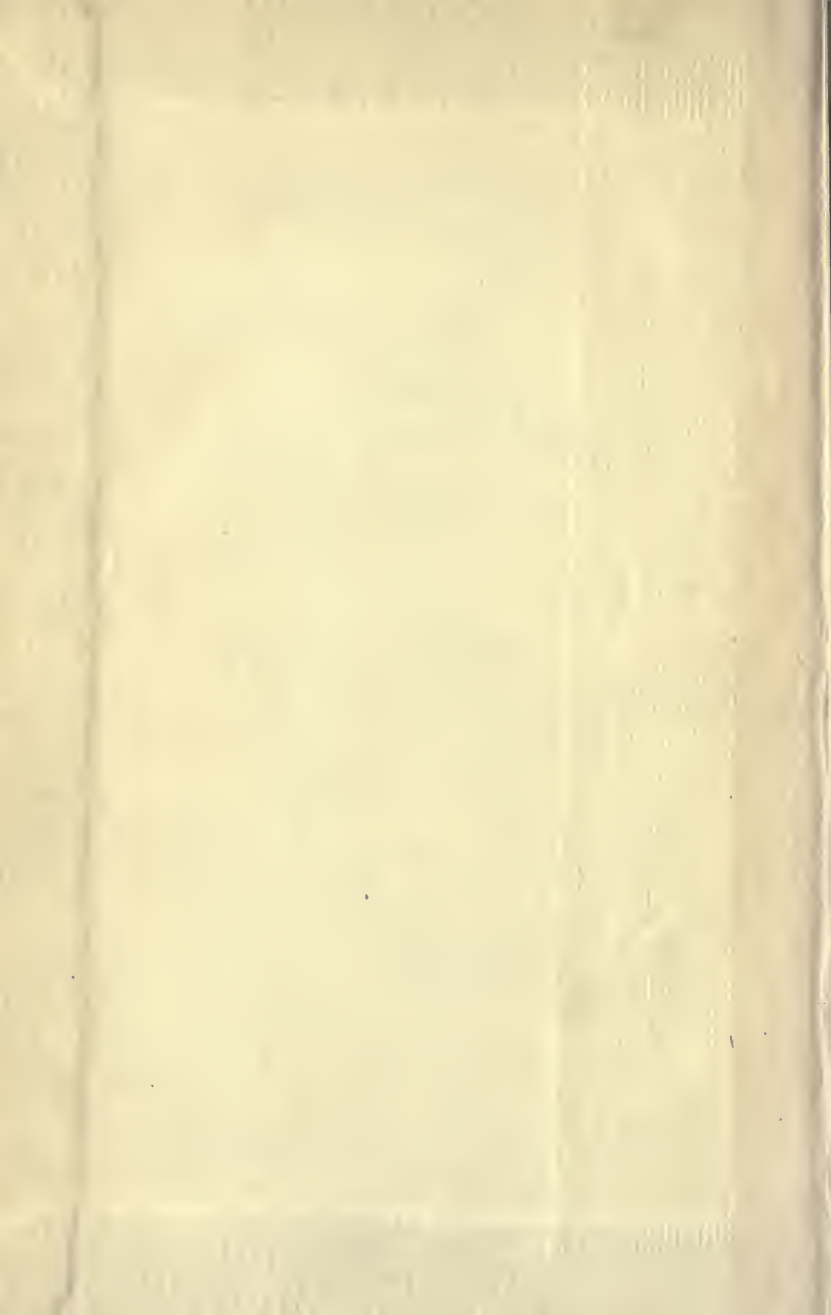




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THE
FALL OF SOMERSET.

BY
WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH,

AUTHOR OF
"PRESTON FIGHT," "BOSCOBEL," "MANCHESTER REBELS," "TOWER
OF LONDON," "OLD SAINT PAUL'S," &c. &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

MY DEAR GRANDDAUGHTER,

APPHIA SWANSON.

JULY 12, 1877.



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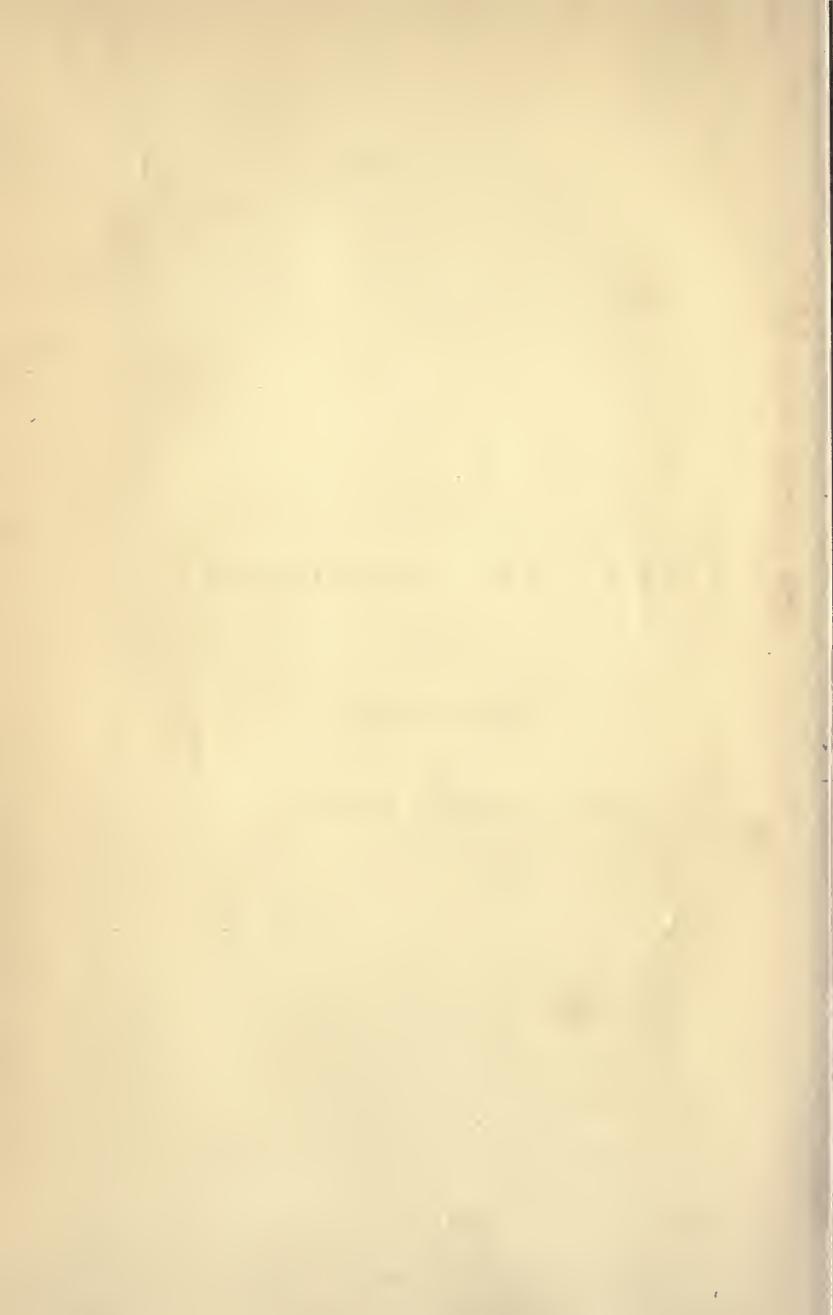
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THE
FALL OF SOMERSET.

—◆—
Book the First.

—
THE NORFOLK REBELS.



I.

WHAT HAPPENED AT WYMONDHAM FAIR ON SAINT THOMAS'S
DAY, 1549.

THE youthful Edward the Sixth had scarcely been three years on the throne he was destined to occupy for so short a period, and his uncle, the Duke of Somerset, was still Protector, and in the plenitude of his power, when insurrections broke out in divers parts of the kingdom; but they were all easily quelled, except one in the west, and another still more formidable rising in the east.

These alarming outbreaks arose from

somewhat different causes. The Devonshire insurgents were opposed to the late religious innovations, and demanded a restoration of the ancient service, with its high mass and other ceremonies; while the Norfolk husbandmen and peasantry bitterly complained that the abbey lands, which before the Dissolution had been open to them for the pasture of their cattle, were now everywhere enclosed by the nobles and wealthy gentlemen who had purchased them, whereby they, the common folk, were excluded.

But this was not their only grievance. Wool then fetched a very high price, and it therefore suited the landowners to breed sheep extensively. For this reason they enclosed their land with stakes; consequently, they did not require so many neatherds and hinds as before, and thousands of poor men belonging to the agri-

cultural classes were thrown out of employment.

Moreover, owing to the scarcity of oxen, meat had become excessively dear, so that the peasantry were half starved. Their complaints, however, were unheeded.

Deep discontent, arising from similar causes, prevailed throughout the sister county of Suffolk.

Since the monasteries had been suppressed, a prodigious quantity of monks had been scattered throughout the kingdom, who were obliged to gain their livelihood by work, the pensions assigned them being badly paid, or not sufficing for their subsistence. Thus, the work being divided among many persons, the profit turned out less than before.

While the monasteries subsisted, their lands were let at a moderate price to farmers, who, to make them answer, were

obliged to employ a great number of persons. But since these lands had fallen into the hands of the nobles, the price of the farms had greatly increased; whence it happened that the farmers, to keep their accounts right, were obliged to employ fewer workmen, and lower their wages.

“The Protector,” says Rapin-Thoyras, “openly espoused the part of the people, either to mortify the nobles, by whom he was disliked, or because he foresaw the inconveniences that might arise from the discontent of the poor. Since 1548 he had appointed commissioners to inquire whether the owners of Church lands exercised hospitality, and if they performed all the conditions under which their lands had been sold them. But he encountered so many obstacles in the execution of this order, that it had no result. Owing to it, however, the Protector incurred more and more

the hatred of the nobility, who were interested in maintaining these abuses. It happened likewise, in the last sitting of Parliament, that the Lords brought forward an Act to enable any one who thought proper to farm his lands. The House of Commons rejected the Bill, despite which the nobles did not cease to farm their lands. This occasioned a general discontent among the people, who fancied a conspiracy had been formed to ruin them, and reduce them to servitude."

Hence, in all parts of East Anglia there was a strong tendency to rebellion among the common folk.

While things were in this state—towards the end of June, 1549—a slight disturbance occurred at Attleborough, because a common pasture belonging to the town had been enclosed; but nothing came of it. The real explosion took place some ten

days later at Wymondham, or Wyndham, as the inhabitants have it.

At this pleasant old town, where, up to the Dissolution, a noble abbey had existed, an annual fair was held on the 7th July, the Translation of Saint Thomas of Canterbury; and the holiday served as a pretext for a large gathering of the peasantry.

The looks and demeanour of the crowd that assembled in the market-place showed that they had not come there for amusement, or even for peaceable purposes. Most of them were provided with spades, pickaxes, and hatchets—implements that might prove dangerous in the hands of riotously disposed persons. The bailiffs and other officers of the town watched them with some uneasiness, but did not interfere with their proceedings, as they manifested no disposition to be turbulent.

The peasants did not stay long in the market-place; but forming themselves into a sort of procession, shouldered their spades, and marched towards the ruined abbey, in the precincts of which the fair was held.

With them were a few Benedictine monks in their old scapularies and hoods, though these vestments were nearly worn out, the holy men being in great poverty.

A large portion of the abbey had been pulled down; but sufficient was left to show its former extent.

Attached to the monastic buildings was the church, a venerable edifice with two lofty towers, one of which was overgrown with ivy. Near the church stood a beautiful chapel dedicated to Saint Thomas à Becket.

The fair was held in the spacious close in

front of the church, and presented a very lively scene with its rows of covered stalls and booths.

The place resounded with the cries of the vendors of various articles— notably woollen stockings and wooden spoons, for which Wymondham was famous; while a drummer and a trumpeter in grotesque attire announced that later in the day a merry interlude would be performed in the refectory of the old abbey.

The peasants soon reached the close, and caused fresh alarm as they marched through the rows of stalls; but they molested no one, and at length drew up before Saint Thomas's Chapel, where the monks went in.

In this little fane, in former days, tapers were constantly burning at the high altar, which was sumptuously decorated; but now no great candlesticks were to be seen, no

ornaments, no silver casket containing relics. Breathing a sigh, the poor monks knelt down and prayed fervently to Saint Thomas—prayed that the old religion might be restored.

Meanwhile the peasants moved on to the gate of the abbey, and began to shout, coupling with their cries the name of an inhabitant of the town, whom they expected to see.

Shortly afterwards, as if in response to the appeal, the individual in question rode into their midst, and was very warmly welcomed.

A striking-looking personage. In age about forty—big, burly, broad-shouldered. He had dusky, yellow hair, and a beard of the same hue. Blue eyes that easily kindled into flame when he was angered. Large, handsome features, characterised by a bluff, good-humoured expression.

A tight-fitting doublet with wings and skirts, and buff boots, drawn above the knee, displayed his powerful frame. A flat cap covered his tawny locks, and a hunting-knife was stuck in his girdle. No other weapon. He required a strong horse, and the one he bestrode carried him well.

Robert Ket—for so was this stalwart personage named—was a tanner by trade, and might be accounted rich, since he possessed three manors, and as many houses. But he had bought no abbey lands, and consequently had not rendered himself obnoxious to the common folk.

Sympathising with their distresses, he had taken care to make them acquainted with his sentiments through their deputies, and had half promised to become their leader in the event of a rising; but he would not commit himself until he had spoken with them.

He therefore directed them to come in a body to Wymondham fair, and meet him near the abbey, enjoining them further to bring with them their spades and other implements, as they might have work to do.

Robert Ket had a younger brother, William, who greatly resembled him, and shared his sentiments; but the stalwart tanner was alone on this occasion.

After surveying the assemblage for a few minutes, and noting their numbers with satisfaction, Ket imposed silence by a gesture, and thus addressed them:

“I have a few words to say to you, my good friends, and I pray you give ear to me. The authorities of the town are afraid you will do some mischief, but I have engaged, on your part, that you will keep quiet so long as you remain here. Do not belie my words. You seek redress for your grievances, and I will endeavour to obtain

it for you, but only on condition that you obey my commands. Do you mark me?" he added, in an authoritative tone.

An immediate and general response in the affirmative followed, and those nearest him called out:

"We choose you for our captain, good Master Ket, and swear obedience to you! Lead us where you will! We will follow you to the death! What would you have us do?"

"I would have you undo the mischievous work done by the purchasers of abbey lands," he replied. "I would have you pull down the hedges, fill up the ditches, and restore the broad commons to their former state. For that reason I bade you bring with you your spades and pickaxes."

"We guessed as much," rejoined his hearers. "We are fully prepared for

the task, as you see. Where shall we begin?"

"At Hethersett," replied Ket, without a moment's hesitation. "John Flowerdew of Hethersett is a great oppressor of the poor, and an enemy of the Church. He helped to despoil yonder chapel dedicated to Saint Thomas à Becket, and carried off the large silver reliquary from the altar. In the hope of preserving a portion of the abbey, I obtained a grant of the choir; but he defeated my purpose by stripping the lead from the roof, besides doing other damages, and violating the tomb of the pious founder, William de Albin."

Here a cry of indignation burst from the assemblage, and at the same moment the monks came forth from the chapel.

At their head was a venerable man named Father Siffrid.

He had heard what had just been said respecting Flowerdew, and exclaimed, "The curse of Heaven is upon the sacrilegious wretch. Of all the Church's enemies, John Flowerdew is the worst. I charge him with inordinate covetousness, with pride, rapine, extortion, and oppression!"

"He deserves death!" cried several voices.

"Ay, marry, does he," rejoined Father Siffrid. "Yet take not his life. You will do harm to your cause if you begin with violence and bloodshed. It will suffice if you deprive him of his ill-gotten gains."

"You are right, good father," said Ket; "no bodily harm shall be done him. Come with us to Hethersett, and you shall see how we will deal with him."

"Willingly," replied Father Siffrid. "I and my brethren will gladly accompany you."

Then lifting up his hands, he cried out in

a loud voice, "Take my blessing! May Heaven prosper you and support you in the good work you have undertaken. May you be the means of restoring our holy Church!"

While this was going on, a great number of the townspeople and visitors to the fair had gathered round, and though taking no part in the proceedings, they did not express disapprobation.

The stout tanner was popular in Wymondham, and there were many persons who, like himself, desired to see the commons again thrown open. These persons cheered him lustily as he started on the expedition.

On the moor outside the town, Robert Ket found his brother William waiting for him, attended by a dozen brawny fellows, in leather jerkins, and armed with pikes, whom he had brought from the tanyard.

William Ket was well mounted, and had with him a couple of hackneys, which were

at once offered to Father Siffrid and Father Ufford, another aged monk, and proved a great help to them, since both were feeble.

Thus augmented, and having the two Kets and the Benedictines at its head, the party proceeded on its way.

While skirting Ketteringham Park, they were joined by another band of peasants, and throughout the journey were constantly receiving accessions, till their number amounted to several hundreds, and assumed a very formidable appearance.

Ere long they came to the newly enclosed lands belonging to Master John Flowerdew.

Originally, a large common had extended from this point to the village of Hethersett, which was more than half a mile distant; but the common was now turned into fields, and the fields were full of sheep.

Here a halt was made, and Robert Ket directed the peasants to level the fences

forthwith, and restore the common as nearly as possible to its original state.

The men signified their assent by a shout, and immediately set to work, and with such zeal that in a very short space of time one of the hateful enclosures was pulled down, no opposition being offered by the shepherds in the fields.

Well satisfied with the commencement he had made, Robert Ket left his brother William to superintend the operations, and proceeded to Hethersett.

The two old monks rode by his side, and the tanyard men formed his body-guard.

II.

JOHN FLOWERDEW OF HETHERSETT.

HETHERSETT was only a small village, but it boasted an ancient church. Village and church belonged to Master John Flowerdew, who had a large mansion in the vicinity.

John Flowerdew was a rich country gentleman, who had greatly increased his property of late years, as we have shown, by the purchase of abbey lands.

Exceedingly covetous and oppressive, he was feared and hated by his tenants and

servants. Not only had he plundered Wymondham Abbey and Saint Thomas's Chapel, but he had disturbed the repose of the dead in his own churchyard—removing monuments, and digging up coffins for the sake of the lead.

The sole redeeming point about Flowerdew was his affection for his daughter, who was probably the only person really attached to him. His wife had been dead many years.

Margaret Flowerdew resembled her mother, who had been very beautiful and very amiable. The fair damsel was not yet twenty, but her grave, quiet manner made her look somewhat older. Undoubtedly she had a certain influence over her father, though she could not restrain him from many acts that caused her infinite pain. Already, as may be supposed, she had had several suitors, for she was an only child,

and her wealth attracted them as well as her beauty, but she gave none of them encouragement, and her father did not seem to desire that she should marry, at least for the present.

Probably, no offer had been made for her hand that he deemed of sufficient importance. In his opinion, his beautiful daughter, with the dowry he could give her, ought to make a great match, and he hoped to unite her to a person of high rank.

John Flowerdew was not far from sixty, but his countenance bore few traces of age, and his hair and beard were still quite black. He was tall and erect, and his deportment was haughty. A black quilted doublet, with hose puffed at the knee, constituted his ordinary attire, and he had generally a long sword by his side.

Flowerdew was well acquainted with Robert Ket, but there was anything but a

friendly feeling between them, and they had had several sharp disputes about the abbey and other matters.

On the day when Ket with his band of peasants came from Wymondham to Hethersett, Flowerdew was wholly unprepared for the visit. No one came to warn him of the meditated attack; and even when the destruction of the fences had commenced, the shepherds neglected to send a messenger to inform him of the violent proceedings.

Unluckily for himself, it chanced that at the very time when he ought to have been guarding his property, he was despoiling a grave in the churchyard.

With great labour, a large coffin had been unearthed by Caister, the sexton, and his two assistants, and Flowerdew, after examining it, had just ordered them to strip off the lead, and burst open the coffin, when his purpose was checked by the sound of

some persons approaching; and presently Ket appeared on the other side of the wall surrounding the churchyard, with the old Benedictines, and his rough but formidable guard.

On discovering what Flowerdew and his men were about, the monks uttered a cry of horror, and Ket exclaimed :

“Soh! you are at your customary employment, I perceive, Master Flowerdew. Since you can no longer rob the living, you are plundering the dead.”

“Profane wretch!” cried Father Siffrid. “For thy many wicked acts like this, thy soul shall dwell in everlasting torment.”

“Buried thou mayest be,” added Father Ufford; “but thou shalt never rest in the grave. Thy dust shall be scattered abroad.”

“What do you here?” cried Flowerdew, fiercely. “This churchyard belongs to me,

and I shall deal with it as I think fit. Be-gone!"

"It is not my intention to depart at present," said Ket. "Hitherto you have escaped punishment for your many offences; but you will escape no longer. I have come to inform you that the illegal enclosures you have made on your lands are now being pulled down."

"You have not dared to meddle with my property?" cried Flowerdew, furiously.

"I tell you I have ordered your fencing to be levelled," rejoined Ket. "The men are now hard at work, and will not desist till their task is accomplished."

Flowerdew looked confounded; but he was a bold man, and soon regained his self-possession.

"If this be true," he said, "you have committed a great outrage. But why am

I selected? All the other abbey lands have been enclosed."

"All enclosures will be pulled down," rejoined Ket, sternly. "Learn that the peasants have risen."

"And you doubtless are their leader," cried Flowerdew.

"I am," replied Ket. "We have not risen in rebellion against the king, but to free him from evil counsellors. Our design is to reform abuses, and punish the oppressors of the poor and the enemies of the Church, of whom thou, John Flowerdew, art the worst."

"Beware the fate of John the Littester," replied Flowerdew. "He rose with the commons of Thetford and Yarmouth in 1381 to redress grievances, and attacked Norwich; but he was hanged—mark me hanged!—by Bishop Spenser. Such may be thy end."

“At least, thou wilt not hang me,” cried Ket. “Seize him!” he added, to his men.

At the words, the sturdy fellows sprang over the churchyard wall, and rushing upon Flowerdew, snatched the sword from his grasp, and secured him.

Finding it vain to struggle, he remained quiet; but threatened his captors with punishment for their violence.

Neither Caister nor the helpers rendered him any assistance; and as Ket called out to them to restore the coffin to its bed and fill up the grave, they promptly obeyed the order.

“Now bring along the prisoner,” said Ket to his men.

“Whither would you take me?” demanded Flowerdew.

“First to thy enclosures, that thou may'st see what we are doing,” replied Ket. “Next

to the house thou hast hitherto called thine own."

"And is it not still mine own?" asked Flowerdew.

"I know not," replied Ket. "This much I can tell thee. I and these holy fathers, with some others, intend to lodge there to-night, and my followers must be fed."

Ket and his companions then rode back to the fields, and close behind them came the prisoner and the guard.

It was astonishing to see what had been done by the peasants in this brief interval. Already several pastures had been laid open, and the sheep driven off to a distant enclosure.

Causing Flowerdew to be placed on a little mound, whence he could discern all that was going on, Ket said to him:

"You see I have not deceived you. Be-

fore night the work will be entirely finished."

"I doubt it not," rejoined Flowerdew, whose courage began to desert him. "But suffer me to go hence, I beseech you. The sight troubles me, and my presence here can serve no good purpose."

"Yes, it will stimulate the labourers," said Ket.

And it seemed to do so. For when the peasants learnt that Flowerdew was looking on, they worked more vigorously than ever.

Subsequently, the captive gentleman was taken through the fields, and had to submit to constant insults and indignities, but since he was protected by the guard, no personal injury was done him.

For several hours he endured this punishment, but when the last fence was levelled,

he hoped to be liberated. Ket, however, turned a deaf ear to his entreaties.

“I have not done with you yet,” said the rebel leader. “A ceremony is about to be performed, at which you must assist.”

The stern significance with which this order was delivered greatly alarmed Flowerdew.

Fancying Ket was about to hang him, he begged piteously for life. No answer was vouchsafed him, but he was taken back to the little mound, around which the entire body of the peasants quickly collected.

Close beside the captive gentleman were the two Kets, on horseback; Fathers Siffrid and Ufford, likewise on horseback; and the men from the tanyard.

As soon as silence could be procured, Flowerdew was forced to make a solemn declaration that he would never again enclose a common, never desecrate a church,

never oppress the poor, but do his utmost to restore and uphold the ancient religion.

To appease the anger of the peasants, he offered them the whole of his sheep, but they scouted the offer, and said the sheep were theirs already, and they meant to shear them, and sell the wool. He then made them other promises, which they treated with derision.

Robert Ket next addressed the concourse, and proposed that they should all bind themselves by oath to reform abuses in Church and State.

Thereupon the entire assemblage swore upon the cross, which was held up to them by Father Siffrid, that they would sacrifice substance and life itself in the cause of the people, and for the welfare of the Church.

Flowerdew could not refuse the oath, but took it under compulsion.

Leaving his brother with the peasants,

who were preparing to kill a number of sheep, Ket then quitted the field, and, attended by the Benedictines and his body-guard, proceeded to Hethersett House, taking with him the captive gentleman.

III.

MARGARET FLOWERDEW.

A LARGE moated mansion was Hethersett House, quadrangular in form, and containing a spacious court. Situated in the midst of a park of no great size, it was well stocked with deer, and possessed some fine old timber.

Aware that Flowerdew kept very few servants, Ket did not imagine that any attempt would be made to defend the house, and he was greatly surprised, on arriving

there, to find that the drawbridge was raised, and the gate shut.

However, he rode up to the edge of the moat, and ordered the porter, whom he could descry at a window in one of the turrets, to admit him instantly with his attendants.

“You can see your master is with us, sirrah,” he said. “Why do you delay?”

“I am not sure my master would desire to come in with such company,” replied the porter. “At any rate, before complying, I must consult Mistress Margaret.”

“Tell her, her father is without—that will suffice,” cried Ket.

Immediately afterwards, a very comely young damsel, attended by the porter and an elderly female servant, appeared on the summit of the gateway.

Margaret Flowerdew’s demeanour was haughty, but despite her resolute bearing,

it was easy to perceive she was very anxious for her father's safety.

Ket instantly recognised her, having often seen her at Wymondham, and had been greatly struck by her beauty. Bowing as he spoke, he therefore intimated to her that the house must be delivered up to him.

“In making this requisition, fair mistress,” he added, “I undertake that no harm shall be done you or any of the household—nor shall you be subjected to any annoyance that I can prevent.”

But Margaret was far from being satisfied with this assurance.

“I cannot doubt, from the guise in which you come, that you intend to plunder the house,” she rejoined, boldly. “I therefore refuse to deliver it up to you, and shall hold it against you and your followers as long as I can.”

“I admire your courage, fair mis-

“tress,” replied Ket. “But with the half-dozen servants at your command—and I know you have no more—you cannot possibly maintain the place against the host I have with me. Four hundred men, who call me captain, will be here anon.”

“Then you avow yourself a captain of robbers!” cried Margaret.

“I proclaim myself a redresser of the wrongs of the people,” rejoined Ket, proudly. “I will see justice done them.”

“But you should use lawful means to accomplish your object,” said Margaret. “You and your men are rebels, and all loyal subjects of the king are bound to resist you. I have few to help me, as you have said truly. Nevertheless, I will not suffer you to enter this house.”

“You cannot prevent me,” replied Ket; “and I trust your father will command you to admit us peaceably. Otherwise, he will

be responsible for any disaster that may ensue."

"Will you engage not to plunder the house if I assent?" said Flowerdew.

"I can make no more promises," replied Ket. "But I recommend you not to wait for the arrival of my band," he added, significantly.

Flowerdew took the advice, and called out to the porter to lower the drawbridge and open the gate.

Upon this, Margaret withdrew, and her father's injunctions being obeyed, Ket and those with him entered the court.

The principal door was on the right of the quadrangle, and on the steps stood Margaret with four or five men-servants behind her, among whom was the steward, Ely Harling, a man of great shrewdness and intelligence, and well known to Ket.

Margaret's anxiety greatly increased when

she found her father was not set free. But, while embracing him, she inquired in a whisper if he had any fear for his life.

“The greatest fear,” he replied, in the same low tone. “All depends on Ket. A word from him would decide my fate. Therefore offend him not. I shall try to purchase my safety.”

Meanwhile, the rebel leader and the two monks had dismounted, and their horses were taken to the stables by the direction of Harling, who instantly perceived the necessity of conciliating Ket, and invited him and the Benedictines into the house, ushering them into the great dining-chamber, where he prayed them to be seated, adding that a repast should be prepared for them forthwith.

“I shall not object to the repast,” replied Ket, “neither will the holy fathers, for we have eaten nothing since morning. But

the wants of my men must be first attended to. I have more than four hundred half-starved peasants with me. They must be fed."

Harling seemed puzzled, but after a moment's reflection answered:

"Our larder is indifferently supplied, but there are plenty of sheep in the pastures."

"And some of them, I doubt not, are already killed and cut up," said Ket. "But where is the meat to be cooked? Methinks you have scarce a kitchen fire large enough to roast a dozen legs of mutton."

"The business can be thus arranged," said Harling. "At the back of the hall is a farm-yard, where any number of fires can be lighted, and as much mutton roasted as you please. Besides, there is a large barn close at hand wherein your men can feast. They will be much more comfortable there

than in the house, and can have plenty of ale and Norfolk dumplings."

"Nay, if they have ale and Norfolk dumplings, they will need little more," remarked Ket, with a laugh. "But I have further orders to give you. Just now you offered to prepare a repast for me. It must be for a score of persons, and quickly served."

"It shall be done," replied Harling. "In half an hour, or an hour at the latest, the repast shall be ready, and I will try to content you."

Ket then quitted the hall, and returned to the court, where he found Flowerdew, surrounded by the tanyard men.

Margaret had disappeared, and none of the household were visible, except the porter, who was standing near the gate.

As it was clear this man could not be relied on, Ket sent half a dozen of his trusty

followers to take his place, and told the rest to go into the house with Flowerdew.

“Do not let him out of your sight for a moment, or you will lose him,” he said. “Take him to the dining-hall, and remain with him there till my return.”

Having fully explained their duties to the men he had stationed at the gateway, and promised them plenty to eat anon, Ket crossed the drawbridge, and went into the park.

He had not proceeded far when a great noise informed him that the peasants were approaching; and presently the whole band could be seen emerging from the trees.

Evidently they had laid in a good stock of provisions. Three fat bucks had just been killed, and were borne in triumph in front, and several carcasses of sheep could likewise be distinguished.

Well pleased at the sight, Ket waited till his brother rode up, and then shouting to the band to follow him, led the way to the farm-yard, where everything was found exactly as Harling had described it.

Fortunately, there was a large stock of wood in the yard, and, while the peasants were lighting the fires, the rebel leader explained his plans to his brother.

“My intention is to remain here till to-morrow morning,” he said, “when I shall march upon Norwich; but we want arms and ammunition, and it must be your business to procure them.”

“Shall I go back to Wymondham?” asked William Ket.

“No; ride on to Norwich,” replied his brother. “Take half a dozen men with you, if you find horses enow in the stables. Make it known everywhere on the road that a rising has taken place. On entering

Norwich you will soon have a crowd round you. Tell them the peasants have risen, that I have become their leader, and that to-morrow I shall march on the city. But add that I want arms, ammunition, and artillery, as well as men. Dare you do this?"

"Dare I do it!" replied William Ket, boldly. "There is nothing to fear. Many of the citizens are as discontented as the peasants themselves, and will at once join the insurrection. Of that I am certain. To-morrow you will have a large force."

"Appoint a rendezvous at Eaton," said Robert Ket. "I will be there an hour after daybreak."

"As soon as I have seen to the wants of these poor fellows, I will start on the expedition," said William Ket, "and will take Flotman and four others with me."

Just then, a barrel of ale was brought from the house, together with a goodly supply of drinking-horns, wooden platters, spoons, knives and forks, and other articles, all of which were joyfully received by the men, who were now preparing to place some huge pieces of venison and mutton before their fires.

Satisfied with all that was going on, Ket then quitted the yard.

On his reappearance in the dining-hall, the promised repast was immediately laid on the table by the steward, and no complaint could be made, for it was abundant and good.

Besides Fathers Siffrid and Ufford, some eight or ten poor Benedictines partook of the meal, having been specially invited by the rebel leader.

At the lower end of the board sat Flowerdew, with a guard on either side,

and two opposite, so that escape seemed impossible. Nevertheless, he did escape. While the men who had charge of him were giving up their seats to their comrades, he suddenly burst from them, and dashed out of the hall, the door being hastily shut by Harling to prevent pursuit.

Enraged at the occurrence, Ket caused the steward to be brought before him, and said :

“Since you have aided your master’s escape, you must take his place. Produce him, and I will set you free. Otherwise I shall hang you.”

“So this is my reward,” said Harling. “I have done all in my power to pleasure you, and now you threaten to put me to death. I cannot produce my master, and would not if I could.”

At this juncture, Margaret Flowerdew, without any attendants, entered the hall,

and hastened towards the rebel leader, who had now seated himself.

As she passed along, Harling called out to her :

“You have just arrived in time to save me. Master Ket declares he will hang me unless I deliver up your father to him. A word from you may induce him to change his mind.”

“I know not that,” remarked Ket. “But I am willing to hear what Mistress Margaret has to say.”

“I am come to offer you a ransom for our faithful servant Harling,” she replied. “He must not suffer for his devotion.”

“What ransom do you offer, fair mistress?” inquired Ket.

“A hundred nobles,” she returned.

“I am content,” said Ket.

“The money shall be brought you

presently," rejoined Margaret, about to depart.

"Stay!" cried Ket. "You are here to represent your father, and I will, therefore, make a proposition to you, which I meant to make to him. All the plunder taken from Wymondham Abbey—the reliquary from Saint Thomas's Chapel, the sacred vessels and ornaments from the altar—all these must be restored to the holy fathers here present, to whom they rightfully belong. If this be done, and no sacred relic be kept back, I will leave your father free. But if compliance with my order be refused, I will plunder the whole house, and put your father to death, if I find him."

"A righteous decision, my son," said Father Siffrid.

Margaret possessed great courage, and at this trying moment it did not desert her.

“If I answer for my father, will it suffice?” she said, regarding the rebel leader steadfastly.

“I will take your promise to deliver up the things I have mentioned,” said Ket.

“Then I give it,” she replied. “I have always felt that this pillage of shrines and altars would not profit us, and shall be glad that these holy men should have it back. Let Harling come with me, and as soon as may be all the sacred articles you have mentioned shall be brought down to you.”

“Be it so,” rejoined Ket.

“By doing this, daughter, you will make reparation for your father’s wrongful acts,” observed Father Ufford.

Margaret then quitted the hall with the steward, who had been set free at a sign from Ket.

Ere long they re-appeared, but were now accompanied by another man-servant, whose

assistance was required in carrying the numerous articles.

When the reliquary, which the monks held in the greatest reverence, was placed on the table, they pressed around it, and each, in turn, touched it with his lips.

IV.

THE MAYOR OF NORWICH.

ON that evening, and at an early hour, William Ket, the rebel leader's brother, accompanied by a few sturdy yeomen, all well mounted, set out for Norwich, which was about six miles distant from Hethersett.

As they rode at a good pace, they soon expected to reach their destination; but they met with a few stoppages that somewhat delayed them.

All the country folks they encountered wished to hear something about the rising,

and William Ket bade them join the band on the morrow, which most of them promised to do.

William Ket greatly resembled his brother, and had the same bluff, good-humoured manner, so that he pleased all those who addressed him.

After passing through a woody district, the party reached Cringleford, where they crossed the Yare, and then halted for a few minutes at Eaton to make some inquiries, and learnt that tidings of the insurrection had already reached Norwich, causing great excitement and alarm.

From this it seemed doubtful whether they would be allowed to enter the city. However, they resolved to make the attempt, and pushed on.

Long ere this, the lofty spire of the cathedral, springing to a height of nigh three hundred feet from the ground, had been

seen, together with the grand Norman keep of the old castle.

On both these striking objects, as well as on the numerous church-towers, and other edifices embellishing the city, the radiance of the setting sun now fell, and constituted a splendid picture.

Unquestionably, Norwich at that time, with its antique walls, towers, and gates, which were then perfect, its magnificent cathedral, and proud castle, was one of the most picturesque and beautiful cities in the kingdom.

But the insurgents, who now gazed upon its walls and towers, thought not of their beauty, but were only anxious to enter the city, and they were now reconnoitring Saint Giles's Gate to ascertain whether an additional guard had been placed there.

Unable to satisfy themselves on this point, they rode up to the gate in question, and,

somewhat to their surprise, were at once allowed admittance.

However, an explanation was soon offered them. For the moment, it appeared, the city was in the hands of the mob, who had taken possession of several of the gates.

The news of the insurrection at Wyndham, which had been received a few hours previously, had caused a popular tumult, but no mischief had been done, although a great crowd was still assembled in the market-place.

Thither William Ket at once repaired with his attendants.

At that time, the large area forming the market-place was surrounded by old gabled houses, that gave it a very picturesque appearance.

Amidst these ancient habitations was the Guildhall, and at the south-east corner could be seen the large square tower of Saint Peter's

Mancroft, together with the upper part of that noble fabric, second only to the cathedral itself in size and architectural beauty.

When it became known that the brother of the rebel leader was present, a tremendous shout arose from the concourse, most of whom were armed with weapons of some sort, but chiefly with arquebuses and bows and arrows.

As soon as William Ket could obtain a hearing from the tumultuous throng, he told them that his brother Robert, the tanner of Wymondham, whom they well knew, had taken up arms to redress the wrongs of the commons, who were ground to the dust by the tyranny and oppression of the rich, and would not rest till he had accomplished his purpose, and provided the young king with trusty counsellors, in lieu of those who thought only of enriching themselves with the public treasure.

This address was exceedingly well received by the crowd, all of whom offered to aid in the good work.

“Then you must join the insurrection at once,” said William Ket. “The sword has been drawn, and cannot be sheathed till the wrongs of the people are avenged. To-morrow, my brother Robert, with the band he has collected, will march on this city, which he knows to be favourable to the good cause, and he earnestly prays that all those who have the welfare of the people at heart will meet him at daybreak to-morrow at Eaton-by-Cringleford, and bring with them such arms and artillery as they can procure.”

A hundred voices answered in the affirmative, and several called out :

“We will go with you now, if you desire it.”

“I thank you in my brother’s name for

your prompt response to his request," rejoined William Ket. "To-morrow will be best. At the early hour I have named, and at the place appointed, I shall expect to find you."

"We will be there!" shouted the throng.

At this juncture the sound of a trumpet very loudly blown drew general attention to the Guildhall.

From the main door of the building came forth the mayor, with Master Henry Bacon and John Atkinson, sheriffs, Alderman Rogers, Homeston, and Brampton, and attended by John Petibone, sword-bearer, with a guard of halberdiers.

The mayor did not descend the steps, but stationed himself near the doorway, in order that he might beat an immediate retreat in case a fresh disturbance should arise.

Master Thomas Clopton, at that time

Mayor of Norwich, was a wealthy woollen-draper; and having been exceedingly prosperous himself in his business, was quite content to let things go on as they had been doing, feeling satisfied they could not be improved. Master Clopton did not believe in the sufferings of the poor, nor in the oppressions they endured from the rich, but thought matters would soon come right if mischievous persons did not sow sedition among the community.

In appearance Master Clopton was short and stout, rather beyond the middle age, and his rosy countenance gave evidence of a fondness for good living. At many a civic banquet had he assisted in Saint Andrew's Hall.

For several hours the mayor had remained in the Guildhall, whither he repaired with the aldermen and sheriffs on the outbreak of the disturbance, being un-

willing to meddle with the concourse, and hoping it would peaceably disperse.

But he was disappointed. The crowd seemed rather to increase than diminish in number; and when he heard of the arrival of William Ket, he thought it necessary to bestir himself, and come forth as has been stated.

Proclamation having been made by sound of trumpet, enjoining all loyal citizens to return to their homes, the mayor thus addressed the assemblage :

“I am told,” he said, “that there are among you certain wicked and seditious persons who are striving to incite you to rebellion. For the present I am willing to show them a forbearance they do not merit, and shall content myself with ordering them to quit the city instantly. If they disobey the injunction, it will be at their

proper peril, for I will show them no further leniency. They will be arrested, imprisoned in the castle dungeons, and punished according to the magnitude of their offences."

Unfortunately the majority of the crowd had but little respect for the mayor and the other civic authorities, and treated this address with derision.

Finding they showed no inclination to disperse, the mayor caused the trumpet to be again sounded, and called out :

"Dear fellow citizens, compel me not, I beseech you, to resort to extremities, but depart peaceably to your homes, and deliver up to justice the rebels and traitors who are among you."

On this, William Ket, aware that he should be supported by the crowd, and that no attempt would be made to arrest him,

rode boldly up to the entrance of the Guildhall, and, haughtily regarding the mayor, bespoke him thus :

“ I would fain say a few words to you, worshipful sir !” he cried.

“ I cannot listen to you,” interrupted the mayor, who had recognised him. “ You are the brother of Robert Ket, the tanner, of Wymondham, who has constituted himself, as I hear, leader of this wicked insurrection. Let me warn him, through you, to desist from the treasonable attempt. He has not yet advanced too far for pardon, but, if he persists, the severest punishment awaits him and his deluded followers.”

“ Your menaces have no terror for us,” rejoined William Ket. “ The cause in which we have embarked is just, and cannot fail. You have warned me, and, in my turn, I warn you. In a few days—perhaps in a few hours—we shall be masters of this city,

and it will then be for you to make terms with us."

"I should be unworthy of the high office I hold," cried the mayor, whose spirit was now aroused, "if I tolerated language like this! I, therefore, call upon you, as loyal subjects of the king, to assist in the arrest of this bold rebel and traitor!"

But no one among the assemblage seemed willing to obey the order. On the contrary, the bystanders prevented the approach of the guard, and enabled the daring rebel to ride off. He was immediately joined by his men, who were close at hand, prepared to render him assistance, and quitted the city.

Elated at having set the mayor's authority at defiance, and anxious to let his brother know what he had done, William Ket galloped back with his followers to Hethersett.

The farm-yard, when he entered it, presented a curious scene.

Tired with the hard work of the day, and rendered drowsy by the ale, most of the peasants were lying stretched on the ground near the half-extinguished fires. Some few had retired to the barn to rest for the night, and a few others kept watch ; but the majority were fast asleep, and could not easily be roused.

Ascertaining that his brother was in the house, William Ket dismounted and proceeded thither.

Though the drawbridge was down, good watch was kept at the gate. The rebel leader was in the dining-hall, standing near the table, on which lights were placed, and was examining several swords, arquebuses, breastplates, and other pieces of armour that had been found in the house.

From this collection he had already

chosen some accoutrements that suited him, and was now trying a sword; but he paused in his task on seeing his brother, and eagerly inquired how he had succeeded at Norwich.

“Better than I expected,” replied William Ket. “The city has risen, and will soon be ours. You will scarce credit me when I tell you I bearded the mayor himself at the door of the Guildhall, though he was surrounded by his guard. He did not dare to arrest me, for the market-place was full of our friends, who would have instantly rescued me. Saint Giles’s Gate was opened to admit me, and to let me out. To-morrow you will be at the head of a large force. At Eaton more than a thousand citizens will meet you at an early hour, well armed, and ready to execute your orders, be they what they may.”

“By my faith! you bring me good news,”

cried the rebel leader, joyfully. "I do not expect to be master of the city quite so soon. But take it I will, or perish in the attempt. Master of Norwich, London itself will soon be mine."

At this juncture, one of the guard posted at the gate entered the hall, and said a young gentleman was without who desired speech of the insurgent leader.

"Knowest thou who he is?" demanded Ket.

"Ay, marry," replied the man; "'tis Master Augustin Stewart. He says he brings a message from the Mayor of Norwich. He is on horseback, and has two mounted attendants with him."

"Augustin Stewart is a young man of good family, and a great favourite with the mayor, who treats him like a son," observed Ket to his brother. "I know him, and he should be well known here; for, unless I

am much mistaken, he has been a suitor to fair Mistress' Margaret Flowerdew. Go to him, and tell him I will see him. Add that he need have no fear. I guarantee his safety; but his attendants must remain outside."

William Ket at once obeyed, and presently returned with a tall, fine-looking young man.

V.

AUGUSTIN STEWART.

AUGUSTIN STEWART might be five-and-twenty, and had a well-proportioned figure and a handsome countenance, characterised by a manly expression. He wore a quilted-silk doublet, a short velvet mantle, a small cap adorned with a feather, funnel-topped boots, and had a long rapier by his side.

He did not exhibit any uneasiness, but rather haughtily returned Ket's salutation.

"I hope you have come to tell me that

you mean to join the insurrection, Master Stewart," said Ket.

"On the contrary," replied Augustin. "I have come to use my best endeavours to induce you to withdraw from a scheme that can only end in your own destruction. Why should you, who have held so high a position in your own town of Wymondham, become the ringleader of a rebellious mob?"

"My object is to aid the poor, and lower the pride and check the rapacity of the rich," replied Ket. "But I thought my motives would be readily understood."

"Your motives may be praiseworthy, Master Ket," said Augustin Stewart. "But they will lead to dire results. The wrongs of the poor cannot be remedied in this way, and the inevitable failure of the outbreak which you have assisted, will only make their condition infinitely worse. I

still advise you to retire while there is yet time, and not sully your fair name."

"If this is all you have to say to me, the interview had better terminate," rejoined Ket, sternly. "You will soon find out whether this movement is beneficial or not; but rest certain it will not be stopped till the great end at which we aim is achieved. Fare you well, sir. I have promised that you shall depart freely, and I will keep my word, though I own I am far from pleased by this intrusion. If you have ought more to say to me, let it be said in Norwich—in the castle."

"You will never enter the castle, except as a prisoner, Master Ket," rejoined Augustin Stewart. "But I have now a favour to ask of you."

"A favour! ha!" cried Ket. "Name it?"

"I do not think Master Flowerdew and

his daughter are safe here. Will you allow me to take them hence?"

"Where do you desire to take them?"

"To Norwich."

"Humph!" exclaimed Ket.

"Master Flowerdew has many enemies," observed Augustin, "and they may take this opportunity of wreaking their vengeance upon him!"

"He is safe while I am here," said Ket. "But if he desires to go with you, I will not hinder him; and, assuredly, I will not detain his daughter."

He then clapped his hands, and the summons was almost immediately answered by Harling.

"Tell your master and your young mistress, that Master Augustin Stewart is here," said Ket, "and will take them to Norwich, if they desire to go thither to-

night. They can have horses from the stables."

"I doubt not they will gladly accept your offer, worshipful sir," replied Harling. And he added, entreatingly, "I would fain make one of the party."

"E'en as thou wilt," said Ket. "I have no further need of thy services."

With a significant look at Augustin Stewart, Harling left the hall; and immediately afterwards Ket signed to his brother to follow him, and went forth into the court.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and all looked so quiet, that it was difficult to imagine that the house was in the hands of an enemy.

"I suppose you wish to get rid of Flowerdew and his daughter, that you allow them to depart thus?" remarked William Ket.

“Exactly,” replied the other. “Before we set out to-morrow morning, the house will be plundered, and I would willingly spare her such a scene. Go to the stables, and see that all is got ready for their departure.”

Meanwhile, Augustin Stewart had been joined by Margaret, who flew at once to the hall when she heard of his arrival from Harling.

She was surprised to find him alone.

“Oh, how thankful I am to you for coming to us, good Master Stewart!” she cried. “We have been in a dreadful state of alarm, and I think I should have died of fright had I been compelled to pass the night here.”

“I hope you have not been treated badly,” cried Augustin.

“No; Robert Ket, the rebel leader, has shown me much consideration — but my

father's life has been threatened, and even now I think he is in danger."

"Dismiss your fears," cried Augustin. "Ket has agreed that you shall both return with me to Norwich. The mayor will receive you till other arrangements can be made. Ah! I little thought," he added, in a tenderer tone, "when we last parted, that we should meet again in this manner."

"You have risked your life in coming here," she cried.

"I would risk a hundred lives if I had them to serve you," he rejoined, passionately. "But we must not waste time. I shall not feel easy till we are out of this house. Where is your father?"

"I left him with Harling. He had some slight preparations to make."

"I hope he will not delay," cried Augustin.

"No; he is here," said Margaret.

And as she spoke, Flowerdew entered the hall.

He was hastily equipped for the journey, and attended by Harling and Margaret's old female servant, Dorothy. The latter brought a cloak, with a hood attached to it, for her young mistress.

Very few words passed between Flowerdew and Augustin, and both displayed great anxiety to be gone.

On issuing forth into the court they found Ket, and for a moment feared he might offer some hindrance to their departure.

But it was soon evident that he had no such design. With much courtesy he conducted them to the other side of the moat, where the horses and attendants were waiting for them. Margaret sat on a pillion behind her father, and a similar seat was provided for old Dorothy, of whom Harling took charge.

Shortly afterwards the whole party were making the best of their way to Norwich, where they arrived in about half an hour in perfect safety.

VI.

HOW THE INSURGENT LEADER SOUGHT TO CAPTURE SIR EDMUND WINDHAM, HIGH SHERIFF OF NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of Master Flowerdew and his daughter with Augustin Stewart, the rebel leader caused the drawbridge to be raised, the gate shut, and all needful precautions taken to guard against a nocturnal attack. He then sought a bed-chamber, and, flinging himself on a couch, soon fell fast asleep.

Day had not yet dawned when he roused

himself, and, descending to the lower part of the house, found the Benedictines at prayers, and joined them in their devotions.

In company with his brother he then sallied forth, and proceeded to the farm-yard.

Though the bell had not yet tolléd the third hour, the peasants were astir, and busily engaged in preparations for breakfast.

Again the fires were lighted, and fresh pieces of venison and mutton set before them. As it had been ascertained that there was more ale in the cellar, another barrel was sent for, and, in due time, made its appearance.

A general demand to plunder the house was now made by the insurgents, and, after some little demur, their leader assented. But he only gave them an hour for the

work, and compelled them to go in three divisions.

As may be supposed, very little was left for the third party. Before they got in, the house was stripped of every portable article. Ket, however, ordered that the plunder should be fairly divided among the whole band.

Somewhat later on, the rebel leader received an immense accession of forces.

Before five o'clock he had been joined by a thousand additional men, most of whom were armed in one way or other; and so many of them had bows and arrows, that Ket determined to form a company of archers.

The majority of the new-comers were young men, and it was difficult to imagine, from their appearance or attire, that they all belonged to the lower classes of society.

Some of them certainly did not. A considerable number were mounted—quite sufficient, indeed, to form a troop of horse. How they came by their steeds was a question that Ket and his brother did not think it needful to put.

Unfortunately for the new-comers, the provisions were exhausted. Some men had been sent to the pastures to kill more sheep, and others to the park to shoot deer, but nothing was ready.

Previously to setting out on his march, the rebel leader assembled as many of the new-comers in the court as the place would hold, and addressed them from an upper window, explaining his designs, and appointing some twenty or thirty officers, to each of whom he gave the command of a small party.

These arrangements made, by the combined efforts of the two Kets and the newly-

appointed officers, the whole force, which now numbered nearly two thousand men, was got into marching order, and set out thus from Hethersett.

First came the horse, consisting of two hundred men, mounted as we have described, at the head of whom rode the rebel leader.

Ket was now fully accoutred in the armour he had found in the hall, which suited his stalwart figure, and gave him a very knightly appearance.

Near him rode his standard-bearer, Peter Rockland.

Rockland was a stout young man, well armed and well mounted, and carried a long staff, to which was affixed a broad white silk flag, embroidered with a ploughshare and a sword.

Ket was likewise accompanied by Fathers Siffrid and Ufford.

After the horsemen came the archers and crossbow-men ; then the arquebusiers ; then the pikemen ; and, lastly, the peasants, commanded by William Ket.

Though armed only with their agricultural implements, the peasants constituted a formidable band.

The morning smiled upon the insurgents as they set forth joyously on their march.

With them they had several soothsayers, who foretold that if the sun shone brightly as they crossed Cringleford Bridge the expedition would prosper.

So they were all in high spirits, for Cringleford was only three miles off, and the morning could scarcely change before they reached the bridge.

Contrary to expectation, however, the sky became suddenly clouded, and a few drops of rain fell at the wrong moment.

This trifling incident had a discouraging

effect on the superstitious peasantry, but William Ket soon laughed them out of their fears.

At Eaton, where they halted, their force was augmented by a great number of citizens, and Ket now found himself the commander of an army of more than four thousand men. Besides, he had obtained a good supply of arms of all kinds, ammunition and artillery, which the citizens brought with them.

At the sight of the three pieces of ordnance now exhibited to them, the insurgents quite recovered their ardour, which had been damped by the slight shower of rain. Possessed of these cannon, they thought themselves invincible.

When the arms had been distributed, the citizens were formed into a separate division, of which Ket now took the command, re-

linquishing the post he had previously held to his brother.

Ere long the whole force was in motion, the citizens forming the first division, with Ket at its head.

Once more the day had changed. The clouds had disappeared, and the sun shone bright on the towers and walls of the ancient city. It could be seen that the royal standard was displayed on the summit of the castle keep.

Marching slowly, the rebel army had not advanced far, when a large party of horsemen, evidently fully equipped, and with helm and corslet glittering in the sunbeams, was seen galloping towards them.

Ket immediately called a halt, and waited till the troop came up, when he perceived that it belonged to a very important person, Sir Edmund Windham, high sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Sir Edmund, who was a remarkably fine-looking man, wore a suit of polished mail, and rode a powerful black war-horse. He did not appear intimidated by the number of the rebellious host, but riding close up to them, called out in a loud voice :

“In the king’s name, I command you to lay down your arms and turn back, or you will be put to death as rebels and traitors !”

“By whom shall we be put to death, Sir Edmund ?” demanded Ket, sternly.

“By me !” replied the high sheriff.

“We laugh at your idle threats !” said the rebel leader. “If you are wise, you will join us, and assist in the work of reformation which we have just commenced.”

“I regard the proposition as an insult !” said Sir Edmund, disdainfully. “I have naught to do with rebels. Hear me, misguided men !” he called out in a loud voice. “Return to your allegiance, and you shall

be pardoned ; but if you go on, the severest punishment will be inflicted upon you !”

“No more of this, Sir Edmund, if you desire to return in safety to Norwich,” cried Ket. “You have delivered yourself into my hands, and may be thankful that I let you depart freely. Begone, and bid the mayor prepare for our reception.”

“The hangman will give you the fittest reception, and he shall be ready for you !” said Sir Edmund.

And he then called out again, “For your own sake, I pray you listen to me, my good friends.”

“I’ll hear no more !” rejoined Ket. “Upon him !” he shouted to his followers.

Thereupon a great number of horsemen, who had been waiting for the order, dashed forward, and surrounded the high sheriff.

But Sir Edmund Windham proved himself a valiant knight.

Before a hand could be laid upon his bridle he had drawn his sword, and being mounted on a powerful charger, and possessing great personal strength, he drove back those who strove to seize him, wounding several, and slaying one, and without receiving any injury, succeeded in rejoining his escort.

“To Norwich!” he cried, as he galloped off at a furious pace, followed by the others.

A great number of the insurgents started in pursuit, but not being so well mounted as the high sheriff or his troop, they had no chance of capturing him or any of his men. and were soon compelled to abandon the chase. But they watched the fugitives pass through Saint Giles’s Gate.

“The capture of the high sheriff would have been most important to us,” cried Ket.
“’Tis a pity he has escaped.”

VII.

HOW KET AND HIS FOLLOWERS CROSSED HELLEDON BRIDGE
AND MARCHED TO CATTON AND SPROWSTON.

KET had now some difficulty in restraining the ardour of the insurgents, who wished to make an immediate attack upon the city.

“The attempt would be futile,” he said; “and we should infallibly be repulsed, and with great loss. My design is to form a camp on Mousehold Heath, on the further side of the city, where our friends can easily resort to us; and as soon as we are strong

enough, the attack can be made. I shall ask the mayor to let us pass through the city, and we shall learn from his answer whether he is favourable or not to the rising."

This plan being generally approved, the insurgents continued their march.

No one met them ; and as they drew near the city, they perceived that the four gates on the west, or near side, were shut, and the towers and walls thronged with armed men.

Having ascertained that the mayor was on a tower near Saint Stephen's Gate, Ket rode towards it, attended by his standard-bearer and a trumpeter.

When a loud blast had been blown by the latter, the mayor called out :

"What would you?"

"I do not come here with any hostile intent, worshipful sir," replied Ket, in a

courteous tone, "though you see me at the head of this large force. I am on the way to Mousehold Heath, where I design to pitch my camp, and plant my standard; and I ask permission of you to pass through the city, pledging my word that no harm shall be done by my men."

"And think you I will grant your request, audacious rebel?" rejoined the mayor, scornfully. "Neither you, nor any of your followers shall enter the city. Begone, or I will order my men to fire upon you!"

"I advise you not to do so!" said Ket, sternly. "I have already given you an assurance that I have no hostile intent. Many of those with me, as you must needs be aware, are citizens of Norwich, and you are bound to listen to them."

"I am not bound to listen to rebels!" replied the mayor. "I deeply regret the

course they have taken ; and, if they will lay down their arms, and undertake to return to their duty, the gates shall be open to them—not otherwise !”

“ You hear what the mayor says !” shouted Ket. “ Are any of you willing to embrace his offer ?”

“ None !” cried a hundred voices. “ But we promise to pass peaceably through the city !”

“ I will not trust you !” rejoined the mayor. “ Depart, lest mischief ensue ”

“ You dare not admit us, fearing the city should rise and join us !” said Ket. “ However, you cannot prevent us from reaching Mousehold Heath, and there all who wish well to the people will find us.”

With a loud, defiant shout, which was continued so long as they were near the walls of the city, the whole insurgent host followed him in tolerably good order.

Mousehold Heath, whither he was bound, was on the further or east side of Norwich, but could not be reached without crossing the Wensum; and there was no bridge nearer than that of Hellesdon, which was two miles higher up the river. Accordingly, they now proceeded thither.

Fearing his passage over Hellesdon Bridge might be disputed, Ket ordered the cannon to be brought forward; but he encountered no obstacle, and was soon on the other side of the river with his whole force.

However, instead of marching direct to Mousehold Heath as he had intended, he yielded to the solicitations of his men, and took them to Catton Hall, which they plundered.

Not content with the spoil there obtained, they went on to Sprowston Hall, then the residence of Master Corbet, who fled to Norwich on hearing of their approach,

being aware that he had rendered himself obnoxious to the common people.

At Sprowston the whole force remained for the night, lodging where they could, consuming all the eatables and drinkables in the place, and carrying off a large quantity of plunder when they departed next morning.

Had it not been for Father Siffrid, who dissuaded them from their vindictive purpose, they would have burnt down the fine old house; but they destroyed a dovecot that had formerly been a chapel.

On the way to Mousehold Heath they met Sir Roger Woodhouse, a wealthy gentleman, dwelling in the neighbourhood.

Sir Roger was accompanied by seven or eight servants, and brought with him a couple of carts laden with beer and provisions, which he caused to be distributed among them.

A poor return was made him for his kindness. Unjustly suspecting his motive, they detained him, and carried him along with them as a prisoner:

VIII.

MOUSEHOLD HEATH.

THE insurgents were now at the eastern extremity of Mousehold Heath, which their leader termed his domain, and shouted loudly as he took possession of it.

A fine broad common, hilly and exceedingly wild in places, but by no means destitute of beauty, Mousehold heath was about five or six miles in length, and three or four in width.

Commencing on the east side of Norwich, almost from the left bank of the Wensum,

the heath extended nearly to Sprowston Park.

But it was not at this distant point that Ket meant to encamp, but near the city, where he could be in constant communication with the inhabitants, from whom he expected great assistance.

So he halted not, but marched completely across the common to Saint Leonard's Hill.

On this eminence, which was close to the city, with the river flowing past its base, had formerly stood a priory, famous for a statue of the saintly Henry the Sixth.

At the Dissolution, this venerable pile was granted to the Earl of Surrey, who partly demolished it, and built a stately mansion on its site, naming it after himself, Mount Surrey. He also laid out a park near the house.

Ever since the earl's death by the hand

of the tyrant, Henry the Eighth, Mount Surrey had been unoccupied, and Ket now resolved to take possession of it.

His purpose was accomplished without difficulty, since there was no one to oppose him. Here Sir Roger Woodhouse was confined, and here he intended to place all his important prisoners.

Not far from Mount Surrey was another eminence crested by a small fort, which the rebel leader likewise seized, and planted his standard on the summit. Thenceforth the fort was styled Ket's Castle.

The camp was fixed on this part of the heath; and since tents could not be obtained, turf huts were reared in their stead as speedily as possible, and roofed with boughs.

As Ket's army increased in number, these cabins multiplied likewise, until they looked like an immense village. In less than a

week, upwards of thirty thousand men were encamped on Mousehold Heath.

From the high ground whereon the camp was situated, and, indeed, from every adjacent eminence, the whole of the ancient city could be discerned—the castle, the cathedral, and the closely-packed habitations, encircled by the winding Wensum—Pokethorpe Gate, Bishop's Gate, Saint Ethelbert's Gate, and the Erpingham Gate—the great hospital, the thirty-five churches, and the walls strengthened by forty towers—to say nothing of the Devil's Tower, the Cow's Tower, and the Boom Towers, specially designed to guard the river where it was devoid of other defences.

But it was not only from Norwich that the rebel army was recruited, but from all the neighbouring towns and villages from Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Southwold, and Bec-

cles, from Attleborough, Watton, Thetford, Brandon, and twenty other places—even from Suffolk.

A large beacon was nightly lighted on Mousehold Heath, and this signal was answered by other fires, which informed the whole country in a marvellously short space of time that the peasants had risen.

In order to supply the wants of his numerous and constantly-increasing host, Ket found it necessary to send out divers light companies daily to procure provisions, and he armed them with warrants, signed by himself and his brother, empowering them to take “all manner of victuals and provisions of victuals in whatsoever place they might find the same, so that no violence be done to any honest or poor man.”

By these rovers, who set out in different directions, the whole surrounding country

was ravaged. Not only did they carry off cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry, but they broke into the parks and killed the deer.

As the rebels increased in number, so did the consumption of provisions increase, and it was said that when the camp was full, twenty thousand sheep were devoured in a few days, to say nothing of swans, geese, and capons.

As yet, the insurgents had not been attacked in their strong position, but their leader deemed it best to be prepared. He therefore fortified his camp, digged a trench around it, and threw up earthworks.

This done, he sent out fresh parties to collect arms and ammunition, and so active were they that they soon got a good stock of powder together, with a dozen large pieces of ordnance, which they took from the ships in the river.

Arquebuses, swords, pikes, javelins, lances, steel caps, and breastplates they obtained from other places—chiefly from gentlemen's houses.

IX.

THE OAK OF REFORMATION.

BELIEVING himself invincible with such a force at his command, and such a stock of arms and ammunition, Ket began to assume a very haughty tone.

Some messages had been sent him by the mayor, which he regarded as insulting and scarcely deigned to notice, but he now invited the chief magistrate to a conference on Mousehold Heath.

Augustin Stewart was deputed to act as the mayor's representative, and was very

courteously received by Ket, who came forth from Mount Surrey at the head of fifty well-mounted followers, to conduct him to the camp. On beholding this large party of horsemen, Augustin, who had only half a dozen attendants with him, felt some uneasiness, but was quickly reassured by the rebel leader.

Not without some pride did Ket point out the defences he had just completed, and the cannon he had mounted.

“I pray you tell the mayor what you have seen,” he said.

“I will not fail,” replied Augustin. “Your camp is much larger than I thought. You must have a very considerable force?”

“I have twenty thousand men,” rejoined Ket; “quite sufficient for my purpose.”

“Do you not find it difficult to manage such an undisciplined horde?”

“Not so difficult as you imagine, young

sir," rejoined Ket. "We have a tribunal, before which all civil and military offences are brought and tried, as at a court of justice. And justice is more strictly administered there than elsewhere. An offender, if found guilty, rarely escapes punishment."

"I never heard of such a court," said Augustin. "Where is it held?"

"You shall see it, if you will," rejoined Ket. "Have you finished your inspection of the camp?"

"Quite," replied Augustin.

"Come with me, then," said Ket. "You will have to ride a mile further along the heath."

Followed by their respective attendants, the rebel leader and his companion rode towards the centre of the common, but no structure of any kind was visible, and nothing offered an explanation of Ket's mysterious words until they came to the

edge of a wide, deep hollow, at the bottom of which stood an enormous oak.

Evidently the growth of centuries, though still in its full vigour, this grand old tree stretched out its mighty arms over a number of persons collected beneath it, all of whom were armed with various weapons.

At first, Augustin Stewart—even with the information previously afforded him by Ket—was puzzled to understand the cause of the meeting; but when he examined the scene more narrowly, he discovered that on a huge arm of the tree, elevated about seven or eight feet from the ground, two persons were seated, who seemed to have something of a judicial air; while before them, and guarded by a couple of halberdiers, stood a prisoner, having his hands bound behind his back by a leather thong.

The branch occupied by the judges was

gained by a ladder, reared at the back of the tree, and a stand was placed beneath them to support their feet.

On either side the judges were ranged archers; and, partly concealed by the vast trunk, were the Benedictines.

“There you behold our tribunal,” said Ket to his companion. “That is the Oak of Reformation. Beneath it our court is held.”

“I understand,” replied Augustin. “If I am not mistaken, one of the judges is your own brother.”

“You are right,” said Ket. “He is now sitting for me. His partner is a simple yeoman, named Flotman, who has been chosen to the office by his comrades, and he fills it well. Who is the prisoner, and what is he charged with?” he inquired of an archer who was standing near them.

“It is Master Aldrich, of Mangrene,” re-

plied the archer. "He has wounded some of our men, and they have brought him here for punishment."

"Are they badly hurt?" demanded Ket.

"Not much, I trow, general," replied the archer. "They are standing yonder."

"Master Aldrich is a worthy gentleman, and a friend to the poor," said Augustin Stewart. "I can affirm that positively!"

"Then bear testimony in his favour," said Ket.

"Willingly!" replied the young man.

And dismounting, he went forward, and, claiming a hearing, said he had been sent by their leader to speak for Master Aldrich, who deserved the greatest consideration at their hands, inasmuch as he had ever been a kind master and a liberal landlord.

"Has he made any enclosures?" demanded Flotman.

"I have made none," said Aldrich; "and

yet my cattle and sheep have been taken from me. These men and their comrades broke into my cellar, and, having drunk too much wine, made a great disturbance in the house, and attacked me, and it was in self-defence that I wounded them."

"You went with the party, Grimston," observed Flotman, to a sturdy fellow, who was standing below him. "Had ye all drunk too much wine?"

"I cannot deny it," replied the individual questioned.

"Then Master Aldrich is justified in what he did," observed William Ket, "and must be liberated. Set him free."

Thereupon the prisoner was instantly released.

"Now set his accusers in his place!" exclaimed Flotman, authoritatively.

The injunction was instantly obeyed.

Half a dozen men were deprived of their arms, and placed before the judges, who regarded them sternly.

“You have been guilty of drunkenness and disobedience,” said Robert Ket, after a moment’s conference with his colleagues, “and our sentence is that ye all be turned out of the camp except Grimston, who has made amends for his fault.”

Some murmurs arose at this decision, but they were instantly repressed. Their arms were not restored to the men, and they were forbidden to return to the camp.

“I am sorry you have been detained, good sir,” said the rebel leader to Aldrich. “You are free to depart when you will; but if you choose to stay awhile—and I engage you shall be no further troubled—you may hear a sermon preached in this place by Master Walter Conyers, vicar of Saint

Martin's, in Norwich. He now comes to us each morning, and brings with him his choristers."

"I know and respect Master Conyers," replied Aldrich; "and will gladly stay and hear him."

"And so will I, if permitted," added Augustin Stewart.

"I do not think you will regret your determination," remarked Ket. "You will hear a good sermon, and behold a curious sight."

Shortly afterwards word was brought that Master Conyers was approaching, upon which Ket, who had previously dismounted, went to meet him, and the judges descended from their seats on the oak to give him place.

X.

THE VICAR OF SAINT MARTIN'S.

THE good vicar of Saint Martin's, who had walked from the city with his attendants, was an elderly man, of grave but kindly aspect. He wore his surplice and cassock, and had a scholastic cap on his head. From a chain attached to his girdle hung the Bible, and a tall staff assisted him in walking.

He was preceded by a band of youthful choristers, in white gowns, and was followed,

at a respectful distance, by a great concourse, who came to hear the sermon.

A very friendly greeting passed between the rebel leader and the vicar, and they walked together to the oak, where the latter mounted to the bough previously occupied by the judges, but did not sit down upon it.

Standing upon the top of the ladder, and extending his arms over the assemblage, all of whom fell down on their knees, he pronounced a blessing upon them.

At this moment the scene presented a very striking picture, for there were an immense number of persons present, attired in all sorts of habiliments, and armed with every kind of weapon, though bows and arrows, cross-bows and pikes predominated.

When the kneeling multitude arose, the choristers, who had grouped themselves at

the foot of the oak, sang the *Te Deum*, in which the whole assemblage joined.

The canticle concluded, a deep hush prevailed, and the good vicar commenced his discourse, in which he sought to benefit his hearers by good counsel, and carefully avoided all that was likely to provoke their anger, which was very easily aroused. His sermon, therefore, being well considered, was listened to with the greatest attention, and appeared to produce the desired effect. Another hymn brought the service to a close, and the assemblage quietly dispersed, the majority returning to the camp.

Both Master Aldrich and Augustin Stewart thanked the vicar when he came down from his post, and Ket expressed his great obligations to him.

“You have acted most judiciously, reverend sir,” said the rebel leader. “Such a

discourse as you have just delivered cannot fail to do good. It can offend none, and must please all. Half of those who listened to you are Romanists, but they were as attentive as those of the Reformed Religion, and I doubt if their own priests, Fathers Siffrid and Ufford, who are to preach to them in the evening, will satisfy them so well. I pray you come to us to-morrow. Stay with us, if you think proper. You shall be well lodged, and your choristers likewise, at Mount Surrey."

"Nay; I must go back to my own church," said Master Conyers. "But I will not abandon the good work I have begun, unless forced to do so. It may be that I shall bring Doctor Matthew Parker with me. He is now staying in Norwich, and has expressed a wish to address the insurgents."

“I have heard of Doctor Parker,” observed Ket. “He is a very learned man.”

“He is one of the best scholars of our time,” rejoined Conyers. “He was chaplain to Queen Anne Boleyn, and attended her on the scaffold. Afterwards he became tutor to the Princess Elizabeth, and was appointed Master of Corpus Christi College, by his late Majesty, King Henry the Eighth. He is much liked by Archbishop Cranmer and our young king. I ought to tell you that Doctor Parker’s great desire is to put an end to the insurrection.”

“I am not afraid of him,” said Ket, with a laugh; “and to prove I am not, I pray you bring him here as you propose. He shall be at full liberty to address the people as you have done from the Oak, and I only hope for his own sake that he will practise the like discretion.”

“ I have heard Doctor Parker, at Saint Clement’s, which belongs to him,” remarked Augustin Stewart. “ No doubt he is a most eloquent preacher, but I think he is somewhat intemperate.”

“ We will teach him forbearance,” said Ket.

“ But you undertake that no harm shall be done him ?” asked Conyers.

“ I do,” replied the rebel leader. “ There are five-and-thirty churches in Norwich, without counting the cathedral ; and I hope each, in turn, will send us a preacher, that we may judge of their respective merits, though I feel sure none of them will compare with our good vicar of Saint Martin’s.”

The foregoing discourse took place as Ket accompanied Master Conyers and the others on their way to the city.

While taking leave of the rebel leader, Augustin Stewart said to him :

“When the mayor is made acquainted with all that has occurred this morning, I am sure he will desire to visit the camp.”

“I shall be glad to see him,” replied Ket. “Tell him so.”

Later on in the day, a messenger was sent from the mayor to the rebel leader, informing the latter that he might expect him in the camp at an early hour on the following day.

At the same time a public announcement was made that henceforward all the gates of the city would be thrown open as before the insurrection.

This concession was looked upon as a great boon, and most of the citizens who had joined the rebel army returned to their abodes, intending to remain there till they

should be required by their captain and governors to march to London.

The mayor had been advised by Augustin Stewart to take this politic step.

XI.

HOW DOCTOR MATTHEW PARKER PREACHED TO THE REBELS
FROM THE OAK OF REFORMATION.

AN untoward circumstance occurred that night.

The watch kept at the farther end of the camp was set upon by Sir Edmund Knevet, of Buckenham Castle, with half a dozen mounted attendants, who drove the guard from their post, and would have killed some of them had not a great number of their comrades, aroused by their shouts, hastened to their assistance.

In this second encounter Sir Edmund Knevet was unhorsed, and with difficulty escaped. Had he been captured he would certainly have been put to death.

Next day Ket was importuned to attack Buckenham Castle, but as it was upwards of a dozen miles from the camp, and a very strong place, he would not consent. His refusal gave umbrage to those who had preferred the request, and put many others in ill-humour, so that when the mayor arrived at the camp about an hour before noon he was not very well received.

The mayor came on horseback, and was accompanied by Augustin Stewart and Master Aldrich. He had three or four servants with him, but no armed attendants, as he wished to show the confidence he had in Ket's promises of safety.

He declined to enter Mount Surrey,

though pressed to do so by the rebel leader, but proceeded at once to the camp, where he was greatly astonished to see the numerous fires and the large joints being roasted at them. He made no comment on such prodigality, though inclined to do so, but he could not repress his displeasure at the surly manner of the men, who scowled at him as he passed by.

On reaching the Tree of Reformation, which he was very curious to behold, he found it surrounded, as usual, by a large assemblage.

Several trials had taken place that morning; but none of them seemed to have had a fortunate result, for six prisoners in fetters were being removed to Mount Surrey, there to be kept in durance.

Apparently, some of the assemblage did not think their sentence sufficiently severe,

for they called out, "Hang them! hang them!" But the proposition was unheeded.

The judgment seats in the Oak being now vacant, the mayor was invited by his conductor to mount to the branch and address a few words to the throng; but he positively refused, alleging that anything he might say to them in their present mood would be sure to give them offence, and therefore he had best hold his tongue. As Ket felt he was right, he urged him no further.

Having seen enough, the mayor was about to take his departure, when he was induced to stay a little longer by learning that Doctor Matthew Parker, who had consented to preach to the insurgents that morning, was on his way to the Oak with the vicar of Saint Martin's.

Ere long, the great increase of the concourse announced the arrival of the two divines; and as soon as the choristers had ranged themselves, as on the previous occasion, an ecclesiastic of very grave and dignified appearance was seen to mount the tree.

Doctor Matthew Parker, who subsequently became Archbishop of Canterbury, and was at this time Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was one of the most eminent divines of his time, and greatly distinguished for learning and zeal. Saint Clement's Church, in Norwich, belonged to him, and as he was staying in the city when the rebellion broke out, he determined to do his best to suppress it peaceably.

With this design he now came to preach to the insurgents, and thinking Master

Conyers had not spoken to them boldly enough, he proposed to address them in a different tone.

Accordingly, it was with a very severe expression that he regarded the assemblage; and before he had uttered a word, they perceived from his looks that he meant to reprove them sharply.

Possessing a sonorous voice, the doctor could be distinctly heard by all. He began by remarking that as he rode past their camp on his way thither, he had seen great fires blazing, riot and profusion everywhere, and a most lamentable waste of provisions. After suffering from famine, they were now indulging in excess; and, if they pursued such a course, would soon be brought back again to starvation. More meat was consumed in their camp that morning than would have sufficed to feed them all for a week.

Some murmurs were heard, but the doctor heeded them not, and went on with his monitions.

“While professing a desire to redress public wrongs,” he said, in a sterner tone, “you are seeking to avenge your own private quarrels. You plunder for the sake of plunder, and cause needless havoc and destruction. You treat your prisoners, all of whom are gentlemen, like common felons, and place them in irons, as I have just seen. But beware how you put any of them to death, or a terrible account will be required of you.”

Here the murmurs grew louder, and the looks of those around became menacing. But Doctor Parker was not to be intimidated.

“You shall hear the truth from me,” he said, “though no one else cares to speak it to you. If you persist in this course, it

will bring you all speedily to destruction. While there is yet time, abandon your rashly-begun enterprise. Abandon it, I say; break up your camp, and return to your homes."

At this moment an interruption was caused by a great, big, brawny fellow, in a leather doublet and leather cap, and carrying a club on his shoulder.

This was a butcher named Fowkes, who exercised considerable influence over the insurgents.

With a roar that sounded like the bellowing of a bull, and effectually silenced Doctor Parker, he called out:

"How long shall we suffer this hireling doctor, who hath been sent here by our oppressors, to talk to us thus? We have had enough of his lying discourse. Let us bridle his tongue, with a murrain to him!"

Thereupon a great clamour arose, and

several archers and cross-bowmen exclaimed, "Let him take heed what he says, or we will bring him down with arrows and bolts."

At the same time, sounds were heard as if they meant to carry out the threat.

"Will you not hear me, friends?" cried Doctor Parker. "I speak for your good."

But they refused to listen to him; and fearing he might sustain injury, Master Conyers, who was standing at the foot of the tree, implored him to come down.

But he would not be driven from his post, though he did not attempt to continue his discourse.

The mayor, who had witnessed the scene from a distance, and was greatly alarmed for the doctor's safety, entreated Ket to go to his rescue.

"He has placed his life in jeopardy," said the rebel leader; "but I will save him if I

can. Come with me," he added to Augustin Stewart.

Skirting the tumultuous concourse, and followed closely by Augustin Stewart, Ket made his way quickly to the other side of the oak, where Doctor Parker's horse had been left with a couple of grooms, who had attended him to the heath.

The grooms were in a great state of alarm, but Ket bade them keep quiet, and he would soon bring their master to them.

The rebel leader was only just in time. In another minute he could not have rescued the offending divine. Rough hands had already laid hold of his cassock, with the intention of pulling him down; but Ket set him free, and committing him to Augustin Stewart, he was speedily conveyed to his horse, and being assisted to the saddle, took flight at once, and made

good his escape. Augustin Stewart accompanied him to Norwich.

Pursuit was prevented by Ket, who reprimanded the assemblage for their turbulence; but the storm was not entirely allayed until a hymn had been sung by the choristers, and another and more temperate discourse delivered by Master Conyers.

Tranquillity being at length restored, Ket went in search of the mayor and Master Aldrich, but found they had departed.

Fowkes and some of his comrades held a council together, and resolved to go to Norwich, and settle matters with Doctor Parker.

Exceedingly wroth at the treatment he had experienced, the doctor next day delivered an address at Saint Clement's Church, in which he strongly denounced the rebels, and declared they would speedily

come to destruction. "The Lord will purge them out from among us," he said; "and they will then find out the truth of what has been written, that whosoever doth rebel, he shall die."

When he preached his sermon, he was not aware that Flotman, Fowkes, and several others, were among the congregation, for they kept out of sight, but they waited for him outside the church, and when he came forth, they addressed him with mock reverence, and after thanking him for his excellent sermon, Flotman said to him:

"We are raising a troop for the king's service, and need some good strong horses, exactly like those your reverence brought with you yesterday, when you came to Mousehold Heath to preach at the Tree of Reformation. We shall be sorry to deprive you of such useful animals, but you will

not refuse when you are told they are for the king."

"You are welcome to them," replied Doctor Parker. "But they will not suit your purpose. They are lamed."

"That won't do, doctor," remarked Fowkes, gruffly. "They went well enough yesterday."

"But they got lamed on the way back," rejoined Doctor Parker.

"Harkye, doctor," cried Fowkes, in an incredulous tone. "We don't mean to return empty-handed. Either we shall take the horses, or we shall take you."

"If you go, you will be lodged at Mount Surrey," said Flotman.

"Imprisoned, I suppose you mean," rejoined the doctor.

"Our captain-general will treat you well," said Flotman. "But I would advise you

to send the horses. Two hours hence we will come for them. Take care they are ready for us."

"Or prepare for a visit to Mount Surrey," added Fowkes, significantly.

Thinking they had said enough, they then left him, and the doctor hastened to his stables, and telling his head groom what had happened, directed him to take off the horses' shoes, and pare their hoofs closely.

"It shall be done, doctor," replied the groom; "and I warrant you these cunning knaves will be taken in."

"I leave them to thee, Robin," said the doctor. "I must be gone to Cambridge. It will not be safe for me to remain in Norwich, since I have incurred the enmity of these evil-disposed men. They will fulfil their threat, and take me with them to Mount Surrey. Send one of thy fellows to

my brother's stables; he will provide me with horses for the journey, and they must be sent on to Cringleford, where I shall find them. I must quit the city privately. Were I to attempt to ride forth, I should be stopped by the rebels."

"I understand, doctor," said Robin. "All shall be done as you enjoin."

Doctor Parker's plan succeeded perfectly. When the rebels came to his stables to ask for the horses, and found them without shoes, and with closely pared hoofs, they believed what had been told them about their lameness, and went away with the firm intention of taking Doctor Parker to Mount Surrey.

But they were again balked. The doctor was not to be found. He had quitted the city, unobserved, by the Saint Giles's Gate, and proceeded on foot to Cringleford, where

he arrived without accident, and found his brother's servants waiting for him.

Mounting the horse brought him, he made the best of his way to Cambridge, and was glad to find himself once more in the quiet courts and halls of Corpus Christi College.

XII.

HOW A HERALD WAS SENT TO NORWICH BY THE COUNCIL ;
AND HOW HE WAS TREATED BY THE REBELS.

THE rebels had now become more audacious than ever.

Dividing themselves into bands, they ravaged the whole country, plundering houses, carrying away cattle and horses; and, worse than all, seizing the owners of the mansions, whom they confined in Mount Surrey, and in the dungeons of Norwich Castle, treating them with great severity, and loading them with fetters.

All these luckless persons were tried by the judges at the Tree of Reformation, and most of them would have been hanged, if the rebels had had their own way. In order to avoid capture, many gentlemen took refuge in woods and caves, where they sought to keep concealed till the danger should have passed.

By a cunning device, the rebels contrived to cloak their lawless acts under the king's authority, for commissions being sent down to several of the gentlemen they had seized, they took off the seals and affixed them to their own papers.

At length the proceedings of the insurgents grew so outrageous and intolerable, that a representation was made to the Lord Protector and the Council, who thought that if the rebels were assured of the royal pardon, they would lay down their arms and return to their duty.

Accordingly a herald was sent to Norwich, and on the day after his arrival, attended by the mayor, the aldermen, Master John Petibone, the city sword-bearer, Master Aldrich, Augustin Stewart, and many officers and gentlemen, all of them on horseback, this important officer, apparelled in his coat of arms, rode to Mousehold Heath.

Meeting no hindrance, he proceeded to the Oak, around which he found an immense assemblage collected.

Ket was at their head, in his full accoutrements, and mounted on his charger, and was attended by his brother and a dozen officers, all of whom were well armed and well mounted.

On beholding this sight, and remarking the resolute demeanour of the leaders and the men, the herald doubted whether he should produce any good effect upon them.

However, he caused a trumpet to be blown to command silence, and then, in a loud voice, offered in the king's name a free pardon to all those who would presently depart to their homes, lay down their arms, and abandon their traitorous enterprise.

No one stirred; and after waiting for a few moments to see how his men would act, Ket turned towards them and said:

“You have heard the proclamation just made by the herald. Now hear me. Kings and princes are accustomed to grant pardons to such as are offenders and not to others. I trust that I need no pardon, since I have done nothing unbecoming a loyal and dutiful subject. Remember the promises I have made you, and what I have done for you. Do not desert me now, since I am ready to hazard my life in your quarrel.”

“None of us will leave you, captain!”

shouted the concourse. "We reject the king's pardon!"

"Thou art a traitor!" said the herald to Ket.

"No more a traitor than thyself, fellow!" rejoined the rebel leader, fiercely. "If it pleased me to give the word, thou wouldst be pulled from thy horse, and thy painted coat stripped from thy shoulders."

"Dare you insult the king's officer-at-arms?" cried the herald.

Then, turning to the sword-bearer, he added:

"I command you to attack him for treason?"

"It were as much as my life is worth to make the attempt," muttered John Petibone. "Provoke him no further. See you not that his men are eager to attack us."

At the same time the mayor came forward, and counselled the herald to forbear.

“ You are dealing with obstinate and churlish men,” he said, “ upon whom you could make no impression were you to talk to them for an hour.”

But the herald made a last attempt ; and, as he prepared to quit the heath with the mayor, called out, as loudly as before :

“ All you who are the king’s friends, come away with me !”

But not a single person followed him ; the sole response from the concourse were jests and derisive laughter.

On his return to the city, the mayor, who was highly indignant at what had occurred, and felt that contempt of the king’s authority must be resented, caused all the gates to be barricaded, ordnance to be planted on the walls and towers, and all needful preparations made to resist an attack of the rebels.

He likewise ordered all the gentlemen confined in the dungeons of the castle to be set at liberty.

On being informed of these preparations, Ket brought his artillery forward, to Saint Leonard's Hill, and began to fire upon the city, but with little effect, [since, as he soon discovered, the guns were placed too high. He therefore removed them to the foot of the hill, whence he found he could effectually batter the walls.

After a time, a truce was proposed by the assailants, in order that they might pass through the city to procure provisions, but it was refused by the mayor.

Enraged by this refusal, the rebels made a furious attack upon Pokethorpe Gate and Bishop's Gate, but were driven back by a shower of arrows from the walls.

However, they renewed the attack, and would have been again repulsed, and with

still greater loss, had not an alarm been given that another body of rebels had gained admittance from Saint Stephen's Gate, which was on the other side of the city. On hearing this, the citizens hurried thither, and left Bishop's Gate undefended.

Taking instant advantage of their want of caution, several of the assailants plunged into the Wensum, and, gaining the opposite bank, reached the gates, threw them open, and admitted their comrades.

They now encountered little opposition, and seizing upon all the guns and artillery they could find, conveyed them to their camp.

Another party proceeded to the market-place in search of provisions, and had not long arrived there, when the herald, who was still in Norwich, came forth from the Guildhall, attended by the mayor, the alder-

men, Master Aldrich, Augustin Stewart, and some others.

Calling out to the insurgents, the herald commanded them, in the king's name, to lay down their arms and go home, but they derided him as before, and might have maltreated him, had not Ket himself ridden into the market-place, and speedily quieted the tumultuous throng.

Addressing the herald, he said, "Thy presence here breeds naught but mischief. Return forthwith to the Lord Protector and the Council, and say to them that we are not to be deluded by fair promises of pardon, which we neither ask for nor will accept, since we are well able to maintain our rights, and defend ourselves. Let those who attack us look to themselves!"

A great shout here arose from the crowd, which so much alarmed the herald, that

he called out to Ket, and expressed his readiness to depart immediately if his horse were brought him.

This was done by command of the rebel leader, who conducted him in person to Saint Stephen's Gate, to prevent any mischance, and sent on a mounted guard with him to Cringleford.

XIII.

HOW FLOWERDEW WAS RELEASED FROM THE CASTLE
DUNGEON BY KET.

KET being now master of the city, his first exercise of authority was to arrest the mayor, the sheriffs, Master Aldrich, and several other important citizens whom he knew to be strongly opposed to him, and send them as prisoners to Mount Surrey.

He then took possession of the Guildhall, intending to establish his head-quarters there; and next, accompanied by a strong mounted guard, rode up to the castle, which

was in the hands of a portion of the citizens favourable to the rebellion.

With his own hands he planted his banner on the summit of the keep, and his heart swelled with pride and triumph as he gazed at the city beneath him which he now regarded as his own.

The bells of most of the thirty-five churches were pealing merrily, causing a prodigious clamour, that overpowered all other sounds.

Every gate in the city belonged to him—every tower on the walls was manned by his followers.

Ket well knew that the loyal citizens of Norwich greatly outnumbered the seditious, and comprehended that they could only be controlled by force; but when he looked towards the neighbouring heights, and beheld his cannon planted upon them, when he saw hundreds of archers and armed men

collected on the opposite bank of the Wensum, he had no fear of holding the city, unless an army should be sent against him.

He had been told by the wizards and soothsayers who accompanied his army, that he should hold Norwich, march to London, and dictate terms to the young king, and he believed what they said. How could he do otherwise, since the first part of the prophecy had already been fulfilled? And although the greatest alarm prevailed within the city, and many of its wealthiest inhabitants were preparing to fly, it presented a smiling and joyous aspect to him.

Seen from the summit of the castle keep on that bright summer day, the fine old city looked its best. Immediately in front of him rose the lofty spire of the cathedral—the majestic structure from which it sprung forming the central part of the picture.

Around it were collected numberless old and picturesque habitations, mingled with church towers, from which rose the joyous peal before alluded to.

Partly surrounded by walls, partly defended by the river, which flowed through it from west to east, and then pursued its winding course past the cathedral and castle, the city seemed secure from assault, and would have been so but for the treachery of its inhabitants.

The rebel leader knew this, yet believed it would be faithful to him.

Having bestowed another look at Mount Surrey and Mousehold Heath, and considered whether he should make any additions to the little fort he had designated his castle, Ket descended from his lofty position and entered the grand hall.

Here he found several persons waiting to speak to him.

Among them was a very beautiful damsel whom he instantly recognised as Margaret Flowerdew. She was attended by the old female servant she had brought with her from Hethersett.

On beholding him, Margaret flew towards him and threw herself at his feet. Ket would have raised her, but she would not move.

“I will not rise till you have granted my prayer, and promised to release my father,” she said.

“Where is he imprisoned?” inquired Ket, affecting surprise.

“In the dungeons of the castle,” replied Margaret. “He has been confined there more than a week. I understood he was sent there by your order.”

“You have been misinformed, fair damsel,” rejoined Ket. “My authority has been abused.”

“Then you will not hesitate to set him free?” she cried, rising.

“I must first inquire what he has done,” said Ket, evasively.

“He has done nothing to deserve punishment at your hands,” rejoined Margaret. “Ever since we were driven from Hethersett, we have lived quietly here in Norwich. My father has taken no part against you or your followers.”

“I will investigate the matter,” said Ket.

“I implore you to do so forthwith,” cried Margaret, earnestly. “I have not seen my father, but I have heard from him, and he says he shall die if he remains much longer in this dreadful dungeon. Some other prisoners have been released, but he was forgotten.”

“He has been hardly dealt with, it appears,” said Ket. “I will visit his dungeon at once. Come with me if you will.”

Margaret thanked him in heartfelt terms, and Ket then called to an attendant, who led them to the entrance of a narrow staircase contrived in the thickness of the wall.

This staircase brought them to a large gloomy chamber on the basement floor, which was lighted up by a lamp suspended from the ceiling, and another lamp placed on a table.

Here they found a couple of gaolers, to whom Ket at once announced himself, and ordered them to open Master Flowerdew's dungeon.

One of the gaolers immediately took up the lamp from the table, and unlocking a heavy door in the wall, disclosed the interior of the cell.

The prisoner, who was without light, and chained, was seated on a wretched pallet. He stared in surprise at Ket, but did not

at first perceive his daughter and her attendant.

Ket ordered the gaoler to remove his fetters, and when this was done, raised him and brought him out of the cell.

Hitherto Margaret had constrained herself, but she now rushed forward, and flung her arms around her father's neck.

The prisoner appeared perfectly bewildered. He did not return her embrace, and scarcely seemed to recognise her.

"His senses are gone," cried Margaret.

"No; he will recover presently," said the gaoler, bringing him a seat.

"Do you not know me, dearest father?" asked Margaret, gently.

He now seemed to recognise her voice, for he pressed her hand, and looked up into her face.

"Are you come to take me away from this horrible place?" he asked.

“I trust so,” she rejoined. “But it rests not with me to deliver you. Do you wish to know who is standing near us?”

“Is it Ket, or an evil spirit in his likeness?” he inquired, in an undertone.

“’Tis Ket in person,” she rejoined.

“Then he has come to put me to death; and I thank him. I would rather die than be kept in that dungeon!”

“If you have any pity in your heart,” cried Margaret to the rebel leader, “you will set him free. Surely he has suffered enough!”

“I have no desire to prolong his punishment,” rejoined Ket; “but I cannot set him free. He shall be taken to Mount Surrey, where, though detained a prisoner, he will be well treated. You may go with him if you please, and take your old attendant with you. Your society will lighten his confinement.”

“You hear what is said, father?” cried Margaret. “I am to go with you to Mount Surrey.”

“I hear, and am thankful,” replied Flowerdew. “’Tis more than I expected.”

“When the prisoner is strong enough to be moved,” said Ket to the gaolers, “let him be taken to the court-yard. Thence he will be conveyed by a guard to Mount Surrey. His daughter and her attendant will accompany him.”

“Your injunctions shall be obeyed, general,” replied the gaolers.

“I am strong enough to quit this place now,” said Flowerdew, rising from his seat.

“Then bring him forth at once,” cried Ket, yielding to a supplicating look from Margaret.

He then left the chamber, and mounting the narrow stone staircase communicating

with it, proceeded to the court-yard, where he found a great number of his men, some on horseback, and others on foot, and calling an officer to him, he directed him to convey Flowerdew to Mount Surrey.

“Take him thither on horseback, since I doubt if he can walk,” he said. “His daughter, whom I have allowed to share his captivity, can follow on foot with her servant.”

While he was giving these directions to the officer, Augustin Stewart entered the court, and saluting him said, “Have I your permission to visit the mayor at Mount Surrey?”

“Certainly,” replied Ket. “Visit him as often as you please. He is not a close prisoner. If you are going to Mount Surrey at once, you can accompany Master Flowerdew and his daughter.”

“Is Flowerdew about to be transferred

there from the castle?" inquired Augustin, eagerly.

"Ay," replied Ket; "and since his health seems to have suffered severely from his confinement, I have allowed his daughter to attend upon him. There they are," he added, as Flowerdew and Margaret were brought into the court-yard by the gaolers; "you are at full liberty to speak to them."

Augustin instantly availed himself of the permission, and explaining that he knew whither they were going, proposed to accompany them.

The offer was gladly accepted, and Ket's instructions were carried out by the officer. Flowerdew was taken on horseback to his new prison, while Margaret followed on foot, accompanied by Augustin and her servant.

XIV.

THE PRISONERS AT MOUNT SURREY.

MEANWHILE, Ket having mounted his steed, attended by his guard, quitted the castle.

Crossing the bridge over the deep moat, which was defended by two towers, one on either side of the fosse, he then rode down to the market-place, which had once been the old field or croft of the castle. He next entered the cathedral, and heard service performed in the presence of a great number of his followers.

But we must now attend on Margaret. On her way to Saint Leonard's Hill she stopped at the house she had occupied since her arrival at Norwich, and which was situated near Saint Peter's Per-Mancigate and close to the castle.

Having directed her servant to pack up certain articles which she should require and bring them to Mount Surrey, she went on with Augustin.

"What will be the end of all this, think you?" said Margaret, as they took their way slowly along the west bank of the Wensum. "Shall we always have to endure these rebels? They seem to grow daily more powerful."

"Their power cannot last long," replied Augustin; "and if we had no seditious persons in the city, they would not be in power now. But a few days I trust will bring us relief. Before his departure, the

herald assured me that a large force would infallibly be sent by the Lord Protector for our deliverance, and for the punishment of the rebels."

"I cannot understand why so much toleration has been shown them," remarked Margaret.

"The whole country is in a disturbed state on account of the religion. That is why severe measures have not been adopted," said Augustin. "I do not think your father or yourself are in any danger at Mount Surrey, or I would endeavour to procure your release. In my opinion you will be safer there than in the city, which is in a very critical state, and there is no saying what may happen in the next few hours. The mayor, the aldermen, the sheriffs—all are prisoners."

"Why do not you act for the mayor?" said Margaret.

“Such is my desire,” rejoined Augustin. I am now going to Mount Surrey, to offer to serve as his deputy; and if he agrees to the proposition, I shall act at whatever risk.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said Margaret. “The mayor wants firmness. All the city authorities have yielded to the rebels, till at last they have been driven from their posts.”

“Very true,” replied Augustin. “I will endeavour to act differently.”

They had now reached Bishop’s Gate—one of the chief gates at the east side of the city, and more than usually important now, since it led to Mount Surrey and Mousehold Heath.

Bands of insurgents were passing out at the time, and others were entering the city, but no order was observed.

Amid the confusion, Augustin and his companion passed out unchallenged.

After crossing the bridge over the Wensum, and passing through the gate on the eastern side, which was now thrown open, they began to ascend the height on which Mount Surrey was built, and soon reached the entrance of the noble mansion, now converted into a rebel stronghold. Cannon were placed upon its walls, and it was otherwise fortified.

Great disorder reigned within, and except that the gates were strongly guarded, it would seem that the prisoners might easily escape.

Except such as were rigorously treated, and confined in underground chambers, the majority had apartments assigned them, and were allowed to meet in the great hall.

Here Flowerdew was brought on his arrival at the mansion. And when Margaret and her companion entered the hall, they found him describing his imprisonment in the castle dungeons to the mayor and sheriffs, whose countenances bespoke their sympathy with his sufferings.

On seeing Augustin, the mayor immediately came up to him, and inquired if he had been sent there as a prisoner.

The young man satisfied him on this point, and explained that he had been treated with considerable favour by the rebel leader.

“ I asked permission to visit your worship,” he said, “ and Ket at once acceded to my request.”

“ I have no reason to complain of harsh treatment,” said the mayor. “ I have a good bed-chamber allotted me. I am free of this hall. I can go forth to the camp, and to

the Tree of Reformation ; but I am not permitted to enter the city, or to exercise my functions as mayor. In short, I am deprived of my office."

" You need not trouble yourself on that score," said Augustin. " It will be soon restored to you. Things cannot long remain in this state."

" The worst is to come," said the mayor. " We have a fearful struggle to pass through before we can deliver ourselves from this barbarous horde. It is quite certain that Ket will not surrender, and it is equally certain that his men will fight. A bloody battle must therefore ensue. Besides, I am told that Ket is offering large rewards to all who will join him, and promising plunder ; so that his force will, no doubt, be greatly increased, perhaps doubled. I grieve for our good city of

Norwich, lately so prosperous, now so unfortunate!"

"The city will recover its prosperity," said Augustin. "But I am come here to offer my services to you. Shall I act as your deputy?"

"By all means, since you are disposed to undertake the office," replied the mayor. "You are the only person I know who is able to govern the city at this critical juncture. At ordinary times you might be deemed too young, but activity and energy are wanted now."

"I will do my best," said Augustin; "and you may rest assured I will not shrink from danger, or be debarred from my duties by threats. But whom will you have as sheriffs?"

"Henry Bacon and John Atkinson," replied the mayor. "Both are firm men, and will do their duty; and as they are

your seniors, they will prevent any reproach on the score of youth. Doubtless, you will take up your quarters in the Guildhall; but you shall have my house as well."

"I shall go to the Guildhall, and at once proclaim that I have been appointed your deputy," replied Augustin. "As long as I am permitted, I shall come here to consult you."

"Do not run any needless risk," said the mayor.

Before taking his departure, Augustin had a few words, in private, with Margaret Flowerdew, and informed her of his appointment as deputy mayor of Norwich, but prayed her to have no anxiety on his account.

"You shall hear from me constantly," he said; "and, if it be possible, shall see me."

“Think no more about me,” said Margaret. “We shall meet when these troubles are past.”

She then returned to her father, and Augustin quitted the mansion.

XV.

HOW AUGUSTIN STEWART SOUGHT TO ARREST KET.

AUGUSTIN was now on the borders of Mousehold Heath, and, deeming it desirable to ascertain the precise state of the camp, he resolved to visit it before returning to the city, and assuming his new and important office.

Instead of descending the hill, he therefore mingled with the crowd of armed men who were marching towards the Oak of Reformation, which was still the grand rendezvous of the camp, where all the insur-

gents met at some time or other in the course of the day.

Evidently the large rewards offered by Ket had been successful, since his force was greatly increased in number.

The camp now seemed positively crowded, and the foraging parties must have been remarkably successful. To judge from the quantity of horses and cattle, and the multitude of sheep, the whole country must have been ravaged, and ere long a famine must inevitably ensue.

The place was like a great cattle fair. Nothing was to be heard but the neighing of horses, the lowing of oxen, and the bleating of sheep.

Large fires were blazing as heretofore, at which huge joints were roasted; and the supply of ale—though the demands upon it must have been great—did not seem half exhausted.

Around the camp there were a great number of large hounds, and these formidable animals generally accompanied the men in their expeditions.

Preparations were likewise being made by the insurgents for a conflict with the army, which they fully expected would be sent against them.

The archers, who now formed a large body, and were generally a fine set of men, were shooting at targets. Bands of cross-bowmen were likewise practising at marks, and the artillerymen were receiving instructions from a certain Gregory Miles, esteemed a perfect cannoneer.

Others were playing at sword-and-buckler, then a favourite pastime; in fact, the whole camp was astir; and, what with the hounds, horses, cattle, and sheep that beset his path, Augustin found some difficulty in making his way to the Oak of Reformation.

Here he found the concourse greater than ever, and did not attempt to penetrate it, but stationed himself on the bank, so that he could see what was going forward.

Two unfortunate gentlemen, captured on the previous night in Plumstead Wood, where they had tried to conceal themselves, were being tried, and though no offence could be alleged against them, except that they *were* gentlemen, most of the assemblage shouted, "Hang them! hang them!"

Such was the fury of the crowd, that Augustin feared the sentence would be carried into effect; but the guard succeeded in removing them to Mount Surrey.

Having now seen enough, Augustin began to retrace his steps.

As he went on, he noticed a venerable-looking man with a long white beard descending to his girdle. He was bent with

age, and supported himself with a staff like that of a pilgrim.

Jabez Strumpshaw, the venerable personage in question, was a soothsayer, and had just predicted that a great battle would soon be fought in Norwich, in which the commons would be victorious. Many knights and gentlemen would be slain, and one noble.

Jabez was accompanied by several persons, who listened attentively to his sayings.

As he met Augustin, he stopped to gaze at him, and seemed perplexed.

“Thou hast an important task to fulfil,” he said, “but I cannot make out what it is. Stay awhile; I have some questions to put to thee.”

“I cannot answer them now,” replied Augustin, hurrying on, being afraid the

soothsayer might compromise him with the rebels.

“Who is that young man?” inquired Jabez of those near him.

“I know not his name,” replied one of the men; “but he is a friend of the mayor, who is now a prisoner in Mount Surrey.”

“He will be mayor himself, or I am much mistaken,” observed the wizard.

On his return to the city, Augustin immediately proceeded to the Guildhall, where he found a great number of loyal citizens assembled, and anxiously considering what could be done in the emergency.

He at once told them that the mayor had appointed him his deputy, and the information was received with great satisfaction, since the young man’s zeal and activity were well known.

Amongst those present were Henry

Bacon and John Atkinson ; and Augustin immediately communicated to them the mayor's desire that they should act as sheriffs.

They readily assented, and, all possible arrangements being made, a long consultation was held as to what steps should be taken for the security of the city till assistance should be sent by the Council.

Augustin proposed that the most energetic measures should be adopted ; that a proclamation should be made by sound of trumpet that all rebellious citizens should forthwith return to their duty, or be dealt with as traitors ; that all the gates now in the hands of Ket and the insurgents should be recovered at any cost ; that Bishop's Gate and Pokethorpe Gate, which led to Mousehold Heath, should be strongly defended, and, if need be, barricaded ; and

that every possible effort should be made to recover the castle, either by assault or stratagem.

All these propositions were approved, and it was resolved that henceforward no terms should be held with the rebels.

“If we could secure their leaders, Ket and his brother,” said Augustin, “it is my opinion that the rebels would lay down their arms. It shall be my endeavour to capture those two dangerous persons.”

“Ket has been here in the Guildhall during the day, and declared that he meant to make it his head-quarters,” said Henry Bacon. “But I believe he has returned to Mount Surrey.”

“He had best remain there,” said Augustin. “He shall never again enter this hall except as a prisoner.”

The propositions of the deputy mayor

being decided upon, he set to work at once to carry them out.

The proclamation he had suggested was forthwith made in the market-place, and produced an excellent effect.

A great number of loyal citizens, who had retired to their dwellings, came forth, and attended by them, and a strong guard, Augustin soon gained possession of all the gates on the west side of the city, and closed them; but he left those facing the camp open; as he hoped to surprise Ket on his return from Mount Surrey, and he was nearly being successful.

He was lying *perdu* behind the walls, when Ket crossed the bridge on horseback, attended by a mounted guard of twenty men.

The rebel leader, who rode a little in advance, had no sooner passed through the

gate than it was shut, and his followers excluded.

At the same instant, Augustin Stewart came forward, sword in hand, and seizing his bridle, called out :

“I arrest thee of high treason! Yield thee! Thou canst not escape!”

“Thou art mistaken,” cried Ket. “Thou hast yet to capture me!”

Breaking from him, he dashed along the side of the river till he got past the fortifications, when he plunged into the stream, and his horse carried him safely to the opposite bank, where he was met by his men, who set up a loud shout of defiance.

The rebel leader seemed to have a charmed life, for though several arquebuses were fired at him, not a single shot touched him or his horse.

For a few minutes he seemed disposed to recross the river with his men, but perceiving

that the cannoneers were preparing their guns on the walls and towers, he turned, and rode back to Mount Surrey.

Though the deputy mayor's plan had failed, its boldness pleased the loyal citizens, and they hoped he would deliver them from the rebels.

XVI.

SIR GILBERT DETHICK, NORROY KING-AT-ARMS.

So enraged was Ket that he threatened to put the deputy mayor to death if he fell into his hands.

As far as possible, all communication between the city and the camp was now cut off; but it was understood that the rebel leader was preparing to make another grand attack, and the greatest anxiety was felt by the loyal citizens, as they dreaded the enemies within the walls.

While things were in this state, a letter

was brought to Augustin from Mount Surrey, which almost drove him to distraction. It was from Margaret Flowerdew, and ran thus :

“I write to you in the greatest distress. A change has taken place in Ket’s conduct towards me. I am no longer allowed to attend upon my father, but am shut up in a small room like a prisoner, with my old servant Deborah.

“Deeply do I regret that I ever trusted Ket, for he seems utterly unscrupulous. He has now declared a passion for me, and has announced that he intends to make me his bride, and that the ceremony shall be performed here at Mount Surrey.

“I will die rather than consent; and I have provided myself with a weapon which will liberate me from him, if I cannot otherwise escape. And escape seems almost

impossible, for the place is strictly guarded. But one of the attendants has undertaken to deliver this letter, and I trust it may reach you.

“I despair of deliverance.

“MARGARET.”

The perusal of this letter, as we have said, almost threw Augustin into a state of frenzy, and he knew not how to act.

At length he wrote a letter to Ket, and sent it by a prisoner, who could safely enter the rebel camp. In this letter he told Ket that he was aware of his design of forcing Margaret Flowerdew into a marriage with him, and that if he persisted in his purpose, he must expect the direst retribution.

An answer to this letter was brought by a royalist prisoner, whom Ket had released. The rebel leader declared that he was deter-

mined to make Margaret Flowerdew his bride, and that neither threats nor entreaties should hinder him.

Augustin's rage at this answer prompted him to assemble all the force he could muster, and attack Mount Surrey. But the inutility of such a plan prevented its execution, and he was kept in a dreadful state of suspense, for no further intelligence could be obtained from the camp during the day.

Next morning, the joyful news was received that the Lord Protector and the Council had appointed the Marquis of Northampton, with a force of fifteen hundred men, to proceed to the relief of the city, and that he was marching thither as quickly as he could.

With him were divers nobles, knights, and honourable personages, namely, the Lord Sheffield, the Lord Wentworth, Sir

Anthony Denny, Sir Henry Parker, Sir Richard Southwell, Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Ralph Rowlet, Sir Richard Lee, Sir John Gates, Sir Thomas Paston, Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Sir John Cutts, Sir William Walgrave, and Sir John Cornwallis, with many other knights, esquires, and gentlemen.

With them likewise was a troop of Italian horsemen, commanded by the renowned Malatesta.

This intelligence at once revived the spirits of the loyal citizens of Norwich, while it caused consternation in the rebel camp.

While the enemy was at a distance, the insurgents were full of audacity; but, now that the royal force was approaching, they began to quail.

However, Ket issued an immediate order that all attempts to desert would be severely

punished ; and the soothsayers, on whom the rebels had great reliance, promised them a complete victory.

About noon, Sir Gilbert Dethick, Norroy King-at-Arms, arrayed in his tabard, and attended by a mounted guard, entered the city by Saint Stephen's Gate.

He was met by the deputy mayor, the aldermen, the two sheriffs, John Petibone, the sword-bearer, and a great number of citizens, all of them on horseback.

Sir Gilbert—a fine, handsome man, who did credit to his office—said that he came from the Marquis of Northampton, whose camp was about two miles off, to summon those in command of the city to yield it into his hands ; or, in the event of their refusal, to declare war against them.

Upon this, Augustin Stewart explained that he, and those with him, were merely deputies—the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen

being prisoners in the rebel camp ; but they themselves were ready to return with Sir Gilbert to the Lord Marquis, and surrender the city to him.

Since no other arrangement was possible, Norroy accepted their offer, and they all rode out of the city to the spot where the Marquis of Northampton had formed his camp.

XVII.

THE MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON.

WHEN Sir Gilbert Dethick appeared, with Augustin Stewart and the others, the Marquis of Northampton and the whole of the nobles and knights with him were assembled in the midst of the camp; and being all well mounted, and accoutred in glittering armour, they presented a magnificent sight.

Beside the Marquis of Northampton and the Lords Sheffield and Wentworth, there were nearly a score of knights, all of high

degree, all well attended, and all eager to chastise the insolent rebels.

The Italian mercenaries, who were likewise splendidly equipped, seemed to regard the peasants against whom they were brought as unworthy of their swords. But they were destined to be undeceived.

The Marquis of Northampton received, with great courtesy, the deputy mayor and the sheriffs, who were presented to him by Sir Gilbert Dethick, and bade them and the citizens by whom they were accompanied be of good cheer, as he hoped soon to deliver them from their enemies.

Preceded by Sir Richard Southwell, who now carried the sword instead of John Petibone, he then marched with his whole force towards Norwich, and entered the city by Saint Stephen's Gate.

The royalist force proceeded to the market-place, where a proclamation was

made that all loyal citizens should immediately repair thither to receive his orders, and ere many minutes the place was densely crowded.

The marquis expressed his satisfaction at seeing so many loyal citizens, and ordered strict watch and ward to be kept throughout the night on the walls and at the gates, deferring any attack on the rebels till the morrow.

He then alighted, and, accompanied by the Lords Sheffield and Wentworth, and the knights above mentioned, entered the Guildhall, where a banquet had been prepared for them by direction of the deputy mayor and sheriffs.

Meanwhile, Malatesta, wishing to reconnoitre the rebel camp, went forth from the Bishop's Gate with his splendidly accoutred band, and, crossing the bridge, rode towards Mount Surrey.

He had not proceeded far when he saw Ket descending the hill, at the head of a large troop of horse, followed by a great number of archers, cross-bowmen, and arquebusiers, under the command of his brother and other officers.

Instantly perceiving, from the disorderly manner in which the rebel horsemen came on, that they were utterly undisciplined and badly led, Malatesta determined to charge them, though they more than trebled his own band in number.

Accordingly he dashed upon them, and at once put them to flight. The Italians were armed with demi-lances, with which they did great execution upon the rebels. Malatesta's aim was to capture Ket, or kill him, but the rebel leader escaped unhurt.

Though the insurgent horse was routed, the archers took their place, and sent a

shower of arrows among the Italians that compelled them to retire, and enabled Ket to rally his troop.

Finding he should now be placed at a disadvantage, Malatesta formed his men into a ring, and retreated to the city, where the gate was instantly closed.

In this skirmish, which gave the citizens, who had witnessed it from the walls, an exalted idea of the Italian leader's bravery and skill, Malatesta lost only a single follower.

This was a gentleman, and not a common soldier. Being unhorsed, he fell into the hands of the rebels, who stripped him of his armour and brought him before Ket.

Though the captive endeavoured to explain that he ought to be considered as a prisoner of war, and that a large ransom would be paid for him, the rebel leader, ex-

asperated by his own defeat, treated him with disdain, and ordered him to be hanged from the walls of Mount Surrey.

The execution was witnessed by Malatesta and the Italians, who vowed revenge.

Before night came on, the Marquis of Northampton, fearing a surprise, caused an immense fire to be lighted in the market-place.

When the flames rose up, they illumined the whole city, producing the effect of a great conflagration, lighting up the bridge, towers, and keep of the castle, the lofty spire of the cathedral, and the towers of Saint Peter's Mancroft, and Saint Andrew's, in Broad-street.

Even Mount Surrey was illumined, and the body of the luckless Italian was seen hanging from the walls.

The defence of the city during the night

was entrusted to Sir Edward Warner, marshal of the field, who gave the watchword, Sir Thomas Paston, Sir William Walgrave, Sir Thomas Cornwallis, and Sir Henry Bedingfeld.

The four latter were posted at the Pокethorpe Gate, the Saint Giles's Gate, Saint Stephen's Gate, and Saint Benet's Gate.

Kept up throughout the night, the fire proved more serviceable to the rebels than the royalists, since it enabled Ket to direct his artillery against the city.

About midnight, when all was quiet, and the Marquis of Northampton had retired to rest at the Guildhall, where he was lodged by the deputy mayor, the roar of cannon was heard from the camp, and shot flew over the heads of those on the gates and walls, luckily without doing much damage.

As the firing continued, the marquis was called up by Sir Edward Warner, and a meeting was held in the market-place, at which it was resolved that all the gates on the west side of the city should be barricaded, and such portions of the walls as were ruinous be repaired with all possible despatch, so that if Ket made an assault he might be repulsed.

But while these orders were being given, a tumultuous noise was heard in the direction of Mousehold Heath, and a great multitude of rebels came rushing down the hill, some striving to get across the river, and so enter the city, others seeking to burn the gates, and others to climb the walls where they were partly decayed.

The shouts and yells of these furious assailants were terrific, and it was soon evident that numbers of them had obtained

admittance, and were throwing open the gates to let in their companions.

Fortunately the greater part of the force brought by the Marquis of Northampton was assembled in the market-place, and fully prepared for action.

The soldiers were instantly taken in different directions by their leaders, and numerous conflicts ensued, which lasted for nearly three hours, when the rebels, who displayed surprising hardihood, were driven out of the city with great slaughter.

It was not known that any party was commanded by Ket; but Augustin Stewart, who rode about in various quarters in the hope of encountering the rebel leader, could not discover him.

Dawn was at hand ere the last party of rebels was driven out and the city made

secure, and then the soldiers, well-nigh exhausted with their night's work, entered the churches and other buildings, and sought repose.

XVIII.

HOW LORD SHEFFIELD WAS SLAIN BY FOWKES, THE
BUTCHER.

THE failure of their nocturnal attack seemed to have disposed the rebels to submission, since on the following morning Augustin Stewart informed the Marquis of Northampton there were some four or five thousand persons at the Pokethorpe Gate, who would willingly lay down their arms if they were assured of the king's pardon.

On receiving this satisfactory intelligence,

the marquis immediately sent Sir Gilbert Dethick, with a trumpet, to inform these persons that their prayer would be granted.

Augustin Stewart accompanied him ; but it appeared that the deputy mayor had been deluded, since they found not a single person at the Pokethorpe Gate.

Highly indignant, Sir Gilbert Dethick was about to return, but at Augustin's request he ordered the trumpet to be sounded, whereupon a great number of people came swiftly down Magdalen Hill.

At their head was Flotman, who demanded, in a stern tone, why they were summoned by sound of trumpet.

"Thou may'st easily guess the reason, fellow," replied Norroy. "But tell thy company that if they cease from further outrage, his majesty's lieutenant, the Marquis of Northampton, promises them that

the past shall be forgotten and forgiven, save in a few cases."

To this address, Flotman returned, with a scornful laugh :

"We care not a pin's point for the lord marquis, and desire you will tell him so. Tell him, likewise, that we, whom you style rebels, are earnest defenders of the throne, and have taken up arms, not against the king, but for his majesty's protection. Our firm resolve is to maintain the liberties of the country, and the safety of the Commonwealth. We will either deliver the country from the rapacity and oppression of the nobles and gentlemen, or perish in the attempt !"

Scarcely had Flotman ceased speaking, when the alarm was given that a large body of insurgents, commanded by Ket and his brother, had contrived to enter the city, near the hospital.

Augustin Stewart saw at once that he had been duped, since it was evident that these were the men who had recently assembled at the Pokethorpe Gate under the pretence of surrendering; but had subsequently changed their plan, and obtained admittance by other means.

They were now destroying everything before them, and were near the Bishop's Palace, which they intended to plunder, when they were encountered by the Marquis of Northampton with his whole force.

A sharp conflict ensued, during which numbers were slain on both sides, for the insurgents fought with great fury, and spared none.

The heaviest loss sustained by the royalists was in the person of Lord Sheffield.

This valiant young nobleman rode into the midst of the pikemen, hoping to reach

Ket, whom he saw at a distance, but his steed was grievously wounded, and fell.

Unable to extricate himself, Lord Sheffield was instantly surrounded by a dozen ferocious ruffians, among whom was Fowkes, the butcher, armed with his massive club.

The prostrate nobleman declared his title, and promised them a large ransom.

“How should we know thou art the Lord Sheffield,” cried Fowkes. “Take off thy headpiece, that we may behold thy face.”

Lord Sheffield complied, and had no sooner unhelmed himself than Fowkes dashed out his brains.

Thus perished by the hand of a vile caitiff one of the most chivalrous young nobles of his day:

Next moment, Ket rode up, but too late to prevent the barbarous deed.

“Idiot!” he cried; “thou hast dishonoured our noble cause. I would rather have given a thousand marks than this had been done.”

“Are these all the thanks I am to get from you, general?” exclaimed Fowkes, astounded.

“All the thanks—ay!” cried Ket. “Thou deservest severe punishment. Make it known,” he shouted, “that if any more nobles or knights fall into our hands, they must be kept as prisoners for ransom.”

XIX.

IN WHAT MANNER MARGARET ESCAPED FROM MOUNT
SURREY.

BUT the slaughter of Lord Sheffield produced a very different effect upon the insurgents from what Ket anticipated, and incited them to so much fury, that after a long and desperate conflict they forced the Marquis of Northampton to quit the city with his followers, by the Saint Stephen's Gate.

Sir Thomas Cornwallis and several other knights and gentlemen were made prisoners, and held in durance by Ket.

The rebels having thus driven out their foes, and obtained complete possession of the city, it was utterly impossible to restrain their violence ; and Ket did not even make the attempt, but allowed them to plunder as they thought fit.

Every sort of license was committed. The hospital for the poor was burnt down ; Bishop's Gate, Pokethorpe Gate, Magdalen Gate, and Bear-street Gate, were partly destroyed by fire ; and no doubt the whole city would have burnt if very heavy rain had not extinguished the flames.

The miscreants searched everywhere for Augustin Stewart, against whom they bore great spite, and would assuredly have put him to death had they found him.

Next day the plunder continued, and the houses of all the wealthiest citizens were visited and stripped.

Many persons had fled during the night,

taking with them their valuables. Others buried their money, or tried to hide it in wells.

The condition of the city at this time was most deplorable ; and appeals were made to Ket to check the violence of his men, but he could do nothing.

At length it was discovered that Augustin Stewart was concealed in the Guildhall, whereupon a great number of the rebels repaired thither, and declared they would burn down the building unless he delivered himself up to them.

On this, he came boldly forth ; and his courageous deportment pleased them so much, that they did him no hurt, but contented themselves with plundering the place.

During all this time, Augustin had heard nothing of Margaret, and his anxiety respecting her was now so great, that he re-

solved, at all hazards, to go to Mount Surrey. Perchance he might be able to accomplish her liberation; at any rate, he would make the attempt.

But he deemed it prudent to wait till it became dusk; and then, passing out by Bishop's Gate, now partly demolished, as we have said, he mingled with a crowd of rebels who were returning to the camp, and mounting the hill, reached the mansion in safety.

To his surprise, the wicket at the side of the gate was unguarded and standing open, and he at once entered the court-yard, which he found lighted up.

A great number of rebels were carousing at a table placed in the centre of the court; but they took no notice of him, and he passed quickly into the great hall, which proved to be entirely deserted. Hence he inferred that Ket was absent at the time,

and all the prisoners confined to their rooms.

Fortune having thus far favoured him, he took up a lamp, and unhesitatingly mounted the great staircase, which brought him to a long gallery having a row of chambers on the right.

Whether Margaret was imprisoned in one of these he could not tell, since there was no one to give him information. He tried several doors, all of which were locked, and the inmates of the rooms silent.

At last, when he had begun to despair, a door at the further end of the gallery was opened, and a female figure issued from it.

It was Margaret herself, and the taper in her hand showed she was attended by her old servant, Deborah. She had seen him at the same moment, but not recognising him, instantly retreated.

Was she endeavouring to escape? It

seemed so, from her sudden disappearance. Augustin hurried forward, and certain that he knew the door, tapped at it, and in low accents pronounced her name.

As she made no answer, he called to her again.

“Who is it?—speak?” she asked, scarcely daring to trust her ears.

“One who has come to deliver you,” he replied.

“Can it be Augustin Stewart?”

“Yes, yes; ’tis he! Have no fear!”

The door was instantly opened, and Augustin stood before her.

“How have you come here?” she cried, in astonishment. “I have been praying for aid in my attempt at flight, and you have brought it me.”

“Some good spirit must have conducted me to you,” he answered. “I have had no difficulty in reaching this gallery. Instead

of keeping watch, the men are drinking in the court-yard."

"I had discovered that the guard were absent, and therefore urged my young mistress to fly," said Deborah.

"Come, then!" cried Augustin.

"Can we not take my father with us?" said Margaret.

"Where is he?" demanded Augustin.

"In the next chamber," she replied.

"Unfortunately, we have not the key."

"Then it will be impossible to liberate him," said Augustin. "But you are in far more danger than he is. You must not be left in Ket's power. For Heaven's sake, do not needlessly delay!"

And taking her hand, he hurried her along the gallery.

Deborah followed, stimulated to unusual exertion by her fears.

Descending the great staircase, they

passed through the entrance hall. The rebels were still drinking in the courtyard; but keeping as much as possible in the gloom, the fugitives contrived to get past them unobserved.

In another minute Augustin and his companions were outside the gates; but they were still close to the castle when Ket returned. Fortunately, he did not discover them, and, in the end, they reached the Guildhall in safety.

Great was the rebel leader's anger on finding how negligently the watch had been kept at Mount Surrey.

But it was nothing to his rage when he learnt that Margaret had fled. No one knew how her escape had been accomplished, or whither she was gone.

XX.

THE EARL OF WARWICK.

As may be imagined, the defeat of the Marquis of Northampton by the insurgents greatly displeased the Lord Protector and the Council, and determined them to stay the Earl of Warwick, who had just been appointed to march against the Scots, and was esteemed the best military leader in the kingdom, and send him, in the first place, to Norwich, to put down the rebellion, promising him, if he required additional

force, fourteen hundred lansquenets, who had been engaged for the Scottish war.

While accepting the appointment, Warwick stipulated that Northampton should not be deprived of his commission, but be allowed to serve with him, otherwise the marquis would conceive himself discredited; and this request being accorded, the earl immediately commenced his preparations, and as soon as he had got his army together, set out for Cambridge, where he met Northampton, with most of those who had accompanied him in the late unlucky expedition, together with divers important citizens of Norwich, who had fled thither for safety.

Northampton, who was burning for vengeance on the insolent rebels, expressed his satisfaction at being permitted to accompany him; while the citizens besought the earl's pardon for having allowed the rebellion to grow to such a formidable height, when it

might easily have been nipped in the bud had due precaution been taken.

Warwick told the citizens they were certainly not free from blame; but they might now repair their error by energetic conduct, and he commanded them to provide themselves forthwith with arms, armour, and horses, and prepare to accompany the expedition.

During his brief stay in Cambridge the Earl of Warwick, with the Marquis of Northampton and many other nobles and knights, dined in the hall of Corpus Christi College, and were very hospitably entertained by Doctor Matthew Parker.

Doctor Parker gave the earl much serviceable information respecting the rebels, and said he thought they would still sue for pardon.

“Marry, if they do, they shall have it—except their ringleaders,” replied Warwick.

“I ought to intercede for Ket, my lord,” said Doctor Parker. “I verily believe I owe my life to him.”

“Place no faith in these rebels, my lord,” observed Northampton to Warwick. “They are rank traitors, and will deceive you if they can.”

“But if they throw down their arms they may be pardoned,” said the earl.

“Be assured they never will throw down their arms, my lord, so long as Ket retains his influence over them,” said Northampton. “He now styles himself Master of Norfolk and Suffolk, and says he shall speedily march to London with an army of thirty thousand men.”

“Has he really that number, think you, my lord?” asked Warwick.

“I cannot say; but such is the report,” replied the marquis; “and I am inclined to believe it, since I know that recruits are

flocking to him daily from all parts of the county. Norwich is completely in his hands. He governs it as he thinks fit, and compels the citizens themselves to keep watch and ward hourly at the gates. As the camp on Mousehold Heath is now not half large enough for the rebels, those who have recently joined have quartered themselves in the churches, and even in the cathedral. Ket still remains at Mount Surrey, but passes much of his time in the city. Doubtless he is preparing for the assault which he cannot fail to expect. He has some good artillerymen with him, as I am told, many of them being deserters from the king's garrisons; but he cannot have much ammunition."

"Then he must take the consequences," said Warwick. "But I cannot believe the rebels will attempt to hold out."

The Earl of Warwick had brought with

him a force of six thousand men, which he deemed more than sufficient to subdue the rebels, without the German mercenaries, though he was eventually obliged to avail himself of their aid.

Entirely composed of picked men, his army was admirably appointed. He had the best artillery, the best cavalry, the best foot soldiers, arquebusiers, archers, cross-bowmen, pikemen. His horse, with their splendidly accoutred officers, made a magnificent display. His infantry were all stalwart men, skilful in the use of their weapons, and originally chosen for the Scottish war, and not for a conflict with a contemptible host of peasants, as Ket's army was considered.

In addition to the Marquis of Northampton, and most of the knights and esquires engaged in the late unfortunate expedition, the Earl of Warwick had with him his two sons, of whom he was justly proud—the

Lord Lisle and Robert Dudley—the elder being just twenty at the time, and the other only two years younger.

Besides these two noble youths, who were eager to obtain distinction, there were the Lords Willoughby, Powis, and Bray; Sir Marmaduke Constable, Sir Thomas Palmer, and Sir Andrew Flammock.

Moreover, Warwick had with him the redoubted Captain Drury, surnamed “Poignard,” from his extraordinary daring and bravery, with a company of two hundred men.

As on the previous occasion, the office of herald was filled by Sir Gilbert Dethick, Norroy King-at-Arms.

Since the Earl of Warwick is destined to play an important part in our story, it may be necessary to say a few words respecting him.

Bold, ambitious, intriguing, insinuating,

Warwick was high in favour with the young king and the most influential members of the Council, except the Lord Protector, whose overthrow he was secretly plotting.

Early introduced at the Court of Henry the Eighth, by whom his father had been put to death, John Dudley was greatly favoured by that monarch, who created him Baron Dudley, and afterwards Viscount Lisle, and honoured him with various important employments. Lord Lisle served twice under the Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset, in Scotland and Picardy, and then became Governor of Boulogne.

Moreover, Henry enriched him with large grants of Church property, and appointed him Lord High Admiral. For the surrender of this important office to the unfortunate Sir Thomas Seymour, Lord Lisle was rewarded by the Protector with the title of Earl of Warwick.

Rich and powerful, Warwick now aimed at the highest authority. Nothing less would content him, and he felt certain of attaining his object.

Already the majority of the Council had been won, and a dangerous conspiracy formed against the Duke of Somerset, of which Warwick was head.

Warwick's personal appearance was magnificent. Tall of stature, as has been recently proved by the discovery of his remains in a vault of Saint Peter's Chapel in the Tower, he possessed a noble countenance, and a figure that was a model of strength and symmetry.

Always splendidly accoutred, he was seen to the greatest advantage when mounted on his richly-caparisoned war-horse. His deportment was haughty and dignified, but he could be exceedingly gracious and affable when he desired to please.

As already mentioned, Warwick was accompanied by his two sons, both of whom greatly resembled him. Robert Dudley, who afterwards became the famous Earl of Leicester—Queen Elizabeth's favourite—was even handsomer than his sire.

On the third day after his arrival at Cambridge, the Earl of Warwick set forth on his expedition, and halted at Thetford.

On entering Norfolk, he found the county in a frightful state. The gentlemen had quitted their habitations, most of which had been plundered, and the peasants had gone to the rebel camp at Mousehold Heath.

Only old men, women, and children were left, and those seemed half starved. Horses, cattle, sheep, swine, had all been carried off by Ket's foraging parties. Agricultural operations were necessarily at a standstill, since there were no labourers.

At Wymondham, where the earl again

halted, he was hailed by the terrified inhabitants as a deliverer, since they suffered from frequent incursions of the rebels. At Wymondham, likewise, he met several fugitives from Norwich, who said that the riotous miscreants, now ruling the city, would certainly submit if sure of pardon.

During the evening the earl was joined by several gentlemen, who had ventured from their hiding-places.

Ket's name, it appeared, was now execrated in his native town, which continued loyal.

Captain Drury, with his men, was sent on towards Norwich to reconnoitre, and found that the rebels kept close within the city. All the gates were shut, and strongly guarded.

Next day, the earl crossed Cringleford Bridge—the passage of which he thought would be disputed—and appeared with his

whole force on the plain lying between Eaton and Norwich. Here he fixed his camp before summoning the city to surrender.

Not a rebel could be descried on the plain, but the proceedings of the royal army were carefully watched by thousands of curious observers on tower and battlement, on the roof of the cathedral, and on the ramparts and keep of the castle.

But there were spectators still nearer. Concealed in Eaton Wood, which skirted the plain, were half a dozen horsemen. They could not have been there long, since the wood had been searched by Captain Drury, who had found no one.

The chief of the little band, a very stalwart personage, well armed, and extremely well mounted, watched all that was going on with the keenest interest, but though struck with admiration at the splendid

appearance of the army, its number, and evident efficiency, he did not manifest the slightest uneasiness, but seemed confident in his ability to cope with it.

He was quite near enough to see Warwick and his sons distinctly, and thought the earl the finest man he had ever beheld.

“I should like to engage him in mortal combat, hand to hand,” he said to his companions, “and to stake the city on the issue of the fight. But even if Warwick would accept my challenge, ’twere useless to offer it. I have him in a snare. I shall capture yonder artillery, and use it against him. All that splendid armour, all those weapons, all those horses, all the vain-glorious earl and his captains have with them, shall be ours. Warwick makes certain of his victory, but he will be as shamefully defeated as Northampton; and where one lord perished in the first attack, a dozen will perish now.

This has been foretold by Jabez, the sooth-sayer, and it will come to pass."

He then rode back through the wood, and entered the city unobserved.

Somewhat later in the day the Earl of Warwick sent Sir Gilbert Dethick, with a trumpeter, to summon the city to open its gates, so that he might enter quietly, or else to look for such chastisement as rebels deserve.

No notice of his summons was taken by the guard at Saint Stephen's Gate; but, in answer to it, Augustin Stewart, with Robert Rugg, an important citizen, came from a postern, and, with expressions of profoundest regret, stated, that Ket absolutely refused to deliver up the city to the Earl of Warwick, but they themselves were of opinion that if a free pardon were offered the rebels in the king's name, most of them would accept it.

"I trust this proposition may be enter-

tained by the Earl of Warwick," said Augustin; "otherwise I firmly believe that Sir Thomas Cornwallis, Sir John Cutts, and fifty other important prisoners, will be put to death."

"Ha! Is it possible that Ket will dare to commit so atrocious an act?" cried Sir Gilbert.

"I nothing doubt it," replied Rugg. "Should the city be assaulted, I am certain Sir Thomas Cornwallis and the rest will be murdered."

"I will convey this information to the Earl of Warwick," said Sir Gilbert. "Tomorrow morning you shall learn his lordship's determination."

"Heaven grant the lives of these unfortunate gentlemen may be spared!" said Augustin.

The Earl of Warwick was greatly disturbed by the intelligence brought him.

So many important prisoners must not be sacrificed.

After some consultation with the Marquis of Northampton and the other lords, he decided to send Norroy again to the city on the morrow, and offer the rebels a general pardon, provided they laid down their arms.

He did not expect that Ket would surrender, but he thought the offer would prevent any outrages.

Throughout the night strict watch was kept in the royalist camp, in case a sortie should be made by the rebels, but none was attempted.

The Earl of Warwick, with the Marquis of Northampton, repaired to Intwood, a house belonging to Sir Thomas Tresham, about two miles from Norwich, but did not take off their armour.

The earl's two sons patrolled the camp

with Captain Drury, and rode twice round the walls of the city, which were strongly guarded on the western side.

All seemed quiet.

In fact, Ket meditated no attack. He had made other preparations for the morrow.

XXI.

HOW NORROY WENT WITH KET TO MOUNT SURREY.

AT an early hour next morning, Norroy King-at-Arms, arrayed in his tabard, and accompanied by a trumpeter, as before, rode from Intwood, where he had passed the night, and again presented himself at Saint Stephen's Gate, which was immediately thrown open by the guard.

On his entrance he was received by the deputy mayor and Master Rugg, both of them being on horseback, and waiting to conduct him to the market-place.

On the way thither the little party was met by a band of forty well-equipped and well-mounted horsemen, riding two and two, and commanded by William Ket.

After a courteous salutation, the leader of the troop explained to Norroy that he was merely come to guard him, and rode on in front, while three or four hundred rebel soldiers, who had now collected together, followed on foot.

When this procession reached the market-place, where a large concourse was assembled, consisting entirely of insurgents, Norroy, still attended by the deputy mayor and Rugg, rode into the centre of the place, and causing the trumpet to be sounded, offered, in the king's name, a full pardon to all who would lay down their arms.

The proclamation was very well received by the assemblage. Taking off their caps

they shouted lustily, "God save King Edward! God save King Edward!"

After another halt near the cathedral, and a third at Saint Martin's at the Palace Gate, Norroy went on to Bishop's Gate, having passed entirely through the city, and intending to return by a different route.

William Ket, who had escorted him throughout, now told him that he thought his brother would come down from Mount Surrey to meet him, if he would tarry where he was for a short time; whereupon Norroy declared he would ride up to Mousehold Heath, and make the proclamation before the camp.

William Ket advised him not to do so, saying the step was very hazardous, and declined to accompany him, but Augustin Stewart and Rugg volunteered to go with him.

Thereupon Norroy crossed the bridge, and mounted the hill, but halted on reaching the summit, for he perceived some four or five hundred soldiers and arquebusiers hurrying towards him.

The men ran on till they got within a short distance, and then drew up, presenting a very menacing aspect.

Nothing daunted, Norroy made the proclamation to them, and, displeased by the reception given it, began to rebuke them.

Regarding them sternly, he extolled the great clemency of the king, who, notwithstanding their unworthiness, had mercifully consented to pardon their many heinous crimes and offences, on condition of a humble submission ; and, he added, by way of warning, that the Earl of Warwick, his majesty's lieutenant-general, had made a solemn vow, that unless they threw down their arms:

he would punish them according to their deserts.

The rebels were highly offended by this address, and Flotman, who was in front of them, called out in a derisive voice, loud enough for Norroy to hear :

“How know we that this fellow, disguised in a fine coat, patched together of vestments and church stuff, is really the king’s herald, and not some one sent by the gentlemen to deceive us?”

“Nay,” cried an arquebusier near him; “I can avouch that he is truly Sir Gilbert Dethick, for I have served with him at Boulogne and in Scotland.”

“Serve in Scotland again, Woodford,” said Norroy. “I remember thee well, and am sorry to find thee here.”

“I will get hence quickly,” rejoined the arquebusier.

“I am glad to hear it,” said Norroy. “I hope all those with thee will follow thy example.”

“Thou art a traitor, Woodford, and deservest a halter,” cried Flotman. “Do not disarm yourselves, friends,” he shouted, “or you will rue it! The enemy are lying in ambush to attack you!”

“’Tis false!” cried Norroy.

“They are close at hand,” said Flotman; “and as soon as you have thrown down your weapons they will fall upon you and cut you to pieces.”

“Believe it not!” shouted Augustin Stewart. “There is no ambush! Disarm, and you may go where you please.”

“We will trust neither thy counterfeit herald nor thee, who art a counterfeit mayor,” cried Flotman, amid general laughter.

Just then Ket was seen galloping towards them from Mount Surrey, at the head of a troop of horse.

He rode a powerful charger, and was almost as magnificently accoutred as the Earl of Warwick himself.

On coming up, he quieted the disorderly rout by an imperious gesture, and then, turning to Norroy, said :

“I have hastened hither, Sir Gilbert, because I feared some mischance might befall you, which I should have deeply regretted. If you desire to visit the camp, and see the Oak of Reformation, I myself will accompany you, and will answer for your safety.”

“I thank you for your courtesy,” replied Norroy ; “but I have seen enough. It would be useless to make the proclamation here. No one would listen to me—not even you.”

Ket laughed at this speech.

“I am quite willing to confer with the Earl of Warwick,” said the rebel leader. “Perchance, something may be arranged.”

“I fear not,” said Norroy. “But I will mention your proposition to his lordship on my return.”

“Will you not enter Mount Surrey?” said Ket. “You will find there the Mayor of Norwich, whose deputy is now attending upon you, together with the aldermen, the sheriffs, and many other important personages. They may desire to send a message by you to the Earl of Warwick.”

Something significant in the tone in which this observation was uttered struck Sir Gilbert Dethick.

“Shall I go?” he said, in a low tone, to the deputy mayor.

“Certainly,” replied the other.

Though suspecting treachery, Norroy consented.

XXII.

OF THE MESSAGE SENT BY KET TO THE EARL OF
WARWICK.

By this time the greater part of the rebels had returned to the camp. Without concerning himself with the remainder, Ket conducted the herald and those with him to the mansion. As before, the rebel leader was attended by his guard.

Sir Gilbert Dethick almost repented his rashness when he found himself in the large court of the castle and the gate closed; but it was now too late to retreat, and he therefore dismounted, and

entered the great hall with Ket. They were followed by Augustin Stuart and Rugg.

Here they found the mayor, the sheriffs, the aldermen, with a score of other prisoners, all of whom were persons of distinction. Among them were Sir Thomas Cornwallis, Sir John Cutts, and Master Flowerdew, who had now quite recovered from the severe treatment he had experienced during his imprisonment in the castle.

“I suppose you understand, Sir Gilbert,” said Ket, as he brought him into the hall, “that these gentlemen are my prisoners? I hope you likewise understand that I hold them as hostages; and that, if I do not come to some terms with the Earl of Warwick, they will be put to death.”

“You cannot mean that!” said Norroy, horror-stricken.

“They will be hanged,” said Ket. “Speak to them, and ascertain whether they have any request to prefer to the earl.”

With this, he withdrew to the further end of the hall, leaving Norroy to talk to the prisoners, who presently surrounded him, and prayed that they might not be sacrificed.

“I will tell the earl what I have seen,” said Norroy; “but I can do no more.”

“Yes; you can tell him from me that he is bound to preserve us from a shameful death,” said Sir Thomas Cornwallis.

“As Mayor of Norwich, I claim his aid for myself, the aldermen, and sheriffs,” said the mayor.

“If he can, his lordship will save you, rest assured, gentlemen,” said Norroy.

“The only plan is to make terms with Ket,” said Flowerdew.

“Whatever Ket demands, he must have,”

said the mayor," "or there will be no chance of escape for us."

"I own I am somewhat disappointed, gentlemen," observed Norroy. "I expected very different language from you."

"Assume a bolder tone," interposed the deputy mayor. "Ket will not dare to proceed to extremities."

"I think otherwise," said one of the aldermen. "I firmly believe he will hang us all."

"But what will content him?" said Norroy. "He has been promised a pardon, and that is more than he could expect."

"And far more than he deserves," said Augustin. "Does he imagine the king will reward him for his evil deeds?"

"Is it doing evil to free the people from oppression?" said Ket, advancing towards them. "I trow not. It has been prophesied that no general will be able to stand

against me. Therefore, I have no fear of the Earl of Warwick. But if he assaults the city without making terms with me, I will put all my prisoners to death! That I swear, and in their presence! Tell him so on your return," he added to Norroy.

Such was the stern determination with which the rebel leader spoke, that all felt that any attempt to move him would be vain, and escape was rendered impossible by the strong guard stationed at the door.

"Farewell, gentlemen," said Norroy. "I will tell the Earl of Warwick all that has passed."

"Bid him not mind us, but act as he deems best," said Sir John Cutts. "We trust in Heaven for our deliverance!"

Norroy quitted the hall, attended by Augustin Stewart and Rugg.

Ket followed, without even casting a

glance at the prisoners, who maintained a firm deportment.

Norroy thought he should be dismissed at the gate of the mansion, and left to the charge of the deputy mayor and Rugg.

But Ket escorted him through the city, and took him to Saint Stephen's Gate, where he bade him adieu.

Augustin Stewart and Rugg were allowed to accompany him to the royalist camp.

"You will tell the Earl of Warwick what he has to expect if he attacks me," were the rebel leader's final words to the herald. "He shall have no quarter!"

"He requires none, and will give none!" rejoined Norroy haughtily.

XXIII.

HOW NORWICH WAS ASSAULTED BY THE EARL OF
WARWICK.

ON arriving at the royalist camp, Norroy and those with him found that full preparations had been made for an immediate assault of the city.

The Earl of Warwick, who was on horseback and completely armed, rode towards them, attended by Lord Lisle and Robert Dudley, and demanded what news they brought of the rebels.

“Do they submit?” he cried.

“No, my lord,” replied Norroy. “Ket will not allow them to disarm.”

“Then they shall yield to force!” said the earl. “Their audacious leader shall be punished as he deserves!”

“I would not restrain your lordship’s indignation,” said Augustin Stewart; “but Ket has sworn if you attack him that he will hang all his prisoners, of whom he has more than twenty at Mount Surrey.”

“’Tis a mere threat!” said Warwick. “Savage as he is, he dares not execute it.”

“Such is my opinion,” remarked Norroy. “But the deputy mayor, who knows him well, thinks otherwise.”

“I agree with Master Stewart, my lord,” said Rugg. “I believe the prisoners are in great danger. I feel certain Ket will keep his oath, if not prevented.”

“But how prevent him?” cried the earl. “Mount Surrey is at the other side of the

city, and cannot be reached without passing through it. I would fain liberate the prisoners if I could, but I see not how it can be accomplished."

"I will try to set them free if your lordship will give me a few hours," said Augustin.

"Were I to wait, this insolent rebel would make fresh demands," rejoined Warwick. "He counts on some further delay, but he shall be disappointed. The assault shall be made at once."

He then caused the trumpets to be sounded, and in a very few minutes the whole force was in motion, and proceeding towards the city.

The order to attack was received with the utmost enthusiasm by the men, who were eager to punish the rebels.

The morning was very fine, and the horsemen—with their steel caps, polished

corslets, and demi-lances glittering in the sun—formed a splendid sight.

Stationed on a tower on the walls, with his brother and some other officers, Ket soon perceived that the army was moving towards Saint Stephen's Gate, and therefore gave orders that the portcullis should be immediately let down, and other defensive preparations made.

As Ket expected, the Earl of Warwick, on coming up, placed his artillery before the gate in question, and ordered the cannoneers to burst it open. They immediately opened fire against it, but the portcullis was strong, and resisted the shot. At the same time, smaller ordnance were discharged against the besiegers from the ramparts, and with some effect.

While this cannonade was going on, Augustin Stewart came up to the Earl of Warwick, who was directing the artillerymen

in person, and informed him that there was another gate, called the Brazen Gate, on the opposite side of the city, which had been barricaded by the rebels, but not so strongly but that it might easily be broken open.

Thereupon the earl sent his elder son, Lord Lisle, with a dozen pioneers and a company of foot-soldiers, to the gate designated.

The pioneers speedily accomplished their task, and Lord Lisle, entering with his soldiers, slew a great number of rebels, who endeavoured to oppose him.

Meanwhile, the portcullis of the Saint Stephen's Gate having been burst open by the cannoneers, and part of the gate battered down, the Marquis of Northampton and Captain Drury rushed in with their bands, and, driving all before them with great slaughter, pressed on to the market-

place, which had been appointed as a general rendezvous for the royalist army.

As to the Earl of Warwick, he had gained admittance by the Westwick Gate, which had been opened for him by the aid of Augustin Stewart.

Entering with his main force by this gate, and encountering but little resistance from Ket, who had fled from Saint Stephen's Gate when it was burst open, and now vainly attempted to drive back the enemy here, the earl soon reached the market-place, where he found the Marquis of Northampton and Captain Drury, and congratulated them on their success.

Three score rebels had been taken, and these were immediately hanged from the castle walls, so that they could be seen from Mousehold Heath, and it was hoped the spectacle would strike terror into their comrades.

Having achieved this success more quickly than he expected, the Earl of Warwick was about to send Captain Drury to Mount Surrey, to demand the release of the prisoners, when an unlooked-for and vexatious circumstance took place.

Either by accident or design, the ammunition waggons belonging to the royal army, which were brought in at the Hell Gate instead of being taken to the market-place, according to orders, were driven right through the city without stoppage to Bishop's Gate, and thence, across the bridge, towards Mousehold Heath.

Ket, who was safe at Mount Surrey with a large force, having received intelligence of the mistake—if mistake it was—rushed down with a party of horse, and, seizing upon the waggons, would have carried them off had it not been for the opportune arrival of Captain Drury, who succeeded in reco-

vering a couple of them, though not without a hard fight.

The capture of these waggons, which were full of arms, ammunition, and powder, was a great loss to the Earl of Warwick, and a proportionate gain to Ket, who, no doubt, had calculated upon it.

But the city was not yet cleared.

Gathering together in small parties, in divers places, the rebels did much mischief. They stationed themselves at cross-streets, and fired upon the soldiers as they passed by. Some were posted at Saint Michael's, others at Saint Peter's, others at Saint Stephen's, others at the lower end of Wimers'-street. An attempt was made to seize the castle, but it failed. Many loyal citizens who had ventured forth too soon were slain.

Determined to dislodge the enemy, and drive them forth, the Earl of Warwick took

a sufficient force with him, and went in search of the rebels. On coming to Saint Andrew's in John-street, he was received by a sharp shower of arrows; but Captain Drury, who was with him, quickly stopped the bowmen by a galling fire from his arquebusiers. Many of the rebels were shot, many captured, and afterwards executed. The rest fled to Mousehold Heath, or concealed themselves in the churchyard.

Having accomplished his object as far as practicable, the Earl of Warwick gave strict orders that watch and ward should be kept on the walls and in the streets, and that every gate should be strongly barricaded, except the Pokethorpe Gate and Bishop's Gate.

At the latter, large cannon were to be placed; an injudicious plan, under the circumstances, as was afterwards shown.

Aware that Warwick wanted powder and

ammunition, and having ascertained that the artillerymen, most of whom were Welshmen, few in number, and unable to resist an attack by a considerable force, Ket got together a great multitude of his men, and bidding them follow him, dashed suddenly down the hill, and reached the gate almost before the artillerymen were aware of their approach.

At the same time, Miles, the master gunner, discharged a large piece of ordnance at the gate, and killed the king's chief engineer. This successful shot, combined with the appearance of the infuriated multitude, caused the greatest consternation among the artillerymen. Unable to withstand the desperate onset made upon them, they abandoned their guns and fled.

There were six large cannon at Bishop's Gate, and six others of equal size at the Pokethorpe Gate. All were seized and

secured by Ket, who caused them to be drawn without delay to the summit of the hill. Brought there, amid the general shouting and rejoicing of the rebels, who now began to deem themselves victorious, the guns were turned upon the city by Miles, and much damage done.

Several shots were directed against the Guildhall, where it was believed the Earl of Warwick would take up his quarters, and it was supposed that some had hit their mark. The top of Bishop's Gate was knocked down, Pokethorpe Gate was much injured, and part of the walls demolished. All this was effected in a marvellously short space of time.

But the rebels were not allowed to remain long at rest. Mounting the hill with a large band, the valiant and indefatigable Captain Drury recovered six of the cannon

and much of the ammunition that had been carried off.

After this, the Earl of Warwick set to work vigorously to restore the defences of the city; barricaded the gates that had been partly demolished; repaired the walls, and doubled the guard upon them; placed bands of soldiers at all the turnings of the streets; broke down the Blackfriars bridge, and appointed Lord Willoughby, with a large band of arquebusiers, to defend Bishop's Gate and Pokethorpe Gate.

Everywhere the strictest watch was kept to prevent a surprise on the part of the rebels. Captain Drury rode from place to place throughout the night, and had frequent interviews with the Earl of Warwick.

XXIV.

IN WHAT MANNER THE PRISONERS AT MOUNT SURREY
WERE LIBERATED.

THAT was an anxious night for the Earl of Warwick; for the nobles, knights, and gentlemen with him; for the loyal citizens of Norwich; and, above all, for Augustin Stewart. None could foresee what the day would bring forth; but it was certain there would be bloodshed, and, it might be, defeat to the king's army. All the royalists kept on their arms, and were fully prepared to defend themselves against a nocturna

attack by the rebels, which they almost anticipated.

It was an anxious night also for Ket. He felt now that he must fight a battle that would probably be decisive of his fate.

And what were his chances of success? He had to encounter the best and most sagacious military leader in England, and some of the bravest captains; notably, Captain Drury, who filled him with dread. His army trebled that of the Earl of Warwick; but, though the peasants who composed it were brave, they were untrained, and unable to cope with regular troops.

Nevertheless, he did not lose his confidence. He believed himself predestined to success. Over and over again he had been told by the wizards and soothsayers haunting his camp that he should vanquish all who opposed him, and march to London in triumph, and he thought Warwick had

placed himself in his hands, and that he should annihilate him and his army.

But, though confident, he did not rest in blind security, but made the best preparations he could for the morrow.

It was long past midnight, and he was alone in a chamber in Mount Surrey—alone, and buried in meditation.

Like Warwick and his captains—like all on that night, he had kept on his armour. A lamp was burning on the table; but it only imperfectly lighted the room. He had seen no one enter, and had heard no sound; but, on looking up, he beheld Augustin Stewart standing near him.

“How came you here?” he said, regarding him sternly.

“No matter how I gained admittance,” replied Augustin. “I have come to ask whether you will liberate your prisoners.”

“Not unless they are ransomed,” said

Ket; "and the Earl of Warwick will not give me a sufficient sum."

"What sum do you require?" demanded Augustin.

"Two thousand pounds," replied Ket.

"There it is," said Augustin, taking a heavy bag of gold from beneath his cloak, and laying it on the table. "Now will you set them all free?"

"I did not expect this," hesitated Ket. "You have taken me by surprise."

"You cannot retreat," rejoined the other, sternly.

"Come for them to-morrow," said Ket, evasively.

"To-morrow may be too late," said Augustin. "I must take them with me now."

"Impossible!" said Ket.

"You are in my power," said Augustin, drawing a petronel from his girdle, and

placing it at the rebel leader's head. "Swear that you will liberate them at once, or you shall die!"

"I swear it!" replied Ket.

"Enough," replied Augustin. "Let us go down to the great hall. The prisoners are there."

"How know you that?" cried Ket. "I have been betrayed! But the traitor shall be punished!"

"He is already safe," said Augustin. "But delay not."

Without another word, Ket took up the lamp, and quitted the room.

No guard was stationed at the door. No one was in the corridor. They descended the staircase without meeting a single person, and entered the great hall.

There all the prisoners were collected—Sir Thomas Cornwallis, Sir John Cutts, the

mayor, the sheriffs, the aldermen, Flowerdew—all.

“You are free, gentlemen,” said Ket. “Your ransom has just been paid by Master Augustin Stewart.”

They could scarcely believe what they heard.

“It is true,” said Augustin.

“Are you ready to depart?” asked Ket.

“At once!” they replied, eagerly.

“You must go forth privately,” said Ket. “Follow me.”

Proceeding to the further end of the hall, he opened a secret door in the wainscot, communicating with a narrow passage that brought them to a postern, from which they all went forth, except Ket himself, who closed the gate the instant the others had passed through it, and returned to the hall.

It was a bright, moonlight night; but the trees that grew near the mansion on this side, screened the fugitives. Walking on to a short distance, they quitted the park, and made their way to Bishop's Gate.

As the party approached the bridge, the arquebusiers would have fired upon them had not Augustin given the watch-word.

Lord Willoughby, who, as we have stated, had been appointed to the defence of the gate, with a great number of soldiers, received the late prisoners with mingled surprise and satisfaction, and congratulated Augustin on his successful achievement.

"The Earl of Warwick will be delighted," he said. "Take him the joyful news yourself. You will find him at the Guildhall, with the Marquis of Northampton and Captain Drury. They have not retired to rest. In fact, I believe, that Captain Drury does without rest."

On this, the whole party proceeded to the Guildhall.

The city seemed full of soldiers. Small detachments were patrolling the streets in every direction. A great fire was lighted in the market-place, around which archers, arquebusiers, and pikemen were gathered.

The Earl of Warwick was greatly rejoiced when he beheld the late prisoners, and on hearing the particulars of their escape, said to Augustin :

“ You have rendered me a great service, Master Stewart, and may rest assured I shall not forget it. Had Ket carried out his threat, and put these gentlemen to death, I should never have forgiven myself.”

“ Nor should I,” said the Marquis of Northampton.

“ They should not have been unavenged,” said Captain Drury.

“That would not have done us much good,” observed the mayor. “We have had a narrow escape. Had we remained, it is highly probable we should all have been hanged to-morrow.”

“It is certain,” remarked Augustin. “I may tell you the plain truth now. Flotman, Fowkes, and some others had resolved to hang you all from the walls of Mount Surrey. This was told me by the man whom I bribed to let me into the castle. But he would not have aided me had I not promised to pay the prisoners’ ransom to Ket.”

“And you *did* pay it?” said the Earl of Warwick.

“I paid him two thousand pounds,” said Augustin.

“Were it thrice the amount, it should be thankfully repaid,” said the mayor.

“That we have to pay heavily for our

release does not lessen our obligations to Master Stewart," said Sir Thomas Cornwallis.

"It ought not, Sir Thomas," said Warwick. "He has risked his life for you. I rejoice to see you all here! I shall now be able to attack the rebels without any misgiving."

XXV.

HOW THE EARL OF WARWICK AND THE NOBLES AND
KNIGHTS WITH HIM VOWED TO DELIVER NORWICH.

ALMOST as soon as it was light, a large party of rebels, bent on rapine and mischief, crossed the river about half a mile below the city on the west, and plundered a large warehouse in which the merchants were accustomed to store the goods they received from Yarmouth. The wretches then set fire to the warehouse, and burnt it to the ground, together with several small buildings.

Simultaneously with this act of wanton destruction, another attack was made upon the north side of the city by three separate bands, one of which was commanded by Ket in person, the second by his brother William, and the third by Flotman.

At this time, that part of the river Wensum that flowed through the city from west to east was crossed by four small bridges, all of which led by different streets to the market-place.

Climbing the northern walls, and killing those who opposed them, the rebels divided themselves into three parties, and made their way quickly to the bridges.

But they got no further. Ket was encountered by the gallant Captain Drury, who drove him back, and well-nigh captured him. At the two other bridges, the result was precisely similar. They were guarded respectively by Lord Lisle and Lord

Robert Dudley, who in each case checked the rebels, and forced them to retire as they came.

But though constantly worsted, the rebels were by no means discouraged. Their numbers were so great, [that their losses, though heavy, seemed as nothing; and they were always able to renew the attacks, both by night and day, so that the royalists were quite worn out by continual watching, and began to despair of success.

After some consultations together, the Marquis of Northampton, the Lords Willoughby, Powis, and Bray, Sir Thomas Tresham and several others, prayed the Earl of Warwick to accord them an interview, as they desired to represent certain matters to him.

Their request being granted by the earl, who well knew their business, they waited

upon him at the Guildhall, accompanied by the principal officers of the army, and found him in the large chamber, completely accoutred—indeed, he now rarely laid aside his armour.

With him were his two sons, Sir Thomas Palmer, Sir Edmund Knevet, Captain Drury, and Norroy.

Warwick received them standing, and saluted them with his accustomed courtesy, but looked displeased.

“My lord,” said the Marquis of Northampton, “we approach you with reluctance, being aware that what we have to say will not be agreeable to you. But we cannot disguise the truth. We hold it impossible that you can defend the city with your present inadequate force against such an enormous multitude as are assembled in Ket’s camp. Though peasants, they have

proved themselves brave, and extraordinarily obstinate. Their attacks are incessant. No sooner are they driven out at one point than they appear at another—nay at several points at once. And their malice is so great, that we marvel they have not set fire to the city in various places, and utterly destroyed it. We therefore recommend you to consult your own safety and retire, rather than hazard a defeat, since the chances are so strongly against you.”

Warwick listened to what was said with suppressed anger.

“I am surprised you have ventured to make this proposition to me,” he said. “Think you I will consent to such dishonour? Were I to leave the city I have come to defend, it would be an eternal reproach to me! But I have no such thought. I will rather suffer whatever fire and sword

may work against me, than yield an inch to the rebels. Neither do I despair of success. Valiant knights can never be beaten by peasants!"

"Never!" exclaimed Captain Drury.

"Let all swords be drawn," cried Warwick, plucking his own blade from the sheath, while all present followed his example. "'Tis an ancient custom among warriors," he continued, "in time of extreme danger to kiss his companion's sword, binding themselves to die, if need be, in each other's defence. We swear not to depart hence till we have delivered the city from the rebels, or to lose our lives in fighting for the king's honour."

"We swear it!" they cried.

And with the words, each pressed his lips to his neighbour's sword.

This chivalrous action harmonised well

with the gallant Drury's feelings. But he was scarcely more pleased than were the Lords Lisle and Robert Dudley.

On that very day, at a later hour, fourteen hundred lansquenets arrived in Norwich as a reinforcement to the king's army. One thousand were horse, well mounted and well equipped; the rest were foot-soldiers, and all fine men.

Warwick then felt perfectly secure, and all Northampton's fears vanished. As to the valiant Drury, such was his contempt for Ket and the peasants, that he almost regretted that the German mercenaries had come.

"We could have beaten the rebels without these Almayns," he said. "They will rob us of some of our credit."

XXVI.

DUSSINDALE.

UNTIL the arrival of the lansquenets, Ket's confidence had been unshaken, since he felt certain he should be able to wear out Warwick by repeated attacks. But he now began to quail.

On the third day as he rode to the camp from Mount Surrey, in a very despondent mood, for his supplies of provisions had been cut off by Captain Drury, great numbers of his men surrounded him, shouting :

“To Dussindale! To Dussindale! Let us go to Dussindale!”

“Why thither?” demanded Ket.

“Know you not the prophecy?” cried several voices. “Our enemies will be slain at Dussindale.”

“I have not heard it,” rejoined Ket.

“Thus it runs,” cried one of the speakers :

“‘The country gnuffs, Hob, Dick, and Hick,
With clubs and clouted shoon,
Shall fill up Dussindale with blood
Of slaughtered bodies soon.’”

“Truly, that seems to import that you shall slay your enemies,” observed Ket. “Yet the ‘slaughtered bodies’ may be your own.”

“No, no!” cried the man who had spoken.

“The nobles and gentlemen are meant. Jabez the soothsayer himself told us so. We will quit the camp, and go down to

Dussindale. Nay, we have no choice, since Captain Drury has stopped all the passages, so that no provisions can reach us."

"The time is come," observed Ket, gloomily. "We must fight a great battle. If we win it, London will be ours."

"And we *shall* win it!" cried the peasants, enthusiastically. "We will burn down our cabins forthwith, and descend to Dussindale!"

Ket did not oppose the proposition. He believed in the prophecy, though its precise meaning seemed uncertain. But, however that might be, he deemed it expedient to quit Mousehold Heath.

Having obtained their leader's assent to immediate departure, the men hurried off to the camp and set it on fire in a hundred places.

Constructed of timber and bushes, the cabins burnt rapidly, covering the entire

summit of the hill with smoke, and concealing the proceedings of the rebels from those in the city, who wondered what had happened.

Thus shrouded, the men placed all their arms and ammunition, of which they had still good store, in waggons and carriages, and conveyed them and their artillery to Dussindale, an extensive valley, consisting altogether of heaths and commons bordered by marshes, lying to the north-west of the city.

Here, under the superintendence of Miles, the master gunner, who selected a suitable spot for the purpose, they dugged a trench, and raised a high rampart, on the summit of which they placed their cannon.

Stakes sharpened at the point were planted around the battery, and the waggons and carriages were so arranged as to add to the strength of the defences.

From the size and number of its guns, the fort presented a very formidable appearance; and when the men had finished it, which they did in a very short space of time, and fixed their ensigns upon it, their spirits revived, and Ket recovered from his despondency.

The Earl of Warwick was rejoiced to learn that the rebels had removed to Dusindale, where they could be more easily attacked than on Mousehold Heath, despite their fort. He, therefore, marched forth next day, with all his horse, his artillery, the lansquenets, and Captain Drury's band.

Besides his sons, who rode by his side, he was accompanied by the Marquis of Northampton, Lord Willoughby, and all the nobles and knights who had come with him to Norwich.

Necessarily, a certain number of officers and soldiers were left behind to guard

the city, though no danger was apprehended.

On entering Dussindale, they immediately descried the rebel fort with the flags flying above it, and the cannon on the ramparts.

A large party of horsemen were drawn up beside it, with Ket at their head; and on the right and left was an immense host, consisting of some four or five thousand armed peasants, archers, arquebusiers, and pikemen.

Before commencing the attack, the Earl of Warwick sent Sir Thomas Palmer and Sir Edmund Knevet to offer a pardon to the rebels on certain conditions; but it was peremptorily refused by Ket, and at the same time a cannon shot was fired from the ramparts by Miles, that severely wounded the king's standard-bearer, and killed his horse.

Highly indignant, the Earl of Warwick ordered a whole volley of artillery to be instantly discharged against the enemy.

Immediately afterwards a tremendous charge was made by Captain Drury on Ket's horse, which the latter were utterly unable to resist. The rebel leader did not attempt to rally his men, who were scattered far and wide by Drury, but galloped from the field, and being mounted on a swift horse, baffled pursuit.

At the same time the rebels were attacked by the lansquenets, and speedily thrown into confusion — their discomfiture being completed by the light horse.

Never was victory speedier. In a quarter of an hour, the whole of the rebel force—except those in the fort—was routed, and flying through the valley in all directions.

Terrible slaughter ensued. The panic-stricken fugitives were chased for miles by

the light horsemen, and ruthlessly slain. The plain was strewn with dead bodies, and it was estimated that four thousand wretched peasants were killed on that day in Dussindale—thus fulfilling the prophecy :

“ The country gnuffs
Shall fill up Dussindale with blood.”

While their comrades were thus being cut down, some three thousand men were shut up in the fort, resolved to sell their lives as dearly as they could; and since they had still got their artillery, with Miles to manage it, it was certain they could do much mischief.

During the pursuit and slaughter of the fugitives, these men were scarcely noticed, because their escape was impossible, as they were environed on every side, with no provisions and no hope of succour.

Their surrender, therefore, seemed in-

evitable. But they had no such intention, and had made up their minds to die, but not unavenged.

Pitying their case, the Earl of Warwick sent Norroy to them, offering them pardon if they would give up their artillery and yield.

To this offer, William Ket, who was with them, made answer :

“ If we could be convinced that our lives would be spared, we might be induced to listen to your proposition. But we have no faith in any promises made us. We will, therefore, defend this fort to the last ; and we are well able to defend it, since we have good artillery, plenty of powder and shot, and good cannoneers, as you will find. We reject the Earl of Warwick’s offer. We will rather die like men than be hanged like dogs. Nor shall we die unavenged.

Attack us, and you shall feel what we can do. Our cannoneers are ready and their matches lighted."

Finding them thus obstinate, the Earl of Warwick sent to Norwich for all the foot soldiers he had left there for its defence, and having put them on their arrival in battle array, he sent Captain Drury to the rebels to ask whether they would receive pardon if he himself came to order it.

"Ay, marry will we!" was the answer. "We have such confidence in the earl, that if he will come himself, we will trust him, and submit to the king's mercy."

On this, Warwick rode towards the fort, attended by Norroy and his two sons.

When close to the ramparts, which were thronged, he called out:

"You see I am here! I promise you a pardon in the king's name!"

“We are satisfied,” they replied. “No need to read the proclamation.”

Thereupon all those within the fort came out, leaving their artillery behind them.

Throwing down their weapons before the earl, they called out, with a loud voice, “God save King Edward!”

All the spoil in Dussindale was given to the soldiers.

XXVII.

HOW KET WAS CAPTURED IN A BARN AT SWANNINGTON.

SAVED from capture or harm by the speed and strength of his horse, Ket galloped on for about three miles, until he reached a thick wood, into the depths of which he plunged.

Here he remained for several hours, and was not disturbed in his retreat, but he could hear the shouts of the soldiers and the cries of the fugitive peasants in the distance.

When it grew dark he ventured forth,

having first taken off his armour, as it might have betrayed him, and rode on towards Felthorpe, but was obliged to turn aside more than once.

While passing, near Swannington, a house belonging to Master Rich, he noticed a large barn, which he thought would afford him shelter for the night. Leaving his horse where he could find him again, he entered the barn.

He now felt greatly exhausted, having eaten nothing since the morning, and, besides, he was oppressed by dreadful thoughts. Of his thousands of followers, not one was left. There was no chance of escape, for a price would be set upon his head, and the whole country would be roused against him.

Worn out, at length, he threw himself on a heap of straw, and presently fell asleep, intending to depart before dawn. But he

did not awake at the time, and was found by two husbandmen, who recognised him at once, and carried him to their master's house.

The fallen rebel leader hoped that Rich, whom he had known, would help him. But the sturdy farmer expressed no sympathy for his situation.

While Ket was devouring some meat that was set before him, Rich sent one of his men, mounted on Ket's own horse, to Norwich, to announce the important capture.

In a couple of hours' time, for the city was only eight miles off, there came out a party of horsemen, with an officer at their head, to take charge of the rebel leader. They treated him most ignominiously, allowing him no saddle, tying his arms behind his back, and his feet under the horse.

In this state he was conveyed to Norwich, without an attempt at rescue being made,

and exposed to the hootings and execrations of the immense crowd that came forth to see him as he passed through the streets from Saint Stephen's Gate to the castle, whither he was taken.

Scarce a week ago, he had ridden through these very streets in triumph, and the lives of the citizens hung on his word. Now he was guarded and bound like a common criminal, and imprecations were hurled against him.

Captured at Wymondham, in the house of one of his own tenants, who betrayed him, William Ket was likewise brought to Norwich, and placed in the castle.

On this day the bodies of the slain at Dussindale were gathered in several great heaps, and buried.

All the notorious rebels not included in the general pardon were executed without delay. According to the barbarous custom

of the time, several were hanged, drawn, and quartered, and their heads fixed on the city gates.

Miles, the master gunner, Flotman, Fowkes, Jabez, the soothsayer, and five others, were hanged on the Oak of Reformation, in the presence of a great concourse of spectators, and the bodies of the miserable caitiffs were left depending from the tree.

A grand thanksgiving service was held next day in the cathedral, and was attended by the Earl of Warwick, the Lords Lisle and Robert Dudley, and all the nobles and knights who had accompanied him on the expedition.

They were assembled in the magnificent choir, and the entire nave and side-aisles were filled with soldiers, completely armed and equipped.

Immediately after the service the Earl of Warwick quitted the city with his army,

amid the ringing of bells and the joyous shouts of the citizens, and commenced his march to London.

It was subsequently ordained that on the anniversary of the day on which this signal victory was obtained over the rebels, service should be performed at all the churches, in order that the citizens might repair to them and give thanks for their great deliverance.

XXVIII.

HOW AUGUSTIN STEWART HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH KET IN
A PRISON-CHAMBER OF THE CASTLE.

ORDERS having been received that Ket and his brother should be sent to London under a sufficient guard, to be examined by the Council, Augustin Stewart, who was exceedingly desirous of having an interview with the late rebel leader before his departure, went to the castle, and easily obtained admittance to the prison-chamber in the great tower in which he was confined.

Ket did not look cast down, and it afterwards appeared that he entertained the belief that the Lord Protector would publish an amnesty, in which he and his brother would be included.

Without waiting to be addressed by his visitor, he said :

“ I understand why you have come to me. You desire information respecting Margaret Flowerdew.”

“ You have guessed my errand,” rejoined Augustin.

“ You shall learn all I know,” said Ket. “ You are aware that she escaped from Mount Surrey ?”

“ I assisted her escape,” observed Augustin. “ But she disappeared.”

“ She quitted the city,” replied Ket, “ not deeming it safe, I suppose, and went to Hethersett with her old female servant. There she remained for some days in per-

fect seclusion; but I then discovered her retreat, and determined to bring her back to Mount Surrey. However, I was disappointed, for, when I came to the house, the bird had flown."

"Thank Heaven for that!" cried Augustin.

Ket took no notice of the exclamation, but went on:

"From careful inquiries which I instituted, I learnt that she had made her way to London, meaning to seek protection from the Duke of Somerset. His grace, at this time, was at Hampton Court Palace with the young king, and Margaret went thither. Hearing from the usher that a young damsel, who had fled from Norwich, earnestly besought an interview with him, the duke consented to receive her, and she was brought into his presence.

"With him was a graceful and richly-

attired youth, who was seated at a table, writing. She could scarcely doubt that this youth was the king, but nothing was said.

“ She told her story to the duke, who listened to it with great interest, and put several questions to her respecting the rebels, all of which she answered. The young king likewise listened to her, and with yet deeper interest, but he put no questions. When she had concluded, the king, raising his head, and looking at the Lord Protector, said, ‘ Let her remain at the palace till something can be done for her.’ The duke assented, and then remarked to Margaret, as if intimating what she ought to do, ‘ You hear what his majesty has just said ?’

“ Thus admonished, she fell on her knees before the young king, and earnestly thanked him for his great goodness to her. Raising

her graciously, he spoke to her in a very kindly and encouraging manner—repeating his injunctions to the duke.

“She therefore remained at Hampton Court Palace at the time. Whether she is still there or at Windsor Castle, with the royal household, I cannot say. I have heard nothing more.”

After a moment’s reflection, Augustin remarked :

“You could not have learnt these particulars unless Margaret herself had written to you.”

“I will not deny it. She has written to me,” replied Ket. “I hope she will intercede for me with the Lord Protector. His grace, I understand, freely admits that the people have good cause to complain of the oppression of the nobles and gentlemen. The punishment has been sufficient for the offence. Already, the Lord Protector has

incurred the hatred of the nobles by his humanity and Christian charity. Let him defy them, and complete his work, by publishing a general abolition of the past. That, and that alone, will restore tranquillity to the kingdom."

"After what you have told me, I shall go up to London without delay," said Augustin; "and I trust I may see Margaret."

"You can scarcely fail," said Ket. "I hope we may meet again. If not, farewell for ever!"

"Farewell!" said Augustin, as he quitted the prison-chamber.

So impatient was Augustin to depart, that as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements for the journey, he set out for London, and arrived there next day.

Under the order of the Council, of which we have previously spoken, the two Kets

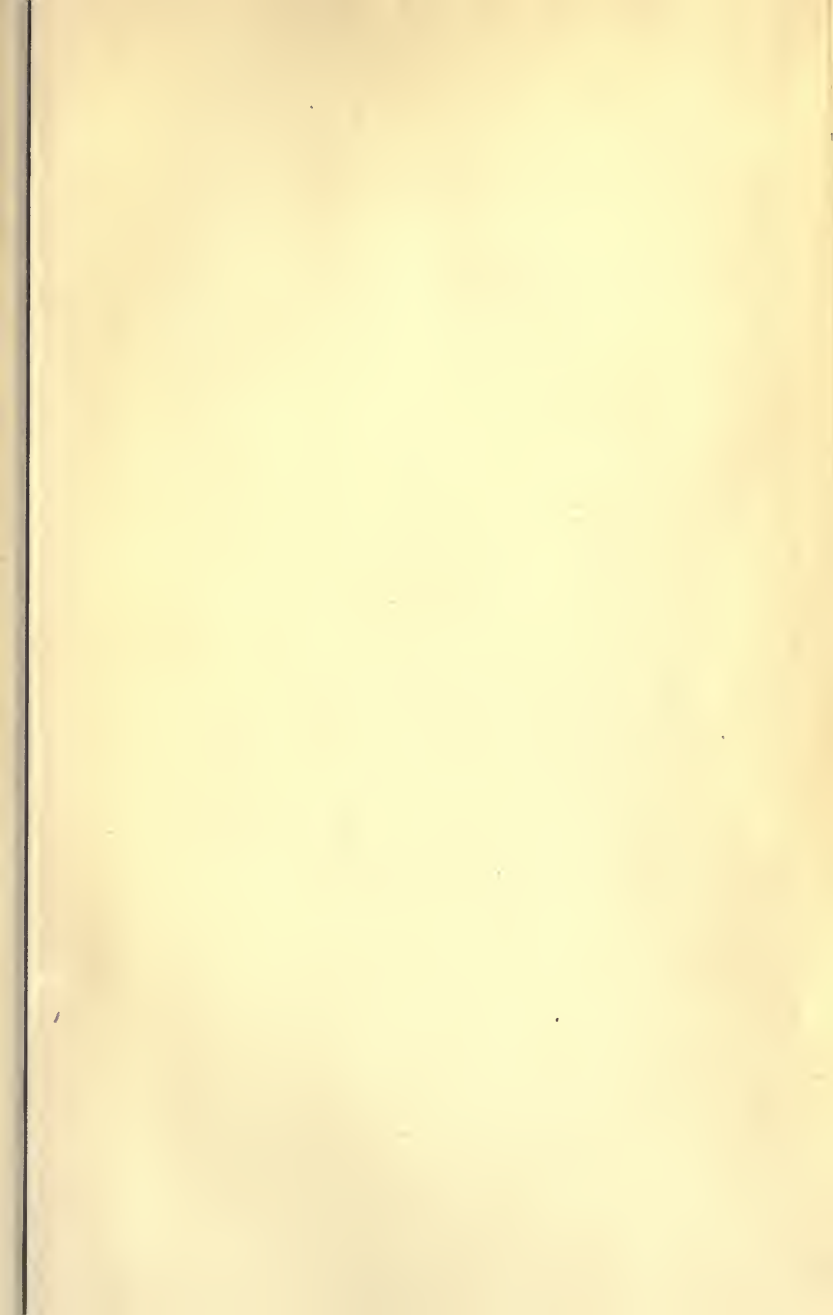
were taken up to London by Thomas Audley, who provided a strong guard for their custody, and lodged them securely in the Tower.

End of Book the First.

END OF VOL. I.

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