

## CHAPTER XXI.

## PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

THE king sleeps. Let him sleep! He is old and infirm, and God has severely punished the restless tyrant with a vacillating, ever-disquieted, never-satisfied spirit, while He bound his body and made the spirit prisoner of the body; while He made the ambitious king, struggling for the infinite, a slave to his own flesh. How high soever his thoughts soar, still the king remains a clumsy, confined, powerless child of humanity; how much soever his conscience harasses him with disquiet and dread, yet he must be calm and endure it. He cannot run away from his conscience; God has fettered him by the flesh.

The king is sleeping! But the queen is not; and Jane Douglas is not; neither is the Princess Elizabeth.

She has watched with heart beating high. She is restless, and, pacing her room up and down in strange confusion, waited for the hour that she had appointed for the meeting. Now the hour had arrived. A glowing crimson overspread the face of the young princess; and her hand trembled as she took the light and opened the secret door to the corridor. She stood still for a moment, hesitating; then, ashamed of her irresolution, she crossed the corridor and ascended the small staircase which led to the tower-chamber. With a hasty movement she pushed open the door and entered the room. She was at the end of her journey, and Thomas Seymour was already there.

As she saw him, an involuntary trepidation came over her, and for the first time she now became conscious of her hazardous step.

As Seymour, the ardent young man, approached her with a passionate salutation, she stepped shyly back and pushed away his hand.

"How! you will not allow me to kiss your hand?" asked he, and she thought she observed on his face a

slight, scornful smile. "You make me the happiest of mortals by inviting me to this interview, and now you stand before me rigid and cold, and I am not once permitted to clasp you in my arms, Elizabeth!"

Elizabeth! He had called her by her first name without her having given him permission to do so. That offended her. In the midst of her confusion, that aroused the pride of the princess, and made her aware how much she must have forgotten her own dignity, when another could be so forgetful of it.

She wished to regain it. At this moment she would have given a year of her life if she had not taken this step—if she had not invited the earl to this meeting.

She wanted to try and regain in his eyes her lost position, and again to become to him the princess.

Pride in her was still mightier than love. She meant her lover should at the same time bow before her as her favored servant.

Therefore she gravely said: "Earl Thomas Seymour, you have often begged us for a private conversation; we now grant it to you. Speak, then! what matter of importance have you to bring before us?"

And with an air of gravity she stepped to an easy-chair, on which she seated herself slowly and solemnly like a queen, who gives audience to her vassals.

Poor, innocent child, that in her unconscious trepidation wished to intrench herself behind her grandeur, as behind a shield, which might conceal her maidenly fear and girlish anxiety!

Thomas Seymour, however, divined her thoughts; and his proud and cold heart revolted against this child's attempt to defy him.

He wanted to humble her; he wished to compel her to bow before him, and implore his love as a gracious gift.

He therefore bowed low to the princess, and respectfully said: "Your highness, it is true I have often besought you for an audience; but you have so long refused



me, that at last I could no longer summon up courage to solicit it; and I let my wish be silent and my heart dumb. Therefore seek not now, when these pains have been subdued, to excite them again. My heart should remain dead, my lips mute. You have so willed; and I have submitted to your will. Farewell, then, princess, and may your days be happier and more serene than those of poor Thomas Seymour!"

He bowed low before her, and then went slowly to the door. He had already opened it and was about to step out, when a hand was suddenly laid on his shoulder and drew him with vehement impetuosity back into the room.

"Do you want to go?" asked Elizabeth, with fluttering breath and trembling voice. "You want to leave me, and, flouting me, you want now, it may be, to go to the Duchess of Richmond, your mistress, and relate to her with a sneer that the Princess Elizabeth granted you an interview, and that you have flouted her?"

"The Duchess of Richmond is not my mistress," said the earl, earnestly.

"No, not your mistress; but she will very soon be your wife!"

"She will never be my wife!"

"And why not?"

"Because I do not love her, princess."

A beam of delight passed over Elizabeth's pale, agitated face. "Why do you call me princess?" asked she.

"Because you have come as a princess to favor your poor servant with an audience. But, ah, it would be greatly abusing your princely grace did I want to protract this audience still further. I therefore retire, princess."

And again he approached the door. But Elizabeth rushed after him, and, laying hold of his arms with both her hands, she wildly pushed him back.

Her eyes shot lightning; her lips trembled; a passionate warmth was manifested in her whole being. Now she

was the true daughter of her father, inconsiderate and passionate in her wrath, destroying in her ferocity.

"You shall not go," muttered she, with her teeth firmly set. "I will not let you go! I will not let you confront me any longer with that cold, smiling face. Scold me; cast on me the bitterest reproaches, because I have dared to brave you so long; curse me, if you can! Anything but this smiling calmness. It kills me; it pierces my heart like a dagger. For you see well enough that I have no longer the power to withstand you; you see well enough that I love you. Yes, I love you to ecstasy and to desperation; with desire and dread. I love you as my demon and my angel. I am angry, because you have so entirely crushed the pride of my heart. I curse you, because you have made me so entirely your slave; and the next moment I fall on my knees and beseech God to forgive me this crime against you. I love you, I say—not as these soft, gentle-hearted women love, with a smile on the lip; but with madness and desperation, with jealousy and wrath. I love you as my father loved Anne Boleyn, whom, in the hatred of his love and the cruel wrath of his jealousy, he made to mount the scaffold, because he had been told that she was untrue to him. Ah, had I the power, I would do as my father did; I would murder you, if you should dare ever to cease to love me. And now, Thomas Seymour, now say whether you have the courage to desire to leave me?"

She looked bewitching in the flaming might of her passion; she was so young, so ardent; and Thomas Seymour was so ambitious! In his eyes Elizabeth was not merely the beautiful, charming maiden, who loved him; she was more than that: she was the daughter of Henry the Eighth, the Princess of England, perchance some day the heiress of the throne. It is true, her father had disinherited her, and by act of Parliament declared her unworthy of succeeding to the throne.\* But Henry's vacil-

\* Burnet, vol. i, p. 138.



lating mind might change, and the disowned princess might one day become queen.

The earl thought of this as he gazed on Elizabeth—as he saw her before him, so charming, so young, and so glowing with passion. He thought of it as he now clasped her in his arms, and pressed on her lips a burning kiss.

“No, I will not go,” whispered he. “I will never more depart from your side, if you do not wish me to go. I am yours!—your slave, your vassal; and I will never be anything else but this alone. They may betray me; your father may punish me for high treason; yet will I exult in my good fortune, for Elizabeth loves me, and it will be for Elizabeth that I die!”

“You shall not die!” cried she, clinging fast to him. “You shall live, live at my side, proud, great, and happy! You shall be my lord and my master; and if I am ever queen, and I feel here in my heart that I must become so, then will Thomas Seymour be King of England.”

“That is to say, in the quiet and secrecy of your chamber I should perhaps be so!” said he with a sigh. “But there without, before the world, I shall still be ever only a servant; and at the best, I shall be called the favorite.”

“Never, never, that I swear to you! Said I not that I loved you?”

“But the love of a woman is so changeable! Who knows how long it will be before you will tread under your feet poor Thomas Seymour, when once the crown has adorned your brow.”

She looked at him well-nigh horrified. “Can this be, then? Is it possible that one can forget and forsake what he once loved?”

“Do you ask, Elizabeth? Has not your father already his sixth wife?”

“It is true,” said she, as mournfully she dropped her head upon her breast. “But I,” said she, after a pause, “I shall not be like my father in that. I shall love you

eternally! And that you may have a guaranty of my faithfulness, I offer myself to you as your wife.”

Astonished, he looked inquiringly into her excited, glowing face! He did not understand her.

But she continued, passionately: “Yes, you shall be my lord and my husband! Come, my beloved, come! I have not called you to take upon yourself the disgraceful rôle of the secret lover of a princess—I have called you to be my husband. I wish a bond to unite us two, that is so indissoluble that not even the wrath and will of my father, but only death itself, can sever it. I will give you proof of my love and my devotion; and you shall be forced to acknowledge that I truly love you. Come, my beloved, that I may soon hail you as my husband!”

He looked at her as though petrified. “Whither will you lead me?”

“To the private chapel,” said she, innocently. “I have written Cranmer to await me there at daybreak. Let us hasten, then!”

“Cranmer! You have written to the archbishop?” cried Seymour, amazed. “How! what say you? Cranmer awaits us in the private chapel?”

“Without doubt he is waiting for us, as I have written him to do so.”

“And what is he to do? What do you want of him?” She looked at him in astonishment. “What do I want of him? Why, that he may marry us!”

The earl staggered back as if stunned. “And have you written him that also?”

“Nay, indeed,” said she, with a charming, childlike smile. “I know very well that it is dangerous to trust such secrets to paper. I have only written him to come in his official robes, because I have an important secret to confess to him.”

“Oh, God be praised! We are not lost,” sighed Seymour.

“But how, I do not understand you?” asked she.



"You do not extend me your hand! You do not hasten to conduct me to the chapel!"

"Tell me, I conjure you, tell me only this one thing: have you ever spoken to the archbishop of your—no—of our love? Have you ever betrayed to him so much as a syllable of that which stirs our hearts?"

She blushed deeply beneath the steady gaze which he fixed on her. "Upbraid me, Seymour," whispered she. "But my heart was weak and timorous; and as often as I tried to fulfil the holy duty, and confess everything honestly and frankly to the archbishop, I could not do it! The word died on my lips; and it was as though an invisible power paralyzed my tongue."

"So, then, Cranmer knows nothing?"

"No, Seymour, he knows nothing as yet. But now he shall learn all; now we will go before him and tell him that we love each other, and constrain him, by our prayers, to bless our union, and join our hands."

"Impossible!" cried Seymour. "That can never be!"

"How! What do you say?" asked she in astonishment.

"I say that Cranmer will never be so insane, nay, so criminal, as to fulfil your wish. I say that you can never be my wife."

She looked him full and square in the face. "Have you not then told me that you loved me?" asked she. "Have I not sworn to you that I loved you in return? Must we then not be married, in order to sanctify the union of our hearts?"

Seymour sank his eyes to the ground before her pure innocent look, and blushed for shame. She did not understand this blush; because he was silent, she deemed him convinced.

"Come," said she, "come; Cranmer is waiting for us!"

He again raised his eyes and looked at her in amazement. "Do you not see, then, this is all only a dream that

can never become reality? Do you not feel that this precious fantasy of your great and noble heart will never be realized? How! are you then so little acquainted with your father as not to know that he would destroy us both if we should dare to set at naught his paternal and his royal authority? Your birth would not secure you from his destroying fury, for you well know he is unyielding and reckless in his wrath; and the voice of consanguinity sounds not so loud in him that it would not be drowned by the thunder of his wrath. Poor child, you have learned that already! Remember with what cruelty he has already revenged himself on you for the pretended fault of your mother; how he transferred to you his wrath against her. Remember that he refused your hand to the Dauphin of France, not for the sake of your happiness, but because he said you were not worthy of so exalted a position. Anne Boleyn's bastard could never become Queen of France. And after such a proof of his cruel wrath against you, will you dare cast in his face this terrible insult?—compel him to recognize a subject, a servant, as his son?"

"Oh, this servant is, however, the brother of a Queen of England!" said she, shyly. "My father loved Jane Seymour too warmly not to forgive her brother."

"Ah, ah, you do not know your father! He has no heart for the past; or, if he has, it is only to take vengeance for an injury or a fault, but not to reward love. King Henry would be capable of sentencing Anne Boleyn's daughter to death, and of sending to the block and rack Catharine Howard's brothers, because these two queens once grieved him and wounded his heart; but he would not forgive me the least offence on account of my being the brother of a queen who loved him faithfully and tenderly till her death. But I speak not of myself. I am a warrior, and have too often looked death in the face to fear him now. I speak only of you, Elizabeth. You have no right to perish thus. This noble head must not be laid upon the block. It is destined to wear a royal crown.



confidence with which you favor me, and sully your angel purity!"

"Ah, we will be very happy, Seymour!" said she, smiling. "I lack only one thing—a friend, to whom I can tell my happiness, to whom I can speak of you. Oh, it often seems to me as if this love, which must always be concealed, always shut up, must at last burst my breast; as if this secret must with violence break a passage, and roar like a tempest over the whole world. Seymour, I want a confidante of my happiness and my love."

"Guard yourself well against desiring to seek such a one!" exclaimed Seymour, anxiously. "A secret that three know, is a secret no more; and one day your confidante will betray us."

"Not so; I know a woman who would be incapable of that—a woman who loves me well enough to keep my secret as faithfully as I myself; a woman who could be more than merely a confidante, who could be the protectress of our love. Oh, believe me, if we could gain her to our side, then our future would be a happy and a blessed one, and we might easily succeed in obtaining the king's consent to our marriage."

"And who is this woman?"

"It is the queen."

"The queen!" cried Thomas Seymour, with such an expression of horror that Elizabeth trembled; "the queen your confidante? But that is impossible! That would be plunging us both inevitably into ruin. Unhappy child, be very careful not to mention even a single word, a syllable of your relation to me. Be very careful not to betray to her, even by the slightest intimation, that Thomas Seymour is not indifferent to you! Ah, her wrath would dash to pieces you and me!"

"And why do you believe that?" asked Elizabeth, gloomily. "Why do you suppose that Catharine would fly into a passion because Earl Seymour loves me? Or how?—it is she, perhaps, that you love, and you dare not there-

fore let her know that you have sworn your love to me also? Ah, I now see through it all; I understand it all! You love the queen—her only. For that reason you will not go to the chapel with me; for that reason you swore that you would not marry the Duchess of Richmond; and therefore—oh, my presentiment did not deceive me—therefore that furious ride in Epping Forest to-day. Ah, the queen's horse must of course become raving, and run away, that his lordship, the master of horse, might follow his lady, and with her get lost in the thicket of the woods!—And now," said she, her eyes flashing with anger, and raising her hand to heaven as if taking an oath, "now I say to you: Take heed to yourself! Take heed to yourself, Seymour, that you do not, even by a single word or a single syllable, betray your secret, for that word would crush you! Yes, I feel it, that I am no bastard, that I am my father's own daughter; I feel it in this wrath and this jealousy that rages within me! Take heed to yourself, Seymour, for I will go hence and accuse you to the king, and the traitor's head will fall upon the scaffold!"

She was beside herself. With clenched fists and a threatening air she paced the room up and down. Tears gushed from her eyes; but she shook them out of her eyelashes, so that they fell scattering about her like pearls. Her father's impetuous and untractable nature stirred within her, and his blood seethed in her veins.

But Thomas Seymour had already regained his self-command and composure. He approached the princess and despite her struggles clasped her in his arms.

"Little fool!" said he, between his kisses. "Sweet, dear fool, how beautiful you are in your anger, and how I love you for it! Jealousy is becoming to love; and I do not complain, though you are unjust and cruel toward me. The queen has much too cold and proud a heart ever to be loved by any man. Ah, only to think this is already treason to her virtue and modesty; and surely she has not deserved this from us two, that we should disdain and



insult her. She is the first that has always been just to you; and to me she has ever been only a gracious mistress!"

"It is true," murmured Elizabeth, completely ashamed; "she is a true friend and mother; and I have her to thank for my present position at this court."

Then, after a pause, she said, smiling, and extending her hand to the earl: "You are right. It would be a crime to suspect her; and I am a fool. Forgive me, Seymour, forgive my absurd and childish anger; and I promise you in return to betray our secret to no one, not even to the queen."

"Do you swear that to me?"

"I swear it to you! and I swear to you more than that: I will never again be jealous of her."

"Then you do but simple justice to yourself and to the queen also," said the earl, with a smile, as he drew her again to his arms.

But she pushed him gently back. "I must now away. The morning dawns, and the archbishop awaits me in the royal chapel."

"And what will you say to him, beloved?"

"I will make my confession to him."

"How! so you will then betray our love to him?"

"Oh," said she, with a bewitching smile, "that is a secret between us and God; and only to Him alone can we confess it; because He alone can absolve us from it. Farewell, then, Seymour, farewell, and think of me till we see each other again! But when—say, when shall we meet again?"

"When there is a night like this one, beloved, when the moon is not in the heavens."

"Oh, then I could wish there were a change of the moon every week," said she, with the charming innocence of a child. "Farewell, Seymour, farewell; we must part."

She clung to his tall, sturdy form as the ivy twines around the trunk of an oak. Then they parted. The

princess slipped again softly and unseen into her apartments, and thence into the royal chapel; the earl descended again the spiral staircase which led to the secret door of the garden.

Unobserved and unseen he returned to his palace; even his valet, who slept in the anteroom, did not see him, as the earl crept past him lightly on his toes, and betook himself to his sleeping-room.

But no sleep came to his eyes that night, and his soul was restless and full of fierce torment. He was angry with himself, and accused himself of treachery and perfidy; and then again, full of proud haughtiness, he still tried to excuse himself and to silence his conscience, which was sitting in judgment on him.

"I love her—her only!" said he to himself. "Catharine possesses my heart, my soul; I am ready to devote my whole life to her. Yes, I love her! I have this day so sworn to her; and she is mine for all eternity!"

"And Elizabeth?" asked his conscience. "Have you not sworn truth and love to her also?"

"No!" said he. "I have only received her oath; I have not given her mine in return. And when I vowed never to marry the Duchess of Richmond; when I swore this 'by my love,' then I thought only of Catharine—of that proud, beautiful, charming woman, at once maidenly and voluptuous; but not of this young, inexperienced, wild child—of this unattractive little princess!"

"But the princess may one day become a queen," whispered his ambition.

"That, however, is very doubtful," replied he to himself. "But it is certain that Catharine will one day be the regent, and if I am at that time her husband, then I am Regent of England."

This was the secret of his duplicity and his double treachery. Thomas Seymour loved nothing but himself, nothing but his ambition. He was capable of risking his



life for a woman; but for renown and greatness he would have gladly sacrificed this woman.

For him there was only one aim, one struggle: to become great and powerful above all the nobles of the kingdom—to be the first man in England. And to reach this aim, he would be afraid of no means; he would shrink from no treachery and no sin.

Like the disciples of Loyola, he said, in justification of himself, "the end sanctifies the means."

And thus for him every means was right which conducted him to the end; that is to say, to greatness and glory.

He was firmly convinced that he loved the queen ardently; and in his nobler hours he did really love her. Depending on the moment, a son of the hour, in him feeling and will varied with the rapidity of lightning, and he ever was wholly and completely that with which the moment inflamed him.

When, therefore, he stood before the queen, he did not lie when he swore that he loved her passionately. He really loved her, with double warmth, since she had to his mind in some sort identified herself with his ambition. He adored her, because she was the means that might conduct him to his end; because she might some day hold in her hands the sceptre of England. And on the day when this came to pass, he wished to be her lover and her lord. She had accepted him as her lord, and he was entirely certain of his future sway.

Consequently he loved the queen, but his proud and ambitious heart could never be so completely animated by one love as that there should not be room in it for a second, provided this second love presented him a favorable chance for the attainment of the aim of his life.

Princess Elizabeth had this chance. And if the queen would certainly become one day Regent of England, yet Elizabeth might some day perchance become queen thereof. Of course, it was as yet only a perhaps, but one

might manage out of this perhaps to make a reality. Besides, this young, passionate child loved him, and Thomas Seymour was himself too young and too easily excitable to be able to despise a love that presented him with such enticing promises and bright dreams of the future.

"It does not become a man to live for love alone," said he to himself as he now thought over the events of the night. "He must struggle for the highest and wish to reach the greatest, and no means of attaining this end ought he to leave unemployed. Besides, my heart is large enough to satisfy a twofold love. I love them both—both of these fair women who fetch me a crown. Let fate decide to which of the two I shall one day belong!"

## CHAPTER XXII.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY.

THE great court festival, so long expected, was at last to take place to-day. Knights and lords were preparing for the tournament; poets and scholars for the feast of the poets. For the witty and brave king wished to unite the two in this festival to-day, in order to give the world a rare and great example of a king who could claim all virtue and wisdom as his own; who could be equally great as a hero and as a divine; equally great as a poet and as a philosopher and a scholar.

The knights were to fight for the honor of their ladies; the poets were to sing their songs, and John Heywood to bring out his merry farces. Ay, even the great scholars were to have a part in this festival; for the king had specially, for this, summoned to London from Cambridge, where he was then professor in the university, his former teacher in the Greek language, the great scholar Croke, to



whom belonged the merit of having first made the learned world of Germany, as well as of England, again acquainted with the poets of Greece.\* He wished to recite with Croke some scenes from Sophocles to his wondering court; and though, to be sure, there was no one there who understood the Greek tongue, yet all, without doubt, must be enraptured with the wonderful music of the Greek and the amazing erudition of the king.

Preparations were going on everywhere; arrangements were being made; every one was making his toilet, whether it were the toilet of the mind or of the body.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, made his also; that is to say, he had retired to his cabinet, and was busy filing away at the sonnets which he expected to recite to-day, and in which he lauded the beauty and the grace of the fair Geraldine.

He had the paper in his hand, and was lying on the velvet ottoman which stood before his writing-table.

Had Lady Jane Douglas seen him now, she would have been filled with painful rapture to observe how, with head leaned back on the cushion, his large blue eyes raised dreamily to heaven, he smiled and whispered gentle words.

He was wholly absorbed in sweet reminiscences; he was thinking of those rapturous, blessed hours which he a few days before had spent with his Geraldine; and as he thought of them he adored her, and repeated to her anew in his mind his oath of eternal love and inviolable truth.

His enthusiastic spirit was completely filled with a sweet melancholy; and he felt perfectly intoxicated by the magical happiness afforded him by his Geraldine.

She was his—his at last! After struggles so long and painful, after such bitter renunciation, and such mournful resignation, happiness had at last arisen for him; the never expected had at last become indeed a reality. Catharine loved him. With a sacred oath she had sworn to

\* Tvtler, p. 207.

him that she would one day become his wife; that she would become his wife before God and man.

But when is the day to come on which he may show her to the world as his consort? When will she be at length relieved from the burden of her royal crown? When at length will fall from her those golden chains that bind her to a tyrannical and bloodthirsty husband—to the cruel and arrogant king? When will Catharine at length cease to be queen, in order to become Lady Surrey?

Strange! As he asked himself this, there ran over him a shudder, and an unaccountable dread fell upon his soul.

It seemed to him as if a voice whispered to him: "Thou wilt never live to see that day! The king, old as he is, will nevertheless live longer than thou! Prepare thyself to die, for death is already at thy door!"

And it was not the first time that he had heard that voice. Often before it had spoken to him, and always with the same words, the same warning. Often it seemed to him in his dreams as if he felt a cutting pain about the neck; and he had seen a scaffold, from which his own head was rolling down.

Henry Howard was superstitious; for he was a poet, and to poets it is given to perceive the mysterious connection between the visible and the invisible world; to believe that supernatural powers and invisible forms surround man, and either protect him or else curse him.

There were hours in which he believed in the reality of his dreams—in which he did not doubt of that melancholy and horrible fate which they foretold.

Formerly he had given himself up to it with smiling resignation; but now—since he loved Catharine, since she belonged to him—now he would not die. Now, when life held out to him its most enchanting enjoyments, its intoxicating delights—now he would not leave them—now he dreaded to die. He was therefore cautious and prudent; and, knowing the king's malicious, savage, and jealous



character, he had always been extremely careful to avoid everything that might excite him, that might arouse the royal hyena from his slumbers.

But it seemed to him as though the king bore him and his family a special spite; as though he could never forgive them that the consort whom he most loved, and who had the most bitterly wronged him, had sprung from their stock. In the king's every word and every look, Henry Howard felt and was sensible of this secret resentment of the king; he suspected that Henry was only watching for the favorable moment when he could seize and strangle him.

He was therefore on his guard. For now, when Geraldine loved him, his life belonged no longer to himself alone; she loved him; she had a claim on him; his days were, therefore, hallowed in his own eyes.

So he had kept silence under the petty annoyances and vexations of the king. He had taken it even without murmuring, and without demanding satisfaction, when the king had suddenly recalled him from the army that was fighting against France, and of which he was commander-in-chief, and in his stead had sent Lord Hertford, Earl of Sudley, to the army which was encamped before Boulogne and Montreuil. He had quietly and without resentment returned to his palace; and since he could no longer be a general and warrior, he became again a scholar and poet. His palace was now again the resort of the scholars and writers of England; and he was always ready, with true princely munificence, to assist oppressed and despised talent; to afford the persecuted scholar an asylum in his palace. He it was who saved the learned Fox from starvation, and took him into his house, where Horatius Junius and the poet Churchyard, afterward so celebrated, had both found a home—the former as his physician and the latter as his page.\*

Love, the arts, and the sciences, caused the wounds

\* Nott's Life of the Earl of Surrey.

that the king had given his ambition, to heal over; and he now felt no more rancor; now he almost thanked the king. For to his recall only did he owe his good fortune; and Henry, who had wished to injure him, had given him his sweetest pleasure.

He now smiled as he thought how Henry, who had taken from him the *bâton*, had, without knowing it, given him in return his own queen, and had exalted him when he wished to humble him.

He smiled, and again took in hand the poem in which he wished to celebrate in song, at the court festival that day, the honor and praise of his lady-love, whom no one knew, or even suspected—the fair Geraldine.

"The verses are stiff," muttered he; "this language is so poor! It has not the power of expressing all that fulness of adoration and ecstasy which I feel. Petrarch was more fortunate in this respect. His beautiful, flexible language sounds like music, and it is, even just by itself, the harmonious accompaniment of his love. Ah, Petrarch, I envy thee, and yet would not be like thee. For thine was a mournful and bitter-sweet lot. Laura never loved thee; and she was the mother of twelve children, not a single one of whom belonged to thee."

He laughed with a sense of his own proud success in love, and seized Petrarch's sonnets, which lay near him on the table, to compare his own new sonnet with a similar one of Petrarch's.

He was so absorbed in these meditations, that he had not at all observed that the hanging which concealed the door behind him was pushed aside, and a marvellous young woman, resplendent with diamonds and sparkling with jewelry, entered his cabinet.

For an instant she stood still upon the threshold, and with a smile observed the earl, who was more and more absorbed in his reading.

She was of imposing beauty; her large eyes blazed and glowed like a volcano; her lofty brow seemed in all re-



spects designed to wear a crown. And, indeed, it was a ducal coronet that sparkled on her black hair, which in long ringlets curled down to her full, voluptuous shoulders. Her tall and majestic form was clad in a white satin dress, richly trimmed with ermine and pearls; two clasps of costly brilliants held fast to her shoulders the small mantilla of crimson velvet, faced with ermine, which covered her back and fell down to her waist.

Thus appeared the Duchess of Richmond, the widow of King Henry's natural son, Henry Richmond; the sister of Lord Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; and the daughter of the noble Duke of Norfolk.

Since her husband had died and left her a widow at twenty, she resided in her brother's palace, and had placed herself under his protection, and in the world they were known as "the affectionate brother and sister."

Ah, how little knew the world, which is ever wont to judge from appearances, of the hatred and the love of these two; how little suspicion had it of the real sentiments of this brother and sister!

Henry Howard had offered his sister his palace as her residence, because he hoped by his presence to lay on her impulsive and voluptuous disposition a restraint which should compel her not to overstep the bounds of custom and decency. Lady Richmond had accepted this offer of his palace because she was obliged to; inasmuch as the avaricious and parsimonious king gave his son's widow only a meagre income, and her own means she had squandered and lavishly thrown away upon her lovers.

Henry Howard had thus acted for the honor of his name; but he loved not his sister; nay, he despised her. But the Duchess of Richmond hated her brother, because her proud heart felt humbled by him, and under obligations of gratitude.

But their hatred and their contempt were a secret that they both preserved in the depths of the heart, and which they scarcely dared confess to themselves. Both

had veiled this their inmost feeling with a show of affection, and only once in a while was one betrayed to the other by some lightly dropped word or unregarded look.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### BROTHER AND SISTER.

LIGHTLY on the tips of her toes the duchess stole toward her brother, who did not yet observe her. The thick Turkish carpet made her steps inaudible. She already stood behind the earl, and he had not yet noticed her.

Now she bent over his shoulder, and fastened her sparkling eyes on the paper in her brother's hand.

Then she read in a loud, sonorous voice the title of it: "Complaint, because Geraldine never shows herself to her lover unless covered by her veil." \* "Ah," said the duchess, laughing, "now, then, I have spied out your secret, and you must surrender to me at discretion. So you are in love; and Geraldine is the name of the chosen one to whom you address your poems! I swear to you, my brother, you will repay me dear for this secret."

"It is no secret at all, sister," said the earl, with a quiet smile, as he rose from the divan and saluted the duchess. "It is so little a secret, that I shall recite this sonnet at the court festival this very evening. I shall not, therefore, need your secrecy, Rosabella."

"So the fair Geraldine never shows herself to you unless in a dark veil, black as the night," said the duchess, musingly. "But tell me, brother, who then is the fair Geraldine? Of the ladies at court, I know not a single one who bears that name."

\* Sonnet by Surrey.—See Nott's *Life and Works of Surrey*.