RED AND WHITE

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[image]

"Nan!" broke from her father's lips, in tones more eloquent than a volume would have been. "Little Nan!" "I would I were your little Nan again," she said. "We were happy then, my Lord—at least I was." P. 140.

Red and White

A Tale of The Wars of the Roses

BY

EMILY SARAH HOLT

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

"If loving hearts were never lonely,
    If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
    They might be glad, but not in Thee."
        —ANNA L. WARING.

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PREFACE.

It is a proverbial truth that thunderstorms clear the air. And it would seem as though that eventful and terrible period of English history, known as the Wars of the Roses, had cleared the political air for the coming Reformation. How little those who took part in it realised the time to follow! To the men of that day it was either a wrestle for personal fame, or a passionate enthusiasm for the estab-

lishment of Right. To the women with whom it was not the latter, it must have been a meaningless agony—a passion with no visible end, and with no conceivable moral purpose. Alas for him who loses his faith in the providence of God, for the key of the world has dropped out of his hand. And happy are they who can calmly walk on in the dark by the side of the Father, it may be feeling the atmosphere painfully oppressive, yet willing to wait His time, and knowing that when they come forth into the light of the Golden City, they will be satisfied with it.

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RED AND WHITE.

CHAPTER I.
THE FLEDGLINGS LEAVE THE NEST.

"Ah, God will never let us plant
Our tent-poles in the sand,
But ever, e'er the blossom buds,
We hear the dread command,—
'Arise and get thee hence away,
Unto another land.'"

"Frid!" said little Dorathie in a whisper.

Frid held up a hushing finger with a smile.

"Frid!" came again; in a tone which showed that tears were not very far from Dorathie's blue eyes.

Frid's hand was held out in reply, and little Dorathie, understanding the gesture, sidled along the window-seat until she reached her sister in the opposite corner. There, nestled up close to Frideswide, and held fast by her arm, Dorathie put the melancholy question which was troubling her repose.

"Frid, be you going hence?—verily going?"

The answering nod was a decided affirmative.

"But both of you?—both thee and Agnes?"

Another silent, uncompromising nod from Frideswide.

"O Frid, I shall be all alone! Whatever must I do?"

And the tears came running from the blue eyes.

"Serve my Lady my grandmother," Frideswide whispered back.

"But that is—only—being useful," sobbed Dorathie, "and I—want to—be happy."

"Being useful is being happy," said her sister.

”I would being happy were being useful,” was Dorathie’s lugubrious answer. ”They never go together—not with me.”

”So do they alway with me,” replied Frideswide.

”Oh, thou! Thou art a woman grown,” said Dorathie with a pout.

”Right an old woman,” said Frideswide with a sparkle of fun in her eyes, for she was not quite twenty. Dorathie was only eight, and in her estimation Frideswide had attained a venerable age. ”But list, Doll! My Lady calleth thee.”

Dorathie’s sobs had attracted the notice of one of the four grown-up persons assembled round the fire. They were two ladies and two gentlemen, and the relations which they bore to Dorathie were father, mother, grandmother, and grand-uncle.

It was her grandmother who had called her—the handsome stately old lady who sat in a carved oak chair on the further side of the fire. Her hair was silvery white, but her eyes, though sunken, were lively, flashing dark eyes still.

Dorathie slipped down from the window-seat, crossed the large room, and stood before her grandmother with clasped hands and a deferential bob. She was not much afraid of a scolding, for she rarely had one from that quarter: still, in the days when girls were expected to be silent statues in the august presence of their elders, she might reasonably have feared for the result of her whispered colloquy with Frideswide.

”What ails my little Doll?” gently asked the old lady.

”An’t please your good Ladyship, you said Frid and Annis[#] should both go away hence.”

[#] Annis, or more correctly Anneyse, is the old French form of Agnes, and appears to have been used in the Middle Ages, in England, as an affectionate diminutive. Some have supposed Annis to be a variety of Anne, and have therefore concluded that Anne and Agnes were considered the same name. This, I think, is a mistake. Annas is the Scottish spelling.

”We did, my little maid. Is our Doll very sorry therefor?”

”I shall be all alone!” sobbed Dorathie.

”’All alone!’” repeated her grandmother with a smile, which was pitying and a little sympathetic. ”Little Doll, there be fourteen in this house beside Frideswide and Agnes.”

”But they are none of them *them*!” said Dorathie.

”Aye. There is the rub,” answered her grandmother. ”But, little maid, we all have to come to that some time.”

”’Tis as well to begin early, Doll,” said her uncle.

”Please it you, Uncle Maurice,” replied Dorathie, rubbing the tears out of her eyes with her small hands, ”I'd rather begin late!”

Her father laughed. ”Folks must needs go forth into the world, Doll,” said he. ”Thou mayest have to do the like thine own self some day.”

”Shall I so?” asked Dorathie, opening her eyes wide. ”Then, an' it like your good Lordship, may I go where Frid and Annis shall be?”

”Thou wilt very like go with Frid or Annis, it we can compass it,” replied her father; ”but they will not be together, Doll.”

”Not together!” cried Dorathie in a tone of disappointed surprise.

”Nay: Frideswide goeth to my good Lady of Warwick at Middleham; and Agnes to London town, to serve my Lady's Grace of Exeter in her chamber.”

”Then they'll be as unhappy as me!” said Dorathie, with a very sorrowful shake of her head. ”I thought they were going to be happy.”

”They shall be merry as crickets!” answered her father. ”My Lady of Warwick hath two young ladies her daughters, and keepeth four maidens in her bower; and my Lady's Grace of Exeter hath likewise a daughter, and keepeth other four maids to wait of her. They are little like to be lonely.”

Her grandmother understood the child's feeling, but her father did not. And Dorathie was dimly conscious that it was so. She dropped another courtesy, and crept back to Frideswide in the window-seat,—not comforted at all. There they sat and listened to the conversation of their elders round the fire. Frideswide was sewing busily, but Dorathie's hands were idle.

The season was early autumn, and the trees outside were just beginning to show the yellow leaf here and there. The window in which the two girls sat, a wide oriel, opened on a narrow courtyard, in front of which lay a garden of tolerable size, wherein pinks, late roses, and other flowers were bowing their heads to the cool breeze of the Yorkshire wolds. The court-yard was paved with large round stones, not pleasant to walk on, and causing no small clatter from the hoofs of the horses. A low parapet wall divided it from the garden, which was approached by three steps, thus making the court into a wide terrace. Beyond the garden, a crenellated wall some twelve feet high shut out the prospect.

What it shut out beside the prospect was a great deal, of which little was known to Frideswide, and much less to Dorathie. They lived at a period of which we, sheltered in a country which has not known war for two hundred years, can barely form an adequate idea. For fourteen years—namely, since Frideswide was five years old, and longer than Dorathie's life—England had been torn asunder by civil warfare. Nor was it over yet. The turbulent past had been sad enough, but the worst was yet to come.

Never, since the cessation of the Heptarchy, had a more terrible time been seen than the Wars of the Roses. In this struggle above all others, family con-

victions were divided, and family love rent asunder. Father and son, brother and brother, uncle and nephew, constantly took opposite sides: and every warrior on each side was absolutely sure that all shadow of right lay with his candidate, and that the ”rebel and adversary” of his chosen monarch had not an inch of ground to stand on.

Nor was the question of right so clear and indisputable as in this nineteenth century we are apt to think. To our eyes, regarding the matter in the light of modern law, it appears certain that Edward IV. was the rightful heir of the crown, and that there was no room for dispute in the matter. But the real point in dispute was the very important one, what the law of succession really was. Was it any bar that Edward claimed through a female? The succession of all the kings from the Empress Maud might be fairly held to settle this item in Edward’s favour. But the real difficulty, which lay beyond, was not so easily solved.

Very little understood at present is the law of non-representation, the old ”custom of England,” which was also the custom of Artois, and several other provinces. According to this law, if a son of the king should predecease his father, leaving issue, that issue was barred from the throne. They were not to be allowed to represent their dead father. The right of succession passed at once to the next son of the monarch.

Several of our kings tried to alter this law, but it was so dear to the hearts of the English people that up to 1377 they invariably failed. The most notable instance is that of Richard I., who tried hard to secure the succession of Arthur, the son of his deceased brother Geoffrey, in preference to his youngest brother John. But the ”custom of England” was too strong for him: and though John was personally neither liked nor respected by any one, England preferred his rule to making a change in her laws.

It was Edward III. who succeeded in making the alteration. His eldest son, the famed Black Prince, had died leaving a son behind him, and the old King strongly desired to secure the peaceable succession of his grandson. He succeeded, partly because of the popularity of the deceased Prince, partly on account of the unpopularity of the next heir, but chiefly because the next heir himself was willing to assist in the alteration. His reward for this self-abnegation is that modern writers are perpetually accusing him of unbridled ambition, and of a desire to snatch the crown from that nephew who would assuredly never have worn it had he withheld his consent.

But though John of Gaunt was perfectly willing to be subject instead of sovereign, his son Henry did not share his feelings. He always considered that he had been tricked out of his rights: and he never forgave his father for consenting to the change. After sundry futile attempts to eject his cousin from the throne, he at last succeeded in effecting his purpose. The succession returned to the

right line according to the old "custom of England"; and since King Richard II., for whom it had been altered, left no issue, matters might have gone on quietly enough had it been suffered to remain there.

They were quiet enough until the death of Henry V. But a long minority of the sovereign has nearly always been a misfortune to the country: and the longest of all minorities was that of Henry VI., who was only eight months old when he came to the throne. Then began a restless and weary struggle for power among the nobles, and especially the three uncles of the baby King. The details of the struggle itself belong to general history: but there are one or two points concerning which it will be best to make such remarks as are necessary at once, in order to save explanations which would otherwise be constantly recurring.

King Henry was remarkably devoid of relatives, and the nearest he had were not of his own rank. He was the only child of his father, and on the father's side his only living connections beside distant cousins were an uncle—Humphrey Duke of Gloucester—and a grand-uncle—Cardinal Beaufort—both of whom were, though different from each other, equally diverse from the King in temperament and aim. On the mother's side he had two half-brothers and a sister, with whom he was scarcely allowed to associate at all. He wanted a wife: and he took the means to obtain one which in his day princes usually took. He sent artists to the various courts of Europe, to bring to him portraits of the unmarried Princesses. King Henry's truth-loving nature comes out in the instructions given to these artists. They were to be careful not to flatter any of the royal ladies, but to draw their portraits just as they were. Of the miniatures thus brought to him, the King's fancy was attracted by the lovely face of a beautiful blonde of sixteen—the Princess Marguerite of Anjou, second daughter of René, the dispossessed King of Naples. An embassy, at the head of which was William Duke of Suffolk, was sent over to demand, and if accepted, to bring home the young Princess.

The girl-Queen found herself a very lonely creature, flung into the midst of discordant elements. She loved her husband, as she afterwards showed beyond question, and she must have felt deep respect for his pure, gentle, truthful, saintly soul. Yet, excellent as he was, he was no adviser for her. It was simply impossible for her brilliant intellect and brave heart to lean upon his dulled brain and timid nature. How could he, with the uttermost will to aid her, help his young wife to keep out of snares laid for her which he could not even see, or counsel her to beware of false friends whose falsehood he never so much as suspected? Is it any wonder that Marguerite in this sore emergency turned to Suffolk, her first friend, a man almost old enough to be her grandfather, with a wise head and a tender heart, and thoroughly desirous to do his duty? Poor, innocent girl! she paid dearly for it. One word of cruel, contemptuous surmise dropped from the lips of a young nobleman,—who very possibly had wished the fair young Queen

to make him her chief adviser—and all over the land, as with wings, the wicked falsehood sped, till there was no possibility of undoing the evil, and Marguerite woke up in horror to find her name defamed, and her innocent friendship with Suffolk believed to be criminal. She did not discover for some time who was the author of this cruel slander: but when she did, she never forgave Warwick.

There is not the shadow of probability that it was true. Suffolk was about fifty years of age[#] when Marguerite was married, and he had been for nearly fifteen years the husband of one of the loveliest women in England, to whom he was passionately attached. His character is shown further by the farewell letter written to his son,[#] one of the most touching and pious farewell letters ever penned by man.

[#] He was born at Cotton, in Suffolk, and baptized in that church on "The Feast of St. Michael in Monte Tumba" [Oct. 16] 1396. (*Prob. Ætatit Willielmi Ducis Suffolk*, 5 H. V. 63.)

[#] Published among the Paston Letters.

But now another and a more serious complication was added to those already existing. The dispossessed heir of the elder branch, Richard Duke of York, had much to forgive the House of Lancaster. He had the memory of a murdered father and a long-imprisoned mother ever fresh before him. His claim was only through the female line, as the son of a daughter of the son of a daughter of Lionel Duke of Clarence, the second son of Edward III. who attained manhood, and who had predeceased his father. In respect of the male line, he was descended from a younger brother[#] of the grandfather of Henry VI. It was therefore only as the representative of Duke Lionel that he could put forward any claim at all. But Richard was not good at forgiving. And when, as if for the purpose of further entangling matters, and suggesting to Richard the very idea which he afterwards carried into action, Henry VI. was seized with an attack of that temporary insanity which he inherited from his maternal grandfather, Richard, as his next male relative, was placed in the position of Regent: a state of things so entirely suited to his wishes that when, the King having recovered, he was summoned to resign his charge, Richard coolly expressed his perfect satisfaction with the position of governor, and his intention to remain such, since he considered himself to be, as heir general of Duke Lionel, much more rightfully King of England than the cousin who had displaced him.

[#] Edmund Duke of York.

The first sensation of Henry VI., on hearing this calm assertion of Richard, was simply one of unbounded amazement.

"My grandfather," said he, "held the crown for twelve years, and my father for ten, and I have held it for twenty-three: and all that time you and your fathers have kept silence, and not one word of this have I ever heard before. What mean you, fair cousin, to prefer such a claim against the Lord's Anointed?"

It was not quite the fact that Richard's fathers had kept absolute silence, since his uncle, Edmund Earl of March, had been put forward as a claimant for the throne, just fifty years before:[#] but in all probability the King was entirely justified in stating that the idea was new to him. It is not likely that those about him from infancy would have allowed him to become familiar with it, since his delicate sense of right and justice was—in their eyes—the most tiresome thing about him. But the question was not in his hands for decision. Had it been so, no man would ever have heard of the Wars of the Roses. King Henry "had no sense of honour," which probably means that ambition, self-seeking, and aggressiveness were feelings utterly unknown to him. "Yea, let him take all," would have been the language of his lips and heart, so long as he had left to him a quiet home in some green nook of England, the wife and child whom he dearly loved, a few books, and peace. At times God's providence decrees peace as the lot of such men. At other rimes it seems to be the one thing with which they must not be trusted. They are tossed perpetually on the waves of this troublesome world, "emptied from vessel to vessel," never suffered to rest. This last was the destiny of Henry VI. For him, it was the way home to the Land of Peace, where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. For four hundred years his spirit has dwelt in the eternal peace of Paradise; God has comforted him for ever.

[#] A full account of this transaction will be found in "The White Rose of Langley."

It was an unfortunate thing for Richard of York that he had married a woman who acted toward his ambitious aspirations not as a bridle, but as a spur. Cicely Neville, surnamed from her great beauty The Rose of Raby, was a woman who, like two of her descendants, would have "died to-morrow to be a queen to-day," and would have preferred "to eat dry bread at a king's table, rather than feast at the board of an elector."[#] Of all members of the royal family of England, this lady is to my knowledge the only one who ever styled herself in her own charters

”the right high and right excellent Princesse.” The Rose of Raby was not the only title given her. To the vulgar in the neighbourhood where her youth was spent she was also known as Proud Cis. And every act of her life tends to show the truth of the title.

[#] The words first quoted were spoken by Anne Princess of Orange, eldest daughter of George II.; the latter by Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia, eldest daughter of James I.

It was at the battle of St. Albans—the first fought between the rival Roses—that Dorathie’s grandfather had been killed; the husband of the stately old lady who remained head of the household at Lovell Tower. His barony descended to his only daughter Margery, who, after a good deal of hesitation among rival suitors who greatly admired her title and fortune, had gradually awoke to the discovery that she liked nobody quite so well as her old friend John Marston, though he was nearly twice her age, and a widower with three children. So on him, with the full consent of her mother, she bestowed hand and heart, title and fortune; the former being in his eyes, alone of all her lovers, more valuable than the latter. In her right he became Lord Marnell of Lymington, for until a comparatively recent period the title of a peeress in her own right was held to become the property of her husband as absolutely as her goods, and was conferred by courtesy, as a matter of necessity, upon any second wife whom he might marry. Two more children—Dorathie and Ralph—were added to the family: but only the former now survived. It will thus be seen that Frideswide and Agnes were half-sisters of Dorathie. The other member of the family not yet introduced was Walter, the eldest son. He was at present a young squire in the household of Queen Marguerite.

Every soul at Lovell Tower was passionately Lancastrian. To them Henry VI. was The King, and Edward IV. was ”the rebel.” In the house of the next knight, half a mile away, the conditions were reversed: and the two families, who had been old and firm friends, now passed each other on the road with no notice whatever. Very painful was this state of things to the Lady Idonia, the only sister of four brothers thus placed at variance. Her two younger brothers, Maurice and William, were still on good terms with her, for they were Lancastrians like herself. But the Carew family was one of those which the political earthquake had shattered, and Hugh and Thomas were determined Yorkists. It was the sadder—or should have been,—since the younger Lady Marnell had been educated under the roof of her Uncle Hugh, during the prolonged residence of her parents at the Court of Scotland. Fortunately or unfortunately, Uncle Hugh and Aunt Mabel had contrived to impress themselves on the mind of young Margery in no

other character than that of live barricades against the accomplishment of all her wishes. To be otherwise than on speaking terms with them, therefore, was a much smaller calamity to Margery than to her mother. The Lady Idonia used to sigh heavily when their names were mentioned. Yet to keep up the friendship would have been no easy matter. Hugh Carew was granite where his convictions were concerned; and not content with following them himself, he insisted on imposing them on every body who came near him. It would have been in his eyes a matter of principle not to allow his sister or his niece to speak of "the King" or "the rebel," without letting them see that he wilfully misunderstood the allusion. Idonia merely sighed ever this piece of perversity, while yet their intercourse remained unbroken: but Margery was apt to flare up and make an open breach of the peace. It certainly was trying, when she spoke of the King (meaning Henry VI.) as in Scotland, to be reminded in a cold, precise tone, slightly astonished, that she had unaccountably forgotten that His Highness was at Westminster. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if Margery felt the open hostility rather a relief than a burden, while her mother grieved over it in secret.

"'Tis strange gear," the Lady Idonia would sometimes say, "that men cannot think alike."

"Nay, fair Sister, why should they so?" was her brother William's answer. "This were tame world if no man saw by his own eyes, but all after a pattern."

"That were well, Ida," replied the graver Maurice, "could all men see through God's eyes."

"Aye, and who shall dare say how He looketh on these matters?" rejoined William.

"Know we not that?" said Maurice. "'The righteous Lord delighteth in righteousness; His countenance beholdeth equity.'"[#]

[#] Psalm xi. 8.

"On which side is the equity?" asked his brother with a shrug of his shoulders. "Somewhat scant on both, as methinks. My Lords of Warwick and Somerset are scarce they which, before giving battle, should look through a speculation glass[#] to find the righteousness of the matter."

[#] Magnifier.

"Perhaps it were hardly so small as to need the same," was Maurice's dry answer.

"Nay, fair Uncle William, but I cry you mercy!" broke in Margery. "It seems me you be but half-hearted toward our good King. Surely his, and none other, is the cause of right and justice."

"Gramercy, Madge! I am well assured I never said they lay with that rebel," returned her uncle, laughing.

"Methinks," said Maurice quietly, "that King David was the wisest, which committed his cause unto God. Never, truly, had king so clear and perfect title as he. But we find not that he laid siege to King Saul, in order to come by it the sooner."

"Dear heart! prithee go tell that to the Queen," said William, still laughing. "Such reasoning were right after the King's heart."

"The Queen fights not for herself," responded Maurice. "It is easier to trust our own lot in God's hands, than the lot of them we love most. But mind ye not, Will and Ida, what our Philip were wont to say—'They that God keepeth be the best kept'?"

William made no reply. He was silenced by the allusion to the dead brother, on whom the Carews looked much as those around them did upon the saints.

The interval between the battles of St. Albans and Wakefield—five years and a half—had changed most of the *dramatis personæ*, but had not in any degree altered the sanguinary character of the struggle. Richard Duke of York was gone—killed at Wakefield: Suffolk was gone, a victim to popular fury. King Henry and Queen Marguerite were still the prominent figures on the Lancastrian side, joined now by their son Prince Edward. On the York side were the three sons of Duke Richard,—Edward, George, and Richard, whose ages when the story opens were twenty-eight, nineteen, and seventeen. Which of these three young men possessed the worst character it is difficult to judge, though that evil eminence is popularly assigned to Richard. Edward was an incorrigible libertine; not a bad organiser, nor devoid of personal bravery, though it usually appeared by fits and starts. He could do a generous action, but he was irremediably lazy, and far weaker in character than either of his brothers. One redeeming point he had—his personal love for his blood relations. But it was not pure love, for much selfishness was mixed with it. Perhaps really the worst of the three was George, for he was not merely an ingrained self-seeker, but also false to the heart's core. No atom of trust could ever be placed in him. The most solemn oath taken today was no guarantee whatever against his breaking through every engagement to-morrow. The Dutchman's maxim, "Every man for mineself," was the motto of George's life. Each of the brothers spent his life in sowing seeds of misery, and in each case the grain came to perfection: though most of the harvest of George and Richard was reaped by themselves, while Edward's was left for his innocent

sons to gather.

It may reasonably be asked why Warwick is counted among the Lancastrians, when to a great extent Edward owed his throne to him, and he had been a consistent Yorkist for years. It is because, at the period when the story opens, Warwick thought proper so to account himself. King Henry, never able to see through a schemer or a traitor, had complacently welcomed him back to his allegiance: Queen Marguerite, who saw through him to the furthest inch, and held him in unmitigated abhorrence, felt that he was necessary at this moment to her husband's cause, and locking her own feelings hard within her, allowed it to be supposed that she was able to trust him, and kept sharp watch over every movement.

It has already been said that the decision for peace or war was not left in the hands of King Henry. The woman who sat by his side on the throne was no longer the timid, lonely dove of their early married life. Marguerite of Anjou was now a woman of middle age, and a mother whose very soul was wrapped around that bright-haired boy who alone shared her heart with his father. Could she but have looked forward a few years, and have seen that for that darling son war meant an early and bloody end, she might have been more ready to acquiesce in King Henry's preference for an obscure but peaceful life. What she saw was something very different. How was she to know that the golden vision which rose so radiantly before her entranced eyes was but a mirage of the desert, and that the silver stream which seemed to spread so invitingly before her would only mock her parched lips with burning sand?

The fatal choice was made for war, and the war had now been raging for fourteen years. The wheel of Fortune had turned rapidly and capriciously, but York had on the whole been uppermost. To the majority of ordinary Englishmen who cared at least as much for peace and prosperity as politics, "the King" had meant Edward IV. since 1461. England at that weary hour cared more for rest than she cared to know who gave it to her. Edward, on his part, had "indulged himself in ease and pleasure"[#]—which was what he most valued—and might have continued to do so if he had kept on good terms with Warwick. For let Edward or Henry be termed the King, it was Warwick who "had all Englond at his bedyng," and the man who offended this master of kings was not likely to be king much longer. Edward had sent Warwick to France to negotiate for his marriage to Bona of Savoy, the Queen's sister, and while the envoy was away, the master fell into the toils of the fair face and golden hair and sweet purring ways of the Lady Grey of Groby. As Edward had passed his life on the easy principle of never denying himself any thing, he acted consistently in marrying the lady. Considering how few ever do so, he had probably not realised that this easy principle is apt to turn in later life into the sharpest of scourges. Warwick

came home in a furious passion, and carried his power, influence, and army instantly over to the side of Lancaster. No man likes being made to "look small," and least of all could it be brooked by a man of Warwick's character and position. Edward paid very dearly for his golden-haired bride, and whether the purchase was worth the amount it cost may be considered extremely doubtful. Elizabeth Grey was not like Marguerite of Anjou, a far-seeing, self-less, large-hearted woman. Her mental horizon was exceedingly minute. She was chiefly concerned, like the creature she most resembled, to obtain the warmest spot of the hearthrug for herself. Very delightful to stroke and pet when all goes well, such quadrupeds—and such women—are capable of becoming extremely uncomfortable companions in certain combinations of circumstances.

[#] Comines.

Edward was not the only person who paid that heavy bill which he ran up with so light a heart. Only one small instalment of it was discharged by him. A heavier one was due from Queen Elizabeth, wrung out through long years of anguish and desolation: another from their innocent boys, discharged in their life's blood. The least amount, perhaps, was exacted from the most undeserving sharer in the penalty—that young Warwickshire girl who was Edward's real wife by canon law, and whose strong love proved equal to the fiery ordeal of saving his honour and ensuring what seemed his happiness at the cost of all her own. It cost her life as well. Edward had the cruelty and baseness to call her into court to deny their marriage. He knew her well enough to dare to do it. And she came, calm and self-restrained, and perjured her soul because she thought it would make him happier and save his good name. Hers was of no moment. Then she passed out of sight, and the overstrained string snapped, and nothing was left to vex the triumphant monarch. Only God saw a nameless green grave in a country churchyard. And when He comes to make inquisition for blood, when every thing that was hidden shall be known, I think it will be found that He did not forget Elizabeth Lucy.

Yet Edward did not escape quite without reproach. One person endeavoured to prevent this sin and shame, and it was a very unlikely person. The voice of Proud Cis was the only one raised against it, and her interference, futile though it was, is the best action of her life. From the far north Edward received the passionate reproaches of his mother for this dastardly action. They did not deter him from its accomplishment: but let the fact be remembered to Cicely's honour.[#]

[#] Some writers have disputed, and more have ignored, these miserable transactions. Surely the interference of Cicely, and the language of Comines, who was a personal acquaintance of the royal family, may fairly be held to prove the point.

Two months before the story begins, Warwick had taken advantage of some quarrel between Edward and his brother George of Clarence to allure the latter to the Lancastrian cause. He offered him an enormous bribe to come over, being his elder daughter Isabel, with one half of her mother's vast inheritance. It must not be forgotten that all Warwick's titles were derived from females. He was Earl of Salisbury in succession to his mother, and Earl of Warwick only by courtesy, in right of his wife. His two daughters, Isabel and Anne, were his only children, and the richest heiresses in the kingdom. They were both extremely beautiful girls, but Isabel was considered the lovelier. Clarence, who kept neither a heart nor a conscience, was ready to do any thing, good, bad, or indifferent, which promised to promote his own advancement in this world. He accepted Warwick's offer; and was now therefore in arms against his brother, and a member of Warwick's household at Middleham Castle, of which household Frideswide Marston was about to form an item.

CHAPTER II.
LILIES AMONG THE THORNS.

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."—WORDSWORTH.

"Aye, perchance that may serve. What cost it by the yard?"

That was a piece of superb purple satin, which the tailor was holding up for inspection, in the best way to catch the light.

"Five nobles, an' it please my Lady."

Five nobles amounted to one pound thirteen and fourpence, and was the price of the very best quality. It is not easy to reduce it into modern value, since authorities are disagreed on the multiple required. Some would go as high as sixteen times the value, while others would reduce it to five. Mv own opinion inclines to the highest number.

"And wherewith wouldst line it, good Whityngham?"

"With velvet, Madam?" suggested the tailor interrogatively.

"Aye. Let it be black."

"At your Ladyship's pleasure."

"And I will have the cloak well furred with Irish fox. Is my broched[#] cloth of gold gown made ready?"

[#] Figured.

"Madam, it shall be meet for your Ladyship's wearing to-morrow."

"Well, see thou fail me not, for I would have it for our Lady Day in harvest.—Well, Avice Hilton, what wouldst?"

Avice Hilton, who was a young lady of about eighteen years, had been waiting the pleasure of her mistress for some minutes.

"An't like you, Madam, your new chamberer that shall be, is now come."

"The Lord Marnell his daughter?"

"She, Madam."

"Hath she eaten aught?"

"Aye, Madam, in the hall."

"Good. Bring her hither."

Frideswide Marston was not a timid or nervous girl by any means, but her heart beat somewhat faster as Avice Hilton introduced her to the presence of the Countess of Warwick, the woman who had more of the reality of queenship than either of those ladies whom the partisans of the rival Roses termed the Queen.

She saw a pleasant upper chamber, about twenty feet square, whose windows looked over the beautiful vale of Wensleydale. It was hung with tapestry on which scenes from the Quest of the Sangraal were delineated. At the lower end three young ladies were busily at work of various kinds: on the daïs, or raised step at the further end, nearest the windows, stood the tailor with his roll of satin over his arm, and two ladies were seated, the elder in a chair of carved wood, the younger in a more elaborate one inlaid with ivory. In those days people did not take the seat they found most comfortable, but were carefully restricted to a certain fashion of chair, according to delicate gradations of rank. Frideswide, being a well-educated young person, as education went in the fifteenth century, had no difficulty in perceiving that she was in the presence of the Countess of Warwick and her daughter, the bride of the royal Clarence.

The Countess of Warwick was a rather slightly-made woman, but tall, with a long pale face, haggard features bearing traces of great former beauty, and a particularly prominent pair of blue eyes.[#] As is often the case with persons

who exhibit the last-named feature, she was at no loss for language. She was the daughter, and now the only surviving child, of that Earl of Warwick who had held a conspicuous place in the burning of the Maid of Orleans, and of Isabel, heiress of Le Despenser. All the old prestige and associations of the House of Warwick centred in her, not her husband. How far her influence over him may have been for good or evil, is not an easy question. What evidence there is, is mostly negative, and tends to show that the Countess Anne exercised but little influence of any kind, and was of a type likely to be more concerned about the burning of the marchpane in her own oven, than about the burning of a city at some distance. If this be so, she is much to be pitied: for of the seed of future misery which Warwick sowed, the heaviest portion of the harvest was reaped by her and by the best and dearest of her daughters.

[#] All the members of the Warwick family, and also those of the royal family, are described so far as is practicable from contemporary portraits.

The young Duchess of Clarence, who was in her nineteenth year, was a woman cast in another mould. She resembled her father in character, and her mother in features: but she was more beautiful than the Countess had ever been, and was accounted "the finest young lady in England." She was fair, with blue eyes and shining light hair, over which she wore the new head-dress, which consisted of a most elaborate erection of wire-work, surmounted by a veil of transparent gauze, so that the hair, for many years concealed, was left fully visible.

Head-dresses were now, and for a long time had been, the most important portion of the female costume. The variety was nearly as astounding as the size. Hearts, horns, crowns, and steeples, were all represented: and a full-dressed lady, in all her paraphernalia, was a formidable object both as to cost and dimensions.

Frideswide found herself put through a lively fire of interrogatories by the Countess, who might have been projecting the writing of memoirs of the whole Marnell family, to judge from the minute and numerous details into which she descended. The Duchess sat generally a silent listener, but occasionally interjected a query. At last the Countess looked across the room, and summoned Avice.

"There, take the new maid to you, and show her what shall be her duty," said she. "See that she wants for nought, and say to Bonham 'tis my desire she be set a-work."

Frideswide followed Avice to the further end of the room, where she was introduced to her remaining fellow-chamberers as Theobalda Salvin and Eleanor

Farley. Beyond them, and hitherto concealed by a chair, she suddenly perceived a fourth person, in the shape of a little old lady, so very little as to be almost a dwarf, with the cheeriest and brightest of faces.

"Mother Bonham," said Avice, "'tis my Lady's good pleasure you set Mistress Frideswide a-work."

"Well, my lass, there's no pleasure in idlesse," was the answer. "See you here, my maid: would you rather a white seam, or some matter of broidery?"

Frideswide, whose tastes inclined her rather to the useful than the ornamental, chose the plain work, and sitting down among the chamberers, was soon as busy as any of them.

Mother Bonham was the most important person at Middleham Castle, in the sense that without her every thing would have gone furthest wrong. She was "mother," or official chaperone, to the chamberers, which accounted for the title bestowed on her; she was general housekeeper to the Countess; she had been nurse and governess to the young ladies; and she was adviser in general to all the younger inmates of the house. She was as great a hand at proverbs as Sancho Panza himself: she mixed marvellous puddings and concocted unimaginable cakes; she drew patterns for embroidery, told stories of all kinds, nursed every body who was ill (which often included prescribing for them), praised every body who did well, smiled on, at, and through every thing that happened to her. Only one thing there was, as Eleanor confided to Frideswide, which Mother Bonham could not do. She was totally incapable of scolding! The most severe thing she ever said was a solemn proverb, prefaced by both Christian and surname of the offender. The use of both names instantly informed a chamberer that she had fallen under Mother Bonham's grave displeasure. But so dearly loved was the little old lady that except in strong emergencies, this was quite enough to recall the person addressed to a sense of her delinquencies.

Frideswide was rather amused to find that she had again to run the gauntlet of inquiries concerning her antecedents from the chamberers. She certainly had never talked so much about herself and her relatives, as she did that first afternoon of her stay at Middleham Castle. The fire of interrogations had slightly slackened, when a door opened in the wall behind the tapestry, and pushing aside the latter, a girl of fifteen came forward and sat down by Mother Bonham, who moved some embroidery from a carved chair to make room for her. The chair taken, and the style of her dress, sufficiently pointed her out as one of the Earl's daughters.

Though strongly resembling her mother and sister in colour and features, the expression of her face was entirely different from either. The piquancy of the elder sister was wholly absent in the younger, and was replaced by a mixture of gentleness and dignity. Very queenly she was—not in the false sense of pride, of

which there was none about her: but in the true sense of that innate kingliness of soul which can tolerate nothing evil, and can stoop to nothing mean. A lily among thorns was sweet Anne Neville. And the thorns sprang up, and choked it. She stood now just

> "Where the brook and river meet,
> Womanhood and childhood fleet"—

but in the path to be pursued a turn as yet hid the river from view, and she who was so soon to be borne down it could see nothing of the roaring cascade and the black pool beneath, where the young life was to be crushed out, and the fair soul to be set free. As Frideswide glanced at her, where she sat with her head slightly bent over the broidery, and a sunbeam lighting up her shining hair, she thought no face so attractive had ever yet crossed her path in life.

"Tib, draw thou the curtain across," said Mother Bonham. "The sun cometh too hot on my Lady Anne, I reckon."

Theobalda obeyed in silence, while Lady Anne looked up and smiled thanks.

"Tib is the best to do it," remarked Eleanor, laughing a little, "for she is highest of all us. I do believe she should mete to twice of you, Mother."

"'Good stuff's lapped up in little parcels,' Nell," was Mother Bonham's good-tempered answer.

Conversation flagged after this. Perhaps work went on the better for it. Supper was announced in an hour, which was served in the hall, Frideswide, as the newest arrival, being seated last of the chamberers, and next to the Earl's squires. She found her neighbour decidedly communicative. From him she learned that the Countess was not ill to please, which was more than could be said for my Lady of Clarence; but my Lady Anne was the sweetest maid in the world. As to my Lord,—with a little shrug of the squire's shoulders—why, he was in his element in the midst of a battle, and not anywhere else. Rather just a little queer-tempered—you had to find out in a morning whether he had got out of bed on the right side or the wrong. In the former case, he could be very pleasant indeed: but in the latter—well, least said was soonest mended.

Frideswide looked up at the potent nobleman thus described to her. She saw a man of moderate height and breadth, with strong features, a florid complexion, rather dark hair and eyes, and a very quick, lively, intelligent expression. His limbs were well-knit and in good proportion, giving the idea of great muscular strength. It may be added, though Frideswide of course could only learn this by degrees, that Warwick was an extremely clever man, with that sort of serpentine cleverness which regards any means as sanctified by the end proposed; full of

physical courage, but looking upon tenderness and compassion as contemptible weaknesses only fit for a woman, and indicative of the consummate inferiority of her sex. He was one of those men in whose eyes a good woman is simply a woman who has hitherto found no opportunity of being otherwise. When the opportunity comes in her way, she must be expected to take advantage of it, as a matter of course. Clear-sighted as Warwick was in some matters, he was strangely obtuse in others.

A good deal of further information Frideswide heard from her next neighbour, who told her that his name was John Wright.[#] He informed her that the King (by whom he meant Henry VI.) was in the Tower of London, a prisoner in the hands of "Edward that rebel," who was not permitted by zealous Lancastrians to enjoy even his ancestral title of Duke of York. The Queen was abroad, seeking fresh help, and intending to take the first good opportunity afterwards to land in England. The Prince of Wales was with her.

[#] Name historical, character imaginary.

As for "that rebel," he of course was enjoying himself to the utmost, residing in the palaces and squandering the finances which did not belong to him: and as for "that witch his wife," Mr. Wright was ready to believe anything of her—by which of course he meant, anything the reverse of complimentary.

That Edward was squandering money, whether it were his own or not, was only too true. Never lived man in whose hands money melted in a more instantaneous manner. During that very summer, he had spent on dress materials and "other necessaries" upwards of twelve hundred pounds, and on jewellery and goldsmiths' work £744, inclusive of a gold collar which cost £34.[#] Nor as we shall presently see, had his extravagance reached its highest point. No King of England ever spent like him. The degree to which he surpassed all his predecessors in this point was an enormous one. By most contemporary chroniclers, Richard II. is accused of having been a shocking waster of money:[#] but the Issue Rolls of Richard II. reveal a state of things which is economy itself when compared with those of Edward IV. Moreover, Richard's extravagance, such as it was, was mainly in presents to other persons: but what Edward spent was on his beloved self. This was the more noticeable, as Henry VI. had not been at all given to spending money; and Queen Marguerite, while lavish enough in her charities, was singularly frugal in respect of her wardrobe. As for Edward's Queen, her lord and master, as his Issue Rolls bear witness, took care she had not much to spend. May not this exhaustion of the royal treasury under the brothers of York,

account to some extent for the parsimony of which Henry VII. is accused?

[#] Issue Roll, Michis. 9 Edw. IV.

[#] A supposition not at all borne out by his Issue Rolls.

After supper the hall was cleared for dancing. Then followed vespers in the Castle chapel, rear-supper, a little general conversation, cups of wine handed round, and the Countess retired to her oratory, and the Earl to his closet. Last came the Countess's *coucher*, at which three of the chamberers were expected to be present, one being told off to assist the Lady Anne. The Duchess of Clarence had her separate household. Frideswide found herself summoned to the Countess's chamber, where Theobalda instructed her in her duties, which were simply those of a lady's maid. The chamberera were then free to seek their own beds.

It was not until the next morning that Frideswide saw the Duke of Clarence, who had been absent from the supper-table. He was the least good-looking of the handsome royal brothers. "A great alms-giver and a great builder" is the character given of him by the retainer of the House of Warwick: but a more skilful hand than his, a hundred years later, sketched a far truer portrait.

"False, fleeting, faithless Clarence!"

With the Duke came two other persons—the brothers of Warwick, John Lord Montague and George Archbishop of York. They were about as much given to tergiversation as their better-known brother, with the proviso that in their innermost hearts they were a shade more determinately Yorkist than he. Montague in particular was remarkable for his power of versatility. His personal convictions were in favour of Edward, but the least offence given to him by his chosen master was enough to make him veer round like a weathercock to the opposite quarter. At the present moment some such annoyance was rankling in his narrow mind, and he was therefore just in a fit state to lend an ear to the persuasive representations of his brother of Warwick. The marvel of the matter is how these three crafty, changeable, unprincipled men contrived to trust each other.

During two previous years, Warwick had been dexterously drawing his net around his brothers. But now matters were almost ripe for action. For the whole of the autumn he had kept quiet and matured his plans. His reverend brother was quite as ready to his hand as the secular one. Any thing which involved a plot or a tumult seems to have been to the taste of this gentleman, who in seeking holy orders had certainly not taken the course for which nature intended him.

The four chamberers of the Countess of Warwick slept in one room, into

which opened the smaller one of Mother Bonham. The furniture of the chamber consisted of two beds, large square ones with a tester, or head, the one having curtains of verder, or tapestry, and the other of dark crimson say, which was a coarse silk chiefly used in upholstery. In the first bed slept Eleanor and Theobalda, in the second Frideswide and Avice. The remaining articles were a large chest at the bottom of each bed, with a division across it, each young lady having a half to herself; a chair, two stools, and a fire-fork. Wardrobes were then kept in a separate chamber; while dressing-tables and washstands were luxuries of the future. There was a mirror fixed to the wall, almost too high to see—a position adopted for the discouragement of personal vanity: while every morning a bowl of water and a towel (to serve all four) was brought up by a slip-shod girl, one of half-a-dozen who did the dirtiest work of the house.

One evening in November, after the lights were out, and Mother Bonham and Theobalda were peacefully asleep, while Eleanor was perpetrating a sound so nearly akin to snoring that her fastidious taste would have been shocked had she known it, Frideswide, whose eyes were disinclined to close, heard a soft whisper from Avice beside her.

"Are you waking?"

"Oh aye," she said in a similar tone, and turning round towards Avice to hear the better what she wished to say.

"Your father, if I err not, is the Lord Marnell, that dwelleth at Lovell Tower, on the wolds?"

"Aye so," said Frideswide.

"Were you loth I should know of what kin you be to the Lady Margery, that died, an old man's life past, on Tower Hill?"

It was no wonder if Frideswide held her breath for a moment, and listened whether all the rest were safely asleep. The reference to a Lollard and a martyr, in the past of any family, had been safe enough during the latter half of Henry VI.'s reign, but it had already been pretty plainly shown not to be equally wise in that of Edward IV.

"Look you," she said, after that momentary pause, "it is my step-dame, not my father, that is verily a Marnell. The lady whom you wot of was her grandame—to wit, her father's mother."

"Of no kin to you, then?" asked Avice, in a tone in which Frideswide fancied she heard a shade of disappointment.

"Nay, that can I not rightly say," was the reply: "for Dame Agnes Lovell, the Lady's mother, which was by birth a Greenhalgh, was sister unto Mistress Ladreyne Clitheroe, whose daughter Maud was my grandmother. So you shall see we are near of kin."

A cousin thrice removed would not now be thought a very near relation;

but in past times much more was made of ”kindly blood” than at present.

Avice did not answer, and Frideswide, having recovered her courage, spoke up boldly. For a hundred years her ancestors had been of the Lollard faith, and she was far more disposed to glory in the fact than to be ashamed of it.

”Wherefore? Are you of that learning?”

”Hush, gramercy!” cried Avice under her breath.

”Wherefore?” asked Frideswide again.

”Dear heart, if any should o’erhear us!” explained Avice. ”Know you not that ’tis a dangerous matter to speak thereof?”

”It may be worse to let be,” answered Frideswide thoughtfully. She was thinking of a story of twenty years ago, which she had heard most sorrowfully told by the lips of the Lady Idonia, how she had at one time fallen away for fear, and had never forgotten her defection nor forgiven herself.

”Ah, Frideswide,” said Avice earnestly, ”you speak like to her that had dwelt in a sure place, and knew nought of the world on the outside. Look you, matters be no more as they were these twenty-five years back. So long as the King were in power and of good wit, never man were ill-used for speaking Lollardy, for he never would have creature harmed in his realm an’ he wist it, by his good-will. Have you ne’er heard how he bade remove down from the Micklegate at York the one quarter of a traitor there set, saying he would ne’er see Christian thus cruelly used for his sake? But the rebel is made of other metal. Heard you not of one Will Balowe, that was burned on Tower Hill scarce three years gone, for that he would not make confession to no priest, but only unto God, and had (said they) no conscience in eating of flesh during Lent? Both he and his wife had been afore abjured, so that he was a lapsed man. There were no burnings whenso as King Henry were in power. Nor know you not, about the same time, some pixes were stole for the silver, and one of them that stale them was heard for to say that he had a dainty morsel to his supper, for he had eaten nine gods—to wit, the hosts that were in the boxes? There is more Lollardy about the realm than ever afore, trust me: but ’tis not so safe to speak thereof as when you and I were childre.”

”Methinks,” said Frideswide thoughtfully, ”they were little credit unto Lollardy that should steal a pix for the silver.”

”There be men enough will make cloaks of new virtue to cover up old sins,” was the answer of Avice.

”You wot more hereof than I, as I may well see,” said Frideswide.

”Aye, I have seen and heard, and I can reckon so much as twice two,” replied Avice drily. ”Look you, I have been with my Lady but half a year, and I came to her from London town, where I served my Lady of Exeter. So I saw and heard much, and I have not an ill memory.”

”Pray you, tell me somewhat touching that my Lady of Exeter,” said

Frideswide. "My sister is but now entered of her chamber, and I would fain wit what manner of mistress she shall have."

"Pray for her!" was the reply.

"Against what?" demanded Frideswide with considerable uneasiness.

"'Shield us fro the foule thing,'" quoted Avice, under her breath.

"But, dear heart, what mean you?" returned Frideswide, rising on her elbow in her eager desire to comprehend these mysterious hints. "Is it my Lady of Exeter, or her Lord, or his squires, or where and what shall it be that is thus foul and fearful?"

"Her Lord?—*No*," was the earnest answer.

"Herself?" repeated Frideswide.

"She and her Lord," said Avice, in a low, sad tone, "have not dwelt of one house these seven years. He, as you must wot, is of the King's side, and she (which is sister to the rebel) brake with him shortly after the war began. There were sore discontents betwixt them, for two years or more ere they parted for good: but now they never meet. His lands be all confiscate and granted to her, and he is the man that shall never win one penny of them at her hands. I think she alway hated him—they were wed being childre—but certes she hates him now. In all my life never saw I in one house so much of God, and so much of the Devil. But the Lord campeth round about them that fear Him. There is an angel in the house, as your sister will early find to her comfort. There are devils too."

"And her Lady is of them?" asked Frideswide.

"She is not the angel," drily responded Avice.

"And her Lord?"—said Frideswide.

"Ah, he is sore to be pitied," answered Avice in a compassionate tone. "Maybe he is not wholly an angel neither: yet methinks there is much in him that is good; and he might have been a better man—had she been a better woman. The first sin is an easy matter, but it is hard most times to see whither it will lead."

"Be any here well-affectioned toward Lollardy?" suddenly asked Frideswide.

"Only one, to my knowing."

"And that is?"—

"Mother Bonham.

"Avice Hilton!" came at this moment in clear tones from the closet.

"I cry you mercy, Mother!" was the natural reply.

"Days for talk, nights for sleep," said the old lady sententiously.

With simply a "Good night, Frideswide," Avice turned on her pillow, and no more was said.

This revelation by no means conduced to Frideswide's happiness. She was uneasy about Agnes, whom she knew to be a girl who would say little, but suffer

keenly. Yet what could she do?—beyond taking Avice's counsel, and praying for her.

The idea of writing, either to her father or sister, did not occur to Frideswide. Letters were serious affairs in those days, more especially to women: and though Frideswide had learned to write, which was not too common an accomplishment in ladies, yet it was to her a very laborious and tedious business, requiring some decided reason to induce so great an effort. While there were at that time a sufficient number of women who could write, yet not to have acquired the art was considered no disgrace to a woman of any rank. In that interesting contemporaneous poem, "The Song of the Lady Bessy," we find the daughter of Edward IV. assuring Lord Stanley that there is no need to send for a scribe to write his important private letters, for she could write as well as any scrivener.

"You shall not need none such to call,
Good Father Stanley—hearken to me,
What my father, King Edward, that King royal,
Did for my sister, my Lady Welles,[#] and me:
He sent for a scrivener to lusty London,
He was the best in that citie;
He taught us both to write and read full soon—
If it please you, full soon you shall see—
Lauded be God, I had such speed
That I can write as well as he,
Both English and also French,
And also Spanish, if you had need."[#]

[#] The Princess Cicely.

[#] Humphrey Brereton, Lord Stanley's squire, and the writer of the poem, was present at the conference, and we may therefore take him to record the exact statements made by the Princess Elizabeth.

Certainly, the black-letter hand was one requiring far more effort and pains than the modern running or Italian hand. The caligraphy of the Lady Bessy (afterwards Queen Elizabeth of York) which has descended to posterity, would lead to the melancholy conclusion that if she wrote as well as the best scriveners in London, the productions of inferior penmen must have been illegible indeed. It really is the case; for of all periods in English history (alas, excepting the present century!) the worst writing is found in that which runs from the close of the

Wars of the Roses to the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth. A document dating from the reign of King John is like copper-plate in comparison with the atrocious scrawls of some writers of the Reformation period.

Before that year was ended, Pope Paul thought proper to confer upon Louis XI. of France the title of "Most Christian King." It was no sooner heard of than it was gleefully seized by Edward IV., under his character of *soi-disant* King of France. We may also conclude that Proud Cis snatched at it with considerable self-gratulation, since a charter of hers, dated in this very year, adds it to her titles. She styles herself "the excellent Princess, mother of the Most Christian Prince, our Lord and son, Edward, and lately wife of the most excellent Prince Richard, by right King of England and of France, and Lord of Ireland."[#] Further than this, even Cicely's ambition dared not to venture; yet it seems almost surprising that she did not step across the very little gulf which lay between all these high-sounding epithets and the one which would have involved them all—the coveted name of Queen.

[#] Close Roll, 9 Edw. IV.

During this year, another daughter was born to Edward and Elizabeth. They had three now—Elizabeth, Mary, and Cicely—but no son. The eldest daughter, however, was treated as Princess of Wales in her own right. She is always styled "the Lady Princess"—a title which, until the accession of the Stuarts, appertained alone to the Princess of Wales, whether she were daughter or daughter-in-law of the monarch. The King's daughters, apart from this, were simply addressed as "Lady." The Princess had her own separate household, and judging from the amount of money spent upon her, was rather better provided for than the Queen.

Another occurrence was taking place this year, of no moment to any but the parties immediately concerned, yet which might have had very considerable influence on the future history of England. William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, had a boy of thirteen as his ward, the nephew of Henry VI., whom at that time it was desirable for his own sake to keep as much in obscurity as possible. This was Henry Tudor, the young Earl of Richmond, whose mother was next heir to the Crown after the descendants of Henry IV. The Earl, who liked his young ward, lent a kindly ear to his pleading when a love-story came before him. He was not altogether sorry to find that he could provide for the eldest of his very numerous family by betrothing her to the young Earl. Very young they both were; but boys and girls came early to the front, and blossomed rapidly into men and women in the time of the rival Roses. So the Earl of Richmond was formally affianced to the

Lady Maud Herbert, in anticipation of a marriage which was never to be. Would it have been better if it had been? Humanly speaking, the course of English history would assuredly have been different. For Maud Herbert was a woman of strong character, and did not faint in the weary march, as Elizabeth Lucy had done. But one thing is certain: that the change for the worse which came over the character of Henry of Richmond dates from the time of his parting from Maud Herbert. He went into exile; and she wedded the Earl of Northumberland, years before his triumphant return to wear the crown of England. Which of the two was to blame must be left an open question. Perhaps it was not either: for Maud's marriage was not improbably forced upon her, and Henry could not have returned to claim her without the most reckless risk of life. His marriage with "the Lady Princess" gave peace to England, but he died a lonely, unloved man, grown miserly and callous,—no longer the graceful and gallant Richmond of those early years when he and Maud had lived and loved at Pembroke Castle.

CHAPTER III.
FLIGHT.

"My barque is wafted to the strand
By breath Divine:
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine."
—DEAN ALFORD.

The Lady Idonia sat writing at a small table in the hall of Lovell Tower. She was the best writer in the family—which does not by any means imply extraordinary fluency of diction or rapidity of penmanship. The letters grew slowly under her hand, and she frequently paused to look out of the window and think. What lay on the desk before her was the following unfinished letter.

"Jh'u.[#]

"MY NOWEN[#] DERE CHYLDE,

Thys shal be to give you to wyt, wt[#] all louyng comendac'ons from all us, that wee well fare, and do hope in God that you be the same. And we have not yett herde so much as one word from yr sistar. Matters here bee reasonable quyett at this present, onlie that Doratie has broke y' powdre box of siluer, in good sooth

a misaduenture and noe malice, wch shall be wel amended ere yow com home. The dun cowe hath a calfe of hir veraye coloure. And Lyard Carlile[#] and all the dogges fare wel. Maistres Henley hir littel lad lyethe sicke of a fevare, but the leech reckoneth he shal doe well. Dorathie ys merrie, and gode withal. Yr father thynkes to buy som pigges ayenst Xmas.[#] We shal bee fayn to here of yr newes, the rather if you can give us any tydynges of such as you wot of,[#] how they be now in men's reckonings, and if thei be lyke to fare wel or noe. The gode Lorde of his mercie kepe us all, and make vs to bee hys trew seruantes. Annis, I wold haue you, when conueniencie serue, to sende mee from London towne viij ells gode clothe of skarlette for a goune for yr moder, and so moche of greene kersay as shall be a goun for Doratie: and dowlas to lyne the same, and silke frenge to guard the skarlett goun, and fur of rabetts to guard ye grene: alsoe siluer botons iij dozen, and black botons vj dosen and halfe. And sende ye same well packed vp to the Goldene Lyon by Powles,[#] to ye name of Maister Anthanie Milborne, yt is a frend of mye broder Will, and cometh into Yorksh: thys nexte monethe. And let him that berethe ye same aske of ye sayd Maister Anthanie for a token[#] yt he hath of mee for yow. Annis, wee trust in God yt yow shal be a discrete mayd and gode, and obedyent to yowr maistres, and kyndlie wt yr fellowes.[#] And above al, my dere harte, kepe yow ye fayth yt ve have ben learned, nor let not anie man beguile you therof."

[#] A contraction of Jesus, commonly used at the head of a letter by pious persons.

[#] Mine own.

[#] With.

[#] The name of a horse.

[#] Against Christmas.

[#] The Lollards.

[#] St Paul's Cathedral.

[#] Present.

[#] Fellow-chamberers.

The pen had been laid down at this point, and left so long that the ink was dry. The Lady Idonia was speaking now to Another than Agnes,

"O Lord, keep the child!" went up from her inmost heart. "Suffer the unfaithful handmaid to plead with Thee, that the faithful one may be preserved in the faith. I may give her wrong cautions—I may fancy dangers that will not assault her, and be blind to those that will. Thou, who seest the end from the beginning, hold the child up, and suffer her not, for any pains nor fears, to fall from Thee!"

She roused herself at last, and finished her letter.

"And so, with all louyng comendac'ons from al vs, I commend yow to God.

"Yr louyng grandame to my litel powar, "IDONIA MARNELL.

"Writyn at Louell Towre, this Wensday."

The letter was delivered by Mr. William Carew to a retainer of the Earl of Warwick, who was also one of his friends, and from whom he had understood that the Earl meant to go southwards before the week was over.

The plot was ripe at last. Warwick left Middleham with the first dawn of 1470, and arrived in London without any suspicion of his proceedings being excited at Court. He left his brothers behind him in the north, with strict injunctions to George to keep John out of mischief. They were very necessary. Unfortunately (from Warwick's point of view) just at that juncture King Edward took it into his head to create Lord Montague's little son George a Duke—a title then shared by very few who were not Princes of the Blood—with the object of marrying him to the Princess Elizabeth, and thus making him, in case Edward himself left no son, virtually the future King. This high advancement for his boy sorely tried Montague's new-born Lancastrian proclivities. He swung like a pendulum between the royal rivals: and all the efforts of his brother George were needed to prevent him from going off to Edward, and of course, revealing the plot in which Warwick was now engaged. One thing which had annoyed Warwick was the discovery, real or fancied, that his influence with Edward was less powerful than of old. But he went to work darkly, as was his wont. He was greatly assisted in his proceedings by the fact that he held Edward's commission to raise troops for his service in the north, and no suspicion would therefore be excited by his gathering an army around him.[#] When he arrived in London, he reported himself at the Palace, and a long interview followed in Westminster Hall between

Edward, Clarence, and Warwick. They parted "worse friends than they met,"[#] but Edward still does not appear to have suspected that Warwick was actually plotting against him, or he would hardly have let him go so calmly. Edward had left for Canterbury, and Warwick and Clarence prepared to return northwards and continue their amusement. Before leaving London, Clarence dispatched Sir John Clare to Lord Welles and his son Sir Robert, desiring them to "be ready with all the fellowship they could, whenever he should send word; but to tarry and not stir till my Lord of Warwick were come again from London, for fear of his destruction."[#] In the mean time they assiduously spread a report that "the King was coming down with great power to Lincolnshire, and his judges should sit, and hang and draw great numbers of the commons."[#] Of course this disposed the commons to rally round Warwick, who represented himself in the light of a protector from the impending terrors. He sent messenger after messenger to bid Sir Robert Welles be of good comfort, and go forward, promising to meet him at Leicester on the twelfth of February with nineteen thousand men.[#]

[#] A very varied tale is told of Warwick's capturing Edward in his bed at Wolvey in 1469, and sending him prisoner to Middleham, whence he effected his escape in a romantic manner. The accounts given are contradictory, the story of the escape is disbelieved by Carte, and intimations on the Rolls seem to show that the King had never left Westminster; I therefore have thought it wiser to ignore this episode entirely beyond the present mention of it.

[#] Sandford.

[#] Confession of Sir Robert Welles, Harl. Ms. 283, fol. 2.

[#] Confession of Sir Robert Welles, Harl. Ms. 283, fol. 2.

Clarence, meanwhile, was playing his own little game, independently of his father-in-law. His messengers had private orders to "move the host, that at such time as the matter should come near the point of battle, they should call upon my Lord of Clarence to be King, and destroy the King that so was about to destroy them and all the realm."[#]

[#] Confession of Sir Robert Welles, Harl. Ms. 283, fol. 2.

Meanwhile, Edward continued his favours to Montague—not because he trusted, but really because he suspected him, and was anxious to ensure his fidelity. A few days only after the meeting of Warwick and Welles, he granted to John, Earl of Northumberland and Baron Montague, the manors of Tiverton, Plympton, Okehampton, and many others in Devonshire,[#] being a portion of the confiscated lands of the Courtenays, Earls of Devon. Perhaps this timely gift prevented Montague from openly siding with Warwick until a later date: but he was not particularly grateful for it, since he contemptuously termed it "a 'pie's nest," and plainly intimated that it was not so much as might have been expected. However, for the present, he held aloof from the actual struggle.

[#] Rot. Pat., 9 Edw. IV, Part 2. The earldom of Morthumberland was not immediately restored to the Percys on their submission in the previous October. A writer in the Paston Letters dates their restoration Mar. 25, 1470.

That was close at hand. Some rumour of the transactions with Welles must have reached Edward, for he sent a peremptory order to Lord Welles to come to him. It was obeyed; and the old man was then commanded to write a letter to his son, charging him instantly to forsake Warwick and to join his father. The command was accompanied by a hint that the writer's head would be the forfeit of his failure. Sir Robert, who seems to have been of an obstinate temper, since we are told that he knew his power was too weak to grapple with Edward, refused to obey, and moved southward to give battle. Edward kept his word, and the father's life paid for the son's imprudence. Then he marched northwards, and the two armies met at Stamford, on a place afterwards known as Loosecoat Field. Welles had no chance against the overwhelming superiority of Edward's forces, and Warwick was not there. Sir Robert was taken, and beheaded at Doncaster on the 13th of March. Hearing that Warwick was encamped about twenty miles from Doncaster, Edward went on to the latter town. The next morning, March 20, "at nine of the bell," Edward took the field at Estrefield, and Warwick met him. "Never were seen in England so many goodly men, and so well arranged." But no sooner did Warwick and Clarence perceive that fortune was against them than they fled the field, and went to seek succour from Lord Stanley. They halted first at a little town, so obscure that it was necessary to say that it was in Lancashire, as otherwise few would have known whereabouts Manchester might be. Thence they sent messengers to Lathom, but my Lord Stanley, most cautious of men, showed them little favour. "And so men say they went northward, and thence, men deem, to London."[#]

[#] Paston Letters.

Perceiving that his chief adversaries had escaped him, Edward stopped pursuit of their troops, and went on to York. He and his men had probably had thirsty work, for we learn that "York was drunk dry when the King was there."[#] He was wise enough to send to Middleham for Lord Montague. When that trustworthy gentleman appeared, it was to be created Marquis Montague, the earldom of Northumberland being now taken from him and restored to its rightful owner. It might have been supposed that an earl would scarcely deem it a deplorable occurrence that he should be made a marquis: but my gracious Lord of Montague was evidently in an exceedingly bad temper. He growled and grumbled as if he were a deeply injured man,—managing, however, to keep up a contented face in the presence of his master, who appears to have fancied that he had secured Montague's fidelity. Never were there more men than at that time who were able to "smile, and smile, and be a villain": and all the Warwick brothers were certainly of the number.

[#] Paston Letters.

From York was issued a long and curious proclamation, in which Edward showed that he had at last fully realised that Warwick and Clarence were his open enemies. If the words of Edward were to be relied on to the exclusion of his deeds, it would certainly be supposed that he was a man of the tenderest and most affectionate nature. In this respect he somewhat resembled his predecessor, Henry III. Both could use very touching language—which the actions of both sorely contradicted. In this document the tone taken by Edward is that of a well-deserving man who had been injured in his deepest affections. He sets forth that "the King granted to George Duke of Clarence and Richard Earl of Warwick his pardon general for all offences before Christmas last," trusting thereby to have caused them to have "shewed unto him their naturall loue, ligeance, and duetee," for which purpose he had authorised them to assemble his subjects in certain shires. "Yet the said Duke and Earl, unnaturally, unkindly, and truly intending his destruction and the subversion of the kingdom, ... and to make the said Duke king of this the said realm, against God's law, man's law, all reason, and conscience, dissimuled with his said Highness." Their proceedings are then detailed, as deposed in the confessions of Sir Robert Welles and others, concluding with their flight "with all their fellaship into Lancastreshire, so as his said Highness with his hoste for lack

of vitayll might not follow." Notwithstanding all these offences, "our sovereign Lord considered the nighness of blood,[#] and tender love which he hath aforetime borne to them, and was therefore loth to have lost them if they would have submitted them to his grace." Having disobeyed the writs which allowed them to present themselves, under promise of pardon, up to the 28th of March, the Duke and Earl are now solemnly proclaimed rebels, to whom loyal subjects of King Edward are to give no aid, favour, nor assistance, with meat, drink, money, or otherwise, but are to take them and bring them to the King, upon pain of death and forfeiture. The reward announced for the capture of either is £100 in land by the year, to the captor and his heirs, or £1000 in ready money, at his election. The capture of any knight of their following is to be rewarded by £20 in land or a hundred marks in cash; and of a squire, £10 in land or forty in money.[#]

[#] The Countess of Warwick was Edward's second cousin, and the Earl his third cousin.

[#] Close Roll, 10 Edw. IV.; dated York, March 24, 1470.

The day after this proclamation, Montague received his marquis's coronet, and was, in appearance at least, one of the most faithful subjects of King Edward. The news he brought on his return to Middleham caused no little excitement there. The Countess ordered instant preparations for departure. Some of the household were left behind at Middleham: some were suffered to return to their friends, among whom were Theobalda and Eleanor. The only ladies she took with her, beside her daughters, were Mother Bonham, Frideswide, and Avice. There was also a dresser, or lady's maid, and a scullion-girl.

About midnight, when the ladies were trying to get a little sleep before their early journey on the morrow, the porter was awoke by small pebbles thrown up at his window.

"Who goes there?" he inquired, opening the casement about an inch.

"It is I, John Wright," answered the familiar voice of the young squire. "Pray thee, good Thomas, be hasteful and let me in privily, with all silence, for I bring word from my Lord unto my Lady."

The porter cautiously unbarred the small wicket, and Wright stepped inside. He did not wait to satisfy the porter's curiosity, but sped across the courtyard, and by means of a key which he carried, let himself into the tower which contained the apartments of the Countess. A minute later, he was softly rapping at the outer door of her rooms, and Mother Bonham admitted him.

The Countess sent for him at once to her bedside. She guessed that his

message was one of imminent import.

"Noble Lady," said Wright, with a low courtesy—for the courtesy was a gentleman's reverence in those days,—"behold here my Lord's token, who greets you well by me, and desires you to come unto him, and my young ladies withal, at Dartmouth, in Devon, so speedily and secretly as you may."

He held forth a diamond ring, which the Countess recognised as one usually worn by her husband, and not sent as a token except on occasions of serious moment. She sent Mother Bonham at once to communicate the news to her daughters, and to desire them to be ready to set forth two hours earlier than the time originally fixed. Her idea had been to seek the Earl at Warwick Castle, though she hoped to receive more exact news before her departure. But she deemed it quite as well that that very reliable person, the Marquis Montague, should be left in a little uncertainty touching her departure. She had already taken advantage of a conveniently smoky chimney to move the Marquis into a tower which did not overlook her own. She now gave further orders that the horses were to be in waiting outside the Castle, on the grass, so as to avoid noise, and in a position where they could not be seen from Montague's windows. At two o'clock, wrapped in long travelling cloaks, and wearing list slippers, the ladies crept out of the Castle into the fresh April night air, and mounted their horses in silence. Sir John Clare rode before the Countess, Sir Walter Wretill before the Duchess of Clarence, and John Wright before the Lady Anne. Slowly and silently, at first, the procession filed off from the Castle, not breaking into a trot till they thought themselves beyond sight and hearing. The Archbishop (just then to be trusted) was keeping watch over his brother, and with him Warwick's servant, Philip Strangeways, who was to follow an hour later, in order to gallop on and warn the ladies if any pursuit were attempted.

Once out of Wensleydale, and joined by Philip, the journey changed into a rapid flight. They travelled by night. They were afraid of being pursued, not only on their own account, but on that of Warwick, to whose locality theirs would give a clue, as it would instantly be surmised that they were going to join him. They kept as much as possible to the bye-ways and moor roads, which were less frequented, and also less capable of ambush, than the high roads: but they could not keep altogether out of human sight and hearing. Many a cottager woke up in the dark to hear a rush of horses, and to see the flash of the lanterns as the fugitives fled past. It was a wretched journey, especially for the Duchess, who was by no means in health to stand it. But the Duchess had a spirit which carried her above all pain and languor. She would have no halts made for her. She entertained a strong dislike and fear of Edward personally, and if report spoke truly, not without good reason.

Before Dartmouth was reached, Frideswide Marston had most heartily

wished herself, a score of times at least, within the safe shelter of Lovell Tower. Oh, if she could wake up from this hurried snatch of sleep under an elderbush, to find herself in that little white bed in the turret chamber, with Dorathie's head beside her on the pillow! It seemed to Frideswide as if, that wish granted, she could never complain of any thing again.

Along the wild hill-passes of "the back-bone of England," winding round the Peak, keeping clear of Stafford Castle, where the Yorkist Duke of Buckingham had his home, skirting Shropshire and Hereford, taking the ferry over the Severn, down through Somerset, avoiding alike the uncivilised neighbourhood of Exmoor, where bandits loved to congregate, and the too civilised neighbourhood of Exeter, they came into those safer parts of Devon where the exiled Courtenays were lords of the hearts, though they had lost the lands,—where once more "the King" was Henry VI., and his adherents would meet with honour and help. Near Totness they were met by William Newark, Warwick's nuncio, who conducted them to boats moored in the river awaiting them. It was a great relief to change their weary saddles for the boats in which they dropped down the lovely Dart, and found Warwick's fleet, of eighty ships, ready to weigh anchor the moment they arrived, lying off Kingswear.

The voyage, however, had not been long before they discovered that the saddles had been the safer mode of conveyance. The wind, though low, was not unfavourable: but they had scarcely passed Portland when they were met by the very enemy from whom they were endeavouring to escape. As they rounded the little peninsula, ships of war stood before them, with King Edward's standard and Lord Rivers' pennon flying from the masthead.

An evil augury for Warwick was that pennon. With any weaker commander, the fleet would have obeyed its Lord High Admiral, as Warwick had been created a year before. But Lord Rivers was a conscientious man of one idea, and he thoroughly believed in Edward's right. The ships joined battle, and the ladies of course were kept below.

Oh for that little white bed and Dorathie!

Never till then had Frideswide Marston looked death in the face, and never after that day could she be as she had been, again.

Warwick was a less honest and true-hearted man than Rivers, but he was also a better general. The battle was short and sharp, but the victory remained in the hands of Warwick. His ships got safely away, but they were not by any means out of their troubles. It seemed as though both God and man were against them that night. Before they could reach Beachy Head, there came on them a terrific tempest, and they were tossed up and down in the Channel like toys of the storm. To add to all other distresses, the Duchess of Clarence, whose mental energy had hitherto borne her through her physical sufferings, sank beneath them at last,

and became alarmingly ill. It was not until the morning of the fourth day that they found themselves off Calais, and a few hours before, the Duchess had given birth to a child which had not survived the event many minutes. But Calais was Warwick's old home; he had been Governor of the town for years. Here, at least, he might hope for rest and aid.

They cast anchor under shelter of Cape Grisnez, and sent John Wright ashore in a little boat to notify to Vauclere, Warwick's deputy in command, that his master was about to land.

Warwick himself paced the quarter-deck impatiently. What were those sluggards ashore doing, that his own state barge was not sent off at once to land the ladies? Why did Vauclere not appear, cap in hand, to express his satisfaction at the return of his master? When at last he saw his squire return alone, Warwick's patience, never very extensive, failed him utterly.

"What means all this?" he roared in a passion.

"My Lord," shouted John Wright back from the boat, "Messire de Vauclere begs your Lordship will not essay a landing, for the townsmen will not receive you."

"Not receive *me*!" cried the Earl in amazement. "Me, their own Governor! Lad, didst hear aright? Is Vauclere beside himself?"

"In good sooth, nay, my Lord, and he is sore aggrieved to have no better welcome for your Lordship than so. 'Tis the townsmen, not he, as he bade me for to say, and he earnestly desires your Lordship to make for some other French port."

Warwick could hardly believe his ears.

"But surely," he answered in a rather crestfallen tone, "they will never refuse to receive my Lady Duchess? Have you told Vauclere in what case she now is?"

"My Lord, I told him all things: and he replied that he was sore troubled it should so fall out, but he had no power. He hath, howbeit, sent two flagons of wine for Her Grace."

"No power!" repeated the Earl. "Wherefore then is he there? Leave me but land in safety, and Messire de Vauclere, and my masters the townsmen, shall soon behold if I have any power or no! No power, quotha! Well! better luck next time. Get you up, lad, and bring the wine, for 'tis sore needed. Bid the shipmaster stand southward. Were we in better case, they should find their ears tingle ere they were much older! Messire de Vauclere shall one day hear my name again, or I much mistake!"

And away strode the Earl wrathfully, to communicate the disappointing news to his suffering ladies.

Southwards, for two days more, they slowly sailed. The storm was over, and the wind had dropped almost to a calm. But at the end of two days, with

much difficulty, the vessel containing the Earl and his family was run into the mouth of the Seine, and between Harfleur and Honfleur they landed on the soil of Normandy.

In France the scene was changed. Louis XI. had been pleased to take up the Lancastrian cause—the cause of the King who had of old, as a child, been made the rival of Louis's father, and whose troops had been so ignominiously driven out of France by the Maid. In France, therefore, Warwick was received with honour and material help. Every provision was made for the wearied ladies at Valognes, where they took up their temporary abode: but for some weeks nothing would tempt Warwick from Honfleur—not even the remonstrances of his friend the Duke of Burgundy, who sent to entreat him to come to his Court. One important point was wanting—Queen Marguerite would make no move towards conciliation. In vain King Louis assured her that Warwick's help was absolutely essential to the Lancastrian cause. The Queen might have welcomed him, but the cruel defamation of her name the woman knew not how to forgive. She only relented after long importunity, and then on the stern condition that in the presence of the Kings of France and Naples, Warwick should solemnly retract all his accusations, and beg her pardon for his infamous falsehoods. She also insisted on this retractation being published in England. Finding that no better terms could be obtained from his insulted sovereign, Warwick was compelled to eat this most unpalatable piece of humble-pie with what appetite he might. He waited on the Queen at Angers, where he begged her pardon on his knees, and formally unsaid all the imputations which he had made upon her character. Even then all present could see that Marguerite found it a very bitter task to receive her enemy into favour. After this humiliating scene, the Earl rejoined his ladies, and some weeks later they travelled together to the Castle of Amboise, where their royal hosts were then residing.

The Castle of Amboise stands on one of those natural platforms of rock which in and about Touraine gem the vale of the Loire; the little town clustering at its foot, between it and the river, while the Palace towers above all. Were it not for them, the scenery would be as flat as the sea. But wherever they stand up there is a little oasis of beauty, for they are generally clad in verdure, as well as crowned with some picturesque edifice of the Middle Ages.

It was after dark when the barge which bore the fugitives was moored at Amboise. Royal footmen stood on each side of the landing-stage, bearing large torches, and royal ushers handed the ladies from the barge, and led them into the Castle. As Frideswide was modestly following her mistress, the last of the group, rather to her surprise, a hand was offered her, and a voice asked her in English if she were not very tired.

Frideswide looked up into the pleasant face of a man of some thirty years

of age, who wore the royal livery of England. Livery, it must be remembered, was not at that time any badge of servitude; all the King's equerries, household officers, and gentlemen ushers, wore his livery. This man was of fine proportions, had bright, dark, intelligent eyes, and wore—what few then did—a long beard and moustache. There was a kind, friendly expression in his face which made Frideswide feel at her ease. She answered the sympathising inquiry by a smiling affirmative.

"Well, here may you find good rest," said he. "At the least, after all these stairs be clomb, which I fear shall yet weary you somewhat. Shall we, of your good pleasure, make acquaintance? I am the Queen's henchman."

"Master Combe?" asked Frideswide, looking up.

"John Combe, and your servant," said he. "Truly a lowly name—it could scarce be shorter—but it hath serven me these thirty years, and yet shall, if it please God."

The name was no unknown sound to Frideswide Marston, for John Combe had been Queen Marguerite's personal attendant—equerry, secretary, confidant, friend—ever since that dark and evil day when, stung by Warwick's cruel stab in the dark, the beautiful young Queen, to avoid all ground for evil surmisings, had selected a boy of fourteen to ride before her. Truest of the true had John Combe proved to his royal lady. He was low down, indeed, in her household—no peerage ever adorned his name, nor order glittered on his breast—but there was not a man about her whom Marguerite would have trusted as she trusted him. His feeling towards her was one of reverential tenderness—the sentiment of a devotee towards his chosen saint. In fact, it was John Combe's nature to look out for, to protect, to love, whatever he found in need of it. "The man who wanted him was the man he wanted." A timid, shrinking girl, who looked frightened and uncomfortable, would have won John Combe's notice, though a dozen luxuriously-appointed beauties were fluttering about him in vain. What had originally attracted him to Marguerite herself was not the beauty nor the Queen, but the lonely, helpless, calumniated woman.

The world holds a few John Combes. Would there were more!

The long stretch of stairs came to an end at last, and John Combe led Frideswide into the private closet of Queen Marguerite. It was the first time she had ever seen the royal lady who to her was the incarnation of every thing that was fair and noble. While the Queen was occupied with the Countess and her daughters, Frideswide had time to look at her.

Marguerite of Anjou was now just forty years of age, but she still retained, in every item but one, that wonderful beauty which had won her the reputation of the loveliest woman in Europe. The once brilliant complexion was dimmed and faded by long years of anxiety and privation. But the graceful figure, lithe and

slender, was not changed—the gracious bearing was no less fascinating than of old—the blue eyes were bright and sparkling still, and the golden hair held its own without a silver thread. She received the Countess with the affectionate concern of an old friend who was sorry for her recent suffering, and her daughters with motherly kindness. Perhaps there was just a shade more of it for the Lady Anne than her sister. But Anne was the younger, and was at that moment looking the more wearied of the two. Then the Queen turned to the suite, greeted Mother Bonham as she might have done her own old nurse, and gave her hand to kiss to Frideswide and Avice. The Earl, who had been first to wait on King Louis, made his appearance last. Marguerite received him with cold civility, very different from her manner to the ladies. But she condescended to converse with him on political affairs, though it was in a grave and distant style. Marguerite showed to most advantage when she spoke, for then her face lighted up, her eyes were animated, and her natural vivacity made itself apparent. Let her be silent, and the face grew grave and sad, as she had good cause to be.

Before much of this political converse had gone on, the Queen, by a motion of her hand, summoned John Combe, who, whatever he might be doing, always seemed to keep one eye upon every act and gesture of his royal mistress. She desired him to call the Lady de Vivonne, and a plump, lively, gesticulating Frenchwoman accordingly sailed into the room. To her care the Queen committed the ladies who had accepted her hospitality, desiring her to see that they wanted for nothing: and the Lady de Vivonne carried them off to the apartments already prepared for them. Here were several other women, both French and English, who busied themselves in offering help. One of the latter, a girl of about their own age, devoted herself to Frideswide and Avice.

"Gramercy, my damsels, but you must be a-weary!" said she. "I wis I was when we hither came. You shall yet have seen none, as I reckon, save our own Queen?"

"None at all," answered Avice. "I would right fain see my Lord Prince."

"And the King and Queen of France—be they here?" said Frideswide.

"They be so," replied Christian, as they found the girl was named: "but, gramercy! they be not much to look at."

"Ill-favoured both?"

Christian pulled an affirmative face. She was evidently ready to continue the conversation to any extent; but both the chamberers were so tired that when their duties were over, they were only too thankful to lie down in bed. Only, before they dropped asleep, Frideswide said,—

"What shall be the next move?"

"God wot," said Avice, gravely.

"Know you if the Queen hath or no any leaning toward our doctrine?"

”Hush, prithee! I cannot tell, in any wise. The King is good man and holy—men say, holy as any saint. The Queen, I have heard, is a great almsgiver—or so were, when she had alms to give. Poor lady! now ’tis well nigh come to asking alms, with her.”

”Poor lady!” echoed Frideswide.

And then they went to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

SCENE-SHIFTING.

”What a world this is!—a cur of a world, which fawns on its master, and bites the beggar. Ha, ha! it fawns on me now, for the beggar has bought the cur.”—EDWARD, EARL LYTTON.

A brilliant spring morning greeted Frideswide’s eyes when she opened her curtains in the little turret-room at Amboise where the chamberers were lodged. Avice was still asleep, but Frideswide, hearing sounds of life without, and fearing it might be late, roused her, and they dressed quickly, and hastened to the Countess’s rooms. They found that lady refreshed by her night’s rest, and in the highest spirits. From the sanguine tone of her conversation, it might have been supposed that the conquest of England was only a thing to ask and have. They would soon be back at Warwick or Middleham,—there could not be the least doubt of it: King Henry would be restored amid the acclamations of a delighted and loyal people, that rebel would have his head cut off, and all would be smooth as a looking-glass, and sweet as a bouquet of roses, for ever thenceforward.

It was not Frideswide’s place to utter a word. But in her heart she thought that she had no wish to return to Middleham. Were it in her power to return to Lovell Tower, that would have been a different matter.

The process of dressing over, the ladies descended to Queen Marguerite’s drawing-room, there to wait till the chapel bell rang for matins. The Queen herself appeared in a few minutes, and gave them a kindly greeting. She was accompanied by a youth of seventeen years, in whom it was easy to recognise the Prince of Wales.

Edward Prince of Wales was ”only the child of his mother.” Neither in person nor character did he bear any resemblance to the King. He was tall for his

age, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and superlatively handsome. His beauty, nevertheless, was of rather too feminine a cast—though there was no shade of weakness in his character, unless too great a tendency to fiery rashness be considered in that light.

It may be said that the Prince did not enter the room unattended. A little allegorical person accompanied him, Cupid by name, who is said to take great delight in the making of mischief and the breaking of hearts. In this instance he certainly came for the latter pursuit. Well would it have been for Warwick's youngest and sweetest daughter if the electric spark had not been shot that day from heart to heart, which was to end in so soon making her a widow indeed, with a heart which could throb no more to any human love.

The King of France was now on his way to the chapel, as a loud ringing of bells and a trumpet-blast informed every body within hearing. Queen Marguerite marshalled her guests, giving her own hand to Clarence, the Prince conducting the Duchess. In pairs they slowly filed down the stairs of the tower, and crossed the court-yard to the chapel, where the English Queen and Prince sat in the royal traverse, the former on the right hand of King Louis, and the latter on the left of Queen Carlotta.

Frideswide felt quite ready to echo Christian's opinion that neither King nor Queen of France was much worth looking at. King Louis had strong and by no means beautiful features, and he stooped in the shoulders to an extent which approached an appearance of deformity. The Queen's features were more regular, but her face had a horse-like length, and every thing about her was on a large and rather coarse scale. From the constant glances of fear cast by the Queen upon her husband, Frideswide readily guessed that her married life was not a happy one. In truth, poor Carlotta's brains had been frightened out of her. She was not naturally at all deficient in intellectual power: but eighteen years spent under the influence of unceasing terror had so completely broken her spirit and crushed her capacities of all kinds, that Carlotta was now a simple nonentity—good to sit, clad in robes and jewels, at a pageant, but in all other respects, outside her children's nursery, good for nothing at all.

After matins, breakfast was served in the Queen's drawing-room. Breakfast was only now beginning to be considered a social meal. Hitherto it had been much what afternoon tea is now—a light repast, to which people came or not as they chose, and chiefly affected by women and invalids. It had, therefore, mainly consisted of bread or cakes. Now fish and meat made their appearance in addition, and also the acceptable novelty of butter—novel, that is to say, in its new form of bread and butter. It had long been used in cooking: but about this time it permanently took the place of dripping as a relish to bread. Wine, ale, and milk, were the beverages used.

Never, perhaps, to the same extent as at this time, did the staff of life appear under so many different forms. The more delicate kinds were termed simnel and *pain de main*: wassel was the best kind of common bread; cocket was a spongy loaf of cheaper flour; maslin was made of wheat mixed with oats and barley. Griddle-cakes were peculiar to Wales and the counties bordering thereon. Spice-bread was plum-cake in all varieties of richness. There was also brown bread, and Christmas bread, which last was made of fine flour, milk, and eggs. Manchet bread, which was of high class, seems to have borne its distinctive name rather in reference to shape than to material, and probably resembled a Yorkshire tea-cake.[#] There were beside all these, rolls, biscuits and cakes of all sorts, maccaroons, gingerbread, and marchpane—a sweet cake of the maccaroon type.

[#] This is the explanation usually given by antiquaries; but in Lancashire, within living memory, a manchet was a small square loaf of very white bread. Some writers make manchet (afterwards termed *chet* bread) the name of the simnel loaf; this is perhaps the true explanation.

After breakfast, Queen Marguerite proceeded to business. She held a long sitting of her council—for the King being a prisoner, she was virtually and unavoidably the Lancastrian Sovereign. The Prince was yet too young to assume this position, though circumstances had forced him to the front so early that his intellect was beyond his years. He had inherited nothing of the mental weakness of his father.

The council consisted of the Prince, Warwick, Clarence, Oxford, Jaspar Tudor Earl of Pembroke (brother of King Henry by the mother's side), Walter Lyhart Bishop of Norwich (the Queen's Confessor), Ralph Mackarell, her Chancellor, and several gentlemen of less note who were in the Queen's suite. The only ladies admitted in attendance on the Queen were the Countess of Warwick and the Lady de Vivonne, the latter of whom understood no English. Any thing of serious consequence could therefore be said in that tongue.

English had now almost entirely taken the place so many centuries held by French as the Court language, and there is very little difference between the English of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During the reign of Elizabeth a polishing process was slowly progressing, which has never ceased,—though how far all changes in this respect are improvements, may reasonably be open to question.

The idea of a new campaign was now mooted. Marguerite was sure of help from King Louis. The Duke of Burgundy was a more doubtful ally, who vacillated between the rivals as inclination or policy led him, and who was at that time recently married to the youngest sister of Edward IV., and yet entertaining

and pensioning a number of the Lancastrian fugitive nobles. Just now the Red Rose was in the ascendant at his Court. His personal liking for Edward was doubtful, and his fear and dislike of Warwick were not doubtful. Two of the most prominent Lancastrian nobles, the Dukes of Exeter and Somerset, both of whom were at his Court, did their utmost to incline him in their own direction, and the result was that he openly offered his assistance to Queen Marguerite, while he privately sent underhand information to Edward of all her plans so far as they were known to him. This, at least, is generally believed. It is, nevertheless, very possible, that the Duchess Margaret may be really responsible for much of her lord's apparent treachery. She was a woman to whose soul conspiracy and scheming were as the breath of life.

The preparations for the campaign were quietly maturing as the summer advanced. It was arranged that Warwick was to precede the Queen, landing about September, and she was to follow with more troops, two months later. But in the mean time it was desirable that some means should be found to make the interests of Warwick identical with those of King Henry. No one knew better than Marguerite that Warwick's fidelity was an article that had its price, and that he might be expected to serve any cause just so long as that cause served him. He was perpetually at see-saw, and a very little additional pressure at either end would hoist or depress him in an instant. The fact of his daughter's marriage to Clarence made him more dubious than ever. True, Clarence himself was at the present moment a Lancastrian: but how long would he remain so? He was even less to be trusted of the two: for while solid advantage was required to weigh with Warwick, caprice was enough at any time to sway the actions of Clarence. Something, therefore, must be done to provide a make-weight for Warwick's family connection with Edward: and while the Queen was considering how it could be done, King Louis made a suggestion to her which showed the best way to do it.

Human hearts will break through all state trappings, and will insist on being heard even through the roar of revolution. The young Prince of Wales, barely seventeen, had fallen passionately in love with the Lady Anne Neville, Warwick's youngest daughter, who was a year younger than himself. But people were grown up at that age in the eventful fifteenth century, which acted like a hot-bed upon the intellect and judgment of its children. That the Prince should marry the Lady Anne Neville was politically most devoutly to be wished: it was ardently desired by both the parties most concerned, by Warwick himself, and by every body but the one person into whose hands the matter had to come for decision. But so well were the feelings of Queen Marguerite known to all around her, that no one but the King of France himself dared to suggest to her the marriage of her son with Warwick's daughter. And when suggested, the proposal

was at first received by the Queen with a blaze of indignation. The wrath was all for Warwick,—certainly not for the innocent Anne, whom she loved dearly for her own sake.

"What!" cried the Queen passionately, "does he ask to marry his daughter to the son of the woman he traduced? The wounds that he has inflicted on me will bleed till the day of judgment."[#]

[#] These are the Queen's own words.

King Louis had need of all his craft and cajolery (in both which he was an adept when he chose) to bring the insulted woman to what he considered reason. Perhaps, after all, she yielded rather to the pleading eyes of her darling than to any political argument. But she did yield: and usually, when Marguerite resolved to do any thing, she did it graciously.

The marriage of the Prince of Wales and the Lady Anne was celebrated in the chapel of Amboise, in July or August, 1470. It was attended by the usual ludicrous stratagems on the part of King Louis, who loved grand pageants only less than he detested paying bills for them. Accordingly, when hangings were to be put up, he bought new velvet for those parts where they could be seen, and made old serve wherever they could not. On the present occasion, His Majesty had new robes made for himself and the Queen, but the fronts only were of previously unused material,—for, as the King very truly observed, "when we are sitting in the traverse in chapel, who will see the backs of our clothes?" On this economical principle, the gold trimmings on Queen Carlotta's dress were gold in front, but at the back tinsel was employed. A splendid diamond served as a button to fasten the ostrich feather in His Majesty's hat (which was of a round form turned up with fur, like a tall "pork-pie" hat), but the velvet of which the back portion was composed was creased and worn, and the back fur had been cut from an old cloak of the Queen's.

Queen Marguerite practised her economies in another fashion. Economy was far more necessary to her than to Louis, for she literally lived upon alms: but when she found velvet beyond her purse, she dressed herself in honest camlet, or, had it come to that, in uncompromising serge. In truth, Marguerite was too high-souled to measure a man's worth by that of his clothes. In velvet or in serge, she was still the Queen of England. By a little pinching, in this instance, velvet was obtained for the bridegroom's dress: but there was not enough for the Queen also, and she therefore appeared contentedly in sendal, which cost less, nor was she so mean a soul as to feel one pang in doing so. Warwick, who

acquired wealth not as he ought, but as he could, had cash enough, and exhibited the fact by showering jewellery on the bride.

The ceremony over, congratulations were offered in abundance, and all the suite knelt to kiss the hand of the Princess. It was the general opinion that a splendid future lay before the young pair,—how could it be otherwise? They were already dowered with rank, beauty, intellect, and devoted love. What did they lack except wealth and success, which the approaching campaign would undoubtedly confer on them? O blind eyes, which saw not the Angel of Death stand with folded wings behind the bridegroom!—which read not the scroll, written within and without, with desolation, and mourning, and woe, to be crushed into those few and evil years which were the portion of the bride! Woe unto them that laughed now, for they should weep!

The remainder of the summer was busily filled with preparations for the approaching campaign. On an early day in September, the Duke of Clarence, and the Earls of Warwick and Oxford, took leave of the ladies, and with banners flying, at the head of a mercenary host, set out for England.

"God guard you, my Lady!" said Warwick, with his last kiss to his wife. "Farewell, my pretty ones!" to his daughters. "Only a short farewell. We meet at Westminster, two months hence, if His will be."

It was not. Never again were they to see his face.

Queen Marguerite did not remain long at Amboise after Warwick's departure. She removed to Paris, to be nearer the scene of action, accompanied by the Prince and Princess, the Countess of Warwick, the Countess of Wiltshire, and the rest of her ladies. A very comical story is told of the husband of this Countess of Wiltshire at the battle of St. Albans, where, says the sly old chronicler, "the said James set the King's banner again an house end, and fought manly with the heels, for he was afeared of losing of beauty, for he was named the fairest knight of this land."[#]

[#] Gregory's Chronicle.

On the thirteenth of September, Warwick and his army landed at Plymouth, some at Dartmouth and Exmouth. The Duke of Burgundy tried in vain to intercept him, his vessels being scattered by a great storm through which Warwick passed safely. Burgundy, however, sent word to Edward of the port and time of Warwick's choice: but Edward was on a hunting expedition, and, true to his character, he left matters to look out for themselves. A man of no foresight, vigilance, nor strength of character, but capable of sudden rushes of violent bravery,

it was Edward's habit to trust to the chapter of circumstances, which hitherto had usually turned in his favour. Moreover, he had in this instance a secret source of hopefulness, of which Warwick was not aware. Private overtures had been going on between him and Clarence, by means of a lady in the household of the Duchess, whom Edward had sent over primed with instructions. Ostensibly she came, of her own accord, to join her mistress, and her *rôle* of envoy was never suspected, for "she was no fool, nor loquacious."[#] Beyond this, Edward placed trust in Warwick's brothers, of whose fidelity he felt no doubt. The past was apparently forgotten.

[#] Comines.—Who this ambassadress was is not known.

Warwick had not landed a week when he found the whole country pouring in to aid him. He set his face towards Bristol, where he had left his heavy baggage when he fled to France. Here he was well received; and after three days spent in collecting forces, he marched upon Nottingham at the head of sixty thousand men.

King Edward was now at Lynn, in a fortified house, to which there was no access except by one bridge. He had "begun to look about him" when he heard of Warwick's approach, but he does not appear to have done much beyond it.[#] As he sat at dinner, news was brought to him that his trusted partisan, the Marquis Montague, had mounted his horse, and was crying, along with others, "God save King Henry!" Edward treated the first rumour as mere nonsense: but when it was repeated, and Lord Rivers shook his head with the remark that "things did not look well," Edward despatched Lord Hastings to see if it were true. He returned with the news that it was less than the truth. Nearly the whole army had deserted to Warwick, as represented by his brother Montague. If Edward meant to save himself at all, he must escape now.

[#] Several chroniclers state that Edward fled from Nottingham to Lynn when he heard of Warwick's coming: but no hint of this movement is given by Comines, who tells us that he received his version of the narrative from Edward's own lips.

At anchor off Lynn lay one English and two Dutch ships, ready to sail, having come laden with provisions for Edward's army. He hastily summoned such of his nobles as were faithful to him, and about seven hundred of the army, and fled

on board one of the Dutch ships. Lord Hastings stayed behind to give a piece of deceitful advice to his men—namely, that they should join Warwick, but retain their allegiance to King Edward and himself—and then followed his master. So hurried was the flight that Edward had no money, and no clothes but those he wore, and a cloak "lined with beautiful martens," which he had probably caught up in departing. The three ships sailed away from Lynn with all the speed they could make, and the day, which had opened on the tenth year of Edward IV., closed on the forty-ninth of Henry VI.

Once more—and though he knew it not, for the last time—Warwick "had all England at his bidding." He was king in all but name, for King Henry still lay a prisoner in the Tower, and Queen Marguerite was in France. Warwick sent off Sir John Clare with hasty triumphant despatches to the Queen, and himself marched on London.

Of course the news of his coming reached the capital before him, and the citizens turned out to greet their favourite. Warwick's popularity with them is said to have been due to three causes: first, he flattered them; secondly, he allowed them to engage in any acts of piracy they pleased with impunity; and lastly, he took care to be always heavily in debt to various citizens.[#] It became therefore the interest of London that Warwick should triumph.

[#] Comines.

Warwick's first act was to march on the Tower, and summon it to surrender. The terrified Constable delivered his keys to the Lord Mayor, who opened the gates for Warwick. Jaspar Earl of Pembroke and John Earl of Oxford entered with him. They went straight to the chamber in which the King was confined, and found that simple-minded man calmly reading his Psalter, and not more disturbed by the tumult than to look up and say,—"Pray you, Master Gaoler, what noise is this without?"

But Henry's tone changed the next instant, and the prisoner became the king.

"Ha! my Lord of Warwick here!—and Jaspar—my dear brother!" and he gave him his hand affectionately. "My Lord of Oxford—God give you good morrow all! What means this?"

Warwick knelt at the feet of the King.

"It means, my Lord, that God hath saved King Henry."

And from all around rose the chorus. The King gazed from one to another as though he scarcely believed the evidence of his senses.

"Where are my wife and son?" was his next query.

"At Paris, my Lord, and soon to come hither, if God be serven."

"And the Earl of March?"

This was Edward's proper title in the eyes of a Lancastrian.

"Fled, my Lord,—fled the realm: and his wife is in sanctuary with her childre."

It would not have been Henry VI. if he had not answered, "Poor souls!"

"All is o'er of the rebellion," broke in Oxford, always fiery and rash: "all is o'er, your Highness; and we pray you give us leave to conduct you to your own lodging."

"Nay," said the King, kneeling down at the table; "tarry till I have thanked God."

Then, the rest kneeling around bareheaded, he poured forth a fervent thanksgiving. Very simple as this man was in worldly wisdom, he was eloquent when he spoke to God. Then they took from him the prison garb, and attired him in royal robes, and led him to "the King's lodgings" in the White Tower.

Here a singular ceremony took place. Warwick and his colleagues were not content with merely restoring King Henry, but deemed it a better safeguard to give him the additional advantage of popular election. Accordingly they held a formal *plébiscite*—of whom composed we are not told,—whether simply of the little group of Lancastrian nobles, or of their army of four thousand men, or generally of the citizens of London. This process completed, the King was set on horseback, and conducted to the Bishop of London's palace.

But Warwick soon discovered that he had an account to settle with his intensely discontented son-in-law. The deposition of Edward, in the eyes of Clarence, was not at all equivalent to the restoration of Henry. He had been ready enough to displace his brother, but his intention—which Warwick had frustrated—had been to set himself, not Henry, on the vacant throne. Clarence was in a very sulky temper, and required a tiresome amount of smoothing. This desirable end was at last accomplished; and having been joined by his excellent brother, the Archbishop of York, who was always constant to one side—the winning one—Warwick proceeded to get up a splendid procession to St. Paul's Cathedral, which King Henry entered in state on the thirteenth of October. He wore his crown, and Warwick carried his train, while Oxford bore the sword before him. After the procession, Edward of March was solemnly proclaimed a usurper through London.

Meanwhile, Edward, deserted and destitute, chased by Esterlings across the sea, ran his vessel into Alkmaar, and landed, accompanied by his brother Richard and his few faithful adherents. He had no money to pay the captain, and he gave him all that he had, his fur-lined cloak. The Lord of Gruthuse, Governor of Hol-

land for the Duke of Burgundy, received the fugitives kindly, provided them with clothing, and conducted them to the Hague, whence Edward sent a messenger to the Duke to notify his arrival. This news was by no means a source of pleasure to that royal trimmer, Duke Charles, whose endeavours to keep in with both parties are as amusing to readers of history as they were troublesome to himself. He did, however, grant to his brother-in-law a pension of five hundred crowns per month; but he gave him little encouragement to come on to his court, whither Edward nevertheless proceeded at once, as soon as he had money to do so. When Edward presented himself at St. Pol, where the Court was then residing, the poor Duke was in a ludicrous state of indecision. On his one hand was his wife Margaret, to whom he was really attached, as he showed by marrying her as soon as he became his own master—his father having set his face against the marriage for political reasons: on the other side, the Lancastrian Dukes of Exeter and Somerset, who had resided for some years at his Court, and were his chosen friends. On both sides, as it seemed, was his own interest. At last he contrived to find a way out of the difficulty, which, as usual in such circumstances, was a crooked one. He publicly proclaimed his intention of giving no assistance to Edward, and forbade any of his subjects to enlist with him: while privately he presented him with fifty thousand florins, and quietly made ready at Ter Veere four or five large ships of his own navy, and fourteen more hired from the Esterlings, or merchants of the Hanse Towns.

These preparations of course took time; and during that time Queen Marguerite would have been energetically working in England, had she found it possible. But winds and waves were against her. She came down to the French coast in November, as had been agreed with Warwick: but she could go no further. In an agony of impatience and longing, she was compelled to waste at Harfleur time more precious than jewels. Her husband wanted her, in every sense of the word. The Lancastrian party, deprived of her, was a body without a soul. Even Warwick, clever man as he was, and little love as was lost between him and her, condescended to express a wish for the Queen's presence.

On the fourth of November, 1470, while things were in this condition, a little life began in the sanctuary at Westminster, which was to end, fifteen years later, as sorrowfully as it had opened, in the Tower of London. The long wished for son of Edward IV. came at last. But the news does not seem to have lightened the discouraged hearts of the Yorkists. Before the month was over, Sir Richard Widville, Queen Elizabeth's own brother, had made his submission to King Henry.

The King was residing, quietly enough, at Westminster Palace, which he never quitted during his short tenure of power. Large grants were made to the three Warwick brothers; and Henry, who could not conceive the idea of any

body playing him false, seems to have placed himself entirely in their hands. His sagacious wife would have taken a truer view of the situation. But she was a virtual prisoner on the French coast, bound there by the winds and waves of God.

Warwick was created afresh Lord High Admiral of England, Ireland, and Aquitaine, with enormous powers: Clarence was made Viceroy of Ireland, and letters patent granted enabling him to do any thing he chose. The whole tone of the grants shows them to have really proceeded from the persons to whom they were ostensibly made, and in whose hands the King was an innocent toy, skilfully moved at pleasure. O for the wise head and the true heart of his one real friend!—of her who loved *him* first, and the crown and sceptre second. There were other friends, true in a sense: but to them the crown was the point of importance, and Henry was interesting merely as the man who ought to be wearing it.

One of these last was with him—his brother Jaspar,—and early in February, another fought his way to his side. The winds and waves, soon to have so dire a message for him, yielded now to the eager importunity of Exeter. The sight of Edward at the Court of Burgundy was more than his Lancastrian heart could bear. The bitter cruelty which he had received at the hands of Edward's sister, his own wife, came back upon him too vividly to be endured. Half driven by the one reason, half drawn by the other, he hastily left St. Pol, and journeyed across France to the port where Queen Marguerite waited for a fair wind from the east. And then it was that Frideswide Marston first saw the face which she should never forget again.

Henry Duke of Exeter was a Holand, but not one of the handsome Holands of Kent, who were characterised by their lofty height, their stately carriage, and their magnificent beauty. His grandfather, John de Holand, the first Duke of Exeter, had stepped out of the family ranks in respect of personal appearance, being a short, dark-haired man, with pendulous cheeks and no good looks of any kind. Duke Henry had improved upon this pattern, having inherited some of the attractiveness of his beautiful grandmother, the Princess Elizabeth of Lancaster. Two Holand qualities were his, derived from his grandfather—the fiery fervour and the silver tongue. From both sides of his ancestry came his impulsive bravery; from the Plantagenet side his chivalrous generosity, his delicate courtesy: from all, the unswerving loyalty and faithfulness which formed the most prominent feature of his character. Yet they were joined by that shrinking from pain, and that despondent hopelessness, which an eminent psychologist tells us are manly, not womanly characteristics, inconsistently mingled with weakness of a type much more feminine than masculine. A strangely complex and inconsistent character was this: a brave man who never feared disgrace nor death; a true man, who would have died with his hand upon his banner and his face to the foe; a man

with distinct convictions, and courage to avow them—yet a weak man. A voice that he loved would lead him in the teeth of his own convictions, though a voice that he did not love could not make him swerve for an instant. In this respect he was unlike all his family,—most of all unlike his bluff and cruel father, the last act of whose life had been the invention of the rack, long popularly known in England as "The Duke of Exeter's daughter."

In a popular ballad of the day, wherein the state is described under the figure of a ship, Exeter is selected as the lantern at the mast-head. The idea was doubtless originally taken from his badge—the fiery cresset set aloft upon the pole—yet it was equally true to the fervent, devoted, transparent character of the man.

"The ship hath closèd hym a lyght
To kepe her course in way of ryght,
A fyrè cressant that bernethe bryght,
    With fawte was never spyed.
That good lyght that is so clere
Call Y the Duke of Exceter,
Whos name in trouthè shyned clere,
    His worship spryngethe wyde."

The memory of the wife at whose hands he had endured what few husbands would have borne, much less have pardoned, was to Exeter one of unmixed pain and bitterness. It could scarcely be said that he had loved her. He had liked her, and he would have loved her with very little encouragement. But so far from encouraging the affection, she had smothered it in its cradle. She gave him no chance to love her. Repulsed and mortified, his heart—to which love of something was an absolute necessity—had turned to their one child, the fair-haired little daughter who resembled her mother in face, but her father in character. For her sake he had borne all this suffering inflicted by her mother; for her sake he had continued to live in the same house with his wife, long after her company had become intolerable. Nay, not to be parted from Anne, he had done, and would have done, almost any thing required from him. They were parted now. The Duchess knew her daughter's power over her husband, and she therefore insisted on keeping the daughter by her side. She might become a useful tool some day, if she received proper training, which her mother meant to give her.

All that Exeter knew was that the only creature whom he loved, and who loved him, was in the hands of enemies who would try hard to make her hate him. She was his one comfort in all the world, and she was kept away from

him. This was the bitterest drop in his bitter cup—and his wife meant it to be so. Few men had suffered in the Wars of the Roses as he had. To-day in prison, and to-morrow in sanctuary; forsaken by his own soldiers, reduced to beg his bread barefooted until the Duke of Burgundy took compassion upon him, robbed of every penny of his inheritance by the woman who had sworn in God's presence to love and cherish him—all these painful memories were less to Exeter than the cruel separation from his only child. Deep down in his heart, scarcely confessed even to himself, was the hope that would break out of that passionate longing for her. If he could cross the Channel, if he could get to London, perhaps, some day, at a window or through the curtains of a litter, he might catch a glimpse of Anne. Even a wilder hope than this he cherished; for it might be possible to bribe one of his own servants to obtain for him a secret and stolen interview with his own child. But would he ever find his child again? He might see the Lady Anne de Holand: but would she be the little Nan that he had left years ago—the little Nan that used to climb upon his knee and kiss him and tell him that she "loved him so"? Better to keep that sweet remembrance undimmed, though it called up such hopeless yearning, than to meet a cold, haughty maiden who would courtesy to him and call him "my gracious Lord," and take the first opportunity of getting away from him. That would be to lose his darling indeed, in a far worse sense than he had lost her now.

It was not for Frideswide Marston to read all this. But she saw the weary, wistful look in the dark eyes, and she wondered whence it came.

How Exeter contrived to do what the Queen could not do, and make his way to England, has not been explained. We only know that he did it, and that on the fourteenth of February, 1471, he rode into London—where King Henry VI. reigned in the Palace of Westminster, where Queen Elizabeth Widville pined in the Sanctuary, and where the Duchess Anne of Exeter held royal state at Coldharbour—safe from both rival Roses, for what Lancastrian would harm the wife of his King's most faithful councillor, and what Yorkist would dare to touch the favourite sister of his sovereign?

In anticipation of the Duke's journey, Queen Marguerite had kindly suggested that any of the suite who wished to do so might send letters by him. Frideswide, who was longing for communication with home, undertook the tremendous task of writing both to her father and sister. The Duke turned over the letters which were put into his hands, and paused suddenly when he came to the one addressed to his own home.

"Who writ this?" he asked of John Combe, who had brought the letters to him.

Combe glanced at the address—"*To the hands of Mistress Agnes Marston, at Coldharbour, in the City of London, le these delivered.*"

”I reckon, my gracious Lord, it shall be Mistress Frideswide Marston, that is of my Lady of Warwick’s following.”

”Pray you, desire Mistress Frideswide to come hither, for I would fain have speech of her.”

She came, and stood courtesying within the doorway.

”Come nigh, I pray you, Mistress,” said the Duke, ”and tell me, is this fair dame of your kin?”

He held up her letter to Agnes, as he spoke.

”An’ it like you, aye, my gracious Lord: it is my sister, that is chamberer unto your Lady.”

The Duke looked thoughtfully at the letter.

”Think not my words strange,” said he, ”but answer me, if this your good sister be of gent and pitying kind?”

”That is she, right surely.”

”One that should do a kind deed for a man in need, an’ it fell in her way?”

”I am assured of that, my gracious Lord.”

”Then pray you, Mistress Frideswide, do me so much grace as to write outside your letter, that you do beseech her, for the love of you, to grant that the bearer thereof shall ask of her.”

Frideswide looked, as she felt, astonished.

”Mistress Frideswide,” said the Duke sadly, ”you are here, as I, cut off from home and friends. But you have hope to return thither when God will, and I have none. My maid, I have one only child, that is the very jewel of my heart, and they keep her from me. (He did not say who ”they” were.) If you will do so much for me, I will myself deliver your letter, an’ it may be compassed, and pray your good sister to let me have a word with my darling.”

Frideswide Marston looked up into the sad earnest eyes, and then, without another word, stooped down and added the request to her letter. There was more wet on the cover than ink, when she had done.

CHAPTER V.

HIS LITTLE NAN.

”Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than Heaven;
And if there be a human tear

From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head."
—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"Be sure, Jane, to tell Valentine that I will have my gown of motley velvet ready for my wearing on the morrow; and bid him set silver buttons thereto—and good plenty."

"Please it your Grace, Master Valentine did desire of me that I should say unto you that he could not make ready the gown of motley as to-morrow, nor afore Thursday come."

"Could not?" The Duchess of Exeter's chiselled eyebrows were slightly raised. "Could not? But he must."

"Please it your Grace, thus said he."

"Tell him it skills not[#] what he can. I say he shall."

[#] Matters not.

"Then belike there shall be more tailors had?"

"I care not how it be done, so it cost no money."

"But, an't like your Grace, the tailors will not work without money: and unless more be had, Master Valentine can never, his own self—without he sit up all night, nor scarce then—make an end of your Grace's gown by to-morrow."

"Let him sit up, then. Good lack! what ado is here over a sely[#] tailor!"

[#] Simple, mean.

"Your Grace mindeth, maybe, that you were set to have the murrey[#] gown by next Sunday?—and both two cannot be done."

[#] Plum-coloured.

”Cannot! always at *cannot*! Hold thine idle tongue. Of course it can be done if I will have it so.”

”Doubtless, Madam, if it please your Grace to pay more tailors.”

”I will pay nobody. Ye will clean ruin me amongst you. ”’Twas but yesterday I paid four thousand marks to a Lombard for jewelling. Ye would leave me never a cross[#] in my purse.”

[#] Penny, divided by a cross that it might be easily broken into fourthings=farthings.

”Then, an’ it please your Grace, what is to be done?” demanded the practical Jane, who was one of the four chamberers of the Duchess.

”Gramercy, maid, burden not me withal!” testily exclaimed her royal mistress. ”Go and ask at Dame Elizabeth Darcy, an’ thou wist not what to do. I tell thee, the motley must be made ready for to-morrow, and the murrey by Sunday next: and how it shall be is no business of mine, so it cost not money. *It shall be.* See to it.”

Poor Jane, who felt herself ordered to do the impossible, made one more faint struggle with destiny.

”It should not like your Grace to bear that gown to-morrow?”

”This?” returned the Duchess contemptuously, glancing down at her dress, which was of dark blue satin, heavily trimmed with minever. ”’Tis not fit to be seen. Hast lost thy wit? I tell thee, I must have a decent gown to put on. That idle Valentine hath left me never a one in my wardrobe. He is the laziest tyke that ever set needle.”

”Please it your Grace, there is the broched[#] cloth of silver”——

[#] Figured.

”’Tis all frayed at the bottom. I warrant he hath not hemmed it anew.”

”And the tawny velvet”——

”The which yon rascal Fulk spilt a glass of malmsey o’er. Tell Dame Elizabeth it must be docked of his wages.”

”And the changeable[#] green velvet”——

[#] We retain changeable silk, under the name of shot silk; but changeable velvet is lost.

"With a rent across the front breadth as wide as mine arm, and none of you idle hussies hath thought to mend it."

"And the russet figury velvet"——

"All the pile worn off—as shabby as can be."

"And the crimson and blue damask, and the purple tartaryn,[#] and the mustredevilers,[#] and"——

[#] A kind of satinette, or satin Turk.

[#] A cloth, of which the name was derived either from *moitié de velours*, or from being manufactured at Villars.

"Go thy ways for an impudent ne'er-do-well! I tell thee I will have those two gowns—I *will have* them! Let me hear no more of thy foolery."

And away marched the Duchess, and left poor Jane standing in the middle of the room.

"It shall cost Master Valentine his place an' he do it not," muttered she to herself. "And he cannot do it—'tis not possible in the time."

"Then, were I Master Valentine, catch me essaying to compass it!" said a voice beside her.

"Dear heart, Marion! wouldst lose thy place?"

"I would lose this place, and be rare thankful to do it," responded the girl addressed as Marion, who was another of the chamberers. "I oft-times wish we were as the meynie,[#] and could be hence if we would."

[#] Household servants.

The expression of Jane's face indicated that she thought such a sentiment treasonable.

"What with her Grace, and what with Tamzine, it is not a dog's life we lead!" continued Marion. "If the thing lay in mine hands, you should see, but I would wed the first man that asked me, just to be out of it."

"So might you be worser off than now," suggested Jane.

"Could not!" said Marion expressively.

Jane shook her head as if she thought that very questionable.

"Men be queer matter," said she. "Now you can make out a woman."

"Good lack! think you making out is all?" replied Marion. "She is easy enough to make out, is Her Grace. So is Tamzine. But I love their company never a whit the more for that. Gramercy, there goeth my Lady's handbell! I must away."

In an upper room in the same house two other girls were sitting. One, who sat at work in the window-seat, was so like Frideswide that we can easily guess her to be Agnes Marston. She was a little quieter than her sister in manner, and a shade less good-looking.

The other girl sat in a large, handsome, curule chair, with an illuminated manuscript open on the table before her. Her face was a remarkable one. Her figure was extremely slender, thin almost to emaciation: but more striking than this was the wan white face, where two hectic spots burned in the hollow cheeks, and the large dark blue eyes seemed of unnatural size and brilliance. A long-drawn sigh made Agnes look up.

"Your Ladyship is weary, methinks," she said.

"I may well be thus," was the answer, as the head was leaned on the thin hand. "I was doing that which would weary an angel, for I was trying to understand God."

"How, dear my Lady?"

The white-faced girl lifted her head, and let her eyes meet those of Agnes.

"It were to no good to speak in riddles," she said. "Agnes, you have dwelt in this house a full year, and you know the sorrows thereof as well as I. Specially, you know my sorrows—you know that I live a life wherein there is nothing to make the present happy, and the future is all full of a great dread. There is only one in all the world that loves me, and I cannot go to him: and one that I love not, and that loves not me, is about to be forced upon me whether I will or no. Why should I try to hide these things from you? You know them all. In all the whole world that is, and in the life that is to be, there is not one ray of sunlight for me. Do you marvel, Agnes, if life looks black to mine eyes? Are you one of those surface seers, that reckon a woman should be comforted for a breaking heart by a necklace of pearl, and that she is a fool to weep for a lost friend if she have a new gown of crimson velvet?"

"No, indeed, Lady mine."

"Aye me!" sighed the Lady Anne. "If I had but been a carpenter's child, or of a gardener——that I could have welcomed him back at eve from his daily work, and kept his hearth bright, and might have loved and been loved! I could have done without the pearls and the velvet, Agnes. But I have them: and they be poor exchange for the other."

”Things will change one of these days, sweet my Lady. ”Tis a long lane has no turning.’”

”It has been a long one, and there be eight years now since it turned last. Eight years, Agnes—more than half my life! And folks think it strange that I care. They looked for me, it should seem, to set mine heart on gewgaws, and to think more of the bidding to a dance than of the loss of a father. If I could see an end to it, I might take less thought. But I can behold no turn coming save one, and that is for the worser.”

Agnes knew that this allusion was to her approaching marriage. Certainly that was no source of congratulation. In the eyes of the waiting-woman no less than the mistress, the handsome young Baron of Groby, Thomas Grey, the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth, who had been chosen as the future husband of the Lady Anne de Holand, was not a man to be regarded with any other sentiment than repugnance. Agnes had seen him kick his dog out of the way, and never look whether he had hurt it, when the poor little spaniel, unaware of its master’s mood, had presumed to request his attention when he was not disposed to give it.

”There is only one comfort thereanent. I shall, may-be, never live to be wedded.”

”Dear my Lady, pray you”——

”Does it look likely, Agnes?” said Lady Anne with a quiet smile,—scarcely a sad one this time.

The tears came to Agnes’s eyes. She could not say that it did.

”No,” resumed Lady Anne, after a short pause, and in a low voice, ”I never loved any thing yet that did not either die or go away from me.”

”Except Jesus Christ,” said Agnes softly. She knew that she was safe in saying it—that however the black clouds might hide the Sun of Righteousness, He had risen, with healing in His wings, upon the young lonely heart beside her.

”Except Jesus Christ,” echoed the girl reverently. ”And yet—O Agnes, does He not know how hard it is to see nothing? to have nothing at all that one can feel and touch, and clasp close to the heart? He had friends in this life—even He, the Man of Sorrows, was not quite without them.”

”Yet they all forsook Him, and fled.”

”Aye. That was worse. But they came back again.”

There were tears behind the voice.

”Dear my Lady, what causeth you be thus sorrowful this even?”

She broke down when that was asked. Pushing away the book, she bent her head down on her clasped hands on the table, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

”Oh, it is all so dark!” she sobbed. ”If we might have gone to Heaven to-

gether, and have had each other there! Why are we kept parted? Agnes, I hate these signs of mine high estate, which seem as if they came betwixt me and him—betwixt me and peace. If I had not been King Edward's niece—Oh, if this awful war had never begun!"

Agnes had dropped her work, and sat looking out of the window. She did not know what to say. Well enough she knew that religious platitudes would do no good here. The Lady Anne was nearer God than she was, but just now she was in the dark. She had dropped the conscious holding of the Father's hand, and she felt like a lost child left out in the cold. Agnes did not realise that much of her depression was physical; but she did feel the necessity for offering some cheerful diversion to her thoughts.

"Dear my Lady, pray you, think on pleasanter gear."

"Wilt find it for me, Agnes?"

That was not an easy task. Agnes hesitated. But in a few moments more the sorrowing girl had found it for herself.

"I suppose," she said more quietly, "I must lift up mine eyes unto the hills, above all the turns in the long road. We shall be together one day, and with God. I shall not be long first. And set down at Christ's feet in the light of the Golden City, I count it shall not seem long to wait for him."

The child was coming back into the light. Physically, the burst of tears had relieved her.

"And yet, after all," she said, "I shall miss him, till he comes. One cannot love one instead of another, even if God be that One. And to love once is to love for ever."

"You can tell the Lord so, dear my Lady."

Lady Anne looked up with an expression of child-like trust and simplicity in her eyes.

"Agnes, I am always telling Him."

"And is He not, then, always hearing you?"

Light came into the sad blue eyes.

"Aye, He must be always hearing. I thank thee."

The door opened, and Marion came in.

"Agnes, here is—O my Lady, I cry you mercy. I wist not you were hither."

"Make an end, Marion," said Lady Anne, with a smile.

"Under your Ladyship's pleasure.—Agnes, here is one that would have speech of you. He hath brought a letter, if I err not, and for some cause is desirous to deliver the same into your own hand."

"Go and see to it, Agnes," said Lady Anne kindly: and Agnes left the room, and descended a long flight of stairs to the base court, where the stranger awaited her.

The stranger! Ah, what a stranger he felt, standing there in the meanest part of his own house, among strange menials to whom his face was unknown, for whom his voice had no authority. Did he think of Another who was Lord and Master of all, and who came unto His own, and His own received Him not?

"You would speak with Agnes Marston, my master?" said a gentle voice close to him. "I am she."

The Duke turned quickly. He wore a long cloak, and a hat which could be pulled down so as to hide his face. For any eyes to recognise him would probably be fatal to his errand. Yet the sensation of utter isolation was oppressive, notwithstanding that.

"Gentle Mistress," said he, in a tone and manner which instantly revealed to Agnes that her visitor was of her own rank or above it, "I bring you a letter from Mistress Frideswide Marston, in France, and I pray you of your courtesy to give heed to that which is writ on the outside thereof."

Agnes held the letter up to the lamp, and read—

"Good Sister, I do beseech you to do that which this bearer shall request of you; and herein fail you not, for the love of me."

"My sister desires me that I will do what you shall ask," she said. "What ask you?"

"May I ask it with fewer ears by?" returned the Duke in a low tone.

Agnes nodded. That was a request only too intelligible in the fifteenth century. She took him aside to a small chamber where no other person was at that moment.

"Now, Master, your will with me?"

"I am the Duke of Exeter," he said simply. "And I pray you, Mistress Agnes, as you ever loved any human soul, that you will win for me privy speech of the only one that loveth me—the Lady Anne, my daughter."

Agnes looked up, and saw the yearning, passionate hunger in the poor father's eyes. She saw nothing more for a minute.

"Sir," she said then, "if I do it not, be assured that it shall be only because I can no way compass it."

"God go with you!" was the reply.

Agnes hastened back to the room where she had left Lady Anne alone with Marion, and heard to her dismay the sharp tones of the Duchess as she came near the door.

"Heard any ever the like!" cried Her Royal Highness. "'An' it please me!' I do you plainly to wit, my dainty mistress, that it doth not please me. I will have thee come down and speak with Master Grey. And I will have thee don a better gown for it, belike.—Agnes Marston, go this minute and lay out the Lady Anne's gown of purple velvet.—And go thou and don it. Dost hear?"

Lady Anne said no more, but her whole face betrayed intense dislike to the task imposed upon her, when she caught the eye of Agnes. The language of the eye was well understood at that time, when the language of the lips was often dangerous. Lady Anne saw in an instant that Agnes knew of some reason why she had better leave the room, and she followed her without another word.

Meanwhile the Duke of Exeter stood below, waiting to know the result of his appeal. Could Agnes convey it at all? and if she did, would Anne come? Last and saddest question of all, if she came, would it be the child he knew, altered of course in person, but unchanged in heart? At last he could keep still no longer. Plantagenet blood was in his veins, and it was a habit of all the race, when suffering from mental excitement, to pace up and down like caged tigers. He had sufficient excuse in the cold of a February evening, and he yielded to the impulse, pausing at every sound to listen—till the door was flung open suddenly, and a tall, slight maiden, robed in violet velvet and decked with jewels, dashed into the room, and flung herself into his arms with a burst of passionate tears. Enough! Enough for the father's heart! His little Nan had come back to him.

When the first wave had broken, he lifted the young head with one hand, and looked long and tenderly on the beloved face. And at the first glance his heart sank down, lower than it had ever been.

Come, but not to stay. Bound on a longer journey than from England to France—than from earth to stars. He held his darling close clasped in his arms, but it was probably for the last time. Verily for her the Bridegroom waited, but the bridal was not of earth.

"Nan!" broke from the father's lips, in tones more eloquent than a volume would have been. "Little Nan!"

"I would I were your little Nan again," she said. "We were happy then, my Lord—at least I was."

"I never was," was the sad answer. "I only came near enough to see that I could have been. If it had been God's will!"

"It will be, my Lord," replied Anne, brightly. "'*Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.*[#]'"

[#] Psalm xvii. 15.

"Dost know, little Nan, that thou didst learn that Psalm at mine instance? But when will it be, my darling?—when? It is such a long dark night without thee."

Yet as he said the words, the thought smote him to the heart,—Not long, not long for one of them!

"When God's will is," she responded simply. "We must wait, my Lord. Oh, this awful war! had it never begun!"

She did not realise that they were parted by any but political reasons—mournful necessities, which might come to an end some time. It was better she should not.

"Little Nan," said the Duke, "I love not 'my Lord' from thy lips. Call me Father."

The request was an unusual one. But she looked up and responded as he wished, with tears glistening in the violet eyes.

"You will come and see me again, Father?"

"I will come and see thee again," he echoed—well knowing, as he spoke, that the interview was not likely to be held on the earthly side of the cold river. But surely he would meet her again; and it would be he that should come to her. There would be room in the halls above, and no need to employ a third person, nor to use secrecy and stratagem in order to meet. Up from the core of his soul went the passionate cry, "Let us go together! Make no tarrying, O my God!" He knew now at least, if he had never known it before, that there was to be no paradise for him outside the Paradise of God.

"My Lady!" said the rather nervous voice of Agnes at the door. "I cry you verily mercy, but—Her Grace is calling for you."

None of them dared to disregard that summons.

One more last embrace! One more last look! From the Duke's eyes

"No tears fell, but a gaze fixed, long,
That memory might print the face
On the heart's ever-vacant space
With a sun-finger, sharp and strong."

His very soul seemed to dissolve itself upon her head as he gave her the last

blessing. She tore herself away, and stumbling with tear-blinded eyes over her velvet train, went up to receive a sharp scolding for loitering from the Duchess, and some very cold ceremonial speeches from her affianced.

All was over. There was nothing left for that desolate man. Nothing to which he could look forward! There had been just that one hope, and it was gone. Nothing was left now to hope or fear.

He had come on foot and unattended, in order to avoid recognition. Mechanically he turned to the river stairs, called a boat, and was rowed up to Westminster. As he wearily mounted the Palace stairs, the Earl of Pembroke met him.

"Ah, my very good Lord of Exeter! Whither away?"

"I know not, and care less."

"Gramercy! what aileth you this starlight even?"

"Is it starlight?" and the Duke lifted his eyes to the glowing heavens, clear in the frosty atmosphere. "I had not observed it."

"Good lack! you must be in the blues to-night. More shame for you! Here is nought but making ready for the Queen, whom my Lord of Warwick rideth for to meet as to-morrow. 'Tis thought the wind may give her leave to come across to-night."

"I do desire it, right heartily."

"Heigh-ho! do you desire anything right heartily, with that face?" said Earl Jaspar, laughing. "Come, my good Lord, what aileth you?"

"My Lord, I cry you mercy, for I wis well I am not merry company. I have this night spoken, as I think, a long farewell to mine only child. Let me pass, I pray you, till I can be more like my fellows, and come into your company without spoiling your mirth—if I ever can."

Jaspar stood looking at his friend with eyes of utter want of comprehension. Exeter "spoke to him who never had a child," and who, moreover, had but little sympathy with human sorrow. It was inconceivable to Jaspar why a man should bring his private sorrows into his political rejoicings, while to Exeter the difficulty would have been to allow the political joy to temper the private sorrow. Nor was Warwick a whit more sympathising. To weep for a woman, or anything that concerned one, was his emblem for masculine weakness of the extremest type. Exeter passed on, and sought refuge in his own chamber, where he lay down, but did not sleep, that night.

But when, the next morning, he presented himself as usual in the presence-chamber, he found that the Palace of Westminster held one Christ-like heart—a heart more at home in the house of mourning than in the house of feasting,—

"A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise."

Through the score of eager, triumphant faces in the presence-chamber, the face upon which grief was written was instantly visible to those eyes which were worth so little for earthly foresight, and were so rich toward God.

"My Lord of Exeter! The King calls for you."

The King himself was that day at his happiest—with the last earthly happiness which he was ever to know. He was at home again—and his was a nature which clung to accustomed things; and he was expecting the daily arrival of his wife and son, when—as he and every body believed—all would again flow

smoothly, and they would live happily ever after. But Henry was one of those rare souls who cannot be happy till they have made others so.

"I pray you, come this way, my good Lord," said the King. "There is trouble in your eyes. Is it aught I may remedy?"

"I thank your Highness heartily; but I fear not. There be evils that none save the King of kings may deal withal."

Exeter had not meant to say another word. But in five minutes—he scarcely knew how—he found himself telling the whole story of his sorrow to the tender soul which shone in those royal eyes.

"I need not tell you, my good Lord," said the gentle comforter, "that he were an ill soldier that should lie down to sleep ere the battle were won. It will not be long ere the battle is over. It seems to me at times"—and the dark eyes grew dreamy, as they were very wont to do—"as if it were only such a little while! And then God shall give us back to each other. We have only to wait for Him."

"My Lord, I cry your Highness mercy, but it looks to me this night a very, very long while."

The King smiled on his godson. The spiritual relationship between them made it only natural that the one should offer instruction and comfort to the other. He said, "*Unus dies apud Dominum sicut mille anni, et mille anni sicut dies unus.*"[#]

[#] 2 Peter iii. 8.

"Ah, Sire!" said Exeter sadly, "the one day for Him, but for us the thousand years."

The response came quickly. "'*Ego vobiscum sum omnibus dielus.*'"[#]

[#] Matt. xxviii. 20.

"We cannot see our Lord, Sire."

"He can see us."

"True: yet, my gracious Lord"——

"My son," said the King tenderly, "He hath written down a word of set purpose for thee. '*Quomodo miseretur pater jiliorum, misertus est Dominus timentibus se.*' Muse thou thereon, and God lead thee into His peace."[#]

[#] Psalm ciii. 13.

He had said enough, for the Word of God in his lips had reached the heart of the mourner. It was nothing new—it had been sung in Exeter's hearing a hundred times—but it came this time with power. Did God feel for him just as he felt for that one darling child over whom he was yearning and lamenting? It said just that. What right had he to water it down, and make it mean something vague and metaphysical? At last he had found the man who understood him. The King was a father himself, and a very loving one. And had he not at last found the God who understood him?—who was indeed his Father, who loved him as he loved his little Nan?

Yes, it would be only a little while. Ah, how little for him who spoke! Three short months, into which was to be poured an ocean of living agony, and then he should see God, and be at peace for ever. And to him who heard, only a little longer. He had but to wait for God.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MIST ON EASTER DAY.

"Such a day,
An old man sees but once in all his time."
—EDWIN ARNOLD.

In vain the "King-Maker" waited at Dover for the Queen. The west wind which had fallen a little in London, and thus excited their hopes, set in with more violence than before, and Marguerite, notwithstanding her agony of impatience, was bound hopelessly at Harfleur.

But though winds and waves fought against the coming of her who was so sorely needed, they seemed powerless to deter him against whose return all Lancastrians were praying. Backed by the secret machinations of the Duke of Burgundy, Edward embarked at Ter Veere on the second of March: and after twelve days' tossing, landed at Ravenspur on the fourteenth of that month. Did it strike him as a parallel coincidence that under the same circumstances, and at the same place, seventy years before, Henry of Lancaster had landed, softly

announcing to the populace that he had no designs upon the Crown, and came only to recover his own inheritance? Probably it did, for he imitated his predecessor's tactics in every particular. He came only to secure his duchy of York, as he sweetly assured the people of Holderness when they opposed his landing. Surely they would allow him to proceed to his own property—to his own city? He was the truest subject King Henry had, nor would he ever have been otherwise but for the inciting of that wicked Earl of Warwick. He stuck the ostrich feather in his cap—the badge of Prince Edward,—and solemnly swore eternal allegiance to King Henry. The honest folks in Holderness were completely won by this fine-spoken man. They fell back, and let him ride on to York.

But York was held by a Clifford,—sternest of all families adherent to the House of Lancaster. It was the head of that House—the "Bloody Clifford,"—who, just ten years before, had gleefully cut off the head of Edward's father, had crowned it with a paper crown, and set it high on Micklegate Bar. He, too, had stabbed young Rutland—the best of the York brothers—in cold blood after the battle of Wakefield. As Edward came up to York, the ghastly heads upon Micklegate Bar, the foremost of which was his own father's, seemed to be the only friends to welcome him. But though Edward could assume sentiment exquisitely, when he expected it to pay, he was not in reality much under its influence. There was no softening at his heart when he rode up to Micklegate, and sounded his horn for a parley, and proudly desired York to open her gates to her Duke. The old Lord Clifford would have known better than to rest any faith on the fair words of the Rose of Rouen. But his kinsman Mr. Thomas was not so wary. He consented to a parley. And when Edward, at the close of his eloquent and well-studied speech, ended by flinging up the ostrich-feathered cap into the air, with the loyal cry of "A, King Harry! A, King and Prince Edward!" the Governor and citizens of York were won. Beguiled, not conquered, they offered to let him pass southward on condition that he would swear his allegiance. Edward, Jesuit to the core, was ready to swear any thing. Had they promised to escort him to London with an army on condition of his swearing to restore the worship of Jupiter, the probability is that he would have accepted the oath with graceful complacency. Micklegate was thrown open, and Edward with his band passed through, and marched towards London.

The reconquest of England was an easier matter to Edward of York than it had been to Henry of Lancaster. Three months had elapsed between the landing and coronation of the former; one was enough for the latter. There were traitors in the Lancastrian camp, whose hearts were always ready to desert, and who only required to hear that Edward had landed to induce an immediate and public declaration in his behalf. Foremost of these was the heavily perjured Clarence, with whom his sister of Burgundy had been secretly tampering. Edward was now at

the head of a very small band, consisting of nine hundred English and three hundred Flemings. With him were his faithful friend Lord Hastings, Lord Say, and a few more distinguished persons. But by the time he came to Nottingham, Sir William Stanley and Sir William Norris had joined him with four hundred more; and with men slowly coming in to him along the line of march, he arrived at Leicester. Here was Warwick waiting for him. A battle was imminent, when letters from Clarence reached Warwick, stating that he was on his way from London to join him, and begging him not to fight until he came. Warwick committed the fatal blunder of compliance. Humanly speaking, had he engaged in battle at once, the probability is that Edward would have been easily driven out of England.

It was not until the 25th of March that the news of Edward's landing reached London. The language of the grant of Tutbury and many other manors to Clarence on the 23rd, intimates that no such information had reached King Henry on that day. But on Lady Day a proclamation was issued appointing Clarence, Warwick, and others, to gather the King's subjects and to defend the kingdom, "against our enemies and adversaries of Flanders, Burgundy, and other parts, by the excitation, procuration, and inducement of our great adversary and rebel, Edward, of late the false, traitorous, and usurping occupant of our crown and dignity."[#] Two days later, the young Prince of Wales was created Viceroy of England against "Edward our rebel, who, with subjects of Burgundy and Flanders, has landed in the north."[#]

[#] Patent Roll, 49 Hen. VI.

[#] Patent Roll, 49 Hen. VI.

This is the only occasion on which the language used by, or in the name of, Henry VI. departs from the calm dignity which characterises it on all others in making mention of Edward IV. Edward can never allude to Henry without a spiteful addition of "late in dede and nat of ryght King:"[#] but Henry's allusions to Edward are always content with, "Edward IV., late *de facto* King of England." There is a kind of feverish spite about Edward's notices of his rival, which is exchanged for quiet matter-of-fact in his rival's notices of him. It is easy to see that Henry had the better title—because he makes so little fuss over it!

[#] Ib., 9 Edw. IV. and many others.

Late on the evening of the 10th of April, George Neville, Archbishop of York, sat writing in the Bishop of London's Palace. To this place the Court had been removed, under the impression that the City would be easier to defend than the less protected town of Westminster. In an adjoining chamber King Henry slept the quiet sleep of the just, with his Latin Psalter[#] lying on the table beside his bed. The Archbishop had paused in his writing, and was thinking deeply, his head resting on his hand; "when a slight sound caused him to lift his eyes, and he looked up into the unexpected face of Master John Shorter, sometime varlet of the chamber to King Edward IV.

[#] This Latin Psalter, originally the property of Richard II., and afterwards of Henry VI., is now in the British Museum (Cott. MS., Domit., A., xvii.), a beautifully illuminated and most interesting volume.

"Whence camest thou?" was the astonished query.

"Out of the street," said Shorter, drily.

"To what end?"

"To tell your Lordship a thing."

"What thing? Prithee, have on with thy matters, and be done. I am busy."

"Your Grace may yet be busier, when King Edward cometh."

"My Lady Saint Mary! What mean you?"

"I left him, my Lord, on the hither side of Herts."

"Gramercy! When?"

"This morrow at day-break."

"Is he on his way to London town?"

"Certes, my Lord."

The Archbishop's face might have furnished, not one, but several studies for a painter, as successive and diverse emotions swept across it. Foremost was the true Neville sentiment—How will this affect *me*? He was silent for a moment, pondering that deeply interesting question.

"Did he send thee to me?"

"He did so, my good Lord."

"What would he have of me?"

Shorter came close to the desk, and quietly laid down before the Archbishop a parchment to which a seal was affixed. It was a document, couched in highly flattering terms, addressed by Edward, by the Grace of God King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland, to his dearly beloved and faithful, the Most Reverend Father in God, George, by Divine permission Archbishop of York, conveying his

royal pardon to the said Archbishop, for all treasons, felonies, and offences whatsoever, committed before the thirteenth day of April, 1471. In other words, the Archbishop was pardoned beforehand for the sins of the three days next ensuing. Some people might have felt puzzled as to the ulterior meaning of such a document. Not so Archbishop Neville. He comprehended to perfection that he was expected to purchase that parchment, by some tremendous act of service still to be performed, and requiring official forgiveness from the *de facto* sovereign.

”What would he?”

An expressive pantomime from Shorter pointed first to the door of King Henry’s chamber, then to a bunch of keys which lay on the desk, and lastly to the prelate himself. The latter pursed up his lips for a moment.

”Rather ugly work!” he muttered, as if to himself.

”Necessity,” shortly suggested the messenger.

”Where?” was the equally short answer.

”Here. There is, of course, one unconvenient matter.”

The Archbishop looked up for explanation.

”That all suspiciousness may be diverted from your Grace, it shall be needful to arrest you with the other.”

A nod of intelligence from the Archbishop.

”Your captivity shall be matter but of a few days.”

The prelate nodded again.

”Go you back to His Highness?”

”I have first to speak with Master Recorder, which hath promised me the key of Aldersgate.”

”Ha!—when shall this matter be?”

”Maundy Thursday, in the even. ’The better day, the better deed.’”

The Archbishop received the wicked proverb with a grim smile. ”Very good: I undertake it.”

”I thank your Grace for my master. God give you good even.”

”The peace of Christ be upon you! Amen.”

Which benediction really meant the expression of a wish that the diabolical bargain just concluded might not be successful, for surely the last thing likely to come upon its actors was the peace of Christ.

Another sort of peace they had. The City was perfectly calm, and its guardians utterly unsuspicious, when on the following night, Mr. Urswick, the Recorder of London, came down with a few more to Aldersgate, and quietly let in about a dozen men who were waiting outside. They were wrapped in long cloaks, in which they muffled their faces; and, accompanied by Urswick, they took their way to the Bishop’s Palace. Behind the postern door the Archbishop’s servant was waiting, and they were allowed to enter as silently as possible.

Upstairs, in the royal chamber, King Henry sat with that devout prelate who has been already mentioned. They had been discussing political matters for a short time, and then the King, turning to a subject more congenial to himself, had requested the Archbishop's opinion as to the meaning of a passage in the Psalms. Both by intuition and education, George Neville was about as well fitted to judge of the meaning of King David as a snail to decide the intentions of an eagle. But he was a priest; therefore of course he must be competent to expound Scripture. The prelate began glibly to explain that of which he had not the remotest idea, and the King meekly to receive instruction on a subject with which he was far better acquainted than his instructor. The notion that he could be better than any body in any possible sense, outside the mere fact of social position, never occurred to the mind of King Henry, one of the humblest Christians that ever breathed.

A slight click of the door-lock made the prelate look up. The King was too much interested in his subject, and his head was bent over the Psalter. In the doorway stood the Recorder of London, and several others were dimly visible behind him. The traitor knew that the hour of his treachery had come.

"What is this?" he exclaimed, with well feigned astonishment. "Master Urswick, who be these with you? The blessed saints be about us! Treachery, my gracious Lord, treachery! Here is my Lord of March!"

Aye, treachery enough! Henry lifted his head, rose, and confronted Edward with a steady gaze as he came forward boldly into the room.

They stood fronting each other, the two Kings, the cousins and rivals, each of whom saw in the other an unprincipled usurper. Only, in the one case, the conviction was a calm certainty that the thing was so, and in the other a feverish determination that it must and should be.

"What dost thou here in my place, thou rebel?" was the insolent demand of Edward, who had sworn many an oath of allegiance to the man whom he addressed.

"I am here in mine own, as God wot," was the dignified reply. "What would you with me?"

Edward turned to his followers without deigning a reply. "Take the rebel," said he, "and this priest with him."

The Archbishop, with well counterfeited terror, began to implore mercy. The King asked none, nor did he waste another word on Edward. He lifted his calm dark eyes heavenward, and merely said, to the sole Friend who was with him, "*Fiat voluntas Tua!*"

An hour later, he was once more secured in his old dungeon in the Tower.

The gates of London were thrown open, and the northern army of Edward poured into the City. The Sanctuary was visited, and the Countess of March and

her infant son, now suddenly become the Queen and the Prince, were installed in Westminster Palace with fitting ceremony. The reign of Henry VI. was over, and the eleventh year of Edward IV. had begun.

The restored monarch was grace and graciousness to all around him. While he took care to propitiate and make friends of those who had hitherto been enemies, Edward did not, like his descendant Charles II., commit the fatal mistake of overlooking and neglecting to reward his friends. He gave away twenty tuns of wine (not forgetting to spend some £2800 on himself), replaced his old officers in their respective state positions, and made up for the forced abstinence and shabbiness of his recent life by buying a new service of plate, ordering twenty-one gold collars (doubtless for presents to his friends who had proved faithful in adversity), purchasing horses, and providing six new and gorgeous garments—a robe of tawny satin, a doublet of purple satin, two jackets of cloth of gold, and two "habits" of black damask and crimson velvet—for his wardrobe. He further expended in alms the munificent sum of £3 3*s*. 4*d*. The Queen does not appear to have required any new clothes, since provisions and wood are alone bought for her.[#]

[#] Issue Roll, Easter term, 11 Edw. IV.

So quietly had this mighty reversion of state affairs been effected, that the citizens of London were unconscious that any thing was happening until they saw the army of Edward IV. marching along their streets. Then, of course, it was too late to express an adverse opinion, had they wished to do so.

The necessary imprisonment of that honourable man, Archbishop Neville, extended only to a few days. He was received into favour on the day to which his pardon reached, but was not released from the Tower until a little later.

And then, when it was too late, the wind changed. Three times had Queen Marguerite set forth from Harfleur, and three times was she driven back on the French coast. Now, just when all was over which her coming might have prevented, on the 24th of March, she was able to embark, and she landed at Weymouth on Saturday night, the 13th of April, which was Easter Eve. Can we come to any conclusion but that of the contemporary letter-writer, that "God hath showed Himself marvellously like Him that made us all, and can undo again when Him list?" It was not immediately upon landing that the mournful news of her husband's capture and deposition met her. The news was to be far worse before it should reach her. She proceeded inland about thirteen miles, as far as the Abbey of Cerne, and there awaited the ceremonies of Easter. The Prince was

with her—unconscious of his proclamation as Viceroy of England, as well as of the downfall of all his hopes—the Princess, and their respective suites.

While Marguerite and her companions knelt at mass that Easter morning in the chancel of Cerne Abbey, with the last hope springing in their hearts which they were ever to know, scenes very unbefitting Easter-tide were taking place in and near the metropolis.

No sooner had Warwick heard of the return of Edward than he came dashing down from the north, and with Exeter,[#] Somerset, Montague, Oxford, and forty thousand men, marched to take the field at Barnet. Exeter and Somerset wished to wait until the Prince should come up, as they had heard of his landing: but this Warwick refused to do. He was doubtful of the good faith of Somerset, who had ere this shown himself remarkably devoid of that quality; to which motive on Warwick's part Comines adds another—"the hatred he bore to Queen Marguerite."

[#] Where and when Exeter had joined Warwick we have no information. It is only known that he was in London on the 14th of February, and that he came with Warwick from the north on the 13th of April.

As soon as Edward heard of Warwick's approach, he and his brother of Gloucester went out to meet him. They took with them carefully one person whom they might have been expected to leave behind. This was King Henry. Was there in the minds of the royal brothers of York any sinister intention of exposing their rival to the fate of Uriah the Hittite? Had Henry fallen, perchance by a stray shot from his own side, would the pair have mournfully and hypocritically condoled with each other on the fact that "the sword devoureth one as well as another?"

The little town of Barnet was occupied by Edward, Warwick remaining on the plain without.

Late on that Saturday night, without any previous despatch of a herald, as was usual, to request an interview, the Duke of Clarence, encamped on Gladmore Heath, received a visit from his brother of Gloucester. They held a long conversation; after which Clarence returned with Gloucester to the town, and humbly implored pardon from his brother Edward. He was likely to be welcomed and forgiven, for he brought with him twelve thousand men. This little business arranged, Clarence sent a message to Warwick, informing him of the very interesting occurrence which had just taken place, and offering to make peace for him also. The envoy returned with an answer from Warwick which breathed scorn in every syllable.

"I choose rather," said the King-Maker, "to be consistent with myself than to follow the example of thy perfidy!"

The night was now wearing towards morning—the morning of Easter Sunday. But no sun danced, nor even shone, upon that awful Easter Day. At four o'clock in the morning the armies met, but in so thick a mist that no man could see the banner of his feudal lord. Since the battle of Mortimer's Cross, where three mock suns had been considered a happy augury, Edward had borne as his badge a sun with rays: and the Earl of Oxford's men, mistaking this sun for the star of the Veres, made the blunder of the Midianites, and turned their arms against each other. They engaged with Warwick's men, and a cry of "Treachery!" was raised by both sides. Oxford fled, carrying with him eight hundred men. At this juncture Montague (another "honourable man"), who had been in private correspondence with Edward ever since he landed, thought it time to turn coat, and did so literally, donning Edward's livery under cover of the mist. But some of Warwick's men caught a glimpse of the hated blue and murrey, and falling upon Montague, exacted the penalty of his treachery in his life. Warwick saw that the field was lost. Montague was dead; Exeter was not to be found; Oxford had fled the field. He mounted his horse, and tried to make his own escape through the intricacies of a neighbouring wood. Even here fate met him in the persons of two of Edward's men, who after a short sharp struggle, unhorsed and slew the foremost man of their age—the man who, more or less, for twenty years had had all England at his bidding.

It was now four o'clock in the afternoon. King Edward—king in a sense he had never been till then,—as the first regal act of his restoration, took his revenge upon the commons of England for their Lancastrian proclivities. Hitherto, following the ancient humane custom peculiar to this country (a source of considerable astonishment to French generals), after a battle, Edward had been accustomed to mount his horse, and cry loudly over the field, "Quarter for the commons!" The nobles and gentry of the defeated side were of course put to the sword. But at Barnet Edward forsook his usual custom. He mounted, indeed, but he left the commons quarterless to the fury of his soldiers, and he spurred fast to London.

That evening, after Edward had entered his metropolis in triumph, King Henry was brought, attired in a long gown of blue velvet, from the fatal field of Gladmore Heath, to that silent dungeon in the Tower which he had occupied so long that it must have borne almost a homelike look to him, and which he was never to leave again, except for the better Home above.

When the military grave-diggers came to bury the dead, they found lying on Gladmore Heath the body of the Duke of Exeter. He had fought manfully, and had fallen at seven o'clock, since which time he had lain insensible on the

field. They took him at first for dead: but on careful consideration they came to the conclusion that life was not quite extinct. The party of workers were either Lancastrians, or they were for their time inexplicably tolerant and humane. Instead of stamping out the little spark of life, they respected it, and carried the Duke to the house of one Ruthland, an old servant of his own, who nursed his master back to that life which was worth so little to him. He was then, on the 26th of May, carried a prisoner to Westminster, where he was allowed the service of a chaplain, cook, page, and varlet, with three servants to wait on them. He was detained in this captivity until the fifteenth of September.[#] Six shillings and eightpence per week were allowed for the Duke's board, two shillings for the chaplain, twenty pence each for the cook, page, and varlet, and sixteen pence each for the inferior domestics.

[#] Issue Roll, Easter term, 11 Edw. IV.—Rymer is apparently under a mistake in stating that Exeter fled to Westminster Sanctuary, about two months after Barnet. The language of the Roll is decisive that Exeter was a prisoner, and not in sanctuary, between the dates named.

King Henry was rather better treated. Dispute his title as he might, Edward provided for him as for a captive prince. About half-a-crown per day was allowed for his "diet;" but a strong guard of thirty-six persons, afterwards gradually reduced to eleven, was thought necessary for his safe keeping.

The corpses of Warwick and Montague were exposed to popular view, with uncovered faces, in St. Paul's Cathedral, for four days: and on the eighteenth of April they were laid with their Montacute fathers in the church at Bisham. The day after their funeral, the royal pardon was renewed to their brother the Archbishop. His offence was that of "taking oath to Harry our great adversary, as to his Sovereign Lord, and to Margaret, calling her Queen, which if a French woman born, and daughter to him that is extreme adversary and mortal enemy to all this our land and people," and "assembling unto him numbers of French men beside other traitors and rebels."[#]

[#] Close Roll, 11 Edw. IV.

Considering that Edward himself had married the daughter of a French lady, had negotiated previously for his marriage with an Italian Princess, and had reconquered England with the assistance of Flemings, this taunt upon Queen Mar-

guerite's foreign extraction and alien troops is rather amusing, and marked with as much consistency as usually characterised his actions. What poor King René of Naples had done, to be singled out beyond all other persons as the special adversary to the English land and people, may reasonably be questioned, particularly by those who know his quiet, rather lazy, artistic disposition. But people in a passion, and people trying to impress others with a conviction, are not in all cases consistent and truthful.

On the 27th of April a solemn proclamation was issued by name of "the King's rebels and traitors." The announcement of the names was not made with particular courtesy. They were "Margaret (with no other distinctive appellation); Edward, her son; Henry, late Duke of Exeter (whose wife continued to be styled Duchess); Edmund Beaufort, calling himself Duke of Somerset; John, Earl of Oxford; John Courtenay, calling himself Earl of Devon; William late Viscount Beaumont; John Beaufort and Hugh Courtenay, knights." It was solemnly commanded that none should "give them help, favour, or succour, on pain of death and forfeiture of all held of us: we calling Almighty God to record that it shall be against our will and intent."[#]

[#] Close Roll, 11 Edw. IV.

Did it ever strike the man who dictated these words, that God Almighty had kept a record concerning him, and did he ever think what his feelings would be, when that record was read out before men and angels? The Nemesis for the sins of Henry IV. was descending with dire vengeance on the House of Lancaster. But did he imagine that the House of York should escape the judgment of God—that the Jehu who had been raised up to destroy the innocent sons of Ahab, should be permitted to walk with impunity in the sins of Jeroboam?

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST BATTLE OF THE RIVAL ROSES.

"May this be borne? How much of agony
Hath the heart room for?"
—FELICIA HEMANS.

One enemy remained for Edward IV. to vanquish, and it was a woman: a woman whose hand he had kissed upon the knee, and whom his Queen had served in her chamber. So long as husband and son were left to fight for, so long Marguerite of Anjou was irrepressible and invincible. When they were not, the complete indifference of despair with which she let the sceptre drop from her hand, proved that it was not it which she had loved, but them.

Yet the dreadful news which met her at Cerne Abbey for one moment overwhelmed the eager and resolute spirit. King Henry was once more a captive, and Warwick—who united the strange characters of her worst enemy in private, and her sole reliable friend in public—could be neither enemy nor friend any more for ever. The bright head was bowed down, and tears, such as Marguerite was rarely seen to shed, came rushing from her eyes.

"Oh, let us give it up!" she cried. "Edward, let us go back to France, and give up the struggle!"

"I cry you mercy, Madame my mother!" was the ringing answer of the Prince. "Never, while another battle may retrieve all! Look, I pray you—have we not yet the Duke of Somerset"——

"Not to be trusted," said Marguerite, under her breath.

"And my Lord of Oxford"——

"Who fled from us at Barnet."

"And my Lord of Devon"——

"Well, yes—I think *he* may be."

The Prince dropped on one knee, and clasped his mother's hand in his.

"And, sweet Mother, have you not *me*?"

The Queen clasped her darling in her arms, and bent her fair head low upon his darker locks.

"*Mon chéri, mon mignon!*" she cried tenderly, in her own language, not often used now, for English had become almost the mother-tongue to the woman who had been Queen of England since she was a maiden of sixteen years. "Aye, my streak of sunlight, I have thee!—and never will I let thine inheritance calmly fall into the hands of thine enemies! Come, let us be up and doing. When, on the day of mine espousals, I set the Rose of England in my bosom, did I not know that I must wear it with all its thorns?"[#]

[#] The last sentence is in the actual words of the Queen, though not spoken on this occasion.

The momentary sensation of irresolute hopelessness was passed, and Marguerite was herself again. She held a council of war, at which it was decided that they

should march on the western provinces, which were more loyal than the midland wherein Warwick had held sway, or the northern of which Edward was Duke. The ladies were to be left behind in sanctuary, except the one or two in personal attendance on the Queen, who knew well enough that whoever might constitute the body of the Lancastrian party, she was and had always been its soul: and that however her forces might acquit themselves with her, they were not likely to do well without her. The Countess of Warwick, with her daughter of Clarence and their suites, had crossed the Channel separately from the Queen, and had taken refuge at Beaulieu Abbey. But nothing would tempt the young Princess of Wales to join them. Whether in life or in death, where her heart's lord was, there also would she be.

The Countess of Devon, in attendance on the Queen, and Lady Katherine Vaux, in waiting on the Princess, were the sole women who accompanied the army. From Bath they marched on to Bristol, intending to join the Earl of Pembroke, Jaspar Tudor, who was coming from Gloucester with his men. But when the Queen's army attempted to pass the Severn, they found themselves intercepted by the men of Gloucester, who urged their necessary "obeissance to their Duke." Marguerite turned aside, and went on to Tewkesbury.

Perhaps few places in England are less changed than Tewkesbury from the appearance they presented in the fifteenth century. Not only the grand old Abbey (alas! restored), but the Bell Inn within a stone's throw, the old winding High Street and its hostelry the Bear, are very little altered in outward seeming from what they were on that night of the third of May, when Marguerite of Anjou drew up her troops in "the Bloody Field" outside the town. Edward was at Tewkesbury in person, awaiting what either side felt instinctively would be the last and decisive battle in the Wars of the Roses.

Early the next morning, the Prince of Wales, who was to command the army, took leave of the royal ladies.

Clasp him close, poor mother! cling to him, young wife! You will do it never, never any more. It was no act of the Prince, whether of commission or omission, that lost the day. Victory hung yet in the balance, when Somerset, traitor to his last breath, fled from his young gallant master, followed by Hugh Courtenay: and from that moment the field was King Edward's.

The Prince was taken. The craven Somerset fled to the sanctuary of a church, and he was followed by Humphrey Audley (who had York blood in his veins), Henry de Ros, James Gower, the Prince's standard-bearer, and many more. But Prince Edward, most valuable prisoner of all, was taken before the conqueror in his royal pavilion. What followed is well known,—King Edward's contemptuous query—

"How camest thou, young man, to bear sword against me?"

It was met by Prince Edward's defiant reply—

"I came to recover my father's kingdom, and mine own inheritance, out of the hands of them that had no right to hold it."[#]

[#] Only the opening words of this speech are commonly quoted.

Some chroniclers say that Edward dashed his gauntleted hand in the face of his young cousin. Others assert that he merely flung a sign to those around him. Either action was well understood. Hastings, the King's faithful servant, and Thomas Grey, his step-son, the affianced of Anne of Exeter, hurried Prince Edward out of his presence to the next tent, where the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester were standing. There they flung him down. One cry of pitiful appeal rang through the evening air—"Clarence! *Brother!*" but Clarence stood deaf and motionless. Gloucester was equally still, but from a very different motive. Then came a second and a lower moan—"*Jesu, Domine!*" That was heard. Another instant, and they had no more that they could do. Edward Plantagenet was with God.

Not that night did Marguerite of Anjou learn all the awful news in store for her. She heard—from the gentle lips of John Combe—that her army was routed, and the day lost: heard it, with the young Princess by her side, seated in that charette in which it had been so difficult to keep her, for she suspected already that fate was going against her, and she was scarcely restrained from mounting her horse, and taking the command of her troops. The one worst item—the loss of her boy—did not reach her then. But what she did hear made her sink down in the charette, "half-dead."

Those about the Queen—very few they were—felt the necessity of doing for her what she was not in a position to do for herself. They hurried the royal ladies away from their dangerous place to a little religious house outside Tewkesbury, where they entered them in sanctuary. Alas for their innocence, if they expected Edward of York to keep promises or reverence sanctuary! At that moment he was presenting himself with drawn sword at the door of the church where so many of the Lancastrian nobles had taken refuge. All honour be to the brave priest who, pix in hand, resolutely barred the victor's entrance, until he had given a solemn promise of pardon to the fugitives. Alas for the fugitives, that they trusted it! All might have escaped, but trusting to that honour of which Edward knew so little, they remained in their asylum until the Monday, when they were marched out and beheaded before the door. Somerset richly deserved his fate: but this cannot be said of many others. Even Humphrey Audley was not spared, though King

Edward and he were second cousins.[#]

[#] He was the younger son of Alianora de Holand, Lady Audley, daughter of Constance of York, King Edward's grand-aunt.

Notwithstanding all his specious words, ties of blood, no less than those of gratitude, weighed as nothing with Edward of York when a man stood in his way.

There was a long funeral procession that day in Tewkesbury Abbey. The Duke of Somerset, as we are told by his herald, who was present, was buried "before the image of Saint Jame at an autar in ye said monastery churche on the northe parte."[#] But it was in the very midst of the church, just under the tower, that they laid the flower of the Red Rose, "the gallant-springing young Plantagenet," who in the endeavour to recover his father's kingdom had sacrificed himself. The rest were buried in one great grave, dug close to that of the Prince in the nave of the Abbey.

[#] Harl. MS. 545.—This tomb was removed at a later date, and is now on the south side of the chancel.

The next step on the part of Edward was to capture the two hapless ladies who had taken refuge in the little nunnery. Sir William Stanley—an old enemy of the Queen—was sent to do this; and he is said to have behaved as brutally as he well could, and in particular to have broken to the bereaved mother the news of her boy's death in the most inhuman manner. Driven almost to frenzy by the suddenness and anguish of the blow, Marguerite broke forth into passionate execrations upon Edward and all his posterity, which Stanley had the cruelty to repeat to the conqueror, when, on the 11th of May, he brought his prisoners to Coventry. The royal mourners were conveyed southwards together, captives in the victorious train of the Rose of Rouen.

One more attempt, however, was to be made in the Lancastrian cause, like the last expiring gleam of a candle ere it dies out. The Governors of Calais, Sir Walter Wretill and Sir Geoffrey Gates, despatched the brave, if somewhat rash, Thomas Fauconbridge "to raise Kent, and deliver King Henry from the Tower." It was only a dying flash, but it roused the Yorkists to instant action. Lord Rivers was sent down to Kent and Lord Bourchier to Essex by the Council; Lord Dudley, with a hundred soldiers, was put in charge of the Tower, where defensive

works were cast up in haste in less than a week; Lord Hastings was despatched to supersede the Governor of Calais, and Lord Pembroke sent to South Wales "to capture rebels, and reduce the King's castles to his obedience." The citizens of London, that unknown and difficult quantity, were complimented by the gift of two tuns of red wine, "expended on them after the conflict at Mile-end against the rebels."[#] For the safe custody of Rochester Castle, a squire of the body was sent down, by name Thomas St. Leger, of whom we shall hear again.

[#] Issue Roll, Easter term, 11 Edw. IV. This Roll is one of the most interesting state papers ever penned.

The insurrection was quashed. But how many more might arise? It was no doubt extremely inconvenient to be perpetually in risk of another; and Henry VI. had still friends enough to make Edward's throne a very uneasy seat. So long as the Lancaster King lived, the York King would have a thorny time of it. There was only one way to end the difficulty: and there was one man who was ready to take it.

On the twenty-first of May, King Edward, accompanied by his brother of Gloucester, and carrying his captives in his victorious train, made his triumphal entry into the City of London. The Queen and Princess were lodged in the Tower. They were now under the same roof as King Henry. If any ray of hope ever entered Marguerite's heart after Tewkesbury, it must have been that night, at the thought of a possible meeting with the husband from whom she had been parted for six weary years. She may well have imagined that fate had done its worst, and no further sorrows could yet be in reserve for her. But the worst had only begun to come. Whether it were that night or a few days later,—within one week from her imprisonment in the Tower, Marguerite of Anjou was a widow.

When and how did Henry VI. die? The how has often been disputed: but the when has generally been considered less doubtful. The popular belief for centuries was that, weary of the continual risk and fear, Gloucester went to the Tower on that same night of his arrival in London, and with one stroke of his dagger ended the Wars of the Roses, and the sorrows of Henry of Lancaster. The courtier Comines writes cautiously: Henry was killed by Gloucester, "if what was told me be true." Had he in his heart believed it untrue, would he have thus mentioned it? One dry old chronicler remarks that Henry died on the twenty-first of May, "the Duke of Gloucester and his men being in the Tower that night." Stow says that his body was carried to St. Paul's in an open coffin on the 22nd. Stow, Sandford, Baker, and Mezeray have no doubt of the murder. It was not until the

last century that it was ever questioned, and then by writers who were desirous to whitewash the decidedly black character of Richard III. But so far as I know, no one has ever noticed on either side the singular fact recorded on the Issue Roll, that Henry did not die on the twenty-first at all. There may have been some reason—now perhaps inscrutable—why Edward wished to convince the public that Henry did die on that day: but his own Roll, meant for no eyes but those of safe persons, unquestionably indicates that Henry was living until the 27th of May, six days later. His "diet" is charged until the latter day. There may have been some show of reason, as putting a stop to all future trouble, why the public should believe Henry to be dead when he was not: but what possible cause could there be for entering on the Roll a false statement with the object of showing Henry to be alive when he was really dead? The question of course arises, whose was the body exposed to view in St. Paul's on the twenty-second?—even if we put aside the sensational item that the corpse bled wherever it rested, on account of the presence of the murderer as chief mourner. The Roll above mentioned, which gives the expenses of Henry's funeral, makes no mention of the day of burial. Perhaps the difficulty is best left unsolved, with just one statement—that Gloucester was perfectly capable of the crime laid to his charge: and that the main point of circumstantial evidence in determining the question, is to decide whether Gloucester was or was not at the Tower on the 27th of May.

The strongest evidence known to me in Gloucester's favour is the assertion of Fleetwood, adopted by the usually careful and accurate Carte, that Henry was found dead, probably of apoplexy, on the night of the twenty-first of May. This was of course the York version of facts. But if, as has been shown, the date is conclusively disproved by the testimony of the Issue Roll, may not the circumstances be equally far from true? It was so exceedingly in the interest of Edward that Henry should die just at that moment, that the suspicion of his death having been humanly assisted will never be removed as long as the world lasts.

Very little expense attended the funeral of the dead. Twenty ells of linen cloth, wax, and spices, were provided; two men only carried torches (the number usually corresponding with the years of the deceased); a few soldiers of Calais watched the corpse; and to five orders of friars a pittance was given for masses, wretched indeed when compared with the usual outlay. The whole cost was under £43—just the price that King Edward paid about the same date for a crimson velvet jacket.

There is nothing but pure fancy as the source of the scene imagined by our greatest dramatist, wherein Gloucester makes love to the young Princess of Wales when she officiates as chief mourner at King Henry's funeral. The poor Princess was an outlaw and a prisoner in the Tower at that moment, and assuredly never held any such position, any more than she lent willing ear, whether first or last,

to any such words.

The body of King Henry was buried at Chertsey Abbey, where it rested until Gloucester himself was King, when, on the 12th of August, 1484, it was finally removed to his birthplace, Windsor.

Many days had not elapsed after the funeral of the dead King, when London was startled with the news that the Princess of Wales was missing. How she had made good her escape no man knew: that she was no longer a prisoner in the Tower was the one thing certain. Princess, indeed, no one now called her. As her father's daughter, she was still the Lady Anne: and this title now replaced the royal one. The first idea was that she had taken refuge at Beaulieu with her mother; but this was soon found to be a mistake. The Countess of Warwick was still in sanctuary, though her elder daughter, the Duchess of Clarence, had departed at once to take her proper place at Court as King Edward's sister-in-law: and from her honorary imprisonment poor Lady Warwick was inditing pitiful letters to every person whom she thought likely to have any influence with King Edward, in the hope of procuring her pardon. She addressed herself to every member of the royal family in turn; and she notes as a special grievance in the petition she presently offered to the King, that "in the absence of clerkes, she hath wretyn l'res with her owne hand."[#]

[#] Cott. MS. Jul. B. xii., fol. 317.

Bitterly she complains that the King had sent letters to the Abbot of Beaulieu, on account of some "synester informacion to his said Highness made," with orders to keep her in strict prison, which was a deep grief to her. She pleads her sore poverty, being cut off from all enjoyment of her jointure and dower of the earldom of Salisbury, and also from her own Despenser lands and earldom of Warwick: and lastly, she represents that she has no opportunity of putting her case into the hands of any solicitor, nor, if she had, is there one that would dare to undertake it.

Edward paid little attention to this sad appeal. Clarence had his brother's ear: and Clarence had set his mind upon one thing,—to hand down to his children the vast Warwick inheritance, undivided. In order to do this, he grudged his mother-in-law every unnecessary penny: and he determined that so far as in him lay, his sister-in-law, the Princess of Wales, should never marry again. There was much danger of this calamity: not because of any wish to that effect on the part of the girl-widow, whose heart was buried for ever in the nave of Tewkesbury Abbey, and whose sole ambition was to creep out of sight and hearing of the hard,

cold world, into some quiet corner, where she could wait undisturbed until God called her to rejoin her dead. The danger arose not from her, but from the Duke of Gloucester. From his early boyhood, Richard of York had loved Anne Neville; or rather, to put it more accurately, he loved himself, and he found in Anne Neville a plaything the possession of which was necessary to his happiness. That he did not love her, he plainly showed by his actions. Had he done so, he would have let her alone, which was all the grace she asked at his hands. But Gloucester, like most human beings, looked upon love and persecution as exchangeable terms. He wanted Anne Neville: whether she wanted him was a point quite unnecessary to take into the account. And Anne did not want him. On the contrary, she intensely disliked him. It was not possible for her to compare to his advantage such a man as this, whose soul was ten times more crooked than his body, with her tender, brave, gallant young Plantagenet, whose death

> "had made all earth and heaven
> One vaulted grave to her."

It was not his disadvantages of person which made Anne shrink from Gloucester like a bird from a snake. Had the characters been exchanged, matters might have been very different.

These being the circumstances of the case, Anne had lent a willing ear to the overtures of Clarence, who sent her secret messages during her imprisonment, offering to deliver her from the Tower and keep her in hiding from Gloucester. His object was to prevent her from requiring her share of the Warwick lands: hers was to get rid of persecution from a man whom she hated. Both being agreed upon the means, however they might differ in the object, Clarence contrived to steal Anne out of the Tower, and secreted her in a very romantic manner. The Princess of Wales was actually placed in service, as a cook, in "a mean house" in the City of London. So thoroughly was she concealed, that nearly two years elapsed before the indefatigable Gloucester succeeded in discovering the place of her retreat.

King Edward appears to have been at this time in a most gracious frame of mind, which he evinced by scattering pardons and honours broadcast on all sides. Fauconbridge, the latest insurrectionist in favour of the House of Lancaster, was not only pardoned, but made Vice-Admiral. Bishop Waynflete, Lord St. John, and even the Earl of Oxford, were taken into favour. The poor Countess, his mother, who was Warwick's sister, was left in such poverty for some time that she was reduced to earn her bread by her needle, until Edward was pleased to awake to the fact of her existence, and to grant her a pension of £100 per annum. The Duke

of Gloucester was created Lord High Chamberlain, the Earl of Wiltshire Chief Butler, and the Earl of Essex Treasurer of the Exchequer. The castles of Middleham and Sheriff Hutton—possessions of Warwick—were granted to Gloucester, who had always been Edward's favourite brother, notwithstanding the anger of Clarence at this poaching on his preserves. The King also granted all the lands of John Lord Lovell, deceased, to his sister the Princess Elizabeth and her husband, John Duke of Suffolk, son of the famous Duke who had been the counsellor of Queen Marguerite. This was a stroke of policy, for Suffolk was a Lancastrian. But now that Henry VI. and his son were dead, numbers of Lancastrians came in and offered themselves as henceforward loyal subjects of Edward IV., who had now in their eyes become the rightful King. Thomas Earl of Ormonde led the van: and he was followed by Jaspar Earl of Pembroke, the late King's half-brother, by the Duke of Exeter from his prison, various members of the Courtenay and Clifford families, and among others, not least, by Margaret Duchess of Somerset, the mother of the only person living who could on any pretence of right dispute the crown with Edward. This was Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, heiress of the Beauforts, and widow of Edmund Tudor, the elder but deceased half-brother of King Henry. The Beauforts, who were the illegitimate children of John of Gaunt by Katherine Swynford, the lady who afterwards became his third wife, had been formally legitimated in 1397, by a patent which distinctly pronounced them capable of succeeding, to all "honours, dignities, positions, and offices, public and private, whether permanent or temporary, and to all feudalities and nobilities, by whatsoever name known, whether dukedom, princedom, earldom, barony, or other fief, mediately or immediately held of us ... as if they had been born in lawful wedlock."[#]

[#] Patent Roll, 20 Ric. II., Part 2.

This language undoubtedly qualified the Beauforts for the royal succession, and was meant to do so:[#] but at the time the patent was drawn up, there was little reasonable probability of any such event, for not only the reigning Sovereign, but the whole House of Lancaster, lay between them and the throne. But now that the royal family was reduced to the children of Richard Duke of York, and the heiress of the Beauforts, Edward IV. was very naturally jealous of the latter. Under the old law, she stood before him; and it was therefore necessary for his peace that some bar should be provided to her further advance. This was the more desirable, since she had a son, a clever youth of fifteen years, concerning whom an anecdote, very awkward for Edward, was in circulation among the

populace. Five years[#] before this, Jaspar Tudor, going into Wales, where young Richmond was residing with Lord Pembroke, had brought him back with him, and presented him to King Henry. The King was reported to have said, laying his hand on the boy's head as he spoke,—

[#] The qualifying words "the royal dignity excepted," are over-lined, in blacker ink and in a later hand than the original entry.

[#] This is the date usually given; but an earlier one is more likely to be true, since in 1466 King Henry was a prisoner.

"Much striving there is between us; but this is he to whom both we and our adversaries must submit."

There can be little doubt that Henry regarded his young nephew as his heir presumptive, a fact which in itself was likely to rouse Edward's jealousy against the boy: and even now a popular reaction was beginning in favour of the deceased King, which took the form of reverence for the sanctity of his life, and disposition to believe in his powers of prediction. The last item was rather helped than hindered by his predisposition to insanity, for in the Middle Ages a man with impaired intellect, in whatever form, was always regarded as one with whom God held direct communication. The particular form of madness which had afflicted King Henry, and which was characterised not by any kind of passion or violence, but by silence and dreaminess—an apparent absence of the soul from the body—was especially looked upon as indicative of inspiration. King Henry's own account of these attacks of aberration was that they were simply a blank to him, and that he had not the slightest idea of any thing that had taken place. It may be that to a man of his tender, sensitive, affectionate nature, placed as he was in these dreadful circumstances, these seasons, resting both mind and body, were God's greatest mercy. At this early date after Henry's death, a strong wish for his canonisation had already arisen. Had those who aspired to canonise him after death been a little more friendly to him in life, it would have been a state of things much more to his advantage. But this is human nature. We worry our friend into his grave, and then we call him poor dear So-and-so, and wear his portrait in a locket.

All these facts tended to make Edward's throne an uneasy seat, and caused him to be very anxious to get hold of young Richmond. His grandmother, the Duchess of Somerset, had returned to her allegiance: but his mother, the Countess of Richmond and Wiltshire, made no sign. His uncle Jaspar was watching

over the boy; and no sooner did he hear that Edward was endeavouring to discover him, than he fled with him across the Channel, and delivered him into the safe keeping of the Duke of Bretagne.

Seeing that his dangerous rival had escaped his hands, Edward thought it desirable to assure himself of the fidelity of his nobles to his son. The little child of eight months old was created Prince of Wales, Duke of Lancaster, and Earl of Cornwall; and on the 3rd of July, in "the Parliament Chamber" at Westminster, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal swore allegiance to him.[#] Among those who took this oath is specially named, third on the list, his uncle of Gloucester. An entire household was appointed for the baby Prince—Chancellor, Seneschal, and Chamberlain.

[#] Close Roll, 11 Edw. IV.

On the 27th of August, a patent of pardon was issued for five Lancastrians. Three were men of no note. The others were described as "Henry, calling himself Duke of Exeter," and "Jaspar Owen, calling himself Earl of Pembroke."[#] It was not, however, for three weeks after this, that Exeter was suffered to leave his prison. He came out to find such a pestilence raging all over the country as had not been known in England for many years—scarcely since the "black death" in the reign of Edward III. No borough town in England was free. King and Queen went on pilgrimage to Canterbury as an expiation for the sins which had caused it. But, as a set-off to this humiliation, the personal expenses of King Edward for this half-year—the bloodiest period of his reign—amounted to a sum which no previous King of England had ever approached. The details of this expenditure, from April to September, 1471, will be found in the Appendix. They throw more light on the King's character than pages of description.

[#] Patent Roll, 11 Edw. IV., Part I.—The scribe probably omitted a word, and meant to describe the son of Owen Tudor as Jaspar ap Owen.

Perhaps, had Edward—and it may be more than he—carefully studied his account-book, it might have given him some intimation of the quarter wherein

those sins lay for which he rode to Canterbury to do penance.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE END OF A WEDDING-DAY

"Aye, there's a blank at my right hand
That ne'er can be made up to me."
—HOGG.

"And how goes it with the fair Grisacres, Sellinger?"

The question was asked by King Edward IV., who was lounging in an attitude of lazy ease on a "day-bed," the ancestor of the modern sofa. His Majesty's life was spent in alternations between taking his ease in the very easiest of ways, and fits of fiery bravery when occasion called them forth. The gentleman addressed was Master Thomas St. Leger, a squire of the body, to whom Edward had granted the marriage of Jane Grisacres, one of the chamberers of his sister of Exeter. This meant that the young lady was an heiress, and that the gentleman was at liberty either to marry her himself, or to make merchandise of her to some other person. The inclinations of the lady were not considered. Her sole opportunity, therefore, if she did not admire her master, lay in making herself so extremely disagreeable to him that he might prefer to sell her.

"I humbly thank your Highness, all goes rarely well," replied St. Leger, with a courtesy.

St. Leger was a good-looking man of some five and twenty years, with light hair, which, in accordance with fashion, he wore very long, and cut quite straight all round.

"That is well. I would fain do thee some grace for thy service," said Edward, rising, and calling another of his squires to attend him, he lounged out of the room.

King Edward IV. was the handsomest man of his age. "A more beautiful person," says Comines, "never did mine eyes behold." He was very tall,—six feet three inches—of extremely fair complexion, light brown hair, and blue eyes—true Plantagenet colours: but he grew corpulent in his later years—a blemish which at this time had not begun to appear. Like most persons at that period, he wore his hair very long, but neither beard, whiskers, nor moustache.

> ”What though the face be fair,
> What though the eye be bright,
> What though the rare and flowing hair
> Vie with the rich sunlight,—
> If the soul which of all should the fairest be,
> If the soul which must last through eternity
> Be a dark and unholy thing?”

And certainly, in Edward’s case, the beauty of the outward man was very far

from corresponding with the inner man of the heart.

A rather peculiar smile curled the lip of the squire after the King’s departure.

”His Highness would fain do me some grace—would he so?” he inquired half aloud, and to all appearance addressing himself to a fly which was marching up the diamond-shaped panes of the window. ”What should he say, trow, an’ he wist of the grace which another thinks to do me?”

The same evening saw Mr. St. Leger a visitor at Coldharbour, for the purpose of carrying on that wooing which was now beginning to be thought decorous even in these cases where the lady was not free to refuse—though, of course, capable of omission if preferred. Half an hour he spent with Mistress Jane Grisacres in the hall—a half-hour which was a weary weight to him, and a moment of enchantment to her, for—alas for poor Jane Grisacres!—she loved the handsome suitor who cared so little about her. This business well over, Mr. St. Leger slipped out of the hall, and passed lightly up a spiral staircase, to do his real wooing in another chamber, to a lady who had double the beauty, and ten times the position, but not one per cent. of the heart, of poor Jane Grisacres.

Men and women do not leap, but grow, into monsters of iniquity. Dionysius the Tyrant, Pope Alexander the Sixth, Judge Jeffries, and Robespierre, were all innocent babies once. The heart not yet hardened in sin shrinks back from the first touch of what it recognises as evil, with the cry, ”Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?”[#]

[#] These words have passed into an English proverb, and are here used in their current sense: but it should be remembered that in that sense they are not a Scriptural quotation, the key-note word being omitted from the sentence. Hazael really said, ”Thy servant the dog, shall he do this great thing?” In other words, Is so mean a creature as I to attain to so high a position as you intimate? His feeling, therefore, was not righteous indignation, but rather rapturous astonishment.

But when the evil is not recognised, how then? There is no shrinking from Satan when he comes to us clad in the robes of an angel of light. One of the most skilful touches of the wonderful tinker is that passage where Christian and Hopeful admit that they were forewarned to beware of the Flatterer. ”But we did not imagine (said they) that this fine-spoken man had been he.”

When the Lady Anne of York, in her innocent girlhood, scarcely more than a child, stood at the altar with Henry Duke of Exeter, she would probably have repulsed with indignant horror the prophet who should have told her that ere twenty years were over, she would fling overboard, careless what fate he met, the husband who would have loved her if she had given him leave, for the sake of a young man who was merely attracted by her beauty, rank, and wealth. She was ready to do it now. Beginning by simply amusing herself with the young squire, then regarding him as a friend, she had reached a point at which she was willing to abnegate rank, and sacrifice even her hoarded wealth, sooner than part with him. The matter was easily managed. A Princess would find it no hard matter to obtain a divorce. Of course the King must be amused with some other reason than the true one, as he might not fancy a marriage between his sister and his servant. But it was easy enough to take him in, by a little virtuous indignation about the wicked Lancastrian proclivities of the Duke, which made it utterly impracticable for the Duchess ever to bear him again. Edward’s own constancy was not so remarkable that he could afford to be severe upon Anne.

And what of the delicate maiden whose one tie to life was that father who was thus to be cast away and left to his fate? Her mother did not find it convenient to consider her. She was to be married to Thomas Grey. If she did not like him, worse luck! What more could be said? She must put up with her fate, as others had done before her.

It did, however, strike the Duchess that it might be as well to get her daughter’s marriage over before her own. The divorce could take place any time—the sooner the better. She had already induced her royal brother to make sundry small grants of minor offices and inexpensive manors to St. Leger: and His Majesty was just now very busy—partly occupied in settling political difficulties, and partly in recruiting his recent heavy exertions. Among the former were a quantity of pardons to Lancastrians who had submitted themselves—among whom was a mercer of London, by name William Caxton, whose thoughts were busy on the setting up of that quiet little printing-press at Westminster which was to revolutionise the world; the removal of Clarence from Court (where he was eternally quarrelling with Gloucester) by creating him Viceroy of Ireland; the re-arrest of Archbishop Neville, under cover of a friendly visit from the King, who gleefully appropriated his £20,000 worth of personalty, and broke up his mitre to make a crown for himself. Edward was still worried on the subject of Richmond,

whom he was trying hard to induce to come to England, alleging as his sole object the desire to restore his dear young kinsman to his forfeited inheritance: but the Duke of Burgundy—with whom Richmond had now taken refuge—at the last moment stopped the negotiations, on hearing from the proverbial little bird that what Edward really wanted with his dear young kinsman was to show him the same civility which Herod did to John the Baptist. King Edward's recourse, under these accumulated annoyances, for rest and refreshment, was as usual to a sylvan recreation which was a mixture of picnic and hunting tour, gorgeous pavilions being pitched for that galaxy of Court ladies without whom life would in his eyes have been a howling wilderness.

The Duchess of Exeter and her daughter were among the royal guests. The flirtation between the former and Mr. St. Leger was thereby considerably promoted: while the aversion of the Lady Anne for Mr. Thomas Grey was very far from lessened. The Duchess, however, pushed on the settlements and preparations: and soon after the King's return to Westminster, both events were ready to happen. The divorce came first. On the twelfth of November, 1472, the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Exeter was dissolved by Papal bull: and in the following January, the Lady Anne de Holand was made to give her hand—*not* with her heart in it—to the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth.

On the evening before this sacrifice was offered at the shrine of politics and propriety, the Lady Anne, and several of her mother's chamberers, were gathered at Coldharbour. The bride had been trying on her wedding-dress, which Jane Grisacres and Marion Rothwell were carefully folding up. It was of rich crimson velvet, heavily furred with ermine, and was almost too great a weight for the slight shoulders which drooped beneath it. Suddenly there was an exclamation from Jane.

"Help us, holy Mary! If I have not lost my locket!"

"Dear heart!" responded Marion. "Look and see if it have not catched in my Lady's gown."

The search was made, but without success.

"Woe is me! I had liefer have lost all mine having rather than yon locket," lamented Jane.

"I know wherefore," suggested the teazing Tamzine, in that tantalising style which is always meant to provoke a request for further explanation: and Marion, who was not devoid of curiosity, responded as Tamzine intended she should.

"Wherefore? The saints be about us! Had she not yon locket for a token of Master Sellinger? *I* know!" announced Miss Thomasine, in a tone which called the colour into Jane's face.

The last-named young lady was still hunting for her lost treasure, in likely and unlikely places, with a running accompaniment of remarks addressed to no-

body, such as are usual in similar cases.

"I am assured I put it on this morrow!—Dear, dear, but to think of it!—Where can it be?—I have looked every whither!—Had ever poor maid such an ill loss?"

"It had his hair in it, I warrant you," said Marion, not ill-naturedly—she was not an ill-natured girl—but with that spice of enjoyable excitement at the least adventure or misadventure, which gave Rochefoucauld the occasion to observe that there is something exhilarating in the misfortunes of our friends.

"Not it, forsooth!" said Tamzine. "Master Sellinger is not he that should lay violent hands of his greatest treasure to please a woman."

"Is his hair his greatest treasure?" laughed Marion.

"Trust me!" was Tamzine's sententious response. "Have you ne'er beheld him shake it with yon delicate turn of his head that he hath? Why, he beareth it a good inch longer than any other in the Court."

"Good lack! the man is a very popinjay,"[#] said Marion. "He might be a maid, with his pouncet-box and his pomanders."[#]

[#] Parrot.

[#] The pomander, now becoming old-fashioned, was a ball of sweet-scented drugs enclosed in a network of metal, which was held in the warm hand to call out its fragrance: the pouncet box had taken its place, and was filled with sweet powder.

"And his little mirror stuck of a little poke[#] of his doublet—have you ne'er watched him pull it forth when he counted him unseen?"

[#] Pocket is the diminutive of poke.

"Nay, verily! but doth he so? That passeth!"[#]

[#] Surpasses belief.

"Use your eyes," said Tamzine. "Jane, sweet chuck, give up searching for a needle of a bottle of hay. The cat hath it, I'll be bound, or some animal belike."

In which Miss Tamzine was not so far wrong, seeing that the missing article lay in her own pocket.

"Cats eat no lockets, trow," said Marion.

"Nay, but I cannot," answered Jane in a distressed voice. "I had never yet heavier loss in all my life."

”Good sooth, your life must have been a merry one,” said Tamzine.

”I have lost father and mother,” added Marion. ”Somewhat passing a locket, belike.”

”I have lost worser than that,” said the cynical Tamzine, ”for I had eleven hundred pound put out to usury, and he that had it paid me ne’er a plack.”

”Dear heart! how came that?” said Marion.

”Father Nokes said it came of the temptation of Satan, and the evilness of men’s hearts,” was the demure reply of Tamzine.

”What was your worst loss, Agnes?” asked Marion.

Agnes had to think. ”I scarce can tell,” said she. ”I were o’er young when my mother died to feel any loss.”

”What happy maids be ye!” came softly from Lady Anne, who had listened hitherto without joining. ”Dear damsels, I pray you to thank God that the worsest loss ye know is the loss of death.”

”Can there be a worser, Madam?”

”Aye, Marion, there be losses in life far wofuller.”

”Your Ladyship scarce speaks from your own knowledge, methinks.”

”Aye, but I do!” answered the bride sadly. ”We may lose our living, in a sorer fashion than our dead. The dead can go no further from us than they be: and the day cometh when we shall go to them. But the living may go further away from us till they never come back again: aye, and worser—for they may go further and further from God till they never come back to Him. And who shall measure the loss of a lost life?—who shall measure the loss of a lost soul?”

”Cheery talk for a bride of her wedding-eve!” muttered Marion, not for Lady Anne to hear.

Nor did she hear it. She sat by the table, resting her head upon her hand, and her thoughts evidently far away. Probably they were either on the life that lay before her, or on the father whom she might never see again.

”Oh dear!” exclaimed poor Jane, standing up from the cramped position in which she had been hunting for the missing locket. ”I must give it up till daylight come. Our sweet Lady grant it be not truly lost!”

”Not a bit of it,” said Tamzine peremptorily: and reasonably enough, since she knew where it was.

”I will help you look for it to-morrow,” said Agnes kindly.

”Truly, I am beholden to you,” replied Jane. ”I would give a gold half-angel to know where it were.”

”Give it me,” said Tamzine, holding out her hand. ”I am going to-morrow even to see the White Witch of Bermondsey.”

”Wait and see if the locket be found afore the even,” wisely suggested Marion.

”Won’t be,” said Tamzine.

Jane, whose chief failing was being too easily led, paid over the five shillings to Tamzine without taking Marion’s advice.

”We must be early abed, maids,” said Lady Anne, rising, with a weary air. ”We must needs be stirring early, and ’tis now so late the night shall not be long.”

She turned away from them, to go to her own chamber, with a hollow cough which smote painfully on Agnes Marston’s heart.

”Not long!” she said to herself, in another sense. ”No, dear, gentle, suffering maiden—the night will not be long!”

The next morning rose brilliantly clear, and cruelly cold. There was a keen frost, and a keener east wind: but it was *de rigueur* that the bride must wear no covering on her head except a coronal of gems. She bore herself royally, with no sign of the outward sufferings which were consuming her life, any more than of the inward anguish which was gnawing at her heart. The marriage took place at Greenwich Palace, after a freezing voyage: and the bride was given away by her royal uncle. All the chamberers of course were present, and so were the people of England, represented by as many as could squeeze into the Palace chapel. Men and women of all ranks were there: but only two pairs of eyes noticed one man, muffled in a thick cloak as if he felt the cold, who stood back in the furthest corner. Agnes thought she could guess who he was; and she contrived to leave the chapel by the door close to which he stood. As she passed him in the crush, the Duke slipped a scrap of paper into her hand, with a significant look. Agnes hid it hastily, for it was not for a long time that she dared to examine it. There was a grand banquet to be gone through, and a series of dances and games in the Palace hall; and hours were over before Agnes could without notice slip away from the dancers, and in the recess of a window where no eyes saw her, unfold the Duke’s missive.

”I would fain speak with you,” it ran. ”Dare you come alone to the water-side, without the little postern, as soon as the dark falleth? Risk nothing: but if you can come, you shall find me there.”

It was growing dusk already. Agnes listened for a moment to the sounds of mirth which came surging from the hall. No one would miss her there. She tied a hood over her head, and ran down to the little postern. True to his appointment, the Duke was walking slowly up and down, muffled in his cloak.

”May Christ bless you, my good damsel!” he said warmly, as Agnes made her appearance. ”I do heartily trust that no ill shall hap to you for this grace. Now tell me quickly, for I would not keep you to your harm—what manner of man is this Master Grey? Since he were babe have I never seen him. What is in him?—what hath he done?”

Ah, Agnes knew of one thing he had done, which so far as in her lay must

be kept from the ears of Anne's father for ever. Could she look up into those mournful, longing eyes, and tell him that the man into whose hands his one darling had fallen was one of the murderers of Prince Edward? She cast her eyes downwards, and played nervously with her chatelaine.

"Methinks, my gracious Lord, not much hath been yet known of the young gentleman."

"Perchance, not much," answered the Duke quietly: "yet something, my gentle maid, which you would fain not tell me."

Agnes took refuge in the smaller of the two evil actions of which she knew Grey to be guilty. The smaller—yet showing, as straws show how the wind blows, that he was capable of the greater.

"I have seen him not o'er good to his dog," said she. "But I know not much of his conditions."

The Duke sighed. "Doth my little maid love him?" he asked. "Was she willing to wed with him?"

It was an unusual idea for that time, and would scarcely have been asked but by an exceptionally tender-hearted parent. Agnes shook her head.

"O my darling, my darling! My little white dove!"

"My Lord," said Agnes tremulously, "it will not be for long."

"I know it. And then—I shall have nothing left to live for."

Agnes Marston was one of those shy, undemonstrative, yet deeply-feeling natures, to whom talking of any thing they feel deeply is all but impossible. The fervent souls who wear their hearts upon their sleeves never comprehend a nature like this. They always think them cold, impassive, unfeeling. Yet such have shown themselves capable of martyr death: and they beyond all others can live the martyr life.[#] The most suffering life, and the most saintly, is the life that has no outlet except towards God.

[#] I would fain take this opportunity of protesting against a very common misapprehension (as it appears to me) of a passage of Scripture, by which hearts have been made sad which I believe God would not have made sad. How often the fervent nature condemns the shy and silent with "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If the latter cannot speak, it is assumed, it is because it cannot feel, or is only half-hearted; if love be in your heart, it must come out of your lips: Christ says so! But does Christ say so? Let the context be carefully examined, and it will be found that Christ says, not that whatever is felt in the heart will come out of the mouth—but that whatever does come out of the mouth must first have originated in the heart. I venture to submit that this passage does not deal with the counter-proposition at all: and that between the two there is as much difference as between saying all one thinks, and meaning all one says.

As she stood there by the river, listening to the soft lapping of the water against the bank, Agnes felt as though she could have given any thing to comfort that desolate man. Yet what could she say that might comfort him? To quote God's Word, for a woman, and especially in English, would put herself in jeopardy: but she did not mind that, if it would do him any good. Agnes did not realise that the Duke had been educated by a Lollard stepmother, herself the daughter of a martyr of Jesus Christ.

"'*Youre liif is hidde with Crist in God.*'" She made the quotation very tremblingly. Amazed indeed she was at the style of its reception. The Duke's hand fell softly on her head as if in blessing, and—most astonishing of all—the quotation went on.

"'*For whanne Crist schal apere youre liif, thanne also ye schuln apere with him in glorie... Where is not male and female, ... larlarus and scita, bonde man and fre man; but alle thingis and in alle thingis Crist.*' I thank you, heartily, my good maid. Aye, and methinks it runneth next,—'*As the Lord forgaf to you, so also ye.*' It is well. I count that shall last us both for this little while. '*Alle thingis and in alle thingis, Crist.*'"

Agnes was silent. She had taken a text: if her hearer would preach the sermon to himself, it was far better than any comment on her part.

"I scarce looked to find one of that sort in Coldharbour now," said the Duke, with a smile which made him but look the sadder. "But you must have a care, Mistress Agnes. We be no longer under King Henry, that would not see a Christian man nor woman ill-usen. Yet I would fain, whenso you find safe chance, that you should speak such words to my little maid as you have spoken to me to-night. She cannot remember her grandmother, that should have learned them to her, as she did to me."

"My gracious Lord, the Lady Anne wist thereof far more and better than I."

The light came to the Duke's eyes, for the first time that sorrowful night.

"Then we shall meet again," he said. "Not long—no, not long! God keep you, Mistress Agnes, and give you, for this little while,—give all of us—to have, '*alle thingis and in alle thingis, Crist.*'"

Once more, light and warm, his hand rested on her head: and the next moment he was gone. She stood still and silent, with the feeling of that hand upon her head—of that last word in her ear. It was as if Christ Himself had blessed her. A sense of deep peace sank into Agnes Marston's heart. The little while to be spent on this side the cold river seemed so very little, and the golden gates of Paradise so very near. She would never forget those words—never forget that tone—"*alle thingis, and in alle thingis, Crist.*"

"Agnes! Agnes Marston! Where art, hussy? Dost look for thy betters to waste their breath a-bawling of thee? Art any better than thou shouldst be, a-

chattering to strange men at postern doors? Come in this minute, for shame of thy face, and tell me who is thy gallant. Some penny-go-quick pot-loving companion, I'll be bound. Come hither, I say!"

Oh, what a revulsion it was! But Agnes did not hesitate a moment. Her conscience was clean as snow. She ran up the spiral staircase, and found herself in the awful, because angry, presence of the Mistress of the Household, Lady Elizabeth Darcy.

"Come up to the light, and let me look at thee!"

Agnes stood the scrutiny without flinching.

"Now then—with whom wert thou talking yonder?"

"Please it you, Madam, with a gentleman whose daughter is a maid of my cognisance, and he, knowing the same, did desire to have some speech of me touching her."

"Yonder's a jolly hearing! Get thy tale up better another time. Wherefore should such meet thee after dark, behind posterns? He should have come up to the hall, and desired speech of thee like an honest man. Now then, tell me another story, and let it be the true one, this time."

"Madam, I have spoken truth. An' I tell your Ladyship any other tale, it must needs be false."

The two pairs of eyes met, and the Lady Elizabeth's fell first.

"Holy Mary! but thou art a brazen piece of goods as ever I saw! Come with me to thy Lady. She must be told of this."

Agnes followed silently. Wild horses should not drag that secret from her keeping.

The Duchess of Exeter—who had just divorced her own husband in order to marry another man—was inexpressibly horrified at the moral turpitude of Agnes Marston. Was she to allow of such scandals in her house? No, indeed! The only atonement that Agnes could make was to declare then and there the name and business of her companion. The Duchess was doubtful whether, after any disclosures or expressions of penitence, she would be justified in overlooking the matter.

Agnes kept silence. She had repeated her explanation, and she held to it as the simple truth: but not another word would she utter.

"Wilt not even say thou art sorry?" demanded Lady Darcy, who, now that the Duchess had taken up the matter so warmly, was herself cooling down.

Sorry! would she ever be sorry, all her life long, for what had passed in those few minutes?

"No, Madam. I am not sorry."

"Nor ashamed?"

"Nor ashamed, in any wise." And Agnes lifted her clear, honest eyes to her

examiners.

”Verily, this passes!” cried the Duchess. ”Dost look to tarry any longer in mine house, thou good-for-nought?”

”At your pleasure, Madam.”

”Then thou mayest write to my Lord Marnell, and tell him I send him back a thing that is no better than she should be.”

Agnes, whose sense of the ludicrous was very delicate, thought she would be quite safe in making that report.

”I’ll have thy sister in the stead of thee. She is a well-looking maid enough, and of good conditions. I saw her this last week, when she that was Queen Margaret was sent from Windsor to Wallingford.”

Agnes felt quietly amused. It was Frideswide who had been the Duke’s first friend, not she. He would be no worse by the exchange—whatever she might be.

”Dost hear, hussy?”

”Aye, Madam, an’t like you.”

”Then begone!”

And so—for Agnes Marston—closed the Lady Anne’s wedding-day.

She went quietly enough upstairs to the room shared by the chamberers of the Duchess. For a moment she stopped at the summit, with her hand on the banister. A sharp pain was shooting through her heart, but whence and what it was she did not know herself.

”What does it matter?” she said to herself, looking out of the window at the starry night. ”Only such a little while! ’*Alle thingis, and in alle thingis, Crist!*’”

CHAPTER IX.
DRAWING NEARER.

”A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest
Unquestioning, upon
A loving breast.”

The Duchess carried her point, and packed off Agnes in disgrace within a week of the offence. She had the grace to see that there was some escort for the friendless girl on her journey home. A small party of travellers were on their way to the

north—consisting of three gentlemen, one of whom was accompanied by his wife and daughters. Agnes received a frigid intimation that she was to make one of this party, and must be ready to start in four days. Mr. Banaster, the married gentleman, lived in Lancashire, whither he was returning, and would take charge of Agnes as far as Sheffield, where, if her friends did not meet her, she must be content to go forward to York with the two younger men whose destination it was. Agnes inwardly hoped that somebody would meet her: but it was a difficult matter to let them know. She wrote to her father, and contrived to send the letter by a post who was going to York with letters from the Duke of Gloucester: but whether it would reach Lovell Tower before herself was an open question. She humbly requested to know the names of the other gentlemen, in a faint hope that they might possibly be acquaintances. Lady Darcy informed her, in her coldest manner, that one of them was a Yorkshire squire, Master Rotherham by name: as for the other, his name was Combe, and whence he might come, she neither knew nor cared. Wherein my Lady Darcy was guilty of saying the thing that is not, since she was perfectly well aware that Master John Combe was of old time Queen Marguerite's henchman, and she had, under different circumstances, appeared to be very good friends with him. Both names were strange to Agnes. She had one more request to make—for an interview with Frideswide ere she set out. Lady Darcy hesitated, but finally granted the request, though she made a great favour of doing so.

During the last few months, Frideswide's movements had been regulated by political necessities. Thirty-seven days was the limit beyond which no person could claim the privilege of sanctuary at the cost of the house: and to reside in sanctuary at a man's own expense was a ruinous proceeding. It was therefore impossible to Frideswide to remain with the Countess of Warwick: and she had no money to provide for herself; yet, being unindicted, she was not a prisoner, and could not expect to be kept at the royal cost. In these uncomfortable circumstances, she had availed herself of an opportunity which few girls would have accepted. A small, though extremely diminished suite had to be provided for the imprisoned Queen, and Frideswide had thankfully received permission to share her captivity. A fervent Lancastrian, she reverenced Marguerite from the core of her heart. Beyond the one change to her own home, any change from that service would be unwelcome.

The unwelcome change was at hand. The Duchess of Exeter had petitioned her brother for Frideswide Marston, and no choice was allowed the latter. One evening in January, Queen Marguerite's gaoler entered her bower, as he politely termed it—she called it her dungeon—in Wallingford Castle. As gaolers went in those days, Sir Thomas Thwaytes was fairly civil to his illustrious captive.

"Dame," said he, "please you, take your leave of Mistress Marston, whom it

is His Highness' gracious pleasure to command otherwhere."

Frideswide turned rather pale, as was but natural. Her first idea was that the alteration had reference to her mistress rather than herself. But Sir Thomas soon undeceived her. Her sister was going home; and Frideswide was to take her place with my Lady of Exeter. Every fibre of Frideswide's heart and nerves revolted at the very name. Take service under the woman who had ruined the life of that man with the soft sad eyes, for whose miserable story her compassion had been intensely awakened! But Frideswide had no choice. And then the thought flashed upon her that perhaps she might serve him there. At least she could do what Agnes had done, and help him, if he should seek it, to obtain private interviews with his daughter.

Queen Marguerite took an affectionate leave of her young attendant. She gave her a token, or gift, in the form of a table-book—one of those little ivory books, turning on a pivot, for memoranda, which have lasted in the same form for many a century. This one was among the few relics of her lost estate, and was mounted in gold, and set with turquoises. It was also fitted with a silver pen.[#]

[#] Silver pens are considerably more ancient than either steel or gold.

The next morning Frideswide left Wallingford, in charge of one Simon Quyxley, an officer of the garrison, who was going on pilgrimage to Canterbury, and meant to stay a few weeks with his friends in London on his way thither. He delivered Frideswide at Coldharbour; and before she well set her foot inside the house, she found herself in the arms of her sister Agnes.

Fortunately for the sisters, the Duchess was spending the evening at Court, and they were free to be alone together if they chose. Agnes hurried Frideswide upstairs to the maidens' chamber, which was at that moment empty, and each rapidly poured her story into the ear of the other—a process which left Agnes comforted, and Frideswide indignant.

"Tarry here I must," said the latter: "but trust me, Annis, so far as lieth in my good will, 'tis for his sake, not hers."

"And thou wilt serve our gracious Lord to thine uttermost, dear heart?" urged Agnes earnestly.

"Trust me, but I will!" was the reply. "And who be thy travelling fellows, sweeting?"

Agnes told her. The names of Messrs. Banaster and Rotherham were received without any comment; but no sooner had she said, "Master Combe," than Frideswide's eyes were lifted with light in them, and a slight flush crept over her

brow.

"Master John Combe—not he? He that was the Queen's henchman?"

There was no Queen but Marguerite to the apprehension of Frideswide Marston.

"Aye, the very same," said Agnes. "Dost know him?"

Frideswide's hood wanted a good deal of settling just at that moment.

"Ay," said she, rather shortly. "Thou wilt not journey ill if Master Combe look to thy comfort. And maybe it shall be none the worser for thee if thou tell him thy name is Marston."

Agnes quietly drew her own conclusions, but she asked no questions. She found, moreover, during the journey, that Master John Combe was undoubtedly an agreeable travelling companion, doing his utmost to make others comfortable: and that when she had once informed him that she was the sister of Frideswide Marston, he appeared to know as much as she did herself about her home, her relatives, and all that concerned her. About Frideswide herself he said very little: but Agnes soon perceived that to talk of her was the surest means of engrossing Master Combe's attention.

Sheffield was reached at last, and Agnes found to her regret that no one from Lovell Tower awaited her. She went on to York with the two young gentlemen, with much less reluctance than she had anticipated: for though she was indifferent to Master Rotherham, she had come to have a very sisterly feeling towards John Combe. It was odd that John Combe's way from York should lie exactly past Lovell Tower: but of course, very convenient for Agnes. Master Rotherham also offered to attend her thither; but Agnes civilly declined his offer as giving him unnecessary trouble. It was late on a Saturday evening in January that Agnes and John Combe reached Lovell Tower at last.

The family were seated in the hall, where a large fire of thick oaken logs was blazing, and the men-servants were bringing in the boards and trestles for rear-supper, the last meal of the day. Fixed tables in the centre of a room were unknown to our medieval ancestors, though they were common enough with the Romans, and even with the Anglo-Saxons. They had leaf-tables, attached to the wall; and wealthy persons indulged in small round or square tables on three feet: but to a much later period than this, the setting of tables for meals included the erection of the table, a mere wide board set upon trestles. We use phrases derived from this practice when we speak of setting a table, or of an hospitable board. Over this was laid a fine damask tablecloth, and the silver *nef*, or ship, was placed in the middle. This was a large salt-cellar, used as the barometer of rank. The family and their guests sat above the salt; the servants below it. Silver plates and cups were set for the former, wooden trenchers and earthen mugs for the latter. To each person was given a knife and spoon: forks were not invented

except for spices, and were never used to eat with. A clean damask napkin, and a basin of water, were carried round before and after every meal: but as neither was changed in the process, the condition in which both reached the lower end of the board is better left undescribed. Fastidiousness was out of place in such circumstances, particularly when husband and wife still ate from the same plate, and for a host to share his plate with his guest was the highest honour he could do him. Yet our ancestors' rules of etiquette show that they were fastidious in their way. Ladies and gentlemen are therein recommended not to wipe their fingers on the tablecloth, to refrain from all attentions to nose and hair during meals, to lick their spoons clean before putting them into the dish—special spoons for helping were never thought of—and above all things, not to feed their dogs from the table.

Saturday evening being a vigil, the supper consisted of salt ling and haddock, baked eels, galantine, eggs prepared in different ways, and various tarts and creams. Wassel bread was set above the salt, maslin below.

The Lady Idonia sat in a large carved chair near the fire. Lord Marnell, who had only just entered, and had had a day's hard riding, had thrown himself on a settle near, with the air of a tired man who was glad to come back to home comforts.

The settle itself would have been hard comfort, but a well-to-do house in those days never ran short of cushions, and his Lordship lay on half a dozen. The Lady Margery was flitting about the table, looking to the ways of her household, and Dorathie was extremely busy on a strip of tapestry. The baked eels were just coming in at the door, when the clear notes of a horn rang outside the gate. It was accompanied—as that sound always was—by a nervous start from Idonia.

Dorathie never could understand why her grandmother always seemed alarmed when a horn sounded. She was too young to be told that before she was born, two horns had so sounded, one of which had brought to Idonia the news of her widowhood, and the other had heralded the arrival of persecutors for the faith. For the momentary defection on her part which followed the latter, Idonia's pardon might be registered in Heaven, but she had never forgiven herself. Was it any wonder if the sound of a horn brought back to her shrinking heart both those awful memories?

"Guests, I ween!" said Lord Marnell, not altering his position on the settle, where he lay with both arms thrown back and beneath his head.

"Dear heart, who shall they be, trow?" responded his wife.

The slip of tapestry dropped from the fingers of Dorathie, who had rushed to the door, and was peering through the crack to make such discoveries as she could.

"Doll! Dorathie! Doll, I say!" cried the scandalised Lady Marnell to her

curiosity-stricken heiress. ”Come back this minute! Where be thy manners?”

Dorathie’s obedience, rather than her manners, produced a reluctant retreat from the door. The gate was heard to open and shut, the clatter of horses came into the paved court-yard, there was the sound of a little bustle and several voices without, and then through the door one voice that all recognised with exclamations of pleasure, the rather because it was one of the last which they expected to hear.

”Agnes, sweet heart!”

”Annis, my dear maid!”

”O Annis, hast come back?—*hast* come back!”

Lord Marnell was up in an instant, his wife warmly embracing her step-daughter, and Dorathie clinging to her as though she had not seen her for a lifetime. Agnes returned the greetings as warmly as they were given, and when all the kisses and blessings were over, presented John Combe.

There was a cordial welcome for Queen Marguerite’s henchman at Lovell Tower, and he was of course desired to remain there as long as it suited his convenience. Any thing less would have been very rude in the eyes of the fifteenth century. Agnes had a shrewd suspicion that Lovell Tower was the real destination of the guest, and that before he left that place he would find that a little private conversation with Lord Marnell was the thing that suited his convenience. She was not mistaken. Before John Combe had stayed a fortnight at Lovell Tower, Agnes and Dorathie were informed by their mother that they were henceforward to regard that gentleman in the light of a brother-in-law elect. Agnes received with a quiet smile the communication which she had been expecting; Dorathie with ecstatic excitement an idea entirely new to her.

”But”—she suddenly exclaimed, ceasing her transports—”will Frid have to go away, or stay away? Won’t she come home?”

”She will come home first, surely,” answered her mother, ”for she will be wed from hence: afterward, Master Combe hath some desire to dwell in this vicinage, though if it shall be compassed I yet know not.”

”Oh, how jolly should that be!” cried Dorathie, ”to have Frid but a step off, and run in and out!”

Lady Margery laughed. ”A good step, I take it, my little maid. Howbeit, I trust thou mayest have thy wish.”

It was on that very evening that Maurice Carew, who had been to York on business, came in with an important piece of news. The Princess of Wales was found. Found, by the man whom she most dreaded, in the guise of a cookmaid, at a ”mean house” in the City of London,—dragged out from her seclusion, and placed under the care of her uncle, Archbishop Neville, with permission to hold intercourse with Queen Marguerite,—the only kindness that could be done to

that lonely, widowed, orphan girl. Of all the quarrels that had ever taken place between Clarence and Gloucester, the worst ensued upon this point. The royal family went to Shene on the sixteenth of February "to pardon," but little pardon was in the hearts of the brothers, who were quarrelling all the way. The King, with whom Gloucester was always the favourite, tried to persuade Clarence to more amiability: but all the concession that could be wrung from the latter was—

"He may well have my Lady my sister-in-law, but she and my wife shall part no livelihood!"

In other words, Clarence did not care how soon the Princess married, so long as she remained a portionless bride, and the Warwick property was left undivided to his children. To do Gloucester credit—the rather since little credit can be done him—he does not seem to have been anxious about the property at that time. It was Anne herself whom he wanted: and he was astute enough to see that if he once got hold of her, the property could be agitated for at leisure.

Not many days after this news had been a nine days' wonder, Lady Darcy informed Frideswide that my Lady Anne Grey had petitioned her mother for her, and she was to be transferred to her service. Frideswide was exceedingly pleased, the rather because she could thus serve the Duke far better than at Coldharbour. She had heard something of Lady Anne from Agnes: but she was hardly prepared for the thin white face and burning eyes which struck to her heart when she saw her new mistress. She might keep in her service as long as Lady Anne should live, and not defer her wedding. The interview in the presence of the Duchess was very short, and question and answer were brief on both sides. But the engagement was effected, and Lord Marnell was fully satisfied with the transfer. He was glad, he said, to win both his poor doves from the clutches of that kite of a woman. Had Frideswide remained at Coldharbour, he would have hastened her marriage in order to get her away. Now there was no need to do it.

The first night that Frideswide spent in her new home, she was required to attend her young lady at her *coucher*. Mr. Grey was not at home; he rarely was so. Noble ladies never had the privilege of a room to themselves in the Middle Ages. When their husbands were away, and often when they were not, a female attendant must occupy the pallet bed, which ran on castors underneath the state bed, and was pulled out when required. Frideswide found herself appointed to the pallet bed this first night—an unusual promotion, since it argued some amount of attachment and confidence on the part of the mistress. The *coucher* was very silent, the only remarks made having reference to the business in hand. But when Frideswide, having finished her duties, had hastily undressed and lain down, the silence was broken.

"Frideswide, art thou in Agnes' secrets?"

"That is somewhat more than I can answer, my Lady. I wis a thing or twain

of hers."

"Did she ever speak unto thee of—of my Lord my father?"

"I think it was I that spake to her," answered Frideswide, softly.

"Hast thou seen him?" The tone was painfully eager.

"My Lady, may I speak out?"

"That is it I would have thee do."

"Doth your Ladyship mind a certain even in winter that his Lordship came to Coldharbour, and, as I think, had speech of yourself?"

"Mind it? Yes, and shall while my life lasts!"

"My Lady, his Lordship had ere that been tarrying with the Queen at Harfleur, and he was pleased to require of me a letter to my sister the which should serve him as a passport to your Ladyship's presence."

"He came hither by thy means, Frideswide?"

"Mine and hers, my Lady."

"Which of you knows him better?"

"Methinks, I, by much, Madam."

"Frideswide, art thou willing to be his true friend and mine?"

"Trust me, my Lady."

"Which Rose dost thou wear?"

A delicate question to answer, when the questioner was a daughter of the House of York! But Frideswide Marston never hesitated.

"The Red, Madam, from my cradle; and shall so do to my coffin."

"So do I," said Lady Anne, quietly, "down in mine heart, Frideswide. He wears it; and what he is, I am. Ah, would I could pass further!—'Where thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.' I had asked God no more. Yet at the least, his people can be my people, as his God is my God. And may-be, when he dies, if not where, then may I die and be buried."

"My Lady, you are young to count on dying."

"It seems long since I counted on living," she said in a low voice. "Life is not worth much, Frideswide."

Frideswide knew too much to ask why. But she knew that for her, under similar circumstances, life would have gone on; and she wondered whether her physical nature were stronger than that of Lady Anne, or her moral nature more blunt and hard.

"I mind," said Lady Anne, in the same tone, "once hearing my Lady of Clarence my aunt to say that none save weak folks brake their hearts. I reckon I must be weak. For mine is broken. I misdoubt if it were ever otherwise than weak and easily shattered. It has not taken much to break it. Thou mayest despise me if thou wilt."

"None less, Madam! It would be impossible."

”Would it?” she answered, rather wistfully. ”Yet methinks thy nature is far stronger than mine. The blows which have crushed me into a poor handful of dust should have rebounded from thee with scarce a bruise. I can see it in thy face; and thy sister is like thee.”

”It may be so, my Lady. But I take it, He told us to pity the weak, who is a God so strong and patient, and who was crucified through weakness for our sakes. Is it not in His strength we can do all things?”

”Dost thou know Him, Frideswide?”

”Aye so, my Lady.”

”Then thou wilt be a comfort to me—in what is coming. It will not be long, Frideswide. Dost thou know that?”

Frideswide’s voice was very low and tender as she said, ”Ay, my Lady. I think it will not be long.” She had more hardihood than Agnes, and spoke out her thoughts instead of feeling them in silence.

”And I shall be glad,” said Lady Anne gently. ”Only I hope my father may not be long after me. Though we have met of late but so seldom, yet I know the world will seem darker and colder to him when I am gone out of it. I am all he has save God; and he is all that I have.”

Frideswide’s eyes were wet; but she made no reply.

”I used to have a fair dream once—too fair to be true. I reckoned that we might have dwelt together, he and I, in some quiet cot in a green glade, where no strangers should come near us, and none seek to take us from each other. But—it was not to be.”

”Not here, Madam. Yet will it not be—hereafter?”

”I feel as though I knew little of what will be hereafter. It will be as God wills; and His will is good. I lack rest sorely—so does my father: and we miss each other very, very much. I suppose our Lord can give us what we need; and as to how, and when, and where—He will know. We have only to wait. Only—I am so weary!”

And she turned on her pillow with a heavy sigh. Weary of life and all that was in it—and she only just eighteen! Frideswide would have given much to comfort her: but she did not know what to say.

”Our Lord was weary Himself,” she said at last.

”Aye, and the memory should rest me. But it doth not so. I seem to have sunk beneath all that—down into the great depths where no words can reach me. Only His own voice, when He shall come and lay His hand upon me, and say, ’Arise, and come away.’ I reckon I shall be strong enough to rise up then. Now, I only want to lie and wait for it. Frideswide, dost thou know what gladness feels like? It is so long sithence I have felt it, that I can barely remember.”

”Yes, Madam, I know it well.”

"And I do not, save in flashes," said Lady Anne again in that wistful tone. "I marvel how it will come to me. I suppose it will come."

She spoke as if she thought it hardly possible.

"Madam, saith not the Psalmist, 'Thou hast put gladness in mine heart?' Methinks that is God's gift as much as grace or mercy."

"Then I will ask Him to put it there," she said, with that childlike simplicity which was a part of her character. "Frideswide, methinks it shall be another way of saying to Him, 'Lord, let me die!'"

And Frideswide knew it was so.

"My maid," said the mistress after a moment's pause, "who was it led thee into the ways of God?"

Frideswide could hardly tell. It had always been so, as it seemed to her. She could barely remember her mother; but first her aunt, and then her stepmother, and always her father, had brought her up in the Lollard faith since her world began. But friends, after all, however faithful and loving, can only lead us into the Court of Israel: the Lord of the Temple must draw aside the veil, and admit His priests Himself into the holy place.

"I can tell thee who it was that led me," resumed Lady Anne, "and let it cheer thee, my maid, to do God's work on them that thou hast opportunity to reach. It was one that I cannot in any wise remember—my Lady my grandmother. She was sometime the Lady Anne de Montacute, a daughter of my Lord of Salisbury that died for King Richard at Cirencester: and she bred up first my father, and after, me, in that which she had learned from her father. I cannot recall her face, essay it as I may: but her doctrine abides with me. 'Tis true, I might have minded it less had not my father kept me thereto belike: for the which reason, may-be, it hath alway seemed me that to love him and to love God went together. They were diverse sides of the same medal. I might say that either came of itself, as I learned the other. Once on a time I seemed to come at God through him: and now—I can come at him only through God. And the day when I shall have both, Frideswide, will be the day when I shall know what like it is to feel glad. But, O my God, was there no other way to bring it?—was there no other way!"

"'There are delights in Thy right hand unto the end,'"[#] softly quoted Frideswide. "And, dear my Lady, surely they will be the sweetest unto them that had the fewest delights here below."

[#] Psalm xvi. 10.

The answer came in another quotation from the same Book. "'I am poor and

needy; the Lord is mine help. My helper and my deliverer art Thou: tarry not, O my God!'"[#]

[#] Psalm xi. 17.

CHAPTER X.
AT THE PARCHMENT-MAKER'S.

"My life hath been a search for Thee,
'Mid thorns left red with Thy dear blood;
In many a dark Gethsemane
I seemed to stand where Thou hadst stood:
And, scorned in this world's judgment-place,
At times, through tears, to catch Thy face."
—ROBERT, EARL LYTTON.

The shadow was falling very low on the sun-dial in a small back yard looking into the fields to the north of Chicken Lane, which crossed the Fleet River, one end abutting upon Lither Lane (running northwards from Holborn) and the other entering Smithfield at its north-western corner. Over the sundial for a moment bent a youth of some twenty years or more, clad in a buff jerkin and working apron. His face was remarkable for the extremely good-humoured expression of the lips, and for the perfect frankness of the clear, honest eyes. Having satisfied himself as to the time of day, he re-entered the house by the back-door, which led him into a low, narrow room, fitted with a long table and sundry benches. Here half-a-dozen men and boys were at work, some engaged in preparing skins for use by scraping off the hair, some arrived at the further stages of straining or bleaching, some at the concluding point of cutting the parallelograms of parchment, the manufacture of which was manifestly their trade.

"Put up work, lads'" said the young man, as he came in, in a tone which showed him, notwithstanding his youth, to be the master. "The 'prentice-lads may be gone. I have more ado yet with Dick and Robin."

He was obeyed with that alacrity which usually finds its way into the cessation of work more readily than into its commencement, and one of the men, with

the three apprentices, shouldered their tools and departed, exchanging ”God be wi’ you!” with the rest. When they were gone, and the two men remaining had gathered their tools into baskets, one of them said,—

”Monition to-night, Master?”

”Even so, Dick. Come you both into the kitchen.”

The two men nodded, and followed their master into a small but cheerful kitchen, where a large fire blazed in the wide chimney. In a wooden chair in the chimney corner, propped up by cushions, sat a silver-haired old woman, and a girl in the chimney corner at work, while an elder girl and a middle-aged woman were arranging forms as though some gathering of persons was expected.

”Time, Jack?” said the old woman.

”Aye so, Mother,” returned he cheerily, setting to work with the forms.

He called her mother, for none other had he ever known: but the old woman was really the grandmother of the young man and the girls. The middle-aged woman was their one servant.

”There!” said Jack at length, glancing over the forms when the arrangement was finished. ”Me reckoneth those shall be so many as we are like to have need.”

”Who be a-coming, Jack?”

”No more than custom is, Mother—without Will Sterys bring yon friend of his that he spake of t’other night. Very like he may.”

”Who shall he be?”

”I wot not, Mother: only Will said he was one safe to be trusted.”

Before the words were well out of Jack’s lips, a low knock came on the house-door—a peculiar knock; three little taps, a pause, two more.

”Here they come,” said Jack, and darted to the door.

A somewhat motley assemblage dropped in by twos and threes. Here came a lame man on crutches; a blind man led by a girl; two wan, tired-looking women; a very old man, bent nearly double; another woman; a young man in his prime. All, however, had as yet one peculiarity—they were dressed in a style which indicated that many of the good things of this life had not come in their way. There was a pause while they spoke kind greetings to the family and each other: and then, at another low knock, Jack let in first one man, and a minute afterwards, two more. All the guests expected had evidently now arrived, for Jack bolted the door and returned to the kitchen.

The man who came by himself, first of the concluding three, proved to be a monk of the Order of St. Austin: a man of about thirty, spare and active, with keen dark eyes which looked as if they saw every thing at once. Coming in with uplifted hand in the traditional attitude of blessing, and ”Christ’s peace be on all here!” he took his stand at a small table, and unfastened from his girdle one of those leather books bound with a projecting end and a knot, for the purpose of

being carried in that manner. This he set down on the table, and waited a moment for the other two to appear.

These last arrivals were both wrapped in cloaks, as though they were anxious not to be recognised. The first, throwing his cloak off, showed that he was dressed in livery, in a style peculiar to the latter half of the Middle Ages. He wore a tabard, or loose short coat, something like a smock-frock in shape, but only reaching to the hips; with wide sleeves which ended at the elbow. The right half of this coat was blue; the left half blue and red in stripes, with yellow fleurs-de-lis worked on the blue stripes. On his left arm, just below the shoulder, was embroidered a silver cresset filled with red and yellow flames. In days when every servant bore his master's badge, and every body knew whose badge it was, no one could doubt for a moment whence this man came. The fiery cresset, borne aloft on the silvered pole, was the familiar badge of the De Holands, Dukes of Exeter.

The second man laid his cloak aside more slowly. But when he did so, he revealed a costume indicating a very high rung on the social ladder. That gold chain and those slashed sleeves marked an esquire at the lowest; the gilt spurs could be worn by none under a knight; and the peculiar cut of the cloak revealed to the initiated that he who bore it must be a peer of the realm. It was no wonder if Jack and his grandmother felt slightly nervous when they discovered that the friend whom Master William Sterys—himself the grandest person they knew—had asked leave to bring, was no other than his noble master, Henry Duke of Exeter.

There was one person in the room, however, who was not in the least affected by the discovery. This was the Austin Friar who was about to conduct the little conventicle. He felt, as one long after him expressed it, that he had always one Hearer of such supreme distinction, that the rank of all the remainder faded into nothingness. Now he said simply, before the others had time to recover themselves,—"Let us pray."

They knelt down on the brick floor—peer, and parchment-maker, and poor—and the voice of the Austin Friar rose in prayer.

"Lord, Thou art made a refuge to us, from generation to generation!"

Oldest of all Psalms, that has been and will be the Psalm of the wilderness Church for ever. First sung in the desert, there is in it a breathing of desert air, a perpetual reminiscence of those who had no city to dwell in, but who sought one to come. These who prayed it that night were all desert-dwellers: and no one of them felt the journey so weary, or the wilderness air so keen, as that one handsomely robed worshipper with the gold chain about his neck, whom one or two of the poorer ones were almost unconsciously envying, and imagining that he had never breathed the air, nor felt a second's weariness from the journey.

”His thoughts they scanned not: but I ween
That could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall
That e’er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fountenay.”[#]

[#] Scott’s Marmion.

After the prayer came the monition. There was no singing. The voice of the spiritual singer was silent during the corrupt ages of the Church. Britons and Anglo-Saxons had sung hymns freely: but one after another the voices were hushed, and no new ones rose. Except in her authorised services, and to words chosen by herself, the Church frowned upon sacred music. This was especially remarkable, in an age when the popular love for secular music was at a height to which, in England at least, it has never risen since. It was reserved for Martin Luther to unlock the sealed spring, and let the frozen waters dash downwards in a joyous cataract.

The text was taken from the fifty-fifth Psalm,[#] ”There is no mutation to them, and they fear not God.” The preacher touched lightly, first, on the changes and chances of this mortal life. In the eyes of inexperienced youth, change is a glad thing, for it is always expected to be for the better, and it accords with that eager restlessness which is the natural feeling of youthful minds. But when middle age is reached, and when men have known trouble, change ceases to be so welcome. It may be good still: we are not so ready to take it for granted that it must be. And when old age is come, or when men have lived through much sorrow, we become afraid of all change, and averse to it. What we desire then is not change and variety; it is rest and peace.

[#] Verse 19.

”Brethren,” said the monk in that low, quiet voice of his, which yet was so distinct that it penetrated every corner, ”this is a world of change, wherein we ourselves are the most changeable of all things. There is only one Man that changeth not, who is the same to-day, and yesterday, and to all the ages. There is only one Land where is no autumn. Change is not needed there, for all is perfect. But here, no

mutation signifieth no betterment. It is the nature of earthly things to become worser: it is the nature of heavenly things to grow fairer, purer, better. And here, were there no worser changes in things around us, there would be no better change in things within us. Nay! but all we be apt to think the very contrary. Oh! saith one, if I had not lost mine having—if I had not lost my children—if I were but better off, with no fear of losing the same, then I would live to God. Brethren, if ye cannot live to God in the place where He has set you, ye will never do the same in the place where you set yourselves.

"Think you, in spiritual things, no change is death. Growth is life. While a plant liveth, it must needs grow and bud and put forth leaves. Let that cease, and what say you at once? The plant is dead.

"Look, I pray you, what the prophet saith of Moab. Quoth he, 'Moab hath prospered from his youth up, and hath rested on the dregs of him: nor hath he been poured from bowl to bowl, and hath not gone a-journeying: wherefore his taste abideth in him, and his scent is not changed.'[#] And what saith God unto His people that had gone far from Him—'Wherefore should ye be stricken more?'[#]

[#] Jer. xlviii. 11, Vulgate.

[#] Isaiah i. 5.

"These late years, brethren, have been changeful ones. Verily we have been poured from bowl to bowl. Are we the better for it? How many of us be resting on our dregs? How many of us be choked up, and bringing no fruit to perfection? Fruit, may-be: the plant is not dead; but poor, little, stunted fruits, half blasted before they be grown. Note, I pray you, in that our Lord's parable which methinks ye know, touching the sower and his seed, He saith the fruit is choked, not only by deceitfulness of riches, but by cares of this life as well. Beware how ye move God to shake you out of slumber! Keep yourselves awake: so shall He not need to wake you with sudden terror. There is scarce a fearfuller passage in all His Word than this: 'Because I desired to cleanse thee, and thou art not cleansed from thy filthiness, therefore cleansed shalt thou not be, until I have caused Mine indignation to rest upon thee.'[#]

[#] Ezek. xxiv. 13.

"But ye whom the Lord hath poured from bowl to bowl, thank Him if the dregs be left behind. This is His purpose, that ye should be partakers of His holiness. Grudge not if ye be poured, even with violence, so long as thereby ye are purified. Look you, the dregs must be got rid of. 'Blessed are the clean in heart: for they shall see God.'[#]

[#] Matt v. 8

"But ere I go further, friends, I must cast up a fence, that ye stray not on wrong paths. Herein is the weakness of mortal man, and of the tongues of men. One emblem showeth but one side of the matter. If we would show all sides, we must have so many emblems as there be sides to show.

"Our Lord saith, 'Be ye perfect.'[#] Yet perfect we cannot be. To the very last day of life, the dregs will be left in the wine so long as it abideth in earthly vessels. There be three kinds of perfectness, brethren: the perfectness of imputation, which is Christ's work done for us; this we have of Him. 'Perfect in His comeliness, which He hath put on us.'[#] This we have now, on earth. But this is not wrought in us, much less by us: it is wrought for us. The second fashion of perfectness is the perfectness of a sincere heart and a single eye. This we must see to, each man for himself. This it is to which our Lord pointeth us when He saith, Be perfect. This it is which is said of David and other, that their hearts were perfect with the Lord. But that whereof I speak now is neither of these, but the third fashion of perfectness; to wit, the perfectness of a soul hallowed unto God, and set apart for Him. This is not done for us, like the first manner; nor by us, like the second manner; but in us, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the cleansing out of these dregs, which shall leave the wine pure and meet for the King's use. And this, though it be begun the very moment the heart turneth unto God, will never be ended till we stand before Him in glory.

[#] Matt v. 48.

[#] Ezek. xvi. 14.

"Doth one of you say in his heart, How can I tell what be dregs? Well, oft-times we cannot. We be apt to mistake therein. But He can. Pray Him to purge you from your dregs, and then let Him take what He will. Lord, give to us what we

need! But look you, it must be what He seeth you to need, not what ye see.

”Brethren, let us thank God that in His infinite perfectness He changeth not. Let us thank Him also that He is changing us, into the likeness of that perfectness. Let us thank Him that the day is at hand when we shall need no further mutation, but shall be with Him, and shall be like Him, for ever.”

Then the Friar read from his leather book a portion of the Gospel of St. John in Wycliffe’s version: offered another short prayer: blessed his hearers, and departed with rapid steps, like a man who had much work to do, and but little time to do it.

One by one, the little congregation took leave of host and hostess, and passed out into the fresh night air. But the Duke of Exeter sat on: and William Sterys waited his Lord’s pleasure. When all were gone, the noble guest rose.

”May I pray you of your name, good master?” he said to Jack.

”Truly, my gracious Lord, it might be bettered. I am but a Goose, at your Lordship’s bidding—John Goose, an’ it like you.”

”I would fain wit, good Master Goose, if you do ever lodge any in your house? Is there a spare chamber that you were willing to let out to any?”

John’s eyes went to his grandmother for a reply.

”Well-a-day!” murmured the old woman, apparently rather staggered by the suddenness of the proposition, and requiring some time to consider it. ”I scarce can tell. There is the chamber o’er here, that might be cleared forth, and the gear set in the porch-chamber. Yet mefeareth, did we our best, it should scarce be meet for any servant of such as your gracious Lordship.”

”I ask it not for my servant; I want it for myself,” said the Duke quietly.

Poor Mrs. Goose looked dumb-foundered, as she felt.

”My gracious Lord, so poor a lodging as we could”—— began John Goose.

”Nay, Master Goose, but my need is to lie hid. I desire to be where men shall not think lightly to look for me. And I seek an house whereon God’s peace cometh. Moreover, I would gladly hear more of Father Alcock’s monitions.”

”My Lord,” said the old woman with some dignity, ”if that be what your Lordship seeks, you shall find it here. You be not the first peer of England that hath lain hid in this house. Sixty years gone, when he that was sometime mine husband was a little lad, for divers weeks concealed in this house was Sir John Oldcastle, sometime Lord Cobham, that died for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s. If it content your Lordship to be as well—nay, better lodged than he was, come.”

”Abundantly, good Mother!” said the Duke. ”And was that true man in the chamber where ye would put me?”

”Nay, my Lord, he had worser lodging than you shall find.—Jack, light a candle, and show his Lordship where my Lord Cobham lay.”

John obeyed, and the Duke followed him, out of the kitchen and through

the workshop, into a large closet in the wall of the latter room. Clearing away an armful of skins from the latter, John slipped back a sliding panel, by some mechanism known to himself, and disclosed a small, dark, dusty room, a little larger than the closet into which it opened, and furnished only with a leaf-table and a stool.

"Here, as I have heard," said John, "his Lordship lay during the day: and at night, when work was over, he came forth into the chamber which your Lordship shall have, and there he commonly sat a-writing till late into the night. Once, when a party came that 'twas thought might know the chamber, his Lordship donned an apron and a jerkin, and was set to work in the shop. 'Tis said," added John with a merry laugh, "he spoiled a skin thereby: but my grandfather recked not, but would have it set by as a precious thing, and 'twas so kept, some years."

"And did the men at work here never hear him?"

"Nay, I reckon they made too much noise themselves. Only one that was next unto him when he was in the shop said after unto my grandsire that he had taken a raw hand a-work, which should be some cost to train," said John, laughing.

"That can I conceive," replied the Duke, with a smile. "Well, Master Goose, so you and yours be willing, I will gladly engage this chamber. For the hire, charge you what is meet."

The whole transaction was so unwonted that the Duke really did not know what to offer.

"Oh, my gracious Lord, we shall find no bones in that matter," returned John Goose, metaphorically. "I will leave that to Mother, seeing the charge shall be hers and my sisters'. Mefeareth, howbeit, that our rude cookery shall little content your good Lordship."

"Bread and water would content me," answered the Duke, "so your cookery is little like to fail."

There were at this time as many delicate gradations of rank in cooking as in costume. Peers were entitled to five dishes at a meal; gentlemen to three, and meaner persons to two, exclusive of pottage. The distinctions of bread have been already mentioned. The daily provision made for the household of the Duke of Clarence is on record, and it reads almost like the details of an army commissariat. For a man who was accustomed to a provision of two oxen, twelve sheep, twelve pigs, and thirty-six barrels of fish—with a great many other things—as the daily consumption of his household, to come down to the style of living of a small tradesman, was a descent indeed. Trade was then held in very low estimation, even a first-class merchant being reckoned below a gentleman's servant. The supply customary for such a house as that of John Goose, was bread and dripping for breakfast, with ale to drink; one dish of meat, with a vegetable and bread, for

dinner; the same for supper on grand occasions, perhaps with a pudding or pie in addition; but in all ordinary cases, the supper was brown bread and buttermilk. Only one thing, therefore, could more have astonished old Mrs. Goose than the Duke's expressed indifference on this point; and that would have been to find that he was willing to sleep on a mattress. Down beds for the upper ten—mattresses for the common folks—was the arrangement in the fifteenth century. I said, only one thing; but there was indeed a lower depth even than this, which to see would have reduced Mrs. Goose to the furthest point of amazement. Had the Duke—for any purpose short of disguise—made his appearance with a long cloak, a buff jerkin, a fustian doublet, and neither gloves nor rings, she would almost have thought the world was coming to an end.

It was, therefore, as may be conjectured, with some trepidation, that Mrs. Goose ventured to superintend her grand-daughters, Joan and Cicely, in the preparation of the room destined for so superior an occupant. The estimation in which a Brahmin of the highest caste is held by a Pariah is alone to be compared with the feelings wherewith Mrs. Goose regarded her lodger elect. She was deeply concerned to remember that the Duke would be accustomed to sleep on cambric sheets, and to eat from gold plate, while she had nothing better to offer him than blankets in the first place, and wooden trenchers in the second. But she was far from realising that, during many years now, the Duke had been accustomed to sleep on whatever he could get to sleep on; and that a good meal served on a wooden trencher was luxury to a man who had begged his bread for months in exile. The cloth of Rennes and the gold plate which were the proper adjuncts of his rank had receded into the far distance, behind the long years of want and pain which Providence had decreed for him.

"Eh dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Goose, surveying her preparations when complete, with her head on one side, as if that would assist her sight. "Gramercy, but it shall be a come-down for the like of him!"

"'Tis the best we can do, Mother," said Cicely. "And 'somewhat is better than nought.'"

"Eh, good lack, but 'tis a small somewhat!" returned the old woman. "Why, I trow he shall have washed him in silver basins set with turkey stones,[#] and drank out of cups of gold all bordered with pearls."

[#] Turquoise.

"Mighty discomfortous, in good sooth!" said Cicely. "I would liefer have a good cow's horn any day. It should hold the drink every whit as well, and be a deal

smoother to take in your lips."

"And, dear heart! how shall we find to our hands aught fit for such an one to drink? Why, the meanest matter that hath passed his lips, I warrant you, shall be Malmsey or claret wine at sixpence the gallon.[#] And I doubt not he hath ate pike[#] and marmalade every day to his dinner; aye, peacocks and rice, too."

[#] A high price at this time; threepence or fourpence a gallon was the cost of ordinary wine.

[#] Pike was now the most costly fish in the market, being ten times the value of cod and turbot. Marmalade was about two shillings or half-a-crown the pound; peacocks, about three shillings each, were reserved for the nobility; rice was very scarce and dear.

"Well, then," rejoined Cicely, "it shall be a change for him to come down to cod and bacon. I dare reckon he never tasted them."

A few days later, Mrs. Goose made a deprecatory remark of the same kind to the Duke himself. It was met with a smile which was a blending of sadness and amusement, and an assurance that for eighteen mouths of his life he had never dined at all, and could therefore easily afford to put up with inexpensive fare now. Mrs. Goose was struck to silence—until she reached the kitchen, when she made up for it in notes of exclamation.

The life passed by the Duke in his retirement was very quiet. He had brought with him a collection of books which struck the unaccustomed eyes of his hosts with the magnitude of a public library. But John, who was used to make quiet observation of all that passed under his eyes, noticed that one after another of these was gradually laid aside upon the shelf and left unused, until the number was reduced to two, which continued in daily employment. He was curious to know what they were: but as he could not read, it was of no use to open them. At last, one day when Father Alcock came, and the Duke was out, John brought the two books to the Friar, and asked to be told what they were.

"The Confessions of St. Austin, my son," answered the monk, opening the one that came first: "an holy volume, and good."

"And this, Father?" pursued John, offering the other.

"A better, my son, for it is the best of all—the true Word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever. Here be the Psalms of David, and the New Testament, bound in one, and in the Latin tongue."

John put the volumes back in his lodger's room with a feeling of satisfaction. It gratified him also to see how regularly the Duke attended the weekly "monition." In all other respects, the lodger made little impression on the house-

hold, and less on the world outside. He dressed as an ordinary gentleman: and as soon as he had ceased to be a nine days' wonder to the Joans and Megs of the neighbourhood, nobody took further notice of him. John Goose found him a very silent man, who dealt chiefly in matter-of-fact when he spoke at all, and sometimes heaved sighs which went to his young host's tender heart. No one ever came to see him but his servant Will Sterys: and he kept indoors until the dusk had fallen. And so the days went on.

CHAPTER XI.
A LAST INTERVIEW.

"Now all these things are over,—yes, all thy pretty ways,
Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy snatches of old lays:
And none will grieve when I go forth, nor smile when I return,
Nor watch beside the old man's bed, nor weep upon his urn."
—LORD MACAULAY.

The two youthful Annes of the royal House at this period, who were nearly of an age, were very similar in character in all points but one. Both the Princess of Wales and Lady Anne Grey were gentle, amiable, refined, and gifted with deep affections: but the one was strong, and the other weak. For the strong nature was carved out a heavy cross. For the weak one, there was a light structure appointed, which so crushed down her feeble frame, that it was as oppressive to her as the greater burden to her cousin.

The sorrows of the one were close to their ending, while those of the other had little more than begun. Treated at first with apparent kindness and lenity—placed in the keeping of her uncle, and suffered to visit her beloved mother-in-law,—the Princess of Wales maintained so dauntless a front, and so unswerving a resolution, that Gloucester saw plainly that to wait for any change in her would be to wait for ever. No earthly consideration would ever make her willingly wed with him. So, as she refused to change front, he changed his. One dark evening in the March of 1473;[#] the Princess was removed from her place of detention by a band of armed men. Whither she knew not, until she found herself, to her amazement, in the lighted aisles of Westminster Abbey, with robed priests awaiting her in the chancel, and the Duke of Gloucester, in gorgeous array, standing before the altar. Then the full perception of the gulf of misery in which she

was to be plunged rushed upon Anne Neville. She tried to fly, but the armed men held her down. She poured out passionate protests—she refused to utter the words prescribed by the service—she screamed in agony for the help that was not to come. Every thing she did which a lonely, captive girl could do, to show that this detested marriage was accompanied by no good-will and no consent of hers. But she might as well have cried to the stone pillars, or have fled for refuge to the dead kings lying around her. The priests went on with their ceremonies, the choir sang calmly, the bridegroom performed his part of the service, the ring was forced on her finger, and Richard Plantagenet and Anne Neville were pronounced man and wife, in the name of that God who looked silently down upon the iniquitous scene, and seemed as though He had forgotten the girl who cried in vain even to Him for mercy. With how much more truth may that dying appeal which has echoed through a hundred years be made, not to liberty, but to the God of all truth and righteousness,—"What crimes are committed in Thy name!" It may have been,—nay, if she were His, it must have been,—that eleven years later, when Anne Neville's spirit returned to the God who gave it, she found that His mercy towards her was better than the mercy she desired of Him, and that but for that painful and weary beating of the gold, the vessel would have been unfit for its place in the sanctuary above.

[#] The exact date cannot be ascertained, but circumstances point to this period.

But meanwhile to Anne Grey the mercy came. The period of her married life, to which she had looked forward with so much dread, proved the least painful time of her life. Not because Mr. Thomas Grey was any better than she had expected to find him, but because, after the first week, he relieved her of his company almost entirely. Affection for her he had none. So long, therefore, as the duties prescribed by civility and custom were properly performed, he had no scruple about leaving her to herself—which was exactly what she most desired.

One troublesome item remained, for no separate residence had been provided for the young pair, and Mr. Grey continued to occupy his old apartments in the Palace of his royal stepfather. This was the last place where Lady Anne could have wished to be. To her uncle she felt no dislike, for he had always shown his best side to her, and her pure and simple nature was incapable of entering into the darker features of his character. Towards the Queen her feeling was a curious mixture of affection and misgiving. The soft caresses and tender words could not be resented, nor even coldly received, yet they were unavoidably provocative of an under-current of doubt as concerned their whole-heartedness.

”The lady did protest too much.”

With the children Lady Anne was at home, especially with that grave-eyed boy in whom much of her own temperament was reproduced.

It had not been intended that the young pair should reside in the Palace. The King fully meant to provide them with a separate abode: but one of his practical rules being never to do to-day that which could be put off till to-morrow, the provision remained unmade, and day after day followed its fellow to the silent chambers of the past.

The chief difficulty of Lady Anne's married life concerned her father. If it had been scarcely possible to receive him at Coldharbour, to do it at Westminster was absolutely impossible. But it might be comparatively easy to meet elsewhere, could she ascertain where he might be met. The Duke had as much difficulty in communicating with her as she with him. But

”Under floods that are deepest
Which Neptune obey,
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way”—

and here also love found it out, though it was not until three months had elapsed since the marriage, and their time for meeting was growing very short. They met again only twice—once under the wing of the Lady Douglas, the Duke's half-sister; and once by appointment at a draper's shop in Lombard Street. And each time the father saw with a pang that the end drew nearer, and that the likelihood was that the next meeting would be in the Garden of God. He let her go very reluctantly the last time.

”Somewhat tells me,” he whispered to his sole friend and companion, William Sterys, ”that this shall be the last time.”

”Dear my Lord,” was the sympathising answer, ”can you not look on to the next time?”

The Duke understood him. ”*Domine, ne moreris!*” broke passionately from his lips.

After that last parting the white rosebud withered quickly. She passed away when the summer began, fading with the May-flowers. The last word upon her lips was ”Father!” Was she thinking of the earthly or the heavenly Father? Perhaps of both. She was safe now in the keeping of the Father of spirits: and the one earthly creature whom she loved would join her before long.

The Duchess of Exeter showed little feeling on the death of her daughter; scarcely more than Mr. Grey, who looked on an invalid wife as a nuisance which he felt glad to have removed. It had been unfortunately necessary to marry her in

order to obtain her vast inheritance; and it was an additional grievance that she left no child behind her to give him a continued lien upon the estates. However, better luck next time. He could now secure a lady with good health and lively spirits, of a disposition akin to his own: and of course the larger purse she had, the better. He soon found her, in the person of Cicely Bonvile, heiress to both parents, and a girl who suited his taste infinitely better than the heiress of Exeter had ever done. Decency was respected by a proper mourning of twelve months: and in the July of the following year, Mr. Grey repaired his loss to his entire satisfaction.

The mother was longer in repairing hers. She had considered herself a most ill-used woman, through the necessity for delaying her marriage until after her daughter's death. There were two reasons for this. The Duchess knew that public opinion would cry shame upon her for marrying while her own and only child was standing face to face with death: and little as she cared for public opinion in general, in this instance she could not afford to disregard it. Her marriage with Mr. St. Leger—a mere squire in her brother's service—would at any time bring upon her as much obloquy as she cared to brave: and it was not desirable to increase it by choosing such a time. Moreover, there remained a further and very awkward consideration, that King Edward might be irremediably offended: and while the adverse verdict of public opinion represented a mere loss of character—an article not of very high value in the eyes of the Duchess—the adverse verdict of her royal brother might represent a very substantial loss of gold and silver, which was a far more serious matter. She had never dared to unfold her intentions to Edward; nor did she mean to do so until she had secured her prize. And as Mr. St. Leger, in losing his master's favour, would have lost even more than the royal lady, he was quite as willing as herself to keep the project secret. However unwillingly or impatiently, she was accordingly bound to wait.

It seemed, therefore, as though no creature mourned for Anne Grey beyond a few of her dependants. The gulf had opened, and the fair, gentle, loving girl had disappeared from sight: and then it had closed again, and the world was dancing over it, and she was forgotten as though she had not been. Frideswide Marston was one of those few who wore mourning for her in their hearts. She had lived in her household only for three months, but she had been her immediate and favourite attendant, and had learned to love her. Now that phase of life was over, and Frideswide was preparing to return home. There was a good deal of shopping to be done first, for Frideswide meant to bring her trousseau from London; and accompanied by one of Lady Anne's ushers, she went to and fro to West Chepe, where the mercers and haberdashers congregated; Guthrum's Lane (afterwards corrupted to Gutter Lane) where the goldsmiths dwelt; Lombard Street, the habitat of drapers; St. Mary Axe, where the furriers were found; and Cordwainer

Street, where the shoemakers lived. Of course she visited Paternoster Row for a new rosary and copies of the Psalter and Gospels in Latin; purchased a pair of pattens in Pattens Lane; and, as the most acceptable present she could carry to her stepmother, bought a sugar-loaf, weighing twenty pounds, price twenty-six shillings and eightpence, from the druggist in Soper's Lane. A handsome piece of scarlet cloth—the most esteemed material for a dress[#]—was also procured for Lady Margery, at a cost of eight shillings the yard: and twelve yards—a very handsome quantity—of black satin of Bruges, to make a gown for the Lady Idonia. For her father she provided a hat in the newest fashion, small, round, edged with fur, and adorned with a single ostrich feather, small but full, which was fastened by a jewelled button. Ladies never wore feathers in the fifteenth century. The present for Agnes was a gold chain, which cost two pounds; and—a far more precious article—a silver cramp-ring which cost nothing. But it had been solemnly consecrated, as was done every year, by her on whom Frideswide looked as the rightful and only Queen of England; and no one who wore it could possibly be troubled with cramp. For a ring which owed its value to the touch of "Dame Bessy Grey," Frideswide would not have paid a halfpenny, nor would Agnes have deigned to soil her fingers by wearing it. What she should bring for Dorathie was a matter of severe reflection to Frideswide. She would have liked a parrot: but parrots were not only rare and costly, but scarcely portable articles. A mirror would not find favour with the authorities, as likely to foster vanity in the immature mind of youth. Her final choice was a silver girdle-clasp and a primer. The latter was not a book from which to learn reading, as we should suppose, but rather a collection of elegant extracts, chiefly of a religious cast. Primers varied in price from about a shilling to fifteen shillings, according to size and binding; and were put forth by authority, containing such things as were considered proper for the people to know.

[#] Writing about this time, Lady Fasten assures her husband that she would prefer his return home to a new gown, "yea, though it were of scarlet."

Frideswide's purchases were at last complete, and her bags packed. Comparatively few boxes were used, when all luggage had to be carried on the backs of mules or galloways. She was to leave London on the first of June, escorted as far as St. Albans by one of her late Lady's ushers. Here she was pretty sure to fall in with a train of pilgrims to Newark or Whitby, or possibly with a convoy of merchants going to York. On the last evening, it occurred to her that she might as well take with her a few ells of fringe to trim the dresses, as they would pack

in no great compass, and would doubtless be of better quality than such as could easily be procured at Lovell Tower. Calling the usher to attend her, she went out to the nearest mercer's in West Chepe. The fringe was soon bought, and she was turning homewards, when her attention was roused by a young man who kept walking close behind them. Taking the bull by the horns, Frideswide said at once,—

"Would you have speech of us, Master?"

"If your name be Marston, that would I," was the answer: "but pray you go a little farther, for we shall come anon to a dark passage where there is more conveniency for talk."

Guessing in an instant that the young man was entrusted with some message for her ear only, Frideswide followed his directions, when he said,—

"Mistress, there is one would speak with you ere you leave London—one that you knew of old time."

"Man or woman?"

"Man."

"What manner of man?" Frideswide was cautious.

"A cresset-bearer."

No further explanation was required. The Duke of Exeter wished for an interview.

"Go to: where shall it be?"

"At my house, an' it like you."

"May it be done this even? for I should set forth on my journey by morning light."

"It can be done this minute, an' you will come with me."

"Is it far?—and who be you?"

"I am a parchment-maker, of Smithfield, and a Goose by name and nature," said the young man with a smile.

"By name, may-be," replied Frideswide, with an answering smile: "methinks scarce by nature, else had not your master and mine trusted you with such an errand. But have you no token for me?"

"Ay, one of gold forged in the King's mint.—'*Alle thingis, and in alle thingis, Crist*.'"

There could be no further question to a Lollard mind of the trustworthiness of the Duke's messenger. Frideswide came out of the dark passage, and dismissed her usher, giving him her parcels to take back with him.

"This worthy master will see me home, and I have ado with him first," she said. "Now, pray you, Master Goose, if your name be so, lead on."

Silently Frideswide followed her guide up to Aldersgate, through Little Britain,—where of old time stood the town mansion of the Counts of Bretagne,

who through several centuries were Earls of Richmond—across Smithfield, and paused before a small house at the north-west corner of that open space. Mr. Goose unlocked the door by a key from his pocket, and led Frideswide up a very narrow staircase, into a small room fitted as a sitting-room. Leaving her there, he disappeared for a moment; and the next minute, a stately step crossed the chamber, and the Duke stood before her.

It was rather more than two years since they had met, but Frideswide was unprepared to find him so sadly changed. He looked rather as if twenty years than two had passed over him. Yet only in his forty-fourth year, he had the appearance of broken-down, premature old age: and every tone of his voice was like a moan of pain.

"Mistress Frideswide, I have heard, in this my retreat, that which hath broken mine heart. Tell me, is it true?"

Frideswide did not ask what he meant. She knew that only too well.

"My Lord, it is true indeed. Our sweet young Lady went her way to God, on Sunday se'nnight in the even."

"On whose soul Jesu have mercy!" broke almost mechanically from the lips of the desolate father.

"Amen!" responded Frideswide.

"Was he with her?" demanded the Duke almost fiercely. He had neither affection nor respect for "Tom Grey," as his Lancastrian instincts contemptuously termed him.

"Master Grey? No."

Frideswide did not tell the Duke, though she knew it, that the young gentleman in question was playing bowls at Lambeth.

"My Lady her mother was, I count?"

Frideswide was thankful that she could truthfully say that the Duchess had been in her daughter's apartments on the night of her death. She had just looked in for ten minutes. She would have been glad to say no more: but the Duke's queries were persistent. He put one after another till he knew all she could tell him: and then, folding his arms upon the table, he laid his head upon them, and a low moan of bitter pain broke from him.

For some minutes there was dead silence in the little chamber. At length the Duke spoke.

"If only a man might die when he would! The sun is gone down, and there be no stars for me."

"Nay, my gracious Lord, I cry you mercy!" said Frideswide gently. "The sun is but gone behind a cloud, for our Lord Jesu Christ is the sun of His people. It is the star which has set. The sun is there as aforetime."

"Then the cloud is sore thick, for I see no light."

”Not now, my Lord. It will break forth again.”

”Is that so sure?” said the Duke, mournfully. ”Ah, you are young and hopeful; to you the birds always chant ’To-morrow.’ But I—I am a man old before his time, and hope is gone from me.”

”Christ is not, my Lord.”

”Mistress Frideswide,” was the earnest answer, ”wit you what it is to stretch forth numb hands into the darkness, and not find them taken?—to feel none other hands meeting yours?”

”So long as the numbness is but in mine hands, my Lord, I know not that it signifieth much. They may be taken, yet be too numb to feel it. Truly, I am but a poor maid and a young, and of little wit: some doctor of the Church could aid your Lordship, but not I. Yet if I might speak one word, it should be,—dear my Lord, if our Lord have gripped hold of your Lordship, will it matter whether your hands have hold of Him or no? They be safe borne, methinks, whom Christ carrieth.”

”Yet if one feel not the carrying—only a sense of falling down, down, into a pit whereto is no bottom”——

”My gracious Lord, can that be if you have trusted our Lord to carry you? Shall your feeling be put in enmity to His word? Have you come to Him? for if so, you give Him the lie to say He hath cast you out.”

The Duke rose. ”My maid,” he said, ”there be times when it looks to mine eyes as though mine whole life had been but one mighty blunder, and one great sin.”

”Be it so, my Lord. Is Christ strong enough to bear it?”

”Undoubtedly.”

”Is He reluctant to bear it?”

”I dare not say so much.”

”Then, my Lord, what wait you for?”

”I have no strength to give it to Him.”

”Have you any need? If a burden lay at my feet that I could not lift, and my brother stood by, think you I should tarry to ask him to bear it for me till I could lift it up and give it to him? Is He that carried our sins away upon His cross become so weak that He cannot bear our sorrows now? If He can hold heaven and earth, verily He can hold you and me.”

”Amen!” said the Duke softly. ”Mistress Frideswide, we may never set eyes again each on other: and you and your sister have been true friends to me. Pray you, do me so much pleasure as to wear this gold chain for my sake. I would I had a better gift to mine hand, but a man that hath spent half his life in exile, and hath his lands proscribed, is not he that can make rich gifts.”

”My Lord, a far smaller matter should be more than enough to pleasure

your handmaid. I thank your good Lordship right heartily."

"And what shall I send unto Mistress Annis?" said the Duke thoughtfully, as he turned over some dozen of jewels and trinkets, which were all now left to him of his once splendid fortune. "I would not by my good-will she were had in oblivion, for she was very good unto me, more than once or twice. What say you, Mistress Frideswide, should like her best of these?"

Frideswide glanced rapidly over the articles indicated.

"I am somewhat afeared to pick and choose, under your Lordship's allowance: for that which may seem the least precious matter unto a stranger, may be the dearest thing in all the treasure-house to him that ought[#] it."

[#] Owned.

"Nay, go to," replied the Duke. "There is nought dear to me now, save a ring my Nan once gave me—and I put not that on my list of tokens."[#]

[#] Gifts.

Thus invited, Frideswide picked out a plain silver ring, set with the badge of the fiery cresset in minute rubies. "This, methinks, should like her, if your Lordship set no store thereby."

"Certes, none at all: yet this is poor matter."

"It is enough, my gracious Lord, and I thank you right heartily for my sister."

"Tell her, I pray you, Mistress Frideswide, that the last words we spake each to other be the parting message of love[#] that I shall send her,—and may God give me to find it true for myself, as I pray she may for her."

[#] Then a word used generally in the sense of friendship or kindliness.

"What were they, an' it like your Lordship?"

"They were the words I told Jack Goose to give you as token of his trustworthiness, the which I thought should bring quickly one of our doctrine. '*Alle thingis, and in all thingis, Crist.*'"

"May you so find it, my gracious Lord!"

The Duke gave her his hand at parting—an unusual condescension from his position to hers. Frideswide bent low, and kissed the hand of him whom she was no longer to call master, and whose face she would never see any more.

John Goose took her home with a lantern. As they threaded their way along St. Martin's Lane, which led from Aldersgate to St. Paul's Churchyard, he said to her,—

"Pray you, my mistress, is aught heard at this time of any ado against them of our doctrine?"

"In good sooth I trust not, Master Goose," was the reply. "I have nought heard of any such matter. Eh, good lack! it should be hard for some to be staunch, if so were!"

"I count it should be hard to them that had it to do for themselves," said John Goose.

"How mean you, my master?"

"Look you, I told you afore I was a Goose by name and nature," said the youth with a merry laugh. "So being, I know well I have no wits to cope with my learned masters the doctors of the Church. Herein I must needs betake me wholly unto my Master. He will give me the endurance, if He send me the need to endure. And that which cometh down from Heaven is like to be better than aught a man hath of his own."

"Then look you for troubles, Master Goose?"

"I look for nought, Mistress. My Master doth the work for me, and I take mine ease. So merry is Christ's service."

"It should be little ease that you should take at the stake, methinks," said Frideswide with a shake of her head. "Verily, methinks it were past all endurance."

"For Him, or for me?" significantly asked John Goose.

"It were over hard for you," said Frideswide to the second question, meeting the first with a deprecatory smile.

"Nay, my Mistress. The enduring was with Him that bare the wrath of God for me: surely not with me that do but bear a few earthly pains for Him. At the least, if it should please Him to call me to that honour."

"Would you covet it, Master Goose?"

"Mistress, I am Christ's servant. Is it for the servant to admonish the Master of the work whereunto He shall set him?"

"But the suffering should be your own!"

"Nay! When I bid my journeyman get a-work, he doth it at my charges, not his own."

"Yet you must needs feel it, Master Goose?"

They had reached the gate of Coldharbour. John Goose swung the lantern into his left hand, and unlatched the outer gate for Frideswide, calling for the

porter as he did so.

”Mistress, if our dear Lord list to have me to His presence without an hair of mine head singed, think you He could compass it, or no?”

”Most certainly!”

”Farewell; and God be with you!”

And the smile with which he took leave of her, she remembered later.

Early the next morning, Frideswide left Coldharbour and London: and she left them readily enough. Her sojourn in the south had been productive of any thing rather than pleasure. Now she was journeying home to all she loved; and of course hope told a flattering tale, and she expected to live happily ever after her arrival at Lovell Tower. Her journey was pleasant and prosperous: and she reached York on the evening of the eighth of June, in company with a party of whom one portion were bound for that city, and another for Beverley Minster.

As Frideswide entered the hotel at York, to her surprise she found an old friend leaning against the sidepost of the door.

”Why, Mistress Marston, is it you?” said he, starting up.

”Why, Master Strangeways! whence came you?”

”Truly, at the heels of my good Lady, that is but now out of Beverley Sanctuary, and goeth northward under convoy of Sir James Tyrell.”

”Whither?”

”That shall we see when we be there,” returned Mr. Strangeways, jovially, as though such a journey were the pleasantest amusement in the world.

”Is it of the King’s Grace’s pleasure?”

”Who is the King’s Grace?” returned Mr. Strangeways, putting his hands in his pockets, with as little concern about possible spies or enemies as though he had lived in the nineteenth century.

”’When we be at Rome, we do as Rome doth,’” quoted Frideswide, with a smile. Not only had her ears become accustomed to the term as applied to Edward, but, like many Lancastrians, she considered that the regal right had now become vested in the House of York. Mr. Philip Strangeways, on the contrary, held politics of so very red a dye that the young Earl of Richmond was his King. ”You know, Master Philip,” concluded she.

”I know more than I profit by, mayhap. Howbeit, your question tarrieth his answer. Nay, ’tis not Merry Ned this time. ’Tis Crookback Dickon. His soul is not as straight as his body. Now I marvel,” said Mr. Strangeways, reflectively, ”if that companion reckoneth he is going to Heaven. I’ll lay you a broad shilling he so doth.”

”What did he, my Master?”

”Kicked my Lady up into Yorkshire, when she fled to that her dearworthy[#] son, and begged him of his protection. And ne’er a plack[#] in her pocket

withal. I do pray the blessed saints to give him his deserts, and I rather count they will."

[#] Beloved.

[#] Coin.

"Dear heart! but sure he would not thus evil entreat his own mother-in-law?"

This innocent query seemed to cause Mr. Philip Strangeways inextinguishable amusement.

"Be men so fond of their mothers-in-law?" said he. "He is, take my word for it: for both he and his brother have set down the foot that never a penny shall my old Lady finger that their fingers can keep from her. She hath scarce more gowns than backs, nor more hoods than heads; and as to her botews,[#] I took them myself to the cobbler this morrow to be patched. Be thankful, Mistress Marston, that you have lighted on your feet like a cat, and are well out of an ill service."

[#] Boots.

"Eh, dear heart! but my poor Lady—I am sorry for her!"

"So am I," said Philip, suddenly dropping his mask of light nonchalance, and becoming another man. "So am I, Mistress Marston: and trust me, I am worser than sorry for the Lady Anne, that is wed against her will and allowing to the man she hated most. Eh, well! God be lauded in all His works!"

And Philip turned into the inn, without vouchsafing any explanation of the manner in which he meant his words to be taken.

His news was only too true. The poor Countess of Warwick, the richest heiress in England, had been stripped of every penny of her vast inheritance by the rapacious greed of her own sons-in-law. Their cruel and wicked deed was formally sanctioned by Act of Parliament about a year later—May 9th, 1474—by which statute it was decreed that George Duke of Clarence and Isabel his wife, and Richard Duke of Gloucester and Anne his wife, were to have and hold all possessions of the said Countess "as if she were naturally dede, and the said Countess is to be barrable, barred, and excluded as well of all jointours, dower, actions, executions, right, title, and interesse, of, in, and for all honours, lordships, castles,

manors, etc., as were at any time the said Earl's her husband:" and "the said dukes and their said wives may make partition of all the premisses."[#] More sweeping language could scarcely be. No notice was taken of poor Lady Warwick's piteous allegation of "noon offence by her doon," nor of her fervent assurance that she had "duly kept her fidelity and ligeance, and obeyed the King's commandments." Naboth's title to his vineyard, even though Divine, was accounted of small matter, so long as King Ahab wanted it for a garden of herbs.

[#] Patent Roll, 14 Edw. IV.

How Lady Warwick lived through the next twelve years is not recorded. We only know that she had nothing to live on. Perhaps, like Warwick's sister, his widow kept herself alive by means of her needle, deeming herself happy when she could buy a few yards of serge for a new dress, while her daughters were decked with pearls and diamonds, and trailed velvet and ermine trains over palace floors. One of the daughters at least was not to blame. The Duchess Anne of Gloucester was as helpless in her palace as her destitute mother in her northern refuge. Gloucester kept her in watch and ward as closely as if she had been his prisoner, which in fact she was: for the first three years of her hated marriage were spent in perpetual efforts to escape its cruel toils. The Act of Parliament just quoted contains the significant entry that if a divorce shall take place between Gloucester and Anne, he shall nevertheless continue to enjoy her property as if she were still his wife, so long as he "doo his effectuell diligence and continuell deuoir by all conuenient and laufull meanes to be lawfully maried to the said Anne." No words could have shown more plainly that the caged bird was constantly working at the fastenings of the cage, and that the jailer was afraid lest it should compass its end some time.

Less than this can be said for Isabel of Clarence. She was in no durance, and her influence over her husband was great. She was, in fact, the only person who was permanently able to do any thing with Clarence. It is difficult to believe that if she had chosen to exert herself, some small pension at least—which would have made all the difference between comfort and care—should not have been conferred on her lonely and destitute mother. But she did it not. Are we justified in assuming that it was by more than fortuitous coincidence or the action of sanitary laws, that her days were not long in the land?

”God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

CHAPTER XII.
IDONIA UNDERSTANDS.

”But hush! What is the utmost that I would?
To give my life to God is all I could:
And this may be the way He wills to take—
This daily death may be for God’s own sake;
He gave, and took. So let my soul be still.”
—ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO.

At Lovell Tower, things were going as merry as marriage-bells could make them. About six weeks after her return home, Frideswide Marston became the wife of John Combe. They were to live, for the present, with Lord Marnell, until it should be seen what would happen further. There was a pretty little estate in Devonshire, named Combe Abbas, which belonged of right to Queen Marguerite’s henchman: but of course, so long as King Edward lived, no deprived Lancastrian could expect to recover his lands. What might happen in the next reign, when men’s minds might be supposed to have cooled down, and the throne to be assured to the House of York, was another matter.

Frideswide had delivered the Duke’s message and token to her sister. They were so quietly received by Agnes, almost in silence, that Frideswide was afraid that she felt disappointed at receiving so small a gift.

”Thou seest, dear heart,” said she, apologetically, ”there is so little left to his Lordship that methought it were ill done to choose any choice thing: and moreover I counted thou shouldst better love a matter whereon was his badge than something greater that had it not. That speaketh for himself, from whom he came.”

”Thou hast done well, and I thank thee,” was the reply, as Agnes lifted her eyes for a moment.

Could Frideswide have read the eyes, her impression would have been different. The language of her sister’s inmost heart was—”Do you understand me no better than that?” From that day, the silver ring with its ruby sparks was always to be seen on Agnes Marston’s hand.

The year 1473 was drawing to a close, when Walter Marston came home from London. His life had been an eventful one. From the household of Queen Marguerite he had passed to that of the Duke of Burgundy, shortly before his sister's arrival in France. Thence, returning to King Henry, he had fought at Barnet and Tewkesbury, had remained long a prisoner, had received pardon, and was now a knight in the household of the Earl of Oxford. Often very near Frideswide, he had never actually met her. Now he came home on a month's leave, and as it was six years since any of his relatives had seen him, the occasion was a festive one indeed.

"But how big thou art!—and what a beard hast thou!" exclaimed Dorathie.

"I am not by the half as much bigger as thou," laughed Walter. "Why, I left thee a little chick all over down, and here thou art a proper young damsel."

"And what news abroad, Wat?" said his father.

"No great matter, my Lord, to my knowledge. 'Tis said the Venetians have won the Isle of Cyprus, that lieth off the coast of the Holy Land: and likewise that, I know not well how, they of Genoa have lost a certain land[#] that lieth beyond the Grand Turk. Here at home, the King goeth to build a new chapel to his Castle of Windsor. You shall have heard, I reckon, of the young Lady of Clarence[#] that was born some weeks gone? I mind not aught else of any moment, without you would hear of a poor Lollard of late brent upon Tower Hill."

[#] The Crimea.

[#] Margaret Countess of Salisbury.

"The Lord may reckon that of more moment than all the rest, Wat," said the Lady Idonia, gravely.

"Truly so, Madam."

"Was he of any note, lad?"

"In no wise, my Lord: a parchment-maker, as I heard, that dwelt without the City."

"Of what name?" asked Frideswide, quickly.

"Why, 'twas a queer name," said her brother. "One John Goose, they told me. A young man, I heard—scarce elder than I."

"Aye me! Had he it to do for himself?" murmured Frideswide in an unsteady voice.

"What sayest, sweeting?"

"Prithee, Wat, tell me all thou wist of the inwards[#] thereof."

[#] Details.

"Well, that is not much. He was delivered afore dinner to Master Sheriff, to put in execution the same afternoon; who had him home to his house, and gave him great exhortation that he should reny[#] his false errors, quoth he: but—as I heard from one that was by—all that Goose would say was to desire that he might have meat, for he was sore hungered. Then Master Sheriff commanded him meat, whereof he ate as though he had ailed nothing: and quo' he, 'I eat now a good and competent dinner, for I shall pass a little sharp shower ere I go to supper.' Then, when he had dined, he required to be shortly led to execution; and so, as I heard it, merrily and with good cheer took his death."

[#] Recant.

"Then his Lord gave him the endurance,—laud be to His name!" said Frideswide. "I knew him, Walter, though I talked with him but once. He did at that time lodge my gracious Lord of Exeter, and his house was that whereat I last spake with my Lord."

"Thou hast well said, good sister: for thou shalt speak with my Lord of Exeter no more."

"Walter!—Woe is me! is my Lord dead?"

It was from Frideswide the cry came. There was no sound from Agnes. Only the Lady Idonia, who happened to be looking at her, saw her needlework stand suddenly still.

"'Tis a few weeks gone, Frid," said Walter, kindly. "Dear heart, I am sorry if I started thee. I thought he had been little more than a name to either of you."

"How died he, and where? Do tell me all."

"Nay, good sister, for how he died must we remit to God. But for where, it was in the waves of the sea—the British Channel, betwixt Calais and Dover. His body was washed up on the sands of Dover, and was there found by the fishers, a dead corpse, stripped of all."

"But was he drowned, Wat? My poor master!"

"The Lord wot, dear heart. The matter had the look of a shipwreck, but no boat was found. If he so were wrecked, or fell from the cliff of misadventure, or—well, whatso it were—who shall tell thee? The sea hath given up her dead, but blabbeth none of their secrets."

This is all that was ever known of the death of Henry Duke of Exeter. The

days of his mourning were ended: but how they closed—whether by accident, or shipwreck, or by the worse violence which Walter would not suggest openly—only his God and Father knows.

A few tears stole from Frideswide's eyes. She had felt for her noble master very deep compassion.

"On whose soul God have mercy!" she said with an accent of tender regret. "He hath his little Nan at the last.—Annis! art thou not sorry at all?"

The last words were spoken rather reproachfully.

"I am sorry," said Agnes. But she said it in tones that sounded even and hard: and leaving her work on the settle where she had been sitting, she rose and quitted the room.

"Well!" said Frideswide, looking after her. "Verily, I am astonied. I had thought Annis should be well-nigh as sorry as I for our poor master."

"Folks can be sorry, Frideswide, though they say it not," quietly answered the Lady Idonia.

But in her heart she was saying,—"O blind eyes, that can see no further than that! Agnes is an hundred times more sorry than Frideswide—so sorry that she can speak of it to none but God."

In the early winter of this year, the baby Prince of Wales, just three years old, was placed under the care of governors spiritual and temporal. His uncle Lord Rivers was the latter, and the Bishop of Rochester the former. King Edward's language, in the decrees which record these appointments, is worth quoting, not only as a specimen of the English of his day, but on account of its inherent singularity. The one entry commences thus:—

"How be it euery child in his yong age ought to be brought vp in vertue and cunnyng,[#] to then-tent that he might delite therin and contynue in the same, and soo consequently deserue the merites of euerlasting blisse, and in this world to be therfore the more eureux[#] and fortunat, yit nathelesse such persoones as god hath called to the pre-eminent astate of princes, and to succede thair progenitours in thestate of Regalte ought more singulerly and more diligently to be enfourmed and instructed in cunnyng and vertu," etc.

[#] Knowledge.

[#] Heureux=happy.

The second decree asserts that—

"We, considering the great bounte of our lord god, whom it hath pleased to

send unto us our first begoten son, hole[#] and furnysshed in nature, to succeed us in our Realmes of England and France, and lordship of Ireland, for the which we thank most humbly his infynyte magnificens, purpose by his grace so to purvey for his precieux sonde[#] and yefte[#] and our most desired tresour our seid first begoten son, that he shall be so virtuously, cunningly, and knyghtly brought up, for to serue Almighty God cristenly and deuoutly, as accordeth to his dute, and to leue and precede in the world honourably, after his estate and dignite."[#]

[#] Whole.

[#] The lost noun of the verb to send.

[#] Gift.

[#] Patent Roll. 13 Edw. IV.

The child thus belauded with a flourish of court trumpets was of utterly different character to both parents. He had neither his father's ease-loving selfishness, nor his mother's sly cajolery. The shadow of the sanctuary wherein his eyes first saw the light seemed to lie upon his soul for ever. Grave and shrewd far beyond his years, yet at the same time of child-like transparency, his character was one that might have become a rare blessing to England. He lived in the constant, calm expectation of early death. When his little brother, who was "joyous and witty, nimble, and ever ready for dances and games"—true son of Edward IV.—besought the elder to learn to dance, the young Prince's grave reply was, "It would be better for us to learn to die." It seems as though in him, perhaps alone of all his family, there was some good thing found towards the Lord God of Israel. "His soul pleased the Lord: therefore He hasted to take him away from among the wicked."

The King was still supremely blind concerning the matrimonial intentions of his sister of Exeter, and continued to lavish favours on St. Leger. He and the Queen were at this time interested in the approaching second marriage of Thomas Grey, with Cicely Bonvile, which took place immediately on the expiration of the year of mourning for his dead wife. In the same month, on a summer evening, and in the private chapel at Coldharbour, with only two or three witnesses, the Princess Anne, Duchess of Exeter, bestowed her hand upon Mr. St. Leger, and—the deed irrevocably done—sent information of it to her royal brother. It was characteristically received. Edward did not see the slightest oc-

casion to put himself out. Anne could do as she liked, he said, as he lounged on his sofa. She liked to please herself, and so did he. After all, Sellenger was not a bad fellow, nor an ill-looking one. "What ho! Bid the minstrels strike up there!" And settling himself comfortably among his cushions, His Majesty prepared to listen to the music.

But there was one person at Coldharbour who received the information very differently.

The news that her suitor was married to her mistress came upon Jane Grisacres like a thunderbolt. Her love had been so blind that the bare possibility of such a thing had never occurred to her for an instant. She heard the terrible tidings suddenly, with nothing to soften the blow: and with a sharp cry of astounded anguish, she fell into Marion Rothwell's arms in a dead swoon. The Duchess, who was herself present, merely glanced at the white face, and in a tone which was calmly contemptuous, commanded that somebody should carry yon poor dolt to her bed. Tamzine, silent for once, came forward and helped Marion to lift the dead weight of poor Jane, and to bear her away from the sight of the mistress to whom her stricken face was a reproach. But the reproach was felt by the Duchess only as she might have regarded a dead fly in her pot of scented ointment. Pick out the intrusive nuisance, throw it away, and then all would be well again. What did a smothered fly, or a broken heart, signify to the royal bride who had obtained her own wishes?

Not long after that event, Master Rotherham, who had been the fellow-traveller of Agnes on her journey home, paid a visit at Lovell Tower, and at his own request was closeted with Lord Marnell for some time. For so much time, indeed, that Lady Margery became rather impatient, and expressed it as she sat and span.

"Dear heart! what would yonder man with my Lord? I had so much to ask him! I want to know when he will have the calf killed, and how much lime we shall take in for the meadow. Will he ne'er have done? What can the companion be after, trow?"

"Thou alway wert a bat, Madge," said her mother, calmly. "He is after Annis."

"Eh, good lack!" returned the daughter. "I marvel where he dwelleth, and if it be far away."

"Shall my Lord covenant with him, I marvel?" said Frideswide, looking up from her embroidery-frame.

Agnes was not in the room.

"Not ere he ask our counsel, methinks," replied Lady Idonia. "At the least I hope not."

"I will read him a lecture an' he do!" said Lady Margery, laughing.

”Hush!” was her mother’s quick check. ”Hold your peace afore the maid.”

For Agnes was just entering, and she came and sat down to her sewing. Another half-hour passed almost in silence. At its close, Lord Marnell came to the door and called out John Combe, who was seated with a book in the recess of the window. With a few low-toned words he sent him off somewhere, and came forward into the hall himself.

”Well, my Lady,” said he, rubbing his hands with the air of a man very well satisfied with his morning’s work, ”and what think you is Master Rotherham come about?”

”You were best tell us, my Lord,” answered his wife, prudently declining to commit herself.

”Of a truth I am well pleased,” returned he. ”I have heard much good of the young gentleman: and he hath a fair estate, and spendeth well-nigh two hundred pound by the year; and true to the Red is he, and a good fellow belike, as I do believe. He would make his wife jointure of sixty pound by the year, and an house—not so ill, eh?”

”Has he a wife?” demanded Lady Margery rather slily.

”Nay, for that he came hither,” said her husband, laughing complacently.

”Dear heart, but Doll is o’er young to be wed yet—think you not so, my Lord?” responded she, with an affectation of innocent simplicity.

”Doll!” cried Lord Marnell. ”Gramercy, what would the woman be at? Doll! she is but a babe in the cradle. ’Tis Annis he would have—where be thine eyes, Madge?”

Lady Margery’s laugh revealed her joke.

”Oh! good heart, thou wert but a-mocking, I see.—Well, my maid, how likest the matter?” And he turned to Agnes.

He expected to see a blush, a smile, and to hear a few faltered words of satisfaction with his arrangement. But no one of them answered him. Instead of these, what he did hear was perhaps the last speech he ever expected from the lips of Agnes Marston.

”Good my Lord, I thank you for your care. But if it may stand with your pleasure, pray you, give me leave to be a nun.”

”A what!” came in accents of astonished dismay from her father, and the expression of satisfaction died out of his face in an instant.

”Annis!” exclaimed her stepmother.

”Gramercy!” said Frideswide.

Lady Idonia said nothing. She sat and watched the quiet, pale face, with its set lips, and the far-away look in the eyes which were gazing from the window.

”If you please, my Lord,” repeated Agnes calmly. ”That is my desire.”

”And what in all this world hath moved thee to desire the same?”

”I have so done of some time,” was the reply, in the same quiet tone.

”Lack-a-day, maid! How long time?”

A faint flush rose to the white brow, and dying away, left it whiter than ever. But she was spared an answer.

”Give the maid her way, Jack,” said a voice hitherto silent. ”She hath well spoken.”

”Truly, fair Mother, but I thought it ill spoken,” said Lord Marnell, in a puzzled tone, turning to face the Lady Idonia. ”I never looked to see one of my little maids in cloister—not by my good-will.”

”Then thou hadst best bring thy good-will thereto, Jack.—Frideswide and Annis, give us leave, dear hearts.”

The young ladies retired obediently. No sooner had the door closed on them than Lady Margery said, with a mixture of perplexity and eagerness,—

”Pray you, sweet Madam, give us to wit your meaning. It seems me you see further into this matter than either my Lord or I.”

”’Tis little enough I see,” added her husband. ”Verily, I counted it rare good fortune for the lass. Here is a good man, that loveth her, and offers her jointure of sixty pound by the year—”

”For thee, Madge,” resumed her mother calmly, ”thou always wert a bat, as I have aforetime told thee. As to Jack here, men be rarely aught else where women be concerned. Let the maid be, dear hearts. I tell you, she has well said.”

”But what doth it all mean?” asked Lord Marnell, impatiently.

”I go not about to tell Annis’ secrets—more in especial when she hath not confided them to me,” replied the Lady Idonia drily. ”Only this I say to you both—withered hearts make the best nuns, and the worst wives. God, not you, hath made a nun of Annis. Let her obey His voice.”

”Dear heart, I would ne’er think to hinder it!” returned her father, in a voice of much regret. ”But what means your Ladyship? How gat she her heart withered, poor wretch?”

”The babe that shall cry for the moon is commonly disappointed, Jack. I do but tell thee, Agnes Marston will never wed with any—and it were to his hurt an’ she so did. Aye, and to her own belike. Enough said.”

Nor was another word on that subject to be extracted from the Dowager. But Master Rotherham received a kindly dismissal, and it was generally understood from that hour that Agnes was to be a nun. Should this strike the reader as a strange thing, it must be remembered that the Lollard views on the subject of monasticism were scarcely at all in advance of the Roman, and that the time had not come when any woman who did not wish to be a wife could be otherwise than a nun. There did exist the rare phenomenon of an old bachelor; but an old maid, out of the cloister, was unknown before the Reformation.

The same evening, when she came up to her chamber, which Agnes shared with her, Lady Idonia sat down by the window, and remained there for a time, looking out upon the summer night. Agnes, who usually helped her to undress, was bidden to "hie her abed, and tarry not." She obeyed; but the old lady sat still, long after Agnes was asleep, or at any rate seemed to be so. Each of the two was under the impression that she knew the other's train of thought, and had kept her own a profound secret. In truth, the thoughts of Agnes were much better understood by the Dowager than the reverse. Quarter after quarter of an hour dripped heavily from the water-clock in the corner, yet the Lady Idonia sat still in the carved oaken chair. And,

"Her great heart through all the faultful past
Went sorrowing."

At last she turned her head towards the sleeper. Agnes lay with her cheek pillowed on one hand, and from that hand, close by the cheek, the ruby cresset of the Duke's ring sparkled in the lamp-light.

"Poor child!" said the heart of the Lady Idonia, though her lips were silent. "I can guess what that ruby cresset is to thee. To him, of course, it was nothing, beyond a kindly wish to give pleasure to an inferior who had shown a kindly feeling towards him. But out of thy life all possibility of wedlock died upon Dover sands, fifteen months ago. Not that *that* was ever possible—poor child! Didst thou fancy, babe, that thou wert about to touch the stars? God grant, for thy sake, that it was not so!"

It was not so. Never, for one moment, had Agnes Marston dreamed of that impossible thing. Her love had never calculated on a return. It had only grown out of the necessity of love to give itself; and her heart had passed out of her keeping before she had known that it was gone.

Idonia was right, also, in guessing that the Duke had never entertained the faintest suspicion of the deep wealth of self-sacrificing love hidden under that quiet manner and silent face. His one venture in the matrimonial lottery had been so utter a blank that the very idea of trying another had never occurred to him, and, had it been suggested, would probably have been dismissed with a shudder.

"And so—" the thoughts of the watcher went on—"'so He leadeth them unto the haven of their desire.' *So*! Ah, how many devious, winding paths there are, which lead up to the door of life! One He leads through pain, another through sorrow: one by loneliness and absence of human love, another by the happiness of a satisfied heart, a third through the shards of broken idols. Not often the

second of those three: much oftener the first or the last. But through all the paths He brings us to the one Gate—through all the wilderness journeying, to the one City. He who has paid for us the price of His own life cannot afford to lose us. And then, 'when we have forded the Jordan, with the ark of the Lord borne before us, we eat of the fruit of the Land of Canaan that year.'"

Far back into the past years ran the "inner eye,"—back to a stately woman in robes of white, with long black hair flowing behind her. The years seemed obliterated, and Idonia Marnell stood in a turret-chamber of the Palace of Holyrood, with the mournful music of Marjory Douglas' voice sounding in her ears.

"It cannot be much longer for me now," she said to herself in conclusion. "She has been comforted these thirty years; and I am nigh fourscore. But for thee, poor little Agnes!—the wilderness may be long yet: and unless I mistake, for thee also it will be 'the wilderness all the way.' So the ark of the Lord go before thee, it is well. He will lead thee no whither but into the Holy Land."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAST OF THE SILVER RING.

"Past the pearl-gates, through the golden—
When we meet His face who died,
Each want full filled, new and olden,
We, too, shall be satisfied."

King Edward quitted England on the twentieth of June, 1475, for a personal interview with the King of France. At this interview an agreement was entered into between the monarchs for the ransom of the royal widow who for four years had been pining out her life in English prisons. What moved that inscrutable mortal, King Louis, to lay down twenty thousand crowns in hard cash for the ransom of Marguerite, is one of those puzzles in psychology which must ever remain perplexities. It is true that her father, King René, was pressing him hard—as hard as it lay in his dreamy artist nature: and it is also true that Louis was urged—or at any rate professed to be so—by considerations of the outraged dignity of his own family, to which Marguerite belonged, through her continued imprisonment—a statement which might be true—and by feelings of compassion for a helpless woman—an assertion which hardly can be so. One of the last men to be moved

by sentiments of pity, particularly towards a woman, was surely Louis XI.

King Edward was more consistent with himself. He took care to have the money in his pocket before he permitted Marguerite to escape his fingers. And, with that intense smallness of soul which—with the exception of King John—was most remarkable in him of all the Plantagenet monarchs, he refused, in his diplomatic negotiations, to bestow upon Marguerite the regal title. Judging from his diction, he was puzzled what to call her. He hit at last upon her title as a Neapolitan Princess, less than which it might seem impossible to give her. On the thirteenth of November, 1475, Thomas Thwaytes, knight, received the royal command to deliver "the most serene Lady Margaret, daughter of the illustrious Prince King René," to Sir Thomas Montgomery; and the latter was ordered to convey the said lady to "the most serene Prince, Louis of France, our dearest cousin." The ingenious way in which King Louis is very civilly described, without admitting his title to the crown of France, is worth notice. But when the actual delivery came, it was found that a lower indignity yet was possible for poor Marguerite. She was required to sign a formal renunciation of all rights and privileges in England which her marriage-settlements had secured to her. In this document no title whatever was given to her. She was not even recognised as a foreign Princess. The opening words described her as "Margaret, sometime in England married." The words would have truly described every cottager's wife in the kingdom who bore the name of Margaret—then one of the commonest names in England. But when the insulting document was laid down before the Queen, she calmly took up the pen and signed it. What did titles signify to her now? There was no husband, there was no son, whose rights could be invaded, and whose feelings could be outraged, by any renunciation of name or dignity on her part. She felt with Valentina of Orleans—"Rien ne m' est plus: plus ne m' est rien!" So she quietly signed her regal "Marguerite,"[#] and by her own act laid down that queenly title which had been so heavy and blood-stained a burden.

[#] In signing English documents, the Queen spelt her name "Margarete."

Queen Marguerite survived this action six years, which she spent, so long as her father lived, with him at the Castle of Reculée, near Angers, and afterwards at Château Dampierre, near Saumur. Her last years were burdened with the horrible disease of leprosy,[#] supposed to have been caused by intense grief. It was on the twenty-fifth of August, 1482, at Château Dampierre, that she laid down the weary weight of life, and as we would fain believe and surely may be allowed to hope, went to keep eternal holiday.

[#] What was meant by leprosy in the Middle Ages is an unsettled question. It was evidently a cutaneous disease of some kind, but is generally supposed not to have been identical with the oriental leprosy of which we read in Scripture.

Perhaps, for her, there was no other way into the Garden of God than through that great and howling wilderness. If it were so, how glad a sight must the lights of home have been to that storm-wearied voyager!

This interview between the two Kings had a further pecuniary result—the payment during some time of an annual sum of £11,000 by France to England—a sum which the King of France was careful to term a pension, and which the King of England took equal care to call a tribute. Edward also made a further effort to obtain the young Earl of Richmond, who was the fly in his ointment: but that wary youth, learning the fact, took instant sanctuary, and the effort was in vain.

The winter of 1475-6 opened with rejoicings for the birth of the Princess Anne—perhaps the best of the daughters of Edward IV. She certainly possessed two qualities enjoyed by few of the others—lowliness and modesty. The rejoicings were increased a week after New Year's Day, when a second royal Anne was born—the only child of the Duchess of Exeter and Sir Thomas St. Leger. She lived to become the stock of the Dukes of Rutland: and she transmitted to them, not only the property of her mother, but also lands on which she had no equitable claim—those of the hapless Duke of Exeter. Had there been any right feeling in the heart of his wretched widow, she would have bequeathed those estates to the last of the Holands of Exeter, his sister Anne, Lady Douglas, and they would have descended to her posterity, the Nevilles of Raby. She did it not: and she had little time to do it. The baby daughter had scarcely more than entered this troublesome world, ere the soul was required of the Princess Anne of Exeter. She died on the twelfth or fourteenth of January, 1476. For her an awful account waited at the judgment bar.

In the last month of that year, Isabel Duchess of Clarence was summoned before the same Divine tribunal. Her death was a signal misfortune to her husband. Her influence had not been altogether for good, by any means, yet such good as had been in it was sorely missed. Clarence had loved her, and it is doubtful if he ever loved any other creature. After her death he became reckless even beyond his former unscrupulous condition. Gloucester kept his sinister eyes upon him, ready to take advantage of the first political slip which he might make. It came two years after Isabel's death. Clarence, who had previously quarrelled with his brother Edward, was present at a trial of some old women on the charge of witchcraft, and took the liberty of remonstrating with the judges on too much haste in condemning the prisoners, as it seemed to him, without sufficient evi-

dence. Gloucester took advantage of this circumstance. He adroitly represented to the King that Clarence had interfered with the course of justice, thus taking upon himself a prerogative of the Crown: that there was strong reason to think that he contemplated a journey to Burgundy, with the view of assisting the Duke, then in hostility to King Edward: that he had many times tried to supplant his brother. The intensely superstitious Edward was reminded of an old prediction that "G. shall reign after E.,"—and did not George begin with the fated letter? So did Gloucester, but of course my Lord Duke omitted that suggestion. He succeeded in frightening Edward into a panic. Clarence was arrested, placed before the Council, and condemned unheard. He was sentenced to be hanged: but at the intercession of the Duchess Cicely, mother alike of the King and of the criminal, the sentence was commuted to imprisonment in the Tower. Ten days later, in his dungeon, Clarence was found dead, his head hanging over an open butt of his favourite liquor, malvoisie. Hence arose the popular tradition that he had been allowed to choose the manner of his death, and that he had elected to be drowned in a butt of malmsey. In all probability the open butt had been placed in his cell by order of the brother who so well knew Clarence's weakness, and hoped by this means to get rid of him without any legal responsibility as to his end. So perished the false and faithless Clarence,—destroyed, like many another, on a mere technical pretext, when on other counts he had previously merited execution a hundred times over.

The years went on, and after a very short illness, Edward IV. passed to his own account. After him came the deluge. Events succeeded one another with startling rapidity. Only for two months was that grave and gentle boy styled King Edward V. Then came the sudden *coup d' etat*, prepared for during many years, by which Gloucester seized the crown, and shut up the boy-King in prison. The Queen and Princesses once more fled to sanctuary; the old friends and adherents of Edward, some of whom had sold their very souls for the White Rose, were sacrificed on the most trifling pretexts: and among them, the best of them all, the upright and honourable Rivers. The boy-King and his brother were put quietly out of the way. The new King made a progress throughout the country, from Windsor to York, joined by the Queen at Warwick. One of those strange gleams of tenderness which now and then flit across the conduct of Richard III., as though for an instant he paused to listen to the whispers of his better angel, induced him to spare Anne Neville a royal progress which would have led her through Tewkesbury. At the close of the year King Richard was at Westminster, firmly seated on his blood-stained throne. He might well think, like the Spanish Regent, that he had not a single enemy: for he had shot them all. But he forgot one, yet left on earth: and he forgot one Other, who remaineth for ever in Heaven.

And then his Nemesis began to come upon him. His one cherished child

died "an unhappy death" at Middleham Castle. His wife, once if selfishly, yet so passionately loved, faded away and died by inches, surviving her boy just twelve months. The terrors of God overwhelmed him. He was tormented by perpetual apprehensions of conspiracy, and distracted by nightly visions of horror. And then Richmond landed at Milford Haven, and the climax came. With that personal courage which was the best item of his bad character, Richard rushed into the field of Bosworth, "and, foremost fighting, fell."

So ended the male line of the White Rose. The Red was uppermost at last. The struggle, with all its untold agony, which had lasted through thirty years, was over at length, and for ever.

Some tardy justice was done now. To the poor old Countess of Warwick, starving in the north, her lands were given back, the iniquitous decree which had deprived her of them being stigmatised, as it deserved, as "against all reason, conscience, and course of nature, and contrary to the law of God and man." But not only the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, but also all covetous desires of the same, had long ago faded from that lonely and weary heart. All whom she had loved were in the grave, and her heirs were grandchildren whom she had never known, whose father had been her worst enemy, and who were abundantly provided for without a rood of any land of hers. Just a few pounds while she lived, just a shelter to cover her hoary head, was all that Anne Beauchamp craved for the little rest of life. She resigned all her property the same year to the Crown, receiving in exchange the manor of Sutton, in Warwickshire. It was probably there that she died, full of years and sorrows, in or shortly before 1493.

To "Dame Bessy Grey" the Nemesis came too. It is customary to bestow great pity on the widow of Edward IV.; and it is true that few women have known more crushing sorrow than she. But I think it is too commonly forgotten how much she had deserved it. She was a most designing woman—the truth was not in her: and she was pitiless to the sorrows of others. In her last years she retired to Bermondsey Convent—of her own motion; not, as has been represented, through coercion from her son-in-law—and there she died, on the 7th or 8th of June, 1493.

Except in the form of witnessing sorrows borne by his friends, no Nemesis ever came to Thomas Grey, now[#] Marquis of Dorset. That form is, to some natures, one of the very bitterest which pain can take: to others it is absolutely painless. Judging from what is known of his character, it may be surmised that the misfortunes of his friends would be a sorrow borne very philosophically by him. Two years' exile, during the short reign of King Richard, was the worst he had to bear for himself—that is, in this life.

[#] Created Apr. 18th, 1475. He is said to have been previously made Earl of Huntingdon, Aug. 4,

1471—the second title of the Duke of Exeter: but I never found one instance when he was so termed on the Rolls.

Notwithstanding his disappointment concerning Agnes, Master Rotherham kept up his acquaintance with Lovell Tower. He was present when she took the veil at Godstow, in the summer of 1476; and that she was not the only attraction he found in the family was proved by the continuance of his visits. About three years after her profession, Master Rotherham came to the conclusion, which he communicated to Lord Marnell, that his grief for the loss of Agnes would be considerably alleviated if he might have her sister Dorathie. Lord Marnell hesitated: for Dorathie's social position, as heiress presumptive to her mother's barony, was very different from that of Agnes. But he consulted the elder ladies, and found Lady Margery of opinion that a good, sensible man without title or large property would be a much better husband for Dorathie than a bad or foolish man who brought her a coronet and a county.

"Say you not so, Madam?" she concluded, turning to her mother.

The Lady Idonia's reply was to call Dorathie to her. She took her granddaughter's face in both hands, and looked tenderly at the rosy cheeks and the pretty blue eyes, which were those neither of father nor mother, but which reminded Idonia Marnell, how often no one knew, of other blue eyes which were dust now in the Abbey of St. Albans.

"Aye, Madge. It will do," was the short but distinct decision of the old lady.

So Dorathie Marston became Dorathie Rotherham, and instead of departing to some strange place with her husband, he came to live with her.

The years went on, until the autumn leaves of 1537 were carpeting the green sward, and the wind was blowing keenly through the glades of Woodstock, and waving the willows that congregate round the Abbey of Godstow. The period was one which we look back upon as lively and tumultuous: yet to the few aged men and women who could look back further yet, to the terrible days of the Roses, it seemed very quiet. Matters had changed greatly since that time. The little printing-press set up by William Caxton the mercer in the Westminster Cloisters, had spread its wide wings over all the land: and the monk who, in his isolated courage, had posted his theses on the door of the church at Wittemburg, had spread his skirts over all the world. Men talked busily now on subjects which they had hardly thought about, fifty years before. Men, aye, and women too, dared to think for themselves. And one of the earliest results of these phenomena was the conclusion that the so-called religious houses had generally ceased to be houses of religion, and that the sooner they were done away with the better.

The state of many of these religious houses was of a kind that simply cannot

be described. In them Satan and his angels reigned supreme. But there were a few—alas! they were very few—where the vows were really kept, where learning still had scope, and charity still held sway. And of female communities, the best of all these was the Abbey of Godstow.

The smaller houses, of the value of three hundred marks and under, were first suppressed. The larger, of which Godstow was one, followed later. Undoubtedly the motives for this proceeding were not pure and unmixed. Every person who joined in it was not actuated by exclusive regard for morality, nor was everybody quite innocent of some respect for those confiscated lands—not to speak of silver vases, gemmed reliquaries, and gold pieces—which, in the general upbreaking, might fall in his direction. Perhaps, when we have satisfied ourselves that our own motives are on all occasions absolutely unadulterated, we shall be in a more advantageous position to cast stones at the Reformers.

The suppression of the Abbey of Godstow was close at hand, and the nuns had made arrangements for the lives they meant to lead in future. Such of them as had relatives living commonly returned to them. A few of the elder ones, who had none, took refuge in the one or two convents of their Order which were, reasonably and charitably, allowed to remain until the death of the last surviving member. Those who married were very few, and were decidedly independent of public opinion.

On a small, but comfortable, pallet-bed in the infirmary of the Abbey lay one nun who needed to make no such provision for future life. She had received her invitation to the King's Palace, and she lay waiting for His messengers to bring His chariot for her. She had other invitations too: loving entreaties from the distant wolds of Yorkshire, where Dorathie Rotherham, Baroness Marnell of Lymington, herself an old woman of eighty years, was longing to cheer the last days of her aged and only sister; and scarcely less urgent pressure from far Devonshire, where the Lady Combe, of Combe Abbas, was affectionately desirous to minister to her husband's saintly and venerable aunt. But none of all these moved Mother Agnes, as she lay in the pallet-bed, waiting for the King's messengers. Life's fitful fever was over, and the eventide had come. For her there was a longer journey, to a better home.

Outside the infirmary two nuns, an old woman and a middle-aged one, were discussing some point which evidently disturbed their serenity.

"Well, it must be, I count," said the younger, who was the Abbess herself. "I am sore afeared it shall be diseaseful to Mother Agnes. Good lack, can they not do the King's gracious pleasure without poking into every corner, and counting the threads in every spider's web! Howbeit—Well! go, Sister Katherine, and say that my Lords the King's Commissioners can ascend now. But I would have thee say to the chief of them, whoso it be, that in the infirmary is a very aged and holy

sister that is nigh to death, and that I pray them of their grace to tread in that chamber as quiet as may be."

Sister Katherine departed on her errand, and the Abbess went forward into the sick chamber. A few minutes later her messenger rejoined her.

"My Lords Commissioners speak very fair," said she. "I told the eldest gentleman as you bade me, holy Mother: and he promiseth that only the three chiefest of them shall come into this chamber, and that they shall tread and speak so quiet as may be."

"'Tis the best we may look for," responded the Abbess: "but I would it were well over."

In about half an hour the footsteps were heard approaching. They roused the dying nun, who had been in a dozing condition for some time.

"What is it, holy Mother?" she said nervously.

"Dear heart, 'tis but those weary companions, the King's Highness' noble Commissioners, that must needs see with their own evil eyes how many candlesticks and phials of physic be of the mantel-shelf," said the Abbess rather irritably. "They know their own business, trow: but verily I would have thought, after reckoning every aglet[#] in the treasury, and every stick of firewood in the yard, they might have left us poor nuns be to drink our senna in peace. Dear heart, what work is here to drive out an handful of old women into this wicked world! Well, well! we shall soon have done therewith, most of us."

[#] The little silver ring which surrounds lace-holes in boots, stays, &c.

She ceased her diatribe, for my Lords Commissioners were entering, and standing up, gave them her blessing—with how much sincerity she was not careful to state. The three gentlemen bowed low to the mitred Abbess, and seemed half alarmed at their own temerity.

"Methinks we need not tarry hither," said the chief Commissioner. "Maybe, holy Sister"—addressing Sister Katherine—"it should stand with your conveniency, under leave of my Lady Abbess, to take note of such furnishings as be in this chamber, and we will accept the same.—Lead forth, my Lord of Dorset."

Before this could be done, the further progress of the Commissioners was intercepted by a weak voice from the pallet bed.

"My Lord of Dorset!" said Mother Agnes faintly.

The youngest of the party, a fair-haired, good-looking young man of about five-and-twenty, paused and turned to her, as if the name belonged to him.

"Pray you, of your grace, come one moment hither," she said, speaking with

some difficulty.

The young Marquis came forward at once, and knelt by the bed of the dying nun, who looked earnestly for some seconds into his face.

"What kin are you," she asked, "to sometime Queen Elizabeth, whose son was Lord of Dorset?"

"That son was my father's father," answered the young man.

"So long ago!" said the dying woman. "Young Lord, 'tis but like yesterday that your father's father was a young man like you. 'Past, as a watch in the night!'"

Her eyes ran feebly over the handsome features, the clear grey eyes, the nervous twitching of the brow, the good-natured fulness of the lower lip, the weak, vacillating indecision of the retreating chin. In those few seconds, she seemed to read his character.

"The good Lord's grace be with thee!" said the faint voice at last. "Be thou strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!"

Did Henry Grey think of those words, twenty years later, when after a life spent in bondage through fear of death, God gave him grace to break through the trammels of Satan, and to stand bravely out upon Tower Hill to die for Him?

The Commissioners were gone, to the relief of the Abbess, who muttered something as the door closed after them, which was not the same form of words as the benediction with which she had greeted them. The next moment she bent down to listen to the weak tones of Mother Agnes.

"Holy Mother, may I crave a boon of you?"

"Surely, good my sister," said the testy yet kind-hearted Abbess.

"Mother, among the gear that came hither with me, must be in the treasury "—

Agnes paused for breath.

"Well, good sister?"

"A silver ring, set with little rubies in form of a cresset."

"Aye. What so?"

"Good Mother, of your grace, give me leave to bear that ring upon my finger until I go hence."

The Abbess was sorely exercised by this request. It must imply either strong vanity in the dying nun, or else a most undue attachment to earthly things. Nay, probably, it meant what was still worse—an attachment to earthly persons: a most improper thing in a professed nun! The Abbess hesitated, but the woman's heart in her prevailed, as she looked into the wistful, dying eyes.

"My sister, shall I do well if I say aye? Thou wist no holy nun must have affinity with the world. Who gave thee the ring?"

"One that hath been dust these sixty years."

"Well, well! be it so. I trust thee, Sister Agnes. Only remember, thy thoughts should be above, not below."

"Below is the dust only," said Agnes. "What I loved is above."

The old nun who kept the keys of the treasury found the silver ring, and brought it to the Abbess. A faint smile greeted the remembered token as it was slipped on the thin hand.

"Remove it not, I pray," she said, "until I am not here to care for it. And now suffer me to keep silence, for I would commune with God."

The hand that bore the ring was laid upon her breast, with the other hand crossed over it. Two hours passed, and she never stirred.

"She must lack food now," whispered the Abbess to Sister Katherine.

Sister Katherine shook her more experienced head.

"She will eat no more, save of the angels' manna."

That night, Sister Margaret unlocked the treasury, and restored the ruby ring to its place. Agnes Marston cared for it no more.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX.

I. THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER, AND ITS CONNECTION WITH THE HOUSE OF TUDOR.

Catherine, sixth and youngest daughter of Charles VI. King of France, and Isabeau of Bavaria, was born at the Hôtel, de St. Pol, Paris, Oct. 27th, 1401; and died at Bermondsey Abbey, London, Jan. 3rd, 1437. She was buried in Westminster Abbey, after many years of neglect, during which her corpse, dried to the appearance of a mummy, had been made a show to strangers. Surnamed The Fair. One historian tells us that she was a most devout woman, perpetually at prayer: but the excessively wayward, impulsive, selfish character of all her actions during her queenly life points to the conclusion that this refers exclusively to her later days: as otherwise we should be impelled to the unwelcome but unavoidable surmise that her prayers were allowed to have very little effect upon her conduct. She married—

(1) King Henry V. of England, eldest son of Henry IV. and Mary Bohun: born at Monmouth, Aug. 9th, 1387: married at Troyes Cathedral, June 3rd, 1420:

died at Vincennes, of fever, Aug. 31st, 1432: buried in Westminster Abbey.

(2) Owain, surnamed Twdwr (often contemporaneously spelt Tydier), son of Meredith ap Twdwr and Margaret, daughter of David Vychan: born at Snowdon, date unknown: wardrobe-keeper to Queen Catherine, whom he married in 1428: beheaded, after the battle of Mortimer's Cross, at Hereford, Feb. 2nd, 1461: buried in Grey Friars' Church, Hereford.

ISSUE OF CATHERINE OF FRANCE. (A) By Henry V.:—

1. HENRY VI., surnamed *The Holy*, born at Windsor (in direct contravention of his father's orders) Dec. 6th, 1421: deposed Mar. 4th, 1461; restored, Oct., 1470; again deposed, Apr. 11th, 1471; died in the Tower, London, May 21 [? 27th—see text], 1471: buried first at Chertsey Abbey, afterwards in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

Though to some extent weak in intellect, and subject, like his maternal grandfather, to occasional attacks of mental aberration, Henry was, on the testimony even of his enemies, one of the best men that ever lived. His strongest asseveration was "Forsooth," at a time when it was customary for men, and even women, to use profane language in the freest manner. He was "wholly given to prayer, Scriptures, and alms-deeds." A Bishop who was his confessor for ten years, bore witness that he had during that time, "never confessed a mortal sin." In person, Henry was not handsome, having the large, strongly-marked features of his Valois ancestors: but his hands and feet were extraordinarily small; so much so that a pair of his boots (still preserved) can only be worn by a woman of slender proportions. His hair and eyes were dark brown. He married—

MARGUERITE, second daughter of René of Anjou, King of Naples, and Isabelle of Lorraine: born at Pont à Mousson, Mar. 23rd, 1429, and baptized in Toul Cathedral: married by proxy, in St. Martin's Church, Tours, Apr. 10th [?], and in person at Titchfield Abbey, Hants, Apr. 22nd, 1445: died at Château Dampierre, near Saumur, in Normandy, Aug. 25th, 1482: buried in Angers Cathedral. The hope expressed in the text as to the Christian character of Marguerite is not a mere baseless imagination. There is evidence showing that in her later years at least, she possessed and was familiar with a French Bible: and in those days persons did not, as a rule, read the Scriptures in their own language as a mere matter of form or custom.

(B) By Owain Twdwr:—

2. Tacina (this singular name is authenticated by occurring on the Patent Roll, 32 B. VI.) born 1429-30, married Reginald, 7th Lord Grey de Wilton, and left

issue.

3. Edmund, born at Hadham, 1431; created Earl of Richmond, Mar. 6th, 1453; died Nov. 1-3, 1456; buried, first at Caermarthen, afterwards at St. David's. Married—

Margaret, only child and heiress of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and Margaret Baroness Beauchamp of Bletshoe: born at Bletshoe, Apr. 1443: married, 1455: [remarried (2) Henry Stafford, Earl of Wiltshire, and (3) Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby]: died at Westminster, July 5th, 1509 [the date usually given is June 29th; but her Inquisition gives July 5]: buried in Westminster Abbey. Generally known as Margaret Countess of Richmond. She is the "Lady Margaret," whose name has been given to professorships, lectures, streets, &c.

4. JASPAR, born at Hatfield, about 1432: created Earl of Pembroke, Nov. 23rd, 1452, and Duke of Bedford Oct. 28th, 1485: died Dec. 21st, 1495: bur. at Keynsham. According to some writers, his illegitimate daughter Helen married William Gardiner, squire and citizen of London, and was mother of Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. He married (but left no legitimate issue),

Katherine, daughter of Richard Earl Rivers and Jaquette de St. Pol, and sister of Queen Elizabeth Widville: married at Court, in or before 1490-1.

5. Owain, born at Westminster, about 1434; monk in Westminster Abbey.

6. Katherine, or Margaret, born and died 1436.

ISSUE OF HENRY VI.:—

EDWARD, born at Westminster, Oct. 13th, 1453; created Prince of Wales, Mar. 15th, 1454; murdered after battle of Tewkesbury, on the field, May 4th, 1471: buried in Tewkesbury Abbey. Married—

ANNE, second and youngest daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury (and by courtesy of Warwick) and Anne Beauchamp, Countess of Warwick: born at Warwick Castle, 1454: married at Amboise, July or August, 1470: [re-married to King Richard III.]: died of consumption, at Westminster Palace, Mar. 16th, 1485: buried in Westminster Abbey. Some writers have endeavoured to show that the ceremony at Amboise was only a betrothal, and that the actual marriage never took place. The best authors, however, are of the contrary opinion: and the strongest evidence is afforded by the language of Warwick's own henchman, John Rous, who distinctly terms the Prince "*primus maritus prenobilissimæ Dominæ Annæ*."

ISSUE OF EDMUND EARL OF RICHMOND:—

King HENRY VII., surnamed *Le Doyen des Rois*: born at Pembroke Castle,

July 26th, 1456: died of gout, at Richmond, Apr. 22nd, 1509; buried at Westminster. An interesting portrait of Henry VII. is drawn for us by Humphrey Brereton, who on arriving at

”Beggrames Abbey in Little Britain,
Whereas the English Prince did lie,”

was obliged to inquire of the porter how he was to recognise the Earl of Richmond, to whom he brought letters and money from the Princess Elizabeth.

”He weareth a gown of velvet black,
And it is cutted above the knee,
With a long visage and pale and black—
Thereby know that Prince may ye:
A wart he hath (the porter said),
A little alsoe above the chinn,
His face is white, his wart is redd,
No more than the head of a small pinn.”

King Henry VII. married—

Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV. [See next section.]

II. HOUSE OF YORK.

RICHARD Duke of York, only son of Richard of Conisborough, Earl of Cambridge, and Anne Mortimer: born Sept. 21st, 1410 (Inquisition) 1412 (Patent Roll): created Duke of York 1425: killed, battle of Wakefield, Dec. 30th, 1460: buried first at Pomfret, and afterwards at Fotheringay. The only known portrait of this Prince is in the ”Neville window” of Penrith Church: it exhibits him as fair-complexioned and rather good-looking, wearing a moustache and a small pointed beard. He married—

CICELY, fourth daughter of Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmoreland, and his second wife Joan Beaufort: surnamed *Proud Cis*, and *The Rose of Raby*: born probably at Raby, date unknown, about 1418: married about 1437: died at Berkhamsted Castle, May 31st, 1495: buried at Fotheringay. In the coffin of the Duchess, tied round her neck with a silver ribbon, was found ”a pardon from Rome, which, penned in a very fine Roman hand, was as fair and fresh to be read as if it had been written but yesterday.” Cicely’s portrait will be found with that of her husband in the church at Penrith: she also is fair and handsome, her face

suggesting more embonpoint than his, and the expression not quite free from that haughtiness which might be expected from her character.

THEIR ISSUE:—

1. Henry, born about 1438, godson of Henry VI.; died young.

2. ANNE, born about 1439: married, (1) probably in childhood, Henry de Holand, Duke of Exeter, from whom she was divorced at her own suit, Nov. 12th, 1472: (2) after the death of her elder daughter, and while he was still a squire (Inquisition), namely, after Feb. 3rd, 1474 (Patent Roll), Thomas St. Leger, afterwards (before Nov. 28th, 1475) knighted, and made Master of the Hounds (Patent Roll; Harl. MS. 433): died at birth of younger daughter, Jan. 12th, or 14th, 1476 (Inquisition): buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, with second husband, who survived her for at least five years. Portrait, in Sandford's Genealogical History of Kings of England, is not suggestive of beauty.

3. EDWARD IV., surnamed *The Rose of Rouen*: born at Rouen, Apr. 29th, 1441; died at Westminster Palace, Apr. 9th, 1483; buried St. George's Chapel, Windsor. News of his death was received at York on the 7th, from which it has been inferred that the date given by all writers, the ninth, is a mistake; but the report might be premature. He married—

ELIZABETH, eldest daughter of Richard Widville, Earl Rivers, and Jaquette de St. Pol: born at Grafton Regis, probably about 1438: [married (1) about 1452, John Grey, 2nd Lord Grey of Groby]: married (2) at Grafton Regis, May 1st, 1464; died at Bermondsey Abbey, June 7th, 1492; buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, on Whit Sunday.

4. Edmund, Earl of Rutland, born at Rouen, May 17th, 1443; murdered by Lord Clifford, after battle of Wakefield, Dec. 31st, 1460; buried first at Pomfret, afterwards Fotheringay.

5. William, died young.

6. John, died young.

7. Humphrey, died young.

8. Elizabeth, married, in or before 1463, John de La Pole, Duke of Suffolk: died 1503.

9. GEORGE, born at Dublin, probably 1450; created Duke of Clarence, 1461, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury, Mar. 25th, 1473: died in the Tower of London, Feb. 18th, 1478: buried in Tewkesbury Abbey. Married—

ISABEL, elder daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury and (by courtesy) of Warwick, and Anne Beauchamp, Countess of Warwick: born at Warwick Castle, Sept. 5th, 1451; married in Lady Church, Calais, July 11th, 1469: died at Warwick Castle, Dec. 16th, or 22nd, 1476; buried in Tewkesbury Abbey.

10. Thomas, born 1451; died young.

11. RICHARD III., born at Fotheringay, Oct. 2nd, 1452, and as is said, with hair and teeth fully grown: surnamed *Crookback*: created Duke of Gloucester, 1461: killed on Bosworth Field, Aug. 22nd, 1485; buried at Leicester. He had dark auburn hair, and dark blue eyes. Married—

ANNE, widow of Edward Prince of Wales [see last section]: married (by force, against her own consent) in Westminster Abbey, after Feb. 17th, 1472 (Paston Letters) and before May 9th, 1474. (Patent Roll.) Miss Strickland's suggested date, Mar. 30th, 1473, is probably about the true one. Portrait in Rous Roll; another engraved in Strickland's *Lives of the Queens*.

12. Margaret, born 1453; married, at Damme, in Flanders, July 3rd, 1468, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy: died at Malines, Nov. 28th, 1503: buried at Malines. Portrait engraved in Paston Letters.

13. Ursula, died young.

ISSUE OF EDWARD IV. AND ELIZABETH WIDVILLE:—

1. Elizabeth, born at Westminster, Feb. 11th, 1466: married to King Henry VII., Jan. 18th, 1486: died in the Tower, Feb. 11th, 1503: buried at Westminster. Portrait engraved in Strickland's *Queens*.

2. Mary, born at Windsor, Aug. 14th, 1466; affianced, 1481, to Frederic I., King of Denmark; died unmarried, at Greenwich, May 23rd, 1483: buried at Windsor. Her coffin was opened in 1817, when her corpse was found in perfect preservation; the hair of "exquisite pale gold," the eyes "a beautiful blue, unclosed and bright."

3. Cicely, born 1469: affianced, Dec. 26th, 1474, to James IV. King of Scotland (broken off): married (1) at Court, before Dec. 1487, John Viscount Welles; (2) without royal licence, between Feb. 1503 and Jan. 1504, Thomas Kyme: died at Quarr Abbey, Isle of Wight, Aug. 24th, 1507: buried at Quarr.

4. EDWARD V., born in the Sanctuary, Westminster, Nov. 4th, 1470: baptized in Westminster Abbey; created Prince of Wales, July 1st, 1471; knighted Apr. 18th, 1475: murdered in Tower of London, after July 6th [exact day much disputed], 1483. Supposed to have been buried in Tower, and afterwards removed to Westminster Abbey.

5. Margaret, born Apr. 10th, and died Dec. 11th, 1472: buried in Westminster Abbey.

6. Richard, born at Shrewsbury, May 28th, 1474, and created Duke of York, same day: knighted Apr. 18th, 1475: Earl of Nottingham, Earl Marshal, Jan. 12th, 1477; Duke of Norfolk, Feb. 6th, 1477: died and buried with eldest brother. (There seems to be very little doubt that this is the truth, and that Perkin Warbeck was

an impostor. It is, however, not improbable that he was an illegitimate son of Edward IV.) Richard Duke of York married—

Anne, only child and heir of John Mowbray, fifth and (of his family) last Duke of Norfolk, and Elizabeth Talbot: born Dec. 10th, 1472, probably at Framlingham: married in St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, Jan. 15th, 1477: died young, before her husband: buried at Westminster.

7. Anne, born at Westminster, Nov. 2nd, 1475: married Feb. 4th, 1495, Thomas Howard, second Duke of Norfolk: died between Nov. 22nd, 1510, and Feb. 1512: buried at Framlingham.

8. George, Duke of Bedford: born at Windsor, probably in 1477: died young, before 1482: buried at Windsor.

9. Katherine, born at Eltham, about Aug. or Sept., 1479: married at Court, before Oct. 1495, William Courtenay, Earl of Devon: vowed widowhood, July 13th, 1511: died at Tiverton, Nov. 15th, 1527; buried at Tiverton.

10. Bridget, born at Eltham, Nov. 10th, 1480: nun at Dartford, 1486-92: died at Dartford, 1517: buried at Dartford.

(*By Elizabeth Lucy*, Edward IV. had two children—

1. Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, born at Lille, 1462 and died in the Tower, Mar. 3rd, 1542, leaving female issue: 2. Elizabeth, married to Thomas Lumley, son of George, second Lord Lumley, whom he predeceased; left issue.)

ISSUE OF GEORGE DUKE OF CLARENCE:—

1. Child, born at sea, off Calais, Apr. 1470: died at birth; buried at Calais.

2. Margaret, born at Farley Castle, Aug. 14th, 1473: married at Court, before 1494, Sir Richard Pole: created Countess of Salisbury (or rather formally recognised as such by inheritance) Oct. 14th, 1513: beheaded on Tower Hill, May 27th, 1541: buried in the Tower. Left issue.

3. Edward, Earl of Warwick: born at Warwick Castle, Feb. 21st, 1475: beheaded on Tower Hill, Nov. 28th, 1499: buried at Bisham.

4. Richard, born at Tewkesbury Abbey, Oct. 6th, 1476: died at Warwick Castle, Jan. 1st, 1477: buried at Warwick.

ISSUE OF RICHARD III. AND ANNE:—

Edward, born at Middleham Castle, 1476 (Rous Roll): created Earl of Salisbury 1477; Prince of Wales, Aug. 24th, 1483: knighted Sept. 8th, 1483: died at Middleham, "an unhappy death," Mar. 31st, 1484: buried at Middleham.

III. DE HOLAND OF EXETER.

John de Holand, second son (but eventual heir) of John, first Duke of Exeter, and Elizabeth of Lancaster (sister of Henry IV.): born Mar. 29th, 1396 (Inquisition): created Duke of Exeter, in consequence of his father's attainder, 1443: beheaded on Goodwin Sands, Aug. 5th, 1447; buried in Church of St. Catherine by the Tower, London. Inventor of the rack,[#] long called "the Duke of Exeter's daughter." Married—

[#] I am anxious to correct here a mistake into which I fell in a note to the early editions of *Lettice Eden*, where it is suggested that the Duke of Exeter who invented the rack might have been Henry himself. The testimony of dates made that appear probable which I have now ascertained was certainly not the case: and the characters of the two Dukes were less known to me at that time.

(A) Anne, daughter of Edmund Earl of Stafford and Princess Anne of Gloucester: widow of Edmund Mortimer, last Earl of March: married 1439: died Sept. 20th or 24th, 1433 (Inquisition): buried in Church of St. Katherine by the Tower.

(B) Briatiz, natural daughter of D. Joam I., King of Portugal, and widow of Thomas 13th Earl of Arundel: marriage licence dated Jan. 20th, 1433 (Patent Roll): died Oct. 23rd, 1439: buried at Arundel.

(C) Anne, daughter of John de Montacute, third Earl of Salisbury, and Maud Francis: widow of (1) Sir Richard Hankford, and (2) Sir John Fitzlewes: died Nov. 28th, 1457 (Inquisition): buried in Church of St. Katherine by the Tower. There are certain items of bequest, and peculiarities of expression, by which Lollardism may always be detected in the last will of any person: and the testament of Anne Montacute bears a decidedly Lollard tone, as beseemed her martyred father's daughter.

His ISSUE. By *Anne Stafford* :—

1. HENRY, third and last Duke of Exeter: born in the Tower, June 27th, 1430, and baptized same day in St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, his sponsors being King Henry VI., Cardinal Beaufort, and his grandmother, Princess Anne, Countess of Stafford (Prob. Æt. 36 Hen. VI. 43): drowned, in sea between Dover and Calais, body cast ashore at Dover, date unknown, authorities differing greatly: some give 1473, some 1474, some 1475. He was very likely buried at Dover. No portrait known. He married—

ANNE, eldest sister of Edward IV. [See first section.]

2. (*By Anne Montacute.*) Anne, born 1440-1, married (1) in infancy, before

Feb. 5th, 1442 (*Patent Roll*) John, Lord Neville of Raby: he died while she was still a child, 1451, and she married (2) by Papal dispensation, about 1456, his uncle, Sir John Neville: (3) 1473, James, 9th and last Earl Douglas: date of death unknown: buried in Black Friars' Church, London.

ISSUE OF HENRY DUKE OF EXETER:—

ANNE, probably born about 1455: married Thomas Grey of Groby, son of John Lord Grey and Queen Elizabeth Widville. Miss Strickland says that the marriage took place at Greenwich, in October, 1466, but gives no authority. There may have been a formal betrothal at that date, but the exact date of the marriage is extremely doubtful. On the one hand, the royal assent to the marriage-settlements, which in all ordinary cases preceded the marriage, is dated Jan. 4th, 1473 (Patent Roll, 12 Edw. IV., Part 2): yet mention is therein made of Anne as the wife of Thomas Grey, which would seem to indicate that the ceremony had already taken place. If Thomas Grey were really created Earl of Huntingdon on the 4th of August, 1471, the fact would imply a strong probability that he was then married to Anne, or at least on the immediate eve of marriage. Lady Anne Grey was dead on July 18th, 1474, when negotiations were entered into for the second marriage of her husband (Patent Roll, 12 Edw. IV., Part 2). Portrait and place of burial unknown; character imaginary.

IV. NEVILLE OF WARWICK.

Richard Neville, eldest son of Ralph, first Earl of Westmoreland, and his second wife Joan Beaufort: born 1400, created Earl of Salisbury, Feb. 1st, 1439: beheaded at Pomfret, Christmas, 1462: buried at Bisham, Feb. 15th, 1463. Married—

Alesia, eldest daughter and heir of Thomas de Montacute, fourth Earl of Salisbury, and Alianora de Holand: born 1407, married in or before 1439; died 1463, buried at Bisham Feb. 15th.

THEIR ISSUE:—

1. Joan, married William Earl of Arundel after Aug. 17th, 1438, when his marriage was granted to her father (Patent Roll), and before May 10th, 1459.

2. Cicely, married, 1434, Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick: died July 28th, 1450. (Dugdale says that she married, secondly, 1448-9, John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester: but this is doubtful.)

3. RICHARD, Earl of Warwick, surnamed the *King-Maker*; killed at Barnet, Easter Sunday, Apr. 14th, 1471; buried at Bisham. Married—

ANNE, daughter and eventual heir of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and his second wife Isabel Baroness Le Despenser: born at Caversham, July 13th, 1429: married 1434: died between 1490 and Michaelmas 1493.

4. Thomas, killed at Wakefield, and buried at Bisham Feb. 15th, 1463. Married (but left no issue),

Maud, daughter and heir of Richard Stanhope, knight: married after May 10th, 1459; died Aug. 30th, 1497: buried at Tateshale.

5. JOHN, born before May 14th, 1431 (Patent Roll), created Earl of Northumberland on defection of the Percys, and on resigning that title, Marquis of Montague, Mar. 25th, 1470: killed at Barnet, Apr. 14th, 1471: buried at Bisham. Married—

Isabel, daughter and heir of Sir Edmund Ingoldesthorp: married before July 19th, 1459 (Close Roll): [re-married Sir William Norris of Yattenden]: died 1477, and buried at Bisham.

6. GEORGE, Bishop of Exeter Nov. 25th, 1455. Lord Chancellor, 1460; Archbishop of York consecrated June 17th, 1465: died 1476.

7. Alesia, married, Henry Lord Fitzhugh: living June 1st, 1475 (Patent Roll).

8. Eleanor, married about 1459, Thomas Stanley, first Earl of Derby: buried in Church of St. James, Garlick-hithe.

9. Ralph, died young.

10. Katherine, married (1) after May 10th, 1459, William Lord Bonvile (2) before July 18th, 1461 (Patent Roll) William Lord Hastings: died in or after 1503: buried at Ashby-de-la-Zouche. She was mother of Cicely Bonvile, second wife of Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset.

11. Robert, died young.

12. Margaret, married after 1458, John de Vere, thirteenth Earl of Oxford: died after 1486; buried at Earl's Colne.

ISSUE OF RICHARD EARL OF WARWICK:—

1. ISABEL, Duchess of Clarence [see second section],

2. ANNE, Princess of Wales and Queen [see second section].

ISSUE OF JOHN MARQUIS MONTAGUE:—

1. George, created Duke of Bedford, Jan. 5th, 1470, and affianced to Princess Elizabeth: died minor, May 4th, 1483: buried at Sheriff Hutton.

2. John, probably died young, and buried at Salston.

3. Anne, married (1) Sir William Stonor (2) ... Fortescue: dead, Nov. 14th, 1494 (Inquisition).

4. Elizabeth, married (1) Thomas Lord Scrope of Masham (2) Sir Henry Wentworth: died Sept. 20th, 1517: buried Black Friars' Church, London.

5. Margaret, married (1) before Nov. 14th, 1494 (Inquisition) Sir John Mortimer, (2) Robert Downes, (3) in or before 1507, Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk: died Jan. 21st, 1528 (Inquisition).

6. Lucy, married (1) before Nov. 14th, 1494 (Inquisition) Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam, (2) Sir Anthony Browne; died at Bagshot, Mar. 25th, 1533, buried at Bisham, 31st. (Harl. MS. 897, fol. 76.)

7. Isabel, aged 23, Nov. 14th, 1494 (Inquisition): married, (1) Ranulph Dacre (2) before Nov 14th, 1494, William Huddlestone, Esq., (3) Sir William Smith: died in or before 1516-7.

V. EXPENDITURE OF EDWARD IV.

Only three of this King's Issue Rolls are extant for the period covered by the story—for the Easter and Michaelmas terms of 1469, and for the Easter term of 1471. They are unpublished, and a few of the more remarkable items can scarcely fail to be interesting.

For the Easter term (March to September) of 1469, the personal expenses of the King were—for wardrobe (purchase of silk, cloth, &c.), £1231 16s. 3-1/2d.: and for jewels, £744 13s. 4d.: those of the Queen, £209 7s.: of the "Lady Princess" (though her "diet" and that of the chaplains is reckoned together,) £100. The expenses, board, and safekeeping of Henry VI. are set down at £146 13s. 4d. The keep of four lions, two in Spain, and two in the Tower, costs £10. £33 6s. 8d., divided among three Orders of Friars, suffices for the royal alms.

The account for the Michaelmas term contains less worth noting. We are, however, there told that the annual allowance to the Queen, "considering the great expense of Elizabeth and Mary our daughters," was £400. There are entries of £33 6s. 8d. for "the diet and custody of Henry Beauford in the Tower"—namely, the Duke of Somerset—and of £13 3s. 6d. for the clothing of Henry Percy, also a prisoner in the Tower.

But never was a state paper penned of deeper interest than the one Roll extant for 1471—for those six months which included the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, the murders of King Henry and his son, the massacre (for it can be called by no lighter term) of the Lancastrian nobles, and the imprisonment of Queen Marguerite and the young Princess of Wales. The business-like entry on May 16th,—"To the Lord King, in his chamber, at Tewkesbury, fifty shillings"—strikes the reader with something like a shudder, from the fearful contrast between the scenes that were passing at Tewkesbury and that fifty shillings squandered on some frivolous pleasure. The items of expenditure run as follows:—

Item	Amount
Expenses of the Queen (one item including "the victualling of the Tower")	£177 18s. 3 1/2d.
Plate, gold and silver	223 15s. 4d.
Jewellery and goldsmiths' work	55 1s. 9d.
Wardrobe	1905 14s. 6d.
Armour	5 3s. 4d.
Horse, a Spanish jennet	10 0s. 0d.
Travelling expenses	9 19s. 0d.
Wine	197 13s. 0d.
Paid to Florentine merchants	6266 13s. 4d.
Household expenses	26,536 9s. 0d.
Expenses of the King's chamber (gifts, trinkets, bets, and all sundries)	9456 10s.
Divine service	40
Alms and oblations	4 6s. 8d.
Total	44,885 14s. 6 1/2d.

There is a further entry of £135, paid for various articles, of which jewels and medicine are alone indicated; and also of £180 paid to Henry Lord Grey, to discharge all the King's debts to him.

These are simply the private expenses, no military nor state charges being quoted, except in the one instance where the victualling of the Tower and the Queen's expenses are entered together at £124 10s., and it is impossible to say what proportion of the sum referred to either. The list speaks for itself.

VI. FICTITIOUS PERSONS.

Those introduced in this story are the members of the Marnell and Carew families, the waiting-women of the Countess of Warwick and Duchess of Exeter (Mistress Grisacres excepted), and the relatives of John Goose, who is himself a real person: Father Alcock, Master Rotherham, and the Banasters. The name and office of John Combe are historical. The character ascribed to the Duke of Exeter is historical in all but its religious aspect, where it is probable only: that sketched for his daughter is entirely fictitious. That of Sir Thomas St. Leger rests also to

some extent on probabilities. All other historical persons are drawn from life.

The names of such individuals as figure in the story are printed in small capitals in the Appendix to assist identification. Where authorities are given within brackets for dates, either the dates are (to my knowledge) hitherto unpublished, or they are corrections from first-class authorities of incorrect dates usually given.

VII. THE OATH OF SUBMISSION.

It may interest some readers to see the exact terms of the oath taken on a man's return to his allegiance, as recorded upon the Close Roll for 1469.

"Sovereign Lord, I, Herry Percy, becom your subgette and liegeman, and promyt to God and you that hereafter of faith and trouth shall bear to you, as to my sovereign liege lord, and to your heirs, Kings of England, of life and limb and of erthlye worship, for to live and die ayenst all earthly people; and to you and to your commandments I shall be obeisant, as God me help and his holy evangelists."

For a man to swear this unconditional oath was styled "putting himself in the King's mercy."

VIII. THOMAS GREY, MARQUIS OF DORSET.

While these pages were passing through the press, I discovered an entry on the first part of the Patent Roll for 1 Ric. III., which, if one quarter of its statements be true, shows Dorset to have been one of the vilest men that ever walked the earth. One offence in particular, of which all the chroniclers accuse Lord Hastings (a most unlikely man), is there distinctly charged upon Dorset, while Hastings is not even mentioned in connection with the subject. The pardon issued on the coronation of Richard III. excepted Dorset on the ground of his disgraceful character.

* * * * * * * *

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BY EMILY S. HOLT.

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OR, LONG AGO AT OXFORD.

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IV. Lady Sybil's Choice:
A TALE OF THE CRUSADES.

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OR, THE POLISHING OF THE PEARL.

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THE STORY OF PIERS GAVESTONE.

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OR, THE CHANGES OF THE WORLD.

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AND WHAT HE DID FOR ENGLAND.

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XIII. The White Rose of Langley;
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A.D. 1400

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A TALE OF THE LOLLARDS.

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XV. Margery's Son;
OR, UNTIL HE FIND IT.

A.D. 1470

XVI. Red and White;
OR, THE WARS OF THE ROSES.

A.D. 1480

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A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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XXXII. Out in the Forty-five;
OR, DUNCAN KEITH'S VOW.

A.D. 1750

XXXIII. Ashcliffe Hall:
A TALE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

XXXIV. A.D. 1556

For the Master's Sake;
OR, THE DAYS OF QUEEN MARY.

A.D. 1345

The Well in the Desert.
AN OLD LEGEND.

XXXV. A.D. 1559

All for the Best;
OR, BERNARD GILPIN'S MOTTO.

A.D. 1560

At the Grene Griffin:
A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

XXXVI. A.D. 1270

Our Little Lady;
OR, SIX HUNDRED YEARS AGO

A.D. 1652

Gold that Glitters;
OR, THE MISTAKES OF JENNY LAVENDER.

XXXVII. A.D. 1290

A Forgotten Hero:
THE STORY OF ROGER DE MORTIMER.

A.D. 1266

Princess Adelaide:
A STORY OF THE SIEGE OF KENILWORTH.

XXXVIII. 1ST CENTURY.

The Slave Girl of Pompeii.

2ND CENTURY.

The Way of the Cross.
TALES OF THE EARLY CHURCH

A.D. 870 to 1580

XXXIX. Lights in the Darkness:
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