

clear voice, briefly addressed the immense audience. Master, scarcely less than Hilyard, of the popular kind of eloquence, which—short, plain, generous, and simple—cuts its way at once through the feelings to the policy, Warwick briefly but forcibly recapitulated to the commons the promises he had made to the captains; and as soon as they heard of taxes removed, the coinage reformed, the corn thrave abolished, the Woodvilles dismissed, and the earl recalled to power, the rebellion was at an end. They answered with a joyous shout his order to disperse and retire to their homes forthwith. But the indomitable Hilyard, ascending a small eminence, began his counter-agitation. The earl saw his robust form and waving hand—he saw the crowd sway towards him; and too well acquainted with mankind to suffer his address, he spurred to the spot, and turning to Marmaduke, said, in a loud voice, “Marmaduke Nevile, arrest that man in the king’s name!”

Marmaduke sprang from his steed, and laid his hand on Hilyard’s shoulder. Not one of the multitude stirred on behalf of their demagogue. As before the sun recede the stars, all lesser lights had died in the blaze of Warwick’s beloved name. Hilyard gripped his dagger, and struggled an instant; but when he saw the awe and apathy of the armed mob, a withering expression of disdain passed over his hardy face.

“Do ye suffer this?” he said. “Do ye suffer me, who have placed swords in your hands, to go forth in bonds, and to the death?”

“The stout earl wrongs no man,” said a single voice, and the populace echoed the word.

“Sir, then, I care not for life, since liberty is gone. I yield myself your prisoner.”

“A horse for my captive!” said Warwick, laughing

—“and hear me promise you, that he shall go unscathed in goods and in limbs. God wot, when Warwick and the people meet, no victim should be sacrificed! Hurrah for King Edward and fair England!”

He waved his plumed cap as he spoke, and within the walls of Olney was heard the shout that answered.

Slowly the earl and his scanty troop turned the rein: as he receded, the multitude broke up rapidly, and when the moon rose, that camp was a solitude! *

Such, for our nature is ever grander in the individual than the mass—such is the power of man above mankind!

CHAPTER IV

THE NORMAN EARL AND THE SAXON DEMAGOGUE CONFER

On leaving the camp, Warwick rode in advance of his train, and his countenance was serious and full of thought. At length, as a turn in the road hid the little band from the view of the rebels, the earl motioned to Marmaduke to advance with his prisoner. The young Nevile then fell back, and Robin and Warwick rode breast to breast out of hearing of the rest.

“Master Hilyard, I am well content that my brother, when you fell into his hands, spared your life, out of gratitude for the favour you once showed to mine.”

* The dispersion of the rebels at Olney is forcibly narrated by a few sentences, graphic from their brief simplicity, in the “Pictorial History of England,” Book v., p. 104. “They (Warwick, &c.) repaired in a very friendly manner to Olney, where they found Edward in a most unhappy condition; his friends were dead or scattered, flying for their lives, or hiding themselves in remote places; the insurgents were almost upon him. *A word from Warwick sent the insurgents quietly back to the north.*”

"Your noble brother, my lord," answered Robin, drily—"is, perhaps, not aware of the service I once rendered you. Methinks he spared me rather, because, without me, an enterprise which has shaken the Woodvilles from their roots around the throne, and given back England to the Neviles, had been nipped in the bud!—Your brother is a deep thinker!"

"I grieve to hear thee speak thus of the Lord Montagu. I know that he hath wilier devices than become, in mine eyes, a well-born knight and a sincere man; but he loves his king, and his ends are juster than his means. Master Hilyard, enough of the past evil. Some months after the field of Hexham, I chanced to fall, when alone, amongst a band of roving and fierce Lancastrian outlaws. Thou, their leader, recognising the crest on my helm, and mindful of some slight indulgence once shown to thy strange notions of republican liberty, didst save me from the swords of thy followers: from that time I have sought in vain to mend thy fortunes. Thou hast rejected all mine offers, and I know well that thou hast lent thy service to the fatal cause of Lancaster. Many a time I might have given thee to the law, but gratitude for thy aid in the needful strait, and to speak sooth, my disdain of all individual efforts to restore a fallen house, made me turn my eyes from transgressions, which, once made known to the king, had placed thee beyond pardon. I see now that thou art a man of head and arm to bring great danger upon nations; and though this time Warwick bids thee escape and live,—if once more thou offend, know me only as the king's minister. The debt between us is now cancelled. Yonder lies the path that conducts to the forest. Farewell. Yet stay!—poverty may have led thee into treason."

"Poverty," interrupted Hilyard—"poverty, Lord Warwick, leads men to sympathise with the poor, and therefore I have done with riches." He paused, and his breast heaved. "Yet," he added, sadly, "now that I have seen the cowardice and ingratitude of men, my calling seems over, and my spirit crushed."

"Alas!" said Warwick, "whether man be rich or poor, ingratitude is the vice of men; and you, who have felt it from the mob, menace me with it from a king. But each must carve out his own way through this earth, without over care for applause or blame; and the tomb is the sole judge of mortal memory!"

Robin looked hard in the earl's face, which was dark and gloomy, as he thus spoke, and approaching nearer, he said—"Lord Warwick, I take from you liberty and life the more willingly, because a voice I cannot mistake tells me, and hath long told, that, sooner or later, time will bind us to each other. Unlike other nobles, you have owed your power not so much to lordship, land, and birth, and a king's smile, as to the love you have nobly won; you alone, true knight and princely Christian—you alone, in war, have spared the humble—you alone, stalwart and resistless champion, have directed your lance against your equals, and your order hath gone forth to the fierce of heart—'Never smite the commons!' In peace, you alone have stood up in your haughty parliament for just law or for gentle mercy; your castle hath had a board for the hungry, and a shelter for the houseless; your pride, which hath bearded kings and humbled upstarts, hath never had a taunt for the lowly; and therefore I—son of the people—in the people's name, bless you living, and sigh to ask whether a people's gratitude will mourn you dead! Beware Edward's false smile—beware Clarence's fickle

faith—beware Gloucester's inscrutable wile. Mark, the sun sets!—and while we speak, yon dark cloud gathers over your plumed head."

He pointed to the heavens as he ceased, and a low roll of gathering thunder seemed to answer his ominous warning. Without tarrying for the earl's answer, Hil-yard shook the reins of his steed, and disappeared in the winding of the lane through which he took his way.

CHAPTER V

WHAT FAITH EDWARD IV. PURPOSETH TO KEEP WITH EARL AND PEOPLE

Edward received his triumphant envoy with open arms and profuse expressions of gratitude. He exerted himself to the utmost in the banquet that crowned the day, not only to conciliate the illustrious newcomers, but to remove from the minds of Raoul de Fulke and his officers all memory of their past disaffection. No gift is rarer or more successful in the intrigues of life than that which Edward eminently possessed—viz., the *hypocrisy of frankness*. Dissimulation is often humble—often polished—often grave, sleek, smooth, decorous; but it is rarely gay and jovial, a hearty laughter, a merry, cordial, boon companion. Such, however, was the felicitous craft of Edward IV.; and, indeed, his spirits were naturally so high—his good humour so flowing—that this joyous hypocrisy cost him no effort. Elated at the dispersion of his foes—at the prospect of his return to his ordinary life of pleasure—there was something so kindly and so winning in his mirth, that he subjugated entirely the fiery

temper of Raoul de Fulke and the steadier suspicions of the more thoughtful St. John. Clarence, wholly reconciled to Edward, gazed on him with eyes swimming with affection, and soon drank himself into uproarious joviality. The archbishop, more reserved, still animated the society by the dry and epigrammatic wit not uncommon to his learned and subtle mind; but Warwick, in vain, endeavoured to shake off an uneasy, ominous gloom. He was not satisfied with Edward's avoidance of discussion upon the grave matters involved in the earl's promise to the insurgents, and his masculine spirit regarded with some disdain, and more suspicion, a levity that he considered ill-suited to the emergence.

The banquet was over, and Edward, having dismissed his other attendants, was in his chamber with Lord Hastings, whose office always admitted him to the wardrobe of the king.

Edward's smile had now left his lip; he paced the room with a hasty stride, and then suddenly opening the casement, pointed to the landscape without, which lay calm and suffused in moonlight.

"Hastings," said he, abruptly, "a few hours since and the earth grew spears! Behold the landscape now!"

"So vanish all the king's enemies!"

"Ay, man, ay—if at the king's word, or before the king's battle-axe; but at a subject's command—. No, I am not a king while another scatters armies in my realm, at his bare will. 'Fore Heaven, this shall not last!"

Hastings regarded the countenance of Edward, changed from affable beauty into terrible fierceness, with reflections suggested by his profound and mourn-

ful wisdom. "How little a man's virtues profit him in the eyes of men!" thought he. "The subject saves the crown, and the crown's wearer never pardons the presumption!"

"You do not speak, sir!" exclaimed Edward, irritated and impatient. "Why gaze you thus on me?"

"*Beau sire*," returned the favourite, calmly, "I was seeking to discover if your pride spoke, or your nobler nature."

"Tush!" said the king, petulantly—"the noblest part of a king's nature is his pride as king!" Again he strode the chamber, and again halted. "But the earl hath fallen into his own snare—he hath promised in my name what I will not perform. Let the people learn that their idol hath deceived them. He asks me to dismiss from the court the queen's mother and kindred!"

Hastings, who in this went thoroughly with the earl and the popular feeling, and whose only enemies in England were the Woodvilles, replied simply—

"These are cheap terms, sire, for a king's life, and the crown of England."

Edward started, and his eyes flashed that cold, cruel fire, which makes eyes of a light colouring so far more expressive of terrible passions than the quicker and warmer heat of dark orbs. "Think you so, sir? By God's blood, he who proffered them shall repent it in every vein of his body! Harkye, William Hastings de Hastings, I know you to be a deep and ambitious man: but better for you, had you covered that learned brain under the cowl of a mendicant friar, than lent one thought to the councils of the Earl of Warwick."

Hastings, who felt even to fondness the affection which Edward generally inspired in those about his person, and who, far from sympathizing, except in

hate of the Woodvilles, with the earl, saw that beneath that mighty tree no new plants could push into their fullest foliage, reddened with anger at this imperious menace.

"My liege," said he, with becoming dignity and spirit, "if you can thus address your most tried confidant and your lealest friend, your most dangerous enemy is yourself."

"Stay, man," said the king, softening, "I was over warm, but the wild beast within me is chafed. Would Gloucester were here!"

"I can tell you what would be the counsels of that wise young prince, for I know his mind," answered Hastings.

"Ay, he and you love each other well. Speak out."

"Prince Richard is a great reader of Italian lere. He saith that those small states are treasuries of all experience. From that lere Prince Richard would say to you—'where a subject is so great as to be feared, and too much beloved to be destroyed, the king must remember how Tarpeia was crushed.'"

"I remember naught of Tarpeia, and I detest parables."

"Tarpeia, sire (it is a story of old Rome), was crushed under the weight of presents. Oh, my liege," continued Hastings, warming with that interest which an able man feels in his own superior art, "were I king for a year, by the end of it Warwick should be the most unpopular (and therefore the weakest) lord in England!"

"And how, O wise in thine own conceit?"

"*Beau sire*," resumed Hastings, not heeding the rebuke—and strangely enough he proceeded to point out, as the means of destroying the earl's influence,

the very method that the archbishop had detailed to Montagu, as that which would make the influence irresistible and permanent.—“*Beau sire*,” resumed Hastings, “Lord Warwick is beloved by the people because they consider him maltreated; he is esteemed by the people, because they consider him above all bribe; he is venerated by the people, because they believe that in all their complaints and struggles he is independent (he alone) of the king. Instead of love, I would raise envy; for instead of cold countenance I would heap him with grace. Instead of esteem and veneration I would raise suspicion, for I would so knit him to your house that he could not stir hand or foot against you; I would make his heirs your brothers. The Duke of Clarence hath married one daughter—wed the other to Lord Richard. Betroth your young princess to Montagu’s son, the representative of all the Neviles. The earl’s immense possessions must thus ultimately pass to your own kindred. The earl himself will be no longer a power apart from the throne, but a part of it. The barons will chafe against one who half ceases to be of their order, and yet monopolises their dignities; the people will no longer see in the earl their champion, but a king’s favourite and deputy. Neither barons nor people will flock to his banner.”

“All this is well and wise,” said Edward, musing; “but meanwhile my queen’s blood—am I to reign in a solitude?—for look you, Hastings, you know well that, uxorious as fools have deemed me, I had purpose and design in the elevation of new families; I wished to raise a fresh nobility to counteract the pride of the old, and only upon new nobles can a new dynasty rely.”

“My Lord, I will not anger you again; but still, for awhile, the queen’s relations will do well to retire.”

“Good night, Hastings,” interrupted Edward, abruptly, “my pillow in this shall be my counsellor.”

Whatever the purpose solitude and reflection might ripen in the king’s mind, he was saved from immediate decision by news, the next morning, of fresh outbreaks. The commons had risen in Lincolnshire and the county of Warwick; and Anthony Woodville wrote word that, if the king would but show himself among the forces he had raised near Coventry, all the gentry around would rise against the rebellious rabble. Seizing advantage of these tidings, borne to him by his own couriers, and eager to escape from the uncertain soldiery quartered at Olney, Edward, without waiting to consult even with the earl, sprang to horse, and his trumpets were the first signal of departure that he deigned to any one.

This want of ceremony displeased the pride of Warwick; but he made no complaint, and took his place by the king’s side, when Edward said, shortly,

“Dear cousin, this is a time that needs all our energies. I ride towards Coventry, to give head and heart to the raw recruits I shall find there: but I pray you and the archbishop to use all means, in this immediate district, to raise fresh troops; for at your name armed men spring up from pasture and glebe, dyke and hedge. Join what troops you can collect in three days with mine at Coventry, and, ere the sickle is in the harvest, England shall be at peace. God speed you! Ho! there, gentlemen, away!—*à franc étrier!*”

Without pausing for reply—for he wished to avoid all questioning, lest Warwick might discover that it was to a Woodville that he was bound—the king put spurs to his horse, and, while his men were yet hurrying to and fro, rode on almost alone, and was a good

mile out of the town before the force led by St. John and Raoul de Fulke, and followed by Hastings, who held no command, overtook him.

"I misthink the king," said Warwick, gloomily, "but my word is pledged to the people, and it shall be kept."

"A man's word is best kept when his arm is the strongest," said the sententious archbishop; "yesterday, you dispersed an army; to-day, raise one!"

Warwick answered not, but, after a moment's thought, beckoned to Marmaduke.

"Kinsman," said he, "spur on, with ten of my little company, to join the king. Report to me if any of the Woodvilles be in his camp near Coventry."

"Whither shall I send the report?"

"To my castle of Warwick!"

Marmaduke bowed his head, and, accustomed to the brevity of the earl's speech, proceeded to the task enjoined him. Warwick next summoned his second squire.

"My lady and her children," said he, "are on their way to Middleham. This paper will instruct you of their progress. Join them with all the rest of my troop, except my heralds and trumpeters; and say that I shall meet them ere long at Middleham."

"It is a strange way to raise an army," said the archbishop, drily, "to begin by getting rid of all the force one possesses!"

"Brother," answered the earl, "I would fain show my son-in-law, who may be the father of a line of kings, that a general may be helpless at the head of thousands, but that a man may stand alone who has the love of a nation."

"May Clarence profit by the lesson! Where is he all this while?"

"Abed," said the stout earl, with a slight accent of disdain; and then, in a softer voice, he added—"youth is ever luxurious. Better the slow man than the false one."

Leaving Warwick to discharge the duty enjoined him, we follow the dissimulating king.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT BEFALLS KING EDWARD ON HIS ESCAPE FROM OLNEY

As soon as Edward was out of sight of the spire of Olney he slackened his speed, and beckoned Hastings to his side.

"Dear Will," said the king, "I have thought over thy counsel, and will find the occasion to make experiment thereof. But, methinks, thou wilt agree with me, that concessions come best from a king who has an army of his own. 'Fore heaven, in the camp of a Warwick I have less power than a lieutenant! Now mark me. I go to head some recruits raised in haste near Coventry. The scene of contest must be in the northern counties. Wilt thou, for love of me, ride night and day, through brake through briar, to Gloucester on the borders? Bid him march, if the Scot will let him, back to York; and if he cannot himself quit the borders, let him send what men can be spared, under thy banner. Failing this, raise through Yorkshire all the men-at-arms thou canst collect. But, above all, see Montagu. Him and his army secure at all hazards. If he demur, tell him his son shall marry his king's daughter, and wear the coronal of a duke. Ha! ha! a large bait for so large

a fish! I see this is no casual outbreak, but a general convulsion of the realm; and the Earl of Warwick must not be the only man to smile or to frown back the angry elements!"

"In this, *beau sire*," answered Hastings, "you speak as a king and a warrior should, and I will do my best to assert your royal motto—'*Modus et ordo*.' If I can but promise that your highness has for awhile dismissed the Woodville lords, rely upon it, that ere two months I will place under your truncheon an army worthy of the liege lord of hardy England."

"Go, dear Hastings, I trust all to thee!" answered the king.

The nobleman kissed his sovereign's extended hand, closed his visor, and, motioning to his body squire to follow him, disappeared down a green lane, avoiding such broader thoroughfares as might bring him in contact with the officers left at Olney.

In a small village near Coventry, Sir Anthony Woodville had collected about two thousand men, chiefly composed of the tenants and vassals of the new nobility, who regarded the brilliant Anthony as their head. The leaders were gallant and ambitious gentlemen, as they who arrive at fortunes above their birth mostly are—but their vassals were little to be trusted. For, in that day, clanship was still strong, and these followers had been bred in allegiance to Lancastrian lords, whose confiscated estates were granted to the Yorkist favourites. The shout that welcomed the arrival of the king was therefore feeble and lukewarm—and, disconcerted by so chilling a reception, he dismounted, in less elevated spirits than those in which he had left Olney, at the pavilion of his brother-in-law.

The mourning-dress of Anthony, his countenance

saddened by the barbarous execution of his father and brother, did not tend to cheer the king.

But Woodville's account of the queen's grief and horror at the afflictions of her house, and of Jacquetta's indignation at the foul language which the report of her practices put into the popular mouth, served to endear to the king's mind the family that he considered unduly persecuted. Even in the coldest breasts affection is fanned by opposition, and the more the queen's kindred were assailed, the more obstinately Edward clung to them. By suiting his humour, by winking at his gallantries, by a submissive sweetness of temper, which soothed his own hasty moods, and contrasted with the rough pride of Warwick and the peevish fickleness of Clarence, Elizabeth had completely wound herself into the king's heart. And the charming graces, the elegant accomplishments, of Anthony Woodville were too harmonious with the character of Edward, who in all—except truth and honour—was the perfect model of the gay *gentilhomme* of the time, not to have become almost a necessary companionship. Indolent natures may be easily ruled—but they grow stubborn when their comforts and habits are interfered with. And the whole current of Edward's merry easy life seemed to him to lose flow and sparkle if the faces he loved best were banished, or even clouded.

He was yet conversing with Woodville, and yet assuring him that, however he might temporise, he would never abandon the interests of his queen's kindred—when a gentleman entered aghast, to report that the Lords St. John and De Fulke, on hearing that Sir Anthony Woodville was in command of the forces, had, without even dismounting, left the camp, and carried

with them their retainers, amounting to more than half of the little troop that rode from Olney.

"Let them go," said Edward, frowning; "a day shall dawn upon their headless trunks!"

"Oh, my king," said Anthony, now Earl of Rivers, —who, by far the least selfish of his house, was struck with remorse at the penalty Edward paid for his love marriage,— "now that your highness can relieve me of my command, let me retire from the camp. I would fain go a pilgrim to the shrine of Compostella, to pray for my father's sins and my sovereign's weal."

"Let us first see what forces arrive from London," answered the king. "Richard ere long will be on the march from the frontiers, and whatever Warwick resolves, Montagu, whose heart I hold in my hand, will bring his army to my side. Let us wait."

But the next day brought no reinforcements, nor the next, and the king retired betimes to his tent, in much irritation and perplexity; when at the dead of the night he was startled from slumber by the tramp of horses, the sound of horns, the challenge of the sentinels—and, as he sprang from his couch, and hurried on his armour in alarm, the Earl of Warwick abruptly entered. The earl's face was stern, but calm and sad; and Edward's brave heart beat loud as he gazed on his formidable subject.

"King Edward," said Warwick, slowly and mournfully, "you have deceived me! I promised to the commons the banishment of the Woodvilles, and to a Woodville you have flown."

"Your promise was given to rebels, with whom no faith can be held; and I passed from a den of mutiny to the camp of a loyal soldier."

"We will not now waste words, king," answered

Warwick. "Please you to mount, and ride northward. The Scotch have gained great advantages on the marches. The Duke of Gloucester is driven backwards. All the Lancastrians in the North have risen. Margaret of Anjou is on the coast of Normandy,* ready to set sail at the first decisive victory of her adherents."

"I am with you," answered Edward; "and I rejoice to think that at last I may *meet* a foe. Hitherto it seems as if I had been chased by shadows. Now may I hope to grasp the form and substance of danger and of battle."

"A steed prepared for your grace awaits you."

"Whither ride we first?"

"To my castle of Warwick, hard by. At noon tomorrow all will be ready for our northward march."

Edward, by this time, having armed himself, strode from the tent into the open air. The scene was striking—the moon was extremely bright and the sky serene, but around the tent stood a troop of torch-bearers, and the red glare shone luridly upon the steel of the serried horsemen and the banners of the earl, in which the grim white bear was wrought upon an ebon ground, quartered with the dun bull, and crested in gold with the eagle of the Monthermers. Far as the king's eye could reach, he saw but the spears of Warwick; while a confused hum in his own encampment told that the troops Anthony Woodville had collected were not yet marshalled into order—Edward drew back.

"And the Lord Anthony of Scales and Rivers," said he, hesitatingly.

"Choose, king, between the Lord Anthony of Scales

* At this time, Margaret was at Harfleur.—*Will. Wyre.*

and Rivers, and Richard Nevile!" answered Warwick, in a stern whisper.

Edward paused, and at that moment Anthony himself emerged from his tent (which adjoined the king's) in company with the Archbishop of York, who had rode thither in Warwick's train.

"My liege," said that gallant knight, putting his knee to the ground, "I have heard from the archbishop the new perils that await your highness, and I grieve sorely that, in this strait, your councillors deem it meet to forbid me the glory of fighting or falling by your side! I know too well the unhappy odium attached to my house and name in the northern parts, to dispute the policy which ordains my absence from your armies. Till these feuds are over, I crave your royal leave to quit England, and perform my pilgrimage to the sainted shrine of Compostella."

A burning flush passed over the king's face, as he raised his brother-in-law, and clasped him to his bosom.

"Go or stay, as you will, Anthony!" said he, "but let these proud men know that neither time nor absence can tear you from your king's heart. But envy must have its hour! Lord Warwick, I attend you; but, it seems, rather as your prisoner than your liege."

Warwick made no answer: the king mounted, and waved his hand to Anthony. The torches tossed to and fro, the horns sounded, and in a silence, moody and resentful on either part, Edward and his terrible subject rode on to the towers of Warwick.

The next day the king beheld, with astonishment, the immense force that, in a time so brief, the earl had collected round his standard.

From his casement, which commanded that lovely slope on which so many a tourist now gazes with an

eye that seeks to call back the stormy and chivalric past, Edward beheld the earl on his renowned black charger, reviewing the thousands that, file on file, and rank on rank, lifted pike and lance in the cloudless sun.

"After all," muttered the king, "I can never make a new noble a great baron! And if in peace a great baron overshadows the throne, in time of war a great baron is a throne's bulwark! Gramercy, I had been mad to cast away such an army—an army fit for a king to lead! They serve Warwick now—but Warwick is less skilful in the martial art than I—and soldiers, like hounds, love best the most dexterous huntsman."

CHAPTER VII

HOW KING EDWARD ARRIVES AT THE CASTLE OF MIDDLEHAM

On the ramparts of feudal Middleham, in the same place where Anne had confessed to Isabel the romance of her childish love, again the sisters stood, awaiting the coming of their father and the king. They had only, with their mother, reached Middleham two days before, and the preceding night an advanced guard had arrived at the castle to announce the approach of the earl with his royal comrade and visitor. From the heights, already, they beheld the long array winding in glorious order towards the mighty pile.

"Look!" exclaimed Isabel, "look! already methinks I see the white steed of Clarence. Yes! it is he! it is my George—my husband! The banner borne before, shows his device."

"Ah! happy Isabel!" said Anne, sighing, "what rapture to await the coming of him one loves!"