Mistress Alice's—only I could wish your honor would condescend to let me step down before, in case any neighbor be there—or—or—just to put matters something into order for Mistress Alice and your honor—just to make things something seemly and shapely."

"Not a whit necessary," said the knight, while Alice had much trouble in concealing her agitation. "If thy matters are unseemly, they are fitter for a defeated knight—if they are unshapely, why, the liker to the rest of a world, which is all unshaped. Go thou with that man.—What is thy name, friend?"

"Joseph Tomkins is my name in the flesh," said the steward. "Men call me Honest Joe, and Trusty Tomkins."

"If thou hast deserved such names, considering what trade thou hast driven, thou art a jewel indeed," said the knight; "yet if thou hast not, never blush for the matter, Joseph, for if thou art not in truth honest, thou hast all the better chance to keep the fame of it—the title and the thing itself have long walked separate ways. Farewell to thee,—and farewell to fair Woodstock!"

So saying, the old knight turned round, and pulling his daughter's arm through his own, they walked onward into the forest, in the same manner in which they were introduced to the reader.

CHAPTER III.

Now, ye wild blades, that make loose inns your stage,
To vapor forth the acts of this sad age,
Stout Edgehill fight, the Newberries and the West,
And northern clashes, where you still fought best;
Your strange escapes, your dangers void of fear,
When bullets flew between the head and ear,
Whether you fought by Damme or the Spirit,
Of you I speak.

LEGEND OF CAPTAIN JONES.

JOSEPH TOMKINS and Joliffe the keeper remained for some time in silence, as they stood together looking along the path in which the figures of the knight of Ditchley and pretty Mistress Alice had disappeared behind the trees. They then gazed on each other in doubt, as men who scarce knew whether they stood on hostile or on friendly terms together, and were at a loss how to open a conversation. They heard the knight's whistle summon Bevis; but though the good hound turned his head and pricked his ears at the sound, yet he did not obey the call, but continued to snuff around Joseph Tomkins's cloak.

"Thou art a rare one, I fear me," said the keeper, looking to his new acquaintance. "I have heard of men who have charms to steal both dogs and deer."

"Trouble not thyself about my qualities, friend," said Joseph Tomkins, "but bethink thee of doing thy master's bidding."

Joceline did not immediately answer, but at length, as if in sign of truce, stuck the end of his quarterstaff upright in the ground, and leaned upon it as he said gruffly,—"So, my tough old knight and you were at drawn bilbo, by way of afternoon service, sir preacher—Well for you I came not up till the blades were done jingling, or I had rung even-song upon your pate."

The Independent smiled grimly as he replied, "Nay, friend, it is well for thyself, for never should sexton have been better paid for the knell he tolled. Nevertheless, why should there be war betwixt us, or my hand be against thine? Thou art but a poor knave, doing thy master's order, nor have I any desire that my own blood or thine should be shed touching this matter.—Thou art, I understand, to give me peaceful possession of the Palace of Woodstock, so called—though there is now no palace in England, no, nor shall be in the days that come after, until we shall enter the palace of the New Jerusalem, and the reign of the Saints shall commence on earth."

"Pretty well begun already, friend Tomkins," said the keeper; "you are little short of being kings already upon the matter as it now stands; and for your Jerusalem I wot not, but Woodstock is a pretty nest-egg to begin with.—Well, will you shog—will you on—will you take sasine and livery?—You heard my orders."

"Umph—I know not," said Tomkins. "I must beware of ambuscades, and I am alone here. Moreover, it is the High Thanksgiving appointed by Parliament, and owned to by the army—also the old man and the young woman may want to recover some of their clothes and personal property, and I would not that they were baulked on my account. Wherefore, if thou wilt deliver me possession to-morrow morning, it shall be done in personal presence of my own followers, and of the Presbyterian man the Mayor, so that the transfer may be made before witnesses; whereas, wert there none with us but thou to deliver, and I to take possession, the men of Belial might say, Go to, Trusty Tomkins hath been an Edomite—Honest Joe hath been as an Ishmaelite, rising up early and dividing the spoil with them that served the Man—yea, they that wore beards and green jerkins, as in remembrance of the Man and of his government."

Joceline fixed his keen dark eyes upon the soldier as he spoke, as if in design to discover whether there was fair play in his mind or not. He then applied his five fingers to scratch a large shock head of hair, as if that operation was necessary to enable him to come to a conclusion. "This is all fair sounding, brother," said he; "but I tell you plainly, there are some silver mugs, and platters, and flagons, and so forth, in yonder house, which have survived the general sweep that sent all our plate to the smelting-pot, to put our knight's troop on horseback. Now, if thou takest not these off my hand, I may come to trouble, since it may be thought I have minished their numbers.—Whereas, I being as honest a fellow——"

"As ever stole venison," said Tomkins—"nay, I do owe thee an interruption."

"Go to, then," replied the keeper; "if a stag may have come to mischance in my walk, it was no way in the course of dishonesty, but merely to keep my old dame's pan from rusting; but for silver porringers, tankards, and such like, I would as soon have drunk the melted silver, as stolen the vessel made out of it. So that I would not wish blame or suspicion fell on me in this matter. And, therefore, if you will have the things rendered even now,—why so—and if not, hold me blameless."

"Ay, truly?" said Tomkins; "and who is to hold me blameless, if they should see cause to think any thing minished? Not the right worshipful Commissioners, to whom the property of the estate is as their own; therefore, as thou say'st, we must walk warily in the matter. To lock up the house and leave it, were but the work of simple ones. What say'st thou to spend the night there, and then nothing can be touched without the knowledge of us both?"

"Why, concerning that," answered the keeper, "I should be at my hut to make matters somewhat conformable for the old knight and Mistress Alice, for my old dame Joan is something dunny, and will scarce know how to manage—and yet, to speak the truth, by the mass I would rather not see Sir Henry to-night, since what has happened to-day hath roused his spleen, and it is a peradventure he may have met something at the hut which will scarce tend to cool it."

"It is a pity," said Tomkins, "that being a gentleman of such grave and goodly presence, he should be such a malignant cavalier, and that he should, like the rest of that generation of vipers, have clothed himself with curses as with a garment."

"Which is as much as to say, the tough old knight hath a habit of swearing," said the keeper, grinning at a pun, which has been repeated since his time; "but who can help it? it comes of use and wont. Were you now, in your bodily self, to light suddenly on a Maypole, with all the blithe morris-dancers prancing around it to the merry pipe and tabor, with bells jingling, ribands fluttering, lads frisking and laughing, lasses leaping till you might see where the scarlet garter fastened the light blue hose, I think some feeling, resembling either natural sociality, or old use and wont, would get the better, friend, even of thy gravity, and thou wouldst fling the cuckoldy steeple-hat one way, and that bloodthirsty long sword another, and trip, like the noodles of Hogs-Norton, when the pigs play on the organ."

The Independent turned fiercely round on the keeper, and replied, "How now, Mr. Green-Jerkin? what language is this to one whose hand is at the plough? I advise thee to put curb on thy tongue, lest thy ribs pay the forfeit."

"Nay, do not take the high tone with me, brother," answered Joceline; "remember thou hast not the old knight of sixty-five to deal with, but a fellow as bitter and prompt as thyself—it may be a little more so—younger, at all events—and prithee, why shouldst thou take such umbrage at a Maypole? I would thou hadst known one Phil Hazeldine of these parts—He was the best morris-dancer betwixt Oxford and Burford."

"The more shame to him," answered the Independent; "and I trust he has seen the error of his ways, and made himself (as, if a man of action, he easily might) fit for better company than wood-hunters, deer-stealers, Maid Marions, swash-bucklers, deboshed revellers, bloody brawlers, maskers, and mummers, lewd men and light women, fools and fiddlers, and carnal self-pleasers of every description."

"Well," replied the keeper, "you are out of breath in time; for here we stand before the famous Maypole of Woodstock."

They paused in an open space of meadow-land, beautifully skirted by large oaks and sycamores, one of which, as king of the forest, stood a little detached from the rest, as if scorning the vicinity of any rival. It was scathed and gnarled in the branches, but the immense trunk still showed to what gigantic size the monarch of the forest can attain in the groves of merry England.

"That is called the King's Oak," said Joceline; "the oldest men of Woodstock know not how old it is; they say Henry used to sit under it with fair Rosamond, and see the lasses dance, and the lads of the village run races, and wrestle for belts or bonnets."

"I nothing doubt it, friend," said Tomkins; "a tyrant and a harlot were fitting patron and patroness for such vanities."

"Thou may'st say thy say, friend," replied the keeper, "so thou lettest me say mine. There stands the Maypole, as thou seest, half a flight-shot from the King's Oak, in the midst of the meadow. The King gave ten shillings from the customs of Woodstock to make a new one yearly, besides a tree fitted for the purpose out of the forest. Now it is warped, and withered and twisted, like a wasted brier-rod. The green, too, used to be close-shaved, and rolled till it was smooth as a velvet mantle—now it is rough and overgrown."

"Well, well, friend Joceline," said the Independent, "but where was the edification of all this?—what use of doctrine could be derived from a pipe and tabor? as was there ever aught like wisdom in a bagpipe?"

"You may ask better scholars that," said Joceline; "but methinks men cannot be always grave, and with the hat over their brow. A young maiden will laugh as a tender flower will blow—ay, and a lad will like her the better for it; just as the same blithe Spring that makes the young birds whistle, bids the blithe fawns skip. There have come worse days since the jolly old times have gone by:—I tell thee, that in the holidays which you, Mr. Longsword, have put down, I have seen this greensward alive with merry

maidens and manly fellows. The good old rector himself thought it was no sin to come for a while and look on, and his goodly cassock and scarf kept us all in good order, and taught us to limit our mirth within the bounds of discretion. We might, it may be, crack a broad jest, or pledge a friendly cup a turn too often, but it was in mirth and good neighborhood--Ay, and if there was a bout at single-stick, or a bellyful of boxing, it was all for love and kindness; and better a few dry blows in drink, than the bloody doings we have had in sober earnest, since the presbyter's cap got above the bishop's mitre, and we exchanged our goodly rectors and learned doctor's, whose sermons were all bolstered up with as much Greek and Latin as might have confounded the devil himself, for weavers and cobblers, and such other pulpit volunteers, as—as we heard this morning—it will out."

"Well, friend," said the Independent, with patience scarcely to have been expected, "I quarrel not with thee for nauseating my doctrine. If thine ear is so much tickled with tabor tunes, and morris tripping, truly it is not likely thou shouldst find pleasant savor in more wholesome and sober food.—But let us to the Lodge, that we may go about our business there before the sun sets."

"Troth, and that may be advisable for more reasons than one," said the keeper; "for there have been tales about the Lodge which have made men afeard to harbor there after nightfall."

"Were not yon old knight, and yonder damsel his daughter, wont to dwell there?" said the Independent. "My information said so."

"Ay, truly did they," said Joceline; "and while they kept a jolly household, all went well enough; for nothing banishes fear like good ale. But after the best of our men went to the wars, and were slain at Naseby fight, they who were left found the Lodge more lonesome, and the old knight has been much deserted of his servants:—marry, it might be, that he has lacked silver of late to pay groom and lackey."

"A potential reason for the diminution of a household," said the soldier.

"Right, sir, even so," replied the keeper. "They spoke of steps in the great gallery, heard by dead of the night, and voices that whispered at noon in the matted chambers; and the servants pretended that these things scared them away; but in my poor judgment, when Martinmas and Whitsuntide came round without a penny-fee, the old blue-bottles of serving-men began to think of creeping elsewhere before the frost chilled them.—No devil so frightful as that which dances in the pocket where there is no cross to keep him out."

"You were reduced, then, to a petty household?" said the Independent.

"Ay, marry were we," said Joceline; "but we kept some half-score together, what with blue-bottles in the Lodge, what with green caterpillars of the chase, like him who is yours to command; we stuck together till we found a call to take a morning's ride somewhere or other."

"To the town of Worcester," said the soldier, "where you were crushed like vermin and palmer worms, as you are."

"You may say your pleasure," replied the keeper; "I'll never contradict a man who has got my head under his belt. Our backs are at the wall, or you would not be here."

"Nay, friend," said the Independent, "thou riskest nothing by thy freedom and trust in me I can be *bon camarado* to a good soldier, although I have striven with him even to the going down of the sun.—But here we are in front of the Lodge."

They stood accordingly in front of the Gothic building, irregularly constructed, and at different times, as the humor of the English monarchs led them to taste the pleasures of Woodstock Chase, and to make such improvements for their own accommodation, as the increasing luxury of each age required. The oldest part of the structure had been named by tradition Fair Rosamond's Tower; it was a small turret of great height, with narrow windows, and walls of massive thickness. The Tower had no opening to the ground, or means of descending, a great part of the lower portion being solid mason-work. It was traditionally said to have been accessible only by a sort of small drawbridge, which might be dropped at pleasure from a little portal near the summit of the turret, to the battlements of another tower of the same construction, but twenty feet lower, and containing only a winding staircase, called in Woodstock Love's Ladder; because it is said, that by ascending this staircase to the top of the tower, and then making use of the drawbridge, Henry obtained access to the chamber of his paramour.

The tradition had been keenly impugned by Dr. Rochecliffe, the former rector of Woodstock, who insisted that what was called Rosamond's Tower, was merely an interior keep, or citadel, to which the lord or warden of the castle might retreat, when other points of safety failed him; and either protract his defence, or, at the worst, stipulate for reasonable terms of surrender. The people of Woodstock, jealous of their ancient traditions, did not relish this new mode of explaining them away; and it is even said that the Mayor, whom we have already introduced, became Presbyterian, in revenge of the doubts cast by the rector upon this important subject, rather choosing to give up the Liturgy than his fixed belief in Rosamond's Tower, and Love's Ladder.

The rest of the Lodge was of considerable extent, and of different ages; comprehending a nest of little courts, surrounded by buildings which corresponded with each other, sometimes within-doors, sometimes by crossing the courts, and frequently in both ways. The different heights of the buildings announced that they could only be connected by the usual variety of staircases

which exercised the limbs of our ancestors in the sixteenth and earlier centuries, and seem sometimes to have been contrived for no other purpose.

The varied and multiplied fronts of this irregular building were, as Dr. Rochecliffe was wont to say, an absolute banquet to the architectural antiquary, as they certainly contained specimens of every style which existed, from the pure Norman of Henry of Anjou, down to the composite, half Gothic half classical architecture of Elizabeth and her successor. Accordingly, the rector was himself as much enamoured of Woodstock as ever was Henry of Fair Rosamond, and as his intimacy with Sir Henry Lee permitted him entrance at all times to the Royal Lodge, he used to spend whole days in wandering about the antique apartments, examining, measuring, studying, and finding out excellent reasons for architectural peculiarities, which probably only owed their existence to the freakish fancy of a Gothic artist. But the old antiquarian had been expelled from his living by the intolerance and troubles of the times, and his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough, would have considered an elaborate investigation of the profane sculpture and architecture of blinded and bloodthirsty Papists, together with the history of the dissolute amours of old Norman monarchs, as little better than a bowing down before the calves of Bethel, and a drinking of the cup of abominations.—We return to the course of our story.

"There is," said the Independent Tomkins, after he had carefully perused the front of the building, "many a rare monument of olden wickedness about this miscalled Royal Lodge; verily, I shall rejoice much to see the same destroyed, yea, burned to ashes, and the ashes thrown into the brook Kedron, or any other brook, that the land may be cleansed from the memory thereof, neither remember the iniquity with which their fathers have sinned."

The keeper heard him with secret indignation, and began to consider with himself, whether, as they stood but one to one, and without chance of speedy interference, he was not called upon, by his official duty, to castigate the rebel who used language so defamatory. But he fortunately recollected that the strife must be a doubtful one—that the advantage of arms was against him—and that, in especial, even if he should succeed in the combat, it would be at the risk of severe retaliation. It must be owned, too, that there was something about the Independent so dark and mysterious, so grim and grave, that the more open spirit of the keeper felt oppressed, and, if not overawed, at least kept in doubt concerning him; and he thought it wisest, as well as safest, for his master and himself, to avoid all subjects of dispute, and know better with whom he was dealing, before he made either friend or enemy of him.

The great gate of the Lodge was strongly bolted, but the wicket opened on Joceline's raising the latch. There was a short passage of ten feet, which had been formerly closed by a portcullis at the inner end, while three loop-holes opened on either side, through which any daring intruder might be annoyed, who having surprised the first gate, must be thus exposed to a severe fire before he could force the second. But the machinery of the portcullis was damaged, and it now remained a fixture, brandishing its jaw, well furnished with iron fangs, but incapable of dropping it across the path of invasion.

The way, therefore, lay open to the great hall or outer vestibule of the Lodge. One end of this long and dusky apartment was entirely occupied by a gallery, which had in ancient times served to accommodate the musicians and minstrels. There was a clumsy staircase at either side of it, composed of entire logs of a foot square; and in each angle of the ascent was placed by way of sentinel the figure of a Norman foot-soldier, having an open casque on his head, which displayed features as stern as the painter's genius could devise. Their arms were buff-jackets, or shirts of mail, round bucklers, with spikes in the centre, and buskins which adorned and defended the feet and ankles, but left the knees bare. These wooden warders held great swords, or maces in their hands, like military guards on duty. Many an empty hook and brace, along the walls of the gloomy apartment, marked the spots from which arms, long preserved as trophies, had been, in the pressure of the war, once more taken down, to do service in the field, like veterans whom extremity of danger recalls to battle. On other rusty fastenings were still displayed the hunting trophies of the monarchs to whom the lodge belonged, and of the sylvan knights to whose care it had been from time to time confided.

At the nether end of the hall, a huge, heavy, stone-wrought chimney-piece projected itself ten feet from the wall, adorned with many a cipher, and many a scutcheon of the Royal House of England. In its present state, it yawned like the arched mouth of a funeral vault, or perhaps might be compared to the crater of an extinguished volcano. But the sable complexion of the massive stone-work, and all around it, showed that the time had been when it sent its huge fires blazing up the huge chimney, besides puffing many a volume of smoke over the heads of the jovial guests, whose royalty or nobility did not render them sensitive enough to quarrel with such slight inconvenience. On these occasions, it was the tradition of the house, that two cart-loads of wood was the regular allowance for the fire between noon and curfew, and the andirons, or dogs, as they were termed, constructed for retaining the blazing firewood on the hearth, were wrought in the shape of lions of such gigantic size as might well warrant the legend. There were long seats of stone within the chimney, where, in despite of the tremendous heat, monarchs were sometimes said to have taken their station, and amused themselves with broiling the *umbles*, or

dowsets, of the deer, upon the glowing embers, with their own royal hands, when happy the courtier who was invited to taste the royal cookery. Tradition was here also ready with her record, to show what merry gibes, such as might be exchanged between prince and peer, had flown about at the jolly banquet which followed the Michaelmas hunt. She could tell, too, exactly, where King Stephen sat when he darned his own princely hose, and knew most of the odd tricks he had put upon little Winkin, the tailor of Woodstock.

Most of this rude revelry belonged to the Plantagenet times. When the house of Tudor acceded to the throne, they were more chary of their royal presence, and feasted in halls and chambers far within, abandoning the outmost hall to the yeomen of the guard, who mounted their watch there, and passed away the night with wassail and mirth, exchanged sometimes for frightful tales of apparitions and sorceries, which made some of those grow pale, in whose ears the trumpet of a French foeman would have sounded as jollily as a summons to the woodland chase.

Joceline pointed out the peculiarities of the place to his gloomy companion more briefly than we have detailed them to the reader. The Independent seemed to listen with some interest at first, but flinging it suddenly aside, he said in a solemn tone, "Perish Babylon, as thy master Nebuchadnezzar hath perished! He is a wanderer, and thou shalt be a waste place—yea, and a wilderness—yea, a desert of salt, in which there shall be thirst and famine."

"There is like to be enough of both to-night," said Joceline, "unless the good knight's larder be somewhat fuller than it is wont."

"We must care for the creature-comforts," said the Independent, "but in due season, when our duties are done. Whither lead these entrances?"

"That to the right," replied the keeper, "leads to what are called the state-apartments, not used since the year sixteen hundred and thirty-nine, when his blessed Majesty——"

"How, sir!" interrupted the Independent, in a voice of thunder, "dost thou speak of Charles Stewart as blessing, or blessed?—beware the proclamation to that effect."

"I meant no harm," answered the keeper, suppressing his disposition to make a harsher reply. "My business is with bolts and bucks, not with titles and state affairs. But yet, whatever may have happened since that poor King was followed with blessings enough from Woodstock, for he left a glove full of broad pieces for the poor of the place——"

"Peace, friend," said the Independent; "I will think thee else one of those besotted and blinded Papists, who hold, that bestowing of alms is an atonement and washing away of the wrongs and oppressions which have been wrought by the almsgiver. Thou sayest, then, these were the apartments of Charles Stewart?"

"And of his father, James, before him, and Elizabeth, before *him*, and bluff King Henry, who builded that wing, before them all."

"And there, I suppose, the knight and his daughter dwelt?"

"No," replied Joceline; "Sir Henry Lee had too much reverence for—for things which are now thought worth no reverence at all—Besides, the state-rooms are unaired, and in indifferent order, since of late years. The Knight Ranger's apartment lies by that passage to the left."

"And whither goes yonder stair, which seems both to lead upwards and downwards?"

"Upwards," replied the keeper, "it leads to many apartments, used for various purposes, of sleeping, and other accommodation. Downwards, to the kitchen, offices, and vaults of the castle, which, at this time of the evening, you cannot see without lights."

"We will to the apartments of your knight, then," said the Independent. "Is there fitting accommodation there?"

"Such as has served a person of condition, whose lodging is now worse appointed," answered the honest keeper, his bile rising so fast that head ded in a muttering and inaudible tone, "so it may well serve a cropeared knave like thee."

He acted as the usher, however, and led on towards the ranger's apartments.

This suite opened by a short passage from the hall, secured at time of need by two oaken doors, which could be fastened by large bars of the same, that were drawn out of the wall, and entered into square holes, contrived for their reception on the other side of the portal. At the end of this passage, a small anteroom received them, into which opened the sitting apartment of the good knight—which, in the style of the times, might have been termed a fair summer parlor—lighted by two oriel windows, so placed as to command each of them a separate avenue, leading distant and deep into the forest. The principal ornament of the apartment, besides two or three family portraits of less interest, was a tall full-length picture, that hung above the chimney-piece, which, like that in the hall, was of heavy stone-work, ornamented with carved scutcheons, emblazoned with various devices. The portrait was that of a man about fifty years of age, in complete plate armor, and painted in the harsh and dry manner of Holbein—probably, indeed, the work of that artist, as the dates corresponded. The formal and marked angles, points, and projections of the armor, were a good subject for the harsh pencil of that early school. The face of the knight was, from the fading of the colors, pale and dim, like that of some being from the other world, yet the lines expressed forcibly pride and exultation.

He pointed with his leading-staff, or truncheon, to the background, where, in such perspective as the artist possessed, were depicted the remains of a burning church, or monastery, and four or five soldiers, in red cassocks, bearing away in triumph what seemed a brazen font or laver. Above their heads might be traced in scroll, "*Lee Victor sic voluit.*" Right opposite to the picture, hung, in a niche in the wall, a complete set of tilting armor, the black and gold colors, and ornaments of which exactly corresponded with those exhibited in the portrait.

The picture was one of those which, from something marked in the features and expression, attract the observation even of those who are ignorant of art. The Independent looked at it until a smile passed transiently over his clouded brow. Whether he smiled to see the grim old cavalier employed in desecrating a religious house—(an occupation much conforming to the practice of his own sect)—whether he smiled in contempt of the old painter's harsh and dry mode of working—or whether the sight of this remarkable portrait revived some other ideas, the under-keeper could not decide.

The smile passed away in an instant, as the soldier looked to the oriel windows. The recesses within them were raised a step or two from the wall. In one was placed a walnut-tree reading-desk, and a huge stuffed arm-chair, covered with Spanish leather. A little cabinet stood beside, with some of its shuttles and drawers open, displaying hawks-bells, dog-whistles, instruments for trimming falcons' feathers, bridle-bits of various constructions, and other trifles connected with sylvan sport.

The other little recess was differently furnished. There lay some articles of needlework on a small table, besides a lute, with a book having some airs written down in it, and a frame for working embroidery. Some tapestry was displayed around the recess, with more attention to ornament than was visible in the rest of the apartment; the arrangement of a few bow-pots, with such flowers as the fading season afforded, showed also the superintendence of female taste.

Tomkins cast an eye of careless regard upon these subjects of female occupation, then stepped into the farther window, and began to turn the leaves of a folio, which lay open on the reading-desk, apparently with some interest. Joceline, who had determined to watch his motions without interfering with them, was standing at some distance in dejected silence, when a door behind the tapestry suddenly opened, and a pretty village maid tripped out with a napkin in her hand as if she had been about some household duty.

"How now, Sir Impudence?" she said to Joceline in a smart tone; "what do you here prowling about the apartments when the master is not at home?"

But instead of the answer which perhaps she expected, Joceline Joliffe cast a mournful glance towards the soldier in the oriel window, as if to make what he said fully intelligible, and replied with a dejected appearance and voice, "Alack, my pretty Phœbe, there come those here that have more right or might than any of us, and will use little ceremony in coming when they will, and staying while they please."

He darted another glance at Tomkins, who still seemed busy with the book before him, then sidled close to the astonished girl, who had continued looking alternately at the keeper and at the stranger, as if she had been unable to understand the words of the first, or to comprehend the meaning of the second being present.

"Go," whispered Joliffe, approaching his mouth so near her cheek, that his breath waved the curls of her hair; "go, my dearest Phœbe, trip it as fast as a fawn down to my lodge—I will soon be there, and——"

"Your lodge, indeed!" said Phœbe; "you are very bold, for a poor killbuck that never frightened any thing before save a dun deer—*Your* lodge, indeed!—I am like to go there, I think."

"Hush, hush! Phœbe—here is no time for jesting. Down to my hut, I say, like a deer, for the knight and Mrs. Alice are both there, and I fear will not return hither again.—All's naught, girl—and our evil days are come at last with a vengeance—we are fairly at bay and fairly hunted down."

"Can this be, Joceline?" said the poor girl, turning to the keeper with an expression of fright in her countenance, which she had hitherto averted in rural coquetry.

"As sure, my dearest Phœbe, as——"

The rest of the asseveration was lost in Phœbe's ear, so closely did the keeper's lips approach it; and if they approached so very near as to touch her cheek, grief, like impatience, hath its privileges, and poor Phœbe had enough of serious alarm to prevent her from demurring upon such a trifle.

But no trifle was the approach of Joceline's lips to Phœbe's pretty though sunburnt cheek, in the estimation of the Independent, who, a little before the object of Joceline's vigilance, had been more lately in his turn the observer of the keeper's demeanor, so soon as the interview betwixt Phœbe and him had become so interesting. And when he remarked the closeness of Joceline's argument, he raised his voice to a pitch of harshness that would have rivalled that of an ungreased and rusty saw, and which at once made Joceline and Phœbe spring six feet apart, each in contrary directions, and if Cupid was of the party, must have sent him out at the window like a wild duck flying from a culverin. Instantly throwing himself into the attitude of a preacher and a reprover of vice, "How now!" he exclaimed, "shameless and impudent as you are!—What—chambering and wantoning in our very presence!—How—would you play your pranks before the steward of the Commissioners of the High Court of Parliament, as ye would in a booth at the fulsome fair, or amidst the trappings and tracings of a profane dancing-school, where the scoundrel

minstrels make their ungodly weapons to squeak, 'Kiss and be kind, the fiddler's blind?'—But here," he said, dealing a perilous thump upon the volume—"Here is the King and high priest of those vices and follies!—Here is he, whom men of folly profanely call nature's miracle!—Here is he, whom princes chose for their cabinet-keeper, and whom maids of honor take for their bed-fellow!—Here is the prime teacher of fine words, foppery and folly—Here!"—(dealing another thump upon the volume—and ho! revered of the Roxburghe, it was the first folio—beloved of the Bannatyne it was Hemmings and Condel—it was the *editio princeps*)—"On thee," he continued—"on thee, William Shakspeare, I charge whate'er of such lawless idleness and immodest folly hath defiled the land since thy day!"

"By the mass, a heavy accusation," said Joceline, the bold recklessness of whose temper, could not be long overawed; "Odds pitlikins, is our master's old favorite, Will of Stratford, to answer for every buss that has been snatched since James's time?—a perilous reckoning truly—but I wonder who is sponsible for what lads and lasses did before his day?"

"Scoff not," said the soldier, "lest I, being called thereto by the voice within me, do deal with thee as a scorner. Verily, I say, that since the devil fell from Heaven, he never lacked agents on earth; yet nowhere hath he met with a wizard having such infinite power over men's souls as this pestilent fellow Shakspeare. Seeks a wife a foul example for adultery, here she shall find it—Would a man know how to train his fellow to be a murderer, here shall he find tutoring—Would a lady marry a heathen negro, she shall have chronicled example for it—Would any one scorn at his Maker, he shall be furnished with a jest in this book—Would he defy his brother in the flesh, he shall be accommodated with a challenge—Would you be drunk, Shakspeare will cheer you with a cup—Would you plunge in sensual pleasures, he will soothe you to indulgence, as with the lascivious sounds of a lute. This, I say, this book is the wellhead and source of all those evils, which have overrun the land like a torrent, making men scoffers, doubters, deniers, murderers, makebates, and lovers of the wine-pot, haunting unclean places, and sitting long at the evening-wine. Away with him, away with him, men of England! to Tophet with his wicked book, and to the Vale of Hinnom with his accursed bones! Verily but that our march was hasty when we passed Stratford, in the year 1643, with Sir William Waller; but that our march was hasty——"

"Because Prince Rupert was after you with his cavaliers," muttered the incorrigible Joceline.

"I say," continued the zealous trooper, raising his voice and extending his arm—"but that our march was by command hasty, and that we turned not aside in our riding, closing our ranks each one upon the other as becomes men of war, I had torn on that day the bones of that precep tor of vice and debauchery from the grave, and given them to the next dunghill. I would have made his memory a scoff and a hissing!"

"That is the bitterest thing he has said yet," observed the keeper. "Poor Will would have liked the hissing worse than all the rest."

"Will the gentleman say any more?" inquired Phœbe in a whisper. "Lack-a-day, he talks brave words, if one knew but what they meant. But it is a mercy our good knight did not see him ruffle the book at that rate—Mercy on us, there would certainly have been bloodshed.—But oh, the father—see how he is twisting his face about!—Is he ill of the colic, think'st thou, Joceline? Or, may I offer him a glass of strong waters?"

"Hark thee hither, wench!" said the keeper, "he is but loading his blunderbuss for another volley; and while he turns up his eyes, and twists about his face, and clenches his fist, and shuffles and tramples with his feet in that fashion, he is bound to take no notice of anything. I would be sworn to cut his purse, if he had one, from his side, without his feeling it."

"La! Joceline," said Phœbe, "and if he abides here in this turn of times, I dare say the gentleman will be easily served."

"Care not thou about that," said Joliffe; "but tell me softly and hastily what is in the pantry?"

"Small housekeeping enough," said Phœbe; "a cold capon and some comfits, and the great standing venison pasty, with plenty of spice-- a manchet or two besides, and that is all."

"Well, it will serve for a pinch—wrap thy cloak round thy comely body—get a basket and a brace of trenchers and towels, they are heinously impoverished down yonder—carry down the capon and the manchets—the pasty must abide with this same soldier and me, and the pie-crust will serve us for bread."

"Rarely," said Phœbe; "I made the paste myself—it is as thick as the walls of Fair Rosamond's Tower."

"Which two pairs of jaws would be long in gnawing through, work hard as they might," said the keeper. "But what liquor is there?"

"Only a bottle of Alicant, and one of sack, with the stone jug of strong waters," answered Phœbe.

"Put the wine-flasks into thy basket," said Joceline, "the knight must not lack his evening draught—and down with thee to the hut like a lapwing. There is enough for supper, and to-morrow is a new day.—Ha! by heaven I thought yonder man's eye watched us—No—he only rolled it round him in a brown study—Deep enough doubtless, as they all are.—But d—n him, he must be bottomless if I cannot sound him before the night's out.—Hie thee away, Phœbe."

But Phœbe was a rural coquette, and, aware that Joceline's situation gave him no advantage of avenging the challenge in a fitting way, she whispered in his ear, "Do you think our knight's friend, Shakspeare, really found out all these naughty devices the gentleman spoke of?"

Off she darted while she spoke, while Joliffe menaced future vengeance with his finger, as he muttered, "Go thy way, Phœbe Mayflower, the lightest-footed and lightest-hearted wench that ever tripped the sod in Woodstock-park!—After her, Bevis, and bring her safe to our master at the hut."

The large greyhound arose like a human servitor who had received an order, and followed Phœbe through the hall, first licking her hand to make her sensible of his presence, and then putting himself to a slow trot, so as best to accommodate himself to the light pace of her whom he convoyed, whom Joceline had not extolled for her activity without due reason. While Phœbe and her guardian thread the forest glades, we return to the Lodge.

The Independent now seemed to start as if from a reverie. "Is the young woman gone?" said he.

"Ay, marry is she," said the keeper; "and if your worship hath farther commands, you must rest contented with male attendance."

"Commands—umph—I think the damsel might have tarried for another exhortation," said the soldier—"Truly, I profess my mind was much inclined toward her for her edification."

"Oh, sir," replied Joliffe, "she will be at church next Sunday, and if your military reverence is pleased again to hold forth amongst us, she will have use of the doctrine with the rest. But young maidens of these parts hear no private homilies.—And what is now your pleasure? Will you look at the other rooms, and at the few plate articles which have been left?"

"Umph—no," said the Independent—"it wears late, and gets dark—thou hast the means of giving us beds, friend?"

"Better you never slept in," replied the keeper.

"And wood for a fire, and a light, and some small pittance of creature-comforts for refreshment of the outer man?" continued the soldier.

"Without doubt," replied the keeper, displaying a prudent anxiety to gratify this important personage.

In a few minutes a great standing candlestick was placed on an oaken table. The mighty venison pasty, adorned with parsley, was placed on the board on a clean napkin; the stone-bottle of strong-waters, with a black jack full of ale, formed comfortable appendages; and to this meal sate down in social manner the soldier, occupying a great elbow-chair, and the keeper, at his invitation, using the more lowly accommodation of a stool, at the opposite side of the table. Thus agreeably employed, our history leaves them for the present.

CHAPTER IV.

——Yon path of greensward
Winds round by sparry grot and gay pavilion;
There is no flint to gall thy tender foot,
There's ready shelter from each breeze, or shower.—
But Duty guides not that way—see her stand,
With wand entwined with amaranth, near yon cliffs.
Oft where she leads thy blood must mark thy footsteps,
Oft where she leads thy head must bear the storm,
And thy shrunk form endure heat, cold, and hunger;
But she will guide thee up to noble heights,
Which he who gains seems native of the sky,
While earthly things lie stretch'd beneath his feet,
Diminish'd, shrunk, and valueless——

ANONYMOUS.

THE reader cannot have forgotten that after his scuffle with the commonwealth soldier, Sir Henry Lee, with his daughter Alice, had departed to take refuge in the hut of the stout keeper Joceline Joliffe. They walked slow, as before, for the old knight was at once oppressed by perceiving these last vestiges of royalty fall into the hands of republicans, and by the recollection of his recent defeat. At times he paused, and, with his arms folded on his bosom, recalled all the circumstances attending his expulsion from a house so long his home. It seemed to him that, like the champions of romance of whom he had sometimes read, he himself was retiring from the post which it was his duty to guard, defeated by a Paynim knight, for whom the adventure had been reserved by fate. Alice had her own painful subjects of recollection, nor had the tenor of her last conversation with her father been so pleasant as to make her anxious to renew it until his temper should be more composed; for with an excellent disposition, and much love to his daughter, age and misfortunes, which of late came thicker and thicker, had given to the good knight's passions a wayward irritability unknown to his better days. His daughter, and one or two attached servants, who still followed his decayed fortunes, soothed his frailty as much as possible, and pitied him even while they suffered under its effects.

It was a long time ere he spoke, and then he referred to an incident already noticed. "It is strange," he said, "that Bevis should have followed Joceline and that fellow rather than me."

"Assure yourself, sir," replied Alice, "that his sagacity saw in this man a stranger, whom he thought himself obliged to watch circumspectly, and therefore he remained with Joceline."

"Not so, Alice," answered Sir Henry; "he leaves me because my fortunes have fled from me. There is a feeling in nature, affecting even the instinct, as it is called, of dumb animals, which teaches them to fly from misfortune. The very deer there will butt a sick or wounded buck from the herd; hurt a dog, and the whole kennel will fall on him and worry him; fishes devour their own kind when they are wounded with a

spear; cut a crow's wing, or break its leg, the others will buffet it to death."

"That may be true of the more irrational kinds of animals among each other," said Alice, "for their whole life is well-nigh a warfare; but the dog leaves his own race to attach himself to ours; forsakes, for his master the company, food, and pleasure of his own kind; and surely the fidelity of such a devoted and voluntary servant as Bevis hath been in particular, ought not to be lightly suspected."

"I am not angry with the dog, Alice; I am only sorry," replied her father. "I have read, in faithful chronicles, that when Richard II. and Henry of Bolingbroke were at Berkeley Castle, a dog of the same kind deserted the king, whom he had always attended upon, and attached himself to Henry, whom he then saw for the first time. Richard foretold, from the desertion of his favorite, his approaching deposition.* The dog was afterwards kept at Woodstock, and Bevis is said to be of his breed, which was heedfully kept up. What I might foretell of mischief from his desertion, I cannot guess, but my mind assures me it bodes no good."

There was a distant rustling among the withered leaves, a bouncing or galloping sound on the path, and the favorite dog instantly joined his master.

"Come into court, old knave," said Alice, cheerfully, "and defend thy character, which is well-nigh endangered by this absence." But the dog only paid her courtesy by gambolling around them, and instantly plunged back again, as fast as he could scamper.

"How now, knave?" said the knight; "thou art too well trained, surely, to take up the chase without orders." A minute more showed them Phœbe Mayflower approaching, her light pace so little impeded by the burden which she bore, that she joined her master and young mistress just as they arrived at the keeper's hut, which was the boundary of their journey. Bevis, who had shot a-head to pay his compliments to Sir Henry his master, had returned again to his immediate duty, the escorting Phœbe and her cargo of provisions. The whole party stood presently assembled before the door of the keeper's hut.

In better times, a substantial stone habitation, fit for the yeoman-keeper of a royal walk, had adorned this place. A fair spring gushed out near the spot, and once traversed yards and courts, attached to well-built and convenient kennels and mews. But in some of the skirmishes which were common during the civil wars, this little sylvan dwelling had been attacked and defended, stormed and burnt. A neighboring squire, of the Parliament side of the question, took advantage of Sir Henry Lee's absence, who was then in Charles's camp, and of the decay of the royal cause, and had, without scruple, carried off the hewn stones, and such building materials as the fire left unconsumed, and repaired his own manor-house with them. The yeoman-keeper, therefore, our friend Joceline, had constructed, for his own accommodation, and that of the old woman he called his dame, a wattled hut, such as his own labor, with that of a neighbor or two, had erected in the course of a few days. The walls were plastered with clay, whitewashed, and covered with vines and other creeping plants; the roof was neatly thatched, and the whole, though merely a hut, had, by the neat-handed Joliffe, been so arranged as not to disgrace the condition of the dweller.

The knight advanced to the entrance; but the ingenuity of the architect, for want of a better lock to the door, which itself was but of wattles curiously twisted, had contrived a mode of securing the latch on the inside with a pin, which prevented it from rising; and in this manner it was at present fastened. Conceiving that this was some precaution of Joliffe's old housekeeper, of whose deafness they were all aware, Sir Henry raised his voice to demand admittance, but in vain. Irritated at this delay, he pressed the door at once with foot and hand, in a way which the frail barrier was unable to resist; it gave way accordingly, and the knight thus forcibly entered the kitchen, or outward apartment, of his servant. In the midst of the floor, and with a posture which indicated embarrassment, stood a youthful stranger, in a riding-suit.

"This may be my last act of authority here," said the knight, seizing the stranger by the collar, "but I am still Ranger of Woodstock for this night at least—Who, or what art thou?"

The stranger dropped the riding mantle in which his face was muffled, and at the same time fell on one knee.

"Your poor kinsman, Markham Everard," he said, "who came hither for your sake, although he fears you will scarce make him welcome for his own."

Sir Henry started back, but recovered himself in an instant, as one who recollected that he had a part of dignity to perform. He stood erect, therefore, and replied with considerable assumption of stately ceremony:

"Fair kinsman, it pleases me that you are come to Woodstock upon the very first night that, for many years which have past, is likely to promise you a worthy or a welcome reception."

"Now God grant it be so, that I rightly hear and duly understand you," said the young man; while Alice, though she was silent, kept her looks fixed on her father's face, as if desirous to know whether his meaning was kind towards his nephew, which her knowledge of his character inclined her greatly to doubt.

The knight meanwhile darted a sardonic look, first on his nephew, then on his daughter, and proceeded—"I need not, I presume, inform Mr. Markham Everard, that it cannot be our purpose

* The story occurs, I think, in Froissart's Chronicles.

to entertain him, or even to offer him a seat in this poor hut."

"I will attend you most willingly to the Lodge," said the young gentleman. "I had, indeed, judged you were already there for the evening, and feared to intrude upon you. But if you would permit me, my dearest uncle, to escort my kinswoman and you back to the Lodge, believe me, amongst all of which you have so often done of good and kind, you never conferred benefit that will be so dearly prized."

"You mistake me greatly, Mr. Markham Everard," replied the knight. "It is not our purpose to return to the Lodge to-night, nor, by Our Lady, to-morrow neither. I meant but to intimate to you in all courtesy, that at Woodstock Lodge you will find those for whom you are fitting society, and who, doubtless, will afford you a willing welcome; which I, sir, in this my present retreat, do not presume to offer to a person of your consequence."

"For Heaven's sake," said the young man, turning to Alice, "tell me how I am to understand language so mysterious."

Alice, to prevent his increasing the restrained anger of her father, compelled herself to answer, though it was with difficulty, "We are expelled from the Lodge by soldiers."

"Expelled—by soldiers!" exclaimed Everard, in surprise—"there is no legal warrant for this."

"None at all," answered the knight, in the same tone of cutting irony which he had all along used, "and yet as lawful a warrant, as for aught that has been wrought in England this twelvemonth and more. You are, I think, or were, an Inns-of-Court man—marry, sir, your enjoyment of your profession is like that lease which a prodigal wishes to have of a wealthy widow. You have already survived the law which you studied, and its expiry doubtless has not been without a legacy—some decent pickings, some merciful increases, as the phrase goes. You have deserved it in two ways—you wore buff and bandalier, as well as wielded pen and ink—I have not heard if you held forth too."

"Think of me and speak of me as harshly as you will, sir," said Everard, submissively. "I have but, in this evil time, guided myself by my conscience, and my father's commands."

"O, an you talk of conscience," said the old knight, "I must have mine eye upon you, as Hamlet says. Never yet did Puritan cheat so grossly as when he was appealing to his conscience; and as for thy *father*——"

He was about to proceed in a tone of the same invective, when the young man interrupted him, by saying, in a firm tone, "Sir Henry Lee, you have ever been thought noble—Say of me what you will, but speak not of my father what the ear of a son should not endure, and which yet his arm cannot resent. To do me such wrong is to insult an unarmed man, or to beat a captive."

Sir Henry paused, as if struck by the remark. "Thou hast spoken truth in that, Mark, wert thou the blackest Puritan whom hell ever vomited, to distract an unhappy country."

"Be that as you will to think it," replied Everard; "but let me not leave you to the shelter of this wretched hovel. The night is drawing to storm—let me but conduct you to the Lodge, and expel those intruders, who can, as yet at least, have no warrant for what they do. I will not linger a moment behind them, save just to deliver my father's message.—Grant me but this much, for the love you once bore me!"

"Yes, Mark," answered his uncle firmly, but sorrowfully, "thou speakest truth—I did love thee once. The bright-haired boy whom I taught to ride, to shoot, to hunt—whose hours of happiness were spent with me, wherever those of graver labors were employed—I did love that boy—ay, and I am weak enough to love even the memory of what he was.—But he is gone, Mark—he is gone; and in his room I only behold an avowed and determined rebel to his religion and to his King—a rebel more detestable on account of his success, the more infamous through the plundered wealth with which he hopes to gild his villany.—But I am poor, thou think'st, and should hold my peace, lest men say, 'Speak, sirrah, when you should.'—Know, however, that, indigent and plundered as I am, I feel myself dishonored in holding even but this much talk with the tool of usurping rebels.—Go to the Lodge, if thou wilt—yonder lies the way—but think not that, to regain my dwelling there, or all the wealth I ever possessed in my wealthiest days, I would willingly accompany thee three steps on the greensward. If I must be thy companion, it shall be only when thy red-coats have tied my hands behind me, and bound my legs beneath my horse's belly. Thou mayst be my fellow travellor then, I grant thee, if thou wilt, but not sooner."

Alice, who suffered cruelly during this dialogue, and was well aware that farther argument would only kindle the knight's resentment still more highly, ventured at last, in her anxiety, to make a sign to her cousin to break off the interview, and to retire, since her father commanded his absence in a manner so peremptory. Unhappily, she was observed by Sir Henry, who, concluding that what he saw was evidence of a private understanding betwixt the cousins, his wrath acquired new fuel, and it required the utmost exertion of self-command, and recollection of all that was due to his own dignity, to enable him to veil his real fury under the same ironical manner which he had adopted at the beginning of this angry interview.

"If thou art afraid," he said, "to trace our forest glades by night, respected stranger, to whom I am perhaps bound to do honor as my successor in the charge of these walks, here seems to be a modest damsel, who will be most willing to wait on thee, and be thy bow-bearer.—Only, for her mother's sake, let there pass some slight form of marriage between you—Ye

need no license or priest in these happy days, but may be buckled like beggars in a ditch, with a hedge for a church-roof, and a tinker for a priest. I crave pardon of you for making such an officious and simple request—perhaps you are a Ranter—or one of the family of Love, or hold marriage rites as unnecessary, as Knipperdoling, or Jack of Leyden?"

"For mercy's sake, forbear such dreadful jesting, my father! and do you, Markham, begone, in God's name, and leave us to our fate—your presence makes my father rave."

"Jesting!" said Sir Henry, "I was never more serious—Raving!—I was never more composed—I could never brook that falsehood should approach me—I would no more bear by my side a dishonored daughter than a dishonored sword; and this unhappy day hath shown that both can fail."

"Sir Henry," said young Everard, "load not your soul with a heavy crime, which be assured you do, in treating your daughter thus unjustly. It is long now since you denied her to me, when we were poor and you were powerful. I acquiesced in your prohibition of all suit and intercourse, God knoweth what I suffered—but I acquiesced. Neither is it to renew my suit that I now come hither, and have, I do acknowledge, sought speech of her—not for her own sake only, but for yours also. Destruction hovers over you, ready to close her pinions to stoop, and her talons to clutch—Yes, sir, look contemptuous as you will, such is the case; and it is to protect both you and her that I am here."

"You refuse then my free gift," said Sir Henry Lee; "or perhaps you think it loaded with too hard conditions?"

"Shame, shame on you, Sir Henry," said Everard, waxing warm in his turn; "have your political prejudices so utterly warped every feeling of a father, that you can speak with bitter mockery and scorn of what concerns your own daughter's honor?—Hold up your head, fair Alice, and tell your father he has forgotten nature in his fantastic spirit of loyalty.—Know, Sir Henry, that though I would prefer your daughter's hand to every blessing which Heaven could bestow on me, I would not accept it—my conscience would not permit me to do so—when I knew it must withdraw her from her duty to you."

"Your conscience is over scrupulous, young man;—carry it to some dissenting rabbi, and he who takes all that comes to net, will teach thee it is sinning against our mercies to refuse any good thing that is freely offered to us."

"When it is freely offered, and kindly offered—not when the offer is made in irony and insult—Fare thee well, Alice—if aught could make me desire to profit by thy father's wild wish to cast thee from him in a moment of unworthy suspicion, it would be that while indulging in such sentiments, Sir Henry Lee is tyrannically oppressing the creature, who of all others is most dependent on his kindness—who of all others, will most feel his severity, and whom, of all others, he is most bound to cherish and support."

"Do not fear for me, Mr. Everard," exclaimed Alice, aroused from her timidity by a dread of the consequences not unlikely to ensue, where civil war set relations, as well as fellow-citizens, in opposition to each other.—"Oh, begone, I conjure you, begone! Nothing stands betwixt me and my father's kindness, but these unhappy family divisions—but your ill-timed presence here—for Heaven's sake, leave us!"

"Soh, mistress!" answered the hot old cavalier, 'you play lady paramount already; and who but you!—you would dictate to our train, I warrant, like Goneril and Regan! But I tell thee, no man shall leave my house—and, humble as it is, *this* is now my house—while he has aught to say to me that is to be spoken, as this young man now speaks, with a bent brow and a lofty tone.—Speak out, sir, and say your worst!"

"Fear not my temper, Mrs. Alice," said Everard, with equal firmness and placidity of manner; "and you, Sir Henry, do not think that if I speak firmly I mean therefore to speak in anger, or officiously. You have taxed me with much, and, were I guided by the wild spirit of romantic chivalry, much which, even from so near a relative, I ought not, as being by birth, and in the world's estimation, a gentleman, to pass over without reply. Is it your pleasure to give me patient hearing?"

"If you stand on your defence," answered the stout old knight, "God forbid that you should not challenge a patient hearing—ay, though your pleading were two parts disloyalty and one blasphemy—Only, be brief—this has already lasted but too long."

"I will, Sir Henry," replied the young man; "yet it is hard to crowd into a few sentences, the defence of a life which, though short, has been a busy one—too busy, your indignant gesture would assert. But I deny it; I have drawn my sword neither hastily, nor without due consideration, for a people whose rights have been trampled on, and whose consciences have been oppressed—Frown not, sir—such is not your view of the contest, but such is mine. For my religious principles, at which you have scoffed, believe me, that though they depend not on set forms, they are no less sincere than your own, and thus far purer—excuse the word—that they are unmingled with the bloodthirsty dictates of a barbarous age, which you and others have called the code of chivalrous honor. Not my own natural disposition, but the better doctrine which my creed has taught, enables me to bear your harsh revilings without answering in a similar tone of wrath and reproach. You may carry insult to extremity against me at your pleasure—not on account of your relationship alone, but because I am bound in charity to endure it. This, Sir Henry, is much from one of our house. But, with forbearance far more than this requires, I can refuse at your hands the gift

which, most of all things under heaven, I should desire to obtain, because duty calls upon her to sustain and comfort you, and because it were sin to permit you, in your blindness, to spurn your comforter from your side.—Farewell, sir—not in anger, but in pity—We may meet in a better time, when your heart and your principles shall master the unhappy prejudices by which they are now overclouded.—Farewell—farewell, Alice!"

The last words were repeated twice, and in a tone of feeling and passionate grief, which differed utterly from the steady and almost severe tone in which he had addressed Sir Henry Lee. He turned and left the hut so soon as he had uttered these last words; and, as if ashamed of the tenderness which had mingled with his accents, the young commonwealth's-man turned and walked sternly and resolvedly forth into the moonlight, which now was spreading its broad light and autumnal shadows over the woodland.

So soon as he departed, Alice, who had been during the whole scene in the utmost terror that her father might have been hurried, by his natural heat of temper, from violence of language into violence of action, sunk down upon a settle twisted out of willow boughs, like most of Joceline's few movables, and endeavored to conceal the tears which accompanied the thanks she rendered in broken accents to Heaven, that, notwithstanding the near alliance and relationship of the parties, some fatal deed had not closed an interview so perilous and so angry. Pœbe Mayflower blubbered heartily for company, though she understood but little of what had passed; just, indeed, enough to enable her afterwards to report to some half-dozen particular friends, that her old master, Sir Henry, had been perilous angry, and almost fought with young Master Everard, because he had well-nigh carried away her young mistress.—"And what could he have done better?" said Phœbe, "seeing the old man had nothing left either for Mrs. Alice or himself; and as for Mr. Mark Everard and our young lady, oh! they had spoken such loving things to each other as are not to be found in the history of Argalus and Parthenia, who, as the story-book tells, were the truest pair of lovers in all Arcadia, and Oxfordshire to boot."

Old Goody Jellycot had popped her scarlet hood into the kitchen more than once while the scene was proceeding; but, as the worthy dame was parcel blind and more than parcel deaf, knowledge was excluded by two principal entrances; and though she comprehended, by a sort of general instinct, that the gentlefolk were at high words, yet why they chose Joceline's hut for the scene of their dispute was as great a mystery as the subject of the quarrel.

But what was the state of the old cavalier's mood, thus contradicted, as his most darling principles had been, by the last words of his departing nephew? The truth is, that he was less thoroughly moved than his daughter expected; and in all probability his nephew's bold defence of his religious and political opinions rather pacified than aggravated his displeasure. Although sufficiently impatient of contradiction, still evasion and subterfuge were more alien to the blunt old Ranger's nature than manly vindication and direct opposition; and he was wont to say, that he ever loved the buck best who stood boldest at bay. He graced his nephew's departure, however, with a quotation from Shakspeare, whom, as many others do, he was wont to quote from a sort of habit and respect, as a favorite of his unfortunate master, without having either much real taste for his works, or great skill in applying the passages which he retained on his memory.

"Mark," he said, "mark this, Alice—the devil can quote Scripture for his purpose. Why, this young fanatic cousin of thine, with no more beard than I have seen on a clown playing Maid Marion on May-day, when the village barber had shaved him in too great a hurry, shall match any bearded Presbyterian or Independent of them all, in laying down his doctrines and his uses, and bethumping us with his texts and his homilies. I would worthy and learned Doctor Rochecliffe had been here, with his battery ready mounted from the Vulgate, and the Septuagint, and what not—he would have battered the presbyterian spirit out of him with a wanion. However, I am glad the young man is no sneaker; for, were a man of the devil's opinion in religion, and of Old Noll's in politics, he were better open on it full cry, than deceive you by hunting counter, or running a false scent. Come—wipe thine eyes—the fray is over, and not like to be stirred again soon, I trust."

Encouraged by these words, Alice rose, and, bewildered as she was, endeavored to superintend the arrangements for their meal and their repose in their new habitation. But her tears fell so fast, they marred her counterfeited diligence; and it was well for her that Phœbe, though too ignorant and too simple to comprehend the extent of her distress, could afford her material assistance, in lack of mere sympathy.

With great readiness and address, the damsel set about every thing that was requisite for preparing the supper and the beds; now screaming into Dame Jellycot's ear, now whispering into her mistress's, and artfully managing, as if she was merely the agent, under Alice's orders. When the cold viands were set forth, Sir Henry Lee kindly pressed his daughter to take refreshment, as if to make up, indirectly, for his previous harshness towards her; while he himself, like an experienced campaigner, showed, that neither the mortifications nor brawls of the day, nor the thoughts of what was to come to-morrow, could diminish his appetite for supper, which was his favorite meal. He ate up two-thirds of the capon, and, devoting the first bumper to the happy restoration of Charles, second of the name, he finished a quart of wine; for he belonged to a school accustomed to feed the

flame of their loyalty with copious brimmers He even sang a verse of "The King shall enjoy his own again," in which Phœbe, half-sobbing, and Dame Jellycot, screaming against time and tune, were contented to lend their aid, to cover Mistress Alice's silence.

At length the jovial knight betook himself to his rest on the keeper's straw pallet, in a recess adjoining to the kitchen, and, unaffected by his change of dwelling, slept fast and deep. Alice had less quiet rest in old Goody Jellycot's wicker couch, in the inner apartment; while the dame and Phœbe slept on a mattress, stuffed with dry leaves, in the same chamber, soundly as those whose daily toil gains their daily bread, and whom morning calls up only to renew the toils of yesterday.

CHAPTER V.

> My tongue pads slowly under this new language,
> And starts and stumbles at these uncouth phrases.
> They may be great in worth and weight, but hang
> Upon the native glibness of my language
> Like Saul's plate-armor on the shepherd boy,
> Encumbering and not arming him.
>
> J. B.

As Markham Everard pursued his way towards the Lodge, through one of the long sweeping glades which traversed the forest, varying in breadth, till the trees were now so close that the boughs made darkness over his head, then receding farther to let in glimpses of the moon, and anon opening yet wider into little meadows, or savannahs, on which the moonbeams lay in silvery silence; as he thus proceeded on his lonely course, the various effects produced by that delicious light on the oaks, whose dark leaves, gnarled branches, and massive trunks it gilded, more or less partially, might have drawn the attention of a poet or a painter.

But if Everard thought of any thing saving the painful scene in which he had just played his part, and of which the result seemed the destruction of all his hopes, it was of the necessary guard to be observed in his night-walk. The times were dangerous and unsettled; the roads full of disbanded soldiers, and especially of royalists, who made their political opinions a pretext for disturbing the country with marauding parties and robberies. Deer-stealers also, who are ever a desperate banditti, had of late infested Woodstock Chase. In short, the dangers of the place and period were such, that Markham Everard wore his loaded pistols at his belt, and carried his drawn sword under his arm, that he might be prepared for whatever peril should cross his path.

He heard the bells of Woodstock Church ring curfew, just as he was crossing one of the little meadows we have described, and they ceased as he entered an overshadowed and twilight part of the path beyond. It was there that he heard some one whistling; and, as the sound became clearer, it was plain the person was advancing towards him. This could hardly be a friend; for the party to which he belonged rejected, generally speaking, all music, unless psalmody. "If a man is merry, let him sing psalms," was a text which they were pleased to interpret as literally and to as little purpose as they did some others; yet it was too continued a sound to be a signal amongst night-walkers, and too light and cheerful to argue any purpose of concealment on the part of the traveller, who presently exchanged his whistling for singing, and trolled forth the following stanza to a jolly tune, with which the old cavaliers were wont to wake the night-owl:—

> "Hey for cavaliers! Ho for cavaliers!
> Pray for cavaliers!
> Rub a dub—rub a dub!
> Have at old Beelzebub—
> Oliver smokes for fear."

"I should know that voice," said Everard, uncocking the pistol which he had drawn from his belt, but continuing to hold it in his hand. Then came another fragment:

> "Hash them—slash them—
> All to pieces dash them."

"So ho!" cried Markham, "who goes there, and for whom?"

"For Church and King," answered a voice, which presently added, "No, d—n me—I mean *against* Church and King, and for the people that are uppermost—I forget which they are."

"Roger Wildrake, as I guess?" said Everard.

"The same—Gentleman; of Squattlesea-mere in the moist county of Lincoln."

"Wildrake!" said Markham—"Wildgoose you should be called. You have been moistening your throat to some purpose, and using it to gabble tunes very suitable to the times, to be sure!"

"Faith, the tune's a pretty tune enough, Mark, only out of fashion a little—the more's the pity."

"What could I expect," said Everard, "but to meet some ranting, drunken cavalier, as desperate and dangerous as night and sack usually make them? What if I had rewarded your melody by a ball in the gullet?"

"Why, there would have been a piper paid—that's all," said Wildrake. "But wherefore come you this way now? I was about to seek you at the hut."

"I have been obliged to leave it—I will tell you the cause hereafter," replied Markham.

"What! the old play-hunting cavalier was cross, or Chloe was unkind?"

"Jest not, Wildrake—it is all over with me," said Everard.

"The devil it is," exclaimed Wildrake, "and you take it thus quietly!—Zounds! let us back together—I'll plead your cause for you—I know how to tickle up an old knight and a pretty maiden—Let me alone for putting you *rectus in curia*, you canting rogue.—D—n me, Sir Henry Lee, says I, your nephew is a piece of a Puritan—it won't deny—but I'll uphold him a gentleman and a pretty fellow, for all that.—Madam, says I, you

may think your cousin looks like a psalm-singing weaver, in that bare felt, and with that rascally brown cloak; that band, which looks like a baby's clout, and those loose boots, which have a whole calf-skin in each of them,—but let him wear on the one side of his head a castor, with a plume befitting his quality; give him a good Toledo by his side, with a broidered belt and an inlaid hilt, instead of the ton of iron contained in that basket-hilted black Andrew Ferrara; put a few smart words in his mouth—and, blood and wounds! madam, says I——"

"Prithee, truce with this nonsense, Wildrake," said Everard, "and tell me if you are sober enough to hear a few words of sober reason?"

"Pshaw! man, I did but crack a brace of quarts with yonder puritanic, roundheaded soldiers, up yonder at the town; and rat me but I passed myself for the best man of the party; twanged my nose, and turned up my eyes, as I took my can—Pah! the very wine tasted of hypocrisy. I think the rogue corporal smoked something at last—as for the common fellows, never stir, but *they* asked me to say grace over another quart!"

"This is just what I wished to speak with you about, Wildrake," said Markham—"You hold me, I am sure, for your friend?"

"True as steel.—Chums at College and at Lincoln's Inn—we have been Nisus and Euryalus, Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades; and, to sum up the whole with a puritanic touch, David and Jonathan, all in one breath. Not even politics, the wedge that rends families and friendships asunder, as iron rives oak, have been able to split us."

"True," answered Markham, "and when you followed the King to Nottingham and I enrolled under Essex, we swore, at our parting, that which ever side was victorious, he of us who adhered to it, should protect his less fortunate comrade."

"Surely, man, surely; and have you not protected me accordingly? Did you not save me from hanging? and am I not indebted to you for the bread I eat?"

"I have but done that which, had the times been otherwise, you, my dear Wildrake, would, I am sure, have done for me. But, as I said, that is just what I wished to speak to you about. Why render the task of protecting you more difficult than it must necessarily be at any rate? Why thrust thyself into the company of soldiers, or such like, where thou art sure to be warmed into betraying thyself? Why come hollowing and whooping out cavalier ditties, like a drunken trooper of Prince Rupert, or one of Wilmot's swaggering body-guards?"

"Because I may have been both one and t'other in my day, for aught that you know," replied Wildrake. "But, oddsfish! is it necessary I should always be reminding you, that our obligation of mutual protection, our league of offensive and defensive, as I may call it, was to be carried into effect without reference to the politics or religion of the party protected, or the least obligation on him to conform to those of his friend?"

"True," said Everard; "but with this most necessary qualification, that the party should submit to such outward conformity to the times as should make it more easy and safe for his friend to be of service to him. Now, you are perpetually breaking forth, to the hazard of your own safety and my credit."

"I tell you, Mark, and I would tell your namesake the apostle, that you are hard on me. You have practised sobriety and hypocrisy from your hanging sleeves till your Geneva cassock—from the cradle to this day,—and it is a thing of nature to you; and you are surprised that a rough, rattling, honest fellow, accustomed to speak truth all his life, and especially when he found it at the bottom of a flask, cannot be so perfect a prig as thyself—Zooks! there is no equality betwixt us—A trained diver might as well, because he can retain his breath for ten minutes without inconvenience, upbraid a poor devil for being like to burst in twenty seconds, at the bottom of ten fathoms, water—And, after all, considering the guise is so new to me, I think I bear myself indifferently well—try me!"

"Are there any more news from Worcester fight?" asked Everard, in a tone so serious that it imposed on his companion, who replied in his genuine character—

"Worse!—d—n me, worse an hundred times than reported—totally broken. Noll hath certainly sold himself to the devil, and his lease will have an end one day—that is all our present comfort."

"What! and would this be your answer to the first red-coat who asked the question?" said Everard. "Methinks you would find a speedy passport to the next corps de garde."

"Nay, nay," answered Wildrake, "I thought you asked me in your own person.—Lack-a-day! a great mercy—a glorifying mercy—a crowning mercy—a vouchsafing—an uplifting—I profess the malignants are scattered from Dan to Beersheba—smitten, hip and thigh, even until the going down of the sun!"

"Hear you aught of Colonel Thornhaugh's wounds?"

"He is dead," answered Wildrake, "that's one comfort—the roundheaded rascal!—Nay, hold! it was but a trip of the tongue—I meant, the sweet godly youth."

"And hear you aught of the young man, King of Scotland, as they call him?" said Everard.

"Nothing, but that he is hunted like a partridge on the mountains. May God deliver him, and confound his enemies!—Zoons, Mark Everard, I can fool it no longer. Do you not remember, that at the Lincoln's-Inn gambols—though you did not mingle much in them, I think—I used always to play as well as any of them when it came to the action, but they could never get me to rehearse conformably. It's the same at this day. I hear