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.

in some of those dangers which it is your daily pleasure to incur, and from which you have but this moment narrowly escaped."

"Ho, ho! my kingdom and my subjects?" answered Richard impatiently. "I tell thee, Sir Wilfred, the best of them are most willing to repay my follies in kind. For example: my very faithful servant Wilfred of Ivanhoe will not obey my positive commands, and yet reads his King a homily because he does not walk exactly by his advice. Which of us has most reason to upbraid the other? Yet forgive me, my faithful Wilfred. The time I have spent, and am yet to spend, in concealment, is, as I explained to thee at St. Botolph's, necessary to give my friends and faithful nobles time to assemble their forces, that, when Richard's return is announced, he should be at the head of such a force as enemies shall tremble to face, and thus subdue the meditated treason without even unsheathing a sword. Estoteville and Bohun will not be strong enough to move forward to York for twenty-four hours. I must have news of Salisbury from the south, and of Beauchamp in Warwickshire, and of Multon and Percy in the north. The chancellor must make sure of London. Too sudden an appearance would subject me to dangers other than my lance and sword, though backed by the bow of bold Robin, or the quarter-staff of Friar Tuck, and the horn of the sage Wamba, may be able to rescue me from."

Wilfred bowed in submission, well knowing how vain it was to contend with the wild spirit of chivalry which so often impelled his master upon dangers which he might easily have avoided, or, rather, which it was unpardonable in him to have sought out. The young knight sighed, therefore, and held his peace; while Richard, rejoiced at having silenced his counselor, though his heart acknowledged the justice of the charge he had brought against him, went on in conversation with Robin Hood. "King of outlaws," he said, "have you no refreshment to offer to your brother sovereign? for these dead knaves have found me both in exercise and appetite."

"In troth," replied the outlaw, "for I scorn to lie to your

Grace, our larder is chiefly supplied with"— He stopped, and was somewhat embarrassed.

"With venison, I suppose?" said Richard gayly. "Better food at need there can be none; and truly, if a king will not remain at home and slay his own game, methinks he should not brawl too loud if he finds it killed to his hand."

"If your Grace, then," said Robin, "will again honor with your presence one of Robin Hood's places of rendezvous, the venison shall not be lacking, and a stoup of ale, and it may be a cup of reasonably good wine, to relish it withal."

The outlaw accordingly led the way, followed by the buxom monarch, more happy, probably, in this chance meeting with Robin Hood and his foresters, than he would have been in again assuming his royal state and presiding over a splendid circle of peers and nobles. Novelty in society and adventure were the zest of life to Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and it had its highest relish when enhanced by dangers encountered and surmounted. In the lion-hearted King, the brilliant but useless character of a knight of romance was in a great measure realized and revived; and the personal glory which he acquired by his own deeds of arms was far more dear to his excited imagination than that which a course of policy and wisdom would have spread around his government. Accordingly his reign was like the course of a brilliant and rapid meteor, which shoots along the face of heaven, shedding around an unnecessary and portentous light, which is instantly swallowed up by universal darkness; his feats of chivalry furnishing themes for bards and minstrels, but affording none of those solid benefits to his country on which history loves to pause, and hold up as an example to posterity. But in his present company Richard showed to the greatest imaginable advantage. He was gay, good-humored, and fond of manhood in every rank of life.

Beneath a huge oak-tree the silvan repast was hastily prepared for the King of England, surrounded by men, outlaws to his government, but who now formed his court and his guard. As the

flagon went round, the rough foresters soon lost their awe for the presence of majesty. The song and the jest were exchanged; the stories of former deeds were told with advantage; and at length, and while boasting of their successful infraction of the laws, no one recollected they were speaking in presence of their natural guardian. The merry King, nothing heeding his dignity any more than his company, laughed, quaffed, and jested among the jolly band. The natural and rough sense of Robin Hood led him to be desirous that the scene should be closed ere anything should occur to disturb its harmony, the more especially that he observed Ivanhoe's brow clouded with anxiety. "We are honored," he said to Ivanhoe apart, "by the presence of our gallant sovereign; yet I would not that he dallied with time, which the circumstances of his kingdom may render precious."

"It is well and wisely spoken, brave Robin Hood," said Wilfred apart; "and know, moreover, that they who jest with majesty, even in its gayest mood, are but toying with the lion's whelp, which, on slight provocation, uses both fangs and claws."

"You have touched the very cause of my fear," said the outlaw. "My men are rough by practice and nature; the King is hasty as well as good-humored; nor know I how soon cause of offense may arise, or how warmly it may be received. It is time this revel were broken off."

"It must be by your management, then, gallant yeoman," said Ivanhoe; "for each hint I have essayed to give him serves only to induce him to prolong it."

"Must I so soon risk the pardon and favor of my sovereign?" said Robin Hood, pausing for an instant; "but by St. Christopher, it shall be so! I were undeserving his grace did I not peril it for his good. — Here, Scathlock, get thee behind yonder thicket, and wind me a Norman blast on thy bugle, and without an instant's delay, on peril of your life."

Scathlock obeyed his captain, and in less than five minutes the revelers were startled by the sound of his horn.

"It is the bugle of Malvoisin," said the miller, starting to his

feet, and seizing his bow. The friar dropped the flagon, and grasped his quarter-staff. Wamba stopped short in the midst of a jest, and betook himself to sword and target. All the others stood to their weapons.

Men of their precarious course of life change readily from the banquet to the battle, and to Richard the exchange seemed but a succession of pleasure. He called for his helmet and the most cumbrous parts of his armor, which he had laid aside; and, while Gurth was putting them on, he laid his strict injunctions on Wilfred, under pain of his highest displeasure, not to engage in the skirmish which he supposed was approaching.

"Thou hast fought for me an hundred times, Wilfred, and I have seen it. Thou shalt this day look on, and see how Richard will fight for his friend and liegeman."

In the mean time, Robin Hood had sent off several of his followers in different directions, as if to reconnoiter the enemy; and, when he saw the company effectually broken up, he approached Richard, who was now completely armed, and, kneeling down on one knee, craved pardon of his sovereign.

"For what, good yeoman?" said Richard somewhat impatiently. "Have we not already granted thee a full pardon for all transgressions? Thinkest thou our word is a feather, to be blown backward and forward between us? Thou canst not have had time to commit any new offense since that time?"

"Ay, but I have, though," answered the yeoman, "if it be an offense to deceive my prince for his own advantage. The bugle you have heard was none of Malvoisin's, but blown by my direction, to break off the banquet, lest it trenched upon hours of dearer import than to be thus dallied with."

He then rose from his knee, folded his arms on his bosom, and, in a manner rather respectful than submissive, awaited the answer of the King, — like one who is conscious he may have given offense, yet is confident in the rectitude of his motive. The blood rushed in anger to the countenance of Richard; but it was the first transient emotion, and his sense of justice instantly subdued it.

"The King of Sherwood," he said, "grudges his venison and his wine-flask to the King of England? It is well, bold Robin; but when you come to see me in merry London, I trust to be a less niggard host. Thou art right, however, good fellow. Let us therefore to horse and away! Wilfred has been impatient this hour. Tell me, bold Robin, hast thou never a friend in thy band, who, not content with advising, will needs direct thy motions, and look miserable when thou dost presume to act for thyself?"

"Such a one," said Robin, "is my lieutenant, Little John, who is even now absent on an expedition as far as the borders of Scotland; and I will own to your Majesty that I am sometimes displeased by the freedom of his counsels, but, when I think twice, I cannot be long angry with one who can have no motive for his anxiety save zeal for his master's service."

"Thou art right, good yeoman," answered Richard; "and if I had Ivanhoe on the one hand to give grave advice, and recommend it by the sad gravity of his brow, and thee on the other to trick me into what thou thinkest my own good, I should have as little the freedom of mine own will as any king in Christendom or Heathenesse. — But come, sirs, let us merrily on to Conings-burgh, and think no more on't."

Robin Hood assured them that he had detached a party in the direction of the road they were to pass, who would not fail to discover and apprise them of any secret ambuscade; and that he had little doubt they would find the ways secure, or, if otherwise, would receive such timely notice of the danger as would enable them to fall back on a strong troop of archers with which he himself proposed to follow on the same route.

The wise and attentive precautions adopted for his safety touched Richard's feelings, and removed any slight grudge which he might retain on account of the deception the outlaw captain had practiced upon him. He once more extended his hand to Robin Hood, assured him of his full pardon and future favor, as well as his firm resolution to restrain the tyrannical exercise of

the forest rights and other oppressive laws by which so many English yeomen were driven into a state of rebellion. But Richard's good intentions towards the bold outlaw were frustrated by the King's untimely death; and the Charter of the Forest was extorted from the unwilling hands of King John when he succeeded to his heroic brother. As for the rest of Robin Hood's career, as well as the tale of his treacherous death, they are to be found in those black-letter[1] garlands, once sold at the low and easy rate of one halfpenny,

"Now cheaply purchased at their weight in gold."

The outlaw's opinion proved true; and the King, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth, and Wamba, arrived, without any interruption, within view of the castle of Coningsburgh, while the sun was yet in the horizon.

There are few more beautiful or striking scenes in England than are presented by the vicinity of this ancient Saxon fortress. The soft and gentle river Don sweeps through an amphitheater in which cultivation is richly blended with woodland; and on a mount ascending from the river, well defended by walls and ditches, rises this ancient edifice, which, as its Saxon name implies, was, previous to the Conquest, a royal residence of the kings of England. The outer walls have probably been added by the Normans, but the inner keep bears token of very great antiquity. It is situated on a mount at one angle of the inner court, and forms a complete circle of perhaps twenty-five feet in diameter. The wall is of immense thickness, and is propped or defended by six huge external buttresses which project from the circle, and rise up against the sides of the tower as if to strengthen or to support it. These massive buttresses are solid when they arise from the foundation, and a good way higher up, but are hollowed out towards the top, and terminate in a sort of turrets communicating with the interior of the keep itself. The distant appearance of this huge building, with these singular accompani-

[1] Old English print ballads.

ments, is as interesting to the lovers of the picturesque as the interior of the castle is to the eager antiquary, whose imagination it carries back to the days of the Heptarchy. A barrow in the vicinity of the castle is pointed out as the tomb of the memorable Hengist, and various monuments, of great antiquity and curiosity, are shown in the neighboring churchyard.

When Cœur-de-Lion and his retinue approached this rude yet stately building, it was not, as at present, surrounded by external fortifications. The Saxon architect had exhausted his art in rendering the main keep defensible, and there was no other circumvallation than a rude barrier of palisades.

A huge black banner, which floated from the top of the tower, announced that the obsequies of the late owner were still in the act of being solemnized. It bore no emblem of the deceased's birth or quality; for armorial bearings were then a novelty among the Norman chivalry themselves, and were totally unknown to the Saxons. But above the gate was another banner, on which the figure of a white horse, rudely painted, indicated the nation and rank of the deceased, by the well-known symbol of Hengist and his Saxon warriors.

All around the castle was a scene of busy commotion; for such funeral banquets were times of general and profuse hospitality, which not only every one who could claim the most distant connection with the deceased, but all passengers whatsoever, were invited to partake. The wealth and consequence of the deceased Athelstane occasioned this custom to be observed in the fullest extent.

Numerous parties, therefore, were seen ascending and descending the hill on which the castle was situated; and when the King and his attendants entered the open and unguarded gates of the external barrier, the space within presented a scene not easily reconciled with the cause of the assemblage. In one place cooks were toiling to roast huge oxen and fat sheep; in another, hogsheads of ale were set abroach,[1] to be drained at the freedom of

[1] Tapped.

all comers. Groups of every description were to be seen devouring the food and swallowing the liquor thus abandoned to their discretion. The naked Saxon serf was drowning the sense of his half-year's hunger and thirst in one day of gluttony. The more pampered burgess and guild-brother was eating his morsel with gust,[1] or curiously criticising the quantity of the malt and the skill of the brewer. Some few of the poorer Norman gentry might also be seen, distinguished by their shaven chins and short cloaks, and not less so by their keeping together, and looking with great scorn on the whole solemnity even while condescending to avail themselves of the good cheer which was so liberally supplied.

Mendicants were of course assembled by the score, together with strolling soldiers returned from Palestine (according to their own account, at least); peddlers were displaying their wares; traveling mechanics were inquiring after employment; and wandering palmers, hedge-priests,[2] Saxon minstrels, and Welsh bards were muttering prayers, and extracting mistuned dirges from their harps, crowds, and rotes.[3] One sent forth the praises of Athelstane in a doleful panegyric; another, in a Saxon genealogical poem, rehearsed the uncouth and harsh names of his noble ancestry. Jesters and jugglers were not awanting, nor was the occasion of the assembly supposed to render the exercise of their profession indecorous or improper. Indeed, the ideas of the Saxons on these occasions were as natural as they were rude. If sorrow was thirsty, there was drink; if hungry, there was food; if it sunk down upon and saddened the heart, here were the means supplied of mirth, or at least of amusement. Nor did the assistants scorn to avail themselves of those means of consolation, although every now and then, as if suddenly recollecting the cause which had brought them together, the men groaned in

[1] Relish. [2] Poor, mean priests.

[3] The crowth, or crowd, was a species of violin; the rote, a sort of guitar, or rather hurdy-gurdy, the strings of which were managed by a wheel, from which the instrument took its name.

unison, while the females, of whom many were present, raised up their voices and shrieked for very woe.

Such was the scene in the castle-yard at Coningsburgh when it was entered by Richard and his followers. The seneschal or steward deigned not to take notice of the groups of inferior guests who were perpetually entering and withdrawing, unless so far as was necessary to preserve order; nevertheless he was struck by the good mien of the monarch and Ivanhoe, more especially as he imagined the features of the latter were familiar to him. Besides, the approach of two knights, for such their dress bespoke them, was a rare event at a Saxon solemnity, and could not but be regarded as a sort of honor to the deceased and his family. And in his sable dress, and holding in his hand his white wand of office, this important personage made way through the miscellaneous assemblage of guests, thus conducting Richard and Ivanhoe to the entrance of the tower. Gurth and Wamba speedily found acquaintances in the courtyard, nor presumed to intrude themselves any farther until their presence should be required.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE mode of entering the great tower of Coningsburgh Castle is very peculiar, and partakes of the rude simplicity of the early times in which it was erected. A flight of steps, so deep and narrow as to be almost precipitous, leads up to a low portal in the south side of the tower, by which the adventurous antiquary may still, or at least could a few years since, gain access to a small stair within the thickness of the main wall of the tower, which leads up to the third story of the building; the two lower being dungeons or vaults, which neither receive air nor light, save by a square hole in the third story, with which they seem to have communicated by a ladder. The access to the upper apartments in the tower, which consist, in all, of four stories, is given by stairs which are carried up through the external buttresses.

By this difficult and complicated entrance the good King Richard, followed by his faithful Ivanhoe, was ushered into the round apartment which occupies the whole of the third story from the ground. Wilfred, by the difficulties of the ascent, gained time to muffle his face in his mantle, as it had been held expedient that he should not present himself to his father until the King should give him the signal.

There were assembled in this apartment, around a large oaken table, about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the Saxon families in the adjacent counties. These were all old, or at least elderly men; for the younger race, to the great displeasure of the seniors, had, like Ivanhoe, broken down many of the barriers which separated for half a century the Norman victors from the vanquished Saxons. The downcast and sorrowful looks of these venerable men, their silence and their mournful posture, formed a strong contrast to the levity of the revelers on the outside of the castle. Their gray locks and long, full beards, together with their antique tunics and loose black mantles, suited well with the singular and rude apartment in which they were seated, and gave the appearance of a band of ancient worshipers of Woden,[1] recalled to life to mourn over the decay of their national glory.

Cedric, seated in equal rank among his countrymen, seemed yet, by common consent, to act as chief of the assembly. Upon the entrance of Richard (only known to him as the valorous knight of the fetterlock) he arose gravely, and gave him welcome by the ordinary salutation, *Waes hael*, raising at the same time a goblet to his head. The King, no stranger to the customs of his English subjects, returned the greeting with the appropriate words, *Drink hael*, and partook of a cup which was handed to him by the sewer. The same courtesy was offered to Ivanhoe, who pledged his father in silence, supplying the usual speech by an inclination of his head, lest his voice should have been recognized.

1 Odin (see Note 3, p. 23).

When this introductory ceremony was performed, Cedric arose, and, extending his hand to Richard, conducted him into a small and very rude chapel, which was excavated, as it were, out of one of the external buttresses. As there was no opening, saving a very narrow loop-hole, the place would have been nearly quite dark but for two flambeaux or torches, which showed, by a red and smoky light, the arched roof and naked walls, the rude altar of stone, and the crucifix of the same material.

Before this altar was placed a bier; and on each side of this bier kneeled three priests, who told their beads and muttered their prayers with the greatest signs of external devotion. For this service a splendid *soul-scat* was paid to the Convent of St. Edmund's by the mother of the deceased; and that it might be fully deserved, the whole brethren, saving the lame sacristan, had transferred themselves to Coningsburgh, where, while six of their number were constantly on guard in the performance of divine rites by the bier of Athelstane, the others failed not to take their share of the refreshments and amusements which went on at the castle. In maintaining this pious watch and ward, the good monks were particularly careful not to interrupt their hymns for an instant, lest Zernebock, the ancient Saxon Apollyon,[1] should lay his clutches on the departed Athelstane. Nor were they less careful to prevent any unhallowed layman from touching the pall, which, having been that used at the funeral of St. Edmund, was liable to be desecrated if handled by the profane. If, in truth, these attentions could be of any use to the deceased, he had some right to expect them at the hands of the brethren of St. Edmund's, since, besides a hundred mancuses of gold paid down as the soul-ransom, the mother of Athelstane had announced her intention of endowing that foundation with the better part of the lands of the deceased, in order to maintain perpetual prayers for his soul and that of her departed husband.

Richard and Wilfred followed the Saxon Cedric into the apartment of death, where, as their guide pointed with solemn air to the untimely bier of Athelstane, they followed his example in devoutly crossing themselves, and muttering a brief prayer for the weal of the departed soul.

[1] In the Hebrew, *Abaddon;* Greek, *Apolluon* (see Revelation ix. 11), the angel of the bottomless pit (see also Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress).

This act of pious charity performed, Cedric again motioned them to follow him, gliding over the stone floor with a noiseless tread, and, after ascending a few steps, opened with great caution the door of a small oratory which adjoined to the chapel. It was about eight feet square; hollowed, like the chapel itself, out of the thickness of the wall; and the loop-hole which enlightened it being to the west, and widening considerably as it sloped inward, a beam of the setting sun found its way into its dark recess, and showed a female of a dignified mien, and whose countenance retained the marked remains of majestic beauty. Her long mourning robes and her flowing wimple[1] of black cypress[2] enhanced the whiteness of her skin and the beauty of her light-colored and flowing tresses, which time had neither thinned nor mingled with silver. Her countenance expressed the deepest sorrow that is consistent with resignation. On the stone table before her stood a crucifix of ivory, beside which was laid a missal, having its pages richly illuminated, and its boards[3] adorned with clasps of gold, and bosses[4] of the same precious metal.

"Noble Edith," said Cedric, after having stood a moment silent, as if to give Richard and Wilfred time to look upon the lady of the mansion, "these are worthy strangers, come to take a part in thy sorrows; and this, in especial, is the valiant knight who fought so bravely for the deliverance of him for whom we this day mourn."

"His bravery has my thanks," returned the lady, "although it be the will of Heaven that it should be displayed in vain. I thank, too, his courtesy, and that of his companion, which hath brought them hither to behold the widow of Adeling, the mother of Athelstane, in her deep hour of sorrow and lamentation. To

[1] A covering, worn by women, for the neck and chin.
[2] Crape. [3] Covers. [4] Ornamental studs.

your care, kind kinsman, I intrust them, satisfied that they will want no hospitality which these sad walls can yet afford."

The guests bowed deeply to the mourning parent, and withdrew with their hospitable guide.

Another winding stair conducted them to an apartment of the same size with that which they had first entered, occupying indeed the story immediately above. From this room, ere yet the door was opened, proceeded a low and melancholy strain of vocal music. When they entered, they found themselves in the presence of about twenty matrons and maidens of distinguished Saxon lineage. Four maidens, Rowena leading the choir, raised a hymn for the soul of the deceased, of which we have only been able to decipher two or three stanzas:—

Dust unto dust,
To this all must;
The tenant hath resigned
The faded form
To waste and worm —
Corruption claims her kind.

Through paths unknown
Thy soul hath flown,
To seek the realms of woe,
Where fiery pain
Shall purge the stain
Of actions done below.

In that sad place,
By Mary's grace,
Brief may thy dwelling be!
Till prayers and alms,
And holy psalms,
Shall set the captive free.

While this dirge was sung in a low and melancholy tone by the female choristers, the others were divided into two bands, of

which one was engaged in bedecking, with such embroidery as their skill and taste could compass, a large silken pall destined to cover the bier of Athelstane, while the others busied themselves in selecting, from baskets of flowers placed before them, garlands, which they intended for the same mournful purpose. The behavior of the maidens was decorous, if not marked with deep affliction; but now and then a whisper or a smile called forth the rebuke of the severer matrons, and here and there might be seen a damsel more interested in endeavoring to find out how her mourning robe became her than in the dismal ceremony for which they were preparing. Neither was this propensity at all diminished by the appearance of two strange knights, which occasioned some looking-up, peeping, and whispering. Rowena alone, too proud to be vain, paid her greeting to her deliverer with a graceful courtesy. Her demeanor was serious but not dejected; and it may be doubted whether thoughts of Ivanhoe, and of the uncertainty of his fate, did not claim as great a share in her gravity as the death of her kinsman.

To Cedric, however, who, as we have observed, was not remarkably clear-sighted on such occasions, the sorrow of his ward seemed so much deeper than any of the other maidens, that he deemed it proper to whisper the explanation, "She was the affianced bride of the noble Athelstane." It may be doubted whether this communication went a far way to increase Wilfred's disposition to sympathize with the mourners of Coningsburgh.

Having thus formally introduced the guests to the different chambers in which the obsequies of Athelstane were celebrated under different forms, Cedric conducted them into a small room, destined, as he informed them, for the exclusive accommodation of honorable guests, whose more slight connection with the deceased might render them unwilling to join those who were immediately affected by the unhappy event. He assured them of every accommodation, and was about to withdraw when the Black Knight took his hand.

"I crave to remind you, noble thane," he said, "that when we

last parted, you promised, for the service I had the fortune to render you, to grant me a boon."

"It is granted ere named, noble knight," said Cedric; "yet at this sad moment"—

"Of that also," said the King, "I have bethought me, but my time is brief; neither does it seem to me unfit, that, when closing the grave on the noble Athelstane, we should deposit therein certain prejudices and hasty opinions."

"Sir Knight of the Fetterlock," said Cedric, coloring, and interrupting the King in his turn, "I trust your boon regards yourself, and no other; for, in that which concerns the honor of my house, it is scarce fitting that a stranger should mingle."

"Nor do I wish to mingle," said the King mildly, "unless in so far as you will admit me to have an interest. As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight of the Fetterlock. Know me now as Richard Plantagenet."

"Richard of Anjou!" exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with the utmost astonishment.

"No, noble Cedric, Richard of England, whose deepest interest, whose deepest wish, is to see her sons united with each other. And how now, worthy thane? Hast thou no knee for thy prince?"

"To Norman blood," said Cedric, "it hath never bended."

"Reserve thine homage, then," said the monarch, "until I shall prove my right to it by my equal protection of Normans and English."

"Prince," answered Cedric, "I have ever done justice to thy bravery and thy worth. Nor am I ignorant of thy claim to the crown through thy descent from Matilda, niece to Edgar Atheling,[1] and daughter to Malcolm of Scotland; but Matilda, though of the royal Saxon blood, was not the heir to the monarchy."

[1] Born about 1057, and died about 1120; son of Edward, the son of Edmund Ironside. When Edward the Confessor died, he was the nearest heir to the throne. In 1068 he withdrew, with his two sisters, from the court of William the Conqueror, and went to Scotland, where King Malcolm married Margaret, one of the sisters.

"I will not dispute my title with thee, noble thane," said Richard calmly; "but I will bid thee look around thee, and see where thou wilt find another to be put into the scale against it."

"And hast thou wandered hither, prince, to tell me so?" said Cedric,—"to upbraid me with the ruin of my race ere the grave has closed o'er the last scion of Saxon royalty?" His countenance darkened as he spoke. "It was boldly, it was rashly done!"

"Not so, by the holy rood!" replied the King. "It was done in the frank confidence which one brave man may repose in another, without a shadow of danger."

"Thou sayest well, Sir King; for King I own thou art, and wilt be, despite of my feeble opposition. I dare not take the only mode to prevent it, though thou hast placed the strong temptation within my reach!"

"And now to my boon," said the King, "which I ask not with one jot the less confidence that thou hast refused to acknowledge my lawful sovereignty. I require of thee, as a man of thy word, on pain of being held faithless, mansworn, and *nidering*, to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight Wilfred of Ivanhoe. In this reconciliation thou wilt own I have an interest,—the happiness of my friend, and the quelling of dissension among my faithful people."

"And this is Wilfred!" said Cedric, pointing to his son.

"My father, my father!" said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet, "grant me thy forgiveness!"

"Thou hast it, my son," said Cedric, raising him up. "The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. But let me see thee use the dress and costume of thy English ancestry,—no short cloaks, no gay bonnets, no fantastic plumage, in my decent household. He that would be the son of Cedric must show himself of English ancestry. Thou art about to speak," he added sternly, "and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years' mourning, as for a betrothed husband. All our Saxon ancestors would dis-

own us were we to treat of a new union for her ere the grave of him she should have wedded — him, so much the most worthy of her hand by birth and ancestry — is yet closed. The ghost of Athelstane himself would burst his bloody cerements, and stand before us to forbid such dishonor to his memory."

It seemed as if Cedric's words had raised a specter; for scarce had he uttered them, ere the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, haggard, and like something arisen from the dead.

The effect of this apparition on the persons present was utterly appalling. Cedric started back as far as the wall of the apartment would permit, and, leaning against it as one unable to support himself, gazed on the figure of his friend with eyes that seemed fixed, and a mouth which he appeared incapable of shutting. Ivanhoe crossed himself, repeating prayers in Saxon, Latin, or Norman-French, as they occurred to his memory; while Richard alternately said *Benedicite*, and swore *Mort de ma vie!*[1]

In the mean time a horrible noise was heard below stairs; some crying, "Secure the treacherous monks!" others, "Down with them into the dungeon!" others, "Pitch them from the highest battlements!"

"In the name of God!" said Cedric, addressing what seemed the specter of his departed friend, "if thou art mortal, speak! If a departed spirit, say for what cause thou dost revisit us, or if I can do aught that can set thy spirit at repose! Living or dead, noble Athelstane, speak to Cedric!"

"I will," said the specter very composedly, "when I have collected breath, and when you give me time. Alive, saidst thou? I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days, which seem three ages. Yes, bread and water, Father Cedric! By Heaven, and all saints in it, better food hath not passed my weasand[2] for three livelong days; and by God's providence it is that I am now here to tell it."

[1] "Death of my life." [2] Windpipe; throat.

"Why, noble Athelstane," said the Black Knight, "I myself saw you struck down by the fierce Templar towards the end of the storm at Torquilstone; and as I thought, and Wamba reported, your skull was cloven through the teeth."

"You thought amiss, Sir Knight," said Athelstane, "and Wamba lied. My teeth are in good order, and that my supper shall presently find; no thanks to the Templar, though, whose sword turned in his hand, so that the blade struck me flatlings,[1] being averted by the handle of the good mace with which I warded the blow. Had my steel cap been on, I had not valued it a rush, and had dealt him such a counter-buff as would have spoilt his retreat; but as it was, down I went, stunned, indeed, but unwounded. Others, of both sides, were beaten down and slaughtered above me, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin (an open one, by good luck) placed before the altar of the Church of St. Edmund's. I sneezed repeatedly, groaned, awakened, and would have arisen, when the sacristan and abbot, full of terror, came running at the noise, surprised, doubtless, and no way pleased to find the man alive whose heirs they had proposed themselves to be. I asked for wine. They gave me some, but it must have been highly medicated; for I slept yet more deeply than before, and wakened not for many hours. I found my arms swathed down, my feet tied so fast that mine ankles ache at the very remembrance. The place was utterly dark, — the *oubliette*,[2] as I suppose, of their accursed convent; and from the close, stifled, damp smell, I conceive it is also used for a place of sepulture. I had strange thoughts of what had befallen me, when the door of my dungeon creaked, and two villain monks entered. They would have persuaded me I was in purgatory, but I knew too well the pursy, short-breathed voice of the father abbot. St. Jeremy! how different from that tone with which he used to ask me for another

[1] Sideways; with the flat side.

[2] A dungeon, especially one, as its name implies (*oublier*, "to forget"), in which persons were left to perpetual imprisonment or to perish secretly.

slice of the haunch! The dog has feasted with me from Christmas to Twelfth Night."[1]

"Have patience, noble Athelstane," said the King. "Take breath. Tell your story at leisure. Beshrew me but such a tale is as well worth listening to as a romance."

"Ay, but, by the rood of Bromeholm, there was no romance in the matter!" said Athelstane. "A barley-loaf and a pitcher of water, — that *they* gave me, the niggardly traitors, whom my father, and I myself, had enriched, when their best resources were the flitches of bacon and measures of corn out of which they wheedled poor serfs and bondsmen in exchange for their prayers, the nest of foul, ungrateful vipers! Barley-bread and ditch water to such a patron as I had been! I will smoke them out of their nest, though I be excommunicated!"

"But in the name of Our Lady, noble Athelstane," said Cedric, grasping the hand of his friend, "how didst thou escape this imminent danger? Did their hearts relent?"

"Did their hearts relent!" echoed Athelstane. "Do rocks melt with the sun? I should have been there still had not some stir in the convent, which I find was their procession hitherward to eat my funeral feast, when they well knew how and where I had been buried alive, summoned the swarm out of their hive. I heard them droning out their death-psalms, little judging they were sung in respect for my soul by those who were thus famishing my body. They went, however, and I waited long for food. No wonder! the gouty sacristan was even too busy with his own provender to mind mine. At length down he came with an unstable step, and a strong flavor of wine and spices about his person. Good cheer had opened his heart, for he left me a nook of pasty and a flask of wine, instead of my former fare. I ate, drank, and was invigorated, when, to add to my good luck, the sacristan, too totty to discharge his duty of turnkey fitly, locked the door beside the staple, so that it fell ajar. The light, the food, the wine, set my invention to work. The staple to which

[1] Epiphany evening, twelfth day after Christmas.

my chains were fixed was more rusted than I or the villain abbot had supposed. Even iron could not remain without consuming in the damps of that infernal dungeon."

"Take breath, noble Athelstane," said Richard, "and partake of some refreshment, ere you proceed with a tale so dreadful."

"Partake!" quoth Athelstane. "I have been partaking five times to-day, and yet a morsel of that savory ham were not altogether foreign to the matter; and I pray you, fair sir, to do me reason in a cup of wine."

The guests, though still agape with astonishment, pledged their resuscitated landlord, who thus proceeded in his story. He had indeed now many more auditors than those to whom it was commenced; for Edith, having given certain necessary orders for arranging matters within the castle, had followed the dead-alive up to the stranger's apartment, attended by as many of the guests, male and female, as could squeeze into the small room, while others, crowding the staircase, caught up an erroneous edition of the story, and transmitted it still more inaccurately to those beneath, who again sent it forth to the vulgar without, in a fashion totally irreconcilable to the real fact. Athelstane, however, went on as follows with the history of his escape: —

"Finding myself freed from the staple, I dragged myself upstairs as well as a man loaded with shackles and emaciated with fasting might; and, after much groping about, I was at length directed by the sound of a jolly roundelay to the apartment where the worthy sacristan was carousing with a huge, beetle-browed, broad-shouldered brother of the gray frock and cowl, who looked much more like a thief than a clergyman. I burst in upon them; and the fashion of my grave-clothes, as well as the clanking of my chains, made me more resemble an inhabitant of the other world than of this. Both stood aghast; but, when I knocked down the sacristan with my fist, the other fellow, his pot-companion, fetched a blow at me with a huge quarter-staff."

"This must be our Friar Tuck, for a count's ransom," said Richard, looking at Ivanhoe.

"He may be the Devil, an he will," said Athelstane. "Fortunately he missed the aim, and, on my approaching to grapple with him, took to his heels and ran for it. I failed not to set my own heels at liberty by means of the fetter-key[1] which hung amongst others at the sexton's belt; and I had thoughts of beating out the knave's brains with the bunch of keys, but gratitude for the nook of pasty and the flask of wine which the rascal had imparted to my captivity came over my heart: so, with a brace of hearty kicks, I left him on the floor, pouched some baked meat and a leathern bottle of wine, with which the two venerable brethren had been regaling, went to the stable, and found in a private stall mine own best palfrey, which, doubtless, had been set apart for the holy father abbot's particular use. Hither I came with all the speed the beast could compass; man and mother's son flying before me wherever I came, taking me for a specter, the more especially, as, to prevent my being recognized, I drew the corpse-hood over my face. I had not gained admittance into my own castle had I not been supposed to be the attendant of a juggler who is making the people in the castle-yard very merry, considering they are assembled to celebrate their lord's funeral. I say the sewer thought I was dressed to bear a part in the tregetour's[2] mummery; and so I got admission, and did but disclose myself to my mother, and eat a hasty morsel, ere I came in quest of you, my noble friend."

"And you have found me," said Cedric, "ready to resume our brave projects of honor and liberty. I tell thee, never will dawn a morrow so auspicious as the next for the deliverance of the noble Saxon race."

"Talk not to me of delivering any one," said Athelstane. "It is well I am delivered myself. I am more intent on punishing that villain abbot. He shall hang on the top of this castle of Coningsburgh in his cope and stole; and, if the stairs be too strait to admit his fat carcass, I will have him craned[3] up from without."

[1] Key for a fetterlock. [2] Juggler's.
[3] Hoisted by a crane or derrick.

"But, my son," said Edith, "consider his sacred office."

"Consider my three days' fast," replied Athelstane. "I will have their blood, every one of them. Front-de-Bœuf was burnt alive for a less matter, for he kept a good table for his prisoners, only put too much garlic in his last dish of pottage; but these hypocritical, ungrateful slaves, so often the self-invited flatterers at my board, who gave me neither pottage nor garlic, more or less, they die, by the soul of Hengist!"

"But the Pope, my noble friend," said Cedric.

"But, my noble friend," answered Athelstane, "they die, and no more of them. Were they the best monks upon earth, the world would go on without them."

"For shame, noble Athelstane!" said Cedric. "Forget such wretches in the career of glory which lies open before thee. Tell this Norman prince, Richard of Anjou, that, lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold undisputed the throne of Alfred while a male descendant of the holy Confessor lives to dispute it."

"How!" said Athelstane, "is this the noble King Richard?"

"It is Richard Plantagenet himself," said Cedric; "yet I need not remind thee, that, coming hither a guest of free will, he may neither be injured nor detained prisoner. Thou well knowest thy duty to him as his host."

"Ay, by my faith!" said Athelstane; "and my duty as a subject besides, for I here tender him my allegiance, heart and hand."

"My son," said Edith, "think on thy royal rights!"

"Think on the freedom of England, degenerate prince!" said Cedric.

"Mother and friend," said Athelstane, "a truce to your upbraidings! Bread and water and a dungeon are marvelous mortifiers of ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it. One half of those vain follies were puffed into my ear by that perfidious abbot Wolfram, and you may now judge if he is a counselor to be trusted. Since these plots were set in agitation, I have had nothing but hurried journeys, indi-

gestions, blows and bruises, imprisonments and starvation; besides that, they can only end in the murder of some thousands of quiet folk. I tell you, I will be king in my own domains, and nowhere else; and my first act of dominion shall be to hang the abbot."

"And my ward, Rowena," said Cedric. "I trust you intend not to desert her?"

"Father Cedric," said Athelstane, "be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me. She loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfred's glove better than my whole person. There she stands to avouch it. — Nay, blush not, kinswoman, there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country franklin. And do not laugh, neither, Rowena, for grave-clothes and a thin visage are, God knows, no matter of merriment. Nay, an thou wilt needs laugh, I will find thee a better jest. Give me thy hand, or rather lend it me, for I but ask it in the way of friendship. — Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, in thy favor I renounce and abjure — Hey! by St. Dunstan, our cousin Wilfred hath vanished! Yet, unless my eyes are still dazzled with the fasting I have undergone, I saw him stand there but even now."

All now looked round and inquired for Ivanhoe, but he had vanished. It was at length discovered that a Jew had been to seek him, and that, after very brief conference, he had called for Gurth and his armor, and had left the castle.

"Fair cousin," said Athelstane to Rowena, "could I think that this sudden disappearance of Ivanhoe was occasioned by other than the weightiest reason, I would myself resume" —

But he had no sooner let go her hand, on first observing that Ivanhoe had disappeared, than Rowena, who had found her situation extremely embarrassing, had taken the first opportunity to escape from the apartment.

"Certainly," quoth Athelstane, "women are the least to be trusted of all animals, monks and abbots excepted. I am an infidel, if I expected not thanks from her, and perhaps a kiss to boot. These cursed grave-clothes have surely a spell on them: every

one flies from me. To you I turn, noble King Richard, with the vows of allegiance, which, as a liege subject" —

But King Richard was gone also, and no one knew whither. At length it was learned that he had hastened to the courtyard, summoned to his presence the Jew who had spoken with Ivanhoe, and, after a moment's speech with him, had called vehemently to horse, thrown himself upon a steed, compelled the Jew to mount another, and set off at a rate which, according to Wamba, rendered the old Jew's neck not worth a penny's purchase.

"By my halidom!" said Athelstane, "it is certain that Zernebock hath possessed himself of my castle in my absence. I return in my grave-clothes, a pledge restored from the very sepulcher, and every one I speak to vanishes as soon as they hear my voice! But it skills not talking of it. Come, my friends, such of you as are left, follow me to the banquet-hall, lest any more of us disappear. It is, I trust, as yet tolerably furnished, as becomes the obsequies of an ancient Saxon noble; and, should we tarry any longer, who knows but the Devil may fly off with the supper."[1]

CHAPTER XLIII.

OUR scene now returns to the exterior of the castle, or preceptory, of Templestowe, about the hour when the bloody die was to be cast for the life or death of Rebecca. It was a scene of bustle and life, as if the whole vicinity had poured forth its inhabitants to a village wake or rural feast.

The eyes of a very considerable multitude were bent on the

[1] The resuscitation of Athelstane has been much criticised as too violent a breach of probability even for a work of such fantastic character. It was a *tour-de-force*, to which the author was compelled to have recourse by the vehement entreaties of his friend and printer, who was inconsolable on the Saxon being conveyed to the tomb.