

THE LAST OF THE BARONS - VOLUME 11.

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON*

BOOK XI.

THE NEW POSITION OF THE KING-MAKER

CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN MASTER ADAM WARNER IS NOTABLY COMMENDED AND
ADVANCED—AND
GREATNESS SAYS TO WISDOM, "THY DESTINY BE MINE, AMEN."

The Chronicles inform us, that two or three days after the entrance of Warwick and Clarence,—namely, on the 6th of October,—those two leaders, accompanied by the Lords Shrewsbury, Stanley, and a numerous and noble train, visited the Tower in formal state, and escorted the king, robed in blue velvet, the crown on his head, to public thanksgivings at St. Paul's, and thence to the Bishop's Palace, [not to the Palace at Westminster, as some historians, preferring the French to the English authorities, have asserted,—that palace was out of repair] where he continued chiefly to reside.

The proclamation that announced the change of dynasty was received with apparent acquiescence through the length and breadth of the kingdom, and the restoration of the Lancastrian line seemed yet the more firm and solid by the magnanimous forbearance of Warwick and his councils. Not one execution that could be termed the act of a private revenge stained with blood the second reign of the peaceful Henry. One only head fell on the scaffold,—that of the Earl of Worcester. [Lord Warwick himself did not sit in judgment on Worcester. He was tried and condemned by Lord Oxford. Though some old offences in his Irish government were alleged against him, the cruelties which rendered him so odious were of recent date. He had (as we before took occasion to relate) impaled twenty persons after Warwick's flight into France. The "Warkworth Chronicle" says, "He was ever afterwarde greatly behated among the people for this disordynate dethe that he used, contrary to the laws of the lande."] This solitary execution, which was regarded by all classes as a due concession to justice, only

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yet more illustrated the general mildness of the new rule.

It was in the earliest days of this sudden restoration that Alwyn found the occasion to serve his friends in the Tower. Warwick was eager to conciliate all the citizens, who, whether frankly or grudgingly, had supported his cause; and, amongst these, he was soon informed of the part taken in the Guildhall by the rising goldsmith. He sent for Alwyn to his house in Warwick-lane, and after complimenting him on his advance in life and repute, since Nicholas had waited on him with baubles for his embassy to France, he offered him the special rank of goldsmith to the king.

The wary, yet honest, trader paused a moment in some embarrassment before he answered,—

”My good lord, you are noble and gracious eno’ to understand and forgive me when I say that I have had, in the upstart of my fortunes, the countenance of the late King Edward and his queen; and though the public weal made me advise my fellow-citizens not to resist your entry, I would not, at least, have it said that my desertion had benefited my private fortunes.”

Warwick coloured, and his lip curled. ”Tush, man, assume not virtues which do not exist amongst the sons of trade, nor, much I trow, amongst the sons of Adam. I read thy mind. Thou thinkest it unsafe openly to commit thyself to the new state. Fear not,—we are firm.”

”Nay, my lord,” returned Alwyn, ”it is not so. But there are many better citizens than I, who remember that the Yorkists were ever friends to commerce. And you will find that only by great tenderness to our crafts you can win the heart of London, though you have passed its gates.”

”I shall be just to all men,” answered the earl, dryly; ”but if the flat-caps are false, there are eno’ of bonnets of steel to watch over the Red Rose!”

”You are said, my lord,” returned Alwyn, bluntly, ”to love the barons, the knights, the gentry, the yeomen, and the peasants, but to despise the traders,—I fear me that report in this is true.”

”I love not the trader spirit, man,—the spirit that cheats, and cringes, and haggles, and splits straws for pence, and roasts eggs by other men’s blazing rafters. Edward of York, forsooth, was a great trader! It was a sorry hour for England when such as ye, Nick Alwyn, left your green villages for loom and booth. But thus far have I spoken to you as a brave fellow, and of the north countree. I have no time to waste on words. Wilt thou accept mine offer, or name another boon in my power? The man who hath served me wrongs me,—till I have served him again!”

"My lord, yes; I will name such a boon,—safety, and, if you will, some grace and honour, to a learned scholar now in the Tower, one Adam Warner, whom—"

"Now in the Tower! Adam Warner! And wanting a friend, I no more an exile! That is my affair, not thine. Grace, honour,—ay, to his heart's content. And his noble daughter? Mort Dieu! she shall choose her bridegroom among the best of England. Is she, too, in the fortress?"

"Yes," said Alwyn, briefly, not liking the last part of the earl's speech.

The earl rang the bell on his table. "Send hither Sir Marmaduke Nevile."

Alwyn saw his former rival enter, and heard the earl commission him to accompany, with a fitting train, his own litter to the Tower. "And you, Alwyn, go with your foster-brother, and pray Master Warner and his daughter to be my guests for their own pleasure. Come hither, my rude Northman,—come. I see I shall have many secret foes in this city: wilt not thou at least be Warwick's open friend?"

Alwyn found it hard to resist the charm of the earl's manner and voice; but, convinced in his own mind that the age was against Warwick, and that commerce and London would be little advantaged by the earl's rule, the trading spirit prevailed in his breast.

"Gracious my lord," he said, bending his knee in no servile homage, "he who befriends my order, commands me."

The proud noble bit his lip, and with a silent wave of his hand dismissed the foster-brothers.

"Thou art but a churl at best, Nick," said Marmaduke, as the door closed on the young men. "Many a baron would have sold his father's hall for such words from the earl's lip."

"Let barons sell their free conduct for fair words. I keep myself unshackled to join that cause which best fills the market and reforms the law. But tell me, I pray thee, Sir Knight, what makes Warner and his daughter so dear to your lord?"

"What! know you not?—and has she not told you?—Ah, what was I about to say?"

"Can there be a secret between the earl and the scholar?" asked Alwyn, in wonder.

"If there be, it is our place to respect it," returned the Nevile, adjusting his manteline; "and now we must command the litter."

In spite of all the more urgent and harassing affairs that pressed upon him, the earl found an early time to attend to his guests. His welcome to Sibyll was more than courteous,—it was paternal. As she approached him, timidly and with a downcast eye, he advanced, placed his hand upon her head,—

"The Holy Mother ever have thee in her charge, child!—This is a father's kiss, young mistress," added the earl, pressing his lips to her forehead; "and in this kiss, remember that I pledge to thee care for thy fortunes, honour for thy name, my heart to do thee service, my arm to shield from wrong! Brave scholar, thy lot has become interwoven with my own. Prosperous is now my destiny,—my destiny be thine! Amen!"

He turned then to Warner, and without further reference to a past which so galled his proud spirit, he made the scholar explain to him the nature of his labours. In the mind of every man who has passed much of his life in successful action, there is a certain, if we may so say, untaught mathesis,—but especially among those who have been bred to the art of war. A great soldier is a great mechanic, a great mathematician, though he may know it not; and Warwick, therefore, better than many a scholar comprehended the principle upon which Adam founded his experiments. But though he caught also a glimpse of the vast results which such experiments in themselves were calculated to effect, his strong common-sense perceived yet more clearly that the time was not ripe for such startling inventions.

"My friend," he said, "I comprehend thee passably. It is clear to me, that if thou canst succeed in making the elements do the work of man with equal precision, but with far greater force and rapidity, thou must multiply eventually, and, by multiplying, cheapen, all the products of industry; that thou must give to this country the market of the world; and that thine would be the true alchemy that turneth all to gold."

"Mighty intellect, thou graspest the truth!" exclaimed Adam.

"But," pursued the earl, with a mixture of prejudice and judgment, "grant thee success to the full, and thou wouldst turn this bold land of yeomanry and manhood into one community of griping traders and sickly artisans. Mort Dieu! we are over-commerced as it is,—the bow is already deserted for the ell-measure. The town populations are ever the most worthless in war. England is begirt with mailed foes; and if by one process she were to accumulate treasure and lose soldiers, she would but tempt invasion and emasculate defenders. Verily, I advise and implore thee to turn thy wit and scholarship to a manlier occupation!"

"My life knows no other object; kill my labour and thou destroyest me," said Adam, in a voice of gloomy despair. Alas, it seemed that, whatever the changes of power, no change could better the hopes of science in an age of iron! Warwick was moved. "Well," he said, after a pause, "be happy in thine own way. I will do my best at least to protect thee. To-morrow resume thy labours; but this day, at least, thou must feast with me."

And at his banquet that day, among the knights and barons, and the abbots and the warriors, Adam sat on the dais near the earl, and Sibyll at "the mess" of the ladies of the Duchess of Clarence. And ere the feast broke up, Warwick thus addressed his company:—

"My friends, though I, and most of us reared in the lap of war, have little other clerkship than sufficed our bold fathers before us, yet in the free towns of Italy and the Rhine,—yea, and in France, under her politic king,—we may see that a day is dawning wherein new knowledge will teach many marvels to our wiser sons. Wherefore it is good that a State should foster men who devote laborious nights and weary days to the advancement of arts and letters, for the glory of our common land. A worthy gentleman, now at this board, hath deeply meditated contrivances which may make our English artisans excel the Flemish loons, who now fatten upon our industry to the impoverishment of the realm. And, above all, he also purposes to complete an invention which may render our ship-craft the most notable in Europe. Of this I say no more at present; but I commend our guest, Master Adam Warner, to your good service, and pray you especially, worshipful sirs of the Church now present, to shield his good name from that charge which most paineth and endangereth honest men. For ye wot well that the commons, from ignorance, would impute all to witchcraft that passeth their understanding. Not," added the earl, crossing himself, "that witchcraft does not horribly infect the land, and hath been largely practised by Jacquetta of Bedford, and her confederates, Bungey and others. But our cause needeth no such aid; and all that Master Warner purposes is in behalf of the people, and in conformity with Holy Church. So this wassail to his health and House."

This characteristic address being received with respect, though with less applause than usually greeted the speeches of the great earl, Warwick added, in a softer and more earnest tone, "And in the fair demoiselle, his daughter, I pray you to acknowledge the dear friend of my beloved lady and child, Anne, Princess of Wales; and for the sake of her highness and in her name, I arrogate to myself a share with Master Warner in this young donzell's guardianship and charge. Know ye, my gallant gentles and fair squires, that he who can succeed in achieving, either by leal love or by bold deeds, as best befit a wooer, the grace of my young ward, shall claim from my hands a knight's fee, with as much of my best land as a bull's hide can cover; and when heaven shall grant safe passage to the Princess Anne and her

noble spouse, we will hold at Smithfield a tourney in honor of Saint George and our ladies, wherein, pardie, I myself would be sorely tempted to provoke my jealous countess, and break a lance for the fame of the demoiselle whose fair face is married to a noble heart.”

That evening, in the galliard, many an admiring eye turned to Sibyll, and many a young gallant, recalling the earl’s words, sighed to win her grace. There had been a time when such honour and such homage would have, indeed, been welcome; but now ONE saw them not, and they were valueless. All that, in her earlier girlhood, Sibyll’s ambition had coveted, when musing on the brilliant world, seemed now well-nigh fulfilled,—her father protected by the first noble of the land, and that not with the degrading condescension of the Duchess of Bedford, but as Power alone should protect Genius, honoured while it honours; her gentle birth recognized; her position elevated; fair fortunes smiling after such rude trials; and all won without servility or abasement. But her ambition having once exhausted itself in a diviner passion, all excitement seemed poor and spiritless compared to the lonely waiting at the humble farm for the voice and step of Hastings. Nay, but for her father’s sake, she could almost have loathed the pleasure and the pomp, and the admiration and the homage, which seemed to insult the reverses of the wandering exile.

The earl had designed to place Sibyll among Isabel’s ladies, but the haughty air of the duchess chilled the poor girl; and pleading the excuse that her father’s health required her constant attendance, she prayed permission to rest with Warner wherever he might be lodged. Adam himself, now that the Duchess of Bedford and Friar Bungey were no longer in the Tower, entreated permission to return to the place where he had worked the most successfully upon the beloved Eureka; and, as the Tower seemed a safer residence than any private home could be, from popular prejudice and assault, Warwick kindly offered apartments, far more commodious than they had yet occupied, to be appropriated to the father and daughter. Several attendants were assigned to them, and never was man of letters or science more honoured now than the poor scholar who, till then, had been so persecuted and despised.

Who shall tell Adam’s serene delight? Alchemy and astrology at rest, no imperious duchess, no hateful Bungey, his free mind left to its congenial labours! And Sibyll, when they met, strove to wear a cheerful brow, praying him only never to speak to her of Hastings. The good old man, relapsing into his wonted mechanical existence, hoped she had forgotten a girl’s evanescent fancy.

But the peculiar distinction showed by the earl to Warner confirmed the reports circulated by Bungey,—”that he was, indeed, a fearful nigromancer, who had much helped the earl in his emprise.” The earl’s address to his guests in behalf both of Warner and Sibyll, the high state accorded to the student, reached even the Sanctuary; for the fugitives there easily contrived to learn all the gossip of the city.

Judge of the effect the tale produced upon the envious Bungey! judge of the representations it enabled him to make to the credulous duchess! It was clear now to Jacquetta as the sun in noonday that Warwick rewarded the evil-predicting astrologer for much dark and secret service, which Bungey, had she listened to him, might have frustrated; and she promised the friar that, if ever again she had the power, Warner and the Eureka should be placed at his sole mercy and discretion.

The friar himself, however, growing very weary of the dulness of the Sanctuary, and covetous of the advantages enjoyed by Adam, began to meditate acquiescence in the fashion of the day, and a transfer of his allegiance to the party in power. Emboldened by the clemency of the victors, learning that no rewards for his own apprehension had been offered, hoping that the stout earl would forget or forgive the old offence of the waxen effigies, and aware of the comparative security his friar's gown and cowl afforded him, he resolved one day to venture forth from his retreat. He even flattered himself that he could cajole Adam—whom he really believed the possessor of some high and weird secrets, but whom otherwise he despised as a very weak creature—into forgiving his past brutalities, and soliciting the earl to take him into favour.

At dusk, then, and by the aid of one of the subalterns of the Tower, whom he had formerly made his friend, the friar got admittance into Warner's chamber. Now it so chanced that Adam, having his own superstitions, had lately taken it into his head that all the various disasters which had befallen the Eureka, together with all the little blemishes and defects that yet marred its construction, were owing to the want of the diamond bathed in the mystic moonbeams, which his German authority had long so emphatically prescribed; and now that a monthly stipend far exceeding his wants was at his disposal, and that it became him to do all possible honour to the earl's patronage, he resolved that the diamond should be no longer absent from the operations it was to influence. He obtained one of passable size and sparkle, exposed it the due number of nights to the new moon, and had already prepared its place in the Eureka, and was contemplating it with solemn joy, when Bungey entered.

"Mighty brother," said the friar, bowing to the ground, "be merciful as thou art strong! Verily thou hast proved thyself the magician, and I but a poor wretch in comparison,—for lo! thou art rich and honoured, and I poor and proscribed. Deign to forgive thine enemy, and take him as thy slave by right of conquest. Oh, Cogsbones! oh, Gemini! what a jewel thou hast got!"

"Depart! thou disturbest me," said Adam, oblivious, in his absorption, of the exact reasons for his repugnance, but feeling indistinctly that something very loathsome and hateful was at his elbow; and, as he spoke, he fitted the diamond into its socket.

"What! a jewel, a diamond—in the—in the—in the—MECHANICAL!" faltered the friar, in profound astonishment, his mouth watering at the sight. If the Eureka were to be envied before, how much more enviable now. "If ever I get thee again, O ugly talisman," he muttered to himself, "I shall know where to look for something better than a pot to boil eggs."

"Depart, I say!" repeated Adam, turning round at last, and shuddering as he now clearly recognized the friar, and recalled his malignity. "Darest thou molest me still?"

The friar abjectly fell on his knees, and, after a long exordium of penitent excuses, entreated the scholar to intercede in his favour with the earl.

"I want not all thy honours and advancement, great Adam, I want only to serve thee, trim thy furnace, and hand thee thy tools, and work out my apprenticeship under thee, master. As for the earl, he will listen to thee, I know, if thou tellest him that I had the trust of his foe, the duchess; that I can give him all her closest secrets; that I—"

"Avaunt! Thou art worse than I deemed thee, wretch! Cruel and ignorant I knew thee,—and now mean and perfidious! I work with thee! I commend to the earl a living disgrace to the name of scholar! Never! If thou wantest bread and alms, those I can give, as a Christian gives to want; but trust and honour, and learned repute and noble toils, those are not for the impostor and the traitor. There, there, there!" And he ran to the closet, took out a handful of small coins, thrust them into the friar's hands, and, pushing him to the door, called to the servants to see his visitor to the gates. The friar turned round with a scowl. He did not dare to utter a threat, but he vowed a vow in his soul, and went his way.

It chanced, some days after this, that Adam, in one of his musing rambles about the precincts of the Tower, which (since it was not then inhabited as a palace) was all free to his rare and desultory wanderings, came by some workmen employed in repairing a bombard; and as whatever was of mechanical art always woke his interest, he paused, and pointed out to them a very simple improvement which would necessarily tend to make the balls go farther and more direct to their object. The principal workman, struck with his remarks, ran to one of the officers of the Tower; the officer came to listen to the learned man, and then went to the earl of Warwick to declare that Master Warner had the most wonderful comprehension of military mechanism. The earl sent for Warner, seized at once upon the very simple truth he suggested as to the proper width of the bore, and holding him in higher esteem than he had ever done before, placed some new cannon he was constructing under his superintendence. As this care occupied but little of his time, Warner was glad to show gratitude to the earl,

looking upon the destructive engines as mechanical contrivances, and wholly unconscious of the new terror he gave to his name.

Soon did the indignant and conscience-stricken Duchess of Bedford hear, in the Sanctuary, that the fell wizard she had saved from the clutches of Bungey was preparing the most dreadful, infallible, and murderous instruments of war against the possible return of her son-in-law!

Leaving Adam to his dreams, and his toils, and his horrible reputation, we return to the world upon the surface,—the Life of

Action.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROSPERITY OF THE OUTER SHOW—THE CARES OF THE INNER MAN.

The position of the king-maker was, to a superficial observer, such as might gratify to the utmost the ambition and the pride of man. He had driven from the land one of the most gorgeous princes and one of the boldest warriors that ever sat upon a throne. He had changed a dynasty without a blow. In the alliances of his daughters, whatever chanced, it seemed certain that by one or the other his posterity would be the kings of England.

The easiness of his victory appeared to prove of itself that the hearts of the people were with him; and the parliament that he hastened to summon confirmed by law the revolution achieved by a bloodless sword. [Lingard, Hume, etc.]

Nor was there aught abroad which menaced disturbance to the peace at home. Letters from the Countess of Warwick and Lady Anne announced their triumphant entry at Paris, where Margaret of Anjou was received with honours never before rendered but to a queen of France.

A solemn embassy, meanwhile, was preparing to proceed from Paris to London to congratulate Henry, and establish a permanent treaty of peace and commerce, [Rymer, xi., 682-690] while Charles of Burgundy himself (the only ally left to Edward) supplicated for the continuance of amicable relations with England, stating that they were formed with the country, not with any special person who might wear the crown; [Hume, Comines] and forbade his subjects by proclamation to join any

enterprise for the recovery of his throne which Edward might attempt.

The conduct of Warwick, whom the parliament had declared, conjointly with Clarence, protector of the realm during the minority of the Prince of Wales, was worthy of the triumph he had obtained. He exhibited now a greater genius for government than he had yet displayed; for all his passions were nerved to the utmost, to consummate his victory and sharpen his faculties. He united mildness towards the defeated faction with a firmness which repelled all attempt at insurrection. [Habington.]

In contrast to the splendour that surrounded his daughter Anne, all accounts spoke of the humiliation to which Charles subjected the exiled king; and in the Sanctuary, amidst homicides and felons, the wife of the earl's defeated foe gave birth to a male child, baptized and christened (says the chronicler) "as the son of a common man." For the Avenger and his children were regal authority and gorgeous pomp, for the fugitive and his offspring were the bread of the exile, or the refuge of the outlaw.

But still the earl's prosperity was hollow, the statue of brass stood on limbs of clay. The position of a man with the name of subject, but the authority of king, was an unpopular anomaly in England. In the principal trading-towns had been long growing up that animosity towards the aristocracy of which Henry VII. availed himself to raise a despotism (and which, even in our day, causes the main disputes of faction); but the recent revolution was one in which the towns had had no share. It was a revolution made by the representative of the barons and his followers. It was connected with no advancement of the middle class; it seemed to the men of commerce but the violence of a turbulent and disappointed nobility. The very name given to Warwick's supporters was unpopular in the towns. They were not called the Lancastrians, or the friends of King Henry,—they were styled then, and still are so, by the old chronicler, "The Lord's Party." Most of whatever was still feudal—the haughtiest of the magnates, the rudest of the yeomanry, the most warlike of the knights—gave to Warwick the sanction of their allegiance; and this sanction was displeasing to the intelligence of the towns.

Classes in all times have a keen instinct of their own class-interests. The revolution which the earl had effected was the triumph of aristocracy; its natural results would tend to strengthen certainly the moral, and probably the constitutional, power already possessed by that martial order. The new parliament was their creature, Henry VI. was a cipher, his son a boy with unknown character, and according to vulgar scandal, of doubtful legitimacy, seemingly bound hand and foot in the trammels of the archbaron's mighty House; the earl himself had never scrupled to evince a distaste to the change in society which was slowly converting an agricultural into a trading population.

It may be observed, too, that a middle class as rarely unites itself with the idols of the populace as with the chiefs of a seignorie. The brute attachment of the peasants and the mobs to the gorgeous and lavish earl seemed to the burgesses the sign of a barbaric clanship, opposed to that advance in civilization towards which they half unconsciously struggled.

And here we must rapidly glance at what, as far as a statesman may foresee, would have been the probable result of Warwick's ascendancy, if durable and effectual. If attached, by prejudice and birth, to the aristocracy, he was yet by reputation and habit attached also to the popular party,—that party more popular than the middle class,—the majority, the masses. His whole life had been one struggle against despotism in the crown. Though far from entertaining such schemes as in similar circumstances might have occurred to the deep sagacity of an Italian patrician for the interest of his order, no doubt his policy would have tended to this one aim,—the limitation of the monarchy by the strength of an aristocracy endeared to the agricultural population, owing to that population its own powers of defence, with the wants and grievances of that population thoroughly familiar, and willing to satisfy the one and redress the other: in short, the great baron would have secured and promoted liberty according to the notions of a seigneur and a Norman, by making the king but the first nobleman of the realm. Had the policy lasted long enough to succeed, the subsequent despotism, which changed a limited into an absolute monarchy under the Tudors, would have been prevented, with all the sanguinary reaction in which the Stuarts were the sufferers. The earl's family, and his own "large father-like heart," had ever been opposed to religious persecution; and timely toleration to the Lollards might have prevented the long-delayed revenge of their posterity, the Puritans. Gradually, perhaps, might the system he represented (of the whole consequences of which he was unconscious) have changed monarchic into aristocratic government, resting, however, upon broad and popular institutions; but no doubt, also, the middle, or rather the commercial class, with all the blessings that attend their power, would have risen much more slowly than when made as they were already, partially under Edward IV., and more systematically under Henry VII., the instrument for destroying feudal aristocracy, and thereby establishing for a long and fearful interval the arbitrary rule of the single tyrant. Warwick's dislike to the commercial biases of Edward was, in fact, not a patrician prejudice alone. It required no great sagacity to perceive that Edward had designed to raise up a class that, though powerful when employed against the barons, would long be impotent against the encroachments of the crown; and the earl viewed that class not only as foes to his own order, but as tools for the destruction of the ancient liberties.

Without presuming to decide which policy, upon the whole, would have been the happier for England,—the one that based a despotism on the middle class, or the one that founded an aristocracy upon popular

affection,—it was clear to the more enlightened burgesses of the great towns, that between Edward of York and the Earl of Warwick a vast principle was at stake, and the commercial king seemed to them a more natural ally than the feudal baron; and equally clear it is to us, now, that the true spirit of the age fought for the false Edward, and against the honest earl.

Warwick did not, however, apprehend any serious results from the passive distaste of the trading towns. His martial spirit led him to despise the least martial part of the population. He knew that the towns would not rise in arms so long as their charters were respected; and that slow, undermining hostility which exists only in opinion, his intellect, so vigorous in immediate dangers, was not far-sighted enough to comprehend. More direct cause for apprehension would there have been to a suspicious mind in the demeanour of the earl's colleague in the Protectorate,—the Duke of Clarence. It was obviously Warwick's policy to satisfy this weak but ambitious person. The duke was, as before agreed, declared heir to the vast possessions of the House of York. He was invested with the Lieutenancy of Ireland, but delayed his departure to his government till the arrival of the Prince of Wales. The personal honours accorded him in the meanwhile were those due to a sovereign; but still the duke's brow was moody, though, if the earl noticed it, Clarence rallied into seeming cheerfulness, and reiterated pledges of faith and friendship.

The manner of Isabel to her father was varying and uncertain: at one time hard and cold; at another, as if in the reaction of secret remorse, she would throw herself into his arms, and pray him, weepingly, to forgive her wayward humours. But the curse of the earl's position was that which he had foreseen before quitting Amboise, and which, more or less, attends upon those who from whatever cause suddenly desert the party with which all their associations, whether of fame or friendship, have been interwoven. His vengeance against one had comprehended many still dear to him. He was not only separated from his old companions in arms, but he had driven their most eminent into exile. He stood alone amongst men whom the habits of an active life had indissolubly connected, in his mind, with recollections of wrath and wrong. Amidst that princely company which begirt him, he hailed no familiar face. Even many of those who most detested Edward (or rather the Woodvilles) recoiled from so startling a desertion to the Lancastrian foe. It was a heavy blow to a heart already bruised and sore, when the fiery Raoul de Fulke, who had so idolized Warwick, that, despite his own high lineage, he had worn his badge upon his breast, sought him at the dead of night, and thus said,—

”Lord of Salisbury and Warwick, I once offered to serve thee as a vassal, if thou wouldst wrestle with lewd Edward for the crown which only a manly brow should wear; and hadst thou now returned, as Henry of Lancaster returned of old, to gripe the sceptre of the Norman with

a conqueror's hand, I had been the first to cry, 'Long live King Richard, namesake and emulator of Coeur de Lion!' But to place upon the throne yon monk-puppet, and to call on brave hearts to worship a patterer of aves and a counter of beads; to fix the succession of England in the adulterous offspring of Margaret, the butcher-harlot [One of the greatest obstacles to the cause of the Red Rose was the popular belief that the young prince was not Henry's son. Had that belief not been widely spread and firmly maintained, the lords who arbitrated between Henry VI. and Richard Duke of York, in October, 1460, could scarcely have come to the resolution to set aside the Prince of Wales altogether, to accord Henry the crown for his life, and declare the Duke of York his heir. Ten years previously (in November, 1450), before the young prince was born or thought of, and the proposition was really just and reasonable, it was moved in the House of Commons to declare Richard Duke of York next heir to Henry; which, at least, by birthright, he certainly was; but the motion met with little favour and the mover was sent to the Tower.]; to give the power of the realm to the men against whom thou thyself hast often led me to strive with lance and battle-axe, is to open a path which leads but to dishonour, and thither Raoul de Fulke follows not even the steps of the Lord of Warwick. Interrupt me not! speak not! As thou to Edward, so I now to thee, forswear allegiance, and I bid thee farewell forever!"

"I pardon thee," answered Warwick; "and if ever thou art wronged as I have been, thy heart will avenge me. Go!" But when this haughty visitor was gone, the earl covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud. A defection perhaps even more severely felt came next. Katherine de Bonville had been the earl's favourite sister; he wrote to her at the convent to which she had retired, praying her affectionately to come to London, "and cheer his vexed spirit, and learn the true cause, not to be told by letter, which had moved him to things once farthest from his thought." The messenger came back, the letter unopened; for Katherine had left the convent, and fled into Burgundy, distrustful, as it seemed to Warwick, of her own brother. The nature of this lion-hearted man was, as we have seen, singularly kindly, frank, and affectionate; and now in the most critical, the most anxious, the most tortured period of his life, confidence and affection were forbidden to him. What had he not given for one hour of the soothing company of his wife, the only being in the world to whom his pride could have communicated the grief of his heart, or the doubts of his conscience! Alas! never on earth should he hear that soft voice again! Anne, too, the gentle, childlike Anne, was afar; but she was happy,—a basker in the brief sunshine, and blind to the darkening clouds. His elder child, with her changeful moods, added but to his disquiet and unhappiness. Next to Edward, Warwick of all the House of York had loved Clarence, though a closer and more domestic intimacy had weakened the affection by lessening the esteem. But looking further into the future, he now saw in this alliance the seeds of many a rankling sorrow. The nearer Anne and her spouse to

power and fame, the more bitter the jealousy of Clarence and his wife. Thus, in the very connections which seemed most to strengthen his House, lay all which must destroy the hallowed unity and peace of family and home.

The Archbishop of York had prudently taken no part whatever in the measures that had changed the dynasty. He came now to reap the fruits; did homage to Henry VI., received the Chancellor's seals, and recommenced intrigues for the Cardinal's hat. But between the bold warrior and the wily priest there could be but little of the endearment of brotherly confidence and love. With Montagu alone could the earl confer in cordiality and unreserve; and their similar position, and certain points of agreement in their characters, now more clearly brought out and manifest, served to make their friendship for each other firmer and more tender, in the estrangement of all other ties, than ever it had been before. But the marquis was soon compelled to depart from London, to his post as warden of the northern marches; for Warwick had not the rash presumption of Edward, and neglected no precaution against the return of the dethroned king.

So there, alone, in pomp and in power, vengeance consummated, ambition gratified, but love denied; with an aching heart and a fearless front; amidst old foes made prosperous, and old friends alienated and ruined, stood the king-maker! and, day by day, the untimely streaks of gray showed more and more amidst the raven curls of the strong man.

CHAPTER III.

FURTHER VIEWS INTO THE HEART OF MAN, AND THE CONDITIONS OF POWER.

But woe to any man who is called to power with exaggerated expectations of his ability to do good! Woe to the man whom the populace have esteemed a popular champion, and who is suddenly made the guardian of law! The Commons of England had not bewailed the exile of the good earl simply for love of his groaning table and admiration of his huge battle-axe,—it was not merely either in pity, or from fame, that his "name had sounded in every song," and that, to use the strong expression of the chronicler, the people "judged that the sun was clearly taken from the world when he was absent."

They knew him as one who had ever sought to correct the abuses of power, to repair the wrongs of the poor; who even in war had forbidden his knights to slay the common men. He was regarded, therefore, as a reformer; and wonderful indeed were the things, proportioned to his fame and his popularity, which he was expected to accomplish; and his

thorough knowledge of the English character, and experience of every class,—especially the lowest as the highest,—conjoined with the vigour of his robust understanding, unquestionably enabled him from the very first to put a stop to the lawless violences which had disgraced the rule of Edward. The infamous spoliations of the royal purveyors ceased; the robber-like excesses of the ruder barons and gentry were severely punished; the country felt that a strong hand held the reins of power. But what is justice when men ask miracles? The peasant and mechanic were astonished that wages were not doubled, that bread was not to be had for asking, that the disparities of life remained the same,—the rich still rich, the poor still poor. In the first days of the revolution, Sir Geoffrey Gates, the freebooter, little comprehending the earl's merciful policy, and anxious naturally to turn a victory into its accustomed fruit of rapine and pillage, placed himself at the head of an armed mob, marched from Kent to the suburbs of London, and, joined by some of the miscreants from the different Sanctuaries, burned and pillaged, ravished and slew. The earl quelled this insurrection with spirit and ease; [Hall, Habington] and great was the praise he received thereby. But all-pervading is the sympathy the poor feel for the poor. And when even the refuse of the populace once felt the sword of Warwick, some portion of the popular enthusiasm must have silently deserted him.

Robert Hilyard, who had borne so large a share in the restoration of the Lancastrians, now fixed his home in the metropolis; and anxious as ever to turn the current to the popular profit, he saw with rage and disappointment that as yet no party but the nobles had really triumphed. He had longed to achieve a revolution that might be called the People's; and he had abetted one that was called "the Lord's doing." The affection he had felt for Warwick arose principally from his regarding him as an instrument to prepare society for the more democratic changes he panted to effect; and, lo! he himself had been the instrument to strengthen the aristocracy. Society resettled after the storm, the noble retained his armies, the demagogue had lost his mobs! Although through England were scattered the principles which were ultimately to destroy feudalism, to humble the fierce barons into silken lords, to reform the Church, to ripen into a commonwealth through the representative system,—the principles were but in the germ; and when Hilyard mingled with the traders or the artisans of London, and sought to form a party which might comprehend something of steady policy and definite object, he found himself regarded as a visionary fanatic by some, as a dangerous dare-devil by the rest. Strange to say, Warwick was the only man who listened to him with attention; the man behind the age and the man before the age ever have some inch of ground in common both desired to increase liberty; both honestly and ardently loved the masses; but each in the spirit of his order,—Warwick defended freedom as against the throne, Hilyard as against the barons. Still, notwithstanding their differences, each was so convinced of the integrity of the other,—that it wanted only a foe in the field to unite them as before. The natural ally of the

popular baron was the leader of the populace.

Some minor, but still serious, griefs added to the embarrassment of the earl's position. Margaret's jealousy had bound him to defer all rewards to lords and others, and encumbered with a provisional council all great acts of government, all grants of offices, lands, or benefits. [Sharon Turner] And who knows not the expectations of men after a successful revolution? The royal exchequer was so empty that even the ordinary household was suspended; [See Ellis: Original Letters from Harleian Manuscripts, second series, vol. i., letter 42.] and as ready money was then prodigiously scarce, the mighty revenues of Warwick barely sufficed to pay the expenses of the expedition which, at his own cost, had restored the Lancastrian line. Hard position, both to generosity and to prudence, to put off and apologize to just claims and valiant service!

With intense, wearying, tortured anxiety, did the earl await the coming of Margaret and her son. The conditions imposed on him in their absence crippled all his resources. Several even of the Lancastrian nobles held aloof, while they saw no authority but Warwick's. Above all, he relied upon the effect that the young Prince of Wales's presence, his beauty, his graciousness, his frank spirit—mild as his fathers, bold as his grandsire's—would create upon all that inert and neutral mass of the public, the affection of which, once gained, makes the solid strength of a government. The very appearance of that prince would at once dispel the slander on his birth. His resemblance to his heroic grandfather would suffice to win him all the hearts by which, in absence, he was regarded as a stranger, a dubious alien. How often did the earl groan forth, "If the prince were but here, all were won!" Henry was worse than a cipher,—he was an eternal embarrassment. His good intentions, his scrupulous piety, made him ever ready to interfere. The Church had got hold of him already, and prompted him to issue proclamations against the disguised Lollards, which would have lost him at one stroke half his subjects. This Warwick prevented, to the great discontent of the honest prince. The moment required all the prestige that an imposing presence and a splendid court could bestow. And Henry, glad of the poverty of his exchequer, deemed it a sin to make a parade of earthly glory. "Heaven will punish me again," said he, meekly, "if, just delivered from a dungeon, I gild my unworthy self with all the vanities of perishable power."

There was not a department which the chill of this poor king's virtue did not somewhat benumb. The gay youths, who had revelled in the alluring court of Edward IV., heard, with disdainful mockery, the grave lectures of Henry on the length of their lovelocks and the beakers of their shoes. The brave warriors presented to him for praise were entertained with homilies on the guilt of war. Even poor Adam was molested and invaded by Henry's pious apprehensions that he was seeking, by vain knowledge, to be superior to the will of

Providence.

Yet, albeit perpetually irritating and chafing the impetuous spirit of the earl, the earl, strange to say, loved the king more and more. This perfect innocence, this absence from guile and self-seeking, in the midst of an age never excelled for fraud, falsehood, and selfish simulation, moved Warwick's admiration as well as pity. Whatever contrasted Edward IV. had a charm for him. He schooled his hot temper, and softened his deep voice, in that holy presence; and the intimate persuasion of the hollowness of all worldly greatness, which worldly greatness itself had forced upon the earl's mind, made something congenial between the meek saint and the fiery warrior. For the hundredth time groaned Warwick, as he quitted Henry's presence,—

"Would that my gallant son-in-law were come! His spirit will soon learn how to govern; then Warwick may be needed no more! I am weary, sore weary of the task of ruling men!"

"Holy Saint Thomas!" bluntly exclaimed Marmaduke, to whom these sad words were said,— "whenever you visit the king you come back—pardon me, my lord—half unmanned. He would make a monk of you!"

"Ah," said Warwick, thoughtfully, "there have been greater marvels than that. Our boldest fathers often died the meekest shavelings. An' I had ruled this realm as long as Henry,—nay, an' this same life I lead now were to continue two years, with its broil and fever,—I could well conceive the sweetness of the cloister and repose. How sets the wind? Against them still! against them still! I cannot bear this suspense!"

The winds had ever seemed malignant to Margaret of Anjou, but never more than now. So long a continuance of stormy and adverse weather was never known in the memory of man; and we believe that it has scarcely its parallel in history.

The earl's promise to restore King Henry was fulfilled in October. From November to the following April, Margaret, with the young and royal pair, and the Countess of Warwick, lay at the seaside, waiting for a wind. [Fabyan, 502.] Thrice, in defiance of all warnings from the mariners of Harfleur, did she put to sea, and thrice was she driven back on the coast of Normandy, her ships much damaged. Her friends protested that this malice of the elements was caused by sorcery, [Hall, Warkworth Chronicle]—a belief which gained ground in England, exhilarated the Duchess of Bedford, and gave new fame to Bungey, who arrogated all the merit, and whose weather wisdom, indeed, had here borne out his predictions. Many besought Margaret not to tempt Providence, not to trust the sea; but the queen was firm to her purpose, and her son laughed at omens,—yet still the vessels could only leave the harbour to be driven back upon the land.

Day after day the first question of Warwick, when the sun rose, was, "How sets the wind?" Night after night, ere he retired to rest, "Ill sets the wind!" sighed the earl. The gales that forbade the coming of the royal party sped to the unwilling lingerers courier after courier, envoy after envoy; and at length Warwick, unable to bear the sickening suspense at distance, went himself to Dover [Hall], and from its white cliffs looked, hour by hour, for the sails which were to bear "Lancaster and its fortunes." The actual watch grew more intolerable than the distant expectation, and the earl sorrowfully departed to his castle of Warwick, at which Isabel and Clarence then were. Alas! where the old smile of home?

CHAPTER IV.

THE RETURN OF EDWARD OF YORK.

And the winds still blew, and the storm was on the tide, and Margaret came not when, in the gusty month of March, the fishermen of the Humber beheld a single ship, without flag or pennon, and sorely stripped and rivelled by adverse blasts, gallantly struggling towards the shore. The vessel was not of English build, and resembled in its bulk and fashion those employed by the Easterlings in their trade, half merchantman, half war-ship.

The villagers of Ravenspur,—the creek of which the vessel now rapidly made to,—imagining that it was some trading craft in distress, grouped round the banks, and some put out their boats: But the vessel held on its way, and, as the water was swelled by the tide, and unusually deep, silently cast anchor close ashore, a quarter of a mile from the crowd.

The first who leaped on land was a knight of lofty stature, and in complete armour richly inlaid with gold arabesques. To him succeeded another, also in mail, and, though well guilt and fair proportioned, of less imposing presence. And then, one by one, the womb of the dark ship gave forth a number of armed soldiers, infinitely larger than it could have been supposed to contain, till the knight who first landed stood the centre of a group of five hundred men. Then were lowered from the vessel, barbed and caparisoned, some five score horses; and, finally, the sailors and rowers, armed but with steel caps and short swords, came on shore, till not a man was left on board.

"Now praise," said the chief knight, "to God and Saint George that we have escaped the water! and not with invisible winds but with bodily foes must our war be waged."

"Beau sire," cried one knight, who had debarked immediately after the speaker, and who seemed, from his bearing and equipment, of higher rank than those that followed, "beau sire, this is a slight army to reconquer a king's realm! Pray Heaven that our bold companions have also escaped the deep!"

"Why, verily, we are not eno' at the best, to spare one man," said the chief knight, gayly, "but, lo! we are not without welcomers." And he pointed to the crowd of villagers who now slowly neared the warlike group, but halting at a little distance, continued to gaze at them in some anxiety and alarm.

"Ho there! good fellows!" cried the leader, striding towards the throng, "what name give you to this village?"

"Ravenspur, please your worship," answered one of the peasants.

"Ravenspur, hear you that, lords and friends? Accept the omen! On this spot landed from exile Henry of Bolingbroke, known afterwards in our annals as King Henry IV.! Bare is the soil of corn and of trees, -it disdains meaner fruit; it grows kings! Hark!" The sound of a bugle was heard at a little distance, and in a few moments a troop of about a hundred men were seen rising above an undulation in the ground, and as the two bands recognized each other, a shout of joy was given and returned.

As this new reinforcement advanced, the peasantry and fishermen, attracted by curiosity and encouraged by the peaceable demeanour of the debarkers, drew nearer, and mingled with the first comers.

"What manner of men be ye, and what want ye?" asked one of the bystanders, who seemed of better nurturing than the rest, and who, indeed, was a small franklin.

No answer was returned by those he more immediately addressed; but the chief knight heard the question, and suddenly unbuckling his helmet, and giving it to one of those beside him, he turned to the crowd a countenance of singular beauty at once animated and majestic, and said in a loud voice, "We are Englishmen, like you, and we come here to claim our rights. Ye seem tall fellows and honest.-Standard bearer, unfurl our flag!" And as the ensign suddenly displayed the device of a sun in a field azure, the chief continued, "March under this banner, and for every day ye serve, ye shall have a month's hire."

"Marry!" quoth the franklin, with a suspicious, sinister look, "these be big words. And who are you, Sir Knight, who would levy men in King Henry's kingdom?"

"Your knees, fellows!" cried the second knight. "Behold your true liege and suzerain, Edward IV.! Long live King Edward!"

The soldiers caught up the cry, and it was re-echoed lustily by the smaller detachment that now reached the spot; but no answer came from the crowd. They looked at each other in dismay, and retreated rapidly from their place amongst the troops. In fact, the whole of the neighbouring district was devoted to Warwick, and many of the peasantry about had joined the former rising under Sir John Coniers. The franklin alone retreated not with the rest; he was a bluff, plain, bold fellow, with good English blood in his veins. And when the shout ceased, he said shortly, "We hereabouts know no king but King Henry. We fear you would impose upon us. We cannot believe that a great lord like him you call Edward IV. would land with a handful of men to encounter the armies of Lord Warwick. We forewarn you to get into your ship and go back as fast as ye came, for the stomach of England is sick of brawls and blows; and what ye devise is treason!"

Forth from the new detachment stepped a youth of small stature, not in armour, and with many a weather-stain on his gorgeous dress. He laid his hand upon the franklin's shoulder. "Honest and plain-dealing fellow," said he, "you are right: pardon the foolish outburst of these brave men, who cannot forget as yet that their chief has worn the crown. We come back not to disturb this realm, nor to effect aught against King Henry, whom the saints have favoured. No, by Saint Paul, we come but back to claim our lands unjustly forfeit. My noble brother here is not king of England, since the people will it not, but he is Duke of York, and he will be contented if assured of the style and lands our father left him. For me, called Richard of Gloucester, I ask nothing but leave to spend my manhood where I have spent my youth, under the eyes of my renowned godfather, Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick. So report of us. Whither leads yon road?"

"To York," said the franklin, softened, despite his judgment, by the irresistible suavity of the voice that addressed him.

"Thither will we go, my lord duke and brother, with your leave," said Prince Richard, "peaceably and as petitioners. God save ye, friends and countrymen, pray for us, that King Henry and the parliament may do us justice. We are not over rich now, but better times may come. Largess!" and filling both hands with coins from his gipsire, he tossed the bounty among the peasants.

"Mille tonnerre! What means he with this humble talk of King Henry and the parliament?" whispered Edward to the Lord Say, while the crowd scrambled for the largess, and Richard smilingly mingled amongst them, and conferred with the franklin.

"Let him alone, I pray you, my liege; I guess his wise design. And now for our ships. What orders for the master?"

"For the other vessels, let them sail or anchor as they list. But for

the bark that has borne Edward king of England to the land of his ancestors there is no return!"

The royal adventurer then beckoned the Flemish master of the ship, who, with every sailor aboard, had debarked, and the loose dresses of the mariners made a strong contrast to the mail of the warriors with whom they mingled.

"Friend," said Edward, in French, "thou hast said that thou wilt share my fortunes, and that thy good fellows are no less free of courage and leal in trust."

"It is so, sire. Not a man who has gazed on thy face, and heard thy voice, but longs to serve one on whose brow Nature has written king."

"And trust me," said Edward, "no prince of my blood shall be dearer to me than you and yours, my friends in danger and in need. And sith it be so, the ship that hath borne such hearts and such hopes should, in sooth, know no meaner freight. Is all prepared?"

"Yes, sire, as you ordered. The train is laid for the brennen."

"Up, then, with the fiery signal, and let it tell, from cliff to cliff, from town to town, that Edward the Plantagenet, once returned to England, leaves it but for the grave!"

The master bowed, and smiled grimly. The sailors, who had been prepared for the burning, arranged before between the master and the prince, and whose careless hearts Edward had thoroughly won to his person and his cause, followed the former towards the ship, and stood silently grouped around the shore. The soldiers, less informed, gazed idly on, and Richard now regained Edward's side.

"Reflect," he said, as he drew him apart, "that, when on this spot landed Henry of Bolingbroke, he gave not out that he was marching to the throne of Richard II. He professed but to claim his duchy,—and men were influenced by justice, till they became agents of ambition. This be your policy; with two thousand men you are but Duke of York; with ten thousand men you are King of England! In passing hither, I met with many, and sounding the temper of the district, I find it not ripe to share your hazard. The world soon ripens when it hath to hail success!"

"O young boy's smooth face! O old man's deep brain!" said Edward, admiringly, "what a king hadst thou made!" A sudden flush passed over the prince's pale cheek, and, ere it died away, a flaming torch was hurled aloft in the air; it fell whirling into the ship—a moment, and a loud crash; a moment, and a mighty blaze! Up sprung from the deck, along the sails, the sheeted fire,—

”A giant beard of flame.” [Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 314]

It reddened the coast, the skies, from far and near; it glowed on the faces and the steel of the scanty army; it was seen, miles away, by the warders of many a castle manned with the troops of Lancaster; it brought the steed from the stall, the courier to the selle; it sped, as of old the beacon fire that announced to Clytemnestra the return of the Argive king. From post to post rode the fiery news, till it reached Lord Warwick in his hall, King Henry in his palace, Elizabeth in her sanctuary. The iron step of the dauntless Edward was once more pressed upon the soil of England.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROGRESS OF THE PLANTAGENET.

A few words suffice to explain the formidable arrival we have just announced. Though the Duke of Burgundy had by public proclamation forbidden his subjects to aid the exiled Edward, yet, whether moved by the entreaties of his wife, or wearied by the remonstrances of his brother-in-law, he at length privately gave the dethroned monarch fifty thousand florins to find troops for himself, and secretly hired Flemish and Dutch vessels to convey him to England. [Comines, Hall, Lingard, S. Turner] But so small was the force to which the bold Edward trusted his fortunes, that it almost seemed as if Burgundy sent him forth to his destruction. He sailed from the coast of Zealand; the winds, if less unmanageable than those that blew off the seaport where Margaret and her armament awaited a favouring breeze, were still adverse. Scared from the coast of Norfolk by the vigilance of Warwick and Oxford, who had filled that district with armed men, storm and tempest drove him at last to Humber Head, where we have seen him land, and whence we pursue his steps.

The little band set out upon its march, and halted for the night at a small village two miles inland. Some of the men were then sent out on horseback for news of the other vessels, that bore the remnant of the invading force. These had, fortunately, effected a landing in various places; and, before daybreak, Anthony Woodville, and the rest of the troops, had joined the leader of an enterprise that seemed but the rashness of despair, for its utmost force, including the few sailors allured to the adventurer’s standard, was about two thousand men. [Fifteen hundred, according to the Croyland historian.] Close and anxious was the consultation then held. Each of the several detachments reported alike of the sullen indifference of the population, which each had sought to excite in favour of Edward. Light riders [Hall] were despatched in various directions, still

further to sound the neighbourhood. All returned ere noon, some bruised and maltreated by the stones and staves of the rustics, and not a voice had been heard to echo the cry, "Long live King Edward!" The profound sagacity of Gloucester's guileful counsel was then unanimously recognized. Richard despatched a secret letter to Clarence; and it was resolved immediately to proceed to York, and to publish everywhere along the road that the fugitive had returned but to claim his private heritage, and remonstrate with the parliament which had awarded the duchy of York to Clarence, his younger brother.

"Such a power," saith the Chronicle, "hath justice ever among men, that all, moved by mercy or compassion, began either to favour or not to resist him." And so, wearing the Lancastrian Prince of Wales's cognizance of the ostrich feather, crying out as they marched, "Long live King Henry!" the hardy liars, four days after their debarkation, arrived at the gates of York.

Here, not till after much delay and negotiation, Edward was admitted only as Duke of York, and upon condition that he would swear to be a faithful and loyal servant to King Henry; and at the gate by which he was to enter, Edward actually took that oath, "a priest being by to say Mass in the Mass tyme, receiving the body of our blessed Saviour!" [Hall.]

Edward tarried not long in York; he pushed forward. Two great nobles guarded those districts,—Montagu and the Earl of Northumberland, to whom Edward had restored his lands and titles, and who, on condition of retaining them, had re-entered the service of Lancaster. This last, a true server of the times, who had sided with all parties, now judged it discreet to remain neutral. [This is the most favourable interpretation of his conduct: according to some he was in correspondence with Edward, who showed his letters.] But Edward must pass within a few miles of Pontefract castle, where Montagu lay with a force that could destroy him at a blow. Edward was prepared for the assault, but trusted to deceive the marquis, as he had deceived the citizens of York,—the more for the strong personal love Montagu had ever shown him. If not, he was prepared equally to die in the field rather than eat again the bitter bread of the exile. But to his inconceivable joy and astonishment, Montagu, like Northumberland, lay idle and supine. Edward and his little troop threaded safely the formidable pass. Alas! Montagu had that day received a formal order from the Duke of Clarence, as co-protector of the realm, [Our historians have puzzled their brains in ingenious conjectures of the cause of Montagu's fatal supineness at this juncture, and have passed over the only probable solution of the mystery, which is to be found simply enough stated thus in Stowe's Chronicle: "The Marquess Montacute would have fought with King Edward, but that he had received letters from the Duke of Clarence that he should not fight till hee came." This explanation is borne out by the Warkworth Chronicler and others, who, in an evident mistake of the person addressed, state that

Clarence wrote word to Warwick not to fight till he came. Clarence could not have written so to Warwick, who, according to all authorities, was mustering his troops near London, and not in the way to fight Edward; nor could Clarence have had authority to issue such commands to his colleague, nor would his colleague have attended to them, since we have the amplest testimony that Warwick was urging all his captains to attack Edward at once. The duke's order was, therefore, clearly addressed to Montagu.] to suffer Edward to march on, provided his force was small, and he had taken the oaths to Henry, and assumed but the title of Duke of York,—”for your brother the earl hath had compunctious visitings, and would fain forgive what hath passed, for my father's sake, and unite all factions by Edward's voluntary abdication of the throne; at all hazards, I am on my way northward, and you will not fight till I come.” The marquis,—who knew the conscientious doubts which Warwick had entertained in his darker hours, who had no right to disobey the co-protector, who knew no reason to suspect Lord Warwick's son-in-law, and who, moreover, was by no means anxious to be, himself, the executioner of Edward, whom he had once so truly loved,—though a little marvelling at Warwick's softness, yet did not discredit the letter, and the less regarded the free passage he left to the returned exiles, from contempt for the smallness of their numbers, and his persuasion that if the earl saw fit to alter his counsels, Edward was still more in his power the farther he advanced amidst a hostile population, and towards the armies which the Lords Exeter and Oxford were already mustering.

But that free passage was everything to Edward! It made men think that Montagu, as well as Northumberland, favoured his enterprise; that the hazard was less rash and hopeless than it had seemed; that Edward counted upon finding his most powerful allies among those falsely supposed to be his enemies. The popularity Edward had artfully acquired amongst the captains of Warwick's own troops, on the march to Middleham, now bestead him. Many of them were knights and gentlemen residing in the very districts through which he passed. They did not join him, but they did not oppose. Then rapidly flocked to ”the Sun of York,” first the adventurers and condottieri who in civil war adopt any side for pay; next came the disappointed, the ambitious, and the needy. The hesitating began to resolve, the neutral to take a part. From the state of petitioners supplicating a pardon, every league the Yorkists marched advanced them to the dignity of assertors of a cause. Doncaster first, then Nottingham, then Leicester,—true to the town spirit we have before described,—opened their gates to the trader prince.

Oxford and Exeter reached Newark with their force. Edward marched on them at once. Deceived as to his numbers, they took panic and fled. When once the foe flies, friends ever start up from the very earth! Hereditary partisans—gentlemen, knights, and nobles—now flocked fast round the adventurer. Then came Lovell and Cromwell and D'Eyncourt, ever true to York; and Stanley, never true to any cause. Then came

the brave knights Parr and Norris and De Burgh; and no less than three thousand retainers belonging to Lord Hastings—the new man—obeyed the summons of his couriers and joined their chief at Leicester.

Edward of March, who had landed at Ravenspur with a handful of brigands, now saw a king's army under his banner. [The perplexity and confusion which involve the annals of this period may be guessed by this,—that two historians, eminent for research (Lingard and Sharon Turner), differ so widely as to the numbers who had now joined Edward, that Lingard asserts that at Nottingham he was at the head of fifty or sixty thousand men; and Turner gives him, at the most, between six and seven thousand. The latter seems nearer to the truth. We must here regret that Turner's partiality to the House of York induces him to slur over Edward's detestable perjury at York, and to accumulate all rhetorical arts to command admiration for his progress,—to the prejudice of the salutary moral horror we ought to feel for the atrocious perfidy and violation of oath to which he owed the first impunity that secured the after triumph.] Then the audacious perjurer threw away the mask; then, forth went—not the prayer of the attainted Duke of York—but the proclamation of the indignant king. England now beheld two sovereigns, equal in their armies. It was no longer a rebellion to be crushed; it was a dynasty to be decided.

CHAPTER VI.

LORD WARWICK, WITH THE FOE IN THE FIELD AND THE TRAITOR AT THE HEARTH.

Every precaution which human wisdom could foresee had Lord Warwick taken to guard against invasion, or to crush it at the onset. [Hall.] All the coasts on which it was most probable Edward would land had been strongly guarded. And if the Humber had been left without regular troops, it was because prudence might calculate that the very spot where Edward did land was the very last he would have selected,—unless guided by fate to his destruction,—in the midst of an unfriendly population, and in face of the armies of Northumberland and of Montagu. The moment the earl heard of Edward's reception at York, —far from the weakness which the false Clarence (already in correspondence with Gloucester) imputed to him,—he despatched to Montagu, by Marmaduke Nevile, peremptory orders to intercept Edward's path, and give him battle before he could advance farther towards the centre of the island. We shall explain presently why this messenger did not reach the marquis. But Clarence was some hours before him in his intelligence and his measures.

When the earl next heard that Edward had passed Pontefract with

impunity, and had reached Doncaster, he flew first to London, to arrange for its defence; consigned the care of Henry to the Archbishop of York, mustered a force already quartered in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and then marched rapidly back towards Coventry, where he had left Clarence with seven thousand men; while he despatched new messengers to Montagu and Northumberland, severely rebuking the former for his supineness, and ordering him to march in all haste to attack Edward in the rear. The earl's activity, promptitude, all-provident generalship, form a mournful contrast to the errors, the pusillanimity, and the treachery of others, which hitherto, as we have seen, made all his wisest schemes abortive. Despite Clarence's sullenness, Warwick had discovered no reason, as yet, to doubt his good faith. The oath he had taken—not only to Henry in London, but to Warwick at Amboise—had been the strongest which can bind man to man. If the duke had not gained all he had hoped, he had still much to lose and much to dread by desertion to Edward. He had been the loudest in bold assertions when he heard of the invasion; and above all, Isabel, whose influence over Clarence at that time the earl overrated, had, at the tidings of so imminent a danger to her father, forgot all her displeasure and recovered all her tenderness.

During Warwick's brief absence, Isabel had indeed exerted her utmost power to repair her former wrongs, and induce Clarence to be faithful to his oath. Although her inconsistency and irresolution had much weakened her influence with the duke, for natures like his are governed but by the ascendancy of a steady and tranquil will, yet still she so far prevailed, that the duke had despatched to Richard a secret courier, informing him that he had finally resolved not to desert his father-in-law.

This letter reached Gloucester as the invaders were on their march to Coventry, before the strong walls of which the Duke of Clarence lay encamped. Richard, after some intent and silent reflection, beckoned to him his familiar Catesby.

"Marmaduke Nevile, whom our scouts seized on his way to Pontefract, is safe, and in the rear?"

"Yes, my lord; prisoners but encumber us; shall I give orders to the provost to end his captivity?"

"Ever ready, Catesby!" said the duke, with a fell smile. "No; hark ye, Clarence vacillates. If he hold firm to Warwick, and the two forces fight honestly against us, we are lost; on the other hand, if Clarence join us, his defection will bring not only the men he commands, all of whom are the retainers of the York lands and duchy, and therefore free from peculiar bias to the earl, and easily lured back to their proper chief; but it will set an example that will create such distrust and panic amongst the enemy, and give such hope of fresh desertions to our own men, as will open to us the keys of the

metropolis. But Clarence, I say, vacillates; look you, here is his letter from Amboise to King Edward; see, his duchess, Warwick's very daughter, approves the promise it contains! If this letter reach Warwick, and Clarence knows it is in his hand, George will have no option but to join us. He will never dare to face the earl, his pledge to Edward once revealed—"

"Most true; a very legal subtlety, my lord," said the lawyer Catesby, admiringly.

"You can serve us in this. Fall back; join Sir Marmaduke; affect to sympathize with him; affect to side with the earl; affect to make terms for Warwick's amity and favour; affect to betray us; affect to have stolen this letter. Give it to young Nevile, artfully effect his escape, as if against our knowledge, and commend him to lose not an hour—a moment—in gaining the earl, and giving him so important a forewarning of the meditated treason of his son-in-law."

"I will do all,—I comprehend; but how will the duke learn in time that the letter is on its way to Warwick?"

"I will seek the duke in his own tent."

"And how shall I effect Sir Marmaduke's escape?"

"Send hither the officer who guards the prisoner; I will give him orders to obey thee in all things."

The invaders marched on. The earl, meanwhile, had reached Warwick, hastened thence to throw himself into the stronger fortifications of the neighbouring Coventry, without the walls of which Clarence was still encamped; Edward advanced on the town of Warwick thus vacated; and Richard, at night, rode along to the camp of Clarence. [Hall, and others.]

The next day, the earl was employed in giving orders to his lieutenants to march forth, join the troops of his son-in-law, who were a mile from the walls, and advance upon Edward, who had that morning quitted Warwick town, when suddenly Sir Marmaduke Nevile rushed into his presence, and, faltering out, "Beware, beware!" placed in his hands the fatal letter which Clarence had despatched from Amboise.

Never did blow more ruthless fall upon man's heart! Clarence's perfidy—that might be disdained; but the closing lines, which revealed a daughter's treachery—words cannot express the father's anguish.

The letter dropped from his hand, a stupor seized his senses, and, ere yet recovered, pale men hurried into his presence to relate how,

amidst joyous trumpets and streaming banners, Richard of Gloucester had led the Duke of Clarence to the brotherly embrace of Edward. [Hall. The chronicler adds: "It was no marvell that the Duke of Clarence with so small persuasion and less exhorting turned from the Earl of Warwick's party, for, as you have heard before, this marchandise was laboured, conducted, and concluded by a damsell, when the duke was in the French court, to the earl's utter confusion." Hume makes a notable mistake in deferring the date of Clarence's desertion to the battle of Barnet.]

Breaking from these messengers of evil news, that could not now surprise, the earl strode on, alone, to his daughter's chamber.

He placed the letter in her hands, and folding his arms said, "What sayest thou of this, Isabel of Clarence?" The terror, the shame, the remorse, that seized upon the wretched lady, the death-like lips, the suppressed shriek, the momentary torpor, succeeded by the impulse which made her fall at her father's feet and clasp his knees,—told the earl, if he had before doubted, that the letter lied not; that Isabel had known and sanctioned its contents.

He gazed on her (as she grovelled at his feet) with a look that her eyes did well to shun.

"Curse me not! curse me not!" cried Isabel, awed by his very silence. "It was but a brief frenzy. Evil counsel, evil passion! I was maddened that my boy had lost a crown. I repented, I repented! Clarence shall yet be true. He hath promised it, vowed it to me; hath written to Gloucester to retract all,—to—"

"Woman! Clarence is in Edward's camp!"

Isabel started to her feet, and uttered a shriek so wild and despairing, that at least it gave to her father's lacerated heart the miserable solace of believing the last treason had not been shared. A softer expression—one of pity, if not of pardon—stole over his dark face.

"I curse thee not," he said; "I rebuke thee not. Thy sin hath its own penance. Ill omen broods on the hearth of the household traitor! Never more shalt thou see holy love in a husband's smile. His kiss shall have the taint of Judas. From his arms thou shalt start with horror, as from those of thy wronged father's betrayer,—perchance his deathsmen! Ill omen broods on the cradle of the child for whom a mother's ambition was but a daughter's perfidy. Woe to thee, wife and mother! Even my forgiveness cannot avert thy doom!"

"Kill me! kill me!" exclaimed Isabel, springing towards him; but seeing his face averted, his arms folded on his breast,—that noble breast, never again her shelter,—she fell lifeless on the floor. [As

our narrative does not embrace the future fate of the Duchess of Clarence, the reader will pardon us if we remind him that her first-born (who bore his illustrious grandfather's title of Earl of Warwick) was cast into prison on the accession of Henry VII., and afterwards beheaded by that king. By birth, he was the rightful heir to the throne. The ill-fated Isabel died young (five years after the date at which our tale has arrived). One of her female attendants was tried and executed on the charge of having poisoned her. Clarence lost no time in seeking to supply her place. He solicited the hand of Mary of Burgundy, sole daughter and heir of Charles the Bold. Edward's jealousy and fear forbade him to listen to an alliance that might, as Lingard observes, enable Clarence "to employ the power of Burgundy to win the crown of England;" and hence arose those dissensions which ended in the secret murder of the perjured duke.]

The earl looked round, to see that none were by to witness his weakness, took her gently in his arms, laid her on her couch, and, bending over her a moment, prayed to God to pardon her.

He then hastily left the room, ordered her handmaids and her litter, and while she was yet unconscious, the gates of the town opened, and forth through the arch went the closed and curtained vehicle which bore the ill-fated duchess to the new home her husband had made with her father's foe! The earl watched it from the casement of his tower, and said to himself,—

"I had been unmanned, had I known her within the same walls. Now forever I dismiss her memory and her crime. Treachery hath done its worst, and my soul is proof against all storms!"

At night came messengers from Clarence and Edward, who had returned to Warwick town, with offers of pardon to the earl, with promises of favour, power, and grace. To Edward the earl deigned no answer; to the messenger of Clarence he gave this: "Tell thy master I had liefer be always like myself than like a false and a perjured duke, and that I am determined never to leave the war till I have lost mine own life, or utterly extinguished and put down my foes." [Hall.]

After this terrible defection, neither his remaining forces, nor the panic amongst them which the duke's desertion had occasioned, nor the mighty interests involved in the success of his arms, nor the irretrievable advantage which even an engagement of equivocal result with the earl in person would give to Edward, justified Warwick in gratifying the anticipations of the enemy,—that his valour and wrath would urge him into immediate and imprudent battle.

Edward, after the vain bravado of marching up to the walls of Coventry, moved on towards London. Thither the earl sent Marmaduke, enjoining the Archbishop of York and the lord mayor but to hold out the city for three days, and he would come to their aid with such a

force as would insure lasting triumph. For, indeed, already were hurrying to his banner Montagu, burning to retrieve his error, Oxford and Exeter, recovered from, and chafing at, their past alarm. Thither his nephew, Fitzhugh, led the earl's own clansmen of Middleham; thither were spurring Somerset from the west, [Most historians state that Somerset was then in London; but Sharon Turner quotes "Harleian Manuscripts," 38, to show that he had left the metropolis "to raise an army from the western counties," and ranks him amongst the generals at the battle of Barnet.] and Sir Thomas Dymoke from Lincolnshire, and the Knight of Lytton, with his hardy retainers, from the Peak. Bold Hilyard waited not far from London, with a host of mingled yeomen and bravos, reduced, as before, to discipline under his own sturdy energies and the military craft of Sir John Coniers. If London would but hold out till these forces could unite, Edward's destruction was still inevitable.