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THE LOLLARDS :

A Tale,

FOUNDED ON THE

PERSECUTIONS WHICH MARKED THE EARLY PART
OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE MYSTERY, OR FORTY YEARS AGO; AND OF
CALTHORPE, OR FALLEN FORTUNES.

Forgotten generations live again.

H. K. WHITE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE LOLLARDS.

CHAPTER I.

“ Chains are as feathers, bondage nought,
“ When a pure breast its witness lends,
“ To light that conscious heaven of thought,
“ Where innocence with suffering blends.”

GRATTAN.

THE unguarded expressions which had fallen from John Huss in his prison, coupled with the attempted escape, to which he had been led by the artifices of Michael de Causis, appeared, to a meeting of the cardinals and bishops, holden on the following day, to supply such unequivocal proofs of guilt, that to call him before them seemed useless; and they actually deliberated whether or not they should proceed at once to condemnation and sentence. A notary who attended

them, indignant at this marked contempt for the ordinary forms of law, apprized the Bohemian noblemen, who had interested themselves for their persecuted countrymen, of the course likely to be taken ; and they, on the instant made such representations to the Emperor, that he interfered, for once, with effect ; and in obedience to his mandate, the accused and his writings were reserved for public examination.

While awaiting his trial, Huss had the satisfaction of learning that “the God of the Earth,” as he had been accustomed to call Pope John, was deposed by that same council before which he had cited him to appear. Huss exulted in this ; but it hastened the decision against himself. The proceedings were, throughout, perfectly consistent with the conduct previously pursued. Charges were multiplied against him ; doctrines stated to have been taught by him, though he had never heard of their existence till they were made a subject of accusation ;

and he, who had ever been the advocate of peace, was denounced as having made it the business of his life to raise commotions, by stirring up the people to resist their governors. Against this mass of calumny, he opposed the general tenor of his life, the uniform spirit of his writings, and those arguments and inferences which were fairly to be drawn from both. What he had really advanced, he avowed and defended, contending that it was in perfect conformity with the Scriptures; but many of the opinions said to be his, he denied that he had held. The Emperor, who was present, with an air of great moderation and indulgence, frequently called upon him to renounce, in a formal manner, those articles which Huss declared to be falsely alleged against him. But this the reformer stedfastly refused. If he did that which was required, he knew that it would go forth to the world, not that he renounced opinions which were never

his, but that he recanted, before the council, the doctrines which he had been accustomed to teach. He resolutely contended, that with notions falsely ascribed to him he had nothing to do; and ought no more to be called upon to renounce them, than ought any of the fathers of the council, who would feel it a great indignity were such a test of their faith proposed to them. It was in vain that the Emperor, the cardinals, and bishops, endeavoured in succession to shake him on this point. Though meek his manner, his resolution was unalterable.

When persuasion failed, it was attempted to terrify him, by reminding him of the fearful penalties to which obstinacy must expose him. Huss denied that he was guilty of stubbornness; and professed himself willing to abjure any opinion that he had taken up, the moment he should be convinced that it was erroneous. But this conciliatory declaration had not

the effect which he had hoped it would produce ; and indeed contained too severe a satire on the inefficient efforts of those opposed to him, to be easily overlooked. By some of the council he was reprovèd for his craftiness — by others mocked, for his supposed absurdities ; and he was impeded, when speaking on points of the greatest importance to his cause, by clamorous calls for judgment, by cries of “ What does this avail ? ” and by every mean expedient that could be adopted, in order to prevent the expression of his thoughts, or weaken their effect on those to whom they were addressed ; who, had these been spared, were too much steeled against him, to make it probable that any undue bias in his favour could be created in their minds.

In these circumstances, when Huss perceived that the relentless ferocity of all around him, was in the spirit of the treatment he had experienced during his confinement, he made a powerful appeal

to the Emperor, on the subject of the safe conduct which had been granted to him for his personal security. Slender was the consolation which he derived from the answer given to this appeal.

“ True it is,” said Sigismund, “ that I have given you safe-conduct hither, to the end that you should have a full and fair opportunity of defending opinions which you have evermore contended were so capable of good and satisfactory defence. The advantage of that safe-conduct you now enjoy ; but farther it extendeth not. — Farther, were your opinions such as you described, yourself could not wish it to extend ; nor could it, in sooth, being superseded by your triumphant acquittal. Renounce your errors, and I will answer for it that you shall depart in safety ; but still persisting in them, expect not that I will be the protector of your heresies.”

Here a burst of admiration from the Cardinals and Bishops interrupted him

for a moment, but only to augment his zeal in the cause of the church; and he added, in a louder and still more determined tone —

“For sooner than you should escape, being so resolved, myself, as a true son of the church, would not scruple with mine own hands to kindle the flames, in which it is fitting a heretic so desperate should expire.”

The face of Sigismund was invaded by a deep blush, when Huss reminded him of the safe conduct which had been granted to him. He felt the reproach which the words of the Bohemian, though urged with all humility, conveyed; and, resenting that boldness, which, to one of his high rank, dared frankly to state an unwelcome truth, he replied with what he thought dignified resentment. Anger made him fancy that he had triumphantly explained away that blot on his character, with which, mean acquiescence in the violation of his own safe-conduct,

has fixed for ever on his name ; and the unfortunate heretic seemed to him then a much fitter object for religious vengeance than he had appeared till that moment.

Huss found that opposed as he was, all he could urge would make no impression on his judges. He, however, pursued his defence, in a manner worthy of the high reputation for talent which he had enjoyed. The result was such as he had anticipated. He was peremptorily enjoined to confess with meekness, that he had erred in all that had been laid to his charge, — to bind himself by oath never again to teach any such doctrines, — and solemnly and publicly to recant them all.

When the decision was announced to him, he professed the most perfect readiness to abandon any opinion which the meanest member of that council could prove to be unsound. This repetition of what he had previously offered was viewed as a singular instance of stubborn

arrogance, and he was remanded to prison; but ordered to be brought up at the expiration of a month; when, if he still adhered to the resolution he had avowed, it was determined to pronounce the definitive sentence of the council.

In the sad days which succeeded, he occupied himself in writing to his friends, to strengthen them in the conviction that what he had taught was the truth, and in giving such admonitions for the general regulation of their conduct, as he thought might be serviceable, coming from one who was so soon to quit the world; for to this he had fully made up his mind.

“Fear not for me,” said he to the Lord de Chlume. “Think not that I deplore for myself the death which is coming upon me. The world has long since lost that value in my estimation, which would make me covet to live for all it could afford.”

“Yet thus abruptly to part with it is afflicting,” his friend remarked.

“Not a whit; it is rather joy than sorrow. In youth, I must confess, for a season the blandishments of this harlot life, seduced my soul to hope for earthly bliss; but the awful interference of a chastening Providence, dispelled the dream which had come over me, and taught me to know how frail the best materials of human joy. From that period, I have known no weak desire to linger here. Life seemed to me despoiled of all its gold; and but that duty bound me to existence, I had not borne about its dross so long.”

“But Alice—”

“There I still am vulnerable; and could I save my life, without sinning against the truth, and disturbing the consciences and possibly endangering the eternal welfare of others, I would gladly do so, that she might retain her protector. But it may not be.”

“Yet shall she not want a protector.”

“I know,” replied Huss, “that your

kindness would offer her an asylum ; but I would not wish that she should tarry in Bohemia. There, De Marle would seek her. He is young, and may not marry yet. His heart is generous ; but I have not to learn on what licentious pleasures soldiers reckon. His warm and ingenuous mind has hardly yet received the impression which will remain on it through life ; and Alice, although discreet as she is beautiful, hath not that experience which might ensure her safety, if the serpent love, should seek the Eden of her heart.”

“ I,” said the Lord de Chlume, “ will nor fail to give her wholesome council.”

“ But it will not be asked when it shall most be needed ; and, for yourself even, I would guard you against being surrounded by fair young females. Have none such among your servants, lest your house shall increase and edify, more than your soul in that which is good. Therefore I would beseech you, when I am

dust again, that you do withdraw Alice from this vicinity; and, for I am satisfied De Marle will forthwith hie to Bohemia in search of her, I would beg of thee to escort her by the way of France, so that she may speedily return into Britain; where, by this, I doubt not her brother is in circumstances to yield her all needful aid and solace.”

“ And, as my soul hopes for mercy at the hands of its Maker, this will I endeavour to perform.”

“ I think, as she has to pass by many roads, it might screen her from notice, and so peradventure from peril and temptation, if she were to travel habited in the vestments of a boy; and this, more over, shall effectually baffle the enquiries of any that may watch her departure, or be minded to follow.”

The Lord de Chlume promised punctually to observe all that had been recommended to him by his pious friend. But he was unwilling to give up the

hope of saving his life, and restoring him to liberty. Disappointed in his efforts to move Sigismund, unless he could bear to him the tidings that Huss was disposed to recant, as a last effort he besought the persecuted Bohemian to consider whether he might not be in error; and if so, whether it was not a duty that he owed as well to himself as to others, to save his life on the terms still held out to him.

“Trust me,” said Huss, and tears attested the sincerity of his words, “I would not pause nor hesitate to do so, if that were possible. Convinced of error, it were as much my duty to avow it, as it is now to maintain what I feel and know to be the truth.”

He gave the same answer to the Bishops, when they waited upon him by order of the Emperor, who felt some compunctious visitings, and was reluctant to see him devoted to destruction; though he was too irresolute to risk giving the

church offence, by demanding that he should be spared.

Huss, not wishing that Alice should be made acquainted with the extent of suffering to which he had been doomed, she was not admitted to his prison. But she failed not to remark, that the tone of his letters had materially changed. He no longer sought to cheer her with the hope that the powerful intercession making for him by the nobles of Bohemia and others, would be likely to obtain his enlargement. What he wrote, was evidently designed to prepare her for a very different result. He now exulted that the malice of his enemies could only touch his life. That sacrificed, the bands which restrained him would be broken ; and in the same moment that his persecutors rejoiced in the consummation of their cruelty ; his emancipated spirit would exult in entering on an immortal career, distinguished by the glorious crown of martyrdom.

These remarks were sufficiently intelligible to Alice. Before their departure from Pragué, she had trembled at the idea of seeing her kind benefactor in the hands of his enemies. The solemn admonitions which she now received, and the manner in which she found herself, affectionately reminded how much more potent was the protector she possessed above, than any to be found in this world, in place of the hope it was intended to inspire, waked the most dismal apprehensions. The solemn settled grief which sat on the face of the Baron de Chlume, when he called to enquire after her welfare, led her to believe that the day of the martyrdom was near at hand; and his conversation, though intended to soothe, did not remove this idea.

One morning she happened to see a packet of letters, which the Baron had confided to the care of the matron with whose family she resided. These were addressed to the Lord de Chlume, and had

been forwarded from Huss by Bohemian nobles, who had visited their countryman in prison. She knew the writing; and gazed on the papers with that eagerness which affection calls forth, when the most trifling objects from one beloved, meet suddenly the eye. Among them she remarked a letter still sealed; and turning it, she perceived that the superscription was unusually long. Alice read it, not having the remotest idea that aught would be written there which the sender or receiver could desire to conceal. She started at beholding these lines :

“ I pray you that you do not open this letter, before you be sure and certain of my death.”

Alice was much agitated. A letter bearing such a request was not likely to be forwarded, but immediately before the writer was to be deprived of life. Even at that moment, it struck her that the Bohemian might be advancing to execu-

tion. An unusual concourse of persons had passed towards Constance, and an air of dejection had marked the countenances of many of them. A month had been allowed Huss to retract errors, which as they had never been his, he could not retract. It seemed to her at first impossible that the month should have passed away so soon; yet, when Alice came to calculate more closely, she perceived that it expired on that day. This and every other circumstance that pressed on her attention, or occurred to her memory, served but to augment her alarm, and awful suspense seemed ripening into dreadful certainty.

CHAP. II.

“ The hour is come, the court arranged,
“ The judges’ solemn brows unchanged—
“ The breathless crowd, the gaolers grim.”

GRATTAN.

THE sixth of July, the day on which Huss had been ordered to be brought up to receive the sentence of the council, arrived. Every effort was made to give all possible pomp and importance to the business of the day, in order that the condemnation of one so detested, should strike terror into others who might be likely to prove refractory. The ceremony was appointed to take place in the great Church of Constance, which was fitted up with extraordinary

splendour for the occasion. From the recent deposition of Pope John, and the non-election of a successor, it was impossible for the head of the Catholic Church to be present; but in order to show all reverence for the station of the Pontiff, a chair was placed as for the Pope, above the throne of the Emperor. Below that, on either side, seats were prepared for the vicars, patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, according to their rank in the church. The nobles who attended came in their most costly habits, and had their several seats assigned to them in conformity with ancient etiquette. The Duke of Bavaria, in his state robes, took his station near the throne of Sigismund, carrying the golden apple in his hand, and bearing the grand cross. In the middle of the church a scaffold was erected of considerable elevation, on which it was proposed to exhibit the heretic, or the heresiarch, as the devoted Bohemian was

called by his judges. Near this scaffold a small table or desk was placed, and here the vestments of a priest were deposited, together with a silver chalice.

At ten in the morning, the Emperor passed to the cathedral in great state, followed by a numerous train of attendants. The cardinals and bishops then approached; and the Emperor having taken his place on the throne as president of the council, the several dignitaries of the church arranged themselves in the order previously concerted.

Huss was brought in, guarded by soldiers, and was directed to stand near the table. Though he had persuaded himself that he had fully made up his mind to the worst, when he saw the newly-erected scaffold, the intended use of which he was somewhat at a loss to guess, he experienced more emotion than he had anticipated. He saw the garments and chalice, rightly comprehended the purpose for which they were brought,

and felt perfectly convinced that in anticipating the worst, he had not deceived himself, nor done his enemies wrong.

The first surprise over, he recovered his wonted serenity of manner. Bowing, with an air of resignation, to the Emperor and council, he directed another look towards the temporary wooden erection which he had before observed; and concluded that a part of the sentence was there to be executed which his judges had determined to award. He saw that the moment of punishment had nearly arrived; and lifting his eyes to Heaven, as thence invoking support and consolation, he sunk on his knees before the scaffold.

The Bishop of Lodi now ascended the pulpit, to open the business, by *preaching the accused*, as it was termed. He took for his text a passage in the sixth chapter of Romans, which describes the atonement offered on the cross to have

been made, "that the body of sin might be destroyēd, that henceforth we should not serve sin." To these expressions he attached a meaning very different from that which obviously belongs to them, wresting from them a command that "the body of sin should be destroyed," and taking especial care that by "the body of sin," the body of an individual charged with heresy should be understood. He proceeded to show the importance of putting down heresies in their infancy. He enlarged on the schism which had been produced in the church; painted, in the most vivid colours, the evils thence arising; and insisted on the paramount importance of visiting with severity the depravity from which they emanated. Finally, he addressed himself to the Emperor, and pointing out John Huss as an object of just vengeance, he called on Sigismund to consummate his own glory, and establish an everlasting

fame, by relieving the church from its enemy, and giving to death the friendless Bohemian.

The procurer or advocate for the council, immediately on the sermon being concluded, moved that the process against John Huss should be read over, and that the council should proceed forthwith, to pass their definitive sentence against him.

The process was thereupon read. When Huss heard opinions imputed to him which he had never held, he remonstrated against the injustice of the proceeding. But he was told by the Cardinal of Cambray, that he could not then be allowed to defend himself by objecting to particular parts of the charges, but when the reading should be ended, he might speak against the whole. The permission to remark on all that he had to complain of at once, Huss regarded as of no value, inasmuch as he could not hope to remember and reply to the

numerous points; though, if allowed to speak as they occurred, he could give what he thought a perfectly satisfactory answer. This he repeatedly attempted to impress on the council, but to no purpose. When the reading finished, he vindicated himself from the charge of obstinacy, by referring to the various instances in which he had yielded ready obedience to the commands of the Pope; and again reminded Sigismund that he had come freely to Constance to defend his opinions, but not till he had obtained a safe-conduct.

The Emperor strove, by a contemptuous glance, to conceal the blush of conscious shame which invaded his cheek. The cardinals and bishops near him seemed struck with horror at the monstrous effrontery, which prompted an unhappy man pleading for life, to remind a personage of the high rank of Sigismund, that his honour had been pledged for the safety of the individual

whom it was now proposed to degrade and to destroy.

Proclamation was made for silence while sentence was passing, on pain of excommunication and imprisonment. The sentence was then read, which set forth the importance of putting down "the heresies of John Wickliffe, of most damnable memory," and reiterating the matters previously charged against Huss; it pronounced him to be "a true and manifest heretic, altogether indurate and hardened by the space of many years, a seducer of the faithful, and also an obstinate and stiff-necked person, and one who did not desire to return to the lap of holy-mother church;" and therefore it decreed that the said John Huss, should be "famously deposed, and degraded from his priestly orders and dignities, and cut off from the church for ever."

Huss stood up while the sentence was being pronounced. He renewed his

efforts to repel particular charges, but was not attended to. At the end he knelt down, appealing from the council to the Almighty, and imploring forgiveness for his enemies. Even this pious exercise subjected him to new indignities; and those who had devoted him to death seemed almost provoked to be facetious, at the idea of a despised heretic, having in his last hour taken the liberty of addressing to the throne of mercy, a prayer for the pardon of persons of their transcendent virtue, matchless piety, and superior interest with the Deity.

The Patriarch of Antioch, the Bishop of Bath, the Bishop of Lodi, the Bishop of Luthonis, the Cardinal of Cambray, the Cardinal of Florence, and the Cardinal Columna, now prepared, being commissioned by the council, to degrade the convicted heretic. As they advanced with sullen pomp and malignant exultation, the Bohemian experienced a momentary thrill, and a tear stole from his

eye, while the Bishop of Lodi addressed him thus :

“ Thou barren fig-tree, that yet vainly cumbreth the ground, array thyself, unworthy as thou art in these habiliments, that the church may speedily do justice upon thee. Pause not; thy tears are vain, and cannot serve thee here.”

Huss gazed on the harsh features of the bishop, whose dark countenance, rendered still darker by the shade of the scaffold falling on it as he approached, so aggravated its natural severity, that his ferocious scowl imaged that of a fiend triumphant over a fallen spirit. The victim shrunk from the bishop with involuntary horror, while he replied.

“ Reproach not my weakness. If the great Captain of the just, knowing that he should rise on the third day from the dead, did groan while invested with mortal infirmities, under the cruel taunts of his enemies, a weak creature like me

may be forgiven for yielding a tear, to the ingenious malice and unwearied cruelty of mine."

"Blasphemous wretch!" vociferated the bishop. "If dead in trespasses and sins, thou art not to be awakened to salvation, obey my bidding, and prepare thee to suffer the pains to which thou art adjudged, by the most righteous decree of this sacred and holy council."

"I am ready," said Huss; "and I do feel that He whose name I never have blasphemed, will still sustain his servant through the awful hour which is now coming over me."

In obedience to the mandate addressed to him, he then proceeded to attire himself in the garments which had been provided for that purpose. As he put on the alb, or white surplice, which formed part of the dress,—

"This bringeth to my remembrance," said he, "the white vest in the which he who is my support and my hope was

clothed, to gratify the cruel Herod, who delighted in such mockery.”

“What obdurate depravity!” exclaimed the Patriarch of Antioch, turning round to the prelate, who stood next to him, as expecting his sanction and approbation. It was the Bishop of Bath, who would readily have concurred, had the expression come from another quarter; but who now thought it right to support his dignity by regarding the condemned with a steady, tranquil eye, as if he had not heard it. The patriarch, abashed at having in some sort recognized the right of England to sit as a fifth nation at the council, by this appeal to her representative, strove by directing his glance to the Cardinal Otho Columna, who stood beyond the Bishop of Bath, to make it appear that it was for his ear he had intended the words which had just been uttered; but the cardinal was too much occupied to offer any observation in reply.

Being now attired in the robes of a priest, Huss was ordered to take the chalice in his hand, and ascend the scaffold to address the multitude, which filled the body of the church. He mounted the steps and presented himself to the crowd. The profound silence of expectation was broken by a general murmur or whisper, at recognising, thus clothed for punishment, the man whose case had through several weeks occupied their undivided attention. He stumbled as he passed on to the platform. It instantly struck him that his faltering step might be regarded as an instance of weakness and irresolution, and he paused to gather up his dress, to shew that it was that which had for a moment impeded him. Huss then addressed the throng. Repeatedly admonished to recant, instead of doing so, he re-asserted the truth of what he had taught; and resolutely denying the justice of his sentence, declared he would nothing abate

of that which he had previously advanced.

“Bear witness, O ye assembled people;” he proceeded, “I yield not to the terror of death those principles for which I have ever contended through life; and by the Saviour’s love I call upon ye to testify, before those who see me not, that no desire to save this vile person hath prevailed over my weakness, to risk disturbing the faith, and endangering the everlasting hope of those who have confided in my ministry.”

“Descend, thou wretch,” cried the Bishop of Luthonis, “nor longer outrage that moderation which hath so mercifully accorded thee, even now, a space to testify contrition; descend and receive the meet reward of thy malicious obstinacy.”

Huss had recovered all his wonted courage, and without manifesting apprehension or resentment, he calmly walked down the steps from the scaffold, prepared

to endure all that cruelty might inflict, with constancy and resignation.

On his reaching the last step, the Bishop of Lodi met him, and snatching the chalice from his hand, exclaimed, —

“O! thou accursed Judas, why hast thou forsaken the council and ways of peace, to take part with the Jews? For that thou hast done this, behold I now take from thee the chalice of thy salvation.”

“But,” said Huss, “there is One who was condemned of men as I am, who will not withdraw from me the chalice of his redemption, out of which I do steadfastly hope I shall this day drink in his kingdom.”

The Bohemian was then surrounded by the bishops, each of whom sought to signalise himself by the part he took in despoiling him, and by the curse he breathed on the sufferer.

“The Patriarch of Antioch, while per-

forming his part, vociferated,—“ He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death.”

The Bishop of Bath, aware that he should incur no slight responsibility, if he, as the English president, failed to take a prominent part in the barbarities that were to be acted, seized on the alb and tore it from the sufferer, while he denounced him, exclaiming, —

“ All the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon thee ; (laying his hand on the Bible), and the Lord shall blot out thy name from under Heaven.”

The other dignitaries, who had been deputed thus to act the part of executioners, took care to be but little behind their brethren. Huss submitted to every outrage with equal meekness and courage, and his spirit rising with the injuries he sustained, proved, even to his persecutors, that he possessed within himself a source of consolation, which human wrath could

not snatch from him — which ecclesiastical hostility could not reach.

“Go on—go on!” he cried; “this is, indeed, a solemn ordinance for me, but a grateful one. Never till now did I so strongly feel the matchless power of all-sustaining faith; which lifting me far, far above the sphere of your wrath, enables me, even here, to look on the workings of your hatred, as serenely as I could do, from the Heaven to which I aspire.”

Completely to divest him of the honours of priesthood, his shaven crown could not be spared. After some controversy, it was decided that the skin should be raised by means of a pair of shears. Huss could not repress a smile while they debated whether a razor or scissors should be used. He bore the operation with unshrinking firmness. His contempt for the rancour of his enemies, seemed to increase in proportion to the progress their cruelty had made towards the accomplishment of its object; and when they announced to

him that the church had withdrawn from him all its ornaments and privileges, and that nothing remained but to deliver him to the secular power, he welcomed the intelligence as that which assured him of a speedy release.

“ I am prepared ; nor can the fluttering hawk that struggles to pursue its prey, impatient till the restraining hand gives permission to spring forward for the prize, pant more impatiently than does my spirit, even now, to enter on that flight which you announce to me it soon shall take. Now, feel ye not your littleness, ye men of blood, when in this glorious hour, you see, that though you can destroy my frame, and as it were snatch from me the tattered garment of my soul, which would be soon discarded ; yet *I*, the same that I have ever been, remain unconquered still ? ”

At this moment a large tall cap, round at the top, was introduced with great form. The word “ Heresiarcha ” ap-

peared on it in large characters, and three black figures were painted beneath. These were decorated with horns and tails, and intended to represent devils. They seemed to be dancing, and the grotesque appearance which they presented, would have provoked laughter in an assembly convened for other purposes. Huss regarded it with an expression of dignified pity, as if he commiserated the degradation of those who could stoop to such an impotent attempt to wound. The Bishop of Lodi received it, and advancing with measured step, and the solemn deportment of one who feels that he is engaged in the performance of a duty to the last degree awful and important, placed the cap on the head of the sufferer, repeating these words, —

“ Hereby we commit thy soul to the devil.”

“ But to thee, O, my Redeemer! do I commend my spirit,” Huss exclaimed with uplifted eyes: “ Thou didst wear a

crown of thorns for me, and shall I not rejoice, that I am permitted to carry this idle toy for thee?"

The bishops looked at each other, as shocked and astonished at this exclamation, and turned from the Bohemian with expressions of regret, that their pious efforts to save the wretched sinner from eternal torments, by waking contrition, had failed. At their suggestion, the Emperor directed the Duke of Bavaria to take charge of the heretic, and deliver him to those who were to do execution upon his body. The council then terminated its session, and Huss was removed from the church.

A guard of eight hundred men attended to receive him. He paused for a moment, to bestow his parting blessing on the Baron de Chlume, and to send his last remembrances to Alice. While speaking on this subject, De Marle approached. His face was suffused with tears,

and pressing his ancient preceptor's hand, he exclaimed with energy : —

“ O my revered master ! this is a day of passing woe. That you should be admonished might be well ; but thus to doom you to the stake is damnable.”

“ Peace be with you !” said the Bohemian, “ but restrain your impetuosity, or without serving me you may ruin yourself.”

“ Nay let them do their worst,” cried De Marle ; “ I fear not the wrath of those whose friendship I despise. I am as nothing in the world, but thy death will occasion a void that time itself cannot repair. In religion we have somewhat differed, but thy worst errors never steeled thee against the supplications of the wretched, nor led thee to forget the gentle charities of life. — Thy benevolence —”

“ No more,” cried Huss. “ If I ever merited the praise of benevolence, it was

in consequence of a most sordid calculation, which taught my heart that what I gave to the unhappy, would be requited and repaid with ten-fold interest. But I must not tarry. Those around me are impatient. It seems that some do conceive that there is not light and air enough for all, by their eagerness to close my eyes and stop my breath."

He was about to go forward, when De Marle anxiously called out,

"One moment — yet one moment. Have you no charge to bequeath as a relic; no duty to impose as a parting mark of thy confidence and love?"

"My blessing and my thanks, I leave with you."

"But can I in nothing testify my living veneration for your virtues, when you have passed to their eternal reward? Is there no being dear to you in life, that I can protect when you are at rest?"

The generous zeal which Huss recog-

nised in the young Frenchman, suggested that it might be well to share with him the confidence which he had reposed in the Baron. But the recollection of the motives by which he had been previously governed occurred to him. He remembered the youth of De Marle; his profession, and the powerful attractions of Alice, and he dismissed the thought.

“I have now,” he said, “no time for thinking of worldly matters — with these I have done; and all my thoughts I would consecrate to my eternal concerns. Farewell! — May we meet in a better world!”

He again offered to advance. De Marle restrained him, and accosted him once more.

“Yet bethink thee — hast thou remembered Alice? May not I protect her innocence — may not I conduct her from this fatal place?”

“She is already withdrawn from Constance, and —”

Here the Bohemian hesitated. The guards urged him forward. It was to him a relief to comply, and he was led away without finishing the sentence he had begun.

CHAP. III.

“Religious hope has likewise this advantage above any other kind of hope, that it is able to revive the dying man, and to fill his mind not only with comfort and refreshment, but sometimes with rapture and transport.”

ADDISON.

THE procession moved on. Huss, absorbed in pious meditations, was only awake to joyful hope, and the momentary weakness which had come over him in the church, had given place to the most calm and settled fortitude. Arriving at the gate of the Episcopal palace, he saw a pile of wood, and believed that he was already at the place of execution. He was soon undeceived, for the wood being fired, he saw his writings brought for-

ward, and successively thrown into the flames. A smile played on his features, which he tried but in vain to smother, while he witnessed this vain experiment; and turning to the crowd with the utmost composure, he declared that his writings were consumed, not for the errors which they contained, but to gratify the ignoble rage of his adversaries.

The sun shone bright, but a shower of rain had fallen, and within the circle to which Huss was admitted to view the destruction of his books, he saw a large earth-worm in his path. He stepped a little aside to avoid treading on it. One of his guards, who observed this, placed his foot on the reptile with an air of bravado.

“ I would call the worm my brother,” said the martyr, “ and truly we are brothers in misfortune, for we perish by the same cruelty.”

He now approached a large area, which had been cleared from the crowd, who still

anxiously pressed forward wherever the vigilance of the guards was relaxed. It was opposite the gate of Gottlebian, and between the gates and gardens of the suburbs. In the centre he saw an accumulation of faggots, amidst which a strong post was erected. Several men were employed in carrying more wood into the open space, and four large bundles of straw were placed beside the faggots. A man of ferocious aspect stood near the post, about which the faggots were being piled. He was engaged in disentangling the coils of a rope, which had been recently immersed in water, and two or three chains were laid across a bench, with an appearance of careful arrangement. Huss had no difficulty in recognizing in this man his executioner, and in the place to which he had now been conducted, the spot on which he was to die.

Unmoved by the terrible array, the Bohemian advanced towards the fatal

stake. He tranquilly surveyed the preparations, and when a workman who was engaged in fixing one of the staples to which he was to be chained, paused as if unwilling to continue his labour, while the eyes of the sufferer were on him, Huss mildly desired him to proceed, or his work would not be completed in time. Then falling on his knees he again implored divine aid, and introduced parts of several psalms into his prayer. He quoted rather largely from the thirty-second, and though he solicited forgiveness for all his enemies, he could not help repeating, with strong emphasis, passages like the following: "*Let me not be ashamed, O Lord! for I have called upon thee; let the wicked be ashamed. Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things, proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*" He added, "But now hastening to present myself before thy awful throne, bear witness, O thou, my Creator, that I have

put from me all earthly resentments. In the meekness of Christian love I leave the world. Now, deign to grant that a ray of thy divine intelligence may sustain and light and guide me, through the brief rugged path which I have yet to tread. Into thine hand I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O source of eternal truth!"

The interest which attaches to the last words and actions of a man, who is about to lay down his life in the presence of a multitude of his fellow-creatures, seldom fails to wake a lively sentiment of commiseration, even when the most hardened malefactors are to expiate their atrocities: but where the individual is celebrated for his talents and learning, and stands charged with no moral offence, a still warmer degree of sympathy is inspired in every heart which degrading bigotry has not bereft of the noblest feelings of human nature. Though the unfortunate Huss was surrounded by

beings who had wrought themselves up to suppose that the torture and death of a virtuous man, would be an acceptable spectacle to a God of mercy, there were many among the crowd whose piety fell far short of that zeal, which could contemplate the meditated sacrifice without shuddering horror. These now made their voices heard, remarking, that in whatever way the sufferer had before offended, he prayed most devoutly, and some wished that he might be indulged with a confessor. But a priest who had been present at the council, and was now riding within the circle, called out, on perceiving the impression which the martyr's words had made, that being a convicted heretic, those entrusted with the punishment of his offences ought not to suffer him to be heard. At the same time, he declared that no confessor could be allowed to approach one so accursed — cut off from, and already dead to the church.

His rage was all in vain ! Huss, though strongly opposed to the abuses which he had remarked in the government of the Roman church, had not so far emancipated himself from its authority, but he still subscribed to many of its tenets, and he had taken an opportunity of securing to himself the advantages of confession and absolution, while he was still in prison. To the stern and inhuman language of the priest, he vouchsafed no reply ; but by again raising his eyes and hands in the act of prayer. Doing this, his head being thrown back, the cap which he had till now worn, fell off. He perceived not the accident, till a soldier running up to him replaced it ; at the same time telling him that he should not die without company, as the devils, his masters, should be burnt with him.

Insult was lost upon Huss, after the numerous outrages he had sustained. He did not even hear the unfeeling speech of the soldier, but understanding

that he had prepared him for immediate execution, he meekly indicated by a submissive gesture, that he was ready to suffer.

The executioner then took from his person a white coat, which he had put on in honour of his anticipated deliverance. A frock, prepared with pitch and tar, was brought to him, and wearing this, he was conducted to the stake. His hands were bound, and two faggots, with straw intermixed, were placed beneath his feet. A wet rope was put round him, and this was being tied to the stake, when a partial murmur ran through those who had been admitted within the guarded space. Huss started. An idea crossed his mind that possibly, Sigismund had relented; but this was immediately dismissed, when the priest, who had before spoken to reprove the cries of the crowd, advanced to give expression to the feeling which had just manifested itself.

“What mean you !” he exclaimed, with much harshness in his tone, “that you thus scandalize the holy council, who have righteously doomed this wretch to perish, by permitting him in this, his last hour, to look towards the east ?”

This remark was supported by several voices, which vociferously condemned the granting of such unmerited indulgence.

The executioner, who was really innocent of the imputed kindness, felt hurt at the suspicion that he was capable of commiseration. Anxious to repel the calumny, and to prove that he was a stranger to such impiety, he hastened to atone for the accident which had endangered his reputation, by roughly ordering the Bohemian to move round to the west ; and before the willing martyr could comply, a rude thrust proved to all present, that any deficiency in cruelty which might have been re-

marked was wholly involuntary. Huss was tied first round the middle with cords. A chain was passed over these, and chains were fastened to his left leg and his neck. Thus securely bound to the stake, the faggots provided for the occasion were piled up to his chin; straw was placed beneath and between them, where it was thought likely most effectually to contribute to the fierceness of the blaze.

A moment of awful expectation followed. The executioner approached with a lighted torch; when the Duke of Bavaria rode up to Huss, and loudly called to him, demanding that he should now renounce his errors; at the same time reminding him that in a few moments it would be out of his power to do so.

“ I thought the danger already passed;” he replied, “ but, happily, I am nothing tempted to gainsay what I have heretofore advanced. I have taught the

truth, and I am now ready to seal it with my blood. Ultimately, it shall prevail, though I may not see it. This day you kindle the flames of persecution, about a poor and worthless sinner; but the spirit which animates me, shall, Phoenix like, ascend from my ashes, soar majestically on high through many succeeding ages, and prove to all the Christian world, how vain this persecution, how impotent your rage.”

Firm to the last, and unawed by all the preparations of his enemies, Huss serenely vindicated his principles, and panted with impatience to give what he considered a convincing proof that they were founded in truth. The Duke of Bavaria, with his attendants, retired, and nothing remained but that the executioner should act his part.

The martyr turned as far as his bands would admit, and looked towards the executioner, who now approached to kindle the fire. His movement caused some

of the outer faggots to fall. Upon this the flaming torch was laid down, till the wood could be replaced. The Bohemian saw the torch resumed, and in the same instant, he heard the crackling of the lighted straw. The rapidly extending blaze spread round the pile, while seizing the last moments that remained to him on earth, Huss prayed aloud. He was proceeding, when the rising flame seized his beard, eyes, and eye-brows, and an involuntary start threw the cap from his head. His voice was again heard above the roaring of the volume of fire, which now burst from the top of the pile behind the stake. Utterance failed him; but his uplifted eyes evinced, in that awful moment, that his heart was still awake to devotion, though his tongue was mute for ever. His face became violently distorted, and bowing down his head, he was seen to expire. Enough wood had not been provided, and the fire failed before the mortal remains of

the martyr were more than half consumed. His clothes had been thrown on the pile in aid of the faggots, but all was insufficient, and a new supply of wood was necessary. The burning being at length complete, his ashes were carefully collected, carried away in a cart, and thrown into the neighbouring river, that the admirers of the Bohemian might possess no relic to recall the memory of their martyr. His friends however, consoled themselves for any disappointment this might cause, by collecting small quantities of the ground on which he had suffered; and those who most vehemently condemned the estimation, in which relics were held in the old church, took excellent care that their new one should not be without them.

While these events were passing, Alice, who had as we have seen, a presentiment that her protector was about to suffer, found the painful suspense in which she had lingered intolerable. Alone, she at

last determined to walk to Constance, in the hope that she might there obtain intelligence that would set the fears which tormented her at rest.

It was nearly evening, when she approached the gate of Gottleben. The splendour of the setting sun dwelt on the towers of Constance. The tranquillity which prevailed around, began to extend itself to her mind. The crowds she had seen early in the day, were no longer visible. All was so peaceful, that she could not persuade herself that that awful scene had been acted, the dread of which had so fearfully haunted her mind. In young bosoms, hope soon glows with the confidence of certainty, and Alice mentally reproved the weak timidity which had disturbed her, when she observed several persons standing near, whose eyes were fixed on a spot that looked different from the rest of the earth that surrounded it. She drew nearer to survey it. It was plain that a

fire had been recently kindled there. All the fears that had before distracted Alice, returned with increased force. In dreadful agitation, and scarcely knowing what she did, she accosted one of the bystanders, and demanded to know what had taken place there. Surprized at the ignorance thus displayed, on a subject of which, he concluded, every human being in Constance must have known as much as he did, and struck by the agitated manner of the female before him, he did not immediately return an answer. To Alice, this silence was confirmation. Forgetful that she was unknown, Alice never doubted but the reply was withheld from reluctance to impart the doleful tidings, which a statement of the truth would not fail to convey.

“’Tis in vain you would conceal it,” she exclaimed. “He is dead — tell me — tell me all!”

The earnestness of her solicitation, moved the stranger to compliance, and

from him Alice soon learned, with anguish, that almost bereft her of reason, nay, of life itself, that her revered benefactor — that the friend in whose protection she had been taught to confide, was then floating in scattered, sable particles on the bosom of the Rhine.

CHAP. IV.

“ For a long series of reigns, Smithfield was the field of gallant tilts and tournaments : and also the spot on which accusations were decided by duel.”

PENNANT.

IT is necessary that our narrative should now unfold what was passing in England, while the circumstances which we have detailed. were in progress. Edward Oldcastle, when he reached his native land, provided as he was with copies of the Gospels, found the resources on which he had calculated, and realised very considerable sums, though it was still out of his power to meet the wishes of half the numerous applicants, who daily importuned him to supply them with parts of the Scriptures.

Profitable as it would have been to comply with the demands of all who came, he was precluded from doing so, even to the extent to which he might have carried his efforts to accommodate, by several considerations. In the first place, translations of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue being prohibited under the severest penalties, he was constantly in fear that some enemy, professing to hold the same opinions as the Lollards, would present himself as a purchaser, in order to betray the seller. He was, moreover, restrained by the oath which he had taken at Prague. He had there sworn, under no circumstances to reveal the mystery which he had been taught ; and it appeared to him that his oath would not be kept inviolate, if he multiplied copies so largely as to provoke enquiry, which in all probability would, at no distant day, lead to the discovery, it was his duty, if possible, to prevent.

But there were other books of devotion

which, being in Latin, might be freely disposed of; and as he could lend himself to promote the circulation of these without giving up any principle, which as a Lollard he was bound to maintain, he availed himself of the facilities he possessed for producing such works with more boldness. The price of a prayer book, from its not being an article of clandestine commerce was low, compared with that paid for an English translation of any part of the Bible; but this was counterbalanced by the greater scale on which his operations might be conducted.

Ceaseless activity, regulated by such precautions, in a short space rendered his circumstances very different from what they were, when with Alice he had been but too happy to find the asylum which the kind-hearted Whittington had offered. This point attained, he might have allowed himself to repose for a season, but he resolutely continued

his labours, not so much for the gain of which they were the unfailing source, as to occupy his mind, and to mitigate the bitter sorrow which rankled at his heart, when his thoughts rested on Matilda, and on those events which had torn her from his hopes.

It was in Nottinghamshire, and on the borders of Shirewood forest, that Edward established himself. He would have preferred a residence near his friend Whittington, but that he feared society would impede his industry, as he could not labour in his friend's presence, without breaking the oath which Hoffmann had exacted. But it was necessary that he should frequently visit London, as well to attend to the wishes of the sectarians with whom he was so intimately connected, as to make arrangements with certain booksellers in Paternoster-row, who, regarding him as an eminent *text-writer*, desired an occa-

sional supply of paternosters, creeds, and prayer books. He had obtained a lodging in what was then called, *the way to Reading*, but which has since received the name of Piccadilly. This situation he selected, not so much from the rural beauty of the spot, as for the retirement he might calculate on enjoying there, while the distance from that part of the city which was then, as it is now, the chosen abode of literature, Paternoster-row, was not so great as to present more than a pleasant walk, to a young man of his active habits.

Returning to his home one day, he deviated from the most direct path, and directed his steps towards Saffron-hill, with the intention of visiting the romantic villa at which he had rested with John Huss, when he was about to leave England. He had just passed through New-gate, when he was agreeably surprised at meeting the very individual

who had before conducted him to the place he now designed to visit, Mr. Whittington.

“ I little thought,” he said, after the first salutation, “ to have seen you again in London.”

“ And little did I think that, at my age, I should become so great a traveller,” replied Whittington; “ but so it hath fortunèd. My brother, Sir Richard, was like to have deceasèd, since you visitèd me on your return, but has recoverèd.”

“ I should have been sorry to hear of his death, though the event might not a little tend to the enriching of you.”

“ Not so. He thought that I was rich enough, so he hath left his property to the public in various ways. This prison of New-gate, near which we stand, is, as you see, hugely dilapidated, wherefore he hath made provision for the re-edifying of the same which will shortly be builded anew, when he shall have

paid the debt of nature. I came to receive his last commands, and when he recovered I could not return, till I had seen the encounter, which was to take place in Smithfield, which we are now approaching, between Robert Carey, now Sir Robert, (by reason of his triumph), and the Arragonese warrior."

"I heard of it."

"And questionless you heard," said Whittington, "how that the Englishman did conquer, who thereupon, as is the law of arms, took on him the coat armour of this champion from Arragon, being argent on a bend sable, with three roses, which he united with his own."

"It was, as I am told, a gallant fight, and worthy of remembrance."

"The men were brave, the combat stout and long, but for the sight it did not please me much. Some twenty years ago, or five-and-twenty, there was a spectacle and on this spot, where many

warriors might be seen engaged in desperate contention.”

“Here, did you say?” Edward enquired.

He put this interrogatory with an air of surprise, for the unequal surface of the ground, Smithfield being then unpaved, and the enormous accumulation of mud, which he remarked, notwithstanding the day was fine, led him to think that a better place might have been selected for a tournament.

“Yes, here,” cried Whittington, “in this very Smithfield. But then it was not quite as it is now. It was covered with gravel for the occasion, and these inns, which half encompass it, were not yet erected. That horse-pond was not in the way, and no building stood between this spot and the Elms.”

“What Elms?”

“I mean the spot which then was called the Elms ; but places change their names so now-a-days, that we old men

must interpret as we go on, or striplings, like you, will little profit by our discourse. The Elms, then, was the spot down by Turnmill-brook, so called, because tall elms once flourished there. I can remember one or two being standing when I was but a youth, though most of them were then cut down, forasmuch as they had been found in the way, when malefactors were conducted thither to suffer, that being the common place of execution."

"It was so within my remembrance."

"I can show you that such was its ancient usage. In documents of the time of Henry the Third, you shall read of *furcæ factæ apud Ulmellas com Middlesex ubi prius factæ fuerent*, which I English thus: "Gallowses were erected at the Elms in the county of Middlesex, where gallowses were formerly erected;" so that you must see it was thus appropriated from times of great antiquity. For the justs, of which I made mention, they presented a sight most gallant to

behold. The Prior of Saint Bartholomew, from yonder hospital, which Rahere, the jester, gave some three hundred years ago, for the sick and impotent, went with me to enjoy the sight.

“ Did the Prior then go forth from the Priory ? ”

“ Yea did he, that we might behold the first of the approach of those who were to share in the tiltings. We hied us through Paul’s-gate, without the which we tarried to see the train as it progressed through West-cheap. It was from the Tower that they came, and well I remember, that three-score coursers, most nobly attired for the tournament, did appear, each being surmounted by an esquire of honour. Forthwith as many ladies then were seen, and with them came a like number of knights. I did expect that these said knights would each have had a lady’s horse, for such was once the custom ; but much did it sur-

prise me to find it all otherwise; for instead thereof, each dame conducted a knight, by a silver chain gilded, which attached to his person. Looking down Cheap, I do remember, how when first the gay habiliments of the esquires were seen in the distance, what shouts did make the air resound, and for the cross which standeth by the end of Wood Street, it was so surmounted by adventurous stripplings of the crowd, that though it was not in the ruined state in which we see it at this present time, I had fear lest that self-same day would be the last of so venerable a pillar, and eke the last of some of those who had elevated themselves thereon, to see this goodly pageant.”

“ And came the knights in their armour ?”

“ In their armour, all glistening bright, and fitly prepared for the fray, save that they wore not their helmets. The trumpets sounded bold and warlike blasts, and

divers other instruments contributed brave sounds to cheer them on. Then all the people, through the long length of the Cheap, shouted the martial train. To see the rich citizens as well as the common sort clad in their holiday garments, looking forth from their houses, the which, almost concealed from view by ample cloths of gold and scarlet, and Tyrian purple, furnished no mean spectacle. And then to gaze upon the knights, whose armour, shone on by the sun, seemed to render back his splendour; while the cunning devices on their shields pleased the vision, the whole being decorated with fair images of white harts, wearing crowns of gold about their necks, together with the display of other crowns of gold, and girdles of the same precious metal, with coursers most richly caparisoned, all of which were to be the prizes of the victors, seemed a dream of fairy land, and worthy of the royal presence which graced it; for Richard, little

comprehending what woe should soon befall him, failed not to come to this spot with his queen to gaze on the doings of that day, and of many which followed, the exploits of which it might be tedious to rehearse."

"I remember," said Edward, "hearing tell of the royal justing which took place when the Earl of Somerset, the Seneshal of Hainault, and others, challenged certain Frenchmen to the combat; and also I remember a trial by battle here, but not farther."

Whittington proceeded to point out the precise spots which had been occupied by different parties, and describing the alterations which had taken place; he especially condemned the new buildings, chiefly inns which had risen on one side of the market; and which he remarked, if they continued, to increase, would in time make that which was called a field, to resemble a court-yard, till at length not a tree nor a meadow should be left

within sight. Passing to the west, by the side of a large pool which claimed a considerable part of the scite of the houses, which now extend from Hosier Lane to Cow Street, they were conducted by Cowbridge towards Oldbourne.

Whittington passed the building which was termed a cell to the monastery of Cluny in France, without observation, and was just beginning to admire the workmanship of the noble portico in front of the bishop of Ely's palace, when his attention rested on a crowd of persons, who were rushing down Shoe Lane. Then, as now, a church dedicated to St. Andrew, marked its entrance. Adjoining the church-yard, stood a house, with offices attached thereto, and a well-planted garden. These belonged to the see of Bangor, and Whittington did not fail to inform his companion that they had been granted to it in the time of Edward the Third, as appeared from the following passage, which he recited from

the catalogue of Patent Rolls. “*Rex amortizavit Epô Bangoren in successione unum messuag. unum placeam terræ, ac unum gardinum, cum aliis ædificiis in Shoe Lane, London.*”

On the opposite side of the lane, Holborn Hall, then in an unfinished state, presented itself. Beyond the hall, a piece of waste ground was seen bounded by the stream, long known by the name of Fleet ditch. To the right, a series of gardens extended almost to Fleet Street.

Whittington and Edward followed those they had seen hastening in that direction.

In Fleet Street, they found the crowd very great, and especially so to the left of the lane from which they had issued. The pressure of the multitude had overthrown the fence inclosing the foundation of the Conduit, which afterwards distinguished that spot for ages; and the fall of the timber had severely injured a lad, who had been carried forward by the crowd. Edward assisted to remove

him to the hospital of the white friars, or hermits of Mount Carmel, which then presented a magnificent object on the south side of Fleet Street, and nearly opposite to Shoe Lane. Having given him in charge to one of the order, Edward rejoined Mr. Whittington, and they passed on towards the Temple. Fleet Street was not then of its present width, the houses on the north side being on a level with the front of St. Dunstan's church. It had not begun to be considered inconveniently narrow, but on this occasion, the pressure of the crowd, collected from all parts in the neighbourhood of London, was severely felt.

That which excited so much interest, was a solemn penance appointed to be performed, to redeem St. Dunstan's church from the heavy consequences of a profanation, which it had lately sustained. The Lady Strange, and the lady of Sir John Trussel, of Warmington,

purposing to attend divine worship, on a day when the church was crowded, found some difficulty in gaining entrance; and coming in contact, had each claimed precedence of the other. Lord Strange and Sir John Trussel supported the pretensions of their ladies; and at length enforced their arguments by drawing their swords. Their attendants doing the same, a great struggle ensued, in which one Thomas Petwarden, a fishmonger, and another, lost their lives, and many were severely injured. Lord Strange and his opponent were arrested, and committed to the Compter, with such of their adherents as were not able to make good their retreat. The church, which had been the scene of this contention, was, in consequence, suspended, an enquiry was set on foot, and Lord Strange and his lady being regarded as the aggressors, were ordered to expiate their offence by a solemn penance.

With much difficulty Whittington and

Edward fought their way to the church, which they wished to enter, but this not being permitted, they advanced to meet the procession, beyond the spot where Temple Bar now stands, where the termination of the City's jurisdiction was marked by posts and chains, which extended across the road. Here they got what they thought a good situation, and Mr. Whittington expressed no small amazement, at finding himself so little incommoded by the crowd. His surprize, and with it his satisfaction, were soon abated by intelligence that that which he had congratulated himself upon might be accounted for from the circumstance of its being known that the procession would move from St. Paul's. This was bad news for him, but after indulging in a few reflections on his own want of thought, which had not made him sooner acquainted with what he had now learned, he submitted to the toil of a new effort to return to the church, and succeeded

just in time to witness the arrival of the expiatory train.

Six officers marched first, habited in black, and bearing long staves, which they occasionally used to repress the too curious mob. The clergyman, who had officiated in the church, walked after these, attended by his ordinary assistants. The servants of Lord Strange, twenty in number, followed; the upper part of their persons being stripped to their shirts. The slow and solemn pace at which they had been compelled to move, was evidently no small annoyance to them, as it prolonged the ceremony, which was not rendered less irksome by a shower of rain, falling towards the close of their march. Lord Strange then was seen, bearing a large wax taper in his hand. He had endeavoured to throw great meekness into his deportment, that he might treat the church with due reverence; but as he approached the scene of the affray, his eye glanced

at the spot with an expression of fiery indignation, which marked regret that he had not taken more ample revenge for the insult he had received. Lady Strange, sentenced as the original cause of the disturbance, to walk attired in white, and barefooted, came after her lord, bearing also a taper in her hand ; she was in tears, and two female domestics, who were permitted to be near her, that they might be ready to assist her at the conclusion of the ceremony, were sternly interdicted by the frowns of the arch-deacon, Reynold Renwood, who next appeared, with a train of ecclesiastical attendants, from interfering in any way for her relief, during the performance of the penance, further than by occasionally throwing a few rushes in her path, where the way was peculiarly rugged. They entered the church, and Whittington and Edward, yielding to the intolerable pressure of the multitude behind, were carried in with the assistants and constables, who closed the procession,

The service was solemn. The Deity was called upon to accept of the imperfect atonement now rendered by the offending sinners, who had so fearfully defiled that spot which ought for ever to have been preserved holy, as the earthly residence of the King of kings. Approaching the communion-table, the delinquents were directed to bow thrice, and to fall on their knees; then taking dust from the floor, and throwing it over the penitents, a prayer as from them was recited, imploring the Most High, if enough had not yet been done to appease his wrath, that its effects might fall on them alone, as the sacred dust which they had profaned, now descended on their heads. The ceremony of re-consecration was then gone through with, and every part of the edifice sprinkled with holy water, from vessels which the culpable lady, still bare-footed, was obliged to fill. Then taking his place by the altar, the arch-

deacon administered the sacrament, and the chief offenders were commanded to add to the solemnities of the day, an expiatory offering. A silver chalice, of the value of ten pounds, elegantly chased, was presented by the lady on her knees; and a pixe of the same metal was offered with like formality by her lord. The building was then held to be sufficiently purified, to admit of the suspension pronounced against it being removed, and the officiating priest exclaimed with a loud voice, "*Attollite portas, Principes, vestras, et elevamini portæ æternales; et introibit Rex Gloriæ.*"* The doors which had been closed after the procession passed in were then re-opened, and the Archbishop of Canterbury in his robes, with his mitre on his head, and preceded by the bearers of the two great crosses, advanced to the communion-table, where he declared that place to be again holy ground, and

* Psalm xxiv. v. 9.

consecrated to the Lord for ever. He pronounced the most awful maledictions against those who should thereafter violate that sacred temple, and concluded the ceremony by accepting the offerings and submissions of the offenders, and dismissing the congregation with his blessing.

This scene, from the formalities and idle superstitions, as he considered them, which it exhibited, gave great offence to Mr. Whittington. Edward would probably have concurred in his view of it, had not his attention been called away by an object of superior interest. Seated among the crowd he beheld Matilda. He looked round in vain for Sir Thomas, and satisfied himself that he was not present. Matilda was attended by her aunt, and deeply commiserated the sufferings of the principal actress in the scene, at least Edward thought so, for the most profound grief was imprinted on her countenance. When she retired

he followed. He dared not to speak, lest it should subject her to her aunt's reproach; but to behold her was something, and anxious to gaze on her as long as possible, he forgot Mr. Whittington, from whom he had been separated while leaving the church, and pursued, but at some distance, the object of his early love, who now being still attended by her relation, proceeded on horseback towards Charing.

CHAP. V.

“These rude observations were at last licked into an art, physical oneiromancy ; in which physicians, from a consideration of the dreams, proceeded to a crisis of the disposition of the person.”

SPENCER.

IT was not till he had seen her pass in to the house of her father, that Edward ceased to follow Matilda. Though compelled to remain at a distance, though her face was turned from him, yet to behold the form of one so dear, was a luxury, which he could hope but seldom to enjoy. He, therefore, went forward, and his thoughts resting on her, on her alone, it was only when she had vanished from his view that it occurred to him

he had very unceremoniously omitted to take leave of Mr. Whittington.

But it was too late to repair his error, and he, therefore, thought not of retracing his steps, but giving himself up to sad reflections on his own fate, and on that of those who were most dear to him, he left Charing, to seek his own abode.

The dangers by which he was surrounded, while exercising that lucrative industry to which he had been introduced by Huss, had taught him the necessity of providing means to disguise his person. With this object in view he had procured a red beard, and eye brows of the same colour, and these, with glasses or spectacles, surrounded with a deep black rim, and constructed in such a manner as to rest securely on the nose, so changed his appearance, that he believed it to be impossible for those who had known him most, to recognize him when so accoutred. This he had unex-

pectedly an opportunity of putting to the proof.

That when it should be necessary to wear his disguise he might not be foiled, by finding his precautions in any respect incomplete, he judged it prudent to accustom himself to wear it occasionally. It soon became familiar to him, and when he did not go out, he frequently kept it on through the whole of the day. He wore it on the morning after that on which he had seen Matilda, when approaching the casement of his room, a horseman then passing stopped suddenly, and saluted him with an air of respectful courtesy. Edward knew the person well, but he almost doubted the evidence of his senses, while they informed him that the visitor, — for having dismounted, the individual he had seen appeared now to assume that character, — was no other than Sir Thomas Venables.

The knight entered and accosted Ed-

ward as cordially as he had been accustomed to do, before calamity had broken off their connexion.

“Trust me,” he said, “I am glad to see you. I did fear that I should have a weary search. Though rightly informed, as I now find, that your abode was in the Reading-road, yet had I misgivings, for the road is long, and there are past a hundred houses, even by the road side, between Charing and Windsor, so populous doth England now become, besides others in the lanes about; therefore I am marvellously rejoiced to find you, at the commencement of my journey.”

“I little expected this visit.”

“I know not how you should,” Sir Thomas replied, “for it was but yesterday that I heard of your present dwelling. Therefore I trow you could but little guess that I should visit you to-day, the which I did not resolve upon till this morning.”

From the language held by Sir Thomas, and from his manner, strange

as it was that he should thus suddenly return to his old habits of kindness, Edward concluded that his disguise had failed altogether, and never doubting that he was recognised, prepared to remove his false beard and eye-brows, remarking, —

“ Be the object of your visit what it may, it affords me pleasure — ”

“ The object of my visit,” cried Sir Thomas “ shall be speedily explained. I wish you to see my daughter, if possible, this day.”

“ Indeed !”

“ I consider your attendance to be absolutely necessary, to the restoration of her health.”

“ Can you be serious ? But on such a subject you would not sport.”

“ You say well,” returned Sir Thomas. “ I do not jest. Not only do I consider your attendance necessary to the restoration of her health, but I believe the preservation of her life to depend upon

her seeing you. I will deal ingenuously with you, and confess that I have tried others, and I regret that I should, for a moment, have preferred them to you, for all have failed to produce the change I wished."

"My heart told me," exclaimed Edward, in a transport of joy, "no rival ever would succeed with your daughter."

"What!" cried Sir Thomas, "have you then heard of her situation?"

"Heard of it? — Do I not know it?"

"I am amazed! You must have studied astrology, then, or this could not be."

"Undoubtedly," replied Edward, "I have paid some attention to that science; but, to speak the truth, I am little advanced therein, Sir Thomas."

The baronet started. — "Why now you give me proof of your proficiency, while you disclaim it, seeing that you make me aware you know my name."

Edward recoiled in amazement, and was silent for some moments. That Sir

Thomas should think it strange his name was remembered; and by him, was a riddle which he was unable to solve. He looked steadfastly on his old friend, whose ardent and admiring gaze still rested upon him, and almost persuaded himself, that in his glance he detected a symptom of mental derangement. He answered with a question,—

“Do you then think proficiency in astrology proved, by my knowledge of your name?”

“It may be,” said Sir Thomas, “that to you learned men, the art of divining the name of a person never seen before, seems but a small matter, and is that which a young student may soon attain; but to me it hath ever appeared a most rare effort of occult knowledge.”

“I am much surprised to hear you speak thus. But have you aught further to say of Matilda?”

“There again!” cried the baronet, in a tone of increased astonishment. “I

see it is your pleasure to surprise me, by the prodigies which you perform as though they were but trifles; and I now clearly discern that your skill in astrology, is equal to your wonderful art in all matters connected with oneiromancy.”

The embarrassment of Edward was at an end. From the last word uttered by Sir Thomas, he perceived that he was mistaken in supposing his disguise to have betrayed him, and the cordial greeting which he had received, to be intended for Edward Oldcastle. He comprehended how the case really stood. In those days there were professors of medicine who undertook, not to interpret dreams, and declare from the wild roavings of the mind in sleep what should be witnessed in the days that were to come, but to tell, from the character of a patient's dreams, what secret maladies might consume the sufferer's health. The barbers — the regular practitioners in physic, of

that age, discountenanced as quacks and ignorant pretenders, those who claimed distinction for skill in oneiromancy ; but notwithstanding this opposition, the study of it gained ground for a time, and wonderful cures were said to be effected by its agency. One individual, had obtained much celebrity by the success of his practice in this way. Sir Thomas was in quest of this person, when he, by accident saw Edward, who, without design, had made himself the exact resemblance of the dream doctor. He was about to undeceive the knight, when it occurred to him that the incident might be turned to advantage. His anxious enquiries were, in the first instance, directed to ascertain the real state of Matilda. The father described her to labour under much depression of spirits ; and proceeded to recount some of the dreams which she had had. These were of the most gloomy character ; and it appeared

that funeral scenes, and murderous conflicts, were the nightly disturbers of her repose.

“It seemeth to me,” said Edward, “from all that you have unfolded, that the mind of your daughter hath been moved by some violent shock. But, to judge aright, it is fitting that I should see her alone. Your affection should be vigilant, that no constraint be put on her gentleness. Hath she a suitor now?”

“She has, but he is not at this present in England, being gone to the wars.”

“He is not a soldier whom she loves, if my art fail me not.”

“In that I do believe — I hope at least you err. Believe me, he is a man few women can resist. At first — for she had heard he was a reckless gallant, she would not brook his name; but he presently so won upon her, that she no longer shunned him. He is young, and passing handsome.”

“So you may think; but it is not

from the judgment of your eyes, that her affections shall be satisfied. Imagination makes the object beloved, and often turns from the being whom the grosser senses would prefer, to select and embellish, for the mental view, some mortal less distinguished from his fellows. But as gold would not possess value, but that men have agreed to regard it as valuable; so human beings, though fairly formed and well accomplished, are worthless to woman kind, till the mind adopts them, and fancy bestows on them a sort of coinage, which can alone make them pass current with the heart."

"What you have said," replied Sir Thomas, "flatters not my hopes; but so far as it assures me of your profound judgment. Much do I congratulate myself that it was my good fortune to recognize you as I did. I would now entreat you to pass speedily to Charing, where you shall find me, near to —"

"Thy residence is known, and I will

follow Some preparations I have previously³ to make, which may not be omitted, but by nightfall you shall see me there. In the mean time, so you would wish to see your daughter regain health, and be yourself restored to happiness, watch over her with kindness. In no case breathe reproof; and if, perchance, you should bethink yourself of any harshness that you have heretofore used to shock or terrify her gentleness, atone for it; still remembering, that fathers may sometimes forget their duty, as well as daughters.”

“By heaven, I have not so acted,” replied Sir Thomas, “as to merit her reproach. True it is, I once opposed her wishes, to save her from a heretic, who would have involved her in ruin, and endangered her salvation.”

“That might be well, and, questionless, these were mighty considerations. I see no harm in it, unless, indeed, you had first bade her love that heretic, not for his

attachment to the true faith, but for his connection with a great family, or for other worldly reasons.”

“ I permitted her to love the son of Lord Cobham, till he forgot his duty to the church. Then did I conclude that he who could thus swerve, might waver in his love.”

“ That was prudently considered. But was he rich at the time you dismissed him ? ”

The question surprised, and rather disconcerted Sir Thomas. He replied, with some hesitation, —

“ The crimes of his father, had brought ruin on his family.”

“ Indeed ! ” cried Edward, in a tone of severe indignation, which, at the moment he could not repress ; but recollecting himself, and considering that to indulge in the full expression of his resentment would answer no good purpose, he added, in a milder strain, — “ Well ! reason was on your side. A heretic husband, whose gold was scant, might assort ill with your

daughter's salvation. I will see her before this day is out, and tell you what hope may be entertained. I will hear her dreams from her own lips, and thereupon decide what remedies shall better her condition."

Sir Thomas then retired, pressing upon the supposed physician the importance of suffering no delay to interpose. Edward determined to repair to Charing, at the time appointed. To see Matilda alone, — to hear her voice, — to thank her for past kindness and affection; these were objects of such moment, that the disguise, which he had purchased under the idea that it might save his life some future day, gained ten-fold value from the promise which it gave him of obtaining an interview with Matilda on that. He applied himself to study the part which he had to perform, so that he might escape discovery on his introduction. In his assumed character, it was as necessary that he should impose

upon Matilda, as that he should baffle the penetration of her father, or her emotion would at once betray him. He, therefore, not only considered what he should say, but how he should say it. Of his voice, he had some fears; but when he remembered that it had not been known to Sir Thomas, even while he spoke on the supposition that to mislead was impossible, he no longer dreaded being recognized, through the more grave and solemn tones in which it was his intention that the communications of the dream-doctor should be made.

CHAP. VI.

- “ Her struggling soul, o'erwhelmed with tender
grief,
“ Now found an interval of short relief:
“ So melts the surface of the frozen stream,
“ Beneath the wintery sun's departing beam.”

FALCONER.

THOUGH Edward had incautiously suffered himself to be seen in his apartment, while endeavouring to accustom himself to his disguise, it was no part of his plan to be known as the being he seemed, when furnished with false hair, and beard of a colour which was not natural to him. He, therefore, took care not to leave his home till the gloom of the evening secured him from observation.

In the mean time, Sir Thomas Venables had announced to his daughter, that

the wonder working-being he had sought, and whose profound skill had inspired in him the most lively hopes, would attend on her that very day. Matilda, satisfied that the dejection, under which she laboured, proceeded from causes which no medicine could remove, was far from sharing his exultation. Silence and retirement she craved, and the introduction of the professor of oneiromancy, she anticipated, would only subject her to the annoying interrogatories of an intruder, whose presence and whose prescriptions could yield no relief.

It was with such feelings that Matilda saw Edward enter the apartment, where, in obedience to the wish of Sir Thomas, she awaited his arrival. She slightly acknowledged his bow, and while his steadfast gaze was fixed on her countenance, resumed her seat. Her father, from the manner in which the supposed physician regarded the patient, judged his attention to be arrested by some very

striking symptom, which at once indicated her malady, and the means of removing it. Anxiously expecting to hear what might be confirmatory of this belief, he remained in the room, alternately looking at Edward and at Matilda. The former at length waived his hand for the knight to retire, and the wish signified by the gesture was complied with in silence.

Edward had not yet uttered one word, fearing that his voice might render his disguise of no avail. He now refrained from speaking, lest his own agitation should betray his secret, and recall Sir Thomas, who was near enough to hear any sudden exclamation. But to find himself once more with Matilda was rapture — was in itself a treat so delicious, that he already exulted in the success of his enterprise. Some minutes elapsed, before he ventured to speak.

“Lady,” said he, “you are doubtless apprized of the purpose for which your

father has brought me hither. He now expects that you should forthwith recount to me, the dreams that may disturb your rest."

"His anxiety," Matilda replied, "has already given you unnecessary toil, but I think you may be spared further attendance. Though dreams I have had, which made a momentary impression on my fears, yet I am not weak enough to attach lasting importance to such distorted shadows. Therefore, your art can nothing avail me."

"It may be, that you think too lightly of such nocturnal visitors. Holy men have deemed these to offer the means by which the Deity might condescend to inform his creatures, and some have asserted that the enemy of our race, knowing this, had attempted by such means to communicate sinful knowledge."

Matilda said — "This do I know, but you must be aware, that the same holy

men have also said, an angel is commissioned by the Eternal, to watch his sleeping creatures. Since then I am in such keeping, I hope it is not presumption to believe, that the tempter may be foiled without your assistance."

"But dreams that no malignant influence has inspired, will sometimes strongly agitate the mind, and overcloud the soul with terrors, which waking reason cannot shake off. These, from the intimate union of the mind and frame, impair health, and it is the effect of these that I would counteract."

"The needless apprehensions of Sir Thomas, have attached importance to those phantoms of my sleep, which I have imparted to my aunt, that of right belongs not to them. I would not trifle by recounting them to you. They harm not my constitution. This say to my father, for it is the truth, and saying this, your skill shall suffer no reproach, and he,

being thereby consoled, shall fitly reward your merit."

"But, lady, I must not confine enquiry to dreams of sleep. There are dreams, which mock our senses while our eyes are open."

"There are indeed," replied Matilda, "that I do know too well." She added in a lower tone, as speaking to herself — "I once did dream of happiness, even in my waking hours, but found it as perfect an illusion as those which sometimes hover round my couch."

"Of these dreams — of the hopes, the fears, the joys, the regrets, that swell your bosom, I would hear."

"Then, Sir, you wish to know my waking thoughts; but claiming to know them, you become a confessor, rather than a physician."

"I have already given my reason for making such enquiry."

"But you can give no mental medi-

cine, by the which I can profit. I can claim little in my own right, but surely my thoughts are of that little, and these I choose not to impart."

"It is, perhaps, your maiden diffidence, that will not trust your tongue to speak of love. May I interpret for you? Your father has informed me, that he whom he designs for your future husband, is now gone to the wars. He is described as noble, and of goodly person. Is this correct?"

"It is."

"Generous and accomplished?"

"In all most gallant."

"Then must I deem that your dejection springs from fear, that he may perish in the chase of glory. Would not that touch you nearly?"

"Doubtless my heart would know sincerest grief at such catastrophe — my warm regrets would follow him : — my tears bedew his grave."

"He will live and triumph. But much

will he rejoice to know what you have said.”

“ And wherefore shall he rejoice ?”

“ Ah ! who would not, to know himself beloved by Matilda ?”

“ Your tone has changed, Sir, somewhat suddenly. What may this mean ? You seem strangely moved !”

“ I am the friend of Octavius, and I know it will rejoice him to learn, Matilda in his absence, owned that he possessed her love.”

“ But I have not said so. Your zeal surpasses your discretion. A woman may admire a hundred men. Their valour, wisdom, modesty, or grace, may claim her notice, and compel her praise ; but she can love but one.”

“ Then let me ask — and O forgive this warmth which may not be restrained ; say, is not he the happy one whom you admire, and admiring love ?”

“ I know not whence this boldness springs ! Was it for this my father brought

you hither? Was it to probe a wounded, bleeding bosom, that you were sent, to wring confessions from me, to make them pledges for my future conduct?"

"Trust me, it is not so. But, fair one, say, what if Octavius, anxious for the joy of knowing his suit preferred, had commissioned a friend, thus to approach you."

"I would reprove the bold imposture," Matilda resolutely answered, "and have the author of it told, that though I once admired his noble bearing, and readily subscribed to all the praises of which he was the subject, yet none of all the merits he possessed, nor all the splendour of his great connections, could shake a previously formed attachment, or win my heart from where it first was taught, even from the happy hours of mirthful infancy, to plight its faith, and rest its every hope."

"Fairest of all the creatures under Heaven!" exclaimed Edward, with transport, "thou soul of constancy, thou star

of truth, what if persecuted Cobham's son, the once blest partner of thy infant joys, had thus disguised, adventured to approach thee? O say! eluded every other eye, when known to thine, would it beam kindly on him — would thy tongue, declare the wanderer welcome?"

While he spoke, he divested himself of the disguise which he had worn, and Matilda recognised her lover. Her first emotion was joy, but in a moment her countenance saddened, while she replied, —

“ I know not what to say. I cannot see you here without alarm. And why, I ask, why was it needful, having gained admittance, to practise on me, as if you desired to find some weakness you suspected?"

“ Spare reproach, Matilda—when I find all the world beside changed, from what I deemed it once, can you wonder that the desolate heart should turn with some apprehension, lest its dearest trea-

sure should be snatched away, with all that he before could boast as his."

"Or rather, you supposed that I, like others who knew you in prosperity, forget you in sorrow. You thought Matilda might prove as worldly-minded as the rest, and so imposed yourself upon her, to convict her of inconstancy, and reproach her failing."

"Not so, by Heaven! But beholding superior merit in the son of Lord Powis, and placed in that cruel situation, where it might appear to you a duty to sacrifice a lover to a father, I wished to know if such the conclusion to which you had come. Had it been so, this hour would have given me the sad luxury of gazing on you for the last time; and having ascertained that your affections were transferred to another, my resolution was taken to breathe no reproach, to utter no complaint, but, if possible, to retire unknown, and hide myself, where, lost to all who once knew

me, and forgotten by the world, my name could disturb your peace no more."

Matilda smiled forgiveness. "I would not have doubted *you*. I never believed that, dazzled by superior attractions, or tempted by the love of fortune, you could be induced to swerve from the path in which through youth you trod — the path of truth. But I cannot doubt that calamitous experience tends too strongly to justify the fear you entertained, that *all* were changed, and that Matilda even might not prove an exception."

"Mine was the miser's fear, who trembles for his treasure, not because he sees danger, but because he knows the vastness of his wealth. This feeling, and this alone, has regulated my conduct. When, by a happy mistake, your father supposed me the professor of an art, of which I hardly knew the name, I could not resist the temptation thrown in my way, of approaching you once more."

"I should rejoice to see you under

other circumstances, but now I dread lest danger and discovery await you. I hear my father's step. He comes, to end our interview."

"Your terrors alarm you with a sound which has not reached your ears. He comes not."

Both listened in silence for some moments.

"I do not hear him now," said Matilda, "I must have been deceived. — But, no, — it is he."

And now the approach of Sir Thomas was distinctly heard. Edward had divested himself of those additions to his person, which secured him against recognition. His hair and eye-brows were speedily adjusted, but his beard was not fastened on, when the door opened, and Sir Thomas joined them.

The confusion of both was so manifest to themselves, that neither entertained a hope of concealing it. The knight, suspecting no deception, saw nothing re-

markable in the diffidence of Matilda before a stranger, and when he perceived Edward holding his handkerchief over the lower part of his face, the thoughtful air which he remarked, only proved that he was giving his most anxious attention to the case on which his opinion had been demanded.

The Baronet paused for more than a minute, awaiting the result of that mental investigation, in which he supposed him to be engaged. Edward, not venturing to look him full in the face, feared that it was the reproachful look of surprize and wrath, which he sustained. From this apprehension he was agreeably relieved, when Sir Thomas accosted him thus :—

“ Learned Sir, I have ventured to intrude on your meditations ; first, because I feared that maiden bashfulness, might lead my child to act in some sort a refractory part ; and, secondly, because her presence is now required below, where one

attends with joyful tidings of him whom she is to wed, and is prepared to expatiate on the gallant actions which Octavius, of whom I before made mention, has already performed, and of the honourable notice of them from the king, in presence of the whole army, which has been their reward."

Edward had now his cue, and without altering his attitude, he replied in a lofty tone, that he had not as yet sufficiently weighed the several symptoms, to be able to arrive at his final judgment on the merits of the case. He, however, acquitted Matilda of having manifested any refractory spirit, and trusted that at his next visit he should be enabled to bring her more comfort, than he could flatter himself she would derive from that interview. Saying this, he looked significantly at Matilda. She was infinitely perplexed, to guess what comfort he could hope to supply. Whatever delight she might feel in his society, when it would

be securely enjoyed, she trembled at the idea of receiving another visit, under circumstances which might lead to a discovery that would inevitably subject her to a father's reproach, and her lover possibly to great peril. To escape for the present moment was something, and her bosom was cheered when she saw the impostor retire unsuspected, and overwhelmed with apologies for the interruption. It will easily be conceived that Edward took excellent care to conceal his chin, which had lost the remarkable ornament appended to it when he entered; and promising to give what he had heard and seen his most serious consideration, he, in compliance with the earnest request of Sir Thomas, consented to repeat his visit on the following evening.

CHAP. VII.

“ But in vayne shee did conjure him
“ To depart her presence soe,
“ Having a thousand tongues to allure him,
“ And but one to bid him go.”

OLD BALLAD.

GREAT was the joy of Edward at having seen Matilda, and found her truth and love unshaken, and it was no trifling source of gratification to him, to find that in the character which Sir Thomas had put upon him, he might securely return to her, whenever he judged it prudent to do so. Fortunate in this instance, he began to consider whether his success might not be rendered more perfect; whether, instead of resting content with its procuring him, occasionally, a delicious

stolen interview, he might not find means to withdraw Matilda from the house of her father, and make her his, so that it should no longer be in the power of her enemies to entertain a thought of giving her to another.

At nightfall he again repaired to Charing. He accosted Sir Thomas with all the solemnity which he had previously assumed, and now informed him that having carefully studied the condition of Matilda, he cherished a confident expectation that it would be in his power to afford her relief. The knight expressed satisfaction, but did not manifest all that delight which Edward had expected to witness. Sir Thomas conducted him to the room in which Matilda awaited his coming, and demanded if it was desirable that he should again withdraw.

“ I certainly should counsel that you do so:” was the reply of Edward.

“ And yet, methinks, that in a case like

this, all that a maiden may have need to say unto her physician, might without risk he poured into her father's ear."

"Yours is the right to tarry, sir, if you think meet," said Edward; but he added: "If you would have me learn with exactness what may affect your daughter, it were well that she were left free from the shadow of restraint, for even paternal love may oppress, and she may less freely disclose the disorder of her thought, before plurality of hearers, than in presence of one alone."

"Be it as you will," said Sir Thomas, and he retired.

Edward seized the hand of Matilda, and pressed it to his heart in speechless joy. He was about to lay aside his disfiguring beard, but she prevented him.

"Nay, do not again expose yourself to that detection, which had so nearly fallen out yesternight. It needs not for my eye, which dwells not on these appendages. Whatever external shape you

may assume, your image engraven on my heart, is never unseen. Wherefore I require, that you do not again risk discovery."

"I obey, and much I thank the anxious providence of love, which thus forewarns me."

"I would forewarn you further, Edward. Dear as those moments which may be given to you, are to Matilda, I cannot wish that you should continue thus to visit me. A dreadful apprehension comes over me. You cannot long escape."

"Dismiss the groundless terror. No one who looks on me when thus decked out, can think of Edward Oldcastle. Now too, I have had time to prepare myself to act with more specious gravity the character I assume, than I could muster at first, so that peril is remote."

"I cannot think it, Edward, and, therefore, wish these meetings should not be continued."

“ And so would I, Matilda ; and it is to urge their discontinuance that I now appear before you. I would suggest that you should withdraw yourself from the house of your father, to unite your fate indissolubly with mine.”

“ Would you advise that I should fly ?”

“ I would, Matilda, for that alone can ease a bosom tortured night and day, by the dread of losing you. Yet think not that a selfish passion would make me offer such advice, forgetful of your happiness. I seem poor, but am in reality so no longer. The means of acquiring abundant wealth have been placed in my hands. We shall not need the grandeur to which we were accustomed in our younger days. Sharing with you a blessed retirement, which poverty could not approach, we never should regret the vanities of rank.”

“ No,” replied the lady, “ obscurity that offered exemption from those dis-

tinctions which have been the ruin of your brave father, would be welcome, but it is impossible for me to comply with your request."

"May I ask why?"

"Would you desire that I should disobey my father?"

"When your father, negligent of his duty, became regardless of your happiness, he forfeited his claim to that obedience which was previously his due."

"But still," said Matilda, "I should err. Nature has made him, as it were, my monarch, and if I cannot execute all his commands, at least he has a right to expect that I shall not commit myself to open rebellion against his authority."

"His authority, — like that of every monarch, ought to be limited, and when he issues opposite commands, disobedience becomes inevitable. He did once will, that you should fix your affections on me. You failed not in your duty.

He who orders you to love another, acts in opposition to your father, who while himself, thought but of providing for the comfort of his child. Therefore, your neglect of the mandate which would now controul you, shall not be at variance with your duty."

Matilda represented to Edward, that to disobey Sir Thomas, by withdrawing from his roof, would not be the way to assure her lover of future obedience as a wife. He over-ruled this, still contending that to disregard the harsh command of Sir Thomas, would be to yield true obedience to his better self. His arguments were plausible, and the earnest supplicating tone in which they were put, gave them resistless eloquence. From opposing the principle on which the scheme was founded, she descended to point out the difficulties that lay in the way of carrying it into effect. Edward failed not to mark her altered

manner, and flushed with hope, began to calculate on perfect success.

He was eagerly proceeding to demonstrate the ease with which all that he contemplated might be effected, when Sir Thomas suddenly entered.

“Learned doctor,” said he, “your examination seemed long. Most untoward must that patient be, who could not in less time possess you of all the ills which may afflict her mind or frame.”

“Your daughter, the Lady Matilda, hath told me all that I coveted to know.”

“Then must I presume that you have no longer to pause, in order to seek the fitting remedy.”

“Your reasoning, Sir Thomas, is most potent and correct. It is even so, and when you joined us, I was giving her my advice.”

“Advice!” exclaimed the father, with an air of fierce resentment, which equally surprised and alarmed Matilda, while

her lover remained silent from amazement.

“ You have been giving her advice, you tell me. There your generosity was passing great ; bestowing that which you yourself so much need. But you shall not be loser, for I will pay with advice of mine.”

“ And what, sir, would you counsel ? ”

“ That you be more careful for the time that is to come, how you attempt a fraud on Sir Thomas Venables.”

“ Your carriage seemeth strangely altered. The cause thereof I know not, but suspect my skill may have been slandered. Beware, lest you indeed be duped, by men who are my foes, but not your friends.”

“ I will beware,” cried Sir Thomas, “ how I am duped again.”

“ Why have you doubted me ? ” enquired Edward, who now, in the absence of proof against him, began to feel more confidence. “ What colourable reason

can you have for questioning my proficiency — what proof can you adduce?”

“A living proof,” returned the offended knight; and, while he spoke, Edward saw a personage, habited like himself, advance towards the table by which he was standing, followed by an elderly man of superior deportment.

“Here!—Here!” exclaimed Sir Thomas, breathless with indignation, “is evidence and proof of thine imposture. My friend, Sir John Crosby, who commended me to this sage person, for whom thou wouldst pass, did meet him by pure fortune this night, and brought him to me, but an hour before his counterfeit arrived to cheat and gloze.”

“Of what do you complain? I have but attended at your bidding, to give you my opinion of the health of that fair maiden.”

“Thou knowest at first that I took thee for another. But now I look at thee, thy beard appears as it were lined with

black. By Heaven, it is tied on thy face. I thought to put thee in the stocks, but since thou art so desperate a lozel, perchance thou mayest calculate on higher advancement."

Edward now found concealment impossible, threw off all disguise, and gave free vent to his indignation, while Sir Thomas recoiled from him in speechless astonishment.

"And who is it," said the lover, "that calls me lozel? Seek out for me some fitter name, and take that back for thine own wearing. Thy listening meanness has discovered, and I avow the glorious project, to bear off Matilda. I had then but taken my own; for long since thou didst make her mine by right; and yet, when over my generous father's head, a frowning sky had lowered, thou scrupledst not to snatch the treasure from my grasp."

"Yes, when your wickedness did break

the law, and bold impiety offended Heaven.”

“The charge is false, and groundless the pretext.”

“How!—is it false that you and your father, lewdly joined to send forth copies of the Holy Bible in the vulgar tongue?”

“And what impiety! Why should not Britons be allowed to read the word of truth?”

“Why, let them read it,” cried Sir Thomas, “but not in English. The Latin is both good and fair, and so it needeth not translation.”

“Must none, then, profit by it but those who are skilled in the Latin tongue? You say the Latin is both good and fair. Why so it is, and so, as it was wisely said by John de Trevisa, was the original Hebrew. Were, then, the early interpreters — were Symachus — Theodocion, and Origenes lewdly occupied, when they translated holy writ into Greek? and was

Saint Jerome guilty of impiety, when he did render it into that said Latin, which you proclaim so good and fair?"

"Such arguments," replied Sir Thomas, with that look of contempt which a man at a loss for a reply finds it very convenient to assume, "require no answer. This you do know, that many sages of vast piety and boundless learning, oppose it."

"So, then it seemeth, those who have the key, would lock the truth under many wards, that it may be hidden from man."

This remark, Sir Thomas immediately recognised as a quotation, almost verbatim, from "the husbandman's prayer" of Wickliffe, and it nothing diminished in his eyes, the offence which Edward had previously committed.

"I see," he cried, "the fatal stubbornness of the father hath become the sad inheritance of the son, and even now you quote that awful sinner Wickliffe, to

mark your contempt for pious reasoning and substantial argument.”

It now became a question in the mind of the knight, what course it would become him to take with respect to the offender. Though formerly it was so universally believed, Edward fully shared the guilt of his father, that many expected the same punishment to descend on both ; Lord Cobham had long been the only object of pursuit, and Sir Thomas did not therefore, consider that any very serious imputation would rest on his character, if he concluded to abstain from giving him up to justice — or rather to persecution.

A touch of humanity checked the resentment which the sturdy opposition of Edward had inspired, and which, it is but right to remark, had injured him in the eyes of Sir Thomas, more than all that he had previously heard of the young man's attachment to Lollardy.

One other consideration came in aid of those gentler feelings, which were strug-

gling in the bosom of Sir Thomas. He reflected, that the spot on which the Lollards had been accustomed to hold their nocturnal assemblies, was not very distant from Charing. That sect, though rendered more cautious than formerly, by the persecution they had encountered, it was very well known had not been annihilated, and in the event of any injury being done to the darling son of their renowned leader, it was not the most improbable thing in the world, that one of their meetings would terminate with a march from Tyburn to Charing, in which case Sir Thomas felt that his house, and his life, might be in no small jeopardy, before any of his friends could be summoned to his assistance, in that retired and little frequented village. This decided him not to offer any new proof of his zeal for the church, by handing over the son of his ancient friend to those in power. He contented himself with pronouncing a panegyric on his own benevo-

lence, uttered in the form of a reprobation of his weakness, in wanting resolution to do his duty, where the safety of one who had formerly been the object of his regard would be compromised. He finished by admonishing the young man on his future life, and by ordering him to withdraw, not forgetting at the same time to threaten the severest vengeance, if he should again be found intruding within those walls. For Matilda, since she had proved herself willing to carry on a clandestine intercourse with one whom it was her duty to forget, he announced that she should be secured by restraints, which as yet she had never known ; and if other measures proved inefficient, his determination was taken to place her in the convent of Black Nuns, whence she should come forth no more, but to be led by Octavius to the altar, or to be conveyed to her sepulchre.

Matilda had thrown her veil over her face, and trembling, awaited the result of this conference. In its progress, over-

whelmed with terror, she was at times unconscious of what was passing. She now heard the stern resolution which her father had announced — she witnessed the expression of despair which sat on the countenance of her lover, and she rose with an air of calm resolution and commanding dignity, which at once rivetted the attention of all present.

“Let me pass to the convent of the Black Nuns,” she said. “You have declared it to be your determination that I shall rest there till I consent to become the wife of Octavius, and there, if you persist in your resolution, I now avow it to be mine, to live and die. Faithful to my early vows, my spirit can, from my lonely cell, appeal to its great Author; he will sustain the truth which he inspires, nor regard constancy as a sin against duty. Time will yield a soothing tranquillity, while each succeeding day shall bring me nearer to that pure union in a better world, which no priest shall dare

to rail against, which no father, seduced by bigotry from virtue, shall have power to oppose.”

Sir Thomas was amazed at the animation he remarked. He was prevented from noticing it as he might otherwise have done, by the grateful and admiring exclamations of Edward, which made the knight consider it necessary to reiterate the order he had previously given, that he should withdraw. It was promptly obeyed, for Matilda had left the apartment, even before his acknowledgments of her firmness and attachment, could reach her ear, and when she was no longer seen, he had no desire to remain.

He left the house with feelings very different from those, with which he had last entered it. His ideas were wholly absorbed by the scene through which he had just passed, and he walked without knowing why, towards Westminster Abbey. Edward was near it, when the sound of the bell in the tower of the stone

clock-house, furnished by the unjust humanity of Randulphus de Hengham, announced the flight of another hour, and recalled his wandering thoughts. At this moment he heard the footsteps of several persons, who seemed to approach him with unusual rapidity. When he recalled the resentment which he had marked in the tone and manner of Sir Thomas, he doubted whether, though he had declined making him a prisoner himself, he might not have felt himself at liberty to direct others to follow him, that he might not escape. When this thought came across his mind, he looked towards the sanctuary church, and felt inclined for a moment to hasten to it, and claim that refuge which the vilest malefactor might be secure of finding in those times, if he could but make his way thither. But he instantly dismissed the idea, recollecting that this privilege had been formally withdrawn from his father, and concluding that if

really pursued it was in vain to expect that it would be granted to himself. He halted, as if to look on the remarkable buildings which then presented themselves to his view, and which, as seen by moonlight, were objects of more than ordinary magnificence. Standing on that spot, which sustains the houses that form the angle at the termination of Bridge Street, and the commencement of St. Margaret Street, he saw on his right hand, through an opening in an irregular row of houses, the Abbey, then a noble pile, though it boasted not the splendid chapel and lofty towers which now adorn it. Instead of the grand appendage supplied by Henry the Seventh, a small dilapidated adjunct was seen, called the Chapel of the Confessor — by some the Chapel of the Virgin, to whom it had been consecrated, and this was partly hidden by a tavern which exhibited the sign of *the John of Gaunt*, but which was afterwards known by that of *the White Rose*. The hall

which had been refreshed, and nearly rebuilt, sixteen or seventeen years before, presented its massy walls and elegant entrance to the eye, in unimpaired beauty. On the side of the clock-house, which stood nearly opposite to the grand door of the hall, he perceived the spouts belonging to the conduit. These, on the accession of the reigning king, he remembered to have seen flow with wine. The splash of water falling from one of them, into its reservoir, now struck the ear, but the water itself shadowed by the building, was invisible. Looking beyond this object to the eastern side of the area, that long building in which Richard the First had formerly caused the *Starra*, or Jewish covenants to be deposited, and which, in modern times obtained a terrible celebrity as the Star Chamber, met his view, which was then directed between the northern extremity of the pile, and the ancient *Wool-Staple*, to the silvery glow, which sat on the illuminated ripple of the river.

The beautiful calmness of the night seemed to mock the agitation which disturbed his bosom. But the men he had heard behind, now passed without observation, and Edward was satisfied that they had not been employed to watch him. In this instance he had been the dupe of groundless alarm. He saw them already at a considerable distance, and he returned on his steps, passed the palace built by Hugh de Burgh, then called York House, which stood near the scite of the present Whitehall; and leaving the Cross at Charing on his right, he passed to his home, without daring to trust himself with another glance at that habitation in which he had known so many happy days, but which now only told the tale of his father's ruin, of Matilda's sufferings and his own despair.

He entered his apartment with a desponding exclamation, when he found, with surprise, that he was not alone. Mr. Whittington had awaited his return.

“ I am here,” said he, “ the bearer of melancholy tidings.” But he added, observing the deep affliction expressed in Edward’s face, — “ Has any calamity befallen yourself?”

Edward briefly told what had occurred at Charing.

“ Sorrows, my good young friend,” returned Whittington, “ love society, and seldom travel alone. Distracted as you are, I must give you some pause before a new wound is inflicted on your sensibility. What I have to communicate you shall know in the morning. — Alas ! more than sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.”

CHAP. VIII.

“Thou wast not wont to have the earth thy stool,
“Nor the moist dewy grass thy pillow, nor
“Thy chamber to be the wide horizon.”

History of Sir John Oldcastle.

WE left Alice at Constance, listening to the mournful history of the death of her friend and protector. The horrors which the narrator of the Bohemian's martyrdom, poured into her ears in appalling succession, produced a degree of stupefaction which left her no longer mistress of her actions. She strove to fly from the terrific sounds, but knew not whither she directed her steps, and without recognizing any of the objects

which surrounded her, she hastened through the principal streets in Constance, with a disordered air, which sufficiently indicated the state of her mind. Thus, wandering without thought or object, she was fortunately encountered by the Baron de Chlume, who, faithful to the trust reposed in him by his departed friend, had sought Alice, the moment bigotry had completed its cruelty, in order by degrees to prepare her mind for the awful tidings which he had to communicate. How he failed to find her in the first instance, what has already been told, sufficiently explains.

He conveyed her to the house in which she had been placed, when, on the commencement of the persecutions of John Huss, it had been judged expedient to remove her from Constance. Here mental anguish produced corporeal sufferings, that for some weeks threatened life. But at length the crisis was passed, and the baron saw his af-

flicted charge slowly recovering. The part he acted, was worthy the friend of the good Bohemian. Though weak in body, Alice failed not to evince sincere gratitude for the parental tenderness of which she found herself the object, and his kind admonitions by degrees restored a portion of that fortitude, which calamity had so rudely assailed. Aware that to call on her at once to dismiss grief, would shock a mind, feeble from the woe it sustained, he praised her affectionate attachment, the source of her distress, while he mildly reminded her that the pure and emancipated spirit of their common friend, permitted in another state to behold the last object of his solicitude on earth, if the inhabitants of Heaven could know grief, would mourn for the sorrow of which he was the cause. Then the baron lead her thoughts to the anxious brother and father, who, uncertain of her fate, must now impatiently look for her return ;

and dwelling on the pain which her continued absence must cause them to experience, he tenderly required her not to let vain regret for the happy dead, place her in hostile array against the peace of those most dear to her, who yet survived.

It was thus that the Lord de Chlume, led Alice to understand that duty required an effort to subdue that extreme grief which had preyed upon her health. She soon desired to be restored, that she might quit Constance for ever. The hope of rejoining her brother, and of finding him no more a needy pensioner on the bounty of his friend, as he had formerly been, began to have a salutary influence on her health, and she speedily found herself sufficiently recovered, to undertake the journey which she had to perform.

Not till then, did the baron think it right to communicate all that had passed between him and Huss concerning her,

and the whole of the contents of that letter, which the martyr had requested might not be opened till after his death. He now informed her, that anxious to guard against exposing her to the passionate addresses of De Marle, unauthorised as these were by her relations, he wished her to pass through France with all practicable expedition, and thence to England.

Alice expressed surprise at this recommendation. It seemed to her a contradiction, that wishing to guard against her being met by De Marle, her lost friend should desire her to make a journey through France.

De Chlume explained. It was the firm belief of Huss, that after his death Eugene de Marle would seek her in Prague, to which place he supposed her to have retired. France was the last country in which he would expect that she might be found. But more effectually to guard against recognition,

he added, Huss further counselled that she should forthwith assume the disguise of a boy, that none might be able to describe the retreat of a female of her appearance from Constance. A suitable dress, it had been his care to provide.

With tender unfeigned emotion, Alice acknowledged that kind and provident anxiety for her welfare, in captivity and sorrow, which had ever marked the conduct of the pious Bohemian in happier moments. She held it to be her duty to conform, as far as possible, with the wishes of her departed protector, but she expressed some apprehension that it might not be practicable for her to pass through France, as it was then said war had actually broken out between that country and England.

“Rumours to this effect,” said the baron, “had reached our dear friend, before his enemies had filled the measure of their iniquity; but he thought this

would little interfere with your journeyings, seeing that you speak the language of the country like a native. He doubted not but as a boy — for, though of proper stature for a maiden, when in male attire, you will seem but a very slender youth — I say, he doubted not, but as a French or English boy, you might pass with small obstruction, even through the contending armies, should they be in the field, when you are travelling through France.”

To Alice it appeared a sacred duty to pay, as a last tribute of respect and gratitude, the most implicit attention to the wishes of Huss. She, therefore, acquiesced in the arrangement which had been suggested. The baron then presented her with a sum of money, which had been confided to him for her use. He read over to her the various bequests which the Bohemian had made; acquainted her with the efforts he himself had used to carry the wishes of Huss into

effect, all of which had been satisfied but one. That one was the duty imposed upon him, to escort her through France, which he was now ready to perform.

Alice tendered the warmest thanks of a heart, ever open to the impressions of gratitude, for the protection he had already afforded her, as well as for the continued assistance which he gave her reason to expect. She requested the baron to take charge of the money which had been reserved for her, and left it to him to fix a time for their departure from Constance.

An early day was named. It was decided that Alice should leave Constance on foot. The baron followed, attended by a servant. At a distance of two leagues from the city, Alice awaited his arrival. When near the place at which they were to meet, de Chlume dismissed his servant—instructed him to procure another horse, and return with all speed to Bohemia, to carry letters then

entrusted to his care. He led the horse which the servant had rode, till he saw Alice, who having assumed the dress of a boy, and the name of Florio, soon joined him. The baron had been careful to provide every thing that could administer to the comfort of his timid and delicate companion; and deeply affected by the generous zeal of which she found herself the object, her heart glowed anew with gratitude to the lamented Huss, for having in his last hours commended her to the care of a friend, whose benevolence bore so striking a resemblance to his own.

The first days of their journey were distinguished by no incident worth detailing. From the knowledge which the baron possessed of the road by which they were to travel, though they were sometimes but indifferently lodged, the difficulties they had to encounter, were not of a very serious nature. They had crossed the Rhine, and passed the

borders of France, without meeting with interruption, and the baron had the satisfaction of finding, that the health of Alice, which he had feared would suffer from the fatigue to which she must be exposed, improved as they advanced, while her mind, in some degree occupied by the romantic changes of scenery which from time to time met her eye, was more serene than it had been since the death of the revered Bohemian.

Engaged in conversation on the merits of their murdered friend, they were one evening descending a hill, where the view was singularly confined, when a loud howl was heard in the wood, on the skirts of which they were journeying.

They had no time to speak on the subject, when it was repeated, and the horse on which the baron rode, taking fright at the sound, bounded from the track he had been pursuing, and plunging desperately forward, rushed down a

dreary glen, and vanished with his master from the view of the terrified Alice. She hoped to see him return in a few moments, not doubting but de Chlume, who was an excellent horseman, would speedily check his impetuosity. The most fearful disappointment awaited her. He came not, and Alice, afraid of remaining where she stood, was equally afraid of going forward or backward, lest doing so should put it out of the power of the baron to rejoin her, when he at length should succeed in extricating himself from the maze. Hour after hour passed away, but without restoring her protector. The darkness became most profound; and no house was near, at which she might solicit shelter for herself, or aid for her late companion.

Dismal as the situation was, she had no alternative but to remain there for the night. She descended from her horse, that the animal might gain that rest which was denied to her, and of

which, alarmed as she was for the safety of the Baron, she felt no want. Sometimes the roaring of the winds, which had risen almost to stormy violence, arrested her attention, and suggested to her startled sense the ferocious wrath of some unknown monster, which might in that moment be preying on the mutilated remains of the unfortunate Baron; and sometimes its gentler breathings and the rustling of the leaves, led her to imagine that she heard the Bohemian noble on his return. But the illusion was momentary, and she continued through the whole night to listen and to sigh for his approach in vain.

Day broke while she still watched in irksome solitude. Alice sought to persuade herself, that the return which had been prevented by the darkness of the night, might now be accomplished, since that darkness was no more. But she was again disappointed. Noon arrived, but the Baron was still absent.

Alice feared that some fatal accident had befallen de Chlume. He might have fallen from his horse, and been too severely injured to move without assistance. She felt convinced that this had happened; and deriving courage from the situation in which she found herself, adopted the resolution of attempting to follow him. She started with involuntary horror when the shades of the forest in which her recent protector had been so suddenly lost, closed upon her; but, firm to her purpose, she continued to advance. She saw a part of the baron's cloak on a bush, and had no doubt, that this had been torn from him through the velocity with which he had been carried forward. Near it, she perceived a cake, which she recognized as having formed part of the provision with which the Baron had charged himself, and fainting from fatigue and want, she eagerly took it from the ground, and tasted the only refreshment she obtained that day. Alice

persuaded herself that she advanced with such cautious observation, that it would be no difficult task to retrace her steps, if it should appear advisable ; but when from the multiplied obstacles which she had to encounter, it became impossible for one so feeble to go further, on attempting to return to the spot where she had lingered through the night, the timid wanderer soon found that she had deceived herself. The irregular path by which she had advanced, and which Alice had believed she could not fail to recognise, was now seen with several others, leading different ways, so similar in their appearance, that she could not distinguish the right from the wrong. Having made her selection, she pursued the path preferred for more than two hours, doubting as she went on, that she had mistaken her way ; but still hoping that such was not the case, till it abruptly turned off in a new direction, and brought

conviction to her mind that she had erred in her choice. Alice altered her course, and then suddenly paused in the belief that she heard the trampling of a horse; but the hoarse winds, which swept by, carried away the sound, and she listened for its repetition in vain. The sun was rapidly declining, and wholly bewildered, she wandered through the maze at random, in the hope that chance would at length conduct her into the right track. Darkness again veiled every object from her view, and her situation became more forlorn and hopeless than ever. Alice fastened her horse to a tree, and seating herself on the damp grass, commended her spirit to her Maker, and resigned herself to that death which she now regarded as inevitable.

She slept not, but when morning returned, she rose cold and shivering from the comfortless spot she had rested upon, if lonely, melancholy watching may be called rest, and no longer indulg-

ing a thought of finding her way through the encompassing forest, she released the horse, allowing him to take his own course, recklessly following his steps, but without regarding the way which he happened to choose. Resigned to the worst, she started with momentary joy, when on a sudden, she found the animal had arrived at that entrance to the wood, which she had in vain attempted to discover on the preceding day. Tears burst from her when she looked on the hill which she had descended with the baron, while she recalled the unfortunate separation which had occurred. Alone and utterly destitute, she saw little reason to rejoice at finding herself extricated from the labyrinth in which she had been involved; and faint, desponding, and irresolute, she moved forward in that direction which she supposed it had been the intention of De Chlume to take, merely because it was a matter of indifference to her in which direction she journeyed.

The road became more open, but no human habitation appeared, — no human being, from whom she could claim information or assistance. About noon, she saw a man at a considerable distance, coming towards her. Alice was about to apply to him for aid, when he quickened his pace ; called to her to stop, with much eagerness, and before she could speak, enquired if she had not lost one who had recently been her companion. The answer which she returned need not be stated ; and she now listened with extreme eagerness to the rustic's account, that three hours before he had encountered that individual, anxiously enquiring after a boy who had been the partner of his journey, and whom he supposed to have gone forward alone.

On hearing this, Alice thought no more of hunger or fatigue, but urged her horse forward to pursue, and if possible, to overtake the baron. But the strength

of the animal was much impaired by the hardships to which he had been exposed, and before many hours were passed, he halted in a state of perfect exhaustion. She dismounted, and led him forward, but found that he impeded her march so much, that it would be policy to abandon him. When about to act on this impression, she perceived a hovel near, and repairing to it, was informed in answer to her eager enquiries, that the person she described had recently passed, and could not be two leagues distant. Alice looked at the horse with a wishful eye; but the creature, the moment she relinquished the bridle, had sunk to the ground, and she saw that it would be in vain to call upon him for any new exertion. But going on foot, it was possible since the Lord de Chlume was so near, that she might overtake him. Alice resolved on making the attempt. She had already begun to advance, when the faintness she ex-

perienced, reminded her how many hours had passed since the slightest refreshment had fallen in her way. She implored the cottager's compassion, and prayed him to accomodate her with a small supply. Her entreaties were vain, and she despaired of moving the unfeeling churl, when it occurred to her, that offering to leave the horse as security for the payment of whatever the peasant might think proper to demand, would be likely to produce a greater effect than the most pathetic representations of distress. In this she was right. Her suit was no longer refused. Provisions were forthwith set before her, and having satisfied her hunger for the moment, she passed on, bearing with her a small supply, to meet her wants on a future occasion.

Intent upon overtaking the baron, she advanced, regardless of pain and fatigue, but was too much exhausted to proceed with that celerity which she had hoped would mark her journey.

The day closed—the evening passed away, and at midnight she felt her limbs fail her, and was reluctantly obliged to make her resolution bend to her weakness. A low shed, which had probably been deserted from its having become too ruinous to shelter cattle, received the exhausted Alice; and miserable and forlorn as it was, it presented her with a most commodious bed-chamber, compared with her resting places on the two preceding nights.

CHAP. IX.

“ ————Here, forlorn and lost I tread,
“ With fainting steps and slow,
“ Where wilds immeasurably spread,
“ Seem lengthening as I go.”

GOLDSMITH.

ALICE resumed her journey in the morning, shortly after day-break. To steal her mind from melancholy reflection, she calculated the extent of ground she had already passed over, and that which she had yet to traverse, and strove to extract consolation from the thought, that even if she failed to overtake De Chlume, the difficult task she had to perform was already diminished by many thousands of steps.

Her shoes were so nearly worn out, that her feet were frequently wounded by the flinty pebbles which lay in her path; and the pain thence arising induced a degree of fever, which made the toil of walking intolerably irksome. About noon she sat down on a little hillock shaded by a tree, to rest her weary limbs, and to refresh herself with the provision that remained to her.

Her simple repast was soon concluded, for, faint as she was, her appetite failed her, and a part of her scanty store was left unconsumed. She was reluctant to rise; but attempted to shake off the lethargy which had been stealing over her, and lifted herself from the hillock. The torture which attended the effort overcame her resolution, and she sunk to the ground.

“Chance what may,” she sighed, “I cannot move from this spot, till rest shall have restored some portion of my failing strength. O, my father! did you but

know the situation of your fondly-beloved Alice, what would be your misery! But it is concealed from your knowledge, and be it my comfort to know, that in this instance at least, you are less unhappy than you might be.”

Reclining on the small mound which she had selected for her seat, she revolved in her mind the scenes she had witnessed; and anticipating the further sufferings to which she was exposed, her spirit could no longer resist that despondency which it had been her study to repel, and she mentally decided against any new effort to reach Paris; considering that death, which she persuaded herself could not be very distant, might as well overtake her where she then was, as at a more advanced stage of her journey.

In this gloomy mood, indifferent to what might befall her, Alice felt a drowsy stupor gaining on her. She was about to sleep, when she was roused by the distant neighing of a horse. She doubted

whether her wandering senses had not deceived her. It was repeated, and now she distinctly heard the clattering of hoofs, and was satisfied that it came towards her. With the most extreme emotion, she waited for it to appear. It might possibly be the baron, who satisfied that she had not gone forward, was returning to seek his helpless, heart-broken charge. The hope was delightful, but in the same moment a thrill of fearful apprehension came over her. It might be some bravo; who having robbed, or perhaps murdered her late protector, had ascertained that he had a companion, who was now the object of pursuit.

At this dreadful thought she rose and looked around for some place of concealment — none offered, and it was too late to think of retreat, for the horse was already in sight, coming not in the way she expected, but in the opposite direction. Alice plainly saw that his rider

was not the baron. She perceived that it was a young man, and that he wore arms. He had not that ferocious aspect which she was accustomed to associate with the idea of a robber; and Alice, relieved from that fear, again strove to walk forward, without taking further notice of the horseman.

“How now, young master! whither go you?” said the latter, as he came up with Alice. “These are rugged ways for a youngster like you to travel alone.”

Alice halted with indescribable amazement. The voice was one which she knew right well, and its first sounds announced to her that she had been overtaken by De Marle.

She made no reply. In the confusion which this unlooked-for rencounter occasioned, she trembled for her assumed character, and could hardly venture to look round, from a dread of being instantly recognized.

“Are ye afraid of answering?” said De Marle.

Alice now believed herself to be known, and in breathless agitation, but attempting an air of composure, she turned to him with the question —

“Spoke ye to me?”

“Aye, by our lady, did I! To whom else could I speak? The animal I ride has not the companionable quality of that which Balaam rode, and so I talk not much to him. Yourself ’twas I did ask — whither ye go?”

“To Paris.”

To Paris, boy, and on foot! You will be tired ere you get there. You are a truant, I dare be sworn, running away from your refractory parents. Am I not right?”

“No, you do err much,” said Alice, “but I pray you pass on, and question me no further.”

She strove to walk as if she felt no fatigue, but her lameness was

not to be disguised. De Marle walked his horse by her side, and replied to her request —

“ Pass on, say you? Nay, but I will not leave you in your present plight. You are foot-sore already. My horse has a good fair share of back, and you shall have part of it and ride with me, till I can see you bestowed in some safer and more comfortable place.”

The proffered relief was most acceptable, but Alice knew not how to avail herself of the offer.

The Frenchman stopped his horse, directing her to jump up behind him. Alice replied not, but remained motionless, her eyes fixed on the ground, her face covered with blushes.

De Marle sprung from his horse. “ Come, boy,” said he, “ never hesitate. But thou art not made to bestride an animal like this. I will seat thee on my saddle before me, so that you shall seem

to be on your form in the school you are flying from."

While he spoke, he lifted Alice from the ground, and carefully placed her on the horse. Joy glistened in her eye at the relief thus afforded, and at the termination of the embarrassment which the proposition of De Marle had inflicted —

"I fear me," said she, as De Marle resumed his seat, "that I shall delay you on the road."

"Thy weight," he replied, "will make no difference to my horse. But fearful heaviness would fall on my heart, were I compelled to leave one so young and so unprotected, to drag along the dreary road, which thou, truant, didst intend to travel on those poor bleeding feet."

He spoke with energy, and his eyes overflowed while he spoke. Alice stooped to conceal a similar emotion, and the

tear of gratitude was blended in its fall with the tear of benevolence.

“Now then,” said he, urging his horse forward, “tell me thy name.”

“Florio am I called,” was the reply.

“Though sorrow seemeth to have ravaged thy cheek, there is not, I will take it upon myself to avouch, so pretty a boy in France. But be merry, urchin. I would see thee glad, though thou bringest me grief.”

“I am sad to hear that. How say you that I am the cause of grief? If it be so, even leave me to myself.”

“Not for all France.—No, 'tis a sweet and a delicious grief, that I would not part with for the coarse delight of vulgar joy. You do remind me of one whom I may see no more, of a bright being that did glad mine eye, and taught my senses a blissful vision, then vanished from my fondly eager view.

Alice trembled while he spoke, and when he paused and seemed to expect a

reply, she remained silent. De Marle went on :

“ Thou remindest me of her, but thou art not like her, at least not like what she was, for the richest glow of blooming health was hers, and her countenance was ever the seat of that serenity, which springs from conscious innocence, and such as, while I gazed, I often thought might belong to a seraph in Heaven, blessed with the presence of the Deity.”

“ You paint her,” said Alice, “ in the colours of idolatrous extravagance.”

“ When thou hast seen her, say so. I speak of Alice, the beauteous charge of that ill-fated, but good man, John Huss.” His voice faltered while he spoke of his ancient preceptor, and his own agitation prevented him from observing that of Alice, at the mention of the martyr’s name. “ She shared the errors of my poor Bohemian friend, but virtue may sometimes be found with imperfect

faith. With her it flourished in sublime perfection, and not a priest or cardinal on earth, when she did sing the strains she had been taught, could make me hold those divine harmonies sprung not from true religion. Reprove me again if thou wilt, but, I did often think I heard an angel's voice, while listening to that lovely heretic."

It was not the object of Alice to lead De Marle to speak in her praise, but those who least covet flattery, when a tribute of admiration is offered, as they believe with sincerity, cannot help feeling gratified. The words of De Marle had a charm for the ear of Alice, and she could not conceal from herself that she listened to them with pleasure. She wished to believe that this was because they proved that her secret had not been discovered, but she would have hesitated to venture the assertion that this was all.

She again reprov'd the language in which De Marle had indulged, remarking,

that that praise which could not be merited, must tend to lower the object of it in the estimation of those who heard it. But the Frenchman vehemently declared that he had uttered nothing incompatible with the strictest adherence to truth. He proceeded to narrate those events, which Alice knew already but too well, which had separated her of whom he spoke from his old friend and preceptor, John Huss. He finished thus : —

“ Where the dear one, thus bereft of her only friend has sought a refuge, I am wholly ignorant. Perhaps she is now a houseless wanderer like you, and those delicate limbs may be exposed to all the hardships and pain, which lately galled yours.”

“ And if it were so,” said Alice, “ might not she encounter some pitying eye as I did, and be sustained by some kind hand as I am ?”

“ Artful little flatterer ! and if it were so, would not the fate of a delicate fe-

male be still calamitous? Thy robust and hardy frame, though small, may sustain buffetings, which to that tender beauty would be annihilation."

"Heard ye how, or when she left Constance?"

"I nothing know of that, for though I sought her on every side, to offer such poor aid as I might supply, I could not find the place of her retreat. I was on the point of setting out for Prague, to seek her there, among the friends of the murdered Huss, when pressing orders to join the army forthwith, came to me from Paris."

"Is war expected, then?"

"No; peace is expected, but war has broken out. The English king at the head of his troops is now in France. Our armies are fast gathering round him, and we have hopes that, unable to advance, and cut off from all retreat, he will soon be compelled to render himself and all his men our prisoners. O! it will be a

grand affair. You would like to see it. Can you fight, boy?"

"I do not know," Alice replied, "for I have never tried."

"This then will be a fitting time for you to begin. I will take thee with me to the battle, for I suppose these gallant fools will fight, though hoping neither victory nor escape."

"That must not be. For even though I could fight as valiantly as you, or any warrior in your monarch's service, yet could I not on this occasion, for I myself am English."

"Art thou an English boy? You speak our language so well, that I suspected you not. Being English, as thou sayest, thou must not fight. O 'twill be a melancholy sight for thee, to behold so many of thy countrymen prisoners in a foreign country! But, trust me, where I have power, they shall be treated as brave men deserve, however indifferent

the cause in which they fight ; and should you see a kinsman or a friend, name him to me, and he shall go at large, to journey with thee onwards to your common home.”

Alice thanked him for the kind offer, but remarked there was little probability of her putting his generosity to the test in that way, as her friends were too few to make it probable that any success, however splendid, on the part of the French, would cause one of them to be among the prisoners.

De Marle reverting to the enquiries he had made after Alice, again lamented that he had lost the opportunity of offering to become her protector for life ; but he added, perhaps it was little to be regretted, as in the struggle about to take place, though in all probability few Frenchmen would fall, yet he might be one of them, and in that case, her situation might not be better than he suspected it to be at that moment.

The day was near its close, but it was still light, when De Marle halted at a small inn, where he proposed to rest that night. He dismounted, and carefully lifted Alice from the horse to the ground. The animal suddenly turned, and in so doing, pressed against Alice, so that she would have fallen, had not De Marle been near enough to receive her in his arms. As he caught her, one hand fell accidentally on her bosom. In her confusion, she thought she perceived a movement of surprise on his part. She was for some moments afraid to lift her eyes to his, expecting to read in them that she was no longer unknown. But when she at length did so, there appeared nothing to justify the alarm she had felt. He tenderly enquired if she had sustained any injury, but his manner indicated not the slightest idea that the individual accosted was a female; and his kindness though great, differed nothing from that

which he had evinced, when he first saw, as he thought, a poor boy, whose forlorn condition entitled him to compassion, and such relief as it was in his power to afford.

CHAP. X.

“ ————— He whom I plead for
“ Is free ; the soul of innocence itself
“ Is not more white : will you pity him ?
“ I see it is in your eyes, 'tis a sweet slumber,
“ Let it shine out.”

MIDDLETON and RAWLEY.

THE house at which De Marle had stopped, offered but sordid accommodation. It was, however, the only one at which he could hope to obtain food or lodging, within many miles of that spot. He complained of the coarse fare set before him, but Alice partook of it with tolerable appetite. Inured as she was to hardship, she was well disposed to be satisfied with the treatment she experienced, but when the hour of rest ar-

arrived, she shared all the mortification of De Marle, at finding the two humble beds, on which they were expected to repose, were in the same room.

De Marle declined retiring, as he had letters to write, which would occupy him through the night.

“Go you to rest,” was his advice to Alice, “fear not to sleep alone, for I shall be near; make your door secure, and I will knock, if I find occasion.”

It was relief to Alice to hear that De Marle was not disposed to occupy the bed prepared for him, but she could not dismiss all alarm. There was something in the manner of the young Frenchman which she had not remarked before—something, which she thought indicated a suspicion that she was not what she seemed. She remembered what had been said by Huss, respecting the impetuosity of De Marle, and his passion for the female sex, and it occurred to her, that

the language he now held might be intended to deceive. Alice instantly re-proved herself, for harbouring an idea that the kindness she had experienced was connected with any base design, and felt assured that he was animated but by the purest motives — and that the noble generosity of his nature carried him to relieve the friendless, without seeking other gain than the joy arising from the consciousness that he assisted a fellow-creature.

Alone, Alice had to decide whether or not to avail herself of the opportunity which presented itself for courting repose. Though she had persuaded herself that no treachery was intended, she could not forget the peculiarities of her situation, nor could she dismiss from her memory what her former protector had thought of the present companion of her wanderings. She had reasoned away suspicion, but fear remained. Thus harassed, she at length threw herself on the

lowly narrow couch, near which she had been standing, and continued to ponder on those subjects which had been pressed on her attention. Caution, at length, yielded to fatigue — consciousness fled — and Alice slept till after day-break.

On waking, she looked anxiously round. She had no reason to suppose that the door had been opened while she slept, and it struck her as not improbable that De Marle, when he had finished his writing, might have knocked for admission in vain. She heard some one breathe heavily, as it seemed close to her, but certainly not in the room, and the house was built in such a form that it was impossible to suppose it was the occupant of another apartment that she heard. After a pause, she unfastened the door and there beheld De Marle.

He was sitting against the door with his arms folded, and enjoying a sound sleep. The opening of the door roused him, and perceiving Alice, he exclaimed, —

“What ! up and dressed so soon ! That is well ; for you slept so soundly when I knocked, that I began to think the last trumpet only would wake you. But I am glad that I disturbed you not, and hope the sleep you have enjoyed has improved your spirits, and recruited your strength.”

He took her by the hand with an air of compassion, and gently pressed it in his. She replied, by declaring her health to be materially improved.

“Now then,” said he, “amuse yourself by walking for a time, or with such eatables, or other matters, as this poor hut affords, that may suit thy palate. I will but finish my sleep, which from thy deafness I was obliged to commence here, and then we will go cheerily forward.”

Alice could detect nothing in De Marle’s speech or manner, that at all warranted a suspicion that her sex was known, and she believed that the

cause of her not hearing his knock for admission, was the remarkably sound sleep into which she had chanced to fall.

After a few hours he rejoined her. Bread and grapes furnished a simple but grateful repast, and De Marle placing her on his horse, as on the preceding day, again set forward. His anxiety to save her from pain, and to spare her fatigue, was as conspicuous as before; but he was less disposed to talk, and absorbed in profound meditation, he sometimes omitted to answer, evidently from not hearing the few questions which Alice was induced to put, or the remarks she ventured to offer.

The change in his manner struck her forcibly. He no longer mentioned her name; he no longer spoke of what he had seen at Constance, and this led Alice to believe, that though not recognised at first, she was now known to De Marle. Every thing that she remarked

in his deportment tended to strengthen the idea. To this recognition she imputed not his tender attentions, for these she had experienced when she was satisfied that he dreamed not of her being other than a boy, but she was confident she might ascribe to it his sudden taciturnity.

So strong was this impression, that she seriously considered whether it would become her to retain her assumed character any longer. To whatever danger she might be exposed, her sex being avowed, Alice could not but believe that perils of equal magnitude surrounded her, while she still affected disguise. If De Marle entertained evil intentions, it was not the masculine attire which she had been advised to wear, that could defeat those intentions ; and to treat him as one undeserving of confidence, did not seem to be the line of conduct most likely to ensure a continuance of his kindness and forbearance.

The conclusion to which she came was — that the preferable course would be frankly to avow herself, and claim from the friend of John Huss, that honourable protection which she had experienced from the martyr himself while he survived. But though decided on this point, it was necessary to wait for a fit opportunity to make the statement she designed to offer. At once to say, “I am Alice,” she wanted resolution to do; and hesitating as to the manner in which it would be advisable to confess, what she was satisfied was more than suspected, she made no effort at speech, and they pursued their road in silence.

But she was speedily relieved from the embarrassment she experienced, as well as from the idea that her sex was known to De Marle. It was late before they arrived at any place where they could rest. De Marle at length stopped his horse before a house of very superior appearance. Here he found little diffi-

culty in obtaining two apartments for himself and Alice. By his advice she had retired for the night, and was preparing for bed, when her attention was attracted by a loud knocking, followed by a very considerable tumult in the house, as if some unexpected guest had arrived, whose presence was deemed of no small importance. In the midst of the confusion, Alice heard the voice of De Marle, but the opening and shutting of doors, and the sound of feet rapidly marching in various directions, prevented her from distinguishing any thing that he said. She was still listening, when a smart rap at her door startled her, and De Marle spoke, with much hurry and impatience in his manner :—

“ Rise—rise, Florio. Attire thyself with all dispatch. I would speak to thee. Rise I say, and open the door, for I would speak to thee without delay. Haste thee, and dress thyself.”

“I am already dressed,” said Alice, opening the door; “what wouldst thou?”

“Right glad am I to see thee with thy apparel on,” exclaimed De Marle. “I must leave thee, and instantly.”

To lose the protection of one so kind, was no slight evil. Disquieted as Alice had been in company with De Marle by doubts and apprehensions, she trembled at the thought of being again left alone, and in the surprise and agitation of the moment, replied with no slight appearance of dismay, —

“Leave me! — Must you leave me, did you say?”

“I must, boy; but let not that disturb thee, for I shall not leave thee alone.”

“With whom, then, would you leave me?” Alice demanded.

“In better hands, my Florio. By mere chance one of our chief commanders, the Mareschal d’Aumont, has arrived here but just now. He tells me

I must travel with him, both night and day, or I shall not reach the army in time for the battle. He has horses ready, and I depart this very hour."

"This hour! — and to the battle!"

"Aye, boy, or I shall not be present at the victory, and shall lose all share in the glory and the gain. Now, mark me. The wife of the commander has journeyed thus far, but will be left here to follow as opportunity may offer. She has servants, but she wants some more polished being to attend her — to converse with her, and to sing now and then some little soothing plaintive air, that may charm and console her in the absence of her lord. I have mentioned thee to her, as just the sort of boy she would have. Thy age, I said might be about sixteen; and she so liked the description I have given of thee, that she consents to accord a trial, and desires to see thee on the instant."

“ I fear,” said Alice, “ I shall do little credit to your recommendation.”

“ Away with thy bashfulness. This is not the time to doubt or to despair. Thou shalt be the lady’s page, boy ; and if it be a joy to wait on beauty, and that it is, what mortal shall deny ? I promise thee much rapture shall be thine. Come, I will introduce thee.”

He neither waited for reply, nor allowed further time for preparation ; but taking her by the hand, he led the trembling Alice into another apartment, where Madame d’Aumont and her husband were exchanging their adieus. The marshal looked slightly at the intended page, and passed out of the room, too much occupied by the important business which claimed his care, to bestow a thought on matters of inferior moment. Alice was welcomed with a smile of approbation by the lady.

Madame D’Aumont had been distin-

guished in her youth, above all the beauties which graced the French court at that period, for the extent of her accomplishments, the elegance of her manners, and the matchless perfection of her person. She had now reached the age of thirty-five, and the charms which had given celebrity to her early life, still flourished in the zenith of their splendour. Her cheek retained the roseate glow of health, florid but delicate, and her eyes, beaming with undiminished radiance, seemed to search and read, the heart they warmed with their sweetly voluptuous glances. If the years she had numbered since the attainment of maturity had left any record of their flight on that fair form, it was to be found in the augmentation of her size; but this was in so slight a degree, and in such exquisite proportion, that it might be doubted whether her attractions were not heightened rather than diminished by that circumstance — whether the grace-

ful inclination to *en bon point* she had acquired did not complete her triumph, presenting as she did a rich exhibition of all that was dazzling, superb, and tempting in woman.

Right well did Madame D'Aumont know the extent of her obligations to "the pomp and prodigality" of nature; and when Alice gazed, with breathless wonder and surprise at the majestic face and figure of the captivating beauty to whom she had been so abruptly presented, her agitation and embarrassment were received as the tribute of homage due, not from a domestic to a mistress, but from all who approached the possessor of charms so resplendent.

"To your kind protection, lady, I commend this boy," said De Marle, "happy, since I can no longer protect him myself, to commit him to hands so kind. I doubt not his willingness will anticipate your commands, unless you should ask him to recount his history, and on that

subject he will crave your indulgent forbearance. Though elsewhere he may have played the truant, he will not deceive you; and I doubt not, on my return, to receive your united thanks for bringing you together."

When active generosity, associated with youthful elegance, pleads for a really interesting object, the appeal is perfectly irresistible. Such Madame D'Aumont confessed the address of De Marle in behalf of Alice. She readily promised, in a voice to which the animated benevolence of De Marle had imparted its own tone, that the youth so placed under her protection should not have to complain of unkindness from her. De Marle thanked her with warmth, and then with an air of gaiety he turned to Alice, and bid her adieu; evidently much relieved at having thus disposed of his charge. The apprehensions which had disturbed her, were now wholly at an end. She was satisfied that they had been groundless, and that she had escaped suspi-

cion. Acknowledging the kindness to which she had been so largely indebted, she rejoiced at seeing De Marle take his leave, unconscious from whom he was parting; but it was not without a pang she reflected, that a few days might, perhaps, consign her disinterested protector to an untimely grave, or see him return exulting in victory, and triumphing in the overthrow of her countrymen.

The Marshal and De Marle departed, and Alice had no reason to complain that Madame D'Aumont forgot the promise she had made, to treat the protégé of the latter with due consideration. If the daughter of Lord Cobham had been struck by the magnificent presence of her patroness, on her part, Madame D'Aumont gazed with no careless eye on the countenance of the false Florio. From the recent mitigation of her sufferings, returning health had already restored the bloom which in happier days had

dwelt on her gentle, but expressive features. Though Madame D'Aumont acknowledged no commencement of decay, she was reminded by Alice of that period, too rich in hope for any prosperity to satisfy the excited fancy with its realities, when her own charms had but begun to expand, and still, while she regarded her blushing page, a question not altogether flattering to her own pride would suggest itself, whether beauty, though immature, was not still more touching in its opening dawn, than in all the bright glare of its noon. Had she seen one whom she recognised as a female, so lovely, about her, jealousy would perhaps, have given rise to a feeling still less agreeable, and have won small favour for the being so distinguished. But in the case of a boy so friendless and so young, admiration showed itself in bounty, pity ripened into fondness, and Madame D'Aumont

soon beheld in the timid Florio the tenderest object of her care, and found in the society of her page the dearest delight that gladdened her existence.

CHAP. XI.

“ — I wished myself a man,
“ Or that we women had men's privilege
“ Of speaking first.— Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,
“ For in this rapture, I shall surely speak
“ The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,
“ Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws
“ My very soul of counsel.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE liveliest feelings of gratitude were called forth in the heart of Alice, by the bounty of Madame D'Aumont. Travelling with her, the false page was no longer exposed to the hardships and difficulties which Alice had previously had to encounter, and in the train of her protectress she soon saw Paris. The preparations then making for the cele-

bration of a solemn *Te Deum*, at the cathedral church of Notre Dame, on the occasion of the overthrow of the invading army, detained them for some time, but in compliance with the representations of the marshall, they hastened forward, and advanced with all convenient speed towards the scene of expected triumph.

Two days after leaving Paris, they arrived at a little villa, which the marshall had but recently purchased. Here they rested for a day, as Madame D'Aumont thought it necessary to superintend in person the arrangements which were then in progress, with a view to fitting up certain apartments for the reception of some of the captive nobility of England. She confidentially informed Alice, that it had been more than hinted to her, the British king himself might probably rest there for one night, on his way to the capital, in which, for the greater security of his person, it was determined that he should reside.

The house was convenient, and the gardens around it were equally spacious and elegant. Their mistress was never weary of promenading them with Alice, to whom she delighted to point out the charms they already possessed, and to describe the embellishments which it was yet in contemplation to supply.

The greater part of a day had thus been spent, when Madame D'Aumont proposed that they should rest themselves in a small alcove which they approached. Thither they accordingly directed their steps. It was a romantic spot. Fronting the alcove a circular fish-pond met their view, in the centre of which Neptune and Amphitrite were seen formed in stone, surrounded by the Naiads, who apparently, in obedience to commands given, refreshed their eyes with a dazzling fountain, to which the horses attached to the car of the marine deities, contributed from their distended nostrils. The marble basin in which they

appeared, was nearly surrounded with lofty elms, in front of which rows of young poplars had recently been planted. These the advanced period of the year had despoiled of much of the verdant honours which they had recently carried, and the fallen leaves rapidly accumulating on the ground, dry and discoloured, were agitated by every passing breeze. On one side, to the right of the place where they were seated, a row of those trees which in England bear the name of the horse-chesnut, reared their towering heads. The first blasts of winter had already been felt by them, and the withered leaves, shrinking from the cold, lost all their original form, while the bright green which they but recently exhibited, gave place to a tawny brown. This, as their summits caught the last ray of the sun, which could surmount the opposing elms, brightened into a rich orange colour, forming a striking contrast to the delicate but healthful hue of the lime,

seen in the rear of the chesnut-trees, and occasionally intruding itself into the front, which its mightier neighbours had been intended to occupy exclusively. The deep and sweetly blended tints thus presented would have challenged admiration from the artist, nor would the parting glory of the sun — his orb now fast sinking, now wholly concealed from view, leaving a ruddy golden glow in his track, have had less charms for the admirer of the magnificence of nature, seen at it was by Madame D'Aumont and Alice, through the rich curtain presented by the elms and poplars to the west of their seat, which softened and relieved the otherwise too powerful glare.

“The sun sets, and the leaves fall from the trees,” said Madame D'Aumont. “Thus doth youth pass away, and thus must loveliness fade!”

“If in the course of nature,” replied Alice, “the foliage we now view is removed at this period of the year, we

know that it will be renewed on the return of spring.”

“ Yes, other days will shine on other foliage, but these poor leaves will quickly be confounded with the earth to which they descend, and gain the height from which they have fallen no more. So other suns shall beam on human beings ; but we, who people now this mighty world, shall soon be lost to sight — perished, forgotten, like these same leaves. To me it seems a cruel peculiarity in our condition, that we are so sensible of decay. It is a dreadful distinction conferred on us, to know that we must die.”

“ You forget, madam, that in us decay leads but to brighter renovation — death to a superior and everlasting life. Brief are the pains and terrors which surround us ; and though they should be multiplied ten-fold, we ought to cherish no repining thought, nor from our dim perception of a part of the great system,

arraign or question the stupendous whole.”

“Thou shouldest have been a monk, boy. Solemn truths, uttered with such a winning air as thine, with mild persuasion beaming from those eyes, and sweetest eloquence upon that tongue, had given thy ministry no common glory; had vanquished doubts, and silenced disbelief; had led the captive soul from earth to heaven, from hope below to happiness above.”

“You flatter me, in sport.”

“No, Florio, I but say this might have been, hadst thou come forward in another guise. I love to listen to thy gentle voice, and oft, in sooth, I think that thy intelligence outstrips thy years. Yet that thou art the boy thou seemest, I may not doubt, for on thy chin I look in vain for that superfluous down, which should announce the approach of maturity.”

While speaking, Madame D'Aumont

laid her hand gently on the face of Alice, who shrinking from the scrutiny to which she found herself subjected, fixed her eyes on the ground, her countenance was covered with blushes.

“Nay, look not thus abashed,” the lady proceeded, anxious to re-assure her page, whose confusion it was impossible for her not to remark. “I did not mean to speak reproachfully. Though much of manly beauty some think lies in a well-grown beard, trust me, I think thy face needs no such aid, nor would it be more comely in my sight, with all those curling ornaments which youths proudly display, to charm their mistresses.”

Alice hoped the examination was now ended, — ventured to look up, and answered in a sportive tone, —

“My lady is most kind, to take such pains to reconcile an urchin like me to himself.

Madame D’Aumont’s eyes were still

fixed with a stedfast gaze on her embarrassed companion.

“I am admiring,” said she, “how delicately fair that face of thine remains, though thou hast travelled farther than I have, and more exposed to the inclemency of the season; while mine the sun’s warm ray has so discoloured, that if much longer exposed to his fires, I fear me I may chance to be mistaken for an Egyptian.”

Alice replied to this remark that delicate complexions were soon affected by exposure to the weather, while others escaped unhurt.

“No,” said Madame D’Aumont, “the sun beholds a face like yours with holy awe, and will not injure it. With my more common-place features he uses greater freedom.”

“Not so,” answered Alice, “say rather the sun will only touch that he loves, and hastens, when he sees you walk

abroad, to pay his undivided homage to your beauty, nor deigns to look upon my humble face."

"This is delicious mockery, my Florio, but sweetly urged. And yet, methinks, I would not have you play the hypocrite."

"Nor do I, madam."

"And do you then consider me so fair, as not to be immensely your inferior?"

"Inferior, madam! and to me inferior! Far be from me a dream so idle, as the mad vanity that would suppose I could vie with you for one moment. Indeed, indeed I have not been so weak! and if, without presumption, my poor thought may be confided to speech, I will say, from the first moment that I gazed on you, it seemed to me I looked on perfect beauty."

She spoke with the warmth of sincerity. Madame D'Aumont thought she remarked the warmth of passion. Her

arm was thrown negligently round the neck of Alice, and her head gently inclined downwards. She smiled, and shook her head, while she replied —

“ What matchless witchery to female ears has praise, or true or false, from lips like thine ! Thou takest the tone that I would have thee take. So weak and timid as thou hast been, I would not have thee remain. Trust me, I like to see the gallant bearing of the future man shine in the fearless and aspiring boy. Think not that I would damp thy growing courage, by chilling frown or harsh remonstrance. Fear no reproof from me.”

“ I hope my boldness never will deserve one.”

“ It will not, Florio — no, it never will ! and so away with idle diffidence, and tell me all thy thoughts.”

“ That, madam, I have done already.”

“ No, you have told but what you

once did think. Tell me what thoughts now wake within thy breast?"

Surprised and confused at being thus interrogated, Alice made no reply. She did not comprehend the question put to her, and fearing that her hesitation and silence would betray her secret, which would be equally endangered by an indiscreet reply, she trembled, but said nothing.

"Peace, flutterer, peace!" said Madame D'Aumont, who perceived her agitation. "Answer not now, since you are still so timid, but let me ask another question.—Knowest thou what love is?"

"I hope I do."

"And hast thou felt it?"

"For all who have been kind to me."

"You speak of gratitude — but I would ask if you have yet felt love?"

"I have not felt that dire and fatal passion, which some have dignified with love's name. I would not wish to ex-

perience that baneful glow, which sometimes urges mortals to their ruin — that makes them reckless of their duty and their welfare.”

“Now thou comest to the point. Such are indeed too often the hard conditions on which mortals purchase love. I will not disguise the fact. But as there are gems of small size, which all the world acknowledge far surpass in value the largest masses that ever human hands have lifted from their native quarries, so are there moments of such boundless bliss, that they are cheaply gained by years of suffering.”

She paused. Alice attempted no reply, and both started, at hearing the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps. Madame D'Aumont felt that the warmth with which she had replied to her page, had caused her to speak in a tone unusually loud, and she doubted whether her voice had not been heard by the individual who now drew near. On the instant she began to converse on indifferent

subjects, still speaking louder than she was generally accustomed to do, that the intruder might not suspect his coming was regarded as a matter of importance.

CHAP. XII.

“ If thou would’st here alledge
“ Thou art in years a boy ;
“ So was Adonis, yet was he
“ Fair Venus’ only joy.”

OLD BALLAD.

A FEW moments explained the interruption, and Madame D’Aumont saw a confidential servant, who was generally in attendance on his master’s person, advance to the alcove, with that boldness and disregard of ceremony, which is very common in those who know themselves to be the bearers of agreeable intelligence. Louis, in the present instance, felt that he had tidings of no common importance to communicate; and he accordingly hastened to announce to his

lady, that the general, having indulged in a game at hazard with the Lord de Noel, had been so astonishingly fortunate, that he had won the ransom, whatever it might be, that should be paid for the prisoner next in rank to the king, (of England,) who should fall into the hands of the French, after the battle then about to take place; unless the previous surrender of the whole English army should make an appeal to arms unnecessary.

Louis did not find that his news produced all the exultation on which he had calculated, and he looked somewhat abashed when he heard himself coldly admonished on the subject of his precipitate approach. He humbly apologised, and excused his abruptness, not only on the ground of impatience to make known the fortunate event, but on that of his having been previously delayed more than a day, in consequence of the failure of the horse on which he had first rode. He added, he was commissioned to state, that it was

now, more than ever, probable that that villa would become the abode of some English nobleman of high rank, and it was, therefore, necessary that the arrangements demanded for the reception of a personage of importance, should be finished without loss of time.

Madame D'Aumont dismissed Louis, and reflecting that to remain longer in the alcove at nightfall, might attract observation, she quitted it, and repaired to the house. On their way thither she preserved a thoughtful silence, and it was but by slow degrees that the displeasure caused by the arrival of Louis appeared to subside.

Alice received permission to retire at an early hour. She availed herself of it, glad to find an opportunity of entertaining, free from observation, the thoughts growing out of her peculiar situation, which disturbed her harassed mind. Alarmed at the impetuosity which she had remarked in her benefactress, an un-

describable terror came over her, when she contemplated its probable return. Taught by John Huss, as well as by her parent, in danger and in difficulty to claim the potent aid of the Most High, she endeavoured to profit by their instructions ; but the confusion which prevailed in her mind so deranged her ideas, that she found it impossible to give utterance to any connected petition. Still occupied with the attempt, her bended knees, her uplifted hands, indicated the devout exercise in which she desired to engage, when a slight noise arrested her attention. She looked round, and perceived a part of the partition of the little cabinet, assigned to her for a sleeping room, had been removed, and before she had time to utter an exclamation of surprise or alarm, Madame D'Aumont cautiously entered.

There are moments which, though wholly devoted to virtue, are among the last in which a youthful and diffident mind would wish to be surprised. Alice

felt abashed at the situation in which she was discovered, and hastily rose. The invader of her apartment shared her embarrassment. To Madame D'Aumont, the manner in which she had found the page occupied, conveyed a reproach for which she had not been prepared; and the contrast between the thoughts which raged in her own bosom, and the gentle piety animating that of Alice, made her recoil for a moment in confusion. But she endeavoured to dismiss the painful reflection, and advanced. The dress she had previously worn had been partially discarded, and now more negligently, but alluringly attired, she presented herself in studied disorder.

“You start, Florio,” said Madame D'Aumont, as she approached the astonished Alice, “and, perhaps, I ought not to wonder at it, for methinks I seem like some unquiet spirit, that wanting rest, borrows the shadow of the form it wore on earth, to wander through the gloom of

night, and visit those it loved while here.”

She paused, as expecting some remark from Alice, expressive of pleasure at her presence ; but she paused in vain. Alice was not sufficiently mistress of her feelings, to be capable of disguising them ; and not affecting to conceal her amazement and uneasiness, she offered no reply.

“ Forgive me, boy, that I disturbed thee. I know not what malady affects me ; but I am restless, and my unquiet thoughts still turn to thee. Therefore, unable to dismiss, I at last indulged them, and stole thus quietly into thy chamber, hoping, without breaking thy slumber, to gaze upon that face, while thou didst sleep.”

“ If any malady denies repose, permit me to call others to assist you.”

“ Not so,” the lady replied, taking Alice’s hand. “ I would see none but thee. Why tremble at my touch ! Am I so dreadful, that you shrink from me,

as though a prowling wolf had crossed your path? — Still you retire, as though some horrid object drove back the current of your healthful blood — Speak, boy — am I so odious?”

“Madam!”

“Am I that hateful being to your vision, that but to look upon inspires disgust?”

“O, madam! that you know is impossible. I would not wish to act a flatterer’s part, but if I uttered every praise that admiration could bestow on beauty, I should not flatter you.”

“Then that which I remark is but the overflowing of surprise, at finding that a lady of my rank, and one whose beauty has been highly prized, can condescend so mildly to entreat the page, whose services she might command. Is it not so?”

Alice faltered, but at length replied, —

“Yes, madam.”

“Right glad am I to know the cause

of your embarrassment. Lift up your eyes, my page, and know that I disdain the accidents of birth and fortune, where nature marks a being formed to wake affection."

"You much surprise me now," said Alice, "for sure you do forget the marriage vow binds you indissolubly to another."

"No, I do not forget. I well remember, that in early youth it was my wretched lot to be disposed of by cold calculations, to which my heart could never be a party. Avarice sold me; ambition bought me. A sordid father handed me over to an unfeeling husband, who craved my beauty, but cared not for my affections. Am I by such unholy compact bound? No! nature spurns the hateful bargain. With thee I would not hesitate to fly far from the splendid mansions now called mine, and blessed with thy society in some romantic cottage, leave wealth and pomp for others."

“But, lady, quitting thus a husband’s roof, have you reflected that shame and scorn must follow?”

“Shame and scorn are but mere names, which those who list may bandy at their pleasure, with little risk of mischief, when those against whom they are uttered, hear them not. Let these pursue, and if the playful gale wafting spring’s odours to our gay retreat, should bring their echo with its fragrant load, I would not fail to make it a theme of laughter through the live long day.”

“You mean not this,” said Alice. “You cannot think so lightly of your fame. No, you are sporting with my feeble youth. But trust me, Florio would not entertain a thought injurious to your honour.”

“Why these vain words? — Wouldst thou behold the rose in all its bloom forgotten and neglected, nor stretch a hand to place it in thy bosom?”

“ I know not how to answer, madam; but methinks, placed where the lily displays its fair flower, or where the rose expands its beauteous bud, not mine should be the hand to tear either thence. I would not snatch them from the soil they grew on, but I would see them still bloom and flourish, and leave them all unsullied where they grew.”

“ And am I, am I then to understand that thus you now would fly from me?”

“ O madam! you but try me. Fear not my boldness ever will offend.”

“ You triumph in the weakness I acknowledge, and persecute me with your cruel coldness. Even now, you fly from me, as though you dreaded the grasp of some monster!”

“ Not so, I but retire, that I may not be found too presuming. I would not use unseemly freedoms even with your shadow, and when your presence beau-

tifies your mirror, I would not rashly approach to sully it one moment with my breath."

Tears burst from Madam D'Aumont, while Alice was speaking, and she trembled with emotion while she exclaimed,

"Affect not to misunderstand me, Florio. Thy heart is like the flint so cold and hard, and like the flint it seems to have the power of spreading fiercest fires around it. For I, the proudest beauty of all France, who never yet would brook indifference, am more moved by these chilling looks, than ever I have been when fondest wooers offered me the homage of their love."

Alice was silent, and her hand which she had withdrawn, again felt the pressure of that of Madame D'Aumont.

"Sit by my side, Florio; nay, you shall," she cried, while she drew Alice towards her. "Dismiss this childish bashfulness, and look on me as you were wont to do, and even though determined

not to love, O! look upon me ever as your friend."

A little soothed by the last words of Madame D'Aumont, Alice sustained her ardent gaze with more firmness than before, and neither attempted to withdraw her hand, nor to avert her countenance. But the situation embarrassed her extremely, and her confusion was not diminished, when on a sudden a violent knocking was heard on the outside of the house. The door was speedily opened, and some one was heard ascending the stairs leading to the bedroom of the lady, and loudly demanding entrance. In the first moment of alarm Alice had clung to Madame D'Aumont for protection, but she instantly relinquished her hold, on recognising the voice of the marshall, while the lady in wild agitation, but in a low tone breathed the exclamation,—

“ Good Heavens! — My husband.”

“ O! lady!” said Alice, and her looks

more expressive than her tongue, intimated the fear she had of the effect that might be produced on the marshall, if he should arrive at a knowledge of her being there, at that hour alone with her page.

“Fear not,” said Madame D’Aumont, “fear not, my Florio. I will stand between thee and danger, whatever may betide. I have so secured my chamber, that he cannot burst it open ere I have time to enter ; and come the worst, trust me he shall sooner bathe his hands in the warm blood of this fond frail heart of mine, than hurt one hair of thy dear head.”

She left the closet as she spoke, and closed after her the opening by which she had entered. Alice heard her unbar the door to the marshall.

“Away ! Away !” he exclaimed.

Alice trembled, for the loud tone in which he spoke, appeared to her that of frantic indignation. She hastened to retreat, but her steps were momentarily

arrested by the consideration whether at all risks it was not her duty to step forward in defence of Madame D'Aumont, to prove that the rage of the general had no very serious foundation. She was about to present herself to the husband and wife for this purpose, when she perceived that they had engaged in a conversation, which though hurried and agitated, had nothing of anger in it. It therefore appeared to Alice unnecessary for her to do as she had intended. The painful situation, however, in which she had been placed, had made such an impression on her mind, that late as it then was, she determined on leaving the house, equally anxious to avoid becoming the mark of the marshall's hatred, and remaining the object of his lady's love.

With this resolution she softly descended the stairs by which the husband had passed to the apartment of Madame D'Aumont. She perceived the whole

of the servants were in motion, though she had supposed them to have retired for the night. In momentary expectation that some effort would be made to detain her, she stole in silence to the door. She had just reached it when the voice of Madame D'Aumont from her chamber, was heard loudly calling on Florio to rise without delay. The assured tone in which the presence of the page was called for, satisfied Alice that her lady, whatever else might disturb her, had nothing to dread on account of her page, and fixed at all hazards to act on her previous determination, instead of replying, she betook herself to flight, with all the expedition she could exert. The night was pitchy dark, it had become rainy, and Alice immediately after leaving a well-lighted house, could distinguish no object in her path; but in a few moments, become more familiar with the gloom, she perceived that she was passing between rows of tall trees.

She pressed forward, but had made little progress when she started with surprise and vexation, at finding herself by the alcove to which Madame D'Aumont had conducted her in the early part of that evening. It was now clear that in her hurry she had mistaken the back entrance for that by which it had been her intention to escape. To retrace her steps would be to abandon her design. It occurred to her that she had seen a door at the extremity of the grounds. She resolved to seek it, and if possible pass from it, content to encounter all the difficulties which presented themselves to her mind, as the attendants of the dreary journey she meditated, rather than again expose herself to the entreaties of Madame D'Aumont.

CHAP. XIII.

“ Calm is the heart that beat with hope of plunder,
“ And nerveless falls the blood-stain'd hand—How
 awful
“ The solemn stillness of this pause from war!
“ When all the shouts of desolation hush'd,
“ Are sunk to breathless silence.”

ROCHE.

FROM the slight view which Alice had taken of the door, she had not formed a very correct idea of the direction in which it was to be found. She had, however, the good fortune soon to discover it, and to open it, and thankful as for an escape from dangers of no common magnitude, she quitted with joy the present abode of the protectress, to whom, but a few hours before, she had felt such attachment, that the remote prospect of a se-

paration would have been regarded as a calamity.

Alice found herself in a vast plain, and doubtful no longer which way to direct her steps, she fled in the direction opposite to the road which had conducted her to the villa she was induced to desert; and by which, from some few words which had caught her ear, she was led to believe the marshall and his lady were about to return. The trampling of horses frequently struck her ear in the course of the night, and she was astonished that such numbers should be travelling at so unseasonable an hour, and with such extraordinary rapidity as she remarked in most instances when they came near.

By day-break their numbers were fewer, but having passed into the road, she was startled at finding it strewed with dead and dying horses. Sometimes she was met by two or three persons on foot, who had the appearance of having re-

cently been dismounted, and who were too much occupied with their own affairs to bestow a look or a thought on her. As the light grew stronger, Alice perceived that the men who were thus precipitately retiring, were soldiers, and for the first time it occurred to her, from the agitated and disorderly manner in which they took their way towards Paris, that possibly the army expected to surrender, or to be annihilated, had triumphed in battle; and that the English, for whose reception as prisoners such extensive preparations had been made, were likely, if they marched forward at all, to advance in a very different manner from that which had been anticipated by those opposed to them.

Yet it was almost incredible, that a change so mighty should have been operated in so short a period. Alice remembered to have heard of the irreparable errors into which the king of England had been betrayed by his youth-

ful impetuosity: — of the hopeless situation in which his troops had been placed; and she had witnessed the indignation which the rejection of the proffered services of a body of Parisians had inspired among some of the inhabitants of that city, and knew from this fact, that those to whom the French army had been confided, believed their strength to be so great, that an auxiliary force was regarded as wholly unnecessary. She had even heard that the Parisians had been turned back with ridicule, for coming forward when they knew that they were not wanted, in the hope of being admitted to a share of the expected booty. After this, to suppose that the army so superior in numbers — so rich in almost inexhaustible resources, should have sustained a total defeat, was too extravagant for thought. Yet every thing that she saw, tended to strengthen the impression on the mind of Alice. The cavalry, even those who were most unfortunate, had

distanced the infantry so far, that for miles, though many traces of their flight were discernable, few horsemen were to be seen. As the morning advanced, she saw men approach, whom, from various circumstances, she was led to conclude had had no means of conveying themselves from the field of battle, but by their pedestrian energies. These, few at first, soon appeared in considerable numbers, till at length Alice found it almost impossible to proceed from the density of the crowd which filled the road, evidently retreating from a pursuing enemy, or an enemy expected to pursue. Some few of them hastily admonished her to turn back, but the mass, exhausted by severe fatigue and chagrin, regarded her not. She considered that to advance was as dangerous, as she found it painful and difficult. Though she had abundant reason to expect that the coming victors were English, there was nothing in her appearance that could

flatter her with the belief, that meeting with them she would be in less danger, because she was of their country. The probability was, if she succeeded in penetrating through the throng of infantry with which she was now mixed, that death, from an English hand, would requite the effort, before it would be possible for her to make known of what nation she was a native.

She availed herself of the earliest opportunity that presented itself, to quit the direct road. But it was still her object to approach the field on which the battle had been fought; conceiving that thence to the coast, after the advantage they had gained, the English must be in force, and that where they prevailed her way would be beset with fewer perils. Having left the road, many impediments to a rapid march presented themselves. She had hills to surmount and woods to penetrate, but severely as she felt the fatigue which they inflicted, Alice per-

severed, though drenched with rain which descended in torrents. A river at length opposed her progress, and incapable of crossing it, she followed its windings till they conducted her into the track which she had quitted at an earlier hour of the day.

The number of fugitives which now met her view, was not so great as before. Of those that passed her, or rather that she passed, for not a few of them were compelled by the injuries they had received to halt; — many were severely wounded. This led Alice to conclude that she was not very distant from the place which had witnessed their misfortune, as she could not suppose that human beings, maimed as some of these unhappy men had been, could travel far. It therefore in her judgment, became necessary that she should again seek a more unfrequented path. Alice was departing from the road, when a waggon, laden with provisions, which had

been on its way to the army, but had here been arrested by news of the calamitous issue of the battle, and in consequence deserted, recalled to the fainting wanderer, that for more than twenty hours she had tasted no refreshment. The surprise — the hope, and the apprehension, which had been successively inspired by the objects she had seen, or imagined, had kept her mind so fully occupied, that she had thought not of food; and with the exception of a draught of water, nothing had passed her lips since she quitted the protection of Madame D'Aumont. She ventured to take a small quantity of the food to which chance had conducted her; and a little before the close of day, finding herself on the borders of what she supposed to be a forest, and remote from all observation, she seated herself on the ground. Here she spread her little store before her, and scarcely daring to breathe, as, shrinking from the savage aspect

of the surrounding scenery, she contemplated the melancholy peculiarities of her situation, Alice commenced her lonely repast.

As nearly as she could judge, it was precisely at that hour on the preceding evening, that she had been seated in the alcove with Madame D'Aumont. How different were the objects which challenged her attention at the two periods! With the lady of the marshall, she had looked on elegantly disposed grounds, on transparent waters artificially taught to meander, brightened by the setting sun; in a word, on all the tranquil beauties which human ingenuity could bring together, and wealth and industry labour to gay perfection. Now she saw exhibited the rugged wildness of neglected nature, under a frowning sky, but notwithstanding the stern gloom which shrouded her resting place, and which made her shrink with terror; she hailed its obscurity, happy

to escape from other scenes. In all the misery inflicted by fatigue and privation, she nothing regretted giving up the protection to which she had been commended by De Marle. Painful and dangerous as she found her present situation, the contrast it presented to that which she had abandoned did not add to her regrets.

Designing to pursue her journey immediately after satisfying the call which hunger, or rather which exhaustion made for food, she soon prepared to set forward. But the extreme weariness of which she became sensible, after resting awhile, made her reluctant to rise. Still intending to do so, but deferring it, she was at length surprised by sleep, and lost for some hours all consciousness of the perils to which she was exposed.

About an hour after midnight, a rustling in the bushes nearest to her, caused her to awake. She could see nothing, and at first she doubted whether the movement which had disturbed her was caused

by the approach of a human being, or by that of some animal. She listened, and was quite certain that a man, or more than one, had passed, and penetrated towards the centre of the wood. The sound of their retiring steps was heard no more; and Alice considered whether it would be wiser to make her way through the maze, on the margin of which she rested, or to return to the road. She was induced to decide for the latter course, by the appearance of two men, who now marched by her, in the direction which the others had taken. They were heavily laden, and one of them was recounting the efforts he had been obliged to make, in order to subdue the resistance of an officer, who though mortally wounded, had nevertheless the courage to engage in a most unequal combat with the speaker in defence of his property. From this it was clear that these persons of whose quality she had doubted before, were engaged in plundering the unfortunates who had been dis-

abled in the fight; and from the manner in which they repaired to that dismal retreat, as to their home, it seemed not improbable that acting as robbers, they did but follow their ordinary profession or calling.

When all was again silent, Alice regained the road. Continuing her journey, shortly after daylight, she arrived at an open plain. Here a most appalling spectacle met her eye. Thousands of dead bodies covered the ground, which was crimsoned with their blood. Arms, legs, and heads were scattered in every direction, in frightful confusion; and parties of English and French were occupied in digging graves for the fallen, or in bearing off wretches, who, though severely wounded, had the misfortune to survive up to this period. The timid Alice could with difficulty sustain the horrible climax, thus supplied to the ghastly scenes she had previously witnessed, — she covered her eyes with her hands, and for some minutes remained

undecided whether to turn back, or to advance over the battle-field of Agincourt.

She at length decided for the latter course, and taking her way between the dead bodies that strewed the field, she passed over the scattered weapons and broken armour lying near them, and by the slaughtered or disabled horses, many of which, wounded with arrows and impaled on the sharp pointed stakes fixed in the ground to defend the English archery against the impetuous attacks of the French cavalry, still groaned and struggled, unregarded amidst the general carnage and confusion. Broken battle-axes — headless spears — bows and arrows — bruised helmets, discarded shields and blood-stained swords beset her path in indescribable disorder, and as she endeavoured to avoid some of these, she beheld with horror a still more frightful engine of war, of which she had heard, but which she had

never seen before. This was a piece of artillery. The importance of cannon in battle had now begun to be recognised. That which Alice looked upon, rested between two spokes, fixed in a wooden frame without wheels, which seemed to have been constructed for the carriage of two guns, as a third piece of timber, rising vertically, formed a sort of fork, and offered a suitable place for a second cannon. The one which remained in its place was of calibre sufficient to carry a shot about the size of a common tennis-ball. It was four feet in length, and two thick iron rings at each end, and six others, which at equal distances, enclosed the tube, proved the anxiety of the makers, to guard against its bursting when fired.

Shrinking from the horrid objects which met her eye at each instant, Alice kept on her way. She advanced but slowly, for the heavy rains which had fallen had saturated the ground, and at

every step her feet sunk so deep that it required no slight exertion to proceed. If she paused from fatigue, she found herself firmly fixed to the spot, and was more than once alarmed by the fear that it would be impossible for her in her feeble state to extricate herself without assistance, which no one was at hand or had leisure to supply.

Many hours were thus mournfully consumed. Turning from time to time to avoid the ghastly dead, or the ferocious living, she was completely bewildered, and unable to determine in what direction she ought to travel, with a view of reaching the coast, she at length gained the limits of that awful scene, on which so many brave men of both nations lay extended in their gore, no better than the earth on which they reposed. Any track that promised to conduct her from a spectacle so awful she was willing to pursue, and she unhesitatingly plunged into the first lane or road which offered.

The evening was at hand, when Alice found herself in a winding path. She had got nearly a league from the plain of Agincourt, when she saw a soldier, who appeared to be severely wounded, leaning upon another for support. Alice conjectured that the unfortunate man, who had been conveyed thus far from the fatal plain, was unable to continue his retreat. Pity arrested her steps, and she paused to look on the sufferer, when his companion called out angrily, —

“ Begone, boy ! what is there here to challenge thy impertinent attention? — Begone.”

“ I mean not to offend,” Alice ventured to reply.

“ Then pass on,” returned the assisting soldier.

“ I obey,” said Alice, and she again set forward with all the little speed which it was in her power to exert, when the wounded man made a sudden

motion with his hand, as if to beckon her.

“What wouldst thou?” demanded the voice which had before spoken, but in a tone as mildly soothing as it had been harsh and abrupt. Then perceiving that Alice had again stopped, his impatience returned, and he impetuously demanded,—

“What wouldst thou pry into?”

“Stay,” cried the wounded man, —
“Stay, youth.”

“Wouldst have him by thee?” his companion enquired.

“Aye,” was the answer, and Alice started at hearing him add — “Come hither, Florio.”

Alice knew the voice, and it was not so dark, but, through the death-like paleness which had invaded his cheek, she could recognise De Marle. In that moment she forgot all the weakness and fatigue which oppressed her frame, and flew to offer such aid as her remaining

strength could supply, to the kind heart which had so tenderly watched over her, in a former part of her journey.

“Go on that side of him, boy,” said the person who attended De Marle to Alice, “and let him lean on thy shoulder.”

“Nay,” cried De Marle, “for that there is no need. I did not wish to see you here, Florio. It was my hope that you reposed in safety, far from the scenes of war which now surround us.”

“It has fortune'd otherwise. In the confusion caused by the news of the battle, I parted from my mistress, and have wandered hither, to find you, alas! in this sad condition.”

“Think not of me, good Florio, but hie thee forward, lest that same ruin which may follow me, should fall on thee also. — Away—but stay — whither canst thou fly, all friendless and alone, and wholly unacquainted with the road?”

Thou hast but a choice of evils, and of the two it may be less appalling to thee to remain with me, till we gain some place of greater safety, than to pursue thy weary way alone."

To Alice, the latter alternative appeared decidedly preferable. If she had thought of nothing but her own preservation and comfort, she would have come to this conclusion; but added to this, a feeling of gratitude whispered to her, that in his present unfortunate situation, she ought not to leave one to whom she was so largely indebted for former kindness.

Her choice was soon made. Alice demanded that he should lean on her on one side, while the soldier, who had first accosted her, sustained him on the other. De Marle seemed to comply with her earnest representations, but he leaned so lightly, that, faint as she was, and wholly unable to sustain a heavy burden, Alice complained that she was not allowed to feel his weight. The other

companion of De Marle was an Englishman, and when he spoke, she could not help tasking her memory to recall the circumstances under which she had heard his voice before, for that she did not now hear it for the first time she was assured. It was not long before her embarrassment terminated. She was convinced that the companion of De Marle was her brother's ancient school-fellow, who had accompanied Edward and herself, with Whittington and Huss, part of the way from Northampton to London. She recognised Octavius.

As they proceeded, Alice learned that on the day of the battle, De Marle having been severely wounded, became captive to Octavius. He was in this situation when the King of England, alarmed by the reports which reached him of the great force in which the French were returning to the field, thought his own safety depended on ordering the prisoners to be put to the sword. When this man-

date was made known to Octavius, he was in the act of binding up the wounds of De Marle. To draw his sword on a defenceless, and perhaps a dying man, for whom he had just professed friendship, was that at which his generous heart revolted, and he declared no monarch on earth should compel him to act such a part. De Marle calmly remarked to him that obedience was his duty, both as a subject and as a soldier; but Octavius insisted that even the king had no right to command him to degrade himself, and, let the consequence be what it might, he would not yield compliance. It was in vain the prisoner remarked that inflexibility on this point might expose the Englishman to ruin, and that probably without saving him. Octavius was not to be moved, but at length it occurred to him, that the most effectual way of serving the captive, would be seemingly to obey the order that had been issued. This thought being communicated to De

Marle, he sunk as if pierced to the heart by Octavius, among the slain. At midnight the latter returned to him. De Marle had suffered so severely in reality, that when again found, he was almost what he had wished to appear. Revived in some degree by cordials, which his English friend supplied, he was borne from the battle field. By direction of De Marle, Octavius sought a neighbouring cottage, in which he expected further assistance might be procured. He found the spot on which it had stood, but the building itself had been burned to the ground, and the inhabitants had fled. Under these circumstances, Octavius deposited his burden in a thicket, spread a bed for him, consisting of clothes which he had snatched from some of the slaughtered warriors that lay near, while he considered what other measures might be necessary to provide for his safety. He procured for him such comforts as he could procure, and on the second night,

at the request of his patient, he assisted him to advance on the road to Boulogne, near which place, in a retired situation, which he hoped had saved it from pillage, his father resided, who, if they could once get there, would gladly requite the preserver of his son. He, however was able to proceed but a few steps, when another halt became necessary. In the morning, all danger from stragglers, belonging to the English army being considered to have reached its termination, the effort was renewed, and was still continued, when the friends were overtaken by Alice.

The King of England having determined on returning to Calais, Octavius was enabled without reproach to absent himself from the army, and to continue his attendance on De Marle, for whom he had conceived a friendship which every hour served but to augment. Their journey was tedious, but in the midst of the disorders which prevailed, the know-

ledge De Marle possessed of the country, enabled him to direct their advance in such a manner, that they experienced no severe privations on their way. They at length approached the neighbourhood of Boulogne. A grove of tall poplars indicated to the young Frenchman the abode of his father. The house, seated in the bosom of an ample valley, and protected on every side by gently swelling hills from the rude blasts of winter, seemed a most enviable retreat. The leaves were fast falling before the chill breeze — the fruit-trees, which enclosed those which have been named, forming a passage to the dwelling, confessed the advanced season of the year, and the fruit with which they had been loaded lay scattered and neglected at their feet, and rapidly perishing for want of the collecting hand of the proprietor. The low, widely stretching vines which were near, by the dark sullied aspect of some of their leaves, and the vivid fiery glow which in other places

extended through a long range of them, furnished similar evidences of decay, but there were among them enormous gaps, and a certain air of disorder to which the eye of De Marle had not been accustomed. He started as he drew nearer to the residence of his father, perceiving that havoc had been made among the favourite poplars, which he was quite sure his parent would never have permitted, had he retained his rights and authority. The house he could now discover had not been spared. He doubted whether it was still inhabited, and looked round on his English friends with fearful misgivings, unwilling to speak of the devastation which he witnessed, and which he rightly concluded must be ascribed to the hostility of their countrymen. With a heavy heart he reached the door, but had the immediate joy of seeing his father spring forward to embrace him. News had reached the old man that his son had perished in the battle, or in the slaughter

of the prisoners which followed it; and to see him again though still weak from the wounds he had received, inspired the warmest transports.

The first greetings over, the father addressing himself to the companions of his son, lamented that recent events placed it out of his power to give them such reception as they were entitled to claim. The enemy, he remarked, had penetrated even to his modest retreat, and had merely spared the walls, which they saw were still standing. He then began vehemently to inveigh against the rapacity of the English, declaring it to be his opinion that no Englishman could be found who knew the duties of humanity, or who could feel for the distresses of his fellow creatures. De Marle interrupted this discourse, to tell his father that the daring benevolence of one Englishman had saved him from death, which had otherwise been inevitable, and had never ceased to tend him in his sickness, till he had conveyed

him to the abode in which he then rested. The old man stood corrected ; confessed that a convincing proof had been afforded that he was in error, and proceeded to invite the strangers to free participation, in all the comforts which the ravages of war and the presence of foreign soldiers had spared.

CHAP. XIV.

“Go to, you spirit of a feather! be not soft hearted : leave your nicety.”

CHAPMAN.

EXULTING in having been the means of restoring De Marle to his home, gratified with the cordial reception which he had met with, and exhilarated by the good cheer which he had tasted, and to which he had been much estranged of late, the joy of Octavius knew no bounds. His heart was gay, and his eye glistened with unwonted fire, while he spoke of the difficulties over which they had triumphed, and Alice, sincerely delighted at seeing the generous and interesting Frenchman

once more in safety, regarded with admiration the warm transports of his preserver.

“Youngster,” said Octavius, when in the afternoon of the day after their arrival he found himself alone with Alice, “they teach that virtue is its own reward; but this I know, we are in right good quarters, and therefore our virtue, if we have any, gives us a fair reward besides itself. But even this may be improved upon, and we may add to what we have found here, some delicacies which it occurs not to our liberal host to offer to his guests.”

“Nay,” replied Alice, “all here is set forth with such liberal hospitality, that he methinks must be no common glutton who could desire more.”

“We may improve our fare, boy.”

“I think not, for if we should add new delicacies to those which here court our appetites, our fare, instead of being

better shall grow worse, becoming too luxurious.”

Octavius laughed while he replied to these remarks.

“ I think you will not say so, Florio, when I shall better have explained myself. Come nearer, for I would not speak too loud, lest our good friend should hear, and think me no meet companion for his son. All old men, as they draw near their graves, think pleasure sin, and strive to atone for what themselves enjoyed, by cheating others of their proper share.”

“ I know not what you mean.”

“ No, but I see from that enquiring look, you half begin to guess what I would say. Not to prolong, the delicacies I would seek — are women — O ! what a glance that single word has won ! You will not now say we are enough provided with all that we can covet.”

“ This,” said Alice, “ is but jesting.”

“ You fear so, for among the drooping vineyards, and leafless orchards that surround us, you looked and languished for such fruit in vain. But mark me, I have met with better fortune. Not far from this I have beheld two nuns, who from their convents have been liberated, lest they should chance to fall into English hands. How oddly fate gives mortals what they fly from! — But what a gallant thing is this same war, which thus gives beauty freedom, is it not? Now listen, these two nuns have journeyed hither, and near this place they rest some few days. Is not this glorious?”

“ I — I am — it is not for me — ”

“ Why how thou stammerest! I saw this gay confusion coming over thee. I saw the merry wickedness of thy swift thoughts outstripped the ambling of my lazy tongue — own thyself pleased.”

“ Give over this raillery. I am sure

you are but trying pastimes with me. Do I not know you have a love in England? Have I not heard you say how passing beautiful, how rich in wit she is, whom you are presently to marry? And after this, would you so dupe my weak capacity, to make me think that you would stoop from her, to look upon another for a moment?"

"I guess, young spark, if this be not all sport, you have hopes from holding such language to talk me out of my half of the prize. But that may not be. Thou art unreasonable. — Rest thee content with one, and come with me."

"Surely," said Alice, "you cannot think I sport when I mention Matilda. You have said you loved her. Why, then this mockery, pretending you would seek another?"

"Truce with thy waggery. This is not to the purpose. True, I love Matilda passing well, but what of that? Shall that forbid me to look on any other?"

“Why if her image really fills your bosom, no stranger would captivate your attention.”

“Marry, why? Were she here, indeed, this might be reason. But she is in England.”

“No matter what distance divides you — true love would make her ever present to your mind, and you would think and sigh for none but her.”

“Why not?” replied Octavius. “The saints from whom we claim protection are in Heaven, and shall it be maintained that we forget them, while worshipping their images on earth? Thus is it with Matilda. Far from my view removed, I cannot seek her, but finding beauty in a foreign land, I view it as her likeness, and greet it with the ecstasy her presence might inspire.”

“But love is not a saint. He is a deity — a jealous deity, who ill can brook that his votary should offer incense at

any altar, but that at which he first bowed."

"O this is idle," returned the soldier. "This indeed were very well in woman's mouth. We lords of the creation teach the other sex that true affection claims an undivided heart, and that they must not think when we are absent of other suitors. But sure a youth of your intelligence must know, we framed this plan to bind their roving fancies, and not our own. It may be well to make women believe this, and I would not confess to one of the other sex what I avow to you; but faith a man must have small taste who, out of all the end-varieties of female excellence, could rest contented with one single sample."

"Is this really your belief?"

"Aye, by my sword. Say, is it not a good one? I love Matilda well, but I love the rest of her enchanting sex also. Is this not right?"

“ No ; I have still believed affection pledged to one would let no rival passion warm the bosom. Wherever the lover wandered, one object would still occupy his mind, and his thoughts be regulated, as if he felt his mistress were omniscient.”

“ This is dreaming. Mean you to assert that you have acted on this conviction ?”

“ I have no love to whom I could prove faithless.”

“ I thought you had some good reason for not making this saint-like virtue your own. The theory was too good to be reduced to practice. I like truth, and virtue, and sentiment, in the abstract, but flesh and blood must be allowed fair play ; so along with me.

“ Not so,” cried Alice ; “ you want not my company, and I shall be better here.”

“ But the nuns are waiting by this

time. There is a little black-eyed wench not taller than yourself, to whom I promised thee.”

“That was rash, for I cannot enable you to keep your word.”

“But thou must. — Why, what a blush has thrown its crimson on thy cheek. Such striplings as thou art, are frequently more happy than we taller, more robust gallants. That wicked eye of thine has glanced on much the world has not suspected. I doubt not many a damsel rues its lustre.”

“I pray you cease,” said Alice, with an air of displeasure.

“Do not look angry, Florio. That face of yours has not practised frowns, and cannot do them naturally. You seem offended that I have found you out. Tush! I think not the worse of you, but like you all the better. I knew that mischief lurked beneath your meekness. Tell me the history of your early frolics.

I like to hear particulars of youngsters sinnings. Describe to me who conquered your young heart, how you did woo, and when you first did win.”

Alice was embarrassed. She offered to withdraw, but was prevented by Octavius, who seemed intent on gaining an answer. At this moment De Marle entered. He was surprised at the confusion which he failed not to remark in Alice. Octavius did not hesitate to explain the cause of it.

“Do not disturb the boy,” said De Marle, “he is too young to follow you; and if you think his principles unnecessary for the guidance of your own conduct, it were not well to urge him to discard them yet.”

“What a demure look!—and how staid your speech!” cried Octavius. “I half suspect that the near view of death has made you penitent, and you, like Florio, will perhaps persuade me that for

the world you would not follow a pretty woman's footsteps."

"The weakness I might own, but not defend. If men are generally libertines, I would not extenuate their profligacy, at least in presence of a youth like this."

"Call in the priests and celebrate high mass! We cannot be more solemn than your look and manner. I think you both are laughing at me, when thus you school me."

"I trust," said De Marle, smiling, "you will profit by the lesson, and cease to favour dissipation."

"O! this is a cathedral or a monastery, and you a holy brother appointed to preach down enjoyment as wicked. I believe not that pleasure is forbidden. Our mother Nature, when she was young, had male children only. They pined for want of amusement, so she made that pretty plaything woman, decked the gay toy in all her brightest hues, gave it life,

mirth, sweet symmetry of form — all that could captivate her earlier offspring, and then bestowed it on their playful hours. Now should I not be a most froward churl, if I could spurn so kind a parent's present, and pass it coldly when it courts my notice ?”

“ Nature's bright gift,” De Marle replied, “ I thought had higher value than you assign to it. Woman was fashioned not to heighten giddy thoughtless mirth, but to embellish and refine our beings, as the kind companions of our every labour. You offer a worthless homage to the sex, when you persuade yourself you show love by following every attractive countenance, anxious to gaze on it for a brief season, then part with it contemptuously for ever.”

“ No more of this, De Marle. I will not listen, or else your reasoning will nip my amusements in their bud. An English soldier never was a saint, and so I must go on as hitherto. I will say, in

spite of this your sermon, the temptation is such that I cannot believe it would have been suffered to cross our path, had yielding to it been prohibited. A call so potent needs must be divine."

"Such matters we may talk about when leisure suits, but now my father expects our company," said De Marle, who appeared desirous of terminating the conversation. Alice was rejoiced to escape from the society of Octavius, and readily waited on their host. De Marle, on account of his weakness, retired at an early hour. The libertine principles of Octavius gave Alice some uneasiness. She feared renewed efforts to introduce her to scenes which she could not consent to behold. The agitation arising from these thoughts took from her all desire to sleep, and her attention was unconsciously attracted to a picture, the only one which the wanton ravages of the late inmates of that building had spared. This was a painting from

the pencil of Giovanni da Fiesole. It represented the Saviour, seated on a splendid throne, the ascent to which was covered with a carpet, on which roses and other ornaments appeared, placing the crown of immortality on the head of the Virgin Mary, who knelt before him in presence of all the hierarchy of Heaven. The painting was executed in a style resembling that of the modern Chinese, and crimson, blue, and gold, were most liberally bestowed on the attire of all the celestials. Beneath, seven small compartments were marked, in which were delineated some of the recorded incidents in the life of St. Dominique. In one, St. Peter and St. Paul appear to him, and presenting him with the sacred volume and the baton of his holy office. Rays of celestial fire were emitted on all sides from the forms of the descending saints, who were made to address the following inspiring exhortation : *Va precher ; Dieu t'a choisi pour ce ministère.* In

another, the saint was engaged in raising from the dead the nephew of Cardinal Stephen de Fosseneuve, who had been killed by a fall from his horse. The miraculous book written by the saint, which his enemies strove in vain to consume was seen, as saved from the fury of the flames, and angels in blue vestments, decorated with gold, were employed bringing food to Saint Dominique from Heaven, in white bags attached to the extremities of their wings. In the last compartment the vision of the Saint was portrayed, in which he saw his own death. He appeared sitting up on his couch, attended by his friends. Above, on two ladders, reaching from earth to Heaven, the artist had stationed shining seraphim. The Virgin Mary, sustained on high, between the ladders, awaited the departure from earth of the retiring spirit, which the attendant angels, though availing themselves of the accommodation just mentioned, were prepared to bear on their

red outstretched wings, to the regions of eternal bliss.* Contemplating this singular assemblage of terrestrial and celestial objects, it was rather late before Alice felt disposed to sleep. She was about to court repose when the silence which had prevailed was suddenly disturbed. Some one drew hastily near, and before she could attempt securing the door of her chamber, it was thrown open, and Octavius entered.

* This picture is at present in the Louvre.

CHAP. XV.

“ ’Tis love just peeping in a hasty dress,
“ Retire fair creature to your needful rest,
“ There’s something noble lab’ring in my breast ;
“ This raging fire which through the mass does move,
“ Shall purge my dross and shall refine my love.”

DRYDEN.

ALICE felt astonishment at receiving a visit so unlooked for, and so little desired at that late hour. Octavius was surprised also, for he had not expected to find her waking.

“ What, my young sir, is your modesty not yet in bed ? Now will you have the face to tell me that any thing, but writing or reading letters, or tales of love, could keep you from sleeping ?”

“ I have not been so occupied,” Alice replied, “ but I did not expect your company to-night.”

“ And though you have it, you need not thank me for it. Our worthy countrymen have knocked our good entertainer’s house about so merrily, that he has no room to spare ; and just as I was going to bed, in came his brother, to crave a lodging. I then gave up my room to him, and as I would not suffer the old gentleman to sustain inconvenience, nor allow his son in his present weak state to have his rest broken, I am come to sleep here.”

The embarrassment which Alice had previously felt, was not removed by this speech. She strove to appear calm while she replied, —

“ My bed is not a large one, but the whole of it shall be at your command.”

“ No,” cried Octavius, “ that shall not be. I will not turn you out, Florio.”

“ But as I am little disposed to sleep, I will walk. — I like to walk at night.”

“ I warrant you do with some pretty damsels, as shy and as wicked as yourself; but alone, and in a storm of rain, a walk would not be preferable to your pillow.”

“ As for that,” said Alice, “ I am so inured to weather, that I mind it not. However, you can take the bed, and I need not leave the house.”

“ Nay, nay, you shall not forth, Florio. I will not suffer that you shall be left without a bed through the night.”

“ I,” said Alice, passing out of the room, “ care not for sleep.”

“ Be not so perverse, boy. What, think you I would so impose on your youth, as to take all your chamber, and leave you unprovided?”

“ No matter,” Alice replied; and hardly knowing what she uttered in her confusion, she added, “ and if I should want

one, perhaps, I could rest in another apartment."

"Indeed! but in which?"

"If in any — perhaps —" Here she paused, overwhelmed with the awkward embarrassment of her situation. "If in any, perhaps — in ——"

"In which?" Octavius curiously demanded.

"In — in — that —— in that ——," faltered Alice, pointing to a small apartment, in which a female servant reposed.

"You little villain!" exclaimed Octavius. "Why this passes my expectation. I did not give you credit for all the blushing modesty you affected, when I bad you forth with me, but I calculated not on finding you seeking a mistress in this very house. So then, you will not rest where I do, because the maiden servant of our host will make you welcome. By the mass! this is so wicked, that I am disposed to punish your ini-

quitos schemings, by going myself in your place.”

“ You mistake ; I did not mean —— ”

“ You did not mean to disclose so much, — that I dare be sworn, but you have done it. Truly you sly sinners do infinitely more mischief than avowed profligates ; and I much incline to think, that the least depraved people on earth are those who openly and honestly confess that they have no regard for moral principle at all. I, though I never meant to say, that had I been in Joseph’s place, I would have run away as he did, — I, though I fairly chase women over Nature’s common, would not have so wronged my host here as to pay my court to his servant.”

Perplexed and harassed by the singular situation in which she found herself, and by the suspicions of which she was the object, Alice was utterly at a loss what to reply.

Octavius went on. "I see my lecture on your immoral conduct has some weight. I am glad of it. I would not have irregular doings here. Come, boy, you stir not hence this night."

"I have no want of sleep."

"Then be awake, only remain with me, that you may do no wrong. Nay, if you hesitate, I myself will help you to bed. Here you shall stay."

While he spoke he advanced towards Alice, who terrified beyond description, fell on her knees, and implored compassion.

"What means this terror, boy?"

"O spare me!"

"Spare you!—What, do you think I am going to devour you?—O! I know what you mean; spare you, that you may run to your expecting damsel.—No, that would be sinful."

"Do not pursue me thus. I am not what I seem."

"How!"

“ I am not the boy you — take me for.”

“ Indeed !” cried Octavius, with undescribable amazement. — “ A strange idea flits across my mind ! — What are you then ?”

“ I am,” said Alice, averting her countenance, “ I am —”

“ What ?”

“ A helpless maiden.”

“ A woman !” Octavius exclaimed. “ A woman alone with me — at night ! Could I believe that in this dreary desert, a rose so fair would blossom in my path, and grow, as I may say into my bosom !”

“ ’Twere sad to tell,” Alice proceeded, “ the changes I have known, which forced me to adopt the dress I wear, and long the story.”

“ Then, sweet one, spare the telling of it. To-morrow, when we rise, I will listen to it. How could I ever think the starry brightness of those eyes — the

heavenly softness of that damask cheek, and all the nameless graces that surround that coral opening to a mine of pearl, were thrown away upon a man or boy! Methinks it was a calumny on Nature, to hold that she could thus madly waste her choicest treasures on any earthly thing, save woman. 'Twas blindness not to find thee out before ; but O! 'tis bliss to recognize thee now !”

“ Now,” said Alice, “ that you know my motive for retiring, permit me to pass forth.”

“ Not for an empire. I were lost, indeed, if meeting one like thee, so fair so bright, I could so underrate thy worth, as for a moment to permit a thought of separation.”

“ What mean you?—You who, some few moments since, chid me for looking towards a female’s door ; would you detain, and that beneath this roof, a maiden in the chamber you inhabit ?”

“ Oh! that is quite another matter. We moralists, inventing theories for others, never think of reducing them to practice ourselves. That which I said and thought, while I believed temptation at a distance, is not binding now when a lovely woman claims my midnight care.”

“ I understand you not, but must pass forth. Impede me not! ”

“ We part not thus, believe me. Good fortune does not often find me out; and when she does pay me a chance visit, I hope I know better than to undervalue her condescension. The goddess, for once indulgent, has brought us together, so I must pray thee banish chilling frowns, and never look so coldly on me. Bid love’s gay smile illuminate that countenance, and let the tear, now glistening in your eye, be tinged with rapture ere it can descend.”

“ Forbear! forbear! ”

“Hence with this coyness,” cried Octavius, advancing towards Alice with outstretched arms.

“Approach me not!”

“Your voice, though eloquent in other matters, cannot command obedience now. Nay, seek not to repel.”

“Stand off!” said Alice, in a commanding tone, the fears which had previously depressed her having vanished before the indignation inspired by the conduct of Octavius. — “On your life — on your soul, I conjure you, touch me not! Retire if you have one spark of honour or of manhood appertaining to you, nor dare to lay a ruffian hand upon the daughter of Lord Cobham!”

Octavius fell back, as if he had been transfixed by an arrow, at the mention of the name of Cobham; and he repeated the last words of Alice, while he strove to recall the features which he had admired when he encountered her on her journey to London.

“ Yes,” said Alice, in reply to the involuntary exclamation of surprise which had burst from the amazed Octavius, “ I am the daughter of Lord Cobham. Time has been you would not have dared to offer such rudeness to one of his family ; and a period may arrive, when, humbled as our house now is, we shall regain sufficient importance to make prudence respect its dignity, where honour fails. Detain me not ! ”

“ I must, by heaven ! Nay, spare that look of wrath, for now I will not merit it. I will detain thee but to humble myself. Oh ! while I look on thee and see with all the radiance of the softer sex, thy gallant father’s courage animating thy countenance, to attest that thou indeed art his, I know not how sufficiently to mark the contrition which surprises me. Why didst thou not confide in me before, and claim a brother’s care ? Dismiss, if thou canst, displeasure, but banish fear at all events, and view me

sincerely repentant; no longer the lawless aspirant to your love, but your firm protector."

"Deceive me not with fair words, uttered to cloak a foul purpose."

"Never doubt me, lady. I am no hypocrite. My sins are sufficient without adding dissimulation to the number. Had I known you were the brave Lord Cobham's daughter—had I known you were the sister of my friend, Edward Oldcastle, (I presume too much in calling him so,) no pilgrim, who on bare and bleeding feet approaches the shrine of his saint, renders more pure and reverential homage than I would have offered to you, in calamity and danger."

"If you speak with sincerity, as I am well inclined to believe, let me forth."

"That will I not, lady; unless you first assure me that you would have desired to leave your chamber had I never intruded; but I will withdraw myself. Forgive, forgive my late rashness. Much

do I desire to learn what sad vicissitudes have brought us thus together ; but now I will not withhold your eyes from sleep to hear of them.

“ In due season they shall be unfolded.”

“ It is sufficient ; and now, lovely sufferer, I withdraw. May blessed repose soothe the troubled spirit with forgetfulness of pain ! ”

“ And where will you abide till morning ? ”

“ I shall watch the chamber in which Alice rests ; still approaching it with as much religious awe, as the Persian feels whose duty it is to watch the entrance of the temple where the sacred fire which he regards as a divinity, is preserved from vulgar eyes.”

“ May I believe thee ? ”

“ Your doubt is the just, but the severe punishment of my late transgression ; but trust me, if there is truth in the heart of man, not only shall you experience no new offence from me, but not

even the shadow of danger shall approach you, if this arm retain its vigour."

"My thanks, nor mine alone," said Alice, "but those of my father and of Edward shall acknowledge your care."

"Already I am more than rewarded. That smile of virtuous joy through tears of unmerited woe, tells me that I am blessed with your confidence; and by this fair hand — shrink not from me now, I swear, that if your father and brother saw my heart, they would not hope to find in the world's wide range, a fitter guardian for their distant treasure!"

"I will believe you; and yet when I recall —"

"Spare me the humiliating recollection. If maddening passion carried me impetuously forward to a beauteous unknown object, I am not so devoid of feeling as to forget the respect due to virtue in misfortune."

While he spoke he respectfully kissed

her hand, and was about to retire, when Alice said —

“ Adieu; my fears are no more; my heart tells me that I may confide in your promises.”

“ Your heart, the seat of purity and truth, deceives you not in this. Rest as securely as if the brave Lord Cobham watched over his fondly beloved child. I shall pass a happy night, blessed in the consciousness that the poor atonement I could offer for my offence has been accepted. Fear nought while I am near you. Could the din of hostile armies interrupt her slumber, threatening vengeance and breathing death, till she beholds *my* mangled lifeless form, let Alice be assured, *for her* there is no danger.”

CHAP. XVI.

“ All of assent, who so can conceive,
“ Their noble king were glad to receive.
“ But for to tellen all the circumstances
“ Of every thing shewed in intent,
“ Noble devices, divers ordinances
“ Conveyed by Scripture with full great excellence,
“ All to declare I have not eloquence.
“ Wherefore, I pray, to all that it shall read,
“ For to correct as they see need.”

LIDGATE.

WE left Mr. Whittington, unwilling to add to the affliction of Edward, by communicating the unpleasant intelligence of which he had become possessed. It was in vain that the latter pressed his friend to make him acquainted with all that he had to tell, and assured him that the suspense in which he was kept by silence

under such circumstances, was more exquisitely painful than knowledge of the most fearful calamity. Mr. Whittington remained firm to his resolution, and some days elapsed before he imparted the melancholy tidings which had reached him, that John Huss was no more, and that Alice, separated from the Baron De Chlume, had been left alone, without the means of subsistence in France, at that moment the seat of the most terrible warfare.

Edward experienced no slight addition to his affliction at hearing this. Whittington endeavoured to suggest hopes to his friend, which he was not sanguine enough to entertain himself, and when in this way he had exhausted his ingenuity, he strove from time to time to divert the mind of Edward from the sorrows to which he seemed falling a prey, by bringing other matters under his consideration.

“Albeit,” said he, one day, when in the hope of diverting him from gloomy

rumination he had prevailed on Edward to be the companion of his walk, "Albeit, you do mourn — at which, I do not marvel, as if you were singled out from the rest of mankind for grief; yet shall you know that all this nation is even now enwrapped in woe, for doleful tidings which have arrived from France."

"I heard," Edward replied, "that the progress of our sovereign has nothing answered to the expectations of those lovers of war, and preachers of peace, that set him on this work."²

"But tidings late received, do make it known that he and his army are surrounded, and the accumulating troops of France, gathered together in such mighty strength, that all must presently yield themselves prisoners to the haughty foe. Wherefore, the nation is much depressed, concluding that soon they must be called upon to pay a vast ransom for the king's person."

“Doubtless, that will be felt severely!”

“I hope not by the general body; and truth to say, I am almost glad that this mischance has happened. Now I do think no other course is open for the king, but that which I would council him to take. Now, he *must* make resumption, and the priests who brought this woe upon the country, will pay for their misdoings; for he cannot choose but see that we have as good reason as ever our forefathers had to tell of the necessity of providing for the wants of the crown, and the “supportation” of his people in this way; and surely we may veritably go on as they did. *Pur ceo que la Corone del Roialme, Dengleterre, est grantement emblemissez, & anientiszez, per grandez et outrageouses dons, faits as diverse persones, si bien espirituelx comme temporelx des Terres ténements,* and other mighty benefits.”

“ Mean you to urge this ? ” Edward enquired, hardly knowing what he said, and not waiting for an answer.

“ Incontinently will I, and I much flatter myself that he, as did Richard Cœur de Lion, after his captivity, will now see that ‘ it is not in the power of the king to alienate ought appertaining to him, by which his state is to subsist, ’ and will thereupon do what shall be to the pleasure of God, the honour and the weal of this land, and comfort of the people. ”

Thus conversing, they proceeded from “ *the Way to Reading, by St. Giles’s in the Fields,* ” which was in 1415 as much in the fields as Hornsey is now. They proceeded by the meadow, then free from every sort of building, on which the street called Long Acre has since been built, and turning to the right, they passed over part of the ground which forms Drury Lane, and descended to Ivy Bridge,

in the Strand. This was a small erection thrown over a running water, (inferior in magnitude to Fleet Ditch,) which passed from north to south, and here made its way to the Thames. Mr. Whittington, determining to call on his brother Sir Richard, went to his house which stood in the Strand, about half a mile nearer Charing than Ivy Bridge. It was his intention to remain a few hours with his relation; but Sir Richard, who was too much connected with men in power, to wish for an intimacy with the son of a proscribed Lollard, excused himself from remaining at home, as he had an engagement for that morning, being expected to attend the swearing in of the new Lord Mayor. He received them courteously in a room which looked on an extensive garden in the rear of the house, beyond which it commanded the Convent Garden, now named Covent Garden, then enclosed with a wall, and extending from

the lane, by which Edward and his friend had passed into the Strand to St. Martin's church.

It was eleven o'clock, and Sir Richard had taken the precaution of dining before he left his home. His brother had intended to get to him in time to sit down with him, but being later than he had expected, he was not sorry to find the remains of an elegant dinner still on table. That which most particularly captivated the old gentleman was the appearance of part of a sea-hog, or porpus, which at that period enjoyed a reputation quite as high as salmon or turbot can pretend to now. A dish of seal's flesh stood near it, and besides roast beef, a peacock just served up, which the knight had not had time to attack, smoked on the well-supplied board, which was further garnished with custards, both cold and hot, together with a jug of ale, a flask of Gascony wine, and a bowl of Ipocras.

“ I trow, my worthy brother,” said Whittington, “ looked for some of his city compatriots to dine with him to-day, seeing he has provided so much more than might have sufficed for his own people. My appetite is somewhat keen, and being fond of fish I purposed asking for a baconed herring, as if I had been at home, but truly this sea-hog is more dainty fare. Wilt have a platter full? ’Tis passing good, and I perceive the sauce is that I like with dolphin, well stored with oysters.”

Edward declined eating any.

“ Take you some seal, then, which, after the porpus, is the most delicate fish that swims, which have good substance. These are luxuries we of the country seldom can enjoy, for if we get fish of the sea, or oysters, in Leicestershire, being so long journeying, they either gain a flavour which is not delicious, or lose that which should belong to them. Therefore, to taste such things a week newer

than we can have them brought to us from London, is no mean treat, but even as good to me as a slice from one of my finest muttons, killed fresh from the pasture, is to my brother."

Pressed to eat by Mr. Whittington, Edward took a small part of the peacock. His friend made an excellent meal on the porpus, after which Whittington invited Edward to accompany him to Sir Richard's *skittle-court*.

The modern medical proverb, "After dinner rest awhile," had not then gained much credit, and Whittington having eaten with good appetite, conceived a little exercise to be absolutely necessary for the preservation of health. He, therefore, on finishing his flask of Gascony, courted the amusement of *skittles*, which at that period was not discountenanced by those who prided themselves on polite accomplishments.

But the game of skittles, as then played, differed essentially from that

which constitutes the amusement of the industrious classes of the present day. The skittle-court of Sir Richard, was a square enclosure, in the centre of which a large frame of the same shape was laid down. About a foot within this frame, the pins were ranged in three rows. These, ludicrous as it must sound, represented the three branches of the British constitution, king, lords, and commons. Such were the names given to the skittles, and in knocking them down, they counted according to their rank. The king pin still retains its name and station, and part but not all of its original glory in the modern game. It stood in the centre, decorated with the representation of a crown, and was three inches taller than the four corner skittles, nobles as they were called, which surpassed in the same degree the commons, or skittles placed at the edge of the frame between the corners. The nobles had small round

heads — the commons lacking such distinction. Whenever the king fell the player scored five. Each noble contributed three towards his game; a commoner gave but two.

“ I judge,” said the brother of the proprietor, “ you have been too much occupied with other studies to be a proficient in the healthful game of skittles. But I will soon instruct you. Throw not up to the skittles, but let your bowl fall on the outer frame, and bound forward to one of the nobles, which shall carry the king, and, perchance, one or more of the commons; but I can tell you all in two goodly verses which I made when I was young, and which both for sound and sense, were thought not unworthy of being oft rehearsed.

“ Bowl strong, the frame withouten hit, and miss
the same within;

“ The king, four lords, and commons four, the
game will quickly bring.”

He then commenced, and his first

throw brought him thirteen, as the king, two lords, and one commoner bowed "beneath his sturdy stroke." This success, reminding him of his youthful dexterity, raised the old gentleman's spirits, if it did not contribute to increase his health, and he soon triumphed over his heedless adversary, who found it no easy task to fall in with the humour of his eccentric friend, so far as to take a part in this diversion.

Leaving the alderman's house they walked to Ludgate, and having passed within the city wall, Mr. Whittington, who had by this time exhausted himself on political subjects, and consoled himself for all the defeats and disgrace which his country was expected to sustain, by reminding Edward that he had predicted every thing that was about to happen, and by assuring him that his favourite act of resumption would set every thing right again, now mounted his other

hobby, and invited Edward to contemplate the mighty changes which had taken place in the city of London.

Having entered the area on which the ancient cathedral church of St. Paul stood, he turned from the episcopal palace in the western corner, to the cemetery called, *Pardon Church Haw*, on which a chapel had been built in the time of king Stephen, but which having fallen much to decay, had recently been taken down to make way for a new erection. The Dean of St. Paul's, Thomas Moore, had caused a new chapel to be raised on the scite of the old one, and to this and the elegant cloister with which he had surrounded it, Mr. Whittington now directed the attention of Edward.

“So many things of late have distracted my attention,” he said, “that I have hardly remarked on this fair edifice, which has been finished since I came to the metropolis with you. Look

round these cloisters, and behold how choicely they are embellished with *the dance of death*. Truly this is a meet representation for a burial place. See you there how the grim spectre assaileth the gay gallant, who thought himself right well defended by a flask of sack from all calamity. Then behold the glutton, who in vain prayeth that the fearful dart shall be stayed from him, while that he finisheth his *peacock pye*. The fair dame before her *polished mirror of purest metal*, on which no spot of rust might in any case be endured, for it would hide so much of her comely flesh, falleth in her youth; while the grim great grandmother in eighty years hath not acquired cunning sufficient to elude his swift pursuit. The beggar cannot crouch so low but he is found out; and further on, mark you the king with crown on head, sceptre in hand, and sword by side; he cannot with all his armies at his back, make

such show of stomach, as shall scare the destroyer from advancing.”

“The representation I must own is veritable.”

“Yes,” said Whittington, “I find it so ; wherefore, since death must overtake us all, why mourn we for those of our friends who fall to him first, seeing that that hath only occurred to them which shall speedily happen to us also, and which we ever knew must befall all who live.”

“The argument is good, but the feeling to which it is opposed will triumph still. We must mourn the beloved dead, and with especial emphasis of woe, when by their being untimely withdrawn the hapless living are exposed to misery.”

“’Tis even so, Edward ; but thy mind, like the hunted hare, still seeketh its old retreat, which I would fain detach thee from ; and loveth to brood on the grief which reflection cannot mitigate. Come, let us forward into the chapel.”

Edward walked where his friend de-

sired to take him. Here he pointed out what appeared to him an object of vast interest. This was an epitaph which he had prepared for the accommodation of his brother Sir Richard Whittington, but which being rendered useless for a time by the knight's recovery, the provident brother had bestowed it on his friend Haggerston, who had died very fortunately just in time to have it placed in the new chapel to his memory. It ran thus : —

“ I p'ye the crysten man that hath g'ce to see this
“ To p'ye for the soulls of them that here buried is,
“ And remember that in Cryst we be bretherne,
“ The wich hath commanded ev'ry man to p'ye for
 other ;
“ This sayth Stephen Haggerston and Joan his wyf,
“ Here wrapped in claye,
“ Abiding the mercy of Almighty God till domes-
 day.”

But it was in vain that Mr. Whittington tasked anew the powers of his retentive memory, to recal the objects which had distinguished the former edifice, and to point out the difference between that

and the new chapel. All that under other circumstances would have been curious and interesting, passed unregarded before Edward — his thoughts could only rest on the dangers to which Alice was exposed, — on the sufferings of Matilda — and on the melancholy exile to which his father was still doomed.

Mr. Whittington found it vain to attempt amusing a mind so severely oppressed by affliction, and at last gave up the idea. He left *Pardon Church Hawe*, and was returning with his companion towards Ludgate, when the shouts of an immense crowd rang through the air. Both were much surprised at what they heard, and what they saw, but they soon learned partly from the joyous exclamations of the advancing throng, and partly from the answers given to questions put to some of the multitude by Mr. Whittington, that the new Lord Mayor, Sir Nicholas Wotton, while on horseback and on his way to qualify him-

self according to law for that office to which he had been appointed by his fellow citizens, had met one of the king's messengers with a letter, communicating the unexpected news, that the English sovereign had triumphantly extricated himself from the difficulties which had encompassed him, by a gloriously complete victory over the enemy, into whose power it had been supposed he had thrown himself.

Fatal as this intelligence might seem to the Act of Resumption desired by Mr. Whittington, he was too much of an Englishman to listen to the tidings of victory, and a victory like that of Agincourt, without emotion. His cries of exultation were united to those of the populace, as the Lord Mayor passed, with the Lord High Chancellor of England on his right, and the Bishop of Winchester on his left, to celebrate, in the cathedral of the metropolis, the happy intelligence of the day by a solemn *Te Deum*.

When this scene terminated, Whittington insisted that Edward, independent of the general joy, ought to derive much comfort from the turn which things had taken, inasmuch as it could not fail to improve the prospects of Alice, since it must of necessity remove many of the difficulties previously interposed to her return through France to England.

So sanguine was he on this head, that when it was known that the king had landed at Dover, he could hardly persuade himself that Alice would not be found in the gay train, expected to attend the monarch in his progress through the city. Vain as the hope must appear, this furnished a pretext which excused the desire he felt to behold a memorable pageant. Under cover of this, he forced Edward to accompany him to the city, on the day the triumphant monarch was to pass through it. He was accommodated on this occasion through the influence of Sir Richard with an eligible situation

in the house of one of his friends, immediately opposite the great conduit in Cheap.

Though the month of November was now considerably advanced, a fair and cloudless day gladdened the hearts of the expectant thousands, who assembled to greet their returning monarch. The Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs, the Aldermen, and a train of more than three hundred opulent citizens, went in procession to meet the king at Blackheath. For a week before, the most extensive preparations had been made to give all possible effect and splendour to the triumph. Some houses were wholly fronted with scarlet cloth, ornamented in different parts with fancifully worked wreaths, each of which was left to serve as a window to those within, through which they might behold the spectacle, and manifest their own enthusiasm. Others were decorated with tapestry, on which the triumphs of Edward the Third were repre-

sented, and some by extraordinary activity had obtained paintings of the scenes in which the reigning monarch had acted a conspicuous part, connected with the battle of Agincourt.

“Of a truth,” said Mr. Whittington, “this reminds me well of some of the merry days which were not uncommon in my youth. Truly our English genius can furnish forth noble devices to celebrate a victory. See you there, my young master, is not yonder a right good mystery, the which doth unite Scripture with the history of this famous island, for the edification of all beholders?”

While speaking he pointed to a sort of rehearsal which was then taking place, in which an enormous giant was seen scornfully to raise his vast club, on which appeared the *fleurs de lis* of France, to strike to the earth a handsome youth, who, under the standard of St. George, advanced for England with a sling and a stone, to attack, in the character of

David, the threatening monster. The giant had been constructed on so bold a scale, that it was feared the stage would not be sufficient to hold him when he fell before his conqueror; and the matter now to be arranged was the position in which it would be advisable that he should stand, so as to guard against a double downfall, which would occasion the actor some inconvenience, and mar the spectacle intended to be exhibited. Further on, a vast tablet was displayed, on which the following verses were inscribed —

“ — raptum nobis aut redde Britannis

“ Aut ferrum expectes, ultrices insuper ignes.”

These were then reported to have been used by the English king, at the close of a conference with the French ambassadors, immediately before the commencement of the war, and were thought to prove that a spirit of prophecy might be counted among the other great qualities of the victorious Henry.

Another scaffold had been raised, on which a groupe of children appeared, clothed in white, with wings attached to their shoulders. It was not deemed at all profane for an actor in a pageant, or mystery, to undertake the personification of the Almighty. In this place, elevated on a golden throne, a venerable looking personage, with a long white beard, was seen presiding over angels as the Deity; and on either hand, fuller-sized angels than those which have been mentioned appeared, representing *Fame* and *Victory*, with trumpets in their hands, prepared to sound the glories of the approaching hero.

At noon the expectant crowds were refreshed with tidings that the cavalcade approached. A hundred youths, representing the bachelors of London, led the way, wearing black bonnets, with doublets and hose of the same colour, with sky-blue mandilions, or jackets,

ornamented with silver-gilt lace. These preceded the procession, but were not considered to form a part of it. The clergy of the city had met the king at St. Thomas of Watering, and made a show of taking their place in the rear. The piety of Henry would by no means permit this, and he insisted that their holy body should precede. The archbishop, the abbot, and monks of Canterbury, had received the king with great pomp and solemnity in that city. Chicheley had accompanied him thence to London, and now arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, took his place in the pageant as head of the church. He wished to advance with the serenity of pious gratitude, but when he looked round at the superb scene in which he was an actor, and heard the loud acclamations of the countless thousands brought together to behold it, he could not suppress the exultation which he felt, at having, by his influence over the king, been the main

cause of events so important, and of a triumph so brilliant.

The Bishops of Bath and Hereford, who had newly returned from Constance, were near him; and these, like himself and the other prelates who were present, had arrayed themselves for the occasion in all that ecclesiastical magnificence could supply, to enhance the grandeur of the show. The superbly embellished crozier, vied with the lustre of the dazzling mitre. Incense flamed from the massy censers; costly chalices met the eye at every step; and besides these, a collection of rare objects, held to be above all price, were carried with appropriate state and reverence, as relics of departed saints. One priest had the glory of bearing a lock of *John the Baptist's* hair, cut from the head as it lay in the charger, after it had been carried out from the hall in which it was displayed to the inhuman Herod: another sustained one of the stones by which

St. Stephen had perished, which striking him on the temple, was said to have terminated the sufferings of the martyr. Relics of seventy other saints, all equally valuable, came in succession; the whole being followed by a splendid cabinet, which was made particularly prominent in the march, and which was believed to contain a sample of the true wood of the cross, on which the Saviour suffered at Calvary. This invaluable morsel was gained from the Saracens by negociation. From the arts to which they had been known to resort, some doubts of its identity had at one period got abroad; but they were all happily removed, by the numerous miracles performed through its efficacy, which satisfied those who were held to be the most competent judges in such matters, that the infidels, to their other crimes, had not added the unpardonable sin of palming on their Christian friends an impostor splinter. It was accordingly treated with the

reverence considered to be due to it, being elegantly set in gold, and surrounded with pearls and precious stones. The lord mayor, aldermen, and citizens, who had joined the king at Blackheath, now appeared. The mayor was attired in crimson velvet, turned up with fur, and the scarlet dresses of the aldermen, coming immediately after the clerical body, formed a very imposing spectacle. Not the least interesting part of their share of the pageant, was furnished by the bearers of two large substantial and richly-embossed gold basins. In each of these five hundred marks had been placed, which, with the basins, had been voted as a present to the king, to signify the joy of the corporation at his happy return.

The alien merchants, resident in England, dressed in the costume of the several nations to which they belonged, came next.

The officers who had distinguished

themselves at Agincourt, were then seen, and now the king himself was momentarily expected. It had been reported that his helmet would be carried before him, in the same battered and unshapen state in which it was left when the battle ended. But Henry, considering that this would serve to evince a vain glorious disposition, had given positive instructions that it should not be used in the cavalcade. In place of it immediately before him, he caused a banner to be carried, inscribed "*Non nobis Domine, non nobis sed nomini, tuo da gloriam.*" On a white courser superbly caparisoned, Henry advanced with an air of modest reserve, bowing from time to time in return for the deafening shouts which rent the air in all directions. The king passed the conduit, which was decorated with banners and streamers, and at that moment *Fame* and *Victory* blew their loudest blasts, and the smaller angels commenced their hymns of praise, to

which the representative of the Deity appeared to listen with great complacency, while he bestowed his most benignant smile on the passing monarch. It was known that the conduit was to run with several sorts of wine, and those who had shouted themselves thirsty, thought the time arrived at which it ought to flow, and were loud in their demands that this should take place in honour of the king's arrival at that spot. But the managers of this part of the business wisely considered that it would be likely to produce confusion, if done while much of the procession had yet to pass, and therefore declined compliance with the wishes of the crowd, who instead of being treated with draughts of wine, were regaled with the *killing of Goliath*. *David* threw the stone with great precision, and the giant died with a very good grace, but his club descending rather abruptly on the great toe of the conqueror, caused the Jewish monarch

to entertain himself and the spectators with a dancing step or two which he had not rehearsed, before he proceeded to complete his performance by the decollation of the vanquished Philistine.

But the most splendid feature of the pageant was furnished by an arch, thrown completely across the road, at the expense of the corporation of the city. In the centre was a wide space, through which the cavalcade was to move; and on each side a passage for the crowd of spectators. A rail had been erected on each side of the way from Fenchurch to the western end of Cheap, within which the citizens had stationed themselves. The arch was surmounted with battlements, in the centre of which was a castle of jasper green. This was rudely approached with sword and fire, by a grim and most uncouth figure, whose garments were stained with blood, while a wreath of vipers decorated his head. He was intended to represent

Discord, who, supported by *Rebellion*, *Heresy*, *Falsehood*, and *Rancour*, the last wearing the form of a dragon, proposed to overthrow that goodly fabric the castle, and raze it to the ground. To oppose this formidable host, *Sapience*, wearing the appearance of venerable age, and habited in white to indicate the purity of his intentions, was seen arming *Loyalty* with a battle-axe, *Religion*, with the cross and Bible, *Truth* with a light, and *Valour* with the helmet and spear of *Saint George*. The contest was fierce, but short. *Discord* retreated at the advance of *Sapience*, *Rebellion* perished under the weapon of *Loyalty*, *Heresy* was struck to the earth, and bound hand and foot by *Religion*. *Falsehood* fell dead before the brightly beaming light of *Truth*, and *Rancour*, overthrown at the first onset with the representative of *Saint George*, by horrible howlings confessed the resistless prowess of the British Champion. Exulting in

the discomfiture of the vanquished, the *City of London*, personified by a comely matron, advanced with a train of virgins, to celebrate the triumph of *Sapience*, and to bestow on him the laurel of victory. He modestly declined wearing it himself, but pointed to the monarch, as the individual to whom it belonged, and the *City of London*, at once recognizing the justice of this decision, failed not to forward it to grace the brow of Henry, at the same time accosting him in these words:—

“Sovreegn Lord and Noble King, thee beest welcome out of your realm of France, into this your blessed and famous realm of England, and in especial unto us your most notable City of London, we thanking Almighty God of his good and gracious atchieving so great triumphs, beseeching of his merciful grace to send you prosperity and many years, to the comfort of all your loving people, and the Citizens of London in especial.”

The train of this dignified personage then sung the following verses, which were rumoured to have been written by the poet Lidgate for the occasion :

- “ Sovreegn Lord welcome to your city,
- “ Welcome our joy and our heart’s pleasance,
- “ Welcome our gladness, welcome our suffiencce,
- “ Welcome, welcome, right welcome may you be !
- “ Singing to fore thy Royal Majesty,
- “ We say of heart, without variance,
- “ Sovreegn Lord welcome ; welcome our joy.
- “ Mayor, citizens, and all the commonalty,
- “ At your homecoming new out of France,
- “ By grace relieved of all their old grievance,
- “ Sing this day with great solemnity.”

The laurel crown was graciously received, placed on the brow of the king for a moment, in compliment to the donors, and then handed to an attendant.

Henry had interdicted his subjects from treating the French his prisoners with derision, by ballads sung in the streets or otherwise. Though wishing to appear pleased with all he saw to the eyes of his subjects, he from time to time found it necessary to explain to his cap-

tive, the Duke of Orleans, who rode near him, that his people wished to manifest joy at seeing him again, and by no means desired to give offence to others. The duke expressed gratitude for the consideration thus evinced, and pensively moved on with the Duke of Bourbon, to whom he appeared to communicate what had just been said by the king.

Immediately after these princes came the celebrated standard of the *oriflamme*. Its fame had extended far and wide, and all eyes rested with exulting admiration on so remarkable a trophy. The *oriflamme* was a banner formed of plain red taffata, and attached to a lance of the same colour, ornamented with gilding. To this, vast importance was attached, as it was said to have been a gift from Heaven direct to King Dagobert. An ensign so venerable from its antiquity, so sacred from its origin, was entrusted to no common hand, when it accompanied the French armies to bat-

tle. He to whom it was last confided, the Sieur de Bacqueville, had proved himself not unworthy of the important charge, and had gallantly laid down his life in its defence. The Counts D'Eu, De Vendosme, De Richemont, and other officers of rank followed. But the public attention was directed especially towards the Count de Richemont. He had been severely wounded, and left for dead. The humane care of Henry, to whom he had been borne, proved the means of restoring him. On this account he was in some degree an object of interest, but he was still more so on another. It had been predicted, so ran the rumour, by no less a personage than the infallible *Merlin*, that the English might be conquered by a prince named Arthur, born in *Armoric Britain*, and carrying a wild boar for his ensign. The name of the count was Arthur, he was born in that province, and owned the device indicated as that of

the future conqueror of England. The captured ensign, and blood-stained coat-armour of the count, were now borne aloft in triumph, and numbering him with the prisoners, the multitude exulted in the belief that English valour had foiled Merlin, and baffled even the hostility of fate.

A crowd of prisoners of inferior rank followed, and the procession was closed by a strong body of English troops, who had fought in the late battle. As these passed the conduit, the promised streams of wine began to flow, and they, in common with the populace, partook of the treat which unsparing liberality had provided, amidst the continued shouts of their fellow countrymen. Of course in the end, the struggle for participation degenerated into a riotous scramble, and more was wasted than was drunk, which perhaps after all, was not to be regretted.

“ Well,” said Whittington, “ I confess that this was a pageant worth beholding.

War, could we always be sure of such results, would not be other than desirable.”

“ Sir,” replied Edward, “ I differ from you much. Reflect at what an expense this spectacle has been purchased ; and tell me what permanent good may be hoped from it. Had I been born a king, methinks not the conquest of all France would have seemed to me an equivalent for the bloodshed which has taken place ; nay, not to buy a world of ravaged land, would I consent to such a fearful waste of gallant life, as lately marred the plain of Agincourt. Conquest and glory !— what are ye ?— Proud names ! but are ye worthy of the price that kings so gaily pay to gain you ! ”

Mr. Whittington changed the subject, to express regret at not having seen Alice among the numbers that followed in the king’s train. Edward was stating that this occasioned him neither disappointment nor surprise, when he saw a man whom he

knew to be in the service of Sir Thomas Venables. He accosted him, but derived small consolation from the information he was enabled to supply, as it merely came to this: that the knight had actually carried his threat into effect; and that Matilda was at that moment immured in the convent of Black Nuns, which it was her father's resolution she should never leave, but to marry Octavius.

CHAP. XVII.

“ When friendship’s honest vows we breathe,
“ They need not flow from roseate bowers ;
“ And if affection twines the wreath,
“ No matter where she culls the flowers.”

GRATTAN.

WHILE these proceedings took place in England, Alice continued to reside in the house of De Marle, who now, recovered from his wound, manifested for her, (still regarding her as one of his own sex,) all the kindness and consideration which had formerly marked his conduct, animated by the liveliest gratitude for the aid which she had attempted to supply while his life was in danger.

When King Henry passed over to England, the storms which prevailed, had

done some mischief, and exposed many of his soldiers to the most imminent danger. This was pressed on the attention of Alice, by the young Frenchman, who earnestly insisted that she should not think of crossing the seas during the winter. Anxious to rejoin her brother, and impatient of the disguise which she continued to wear, Alice was unwilling to yield to these representations; but the strenuous opposition which he made to her departure, and the obstacles which he represented as lying in the way, compelled acquiescence. Octavius was silent on the discovery which he had made, but from that moment his carriage towards her was materially changed. He charged himself with the duty of apprizing her brother of her safety; and though careful not to betray her secret, was unremitting in his attentions. If Alice ever walked, he was anxious to be her companion, and no moments were so delicious as those in which, alone with

her, he could converse freely on the situation of her family, and on his own prospects. A slight injury which he had received from a spent arrow, had enabled him to account to his father for delaying his return to England. This had long since been perfectly healed, yet he spoke not of departing. He could not conceal from himself that it was the interest which he took in the affairs of Alice that detained him, but he believed at first it was only sympathy for distress that made him reluctant to leave her surrounded by foreigners. It was not in his power to answer the cogent arguments urged by De Marle in favour of her stay, and had it been different, he would have scrupled to do so. While she remained there, he could have frequent access to her presence; but he foresaw that, in England, he should rarely enjoy that which had now become a luxury,—her society, and all the once fondly recollected charms of Matilda, faded on his mental view,

while he gazed on the present beauty of Alice.

He could not long conceal from himself that compassion and admiration had introduced love into his heart, nor could he help, when alone with Alice, giving expression to the deep regret inspired by the very peculiar situation in which he found himself. He lamented that he had not known her before he saw Matilda, and before he had signified to his father, as well as to Sir Thomas, his readiness to comply with their anxious wishes.

“Thrice happy!” he would exclaim, “had your worth been earlier known to me! I had not then assured the Earl of my readiness to yield obedience to his will, and induced him to place himself in a situation which makes my union with Matilda almost essential to his existence.”

Alice sighed.

“Does Alice sigh?” he enquired with tenderness. “And is it for me? — am I

the cause of the emotion which I now witness?"

"Undoubtedly you are. —I —"

"Indeed! How proudly wretched is my fate! Under other circumstances I know not the earthly good I would not barter for the happiness of being dear to you."

"Of this no more. You mistake me. I was about to say," Alice continued, "that I sighed for the grief of which you are the cause to my ill-fated brother."

"There again," he remarked, "is an aggravation of my sorrow. Denied the joy of offering my hand where my heart fondly inclines, I am unhappily doomed to be the cause of added affliction, where I would lay down my life to impart happiness."

"I am aware that you are partly the involuntary cause of that deep sorrow which Edward feels on beholding you a suitor to Matilda, but for yourself, you

are surely fortunate, being soon to lead that far-famed beauty to the altar."

"Know you not, Alice, that the beauty to which all the rest of the world do homage, may still fail to satisfy the wayward eye of a lover?"

"But this is not your case," Alice rejoined. "Even I, while unknown to you, have often heard you celebrate with ardour Matilda's unequalled attractions, and her peerless worth."

"I may not deny this, but then my attention had not rested on you. That Matilda has beauty, whoever hath seen her needs must confess — that she presents a lovely union of all the virtues and graces which are of highest account among women, I do most freely acknowledge; but there is not that nameless witchery in all of them, which captivates my heart where you are. I may not disparage her — I blame not the praises which even envy cannot withhold, but

this I feel, I can only admire Matilda ;
— I love Alice.”

Alice changed the conversation, but whenever opportunity served, Octavius failed not to recur to it. The most profound respect governed his attentions, and he spoke but the language of regret — regret that he might not cherish the hope of one day soliciting a return to his love, always regarding his projected union as that which was perfectly inevitable. He censured his own conduct for not returning to England, and determined to tear himself from the abode of Alice — but as often forgot his resolution, and still lingered in her presence.

His attention to Alice escaped not the notice of De Marle, who often joined them in their walks, when Octavius would gladly have dispensed with his courtesy. Alice remarked an air of mysterious uneasiness for which she knew not how to account, and when she questioned De

Marle as to its cause, he was resolutely silent, — but he continued ever kind, — ever on the alert to add to her comforts, and to meet, if possible, her wishes before they could be uttered.

Thus passed the winter. News arrived that the king of England was again preparing to invade France. Octavius blushed for the protracted stay he had made, and was now intent upon returning to his native country. There was no longer a pretext for deferring the departure of Alice, and Octavius claimed the privilege of escorting her to England, and of conducting her to the residence of her brother.

Little time was lost in making the preparations necessary for their departure. A vessel was about to leave Boulogne, in which it was agreed that they should pass to England. The day arrived on which they were to sail — Octavius was occupied in providing for the comfort of Alice in the ship, when De Marle found

her alone. He gazed on her as he had often done in pensive silence, and at length spoke : —

“ We must part — perhaps for ever, Alice !”

She started at finding that her disguise had not saved her from being recognised.

“ You are surprised,” he remarked, “ to find that you are known. Believe me, this is no new discovery that startles you. Grief, fatigue, and suffering, had so far changed you, that I knew you not on the day when we first met, but ere the second had closed, I ascertained that it was my felicity to be the protector of Alice. I dissembled, that I might spare you all embarrassment. For the same reason, I occupied myself in writing on that night when but one room was offered to both. To spare your delicacy I placed you near Madame D’Aumont, where I fondly hoped you might remain in safety, and secure from those shocks to which your sensibility might be exposed. Since

we were again thrown together, I have concealed my knowledge of your real character, that I might not subject your feelings to a momentary shock."

Alice could not repress the tear of gratitude for the noble forbearance and generous consideration of De Marle, while clasping his hand between her's she exclaimed — "Kindest of the kind!"

"I do confess," he went on, "that I should have presumed to act a different part under other circumstances. Had the hopes which I, in common with all my countrymen, entertained before the fatal day of Agincourt been realised, I should have returned to Madame D'Aumont, to claim the honour of becoming your protector for life. But after the disastrous issue of the battle, when I contemplated my ruined fortune and my conquered country, love, which once made me desire to see you mine, now but permitted me to pray that you might find happiness with another. I feared, too,"

he added, in a faltering voice, and then paused for some moments — “ I feared, too, that perhaps humbled as my nation has been, a French aspirant might be despised by an English beauty.”

“ Base were that heart,” exclaimed Alice, “ that could despise worth like yours, wherever found. It is not while those anxieties press on my drooping spirits, which now bind down my thoughts to fearful apprehension, that I can indulge the gay visions which receive the name of love; but never think an English heart, whatever be its joy for English triumph, can contemplate with scorn a gallant nation’s woe. Though the dispensations of Providence have now given you defeat, your valour has redeemed you from shame; and England has felt your prowess too often to think lightly of the foe, over whom she has chanced to prevail.”

“ Sweet comforter! Your words are balsam to a wounded bosom. I have

explained why I so long abstained from making you acquainted with the fact that you were known to me. Let me add, I could not bear the thought of seeing you depart never to return, without seizing this opportunity of proving to you that our dear lost friend, the virtuous Huss, erred when he supposed, as I know he did, that I was capable of entertaining one thought of you, which even he would have reprov'd. But the moment is now arriv'd when you must on board. Adieu, Alice. — May all the joys favour'd mortals can know in this life gaily conduct you through a happy old age, to the unalloy'd bliss of the next. Farewell : and if in the mad railings which too often provoke and follow hostility between our countries, you sometimes hear all merit denied to a native of France, do not you believe that a Frenchman, where he may not proffer love, is incapable of disinterested friendship.”

“ Fear not my memory, generous De

Marle ; but when reproaches like those which you have imagined, assail in your hearing the British name, remember me, and doubt not that an English bosom which has known French kindness, can glow with admiring gratitude.”

Octavius entered. He and De Marle took leave of each other, with mutual expressions of kindness. The senior De Marle loadeth both with his often-repeated thanks, and they embarked with a fair wind.

A few hours brought them to Dover harbour. On landing, they perceived an immense crowd on the beach, which the sentinels had much difficulty in repressing from the water's edge. It was quite impossible to penetrate the dense living mass, and they were compelled to remain with the soldiers. The shouts of the multitude announced the object of attraction to be then within view, and Octavius saw a gaily manned and fancifully decorated barge, approach

the shore, while the Duke of Gloucester, then constable of Dover Castle, wearing his steel corslet — his helmet — in short being armed, *cap a pie*, and surrounded by warriors prepared like himself for the fight, seemed ready to repel the visitors or invaders, whose superb though foreign costume was now distinctly seen. The barge steadily pursued its course till it grounded from the shallowness of the water. Two men then advanced with a broad board covered with crimson velvet, to form a bridge, from the edge of the barge to other planks, which had been laid to serve for a path up the beach. These were hastily ordered back by the Duke of Gloucester, who now rushed into the sea, drawing his sword as did all his attendants, while he addressed in the following terms the principal personage on board the barge :

“ Great emperor, we are appointed by the king, our mighty and puissant mas-

ter, to receive you with all honours befitting your imperial rank and exalted character, if that you come in peace, and peace be the intent of your coming; but, potent Sigismund, if you have sought the shores of England in quality of emperor, to exercise sovereign power, or claim authority within this realm, then be it known to you, the great king our master, the ruler of a free and gallant people, disdains dependance on any earthly monarch. Wherefore our swords, now drawn in his cause, shall vindicate his rightful sway, and defend that liberty which all his brave and loyal subjects claim, even to the last drop of our blood. Know then great sire, not you, nor one of that gallant company shall put his foot on this, our English soil — if that ye come in war, till ye have won your way by victory.”

Sigismund had been prepared for this ceremony — which was deemed most important to guard against the future

sovereignty of England, being questioned. The Earl of Warwick and several of the English nobility had waited on him at Calais, to acquaint him with the forms to be observed, and he had had time to get quite perfect in his part. He replied with all needful solemnity, but with most gracious courtesy —

“ My lord duke, and you brave noblemen of famous England, I greet you well, and come not now to put your well approved valour to the test, but I do come in all friendship to your mighty king, my well-beloved brother, to negotiate for peace between him and the king of France ; and no authority claim I, or will I seek to exercise, in this fair realm, his by undoubted right under Heaven ; so sheath your swords, and let me be your friend.”

That moment every warlike demonstration was at an end ; loud acclamations resounded from the beach, and the numerous boats which had

put out on this great occasion. The Emperor Sigismund availed himself of the accommodation provided for him, and stepped on English ground. He was about forty-five years of age, of tall stature and graceful form. He wore his hair curling, and his beard long, according to the fashion of those times, and there was an easy majesty in his manner, which every one regarded as happily suited to his rank. The instant his noble and commanding figure was seen, the shouts of the expectant multitude were renewed. He was attended by the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Milan, the Marquises of Ferrara, of Mantua, of Monferrat, and many other German and Italian nobles. The clamour of applause when they landed was deafening and enthusiastic, the joy universal. Sigismund appeared much affected by the welcome he received; he bowed and smiled with a degree of affability that passed with the many for be-

nevolence. But Alice gazing on the potentate who had basely given the virtuous Huss to death, after perfidiously assuring him of protection, could only see in his present look of kindness proof of the most detestable hypocrisy. A degree of resentment unknown to her gentleness before, swelled her bosom, while her eyes were fixed on those which had calmly witnessed the persecution of her lost protector, and the lively recollection of the martyr's woes produced involuntary tears. There was a peculiar expression in her countenance which had caught the Emperor's attention. He saw her tears, and a fit opportunity for a display of his imperial tenderness seemed to offer. He directed one of his attendants to enquire of the youth he had remarked, what made him an exception to the general joy. Alice at first declined giving an answer, but being pressed to do so, and assured that having been noticed by the emperor, she had only to

name the cause of her grief, to have it removed.

“ O no — no — ” she replied, no longer mistress of herself, — “ that is beyond an emperor’s power. He could betray John Huss to death, but he cannot recall him to life.”

The nobleman who had accosted her was confounded at receiving this answer. The listening Sigismund had heard it, and waited not for a report. For a moment he seemed to shrink within himself, as if the martyr had started from his grave to appal him; but the next saw his confusion give way to a glance of rage. Then, remembering the part he had to act in England, he endeavoured to forget the incident which had ruffled him, and with all the adroitness of an accomplished actor, he recalled the smile of imperial condescension.

CHAP. XVIII.

“ Fixed in astonishment, I gaze upon thee !
“ Like one just blasted by a stroke from Heaven,
“ Who pants for breath, and stiffens, yet alive.”

ADDISON.

ALICE now resumed the attire of her sex, and proceeded to London. It was on a Sunday when they arrived, and the first care of Octavius was to seek Paternoster Row. There, Edward had directed application to be made for news of him. Having gained information respecting his present abode, they passed through St. Paul's Church-yard, where a large concourse of people had assembled near the *Cross*. This stood near the side of the church, and presented to the view a pulpit, in the open air, covered

with lead, with stone steps leading to it, from which sermons were commonly preached on the morning of the Sabbath, and various *cursings*, which were demanded on certain solemn occasions, were uttered from this elevation. It was now in a ruined state, so that it could with difficulty be mounted, and preparations were making to repair or rebuild it. In rainy weather, as it was found inconvenient to curse, or to preach, exposed to the elements, it was common for the officiating priest to fly to a shelter, presented by what were called the *Shrowds*, by the side of the church; and here it was that the service was to be performed on the day when Alice and Octavius chanced to be present.

On their way, they had believed some whom they met repeated the name of Lord Cobham. Octavius endeavoured to persuade both Alice and himself, that they were deceived by similar sounds. Both, however, were

soon convinced that the name was actually uttered, and Alice had the affliction to hear one report to another, that Lord Cobham had been taken in the house of a countryman near St. Albans. Overwhelmed with dismay, she had nearly sunk to the earth, but Octavius sustained and encouraged her to hope that the rumour was unfounded. He had soon to perform the pleasing task of giving her a positive assurance that it was so. A few books that had belonged to Lord Cobham had been found near St. Albans, and some missals, in which the pictures of the Saints and of the Virgin Mary had been mangled and defaced, had been discovered with them. These were sent by the Abbot of St. Albans to the king, who commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury to cause them to be exhibited at St. Paul's Cross, as proofs of the mad fury of the Lollards. This was accordingly done, and the display of the injured missals—a

sermon against such impiety, with the ceremony of cursing those who sanctioned it, produced the numerous attendance which they had witnessed in the church-yard.

Alice was soon conducted to *the way to Reading*.

It was with sincere pleasure that Edward saw his sister again. He was truly grateful to Octavius for the generous anxiety which he had manifested for her welfare, from the moment that he knew her. Mr. Whittington insisted that Alice should again reside with him. Edward consented and Octavius entreated and obtained permission to enquire after her welfare, when he should travel that road. He lingered, reluctant to lose sight of Alice; while Edward, with eyes fixed on him, mournfully reflected on the severe trial to which his return must subject Matilda. He remembered the former declaration of his rival, and ventured to remind him of his promise,

that no constraint should be put on the daughter of Sir Thomas Venables.

“The same sentiments animate me still,” was the reply; “and truly, Ned, you have not more to fear from me now, than you had formerly. Then I coveted the beauty of Matilda, which charmed my eye, though as I have found since more acquainted with your lovely sister, it did not very much enthral my heart. Now pledged to my father to become her husband, although prepared to do so, I shall still regret that my fortune denied me the felicity of relinquishing Matilda, admirable as all must own she is, to aspire to the hand of Alice.”

Edward replied not, but his looks indicated that the words of Octavius made no slight impression on his mind.

“Well,” cried the latter, “it is all in vain; we must not repine. I must to Sir Thomas, and act my part. Were good fortune to return to you — but for my father, who will totter on the verge

of ruin if this match be not completed, you should have my best wishes for carrying Matilda. But this cannot be — I am bound to wed her, and I will not let her complain of cold insensibility to her worth on the part of her husband.”

Octavius tore himself away before Edward could reply. A thousand confused thoughts distracted the latter. An idea flitted across his brain, that Matilda might be enabled to escape from the convent, and Octavius prevailed upon to favour her liberation. But numerous difficulties presented themselves to his imagination; and when he reflected that though Octavius felt not that ardent passion for Matilda which he once understood him to have conceived, he retained his former intention to marry; when these considerations occurred to him, he could derive no consolation from what he had just heard.

Edward was summoned to Wales by a message from his father. He hastened

to obey the call ; and Mr. Whittington, who had now completed his preparations for proposing an act of resumption, when parliament should meet, rejoiced in the prospect of being accompanied by him and Alice to Leicestershire. There they arrived in due time. Edward passed on with little delay towards Flintshire. Some weeks elapsed from this period, before Mr. Whittington had ceased to receive the congratulations of his friends on the happy termination of his travels ; and before he could again resume his old amusements. He rejoiced at having regained Alice, and her days now passed with a degree of tranquillity which she had not known since Huss first entertained the idea of repairing to Constance. She often dwelt with admiration and regret on the virtues and the fate of the virtuous Bohemian ; and recollections, not less interesting, and regrets not less lively, would sometimes come over her, when she thought of the absent De Marle.

Octavius returned to France, with the army under the Duke of Bedford. This afforded Matilda a respite from the remonstrances and intreaties which had pursued her, even in the convent. The year had nearly closed before he again arrived in England. It was at this period that Lord Cobham determined on a journey to Lutterworth, once more to behold his long lost daughter. The shortness of the days presented a considerable inducement to one who could only venture to travel in darkness. Edward had become so familiar with every part of the road, that the difficulties attendant on this undertaking were infinitely diminished; and baffled in all his efforts to get sight or news of Matilda, he hastened to court the only solace remaining to him — that of contributing to the happiness of his father and his sister.

Expecting his arrival, Mr. Whittington one afternoon, heard some person

approach by the private entrance. He joyfully rose, expecting to see Lord Cobham enter. This hope was not realized, but Octavius presented himself. Though his interest appeared so diametrically opposite to that of Edward Oldcastle, the frankness and benevolence of his character had caused him to be ranked among the confidential friends of Mr. Whittington; and he now availed himself of this circumstance, to make his appearance at the door by which John Huss had formerly entered.

Unbounded joy sparkled in his eyes, while he replied to the salutations which he received. He approached Alice with an air of irrestrainable gaiety, but with tender respect; and, expressing the delight he felt at beholding her in good health, there was a rapturous exultation in his manner that announced an unexpected change in his fortunes.

“ I know not, my Alice, so I venture to call you, what reception you will con-

descend to give," he said, "to the news which I have now the happiness to impart; but, O! if the intelligence shall be grateful to you, my felicity will be complete."

Alice directed a look of enquiring surprise at the speaker.

"You know," continued Octavius, "that, bound by the pledge which I had given to my father, I dared not think but of fulfilling the engagements into which I had rashly entered. I could not consign my father to poverty by acting in opposition to his wishes. Such considerations doomed me to be the rival of your brother, and precluded me from offering you that heart which your worth and beauty had made your own. May I hope that you will learn with satisfaction, that I am now free to offer my hand where my inclinations lead me. I come to solicit the honour and the happiness of becoming your protector for life."

"How!" exclaimed Whittington, "is

the match between you and the daughter of Sir Thomas Venables broken off?"

"I am no longer urged to wed a rich heiress, by the necessitous condition of my father. On my way hither — for I was determined to see Alice once more, I met a messenger from my father. He gave me a letter, and then ran away from fear, seeing that once, I being in college, when he did bring me a reproving scroll from the proctor, I made him eat it for his pains. I opened it, and then chased the varlet; but not to bid him make a meal of this, as you shall judge."

He then read the following letter:

"Marvell and rejoice, my Octavius, for thy father's advancement. A mighty service rendered to the nation by me hath given me much wealth already, and store of gold shall follow; so that now thou needest to heed charges no more, but may even do as thou listest, like the son of the richest peer of this realm. More can I not at this present, as to

the way by which this hath progressed, but come to me immediately, and know all. In the mean time, for that thy father is wealthy and that thou shalt rank high in the state, be happy.

“ POWIS.”

“ And know you the service of the which your father doth speak ?”

“ That do I not, for the fellow, — he who should have given the letter into my hand, did fall from his horse at Tamworth, and broke his leg, wherefore had not his brother, who was formerly one of my father’s domestics, chanced to live there, and taken upon himself to come on with it, I had not known so much as I know. This messenger’s man could nothing tell of what had chanced.”

“ Well,” said Whittington, “it may not matter much, seeing the main thing is certain, that much improvement hath taken place in the fortunes of thy house. That was the grand point to know, and that possessed, curiosity may rest for a

season, with some share of patience. Truly this is happy !”

“ Most happy, if the blushing Alice will deign to give assurance that the hope I fondly cherish shall not be entertained in vain.”

Alice was unprepared for such an appeal. She was grateful for the past kindness of Octavius ; she esteemed him for his frankness and his generosity, but she had not thought of love.

“ Does Alice consent ? — Does she bless me with the sweet acknowledgement that I may without offence aspire to be her suitor.”

“ I—I—” said Alice, “ am a daughter and a sister. Others must be consulted before I can speak.”

“ Your silence I will take then for consent. Since you deny me not, my heart is full of sacred joy. Your brother yet shall wed Matilda. I will plead for him, and make Sir Thomas Venables confess that he has wronged him. Nay,

I will prove to the archbishop himself that his wrath has been ill bestowed, when turned against Edward Oldcastle. Oh! if your decision depends upon your brother's voice, I give to the winds my every doubt. Would that Edward were here this moment to give his consent! And — see — the wish no sooner formed than realised — this — this must be a blessed omen! By all my towering hopes of bliss he comes!”

Edward indeed entered at that moment; but his aspect ill accorded with the joy which in the first moment of recognition his presence inspired in the heart of Octavius. Pale, breathless, almost fainting — he seemed ready to expire with fatigue, while the sad expression of his countenance but too distinctly made it known, that bodily anguish was not the only affliction which he had to deplore.

All gathered round him in sorrow and alarm, impatient to know the cause of

his disorder, yet fearing to enquire. The ecstasy of Octavius resolved itself into commiseration, and with extended hand and sympathising looks he approached the ghastly visitor.

Edward started from his touch with the exclamation —

“What! Octavius here!”

“Why do you look so wildly round?” enquired Alice. “You seem as if some terrible alarm had seized you — as if some dreadful tale were now to be unfolded, which your tongue feared to utter.”

“I have, indeed, a dreadful tale to tell.”

“What mean you? — O speak! — tell me all. — My father — what of my father?”

“Alas!” cried Edward, wildly striking his bosom — “he is taken.”

An exclamation of anguish and surprise burst from the hearers.

“The reward offered for his apprehension has at length had its effect, and he has been basely betrayed.”

“Have mercy, Heaven!” was the sad exclamation of Alice, while she unconsciously reclined on Octavius.

“May endless curses be the lasting portion of the base hind!” — said Octavius.

“Amen — Amen!” added Edward, with solemn energy.

“Who?” demanded Octavius, “who is the low-born wretch? — the trafficker in blood?”

“No low-born man has done the deed. No starving beggar has purchased bread by infamy.”

“And is it possible that one above the very dregs of the rabble can have given the brave Lord Cobham to his enemies?”

“Sir,” replied Edward, “if you have not heard of it before, know that the betrayer is a man of high distinction.”

“Can it be possible!”

“Of ancient family.”

“Then tenfold shame fall on him,” exclaimed Octavius. “Be infamy his

portion in this world, and in the next —
O! God of justice — ”

“ Hold !” cried Edward, “ hear more ere you proceed.”

“ More needs not — Who is the reptile ?”

“ If you have to learn it — if indeed you are sincere — you will mourn to know it.”

“ If! — If — and why these injurious *ifs*? Do I come of a race so degraded, that you can expect instinctive meanness should teach me to speak of baseness with measured forbearance? Who, I ask, is the betrayer? — tell me the name the miscreant disgraces?”

“ Earl Powis !”

“ *My father!*” thundered Octavius in a transport of rage at the supposed insult.

“ ’Tis false. — ’Tis foulest calumny.”

“ Take back your words. — Earl Powis is as secure from calumny as he is now — rewarded as he has been for his vile services, — from poverty.”

As the sounds of reward and of services fell on the startled senses of Octavius, a sudden trembling seized him. The letter which had inspired so much joy occurred to his recollection. Still sustaining the fainting Alice, he made a motion with his hand, as to dispel a mist floating before his eyes. He staggered backward, and Alice must have fallen, had not Whittington received her in his arms. The blood receded from the cheek of Octavius — his eyes glared with a terrific lustre now on Alice, — now on Edward; — then, as the awful recollection of what he had just heard overwhelmed his disordered brain, they settled into a wild stare, and he remained fixed to the spot, a breathing but unconscious monument of grief, astonishment, and horror.

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