

lightning of his eyes, though she durst not look up at him, but lay at his feet moaning and convulsed, and concealing her face in her veil, as she shuddered at her own picture.

"And this be my last word to you Geraldine," said Henry Howard, panting for breath: "Go hence under the burden of my curse, and live—if you can!"

She unveiled her head, and raised her countenance toward him. A contemptuous smile writhed about her deathly pale lips. "Live!" said she. "Have we not sworn to die with each other? Your curse does not release me from my oath, and when you descend into the grave, Jane Douglas will stand upon its brink, to wail and weep until you make a little place for her there below; until she has softened your heart and you take her again, as your Geraldine, into your grave. Oh, Henry! in the grave, I no longer wear the face of Jane Douglas—that hated face, which I would tear with my nails. In the grave, I am Geraldine again. There I may again lie close to your heart, and again you will say to me: 'I love not your face and your external form! I love you yourself; I love your heart and mind; and that can never change; and can never be otherwise!'"

"Silence!" said he, roughly; "silence, if you do not want me to run mad! Cast not my own words in my face. They defile me, for falsehood has desecrated and trodden them in the mire. No! I will not make room for you in my grave. I will not again call you Geraldine. You are Jane Douglas, and I hate you, and I hurl my curse upon your criminal head! I tell you——"

He suddenly paused, and a slight convulsion ran through his whole frame.

Jane Douglas uttered a piercing scream, and sprang from her knees.

Day had broken; and from the prison-tower sounded the dismal, plaintive stroke of the death-bell.

"Do you hear, Jane Douglas?" said Surrey. "That

bell summons me to death. You it is that has poisoned my last hour. I was happy when I loved you. I die in despair, for I despise and hate you."

"No, no, you dare not die!" cried she, clinging to him with passionate anguish. "You dare not go to the grave with that fierce curse upon your lips. I cannot be your murderess. Oh, it is not possible that they will put you to death—you, the beautiful, the noble and the virtuous Earl Surrey. My God, what have you done to excite their wrath? You are innocent; and they know it. They cannot execute you; for it would be murder! You have committed no offence; you have been guilty of nothing; no crime attaches to your noble person. It is indeed no crime to love Jane Douglas, and me have you loved—me alone."

"No, not you," said he proudly; "I have nothing to do with Lady Jane Douglas. I loved the queen, and I believed she returned my love. That is my crime."

The door opened: and in solemn silence the lieutenant of the Tower entered with the priests and his assistants. In the door was seen the bright-red dress of the headsman, who was standing upon the threshold with face calm and unmoved.

"It is time!" solemnly said the lieutenant.

The priest muttered his prayers, and the assistants swung their censers. Without, the death-bell kept up its wail; and from the court was heard the hum of the mob, which, curious and bloodthirsty as it ever is, had streamed hither to behold with laughing mouth the blood of the man who but yesterday was its favorite.

Earl Surrey stood there a moment in silence. His features worked and were convulsed, and a deathlike pallor covered his cheeks.

He trembled, not at death, but at dying. It seemed to him that he already felt on his neck the cold broad-axe which that frightful man there held in his hand. Oh, to die on the battle-field—what a boon it would have been!

To come to an end on the scaffold—what a disgrace was this!

"Henry Howard, my son, are you prepared to die?" asked the priest. "Have you made your peace with God? Do you repent of your sins, and do you acknowledge death as a righteous expiation and punishment? Do you forgive your enemies, and depart hence at peace with yourself and with mankind?"

"I am prepared to die," said Surrey, with a proud smile; "the other questions, my father, I will answer to my God."

"Do you confess that you were a wicked traitor? And do you beg the forgiveness of your noble and righteous, your exalted and good king, for the blasphemous injury to his sacred majesty?"

Earl Surrey looked him steadily in the eye. "Do you know what crime I am accused of?"

The priest cast down his eyes, and muttered a few unintelligible words.

With a haughty movement of the head, Henry Howard turned from the priest to the lieutenant of the Tower.

"Do you know my crime, my lord?" said he.

But the lord lieutenant also dropped his eyes, and remained silent.

Henry Howard smiled. "Well, now, I will tell you. I have, as it becomes me, my father's son, borne the arms of our house on my shield and over the entrance of my palace, and it has been discovered that the king bears the same arms that we do. That is my high treason! I have said that the king is deceived in many of his servants, and often promotes his favorites to high honors which they do not deserve. That is my offence against his majesty; and it is that for which I shall lay my head upon the block.* But

* These two insignificant accusations were the only points that could be made out against the Earl of Surrey. Upon these charges, brought by his mother and sister, he was executed.—Tytler, p. 492; Burnet, vol. i, p. 75; Leti, vol. i, p. 108.

make yourself easy; I shall myself add to my crimes one more, so that they may be grievous enough to make the conscience of the righteous and generous king quiet. I have given up my heart to a wretched and criminal love, and the Geraldine whom I have sung in many a poem, and have celebrated even before the king, was nothing but a miserable coquettish strumpet!"

Jane Douglas gave a scream, and sank upon the ground as if struck by lightning.

"Do you repent of this sin, my son?" asked the priest. "Do you turn your heart away from this sinful love, in order to turn it to God?"

"I not only repent of this love, but I execrate it! and now, my father, let us go; for you see, indeed, my lord is becoming impatient. He bears in mind that the king will find no rest until the Howards also have gone to rest. Ah, King Henry! King Henry! Thou callest thyself the mighty king of the world, and yet thou tremblest before the arms of thy subject! My lord, if you go to the king to-day, give him Henry Howard's greeting; and tell him, I wish his bed may be as easy to him as the grave will be to me. Now, come, my lords! It is time."

With head proudly erect and calm step, he turned to the door. But now Jane Douglas sprang from the ground; now she rushed to Henry Howard and clung to him with all the might of her passion and agony. "I leave you not!" cried she, breathless and pale as death. "You dare not repulse me, for you have sworn that we shall live and die together."

He hurled her from him in fierce wrath, and drew himself up before her, lofty and threatening.

"I forbid you to follow me!" cried he, in a tone of command. She reeled back against the wall and looked at him, trembling and breathless.

He was still lord over her soul; she was still subject to him in love and obedience. She could not therefore summon up courage to defy his command.

She beheld him as he left the room and passed down the corridor with his dreadful train; she heard their footsteps gradually die away; and then suddenly in the yard sounded the hollow roll of the drum.

Jane Douglas fell on her knees to pray, but her lips trembled so much that she could find no words for her prayer.

The roll of the drum ceased in the court below, and only the death-bell still continued to wail and wail. She heard a voice speaking loud and powerful words.

It was *his* voice; it was Henry Howard that was speaking. And now again the hollow roll of the drums drowned his voice.

"He dies! He dies, and I am not with him!" cried she, with a shriek; and she gathered herself up, and as if borne by a whirlwind she dashed out of the room, through the corridor, and down the stairs.

There she stood in the court. That dreadful black pile above there, in the midst of this square crowded with men—that was the scaffold. Yonder she beheld *him* prostrate on his knees. She beheld the axe in the headsmen's hand; she saw him raise it for the fatal stroke.

She was a woman no longer, but a lioness! Not a drop of blood was in her cheeks. Her nostrils were expanded and her eyes darted lightning.

She drew out a dagger that she had concealed in her bosom, and made a path through the amazed, frightened, yielding crowd.

With one spring she had rushed up the steps of the scaffold. She now stood by him on the top of it—close by that kneeling figure.

There was a flash through the air. She heard a peculiar whiz—then a hollow blow. A red vapor-like streak of blood spurted up, and covered Jane Douglas with its crimson flood.

"I come, Henry, I come!" cried she, with a wild shout. "I shall be with thee in death!"



THE EXECUTION OF HENRY HOWARD.

And again there was a flash through the air. It was the dagger that Jane Douglas plunged into her heart.

She had struck well. No sound—no groan burst from her lips. With a proud smile she sank by her lover's headless corpse, and with a last dying effort she said to the horrified headsman: "Let me share his grave! Henry Howard, in life and in death I am with thee!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NEW INTRIGUES.

HENRY HOWARD was dead; and now one would have thought the king might be satisfied and quiet, and that sleep would no longer flee from his eyelids, since Henry Howard, his great rival, had closed his eyes forever; since Henry Howard was no longer there, to steal away his crown, to fill the world with the glory of his deeds, to dim the genius of the king by his own fame as a poet.

But the king was still dissatisfied. Sleep still fled from his couch.

The cause of this was that his work was only just half done. Henry Howard's father, the Duke of Norfolk, still lived. The cause of this was, that the king was always obliged to think of this powerful rival; and these thoughts chased sleep from his eyelids. His soul was sick of the Howards; therefore his body suffered such terrible pains.

If the Duke of Norfolk would close his eyes in death, then would the king also be able to close his again in refreshing sleep! But this court of peers—and only by such a court could the duke be judged—this court of peers was so slow and deliberate! It worked far less rapidly, and was not near so serviceable, as the Parliament which had so quickly condemned Henry Howard. Why must the