

to refuse thee my protection. Yet, when I think of the pale clay-cold figure of the old man, as he lay last night extended before me, and imagine the fury of Albert Lee raging with impatience, his hand on a sword which only his loyalty prevents him from plunging into his sovereign's heart—nay, the picture is too horrible! Charles must for ever change his name to Joseph, even if he were strongly tempted; which may Fortune in mercy prohibit!"

To speak the truth of a prince, more unfortunate in his early companions, and the callousness which he acquired by his juvenile adventures and irregular mode of life, than in his natural disposition, Charles came the more readily to this wise conclusion, because he was by no means subject to those violent and engrossing passions, to gratify which the world has been thought well lost. His amours, like many of the present day, were rather matters of habit and fashion, than of passion and affection; and, in comparing himself in this respect to his grandfather, Henry IV., he did neither his ancestor nor himself perfect justice. He was, to parody the words of a bard, himself actuated by the stormy passions which an intriguer often only simulates,—

None of those who loved so kindly,
None of those who loved so blindly.

An amour was with him a matter of amusement, a regular consequence, as it seemed to him, of the ordinary course of things in society. He was not at the trouble to practise seductive arts, because he had seldom found occasion to make use of them; his high rank, and the profligacy of part of the female society with which he had mingled, rendering them unnecessary. Added to this, he had, for the same reason, seldom been crossed by the obstinate interference of relations, or even of husbands, who had generally seemed not unwilling to suffer such matters to take their course.

So that, notwithstanding his total looseness of principle, and systematic disbelief in the virtue of woman, and the honor of men, as connected with the character of their female relatives, Charles was not a person to have studiously introduced disgrace into a family, where a conquest might have been violently disputed, attained with difficulty, and accompanied with general distress, not to mention the excitation of all fiercer passions against the author of the scandal.

But the danger of the King's society consisted in his being much of an unbeliever in the existence of such cases as were likely to be embittered by remorse on the part of the principal victim, or rendered perilous by the violent resentment of her connections or relatives. He had even already found such things treated on the continent as matters of ordinary occurrence, subject, in all cases were a man of high influence was concerned, to an easy arrangement; and he was really, generally speaking, sceptical on the subject of severe virtue in either sex, and apt to consider it as a veil assumed by prudery in

women, and hypocrisy in men, to extort a higher reward for their compliance.

While we are discussing the character of his disposition to gallantry, the Wanderer was conducted, by the walk he had chosen, through several whimsical turns, until at last it brought him under the windows of Victor Lee's apartment, where he descried Alice oriel and arranging some flowers placed on the oriel window, which was easily accessible by daylight, although at night he had found it a dangerous attempt to scale it. But not Alice only, her father also showed himself near the window, and beckoned him up. The family party seemed now more promising than before, and the fugitive Prince was weary of playing battledore and shuttlecock with his conscience, and much disposed to let matters go as chance should determine.

He climbed lightly up the broken ascent, and was readily welcomed by the old knight, who held activity in high honor. Alice also seemed glad to see the lively and interesting young man; and by her presence, and the unaffected mirth with which she enjoyed his sallies, he was animated to display those qualities of wit and humor which nobody possessed in a higher degree.

His satire delighted the old gentleman, who laughed till his eyes ran over as he heard the youth, whose claims to his respect he little dreamed of, amusing him with successive imitations of the Scottish Presbyterian clergymen, of the proud and poor Hidalgo of the North, of the fierce and overweening pride and Celtic dialect of the mountain chief, of the slow and more pedantic Lowlander, with all of which his residence in Scotland had made him familiar. Alice also laughed, and applauded, amused herself, and delighted to see that her father was so; and the whole party were in the highest glee, when Albert Lee entered, eager to find Louis Kernegny, and to lead him away to a private colloquy with Dr. Rochecliffe, whose zeal, assiduity, and wonderful possession of information, had constituted him their master-pilot in those difficult times.

It is unnecessary to introduce the reader to the minute particulars of their conference. The information obtained was so far favorable, that the enemy seemed to have had no intelligence of the King's route towards the south, and remained persuaded that he had made his escape from Bristol, as had been reported, and as had indeed been proposed; but the master of the vessel prepared for the King's passage had taken the alarm, and sailed without his royal freight. His departure, however, and the suspicion of the service in which he was engaged, served to make the belief general, that the King had gone off along with him.

But though this was cheering, the Doctor had more unpleasant tidings from the sea-coast, alleging great difficulties in securing a vessel, to which it might be fit to commit a charge so precious; and, above all, requesting his Majesty

might on no account venture to approach the shore, until he should receive advice that all the previous arrangements had been completely settled.

No one was able to suggest a safer place of residence than that which he at present occupied. Colonel Everard was deemed certainly not personally unfriendly to the King; and Cromwell, as was supposed, reposed in Everard an unbounded confidence. The interior presented numberless hiding-places, and secret modes of exit, known to no one but the ancient residents of the Lodge—nay, far better to Rochecliffe than to any of them; as, when Rector at the neighboring town, his prying disposition as an antiquary had induced him to make very many researches among the old ruins—the results of which he was believed, in some instances, to have kept to himself.

To balance these conveniences, it was no doubt true, that the Parliamentary Commissioners were still at no great distance, and would be ready to resume their authority upon the first opportunity. But no one supposed such an opportunity was likely to occur; and all believed, as the influence of Cromwell and the army grew more and more predominant, that the disappointed Commissioners would attempt nothing in contradiction to his pleasure, but wait with patience and indemnification in some other quarter for their vacated commissions. Report, through the voice of Master Joseph Tomkins, stated, that they had determined, in the first place, to retire to Oxford, and were making preparations accordingly. This promised still farther to insure the security of Woodstock. It was therefore settled that the King, under the character of Louis Kernegny, should remain an inmate of the Lodge, until a vessel should be procured for his escape, at the port which might be esteemed the safest and most convenient.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The deadliest snakes are those which, twined 'mongst flowers,
Blend their bright coloring with the varied blossoms,
Their fierce eyes glittering like the spangled dew-drop;
In all so like what nature has most harmless,
That sportive innocence, which dreads no danger,
Is poison'd unawares.

OLD FLAY.

CHARLES (we must now give him his own name) was easily reconciled to the circumstances which rendered his residence at Woodstock advisable. No doubt he would much rather have secured his safety by making an immediate escape out of England; but he had been condemned already to many uncomfortable lurking-places, and more disagreeable disguises, as well as to long and difficult journeys, during which, between pragmatical officers of justice belonging to the prevailing party, and parties of soldiers whose officers usually took on them to act on their own warrant, risk of discovery had more than once become very imminent. He was glad, there-

fore, of comparative repose, and of comparative safety.

Then it must be considered, that Charles had been entirely reconciled to the society at Woodstock since he had become better acquainted with it. He had seen, that, to interest the beautiful Alice, and procure a great deal of her company, nothing more was necessary than to submit to the humors, and cultivate the intimacy, of the old cavalier her father. A few bouts at fencing, in which Charles took care not to put out his more perfect skill, and full youthful strength and activity—the endurance of a few scenes from Shakspeare, which the knight read with more zeal than taste—a little skill in music, in which the old man had been a proficient—the deference paid to a few old-fashioned opinions, at which Charles laughed in his sleeve—were all sufficient to gain for the disguised Prince an interest in Sir Henry Lee, and to conciliate in an equal degree the goodwill of his lovely daughter.

Never were there two young persons who could be said to commence this species of intimacy with such unequal advantages. Charles was a libertine, who, if he did not in cold blood resolve upon prosecuting his passion for Alice to a dishonorable conclusion, was at every moment liable to be provoked to attempt the strength of a virtue, in which he was no believer. Then Alice, on her part, hardly knew even what was implied by the word libertine or seducer. Her mother had died early in the commencement of the Civil War, and she had been bred up chiefly with her brother and cousin; so that she had an unfeared and unsuspecting frankness of manner, upon which Charles was not unwilling or unlikely to put a construction favorable to his own views. Even Alice's love for her cousin—the first sensation which awakens the most innocent and simple mind to feelings of shyness and restraint towards the male sex in general—had failed to excite such an alarm in her bosom. They were nearly related; and Everard, though young, was several years her elder, and had, from her infancy, been an object of her respect as well as of her affection. When this early and childish intimacy ripened into youthful love confessed and returned, still it differed in some shades from the passion existing between lovers originally strangers to each other, until their affections have been united in the ordinary course of courtship. Their love was fonder, more familiar, more perfectly confidential; purer too, perhaps, and more free from starts of passionate violence, or apprehensive jealousy.

The possibility that any one could have attempted to rival Everard in her affection, was a circumstance which never occurred to Alice; and that this singular Scottish lad, whom she laughed with on account of his humor, and laughed at for his peculiarities, should be an object of danger or of caution, never once entered her imagination. The sort of intimacy to which she admitted Kernegny was the same to which she would have received a companion of her own sex, whose man

ners she did not always approve, but whose society she found always amusing.

It was natural that the freedom of Alice Lee's conduct, which arose from the most perfect indifference, should pass for something approaching to encouragement in the royal gallant's apprehension, and that any resolutions he had formed against being tempted to violate the hospitality of Woodstock, should begin to totter, as opportunities for doing so became more frequent.

These opportunities were favored by Albert's departure from Woodstock the very day after his arrival. It had been agreed, in full council with Charles and Rocheliff, that he should go to visit his uncle Everard in the county of Kent, and, by showing himself there, obviate any cause of suspicion which might arise from his residence at Woodstock, and remove any pretext for disturbing his father's family on account of their harboring one who had been so lately in arms. He had also undertaken, at his own great personal risk, to visit different points on the sea-coast, and ascertain the security of different places for providing shipping for the King's leaving England.

These circumstances were alike calculated to procure the King's safety, and facilitate his escape. But Alice was thereby deprived of the presence of her brother, who would have been her most watchful guardian, but who had set down the King's light talk upon a former occasion to the gaiety of his humor, and would have thought he had done his sovereign great injustice, had he seriously suspected him of such a breach of hospitality as a dishonorable pursuit of Alice would have implied.

There were, however, two of the household at Woodstock, who appeared not so entirely reconciled with Louis Kerneguy or his purposes. The one was Bevis, who seemed, from their first unfriendly rencontre, to have kept up a pique against their new guest, which no advances on the part of Charles were able to soften. If the page was by chance left alone with his young mistress, Bevis chose always to be of the party; came close by Alice's chair, and growled audibly when the gallant drew near her. "It is a pity," said the disguised Prince, "that your Bevis is not a bull-dog, that we might dub him a roundhead at once—He is too handsome, too noble, too aristocratic, to nourish those inhospitable prejudices against a poor houseless cavalier. I am convinced the spirit of Pym or Hampden has transmigrated into the rogue, and continues to demonstrate his hatred against royalty and all its adherents."

Alice would then reply, that Bevis was loyal in word and deed, and only partook her father's prejudices against the Scots, which, she could not but acknowledge, were tolerably strong.

"Nay, then," said the supposed Louis, "I must find some other reason, for I cannot allow Sir Bevis's resentment to rest upon national antipathy. So we will suppose that some gallant cavalier, who wended to the wars and never re-

turned, has adopted this shape to look back upon the haunts he left so unwillingly, and is jealous at seeing even poor Louis Kerneguy drawing near to the lady of his lost affections."—He approached her chair as he spoke, and Bevis gave one of his deep growls.

"In that case, you had best keep your distance," said Alice, laughing, "for the bite of a dog, possessed by the ghost of a jealous lover, cannot be very safe." And the King carried on the dialogue in the same strain—which, while it led Alice to apprehend nothing more serious than the apish gallantry of a fantastic boy, certainly induced the supposed Louis Kerneguy to think that he had made one of those conquests which often and easily fall to the share of sovereigns. Notwithstanding the acuteness of his apprehension, he was not sufficiently aware that the Royal Road to female favor is only open to monarchs when they travel in grand costume, and that when they woo incognito, their path of courtship is liable to the same windings and obstacles which obstruct the course of private individuals.

There was, besides Bevis, another member of the family, who kept a look-out upon Louis Kerneguy, and with no friendly eye. Phœbe Mayflower, though her experience extended not beyond the sphere of the village, yet knew the world much better than her mistress, and besides she was five years older. More knowing, she was more suspicious. She thought that odd-looking Scotch boy made more up to her young mistress than was proper for his condition of life; and, moreover, that Alice gave him a little more encouragement than Parthenia would have afforded to any such Jack-a-dandy, in the absence of Argalus—for the volume treating of the loves of these celebrated Arcadians was then the favorite study of swains and damsels throughout merry England. Entertaining such suspicions, Phœbe was at a loss how to conduct herself on the occasion, and yet resolved she would not see the slightest chance of the course of Colonel Everard's true love being obstructed, without attempting a remedy. She had a peculiar favor for Markham herself; and, moreover, he was, according to her phrase, as handsome and perscable a young man as was in Oxfordshire; and this Scottish scarecrow was no more to be compared to him than chalk was to cheese. And yet she allowed that Master Ginnig had a wonderfully well-oiled tongue, and that such gallants were not to be despised. What was to be done?—she had no facts to offer, only vague suspicion; and was afraid to speak to her mistress, whose kindness, great as it was, did not, nevertheless, encourage familiarity.

She sounded Joceline; but he was, she knew not why, so deeply interested about this unlucky lad, and held his importance so high, that she could make no impression on him. To speak to the old knight, would have been to raise a general tempest. The worthy chaplain, who was, at Woodstock, grand referee on all disputed matters, would have been the damsel's most natural re-

source, for he was peaceful as well as moral by profession, and politic by practice. But it happened he had given Phœbe unintentional offence by speaking of her under the classical epithet of *Rustica Fidele*, the which epithet, as she understood it not, she held herself bound to resent as contumelious, and declaring she was not fonder of a *fiddle* than other folk, had ever since shunned all intercourse with Dr. Rocheliff which she could easily avoid.

Master Tomkins was always coming and going about the house under various pretexts; but he was a roundhead, and she was too true to the cavaliers to introduce any of the enemy as parties to their internal discords; besides, he had talked to Phœbe herself in a manner which induced her to decline every thing in the shape of familiarity with him. Lastly, Cavaliero Wildrake might have been consulted; but Phœbe had her own reasons for saying, as she did with some emphasis, that Cavaliero Wildrake was an impudent London rake. At length she resolved to communicate her suspicions to the party having most interest in verifying or confuting them.

"I'll let Master Markham Everard know, that there is a wasp buzzing about his honeycomb," said Phœbe; "and, moreover, that I know that this young Scotch Scapegrace shifted himself out of a woman's into a man's dress at Goody Green's, and gave Goody Green's Dolly a gold-piece to say nothing about it; and no more she did to any one but me, and she knows best herself whether she gave change for the gold or not,—but Master Louis is a saucy jackanapes, and like enough to ask it."

Three or four days elapsed while matters continued in this condition—the disguised Prince sometimes thinking on the intrigue which Fortune seemed to have thrown in his way for his amusement, and taking advantage of such opportunities as occurred to increase his intimacy with Alice Lee; but much oftener harassing Dr. Rocheliff with questions about the possibility of escape, which the good man finding himself unable to answer, secured his leisure against royal importunity, by retreating into the various unexplored recesses of the Lodge, known perhaps only to himself, who had been for nearly a score of years employed in writing the Wonders of Woodstock.

It chanced on the fourth day, that some trifling circumstance had called the knight abroad; and he had left the young Scotsman, now familiar in the family, along with Alice, in the parlor of Victor Lee. Thus situated, he thought the time not unpropitious for entering upon a strain of gallantry, of a kind which might be called experimental, such as is practised by the Croats in skirmishing, when they keep bridle in hand, ready to attack the enemy, or canter off without coming to close quarters, as circumstances may recommend. After using for nearly ten minutes a sort of metaphysical jargon, which might, according to Alice's pleasure, have been inter-

preted either into gallantry, or the language of serious pretension, and when he supposed her engaged in fathoming his meaning, he had the mortification to find, by a single and brief question, that he had been totally unattended to, and that Alice was thinking on any thing at the moment rather than the sense of what he had been saying. She asked him if he could tell what it was o'clock, and this with an air of real curiosity concerning the lapse of time, which put coquetry wholly out of the question.

"I will go look at the sundial, Mistress Alice," said the gallant, rising and coloring, through a sense of the contempt with which he thought himself treated.

"You will do me a pleasure, Master Kerneguy," said Alice, without the least consciousness of the indignation she had excited.

Master Louis Kerneguy left the room accordingly, not, however, to procure the information required, but to vent his anger and mortification, and to swear, with more serious purpose than he had dared to do before, that Alice should rue her insolence. Good-natured as he was, he was still a prince, unaccustomed to contradiction, far less to contempt, and his self-pride felt, for the moment, wounded to the quick. With a hasty step he plunged into the Chase, only remembering his own safety so far as to choose the deeper and sequestered avenues, where, walking on with the speedy and active step, which his recovery from fatigue now permitted him to exercise according to his wont, he solaced his angry purposes, by devising schemes of revenge on the insolent country coquette, from which no consideration of hospitality was in future to have weight enough to save her.

The irritated gallant passed

"The dial-stone, aged and green,"

without deigning to ask it a single question; nor could it have satisfied his curiosity if he had, for no sun happened to shine at the moment. He then hastened forward, muffling himself in his cloak, and assuming a stooping and slouching gait, which diminished his apparent height. He was soon involved in the deep and dim alleys of the wood, into which he had insensibly plunged himself, and was traversing it at a great rate, without having any distinct idea in what direction he was going, when suddenly his course was arrested, first by a loud hullo, and then by a summons to stand, accompanied by what seemed still more startling and extraordinary, the touch of a cane upon his shoulder, imposed in a good-humored but somewhat imperious manner.

There were few symptoms of recognition which would have been welcome at this moment; but the appearance of the person who had thus arrested his course, was least of all that he could have anticipated as timely or agreeable. When he turned, on receiving the signal, he beheld himself close to a young man, nearly six feet in height, well made in joint and limb, but the gravity of whose apparel, although handsome and

gentlemanlike, and a sort of precision in his habit, from the cleanness and stiffness of his band to the unsullied purity of his Spanish-leather shoes, bespoke a love of order which was foreign to the impoverished and vanquished cavaliers, and proper to the habits of those of the victorious party, who could afford to dress themselves handsomely; and whose rule—that is, such as regarded the higher and more respectable classes—enjoined decency and sobriety of garb and deportment. There was yet another weight against the Prince in the scale, and one still more characteristic of the inequality in the comparison, under which he seemed to labor. There was strength in the muscular form of the stranger who had brought him to this involuntary parley, authority and determination in his brow, a long rapier on the left, and a poniard or dagger on the right side of his belt, and a pair of pistols stuck into it, which would have been sufficient to give the unknown the advantage (Louis Kerneguy having no weapon but his sword), even had his personal strength approached nearer than it did to that of the person by whom he was thus suddenly stopped.

Bitterly regretting the thoughtless fit of passion that brought him into his present situation, but especially the want of the pistols he had left behind, and which do so much to place bodily strength and weakness upon an equal footing, Charles yet availed himself of the courage and presence of mind, in which few of his unfortunate family had for centuries been deficient. He stood firm and without motion, his cloak still wrapped round the lower part of his face, to give time for explanation, in case he was mistaken for some other person.

This coolness produced its effect; for the other party said, with doubt and surprise on his part, "Joceline Joliffe, is it not?—if I know not Joceline Joliffe, I should at least know my own cloak."

"I am not Joceline Joliffe; as you may see, sir," said Kerneguy, calmly, drawing himself erect to show the difference of size, and dropping the cloak from his face and person.

"Indeed!" replied the stranger, in surprise; "then, Sir Unknown, I have to express my regret at having used my cane in intimating that I wished you to stop. From that dress, which I certainly recognise for my own, I concluded you must be Joceline, in whose custody I had left my habit at the Lodge."

"If it had been Joceline, sir," replied the supposed Kerneguy, with perfect composure, "methinks you should not have struck so hard."

The other party was obviously confused by the steady calmness with which he was encountered. The sense of politeness dictated, in the first place, an apology for a mistake, when he thought he had been tolerably certain of the person. Master Kerneguy was not in a situation to be punctilious; he bowed gravely, as indicating his acceptance of the excuse offered, then turned, and walked, as he conceived, towards the Lodge;

though he had traversed the woods which were cut with various alleys in different directions, too hastily to be certain of the real course which he wished to pursue.

He was much embarrassed to find that this did not get him rid of the companion whom he had thus involuntarily acquired. Walked he slow, walked he fast, his friend in the genteel but puritanic habit, strong in person, and well armed, as we have described him, seemed determined to keep him company, and, without attempting to join, or enter into conversation, never suffered him to outstrip his surveillance for more than two or three yards. The Wanderer mended his pace; but, although he was then, in his youth, as afterwards in his riper age, one of the best walkers in Britain, the stranger, without advancing his pace to a run, kept fully equal to him, and his persecution became so close and constant, and inevitable, that the pride and fear of Charles were both alarmed, and he began to think that, whatever the danger might be of a single-handed rencontre, he would nevertheless have a better bargain of this tall satellite if they settled the debate betwixt them in the forest, than if they drew near any place of habitation, where the man in authority was likely to find friends and concurrents.

Betwixt anxiety, therefore, vexation, and anger, Charles faced suddenly round on his pursuer, as they reached a small narrow glade, which led to the little meadow over which presided the King's Oak, the ragged and scathed branches and gigantic trunk of which formed a vista to the little wild avenue.

"Sir," said he to his pursuer, "you have already been guilty of one piece of impertinence towards me. You have apologized; and knowing no reason why you should distinguish me as an object of incivility, I have accepted your excuse without scruple. Is there anything remains to be settled betwixt us, which causes you to follow me in this manner? If so, I shall be glad to make it a subject of explanation or satisfaction, as the case may admit of. I think you can owe me no malice; for I never saw you before to my knowledge. If you can give any good reason for asking it, I am willing to render you personal satisfaction. If your purpose is merely impertinent curiosity, I let you know that I will not suffer myself to be dogged in my private walks by any one."

"When I recognise my own cloak on another man's shoulders," replied the stranger, dryly, "methinks I have a natural right to follow and see what becomes of it; for know, sir, though I have been mistaken as to the wearer, yet I am confident I had as good a right to stretch my cane across the cloak you are muffled in, as ever had any one to brush his own garments. If, therefore, we are to be friends, I must ask, for instance, how you came by that cloak, and where you are going with it? I shall otherwise make bold to stop you, as one who has sufficient commission to do so."

"Oh, unhappy cloak," thought the Wanderer, "ay, and thrice unhappy the idle fancy that sent me here with it wrapped around my nose, to pick quarrels and attract observation, when quiet and secrecy were peculiarly essential to my safety!"

"If you will allow me to guess, sir," continued the stranger, who was no other than Markham Everard, "I will convince you that you are better known than you think for."

"Now, Heaven forbid!" prayed the party addressed, in silence, but with as much devotion as ever he applied to a prayer in his life. Yet even in this moment of extreme urgency his courage and composure did not fail; and he recollected it was of the utmost importance not to seem startled, and to answer so as, if possible, to lead the dangerous companion with whom he had met, to confess the extent of his actual knowledge or suspicions concerning him.

"If you know me, Sir," he said, "and are a gentleman, as your appearance promises, you cannot be at a loss to discover to what accident you must attribute my wearing these clothes, which you say are yours."

"Oh, sir," replied Colonel Everard, his wrath in no sort turned away by the mildness of the stranger's answer—"we have learned our Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and we know for what purposes young men of quality travel in disguise—we know that even female attire is resorted to on certain occasions—We have heard of *Vertumnus* and *Pomona*."

The Monarch, as he weighed these words, again uttered a devout prayer, that this ill-looking affair might have no deeper root than the jealousy of some admirer of Alice Lee, promising to himself, that, devotee as he was to the fair sex, he would make no scruple of renouncing the fairest of Eve's daughters in order to get out of the present dilemma.

"Sir," he said, "you seem to be a gentleman. I have no objection to tell you, as such, that I also am of that class."

"Or somewhat higher, perhaps?" said Everard.

"A gentleman," replied Charles, "is a term which comprehends all ranks entitled to armorial bearings—A duke, a lord, a prince, is no more than a gentleman; and if in misfortune, as I am, he may be glad if that general term of courtesy is allowed him."

"Sir," replied Everard, "I have no purpose to entrap you to any acknowledgment fatal to your own safety,—nor do I hold it my business to be active in the arrest of private individuals, whose perverted sense of national duty may have led them into errors, rather to be pitied than punished by candid men. But if those who have brought civil war and disturbance into their native country, proceed to carry dishonor and disgrace into the bosom of families—if they attempt to carry on their private debaucheries to the injury of the hospitable roofs which afford them refuge from the consequences of their public

crimes, do you think, my lord, that we shall bear it with patience?"

"If it is your purpose to quarrel with me," said the Prince, "speak it out at once like a gentleman. You have the advantage, no doubt, of arms; but it is not that odds which will induce me to fly from a single man. If, on the other hand, you are disposed to hear reason, I tell you in calm words, that I neither suspect the offence to which you allude, nor comprehend why you give me the title of my Lord."

"You deny, then, being the Lord Wilmot?" said Everard.

"I may do so most safely," said the Prince.

"Perhaps you rather style yourself Earl of Rochester? We heard that the issuing of some such patent by the King of Scots was a step which your ambition proposed."

"Neither lord nor earl am I, as sure as I have a Christian soul to be saved. My name is—"

"Do not degrade yourself by unnecessary falsehood, my lord; and that to a single man, who, I promise you, will not invoke public justice to assist his own good sword should he see cause to use it. Can you look at that ring, and deny that you are Lord Wilmot?"

He handed to the disguised Prince a ring which he took from his purse, and his opponent instantly knew it for the same he had dropped into Alice's pitcher at the fountain, obeying only, though imprudently, the gallantry of the moment, in giving a pretty gem to a handsome girl, whom he had accidentally frightened.

"I know the ring," he said; "it has been in my possession. How it should prove me to be Lord Wilmot, I cannot conceive; and beg to say, it bears false witness against me."

"You shall see the evidencé," answered Everard; and, resuming the ring, he pressed a spring ingeniously contrived in the collet of the setting, on which the stone flew back, and showed within it the cipher of Lord Wilmot beautifully engraved in miniature, with a coronet.—"What say you now, sir?"

"That probabilities are no proofs," said the Prince; "there is nothing here save what can be easily accounted for. I am the son of a Scottish nobleman, who was mortally wounded and made prisoner at Worcester fight. When he took leave, and bade me fly, he gave me the few valuables he possessed, and that among others. I have heard him talk of having changed rings with Lord Wilmot, on some occasion in Scotland, but I never knew the trick of the gem which you have shown me."

In this it may be necessary to say, Charles spoke very truly; nor would he have parted with it in the way he did, had he suspected it would be easily recognised. He proceeded after a minute's pause:—"Once more, sir—I have told you much that concerns my safety—if you are generous, you will let me pass, and I may do you on some future day as good service. If you mean to arrest me, you must do so here, and at your own peril, for I

will neither walk farther your way, nor permit you to dog me on mine. If you let me pass I will thank you; if not, take to your weapon."

"Young gentleman," said Colonel Everard, "whether you be actually the gay young nobleman for whom I took you, you have made me uncertain; but, intimate as you say your family has been with him, I have little doubt that you are proficient in the school of debauchery, of which Wilmot and Villiers are professors, and their hopeful Master a graduated student. Your conduct at Woodstock, where you have rewarded the hospitality of the family by meditating the most deadly wound to their honor, has proved you too apt a scholar in such an academy. I intended only to warn you on this subject—it will be your own fault if I add chastisement to admonition."

"Warn me, sir!" said the Prince, indignantly, "and chastisement! This is presuming more on my patience than is consistent with your own safety—Draw, sir."—So saying, he laid his hand on his sword.

"My religion," said Everard, "forbids me to be rash in shedding blood—Go home, sir—be wise—consult the dictates of honor as well as prudence. Respect the honor of the House of Lee, and know there is one nearly allied to it, by whom your motions will be called to severe account."

"Aha!" said the Prince, with a bitter laugh, "I see the whole matter now—we have our roundheaded Colonel, our puritan cousin before us—the man of texts and morals, whom Alice Lee laughs at so heartily. If your religion, sir, prevents you from giving satisfaction, it should prevent you from offering insult to a person of honor."

The passions of both were now fully up—they drew mutually, and began to fight, the Colonel relinquishing the advantage he could have obtained by the use of his fire-arms. A thrust of the arm, or a slip of the foot, might, at the moment, have changed the destinies of Britain, when the arrival of a third party broke off the combat.

CHAPTER XXV.

Slay—for the King has thrown his warder down.

RICHARD II.

THE combatants whom we left engaged at the end of the last chapter, made mutual passes at each other with apparently equal skill and courage. Charles had been too often in action, and too long a party as well as a victim to civil war, to find anything new or surprising in being obliged to defend himself with his own hands; and Everard had been distinguished, as well for his personal bravery, as for the other properties of a commander. But the arrival of a third party prevented the tragic conclusion of a combat, in which the success of either party must have given him much cause for regretting his victory.

It was the old knight himself, who arrived, mounted upon a forest pony, for the war and sequestration had left him no steed of a more dignified description. He thrust himself between the combatants, and commanded them on their lives to hold. So soon as a glance from one to the other had ascertained to him whom he had to deal with, he demanded, "Whether the devils of Woodstock, whom folk talked about, had got possession of them both, that they were tilting at each other within the verge of the royal liberties? Let me tell both of you," he said, "that while old Henry Lee is at Woodstock, the immunities of the Park shall be maintained as much as if the King were still on the throne. None shall fight duels here, excepting the stags in their season. Put up, both of you, or I shall lug out as thirdsman, and prove perhaps the worst devil of the three!—As Will says—

"I'll so maul you and your toasting-irons,

That you shall think the devil has come from hell!"

The combatants desisted from their encounter, but stood looking at each other sullenly, as men do in such a situation, each unwilling to seem to desire peace more than the other, and averse therefore to be the first to sheathe his sword.

"Return your weapons, gentlemen, upon the spot," said the knight yet more peremptorily, "one and both of you, or you will have something to do with me, I promise you. You may be thankful times are changed. I have known them such, that your insolence might have cost each of you your right hand, if not redeemed with a round sum of money. Nephew, if you do not mean to alienate me for ever, I command you to put up.—Master Kerneguy, you are my guest. I request of you not to do me the insult of remaining with your sword drawn where it is my duty to see peace observed."

"I obey you, Sir Henry," said the King, sheathing his rapier—"I hardly indeed know wherefore I was assaulted by this gentleman. I assure you, none respects the King's person or privileges more than myself—though the devotion is somewhat out of fashion."

"We may find a place to meet, sir," replied Everard, "where neither the royal person nor privileges can be offended."

"Faith, very hardly, sir," said Charles, unable to suppress the rising jest—"I mean, the King has so few followers, that the loss of the least of them might be some small damage to him; but, risking all that, I will meet you wherever there is fair field for a poor cavalier to get off in safety, if he has the luck in fight."

Sir Henry Lee's first idea had been fixed upon the insult offered to the royal demesne; he now began to turn them towards the safety of his kinsman, and of the young royalist, as he deemed him. "Gentlemen," he said, "I must insist on this business being put to a final end. Nephew Markham, is this your return for my condescension in coming back to Woodstock on

your warrant, that you should take an opportunity to cut the throat of my guest?"

"If you knew his purpose as well as I do,"—said Markham, and then paused, conscious that he might only incense his uncle without convincing him, as any thing he might say of Kerneguy's addresses to Alice was likely to be imputed to his own jealous suspicions—he looked on the ground, therefore, and was silent.

"And you, Master Kerneguy," said Sir Henry, "can you give me any reason why you seek to take the life of this young man, in whom, though unhappily forgetful of his loyalty and duty, I must yet take some interest, as my nephew by affinity?"

"I was not aware the gentleman enjoyed that honor, which certainly would have protected him from my sword," answered Kerneguy. "But the quarrel is his; nor can I tell any reason why he fixed it upon me, unless it were the difference of our political opinions."

"You know the contrary," said Everard; "you know that I told you you were safe from me as a fugitive royalist—and your last words showed you were at no loss to guess my connexion with Sir Henry. That, indeed, is of little consequence. I should debase myself did I use the relationship as a means of protection from you, or any one."

As they thus disputed, neither choosing to approach the real cause of quarrel, Sir Henry looked from the one to the other, with a peace-making countenance, exclaiming—

—"Why, what an intricate impench is this!

I think you both have drunk of Circe's cup."

Come, my young masters, allow an old man to mediate between you. I am not short-sighted in such matters.—The mother of mischief is no bigger than a gnat's wing; and I have known fifty instances in my own day, when, as Will says—

"Gallants have been confronted hardly,

In single opposition, hand to hand,"

in which, after the field was fought, no one could remember the cause of quarrel.—Tush! a small thing will do it—the taking of the wall—or the gentle rub of the shoulder in passing each other, or a hasty word, or a misconceived gesture—Come, forget your cause of quarrel, be what it will—you have had your breathing, and though you put up your rapiers unbloodied, that was no default of yours, but by command of your elder, and one who had right to use authority. In Malta, where the duello is punctiliously well understood, the persons engaged in a single combat are bound to halt on the command of a knight, or priest, or lady and the quarrel so interrupted is held as honorably terminated, and may not be revived.—Nephew, it is, I think, impossible that you can nourish spleen against this young gentleman for having fought for his king. Hear my honest proposal, Markham—You know I bear no malice, though I have some reason to be offended with you—Give the young man your hand in friendship, and we will back to the Lodge, all

three together, and drink a cup of sack in token of reconciliation."

Markham Everard found himself unable to resist this approach towards kindness on his uncle's part. He suspected, indeed, what was partly the truth, that it was not entirely from reviving goodwill, but also, that his uncle thought, by such attention, to secure his neutrality at least, if not his assistance, for the safety of the fugitive royalist. He was sensible that he was placed in an awkward predicament; and that he might incur the suspicions of his own party, for holding intercourse even with a near relation, who harbored such guests. But, on the other hand, he thought his services to the Commonwealth had been of sufficient importance to outweigh whatever envy might urge on that topic. Indeed, although the Civil War had divided families much, and in many various ways, yet when it seemed ended by the triumph of the republicans, the rage of political hatred began to relent, and the ancient ties of kindred and friendship regained at least a part of their former influence. Many reunions were formed; and those who, like Everard, adhered to the conquering party, often exerted themselves for the protection of their deserted relatives.

As these things rushed through his mind, accompanied with the prospect of a renewed intercourse with Alice Lee, by means of which he might be at hand to protect her against every chance, either of injury or insult, he held out his hand to the supposed Scottish page, saying at the same time, "That, for his part, he was very ready to forget the cause of quarrel, or rather, to consider it as arising out of a misapprehension, and to offer Master Kerneguy such friendship as might exist between honorable men, who had embraced different sides in politics."

Unable to overcome the feeling of personal dignity, which prudence recommended to him to forget, Louis Kerneguy in return bowed low, but without accepting Everard's proffered hand.

"He had no occasion," he said, "to make any exertions to forget the cause of quarrel, for he had never been able to comprehend it; but as he had not shunned the gentleman's resentment, so he was now willing to embrace and return any degree of his favor, with which he might be pleased to honor him."

Everard withdrew his hand with a smile, and bowed in return to the salutation of the page, whose stiff reception of his advances he imputed to the proud pettish disposition of a Scotch boy, trained up in extravagant ideas of family consequence and personal importance, which his acquaintance with the world had not yet been sufficient to dispel.

Sir Henry Lee, delighted with the termination of the quarrel, which he supposed to be in deep deference to his own authority, and not displeased with the opportunity of renewing some acquaintance with his nephew, who had, notwithstanding his political demerits, a warmer interest in his

affections than he was, perhaps, himself aware of, said in a tone of consolation, "Never be mortified, young gentlemen. I protest it went to my heart to part you, when I saw you stretching yourselves so handsomely, and in fair love of honor, without any malicious or bloodthirsty thoughts. I promise you, had it not been for my duty as Ranger here, and sworn to the office, I would rather have been your umpire than your hinderance.—But a finished quarrel is a forgotten quarrel; and your tilting should have no further consequence excepting the appetite it may have given you."

So saying, he urged forward his pony, and moved in triumph towards the Lodge by the nearest alley. His feet almost touching the ground, the ball of his toe just resting in the stirrup,—the forepart of the thigh brought round to the saddle,—the heels turned outwards, and sunk as much as possible,—his body precisely erect,—the reins properly and systematically divided in his left hand, his right holding a riding-rod diagonally pointed towards the horse's left ear,—he seemed a champion of the menage, fit to have reigned Bucephalus himself. His youthful companions, who attended on either hand like equerries, could scarce suppress a smile at the completely adjusted and systematic posture of the rider, contrasted with the wild and diminutive appearance of the pony, with its shaggy coat, and long tail and mane, and its keen eyes sparkling like red coals from amongst the mass of hair which fell over its small countenance. If the reader has the Duke of Newcastle's book on horsemanship (*splendida moles!*), he may have some idea of the figure of the good knight, if he can conceive such a figure as one of the cavaliers there represented, seated, in all the graces of his art, on a Welsh or Exmoor pony, in its native savage state, without grooming or discipline of any kind; the ridicule being greatly enhanced by the disproportion of size betwixt the animal and its rider.

Perhaps the knight saw their wonder, for the first words he said after they left the ground were, "Pixie, though small, is mettlesome, gentlemen" (here he contrived that Pixie should himself corroborate the assertion, by executing a gambade)—"he is diminutive, but full of spirit;—indeed, save that I am somewhat too large for an elfin horseman" (the knight was upwards of six feet high), "I should remind myself, when I mount him, of the Fairy king, as described by Mike Drayton:—

Himself he on an earwig set,
Yet scarce upon his back could get,
So oft and high he did curvet,
Ere he himself did settle.
He made him stop, and turn, and bound,
To gallop and to trot the round,
He scarce could stand on any ground,
He was so full of mettle.*

"My old friend, Pixie," said Everard, stroking the pony's neck, "I am glad that he has

survived all these bustling days. Pixie must be above twenty years old, Sir Henry?"

"Above twenty years, certainly. Yes, nephew Markham, war is a whirlwind in a plantation, which only spares what is least worth leaving. Old Pixie and his old master have survived many a tall fellow and many a great horse—neither of them good for much themselves. Yet, as Will says, an old man can do somewhat. So Pixie and I still survive."

So saying, he again contrived that Pixie should show some remnants of activity.

"Still survive?" said the young Scot, completing the sentence which the good knight had left unfinished—"ay, still survive,

'To witch the world with noble horsemanship.'"

Everard colored, for he felt the irony; but not so his uncle, whose simple vanity never permitted him to doubt the sincerity of the compliment.

"Are you avised of that?" he said. "In King James's time, indeed, I have appeared in the tilt-yard, and there you might have said—

'You saw young Harry with his beaver up.'

As to seeing *old Harry*, why— Here the knight paused, and looked as a bashful man in labor of a pun—"As to old Harry—why, you might as well see the *devil*. You take me, Master Kerneguy—the devil, you know, is my namesake—ha—ha—ha!—Cousin Everard, I hope your precision is not startled by an innocent jest?"

He was so delighted with the applause of both his companions, that he recited the whole of the celebrated passage referred to, and concluded with defying the present age, bundle all its wits, Donne, Cowley, Waller, and the rest of them together, to produce a poet of a tenth part of the genius of old Will.

"Why, we are said to have one of his descendants among us—Sir William D'Avenant," said Louis Kerneguy; "and many think him as clever a fellow."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Henry—"Will D'Avenant, whom I knew in the North, an officer under Newcastle, when the Marquis lay before Hull?—why, he was an honest cavalier, and wrote good doggerel enough; but how came he a-kin to Will Shakespeare, I trow?"

"Why," replied the young Scot, "by the surer side of the house, and after the old fashion, if D'Avenant speaks truth. It seems that his mother was a good-looking, laughing, buxom mistress of an inn between Stratford and London, at which Will Shakespeare often quartered as he went down to his native town; and that out of friendship and gossip, as we say in Scotland, Will Shakespeare became godfather to Will D'Avenant; and not contented with this spiritual affinity, the younger Will is for establishing some claim to a natural one, alleging that his mother was a great admirer of wit, and there

were no bounds to her complaisance for men of genius."*

"Out upon the hound!" said Colonel Everard; "would he purchase the reputation of descending from poet, or from prince, at the expense of his mother's good fame?—his nose ought to be slit."

"That would be difficult," answered the disguised Prince, recollecting the peculiarity of the bard's countenance.†

"Will D'Avenant the son of Will Shakespeare!" said the knight, who had not yet recovered his surprise at the enormity of the pretension; "why, it reminds me of a verse in the puppet show of Phaeton, where the hero complains to his mother—

*'Besides, by all the village boys I'm sham'd;
You the Sun's son, you rascal, you be d—d!'*‡

I never heard such unblushing assurance in my life!—Will D'Avenant the son of the brightest and best poet that ever was, is, or will be?—But I crave your pardon, nephew—You, I believe, love no stage plays."

"Nay, I am not altogether so precise as you would make me, uncle. I have loved them perhaps too well in my time, and now I condemn them not altogether, or in gross, though I approve not their excesses and extravagances.—I cannot, even in Shakespeare, but see many things both scandalous to decency and prejudicial to good manners—many things which tend to ridicule virtue, or to recommend vice,—at least to mitigate the hideousness of its features. I cannot think these fine poems are a useful study, and especially for the youth of either sex, in which bloodshed is pointed out as the chief occupation of the men, and intrigue as the sole employment of the women."

In making these observations, Everard was simple enough to think that he was only giving his uncle an opportunity of defending a favorite opinion, without offending him by a contradiction which was so limited and mitigated. But here, as on other occasions, he forgot how obstinate his uncle was in his views, whether of religion, policy, or taste, and that it would be as easy to convert him to the Presbyterian form of government, or engage him to take the abjuration oath, as to shake his belief in Shakespeare. There was another peculiarity in the good knight's mode of arguing, which Everard, being himself of a plain and downright character, and one whose religious tenets were in some degree unfavorable to the suppressions and simulations

* This gossiping tale is to be found in the *variorum Shakespeare*. D'Avenant did not much mind throwing out hints, in which he sacrificed his mother's character to his desire of being held a descendant from the admirable Shakespeare.

† D'Avenant actually wanted the nose, the foundation of many a jest of the day.

‡ We observe this couplet in Fielding's farce of *Tumble-down-Dick*, founded on the same classical story. As it was current in the time of the Commonwealth, it must have reached the author of *Tom Jones* by tradition—for no one will suspect the present author of making the anachronism.

often used in society, could never perfectly understand. Sir Henry, sensible of his natural heat of temper, was wont scrupulously to guard against it, and would for some time, when in fact much offended, conduct a debate with all the external appearance of composure, till the violence of his feelings would rise so high as to overcome and bear away the artificial barriers opposed to it, and rush down upon the adversary with accumulating wrath. It thus frequently happened, that, like a wily old general, he retreated in the face of his disputant in good order and by degrees, with so moderate a degree of resistance, as to draw on his antagonist's pursuit to the spot, where, at length, making a sudden and unexpected attack, with horse, foot, and artillery at once, he seldom failed to confound the enemy, though he might not overthrow him.

It was on this principle, therefore, that, hearing Everard's last observation, he disguised his angry feelings, and answered, with a tone where politeness was called in to keep guard upon passion, "That undoubtedly the Presbyterian gentry had given, through the whole of these unhappy times, such proofs of an humble, unambitious desire of the public good, as entitled them to general credit for the sincerity of those very strong scruples which they entertained against works, in which the noblest sentiments of religion and virtue,—sentiments which might convert hardened sinners, and be placed with propriety in the mouths of dying saints and martyrs,—happened, from the rudeness and coarse taste of the times, to be mixed with some broad jests, and similar matter, which lay not much in the way, excepting of those who painfully sought such stuff out, that they might use it in vilifying what was in itself deserving of the highest applause. But what he wished especially to know from his nephew was, whether any of those gifted men, who had expelled the learned scholars and deep divines of the Church of England from the pulpit, and now flourished in their stead, received any inspiration from the muses (if he might use so profane a term without offence to Colonel Everard), or whether they were not as sottishly and brutally averse from elegant letters, as they were from humanity and common sense?"

Colonel Everard might have guessed, by the ironical tone in which the speech was delivered, what storm was mustering within his uncle's bosom—nay, he might have conjectured the state of the old knight's feelings from his emphasis on the word Colonel, by which epithet, as that which most connected his nephew with the party he hated, he never distinguished Everard, unless when his wrath was rising; while, on the contrary, when disposed to be on good terms with him, he usually called him Kinsman, or Nephew Markham. Indeed, it was under a partial sense that this was the case, and in the hope to see his cousin Alice, that the Colonel forbore making any answer to the harangue of his uncle, which had

concluded just as the old knight had alighted at the door of the Lodge, and was entering the hall, followed by his two attendants.

Phoebe at the same time made her appearance in the hall, and received orders to bring some "beverage" for the gentlemen. The Hebe of Woodstock failed not to recognise and welcome Everard by an almost imperceptible curtsy; but she did not serve her interest, as she designed, when she asked the knight, as a question of course, whether he commanded the attendance of Mistress Alice. A stern *No*, was the decided reply; and the ill-timed interference seemed to increase his previous irritation against Everard for his depreciation of Shakspeare. "I would insist," said Sir Henry, resuming the obnoxious subject, "were it fit for a poor disbanded cavalier to use such a phrase towards a commander of the conquering army,—upon knowing whether the convulsion which has sent us saints and prophets without end, has not also afforded us a poet with enough both of gifts and grace to outshine poor old Will, the oracle and idol of us blinded and carnal cavaliers?"

"Surely, sir," replied Colonel Everard; "I know verses written by a friend of the Commonwealth, and those, too, of a dramatic character, which, weighed in an impartial scale, might equal even the poetry of Shakspeare, and which are free from the fustian and indelicacy with which that great bard was sometimes content to feed the coarse appetites of his barbarous audience."

"Indeed!" said the knight, keeping down his wrath with difficulty. "I should like to be acquainted with this masterpiece of poetry!—May we ask the name of this distinguished person?"

"It must be Vicars, or Withers, at least," said the feigned Page.

"No, sir," replied Everard, "nor Drummond of Hawthornden, nor Lord Stirling neither. And yet the verses will vindicate what I say, if you will make allowance for indifferent recitation, for I am better accustomed to speak to a battalion than to those who love the muses. The speaker is a lady benighted, who, having lost her way in a pathless forest, at first expresses herself agitated by the supernatural fears to which her situation gave rise."

"A play, too, and written by a roundhead author!" said Sir Henry in surprise.

"A dramatic production at least," replied his nephew; and began to recite simply, but with feeling, the lines now so well known, but which had then obtained no celebrity, the fame of the author resting upon the basis rather of his polemical and political publications, than on the poetry doomed in after-days to support the eternal structure of his immortality:

"These thoughts may startle, but will not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong-siding champion, Conscience."

"My own opinion, nephew Markham, my own opinion," said Sir Henry, with a burst of admi-

ration; "better expressed, but just what I said when the scoundrelly roundheads pretended to see ghosts at Woodstock—Go on, I prithee."

Everard proceeded:—

"O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity;
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistening guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honor unassail'd.—
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud,
Turn forth her silver lining on the night!"

"The rest has escaped me," said the reciter; "and I marvel I have been able to remember so much."

Sir Henry Lee, who had expected some effusion very different from those classical and beautiful lines, soon changed the scornful expression of his countenance, relaxed his contorted upper lip, and, stroking down his beard with his left hand, rested the forefinger of the right upon his eyebrow, in sign of profound attention. After Everard had ceased speaking, the old man sighed as at the end of a strain of sweet music. He then spoke in a gentler manner than formerly.

"Cousin Markham," he said, "these verses flow sweetly, and sound in my ears like the well-touched warbling of a lute. But thou knowest I am something slow of apprehending the full meaning of that which I hear for the first time. Repeat me these verses again slowly and deliberately; for I always love to hear poetry twice, the first time for sound, and the latter time for sense."

Thus encouraged, Everard recited again the lines with more hardihood and better effect; the knight distinctly understanding, and from his looks and motions, highly applauding them.

"Yes!" he broke out, when Everard was again silent—"yes, I do call that poetry—though it were even written by a Presbyterian, or an Anabaptist either. Ay, there were good and righteous people to be found even amongst the offending towns which were destroyed by fire. And certainly I have heard, though with little credence (begging your pardon, cousin Everard), that there are men among you who have seen the error of their ways in rebelling against the best and kindest of masters, and bringing it to that pass that he was murdered by a gang yet fiercer than themselves. Ay, doubtless, the gentleness of spirit, and the purity of mind, which dictated those beautiful lines, has long ago taught a man so amiable to say, I have sinned, I have sinned. Yes, I doubt not so sweet a harp has been broken even in remore, for the crimes he was witness to; and now he sits drooping for the shame and sorrow of England,—all his noble rhymes, as Will says,

'Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh.'

Dost thou not think so, Master Kerneguy?"

"Not I, Sir Henry," answered the page, somewhat maliciously.

"What, dost not believe the author of these lines must needs be of the better file, and leaning to our persuasion?"

"I think, Sir Henry, that the poetry qualifies the author to write a play on the subject of Dame Potiphar and her recusant lover; and as for his calling—that last metaphor of the cloud in a black coat or cloak, with silver lining, would have dubbed him a tailor with me, only that I happen to know that he is a schoolmaster by profession, and by political opinions qualified to be Poet Laureate to Cromwell; for what Colonel Everard has repeated with such unction, is the production of no less celebrated a person than John Milton."

"John Milton!" exclaimed Sir Henry in astonishment—"what! John Milton, the blasphemous and bloody-minded author of the *Defensio Populi Anglicani*!—the advocate of the infernal High Court of Fiends; the creature and parasite of that grand impostor, that loathsome hypocrite, that detestable monster, that prodigy of the universe, that disgrace of mankind, that landscape of iniquity, that sink of sin, and that compendium of baseness, Oliver Cromwell!"

"Even the same John Milton," answered Charles; "schoolmaster to little boys, and tailor to the clouds, which he furnishes with suits of black, lined with silver, at no other expense than that of common sense."

"Markham Everard," said the old knight, "I will never forgive thee—never, never. Thou hast made me speak words of praise respecting one whose offal should fatten the region-kites. Speak not to me, sir, but begone! Am I, your kinsman and benefactor, a fit person to be juggled out of my commendation and eulogy, and brought to bedaub such a whitened sepulchre as the sophist Milton?"

"I profess," said Everard, "this is hard measure, Sir Henry. You pressed me—you defied me to produce poetry as good as Shakspeare's. I only thought of the verses, not of the politics of Milton."

"Oh yes, sir," replied Sir Henry, "we well know your power of making distinctions; you could make war against the King's prerogative, without having the least design against his person. Oh Heaven forbid! But Heaven will hear and judge you.—Set down the beverage, Phoebe"—(this was added by way of parenthesis to Phoebe, who entered with refreshment)—"Colonel Everard is not thirsty.—You have wiped your mouths and said you have done no evil. But though you have deceived man, yet God you cannot deceive. And you shall wipe no lips in Woodstock, either after meat or drink, I promise you."

Charged thus at once with the faults imputed to his whole religious sect and political party, Everard felt too late of what imprudence he had been guilty in giving the opening, by disputing

his uncle's taste in dramatic poetry. He endeavored to explain—to apologize.

"I mistook your purpose, honored sir, and thought you really desired to know something of our literature; and in repeating what you deemed not unworthy your hearing, I profess I thought I was doing you pleasure, instead of stirring your indignation."

"O ay!" returned the knight, with unmitigated rigor of resentment—"profess—profess—Ay, that is the new phrase of asseveration, instead of the profane adjuration of courtiers and cavaliers—Oh, sir, *profess* less and *practise* more—and so good-day to you.—Master Kerneguy, you will find beverage in my apartment."

While Phoebe stood gaping in admiration at the sudden quarrel which had arisen, Colonel Everard's vexation and resentment was not a little increased by the nonchalance of the young Scotsman, who, with his hands thrust into his pockets (with a courtly affectation of the time,) had thrown himself into one of the antique chairs, and, though habitually too polite to laugh aloud, and possessing that art of internal laughter by which men of the world learn to indulge their mirth without incurring quarrels, or giving direct offence, was at no particular trouble to conceal that he was exceedingly amused by the result of the Colonel's visit to Woodstock. Colonel Everard's patience, however, had reached bounds which it was very likely to surpass; for, though differing widely in politics, there was a resemblance betwixt the temper of the uncle and nephew.

"Damnation!" exclaimed the Colonel, in a tone which became a puritan as little as did the exclamation itself.

"Amen!" said Louis Kerneguy, but in a tone so soft and gentle, that the ejaculation seemed rather to escape him than to be designedly uttered.

"Sir," said Everard, striding towards him in that sort of humor, when a man, full of resentment, would not unwillingly find an object on which to discharge it.

"*Plait-il?*" said the page, in the most equable tone, looking up in his face with the most unconscious innocence.

"I wish to know, sir," retorted Everard, "the meaning of that which you said just now?"

"Only a pouring out of the spirit, worthy sir," returned Kerneguy—"a small skiff dispatched to Heaven on my own account, to keep company with your holy petition just now expressed."

"Sir, I have known a merry gentleman's bones broke for such a smile as you wear just now," replied Everard.

"There, look you now!" answered the malicious page, who could not weigh even the thoughts of his safety against the enjoyment of his jest—"if you had stuck to your *professions*, worthy sir, you must have choked by this time; but your round execration bolted like a cork from a bottle of cider, and now allows your wrath to come foaming out after it, in the honest unbaptized language of common ruffians."

"For Heaven's sake, Master Grinegy," said Phoebe, "forbear giving the Colonel these bitter words! And do you, good Colonel Markham, scorn to take offence at his hands—he is but a boy."

"If the Colonel or you choose, Mistress Phoebe, you shall find me a man—I think the gentleman can say something to the purpose already.—Probably he may recommend to you the part of the Lady in Comus; and I only hope his own admiration of John Milton will not induce him to undertake the part of Samson Agonistes, and blow up this old house with execrations, or pull it down in wrath about our ears."

"Young man," said the Colonel, still in towering passion, "if you respect my principles for nothing else, be grateful to the protection which, but for them, you would not easily attain."

"Nay, then," said the attendant, "I must fetch those who have more influence with you than I have," and away tripped Phoebe; while Kerneguy answered Everard in the same provoking tone of calm indifference,—

"Before you menace me with a thing so formidable as your resentment, you ought to be certain whether I may not be compelled by circumstances to deny you the opportunity you seem to point at."

At this moment Alice, summoned no doubt by her attendant, entered the hall hastily.

"Master Kerneguy," she said, "my father requests to see you in Victor Lee's apartment."

Kerneguy arose and bowed, but seemed determined to remain till Everard's departure, so as to prevent any explanation betwixt the consins.

"Markham," said Alice, hurriedly—"Cousin Everard—I have but a moment to remain here—for God's sake do you instantly begone!—be cautious and patient—but do not tarry here—my father is fearfully incensed."

"I have had my uncle's word for that, madam," replied Everard, "as well as his injunctions to depart, which I will obey without delay. I was not aware that you would have seconded so harsh an order quite so willingly; but I go, madam, sensible I leave those behind whose company is more agreeable."

"Unjust—ungenerous—ungrateful!" said Alice; but fearful her words might reach ears for which they were not designed, she spoke them in a voice so feeble, that her cousin, for whom they were intended, lost the consolation they were calculated to convey.

He bowed coldly to Alice, as taking leave, and said, with an air of that constrained courtesy which sometimes covers, among men of condition, the most deadly hatred, "I believe, Master Kerneguy, that I must make it convenient at present to suppress my own peculiar opinions on the matter which we have hinted at in our conversation, in which case I will send a gentleman, who, I hope, may be able to conquer yours."

The supposed Scotchman made him a stately, and at the same time a condescending bow, said

he should expect the honor of his commands, offered his hand to Mistress Alice, to conduct her back to her father's apartment, and took a triumphant leave of his rival.

Everard, on the other hand, stung beyond his patience, and, from the grace and composed assurance of the youth's carriage, still conceiving him to be either Wilmot, or some of his compeers in rank and profligacy, returned to the town of Woodstock, determined not to be outbearded, even though he should seek redress by means which his principles forbade him to consider as justifiable.

CHAPTER XXVI.

—Boundless Intemperance
In nature is a tyranny—it hath been
The untimely emptying of many a throne,
And fall of many kings.—

MACBETH.

WHILE Colonel Everard retreated in high indignation from the little refection, which Sir Henry Lee had in his good-humor offered, and withdrawn under the circumstances of provocation which we have detailed, the good old knight, scarce recovered from his fit of passion, partook of it with his daughter and guest, and shortly after, recollecting some sylvan task (for, though to little efficient purpose, he still regularly attended to his duties as Ranger), he called Bevis, and went out, leaving the two young people together.

"Now," said the amorous Prince to himself, "that Alice is left without her lion, it remains to see whether she is herself of a tigress breed.—So, Sir Bevis has left his charge," he said aloud; "I thought the knights of old, those stern guardians of which he is so fit a representative, were more rigorous in maintaining a vigilant guard."

"Bevis," said Alice, "knows that his attendance on me is totally needless; and, moreover, he has other duties to perform, which every true knight prefers to dangling the whole morning by a lady's sleeve."

"You speak treason against all true affection," said the gallant; "a lady's lightest wish should to a true knight be more binding than aught excepting the summons of his sovereign. I wish, Mistress Alice, you would but intimate your slightest desire to me, and you should see how I have practised obedience."

"You never brought me word what o'clock it was this morning," replied the young lady, "and there I sat questioning of the wings of Time when I should have remembered that gentlemen's gallantry can be quite as fugitive as Time himself. How do you know what your disobedience may have cost me and others? Pudding and pasty may have been burned to a cinder, for, sir, I practise the old domestic rule of visiting the kitchen; or I may have missed prayers, or I may have been too late for an appointment, simply by

the negligence of Master Louis Kerneguy failing to let me know the hour of the day."

"Oh," replied Kerneguy, "I am one of those lovers who cannot endure absence—I must be eternally at the feet of my fair enemy—such, I think, is the title with which romances teach us to grace the fair and cruel to whom we devote our hearts and lives.—Speak for me, good lute," he added, taking up the instrument, "and show whether I know not my duty."

He sung, but with more taste than execution, the air of a French rondelai, to which some of the wits or sonnetteers, in his gay and roving train, had adapted English verses:

An hour with thee!—When earliest day
Dapples with gold the eastern gray,
Oh, what can frame my mind to bear
The toil and turmoil, care and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold,
And sad remembrance of the old!—
One hour with thee.

One hour with thee!—When burning June
Waves his red flag at pitch of noon;
What shall repay the faithful swain,
His labor on the sultry plain;
And more than cave or sheltering bough,
Cool feverish blood, and throbbing brow!—
One hour with thee.

One hour with thee!—When sun is set,
Oh! what can teach me to forget
The thankless labors of the day;
The hopes, the wishes, flung away;
The increasing wants, and lessening gains,
The master's pride, who scorns my pains!—
One hour with thee.

"Truly, there is another verse," said the songster; "but I sing it not to you, Mistress Alice, because some of the prudes of the court liked it not."

"I thank you, Master Louis," answered the young lady "both for your discretion in singing, what has given me pleasure, and in forbearing what might offend me. Though a country girl, I pretend to be so far of the court mode, as to receive nothing which does not pass current among the better class there."

"I would," answered Louis, "that you were so well confirmed in their creed, as to let all pass with you, to which court ladies would give currency."

"And what would be the consequence?" said Alice, with perfect composure.

"In that case," said Louis, embarrassed like a general who finds that his preparations for attack do not seem to strike either fear or confusion into the enemy—"in that case you would forgive me, fair Alice, if I spoke to you in a warmer language than that of mere gallantry—if I told you how much my heart was interested in what you consider as idle jesting—if I seriously owned 't was in your power to make me the happiest or the most miserable of human beings."

"Master Kerneguy," said Alice, with the same unshaken nonchalance, "let us understand each other. I am little acquainted with high-ored manners, and I am unwilling, I tell you plainly,

to be accounted a silly country girl, who, rather from ignorance or conceit, is startled at every word of gallantry addressed to her by a young man, who, for the present, has nothing better to do than coin and circulate such false compliments. But I must not let this fear of seeming rustic and awkwardly timorous carry me too far; and being ignorant of the exact limits, I will take care to stop within them."

"I trust, madam," said Kerneguy, "that however severely you may be disposed to judge of me, your justice will not punish me too severely for an offence, of which your charms are alone the occasion?"

"Hear me out, sir, if you please," resumed Alice. "I have listened to you when you spoke *en berger*—nay, my complaisance has been so great, as to answer you *en bergère*—for I do not think anything except ridicule can come of dialogues between Lindor and Jeanneton; and the principal fault of the style is its extreme and tiresome silliness and affectation. But when you begin to kneel, offer to take my hand, and speak with a more serious tone, I must remind you of our real characters. I am the daughter of Sir Henry Lee, sir; and you are, or profess to be, Master Louis Kerneguy, my brother's page, and a fugitive for shelter under my father's roof, who incurs danger by the harbor he affords you, and whose household, therefore, ought not to be disturbed by your unpleasing importunities."

"I would to Heaven, fair Alice," said the King, "that your objections to the suit which I am urging, not in jest, but most seriously, as that on which my happiness depends, rested only on the low and precarious station of Louis Kerneguy!—Alice, thou hast the soul of thy family, and must needs love honor. I am no more than needy Scottish page, whom I have for my own purposes, personated, than I am the awkward lout, whose manners I adopted on the first night of our acquaintance. This hand, poor as I seem, can confer a coronet."

"Keep it," said Alice, "for some more ambitious damsel, my lord, for such I conclude is your title, if this romance be true,—I would not accept your hand, could you confer a duchy."

"In one sense, lovely Alice, you have neither overrated my power nor affection. It is your King—it is Charles Stewart who speaks to you!—he can confer duchies, and if beauty can merit them, it is that of Alice Lee. Nay, nay—rise—do not kneel—it is for your sovereign to kneel to thee, Alice, to whom he is a thousand times more devoted than the wanderer Louis dared venture to profess himself. My Alice has, I know, been trained up in those principles of love and obedience to her sovereign, that she cannot, in conscience or in mercy, inflict on him such a wound as would be implied in the rejection of his suit."

In spite of all Charles's attempts to prevent her, Alice had persevered in kneeling on one knee, until she had touched with her lip the hand