former. Roger Mortimer—an ominous name! For this boy was the heir of the earldom of March, one of the proudest coronets of England; and his mother, a fair girl of eighteen, was a Princess of the Blood.

Baby Number Two was christened in the parish church, one of a batch of ten, and might not have been christened at all if the curate had not been one who looked sharply after his baptismal fees. He received the name of Lawrence, which was the first that occurred to his parents. Very naturally protesting in his baby style against a sprinkling with cold water, he was tumbled with no particular care into the thin arms of Mariot, who rewarded him with a private shake for his vocal performance, the only music which accompanied the ceremony. As to surname, he could not be said to have any. What did the son of a serf want with a surname? As he grew older, however, some distinction between him and other Lawrences being felt desirable, his neighbours took to calling him Lawrence Madison, or son of Maud,—his mother being a woman with a tongue, and as such a more prominent character than her quiet and silent husband.

The family physician, Master Gilbert Besseford, carefully drew out the

horoscope of the young Lord. It appeared from this elaborate document that he was to be a highly accomplished and intellectual youth, since Mercury was busy about him; that he would be most fortunate in wedlock, for Venus was doing something; that he would rise to the highest honours of the State, and might possibly achieve a crown, as Jupiter was most benevolently disposed to him. At any rate, something was to happen about his twenty-fifth birthday, which would place him in a position that none of his fathers had equalled. He would have a long life and a happy one.

Two items of the horoscope were true. He was to be indeed an intellectual and accomplished youth: and in his twenty-fifth year a crown was to be his, to which few of his fathers had attained. But those around him thought of a corruptible crown, and that which God had prepared for him was an incorruptible. And the happy wedlock, and the long life, and the rise to worldly honour, were not the portion of Roger Mortimer, but of Lawrence Madison in the hovel below.

That Roger should exercise in the future considerable influence over the fortunes of Lawrence, was extremely probable; since they would some day stand to each other in the relations of master and vassal, and the former possessed absolute power over the latter. But the idea that Lawrence could in any sense sway the fortunes of Roger would have been laughed to scorn by the household at the Castle. Yet this was to be.

In a small, but very prettily furnished boudoir in one of the Castle turrets, sat the Countess Dowager of March. She was considered an elderly woman, though we should think her only middle-aged; for in the days of our shorter-lived forefathers, who looked upon fifty as old age, and sixty as advanced senility, a woman of forty was some way down the hill. From a father whose character stood high both as warrior and statesman, and a mother whose remarkable wisdom and good sense were a proverb among her contemporaries, Philippa Montacute had inherited a character of unusual power, moral and mental. Her energy was tempered by her prudence, while warm affections and shrewd common sense held sway together over her actions. The character was not transmitted, except in the affections, to that handsome, eloquent, amiable young man of one-and-twenty, who was the only one left living of her four children: but it was to be reproduced in every point save one, in the baby grandson for whose birth the chapel bells were ringing melodiously, and in whose honour all the thralls were to have a holiday the next day. Alas, that the omitted item was the one which should have been a girdle to all the rest! Warm-hearted, energetic to impulsiveness, with plenty of good sense and fine understanding, the gifts bestowed on little Roger did not include prudence.

The Countess sat alone in her bower in the September twilight, and took "blind man's holiday," her imagination and memory scanning both the future and

the past.

It was not quite dark when the door of the bower opened, and a woman of some thirty years came forward, dropping a courtesy as she approached her mistress.

"Come in, Wenteline," said the Countess; for thus the medieval English pronounced the old British name, Guenllian. "Is David yet back from his errand?"

"An't please your Ladyship, he came but now, and he brings tidings, agreeably to your Ladyship's pleasure, that among the thralls be two babes to-day born. Maud, the wife of Nicholas in the huts, hath a man-child; and your Ladyship's god-daughter, Philippa, wife of Blumond the fishmonger, a maid-child."

"Good," answered the Countess, feeling for the gold and ivory tablet which hung by a silver chain from her girdle, that she might therein enter the information for which she had sent. "Then, as born on the birthday of the heir, they shall be allowed some privileges. What names are the babes christened by?"

"Please it your Ladyship, the little maid is Beatrice—so baptized by Dan Robesart this afternoon. For the knave, being born but an hour back, he is not yet baptized; but they think to call him Lawrence."

Both names went down on the Countess's tablet, after Guenllian had lighted a candle for that purpose.

"Did David give the thralls to wit of the games and rejoicings allowed to-morrow?"

"Ay, my Lady: and he saith one and all were greatly gladdened thereby. My young Lord shall be right welcome to all his vassals some day to be."

The Countess drew a long breath of semi-apprehension. "May he be none the less desired, God grant, when they shall lay his head beneath the mould! O my maid, how great and awesome a thing is the life of a man on earth!"

"Madam, I heard once the parson of Ludgarshal, Dan John, to say"—

"Have on. A good man is Dan John. What said he?"

"That our Lord bound Him to care for the childer of them that feared Him; and that no prayer so made should ever be lost."

"But how answered?" was the low-toned reply. "Wenteline, our prayers be sometimes heard in a manner that crusheth the heart of him that prayed them. If the babe were to die!"

"Very dear Lady, it might be, otherwise, that a twenty years' space hereafter, you should heartily wish that he had died the sooner. Surely it can be no evil thing for a little child to go right to God, while he is yet lapped about with the white robes of his chrisom."

"I have buried three, Wenteline: and of them one went so. The other were pretty little childer that prattled at my knee. And it was like burying a piece of mine own heart to part with every one."

"Yet now, my Lady—would you have them back now?"

"Know I what I would? Surely it is better for them. And may God's will be done. Only to-night, Wenteline—to-night, holding that little babe, the thought came sorrowfully of my Roger, and how he faded from me like a white flower of the earth, or a star that goes out in the sky. Hand me yonder French Bible, Wenteline. Let me read a little touching the City where my childer dwell, and the King unto whose presence they be gone. May be it shall still my yearning when I think of them as there, and not here."

There were no Bibles at that date but in French or Latin; seven years were yet to elapse before John Wycliffe, to whom Guenllian had just referred, was to begin the translation of the first English Bible. But French Bibles and Latin Psalters were no unusual possession of noble families. Those families who were not noble were expected to get to heaven without any; for one of the most singular medieval ideas was that which restricted all intellect to those of noble blood. Blood and brains went together. If a man had not the former, it was out of all calculation that he should possess the latter.

Guenllian reached down from a high shelf the French Bible, bound in dark green velvet, with golden rims and embossed corners, and amethysts gleaming from every corner. The Countess unfastened the clasps, and turned to the last chapters of the book. She read, to herself and Guenllian, of the Golden City and the River of Gladness and the Tree of Life, until the world seemed to grow small and dim, and the world's conventionalities to become very poor and worthless. And then, turning a little further back, she read of the Good Shepherd who calleth His flock by name, and leadeth them out; and they know His voice, and follow Him. Then the golden clasps were closed, and the lady sat in silence for a few moments.

"Wenteline," she said, "we have tried to follow the Shepherd, thou and I, in the sunlit plains. Thinkest thou thy feet would fail if we come by-and-by to the arid slopes of the stony hills?"

Guenllian looked down, and nervously played with her chatelaine. "I cannot tell, an' it like my Lady. You look not for such troubles, Madam?"

"They that be sure of Satan's enmity had best look for trouble," was the pithy answer. "It is not here—yet. But it may be."

And it was to be. But it came not until Philippa Montacute was safe in the shelter of the Golden City, and under the shade of the Tree of Life. Then it broke fiercely on the unsheltered heads of those on the stony slope, and the baby that lay that day in the velvet wrapper came in for some drops of the thunderstorm.

The children in the Castle and in the hovel grew and thrived. They were both pretty, but had Lawrence Madison been kept as clean and dressed as nicely as the little Lord, he would have been the prettier of the two. As he grew old

enough to take note of things, to tumble about on the sheepskin at the door, while his mother and Mariot attended to their duties within, and to listen and talk, a great ambition arose in his young heart. He did not envy the young heir at the Castle: an idea so lofty and preposterous never suggested itself for an instant. Lawrence would as soon have thought of grumbling because he was not an archangel, as because he was not my Lord Roger of March. But he did indescribably admire and envy the fishmonger across the street. He had a whole coat, and a clean apron; he looked like a man who always had plenty of nice things to eat, and a fire to warm himself by in cold weather. And the fishes were so beautiful! Lawrence had crept across the street and looked up at their lovely prismatic scales, as they lay in the baskets level with his head. He had seen Blumond's wife as she came to the door with her child in her arms. Little Beatrice was kept cleaner and nicer than he was. Why did not Mother give him nice things to wear like hers? And why, that evening when she and Father were talking about something—what were they talking about?—did Father look across at Lawrence, and say, with a lowered brow and a sulky tone quite unusual with him, something about letting a freeman manage for himself, and not be beholden to a villein? Now that he thought about it—and Lawrence was given to thinking about things—Father did seem more cross with him than the others. What had he done?

After many long cogitations on this and other puzzles, of which nobody knew, since he kept them all to himself, Lawrence finished by astounding his world.

Lawrence's world was very small, for it was bounded by a few yards of the street at its widest extent. The inner circle of this sphere, namely, the hovel, was built of mud and wooden laths, and was about fifteen feet in longitude. Separate rooms were an unimaginable luxury. Nine persons—Lawrence's father, mother, and grandmother, his two brothers, three sisters, and himself—ate, slept, and mostly worked, in the one chamber which formed the whole of the hut. There were also additional inhabitants in the shape of two cats, three hens, and a small and lively pig. It was not easy to move without falling over somebody or something which was apt to resent it in a way not suggestive of polished society. Perhaps it was quite as well, considering these circumstances, that the space was not cumbered with much furniture. Alike of bedsteads, chairs, and tables, the hut was entirely guiltless, and the inhabitants would scarcely have known what to do with them. A bundle of straw littered down in a corner, with a sheepskin thrown over it, was their idea of the utmost luxury in the way of sleeping accommodation—a luxury which they could rarely attain: and the ordinary bed was one of dry leaves from the neighbouring forest, which, when they were able to reach such a pitch of comfort, were stuffed into a sack. A long form, set against

the wall, represented the chair element, and was reserved for the elders, the children squatting on the mud floor with the pig, cats, and hens. The minds of the inhabitants had not reached the table idea.

Nicholas, the father of Lawrence, was by trade a tanner—not a master-tanner by any means. He worked for a man who in his turn worked under another, and all were serfs, at the Earl's tan-pits, a mile from the city. Maud, his wife, was the daughter of another serf, the blacksmith who shoed the Earl's horses. To all these the Lord of Usk was a sort of minor divinity, almost too far above them to be thought of as a human creature like themselves, and much too inaccessible for any complaints or requests to reach him, except through the medium of a dozen persons at least. People of this kind were not expected to have any manners, beyond the indispensable one of making the most obsequious reverences to the meanest dweller in the Castle, or to a priest. The sailor's pithy description of the savages with whom he met—"Manners, none; customs, nasty"—were in most cases only too descriptive of the medieval villein.

Does not this manner of life among the lower orders, five hundred years ago, account for much of the power obtained by the priesthood, and the blind obedience with which the people followed the clergy? The priest was something more to the masses than he was to the aristocracy. To the latter, he was the man who stood between them and God: to the former, he was also the mediator between man and man. He was the only person among the upper ranks who treated these poor down-trodden creatures, not as machines out of which so much profit was to be ground, but as men and women with human sins and sorrows.

The children saw very little of their father. He went to work as soon as it was light, and often did not return before they were fast asleep on the leaves. They saw only too much of their mother, whose tongue was never still when awake, and was governed by a cross temper and a discontented mind. The grandmother was an old woman bent by rheumatism, and enfeebled by years of hard work and hard usage. The girls, Mariot, Emmot, and Joan, had nothing to look forward to but similar lives, and after them—they hardly knew what. They had a dim notion that there was a pleasant place where some people went at death, and where nobody did any work: this was derived from the priests. They had also a notion, dug up out of the natural soil of the human heart, that having met with very little comfort in this life, it was sure to be waiting for them in the next. Of God their principal idea was that He was a very great and rich man, above even my Lord, and was in some mysterious manner connected with hearing mass. The boys might expect the serf's usual life—hard work and many blows, with such intervals of pleasure as an animal would be capable of appreciating, chiefly connected with eating and drinking, an occasional dance or game on the village green on saints' days, and any rough horse-play among themselves.

They were not badly off in respect of food, for their master fed them, and it was to his profit that they should be in good bodily condition. They had therefore, plenty of food of the coarsest kind, and sufficient clothing of the same quality, which they had about as much notion of keeping clean as a monkey has of writing letters. Wages, of course, were never heard of between master and serf. Whatever they needed had to be reported to their superior in office, and they received it if and when he found it convenient.

Is it not a singular fact that the less a man has, the more contented he is often found to be? The majority of these serfs, thus comfortlessly situated, were more contented men than their descendants, who have privileges and possessions of which they never dreamed, and many of whom are never satisfied with them.

These were the circumstances in which Lawrence was placed, and such were the persons whom he astonished when his time came to do so.

"Get out of the way, childer!" said Mariot one night, not crossly, but like the tired girl she was, as she came and threw herself down on the sheepskin among them at the door. "I am weary as a dog. There never is any pleasure in life—our lives, anywise. Simon, have done!—and Emmot, give o'er pushing. Let a body have a bit of rest, do!"

And rolling one corner of the sheepskin into a bolster, Mariot made herself comfortable—as much so, that is, as the circumstances admitted.

"Mariot, what is a villein?"

"What's *what*?" exclaimed Mariot, her head coming up in astonishment. "Lo' you now, if Slow-o'-Words hasn't found his tongue!"

"What's a villein, Mariot?"

"What we all are—saving thee, little plague o' my life."

"Why amn't I like you?" said Lawrence, opening his eyes wide.

"The deer knows!" replied Simon grumpily.

"Well, but I know beside the deer," said Mariot. "Well, what for but by reason thou wert born on the same day as the young Lord up yonder,—thou and Blumond's Beattie—and ye were both made free therefor."

"What's *free*, Mariot?"

"It means, do what you will."

"Does it so? May I have one of those fishes, then?"

"Oh, well—it means not, do ill and thieve. Wait a bit, Lolly, till thou art grown bigger, and thou wilt know what free means—better than ever we are like to know it."

"Why isn't everybody free, Mariot?"

"What wot I? They aren't."

"Is Beattie free too?"

"Ay."

"But we were *made* free. Is nobody free that isn't made?"

"Lots of folks."

"Then why isn't everybody?" repeated little Lawrence meditatively.

"Oh, give o'er, and reive not my head!" cried Mariot. "Loll, if thou goest about to ask questions that none can answer, I shall want thee dumb again I promise thee."

"Can't nobody answer them? Couldn't the parson?"

"The parson, in good sooth! The like of thee to ask questions at the parson! Shut thine eyes, and go to sleep: I'm as sleepy as a squirrel in winter."

Lawrence crept on his hands and knees to the edge of the sheepskin, avoiding his brother Simon, who lay on his face in the middle of it, amusing himself by kicks up at the atmosphere: and looking out into the still summer evening, saw Blumond's wife Philippa carrying in the baskets of fish, and little Beatrice trotting beside her. Prettiest of the three children was Beatrice, with dainty little ways which woke Lawrence's admiration, and made her a perpetual attraction to him. In fact, he hardly knew which he liked best, Beatrice or the fishes!

As to the magnificent people in the Castle, Lawrence barely presumed to lift his eyes to them. Now and then, as he sat on the sheepskin, some squire on horseback or messenger on foot would flash past in the Earl's livery—blue and gold, guarded with white—who was to the children in the huts as good as a show at Whitsuntide Fair. But before Lawrence was quite two years old, the Castle was deserted, and the Earl and all his family had removed to Ludlow. Thence came rumours from time to time of their doings. A daughter was born, in honour of whom a holiday was given to the villeins; and two years later, a son, for whom they had a great feast. But immediately after that came sadder news, for the royal mother, yet only twenty-two, survived her boy's birth scarcely six weeks. All the bells of Usk tolled in mourning, catafalques of black and silver were in every church, and the chant of doleful litanies for the dead floated through the perfumed aisles. And after the death of the young Countess, the Earl and Countess Dowager returned no more to Usk; for two years later, the Earl was made Viceroy of Ireland, and removed thither, while his mother and children remained at Wigmore.

The connection between England and Ireland had hitherto been disastrous to both parties. Had the Pope intended by his gift of that island to punish all the royal dynasty for their sins, past and future, he could not have succeeded better; and had he desired to visit on the Green Isle the penalty for all her crimes, he could scarcely have devised a sorer punishment than the infliction of such rulers as England sent her for several hundred years. The conquerors and the conquered understood each other as little as Celt and Teuton commonly do: and what was still worse, they did not try to do so. The English notion of governing

was first to kill off the Irish chieftains, and then to divide the land among a quantity of Norman adventurers whose capacity for "land-hunger" was something remarkable. When Earl Edmund of March assumed the government, it was only seventeen years since the passing of the Statute of Kilkenny, which forbade marriage between the English and the Irish, and commanded the use of the English language and customs on pain of death. Even Lionel, Duke of Clarence, who was considered one of the gentlest of men, had, as his first step on landing in Ireland, forbidden any Irishman to approach his camp. His son-in-law was a wiser man. There was Irish blood in his own veins—in small proportion to the English, it is true; still, he was the descendant of an Irish King, and the pedigree-loving Celts were not likely to forget it. He began by showing a strong hand upon the reins, and in six months had Ireland at his feet. Then he laid aside whip and spur, and permitted his natural character to take its course. The result was that he became exceedingly popular, as a ruler usually is in Celtic nations who ordinarily exhibits himself in an amiable light, and yet shows that he has power, and can use it when required. Earl Edmund shut himself up from no one. Any Irishman who pleased could have access to him at any time, and his native eloquence recommended him strongly to their easily touched feelings. But his beneficent reign did not last long, and perhaps his short tenure of power was quite as well for his popularity. Human nature, in all countries, is apt to become accustomed to kindness, and to take advantage of it. And doubtless the Earl's popularity was partly due to the fact that he succeeded rulers harsher and less attractive than himself.

One great disadvantage on the part of England was that while she realised to the full the inferior civilisation of the Irish, she failed to discover that they possessed a faith purer than her own. The true old and Catholic religion implanted by St. Patrick and others of his type had received far less corruption from Rome than the religion of England. But the English were much more concerned in improving the manners of the Irish nobles than in improving their own spirituality. That an Irish king wore no trousers, and that his attendant minstrel shared his plate and glass, struck them infinitely more than the condition of his morals. When once they had satisfied themselves that the Irish believed in the Triune God, and had heard of the existence of a Bishop at Rome who was the Pontiff of Western Christendom—points apparently of equal importance to them—they gave themselves no further trouble on the religious question. Political and social questions came nearer and pressed more heavily.

With the usual individuality of our race, they resented the use of a separate language, to which the Irish, as individual in their way, clung as for very life. If, instead of trying to suppress the venerable and beloved tongue, England had given Ireland an open Bible in it—if she had insisted on the study of Holy Writ,

and had left the manners to take care of themselves under its influence, what a different future there might have been!

Are we still as blind as five hundred years ago, or shall we some day see that peace for Ireland, as for every other land and soul, must come through the teaching of the Spirit, and the blood of the Cross?

CHAPTER II. WATCHWORDS.

"Then out and spake a gude auld man—
A gude death micht he dee!—
'Whatever ye do, my gude maister,
Take God your Guide to be.'"
—OLD BALLAD.

While Earl Edmund was governing across the sea, his little son Roger grew in health and stature under the loving care of his grandmother at Wigmore. The Earls of March had many castles and seats, but Wigmore Castle was the family seat of the Mortimers. The old Countess was extremely anxious that the boy should grow up a good man; the rather because she recognised in him a quality beyond her own energy and activity—that passionate, impetuous nature which belonged to his mother's blood. She brought him up on a course of philosophy, and above all of Scripture, in the hope of calming it down. The eradication was hopeless enough; but the Scripture sank deep. Young as he was when he lost her, Roger Mortimer never forgot those lessons at his grandmother's knee. But the quiet years of holy teaching were not long. In the spring of 1381, Earl Edmund sent letters to his mother, requesting that his eldest son might be sent over to him, as he wished him to make acquaintance with the tenants on his Irish lands. The whole province of Ulster would lie one day at the pleasure of its future Earl.

Sir Thomas Mortimer, a distant relative of the Earl, brought his noble kinsman's letters. He was appointed the governor of little Roger, and was to take care of him on his perilous journey. In order to impress the Irish with a sense of the child's grandeur and importance, he was to have a distinct establishment; and the Earl had suggested that the majority of the new servants had better come from his Welsh estates. Two Celtic races, which centuries ago were one, would,

as he thought, be more likely to amalgamate with each other than either with the Saxon. Perhaps he forgot that the meeting of two fires will scarcely extinguish a conflagration.

Sir Thomas therefore had come through Usk, where he had imparted the Earl's commands to the keeper of the Castle, ordering him to have ready by a certain day, to meet him at Holyhead, such and such persons—so many men and boys to fill so many offices—much as he might have ordered as many garments or loaves of bread. The villeins were bound to serve in the menial offices; and for higher places, the neighbouring gentry and their sons would only be too glad to hear of the vacancies.

One appointment was to be made, at her son's request, by the Countess herself. This was perhaps the most important of all, for it was the choice of a woman who should look after the child's necessities, and fill so far as possible the place of the dead mother and the absent grandmother. The boy, having passed his seventh birthday, was ostensibly emancipated from the nursery: yet, with no lady at the head of the household, the presence of some responsible woman about the child became needful. The Countess's choice was soon made. It fell on her own waiting-woman, Guenllian, in whom she had more confidence than in any one else. It was an additional recommendation that Guenllian had been about the child from his infancy, so that he would feel her to be a familiar friend. Yet, though she was sending with him the person of all others in whom she most relied, the Countess suffered severe anxiety in parting with her boy, who, after his father, was her one darling in all the world. What would become of him? Suppose he were drowned in crossing the sea, and never reached his father! Suppose he were murdered by the "wild Irish," who, in the eyes of all English people of that date, were savages of the most dreadful type. Or, worse still,—suppose he grew up to be a monster of wickedness,—that pretty little child who now lifted his pure blue eyes so honestly and confidingly to hers! She thought it would break her heart. And strong as that heart was to cleave to God and do the right, yet, as the event proved, it was not one to bear much suffering.

"Very dear Lady," suggested Guenllian tenderly, "can you not trust the young Lord into the merciful hands of God? Can my young Lord go whither He is not?"

"Thy faith shames mine, my maid. May God verily go with you! Wenteline, thou wilt surely promise me that my darling shall be bred up to prize this," and she laid her hand on the French Bible. "Let the Word of the Lord never be out of his reach, nor of his hearing. Rising up and lying down—coming in and going out—let him pillow his soul upon it, and be made strong."

Guenllian gave the required promise very quietly. Her mistress knew she might be trusted.

"And if it should come—as we hear rumour afloat—that Dan John busieth himself to render the Book into the English tongue, then will I send it o'er so soon as may be. An whole Bible in English! Ay, that day that seeth it shall be a merry day for England."

The French Bible was the Countess's parting gift to her grandson. It was no mean gift, for the writing of its fellow, which was to remain with her, had cost her more than twenty pounds.

To the child himself she said comparatively little. She wished her words to sink deep and take root; and she knew that an important means to that end was that they should be few. So, as her last words, she gave him two mottoes, in the language which was only then ceasing to be the mother tongue of English nobles.

"Fais ce que doy, advienne que fourra." And—"Un Dieu, un Roy, servir je day."

And thus, with a thousand prayers and blessings, the boy left her.

"Ah, when to meet again?" she sighed, as from the castle turret she watched him go, turning to kiss his hand to her as he rode away towards Shropshire. "O my darling, mine heart misgiveth me sore!—when to meet again?"

Never any more, Philippa Mortimer, till both stand in the street of the Golden City, and under the shade of the Tree of Life.

Little Roger and his suite travelled, as was usual at the time, on horseback. The charette was reserved for short journeys in civilised places, where there was some semblance of a road; while the litter was the vehicle of ladies and invalids. A dark roan-coloured "trotter," or saddle-horse, was selected for the little lord, and fitted with a black velvet saddle embroidered in gold. The harness was also black. There was no saddle-cloth, as this was an article used on ceremonial occasions; and as the horse was going on a journey which would lie chiefly upon turf, he was not shod.

Roger himself was dressed in a long robe of dark blue damask, relieved by narrow stripes of white and red; and over it he wore a hood of black velvet. On the top of this sat a brown felt hat, in shape something like a modern "wide-awake," with one dark-green plume standing straight up in its front, and fastened to the hat by a small golden clasp. A little white frill surrounded his throat beneath the hood, which latter article could be cast aside if the weather were sufficiently warm. The sleeves of the robe were extremely wide and full, and lined with white; and beneath them were closer sleeves of apple-green, but these were far wider than gentlemen wear them now. Dark-green boots, with white buttons, and spurs of gilt copper, completed the young gentleman's costume. His stirrups were of white metal, and in his hand was an excessively long white whip, much taller than himself.[#] It was the first time that Roger had been allowed to ride alone on a journey, and he was as proud of the distinction as might be expected.

[#] This description is mainly taken from one of Creton's illuminations. Harl. MS. 1319, illum. ix.

Before the convoy went two running footmen, attired loosely in a costume somewhat resembling the Highland kilt, one of whom bore a pennon with the Earl's arms, and the other a trumpet, which was sounded whenever they drew near to any town or village. Every man carried a drinking-cup at his girdle, and his dagger served for a knife. The travellers beguiled the long day by singing songs and ballads, among which was a new song just become popular, of which the first line only has descended to us, and that has a decidedly minor tone—" *J'ay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.*"

Thus accoutred and equipped, conducted by two knights, eight squires, fifty men-at-arms, and a hundred archers, Roger set forth on his journey. A pleasant ride of eight miles brought them to Clun Castle, which belonged to Roger's cousin, the young Lord Le Despenser, and the keeper of the castle was delighted to show hospitality to one so nearly related to the owner. Here they stayed for dinner, Roger being seated in the place of honour at the head of the daïs, and all present anxious to gratify his slightest fancy. Eight miles more, after dinner, brought them to Montgomery, where the castle received its heir for the night.

In the streets of the towns, but especially on the bridges and in the church porches—where in Roman Catholic countries they usually lie in wait—were always congregated a larger or smaller swarm of beggars, who invariably seized upon a group of travellers with avidity. And as giving of alms, however indiscriminate, was a good work in the eyes of the Church, Sir Thomas Mortimer had provided himself with a purse full of pennies, out of which he doled twopences and fourpences to every crowd of suppliants.

The next day was Sunday; but the only difference which it made in the day's programme was that, before the travellers set forth, they attended mass in the fine old cruciform church of Montgomery. Mass being conducted in a tongue unknown to the vulgar of all nations, may be attended in any country with equal advantage—or disadvantage. The stage that day was rather shorter, but they were now among the mountains, and travelling became a slow and wearisome process. They reached before night the village of Languadan, where they stayed the night, Sir Thomas and his precious charge being accommodated at the village inn, and the guard encamping outside in the open air. A third day's journey of thirteen miles brought them to Kemmer Abbey, and a fourth, long and fatiguing, winding round the base of Snowdon, to Beddgelert. They made up for their extra work by riding only ten miles on the Wednesday, which ended at Caernarvon. Here they returned to more civilised life, and found better accommodation than they had done since leaving Montgomery. But the Thursday's journey was again long and tedious, for they had to sail across the Menai, and round Anglesey. Five boats

awaited them here, the St. Mary, the Michael, the Grace Dieu, the Margaret, and the Katherine: their tonnage ran from sixty to a hundred and fifty tons. They were simply large, deep brown boats, with one mast and no deck, and neither cabin nor any other form of shelter. Sir Thomas and Roger embarked on the Grace Dieu, which was the largest of the boats, and the guard were packed into the other four, the squires going with their betters.

On arrival at Holyhead, Sir Thomas was met by the deputy keeper of Usk Castle, who presented to him two more squires, three "varlets," and a boy, who were to serve in the household of the young Lord. One of the squires was named Reginald de Pageham, and his family had been in the service of the Earls of Ulster from time immemorial. The other was named Constantine Byterre, and was the son of a squire of the Earl. The varlets were villeins from Usk. And the boy was Lawrence Madison.

If any reader of modern ideas should desire to know how or why a child of seven years old was selected for a servant, be it known that in the Middle Ages that was the usual period for a boy to commence service. He was to fill the posts of page of the chamber and whipping-boy: in other words, and practically, he was to fetch and carry for his little master, to learn and play with him, and when Roger was naughty and required chastisement,—which could scarcely be expected not to occur,—Lawrence, not Roger was to be whipped.

The combination of boy with boy was a curious one. Roger had been most carefully brought up, led by tender hands every step of the way hitherto traversed. Lawrence had scrambled up on hands and knees, as he might, with no leading at all except the rare catechising in church, and the personal influence of Beatrice and the fishes. But these three had been for good. The Rev. Mr. Robesart, the only one of the clergy of the parish church at Usk who cared to catechise the children, had been one of those rare stars among the medieval priesthood who both loved the perishing souls of men, and were themselves in possession of the Bread of Life to break to them.

Little Beatrice had repeated her lessons to Lawrence, whom she was pleased to like, in a funny, patronising little way, and they had done him at least as much good as they did to her. And the fishes had also had a share in his education, for their beauty had gratified his taste, and their helpless condition had stirred feelings of pity which do not often find such ready entrance into a boy's heart as they did into that of Lawrence Madison.

It was not on account of any intellectual or moral qualifications that Lawrence had been chosen for his post of service. It was simply because he was a pretty child, and would look well in the Earl's livery. His parents were only too thankful for such a chance of promotion for him. He was one too many for their financial resources. On Lawrence's part there was only one person whom

he was sorry to leave, and that was the little playmate over the way. He had gone proudly across to the fishmonger's, to show himself in his new splendours, and to say farewell.

"Love us, sweet Saint Mary!" was Philippa's exclamation. "How fine art thou!"

"Oh, how pretty, how pretty!" cried little Beatrice. "Lolly, where gattest such pretty raiment?"

"'Tis my Lord his livery, child," said Blumond. "And what place hast thou, lad? Kitchen knave?"

This was the lowest position that a boy could have in a noble household. Lawrence's head went up in a style which would have amused most students of human nature.

"Nay, Master Blumond," said he: "I am to be page of the chamber to my Lord's son."

"Gramercy, how grand we are!" laughed Blumond. "Prithee, good Master Lawrence, let me beseech thee to have a favour unto me."

Lawrence had an uneasy perception that the fishmonger was laughing at him. He struggled for a moment with the new sense of dignity which sat so stiffly upon him, and then, speaking in his natural way, said,—

"I shall never forget you, Master Blumond, nor Philippa, nor Beattie. But I wis not when I shall see you all again. The little Lord goeth to Ireland, and I withal."

"Where's Ireland?" asked Beattie, with wide-open eyes, "Ireland" having immediately presented to her imagination a large park with a castle in the middle of it.

"That wis I not," answered ignorant Lawrence. "'Tis somewhere. I shall see when we be there."

Blumond was a little wiser, but only a little. "Well, now, is't not across seas?" suggested he.

Lawrence's eyes brightened, and Beatrice's grew sorrowful.

"Wilt thou ever be back, Lolly?" she said in a mournful tone.

"To be sure!" quickly responded Blumond. "He shall come back a grand young gentleman, a-riding of a big black courser, with a scarlet saddle-cloth all broidered o' gold and silver."

There was a general laugh at this highly improbable suggestion, which was checked by Philippa's query if Lawrence had taken leave of Dan Robesart.

"Nay. Should I so?" asked the boy doubtfully.

"Aye, for sure. Haste thee up the hill, for he went into the church but now." And with a hasty farewell at last Lawrence ran off.

He found the priest pacing meditatively up and down the north aisle of the

church, with folded arms and a very grave face.

"Didst seek me, my son?" he inquired, pausing as Lawrence came up and stood rather timidly at a little distance.

"An't please you, good Father, I go hence as to-morrow, and Philippa would have me ask you of your blessing ere I went."

"That shalt thou have, right heartily." And the thin white hand was laid on the child's head. "Our Lord bless thee, and make thee a blessing. May He be thy Guide and Shield and Comforter; yea, may He cover thee with His wings all the day long, and be unto thee a buckler from the face of evil. Lawrence, my son, I would fain have thy promise to a thing."

"What thing, Father?"

"Pass thy word to me, and never forget it, that in all thy life thou wilt never go any whither without asking our Lord to go with thee."

The priest had somewhat failed to realise the extreme youth and worse ignorance of the child to whom he was talking. The reply recalled him to these facts.

"Where shall I find Him?—in the church? Must I hear mass every morning?"

One of the strangest things in Romanism to a Protestant mind is the fancy that prayer must be offered in a consecrated building to be thoroughly acceptable. Of course, when a man localises the presence of Christ as confined to a particular piece of stone, it is natural that he should fancy he must go to the stone to find Him. From this unscriptural notion the Lollards had to a great extent emancipated themselves. Mr. Robesart therefore answered Lawrence as most priests would not have done, for in his eyes the presence of Christ was not restricted to the altar-stone and the consecrated wafer.

"My son, say in thine heart—thou needest not speak it loud—'Jesus, be with me,' before thou dost any matter, or goest any whither. Our Lord will hear thee. Wilt thou so do?"

Lawrence gave the promise, with a child's readiness to promise anything asked by a person whom he loved and revered. The priest lifted his eyes.

"Lord keep him in mind!" he said in a low voice. "Keep Thyself in the child's heart, and bear him upon Thine before the Father!—Now, my son, go, and God be with thee."

Mr. Robesart laid his hand again on the child's head, and with a slower step than before, as if some awe rested upon him, Lawrence went down to the hovel below the hill.

The journey from Usk to Ireland was a far more new and strange experience to Lawrence than it could be to Roger. The latter had taken various short journeys from one of his father's castles to another, or on occasional visits to friends and relatives of the family: but the former had spent all his little life in

the hovel at Usk, and his own feet were the only mode of travelling with which he had hitherto been acquainted. The sea was something completely new to both. Lawrence was deeply interested in finding out that fishes lived in that mighty ocean which seemed alike so potent and so interminable. He wanted to go down to the bottom and see the fishes alive in their own haunts, and find out what was there beside them. But after timidly hinting at these aspirations to an archer and a squire, and perceiving that both were inclined to laugh at him, Lawrence locked up the remainder of his fancies in his own breast, and awaited further light and future opportunities.

Meditations of this kind did not trouble Roger. He found quite enough to look at in the visible world, without puzzling his brain by speculations concerning the unseen. His nature disposed him at all times to action rather than thought.

Two months were consumed on the voyage to Ireland: not by any means an unreasonable time, when that period or longer was frequently required between Dover and Calais. They were detained previously at Holyhead, waiting for a south-east wind, only for a fortnight, which was rather a matter for congratulation; as was also the fact that they were only twice in danger of their lives during the voyage. Perils in the wilderness, and perils in the sea, were much more intelligible to our forefathers than to ourselves.

Roger was growing dreadfully tired of sea and sky long before the shore of Antrim was sighted. Lawrence was tired of nothing but his own ignorance and incapacity to understand what he saw. He wanted to know—to dive to the bottom of every thing, literally and figuratively: and he did not know how to get there, and nobody could or would tell him. Surely things had an end somewhere—if one could only find it out!

The voyage came to one, at any rate; and on a beautiful summer morning, the keel of the *Grace Dieu* at last grated upon the shingle of Ulster. Half-a-dozen of the crew jumped out into the surf, and twice as many came to help from the land. The great boat was dragged on shore by the help of ropes, a ladder set against her side, and Roger carefully carried ashore by a squire. Lawrence was left to climb down as he best could. Both reached the ground in safety, and found themselves in presence of a crowd of officers and retainers in the Earl of Ulster's livery; from among whom in a moment the Earl himself came forward, and gave a warm fatherly welcome to his little son. After mutual greetings had been sufficiently exchanged between old residents and new-comers, the Earl mounted his horse, a superb bay caparisoned with a scarlet saddle-cloth, and Roger having been lifted on a white pony beside him, they rode away to the Castle of Carrickfergus.

Ulster was in the fourteenth century, as it still is in the nineteenth, in a

much more settled, and to English eyes a more civilised condition, than the Milesian parts of Ireland: but even there, that hatred of rent which seems characteristic of the Irish race, flourished quite as luxuriantly as now. Fifty years before this date, Maud of Lancaster, the girl-widow of the murdered Earl of Ulster, and great-grandmother of little Roger, had been constrained to address piteous appeals to King Edward III. for his charity, on the ground that while nominally possessed of large property, she had really nothing to live upon, since her Irish tenants would not pay their rents.

The English mind, which is apt to pride itself upon its steady-going, law-abiding tendencies, was much exercised with this Irish peculiarity, which it could not understand at all. Why a man should not pay rent for land which the law affirmed was not his own, and what possible objection he could have to doing so beyond a wish to keep his money in his pocket, was wholly unintelligible to the Saxon mind, which never comprehended that passionate love for the soil, that blind clinging to the homestead, which are characteristic of the Celt. Those who have those qualities, among our now mixed race, whatever their known pedigree be, may rest assured that Celtic blood—whether British, Gaelic, or Erse—has entered their veins from some quarter.

The Irish, on their part, were for ever looking back to that day when they were lords of the soil, before the foot of the stranger had ever pressed the turf of the Green Isle. It was the land which they yearned to emancipate rather than themselves. In Celtic eyes a monarch is king of the land, and the people who dwell on it are merely adventitious coincidences: in Saxon eyes he is king of the people, and the land is simply the piece of matter which holds the people in obedience to the law of gravitation. The latter must necessarily be an emigrating and colonising race: the former as certainly, by the very nature of things, must feel subjection to a foreign nation an intolerable yoke, and exile one of the bitterest penalties that can be visited on man. How are these two types of mind ever to understand each other?

It has been well said that "there is not only one Mediator between God and man, but also one Mediator between man and man, the Man Christ Jesus." Never, as Man, was a truer patriot, and yet never was a more thorough cosmopolitan, than He whose eyes as God are always upon the Land of Israel, and who hath loved Zion. Can we not all learn of Him, and bear with each other till the day comes when we shall see eye to eye—when there shall be one nation upon the mountains of Israel, and one King over all the earth,—one flock, and one Shep-

herd?

CHAPTER III. CAST ON THE WORLD.

"But He who feeds the ravens young
Lets naething pass He disna see,
He'll some time judge o' richt and wrang,
And aye provide for you and me."
—JAMES HOGG.

"Would it please your good Lordship to stand still but one minute?"

"No, Wenteline, it wouldn't." And little Roger twisted himself out of the hands which were vainly endeavouring to smoothe down his vest of violet velvet embroidered in silver, and to fasten it round the waist with a richly-chased silver belt.

"Then, when my gracious Lord sends Master Constantine for your Lordship, am I to say you will not be donned, so you cannot go down to hall?"

"Thou canst say what it list thee. I want to play at soldiers with Lolly."

"So shall your Lordship when you be donned," answered Guenllian firmly. Little Roger looked up into her face, and seeing no relenting, broke into a merry little laugh, and resigned himself to the inevitable.

"Oh, come then, make haste!"

Vanity was not among Roger's failings, and impatience very decidedly was. Guenllian obeyed her little charge's bidding, and in a few minutes released him from bondage. He rewarded her with a hurried kiss, and scampered off into the ante-chamber, calling out,—

"Lolly, Lolly, come and play at soldiers!"

The two boys, master and servant, were very fond of each other. This was the more remarkable since not only their temperaments, but their tastes, were diverse. Roger liked noise and show, was lively, impulsive, ardent: he had no particular love for lessons, and no capacity for sitting still. Lawrence was grave and calm, gifted with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and of a quiet, almost indolent physical temperament. The one point on which their tastes met was a liking for music; and even in this case Roger delighted in stirring martial

strains, while Lawrence preferred soft and plaintive airs. Playing at soldiers, therefore, was rather in Roger's line than in Lawrence's: but the latter never dreamed of setting his will in antagonism to that of his master. The game had gone on for about half an hour when a young man of twenty presented himself at the door of the ante-chamber. He was clad in a blue tunic reaching nearly to the knee, and girded with a black belt round the hips, studded with gold; a red hood encircled his neck; his stockings were diverse, the right being of the same shade as the hood, and the left of green striped with black. Low black shoes, with very pointed toes, completed his costume.

"Now, Master Constantine, you may go away. I want nought with you," shouted little Roger, still struggling with Lawrence, whom he had almost forced into a corner.

"Please it your Lordship," returned Master Constantine with an amused smile, "I want somewhat with you. My gracious Lord hath sent me to fetch you to hall."

"O you bad man, you have spoiled my fun!" cried little Roger. "I had nearly won the battle.—Come along then, Lolly, we will make an end at after. Draw off the troops—right about face! March!"

A smile broke over the somewhat weary face of the Viceroy, when, two minutes later, his little son came marching into the hall, shouldering his toy spear, and followed by Lawrence, who carried a long stick in a manner similar as to position, but dissimilar as to the appearance of interest. At the edge of the dalls Lawrence dropped his stick, made a low bow to his master, and retreated among the household beneath. Roger bounded on the daïs, kissed his father's hand, and squatted himself down—for half a minute—on a hassock at the Earl's feet. The father's hand lingered tenderly among the fair curls on the boy's head.

"Little Roger," he said, "I have somewhat to tell thee."

"Is it a battle?" exclaimed Roger eagerly.

His father laughed. "Of a truth, thou art cut out for a soldier, my lad. Nay, 'tis not a battle; it is a journey."

"Shall I take a journey?"

"Not yet a while. Perchance, some day. But what sayest? Canst do without me for a month or twain?"

"Whither go you, my Lord?"

"I set forth for Cork this next Wednesday."

"Where's Cork?"

"There shall be nigh all Ireland between us, little Roger."

"But musn't I go?" said Roger in a very disappointed tone.

"Not yet a while," repeated his father. "Cork is wilder by far than Antrim. I must ensure me first that it shall be safe to have thee. If so be, I may send for

thee in time.”

”But must I be all alone?” demanded the child in a changed tone.

”All alone—with Wenteline and Master Byterre and Lawrence—for a little while. Then thou shalt either come to me, or go back to my Lady thy grandmother.”

”Oh, let me come to your Lordship! I love not women!” cried Roger, with the usual want of gallantry of small boys.

”In very deed, I am shocked!” said the Earl, with a twinkle of amusement in his eyes which made more impression on Roger than the accompanying words. ”Howbeit, we shall see. Thou shouldst dearly love thy grandmother, Roger, for she loveth thee right well.”

”Oh aye, I love her all right!—but women wit nought of war and knight-hood, and such like. They think you be good if you sit still and stare on a book. And that is monks’ gear, not soldiers’. I am a soldier.”

”Art thou, forsooth?” responded the Earl with a laugh. ”Thou shalt be one day, maybe. Now, my doughty warrior, run to thy nurse. I have ado with these gentlemen.”

Two years had passed when this dialogue took place, since little Roger came from Wigmore to Ireland. He was growing a bright boy, still not particularly fond of study, but less averse to it than he had been, and developing a strong taste for military matters, and for the lighter accomplishments. He danced and sang well for his age, and was learning to play the cithern or guitar. He rode fearlessly, was a great climber and leaper, and considering his years a good archer, and a first-rate player of chess, foot-ball, club-ball (cricket), hand-tennis (fives), mall battledore and shuttlecock, and tables or back-gammon. As to drawing, nobody ever dreamed of teaching that to a medieval noble. The three Rs were also progressing fairly for a boy in the fourteenth century.

The small household left at Carrickfergus had but a dull time of it after the Earl had ridden away for Cork. Two months, and half of a third, dragged wearily along, and not a word came from either Cork or Wigmore. The third month was drawing to its close when, late one snowy winter night, the faint sound of a horn announced the approach of visitors.

”The saints give it maybe my Lord!” exclaimed Constantine Byterre, who was as weary of comparative solitude as a lively young man could well be.

The drawbridge was thrown across, the portcullis pulled up, and Sir Thomas Mortimer rode into the courtyard, followed by Reginald de Pageham and various other members of the Earl’s household. They had evidently ridden a long way, for their horses were exceedingly jaded.

”How does my Lord Roger?” were the first words of Sir Thomas, and the porter perceived that he was either very tired, or very sad.

"Well, sweet Sir: in his bed, as a child should be at this hour."

"Thank God! Bid Mistress Wenteline down to hall, for I must speak with her quickly."

"Sweet Sir, I pray you of your grace, is aught ill?"

"Very ill indeed, good Alan." But Sir Thomas did not explain himself until Guenllian appeared.

It was necessary to rouse her gently, since she slept in little Roger's chamber, and Sir Thomas had given orders that if possible he should not be disturbed. Fearing she knew not what, Guenllian wrapped herself in a thick robe, and descended to the hall.

"Mistress, I give you good greeting: and I do you to wit right heavy tidings, for Lord Edmund the Earl lieth dead in Cork Castle."

A low cry of pain and horror broke from Guenllian.

"Surely not slain of the wild men?"

"In no wise. He died a less glorious death, for he took ill rheum, fording the Lee, and in five days therefrom he was no more."

It was as natural for a Lollard as for any other to respond, "Whose soul God pardon!"

"Amen," said Sir Thomas, crossing himself. "I trust you, mistress mine, to break these tidings to the young Earl. Have here my dead Lord's token"—and he held forth a chased gold ring. "I am bidden, if it shall stand with the King's pleasure, to have back his little Lordship to my Lady his grandmother at Wigmore."

"Poor child!" said Guenllian tremulously. "Poor child!"

"Aye, 'tis sad news for him," was the answer. "Yet childre's grief lasteth not long. Methought, good my mistress, it were as well he should not hear it until the morrow."

"Trust me, Sir. It were cruelty to wake a child up to such news. Aye, but I am woe for my little child! Mereckoneth he were not one to grow up well without a father—and without mother belike! The morrow's tears shall be the least part of his sorrow."

"Ah, well! God must do His will," replied Sir Thomas in a fatalistic manner.

To him, God's will was only another term for what a heathen would have styled inevitable destiny. In connection with the expression, he no more thought of God as a real, living, loving Personality, than he would have thought of Destiny in like manner. It was simply as an impalpable but invincible law that had to take its course. But on Guenllian's ear the expression came with a wholly different meaning. That Almighty Being who to the one was merely the embodiment of stern fate, was to the other at once God and Father—the incarnation of all wisdom and of all love. It was His will that little Roger should be left fatherless. Then it

was the best thing that He could do for him: and He would be Himself the child's Father. The very thought which was the worst part of the sorrow to the one was the greatest alleviation of it to the other.

Little Roger's grief was according to his character—intense, but not abiding. Novelty had for him the charm which it has for all children; and he soon began to look forward to the coming journey to England, and the meeting with his grandmother, and with his brother and sisters, who had been left in her care. But before the journey could be taken, the royal assent and formal licence were an absolute necessity. By the death of the Earl, the viceroyalty devolved on his successor in the earldom until a fresh appointment was made; and the Viceroy must not leave his post except under leave of the Sovereign. Master Richard Byterre, squire of the late Earl, was sent to England to tell the news, and obtain the necessary authorisation, and until his return the household at Carrickfergus was occupied in quietly preparing for the change which was about to come upon it.

But before the return of Byterre, Reginald de Pyrpoint arrived from England with the heaviest news of all.

The coffin of the Earl had been taken by sea direct from Cork to Milford Haven, and thence to Wigmore. Perhaps too suddenly, the tidings of the death of her last child were broken to the widowed mother. She came down into the hall of the Castle, whither the Coffin had been carried: the lid was lifted, and she gazed long and earnestly on the face of her dead: but through it all she never shed a tear. When she had regained her own rooms, her squire asked if it were her pleasure that the funeral should be proceeded with on the next day.

"Nay, not all so soon," was the answer. "Wait but a little, and ye shall bear my coffin too."

Despite all the efforts of her anxious suite, the Countess Philippa refused to be comforted. She would go down, into the grave unto her son, mourning. She took to her bed on the second day. Her confessor came to reason with her.

"This is not well, Lady," said he. "You are a rebellious subject unto your heavenly King—a child that will not kiss the Father's rod. Submit you to Him, and be at peace."

"Not a rebel, Father," answered the low pathetic voice. "Only a child too tired to work any more. Let me go to Him that calleth me."

"But there is much for you to live for, Lady——" resumed the confessor, but she interrupted him.

"I know. And I would have lived if I could. I would have lived for my little Roger. But I cannot, Father. Heart and brain and life are tired out. God must have a care of my little child. I am too weary to tend him. Let me go!"

They had to let her go. On the evening of the third day, with one deep sigh

as of relief in the ending of the struggle, she laid down the weary weight of life, and went to Him who had called her.

The House of Mortimer of March was represented by those four lonely little children, of whom the eldest was only nine years old. It seemed as if every vestige of a shield for the tender plants was to be taken away and they were to be exposed to the full fury of the winter blasts.

For a whole year little Roger was detained at Carrickfergus, nominal Viceroy of Ireland, with his future still undetermined. This was not the fault of the King, a boy only just fifteen years of age; but of the commission of Regency which governed in his name. At the end of that time orders came from Westminster.

Sir Thomas Mortimer was to bring home the little Viceroy, to receive his exoneration from the arduous honour which had been thrust upon him, and to deliver him to the Earl of Arundel, whose ward he had been made, and with whom he was to reside till his majority. To Sir Thomas this news was indifferent: he desired the child's welfare, which, as he understood it, was likely to be well secured by this arrangement. But as Guenllian understood it, there was fair chance of the boy's ruin. If there were in the world one layman more than another who hated Wycliffe and Lollardism from the centre of his soul, it was that Earl of Arundel to whom Roger's future education was thus entrusted. And the astute statesman who was really—not ostensibly—the ruler of England, knew this quite as well as she did. This was Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, the youngest and cleverest of the sons of Edward III. And we have now arrived at a point in our story which makes it necessary to interpose a few words upon the state of politics at that time.

The King, as has just been said, was a mere boy, and the reins of power were in the hands of his three uncles. Of these Princes, the one whom nature and fortune alike pointed out as the leader was the eldest, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. And had he really taken the lead, the disastrous reign of Richard II. might, humanly speaking, have ended very differently. His next brother, Edmund, Duke of York, was so extremely weak in mind as to be little better than half-witted, and was entirely under the control of whoever chose to control him. The youngest, of whom I have spoken above, was clever in the worst sense of that word: but the only man whom he feared was his brother John, and had John chosen he might have reduced the active wickedness of Thomas to a point of merely nominal value. He did not choose. Never was a finer character more completely rendered useless and inert by moral indolence; never were such magnificent opportunities of serving God and man more utterly wasted—than in the case of John of Gaunt.

The word "moral" is used advisedly. Of physical or mental indolence he

had none. His greatest delight, on his own authority, was "to hear of gallant deeds of arms" or to perform them: and few, even of royal blood, were more thoroughly well educated and accomplished according to the standard of his day. But all was spoiled by this moral indolence—this *laissez faire* which would take no trouble. Too much has been said of the libertinism of John of Gaunt. He was not a man of pure life; but he was not so bad as he is usually supposed to have been. Yet in one point he was a perfect rehearsal of Charles the Second—that so-called "sauntering," which I have termed moral indolence, and which it is said that Charles loved better than he ever loved any human being. And in the case of John of Gaunt it is the sadder to relate, because he had more perfect knowledge of the way of righteousness than most of those around him. The one instance in which he broke through the bonds of his besetting sin was in order to stand by John Wycliffe in the hour of persecution. Oh, how terrible is the reckoning for him who was not ignorant, who was not even in doubt of the right—who knew his Lord's will, and did it not!

In consequence of this sad lapse, the reins of power fell into the hands of Gloucester. And Gloucester was one of those men who know how to wait, to feel the pulse of circumstances, and when the right moment comes, to strike a decisive blow. How far he ever loved any one may be doubtful: but that he was a splendid hater is beyond all doubt. There were a few men whom he trusted and favoured; and of these—with one exception, the chief of them—was Richard Earl of Arundel.

The wardship of little Roger Mortimer would much more naturally have been given to one of his only adult relatives—his two grand-uncles, William, Earl of Salisbury, and Sir John de Montacute. But in the eyes of Gloucester, no Montacute was a person to be trusted. The family were by tradition favourers of the Boin-Homines—or, in other words, among the Protestants of that period. And Gloucester was a "black Papist." It is true that the Earl of Salisbury was an exception to the family rule in this particular: but it did not suit Gloucester's views to allow little Roger to reside in his house. He had a wife whose mother was one of the most prominent Lollards of the day: and he was himself much under the influence of the Lollard Princess of Wales, whom he had loved in her brilliant youth. His surroundings, therefore, were dubious. And deep down in Gloucester's crafty brain lay a scheme in which poor little Roger was to be chief actor, and if he were brought up as a Lollard there would be very little hope of utilising him for it. He must be made the ward of somebody who would diligently cultivate any sparks of ambition latent in his mind, who would give him a bias in favour of his uncle Gloucester personally, and against the King, and who would teach him to hate Lollardism. So the child was consigned to the care of the Earl of Arundel, and to make surety doubly sure, was solemnly affianced to his daughter.

A very clever Jesuit is recorded to have said, "Let me have the education of a child till he is seven years old, and you may have him for the rest of his life." The child thus plotted against had passed the test age. It might have been thought that his ruin was sure. But graven deep down in that fervent heart, below all the digging of Gloucester and his myrmidons, lay the mottoes of Philippa Montacute: and no efforts of theirs would ever efface that graving. "*Un Dieu, un Roy*"—and "*Fais ce que doy*." They were a hedge of God's planting around the tender shoot. He seemed to have said to the enemy, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his moral life."

It was a bitter sorrow to Guenllian that the Earl of Arundel gave her a civil *congé*. He had not the least doubt that she would be invaluable to the younger children: he could not think of depriving them of her. And little Roger would be amply provided with care. The Countess herself would see to him.

Guenllian was not reassured. The Countess was one of those soft, languid, placid, India-rubber women who would lay aside a novel deliberately if they knew that their children were in danger of drowning. She was not fit to bring up Guenllian's darling! She pleaded with the Earl piteously to allow her to remain with the child. She was sure the old Countess would have wished it. The Earl inquired if she had made any actual promise to this effect. In so many words, Guenllian could not say that she had: but that the tacit understanding had existed she knew full well. And she had distinctly promised that Roger should read constantly and diligently in the French Bible. The Earl assured her with an insinuating smile that there was not the least difficulty about that. He had a French Bible, and read it. Just then, Lollardism was walking in silver slippers, and the Bible was ranked among fashionable literature. Guenllian knew well that the reading with and without her would be two very different things. There would be all the difference in them between a living man and an automaton. But she was powerless. The matter was out of her hands. She must let her darling go.

She lifted up her soul as she turned away.

"Lord, they cannot bar Thee out of Arundel Castle! go with this child of many prayers! Teach him Thyself, and then he will be taught: save him, and he will be saved! Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He,—in heaven and in the earth and in the sea, and in all deep places. Let them curse, but bless Thou!"

And so, having touched the hem of Christ's garment, Guenllian went in

peace.

CHAPTER IV. WHAT CAME OF SELF-WILL.

"Are not the worst things that befall us here,
That seem devoid of meaning, or contain
The least of love and beauty, those from which
The heavenly Alchemist extracts the gold
That makes us rich?"

—REV. HORATIUS BONAR.

It was not in the old Castle in Sussex, the ancient home of the Earls of Arundel, that little Roger Mortimer found his home at first. The Earl was about to reside for a time in Town. His city residence, Bermondsey House, was situated on Fish Wharf, near to that delicious part of the City of London now known as Billingsgate. It may be safely asserted that no member of the English peerage would be likely to select this locality in the present day for the site of his town house. But, five hundred years ago, matters were very different, and the banks of the river near London Bridge were pleasant and airy places. This was, in fact, a fashionable part of the City: and here the premier Earl of England held his court, almost rivalling that of the sovereign in costliness and magnificence. Little Roger, for the past year a comparatively lonely child, found himself suddenly transported into the midst of a large and lively family. Liveliness was not, indeed, a characteristic of the Countess, a near relative of Roger, for her father and his grandfather were sons of one mother. She was a calm, imperturbable specimen of humanity, who spoke, moved, and thought, in a slow, self-complacent style, which would have sent an impatient person into a passion.

The Earl was almost the antipodes of his wife. The Fitzalans of Arundel were anything but faultless persons as a rule, but too much slowness and caution were assuredly not among their failings. He was an extremely clever man, gifted with much originality of conception, as well as talent in execution: not unamiable to those whom he loved, but capable of intense harshness, and even cruelty, where he hated. Energetic even to passion in everything which he did, a "whole man" to the one thing at the one moment, capable of seeing very far

into that which he chose to see, but of being totally blind to that which he did not. Richard, Earl of Arundel, was one of the last men to whom such a charge as Roger Mortimer ought to have been entrusted.

The family of this dissimilar pair amounted to five in number when little Roger joined them. These were, Richard, a youth of sixteen years; John, aged fourteen; Elizabeth, aged ten, and already married to Roger's cousin, William de Montacute; Alice, aged five; and Joan, aged three. Both the boys were too old for Roger to feel much sympathy with them, or they with him; while the girls, both as being younger, and as being girls, were in his eyes beneath his notice. He therefore remained a speckled bird in the family, instead of amalgamating with it; a fact which drew him closer, despite all inequalities of position, to the one boy whom he did like, Lawrence Madison, the only one of his old acquaintances who was permitted to accompany him to Bermondsey House. The Earl had meant to cut all the old ties; but little Roger pleaded hard for the retention of Lawrence, alleging truthfully that he played at soldiers with him. It was just because this one item was so utterly insignificant that the Earl permitted it to escape the general doom: and thereby, little as he knew it, rendered inoperative all the rest of his cautionary arrangements. It was Lawrence who helped Roger more than any one else to keep true to his grandmother's early teaching. When Roger went astray, Lawrence either refused aid altogether, or went only so far as he thought right, and then stood like a granite rock, immovable by commands or entreaties. When the former was less obstinate, and more capable of being influenced, the look of earnest remonstrance in Lawrence's eyes or even his disapproving silence, were often enough to turn away the versatile and sensitive mind of Roger from a project of doubtful character. The little servant did not appear to care for hard epithets, passionate words, or even blows, to which naughty Roger sometimes descended when his temper got the better of him: but he did care deeply to see his little master do right and grow wiser. The influence of the young Arundels—which was small, since Roger never liked any of them—was often bad, and always doubtful: but Lawrence could be relied upon as a force ever on the side of right, or at least of that which he believed to be so.

It was Alice, the little girl of five years old, who had been solemnly affianced to young Roger Mortimer. She was the only one of the children who in character resembled her mother, nor was this resemblance perfect. It made her physically idle, and mentally dull; but it did not save her from that moral intensity which was the characteristic of the Arundel family. In her, instead of expending itself in mental and physical energy as it did with most of them, it formed a most unhappy combination with those features inherited from her mother. Passionate with a passion which was weakness and not strength, with an energy which was destructive and not constructive, with a capacity for loving which centred

in herself, and a perversity of will which only served to lead astray, she went to wreck early, a boat with no compass and no rudder. It was well for Roger Mortimer that however men might think to order his future life, God had not destined Alice of Arundel for him.

It is scarcely necessary to say that notwithstanding the unctious wherewith the Earl had expiated to Guenllian on his possession of a French Bible, he did not see the least necessity for bringing Roger in contact with that volume. He had indeed come upon certain passages therein which he theoretically regarded with reverence as "good words," but which he was nevertheless far from elevating into rules for his daily conduct. It never occurred to him that his Bible and his life had anything to do with one another. He would have thought it as reasonable to regulate his diet by the particular clothes he wore, as to guide his actions by that compilation of "excellent matter" upon which he looked as supremely uninteresting and hardly intended for laymen.

About a week had elapsed since Roger became an inmate of the Earl's household. He and Lawrence slept in a small turret chamber, with a young priest, by name Sir Gerard de Stanhope, whom the Earl had appointed governor of his youthful ward. The boys, who went to bed earlier than the governor, very frequently employed the interval before his arrival, not in sleep, but in confidential conversation—the rather since it was the only time of day when they could talk together without fear of being overheard.

"Lolly!" said Roger on the night in question. He lay in a blue silk bed embroidered with red and gold griffins; Lawrence in a little plain trundle-bed which was pushed under the larger one in the day-time.

"My Lord?" obediently responded Lawrence.

"How doth this place like thee?"

"Please it your Lordship, it liketh me reasonable well," answered Lawrence, in a tone even less decisive than the words.

"It liketh me unreasonable ill," returned Roger in a voice wherein no want of decision could be traced.

"What ails you thereat, my Lord?"

"Lolly, I like nobody here but thee."

"That grudgeth me, my Lord." By which Lawrence meant to say that he was sorry to hear it. "Loves not your Lordship neither my Lord nor my Lady?"

"My Lord's a big lion, and they sometimes bite and claw you. And my Lady's a hen, and all she cares for is to snuggle her in the sand and cluck. Beside, she's a woman, and women be no good. I would there had been some lads."

"So there be, saving your Lordship's pleasure."

"They aren't lads, they are men. My Lord Richard were not so ill, if he were younger, but he is a grown man: and as to my Lord John, he doth nought

but make mowes[#] at me. I tell thee, Lolly, there is nobody here, out-taken[#] thyself, that I would buy for a farthing.”

[#] Grimaces.

[#] Except.

”Truly, I am sorry your Lordship is of such ill cheer.”

”Lolly, what was it—didst hear?—that my Lord spake to Sir Gerard, mighty low, when thou and I were going forth of the chamber this morrow?”

”I heard not all of it,” said Lawrence. ”Only it was somewhat touching Mistress Wenteline, that had desired your Lordship to be well learned in the French Bible.”

”Doth he look to cause me learn long tasks thereout by heart?” asked Roger, with a wry face. ”I reckoned thou shouldst hear, for thou wert nearer than I.”

”In no wise, my Lord, so far as I might hear, for he bade Sir Gerard have a care you touched it not.”

”Then I’ll read it right through!” cried Roger with childish perversity. ”That cannot be an ill deed, for my Lady my grandmother was set to have me do the same.”

Lawrence made no reply.

Though nothing on earth would have drawn the confession from him, yet for all his expressed contempt for women, little Roger sorely missed Guenllian. She had been his virtual mother for so long that, suddenly deprived of her, he felt like a chicken roughly taken from under the brooding wings of the hen. He was far more inclined to respect her wishes than he would have been had she remained with him: and there was also a certain zest added by the instinctive knowledge that what was good in the eyes of Guenllian was not unlikely to be bad in those of my Lord Arundel. Little Roger felt as if he had the pleasure of doing wrong, without the conscientious reaction which usually followed.

The impulsive little mind was made up that he would read that French Bible. That it was locked up in a tall press, at least four feet above his reach, was rather an additional incentive than a hindrance. To be always on the watch for a possible leaving about of the keys formed an object in life; and the subsequent scaling of the shelves like a cat was decidedly a pleasure to be anticipated. The keys were in charge of Sir Gerard, who was the Earl’s librarian; and he put them every night beneath his pillow. He need not have taken the precaution, so far as Roger was concerned; for to possess himself of the keys by theft would have

been utterly dishonourable and unchivalrous in the eyes of the future knight. Yet with odd inconsistency—are we not all guilty of that at times?—he had no such scruple as to possessing himself of the Bible, if he could only find the keys. But weeks went on, and this hoped-for discovery had not been made.

It came suddenly at last, when one morning the Earl had occasion to send for Sir Gerard in haste, at a moment when that gentleman, having just finished his dressing, was about to put the usual contents into his pockets. He left the articles lying on the table, and hurriedly obeyed the summons: which he had no sooner done than the small Earl of March pounced upon the keys. He had been watching the process with considerable fluttering of his little heart; the next moment the key of the press was slipped off the ring, and was safe at the bottom of his pocket. Lawrence looked on with very doubtful eyes, the expression of which was easily read by Roger.

"Now, Loll, hold thy peace!" said he, though Lawrence had not uttered a word. "I must have it, and I will!"

It will easily be surmised that Roger's ambition involved no particular desire of learning, least of all the study of divinity. The delight of outwitting the Earl and Sir Gerard was great; and the pleasure of doing something that Guenlian and his grandmother had wished him to do, deprived the action of all wrong in his eyes, and added to it a sentimental zest. Had the two motives been weighed in a balance, the first would have proved the heavier.

The press containing the Bible stood in a large room which opened off the hall. The expedition to secure it must remain a future gratification for the present. If only Sir Gerard would not miss the key! Was it safe to carry it in Roger's pocket? Roger consulted Lawrence, who agreed with him that it was a serious risk to run. He advised its restoration, but to that hypothesis his young master would not listen for a moment.

The study of the garden wall now became sensationally interesting; likewise of sundry old trees within the enclosure. The alternatives seemed to have equal chances of adoption, when a little hole was discovered in the wall, at the further end of the garden, delightfully hidden by a small loose stone which just fitted nicely into the crevice. The key was safely concealed, and Roger, with the most angelic innocence of face, returned to the house to repeat his Latin lesson to Sir Gerard.

Roger had been taught that to hide any thing from his confessor was a sin of the most deadly type. Conveniently for him, his confessor was not his tutor Sir Gerard, but the Earl's family chaplain, Friar Thomas Ashbourne, a fat sleepy old priest, who never inflicted a penance that he could help, and was more frequently than not employed in mental wool-gathering during the process of confession, merely waking up to pronounce the absolution at the close. It was

not at all difficult to get on the blind side of this comfortable official, especially if a morning could be selected when his thoughts were likely to be preoccupied with some subject interesting to himself.

Roger, having a very good idea what interested Dan Thomas, laid a trap to catch him for the next occasion of shrift. In order to do this, he had first to catch the cook: and for that purpose, he must angle with the master of the household, who happily for his object was a good-natured man, and liked children. Running through a gallery with the hope of discovering him, he nearly fell over the person for whom he was searching.

"Nay, now! what make you here, my Lord?"

"O Master Wynkfeld! I was a-looking for you. Pray you, let us have a capon endored[#] this even for supper, with *sauce Madame*."

[#] Larded.

The master of the household laughed. "At your Lordship's pleasure. I wist not you loved capon so dear."

Nor did he: but Dan Thomas did. Little Roger stood on tiptoe, and pulled down the master to whisper in his ear.

"Look you, Dan Thomas loveth a capon thus dressed, and I would have him do a thing for me that I wot of."

"Oho! is that it?" laughed the master. "Then be your Lordship assured Dan Thomas shall have the capon."

"With *sauce Madame*, look you!"

"With *sauce Madame*: good."

"But don't you tell!"

"Tell! Not I," responded the amused and good-humoured master: and little Roger scampered off.

An hour later, my Lord of March was summoned to be shriven. Having knelt down in the confessional, and gabbled over the formal prelude to the effect that he confessed his sins, not only to God, but to the most blessed Lady St. Mary, to my Lord St. John the Baptist, my Lords Saints Peter and Paul, and all the saints and saintesses in Heaven, little Roger added at the conclusion, all in a breath, as if it were part of the *Confiteor*,—

"Father, I begged Master Wynkfeld to have for supper a capon endored, with *sauce Madame*, by reason I knew you loved it thus."

"That shall scantily be amongst thy sins, my son," answered Friar Thomas, jovially. "I thank thee: but keep thee now to the matter in hand."

Roger was doing that much more strictly than was ever supposed by Friar Thomas, who was the most unsuspecting of men. He proceeded at once to the catalogue of his sins, satisfied that they would now receive small attention from the confessor. In silence, with as much rapidity and in as low a voice as he dared without exciting suspicion, Roger accused himself of having taken a key from the table and hidden it in the wall. What key it was, he was not careful to state; if the confessor wished to know that, he could ask him the question. But at this point Roger's heart gave a bound, for he was asked a question.

"Thou hiddest *what* in the wall?"

"A key," mumbled Roger.

"A pea!" repeated the Friar, misunderstanding him, and not having much care to investigate. "No need to confess such like small matter, my son. Didst thou name *sauce Madame* to Master Winkfeld?"

"Oh yes, Father, twice over!" answered Roger eagerly.

"Good lad. Now keep thee to thy confession."

Which Roger diligently did for the rest of the time, and then, absolved and "clean shriven," ran back to Lawrence in the highest glee.

"Now, Lolly, my sins be all clean gone. Go thou to shrift, and get rid of thine; and then, as soon as ever we can, we'll have yon big book."

It was about a week later that the desired opportunity at last occurred. The Earl had carried away Sir Gerard—for what purpose Roger neither knew nor cared—and he and Lawrence had been bidden to play in the press-chamber, and be good boys till they were called to supper. No sooner were they safely shut in than Roger indulged in a gleeful chuckle.

"Look, Lolly!" said he, holding up the key. "I heard my Lord say to my Lady that he should not be home ere supper-time, and I thought we might have luck, so I ran and fetched the key. Now for it! Set me that settle under the press."

"But your Lordship cannot climb up yonder!" responded Lawrence, as he obeyed.

"I can do what I will!" said Roger stubbornly. "Nay, but look how the press boweth outward! How shall you pass the same?"

The press, which was itself of wood, was built into the wall, in such a manner that the upper half projected further than the lower.

"Dost think a wooden press shall master *me*? I'll show him I'm his master!"

Roger sprang upon the settle, set one foot upon a carved boss, and climbed up with sufficient agility till he was stopped by the projection. No efforts could get him any higher. He returned to the settle, looking considerably discomfited.

"I'll have it yet!" said he. "See, Lolly—if I could catch yonder great brass rod that sticketh out, I am sicker[#] I could climb up by that I shall jump for it."

[#] Certain.

"Eh, good lack! do not so, my Lord! you shall hurt yourself greatly, if you have not a care."

"Thou go whistle for a fair wind! Here goes!" And little Roger, gathering all his forces, gave a wild upward leap from the settle, intent on catching the brass rod which was part of the ornamentation of the press, and was not very firmly fixed. To Lawrence's surprise, he caught it; but the next moment the end of the rod came out in his hand, and the natural result followed. Down came the rod, and down came Roger, overturning the settle, and bringing his head into violent contact with the floor. There he lay stunned, with Lawrence looking at him in a terrible fright.

"Gramercy, what a to-do is here!" said the voice of Master Salveyn at the door. "Were ye not bidden be good lads till!— Mercy, Saint Mary! my Lord bleeds! How happened this?"

Lawrence tremblingly replied that he had been climbing, and had fallen. His own nerves had received a much worse shock than those of Salveyn.

"Good lack, will lads ever be out of mischief?" demanded that gentleman. "Shut them up in a chamber where you should think none ill could hap them short of earth-moving,[#] and ere you shall well have turned your back, they shall be killing either themselves or one another! Run thou to call Mistress Grenestede, while I bear my young Lord to his chamber."

[#] Earthquake.

Lawrence rushed off for the middle-aged and useful person in question, the children's nurse, governess, prescriber, chemist, confectioner, and general factotum: and in a few minutes Roger was laid in bed, and Mistress Grenestede was bathing his injured head with warm water. She improved the occasion by giving a lecture to Lawrence—who did not need it—on imprudence and rashness. But when time went on, and her little patient did not return to consciousness, Mistress Grenestede began to look uneasy. A whispered consultation with Salveyn resulted in the sending of a varlet on some errand. Another half-hour elapsed without change, and then Lawrence, standing beside his master's bed, half hidden by the curtain, heard somebody say, "He is come." A step forward to enable him to see who it was, and a smothered exclamation of pleasure broke from him. Master Salveyn was ushering in a priest in long black robe—all physicians were priests

at that date—and though the new-comer failed to recognise Lawrence, the boy knew him.

”Father Robesart! God be thanked!”

The priest heard him, and turned towards him.

”Who art thou, my son?”

Lawrence’s delight overcame his shyness.

”Father Robesart, wit you not me? I am Lawrence, son of Nicholas, tanner, in the huts at Usk, that went away these two years gone. I bade you farewell in the church aisle, and you blessed me, and told me I should pass word to you never to go any whither that I had not first asked our Lord to be with me.”

”Good, my son. I remember thee now, and will have more talk with thee anon. Now let me look on the sick child. Is it my little Lord of March?”

”That is he, good Father.”

”How gat he this hurt?”

Mistress Grenestede and Master Salveyn knew so little about it that Lawrence was called forward to say what he knew. His instinct told him that it would be best to confess the whole truth to Father Robesart, which he did, thereby calling up a look on the face of his old friend which was a mixture of amusement and pity.

”Poor child!” he said softly, when Lawrence’s story was told,—rather astonishing Mistress Grenestede, that one of the first nobles in England should be thought or called a poor child.

”Please it you, Father, did my Lord a wrong thing herein?” asked Lawrence, timidly.

”I fear he did, my son.”

Mr. Robesart said no more, but proceeded to his professional duties. When he had finished his examination of the patient, and had given his instructions to Mistress Grenestede—which involved some learned references to the occultation of certain beneficent planets by malevolent ones, and hints that the herbs prescribed were to be gathered with reference to the position of the sun with respect to the Zodiac—he called Lawrence out into the ante-chamber.

CHAPTER V. A CHANGE IN ROGER’S DESTINY.

”We shall be together, my Lord and I,

While the crowds around us come and go;
 When false hearts wander, and true hearts die,
 My Friend will still be mine own, I know."
 —SARAH DOUDNEY.

On the wide cushioned seat in the window, Mr. Robesart sat down, and Lawrence placed himself in front, waiting to be questioned. He had to wait in silence for a few moments, while the priest seemed lost in thought; then he turned back to the child.

"Now, my son, I would have some talk with thee. I am faint to find thou hast thought on my words at parting. Hast thou done them, Lawrence Madison?"

"Mean you, Father, if I have asked at our Lord that He would go with me whithersoever I went?"

"That mean I, my son."

"Aye, nearly alway, Father," said Lawrence, lifting a pair of honest eyes to his friend's face, and adding more shyly, "I forgot sometimes."

"Good lad! Take thou God's blessing and mine"—and Mr. Robesart laid his hand on the boy's head. "Hath He been with thee, Lawrence?"

Lawrence looked up in some surprise. Mr. Robesart's question suggested two entirely new ideas: that prayers might have some result attached to them, and that the presence of God was something which he could know and feel. Hitherto he had always looked upon praying as something which had to be done—a good work, and the saying of good words—but a work which had no possible connection with any source or consequence. As a child once said, Lawrence "had plenty of think in him," but he sadly wanted teaching how to put his thoughts to practical purpose. The thoughts now came so fast that the words were slow. Mr. Robesart was wise, and waited for them. How many priceless opportunities have been thrown away, through not waiting quite long enough at such moments! For one temptation to be silent when we ought to speak, are there not a score to speak when we ought to be silent?

"Father! How can I know?" came at last.

"If He never went with thee, thou canst not know," was the pithy answer. "That which one hath not, how can he lose or miss?"

Lawrence was silent, playing with one of the bright buttons of his tunic in a style which indicated that his thoughts were not on the button.

"There is one manner, my son," then continued the priest, "wherein God goeth with all men—in His providence as their Creator and Preserver. Were He not ever with thee after this fashion, thou wouldst not live a moment. But it is after another manner that he goeth with His beloved—as their Father and Friend.

Is He that to thee?"

"There be different sorts of fathers," said Lawrence, meditatively.

"Aye. Alas for the human fathers that do misturn[#] the heavenly Father! It is only the good, true, and loving, my child, that be in their lesser way like God."

[#] Pervert, misrepresent.

"Like my sometime Lord was to him?" said Lawrence, with brightening eyes, and a nod towards the door of the inner chamber.

Mr. Robesart smiled a little sadly. "Aye, Lawrence. Take thou for example the best and truest thou hast known, but remember that he must needs fall far behind."

Lawrence went back to the button, uttering his thoughts in a low voice, as if he spoke to it rather than to the priest.

"He alway loved to have my little Lord at his knee," he reflected in this manner. "And he used to lift him up, and kiss him. And if he were in any trouble, my Lord would stay and hear him, even were it to his own travail. And had he been hither this morrow, I reckon it should have gone nigh to break his heart to see him thus.—Father Robesart! Doth God Almighty care for any man like *that*?"

"He cares like that for thee, Lawrence Madison."

Mr. Robesart paused an instant, and Lawrence thought the sentence was finished. But it was not, for one word followed it. "If—"

"If what?" said the boy quickly.

"If thou wilt have it so."

"If I will have it! Father Robesart, never nobody loved me! Never, in all my life!"

"Then see thou reject not the love which passeth all loves."

"What am I to do?"

"What doth any with love? Take it—enjoy it—return it—do thy little best for Him that giveth it."

"But serve him, *how*?" It sounded to Lawrence like telling a serf child lying in the mire to rise and offer the golden cup to a king. Would the great nobles around the throne ever permit him to approach it? A dim idea pervaded his brain that Father Robesart, as a priest, could give him a passport through the ranks of the angels. But the answer brought him back to earth again.

"My son, thou servest God when thou servest any whom God loveth."

"Doth God love my Lord? I suppose He will, being thus noble."

"Not many noble are called," said Mr. Robesart, speaking rather to himself than to Lawrence. "Yet 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.' Aye, little Lawrence, I cannot doubt it. God teach thee, poor child, better than I can! Remember, my son, that thou servest not God in following thy little Lord into sin and mischief. Thou wilt serve God by keeping him out thereof."

"My Lord bade me so keep him—my Lord of March, I would say, not he of Arundel. I misdoubt if he care."

"Poor children!" repeated the priest sorrowfully. "Tell me, Lawrence, what would thy little Lord with the Bible?"

"Was it wrong to get that, Father?"

"Assuredly it was wrong to steal the key."

"O Father, we never stole it! We only took it when Sir Gerard left it behind him."

Mr. Robesart smiled and shook his head. "Ye stole it, my son. What is it but stealing to take a thing which he that ought[#] it would not yield unto you? But what wanted my Lord with the book?"

[#] Owned.

"Please, Father, he desired much to read the same, and my old Lady his grandmother had bidden him so to do. And he heard—leastwise I heard, and he asked at me—my Lord of Arundel once to say that he would not have him lay finger thereon; so he was set on it."

Another very pitying smile parted the lips of Mr. Robesart. "I marvel whether the bidding or the forbidding were the more tempting bait! Poor little child!"

"Please, Father—"

"Speak thy will, my son."

"Will my Lord get well again?"

"I trust, if it be our Lord's pleasure, he shall do well, my son."

"Oh, I am so glad!" And Lawrence's sparkling eyes by no means belied his words.

"Dost thou love thy little Lord, Lawrence?"

"Aye, Father—so much! Please, there never was any body else but him and Beattie." Lawrence was very near adding, "and you." A feeling of reverence restrained him, but he might have done it safely.

"Who is Beattie?"

"Blumond's Beattie—at the fishmonger's at Usk."

"Oh! I know. A good child."

"May I love Beattie, please, Father?"

"Thou mayest love who so thou wilt, and as much as ever thou wilt, so long as thou lovest our Lord first and most."

"Whoever I will?"

"Certainly. Who dost thou think too great to be loved?"

"Not great, exactly; but—Father Robesart, might I love you? I never thought I dare, before."

Mr. Robesart was more touched than he thought it well to let Lawrence see. But he did what nobody had ever done to the boy in all his life—he stooped and kissed him. It was an affirmative of the strongest type, and Lawrence felt it so.

Roger's recovery was more rapid than any one about him had anticipated. His body seemed as active and as easily impressed as his mind, as much subject to ups and downs, and generally either on the top of the mount, or in the bottom of the valley: the transition was quick from one to the other, and he was never in either position for long.

Three years more passed uneventfully, until Roger and Lawrence were boys of twelve years old. Both had developed their respective characters. Roger was beginning to see that the lesson-books which he had in old days unreasonably detested, were machines for imparting knowledge and power. If he were only a little older, his own master, and out in the world, what could he not do! The change in his case was more or less radical, for he was learning to govern himself. He had drawn no closer to the Arundel family. He disliked them every one—from the Earl to his youngest child: but most especially he disliked Alice, his betrothed. When he grew to manhood he would pay the fine, and rid himself of that galling bond. He did not care for girls: he wanted to feel free.

The change which had taken place in Lawrence Madison was only in the direction of growth. The fetters of service and etiquette pressed lightly upon him, for he loved his young Lord more than he had ever loved his own brothers; and love makes fetters sit easily. Lawrence did not care for power, as Roger did: but for knowledge his thirst was insatiable. And above all he longed for the knowledge of God—for the realisation of that Presence of which the priest had spoken to him. Like a flower shooting in the spring-time, he kept his face ever towards the light, hoping to reach it some day. Sir Gerard said he was not like a boy. Master Salveyn opined that the lad had a bee in his hood. Mistress Grenestede shook her head with an assumption of superior wisdom, and murmured that such lads as Lawrence Madison died early.

Outside, matters went quietly enough so far as the boys were concerned, till on the third of April, 1383, shortly after the birth of her daughter Margaret, the

Countess of Arundel died. Little care as she had taken of them, yet the children felt a blank when she was gone.

Not many weeks after the death of the Countess, when the early roses were just beginning to bud, Mistress Grenestede came into the room where the children were studying under Sir Gerard, in a state of some excitement.

"Give you good den,[#] Sir Gerard! Here is somewhat befallen one of your chicks, for sure!"

[#] Day.

"Take me with you,[#] good Mistress?"

[#] Explain yourself.

"Why, 'tis him," said the ungrammatical lady, nodding towards Roger. "Who but my Lady Princess hath sent for to have him to come and speak with her?"

At this date, there was in the kingdom but one Princess. The daughters of the monarch did not bear that title until the accession of the House of Stuart. "My Lady Princess," therefore, meant Joan of Kent, widow of the Black Prince, and mother of King Richard. She had been in her early youth a very giddy girl, and had sobered down in later life, under the instrumentality of Wycliffe, into the chief nursing mother of the Lollard Church. Her influence with her royal son was powerful, and she was one of the three practical rulers of England at this juncture. For the Princess to send for Roger might therefore mean something of greater import than a mere impulse of kindness from a lady to a child.

"Is that sooth?"[#] demanded Sir Gerard, almost as excited as Mistress Grenestede.

[#] Truth.

"True as truth, I do ensure you. What shall hap of it, think you?"

"Dear heart, who wist? Shall it be now?"

"Nay, time enough. To-morrow. My Lord bade me don him in his best array, and at eight o' the clock Sir Lewis Clifford shall come for him."

"Who for?" demanded Roger, quite as ungrammatically, and looking up with an eager expression in his eyes.

"Lo' you now, if he be not a-hearkening!—Why, for you, fair Lord. At eight o' the clock to-morrow."

"Who cometh for me?"

"Sir Lewis de Clifford, Knight of the Body to my Lady Princess. Now hark you, sweet Lord; I trust you shall be of gentle conditions—not too masterful, nor yet abashed,[#] but with good manners. 'Tis a great thing for a young gentleman like you to be sent for to my Lady the Princess."

[#] Frightened, nervous.

"She's only a woman!" said Roger, trying to hit the inkstand with a paper pellet. "Why did the King not send for me himself?"

"Good lack, sweet Lord, but you must never be thus masterful! The King, quotha!"

"The King doth what he will," said Sir Gerard, reprovingly.

"I would, if I were king," responded Roger, aiming another pellet at the inkstand.

"Love us, all the saints!" ejaculated Mistress Grenestede.

"The cockerel crows well, trow?" said Sir Gerard with a laugh. "Look you, good Mistress, he hath the Blood in him. 'Tis no wonder. But have a care, my good Lord, that you use not over much homeliness[#] toward my Lady Princess."

[#] Do not be too familiar.

"What would she with me?"

"Nay, who wist? Carry yourself well and seemly, and you shall see."

"Shall Lolly go with me?"

Mistress Grenestede was about to exclaim, "Nay, for sure!" but she stopped and looked at Sir Gerard.

"His Lordship were better have an elder serving-man," answered the tutor.

"If Lolly must not go, I won't be good!"

"Heard any ever the like!"

"Then my Lord must needs send word by Sir Lewis that your Lordship is so naughty a lad, you be not fit to go speak with my Lady's Grace?"

Sir Gerard calculated rightly that this consideration would have some weight. Roger was sensitive to the opinions of other people, and particularly of those much above him in rank.

"I don't see why Lolly could not go!" said he with a pout.

"We shall see," said the tutor. "Perchance, if your Lordship order yourself after his will, my Lord may give leave that you shall choose whom you list."

The Earl, on being appealed to, carelessly replied that Roger might take the man in the moon, if he wished it, provided he were fittingly attired. Roger, who had got over his pet—indeed, his pets were less frequent than they used to be—submitted with nothing more than a little impatience to the tedious ceremony of his own arraying. Mistress Grenestede was very particular, for she desired Roger to make a good impression on the Princess, upon whom she looked with very different eyes from his. When the young Earl's attiring was over, he found himself in a long robe of apple-green satin, edged with cloth of gold, ruby-coloured hose, over which the garter was clasped, and a cap adorned with a very full, long plume of white feathers. His shoes were slate-coloured, with a red diamond pattern. Gold buttons ran all down his sleeves: a rich golden girdle, set with gems, clasped his waist; a golden collar, with diamonds and rubies, was round his neck; and, in compliment to the Princess, her badge of the white hart gorged and couchant was suspended at his breast from a rich gold chain. Thus splendidly arrayed, Roger marched into the hall, where three persons awaited him, clad in his own livery, blue and gold, guarded with white. These were two squires and Lawrence. With considerable impatience the young Earl sat on the form awaiting Sir Lewis Clifford, who was punctual to his time, though Roger could hardly believe it. The party then mounted their horses, and rode away to Kennington Palace, where the Princess was at that time.

Kennington Palace was then in a neighbourhood at least as rural as Hampton Court is now. Sir Lewis led his youthful charge, followed by the attendants, into a pleasant chamber hung with yellow say and panelled with cedar. Here were two ladies and a gentleman—the former seated at work, the latter standing in the window. Sir Lewis, leading Roger up to one of the ladies, dropped on one knee to say—

"Here is the young Lord of March, to wait on my Lady's Grace."

[image]

"Here is the young Lord of March, to wait on my Lady's Grace."

With some curiosity Roger looked up, and saw a short, smiling, exceed-

ingly fat woman, clad in a crimson damask dress embroidered with rings of gold. Threads of silver were mingled with her golden hair, and the remains of what had been extreme beauty could be traced in her countenance.

"Come hither, little Cousin," said the Princess affably, smiling all over her plump face. "Of a truth, I am right glad to see thee. I can go visit none now, for I am so fat I may scarce mount mine horse. Didst ever behold a woman fatter than I?"

Roger's head squire, who had been spending considerable pains in coaching him for this interview, was horrified to hear him reply with charming candour—

"No, Dame; that did I never."

"Why, thou sayest well!" laughed the Princess, evidently not in the least offended. "Always speak truth, fair Cousin."

"So do I," answered Roger rather proudly. "My Lady my grandmother told me ever so to do; and she learned me two sayings by the which I should rule me, and I so will. Under your pleasure, Dame," he added in an instant, with a sudden recollection of the squire's instructions and those of Sir Gerard.

"Come, tell me what they were!" responded the Princess, coaxingly. "Thou lovest my Lady thy grandmother, that can I see."

"Well, I did, middling, Dame," said Roger, coolly. "Howbeit she were only a woman."

The squire was ready to sink into the earth, till he was relieved by the Princess leaning back in her gilded chair with a burst of the heartiest laughter.

"Gramercy, little Cousin, but thou art right covenable! [#] I see, we shall be good friends. But I desire thy two sayings. Tell me the same."

[#] Agreeable, amusing.

Roger repeated them rather proudly.

"*'Fais ce que doy, advienne que pourra: 'Un and Dieu, un Roy, servir je doy.*"

"And dost mean to rule thee by them?" asked the Princess, still smiling.

"That do I, Dame. I will serve God and the King to my power, but none other."

"He will do, trow?" said the Princess, looking up at somebody whom Roger had not previously noticed. His eyes followed hers, and he saw standing on her right hand a young man of eighteen, clad in a tunic of black baldekyn, figured with red balls and purplish-gray flowers. Above it was a white tippet; the sleeves were red, with gold cuffs; and he wore yellow shoes with a red pattern. [#] He was of short stature and slight figure: his complexion was of feminine fairness,

his hair flaxen tinged with gold, his eyes blue and dove-like. So great was his soft and pathetic beauty, that artists selected his face as the model for "that Face which now outshines the cherubim."

[#] This is King Richard's costume in the Golden Book of St. Albans.

Something in the face won Roger's heart. What it was he did not know himself. It was, in truth, a vague remembrance of that fair young mother who had passed away from him so early, and a likeness to whom he detected without recognising it, in the face before him. An affectionate smile from the royal cousin completed his conquest of the heart of Roger Mortimer.

"He will do, in very truth," said the King, answering his mother first: then he turned to Roger. "Be right welcome, fair Cousin: I trust to see more of you in time coming."

"Sir," asked Roger, looking up, "be you Lord Richard the King?"

"Even so, fair Cousin. What can I do to pleasure you?"

Natures like those of Roger Mortimer are always capable of intense hero-worship. And Roger had found his hero. He dropped on one knee without any prompting.

"Then, Sire, I will live and die with you!"

The King unfastened from his chain of rubies a golden broom-pod wrought with green enamel. It was one of his own badges.

"Then shalt thou be mine own man, by thy covenant," said he, smiling, and attaching the badge to Roger's gold chain: "and thereto is my token."

"Why, well said!" interpolated the Princess, who seemed unable to keep silence long. "Come hither, little Cousin—here, set a stool for my Lord of March,—and tell me how it liketh thee to dwell with my Lord of Arundel."

"Not in no wise, Dame," answered Roger, boldly.

"Not in no wise, quotha! Why what ails thee at him?"

"I love him not, Dame, nor he me."

"Dear heart, here is a pity! But thou lovest my Lady Alice, trow?—though she be but a woman." The Princess's fat shoulders shook with laughter.

"Our young cousin's chivalry is scarce fledged, methinks," said the King.

"If you will learn me, Sire, I will do your bidding," said Roger, who did not know what bashfulness was. "My Lady Alice, said your Grace? Good lack, but I cannot abear her!"

"Cannot bear her, quotha! Nay, now, she is to be thy wife!"

"My Lord the King's command except, that shall she never!" said Roger

sturdily.

"See you, fair Son?" was the Princess's comment, with a glance at the King. "And wouldst thou be much aggrieved, little Cousin, if thou wert to depart thence, and to dwell in another household, where thou shouldst have jolly lads and lasses to pleasure and couldst see the King thy cousin well-nigh thee, every day?"

Roger's eyes shone with delight.

"Please it you, Dame, that should like me right well. Howbeit, I hope there should be more lads than lasses."

The Princess indulged in another hilarious convulsion.

"Thy time will come, lad!" said she, when she was able to speak. "Till it do, thou canst lake thee with Tom, which is scarce the younger of thee.—It shall do right well, fair Son: and I pray you heartily to set the matter in train."

"Aye, methinks it were well done," answered the King.

But neither of them explained what was to be done, though Roger's curiosity was intense. Manifestly, he was to be taken from the Earl of Arundel, and given in wardship to some other nobleman. That was a delightful prospect. If he could only be rid of Alice as well, Roger thought he would be in Paradise. And the King had offered him a favour. Roger turned boldly to His Majesty.

"Sire, your Grace said you would pleasure me. Pray you, have me rid of yon Alice. I love no maids, and her least of all."

Once more the Princess burst out laughing. The King looked quietly amused.

"Is that the dearest wish of your heart, fair Cousin?"

"It is so, at this present, my Liege."

"He shall have a dearer anon, or I am no prophetess," exclaimed the convulsed Princess.

"Maybe," said the King. "Well, fair Cousin, we will pleasure you in this matter,—the rather seeing"—and he turned to his mother with a smile—"that it shall pleasure your Grace as well."

At this moment a slight noise outside preceded a scratching at the door, a lifting of the arras, and the announcement of—"My Lady's Grace of Lancaster."

The royal hosts took leave of their little guest rather hastily, yet very kindly, and thus dismissed, Roger was reconducted to Bermondsey House by Sir Lewis Clifford.

There was a good deal to talk over when Roger and Lawrence were safely tucked up in their respective beds.

"I say, Loll!" came from the big blue bed, "this is jolly!"

"I am glad your Lordship is well content therewith," was the response in the quieter voice from the pallet.

"I am so fain to get rid of yon Alice!" said unchivalrous Roger. "And I am

right fain, too, to be out of this dull house. Who is Tom, I marvel, that she said I could lake me withal? Metrusteth he is a lad of some mettle, and not a dull lump of stuff like yon Jack Arundel. I would, though, he had been something elder than me in the stead of younger. I love not laking with children."

Master Roger was beginning to consider himself above the degradation of childhood. Lawrence contented himself with replying that he trusted his Lordship might find matters as should be to his satisfaction.

"Where shall it be, Loll, thinkest? I would it might be in the Palace! Aye, and said she not that I should see the King my cousin well-nigh every morrow? I would like that best of all. I could die for him, Lolly!—and shall some day, I cast no doubt."

Lawrence's reply was merely a respectful intimation that he was listening. He was quite as ready as Roger to die for one whom he might love, but not by any means so ready to talk about it.

"O Lolly, I could jump up to the moon, 'tis so jolly!" and Roger executed a *pas seul* outside his bedclothes. "But I say!—I hope they shall 'noy me with no more maids! Why can folk not leave a man be, I would fain wit?" demanded his Lordship, loftily, lying down again, and drawing the satin coverlet over him, by no means tidily. "I would in very sooth I were but a bit bigger! Howbeit, I reckon we shall grow. And then, Loll, thou shalt be mine own especial knight, and shalt bear mine arms, and fight right behind me."

"I thank your good Lordship," said Lawrence dutifully, though the prospect of fighting, whether before or behind his master, was not particularly enlivening to his mind. Could Lawrence have chosen his lot, there would have been no fighting in it.

"I reckon we shall see," went on Roger, not quite in so lively a tone. "But it shall be right jolly—any how. And I do not—I should not——"

Roger was asleep.

CHAPTER VI. FAIR AND FICKLE.

"Wel were hym that wyste
To whom he mytte tryste;
Beter were hym that knewe
The falsè fro the trewe."

—OLD POEM OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

The hidden intentions of the Princess were very soon revealed. Roger and his suite were transferred from Bermondsey House to Woking Manor, the seat of Thomas, Earl of Kent, the eldest son of the Princess, and half-brother of the King. The Countess of Kent was a sister of the Earl of Arundel, but of a quieter and less decided character than most of her family. Her children, in whom Roger felt more interest than in herself, were six in number, exclusive of two boys who had died in the cradle. They were Alianora, aged fourteen; Thomas, aged twelve; Anne, aged six; Edmund, aged three; Joan, aged two; and Margaret, an infant. The eldest boy was of course the Tom to whom the Princess had alluded. He was present when Roger was introduced to the Countess, and Roger was gratified to discover that Tom, though by a few months the younger, was taller than himself. All the Holands of Kent were tall, fully developed, of very fair complexion, and exceedingly handsome. But Roger's eyes had not reached beyond Tom, when they lighted on some one else who was entering the room, and from that moment he had eyes for no other.

If it be true, as it has been said, that the metaphorical gentleman termed Cupid usually takes the severest vengeance on those who despise his power, he must have been in that mind with regard to Roger Mortimer. One instantaneous glance proved sufficient to awaken in the bosom of Roger, who hated and despised all girls, a fervent boyish passion which reached down to his heart's core, and never left him until his life's end.

The girl of whom the sight proved thus potent was the Lady Alianora de Holand, eldest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Kent. Though only fourteen, she was so tall and stately that she had a grown-up aspect. She stood, when Roger saw her, just in the doorway, her arms full of flowers which she had been gathering in the garden, and her abundant fair hair falling about her like a golden glory. Her little brother Edmund had pulled it down in play; and had she known of the existence of visitors in the hall, the Lady Alianora, who was quite old enough to be particular about her personal appearance, would never have presented herself before them in this dishevelled guise. She stopped, blushed, and hastily dropping her flowers on the nearest form, fled to her chamber to make herself presentable,—leaving on Roger's mind an impression of angelic loveliness.

No such impression was conveyed to Lawrence Madison. Roger, who was in an exalted mood which disposed him, knight-errant-like, to insist upon all beholders' instantaneous acknowledgment of the pre-eminence of the lady of his heart, was quite put out by the cool, indifferent tone in which Lawrence assented to his rapturous comments on the beauty of the Lady Alianora. Accustomed as

he was to sudden changes in his impulsive master, yet this one took Lawrence by surprise. He had not expected Roger to alter in that direction. Love, to him, was not a blow to be struck all at once, but a plant to ripen by degrees. The sudden and absorbing passion which had taken possession of Roger's heart by assault, was not merely unexpected to Lawrence; it was incomprehensible.

The transfer of Roger from the care of the Earl of Arundel to that of the Earl of Kent was marked by one peculiarity very unusual at the time. It was purely a personal transfer, and did not include any change with regard to the administration of the estates, which were still left in the hands of Arundel, except that the Earls of Warwick and Northumberland were joined with him in the guardianship. The care of the heir and of the estate so generally went together as to rouse the suspicion in this case that the severance was a fresh clever move on the part of the Princess. To leave the estate in the enemy's hands might be intended as a hidden purchase of his acquiescence in the transfer of the boy. It was a sacrifice of the casket to secure the safety of the gem. Perhaps the Princess was also sagacious enough to divine that—as it turned out—there would be no sacrifice in the matter. Arundel proved in this case an honourable man, and administered the estates well, resigning them without difficulty into Roger's hands when he was called upon to do so.

Between Roger and Thomas, eternal friendship was sworn without delay. Their characters were somewhat alike, save that Roger was slightly the more impulsive, and considerably the more self-willed. The younger children were in Roger's eyes quite beneath his contempt.

There was one point of the matter in respect to which Lawrence was by no means indifferent. The style in which the Lady Alianora behaved to her youthful admirer enraged him beyond words. The beautiful girl was a born coquette. And she treated Roger to every variety of behaviour suggested by that despicable type of character. One day she would lift him up to the heights of ecstasy with her notice and favour, and on the next would plunge him into the lowest depths of despair. It appeared to delight her to play with his feelings like a cat with a mouse. That she had any of her own Lawrence could not discover. But as time went on, and they grew older, and the sentimental adoration of the boy, instead of fading away, blossomed into the solid and enduring love of the man, the sensation of aversion on Lawrence's part became stronger than ever. He would never have used Roger as she did, had he been in her place.

Roger appeared not to perceive this blemish in his chosen idol. All that she chose to do was perfection in his eyes.

It may perhaps strike the reader as hardly possible that a boy of Roger's age could have entertained such feelings. But we have abundant evidence that our fathers, five hundred years ago, grew up much earlier than we do—probably in

part from the shorter average duration of human life, and in part from the forcing nature of the life they led. A boy of twelve, in 1385, had attained a period of life equivalent to that of a youth of at least sixteen in the present day.

If it could have been whispered to Roger Mortimer that he was flinging away his true and faithful heart upon a worthless weed, while there were modest violets to be found under the leaves—that he was bartering his priceless diamonds for glass beads which were not worth the picking up—well, he would not have believed it. But in truth he had met with the evil angel of his life, and he was yielding unto her fair false hands the perfect trust and the passionate devotion which were only due to God. Would he ever awake from the dream? and if he did, would it be while there was yet time left to repair his blunder, or only when it was too late, and there remained but a long weary stretch of the wilderness before the end should come?

Ah, the Good Shepherd goes after His lost sheep, until He find them. But they are apt to lead Him up arid steeps and into sunless gulfs, through thorns which tear their feet as well as His, and into dry places where no water is beside the stream which flows from the smitten Rock.

Reserve and reticence were not in the nature of Roger Mortimer. The Princess very soon perceived, with equal amusement and delight, the fulfilment of her prophecy; and urged upon her royal son the desirability of at once betrothing Roger and Alianora. The King, however, preferred a little delay. There was time enough, he said: both were yet very young; matters might alter before they were old enough to be married. So the formal ceremony, though fully intended, was deferred, leaving an element of uncertainty which added to Roger's intermittent misery.

The autumn which followed the spring of Roger's transference to Woking witnessed some most painful events. The second son of the Princess, Sir John de Holand, entering into a squabble between his attendants out of which he had far better have kept himself, killed Sir Ralph Stafford, the favourite squire of the young Queen. He was condemned to die, and the Princess in an agony of grief, sent Sir Lewis Clifford to the King at York, earnestly beseeching for mercy to his brother. She was refused, and it was the first refusal which her royal son had ever given to an intercession of hers. As the event proved, he was ready enough to grant it as man, but he could not feel it his duty as King. The Princess laid it so to heart that her heart broke. A fortnight after the return of Sir Lewis from his fruitless errand, she lay dead at Wallingford Castle.

In the first impulse of his anguish and remorse, King Richard granted a full pardon to his brother, on condition of his making a pilgrimage to Syria. He was a man of the deepest affections, and next to his wife, his mother had been nearest to his heart. Perhaps it was the remembrance of this one rejected appeal and the

agony of its result, which made Richard in after years so perpetual a pardoner of the transgressions of those whom he loved.

Another result of these sorrowful circumstances was to cause the King to carry into immediate action various intentions which he knew had been his mother's wish. And in pursuance of one of these, on a morning in October, he sent for the Earl of March.

The royal officers conducted Roger, somewhat to his surprise, to the King's private closet, and motioned to his suite to remain in the ante-chamber. He was to pass in alone.

Roger found, however, that the interview was not to be *tête-à-tête*. Seated in a curule chair by the side of His Majesty was the uncle of both, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, the most astute man in England, and the evil angel of the King. Roger made his reverences to his royal kinsman, and was directed to seat himself on a velvet settle which faced them. A slight motion from the young King appeared to be a preconcerted signal at which Gloucester took up the word.

[image]

'Roger made his reverences to his royal kinsman, and was directed to seat himself on a velvet settle which faced them.'

"Methinks, fair Cousin," said he, addressing Roger, "that you be not now to learn that your mother, the Lady Philippa of March, was daughter and heir unto my fair brother of Clarence, whom God assoil?"

Roger intimated that this was no news to him.

"And you may lightly guess, moreover, that, my said brother standing next in age to my most honoured Lord the Prince, whom likewise may God pardon, had the said Prince deceased unhappily without issue him outliving, my said brother your grand-sire should have stood next to be king."

Roger bowed his head. He began to wonder what was coming. Was evil about to befall him for the crime of being a great-grandson of King Edward?

"Bear with me, then, my fair Cousin, while I recount unto you the causes of that which I am about to lay before you under command of my Liege here present."

One of the secrets of Gloucester's popularity was his exquisite veneer. Very few persons realised how thin the coating was, or what was the material which lay beneath. Least likely to discover it of all was the young King, in whose single-eyed nature suspicion had no place, and whose warm heart was ready to take in every creature who professed a shred of devotion to himself.

"Maybe, being as you are but right youthful, fair Cousin," pursued Gloucester, "you shall have need to be told in words that after the old custom of England it was not used that, the King's son dying afore his father, his childre should be held to fill his place. This ancient custom, howbeit, was changed by my redoubted Lord and father King Edward, of set purpose that the King our Liege who here sitteth should succeed him on the throne. In case, therefore, that our said Liege should leave no issue—which God defend!—he must needs appoint him a successor after his pleasure. Now my said Liege, accounting it ill (as in very sooth it should be) that men's minds should be unsettled touching so weighty a matter, and knowing moreover that life standeth alway at the pleasure of God, and that men may not dwell on middle earth no longer than it listeth Him—" there was a vast reservoir of piety in Gloucester, but it went no lower than his tongue—"it hath pleased my Liege to make choice of him that shall succeed him, if in evil case he should chance to decease without child. To make an end, fair Cousin, without further words, you are he whom my Lord hath chosen to sit on the throne when the pleasure of God shall be fulfilled in him."

Roger sat dumfounded. The last conclusion he had expected was the one that had come upon him. Among all the suppositions as to the chosen heir which had been coursing through his thoughts while his uncle spoke, the faintest idea that it might be himself had never occurred to his mind.

He did not know that it had been in existence, nearly as long as he had, in the three governing minds of England, of which one had just passed away. It was the only point of all their opinions in which the Princess and the Dukes of Lancaster and Gloucester were agreed. The private reasons of each were utterly diverse from those of the other two. The Princess wished to secure two points—the happiness of her son, and the welfare of the Lollard Church of which she was the nursing mother. To this end the heir must entertain a personal affection for His Majesty which would prevent him from coveting his position, and must be brought up in an atmosphere which would dispose him toward the Lollard doctrines. The Duke of Lancaster's object was the welfare of England; added to which he did not want to reign himself, and Roger or his brother were the only persons who could reasonably be placed before him. The Duke of Gloucester's object was almost the opposite of the last. He did wish to reign, but he cared more for the reality of power than for the semblance, and knowing that equity would be outraged by his being preferred to his elder brothers, he desired such a monarch as he would easily be able to influence. This he fancied he saw in Roger,—warm-hearted, impulsive, readily swayed, and not too suspicious of ulterior motives.

The only person, at that day, who had ever been able to read the true character of Gloucester was the dead Princess. She must have been a very clever woman. Her feminine instinct penetrated all the joints of his closely-riveted ar-

mour, and without his being in the least aware of it, "to her he had shown his naked heart." Somebody who could be trusted must be put in his way; and she read Roger also more accurately than he had done. Through all the outward impulsiveness she discerned the heart's fidelity—through all the thorny surroundings of temptation the ever straightforward aim at the one goal of right. Perhaps her cleverest move of all was just that which looked on the surface the least likely to forward her intentions. She had removed him from the noxious atmosphere of Bermondsey House, and had placed him in a family which was not marked by Lollard proclivities—a family of which, in that respect, even the anti-Lollard Gloucester could feel no suspicion. But she saw that Roger was more easily led than driven: that his intensely Lollard uncle, John de Montacute, "the most pestilent of all that sect," was likely to have far more influence with him as an occasional and interesting visitor, than as the man who decided his fate and sat in judgment on all his little peccadilloes; beside which, had he been consigned to the care of a distinctly Lollard family, Gloucester would have been certain to scheme for his removal. He would probably be content to leave him at Woking, where Lollardism was something quite outside the family notions—a matter which they left to the priesthood, whose business they considered it to be. His suspicions of any sinister design on the part of the Princess would scarcely be aroused by her very natural wish that her youngest son's chosen heir should be in the care of her eldest son.

Roger, of course, had not the slightest conception of all these wheels within wheels which he now saw to his amazement were bearing him forward to the throne. The result was to him the only thing apparent, and that left him in a state of speechless astonishment. The only two clear ideas in his confused head, beyond surprise, were deep devotion to the royal cousin who had marked him by such signal favour, and a rapturous throb of his heart at the thought that now, at least, Alianora was safely assured to him. He knew that a prospective crown would weigh heavily with her, no less than with her parents: and as for him who wore it, and who certainly would weigh less, Roger's loyal heart was content to accept the very crumbs of affection from the hand which he loved, rather than a plentiful board spread by any other.

The King's voice broke Roger's astounded silence.

"Methinks we have somewhat taken you by surprise, fair Cousin," said he, with that exquisitely sweet smile which Richard knew how to give.

"In very deed, my gracious Lord, but you so have!" was the answer. "Mefeareth, my Liege, that your bestowal upon me is far over my dementing."

"Strive then to deserve the same, fair Cousin," said Gloucester didactically.

"In all things submit you obeissantly to my Lord his pleasure."

A speech which meant much more than it said, since Gloucester aimed at

governing Roger through the King. Like other astute persons, the former scarcely comprehended a mind which had but one aim, and assuredly never intended to strengthen Roger's personal love for his royal cousin. His real intention was to attract it to himself. But Roger's powers of discrimination were greater than those of King Richard, and he had an uneasy sense of some ulterior meaning on the part of his uncle, which cooled his demeanour and lessened his words. He had no intention of confiding his heart's secrets to that over-clever relative.

"I am at ease thereanent," said the King, answering Roger with another smile. "And now, Cousin, God give you good day, for methinks you have food enough for thought."

Roger could not have told whether he returned to Woking through smiling valleys or barren mountains. The family of the Earl of Kent, the elder branches of which had been admitted into the secret, were amused to see how silent and meditative their young ward became after the proclamation of his future brilliant destiny. Roger was growing up fast—faster in mind than in body. Very grave and thoughtful grew the young heir. The radiant crown which hung before him, though in a probably distant future, seemed to have descended upon his head not as an ornament, but as a weight. The Earl of Kent was much surprised at it. The side of Roger's character which was outwardly exhibited—the lighter and more childish side of it—was the only one which he had yet seen. But the depths were there, and they had been stirred at last.

They were stirred in more ways than one. The prospective crown which had struck Roger into gravity, struck the Lady Alianora into a flutter. To her it was merely the most becoming decoration which could rest upon her head. The thought of any duty or responsibility in connection with it was entirely foreign to her mind. But it became desirable to cultivate Roger, and to let him see unmistakably that he was established in her good graces. To lose him now was not to be thought of for a moment. But had the King changed his mind, and transferred his favours to any other person, what the Lady Alianora called her heart would have followed in their wake. The dog-like fidelity which characterised Lawrence Madison, and to which it would have been of no moment whether his master sat upon a throne or a dunghill, was simply inconceivable to her.

It was Sunday evening, and the churches were slowly emptying of the worshippers at vespers. Lawrence was making his way out at the western door, when looking up he encountered a pair of bright eyes attentively regarding him. They belonged to a girl of about his own age, who wore a dress of blue camlet, and was evidently in the middle class of life. She was very pretty, but apparently very shy. Her eyes dropped the instant they encountered his, but kept returning to his face as if she found something attractive in it. Behind her came an older woman whom Lawrence felt certain, as soon as he glanced at her, that he had met

somewhere before. As soon as they were clear of the sacred edifice, Lawrence saw the girl turn round to the woman behind her, and address her in an earnest whisper. The woman replied aloud.

"Nay, child: it were not like, methinks."

"But it might be! Will you not ask, Mistress Wenteline?"

The name solved Lawrence's difficulty in a moment. In another instant he had pressed through the crowd, and was by the side of his old friend.

"Mistress Wenteline! Come you from Ludlow—from Usk? Know you not Lawrence Madison?"

"Well, of a surety, but it is!" cried Guenllian, heartily enough. "Lad, how camest thou hither? The maid said it were like thee, but I never thought—Is my Lord hereaway? My Lord of Arundel hath no place in this vicinage, trow?"

"My Lord is not now in ward to him, good Mistress; but unto my Lord of Kent, that dwelleth at the Manor here."

"Now God be thanked therefor!" said Guenllian warmly.

Lawrence turned to the girl. "Methinks I should know you likewise: and in truth, you be like some one that I have known, but I cannot give you a name."

The bright eyes laughed, but their owner seemed too shy to speak. Guenllian looked at both with an amused expression.

"Nay, twain friends so dear as you were of old should not have forgot each other," said she. "Lolly, dost not know thine old playfellow? 'Tis Blumond's Beattie."

"Beattie!" broke from Lawrence with more warmth than usual. But as soon as the greeting was over, both relapsed into extreme shyness.

"And pray you, Mistress Wenteline, how came you hither?"

"Marry, lad, we be tarrying a two-three days, under the King's gracious leave, at his manor of Byfleet, and as Tuesday we journey onward to London town. Beattie and I, we thought we would come to Church something a longer walk, and two of my Lord's squires be with us"—Guenllian paused and looked about for them—"I marvel whither they be gone in this crowd. Beattie, canst see any whither Master Orewell or Master Chauntemarle?"

Beattie thought she saw Master Chauntemarle's cap over yonder: but Lawrence interposed with a question which he was burning to ask.

"But, Mistress Wenteline, how came you hither?"

"Why, look you, we be now of the following of the Lady de Percy, and the Lord of these squires and of us is my Lord of Northumberland."

"And the Lady de Percy is at Byfleet? Me reckoneth my Lord were right fain to see his sister."

"Aye, and the Lady Elizabeth was ever his favourite. But, Lolly, I would fain see my dear child. He is at the Manor here, trow?"

"If it like you to bide for compline, Mistress, you shall then see him with no further travail; or if you will come up to the Manor, I rest well assured that Mistress Dayrell, which keepeth house, shall make you right welcome."

"Beattie, run thou to Master Orewell, which I see searching us o'er by yon yew-tree, and do him to wit of this. Say we will return with Lawrence to the Manor, and ask at him if he or Master Chauntemarle list to come with us. If not, then will we leave our returning as it shall please God."

Beatrice obeyed, and in a minute returned with Master Orewell, who intimated that his pleasure would be to accompany the ladies, but Master Chauntemarle preferred to return to Byfleet. Guenllian accordingly sent through the latter her excuses to Lady Northumberland, and the party set out for the Manor.

Lawrence left his friends in charge of Mistress Dayrell, who was well pleased with the prospect of a gossip, and dashed up the stairs, three at a time, in search of his young master. Roger was playing hand-tennis with the other young people—an occupation the suitability of which to Sunday evening it never occurred to him or any one else to doubt. The moment that he heard who was below, he flung down his battledore, and rushed down the stairs as quickly as Lawrence had come up them.

Guenllian had not realised the change that years could make until Roger stood before her. She had been unconsciously expecting to see the child of nine, and when the handsome boy of thirteen, who looked older than he was, came into the room and welcomed her, she could scarcely believe his identity. But the warmth and brightness were those of the old Roger, and they comforted Guenllian after all her fears and heart-sinkings lest he should be changed and spoiled at Bermondsey House.

"Mine own dear child!" she said lovingly. "Verily, I ask your Lordship's pardon; but you shall seem always my child to me, even when you be a man grown."

Roger had arrived at the age when a boy is rather ashamed of being kissed, and feels it a humiliation. But like a true gentleman as he was in nature as well as name, he put his own feelings aside, and permitted his old nurse to pet him to her heart's content.

"And now, mine heart, give me leave to ask you," inquired Guenllian, in whose diction the new deference was somewhat at variance with the old familiar love, "if you be welsome and happy hereaway?"

"Very, very happy," said Roger's eyes no less than his voice. The Lady Alianora had been unusually complaisant for the past week.

"And how did your Lordship like at Arundel Castle?"

"Very ill, Wenteline. I am rejoiced to be away thence."

Guenllian was privately rejoiced to hear it.

"Metrusteth Lawrence continueth a good lad?"

"Much better than Roger," said the owner of the latter name, with a bright laugh. "He alway were so."

"And your Lordship, as I do hear, is in right high favour with the King?"

Roger smiled and blushed slightly. His honours were still fresh upon him.

"Aye, Wenteline, I have been denounced[#] heir of England."

[#] Announced, proclaimed.

"But to think of it!" exclaimed she. "Well, my dear child, God give thee His grace! Thou shalt make but an ill King without it."

Guenllian thought that Roger's eyes responded, but his voice was silent.

CHAPTER VII. ROGER HAS HIS WISH.

"Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings."

—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

The paths that had joined for a moment parted again, and Guenllian and Beatrice passed out of the sight of Roger and Lawrence. The life which they led at Woking was very quiet—so quiet that Roger at least began to feel restless, and to complain to Lawrence, that every thing stagnated around him. But before six months were over, the second political convulsion of the century had begun. Gloucester only awaited the removal of his brother Lancaster, who was the barricade against his ambitious designs, to draw the bow which he was holding ready.

The Duke of Lancaster sailed from Plymouth on the ninth of July. By Michaelmas, Gloucester was in London, gathering his conspirators around him. The one with whom he first took counsel was his nephew, Edward, afterwards Earl of Rutland, eldest son of the Duke of York. This man seems to have delighted in dissimulation and treachery, not as means to an end, but for their own sakes. He cared not whom he joined, so long as he could afterwards betray them; and

he was ready to agree to anything, if it only involved a plot. Love, kinship, gratitude, even interest, were no barriers in his way. This man had been one of the dearest friends of the young King—the friendship being on the King's side, and only the outward profession of it on Rutland's: but no sooner did Gloucester lay his plans before Rutland, than the latter sacrificed his friend to the pleasure of a conspiracy.

There were four of the Privy Councillors of whom Gloucester had resolved to get rid. These were the Archbishop of York, the Duke of Ireland, the Earl of Suffolk, and Sir Simon Burley. The first and last were professed Lollards: the second, and perhaps the third, almost certainly held those doctrines, though less openly than the other two. There is an old proverb that "If you want to hang a dog, it is easy enough to find a rope:" and the conspirators found no difficulty in fixing on charges calculated to render the four councillors unpopular. The Archbishop, who was a Neville of Raby, and the Duke, who was ninth Earl of Oxford, could not be accused of humble origin; but the Earl of Suffolk was open to this impeachment, and they made the most of it, by contemptuously addressing him as "Michael," even in full Parliament. Sir Simon Burley had been the King's tutor, and an old friend of the Black Prince, who had great confidence in him; it might have been supposed difficult to find the rope in his case. But who ever knew a Romish priest short of an excuse to disparage the character of a heretic, by whatever name he might be called? Behind the conspirators himself unseen, but quietly pulling the strings which moved all these puppets at his pleasure, stood Sir Thomas de Arundel, Bishop of Ely, and brother of the Earl, who was at once the instigator, the assistant, and the absolver of them all.

The Earl of Arundel had been induced by his brother to unite with the conspirators, who were also joined by Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, a weak man who was as much a dupe as a criminal. It was not till a later period that they were joined by the cautious Henry of Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, and by another who ought for very shame to have held aloof,—the King's favoured friend and trusted councillor, Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Norfolk. William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, was also ready to help them, on account of his personal dislike to his brother Archbishop, who had recently received a lucrative appointment whereon Courtenay had set covetous eyes.

Of course the real causes of hatred were not paraded before that innocent, deceivable creature, the public. The true reasons for hating the four obnoxious councillors were that they had the ear of the King, while he declined to be governed by the five conspirators and their priestly guides, who were accordingly much scandalised at his allowing himself to be governed by any one—themselves of course excepted. This is the usual secret of complaints that a man is governed. Put the complainer in the place of the governor, and the complaint will not be

heard again.

The ostensible reasons were plausible. The Archbishop of York, said the conspirators, was covetous and arrogant, and took liberties with the King: which of course meant that equal liberties were not allowed to themselves, the Archbishop being in reality one of the gentlest and most unworldly of men. The Duke of Ireland was "a puppy;" he made the King do whatever he liked, and bestow on him lands, titles, and offices (instead of on the conspirators). The Earl of Suffolk was a mere nobody, the scum of the earth, yet he took upon himself to dictate to the King and to oppose the nobles. Sir Simon Burley had proposed, under colour of an expected invasion of the French, to remove the shrine of St. Thomas from Canterbury Cathedral to Dover Castle, on the pretence that Canterbury was not so strong as Dover: of course he could only mean to pocket the rich offerings, and make his own profit out of the guardianship of the shrine. All of them were accused of defalcations of the Crown revenues.

There was a further charge against Ireland, which has been ever since received as historical fact, though it was not substantiated by a single document, nor by any thing but the bare word of the conspirators, and some inferences from circumstantial evidence, which might or might not be true. The Duke had always lived unhappily with his Duchess, who was a cousin of the King. The differences between them were partly ecclesiastical, he siding with the Antipope Urban, she with Pope Clement. There is also reason to suspect that her temper was somewhat less than angelic. The chroniclers tell us that Ireland fell violently in love with a German lady in the Queen's suite, whose name was Lancerona or Lancecrona (a suspiciously manufactured epithet): that the Queen wrote a letter to Pope Urban entreating that he might receive a divorce; that Urban thereupon divorced Ireland and Philippa, and that the Duke married his German love: that his mother was extremely indignant, and took Philippa to live with her; that the Sire de Coucy, father of the Duchess, and the King of France, almost took up arms against England in consequence of these wicked proceedings. The real truth of the matter is that no evidence whatever exists to support these alleged facts. We have evidence that Gloucester and others took pains to spread them as a rumour, but none to show that they were true. Not only is the Queen's letter not forthcoming, but there is no document to show that a divorce ever took place! [#] There is no evidence—except the *ipse dixit* of Gloucester and his partisans—that Ireland ever contracted a second marriage; while the facts that after his banishment he was invited to visit the French Court, that his wife bore the title of Duchess of Ireland to the day of her death, which followed his, and that his mother ran great personal risk in warmly espousing his cause and that of King Richard when both were at the lowest ebb, do not look favourable to the representations of Gloucester. It may be added that this Lancecrona, who is stated to have been a lady in

waiting and a laundress—two utterly incompatible positions, even more so at that time than now—does not appear at all as one of the royal suite in any mention of them contained in the state papers, and there is cause for suspicion which almost reaches certainty, that she never existed beyond the inner consciousness of my Lord Duke of Gloucester.

[#] Carter, one of the most accurate of our historians, records his opinion that "there is no reason to think that a divorce was ever granted, *nor even solicited*, between Ireland and Philippa." (ii. 581.)

These tales, true or false, were assiduously spread among the populace, and Gloucester very secretly, but very diligently, advised them to refuse any further payment of taxes. The King, said he, would have plenty of money at his command, if the wicked councillors were only forced to disgorge their ill-gotten booty. Yet with all their cleverness, Gloucester and his allies could not succeed in accusing Suffolk of any greater covetousness than "taking from the King a thousand marks a year since he was made an Earl"—which was the ordinary grant from the Crown to every earl in England.

That the animosity of these plotters was really and originally religious is shown in the fact that when the whole power in the kingdom fell into their hands, they weeded the state offices and the royal household of all the Lollards, and let others alone. They descended even to squires and ladies—so long as they were Lollards. The Lady de Poynings, a princess's daughter, was not too high for them to aim at; nor was John Calverley, the Queen's squire, too low to feel their vengeance. Sir Bernard Brocas, the Queen's Chamberlain, and the Lady Molyneux, wife of Sir Thomas, were also swept out of her household. Neither prayers nor tears availed to soften them. For four hours the Queen herself, "Cæsar's daughter," knelt to the Earl of Arundel, imploring him to spare Calverley, whom they had condemned to death. It was all in vain. Arundel savagely told her to pray for herself. She had cause enough. Sir Bernard Brocas was also put to death: the ladies were dropped into obscurity, where they were wise enough to remain.

The long and sad story of this persecution—it deserves no other name—belongs to general history: but the end is soon told. Ireland, Suffolk, and Archbishop Neville fled abroad, and died there. Burley meant to have preceded them in this step, but was unfortunately dissuaded by Ireland, at that time unable to conceive the possibility of the conspirators presuming to put any man to death. He generously offered him forty thousand marks to refund in respect of the defalcations of which Burley, "that gentle, gallant, and prudent knight," had been

falsely accused. But the Lords Appellants, as it pleased the conspirators to term themselves, wanted blood, not bribes: nor did it suit them to accept as a gift what they meant to take with a high hand. They got the King out of the way, and instantly seized on his old tutor, whom he was unable to deliver from their malicious hands. Burley died on Tower Hill. The other less obnoxious councillors were got rid of, mostly by death without the pretence of a trial: and then my Lords Appellants, having reduced their Sovereign to the status of their slave, courteously, and in subservient language requested him to come home, to obey their orders, and as the first, to deliver into their hands all the state records and twenty thousand pounds.

Ten years later, when the slave had resumed the status of the Sovereign, after a trial on which Lancaster sat as judge, the Earl of Arundel was beheaded in Cheapside. And modern writers regard Richard as a tyrant, and Arundel as a murdered patriot! There is one Book written by truer pens than theirs, wherein other appellations are probably attached to the names.

Perhaps few households in high positions throughout England were less disturbed by the political earthquake than that at Woking Manor. The Earl of Kent, with whomsoever he might side in his heart, practically held aloof from the entire struggle; and the Countess Alesia, though she was sister alike of the Earl of Arundel and the Bishop of Ely, who with Gloucester formed the soul of the conspiracy, appears herself to have entertained no political bias, and to have followed her husband along the quiet bye-path into which he thought it prudent to turn until the storm blew over. Rumours, however, were not slow in reaching them: and no one was more eager to hear all the news than Roger. It need hardly be said that he was a vehement partisan of his royal cousin, and hotly indignant against the Lords Appellants. The suspicions which he had entertained already concerning the fidelity of his uncle of Gloucester were now confirmed to the full, and beyond it.

Those who, being conscious of Lollardism, or knowing themselves suspected of it, felt danger threatening them, got out of the way, or in some other manner prepared for the inevitable as best they could. The prominent Lollard, Sir John Montacute, Roger's great-uncle, made his will, and then waited the event. The young Lord Le Despenser, a boy of Roger's age, was sent off by his friends to sea, being sagaciously placed under the nominal care of the Earl of Arundel.

Having finished their work, the Lords Appellants now thought it time to distribute their rewards. The heaviest prize fell to Gloucester's share, for he granted himself—of course in the King's name—all the lands of the Duke of Ireland, about the second man in England as to wealth, and the smaller property of the Earl of Suffolk. He also appropriated to himself the office of Justice of Chester, which the conspirators had showed such indignation that Ireland should possess.

To Arundel was granted the marriage of the young Lord Poynings. To Edward of York was given the earldom of Rutland, with lands in the county, and a hundred marks in money. The Bishop of Ely received the archbishopric of York. Derby was more easily satisfied: he coveted only the breastplate of Sir John Beauchamp, one of the murdered Lollards. He was, in truth, not anxious to show too distinctly his status as one of the conspirators. The Archbishop of Canterbury was made happy by a proclamation that "whosoever should be found to possess any books, pamphlets, or handbills, of Master John Wycliffe and others, deceased, in English or in Latin, should be arrested and put under penalty by the Council." Norfolk and Warwick it was not thought necessary to notice in the general distribution: but, perhaps to blind the eyes of the public, perhaps to keep the King content in the menial position which they had assigned to him, that suppressed gentleman was allowed to make a few insignificant grants to his own friends. He was graciously permitted to restore a single manor to Lady Poynings, their own inheritances to Emma Tresilian, and Idonia Brembre, and her wardrobe to Joan Salesbury, widows of his murdered councillors.[#] He was also allowed to grant to his younger brother the castles of Berkhamsted and Tintagel, and to the elder the constablership of the Tower, and the marriage of Roger, Earl of March.

[#] The widows of Tresilian and Brembre, the two members of the attainted group who alone were not Lollards, received by far the best treatment of any.

"'Tis an ill wind blows nobody good," said Mistress Grenestede when this last piece of news was published.

"Ah, my dear master! is it good it has blown you?" was the silent response of Lawrence Madison in his inmost heart.

Whatever were Lawrence's doubts, none oppressed Roger. He arrayed himself for his bridal without a shadow of apprehension of any sort.

The King, the Queen, the royal Dukes and Duchesses, and half the nobility, were bidden to the marriage of the heir of England, which took place early in March, in the Royal chapel of the Tower.[#] The bridegroom was dressed in blue golden baldekyn, one of the richest silk stuffs then manufactured, the cost of which when plain was about seven guineas: but this was richly wrought with fleurs-de-lis in gold embroidery, which had cost three pounds more. White frills of costly lace encircled his neck and wrists, and closer sleeves of crimson velvet protruded from the wider sleeves of the blue gown. His boots were of crimson velvet, buttoned with pearls. In his hand was a hat of black velvet, over which swept a full plume of white ostrich feathers. From a chain of massy gold about

his neck depended the White Hart, in enamel and gold, which was at once the badge of the King and that of the bride.

[#] The place is not on record; February or March, 1389, is the probable date.

The Lady Alianora, who was given away by her royal uncle,—an uncle only about five years older than his niece—was arrayed with the utmost care and costliness that her wardrobe could afford. She appeared in a long robe of crimson velvet, embroidered with golden flowers in an elaborate rambling pattern, and over it a cote-hardie, or close jacket without sleeves, of the choicest miniver, cut low in the neck, as a bridal dress then usually was: cuffs of gold filagree finished the sleeve at the wrist, and a girdle formed of ten golden clasps fitted round the hips. Down the front of the cote-hardie ran a row of gleaming jewels—sapphires, rubies, diamonds, and emeralds—which flashed and sparkled with every motion of the wearer. A golden fillet adorned her head, set with similar gems; and from under it flowed the golden glory of her magnificent hair, which streamed almost to the ground. This last item was an essential part of the bride's costume at this date. Beneath the crimson velvet robe, when she lifted it out of her way, could be seen glimpses of a rich skirt of gold-coloured satin, and black velvet shoes studded with gold. The bride wore no gloves: they were not usual except on some ceremonial occasions, and then only for royal persons, or for the bird to perch upon in hawking. The wedding-ring was set with a ruby.

Around the principal actors stood a crowd of the English nobility, and on its outskirts a motley assemblage of officials then deemed necessary—seneschals, heralds, minstrels, trumpeters, and many others.

When the priest reached the words "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," it was incumbent upon the bridegroom to put a sum of money on the book, in gold and silver, which became the private possession of the bride. Roger laid down the princely sum of three marks, which Alianora swept composedly into her pocket. Pockets were comparative novelties, having only existed for about forty years; and ladies, like gentlemen, had one on each side. Enormous bags they were, within which, had it so pleased her, the bride could easily have disposed of her fillet or her cote-hardie.

Immediately after the ceremony followed the mass,—a low mass, at which the wedded pair alone communicated with the priest. The bride was then led between two married nobles to the banquet-hall, where the wedding-feast was spread, and the bridegroom followed, led in like manner. Precedence even before royalty was given to them for that day. They sat together in the place of hon-

our, the middle of the table on the daïs, the King being on the right hand of the bride, and the Queen on the left of the bridegroom. Such plate as was included in the bridal gifts—and plate was more frequently given than anything else—was used at the feast. Stately gold and silver hanaps, or cups about the size of a chalice, in all manner of diverse forms dictated by fashion or fancy—swans, eagles, dragons, roses,—gold and silver ewers, often matching the hanaps; dishes, plates, porringers, cups, saucers, salt-cellars, spoons—all these had been poured before the feet of Alianora, and all figured at her bridal festival.

This was above all others the era of elaborate cookery, and of marvellous and unintelligible names bestowed upon it. The guests were offered Bouce Jane and Bardolf—both being of the nature of a fricasee; Daryalys and Mon Amy, which may be classed under the head of custards; Aqua Patys, which was garlic broth, and Rayneclis, which somewhat resembled croquets. It is, however, very difficult to compare these dishes with our own, since the former were far more elaborate, and generally involved most extraordinary mixtures of incongruous ingredients. There were also oxen, pigs, and sheep, roasted whole; pies of all descriptions, made of flesh, fowl, and fruit; smaller beasts and birds of every kind, many of which are now deemed inedible, such as hedgehogs, squirrels, swans, and herons; and lastly, two regal dishes at the top and bottom of the high table, the boar's head and the peacock in his pride—namely, with the tail fully spread. In the midst of the table, at every course, stood a different "subtlety"—now a castle of silvered cardboard, attacked by painted wooden knights; now a bronze mill turning its wheel through a stream of Gascon wine; now a lady standing on a mossy bank, with her cavalier kneeling at her feet, while his squire held his horse, ready for departure, behind them; finally, a King seated on his throne, with his Court standing around. This table ornament might or might not be of edible materials; it was more frequently the latter.

After this splendid feast, and when the basin of rose-water had been carried round, the hall was cleared for dancing, commenced by a minuet in which the wedded pair were partners. How gentlemen contrived to dance with those long gowns, like dressing-gowns, flapping about their feet, may be left to themselves to explain. They must have been more awkward to manage than a woman's dress, being open in front, and therefore much more likely to entangle the legs. Swords were another difficulty; and to fall over the sword in dancing was not an unknown calamity. The simple expedient of laying it aside for the occasion appears not to have occurred to the wearers, and would, perhaps, have been thought unknighly behaviour.

The bride, who of course was the observed of all observers, conducted herself through the whole ceremony in a composed and self-possessed manner, which the elder ladies thought extremely edifying, and pointed out to their giddy

or excitable daughters as a model of proper behaviour.

To women of Alianora's type, the matrimonial ceremony is the great event of life—the ceremony, rather than the fact. And she was perfectly satisfied, for she had obtained all she wanted. She had longed for a gown of blue cloth of gold, and she possessed it, and many equally expensive and handsome. She was now a matron, which meant that she was emancipated from parental control, could go where she liked, and do what she pleased. Before her hung the glittering prospect of a queenly crown, with the adornment of a rich coronet while she waited for it. There was only one element in her jewelled world with which she would have been quite ready to dispense, if she could have had the other items without it, which was unhappily impossible. And that was—Roger.

"Happy is the bride the sun shines on!" said Mistress Grenestede, who dealt largely in proverbs, "Look you, we could not have had a better day, might we have ordered the same our own selves: nay, nor a jollier wedding. What think you, Master Madison? Forsooth, methinks you be somewhat unjocund. You grudge not your Lord a fair and princely bride, trow?"

"I grudge my Lord nothing that shall be for his good, nor for his pleasure," was Lawrence's grave answer. "He above wist that."

"Then, prithe, why be you not better accommodated?"[#]

[#] More at ease.

"By reason, Mistress, that I much question the good: and I do yet more doubt the pleasure."

"Nay, now, heard you ever the like?" demanded Mistress Grenestede of any body who chose to answer, as Lawrence walked quietly away. "Yon lad is either to presume more than him ought,[#] or otherwise can he see further into a millstone than other folk."

[#] More suspicious than he should be.

Lawrence was not so far off that he failed to hear her, and he stopped for a moment to reply.

"Any man may see through a millstone, Mistress mine, if he will but set his eye on line with the hole."

About the close of 1393, the King resolved to make Roger Viceroy of Ireland. He was now twenty years of age—equivalent to twenty-five in the present day—and His Majesty thought it desirable that he should try his hand at that government of which so much might eventually be thrust upon him. He had been married for four years, and most people would have thought him fully competent to take care, not only of himself, but of Ireland. But his wise friend and father-in-law, Kent, who seems to have been much attached to him, was not easy to let him go alone. He resolved to accompany him in person: not only this, but he prepared a petition to the King in Council, in Roger's name, containing the following large stipulations, before Roger should take the lieutenancy upon him.

First, he requested that notwithstanding his nonage, full livery should be granted to the Earl of March of all his estates, in England, Wales, or Ireland; and of all "lordships, castles, manors, towns, lands, tenements, rents, services, franchises, fees, and advowsons, with all other appurtenances and commodities, whether existing in fee, or hereafter to return to the said heritage by reversion or remainder, or by any other way whatever. Item, all the revenues and profits of all the lordships and lands, with all their appurtenances and commodities whatever, belonging to our Lord the King in all the land of Ireland during the nonage of the said Roger. Item, two thousand marks in money to be paid in hand. Item, that he have ... full power to charge his said heritage" for one year, in order to provide money for the voyage. Item, that Roger should not be obliged to take the said lieutenancy upon him, before attaining his majority. Item, that the Earl of Kent should accompany him, with sufficient attendance, specially indicating the Lord Lovel, Sir John Stanley, Sir John Sandes, and Sir Ralph Cheyne. Lastly, that this should be done within a year from the nativity of St. John next ensuing, whereupon Roger would assume the duties of Viceroy. These demands were very large; but that they were perfectly reasonable is shown by the fact that not only did the King assent to them, but that Arundel and his co-trustees gave a ready and formal consent. The entire estates of March, therefore, were at once resigned into Roger's keeping, though he was yet some months short of his full age. Arundel and his colleagues had done their duty well by Roger in this matter. The possessions handed over to him were in the best possible condition. He "found all his castles and houses in good repair, amply stored with rich furniture, his lands stocked with cattle, and forty thousand marks in the treasury."

The King intended to have set out for Ireland about the end of April. But before he was able to leave Shene, where he was then residing, the saddest loss of all his sad life fell upon him. The "black death," that dreadful plague which had scourged England in 1340 and in 1369, returned to ravage it in 1394. One of its first victims, about the 20th or 25th of April, was the beloved Lollard Queen.

This is not the date usually given for her death but it is nearer the truth

than the accepted one. Froissart, who states that she died at Whitsuntide (which that year was June 7), and who has been followed by all other writers, contradicts himself by saying that the King's journey was deferred for two months in consequence of the Queen's death, and that he set out about the 24th of June. In this case, she died about the 24th of April: a date shown to be near the truth by an entry on the Issue Roll, recording payment for the carriage of the waxen image to be borne on the coffin at her burial, on the third of June. There must therefore have been time, before this, to manufacture the wax statue, which assuredly never was commenced while the Queen was alive; nor only this, but to convey it by water from London to Richmond, which the entry informs us had been done.

It was not until after the tenth of August that Roger set forth on his journey to Ireland. His retinue consisted of (his own) March Herald, two knights banneret, eight other knights, a hundred men-at-arms, 200 horsed archers, and 400 foot archers. With him, inseparable as his shadow, went Lawrence Madison.

CHAPTER VIII. MISCALCULATION.

"Keep them thy gifts for them that value gold
Above their souls' redemption and hearts' love!
What! shall I stain mine honour, lose my God,
Do violence to mine heart, at such a price?
This very bait the Devil fished withal
For Christ our Master, urging Him to buy
What was His own an hour too soon, and pay
For the hour's tinsel glory, hope and peace.
Go, buy the traitors that will sell their souls!
From thy perfidious hand I draw mine own,
Clean of its lucre and its perfidy."

An account of the state of affairs in Ireland, when Roger sailed from Holyhead to Dublin—the fact which is supposed to underlie the enigmatical assertion of the worthy Canon of Chimay, Sir John Froissart, that the Lords sent to govern Ireland embarked from Lolighet, and landed at Dimelin—would if in detail re-

quire a volume to itself, and would be a mere list of names and battles, diversified by occasional murders. A short epitome of the facts is however requisite, in order to make clear much that follows. There were three parties at this time in Ireland, whom the English styled the Wild Irish, or Irishry; the Rebellious Irish; and the English. The first were the unsubdued natives, who had retired to the mountains, bogs, and forests; the second, who dwelt in the territory known as the English pale, between the Irishry and the sea, were the descendants of mixed marriages between the English and Irish; they partially adopted the customs of both countries, and were subject to the English or not as they found it convenient: more frequently they did not find it so. Among these we find reckoned "the Butyllers, Powers, Gerardyns [Fitzgeralds], Bermynghams, Daltons, Barettes, and Dillons." The last class, the English proper, consisted of "a confused medley of soldiers, merchants, men of needy or desperate fortunes, and those whom the English government had invested with authority: they occupied the principal towns and cities and small tracts around them, chiefly in Leinster, and on the eastern and southern coasts." The "rebellious English" were also termed English *by birth*, while to the "obedient English" was restricted the title of English *by blood*.

Since the death of Roger's father, Earl Edmund of March, matters had gradually been going from bad to worse, until now the state of things was little removed from anarchy. "Sometimes the septs were destroying each other; at other times they were making inroads upon the English pale, or joining with the great settlers in their mutual ravages." The most unmanageable of all the Irish chieftains at this period was Arthur MacMorogh, of Leinster, who with the Earl of Desmond wasted the whole south of the country at intervals. Lesser troublers to the English, but still sufficiently vexatious, were the O'Brien in the east, and the O'Neile in Ulster. The chief helper of the government was the Earl of Ormonde, head of the great family of Boteler. Connaught was almost entirely given up to the "wild Irish."

The appearance and tactics of King Richard restored order, and four Kings of the "wild Irish" submitted themselves to him, rather "through love and good-humour than by battle or force," and mainly through the persuasions of the Earl of Ormonde. The four were, O'Neile, King of Meath; Brian, King of Thomond; "Contruo, King of Chenour," which may mean the O'Conor; and Arthur MacMorogh himself, King of Leinster, who claimed to be the Ardriagh, or Lord Paramount over the whole island. At Dublin, on the 25th of March, 1395, these four chieftains were knighted by the King in St. Patrick's Cathedral, after mass, having "watched" the previous night in the church. It may be well to note in passing that Froissart gravely informs us that St. John the Baptist was the founder of the Cathedral. To instruct these four potentates in English customs in general,

and in the ceremonies of the forthcoming solemnity in particular, the King appointed a tutor in the person of an English squire of uncertain name, called in different MSS. of Froissart and by other writers, Henry Castide, Cristeed, Cristall, and Cristelle. This man had long been a captive among the "wild Irish," and had married an Irish damsel. His first care was to improve the chieftains' table manners, which in his eyes were those of savages: the next, to induce them to lay aside their Irish cloaks, and attire themselves in silken robes trimmed with fur; the third, to make them use saddles and stirrups, both which they were very unwilling to do. They appear, however, on this occasion, to have been in a most amiable and accommodating temper. What they least liked they submitted to cheerfully, on being assured that it was the King's wish that while they were his guests they should conform to English customs. On one point, however, they showed that they intended to listen to no instruction. When the squire tried to investigate their religious faith, "they seemed so displeased that he was forced to silence."

"We believe in God, Three in One," said the Irish Kings: "thus far there is no difference between our creed and yours."

Their teacher would not quit the subject until he had ascertained one point which was in his eyes of primary importance. To what Pope did they profess obedience? Was their pontiff the successor of St. Peter who reigned at Rome, or the wicked schismatic who had set himself up at Avignon? In fear and trembling he put the question. He might have been easy; for the fierce struggle between Pope and Anti-pope had not penetrated the bogs of the Emerald Isle. The Irish Kings at once answered that their Pope was at Rome.

He then asked if they would like to be made knights. They replied that they were knights already, for every Irish prince was made a knight by his royal father when he was seven years of age. The squire responded rather contemptuously that the King of England would not be satisfied with that kind of childish knighthood, but would create them knights in church with solemn ceremonies.

Shortly before this solemnity, the Earl of Ormonde paid a visit to his royal *protegés*. He inquired if they were satisfied with Castide—a question which they answered like gentlemen.

"Perfectly. He has prudently and wisely taught us the manners and usages of his country, for which we ought to be obliged, and do thank him."

The Earl then gave them a full explanation of the honour about to be done them, and the ceremonies which would attend it, laying stress on the great value which they ought to set upon it. The four Kings seem to have behaved admirably. They allowed themselves to be richly dressed, of course in the English manner: and let us hope that it did not include cracowes, those ridiculous boots which tapered to a point, and preceded their wearer by several inches,—for these must

have been woful inflictions upon an Irish chieftain, accustomed either to wear no boots at all, or to tie on simply "the dun deer's hide." They dined at King Richard's table, where, said Master Castide, "they were much stared at by the Lords and those present—not indeed without reason; for they were strange figures, and differently countenanced to the English or other nations. We are naturally inclined to gaze at anything strange," naïvely added the squire, "and it was certainly, Sir John, at that time, a great novelty to see four Irish Kings."

Castide's opinion is worth record as to the reasons why the Irish submitted themselves so readily. He thought the "rebellious English" were alarmed at the blockade of their coasts, which was so strict that "neither provision nor merchandise could be landed": but he admitted that the "wild Irish" cared nothing for this, since they lived by hunting, and were strangers to commerce. Their reason, he considered, was the personal respect which they bore to King Richard, whom they accounted to be a prudent and conscientious man, and whose reverence for the memory of Edward the Confessor was shared by themselves,—a fact undisturbed by any inconvenient knowledge that Richard, if not the Irish Kings also, had at least as much sanctity about him as Edward the Confessor. How that most unamiable of men, whose cruelty as a husband was only equalled by his irreverence as a son, ever came to be canonised and honoured as Saint Edward, must be left as one of the many insoluble enigmas which Rome propounds to the crushed hearts, smothered intelligences, and stifled consciences of her votaries. For any other reason, Castide remitted it to the grace of God. The Canon of Chimay, whose exquisite naïve simplicity at times cuts sharply as a knife, made answer, with more wit than he was aware, that "the grace of God is good, and of infinite value to those who can obtain it: but we see few lords now-o'-days augment their territories otherwise than by force."

The campaign thus ended, Roger returned to England in company with his royal cousin, and rejoined his family in London on May, 1395, much to the satisfaction of both himself and Lawrence Madison, who greatly preferred to follow his master out of battle rather than into it, though he wisely kept to himself that sentiment, which would only have earned him a character for cowardice. On very few men had the idea then dawned that any person could love peace for other reasons than laziness and fear of being hurt. The two characteristics of King Richard which his uncle Gloucester specially detested and despised were his religious opinions, and his dislike to war and tumult. It might truly be said, paradox though it be, that Gloucester was never at peace except when he was at war.

During the twelve months following his return to London, Roger kept himself exceedingly quiet. It was the only safe thing he could do. It is said that an eminent man was asked how, being a resident in Paris, he contrived to live

through the Reign of Terror. "I made myself of no reputation, and kept silence," was the significant answer. The Earl of March followed the same plan.

The beginning of 1395 was characterised by a strong agitation against the Lollard party, provoked by a very bold step on their part. Sir John Oldcastle, afterwards Lord Cobham, issued his "Book of Conclusions"—an epitome of Lollard doctrines, as well as a damaging attack on the opposite party—which was presented to Parliament by Lord Latimer and Sir Richard Stury, and posted up on the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral and the gates of Westminster Abbey. The two Archbishops took alarm in good earnest. They were strongly opposed to the "new" doctrines—which were not new, but as old as Christianity itself—and they rightly judged that unless these views had been spreading considerably in secret, they would scarcely have made this flourishing appearance in public. King Richard must be appealed to, and entreated to put down this unwelcome manifestation with the strong arm of the law: and the astute prelates well knew that only at one point, like Achilles, was Richard vulnerable on the Lollard question. The religious views were his own, and he would listen to no diatribe against them. But the political aspirations of the advanced Lollards he dreaded and disliked as much as the hierarchy. Archbishop Courtenay trusted to no tongue less skilful than his own the task of winning the King over. He started for Ireland without delay, taking with him Bishop Braybroke, a prelate whom the King liked and respected. Richard, the most open and unsuspecting of men, was no match for one of the wiliest priests who ever wore a mitre. Under his dexterous hands he was induced to believe that the political aims of the advanced section included his own deposition—the exact contrary was the truth—and the beloved Queen, who had hitherto always guided his sceptre on this point, was now beyond the fitful fever of earthly tumults. "Never was there King of England who so easily believed what was told him," says the chronicler Froissart, who knew Richard personally.

The King, thus influenced, departed from the course approved by his own better judgment, and for one moment swerved from that kindly support which he had always given hitherto to the Lollard party. He called before him the four most prominent Lollards then in his suite—Lord Latimer, Sir John Montacute, Sir Lewis Clifford, and Sir Richard Stury—and sharply rebuked them for their favour shown to traitors, with a threat of expulsion from the household if they did not change their political aspect. Latimer, Clifford, and Stury, were terrified, especially the last, who fell upon his knees and vowed that he would never do it again.

All these were old men. But the youngest of the group,—John Montacute, who was but four-and-twenty—held his peace, and promised nothing.

Could King Richard have looked forward five short years, he would have

seen that one young man, who now refused to follow his King to evil, alone of all the four giving his life for that King's sake. The man who would not deny his God for fear of his sovereign, was the one who was ready to die for God and him.

It was during this short period of glamour thrown over King Richard by the astute Archbishop that certain Lollards were imprisoned in Beaumaris Castle, that some recanted, and that various edicts were issued, in the strong language wherein Gloucester and Courtenay delighted, against those who "sowed tares among the people." The complete change of tone in the royal mandates is very striking, between those periods when Gloucester's influence paralysed the King, and the two short intervals when Richard was left to himself. Yet to this day Richard, not Gloucester or Courtenay, is assailed with all the obloquy which is due only to the two latter. On this occasion Richard followed the Archbishop's leading up to a certain point. But when Courtenay pressed the advantage which he had gained, and urged capital punishment for the heretics, the King drew back. The cards had been shown a little too plainly. A short term of imprisonment for obnoxious politics was consonant with Richard's ideas of right and justice: but death as the penalty of religious opinions he would not give. Was it likely, when the religious opinions were to some extent his own?

Courtenay appeared to waive the matter. Ostensibly, he deferred to the King's judgment. And Richard never suspected that the sentence of death had merely been, by Courtenay and Gloucester, transferred to another person, and that their resolve was that if he would not permit the heretics to die, Richard must die himself.

It was during this period that Earl Roger kept quiet and silent,—so quiet that we never hear a word about him for a whole twelvemonth, though circumstantial evidence tends to show that he was in London all the time. His high position, and his known opinions, alike placed him in danger. The only safe thing to do was, so far as possible, to reduce himself to a nonentity, and hope that Gloucester and his myrmidons would forget him.

During the last two years death had been very busy in high places. The plague of 1394 had made three royal widowers—the Duke of Lancaster, the King, and the Earl of Derby. In the summer of 1396, Archbishop Courtenay was also summoned to the judgment bar. Removed from Courtenay's influence, the King awoke from his dream, and determined to initiate a new order of things. He knew at last—all but too late—that Gloucester and Arundel were among his worst enemies. Had he seen it with regard to one man more—his cousin Derby—the course of English history would probably have been different.

There was another person awake also, with the important difference that he had never been asleep. Gloucester was ready to act just as soon as his royal nephew: sooner, in fact, for his plans were already matured, while Richard's

were only in process of formation. The time was come when that blow was to be struck which he had foreseen so long, for which he had waited so patiently and paved the way so elaborately, and which for so many years past, he had mentally destined Roger Mortimer to strike. The edge of the tool must be felt, to see whether the metal were sufficiently strong for the work to be done, and the point sufficiently sharp.

The July sun streamed full into a large low chamber of a handsome house on St. Paul's Wharf. The chamber was hung with dark blue silk relieved by silver embroidery. Velvet settles of the same colour stood at intervals around the walls, and half-a-dozen curule chairs of ebony inlaid with ivory, and furnished with blue silk cushions, were scattered about the room. On one of the velvet settles, with his head supported by a cushion, lay the only occupant of this handsome chamber—a young man of twenty-two years of age, fair-complexioned and very good-looking. His eyes were closed, but he certainly was not asleep, for he drew long sighs at intervals which were not long. On a small table beside him a large book lay open, bound in violet velvet, and clasped with gold.

A soft scratch at the door without announced a visitor, who was desired to come in, without any change of position on the part of the occupant of the settle. A middle-aged man, clad in blue and gold livery, entered accordingly.

"Please it your Lordship, Master Westcombe is here come from Fleshy, from my Lord Duke of Gloucester, desiring speech of your Lordship."

The slight contraction of his Lordship's brow might indicate that he could have borne to be deprived of the pleasure of an interview with Mr. Westcombe.

"Good. Bring him hither."

He rose from the settle, gave his long blue silk gown a slight shake, and resting his hand on the book, awaited his visitor.

The visitor proved to be a squire in royal livery, with the badge of the Duke of Gloucester—a golden swan—fastened to his left sleeve. He made a courtesy—for in those days the courtesy was the gentleman's reverence—and then with many words and some flowery expletives informed his very dear Lord that his gracious Lord the Duke lovingly prayed him to speed with all haste to Fleshy, for he desired to speak with him immediately.

Earl Roger's expression of face on this communication was much like that of a man who is just on the point of swallowing a necessary but very unpalatable dose of medicine. He gave a rather short reply, to the effect that he would start for Fleshy early the next morning: and having dismissed Mr. Westcombe courteously but quickly, he made his way to another room on the same floor of the house. Sounds of lively conversation and laughter issued from this room as soon as the door was opened. The Earl, in whose face the expression with which he had received his uncle's behest had rather increased than disappeared from it,

made his way up the long narrow room, filled with brilliant company, pausing now to greet one, and now another, till he reached a lady attired in white and ruby satin, who sat at the further end in a curule chair, surrounded by gentle men who appeared to be paying court to her.

"Pray, suffer me not to let your diversion," remarked the Earl, with the faintest possible tone of satire under his polished accents: "I suppose I may have leave to speak with her Ladyship among her other servitors.—I came but to say, my Lady, that my fair uncle of Gloucester hath sent unto me this evening, praying me to render visit unto him at Fleshy, as early as may stand at mine ease. I think, therefore, to set forth with the morning light, and I shall maybe not have the pleasure to see your Ladyship again ere my departing."

The voice of the Countess replied, "Then, my Lord, you will not be here for the dance to-morrow? Truly, this is displeasing tidings!" But what her eyes said was,— "Really, what a convenient coincidence! I am delighted to hear it."

"I dare not flatter myself that your Ladyship will miss me," was Earl Roger's answer, in the same slightly ironical tone. Then he turned round, kissed his hand to her, and made his way out of the room.

Just outside he met his children and their nurses, returning from the garden. They were four very pretty, attractive little children, the eldest not quite seven years of age, and the youngest only two. The Earl stopped, and took up the eldest in his arms.

"God bless my Nannette!" he said. "Has Nannette been in the garden?"

Little Anne nodded, and looked earnestly into her father's eyes. The expression of them distressed her. Children can read the expression of a face long before they can read anything else. She thought, in her child language, that "somebody had hurt him;" she realised that he wanted comforting and diversion of thought: and her idea of administering both was to pat his cheek, and to hold up her doll for him to look at.

Somebody had indeed hurt him—somebody who was always hurting him—somebody who cared not a straw whether he was hurt or not. But who that was must never be told, except to the two privileged persons who had discovered it without telling, and whose sympathy was ready and sure.

The Earl kissed his little girl and set her down; laid his hand on his boy's head and blessed him. As he turned away, he said to a gentleman usher who was in waiting,— "Has Dan Robesart returned home?"

"Not yet, my Lord."

"No matter. Send Madison to me." And the Earl went on to the room he had first occupied. There he sat down by the window, and for a moment yielded to his own sorrowful thoughts.

He was not usually a man to brood over his sorrows, nor to nurse

grievances. His feelings were more of the sharp and short order, and his disposition was not only cheerful, but playful. But when he had just received a fresh sting, the wound would smart and rankle for a moment. Otherwise, youth and natural good spirits commonly helped him to bear his daily cross. Just now it pressed hard. Those lovely blue eyes—as lovely as they were unloving—had so plainly told him that their owner would be glad to get rid of him, even for a few days. That bright illusion of past days, when he had fancied differently, was over long ago. He had woken early from his sweet dream. He knew that his idol was not merely dethroned—it was broken. The Alianora whom he had so passionately loved was a creature of his own imagination: and the real being, to whom he was tied for life, was neither loveable nor loving.

There was no jealousy mixed with these feelings of disappointed loneliness. It was not that he had any apprehension of her loving some one else better than himself. He said to himself bitterly that she had not heart enough for that. What she enjoyed in those ceaseless flirtations in which she spent her life was just their very emptiness and frivolity. For anything like genuine attachment—anything which involved strength and colour and warmth and reality—her nature was too light.

Oh, when will women learn that a flirt is a woman who has deliberately flung aside the very flower and glory of her womanhood?—who is preparing for herself a middle age of misery, and an old age of contempt and loneliness: to add to them, unless God's mercy interpose to save her, an eternity of remorse. No type of woman is so utterly despicable as this. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Earl Roger was not a man to shut his eyes to anything which he did not wish to see, nor to go on hoping against hope in the face of what he knew to be facts. His position was very much the same as that of another near connection of royalty, just a hundred years before him.[#] But Earl Edmund of Cornwall and Earl Roger of March were men of two very different types. The one had sunk under his burden; the other rose superior to it. Roger was not so utterly swallowed up in his disappointment as his predecessor had been. For him, his territorial affairs, his children, politics, and other interests, came in to relieve the weight. Only now and then, as it was to-night, his heart sank low, and felt a yearning want of that human sympathy which he never received but from two persons—his family physician, Mr. Robesart, and his body-squire, Lawrence Madison.

[#] The reader who desires to know more of this will find it in "Not For Him."

He lifted his head now to bid the latter enter.

"Your Lordship is not at ease, I fear?" said the squire with an intonation of genuine interest in his master.

He had grown into a taller and stronger-built man than Roger: dark-haired, dark-eyed, with a pale grave face, a smile of considerable sweetness, and a clear pleasant voice.

"Only the old story, lad," was the quiet answer. "Aye, and a little further travail thereto. My Lord of Gloucester, mine uncle, hath sent for me. We must needs be away toward Flechy as early as the sun to-morrow."

"At your Lordship's pleasure. Shall it be to tarry?"

"I trow not. Best, maybe, to be prepared for a two-three days. But I shall be here again in the even, an' I may."

Lawrence bowed, and withdrew from the chamber.

Half an hour later, Mr. Robesart entered it, and found the Earl bending over the large Bible.

"I was told," said he, "that your Lordship had asked for me a short space ago. Metrusteth you be not indisposed?"

"Not here, good Father, I thank you," answered the Earl, touching his head. "Only here"—and he laid a hand upon his heart. "Methought I would fain hear somewhat of your counsel ere my departing, which shall be right early on the morrow." And he repeated the explanation given to Lawrence.

"Your Lordship," responded the physician, "hath not, as methinks, overmuch trust in my Lord Duke?"

"Fair fall he that hath that in any man!" returned Roger with a gesture of contempt. "In truth, Father, my belief in the Duke's discretion, not to say loyalty, would go by the eye of a needle. If he would but keep his plots to himself and my fair cousin of Rutland, which 'joyeth so much therein that I could not for compassion wish him thereout! Verily, I am always something afeard lest some day he essay to drag me in."

"Counts your Lordship that his Grace hath sent for you with that intent?"

"I know not wherefore he hath so done, and that is the very truth." And the Earl passed his hand wearily over his forehead.

"It will be well that we both ask God for wisdom for your Lordship. But there is more than that troubling you, or I mistake."

"More than that? Aye so. Not more than custom is. Father, see you yon fly a-walking over the page of this book? If I shall say, That fly is in my way, and brush him thereout, roughly, so that he die—what is it? To me, but a little matter of disease[#] whereof I have rid me. But to him it is the end of health, and life, and all things. Ah! there be many fly-crushers among us human creatures. God help the crushed flies!"

[#] Inconvenience.

"Does He not help them?"

"How wot I? You must needs tell me what is help ere I can answer you. You mind that part of the story of my Lord Saint John Baptist, when he sent them twain to our Lord to ask at Him if He were He that should come, or no? There be will tell us that he sent them for their teaching; it could not be for his own. Methinks such have been in but few deep places, where the floods overflowed them. Was it not that the man's heart was wrung to behold the Christ, his own kinsman, pass him by on the other side—heal and comfort and help all that came, and never turn to him? Ah, it is evil waiting with patience and faith, when Christ passeth a man by."

"And you scarce twenty-three, my Lord!" said Mr. Robesart sadly, and not so inconsequently as it seemed.

"After men's reckoning. Be there any years in God's eternity? A man, methinks, may live a thousand years in one day, whether they be years of happiness or of misery." The Earl's head was lifted suddenly. "Father, tell me, what means He for me? It might have been so different!" And with the saddest of intonations, the young head sank again.

Mr. Robesart laid his hand on that of the Earl.

"He means,—'My son, give Me thine heart.'"

"I thought I had done so."

"Then he means,—My child, come nearer to Me. 'Each branch that beareth fruit, He shall purge it, that it bear the more fruit.'"

The Earl made no reply, except to say after an interval,—"Father, I would fain find you here when I return. I hope that will be to-morrow at even."

"I will await your Lordship," answered Mr. Robesart: and the interview ended.

The journey to Fleshy was hot and dusty, though they arrived there before the sun had reached the meridian. My Lord Duke kept his young kinsman waiting for him some time, and when he came, took him into the most secret recess of his own private room.

"Very dear Cousin," said he—and Roger felt sure from that moment that he meant mischief—"I do earnestly desire to unbosom myself to thee of all the secrets of mine heart. I am well assured that I need not unfold to thee the very numerous reasons which render our fair Lord King Richard wholly unfit to govern this realm, as being neither worthy nor capable to do so."

Roger contrived to hold his tongue, and kept his amazement as much out of his eyes as he could.

"You are well aware," continued the Duke—people are apt to assume your perfect agreement when they utter opinions with which you particularly disagree—"you are well aware, very dear Cousin, that the King cares for nothing but the pleasures of the table and the amusements of ladies."

What Gloucester meant by this sweeping statement[#] was that the King disliked war, which his uncle regarded as the only occupation fit for a prince: and preferred literature, music, conversation, and field sports, which in the eyes of his uncle were sufficiently mean to be level to the feminine intellect.

[#] These words from Gloucester are matter of history, and were used more than once in substance at least.

"Now, very dear Cousin, it is much communed[#] that these things are so: and hard is to know what shall be done in the matter, the rather since the people are right heartily discontent, and action must needs be taken."

[#] Talked about.

My Lord of Gloucester's language was usually as full of "the people" as that of any modern Radical: and, also like some modern speakers, he was greatly given to crediting the people with whatever desires he himself might entertain. Roger felt strongly inclined to inquire (with Lord Melbourne), "Can't you let it alone?" but he held his peace, accounting it the wisest plan to let Gloucester unwind his peroration. Every time that he found himself addressed as "very dear cousin," Roger's sensation of distrust deepened.

"I do you to wit, very dear Cousin, that I am already joined by my Lord of Arundel, your old friend and guardian,—his son Sir John, my Lord of Warwick, and many other prelates and barons, all which be at one and busy about this matter. The King shall be deposed, and prisoned so long as he shall live, in due state of a prince, and full provision allowed for his maintenance. We do desire to see you our King, being fully satisfied that you shall be of very diverse liking and conditions from him that is now such, and shall well content your nobles and people. What say you?"

Not what he thought. Had Roger spoken that out, the solitary word "Scoundrel!" would have been sufficient to convey it. But he held his peace. During a few seconds of silence his thoughts rapidly revolved probabilities, possibil-

ities, desirabilities. Gloucester watched him narrowly until at last Roger looked up and spoke.

"Fair Uncle, and my gracious Lord, these matters be of weighty import, and ask grave meditation. It would not be possible that with so little time I should give you an answer touching a business so great."

Roger's manner was so cautious, if not cold, that Gloucester took the alarm.

"Have a care, nevertheless, most sweet Cousin, and this I pray you right heartily, that the matter get not abroad. If it be published, and come to the King's ears, ere the business be ripe—"

"Trust me, fair Uncle. I will take due thought, and observe all secrecy. And now, if your Grace have said so much as it list you, I pray you let me be on my way home, for I have urgent business in hand, and it shall be late ere I win thither."

An hour afterwards, Roger and his suite set out from Fleishy. As he climbed the last slope whence the Castle could be seen, he drew bridle for an instant, and looked back.

"Thank God that I have escaped from that hole with mine head on!" he murmured, in so low a tone that he was unheard except by the safe ears of Lawrence Madison. "If my gracious Lord of Gloucester ever again set eyes on me within those his walls, I grant him free leave to dub Roger Mortimer a fool! 'Very dear Cousin,' forsooth! 'Most sweet Cousin!' Methinks, the further I drew away from him, the dearer and sweeter I became. We will see, most sweet and very dear Uncle, if the young cannot outrun the old!—Lawrence!"

"My Lord?"

"We must be ready, thou and I, to set out for Ireland as to-morrow."

"For Ireland, my Lord!"

"Aye. I shall never feel at ease till I have set the sea betwixt me and those prating traitors. Once at Carrickfergus or Trim Castle, and I may snap my fingers at my very dear uncle and my most sweet cousins. They shall not be so foot-hot to fetch me from Ireland as from Paul's Wharf. The rascal crew!—the vile traitors! Pardoned over and over again as some of them have been!—raised to honours and riches by the King they are ready to betray! Would I be their King?—the ungrateful, disloyal adders! Nay, fair Uncle of Gloucester! Roger Mortimer can lay down his life if need be, but he can never sell his King and betray his friend—never break his trust, nor be unfaithful to his troth! '*Un Dieu, un Roy*'—'*Fais ce que doy!*' Come, let us hie on."

"Methinks," said Lawrence, a little hesitatingly, "her Ladyship shall scantily be ready to obey so unlooked-for a summons."

"Her Ladyship—will do her pleasure." There was a pause between the words. "It may be it shall not list her to follow me thus far. If she so think, she can 'bide at which of my castles she will."

Nothing more was said on the subject until they reached Thames Street, when Lawrence was sent to give instant notice to the servants of their master's sudden departure, and warn them to be ready for him to set out at four o'clock the next morning, and the Earl himself went to convey the intelligence to the Countess.

"Bid Dan Robesart await me in my chamber," he said to the gentleman usher as he passed.

CHAPTER IX. ROGER FINDS HIS MISSION.

"And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods?"
—LORD MACAULAY.

Earl Roger found his Countess in the same room in which he had left her when he went to Fleshy. Hypocras and spices, which constituted the "void," a light meal corresponding to afternoon tea, were being served round as he entered. Roger made his way to the side of Alianora, declined the hypocras—a light, sweet wine—and sat down by her while she sipped it.

"You are early, my Lord," said the Countess, whose eyes were occupied in watching an interchange of frothy banter between a knight and a lady at a little distance.

"I had need, my Lady. Will it meet with your wishes to follow me to Ireland, whether urgent cause removeth me, and without delay?"

"Ireland! What part of Ireland?"

"Kilkenny, at the first; afterward, maybe, to Trim."

"And what moveth your Lordship to go among those savages, who should scantily wit if you ware red velvet or blue damask?"

"Those savages are my kinsfolk, under your Ladyship's leave. Moreover, savages commonly have better sight than civil[#] men."

[#] Civilised.

"Verily, your Lordship hath some sweet kinsfolk to wake your pride!" said the Countess with a light laugh.

"Therein is your Ladyship not deceived," was the dry answer. "I leave behind me some most sweet ones. Well, what saith your Ladyship to my point?"

"What, *I* go to Ireland? Gramercy, your Lordship is pleasant! Aye, when I have cause to wear up mine old gowns and ugly[#] head-gear, then will I think of following you in that direction. But till it so happen, under your leave, I would as lief "bide on Paul's Wharf or at Ludlow."

[#] Ugly.

"As your Ladyship will."

"When go you? Soon, is it?—this next week?"

"I set forth as four o'clock to-morrow morning."

"And you looked for me to go withal? Verily, what unwitty[#] fantasies have these men! Why, one might scarce fold a borel[#] cloth in the time. What moveth you to be thus foot-hot,[#] forsooth?"

[#] Silly.

[#] A very common, coarse material.

[#] In hot haste.

"There is cause, Dame," said the Earl gravely.

"Then I bid your Lordship good even," said the Countess, laughing, "for elsewhere shall you ne'er have space to put on your hood. I wish you a joyous meeting with those your dear kinsfolk, and that they may not eat you ere I behold you again!"

She held out her hand, and he touched his lips to it.

"May God bless my Lady!" he said very gravely.

Then he left her, and went upstairs, to say good-bye to his children. As he slowly mounted, the thought occurred to him,—What does blessing mean? If

God blessed Alianora, what would He do to her? According to the usual ideas of men, He would give her beauty, talent, wealth, luxury, and happiness. But was this what God meant by the word? Had He no better blessings than such as these? Were not His sweetest fruits wrapped often in unsightly husks—His rarest gems in crusts which concealed their brilliance? Might He not be blessing Roger himself by means of his disappointments, and not blessing Alianora through all the gifts He showered on her? Was there not something in that Book which Roger was beginning to know so well, and to apply instinctively to every thing which happened to him, about one to whom God gave corn, and wine, and oil, and silver, and gold, which she prepared for Baal? If men turned His blessings into means of sinning, was there no fear lest He should turn them into curses?

Little Anne ran to meet her father as soon as she heard his step. He stooped and took her in his arms.

"Little Nan," he said rather sadly, "what wilt thou grow to be?"

"A lady," said she readily, with brightening eyes.

"There be two sorts of women, my little maid. There be heart-comforters, and there be heart-breakers. Which wilt thou be?"

The question was beyond her in details. She replied to its scope, which was all that she understood.

"I will be what God makes me."

"Amen," answered the Earl. "Be what God makes thee,—not Satan, nor thine own foolish fantasies. Farewell, my little one. I am going a long journey, my Nannette."

"Will you be back soon?"

"Nay, I think not. Farewell, my darling—God go with thee and bless thee!"

He kissed them all and gave them his blessing. Then he went back to his own room, where he found Mr. Robesart awaiting him.

"Father, it behoveth me to set forth for Ireland with the dawn, and I would vain have taken you withal. Can you be ready?"

"A priest is always ready," was the reply. "At what hour shall I wait upon your Lordship?"

"At four of the clock I think to set out."

"You shall find me in attendance. Can I serve your Lordship in any other way?"

"Methinks not, save by taking that into your safe keeping," said the Earl, touching the large Bible. "I would have it go withal, as well as you. Nought else, I thank you."

But before Mr. Robesart had quite reached the door, his young master's voice arrested his steps.

"Father, tell me ere you go, what doth God when He blesseth us?"

"What do you, my Lord, when you bless your childre?"

"I do desire all good to hap unto them: but I may not ensure it."

"And He alway ensureth it. I see none other difference. God's blessing is God's love. Every gift of God is a loving thought of God's heart toward His childre."

"But how, toward them that are not such?"

"He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good," replied Mr. Robesart. "His common, earthly blessings He gives to all alike."

"And what call you such gifts as beauty, learning, and riches? Be they blessings, or no?"

"All things that God has made are good. They are blessings when they leave His hand. If we would have them abide blessings, we must give them back to Him. If we keep them to adorn ourselves withal, they become curses to us. God's first and greatest blessing is Himself. Let us keep Him in His right place—on the throne of the heart—and all else will fall into his right place, as by the wave of a magician's wand."

"Things be sorely apt to get out of their places!" said the Earl with a sigh. "I thank you, Father."

"My Lord, when you find things out of their places, look and see if you have not given leave to somewhat else to occupy His place. God give you a good even!"

A very small suite accompanied Earl Roger to Ireland; but it included his two best friends, Mr. Robesart and Lawrence Madison. His outside friends were considerably puzzled to know why he should leave England at such a particularly awkward moment as this, when the negotiations for the King's marriage were in progress. The Earl of Kent, his late guardian—since Roger's majority he had ceased to be a practical one so far as any personal control was concerned—was specially perplexed and astonished at this step. But he knew nothing of the interview at Fleshy.

To all of them Roger gave a general and vague explanation, which had reference to the necessary care of his Irish estates. His own sole fervent desire was to put himself where Gloucester could not find him—to lose himself, as far as the conspirators were concerned. It was the only way that he could see just then to serve that God, and that King, to both of whom in his early youth he had pledged his heart's devotion.

Rarely has any journey been taken in more feverish haste than that of Roger Earl of March to Ireland in the summer of 1396. He felt as though he were not safe for a day until he had put the breadth of St. George's Channel between himself and his uncle Gloucester. His journey from London to Haverford was almost a flight. His unsuspecting suite complained bitterly of the long forced

marches over the mountains of South Wales which their unreasonable master obliged them to take. Two days delay at Haverford, before the wind would serve, brought Roger's patience to the verge of distraction.

"I *must* go!" he said passionately to Mr. Robesart.

"My Lord," was the grave answer, "it ill suits the archer to wear the uniform of the general. There is no *must* but one, and it is meet but for the lips of the Lord of all."

"Yet surely He knoweth my necessity?"

"Soothly: but I pray your Lordship to remember that what is *must* with you may be *must not* with Him."

"I cannot rest till I be hence!"

"We shall rest in the life to come," quietly replied Mr. Robesart. "In the life that now is, we have but to be and do God's will."

"You take it calmly, Father! But then, for you there is no such need. 'Tis easy gear to counsel a man to lie still whose veins burn with fever, when your own pulse is as quiet as a mill-tarn." And Roger laughed, with a laugh which was not all mirth.

Mr. Robesart's answering smile was rather pathetic.

"Having lived through the fever, I may know your Lordship's feelings."

On the third day the wind changed, and they set sail from Haverford. Three weeks—a very favourable passage—landed them at Wexford; and as Roger set foot upon the shore of Ireland, he turned and looked across to the invisible mountains of Wales.

"Fair fall thou, my native land!" he said half sarcastically. "From henceforth is this land of my fathers mine own land, and thou must serve thee without me."

The autumn and winter of that year found him at Kilkenny, spending his time in an unusual manner for a noble of the fourteenth century. He summoned Irish minstrels and chroniclers around him, and went deep into Irish history. Perhaps it was a natural result that Irish history went deep into him. He became an enthusiastic admirer of the character and annals of the nation the blood of whose kings ran in his veins. His own natural impetuosity drove him along the groove which he had chosen, and ere long one passionate aspiration took possession of his soul, next after that "*Un Dieu, un Roy*" which had possessed and would possess it for ever. England and Ireland should be at peace, and he would be the means of it. They should live and love as sisters, happy and tranquil, under one sceptre, having but one aim, and the glory of the one should be the glory of the other. To this he would give himself as long as he should live. He would secure it—or die in the attempt.

All the Mortimers had entertained an affection for Ireland, and could never forget their Irish blood. King Richard also had a liking for that country, of which

his uncle of Gloucester was pleased to speak very scornfully.

"He is a fool who thinks of conquering Ireland," said Gloucester, in his usual unwatered diction. "The Irish are a poor and wicked people, with an impoverished country; and he who should conquer it one year would lose it the next."

This affection of the young Earl for the Green Isle by no means increased his popularity with his English retainers. Saxon and Celt have always mutually looked down upon each other. The Irish saw in the English intruding strangers, none the more welcome for being conquerors; the English reckoned the Irish uncivilised barbarians with whom no person of refinement could be satisfied to associate. They were not themselves so over-refined that they need have been particular: but the half-educated man (still more woman) is usually more fastidious on the score of vulgarity than the blue-blooded noble. There were murmurs among Roger's suit that he was too accessible to the masses, and that his heart was rather Irish than English.

When the King discovered, somewhat to his surprise, that his chosen heir had so unexpectedly disappeared from the scene on the plea of looking after his Irish property, he sent him a commission of lieutenancy for Ulster, Connaught, and Meath—a most convenient arrangement for Roger, since it afforded him a full excuse for not returning to England until the state of affairs should have changed. His Majesty was not the only person who was puzzled by Roger's proceedings. But there was another person who was not puzzled at all. Of one point Roger might safely have felt assured—that, however his sudden disappearance might surprise and perplex others, his uncle Gloucester at least would not fail to understand it. But the fact that a particular material had proved unsuitable for his purpose was not likely to ruin the designs of so far-seeing and scheming a conspirator as Gloucester. Having convinced himself that his nephew of March was not the soft and malleable article that he had supposed him, Gloucester merely cast the useless thing on one side, and set his busy brain to work to evolve a fresh project. It proved a very different one from the last. His new scheme involved a partition of the kingdom into four parts, of which his brother of Lancaster was to be bought off with one (a matter somewhat easier said than done); York, who was plastic as putty in the hands of Gloucester, was to have another; Arundel was to be rewarded with the third; and the fourth fell to Gloucester himself. March was left out altogether.

How long this sagacious disposition of political affairs would have lasted, may be very reasonably questioned: certainly not, at the furthest, beyond the second generation. A quarter of England would never have contented Derby, for whose ambitious soul the world was scarcely wide enough, nor could Rutland have reigned an hour in his division without plotting against the other three.

The end was near—the end of one phase of the political tumult. On the 28th

of July, Gloucester and his fellow conspirators met at Arundel, to perfect their plot. Just eight days later, in full Parliament, at Westminster, that extremely "honourable man," my Lord of Rutland, humbly presented a petition of impeachment against Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick. Five days afterwards Gloucester was arrested and sent to Calais; and on the 8th of September he died in the Castle of that town. The King had borne with him, to use his own words, "as long as he had been able"—and no other Sovereign, perhaps excepting Henry VI., would have borne with him half so long.

It was asserted by the King's enemies, long afterwards, and is now generally believed, that Gloucester was "murdered" by being smothered between two feather beds. Unfortunately for the assertion, this very report was spread, with the view of aspersing the King, while Gloucester was still alive. The subsequent elaborate account, therefore, was simply a more carefully revised version of the old slander. The truth is that Gloucester was either privately executed, or that he died of apoplexy before the execution took place. Why a man under sentence of death, approved as inevitable by his own brother, the just and humane Lancaster, should not have suffered execution, must be left to those modern writers of the "follow-my-leader" school, who persist in terming the execution a murder. How many times the penalty had been deserved it would not be easy to reckon.

Things were not now, as previously, done by halves—except in one item, and that spoiled the whole. The Earl of Arundel was beheaded on the 21st of September. The Archbishop, Norfolk, and Warwick, were banished for life. If one other execution had taken place, the rebellion would have been crushed, and King Richard's life would have been safe. It was entirely his own fault that it did not. Derby had been engaged in a multitude of plots—more than any one knew except himself—he had plotted the death of the King, and had drawn his sword upon him in the Queen's presence: he had been twice, if not three times, condemned to death by his own father. The Duke of Bretagne had said to the King on their last interview, "You will never be safe while Henry of Lancaster lives." Richard knew all this, but his heart failed him. For all the provocation received both as monarch and as man, that true and tender heart refused to condemn the old playmate, and instead of it lifted him to honour. He fancied this step would ensure the love and fidelity of a man who knew not what love and faithfulness were. He laid this adder to warm in his bosom, and like the adder that it was, it stung him to death.

While these stirring events were passing in England, Earl Roger of March maintained that distance and silence which he had evidently perceived to be the only safe course for himself. How far was he neglecting his duties in so doing? is a question which may reasonably be asked. The date at which he returned to England seems to show that he was actuated, not by a cowardly fear for his

personal safety—a supposition contradicted by every other action of his life—but by a fear of his name being dragged into the contest on the wrong side, and without his own consent. As soon as he could feel sure that Gloucester had laid aside the idea of making a tool of him, and before any appearance of retribution had overtaken Gloucester, Roger returned to Usk. The little cloud which had overhung the Lollard party had been long dispersed, and during the period of that shadow Roger had sought safety not in flight, but in silence.

The Countess was still in London, and she made no attempt to join her lord in Monmouthshire. He felt so hopeless of her doing so, that he did not even ask her. But one other thing he did—he sent for his children. Beyond his natural wish for their occasional company, was his strong desire to rescue them from the contamination of the society into which, so soon as they were old enough, their mother was likely to plunge them. He was anxious to accomplish a project which had occurred to him, and which he did not expect her to oppose—to obtain his old foster-mother, Guenllian, to take the same position with respect to his children. Their mother cared too little about them to care who was with them, so long as it was some one who would take all responsibility off her shoulders. Guenllian, on her part, was ready enough to return to her sometime nursling, whom she had always loved the best of all her charges. Roger was more easy when he had secured her. With her came Beatrice, who had always been her satellite since she entered service, and was considered as an indispensable appendage.

The following Michaelmas brought a magnificent ceremony, in the creation of some dozen new peers at Westminster. The list was headed by the traitor Derby and the treacherous Rutland, who were respectively created Dukes of Hereford and Aumerle. But the heir presumptive of the Crown kept away from both politics and pageants in his seclusion at Usk, and never showed himself until the ensuing January, when he was summoned to the Parliament at Shrewsbury, to take an oath which had been administered to all the peers, and which March was the last of the peers to take. It was a particularly useless one, for a member of any party could have taken it with a clear conscience. It was sworn by the body of the peers on the shrine of St. Edward, and by March alone upon the cross of Canterbury (probably as being portable, which the shrine was not): and it bound him who took it "to hold, sustain, and maintain well and loyally, without fraud or evil intent, all statutes, etc., made in this present Parliament, without ever going contrary thereto or to any part of them, and never to revoke nor annul them, nor never to suffer their repeal, living nor dying—saving to the King his royalty and liberty, and the rights of the Crown." The last item annulled all the rest so far as the royalists were concerned; the whole was useless as directed against the traitors.

Roger did not remain at Shrewsbury. He followed the King and Parliament

to Bristol, and as soon as he was released from his parliamentary duties, he came on to London. He was there for a few weeks, until signs appeared in the political world of another tumult. It is popularly said that when thieves fall out, honest men come by their own: and in this instance the thieves, who were Hereford and Norfolk, fell out most decidedly. They appeared together before the King, each of them bringing against the other a charge of that disloyalty of which both were as guilty as any man could well be. A rumour of disturbances in Ireland afforded Roger a chance of getting out of the way, before either of these most honourable men should drag him into their toils, or bring charges against him which, however untrue, he might find it difficult to refute.

Once more he offered to Alianora the choice of accompanying him. They had been separated for nearly two years, and had only met a few weeks before. But the Countess could not think of it. In fact, she declared herself quite astonished that her lord could be so unreasonable as to ask for her company. Her new dresses for Whitsuntide were in course of preparation, and had cost her a month's reflection. Did he suppose that they could be finished in a day? or if they had been finished, how could he imagine that she would be satisfied to waste their resplendency on a handful of common knights and squires, or a horde of Irish barbarians? Leave Town in the beginning of April! It was perfectly preposterous, impossible. And she was quite sure he did not want her—which last was said in a tone decidedly indicative of the companion fact that she did not want him.

He did not want her as he had once done. His wish for the company of the real woman whom he had long seen her to be, was far less than it had been erewhile for the society of the loved and loveable ideal which he was now convinced that she was not. Still the old love, though stifled, repressed, and repulsed, was yet alive, and might have been blown into a flame had Alianora cared to take the trouble. Roger sighed as he turned away.

"Be it so, Dame," he answered, speaking more lightly than he felt. "But your Ladyship will scarce look for me to rest content in being utterly bereft of the company of ladies. I shall take Nannette withal from Usk."

"Gramercy! to what end?" demanded Alianora, opening her handsome eyes in astonishment.

A smile of rather bitter amusement played round the lips of the Earl. "Choose your Ladyship the reason," said he, still lightly. "You have no grudge thereunto?"

"I? Good lack, nay! An' it like your Lordship to burden you with a maid of nine years, you be welcome of very inwitte.[#] I shall have the lesser charge."

[#] Most heartily.

Her husband might reasonably have inquired what charge she had ever taken of the children, or how it was to be lessened when they were already out of her care: but he passed it by.

"Wenteline will ease you thereof," said he. "Your Ladyship grudgeth not, methinks, that she should bide hence with the childre?"

"Not I, forsooth! Have with them whom you will," was the careless answer. "I love none of them so dear that I may not live without them."

Roger knew as well as Alianora that the pronoun included himself. He sent Anne into raptures, and Guenllian into much surprise, by an order that they should be ready to accompany him. His male friends were inclined to be exceedingly merry over this odd notion of the Earl. That he should have taken even his heir, at that early age, would have seemed to them amusing; but to choose a girl of nine for his companion struck them as a preposterous absurdity. Earl Roger paid no attention to them. Extremely sensitive to the lightest censure from lips that he loved, he was now perfectly callous alike to ridicule and to anger from others.

Of the four children, Anne was his special darling. She and her brother Roger took after himself in character, while Edmund and Alianora were their mother's children. Least attractive of them was Edmund, in whose disposition indolence and selfishness were already manifesting themselves strongly. When the children were summoned in the morning, Anne and Roger were always up in a moment, while Edmund had to be dug out of bed amid a storm of grumbles. All that Anne owed to her mother was that graceful and gracious manner, which with the mother was merely artificial polish, but in the daughter was ingrained as a part of her character. The child's affection for her father was intense: she always shrank from her mother. The instinct of her true heart discerned the utter hollowness of Alianora, and the two natures could never amalgamate.

April had almost bloomed into May when the party reached Trim Castle, where Roger meant to remain for a few weeks.

CHAPTER X. MARCUS CURTIUS.

"Yet thy true heart and loving faith,
And agony of martyr death,
God saw,—and He remembereth."

—F. J. PALGRAVE.

"What think you on thus sadly, my son?" said Mr. Robesart to Lawrence Madison, whom he found standing with folded arms, gazing out of an embrasure as though he were not contemplating the landscape.

"I was thinking, Father," was the answer, in a low, dreamy tone, "wherein success lieth."

"What fashion of success?"

Lawrence smiled, "I am beginning to learn that there be more fashions thereof than one."

"It is good to learn it early," said the priest. "For man is apt to think that alone success which hath a gloss and a glitter about it. We be too oft like childre, which would rather a brass counter that did shine bravely, than a gold noble that was dull and covered with dirt. But what be thy thoughts thereon, my son?"

"I thought, Father, that many men did destroy their own success by being too eager to grasp thereat, afore God had it ready."

"Thou hast well spoken, Lawrence—'afore God had it ready.' Hast thou read certain words of Saint Stephen the martyr touching Moyses, that great Prophet of God? 'He guessed that his brethren should understand that God should give to them health by the hand of him; but they understood not.' How should they? Nor was it they that were lacking. It was Moyses that understood not—understood not that the day of deliverance was not come by forty years—that forty years' keeping of sheep in Midian must needs be first. Yet God did mean to deliver them by his hand; it was not undone, only latered.[#] He did so when the right time came—when He was ready, and when Moyses was ready, and when Israel was ready."

[#] Deferred.

"It seemeth me," answered Lawrence, sighing, "that man lacketh much training at our Lord's hand, ere he be fit for a deliverer."

"More than any can rightly judge, out-taken our Lord. The fellowship of Christ's work may well include the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Mark thou, a stone-breaker needs no training; a goldsmith must have much. The finer the tool shall be, the sharper must be the grinding of it. What is behind thy thoughts, Lawrence?"

"Methinks, Father, you wit my Lord's earnest desire to be he that should

peace Ireland with England?—and you know how foot-hot he flingeth himself, soul and body, into all that cometh to his hand for to be done?”

”I know,” said Mr. Robesart, with a smile in which amusement and pity had equal shares.

”I was marvelling if he were ready,” said Lawrence in the same low voice. ”I am something feared lest he may run ere he be sent.”

”Men of his disposition are prone to make that blunder.”

”That would not bring success.”

”Not the brass counter of it, in very sooth: yet it might be a step on the way to the gold. It were more like to bring a lesson to himself than success to his plan. Yet even there, Lawrence, that is at times the truest success which hath most the look of failure. It did not look like success when the cross was reared on the hill of Calvary. Yet that night he was destroyed that had the power of death, and the gates of the kingdom of Heaven were flung open to all believers.”

Lawrence did not answer for a moment. Then he said, in a lower tone than ever,—”There be that seem as though they could not learn from the past.”

”Let us have a care we be not of them. And for others let us pray.”

”It is hard,” was the reply with an unsteady voice, ”to see a life flung away and lost, for the which you would give your own and count it nothing worth.”

”That is not lost,” was Mr. Robesart’s answer, ”which is given to God and our neighbour. The only lost lives are those that be cast away upon Satan and ourselves. He will not lose his life: another may.”

Lawrence had no need to inquire if Mr. Robesart were thinking of the Countess.

”And if it were as thou shouldst seem to fear,” resumed the priest, ”if our young Lord should fling away all, even to earthly life, upon this earnest burning desire that hath possessed him,—who are we to say him nay? This may be God’s work for him. It were a good work, surely, if it could be done.”

”It were a good work to dry up a quicksand,” answered Lawrence, significantly: ”yet if a man flung therein all the gold of his having, it should be cast away, and the quicksand be no drier. Father, it seems to me a work that cannot be done, or that, if it were done, should cost a thousand lives as fair as his, and take maybe a thousand years to do it.”

”Lawrence Madison,” said Mr. Robesart, gravely, ”thou and I had better let the Lord’s purposes alone, for the chances be an hundred to one that we shall do them mischief. It were unwisdom to stay the wheels of the world lest they should crush a fly.”

Lawrence gave a gesture of impatience, almost involuntary.

”My son,” continued the priest, laying his hand on Lawrence’s shoulder, ”childre be apt to make wrong reckonings. Remember, He that driveth the

charette is the Father of us all. He will not crush, nor 'noy one of his childre without good cause. And mind thou, that meaneth good cause for him, no less than for the general matter. If the Master of the garden will pluck one of His flowers in the bud, which of His weeding-lads shall say Him nay? And if our Father see it well to call His child to Him, somewhat sooner than the other childre would fain part with him, is it ill for the child thus called, or is it well?"

"By how rough a road!"

"It will not matter when he hath reached Home. Yet is it so? Dost thou know which road should be the rougher—the short, sharp climb up the steep rock, or the weary winding around it? I would scarce presume to say. Forty years in the wilderness be apt to tire a man sorely. Let it rest, Lawrence; it is better. Only pray for him. He will give his life for somewhat, either by the sharp climb or the weary desert way. Pray that he may give it for what God means it. We shall meet and rest at Home."

"God grant it be so!"

"And one other thing, Lawrence, I will say unto thee, of the which I think thou hast need. Be not too careful to spare pain to them thou lovest. It is not the best kind of love. And too often—I would but caution thee, my son, to keep out of the wiles of Satan—what it truly signifieth is that we would fain spare ourselves the pain of seeing it. Methinks thy danger should be on that side, wherefore have a care. God loves us better than that. Aye, and He only knows our hearts, as He only knows those good works which He hath prepared for us to walk in. 'It sufficeth to each day his own evil.' Pray as much as ever thou wilt; only beware of giving commands to God. And when thou hast prayed, and canst do nothing, then is the time to stand still and see His salvation. Remember, for him that is God's child, nothing is verily ill that God doth to him."

"Nay, but if it break his heart?"

"Hearts take more breaking than men think," said Mr. Robesart, quietly. "And He healeth 'all that have need of healing.' By times, when we think we lack the plaster, we do in very deed want the probe."

Lawrence looked up suddenly, with pained eyes.

"The probe gives the most pain when a man shall struggle against it. 'Thy will, not mine,' is the most wholesome medicine for all our ills, my son."

"It is a bitter one," said Lawrence, his lip slightly trembling.

"Aye, whiles we be swallowing of it. But if thou wouldst make thy physic specially bitter, the way is to look thereon a while aforehand, and feed thy fantasy with the bitterness thereof, and swallow the same grudgingly at last."

Lawrence smiled.

"Aye me!" said Mr. Robesart, sadly. "For every time that we say to God with our lips, '*Fiat voluntas tua*' how many times do we say to Him with our hearts,

'*Fiat voluntas mea!*' Nay, at times we pass a step further yet, and say, 'Do Thou my will!' May God save thee and me from that rank treason against our heavenly King! We be all likely to fall therein. And yet His will is for our best welfare—our sanctification here, our bliss hereafter; and our will is but for present ease and passing pleasure. Lord, teach us to do Thy will!"

The same evening, a horn sounded without the gate, and the Earl of Ormonde was announced in the hall of Trim Castle. Roger, who was playing chess with one of his knights, rose to meet his kinsman, a man ten years older than himself.

"Fair fall your Lordship in your light battle to-night!" said Ormonde, with a rather grim smile and a glance at the chess-board. "If you be of my mind, we shall find somewhat heavier work to-morrow."

"Truly, what mean you, fair Cousin?"

"The O'Brien is up, my Lord: and that means work for me—and for you, if you will have with me."

"Have with you? Aye, with all my heart!" returned the Viceroy, with a flash in his eyes. "The O'Brien! ungrateful traitor! was it for this the King knighted him in Dublin Cathedral? Howbeit, you and I shall soon bring him to book, and without tumult, I would fain hope."

"Your Pandora hath her coffer a good size," answered Ormonde, with the same grim smile.

"You think my hopes be over-great, trow?"

"A dram or so bigger than mine."

"I will never fight mine own kin, if I may away therewith," said Roger, cheerfully. "Let me but parley with the Irishry myself, and you shall behold somewhat come thereof."

"Truly, of that doubt I nothing," said Ormonde in the same tone. "But whether that which comes thereof shall be to your gracious Lordship's ease—well, I was not bred up for a prophet."

"Whither march we?"

"Down the Boyne and up the Blackwater. The sept are gathered at Kells."[#]

[#] Now called Kells.

"How much is your following?"

"All the Botelers, and a good parcel more of the English pale. We are well enough for that."

"I will march to meet them with the dawn," said the Viceroy. "Madison, order all things in good readiness for early morrow. Maybe I shall find my work there."

It was said in a cheerful, almost exultant voice; and Roger quitted the hall, leaving Lawrence very, very sad.

"Maybe he shall find his death there!" he said in a low mournful voice to Mr. Robesart.

"Be it so, my son," answered the priest, though his own tones were not without sorrow. "Let him only find God's work; and then he shall find also God's hire unto His servants. He gives not grudgingly, Lawrence Madison."

The armies met at Kenles, on the 20th of July 1398. When they were yet at a short distance, the Earl of March suddenly sprang from his horse, and bade Lawrence dismount also.

"Quick, and aid me!" said he, in his usual impulsive manner. "I will don the Irish habit, and meet them thus arrayed. They will list me if I come to them in their own habit, and speaking their own tongue. Is not the blood of their ancient kings mine own? Lolly"—the old childish epithet came back to his lips in this moment of haste and excitement—"wherefore standest gazing thus moonstruck? Make haste and help me."

"My Lord, I am sore afeared lest they hurt you."

"They hurt me! Am I not one of them by blood? Have I not learned to be one of them in language? Let me but don their habit, and I am of them in all things. Quick! Cast thy fears and fantasies to the winds! This is no time for them."

While Roger spoke, he was hastily throwing aside his English dress, and arraying himself in the Irish national costume—the tunic and braccæ which dated from Roman days, the loose hood, the plaid, the bare foot in the stirrup, and the spear in the hand. Thus accoutred, and commanding his men to stand still until after the parley, he dashed up the slope to meet the Irish leaders.

For an instant Roger's handsome face and lithe figure were seen at the summit of the knoll, as he cried in Irish to the advancing host.

"God speed you, my brethren! What are your demands?"

There was a moment's pause for consultation among the Irish leaders. Then two appeared to separate from the rest, and to come forth towards Roger.

At that moment came the sharp whirr of an arrow whizzing past, a wild passionate cry, a sudden rush forward, and the next instant a prostrate figure lay on the ground at the top of the slope, and over it stood Lawrence Madison, sword in hand, guarding it alike from friend and foe. Then a sudden word of command from the Irish chieftain, and down the side of the slope charged the sept of the O'Briens, completely overwhelming the English forces.

Let us draw a veil over the next scene. The customs of the Irish septs in war were very terrible. The enemy who fell into their hands alive could rarely expect mercy: while he who met their vengeance dead was sure of a form of wild revenge which makes the reader shudder.

Six hours later, the returned relics of the English army were reviewed, and the roll called, in the courtyard of Trim Castle. Ten disabled archers were answered for by others: so were twenty-seven wounded or captured spearmen. So men spoke up for Lawrence Madison, rescued alive almost by miracle, but brought home sorely wounded and insensible, and delivered into the tender care of Guenllian, to be nursed back to life if that might be.

But there was one name which won no answer of any kind, except the bare bowed heads which greeted its sound, and let it pass by them in solemn silence. And that was Roger Mortimer, Earl of Ulster and March, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

The drawbridge was in place at Trim Castle; the portcullis was lifted, and the gates stood open. In the hall was a great catafalque of black and silver, where lighted tapers burned at the head and foot of the bier. And into that hall, now open to every comer, came men of all kinds and classes, and of both rival nationalities—soldiers in uniform, and squires of the neighbourhood, of the English pale, and bare-footed Irish peasantry wrapped in their tartan cloaks, to gaze upon that still white face which lay so calm and quiet now. The words which could be heard whispered were not all alike. Some of the squires and the soldiers said angrily, "He was too much for the Irish"—"He was no true Englishman." Others hushed them, with, "Nay, he was England's heir," or, "He meant well, poor young gentleman!" But at last came one old man wrapped in the national tartan, and bearing a harp upon his back, who sat down, and played upon the instrument a wild, weird, sweet keen, in the softest notes it would produce. And then, rising, he bound his harp again upon his shoulders, and went up to the black-robed priest who stood holding the sprinkler with the holy water, which each one who pleased it took and sprinkled the corpse. The old man took it from his hand, and softly scattered the fresh drops on the calm figure lying there. While he did so he spoke in Irish.

"Sweet be thy sleep, son of the Kings of Erin! Light lie the earth upon thy fair young face! May He that reigneth in the heavens count thee among the white-winged, and the dark spirits of evil flee away from thy path to glory! Sleep, son of Una the daughter of Cahil! The winds, whistling in thy soft hair, shall not awaken thee. Depart on thy wings, O blast of the north! for thou shalt not disturb his rest. Long is the night that cometh, but his eyes are heavy. Draw over him the curtain of peace, and let peace be his coverlet."

As his murmured words ended he caught the eyes of the priest.

"I was only blessing him, Father!" said the old man quietly. "Didst thou think the words in my lips were reproaches or curses? A bard of Roscommon curse the son of Cahil! We could not do it, Father. And he loved us, and died for us. They will not leave us his dust, methinks. We would enshrine it at Tara where holy Patrick preached, or on the Rock of Cashel with the dust of his royal fathers. Ah, it is not likely. They do not trust us. And maybe, at times, we have not deserved the trust. But we would not have hurt *him*."

"Yet you killed him!" said Mr. Robesart in a choked voice.

"*We?*" was the significant answer, in a pathetic tone. "God be Judge between us. You will know one day,—not, perchance, till the great doom shall be. Father!"—the old man, who had moved a little away, suddenly stopped, and fixed his eyes on Mr. Robesart. "There will be some wrong things to be set right, when that shall be."

"There will," was the answer in the same tone.

"Aye," pursued the aged bard, dreamily. "Some false things to be made true, and crooked things to be made straight, and justice to be done by the great Judge that day. It will be a long day, that—the longest earth shall know. It may well take a thousand years." He turned to the corpse. "Sleep till the morning come, golden-haired love of Erin! We shall all be there, every one, the accuser and the accused, the oppressor and the oppressed, the murderer and the slain. There will be some of us who would be glad to change. Peace be on thee, and God forgive us all!"

And the old bard, with the harp bound upon his back, went slowly out of the hall: and Mr. Robesart, looking after him, murmured, "*Pax tecum!*"

In the upper chambers of Trim Castle, the scenes were nearly as sad as in the hall beneath. In the private rooms of the ladies' tower, the dead father's darling had wept herself to sleep, when exhausted nature could bear no more grief for the moment: and in an upper chamber of the adjoining tower, Lawrence Madison lay in fever and delirium. Between the two Guenllian came and went, with light steps and heavy heart: and Beatrice sat by the velvet bed, watching for the child to wake, and longing to comfort her.

There were two reasons why Guenllian kept Beatrice out of the sick chamber, but neither of them was the one which would occur to a modern nurse. Our fathers, at that time, had little fear of contagion, for they scarcely realised its existence: when an infectious disease broke out, they immediately thought the wells had been poisoned—which perhaps they had, though not by deliberate malice, as was then imagined. One of Guenllian's motives was a desire to keep the young girl from hearing poor Lawrence's perpetual repetition of the dreadful scene just enacted at Kenles—that was one of the two topics on which his fevered thoughts ran endlessly: and the other—motive and topic alike—was that

Lawrence in his delirium had told Guenllian a secret, which she wanted time to consider whether it would be well to share with Beatrice. Guenllian had entertained some suspicion of the truth already, but she knew now with certainty that Lawrence loved Beatrice, and that he felt certain she did not love him. On the latter point Guenllian was entirely ignorant, for if Beatrice had any secret feelings of this kind, she confided them to no one. The former was inclined to think that any partiality which Beatrice might feel for Lawrence was only the sisterly kindness which had always existed between them, and if that were so, she was very sorry for Lawrence. Guenllian knew him well enough to be aware that his love, once given, would be given for ever, and that there could be no second time for him. But it was only now and then that Beatrice's name came into the passionate flood of words which were poured forth from the unguarded lips of the sufferer. Nearly all night through he was at Kenles, going over, over, over that awful scene, but—Guenllian noticed—never coming quite to the end. When he reached the most terrible point—just before the death of his master—he always gave a sob and a low cry as if in pain, and turned back again to the beginning. This peculiarity, however, had not struck her as any thing remarkable, until the second day, when in giving a minute account of the patient, she mentioned it among other items to the physician.

"Aye so?" asked Mr. Robesart significantly. "Methinks, Mistress Guenllian, that hath a meaning. I would fain be here the next time that it happeth."

"That may you with little trouble, good Father, since I count it happeth every hour at the furthest."

Mr. Robesart sat down and waited. He had no need to wait long. Before the hour was over, poor Lawrence was once more pouring out his fervid and dreadful tale, as though he were relating it to a listener, broken constantly by disjointed words, yet ever coming back to the one subject.

"Then he rade to the top of the mount—primroses grow there—no, not primroses—what call you them?—he rade up, in his Irish habit—habit—Mistress Wenteline, can you amend this rent in mine habit? The Irish have torn it—he called to them in the Irish tongue—nay, I cannot tell you; I wis not the Irish—they be wild folk. They talk alway; they talked then. And two of them came riding forward at after—Master Byterre, look to your saddle-girth; methinks there is somewhat awry—my Lord bent to his saddle-bow when he answered them. Then one of them laid his spear in rest—rest! Oh for rest! Mine head burneth—'I will give you rest'—aye, only He can give it—but methought the man were not hostile, he seemed as though he held forth his hand—O wala, wala wa! Help, my God!"

And with this cry, not sharply and loudly delivered, but in a low voice of intense anguish, poor Lawrence sank back upon his pillow, and a cold perspiration

broke out over his face.

"Lo' you, right this doth he alway!" whispered Guenllian.

Mr. Robesart shook his head. He laid his soft, cool, quieting hand upon the patient's brow.

"My son Lawrence, dost thou hear me?"

A lucid interval seemed to occur, for Lawrence looked up into his old friend's face, with calm weak eyes.

"I see thou dost. What came then to pass? Try to tell me."

"When, Father?" answered the faint voice. He had evidently no recollection of what had just happened.

"When the Irish leader came up to thy Lord with his spear in rest, and held forth his hand, or seemed as though he should do it."

A look of unutterable pain came into the sick man's eyes, and his tongue appeared to refuse its office.

"Tell me, my son," urged Mr. Robesart with gentle firmness. "Was it then the Irish shot him?"

Lawrence tried to lift himself, and looked round uneasily. Mr. Robesart helped him into a more elevated position, and with a look to Guenllian sent her behind the curtain.

"Under *benedicite*, if I must!" whispered the patient.

"Be it so," answered the priest, and signed to Guenllian to quit the chamber.

"Now, my son, here be no ears save mine—and His that knoweth all things. Speak on."

"Father!" continued the low but fervent tone, "the Irish never shot him. That shot came *from our own side*."

"Never!" broke from the amazed priest. "Lawrence, my son, calm thee! Thou art speaking—"

"I am speaking the heavy truth," answered the sufferer. "Nay Father, I am in good wit now, whatso I may have been. I tell you again, the Irish did it not. It was his own men that slew him."

"Christ pardon him that did it!"

"I will say Amen so soon as I can," answered Lawrence Madison with a sob. "That is not yet."

The priest did not reprove him. Perhaps he was too shocked to say anything: or perhaps he felt that in a case like this, nature must have its way at first, and even grace could hardly overcome it in the opening bitterness of love's agony.

Guenllian had felt much afraid of Mr. Robesart's making Lawrence thus speak out the point which in his delirium he seemed unable to utter, like a nervous horse refusing to pass a special object. But the event proved the physician's

judgment right. From the hour that the burden was shared with another, the patient began to amend.

Who was it that slew Roger Mortimer, and why? God knoweth, and men never knew. The chroniclers plainly enough assert the fact of his death; but they content themselves with the vaguest possible hints at the further facts—that his own men slew him, and that they did it out of jealousy on account of what they deemed his Irish proclivities. Just enough to make us guess it they suggest: they were evidently afraid to say more.

The old bard had spoken truly, for the dust of Roger Mortimer was not left to repose in Ireland. Amid solemn pomp and glittering funeral gloom, the coffin of the heir of England was borne over St. George's Channel to his ancestral home at Wigmore. There they laid him with the elder Mortimers, and not, like his father, with his Montacute ancestors, at Bisham. There, by the side of the valiant and wise Edmund Mortimer and his royally descended Margaret, who may be termed the founders of the house, by the first Earl of darkened memory, by the young and royal mother whom he could barely remember, sleeps Roger Mortimer, heir presumptive of England, first and last Lollard of the House of March.

England has forgotten him long ago, her own chosen heir to whom her faith was sworn, and from whose lips, time after time, the cup of success seemed snatched, just as he was about to drink the sweet wine. But should Ireland utterly forget that scion of her ancient kings, the young, warm-hearted, gallant Prince who, prudently or imprudently, gave his life for her, and did not achieve the end in the hope of which he gave it?

CHAPTER XI.

HOME TO USK.

”We buried him where he was wont to pray,
 By the calm lake,—even here,—at eventide;
 We reared this cross in token where he lay,
 For on the cross, he said, his Lord had died;
 Now hath he surely reached, o'er mount and wave,
 That flowery land whose green turf hides no grave.”
 —FELICIA HEMANS.

If any further item of failure could have come into the life of Roger Mortimer, it would have been conveyed by a royal letter, dated at Westminster just one week after his death, and, being addressed to himself, before the news of the calamity at Kenles had reached the King. In this letter, Roger Earl of Ulster and March, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is told that "as, by the advice of our Council, we have constituted our beloved nephew Thomas Duke of Surrey our Lieutenant in our said land from the first day of September next, for one year, we command that you shall not hinder the said Duke from the execution of his office, and we also exonerate you from the charge aforesaid, from the coming of the said Duke."[#]

[#] Close Roll, 22 Ric. II., Part 1.

Roger was superseded—why, there is no information. It does not necessarily mean, by any means, that the King was displeased with him, or desired to revoke his policy. It may even have been at his own desire, but there remains no evidence of this. It is more probable that his royal cousin wished to have him nearer, and considered that the presence of his heir presumptive would be of service to himself in that thorny and difficult path which it had been the lot of Richard of Bordeaux to tread from his early youth. And now all that remained of Roger Mortimer was coming home indeed, but to another home and a longer rest than those which his royal cousin had designed for him. His crown was no longer a future possibility: it had come. He should never see evil any more.

It has been left on record that King Richard's grief and indignation at the news of Roger's death were very deep and true. It was indeed, apart from the personal regard which he entertained for his young cousin, one of the saddest calamities which could have happened for himself. His heir presumptive, instead of being a man who loved and honoured him, was now his most implacable enemy—that Henry of Bolingbroke who hated him worse than any other. For according to the old law of England, Roger's reign would have been an interlude, and his claim, without some further distinct disposition of the Crown, could scarcely devolve upon his children. Before the funeral procession set forth, there was an arrival at Trim Castle. The Lord Bardolf arrived from England, accompanied by his mother, the Lady Agnes Mortimer, wife of that Sir Thomas Mortimer who had played a part in Roger's early life. He had chosen to cast in his lot with Gloucester and the Lords Appellants, and he was now a fugitive in hiding.[#]

[#] The Irish Government was charged to search for him in September, 1397, as he was supposed to

be in that country; and he was executed in England, before May 27th, 1399. (Close Roll, 21 Ric. II., Part 1; Patent Roll, 23 ib.)

The Lady Agnes Mortimer, who came to conduct the little Lady Anne back to her English friends, while her son attended to the more public necessities of the case, was an elderly woman of girlish character. She was by birth a Poynings, and sister-in-law of that Lollard Lady Poynings who was the daughter of a Princess of Lancaster, and who had been ejected from King Richard's household by the Lords Appellants. But Lady Agnes was no Lollard, as she showed a few years later by making painful pilgrimage to Cologne and Rome for the good of her soul. She came forward now to meet Guenllian, answering her deliberate and modest reverence with a shower of rapid words.

"Mistress Wenteline Bevan, is it not so? Not Bevan? 'Ap Evan'! Gramercy, what matter? Ap Evan is Bevan, and Bevan is Ap Evan—'tis all one. I pray you, Mistress Wenteline, carry me whither I may dry me, for my skirts be all sore bemired this rainy day. Good lack, but it witteth how to rain in this country, by my troth! And how doth your little Lady, trow? Verily, poor child, she must have been moped well-nigh to death, with all this doole about her. Young things love gleesomeness, and should have it. Is she yet abed?"

Lady Agnes paused a second for the answer, and Guenllian managed to glide in—"No, Madam. Truly I think the child hath too much sorrowed for her father to take any grief at the doole."

"Ah, well, we will soon have that amended," said Lady Agnes cheerfully. "I will have the maid away at once, and not await for aught but the bare needful: we can amend all when we come to Usk, where my Lady her mother now abideth."

The Countess had always expressed so much dislike to Usk that it rather surprised Guenllian to hear that she was there. Lady Agnes answered her look.

"Ah, my Lady loveth not doole, no more than other folk. She hath held fair court at Usk, trust me, with a merry lot of knights and dames: and in especial—mark you, Mistress Wenteline—in *especial*—my good Lord Charlton of Powys. Marry, but when the news came, she *was* aggrieved!"

Guenllian was glad to hear it. The thought had lain heavy at her heart, that Alianora would not sorrow. Yet to think of her "holding fair court" with gay company, while that terrible scene was enacting at Kenles, went sorely against her.

"She might well," continued the garrulous lady. "Gramercy, but I would have done the like in the same case! 'Twas but two days—nay, methinks, but one—sithence all her Michaelmas gowns were home from the tailor, new fashioned and right fair—and now but to think of putting all away for a lot of dreary

doole! Dear heart, but it were enough to aggrieve one! If there had not been at hand my Lord Charlton to divert her withal, methinks she should well-nigh have gone distraught! We shall hear of a wedding there, Mistress Wenteline, by my troth, so soon as this weary, dreary doole be but got o'er."

Guenllian's tongue required some hard discipline to keep it quiet. Could *he* hear it through his coffin-lid,—that still sleeper in the hall beneath? Would he not almost stir upon his satin pillow, if this tale reached him of the utter apathy and heartlessness of the woman to whom he had given his heart's best love, and to whom the news of his loss brought bitter regret—for the deferred wearing of her Michaelmas wardrobe? Guenllian severely schooled her heart down, and then said—as calmly as was in her warm Welsh nature—and as soon as a hiatus occurred in Lady Agnes's persistent rattle—

"Would it like your Ladyship to tell me what manner of man is this Lord Charlton? Shall he be one that should deal gently with the childre, or no?"

For Guenllian's heart yearned over her darlings, and especially over Anne.

"Eh, good lack!" laughed Lady Agnes, "he shall neither make nor mell with them. My Lord Charlton is not he that should befool him a-laking with childre. 'Tis the mother he loveth, not them. And in good sooth, he is scanty the man for one of her high estate: but—there! you wit, Mistress Wenteline, love is a leveller."

"Love?" said Guenllian inquiringly to her own heart—not to Lady Agnes. Ay, she knew, better than her companion could tell her, of what material Alianora was made. She was likely enough to

"Crawl to the next shrub or bramble vile,
Thought from the cedar's stately arm she fell."

"And look you," pursued Lady Agnes, breaking in upon Guenllian's sorrowful thoughts, "truly it hath been a great trouble unto my Lady, the coming down. She looked to be one day Queen of England, and should have been, had my sometime Lord (whom God pardon) been more wary and wifful. Do but think, to adventure himself afore his army in an Irish habit—was it not thus he did? Any man with his wits in his head should have wist he might as well have writ his death-warrant. And now all that lost! Dear, dear, what a misadventure! Verily, I do think my Lady of March sore to pity, I warrant you. To lose a crown, and spoil an whole wardrobe, all of a blow—well, as to the losing her baron, the world holdeth more than one man—" Lady Agnes had found it so—"but in very deed it should sorrowfully grudge me to be in like case."

Guenllian made no answer. She only threw open the door of the Lady Anne's apartments, and motioned to the new disposer of the child's destiny to enter. If she thought that both the Countess and the Lady Agnes Mortimer mis-

took their pearls for pebbles, and their pebbles for pearls, she gave no hint of doing so.

The funeral procession set forth, and the lonely and sorrowful child who had been one of his dearest treasures, followed the coffin of the dead father. Lady Agnes Mortimer had taken Anne's future into her own hands, and being Guenllian's nominal superior, the latter was bound to obey. She was about to deliver the child into the yet more nominal care of the Countess, to be plunged, when she grew a little older, into all those pomps and vanities of this wicked world which her father had foreseen and feared for her. So sorrowfully reckoned Guenllian ap Evan: but the God of Roger Mortimer reckoned very differently. The lot He had prepared for Anne was far away from pomp and vanity,—a long, eventless, monotonous imprisonment in Windsor Castle, with her sister and brothers,—the bitter disappointment of an attempted and almost successful rescue, for the lot of Roger Mortimer seemed to pursue his children—an imprisonment straiter and sadder than before, until that one of them whom the usurper had really cause to fear, Roger's bright little namesake, his own true son, fervent and energetic like himself, died in his weary prison; till a greater King than Henry of Bolingbroke undrew the bolts, and set the prisoner free. Then the other three were allowed to come forth. The King was not afraid of Edmund,—dreamy, indolent, ease-loving Edmund—nor of Alianora, who shared his character. He gave to Edmund, to ensure his safe keeping, a wife of a different type from himself, a daughter of the Romish House of Stafford, and a grand-daughter of Gloucester. Alianora was handed over to the care of the heir of Courtenay, ever a Lancastrian House. The most wary and cautious men sometimes blunder. And surely it was in a moment of blunder that that wariest and coldest-hearted of English kings and statesmen permitted Anne Mortimer,—the heir of Duke Lionel of Clarence if her brother should die issueless, as he did—to wed the loyal and true-hearted Richard of Conisborough, a Prince of the Blood, in whose eyes Richard of Bordeaux, whose godson he was, was the King, and Henry of Bolingbroke a usurper. Richard of Conisborough was the one love of Anne Mortimer's true heart. Every fibre of that sterling character—silent, shy, undemonstrative, but deep and loyal to the heart's core,—wound itself around him by whose side she dwelt in a dream of bliss for three short years, and then God called her away from the evil to come. He lies—murdered, or rather martyred—in the precincts of "God's House" at Southampton, she in the Abbey Church of King's Langley. They have met in the Garden of God. And if a text were to be engraven on the tomb of Anne Mortimer, it might well be this,—"I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

She was the mother of all our kings. When one grand climacteric of years had rolled round from the death of Roger Mortimer at Kenles, the Lancastrian episode was over, and the grandson of Anne Mortimer sat upon the throne of England. The cup of success, dashed so frequently from Roger, came to his children's lips at last. But the one point in which success would have been dearest to his heart has never come. Is it yet in reserve for some descendant of his blood?—or shall the rival sister nations only see eye to eye, when He shall come who is the Desire of all nations—when the Lord shall bring again Zion? One event happened, of a different character, before Lord Bardolf and Lady Mortimer set forth, which greatly astonished every body in Trim Castle, and the person most concerned more than any other.

Lawrence Madison was slowly creeping back to ordinary life, and was now able to sit up most of the day, propped with pillows; and with some difficulty, and a helping arm, to walk the length of the chamber. Lord Bardolf had shown a particular wish to see him, and to hear the story of the Earl's death from his lips, and had pressed Mr. Robesart to allow the prudence of his doing so before the physician was quite ready to admit it. The latter, however, was overruled by his superior, and Lord Bardolf had his wish. The tale was told, at what cost to Lawrence he best knew.

"And now," said Lord Bardolf, when he paused, exhausted, and Guenllian held a cup of wine to his white weary lips, "methinks, Master Madison, you have scanty yet told all. We heard of a young squire that, in the thickest of the fight, stood o'er his Lord's body, and well-nigh gave his own life that the foe should not touch the same. Was it thus, pray you, or no?"

There was a moment's flash of fiery light in the weak sunken eyes.

"What looked you for?" said Lawrence Madison. "Had he loved me, and freed me, and grown with me, child and boy and man, and set me, so far as meetness might, as his very self, and should I reckon my poor worthless life as aught beside his? Had a thousand lives been mine, I would have given them for his life: and when nought but his dust was left to give them for, they were at his service for that!"

Lord Bardolf evidently liked the spirit of the reply.

"So heard the King's grace," said he. "And it liked him to issue a command to me, which I must obey ere I go hence. Can you rise and stand a moment, Master Madison?"

Mr. Robesart stepped forward and lent his aid.

"Can you kneel?" said Lord Bardolf.

Lawrence, with some difficulty, contrived to do so. What was going to be done to him he did not realise. He was simply obeying, through his messenger, the command of his King. He was the most astonished person in that chamber,

when he felt the light touch of the accolade upon his shoulder, and heard Lord Bardolf say authoritatively,—

”Rise up, Sir Lawrence Madison!”

”Well, verily, this passeth!” said Guenllian, an hour later, to her subordinate Beatrice, who was busy packing the few absolute necessaries which were to go with the little Lady Anne. ”Beattie, heardest the news? Lawrence is made a knight!”

Guenllian received no answer except a slight sound which she failed to comprehend. She looked round, and saw that Beatrice was in tears.

”Beattie, doth aught ail thee, mine heart?”

”Oh, nothing—not—Mistress Wenteline, would you have my Lady’s furred mantle, or no?”

”Fur mantle! in August!” exclaimed Guenllian. ”Why Beattie, where be thy wits, dear maid? The gear shall all be sent after my little Lady, long ere she lack her furred mantle.”

”Oh! aye,” said Beatrice confusedly. ”I only thought—and I have not yet put up her Ladyship’s head-gear.”

Guenllian looked after her as Beatrice hastily ran upstairs, with a soft laugh such as had never come to her lips since the death of the Earl.

”Aye, I conceive you, Mistress Beattie!” said she. ”You ’only thought’ that Sir Lawrence Madison had climbed up above Blumond’s Beattie, and was not like to reach forth an hand to help her to a seat at his side. Well, we shall see what we shall see. But if Lolly be he that shall forget the old friends in the hovel for the new at the castle, then is Guenllian ap Evan no prophetess.”

The packing was all done, and the preparations made for the long journey to Wigmore Abbey. It had been arranged that the ladies should go no further than Usk, for the Countess had intimated that her deep despondency would not permit her to attend the funeral. Her heart was so nearly broken that another ounce-weight of grief would complete the catastrophe. Lady Agnes repeated the statement to Guenllian with grave lips, but with a twinkle of fun in her eyes which sufficiently indicated that the real character and private intentions of this disconsolate widow were no secret to her. To Lady Agnes this was pure amusement: to Guenllian it resulted in a mixture of contempt and sorrow. Lord Bardolf of course, would attend the funeral, having now resigned all official duties to the new Viceroy: and Lawrence Madison had intimated that no power short of a royal command should keep him from it. He would follow the friend and master whom he had loved so dearly, to the last step where man can go with man. His new honours had rendered Lawrence his own master, free to take service where he would, or to refrain from it at his pleasure: and to sink into the idle attitude of a hanger on the train of the Lady Alianora was far from Lawrence’s conception

either of happiness or duty.

He had now recovered his health in all senses except that physical strength was still lacking. Even a short walk, or a slight exertion, fatigued him considerably. How the coming journey was to be borne he hardly knew. But he said to himself that he would go through with it: and in very many cases, where a man *will* do a thing, he finds that he can.

It was the evening before the journey, and in Lawrence's chamber he and Mr. Robesart sat in the oriel window enjoying the quiet of the summer evening. The preceding events had drawn very closely together these two friends, who alone of all the male members of the household had much in common with each other.

"Lawrence," said Mr. Robesart—he had attempted to address the new knight by his title, and had been instantly entreated never to do so again—"Lawrence, what think you to make of your life, now that it lieth in your own hands to make or mar it as you will?"

"If it lay in mine hands, Father, it should surely be to mar," said Lawrence with much feeling. "I am thankful it is in God's hands, to whom I have given it, and He shall make thereof whatsoever He will."

"But you must needs have desires and wishes thereunto, my son."

"Aye, I have so," and a slight sigh accompanied the words. "Whether they shall ever behold their fulfilment I think greatly to doubt."

"Think you to abide with my Lady Countess?"

"Not so, if our Lord be served[#] otherwise."

[#] If it be His will.

"Then what mean you? To enter other service, or to go to the wars, or what so?"

"So far as mine own liking goeth, methinks, neither."

"I have always counted you a man of peace, Lawrence," said Mr. Robesart, with a smile which betrayed rather more amusement than was indicated by his words.

"Aye so, to mine own pleasure," was the reply. "But they which best love peace be not always suffered to pursue it."

"And I had thought that, by your good-will, some quiet home far away from strife, amid the green fields and the calm old hills, should have been that which should have served you, my son."

"Ah, if it had been possible!" And another sigh followed the wish.

"There be times, howbeit, when man may mistake his vocation," said Mr.

Robesart in a musing tone. "I am something feared that is thus with one friend of ours—I fear it much."

"Whom point you at?" asked Lawrence, but not in any tone of particular interest.

"Our friend Beatrice, that hath been speaking with me of her desire to enter the cloister."

The "Beatrice!" which answered the communication, was in a very different tone from the last, and ended in a gasp.

"Aye so," replied Mr. Robesart, calmly, paying no apparent attention to the tone, and bestowing all his ostensible regard upon the planet Venus, which he was reconnoitring through an impromptu telescope made of his right hand. "I am greatly to doubt if the maid have any true vocation, and be not rather inclined unto the veil by some other reason thereto provoking her. Howbeit, each knoweth best his own mind. But we were speaking of thyself."

Mr. Robesart might try to lead the conversation back to the previous subject, but Lawrence's interest in himself and his own future seemed suddenly extinguished. He answered all further queries in a short, dreamy manner which showed that his thoughts had been borne elsewhere, and were likely to remain there. Whereby, though he was not aware of it, he confirmed certain impressions on the priest's mind, which had been formed into distinct convictions by a hint from Guenllian. All that Mr. Robesart could learn from what followed was that Lawrence was possessed of considerable savings, which he meant, on his approaching return to Usk, to devote to the comfort of his own relatives.

"What other use have I for it?" he asked sadly, and with a faint return of his former interest to his tone. "They are poor, and need it: and I never needed it, nor wist what to do withal. My Lord furnished me with food and raiment, and what other needs hath a man? I never spent penny of my wage, save by nows and thens in a gift to some friend, and in the writing of the holy Evangel that I bear ever about me. I shall part the same betwixt my mother and sisters, which shall wot far better than I how to lay it out to profit."

"If any man hath not cure of his own, he hath denied the faith," quoted Mr. Robesart. "Yet bethink thee, my son, that very charity biddeth not that a man part with every penny of his having, nor for the needs of his kinsfolk in the present, empoverish his own future."

"The Lord will have a care of my future. I lack but a cake and a cruse of water, and He can send them by His angels when my need asketh them of Him."

"Verily: a man may reasonably pack his own needs in small compass. But dost thou mean to remain single all thy life, Lawrence? My Lady Madison may scarce be as content as thou with the cruse and the cake, and in all cases, two lack more provision than one."

Mr. Robesart had dropped almost unconsciously into the familiar *thou*, always used to the little Lawrence of old. His hearer liked it far better than the ceremonious *you*, which he had taken up since Lawrence became a man.

"I think that is not in my future," was the low-voiced answer.

"Be not too sure," said the priest. "Some of our Father's best gifts are they which we count too good to look for. Yet soothly, Lawrence, I would not wish thee a wife like—like some women be."

Lawrence leaned forward with a glow in his eyes, and spoke in a whisper.

"Wala wa! Father, it lieth sore and heavy at mine heart that the friends *he* had to mourn him have been only the men and women of his meynie. The one whom he loved better than all the world hath not shed one true tear for his loss!"

"My son!" said Mr. Robesart tenderly,—with a tenderness which was not all for Lawrence,—*"he hath seen the Face of God, and he is satisfied with it."*

"We loved him dear enough, at least," said Lawrence in a choked voice.

"Lawrence, canst thou not forgive her?—and that man that shot the arrow, hast thou forgiven him? Dost thou know who it was?"

"I am right thankful to answer No to that last. I saw not from what bow the cursed shaft came. But to think that I may be speaking to that man as a friend, *not knowing—*"

Lawrence left his sentence unfinished.

"Maybe it were meant for another," said Mr. Robesart quietly. "But if no—mind thou, my son, how God dealeth with thee and me, whose sins slew the Son of His love, and He knoweth it."

They set out for Usk the next day, taking the same route which Roger had traversed in life only four months before. His coffin was borne upon a bier drawn by six horses, through the green valleys of Kildare and Carlow and Wexford, and at Wexford Haven was transferred to a boat, the *Chanty*, which bore it across in the calm August sunlight to Haverford. Two days' journey took them to Caermarthen, where the travellers were housed in the Castle, and the corpse in the Church of St. Peter, watched all night by monks and four squires, and sprinkled frequently with holy water. Three days more took them to Merthyr Tydvil, a fourth to Pontypool, and on the afternoon of the fifth, which was the first of September, they marched in slow and solemn procession into Usk.

Before entering the town a fresh arrangement of the procession was made. First came the body of archers, carrying their bows unstrung in sign of mourning; then two knights of the household of the deceased Earl, the one bearing his pennon, the other his helmet with its crest. Then came his war-horse, led by a squire bare-headed, and caparisoned with all its ceremonial trappings—the saddle-cloth of blue velvet, broidered with silver ostrich-feathers (gold ones were peculiar to the monarch), a saddle-cloth which covered the horse from ears to hoofs, leaving

only an outlet for the nose and the eyes—the bridle being of gilded leather, and the stirrup of gilt copper. After the horse walked Mr. Robesart, in full canonicals, bearing aloft a silver cross. Then came the bier, borne by ten spearmen specially selected from the corps—men whose qualifications for the office were good character and much physical strength. Immediately following, clad in white, then the colour of deepest mourning, came the little Lady Anne, on a white horse—truly the chief mourner for that father who had been her best friend in all the world. Her horse was led by a bare-headed squire. A little behind her, on the right, rode Lord Bardolf, and on the left the Lady Agnes. The remainder of the household, which included Guenllian, Beatrice, and Lawrence, rode after, and the company of spearmen closed the funeral procession.

Thus they bore him dead into the Castle of Usk, which he had entered living, an infant gift from God, on that very morning, twenty-five years before.

A trumpeter had been sent forward to announce the coming of the procession; and when they crossed the drawbridge, and filed slowly in beneath the portcullis into the court-yard, they were met by a group of black monks from the neighbouring Benedictine Abbey, the foremost swinging a censur, and two others sprinkling holy water. The bier was set down immediately under the portcullis, and there it rested while the *De Profundis* was chanted, in presence of the garrison and of many members of the household. The entire procession was meantime arrested.

With an irrepressible sob, Guenllian whispered to Lawrence, "'They that bare him stood still.' Here is the city, and there is the bier: but where is He that can say, 'Arise'?"

Lawrence answered by a quotation from the same book. "'I am again rising and life; ... he that believeth in Me shall not die withouten end. Believest thou this?'"

"It is hard to believe where man seeth not."

"Therefore the more 'Blessed is she which hath believed.' 'Nyl ye fere: only believe.'"

"Believe *what*?" said Beatrice, with a dreary sigh, suppressed when half drawn.

"Believe nothing, Mistress Beatrice," replied Lawrence with a soft intonation which Guenllian had noticed to come into his voice only when he spoke to Beatrice. "'Believe in God, and believe in Me.' It is not *what* we must believe; it is *whom*. And whom is far easier than what. To believe a thing or a doctrine taketh the head only; but to believe a man, and that the Man that died for you, this methinks taketh the heart belike. Trust and love be right near akin. And hearts be soft, while heads be hard to deal withal. Matters be apt to steal into the heart ere you shall wit it, which should take many a weary hour to beat into the

head.”

”Neither come they so easy out when they be once lodged therein,” added Guenllian.

”You speak soothly, Mistress Wenteline,” answered Lawrence.

But now the procession moved on again, and they with it. Into the great hall of the Castle they slowly filed, and there found a most effective dramatic scene prepared to meet them.

The Countess Alianora sat on the daïs, robed in pure white, the earliest garb of widowhood, which covered so much of the face that only the features were left visible in the midst. But she had chosen to hide everything by an embroidered handkerchief, in which her eyes were concealed. There she sat, the image of inconsolable woe and utter desolation, while Consolation, in the person of the Lord Charlton of Powys leaned over her chair and tried to gain a hearing. Terrible sobs were rending her breast, and she seemed quite unable to speak. When at last she managed to rise and approach the coffin,—leaning on the arm of Lord Powys, which appeared absolutely necessary for her support,—she had scarcely taken the sprinkler from the hand of her chaplain when she dropped it and sank down in a faint. Of course Lord Powys caught her: could he as a knight or a person of any humanity have permitted a lady to drop to the floor? But Guenllian was so misguided as to allow herself to see that her mistress took care in fainting not to entangle herself in her train, and that she dropped the sprinkler in such a position that it should not damage her new velvet.

”She hath swooned right away!” exclaimed Beatrice in a pitying tone. She did not see through the stained glass of Alianora’s beautiful and becoming attitudes.

”It is not ill played,” was Guenllian’s answer, in a rather constrained tone.

That evening, when Guenllian and Beatrice attended the *coucher* of the afflicted widow, it fell to the lot of the latter to remove the used handkerchief from the pocket of her lady’s dress, and place it in the buck-basket which contained the articles ready for the wash.

”My Lady must have some whither another sudary,” observed she to Guenllian. ”This is full dry, and she wept sore.”

”Lay it in the basket, Beattie,” was Guenllian’s quiet reply. ”I misdoubt if thou shalt find any other.”

CHAPTER XII.

LAWRENCE'S REWARD.

"Walking together o'er the restless earth
With faces set to the eternal hills."

—REV. HORATIUS BONAR.

Lawrence Madison had time given him to recover, for it was November before the funeral cortège left Usk for Wigmore. Earl Roger was found to have died intestate. It was no wonder, for how could he have anticipated that his life would end as or when it had done? This fact left all the details of his burial, usually so carefully provided for in the will of the deceased, to the decision of the survivors. The Countess, when appealed to, replied that her unspeakable affliction could not concern itself with matters of that kind; she would be obliged to Lord Bardolf to see that all was done properly, and to leave her alone with her life-long sorrow. Having said which, she called for a backgammon board, and was soon smilingly interested in a game with my Lord Powys.

Lord Powys, however, perceived that notwithstanding the distraction of backgammon, something was really annoying the lady of his heart: and after a sufficient administration of flattery and coaxing, he succeeded in inducing her to confess what it was. She was seriously distressed at the discovery that her husband had left no will, for what that meant was that her only claim on his property was a third share in the estate. Had he attended properly to his conjugal duties, he ought to have made a much better provision for her. Now, when her eldest son came of age, and his wardship ceased, two-thirds of the estate would go to him, and she would be left in a position which it pleased her to regard as equivalent to destitution. Considering that this lamentable descent from affluence to poverty would leave her Ladyship with a small balance of about a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, according to the value of money at the present day, it may be supposed that there was a slight twinkle in the eyes of Lord Powys while he condoled in a grave voice with the calamitous widow. He thought her still quite sufficiently golden to be worth the trouble of wooing, and she knew it. He was moreover aware that a very large casket of jewels lay at her disposal, and that dexterous management might squeeze a further grant out of the Crown. Alianora was troubled by no fear of losing Lord Powys, and had she been so, would readily have comforted herself with anybody else who possessed good looks, gentlemanly manners, and a flattering tongue. But before this little arrangement with Lord Powys could come to pass, a licence was required from the Crown, and this in Alianora's case would be an awkward and delicate business. The King might not approve—probably would not approve—of the widow of his heir presumptive

throwing herself away on an obscure Welsh baron. And Alianora was determined to marry Lord Powys, who suited her taste much better than Roger had done. He was not a handsomer man, but he was good-looking, and he possessed a tongue of that silvery description which, to use the Irishman's expression, "would wile a bird off a tree." His tastes accorded with hers; he knew how to please her—an art in which Roger, with all his desire to do it, had been much less of an adept—he was an exquisite hand at that airy small-talk which Alianora loved better than she loved her children, and his supply of flattery equalled the demand, which implies that it was deep and extensive indeed. Alianora, therefore, set what she called her heart—namely, an obstinate unreasoning will—upon Edward Charlton, and was determined to marry him, obstacles or no obstacles. In order to do this, a licence to marry whom she would must be procured from the Crown,—no hint being given of whom it was to be: and this could not in decency be asked for until some months had elapsed after Roger's death. She obtained it, however, before twelve months were over: and having done so, she instantly gave her hand to Lord Powys in the Castle chapel, to the annoyance of all her own relations, and the decided displeasure of the King. That did not matter to her: once secure of her prize, she could snap her fingers at them all.

She had, in fact, though it may be doubted if King Richard knew it, done the one thing which her licence bound her not to do, and married one of the King's enemies. Lord Powys was an adherent of Henry of Lancaster, and one of the bitterest anti-Lollards in the kingdom.[#] They both knew that they could reasonably expect no extraordinary favours at the hands of the reigning King, and they contrived to bear existence on that poor pittance of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, until, only four months after the granting of the licence, which was one of the last acts of King Richard, Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, unseated his cousin and occupied his throne. He might be expected to have friendly intentions towards Powys and Alianora. She accordingly, in due time and form, represented to the new King "the charge she was at in maintenance of her two daughters," Anne and Alianora; "the devastation of all her dowry in Wales, and the spoil of her late husband's lands by the Welsh," and prayed for relief from the Crown. Henry answered her characteristically, and in a manner which arouses an idea that his clear cold eyes saw through her dramatic craft. He granted her, to the value of a hundred guineas per annum, all annuities, forfeitures, and reversions which Earl Roger had assigned during his life:—a clever mode of making provision in name, with very little solid advantage to accrue. It was not for long that Alianora survived this episode. She died at the birth of Joyce Charlton, the second child of her second marriage, leaving her elder children in prison, and going to her own place—the place she was fit for, and the place she had chosen.

[#] It is doubtful if he were not also to some extent an adherent of Gloucester, for in the previous November he had suffered eleven days imprisonment in the Tower, evidently on some such suspicion. (Close Roll, 21 Ric. II., Part 1.)

But this is an anticipation, and we must return to that November morning on which the funeral procession quitted Usk for Wigmore.

The bier was placed on a charette, and covered with a pall of black cloth, surmounted by the waxen image then always carried outside the coffin, the face of which was a mask taken from that of the corpse beneath. Two horses drew the charette until about a mile from Wigmore, when four more were added in order to form a more imposing spectacle. Lord Bardolf rode behind the coffin, on the right hand of the young Earl, who was chief mourner, and whose horse was led, at the leader's special request, by Sir Lawrence Madison. It was usual to depute a squire to this work: and it was paying the highest honour in his power to the dead and the living, that Lawrence should demean himself to do it.

The little Earl, seven years old, behaved extremely well, as was admitted and admired by everybody. He really behaved so well, because he felt so little. The true son of Alianora, it was not in his nature to love any creature but Edmund Mortimer, nor even for his own ultimate benefit was he ready to take much trouble. He took the loss of a father at seven years of age, as he afterwards took the loss of a crown at fourteen, with the most philosophical placidity.

At the door of the Abbey Church of St. James at Wigmore, the Benedictine Abbot and his canons met the coffin of the Lord of the Marches of Wales. Over the coffin was a pall of cloth of gold, edged with blue, the colours of the house of Mortimer. It was borne by six squires on each side, but once more Sir Lawrence Madison stepped forward, and took the place of the foremost squire. His hand should be among those which performed the last offices to the brother of his love,—”More than his brothers were to him.”

When the bier was set down before the high altar, twenty-five poor men clad in white, according to the number of the years of the dead, came forward to receive the thick wax tapers which they were to hold during the service, standing about the coffin.

Then came the solemn mass, accompanied as it always is, by that grandest of all funeral hymns which, like the inspired hymnal of King David, seems to be inimitable in translated metre:—

”Recordare, Jesu pie,
 Quod sum causa tæ viæ;
 Ne me perdas ilia die!

”Quærens me sedisti lassus,
Redemisti crucem passus;
Tantus labor non sit cassus.”

When the coffin had been lowered into the vault,—to which again, the last office,

Lawrence lent his hand—the mourners slowly filed out of the church, each as he passed the vault receiving the sprinkler from the hand of a priest in attendance, and sprinkling the coffin with holy water. They returned to Usk not as they had come, in ceremonial procession, but in a quiet and orderly group.

Considerable time elapsed, and much investigation was necessary, before Lawrence could discover what had become of the relatives whom he had left in the hut at the foot of the castle, eighteen years before. The parents of Beatrice (his old friends Blumond and Philippa) were dead; and having been an only child, she had no near relatives whose assistance could be lent in the matter. For a long while, all that he could ascertain with any certainty was that the present inhabitants of the hut knew nothing of the late ones, and that an old woman, the only person left of those who had dwelt there in Lawrence’s childhood, could tell him that his mother was dead, two of his sisters married and gone, and that his father and his brother Simon had been removed to some other estate of their feudal owner—”down yonder,” said she, with a nod of her head towards the north, which might take in a large tract of country. What had befallen the younger brother and sister she appeared to have no idea. All to whom Lawrence applied gave him an answer, half awe-struck, half kindly, excepting those whose brains and hearts seemed dulled by hard usage. Most promised to bear the matter in mind, and to make such inquiries as they had opportunity.

Lawrence had never realised the immensity of the change in himself, until he attempted thus to resume the old familiar relations with that stratum of society into which he was born. Through constant association with educated gentlemen, he had become one of them in thought and feeling; but he was never aware how thoroughly, until he tried to be once more that which he had ceased to be. His first thought was that the people of Usk had changed—they were more cold-hearted, and less homely and pleasant, than they had been in his boyhood. He discovered in time that the alteration was not in them, but in himself, and that all they were guilty of was the unavoidable and intuitive recognition that he belonged to the group of masters, and no more to that of serfs. But the discovery was not perfected until one evening, when a dirty, slatternly woman of about thirty years of age presented herself at the porter’s lodge of Usk Castle,

and demanded in a whining tone to see one Lawrence Madison.

"Lawrence Madison, forsooth!" returned the scandalised porter. "Is it thus thou wouldst speak of one of the most gallant knights in England? Mend thy ways, woman, and say Sir Lawrence, and then maybe I can find the time to answer thee."

"Eh, lo' you now!" exclaimed the woman, resting a dirty hand against the stone wall. "Is't so fine as that, trow? Well, Master Porter, or Sir Porter, or my Lord Porter, as it shall like your Bigness, I would see *Sir* Lawrence Madison, if it should like you demean you to go and tell him so much, and him to come hither and behold his sister."

"His what?" inquired the porter in an indescribable tone, reviewing the querist in a style which was scarcely flattering.

"His sister," coolly returned the unabashed young woman. "His father's daughter, and his mother's belike, byname Emmot, and wife unto Will Sumpter-man, that keepeth my Lord Le Despenser his baggage mules, and hath traped many a weary mile to speak with my said worshipful knight. Canst carry so much, thinkest?"

The disgusted porter turned away without deigning a reply; but his wife, who had overheard the colloquy, came forward and in politic wise invited Emmot to enter the lodge. There Lawrence found her when the porter returned with him. His first idea had been one of great pleasure. But when he saw the dirty, untidy, miserable-looking creature who called him Brother, a mixed feeling of compassion and disgust took its place.

To him she was another woman, and was very far from braving him as she had done the porter.

"Give you good den, Sir Lawrence," said she, louting low: "Metrusteth you shall not have forgat your sister Emmot, that is your own flesh and blood, and right ill off, with eight childre that have scarce a rag to their backs, nor an handful of meal to put in their mouths, I do ensure you. We have heard you be come back a knight, worshipful Sir, with a fortune in broad gold pieces, and sure you would never forget your own flesh and blood. Mariot hath but five childre, and her man was better off than mine; and Joan hath but two. So you shall see, sweet Sir, I cast no doubt, that 'tis I have the most need of your bountifulness, good Sir Lawrence."

Lawrence's awakened pity was rapidly passing into unspeakable disgust. He had come home prepared to divide his savings among these relatives, as being his own flesh and blood: but he was not prepared to find them throwing themselves upon him like a pack of wolves, intent upon nothing but the horrible emulation which of them could bite the largest piece out of him, and each utterly unconcerned whether the rest got any thing at all. It cost him something to say

"Sister" to this wretched creature—not because she was poor,—Lawrence would never have felt that—but because she was vulgar and slovenly, disgusting alike in mind and body. He controlled himself, however, and passing by the too evident spirit of her speech, asked what she could tell him of the other members of the family. Emmot's communicativeness cooled manifestly. She professed that she knew nothing of the others, and Lawrence had to remind her what she had just said. After a little fencing she admitted that she knew where nearly all of them were. Mariot was living about two miles from Usk, and her husband had been a miner; he was dead, and she made a living by plaiting straw. One of her sons was quite old enough to work—a fact on which Emmot laid great stress; her husband had been a freeman, and none of the family were serfs except herself, which was an enormous advantage: and Joan's husband was a serf, so that she and her family were kept at their master's cost, and needed nothing whatever,—another enormous advantage; and she had only two children. And once more the eight children of the illogical Emmot were paraded rhetorically before Lawrence.

He gave her a handsome donation, over which she grumbled sorely, and he turned away sick at heart.

Lawrence's next work was to visit his father, who lived a day's journey away, with his son Simon and his family. Nicholas showed some interest in his youngest son, and some slight affection for him; and he did not ask for money—an omission fully made up by Simon's wife. Simon himself proved the least changed of any of the family. Grim and surly as far back as Lawrence could recollect him, he was grim and surly still. Lawrence left another donation here, and coming back, went a little out of his way to call upon his sister Joan.

If this lady had fewer children than her sister, she supplied the gap by a larger quantity of grumbling. When he left her—having had hard work to get away—Lawrence really wondered if she could have been more abusive had he refused her a penny. It was with a sensation of utter disgust with the whole concern that he went to pay his last visit, to his sister Mariot.

He found a trim, neat little cottage by the roadside, where a clean, smiling lad was cutting up a log of wood, and a tidy, pleasant-looking girl was sewing in the little porch. And when Lawrence had made known his wishes, and the girl had called "Mother!" to someone in the inner room—the cottage only held two—the woman who came forward in answer had a clean rosy face, and smooth black hair neatly braided.

"Mariot, dost thou mind thy youngest brother?"

"Lolly! Eh, my little lad, is it thou?"

She laid both hands on his shoulders and turned him round to the light.

"My dear lad! My own little Lolly! Mind thee? aye, that do I, forsooth. And thou art come back to Usk?—is it to 'bide there? And how goes it with thee, lad?"

art wed? and hast done well? Tell me all about thee, Lolly.”

It was an entirely different welcome from any of the rest. The news that Lawrence was a knight, and had returned possessed of a sum which in her eyes was great riches, did not seem to strike Mariot in any light but that of being glad for him. And when he offered her the same sum which he had given to the rest, and they had received so murmuringly, to his surprise she refused it.

”Nay, lad, I’ll not take thy gold,” said Mariot. ”I want for nought, God be thanked, and my childre be good childre; and Jack hath so much as he can do, and Alice yonder can make a pretty penny in the straw plaiting, and Maud comes on well with her sewing. Surely it were ill done, even had I need, that thy brethren and sisters should strip thee of every penny! Little Lolly, I guess I was pretty nigh the only one that loved thee as a babe, and now, thanks be to God, since I knew how He loved me I have learned to love better. Go thy ways, lad, and see to thine own well-doing, and keep thy bits of savings in thy pocket. I am every whit as much beholden to thee as if thou hadst given me a thousand marks. But bethink thee somewhat of thine own future: for when folk think not of their own selves—of the which sort there be main few, by my troth—other folk must think for them. Thou shalt wish to wed one of these days, an’ thou dost not now: and how shall that be compassed with never a plack in thy pocket? Go thy ways, and get thee a good wife and a pleasant home—the which shall do me a much more pleasure than to have the spending of thy gold. Choose her by a true heart, and not by a fair face, and ask our Lord to help thee in the choosing, and then thou shalt do well. And now and anon, when thou hast an hour or twain to spare, come down hither and drink thy four-hours with us, and give me to wit of thy welfare—that shall pleasure me full greatly. My Lady Madison, trow, shall be too fine to sup her four-hours with a miner’s widow; but I would like to see thee by nows and thens.”

”She will not be my wife an’ she so be,” said Lawrence: ”but truly, Mariot, I look for no such, and it should better serve that thou wouldst leave me help thee.”

”Go to!” said Mariot with a knowing smile. ”How many a time, thinkest, have I heard that saying from folks at whose wedding I have danced within the next twelvemonth? Thine eyes be tell-tales, Lolly. An’ thou be heart-free, mine eyes be no true men.”

”Thou sayest sooth,” was Lawrence’s answer, in rather a sorrowful tone. ”But one heart is not enough for a wedding, my sister. More than one swallow goeth to make a summer.”

”Dear heart, two swallows were plenty for that summer,” replied Mariot, laughing. ”Hast asked her, lad?” she added somewhat drily.

Lawrence confessed the negative.

”Art awaiting till she ask thee?” demanded Mariot with an amused look.

"Scarce that, methinks. Nay, Mariot, she hath thought of the veil. Who am I, that I should set me in rivalry with God?"

"Go to!" returned Mariot, with a strong good sense which was not common in her era. "Veils be for broken hearts and worn-down widows, and unchilded mothers—for women which have smoothed down the green turf over their hearts' best love. They be not for young maids, fresh and bright, with life opening afore them. Never think it!"

"Yet we should give God the best," said Lawrence sadly.

"Give Him what He asketh of thee, Lolly. Methinks that is not often the making a man's life desolate. But is the cloister the only way to give to God? Didst learn that from the Word, or out of thine own heart? He that trusteth his own heart is a fool."

"Why, Mariot, art not giving me counsel to trust mine own heart in this matter?"

"Never a whit. I counsel thee to trust God's providence, and let Him choose for thee. If He have not meant this maid for thee, have no fear she shall say yea to thine asking. Do the thing that did King Ezekias, my dear lad—spread it before the Lord, and ask Him to lead her in accordance with His will. Then speak, and fear not. How wist thou that in her mind the choice lieth not betwixt the cloister and thee,—and if thy tongue be dumb, she must needs choose the other. She'll not ask thee, I reckon."

"She loveth me not at all," said Lawrence.

"I'd make sure," was Mariot's quiet conclusion. "There be some nuts be all o'er prickles o' the outside, which be good enough when thou hast stripped off the bur."

"Mistress Wenteline," said Lawrence, the next morning, "will you do me so much favour as tell me if Mistress Beatrice hath yet purpose to be a nun?"

"I believe," answered Guenllian, "she hath purpose to be veiled with the White Ladies of Limbroke, if it may be, this next month." But as Lawrence passed on, she said to herself, "Unless you can persuade her out of it!"

A few hours later, when the dusk had come, as Lawrence crossed the ante-chamber, into which the moon was shining brightly, he saw a dark figure standing in the recess of the window, and went up to it. His heart, rather than his eyes, told him who it was.

"Is it you, Mistress Beatrice?"

"It is I, Sir Lawrence."

The old playmates had become excessively ceremonious to each other. The brotherly sort of intercourse, resumed on their meeting at Trim, had been quite

dropped, and they were as distantly civil as if they had made acquaintance only a few days before.

"You can scarce see much hence, methinketh."

"It is fair enough," said Beatrice, absently; adding after a moment, "fair enough for one who shall soon behold nought beyond convent walls."

"Are you well avised thereabout, Mistress Beatrice?"

"I think so much," she answered, gravely.

"Thus said Father Robesart. Yet he seemed, something doubtful if you have well judged therein, as methought. It were grave matter to blunder over, Mistress Beatrice. There is no coming forth, howsoe'er one may desire it."

"No," she said—and said no more.

Lawrence took another step, and dropped a little of his ceremoniousness to do it.

"Beatrice, dear old friend, is this for your happiness? Not one other word will I speak if you ensure me thereof."

"Happiness is not the only thing," she said in a constrained voice.

"Not so, maybe, for you to think on: yet methinks you might allow for your friends to concern them touching the same."

Beatrice made no reply.

"Are you well assured that our Lord calls you to that life, dear Beatrice? Might it not be better for you, no less than for other, that you should make happy some home and heart, rather than bury yourself in the cloister? Think well of it, ere you cast die that can never be recalled."

"I have thought of it," said Beatrice in rather a hard tone. "I am not wanted elsewhere. Why should I not be a nun?"

"Because you were never meant for one. Because it is not the right life for you, for whom life is but just opening. Because——"

Beatrice interrupted him. "Life opening! Your pardon, Sir Lawrence. Life has closed for me."

"You think so much now," he answered, gently. "This time next year, will you so think? Not wanted! Would you come where you were? I could tell you of one who wanteth you more than words can tell,—to whom the world will be black gloom if you go forth of it. But let that pass. I meant not to speak—Beattie, old friend, old playmate, sister if I may call you so, leave me plead with you this once, ere you bury your youth and hope where neither hope nor gladness can enter more. I know you too well, Beattie! You would be miserable in the cloister. Why not make some other life happy, and your own joined thereto?"

He listened earnestly for her answer. One more negative, and he would let her alone, to go her own way, though his way would be darkness and loneliness thenceforward. Lawrence's love was very unselfish. If Beatrice had loved some

one who was not himself, he would have given her every penny he possessed for her fortune, had he thought that the want of fortune barred her from happiness. But he did not think that she loved any one, and himself least of all. Only he could not bear the thought of the cloister for Blumond's Beattie, and he thought he knew her well enough to be sure that it would be misery in the latter end.

"I will," said Beatrice in a low voice, keeping her face in shadow. "I will, if—"

"If what, dear Beattie?"

"If it may be yours, Lawrence."

HISTORICAL APPENDIX.

MORTIMER OF MARCH.

Roger Mortimer, third Earl of March, eldest and only surviving son of Edmund second Earl and Elizabeth de Badlesmere was born in 1328, and stood eighth on the list of original Knights of the Garter: died at Rouvray, in Burgundy, Feb. 26th, 1360; buried at Wigmore. Married

PHILIPPA, daughter of William de Montacute, first Earl of Salisbury, and Katherine Grandison; for whom Earl Roger's marriage was granted to her father, 1336: died Jan. 5th, 1382; buried at Bisham.

Issue:—

1. Roger, died young.
2. Alice, affianced in 1354 to Edmund, son of Richard Earl of Arundel, and then under thirteen years of age; died before marriage.

3. EDMUND, 4th Earl, born at Langenith, Feb. 1st, 1352; affianced 1354 to Alice, daughter of Richard Earl of Arundel (marriage broken off); received into fraternity, Canterbury Cathedral, July 7th, 1379; died at Cork, from cold taken in fording the Lee, Dec. 27th, 1381; buried at Bisham. Married

PHILIPPA, only child of Lionel Duke of Clarence (son of Edward III.) and his first wife Elizabeth de Burgh: born at Eltham Palace, Aug. 16th, 1355; married in the Queen's Chapel, probably at Reading, 1359, apparently before Feb. 15th, and certainly before July 16th: died shortly before Jan. 7th, 1378; buried at Wigmore.

4. John, died young.

Issue of Edmund 4th Earl:—

1. Elizabeth, born at Usk, Feb. 12th, 1371; married (1) before May 1st, 1380, Henry Lord Percy, surnamed Hotspur (2) after Oct. 8th, 1403, Thomas Lord Camoys; living 1417; Inq. Post Mortem, 5 Hen. V.: buried at Trotton with second husband. Left issue by both marriages.

2. ROGER, 5th Earl; born at Usk, Sept. 1st, 1373; affianced 1385 to (probably Alice) daughter of Richard 12th Earl of Arundel (marriage broken off at the request of Princess of Wales): Viceroy of Ireland 20 to 22 Ric. II.: killed in skirmish, Kenles, Ireland, "adventuring himself before his army in an Irish habit," July 20th, 1398; buried at Wigmore. Declared heir of the Crown in Parliament, 9 Ric. II. Married

ALIANORA, eldest daughter of Thomas de Holand, Earl of Kent, and Alesia de Arundel: born 1370-2, married after Oct. 7th, 1388, when Earl Roger's marriage was granted to her father (re-married, licence dat. June 19th, 1399, Edward de Charlton, Lord Powys): died Oct. 23rd, 1405; buried at Wigmore.

3. Philippa, born at Ludlow, Nov. 21st, 1375: married (1) John Hastings, 3rd and last Earl of Pembroke, after Sept. 24th, 1383 (2) pardon dat. Nov. 10, 1391, for fine of 500 marks, Richard, 12th Earl of Arundel, (3) after Sept. 1397, John, Lord St. John of Basing: died Sept. 24th, 1401 (Inq. P. Mort.), Sept. 26th, 1400 (Registry of Lewes): buried at Boxgrove. Left issue by last marriage only.

Edmund, born at Ludlow, Nov. 1377: fled into Wales after battle of Shrewsbury, 1403; Inq. 16 Hen. VI. 24. Married

Katherine, daughter of Owain Glyndwr and Margaret Hanmer, married 1402; died prisoner, London, about Nov. 1413; buried there in St. Swithin's Church. Issue doubtful, but comprising a son and two daughters at least.

Issue of Roger 5th Earl:—ANNE, born Dec. 27th, 1388 (Dugdale, doubtless a mistake for 1389): married after Jan. 9th, 1407, Richard of York, Earl of Cambridge; died about Sept. 1410; buried probably in Abbey Church, King's Langley.

2. Edmund, 6th and last Earl, born in New Forest, Nov. 6th, 1391; died at Trim Castle, Jan. 19th, 1425; buried at Stoke Clare. Married (but left no issue),

Anne, daughter of Edmund Earl of Stafford and Princess Anne of Gloucester: married about 1413-1415; (remarried, 1429, John de Holand, Duke of Exeter); died Sept. 20th or 24th, 1432; buried in Church of St. Katherine, Tower, with second husband.

3. Roger, born at Nethewode, Mar. 24th, 1393; died prisoner in Windsor Castle, after Aug. 26th, 1404, and probably after 1405; buried at Stoke Priory.

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 6th. GLEAMS OF GLORY FROM THE GOSPELS.
 7th. A LARGE THOUGHT IN A LARGE WORD.
 8th. SCRIPTURE FEAR NOTS.
 9th. "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS."
 10th. TEXTS FOR THE CHILDREN.
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