

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 thing 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

gradually abated, and the ministry of Wildrake proved daily more indispensable.

It was not, however, always to be had. The cavalier was one of those happy persons whom a strong constitution, an unreflecting mind, and exuberant spirits, enabled to play through their whole lives the part of a school-boy—happy for the moment, and careless of consequences.

Once or twice every year, when he had collected a few pieces, the Cavaliero Wildrake made a start to London, where, as he described it, he went on the ramble, drank as much wine as he could come by, and led a *skeddering* life, to use his own phrase, among roystering cavaliers like himself, till by some rash speech or wild action, he got into the Marshalsea, the Fleet, or some other prison, from which he was to be delivered at the expense of interest, money, and sometimes a little reputation.

At length Cromwell died, his son resigned the government, and the various changes which followed induced Everard, as well as many others, to adopt more active measures in the King's behalf. Everard even remitted considerable sums for his service, but with the utmost caution, and corresponding with no intermediate agent, but with the Chancellor himself, to whom he communicated much useful information upon public affairs. With all his prudence he was very nearly engaged in the ineffectual rising of Booth and Middleton in the west, and with great difficulty escaped from the fatal consequences of that ill-timed attempt. After this, although the estate of the kingdom was trebly unsettled, yet no card seemed to turn up favorable to the royal cause, until the movement of General Monk from Scotland. Even then, it was when at the point of complete success, that the fortunes of Charles seemed at a lower ebb than ever, especially when intelligence had arrived at the little Court which he then kept in Brussels, that Monk, on arriving in London, had put himself under the orders of the Parliament.

It was at this time, and in the evening, while the King, Buckingham, Wilmot, and some other gallants of his wandering Court, were engaged in a convivial party, that the Chancellor (Clarendon) suddenly craved audience, and, entering with less ceremony than he would have done at another time, announced extraordinary news. For the messenger, he said, he could say nothing, saving that he appeared to have drunk much, and slept little; but that he had brought a sure token of credence from a man for whose faith he would venture his life. The King demanded to see the messenger himself.

A man entered, with something the manners of a gentleman, and more those of a rakehell debauchee—his eyes swelled and inflamed—his gait disordered and stumbling, partly through lack of sleep, partly through the means he had taken to support his fatigue. He staggered without ceremony to the head of the table, seized the King's hand, which he mumbled like a piece of

gingerbread; while Charles, who began to recollect him from his mode of salutation, was not very much pleased that their meeting should have taken place before so many witnesses.

"I bring good news," said the uncouth messenger, "glorious news!—the King shall enjoy his own again!—My feet are beautiful on the mountains. Gad, I have lived with Presbyterians till I have caught their language—but we are all one man's children now—all your Majesty's poor babes. The Rump is all ruined in London—Bonfires flaming, music playing, rumps roasting, healths drinking, London in a blaze of light from the Strand to Rotherhithe—tankards clattering—"

"We can guess at that," said the Duke of Buckingham.

"My old friend, Mark Everard, sent me off with the news; I'm a villain if I've slept since. Your Majesty recollects me, I am sure. Your Majesty remembers, sa—sa—at the King's Oak, at Woodstock?—"

"O, we'll dance, and sing, and play,  
For 'twill be a joyous day  
When the King shall enjoy his own again."

"Master Wildrake, I remember you well," said the King. "I trust the good news is certain?"

"Certain! your Majesty; did I not hear the bells?—did I not see the bonfires?—did I not drink your Majesty's health so often, that my legs would scarce carry me to the wharf? It is as certain as that I am poor Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln."

The Duke of Buckingham here whispered to the King, "I have always suspected your Majesty kept odd company during the escape from Worcester, but this seems a rare sample."

"Why, pretty much like yourself, and other company I have kept here so many years—as stout a heart, as empty a head," said Charles—"as much lace, though somewhat tarnished, as much brass on the brow, and nearly as much copper in the pocket."

"I would your Majesty would intrust this messenger of good news with me, to get the truth out of him," said Buckingham.

"Thank your Grace," replied the King; "but he has a will as well as yourself, and such seldom agree. My Lord Chancellor hath wisdom, and to that we must trust ourselves.—Master Wildrake, you will go with my Lord Chancellor, who will bring us a report of your tidings; meantime, I assure you that you shall be no loser for being the first messenger of good news." So saying, he gave a signal to the Chancellor to take away Wildrake, whom he judged, in his present humor, to be not unlikely to communicate some former passages at Woodstock which might rather entertain than edify the wits of his court.

Corroboration of the joyful intelligence soon arrived, and Wildrake was presented with a handsome gratuity and small pension, which, by

the King's special desire, had no duty whatever attached to it.

Shortly afterwards, all England was engaged in chorusing his favorite ditty—

"Oh, the twenty-ninth of May,  
It was a glorious day,  
When the King did enjoy his own again."

On that memorable day, the King prepared to make his progress from Rochester to London, with a reception on the part of his subjects so unanimously cordial, as made him say gaily, it must have been his own fault to stay so long away from a country where his arrival gave so much joy. On horseback, betwixt his brothers, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, the Restored Monarch trode slowly over roads strewn with flowers—by conduits running wine, under triumphal arches, and through streets hung with tapestry. There were the citizens in various bands, some arrayed in coats of black velvet, with gold chains; some in military suits of cloth of gold, or cloth of silver, followed by all those craftsmen, who, having hooted the father from Whitehall, had now come to shout the son into possession of his ancestral palace. On his progress through Blackheath, he passed that army, which, so long formidable to England herself, as well as to Europe, had been the means of restoring the Monarchy which their own hands had destroyed. As the King passed the last files of this formidable host, he came to an open part of the heath, where many persons of quality, with others of inferior rank, had stationed themselves to gratulate him as he passed towards the capital.

There was one group, however, which attracted peculiar attention from those around, on account of the respect shown to the party by the soldiers who kept the ground, and who, whether Cavaliers or Roundheads, seemed to contest emulously which should contribute most to their accommodation; for both the elder and younger gentlemen of the party had been distinguished in the Civil War.

It was a family group, of which the principal figure was an old man seated in a chair, having a complacent smile on his face, and a tear swelling to his eye, as he saw the banners wave on in interminable succession, and heard the multitude shouting the long-silenced acclamation, "God save King Charles!" His cheek was ashy pale, and his long beard bleached like the thistle-down; his blue eye was cloudless, yet it was obvious that its vision was falling. His motions were feeble, and he spoke little, except when he answered the prattle of his grandchildren, or asked a question of his daughter, who sat beside him, matured in matronly beauty, or of Colonel Everard, who stood behind. There, too, the stout yeoman, Joceline Joliffe, still in his sylvan dress, leaned, like a second Benaiah, on the quarter-staff that had done the King good service in his day, and his wife, a buxom matron as she had been a pretty maiden, laughed at her own

consequence; and ever and anon joined her shrill notes to the stentorian halloo which her husband added to the general exclamation.

Three fine boys and two pretty girls prattled around their grandfather, who made them such answers as suited their age, and repeatedly passed his withered hand over the fair locks of the little darlings, while Alice, assisted by Wildrake (blazing in a splendid dress, and his eyes washed with only a single cup of canary), took off the children's attention from time to time, lest they should weary their grandfather. We must not omit one other remarkable figure in the group—a gigantic dog, which bore the signs of being at the extremity of canine life, being perhaps fifteen or sixteen years old. But though exhibiting the ruin only of his former appearance, his eyes dim, his joints stiff, his head slouched down, and his gallant carriage and graceful motions exchanged for a stiff, rheumatic, hobbling gait, the noble hound had lost none of his instinctive fondness for his master. To lie by Sir Henry's feet in the summer or by the fire in winter, to raise his head to look on him, to lick his withered hand or his shrivelled cheek from time to time, seemed now all that Bevis lived for.

Three or four livery servants attended to protect this group from the thronging multitude; but it needed not. The high respectability and unpretending simplicity of their appearance gave them, even in the eyes of the coarsest of the people, an air of patriarchal dignity, which commanded general regard; and they sat upon the bank which they had chosen for their station by the wayside, as undisturbed as if they had been in their own park.

And now the distant clarions announced the Royal Presence. Onward came plumes and cloth of gold, and waving standards displayed, and swords gleaming to the sun; and at length, heading a group of the noblest in England, and supported by his royal brothers on either side, onward came King Charles. He had already halted more than once, in kindness perhaps as well as policy, to exchange a word with persons whom he recognised among the spectators, and the shouts of the bystanders applauded a courtesy which seemed so well timed. But when he had gazed an instant on the party we have described, it was impossible, if even Alice had been too much changed to be recognised, not instantly to know Bevis and his venerable master. The Monarch sprang from his horse, and walked instantly up to the old knight, amid thundering acclamations which rose from the multitudes around, when they saw Charles with his own hand to do him the feeble attempts of the old man to rise to do him homage. Gently replacing him on his seat—"Bless," he said, "father—bless your son, who has returned in safety, as you blessed him when he departed in danger."

"May God bless—and preserve,"—muttered

the old man, overcome by his feelings; and the King, to give him a few moments' repose, turned to Alice—

"And you," he said, "my fair guide, how have you been employed since our perilous night-walk? But I need not ask," glancing round—"in the service of King and Kingdom, bringing up subjects as loyal as their ancestors.—A fair lineage, by my faith, and a beautiful sight to the eye of an English king!—Colonel Everard, we shall see you, I trust, at Whitehall?" Here he nodded to Wildrake. "And thou, Joceline, thou canst hold thy quarter-staff with one hand, sure? Thrust forward the other palm."

Looking down in sheer bashfulness, Joceline, like a bull about to push, extended to the King, over his lady's shoulder, a hand as broad and hard as a wooden trencher, which the King filled with gold coins. "Buy a headgear for my friend Phoebe with some of these," said Charles; "she too has been doing her duty to Old England."

The King then turned once more to the knight, who seemed making an effort to speak. He took his aged hand in both his own, and stooped his head towards him to catch his accents, while the old man, detaining him with the other hand, said something faltering, of which Charles could only catch the quotation—

"Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,  
And welcome home again discarded faith."

Extricating himself, therefore, as gently as possible, from a scene which began to grow painfully embarrassing, the good-natured King said, speaking with unusual distinctness to insure the old man's comprehending him, "This is something too public a place for all we have to say. But if you come not soon to see King Charles at Whitehall, he will send down Louis Kernegy to visit you, that you may see how rational that mischievous lad is become since his travels."

So saying, he once more pressed affectionately the old man's hand, bowed to Alice and all around, and withdrew; Sir Henry Lee, listening

with a smile, which showed he comprehended the gracious tendency of what had been said. The old man leaned back on his seat, and muttered the *Nunc dimittas*.

"Excuse me for having made you wait, my lords," said the King, as he mounted his horse. "Indeed, had it not been for these good folks, you might have waited for me long enough to little purpose.—Move on, sirs."

The array moved on accordingly; the sound of trumpets and drums again rose amid the acclamations, which had been silent while the King stopped; while the effect of the whole procession resuming its motion, was so splendidly dazzling, that even Alice's anxiety about her father's health was for a moment suspended, while her eye followed the long line of varied brilliancy that proceeded over the heath. When she looked again at Sir Henry, she was startled to see that his cheek, which had gained some color during his conversation with the King, had relapsed into earthly paleness; that his eyes were closed, and opened not again; and that his features expressed, amid their quietude, a rigidity which is not that of sleep. They ran to his assistance, but it was too late. The light that burned so low in the socket, had leaped up, and expired in one exhilarating flash.

The rest must be conceived. I have only to add that his faithful dog did not survive him many days; and that the image of Bevis lies carved at his master's feet, on the tomb which was erected to the memory of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley.\*

\* It may interest some readers to know that Bevis, the gallant hound, one of the handsomest and active of the ancient Highland deer-hounds, had his prototype in a dog called Maids, the gift of the late Chief of Glengarry to the author. A beautiful sketch of him was made by Edwin Landseer, and afterwards engraved. I cannot suppress the avowal of some personal vanity when I mention that a friend, going through Munich, picked up a common snuff-box, such as are sold for one franc, on which was displayed the form of this veteran favorite, simply marked as *Der liebling hund von Walter Scott*. Mr. Landseer's painting is at Blair-Adam, the property of my venerable friend, the Right Honorable Lord Chief Commissioner Adam.

END OF WOODSTOCK.

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