

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*.



"So you see from that, the whole is only a fiction—a creation of my fancy."

"No, indeed," said she, smiling; "one does not write with such warmth and enthusiasm unless he is really in love. You sing your lady-love, and you give her another name. That is very plain. Do not deny it, Henry, for I know indeed that you have a lady-love. It may be read in your eyes. And look you! it is on account of this dear one that I have come to you. It pains me, Henry, that you have no confidence in me, and allow me no share in your joys and sorrows. Do you not know, then, how tenderly I love you, my dear, noble brother?"

She put her arm tenderly round his neck, and wanted to kiss him. He bent his head back, and laying his hand on her rosy, round chin, he looked inquiringly and smilingly into her eyes.

"You want something of me, Rosabella!" said he. "I have never yet enjoyed your tenderness and sisterly affection, except when you needed my services."

"How suspicious you are!" cried she, with a charming pout, as she shook his hand away from her face. "I have come from wholly disinterested sympathy; partly to warn you, partly to find out whether your love is perchance fixed upon a lady that would render my warning useless."

"Well, so you see, Rosabella, that I was right, and that your tenderness was not aimless. Now, then, you want to warn me? I have yet to learn that I need any warning."

"Nay, brother! For it would certainly be very dangerous and mischievous for you, if your love should chance not to be in accordance with the command of the king."

A momentary flush spread over Henry Howard's face, and his brow darkened.

"With the king's command?" asked he, in astonishment. "I did not know that Henry the Eighth could control my heart. And, at any rate, I would never concede him that right. Say quickly, then, sister, what is it?"

What means this about the king's command, and what matrimonial scheme have you women been again contriving? For I well know that you and my mother have no rest with the thought of seeing me still unmarried. You want to bestow on me, whether or no, the happiness of marriage; yet, nevertheless, it appears to me that you both have sufficiently learned from experience that this happiness is only imaginary, and that marriage in reality is, at the very least, the vestibule of hell."

"It is true," laughed the duchess; "the only happy moment of my married life was when my husband died. For in that I am more fortunate than my mother, who has her tyrant still living about her. Ah, how I pity my mother!"

"Dare not to revile our noble father!" cried the earl, almost threateningly. "God alone knows how much he has suffered from our mother, and how much he still suffers. He is not to blame for this unhappy marriage. But you have not come to talk over these sad and disgraceful family matters, sister! You wish to warn me, did you say?"

"Yes, warn you!" said the duchess, tenderly, as she took her brother's hand and led him to the ottoman. "Come, let us sit down here, Henry, and let us for once chat confidentially and cordially, as becomes brother and sister. Tell me, who is Geraldine?"

"A phantom, an ideal! I have told you that already."

"You really love, then, no lady at this court?"

"No, none! There is among all these ladies, with whom the queen has surrounded herself, not one whom I am able to love."

"Ah, your heart then is free, Henry; and you will be so much more easily inclined to comply with the king's wish."

"What does the king wish?"

She laid her head on her brother's shoulder, and said in a low whisper: "That the Howard and Seymour families



be at last reconciled; that at last they may reconcile the hatred, which has for centuries separated them, by means of a firm and sincere bond of love."

"Ah, the king wants that!" cried the earl, scornfully. "Forsooth, now, he has made a good beginning toward bringing about this reconciliation. He has insulted me before all Europe, by removing me from my command, and investing a Seymour with my rank and dignity; and he requires that I in return shall love this arrogant earl, who has robbed me of what is my due; who has long intrigued and besieged the king's ears with lies and calumnies, till he has gained his end and supplanted me."

"It is true the king recalled you from the army; but this was done in order to give you the first place at his court—to appoint you lord chamberlain to the queen."

Henry Howard trembled and was silent. "It is true," he then muttered; "I am obliged to the king for this place."

"And then," continued the duchess, with an innocent air, "then I do not believe either that Lord Hertford is to blame for your recall. To prove this to you, he has made a proposal to the king, and to me also, which is to testify to you and to all the world how great an honor Lord Hertford esteems it to be allied to the Howards, and above all things to you, by the most sacred bonds."

"Ah, that noble, magnanimous lord!" cried Henry Howard, with a bitter laugh. "As matters do not advance well with laurels, he tries the myrtles; since he can win no battles, he wants to make marriages. Now, sister, let me hear what he has to propose."

"A double marriage, Henry. He asks my hand for his brother Thomas Seymour, provided you choose his sister, Lady Margaret, for your wife."

"Never!" cried the earl. "Never will Henry Howard present his hand to a daughter of that house; never condescend so far as to elevate a Seymour to be his wife. That is well enough for a king—not for a Howard!"

"Brother, you insult the king!"

"Well, I insult him, then! He has insulted me, too, in arranging this base scheme."

"Brother, reflect; the Seymours are powerful, and stand high in the king's favor."

"Yes, in the king's favor they stand high! But the people know their proud, cruel, and arrogant disposition; and the people and nobility despise them. The Seymours have the voice of the king in their favor; the Howards the voice of the whole country, and that is of more consequence. The king can exalt the Seymours, for they stand far beneath him. He cannot exalt the Howards, for they are his equals. Nor can he degrade them. Catharine died on the scaffold—the king became thereby only a hangman—our escutcheon was not sullied by that act!"

"These are very proud words, Henry!"

"They become a son of the Norfolks, Rosabella! Ah, see that petty Lord Hertford, Earl Seymour. He covets a ducal coronet for his sister. He wants to give her to me to wife; for as soon as our poor father dies, I wear his coronet! The arrogant upstarts! For the sister's escutcheon, *my* coronet; for the brother's, *your* coronet. Never, say I, shall that be!"

The duchess had become pale, and a tremor ran through her proud form. Her eyes flashed, and an angry word was already suspended on her lips; but she still held it back. She violently forced herself to calmness and self-possession.

"Consider once more, Henry," said she, "do not decide at once. You speak of our *greatness*; but you do not bear in mind the *power* of the Seymours. I tell you they are powerful enough to tread us in the dust, despite all our greatness. And they are not only powerful at the present; they will be so in the future also; for it is well known in what disposition and what way of thinking the Prince of Wales is trained up. The king is old, weak, and failing; death lurks behind his throne, and will soon



enough press him in his arms. Then Edward is king. With him, the heresy of Protestantism triumphs; and however great and numerous our party may be, yet we shall be powerless and subdued. Yes, we shall be the oppressed and persecuted."

"We shall then know how to fight, and if it must be so, to die also!" cried her brother. "It is more honorable to die on the battle-field than to purchase life and humiliation."

"Yes, it is honorable to die on the field of battle; but, Henry, it is a disgrace to come to an end upon the scaffold. And that, my brother, may be your fate, if you do not this time bend your pride; if you do not grasp the hand that Lord Hertford extends to you in reconciliation, but mortally offend him. He will take bloody vengeance, when once he comes into power."

"Let him do it, if he can; my life is in God's hand! My head belongs to the king, but my heart to myself; and that I will never degrade to merchandise, which I may barter for a little security and royal favor."

"Brother, I conjure you, consider it!" cried the duchess, no longer able to restrain her passionate disposition, and all ablaze in her savage wrath. "Dare not in proud arrogance to destroy *my* future also! You may die on the scaffold, if you choose; but I—I will be happy; I will at last, after so many years of sorrow and disgrace, have my share of life's joys also. It is my due, and I will not relinquish it; and you shall not be allowed to tear it from me. Know, then, my brother, I love Thomas Seymour; all my desire, all my hope is fixed on him; and I will not tear this love out of my heart; I will not give him up."

"Well, if you love him, marry him, then!" exclaimed her brother. "Become the wife of this Thomas Seymour! Ask the duke, our father, for his consent to this marriage, and I am certain he will not refuse you, for he is prudent and cautious, and will, better than I, calculate the advantages which a connection with the Seymours may yield

our family. Do that, sister, and marry your dearly beloved. I do not hinder you."

"Yes, you do hinder me—you alone!" cried his sister, flaming with wrath. "You will refuse Margaret's hand; you will give the Seymours mortal offence. You thereby make my union with Thomas Seymour impossible! In the proud selfishness of your haughtiness, you see not that you are dashing to atoms my happiness, while you are thinking only of your desire to offend the Seymours. But I tell you, I love Thomas Seymour—nay, I adore him. He is my happiness, my future, my eternal bliss. Therefore have pity on me, Henry! Grant me this happiness, which I implore you for as Heaven's blessing. Prove to me that you love me, and are willing to make this sacrifice for me. Henry, on my knees, I conjure you! Give me the man I love; bend your proud head; become Margaret Seymour's husband, that Thomas Seymour may become mine."

She had actually sunk upon her knees; and her face deluged with tears, bewitchingly beautiful in her passionate emotion, she looked up imploringly to her brother.

But the earl did not lift her up; on the contrary, with a smile, he fell back a step. "How long is it now, duchess," asked he, mockingly, "since you swore that your secretary, Mr. Wilford, was the man whom you loved? Positively, I believed you—I believed it till I one day found you in the arms of your page. On that day, I swore to myself never to believe you again, though you vowed to me, with an oath ever so sacred, that you loved a man. Well, now, you love a man; but what one, is a matter of indifference. To-day his name is Thomas, to-morrow Archibald, or Edward as you please!"

For the first time the earl drew the veil away from his heart, and let his sister see all the contempt and anger that he felt toward her.

The duchess also felt wounded by his words, as by a red-hot iron.

She sprang from her knees; and with flurried breath,



with looks flashing with rage, every muscle of her countenance convulsed and trembling, there she stood before her brother. She was a woman no more; she was a lioness, that, without compassion or pity, will devour him who has dared irritate her.

"Earl of Surrey, you are a shameless wretch!" said she, with compressed, quivering lips. "Were I a man, I would slap you in the face, and call you a scoundrel. But, by the eternal God, you shall not say that you have done this with impunity! Once more, and for the last time, I now ask you, will you comply with Lord Hertford's wish? Will you marry Lady Margaret, and accompany me with Thomas Seymour to the altar?"

"No, I will not, and I will never do it!" exclaimed her brother, solemnly. "The Howards bow not before the Seymours; and never will Henry Howard marry a wife that he does not love!"

"Ah, you love her not!" said she, breathless, gnashing her teeth. "You do not love Lady Margaret; and for this reason must your sister renounce her love, and give up this man whom she adores. Ah, you love not this sister of Thomas Seymour? She is not the Geraldine whom you adore—to whom you dedicate your verses! Well, now, I will find her out—your Geraldine. I will discover her; and then, woe to you and to her! You refuse me your hand to lead me to the altar with Thomas Seymour; well, now, I will one day extend you my hand to conduct you and your Geraldine to the scaffold!"

And as she saw how the earl startled and turned pale, she continued with a scornful laugh: "Ah, you shrink, and horror creeps over you! Does your conscience admonish you that the hero, rigid in virtue, may yet sometimes make a false step? You thought to hide your secret, if you enveloped it in the veil of night, like your Geraldine, who, as you wailingly complain in that poem there, never shows herself to you without a veil as black as night. Just wait, wait! I will strike a light for you, before which all

your night-like veils shall be torn in shreds; I will light up the night of your secret with a torch which will be large enough to set on fire the fagot piles about the stake to which you and your Geraldine are to go!"

"Ah, now you let me see for the first time your real countenance," said Henry Howard, shrugging his shoulders. "The angel's mask falls from your face; and I behold the fury that was hidden beneath it. Now you are your mother's own daughter; and at this moment I comprehend for the first time what my father has suffered, and why he shunned not even the disgrace of a divorce, just to be delivered from such a Megæra."

"Oh, I thank you, thank you!" cried she, with a savage laugh. "You are filling up the measure of your iniquity. It is not enough that you drive your sister to despair; you revile your mother also! You say that we are furies; well, indeed, for we shall one day be such to you, and we will show you our Medusa-face, before which you will be stiffened to stone. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, from this hour out, I am your implacable enemy; look out for the head on your shoulders, for my hand is raised against it, and in my hand is a sword! Guard well the secret that sleeps in your breast; for you have transformed me to a vampire that will suck your heart's blood. You have reviled my mother, and I will go hence and tell her of it. She will believe me; for she well knows that you hate her, and that you are a genuine son of your father; that is to say, a canting hypocrite, a miserable fellow, who carries virtue on the lips and crime in the heart."

"Cease, I say, cease," cried the earl, "if you do not want me to forget that you are a woman and my sister!"

"Forget it by all means," said she, scornfully. "I have forgotten long since that you are my brother, as you have long since forgotten that you are the son of your mother. Farewell, Earl of Surrey; I leave you and your palace, and will from this hour out abide with my mother,



the divorced wife of the Duke of Norfolk. But mark you this: we two are separated from you in our love—but not in our hate! Our hatred to you remains eternal and unchangeable; and one day it will crush you! Farewell, Earl of Surrey; we meet again in the king's presence!"

She rushed to the door. Henry Howard did not hold her back. He looked after her with a smile as she left the cabinet, and murmured, almost compassionately: "Poor woman! I have, perhaps, cheated her out of a lover, and she will never forgive me that. Well, let it be so! Let her, as much as she pleases, be my enemy, and torment me with petty pin-prickings, if she be but unable to harm *her*. I hope, though, that I have guarded well my secret, and she could not suspect the real cause of my refusal. Ah, I was obliged to wrap myself in that foolish family pride, and make haughtiness a cloak for my love. Oh, Geraldine, *thee* would I choose, wert thou the daughter of a peasant; and I would not hold my escutcheon tarnished, if for thy sake I must draw a pale athwart it.—But hark! It is striking four! My service begins! Farewell, Geraldine, I must to the queen!"

And while he betook himself to his dressing-room, to put on his state robes for the great court feast, the Duchess of Richmond returned to her own apartments, trembling and quivering with rage. She traversed these with precipitate haste, and entered her boudoir, where Earl Douglas was waiting for her.

"Well," said he, stepping toward her with his soft, lurking smile, "has he consented?"

"No," said she, gnashing her teeth. "He swore he would never enter into an alliance with the Seymours."

"I well knew that," muttered the earl. "And what do you decide upon now, my lady?"

"I will have revenge! He wants to hinder me from being happy; I will for that make him unhappy!"

"You will do well in that, my lady; for he is an apostate and perjurer; an unfaithful son of the Church. He

inclines to the heretical sect, and has forgotten the faith of his fathers."

"I know it!" said she, breathlessly.

Earl Douglas looked at her in astonishment, and continued: "But he is not merely an atheist, he is a traitor also; and more than once he has reviled his king, to whom he, in his pride of heart, believes himself far superior."

"I know it!" repeated she.

"So proud is he," continued the earl, "so full of blasphemous haughtiness, that he might lay his hands upon the crown of England."

"I know it!" said the duchess again. But as she saw the earl's astonished and doubting looks, she added, with an inhuman smile: "I know everything that you want that I should know! Only impute crimes to him; only accuse him; I will substantiate everything, testify to everything that will bring him to ruin. My mother is our ally; she hates the father as hotly as I the son. Bring your accusation, then, Earl Douglas; we are your witnesses!"

"Nay, indeed, my lady," said he, with a gentle, insinuating smile. "I know nothing at all; I have heard nothing; how, then, can I bring an accusation? You know all; to you he has spoken. You must be his accuser!"

"Well, then, conduct me to the king!" said she.

"Will you allow me to give you some more advice first?"

"Do so, Earl Douglas."

"Be very cautious in the choice of your means. Do not waste them all at once, so that if your first thrust does not hit, you may not be afterward without weapons. It is better, and far less dangerous, to surely kill the enemy that you hate with a slow, creeping poison, gradually and day by day, than to murder him at once with a dagger, which may, however, break on a rib and become ineffective. Tell, then, what you know, not at once, but little by little. Administer your drug which is to make the king furious,



gradually; and if you do not hit your enemy to-day, think that you will do it so much the more surely to-morrow. Nor do you forget that we have to punish, not merely the heretic Henry Howard, but above all things the heretical queen, whose unbelief will call down the wrath of the Most High upon this land."

"Come to the king," said she, hastily. "On the way you can tell me what I ought to make known and what conceal. I will do implicitly what you say. Now, Henry Howard," said she softly to herself, "hold yourself ready; the contest begins! In your pride and selfishness you have destroyed the happiness of my life—my eternal felicity. I loved Thomas Seymour; I hoped by his side to find the happiness that I have so long and so vainly sought in the crooked paths of life. By this love my soul would have been saved and restored to virtue. My brother has willed otherwise. He has, therefore, condemned me to be a demon, instead of an angel. I will fulfil my destiny. I will be an evil spirit to him." \*

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### THE QUEEN'S TOILET.

THE festivities of the day are concluded, and the gallant knights and champions, who have to-day broken a lance for the honor of their ladies, may rest from their vic-

\* The Earl of Surrey, by his refusal to marry Margaret Seymour, gave occasion to the rupture of the proposed alliance between Thomas Seymour and the Duchess of Richmond, his sister. After that the duchess mortally hated him and combined with his enemies against him. The Duchess of Richmond is designated by all the historians of her time as "the most beautiful woman of her century, but also a shameless Messalina."—See Tytler, p. 390. Also Burnet, vol. i, p. 134; Leti, vol. i, p. 83; and Nott's *Life of Henry Howard*.

tories upon their laurels. The tournament of arms was over, and the tournament of mind was about to begin. The knights, therefore, retired to exchange the coat-of-mail for gold-embroidered velvet apparel; the ladies to put on their lighter evening dresses; and the queen, likewise with this design, had withdrawn to her dressing-room, while the ladies and lords of her court were in attendance in the large anteroom to escort her to the throne.

Without, it was beginning to grow dusky, and the twilight cast its long shadows across this hall, in which the cavaliers of the court were walking up and down with the ladies, and discussing the particularly important events of the day's tourney.

The Earl of Sudley, Thomas Seymour, had borne off the prize of the day, and conquered his opponent, Henry Howard. The king had been in raptures on this account. For Thomas Seymour had been for some time his favorite; perhaps because he was the declared enemy of the Howards. He had, therefore, added to the golden laurel crown which the queen had presented to the earl as the award, a diamond pin, and commanded the queen to fasten it in the earl's ruff with her own hand. Catharine had done so with sullen countenance and averted looks; and even Thomas Seymour had shown himself only a very little delighted with the proud honor with which the queen, at her husband's command, was to grace him.

The rigid popish party at court formed new hopes from this, and dreamed of the queen's conversion and return to the true, pure faith; while the Protestant, "the heretical" party, looked to the future with gloomy despondency, and were afraid of being robbed of their most powerful support and their most influential patronage.

Nobody had seen that, as the queen arose to crown the victor, Thomas Seymour, her handkerchief, embroidered with gold, fell from her hands, and that the earl, after he had taken it up and presented it to the queen, had