

—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.

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## 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



no more of the past—take me to my mother! I want the clasp of my mother's arms!"

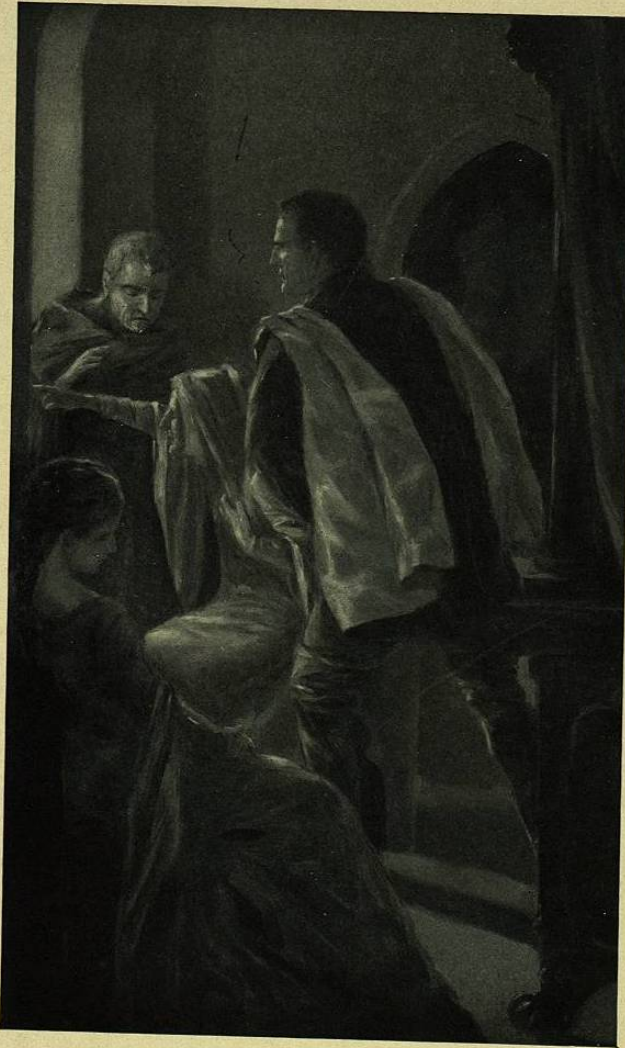
"Leave us—leave the dying, Sir Earl and son," said Godard. "I, too, am Lancastrian—I too would lay down my life for the holy Henry; but I shudder, in the hour of death, to hear yon pale lips, that should pray for pardon, preach to thee of revenge."

"Revenge!" shrieked out the Dame of Longueville, as, sinking fast and fast, she caught the word—"Revenge! Thou hast sworn revenge on Edward of York, Lord Warwick—sworn it, in the chamber of death—in the ear of one who will carry that word to the herodead of a hundred battle-fields! Ha!—the sun has risen! Priest—Godard—thine arms—support—raise—bear me to the casement! Quick—quick! I would see my king once more! Quick—quick! and then—*then*—I will hear thee pray!"

The priest, half chiding, yet half in pity, bore the dying woman to the casement. She motioned to him to open it; he obeyed. The sun, just above the welkin, shone over the lordly Thames, gilded the gloomy fortress of the Tower, and glittered upon the window of Henry's prison.

"There—there! It is he—it is my king! Hither—lord, rebel earl—hither. Behold your sovereign. Repent, revenge!"

With her livid and outstretched hand, the Lancastrian pointed to the huge Wakefield Tower. The earl's dark eye beheld in the dim distance a pale and reverend countenance, recognized even from afar. The dying woman fixed her glazing eyes upon the wronged and mighty baron, and suddenly her arm fell to her side, the face became set as into stone, the last breath of life gurgled within, and fled—and still those glazing eyes



With her livid and outstretched hand the Lancastrian pointed to the huge Wakefield Tower.



were fixed on the earl's hueless face: and still in his ear, and echoed by a thousand passions in his heart—thrilled the word which had superseded prayer, and in which the sinner's soul had flown—REVENGE!