

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. Humbuggeon 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 pilled 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

easy one! See you, we stand in the portal near the top of Rosamond's Tower; and yon turret, which rises opposite to our feet, is that which is called Love's Ladder, from which the drawbridge reached that admitted the profligate Norman tyrant to the bower of his mistress."

"True, my lord, but the drawbridge is gone," said Pearson.

"Ay, Pearson," replied the General; "but an active man might spring from the spot we stand upon to the battlements of yonder turret."

"I do not think so, my lord," said Pearson.

"What?" said Cromwell; "not if the avenger of blood were behind you, with his slaughter-weapon in his hand?"

"The fear of instant death might do much," answered Pearson; "but when I look at that sheer depth on either side, and at the empty chasm between us and yonder turret, which is, I warrant you, twelve feet distant, I confess the truth, nothing short of the most imminent danger should induce me to try. Pah—the thought makes my head grow giddy!—I tremble to see your Highness stand there, balancing yourself as if you meditated a spring into the empty air. I repeat, I would scarce stand so near the verge as does your Highness, for the rescue of my life."

"Ah, base and degenerate spirit!" said the General; "soul of mud and clay, wouldst thou not do it, and much more, for the possession of empire—that is, peradventure," continued he, changing his tone as one who has said too much, "shouldst thou be called on to do this, that thereby becoming a great man in the tribes of Israel, thou mightest redeem the captivity of Jerusalem—ay, and it may be, work some great work for the afflicted people of this land?"

"Your Highness may feel such calls," said the officer; "but they are not for poor Gilbert Pearson, your faithful follower. You made a jest of me yesterday, when I tried to speak your language; and I am no more able to fulfil your designs than to use your mode of speech."

"But, Pearson," said Cromwell, "thou hast thrice, yea, four times, called me your Highness."

"Did I, my lord? I was not sensible of it. I crave your pardon," said the officer.

"Nay," said Oliver, "there was no offence. I do indeed stand high, and I may perchance stand higher—though, alas! it were fitter for a simple soul like me to return to my plough and my husbandry. Nevertheless, I will not wrestle against the Supreme will, should I be called on to do yet more in that worthy cause. For surely he who hath been to our British Israel as a shield of help, and a sword of excellency, making her enemies be found liars unto her, will not give over the flock to those foolish shepherds of Westminster, who shear the sheep, and feed them not, and who are in very deed hirelings, not shepherds."

"I trust to see your lordship quoit them all down-stairs," answered Pearson. "But may I

ask why we pursue this discourse even now, until we have secured the common enemy?"

"I will tarry no jot of time—" said the General; "fence the communication of Love's Ladder, as it is called, below, as I take it for almost certain, that the party whom we have driven from fastness to fastness during the night, has at length sprung to the top of yonder battlements from the place where we now stand. Finding the turret is guarded below, the place he has chosen for his security will prove a rat-trap, from whence there is no returning."

"There is a cask of gunpowder in this cabinet," said Pearson; "were it not better, my lord, to mine the tower, if he will not render himself, and send the whole turret with its contents one hundred feet into the air?"

"Ah, silly man," said Cromwell, striking him familiarly on the shoulder; "if thou hadst done this without telling me, it had been good service. But we will first summon the turret, and then think whether the petard will serve our turn—it is but mining at last. Blow a summons there, down below."

The trumpets rang at his bidding, till the old walls echoed from every recess and vaulted archway. Cromwell, as if he cared not to look upon the person whom he expected to appear, drew back, like a necromancer afraid of the spectre which he has evoked.

"He has come to the battlement," said Pearson to his General.

"In what dress or appearance?" answered Cromwell from within the chamber.

"A gray riding-suit, passmented with silver, russet walking-boots, a cut band, a gray hat and plume, black hair."

"It is he, it is he!" said Cromwell; "and another crowning mercy is vouchsafed!"

Meantime, Pearson and young Lee exchanged defiance from their respective posts.

"Surrender," said the former, "or we blow you up in your fastness."

"I am come of too high a race to surrender to rebels," said Albert, assuming the air with which, in such a condition, a king might have spoken.

"I bear you to witness," cried Cromwell, exultingly, "he hath refused quarter. Of a surety, his blood be on his head.—One of you, bring down the barrel of powder. As he loves to soar high, we will add what can be taken from the soldiers' bandoleers.—Come with me, Pearson; thou understandest this gear—Corporal Gracebe-here, stand thou fast on the platform of the window where Captain Pearson and I stood but even now, and bend the point of thy partisan against any who shall attempt to pass. Thou art as strong as a bull; and I will back thee against despair itself."

"But," said the corporal, mounting reluctantly, "the place is as the pinnacle of the Temple; and it is written, that Eutychus fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."

"Because he slept upon his post," answered Cromwell, readily. "Beware thou of carelessness, and thus thy feet shall be kept from stumbling.—You four soldiers, remain here to support the corporal, if it be necessary; and you, as well as the corporal, will draw into the vaulted passage the minute the trumpets sound a retreat. It is as strong as a casemate, and you may lie there safe from the effects of the mine. Thou, Zerubbabel Robins, I know wilt be their lance-prisade."*

Robins bowed, and the General departed to join those who were without.

As he reached the door of the hall, the petard was heard to explode, and he saw that it had succeeded; for the soldiers rushed, brandishing their swords and pistols, in at the postern of the turret, whose gate had been successfully forced. A thrill of exultation, but not unmingled with horror, shot across the veins of the ambitious soldier.

"Now—now!" he cried; "they are dealing with him!"

His expectations were deceived. Pearson and the others returned disappointed, and reported they had been stopped by a strong trap-door of grated iron, extended over the narrow stair; and they could see there was an obstacle of the same kind some ten feet higher. To remove it by force, while a desperate and well-armed man had the advantage of the steps above them, might cost many lives. "Which, lack-a-day," said the General, "it is our duty to be tender of. What dost thou advise, Gilbert Pearson?"

"We must use powder, my lord," answered Pearson, who saw his master was too modest to reserve to himself the whole merit of the proceeding—"There may be a chamber easily and conveniently formed under the foot of the stair. We have a sausage, by good luck, to form the train—and so—"

"Ah!" said Cromwell, "I know thou canst manage such gear well—But, Gilbert, I go to visit the posts, and give them orders to retire to a safe distance when the retreat is sounded. You will allow them five minutes for this purpose."

"Three is enough for any knave of them all," said Pearson, "They will be lame indeed, that require more on such a service,—I ask but one, though I fire the train myself."

"Take heed," said Cromwell, "that the poor soul be listened to, if he asks quarter. It may be, he may repent him of his hard-heartedness, and call for mercy."

"And mercy he shall have,"—answered Pearson, "provided he calls loud enough to make me hear him; for the explosion of that damned petard has made me as deaf as the devil's dam."

"Hush, Gilbert, hush!" said Cromwell; "you offend in your language."

"Zooks, sir, I must speak either in your way, or in my own," said Pearson, "unless I am to be

* "Lance-prisade," or "lance-brisade," a private appointed to a small command—a sort of temporary corporal.

dumb as well as deaf!—Away with you, my lord, to visit the posts; and you will presently hear me make some noise in the world."

Cromwell smiled gently at his aide-de-camp's petulance, patted him on the shoulder, and called him a mad fellow, walked a little way, then turned back to whisper, "What thou dost, do quickly;" then returned again towards the outer circle of guards, turning his head from time to time, as if to assure himself that the corporal, to whom he had intrusted the duty, still kept guard with his advanced weapon upon the terrific chasm between Rosamond's Tower and the corresponding turret. Seeing him standing on his post, the General muttered between his mustaches, "The fellow hath the strength and courage of a bear; and yonder is a post where one shall do more to keep back than an hundred in making way." He cast a last look on the gigantic figure, who stood in that airy position, like some Gothic statue, the weapon half levelled against the opposite turret, with the butt rested against his right foot, his steel cap and burnished corselet glittering in the rising sun.

Cromwell then passed on to give the necessary orders, that such sentinels as might be endangered at their present posts by the effect of the mine, should withdraw at the sound of the trumpet to the places which he pointed out to them. Never, on any occasion of his life, did he display more calmness and presence of mind. He was kind, nay, facetious, with the soldiers, who adored him; and yet he resembled a volcano before the eruption commences—all peaceful and quiet without, while an hundred contradictory passions were raging in his bosom.

Corporal Humgudgeon, meanwhile, remained steady upon his post; yet, though as determined a soldier as ever fought among the redoubted regiment of Ironsides, and possessed of no small share of that exalted fanaticism which lent so keen an edge to the natural courage of those stern religionists, the veteran felt his present situation to be highly uncomfortable. Within a pike's length of him arose a turret, which was about to be dispersed in massive fragments through the air; and he felt small confidence in the length of time which might be allowed for his escape from such a dangerous vicinity. The duty of constant vigilance upon his post, was partly divided by this natural feeling, which induced him from time to time to bend his eyes on the miners below, instead of keeping them riveted on the opposite turret.

At length the interest of the scene arose to the uttermost. After entering and returning from the turret, and coming out again more than once, in the course of about twenty minutes Pearson issued, as it might be supposed, for the last time, carrying in his hand, and uncoiling, as he went along, the sausage, or linen bag (so called from its appearance), which, strongly sewed together, and crammed with gunpowder, was to serve as a train betwixt the mine to be

sprung, and the point occupied by the engineer who was to give fire. He was in the act of finally adjusting it, when the attention of the corporal on the tower became irresistibly and exclusively riveted upon the preparations for the explosion. But while he watched the aide-de-camp drawing his pistol to give fire, and the trumpeter handling his instrument, as waiting the order to sound the retreat, fate rushed on the unhappy sentinel in a way he least expected.

Young, active, bold, and completely possessed of his presence of mind, Albert Lee, who had been from the loopholes a watchful observer of every measure which had been taken by his besiegers, had resolved to make one desperate effort for self-preservation. While the head of the sentinel on the opposite platform was turned from him, and bent rather downwards, he suddenly sprang across the chasm, though the space on which he lighted was scarce wide enough for two persons, threw the surprised soldier from his precarious stand, and jumped himself down into the chamber. The gigantic trooper went sheer down twenty feet, struck against a projecting battlement, which launched the wretched man outwards, and then fell on the earth with such tremendous force, that the head, which first touched the ground, dented a hole in the soil of six inches in depth, and was crushed like an eggshell. Scarce knowing what had happened, yet startled and confounded at the descent of this heavy body, which fell at no great distance from him, Pearson snapped his pistol at the train, no previous warning given; the powder caught, and the mine exploded. Had it been strongly charged with powder, many of those without might have suffered; but the explosion was only powerful enough to blow out, in a lateral direction, a part of the wall just above the foundation, sufficient, however, to destroy the equipoise of the building. Then amid a cloud of smoke, which began gradually to encircle the turret like a shroud, arising slowly from its base to its summit, it was seen to stagger and shake by all who had courage to look steadily at a sight so dreadful. Slowly, at first, the building inclined outwards, then rushed precipitately to its base, and fell to the ground in huge fragments, the strength of its resistance showing the excellence of the mason-work. The engineer, so soon as he had fired the train, fled in such alarm, that he well-nigh ran against his General, who was advancing towards him, while a huge stone from the summit of the building, flying farther than the rest, lighted within a yard of them.

"Thou hast been over hasty, Pearson," said Cromwell, with the greatest composure possible—"hath no one fallen in that same tower of Siloe?"

"Some one fell," said Pearson, still in great agitation, "and yonder lies his body half-buried in the rubbish."

With a quick and resolute step Cromwell approached the spot, and exclaimed, "Pearson,

thou hast ruined me—the young Man hath escaped.—This is our own sentinel—plague on the idiot! Let him rot beneath the ruins which crushed him?"

A cry now resounded from the platform of Rosamond's Tower, which appeared yet taller than formerly, deprived of the neighboring turret, which emulated though it did not attain to its height.—"A prisoner, noble General—a prisoner—the fox whom we have chased all night is now in the snare—the Lord hath delivered him into the hand of his servants."

"Look you keep him in safe custody," exclaimed Cromwell, "and bring him presently down to the apartment from which the secret passages have their principal entrance."

"Your Excellency shall be obeyed."

The proceedings of Albert Lee, to which these exclamations related, had been unfortunate. He had dashed from the platform, as we have related, the gigantic strength of the soldier opposed to him, and had instantly jumped down into Rochecliffe's chamber. But the soldiers stationed there threw themselves upon him, and after a struggle, which was hopelessly maintained against such advantage of numbers, had thrown the young cavalier to the ground, two of them, drawn down by his strenuous exertions, falling across him. At the same moment a sharp and severe report was heard, which, like a clap of thunder in the immediate vicinity, shook all around them, till the strong and solid tower tottered like the mast of a stately vessel when about to part by the board. In a few seconds, this was followed by another sullen sound, at first low, and deep, but augmenting like the roar of a cataract, as it descends, reeling, bellowing, and rushing, as if to astound both heaven and earth. So awful, indeed, was the sound of the neighbor tower as it fell, that both the captive, and those who struggled with him, continued for a minute or two passive in each other's grasp.

Albert was the first who recovered consciousness and activity. He shook off those who lay above him, and made a desperate effort to gain his feet, in which he partly succeeded. But as he had to deal with men accustomed to every species of danger, and whose energies were recovered nearly as soon as his own, he was completely secured, and his arms held down. Loyal and faithful to his trust, and resolved to sustain to the last the character which he had assumed, he exclaimed, as his struggles were finally overpowered, "Rebel villains! would you slay your king?"

"Ha, heard you that?" cried one of the soldiers to the lance-prisade who commanded the party. "Shall I not strike this son of a wicked father under the fifth rib, even as the tyrant of Moab was smitten by Ehud with a dagger of a cubit's length?"

But Robins answered, "Be it far from us, Merciful Strickalthrow, to slay in cold blood the captive of our bow and of our spear. Methinks

since the storm of Tredagh* we have shed enough of blood—therefore, on your lives do him no evil; but take from him his arms, and let us bring him before the chosen Instrument, even our General, that he may do with him what is meet in his eyes."

By this time the soldier, whose exultation had made him the first to communicate the intelligence from the battlements to Cromwell, returned, and brought commands corresponding to the orders of their temporary officer; and Albert Lee, disarmed and bound, was conducted as a captive into the apartment which derived its name from the victories of his ancestor, and placed in the presence of General Cromwell.

Running over in his mind the time which had elapsed since the departure of Charles till the siege, if it may be termed so, had terminated in his own capture, Albert had every reason to hope that his Royal Master must have had time to accomplish his escape. Yet he determined to maintain to the last a deceit which might for a time insure the King's safety. The difference betwixt them could not, he thought, be instantly discovered, begrimed as he was with dust and smoke, and with blood issuing from some scratches received in the scuffle.

In this evil plight, but bearing himself with such dignity as was adapted to the princely character, Albert was ushered into the apartment of Victor Lee, where, in his father's own chair, reclined the triumphant enemy of the cause to which the house of Lee had been hereditarily faithful.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A barren title hast thou bought too dear,
Why dost thou tell me that thou wert a king!

HEAVY IV. Part I.

OLIVER CROMWELL arose from his seat as the two veteran soldiers, Zerubbabel Robins and Merciful Strickalthrow, introduced into the apartment the prisoner, whom they held by the arms, and fixed his stern hazel eye on Albert long before he could give vent to the ideas which were swelling in his bosom. Exultation was the most predominant.

"Art not thou," he at length said, "that Egyptian which, before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness many thousand men, who were murderers!—Ha, youth, I have hunted thee from Stirling to Worcester, from Worcester to Woodstock, and we have met at last!"

"I would," replied Albert, speaking in the character which he had assumed, "that we had met where I could have shown thee the difference betwixt a rightful King and an ambitious Usurper!"

* Tredagh, or Drogheda, was taken by Cromwell in 1649, by storm, and the governor and the whole garrison put to the sword.

"Go to, young man," said Cromwell; "say rather the difference between a judge raised up for the redemption of England, and the son of those Kings whom the Lord in his anger permitted to reign over her. But we will not waste useless words. God knows that it is not of our will that we are called to such high matters, being as humble in our thoughts as we are of ourselves; and in our unassisted nature frail and foolish; and unable to render a reason but for the better spirit within us, which is not of us.—Thou art weary, young man, and thy nature requires rest and reflection, being doubtless dealt with delicately, as one who hath fed on the fat, and drunk of the sweet, and who hath been clothed in purple and fine linen."

Here the General suddenly stopped, and then abruptly exclaimed—"But is this—Ay! whom have we here? These are not the locks of the swarthy lad, Charles Stewart?—A cheat! a cheat!"

Albert hastily cast his eyes on a mirror which stood in the room, and perceived that a dark peruke, found among Dr. Rochecliffe's miscellaneous wardrobe, had been disordered in the scuffle with the soldiery, and that his own light-brown hair was escaping from beneath it.

"Who is this!" said Cromwell, stamping with fury—"Pluck the disguise from him."

The soldiers did so; and bringing him at the same time towards the light, the deception could not be maintained for a moment longer with any possibility of success. Cromwell came up to him with his teeth set, and grinding against each other as he spoke, his hands clenched, and trembling with emotion, and speaking with a voice low-pitched, bitterly and deeply emphatic, such as might have preceded a stab with his dagger.

"Thy name, young man?"

He was answered calmly and firmly, while the countenance of the speaker wore a cast of triumph and even contempt.

"Albert Lee of Ditchley, a faithful subject of King Charles."

"I might have guessed it," said Cromwell.—"Ay, and to King Charles shalt thou go as soon as it is noon on the dial.—Pearson," he continued, "let him be carried to the others; and let them be executed at twelve exactly."

"All, sir?" said Pearson, surprised; for Cromwell, though he at times made formidable examples, was, in general, by no means sanguinary.

"All"—repeated Cromwell, fixing his eye on young Lee. "Yes, young sir, your conduct has devoted to death thy father, thy kinsman, and the stranger that was in thine household. Such wreck hast thou brought on thy father's house."

"My father, too—my aged father!" said Albert, looking upward, and endeavoring to raise his hands in the same direction, which was prevented by his bonds. "The Lord's will be done!"

"All this havoc can be saved, if," said the General, "thou wilt answer one question—Where is the young Charles Stewart, who was called King of Scotland?"

"Under Heaven's protection, and safe from thy power," was the firm and unhesitating answer of the young royalist.

"Away with him to prison!" said Cromwell; "and from thence to execution with the rest of them, as malignants taken in the fact. Let a court-martial sit on them presently."

"One word," said young Lee, as they led him from the room.

"Stop, stop," said Cromwell with the agitation of renewed hope—"let him be heard."

"You love texts of Scripture," said Albert—"Let this be the subject of your next homily—'Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?'"

"Away with him," said the General; "let him die the death!—I have said it."

As Cromwell spoke these words, his aide-de-camp observed that he became unwontedly pale.

"Your Excellency is overtired in the public service," said Pearson; "a course of the stag in the evening will refresh you. The old knight hath a noble hound here, if we can but get him to hunt without his master, which may be hard, as he is faithful, and—"

"Hang him up," said Cromwell.

"What—whom—hang the noble dog? Your Excellency was wont to love a good hound?"

"It matters not," said Cromwell; "let him be killed. Is it not written, that they slew in the valley of Achor, not only the accursed Achan, with his sons and his daughters, but also his oxen and his asses, and his sheep, and every live thing belonging unto him? And even thus shall we do to the malignant family of Lee, who have aided Sisera in his flight, when Israel might have been delivered of his trouble for ever. But send out couriers and patrols—Follow, pursue, watch in every direction—Let my horse be ready at the door in five minutes, or bring me the first thou canst find."

It seemed to Pearson that this was something wildly spoken, and that the cold perspiration was standing upon the General's brow as he said it. He therefore again pressed the necessity of repose, and it would appear that nature seconded strongly the representation. Cromwell arose, and made a step or two towards the door of the apartment; but stopped, staggered, and, after a pause, sat down in a chair. "Truly, friend Pearson," he said, "this weary carcass of ours is an impediment to us, even in our most necessary business, and I am fitter to sleep than to watch, which is not my wont. Place guards, therefore, till we repose ourselves for an hour or two. Send out in every direction, and spare not for horses' flesh. Wake me if the court-martial should require instruction, and forget not to see the sentence punctually executed on the Lees, and those who were arrested with them."

As Cromwell spoke thus, he arose and half-opened a bedroom door, when Pearson again craved pardon for asking if he had rightly understood his Excellency, that all the prisoners were to be executed.

"Have I not said it?" answered Cromwell, displeasably. "Is it because thou art a man of blood, and hast ever been, that thou dost affect these scruples, to show thyself tender-hearted at my expense? I tell thee, that if there lack one in the full tale of execution, thine own life shall pay the forfeit."

So saying, he entered the apartment, followed by the groom of his chamber, who attended upon Pearson's summons.

When his General had retired, Pearson remained in great perplexity what he ought to do; and that from no scruples of conscience, but from uncertainty whether he might not err either in postponing or in too hastily and too literally executing, the instructions he had received.

In the meantime, Strickalthrow and Robins had returned, after lodging Albert in prison, to the room where Pearson was still musing on his General's commands. Both these men were adjutants in their army, and old soldiers, whom Cromwell was accustomed to treat with great familiarity; so that Robins had no hesitation to ask Captain Pearson, "Whether he meant to execute the commands of the General, even to the letter?"

Pearson shook his head with an air of doubt, but added, "There was no choice left."

"Be assured," said the old man, "that if thou dost this folly, thou wilt cause Israel to sin, and that the General will not be pleased with your service. Thou knowest, and none better than thou, that Oliver, although he be like unto David the son of Jesse, in faith, and wisdom, and courage, yet there are times when the evil spirit cometh upon him as it did upon Saul, and he uttereth commands which he will not thank any one for executing."

Pearson was too good a politician to assent directly to a proposition which he could not deny—he only shook his head once more, and said that it was easy for those to talk who were not responsible, but the soldier's duty was to obey his orders and not to judge of them.

"Very righteous truth," said Merciful Strickalthrow, a grim old Scotchman; "I marvel where our brother Zerubbabel caught up this softness of heart?"

"Why, I do but wish," said Zerubbabel, "that four or five human creatures may draw the breath of God's air for a few hours more; there can be small harm done by delaying the execution,—and the General will have some time for reflection."

"Ay," said Captain Pearson, "but I in my service must be more pointedly obsequious, than thou in thy plainness art bound to be, friend Zerubbabel."

"Then shall the coarse frieze cassock of the private soldier help the golden gaberdine of the captain to bear out the blast," said Zerubbabel. "Ay, indeed, I can show you warrant why we be aidful to each other in doing acts of kindness and long-suffering, seeing the best of us are poor sinful creatures, who might suffer, being called to a brief accounting."

"Of a verity you surprise me, brother Zerubbabel," said Strickalthrow; "that thou, being an old and experienced soldier, whose head hath grown gray in battle, shouldst give such advice to a young officer. Is not the General's commission to take away the wicked from the land, and to root out the Amalekite, and the Jebusite, and the Perizzite, and the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite? and are not these men justly to be compared to the five kings, who took shelter in the cave of Makedah, who were delivered into the hands of Joshua the son of Nun? and he caused his captains and his soldiers to come near and tread on their necks—and then he smote them, and he slew them, and then he hanged them on five trees, even till evening.—And thou, Gilbert Pearson by name, be not withheld from the duty which is appointed to thee, but do even as has been commanded by him who is raised up to judge and to deliver Israel; for it is written, 'cursed is he who holdeth back his sword from the slaughter.'"

Thus wrangled the two military theologians, while Pearson, much more solicitous to anticipate the wishes of Oliver than to know the will of Heaven, listened to them with great indecision and perplexity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

But let us now, like soldiers on the watch,
Put the soul's armor on, alike prepared
For all a soldier's warfare brings.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

The reader will recollect, that when Rochcliffe and Joceline were made prisoners, the party which escorted them had two other captives in their train, Colonel Everard, namely, and the Rev. Nehemiah Holdenough. When Cromwell had obtained entrance into Woodstock, and commenced his search after the fugitive Prince, the prisoners were placed in what had been an old guard-room, and which was by its strength well calculated to serve for a prison, and a guard was placed over them by Pearson. No light was allowed, save that of a glimmering fire of charcoal. The prisoners remained separated from each other, Colonel Everard conversing with Nehemiah Holdenough, at a distance from Dr. Rochcliffe, Sir Henry Lee, and Joceline. The party was soon after augmented by Wildrake, who was brought down to the Lodge, and thrust in with a little ceremony, that, his arms being bound, he had very nearly fallen on his nose in the middle of the prison.

"I thank you, my good friend," he said, look-

ing back to the door, which they who had pushed him in were securing—"Point de cérémonie—no apology for tumbling, so we light in good company.—Save ye, save ye, gentlemen all—What, *à la mort*, and nothing stirring to keep the spirits up, and make a night on't?—the last we shall have, I take it; for a make * to a million, but we trine to the nubbing cheat † to-morrow.—Patron, noble patron, how goes it? This was but a scurvy trick of Noll so far as you were concerned: as for me, why I might have deserved something of the kind at his hand."

"Prithee, Wildrake, sit down," said Everard; "thou art drunk—disturb us not."

"Drunk? I drunk?" cried Wildrake, "I have been splicing the main-brace, as Jack says at Wapping—have been tasting Noll's brandy in a bumper to the King's health, and another to his Excellency's confusion, and another to the d—n of Parliament—and it may be one or two more, but all to devilish good toasts. But I'm not drunk."

"Prithee, friend, be not profane," said Nehemiah Holdenough.

"What, my little Presbyterian Parson, my slender Mass John? thou shalt say amen to this world instantly," said Wildrake; "I have had a weary time in't for one.—Ha, noble Sir Henry, I kiss your hand—I tell thee, knight, the point of my Toledo was near Cromwell's heart last night, as ever a button on the breast of his doublet, Rat him, he wears secret armor—He a soldier! Had it not been for a cursed steel shirt, I would have spitted him like a lark.—Ha, Doctor Rochcliffe!—thou knowest I can wield my weapon."

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "and you know I can use mine."

"I prithee be quiet, Master Wildrake," said Sir Henry.

"Nay, good knight," answered Wildrake, "be somewhat more cordial with a comrade in distress. This is a different scene from the Brentford storming-party. The jade Fortune has been a very stepmother to me. I will sing you a song I made on my own ill-luck."

"At this moment, Captain Wildrake, we are not in a fitting mood for singing," said Sir Henry, civilly and gravely.

"Nay, it will aid your devotions—Egad, it sounds like a penitential psalm:

'When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad,
If e'er I do well 'tis a wonder.
I spent all my means
Amid sharpeners and queans;
Then I got a commission to plunder.
I have stockings 'tis true,
But the devil a shoe,
I am forced to wear boots in all weather,
Be d—d the boot-sole,
Curse on the spur-roll,
Confounded be the upper-leather.' ‡

* A half-penny.

† Hang on the gallows.

‡ Such a song, or something very like it, may be found in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, among the wild slips of minstrelsy which are there collected.

The door opened as Wildrake finished this stanza at the top of his voice, and in rushed a sentinel, who, greeting him by the title of a "blasphemous bellowing bull of Bashan," bestowed a severe blow, with his ramrod, on the shoulders of the songster, whose bonds permitted him no means of returning the compliment.

"Your humble servant again, sir," said Wildrake, shrugging his shoulders,—"sorry I have no means of showing my gratitude. I am bound over to keep the peace, like Captain Bobadil—Ha, knight, did you hear my bones clatter? that blow came twangingly off—the fellow might inflict the bastinado, where it is in presence of the Grand Seigneur—he has no taste for music, knight—is no way moved by the 'concord of sweet sounds.' I will warrant him fit for treason, stratagem, and spoil—Eh?—all down in the mouth—well—I'll go to sleep to-night on a bench, as I've done many a night, and I will be ready to be hanged decently in the morning, which never happened to me before in all my life—

"When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad"—

Pshaw! This is not the tune it goes to." Here he fell fast asleep, and sooner or later all his companions in misfortune followed his example.

The benches intended for the repose of the soldiers of the guard, afforded the prisoners convenience enough to lie down, though their slumbers, it may be believed, were neither sound nor undisturbed. But when daylight was but a little while broken, the explosion of gunpowder which took place, and the subsequent fall of the turret to which the mine was applied, would have awakened the Seven Sleepers, or Morpheus himself. The smoke, penetrating through the windows, left them at no loss for the cause of the din.

"There went my gunpowder," said Rochecliffe, "which has, I trust, blown up as many rebel villains as it might have been the means of destroying otherwise in a fair field. It must have caught fire by chance."

"By chance?—No," said Sir Henry; "depend on it, my bold Albert has fired the train, and that in yonder blast Cromwell was flying towards the heaven whose battlements he will never reach—Ah, my brave boy! and perhaps thou art thyself sacrificed, like a youthful Samson among the rebellious Philistines.—But I will not be long behind thee, Albert."

Everard hastened to the door, hoping to obtain from the guard, to whom his name and rank might be known, some explanation of the noise, which seemed to announce some dreadful catastrophe.

But Nehemiah Holdenough, whose rest had been broken by the trumpet which gave signal for the explosion, appeared in the very acme of horror—"It is the trumpet of the Archangel!" he cried—"it is the crushing of this world of elements—it is the summons to the Judgment-seat! The dead are obeying the call—they are with us

—they are amongst us—they arise in their bodily frames—they come to summon us!"

As he spoke his eyes were riveted upon Dr. Rochecliffe, who stood directly opposite to him. In rising hastily, the cap which he commonly wore, according to a custom then usual both among clergymen and gowmen of a civil profession, had escaped from his head, and carried with it the large silk patch which he probably wore for the purpose of disguise, for the cheek which was disclosed was unscarred, and the eye as good as that which was usually uncovered.

Colonel Everard returning from the door, endeavored in vain to make Master Holdenough comprehend what he learned from the guard without, that the explosion had involved only the death of one of Cromwell's soldiers. The Presbyterian divine continued to stare wildly at him of the Episcopal persuasion.

But Dr. Rochecliffe heard and understood the news brought by Colonel Everard, and, relieved from the instant anxiety which had kept him stationary, he advanced towards the retiring Calvinist, extending his hand in the most friendly manner.

"Avoid thee—Avoid thee!" said Holdenough, "the living may not join hands with the dead."

"But I," said Rochecliffe, "am as much alive as you are."

"Thou alive!—thou! Joseph Albany, whom my own eyes saw precipitated from the battlements of Clidesthrow Castle?"

"Ay," answered the Doctor, "but you did not see me swim ashore on a marsh covered with sedges—*fugit ad salices*—after a manner which I will explain to you another time."

Holdenough touched his hand with doubt and uncertainty. "Thou art indeed warm and alive," he said, "and yet after so many blows, and a fall so tremendous—thou canst not be my Joseph Albany."

"I am Joseph Albany Rochecliffe," said the Doctor, "become so in virtue of my mother's little estate, which fines and confiscations have made an end of."

"And is it so, indeed?" said Holdenough, "and have I recovered mine old chum!"

"Even so," replied Rochecliffe, "by the same token I appeared to you in the Mirror Chamber—Thou wert so bold, Nehemiah, that our whole scheme would have been shipwrecked, had I not appeared to thee in the shape of a departed friend. Yet, believe me, it went against my heart to do it."

"Ah, fie on thee, fie on thee," said Holdenough, throwing himself into his arms, and clasping him to his bosom, "thou wert ever a naughty wag. How couldst thou play me such a trick?—Ah, Albany, dost thou remember Dr. Purefoy and Caius College?"

"Marry, do I," said the Doctor, thrusting his arm through the Presbyterian divine's and guiding him to a seat apart from the other prisoners who witnessed this scene with much surprise.

"Remember Caius College?" said Rochecliffe, "ay, and the good ale we drank, and our parties to mother Huffcap's."

"Vanity of vanities," said Holdenough, smiling kindly at the same time, and still holding his recovered friend's arm enclosed and hand-locked in his.

"But the breaking the Principal's orchard, so cleanly done," said the Doctor; "it was the first plot I ever framed, and much work I had to prevail on thee to go into it."

"Oh, name not that iniquity," said Nehemiah, "since I may well say, as the pious Master Baxter, that these boyish offences have had their punishment in later years, inasmuch as that inordinate appetite for fruit hath produced stomachic affections under which I yet labor."

"True, true, dear Nehemiah," said Rochecliffe, "but care not for them—a dram of brandy will correct it all. Mr. Baxter was,"—he was about to say "an ass," but checked himself, and only filled up the sentence with "a good man, I dare say, but over scrupulous."

So they sat down together the best of friends, and for half an hour talked with mutual delight over old college stories. By degrees they got on the politics of the day; and though then they unclasped their hands, and there occurred between them such expressions as, "Nay, my dear brother," and, "there I must needs differ," and, "on this point I crave leave to think;" yet a hue and cry against the Independents and other sectarists being started, they followed like brethren in full halo, and it was hard to guess which was most forward. Unhappily, in the course of this amicable intercourse, something was mentioned about the bishopric of Titus, which at once involved them in the doctrinal question of Church Government. Then, alas! the floodgates were opened, and they showered on each other Greek and Hebrew texts, while their eyes kindled, their cheeks glowed, their hands became clenched, and they looked more like fierce polemics about to rend each other's eyes out, than Christian divines.

Roger Wildrake, by making himself an auditor of the debate, contrived to augment its violence. He took, of course, a most decided part in a question, the merits of which were totally unknown to him. Somewhat overawed by Holdenough's ready oratory and learning, the cavalier watched with a face of anxiety the countenance of Dr. Rochecliffe; but when he saw the proud eye and steady bearing of the Episcopal champion, and heard him answer Greek with Greek, and Hebrew with Hebrew, Wildrake backed his arguments as he closed them, with a stout rap upon the bench, and an exulting laugh in the face of the antagonist. It was with some difficulty that Sir Henry and Colonel Everard, having at length and reluctantly interfered, prevailed on the two alienated friends to adjourn their dispute, removing at the same time to a distance, and regarding each other with looks in which old friendship appeared to have totally given way to mutual animosity.

But while they sat lowering on each other, and longing to renew a contest in which each claimed the victory, Pearson entered the prison, and in a low and troubled voice, desired the persons whom it contained to prepare for instant death.

Sir Henry Lee received the doom with the stern composure which he had hitherto displayed. Colonel Everard attempted the interposition of a strong and resentful appeal to the Parliament, against the judgment of the court-martial and the General. But Pearson declined to receive or transmit any such remonstrance, and with a dejected look and mien of melancholy presage, renewed his exhortation to them to prepare for the hour of noon, and withdrew from the prison.

The operation of this intelligence on the two clerical disputants was more remarkable. They gazed for a moment on each other with eyes in which repentant kindness, and a feeling of generous shame quenched every lingering feeling of resentment, and joining in the mutual exclamation—"My brother—my brother, I have sinned, I have sinned in offending thee!" they rushed into each other's arms, shed tears as they demanded each other's forgiveness, and, like two warriors, who sacrifice a personal quarrel to discharge their duty against the common enemy, they recalled nobler ideas of their sacred character, and assuming the part which best became them on an occasion so melancholy, began to exhort those around them to meet the doom that had been announced, with the firmness and dignity which Christianity alone can give.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Most gracious prince, good Cannyng cried,
Leave vengeance to our God,
And lay the iron rule aside,
Be thine the olive rod.

BALLAD OF SIR CHARLES BAWDIN.

The hour appointed for execution had been long past, and it was about five in the evening, when the Protector summoned Pearson to his presence. He went with fear and reluctance, uncertain how he might be received. After remaining about a quarter of an hour, the aide-de-camp returned to Victor Lee's parlor, where he found the old soldier, Zerubbabel Robins, in attendance for his return.

"How is Oliver?" said the old man, anxiously.

"Why, well," answered Pearson, "and hath asked no questions of the execution, but many concerning the reports we have been able to make regarding the flight of the young Man, and is much moved at thinking he must now be beyond pursuit. Also I gave him certain papers belonging to the malignant Doctor Rochecliffe."

"Then will I venture upon him," said the adjutant; "so give me a napkin that I may look like a sewer, and fetch up the food which I directed should be in readiness."

Two troopers attended accordingly with a

ration of beef, such as was distributed to the private soldiers, and dressed after their fashion—a pewter pot of ale, a trencher with salt, black pepper, and a loaf of ammunition bread. "Come with me," he said to Pearson, "and fear not—Noll loves an innocent jest." He boldly entered the General's sleeping apartment, and said aloud, "Arise, thou that art called to be a judge in Israel—let there be no more folding of the hands to sleep. Lo, I come as a sign to thee; wherefore arise, eat, drink, and let thy heart be glad within thee; for thou shalt eat with joy the food of him that laboreth in the trenches, seeing that since thou wert commander over the host, the poor sentinel hath had such provisions as I have now placed for thine own refreshment."

"Truly, brother Zerubbabel," said Cromwell, accustomed to such arts of enthusiasm among his followers, "we would wish that it were so; neither is it our desire to sleep soft, nor feed more highly than the meanest that ranks under our banners. Verily, thou hast chosen well for my refreshment, and the smell of the food is savory in my nostrils."

He rose from the bed, on which he had lain down half dressed, and wrapping his cloak around him, sat down by the bedside, and partook heartily of the plain food which was prepared for him. While he was eating, Cromwell commanded Pearson to finish his report—"You need not desist for the presence of a worthy soldier whose spirit is as my spirit."

"Nay, but," interrupted Robins, "you are to know that Gilbert Pearson hath not fully executed thy commands, touching a part of those malignants, all of whom should have died at noon."

"What execution—what malignants?" said Cromwell, laying down his knife and fork.

"Those in the prison here at Woodstock," answered Zerubbabel, "whom your Excellency commanded should be executed at noon, as taken in the fact of rebellion against the Commonwealth."

"Wretch!" said Cromwell, starting up and addressing Pearson, "thou hast not touched Mark Everard, in whom there was no guilt, for he was deceived by him who passed between us—neither hast thou put forth thy hand on the pragmatic Presbyterian minister, to have all those of their classes cry sacrilege, and alienate them from us for ever?"

"If your Excellency wish them to live, they live—their life and death are in the power of a word," said Pearson.

"Enfranchise them; I must gain the Presbyterian interest over to us if I can."

"Rochecliffe, the arch-plotter," said Pearson, "I thought to have executed, but—"

"Barbarous man," said Cromwell, "alike ungrateful and impolitic—wouldst thou have destroyed our decoy-duck? This doctor is but like a well, a shallow one indeed, but something deeper than the springs which discharge their secret tribute into his keeping; then come I with a pump, and suck it all up to the open air.

Enlarge him, and let him have money if he wants it. I know his haunts; he can go nowhere but our eye will be upon him.—But you look at each other darkly, as if you had more to say than you durst. I trust you have not done to death Sir Henry Lee?"

"No. Yet the man," replied Pearson, "is a confirmed malignant, and—"

"Ay, but he is also a noble relic of the ancient English Gentleman," said the General. "I would I knew how to win the favor of that race. But we, Pearson, whose royal robes are the armor which we wear on our bodies, and whose leading-staves are our sceptres, are too newly set up to draw the respect of the proud malignants, who cannot brook to submit to less than royal lineage. Yet what can they see in the longest kingly line in Europe, save that it runs back to a successful soldier? I grudge that one man should be honored and followed, because he is the descendant of a victorious commander, while less honor and allegiance is paid to another, who, in personal qualities, and, in success, might emulate the founder of his rival's dynasty. Well, Sir Henry Lee lives, and shall live for me. His son, indeed, hath deserved the death which he has doubtless sustained."

"My lord," stammered Pearson, "since your Excellency has found I am right in suspending your order in so many instances, I trust you will not blame me in this also—I thought it best to await more special orders."

"Thou art in a mighty merciful humor this morning, Pearson," said Cromwell, not entirely satisfied.

"If your Excellency please, the halter is ready, and so is the provost-marshal."

"Nay, if such a bloody fellow as thou hast spared him, it would ill become me to destroy him," said the General. "But then, here is among Rochecliffe's papers the engagement of twenty desperadoes to take us off—some example ought to be made."

"My lord," said Zerubbabel, "consider now how often this young man, Albert Lee, hath been near you, nay, probably, quite close to your Excellency, in these dark passages which he knew, and we did not. Had he been of an assassin's nature, it would have cost him but a pistol-shot, and the light of Israel was extinguished. Nay, in the unavoidable confusion which must have ensued, the sentinels quitting their posts, he might have had a fair chance of escape."

"Enough, Zerubbabel; he lives," said the General. "He shall remain in custody for some time, however, and be then banished from England. The other two are safe, of course; for you would not dream of considering such paltry fellows as fit victims for my revenge."

"One fellow, the under-keeper, called Joliffe, deserves death, however," said Pearson, "since he has frankly admitted that he slew honest Joseph Tomkins."

"He deserves a reward for saving us a labor."

said Cromwell; "that Tomkins was a most double-hearted villain. I have found evidence among these papers here, that if we had lost the fight at Worcester, we should have had reason to regret that we had ever trusted Master Tomkins—it was only our success which anticipated his treachery—write us down debtor, not creditor, to Joceline, an you call him so, and to his quarter-staff."

"There remains the sacrilegious and graceless cavalier who attempted your Excellency's life last night," said Pearson.

"Nay," said the General, "that were stooping too low for revenge. His sword had no more power than had he thrust with a tobacco-pipe. Eagles stoop not at mallards, or wild-drakes either."

"Yet, sir," said Pearson, "the fellow should be punished as a libeller. The quantity of foul and pestilential abuse which we found in his pockets makes me loath he should go altogether free—Please to look at them, sir."

"A most vile hand," said Oliver, as he looked at a sheet or two of our friend Wildrake's poetical miscellanies—"The very handwriting seems to be drunk, and the very poetry not sober—What have we here?"

"When I was a young lad,
My fortune was had—
If e'er I do well, tis a wonder!"

Why, what trash is this?—and then again—

"Now a plague on the poll
Of old poltice Noll!
We will drink till we bring
In triumph back the King."

In truth, if it could be done that way, this poet would be a stout champion. Give the poor knave five pieces, Pearson, and bid him go sell his ballads. If he come within twenty miles of our person, though, we will have him flogged till the blood runs down to his heels."

"There remains only one sentenced person," said Pearson, "a noble wolf-hound, finer than any your Excellency saw in Ireland. He belongs to the old knight Sir Henry Lee. Should your Excellency not desire to keep the fine creature yourself, might I presume to beg that I might have leave?"

"No, Pearson," said Cromwell; "the old man, so faithful himself, shall not be deprived of his faithful dog.—I would I had any creature, were it but a dog, that followed me, because it loved me, not for what it could make of me."

"Your Excellency is unjust to your faithful soldiers," said Zerubbabel, bluntly, "who follow you like dogs, fight for you like dogs, and have the grave of a dog on the spot where they happen to fall."

"How now, old grumbler," said the General, "what means this change of note?"

"Corporal Humudgeon's remains are left to moulder under the ruins of yonder tower, and Tomkins is thrust into a hole in a thicket like a beast."

"True, true," said Cromwell, "they shall be removed to the churchyard, and every soldier shall attend with cockades of sea-green and blue ribbon—Every one of the non-commissioned officers and adjutators shall have a mourning-scarf; we ourselves will lead the procession, and there shall be a proper dole of wine, burned brandy, and rosemary. See that it is done, Pearson. After the funeral, Woodstock shall be dismantled and destroyed, that its recesses may not again afford shelter to rebels and malignants."

The commands of the General were punctually obeyed, and when the other prisoners were dismissed, Albert Lee remained for some time in custody. He went abroad after his liberation, entered in King Charles's Guards, where he was promoted by that monarch. But his fate, as we shall see hereafter, only allowed him a short though bright career.

We return to the liberation of the other prisoners from Woodstock. The two divines, completely reconciled to each other, retreated arm in arm to the parsonage-house, formerly the residence of Dr. Rochecliffe, but which he now visited as the guest of his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough. The Presbyterian had no sooner installed his friend under his roof than he urged upon him an offer to partake, and the income annexed to it, as his own. Dr. Rochecliffe was much affected, but wisely rejected the generous offer, considering the difference of their tenets on Church government, which each entertained as religiously as his creed. Another debate, though a light one, on the subject of the office of Bishops in the Primitive Church, confirmed him in his resolution. They parted the next day, and their friendship remained undisturbed by controversy till Mr. Holdenough's death, in 1658; a harmony which might be in some degree owing to their never meeting again after their imprisonment. Dr. Rochecliffe was restored to his living after the Restoration, and ascended from thence to high clerical preferment.

The inferior personages of the grand-jail delivery at Woodstock Lodge, easily found themselves temporary accommodations in the town among old acquaintance; but no one ventured to entertain the old knight, understood to be so much under the displeasure of the ruling powers; and even the innkeeper of the George, who had been one of his tenants, scarce dared to admit him to the common privileges of a traveller, who has food and lodging for his money. Everard attended him unrequested, unpermitted, but also unforbidden. The heart of the old man had been turned once more towards him when he learned how he had behaved at the memorable rencounter at the King's Oak, and saw that he was an object of the enmity, rather than the favor of Cromwell. But there was another secret feeling which tended to reconcile him to his nephew—the consciousness that Everard shared with him the deep anxiety which he experienced on account

of his daughter, who had not yet returned from her doubtful and perilous expedition. He felt that he himself would perhaps be unable to discover where Alice had taken refuge during the late events, or to obtain her deliverance if she was taken into custody. He wished Everard to offer him his service in making a search for her, but shame prevented his preferring the request; and Everard, who could not suspect the altered state of his uncle's mind, was afraid to make the proposal of assistance, or even to name the name of Alice.

The sun had already set—they sat looking each other in the face in silence, when the trampling of horses was heard—there was knocking at the door—there was a light step on the stair, and Alice, the subject of their anxiety, stood before them. She threw herself joyfully into her father's arms, who glanced his eye heedfully round the room, as he said in a whisper, "Is all safe?"

"Safe and out of danger, as I trust," replied Alice—"I have a token for you."

Her eye then rested on Everard—she blushed, was embarrassed, and silent.

"You need not fear your Presbyterian cousin," said the knight, with a good-humored smile, "he has himself proved a confessor at least for loyalty, and ran the risk of being a martyr."

She pulled from her bosom the royal rescript, written on a small and soiled piece of paper, and tied round with a worsted thread instead of a seal. Such as it was, Sir Henry ere he opened it pressed the little packet with oriental veneration to his lips, to his heart, to his forehead; and it was not before a tear had dropped on it that he found courage to open and read the billet. It was in these words:—

"LOYAL OUR MUCH-ESTEEMED FRIEND, AND OUR TRUSTY SUBJECT,

"It having become known to us that a purpose of marriage has been entertained betwixt Mrs. Alice Lee, your only daughter, and Markham Everard, Esq., of Eversly Chase, her kinsman, and by affinity your nephew: And being assured that this match would be highly agreeable to you, had it not been for certain respects to our service, which induced you to refuse your consent thereto—We do therefore acquaint you, that, far from our affairs suffering by such an alliance, we do exhort, and so far as we may, require you to consent to the same, as you would wish to do as good pleasure, and greatly to advance our affairs. Leaving to you, nevertheless, as becometh a Christian King, the full exercise of your own discretion concerning other obstacles to such an alliance, which may exist, independent of those connected with our service. Witness our hand, together with our thankful recollections of your good services to our late Royal Father as well as ourselves, C. R."

Long and steadily did Sir Henry gaze on the

letter, so that it might almost seem as if he were getting it by heart. He then placed it carefully in his pocket-book, and asked Alice the account of her adventures of the preceding night. They were briefly told. Their midnight walk through the Chase had been speedily and safely accomplished. Nor had the King once made the slightest relapse into the naughty Louis Kerneguy. When she had seen Charles and his attendant set off, she had taken some repose in the cottage where they parted. With the morning came news that Woodstock was occupied by soldiers, so that return thither might have led to danger, suspicion, and inquiry. Alice, therefore, did not attempt it, but went to a house in the neighborhood, inhabited by a lady of established loyalty, whose husband had been major of Sir Henry Lee's regiment, and had fallen at the battle of Naseby. Mrs. Aylmer was a sensible woman, and indeed the necessities of the singular times had sharpened every one's faculties for stratagem and intrigue. She sent a faithful servant to scout about the mansion at Woodstock, who no sooner saw the prisoners dismissed and in safety, and ascertained the knight's destination for the evening, than he carried the news to his mistress, and by her orders attended Alice on horseback to join her father.

There was seldom, perhaps, an evening meal in such absolute silence as by this embarrassed party, each occupied with their own thoughts, and at a loss how to fathom those of the others. At length the hour came when Alice felt herself at liberty to retire to repose after a day so fatiguing. Everard handed her to the door of her apartment, and was then himself about to take leave, when, to his surprise, his uncle asked him to return, pointed to a chair, and giving him the King's letter to read, fixed his looks on him steadily during the perusal; determined that if he could discover aught short of the utmost delight in the reading, the commands of the King himself should be disobeyed, rather than Alice should be sacrificed to one who received not her hand as the greatest blessing earth had to bestow. But the features of Everard indicated joyful hope, even beyond what the father could have anticipated, yet mingled with surprise; and when he raised his eye to the knight's with timidity and doubt, a smile was on Sir Henry's countenance as he broke silence. "The King," he said, "had he no other subject in England, should dispose at will of those of the house of Lee. But methinks the family of Everard have not been so devoted of late to the crown as to comply with a mandate, inviting its heir to marry the daughter of a beggar."

"The daughter of Sir Henry Lee," said Everard, kneeling to his uncle, and perforce kissing his hand, "would grace the house of a duke."

"The girl is well enough," said the knight, proudly; "for myself, my poverty shall neither shame nor encroach on my friends. Some few

pieces I have by Dr. Rochecliffe's kindness, and Joceline and I will strike out something."

"Nay, my dear uncle, you are richer than you think for," said Everard. "That part of your estate, which my father redeemed for payment of a moderate composition, is still your own, and held by trustees in your name, myself being one of them. You are only our debtor for an advance of moneys, for which, if it will content you we will count with you like usurers. My father is incapable of profiting by making a bargain on his own account for the estate of a distressed friend; and all this you would have learned long since, but that you would not—I mean, time did not serve for explanation—I mean—"

"You mean I was too hot to hear reason, Mark, and I believe it is very true. But I think we understand each other now. To-morrow I go with my family to Kingston, where is an old house I may still call mine. Come thither at thy leisure, Mark,—or thy best speed, as thou wilt—but come with thy father's consent."

"With my father in person," said Everard, "if you will permit."

"Be that," answered the knight, "as he and you will—I think Joceline will scarce shut the door in thy face, or Bevis growl as he did after poor Louis Kerneguy.—Nay, no more raptures, but good-night, Mark, good-night; and if thou art not tired with the fatigue of yesterday—why, if you appear here at seven in the morning, I think we must bear with your company on the Kingston road."

Once more Everard pressed the Knight's hand, caressed Bevis, who received his kindness graciously, and went home to dreams of happiness, which were realized, as far as this motley world permits, within a few months afterwards.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

—My life was of a piece
Spent in your service—dying at your feet.
DON SEBASTIAN.

YEARS rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their fight without a sense that we are changed; and yet Time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.

After the marriage of Alice and Markham Everard, the old knight resided near them, in an ancient manor-house, belonging to the redeemed portion of his estate, where Joceline and Phoebe, now man and wife, with one or two domestics, regulated the affairs of his household. When he tired of Shakespeare and solitude, he was ever a welcome guest at his son-in-law's, where he went the more frequently that Markham had given up all concern in public affairs, disapproving of the forcible dismissal of the Parliament, and submitting to Cromwell's subsequent domination, rather as that which was the lesser evil, than as to a

government which he regarded as legal. Cromwell seemed ever willing to show himself his friend; but Everard, resenting highly the proposal to deliver up the King, which he considered as an insult to his honor, never answered such advances, and became, on the contrary, of the opinion, which was now generally prevalent in the nation, that a settled government could not be obtained without the recall of the banished family. There is no doubt that the personal kindness which he had received from Charles, rendered him the more readily disposed to such a measure. He was peremptory, however, in declining all engagements during Oliver's life, whose power he considered as too firmly fixed to be shaken by any plots which could be formed against it.

Meantime, Willdrake continued to be Everard's protected dependant as before, though sometimes the connexion tended not a little to his inconvenience. That respectable person, indeed, while he remained stationary in his patron's house, or that of the old knight, discharged many little duties in the family, and won Alice's heart by his attention to the children, teaching the boys, of whom they had three, to ride, fence, toss the pike, and many similar exercises; and, above all, filling up a great blank in her father's existence, with whom he played at chess, and backgammon, or read Shakespeare, or was clerk to prayers when any sequestered divine ventured to read the service of the Church. Or he found game for him while the old gentleman continued to go a-sporting; and, especially, he talked over the storming of Brentford, and the battles of Edgehill, Banbury, Roundway-down, and others, themes which the aged cavalier delighted in, but which he could not so well enter upon with Colonel Everard, who had gained his laurels in the Parliament service.

The assistance which he received from Willdrake's society became more necessary, after Sir Henry was deprived of his gallant and only son, who was slain in the fatal battle of Dunkirk, where, unhappily, English colors were displayed on both the contending sides, the French being then allied with Oliver, who sent to their aid a body of auxiliaries, and the troops of the banished King fighting in behalf of the Spaniards. Sir Henry received the melancholy news like an old man, that is, with more external composure than could have been anticipated. He dwelt for weeks and months on the lines forwarded by the indefatigable Dr. Rochecliffe, superscribed in small letters, c. r., and subscribed Louis Kerneguy, in which the writer conjured him to endure this inestimable loss with the greater firmness, that he had still left one son (intimating himself), who would always regard him as a father.

But in spite of this balsam, sorrow, acting imperceptibly, and sucking the blood like a vampire, seemed gradually drying up the springs of life; and, without any formed illness, or outward complaint, the old man's strength and vigor