

## BOOK IX

### THE WANDERERS AND THE EXILES

#### CHAPTER I

##### HOW THE GREAT BARON BECOMES AS GREAT A REBEL

Hilyard was yet asleep in the chamber assigned to him as his prison, when a rough grasp shook off his slumbers, and he saw the earl before him, with a countenance so changed from its usual open majesty—so dark and sombre, that he said, involuntarily, “You send me to the doomsman—I am ready!”

“Hist, man! Thou hatest Edward of York?”

“An’ it were my last word—yes!”

“Give me thy hand—we are friends! Stare not at me with those eyes of wonder—ask not the why nor wherefore! This last night gave Edward a rebel more in Richard Nevile! A steed waits thee at my gates—ride fast to young Sir Robert Welles with this letter. Bid him not be dismayed; bid him hold out—for ere many days are past, Lord Warwick, and it may be, also, the Duke of Clarence, will join their force with his. Mark, I say not that I am for Henry of Lancaster—I say only that I am against Edward of York. Farewell, and when we meet again, blessed be the arm that first cuts its way to a tyrant’s heart!”

Without another word, Warwick left the chamber. Hilyard, at first, could not believe his senses; but as he dressed himself in haste, he pondered over all those

causes of dissension which had long notoriously subsisted between Edward and the earl, and rejoiced that the prophecy he had long so shrewdly hazarded was at last fulfilled. Descending the stairs, he gained the gate, where Marmaduke awaited him, while a groom held a stout *haquenée* (as the common riding-horse was then called), whose points and breeding promised speed and endurance.

“Mount, Master Robin,” said Marmaduke; “I little thought we should ever ride as friends together! Mount—our way for some miles out of London is the same. You go into Lincolnshire—I into the shire of Hertford.”

“And for the same purpose?” asked Hilyard, as he sprang upon his horse, and the two men rode briskly on.

“Yes!”

“Lord Warwick is changed at last.”

“At last!”

“For long?”

“Till death!”

“Good—I ask no more!”

A sound of hoofs behind made the franklin turn his head, and he saw a goodly troop, armed to the teeth, emerge from the earl’s house and follow the lead of Marmaduke.

Meanwhile Warwick was closeted with Montagu.

Worldly as the latter was, and personally attached to Edward, he was still keenly alive to all that touched the honour of his house; and his indignation at the deadly insult offered to his niece was even more loudly expressed than that of the fiery earl.

“To deem,” he exclaimed, “to deem Elizabeth Woodville worthy of his throne, and to see in Anne Nevile one only worthy to be his leman!”

"Ay!" said the earl, with a calmness perfectly terrible, from its unnatural contrast to his ordinary heat, when but slightly chafed, "Ay! thou sayest it! But be tranquil—cold—cold as iron, and as hard! We must *scheme* now, not storm and threaten—I never schemed before! You are right—honesty is a fool's policy! Would I had known this but an hour before the news reached me! I have already dismissed our friends to their different districts, to support King Edward's cause—he is still king—a little while longer king! Last night, I dismissed them—last night, at the very hour when—O God, give me patience!" He paused, and added, in a low voice, "Yet—yet—how long the moments are—how long! Ere the sun sets, Edward, I trust, will be in my power!"

"How!"

"He goes, to-day, to the More—he will not go the less for what hath chanced; he will trust to the archbishop to make his peace with me—churchmen are not fathers! Marmaduke Nevile hath my orders—a hundred armed men, who would march against the fiend himself, if I said the word, will surround the More, and seize the guest!"

"But what then? Who, *if* Edward, I dare not say the word;—*who is to succeed him?*"

"Clarence is the male heir!"

"But with what face to the people—proclaim——"

"There—there it is!" interrupted Warwick. "I have thought of that—I have thought of all things; my mind seems to have traversed worlds since day-break! True! all commotion to be successful must have a cause that men can understand. Nevertheless, you, Montagu—you have a smoother tongue than I; go to our friends—to those who hate Edward—seek them, sound them!"

"And name to them Edward's infamy!"

"'Sdeath, dost thou think it! Thou, a Monthermer and Montagu: proclaim to England the foul insult to the hearth of an English gentleman and peer! feed every ribald Bourdour with song and roundel of Anne's virgin shame! how King Edward stole to her room at the dead of night, and wooed and pressed, and swore, and—God of Heaven, that this hand were on his throat! No, brother, no! there are some wrongs we may not tell—tumours and swellings of the heart, which are eased not till blood can flow!"

During this conference between the brothers, Edward, in his palace, was seized with consternation and dismay on hearing that the Lady Anne could not be found in her chamber. He sent forthwith to summon Adam Warner to his presence, and learned from the simple sage, who concealed nothing, the mode in which Anne had fled from the Tower. The king abruptly dismissed Adam, after a few hearty curses and vague threats; and awaking to the necessity of inventing some plausible story, to account to the wonder of the court for the abrupt disappearance of his guest, he saw that the person who could best originate and circulate such a tale was the queen; and he sought her at once, with the resolution to choose his confidant in the connection most rarely honoured by marital trust, in similar offences. He, however, so softened his narrative as to leave it but a venial error. He had been indulging over-freely in the wine-cup—he had walked into the corridor, for the refreshing coolness of the air—he had seen the figure of a female whom he did not recognise; and a few gallant words, he scarce remembered what, had been misconstrued. On perceiving whom he had thus addressed, he had sought to soothe the anger or

alarm of the Lady Anne; but still mistaking his intention, she had hurried into Warner's chamber—he had followed her thither—and now she had fled the palace. Such was his story, told lightly and laughingly, but ending with a grave enumeration of the dangers his imprudence had incurred.

Whatever Elizabeth felt, or however she might interpret the confession, she acted with her customary discretion; affected, after a few tender reproaches, to place implicit credit in her lord's account, and volunteered to prevent all scandal by the probable story, that the earl, being prevented from coming in person for his daughter, as he had purposed, by fresh news of the rebellion which might call him from London with the early day, had commissioned his kinsman, Marmaduke, to escort her home. The quick perception of her sex told her that, whatever licence might have terrified Anne into so abrupt a flight, the haughty earl would shrink no less than Edward himself from making public an insult which slander could well distort into the dishonour of his daughter; and that whatever pretext might be invented, Warwick would not deign to contradict it. And as, despite Elizabeth's hatred to the earl, and desire of permanent breach between Edward and his minister, she could not, as queen, wife, and woman, but be anxious that some cause more honourable in Edward, and less odious to the people, should be assigned for quarrel,—she earnestly recommended the king to repair at once to the More, as had been before arranged, and to spare no pains, disdain no expressions of penitence and humiliation, to secure the mediation of the archbishop. His mind somewhat relieved by this interview and counsel, the king kissed Elizabeth with affectionate gratitude, and returned to

his chamber to prepare for his departure to the archbishop's palace. But then remembering that Adam and Sibyll possessed his secret, he resolved at once to banish them from the Tower. For a moment he thought of the dungeons of his fortress—of the rope of his doomsman; but his conscience at that hour was sore and vexed. His fierceness humbled by the sense of shame, he shrunk from a new crime; and, moreover, his strong common sense assured him that the testimony of a shunned and abhorred wizard ceased to be of weight the moment it was deprived of the influence it took from the protection of a king. He gave orders for a boat to be in readiness by the gate of St. Thomas, again summoned Adam into his presence, and said, briefly, "Master Warner, the London mechanics cry so loudly against thine invention, for lessening labour and starving the poor, the sailors on the wharfs are so mutinous at the thought of vessels without rowers, that, as a good king is bound, I yield to the voice of my people. Go home, then, at once; the queen dispenses with thy fair daughter's service—the damsel accompanies thee. A boat awaits ye at the stairs; a guard shall attend ye to your house. Think what has passed within these walls has been a dream; a dream that, if told, is deathful—if concealed and forgotten, hath no portent!"

Without waiting a reply, the king called from the ante-room one of his gentlemen, and gave him special directions as to the departure and conduct of the worthy scholar and his gentle daughter. Edward next summoned before him the warder of the gate, learned that he alone was privy to the mode of his guest's flight, and deeming it best to leave at large no commentator on the tale he had invented, sentenced

the astonished warder to three months' solitary imprisonment—for appearing before him with soiled hosen! An hour afterwards, the king, with a small though gorgeous retinue, was on his way to the More.

The archbishop had, according to his engagement, assembled in his palace the more powerful of the discontented seigneurs; and his eloquence had so worked upon them, that Edward beheld, on entering the hall, only countenances of cheerful loyalty and respectful welcome. After the first greetings, the prelate, according to the custom of the day, conducted Edward into a chamber, that he might refresh himself with a brief rest and the bath, previous to the banquet.

Edward seized the occasion, and told his tale; but, however softened, enough was left to create the liveliest dismay in his listener. The lofty scaffolding of hope, upon which the ambitious prelate was to mount to the papal throne seemed to crumble into the dust. The king and the earl were equally necessary to the schemes of George Nevile. He chid the royal layman with more than priestly unction for his offence; but Edward so humbly confessed his fault, that the prelate at length relaxed his brow, and promised to convey his penitent assurances to the earl.

"Not an hour should be lost," he said; "the only one who can soothe his wrath is your highness's mother, our noble kinswoman. Permit me to despatch to her grace a letter, praying her to seek the earl, while I write by the same courier to himself."

"Be it all as you will," said Edward, doffing his surcoat, and dipping his hands in a perfumed ewer, "I shall not know rest till I have knelt to the Lady Anne, and won her pardon."

The prelate retired, and scarcely had he left the room

when Sir John Ratcliffe,\* one of the king's retinue, and in waiting on his person, entered the chamber, pale and trembling.

"My liege," he said, in a whisper, "I fear some deadly treason awaits you. I have seen, amongst the trees below this tower, the gleam of steel; I have crept through the foliage, and counted no less than a hundred armed men—their leader is Sir Marmaduke Nevile, Earl Warwick's kinsman!"

"Ha!" muttered the king, and his bold face fell—"comes the earl's revenge so soon?"

"And," continued Ratcliffe, "I overheard Sir Marmaduke say, 'The door of the Garden Tower is unguarded—wait the signal!' Fly, my liege! Hark! even now, I hear the rattling of arms!"

The king stole to the casement—the day was closing; the foliage grew thick and dark around the wall; he saw an armed man emerge from the shade—a second, and a third.

"You are right, Ratcliffe! Flight—but how?"

"This way, my liege. By the passage I entered, a stair winds to a door on the inner court; there, I have already a steed in waiting. Deign, for precaution, to use my hat and manteline."

The king hastily adopted the suggestion, followed the noiseless steps of Ratcliffe, gained the door, sprang upon his steed, and dashing right through a crowd assembled by the gate, galloped alone and fast, untracked by human enemy, but goaded by the foe that

\* Afterwards Lord Fitzwalter. See "Lingard," note, vol. iii., p. 507, quarto edition, for the proper date to be assigned to this royal visit to the More:—a date we have here adopted—not as Sharon Turner and others place,—viz. (upon the authority of Hearne's *Fragm.*, 302, which subsequent events disprove) *after* the open rebellion of Warwick, but just *before* it—that is, not after Easter, but before Lent.

mounts the rider's steed—over field, over fell, over dyke, through hedge, and in the dead of night reined in at last before the royal towers of Windsor.

## CHAPTER II

### MANY THINGS BRIEFLY TOLD

The events that followed the king's escape were rapid and startling. The barons assembled at the More, enraged at Edward's seeming distrust of them, separated in loud anger. The archbishop learned the cause from one of his servitors, who detected Marmaduke's ambush, but he was too wary to make known a circumstance suspicious to himself. He flew to London, and engaged the mediation of the Duchess of York to assist his own.\*

The earl received their joint overtures with stern and ominous coldness, and abruptly repaired to Warwick, taking with him the Lady Anne. There he was joined, the same day, by the Duke and Duchess of Clarence.

The Lincolnshire rebellion gained head: Edward made a dexterous feint in calling, by public commission, upon Clarence and Warwick to aid in dispersing it; if they refused, the odium of first aggression would seemingly rest with them. Clarence, more induced by personal ambition than sympathy with Warwick's wrong, incensed by his brother's recent slights, looking to Edward's resignation and his own consequent accession to the throne, and inflamed by the ambition and pride of a wife whom he at once feared and idolised, went hand in heart with the earl; but not one

\*Lingard. See for the dates, Fabyan, 657.

lord and captain whom Montagu had sounded lent favour to the deposition of one brother for the advancement of the next. Clarence, though popular, was too young to be respected: many there were who would rather have supported the earl, if an aspirant to the throne; but that choice forbidden by the earl himself, there could be but two parties in England—the one for Edward IV., the other for Henry VI.

Lord Montagu had repaired to Warwick Castle to communicate in person this result of his diplomacy. The earl, whose manner was completely changed, no longer frank and hearty, but close and sinister, listened in gloomy silence.

"And now," said Montagu, with the generous emotion of a man whose nobler nature was stirred deeply, "if you resolve on war with Edward, I am willing to renounce my own ambition, the hand of a king's daughter for my son—so that I may avenge the honour of our common name. I confess that I have so loved Edward that I would fain pray you to pause, did I not distrust myself, lest in such delay his craft should charm me back to the old affection. Nathless, to your arm, and your great soul, I have owed all, and if you are resolved to strike the blow, I am ready to share the hazard."

The earl turned away his face, and wrung his brother's hand.

"Our father, methinks, hears thee from the grave!" said he, solemnly, and there was a long pause. At length Warwick resumed: "Return to London: seem to take no share in my actions, whatever they be; if I fail, why drag thee into my ruin?—and yet, trust me, I am rash and fierce no more. He who sets his heart on a great object suddenly becomes wise. When a

throne is in the dust—when from St. Paul's Cross a voice goes forth, to Carlisle and the Land's End, proclaiming that the reign of Edward the Fourth is past and gone—then, Montagu, I claim thy promise of aid and fellowship—not before!”

Meanwhile, the king, eager to dispel thought in action, rushed in person against the rebellious forces. Stung by fear into cruelty, he beheaded, against all kingly faith, his hostages, Lord Welles and Sir Thomas Dymoke, summoned Sir Robert Welles, the leader of the revolt, to surrender; received for answer, “that Sir Robert Welles would not trust the perfidy of the man who had murdered his father!”—pushed on to Erpingham, defeated the rebels in a signal battle, and crowned his victory by a series of ruthless cruelties—committed to the fierce and learned Earl of Worcester, “Butcher of England.”\* With the prompt vigour and superb

\* Stowe. Warkworth Chronicle—Cont. Croyl. Lord Worcester ordered Clapham (a squire to Lord Warwick), and nineteen others, gentlemen and yeomen, *to be impaled*, and from the horror the spectacle inspired, and the universal odium it attached to Worcester, it is to be feared that the unhappy men were still sensible to the agony of this infliction, though they appear first to have been drawn, and partially hanged;—outrage confined only to the *dead bodies* of rebels being too common at that day to have excited the indignation which attended the sentence Worcester passed on his victims. It is in vain that some writers would seek to cleanse the memory of this learned nobleman from the stain of cruelty, by rhetorical remarks on the improbability that a cultivator of letters should be of a ruthless disposition. The general philosophy of this defence is erroneous. In ignorant ages a man of superior acquirements is not necessarily made humane by the cultivation of his intellect; on the contrary, he too often learns to look upon the uneducated herd as things of another clay. Of this truth all history is pregnant—witness the accomplished tyrants of Greece, the profound and cruel intellect of the Italian Borgias. Richard III. and Henry VIII. were both highly educated for their age. But in the case of Tiptoft, Lord Worcester, the evidence of his cruelty is no less incontestable than that which proves his learning—the Croyland

generalship which Edward ever displayed in war, he then cut his gory way to the force which Clarence and Warwick (though their hostility was still undeclared) had levied, with the intent to join the defeated rebels. He sent his herald, Garter King-at-arms, to summon the earl and the duke to appear before him within a certain day. The time expired; he proclaimed them traitors, and offered rewards for their apprehension!\*

So sudden had been Warwick's defection—so rapid the king's movements—that the earl had not time to mature his resources, assemble his vassals, consolidate his schemes. His very preparations, upon the night on which Edward had repaid his services by such hideous ingratitude, had manned the country with armies against himself. Girt but with a scanty force collected in haste (and which consisted merely of his retainers, in the single shire of Warwick), the march of Edward cut him off from the counties in which his name was held most dear—in which his trumpet could raise up hosts. He was disappointed in the aid he had expected from his powerful but self-interested brother-in-law, Lord Stanley. Revenge had become more dear to him than life: life must not be hazarded, lest revenge be lost. On still marched the king; and the day that his troops entered Exeter, Warwick, the females of his family, with Clarence, and a small but armed retinue, took ship from Dartmouth, sailed for Calais (before which town, while at anchor, Isabel was confined of historian alone is unimpeachable. Worcester's popular name of “the Butcher” is sufficient testimony in itself. The people are often mistaken, to be sure, but can scarcely be so upon the one point—whether a man who has sat in judgment on themselves be merciful or cruel.

\* One thousand pounds in money, or one hundred pounds a year in land; an immense reward for that day.

her first-born)—to the earl's rage and dismay his deputy Vauclerc fired upon his ships. Warwick then steered on towards Normandy, captured some Flemish vessels by the way, in token of defiance to the earl's old Burgundian foe—and landed at Harfleur, where he and his companions were received with royal honours by the Admiral of France, and finally took their way to the court of Louis XI., at Amboise.

"The danger is past for ever!" said King Edward, as the wine sparkled in his goblet. "Rebellion hath lost its head—and now, indeed, and for the first time, a monarch I reign alone!"\*

\* Before leaving England, Warwick and Clarence are generally said to have fallen in with Anthony Woodville and Lord Audley, and ordered them to execution; from which they were saved by a Dorsetshire gentleman. Carte, who, though his history is not without great mistakes, is well worth reading by those whom the character of Lord Warwick may interest, says, that the earl had "too much magnanimity to put them to death immediately, according to the common practice of the times, and only imprisoned them in the castle of Wardour, from whence they were soon rescued by John Thornhill, a gentleman of Dorsetshire." The whole of this story is, however, absolutely contradicted by the "Warkworth Chronicle" (p. 9, edited by Mr. Halliwell), according to which authority Anthony Woodville was at that time commanding a fleet upon the Channel, which waylaid Warwick on his voyage, but the success therein attributed to the gallant Anthony, in dispersing or seizing all the earl's ships, save the one that bore the earl himself and his family, is proved to be purely fabulous by the earl's well-attested capture of the Flemish vessels, as he passed from Calais to the coasts of Normandy, an exploit he could never have performed with a single vessel of his own. It is very probable that the story of Anthony Woodville's capture and peril at this time originates in a misadventure many years before, and recorded in the Paston letters, as well as in the Chronicles.—In the year 1459, Anthony Woodville and his father, Lord Rivers (then zealous Lancastrians), really did fall into the hands of the Earl of March (Edward IV.), Warwick and Salisbury, and got off with a sound "rating" upon the rude language which such "knaves' sons," and "little squires" had held to those "who were of king's blood."

## CHAPTER III

## THE PLOT OF THE HOSTELRY—THE MAID AND THE SCHOLAR IN THEIR HOME

The country was still disturbed, and the adherents, whether of Henry or the earl, still rose in many an outbreak, though prevented from swelling into one common army by the extraordinary vigour not only of Edward, but of Gloucester and Hastings,—when one morning, just after the events thus rapidly related, the hostelry of Master Sancroft, in the suburban parish of Marybone, rejoiced in a motley crowd of customers and toppers.

Some half-score soldiers, returned in triumph from the royal camp, sat round a table placed agreeably enough in the deep recess made by the large jutting lattice; with them were mingled about as many women, strangely and gaudily clad. These last were all young; one or two, indeed, little advanced from childhood. But there was no expression of youth in their hard, sinister features: coarse paint supplied the place of bloom; the very youngest had a wrinkle on her brow; their forms wanted the round and supple grace of early years. Living principally in the open air, trained from infancy to feats of activity, their muscles were sharp and prominent—their aspects had something of masculine audacity and rudeness; health itself seemed in them more loathsome than disease. Upon those faces of bronze, vice had set its ineffable, unmistakable seal. To those eyes never had sprung the tears of compassion or woman's gentle sorrow; on those brows never had flushed the glow of modest shame: their very voices