

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

which the soldiers might be admitted into the house without exciting alarm. Nay, the matter might, by means of his local knowledge, be managed, as he represented it, with such security that he would undertake to place his Excellency, or whomsoever he might appoint for the service, by the side of Charles Stewart's bed, ere he had slept off the last night's claret. Above all, he had stated, that from the style of the old house, there were many passages and posterns which must be carefully guarded before the least alarm was caught by those within, otherwise the success of the whole enterprise might be endangered. He had therefore besought Cromwell to wait for him at the village, if he found him not there on his arrival; and assured him that the marching and countermarching of soldiers was at present so common, that even if any news were carried to the Lodge that fresh troops had arrived in the borough, so ordinary a circumstance would not give them the least alarm. He recommended that the soldiers chosen for this service should be such as could be depended upon—no fainters in spirit—none who turn back from Mount Gilbea for fear of the Amalekites, but men of war, accustomed to strike with the sword, and to need no second blow. Finally, he represented that it would be wisely done if the General should put Pearson, or any other officer whom he could completely trust, into the command of the detachment, and keep his own person, if he should think it proper to attend, secret even from the soldiers.

All this man's counsels Cromwell had punctually followed. He had travelled in the van of this detachment of one hundred picked soldiers, whom he had selected for the service, men of dauntless resolution, bred in a thousand dangers, and who were steeled against all feelings of hesitation and compassion, by the deep and gloomy fanaticism which was their chief principle of action—men to whom, as their General, and no less as the chief among the Elect, the commands of Oliver were like a commission from the Deity.

Great and deep was the General's mortification at the unexpected absence of the personage on whose agency he so confidently reckoned, and many conjectures he formed as to the cause of such mysterious conduct. Sometimes he thought Tomkins had been overcome by liquor, a frailty to which Cromwell knew him to be addicted; and when he held this opinion, he discharged his wrath in maledictions, which, of a different kind from the wild oaths and curses of the cavaliers, had yet in them as much blasphemy, and more determined malevolence. At other times he thought some unexpected alarm, or perhaps some drunken cavalier revel, had caused the family of Woodstock Lodge to make later hours than usual. To this conjecture, which appeared the most probable of any, his mind often recurred; and it was the hope that Tomkins would still appear at the rendezvous which induced him to remain at the

borough, anxious to receive communication from his emissary, and afraid of endangering the success of the enterprise by any premature exertion on his own part.

In the meantime, Cromwell, finding it no longer possible to conceal his personal presence, disposed of everything so as to be ready at a minute's notice. Half his soldiers he caused to dismount, and had the horses put into quarters; the other half were directed to keep their horses saddled, and themselves ready to mount at a moment's notice. The men were brought into the house by turns, and had some refreshment, leaving a sufficient guard on the horses, which was changed from time to time.

Thus Cromwell waited with no little uncertainty, often casting an anxious eye upon Colonel Everard, who, he suspected, could, if he chose it, well supply the place of his absent confidant. Everard endured this calmly, with unaltered countenance, and brow neither ruffled nor dejected.

Midnight at length tolled, and it became necessary to take some decisive step. Tomkins might have been treacherous; or, a suspicion which approached more near to the reality, his intrigue might have been discovered, and he himself murdered or kidnapped by the vengeful royalists. In a word, if any use was to be made of the chance which fortune afforded of securing the most formidable claimant of the supreme power, which he already aimed at, no farther time was to be lost. He at length gave orders to Pearson to get the men under arms; he directed him concerning the mode of forming them, and that they should march with the utmost possible silence; or as it was given out in the orders, "Even as Gideon marched in silence when he went down against the camp of the Midianites, with only Phurah his servant. Peradventure," continued this strange document "we too may learn of what yonder Midianites have dreamed."

A single patrol, followed by a corporal and five steady, experienced soldiers, formed the advanced guard of the party; then followed the main body. A rear-guard of ten men guarded Everard and the minister. Cromwell required the attendance of the former, as it might be necessary to examine him, or confront him with others; and he carried Master Holdenough with him, because he might escape if left behind, and perhaps raise some tumult in the village. The Presbyterians, though they not only concurred with, but led the way in the civil war, were at its conclusion highly dissatisfied with the ascendancy of the military sectaries, and not to be trusted as cordial agents in anything where their interest was concerned. The infantry being disposed of as we have noticed, marched off from the left of their line, Cromwell and Pearson, both on foot, keeping at the head of the centre, or main body of the detachment. They were all armed with petronels, short guns similar to the

modern carbine, and, like them, used by horsemen. They marched in the most profound silence and with the utmost regularity, the whole body moving like one man.

About one hundred yards behind the rear-most of the dismounted party, came the troopers who remained on horseback; and it seemed as if even the irrational animals were sensible to Cromwell's orders, for the horses did not neigh, and even appeared to place their feet on the earth cautiously, and with less noise than usual.

Their leader, full of anxious thoughts, never spoke, save to enforce by whispers his caution respecting silence, while the men, surprised and delighted to find themselves under the command of their renowned General, and destined, doubtless, for some secret service of high import, used the utmost precaution in attending to his reiterated orders.

They marched down the street of the little borough in the order we have mentioned. Few of the townsmen were abroad; and one or two, who had protracted the orgies of the evening to that unusual hour, were too happy to escape the notice of a strong party of soldiers, who often acted in the character of police, to inquire about their purpose for being under arms so late, or the route which they were pursuing.

The external gate of the Chase had, ever since the party had arrived at Woodstock, been strictly guarded by three file of troopers, to cut off all communication between the Lodge and the town. Spitfire, Wildrake's emissary, who had often been a bird-nesting, or on similar mischievous excursions in the forest, had evaded these men's vigilance by climbing over a breach with which he was well acquainted, in a different part of the wall.

Between this party and the advanced guard of Cromwell's detachment, a whispered challenge was exchanged, according to the rules of discipline. The infantry entered the Park, and were followed by the cavalry, who were directed to avoid the hard road, and ride as much as possible upon the turf which bordered on the avenue. Here, too, an additional precaution was used, a file or two of foot soldiers being detached to search the woods on either hand, and make prisoner, or, in the event of resistance, put to death, any whom they might find lurking there, under what pretence soever.

Meanwhile, the weather began to show itself as propitious to Cromwell, as he had found most incidents in the course of his successful career. The gray mist, which had hitherto obscured everything, and rendered marching in the wood embarrassing and difficult, had now given way to the moon, which, after many efforts, at length forced her way through the vapor, and hung her dim dull crescent in the heavens, which she enlightened, as the dying lamp of an anchorite does the cell in which he reposes. The party were in sight of the front of the palace, when Holdenough whispered to Everard, as they walked near each

other—"See ye not, yonder flutters the mysterious light in the turret of the incontinent Rosamond? This night will try whether the devil of the Sectaries or the devil of the Malignants shall prove the stronger. O, sing jubilee, for the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself!"

Here the divine was interrupted by a non-commissioned officer, who came hastily, yet with noiseless steps, to say, in a low stern whisper—"Silence, prisoner in the rear—silence on pain of death!"

A moment afterwards the whole party stopped their march, the word *halt* being passed from one to another and instantly obeyed.

The cause of this interruption was the hasty return of one of the flanking party to the main body, bringing news to Cromwell that they had seen a light in the wood at some distance on the left.

"What can it be?" said Cromwell, his low stern voice, even in a whisper, making itself distinctly heard. "Does it move, or is it stationary?"

"So far as we can judge, it moveth not," answered the trooper.

"Strange—there is no cottage near the spot where it is seen."

"So please your Excellency, it may be a device of Sathan," said Corporal Hungudgeon, snuffling through his nose; "he is mighty powerful in these parts of late."

"So please your idioocy, thou art an ass," said Cromwell; but, instantly recollecting that the corporal had been one of the adjutators or tribunes of the common soldiers, and was therefore to be treated with suitable respect, he said, "Nevertheless, if it be the device of Satan, please it the Lord we will resist him, and the foul slave shall fly from us.—Pearson," he said, resuming his soldierlike brevity, "take four file, and see what is yonder—No—the knaves may shrink from thee. Go thou straight to the Lodge—invest it in the way we agreed, so that a bird shall not escape out of it—form an outer and an inward ring of sentinels, but give no alarm until I come. Should any attempt to escape, *KILL* them."—He spoke that command with terrible emphasis.—"Kill them on the spot," he repeated, "be they who or what they will. Better so than trouble the Commonwealth with prisoners."

Pearson heard, and proceeded to obey his commander's orders.

Meanwhile, the future Protector disposed the small force which remained with him in such a manner that they should approach from different points at once the light which excited his suspicions, and gave them orders to creep as near to it as they could, taking care not to lose each other's support, and to be ready to rush in at the same moment, when he should give the sign, which was to be a loud whistle. Anxious to ascertain the truth with his own eyes, Cromwell, who had by instinct all the habits of military foresight, which, in others, are the result of pro-

fessional education and long experience, advanced upon the object of his curiosity. He skulked from tree to tree with the light step and prowling sagacity of an Indian bush-fighter; and before any of his men had approached so near as to descry them, he saw, by the lantern which was placed on the ground, two men, who had been engaged in digging what seemed to be an ill-made grave. Near them lay extended something wrapped in a deer's hide, which greatly resembled the dead body of a man. They spoke together in a low voice, yet so that their dangerous auditor could perfectly overhear what they said.

"It is done at last," said one; "the worst and hardest labor I ever did in my life. I believe there is no luck about me left. My very arms feel as if they did not belong to me; and, strange to tell, toil as hard as I would, I could not gather warmth in my limbs."

"I have warmed me enough," said Rochecliffe, breathing short with fatigue.

"But the cold lies at my heart," said Joceline; "I scarce hope ever to be warm again. It is strange, and a charm seems to be on us. Here have we been nigh two hours in doing what Digger the sexton would have done to better purpose in half a one."

"We are wretched spademen enough," answered Dr. Rochecliffe. "Every man to his tools—thou to thy bugle-horn, and I to my papers in cipher. But do not be discouraged; it is the frost on the ground, and the number of roots, which rendered our task difficult. And now, all due rites done to this unhappy man, and having read over him the service of the church, *valeat quantum*, let us lay him decently in this place of last repose; there will be small lack of him above ground. So cheer up thy head, man, like a soldier as thou art; we have read the service over his body; and should times permit it, we will have him removed to consecrated ground, though he is all unworthy of such favor. Here, help me to lay him in the earth; we will drag briars and thorns over the spot, when we have shovelled dust upon dust; and do thou think of this chance more manfully; and remember, thy secret is in thine own keeping."

"I cannot answer for that," said Joceline. "Methinks the very night winds among the leaves will tell of what we have been doing—methinks the trees themselves will say 'there is a dead corpse lies among our roots.' Witnesses are soon found when blood hath been spilled."

"They are so, and that right early," exclaimed Cromwell, starting from the thicket, laying hold on Joceline, and putting a pistol to his head. At any other period of his life, the forester would, even against the odds of numbers, have made a desperate resistance; but the horror he had felt at the slaughter of an old companion, although in defence of his own life, together with fatigue and surprise, had altogether unmanned him, and he was seized as easily as a sheep is secured by the butcher. Dr. Rochecliffe offered some resistance,

but was presently secured by the soldiers who pressed around him.

"Look, some of you," said Cromwell, "what corpse this is upon whom these lewd sons of Belial have done a murder—Corporal Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, see if thou knowest the face."

"I profess I do, even as I should do mine own in a mirror," sniffled the corporal, after looking on the countenance of the dead man by the help of the lantern. "Of a verity it is our trusty brother in the faith, Joseph Tomkins."

"Tomkins!" exclaimed Cromwell, springing forward and satisfying himself with a glance at the features of the corpse—"Tomkins!—and murdered, as the fracture of the temple intimates!—dogs that ye are, confess the truth—You have murdered him because you have discovered his treachery—I should say his true spirit towards the Commonwealth of England, and his hatred of those complots in which you would have engaged his honest simplicity."

"Ay," said Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, "and then to misuse his dead body with your papistical doctrines, as if you had crammed cold porridge into its cold mouth. I pray thee, General, let these men's bonds be made strong."

"Forbear, corporal," said Cromwell; "our time presses.—Friend, to you, whom I believe to be Doctor Anthony Rochecliffe by name and surname, I have to give the choice of being hanged at daybreak to-morrow, or making atonement for the murder of one of the Lord's people, by telling what thou knowest of the secrets which are in yonder house."

"Truly, sir," replied Rochecliffe, "you found me but in my duty as a clergyman, interring the dead; and respecting answering your questions, I am determined myself, and do advise my fellow-sufferer on this occasion—"

"Remove him," said Cromwell; "I know his stiffneckedness of old, though I have made him plough in my furrow, when he thought he was turning up his own swathe—remove him to the rear, and bring hither the other fellow.—Come thou here—this way—closer—closer.—Corporal Grace-be-here, do thou keep thy hand upon the belt with which he is bound. We must take care of our life for the sake of this distracted country, though, lack-a-day, for its own proper worth we could peril it for a pin's point.—Now, mark me, fellow, choose betwixt buying thy life by a full confession, or being tuckered presently up to one of these old oaks—How likest thou that?"

"Truly, master," answered the under-keeper, affecting more rusticity than was natural to him (for his frequent intercourse with Sir Henry Lee had partly softened and polished his manners), "I think the oak is like to bear a lusty acorn—that is all."

"Dally not with me, friend," continued Oliver; "I profess to thee in sincerity I am no trifier. What guests have you seen at yonder house called the Lodge?"

"Many a brave guest in my day, I've warrant

ye, master," said Joceline. "Ah, to see how the chimneys used to smoke some twelve years back! Ah, sir, a sniff of it would have dined a poor man."

"Out, rascal!" said the General, "dost thou jeer me? Tell me at once what guests have been of late in the Lodge—and look thee, friend, be assured, that in rendering me this satisfaction, thou shalt not only rescue thy neck from the halter, but render also an acceptable service to the State, and one which I will see fittingly rewarded. For, truly, I am not of those who would have the rain fall only on the proud and stately plants, but rather would, so far as my poor wishes and prayers are concerned, that it should also fall upon the lowly and humble grass and corn, that the heart of the husbandman may be rejoiced, and that as the cedar of Lebanon waxes in its height, in its boughs, and in its roots, so may the humble and lowly hyssop that groweth upon the walls flourish, and—and, truly—Understand'st thou me, knave?"

"Not entirely, if it please your honor," said Joceline; "but it sounds as if you were preaching a sermon, and has a marvellous twang of doctrine with it."

"Then, in one word—thou knowest there is one Louis Kernes, or Carnego, or some such name, in hiding at the Lodge yonder?"

"Nay, sir," replied the under-keeper; "there have been many coming and going since Worcester-field; and how should I know who they are?—my service is out of doors, I trow."

"A thousand pounds," said Cromwell, "do I tell down to thee, if thou canst place that boy in my power."

"A thousand pounds is a marvellous matter, sir," said Joceline; "but I have more blood on my hand than I like already. I know not how the price of life may thrive—and, 'scape or hang, I have no mind to try."

"Away with him to the rear," said the General; "and let him not speak with his yoke-fellow yonder.—Fool that I am, to waste time in expecting to get milk from mules—move on towards the Lodge."

They moved with the same silence as formerly, notwithstanding the difficulties which they encountered from being unacquainted with the road and its various intricacies. At length they were challenged in a low voice, by one of their own sentinels, two concentric circles of whom had been placed around the Lodge, so close to each other, as to preclude the possibility of an individual escaping from within. The outer guard was maintained partly by horse upon the roads and open lawn, and where the ground was broken and bushy, by infantry. The inner circle was guarded by foot soldiers only. The whole were in the highest degree alert, expecting some interesting and important consequences from the unusual expedition on which they were engaged.

"Any news, Pearson?" said the General to

his aid-de-camp, who came instantly to report to his superior.

He received for answer, "None."

Cromwell led his officer forward just opposite to the door of the Lodge, and there paused betwixt the circles of guards, so that their conversation could not be overheard.

He then pursued his inquiry, demanding—"Were there any lights, any appearances of stirring—any attempt at sally—any preparation for defence?"

"All as silent as the valley of the shadow of death—Even as the vale of Jehosaphat."

"Pshaw! tell me not of Jehosaphat, Pearson," said Cromwell. "These words are good for others, but not for thee. Speak plainly, and like a blunt soldier as thou art. Each man hath his own mode of speech; and bluntness, not sanctity, is thine."

"Well, then, nothing has been stirring," said Pearson.—"Yet peradventure—"

"Peradventure not me," said Cromwell, "or thou wilt tempt me to knock thy teeth out. I ever distrust a man when he speaks after another fashion from his own."

"Zounds! let me speak to an end," answered Pearson, "and I will speak in what language your Excellency will."

"Thy zounds, friend," said Oliver, "showeth little of grace, but much of sincerity. Go to then—thou knowest I love and trust thee. Hast thou kept close watch? It behoves us to know that, before giving the alarm."

"On my soul," said Pearson, "I have watched as closely as a cat at a mouse-hole. It is beyond possibility that anything could have eluded our vigilance, or even stirred within the house, without our being aware of it."

"Tis well," said Cromwell; "thy services shall not be forgotten, Pearson. Thou canst not preach and pray, but thou canst obey thine orders, Gilbert Pearson, and that may make amends."

"I thank your Excellency," replied Pearson; "but I beg leave to chime in with the humors of the times. A poor fellow hath no right to hold himself singular."

He paused, expecting Cromwell's orders what next was to be done, and, indeed, not a little surprised that the General's active and prompt spirit had suffered him during a moment so critical to cast away a thought upon a circumstance so trivial as his officer's peculiar mode of expressing himself. He wondered still more, when, by a brighter gleam of sunshine than he had yet enjoyed, he observed that Cromwell was standing motionless, his hands supported upon his sword, which he had taken out of the belt, and his stern brows bent on the ground. He waited for some time impatiently, yet afraid to interfere, lest he should awaken this unwonted fit of ill-timed melancholy into anger and impatience. He listened to the muttering sounds which escaped from the half-opening lips of his principal, in

which the words, "hard necessity," which occurred more than once, were all of which the sense could be distinguished. "My Lord-General," at length he said, "time flies."

"Peace, busy fiend, and urge me not!" said Cromwell. "Think'st thou, like other fools, that I have made a paction with the devil for success, and am bound to do my work within an appointed hour, lest the spell should lose its force!"

"I only think, my Lord-General," said Pearson, "that Fortune has put into your offer what you have long desired to make a prize of, and that you hesitate."

Cromwell sighed deeply as he answered, "Ah, Pearson, in this troubled world, a man, who is called like me to work great things in Israel, had need to be, as the poets feign, a thing made of hardened metal, immovable to feelings of human charities, impassible, resistless. Pearson, the world will hereafter, perchance, think of me as being such a one as I have described, 'an iron man, and made of iron mould.'—Yet they will wrong my memory—my heart is flesh, and my blood is mild as that of others. When I was a sportsman, I have wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by my hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of my greyhound; and canst thou think it a light thing to me, that the blood of this lad's father lying in some measure upon my head, I should now put in peril that of the son? They are of the kindly race of English sovereigns, and, doubtless, are adored like to demigods by those of their own party. I am called Parricide, Bloodthirsty Usurper, already, for shedding the blood of one man, that the plague might be stayed—or as Achan was slain that Israel might thereafter stand against the face of their enemies. Nevertheless, who has spoken unto me graciously since that high deed! Those who acted in the matter with me are willing that I should be the scape-goat of atonement—those who looked on and helped not, bear themselves now as if they had been borne down by violence; and while I looked that they should shout applause on me, because of the victory of Worcester, whereof the Lord had made me the poor instrument, they look aside to say, 'Ha! ha! the King-killer, the Parricide—soon shall his place be made desolate.'—Truly it is a great thing, Gilbert Pearson, to be lifted above the multitude; but when one feelth that his exaltation is rather hailed with hate and scorn than with love and reverence—in sooth, it is still a hard matter for a mild, tender-conscienced, infirm spirit to bear—and God be my witness, that, rather than do this new deed, I would shed my own best heart's blood in a pitched field, twenty against one." Here he fell into a flood of tears, which he sometimes was wont to do. This extremity of emotion was of a singular character. It was not actually the result of penitence, and far less that of absolute hypocrisy, but arose merely from the temperature of that remarkable man, whose deep policy,

and ardent enthusiasm, were intermingled with a strain of hypochondriacal passion, which often led him to exhibit scenes of this sort, though seldom, as now, when he was called to the execution of great undertakings.

Pearson, well acquainted as he was with the peculiarities of his General, was baffled and confounded by this fit of hesitation and contrition, by which his enterprising spirit appeared to be so suddenly paralyzed. After a moment's silence, he said, with some dryness of manner, "Is this be the case, it is a pity your Excellency came hither. Corporal Humgudgeon and I, the greatest saint and greatest sinner in your army, had done the deed, and divided the guilt and the honor betwixt us."

"Ha!" said Cromwell, as if touched to the quick, "wouldst thou take the prey from the lion?"

"If the lion behaves like a village cur," said Pearson, boldly, "who now barks and seems as if he would tear all to pieces, and now flies from a raised stick or a stone, I know not why I should fear him. If Lambert had been here, there had been less speaking and more action."

"Lambert! What of Lambert?" said Cromwell, very sharply.

"Only," said Pearson, "that I long since hesitated whether I should follow your Excellency or him—and I begin to be uncertain whether I have made the best choice, that's all."

"Lambert!" exclaimed Cromwell, impatiently, yet softening his voice lest he should be overheard descanting on the character of his rival,—"What is Lambert?—a fulip-fancying fellow, whom nature intended for a Dutch gardener at Delft or Rotterdam. Ungrateful as thou art, what could Lambert have done for thee?"

"He would not," answered Pearson, "have stood here hesitating before a locked door, when fortune presented the means of securing, by one blow, his own fortune, and that of all who followed him."

"Thou art right, Gilbert Pearson," said Cromwell, grasping his officer's hand, and strongly pressing it. "Be the half of this bold accomplishment, whether the reckoning be on earth or heaven."

"Be the whole of it mine hereafter," said Pearson hardily, "so your Excellency have the advantage of it upon earth. Step back to the rear till I force the door—there may be danger, if despair induce them to make a desperate sally."

"And if they do sally, is there one of my Ironsides who fears fire or steel less than myself?" said the General. "Let ten of the most determined men follow us, two with halberds, two with petronels, the others with pistols—Let all their arms be loaded, and fire without hesitation, if there is any attempt to resist or to sally forth—Let Corporal Humgudgeon be with them, and do thou remain here, and watch against escape, as thou wouldst watch for thy salvation."

The General then struck at the door with the

hilt of his sword—at first with a single blow or two, then with a reverberation of strokes that made the ancient building ring again. This noisy summons was repeated once or twice without producing the least effect.

"What can this mean?" said Cromwell; "they cannot surely have fled, and left the house empty."

"No," replied Pearson, "I will ensure you against that; but your Excellency strikes so fiercely, you allow no time for an answer. Hark! I hear the baying of a hound, and the voice of a man who is quieting him—Shall we break in at once, or hold parley?"

"I will speak to them first," said Cromwell.—"Hollo! who is within there?"

"Who is it inquires?" answered Sir Henry Lee from the interior; "or what want you here at this dead hour?"

"We come by warrant of the Commonwealth of England," said the General.

"I must see your warrant ere I undo either bolt or latch," replied the knight; "we are enough of us to make good the castle; neither I nor my fellows will deliver it up but upon good quarter and conditions; and we will not treat for these save in fair daylight."

"Since you will not yield to our right, you must try our might," replied Cromwell. "Look to yourselves within, the door will be in the midst of you in five minutes."

"Look to yourselves without," replied the stout-hearted Sir Henry; "we will pour our shot upon you; if you attempt the least violence."

But, alas! while he assumed this bold language, his whole garrison consisted of two poor terrified women; for his son, in conformity with the plan which they had fixed upon, had withdrawn from the hall into the secret recesses of the palace.

"What can they be doing now, sir?" said Phebe, hearing a noise as it were of a carpenter turning screw-nails, mixed with a low buzz of men talking.

"They are fixing a petard," said the knight, with great composure. "I have noted thee for a clever wench, Phebe, and I will explain it to thee: 'Tis a metal pot, shaped much like one of the roguish knaves' own sugar-loaf hats, supposing it had narrower brims—it is charged with some few pounds of fine gunpowder. Then—"

"Gracious! we shall be all blown up!" exclaimed Phebe,—the word gunpowder being the only one which she understood in the knight's description.

"Not a bit, foolish girl. Pack old Dame Jellicot into the embrasure of yonder window," said the knight, "on that side of the door, and we will esconce ourselves on this, and we shall have time to finish my explanation, for they have bungling engineers. We had a clever French fellow at Newark would have done the job in the firing of a pistol."

They had scarce got into the place of security when the knight proceeded with his description.—"The petard being formed, as I tell you, is secured with a thick and strong piece of plank, termed the madrier, and the whole being suspended, or rather secured against the gate to be forced—But thou mindest me not?"

"How can I, Sir Henry," she said, "within reach of such a thing as you speak of?—O Lord! I shall go mad with very terror—we shall be crushed—blown up—in a few minutes!"

"We are secure from the explosion," replied the knight, gravely, "which will operate chiefly in a forward direction into the middle of the chamber; and from any fragments that may fly laterally, we are sufficiently guarded by this deep embrasure."

"But they will slay us when they enter," said Phebe.

"They will give thee fair quarter, wench," said Sir Henry; "and if I do not bestow a brace of balls on that rogne engineer, it is because I would not incur the penalty inflicted by martial law, which condemns to the edge of the sword all persons who attempt to defend an untenable post. Not that I think the rigor of the law could reach Dame Jellicot or thyself Phebe, considering that you carry no arms. If Alice had been here she might indeed have done somewhat, for she can use a birding-piece."

Phebe might have appealed to her own deeds of that day, as more allied to feats of *millee* and battle, than any which her young lady evacted; but she was in an agony of inexpressible terror, expecting from the knight's account of the petard, some dreadful catastrophe, of what nature she did not justly understand, notwithstanding his liberal communication on the subject.

"They are strangely awkward at it," said Sir Henry; "little Boutirlin would have blown the house up before now.—Ah! he is a fellow would take the earth like a rabbit—if he had been here, never may I stir, but he would have countermined them ere now, and

—'Tis sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard.'

as our immortal Shakspeare has it."

"Oh, Lord, the poor mad old gentleman," thought Phebe—"Oh, sir, had you not better leave alone play-books, and think of your end?" uttered she aloud, in sheer terror and vexation of spirit.

"If I had not made up my mind to that many days since," answered the knight, "I had not now met this hour with a free bosom—"

'As gentle and as jocund as to rest  
Go I to death—truth hath a quiet breast.'

As he spoke, a broad glare of light flashed from without, through the windows of the hall, and betwixt the strong iron stanchions with which they were secured—a broad discolored light it was, which shed a red and dusky illumination on the old armor and weapons, as if it had been the reflection of a conflagration. Phebe

screamed aloud, and, forgetful of reverence in the moment of passion, clung close to the knight's cloak and arm, while Dame Jellicot, from her solitary niche, having the use of her eyes, though bereft of her hearing, yelled like an owl when the moon breaks out suddenly.

"Take care, good Phebe," said the knight; "you will prevent my using my weapon if you hang upon me thus.—The bungling fools cannot fix their petard without the use of torches! Now let me take the advantage of this interval.—Remember what I told thee, and how to put off time."

"Oh, Lord—ay, sir," said Phebe, "I will say anything. Oh, Lord, that it were but over!—Ah! ah!"—(two prolonged screams)—"I hear something hissing like a serpent."

"It is the fusee, as we martialists call it," replied the knight; "that is, Phebe, the match which fires the petard, and which is longer or shorter, according to the distance."

Here the knight's discourse was cut short by a dreadful explosion, which, as he had foretold, shattered the door, strong as it was, to pieces, and brought down the glass clattering from the windows with all the painted heroes and heroines, who had been recorded on that fragile place of memory for centuries. The women shrieked incessantly, and were answered by the bellowing of Bevis, though shut up at a distance from the scene of action. The knight, shaking Phebe from him with difficulty, advanced into the hall to meet those who rushed in, with torches lighted and weapons prepared.

"Death to all who resist—life to those who surrender!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot. "Who commands this garrison?"

"Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley," answered the old knight, stepping forward; "who, having no other garrison than two weak women, is compelled to submit to what he would willingly have resisted."

"Disarm the inveterate and malignant rebel," cried Oliver. "Art thou not ashamed, sir, to detain me before the door of a house which you had no force to defend? Wearest thou so white a beard, and knowest thou not, that to refuse surrendering an indefensible post, by the martial law, deserves hanging?"

"My beard and I," said Sir Henry, "have settled that matter between us, and agree right cordially. It is better to run the risk of being hanged like honest men, than to give up our trust like cowards and traitors."

"Ha! say'st thou?" said Cromwell; "thou hast powerful motives, I doubt not, for running thy head into a noose. But I will speak with thee by and by. Ho! Pearson, Gilbert Pearson, take this scroll—Take the elder woman with thee—Let her guide you to the various places therein mentioned—Search every room therein set down, and arrest, or slay upon the slightest resistance, whomsoever you find there. Then

note those places marked as commanding points for cutting off intercourse through the mansion—the landing-places of the great staircase, the great gallery, and so forth. Use the woman civilly. The plan annexed to the scroll will point out the posts, even if she prove stupid or refractory. Meanwhile, the corporal, with a party, will bring the old man and the girl there to some apartment—the parlor, I think, called Victor Lee's, will do as well as another.—We will then be out of this stifling smell of gunpowder."

So saying, and without requiring any farther assistance or guidance, he walked towards the apartment he had named. Sir Henry had his own feelings, when he saw the unhesitating decision with which the General led the way, and which seemed to intimate a more complete acquaintance with the various localities of Woodstock than was consistent with his own present design, to engage the Commonwealth party in a fruitless search through the intricacies of the Lodge.

"I will now ask thee a few questions, old man," said the General, when they had arrived in the room; "and I warn thee, that hope of pardon for thy many and persevering efforts against the Commonwealth, can be no otherwise merited than by the most direct answers to the questions I am about to ask."

Sir Henry bowed. He would have spoken, but he felt his temper rising high, and became afraid it might be exhausted before the part he had settled to play, in order to afford the King time for his escape, should be brought to an end.

"What household have you had here, Sir Henry Lee, within these few days—what guests—what visitors? We know that your means of housekeeping are not so profuse as usual, so the catalogue cannot be burdensome to your memory."

"Far from it," replied the knight, with unusual command of temper; "my daughter, and latterly my son, have been my guests; and I have had these females, and one Joceline Joliffe, to attend upon us."

"I do not ask after the regular members of your household, but after those who have been within your gates, either as guests, or as malignant fugitives taking shelter?"

"There may have been more of both kinds, sir, than I, if it please your valor, am able to answer for," replied the knight, "I remember my kinsman Everard was here one morning—Also, I bethink me, a follower of his, called Wildrake."

"Did you not also receive a young cavalier, called Louis Garnegey?" said Cromwell.

"I remember no such name, were I to hang for it," said the knight.

"Kernegey, or some such word," said the General; "we will not quarrel for a sound."

"A Scotch lad, called Louis Kernegey, was a



"I will now ask thee a few questions, old man," said Cromwell, when they had arrived in the room; "and I warn thee that hope of pardon for thy many and persevering efforts against the Commonwealth can be no otherwise merited than by the most direct answers to the questions I am about to ask."

guest of mine," said Sir Henry, "and left me this morning for Dorsetshire."

"So late!" exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot—"How fate contrives to baffle us, even when she seems most favorable!—What direction did he take, old man?" continued Cromwell—"what horse did he ride—who went with him?"

"My son went with him," replied the knight; "he brought him here as the son of a Scottish lord.—I pray you, sir, to be finished with these questions; for although I owe thee, as Will Shakspeare says,

"Respect for thy great place, and let the devil  
Be sometimes honored for his burning throne,—"

yet I feel my patience wearing thin."

Cromwell here whispered to the corporal, who in turn uttered orders to two soldiers, who left the room. "Place the knight aside; we will now examine the servant damsel," said the General.—"Dost thou know," said he to Phoebe, "of the presence of one Louis Kerneguy, calling himself a Scotch page, who came here a few days since?"

"Surely, sir," she replied, "I cannot easily forget him; and I warrant no well-looking wench that comes into his way will be like to forget him either."

"Aha," said Cromwell, "sayst thou so? truly I believe the woman will prove the truer witness.—When did he leave this house?"

"Nay, I know nothing of his movements, not I," said Phoebe; "I am only glad to keep out of his way. But if he have actually gone hence, I am sure he was here some two hours since, for he crossed me in the lower passage, between the hall and the kitchen."

"How did you know it was he?" demanded Cromwell.

"By a rude enough token," said Phoebe.—"La, sir, you do ask such questions!" she added, hanging down her head.

Humgudgeon here interfered, taking upon himself the freedom of a coadjutor. "Verily," he said, "if what the damsel is called to speak upon hath aught unseemly, I crave your Excellency's permission to withdraw, not desiring that my nightly meditations may be disturbed with tales of such a nature."

"Nay, your honor," said Phoebe, "I scorn the old man's words, in the way of seemliness or unseemliness either. Master Louis did but snatch a kiss, that is the truth of it, if it must be told."

Here Humgudgeon groaned deeply, while his Excellency avoided laughing with some difficulty. "Thou hast given excellent tokens, Phoebe," he said; "and if they be true, as I think they seem to be, thou shalt not lack thy reward.—And here comes our spy from the stables."

"There are not the least signs," said the trooper, "that horses have been in the stables for a month—there is no litter in the stalls, no

hay in the racks, the corn-bins are empty, and the mangers are full of cobwebs."

"Ay, ay," said the old knight, "I have seen when I kept twenty good horses in these stalls, with many a groom and stable-boy to attend them."

"In the meanwhile," said Cromwell, "their present state tells little for the truth of your own story, that there were horses to-day, on which this Kerneguy and your son fled from justice."

"I did not say that the horses were kept there," said the knight. "I have horses and stables elsewhere."

"Fie, fie, for shame, for shame!" said the General; "can a white-bearded man, I ask it once more, be a false witness?"

"Faith, sir," said Sir Henry Lee, "it is a thriving trade, and I wonder not that you who live on it are so severe in prosecuting interlopers. But it is the times, and those who rule the times, that make gray-beards deceivers."

"Thou art facetious, friend, as well as daring, in thy malignancy," said Cromwell; "but credit me, I will cry quittance with you ere I am done. Whereunto lead these doors?"

"To bedrooms," answered the knight.

"Bedrooms! only to bedrooms?" said the Republican General, in a voice which indicated such was the internal occupation of his thoughts, that he had not fully understood the answer.

"Lord, sir," said the knight, "why should you make it so strange? I say these doors lead to bedrooms—to places where honest men sleep, and rogues lie awake."

"You are running up a farther account, Sir Henry," said the General; "but we will balance it once and for all."

During the whole of the scene, Cromwell, whatever might be the internal uncertainty of his mind, maintained the most strict temperance in language and manner, just as if he had no farther interest in what was passing, than as a military man employed in discharging the duty enjoined him by his superiors. But the restraint upon his passion was but

\* The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.\*

The course of his resolution was hurried on even more forcibly, because no violence of expression attended or announced its current. He threw himself into a chair, with a countenance that indicated no indecision of mind, but a determination which awaited only the signal for action. Meanwhile the knight, as if resolved in nothing to forego the privileges of his rank and place, sat himself down in turn, and putting on his hat, which lay on a table, regarded the General with a calm look of fearless indifference. The soldiers stood around, some holding the torches, which illuminated the apartment with a lurid and sombre glare of light, the others rest-

\* But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth!  
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.

CAMPBELL'S *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

ing upon their weapons. Phœbe, with her hands folded, her eyes turned upwards till the pupils were scarce visible, and every shade of color banished from her ruddy cheek, stood like one in immediate apprehension of the sentence of death being pronounced, and instant execution commanded.

Heavy steps were at last heard, and Pearson and some of the soldiers returned. This seemed to be what Cromwell waited for. He started up, and asked hastily, "Any news, Pearson? any prisoners—any malignants slain in thy defence?"

"None, so please your Excellency," said the officer.

"And are thy sentinels all carefully placed, as Tomkins's scroll gave direction, and with fitting orders?"

"With the most deliberate care," said Pearson.

"Art thou very sure," said Cromwell, pulling him a little to one side, "that this is all well, and duly cared for? Bethink thee, that when we engage ourselves in the private communications, all will be lost should the party we look for have the means of dodging us by an escape into the more open rooms, and from thence perhaps into the forest."

"My Lord-General," answered Pearson, "if placing the guards on the places pointed out in this scroll be sufficient, with the strictest orders to stop, and, if necessary, to stab or shoot, whoever crosses their post, such orders are given to men who will not fail to execute them. If more is necessary, your Excellency has only to speak."

"No—no—no, Pearson," said the General, "thou hast done well.—This night over, and let it end but as we hope, thy reward shall not be wanting.—And now to business.—Sir Henry Lee, undo me the secret spring of yonder picture of your ancestor. Nay, spare yourself the trouble and guilt of falsehood or equivocation, and, I say, undo me that spring presently."

"When I acknowledge you for my master, and wear your livery, I may obey your commands," answered the knight; "even then I would need first to understand them."

"Wench," said Cromwell, addressing Phœbe, "go thou undo the spring—you could do it fast enough when you aided at the gambols of the demons of Woodstock, and terrified even Mark Everard, who, I judged, had more sense."

"Oh Lord, sir, what shall I do?" said Phœbe, looking to the knight; "they know all about it. What shall I do?"

"For thy life, hold out to the last, wench! Every minute is worth a million."

"Ha! heard you that, Pearson?" said Cromwell to the officer; then, stamping with his foot, he added, "Undo the spring, or I will else use levers and wrenching-irons—Or, ha! another petard were well bestowed.—Call the engineer."

"O Lord, sir," cried Phœbe, "I shall never live another petard—I will open the spring."

"Do as thou wilt," said Sir Henry; "it shall profit them but little."

Whether from real agitation, or from a desire to gain time, Phœbe was some minutes ere she could get the spring to open; it was indeed secured with art, and the machinery on which it acted was concealed in the frame of the portrait. The whole, when fastened, appeared quite motionless, and betrayed, as when examined by Colonel Everard, no external mark of its being possible to remove it. It was now withdrawn, however, and showed a narrow recess, with steps which ascended on one side into the thickness of the wall. Cromwell was now like a greyhound slipped from the leash with the prey in full view.—"Up," he cried, "Pearson, thou art swifter than I—Up thou next, corporal." With more agility than could have been expected from his person or years, which were past the meridian of life, and exclaiming, "Before, those with the torches!" he followed the party, like an eager huntsman in the rear of his hounds, to encourage at once and direct them, as they penetrated into the labyrinth described by Dr. Rochecliffe in the "Wonders of Woodstock."

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

The King, therefore, for his defence  
Against the furious Queen,  
At Woodstock build'd such a bower,  
As never yet was seen.  
Most curiously that bower was built,  
Of stone and timber strong;  
An hundred and fifty doors  
Did to this bower belong;  
And they so cunningly contriv'd,  
With turnings round about,  
That none but with a clew of thread  
Could enter in or out.

BALLAD OF FAIR ROSAMOND.

The tradition of the country, as well as some historical evidence, confirmed the opinion that there existed, within the old Royal Lodge at Woodstock, a labyrinth, or connected series of subterranean passages, built chiefly by Henry II., for the security of his mistress, Rosamond Clifford, from the jealousy of his Queen, the celebrated Eleanor. Dr. Rochecliffe, indeed, in one of those fits of contradiction with which antiquaries are sometimes seized, was bold enough to dispute the alleged purpose of the perplexed maze of rooms and passages, with which the walls of the ancient palace were perforated; but the fact was undeniable, that in raising the fabric some Norman architect had exerted the utmost of the complicated art which they have often shown elsewhere, in creating secret passages, and chambers of retreat and concealment. There were stairs, which were ascended merely, as it seemed, for the purpose of descending again—passages, which, after turning and winding for a considerable way, returned to the place where they set out—there were trapdoors and hatchways, panels and portcullises. Although Oliver was assisted by a sort of ground-plan, made out and transmit-

ted by Joseph Tomkins, whose former employment in Dr. Rochecliffe's service had made him fully acquainted with the place, it was found imperfect; and, moreover, the most serious obstacles to their progress occurred in the shape of strong doors, party-walls, and iron-grates—so that the party blundered on in the dark, uncertain whether they were not going farther from, rather than approaching the extremity of the labyrinth. They were obliged to send for mechanics with sledge-hammers and other instruments, to force one or two of those doors, which resisted all other means of undoing them. Laboring along in these gusky passages, where, from time to time, they were like to be choked by the dust which their acts of violence excited, the soldiers were obliged to be relieved oftener than once, and the bulky Corporal Grace-be-here himself puffed and blew like a grampus that has got into shoal water. Cromwell alone continued, with unabated zeal, to push on his researches—to encourage the soldiers, by the exhortations which they best understood, against fainting for lack of faith—and to secure, by sentinels at proper places, possession of the ground which they had already explored. His acute and observing eye detected, with a sneering smile, the cordage and machinery by which the bed of poor Desborough had been inverted, and several remains of the various disguises, as well as private modes of access, by which Desborough, Bletson, and Harrison, had been previously imposed upon. He pointed them out to Pearson, with no farther comment than was implied in the exclamation, "The simple fools!"

But his assistants began to lose heart and be discouraged, and required all his spirit to raise theirs. He then called their attention to voices which they seemed to hear before them, and urged these as evidence that they were moving on the track of some enemy of the Commonwealth, who, for the execution of his malignant plots, had retreated into these extraordinary fastnesses.

The spirits of the men became at last downcast, notwithstanding all this encouragement. They spoke to each other in whispers, of the devils of Woodstock, who might be all the while decoying them forward to a room said to exist in the Palace, where the floor, revolving on an axis, precipitated those who entered into a bottomless abyss. Humbugdgeon hinted, that he had consulted the Scripture that morning by way of lot, and his fortune had been to alight on the passage, "Eutyclus fell down from the third loft." The energy and authority of Cromwell, however, and the refreshment of some food and strong waters, reconciled them to pursuing their task.

Nevertheless, with all their unwearied exertions, morning dawned on the search before they had reached Dr. Rochecliffe's sitting-apartment, into which, after all, they obtained entrance by a mode much more difficult than that which the Doctor himself employed. But here their in-

genuity was long at fault. From the miscellaneous articles that were strowed around, and the preparations made for food and lodging, it seemed they had gained the very citadel of the labyrinth; but though various passages opened from it, they all terminated in places with which they were already acquainted, or communicated with the other parts of the house, where their own sentinels assured them none had passed. Cromwell remained long in deep uncertainty. Meantime he directed Pearson to take charge of the ciphers, and more important papers which lay on the table. "Though there is little there," he said, "that I have not already known, by means of Trusty Tomkins—Honest Joseph—for an artful and thorough-paced agent, the like of thee is not left in England."

After a considerable pause, during which he sounded with the pommel of his sword almost every stone in the building, and every plank on the floor, the General gave orders to bring the old knight and Dr. Rochecliffe to the spot, trusting that he might work out of them some explanation of the secrets of this apartment.

"So please your Excellency, to let me to deal with them," said Pearson, who was a true soldier of fortune, and had been a buccanier in the West Indies, "I think that, by a whipcord twined tight around their forehead and twisted about with a pistol-butt, I could make either the truth start from their lips, or the eyes from their head."

"Out upon thee, Pearson!" said Cromwell, with abhorrence; "we have no warrant for such cruelty, neither as Englishmen nor Christians. We may slay malignants as we crush noxious animals, but to torture them is a deadly sin; for it is written, 'He made them to be pitted of those who carried them captive.' Nay, I recall the order even for their examination, trusting that wisdom will be granted us without it, to discover their most secret devices."

There was a pause accordingly, during which an idea seized upon Cromwell's imagination—"Bring me hither," he said, "yonder stool;" and placing it beneath one of the windows, of which there were two so high in the wall as not to be accessible from the floor, he clambered up into the entrance of the window, which was six or seven feet deep, corresponding with the thickness of the wall. "Come up hither, Pearson," said the General; "but ere thou comest, double the guard at the foot of the turret called Love's Ladder, and bid them bring up the other petard—So now, come thou hither."

The inferior officer, however brave in the field, was one of those whom a great height strikes with giddiness and sickness. He shrunk back from the view of the precipice, on the verge of which Cromwell was standing with complete indifference, till the General, catching the hand of his follower, pulled him forward as far as he would advance. "I think," said the General, "I have found the clew, but by this light it is no