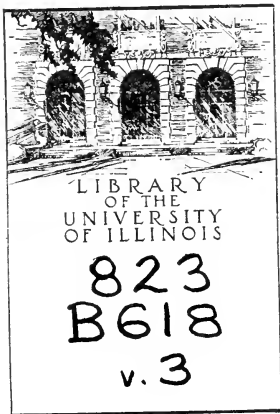


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BLIGHTED AMBITION;

OR, THE

Rise and Fall

OF

THE EARL OF SOMERSET.

A Romance,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

“ Let me speak, to the unknowing world,
How these things came about—so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on by cunning, and forc'd cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads;—all this can I
Truly deliver.” HAMLET.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,
13, AVE-MARIA-LANE.

1822.

LONDON :
SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

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BLIGHTED AMBITION,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

You were us'd
To say extremity was the tiring of spirits;
That common chances, common men would bear;
That when the sea was calm, all boats alike
Shew'd mastership in floating. Fortune's blows,
When most struck home, being gently warded, crave
A noble cunning. You were used to load me
With precepts that would make invincible
The heart that conn'd them. CORIOLANUS.

IN a few days after the Earl of Somerset had visited the King at Hampton Court, the Privy Council resolved upon sending Sir Thomas Overbury as ambassador into the Low Countries to the Archduke. The great object of Cecil

in this appointment, was to reward the diligence and sufficiency of the knight, and to make his mission a means of drawing him into greater preferments. But that great statesman did not live to see his plan carried into effect ; for being now grown into years, he was advised to visit Bath for the benefit of his health, and in coming over the downs from that city, to Marlborough, he was taken ill in his coach, and expired the day after. The death of the great Earl of Salisbury, was not looked upon by many as having happened in the ordinary course of Nature, and they accordingly attributed it to poison, that invisible but fatal agent so much in vogue in those days. And scarcely had this “ supporter of the Protestant faction, and discloser of treasons,” departed this life, than epitaphs innumerable were made for his tomb-stone, one saying :

Here lies thrown * * * * *
 Little Bossive Robin, that was so great,
 Not Robin Goodfellow, nor Robin Hood,
 But Robin th' incloser of Hatfield Wood ;
 Who seem'd as sent from ugly Fate,
 To spoil the Prince and rob the state :
 Owning a mind of dismal ends,
 As traps for foes, and tricks for friends.

The great fame of Somerset, his popularity, and the mysterious manner in which he conducted some parts of his conduct, spread reports in no respects favourable to his reputation at this period. Some said he had tampered with Cecil's physician, others that he had merely employed the chroniclers of men's actions, to write the epitaph of the great statesman now no more ; but a third class in the blindness of their zeal, translated the Earl's death, into an effect of God's vengeance ; but the Earl of Salisbury was a minister of incomparable prudence, and with such a scatterer as King James

might have feathered his nest, as the saying goes, better than he did ; but he looked upon low things with contempt, leaving much to the gleaning of his servants, many of whom came afterwards into high places.

Great as the honour was which had now been conferred upon Sir Thomas Overbury, that gentleman demurred to be encumbered with it, and this reluctance he was not backward to express to Gabriella, that friend of his bosom, from whom no action of his life was now concealed, so much did he value her judgment in matters wherein his own rested without any doubt.

“ Nay, doubt not the disposition of the Lords of Council,” said the fair Gabriella : “ follow their counsel and your fortune is made.”

“ But, Gabriella,” replied Overbury, “ the Earl of Northampton bears ill-will towards me—he has not concealed his

mind from myself, and to others he has spoken even more freely. I must cast about, to find out the reason why I am employed to visit the Archduke, in preference to some great lord."

"Sir Knight," interrupted Gabriella, "to refuse the King's commission, will be your utter disgrace."

"To undertake it," replied Sir Thomas, "will be the loss of my preferment by means of my best friend at home, the Earl of Somerset."

"And to decline it, will be construed into high treason," rejoined Gabriella.

"Think'st thou, fair dame, I am to be cozened by Northampton, and he it is who desires me gone? Nay, nay, Gabriella, I will not budge; 'tis all a trick into which they have drawn me; and Somerset is so fairly in my power, he'll not fail to stand my friend, in the event of incurring the King's displeasure."

“ I shall not urge my poor opinion further,” replied Gabriella ; “ but methinks you might try the stars with some wise magician, to know the fortune reserved for you in this appointment.”

“ I had some thoughts of that myself,” answered Overbury ; “ but I am not in the humour now.—To-morrow, perhaps, I may visit a conjuror, and have the scheme of my nativity erected and consulted.”

On the morrow Sir Thomas was met by Somerset earlier than usual at Whitehall ; and the presence of the Earl surprised his friend, who, in the familiarity of that intercourse which passed between them, exclaimed as his eyes met those of his patron,—“ My Lord, good morrow : methinks this early time of day bespeaks partnership with some alchymical dew gatherer.”

“ No, Sir, Thomas, no, not quite so fan-

eiful as a Rosicrutian either ; but as zealous as the best friend of Overbury," replied Somerset.

" Zeal, my good lord, like the warming beams of that blessed sun, ne'er yet lacked blossoms and social evergreens, —How does my sweet lord ?"

" Indifferent well, Sir Thomas," replied Somerset : " you have been talked to last night, by the lords of council, on your appointment to the Low Countries. How squares your humour with an embassy ?"

Overbury, who judged this would be a favourable opportunity of putting the friendship of the Viscount to the test, professed himself at a loss how to act, and begged Somerset would advise him, saying, " What thinks your Lordship of the appointment ? For myself, I am indifferent how it goes. Some considerations there are which would induce me to travel again ; but there are others, and

these not altogether personal, which invite me to remain still in England."

" I confess to you, Sir Thomas," replied Somerset, " I am somewhat of your mind ; and I am aware of considerations you ought to entertain not altogether personal. Bethink you or the predicament in which you might be placed with respect to Gabriella, and also to the Council if your embassy answered not the wishes of the King, who, whatever may be his present intentions, will be no trusty ally of the protestant cause in Germany."

" I had, in reference to the maligners of your Lordship's worth," said Overbury, " applied to myself these words of the poet :—

" Ne quicquam crede, haud credere quicquam,
————— nam fronte polito."

" *Astutum rapido torrent sub pectore vulpem,* the which," continued Sir Thomas,

who entertained a very low opinion of Somerset's Latinity, "we English by saying,

Believe not thou, scarce any man ;
 For oft a Phrygian face
 Is smoothly covered with a smile,
 But within seeks thy disgrace."

"Perfectly so," ejaculated Somerset ;
 "thy disgrace indeed, my Mentor ;—do
 your preferments and your expectations
 lie among foreign nations ? No, none of
 them. In how many years will you
 labour to make among them that cre-
 dit you have at home ? Then why
 should you hazard upon uncertainties,
 being in possession, as a man may say,
 of all that you expect by this means
 already ?"

"There, my Lord Earl, you have hit
 the right nail on the head," answered
 the knight, whose determinations the
 wily favourite had now directed as he

wished ;—“ My great trust in your Lordship’s continued friendships, with the doubtfulness of my own mind, what some who wish me gone may aim at, does in a manner confirm my opinion rather to leave it than to take it.”

“ Doubt that sweet sun shines, but do doubt not me,” replied Somerset.

“ Nevertheless, my Lord, it will be no small thing to oppose the determination of the Council, and to contradict the King’s employment,” interrupted Overbury ;—“ for in either of these I must expect the displeasure of both, and be in danger to receive condign punishment, if your Lordship’s great influence help me not over this bridge of despair.”

“ Who ever sank when I said, swim, fellow, swim ?” demanded Somerset ; “ and dost thou doubt I will not take this upon me. I grant I wished at first thou wert gone to Jericho, till thy beard

had grown, for those jangles we have had; but now, Sir Thomas, I do not know what I should do without you; our fortunes are one."

"And I had hopes, nay, considerations not altogether personal, as I may say again, that my presence here in England, might save your Lordship from that alliance."

"Hold, hold, Sir Thomas," interrupted the favourite, "I have had long experience of thy worth—I have found thee faithful and diligent in thy employments, and could as well miss my right hand, as miss thee; and in case any such danger should happen to thee as thou fearest, yet nevertheless, if either my word, my letter, or my credit, or favour, can either mitigate, release, or relieve you, it shall not be wanting to do you pleasure and afford ease."

"Then, my Lord, I will this morning write to the Lord President of the

council, and inform him of my determination to decline the embassy to the Archduke," said Overbury, whom a blind prejudice seduced from duty and utterly drew from that which was intended for his profit.

"Write, by all means," exclaimed Somerset; "but to no mortal do thou, my friend, disclose that I had any hand in dissuading thee from the embassy."

Overbury having replied that he should never commit his patron, walked out of the palace gardens into his cabinet, where he penned his renunciation of the employment, and forwarded it to the Lord President before noon.—And Somerset having so completely gained his purpose, took a bye path to the house of Northampton, where he arrived, ere the Earl had despatched the business of the morning between matins and breakfast.

"How fares my good Lord this morning," demanded Somerset, as he

abruptly introduced himself into the presence of the Earl of Northampton.

“ Well, excellent well, both in heart and in head; and as purpose of a feast brings the falcon from his mew, for which species of banquet, am I to translate your Lordship’s early visit?” asked Northampton, who, though he shaped his question so, judged the Viscount came to make the *amende honorable* to the Lady Frances for the ill humour into which he had thrown her mind on the preceding evening.

“ In faith, my Lord,” said Somerset, in reply, “ I’ve had as much to do this morning as an I were of the cabal of hermetrical philosophers. As the *fratres roris cocti* frequent the meadows in the morning to gather their most powerful dissolvent from the grassy couch of Somnus, so have I, my Lord, been seeking for light.”

“ Indeed, my Lord of Somerset, you

seem initiated in the rules of the invisible brothers," retorted Northampton ; " have you then digested, modified, and compounded the seed of the red dragon into pure gold ?"

" In good sooth I have," answered the favourite ;—" this gross corporeal light hath dissolved a spell I lay under, and now, methinks, that archean power o' the stars o'er my fate begins to act sensibly before my eyes."

" By the signatures of things past, present, and to come !" uttered Northampton ; " by the efficacy of magic, and the various ranks and orders of dæmons, methinks thou hast in very deed found out that the philosopher's stone is dew concocted, exalted."

" Aye, faith, have I," said Somerset, laughing. " My conjuror Overbury hath become a most perfect gymnosophist ; but, as I squeeze this Provence rose-bud, so shall I crush him now."

“How, *now*, my Lord,” asked Northampton in evident joy.

“Why look ye, my sweet Earl,” answered Somerset, “the poor knight hath resolved him not to undertake the embassy; and my plan is thereby thorough sped. Presto I’ll to the King and trounce mine enemy.”

“Thou art as marvellous as a fowler with his harquebuss and stalking horse,” said Northampton: “explain to me this mystery.”

“Briefly then ’tis this,” answered Somerset. “Overbury declines the embassy; as soon as he hath written to that effect to the Lord President of the council, I will urge his Lordship to lay the knight’s letter before the King. To Overbury, before his Majesty, I have always shewn myself partial. I shall still preserve the appearance of honest friendship; but then my duty to James is above all others important, and will dic-

tate the necessity of his Grace's displeasure being shown, by committing Sir Thomas Overbury to the Tower—let the Lord Justice Coke, and the Attorney Bacon, find out the kind and degree of treason the knight hath committed in refusing to obey the King's royal pleasure."

"By the rood, my Lord Somerset, thou hast rid thyself of the fellow excellent well," exclaimed Northampton—"But there are others will oppose thee, and leave no stone unturned till Overbury be released."

"On what figure of the canvas now is your Lordship's eye bent?" asked Somerset; for the Earl was at the moment glancing at a fine painting of the Royal Family, which had been presented by Queen Anne to Northampton.

"Which of these youths, thinkest thou, Somerset, would best fish with a jury of flies? Nay, look not so

grave ; there wants but the wee wee, German lairdie in the group, spouting a verse from Du Bartas."

" By St. Androis!" exclaimed Somerset. " And has busy prating fame brought my rencontre with their highnesses to your Lordship's ears already?"

" Even so, my Lord Somerset," replied the Earl with a sigh, and adding one of the popular angling proverbs of the day to strike home into the Viscount's bosom, he said flippantly,

" If that the wind be in the south,
It blows the fly into the trout's mouth."

" Enough, enough! my sweet Lord," cried Somerset; " to that thorough-paced courtier Philip Herbert, hath Prince Henry no doubt in a poculent moment bragged of his sport with me; and now I must be the laughing stock

of fools and knaves. By Jove this is too much.”

“Nay, my Lord, reserve this choler for a fitting time and place ; breakfast, I dare swear, awaits, though the rascal serving me ne'er fancies my appetite may become trenchant—let us to the Lady Frances, who must be reconciled by this news.”—And without waiting for Somerset's answer, or listening to any observation from him on the hint conveyed by the Lady Frances being reconciled, the old Earl led the way, leaving the noble Viscount to follow.

On entering the spacious and elegant apartment which served as the breakfasting room, the Lady Frances was seen viewing herself in a fine French looking glass, the frame whereof was ornamented with gold, pearls, silver, and velvet, so richly bedecked as to be estimated at five hundred ecus de soleil.

“ Good morrow, noble Coz,” said Northampton, skipping with nimble step up to his niece ; “ I’ve brought you the noble Somerset, who has made his peace with a whole hecatomb this morning ; and all that is past must be blown to the blast.—No—no—I’ll not see those sweet lips opened in reproach, nor hear that angel tongue revile the Lord : Overbury goes to the Tower to-morrow, or I forfeit my right hand ! Does that content you ? ”

“ A little thing contents me,” replied the Lady Frances, whom the Earl had prevented speaking for a space—and as she said this she turned round to Somerset, on whom she cast a glance that spoke her high displeasure, but the Viscount knelt on one knee, seized her hand, pressed it to his lips and then to his heart without uttering a word.—“ Nay, rise,” added she ; “ we bear not malice, though we receive offence.—

Thou hast sealed thy pardon, my dearest Somerset."

The favourite thereupon arose, and having placed for the Lady Frances a chair by the side of the richly loaded table, sat down beside her, and their breakfast was eaten with good appetite.

"Cousin," said Northampton, "we will now take our leave of you, for business of high import calls us away; the Earl of Somerset and myself have only entered on the threshold of our labours. There must not be one impediment to your marriage; nor in the land one golden tongue to ask what card is trumps; our game must be played in the world's eye as fairly under clubs as diamonds, under spades as hearts; neither ought we to heed whether the fetters of our maligners consist of many links or of one. We must forge the many and make the one strong

enough. There is that many headed beast, the multitude, that in a few years must be galled by a new saddle and a young rider, unless some one act the part of Robert Dudley, thinking it more convenient to maintain his power at the expense of one prince than to lose it in the splendour of the rising sun."

"There were greater loss than all that," said Somerset; "and to hear a 'scape-grace prince, in the ostentation of his birth, despise his father's best friend for meanness of blood, renders that a shame which in itself is no crime."

"Sweet Somerset," quoth the Lady Frances, "leave such animals to pride themselves in the shadow and tail of honour;—be it our duty to find some alchymic which may make the substance vanish, and the tongue⁷ that would insult us listless as Bryan o' Rourke's."

"Mad savage that was, cousin," said

Northampton, “ to drag her grace Elizabeth’s picture about at the tail of a horse, and die laughing at his confessor.”

Weston who stood behind the chair of the Lady Frances, at this moment whispered into her ear the petition ; “ now is the moment to find an apt assistant in our mysteries.” And the Lady Frances accordingly turning to Rochester said, “ sweet Lord, I have a boon to beg ; read me this scroll, and if thou canst obtain for a poor man his lands, we’ll find an active messenger in Franklin.”

Somerset took the paper, opened it, and having glanced over its contents, said, “ He believed the fellow might be reinstated ;” but added, “ what means my dearest Lady Frances by this messenger ?”

“ In good sooth, my Lord, I would have him preferred into the prince’s

kitchen, where he may be as useful as Doctor Julio to the Earl of Leicester."

"Ah! now speakest thou without riddle," exclaimed Somerset. "Franklin shall be translated, if we can depend upon him. How sayest thou, Weston?"

Weston looked first at Northampton, as much as to say, "mine host, may I speak?" Then at the Lady Frances as if to get the catch-word of his part, and having with some degree of sufficiency adjusted the ruff he had that morning put on, said, "so please your noble personages, there was the Lord Robert Dudley whom ye have spoken of: he thought it convenient to be single, while two young queens in the island were marriageable, and therefore put Amie Robsart his wife out of the way, by flinging her down stairs, and breaking her neck."

"How, sirrah, how knowest thou that?" said Lady Frances.

“ Even as the world knows that he privately married the Lady Douglas Sheffield, after having poisoned her husband,” replied Weston.

“ Scandal, as I live,” said Northampton ; “ but what hast thou, Sirrah, to tell us of the Lady Douglas ; for I warrant your Ladyship this young braggart page knows all that passes in all the chambers of the land.”

“ Faith, my Lord,” answered the page, “ an I must speak, Dudley finding the Lady Douglas inconvenient to him, endeavoured to poison her, and forced the by terror, and the loss of her hair and nails, to marry Sir Edward Stafford.”

“ Well, Sirrah ; and what wouldst thou infer next ?” demanded Northampton.

“ He then got another wife,” answered Weston.

“ He knows all that’s done under Heaven, I do believe,” said the Lady

Frances. “ He did get another wife, Sirrah, the Lady Essex.”

“ After getting rid of her husband by his favourite method,” rejoined the page. “ And Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, and the Earl of Sussex, and the Cardinal Chastillon, and Dr. Julio expired in a strange manner. Men must die some time, and the Earl of Leicester had the power and the will to deliver himself of all who opposed his jovial humour in queen craft.—But Harry Stuart may be less offensive as King Henry the Ninth, than debonnaire as Prince of Wales, and the loftiest branch in the young Caledonian grove. God bless the King, and Heaven guard his sons, say I; and may they be bred as well as the son of her late Grace in the state of Venice, and her daughter, I know not where, more than wise Henry the Fourth over the water, who could not tell what religion himself was of.”

“ Hold thy peace, varlet,” said the Lady Frances, for both Northampton and Somerset sat laughing immoderately as the pert page ran on ; “ hold thy peace, Sirrah,” exclaimed the Lady angrily, “ and bring presto, thy thorough-paced friend, my Lord’s trenchman, or master of horse, or whatever he is, by name Coppinger.”

Weston bowed and hastened to the buttery, where Coppinger was preparing his body for the duties of the day, by a more substantial meal than usually constituted the breakfast of the English people at this period.

“ Come along, thou pot-bellied trencherman ?” exclaimed Weston : “ come along, I say : there are great sovereigns and double rose nobles to boot in the way this morning, and thou sittest there with that porker, tosspot, truculent cook and his trumpet-tongued trulls.”

“ Then have at thee, bully page,”

cried one of the kitchen wenches who sat next Coppinger; "thou cuttle fish, sea angler, graceless skegger—zounds, sirrah, the brass gates of Norwich and thy tench looking face, are the nearest things alike in this nether world—how squares thy turcism with a slice of boar's head, thou trucking shark?"

"Look ye, my masters," quoth Weston, regardless of the enraged woman, "look ye," he added, tossing up a purse of money, "these are all Britain crowns, new from the Mint, as a sinner may say, and when they're gone, I'll stuff this bit of leather with half Henry nobles, or my name is not Weston. Come, Coppinger, come, I say, or go to the devil in your own way."

Coppinger, whom money, or the sight of money always moved on his seat, sprung out of the buttery with Weston, and was speedily conducted into the presence of his master.

“Coppinger,” said the favourite, “knowest thou Jervase Yelvis in Lincoln?”

“Him that was some time in the study of the public laws at Lincoln’s Inn?” asked the Master of Horse.

“The same; thou didst hint to me,” said Somerset, “he was ambitious of preferment, and would give a sum of money to have the honour and place of Sir William Wade.”

“Gramercie! my Lord,” answered Coppinger, “and I did. Sir William Wade hath been too severe towards the Lady Arabella, and he hath given some other prisoners in the Tower more liberty than they deserve; besides, he hath grown rich, and with that careless of his office, the which to my thinking, he neglecteth.”

“Well, well, Sir,” said Northampton, “we called you not here for advice, but to hear and to obey.—Look ye, Coppin-

ger, take this bag full of great sovereigns and do what my Lord of Somerset hath to do, e'en to the death of friend or foe ; —be wise, honest and discreet, and discharge thyself with more sufficiency than I hope thou can'st, and on the word of Northampton, thy beaver shall be heaped with double rose nobles when thy work is done."

Coppinger took the bag of gold, put it into a side pocket of his doublet, which he wore fastened with large copper clasps before, and bowing to Northampton, assured him " he would justify the house of Howard against any who wore a leek on St. David's day, or refused salt fish and parsnips on Good Friday."

" 'Tis well," said Northampton, waving his hand, and walking to the window, he left the Viscount to dispatch his Master of Horse.

" Coppinger, my dear fellow," said

Somerset, “ thou must to horse presto, presto, and as fast as thy limbs and the tid hold good, ride thee to the fair city of Lincoln. Here is thy passport, signed with my own seal. Find me Jervase Elwes, or Yelvis, as they call him ; and make what bargain thou can’st with him for the lieutenancy of the Tower—my Lord Northampton and myself, will place him there, ere two suns are set. But look to it, Sir, he must be observant of such as prefer him ; and make the Earls of Northampton and Somerset the end of all his actions.”

“ If he fear not to displease your noble Lordships more than the King,” answered Coppinger, “ he is no fit man for his office ; and an he displease your Lordships, I’ll undertake his extortion comes to nought, ere the settle of his lieutenancy warms under him.—This dagger,” added the bravo, looking in the face of the Lord Northampton, “ this

shall justify my duty, and punish Jervaise's neglect, an he lack grace to remember his patrons."

"Good, Coppinger, good; but when wilt thou be in town again?" demanded Somerset.

"An horse and man hold good," replied the bravo, "on Sunday at dusk."

"Speed thee well then, Coppinger," said the favourite, waving his hand for the ruffian to be gone.

Weston, who had entered the chamber with his bully friend, stood in amazement as this scene passed before his eyes, and in the hearing of his ears; and when Coppinger departed he would have followed, but the Lady Frances withdrew by the arras of a side door, beckoning her page to follow her.

CHAP. II.

Still cheating and lying, he plays his game,
 Always dissembling, yet still the same ;
 Till he fills the creation with crimes of damnation,
 Then goes to the devil from whence he came.

OLD SONG.

Is all the council that we two have shared,
 ————— the hours that we have spent,
 When we have chid the hasty footed time
 For parting us———Oh! is all forgot ?

*

*

*

And will you rent our ancient love asunder ?

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

“ Now, my sweet Lord,” said Somerset
 to his wily friend Northampton, the
 moment Coppinger had left the room,
 “ I'll to the Tower, and under pretence
 of duty, fish from the prisoners there,

such grounds of complaint against Sir William Wade as may warrant his removal. Thus the way will be opened for Elwes. My next business will be to do a good turn to this Franklin. If I can make him a household man at Hampton Court, or the Hospital, I shall indeed, recommend him and his trustiness to our plot, and he shall find an honest recompence for his pains in the end."

"For mercy's sake, Somerset," said the Earl, "be as wary as you can, that no man get an advantage of us. I doubt not but you know the peril to be, both life, lands and honour, in case the matter be not wisely used."

"I trow your Lordship has proof of my constancy already," answered Somerset, "and you might confide your Earldom to Coppinger; he would not spare to ride to hell's gate to pleasure me, and he is not beguiled of my part to

him. The page I must dispose of, as his recklessness shews want of caution. I must even now see him, to achieve that which my heart pants after withal. If he blab one word, had he ten thousand lives, and could he suffer ten thousand deaths, they would not all be sufficient satisfaction and recompense for such a traitor."

As the favourite pronounced the last word, the Lady Frances entered the room, saying, "My sweet Lord, I have dispatched Weston for that knave Franklin;—it is fit we should see him, ere we count all our materials in readiness."

"My own thought, sweet," answered Somerset, "though the spending of all I have got, yea, the hazarding of my life shall not affray me from my revenge, although the scaffold were already set up, I would go through with the wracking of mine enemies."

"Time flies," interrupted Northamp-

ton, "and it makes for my hour of sailing on the river. I will call on my excursion at one or two water gates. Does your Ladyship 'company me, or may I trust the Lady Frances with my sweet Rochester."

"Goodsooth, noble uncle," said the Lady Frances, "your house is fast castle to me till my page return, for without him, in public I will not appear. Besides, I look for him and this Franklin anon—Somerset, you'll wait and see this man?"

Somerset, bowed assent, the old Earl took his leave, and the Lady Frances and her gallant passed the time to their own satisfaction till Weston returned. As soon as the page introduced his associate Franklin, Somerset addressed him saying, "Thou hast been hardly dealt with, my master, and thy lands may be difficult to recover; nevertheless good service may be done thee, if thou couldst be relied on in extremity—Wouldst live.

in my house at St. James's Park, or would the Prince's suit thy humour better?"

"An your Lordship wants a special Secretary of your noble life, I will undertake in any stratagem, to be circumspect in all things, and take no fear but all shall be well," said Franklin with great deliberate coolness.

"Thou canst prepare ane hatted kit with sugar and comfits?" asked Somerset; "and for youngers that snuff the Queen's herb, thou couldst undertake to mill it with some henbane;—or with white arsenic, which is fit for salt at the table; thou couldst undertake to become apprentice to death; or the help grave ycleped great spiders and the fly cantharides, fit for pigs sauce or porridge sauce, albeit they resemble spiceries—thou couldst use these discreetly; or with roseaker and mercury water in the composts of tarts and hotch potches, ycleped made dishes, or by such essays

as might not be too swift, lest the world should startle at thy occupation by the suddenness of dispatch;—thou couldst give the sexton a fee?”

Franklin whose countenance moved not during Somerset's enumeration of these various methods of dispatching an enemy, said, “An I had a quiet place and well provided, he might linger some one and twenty days I essaid upon, or till all be done that could be well done, he might be said to have an ague for two months, or an 'twere fitting he should seem leprosied with vice, and a *corpus judaicum*, dead by dissoluteness.”

The speeches of Somerset and the cool blooded murderer who spoke last, thrilled the very soul of the Lady Frances, for though she loved pleasure, she had no such hardness of heart and depravity as these plotters discovered; but the shock was momentary, and the purpose of her revenge reconciled her to

language not befitting the ears of a female, and a lady of noble birth and high breeding.

Weston, on the other hand, exhibited a malignant satisfaction in his look, as the Viscount's enumeration fell upon his ear, and his eyes glistened with a hellish joy as Franklin briefly declared how far his ability extended in this traffic of death.

“ By the rood, my master, thou deservest an ecclesiastical revenue,” exclaimed Somerset, his eye-brows meeting as he pursed his forehead in examining the face of Franklin, to discover if insincerity lurked beneath the appearance of ready service he expressed in words ; “ and now methinks, it were well thou couldst in some sort assure us of thy fidelity.”

“ Propose your oath, my Lord,” said Franklin readily, “ and I will swear it ; but methinks if I stake life and limb

'gainst your Lordship's blue ribbon, the danger is reciprocate. May I be planet stricken; may the Lord of the ascendant and the Lord of the hour cease to be of one nature and triplicity, when I put a radical question to the astrologer Gresham, or Scot in St. Swithin's Lane, an I ben't as cobby in your Lordship's service, an I am to have my patrimony back, as an I had the Mall dusted with farthings of gold, and the whole a free gift of the King's Majesty.—Why wasn't our breast bones made to open and shut that a man's heart might be looked into, an his bare word equal not the objuration of prating oafs that bounce all they know in roundelays with the rudity of punchinello."

“Thou lackest not the gift of the gab more than romancers of thy calling,” said Somerset, when he could edge in his word; “but to be brief, master Franklin, thou'lt change service to enter

as chief cook at St. James's or Hampton Court ;"—Franklin bowed, folded his hands upon his breast and muttered something about his gratitude, and the Viscount proceeded to say, "thy worth in this new vocation we will try in good time, if thou becomest not one of the puling craven dependants of my Lord of Pembroke. Look to it, if thou art called to the royal kitchen, that thy service to me procure thee preferment,—take this purse of nobles, and remember thy trust."

Franklin again made an inclination of his head very lowly, put the money into the pocket of his jerkin, and turned round to Weston to be conducted out of the apartment. The page, who had said to himself on the departure of Coppinger with his money, "Much falls between the cup and the lip," resolved to let no preventional contingency intervene between him and Franklin, and

taking his friend by the hand, gave him joy on the success of his interview.

“Thy fortune is made, master Martin Franklin,” said Weston when he had gained the outside of the chamber door. “Mayhap thou’lt not forget Billy Weston, and thy pocket stuffed as it is this morning?”

“Thou hast an excellent place, my young master,” replied Franklin, “and I tell thee for thy comfort, it is good to make hay while the sun shines.”

“God’s death! Bully Cook,” exclaimed Weston, his colour leaving his cheek, while he laid his hand on the hilt of his dagger. “This to me, thou baud to the mouth.—Who brought thee to all this good fortune? Not Gresham, nor Scot, nor Forman,—cozening knaves, I despise their art, and spurn thee thus, thou white livered night crow;” and as the indignant page, who saw at once that his copartner intended him to make

the honest proverb a stalking horse to his villainies, said, " I spurn thee thus," he gave Franklin a smart kick on the buttocks.

" Thou trimming pickerel, an I hadn't more occasion to palter with thy betters, I'd play at pimpompot with thee for an hour to come. 'Sdeath, bully Page, an thou'rt going to palmer me ere I reach the threshold, I'll truck and budge anon."

" There's reason in that, Bully Cook," rejoined Weston. " Thou'st turned thy coat in the sun to-day, but we must go snacks, or by St. Paul I'll cut thee out of all thy employment, ere thou cross the Thames.—Holy Virgin! an thou hast not found out how to catch larks before the sky falls!"

By this time Weston had dogged the temporizing cook into a remote corner of the building, and there he compelled him to produce the presenta-

tion purse, the contents of which he divided into two equal shares, and bidding Franklin take which he liked, added, "Now, my master, thy fortune is in my keeping, if I go not halves in every purse thou gettest, I'll blast thee in the Star Chamber with one word."

Franklin, having put his half of the prize into his pocket, commenced a long speech justifying himself, and reflecting on the disposition the page had shown to cut a connection that promised such, and so great mutual advantages. But Weston had neither time nor temper to listen to the arguments of his copartner, and he therefore broke forth into a loud laugh, bidding the cook "go preach to the archbishop."

On the page's return to his lady, she was in high altercation with Somerset, on subjects of personal consequence to themselves; and the youth was about to quit the apartment under an impres-

sion that his presence might not be agreeable. "Nay, stay, Sirrah," exclaimed the Lady Frances, "thou hast heard the beginning, thou must hear the end of this jangle." Weston bowed and took his stand by the door he had just entered.

The Lady Frances earnestly besought Somerset for a sum of money she wanted, and he promised her it should be forthcoming by a certain time. The period assigned by the Viscount was too remote, the Lady Frances "could not exist," she declared, till that time unless she had a certain sum, and Somerset was at length compelled to agree to her terms, and time of furnishing the cash. Glad to escape from the Earl of Northampton's, where his scheming had detained him, this morning longer than he could have wished, the Viscount repaired to his office at Whitehall, and found that Sir Thomas

Overbury had actually forwarded his letter of resignation to the Lord President of the council: so far, he was glad, all had gone well, and now he proceeded forthwith to the Lord President's, who on his entering handed the Viscount the letter of Overbury, without saying a word. Somerset pretended great concern and deep sorrow at his protégée's abandonment of the employment, and asked the noble Lord, "what offence the conduct of Overbury might be classed with? For offence it seemed to him, that any man should dare to gainsay the word of the King."

"The offence," answered the Lord President, "is high treason." Then opening a casket, his Lordship took from it a small volume in manuscript, beautifully written and in some parts illuminated, containing in alphabetical orders the various treasons which in the opinion of the judge who had written that

book might be committed against the state.

“ I shall be undone by this man, I foresee,” quoth Somerset, “ if he be committed to the Tower; and yet we must report to his Majesty forthwith the conduct of my secretary.”

“ An insolent fellow, he is,” replied the Lord President Suffolk; “ thou hast made him a kind of oracle of direction to thee, my sweet Lord, and if the world will believe his own vaunt, he took upon him that thy fortunes, reputation and fame proceeded from his company and counsel.”

“ Doubtless, my noble Lord,” answered Somerset, “ our friendship hath rested not only in conversation and business at court, but likewise in communication of secrets of state; he hath seen and used for me the King’s packets and despatches from all parts of Spain, France, and the Low Countries; and

this not by glimpses, or now and then resounding in the ear for a favour, but in a settled manner.”

“ His head is now under your girdle,” interrupted the Lord President; “and it would be a fantastical grace indeed, to let him wear it thrasonically for your destruction. Thomas Overbury bears the house of Howard no good will; you, my Lord Earl of Somerset, have given him opportunity to betray the state by confiding too much in him, sending him packets sometimes open, sometimes sealed for his perusal before you read them yourself. He hath perused them, copied them, registered them, made table talk of them, as he thought good.”

“ Terrors of darkness confound the villain,” exclaimed Somerset, “ how does your Lordship know all this?”

The Lord President opened the door of his chamber, and ringing a little bell a servant entered. “ Peyton,” said the

Earl, " relate the jargon thou heardst Sir Thomas Overbury use."

" So please your Grace," said the serving man, " Cambro Mead of the Mitre in Cheap, says he knows more of the secrets of State from Sir Thomas Overbury than the Council table doth."

" Why, master Peyton," observed Somerset, " how came it to pass that while in my service thou usedst not this plainness?"

" So please your Lordship," answered the man, " an I had lippeded aught of all Cambro Mead told me, I had been confederate with Raleigh in the Tower."

" How, fellow, how sayest thou? explain me thy meaning, for a riddle is thy trash of speech to my ear," said Somerset, angrily, his colour coming and going as the serving man spoke, and as his own tongue performed its office.

" This Mead is a prating fellow, of

the city, and valueth himself on his occupation, and protection therein," remarked Suffolk. "All the passages between him and Overbury happened, I reckon, before your friend, my Lord, was knighted; nevertheless, the drift of the matter in form and meaning is this. The knight hath used the house of this Mead in his meaner fortunes; and now shall Peyton speak plainly. The inwardness of thy soul lay open, Sirrah;" said the Earl to Peyton, who confessed he had been employed as a spy to watch Sir Thomas Overbury—"And," added the Earl, "I'll conjure from this Peyton cyphers used in great communication of secrets anent Julius, Agrippina, Dominic, Lerma, and so forth."

Somerset stood confounded for a moment; this disclosure was more than he apprehended, as the names mentioned by the Lord President of the council,

were actually nicknames, which Overbury and he had used to designate the King, Queen, Northampton, and Suffolk himself. When, however, the favourite could command his feelings, “ he begged of his Lordship that the serving man might withdraw ;” a request which was at once complied with, and the two privy counsellors being left alone, mutual explanations and apologies took place ; Somerset averring he had been abused by Overbury, and Suffolk assuring his future son in law, that “ since he had opened his eyes, he hoped the noble Viscount would no longer accord his friendship to an ill man, since such alliances were conspiracy, not friendship.”

“ I see it all,” answered Somerset, “ this is his sincerity, his impugning my purpose of marriage ;—long did I know he had nothing solid for religion, or moral virtue about him, but was wholly

possessed with ambition and vain glory;—now I see he was loth to have any partners in my favour but himself—Holy Paul! Overbury is naught and corrupt; the ballads must be mended for that point that shall chaunt his praise—I have this day planned his utter ruin,—and if I now let him break from me and fly out, he will wind unto me and trouble my whole fortunes—Overbury must die!”

“ I go straight to the King,” said the Earl of Suffolk, “ to lay before his Majesty this letter; do you, in the mean time, my dear Lord, give orders for Overbury’s arrest; I shall return with the warrant of his committment to the Tower.”

Overbury, who had left Whitehall, immediately as Rochester quitted him, was, at the period of the discourse we have just related, innocently amusing himself in the company of his Gabriella.

Their conversation, on the knight's return to this interesting being, ran for a time upon her dress for a wedding in the city, whither they had both been invited ; and so much did this matter occupy the attention of Gabriella, that for a time she forgot to mention the affair of the embassy into the Low Countries. At length, however, it was broached, and Sir Thomas having told her that he had declined the employment, she burst into tears, and in her great agony prophesied the ruin of them both.—Overbury, who was in reality a man of a haughty and overbearing disposition, found no better defence of his conduct than the usurpation of the tyrannical power which their relative situations yielded him, and he very unmanly used it to silence the accomplished female who had lavished upon him to this hour the warmest affection of her

soul and the sensibilities of her tender heart.

“ Gabriella,” said he, “ you talk like a child, and your tears are mere folly and ingratitude to me. I am the best judge of my own actions; and besides, I have my Lord Somerset so completely in my power, he must stand my friend, and think you he will not do it?—If they deal violently with me, my service to the Favourite will obliterate my fault, if fault it be to refuse the embassy, and as they cannot charge me with disloyalty, I shall come forth greater than ever.—We have made all the world players for our amusement and profit.—Besides, my serving man, Peyton, whom I sent with my letter to the Lord President, assures me the Earl said he was glad I would not go over sea.”

“ So much the worse,” said Gabriella, “ I always feared Lord Suffolk; his gladness may arise from a

secret joy in his triumph. And believe me, Sir Thomas, you put more confidence in your serving men, Davis and Peyton, than I trow is reasonable. They are both rascal valets that will take a bribe, and being recommended to you by Lord Somerset, I fear them the more."

Overbury smiled at this speech, and observed upon it, that "it was true these fellows had been in the employ of Somerset, but they were sworn to secrecy between the favourite and him, and could be depended on."

"Said you not once to me, you feared one sight Davis saw, when you opened a packet of letters directed to the King, and coming from Sir John Digby, to take notes from them for Somerset?" asked Gabriella.

"True, sweet, true, but I sent both the packet and notes to the Viscount," answered Overbury.

“ And when we were at Newmarket before the Queen became offended,” said Gabriella, “ did not Peyton see you open the packet from Sir Thomas Edmundes to the King, out of which after you had taken extracts, you sealed it and sent both to Somerset ?”

“ And what of that ?” asked the knight peevishly ; “ all this is secret, private, and were it published in Paul’s Aisle would only be used as an aggravation against the villains who should disclose such trusts, and not against us who rule the roast—I’ll brave them all in words and writing, if they put me to it :—The red haired Dane had better never have interdicted me the court ; and whose fault was that ? Not my miscarriage in particular towards her Majesty, but Somerset’s own neglect.—No man fears the whole court less than I ;—none of them can come to the knowledge of the Viscount’s secret

doings without my privity; and I have all the friends of my late Lord of Salisbury to help me, even if the whole batch of the Howards enforce themselves and their causeless discontents against me.”

The hour now approached when Sir Thomas and Gabriella were to repair into the city to attend the wedding of his friend, Master Rawlins, who was that day to receive the hand of Margery Weymark, daughter of that wealthy citizen and merchant, but better known as the Paul's walker, a name usually given to those novelans who frequented the Aisle for news.

Rawlins and Overbury were remotely allied by family, and the citizen judged the highest honour the feast could receive would be the presence of his cousin, Sir Thomas Overbury, from Bruton upon the Hill, and now so great a man at court. In this, perhaps,

the worthy master Rawlins was not mistaken, but he knew little of the precipice on which his court relative stood. With breasts more variable in tone than language can describe, the knight and his Gabriella departed from his villa in Holborn for the house of Master Weymark.

The company at this civic feast consisted of tradesmen's wives, their children, and husbands. Some of these good women wore fly caps adorned with pearls, to keep alive their remembrance of Queen Elizabeth and her court ladies; others wore a small cap with a veil, which was negligently thrown behind the neck, and gave much grace to the upper part of the fair dames who wore them; a third wore a vast load of false hair, and her daughter's head was ornamented merely with what nature had furnished it, uncovered and braided behind; a fourth wore a large

showy bonnet; a fifth had on the gauze French hood, shewing the hair on each side, and drawn from the back of the head down the forehead; but the greater number of the matrons here present wore the Minerva cap, white and three cornered, the peaks standing about three inches above the head. Their ruffs were large, of lawn and cambric, stiffened with yellow starch, gracefully poked and reaching to the upper part of the head behind. The waist of every woman present offered to the eye all its natural length between shoulder and hip, where the stays finished before and behind in a fine taper point. One of our modern dandies with his stuffed out coat at the shoulders, and horse girth round his abdomen, presents a tolerable picture of a belle of the city in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The petticoats were such as to shew off their wearers as good bouncing dames, much

unlike the ghostly figures that taper from the shoulders to the heels; as if it were an ornament to appear devoid of strength and magnitude where nature planted her greatest beauty on woman. In a word then, the citizen's wives wore not exactly the Spanish fardingale, so much spoken against as if Elizabeth had worn it as a guard infanta, but they wore full petticoats. The stockings of these ladies were of velvet, of silk, and of fine linen; their gloves were of leather and some few of sewed silk. But the end of all this ostentation was to benefit the young couple, who received from the guests, presents that bore an exact proportion to the gay appearance of their wedding.

“In good sooth, friends,” said Overbury on entering, “there be signs of a wedding here, aye, and of a bridal to-boot. But where be our scarves and our gloves? I pray you give them us; let us know

your bride's colours and yours, friend Rawlins. Good, my master, good," added the knight, taking his scarf and gloves. "'tis well not to offend in so high a point of ceremony as this, for when nuptials want fitting marks of solemnity, what plate doth the bridegroom lose! what gifts! what friends! And now that we have had gloves, garters, and scarves, I pray you let us have the epithalamium, and masque sans error, sans rusticity."

"Gramercie! now it's time to wend to church, for the clock hath gone eleven," said Master Weymark, the bride's father, and a comely lass Margery was. Her attire was a gown of Mechlin cloth, and her hair was as yellow as gold hanging down behind attired with a 'billimant of gold, and curiously combed and plaited after the manner of those days. She was led to Bow-church between two sweet boys, with bride

laces and rosemary tied about their silken sleeves. There was a fair bride cup of silver gilt carried before her, wherein was a branch of rosemary gilded very fair, and hung about with silken ribbands of all colours. Musicians came next and played excellent epithalamium music from a band of lutes, poliphants, virginals, trumpets, kettle drums, fifes, cornets, and side drums, that made Cheapside ring again as the procession walked on. Then followed the musicians, a group of maidens fair, all the friends of Margery, some bearing great bride cakes, others garlands of vine leaves, intertwined with privets and oak branches gilded; then followed the matrons, and last the men in goodly array, and thus they passed on to church. But the first figure in the group was perhaps the interesting Gabriella, dight in a rich scarlet robe, while over her head she cast a hood white as the drifted snow: her gown was deli-

cately fastened round her waist with a belt of silver, from whence a gay purse and gingling keys depended ; two bright gold rings on each finger she wore, while the large rosettes, in her chopines or Italian shoes, of green grass silk set off the rich silver embroidery that graced her taper ankle.

The ceremony having been ended in the true spirit of the religion of the times, the whole company retraced their steps to Master Weimark's, where there was served up a costly and sumptuous entertainment. Nothing could exceed the hospitality of the host, and the presents which adorned the side tables were both numerous and expensive. But that which produced the most amusement towards the latter part of the day, was the masque performed by the " Earl of Dorset, his servants." These brothers of the sock and buskin, were the stars of Blackfriars and Salisbury Court, and

had in a former time been the Lord Hounsden's when Romeo and Juliet was first enacted; but now they were part of the Sackville retainers, and amused Prince Henry at their lord's occasionally with the "Virgin Martyr," the "Roaring Girl," "Tottenham Court," "Gull's Horn Book," and Ben Jonson's, "Staple of News."

The company thus amused, enjoyed their diversion till the curfew tolled the knell of parting day, when the night bridal was solemnized in goblets of clarey and cups of braket well spiced, while the young couple having been safely deposited between fine Holland's sheets, had their night posset given them, and were committed to Nox, to Hymen, and Somnus.

Overbury returned home with his Gabriella, and next day at Whitehall, the Archbishop came to him, asking "how he could venture to refuse the em-

bassage which had been procured him in distinction to so many others, all competent and desirous of place?" Sir Thomas excused himself on grounds which the Right Reverend Father considered untenable.

"Have you, nevertheless, procured me the copy of Bellarmine's letter to Lord Northampton?" asked the Right Reverend Prelate.

"I have," replied Overbury, "here it is, but for mercy's sake do not commit me in bringing this matter forward." The Archbishop pledged his word he would not, and entreated Overbury to reconsider his own case before he should find it too late. But the die was cast.

Somerset and the Earl of Suffolk were in the mean time not idle, and Northampton had managed matters, so as to put the whole in train for the final accomplishment of the plot. Somerset had on the instant desired a warrant to be drawn

out and despatched a trusty person to arrest Overbury. Unprepared as the knight was for this blow from his patron and friend, he was more enraged at the form of the document, which deprived him of his liberty.

“ I tell thee, fellow,” said he to the messenger, “ no privy counsellor alone can arrest me, or any man in England, but upon oath before a judge ; all the council together could not justify the making of such a warrant ;—I will not budge till I have seen my Lord Rochester himself.”

“ That’s impossible,” replied the messenger at arms, “ my Lord of Somerset hath gone to the king at Royston, and had all the judges in the land signed the warrant, it were not more legal than the Earl’s, he being a commissioner of star-chamber, and any of its members may fine, imprison, and punish corporally, by

whipping, branding, slitting nostrils and ears."

"Then take me to the Palace of Lambeth, master pursuivant," said Overbury; "his Grace of Canterbury, will stand good for me, or give me lodging until the will of the King himself be known."

"Faith, Sir Thomas," quoth the man of office, "there is my authority; and the best way for you is the quietest for me—I have a barge at Whitehall stairs, let's to it, and push down the river with the tide."

"No fellow, no, I will not stir, not an inch; take me before my Lord Knowles, take me to the Hospital before the Prince Henry, any where but to prison."

"By the rood, Sir Knight, thou dost but sully thy honours to compel me to use force," answered the pursuivant; but my men are at hand, and I'll whis-

tle them here in a trice, if we are to parley longer.”

“Holy Virgin! what shall I do—Let me take these papers; and these, and these, and this book;” said Overbury, in one moment losing his manly disposition. But who shall account for the various feelings of the mind in times of difficulty? To Overbury’s mind his connection with Somerset now seemed as the remnants of a dream, the past was confounded with his present situation, a prisoner, arrested for high treason, and the future presented only the direst consequences for that political crime,

CHAP. III.

“ They were quite mistaken in his temper who thought to get rid of him by advising him to make his escape from the Tower. He would have sat out the storm let the danger be what it would. He was a steady man and had a great firmness of soul, and would have died unconcernedly, or perhaps, like Sir Thomas More, with a jest in his mouth.”

SPENCE'S ANECDOTES.

SOMERSET'S visit to the Tower afforded him the means of proving the incapacity of Sir William Wade continuing its lieutenant any longer. Among the prisoners confined there at this time, was the accomplished and unfortunate Arabella Stuart, and a singular though romantic indulgence which the humanity of the lieutenant accorded her, furnished the plotting Viscount with a charge for Sir William's removal.

It so happened that as Somerset's barge neared the great White Tower of the fortress, he discovered a small hoy hovering in the middle of the stream, from which a female descended into a boat that was quickly rowed into Traitor's-gate. The Viscount's suspicions were instantly roused; he conjectured the lady who sought admittance within the walls of that dreary dwelling must be some friend of the Earl of Northumberland: the wife of Sir Walter Raleigh, or Mary Countess of Shrewsbury, or perchance, her neice the Lady Arabella Stuart.

The Lady Arabella was first cousin to James, for she was daughter of Charles Earl of Lennox, the younger brother of the Lord Darnley, whom Queen Mary raised to the Scottish throne. Her mother was Elizabeth daughter of Sir William Cavendish; and the Countess of Shrewsbury was

sister to Elizabeth Countess of Lennox. Sir William Seymour,* second son of the Earl of Hertford, had married the Lady Arabella without asking King James's leave, and she being so nearly related in blood to the King, it was deemed an offence against the royal prerogative ; and the ultimate consequence was her imprisonment in the Tower. The Lord Seymour escaped, however, beyond seas ; the Lady Arabella and the Countess attempted this also, but were captured and committed to the safe custody of the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir William Wade, who, though reputed severe to some of his prisoners, was certainly very lenient towards the Lady Arabella. He permitted her not only the range of the garrison, but he furnished her with the best apartments facing the

* At the Restoration, Sir William Seymour recovered the Dukedom of Somerset for his family.

river; and he even indulged her with a master key, which allowed her to leave the prison at any time she pleased. It was she who now disappeared from Rochester's eyes under the aquatic entrance into the tower. The Earl bade his men "row, row, row," and they did row merrily, but before they reached the arched entrance, the massive iron grated doors were shut, and the pinnace had disappeared. The water, however, was sufficiently troubled to shew that it had been disturbed by some more powerful agent than the usual current of the stream. The Earl of Somerset's bargeman in the bow, having already summoned the sentinel for admittance, the gate was soon re-opened, and the Favourite was forthwith attended by Sir William Wade.

"Pray, Sir knight," said Somerset, "is this an enchanted castle, in the which ye detain fair dames?"

“ Truly, my Lord of Somerset, there are fair ladies, of high blood too, within these walls,” answered Sir William Wade.—“ But for enchantments, we leave them to conjuring knaves ad octo.”

“ And which of these ladies of high blood enjoys a master key ?” said Somerset ; “ for by that angel shot at thy feet, Sir knight, my eyes deceived me if a lady fair came not in by the Traitor’s gate.” The lieutenant was posed by this question, and attempted an excuse which far from satisfying the Earl, only excited his suspicions the more. “ Nay, man,” added Somerset, “ thou canst not jest with me—on thy allegiance, Sir William Wade, who was the female that landed from that hoy in the mid stream ?”

“ The Lady Arabella !” said the lieutenant.

“ The Lady Arabella !” re-echoed

the favourite; and after repeating the name he said; “ Well, Sir Knight, this is indeed assuming the royal authority; you shall answer, anon, to his Majesty for this conduct—I would see Sir Walter Raleigh—he is in the Beauchamp Tower.”

Sir William Wade bowed, and conducting the Earl along the Court, he called to Carey, his under keeper, that “ Sir Walter Raleigh was wanted.”

“ Oh! I’ll to his apartments,” said Somerset, “ I must see him alone.”—

The Lieutenant walked on and Somerset followed. “ You will doubtless hear me,” said Sir William, “ before you report to his grace this little stretch of my authority? May I hope my lord Earl of Somerset will consider my conduct in the light of a gallant of other times? I have risked my head in this: the Lady Arabella has used my indulgence discreetly, and like a high born

Princess, her promise she hath kept ;-- nay I will go farther ; both she and the Countess of Shrewsbury have enjoyed the chase in Kent in such disguise as suited them. They have returned to this fortress, nor would they peril me to be free themselves in France."

" Sir Knight, thy open speech would sound ill on the ear of King James," answered Somerset, " but since it is so, that thou wilt peril thyself thus, thou must e'en swing by the hemp thou hast sown and twisted—In whatever light I represent thee to the King, prepare thyself to quit this place in four and twenty hours—I am resolved—so no more on this matter."

Somerset had now arrived at the door of Sir Walter Raleigh's apartments. The Knight was busily engaged in distilling some chemical preparation, which he assured the Earl, was an infallible cure for various diseases, over which the ordi-

nary medicines were known to have little power.—But the reader is already acquainted with this specific, which was long known as Raleigh's Cordial."

"Good-morrow," said Somerset, on entering the apartment of Raleigh, "good-morrow, Sir Knight Philosopher. How do the alembics and alchymical vessels suit thy humour?"

"Exceedingly well, my Lord Earl," answered Raleigh, who looked not without a slight degree of contempt upon the possessor of his manor of Sherbourne. "But my Lord, these chemicals are nothing in comparison of my latest discovery."

"Indeed!" said Somerset, "and hast thou arrived at a nostrum, which will protract the period of human life, or restore it to youth."

"Let the Queen's Majesty bear witness for the effects of my cordial," replied Raleigh; "I have discovered not the phi-

losopher's stone, but a gold mine itself. Thanks, gentle lord, for the enjoyment I have here, living as one may say, in *libera custodia* ; but had I free liberty now, and seven such ships as went to Virginia in 1585, or such a fleet as I conquered Guiana with ten years after, I would enrich England with all the wealth of the Spaniard."

"How now, Sir Knight," asked Somerset, "wouldst thou make war upon him, on this side the line?"

"War! no—In Guiana there is a golden mine, a mine of ore, rich, plentiful; I could have laden as many vessels with it as would lie abreast this fortress."

"That would, indeed, be a golden enterprise," exclaimed the Earl, "and a princely judgment thou hast to persuade thyself there is such a mine of gold entire, which the industrious Spaniard in his chase of treasure, hath so long neglected."

“Nay, doubt not, my good Lord Earl,” continued Raleigh, “the news of this shall not more charm the world than the adventure shall realize the hope of so great riches. Let but my Lord Somerset convince his Majesty, that it stands with the politic and magnanimous courses of his Grace, in these his flourishing times of peace, to nourish and encourage this noble and generous enterprise, and it shall do more to enrich his kingdom, than all the plantations, discoveries, and opening of new trades that have been hit upon since the days of Columbus.”

“If so be thou wouldst have me undertake this passage between thee and his Majesty’s grace,” answered the Earl, “I shall favour thy suit with my poor influence: but I’d advise thee, Sir Knight, to memorialize Master Secretary Winwood.”

“As this hand hath aided the Queen

of Navarre in defending the Protestants," said Raleigh seriously, "as I shared the glory of the decisive victory over Don John of Austria, when the Queen's troops assisted the Dutchers; as I helped to put an end to the Munster rebellion; as I have escorted the Duke of Anjou and saved the Prince of Orange; I have nothing hostile or piratical in this my enterprize."

"Time speeds," interrupted Somerset who felt no appetite to listen to such a reference of the splended deeds of the brave man before him—"Time speeds—I must see Andrew Melville. Why, Sir Walter, this tower was want to be a Royal mansion. In this very room, I reckon Anna Bullen, the Lady Jane Grey, and the Earl of Essex were illustrious prisoners.—*Bon jour*—I must to the white tower to see poor Melville;" and as he spoke thus, he quitted the room in which Raleigh was experimenting, and crossed the Court yard to that quadrangle of the

Fortress in which the renowned Presbyterian clergyman was imprisoned.

The lieutenant stood by the door of Melville's cell and opened it to Somerset, undoing successively, an upper and an under bolt of great strength, which lodged when shut home, in an iron socket that was deeply fastened in the stone work: and even the lock was secured by a traverse bar of iron, so massive, that as it fell when Sir William Wade threw it from its gage, it caused the vaulted gallery to resound—The “man of God,” now presented an interesting contrast to the “courtezan” who came to visit him. In a cold cell, sitting upon a small stool resembling one of those ancient stances for the box containing a response of an oracle, sat Andrew Melville, his hair and beard overgrown, his visage emaciated by confinement, but calm and dignified, his garments tattered and worn into holes. He was seated so that from the grated

window, the sun's rays fell full on his body, and the picture would have furnished ample scope for the pencil of Jones, the painter of Waterloo.

“ How does Master Melville to day ? ” said the favourite, upon whom the venerable preacher's appearance seemed evidently to make a deep and instantaneous impression.

“ Well, God be praised ! ” replied the worthy man, without any affectation of misery, or any of that indifference which many a mind of his mould in knowledge would have shewn upon such an occasion. “ May I ask to what favourable circumstance I owe this visit of my countryman into a place whose walls are eleven feet thick ? ”

“ Sir William Wade, you may retire, ” said Somerset, addressing the lieutenant : and then turning to the Minister of the Gospel ; “ Reverend Sir, ” replied the Earl, “ I am right glad you are well. This is a dreary and inhospitable region

—'Twere better thou shouldst enjoy more liberty."

"Has, Sir James Sempill, then, obtained for me a more healthy and spacious apartment?" asked Melville.

"He has petitioned the King," answered Somerset, "but you have a more powerful intercessor: the Duke of Bouillon has interceded for you, my friend; and 'twere fitting you be removed into another apartment, and allowed the use of pen, ink, and paper. But beware Melville, how you make use of them; no more caustic poetry like *Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria*, or all my endeavours come to nought. But what have we here?" continued the Earl casting his eyes round the cell, "with what tablets hast thou inscribed this profusion of verses?"

Melville whose imprisonment had been aggravated by the barbaric and wanton severity of an entire privation of books, ink, pens, and paper, answered

very mildly, “ my Lord Earl, I have not you to reproach with this refinement of cruelty, which has been exercised unceasingly for these ten months, as if its rigour could shackle the faculties of my mind—No, I owe it to the Ministers of his Grace, not to his favourites, that I have been deprived of the means of expressing my thoughts either in writing or by oral communication.”

“ Worthy Sir,” interrupted Somerset, “ he who caused you all this severity is gone to his reckoning !”

“ Dead ! is Bancroft dead ?” asked Melville eagerly.

“ Troth is he,” answered the Earl ; “ and I am freed of a great enemy.—But let me see,” continued the favourite looking round the walls of the solitary man’s cell ; “ these are indeed exquisite touches of plaintive tenderness, Master Melville.”

“ Such as they are, my Lord, with

THE RISE AND FALL OF SOMERSET.

these tablets of plaister, cold and damp to receive the thoughts of my mind, and with the tongue of my shoe buckle as a *stylus*, have I given permanency to my descent from royal ancestors, and the obligations which my family have conferred on learning, and my native land.”

Somerset with all his ambition and profligacy could not help admiring the elegant verses which crowded the walls of this dungeon. They were indeed characteristic of that lofty magnanimity and noble endurance, which neither power nor malice were able to overcome. Many of them were written in Latin, rivalling the sweetness of even Buchannan's poetry; and those which were in the Scottish dialect, or in the English tongue, presented an enchanting picture of gaiety and goodness of heart, betokening a spirit above this world; for in circumstances so gloomy no mind that was troubled by any com-

punctious feelings or the consciousness of guilt and perfidy could dictate the beautiful effusions of Andrew Melville's muse.

“By St. Paul,” exclaimed the Viscount, “the rigour of thy confinement shall be relaxed, Master Melville.—I have brought this sermon for thy perusal; 'tis on Episcopacy—The assembly of Glasgow have consented to a complete establishment of episcopacy.—This discourse which is meant to convert all the Presbyterians in the north, was preached by Dr. Downham, and has been distributed gratis to all the clergy of poor old Scotland.—Now methinks, thou couldst answer it, anon, in two or three letters to thy nephew, Master James Melville in the prison of Newcastle.”

Melville took the pamphlet in his hand, expressed his thankfulness, and Somerset took his leave—gliding under the arched gallery from the view of the

highest lettered name which flourished two centuries ago.—Melville was the great champion of the Scottish Presbyterians, with respect to whom James exercised a policy, the most infatuated; but the advisers of that policy were unworthy of his confidence, if the indolent monarch had either discernment to unmask their baseness, or address sufficient to bend the resolution of a high-minded people by the smoother methods of persuasion and forbearance.

“Observe me, Sir William Wade, the first state prisoner that comes here, I shall expect from you the same kindness you shew to master Melville—the same sort of cell—the same provisions,—the like accommodation; but let it be in the bulwark,” said Somerset who now passed along with the lieutenant of the Tower to visit another part of the garrison; and their route soon brought the Viscount in contact with the “proud Percy,” Earl of

Northumberland. The old nobleman was walking on a kind of parapet banque, that fronted the low and gloomy windows of his apartments, and he was attended by his magi, as the lieutenant styled the companions of the Percy's promenade. "Who are these attendants of the noble captive Earl?" asked Somerset; "Northumberland's Magi," answered Sir William Wade, "that on his right is Nathaniel Torporley, a noted mathematician of the times, the person on his left is Thomas Hariot, a gentleman who had accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh in his voyage to Virginia, and where he was employed as a maritime surveyor, and Robert Hues another famous mathematician, you see taking hold of Hariot's arm."

"Who are they that follow at the distance of a few paces?" asked the inquisitive Viscount. "Master Walter Warner, takes the right; he is well read in the

obscure parts of learning; Nicholas Hill, a gentleman proficient in the same recondite studies, walks in the middle. Thomas Allen an eminent antiquary, and philosopher, next in the middle; and John Dee well versed as an artist of the mathematic world, trudges on the left of all."

It now occurred to Somerset's mind, as the lieutenant named these gentlemen, and their respective qualifications, that this would be a favourable opportunity for him to do a kindness to the Lord Hay, his ancient friend and brother favourite with King James. The Lord Hay had long solicited the hand of the Lady Lucy Percy, the Earl of Northumberland's youngest daughter, a lady of incomparable beauty, and solemnized in the poems of the day, as the most exquisite wit of her time. The Earl had refused his consent, as he aimed at a husband of noble extract for

the Lady Percy ; but the Lord Hay resolved on wedding her, even though her father should bereave her of dower. “ Now for the old stubborn Earl,” said Somerset to himself, “ if I cannot cozen him, I’ll break his spirit.”

“ *Bon jour*, my Lord,” said Somerset to Northumberland, with all the ease and grace of an acquaintance. “ From the company of these Atlantes of the world of science, the noble Earl of Northumberland’s time, I hope, passes agreeably.

“ Come ye here to mock, the first favourite of the King ?” said the Earl scornfully ; “ for by thy speech thou wouldst join the revellers at Theobalds in styling me Henry the Wizzard ?”

“ My Lord, I come not here to make circles with Archimedes,” said the favourite.

“ No faith,” interrupted the Earl ; “ for with such a leaky sieve as over-

tops thy shoulders, Hercules ne'er could have watered the wild gardens of Hesperides."

" Good, my Lord Pilgrim ; but I would not look one way and row another," answered Somerset.

" Better still, my Lord Palmer," rejoined Northumberland, " and what passenger wouldst thou help forward whilst thou went backward thyself?"

" As the pilgrim hath some dwelling place, and the palmer none," said Somerset; " as you, my Lord, in this fortress are mine host, and I an humble guest, permit me to entreat."

" By the rood, my Lord Somerset," interrupted the Earl, " ye do but come here to mock—the comparison of the proverb thou wouldst pun on runs thus: as the pilgrim travels to some certain place, and the palmer to all, and not to any one in particular, so wouldst thou insinuate, I can only walk to that

gun and back again, whilst thou like the eagle canst fly to Theobald's, Royston, Newmarket, and thy lands of Sherbourne!"

"Nay, hear me, my good Lord," said Somerset eagerly; "as the pilgrim lives at his own charge, while the palmer professes wilful poverty, so would I sue your grace for my noble friend Lord Hay."

"Perdition! thinkest thou to cozen me as thou dost thy King—No, by the rood. Sir William Wade, we would be alone. Let us be without hollow-hearted hypocrites about us. 'Sdeath, my Lord of Somerset, the Lady Lucy Percy shall never, with our consent wed the Lord Hay. I know all thou hast to say, begone, leave me. *Altera manu fert lapidem, panem ostendat altera,*" added the indignant Earl, addressing himself to the Reverend Mr. Nathaniel Torporley.

“ My Lord Earl, I must crave a private audience,” said Somerset with the utmost composure, neither offended by the speech of Northumberland, nor disposed to let the opportunity he enjoyed slip; till he had achieved his purpose,—“ your grace knows the pilgrim might give over his profession, but the palmer might not; and your Lordship cannot suppose I will apply the proverb *in tuum ipsius caput lunam deducis* to my own particular case. My Lord we must be private for the space of an hour.”

“ My Lord, the coronet of Northumberland shall never fall from the lance to the distaff,” said the Earl; “ but we give you audience.”

Somerset now pressed the Percy to yield consent to the marriage of his lovely daughter with the Lord Hay, urging as his strongest argument, that “ Hay being the king’s chief favourite,

there was little doubt but he would procure the Earl's release."

"If that be the way your friend intends to make himself meritorious with me," replied Northumberland, "I fear I shall never be released. No master Car, no.

"Henry Percy!" exclaimed Somerset, "I have borne thy humour full oft this hour; methinks the courtesy due to the King's Majesty would restrain thy speech within the bounds due from one nobleman to another."

"Go learn these verses, go learn these verses, sirrah!" interrupted the Earl in *mirthful anger*.—"Go learn these verses, and come not here again to insult a captive nobleman, *volens volens*;" and as he said these words he walked Somerset out of the garrison singing in his face:—

Bonny Scot, we all witness can,
That England hath made thee a gentleman,

Thy blue bonnet when thou came hither,
 Could scarce keep out the wind and weather ;
 But now it is turned to a hat and feather,
 Thy bonnet is blown, the devil knows whither.

Thy shoes on thy feet, when thou camest from plough,
 Were made of the hide of an old Scot's cow ;
 But now they are turned to a rare Spanish leather,
 And decked with roses altogether.

Thy sword at thy a— was a great black blade,
 With a great basket hilt of iron made ;
 But now a long rapier doth hang at thy side,
 And buffingly doth the bonny Scot ride.

Bonny Scot we all witness can,
 That England hath made thee a gentleman.

Somerset knew these verses had been applied to his master, and he was not a little staggered to hear them sung of himself. It were like attempting description of chaos, to paint his mind as he now quitted the fortress. He had gained his object, it is true, and he had afforded hope to Raleigh and Melville,

but the treatment he received from the "proud Percy," discomposed him beyond all endurance. Somerset had some slight touches occasionally of wit and noble bearing; but he could take more direct insult from those it was his interest not to fall out with, than any lacquey about the court could have endured from Billy Weston. He had his purpose, however, to answer, and he now repaired to the King at Theobald's, and very soon obtained the royal authority for the removal of Sir William Wade. Raleigh's project he just touched upon to the King who replied.

"Raleigh's a fellow of the camp and ocean, not of the court and carpet, my Lord; he hath a strong natural wit, and a better judgment than to believe this romance of a gold mine; but his bold and plausible tongue hath won you I perceive, my lord. Good—I will send Master Secretary Winwood to him, and

if we may grant him a commission, it will be to rid ourselves of him. For fail not to mark my words, he hath a design to make a breach between the two crowns of England and Spain; but if I commission him limitedly, and he do trespass therein, I will surely do justice upon him, or send him bound hand and foot into Spain, and all the gold and goods he shall obtain, by robbery and bring home, were they ever so great."

Somerset bowed acquiescence, and then proposed Jervase Yelvis as a fit and proper person to be Lieutenant of the Tower.

"Thinkst thou Robin," asked the King, "he will be discreet towards Henry the Wizzard, the Lady Arabella, the Countess of Shrewsbury and others? I care not a bodle about his rigour to that stiff clerk o' the kirk, Master Melville, with his royal descent forsooth; nor to

that pugnacious knight Raleigh, with his cordials, histories of the World, and such stuff."

" I'll pledge myself for Elwes, that he in all things will comport himself stily to your Grace's will and pleasure," answered Somerset, " but for Melville, if your royal Majesty were to see his cell, it is not fit for a felon without the benefit of clergy, and his spirit cannot be humbled by affliction : the walls of it are covered with verses, graven in the plaister with the tongue of his shoe buckle."

" Say ye so, Robin ?" demanded the King, concerned only to hear of so ingenious a method of recording the the thoughts of the mind, but perfectly unmoved at the situation of the worthy forlorn Christian Pastor.—" these are inelegant pursuits, somebody may come after him and read them though, and he deserves all he suffers. Glad am I,

Robin, we intercepted that letter, offering to make him professor of Divinity in the Protestant college of Rochelle."

Somerset, who knew the timid nature of James's mind, and had observed the King's concern lest any third person should peruse Melville's verses, resolved to try the effect of fear upon it, seeing reason had no influence; and he therefore again urged the King to grant Sir James Sempill's request, or at all events to listen to the letter of the Duke of Bouillon, and give Melville a better apartment and the use of pen, ink, paper and books;" saying, in conclusion, "your Majesty has little to fear in your royal person from Melville's pen, whatever his friends may say—he fears God, honours the King, and loves his brethren; but he will let his fancy play freely upon Episcopacy, and the more so the harder he is dealt with."

"Somerset, you know my maxim,"

said James fretfully, “ no king no bishop, no bishop no king, and this man spurns at our bishops, *ergo*, he kicks at my breech.”

“ True, your Grace ; but look ye what has been written, upon that umquhile Lord of Salisbury,” and the crafty favourite, handed the King these lines, which had just appeared as a second epitaph on the great Robert Cecil :

Here lies Hobinal, our pastor while here,
 That once in a quarter our fleeces did shear,
 To please us, his curre he kept under clog,
 And was ever after both shepherd and dog.
 For oblation to Pan, his custom was thus,
 He first gave a trifle, then offered up us ;
 And through his false worship, such power did he
 gaine,
 As kept him o’ th’ mountaine and us on the plaine :
 Where many a hornpipe he tun’d to his Phyllis,
 And sweetly sung Walsingham to ’s Amaryllis !

“ Save us, Robin, this is unco gear,

I hope the author will be dead afore me," said James, evidently moved by the criticism conveyed in the intended epitaph. Though a slovenly practical politician, King James knew the theory of government tolerably well—"Shepherd and dog," said the Sovereign, musing, then bursting into a roar of laughter, he exclaimed, "But only think, Robin, o' th' mountaine,

Where many a hornpipe he tun'd to his Phyllis,
And sweetly sung Walsingham to 's Amaryllis.

that is figurative enough, God knows; but it is plain enough, Robin. This Walsingham, as I take it, was some courtezan the Earl keppit in a bye corner?" Somerset bowed, smiled, and the King went on thus: "Walsingham? Walsingham? Walsingham? I've surely heard somebody speak o' a sutor cobbler that learned blackbirds to whis-

tle a tune ca'd Walsingham?" and the King was right, for one of Crispin's sons had in this way avenged himself on Cecil.

"The truth is, your Majesty," replied Somerset, "the fraternity to which Melville belongs, ne'er clip their nails, when once they begin with a great man, just as if they were going to houck their grannies out o' their graves; and its my thinking a little lenity to poor Andrew Melville would get the Court more credit at this term than gif he were sunk fifteen feet aneath the bed o' the Thames."

"Do we him as you like, Robin, and please Bouillon and Sempill, and only dinna let that maivis out o' the cage any mair than the hawk Raleigh."

"Now, your Majesty will give me leave to disclose my sentiments anent Sir Thomas Overbury, who hath refused to undertake your Grace's instruc-

tions, and become lieger ambassadour to the Archduke."

"A very presumptuous insolent fellow," said the King; "my Lord Treasurer hath, as president of the Council, laid before us the republican's letter. And this is the way he repays your offices of kindness, my Lord; this is the man that was to be alternate help and assistant; these are the fruits and issues of your friendship; he is a turn coat, I see; and ere Twelfthtide he is confessed a catholic I'll be sworn."

"He is now very safe. By this time he is in the Tower," answered the favourite coolly.

"Vastly proper, my Lord," quoth James; "and I am right merry ye can act saepromptly.—Robin, ye'll take that paper wi' you, and gar the lords o' the Painted Chamber to proceed with all these persons forthwith. I expect dili-

gence, if ye wad a' keep up we me in the chase."

Somerset took the paper offered him by the King, promised fidelity and dispatch, and now again hinted at his marriage with the Lady Frances.

"On that score, Robin," said the King, "I am sair fashed; but nothing venture nothing have, albeit in this venu at a venture we maunna royne the public mind wi' inconsiderate rashness, maugre all probability of success, but ruck as it were before these ill disposed persons, wha, as the verderons, do in some sort attack the great."

"The rabble will never rouze when aught is doing that brings not Royal Poverty* with it," said Rochester in reply.

* The moderns call this "Bird's Old Tom," "Blue Ruin," and "Hodges's Cordial *Gin!*" In King James's time, the Lords of Paris Gardens called *Geneva* by the name of "Royal Poverty."

“ But they shall have Geneva enough on that day, be as drunk as beggars and as great as Kings. Myself, and my noble Lord of Suffolk, will cause the Strand to run with liquor.”

“ But no saucy bravado work, Robin, on the retainers o’ ither Lords—Gie them plenty o’ Saltimbangos and players.”

“ Would it please your Grace,” asked Somerset, “ that the marriage of your poor servant were honoured by the royal presence and solemnization when the Plasgrave and the Lady Elizabeth are joined in matrimony.”

“ I maun consult on that, Robin, I maun consult my family,” replied the King: “ Now Robin, I’m for the chase—so gude day and gude gang wi’ ye.”

Somerset bowed, kissed hands, took leave and returned to London.

CHAP. IV.

The image of a wicked heinous fault
 Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
 Des shew the mood of a much troubled breast.

KING JOHN.

SOMERSET, on quitting the presence of the King, threw himself on his horse, and had rode some miles on his way to town ere he thought of the paper which his master had put into his hand. On examining it, he read as follows: "On the petition of grievances by the Commons, I would not have the judges give an opinion to the Lords. What have they to do with impositions by prerogative?—*Item.* The King prays that the union may be speedily effected.—*Item.* In the painted Chamber, let that author of the sedi-

tious slander ‘ *Calamosque Armare Veneno,*’ that Mr. Oliver St. John, be proceeded against for arraigning our benevolences, collected under letters of the Privy Council; *—*Item.* The Countess of Exeter.—*Item.* The witch Mary Smith for covenanting with Sathan—try her anon in *Stella Camera.*—*Item.* Investigate the Lord Buckhurst’s claim to the Kentish Lucy’s land; — *Item.* Have up Bart. Legat and Ed. Wightman for their heresy.—*Item.* James Whitlocke for contempt of our authority.—*Item.* Bring all the citizens up to the Painted Chamber, who have not complied with the Privy Council’s letters, and granted us their benevolences.”

“ Well!” said Somerset to himself, fetching a deep breathing after he had read over these several items; “ the bill

* See the State Trials, Vol. ii. 8vo. edit. p. 899.

of fare is ample enough. Am I to proceed with them in succession as set down, or shall I take them according to my own pleasure. Let me see—Master St. John we can fine—In how much?—£5000, yes; I'll thereby please the King. Those conceited citizens must bleed plentifully—So who have not granted their benevolences. A plague on Mary Smith, and those Unitarians, Legat and Wightman. Ah! the Lady Exeter;—there I'll manœuvre the whole of the Lakes; father Lake, mother Lake, and daughter Lake. Let me see what comes next?—*Item.* the Lord Buckhurst's claim—I'll get rid of this mirror of magistrates, and partner of Burleigh's secret counsels. Oh! the benevolences; there is one stubborn fellow I shall have up; Master Edward Weimark, a noted novilant, who denounces our mode of benevolences as one of the devices of extra-parliamentary taxation—I'll link him,

and Oliver St. John together—The one hath written and published a letter against this kind of benevolence as against law, reason and religion: the other turbulent and presumptuous, saith in Paul's Aisle, that King James, by benevolences, violates the liberties, laws, and customs, of his kingdoms, the subjects' birth rights and the parliament's prerogatives.—He shall answer for these words—and pay heavily too.—A fine thing this has been. Overbury gracing the marriage of the fat tinker, cutting large thongs out of other men's leather.”

In this temper of mind Somerset arrived in town from Theobalds; it was Saturday evening and late, yet he lost not a moment in sending a pursuivant to Sir William Wade, with instructions for the more comfortable entertainment of Andrew Melville, and the utmost rigour of the fortress toward Sir Thomas Overbury. On Sunday he looked

for Coppinger's return, and he looked not in vain.

Coppinger, who rode with all possible speed into Lincolnshire, with the intelligence that the vacant lieutenancy of the Tower was open to Jervase Elwes, was punctual in returning to the time fixed by Rochester. Elwes had a staunch friend in a Sir Thomas Monson, for any service of the court. He therefore judged it fitting on nearing the metropolis to strike down through Highgate and Islington, that he might enter the City by Aldersgate, and take his friend Monson with him to the Lord Somerset's house in St. James's Park—Monson was a particular friend of the Howards; that is to say, that family considered the knight among their list of friends. Thus the links and the chain were completed.

“ Think'st thou Master Coppinger,” said Jervase, as the travellers slowly

descended Highgate Hill, “ think’st thou, Sir Thomas Monson can stand us in any stead ?”

“ An he could, he were n’t necessary,” replied Coppinger unhesitatingly ; “ how often shall I dodge thy sponce wi’ the same tale—Get thy old uncle or brother, or whoever he is, Alderman Yelvis, or Elwes, or Helways, to bleed freely to my Lord of Rochester ; not forgetting abundance of great sovereigns to thy poorest friend Coppinger, and the constableness or lieutenantancy, or governorship, or whatever else thou likest to call it, is thine—an it be not, the devil poison me by consuming the *nativum calidum or luidum radicle* of my vigorous body, in one month, two, or three, or more, as his Sathanic Majesty listeth, in any of the four ways *gustu, baustu, ordore, contactu.*”

“ By the cross, Master Coppinger,

thou talkest as freely o' the felony o' self murder, an' I understand thee, as gif it were glorious to die by detestable and lingering poison," said Jervase Elwes.

"I spoke only by comparison," replied Coppinger; "I wish thy lieutenancy were as much for glory as for self-preservation." And as Elwes stared in the face of his fellow traveller, as if looking for the meaning of these mysterious words in the cast of his countenance, the Master of Horse proceeded. "Hast thou not heard it said, the greatest portion of helibore was to be given to the covetuous—So would I deal by them who have this gift in their power, an they bleed thee above one thousand pound worth—And every ounce of blood in a man's body is worth that to himself;—an he can sell it at that price he might lose ye ten Warwickshire spoonfulls ilka quarterday o'

las life, and be as fat as a Connaught ox at the end o' his journey after all—what think'st thou?"

"I understood thee on starting," replied Elwes, "that I was to look unto my Lords of Northampton and Rochester as thy friends and patrons who had the power to procure me the appointment, and it were but befitting, I repaid their patronage; but it sounds oddly, Master Coppinger, does thy speech, that the lieutenancy should not be for glory, but only self preservation."

"An thou be so dull o' apprehension," answered Coppinger, "and so little aware o' the duties o' thine office, that is to be, I'll explain them. First of all, thou getest office—good—I must snack the bit with the Viscount, and thou must be dubber mum'd; secondly, in all the gammon and patter between a younker ycleped Weston and me, about bub and grub, for a certain pri-

soner, that you shall have under your charge, act thou the tollibon man, or, by Jupiter, I'll lip ye a chaunt afore my Lord Coke that 'll carp ye at Tyburn, and every noble of your kelter shall go into the King's Exchequer."

Obscure as this dialogue appeared in some parts to Elwes, he understood in the first place, that his guide hoped to share the premium of his lieutenancy with Rochester; and, secondly, that some prisoner was not to be fairly dealt by in his victuals and drink—the understanding of the Master of Horse squared equally well with the dictates of military and jailor humanity, when it was his interest to be so morally good, and with the chicanery, fraud, artifice and combination of traitors and murderers.

“Nay man,” continued Coppinger, “but thou art strangely dull to ha’e mixed in the fashionable world about

the Inns and the great politic world, o' the Justices at Westminster Hall, and at the feet o' Gog and Magog."

"Gog's bones! Master Coppinger, but I understand thee:—in how much expectest thou me to bleed for thy service?" asked Elwes.

"An it be not impolitic to higgle and sell another man's goods," answered the Master of Horse, "I would, bully pat, thou'dst clap me in one scale as many Britain crowns as poised these barking irons which I shall throw into the other."

"Bright Heavens above! as many crowns as outweigh thy pistols!" exclaimed Elwes—"Why they'd make me cove at Theobald's? Nay, bully guide, an you get your livelihood as easily every two days, it is my thinking you'll be Lord Treasurer by next May-day."

"Men of genius and of humble fortune

are all sorted," said Coppinger collecting himself and speaking very deliberately. "Curiosity impels them to mix indiscriminately in the world. I have seen it, my Master ; its the only book I read ; human faces the only vocabulary I study. I have sought oddity at darkey in the City, where Will Shakespeare kept the table in a roar, as he's often done in a night house. I have been wi' Spencer in a withdrawing room where fools have mooted the slang of the great world without moving a lip to please high born dames ;—I have gravely approached a cathedral, where his reverence in eminence pretended to dive into mysteries and ascend heaven, while in his heart he was little better than a Turk, being neither Protestant nor Recusant ;—and think'st thou, Jervase Yelvis, or Helways ;—thinkest thou I ask thee seriously, an I'm to be put off ?—No—look at these barking

irons, at this prad I stride, this flogger i' my hand, these diggers on my heater cases, and say me truly whether 'twere not better to end our journey in Hornsey Wood, than enter the City and be bilked?"

Elwes though well armed with a case of pistols in his belt, a good Toledo blade by his side, and mounted on a stout Yorkshire courser, with as good spur rowels at his heels as Coppinger, had, however, no stomach to put the lieutenancy at issue by a duel in the Wood on his left. He, therefore, cut the discourse short by "damning his soul," but that Coppinger should have an hundred great sovereigns for his own share, and as many more as he could cheat the noble lords out of, when the purchase money was handed over to Rochester. With this arrangement the Master of Horse seemed satisfied, and

our travellers entered the City by Aldersgate.

Coppinger's first visit was to the house of Mistress Turner in Paternoster-row where he found the Lady Frances and Rochester.

“ Back already !” exclaimed Weston, on seeing his coadjutor—“ By the sigil I wear next my left breast, thou'st gone brief over the ground, my Master ; the attire o' thy tid's feet held good, I reckon ;—did our new lieutenant shogg or tally at once ?”

“ Why my young bully file leader,” replied Coppinger ; “ where 's my lord and his leman ?”

“ Answerest thou me by asking, where's my lord an his l' aimante ?” said Weston ; “ call up thy night spirit mother Turner, and pump her, bully servitour—where be the great sovereigns my Lord of Northampton, chucked into thy beaver when thou

didst start for this seneschal of Gundulph's Castle?"

"Stand out o' my way, thou selcouth imp—am I to be made such a staple commodity as thy stammel dame lady? 'Sdeath, Billy, bully Weston, I'm not star read, an thou be not as gleg in the agles as any scout or beat runner of my Lord Coke looking after weif.—What dost thou take me for?—a juggler at cousenage?"

"Look ye, Master Coppinger, I that plan all, get nought. Does that stand to reason?" demanded the Page. "Here you stand laden, I'll be sworn with old Helway's rose nobles; and I finger ne'er a one—by the rod of Aaron, sir, there is not an Israelite in Duke's Place, wouldn't divide even gold shekels with a brother who gave him half the shimmering into any plot, I've given thee into this.—But, by Jove! I'll blast the

whole as sure as ye've all transgressed the laws of God."

"Here thou sinister aspect," said the Master of Horse, "take these five pieces and get jolly drunk at Cambro Mead's, thou pig-face."

"Look ye, Master Coppinger, I can count ye some fifty good Henries, and by the rood, I'll not touch thy five pieces—the half or none. An thou hast spent all to these five, the matter's altered, and I'll e'en square my avarice with thy necessity."

"Craven pimp," exclaimed Coppinger, "take them or want; let me pass, or by the rood I'll open a vein in thy throat."

Somerset who had heard the uproar created by his bravo, and the Page, now hastened into the hall, and his presence was the immediate signal for silence.

"Coppinger, why parley with this

varlet?" said the Viscount. "Hast thou brought Elwes?"

"Aye, faith, have I; but as a mercury woman, and her news books afore a justice—mercenary knave, he will bleed only to your Lordship," said the Master of Horse.

"Will he knuckle under; does he seem micher?—Must you use him as a middle man?" asked the Viscount almost in one breath.

"He is miser enough, and file leader, he won't be, I fear, unless ye wink at his exactions without process in the Painted Chamber. But where's the Earl of Northampton? Does Elwes enter on office to-morrow?"

"To morrow without fail; at the Earl's at Charing Cross," replied Somerset.

"Then, my Lord, if I might advise, haste you thither;—I'll to the Mitre in Cheap for Jervase, and, his old

uncle the Alderman in Lothbury— In an hour I'll wait on you with my doge of the White Tower, and, then, may your revels pass merrily."

The Master of Horse looked into the face of his Lord for an answer, but Somerset seemed wrapped in thought; and before he replied, the patience of his man was gone. "My Lord," he interrupted, "are we on the vauntley, or—"

"No—no"—said Somerset hastily, now roused from the brown study.—"I was thinking whether we couldn't post Elwes at once in the Tower?"

"Without bleeding first?" exclaimed Coppinger; "Nay then, an that be to be the way my ride ends, I've misglosed my Lord of Northampton's speech, and shall run mute the rest o' the chase."

"How now, Coppinger, how now?" asked Somerset.

“ My Lord, I know my place—do as you will—shall I meet your Lordship on Tower Hill with Elwes anon ?” asked Coppinger in a tone that shewed he meant the question to be answered in the negative.

“ No, sir, you shall not—get me my cloak—bring Elwes to Northampton House with what speed you please, sir.”

The Master of Horse bowed, laid the Viscount’s cloak over his shoulders, and departed to the abode of Mistress Turner, with an agility that shewed how little he felt the ride into Lincolnshire and back again to London without longer rest than to eat and drink, and have his relays put in readiness.

Somerset hastened to the Lady Frances, and communicated the news to her of Coppinger’s arrival, saying at the same time, that the information of his Master of Horse left it very doubt-

ful whether and how far Elwes would go into their plot.

“ But he hasn’t come this length to halt between his conscience and his interest,” said the Lady Frances. “ Make it worth his while to take the keys of Gundulph’s Castle, and look not after his extortions, and trust me our job is done.”

“ Sweet, I must to thine uncle’s,” interrupted Somerset.—“ There we’ll house Elwes for the night—To-morrow I’ll ’company him the length o’ Queen-hithe.—That jæckal Coppinger’s gone to escort him to Charing Cross ; shall we budge, sweet ?”

“ I must coach it.—Where ’s that lourdan page, my Lord ?”—asked the Lady Frances.

“ Here, my Lady Countess,” answered Weston,

“ Thou’st been at some church ales, sirrah ! and smellest of tobacco.—

S'death, my Lord, can't this imp be cured of his frolics?"

"Cry you mercy, madam," interrupted Weston. "I ha' been but some ten minutes at the Globe, seeing o' the blinded bears whipt; and I quitted the ring the instant the flag was lowered on the front of the theatre.—For church ales, madam, mysteries and moralities, your companies of parish clerks make not them such mines of pleasure as I find on the southern bank of the Thames."

"You hear my Lord, the varlet's confession; he hath crossed the river to that contaminated audience!"

"Methinks, Master Weston," said Somerset, "thou shouldst give twelve pence for a stool on the stage at Blackfriars, sit there as a critic, or in the Fortune Theatre, where thou'dst be attended by a page, and hear thy cat-call listened to.—Ah! sirrah—you

smile. By the rood, my dearest Lady Frances, I do believe he hath been so set out there, for he doth smell of tobacco. How, sirrah, art thou not afraid with thy live pipe to set fire to the rushes strewed where the comedie is to dance?"

"Shall I call the coach, or make answer to my Lord first?" said Weston; "for I'm not such a child going to a play and seeing Thebes written over an old door as to believe that that is Thebes."

Somerset laughed outright at the reply of his love's page, and Lady Frances herself replied by calling "the coach. The coach, sirrah."

The page disappeared like the genius of dispatch, and the coach drew up before Mistress Turner's door with all possible speed.

Coppinger in the mean time, hastened to the Mitre in Cheap, where he found his *protégée*, Jervaise Yelvis in

deep divan with mine host Cambro Mead, the worthy Alderman Elwes, and Master Weimark the Paul's walker.

“ *Bon Soir,*” said the Master of Horse, on entering the well dight parlour of the well known Mitre. “ Pr’ythee, mine host,” added he accosting Cambro Mead with perfect *nonchalance*, “ an a man come hither to rid himself o’ his pelf, resembleth he not that whowiskin filled wi’ braket that I whilom used as a penbank when I couldn’t spume a mug o’ ale from the contents o’ this purse? It rings cheerily now, my master; and good reason it is that my wisdom to night should resemble the saving a cask o’ wine at the tap, while it is running into the kennel by the bung-hole.—Fetch me a stoup o’ clarey; a man may be penny wise and pound foolish once in his life.”

Cambro Mead, who knew the profession of Coppinger, called to his tapster for the liquors demanded, but kept

his place on the settle beside Weimark;—and when his guest had taken a deep draught of the claret, he accosted him, saying, “why, Master Coppinger, you seem to my ogles to have lighted on the powder of projection.”

Coppinger laughed and replied, “the seed of gold;—no, no, Master Cambro Mead, ’tis for thee and such like publicans and sinners to have the faculty of multiplying and encreasing a bag full of rose rubles like this,” tossing to the ceiling a purse of gold, “and that too, without e’er traversing God’s footstool beyond the sound of Bow Bells.—Come my masters, now we’re within the sphere o’ the Mitre’s activity, Christ’s death be the portion of ilka man that won’t pledge me in this stoup to the health of my noble Lord Somerset.”

“It is the fashion within Temple Bar, for us first to choose our company,

then our liquor, and a'ter that to think o' our toasts ;" answered Weimark.

" Wouldst thou answer a king at arms so?" demanded Coppinger with great gravity.

" Aye, or any loon clad in thy kirtle," replied Weimark.

" Then thou 'rt a traitor, kidst who I am?" asked the Master of Horse.

" A pimp—my Lord of Somerset's very klick minx,"—replied Weimark.

" Look ye, bully Weimark," said Coppinger perfectly unmoved, " as I cock this pistolet in thy face, so could I with the three bullets in its guts, make a trinity of loop holes in thy paunch ; but 'twere no merit to send to Heaven such a kinchen cove as thou—There," said the bravo discharging the piece into the wainscoat over Weimark's head.—" There I'll empty my wrath in thy presence.—And now, my merry cockney, seest thou this other

trim bit of iron ; there are two bullets in it."

"Coppinger, I arrest thee," said the Alderman, before the Master of Horse had time to fire off the piece. "This in the City, sir ; and to a liveryman and a magistrate."

"Heyday ! my masters ?" answered the bravo. "You arrest me ?—I despise thy writ and spurn thy mittimus. Come along Jervaise Elwes, or Yelvis, or Helways ; come along, I say ; let us to some other shop, where our money shall bring us better cheer and truer company. A plague on all citizens, say I."

"And a plague on all upstarts, and possessors of other men's gear," said Weimark.

"How now, my master ?" asked Coppinger ; "have I ever fingered thy vile dust."

"No ! by St. Dunstan," answered

Weimark; but thy master hath the estate of Raleigh.—His head, take it off when they will, (and its in my thinking they'll do sae soon,) would do well upon the shoulders of Robert Car, Viscount Rochester and Earl of Somerset."

"Teste, Master Jervaise Elwes, or Yelvis, or Helways;" exclaimed Coppinger—"Teste Alderman Elwes also—Master Weimark hath abused the lord—Cambro Mead, teste thou also; in the mouth of two or three witnesses shalt thou be condemned, Master Weimark."

"Edward Weimark, heeds not thee, bully Coppinger," answered the Paul's walker, "nor any espaniolized English, or beggarly Scots overtickled with the trappings of pride and honour:

They beg our lands, our goods, our lives;
 They switch our nobles, and lie with their wives;
 They pinch our gentry, and send for our benchers,
 They stab our serjeants, and pistol our fencers."

“Teste, again,” said Coppinger, “thou shalt justify these words in the Painted Chamber; Master Elwes, I go presto;” and as he said this, he threw down on the table a piece of money for his reckoning, wrapped his cloak round him, and turned on his heel. The two Elwes arose and followed, and Coppinger led the way through Cheapside, Paternoster-row, and Ludgate to the Fleet, where he stepped into a pinnace and took his seat with all the consequence of his master. The two men who accompanied him, sat themselves down, one on each side of the master of horse, and the barge-men plied the oars lustily, till they landed their passengers at Hungerford stairs.

“My Masters,” said Coppinger, on landing, “our thoughts ha’ been in petto—one word ere we enter the presence of the Lord: hast thou Jervaise Elwes, or Yelvis, or Helways, while truanting the Mitre, opened thy soul to thine

uncle or cousin of the quest we're on—
 Its a *quid pro quo*, between thee and me;
 there stands Gundolph's Castle, the moon
 now rising over it—and there is my Lord
 of Northampton's house.—Here standst
 thou—wilt thou put one hand on
 each?"

“Master Coppinger,” quoth the Alderman, “thou knowst

If you trust before you try,
 You may repent before you die.”

“The Alderman talks reason, my Master,” said Jervaise, “nevertheless, at thy convenience, open me this bag, and thou'lt find thee some six score good sovereigns. Here, take it and spend them.”

Coppinger seized the bag, and with a great oath declared its weight justified the words of Jervaise Elwes.

On entering the palace of the Earl of

Northampton, Somerset's stirrup holder announced the Alderman and Jervaise Elwes, who were received with open arms by the Earl and the Favourite. "Good Master Alderman Yelvis," said the Earl of Northampton, "opportunity offers, and it were fitting we repaid thy zeal to the House of Howard. Thou rememberest my promise when we supped delligroust together on the king's coronation day—Jervaise Elwes was then dike-reeve in Lincolnshire—That pottage got us acquaintance, brought him to the Inns of Court, and now at a small lot of pelf, the constableness of the Tower is at his service."

"And for how much may he become Lieutenant of Gundolph's Castle," asked the wary civic magistrate.

"Why, for the matter of that," replied Northampton, "we'll not turn a gift into market gold: if it be worth his while to take office there, two thousand

great sovereigns weren'tout of the way, methinks."

"The place hath sold for more within my time," answered the Alderman, "but the benevolence of late hath drained the citizens; say we lay down one thousand, and the other when this vergere bringeth its crop of apples."

"And that 's as much as we can do," added Jervaise. "I would also debit therefrom, the tale of five score marks, in requital to your Lordship's rod knight Master Coppinger."

"Debit thyself six score an' it please ye," said Coppinger, "out o' the thousand in reversion, and let the round sum the lord prays, be paid without sale by inch of candle."

"The Master of Horse speaks reason," said Somerset. "Let him have seven score marks if ye like by Martinmas. The balance we'll truck with you for in the quarter following."

“ And when shall I enter upon my office ?” asked Jervaise.

“ Now Sir,” replied Somerset ; “ take thee this signet, present it to Sir William Wade, and he shall quit thy strong hold before day break.”

“ Your Lordship would have your signet back on the instant Master Elwes or Yelvis, or Helways is housed ?” said Coppinger.

“ Doubtless, doubtless,” replied Somerset.

“ Coppinger,” added Northampton, “ take thee my barge, land the lieutenant in Gundolph’s Castle, return with the Lord’s signet anon, and take thy stand here till day light.”

“ In all things,” said Somerset to Jervaise Elwes, “ in all things, the Lord of Northampton and myself expect you will serve us—Your obedience and fidelity shall guarantee an annual oblivion of all extortions. To-morrow dismiss

me the under lieutenant, and admit in his place, a person I shall send you. With *his* duty to me, never thou interfere, as thou valuest thy place--Adieu."

Elwes would have made answer according to the tenor of the Viscount's address, but the Master of Horse seized his arm saying: "Time speeds, and I would not Gundolph's clock struck eleven ere I lodged you in the royal apartments.*"

* Till the reign of Elizabeth, the kings of England maintained a suite of royal apartments in the Tower.

CHAP. V.

To do good never can be their task.
But ever to do ill, their sole delight.

MILTON.

Hell's most abandoned fiend
Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,
Speak to his heart as now you speak to me.
I thank my God that I believe you not.

SHELLEY.

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY arrived at the Tower very shortly after the Earl of Somerset had quitted it for Theobald's, and the lieutenant strictly obeyed the commands of the Viscount.

“ You will follow me,” said the lieutenant to Overbury, “ your apartments are assigned.”

“ I am a state prisoner, I suppose,” said Overbury, “ and I will not de-

scend into thy dungeons, below even the lions"—for the lieutenant bent his steps to the Tower, which since the days of Henry VII. was called indifferently the "Bulwark" and the "Lion's Tower."

"We only hear and obey in this place," said Sir William Wade dryly—"to-morrow, for aught I know, I may replace Sir Thomas Overbury."

"Nay, but I will pay handsomely," said Overbury, take this purse and place me beside Raleigh or Northumberland."

"My extortions are at an end," replied the lieutenant, "I expect hourly to be committed myself, for the exercise of a little Christian indulgence"

"Nay then, my catechism's ended," said Overbury.—"Lead on, I'll follow."

On arriving at the bottom of the stairs, a large door was opened, and presented a vaulted passage that led to the subterraneous cells belonging to the

Bulwark. A few steps brought the prisoner and his jailors to a second door, which was opened by Carey, the lieutenant's assistant.—“And this is to be my dreary abode,” said Overbury.—“Pr'ythee, Sir William, let me have a lamp, pen, ink, and paper, to dispatch a billet into Holborn.”

“It were as much as my head were worth to grant you more indulgence, Sir Thomas,” replied the lieutenant, “than we have accorded to Andrew Melville ;—and you know my instructions anent him.”

“Were indited by Bancroft, not by Cecil, I assure you,” said Overbury. “But if I cannot have tablets to make my fate known, accord me a trusty messenger who will go to Gray's-Inn Lane, with a communication.”

“Know you Captain Kemish ?” asked the lieutenant.

“Perfectly well,” answered Overbury,

“Call him, Carey; he is now with Raleigh, and bring him hither to Sir Thomas Overbury,” said Sir William Wade.

Kemish soon appeared in the dismal cell—and the meeting of these gentlemen had less political feeling than when the reader saw them last in company with Lawrency.—There was, however, little time for discussion, and in few words Sir Thomas Overbury requested the captain to hasten to Gabriella, at her house in Gray’s-Inn Lane—then, indeed, a fashionable and retired part of London—and communicate to her the fate to which he was now doomed. Gabriella heard with dismay the intelligence of Kemish, but the strong presentiment she entertained that events would fall out precisely as we have detailed, had prepared her for the worst.

“I have one resource left me,” said the fair Gabriella, “I will this instant

speed me to Prince Henry—No—that will not do—I'll to the King at Theobald's."

"Know you the difficulty of an audience?" asked Kemish, "an you do not, that journey will teach you.—My poor stratagem would be to gain Philip Herbert to my interest.—The Lord Bishop of Canterbury;—and such other friends as Sir Thomas hath at court."

Gabriella accordingly repaired to St. James's, where she hoped to meet with Philip Herbert—but here all was in confusion; every face wore the trappings of inward sorrow; messengers were hurrying out and in; the guards were sullenly resting on their pikes; and horses stood saddled, as if for unexpected journeys.

"What mean all these appearances of concern?" said Gabriella, as she entered the gate.

"The most exquisite, hopeful Prince

in Christendom, sheweth the first symptoms of change," said one of the guards, — "from a full round face, and pleasant disposition, he hath become pale and sharp, more sad and retired, and he hath been brought to extraordinary qualms."

"Aye, but his physicians have recovered him with strong waters," answered another soldier, who leant on his pike.

"He should not learn to swim in the evenings, after a full supper," said a third, "to engender a fatal fever. And riding a hundred miles in two days!— and in all his progress with the Palsgrave, feasting, hunting, and taking other sports of ballcon and tennis in his shirt."

"Can I see the Lord Pembroke?" asked the sorrowful Gabriella.

"An I could make all the Hospital merry wi' the fruits and juices of the best berries I hae seen in Franconia,

Swabland, Elas, and the Paltz," answered the sentinel, at the foot of the tower, leading to Prince Henry's apartments, "I couldn't admit un"—

"But will you allow a messenger to go to him?" asked Gabriella, putting into the man's hand a gold penny.

"This might get un a stoup o' Hamburg beer in Holstein, or a drop o' Rustoche in Denmark; it might e'en buy un a flaggon o' the good Calvinist's beer at Serbest," said the soldier, turning the gold penny in his hand. "And the choice of all beers," added he, "is Serbester beer, being the wholesomest for the body, and clearest from all filth and barme, as their religion is the best for the soul, and clearest from the dregs of superstition."

"Here, man," quoth Gabriella, interrupting the mercenary, "take thee this great sovereign and drink good Braket or Rhenish for the rest of the

day—only let me pass on to the Lord Pembroke.”

The sentinel stepped aside on his beat, and Gabriella walked into the withdrawing room. Here she found several persons in waiting, and on inquiring after the Earl of Pembroke, she was told he had gone into the Prince's apartment the moment before, but would soon return.

“ My Lord of Pembroke !” exclaimed Gabriella, on seeing Herbert come forth from the chamber of the sick Prince, “ they have taken Sir Thomas to the Tower, and immured him in the dungeons of the Lion's Tower—Oh ! for pity's sake move the Prince of Wales for his release ; let me fall down at the feet of his Grace and implore pardon—Overbury will go to the Low Countries—He will travel to the Iceland pole. His friends have become his enemies, and conspired his death.”

“ Rise, gentle lady, rise,” said Philip Herbert—“ What my poor influence can do shall be done ; but Lord Rochester and his crew play a deep game, and I cannot interfere.”—And as he thus spoke the Earl was departing.

“ Nay, but hear me—I’ll stake my existence,” said Gabriella, “ that Overbury hath been deceived, cajoled, and entrapped.”—

At this moment the door of the Prince’s apartment opened, and one of the physicians begged the Earl to keep all noises down.—A file of soldiers, without any ceremony, seized Gabriella and carried her into the court-yard, Philip Herbert nodding approval of what they did.

“ Oh ! Captain Kemish, save me, save me,” exclaimed Gabriella ; and the gallant companion of Raleigh drew his sword in her defence ; but a party of the soldiers, who were at hand, grasped

their spontoons and charged Kemish beyond the precincts of the royal residence.—Gabriella, whose resolution bore strong characteristics of the opposite sex, followed the Captain out at the gate, uttering “curses loud and deep” on all the dogs of war who had annoyed her.

“We must to the Archbishop forthwith,” said Kemish; “an his Lordship like to stir himself, we may fare better than at this haunted tower.”

“Saw you ever snch brutality, Sir, to a female?” asked Gabriella, who had now dried up her tears, her indignation overcoming her sorrow.

“It accords with Herbert’s character, madam, but what can we expect where every man has heard that the Lord St. Clair hath not been ashamed to challenge Prince Henry to be his own son, to English and Scots arriv-

ing in Denmark while he was ambassador there to Christiern?"

This discourse Gabriella thought not more refined than the usage she had met with, though very opposite sentiments had dictated both; and she, therefore, turned the conversation into another channel during their walk down the Mall. Kemish strode along in a gaunt style a-la-militaire, and on arriving at Westminster Ferry, he hired a skiff to land him and Gabriella at Lambeth stairs.

The day was now advanced; but there were still some boats afloat in the river,—and as our passengers had got nearly into the mid stream, their attention was arrested by the clamour of tongues in two boats that were plying hard down the river against the tide, which then flowed majestically westward. But passing in opposite directions, the Captain paid no more attention to

them than he would to a company of drunken brawlers till he heard a splash in the water. Turning suddenly round, he espied an old man struggling with an oar in the river, while another fellow, seemingly young and active, endeavoured to wrest it from the wretch in the stream. Kemish called aloud; his voice seemed to reach the villain who was drowning the poor old man; but the murderer heeded it not. He had succeeded by this time in wresting the oar from his companion; and, pushing the boats asunder, he left the drowning wretch to his fate. The Captain bade his bargeman put about and row to the assistance of the unfortunate man in the water, and the waterman did so with great agility, but long ere his boat reached the point where the drowning man was struggling with the stream, he sunk to rise no more.—His boat, which now floated empty, the Captain's water-

man followed, and it turned out to be the wherry of Doctor Forman!—The conjecture, therefore, was that the astrologer had gone to his long home, but his murderer had escaped the hand of justice by a precipitate flight, directing his course into that part of the river's brink where he was least likely to be apprehended by any observers from the shore.

Gabriella and Captain Kemish were landed at the Archbishop's Palace, and the waterman repaired to "Forman's Grove," to announce the catastrophe of the astrologer to his widow Trunco. Kemish knocked loudly at the gate of the Primate's Palace, and the seneschal opened an eyelet to reconnoitre the persons of his visitors.

"We would see his Grace," said the Captain.

"Many would see him that cannot get a glimpse o' him," answered the man. "Think ye, my master, his Grace that

burns daylight away in his study, has time to see you; I say you nay—A plague on all you may-gamers, and morris-dancers, and morality mongers, and wake-makers and church-ale revellers, and sic like.”

“Do, good man, open the portal,” said Gabriella, “charity seeks admittance, and would woo thee to her service with these few gold pennies.”

“An his Grace sit frae sun-rise, till dusk i’ his study, the grating barricaded with oaken plants to keep God’s light out while he dives wi’ lamp glimmerings into the pages o’ Revelation, think you he’ll be moved though charity came to his gate wi’ all the parish children in Surrey; I say you nay; nevertheless, seeing ye be civil gentles, ye shall to his Chaplain, and try what ye can make o’ him,” and, as the Seneschal said this, he undid the strong iron bars of the gate and admitted Gabriella and Kemish.

A serving man conducted them into a waiting or withdrawing room, whither the Chaplain soon came to know their pleasure with his grace : “ We desire to see the Right Reverend Father,” said Gabriella ; “ and implore his powerful aid in behalf of an injured and innocent person.”

“ And who may you be, Lady, that seek an audience of my lord Archbishop ?” asked the Chaplain.

“ The wife of Sir Thomas Overbury,” answered Gabriella.

“ A daughter of Babylon !” exclaimed the Churchman—“ An there were not on London Bridge Tower, heads and quarters enow of thy recusant tenets, I would thee a speedy journey thither.”

“ Sir,” said Captain Kemish, “ we came not here to be mocked by thy Puritanical cant ; if thy master receive us with incivility, it were then high time for thee to vapour thy precision and rhodomontade.”

“Thou art a Catholic too,” interrupted the Chaplain, “who bee’st thou, my master; answer me that?”

“A man, and an Englishman, and he that’s more is not of this world,” replied Kemish.

“Thou art a Recusant, and comest here with this runaway, halfling married woman, that sins and confesses and sins again,” said the churchman, swelling his goodly port and adjusting his wig: “The King’s Majesty will bury the whole brood of Catholics between Holyhoodhouse and Whitehall, and the Lord Northampton, that turncoat that is, gives them favour, and sends them abroad to the wild Irish. Priests come into the country by tens, fifteens, and twenties at a time, and have good and free harbour amongst his other buildings in Bloomsbury.”

“Sir,” interrupted the Captain, “your charge against the Earl of

Northampton, may be well founded ; but he was never a friend of Sir Thomas Overbury, whom the Lord Salisbury, that prop of Protestantism that was, favoured till his death, and now he's gone, the Lord Rochester must fall out with his Mentor, and sends him to the Tower."

"Nay, prythee, speak truth," said the Chaplain in his turn, checking the speech of Kemish ; " Master Overbury, to my lord Archbishop's sorrow, refused the embassage, and spurned the King's favour, and hath done traitor's work for his own neck ; and he is worse than a Catholic even, for he is one of Sir Walter Raleigh's Atheists."

" Since you know the religion and crimes of all men, Sir Priest, of what religion should an Archbishop's Chaplain be ?" asked Kemish, whose patience was now exhausted by the insufferable insolency of this pretea-

der to Christianity, though he felt no inclination to be wroth with the garrulous Puritan.

“Angels of grace defend us!” uttered the hapless Gabriella—“There comes the lord Northampton!”—and as sure as she spoke that nobleman entered, and as he entered, the Chaplain glided out of the room: “O! my Lord Earl,” she exclaimed, “what misery is this you have doomed my Knight to? Beseech your Lordship to move heaven and earth, that he be freed from a dungeon, cold and damp. Let Overbury but have his release, and leave us to wander from this Island, fugitives and friendshorn; you will find me true as the bravest Knight’s lady that e’er loved her lord.”

“Gabriella, thou talkest dreams,” said the Earl. “Sir Thomas Overbury is a state prisoner; but believe me, on the honour of this blue ribbon, thy Knight will be restored to thy arms. I can say

no more did I talk till midnight. Leave this place, where thou and thy religion have no friends. My lord of Rochester has promised me he will find the means of Overbury's release. His present confinement is an understood thing; a mere trick. These puling Protestants must be cozened sometimes."

"Then I will rely on the special favour of your noble lordship, and seek not an interview further with the high priest of Martin Luther," said Gabriella. "Will your lordship, as Warden of the Cinque Ports, gain me admittance to Overbury?" The Earl replied that, if his interest could procure free ingress to the fortress, it should not be wanting; he could promise the exercise of his endeavours, and he hoped the result would be favourable."

Kemish would have said a few words, but Gabriella's speech disengaged Northampton from her conversation, and

that crafty politician passed through the apartment at the same side door that the churchman had vanished by on the Earl's entrance.

Northampton's business with the Archbishop, was to justify himself in his grace's opinion, from the reports which were now in circulation, respecting his having relapsed into Catholicism, many persons affirming that his conversion was a mere manœuvre to serve his family with the first of the Stuarts on the English Throne.

Kemish, who judged he might further the interests of Gabriella most, by employing Sir Walter Raleigh's influence with Queen Anne, proposed they should make their repair to the Tower for that purpose. The gallant Raleigh felt for the situation of Overbury, but stated how impossible it was for any person to procure his liberty under the present circumstances. Disappointed here also,

Gabriella applied to Sir William Wade for an interview with her husband. The lieutenant with more humanity than prudence, complied with her request, but, unwilling to shock her by a sight of the loathsome dungeon in which his prisoner was confined, conducted her to his own apartments, and went to fetch Sir Thomas from his cell. On arriving at the door of Overbury's dungeon, Sir William briefly informed him of the object of his visit, saying at the same time, "As I was unwilling to shock the feelings of a female by conducting her to this miserable hole, the only request I have to beg of you, Sir Knight, is, that you will not discover to your Lady, the character of this place, nor attribute to the inhumanity of my nature, the severity which is exercised towards you."

Overbury, who had now been a sufficient time immured in his loathsome

dungeon to anticipate, or, more properly, to know the horrible anxiety confinement such as his would produce on the mind, and who, in the midst of darkness and irksome solitude, had been so unexpectedly visited by his jailor, could not but applaud the spirit that dictated a line of conduct so delicate as that shown by the lieutenant on the present occasion, and very readily promised compliance with Sir William Wade's proposal, adding that, "The obligation was wholly on the part of the prisoner, who could scarcely expect this mark of compassion, considering the orders under which the Lieutenant acted."

"Dearest love!" exclaimed Gabriella, the moment Overbury entered her presence, throwing herself into his arms. "Dearest love! and has it come to this? Oh! why did you not act by my

counsel? Though a woman, I was right in the judgment I formed—'Twas unkind, unfeeling to me, not to listen: But I will not reproach you; I came hither to comfort, not to irritate."

"Be composed, my sweet, all will be well," said Overbury. "The council will not attempt my life, and though King James may hang a poor man for shooting a rascal deer sooner than a cut throat, he will not exercise such prerogative on me."

After mutual reproaches, apologies, and consolations, Gabriella and Sir Thomas parted, Captain Kemish escorting her from the Tower to Gray's Inn Lane,—and the lieutenant conducted Overbury back to his prison cell, where for the present we shall leave him.

On reaching her house, Gabriella was surprised to find there, an old and valued friend.

“**Father Francis!**” she exclaimed, on seeing her confessor; “**Father Francis in England!**” but speech refused its utterance, and she sunk on her knees, the reverend Father repeating, “**Benedicite, filia!—Benedicite!**”—and taking hold of her hand he besought her to rise, asking at the same time, the cause of such visible sorrow as was painted in her looks: “**I had heard of thy welfare, daughter, and comforted myself to have found thee at least happy: whence then the cause of this distress?**”

Gabriella, sobbed out in broken accents her brief tale of woe, to which Father Francis listened with sorrowful attention. “**I have,**” he then said, “**matters of high import with the House of Howard, and it will go hard, indeed, if I enlist not in thy favour the powerful aid of the Earl of Northampton; there are other lords, too, of the**

council, whom it concerns my mission to speak with; fear not, therefore, daughter, but all shall yet be well."

Gabriella expressed her doubts, and assigned their grounds. "The Lord Somerset, and he of Northampton, are sworn friends; Somerset is the pretended friend of Overbury, but secretly his enemy; Northampton has long ago declared the same kingdom could not hold Overbury and the House of Howard. Sorry am I, my dearest Overbury, troubled himself about them; but, he fancied he was serving Somerset, when he opposed his passion, and endeavoured to turn his mind from the pursuit of his darling object. Overbury sought fame—he strove to acquire it by raising his patron, the chief Favourite at court; but alas! alas! he now rues it bitterly, though to me confession escaped not his lips."

"Daughter," interrupted Father Fran-

eis, “ I go to meet a brother in the city ; I will return and see thee with him ; he is an Englishman by birth ; and my own native country is Ireland ; it will go hard indeed if our labours for thy Knight’s release, prove ineffectual—Benedicite, filia, Benedicite—vale.”

CHAP. VI.

What gives our tale its moral ? Here we find
That wives like this are not for rule designed,
Nor yet for blind submission.—————

CRABBE.

Yet more he would have said ; but then there came
A cough that shook the sufferer's weaken'd frame ;
And choking phlegm, that would not quit its hold,
And on his brow the clammy drops stood cold.

ANONYMOUS.

SOMERSET had no sooner dispatched his Master of Horse with Jervaise Elwes to the Tower, than, exhausted by the fatigues of his late employment, he sought a few hours repose. On the following morning the first object that engaged his attention were the memoranda of the King, touching the business which was that day to be trans-

acted in the court of the Star-chamber. Calling his Master of Horse to him, while it was yet hardly daylight, the Favourite gave him some brief instructions respecting his household, and then said, "All day I shall be at the Camera Stellata, that musty old council-chamber of the Palace at Westminster."

"An your Lordship hae matters o' Benevolences on the tapis in that ancient depository of the Israelites she-tars,"* replied Coppinger; "I would be fain to give evidence for the commissioners on that dure Puritan, Master Weimark."

"Good," said Somerset, "a pursui-

* Before the banishment of the Jews under Edward I. their contracts or obligations, denominated in our ancient records *Starra* or *Starrs*, from a corruption of the Hebrew word *Shetar*, (a covenant), were deposited in strong chests in a chamber of the King's Exchequer, at Westminster Palace. The popular notion that the Star-chamber received its name

vant shall bring him before the tribunal.”

“ My Lord, there is news abroad this morning ;—the Prince Henry is marvellously ill ;—there’s a monstrous hurly burly at St. James’s, and it’s my poor opinion that Lord Northampton and yourself ought to have all your ranting followers, captains and swordsmen of the town, paraded somewhere quietly in case of need.”

“ Why, Coppinger, thou wouldst have us imitate the mad Earl of Essex,” said Somerset.

“ I would have your Lordships look to your own safety, an any thing happen the Prince, and Martin Franklin

from the circumstance of the roof being adorned with gilded stars, receives little confirmation from tradition ; for so late as the sixteenth century, at all events as far back as the first of Mary, the ceiling of the “ Council Room” was without stars.—The allusion, therefore, of the Master of Horse, seems correct. ED.

stand not the torture, an they pitch on him,” replied the Master of Horse. “An the leeches Mayern, Hammond, and Butler, gie him Raleigh’s cordial, without tasting, then we may say Prince Henry has been poisoned by that damned quack.—An they gie him not the cordials, but nostrums, and bleed him, his head ache and drought, and other accidents may increase, and then we shall have sickness, faintings, shakings, cold fits, and then great dry fits and so forth.”

“Thou seemest marvellously instructed in all the passages between his Grace and the leeches,” said Somerset. “What wit hast thou further to declare anent the Prince of Wales?”

“I know nothing, my Lord Earl,” replied the Master of Horse.—“Were I on the rack now, I know nothing; let them claw my flesh off with hot pinchers, and pole me with boiling oil,

I know nothing that concerns mortal save myself."

"Coppinger," replied Somerset, "I believe you are one of the cleverest fellows about town, and I will reward you in proportion to your merit; but if you deceive and betray me"—

"Take this dagger, and end my days," interrupted the Master of Horse.—"Time speeds—shall we debate our fidelity now, and leave our work half done?"

"No, Sir, we debate nothing," replied the Earl. "Attend me at the Council-chamber."

On arriving at the Camera Stellata, Somerset and the other Commissioners engaged first on the matter of Mr. Oliver St. John, whom they fined and sentenced to imprisonment; after hearing Sir Francis Bacon deliver a long speech, which the reader may find in his works, volume the second of the last 4to edi-

tion. This was no sooner dispatched, than the Viscount proposed that the citizens who spoke treasonably of the Privy Council's letters, touching the Benevolences, should be brought up by a messenger at arms; and the proposition being carried *nem. con.* pursuivants were dispatched with warrants for their appearance before the Commissioners.

When Weimark made his appearance, he was asked why he impugned the Lords' letters, calling on the citizens for Benevolences. "An it please your Lordships," replied Weimark.— "The King's Majesty can no more claim Benevolences than he can impose duties on merchandize, by virtue of his prerogative. An the English people acquiesce in these claims, loans, monopolies, benevolences and sic like subsidiary and extra parliamentary modes of taxation, the House of Commons will

become unnecessary, and a legal government will be corrupted into a tyranny. I have nothing further to argue, and I had the eloquence o' the Attorney-General, Master Bacon, I could only say taxing by prerogative is the strongest proof of a new constitution. 'Sic voleo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas.'"

"What further need have we of any evidence of thy base treason, Master Weimark?" said Sir Francis Bacon.—"My Lords, in the face of the King's ministers, he slanders and traduces his Majesty."

"Master Weimark slanders not the King alone," interrupted Northampton, who had got his cue from Somerset, "he abuses us, my Lords, and speaks darkly of assassinations."

"I marvel what your Lordships will make out next," said Weimark. "Produce your witnesses before these Lords

spiritual, temporal, and privy counselors, composing the Commissioners, my judges, without the intervention of a jury.”

“Master Weimark, thou art ignorant of this august court,” interrupted the Attorney-General;—“it hath jurisdiction legally,—legally, I say, Sir, legally, over riots,—riots observe, perjury, an awful crime; that is, Sir, to forswear thyself, Master Weimark;—misbehaviour of sheriffs, Sir; so let thy civic officers beware, and other notorious misdemeanours contrary to the laws of the land.”

“Ye may assert here all proclamations,” replied Weimark, “and stretch all orders of prerogative, to the vindicating of illegal commissions and grants of monopolies; ye may hold for honourable that which pleases you, and for just that which profits;—ye may call yourselves a court of law to deter-

wayz-goose-day, put a whittle in the Lords' throat, sans weapon salve."

This explanation thrilled the court with horror, and though Weimark pleaded for himself, that "he intended no disrespect to Lord Somerset, whose known diligence to the cloth-workers was above all detraction, only he spake in reference to an old proverb, 'two heads are better than one.'"

"Better off the shoulders than on," added Coppinger, "thou didst mean that Master Weimark;" and the Lord President of the Commissioners approving of the interpretation, closed the debate, by saying—"Master Weimark, thy Benevolence was to have been one hundred pounds sterling, but thou'lt agree with me, two hundred were better than one,"—which between fear and charity the bold Novilant was fain to subscribe and depart, regretting that

his jest should have been reckoned so exceedingly valuable.

As Weimark departed the Star-chamber, the King himself entered, accompanied by Philip Herbert. The Lords rose up, to receive his Majesty, and the Earl of Suffolk vacated his seat, but James signified, by waving his hand, that he came merely as a spectator or witness, and not as a judge.

“Let Sir Thomas, the Lady Lake, and Lady Rosse be called in,” said the Lord President, and the pursuivant very soon ushered the joint Secretary, his wife and eldest daughter into the Camera Stellata.

“My Lords,” said the King’s counsel, “the Lady Lake and the Baroness Rosse have accused the Countess of Exeter of incontinency with Lord Rosse. How maintain ye this scandal Sir Thomas Lake?”

Sir Thomas attempted a reply, and

a long and desultory conversation ensued, alleging on the side of the accusers, that the Earl of Exeter had been injured in his reputation.

“ Upon my credit,” said Sir Thomas Lake, “ Lord Rosse was sent ambassador extraordinary into Spain, in a very gallant equipage, with some hopes of his own to continue leiger, to save charges of transmitting any other.”

“ Yes,” interrupted the King, “ and in his absence hath fallen out an extreme deadly feud (’tis no matter for what) between Lady Lake and the Countess of Exeter ;—a youthful widow she had been, and virtuous—”

“ And so became bed-fellow to this aged, gouty, diseased but noble Earl,” said Coppinger into the ear of Rochester.

“ And that preferment,” continued the King, “ hath made her subject to envy and malice ?”

“ But my Lord Rosse coming home from his embassy, stays not long in England,” said Sir Thomas Lake, “ but away he gets into Italy, turns a professed Roman Catholic, being cozened into that religion by his public confidant Gondamare.”

“ With that we have nothing to do,” said Northampton; “ was it befitting he should be charged with incontinency and neglect of his wife and kindred, because he refused an increase of allowance to her settlement of jointure, which I believe was promised to be completed at his return ?”

“ Truth is,” said the counsel for Lady Lake, “ we accuse Lord Rosse of incontinency towards his lady whilst here; whereupon his wife made the discovery, he hath fled from hence, and from her marriage-bed—and with other devised calumnies, by several designs and con-

trivements, he aimed to have poisoned the mother and daughter!"

The Countess at this stage of the proceedings, with tears and imprecations, professed her innocence; to oppose which the mother Lake and her daughter produced a written document, wherein the Countess, with much contrition, acknowledged herself guilty; craved pardon for attempting to poison them, and desired friendship with them all.

"A forgery, a counterfeit!" exclaimed the Countess of Exeter.

"In what place, at what time, and on what occasion should this be writ?" demanded the King.

"At the house of Lord of Exeter, at Wimbledon," replied Sir Thomas Lake, "where all the parties met in dispute of their differences, and the Countess confessed her guilt of attempting the poison of my lady and daughter."

“What says the Lady Lake?” demanded the King.

“Only that the Countess being desirous of absolution and friendship, your grace, consented to set down all the circumstances under her own hand, which presently she writ down at the window, in the upper end of the great chamber, in the presence of my daughter, Lord Rosse, Diego the Spaniard, and myself.”

“Diego is Lord Rosse’s confiding servant?” said James—“and ye are all parties; what further witness have you that will prevail with my belief?”

“Our chamberesse,” added the Baroness Rosse, “stood behind the hanging, at the entrance of the room, and heard the Countess read over what she writ.”

“What additional witness have you,” asked the King, “to give sufficient credit to the poisoning?”

“ A confession of one Luke Hutton,” said Sir Thomas Lake, “ acknowledging for forty pounds annuity, the Countess hired him to poison my family.”

“ And this is the case against the Countess of Exeter ?” asked the King, —The ladies curtesied, Sir Thomas Lake bowed, and his Majesty taking from his doublet a paper, addressed the commissioners, saying,—“ My Lords, and noble cousins, I have adventured upon this, even as upon the Powder treason, because modesty forbids the defacement of the living, and I crave your indulgence, that without previous notice of my presence, I came here and have been bold to speak in the cause of the Countess of Exeter, which might better become greater abilities to plead. —But the case stands thus: Master Dendy tell thy tale.”

Master Dendy, now a Serjeant at

Arms, and sometime a domestic of the Earl of Exeter, stepped up to the table and said: "As soon as this quarrel was blazoned at Court, it came to his Grace's ear, and he sent me into Italy, post to the Lord Rosse. Here is the Lord Rosse's hand, also Diego's, and other testimonials, confirming that all the said accusations and confessions, suspicions and papers, concerning the Countess are notorious, false, and scandalous, which the Lord confirmed, by receiving the host, in assurance of her honour and his innocency."

This declaration excited the utmost consternation among the accusers; the Commissioners looked at each other; the King stepped up to Master Dendy, took the papers from him, endorsed them with the initials I. R. and having handed them to the Earl of Suffolk, addressed the Court, saying,—“oaths cannot confound my sight—I knew pri-

vately of all this, and to make trial, in a hunting journey, at New Park, I galloped thither to Wimbledon, viewed the room, and observing the great distance of the window from the lower end of the room, I placed myself behind the hanging, and so my Lord Pembroke in turn, and we could not hear ourselves seriatim speak aloud from the window. What say you, Herbert?"

"His Grace hath reported the gospel of this fable," replied the Earl of Pembroke; "and I declare on the honour of a peer, the old housekeeper protested those hangings at the door, constantly furnisht that room for thirty years.—And I say with his Grace, oaths cannot confound my sight; if the arras be two foot short of the ground, the Countess of Exeter and Lord Rosse might discover the chamberesse an she were hidden behind it."

"We only want Luke Hutton," said

the King, "if some wonderful providence could find him out privately; I dare say he would deny it also."

Coppinger at this moment stepped two paces from where he stood, behind Lord Somerset, and falling on one knee, besought he might have their Lordship's warrant, and he should produce Luke Hutton in half an hour!

"Thou'rt my Lord Somerset's Master of Horse?" said the King, "art not?"

Somerset bowed—"Begone, then," said the King, "and come not back with thy head on, my master, if thou bring'st not this Hutton."

The Favourite handed his bravo the ring from his finger, and Coppinger left the Presence with as much address as if he were the most finished courtier in the Camera Stellata.

During the absence of the Master of Horse, the Baroness Rosse fell on

her knees, confessing she had been inveigled into this plot against her will and consent ; Sir Thomas Lake stood confounded, the Lords of the commission being as much ashamed of the joint Secretary as he was of his guilt ; but Lady Lake remained unmoved, looking with the most scornful contempt on her husband and daughter.

As Coppinger reached the Palace-yard, he was accosted by Weston, “How now, Master Coppinger?—Has the King blown up the plot and contrivers?”

“Devil that thou art,” exclaimed Coppinger ; “where is Hutton?”

“Hard bye,” answered the page,—“guarded by Martin Franklin—but he won’t budge, he’s afraid of being whipt at the cart’s tail from hence to Newgate.”

“Looke ye, here’s my Lord’s signet, and I’ll fetch him forth ; lead on.”

Weston conducted the Master of Horse into one of the crowded lanes that ran from the Palace-yard into Tothil-fields, Westminster, and in an obscure ale-house they found Franklin and Hutton.—“Come along, bully Hutton, come along, thy peace is made, but demur one moment and the sun shall bless thy shoulders ’atween this and Temple Bar.”

Hutton rose from his seat grumbling, and was hurried along to the entrance into the Painted Chamber, but his fears now got the better of his resolution, and he refused to proceed one step farther.—The idea of entering the Star-chamber, carried with it as much terror to the minds of the people, as entering the inquisition in Spain did into that of an accused heretic. Coppinger, however, produced his Lord’s signet, and called on the javelin-men in attendance to bear the prisoner up stairs—a com-

mand which soon found hands enow to carry it into effect.

The King and all the Lords were astonished at the dispatch of the Master of Horse, and Somerset was equally so to find that Weston seemed the chief person employed in dragging the unwilling witness up to the table of the Commissioners. The evidence of Hutton closed the defence of the Countess of Exeter; and the King addressed the court, saying, "Sir Thomas Lake I whilom valued, told him the danger of embarking himself in this quarrel, and advised him to leave his wife and daughter for the Star-chamber. He humbly thanked me, but could not refuse to be a father and a husband, and so puts his name with theirs to the bill—My Lord Suffolk, give place," continued James, "we will now sit in judgment ourselves. I hope we shall not have another plot like this soon again; it resembles the first sin in Pa-

radise; the Lady Lake, the serpent; her daughter, Eve; Sir Thomas, poor Adam, whom, I think in my conscience, that his love to his wife has beguiled—Sir Thomas Lake, we fine you and your Lady ten thousand pounds to the Exchequer; five thousand to the poor Countess, and fifty pounds to this ~~Hutton~~ ^{Hutton}.—The chamberesse shall be whipt at a cart's tail about the streets, and do penance in St. Martin's Church." Then addressing the Commissioners, the King said, my Lords, I leave to you to see this sentence executed.—We pardon the Lady Rosse from penal sentence."

The King now rose to leave the chamber, alleging the serious indisposition of Prince Henry, as the only cause which could withdraw him from that day's blessed work; but strongly recommending that the Commissioners should "ride the capering mules that

should come under them, with a dure gripe o' the bridle."—His Majesty's departure was the signal for the calm Archbishop to say a few words, and he, therefore, asked the Earl of Northampton if he meant to exhibit his bill against those who defamed him.

The Earl replied that he did, and drew from his doublet a paper containing a list of many names, the bearers of which were charged with calling him a Papist, and alleging that, through his countenance, any man might go publicly to mass.

"Let them be committed to Newgate, the Fleet, or the Tower, that accuse his Lordship,"—said Bishop Bilson, "do the Commissioner Lords agree thereto?"

"Although many have been the rumours and reports that have passed in these times," said the Archbishop Abbot, "some of them shut up rather for un-

certain truths, and flying fables, than entertained for approved truths; yet, nevertheless, such things are grounded upon reason, and for which men of upright consciences have some occasion to speak; to have such either lightly valued or punished, is rather unjust, than any way beseeming the equity of this court: but, in truth those whereof we now speak, are grounded upon some cause, and my Lord's own letters make evident, that he hath done some things both against his own conscience and meaning, merely to attain unto honour and sovereignty, and to please the King."

"My Lord Archbishop," interrupted Northampton, "this is not well done, after what passed between us; I claim the protection of this high and noble court against the slanderous tongue of every Churchman. What, my Lord Bishops, ye rise! depart if it suit you;

there are belted Earls enow to do me right; and the King's Majesty shall visit with his ire the sponce that a mitre saves from a sword."

"My Lord of Suffolk, keep your seat," said the Archbishop, "I and my brothers rise not to leave this chamber."

"No, no," exclaimed Bishop Bilson, "we are here by the King's commission, and he sits on his throne by God's commission."

"Complete your syllogism," said Northampton, scowling Bilson out of countenance; "I defy the Archbishop to prove the allegation he has made—I stand upon the privilege of my nobility."

"Good, my Lord Earl," replied the Archbishop; "know ye the Cardinal Bellarmine?—Heard ye never of a Howard that writ him a letter—Here's the letter, my Lords," continued the very reverend Prelate.—'The Earl de-

clareth that howsoever the condition of the times compelled him, and his Majesty urged him to turn Protestant, yet nevertheless, his heart stood with the Papists—he will further their attempts.’ And, my Lords, the actions that follow justify the hand to be true—Priests swarm, many have come over into this kingdom, travelling with hollow sticks, containing the Pope’s instructions and letters to great ones here;—and who can assure himself the lord on his right hand, or on his left, is true hearted unto the state. Lord Northampton, I say, thou harbourest recusants; and I charge thee with undertaking to write in defence of the Gunpowder treason.”

“My Lords, I appeal from this tribunal to my Peers—I am a Commissioner here, and cannot, therefore, be judged,” said Northampton. “At any rate no craven puling Puritan shall

arraign Harry Howard—God’s wounds! my Lords, if you bear this tyranny of that canting priest, of you it shall be said—*via nulla salutis, non fuga, non virtus, vix opes quoque mortis honestæ.*”

—And as Northampton uttered these words, he again demanded the protection of the court ; which was accorded him by a majority of two voices, till the King himself should sit in judgment.

“ My Lord Buckhurst,” said Suffolk, “ we will now hear your claim to that part of the Kentish Lucy’s land, which lays contiguous to your own.”

The Lord Buckhurst, who was both a beautiful poet and an able statesman, in the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign, and the beginning of James’s, kept house with such hospitality, that he had never less than two hundred persons in his family. But he is better known to the world as one of the Commissioners appointed to try the unfortunate

Mary Queen of Scots, and as the messenger employed to report the confirmation of her sentence, and see it executed. History recognizes him as Lord High Steward on the trials of Essex and Southampton, in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. Whatever grounds there might be for the charge against the Earl, there is no proof assigned even by Osborne, that his Lordship did not merit the character of a good poet, an able statesman, and an honest man.

“ My Lords,” said he, “ I mean not to misconstrue the integrity of any other tribunal, in bringing my claim before this council. I believe there is not a more legal mode of trial than by this Chamber ; yet I will not by the highness of my hand stifle the report of the world, which questions my claim, as if it were founded merely on the contiguity of the disputed lands to my

own. Here are documents which will give your Lordships full and final satisfaction"—but as the Earl said this, and was pulling out of his bosom the papers he referred to, he dropped down suddenly at the table and expired. The Chamber was filled with instant consternation; the charge against Northampton was forgotten in the moment of sorrow, and the death of the Earl of Dorset, (for such was the last creation of Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst,) was untowardly interpreted by his enemies; but it was in reality owing to the breaking of a vessel in his head. The business of the court was immediately suspended, and when Coppinger, who had kept his place when the Lakes withdrew, was called on by the Serjeant at Arms to lend a hand in bearing the lord away, the Master of Horse took upon himself to satirise the place that could not afford a leech

To save a Lord, that wenching thought no sin,
And bought his flesh by selling of one skin.

The commissioners separated, Suffolk observing, "None will ever question Lucy's land again, in the quiet possession of which the Sackville's have been thus miraculously estated."

Northampton, on entering his own palace, at Charing Cross, was accosted by a venerable monk, who craved a private audience of him forthwith. "My Lord of Rochester, who accompanies me," said the Earl, "is my most intimate friend; I can have no secrets which may not be made known to him also."

"Benedicite, son," quoth the monk, addressing Somerset; "but, my Lord," he continued, accosting Northampton, "my business is with yourself alone."

"My Lord of Somerset," said the Earl, "this reverend father must be humoured; I advise, in the mean time, that with all diligence, you make your repair to the King and trounce the Lord of

Canterbury. Take with you the Earl of Suffolk, and when I have dispatched this stranger, I will also wait on his Grace to justify myself." Then addressing the monk, the Earl bade him follow to his study. "You have business with me, reverend father?" said the Earl, on reaching his study.

"Son," replied the Monk, "I have journeyed many a weary mile to bless thee as the favourer of the mother church, and to bless also, ere I die, the Lady Gabriella, whom in holy matrimony I joined to Thomas Overbury."

The last words of Father Francis's reply fell like a death knell on the Earl's ear.—"Gabriella!" he repeated, "she is not the wife of Overbury, by the rites of the English Church, father; and the man himself is now a prisoner in the Tower."

"I have heard as much," answered the Monk, "I have seen the unfortu-

nate Gabriella.—I command thee, son, to banish this rancorous enmity thou bearest her knight, and to hasten the liberty of a man who has diligently served Lord Somerset.”

“Father, ye know not what ye ask,” said Northampton. “Sir Thomas Overbury is the King’s prisoner.—Hast thou no other business with me but this? The present hour is important to me.”

“Son,” answered Father Francis, “I have other business with thee.—Thou art reckoned at Rome a chief help of our persecuted brethren in this heretical land; and I bear important letters to thee.” As the Monk spoke these words, he unscrewed the upper part of a large walking-stick he bore in his hand, and took from its hollow bosom some letters which had been very ingeniously concealed there.—“This is from the Cardinal Bellarmine—this from the Holy Father—and this from

the Lord Rosse—But my mission ends not with the bare delivery of these : I journey northward into Lancashire ; letters of passport I will require, and from your Lordship a full relation of all the affairs of the Holy Catholic brethren in England.”

Northampton had by this time opened the Cardinal's letter, scanned its contents, and desiring the Monk to be seated, he crossed himself before a fine silver crucifix that surmounted his writing-cabinet, and with evident apprehension undid the silken string which bound the epistle of his Holiness. When the Earl had attentively read the writing, he addressed the Monk saying, “ Father Francis, the King my master wisheth to match his sons with princesses of high descent, though of a different religion. This bear thou, in my name, to all the brethren of our holy religion ; it will reconcile them to his

Majesty, who is willing to meet them half-way, and this shall be communicated by a legier ambassador to Spain, the Emperor, and the Holy Father.”*

Delighted to hear so favourable a report of the King of England’s sentiments towards his brethren, Father Francis gave the Earl his “benedicite,” and proceeded to the disconsolate Gabriella in Gray’s-Inn Lane. Northampton’s mind, however, was not at ease; he felt deeply the charge preferred against him by the Archbishop, but he received from the death of the Earl of Dorset some consolation; as that accomplished statesman had invariably

* The intrigues of the Court of Great Britain, or more properly speaking of the King himself, with the Popes Gregory XV. and Urban VIII. are pretty impartially given by the unfortunate Rushworth; Peyton, however, delivers them more originally with the feelings of the Catholics’ enemies.

supported the "Protestant faction" with the great Earl of Salisbury. Now, however, that these noblemen were no more, Northampton piqued himself on his abilities and power, and since it could no longer be hid that he favoured the "religion in which he had been born and bred," he resolved on carrying himself through with his project in a style and manner becoming the house of Howard, and the brother of the unfortunate Norfolk. His great dependence lay in the influence of his family with the vacillating monarch, who, he knew, would make any concessions in words, provided he could keep Europe in peace, but more especially, if he could preserve peace to England : and the Earl had, besides, a strong party to back his efforts among the ancient nobility of both kingdoms. The Irish were, besides, almost all catholics, if we except the colonists and their

families, that from time to time settled and multiplied in Hibernia, together with the officers of government chosen from among the natives, the greater part of whom, though outwardly favourable to Protestantism, were confirmed Romanists in principle and disposition.

CHAP. VII.

COLONNA.—Come you, my Lord,
 To swill with drunken thirst, the poor revenge
 That makes a little mind's ignoble joy?

* * * * *

What is a man doomed to the stroke of death
 To understand by this?

LUDOVICO.—That I am his friend
 Who called me traitor.

EVADNE, OR, THE STATUE.

SOMERSET, on quitting the Earl of Northampton's, hastened to St. James's, where he knew he should meet the Earl of Suffolk, and from thence, when he had gained his object, he sped his course to the Charter-House, where Lady Frances was anxiously awaiting his arrival. "How, my Lord," exclaimed the Lady of Suffolk, on his entering

the mansion, "how came the Lords of the Star-Chamber council to allow that Puritanical Priest, from Lambeth, to carry himself so high towards Lord Northampton?"

"My Lady Countess," replied Somerset, "we will easily put the Archbishop down, though it may be difficult to silence him.—Words are but air."

"But they are the atmosphere the camelion multitude feed on," replied the Countess.

"But have ye heard the news? Buckhurst's dead," said Somerset, anxious to divert the conversation.

"Dead; then will the Earl of Suffolk be Lord Treasurer, I hope," said the Countess.

"That is already settled," replied Somerset. "The council had no sooner broken up, than your Lord and myself sped to St. James's, where the King is consoling his sick heir, and his Ma-

CHAP. VII.

COLONNA.—Come you, my Lord,
 To swill with drunken thirst, the poor revenge
 That makes a little mind's ignoble joy?

* * * * *

What is a man doomed to the stroke of death
 To understand by this?

LUDOVICO.—That I am his friend
 Who called me traitor.

EVADNE, OR, THE STATUE.

SOMERSET, on quitting the Earl of Northampton's, hastened to St. James's, where he knew he should meet the Earl of Suffolk, and from thence, when he had gained his object, he sped his course to the Charter-House, where Lady Frances was anxiously awaiting his arrival. "How, my Lord," exclaimed the Lady of Suffolk, on his entering

the mansion, "how came the Lords of the Star-Chamber council to allow that Puritanical Priest, from Lambeth, to carry himself so high towards Lord Northampton?"

"My Lady Countess," replied Somerset, "we will easily put the Archbishop down, though it may be difficult to silence him.—Words are but air."

"But they are the atmosphere the camelion multitude feed on," replied the Countess.

"But have ye heard the news? Buckhurst's dead," said Somerset, anxious to divert the conversation.

"Dead; then will the Earl of Suffolk be Lord Treasurer, I hope," said the Countess.

"That is already settled," replied Somerset. "The council had no sooner broken up, than your Lord and myself sped to St. James's, where the King is consoling his sick heir, and his Ma-

jesty immediately conferred the place on his trusty cousin, the Earl of Suffolk."

This piece of intelligence instantly changed the Countess's style and manner towards Somerset; and she conjured him by all the love he bore her daughter, to yoke in the same team with her Earl, and prayed Heaven that their horses might pull one way. "But who," said she, "would have thought that the Lakes should have tricked themselves so? How came the King, know ye, to soss into their plot so masterly?"

"Truth is," replied the Favourite, "ever since this affair began to be sonnetted at court, the King suspected it, for he is suspicious to a proverb. My Master of Horse, who I verily believe knows all that's done under the sun, furnished me with the cue."

"Good, my Lord, I am right glad," replied the Countess, "and now let me

pray your Lordship to set the sonnetteers of Grub Street to work ; and trust me the citizens encourage the catabanqui to chant their ditties on the discomfiture of the Lakes, and the death of Sackville. I am now going to the Queen at her palace of Denmark House in the Strand. Lord Dorset's death opens the way to great matters.—I shall then visit Northampton.—I must, therefore, leave the Lady Frances in your charge ; if you cannot ride with her to-day, let me pray you to give her an airing on the river.”

“ Your wishes are commands,” replied Somerset, “ in all things you shall be obeyed, my Lady Countess.”

The moment Lady Frances found herself alone with Somerset, she gave vent to her feelings in a strain the Viscount was ill prepared to hear.—He had laboured to remove every obstacle to their union in matrimony ; the divorce,

the imprisonment of Overbury, and other matters of deep and dangerous import, he had atchieved to satisfy his love, or gratify his own ambition. "In God's name, my dearest Lady Frances, what would you have me do more?" asked Somerset. Prince Henry is now at the point of death, Charles, his brother, is not likely to come in our way,—the Queen is occupied enough with her own gallants, Beely and Buchanan ;—is Overbury to be left at the disposal of that devil's buckie, Weston?"

"My Lord Earl," replied Lady Frances, "our nuptials shall never be solemnized while Overbury lives. He is privy to too many of our doings to let us live in a whole skin. Think you he will not splutter and fume?—Long ere this time, when you and he were yet sworn friends, heard he not that speech you uttered as Abelard?"

“As I live, I have no recollection of that speech,” replied Somerset. “What means my love?”

“Canst thou recollect that masque at which thou didst personate Abelard, and I Eloisa?—And hast thou forgotten Friar Bacon?” asked Lady Frances.

“No,” replied Somerset, “all that I recollect perfectly, and good reason I should.”

“The Monk was Overbury,” said the Lady Frances.

“Overbury!” exclaimed Somerset, his voice faltering as he pronounced the name—“How know you that?”

Lady Frances applied her cat-call to her lips, and Weston entered: “Who enacted Friar Bacon at Prince Henry’s masque, when I sustained the character of Eloisa?” said Lady Frances Howard.

“Sir Thomas Overbury,” replied the page unhesitatingly.

“ How knowest thou that, sirrah ? ” asked the Earl.

“ I dogged him to Gray’s-Inn, when the masque ended,” replied Weston, “ and saw him housed with his dousabel.”

“ And I have been told,” added Lady Frances, “ that your puissant knight did tell the Prince, ‘ that the fortunes of Rochester afforded more hope to the young Countess of Essex, than the uncertain and hopeless love of his Royal Highness.’ ”

“ Soho ! soho ! Master Overbury ! ” exclaimed Somerset, “ cozening has become a topping trade, thou scornedst to play at such a small game as we started, I find ; but thou shalt not bid both the gallows and the horse-pond defiance ! ” Then turning to Lady Frances, he said, “ Will you accompany me to the Tower in my barge ? I must see Jervaise Elwes ere I sleep—If

Overbury hath, indeed, gone that length, how know I but he may have gone farther anent the passages between us, touching the Royal family?"

"What sayest thou, sweet Turner?" asked Lady Frances, "we lack counsel when thy pretty lips are closed. Was ever any Lady so defamed as I have been by this vile wretch, not only to Prince Henry, but to Rochester? Yes, my Lord, with an impudent face he called me base in your hearing, and you had not the courage to pistol him in some of his doublings through town.—Oh! that such a negro as that Overbury, that scum of men, that devil incarnate, should do such things, and say such things, and pass either unregarded, or unpunished, till a disconsolate lady rose to avenge her wrongs!"

"Pity it is he should live to defame so honourable a lady, so well descended, to the utter disparagement of her house,"

said Mistress Turner. " Rather than he should leave the Tower with life, I will go and dispatch him myself. I have it, my Lady Frances ; I have it ; let the Lord go and persuade him to have as a servant, a trusty person who shall bear all messages between them. I will find you a man, aye two ; there is Bill Weston's father, that was servant to my husband, and there is a crook shouldered, swarthy knave, ycleped Franklin, some time a cook : but experienced enough in all herbs and medicinals, and thought to be no less a wizard than Forman.—I trow you, he mixes a dose with such excellent art, to mitigate or increase its strength, that it shall take a month before it works, or do its job in an hour and seven minutes."

" Soft, soft !" said Somerset, " we know this Franklin ; find me Weston

by to-morrow's dawn—Let us to Water Lane, Blackfriars—my barge waits.”

On reaching Traitor's-Gate, by which, in his aquatic excursions, Somerset chose for privacy to enter the Tower, he was met by his “humble servant” Jervaise Elwes, who bowed to the Viscount, and thanked him profusely for the lieutenancy which pleased him equally to his expectations. The Lady Frances continued in the barge, which was rowed gently down the middle stream, till the Viscount's signal should be hoisted for its return.

“I would see Overbury,” said the Earl, “lead on to his apartments.”

The Lieutenant obeyed, and on arriving at the loathsome dungeon in which Sir Thomas was confined, Somerset expressed the utmost indignation that “his friend” should be immured like a felon.

“My keeper,” answered Overbury, “whom this new Constable hath sup-

planted, told me in set terms, he but did the bidding of his employers, in cramming me here beyond God's light, and the countenance of man."

"And I," added Elwes, "could not take upon me to remove from their apartments, into others, of my own choosing, the gentlemen I found in custody."

"Then know now, Sir," said Somerset, in pompous phrase, "that safe custody does not imply interment; remove Sir Thomas to an apartment which you would choose for my friend."

The Lieutenant bowed, Somerset took Overbury by the arm, and walking up the stairs, which were but very faintly illuminated by the torch that their conductor held in his hand, talked familiarly with the Knight till they arrived in an apartment fit for a human being to inhabit.

"Sir Thomas," said Somerset, "we

are labouring for your release, but it will be difficult to effect it; the King is mightily displeased, and you know his frown is like the roaring of a lion, terrible to the spectators and hearers."

"But, my Lord Earl," said Overbury, "am I to esteem your favour more than the King's displeasure?—I fear I have played my cards without shuffling the pack,—but if I have, I will cut at random—What!—Host of Heaven! To be sequestered from my friends, all intercourse denied me, no tablets to express my thoughts"—

"Soft, my friend, soft," replied Somerset, "bethink you of the slanderers abroad, of the numbers who wear masks, and you will not wonder I act so much like Friar Bacon, tho' I have rather been to you, perhaps, the magician's brazen head."

"My Lord Earl, I understand not this," interrupted Overbury.

“ Look ye, Sir Thomas,” said the Earl, in explanation, “ you must have a fit and trusty knave about you, who will so deal between us, that all our passages may be unknown to those we have heretofore employed as serving-men.”

“ I will do any thing, my Lord, so as I may be extricated from the horrors of confinement,” answered Overbury, “ but I know my enemies, and I fear your Lordship will be cozened by them also.”

“ All will be well, depend on't, only suffer yourself to be as private here as the Lieutenant shall prescribe,” said Somerset ; adding, “ I would now be gone, as the turn of the tide may prevent us getting up the river,” and as he said this he left the apartment, Overbury wondering the Earl's visit should have been so brief.

On reaching the gate Somerset took Elwes aside, and now explained himself

fully, as to his conduct towards Overbury.

“ My Lord Earl, how can I take upon me the office of a poisoner ?” asked the Lieutenant, “ verily evil actions shall never want evil actors ; and in all ages, quacks, and cashiered serving men, fallen into want, have still been the agents in such enterprizes ; but for the Constable of his Majesty’s Tower to undertake such work, were disgraceful to my office, and my employers.”

Somerset stared at Elwes, from whom he had looked for a very different answer.—“ Good,” said the Earl, “ good, my master ; I see thou art read in these matters.—Well, it shall be as thou willest, Jervaise Elwes—Tiberius’s physician, Spado, an apothecary, and Lidgo, Drusus’ servant, are made agents to be his poisoners—Nero’s bond-man must kill him—Piso’s captain, under Germani-

cus, must poison him—a centurion of Maximus must poison him—Alexander's physician, Antipater, and Aristotle, must be the authors of his death—A knave, without birth or parentage, must poison Queen Elizabeth's saddle—Wert thou a shaver and tonsor, thou might'st powder a man's head, so that his hair should cost him as dear as Sampson's. But if I row in the same boat with thee, Elwes, devil take thy craven heart an thou push not among the eddies of this troubled world."

Somerset paused; and his speech acted like magic on the mind of the Lieutenant, who thought "if the Earl was following the steps of the great Robert Dudley, he might take the risk in company with him."

"Good," answered Somerset, "my greatest injunction to you is, that you throw in the way of my plans—no obstacle—no vain scruples of conscience—no

shuffling—or, by the gods, I'll stick thy head on yonder tower over London Bridge."

The signal was now made for the Favourite's barge, which soon pulled up to the "Traitor's Gate," and Somerset stepping on board, the rowers plied for London Bridge; but the tide had fallen too low for the boat to pass up under the centre arch, where the fall of the water is more than five feet at ebb-tide. This was a dilemma for which the Earl was not prepared, and he was compelled to think of landing, on one side or other to the east of the bridge. He accordingly chose the Surry-side, and he and the Lady Frances proposed riding up the bank of the Thames, to Westminster Ferry. They had scarcely proceeded to St. Saviour's church, when they were met by the Earl of Northampton. Somerset, in few words, related to him all that he had done; Northampton's spirits were flat, and if

he approved of his friend's plans, he shewed no joy on the occasion.

“ I am on my way to Greenwich,” said Howard, “ and purpose spending a few days at Rochester. I shall now endow the fair convent I have built at Greenwich, with revenue for ever, for maintenance of decayed gentlemen, a sufficient number, and for women also considerable.”

“ But my dear uncle,” said Lady Frances, “ why be cast down by any thing that cozening bishop said in the Camera Stellata? Every thing bids fair for the removal of all our enemies.”

“ Sweet and fair,” replied the Earl, “ I have done all the good I can for my family, I have even—but I will not make those sorrowful who have entered the chase in pursuit of joy—to-morrow let me see you, that we may fix on your wedding-day.” So saying, the old Earl gave his horse the spur,

and waving his hand, bade Somerset and the Lady Frances adieu.

It was evening ere Somerset reached his house in St. James's Park, attended by Lady Frances, and we will leave them in the enjoyment of their worst thoughts, till we have scanned certain events which transpired during the day.

Coppinger, who had assisted in carrying the corpse of the Earl of Dorset out of the Star-chamber, accompanied not his master in the latter progress of this day, but repaired hastily to the Prince of Wales's Palace, as he himself said, "to gain intelligence." The first person he met with was Master Primrose, the Prince's foster-brother; "Good Master Primrose, how does the Prince Henry?" asked Coppinger, adding by way of varnish to his enquiry, "My Lord Earl of Somerset could not refrain from sending, by so poor a messenger, his

duty and fealty to know how his Highness doth ?”

“ Ah !” said poor Primrose, “ we have Raleigh’s cordial—that penned his history of the world for the satisfaction of the Prince—it did him no good, though a good cordial it is I believe—I drank of it ; so did Doctor Mayerne, that French physician, and so did the Earl of Pembroke, to prove it was wholesome. But I fear, Master Coppinger, there be foul doings here ; the Prince’s pain lieth all in his head, and he is perfect heart-whole.”

“ But, Master Primrose,” said Coppinger, without any intention of following up, by an exclamation of unguarded surprise, the intelligence the Foster-brother seemed to communicate, “ Master Foster, hast thou always found it safe to advise the Prince ? ’Tis not always so during the life of his father,

nothing remaining in prudence possible to be said in relation to his safety, but must reflect upon the honour of the King, or the guidance of himself. The smallest intimation of that kind falls within the compass of treason, and youth and folly cannot always conceal what is revealed to it.

“ Sir Master of Horse,” said Primrose, “ you judge very meanly of the Prince of Wales.”

“ Had I not heard from many,” answered Coppinger, “ his father did dread him, I would not have uttered such a speech. But I would as soon have my lips sealed with a cobbler’s end, like the eye-lids of an eyes, than smutter what passages may be entertained between us. I say nothing of the secret doings this heart is privy to, both at Tibbalds, Whitehall, Denmark-House and Royston, where I attend my Lord Earl of Somerset.”

“Then I dare to swear, Master Coppinger,” said Primrose, very bluntly, “thou knowest from thy own observation, that the King, though he would not deny any thing that Prince Henry plainly desired, yet it appeared rather the result of fear, and outward compliance, than love or natural affection ; being harder drawn to confer an honour or pardon, in cases of desert, upon a retainer of the Prince, than a stranger.”

“From whence might be calculated,” said Coppinger, as if by inference from what Primrose had unwittingly spoken, “a malignity conceived in his heart against his son’s retinue.”

“A consequence my speech did not warrant,” interrupted the Foster-brother.

“Nay then,” replied Coppinger, “I did but use thy premises in conjunction with the King’s commands to the

Lord Chamberlain, not to suffer any to be inrolled the Duke of York's servants, without his knowledge. And, forsooth, I thereby looked upon the reasonableness of their judgments who did look upon Prince Henry rather as a terror than a comfort to the King."

"Thou art more fool than logician," answered Primrose, "to draw any such conclusion; "but people do flock round the Prince, it being the religion of some nations, and the custom of all, to adore the rising sun, and contemn him at his going down."

"And among the fire worshippers," said Coppinger, "thou didst reckon Sir Thomas Lake, a fellow of mean birth and mean breeding. He is an arrant knave that."

"But he is not dead; he hath been the great link with the Scottish nation," said Primrose.

"Proggng for suits, and helping

them to fill their purses, Master Primrose," answered the Master of Horse. "Why, man, I hae just come from the Star-chamber, and the scandal of the Countess of Exeter is all a hoax, man; the King, who hath as much glory in displacing officers, as in overthrowing and conquering the Spaniard; the King, Master Primrose, who is more tender over the life of a rascal stag, than that of a man, hath crossed the Lake's designs, and trumped in their way; so that clerk of the signet could only swim, being held up by the chin. But in what condition shall I report the Prince Henry to my Lord Earl of Somerset?"

"I will just step into the withdrawing-room, good Master Coppinger, and fetch thee word anon," said Primrose, who began now to entertain a mighty high opinion of the judgment and parts of the Master of Horse. And while the

Foster-brother was on this errand, Coppinger stole to the door of the apartment, lest he should be misinformed by Primrose.

“ So,” said Coppinger, “ I hear the doctors disagree—Mayerne bids them bleed on—No, says Butler, but apply pigeons and cupping-glasses to draw away the pain—Doctor Gifford says quintessential spirits can alone cure—Soft, soft, here comes the Foster-brother”—and the the Master of Horse withdrew to his former stance.

“ Bear to the Earl of Somerset the King’s favour,” said Primrose, “ and say Doctor Butler gives hopes of recovery, but his Grace hath sent for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor Melborne, dean of Rochester, and other ghostly comforters, to pray by Prince Henry’s bed-side.—But a happy death is the never-failing portion of a well-spent life.”

Coppinger bowed, pressed the hand of the Foster-brother, whose grief was unaffected, and offered the consolation contained in the proverb, ‘All is well that ends well ;’ adding, “ may I be allowed to commend to the Earl of Somerset, the friend of Prince Henry, Master Primrose ?—Believe me, Sir, whatever jealousies might have been between them on account of—”

“ Is this a time to talk of boyish imprudencies, and the lusts of the flesh,” said Primrose, “ thou wouldst embitter even the sorrow of the grave, by remembering every shovel full of earth its inhabitant digged out o’t by his sins.”

“ A most religious and Christian observation,” replied Coppinger ; “ I protest I did desire but to signify that affliction and death compose all differences.—But wonder not at my lack o’ gospel light, my master.—Great lords

employ their servants to do *their* work, and I protest to you it's sometimes like baking loaves of embodied smoke. As for religious and Christian 'haviour, that's a kindness to God they kick at, and disparage the varlet that enters it on his bead-roll."

"Vale, Master Coppinger, vale," said Primrose, and the Master of Horse quitted St. James's to start other game.

Coppinger made the Earl of Northampton's in his way to the city, and on pretence of asking whether the Earl of Somerset was with the lord of the mansion, he insinuated himself into Howard's presence, just at the moment Father Francis was departing from the Earl's cabinet or library. "Coppinger," quoth the Earl, "what news from the palace?—How does the Prince?"

"So please your Grace," replied the Master of Horse, "the Foster-brother tells me he is ill beyond medicinals—

and to my thinking the leeches are posed.”

“Where is Franklin,” asked the Earl.

“Since he entered the Prince’s kitchen I have not seen him,” replied Coppinger ; “my business was to have found him on my visit now ; but I cared not to adventure further than the sight of the guards.”

“Let him be forthwith put into another place, Coppinger, and do you proceed to Jervaise Elwes, and give him this letter. I would have him prefer old Weston to wait on Overbury. Look ye, Mistress Turner hath been with me ; she recommends him as trusty ; and thou must make Elwes sensible how willing he must be to deserve his patron’s chiefest favour, and therefore with the more readiness entertain this man.”

“And is this all I have to do ?” asked Coppinger.

“Only further to have this Weston,

the elder, at hand by to-morrow dawn for his place?" replied the Earl.

Coppinger bowed and departed, and with all possible speed hastened to the Tower. On arriving at the portcullis, he demanded admittance as the Earl of Somerset's Master of Horse; a command which the serjeant of the guard, and the buffetier on duty, readily complied with. "Conduct me to the Lieutenant," said Coppinger, in a tone of authority; and he was conducted into the presence of his quantum fellow-traveller.

"How now, bully Constable?" said the Master of Horse. "How doth friar Overbury? a dead person in law, in whose breast many secrets are contained.—Look ye, my master, you must feed him with hope of liberty and preferment, lest he should disclose what he knows—But here—here is a letter from my Lord of Northampton to you."

Elwes took the letter and read ; and then bade Coppinger tell the Earl he need not doubt his troth. “ The Earl of Somerset hath just been with me ! ”

“ The Earl of Somerset ! ” exclaimed Coppinger. “ By Saint James, Master Elwes, but thou dealest doubly with me. Why not tell me this the moment my face smiled on thee ? ”

“ Because thy Lord and I settled how this matter is to be managed,” replied Elwes.

“ Good, an since thou canst settle with the Lord Somerset so easily,” replied Coppinger, “ mayhap thou canst settle the little matter of the seven score marks ? ”

“ Why, thou canst not want money so soon,” said the Lieutenant, “ ’twas but t’other day thou wallowed in gold nobles.”

“ Look ye, as thine eyes see this half Hal,” said Coppinger, “ I have no more,

and I will snatch upon you, an I am not paid my full wack before I quit thy dungeons.”

To reason with Coppinger, when he was bent on gaining his end, but added to his insolency, whenever he could avail himself of his situation in the Earl of Somerset's household. This the Lieutenant knew, and the specimen he had lately had of the easy familiarity with which the Master of Horse bore himself towards both Northampton and Somerset, convinced him that the sooner he discharged the debt between him and Coppinger, the more likely he was to be left to the exercise of his own discretion, with regard to Sir Thomas Overbury. He therefore took the Master of Horse into a withdrawing-room and paid him the seven score marks in good money, that had not as yet left the precincts of the mint. As soon as the Master of Horse received his share

of the spoils, he bade Elwes "good bye," and hastened to Mrs. Turner's, to gain intelligence respecting the visit of the Earl to the Tower, for he rightly suspected that woman was privy to this journey, if, indeed, she had not planned it for Lady Frances Howard.— "Now," said the Lieutenant, when Coppinger departed, "now I must await the Earl of Northampton's coming here i' the night.—Black work this is that needs such a season, and so many busy messengers."

Accordingly about midnight, a whistle was heard at Traitor's Gate, and the Lieutenant, on repairing thither, found Northampton in his barge ready to land. The Earl was wrapped up in his cloak, and stepped ashore with great caution, Elwes leading the way to an adjacent part of the fortress, in which a fire of charcoal had been kindled.

"Are you firm, or wavering now,

Master Elwes?" asked the Earl, "Have you conferred with this Overbury and sounded him? Are we to depend on you, or do you quit us and the constableness together? As Warden of the Cinque-ports and Chancellor of Cambridge, and a Privy Counsellor, I may assist thy kindred; but service for service—"

Elwes, who had forgotten the first and second questions put to him by Northampton, who allowed him no time for answering, replied, he was ready to do any service and all services, "For I find," he added, "on the evidence of my own senses, in the long and hard discourse I hae had wi' the prisoner this night, he mingles with his hatred of your Lordship many of his insolencies; he is obstinate against the Earl of Somerset marrying the Lady Frances; her he treats as he would any girl in Salisbury Court or in Paris Gardens."

“ Then he is not fit to live,” said the Earl. “ But be on thy guard, for the fellow’s of an excellent wit, a sleek tongue, a traveller, experienced in the world, and besides, he’s favoured by the country faction, and as great a politician as any this day in England. Elwes,—if Overbury in fewer hours than there are great sovereigns in that bag,” said the Earl, taking from his doublet a leathern bag of gold—“ be prepared for a coroner’s inquest, or the grave without one—thou mayest command me to a thousand pounds in lieu of thy service particular to myself.”

Elwes made another protestation of fidelity, which Northampton interpreted, as originating in the Lieutenant’s having, by the present and promise entered into his office without paying through the nose for it, as others before him had been wont to do.—The Earl now mentioned Weston as a fit and proper per-

son to attend upon Overbury, and the only man who should wait on him at his meals, which were to be served from the Lieutenant's own table.—“And,” said Northampton, “my last charge is, that Raleigh see him not, nor Northumberland, nor any of his magi, nor any of his relatives, father, mother, or that busy meddling fellow, Rawlins, who hath wedded Weimark's daughter.”

Elwes promised obedience to these orders, and on the following day, agreeably to the plan of Mistress Turner, Weston, the father, presented himself before the Lieutenant, with a letter from Somerset; first recommending, and then commanding him to place its bearer in attendance on Overbury.—But we have Coppinger to dispose of for the night.

That ready servant of Somerset, had no sooner got his seven score marks than, as we have said, he hastened to

Mistress Turner's, and learning the plan that was laid, he gave this woman a score pieces to fee Weston, while he himself should place Franklin in a situation the most favourable to the plot. With this design he returned to St. James's; but here all were in consternation. It was evening now, the moon shone in a lovely silvery fulness in the East, and from the extremity of the Park, the star-gazers saw, as they thought, over the hospital of Prince Henry, a lunar rainbow—an emblem in no ways propitious to the recovery of the Prince. Some blabbing fool had, in the height of his superstitious zeal, communicated intelligence of this ominous appearance to the guards at the palace; from them it reached the ears of the medical men in attendance; and finally the King himself at Whitehall. Shortly after this aerial phenomenon became visible, which it remained for Sir Isaac New-

ton many many years afterwards to explain, Prince Henry became worse. It was very remarkable that the iris in question became first visible about nine o'clock, and continued long, though with different degrees of brilliancy. At Charing Cross a crowd viewed this sight, which since the days of Aristotle has been exceedingly rare; at first, though a strongly marked bow, it was without colours; but afterwards they were very conspicuous, and visible in the same form as in the solar rainbow, the red, green, and purple being most distinguishable; about twelve the phenomenon was most splendid, the vast arch being then perfect in all its parts, while the moon "walking in brightness," seemed to lighten immortal spirits from this nether world.

Coppinger, on reaching the palace of the Prince of Wales, found the guards, domestics, and dependants of his Royal

Highness in dismay and sorrow. As the lunar rainbow first became visible, the Prince appeared to be parting with life, and before the lovely iris had reached its full splendour in the heavens, Philip Herbert and Doctor Butler carried intelligence of Henry Stuart's death to his royal father.—The King in the midst of his grief removed to Kensington House—the Palsgrave was conducted to Hampton Court, and Queen Anne, with her daughter, gave vent to their sorrow in Denmark Palace.

Coppinger found the confusion in the Court-yard of St. James's favourable for his purpose, and having bustled through the throng, he at length met with Franklin.

“ Well,” said the Master of Horse, “ now your occupation's at an end here, Monsieur le maître queux ; take thee these three score marks from my Lord Somerset ; this cuisine royal will to-

morrow be shut up, I reckon; take with thee thy batterie, thy marmiton, and open shop inside Temple Bar, as an apothecary;—carry thyself as un effronté, for we have another action de tour for thee anon.—Then thou shalt riot in wealth, ample as thy wishes; and, an' thou dost the next job as col-légiale as this, we shall divide Northampton and Somerset's fortunes, or stick their heads on London Bridge Tower."

Franklin swore by all the truth he could appeal to, he undersood not what Coppinger alluded to; but declared the three score marks came in good season, and the moment the *état royal* was broken up, he should betake himself to the city, where men's actions were valued by their efforts, and their worth by their ability to pay what they owed. Coppinger, who only laughed at the cook-apothecary's pretended ignorance,

now hastened to Somerset's house in St. James's Park, and was the first to announce to the Earl and Lady Frances the death of Prince Henry. But we had already proposed to leave Somerset and Lady Frances in the enjoyment of each others company, for the present ; by adding to the company at the Earl's mansion, his Master of Horse ; the dramatis personæ of the evening's entertainment is now complete.—Billy Weston and Coppinger revelled it bravely long after their lord and lady had, for the night, dismissed their attendants.

When all was hushed and still in the Earl's mansion, these fellows entered more feelingly into their late transactions ; for it was some time since they had been alone under circumstances so favourable for that exchange of mind which makes men one.—Coppinger very openly related all the adventures he had met with from the time he set off

for Lincoln, through all his various passages in the service of Somerset, till the hour when these two agents of the Earl's projects had set down to carouse, without the disagreeable intervention of a third person. The Master of Horse observed, however, that Weston was unusually dull, and after swilling a few cups of wine, he rallied the page, who in his own defence inquired, "How feels your pulse now, bully Coppinger? what deaf pillows hast thou now got for our consciences; we're alone in the middle of an eventful night, and may thereby each ask the other that question." — "How feels my pulse? said'st thou?" answered the Master of Horse, "no more o' that; you mar my manhood; and make me smell death, when the patient dies holily in his bed.—What's done can't be undone—

The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
 Shall never sagg with doubt, nor shake with fear.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose-look?

Weston, who sat mute as his companion, supplied himself with an answer from Shakespeare's most popular play at that period, answered. "I do begin to pull in resolution—they've lugged in my father.—The devil himself knows not more of rosacre, white arsenick, mercury, sublimate, cantharides, and so forth, than he."

"Good, the better for us all," replied Coppinger. "Why I should ha' thought thou'dst almost forgot the taste o' fears. But come, come, Billy, thou must not sup with horrors."

"Heard ye not the hue and cry anent that weird fiend Forman?" asked the Page.

"Ah! thou art in blood steeped so far!" exclaimed Coppinger. "Thou must wade on—returning were as tedious as going o'er. We are yet but young

indeed.—And I shall nourish thee as a brave knave to have sent that cozening Israelite into the pit of Acheron.—Come, my lad, fill thy horn again.—Ne'er mind the black scruples that pluck conscience, but beat them back with good liquor, man—laugh at death, smile at the grave, brandish thy faulchion in the face of every mother's son that is hotter than thyself; and for your ghosts, and conscience, and so forth, they're juggling fiends created by opinion, and no more to be believed than Forman's prophecies.—But, come, tell us how thou'dst do the job again, were't to do?"

“An I could tell who they were that passed us in a boat to Lambeth Ferry, I'd give this purse and all it contains,” said the page; “they were man and woman, and a bargeman.—By the gods, I took them for the Earl

and Countess, but that I knew they were elsewhere.”

“ Ne’er heed, man, who they were; they’re worth no more thought than Forman’s death’s worth sorrow.—Thou’st done a public good to rid the world o’ the weird loon,” said Coppinger. “ He knew too much; and an I could but lay hand on his album, I’d make discovery of such perilous stuff as should trouble half the great ones in the land—drink. My Lord of Somerset owes me seven score marks, I paid on his account this night,” continued the Master of Horse, “ an’ I get them to-morrow, I’ll to the grove of the Hebrew widow, and an’ she will not take money for the astrologic utensils of the knave, ’sdeath, I’ll make love to her, and carry off the album.”

The last words of Coppinger restored Weston to his usual mirthful

tone ; he laughed outright at the idea of his companion's making love to Trunco, and in the midst of their railery we will leave them also for the night.

CHAP. VIII.

They love not poison that do poison need,
Nor do I thee ; though I wish him dead,
I hate the murderer, love him murdered.
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour,
But neither my good word, nor princely favour ;
With Cain go wander through the shade of night,
And never show thy head by day or night.

KING RICHARD II.

THE Father Francis hastened from the Earl of Northampton's to Gabriella, and in the most delicate manner reported to her the result of his application to the Howard in Overbury's favour.

“ Daughter,” said the old man, “ thou hast not had justice done thee ; thy knight should have married thee agreeably to the rights of the English church ;

for by their laws a marriage between a Protestant and Catholic is little better than a nullity, if it be only performed by the Catholic and holy religion, the husband being not a Catholic;—they require the publication of bans, in their parish churches, though some of their Puritans think the magistrate might join man and woman in holy wedlock, and far from being a religious ceremony and an holy sacrament, it is a compound of their civil and ecclesiastical law.”

“Father,” replied Gabriella, “I am unused to this—Overbury loved me, how much I loved him my misfortunes now bear witness.—Go with me to his prison-house, and you will find him a greater statesman, philosopher, and Christian, than his enemies can produce in all their host. But the day is far gone, and I perceive you are fatigued too much already;—to-morrow, reve-

rend Father, we will go; you can accompany me; the information my brave knight can give us will assist us in labouring for his release, though I am in doubt we shall not effect that till Prince Henry recover."

"Daughter," replied the Monk, "thou art more considerate for my well-being, than thy Lord's release from a dungeon; but thou shalt be obeyed, and on the morrow I will come hither, and together we will visit the Tower." So saying, Father Francis pronounced his benedicite, '*vale, filia*' and departed.

On the morrow, however, ere he had yet finished his matins, the Monk was waited on by a messenger from the Earl of Northampton, desiring his attendance without loss of time. Great and important were the matters on which the Howard had to converse with Father Francis; and the instructions he had to give him, were so vari-

ous and multiplied, that the old man's head seemed in a whirl ere the Earl was half done with his commission. In addition to all that Northampton had to say, the sudden death of Prince Henry opened up so many fresh subjects of speculation to the Earl and the Monk, on the prospects that seemed to dawn on their persecuted friends in England, that it was noon ere their conference ended. And the moment it was finished, the zealous Friar, compelled by duty, deemed it advisable to write several letters to the continent, to his superior in Italy, to the Cardinal Bishop of Frascati, who was in particular Father Francis's friend, at that time the chief or leader of the Suburbicarians, and to the Cardinal Secretary of State, as the person of the pontifical court with whom he was in terms of friendship; though we mean not thereby to insinuate that the Monk was

in hostility with any member of the different congregations. To the Archbishops of Toledo and Vienna, Father Francis also wrote letters. Wholly engrossed by the subject in hand, and desirous to acquit himself creditably on so important an occasion, it was evening ere the Monk had finished all he had to say. When he repaired to Gabriella's, she was in the greatest distress, partly on his account, but more particularly on her own. She had, during the day, when disappointed of the good father's company, repaired into the city to Master Rawlins, in the hopes of employing him to accompany her to the Tower; nor was she in this mistaken, though on her arrival at the Fortress she found her admission to Overbury resisted in the most rude and brutal manner by Jervaise Elwes, and his assistant Watson, who had by this time entered upon his office, the du-

ties of which he seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in discharging with a ferocious cruelty.—No one expects to find a gailor a gentleman, even were he a lieutenant of the Tower; much less to perceive in his keepers, or understrappers, any thing better than tamed hyænas. In general, if these fellows have escaped the gallows, it is not because they have not deserved that exhibition; but because in the mixture of evil and good upon earth, such wretches are permitted to live and do what few, that could escape the honour¹ they riot in, would be greeted with if they could escape it by the maiden or guillotine—that invention of the Regent Moreton, and upon which he suffered, though M. Guillotine, a physician of Lyons, thought it an honour to his name, that it was conferred upon this instrument of death, a model of which he exhibited in the National

Assembly, during the mad French Revolution, and for which he received a donation of two thousand livres.

Distressed and afflicted, Gabriella was fain to get beyond the precincts of a place in which, by her simple tale, she only excited a greater degree of barbarity. Elwes taunted poor Gabriella with opprobrious names, and at length turning from her, left Weston to indulge in the same unseemly manner. "Fellow," said she, "thy master's gibes authorise not thy tongue to lavish on me thine unmanly speech. Take this purse and admit me to my husband."

"I were rogue and a half to take thy purse, and admit thee," replied the man, "but I'll be the fellow thou takest me for, an thou'lt come here at night alone for admission."

"Be honest and fair, man," said Rawlins, "I am cousin to Overbury, my name is Rawlins ; thou art an Englishman.

though thou seemest an alien.—Wilt thou give this lady free passage to her lord, to Sir Thomas Overbury?”

“I’ve given her my answer, to thee I’ll say nought, thou sheep-face,” answered Weston.

“’Twere vain to reason with these fellows,” said Rawlins to Gabriella; “I’ll to the Lord Mayor, and represent the matter, and an his Lordship can, we’ll ha’ admittance spite their teeth.”

The reader who knows the situation of the Tower, and who bears in mind also that Gabriella was spoken to through the portcullis of the garrison, from beneath the low ground arch at the western angle of the ditch, will not wonder that Gabriella evinced none of that superlative action, which we find heroines usually clad in, when their genius, the author, draws them in the caricature of tragedy queens, “strut-

ting their hour upon the stage!" From the Lord Mayor, for the time being, Master Rawlins received assurances of such representations as his Lordship could make ; but the civic magistrate could exercise no authority in Overbury's case ; besides, the Tower was beyond his jurisdiction. Gabriella then suggested the intercession of the Mayor with the Archbishop, and his Lordship very readily offered to move his Grace on behalf of the prisoner. " We are brother Nicodemites," said the Mayor, " and I doubt not I may prevail, an we can but get ahint his chaplain, who is a precise enemy of even good churchmen, not to speak of his fire and faggot to the children of Babylon, and all wizzards, witches and weird sisters i' the land." This was a fact which Gabriella had already proved, and, therefore, she felt the less hope of success from the Mayor's reference to the chap-

lain, as standing in the way between his Lordship and the Archbishop. Her distress, therefore, when Father Francis arrived, had subsided into that calm but not less poignant sorrow, which the heart is charged with when bereft of all consolation, except what it derives from patient endurance, and the relief which virtue and goodness bring their possessor. And Gabriella was a pattern of moral excellence;—she loved, it is true, but there was no crime in that love; for she but obeyed the impulse of her simple nature, as the expression of her passion was confined within the limits of virtuous indulgence. Reasoning in her defence, is therefore out of the question; her life is before the reader, and the reflections it warrants, will occur to his mind without my assistance. The good old Monk endeavoured to yield such ghostly consolation, as his habits of life had taught

him to administer ; but they err egregiously who write rules for a diseased mind, for half the soul's comfort is derived from the exercise of sociable rather than moral feeling ; and Father Francis was the least companionable being that could have ventured in Gabriella's presence.

“ All you say, Father Francis,” she replied to the Monk's reasonings on the inscrutable ways of Providence, and that whatever is, happens for the best. —“ All you say, is, I dare say, very true ; but think you, the hollow-hearted courtiers, who have plotted my dear Overbury's confinement, and it may be his death, ever tax their consciences with any duties to Heaven?—Did you know but the thousandth part of the vice triumphant which reigns in this dissipated city, you would indeed tremble. Pretends the King to religion ? It is an odd religion, forsooth,

if half the errors of his life be true, which the world assigns him. God forbid I should belie him ; but they do say such things of him as are not fit for a female tongue to utter. And for the Queen!—She that ought to be the matron of her sex ; why, good Father, thou shouldst ne'er have been a religious, and then thou mightst have attended one of Queen Anne's masques.—All that the poets have fabled comes short of Denmark House, which they do say is at once the temple of Venus and Bacchus. She and his Majesty have not lived together for a long time ; but Anne has her bravoës and roaring-boys, to justify her 'gainst all the world.—Oh ! Lord ! what a world we live in.—And then for the courtiers—it is every one for himself.—I am sick of half of them, at the very mention of their names.—They're an academy of jugglers."

Father Francis in vain tried to interrupt this burst of passionate and partial feeling; and when his friend paused, he chid her for using language that might be construed into scandal, if not branded into treason.

“If the truth be treason,” replied Gabriella, “they commit treason against Heaven who stifle its expression; if to report with the lips, what the eyes let into the mind be scandal, the guilt rests on the actors, not on the observers’ shoulders. But I see, I see the correctness of thy language, holy Father, truth finds no protection where injustice is the order of the day, and innocence is unfriended where vice bears sway. I will learn in time to think more accurately of the world. Had Overbury not spoken truth, he had ne’er been now immured, a lonely prisoner in the Tower. But I have done—I will endeavour to summon resolution,

and though my duty bids me hope for the best, my fears desire me to prepare for the worst."

"Now thou talkest reason, daughter," said Father Francis. "But what plan can we devise for rescuing Sir Thomas Overbury? Hast thou bethought thee of that?"

"Only," replied Gabriella, "that it has occurred to my mind the death of the Prince may soften the King's heart; and as man is more disposed in affliction to commiserate his fellow-sufferers, James may bethink him of those imprisoned in that horrible dungeon, and set them free of his own mere grace and favour. I will patiently await the interment of Prince Henry, as his Majesty may then affect a sorrow he feels not, and set my lord free. Why, when Queen Mary's ashes were removed to Westminster Abbey some years ago, from the Cathedral of Peterborough,

the royal mercy was extended to the Lords Cobham and Grey, and they were condemned and pardoned, when their heads were on the block as it were."

"I approve of thy counsel, daughter," said the Monk, "and now that I pass into the North, let me beseech thee, in this trying business, to bear thyself as thou hast done, and thou wilt confer an honour on thy sex, and thy religion."

With many other exhortations all equally wise and appropriate, did Father Francis conjure Gabriella to execute her purpose with the resolution with which she had begun, and having given her his blessing, he took his leave of her for a season, to visit his persecuted brethren in the North.

Lady Frances has hitherto borne a conspicuous part in the plot against Overbury ; she had been contemned by

him, and spoken of as no better than a public woman. And even among that unfortunate class of persons there are expressions more indicative of their real character than others, that to some of them sound as words of high offence. So too it proved in reference to the Lady Frances Howard;—the epithets that Overbury had used, she would not brook, and hence her resentment.

“ *Nec dum etiã causæ irarum sævique dolores,
Exciderant animo, manet altâ mente repostum
Judicium Paridis, spretæque injuriã formæ.*”

The death and burial of Prince Henry had not the power to check her projects; this season of national grief was looked upon as more favourable than another, for giving them their final touch. On the evening, therefore, that Weston, the father, entered upon his office, Lady Frances called her Page

to her. "Come hither, sirrah," said she, and the page was at her side in an instant. "Now thou must to the Tower, Master Weston. Take with thee this phial of rosalgar; give it into the hand of thy father; to him alone; observe me;—and bid him see to it, that as he values the House of Howard, he use dispatch.—None will know but Overbury poisoned himself."

The Page uttered not a word, but taking the phial bowed, kissed his Lady's hand, and departed. On his way from Northampton's House, he visited Mistress Turner's, and she having ascertained the object of his journey, desired to see the phial. The young assassin had some apprehension she meant to play him a trick, and accordingly expressed himself to that purpose. "Thinkst thou, varlet," said the woman, "I am not as deep in the mire as thy Lady; besides, sirrah, I have a

bit of advice to give thee. Which is the cleverer, he that lies, like a knight of the post, for half a crown and a dinner, or he that does it for the more substantial consideration of a hundred pounds a year?"

"Am I to go back, and say I have been to Gundulph's Castle?" asked Weston, who lacked not capacity to understand the application of the woman's question.

"No, sirrah," replied Turner, "let me see the phial?"—The Page pulled it from the pouch of his doublet, and Mistress Turner seizing it, dashed the glass to pieces in the fire-place. Weston laid his hand on his dagger, and might have used it, but his arm was caught hold of by the powerful hand of some one in his rear. He looked round and, lo! Coppinger was there, with his right hand on the hilt of his dagger.

"Soft! soft! Master Weston," said

Coppinger.—“ We go snacks.—How much didst thou have with that bottle, for thy pains ?”

“ Nothing, bully paillard,” exclaimed Weston.—“ Nothing ;—traitor have at you,” and as the enraged page said these words, he disengaged himself from Coppinger’s grasp, and made a lunge at him. “ O ! ho ! my young master of defence,” said Coppinger, as he parried the thrust. “ An thou be after that game, thou’st work for a month before thee.—Put up thy nasty throtle-snaker, boy, and listen to the woman.” And while the Master of Horse spoke these words, the woman closed upon the Page behind, and Coppinger disarmed him with all imaginable coolness.

Seeing himself thus vanquished, Weston threw himself into a chair, and demanded, “ what he was to do ?”—adding, “ I do believe, bully Coppinger,

thou art the devil in human shape. Double as I will, thou art at my heels. What am I to do?"

"To do, varlet," said the Master of Horse, "do what Mistress Turner bids thee." And the Page looked round on the woman for instruction.

"Take this phial," said Mistress Turner, give it thy hoary father, and bid him on no account minister it without Elwes' knowledge. We'll make Master Lieutenant dance between Heaven and earth, an it be need, and 'scape ourselves; but mean time thy father must be rewarded, and a little delay will put thy mistress on her mettle to dispatch.—Get thee gone; do as I bid."

"Wilt thou be here, bully Coppinger, as I come back?" asked the Page.

"No, varlet, not here, but thou'lt find me at Master Franklin's new shop in Fleet Street."

"The Page hastened to his father in

the Tower, gave him the phial without any emotion, and the old man received it saying, “ How can God bless my family in this business ?”

“ Let them talk of God that have to do with him ; my Lord of Somerset, and the Countess will bear us out in any thing we do,” said the son ; “ has not Mistress Turner preferred thee to this place, and thou only an ancient bailiff of her husband in the country ?”

“ Death, Sir, think of the blue ribbons at stake, as well as our fortunes—and lives too, father ;—eat nothing, man living offers thee, and thou’lt live ; drink after thine enemy, and let thy best friends swill afore thee.—Buy thy prog in the Minories ; in any grubby hovel in Tower Street alleys ; or get thee down among the Israelites in Rosemary Lane for thy dinner. Put thy mouth to the Thames and drink ; but drink not and eat not from the table of the Lieute-

nant, after Overbury's soul has left his poisoned body."—And as the young villain said this, he thrust the phial into his father's hand. "Look to it, my Master," he added, "look well to it, thou minister it not without the privity of Jervaise Elwes; for an we must crap, the more the merrier."

The old man took the phial, and hardened as he was in sin, his amazement at his son's villainy, left him no power of speech. The Page without waiting a reply, turned on his heel and left the Fortress, whistling as he went along.

"Martin Swart and his men,—Sodledum, Sodledum,
"Martin Swart and his men,—Sodledum Bell."

On the departure of his son, Weston repaired to the Lieutenant's house from which Overbury was served with his meals, and supper having now become a fashionable meal among the English, Jervaise Elwes sent from his table the

evening repast of his prisoner. Weston, as he lifted the tray, containing the Knight's fare, and stoup of wine, looked fixedly in the Lieutenant's face, and said, "shall I give it him now?"

Elwes stepped up to Weston, asking him, "What?—Whom alludest thou to, Master Richard Weston?"

"Why, Overbury," replied Weston, "shall I now give him this phial in his night posset?—Know you not 'tis dissolved powder of diamonds, and lapis costitus."

"Poison, thou knave," replied the Lieutenant. "By God's judgment, thou'lt hang, my Master, an thou be abetting and comforting with malice."

"Hang!" exclaimed Weston, "Hang! so will the contrivers, an the actors crap;—a murrain seize me an this dose ben't the happiest affliction the prisoner's soul can receive. May Sheriff Goare hang him as high as Haman,

who has un nature so unkind to be his own accuser !”

“Thou’rt a trusty knave, I perceive,” said the Lieutenant, “but bethink thee o’ the scripture, and the judgments o’ the Most High ’gainst they who shed blood, or by poisonings take off their fellow-men. Reprobate, an thou ben’t beat down by the vengeance of Omnipotence, thou’lt fare better than Cain.—Down on thy knees, Master, and thank Heaven and me for letting thee in this; be terrified into thy sins, that thou mayest eschew evil, and rise to thank Providence for abhorrence and detestation of all imprisonments and misdeeds.”

“Am I to put down the tray and do all thou wishest me, afore the man hae his supper?” said Weston very coolly.

“Put it in purgatory wi’ Guy Fawkes, an thou wilt,” replied the

Lieutenant ; “sit thee down, man, and let me see thee cast down for thy offence ;”—and whether Weston, in fun or in earnest, enacted the part proposed by Elwes, the Lieutenant became so pleased with his keeper, that he filled him a cup of wine, drank to his reformation, and bade him pledge him in the same liquor.

Weston left the apartment of the Lieutenant for Overbury’s cell, saying to himself as he went along, “He would quote scripture, yet Cain was not hanged, only had a mark put on him, in respect of the population of the world, and I think the negroes o’ Afric be his children, since they nearest resemble a black and blue corpse. Or could he mean the murder of Abner by Joab ? it was respited by David, in respect of great services past, or reason of state ; so shall this, and Overbury shall drink of the phial.”

Young Weston, whom we have seen, depart abruptly from his hoary father, hastened back to Coppinger, whom he found agreeably to his appointment in Fleet Street. "How now, my masters, Coppinger and Franklin," said the Page, "there's been a windfall, or hae ye stolen a goose and given the giblets in alms, that ye have buried yourselves in this pokey-hole of a poison mew?"

"Soft, young drown the Jew," replied Coppinger, "hast thou seen the phial given?"

"Have ye raised the wind, my Masters, since I parted company?" asked the Page. "As for your phial, 'Sdeath, bully Coppinger, would you have the deed done in the eye of England, and hear it talked about in the ear of Christendom?"

"Neither, man; and I reckon thou'st played thy part masterly, after the

fashion of mad Will Shakespeare's Macbeth, and the Dane King i' his Hamlet," replied Coppinger, adding: "Now an thou could urge thy dad to let the Lord Suffolk up to the plot—no, that won't do.—The Lord Treasurer must not be cockered yet.—Let the fox be i' the earth, then we must lay our heads together to get Jervaise Elwes to foul Suffolk's nest, by going to him, and disclosing what himself has done in his capacity of Lieutenant, to repair the honour of the Lady Frances's, despite all Overbury's gab. That's the bait, and the Lord Treasurer will gobble it, or I'll jump over London Bridge."

"Faith, Coppinger," said Franklin, "you'll hae a rare card to play an this get wind: but scab is like the fox, the more he is cursed the better he fareth."

"Hang proverbs in a corn-field to frighten crows," answered the Master of Horse, "let me hae some white

arsenick for the Lady Frances, Master Franklin; and as much cantharides as may pepper a cruse o' onion-sauce for a brace o' partridges, that Weston here shall crave of her for the prisoner in Gundolph's Castle."

Leaving these wretches in the prosecution of their diabolical purpose, which to detail more largely, in this place, would be merely repeating the same abominable machinations to the end of the chapter, let us look after larger game that now comes into view.

Weston, the father did proceed in his resolve, and the next morning Overbury was found in bed very ill indeed. Not suspecting he had taken poison, but imagining his death at hand, he desired to see the Lieutenant on the instant. Jervaise Elwes repaired to Overbury's cell forthwith, and expressed the utmost concern for the health of the prisoner. "Master Lieu-

tenant," said Sir Thomas, " I would write my Lord Somerset ; pray let me have pen and ink." With this request Elwes readily complied, as he resolved on the moment to see the contents of the epistle, ere he delivered it. " The Lord Somerset," said Overbury, " hath promised me his aid, and in this extremity it were suicide not to seek it," and he accordingly wrote.

" Right noble and worthy Sir,

" The former accustomed favours, and absolute promise, concerning my present delivery, have caused me at this time, by these lines, to solicit your Lordship, and put you in remembrance of the same, not doubting that your honour is at all forgetful of me, but only by reason of my imprisonment, being possessed of a dangerous disease, would, for my body's safety, partake of the felicity of the open air : in which case, if your

Lordship please to commiserate my present necessities, and procure me my speedy delivery, I shall not only stand so much the more obliged, but also acknowledge you the defender and preserver of my life. Sic subscribitur,

THOS. OVERBURY, KNT.

Elwes, to whom Overbury submitted the perusal of this epistle, promised to deliver it that day himself, and for that purpose left the garrison. The Lieutenant entered the royal barge belonging to the Tower, accompanied by his rowers only, and having landed at White-Hall, hastened to the Earl of Northampton's at Charing Cross. On being admitted to an audience, he found the Earl, the Lady Frances, and Rochester in high divan.

“ Good Master Lieutenant, how fare you this day ?” asked Somerset.

“ Well ; but my prisoner's ill ;—des-

perate ill, and he sends your noble Lordship this letter."

Somerset took the epistle, and while he perused it, the Earl of Northampton asked Elwes what passages there had been between him and Overbury, anent the secrets he wished to wring from him. "Having undertook my prisoner," said Elwes, "according to your instructions, after long silence, as standing between hope and fear, he takes his Bible, and after he had read upon it, and by it protested his innocency, upon further conference, concerning the Countess, he said he had justified her already, and he could do no more than what he had done."

"Justified me!" exclaimed the Lady Frances; "either thou forgest lies, false as hell, monster, or he lies to thee like a Mahomedan Corsair.—Accused me, defamed me, thou meanest, Master Elwes.—But what said he of himself?"

“For himself,” replied the Lieutenant, ‘alas!’ said he, ‘what will they do with me?’—I answered, ‘so refine you as you shall make no question hereafter of your pureness. And I left him in some sense to work upon that.’”

“Good, thou didst well to give him an insight into our power, and the means of his purification,” replied Northampton. But said he nothing respecting my niece’s union with the Lord Somerset?”

“That in the generality she was worthy that she might be a wife in particular for my Lord Rochester, he would not say it, lest my Lord should condemn him for weighing his worth.”

“That’s thy other cloven foot, Master Lieutenant,” replied the Lady Frances. “Hadst thou no other confabulation with the monster?”

“At my next coming to him,” answered Elwes, “I found him not in

sense, but in fury, he let fly at my Lord Northampton, but was respectful to my Lord Rochester, whose part he took altogether."

"Look well, Master Elwes, look well to the event," said Northampton.

"I see the event," answered Jervaise: "I desire it may be safely carried; what my service may do in this or any thing else, I will be faithful to your Lordship."

"To-night," added the Lady Frances, "I will send thee some tarts for him; see thou he eat them.—That knave, Weston, must be rewarded with a good boon. Give him this purse."

"What message shall I deliver to the prisoner?" asked Elwes of Somerset.

"Thou'lt bear him my service in all straits, and tell him, I send him this powder. 'Twill make him a little sick; say to him I said so;—and on his sickness I'll urge his release with the King's

Majesty. Tell him also I'll come to him anon, to be eye witness of his sickness, and thereby testify to the King his real case."

Elwes accordingly left their Lordships, the one of whom laughed at the simplicity of the Lieutenant, while the other smiled at the ignorance of the prisoner. Yet they applauded the Lieutenant; and Somerset, on his taking leave, said, "Master Elwes, as I hold you both a discreet and wise man, fear not, I shall assuredly procure thee the reversion of Overbury's knighthood for thy service and honest dealing in this employment, which will deserve everlasting praises with after ages."

The project of this band of plotters was so contrived, in administering their poisons to the unfortunate Sir Thomas Overbury, as to increase or diminish his torments, as they saw him affected toward them; but more especially to

end his existence in such a manner as to prevent suspicion of unfair means having been used to get rid of him. Elwes, too, was not over anxious for his decease, as he knew that whenever his prisoner died, a coroner's jury would inspect the body, and it would be more difficult to cozen them than strangers to the fraud which was practised. Gabriella became impatient for her husband's release; she despaired in the hopes of King James's mercy, and hastened to the Tower, where, for the first time, she learned the miserable condition he was in. Elwes, who had not hitherto permitted any letters to reach his prisoner, nor any friend to speak with him, was now in some measure awakened to a sense of the wrongs that Overbury suffered, and permitted Gabriella, under a promise of secrecy, to visit the unfortunate gentleman. This meeting and its con-

sequences are, however, of too much importance in the Romance, to fall in as the tail of the narrative, which the reader has been perusing in this chapter;—we will, therefore, throw them together in the following one.

CHAP. IX.

————— Peace ; sit you down,
And let me wring your heart ; for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff ;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

HAMLET.

THE circumstance of Overbury's confinement as a state prisoner in the Tower, soon became known to all the inmates of that Fortress. Among these were persons of high rank in the state ;—the Lady Arabella Stuart, allied in blood to the King himself ; the Countess of Shrewsbury, her companion in misfortune ; the great Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, and Sir Walter Raleigh ;—all felt an uncom-

mon degree of interest in the fate of Sir Thomas Overbury. He was known to them as no mean instrument in Somerset's rise; and he was respected for the manner in which he conducted himself as the servant of that ambitious Favourite. Raleigh, in particular, was touched with the misfortunes of Gabriella, though hitherto he had only learned her merits from the brief report of Captain Kemish. The Lady Arabella Stuart, and the Countess of Shrewsbury could well entertain feelings and sentiments congenial with the sufferers. And the Percy, though little accustomed to have his nature ruffled by ordinary circumstances, had learned that the Lady Gabriella was a stranger, unprotected and persecuted on account of her religion. All these personages had resolved, if she entered the Fortress, to make common cause with Elwes for an interview between her and Sir

Thomas. They had even addressed the Lieutenant on this subject, and probably to this circumstance, rather than to any misdoubtings their jailor had, is to be attributed the yielding disposition in which we now find him. But whatever might be his intentions to humour their sympathies, and indulge Gabriella, he resisted every attempt of the Percy and of Raleigh to grant them an interview with Overbury. The motives from which the wicked usually perform charitable actions, are either selfish or iniquitous, and it were a waste of language to dive into those which now actuated the Lieutenant of the Tower. We do, therefore, dismiss him from this investigation, with that contempt of his character, which his unfortunatè prisoners, no doubt, felt for his person and office.

It was about the hour of noon when Gabriella made her visit to the Tower,

and it was on the day subsequent to Elwes's journey to the Earl of Northampton. She was admitted by the postern-gate, on the eastern quadrangle of the Fortress, and conducted with great privacy to the door of her husband's apartment, which the Lieutenant himself unlocked for her admission. The moment the door opened, she rushed into the arms of her husband.—“Great God!” she exclaimed, “and do I once more clasp thee in my arms, my dearest Overbury?—But how pale, how ill you look.—Oh heavens! surely there has been some foul play going on with your victuals, and the liquor you have been drinking.—My Lord, my love, you are consumed by fever.—Your forehead burns like a furnace; you respire with difficulty.—Holy Virgin! what do I suspect—” and exhausted by the intensity of her feelings,

Gabriella sunk upon the bed beside her helpless husband.

“ Be composed, dearest love, be composed, my Gabriella,” said Overbury, struggling to raise himself and afford her assistance.

Elwes now came forward and attempted to raise her, but his touch had all the magic of physical power. “ Wretch, monster,” she exclaimed, “ let me alone ; touch me not with thy foul hands, already stained with the blood of my dying husband.—Monstrous iniquity !—Oh, God ! is there no justice on earth ! no retribution for the doers of evil. Avaunt, thou accursed murderer, and leave us to perish together.” But the Lieutenant still persisted, and opening the door of the cell, that he might with one effort lift the distressed lady from the couch of her husband, and spring with her beyond

the threshold of a place that was alike terrific and dangerous to him, he came furiously up to seize Gabriella and hurry her into the gallery.

Overbury, who saw all that passed ; though, when the door of his cell was opened at first, he felt unable to rise from his pillow, on the instant that Elwes approached to grasp Gabriella, sprung from his bed by an effort of recalled strength, and being, when in health, a powerful man, was still able to save his wife from the brutal usage that the Lieutenant designed to offer her. " Hold, fellow," he exclaimed, " taking Elwes by the arms, and as the other struggled to advance, " nay then," said the prisoner, " if thou be bent on such a purpose, I must repel force by force." So saying he pushed the Lieutenant out of the dungeon ; and was in the act of closing the door upon him, when Somerset advanced

and entered the apartment. The Earl's presence for a moment dissipated the resolution of Overbury. "My Lord," he exclaimed, "you are now as good as your word, and have kept your vow with me."

"Sir Thomas, on the instant you see, I have visited you," replied Somerset, taking Overbury by the hand; but the Earl's eye now caught a sight of Gabriella. "Soho! soho! Jervaise Elwes," he cried aloud. "What doings have you here? Powers of light! what do mine eyes behold? The Lady Gabriella?"

"Even so," answered Overbury; "the Lieutenant hath accorded this much grace; no doubt on the favour your honourable Lordship expressed in answer to my letter."

"Elwes thou hast done that thou'lt answer for before the Council," said Somerset. Then turning to Overbury,

“ Sir Thomas,” he said, “ knew you not the privacy observed towards you, was designed for your release? Have you taken the powder I sent you?”

“ Powder!” uttered Gabriella with a shriek. “ Powder!” she again repeated. “ Then are my fears real.— Monster of iniquity—fiend of ingratitude.— Rochester, or Somerset, or Lord Chamberlain, as you are, you have poisoned my Lord, my love, my life. Oh! God! Oh! God!”

“ Poison! Poisoned!” said Overbury, sinking on the bed. “ Oh! my Lord of Somerset, was this well done?—But I remember you once told me, you would be even with me. I had congratulated my bewildered senses when my eyes beheld your smooth, calm, villainous face not a minute ago, that you had come in bonds of peace, and terms of friendship; but, alas! alas! you are indeed as good as your word, and have kept

your vow with me ;—poison ! poisoned ! I feel it here !” placing his hand firmly on his forehead —“ Well then, my Lord, since it is so, remember, whether I live or die, your shame will live for ever,—poison ! poisoned !—Nay then, in the jaws of death I will do an act of justice ; you or I shall die, whether I recover.”

“ This is irreverence,” said Somerset, “ and thy speech is raving madness.”

“ Madness ! the madness of great spiders, cantharides, sublimate of mercury, white arsenic,” exclaimed Overbury. “ This was the Lieutenant’s care for me—his tarts, his partridges, his onion-sauce, his jellies, all from my Lady Countess !—O God ! O God !”—“ Holy Virgin !” exclaimed Gabriella, “ do my eyes look on Somerset ; him who boasted he had in greatness and in power, never advanced one of his relations to an office of state ; but he would

only make the fortune of Sir Thomas Overbury and his family?—There are others in this plot—I see it all—I would believe Somerset almost incapable of such wickedness. But, when I review his life, the passages between him and my loved Knight, the embassy, the warrant of his commitment, the keeper set over him;—and, last of all his table made a snare—I must believe thee the murderer, my Lord!”

“’Sdeath, Madam,” exclaimed Somerset, “you talk of your Italian comfits for the Court of Rome, where the person that intoxicateth the kings of the earth, is many times really intoxicated and poisoned himself.”

“Villain! to talk so to me,” replied the noble Gabriella. “Monstrous ingratitude—to take away thy best friend in full peace, in God’s and the King’s peace; and to charge me with thinking harm of my Lord.—Oh! accursed

dissembler! base betrayer! but thou'lt not go unpunished.—See! the ruins thou hast made in that brave man.—Behold a second Abel: but bear in that black heart of thine this appalling truth, though poison be easily administered, and thy murderous deeds easily concealed for a time, it will be hardly prevented and hardly discovered.”

“Elwes? Soho! Elwes? Soho!” cried Somerset, “call thy keepers and hurry this fury into a fit place for a popish recusant.”

“No! my Lord,” answered Overbury. “If I am the butt of that Jezebel, the Lady Frances Howard—the butt of her malice—the end of her bottomless mischief—let me suffer all the miseries I now believe you capable of inflicting on the man that raised you to what you are.—Nay, spurn me not so, my Lord of Somerset; turn thy ear and listen. With what face could you

do this; you who know you owe to me all the fortune, wit and understanding that you have? Is this the fruit of all my care and love for you? Look on my hands palsied and poisoned; my frame tottering under your henbane and helebore. For murder by violence, princes have guards, and private men houses, attendants and arms; but for poison, the cup itself of princes will scarce serve in regard of many poisons that neither discolour nor distaste; it comes upon a man when he is careless, and without suspicion.—From the table of thy Lieutenant, my Lord, I have been poisoned; the cup in which thou didst pledge me, as it were, contained that which hath brought me to the gates of death.”

“Overbury, silence, and in thy turn listen to me,” said Somerset: “I consented to thy imprisonment, to the end thou shouldst be no impediment to my

marriage. You have had proof it was against my intention you should be a close prisoner. And dost thou aggravate the breach of friendship betwixt us, as grounds for unfounded suspicion?"

"And are these the proofs of your innocency, my Lord?" asked Overbury.

"No, Sir Thomas," answered Somerset; "and if you be incapable of hearing reason, and listening, I must even leave you; for I think you had never a friend in your life, that you would not some time or other fall out with and give offence unto. Thine enemies termed this insolence; but I'll give it a better name. Hast thou conformed to my wish, and taken the powder? If not, give it me, and I'll swallow it in your presence, and prove its harmlessness."

"My Lord, your behaviour betrays

you.—I have taken the powder,” said Overbury. “And was it the fruit of common secrets, common dangers?—Oh! Rochester, Rochester!—Yet this shall not serve you.—You and I shall soon come to a public trial upon another nature:—if I do recover, I have an antidote beside me, thank God, and I will now administer it, I upon the rack, and you at your ease; yet I must say nothing—I am done. If you persist to use me thus, assure yourself it shall be published and punished. Whether I live or die, your shame shall never die, but ever remain to the world, to make you the most odious man living.”

“Elwes! Elwes!” said Somerset, “do as I bid—you have done more than you can justify, and stand stupid and mute:—move slave—you’ve juggled with me—I’ll lay your back on the rack anon.—Fetch thy keepers, I

command thee, and drag that beldame to the lowest dungeon of the Fortress."

"My Lord Somerset," said Gabriella, who clung to her husband, "you shall have no need to use force—let your accomplice lead on—I follow; and since you seek to play prizes, and blazon your name in blood, I joyfully add the purple stream that flows in my veins to that of my Lord and life."—And as Gabriella said these words, she flung her arms round Overbury's neck, embraced him tenderly, and disengaging herself, said again—"Lead on—I follow."

"Nay, by my holiday," replied Somerset, "but you shall not follow the Constable.—If I have erred in permitting the confinement of Sir Thomas, I will not double my crime by defending my fault.—I would serve him and you too, only let not your wilfulness

cause the gates of mercy to be shut upon him.”

“What means your Lordship?” asked Gabriella, whose eyes streamed tears of sorrow.

“That I would be her friend who arraigns my conduct; and in the fulness of her affections for her husband, can have no confidence in me,” replied Somerset. “Come I into this vault, think’st thou, Lady, to contrive or execute works of darkness? I who can fill up vallies, and level mountains? I who can protect the small against the great? Come I hither as upon a stage, mountebank like, to shew my power to relieve thy Lord? But why should I make confession to thee, seeing thou believest not it is the strongest foundation whereupon justice and mercy may meet. Unless God so dazzle my eyes that truth is falsehood, and wrong right, and guilt innocency, I am thy husband’s friend, and hine Lady—thou shalt remain here and

comfort him, or depart in my coach, and be set down at thine own door.”

“ My Lord,” replied Gabriella, raising her eyes on Somerset, “ your speech falls on me like sun-beams from heaven—I lack fortitude to resolve on any thing—Oh ! if you speak truth, I could write *Somerset* in sparkling stars around the queen of night, that all men might, in all times, worship it as truth ;—but O God ! if all this be but the smooth surface of a sea of trouble ; and you, my Lord, deceive me by the delusion of your greatness—if you have bewitched me by your sorceries, and charms, and enchantments, and black arts of evil spirits—I will dress me in black trammel, a cypress chaperon, a cobweb lawn ruff and cuffs, and sit me down in Westminster-Hall till I hear thy doom of death, said by the Peers of England standing up and bare headed.”

“ Noble Gabriella,” exclaimed Over-

bury. "Excellent of women! I will not mar my Lord's intention for after proceedings to obtain the King's grace and favour toward me, by the assault of speech." Then turning to Rochester, he said—"As no consultation is ripe in an hour, I will quietly await my release; only, my Lord, deal fairly by me, and I will be no hindrance of your marriage and the Lady Frances deuterogamy; moreover, you shall find me the trustiest man about you."

Somerset now gave command to the Lieutenant to see to it, that Sir Thomas Overbury wanted for nothing—and suggested the fitness of a bath, and sundry comforts that the place allowed. The ease of the Favourite, at this moment, his unruffled temper, the self-command he evinced when most hotly pressed by accusations, the blandishments of his speech, brought this extraordinary interview to its most ex-

traordinary conclusion ; and Gabriella continued, during her pleasure, in the apartment of her husband.

But this result was partly due to the singular manner of Gabriella, in whose composition dissimulation had no part, and who possessed a mind attuned to an extraordinary degree of masculine firmness, when extremity called forth its exertions. Somerset, at length parted from Overbury, leaving the prisoner's mind impressed with a strong belief that he was still befriended by the Earl, and Gabriella having awaited in the Lieutenant's, while an apothecary, whom Elwes sent for, had given the patient a warm-bath, then came and took her leave of him also, under an impression, that if, indeed, poison had been administered to her husband, the Lord Somerset was not privy to it. Elwestook the precaution on her quitting the Fortress that he had observed when she en-

tered it, and conducted her out of it by the postern, or eastern gate; and Gabriella returned to her own house, without being seen by any of those great persons she left in the Fortress, and to whose kind representations she was mainly indebted for the sorrow and anguish she had that day experienced.

CHAP. X.

————— But to persevere
 In obstinate condolment, is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
 An understanding simple and unschooled:

* * * * *

Thrift, thrift Horatio;—the funeral bak'd meats
 Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

HAMLET.

CONTRARY to the expectations of Somerset, and Lady Frances, and before the nation had ceased to weep the death of Prince Henry, the King announced the celebration of the Lady Elizabeth's marriage with the Plasgrave. The funeral of the Prince of Wales was observed with great state and pomp, in

the latter end of November, and Christmas being likely to become an unusually dull season at Court, Somerset determined to furnish amusement at this festive season. The King had not greatly intermitted the chase of the doe, of which he was very fond, and Candlemas was fast approaching, when the season for this sport would cease. For the gratification of the Royal Family, the Lord Chamberlain, Somerset, proposed a very splendid masque on Twelfth Night, when, for the first time, the children of the revels performed Shakespeare's Comedy of What you Will, or Twelfth Night*. The King was so transported

* Mr. Malone, the Commentator on Shakespeare, supposes this play to have been written in 1614. Prince Henry died the 6th of November, 1612. But Miles, in Ben Jonson's "Every man out of his Humour," censures Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, at the end of Act III. Scene VI. And I believe

by mirth and wine, that toward the close of the entertainment, he declared “ he should on Candlemas-day, when the Popish priests were consecrating their candles for the year, celebrate the marriage of his daughter with the Plasgrave, albeit the bridal be kept in sable.” These words fell like the ominous response of an astrologer on the ears of Somerset. He had buoyed himself up with the vain hope that his marriage with the Lady Frances should be “ solemnized on the same day, and at the same altar with the Lady Elizabeth’s, and the wee wee German lairdie.” But it is one thing to plan and another to execute ; one thing to serve and another to command ; and the Fa-

Jonson’s play appeared before the death of Prince Henry. It is unnecessary, however, to be chronologically correct in Romance, which is privileged to annihilate time and space in the conduct of its action.

vourite now found the King as mighty in support of prerogative, as he had all along been lavish of his bounty to Robert Car.—“ No, Robin, no,” said James, “ Kings, and Princes that are to be Kings, are of God, his representatives on earth, to govern his people in his stead, to reward the good and to punish the bad ; but anent this request ye ask, I canna, winna, mauna forsake the path o’ my predecessors, and the example o’ a’ Kings that ever reigned on earth. But we’ll make holiday o’t for a’ that, and be blithe on your account, as weel as our ain. The Lady Elizabeth’s wedding sall be keppit wi’ great pomp and state, all or the greatest part o’ the nobility sall be present ; we sall hae a masque in the banquetting-house, the children o’ the revels sall, wi’ a forest o’ feathers, twa Provence roses on their slashed sheen, ruffs, doublets, gloves and good black velvet hose, give

us a cry o' players; and the town's folks sall hae the spectacle o' three days tilting and running at the ring, and all other pastimes both stately and becoming the dignity of a King. But devil a fardingale sall come to our court, for they be rather increased than diminished o' late. An the ladies canna come without Spanish popish petticoats, they sa' na come awa. By my majesty, Somerset, ane kens na' mither frae daughter, maid frae wife, when their artificer raise them sae, that the surcingle o' Pope Joan's cassock wad na tie round them—

They waste mair claith within few years
Than wad claith fifty score of friars.

Now Robin ye ken my mind—put forth a proclamation anent the guarda infanta fardingales; and mak a' preparation for the wedding."

The Earl reasoned again with the

King on the subject of his marriage, but James was immovable.—In order, however, to indulge the Favourite, he willed Somerset's wedding should be on the day following the Lady Elizabeth's and the Plasgrave; and as his Majesty took a peculiar pleasure in courting popularity by artifice, without striving to secure it by magnanimity, he bade Somerset to move the Gentlemen of Middle Temple, and the others of Gray's-Inn to give the Court a couple of masques, while the common people should be amused with their favourite sports of bear-baiting, bull-baiting, interludes on week-days, dancing, arching, leaping, vaulting, morrice-dancers and sports to be used after Divine service on Sunday. "But, look ye, Robin, there be no tobacco used in the smell o' my nose, fore were I to invite the devil to a dinner, he should hae these three dishes; a pig, a pool o' ling and mus-

tard, and a pipe of tobacco for digestion.”

“ Shall I confer with Sir Roger Ashton, the Lords’ Suffolk, Pembroke and Hays,” said Somerset, “ on the nuptials ? ”

“ By my prerogative Somerset,” replied the King, “ we would see Sir Roger—let him be called.—No, stay, we’ll wait till he gets free o’ that Hogen Mogens Tam Crompton.”

Somerset now wished he had not mentioned the name of Sir Roger, but the King once set upon any project, took great pleasure in going through with it, especially when it regarded the ceremonies of his court, the dress of those who surrounded him, and the style of his table, his mews, his studs, and hound-kennels.—Sir Roger, who caught the King’s eye bent on him, made up to his Majesty. “ Ah, Sir Roger ! ” said the King, “ thou’s a man

bred in courts, exercised in business, stored in observation, and confident in thy knowledge ; now sans preface, sans introduction, depend on thy memory, and draw from thy ken useful counsel anent the bridal o' Bess."

Sir Roger with much precision lamented the paucity of his knowledge in retrospection, and confessed his ignorance in foresight ; and then detailed, with all the properties of superficial eloquence, the various particulars of this weighty affair.

" Good," said the King, " good, Sir Roger, but I lack my table-books, and maun hae all thy wit noted in short memoranda, and all thy sparkling sentences set down, as the gems o' Doctor Laud's preachments on a Sunday."

Somerset felt now more piqued than before ; for Sir Roger was a character of manners, resembling those of Polo-

nius, superficial, accidental and acquired; and he was positive and confident, in the Favourite's presence, for the King had encouraged him. "Would your Grace deign," said Sir Roger;—"I have a daughter—The Lady Elizabeth—Will it please your Majesty—"

"You have a daughter," interrupted the King;—"So have I;--what wouldst thou, Roger?"

"The Queen, your Majesty,"—replied Ashton, "the Queen's Grace, I propine hath solicited your Majesty?"

James, who affected ignorance of the topic, the Knight was aiming at, replied, "the Queen's Grace hath a favour to beg? Good, it shall be granted."

"That my daughter shall be one of the Maids of Honour to the Lady Elizabeth," said the Knight, somewhat embarrassed.

"And what will we do wi' her gal-

lant?" said the King. "He's a bonny son o' a beautiful and provident mither."

"The Queen's Grace for Master Villiers prays your Majesty," said Anne, who at this moment joined the group, "that the gallant, blooming one-and-twenty be the King's cup-bearer."

Somerset, who had already had proof of his Majesty's partiality in favour of this young gentleman, concealed with much difficulty the emotions which arose in his mind, as he heard Queen Anne ask this place for Villiers, but it required all the apathy he could muster to keep him calm, when the King replied:—

"Fair Princess, since you will it so, let Master Villiers be our cup-bearer. And pray good Sir Roger Ashton, is the young gallant in waiting on our Lady Queen?" The gentleman of the bed-chamber bowed, and the Sovereign

added, "Let him be called before us forthwith."

Sir Roger who had now achieved his heart's desire, very soon handed young Villiers up to the royal stance. The young gentleman's engaging figure struck the King instantaneously with a strong liking towards him, and drawing his sword from its sheath, James laid it over the shoulder of the aspirant, saying, "rise"—'George Villiers' whispered Ashton in the Monarch's ear, for the King paused at a loss for the name.—"Rise, Sir George Villiers, and do knight service among our equites aurati."

"Go, Sir Knight," said the Queen, "surpass in silks and dress, and use ensigns armorial, that our milites of yesterday may know thy family is of four hundred years standing." And as the Queen said these words, she looked hard in the face of Somerset. The Earl was

about to make some observation, but the Queen checked his utterance by asking him,—“ Lord Somerset, can you tell me why my interference for Sir Walter Raleigh should be fruitless? I have drank his cordial, and esteem it: Prince Henry, in his last illness, took it, but though it brought on a respiration, nature was too much spent for profiting by the crisis.”

“ So please your Majesty,” answered Somerset, “ I have seen Raleigh, and go to-morrow to the Lord Cobham.”

“ What signifies it?” asked the King, “ we are soon going to send Raleigh to fetch hame a mountain o’ goud frae the Indies.”

“ But it will be a satisfaction,” answered the Queen, “ and I promised the Prince, that’s dead and gone, I should labour the release of this cavalier, and the justification of his name.”

“ By the rood, your Grace has become a politician,” said James. “ The release of that cavalier comes like a jubar from our crown.” And as the King said this, he called for a song from one of the children of the revels, who, by command of the Master of the Ceremonies, sung from a very merry and pithy comedy entitled, “ The Longer thou Livest the more Fool thou Art.”

“ There was a mayde come out of Kent,
 Deintie love, Deintie love ;
 There was a mayde come out of Kent,
 Daungerous Bee.

There was a mayde come out of Kent,
 Fair and proper, small and gent,
 As ever upon the ground ywent,
 For so should it bee”—

The Sovereign approved of the ditty, and declared that “ Moros, though counterfeiting a vain gesture, and a foolish countenance, was, withal, an excellent

chorister, and should hae abundance o' Christmas ale in honour of St. Ste'en."

Somerset, on retiring for the night, felt more perplexed than he had ever been in his life; and his embarrassment, his chafed spirits, his knit brow, escaped not the piercing eye of the Master of Horse. "My Lord, you are unwell," said Coppinger.

"Indifferently so, Coppinger," replied the Earl.

"But why should your Grace be moved that the King has given Villiers a blow with his throttle-snaker?" asked the Master of Horse.

"Ah! Coppinger, it's a long lane that has no turning," replied the Earl.

"True," answered Coppinger; "but can he that puts on his harness, boast himself like him that casts it off?"

"By St. Androis, my Master of Horse, thou lookest upon this Villiers as a favourite," said the Earl.

“He shall not be so long, an this hand hold its nerve,” replied the Master of Horse.

“Fulfil thou that speech,” said Somerset, hastily, “and, by the Powers that guard us, I’ll enrich thee with as much land as thou mayst on it set up thine own chase with store of game. But I would this night see Lord Cobham? Knowest thou his residence?”

“Your Lordship will require your litter, or carosse,” answered Coppinger, “the poor old Lord’s in the East, living I know not how. Shall we to horse?”

Somerset replied in the affirmative, and in the dead of the night was conducted by his guide through the city into the Minories. “Where am I led into?” asked the Earl. “Are we going down to St. Katherine’s?”

“No, my Lord,” replied Coppinger, “the lodging of Cobham is hard by now,”—and in a few minutes more,

the Master of Horse knocked loudly at the door of a mean dwelling.

“Wha routs sae steevly, we that dirdum, at this mirk hour o’ a hurloch nicht?” said a shrill voice from an upper casement.

“Dark it is cummer,” answered Coppinger, “and cloudy to boot. Take your claiths about ye, granny, you’re not going to be herryed, and hie ye down tenty: here’s a gowpen fu’ o’ siller for ye.”

“Wha are ye that hight goud,” said the voice from within;—“come ye as friend and hamely?”

“Its Coppinger, cummer, and a friend o’ the Lord’s,” answered the Master of Horse.

Scarcely had the man said these words, when a tall spare old woman opened the door. Of clothes she had on nothing save her scanty chemise, and a petticoat drawn up to her chest with

one hand, while the other held an iron cruse of oil, in which there burned dimly a rush-wick. "O! Mister Coppinger, but ye maun yearn muckle to see the puir Lord, to come at this time o' nicht. But it's yule time. Wha's this yeman or gent wi' you? I hae been wakerife a' nicht for the puir carl wraslin wi' an unsousy whaisling i' his craig."

Coppinger put some pieces of silver into the old woman's hand, and bidding her give him the light, ascended a ladder that conducted to the upper floor of the dwelling. "Take care, my Lord," said the Master of Horse, as he looked down, "there are two rounds broken."

"My Lord, my Lord!" exclaimed the old woman. "They've come to redd me o' my preve charge at last—O hon! that it were the scrich o' day. But that wad na' suit the pawkie aunters o' that dackerin chield, Coppinger."

“ My Lord, Lord Cobham,” said Coppinger, taking the hand of the old nobleman, “ open your eyes.”

Lord Cobham raised himself on his elbow, and looked up.—“ Master Coppinger, is it you ?” —said the dying man.

“ Troth and it is every inch of me above ground yet, my Lord,” said the Master of Horse. Then turning to Somerset, “ See here, my Lord, this ancient nobleman’s as good as dead in this lousie hole of a chamber, and dying, ’fore God, for want of apparel to keep him warm, or medicine to minister a potion.”

“ Lord, what Lord comes here ?” asked Cobham.

“ Somerset,” answered the Earl, “ I have come to ask one question of Lord Cobham.

“ Propound your query, my Lord Earl,” answered Lord Cobham.

“ Did you ever at any time accuse Sir Walter Raleigh of treason under your hand ?” asked Somerset.

“ Never, nor could I,” answered Cobham. “ That villain, Wade, did often solicit me, and not prevailing, got me, by a trick, to write my name upon a piece of white paper, which I, thinking nothing, did ; so that the charge which the Attorney-General, Coke, said came under my hand, was forged by that villain Wade, by writing something above my hand, without my consent.”

“ Did you say this to Lennox and Salisbury when they questioned you in the Tower ?” asked Somerset.

“ True, I did,” answered Cobham ; “ I never wrote any thing to accuse Raleigh,—I said many foolish things that Cecil took as good as accusations and proofs : but—”

“Equivocating scoundrels!” exclaimed Somerset, “treason and traitors in all the turnings and windings.”

“You see how miserable is my abode,” said Cobham: “this poor woman that was formerly my laundresse gives me a lodgement in her poor hostelrie; and I that had seven thousand pounds per annum, and a personal estate of thirty thousand, have been now for many a weary day relieved by scraps brought me by a trenchman. Thirty thousand, my Lord, and seven thousand a year, of all which the King was cheated, of what should be escheated to him.”

“Buy thee food with this,” said Somerset, giving Cobham a purse of nobles;—and descending the ladder, he left the dwelling of this unfortunate nobleman—doubting the truth of the report which he had heard.

“Coppinger,” said the Earl, when he had breathed the free air a few

seconds ; “ Coppinger, how the devil do you know every place and every person’s abode so ?”

“ Great men have their Masters of Horse, and bravos and spies : I have an informer worth a thousand—I have acted the gypsy before King James, I have been astrologer to great ones now no more, and it’s odd if a man that has gone through his own fortune, and all he could get as knight of the post till your Lordship took pity on him, should not know as much of the world as either Bluff Ben, or Mad Will ?”

“ True, bully Knight,” answered Somerset. “ What thinkst thou of Roger Ashton, our Master of the Robes ?”

“ As much as I think of that liar Anthony Welldon, at the Board of Green Cloth, or that cheat-the-gallows, Compton,” replied the bravo.

“ What has Compton done to offend thee ?” asked Somerset.

“ He is husband of Villiers’ mother,” replied Coppinger ; “ and an that ben’t offence enough, may I never ruffle in your Lordship’s quarrels.”

“ Rank offence,” answered Somerset.

“ As rank as Cobham’s,” observed Coppinger, “ to insinuate the five statesmen of his Majesty cheated the crown out of his thirty thousand pounds ; and his freamething wife brimming away with her gallants, and wont so much as give him the crumbs that fall from her table, albeit she is rich, and he in restraint and infidel poverty.”

To this observation Somerset turned a deaf ear, and demanded, “ What there had been done lately in respect of Overbury ?”

“ So please you, nothing,” replied Coppinger, “ but an it be your will, the coroner shall have work anon.— The braggart Billy Weston—”

“ What of him, Sir ?” asked the Earl.

“ Nought,” replied Coppinger, peevishly, “ only he’s going to put on a greasy shirt, sling a musket over his shoulder, stick a Dutch knife in his belt, and take service with David Samms.”

“ What! going to become a buccaneer?” “ Even so,” answered the Master of Horse, “ he’s got an affair of bastardy on his hands, and they do say he must scamp for another matter.”

“ God send him a good deliverance; but Master Coppinger, art thou not yet going to splice with Mistress Turner? There’s a warm fire-side for you.”

“ No faith,” replied the Master of Horse; and as Somerset turned his nag’s head into St. Martin’s le Grand, Coppinger said, “ Thank God I’ll get rest in the Charter-House to-night.—Good, my Lord, the old Garçon and I will sing

Tom o’ Lyn and his wife, and his wife’s mother,
They went o’er the bridge all three together,
The bridge was broken, they all fell in,
The devil go with all, quoth Tom o’ Lyn.”

Somerset did arrive at the Charter-House, the residence of the Earl of Suffolk, and ere he left it on the following day, arrangements were made for his marriage with Lady Frances Howard.

Coppinger, however, on that morning could not be found; he had spent the evening very jollily with the old Garçon, as he termed the Earl of Suffolk's butler; and all that was known of him was, that he had gone to rest in a remote part of the building, that had once been the cells of the lay Carthusian brethren. Lady Frances dispatched Weston in quest of Coppinger, to Mistress Turner's, in Paternoster-Row; but the Master of Horse had not been there. Weston bethought himself of Franklin's shop in Fleet-Street, and thither he repaired, where, indeed, he found Coppinger.

“Come along, bully stirrup-holder,”

said the Page, “ your Lord’s in a fine pother ; for the love of God put on sobriety, and come along.”

“ Beshrew me, Master wild bull-shooter, an thou ben’t as polite as an offender in the bilboes—I drunk, varlet?—Wouldst keep me fasting, duck me at the yard-arm, keel hawl me, flogg me at the capstane, hang weights round my neck till my heart be ready to break, gagg me, scrape my tongue for blasphemy?—I go, young buck.”

“ See,” said Weston, as the comrades came down Fleet-Street, “ there’s a picture will match Zuccherò’s Pope’s asses. — Marry an it ben’t painted with Master Ketel’s toes.”

“ ’Sdeath, ‘ Drown the Jew’ it’s the Lord Somerset’s picture,” said Coppinger.—“ I see so,” replied the other, “ that wild performer Cornelius Ketel, I tell thee, must have painted this after he laid aside his brushes, and daubed

lord's faces with his fingers alone, and their fair bosoms with his stinking toes."

"Marry my Master, but it's the Lord Somerset's picture, painted by Nicholas Hilliard," replied Coppinger.

"And that beside it is the portrait of young Mockson, painted by the Scottish linner, George Jamieson," said the Page.—"Look ye, Master Coppinger, look ye, an your Lord's picture ben't laughed at by the white-livered loons over the way."

Coppinger saw this affront offered to his Lord, as well as Weston, and springing nimbly across the street "Halloo, my Masters!" he cried, "who be you that have privilege to laugh in daylight?"

"As good a man as that Lord on canvas any day. I am an Englishman, and that's more than he can brag,"—replied one of the men who had been

deriding the dress and countenance of Somerset.

“Thou’rt a caitiff trader in insolence,” said Coppinger, adding, “take that bully Englishman,” and he hit the man a sound box on the face. “Now in what Lord’s name dost thou ruffle?”

The man, who was much stunned by the blow, stooped hastily to the ground, seized a handful of dirt, flung it on the painting of Somerset, and drew his sword, exclaiming, “Infamous ruffian!—have at thee—Coppinger is imprinted on thy bully tongue,”—and as the man said this he made a pass at the Master of Horse; but Weston having on the moment drawn his rapier, twirled the stranger’s sword out of his hand, and thereby saved the life of his comrade, who must otherwise have been run through, as he had not his arms in motion to defend himself. Several of the

other persons now surrounded the combatants, and they all took part with the man that had been hit, and each of them in his turn hurling a handful of dirt on the portrait of Somerset, while that of Villiers, which hung beside it, remained unmolested.

“ My Masters,” said Weston, “ an ye ruffle in young Mockson’s name, we’ll take ye by pairs in the White Friars, a more convenient spot to decide the merits of our Masters.”

“ ’Sdeath,” exclaimed Coppinger, drawing his sword; “ the ground’s good enough, and the cause of Somerset better.”

“ But the peace of the city is better than all,” said a Marshalman coming up, and all parties recognized the importance of blue jacket and red cuffs, “ Put up your blades, and go west o’ Temple Bar, an ye be the scavengers o’ court Lords.”

“ Aye,” said another Marshalman, “ ayond the Bar ye pravoos; he that lets us in our duty, I’ll flounder him with my truncheon.”

It was in vain that Coppinger and Weston strove to explain, in boisterous terms, “ the affront that had been put upon the Lord Chamberlain of England;” the only redress they got was from the picture-dealer, who bringing out a pail of water, dashed it on Somerset’s portrait. The Page’s rage now knew no bounds, he took up a handful of mud to bespatter the portrait of Villiers, but the artist dared him, and placed himself before the painting, saying to the Marshalmen, “ My Masters, the city is much bound to God and his deputy on earth, the Lord Mayor, your master; wherefore, grant deliverance to me and my wares, and your justice shall shine as a lanthorn to shew these serving men home to their butteries.”

The roar of laughter that followed this address of the artist, so offended Coppinger that he merely said in reply—"Malcontent, Recusant, or Puritan, you'll answer for this in the Star-Chamber.—Come along, my Master," he added, addressing Weston, "that speech of the canting knave is as good a prayer as he could utter, *en la chambre des esteilles*, to go to Heaven by."

When these wranglers had reached Ludgate, Weston addressed his friend, saying, "Well, Coppinger, ye see it's high time for me to tramp. I'll lose this tongue in Barbary, an the prophecy of that mad devil Bruce come not true after all.—I laughed at Villiers as a mockson—But thinkst thou all these bravoos, and lusty knaves they were too, none o' them under fourteen stone, aren't paid by the Herbert's, Hartford's, Bedford's, the Earl of Essex, and some others, to bring in Villiers to the notice

of the tailors, and cobblers, and blacksmiths and grubby rabbling mob of this purse-proud city? 'Sdeath, Coppinger, take my advice, and put another string to thy bow."

"An he be thus backt," replied the Master of Horse, "the new Favourite need not borrow, nor seek out many bravoës to second his quarrels. He's made cup-bearer to the King, and he'll have the upper end of the table, at the reversion of the King's diet, during his monthly waiting; now an we could set him out of his mouth, when it's not his due, my Lord of Somerset shall remove him with that overmuch kindness these damned Marshalmen have hoisted us adrift."

"To-day," said Weston, "Suffolk and Somerset, and all the council dine with the King and Queen at Denmark-House, and I'll bet you this purse Villiers is there," said the Page. "An he be, I'll play him a trick."

As Weston prophesied, Villiers was indeed at table, and the Page by chance, rather than by design, spilt some gravy upon the young Favourite's clothes, as he carried a haunch of doe-venison to the table. Villiers, without knowing the etiquette of the table, at which the King of England sits, took occasion when dinner was over, to give Weston a box on the ear, in presence of the Sovereign.

“Marry, but this is an high offence,” said Somerset.

“Sir George Villiers is a young man, and a younger courtier, my Lord of Somerset,” interrupted the King. Then turning to the rising Favourite, his Majesty said, “Know ye not, Sir George Villiers, the punishment of your offence is, to have your hand, that dealt the blow in our presence, cut off?”

“Yes,” added the Queen, “and it belongs to the puissant Earl of Somer-

set, our Liege's Lord Chamberlain, to prosecute the execution, as he hath begun."

"By my holiday," continued the King, "but we shall exercise our prerogative, and pardon this juvenis miles."

"Without any satisfaction?" said the Queen.

"Our word hath gone forth, royal Lady," answered James.

"And now indeed," said Somerset to himself, "all the browse boughs are cut down to the plain stem, and the budding Favourite appears like a proper palm."

The reflection of Somerset was founded in truth; as the time arrived for the celebration of the Lady Elizabeth's marriage with the Palsgrave, Villiers rose daily into more favour. But Somerset was the man without whom James enjoyed few social hours, and by whose advice the greater num-

ber of his actions were now of late regulated, if indeed they did not originate with the Earl. The royal marriage was a most splendid entertainment, kept with pomp and magnificence, the nobility of the land vying with each other in the splendour of their dresses and equipages, the number of their gorgeously decked retainers, whom they crowded their palaces with in London. The marriage too, of Somerset and Lady Frances Howard was attended by the numerous friends, both noble and great, of the Favourite, and the House of Howard; and King James kept his word, honouring the ceremony with his presence, and engaging in the banquet, and masque that followed, with all the life and spirit which his late loss would permit.

CHAP. XI.

I see thy glory, like the shooting star,
Fall to the base earth from the firmament !
Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west,
Witnessing storms to come, woe, and unrest :
Thy friends are fled, to wait upon thy foes ;
And crossly to thy good all fortune goes.

KING RICHARD II.

ON the day of the Lady Elizabeth's marriage, the honour of knighthood was conferred upon a vast number of persons, whom the Favourites of James recommended for that honour. Among these, Elwes, the Lieutenant of the Tower, was dubbed Sir Jervaise. On the morning following the bridal of Somerset, Sir Jervaise waited on the

Earl of Northampton, and announced the death of Sir Thomas Overbury.

“Dead!” exclaimed Northampton, “and what measures hast thou taken with the body?”

“My experience cannot direct me,” answered the Lieutenant, “therefore came I to your Lordship; it is usual to have a prisoner’s body viewed by a jury and the coroner;—but this is so very ugly to look upon—I fear—I fear—”

“Banish fear!” answered Northampton, “and call Sir John Lidcote, my special friend, and some of his rare friends to view it; and so soon as it is viewed, without staying the coming of a messenger from the court, in any case see it interred in the body of the chapel, within the Tower, instantly, considering the humours of that damned crew in your custody, that only desire means to move pity and raise scandals.”

“But my Lord of Somerset,” said

Elwes, "or some special friends of Overbury; were they to come and grace his funeral, all suspicion would be lulled."

"Stuff and buckram!" exclaimed Northampton. "My Lord of Somerset rise from his bridal-bed to go in a style of hypocritical ambiguity, holding a mourning kerchief to his eyes at the grave of that damned corpse!"

"Overbury's relations,—Lady Gabriella, his father, now a justice in Wales, his cousins, and the benchers of the Temple, who have come almost daily to the gate to inquire after his health.;—they will all want to see the body, and be at the funeral."

"I will free you from their intervention," replied the Earl, and he accordingly sat down and wrote an epistle, which is still extant, expressive of "Lord Rochester's desire to attend the funeral of his deceased friend, but fearing the unsweetness of the body, in keeping it

above, must needs give more offence than its speedy interment, his Lordship desires Sir Jervaise will do that which is best.”—“ My fear is also,” said the conspirator in conclusion of his letter, “ that the body is already viewed upon that cause whereof I write, which being so, is too late to set out solemnity.” Having thus penned an epistle exculpatory, the Earl added a postscript lacriminal, which is also extant, and says, “ you see my Lord’s earnest desire, with my concurring care that all respect may be had to him, that may be for the credit of his memory,” &c.

“ And now, Sir Jervaise,” said Northampton, “ let no man’s instance move you to stay in any case, and bring me this letter when I next see you.”

The Lieutenant, promising dispatch and obedience, took his leave, and just as he departed, a serving-man entered, and announced to the Earl that Lord

Somerset's Master of Horse desired an audience. "Let him be admitted," said the Earl, and in brief space, Coppinger walked into the cabinet of Northampton.

"'Sblood, my Lord, some passion shakes your frame?" said the Master of Horse; "my fear interprets your Lordship knows he's dead."

"Most finished Prince of Saxonie*, thou'st stomach for't all, I see," replied the Earl.—"What wouldst thou?"

"All that's done is marred, my Lord," said the Master of Horse, "if that demi-devil, Elwes, have privilege to call the coroner, Lidcote, to view the body."

* Alluding to the "History of the famous Enorcamus, Prince of Denmark, with the strange adventures of Iago, Prince of Saxony," a Romance that was popular in the reign of James, and from which Shakespeare borrowed the name of the most malignant villain our imagination can think of.—ED.

“ I’ve given him orders for’t, and my hand to boot, suggesting Somerset’s desires for a public funeral, but adding a sufficient apology for evading my request,” said the Howard.

“ I must outwit the pernicious caitiff, my Lord, or were the hairs on our heads lives, they’d all be too few to satiate the public revenge. We are ensnared soul and body if a jury sit on the carcase of that damned viper.— Shall I, my Lord Earl, send Lidcote to my Lord Somerset speedily, and then hasten to the Tower, and make that grim ice-heart, the Lieutenant, entomb it forthwith, and pretend when all’s over, the corpse wouldn’t tarry the coroner?”

“ Thy counsel savours of a mind gardened by industry and care of thy friends,” said the Earl; “ go and do as thou wilt, Coppinger.”

“ The knaves whom it concerns me

to assist may be idle, my Lord, and one can't make them answerable to his commands without gold, and this purse is light, very light, my Lord."

"Here, take this bag of nobles," said the Earl, "and from it put money in thy purse."

"My Lord, I must fee a starveling curate to say the service of the dead, belike he'll look for a small purse himself, and to knit him to our deserving with cables of perdurable toughness, I'll fill this other marsupium," said Coppinger, taking from his pouch another purse, somewhat smaller than the one he had filled from the bag, which the Earl laid on the table. "Now, my Lord Earl, your further commands?"

"Briefly these; fail not a jot herein, as you love your friends," said the Earl, squeezing the hand of his super-subtle agent.

Coppinger's first business was to dis-

patch to Theobald's, Sir John Lidcote, on a fool's errand to Somerset; his next to proceed to the Tower, where he arrived just as Weston and Elwes were conferring about the coroner and his jury.

“Come, my Masters, come,” said Coppinger, on entering the prison-cell of the dead,—“an ye be hatching hypocrisy 'gainst the devil, why get ye not a parson, like a raven o'er the infected house? 'Sblood, Master Elwes, send for Sir John Lidcote, the coroner.—Let a jury of knaves be sworn from the arrant barbarians of St. Katherine's—and hasten to impinguate God's earth with this cashiered lawyer's corpse, whose soul's billited with imparadised Prince Henry's.—Soft, some one knocks—See who it is.”

Weston opened the door of the cell—It was Gabriella—“Ah! Lady,” said Coppinger, “you come too late!”

“ Heaven forgive me !—Dead !—my Lord, my life, dead !” exclaimed Gabriella, clasping her hands, and shrinking back from the horrid spectacle before her---for the corpse of her husband was too disagreeable to look upon, and the place was noisome beyond her endurance.

“ Even so,” said Elwes—and the Master of Horse added :—“ Lady, I am here by Lord Somerset’s command to see the rites of sepulture done—this is too masculine to be commended in a woman ; but come, you are unwell, and catching her in his arms, he hurried the fainting Gabriella out of the cell, and carried her to an adjacent room.-- “ Soho, soho, Weston,” called Coppinger, and the turnkey came to the bravo’s assistance. “ Now man,” continued the villain, “ if thou wouldst no longer be a toad, and live upon the vapour of these dungeons, take this purse, and find me some clerk who’

sinned with Peter, but not wept wi' him, and who'll say the burial service, and enter the name of the departed in the chapel register."

"But in what state is the Lady Gabriella?" asked Weston. "Were it not well she were looked to?"

"Get thee gone; do as I bid; and leave the fair devil to me; I shall devise some charm for this callet," and as the Master of Horse said these words, he entered the apartment into which he had but a minute before carried Gabriella.

Gabriella was now recovering from the sudden giddiness or swoon, she had been seized with, and opening her eyes said in a feeble tone—"When, when did my Lord die?"

"This morning at five," replied Coppinger, "and the Lord Somerset on the instant he learned of his death, which was even ere he rose from his

bridal-bed, dispatched me to see those honours paid the deceased, which his virtues merit, and the friendship of the Earl prescribe. Rise, Lady, rise, there is nought here to tempt delay ; give me your hand, and let me conduct you hence. A reverend Monk has made diligent inquiry for you.—Let us begone.”

“ Begone !” repeated Gabriella, “ said you not you were commissioned to see Lord Somerset’s pleasure fulfilled ? Begone if need be, but here I will stay and do the last offices to my deceased husband.”

“ The corpse is even now in the chapel,” said Coppinger, “ and you would not, by unnecessary grief, disturb the funeral service ?”

“ How now ? how now ?” said Billy Weston, entering the apartment breathless. “ ’Sdeath, but I have run as an I were outstripping the grave.—Ah!—The Lady of Sir Thomas Overbury !

Madam, why inch ye out the day here, when all is done for the dead the living can do, save to render to mother earth her due?—Let us bear the Lady to the Earl of Northampton's barge."—And while the presence and language of Weston deprived Gabriella of speech and action, the two villains carried her down the stairs to the Traitor's-Gate, and seated her in a covered barge that rowed swiftly down the river. At Greenwich the unfortunate Gabriella was landed, and conducted, almost senseless, to an adjoining mansion that Northampton had built. There, indeed, she found Father Francis and the Earl, who with much sauvity of manners, apologised for the treatment he had shewn to Gabriella, on a former occasion, but ascribing it all to his duty as a Privy Counsellor, and being aided by the persuasive and authorative intercession of the Monk, the Howard succeeded in

gaining the belief of Gabriella to his protestations of regret for the past, and professions of friendship for the future.

“ Daughter,” said the Monk, “ the noble Earl is our staunchest friend in England ; nor in Europe has the Catholic and true religion a more devoted member. By his means I have visited this country, and now return to Italy. Believe me, daughter, our Church will not lack the arm of power in Britain when Prince Charles comes to the throne.”

“ But what am I to understand by all this ?” asked Gabriella. Then bursting into tears, she sobbed out—“ My husband ! O ! my husband !—Where am I ? It was but now I entered the Tower and saw him—dead !—Holy Virgin ! give me strength. Father Francis, is it you ?”

“ It is, daughter,” replied the Monk, “ in charity have I sought you, and hither I have been privately conducted

that I might see you ere I quitted England. But a strange—" the Monk paused, for Gabriella was too much overcome to support herself, even in a chair.—" Help! Help!" said the Monk.—" My Lord Earl, let some female be called; the luckless Gabriella is ill indeed." A female did come, and Gabriella was then carried to another apartment, and every comfort afforded her. By degrees she recovered, and through the persuasions of Father Francis, agreed to accompany him home to Italy; and pass the residue of her days in that convent, in which she had formerly determined to take the veil. Unfortunate Gabriella! she had loved to distraction, and at first sight too; and Overbury for some time cherished for her a warm and constant attachment; but his mind was not formed for love, and his life, since he returned to England, was passed in the turmoil of intrigue

with Somerset, and the coarse revels of the court of James, or his Favourite. Gabriella, though known as the wife of Sir Thomas, was never honoured as such by those who honoured him ; —for the general belief was that she had eloped with him ; nor was she treated by him with the recompence of fond affection, and that public acknowledgment of her rights, which would have secured to her an honourable reception from her sex. She saw no company at her own home, and her punctilious devotion to the rites of the Catholic Church, rendered her contemptuous in the eyes of the Protestant dames, who revelled it at Whitehall, the ancient palace of Cardinal Wolsey, at Denmark House, and in the sumptuous mansions of the English, by whom her husband was courted, merely because he was the factotum, the Alpha and Omega, of the Favou-

rite, Somerset. With these circumstances before us, need we wonder that when events occurred, calculated to call forth the whole of that soul, which occasionally shone in Gabriella, she should act with a conduct that bordered on masculine coolness and female apathy, rather than with the glow of passion so conspicuous in a wife, when all she holds dear, is placed in peril, and brought to death? The language too which Northampton poured into Father Francis's ear, set the good man's heart against the very name of Overbury; and the Monk was thereby the more urgent in his endeavours to bear off to a cloister a being so well calculated to do honour to its austerities as was Gabriella.

When the Earl of Northampton had disposed of the Monk and Gabriella, he returned to London by water, stopping in his voyage at the Tower, to

confer with Sir Jervaise Elwes, as to the best means of promulgating a report, which found believers enow to give it the desired effect. “Sir Jervaise,” said the Earl, “you will give out that Overbury died of a foul disease, contracted by his excess of lasciviousness;—add to it also, that God is gracious in cutting off ill instruments before their time;—it will set the Puritans on to tax his memory with great infamy.”

The report of Northampton and the Lieutenant of the Tower, met with believers, though there were a few that doubted it, and principally because no coroner’s inquest had viewed the body, and returned a verdict, according to the judgment of Englishmen in all such cases. Somerset, however, did not feel easy after the death of Overbury, and though his power combined with that of Northampton’s, was effec-

tual in silencing those who attempted to question the truth of the report, that Overbury died through excess of debauchery; the Earl became pensive and dull, his wonted mirth forsook him, his countenance was cast down and sullen, and he took not that felicity in company, which he was wont to enjoy. The Countess chid him, rallied him, and at length spoke to her uncle, the Earl of Northampton, on her Lord's unhappy condition.

“Cousin,” said Northampton to Lord Somerset, “I marvel one of your capacity should wear the looks of credulous fools, who bear not their fortunes like men.—By my halidom were I in your Lordship's mood, methinks I'd strip to the shirt, put a rope round my neck, take a wax taper in my hand, and speed me to court, to beg pardon of God and the King.—'Sdeath, my

Lord, but our fate lies not in any one of the twelve houses, if a man may droop thus for an ordinary homicide.”

“ My Lord Earl,” answered Somerset, “ you know the severity of our enemies, the Poetasters, and Puritans ; and, besides, how can I be safe when so many are privy to our homicide, as your Lordship terms the death of Overbury. There are the Westons, father and son, that callet Turner, Elwes, and though last, not least, Franklin and Coppinger.”

“ My sweet Lord !” replied Northampton, “ let us make our own fortunes so great, that we may oppose all accusation. We can surely bribe old Weston to stand mute, the Page is already disposed of, Turner shall change her name, and cross over to France, Elwes we must stand or fall with ;—the other two, I confess, puzzle me—the mind

of that Franklin is as crooked as his body, and Coppinger is more a master of men than of horse.”

“ I have been thinking,” interrupted Somerset, “ of turning Catholic, and uniting with that powerful, but oppressed body of the people, to brave the maligners of my name.”

“ Excellent Somerset! thou’st now hit on the true way.—But there’s one even more sure.—Get the King in a good mood, and urge him for a pardon.—See here,” added the Earl, turning to a cabinet, and taking therefrom a parchment, “ this is the exact copy of one that was made by the Pope to Cardinal Wolsey.”

“ To-day we banquet with the King,” said Somerset, “ and if his Majesty be not in the humour of dining out of the salt-seller with Villiers and Pembroke, I’ll even follow your advice,

my Lord Earl, and let me not lack your special assistance therein."

That day Somerset, and his friend Northampton, did dine with the King, but it was not till, as principal Secretary of State, some collateral conversation engaged the King and his old Favourite, that the Earl of Somerset found an opportunity to advert to the responsibility of his office, in the execution of which he might inadvertently run himself into a præmunire, and thereby forfeit to the King both his goods, lands, and liberties."

"My Lord of Somerset is a wise man," said the King, when he heard this topic broached." "It were well your Lordship could move the Parliament to grant a Bill of Indemnity for the past; for, I trow, the life o' a minister and privy counsellor resembleth a story worked in tapestry, fair and

legible to the company that are inside the room, but full of thrumbs and contrary figures and expressions on the other side.”

Somerset, who saw by the answer of the King, that his Majesty's humour squared not with the request he had made, waved the subject for the present, and took another opportunity to urge his Grace, saying: “Whereas it hath pleased your Majesty to commit many things to my charge, and some of them proving something too weighty for me to undergo, if the Parliament, 'specially the Commons, haul me over the coals, they will find me within the statute of præmunire.—Your Grace knows the consequence of that; wherefore, I would prefer to surrender even now my lands, goods, and liberties into your Majesty's hands, unless it please your Grace, in your royal and wonted favour towards me, to grant me pardon

for having committed Overbury to the Tower, and all other offences I may ignorantly have fallen into.”

“ The thing hath been often done,” interrupted Northampton ; “ and his Grace requires not your Lordship’s instructions, in religion or polity, cousin.”

“ My Lord of Somerset,” answered the King, “ I would ill deserve the services of such a Secretary, if I did not protect him by my prerogative from the House of Commons, those meddlers with every thing that regards my government, and deep affairs of state, which are above their reach and capacity.”*

“ Then,” said Northampton, “ then your Grace meaneth that the Earl of Somerset should draw out his pardon, as large as he can find in former precedents ?”

* Rushworth, vol. I.

“Doubtless, Lord Northampton,” answered the King. “Have I laboured so much to make an able minister o’ our cousin, Robin, who devised for us a price to every rank o’ nobility ; and will I refuse to sign sic an act o’ our wonted favour ?—I say thee nay, Northampton.”

Both the Earls bowed, the one smiling internally at the Monarch’s simplicity ; the other cut by the recollection of the many days and hours he had sat with James, receiving lessons on political economy, prerogative, and the particular rules of etiquette, which his master willed should be observed in his court, while both felt the allusion to the sale of titles, as applicable to themselves as to the King.*

* The title of Baronet was currently sold for £1000 to supply the profusion of Somerset. Franklin, p. 11.

But Villiers overheard this discourse, and resolved to be even with his rival, Somerset. When the two Earls, therefore, had departed, he took occasion to ask the King what crimes fell within the statute of præmunire, and James who took infinite pleasure in acting the part of political preceptor to his young Favourite, entered into a long discussion, partly didactic, and partly categorical, which ended in Villiers insinuating that the Earl of Somerset had more to answer for to God, than his Majesty could pardon. "I ken that, Gordie," answered James, "but thou hast something to say, thou wouldst not tell me if thou could make me sensible o't by reflection."

"Were Lord Somerset King James, and King James the Earl of Somerset, King Somerset would leave your Grace to the laws, rather than exert the favour he craves," said Villiers.

“By my halidom and I think so too,” replied the King, “the Lord Somerset was unco ready to hae thy bonny hand necked off, on a late occasion.—But I’ll keep my word; I’ll sign the pardon; but gang thou in the mean time to the Lord Chancellor, and tell him on no account to put the great seal to it.—I’ll bear him harmless, and the fool’s pardon will be like a papistical pardon from Rome at the gate o’ heaven, if Somerset be called to the bar o’ the House o’ Lords for high crimes and midemeanours.”

Somerset lost no time in presenting to the King, for signature, a pardon couched in these terms: “That the King of his mere motion and special favour, did pardon all and all manner of treasons, misprisions of treasons, murders, felonies, and outrages whatsoever, by the said Robert Carr, Earl

of Somerset committed, or hereafter to be committed, &c.”*

This extraordinary parchment of “Indemnity,” of which we have given but the softest language, King James signed!!! and Somerset put it in his pocket. “Go, Robin,” added the Sovereign, “gang to the Lord Chancellor and gar him to put the muckle seal to’t.”

Somerset bowed, kissed the King’s hand, and repaired to the Lord Chancellor, with “the King’s commands to seal his Grace’s pardon.”

“Allow me the perusal of your Lordship’s Indemnification,” said the Lord Chancellor Egerton, and the Lawyer having perused the “Pardon,” asked Somerset, “who had drawn it up?”

* Harleian Miscellany.—Art. Five Years of King James.

“ Sir Robert Cotton,” replied the Earl.

“ From Cardinal Wolsey’s, I see,” replied Egerton. “ My Lord of Somerset, I cannot put the great seal to this document.”

“ How so, my Lord Chancellor? What reason make ye against the King’s positive command?” asked Somerset in a high tone.

“ I could not justify the doing of it, my Lord Earl,” replied Egerton, adding, “ without incurring a præmunire as well as yourself.”

“ Then your Lordship refuses to obey the express commands of the Sovereign?” said Somerset.

“ My Lord of Somerset,” replied Egerton, “ I said not, I would not obey the King’s commands.—I said, and I repeat it, I could not justify the putting of the great seal to that instrument.—You have my answer.”

Somerset would have replied to this, but the Lord Chancellor's manner struck him to the heart.—He could barely say, “ My Lord Egerton I did not expect this of your Lordship,” and turning on his heel, the falling Favourite quitted the apartment.

Egerton lost not a moment before he came to the King, to whom he represented, in strong language, the risk he should have run had he signed the pardon of Somerset.—There was policy in this representation, for Northampton, and many other Lords were then in the King's presence. “ What! my Lord Chancellor, not put the great seal to what I put my hand to ?” said the King, in affected anger.

“ So please your Majesty, 'tis more than my head could answer for, and I am not above the law,” replied Egerton.

“ By the rood, my Lord Egerton,”

said the Howard, “but your hesitating to do what his Grace commands, is not the way to establish the royal prerogative in the eyes of the Commons!”

“My Lord Earl,” replied Egerton, “were a weak mortal to take upon him to do wrong, because of high behest, as Judas hanged himself, and another part of scripture says, ‘go thou and do likewise,’ am I thence to throttle myself?—No, by my halidom.”

“Go to Rome!” exclaimed Archbishop Abbot, who stood among the group, “and they’ll give your Lordship a dispensation for greater crimes than stamping an ounce or two of beeswax with the arms of England.”

“My Lord Bishop, you exercise with sword and dagger,” said Northampton, “you speak *to* the Lord Egerton, and *at* Henry Howard, in this irreverent

satire.—My gage were even now at the feet of George Abbot, did not his functions—”

“Hold! my Lord Northampton,” said the King, interfering. “What speech is this in our presence? seeing the poor Lord Sanquire.”

“Cry you mercy, my Liege,” interrupted Northampton, with great courage, “but the premises are unlike.—Take the Earl of Dorset, who yet lives.”

“Right trusty and noble cousins, Abbot, Egerton, Herbert, Roxborough, Erskine,” exclaimed the King, “but my Lord Northampton would beard the lion in his den.—Henry Howard! we charge thee with being a papist, and a favourer of papists, and in league with the Pope.—How say you, my Lords?—Speaks the King truth, Henry Howard?”

The intrepidity of James, and the

language he used, overpowered Northampton, who stood alone, the other Lords having taken their stations close by the King's side, as he pronounced their names;—but the Howard soon recovered himself, and asked, “And is Henry Howard to defend the charge of popery in the King's cabinet-council, and at the table of the Star-chamber council likewise?”

“No, my Lord Earl,” replied the King, “but we would have you know the charge, though dormant, is not dead,” and turning to the Lord Chancellor, his Majesty added, “Peradventure, my Lord Egerton, you fear some greater matter than we know of, that you demur ffix our seal to the Lord Somerset's pardon?”

“No, by St. Androis,” replied Egerton. “I have an high opinion of my Lord Somerset; but I value the due

fulfilment of my office above all friendships.”

“The Lord Egerton speaks like a sound lawyer, and a right trusty counsellor,” said the King, “and we remit him the weight of our displeasure, which his durenness exacted for a moment.” As the King said this, he bowed to the noblemen present, and leaning upon the arm of Villiers he walked out of the apartment in which this scene occurred.

Northampton, in a maze, gazed after James, and without taking any notice of the other lords, left the chamber, saying to himself.—“Royal knavery—But why should such goblin fears possess me?—And they would hunt me to the block, without shriving time allowed.—No! by my halidom, I’ll not stay the grinding of their axe.—God help thee, Somerset! I’m no prophet if thou’rt not thick benetted round with

villainies.—But I'll to that base nature in the Tower, and school him in his lesson, should he ere have the misfortune to know the interim between his life and that dark bourne whence no traveller returns.”

Northampton accordingly proceeded to Sir Jervaise Elwes, with whom he passed two hours in prompting him, as to the course he should pursue, if ever the murder of Overbury was questioned in a court of justice. At parting the Earl expressed himself saying, “Sir Jervaise, I cannot deliver with what caution and discretion you have undertaken all this business. But for your conclusion, I do and ever will love you the better. As you love your own life, let no threats nor bribes move you to involve my cousin Somerset, and his wife. Observe this, and my name is not Henry Howard if you fare not well for't when the puny Scot's settle is

filled by Prince Charles.—Adieu—adieu—adieu.”

Northampton with all speed hastened to his house at Charing Cross, and having sent for Somerset, informed him of all that had passed before the King, and then came to the instructions he had given Elwes. “Should all our foresight be unavailing,” said the Howard, “and the satirical wits begin to vent themselves in stinging libels, in which you know they spare neither the persons, families, nor most secret avowtries of those their spleen battens on, your Lordship must bear yourself nobly, and defy all men.—Nay, let drop some hints which may point to the Head itself—you understand me.—’Sblood, cousin, but you must ruffle with the King himself, if need be. I have disciplined Elwes, and find him very perfect in his part. For yourself, if it comes to the push, there must be a main drift,

and a real charge." "This," continued the Earl, with a sigh, is my last will and testament, wherein I have published myself to die in the faith I was baptised in; some of my servants are my executors; upon others I have bestowed gifts; this fair palace I leave to your Lordship; my lands to your brother-in-law, Lord Theophilus Howard—and now, my sweet Lord, my occupation's done."

"Heaven's!" exclaimed Somerset, "what means your Lordship?"

"That the world may not have the satisfaction of calling me traitor," answered Northampton,—“after my death.”

"My dearest Lord," said Somerset, really affected by Northampton's look, voice and speech, "my dearest Uncle, what am I to understand by all this?"

"That this night I leave London to die at Rochester, and be buried in

Dover—or it may be at Rochester, that being the chief port town of my office:—to be buried without any state to outward appearance.”

“Heaven forefend!” exclaimed Somerset. “Remain here, my Lord Earl, to bear me out, and let us live or die together. The world will otherwise say you are not dead, but carried beyond sea.”

“Hold dearest Somerset, hold—my purpose is fixed” replied Northampton. “Bear my love to your Countess, for whom I have sacrificed even my good name—adieu!—adieu!”—and as the Howard said these words, he rushed out of the apartment, and in the evening departed by water for Greenwich, where he staid one day; on the next he journeyed to Rochester, where in a short time a funeral was performed, said to be that of Northampton.

CHAP. XII.

I have lived long enough: my way of life
 Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf:
 And that which should accompany old age,
 As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends
 I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
 Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth honour, breath,
 Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not.

MACBETH.

THE death of Northampton was signified at Court by the Earl of Suffolk delivering to the King his relative's insignia, and patents of office. Somerset, by his great power and numerous friends, succeeded to the Chancellorship of Cambridge, and the Lord Zouch was appointed Warden of the Cinque-

Ports. Just as Somerset returned from Cambridge, his Master of Horse came to him, saying, "It holds current in the City, my Lord Earl, among the purple-lined malt-worms, that Overbury's death came not in the way that Heaven willed, and I must be beholden to the night, rather than to fern-seed, an I would walk invisible."

"Why, how now thou land-raker, dost talk to me of the hangman?" said Somerset.

"No, my good Lord Earl," answered Coppinger, "as I am loath to make either a knightly or a noble pair of gallows, I am advised by my signatures to go look for fern-seed among the Jamaicans, an I would go about in the company of those knaves that are continually praying to their saint, the commonwealth."

"Coppinger, I expected not this at your hands," replied Somerset, "and

I fear not that either Sir Jervaise or myself shall come to the gallows, so would I not fear thee—my power was never greater—my friends, save a few starveling Puritanical Lords, are numerous and powerful—and the King's affections will not long be ruled by Villiers.—Stay by me, Coppinger, and in one month more I'll enrich thee with a thousand pounds, and the land I've promised.”

“ Since it must out, my Lord Earl, the truth of the matter is this: Payton, that caitiff, who was aforetime servant to Overbury, has gone through the City saying, Sir Thomas used these words, ‘ If I die my blood lies upon the Lord Somerset;’ and the rogue utters some threats your Lordship used in the gallery of Whitehall; and they do say, ‘ Foul play has been used, else the coroner had seen the body,’ and last of all comes a relation of Overbury, George Rawlins, that married Wei-

mark's daughter, and he has petitioned the Chief Justice Coke to inquire into the death of the luckless knight."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Somerset, in evident surprise; and pacing the room with heavy footfall, he said to himself, "then Villiers will not lack buzzers to infect his ear with pestilent speeches, and he'll to the King with impetuous haste convey, with unsmirched brow, the thick and unwholesome thoughts of my enemies."—Then stopping, the Earl addressed Coppinger.—"Heardst thou ought of my Lord Bishop of Canterbury, that he moved in this? Or of Sir Ralph Winwood?"

"The Archbishop," replied the Master of Horse. "Is your Lordship disposed to hear me?" asked Coppinger, for Somerset was absorbed in thought, and leant pensively over the chimney-piece; but the question roused him, and he nodded assent. "The Arch-

bishop," pursued the bravo, "has been this morning at Master Secretary Winwood's, and there was there too, my Lord Coke. Suspecting what was brewing, that these state alchymists were not conjuring how they might turn some meagre cloddy earth into a glittering nobleman, but a gorgeous lord into most unpitied simpleness, I dogged the two and heard his Grace of Lambeth say, 'They've done it but greenly, in hugger mugger to inter him!' whereupon I hastened to old Weston's, and there I found a tipstaff, with my Lord Coke's warrant, to bring the under-keeper of Gundolph's Castle to the Privy Council."

"I'll to Royston, to the King, and stir up such matters as shall quiet these busy triflers," replied Somerset, whom the last words of Coppinger roused to his wonted energies. "Hie you, to my Lady Countess, and bid her hasten the

departure of Turner and Franklin into France. Be you at hand to assist us in our flight thither the moment I return."

Coppinger bowed, and stopped the Earl as he reached the door of the chamber, asking him, "Am I, my Lord, to take no care of your Lordship's plate, jewels, and chests of rose nobles, gold Henries, sovereigns, and Jacobuses?"

"Dæmon of fortune !" exclaimed Somerset, to call me back so, "take these keys and my signet, which will together give thee command of my stores, and do what the urgency of our destiny dictates."

Coppinger took the keys and signet, and repaired to his Lordship's mansion in St. James's Park, where he was met by his companion Weston. "How now, Master Weston," asked Coppinger, "I thought thou'dst gone on board two days ago?"

“No, my friend, no,” replied the Page, “I’ve been on board, but am ashore again.—Heard ye the news?—my tongue cleaves to the roof within my mouth—and the marrow in my bones disputes with my valorous heart—’Sdeath, bully Coppinger, you’re unhorsed, and the unthrifty Page must kneel at Tyburn, an he be another night on shore.—Ha! what keys be these?—my Lord of Somerset’s gold key, of his gold Henries?”

“Even so, varlet,” replied Coppinger, “canst thou lay hands on the Countess’s jewels, and join me in easing the titled robber of his Jacobuses?—See there, that finger bears his signet, and now for ourselves.”

Coppinger repaired to the Countess of Somerset, and detailed to her in his own way, the discovery of the murder, mingling with his own narrative, such advice as he judged fitting. “But we

have friends, power, and wealth," said Lady Frances, "and shall defy all accusation."

"My Lord Earl has gone to Royston," said Coppinger, "and he'll not return without the pardon sealed as well as signed."

"Then we are safe!" exclaimed the Countess.

"My Lord Earl thought otherwise," replied the Master of Horse. "And to make all sure, see my Lady Countess, I am possessed of his signet to validate a message to his goldsmith, in Lombard-street; and the key of his treasury, to remove the rusty nobles, Henries, and Jacobuses."

"My Lord Somerset will not flee, Master Coppinger. 'Sdeath, we'll sing a requiem o'er the weathercock of our nobility, rather than budge one inch," said the Countess.

"Then your Grace will walk invisibly

ble, or enjoy a reset beyond my Lord Coke's clutches," replied the Master of Horse. "For myself, I'm in quest of fern-seed the moment I've done my Lord's service."

"Where is my Page?" asked the Countess, "that varlet that in swearing shakes the throned gods."

"Busy in another part of the mansion," said Coppinger. "Feels your mind any easier?"

Whilst the Master of Horse was detained by the Countess, the Page was busily employed in rummaging her cabinet, and secreting in different parts of his dress such minute valuables as he most prized; and long before Coppinger returned to him, he was ready to depart. Nevertheless he awaited with much impatience the arrival of his companion. Finding, however, that he came not, the Page proceeded in quest of him, and after passing through

several apartments, he found the Master of Horse in the Earl's cabinet, rifling the most secret depositories of the fallen Favourite's hoards. "There you are, most righteous roamer," said the Page, on seeing his companion. "'Sblood, Coppinger, the Countess is laid out most riggish."

"Hast thou been peering into her tiring-room, thou skip-kennel?" asked Coppinger.

"O ho! bully stirrup-holder! What! thou'st been buying Robin Hood's pennyworths?" said the Page, archly.

"Damn your proverbs. Many talk of Robin Hood who never shot in his bow. Thinkst thou I'd become the bellows and the fan, to cool the gipsey's lust?" asked Coppinger, pretending, at the same time, to be mightily offended.

"Soho! Master Coppinger. I remember me a passage spoken last night, at the Globe," said the Page. "There's

beggary in the love that can be reckoned. How are you off for pelf? Not penny wise and pound foolish?"

"No, by my signatures," answered Coppinger, "I've secured a sweepstake—and now for the city,"—and the villains accordingly quitted Somerset's house for ever.*

Somerset hastened with all speed to Royston, and the King received him

* The stay of these fellows in the city was as short as they could make it; and hiring a boat at London Bridge, they went down to Tilbury Fort, where they embarked on board a vessel that was fitted out for the service of the Buccaneers of St. Domingo. Their fate, after a series of adventures, was worthy their lives. Coppinger, after bamboozling his companions in a variety of ways, was at length given up to the Spaniards, who cut his tongue out, and then sold him as a slave, to work in the mines of Potosi. Weston remained true to his trade, and became famous, under an assumed name, as a shooter of bulls, and pirate on the high seas; but he at length

with kindness, but the Earl could discover it was assumed, and he, therefore, conceived it was his duty to observe the etiquette, which was expected from those who were not like himself, the companion of James's secret pleasures, the friend of his sovereign's bosom. As soon as an opportunity offered itself, Somerset introduced the subject of the pardon, and stated with great warmth, the conduct of the Lord Chancellor. The King regretted, as much as the Earl, that Egerton should

fell a sacrifice to the jealousy of his companions, and had his choice of being shot, put on shore on a desolate island, or delivered up to the Spaniards. "The first," said he, with great courage; and climbing a tree, he suspended himself from a branch of it, by his heels, and gave his comrades the word of command to "fire." In an instant he was pierced by twenty bullets, and fell to the earth, as he had lived — "without God, and without hope in the world."

have hesitated; but, said his Majesty, —“ Robert Carr, thou art privy to what nane else in this world maun ken aught about; thou hast rid me o’ my mucklest fears; and while I wear a crown, thou’lt not cast off thine honour and fame.”

While the King and Somerset were busily engaged in private, discussing various topics, which James introduced to kill time, Sir Jervaise Elwes arrived at Royston, and was immediately admitted to the King’s presence, a privilege the Lieutenant of the Tower enjoys in common with Privy Counsellors, without the formality of introduction, observable towards other persons.

“ How now Sir Jervaise ?” asked the King.

“ The Lady Arabella, your Grace,” answered the Lieutenant, with a croaking voice, and downcast look.

“Is fled, gone!” exclaimed the King, “then shalt thou go with her by Traitor’s Gate.”

“So please your Grace, she hath become defunct,” answered the Lieutenant.

“Dead!” echoed James, in a tone of surprise.

“Died this day at the hour of—” repeated the jailor.

“Then we release Northumberland and Raleigh,” said the King. “And as the dure Percy winna be indebted to us for his discharge, gar his physician prescribe the Bath-waters for his health, and so send him down there. He may be reconciled then to his son-in-law, our cousin, Lord Hay, though he wad na be indebted to him for his enlargement at the marriage, thrawn auld bull.”

Somerset was ordered to make out the instrument which should authorise

Elwes to set Northumberland and Raleigh free, and the Secretary and Lieutenant withdrew for that purpose. While they were thus occupied, Purbeck Villiers, who had lately married Justice Coke's daughter, arrived in company with Sir Ralph Winwood, the joint Secretary of State, with an important message to the King.

The Viscount Villiers received Purbeck, exclaiming, "Has the Chief Justice discovered more?"

"All, all is discovered," answered Purbeck Villiers, "as Master Secretary will shew unto his Majesty. Mistress Turner is apprehended, Weston is apprehended, and one Franklin, a notable villain, is secured.—Prince Henry was poisoned—Overbury was poisoned—There's no safety while these wretches live."

"Ah! ah! Master Carr," exclaimed Viscount Villiers: "thou hast played

booty, but not above board.—Stay ye here, gentlemen, and I will announce you to the King.” The prosperous Favourite did so, and James received the news of Overbury’s death with emotions that were new to him. His Majesty then retired to his cabinet, and sent for Somerset. On the entrance of the Earl, the King said: “My Lord Somerset, we ride for a space, tarry thou here till our return:”—and without waiting for the fallen Favourite’s reply, James quitted the apartment, and repaired to that in which he had left Villiers.

“To horse; to horse, my Lord Villiers,” said the King. “We’ll ride to Whitehall forthwith.”

On arriving at Whitehall, the King found the judges all assembled in consultation on the discovery that had been made. They had before them the confessions of Mistress Turner, Franklin,

and Weston, the father. From these it appeared that Sir Thomas, though poisoned, had in the end been strangled by Weston and Franklin; and the part the Countess of Somerset, her uncle the Earl of Northampton, her husband, the Earl of Somerset, and Sir Jervaise Elves had taken in this murder was now fully disclosed.

So astonished was the King by this disclosure, that kneeling down in the midst of the Judges and Lords assembled, he exclaimed, "Lord, in what a miserable condition shall this kingdom be, (the only famous nation for hospitality in the world) if our tables shall become such a snare, as none can eat without danger of life, and that Italian custom should be introduced amongst us: therefore, my Lords, I charge you, as you shall answer it at the great and dreadful day of judgment, that you examine into this diabolical plot, without

favour, affection or partiality ; and if you shall spare any guilty of the crime, God's curse light upon you and your posterity ; and if I spare any that are guilty, God's curse light on me and my posterity for ever."

" We have here, your Grace," said Coke, " a book, aforetime the album of a juggler in Lambeth, Forman by name ; we have his puppets and pictures, with some exorcism and magic spells."

" Let me see the book," said the King, and the book was shewn him, opened at that leaf wherein the Countess of Essex's name was signed, and the object of her visit to the astrologer set down. " A trick of the fellow," added the King, " wherein he hath set down human follies, to keep lords and ladies in awe, and save his neck. In troth, I see many pretty wenches' names set down. Look here, my Lord Jus-

tice Coke," continued the King, pointing to another leaf of the book where it appeared Lady Coke had tried the artist's skill," and adding, "the knave has witchcraft to adorn better heads than his own. Herry him out and hang him anon."

"He is dead already," answered the Judge.

"A benefit's lost to the hangman then," replied the King; "but, come my Lords, let us consider, I go to Royston direct.—The Lord Somerset is there—my word is pledged to him, no harm shall light on him: make his guilt apparent as the sun, or, by my halidom, it will go hard that I abandon poor Somerset."

James hastened to Royston, and entertained Somerset for a time, till the Judges and Privy Counsellors had threaded the labyrinth of the Earl's guilt. On the second evening of So-

merset's stay, the King's patience forsook him, and he dispatched a messenger to Sir Edward Coke, with a letter under his own hand, to apprehend Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset! Sir Edward then lived in the Temple, and measured out his time at regular turns, two whereof were to go to bed at nine o'clock, and in the morning to rise at three.

The messenger arrived at the Temple-gate about one in the morning, and demanded admittance to the Chief Justice saying, "he came from the King, and must immediately speak with Sir Edward Coke."

"Thou canst not, Master Gibbs," replied Sir Edward's servant,— "canst not speak with my master, if thou camest from ten kings; we are now watching that the Judge's repose be not disturbed by intruders, which if it be, he will not be fit for any business ;

but if you will do as we do, you shall be welcome; the claret is good, this pool of ling better, and the 'bacco best of all. About two hours hence my master will rise, and then you may do as you please."

At three Sir Edward rang a little bell, to give notice to his servant to come to him; the waiting-man went in to the Judge saying—"Master Gibbs, the King's trusty courier is now in the withdrawing-room, bearing a letter from the King's Majesty to your honourable Lordship."

"Admit him, admit him," said the Judge, and Gibbs entered and gave the Justice the King's letter.—Lord Coke opened the letter in haste, and glancing at its contents, bade Gibbs withdraw for a space, and prepare to return to Royston forthwith. In a few words the lawyer informed *his master* that the warrant for Somerset's apprehen-

sion should arrive ere the murderer put off his morning gown.

Somerset, however, was up when the messengers at arms arrived with the warrant for his apprehension. "My Lord Earl," said Villiers, entering the apartment in which the King was at that moment most good humouredly joking with Somerset on some trifling subject.—"My Lord Earl, these pursuivants—"

"Perdition!" exclaimed Somerset, rising from his seat. "These pursuivants!—What means this?—Messengers at arms!—Am I a prisoner?"

The chief pursuivant walked up to the Earl, produced his warrant, touched Somerset with his baton gently on the shoulder, saying, "Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, I arrest thee in the King's name."

The King shrunk from beside the Earl, and Villiers, with his two brothers

and Philip Herbert, took their stations by the side of his Grace, while Somerset, surrounded by the messengers at arms, remained motionless. But recovering from the trance into which this sudden and overpowering notice had cast him, he looked towards the King, and said with great energy.—“There never was such an affront offered to a Peer of England in the presence of his sovereign.”

“Nay man,” answered the King, “if Coke sends for me I must go.—Dinna be afeard, Robin;” and James, as he said this, held out his hand to the fallen Favourite, who stepped up to the royal stance, and kissed it fervently. James raised Somerset and addressed him with more seeming affection than ever he had done, so that an indifferent person would have supposed that the Earl was rising in favour, rather than fallen from his high estate. Then

lolling on the Earl's neck with all his former fondness, and disgusting familiarity, he kissed Somerset's cheeks, and in a puling accent inquired, "For God's sake when shall I see thee again? On my soul I shall never eat nor sleep till you come again."

"On Monday, my Liege, if I am not, contrary to your Grace's professions, a prisoner in the Tower."

"For God's sake let me see thee on Monday," answered the King, still lolling about the dupe's neck, and slabbering his cheeks.* "For God's sake give thy lady this kiss for me." In the same manner at the stair's head, at the middle of the stairs, and at the stair's foot, did the dissembling weak King part with his once dear Robert Carr.

"Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare."

* Weldon's Court and Character of King James, p. 99. See also State Trials, vol. I. 14, Jac. 1616.

Somerset was struck dumb by the King's manner, and was placed in his coach ere he awoke from the stupefaction created by the pursuivant's appearance, and his old master's dissimulation. —“ Now de'il go with thee,” said the King, as he turned from the Earl's carriage-door; for so well contrived were all the parts of the drama, that Somerset's own coach was actually in readiness for him on the instant the messengers at arms arrived; and his Majesty accompanied him till he entered it. “ De'il go with thee! for I will never see thy face more.”

Sir Jervaise Elwes had, in the mean time, been arrested, as was Lady Frances Carr, Countess of Somerset. Turner, Weston, and Franklin were put upon their trials, and being found guilty of the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, were hanged at Tyburn. Elwes next appeared at the bar of the Judges in

Guildhall, London, and was put on his trial. The unfortunate Lieutenant confessed what part he had taken.

Sir Jervaise Elwes no sooner saw the Earl arrive, his prisoner, than his conscience misgave him, and he hastened to Justice Coke, communicating as much of the murderer's traffic as he fancied would implicate Somerset and his Countess, without bringing the charge home to himself. In this the Lieutenant was mistaken. The charge was not only preferred, but proved, and Sir Jervaise Elwes was replaced by George Moore, as Constable of the Tower, and lodged safely himself in that very cell in which his emissaries had murdered Overbury. Weston stood out for about a week, but the Bishop of London persuaded the villain to tell the whole truth; "how Mrs. Turner and the Countess came acquainted; what relation she had to

witches, sorcerers and conjurors; that Northampton, Somerset, Franklin, Coppinger, Monson,* and Yelvis had their hands in this business." Weston was hanged at Tyburn, as were Franklin and Mistress Turner; but Elwes suffered on Tower-Hill, making a most theatrical exit, with more devotion than Cashman in modern times, but much after the same fashion. Lady Frances, who had been arrested on the same day with her Lord, was committed to the custody of the Dean of Westminster, and in May following arraigned before her Peers, for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. Sir Edward Coke, whom we have had occasion to notice in a particu-

* Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Monson, whom I have omitted among the characters in this plot, because there is no evidence that he was privy to the project of Somerset and his Countess. He was tried and the indictment quashed. See STATE TRIALS, vol. I, Art. 137.

lar manner, as Attorney-General on the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh, now sat as Lord Chief Justice of England, and the noble personages, Peers of the realm who presided, were many, learned and wise. Sir Francis Bacon was the King's Attorney-General, and conducted the prosecution, with what ability the reader will judge from that great lawyer's works.

When the Lord Chancellor, who for this time was High Steward of England, came into Court, there came before him six Serjeants at arms, with their maces, a Knight bearing the patent of commission for the trial, another Knight, the white staff, and a third, the great seal. The Chancellor then proceeded to the upper end of the hall, and sat him down under a cloth of state, on both sides of him the Peers, and under them the Judges; at the further end were the King's Counsel below the Judges;

on one side the Keeper of the records of attainders; the Clerk of the Crown and his deputy, in the midst of the court, the Serjeant Crier standing by him; the white staff and seal-bear placing themselves at the Lord High Steward's feet; and last of all was brought in Lady Frances, Countess of Somerset, and placed at the bar, the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir George Moore, standing adjacent to his prisoner.

When the whole Court was thus completed, the Knight, upon his knee, delivered the patent to the Lord High Steward, who received, kissed, and then re-delivered it to the Serjeant Crier who went through the various steps that were preliminary, and came at length to the prisoner, who made three reverences to his Grace and the Peers.—The once gay and sprightly Lady Frances, once the lovely but imprudent wife of the Earl of Essex, now the

degraded, and guilty partner of Somerset's pleasures and crimes, looked pale, trembled, and shed some few tears, as her indictment was reading ; but at the first mention of Weston's name, she put her fan to her face, till the Clerk of the Crown cried aloud—"Frances, Countess of Somerset, what sayest thou? Art thou guilty of this felony and murder, or not guilty?"

Lady Somerset making an obeisance to the Lord High Steward, answered with a low voice, and very fearfully—*"Guilty!"*

Sir Francis Bacon, the Attorney-General, then addressed the Court, desiring that her confession might be recorded, and judgment given against the prisoner ; and the Clerk of the Crown bade her hold up her hand, demanding, "what canst thou now say for thyself, why judgment of death should not be pronounced against thee?"

“ Mercy, Mercy !” cried the Lady Frances, remorse and a sense of guilt overpowering her faculties.—“ Mercy ! Mercy ! and that the Lords will intercede for me to the King.”

The White Staff, on his knee, delivered his wand to the Lord High Steward, who with great solemnity pronounced the awful sentence of the law upon the unfortunate daughter of the Earl of Suffolk.

When the Lieutenant returned to the Tower, he informed Somerset, who had been kept with uncommon safe custody, that next day he was to take his trial before his Peers.

“ They shall carry me in my bed,” answered the Earl ; “ the King has assured me that I should not come to any ignominious trial ; nor dares James bring me to it.”

“ I have delivered my message,” answered the Lieutenant, “ and your Lordship had better provide yourself.”

Somerset made no reply, but waved his hand for Moore to leave him. The Lieutenant did so, saying to himself, "This is a high strain, and in language I do not well understand—dares not?—I'll to Greenwich to the King."—And he accordingly ordered his barge, and was rowed down the river to the Palace, which he entered by the back stairs. It was midnight; the King had retired to rest; but a groom in waiting was still on foot. "I must speak with the King," said Moore.

"He is quiet, good Master Lieutenant," replied the groom.

"You must awake his Grace—I am at my wits ends," replied Moore—and the groom departed to his Grace's chamber. In a few minutes he returned and admitted the Lieutenant.

"How now, Moore?" asked the King. "Is he dead by his own hand? Somerset, Somerset, is he gone?"

“So please your Grace, he is not dead, and refuses to provide for his trial on the morrow,” replied Moore. “Oh! how it puts me beyond my reason to hear such bold and undutiful expressions, from a faulty subject against a just sovereign!”

“What? what? what?” asked the King, rising on his elbow in bed. “What says the fool?”

Moore then related the precise words of Somerset, whereupon the King fell into a passion of tears, exclaiming, “On my soul, Moore, I wot not what to do; thou art a wise man; help me in this great straight, and then thou shalt find thou dost it for a thankful master.”

“I will prove the utmost of my wit to save your Majesty,” replied Moore, “and doubt not I will bring him before his Peers and back to the Tower if I may use my own wit.”

“ Any thing, every thing, do what you like,” said the King ; “ but lippen not to any but himself ye hae been wi’ me. Take with you a cloak into Court, and if he speaks o’ me, hood him and carry him home with you ; this ring shall be your warrant, let the Lords say what they like.”

Sir George Moore returned to the Tower and entered the cell of Somerset about three in the morning, and informed him he had been with the King, whom he found an affectionate master to his Lordship. “ To satisfy justice,” added the Lieutenant, “ his Grace wills you to go on your trial, he is full of favourable intention towards your Lordship, and you shall return instantly again, without any further proceedings, only you shall know your enemies and their malice, though they shall have no power over you.”

“ Did the King say this ?” asked Somerset.

“ Aye, and a great deal more,” answered the Lieutenant.

“ Then I will go—let me be well provided according to my estate and bearing,” said the Earl.

“ That you shall,” answered Sir George, “ and now I commit you, my Lord Earl, to God and his angels, till seven in the morning.”

On the following day the fallen Favourite was placed at the bar with all the solemnity that had been observed toward his Countess. The defence of the Earl was ingenious and even eloquent, but the facts had been so clearly proved, that it availed him nothing. By his side stood Moore and an attendant-keeper, each with a cloak over his arm, which much puzzled the Lords to understand, why such a garment

should be brought there ; but none offered to ask the Lieutenant. The Lord Chief Justice Coke, who had been excessively mortified by the production of his own wife's name in the conjuror's Album, thought he could not say too much against the unfortunate prisoner, and in a vain-glorious speech to shew his vigilancy, entered into a rapture as he sat upon the bench, saying, " God knows what became of that sweet babe, Prince Henry." Somerset very wisely took no notice of this point, which, however, was not let slip by the King, who from that day withdrew all his favour and friendship from Sir Edward Coke ; and then the Judges were not independent of the Crown.

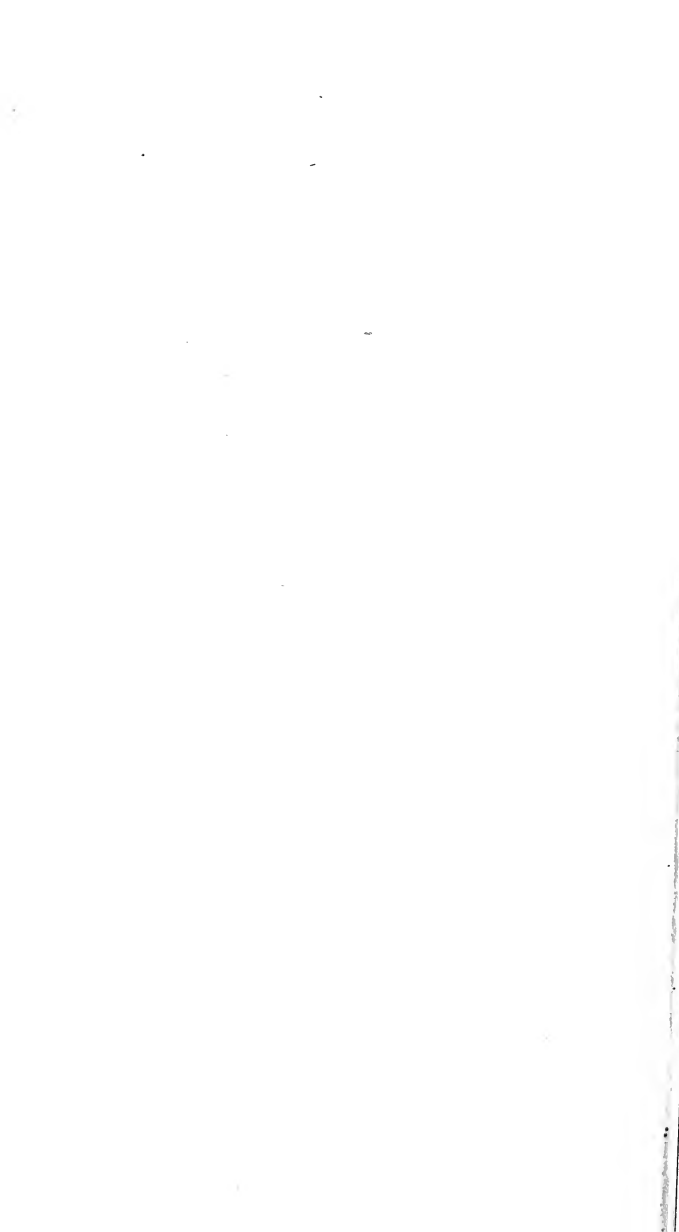
Somerset heard his sentence, and saw the white wand broken with a firmness, that would have done honour to

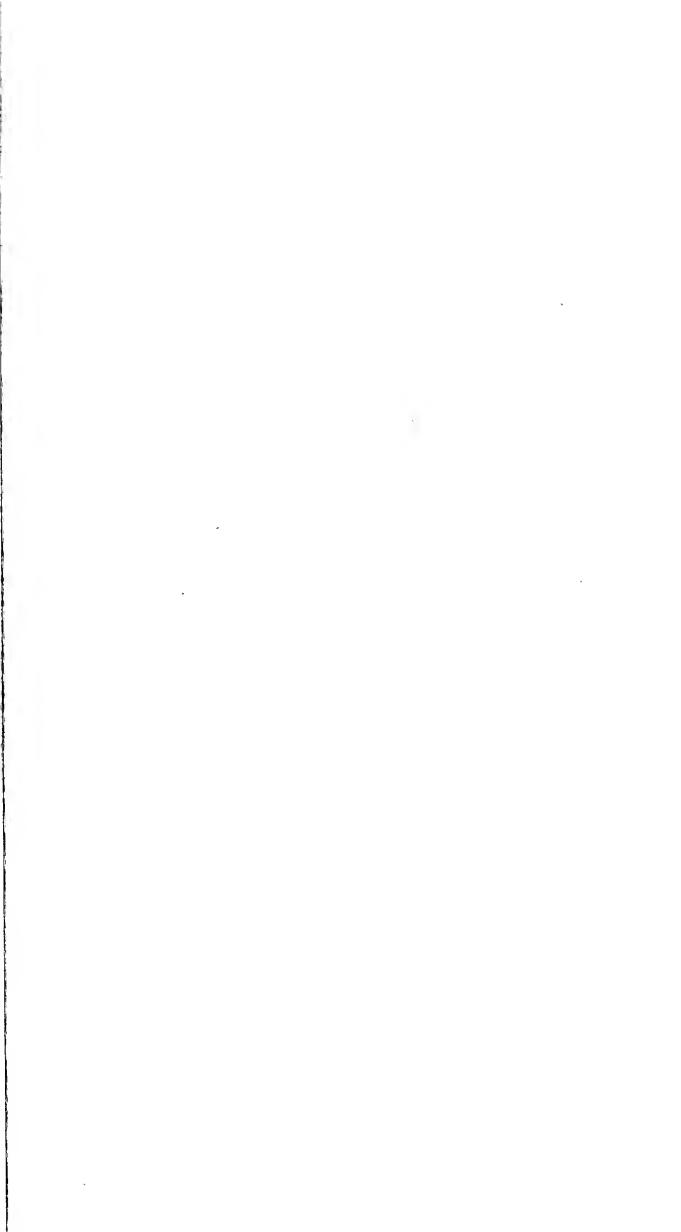
a better man, in a happier situation. He was removed to the Tower, and after a time, both he and his Countess received a pardon, but lingered out their existence in disgrace, degradation, and obscurity, under that most insupportable of all evils, the reproofs of an accusing and guilty conscience.

THE END.

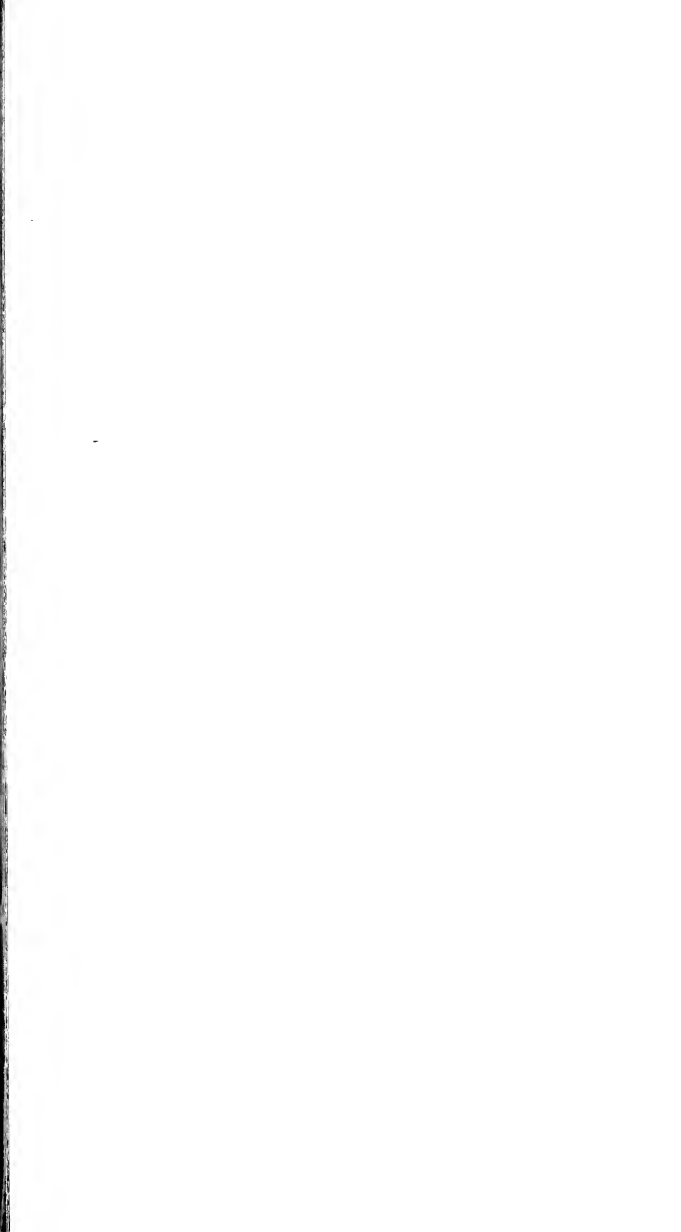
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