Richard hear the news that the knight that set him hard[1] in Palestine, and well-nigh darkened[2] his renown, has lost fame and honor!"

"Malvoisin," said the knight, "I thank thee. Thou hast touched the string at which my heart most readily thrills. Come of it what may, recreant shall never be added to the name of Bois-Guilbert. Would to God, Richard, or any of his vaunting minions of England, would appear in these lists! But they will be empty: no one will risk to break a lance for the innocent, the forlorn."

"The better for thee if it prove so," said the preceptor. "If no champion appears, it is not by thy means that this unlucky damsel shall die, but by the doom of the Grand Master, with whom rests all the blame, and who will count that blame for praise and commendation."

"True," said Bois-Guilbert, "if no champion appears, I am but a part of the pageant, sitting indeed on horseback, in the lists, but having no part in what is to follow."

"None whatever," said Malvoisin; "no more than the armed image of St. George when it makes part of a procession."

"Well, I will resume my resolution," replied the haughty Templar. "She has despised me, repulsed me, reviled me, and wherefore should I offer up for her whatever of estimation I have in the opinion of others? Malvoisin, I will appear in the lists."

He left the apartment hastily as he uttered these words, and the preceptor followed, to watch and confirm him in his resolution; for in Bois-Guilbert's fame he had himself a strong interest, expecting much advantage from his being one day at the head of the order, not to mention the preferment of which Mont-Fitchet had given him hopes, on condition he would forward the condemnation of the unfortunate Rebecca. Yet although, in combating his friend's better feelings, he possessed all the advantage which a wily, composed, selfish disposition has over a man

[1] Pressed him hard. [2] Eclipsed.

agitated by strong and contending emotions, it required all Malvoisin's art to keep Bois-Guilbert steady to the purpose he had prevailed on him to adopt. He was obliged to watch him closely to prevent him resuming his purpose of flight, to intercept his communication with the Grand Master, lest he should come to an open rupture with his superior, and to renew from time to time the various arguments by which he endeavored to show, that, in appearing as champion on this occasion, Bois-Guilbert, without either accelerating or insuring the fate of Rebecca, would follow the only course by which he could save himself from degradation and disgrace.

CHAPTER XL.

WHEN the Black Knight — for it becomes necessary to resume the train of his adventures — left the trysting-tree of the generous outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighboring religious house, of small extent and revenue, called the Priory of St. Botolph, to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed when the castle was taken, under the guidance of the faithful Gurth and the magnanimous Wamba. It is unnecessary at present to mention what took place in the interim betwixt Wilfred and his deliverer; suffice it to say, that, after long and grave communication, messengers were dispatched by the prior in several directions, and that on the succeeding morning the Black Knight was about to set forth on his journey, accompanied by the jester Wamba, who attended as his guide.

"We will meet," he said to Ivanhoe, "at Coningsburgh, the castle of the deceased Athelstane, since there thy father Cedric holds the funeral feast for his noble relation. I would see your Saxon kindred together, Sir Wilfred, and become better acquainted with them than heretofore. Thou also wilt meet me, and it shall be my task to reconcile thee to thy father."

So saying, he took an affectionate farewell of Ivanhoe, who expressed an anxious desire to attend upon his deliverer; but the Black Knight would not listen to the proposal.

"Rest this day: thou wilt have scarce strength enough to travel on the next. I will have no guide with me but honest Wamba, who can play priest or fool as I shall be most in the humor."

"And I," said Wamba, "will attend you with all my heart. I would fain see the feasting at the funeral of Athelstane; for, if it be not full and frequent, he will rise from the dead to rebuke cook, sewer, and cupbearer; and that were a sight worth seeing. Always, Sir Knight, I will trust your valor with making my excuse to my master Cedric, in case mine own wit should fail."

"And how should my poor valor succeed, Sir Jester, when thy light wit halts? Resolve me that."

"Wit, Sir Knight," replied the Jester, "may do much. He is a quick, apprehensive knave, who sees his neighbor's blind side, and knows how to keep the lee-gage[1] when his passions are blowing high. But valor is a sturdy fellow that makes all split. He rows against both wind and tide, and makes way notwithstanding; and therefore, good Sir Knight, while I take advantage of the fair weather in our noble master's temper, I will expect you to bestir yourself when it grows rough."

"Sir Knight of the Fetterlock, since it is your pleasure so to be distinguished," said Ivanhoe, "I fear you may have chosen a talkative and troublesome fool to be your guide. But he knows every path and alley in the woods as well as e'er a hunter who frequents them; and the poor knave, as thou hast partly seen, is as faithful as steel."

"Nay," said the knight, "an he have the gift of showing my road, I shall not grumble with him that he desires to make it pleasant. Fare thee well, kind Wilfred! I charge thee not to attempt to travel till to-morrow at earliest."

[1] On the lee side, the side protected from the wind, the sheltered side: hence the safe side.

So saying, he extended his hand to Ivanhoe, who pressed it to his lips, took leave of the prior, mounted his horse, and departed, with Wamba for his companion. Ivanhoe followed them with his eyes, until they were lost in the shades of the surrounding forest, and then returned into the convent.

But shortly after matin song he requested to see the prior. The old man came in haste, and inquired anxiously after the state of his health.

"It is better," he said, "than my fondest hope could have anticipated. Either my wound has been slighter than the effusion of blood led me to suppose, or this balsam hath wrought a wonderful cure upon it. I feel already as if I could bear my corselet; and so much the better, for thoughts pass in my mind which render me unwilling to remain here longer in inactivity."

"Now the saints forbid," said the prior, "that the son of the Saxon Cedric should leave our convent ere his wounds were healed! It were shame to our profession were we to suffer it."

"Nor would I desire to leave your hospitable roof, venerable father," said Ivanhoe, "did I not feel myself able to endure the journey, and compelled to undertake it."

"And what can have urged you to so sudden a departure?" said the prior.

"Have you never, holy father," answered the knight, "felt an apprehension of approaching evil, for which you in vain attempted to assign a cause? Have you never found your mind darkened, like the sunny landscape, by the sudden cloud, which augurs a coming tempest? And thinkest thou not that such impulses are deserving of attention, as being the hints of our guardian spirits, that danger is impending?"

"I may not deny," said the prior, crossing himself, "that such things have been, and have been of Heaven; but then, such communications have had a visibly useful scope and tendency. But thou, wounded as thou art, what avails it thou shouldst follow the steps of him whom thou couldst not aid, were he to be assaulted?"

"Prior," said Ivanhoe, "thou dost mistake. I am stout enough to exchange buffets with any one who will challenge me to such a traffic. But were it otherwise, may I not aid him, were he in danger, by other means than by force of arms? It is but too well known that the Saxons love not the Norman race; and who knows what may be the issue, if he break in upon them when their hearts are irritated by the death of Athelstane, and their heads heated by the carousal in which they will indulge themselves? I hold his entrance among them at such a moment most perilous, and I am resolved to share or avert the danger; which that I may the better do, I would crave of thee the use of some palfrey whose pace may be softer than that of my *destrier*."[1]

"Surely," said the worthy churchman, "you shall have my own ambling jennet, and I would it ambled as easy for your sake as that of the abbot of St. Albans.[2] Yet this will I say for Malkin (for so I call her), that, unless you were to borrow a ride on the juggler's steed that paces a hornpipe amongst the eggs, you could not go a journey on a creature so gentle and smooth-paced. I have composed many a homily on her back, to the edification of my brethren of the convent and many poor Christian souls."

"I pray you, reverend father," said Ivanhoe, "let Malkin be got ready instantly, and bid Gurth attend me with mine arms."

"Nay, but, fair sir," said the prior, "I pray you to remember that Malkin hath as little skill in arms as her master, and that I warrant not her enduring the sight or weight of your full panoply. Oh, Malkin, I promise you, is a beast of judgment, and will contend against an undue weight. I did but borrow the *Fructus Temporum*[3] from the priest of St. Bees, and I promise you she would not stir from the gate until I had exchanged the huge volume for my little breviary."

"Trust me, holy father," said Ivanhoe, "I will not distress her

[1] War-horse.

[2] An ancient abbey in the county of Hertfordshire.

[3] "Fruit of the Times," the title of a book.

with too much weight; and, if she calls a combat with me, it is odds but she has the worst."

This reply was made while Gurth was buckling on the knight's heels a pair of large gilded spurs, capable of convincing any restive horse that his best safety lay in being conformable to the will of his rider.

The deep and sharp rowels with which Ivanhoe's heels were now armed began to make the worthy prior repent of his courtesy, and ejaculate, "Nay, but, fair sir, now I bethink me, my Malkin abideth not the spur. Better it were that you tarry for the mare of our manciple[1] down at the Grange, which may be had in little more than an hour, and cannot but be tractable, in respect that she draweth much of our winter firewood and eateth no corn."

"I thank you, reverend father, but will abide by your first offer, as I see Malkin is already led forth to the gate. Gurth shall carry mine armor; and for the rest, rely on it, that, as I will not overload Malkin's back, she shall not overcome my patience. And now, farewell!"

Ivanhoe now descended the stairs more hastily and easily than his wound promised, and threw himself upon the jennet, eager to escape the importunity of the prior, who stuck as closely to his side as his age and fatness would permit, now singing the praises of Malkin, now recommending caution to the knight in managing her.

Ivanhoe, who had other web to weave than to stand canvassing a palfrey's paces with its owner, lent but a deaf ear to the prior's grave advices and facetious jests, and having leapt on his mare, and commanded his squire (for such Gurth now called himself) to keep close by his side, he followed the track of the Black Knight into the forest, while the prior stood at the gate of the convent, looking after him, and ejaculating, "St. Mary! how prompt and fiery be these men of war! I would I had not trusted Malkin to his keeping; for, crippled as I am with the

[1] Steward.

cold rheum, I am undone if aught but good befalls her. And yet," said he, recollecting himself, "as I would not spare my own old and disabled limbs in the good cause of Old England, so Malkin must e'en run her hazard[1] on the same venture; and it may be they will think our poor house worthy of some munificent guerdon — or it may be they will send the old prior a pacing nag. And if they do none of these, as great men will forget little men's service, truly I shall hold me well repaid in having done that which is right. And it is now well-nigh the fitting time to summon the brethren to breakfast in the refectory. Ah! I doubt they obey that call more cheerily than the bells for primes and matins."

So the prior of St. Botolph's hobbled back again into the refectory, to preside over the stock-fish and ale, which was just serving out for the friars' breakfast.

In the mean time, the Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest, the good knight whiles humming to himself the lay of some enamored troubadour, sometimes encouraging by questions the prating disposition of his attendant, so that their dialogue formed a whimsical mixture of song and jest, of which we would fain give our readers some idea. You are then to imagine this knight, such as we have already described him, strong of person, tall, broad-shouldered, and large of bone, mounted on his mighty black charger, which seemed made on purpose to bear his weight, so easily he paced forward under it, having the visor of his helmet raised in order to admit freedom of breath, yet keeping the beaver, or under part, closed, so that his features could be but imperfectly distinguished. But his ruddy, embrowned cheek-bones could be plainly seen, and the large and bright blue eyes that flashed from under the dark shade of the raised visor; and the whole gesture and look of the champion expressed careless gayety and fearless confidence, — a mind which was unapt to apprehend danger, and prompt to defy it when most imminent,

[1] Take her chance.

yet with whom danger was a familiar thought, as with one whose trade was war and adventure.

The Jester wore his usual fantastic habit, but late accidents had led him to adopt a good cutting falchion instead of his wooden sword, with a targe[1] to match it; of both which weapons he had, notwithstanding his profession, shown himself a skillful master during the storming of Torquilstone. Indeed, the infirmity of Wamba's brain consisted chiefly in a kind of impatient irritability, which suffered him not long to remain quiet in any posture, or adhere to any certain train of ideas, although he was for a few minutes alert enough in performing any immediate task, or in apprehending any immediate topic. On horseback, therefore, he was perpetually swinging himself backwards and forwards, — now on the horse's ears, then anon on the very rump of the animal; now hanging both his legs on one side, and now sitting with his face to the tail, moping, mowing,[2] and making a thousand apish gestures, — until his palfrey took his freaks so much to heart as fairly to lay him at his length on the green grass, — an incident which greatly amused the knight, but compelled his companion to ride more steadily thereafter.

At the point of their journey at which we take them up, this joyous pair were engaged in singing a virelai, as it was called, in which the clown bore a mellow burden to the better-instructed knight of the fetterlock.

"A dainty song," said Wamba, when they had finished their carol, "and, I swear by my bauble,[3] a pretty moral! I used to sing it with Gurth, once my playfellow, and now, by the grace of God and his master, no less than a freeman; and we once came by the cudgel for being so entranced by the melody that we lay in bed two hours after sunrise, singing the ditty betwixt sleeping and waking. My bones ache at thinking of the tune ever since."

The Jester next struck into another carol, a sort of comic ditty,

[1] A shield; a buckler.

[2] Making mouths.

[3] Fool's stick. See Note 1, p. 199.

to which the knight, catching up the tune, replied in the like manner.

KNIGHT AND WAMBA.

There came three merry men from south, west, and north,
Ever more sing the roundelay;
To win the Widow of Wycombe forth,
And where was the widow might say them nay?

The first was a knight, and from Tynedale he came,
Ever more sing the roundelay;
And his fathers, God save us, were men of great fame,
And where was the widow might say him nay?

Of his father the laird, of his uncle the squire,
He boasted in rhyme and in roundelay;
She bade him go bask by his sea-coal fire,
For she was the widow would say him nay.

WAMBA.

The next that came forth swore by blood and by nails,
Merrily sing the roundelay;
Hur's[1] a gentleman, God wot, and hur's lineage was of Wales,
And where was the widow might say him nay?

Sir David ap[2] Morgan ap Griffith ap Hugh
Ap Tudor ap Rhice, quoth his roundelay;
She said that one widow for so many was too few,
And she bade the Welshman wend his way.

But then next came a yeoman, a yeoman of Kent,
Jollily singing his roundelay;
He spoke to the widow of living and rent,
And where was the widow could say him nay?

BOTH.

So the knight and the squire were both left in the mire,
There for to sing their roundelay;
For a yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent,
There never was a widow could say him nay.

[1] He is, or his. [2] The son of.

"I would, Wamba," said the knight, "that our host of the trysting-tree, or the jolly friar, his chaplain, heard this thy ditty in praise of our bluff yeoman."

"So would not I," said Wamba, "but for the horn that hangs at your baldric."

"Ay," said the knight, "this is a pledge of Locksley's good will, though I am not like to need it. Three mots on this bugle will, I am assured, bring round, at our need, a jolly band of yonder honest yeomen."

"I would say Heaven forfend," said the Jester, "were it not that that fair gift is a pledge they would let us pass peaceably."

"Why, what meanest thou?" said the knight. "Thinkest thou that but for this pledge of fellowship they would assault us?"

"Nay, for me I say nothing," said Wamba; "for green trees have ears, as well as stone walls. But canst thou construe me this, Sir Knight: when is thy wine-pitcher and thy purse better empty than full?"

"Why, never, I think," replied the knight.

"Thou never deservest to have a full one in thy hand, for so simple an answer! Thou hadst best empty thy pitcher ere thou pass it to a Saxon, and leave thy money at home ere thou walk in the greenwood."

"You hold our friends for robbers, then?" said the knight of the fetterlock.

"You hear me not say so, fair sir," said Wamba. "It may relieve a poor man's steed to take off his mail when he hath a long journey to make; and, certes, it may do good to the rider's soul to ease him of that which is the root of all evil: therefore will I give no hard names to those who do such services; only I would wish my mail at home, and my purse in my chamber, when I meet with these good fellows, because it may save them some trouble."

"*We* are bound to pray for them, my friend, notwithstanding the fair character thou dost afford them."

"Pray for them with all my heart," said Wamba, "but in the

town, not in the greenwood, like the abbot of St. Bees, whom they caused to say mass with an old hollow oak-tree for his stall."

"Say as thou list, Wamba," replied the knight, "these yeomen did thy master Cedric yeomanly service at Torquilstone."

"Ay, truly," answered Wamba; "but that was in the fashion of their trade with Heaven."

"Their trade, Wamba! How mean you by that?" replied his companion.

"Marry, thus," said the Jester: "they make up a balanced account with Heaven, as our old cellarer used to call his ciphering, as fair as Isaac the Jew keeps with his debtors, and, like him, give out a very little, and take large credit for doing so; reckoning, doubtless, on their own behalf, the sevenfold usury which the blessed text hath promised to charitable loans."

"Give me an example of your meaning, Wamba. I know nothing of ciphers or rates of usage," answered the knight.

"Why," said Wamba, "an your valor be so dull, you will please to learn that those honest fellows balance a good deed with one not quite so laudable, as a crown given to a begging friar with a hundred byzants taken from a fat abbot, or a wench kissed in the greenwood with the relief of a poor widow."

"Which of these was the good deed, which was the felony?" interrupted the knight.

"A good gibe,[1] a good gibe!" said Wamba. "Keeping witty company sharpeneth the apprehension. You said nothing so well, Sir Knight, I will be sworn, when you held vespers with the bluff hermit. But to go on. The merry men of the forest set off the building of a cottage with the burning of a castle, the thatching of a choir against the robbing of a church, the setting-free a poor prisoner against the murder of a proud sheriff, or, to come nearer to our point, the deliverance of a Saxon franklin against the burning-alive of a Norman baron. Gentle thieves they are, in short, and courteous robbers; but it is ever the luckiest to meet with them when they are at the worst."

[1] A jest.

"How so, Wamba?" said the knight.

"Why, then they have some compunction, and are for making up matters with Heaven. But when they have struck an even balance, Heaven help them with whom they next open the account! The travelers who first met them after their good service at Torquilstone would have a woeful flaying; and yet," said Wamba, coming close up to the knight's side, "there be companions who are far more dangerous for travelers to meet than yonder outlaws."

"And who may they be? for you have neither bears nor wolves, I trow," said the knight.

"Marry, sir, but we have Malvoisin's men-at-arms," said Wamba; "and let me tell you, that, in time of civil war, a half-score of these is worth a band of wolves at any time. They are now expecting their harvest, and are reënforced with the soldiers that escaped from Torquilstone; so that, should we meet with a band of them, we are like to pay for our feats of arms. Now, I pray you, Sir Knight, what would you do if we met two of them?"

"Pin the villains to the earth with my lance, Wamba, if they offered us any impediment."

"But what if there were four of them?"

"They should drink of the same cup," answered the knight.

"What if six," continued Wamba, "and we as we now are, barely two? Would you not remember Locksley's horn?"

"What! sound for aid," exclaimed the knight, "against a score of such *rascaille* as these, whom one good knight could drive before him as the wind drives the withered leaves?"

"Nay, then," said Wamba, "I will pray you for a close sight of that same horn that hath so powerful a breath."

The knight undid the clasp of the baldric, and indulged his fellow-traveler, who immediately hung the bugle round his own neck.

"Tra-lira-la!" said he, whistling the notes. "Nay, I know my gamut as well as another."

"How mean you, knave?" said the knight. "Restore me the bugle."

"Content you, Sir Knight, it is in safe keeping. When Valor and Folly travel, Folly should bear the horn, because she can blow the best."

"Nay, but, rogue," said the Black Knight, "this exceedeth thy license. Beware ye tamper not with my patience."

"Urge me not with violence, Sir Knight," said the Jester, keeping at a distance from the impatient champion, "or Folly will show a clean pair of heels, and leave Valor to find out his way through the wood as best he may."

"Nay, thou hast hit me there," said the knight; "and, sooth to say, I have little time to jangle with thee. Keep the horn an thou wilt, but let us proceed on our journey."

"You will not harm me, then?" said Wamba.

"I tell thee no, thou knave!"

"Ay, but pledge me your knightly word for it," continued Wamba, as he approached with great caution.

"My knightly word I pledge, only come on with thy foolish self."

"Nay, then, Valor and Folly are once more boon companions," said the Jester, coming up frankly to the knight's side; "but, in truth, I love not such buffets as that you bestowed on the burly friar, when his Holiness rolled on the green like a king of the ninepins. And now that Folly wears the horn, let Valor rouse himself and shake his mane; for, if I mistake not, there are company in yonder brake that are on the lookout for us."

"What makes thee judge so?" said the knight.

"Because I have twice or thrice noticed the glance of a morrion[1] from amongst the green leaves. Had they been honest men, they had kept the path; but yonder thicket is a choice chapel for the clerks of St. Nicholas."

"By my faith," said the knight, closing his visor, "I think thou be'st in the right on't."

[1] A kind of hat-shaped helmet without visor or beaver.

And in good time did he close it, for three arrows flew at the same instant from the suspected spot against his head and breast, one of which would have penetrated to the brain had it not been turned aside by the steel visor. The other two were averted by the gorget, and by the shield which hung around his neck.

"Thanks, trusty armorer," said the knight. "Wamba, let us close with them," and he rode straight to the thicket. He was met by six or seven men-at-arms, who ran against him with their lances at full career.[1] Three of the weapons struck against him and splintered with as little effect as if they had been driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight's eyes seemed to flash fire even through the aperture of his visor. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of inexpressible dignity, and exclaimed, "What means this, my masters?" The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, "Die, tyrant!"

"Ha, St. Edward! Ha, St. George!" said the Black Knight, striking down a man at every invocation. "Have we traitors here?"

His opponents, desperate as they were, bore back from an arm which carried death in every blow; and it seemed as if the terror of his single strength was about to gain the battle against such odds, when a knight in blue armor, who had hitherto kept himself behind the other assailants, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim, not at the rider, but at the steed, wounded the noble animal mortally.

"That was a felon[2] stroke!" exclaimed the Black Knight, as the steed fell to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

And at this moment Wamba winded the bugle, for the whole had passed so speedily that he had not time to do so sooner. The sudden sound made the murderers bear back once more; and Wamba, though so imperfectly weaponed, did not hesitate to rush in and assist the Black Knight to rise.

"Shame on ye, false cowards!" exclaimed he in the blue har-

[1] Speed.

[2] Malicious; foul.

ness, who seemed to lead the assailants. "Do ye fly from the empty blast of a horn blown by a jester?"

Animated by his words, they attacked the Black Knight anew, whose best refuge was now to place his back against an oak, and defend himself with his sword. The felon knight, who had taken another spear, watching the moment when his formidable antagonist was most closely pressed, galloped against him in hopes to nail him with his lance against the tree, when his purpose was again intercepted by Wamba. The Jester, making up by agility the want of strength, and little noticed by the men-at-arms, who were busied in their more important object, hovered on the skirts of the fight, and effectually checked the fatal career of the blue knight by hamstringing[1] his horse with a stroke of his sword. Horse and man went to the ground; yet the situation of the knight of the fetterlock continued very precarious, as he was pressed close by several men completely armed, and began to be fatigued by the violent exertions necessary to defend himself on so many points at nearly the same moment, when a gray-goose shaft suddenly stretched on the earth one of the most formidable of his assailants, and a band of yeomen broke forth from the glade, headed by Locksley and the jovial friar, who, taking ready and effectual part in the fray, soon disposed of the ruffians, all of whom lay on the spot dead or mortally wounded. The Black Knight thanked his deliverers with a dignity they had not observed in his former bearing, which hitherto had seemed rather that of a blunt, bold soldier than of a person of exalted rank.

"It concerns me much," he said, "even before I express my full gratitude to my ready friends, to discover, if I may, who have been my unprovoked enemies. — Open the visor of that blue knight, Wamba, who seems the chief of these villains."

The Jester instantly made up to the leader of the assassins, who, bruised by his fall, and entangled under the wounded steed, lay incapable either of flight or resistance.

"Come, valiant sir," said Wamba, "I must be your armorer

[1] Cutting the tendons of the legs; disabling.

as well as your equerry. I have dismounted you, and now I will unhelm you."

So saying, with no very gentle hand he undid the helmet of the blue knight, which, rolling to a distance on the grass, displayed to the knight of the fetterlock grizzled locks, and a countenance he did not expect to have seen under such circumstances.

"Waldemar Fitzurse!" he said in astonishment, "what could urge one of thy rank and seeming worth to so foul an undertaking?"

"Richard," said the captive knight, looking up to him, "thou knowest little of mankind if thou knowest not to what ambition and revenge can lead every child of Adam."

"Revenge?" answered the Black Knight. "I never wronged thee. On me thou hast naught to revenge."

"My daughter, Richard, whose alliance thou didst scorn — was that no injury to a Norman, whose blood is noble as thine own?"

"Thy daughter?" replied the Black Knight, "a proper cause of enmity, and followed up to a bloody issue! — Stand back, my masters, I would speak to him alone. — And now, Waldemar Fitzurse, say me the truth. Confess who set thee on this traitorous deed."

"Thy father's son," answered Waldemar, "who, in so doing, did but avenge on thee thy disobedience to thy father."

Richard's eyes sparkled with indignation, but his better nature overcame it. He pressed his hand against his brow, and remained an instant gazing on the face of the humbled baron, in whose features pride was contending with shame.

"Thou dost not ask thy life, Waldemar," said the King.

"He that is in the lion's clutch," answered Fitzurse, "knows it were needless."

"Take it, then, unasked," said Richard: "the lion preys not on prostrate carcasses. Take thy life, but with this condition, — that in three days thou shalt leave England, and go to hide thine infamy in thy Norman castle, and that thou wilt never mention the name of John of Anjou as connected with thy felony. If

thou art found on English ground after the space I have allotted thee, thou diest; or if thou breathest aught that can attaint the honor of my house, by St. George! not the altar itself shall be a sanctuary. I will hang thee out to feed the ravens, from the very pinnacle of thine own castle. — Let this knight have a steed, Locksley, for I see your yeomen have caught those which were running loose, and let him depart unharmed."

"But that I judge I listen to a voice whose behests must not be disputed," answered the yeoman, "I would send a shaft after the skulking villain that should spare him the labor of a long journey."

"Thou bearest an English heart, Locksley," said the Black Knight, "and well dost judge thou art the more bound to obey my behest. I am Richard of England!"

At these words, pronounced in a tone of majesty suited to the high rank and no less distinguished character of Cœur-de-Lion, the yeomen at once kneeled down before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance, and implored pardon for their offenses.

"Rise, my friends," said Richard in a gracious tone, looking on them with a countenance in which his habitual good humor had already conquered the blaze of hasty resentment, and whose features retained no mark of the late desperate conflict, excepting the flush arising from exertion. "Arise," he said, "my friends! Your misdemeanors, whether in forest or field, have been atoned by the loyal services you rendered my distressed subjects before the walls of Torquilstone, and the rescue you have this day afforded to your sovereign. Arise, my liegemen, and be good subjects in future. — And thou, brave Locksley" —

"Call me no longer Locksley, my liege, but know me under the name which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears. I am Robin Hood[1] of Sherwood Forest."

[1] From the ballads of Robin Hood, we learn that this celebrated outlaw, when in disguise, sometimes assumed the name of Locksley, from a village where he was born, but where situated we are not distinctly told.

"King of outlaws, and prince of good fellows!" said the King. "Who hath not heard a name that has been borne as far as Palestine? But be assured, brave outlaw, that no deed done in our absence, and in the turbulent times to which it hath given rise, shall be remembered to thy disadvantage."

"True says the proverb," said Wamba, interposing his word, but with some abatement of his usual petulance, —

"'When the cat is away,
The mice will play.'"

"What, Wamba, art thou there?" said Richard. "I have been so long of hearing thy voice, I thought thou hadst taken flight."

"I take flight!" said Wamba. "When do you ever find Folly separated from Valor? There lies the trophy of my sword, that good gray gelding, whom I heartily wish upon his legs again, conditioning[1] his master lay there houghed[2] in his place. It is true, I gave a little ground at first, for a motley jacket does not brook lance-heads as a steel doublet will. But, if I fought not at sword's point, you will grant me that I sounded the onset."

"And to good purpose, honest Wamba," replied the King. "Thy good service shall not be forgotten."

"*Confiteor*,[3] *confiteor!*" exclaimed, in a submissive tone, a voice near the King's side — "my Latin will carry me no further — but I confess my deadly treason, and pray leave to have absolution before I am led to execution!"

Richard looked around, and beheld the jovial friar on his knees, telling his rosary, while his quarter-staff, which had not been idle during the skirmish, lay on the grass beside him. His countenance was gathered so as he thought might best express the most profound contrition, his eyes being turned up, and the corners of his mouth drawn down, as Wamba expressed it, like the tassels at the mouth of a purse. Yet this demure affectation

[1] Stipulating; on the condition that. [2] Hamstrung. [3] "I confess."

of extreme penitence was whimsically belied by a ludicrous meaning which lurked in his huge features, and seemed to pronounce his fear and repentance alike hypocritical.

"For what art thou cast down, mad priest?" said Richard. "Art thou afraid thy diocesan[1] should learn how truly thou dost serve Our Lady and St. Dunstan? Tush, man! fear it not. Richard of England betrays no secrets that pass over the flagon."

"Nay, most gracious sovereign," answered the hermit (well known to the curious in penny histories of Robin Hood by the name of Friar Tuck), "it is not the crosier[2] I fear, but the scepter.[3] Alas! that my sacrilegious fist should ever have been applied to the ear of the Lord's anointed!"

"Ha, ha!" said Richard, "sits the wind there? In truth, I had forgotten the buffet, though mine ear sung after it for a whole day; but, if the cuff was fairly given, I will be judged by the good men around if it was not as well repaid; or, if thou thinkest I still owe thee aught, and will stand forth for another counter-buff"—

"By no means," replied Friar Tuck. "I had mine own returned, and with usury. May your Majesty ever pay your debts as fully!".

"If I could do so with cuffs," said the King, "my creditors should have little reason to complain of an empty exchequer."

"And yet," said the friar, resuming his demure, hypocritical countenance, "I know not what penance I ought to perform for that most sacrilegious blow."

"Speak no more of it, brother," said the King. "After having stood so many cuffs from Paynims and misbelievers, I were void of reason to quarrel with the buffet of a clerk so holy as he of Copmanhurst. Yet, mine honest friar, I think it would be best, both for the Church and thyself, that I should procure a li-

[1] Bishop. [2] The staff of office of a bishop.

[3] The emblem of sovereignty. The meaning is, of course, that he fears not the bishop, but the King.

cense to unfrock thee, and retain thee as a yeoman of our guard, serving in care of our person as formerly in attendance upon the altar of St. Dunstan."

"My liege," said the friar, "I humbly crave your pardon; and you would readily grant my excuse did you but know how the sin of laziness has beset me. St. Dunstan — may he be gracious to us! — stands quiet in his niche, though I should forget my orisons in killing a fat buck. I stay out of my cell sometimes a night, doing I wot not what. St. Dunstan never complains. A quiet master he is, and a peaceful, as ever was made of wood. But to be a yeoman in attendance on my sovereign the King — the honor is great, doubtless; yet, if I were but to step aside to kill a deer, it would be, 'Who has seen Tuck? The unfrocked villain destroys more venison than half the country besides.' In fine, good my liege, I pray you to leave me as you found me; or, if in aught you desire to extend your benevolence to me, that I may be considered as the poor clerk of St. Dunstan's cell in Copmanhurst, to whom any small donation will be most thankfully acceptable."

"I understand thee," said the King, "and the Holy Clerk shall have a grant of vert[1] and venison in my woods of Warncliffe. Mark, however, I will but assign thee three bucks every season; but, if that do not prove an apology for thy slaying thirty, I am no Christian knight nor true king."

"Your Grace may be well assured," said the friar, "that, with the grace of St. Dunstan, I shall find the way of multiplying your most bounteous gift."

"I nothing doubt it, good brother," said the King; "and, as venison is but dry food, our cellarer shall have orders to deliver to thee a butt of sack, a runlet of Malvoisie, and three hogsheads of ale of the first strike,[2] yearly. If that will not quench thy

[1] Forest liberty. In English forest law, the term "vert" refers to everything that grows and bears a green leaf in a forest; and the duty of the verderer, or King's forest-keeper, was to preserve vert and venison.

[2] Quality.

thirst, thou must come to court, and become acquainted with my butler."

"But for St. Dunstan?" said the friar.

"A cope, a stole,[1] and an altar-cloth shalt thou also have," continued the King, crossing himself; "but we may not turn our game into earnest, lest God punish us for thinking more on our follies than on his honor and worship."

"I will answer for my patron," said the priest joyously.

"Answer for thyself, friar," said King Richard something sternly; but immediately stretching out his hand to the hermit, the latter, somewhat abashed, bent his knee and saluted it. "Thou dost less honor to my extended palm than to my clinched fist," said the monarch: "thou didst only kneel to the one, and to the other didst prostrate thyself."

But the friar, afraid perhaps of again giving offense by continuing the conversation in too jocose a style, — a false step to be particularly guarded against by those who converse with monarchs, — bowed profoundly, and fell into the rear.

At the same time two additional personages appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE new-comers were Wilfred of Ivanhoe, on the Prior of Botolph's palfrey, and Gurth, who attended him, on the knight's own war-horse. The astonishment of Ivanhoe was beyond bounds when he saw his master besprinkled with blood, and six or seven dead bodies lying around in the little glade in which the battle had taken place. Nor was he less surprised to see Richard surrounded by so many silvan attendants, — the outlaws, as they seemed to be, of the forest, and a perilous retinue, therefore, for a prince. He hesitated whether to address the King as the Black Knight-errant, or in what other manner to demean himself towards him. Richard saw his embarrassment.

[1] A narrow band of silk or other material, worn by priests.

"Fear not, Wilfred," he said, "to address Richard Plantagenet as himself, since thou seest him in the company of true English hearts, although it may be they have been urged a few steps aside by warm English blood."

"Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe," said the gallant outlaw, stepping forward, "my assurances can add nothing to those of our sovereign; yet let me say somewhat proudly, that, of men who have suffered much, he hath not truer subjects than those who now stand around him."

"I cannot doubt it, brave man," said Wilfred, "since thou art of the number; but what mean these marks of death and danger, — these slain men, and the bloody armor of my prince?"

"Treason hath been with us, Ivanhoe," said the King; "but, thanks to these brave men, treason hath met its meed. But, now I bethink me, thou too art a traitor," said Richard, smiling, — "a most disobedient traitor; for were not our orders positive that thou shouldst repose thyself at St. Botolph's until thy wound was healed?"

"It is healed," said Ivanhoe: "it is not of more consequence than the scratch of a bodkin. But why, oh why, noble prince, will you thus vex the hearts of your faithful servants, and expose your life by lonely journeys and rash adventures, as if it were of no more value than that of a mere knight-errant, who has no interest on earth but what lance and sword may procure him?"

"And Richard Plantagenet,"[1] said the King, "desires no more fame than his good lance and sword may acquire him; and Richard Plantagenet is prouder of achieving an adventure, with only his good sword, and his good arm to speed, than if he led to battle a host of a hundred thousand armed men."

"But your kingdom, my liege," said Ivanhoe — "your kingdom is threatened with dissolution and civil war; your subjects menaced with every species of evil, if deprived of their sovereign

[1] The name by which the House of Anjou is generally known in English history; derived from the words *planta genesta*, the broom plant, a sprig of which was worn upon his cap by Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry II.'s father.