

selves, had already hoisted up the Eureka; and when Adam saw it borne from the room, he instinctively followed the bearers. Sibyll, relieved by the thought that, for weal or for woe, she should, at least, share her father's fate, and scarce foreboding much positive danger from the party which contained Hastings and Alwyn, attempted no further remonstrance.

The Eureka was placed in the enormous vehicle—it served as a barrier between the friar and his prisoners.

The friar, as soon as the waggon was in motion, addressed himself civilly enough to his fellow-travellers, and assured them there was nothing to fear, unless Adam thought fit to disturb his incantations. The captives answered not his address, but nestled close to each other, interchanging, at intervals, words of comfort, and recoiling as far as possible from the extregitour, who, having taken with him a more congenial companion, in the shape of a great leathern bottle, finally sunk into the silent and complacent doze which usually rewards the libations to the Bromian god.

The vehicle, with many other baggage-waggons in the rear of the army, in that memorable night-march, moved mournfully on; the night continued wrapped in fog and mist, agreeably to the weatherwise predictions of the friar; the rumbling groan of the vehicle, the tramp of the soldiers, the dull rattle of their arms, with now and then the neigh of some knight's steed in the distance, were the only sounds that broke the silence, till once, as they neared their destination, Sibyll started from her father's bosom, and shudderingly thought she recognised the hoarse chant and the tinkling bells of the ominous tymbesteres.

CHAPTER III

A PAUSE

In the profound darkness of the night and the thick fog, Edward had stationed his men at a venture upon the heath at Gladsmoor,* and hastily environed the camp with palisades and trenches. He had intended to have rested immediately in front of the foe, but, in the darkness, mistook the extent of the hostile line, and his men were ranged only opposite to the *left* side of the earl's force (towards Hadley), leaving the right unopposed. Most fortunate for Edward was this mistake; for Warwick's artillery, and the new and deadly bombards he had constructed, were placed in the *right* of the earl's army; and the provident earl, naturally supposing Edward's left was there opposed to him, ordered his gunners to cannonade all night. Edward, "as the flashes of the guns illumined by fits the gloom of midnight, saw the advantage of his unintentional error; and to prevent Warwick from discovering it, reiterated his orders for the most profound silence." † Thus even his very blunders favoured Edward more than the wisest precautions had served his fated foe.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April, the Easter Sabbath. In the fortunes of that day were involved those of all the persons who hitherto, in the course of this narrative, may have seemed to move in separate orbits from the fiery star of Warwick. Now, in this crowning hour, the vast and gigantic destiny of the great earl compre-

* Edward "had the greater number of men."—Hall, p. 296.

† Sharon Turner.

hended all upon which its darkness or its light had fallen: not only the luxurious Edward, the perjured Clarence, the haughty Margaret, her gallant son, the gentle Anne, the remorseful Isabel, the dark guile of Gloucester, the rising fortunes of the gifted Hastings,—but on the hazard of that die rested the hopes of Hil-yard, and the interests of the trader Alwyn, and the permanence of that frank, chivalric, hardy, still half Norman race, of which Nicholas Alwyn and his Saxon class were the rival antagonistic principle, and Marmaduke Nevile the ordinary type. Dragged inexorably into the whirlpool of that mighty fate, were even the very lives of the simple Scholar—of his obscure and devoted child. Here, into this gory ocean, all scattered rivulets and streams had hastened to merge at last.

But grander and more awful than all individual interests were those assigned to the fortunes of this battle, so memorable in the English annals;—the ruin or triumph of a dynasty;—the fall of that warlike baronage, of which Richard Nevile was the personation—the crowning flower—the greatest representative and the last—associated with memories of turbulence and excess, it is true, but with the proudest and grandest achievements in our early history—with all such liberty as had been yet achieved since the Norman Conquest—with all such glory as had made the island famous,—here with Runnymede, and there with Cressy!—the rise of a crafty, plotting, imperious Despotism, based upon the growing sympathy of craftsmen and traders, and ripening on the one hand to the Tudor tyranny, the Republican reaction under the Stuarts, the slavery, and the civil war—but, on the other hand, to the concentration of all the vigour and life of genius

into a single and strong government, the graces, the arts, the letters of a polished court, the freedom, the energy, the resources of a commercial population destined to rise above the tyranny at which it had first connived, and give to the emancipated Saxon the markets of the world. Upon the victory of that day, all these contending interests—this vast alternative in the future—swayed and trembled. Out, then, upon that vulgar craving of those who comprehend neither the vast truths of life, nor the grandeur of ideal art, and who ask from poet or narrator the poor and petty morality of “Poetical Justice”—a justice existing not in our work-day world—a justice existing not in the sombre page of history—a justice existing not in the loftier conceptions of men whose genius has grappled with the enigmas which art and poetry only can foreshadow and divine:—unknown to us in the street and the market—unknown to us on the scaffold of the patriot, or amidst the flames of the martyr—unknown to us in the Lear and the Hamlet—in the Agamemnon and the Prometheus. Millions upon millions, ages upon ages, are entered but as items in the vast account in which the recording angel sums up the unerring justice of God to man.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April. And on that very day Margaret and her son, and the wife and daughter of Lord Warwick, landed, at last, on the shores of England.* Come they for joy, or for woe—for victory, or despair? The issue of this day's fight on the Heath of Gladsmoor will decide. Prank thy halls, O Westminster, for the triumph of the Lancastrian king—or open thou, O

* Margaret landed at Weymouth; Lady Warwick, at Portsmouth.

Grave, to receive the saint-like Henry and his noble son. The king-maker goes before ye, saint-like father and noble son, to prepare your thrones amongst the living, or your mansions amongst the dead!

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April. The heavy mist still covered both armies, but their hum and stir was already heard through the gloaming,—the neighing of steeds, and the clangour of mail. Occasionally a movement of either force made dim form, seeming gigantic through the vapour, indistinctly visible to the antagonist army; and there was something ghastly and unearth-like in these ominous shapes, suddenly seen, and suddenly vanishing, amidst the sullen atmosphere. By this time, Warwick had discovered the mistake of his gunners; for, to the right of the earl, the silence of the Yorkists was still unbroken, while abruptly, from the thick gloom to the left, broke the hoarse mutter and low growl of the awakening war. Not a moment was lost by the earl in repairing the error of the night: his artillery wheeled rapidly from the right wing, and, sudden as a storm of lightning, the fire from the cannon flashed through the dun and heavy vapour: and not far from the very spot where Hastings was marshalling the wing intrusted to his command, made a deep chasm in the serried ranks. Death had begun his feast!

At that moment, however, from the centre of the

Yorkist army, arose, scarcely drowned by the explosion, that deep-toned shout of enthusiasm, which he who has once heard it, coming, as it were, from the one heart of an armed multitude, will ever recall as the most kindling and glorious sound which ever quickened the pulse and thrilled the blood,—for along that part of the army now rode King Edward. His mail was polished as a mirror, but otherwise unadorned, resembling that which now invests his effigies at the Tower,* and the housings of his steed were spangled with silver suns, for the silver sun was the cognisance on all his banners. His head was bare, and through the hazy atmosphere the gold of his rich locks seemed literally to shine. Followed by his body squire, with his helm and lance, and the lords in his immediate staff, his truncheon in his hand, he passed slowly along the steady line, till, halting where he deemed his voice could be farthest heard, he reined in, and lifting his hand, the shout of the soldiery was hushed,—though still, while he spoke, from Warwick's archers came the arrowy shower, and still the gloom was pierced and the hush interrupted by the flash and the roar of the bombard.

“Englishmen and friends,” said the martial chief, “to bold deeds go but few words. Before you is the foe! From Ravenspur to London I have marched—treason flying from my sword, loyalty gathering to my standard. With but two thousand men, on the fourteenth of March, I entered England—on the fourteenth of April, fifty thousand is my muster-roll. Who shall say, then, that I am not king, when one month mans

* The suit of armour, however, which the visitor to the Royal Armoury is expected to believe King Edward could have worn, is infinitely too small for such credulity. Edward's height was six feet two inches.

a monarch's army from his subjects' love? And well know ye, now, that my cause is yours and England's! Those against us are men who would rule in despite of law—barons whom I gorged with favours, and who would reduce this fair realm of King, Lords, and Commons, to be the appanage and property of one man's measureless ambition—the park, forsooth, the homestead to Lord Warwick's private house! Ye gentlemen and knights of England, let them and their rabble prosper, and your properties will be despoiled—your lives insecure—all law struck dead. What differs Richard of Warwick from Jack Cade, save that if his name is nobler, so is his treason greater? Commoners and soldiers of England—freemen, however humble—what do these rebel lords (who would rule in the name of Lancaster) desire? To reduce you to villeins and to bondsmen, as your forefathers were to them. Ye owe freedom from the barons to the just laws of my sires, your kings. Gentlemen and knights, commoners and soldiers, Edward IV. upon his throne will not profit by a victory more than you. This is no war of dainty chivalry—it is a war of true men against false. No quarter! Spare not either knight or hilding. Warwick, forsooth, will not smite the commons. Truly not—the rabble are his friends. I say to you——” and Edward, pausing in the excitement and sanguinary fury of his tiger nature—the soldiers, heated like himself to the thirst of blood, saw his eyes sparkle, and his teeth gnash, as he added in a deeper and lower, but not less audible voice, “I say to you, SLAY ALL!* What heel spares the viper's brood?”

“We will—we will!” was the horrid answer, which came hissing and muttered forth from morion and cap of steel.

* Hall.

“Hark! to their bombards!” resumed Edward. “The enemy would fight from afar, for they excel us in their archers and gunners. Upon them, then—hand to hand, and man to man! Advance banners—sound trumpets! Sir Oliver, my basinet! Soldiers, if my standard falls, look for the plume upon your king's helmet! Charge!”

Then, with a shout wilder and louder than before, on through the hail of the arrows—on through the glare of the bombards—rather with a rush than in a march, advanced Edward's centre against the array of Somerset. But from a part of the encampment where the circumvallation seemed strongest, a small body of men moved not with the general body.

To the left of the churchyard of Hadley, at this day, the visitor may notice a low wall; on the other side of that wall is a garden, then but a rude eminence on Gladsmoor Heath. On that spot a troop in complete armour, upon destries pawing impatiently, surrounded a man upon a sorry palfrey, and in a gown of blue—the colour of royalty and of servitude,—that man was Henry the Sixth. In the same space stood Friar Bungey, his foot on the Eureka, muttering incantations, that the mists he had foretold,* and which had protected the Yorkists from the midnight guns, might yet last, to the confusion of the foe. And near him, under a gaunt, leafless tree, a rope round his neck, was Adam Warner—Sibyll, still faithful to his side, nor shuddering at the arrows and the guns—her whole

* Lest the reader should suppose that the importance of Friar Bungey upon this bloody day has been exaggerated by the narrator, we must cite the testimony of sober Alderman Fabyan:—“Of the mists and other impediments which fell upon the lords' party, by reason of the incantations wrought by Friar Bungey, as the fame went, we list not to write.”

fear concentrated upon the sole life for which her own was prized. Upon this eminence, then, these lookers-on stood aloof. And the meek ears of Henry heard through the fog the inexplicable, sullen, jarring clash, —steel had met steel.

“Holy Father!” exclaimed the kingly saint, “and this is the Easter Sabbath, thy most solemn day of peace!”

“Be silent,” thundered the friar, “thou disturbest my spells. *Barabbarara—Santhinoa—Foggibus incresebo—confusio inimicis—Garabborra, vapor et mistes!*”

We must now rapidly survey the dispositions of the army under Warwick. In the right wing, the command was intrusted to the Earl of Oxford and the Marquis of Montagu. The former, who led the cavalry of that division, was stationed in the van; the latter, according to his usual habit—surrounded by a strong body-guard of knights and a prodigious number of squires as aides-de-camp—remained at the rear, and directed thence, by his orders, the general movement. In this wing the greater number were Lancastrian, jealous of Warwick, and only consenting to the generalship of Montagu, because shared by their favourite hero, Oxford. In the mid-space lay the chief strength of the bowmen, with a goodly number of pikes and bills, under the Duke of Somerset; and this division also was principally Lancastrian, and shared the jealousy of Oxford’s soldiery. The left wing, composed for the most of Warwick’s yeomanry and retainers, was commanded by the Duke of Exeter, conjointly with the earl himself. Both armies kept a considerable body in reserve, and Warwick, besides this resource, had selected from his own retainers a band

of picked archers, whom he had skilfully placed in the outskirts of a wood that then stretched from Wrotham Park to the column that now commemorates the battle of Barnet, on the high northern road. He had guarded these last-mentioned archers (where exposed in front to Edward’s horsemen) by strong tall barricades, leaving only such an opening as would allow one horseman at a time to pass, and defending by a formidable line of pikes this narrow opening left for communication, and to admit to a place of refuge in case of need. These dispositions made, and ere yet Edward had advanced on Somerset, the earl rode to the front of the wing under his special command, and, agreeably to the custom of the time, observed by his royal foe, harangued the troops. Here were placed those who loved him as a father, and venerated him as something superior to mortal man—here the retainers who had grown up with him from his childhood—who had followed him to his first fields of war—who had lived under the shelter of his many castles, and fed in that rude equality of a more primæval age, which he loved still to maintain, at his lavish board. And now Lord Warwick’s coal-black steed halted, motionless in the van. His squire behind bore his helmet, overshadowed by the eagle of Monthermer, the outstretched wings of which spread wide into sable plumes: and as the earl’s noble face turned full and calm upon the bristling lines, there arose not the vulgar uproar that greeted the aspect of the young Edward. By one of those strange sympathies which pass through multitudes, and seize them with a common feeling, the whole body of those adoring vassals became suddenly aware of the change which a year had made in the face of their chief and father. They saw the grey flakes in his Jove-like curls

—the furrows in that lofty brow—the hollows in that bronzed and manly visage, which had seemed to their rude admiration to wear the stamp of the twofold Divinity—Beneficence and Valour. A thrill of tenderness and awe shot through the veins of every one—tears of devotion rushed into many a hardy eye. No—*there* was not the ruthless captain addressing his hireling butchers; it *was* the chief and father rallying gratitude, and love, and reverence, to the crisis of his stormy fate.

“My friends, my followers, and my children,” said the earl, “the field we have entered is one from which there is no retreat; here must your leader conquer, or here die. It is not a parchment pedigree—it is not a name, derived from the ashes of dead men, that make the only charter of a king. We Englishmen were but slaves, if, in giving crown and sceptre to a mortal like ourselves, we asked not in return the kingly virtues. Beset, of old, by evil counsellors, the reign of Henry VI. was obscured, and the weal of the realm endangered. Mine own wrongs seemed to me great, but the disasters of my country not less. I deemed that in the race of York, England would know a wiser and happier rule. What was, in this, mine error, ye partly know. A prince dissolved in luxurious vices—a nobility degraded by minions and blood-suckers—a people plundered by purveyors, and a land disturbed by brawl and riot. But ye know not all: God makes man’s hearth man’s altar—our hearths were polluted—our wives and daughters were viewed as harlots—and lechery ruled the realm. A king’s word should be fast as the pillars of the world. What man ever trusted Edward and was not deceived? Even now the unknighly liar stands in arms with the weight of

perjury on his soul. In his father’s town of York, ye know that he took, three short weeks since, solemn oath of fealty to King Henry. And now King Henry is his captive, and King Henry’s holy crown upon his traitor’s head—‘traitors’ calls he Us? What name, then, rank enough for him? Edward gave the promise of a brave man, and I served him. He proved a base, a false, a licentious, and a cruel king, and I forsook him; may all free hearts in all free lands so serve kings when they become tyrants! Ye fight against a cruel and a torcious usurper, whose bold hand cannot sanctify a black heart—ye fight not only for King Henry, the meek and the godly—ye fight not for him alone, but for his young and princely son, the grandchild of Henry of Agincourt, who, old men tell me, has that hero’s face, and who, I know, has that hero’s frank and royal and noble soul—ye fight for the freedom of your land, for the honour of your women, for what is better than any king’s cause—for justice and mercy—for truth and manhood’s virtues against corruption in the laws, slaughter by the scaffold, falsehood in a ruler’s lips, and shameless harlotry in the councils of ruthless power. The order I have ever given in war, I give now;—we war against the leaders of evil, not against the hapless tools—we war against our oppressors, not against our misguided brethren. Strike down every plumed crest, but when the strife is over, spare every common man! Hark! while I speak, I hear the march of your foe! Up standards!—blow trumpets! And now, as I brace my basinet, may God grant us all a glorious victory, or a glorious grave. On, my merry men! show these London loons the stout hearts of Warwickshire and Yorkshire. On, my merry men! A Warwick! a Warwick!”

As he ended, he swung lightly over his head the terrible battle-axe which had smitten down, as the grass before the reaper, the chivalry of many a field; and ere the last blast of the trumpets died, the troops of Warwick and of Gloucester met, and mingled hand to hand.

Although the earl had, on discovering the position of the enemy, moved some of his artillery from his right wing, yet there still lay the great number and strength of his force. And there, therefore, Montagu, rolling troop on troop to the aid of Oxford, pressed so overpoweringly upon the soldiers under Hastings, that the battle very soon wore a most unfavourable aspect for the Yorkists. It seemed, indeed, that the success which had always hitherto attended the military movements of Montagu, was destined for a crowning triumph. Stationed, as we have said, in the rear, with his light-armed squires, upon fleet steeds, around him, he moved the springs of the battle with the calm sagacity which at that moment no chief in either army possessed. Hastings was thoroughly outflanked, and though his men fought with great valour, they could not resist the weight of superior numbers.

In the midst of the carnage in the centre, Edward reined in his steed, as he heard the cry of victory in the gale—

“By heaven!” he exclaimed, “our men at the left are cravens—they fly! they fly!—Ride to Lord Hastings, Sir Humphrey Bouchier, bid him defile hither what men are left him; and now, ere our fellows are well aware what hath chanced yonder, charge we, knights and gentlemen, on, on!—break Somerset’s line; on, on, to the heart of the rebel earl!”

Then, visor closed, lance in rest, Edward and his

cavalry dashed through the archers and billmen of Somerset; clad in complete mail, impervious to the weapons of the infantry, they slaughtered as they rode, and their way was marked by corpses and streams of blood. Fiercest and fellest of all, was Edward himself; when his lance shivered, and he drew his knotty mace from its sling by his saddle-bow, woe to all who attempted to stop his path. Vain alike steel helmet or leathern cap, jerkin or coat of mail. In vain Somerset threw himself into the *mêlée*. The instant Edward and his cavalry had made a path through the lines for his foot soldiery, the fortunes of the day were half retrieved. It was no rapid passage, pierced and reclosed, that he desired to effect, it was the wedge in the oak of war. There, rooted in the very midst of Somerset’s troops, doubling on each side, passing on but to return again, where helm could be crashed and man overthrown, the mighty strength of Edward widened the breach more and more, till faster and faster poured in his bands, and the centre of Warwick’s army seemed to reel and whirl round the broadening gap through its ranks,—as the waves round some chasm in a maëlstrom.

But in the interval, the hard-pressed troops commanded by Hastings were scattered and dispersed; driven from the field, they fled in numbers through the town of Barnet; many halted not till they reached London, where they spread the news of the earl’s victory and Edward’s ruin.*

Through the mist, Friar Bungey discerned the fugitive Yorkists under Hastings, and heard their cries of despair: through the mist, Sibyll saw, close beneath the intrenchments which protected the space on which

* Sharon Turner.

they stood, an armed horseman with the well-known crest of Hastings on his helmet, and, with lifted visor, calling his men to the return, in the loud voice of rage and scorn. And then, she herself sprang forwards, and forgetting his past cruelty in his present danger, cried his name—weak cry, lost in the roar of war! But the friar, now fearing he had taken the wrong side, began to turn from his spells, to address the most abject apologies to Adam, to assure him that he would have been slaughtered at the Tower, but for the friar's interruption; and that the rope round his neck was but an insignificant ceremony due to the prejudices of the soldiers. "Alas, Great Man," he concluded; "I see still that thou art mightier than I am; thy charms, though silent, are more potent than mine, though my lungs crack beneath them! *Confusio Inimicis Taralorolu*—I mean no harm to the earl,—*Garrabora, mistes et nubes*;—Lord, what will become of me!"

Meanwhile, Hastings, with a small body of horse, who being composed of knights and squires, specially singled out for the sword, fought with the pride of disdainful gentlemen, and the fury of desperate soldiers—finding it impossible to lure back the fugitives, hewed their own way through Oxford's ranks, to the centre, where they brought fresh aid to the terrible arm of Edward.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE

The mist still continued so thick that Montagu was unable to discern the general prospects of the field. But, calm and resolute in his post, amidst the arrows which whirled round him, and often struck, blunted against his Milan mail, the marquis received the reports of his aides-de-camp (may that modern word be pardoned?) as one after one they emerged through the fog to his side.

"Well," he said, as one of these messengers now spurred to the spot, "we have beaten off Hastings and his hirelings; but I see not 'the Silver Star' of Lord Oxford's banner."*

"Lord Oxford, my lord, has followed the enemy he routed to the farthest verge of the heath."

"Saints help us! Is Oxford thus headstrong? He will ruin all if he be decoyed from the field! Ride back, sir! Yet—hold!"—as another of the aides-de-camp appeared. "What news from Lord Warwick's wing?"

"Sore beset, bold marquis. Gloucester's line seems countless; it already outflanks the earl. The duke himself seems inspired by hell! Twice has his slight arm braved even the earl's battle-axe, which spared the boy but smote to the dust his comrades!"

"Well, and what of the centre, sir?" as a third form

*The Silver Star of the De Veres had its origin in a tradition that one of their ancestors, when fighting in the Holy Land saw a falling star descend upon his shield. Fatal to men, nobler even than the De Veres, was that silver falling star.