



EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

THE LAST OF THE BARONS

VOLUME III

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BOOK III.

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

CHAPTER I.

THE SOLITARY SAGE AND THE SOLITARY MAID.

While such the entrance of Marmaduke Nevile into a court, that if far less intellectual and refined than those of later days, was yet more calculated to dazzle the fancy, to sharpen the wit, and to charm the senses,—for round the throne of Edward IV. chivalry was magnificent, intrigue restless, and pleasure ever on the wing,—Sibyll had ample leisure in her solitary home to muse over the incidents that had preceded the departure of the young guest. Though she had rejected Marmaduke's proffered love, his tone, so suddenly altered, his abrupt, broken words and confusion, his farewell, so soon succeeding his passionate declaration, could not fail to wound that pride of woman which never sleeps till modesty is gone. But this made the least cause of the profound humiliation which bowed down her spirit. The meaning taunt conveyed in the rhyme of the tymbesteres pierced her to the quick; the calm, indifferent smile of the stranger, as he regarded her, the beauty of the dame he attended, woke mingled and contrary feelings, but those of jealousy were perhaps the keenest: and in the midst of all she started to ask herself if indeed she had suffered her vain thoughts to dwell too tenderly upon one from whom the vast inequalities of human life must divide her evermore. What to her was his indifference? Nothing,—yet had she given worlds to banish that careless smile from her remembrance.

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

There is, to the quick and mercurial spirits of the young, something of marvellous and preternatural in that life within life, which the strong passion of science and genius forms and feeds,—that passion so much stronger than love, and so much more self-dependent; which asks no sympathy, leans on no kindred heart; which lives alone in its works and fancies, like a god amidst his creations.

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

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

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

CHAPTER II.

MASTER ADAM WARNER GROWS A MISER, AND BEHAVES SHAMEFULLY.

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

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

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

But all at once Adam woke to a sense of the change that had taken place; all at once he caught scent of gold, for his works were brought to a pause for want of some finer and more costly materials than the coins in his own possession (the remnant of Marmaduke's gift) enabled him to purchase. He had stolen out at dusk, unknown to Sibyll, and lavished the whole upon the model; but in vain! The model in itself was, indeed, completed; his invention had mastered the difficulty that it had encountered. But Adam had complicated the contrivance by adding to it experimental proofs of the agency it was intended to exercise. It was necessary in that age, if he were to convince others, to show more than the principle of his engine,—he must show also something of its effects; turn a mill without wind or water, or set in motion some mimic vehicle without other force than that the contrivance itself supplied. And here, at every step, new obstacles arose. It was the misfortune to science in those days, not only that all books and mathematical instruments were enormously dear, but that the students, still struggling into light, through the glorious delusions of alchemy and mysticism, imagined that, even in simple practical operations, there were peculiar virtues in virgin gold and certain precious stones. A link in the process upon which Adam was engaged failed him; his ingenuity was baffled, his work stood still; and in poring again and again over the learned manuscripts—alas! now lost—in which certain German doctors had sought to explain the pregnant hints of Roger Bacon, he found it inculcated that the axle of a certain wheel must be composed of a diamond. Now, in truth, it so happened that Adam's contrivance, which (even without the appliances which were added in illustration of the theory) was infinitely more complicated than modern research has found necessary, did not even require the wheel in question, much less the absent diamond; it happened, also, that his understanding, which, though so obtuse in common life, was in these matters astonishingly clear, could not trace any mathematical operations by which the diamond axle would in the least correct the difficulty that had suddenly started up; and yet the accursed diamond began to haunt him,—the German authority was so positive on the point, and that authority had in many respects been accurate. Nor was this all,—the diamond was to be no vulgar diamond; it was to be endowed, by talismanic skill, with certain properties and virtues; it was to be for a certain number of hours exposed to the rays of the full moon; it was to be washed in a primitive and wondrous elixir, the making of which consumed no little of the finest gold. This diamond was to be to the machine what the soul is to the body,—a glorious, all-pervading, mysterious principle of activity and life. Such were the dreams that obscured the cradle of infant science! And Adam, with all his reasoning powers, big lore in the hard truths of

mathematics, was but one of the giant children of the dawn. The magnificent phrases and solemn promises of the mystic Germans got firm hold of his fancy. Night and day, waking or sleeping, the diamond, basking in the silence of the full moon, sparkled before his eyes. Meanwhile all was at a stand. In the very last steps of his discovery he was arrested. Then suddenly looking round for vulgar moneys to purchase the precious gem, and the materials for the soluble elixir, he saw that MONEY had been at work around him,--that he had been sleeping softly and faring sumptuously. He was seized with a divine rage. How had Sibyll dared to secrete from him this hoard; how presumed to waste upon the base body what might have so profited the eternal mind? In his relentless ardour, in his sublime devotion and loyalty to his abstract idea, there was a devouring cruelty, of which this meek and gentle scholar was wholly unconscious. The grim iron model, like a Moloch, ate up all things,--health, life, love; and its jaws now opened for his child. He rose from his bed,--it was daybreak,--he threw on his dressing-robe, he strode into his daughter's room; the gray twilight came through the comfortless, curtainless casement, deep sunk into the wall. Adam did not pause to notice that the poor child, though she had provoked his anger by refitting his dismal chamber, had spent nothing in giving a less rugged frown to her own.

The scanty worm-worn furniture, the wretched pallet, the poor attire folded decently beside,--nothing save that inexpressible purity and cleanliness which, in the lowliest hovel, a pure and maiden mind gathers round it; nothing to distinguish the room of her whose childhood had passed in courts from the but of the meanest daughter of drudgery and toil! No,--he who had lavished the fortunes of his father and big child into the grave of his idea--no--he saw nothing of this self-forgetful penury--the diamond danced before him! He approached the bed; and oh! the contrast of that dreary room and peasant pallet to the delicate, pure, enchanting loveliness of the sleeping inmate. The scanty covering left partially exposed the snow-white neck and rounded shoulder; the face was pillowed upon the arm, in an infantine grace; the face was slightly flushed, and the fresh red lips parted into a smile,--for in her sleep the virgin dreamed,--a happy dream! It was a sight to have touched a father's heart, to have stopped his footstep, and hushed his breath into prayer. And call not Adam hard--unnatural--that he was not then, as men far more harsh than he--for the father at that moment was not in his breast, the human man was gone--he himself, like his model, was a machine of iron!--his life was his one idea!

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

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

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

"The gold!" said Adam, mechanically, but in a softer voice,—"all--all thou hast! How didst thou get it,—how?"

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

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

"Dost thou not labour too?"

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

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

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

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

"Eh, sir!" she said, in her shrill, cracked tone, "I thought when I heard your door open, and your step hurrying down, you were after no good deeds. Fie, master, fie! I have clung to you when all reviled, and when starvation within and foul words without made all my hire; for I ever thought you a good and mild man, though little better than stark wode. But, augh! to rob your child thus, to leave her to starve and pine! We old folks are used to it. Look round, look round! I remember this chamber, when ye first came to your father's hall. Saints of heaven! There stood the brave bed all rustling with damask of silk; on those stone walls once hung fine arras of the Flemings,--a marriage gift to my lady from Queen Margaret, and a mighty show to see, and good for the soul's comforts, with Bible stories wrought on it. Eh, sir! don't you call to mind your namesake, Master Adam, in his brave scarlet hosen, and Madam Eve, in her bonny blue kirtle and laced courtpie? and now--now look round, I say, and see what you have brought your child to!"

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

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

"Forbear, woman!" cried Adam, in a voice of thunder; "forbear! Heavens!" And he waved his hand as he spoke, with so unexpected a majesty that Madge was awed into sudden silence, and, darting a look of compassion at Sibyll, she hobbled from the room. Adam stood motionless an instant; but when he felt his child's soft arms round his neck, when he heard her voice struggling against tears, praying him not to heed the foolish words of the old servant,--to take--to take all, that it would be easy to gain more,--the ice of his philosophy melted at once; the man broke forth, and, clasping Sibyll to his heart, and kissing her cheek, her lips, her hands, he faltered out, "No! no! forgive me! Forgive thy cruel father! Much thought has maddened me, I think,--it has indeed! Poor child, poor Sibyll," and he stroked her cheek gently, and with a movement of pathetic pity--

"poor child, thou art pale, and so slight and delicate! And this chamber--and thy loneliness--and--ah! my life hath been a curse to thee, yet I meant to bequeath it a boon to all!

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

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

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

CHAPTER III.

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

Sibyll, whose soft heart bled for her father, and who now reproached herself for having concealed from him her little hoard, began hastily to dress that she might seek him out, and soothe the painful feelings which the honest rudeness of Madge had aroused. But before her task was concluded, there pealed a loud knock at the outer door. She heard the old housekeeper's quivering voice responding to a loud clear tone; and presently Madge herself ascended the stairs to Warner's room, followed by a man whom Sibyll instantly recognized--for he was not one easily to be forgotten--as their protector from the assault of the mob. She drew back hastily as he passed her door, and in some wonder and alarm awaited the descent of Madge. That venerable personage having with some difficulty induced her master to open his door and admit the stranger, came straight into her young lady's chamber.

"Cheer up, cheer up, sweetheart," said the old woman; "I think better days will shine soon; for the honest man I have admitted says he is but come to tell Master Warner something that will redound much to his

profit. Oh, he is a wonderful fellow, this same Robin! You saw how he turned the cullions from burning the old house!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ah," exclaimed Adam, with a gleam of something like joy on his face, "art thou indeed that riotous, brawling, fighting, frank-hearted, bold fellow, Robert Hilyard? Ha! ha!--those were merry days! I have known none like them--" The old schoolfellows shook hands heartily.

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

true, thou and I have each been working for one end; thou to make the world other than it is, and I to--"

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

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

"Does thy philosophy disdain gold?"

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

"Wilt thou brave some danger--thou wert ever a fearless boy when thy blood was up, though so meek and gentle--wilt thou brave some danger for large reward?"

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

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

"Twenty!--A mine! a Tmolus!" exclaimed Adam, in uncontrollable glee.

"Twenty! O true friend, then my work will be born at last!"

"But hear me further, Adam, for I will not deceive thee; the visit hath its peril! Thou must first see if the mind of King Henry, for king he is, though the usurper wear his holy crown, be clear and healthful. Thou knowest he is subject to dark moods,--suspension of man's reason; and if he be, as his friends hope, sane and right-judging, thou wilt give him certain papers, which, after his hand has

signed them, thou wilt bring back to me. If in this thou succeedest, know that thou mayst restore the royalty of Lancaster to the purple and the throne; that thou wilt have princes and earls for favourers and protectors to thy learned life; that thy fortunes and fame are made! Fail, be discovered,--and Edward of York never spares!--thy guerdon will be the nearest tree and the strongest rope!"

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

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

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

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

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

A tear stood in the bright gray eyes of the bluff visitor. "Ah, Adam," he said sadly, "only by the candle held in the skeleton hand of Poverty can man read his own dark heart. But thou, Workman of Knowledge, hast the same interest as the poor who dig and delve. Though strange circumstance hath made me the servant and emissary of Margaret, think not that I am but the varlet of the great." Hilyard paused a moment, and resumed,--

"Thou knowest, peradventure, that my race dates from an elder date than these Norman nobles, who boast their robber-fathers. From the renowned Saxon Thane, who, free of hand and of cheer, won the name of Hildegardis, [Hildegardis, namely, old German, a person of noble or generous disposition. Wotton's "Baronetage," art. Hilyard, or Hildyard, of Pattrington.] our family took its rise. But under these

Norman barons we sank with the nation to which we belonged. Still were we called gentlemen, and still were dubbed knights. But as I grew up to man's estate, I felt myself more Saxon than gentleman, and, as one of a subject and vassal race, I was a son of the Saxon people. My father, like thee, was a man of thought and bookcraft. I dare own to thee that he was a Lollard; and with the religion of those bold foes to priest-vice, goes a spirit that asks why the people should be evermore the spoil and prey of lords and kings. Early in my youth, my father, fearing rack and fagot in England, sought refuge in the Hans town of Lubeck. There I learned grave truths,--how liberty can be won and guarded. Later in life I saw the republics of Italy, and I asked why they were so glorious in all the arts and craft of civil life, while the braver men of France and England seemed as savages by the side of the Florentine burgess, nay, of the Lombard vine-dresser. I saw that, even when those republics fell a victim to some tyrant or podesta, their men still preserved rights and uttered thoughts which left them more free and more great than the Commons of England after all their boasted wars. I came back to my native land and settled in the North, as my franklin ancestry before me. The broad lands of my forefathers had devolved on the elder line, and gave a knight's fee to Sir Robert Hilyard, who fell afterwards at Towton for the Lancastrians. But I had won gold in the far countree, and I took farm and homestead near Lord Warwick's tower of Middleham. The feud between Lancaster and York broke forth; Earl Warwick summoned his retainers, myself amongst them, since I lived upon his land; I sought the great earl, and I told him boldly--him whom the Commons deemed a friend, and a foe to all malfaisance and abuse--I told him that the war he asked me to join seemed to me but a war of ambitious lords, and that I saw not how the Commons were to be bettered, let who would be king. The earl listened and deigned to reason; and when he saw I was not convinced, he left me to my will; for he is a noble chief, and I admired even his angry pride, when he said, 'Let no man fight for Warwick whose heart beats not in his cause.' I lived afterwards to discharge my debt to the proud earl, and show him how even the lion may be meshed, and how even the mouse may gnaw the net. But to my own tragedy. So I quitted those parts, for I feared my own resolution near so great a man; I made a new home not far from the city of York. So, Adam, when all the land around bristled with pike and gisarme, and while my own cousin and namesake, the head of my House, was winning laurels and wasting blood--I, thy quarrelsome, fighting friend--lived at home in peace with my wife and child (for I was now married, and wife and child were dear to me), and tilled my lands. But in peace I was active and astir, for my words inflamed the bosoms of labourers and peasants, and many of them, benighted as they were, thought with

me. One day--I was absent from home, selling my grain in the marts of York--one day there entered the village a young captain, a boy-chief, Edward Earl of March, beating for recruits. Dost thou heed me, Adam? Well, man--well, the peasants stood aloof from tromp and banner, and they answered, to all the talk of hire and fame, 'Robin Hilyard tells us we have nothing to gain but blows,--leave us to hew and to delve.' Oh, Adam, this boy, this chief, the Earl of March, now crowned King Edward, made but one reply, 'This Robin Hilyard must be a wise man,--show me his house.' They pointed out the ricks, the barns, the homestead, and in five minutes all--all were in flames. 'Tell the hilding, when he returns, that thus Edward of March, fair to friends and terrible to foes, rewards the coward who disaffects the men of Yorkshire to their chief.' And by the blazing rafters, and the pale faces of the silent crowd, he rode on his way to battle and the throne!"

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

"I returned to find a heap of ashes; I returned to find my wife a maniac; I returned to find my child--my boy--great God!--he had run to hide himself, in terror at the torches and the grim men; they had failed to discover him, till, too late, his shrieks, amidst the crashing walls, burst on his mother's ear,--and the scorched, mangled, lifeless corpse lay on that mother's bosom!"

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

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

"One dark twilight--thou hast heard the tale, every village minstrel sets it to his viol--a majestic woman, a hunted fugitive, crossed my path; she led a boy in her hand, a year or so younger than my murdered child. 'Friend!' said the woman, fearlessly, 'save the son of your

king; I am Margaret, Queen of England! I saved them both. From that hour the robber-chief, the Lollard's son, became a queen's friend. Here opened, at least, vengeance against the fell destroyer. Now see you why I seek you, why tempt you into danger? Pause, if you will, for my passion heats my blood,--and all the kings since Saul, it may be, are not worth one scholar's life! And yet," continued Hilyard, regaining his ordinary calm tone, "and yet, it seemeth to me, as I said at first, that all who labour have in this a common cause and interest with the poor. This woman-king, though bloody man, with his wine-cups and his harlots, this usurping York--his very existence flaunts the life of the sons of toil. In civil war and in broil, in strife that needs the arms of the people, the people shall get their own."

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

"I heed you," said Warner, meekly.

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

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

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

rude slave of the tymbesteres.

The anxiety the visit of Hilyard had occasioned her was at once allayed, when he informed her that he had been her father's schoolmate, and desired to become his friend. And when he drew a moving picture of the exiled condition of Margaret and the young prince, and their natural desire to learn tidings of the health of the deposed king, her gentle heart, forgetting the haughty insolence with which her royal mistress had often wounded and chilled her childhood, felt all the generous and compassionate sympathy the conspirator desired to awaken. "The occasion," added Hilyard, "for learning the poor captive's state now offers! He hath heard of your father's labours; he desires to learn their nature from his own lips. He is allowed to receive, by an order from King Edward's chamberlain, the visits of those scholars in whose converse he was ever wont to delight. Wilt thou so far aid the charitable work as to seek the Lord Hastings, and crave the necessary license? Thou seest that thy father has wayward and abstract moods; he might forget that Henry of Windsor is no longer king, and might give him that title in speaking to Lord Hastings,—a slip of the tongue which the law styles treason."

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

Hilyard winced as he interrupted her hastily,

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

"His life!"

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

"Alas! alas! it is true."

"That gold he shall honourably win! Nor is this all. Thou wilt see the Lord Hastings: he is less learned, perhaps, than Worcester, less dainty in accomplishments and gifts than Anthony Woodville, but his

mind is profound and vast; all men praise him save the queen's kin. He loves scholars; he is mild to distress; he laughs at the superstitions of the vulgar. Thou wilt see the Lord Hastings, and thou mayst interest him in thy father's genius and his fate!"

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

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

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

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

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

Sibyll sought her father; his mind had flown back to the model. He was already living in the life that the promised gold would give to the dumb thought. True that all the ingenious additions to the engine--additions that were to convince the reason and startle the fancy--were not yet complete (for want, of course, of the diamond bathed in moonbeams); but still there was enough in the inventions already achieved to excite curiosity and obtain encouragement. So, with care and diligence and sanguine hope the philosopher prepared the grim model for exhibition to a man who had worn a crown, and might wear again. But with that innocent and sad cunning which is so common with enthusiasts of one idea, the sublime dwellers of the narrow border between madness and inspiration, Adam, amidst his excitement, contrived to conceal from his daughter all glimpse of the danger he ran, of the correspondence of which he was to be the medium,--or rather, may we think that he had forgotten both! Not the stout Warwick himself, in the roar of battle, thought so little of peril to life and limb as that gentle student, in the reveries of his lonely closet; and therefore, all unsuspecting, and seeing but diversion to Adam's recent gloom of despair, an opening to all his bright

prospects, Sibyll attired herself in her holiday garments, drew her wimple closely round her face, and summoning Madge to attend her, bent her way to the Tower. Near York House, within view of the Sanctuary and the Palace of Westminster, they took a boat, and arrived at the stairs of the Tower.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD HASTINGS.

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

The manners of Lord Hastings had contributed to his fortunes. Despite the newness of his honours, even the haughtiest of the ancient nobles bore him no grudge, for his demeanour was at once modest and manly. He was peculiarly simple and unostentatious in his habits, and possessed that nameless charm which makes men popular with the lowly and welcome to the great. [On Edward's accession so highly were the services of Hastings appreciated by the party, that not only the king, but many of the nobility, contributed to render his wealth equal to his new station, by grants of lands and moneys. Several years afterwards, when he went with Edward into France, no less than two lords, nine knights, fifty-eight squires, and twenty gentlemen joined his train.--Dugdale: Baronage, p. 583. Sharon Turner: History of England, vol. iii. p. 380.] But in that day a certain mixture of vice was necessary to success; and Hastings wounded no self-love by the

assumption of unfashionable purism. He was regarded with small favour by the queen, who knew him as the companion of Edward in his pleasures, and at a later period accused him of enticing her faithless lord into unworthy affections. And certain it is, that he was foremost amongst the courtiers in those adventures which we call the excesses of gayety and folly, though too often leading to Solomon's wisdom and his sadness. But profligacy with Hastings had the excuse of ardent passions: he had loved deeply, and unhappily, in his earlier youth, and he gave in to the dissipation of the time with the restless eagerness common to strong and active natures when the heart is not at ease; and under all the light fascination of his converse; or the dissipation of his life, lurked the melancholic temperament of a man worthy of nobler things. Nor was the courtly vice of the libertine the only drawback to the virtuous character assigned to Hastings by Comines. His experience of men had taught him something of the disdain of the cynic, and he scrupled not at serving his pleasures or his ambition by means which his loftier nature could not excuse to his clear sense. [See Comines, book vi., for a curious anecdote of what Mr. Sharon Turner happily calls "the moral coquetry" of Hastings,--an anecdote which reveals much of his character.] Still, however, the world, which had deteriorated, could not harden him. Few persons so able acted so frequently from impulse; the impulses were for the most part affectionate and generous, but then came the regrets of caution and experience; and Hastings summoned his intellect to correct the movement of his heart,--in other words, reflection sought to undo what impulse had suggested. Though so successful a gallant, he had not acquired the ruthless egotism of the sensualist; and his conduct to women often evinced the weakness of giddy youth rather than the cold deliberation of profligate manhood. Thus in his veriest vices there was a spurious amiability, a seductive charm; while in the graver affairs of life the intellectual susceptibility of his nature served but to quicken his penetration and stimulate his energies, and Hastings might have said, with one of his Italian contemporaries, "That in subjection to the influences of women he had learned the government of men." In a word, his powers to attract, and his capacities to command, may be guessed by this,--that Lord Hastings was the only man Richard III. seems to have loved, when Duke of Gloucester, [Sir Thomas More, "Life of Edward V.," speaks of "the great love" Richard bore to Hastings.] and the only man he seems to have feared, when resolved to be King of England.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Of me, noble sir?"

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

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

"The fortunate person whom Alwyn has enriched at so slight a cost? Yes. Do not grudge me my good fortune in this. Thou hast nobler treasures, methinks, to bestow on another!"

"My good lord!"

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

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

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

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

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

but, alas, it may be, above thy fortunes?"

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

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

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

CHAPTER V.

MASTER ADAM WARNER AND KING HENRY THE SIXTH.

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

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

"Suffer this trusty fellow to guide thee, dear Adam; he will take thee through ways where thy brutal neighbours are not likely to meet and

molest thee. Call all thy wits to the surface. Speed and prosper!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

Either unconscious or contemptuous of the perils to which he was subjected, the student, with his silent companions, performed the voyage, and landed in sight of the Fortress-Palatine. And now Hugh

stopped before a house of good fashion, knocked at the door, which was opened by an old servitor, disappeared for a few moments, and returning, informed Sibyll, in a meaning whisper, that the gentlewoman within was a good Lancastrian, and prayed the donzell to rest in her company till Master Warner's return.

Sibyll, accordingly, after pressing her father's hand without fear-- for she had deemed the sole danger Adam risked was from the rabble by the way--followed Hugh into a fair chamber, strewd with rushes, where an aged dame, of noble air and aspect, was employed at her broidery frame. This gentlewoman, the widow of a nobleman who had fallen in the service of Henry, received her graciously, and Hugh then retired to complete his commission. The student, the mule, the model, and the porter pursued their way to the entrance of that part of the gloomy palace inhabited by Henry. Here they were stopped, and Adam, after rummaging long in vain for the chamberlain's passport, at last happily discovered it, pinned to his sleeve, by Sibyll's forethought. On this a gentleman was summoned to inspect the order, and in a few moments Adam was conducted to the presence of the illustrious prisoner.

"And what," said a subaltern officer, lolling by the archway of the (now styled) "Bloody Tower," hard by the turret devoted to the prisoner, [The Wakefield Tower] and speaking to Adam's guide, who still mounted guard by the model,--"what may be the precious burden of which thou art the convoy?"

"Marry, sir," said Hugh, who spoke in the strong Yorkshire dialect, which we are obliged to render into intelligible English--"marry, I weet not,--it is some curious puppet-box, or quiet contrivance, that Master Warner, whom they say is a very deft and ingenious personage, is permitted to bring hither for the Lord Henry's diversion."

"A puppet-box!" said the officer, with much animated curiosity.

"Fore the Mass! that must be a pleasant sight. Lift the lid, fellow!"

"Please your honour, I do not dare," returned Hugh,--"I but obey orders."

"Obey mine, then. Out of the way," and the officer lifted the lid of the pannier with the point of his dagger, and peered within. He drew back, much disappointed. "Holy Mother!" said he, "this seemeth more like an instrument of torture than a juggler's merry device. It looks parlous ugly!"

"Hush!" said one of the lazy bystanders, with whom the various gateways and courts of the Palace-Fortress were crowded, "hush--thy cap and thy knee, sir!"

The officer started; and, looking round, perceived a young man of low stature, followed by three or four knights and nobles, slowly approaching towards the arch, and every cap in the vicinity was off, and every knee bowed.

The eye of this young man was already bent, with a searching and keen gaze, upon the motionless mule, standing patiently by the Wakefield Tower; and turning from the mule to the porter, the latter shrunk, and grew pale, at that dark, steady, penetrating eye, which seemed to pierce at once into the secrets and hearts of men.

"Who may this young lord be?" he whispered to the officer.

"Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, man," was the answer. "Uncover, varlet!"

"Surely," said the prince, pausing by the gate, "surely this is no sumpter-mule, bearing provisions to the Lord Henry of Windsor. It would be but poor respect to that noble person, whom, alas the day! his grace the king is unwillingly compelled to guard from the malicious designs of rebels and mischief-seekers, that one not bearing the king's livery should attend to any of the needful wants of so worshipful a lord and guest!"

"My lord," said the officer at the gate, "one Master Adam Warner hath just, by permission, been conducted to the Lord Henry's presence, and the beast beareth some strange and grim-looking device for my lord's diversion."

The singular softness and urbanity which generally characterized the Duke of Gloucester's tone and bearing at that time,--which in a court so full of factions and intrigues made him the enemy of none and seemingly the friend of all, and, conjoined with abilities already universally acknowledged, had given to his very boyhood a pre-eminence of grave repute and good opinion, which, indeed, he retained till the terrible circumstances connected with his accession to the throne, under the bloody name of Richard the Third, roused all men's hearts and reasons into the persuasion that what before had seemed virtue was but dissimulation,--this singular sweetness, we say, of manner and

voice, had in it, nevertheless, something that imposed and thrilled and awed. And in truth, in our common and more vulgar intercourse with life, we must have observed, that where external gentleness of bearing is accompanied by a repute for iron will, determined resolution, and a serious, profound, and all-inquiring intellect, it carries with it a majesty wholly distinct from that charm which is exercised by one whose mildness of nature corresponds with the outward humility; and, if it does not convey the notion of falseness, bears the appearance of that perfect self-possession, that calm repose of power, which intimidates those it influences far more than the imperious port and the loud voice. And they who best knew the duke, knew also that, despite this general smoothness of mien, his temperament was naturally irritable, quick, and subject to stormy gusts of passion, the which defects his admirers praised him for labouring hard and sedulously to keep in due control. Still, to a keen observer, the constitutional tendencies of that nervous temperament were often visible, even in his blindest moments, even when his voice was most musical, his smile most gracious. If something stung or excited him, an uneasy gnawing of the nether lip, a fretful playing with his dagger, drawing it up and down from its sheath, [Pol. Virg. 565] a slight twitching of the muscles of the face, and a quiver of the eyelid, betokened the efforts he made at self-command; and now, as his dark eyes rested upon Hugh's pale countenance, and then glanced upon the impassive mule, dozing quietly under the weight of poor Adam's model, his hand mechanically sought his dagger-hilt, and his face took a sinister and sombre expression.

"Thy name, friend?"

"Hugh Withers, please you, my lord duke."

"Um! North country, by thine accent. Dost thou serve this Master Warner?"

"No, my lord, I was only hired with my mule to carry--"

"Ah, true! to carry what thy pannier contains; open it. Holy Paul! a strange jonglerie indeed! This Master Adam Warner,--methinks, I have heard his name--a learned man--um--let me see his safe conduct. Right,--it is Lord Hastings's signature." But still the prince held the passport, and still suspiciously eyed the Eureka and its appliances, which, in their complicated and native ugliness of doors, wheels, pipes, and chimney, were exposed to his view. At this moment, one of the attendants of Henry descended the stairs of the Wakefield

Tower, with a request that the model might be carried up to divert the prisoner.

Richard paused a moment, as the officer hesitatingly watched his countenance before giving the desired permission. But the prince, turning to him, and smoothing his brow, said mildly, "Certes! all that can divert the Lord Henry must be innocent pastime. And I am well pleased that he hath this cheerful mood for recreation. It gainsayeth those who would accuse us of rigour in his durance. Yes, this warrant is complete and formal;" and the prince returned the passport to the officer, and walked slowly on through that gloomy arch ever more associated with Richard of Gloucester's memory, and beneath the very room in which our belief yet holds that the infant sons of Edward IV. breathed their last; still, as Gloucester moved, he turned and turned, and kept his eye furtively fixed upon the porter.

"Lovell," he said to one of the gentlemen who attended him, and who was among the few admitted to his more peculiar intimacy, "that man is of the North."

"Well, my lord?"

"The North was always well affected to the Lancastrians. Master Warner hath been accused of witchcraft. Marry, I should like to see his device--um; Master Catesby, come hither,--approach, sir. Go back, and the instant Adam Warner and his contrivance are dismissed, bring them both to me in the king's chamber. Thou understandest? We too would see his device,--and let neither man nor mechanical, when once they reappear, out of thine eye's reach. For divers and subtle are the contrivances of treasonable men!"

Catesby bowed, and Richard, without speaking further, took his way to the royal apartments, which lay beyond the White Tower, towards the river, and are long since demolished.

Meanwhile the porter, with the aid of one of the attendants, had carried the model into the chamber of the august captive. Henry, attired in a loose robe, was pacing the room with a slow step, and his head sunk on his bosom,--while Adam with much animation was enlarging on the wonders of the contrivance he was about to show him. The chamber was commodious, and furnished with sufficient attention to the state and dignity of the prisoner; for Edward, though savage and relentless when his blood was up, never descended into the cool and continuous cruelty of detail.

The chamber may yet be seen,--its shape a spacious octagon; but the walls now rude and bare were then painted and blazoned with scenes from the Old Testament. The door opened beneath the pointed arch in the central side (not where it now does), giving entrance from a small anteroom, in which the visitor now beholds the receptacle for old rolls and papers. At the right, on entering, where now, if our memory mistake not, is placed a press, stood the bed, quaintly carved, and with hangings of damascene. At the farther end the deep recess which faced the ancient door was fitted up as a kind of oratory. And there were to be seen, besides the crucifix and the Mass-book, a profusion of small vessels of gold and crystal, containing the relics, supposed or real, of saint and martyr, treasures which the deposed king had collected in his palmier days at a sum that, in the minds of his followers, had been better bestowed on arms and war-steeds. A young man named Allerton--one of the three gentlemen personally attached to Henry, to whom Edward had permitted general access, and who, in fact, lodged in other apartments of the Wakefield Tower, and might be said to share his captivity--was seated before a table, and following the steps of his musing master, with earnest and watchful eyes.

One of the small spaniels employed in springing game--for Henry, despite his mildness, had been fond of all the sports of the field--lay curled round on the floor, but started up, with a shrill bark, at the entrance of the bearer of the model, while a starling in a cage by the window, seemingly delighted at the disturbance, flapped his wings, and screamed out, "Bad men! Bad world! Poor Henry!"

The captive paused at that cry, and a sad and patient smile of inexpressible melancholy and sweetness hovered over his lips. Henry still retained much of the personal comeliness he possessed at the time when Margaret of Anjou, the theme of minstrel and minne singer, left her native court of poets for the fatal throne of England. But beauty, usually so popular and precious a gift to kings, was not in him of that order which commanded the eye and moved the admiration of a turbulent people and a haughty chivalry. The features, if regular, were small; their expression meek and timid; the form, though tall, was not firm-knit and muscular; the lower limbs were too thin, the body had too much flesh, the delicate hands betrayed the sickly paleness of feeble health; there was a dreamy vagueness in the clear soft blue eyes, and a listless absence of all energy in the habitual bend, the slow, heavy, sauntering tread,--all about that benevolent aspect, that soft voice, that resigned mien, and gentle manner, spoke the exquisite, unresisting goodness, which provoked the lewd to taunt,

the hardy to despise, the insolent to rebel; for the foes of a king in stormy times are often less his vices than his virtues.

"And now, good my lord," said Adam, hastening, with eager hands, to assist the bearer in depositing the model on the table--"now will I explain to you the contrivance which it hath cost me long years of patient toil to shape from thought into this iron form."

"But first," said Allerton, "were it not well that these good people withdrew? A contriver likes not others to learn his secret ere the time hath come to reap its profits."

"Surely, surely!" said Adam, and alarmed at the idea thus suggested, he threw the folds of his gown over the model.

The attendant bowed and retired; Hugh followed him, but not till he had exchanged a significant look with Allerton. As soon as the room was left clear to Adam, the captive, and Master Allerton, the last rose, and looking hastily round the chamber, approached the mechanic. "Quick, sir!" said he, in a whisper, "we are not often left without witnesses."

"Verily," said Adam, who had now forgotten kings and stratagems, plots and counterplots, and was all absorbed in his invention, "verily, young man, hurry not in this fashion,--I am about to begin. Know, my lord," and he turned to Henry, who, with an indolent, dreamy gaze, stood contemplating the Eureka,--"know that more than a hundred years before the Christian era, one Hero, an Alexandrian, discovered the force produced by the vapour begot by heat on water. That this power was not unknown to the ancient sages, witness the contrivance, not otherwise to be accounted for, of the heathen oracles; but to our great countryman and predecessor, Roger Bacon, who first suggested that vehicles might be drawn without steeds or steers, and ships might--"

"Marry, sir," interrupted Allerton, with great impatience, "it is not to prate to us of such trivial fables of Man, or such wanton sports of the Foul Fiend, that thou hast risked limb and life. Time is precious. I have been prevised that thou hast letters for King Henry; produce them, quick!"

A deep glow of indignation had overspread the enthusiast's face at the commencement of this address; but the close reminded him, in truth, of his errand.

"Hot youth," said he, with dignity, "a future age may judge differently of what thou deemest trivial fables, and may rate high this poor invention when the brawls of York and Lancaster are forgotten."

"Hear him," said Henry, with a soft smile, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the young man, who was about to utter a passionate and scornful retort,--"hear him, sir. Have I not often and ever said this same thing to thee? We children of a day imagine our contests are the sole things that move the world. Alack! our fathers thought the same; and they and their turmoils sleep forgotten! Nay, Master Warner,"--for here Adam, poor man, awed by Henry's mildness into shame at his discourteous vaunting, began to apologize,--"nay, sir, nay-- thou art right to contemn our bloody and futile struggles for a crown of thorns; for--"

'Kingdoms are but cares,
State is devoid of stay
Riches are ready snares,
And hasten to decay.'

[Lines ascribed to Henry VI., with commendation "as a prettie verse," by Sir John Harrington, in the "Nugae Antiquae." They are also given, with little alteration, to the unhappy king by Baldwin, in his tragedy of "King Henry VI."]

"And yet, sir, believe me, thou hast no cause for vain glory in thine own craft and labours; for to wit and to lere there are the same vanity and vexation of spirit as to war and empire. Only, O would-be wise man, only when we muse on Heaven do our souls ascend from the fowler's snare!"

"My saint-like liege," said Allerton, bowing low, and with tears in his eyes, "thinkest thou not that thy very disdain of thy rights makes thee more worthy of them? If not for thine, for thy son's sake, remember that the usurper sits on the throne of the conqueror of Agincourt!--Sir Clerk, the letters."

Adam, already anxious to retrieve the error of his first forgetfulness, here, after a moment's struggle for the necessary remembrance, drew the papers from the labyrinthine receptacle which concealed them; and Henry uttered an exclamation of joy as, after cutting the silk, his eye glanced over the writing--

"My Margaret! my wife!" Presently he grew pale, and his hands trembled. "Saints defend her! Saints defend her! She is here, disguised, in London!"

"Margaret! our hero-queen! the manlike woman!" exclaimed Allerton, clasping his hands. "Then be sure that--" He stopped, and abruptly taking Adam's arm, drew him aside, while Henry continued to read-- "Master Warner, we may trust thee,--thou art one of us; thou art sent here, I know; by Robin of Redesdale,--we may trust thee?"

"Young sir," replied the philosopher, gravely, "the fears and hopes of power are not amidst the uneasier passions of the student's mind. I pledged myself but to bear these papers hither, and to return with what may be sent back."

"But thou didst this for love of the cause, the truth, and the right?"

"I did it partly from Hilyard's tale of wrong, but partly, also, for the gold," answered Adam, simply; and his noble air, his high brow, the serene calm of his features, so contrasted with the meanness implied in the latter words of his confession, that Allerton stared at him amazed, and without reply.

Meanwhile Henry had concluded the letter, and with a heavy sigh glanced over the papers that accompanied it. "Alack! alack! more turbulence, more danger and disquiet, more of my people's blood!" He motioned to the young man, and drawing him to the window, while Adam returned to his model, put the papers in his hand. "Allerton," he said, "thou lovest me, but thou art one of the few in this distraught land who love also God. Thou art not one of the warriors, the men of steel. Counsel me. See: Margaret demands my signature to these papers; the one, empowering and craving the levy of men and arms in the northern counties; the other, promising free pardon to all who will desert Edward; the third--it seemeth to me more strange and less kinglike than the others--undertaking to abolish all the imposts and all the laws that press upon the commons, and (is this a holy and pious stipulation?) to inquire into the exactions and persecutions of the priesthood of our Holy Church!"

"Sire!" said the young man, after he had hastily perused the papers, "my lady liege showeth good argument for your assent to two, at least, of these undertakings. See the names of fifty gentlemen ready to take arms in your cause if authorized by your royal warrant. The men of

the North are malcontent with the usurper, but they will not yet stir, unless at your own command. Such documents will, of course, be used with discretion, and not to imperil your Grace's safety."

"My safety!" said Henry, with a flash of his father's hero soul in his eyes--"of that I think not! If I have small courage to attack, I have some fortitude to bear. But three months after these be signed, how many brave hearts will be still! how many stout hands be dust! O Margaret! Margaret! why temptest thou? Wert thou so happy when a queen?" The prisoner broke from Allerton's arm, and walked, in great disorder and irresolution, to and fro the chamber; and strange it was to see the contrast between himself and Warner,--both in so much alike, both so purely creatures out of the common world, so gentle, abstract, so utterly living in the life apart: and now the student so calm, the prince so disturbed! The contrast struck Henry himself! He paused abruptly, and, folding his arms, contemplated the philosopher, as, with an affectionate complacency, Adam played and toyed, as it were, with his beloved model; now opening and shutting again its doors, now brushing away with his sleeve some particles of dust that had settled on it, now retiring a few paces to gaze the better on its stern symmetry.

"Oh, my Allerton!" cried Henry, "behold! the kingdom a man makes out of his own mind is the only one that it delighteth man to govern! Behold, he is lord over its springs and movements; its wheels revolve and stop at his bidding. Here, here, alone, God never asketh the ruler, 'Why was the blood of thousands poured forth like water, that a worm might wear a crown?'"

"Sire," said Allerton, solemnly, "when our Heavenly King appoints his anointed representative on earth, He gives to that human delegate no power to resign the ambassade and trust. What suicide is to a man, abdication is to a king! How canst thou dispose of thy son's rights? And what becomes of those rights if thou wilt prefer for him the exile, for thyself the prison, when one effort may restore a throne!"

Henry seemed struck by a tone of argument that suited both his own mind and the reasoning of the age. He gazed a moment on the face of the young man, muttered to himself, and suddenly moving to the table, signed the papers, and restored them to Adam, who mechanically replaced them in their iron hiding-place.

"Now begone, Sir!" whispered Allerton, afraid that Henry's mind might again change.

"Will not my lord examine the engine?" asked Warner, half-beseechingly.

"Not to-day! See, he has already retired to his oratory, he is in prayer!" and, going to the door, Allerton summoned the attendants in waiting to carry down the model.

"Well, well, patience, patience! thou shalt have thine audience at last," muttered Adam, as he retired from the room, his eyes fixed upon the neglected infant of his brain.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW, ON LEAVING KING LOG, FOOLISH WISDOM RUNS A-MUCK ON KING STORK.

At the outer door of the Tower by which he had entered, the philosopher was accosted by Catesby,--a man who, in imitation of his young patron, exhibited the soft and oily manner which concealed intense ambition and innate ferocity.

"Worshipful my master," said he, bowing low, but with a half sneer on his lips, "the king and his Highness the Duke of Gloucester have heard much of your strange skill, and command me to lead you to their presence. Follow, sir, and you, my men, convey this quaint contrivance to the king's apartments."

With this, not waiting for any reply, Catesby strode on. Hugh's face fell; he turned very pale, and, imagining himself unobserved, turned round to slink away. But Catesby, who seemed to have eyes at the back of his head, called out, in a mild tone,--

"Good fellow, help to bear the mechanical--you, too, may be needed."

"Cog's wounds!" muttered Hugh, "an' I had but known what it was to set my foot in a king's palace! Such walking may do for the silken shoon, but the hobnail always gets into a hobble." With that, affecting a cheerful mien, he helped to replace the model on the mule.

Meanwhile, Adam, elated, poor man! at the flattery of the royal mandate, persuaded that his fame had reached Edward's ears, and chafed

at the little heed paid by the pious Henry to his great work, stalked on, his head in the air. "Verily," mused the student, "King Edward may have been a cruel youth, and over hasty; it is horrible to think of Robert Hilyard's calamities! But men do say he hath an acute and masterly comprehension. Doubtless, he will perceive at a glance how much I can advantage his kingdom." With this, we grieve to say, selfish reflection--which, if the thought of his model could have slept a while, Adam would have blushed to recall, as an affront to Hilyard's wrongs--the philosopher followed Catesby across the spacious yard, along a narrow passage, and up a winding turret-stair, to a room in the third story, which opened at one door into the king's closet, at the other into the spacious gallery, which was already a feature in the plan of the more princely houses. In another minute Adam and his model were in the presence of the king. The part of the room in which Edward sat was distinguished from the rest by a small eastern carpet on the floor (a luxury more in use in the palaces of that day than it appears to have been a century later); [see the Narrative of the Lord Grauthuse, before referred to] a table was set before him, on which the model was placed. At his right hand sat Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, the queen's mother; at his left, Prince Richard. The duchess, though not without the remains of beauty, had a stern, haughty, scornful expression in her sharp aquiline features, compressed lips, and imperious eye. The paleness of her complexion, and the careworn, anxious lines of her countenance, were ascribed by the vulgar to studies of no holy cast. Her reputation for sorcery and witchcraft was daily increasing, and served well the purpose of the discontented barons, whom the rise of her children mortified and enraged.

"Approach, Master--What say you his name is, Richard?"

"Adam Warner," replied the sweet voice of the Duke of Gloucester; "of excellent skill in the mathematics."

"Approach, sir, and show us the nature of this notable invention."

"I desire nothing better, my lord king," said Adam, boldly; "but first let me crave a small modicum of fuel. Fire, which is the life of the world, as the wise of old held it, is also the soul of this, my mechanical."

"Peradventure," whispered the duchess, "the wizard desireth to consume us."

"More likely," replied Richard, in the same undertone, "to consume whatever of treasonable nature may lurk concealed in his engine."

"True," said Edward, and then, speaking aloud, "Master Warner," he added, "put thy puppet to its purpose without fire,--we will it."

"It is impossible, my lord," said Adam, with a lofty smile. "Science and nature are more powerful than a king's word."

"Do not say that in public, my friend," said Edward, dryly, "or we must hang thee! I would not my subjects were told anything so treasonable. Howbeit, to give thee no excuse in failure, thou shalt have what thou needest."

"But surely not in our presence," exclaimed the duchess. "This may be a device of the Lancastrians for our perdition."

"As you please, belle mere," said Edward, and he motioned to a gentleman, who stood a few paces behind his chair, and who, from the entrance of the mechanic, had seemed to observe him with intense interest. "Master Nevile, attend this wise man; supply his wants, and hark, in thy ear, watch well that he abstract nothing from the womb of his engine; observe what he doeth; be all eyes." Marmaduke bowed low to conceal his change of countenance, and, stepping forward, made a sign to Adam to follow him.

"Go also, Catesby," said Richard to his follower, who had taken his post near him, "and clear the chamber."

As soon as the three members of the royal family were left alone, the king, stretching himself, with a slight yawn, observed, "This man looks not like a conspirator, brother Richard, though his sententiary as to nature and science lacked loyalty and respect."

"Sire and brother," answered Richard, "great leaders often dupe their own tools; at least, meseemeth that they would reason well so to do. Remember, I have told thee that there is strong cause to suppose Margaret to be in London. In the suburbs of the city has also appeared, within the last few weeks, that strange and dangerous person, whose very objects are a mystery, save that he is our foe,-- Robin of Redesdale. The men of the North have exhibited a spirit of insurrection; a man of that country attends this reputed wizard, and he himself was favoured in past times by Henry of Windsor. These are ominous signs when the conjunctions be considered!"

"It is well said; but a fair day for breathing our palfrey is half-spent!" returned the indolent prince. "By'r Lady! I like the fashion of thy super-tunic well, Richard; but thou hast it too much puffed over the shoulders."

Richard's dark eye shot fire, and he gnawed his lip as he answered, "God hath not given to me the fair shape of my kinsmen."

"Thy pardon, dear boy," said Edward, kindly; "yet little needest thou our broad backs and strong sinews, for thou hast a tongue to charm women and a wit to command men."

Richard bowed his face, little less beautiful than his brother's, though wholly different from it in feature, for Edward had the long oval countenance, the fair hair, the rich colouring, and the large outline of his mother, the Rose of Raby. Richard, on the contrary, had the short face, the dark brown locks, and the pale olive complexion of his father, whom he alone of the royal brothers strikingly resembled. [Pol. Virg. 544.]

The cheeks, too, were somewhat sunken, and already, though scarcely past childhood, about his lips were seen the lines of thoughtful manhood. But then those small features, delicately aquiline, were so regular; that dark eye was so deep, so fathomless in its bright, musing intelligence; that quivering lip was at once so beautifully formed and so expressive of intellectual subtlety and haughty will; and that pale forehead was so massive, high, and majestic,—that when, at a later period, the Scottish prelate [Archibald Quhitlaw.—"Faciem tuam summo imperio principatu dignam inspicit, quam moralis et heroica, virtus illustrat," etc.—We need scarcely observe that even a Scotchman would not have risked a public compliment to Richard's face, if so inappropriate as to seem a sarcasm, especially as the orator immediately proceeds to notice the shortness of Richard's stature,—a comment not likely to have been peculiarly acceptable in the Rous Roll, the portrait of Richard represents him as undersized, but compactly and strongly built, and without any sign of deformity, unless the inelegant defect of a short neck can be so called.] commended Richard's "princely countenance," the compliment was not one to be disputed, much less contemned. But now as he rose, obedient to a whisper from the duchess, and followed her to the window, while Edward appeared engaged in admiring the shape of his own long, upturned shoes, those defects in his shape which the popular hatred and the rise of the House of Tudor exaggerated into the absolute

deformity that the unexamining ignorance of modern days and Shakspeare's fiery tragedy have fixed into established caricature, were sufficiently apparent. Deformed or hunchbacked we need scarcely say he was not, for no man so disfigured could have possessed that great personal strength which he invariably exhibited in battle, despite the comparative slightness of his frame. He was considerably below the ordinary height, which the great stature of his brother rendered yet more disadvantageous by contrast; but his lower limbs were strong-jointed and muscular. Though the back was not curved, yet one shoulder was slightly higher than the other, which was the more observable from the evident pains that he took to disguise it, and the gorgeous splendour, savouring of personal coxcombry--from which no Plantagenet was ever free,--that he exhibited in his dress. And as, in a warlike age, the physical conformation of men is always critically regarded, so this defect and that of his low stature were not so much redeemed as they would be in our day by the beauty and intelligence of his face. Added to this, his neck was short, and a habit of bending his head on his bosom (arising either from thought, or the affectation of humility, which was a part of his character) made it seem shorter still. But this peculiarity, while taking from the grace, added to the strength of his frame, which, spare, sinewy, and compact, showed to an observer that power of endurance, that combination of solid stubbornness and active energy, which, at the battle of Barnet, made him no less formidable to encounter than the ruthless sword of the mighty Edward.

"So, prince," said the duchess, "this new gentleman of the king's is, it seems, a Nevile. When will Edward's high spirit cast off that hateful yoke?"

Richard sighed and shook his head. The duchess, encouraged by these signs of sympathy, continued,--

"Your brother Clarence, Prince Richard, despises us, to cringe to the proud earl. But you--"

"I am not suitor to the Lady Isabel; Clarence is overlavish, and Isabel has a fair face and a queenly dowry."

"May I perish," said the duchess, "ere Warwick's daughter wears the baudekin of royalty, and sits in as high a state as the queen's mother! Prince, I would fain confer with thee; we have a project to abase and banish this hateful lord. If you but join us, success is sure; the Count of Charolois--"

"Dear lady," interrupted Richard, with an air of profound humility, "tell me nothing of plot or project; my years are too few for such high and subtle policy; and the Lord Warwick hath been a leal friend to our House of York."

The duchess bit her lip--"Yet I have heard you tell Edward that a subject can be too powerful?"

"Never, lady! you have never heard me."

"Then Edward has told Elizabeth that you so spoke."

"Ah," said Richard, turning away with a smile, "I see that the king's conscience hath a discreet keeper. Pardon me, Edward, now that he hath sufficiently surveyed his shoon, must marvel at this prolonged colloquy. And see, the door opens."

With this, the duke slowly moved to the table, and resumed his seat.

Marmaduke, full of fear for his ancient host, had in vain sought an opportunity to address a few words of exhortation to him to forbear all necromancy, and to abstain from all perilous distinctions between the power of Edward IV. and that of his damnable Nature and Science; but Catesby watched him with so feline a vigilance, that he was unable to slip in more than--"Ah, Master Warner, for our blessed Lord's sake, recollect that rack and cord are more than mere words here!" To the which pleasant remark, Adam, then busy in filling his miniature boiler, only replied by a wistful stare, not in the least recognizing the Nevile in his fine attire, and the new-fashioned mode of dressing his long hair.

But Catesby watched in vain for the abstraction of any treasonable contents in the engine, which the Duke of Gloucester had so shrewdly suspected. The truth must be told. Adam had entirely forgotten that in the intricacies of his mechanical lurked the papers that might overthrow a throne! Magnificent Incarnation was he (in that oblivion) of Science itself, which cares not a jot for men and nations, in their ephemeral existences; which only remembers THINGS,--things that endure for ages; and in its stupendous calculations loses sight of the unit of a generation! No, he had thoroughly forgotten Henry, Edward, his own limbs and life,--not only York and Lancaster, but Adam Warner and the rack. Grand in his forgetfulness, he stood before the tiger and the tiger-cat,--Edward and--Richard,--A Pure Thought, a Man's Soul;

Science fearless in the presence of Cruelty, Tyranny, Craft, and Power.

In truth, now that Adam was thoroughly in his own sphere, was in the domain of which he was king, and those beings in velvet and ermine were but as ignorant savages admitted to the frontier of his realm, his form seemed to dilate into a majesty the beholders had not before recognized; and even the lazy Edward muttered involuntarily, "By my halidame, the man has a noble presence!"

"I am prepared now, sire," said Adam, loftily, "to show to my king and to this court, that, unnoticed and obscure, in study and retreat, often live those men whom kings may be proud to call their subjects. Will it please you, my lords, this way!" and he motioned so commandingly to the room in which he had left the Eureka, that his audience rose by a common impulse, and in another minute stood grouped round the model in the adjoining chamber. This really wonderful invention--so wonderful, indeed, that it will surpass the faith of those who do not pause to consider what vast forestallments of modern science have been made and lost in the darkness of ages not fitted to receive them--was, doubtless, in many important details not yet adapted for the practical uses to which Adam designed its application. But as a mere model, as a marvellous essay, for the suggestion of gigantic results, it was, perhaps, to the full as effective as the ingenuity of a mechanic of our own day could construct. It is true that it was crowded with unnecessary cylinders, slides, cocks, and wheels--hideous and clumsy to the eye--but through this intricacy the great simple design accomplished its main object. It contrived to show what force and skill man can obtain from the alliance of nature; the more clearly, inasmuch as the mechanism affixed to it, still more ingenious than itself, was well calculated to illustrate practically one of the many uses to which the principle was destined to be applied.

Adam had not yet fathomed the secret by which to supply the miniature cylinder with sufficient steam for any prolonged effect,--the great truth of latent heat was unknown to him; but he had contrived to regulate the supply of water so as to make the engine discharge its duties sufficiently for the satisfaction of curiosity and the explanation of its objects. And now this strange thing of iron was in full life. From its serpent chimney issued the thick rapid smoke, and the groan of its travail was heard within.

"And what propose you to yourself and to the kingdom in all this,

Master Adam?" asked Edward, curiously bending his tall person over the tortured iron.

"I propose to make Nature the labourer of man," answered Warner. "When I was a child of some eight years old, I observed that water swelleth into vapour when fire is applied to it. Twelve years afterwards, at the age of twenty, I observed that while undergoing this change it exerts a mighty mechanical force. At twenty-five, constantly musing, I said, 'Why should not that force become subject to man's art?' I then began the first rude model, of which this is the descendant. I noticed that the vapour so produced is elastic,--that is, that as it expands, it presses against what opposes it; it has a force applicable everywhere force is needed by man's labour. Behold a second agency of gigantic resources! And then, still studying this, I perceived that the vapour thus produced can be reconverted into water, shrinking necessarily, while so retransformed, from the space it filled as vapour, and leaving that space a vacuum. But Nature abhors a vacuum; produce a vacuum, and the bodies that surround rush into it. Thus, the vapour again, while changing back into water, becomes also a force,--our agent. And all the while these truths were shaping themselves to my mind, I was devising and improving also the material form by which I might render them useful to man; so at last, out of these truths, arose this invention!"

"Pardie," said Edward, with the haste natural to royalty, "what in common there can be between thy jargon of smoke and water and this huge ugliness of iron passeth all understanding. But spare us thy speeches, and on to thy puppet-show."

Adam stared a moment at the king in the surprise that one full of his subject feels when he sees it impossible to make another understand it, sighed, shook his head, and prepared to begin.

"Observe," he said, "that there is no juggling, no deceit. I will place in this deposit this small lump of brass--would the size of this toy would admit of larger experiment! I will then pray ye to note, as I open door after door, how the metal passes through various changes, all operated by this one agency of vapour. Heed and attend. And if the crowning work please thee, think, great king, what such an agency upon the large scale would be to thee; think how it would multiply all arts and lessen all labour; think that thou hast, in this, achieved for a whole people the true philosopher's stone. Now note!"

He placed the rough ore in its receptacle, and suddenly it seemed

seized by a vice within, and vanished. He proceeded then, while dexterously attending to the complex movements, to open door after door, to show the astonished spectators the rapid transitions the metal underwent, and suddenly, in the midst of his pride, he stopped short, for, like a lightning-flash, came across his mind the remembrance of the fatal papers. Within the next door he was to open, they lay concealed. His change of countenance did not escape Richard, and he noted the door which Adam forbore to open, as the student hurriedly, and with some presence of mind, passed to the next, in which the metal was shortly to appear.

"Open this door," said the prince, pointing to the handle. "No! forbear! There is danger! forbear!" exclaimed the mechanician.

"Danger to thine own neck, varlet and impostor!" exclaimed the duke; and he was about himself to open the door, when suddenly a loud roar, a terrific explosion was heard. Alas! Adam Warner had not yet discovered for his engine what we now call the safety-valve. The steam contained in the miniature boiler had acquired an undue pressure; Adam's attention had been too much engrossed to notice the signs of the growing increase, and the rest may be easily conceived. Nothing could equal the stupor and the horror of the spectators at this explosion, save only the boy-duke, who remained immovable, and still frowning. All rushed to the door, huddling one on the other, scarcely knowing what next was to befall them, but certain that the wizard was bent upon their destruction. Edward was the first to recover himself; and seeing that no lives were lost, his first impulse was that of ungovernable rage.

"Foul traitor!" he exclaimed, "was it for this that thou hast pretended to beguile us with thy damnable sorceries? Seize him! Away to the Tower Hill! and let the priest patter an ave while the doomsman knots the rope."

Not a hand stirred; even Catesby would as lief have touched the king's lion before meals, as that poor mechanician, standing aghast, and unheeding all, beside his mutilated engine.

"Master Nevile," said the king, sternly, "dost thou hear us?"

"Verily," muttered the Nevile, approaching very slowly, "I knew what would happen; but to lay hands on my host, an' he were fifty times a wizard--No! My liege," he said in a firm tone, but falling on his knee, and his gallant countenance pale with generous terror, "my

liege, forgive me. This man succoured me when struck down and wounded by a Lancastrian ruffian; this man gave me shelter, food, and healing. Command me not, O gracious my lord, to aid in taking the life of one to whom I owe my own."

"His life!" exclaimed the Duchess of Bedford,--"the life of this most illustrious person! Sire, you do not dream it!"

"Heh! by the saints, what now?" cried the king, whose choler, though fierce and ruthless, was as short-lived as the passions of the indolent usually are, and whom the earnest interposition of his mother-in-law much surprised and diverted. "If, fair belle-mere, thou thinkest it so illustrious a deed to frighten us out of our mortal senses, and narrowly to 'scape sending us across the river like a bevy of balls from a bombard, there is no disputing of tastes. Rise up, Master Nevile, we esteem thee not less for thy boldness; ever be the host and the benefactor revered by English gentlemen and Christian youth. Master Warner may go free."

Here Warner uttered so deep and hollow a groan, that it startled all present.

"Twenty-five years of labour, and not to have seen this!" he ejaculated. "Twenty and five years, and all wasted! How repair this disaster? O fatal day!"

"What says he? What means he?" said Jacquetta.

"Come home!--home!" said Marmaduke, approaching the philosopher, in great alarm lest he should once more jeopardize his life. But Adam, shaking him off, began eagerly, and with tremulous hands, to examine the machine, and not perceiving any mode by which to guard in future against a danger that he saw at once would, if not removed, render his invention useless, tottered to a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"He seemeth mightily grieved that our bones are still whole!" muttered Edward. "And why, belle-mere mine, wouldst thou protect this pleasant tregetour?"

"What!" said the duchess, "see you not that a man capable of such devices must be of doughty service against our foes?"

"Not I. How?"

"Why, if merely to signify his displeasure at our young Richard's over-curious meddling, he can cause this strange engine to shake the walls,--nay, to destroy itself,--think what he might do were his power and malice at our disposing. I know something of these nigromancers."

"And would you knew less! for already the commons murmur at your favour to them. But be it as you will. And now--ho, there! let our steeds be caparisoned."

"You forget, sire," said Richard, who had hitherto silently watched the various parties, "the object for which we summoned this worthy man. Please you now, sir, to open that door."

"No, no!" exclaimed the king, hastily, "I will have no more provoking the foul fiend; conspirator or not, I have had enough of Master Warner. Pah! My poor placard is turned lampblack. Sweet mother-in-law, take him under thy protection; and Richard, come with me."

So saying, the king linked his arm in that of the reluctant Gloucester, and quitted the room. The duchess then ordered the rest also to depart, and was left alone with the crest-fallen philosopher.

CHAPTER VII.

MY LADY DUCHESS'S OPINION OF THE UTILITY OF MASTER WARNER'S INVENTION, AND HER ESTEEM FOR ITS--EXPLOSION.

Adam, utterly unheeding, or rather deaf to, the discussion that had taken place, and his narrow escape from cord and gibbet, lifted his head peevishly from his bosom, as the duchess rested her hand almost caressingly on his shoulder, and thus addressed him,--

"Most puissant Sir, think not that I am one of those who, in their ignorance and folly, slight the mysteries of which thou art clearly so great a master. When I heard thee speak of subjecting Nature to Man, I at once comprehended thee, and blushed for the dulness of my kindred."

"Ah, lady, thou hast studied, then, the mathematics. Alack! this is a grievous blow; but it is no inherent fault in the device. I am

clearly of mind that it can be remedied. But oh! what time, what thought, what sleepless nights, what gold will be needed!"

"Give me thy sleepless nights and thy grand thoughts, and thou shalt not want gold."

"Lady," cried Adam, starting to his feet, "do I hear aright? Art thou, in truth, the patron I have so long dreamed of? Hast thou the brain and the heart to aid the pursuits of science?"

"Ay! and the power to protect the students! Sage, I am the Duchess of Bedford, whom men accuse of witchcraft,--as thee of wizardy. From the wife of a private gentleman, I have become the mother of a queen. I stand amidst a court full of foes; I desire gold to corrupt, and wisdom to guard against, and means to destroy them. And I seek all these in men like thee!"

Adam turned on her his bewildered eyes, and made no answer.

"They tell me," said the duchess, "that Henry of Windsor employed learned men to transmute the baser metals into gold. Wert thou one of them?"

"No."

"Thou knowest that art?"

"I studied it in my youth, but the ingredients of the crucible were too costly."

"Thou shalt not lack them with me. Thou knowest the lore of the stars, and canst foretell the designs of enemies,--the hour whether to act or to forbear?"

"Astrology I have studied, but that also was in youth; for there dwelleth in the pure mathematics that have led me to this invention--"

"Truce with that invention, whatever it be; think of it no more,--it has served its end in the explosion, which proved thy power of mischief. High objects are now before thee. Wilt thou be of my household, one of my alchemists and astrologers? Thou shalt have leisure, honour, and all the moneys thou canst need."

"Moneys!" said Adam, eagerly, and casting his eyes upon the mangled

model. "Well, I agree; what you will,--alchemist, astrologist, wizard,--what you will. This shall all be repaired,--all; I begin to see now, all! I begin to see; yes, if a pipe by which the too-excessive vapour could--ay, ay!--right, right," and he rubbed his hands.

Jacquetta was struck with his enthusiasm. "But surely, Master Warner, this has some virtue you have not vouchsafed to explain; confide in me, can it change iron to gold?"

"No; but--"

"Can it predict the future?"

"No; but--"

"Can it prolong life?"

"No; but--"

"Then, in God's name let us waste no more time about it!" said the duchess, impatiently,--"your art is mine now. Ho, there!--I will send my page to conduct thee to thy apartments, and thou shalt lodge next to Friar Bungey, a man of wondrous lere, Master Warner, and a worthy confrere in thy researches. Hast thou any one of kith and kin at home to whom thou wilt announce thy advancement?"

"Ah, lady! Heaven forgive me, I have a daughter,--an only child,--my Sibyll; I cannot leave her alone, and--"

"Well, nothing should distract thy cares from thine art,--she shall be sent for. I will rank her amongst my maidens. Fare-thee-well, Master Warner! At night I will send for thee, and appoint the tasks I would have thee accomplish."

So saying, the duchess quitted the room, and left Adam alone, bending over his model in deep revery.

From this absorption it was the poor man's fate to be again aroused.

The peculiar character of the boy-prince of Gloucester was that of one who, having once seized upon an object, never willingly relinquished it. First, he crept and slid and coiled round it as the snake. But if craft failed, his passion, roused by resistance, sprang at his prey

with a lion's leap: and whoever examines the career of this extraordinary personage, will perceive, that whatever might be his habitual hypocrisy, he seemed to lose sight of it wholly when once resolved upon force. Then the naked ferocity with which the destructive propensity swept away the objects in his path becomes fearfully and startlingly apparent, and offers a strange contrast to the wily duplicity with which, in calmer moments, he seems to have sought to coax the victim into his folds. Firmly convinced that Adam's engine had been made the medium of dangerous and treasonable correspondence with the royal prisoner, and of that suspicious, restless, feverish temperament which never slept when a fear was awakened, a doubt conceived, he had broke from his brother, whose more open valour and less unquiet intellect were ever willing to leave the crown defended but by the gibbet for the detected traitor, the sword for the declared foe; and obtaining Edward's permission "to inquire further into these strange matters," he sent at once for the porter who had conveyed the model to the Tower; but that suspicious accomplice was gone. The sound of the explosion of the engine had no less startled the guard below than the spectators above. Releasing their hold of their prisoner, they had some taken fairly to their heels, others rushed into the palace to learn what mischief had ensued; and Hugh, with the quick discretion of his north country, had not lost so favourable an opportunity for escape. There stood the dozing mule at the door below, but the guide was vanished. More confirmed in his suspicions by this disappearance of Adam's companion, Richard, giving some preparatory orders to Catesby, turned at once to the room which still held the philosopher and his device. He closed the door on entering, and his brow was dark and sinister as he approached the musing inmate. But here we must return to Sibyll.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD WOMAN TALKS OF SORROWS, THE YOUNG WOMAN DREAMS OF LOVE; THE COURTIER FLIES FROM PRESENT POWER TO REMEMBRANCES OF PAST HOPES, AND THE WORLD-BETTERED OPENS UTOPIA, WITH A VIEW OF THE GIBBET FOR THE SILLY SAGE HE HAS SEDUCED INTO HIS SCHEMES,--SO, EVER AND EVERMORE, RUNS THE WORLD AWAY!

The old lady looked up from her embroidery-frame, as Sibyll sat musing on a stool before her; she scanned the maiden with a wistful and somewhat melancholy eye.

"Fair girl," she said, breaking a silence that had lasted for some moments, "it seems to me that I have seen thy face before. Wert thou never in Queen Margaret's court?"

"In childhood, yes, lady."

"Do you not remember me, the dame of Longueville?" Sibyll started in surprise, and gazed long before she recognized the features of her hostess; for the dame of Longueville had been still, when Sibyll was a child at the court, renowned for matronly beauty, and the change was greater than the lapse of years could account for. The lady smiled sadly: "Yes, you marvel to see me thus bent and faded. Maiden, I lost my husband at the battle of St. Alban's, and my three sons in the field of Towton. My lands and my wealth have been confiscated to enrich new men; and to one of them--one of the enemies of the only king whom Alice de Longueville will acknowledge--I owe the food for my board and the roof for my head. Do you marvel now that I am so changed?"

Sibyll rose and kissed the lady's hand, and the tear that sparkled on its surface was her only answer.

"I learn," said the dame of Longueville, "that your father has an order from the Lord Hastings to see King Henry. I trust that he will rest here as he returns, to tell me how the monarch-saint bears his afflictions. But I know: his example should console us all." She paused a moment, and resumed, "Sees your father much of the Lord Hastings?"

"He never saw him that I weet of," answered Sibyll, blushing; "the order was given, but as of usual form to a learned scholar."

"But given to whom?" persisted the lady. "To--to me," replied Sibyll, falteringly. The dame of Longueville smiled.

"Ah, Hastings could scarcely say no to a prayer from such rosy lips. But let me not imply aught to disparage his humane and gracious heart. To Lord Hastings, next to God and his saints, I owe all that is left to me on earth. Strange that he is not yet here! This is the usual day and hour on which he comes, from pomp and pleasurement, to visit the lonely widow." And, pleased to find an attentive listener to her grateful loquacity, the dame then proceeded, with warm eulogies upon her protector, to inform Sibyll that her husband had, in the first

outbreak of the Civil War, chanced to capture Hastings, and, moved by his valour and youth, and some old connections with his father, Sir Leonard, had favoured his escape from the certain death that awaited him from the wrath of the relentless Margaret. After the field of Towton, Hastings had accepted one of the manors confiscated from the attainted House of Longueville, solely that he might restore it to the widow of the fallen lord; and with a chivalrous consideration, not contented with beneficence, he omitted no occasion to show to the noblewoman whatever homage and respect might soothe the pride, which, in the poverty of those who have been great, becomes disease. The loyalty of the Lady Longueville was carried to a sentiment most rare in that day, and rather resembling the devotion inspired by the later Stuarts. She made her home within the precincts of the Tower, that, morning and eve, when Henry opened his lattice to greet the rising and the setting sun, she might catch a dim and distant glance of the captive king, or animate, by that sad sight, the hopes and courage of the Lancastrian emissaries, to whom, fearless of danger, she scrupled not to give counsel, and, at need, asylum.

While Sibyll, with enchanted sense, was listening to the praise of Hastings, a low knock at the door was succeeded by the entrance of that nobleman himself. Not to Elizabeth, in the alcoves of Shene, or on the dais of the palace hall, did the graceful courtier bend with more respectful reverence than to the powerless widow, whose very bread was his alms; for the true high-breeding of chivalry exists not without delicacy of feeling, formed originally by warmth of heart; and though the warmth may lose its glow, the delicacy endures, as the steel that acquires through heat its polish retains its lustre, even when the shine but betrays the hardness.

"And how fares my noble lady of Longueville? But need I ask? for her cheek still wears the rose of Lancaster. A companion? Ha! Mistress Warner, I learn now how much pleasure exists in surprise!"

"My young visitor," said the dame, "is but an old friend; she was one of the child-maidens reared at the court of Queen Margaret."

"In sooth!" exclaimed Hastings; and then, in an altered tone, he added, "but I should have guessed so much grace had not come all from Nature. And your father has gone to see the Lord Henry, and you rest, here, his return? Ah, noble lady, may you harbour always such innocent Lancastrians!" The fascinations of this eminent person's voice and manner were such that they soon restored Sibyll, to the ease she had lost at his sudden entrance. He conversed gayly with the old

dame upon such matters of court anecdote as in all the changes of state were still welcome to one so long accustomed to court air; but from time to time he addressed himself to Sibyll, and provoked replies which startled herself--for she was not yet well aware of her own gifts--by their spirit and intelligence.

"You do not tell us," said the Lady Longueville, sarcastically, "of the happy spousailles of Elizabeth's brother with the Duchess of Norfolk,--a bachelor of twenty, a bride of some eighty-two. [The old chronicler justly calls this a "diabolical marriage." It greatly roused the wrath of the nobles and indeed of all honourable men, as a proof of the shameless avarice of the queen's family.] Verily, these alliances are new things in the history of English royalty. But when Edward, who, even if not a rightful king, is at least a born Plantagenet, condescended to marry Mistress Elizabeth, a born Woodville, scarce of good gentleman's blood, naught else seems strange enough to provoke marvel."

"As to the last matter," returned Hastings, gravely, "though her grace the queen be no warm friend to me, I must needs become her champion and the king's. The lady who refused the dishonouring suit of the fairest prince and the boldest knight in the Christian world thereby made herself worthy of the suit that honoured her; it was not Elizabeth Woodville alone that won the purple. On the day she mounted a throne, the chastity of woman herself was crowned."

"What!" said the Lady Longueville, angrily, "mean you to say that there is no disgrace in the mal-alliance of kite and falcon, of Plantagenet and Woodville, of high-born and mud-descended?"

"You forget, lady, that the widow of Henry the Fifth, Catherine of Valois, a king's daughter, married the Welsh soldier, Owen Tudor; that all England teems with brave men born from similar spousailles, where love has levelled all distinctions, and made a purer hearth, and raised a bolder offspring, than the lukewarm likings of hearts that beat but for lands and gold. Wherefore, lady, appeal not to me, a squire of dames, a believer in the old Parliament of Love; whoever is fair and chaste, gentle and loving, is, in the eyes of William de Hastings, the mate and equal of a king!"

Sibyll turned involuntarily as the courtier spoke thus, with animation in his voice, and fire in his eyes; she turned, and her breath came quick; she turned, and her look met his, and those words and that look sank deep into her heart; they called forth brilliant and ambitious

dreams; they rooted the growing love, but they aided to make it holy; they gave to the delicious fancy what before it had not paused, on its wing, to sigh for; they gave it that without which all fancy sooner or later dies; they gave it that which, once received in a noble heart, is the excuse for untiring faith; they gave it,--HOPE!

"And thou wouldst say," replied the lady of Longueville, with a meaning smile, still more emphatically--"thou wouldst say that a youth, brave and well nurtured, ambitious and loving, ought, in the eyes of rank and pride, to be the mate and equal of--"

"Ah, noble dame," interrupted Hastings, quickly, "I must not prolong encounter with so sharp a wit. Let me leave that answer to this fair maiden, for by rights it is a challenge to her sex, not to mine."

"How say you, then, Mistress Warner?" said the dame. "Suppose a young heiress, of the loftiest birth, of the broadest lands, of the comeliest form--suppose her wooed by a gentleman poor and stationless, but with a mighty soul, born to achieve greatness, would she lower herself by hearkening to his suit?"

"A maiden, methinks," answered Sibyll, with reluctant but charming hesitation, "cannot love truly if she love unworthily; and if she love worthily, it is not rank nor wealth she loves."

"But her parents, sweet mistress, may deem differently; and should not her love refuse submission to their tyranny?" asked Hastings.

"Nay, good my lord, nay," returned Sibyll, shaking her head with thoughtful demureness. "Surely the wooer, if he love worthily, will not press her to the curse of a child's disobedience and a parent's wrath!"

"Shrewdly answered," said the dame of Longueville. "Then she would renounce the poor gentleman if the parent ordain her to marry a rich lord. Ah, you hesitate, for a woman's ambition is pleased with the excuse of a child's obedience."

Hastings said this so bitterly that Sibyll could not but perceive that some personal feeling gave significance to his words. Yet how could they be applied to him,--to one now in rank and repute equal to the highest below the throne?

"If the demoiselle should so choose," said the dame of Longueville,

"it seemeth to me that the rejected suitor might find it facile to disdain and to forget."

Hastings made no reply; but that remarkable and deep shade of melancholy which sometimes in his gayest hours startled those who beheld it, and which had, perhaps, induced many of the prophecies that circulated as to the untimely and violent death that should close his bright career, gathered like a cloud over his brow. At this moment the door opened gently, and Robert Hilyard stood at the aperture. He was clad in the dress of a friar, but the raised cowl showed his features to the lady of Longueville, to whom alone he was visible; and those bold features were literally haggard with agitation and alarm. He lifted his finger to his lips, and motioning the lady to follow him, closed the door.

The dame of Longueville rose, and praying her visitors to excuse her absence for a few moments, she left Hastings and Sibyll to themselves.

"Lady," said Hilyard, in a hollow whisper, as soon as the dame appeared in the low hall, communicating on the one hand with the room just left, on the other with the street, "I fear all will be detected. Hush! Adam and the iron coffer that contains the precious papers have been conducted to Edward's presence. A terrible explosion, possibly connected with the contrivance, caused such confusion among the guards that Hugh escaped to scare me with his news. Stationed near the gate in this disguise, I ventured to enter the courtyard, and saw--saw--the TORMENTOR! the torturer, the hideous, masked minister of agony, led towards the chambers in which our hapless messenger is examined by the ruthless tyrants. Gloucester, the lynx-eyed mannikin, is there!"

"O Margaret, my queen," exclaimed the lady of Longueville, "the papers will reveal her whereabouts."

"No, she is safe!" returned Hilyard; "but thy poor scholar, I tremble for him, and for the heads of all whom the papers name."

"What can be done! Ha! Lord Hastings is here,--he is ever humane and pitiful. Dare we confide in him?"

A bright gleam shot over Hilyard's face. "Yes, yes; let me confer with him alone. I wait him here,--quick!" The lady hastened back. Hastings was conversing in a low voice with Sibyll. The dame of Longueville whispered in the courtier's ear, drew him into the hall, and left him alone with the false friar, who had drawn the cowl over

his face.

"Lord Hastings," said Hilyard, speaking rapidly, "you are in danger, if not of loss of life, of loss of favour. You gave a passport to one Warner to see the ex-king Henry. Warner's simplicity (for he is innocent) hath been duped,--he is made the bearer of secret intelligence from the unhappy gentlemen who still cling to the Lancaster cause. He is suspected, he is examined; he may be questioned by the torture. If the treason be discovered, it was thy hand that signed the passport; the queen, thou knowest, hates thee, the Woodvilles thirst for thy downfall. What handle may this give them! Fly! my lord,--fly to the Tower; thou mayst yet be in time; thy wit can screen all that may otherwise be bare. Save this poor scholar, conceal this correspondence. Hark ye, lord! frown not so haughtily,--that correspondence names thee as one who hast taken the gold of Count Charolois, and whom, therefore, King Louis may outbuy. Look to thyself!"

A slight blush passed over the pale brow of the great statesman, but he answered with a steady voice, "Friar or layman, I care not which, the gold of the heir of Burgundy was a gift, not a bribe. But I need no threats to save, if not too late, from rack and gibbet the life of a guiltless man. I am gone. Hold! bid the maiden, the scholar's daughter, follow me to the Tower."

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE DESTRUCTIVE ORGAN OF PRINCE RICHARD PROMISES GOODLY DEVELOPMENT.

The Duke of Gloucester approached Adam as he stood gazing on his model. "Old man," said the prince, touching him with the point of his sheathed dagger, "look up and answer. What converse hast thou held with Henry of Windsor, and who commissioned thee to visit him in his confinement? Speak, and the truth! for by holy Paul, I am one who can detect a lie, and without that door stands--the Tormentor!"

Upon a pleasing and joyous dream broke these harsh words; for Adam then was full of the contrivance by which to repair the defect of the engine, and with this suggestion was blent confusedly the thought that he was now protected by royalty, that he should have means and leisure

to accomplish his great design, that he should have friends whose power could obtain its adoption by the king. He raised his eyes, and that young dark face frowned upon him,--the child menacing the sage, brute force in a pigmy shape, having authority of life and death over the giant strength of genius. But these words, which recalled Warner from his existence as philosopher, woke that of the gentle but brave and honourable man which he was, when reduced to earth.

"Sir," he said gravely, "if I have consented to hold converse with the unhappy, it was not as the tell-tale and the spier. I had formal warrant for my visit, and I was solicited to render it by an early friend and comrade, who sought to be my benefactor in aiding with gold my poor studies for the king's people."

"Tut!" said Richard, impatiently, and playing with his dagger hilt; "thy words, stealthy and evasive, prove thy guilt! Sure am I that this iron traitor with its intricate hollows and recesses holds what, unless confessed, will give thee to the hangman! Confess all, and thou art spared."

"If," said Adam, mildly, "your Highness--for though I know not your quality, I opine that no one less than royal could so menace--if your Highness imagines that I have been intrusted by a fallen man, wrong me not by supposing that I could fear death more than dishonour; for certes!" continued Adam, with innocent pedantry, "to put the case scholastically, and in the logic familiar, doubtless, to your Highness, either I have something to confess or I have not; if I have--"

"Hound!" interrupted the prince, stamping his foot, "thinkest thou to banter me,--see!" As his foot shook the floor, the door opened, and a man with his arms bare, covered from head to foot in a black gown of serge, with his features concealed by a hideous mask, stood ominously at the aperture.

The prince motioned to the torturer (or tormentor, as he was technically styled) to approach, which he did noiselessly, till he stood, tall, grim, and lowering, beside Adam, like some silent and devouring monster by its prey.

"Dost thou repent thy contumacy? A moment, and I render my questioning to another!"

"Sir," said Adam, drawing himself up, and with so sudden a change of mien, that his loftiness almost awed even the dauntless Richard,--

"sir, my fathers feared not death when they did battle for the throne of England; and why?--because in their loyal valour they placed not the interests of a mortal man, but the cause of imperishable honour! And though their son be a poor scholar, and wears not the spurs of gold; though his frame be weak and his hairs gray, he loveth honour also well eno' to look without dread on death!"

Fierce and ruthless, when irritated and opposed, as the prince was, he was still in his first youth,--ambition had here no motive to harden him into stone. He was naturally so brave himself that bravery could not fail to win from him something of respect and sympathy, and he was taken wholly by surprise in hearing the language of a knight and hero from one whom he had regarded but as the artful impostor or the despicable intriguer.

He changed countenance as Warner spoke, and remained a moment silent. Then as a thought occurred to him, at which his features relaxed into a half-smile, he beckoned to the tormentor, said a word in his ear, and the horrible intruder nodded and withdrew.

"Master Warner," then said the prince, in his customary sweet and gliding tones, "it were a pity that so gallant a gentleman should be exposed to peril for adhesion to a cause that can never prosper, and that would be fatal, could it prosper, to our common country. For look you, this Margaret, who is now, we believe, in London" (here he examined Adam's countenance, which evinced surprise), "this Margaret, who is seeking to rekindle the brand and brennen of civil war, has already sold for base gold to the enemy of the realm, to Louis XI., that very Calais which your fathers, doubtless, lavished their blood to annex to our possessions. Shame on the lewd harlot! What woman so bloody and so dissolute? What man so feeble and craven as her lord?"

"Alas! sir," said Adam, "I am unfitted for these high considerations of state. I live but for my art, and in it. And now, behold how my kingdom is shaken and rent!" he pointed with so touching a smile, and so simple a sadness, to the broken engine, that Richard was moved.

"Thou lovest this, thy toy? I can comprehend that love for some dumb thing that we have toiled for. Ay!" continued the prince, thoughtfully,--"ay! I have noted myself in life that there are objects, senseless as that mould of iron, which if we labour at them wind round our hearts as if they were flesh and blood. So some men love learning, others glory, others power. Well, man, thou lovest that mechanical? How many years hast thou been about it?"

"From the first to the last, twenty-five years, and it is still incomplete."

"Um!" said the prince, smiling, "Master Warner, thou hast read of the judgment of Solomon,--how the wise king discovered the truth by ordering the child's death?"

"It was indeed," said Adam, unsuspectingly, "a most shrewd suggestion of native wit and clerkly wisdom."

"Glad am I thou approvest it, Master Warner," said Richard. And as he spoke the tormentor reappeared with a smith, armed with the implements of his trade.

"Good smith, break into pieces this stubborn iron; bare all its receptacles; leave not one fragment standing on the other! 'Delenda est tua Carthago,' Master Warner. There is Latin in answer to thy logic."

It is impossible to convey any notion of the terror, the rage, the despair, which seized upon the unhappy sage when these words smote his ear, and he saw the smith's brawny arms swing on high the ponderous hammer. He flung himself between the murderous stroke and his beloved model. He embraced the grim iron tightly. "Kill me!" he exclaimed sublimely, "kill me!--not my THOUGHT!"

"Solomon was verily and indeed a wise king," said the duke, with a low inward laugh. "And now, man, I have thee! To save thy infant, thine art's hideous infant, confess the whole!"

It was then that a fierce struggle evidently took place in Adam's bosom. It was, perhaps--O reader! thou whom pleasure, love, ambition, hatred, avarice, in thine and our ordinary existence, tempt--it was, perhaps, to him the one arch-temptation of a life. In the changing countenance, the heaving breast, the trembling lip, the eyes that closed and opened to close again, as if to shut out the unworthy weakness,--yea, in the whole physical man,--was seen the crisis of the moral struggle. And what, in truth, to him an Edward or a Henry, a Lancaster or a York? Nothing. But still that instinct, that principle, that conscience, ever strongest in those whose eyes are accustomed to the search of truth, prevailed. So he rose suddenly and quietly, drew himself apart, left his work to the Destroyer, and said,--

"Prince, thou art a boy! Let a boy's voice annihilate that which should have served all time. Strike!"

Richard motioned; the hammer descended, the engine and its appurtenances reeled and crashed, the doors flew open, the wheels rattled, the sparks flew. And Adam Warner fell to the ground, as if the blow had broken his own heart. Little heeding the insensible victim of his hard and cunning policy, Richard advanced to the inspection of the interior recesses of the machinery. But that which promised Adam's destruction saved him. The heavy stroke had battered in the receptacle of the documents, had buried them in the layers of iron. The faithful Eureka, even amidst its injuries and wrecks, preserved the secret of its master.

The prince, with impatient hands, explored all the apertures yet revealed, and after wasting many minutes in a fruitless search, was about to bid the smith complete the work of destruction, when the door suddenly opened and Lord Hastings entered. His quick eye took in the whole scene; he arrested the lifted arm of the smith, and passing deliberately to Gloucester, said, with a profound reverence, but a half-reproachful smile, "My lord! my lord! your Highness is indeed severe upon my poor scholar."

"Canst thou answer for thy scholar's loyalty?" said the duke, gloomily.

Hastings drew the prince aside, and said, in a low tone, "His loyalty! poor man, I know not; but his guilelessness, surely, yes. Look you, sweet prince, I know the interest thou hast in keeping well with the Earl of Warwick, whom I, in sooth, have slight cause to love. Thou hast trusted me with thy young hopes of the Lady Anne; this new Nevile placed about the king, and whose fortunes Warwick hath made his care, hath, I have reason to think, some love passages with the scholar's daughter,—the daughter came to me for the passport. Shall this Marmaduke Nevile have it to say to his fair kinswoman, with the unforgiving malice of a lover's memory, that the princely Gloucester stooped to be the torturer of yon poor old man? If there be treason in the scholar or in yon battered craft-work, leave the search to me!"

The duke raised his dark, penetrating eyes to those of Hastings, which did not quail; for here world-genius encountered world-genius, and art, art.

"Thine argument hath more subtlety and circumlocution than suit with simple truth," said the prince, smiling. "But it is enough to Richard that Hastings wills protection even to a spy!"

Hastings kissed the duke's hand in silence, and going to the door, he disappeared a moment and returned with Sibyll. As she entered, pale and trembling, Adam rose, and the girl with a wild cry flew to his bosom.

"It is a winsome face, Hastings," said the duke, dryly. "I pity Master Nevile the lover, and envy my Lord Chamberlain the protector."

Hastings laughed, for he was well pleased that Richard's suspicion took that turn.

"And now," he said, "I suppose Master Nevile and the Duchess of Bedford's page may enter. Your guard stopped them hitherto. They come for this gentleman from her highness the queen's mother."

"Enter, Master Nevile, and you, Sir Page. What is your errand?"

"My lady, the duchess," said the page, "has sent me to conduct Master Warner to the apartments prepared for him as her special multiplier and alchemist."

"What!" said the prince, who, unlike the irritable Clarence, made it his policy to show all decorous homage to the queen's kin, "hath that illustrious lady taken this gentleman into her service? Why announced you not, Master Warner, what at once had saved you from further questioning? Lord Hastings, I thank you now for your intercession."

Hastings, in answer, pointed archly at Marmaduke, who was aiding Sibyll to support her father. "Do you suspect me still, prince?" he whispered.

The duke shrugged his shoulders, and Adam, breaking from Marmaduke and Sibyll, passed with tottering steps to the shattered labour of his solitary life. He looked at the ruin with mournful despondence, with quivering lips. "Have you done with me?" then he said, bowing his head lowly, for his pride was gone; "may we--that is, I and this, my poor device--withdraw from your palace? I see we are not fit for kings!"

"Say not so," said the young duke, gently: "we have now convinced

ourselves of our error, and I crave thy pardon, Master Warner, for my harsh dealings. As for this, thy toy, the king's workmen shall set it right for thee. Smith, call the fellows yonder, to help bear this to--" He paused, and glanced at Hastings.

"To my apartments," said the chamberlain. "Your Highness may be sure that I will there inspect it. Fear not, Master Warner; no further harm shall chance to thy contrivance."

"Come, sir, forgive me," said the duke. With gracious affability the young prince held out his hand, the fingers of which sparkled with costly gems, to the old man. The old man bowed as if his beard would have swept the earth, but he did not touch the hand. He seemed still in a state between dream and reason, life and death: he moved not, spoke not, till the men came to bear the model; and he then followed it, his arms folded in his gown, till, on entering the court, it was borne in a contrary direction from his own, to the chamberlain's apartment; then wistfully pursuing it with his eyes, he uttered such a sigh as might have come from a resigned father losing the last glimpse of a beloved son.

Richard hesitated a moment, loth to relinquish his research, and doubtful whether to follow the Eureka for renewed investigation; but partly unwilling to compromise his dignity in the eyes of Hastings, should his suspicions prove unfounded, and partly indisposed to risk the displeasure of the vindictive Duchess of Bedford by further molestation of one now under her protection, he reluctantly trusted all further inquiry to the well-known loyalty of Hastings. "If Margaret be in London," he muttered to himself as he turned slowly away, "now is the time to seize and chain the lioness! Ho, Catesby,-- hither (a valuable man that Catesby--a lawyer's nurturing with a bloodhound's nature!)--Catesby, while King Edward rides for pleasure, let thou and I track the scent of his foes. If the she-wolf of Anjou hath ventured hither, she hides in some convent or monastery, be sure. See to our palfreys, Catesby! Strange," added the prince, muttering to himself, "that I am more restless to guard the crown than he who wears it! Nay, a crown is a goodly heirloom in a man's family, and a fair sight to see near--and near--and near--"

The prince abruptly paused, opened and shut his right hand convulsively, and drew a long sigh.

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