

"Does your Excellency think Tomkins is certainly to be depended upon?" said Pearson.

"As far as his interest goes, unquestionably," replied the General. "He has ever been the pump by which I have sucked the marrow out of many a plot, in special those of the conceited fool Rochecliffe, who is goose enough to believe that such a fellow as Tomkins would value anything beyond the offer of the best bidder. And yet it groweth late—I fear we must to the Lodge without him—Yet, all things well considered, I will tarry here till midnight.—Ah! Everard, thou mightest put this gear to rights if thou wilt! Shall some foolish principle of fantastic punctilio have more weight with thee, man, than have the pacification and welfare of England; the keeping of faith to thy friend and benefactor, and who will be yet more so, and the fortune and security of thy relations? Are these, I say, lighter in the balance than the cause of a worthless boy, who, with his father and his father's house, have troubled Israel for fifty years?"

"I do not understand your Excellency, nor at what service you point, which I can honestly render," replied Everard. "That which is dishonest I should be loth that you proposed."

"Then this at least might suit your honesty, or scrupulous humor, call it which thou wilt," said Cromwell. "Thou knowest, surely, all the passages about Jezebel's palace down yonder?—Let me know how they may be guarded against the escape of any from within."

"I cannot pretend to aid you in this matter," said Everard; "I know not all the entrances and posterns about Woodstock, and if I did, I am not free in conscience to communicate with you on this occasion."

"We shall do without you, sir," replied Cromwell, haughtily; "and if aught is found which may criminate you, remember you have lost right to my protection."

"I shall be sorry," said Everard, "to have lost your friendship, General; but I trust my quality as an Englishman may dispense with the necessity of protection from any man. I know no law which obliges me to be spy or informer, even if I were in the way of having opportunity to do service in either honorable capacity."

"Well, sir," said Cromwell, "for all your privileges and qualities, I will make bold to take you down to the Lodge at Woodstock to-night, to inquire into affairs in which the State is concerned.—Come hither, Pearson." He took a paper from his pocket, containing a rough sketch or ground-plan of Woodstock Lodge, with the avenues leading to it.—"Look here," he said, "we must move in two bodies on foot, and with all possible silence—thou must march to the rear of the old house of iniquity with twenty file of men, and dispose them around it the wisest thou canst. Take the reverend man there along with you. He must be secured at any rate, and may serve as a guide. I myself will occupy the front of the Lodge, and thus having stopped all the earths, thou wilt come

to me for farther orders—silence and dispatch is all.—But for the dog Tomkins, who broke appointment with me, he had need render a good excuse, or woe to his father's son!—Reverend sir, be pleased to accompany that officer.—Colonel Everard, you are to follow me; but first give your sword to captain Pearson, and consider yourself as under arrest."

Everard gave his sword to Pearson without any comment, and with the most anxious presage of evil followed the Republican General, in obedience to commands which it would have been useless to dispute.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Were my son William here but now,
He wadna fail the pledge."
W'P that in at the door there ran
A ghastly-looking page—
"I saw them, master, O! I saw,
Beneath the thornie brae,
Of black-maill'd warriors many a rank,
'Revenge!' he cried 'and gae.'"

HENRY MACKENZIE.

The little party at the Lodge were assembled at supper, at the early hour of eight o'clock. Sir Henry Lee, neglecting the food that was placed on the table, stood by a lamp on the chimney-piece, and read a letter with mournful attention.

"Does my son write to you more particularly than to me, Doctor Rochecliffe?" said the knight. "He only says here, that he will return probably this night; and that Master Kerneguy must be ready to set off with him instantly. What can this haste mean? Have you heard of any new search after our suffering party? I wish they would permit me to enjoy my son's company in quiet but for a day."

"The quiet which depends on the wicked ceasing from troubling," said Dr. Rochecliffe, "is connected, not by days and hours but by minutes. Their glut of blood at Worcester had satiated them for a moment, but their appetite, I fancy, has revived."

"You have news, then, to that purpose?" said Sir Henry.

"Your son," replied the doctor, "wrote to me by the same messenger: he seldom fails to do so, being aware of what importance it is that I should know every thing that passes. Means of escape are provided on the coast, and Master Kerneguy must be ready to start with your son the instant he appears."

"It is strange," said the knight; "for forty years I have dwelt in this house, man and boy, and the point only was how to make the day pass over our heads; for if I did not scheme out some hunting match or hawking, or the like, I might have sat here on my arm-chair, as undisturbed as a sleeping dormouse, from one end of the year to the other, and now I am more like a hare on her form, that dare not sleep unless with her eyes open, and scuds off when the wind rustles among the fern."

"It is strange," said Alice, looking at Dr. Rochecliffe, "that the roundhead steward has told you nothing of this. He is usually communicative enough of the motions of his party; and I saw you close together this morning."

"I must be closer with him this evening," said the Doctor gloomily; "but he will not blab."

"I wish you may not trust him too much," said Alice in reply.—"To me, that man's face, with all its shrewdness, evinces such a dark expression, that methinks I read treason in his very eye."

"Be assured, that matter is looked to," answered the Doctor, in the same ominous tone as before. No one replied, and there was a chilling and anxious feeling of apprehension which seemed to sink down on the company at once, like those sensations which make such constitutions as are particularly subject to the electrical influence, conscious of an approaching thunder-storm.

The disguised Monarch, apprized that day to be prepared on short notice to quit his temporary asylum, felt his own share of the gloom which involved the little society. But he was the first also to shake it off, as what neither suited his character nor his situation. Gaiety was the leading distinction of the former, and presence of mind, not depression of spirits, was required by the latter.

"We make the hour heavier," he said, "by being melancholy about it. Had you not better join me, Mistress Alice, in Patrick Cary's jovial farewell?—Ah, you do not know Pat Cary—a younger brother of Lord Falkland's?"

"A brother of the immortal Lord Falkland's, and write songs!" said the Doctor.

"Oh Doctor, the Muses take tithe as well as the Church," said Charles, "and have their share in every family of distinction. You do not know the words, Mistress Alice, but you can aid me, notwithstanding, in the burden at least—"

"Come, now that we're parting, and 'tis one to ten
If the towers of sweet Woodstock I'er see agen,
Let us e'en have a frolic, and drink like tall men,
While the goblet goes merrily round."†

The song arose, but not with spirit. It was

* "You do not know Patrick Carey," says King Charles in the novel; and, what is more singular, Patrick Carey has had two editors each unknown alike to the other, except by name only. In 1771, Mr. John Murray published Carey's poems, from a collection said to be in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Pierspoint Crimp. A very probable conjecture is stated, that the author was only known to private friendship. As late as 1819, the Author of Waverley, ignorant of the edition of 1771, published a second quarto from an elaborate manuscript, though in bad order, apparently the autograph of the first. Of Carey, the second editor, like the first, only knew the name and the spirit of the verses. He has since been enabled to ascertain that the poetic cavalier was a younger brother of the celebrated Henry Lord Carey, who fell at the battle of Newbery, and escaped the researches of Horace Walpole, to whose list of noble authors he would have been an important addition. So completely has the fame of the great Lord Falkland eclipsed that of his brothers, that this brother Patrick has been overlooked even by genealogists.

† The original song of Carey bears Wykeham, instead of Woodstock, for the locality. The verses are full of the bacchanalian spirit of the time.

one of those efforts at forced mirth, by which, above all other modes of expressing it, the absence of real cheerfulness is most distinctly intimated. Charles stopped the song, and upbraided the choristers.

"You sing, my dear Mistress Alice, as if you were chanting one of the seven penitential psalms; and you, good Doctor, as if you recited the funeral service."

The Doctor rose hastily from the table, and turned to the window; for the expression connected singularly with the task which he was that evening to discharge. Charles looked at him with some surprise; for the peril in which he lived, made him watchful of the slightest motions of those around him—then turned to Sir Henry, and said, "My honored host, can you tell any reason for this moody fit, which has so strangely crept upon us all?"

"Not I, my dear Louis," replied the knight; "I have no skill in these nice quillets of philosophy. I could as soon undertake to tell you the reason why Bevis turns round three times before he lies down. I can only say for myself, that if age and sorrow and uncertainty be enough to break a jovial spirit, or at least to bend it now and then, I have my share of them all; so that I, for one, cannot say that I am sad merely because I am not merry. I have but too good cause for sadness. I would I saw my son, were it but for a minute."

Fortune seemed for once disposed to gratify the old man; for Albert Lee entered at that moment. He was dressed in a riding-suit, and appeared to have travelled hard. He cast his eye hastily around as he entered. It rested for a second on that of the disguised Prince, and, satisfied with the glance which he received in lieu, he hastened, after the fashion of the olden day, to kneel down to his father, and request his blessing.

"It is thine, my boy," said the old man; a tear springing to his eyes as he laid his hand on the long locks, which distinguished the young cavalier's rank and principles, and which, usually combed and curled with some care, now hung wild and dishevelled about his shoulders. They remained an instant in this posture, when the old man suddenly started from it, as if ashamed of the emotion which he had expressed before so many witnesses, and passing the back of his hand hastily across his eyes, bade Albert get up and mind his supper, "since I dare say you have ridden fast and far since you last baited—and we'll send round a cup to his health, if Doctor Rochecliffe and the good company please.—Joceline, thou knave, skink about—thou look'st as if thou hadst seen a ghost."

"Joceline," said Alice, "is sick for sympathy—one of the stags ran at Phoebe Mayflower to-day, and she was fain to have Joceline's assistance to drive the creature off—the girl has been in fits since she came home."

"Silly slut," said the old knight—"she a woodman's daughter!—But, Joceline, if the deez

gets dangerous, you must send a broad arrow through him."

"It will not need, Sir Henry," said Joceline, speaking with great difficulty of utterance—"he is quiet enough now—he will not offend in that sort again."

"See it be so," replied the knight; "remember Mistress Alice often walks in the Chase. And now, fill round, and fill too, a cup to thyself to over-red thy fear, as mad Will has it. Tush, man, Phoebe will do well enough—she only screamed and ran, that thou might'st have the pleasure to help her. Mind what thou dost, and do not go spilling the wine after that fashion.—Come, here is a health to our wanderer, who has come to us again."

"None will pledge it more willingly than I," said the disguised Prince, unconsciously assuming an importance which the character he personated scarce warranted; but Sir Henry, who had become fond of the supposed page, with all his peculiarities, imposed only a moderate rebuke upon his petulance. "Thou art a merry, good-humored youth, Louis," he said, "but it is a world to see how the forwardness of the present generation hath gone beyond the gravity and reverence which in my youth was so regularly observed towards those of higher rank and station—I dared no more have given my own tongue the rein, when there was a doctor of divinity in company, than I would have dared to have spoken in church in service time."

"True, sir," said Albert, hastily interfering; "but Master Kerneguy had the better right to speak at present, that I have been absent on his business as well as my own, have seen several of his friends, and bring him important intelligence."

Charles was about to rise and beckon Albert aside, naturally impatient to know what news he had procured, or what scheme of safe escape was now decreed for him. But Dr. Rochecliffe twitched his cloak, as a hint to him to sit still, and not show any extraordinary motive for anxiety, since, in case of a sudden discovery of his real quality, the violence of Sir Henry Lee's feelings might have been likely to attract too much attention.

Charles, therefore, only replied, as to the knight's stricture, that he had a particular title to be sudden and unceremonious in expressing his thanks to Colonel Lee—that gratitude was apt to be unmannerly—finally, that he was much obliged to Sir Henry for his admonition; and that quit Woodstock when he would, "he was sure to leave it a better man than he came there."

His speech was of course ostensibly directed towards the father; but a glance at Alice assured her that she had her full share in the compliment.

"I fear," he concluded, addressing Albert, "that you come to tell us our stay here must be very short."

"A few hours only," said Albert—"just enough for needful rest for ourselves and our

horses. I have procured two which are good and tried. But Doctor Rochecliffe broke faith with me. I expected to have met some one do as at Joceline's hut, where I left the horses; and finding no person, I was delayed an hour in littering them down myself, that they might be ready for to-morrow's work—for we must be off before day."

"I—I—intended to have sent Tomkins—but—but"—hesitated the Doctor, "I—"

"The roundheaded rascal was drunk, or out of the way, I presume," said Albert. "I am glad of it—you may easily trust him too far."

"Hitherto he has been faithful," said the Doctor, "and I scarce think he will fail me now. But Joceline will go down and have the horses in readiness in the morning."

Joceline's countenance was usually that of alacrity itself on a case extraordinary. Now, however, he seemed to hesitate.

"You will go with me a little way, Doctor?" he said, as he edged himself closely to Rochecliffe.

"How? puppy, fool, and blockhead," said the knight, "wouldst thou ask Doctor Rochecliffe to bear thee company at this hour?—Out, hound!—get down to the kennel yonder instantly, or I will break the knave's pate of thee."

Joceline looked with an eye of agony at the divine, as if entreating him to interfere in his behalf; but just as he was about to speak, a most melancholy howling arose at the hall-door, and a dog was heard scratching for admittance.

"What ails Bevis next?" said the old knight. "I think this must be All-Fools-day, and that everything around me is going mad!"

The same sound startled Albert and Charles from a private conference in which they had engaged, and Albert ran to the hall-door to examine personally into the cause of the noise.

"It is no alarm," said the old knight to Kerneguy, "for in such cases the dog's bark is short, sharp, and furious. These long howls are said to be ominous. It was even so that Bevis's grand-sire bayed the whole livelong night on which my poor father died. If it comes now as a presage, God send it regard the old and useless, not the young, and those who may yet serve King and country!"

The dog had pushed past Colonel Lee, who stood a little while at the hall-door to listen if there were any thing stirring without, while Bevis advanced into the room where the company were assembled, bearing something in his mouth, and exhibiting, in an unusual degree, that sense of duty and interest which a dog seems to show when he thinks he has the charge of something important. He entered, therefore, drooping his long tail, slouching his head and ears, and walking with the stately yet melancholy dignity of a war-horse at his master's funeral. In this manner he paced through the room, went straight up to Joceline, who had been regarding him with astonishment, and uttering a short and melancholy howl, laid at his feet the object which

he bore in his mouth. Joceline stooped, and took from the floor a man's glove, of the fashion worn by the troopers, having something like the old-fashioned gauntlet projections of thick leather arising from the wrist, which go half way up to the elbow, and secure the arm against a cut with a sword. But Joceline had no sooner looked at what in itself was so common an object, than he dropped it from his hand, staggered backward, uttered a groan, and nearly fell to the ground.

"Now, the coward's curse be upon thee for an idiot!" said the knight, who had picked up the glove, and was looking at it—"thou shouldst be sent back to school, and flogged till the craven's blood was switched out of thee—What dost thou look at but a glove, thou base poltroon, and a very dirty glove, too? Stay, here is writing—Joseph Tomkins? Why, that is the round-headed fellow—I wish he hath not come to some mischief, for this is not dirt on the cheveron, but blood. Bevis may have bit the fellow, and yet the dog seemed to love him well too, or the stag may have hurt him. Out, Joceline, instantly, and see where he is—wind your bugle."

"I cannot go," said Joliffe, "unless"—and again he looked piteously at Dr. Rochecliffe, who saw no time was to be lost in appeasing the ranger's terrors, as his ministry was most needful in the present circumstances.—"Get spade and mattock," he whispered to him, "and a dark lantern, and meet me in the Wilderness."

Joceline left the room; and the Doctor, before following him, had a few words of explanation with Colonel Lee. His own spirit, far from being dismayed on the occasion, rather rose higher, like one whose natural element was intrigue and danger. "Here hath been wild work," he said, "since you parted. Tomkins was rude to the wench Phoebe—Joceline and he had a brawl together, and Tomkins is lying dead in the thicket, not far from Rosamond's Well. It will be necessary that Joceline and I go directly to bury the body; for besides that some one might stumble upon it, and raise an alarm, this fellow Joceline will never be fit for any active purpose till it is under ground. Though as stout as a lion, the under-keeper has his own weak side, and is more afraid of a dead body than a living one. When do you propose to start to-morrow?"

"By daybreak, or earlier," said Colonel Lee; "but we will meet again. A vessel is provided, and I have relays in more places than one—we go off from the coast of Sussex; and I am to get a letter at—, acquainting me precisely with the spot."

"Wherefore not go off instantly?" said the Doctor.

"The horses would fail us," replied Albert; "they have been hard ridden to-day."

"Adieu," said Rochecliffe, "I must to my task—Do you take rest and repose for yours, To conceal a slaughtered body, and convey on the same night a king from danger and captivity, are two feats which have fallen to few folks save my-

self; but let me not, while putting on my harness, boast myself as if I were taking it off after a victory." So saying, he left the apartment, and muffling himself in his cloak, went out into what was called the Wilderness.

The weather was a raw frost. The mist lay in partial wreaths upon the lower grounds; but the night, considering that the heavenly bodies were in a great measure hidden by the haze, was not extremely dark. Dr. Rochecliffe could not, however, distinguish the under-keeper until he had hemmed once or twice, when Joceline answered the signal by showing a glimpse of light from the dark lantern which he carried. Guided by this intimation of his presence, the divine found him leaning against a buttress which had once supported a terrace, now ruinous. He had a pickaxe and shovel, together with a deer's hide hanging over his shoulder.

"What do you want with the hide, Joceline," said Dr. Rochecliffe, "that you lumber it about with you on such an errand?"

"Why, look you, Doctor," he answered, "it is as well to tell you all about it. The man and I—he there—you know whom I mean—had many years since a quarrel about this deer. For though we were great friends, and Philip was sometimes allowed by my master's permission to help me in mine office, yet I knew, for all that, Philip Hazeldine was sometimes a trespasser. The deer-stealers were very bold at that time, it being just before the breaking out of the war, when men were becoming unsettled. And so it chanced, that one day, in the Chase, I found two fellows with their faces blacked and shirts over their clothes, carrying as prime a buck between them as any was in the park. I was upon them in the instant—one escaped, but I got hold of the other fellow, and who should it prove to be but trusty Phil Hazeldine! Well, I don't know whether it was right or wrong, but he was my old friend and pot-companion, and I took his word for amendment in future; and he helped me to hang up the deer on a tree, and I came back with a horse to carry him to the Lodge, and tell the knight the story, all but Phil's name. But the rogues had been too clever for me; for they had flayed and dressed the deer, and quartered him, and carried him off, and left the hide and horns, with a chime, saying,—

"The hannah to thee,
The breast to me,
The hide and the horns for the keeper's fee."

And this I knew for one of Phil's mad pranks, that he would play in those days with any lad in the country. But I was so nettled that I made the deer's hide be carried and dressed by a tanner and swore that it should be his winding-sheet or mine; and though I had long repented my rash oath, yet now, Doctor, you see what it has come to—though I forgot it, the devil did not."

"It was a very wrong thing to make a vow so sinful," said Rochecliffe; "but it would have been greatly worse had you endeavored to keep

it. Therefore, I bid you cheer up," said the good divine; "for in this unhappy case, I could not have wished, after what I have heard from Phœbe and yourself, that you should have kept your hand still, though I may regret that the blow has proved fatal. Nevertheless, thou hast done even that which was done by the great and inspired legislator, when he beheld an Egyptian tyrannizing over a Hebrew, saying that, in the case present, it was a female, when, says the Septuagint, *Percussum Egyptum abscondit sabulo*; the meaning whereof I will explain to you another time. Wherefore, I exhort you not to grieve beyond measure; for although this circumstance is unhappy in time and place, yet, from what Phœbe hath informed me of yonder wretch's opinions, it is much to be regretted that his brains had not been beaten out in his cradle, rather than that he had grown up to be one of those Grindlestonians, or Muggletonians, in whom is the perfection of every foul and blasphemous heresy, united with such an universal practice of hypocritical assentation as would deceive their master, even Satan himself."

"Nevertheless, sir," said the forester, "I hope you will bestow some of the service of the Church on this poor man, as it was his last wish, naming you, sir, at the same time; and unless this were done, I should scarce dare to walk out in the dark again for my whole life."

"Thou art a silly fellow; but if," continued the Doctor, "he named me as he departed, and desired the last rites of the Church, there was, it may be, a turning from evil and a seeking to good even in his last moments; and if Heaven granted him grace to form a prayer so fitting, wherefore should man refuse it? All I fear is the briefness of time."

"Nay, your reverence may cut the service somewhat short," said Joceline; "assuredly he does not deserve the whole of it; only if something were not to be done, I believe I should flee the country. They were his last words; and methinks he sent Bevis with his glove to put me in mind of them."

"Out, fool! Do you think," said the Doctor, "dead men send gauntlets to the living, like knights in a romance; or if so, would they choose dogs to carry their challenges? I tell thee, fool, the cause was natural enough. Bevis, questing about, found the body, and brought the glove to you to intimate where it was lying, and to require assistance; for such is the high instinct of these animals towards one in peril."

"Nay, if you think so, Doctor," said Joceline—"and, doubtless, I must say, Bevis took an interest in the man—if indeed it was not something worse in the shape of Bevis, for methought his eyes looked wild and fiery, as if he would have spoken."

As he talked thus, Joceline rather hung back, and, in doing so, displeased the Doctor, who exclaimed, "Come along, thou lazy laggard. Art thou a soldier, and a brave one, and so much

afraid of a dead man? Thou hast killed men in battle and in chase, I warrant thee."

"Ay, but their backs were to me," said Joceline. "I never saw one of them cast back his head, and glare at me as yonder fellow did, his eye retaining a glance of hatred, mixed with terror and reproach, till it became fixed like a jelly. And were you not with me, and my master's concerns, and something else, very deeply at stake, I promise you I would not again look at him for all Woodstock."

"You must, though," said the Doctor, suddenly pausing, "for here is the place where he lies. Come hither deep into the copse; take care of stumbling—Here is a place just fitting, and we will draw the briers over the grave afterwards."

As the Doctor thus issued his directions, he assisted also in the execution of them; and while his attendant labored to dig a shallow and misshapen grave, a task which the state of the soil, perplexed with roots, and hardened by the influence of the frost, rendered very difficult, the divine read a few passages out of the funeral service, partly in order to appease the superstitious terrors of Joceline, and partly because he held it matter of conscience not to deny the Church's rites to one who had requested their aid in extremity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Case ye, case ye,—on with your vizards.

HENRY IV.

THE company whom we had left in Victor Lee's parlor were about to separate for the night, and had risen to take a formal leave of each other, when a tap was heard at the hall-door. Albert, the vidette of the party, hastened to open it, enjoining, as he left the room, the rest to remain quiet, until he had ascertained the cause of the knocking. When he gained the portal, he called to know who was there, and what they wanted at so late an hour.

"It is only me," answered a treble voice.

"And what is your name, my little fellow?" said Albert.

"Spitfire, sir," replied the voice without.

"Spitfire?" said Albert.

"Yes, sir," replied the voice; "all the world calls me so, and Colonel Everard himself. But my name is Spittal for all that."

"Colonel Everard! arrive you from him?" demanded young Lee.

"No, sir; I come, sir, from Roger Wildrake, esquire, of Squattlesea-mere, if it like you," said the boy; "and I have brought a token to Mistress Lee, which I am to give into her own hands, if you would but open the door, sir, and let me in—but I can do nothing with a three-inch board between us."

"It is some freak of that drunken rakehell," said Albert, in a low voice, to his sister, who had crept out after him on tiptoe.

"Yet, let us not be hasty in concluding so," said the young lady; "at this moment the least trifle may be of consequence.—What token has Master Wildrake sent me, my little boy?"

"Nay, nothing very valuable neither," replied the boy; "but he was so anxious you should get it, that he put me out of window as one would chuck out a kitten, that I might not be stopped by the soldiers."

"Hear you?" said Alice to her brother; "undo the gate, for God's sake."

Her brother, to whom her feelings of suspicion were now sufficiently communicated, opened the gate in haste, and admitted the boy, whose appearance, not much dissimilar to that of a skinned rabbit in a livery, or a monkey at a fair, would at another time have furnished them with amusement. The urchin messenger entered the hall, making several odd bows and congés, and delivered the woodcock's feather* with much ceremony to the young lady, assuring her it was the prize she had won upon a wager about hawk-ing.

"I prithee, my little man," said Albert, "was your master drunk or sober, when he sent thee all this way with a feather at this time of night?"

"With reverence, sir," said the boy, "he was what he calls sober, and what I would call concerned in liquor for any other person."

"Curse on the drunken coxcomb!" said Albert.—"There is a tester for thee, boy, and tell thy master to break his jests on suitable persons, and at fitting times."

"Stay yet a minute," exclaimed Alice; "we must not go too fast—this craves wary walking."

"A feather," said Albert; "all this work about a feather! Why, Doctor Rochecliffe, who can suck intelligence out of every trifle as a magpie would suck an egg, could make nothing of this."

"Let us try what we can do without him," said Alice. Then addressing herself to the boy,—"So there are strangers at your master's?"

"At Colonel Everard's, madam, which is the same thing," said Spitfire.

"And what manner of strangers," said Alice; "guests, I suppose?"

"Ay, mistress," said the boy, "a sort of guests that make themselves welcome wherever

they come, if they meet not a welcome from their landlord—soldiers, madam."

"The men that have been long lying at Woodstock," said Albert.

"No, sir," said Spitfire, "new-comers, with gallant buff-coats and steel breastplates; and their commander—your honor and your ladyship never saw such a man—at least I am sure Bill Spitfire never did."

"Was he tall or short?" said Albert, now much alarmed.

"Neither one nor other," said the boy; "stout made, with slouching shoulders; a nose large, and a face one would not like to say No to. He had several officers with him. I saw him but for a moment, but I shall never forget him while I live."

"You are right," said Albert Lee to his sister, pulling her to one side—"quite right—the Archfiend himself is upon us!"

"And the feather," said Alice, whom fear had rendered apprehensive of slight tokens, "means flight—and a woodcock is a bird of passage."

"You have hit it," said her brother; "but the time has taken us cruelly short. Give the boy a trifle more—nothing that can excite suspicion, and dismiss him. I must summon Rochecliffe and Joceline."

He went accordingly, but, unable to find those he sought, he returned with hasty steps to the parlor, where, in his character of Louis, the page was exerting himself to detain the old knight, who, while laughing at the tales he told him, was anxious to go to see what was passing in the hall.

"What is the matter, Albert?" said the old man; "who calls at the Lodge at so undue an hour, and wherefore is the hall-door opened to them? I will not have my rules, and the regulations laid down for keeping this house, broken through, because I am old and poor. Why answer you not? why keep a chattering with Louis Kerneguy, and neither of you all the while minding what I say?—Daughter Alice, have you sense and civility enough to tell me, what or who it is that is admitted here contrary to my general orders?"

"No one, sir," replied Alice; "a boy brought a message, which I fear is an alarming one."

"There is only fear, sir," said Albert, stepping forward, "that whereas we thought to have stayed with you till to-morrow, we must now take farewell of you to-night."

"Not so, brother," said Alice, "you must stay and aid the defence here—if you and Master Kerneguy are both missed, the pursuit will be instant, and probably successful; but if you stay, the hiding-places about this house will take some time to search. You can change coats with Kerneguy too."

"Right, noble wench," said Albert; "most excellent—yes—Louis, I remain as Kerneguy, your fly as young Master Lee."

* On a particular occasion, a lady, suspecting, by the passage of a body of guards through her estate, that the arrest of her neighbor, Patrick Home of Polwarth, afterwards first Earl of Marchmont, was designed, sent him a feather by a shepherd boy, whom she dared not trust with a more explicit message. Danger sharpens the intellect, and this hint was the commencement of those romantic adventures which gave Grizzel Lady Murray the materials from which she compiled her account of her grandfather's escape, published by Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy Register of Scotland. The anecdote of the feather does not occur there, but the author has often heard it from the late Lady Diana Scott, the lineal descendant and representative of Patrick Earl of Marchmont.

"I cannot see the justice of that," said Charles.

"Nor I neither," said the knight, interfering. "Men come and go, lay schemes, and alter them, in my house, without deigning to consult me! And who is Master Kerneguy, or what is he to me, that my son must stay and take the chance of mischief, and this your Scotch page is to escape in his dress? I will have no such contrivance carried into effect, though it were the finest cobweb that was ever woven in Dr. Rochecliffe's brains. —I wish you no ill, Louis; thou art a lively boy; but I have been somewhat too lightly treated in this, man."

"I am fully of your opinion, Sir Henry," replied the person whom he addressed. "You have been, indeed, repaid for your hospitality by want of that confidence, which could never have been so justly reposed. But the moment is come, when I must say, in a word, I am that unfortunate Charles Stewart, whose lot it has been to become the cause of ruin to his best friends, and whose present residence in your family threatens to bring destruction to you, and all around you."

"Master Louis Kerneguy," said the knight, very angrily, "I will teach you to choose the subjects of your mirth better when you address them to me; and, moreover, very little provocation would make me desire to have an ounce or two of that malapert blood from you."

"Be still, sir, for God's sake!" said Albert to his father. "This is indeed the King; and such is the danger of his person, that every moment we waste may bring round a fatal catastrophe."

"Good God!" said the father, clasping his hands together, and about to drop on his knees, "has my earnest wish been accomplished! and is it in such a manner as to make me pray it had never taken place!"

He then attempted to bend his knee to the King—kissed his hand, while tears trickled from his eyes—then said, "Pardon, my Lord—your Majesty, I mean—permit me to sit in your presence but one instant till my blood beats more freely, and then—"

Charles raised his ancient and faithful subject from the ground; and even in that moment of fear, and anxiety, and danger, insisted on leading him to his seat, upon which he sunk in apparent exhaustion, his head drooping upon his long white beard, and big unconscious tears mingling with its silver hairs. Alice and Albert remained with the King, arguing and urging his instant departure.

"The horses are at the under-keeper's hut," said Albert, "and the relays only eighteen or twenty miles off. If the horses can but carry you so far—"

"Will you not rather," interrupted Alice, "trust to the concealments of this place, so numerous and so well tried—Rochecliffe's apartments, and the yet farther places of secrecy?"

"Alas!" said Albert, "I know them only by name. My father was sworn to confide them to but one man, and he had chosen Rochecliffe."

"I prefer taking the field to any hiding-hole in England," said the King. "Could I but find my way to this hut, where the horses are, I would try what arguments whip and spur could use to get them to the rendezvous, where I am to meet Sir Thomas Acland and fresh cattle. Come with me, Colonel Lee, and let us run for it. The roundheads have beat us in battle; but if it come to a walk or a race, I think I can show which has the best mettle."

"But then," said Albert, "we lose all the time which may otherwise be gained by the defence of this house—leaving none here but my poor father, incapable from his state of doing anything; and you will be instantly pursued by fresh horses, while ours are unfit for the road. Oh, where is the villain Joceline!"

"What can have become of Doctor Rochecliffe?" said Alice; "he that is so ready with advice;—where can they be gone? Oh, if my father could but rouse himself!"

"Your father is roused," said Sir Henry, rising and stepping up to them with the energy of full manhood in his countenance and motions—"I did but gather my thoughts—for when did they fail a Lee when his King needed counsel or aid?" He then began to speak, with the ready and distinct utterance of a general at the head of an army, ordering every motion for attack and defence, unmoved himself, and his own energy compelling obedience, and that cheerful obedience, from all who heard him. "Daughter," he said, "beat up Dame Jellicot—Let Phebe rise, if she were dying, and secure doors and windows."

"That hath been done regularly since—we have been thus far honored," said his daughter, looking at the King—"yet, let them go through the chambers once more." And Alice retired to give the orders, and presently returned.

The old knight proceeded, in the same decided tone of promptitude and dispatch—"Which is your first stage?"

"Gray's—Rothebury, by Henley, where Sir Thomas Acland and young Knolles are to have horses in readiness," said Albert; "but how to get there with our weary cattle!"

"Trust me for that," said the knight; and proceeding with the same tone of authority—"Your Majesty must instantly to Joceline's lodge," he said; "there are your horses and your means of flight. The secret places of this house, well managed, will keep the rebel dogs in play two or three hours good—Rochecliffe is, I fear, kidnapped, and his Independent hath betrayed him—Would I had judged the villain better! I would have struck him through at one of our trials of fence, with an unbated weapon, as Will says.—But for your guide when on horseback, half a bowshot from Joceline's hut is that of old Martin the verdurer; he is a score of years older than I, but as fresh as an old oak—beat up

his quarters, and let him ride with you for death and life. He will guide you to your relay, for no fox that ever earthed in the Chase knows the country so well for seven leagues around."

"Excellent, my dearest father, excellent," said Albert; "I had forgot Martin the verdurer."

"Young men forget all," answered the knight—"Alas, that the limbs should fail, when the head which can best direct them—is come perhaps to its wisest!"

"But the tired horses," said the King—"could we not get fresh cattle?"

"Impossible at this time of night," answered Sir Henry; "but tired horses may do much with care and looking to." He went hastily to the cabinet which stood in one of the oriel windows, and searched for something in the drawers, pulling out one after another.

"We lose time, father," said Albert, afraid that the intelligence and energy which the old man displayed had been but a temporary flash of the lamp, which was about to relapse into evening twilight.

"Go to, sir boy," said his father sharply; "is it for thee to tax me in this presence!—Know, that were the whole roundheads that are out of hell in present assemblage round Woodstock, I could send away the Royal Hope of England by a way that the wisest of them could never guess.—Alice, my love, ask no questions, but speed to the kitchen, and fetch a slice or two of beef, or better of venison; cut them long, and thin, d'ye mark me—"

"This is wandering of the mind," said Albert apart to the King. "We do him wrong, and your Majesty harm, to listen to him."

"I think otherwise," said Alice, "and I know my father better than you." So saying, she left the room, to fulfil her father's orders.

"I think so, too," said Charles—"in Scotland the Presbyterian ministers, when thundering in their pulpits on my own sins and those of my house, took the freedom to call me to my face Jeroboam, or Rehoboam, or some such name, for following the advice of young counsellors—Odds-fish, I will take that of the gray beard for once, for never saw I more sharpness and decision than in the countenance of that noble old man."

By this time Sir Henry had found what he was seeking. "In this tin box," he said, "are six balls prepared of the most cordial spices, mixed with medicaments of the choicest and most invigorating quality. Given from hour to hour, wrapped in a covering of good beef or venison, a horse of spirit will not flag for five hours, at the speed of fifteen miles an hour; and, please God, the fourth of the time places your Majesty in safety—what remains may be useful on some future occasion. Martin knows how to administer them; and Albert's weary cattle shall be ready, if walked gently for ten minutes, in running to devour the way, as old Will says—nay, waste not time in speech, your Majesty does me

but too much honor in using what is your own.—Now, see if the coast is clear, Albert, and let his Majesty set off instantly—We will play our parts but ill, if any take the chase after him for these two hours that are between night and day—Change dresses, as you proposed, in yonder sleeping apartment—something may be made of that too."

"But, good Sir Henry," said the King, "your zeal overlooks a principal point. I have, indeed, come from the underkeeper's hut you mention to this place, but it was by daylight, and under guidance—I shall never find my way thither in utter darkness, and without a guide—I fear you must let the Colonel go with me; and I entreat and command, you will put yourself to no trouble or risk to defend the house—only make what delay you can in showing its secret recesses."

"Rely on me, my royal and liege Sovereign," said Sir Henry; "but Albert *must* remain here, and Alice shall guide your Majesty to Joceline's hut in his stead."

"Alice!" said Charles, stepping back in surprise—"why, it is dark night—and—and— and—" He glanced his eye towards Alice, who had by this time returned to the apartment, and saw doubt and apprehension in her look; an intimation, that the reserve under which he had placed his disposition for gallantry, since the morning of the proposed duel, had not altogether effaced the recollection of his previous conduct. He hastened to put a strong negative upon a proposal which appeared so much to embarrass her. "It is impossible for me, indeed, Sir Henry, to use Alice's services—I must walk as if bloodhounds were at my heels."

"Alice shall trip it," said the knight, "with any wench in Oxfordshire; and what would your Majesty's best speed avail, if you knew not the way to go?"

"Nay, nay, Sir Henry," continued the King, "the night is too dark—we stay too long—I will find it myself."

"Lose no time in exchanging your dress with Albert," said Sir Henry—"leave me to take care of the rest."

Charles, still inclined to expostulate, withdrew, however, into the apartment where young Lee and he were to exchange clothes; while Sir Henry said to his daughter, "Get thee a cloak, wench, and put on thy thickest shoes. Thou might'st have ridden Pixie, but he is something spirited, and thou art a timid horsewoman, and ever wert so—the only weakness I have known of thee."

"But, my father," said Alice, fixing her eyes very earnestly on Sir Henry's face, "must I really go along with the King? might not Phebe, or Dame Jellicot, go with us?"

"No—no—no," answered Sir Henry; "Phebe, the silly slut, has, as you well know, been in fits to-night, and I take it, such a walk as you must take is no charm for hysterics—Dame Jellicot,

hobbles as slow as a broken-winded mare—besides, her deafness, were there occasion to speak to her—No—no—you shall go alone and entitle yourself to have it written on your tomb, 'Here lies she who saved the King!'—And, hark you, do not think of returning to-night, but stay at the verdurer's with his niece—the Park and Chase will shortly be filled with our enemies, and whatever chances here you will learn early enough in the morning."

"And what is it I may then learn?" said Alice—"Alas, who can tell?—Oh, dearest father, let me stay and share your fate! I will pull off the timorous woman, and fight for the King, if it be necessary.—But—I cannot think of becoming his only attendant in the dark night, and through a road so lonely."

"How!" said the knight, raising his voice; "do you bring ceremonious and silly scruples forward, when the King's safety, nay, his life, is at stake! By this mark of loyalty," stroking his gray beard as he spoke, "could I think thou wert other than becomes a daughter of the house of Lee, I would—"

At this moment the King and Albert interrupted him by entering the apartment, having exchanged dresses, and, from their stature, bearing some resemblance to each other, though Charles was evidently a plain, and Lee a handsome young man. Their complexions were different; but the difference could not be immediately noticed, Albert having adopted a black peruke, and darkened his eyebrows.

Albert Lee walked out to the front of the mansion, to give one turn around the Lodge, in order to discover in what direction any enemies might be approaching, that they might judge of the road which it was safest for the royal fugitive to adopt. Meanwhile the King, who was first in entering the apartment, had heard a part of the angry answer which the old knight made to his daughter, and was at no loss to guess the subject of his resentment. He walked up to him with the dignity which he perfectly knew to assume when he chose it.

"Sir Henry," he said, "it is our pleasure, nay, our command, that you forbear all exertion of paternal authority in this matter. Mistress Alice, I am sure, must have good and strong reasons for what she wishes; and I should never pardon myself were she placed in an unpleasant situation on my account. I am too well acquainted with woods and wildernesses to fear losing my way among my native oaks of Woodstock."

"Your Majesty shall not incur the danger," said Alice, her temporary hesitation entirely removed by the calm, clear, and candid manner in which Charles uttered these last words. "You shall run no risk that I can prevent; and the unhappy chances of the times in which I have lived have from experience made the forest as well known to me by night as by day. So, if you scorn not my company, let us away instantly."

"If your company is given with good-will, I accept it with gratitude," replied the monarch.

"Willingly," she said, "most willingly. Let me be one of the first to show that zeal and that confidence, which I trust all England will one day emulously display in behalf of your Majesty."

She uttered these words with an alacrity of spirit, and made the trifling change of habit with a speed and dexterity which showed that all her fears were gone, and that her heart was entirely in the mission on which her father had dispatched her.

"All is safe around," said Albert Lee, showing himself; "you may take which passage you will—the most private is the best."

Charles went gracefully up to Sir Henry Lee ere his departure, and took him by the hand.—"I am too proud to make professions," he said, "which I may be too poor ever to realize. But while Charles Stewart lives, he lives the obliged and indebted debtor of Sir Henry Lee."

"Say not so, please your Majesty, say not so," exclaimed the old man, struggling with the hysterical sobs which rose to his throat. "He who might claim all, cannot become indebted by accepting some small part."

"Farewell, good friend, farewell!" said the King; "think of me as a son, a brother to Albert and to Alice, who are, I see, already impatient. Give me a father's blessing, and let me be gone."

"The God, through whom kings reign, bless your Majesty," said Sir Henry, kneeling and turning his reverend face and clasped hands up to Heaven—"The Lord of Hosts bless you, and save your Majesty from your present dangers, and bring you in his own good time to the safe possession of the crown that is your due!"

Charles received his blessing like that of a father, and Alice and he departed on their journey.

As they left the apartment, the old knight let his hands sink gently as he concluded this fervent ejaculation, his head sinking at the same time.—His son dared not disturb his meditation, yet feared the strength of his feelings might overcome that of his constitution, and that he might fall into a swoon. At length he ventured to approach and gradually touch him. The old knight started to his feet, and was at once the same alert, active-minded, forecasting director, which he had shown himself a little before.

"You are right, boy," he said, "we must be up and doing. They lie, the roundheaded traitors, that call him dissolute and worthless! He hath feelings worthy the son of the blessed Martyr. You saw, even in the extremity of danger, he would have perilled his safety rather than take Alice's guidance when the silly wench seemed in doubt about going. Profligacy is intensely selfish, and thinks not of the feelings of others. But hast thou drawn bolt and bar after them? I vow I scarce saw when they left the hall."

"I let them out at the little postern," said the Colonel; "and when I returned, I was afraid I had found you ill."

"Joy—joy, only joy, Albert—I cannot allow a thought of doubt to cross my breast. God will not desert the descendant of an hundred kings—the rightful heir will not be given up to the ruffians. There was a tear in his eye as he took leave of me—I am sure of it. Wouldst not die for him, boy?"

"If I lay my life down for him to-night," said Albert, "I would only regret it, because I should not hear of his escape to-morrow."

"Well, let us to this gear," said the knight; "think'st thou that thou know'st enough of his manner, clad as thou art in his dress, to induce the women to believe thee to be the page Kerne-guy?"

"Umph," replied Albert, "it is not easy to bear out a personification of the King, when women are in the case. But there is only a very little light below, and I can try."

"Do so instantly," said his father; "the knaves will be here presently."

Albert accordingly left the apartment, while the knight continued—"If the women be actually persuaded that Kerne-guy be still here, it will add strength to my plot—the beagles will open on a false scent, and the royal stag be safe in cover ere they regain the slot of him. Then to draw them on from hiding-place to hiding-place! Why, the east will be gray before they have sought the half of them!—Yes, I will play at bob-cherry with them, hold the bait to their nose, which they are never to gorge upon! I will drag a trail for them which will take them some time to puzzle out.—But at what cost do I do this!" continued the old knight, interrupting his own joyous soliloquy—"Oh, Absalom, Absalom, my son! my son!—But let him go; he can but die as his fathers have died; and in the cause for which they lived. But he comes—Hush!—Albert, hast thou succeeded? hast thou taken royalty upon thee so as to pass current?"

"I have, sir," replied Albert; "the women will swear that Louis Kerne-guy was in the house this very last minute."

"Right, for they are good and faithful creatures," said the knight, "and would swear what was for his majesty's safety at any rate; yet they will do it with more nature and effect, if they believe they are swearing truth—How didst thou impress the deceit upon them?"

"By a trifling adoption of the royal manner, sir, not worth mentioning."

"Out, rogue!" replied the knight. "I fear the King's character will suffer under your mummery."

"Umph," said Albert, muttering what he dared not utter aloud—"were I to follow the example close up, I know whose character would be in the greatest danger."

"Well, now we must adjust the defence of the outworks, the signals, &c., betwixt us both, and

the best way to baffle the enemy for the longest time possible." He then again had recourse to the secret drawers of his cabinet, and pulled out a piece of parchment, on which was a plan. "This," said he, "is a scheme of the citadel, as I call it, which may hold out long enough after you have been forced to evacuate the places of retreat you are already acquainted with. The ranger was always sworn to keep this plan secret, save from one person only, in case of sudden death.—Let us sit down and study it together."

They accordingly adjusted their measures in a manner which will better show itself from what afterwards took place, than were we to state the various schemes which they proposed, and provisions made against events that did not arrive.

At length young Lee, armed and provided with some food and liquor, took leave of his father, and went and shut himself up in Victor Lee's apartment, from which was an opening to the labyrinth of private apartments, or hiding places, that had served the associates so well in the fantastic tricks which they had played off at the expense of the Commissioners of the Commonwealth.

"I trust," said Sir Henry, sitting down by his desk, after having taken a tender farewell of his son, "that Rochefort has not blabbed out the secret of the plot to yonder fellow Tomkins, who was not unlikely to prate of it out of school.—But here am I seated—perhaps for the last time, with my Bible on the one hand, and old Will on the other, prepared, thank God, to die as I have lived.—I marvel they come not yet," he said, after waiting for some time—"I always thought the devil had a smarter spur to give his agents, when they were upon his own special service."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

But see, his face is black, and full of blood;
His eye-balls farther out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man;
His hair uprear'd—his nostrils stretch'd with struggling;
His hands abroad display'd, as one who grasp'd
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.

HENRY VI. Part I.

HAD those whose unpleasant visit Sir Henry expected come straight to the Lodge, instead of staying for three hours at Woodstock, they would have secured their prey. But the Familist, partly to prevent the King's escape, partly to render himself of more importance in the affair, had represented the party at the Lodge as being constantly on the alert, and had therefore inculcated upon Cromwell the necessity of his remaining quiet until he (Tomkins) should appear to give him notice that the household were retired to rest. On this condition he undertook, not only to discover the apartment in which the unfortunate Charles slept, but, if possible, to find some mode of fastening the door on the outside, so as to render flight impossible. He had also promised to secure the key of a postern, by