

by whom alone it would be judged—and therefore, sweet lord, true love never contemplates this sacrifice; and if once it believes itself truly loved, it trusts with a fearless faith in the love on which it leans.”

“Sibyll, would to Heaven I had seen thee in my youth! Would to Heaven I were more worthy of thee!” And in that interview Hastings had no heart to utter what he had resolved—“Sibyll, I sought thee but to say, Farewell.”

CHAPTER VI

WARWICK RETURNS—APPEASES A DISCONTENTED PRINCE—AND CONFERS WITH A REVENGEFUL CONSPIRATOR

It was not till late in the evening that Warwick arrived at his vast residence in London, where he found not only Marmaduke Nevile ready to receive him, but a more august expectant, in George Duke of Clarence. Scarcely had the earl crossed the threshold, when the duke seized his arm, and leading him into the room that adjoined the hall, said—

“Verily, Edward is besotted no less than ever by his wife’s leech-like family. Thou knowest my appointment to the government of Ireland; Isabel, like myself, cannot endure the subordinate vassalage we must brook at the court, with the queen’s cold looks and sour words. Thou knowest, also, with what vain pretexes Edward has put me off; and now, this very day, he tells me that he hath changed his humour—that I am not stern enough for the Irish kernes—that he loves me too well to banish me, forsooth; and that Worcester, the people’s butcher, but the queen’s favourite, must have the

post so sacredly pledged to me. I see, in this, Elizabeth’s crafty malice. Is this struggle between king’s blood and queen’s kith to go on for ever?”

“Calm thyself, George; I will confer with the king to-morrow, and hope to compass thy not too arrogant desire. Certes, a king’s brother is the fittest vice-king for the turbulent kernes of Ireland, who are ever flattered into obeisance by ceremony and show. The government was pledged to thee—Edward can scarcely be serious. Moreover, Worcester, though forsooth a learned man—(*Mort-Dieu!* methinks that same learning fills the head to drain the heart!)—is so abhorred for his cruelties, that his very landing in Ireland will bring a new rebellion to add to our already festering broils and sores. Calm thyself, I say. Where didst thou leave Isabel?”

“With my mother.”

“And Anne?—the queen chills not her young heart with cold grace?”

“Nay—the queen dare not unleash her malice against Edward’s will; and, to do him justice, he hath shown all honour to Lord Warwick’s daughter.”

“He is a gallant prince, with all his faults,” said the father, heartily, “and we must bear with him, George; for verily he hath bound men by a charm to love him. Stay, thou, and share my hasty repast, and over the wine we will talk of thy views. Spare me now for a moment; I have to prepare work eno’ for a sleepless night. This Lincolnshire rebellion promises much trouble. Lord Willoughby has joined it—more than twenty thousand men are in arms. I have already sent to convene the knights and barons on whom the king can best depend, and must urge their instant departure for their halls, to raise men and meet the foe. While

Edward feasts, his minister must toil. Tarry awhile till I return."

The earl re-entered the hall, and beckoned to Marmaduke, who stood amongst a group of squires.

"Follow me, I may have work for thee." Warwick took a taper from one of the servitors, and led the way to his own more private apartment. On the landing of the staircase by a small door, stood his body squire—"Is the prisoner within?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Good!"—The earl opened the door by which the squire had mounted guard, and bade Marmaduke wait without.

The inmate of the chamber, whose dress bore the stains of fresh travel and hard riding, lifted his face hastily as the earl entered.

"Robin Hilyard," said Warwick, "I have mused much how to reconcile my service to the king with the gratitude I owe to a man who saved me from great danger. In the midst of thy unhappy and rebellious designs thou wert captured and brought to me; the papers found on thee attest a Lancastrian revolt; so ripening towards a mighty gathering—and so formidable from the adherents whom the gold and intrigues of King Louis have persuaded to risk land and life for the Red Rose, that all the king's friends can do to save his throne is now needed. In this revolt thou hast been the scheming brain, the master hand, the match to the bombard, the firebrand to the flax. Thou smilest, man! Alas! seest thou not that it is my stern duty to send thee bound hand and foot before the king's council—for the brake to wring from thee thy guilty secrets, and the gibbet to close thy days?"

"I am prepared," said Hilyard; "when the bombard

explodes, the match has become useless—when the flame smites the welkin, the firebrand is consumed!"

"Bold man! what seest thou in this rebellion that can profit thee?"

"I see, looming through the chasms and rents, made in the feudal order by civil war—the giant image of a free people."

"And thou wouldst be a martyr for the multitude, who deserted thee at Olney?"

"As thou for the king, who dishonoured thee at Shene!"

Warwick frowned, and there was a moment's pause; at last, said the earl—"Look you, Robin, I would fain not have on my hands the blood of a man who saved my life. I believe thee, though a fanatic and half madman—I believe thee true in word, as rash of deed. Swear to me on the cross of this dagger, that thou wilt lay aside all scheme and plot for this rebellion, all aid and share in civil broil and dissension, and thy life and liberty are restored to thee. In that intent, I have summoned my own kinsman, Marmaduke Nevile. He waits without the door—he shall conduct thee safely to the sea-shore—thou shalt gain in peace my government of Calais, and my seneschal there shall find thee all thou canst need—meat for thy hunger and moneys for thy pastime. Accept my mercy—take the oath, and be gone."

"My lord," answered Hilyard, much touched and affected—"blame not thyself if this carcass feed the crows—my blood be on mine own head! I cannot take this oath; I cannot live in peace; strife and broil are grown to me food and drink. Oh, my lord! thou knowest not what dark and baleful memories made me an agent in God's hand against this ruthless Ed-

ward;" and then passionately, with whitening lips and convulsive features, Hilyard recounted to the startled Warwick the same tale which had roused the sympathy of Adam Warner.

The earl, whose affections were so essentially homely and domestic, was even more shocked than the scholar by the fearful narrative.

"Unhappy man!" he said, with moistened eyes—"from the core of my heart I pity thee. But thou, the scathed sufferer from civil war, wilt *thou* be now its dread reviver?"

"If Edward had wronged thee, great earl, as me, poor franklin, what would be thine answer? In vain moralise to him whom the spectre of a murdered child and the shriek of a maniac wife haunt and hound on to vengeance! So send me to rack and halter. Be there one curse more on the soul of Edward!"

"Thou shalt not die through my witness," said the earl, abruptly; and he quitted the chamber.

Securing the door by a heavy bolt on the outside, he gave orders to his squire to attend to the comforts of the prisoner; and then turning into his closet with Marmaduke, said—"I sent for thee, young cousin, with design to commit to thy charge one whose absence from England I deemed needful—that design I must abandon. Go back to the palace, and see, if thou canst, the king before he sleeps—say that this rising in Lincolnshire is more than a riot; it is the first burst of a revolution! that I hold council here to-night, and every shire, ere the morrow, shall have its appointed captain. I will see the king at morning. Yet stay—gain sight of my child Anne; she will leave the court to-morrow. I will come for her—bid her train be prepared; she and the countess must away to Calais—England again hath

ceased to be a home for women! What to do with this poor rebel?" muttered the earl, when alone; "release him I cannot, slay him I will not. Hum—there is space enough in these walls to enclose a captive."

CHAPTER VII

THE FEAR AND THE FLIGHT

King Edward feasted high, and Sibyll sat in her father's chamber—she silent with thought of love, Adam silent in the toils of science. The Eureka was well-nigh finished—rising from its ruins, more perfect, more elaborate, than before. Maiden and scholar, each seeming near to the cherished goal—one to love's genial altar, the other to fame's lonely shrine.

Evening advanced—night began—night deepened. King Edward's feast was over, but still in his perfumed chamber the wine sparkled in the golden cup. It was announced to him that Sir Marmaduke Nevile, just arrived from the earl's house, craved an audience. The king, preoccupied in deep reverie, impatiently postponed it till the morrow.

"To-morrow!" said the gentleman in attendance. "Sir Marmaduke bids me to say, fearful that the late hour would forbid his audience, that Lord Warwick himself will visit your grace. I fear, sire, that the disturbances are great indeed, for the squires and gentlemen in Lady Anne's train have orders to accompany her to Calais to-morrow."

"To-morrow, to-morrow!" repeated the king—"well, sir, you are dismissed."

The Lady Anne (to whom Sibyll had previously com-

municated the king's kindly consideration for Master Warner) had just seen Marmaduke, and learned the new dangers that awaited the throne and the realm. The Lancastrians were then openly in arms for the prince of her love, and against her mighty father!

The Lady Anne sat awhile, sorrowful and musing, and then, before yon crucifix, the Lady Anne knelt in prayer.

Sir Marmaduke Nevile descends to the court below, and some three or four busy, curious gentlemen, not yet abed, seize him by the arm, and pray him to say what storm is in the wind.

The night deepened still—the wine is drained in King Edward's goblet—King Edward has left his chamber—and Sibyll, entreating her father, but in vain, to suspend his toil, has kissed the damps from his brow, and is about to retire to her neighbouring room. She has turned to the threshold, when, hark! a faint—a distant cry, a woman's shriek, the noise of a clapping door! The voice—it is the voice of Anne! Sibyll passed the threshold—she is in the corridor—the winter moon shines through the open arches—the air is white and cold with frost. Suddenly the door at the farther end is thrown wide open, a form rushes into the corridor, it passes Sibyll, halts, turns round—“Oh, Sibyll!” cried the Lady Anne, in a voice wild with horror, “save me—aid—help! Merciful Heaven, the king!”

Instinctively, wonderingly, tremblingly, Sibyll drew Anne into the chamber she had just quitted, and as they gained its shelter—as Anne sank upon the floor, the gleam of cloth of gold flashed through the dim atmosphere, and Edward, yet in the royal robe in which he had dazzled all the eyes at his kingly feast, stood within

the chamber. His countenance was agitated with passion, and its clear hues flushed red with wine. At his entrance, Anne sprang from the door, and rushed to Warner, who, in dumb bewilderment, had suspended his task, and stood before the Eureka, from which steamed and rushed the dark rapid smoke, while round and round, labouring and groaning, rolled its fairy wheels.*

“Sir,” cried Anne, clinging to him convulsively. “You are a father—by your child's soul, protect Lord Warwick's daughter!”

Roused from his abstraction by this appeal, the poor scholar wound his arm round the form thus clinging to him, and raising his head with dignity, replied, “Thy name, youth, and sex protect thee!”

“Unhand that lady, vile sorcerer,” exclaimed the king—“I am her protector. Come, Anne, sweet Anne, fair lady—thou mistakest—come!” he whispered. “Give not to these low natures matter for guesses that do but shame thee. Let thy king and cousin lead thee back to thy sweet rest.”

He sought, though gently, to loosen the arms that wound themselves round the old man; but Anne, not heeding, not listening, distracted by a terror that seemed to shake her whole frame, and to threaten her very reason, continued to cry out loudly upon her father's name—her great father, wakeful, then, for the baffled ravisher's tottering throne!

Edward had still sufficient possession of his reason to be alarmed lest some loiterer or sentry in the outer court

* The gentle reader will doubtless bear in mind that Master Warner's complicated model had but little resemblance to the models of the steam-engine in our own day, and that it was usually connected with other contrivances, for the better display of the principle it was intended to illustrate.

might hear the cries which his attempts to soothe but the more provoked. Grinding his teeth, and losing patience, he said to Adam, "Thou knowest me, friend—I am thy king. Since the Lady Anne, in her bewilderment, prefers thine aid to mine, help to bear her back to her apartment; and thou, young mistress, lend thine arm. This wizard's den is no fit chamber for our high-born guest."

"No, no; drive me not hence, Master Warner—That man—that king—give me not up to his—his——"
"Beware!" exclaimed the king.

It was not till now that Adam's simple mind comprehended the true cause of Anne's alarm, which Sibyll still conjectured not, but stood trembling by her friend's side, and close to her father.

"Do not fear, maiden," said Adam Warner, laying his hand upon the loosened locks that swept over his bosom, "for though I am old and feeble, God and his angels are in every spot where virtue trembles and resists. My lord king, thy sceptre extends not over a human soul!"

"Dotard, prate not to me!" said Edward, laying his hand on his dagger.

Sibyll saw the movement, and instinctively placed herself between her father and the king. That slight form, those pure, steadfast eyes, those features, noble at once and delicate, recalled to Edward the awe which had seized him in his first dark design; and again that awe came over him. He retreated.

"I mean harm to none," said he, almost submissively; "and if I am so unhappy as to scare with my presence the Lady Anne, I will retire, praying you, donzell, to see to her state, and lead her back to her chamber when it so pleases herself. Saying this much,

I command you, old man, and you, maiden, to stand back while I but address one sentence to the Lady Anne."

With these words he gently advanced to Anne, and took her hand; but, snatching it from him, the poor lady broke from Adam, rushed to the casement, opened it, and seeing some figures indistinct and distant in the court below, she called out in a voice of such sharp agony, that it struck remorse and even terror into Edward's soul.

"Alas!" he muttered, "she will not listen to me, her mind is distraught! What frenzy has been mine! Pardon—pardon, Anne—oh, pardon!"

Adam Warner laid his hand on the king's arm, and he drew the imperious despot away as easily as a nurse leads a docile child.

"King!" said the brave old man, "may God pardon thee, for if the last evil hath been wrought upon this noble lady, David sinned not more heavily than thou."

"She is pure—inviolate—I swear it!" said the king, humbly. "Anne, only say that I am forgiven."

But Anne spoke not: her eyes were fixed—her lips had fallen—she was insensible as a corpse—dumb and frozen with her ineffable dread. Suddenly steps were heard upon the stairs; the door opened, and Marmaduke Nevile entered abruptly.

"Surely I heard my lady's voice—surely! What marvel this?—the king! Pardon, my liege!"—and he bent his knee.

The sight of Marmaduke dissolved the spell of awe and repentant humiliation, which had chained a king's dauntless heart. His wonted guile returned to him with his self-possession.

"Our wise craftsman's strange and weird inven-

tion"—(and Edward pointed to the Eureka)—"has scared our fair cousin's senses, as, by sweet St. George, it well might! Go back, Sir Marmaduke, we will leave Lady Anne for the moment to the care of Mistress Sibyll. Donzell, remember my command. Come, sir"—(and he drew the wondering Marmaduke from the chamber)—but as soon as he had seen the knight descend the stairs and regain the court, he returned to the room, and in a low stern voice, said—"Look you, Master Warner, and you, damsel, if ever either of ye breathe one word of what has been your dangerous fate to hear and witness, kings have but one way to punish slanderers, and silence but one safeguard—trifle not with death!"

He then closed the door, and resought his own chamber. The Eastern spices, which were burned in the sleeping-rooms of the great, still made the air heavy with their feverish fragrance. The king seated himself, and strove to recollect his thoughts, and examine the peril he had provoked. The resistance and the terror of Anne had effectually banished from his heart the guilty passion it had before harboured; for emotions like his, and in such a nature, are quick of change. His prevailing feeling was one of sharp repentance and reproachful shame. But, as he roused himself from a state of mind which light characters ever seek to escape, the image of the dark-browed earl rose before him, and fear succeeded to mortification; but even this, however well-founded, could not endure long in a disposition so essentially scornful of all danger. Before morning the senses of Anne must return to her. So gentle a bosom could be surely reasoned out of resentment, or daunted, at least, from betraying to her stern father a secret that, if told, would smear the sword of

England with the gore of thousands. What woman will provoke war and bloodshed? And for an evil not wrought—for a purpose not fulfilled? The king was grateful that his victim had escaped him. He would see Anne before the earl could, and appease her anger—obtain her silence! For Warner and for Sibyll, they would not dare to reveal; and, if they did, the lips that accuse a king soon belie themselves, while a rack can torture truth, and the doomsman be the only judge between the subject and the head that wears a crown!

Thus reasoning with himself, his soul faced the solitude. Meanwhile Marmaduke regained the courtyard, where, as we have said, he had been detained in conferring with some of the gentlemen in the king's service, who, hearing that he brought important tidings from the earl, had abstained from rest till they could learn if the progress of the new rebellion would bring their swords into immediate service. Marmaduke, pleased to be of importance, had willingly satisfied their curiosity, as far as he was able, and was just about to retire to his own chamber, when the cry of Anne had made him enter the postern-door which led up the stairs to Adam's apartment, and which was fortunately not locked; and now, on returning, he had again a new curiosity to allay. Having briefly said that Master Warner had taken that untoward hour to frighten the women with a machine that vomited smoke and howled piteously, Marmaduke dismissed the group to their beds, and was about to seek his own, when, looking once more towards the casement, he saw a white hand gleaming in the frosty moonlight, and beckoning to him.

The knight crossed himself, and reluctantly ascended the stairs, and re-entered the wizard's den.

The Lady Anne had so far recovered herself, that a kind of unnatural calm had taken possession of her mind, and changed her ordinary sweet and tractable nature into one stern, obstinate resolution,—to escape, if possible, that unholy palace. And as soon as Marmaduke re-entered, Anne met him at the threshold, and laying her hand convulsively on his arm, said—“By the name you bear—by your love to my father, aid me to quit these walls.”

In great astonishment, Marmaduke stared, without reply.

“Do you deny me, sir?” said Anne, almost sternly.

“Lady and mistress mine,” answered Marmaduke, “I am your servant in all things. Quit these walls—the palace!—How?—the gates are closed. Nay, and what would my lord say, if at night——”

“*If at night!*” repeated Anne, in a hollow voice; and then pausing, burst into a terrible laugh. Recovering herself abruptly, she moved to the door—“I will go forth alone, and trust in God and Our Lady.”

Sibyll sprang forward to arrest her steps, and Marmaduke hastened to Adam, and whispered—“Poor lady, is her mind unsettled? Hast thou, in truth, distracted her with thy spells and glamour?”

“Hush!” answered the old man; and he whispered in the Nevile’s ear.

Scarcely had the knight caught the words, than his cheek paled—his eyes flashed fire. “The great earl’s daughter!” he exclaimed—“infamy—horror—she is right!” He broke from the student, approached Anne, who still struggled with Sibyll, and kneeling before her, said, in a voice choked with passions at once fierce and tender—

“Lady, you are right. Unseemly it may be for one

of your quality and sex to quit this place with me, and alone; but at least I have a man’s heart—a knight’s honour. Trust to me your safety, noble maiden, and I will cut your way, even through yon foul king’s heart, to your great father’s side!”

Anne did not seem quite to understand his words, but she smiled on him as he knelt, and gave him her hand. The responsibility he had assumed quickened all the intellect of the young knight. As he took and kissed the hand extended to him, he felt the ring upon his finger—the ring entrusted to him by Alwyn—the king’s signet-ring, before which would fly open every gate. He uttered a joyous exclamation, loosened his long night-cloak, and praying Anne to envelop her form in its folds, drew the hood over her head;—he was about to lead her forth, when he halted suddenly.

“Alack,” said he, turning to Sibyll, “even though we may escape the Tower, no boatman now can be found on the river. The way through the streets is dark and perilous, and beset with midnight ruffians.”

“Verily,” said Warner, “the danger is past now. Let the noble demoiselle rest here till morning. The king dare not again——”

“Dare not!” interrupted Marmaduke. “Alas! you little know King Edward.”

At that name Anne shuddered, opened the door, and hurried down the stairs; Sibyll and Marmaduke followed her.

“Listen, Sir Marmaduke,” said Sibyll. “Close without the Tower is the house of a noble lady, the Dame of Longueville, where Anne may rest in safety, while you seek Lord Warwick. I will go with you, if you can obtain egress for us both.”

“Brave damsel!” said Marmaduke, with emotion—

"but your own safety—the king's anger—no—besides a third, your dress not concealed, would create the warder's suspicion. Describe the house."

"The third to the left, by the river's side, with an arched porch, and the fleur-de-lis embossed on the walls."

"It is not so dark but we shall find it. Fare you well, gentle mistress."

While they yet spoke, they had both reached the side of Anne. Sibyll still persisted in the wish to accompany her friend; but Marmaduke's representation on the peril to life itself, that might befall her father, if Edward learned she had abetted Anne's escape, finally prevailed. The knight and his charge gained the outer gate.

"Haste—haste, Master Warder!" he cried, beating at the door with his dagger till it opened jealously—"messages of importance to the Lord Warwick. We have the king's signet. Open!"

The sleepy warder glanced at the ring—the gates were opened: they were without the fortress—they hurried on.

"Cheer up, noble lady; you are safe—you shall be avenged!" said Marmaduke, as he felt the steps of his companion falter.

But the reaction had come. The effort Anne had hitherto made was for escape—for liberty; the strength ceased, the object gained;—her head drooped—she muttered a few incoherent words, and then sense and life left her. Marmaduke paused in great perplexity and alarm. But lo, a light in a house before him!—That house the third to the river—the only one with the arched porch described by Sibyll. He lifted the light and holy burthen in his strong arms—he gained

the door: to his astonishment, it was open—a light burned on the stairs—he heard, in the upper room, the sound of whispered voices, and quick, soft footsteps hurrying to and fro. Still bearing the insensible form of his companion, he ascended the staircase, and entered at once upon a chamber, in which, by a dim lamp, he saw some two or three persons assembled round a bed in the recess. A grave man advanced to him, as he paused at the threshold—

"Whom seek you?"

"The Lady Longueville."

"Hush!"

"Who needs me?" said a faint voice, from the curtained recess.

"My name is Nevile," answered Marmaduke, with straightforward brevity. "Mistress Sibyll Warner told me of this house, where I come for an hour's shelter to my companion, the Lady Anne, daughter of the Earl of Warwick."

Marmaduke resigned his charge to an old woman, who was the nurse in that sick chamber, and who lifted the hood, and chafed the pale, cold hands of the young maiden; the knight then strode to the recess. The Lady of Longueville was on the bed of death—an illness of two days had brought her to the brink of the grave—but there was in her eye and countenance a restless and preternatural animation, and her voice was clear and shrill, as she said—

"Why does the daughter of Warwick, the Yorkist, seek refuge in the house of the fallen and childless Lancastrian?"

"Swear, by thy hopes in Christ, that thou wilt tend and guard her while I seek the earl, and I reply."

"Stranger, my name is Longueville—my birth noble

—those pledges of hospitality and trust are stronger than hollow oaths. Say on!”

“Because, then,” whispered the knight, after waving the bystanders from the spot—“because the earl’s daughter flies dishonour in a king’s palace, and her insulter is the king!”

Before the dying woman could reply, Anne, recovered by the cares of the experienced nurse, suddenly sprang to the recess, and kneeling by the bedside, exclaimed, wildly—

“Save me!—hide me!—save me!”

“Go and seek the earl, whose right hand destroyed my house and his lawful sovereign’s throne—go! I will live till he arrives!” said the childless widow, and a wild gleam of triumph shot over her haggard features.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GROUP ROUND THE DEATH-BED OF THE LANCASTRIAN WIDOW

The dawning sun gleamed through grey clouds upon a small troop of men, armed in haste, who were grouped round a covered litter by the outer door of the Lady Longueville’s house; while in the death-chamber, the Earl of Warwick, with a face as pale as the dying woman’s, stood beside the bed—Anne calmly leaning on his breast, her eyes closed, and tears yet moist on their long fringes.

“Ay—ay—ay!” said the Lancastrian noblewoman, “ye men of wrath and turbulence, should reap what ye have sown! *This* is the king for whom ye dethroned the sainted Henry! *this* the man for whom ye poured

forth the blood of England’s best! Ha!—ha!—Look down from heaven, my husband, my martyr-sons! The daughter of your mightiest foe flies to this lonely hearth—flies to the death-bed of the powerless woman for refuge from the foul usurper whom that foe placed upon the throne!”

“Spare me,” muttered Warwick, in a low voice, and between his grinded teeth. The room had been cleared, and Doctor Godard (the grave man who had first accosted Marmaduke, and who was the priest summoned to the dying) alone—save the scarce conscious Anne herself—witnessed the ghastly and awful conference.

“Hush, daughter,” said the man of peace, lifting the solemn crucifix—“calm thyself to holier thoughts.”

The lady impatiently turned from the priest, and grasping the strong right arm of Warwick with her shrivelled and trembling fingers, resumed, in a voice that struggled to repress the gasps which broke its breath—

“But thou—oh, thou, wilt bear this indignity! thou, the chief of England’s barons, wilt see no dishonour in the rank love of the vilest of England’s kings! Oh, yes, ye Yorkists have the hearts of varlets—not of men and fathers!”

“By the symbol from which thou turnest, woman!” exclaimed the earl, giving vent to the fury which the presence of death had before suppressed—“by Him, to whom, morning and night, I have knelt in grateful blessing for the virtuous life of this beloved child, I will have such revenge on the recreant whom I kinged, as shall live in the Rolls of England till the trump of the Judgment Angel!”

“Father,” said Anne, startled by her father’s vehemence, from her half-swoon sleep—“Father, think