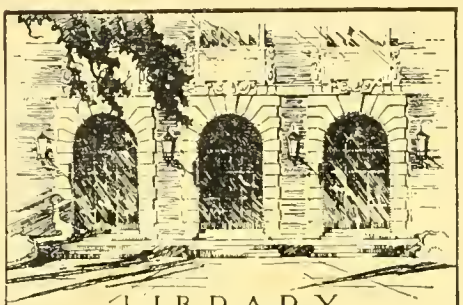

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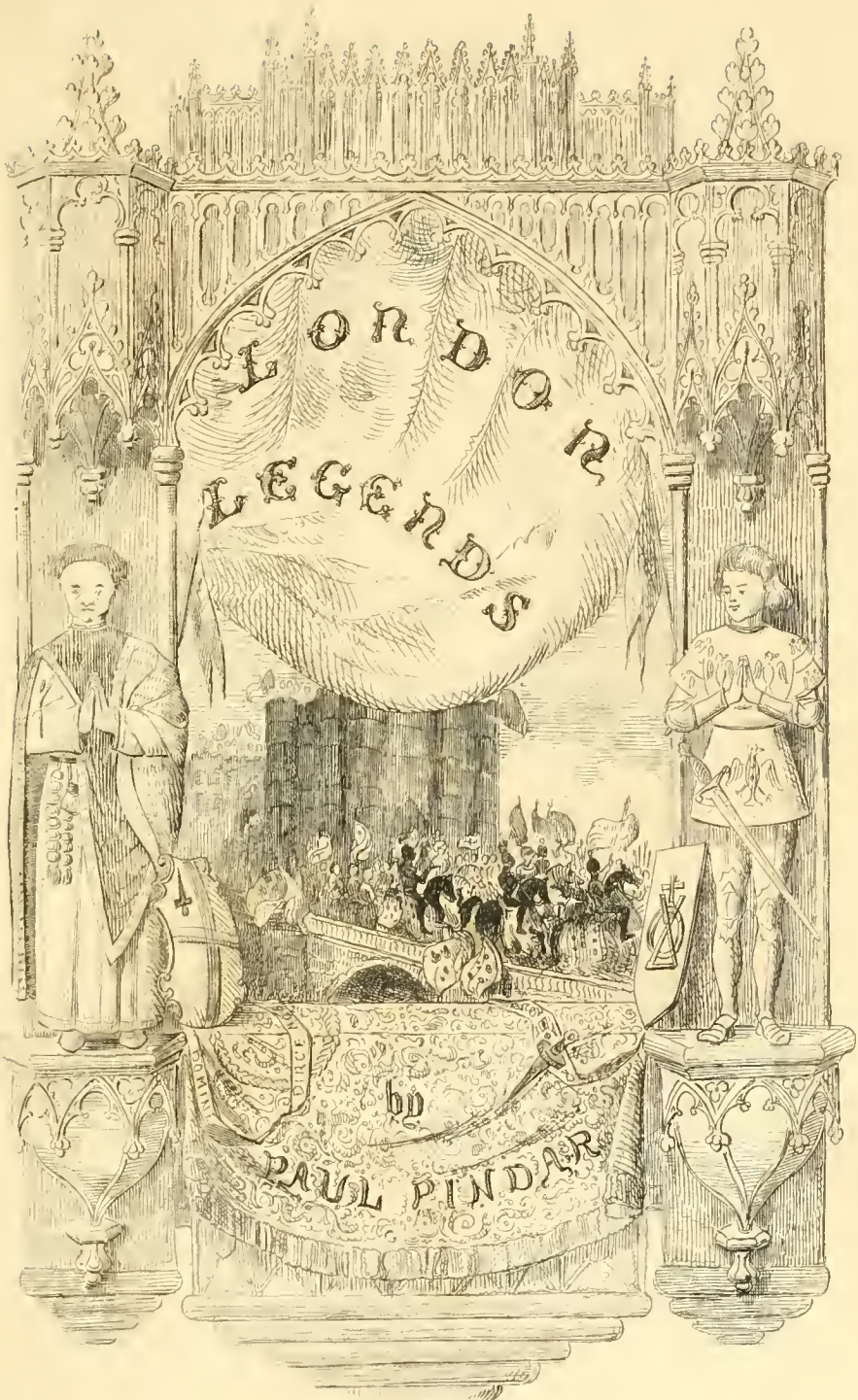


VOL. II.

LONDON.

Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, March 1844.

LONDON LEGENDS.

By PAUL PINDAR, Gent.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1842.

THE FOSTER-SON.

A LEGEND OF

THE WARD OF FARRINGDON EXTRA.

BOOK THE THIRD

CONTINUED.

THE FOSTER-SON.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CITIZENS OF LONDON VERSUS THE COMMONS OF KENT.

In all ages throughout the world the arguments of necessity and expediency have been considered more powerful than those of justice and philanthropy. Not many years ago the private lunatic asylums of England were occasionally the scenes of much tyranny and oppression, and, though the facts were well known to their fellow-men, and were sometimes interwoven with the fictions of the novelist, not a voice was raised in behalf of the unfortunates. At length, "a respectable member of the Society of

Friends" (*vulgò* a Quaker) was incarcerated in one of these places, and treated with great severity, when, lo! the alarm became general, and a crusade was preached against these receptacles, which led to some salutary legislative enactments for their regulation. It was the same with the punishment of death. Formerly, if a citizen chanced to pass the end of the Old Bailey at an early hour of the morning he might, to his horror and disgust, behold several unfortunate victims to the crime of forgery writhing in horrible torments "before the debtor's door of Newgate." By-and-bye, a banker himself was found among the delinquents, and, lastly,—oh! shades of Fox, Naylor, and Ellwood!—a Quaker was added to the list of forgers, and suffered as his fellow criminals had suffered. Until these "members of highly respectable families" had entailed upon themselves the extreme penalty of the law, the cry uttered here and there by some solitary philanthropist was unheeded; but now these Moloch-like sacrifices were found to be too severe, and

the punishment of death for such offences was voted a stain upon our criminal law. Throughout human nature you will find mankind acting under the same motives and influences.

A feeling, somewhat similar to this, forced on the citizens of London, in the fifteenth century, the expediency of making some effort to rid themselves of a daring rebel, who was each day manifesting his real character. Every wealthy man considered himself as marked for the next visit of Cade, and therefore every man who had anything to lose, was clamorous for the taking of some vigorous step to abate the evil.

Scarcely had Cade reached Southwark, after robbing the goldsmith, when the bells of the great *Clochier* in St. Paul's Churchyard, already described, rang out for a folkmote, and armed citizens were seen pouring into the Cheap from every quarter. The gloom and depression which were previously depicted in every face, now changed to animated and encouraging looks on all sides. The bills and lances, which had reposed quietly in the

churches, were seen bristling above the heads of the armed throng which was filling the principal thoroughfare; and Master Hyltoft, as he beheld the muster from his window, blessed God that there was some spirit left among his fellow-citizens, and almost forgot how he had been plundered when he contemplated the discomfiture of the rebel host. Mistress Johanna shared in her father's delight; yet, though she did not doubt the constancy of William Farendon, she could not help thinking of the loss of her marriage-portion; a loss which grieved her sadly, since she considered it might somewhat abridge her authority as his wedded wife.

"Ha! this is bravely done, my fellow-citizens!" exclaimed the goldsmith, rubbing his hands together with great glee. "Look, Johanna; look child; there 's a goodly troop of billmen from Cold Harbour, and a band of archers from the Aldermanbury; and there 's Captain Petwyn's company of cross-bowmen from Castle Baynard just entering the Cheap!

Oh! it 's a brave sight, and reminds me of my youthful days."

"Yes, and here come the mayor and the sheriffs, in their bright harness!" cried Johanna; "and there 's the banner of St. Paul! We shall see William Farendon anon."

"Bravely done!" repeated the citizen. "Ah, my old companions, I thought you would soon pluck up heart, and be upon 'em. So, there 's Robert Horne already in his harness. God speed thee, stout heart! What, thou art a mind to win back the five hundred marks they wrung from thee, eh? We might have been spared the last few days if they had taken thy counsel."

"Here come the 'prentices!" cried Johanna. "They are led by Master Nicholas Basing, the alderman of Portsoken. And there 's William Farendon in his handsome harness, which he bought of Antonio, the merchant stranger. Oh! it 's a brave sight!"

The young lady's enthusiasm was at this moment somewhat damped by the serious re-

flection, that the chances of war might cause not only that brave harness, but also its wearer, to suffer, and that many who were assembled below in health and spirits might return no more to prayer or folkmote.

At length, at a signal, the citizens and soldiers fell into their ranks; the banner of St. Paul went forward with the mayor and sheriffs, and the Londoners followed in column in the order of the respective companies; a body of cross-bowmen and men-at-arms bringing up the rear. There were the usual number of adieus and salutations from the windows, and several young men received love-tokens and favours on the points of their lances as they passed the dwellings of their mistresses.

The rebel forces had withdrawn, unmolested, into Southwark, where they had taken up their quarters; and, though the Londoners had determined to oppose, at all risks, their re-entering the city, they yet doubted the policy of attacking Cade on the other side of the water. It was therefore resolved that the

passage of the bridge should be kept against all comers. Scarcely, however, had the citizens occupied that far-famed thoroughfare, when the rebel drums in Southwark beat to arms; and Cade, marshalling his men in all haste, advanced to dispute their possession.

So fierce was the onset of the Kentish-men that the citizens gave ground, and retreated as far as the drawbridge, from the towers of which a flight of arrows and cross-bow bolts held the rebels for a while in check. At this critical moment a company of men-at-arms, led by Matthew Gough and Sir Valentine, wheeling round the corner of St. Magnus' church, arrived on the spur, and charging full on the rebel front, turned the tide. Then arose a terrible uproar of blows, and shouts, and fierce execrations. Cade foamed and chafed like a wolf when hard pressed; and, encouraging his men with voice and gesture, appeared in the thickest of the fight, which now raged with redoubled fury.

"Our plessed Lady save us!" cried Gough,

pressing forward and crying on his men; "the traitorous dog has bedecked himself with the slain knight's prigandine and spurs. Ha! thou thief! I long to try a pout with thee!"

Gough spoke truly. Cade from the day of the unfortunate defeat of Sir Humphrey Stafford, near Sevenoaks, had worn the armour and spurs of the vanquished knight.

The latter part of the Welch captain's invective was plainly heard by the rebel leader, who, sword in hand, seemed willing to afford him the desired gratification.

"By Saint Thomas!" cried Cade, at the top of his voice, flourishing his sword menacingly; "thou shalt have thy will, thou Welsh goat, if my fellows here will give me room to reach thee!"

"God and the King!" shouted the welsh captain. "Down with these repel hounds! down with 'em! down with 'em! St. George! St. George!"

"God and the King! St. Paul! St. Paul for London!" shouted the 'prentices on the

roof and at the loop-holes of the tower which commanded the drawbridge; and plying their shot, they so galled the rebels that they were constrained to give ground, leaving several of their comrades either slain or writhing with their wounds.

Thinking this a favourable moment for attempting to kill or take prisoner the arch rebel, Gough, supported by Valentine, who kept close to his side, dashed forward, sword in hand, scattering to the right and left those who fought around Cade.

"Yield thee in the king's name, traitor!" cried Gough, spurring his horse, and advancing upon Cade.

The resolute conduct of the old soldier seemed for a moment to daunt Cade, who reined back his horse, and appeared to be desirous of shunning a single combat. At that moment Robin of Beaksbourne, who fought on foot by the side of his leader, rushing forward, raised his huge axe, and struck Gough from his horse.

"Bravely struck, my Gogmagog!" cried Cade in a tone of exultation. "His brigandine is worth ten Harry nobles."

His note, however, was quickly changed, for a charge of the citizens, among whom was Alderman Sutton and William Farendon, with a party of billmen, drove the rebels back in confusion and disorder to the Southwark end of the bridge.

"God be praised!" ejaculated the young goldsmith, wiping his sword; "we have given them a wholesome lesson. But, where 's Master Sutton?"

"Alas! sir," said a citizen, "he lies dying at the door of St. Thomas's Chapel. His head is cleft with a brownbill. I brained the man who struck him down."

By this time the sun had gone down, and the gloom of a summer's twilight had succeeded. An ominous silence had followed the recent strife. Southwark was still swarming with the rebels, and the buzz of their voices was distinctly heard by the victorious citizens; while on the bridge men were busily engaged in removing

the wounded. Round the steps of Saint Magnus' Church stood a little group of soldiers, attentively regarding their dying leader. Valentine was on his knees by the side of his expiring friend Matthew Gough, and the old veterans, whom he had often led to victory on the plains of France, looked on with tearful eyes.

"Alas! alas!" said Valentine, in a voice tremulous with emotion, as he looked on the pallid countenance of the wounded man—"He is sinking! Fetch me some water, for the love of the Saints!"

A soldier of Gough's troop quitted the place, and running to the river-side, returned immediately with water in his helmet, which he sprinkled in the face of his leader.

"Ah, me!" sighed the dying captain, raising his eyes, "I am sped, my prave companions! that repel axe has settled all! Thank God, I shall die in mine harness, as pecomes a soldier; yet I would rather it had peen on the plains of France, where I have earned a good name. Farewell! Sir Valentine; farewell! my mates!

I could prophecy, put my life is fleeting. The time is coming when loyal hearts will pe more precious than rupies."

While he uttered these words, rendered more affecting by the peculiarities of his native language, Matthew Gough felt for his dagger. Valentine anticipating him, plucked it quickly from its sheath, and grasping the blade, presented the handle to his lips, in the manner of a crucifix. Gough acknowledged this act of attention with a smile, which lit up his features for a moment, and, with a long drawn sigh, returned the pressure of Valentine's hand, and expired.

As the men-at-arms beheld this sad sight, they grasped their own weapons, and swore to revenge the death of their leader, when suddenly the roll of the rebel drums gave notice of a renewal of the attack, and a column of men, preceded by a band of archers, advanced in good order upon the bridge, driving before them the pickets, which had been stationed upon it by the citizens.

The archers were led by the giant Robin of Beaksbourne, who pointed with a threatening air to the towers that commanded the draw-bridge, which the rebels had rendered useless on their first entry into the city, their leader having set the example by hewing the ropes asunder with his sword.

In the gateway below these towers, the roofs of which were covered with the 'prentices under the command of Nicholas Basing, the alderman of Portsoken, while the cross-bowmen occupied every window and loop-hole, was now planted one of the cumbrous and unmanageable pieces of ordnance of those days, which had been forwarded by Lord Scales for the help of the citizens, who judged that its presence alone would scare the rebels from any further attempt to re-enter. When, therefore, the citizens witnessed the advance of Robin and his party, they immediately brought it to bear upon them. The art of gunnery was at that period but indifferently understood, and, as the piece exploded, it was perceived that they had given it too

great an elevation. The huge stone shot, with which it was charged, did not fly far, and in its parabola overtopped the ranks of the rebels, so that all but Robin of Beaksbourne escaped unharmed. He, on the contrary, a head and shoulders taller than his fellows, was doomed to perish. The shot, striking him full in the face, dashed him to the earth, a headless quivering trunk, to the horror and consternation of those around him.

Had this shot been followed up by a vigorous charge of the citizens the struggle might have been decided; but, annoyed and surprised at its failure, they did not act with decision, and, therefore, gave their enemies time to recover from their alarm.

Shouting vengeance, and crying their battle-cry, the rebels again advanced, and, sweeping all before them, charged up to the gate and seized the piece of ordnance. But a terrible mischance awaited them. One of their band, having snatched up the burning linstock, incautiously approached the cask of powder,

which exploded with a frightful noise, killing and wounding nearly twenty men. Horrible were the yells, groans and execrations which arose at the moment; and, when the smoke had cleared away, several scorched and blackened wretches crawled up to their more fortunate fellows, and craved for water in piteous tones.

By this time the bridge was literally crammed with the rebel troops; and Cade, putting himself at the head of a chosen few, charged through the gateway, while a party, led by a man in a complete suit of armour, with a surcoat of blue, powdered with gold annulets, assaulted the towers which commanded the drawbridge. They soon forced the doors beneath the archway, and ascended to the roof, where they commenced a horrible slaughter of the apprentices, whose leader, Nicholas Basing, was instantly struck down, and would have been slain outright but for the man in complete armour, who commanded them to throw him from the tower into the river.

The unfortunate citizen, finding himself entirely in the power of his enemies, clasped the knees of their leader, and, though the din above and below prevented his voice being heard, the movement of his lips and his agonised and frantic look spoke more eloquently than words. But he appealed to men naturally fierce and savage, and now rendered utterly implacable. Their leader spurned the alderman from him, and his followers, seizing their victim, lifted him up in their arms and cast him over the parapet. He fell with a loud cry and a heavy splash into the roaring tide beneath, and was borne away by the swift current.

While this was passing, the tide of battle below was again turned by the citizens, who, headed by the mayor and sheriffs, had driven back the rebels nearly to the Southwark gate of the bridge. Valentine was in the thickest of the fight: two powerful motives urged him to court danger,—a desire to avenge the fate of his friend Gough, and the hope of meeting the death he now courted.

While the citizens were yet struggling with their enemies, and gradually forcing them back into Southwark, a cry arose, that the Kentish-men had forced the towers commanding the drawbridge, and were putting the apprentices to the sword. Chance at this moment brought together Sir Valentine and William Farendon, and both volunteered to attack the rebels who had obtained possession of the towers. They arrived too late to save the unfortunate leader of the apprentices, many of whom were on the roof paralyzed with fear at witnessing the fate of their captain.

Dashing up the stairs, and crying the war-cry of the citizens, they came suddenly upon the rebel band. The conflict was of short duration ; after a few blows, and the death of one or two of the boldest, the Kentish-men, seeing that they were cut off from their fellows, yielded themselves prisoners, but their leader, with his beaver down, cutting his way through all opposition, rushed on Sir Valentine with a yell of savage exultation.

The young knight, making a sign that they should not attempt to assist him, received on his sword the blow intended for his head, and his adversary's weapon flew in twain. Valentine, dropping his point, was about to summon him to surrender, when the unknown, quickly drawing his dagger, rushed upon him. A desperate struggle ensued ; both lost their footing, and, rolling over and over, attempted to wound each other with their daggers, but their armour for some time protected them. At length, by a vigorous effort, Valentine succeeded in getting uppermost, and dashed his dagger through the the linked camail which guarded his adversary's throat.

The wounded man released his hold, uttered a cry of anguish, and blood followed the stroke.

Raising himself on his knees, Sir Valentine wiped the perspiration from his brow, and, bending over the prostrate man, lifted his beaver, when,—oh, wonder and amazement !— the well-known features of Richard Furnival met his astonished gaze.

"God of heaven!" exclaimed William Farendon. "It is Dick Furnival!—ah, mad boy, see to what a pass treason hath brought thee!"

Richard Furnival turned his dying eyes upon the speaker with an expression of the bitterest scorn.

"Oh, Richard! Richard!" cried Valentine, "forgive me: I knew thee not. Oh, heavy day!"

The lips of the expiring rebel moved as if he would have replied.

"Ay,—speak to me,—speak to me, Richard. Say but one word,—that you forgive me—" continued Valentine, in accents broken by grief; and, bending down, he attempted to catch the last words of his foster-brother.

A smile of concentrated malice distorted the features of the dying youth, and, collecting all his strength, he spat the bloody foam which mantled on his lips, in the face of the speaker; and, averting his head, groaned heavily and died.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RECOGNITION.

> So young to go
> Under th' obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
> To be nailed down into a narrow place!
> To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more
> Blithe voice of living thing!
>
> SHELLY'S *Cenci.*

SUCH of the citizens as were not personally engaged in the desperate struggle—attempted to be described in the preceding chapter—awaited its issue with painful anxiety, while the Jews, and merchant strangers, thought on the probable success of Cade's party with alarm and horror, for they well knew that his triumph would be their destruction. The number of wounded men from time to time brought into

the city, attested the fury of the conflict; and, as the last glimmer of twilight faded away, bright flames were seen waving over London Bridge,—the rebels had fired the houses upon it, and the aged and the helpless were perishing in the conflagration. But we must leave this scene of violence and bloodshed, which has been so faithfully depicted by the chroniclers.

Among the varied acquirements of the gentle prioress of the Benedictine Nuns, within Bishopsgate, was that of leechcraft, an art practised almost exclusively by ecclesiastics, and but imperfectly understood in the middle ages. Every morning, at a certain hour, the hall of the priory was crowded with the indigent and ailing poor, whose bodily infirmities were alleviated by the care and attention of the sisterhood, under the directions of their superior. No marvel, therefore, that the gates of the priory were now beset by those whose friends or relations had been wounded in the battle with Cade.

In every age and country the cares and at-

tentions of women in such trying scenes have soothed the agonies of the suffering, and tempered the horrors of war. Every kindness that humanity could dictate was performed by the good sisters of St. Helen's, but the injuries which some had sustained required *surgical* knowledge, and baffled all their skill, while several unfortunates expired before relief could be afforded them.

The prioress had just extracted, with her own fair hands, an arrow from the throat of a soldier, when there was a stir among the crowd in the hall, and the heavy tramp of men was heard advancing. They bore a litter, upon which was extended a young man in the armour of a knight, his fine features writhen with bodily suffering, and smeared with blood. He had been rescued by William Farendon, who had, with great difficulty, and at the risk of his own life, dragged him out of the press where a score of rebels were hacking and thrusting at him with desperate malice.

The bearers set down the litter, and the sis-

ters crowded round the wounded knight, each anxious to render him some assistance; but there was one among them who, with blanched cheek and dilated eye, for a while regarded the sufferer with a look in which the various expressions of doubt, wonder, sadness, and despair were strangely blended.

The nun was Anna Furnival. As she looked bewildered and doubting on the face of the wounded youth his eyes met hers, and that glance dispelled all uncertainty—it was he—it was Valentine! he closed his eyes and sank backward with a long-drawn sigh.

With a violent effort of self-controul, Anna suppressed the cry which rose to her pale lips, and the nun by whose side she stood, feeling a sudden pressure on her shoulder, turned and received the fainting girl in her arms.

There was a murmur of surprise among the sisterhood, and the prioress was instantly by the side of her favourite, whom she caused to be borne to her own room, where, in a short time, Anna was restored to consciousness.

"Oh, dearest mother!" sobbed the poor girl, recovering, and looking wildly around her—"*it is he!*"

"Who?" queried the superior, with a look of mingled wonder and commiseration; "who dost thou say?"

"Alas! alas! who should it be but he whom I thought lost to me for ever—my Valentine!"

"Holy Mother!" exclaimed the prioress; "thou art distraught!"

"Oh, no, no, no!" sighed Anna, mournfully, "I am not deceived. Oh! dearest mother, pity and forgive me!" And throwing her arm around the neck of the superior, she fell upon her bosom and sobbed convulsively.

Big tears filled the large lustrous eyes of the lady prioress. She essayed to speak some words of consolation, but they found no utterance. As she strained the nun to her bosom her heart throbbed in union with that of the suffering maiden; the recollection of her own griefs was painfully awakened: her cup was filled, and required no violent shock to cause it to overflow.

A sister here entered, and informed the superior that the young knight was grievously wounded, and sinking rapidly. The prioress hesitated for a while, as if in doubt and perplexity, and then directed that the wounded man should be conveyed into an inner room; to which she proceeded herself.

On entering the apartment to which the young knight had been borne, she found him extended on a couch, while two or three citizens were divesting him of his gorget and coat of mail. As they did so, it was perceived that he had received a grievous hurt in the throat and shoulder, which had forced in his armour and caused a deep lacerated wound.

The prioress here knelt, and with her own hands bared the wounded shoulder of the sufferer, who, though writhing with pain, gazed on her with respect and admiration. Suddenly she rose — the colour mounted to her eyes; her hands trembled; she paused in her office, looked ardently at the shoulder of her patient, on which a *blue spot* was distinctly visible.

Isabel Chychelye felt her heart throb as if it would have burst its bounds. She brushed aside with her hands the crisp locks of the knight, and saw at a glance that his ear was marked in a similar manner. Those who stood by looked on and marvelled at the actions of the prioress, who murmured to herself, what those around her might have supposed to be a charm, but for the evident emotion which was visible in her look and manner.

At that moment Anna Furnival entered the apartment, supported by one of the sisterhood. Tottering to the couch on which her lover was lying, she sank on her knees before it. Valentine would have clasped her in his arms, but was restrained by the citizens. The exertion caused his wounds to bleed afresh: it was evident that his strength was fast fleeting, and that the lamp of life was exhausted.

Not a word was uttered by either of the lovers. Sorrow had stricken them dumb. At length the prioress spoke.

"Good citizens," said she, in accents choked

by grief, "it hath pleased the Lord of Heaven and Earth this day to fill up the measure of my affliction. May He in his mercy grant strength to support me in this trying hour! In this young knight you behold the lover of one of our sisterhood, by whom he was accounted dead."

There was a murmur of sympathy and astonishment at this announcement.

"Marvel not at this alone," continued the prioress, with an effort to stifle her emotion: "in this knight, this dying youth, *I have found my son—my long-lost son!*"

Here the good prioress's resolution yielded to the yearnings of nature; and flinging herself on her knees before the wounded knight, she grasped his hand in hers, and cried in piteous accents, which wrung the hearts of those around her, while her tears fell in showers on his face.

"My son! my son!"

"Mother!" faintly articulated the dying youth, endeavouring to embrace the superior.

"*My* mother!" With these words he swooned from exhaustion.

Here description fails. We can dwell no longer on this scene of human affliction and suffering. When the prioress and the sister were removed by the nuns from the object of their solicitude, it was discovered that each was fondly pressing the hand of a corpse.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

A few words will suffice to bring our tale to an end. The dispersion of the rebels on the proclamation of general pardon, and the punishment of the most daring of them, have been described by the old chroniclers; and the death of the arch rebel himself, at Heathfield, in Sussex, is a well known dramatic scene in the works of our great poet. On a recent visit to the spot, the words which Shakspeare puts in the mouth of Cade, when Iden strikes him down—

> Wither, garden; and be henceforth a burial place to all that do dwell in this house—

were forcibly recalled to our recollection. There is no garden or substantial country-house near the place where he fell, but an ill-designed

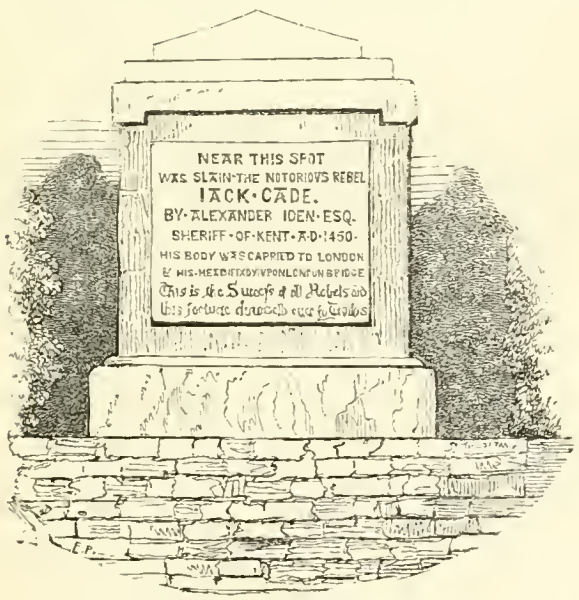
monument commemorates the event, the village being called Cat's Street, a corruption of Cade's Street.

The dispersion of the rebels diffused the most lively joy over the city, and the lamentations of those who had lost a husband, a brother, a lover, or a friend, were drowned in the rejoicings of the more fortunate, who had escaped the threatened pillage.

Order being established, the weak-minded King Henry returned to the metropolis, to mete out rewards and punishments. Among the former may be noticed the knighting of William Farendon, whose marriage with Johanna Hyltoft, three months afterwards, at Bow Church, furnished a holiday-spectacle to the Londoners, so pompously was everything ordered on that occasion.

For the information of those who may desire to know something of the subtle friend of Cade, hight Robert Poynings, we append the following, from Cotton's abridgement of the Tower Records of Parliament, by Prynne, folio 652. 31st year of Henry VI.

"Robert Poynings of Southwark, Esquire, being the carver, sword-bearer, and chief doer with Jack Cade, and had his pardon, upon which he, with sureties, were bound by recognisances in Chancery for his good behaviour. Since which he hath done many riots, and by raising and going with men armed, against the law in Kent; wherefore it was enacted that an extent upon the said recognisances shall go against the said Poynings and his sureties, and his and their lands and goods."



CADE'S MONUMENT AT HEATHFIELD, SUSSEX.

EVIL MAY-DAY.

A LEGEND OF

THE WARD OF FARRINGDON INFRA.

A prentis whilom dwelt in our eitee,
And of a craft of vitaillers was he;
Gaillard he was, as goldfineh in the shawe,
Broune as a bery, a propre short felawe:
With lokkes blake, kembed ful fetisly.
Daneen he eoude so wel and jolily,
That he was eleped Perkin Revelour.
He was as ful of love and paramour,
As is the hive ful of hony swete;
Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete.
At every bridale would he sing and hoppe;
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
For whan ther any riding was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wold he lepe;
And til that he had all the sight ysein,
And daneed wel, he wold not eome agein;
And gadred him a meinie of his sort,
To hoppe and sing, and maker swiche disport.

CHAUCER,—*The Coke's Tale.*

EVIL MAY-DAY.

CHAPTER I.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

N the evening of the 27th of April, in the year 1517, and, consequently, in the eighth year of the reign of Henry the Eighth, a tall, portly, broad-shouldered, and comely-visaged man, in the garb of a respectable citizen, emerged from one of the dark lanes which led into Thames Street, near Dowgate, and proceeded at a sturdy pace in a westerly direction.

It was growing dark, the shops and stalls were closed, and the good citizens were at their suppers. The lusty stranger seemed to be conscious of this, and strode along with a firm and erect gait, more resembling that of a man-at-arms than a simple burgess.

He had scarcely walked forty paces when two men, squalid and ill-looking, darted from under a gateway, and while they both confronted him, one of them, with a grisly oath, made a snatch at the purse which hung at his girdle.

"Ha! St. George!" cried the stout man, eluding the fellow's grasp; "take that, knave;" and, flourishing a stout oaken staff, he stretched the fellow on the ground with a well-directed blow, which, had it alighted on his head instead of his shoulder, would infallibly have knocked out his brains.

Though somewhat daunted at this resistance, the other thief drew forth a long knife, while his companion scrambled on his legs again, and blood would no doubt have flowed but for the

sudden arrival of a young man, armed with a broadsword and a buckler, who, shouting as he whirled his weapon round his head,—"Have at ye, cut-purse villains!"—instantly placed himself by the side of the citizen.

Alarmed at this unexpected succour, the thieves fled precipitately down the street, and were soon lost among the numerous dark alleys which led to the water-side.

"Thanks, my young master," said the portly figure, who had been so promptly assisted; "a friend at such a time is worth a thousand fair speeches."

"You are heartily welcome, sir," replied the youth, sheathing his broadsword; "and, if your road lies westward, I will bear you company a part of the way. The gentlemen of the White-friars are always stirring with the owl and the bat, and you may meet others of the same family before you reach home."

"A boat waits for me at Queen-hithe," said the stranger; "but, as the night is coming on, I will accept your offer, young man." And he

proceeded on his way, with his sturdy step, humming one of the songs of that period. At length he spoke again :—

" By what name shall I know my champion ? "

" Nicholas Fortescue, an't please you, fair sir," replied the youth, in a respectful tone; for he thought there was something in the air and manner of his interrogator above the stamp of an ordinary citizen.

" Of what craft or profession ? " was the next inquiry.

" 'Prentice to Master George Elliott, stationer, in St. Paul's Church-yard," replied the youth.

" Ha ! St. George ! a 'prentice, and abroad at this hour ! Does Master Elliott give you such license, young man ? "

The 'prentice hung his head, and was mute for some seconds. At length he muttered, in a tone which showed that he did not relish the remark :—

" My back will doubtless taste of the stirrup-

leather, sir; but I shall not grieve at that, since my playing truant brought me to your rescue. There was some good sword-play at the Bank-side this evening; and Mahoud, the great black bear, was baited. Ecod, sir! he nipped asunder Ralph, the butcher's dog, of High Street, and played the devil among the other curs."

"And you could not flee from the temptation?" interrupted the stranger. "But come, you are a brave youth, and though I cannot save your back from Master Elliott's discipline, I can find an unguent that hath cured many wounds."

As he said this they arrived at Queen-hithe stairs, off which lay a boat with a party-coloured tilt; and the stranger, unfastening the pouch which hung at his girdle, placed it in the hand of the apprentice.

"Take this," he continued, "you will find it stuffed with proper metal. But have a care of the purse; it is a sovereign charm against sorcery and danger of all kinds. George Willoughbye is your debtor, young man."

The apprentice doffed his leathern cap, and bowed low as he received the pouch; but as he did so, he took care to steal a glance at the features of the donor.

The keel of the boat now grated on the stairs, and the stranger having entered and taken his seat, it darted out into the stream, and was soon lost in the gloom.

"George Willoughbye! He must be a noble!" ejaculated Fortescue, thrusting the well-filled purse into his bosom: "I have surely seen that broad fair face and well-trimmed beard before to-night. But now for my master's uncomely visage." And, saying this, he bent his way homeward. He had just reached Thames Street, when the trampling of feet was heard on his right.

"Ha! by the Mass!" muttered the 'prentice, as he quickened his pace, "here 's the city watch going their rounds. I 'd rather face Master Elliott than sleep in the Compter to-night."

Disappearing stealthily from the spot, Ni-

cholas Fortescue was in a few minutes afterwards knocking at his master's door, on the north side of St. Paul's Church-yard, now wrapped in total darkness.

CHAPTER II.

THE CITY WATCH.

Our 'prentice had knocked three or four times, each knock being louder than the preceding one, when a window was opened above, and the gaunt visage of Master Elliott, illumined by the light of the lamp which he held in his hand, looked out ominously upon him.

"Who knocks?" inquired the stationer, in a loud and angry voice.

"'Tis I, master," replied the 'prentice, in a soft, subdued, penitential tone.

"Rascal!" cried the man of business, "get thee gone! Go, and sleep in St. Nicholas' shambles—I will not let thee into my house to-night!" And he shut to the window in a furious passion.

"Humph!" said Fortescue, as he seated himself on the stone steps; "then I 'm likely to get a lodging at the expense o' the city; for if I stay here I shall soon be marched off to the Compter. I 'll e'en try him again."

He accordingly renewed his knocking with increased vehemence; but Master Elliott was inexorable; the door remained closed against him, and our 'prentice resumed his seat on the steps, whistling a tune and beating time with his heel.

The sound smote the ear of his master, who was praying for the arrival of the watch. He did not pray in vain; the watch soon arrived, and the whole party halted as soon as they espied the 'prentice, whose solo was hushed in a moment.

"Ho! friend!" cried the sergeant, "what art doing there?"

The 'prentice made no reply; indeed he knew not what reply to make.

"Kick him up, Will Lathbury," said the sergeant; and one of the men advanced to do his

bidding; but this was not an easy performance. Fortescue started up, and swearing a fierce oath, placed himself in a threatening attitude, his unsheathed sword in his hand, and his buckler covering his head. Dark as it was, the man perceived his danger and recoiled.

"'Ods, daggers and devils!" cried the sergeant; "may double-beer be my poison, if thou 'rt not afraid!"

"I am *not* afraid," said the man in a surly tone. "And now, my fine fellow, put up your broadsword, or I'll cleave your pate for you in a trice."

Daring and obstinate, Nicholas Fortescue heeded not this menace, but remained on the defensive, when the sergeant of the watch again addressed him.

"Hark 'ee, young coistrel," cried he, "this may be very pretty play in Finsbury Fields on a summer's evening, but it wont do here; throw down your weapon at once, or you 'll be cut to the chine in a pater-noster."

The 'prentice did not stir.

"Nay, then, down with him," continued the sergeant, perceiving that his remonstrance produced no effect; and Fortescue was instantly stretched on the ground with the stroke of a brown-bill. His buckler saved his head, but he sunk under the furious blow, and was instantly seized by two of the watch.

Suddenly there was a stir in the house of the stationer, whose head appeared at the window, while the pretty round face of his daughter looked out with alarm over his shoulder upon the scene below.

"My dearest father, forgive him," murmured the damsel, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Go to your chamber, girl," said her father, angrily; "I 'll teach the rascal to be malapert."

"Be not wroth with him, dear father!" And the tears stood in her blue eyes.

"Away with thee!" cried the stationer, in a tone which showed that he would not be trifled with.

Jane Elliott instantly left the room in tears, and her father, leaning out of the window, de-

sired the watch to lodge his undutiful apprentice in the Poultry Compter.

"Nay, nay, master stationer," said the sergeant; "'tis a pity to take the boy away; your pretty daughter will grieve."

Master Elliott turned pale with rage at this bantering; and he uttered an execration, which, for the ladies' sakes, must not be recorded.

"Go to the devil with you, sirrah!" cried he; "and have a care of your prisoner!"

While this was passing, Nicholas Fortescue uttered not a word, much to the surprise of his master, who naturally expected to hear him supplicate for pardon; but the man of business was disappointed, and, shutting-to his window, he left the watch to conduct their prisoner to the Compter.

Master Elliott threw himself into his arm-chair, and took a long pull at his horn of sack-posset.

"A murrain take the girl!" cried he; "she will plague me more than half a score of boys. I'll take a course with her, spite of her tears,

which every woman can shed at will. Who but a beardless gallant would be moved by such? I should as soon grieve at seeing a duck walk barefoot!"

The concluding part of Master Elliott's soliloquy was, in some respects, true; but the fair reader should be informed that our widower had counted sixty summers, and that he had been plagued for many years by his wife, who was a *shrew*.

CHAPTER III.

THE ALSATIAN BLACKSMITH.

Shamwell.—They are up in the Friars.
The Squire of Alsatia.

The boat which conveyed Master Willoughbye glided rapidly up the stream, in almost total darkness. Here and there a feeble light glimmered in some dwelling which encroached upon and overhung the city wall, and on the other side of the river the faint gleam of a taper might be seen at intervals in the houses on the bankside. Lower down, but dimly seen through the gloom, London-bridge, with its towers and dwellings, spanned the noble river, whose dark stream poured through its arches with a sullen and unbroken roar. But these were soon lost to the ear and the eye as the

boat ascended the river. It soon approached the neighbourhood of the Black-friars, when the noise of smiths' hammers aroused Master Willoughbye from the reverie in which he had been indulging.

"Ha!" cried he, "what can this mean?—no *citizen* can be working at this hour!"

The boat continued to advance, and the sound became more and more audible. They were now off the far-famed White-friars, and the cause of the noise became obvious.

In one of the wretched hovels, which descended to the water's edge, was a smith's forge, the fire from which threw its red glare upon the river. Two men were hard at work, and several others were conversing in boisterous tones. *Mischief was brewing in Alsatia!*

"Pull towards that smithy, and lie-to under the shadow of yon great barge," said Master Willoughbye to the rowers.

This command was promptly obeyed, and the boat was soon within half a stone's throw of the Alsatians. The smiths continued at

their work for some time, and the noise they made prevented the conversation of the others who had assembled in the shed from being distinctly heard by him who was now playing the eaves-dropper. Merrily rung the hammers, as they dashed the bright sparks among the company, whose features were lit up by the vivid glow of the fire—it was a scene worthy the pencil of Schalcken.

A lengthened description of the region of White-friars, which, under the cant name of Alsatia, was for a long period the hiding-place of the most desperate wretches that infested the metropolis, will not here be necessary. Shadwell has left us a play, in which he has given a picture of the doings in this classic land, and Sir Walter Scott, with consummate skill, has, in "The Fortunes of Nigel," wrought a beautiful and stirring scene from the slender materials. Whitefriars was, at the period of which we are writing, and for a long while after, a sanctuary for all whom debt or crime had thrust from decent society: the lurking-

hole of thieves, beggars, and bullies, where warrant and capias were powerless, unless supported by a file of musketeers; the head quarters of

> ——— angry spirits,
> And turbulent mutterers of stifled treason,
> Who lurk in narrow places, and walk out
> Muffled, to whisper curses to the night;
> Disbanded soldiers, discontented ruffians,
> And desperate libertines.—*Marino Faliero.*

Woe to the unlucky tipstaff who ventured within the precincts of Alsatia; a fortunate man was he if he could compound for his life by quietly allowing himself to be tarred and feathered.

It is long since this human den existed, but he who visits the spot at the present day, will find that, although White-friars is no longer a sanctuary for felons and debtors, it has not been entirely purged of its abominations.

But, to return to Master Willoughbye. The hammering in the Alsatian smithy at length ceased; the fire sunk down, so that the boat could approach nearer without being observed.

"The jail-birds of the Friars are hatching treason," observed one of the boatmen, in a whisper, to his fellow.

"Ay," replied the other, "and the cockneys are going to bed, little dreaming, good souls! that a thousand knives are sharpening for their throats! The mayor is a fool, or he'd give these rascals a camisado."

Master Willoughbye was listening to the conversation in the smithy, which now rung with other music than that of the anvil.

"There's good stuff at the steel-yard," remarked a burly-shaped and sinister featured man, with a ragged jerkin and a greasy thrum cap; "ay, capital stuff! That old Flemish rascal, Philip Van Rynk, has many a bale of Brabant linen in his bestowing rooms."

"Ay, ay!" cried another, "and not a few ells of cloth of gold, and budge, and tapestry, and other fineries, which have been denied to the poor man."

"And a pretty daughter, too," said a tall slim young man with a gilt chain round his

neck, a sword and a dagger, and a neatly trimmed beard,—all of which tended to show his threadbare apparel to still greater disadvantage. He *had* been one of the most cutting gallants that strutted in St. Paul's for an appetite.

"Thou mayest take the wench, Master Lorymer, and leave me the cloth, for I lack linen," another stammered in a voice that showed him to be about three parts drunk.

"You shall have enough to make you a comfortable winding-sheet, my boy," replied the young man, who had also been drinking. "Have you got your brown-bill well ground? These foreigners can fight, and they'll show their teeth, my valiant Hector!"

"Havock! 's the word," said a fellow with a ferocious countenance and the frame of a Hercules; "I'm for having a turn at the Frenchmen in St. Martin's first, and then we can visit one Monsieur Meutas in Leadenhall Street, whose throat I'll cut, if we should catch him at home."

This ruffian had been a butcher, and had been thrice exposed in the pillory.

"And there's another frog-eater near the Conduit in the West Cheap; his name's Pierre Beauvarlet: he deals in Naples fustians, Normandy canvass, and Genoa velvet;" said a spindle-shanked fellow, who squinted horribly.

"I have shod and sharpened three score of morrice-pikes, and a dozen bills to-day, and received but a groat," said one of the smiths. "Peter Beale, you have not paid me for taking the notches out of your broad-sword."

"Go to, Sir Vulcan," muttered the man, whose memory had been thus refreshed, "I 'll pay thee *to-morrow*."

"I have heard nothing else to-day," thought the smith. "*To-morrow* will see many of 'em food for the crows!"

"There 's no chance for the honest English workman; these d—d foreigners are devouring locusts!" said a little round punchy man, the very personification of idleness.

"Try the country, Maester Andrew," growl-

ed a tall gaunt figure, with a West-country drawl; "they 'll find 'ee work, I warrand ye."

The last speaker had fled from his native village in Somersetshire, to avoid the punishment which threatened him for deer-stealing.

Not a word of this conversation was lost to Master Willoughbye: he was near enough to hear all that was said, but entirely shrouded from observation by the darkness without, while the fire in the smithy enabled him to scrutinize the features of the Alsatian assembly. He determined to wait until this precious council had broken up.

"We must force the Poultry Compter, boys!" cried the butcher; "and then we shall be strong enough to venture upon Newgate."

"What the devil have we to do with the prisons, my valiant slaughterman?" said the tall young man with the gilt chain; "I thought we were to visit the foreigners only."

"Then you reckoned without your counters, Master Lorymer," remarked the butcher; "we have something to do besides *that*."

Just at that moment a human head was thrust in at the window of the hovel, and a voice cried out,—"Oh, ye precious plotters of treason! the hemp's already round your throats! Master Dennis, the Sergeant-at-arms, has just entered the Friars with a file of hackbut men!"

"The devil!" muttered Master Lorymer.

The butcher swore a horrible oath, which he had probably learned in St. Nicholas' shambles.

"Body o' St. Bennet! we are lost!" cried the squinting fellow.

A begging friar, who had seated himself on a bench, and been sleeping soundly all the time, now started up, and swore "*Per sanguinem Dei!*"

"Cross of St. Andrew!" cried the little punchy man, "it 's uncivil to visit us at this time o' night. Let 's cry *Arrest!* and face the rascals."

He made towards the door for that purpose; and in another moment the whole neighbourhood would have been in an uproar, but the alarm was stopped by the entrance of the person who had put his head in at the window.

The new comer was a youth of short stature, and dull heavy features, with a profusion of black hair, that grew completely over his forehead, beneath which his unintellectual grey eyes twinkled with a sort of stupid satisfaction at the fright he had occasioned. He advanced into the midst of the company, and greeted them with a wild idiot laugh, at which they were anything but pleased,

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! how I scared ye, my men of wax!" cried he.

"Curse your frolicking," growled the butcher; "I 'll slit your weasand, you screech-owl?"

"Let him alone, my soldan of the shambles," said Lorymer to the ruffian, "you wouldn't harm a poor idiot, surely? A blow on your sconce to-morrow may make you as witless." Then, addressing the youth, — "Edwin, you deserve to be scourged for this wanton frolic."

"Scourged!" echoed the idiot, grinning a laugh. "Ay, yes, I remember, there was a king of Morocco once scourged by the monks

at Becket's shrine. They don't flourish the whip to-night, though: no, there 's brandishing of pike and halberd, and handling of caliver! Whew! I heard the vane creak on St. Bride's tower, and I said, Ha! there 's a storm coming from the west. The devil has set his foot in the Friars!"

Here he tweaked the friar's nose, and made his eyes water; but the ecclesiastic seemed too sleepy to resent it; so, wiping his rubicund proboscis with his ample sleeve, he muttered—

"Would that I could drive thee and thy familiar into the Thames, as our Lord dealt with the herd of swine;" and resigned himself again to sleep.

"Get home to bed, Edwin," said Lorymer; "get home, or *I'll* take thee in hand."

The idiot looked vaguely in the face of the young man, then shook his head, and sung:—

> "And the blazoned shield will be broken,
> And the tall crest cleft in twain:
> Little reck they of knightly gear,
> Gilt spurs and golden chain!"

"Get away with this mummery!" said Lorymer angrily; "you will cause a brawl anon. Go home, sirrah!"

The idiot hung down his head at this reproof, and quitted the smithy without saying another word. He had often been protected from insult by Lorymer, and the poor wretch feared the anger of one of the few persons who had treated him with kindness.

"That bull-calf," said the butcher, "will work us mischief. Let us go over to the Bankside, and see limping Harry and the boys of the Clink."

"Come on, then!" cried several voices at once; and immediately the hovel was almost empty. The Alsatians were preparing to cross the water, and Master Willoughbye having sufficiently gratified his curiosity, and given a nod to his men, the boat shot out noiselessly into the stream, and proceeded up the river.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE'S PLEA.

Master Elliott, though easily angered, was one of those men who under a rough and uncompromising exterior concealed much goodness of heart. Perhaps our apprentice, who was a shrewd fellow, had discovered this, and the knowledge had done him no good. Be this as it may, when the morrow came and the honest stationer sat at breakfast with his daughter, her pale face, and eyes inflamed with weeping, which she had indulged throughout the night, softened his heart. Nevertheless, he determined not to touch on the subject of his apprentice until his name should be mentioned.

Perceiving that his child sat without partaking of the morning meal, the citizen demanded sternly:

"What ails thee, wench? art thou, too, a mind to try me?"

"Alas! dearest father," replied the girl, bursting into tears; "I love you dearly, but"——

"But," interpolated her parent, "there is one whom I love even better than thee—is not that what thou would 'st have said, eh?"

Jane Elliott blushed scarlet, and cast her eyes on the floor.

"Ay, ay," continued the stationer, "I see plainly how it is, Jane; thou hast given thy heart to that graceless boy, whom the watch haled from my door last night. Is it not so?"

Jane sobbed and covered her face with her hands. Master Elliott was touched by her distress, but parental wisdom told him it would be better to dissemble a little longer.

"Dost thou not see the folly of setting thy heart upon the fellow without first asking my counsel?" he continued.

"I do, I do," replied the poor girl, in much distress.

"Ay, I trow thou dost, *now*," was the gruff rejoinder. "But 'tis now too late, and thy leman will get his deserts; he will find the justices sterner folk than the wardens of our guild; and in the room of a private whipping, he will have a public one; and, moreover, be put in the stocks."

"Save him, dearest father! save him!" sobbed Jane.

"I cannot, an I would, girl," returned the stationer.

"Oh yes, yes, forgive him, and intercede for him; he is young and thoughtless, but he loves you, father—he loves you as a son."

"He hath a strange fashion of showing it," observed the citizen, chuckling.

"He saved you from the rabblement when your best gown was torn last Midsummer eve," said his daughter.

"Well, what of that, wench," replied Master Elliott, a little posed by this refreshing of his

somewhat imperfect memory. "Is not a 'prentice bound by his indentures to faithfully serve his master? and have I not fed him and clothed him like mine own these six years past?"

"True, true, dear father; and he hath served you faithfully; nay, he would peril his life for you."

"The wench pleads well for the young dog," thought the stationer. "What will she remind me of next?"

"Then," continued the girl, "when Master Batt, the Paternoster-maker's house took fire, our own, you wot, was in great danger."

"Well?"

"Did he not climb the roof, and cast off the fiery flakes that fell upon it, when the men of the night-watch were afeared to venture near him?"

"He did no more than his duty," remarked the stationer drily.

"My dear mother loved him as her own," resumed Jane, still weeping. "Oh! let him not be whipped like a dog."

The stationer here rose, and walked up and down the room in an agitated manner. It was certainly a serious thing to contemplate. The whipping was of itself a severe punishment, but the indignity of it could never be effaced: it would degrade Fortescue in the eyes of the citizens, and ruin his prospects for ever.

Master Elliott scratched his head in this dire perplexity, and cursed his fit of anger, which had caused the 'prentice to be dragged to prison. Nevertheless, he was unwilling to let his daughter know his mind on the subject, and he replied to her entreaties:—

"It is no fault of mine, wench; it is his own doing."

"I know it, I know it," was the reply. "But do not let him be dealt with so harshly."

"I can't help it," returned the stationer, biting his thumb; "the foolish boy has brought it on himself, and he must now pay the penalty."

"It will ruin him for aye," sobbed Jane Elliott.

"It will teach him discretion," observed her father, affecting indifference, which he did not feel.

"It will drive him mad," rejoined the girl; "and he may become an outcast after such treatment. Prithee, dear father, see if something cannot be done to screen him. You wot how little Watkin joined a company of vagabonds last Lammas, because he was cruelly whipped before the wardens of his guild."

"I know it, I know it," replied the citizen, aware that the arguments used by Jane in defence of her sweetheart were perfectly sound and good; "but what boots it if I cannot save Nic Fortescue. Dost thou not know that they are in some alarm just now in this city of ours, lest there should be a rising of the people, who have sworn to destroy all foreigners within the walls."

"Nic would not harm a hair of their heads," replied the girl; "believe me, dear father, he would not kill a mouse."

"And when didst thou discover this gentle-heartedness in the boy?" inquired her parent, laughing outright. "Beshrew me, if thou dost not make me laugh against my inclination. When were all these virtuous qualities discovered in Nicholas Fortescue, Mistress Elliott?"

"Do not mock me, dearest father," said Jane, casting her eyes on the ground in confusion; "do not mock me, or you will break my heart."

"I do not mock thee, wench," replied the stationer, whose heart was mollified by her distress. "I would fain know if thou carest for this mad coistril."

Master Elliott *knew* that she cared: the first few words of their conversation that morning had proved it; and during the whole time he was really considering how he might save from punishment the youth who he found had aspired to be his son-in-law. This, however, was not to be achieved so easily: the wild rumours which had been afloat throughout the city for some days past had rendered the civic

authorities suspicious and severe; and the unfortunate encounter of Nic Fortescue with the watch had been reported to the aldermen, who wisely judged that a few such youths would soon realise the wild stories which had been circulated within the walls.

Love is lynx-eyed; and Jane Elliott soon perceived that her father was inclined to save, if possible, the 'prentice from the consequences of his rashness; and, as the stationer set out for the justice-room, she mentally wished him "God speed."

CHAPTER V.

THE POULTRY COMPTER.—THE ALDERMAN.

We must now return to Nicholas Fortescue, whom we left in the custody of the city watch. Like all rash and impetuous spirits, he began to reflect when it was too late; and when he heard the doors of the cell into which he was thrust close, with a hollow grating sound, his heart sunk within him, and, flinging himself on a heap of straw in one corner, he wept like an infant. The thunder had passed away, and the heat-drops were falling fast. Nicholas Fortescue saw plainly that he had got himself into a scrape, and, not without cause, trembled for the consequences. The laws of the various guilds were severe against refractory apprentices; and

Master Elliott was not a man to be trifled with. Then, again, he had resisted the watch; an offence which would not be overlooked by the alderman. Our 'prentice had, indeed, much to fear; and as he lay in his cell in darkness and solitude, he bitterly repented him of his folly.

Not to weary the reader with all that passed in the mind of the prisoner, we are obliged to confess that Nicholas Fortescue fairly cried himself to sleep. Many an ugly dream haunted his slumbers. Jane Elliott discarded him, and her father refused to take back his 'prentice after he had been set in the stocks, and flogged at a cart's tail up the Cheap!

These and other visions tormented him till day-break, when the light which streamed through the bars of a small window in the cell fell on his face, and showed him that he was still in custody. He now recollected that he had not examined the purse which Master Willoughbye had presented to him; and drawing it from his bosom, he emptied the contents into his cap, and then began to count his treasure.

"Ha!" cried he joyfully, forgetting where he was; "five-and-twenty Harry shillings, three nobles, and five halves, besides smaller coin! 't is the gift of a prince! How generous!"

Then he suddenly recollected that all this might be taken from him, and fell to cudgelling his brains how he should prevent such a catastrophe. After due deliberation, he determined to make a confidant of the turnkey. As the morning wore away, this man entered the cell, and Fortescue at once unfolded his secret.

"Master jailor," said he, "if you will do me a piece of service, I can put a half-noble in your pouch."

"And what is the service?" inquired the man, eyeing him significantly.

"Simply this," answered the prisoner, "I am master of a sum of money, and I may stand in need of it, if my sentence should be a severe one. Master Elliott may not receive me again. Swear to me that, if I tell thee where it is hidden, thou wilt be keeper of it till I am released, and then return it to me untouched."

The turnkey took the oath, and Fortescue drew forth the purse, which he had thrust under the straw.

"Here," said he, "go put it into thy strong box."

The turnkey quitted the cell with his charge; and an hour afterwards our 'prentice was in the justice-room at the Guildhall, before Master Joel Bokerell, alderman of the ward of Cheap.

The civic Rhadamanthus was a short, corpulent man, with a large, sleek, red face, a small bald forehead, snub nose, and grey eyes, with more of sensuality than severity in their expression. The charge was made by the sergeant of the watch.

"A-hem!" said the alderman, addressing the shame-stricken apprentice; "you are charged, on the oath of one of the sergeants of the night-watch of the King's good city of London, with obstructing, threatening, and foining at with deadly weapons, contrary to the statute, divers persons of the said watch, to the great scandal of the city."

Having uttered this elegant sample of magisterial eloquence, Master Bokerell paused for breath, and played with his gold chain.

The 'prentice let his head fall on his chest, and thought of Jane Elliott: he feared he had lost her for ever! Grief and shame prevented his uttering a word in reply to the magistrate, who, of course, attributed his silence to obstinacy.

"What!" cried Master Bokerell, his face assuming a deeper shade of scarlet; "you have nothing to say, eh? Ha! you contumacious young rogue, you! a hundred such would set the city in an uproar; we must take care of you. We have May-day to-morrow, and idle gossips and controvors* have been busy spreading evil reports of your brotherhood." Here he whispered in the ear of his clerk, "We must keep him safe: he is a wild young dog; there will be a stir to-morrow. There was a folkmote in the 'Friars last night;—so say letters from the court."

* *Controvor*, an old French law-term, signifying one who circulated false news.

Nicholas Fortescue, on hearing this tirade against himself, took courage and raised his head, when his eye accidentally rested on the stern visage of his master below the bar.

"Oh, master," muttered he, "speak but one word for me, or I 'm a lost lad!"

"'Tis your own fault, Nick," said the stationer in a milder tone than usual.

Master Elliott had been touched by the grief of his daughter, whom, as already described, he had left at home in great distress; and, moreover, had not forgotten the good qualities of his 'prentice.

Fortescue again spoke:

"Master," said he, "I saved your house when Stephen Batt, the paternoster-maker's work-yard took fire at midnight, last Candlemas;—plead for me, dear master, or I 'm lost for aye!"

"Let him be taken back to the Compter, and suffer solitary confinement for a week; he may then be whipped three times between the Conduit in Cornhill and the Cross in the Westcheap!" said the alderman.

"Oh, master!" groaned the 'prentice, "suffer me not to be scourged like a dog."

Here Master Elliott spoke. His stern nature was softened; he loved his daughter; and he had found out, when too late to oppose it with effect, that his daughter loved the apprentice. Now he dreaded the thought of his future son-in-law being whipped at the cart's tail; so he pleaded for a remission of the sentence. But Alderman Bokerell loved to have his own way: he persisted in his determination that Fortescue should suffer the punishment to which he had doomed him.

Again Master Elliott besought the obdurate magistrate to modify the punishment.

Obstinate as was the alderman, he loved ease too much to bear teazing, and this he could not now avoid without giving offence to the stationer.

"Citizen," said he, "I am not one of those who delight in cruel punishments; but the laws must be respected. These boys have often caused grievous tumults in this our ancient city.

The rod hath told when good counsel hath met deaf ears, and the rod must descend again right sharply ere 'prentices will learn that they may not follow their own stubborn will. He hath committed an heinous offence against the laws of this good city, besides his undutiful conduct to you. Had he not resisted and threatened the watch, I would have left him to the punishment of the wardens of your guild; but this is a public matter." Here he paused for breath. and the stationer put in a word.

"Spare him this time, your worship, and I 'll give bond for his orderly behaviour for the future," said he.

The alderman threw himself back in his chair, scratched his ear, and looked thoughtful; then he shook his head, and conferred with his clerk in whispers. Our metropolitan magistrates at the present day well know the value of an intelligent clerk.

After due deliberation, his worship in his mercy consented to remit a *portion* of the punishment, and Nicholas Fortescue was adjudged

to receive but *one* whipping between the Conduit in West Cheap and the Standard in Cornhill.

The stationer ground his teeth with rage and vexation at this pretended lenity: had the term of his 'prentice's imprisonment been doubled, he would not have cared; it was the *whipping* which annoyed him.

"Your worship will remit the *whipping* altogether?" said he imploringly.

"Not a single stripe, citizen!" said the alderman, rising from his seat in a passsion; "no marvel that the 'prentices run wild, when their masters are crazed. Take him away, men."

Four men, in the city livery, led the 'prentice out of the justice-room; and Master Bokerell, to avoid further importunity, vanished through a low door at the back of his chair, leaving the stationer in a state of absolute bewilderment.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COUNCIL OF THE COCK AND BOTTLE.

The Cock and Bottle was an obscure but snug tavern, situated in Cuckold's Court, near Cold Harbour, in the parish of Allhallows, Thames Street, much frequented by the apprentices and other youths of the city. Over the low door was a cunningly carved figure of Chanticleer, standing on a wooden bottle or barrel, and painted to the life: it seemed as though the artist had modeled and coloured the bird from Dan Chaucer's description:—

> His combe was redder than the fin corall;
> Embattled, as it were, a castel wall.
> His bill was black, and as the jet it shone;
> Like asure were his legges and his tone;
> His nailes whiter than the lillie flour,
> And like the burned gold was his colour.

The house had been often complained of to the common-councilman of the ward, but, for some good reason best known to that important personage himself, it was still suffered to be the rendezvous and lurking-place of these "light-heeled masters," as an old writer terms them.

At the period of our tale, the Cock and Bottle was observed by the city watch to be constantly swarming after night-fall with these headstrong youths; and many of the older and graver inhabitants predicted that it boded no good to the peace of the city. These predictions were soon to be verified.

On the evening of the 30th of April, there was a strong muster of apprentices at their favourite house of resort. They occupied the largest room in the house, and the host remarked, that instead of drinking, dicing, and singing, as was often their wont, they were evidently engaged in some serious deliberation; so Boniface made up his mind to know something of the matter, and laid his ear to

the wainscot. He soon discovered that an outbreak on the foreigners was in contemplation.

The meeting was a very animated one. As the subject of the foreigners' insolence was discussed the speakers waxed warm, and vented their wrath upon the Flemings, French, and Florentines, in no measured terms.

"I hate the whole crew of French, Flemings, and Lombards," cried a saucy-looking youth, with his small square cap stuck jauntily on one side of his head. "An' I had my will I'd take 'em to the Bear-garden in the Bank-side, and bait them with all the dogs o' the parish; honest men will never thrive while these caterpillars are amongst us consuming the fat of the land!"

"You're right, Jem Studelye," said another. "They feed on the best, and go clothed like princes, while many a poor citizen hath not wherewithal to keep the wolf from the door —down with 'em I say."

"And they bring over base coin in ship-

loads, which they contrive to put in currency here," observed a pale-faced lad. "My master hath nailed half a score to his counter this very week."

"Ay," cried another: "and when their coins be of silver, they are light o' weight."

"For my own part I care little about their coin, since our King has set the example by striking testoons of brass," remarked the first speaker. "But, 'tis a grievous thing that the trade of this good city should be spoiled by these locusts."

"Then ye all wot how that villainous Frenchman plucked the stockdoves out o' the hand o' the carpenter in Cheap," cried another; "and how, though the poor fellow had paid for them, he could get no redress of our aldermen."

"Shame! shame!" cried the apprentices.

"And the Lombard who took the citizen's wife and all his plate,"* said Studelye. "Hugh

* This alludes to an anecdote given by the chronicler Hall, which for audacious rascality has perhaps never been

Smithson, thou shalt have the trussing of *him* an' we light on him; for the wronged man was thy master!"

"Mass!" exclaimed the 'prentice thus addressed, "I should like the task well. Only listen, my mates, to what I heard between my master and his gossip, old George Wyatt, the pewterer, this very morning:—'These foreigners will bring their houses about their ears, eftsoones,' quoth Master Wyatt. On Sunday last Master Bolt, the mercer, was at Greenwich, when who should he see in the King's Gallery but the rascally Lombard who took

paralleled. We give it in the historian's own words:—"Howebeit, the Frenchemen were not alonely oppressors of the Englishemen, for a Lombarde, called Fraunces de Bard, entised a mannes wyfe in Lombarde Strete to come to his chābre with her husbandes plate, whiche thynge she dyd. After, when her husbande knewe it, he demaunded hys wyfe, but aunswer was made he shoulde not haue her; then he demaunded his plate, and in lyke maner aunswer was made that he shoulde neither haue plate nor wyfe. And whē he had sewed an accion against the straunger in the Guylde hall, the straunger so faced the Englisheman, that he faynted in his sute. And then the Lombarde arrested the poore man for his wyfes boorde, while he kept her frō her husbād in his chāber."

the citizen's wife, with many other strangers, making lewd jests o' the matter. Sir Thomas Palmer was there, and hearing them thus discourse—'Sirs,' quoth he, 'you have too much favour in England.'—'By St. Anthony, of Padua,' quoth the saucy strangers, 'we would keep the mayor's wife, an' we would.' Whereupon Bolt waxed wroth, and cried, 'Well, you whoreson Lombards, you may rejoice and laugh now, but, by the Mass! we will soon have a day at you.'"*

"Bravely spoken!" cried the assembly, who testified their approval of the bold mercer's sentiments by several rounds of applause.

When the uproar subsided, Smithson spoke again:—

"There 's a rascally Picard, one Meutas, at Green-gate, near Leadenhall, whose house is a sanctuary for all the foreign pickpurses," said he.

"We 'll hang all we find in that house,"

* See the chroniclers for this fact.

said a youth of forbidding aspect, a butcher's apprentice, who had not spoken before.

"Thou shalt ha' the braining o' them, Jack Butcher," cried Smithson, laughing: "thou shalt lead a party to Blanch-chapleton,* where these foreigners abide as thick as locusts."

"I marvel how poor Nic Fortescue fares in the Poultry Compter," said James Studelye.

"They say, it 's a pestilent hole; not fit to put an honest man's dog in," observed Smithson. "Little Jack Wayte can tell you much about it, for his master let him lay there three days for pelting the priest of St. Benet Sherhog with snow-balls, in the Cheap, last winter."

"Ay, that I can," said the boy alluded to. "They have beetles there a span long, and a legion of newts, to boot. While I lay on my back one night, trying to say a pater-noster, I was nearly choked by a newt, which crawled into my mouth."

* Whitechapel.

"I hope it 'twasn't a fast-day, Jack," said Studelye.

"Mass! but I think it was," rejoined the boy.

"Then, if the priest of St. Benet comes to hear of't he 'll ordain thee a sharp penance."

"Not a whit, not a whit," cried Wayte, laughing—"the creature's neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. But you were talking of Nic Fortescue—we must break up the Poultry Compter to-morrow first; for Nic hath a stout heart."

"Thou art the very devil for mischief, Jack," observed Hugh Smithson; "thou carryest a daring spirit in that body o' thine, little Hector."

Here mine host of the Cock and Bottle suddenly entered in a flurried manner.

"Gentlemen!" said he, "I cry you mercy, but the watch is at the door."

"What care we!" cried the 'prentices.

"Whist!" said Smithson, holding up his hand to enjoin silence; "we must speak them gently. Shall we invite the sergeant to drink

a horn of ale to the downfall of the foreigners?"

Several voices replied "Ay" to this proposition, and Boniface was ordered to show in the sergeant of the watch.

"Save you, young masters," said the officer, entering the room.

"Save you, master sergeant," returned the youths; "can you drink a horn of beer?"

"Marry, gentlemen, I'll try," replied the sergeant, with a grin.

"'To the confusion of all foreign popinjays,'" continued the boys.

"I dare not drink it, my masters; 'tis an unlawful toast."

"You love them, then, goodman, sergeant?"

"I' faith, not I, sirs, but I dare not drink as you desire; moreover I am charged to see this house cleared, for curfew hath rung this half hour past."

"Ha! ha!" cried the 'prentices; "by whom —by whose orders?"

"Master Jegon, of the common-council," re-

plied the officer. And now I pray you, sirs, to go home, for there are strange tales afloat, and some o' the foreigners have left the city, and have gone on shipboard in the Thames."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the apprentices. "What, they have heard that we have something in store for them, eh? Come, down with this horn of ale, and drink to their speedy ruin."

The sergeant received the horn of beer, and looking furtively over his shoulder to see that none of the watch were behind him, said,—

"I will drink your health, my masters, and wish you a speedy deliverance out of all your grievances."

"That wont do, master sergeant!" cried several of the boys.

"Whist," said Smithson; then. turning to his friends, he added, in an under tone, "The old fox wishes us well, but fears his fellows. Let him alone."

The sergeant was suffered to drain the horn

of ale; and then there was a stir among the apprentices, who prepared to take their departure. As each proceeded to his home, they perceived that the city authorities had doubled the watch, who were particularly inquisitive as to their destination.

CHAPTER VII.

"'PRENTICES AND CLUBS."

Few of our readers will require to be informed, that from an early period, almost up to the close of the seventeenth century, the apprentices of London were a very numerous and formidable body. The daring and martial spirit which the sports and pastimes of our ancestors tended so much to encourage, occasionally found vent in desperate tumults, and in these the 'prentices of London were ever ready to take an active and prominent part. Of all riots, those which are created by boys and young men are the most alarming. Youth is always impetuous; and the smooth face has often looked fearlessly upon danger, when

bearded men have skulked in the rear. The heroes of the "three days" were young men and boys; and mere striplings were the first that fell in that memorable struggle.

Of the boldness and impudence of the London apprentices in the year 1595 we will give one example, and then go back to the period in which the scenes of our tale are laid.

In this year, several of that turbulent body having been imprisoned by the court of Star Chamber, their companions broke open the prisons and released them; for which several of the ringleaders were, by order of the lord mayor, publicly whipped. Enraged at this punishment, a large body of them assembled in Tower Street, and marched, with the beat of drum, to seize his lordship, *whom they intended to whip through the streets by way of retaliation.*

During the civil wars the London apprentices were not inactive; and Charles the Second, who had quarrelled with the corporation, endeavoured to cultivate a good understanding with

these spirited youths. But our business is now with the apprentices of London in the year 1517.

The various guilds viewed with jealousy and alarm the endeavours of foreigners, at this period, to establish a trade in England; and in this year their hostility to the stranger-merchants and artisans had manifested itself in various acts of violence. The English complained, that so many foreigners were employed as artificers that their countrymen found it extremely difficult to procure work. They also alleged, that the English merchant could not compete with the foreigners, who brought over cloth of gold, silks, wines, oil, iron, and other commodities, to their very great emolument; and lived sumptuously among those whose interests they had so deeply injured. If we may credit the relations of the old chroniclers, there is good reason for believing that an undue partiality was shown to the foreign traders by Englishmen in power;* for, upon

* The sceptical will bear in mind that, at a later period, one of the charges brought against the great Lord Bacon

several occasions the strangers are said to have conducted themselves with unbearable insolence towards the English.

At length, the long pent-up rage of the Londoners burst forth. The priests from the pulpit denounced the strangers, who could not venture into the streets alone; several foreigners were assaulted and wounded by the populace; for which offence some half-dozen Englishmen were committed to prison. But this was only adding fuel to fire. A report, which reached the court itself, was circulated, that on May-day the English would rise and destroy all the foreigners within the city and its liberties.

Measures were immediately taken to avert the threatened rising. Cardinal Wolsey in alarm sent to the lord mayor, whom he urged to adopt proper measures. The mayor held a council, at which it was resolved that an

was, his having received a thousand pounds as a bribe from the French merchants, to oblige the London vintners to take 1500 tons of wine!—*Vide his Trial.*

order should go forth, commanding every man to keep his door closed, his servants and apprentices within, and that no person should be abroad after nine o'clock in the evening. It is said, that this order was not properly published, for many idlers were seen in the streets, and the 'prentices appeared ripe for mischief, as they collected in the public places.

A lovely evening had succeeded an unusually fine day, and the streets of London were gradually darkening, although the setting sun still gilded the steeples and weathercocks. The tall tower of St. Paul's shot up into the clear, unclouded sky, and echoed with the sharp and incessant cawing of the jackdaws. Below were groups of persons, conversing on the subject of the foreigners. At the west-end of Cheapside, just under the walls of the church of St. Michael at the Querne, a number of apprentices were assembled; two of them were playing at sword-and-buckler, and the others were vociferating their opinions of the skill of the mock combatants.

"Hammer away, my boys!" cried one. "Jem Studelye, you handle your broadsword as though you had got the mercer's measuring-yard!"

"Mass! what a clatter ye make," roared another. "Sam Hall, that was not fair: you aimed below Jem's girdle; 'twas a foul blow!"

A dispute here arose, and some of the elder boys were appealed to; but ere it could be settled the clatter of hoofs was heard, and six horsemen dashed into the West Cheap from St. Paul's Church-yard. They were two of the aldermen, Sir John Munday and Master Joel Bokerell, with four attendants in the city livery.

"Ha!" cried Sir John Munday, suddenly pulling up, "is London run mad? Here 's a pretty pack of young knaves! What the good-day are we to be flouted thus? Go home, ye varlets, or we 'll fit a score of ye with the stocks!"

The knight expected to see the group quail

before him; but he was sadly mistaken; they answered him with a burst of riotous laughter.

Here Master Bokerell, who was not so choleric as his brother alderman, attempted to remonstrate with the apprentices! but as he was beginning to address them, one of the urchins discharged a handful of black mud full in his magisterial face.

"Take that, you old rascal!" cried the boy; "'twas you who sent Nick Fortescue to prison." And again a loud peal of laughter burst from the 'prentices.

"Mother of God!" cried Sir John Munday, "this will never do;" and he spurred his horse among the group, and seized the boy who had bespattered Master Bokerell; but the little fellow was instantly torn from his grasp by the elder lads; and the knight received some hard blows in the scuffle.

Master Bokerell, having by this time cleared his eyes, unsheathed his sword; and his example was followed by his attendants, who advanced to support the knight.

Then arose that tremendous cry, which of old was wont to fill the more quiet Londoners with alarm and dread.

"*'Prentices! 'prentices! Clubs! clubs!*" shouted the boys; and a crowd was instantly gathered round the spot.

"'Prentices and clubs!" yelled the rabble, which had been drawn together by the tumult; and the danger of the aldermen and their attendants became imminent, as many an execration rose against them.

"'Prentices and clubs!" again shouted the boys; and, as the sound penetrated the adjoining streets, the affrighted citizens closed their doors, and listened to the uproar in breathless suspense. The cry was spreading: Blow-bladder Lane poured out scores of stout youths, with bat in hand.

"'Prentices and clubs!" rose the cry in Paternoster-row, and knives and cleavers clashed in St. Nicholas' shambles. That tremendous shout had gone forth, and was extending like a train of ignited gunpowder.

"'Prentices and clubs!" roared the boys of Ludgate Hill and Fleet Street; and the inhabitants of the White-friars came forth from their holes, like owls and bats when an eclipse has darkened the sun. From Temple Bar to Aldgate, from Aldersgate to the river-side; in Leadenhall Street, Bishopsgate Street, Cornhill, Coleman Street, and the innumerable streets and alleys which intersected them, the well-known cry of "'*Prentices and clubs!*" froze the hearts of the foreigners with terror, and filled the peaceable citizens with consternation and dismay.

The aldermen plainly saw that it was impossible to stem the torrent. They certainly cut a contemptible figure: their faces streamed with perspiration; their swords were dashed from their hands, and their soiled and torn apparel excited the laughter of the mob; they could no longer resist, and wisely determining on a retreat, they galloped down the Cheap, pursued by a shower of sticks, stones, and mud. mingled with the choicest maledictions.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNWELCOME VISIT.

The discomfited aldermen and their attendants with some difficulty made their way through the crowd, which by this time almost blocked up the Cheap, and repaired to the Guildhall, where Sir John Rest, the lord mayor, had summoned a common-council. But we must leave these archons to their sage deliberations, and once more lead the reader to the cell of Nicholas Fortescue, in the Poultry Compter.

The 'prentice had received his master's forgiveness, and delivered to him the purse, which the turnkey had faithfully kept, and returned when demanded. But the dread of public punishment in the eyes of all the citizens

almost drove him mad; he thought himself the most wretched youth in christendom, and, as he lay on his straw bed, he prayed that an earthquake might shake down the prison and bury him beneath its ruins.

All of a sudden a wild cry arose, which made him start like the hunter when reynard breaks cover, and the view halloo is given. The shout of "'Prentices! 'prentices! clubs! clubs!" had penetrated even to the cells of the Poultry Compter.

"Holy Mother!" exclaimed Fortescue, "the 'prentices are up, and there 'll be sharp work anon."

Soon the noise approached nearer, and there was a sound like the wrenching of crowbars and the blows of axes; then a struggling succeeded, and the clashing of steel was heard within the building. In another moment the door of Fortescue's cell was opened, and several youths entered, stumbling one over the other."

"Up, Nic!" cried one of them, "up! we are going to have a fling at the foreigners.

Newgate is forced by this time—come on to the Steel-yard."

"What does all this mean?" inquired Fortescue, as he suffered himself to be led into the Poultry. Here he beheld a strange scene. A furious rabble rent the air with wild shouts of vengeance, while they brandished aloft almost every description of weapon then known. Halberds, pikes, bills, scythes fixed on poles, axes, spits, swords and knives, flashed in the red light of cressets and torches. The 'prentice, whose spirits had been depressed, shuddered as he looked on that fearful rabble; but he dared not withdraw from it.

"Saint George for England! 'prentices, 'prentices! clubs!" roared the boys, striking their swords and bucklers together.

"Slice! slice! kill the rogues! kill all! down with the merchant-strangers! down with the French, Flemings, and Lombards!" yelled the rabble, brandishing their various weapons.

"To the Steel-yard, boys!" cried a stout fellow with a red woollen cap. It was the

Alsatian butcher; he had girded on an enormous broadsword, and carried a buckler as large in circumference as a good sized table. Master Lorymer was there, and the other gentry of the Friars.

"Come on, my lads!" cried the butcher; "we are wasting time. Van Rynk will be prepared for us! To the Steel-yard!"

"To the Steel-yard! to the Steel-yard!" shouted a thousand voices; and in a few minutes the Cheap was comparatively still.

The immense mob filed off down Bucklersbury into Walbrook, headed by several drunken wretches, who formed their band. An old woman was grinding a hurdy-gurdy with furious gestures, and several butchers were blowing discordant blasts on bullocks' horns, while some of their companions clanked their cleavers in concert.

As they passed down Walbrook the lights from their torches lit up the fronts of the houses, and the terrified inmates ran to the windows to take a cautious peep at the pro-

cession as it descended towards Thames Street. Two other bands were in different quarters of the city; one had proceeded to the prison of Newgate, and the other had advanced to Leadenhall Street, where several foreign traders resided. It was a fearful sight, and the bells, which now rung alarm, increased the hideous uproar.

Among those who had provoked the vengeance of the Londoners was Philip Van Rynk, a wealthy Flemish merchant, dwelling near the Steel-yard in Thames Street. He and his countrymen, as well as the French and Lombards, had received intimation of the intended rising against them, and each adopted his own measures of precaution. While, therefore, the tumultuous procession was on its way to the Steel-yard, Van Rynk was sitting in a room up stairs conversing with his daughter, two serving-men and an apprentice keeping good watch below. An expression of deep sadness wrung the fine countenance of the venerable Fleming; and now and then a tear would start, as he

raised his head and gazed on the beautiful features of his only child.

"Dearest father!" said the lovely foreigner, "take heart; there can be no danger. Englishmen are generous, and will not harm aged men and weak women."

"Alas!" sighed the old man; "many Englishmen have done me good service—but this rabble rout! Oh, Margaret, there was a day when I could have died with honour in defending thee! In my good Almain harness I could have returned the thwacks of these clowns; but we are their prey now."

The large lustrous eyes of his daughter were dimmed with tears; but, checking her emotion, she renewed her endeavours to persuade her father that the danger was not so great as he anticipated.

"My child! my sweet Margaret!" murmured the old man, as he repeatedly kissed her pallid cheek; "it is not for my merchandize I fear; for thy dear sake I have braved the seas and perilled my life in strange

lands; the thought of harm to thee wrings my old bosom, and makes me womanish."

The old man here arose from his seat and dropped on his knees before a carved wooden image of the Virgin, which occupied a niche in the wall of the apartment. Thrice he crossed himself, and then burst into an extempore prayer.

"Holy Mother! ever blessed Virgin! guardian of the weak and innocent, vouchsafe to hear the prayer of a distracted old man! Oh, blessed Lady! for thy dear Son's sake turn the wrath of these fierce men, and shield my child!"

He continued to pray, but his voice died away into a scarcely audible murmur, with which the whispered orisons of his daughter mingled, as her long white fingers separated the beads of her rosary.

There was a beautiful contrast in those two figures. The painter of a later period might have taken the old man as a model for his favourite saint, while the Madonna-like form that

knelt near him would have inspired Murillo himself, heightened as it was by the light of the small silver lamp, which stood on the oak table.

How different the scene without! While the merchant and his lovely daughter continued in prayer the tumultuous procession was descending Dowgate Hill.

Had a well-disciplined band encountered that disorderly throng as they entered Thames Street, their progress might have been arrested, and their flight certain; but the civic authorities appeared to despise the old adage, "prevention is better than cure," and suffered the riot to proceed until their own force was too weak to cope with it.

The rioters set up a frightful yell as soon as they entered Thames Street, and saw the houses of the foreigners and the capacious warehouses of the Steel-yard.

If the reader be a citizen, he will not require to be told, that a stack of warehouses still bears the name of the Steel-yard, and that they stand less

than a stone's throw from Dowgate Hill; but if he be a stranger, desirous of making a personal survey of this once-celebrated spot, let him repair to it early in the morning; at mid-day the attempt will be dangerous, the pavement being little broader than an ordinary plank. There is nothing glorious in being squeezed to death between the wall and the broad wheel of a coal-waggon.

But to return to the gentry, whose array now filled the street, their numerous torches rendering every object visible.

Countless heads waved to and fro in the torch-light, and a roar of voices, in which fierce oaths and execrations were mingled, smote the hearts of the foreigners, who indeed had much to fear from their infuriate visitors.

Their windows were now assailed with a shower of large stones, some of which fell down again on the heads of the crowd, who in their blind fury supposed that their enemies had hurled them back again upon the throwers. A few dropping hackbut-shots were returned by

a Genoese merchant who lived opposite the Steel-yard, and some of the crowd bit the dust, while the wounded yelled with pain, and called upon their comrades to revenge them.

A window was now opened, and the aged Philip Van Rynk appeared for a second, and cast a hasty glance at the crowd below. The sight made him quail. He had supposed that the assembly was such as the watch might disperse, if assisted by the more respectable citizens. A momentary view, however, of the scene beneath showed him that he had miscalculated. He disappeared in a twinkling; and it was well for him that he did so, for three arrows whistled over the heads of the crowd: two of them entered the house, while a third quivered in the frame of the window.

Then arose another wild cry, as the old man withdrew from the view of the assailants.

"Van Rynk! Van Rynk!" shouted a ruffian, who had armed himself with a brown-bill.

"Ha! you whoreson Flemish goat! you took the wall of me in the Cheap last Friday."

"And you beat my trusty dog with your riding-staff in the Stocks'-market," cried another.

"That fair chain he wears about his neck has been gained by cheating honest Englishmen," roared a waterman, flourishing a boat-hook. "He's as sleek as a stall-fed ox!"

"But he hath a white head and beard," observed an apprentice, who was no other than Nicholas Fortescue.

"The devil wears such a beard when he meets the witches," said a woman, shaking aloft a large torch, and looking herself like a priestess of Hecate.

"I will have that beard in my hand ere long!" cried the Alsatian butcher. "Burst the doors and help yourselves, my boys; he has stuff in the house that the Pope might covet."

Several men accordingly began to batter

the door of the old merchant's house, which shook with the blows. Shots were again discharged from the opposite side of the street, and several of the besiegers were killed and wounded, while large stones, and scalding water were thrown upon the heads of those who were immediately under the door.

But the second story of Van Rynk's house projected far over the foot-path, so that the attacking party could not be seriously molested. They soon ceased to batter the door, and, at the suggestion of a stone-mason, commenced making a breach in the wall, where it was impossible for the besieged to reach them.

While this was preparing, Nicholas Fortescue, who had fallen in with five or six of his acquaintances, was deliberating how he should save the Fleming and his daughter from their fierce enemies. The butcher and his friends had nearly effected a breach in the house, while the other part of the rabble prevented the foreigners on the opposite

side of the street from appearing at the windows with their cross-bows and hackbuts.

Fortescue did not love the foreigners any more than the rest of his countrymen; but Van Rynk had a grey head, and his daughter was passing beautiful, two things that always operated strongly on our 'prentice's feelings. He determined to save them at the risk of his life; and his companions, to whom he communicated his intentions, swore to assist him.

"My mates," said he, addressing them, "there is an alley below, which leads to the water-side. If we could climb the wall, we are at the back of the old Fleming's house."

"Be quick, then," cried the 'prentices, "or that blood-thirsty dog, the butcher, will have run down his game."

The 'prentice and his friends cautiously withdrew from the crowd, and diving into the alley, scaled the high wall, and soon found themselves at the rear of Van Rynk's house, which they entered without opposition, the door being left

on the latch,—the inmates having probably calculated upon the possibility of their being obliged to retreat, in the event of the assailants succeeding in forcing an entrance.

They ascended the stairs, which led to the principal apartments, and heard loud shouts, mingled with the clash of weapons and the knell of fire-arms; the butcher and his desperate band had broken through the wall, and, after a short but violent struggle, in which the merchant took a part, the old man retreated, leaving his two serving-men and his apprentice mortally wounded.

Determined to sell his life dearly, Van Rynk flew from the spot, and gained time to ascend the stairs by closing a strong inner-door upon the intruders. But great was his alarm as he encountered the little band of apprentices. Nevertheless, he raised his sword, and seemed inclined to dispute their possession; and it was not until after they had disarmed him that he could be persuaded of their friendly intentions. As his sword was wrenched from

his grasp, his daughter rushed from an adjoining room, and fell at the feet of Fortescue.

"Oh! good Englishman," cried she, in broken English, "save my father!"

"Save him!" said Fortescue, raising her up; "I'll be cut to the chin ere they touch a hair of his head; but you must fly —another moment, and you are lost. Have you the key of the door which opens into the alley?"

"'Tis here," said the old merchant, taking the key from his bosom; "hasten, good youth, and I will reward thee nobly."

"You must fly to the water-side alone," said Fortescue; "your daughter shall be protected —but time presses. Will Studelye, Sam Hall, Jem Rendell, see Master Van Rynk to the water-side; I'll follow with the lady, and Hugh Smithson, Walter Browne, and little Jack Wayte, shall help me."

As he spoke a thick vapour was spreading itself through the house, and a loud crackling was heard below.

"By heaven!" exclaimed the 'prentice, "they have fired the house!"

Van Rynk was about to depart, when he suddenly recollected his money-chest. This was soon dragged out by two of the 'prentices, and the merchant and his escort departed.

"Heaven bless thee, youth! I feel that thou wilt not betray me," ejaculated the merchant as he passed out.

"Now then," said Fortescue, "your hand, fair lady — oh! your jewel-casket! — give it to me." He thrust it under his girdle. "So: now let us begone—ha! they have entered the court-yard!"

He spoke truly.

As they emerged from under the porch, which shaded the door by which he and his companions had entered, several men rushed towards them. The foremost was Lorymer, who instantly made a lunge at the 'prentice, shouting at the same time—

"Unhand the wench, knave, and defend thyself!"

"To the devil with thee, gallows bird!"

replied Fortescue; and with a back-handed blow of his broadsword he struck off the right hand of his assailant. Another stroke followed, and alighted on the head of the unfortunate man, crashing through bone and brain; and the body of Lorymer fell quivering to the ground.

A man of giant frame and fierce aspect next advanced with a dreadful oath; it was the Alsatian butcher.

The 'prentice looked at the athletic ruffian with something like dread; he felt the weight on his left arm increasing: his lovely charge had fainted; but he kept on his guard, and waited for the blow of his antagonist.

Another execration burst from the lips of the butcher as, with flashing eyes and clenched teeth, he struck at the youth's bare head.

The stroke was parried, and the ruffian over-reaching himself, slipped and fell. Ere he could recover his legs the swords of Fortescue's companions were sheathed in his body, and his followers fled away in alarm.

All this was the work of a moment.

"Now then, my lads, let us run for it!" cried the 'prentice, taking in his arms the still insensible form of the beautiful little Fleming.

They hurried to the water-side, where the other 'prentices had already unmoored a boat.

"Whither would you go, master?" inquired Fortescue, placing his burthen in the lap of the old man.

"To St. Saviour's Church; we shall obtain sanctuary there. The priest knows me well;" said Van Rynk, kissing his child, who was slowly reviving.

"We must be your guard, then," observed Fortescue, stepping into a boat; "there is a stir on the other side of the river, and you may be stopped."

In the mean time the fire was gaining on the house of the venerable Fleming; and, as the boat proceeded across the river, the bright flames rose to a great height, lighting up the whole neighbourhood and the tall towers and buildings which surmounted London Bridge, while the Thames beneath glowed like molten lead.

But not a sigh heaved the breast of the old man, as he gazed on the fierce element that consumed his most valuable merchandise. His lips moved, but not in murmurs; his overcharged heart throbbed with gladness—he was breathing a prayer to that Power which had preserved to him his only child.

Ere the boat had reached the other side of the river a strong body of soldiers and armed citizens, headed by Sir John Rest, the lord mayor, entered Thames Street, and charged the rioters, who fled in confusion and dismay, leaving sad traces of their violence. Other bands, which had spread themselves through the city, were also dispersed, and by day-break tranquillity was restored.

CHAPTER IX.

FORTESCUE MEETS MASTER WILLOUGHBYE.

CONCLUSION.

The calm of the following morning was more terrible than the storm of the night before. It was May-day, but no revelling was contemplated by the citizens. The huge May-pole, which was wont to be set up in Leadenhall Street, hung undisturbed against the wall of the church of St. Andrew Undershaft.

Tears stood in the eyes of bearded men, as they passed through the streets; and wailing was heard in many a hitherto happy dwelling. The chains were drawn across the streets, and armed men occupied several of the principal thoroughfares, while the sergeants-at-arms were

prowling about, and dragging from their hiding places the participators in the outrages of the preceding evening.

Ere mid-day arrived Nicholas Fortescue was again an occupant of the Poultry Compter; but this time he was not alone.

A commission of Oyer and Terminer was immediately made out, and the trials of the prisoners took place at Guildhall. Nicholas Fortescue took his stand at the bar with his six companions in misery, and it was only when called upon to plead that he raised his head. But what a sight met his view!

A crowd of gorgeously dressed noblemen and gentlemen occupied the court, and in the midst of them sat that portly figure whom he had parted with at Queen-hithe!

A mist obscured his sight, a noise like the rushing of waters filled his ears; his knees bent under him, and he fell back in a swoon. It was Master Willoughbye! *It was the King!*

When our 'prentice recovered his senses, he

found himself still in that comely presence, but not in the court.

"Pardon, pardon, gracious lord!" murmured the poor youth.

Henry laughed aloud.

"Pardon thee!" cried he. "Ay, by St. George! and reward thee too. Rise, man: *Master Willoughbye* is thy friend. Old Philip Van Rynk hath given us an account of thee and thy brave companions."

Our tale is told. The rest is matter of history, and may be found in the Chronicle of Hollingshed. Only one man, it is said, died by the hands of the executioner, and this was John Lincoln, who had been the prime mover of the sedition.

In the year of Grace 1537 Nicholas Fortescue was a rich stationer, alderman of the ward of Cheap, and father of eleven children. When he died, full of years and honours, his widow, the once pretty Jane Elliott, erected to his memory a handsome tomb in Bow Church; but that awful visitation, which civic

historians have termed, *par excellence*, "the great fire," proved more destructive to the antiquities of the metropolis than even the scythe of Time; and the pious cockney, who performs a pilgrimage to Bow Church, will look in vain for the tomb of Nicholas Fortescue.

The tumults which we have endeavoured to describe, for ever tended to abridge the sports of the London apprentices; and "Evil May-day," as it was afterward called, was long remembered by the citizens.

THE MERCER'S WIFE.

A LEGEND OF

THE WARD OF CRIPPLEGATE INFRA.

Had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I 'd not have sold her for it.

Othello, act v. scene iii.

THE MERCER'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRANSMUTATION.

ONDON! ancient and time-honoured city! the chroniclers of the ruff and doublet days have scarcely done thee justice; and yet, but for them, how should we know thee as thou wert of old? A change has come over thee: thy streets, lanes, buildings, and public places could not be identified by a citizen of those times. The names of Bat, and Basing, and Farendon, are still found on the door-posts of obscure shops in thy by-

streets; but the days of civic splendour have passed away for ever!

The tide of life hath no ebb! Even the thorough-bred Londoner is not an every-day personage, and the cockney of three descents may haply be soon referred to as an extinct creature, like the Iguanadon, or the Icthyosaurus, for it is rare to find a legitimate descendant of those who once mustered within thy walls.

Fire has consumed thee, and the spoiler's hand has been (nay, is *now*) busily at work. Alas! could the venerable antiquary Stow revisit the city whose antiquities he so devoutly venerated and so faithfully described, he would look in vain for many a cherished spot, consecrated by a thousand recollections—every vestige is swept away, "modern improvement" (would that this included *moral* improvement) has anticipated the work of time, and *ancient* London exists only in the imaginations of the few who love antiquity.

For buildings, it is true, we have the *Monu-*

ment, par excellence; but, does it not record the destruction of others a thousand times more interesting? We *had* the Exchange, but it was not that to which Elizabeth gave a name. There is the Mansion-house: its once fair white stone as dark and dingy as the cloud that hangs above the city in foul weather, but it is not the Mansion-house of old times. And, lastly, there is St. Paul's, the wonder of the rustic visitor, and the land-mark of the strayed cockney; but the antiquary will look in vain for the shrine of St. Erkenwald.

Reader, if thou art a Londoner, and the pursuit of gain hath hardened thy heart, and shut out from it all sympathy for that which is old; if "yellow dross" is all thy care, the sole object of thy desires, close our volume, and betake thee again to thy money-bags; we write not for thee; our love for venerable antiquity will find no kindred spirit in one so employed. But, if thy thoughts ever wander to those days when monkish magnificence vied with civic pomp, and London was bounded by her walls.

thou wilt bear with these reveries of one who loves to dwell on what she was.

He who has looked into Stow, or any other writer on the antiquities of London, (if he be a cockney, we will not suppose it possible that he has not,) will learn that, in days of yore, Bucklersbury was inhabited by grocers, and dealers in drugs and simples. But, like all the other localities of the great metropolis, it has changed its aspect, and all trades exist or thrive where herbs and "'pothecaries' stuff" once wasted their fragrance.

It is true that one warehouse of this description still remains (we know not whether it has descended from father to son since Stow wrote), at the corner of Barge Yard; but there is no other establishment of the kind, that we know of, in this neighbourhood.

Bucklersbury, we are told, derives its name from one Buckle, who dwelt there in "a fair mansion of stone," in the reign of Edward the First. That monarch kept his exchange here, and built a high tower, called the "Cornet's

Tower," doubtless, for a watchman, who gave signals by the blowing of a horn. This structure fell into the hands of Buckle, who, in hastily demolishing it—intending to build a house in its place—met with his death by the fall of a great stone.

We have already said that, in the days of honest Stow, Bucklersbury was inhabited by grocers and apothecaries. A century later it was much resorted to by the fashionable, who came to purchase tea, fans, skreens, and other Indian luxuries.

William the Third, we are informed, was much disturbed by his queen's frequent visits to these shops, which, by certain lines of Prior, in "Hans Carvel," seem to have borne but an indifferent character.

In describing the citizen's wife, the poet says:—

> She first of all the town was told
> Where newest Indian things were sold;
> So in a morning, without bodice,
> Slipt sometimes out to Mrs. Thody's,
> To cheapen tea, or buy a skreen;—
> What else could so much virtue mean?

But it is not to the Cornet's Tower, nor the King's Cambium, nor to the 'pothecaries shops, nor those of more recent date, each with their tale of scandal, to which our present tale refers.

In the reign of Henry the Fourth there stood in Bucklersbury, a few doors from the end of Walbrook, an ancient house with an ornamented gable, surmounted by a weather-cock. Its upper stories jutted over the foot-path, and its windows on the ground-floor were well defended by stout iron bars. Besides these precautions of the occupant, the shutters were always kept closed and barred, and the door was upon all occasions first opened with a chain attached to it, in order that the visitor, if an unwelcome one, might be excluded, if desirable or expedient.

Here lived Moses Lyons, a remnant of the scatterred tribe of Israel. Why he was suffered to dwell there was, perhaps, best known to some of the aldermen and spend-thrifts of that day. At any rate, he was

permitted to take up his abode in Bucklersbury, instead of among the people of his own nation, in the quarter allotted to the Jews in London. Moses had all the rapacity and cunning of his tribe; but could now and then do a kind act even to those whose religion he disdained, and who held him in detestation and abhorrence.

At the close of a fine summer's day, while the bells were ringing for even-song, a youth, of slender frame, clad like a page of that period, with a hood of purple velvet, and a jerkin of the same colour, hose of murrey-coloured serge, and long piked shoes, came tripping down Bucklersbury, flourishing his light staff, and affecting the air coxcombical. From the embroidered belt with which he was girded hung a short broad weapon resembling a wood-knife, and underneath the belt was stuffed a small elongated bag, the two ends of which seemed loaded with something which was certainly heavy, if it was not valuable.

The youth proceeded direct to the house of Moses Lyons, and rapped with his staff on the door. The summons was not heeded, for Moses was often annoyed by "runaway knocks" from the 'prentices and idle boys in that neighbourhood. The knocking was repeated again and again, and at length a small wicket was opened in the huge door, and a visage appeared, of such surpassing and disgusting ugliness, such a libel on the human face divine, that the young man recoiled before it. It was Rachael, the Jew's housekeeper.

"What want ye?" demanded the beldame, in a tone that was any thing but inviting.

"Thy master," was the laconic reply.

"What would ye have with him this evening? he hath gone to his bed, and will not be disturbed."

"Humph!" said the youth, tapping nervously with his heel on the ground; "that 's unlucky, mine ancient portress; but say, I *have a pawn*, a jewel of price."

Instantly the hideous face disappeared, the huge chain which helped to secure the door was heard to fall, and sundry bolts creaked and groaned. Immediately after, the door opened slowly, and the page entered, the bolts and chain being again put in requisition, as it closed upon him.

Hobbling along the gloomy passage, and beckoning the page to follow her, old Rachael bade him wait for a moment at the door of a room which she entered. A moment after, he was ushered into the presence of Moses the usurer, who, seated at a table, was busily employed in making entries in a large account-book with huge brass clasps.

"Well, what ish it you want thish late hour?" inquired the usurer, eyeing the page with a scrutinizing glance.

"I want money, Moses," said the youth, with an embarrassed look; "and men say you have plenty—that a legion of angels is at your bidding."

"The world ish fond of falsehoods, young

mans. I am not rich: I am old and poor; but what have you got in that leetle bag?"

The page drew forth the bag from under his girdle, and emptied its contents upon the table: sundry costly rings, a gold chain, a rich carcanet of jewels, and a clasp set with large rubies.

"I would fain exchange these baubles for coin," said he.

The Jew's eyes were instantly fixed on these articles of *bijouterie*, and counting them over, he asked his visitor whether he wished to pledge or dispose of them at once.

"Give me what thou canst for them," said the page. "My master hath no farther need of them: he needs the current coin."

"What moneys does he want for them?" inquired the old fellow, with the characteristic caution of his race.

"Fifty gold nobles," replied the page.

"Feefty gold noblesh!" echoed the Jew, with feigned surprise, though he well knew the articles before him were worth half as much again, "your master ish mad, young mans."

"Very likely," observed the page, dryly; "but he wants fifty nobles for those ornaments, nevertheless."

"But I cannot give such a sum."

"Then I can try some Christian, who hath a conscience." And the youth began to gather up the different objects and deposit them again in his bag.

"I will give thee forty-five nobles," said Moses, "and a basilard of fine almain work for thyself, to boot."

The Jew thought this last offer would be *a clencher*. He had often used the same means with the servants and retainers of those who had stood in the like need, and he was therefore rather surprised to find that he had not gained his point in this instance. But he had little time to marvel at the youth's honesty; and seeing him deposit the last article in the bag, he hastily took from an iron chest a bag of gold, and began to fumble with the string with which it was tied, muttering to himself all the while, "Feefty noblesh! feefty noblesh! it ish a ransom for an earl."

The page watched him closely as he counted out the broad pieces, and observed with a smile that he had only given forty-eight.

"Ah! plesh my shoul!" exclaimed the Israelite, drawing forth two more pieces, and adding them to the heap, "I am getting old, my eysh are bad, young mans."

"They will prove a measuring cast with thy conscience, Moses," said the youth; and placing the nobles in his bag, he tucked it under his girdle and departed.

CHAPTER II.

THE RENCONTRE.

The page, on regaining the street, heard the bolts and bars again creaking under the hand of the Jew's housekeeper, who never wished him "good-even," but seemed rather to rejoice that her master had despatched him so promptly. He bounded up Bucklersbury with a light step, and was just passing into the Cheap, when the narrow entrance of the street was darkened by a figure at which the page "startled like a guilty thing." It was now twilight, but he quickly recognized the features of the sober-clad citizen who was advancing towards him. To a casual passenger, the tremor which shook the young man's frame might have appeared like a fit; and so indeed it was, but not one of the ordinary kind. His heightened

colour changed to ashy paleness; his knees smote each other, and, supporting himself on his light staff, he seemed to gasp for breath.

"Heyday!" cried the sober-looking and gravely-clad citizen, advancing towards the trembling figure, whom his presence had so much alarmed. "You are ill, young sir! prithee take my arm for awhile, and move into the Cheap, where the air is fresher."

The page hurriedly pulled his hood over his face and spoke not, but he waved his hand and shook his head in a manner that indicated his unwillingness to accept the offer of assistance.

"What! you refuse to take the arm of an honest citizen! thy betters have leant upon it ere now, young man."

Still the youth remained silent, and with his head averted. The citizen smiled bitterly, and again addressed him.

"Why, what ails thee, young man? does my presence offend? I wot not that there was aught terrible in Matthew Fitz-Arnold. Pri-

thee throw off thy hood, and this fit will leave thee in a trice."

As he spoke he laid one hand on the youth's shoulder, and with the other made an attempt to unclasp his hood; but the page, evidently alarmed at his pertinacity, freed himself in an instant, and laid his hand on his dagger. Master Arnold, apparently startled at this demonstration, recoiled from the object of his attentions, and at the same moment a voice saluted him in no very courteous accents.

"How now, gaffer! What has the youth done to offend thee?"

The citizen turned, and beheld the person who had accosted him—a tall, elegant figure, gaily appareled, and girt with a handsome broad belt, sustaining a sword and dagger. The half hood which he wore was of scarlet, richly embroidered, and set off the dark locks which clustered about his temples. His complexion was pale, but his eye was bright and piercing; and a beautifully formed aquiline nose —a rare feature in an English face—contri-

buted dignity to a countenance, which many a city dame had considered passing comely. Sir Mark Courtenay was, in fact, the handsomest man within the city gates, and it must also be said, to his shame, that he was the most vicious. He had wasted a princely fortune in riot and debauchery, and had for some time been living, to use a modern phrase, "on his wits;" which is as much as to say, in a manner no one knew precisely how. Wealthy men of rank had long since discarded him; and the citizens, with few exceptions, were ill inclined to brook his haughty temper. But enough of Sir Mark and his qualities for the present. The citizen whom he had addressed so rudely was not a man to be bullied; he had in his youth been a soldier, and was a man of stalwart frame and tried courage: he replied to the uncivil words which had been addressed to him in a manner that indicated something more than mere indignation.

"Ho! good Sir Popinjay! dost thou set thy feathers at me?"

"Ay, Sir Mercer!" was the reply; "'gainst thee or thine. Let the boy pass; what has he done to merit thy rudeness?"

"He is a graceless gangrel," said the citizen, grinding his teeth with rage; "and thou—art an ass, and I will crop thy ears if thou art malapert."

The knight laughed aloud, but it was a forced laugh, and his left hand mechanically clutched the scabbard of his sword, as if to prepare for an encounter, which he saw was inevitable.

"Ha! by the Mass!" cried he, "thou art mad, Sir Mercer. Ass though I be, I will not be ridden by a cuckoldy lout like thyself. What the good-day, are we to——"

The remainder of his speech was cut short by the violent gestures of Master Fitz-Arnold, whose rage seemed to have reached its climax at this last epithet. His grey eyes flashed fiercely on the gallant who had uttered it, and then on the page, who stood a mute, though by no means unconcerned spectator of the brawl. At length his ire found vent in a torrent of

incoherent abuse, which he crowned by spitting in Courtenay's handsome face. The knight, uttering a curse, stepped back, and unsheathing his sword, would have transfixed the citizen, whose long dagger was bared, and in his hand ready to parry and return the blow, when several citizens rushed between them. While some of them seized and disarmed Courtenay, others restrained the citizen.

"Unhand me, and let me cut the dog's throat," cried Fitz-Arnold, who, foaming and struggling in the grasp of his friend and neighbour, Peter Neave, of the West Cheap, seemed by no means pleased with this interruption. "Unhand me, I say—I would slay my brother for that vile word." But his friend held him fast, while Courtenay, who had been released from the hands of the others upon a promise that he would not renew the combat, sheathed his sword and adjusted his apparel.

"We shall meet again," said he, in a calm tone, to his antagonist.

"The blessed Virgin grant me that boon!"

cried the mercer; "and if I don't humble thy saucy crest, I pray Heaven mine may be for ever laid low."

The knight uttered not a word in reply, but making a very significant and provoking gesture to the enraged citizen, he turned on his heel and walked leisurely down Bucklersbury.

CHAPTER III.

THE DISCLOSURE.

The crowd which had been drawn together by the scuffle, described in the previous chapter, quickly dispersed, and Master Neave led his friend and gossip into the Cheap, anxious to know the cause of the quarrel. It should be mentioned that, in the height of the tumult, the page had decamped no one knew whither.

Master Fitz-Arnold replied to his friend's questions by monosyllables only; but when Neave stopped at his own door, he readily accepted an invitation to supper.

Neave was a rigid bachelor, but a good-hearted fellow, and as the two friends sat at supper, it was evident that some secret grief gnawed the heart of Matthew Fitz-Arnold: he

ate not, spoke not, but sighed incessantly. At length, Neave pushed away his trencher, and looking inquiringly in the face of his friend, thus addressed him:—

"Matthew Fitz-Arnold, my honoured friend, what mean these meagrims? you sigh like a lover, though more vehemently. But you have passed the age for such follies, and art, besides, wedded to a woman whom most men account exceeding fair;—you have"——

Here Neave's address was suddenly stopped; he observed that Fitz-Arnold's lip quivered, and that he had touched unwittingly upon a disagreeable subject; but ere he could change the theme the mercer burst into tears, and sobbed like a school-boy.

The tears of bearded men are, of all others, the most distressing. The sorrow and the tears of infancy are transient, and those of women are but as the heat-drops of a summer's day, soon dried and soon forgotten. Far different are those which relieve, while they convulse, the proud and unyielding heart

of man. So thought Peter Neave; and as he witnessed his friend's grief, the tears stood in his own eyes. Neave's astonishment, however, was fully as great as his sympathy.

"Why, neighbour Fitz-Arnold! why, my honoured friend and gossip!" cried he; "what means this fit? I never saw a tear in thine eye before."

The mercer responded by a deep and long-drawn sigh. "Neave," said he, "I am the most wretched of men!"

"Nay, nay, friend Matthew; you rave—this is but a phantasy. Some witch hath charmed ye."

"Ay, witch indeed!" screamed the mercer, starting up, and pacing hurriedly to and fro. "Wicked and wanton as she is fair and winning! Peter Neave, I was once happy, and had a virtuous wife—I am now,"—he crashed a bitter oath—"what that vile coxcomb styled me; and you—you, Neave, stepped between me and mine enemy."

"I thought it a common street brawl; and you know well that these popinjays are al-

ways favoured, let the quarrel end as it may," remarked Neave, in a tone which showed that he was not pleased at the reflection. "Sam Basing was fined three merks for ruffling with one of these gentry last Shrovetide, and lost his thumb to boot."

"I would have given a hundred merks," cried Fitz-Arnold, "to have cleft the knave to the chine; but we shall meet yet. Neave, Neave, thank the saints thou art a bachelor."

Here Fitz-Arnold grasped his friend's arm tightly, and his voice fell until it reached a scarcely audible whisper.

"Saw ye a boy in the crowd to-night?" he asked.

"Ay, gossip; he had a purple hood; a fair stripling, with a lady face; at least so it seemed to me. But there was little light, ye wot."

"Whither did he fly?"

"Of a truth I cannot tell: I took no special note of him."

"That boy—that page *was a woman!*" said the mercer vehemently.

Neave gave a prolonged "whe—w!" and muttered something about the city being scandalized by such doings.

"Thou hast more to marvel at," said the mercer; "*that woman was thy friend's wife —was Alice Fitz-Arnold!*"

Neave looked awfully blank at this strange announcement; but, recovering from the surprise which it had occasioned him, he ejaculated—

"It cannot be, gossip; thou art dreaming."

"Would to God it were so!" exclaimed Fitz-Arnold, as his eyes again swam with tears. "Prove to me that it is a cheat upon my senses, and, wealthy though I be, I will exchange all I possess for a pedlar's pack and a light heart; but, no, no, no; 'tis too true, Neave; all I have heard is confirmed. Yet, beshrew me, if I'm not ashamed of these tears for the loss of one so worthless. *Revenge* is still left me; and revenge I will have, though I die in achieving it."

"I would fain believe that thou art de-

ceived," said the goldsmith. "You will bring the gallant who has done you this shame before the mayor?"

"No, Neave," said the mercer, in a cool determined tone, brushing away with the sleeve of his doublet the tear that still lingered on his cheek, "I will not proclaim my shame at Cross or Conduit; I will confront the villain, who has robbed me of that I valued most, and carve my vengeance on his brazen front, or meet the death I now covet—I am resolved. Hearken:—I have learnt all from my wife's maid. My good name is dishonoured, and my valuables converted to the use of that vile felon. This day—this very evening—my graceless partner, in the disguise of a varlet, pledged, with a Jew in Bucklersbury, sundry trinkets which I valued highly. Her leman, who dared not be the bearer of them, hovered about the neighbourhood. O that the crafty rogue had conveyed them thither himself!—Well, mark: I met the wife of my bosom in that unseemly garb—she quailed like the par-

tridge when the hawk hangs in the air—but I feigned not to know her. A grievous fit overtook her, and I proffered my arm, when, on the instant, up came my enemy. — Thou knowest the rest."

"Nothing," observes Lord Bacon, "openeth the heart like a true friend." Fitz-Arnold thus unburdened himself of the grievous load that had oppressed him for some days past. Neave endeavoured to console him; but, like Rachel, he refused to be comforted, and shortly quitted his friend's house, with reiterated vows of vengeance on the author of his unhappiness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOUBLE TRIAL.

While Fitz-Arnold sat with his friend, his guilty partner, in the belief that her disguise was impenetrable, hurried through the streets in an agony of grief and shame; but she had gone too far to abandon the designs she meditated, and trusted to her reaching home before her husband. This she accomplished. A small door, at the rear of a goodly house in Aldermanbury, hastily opened with a key which she drew from her bosom, and Alice Fitz-Arnold reached her chamber unperceived by all in the house, except her maid; who was instantly in attendance.

"Oh, Madge!" said the dame, throwing herself into a chair, and gasping for breath, "*I have seen my husband!*"

She unclasped her hood, and, drawing it from her head, her long dark tresses descended over her shoulders, while her flushed cheek and dilated eye, told how fierce a storm agitated her heaving bosom. Fatigue, fright, and uncertainty as to the fate of those she had left engaged in mortal combat, combined to complete her bewilderment.

"Be calm, madam," said the damsel; "prithee be calm, and shift this strange gear. My master will return anon."

"Calm! didst thou say, wench? 'Tis impossible! *He may not return again.* I left him blade to blade, and foot to foot with Courtenay! O that I could know the issue of the brawl. He may be slain—Courtenay may be slain—and I—I, Madge, am wretched, though safe and beyond suspicion."

She shed a torrent of scalding tears; and then, as if relieved by them, began deliberately

to divest herself of the unseemly garb she had assumed.

Like all tale-tellers, when they bring their characters into a scrape, we are here compelled to say, that we must leave much to the imagination of our readers; who will therefore be pleased to picture to themselves, according to their several fancies, the lamentable situation of Mistress Fitz-Arnold. She had forfeited for ever her good name, and spurned the affection of a worthy man, for a worthless coxcomb, whose only recommendation was a pleasing address, and a handsome figure. She was now beginning to feel the effects of her folly and wickedness. To think on the probable issue of the combat, the death of either of the combatants, was madness. Should Courtenay fall, she would then be bereft of the man for whom she had sacrificed every consideration. On the contrary, should, her husband be overpowered by his more youthful adversary, she would, though unwittingly, be implicated in his destruction.

Her uncertainty in this respect was, however, soon relieved. She had scarcely assumed her appropriate attire, when the noise of Fitz-Arnold's arrival caused her heart to leap within her bosom—"*Courtenay, then, must have fallen!*" She descended to meet her husband in a small room below, where supper had been laid.

The mercer sat in moody silence, and, though his look was calm, the nervous tapping of his foot on the oak floor was not unobserved by his wife. He raised his head on her entrance, and his rigid features assumed a look of stern severity. The lady attempted to speak, but her tongue refused to articulate, and she sunk into a chair.

"How now, mistress!" cried Fitz-Arnold, "what ails you?"

"I am faint, sweetheart," said the guilty wife, as her pale face gradually acquired a still more pallid hue; agony had stiffened her usually bright and handsome features into the rigidity of marble; and the heart of Fitz-Arnold, much as she caused him to suffer,

almost relented when he saw the awful change in that lovely countenance. Her eyes became fixed and glassy, and her very lips,—those bright pouting lips, which but three years agone had pronounced the vow of eternal love and constancy, became blue, like those of a corpse.

"She believes her leman dead," thought the mercer. "'Tis *for him* she feels. I will torment her yet." And the spark of compassion, which had been kindled for a moment in his bosom, was quenched for ever by that bitter reflection.

Meanwhile his wretched wife, making an effort to recover her composure, endeavoured to divert attention from herself.

"Husband, dear husband!" said she, "you seem ill at ease?"

"I am," said the mercer, with bitter emphasis.

"You are chafed and weary?"

"I am."

"Who has angered you?"

Here mistress Fitz-Arnold, rising from her seat, advanced, and laid her small white trembling hand upon her husband's shoulder.

"I have had a ruffle with a stranger in Bucklersbury," said the mercer.

"Holy Mother! and you are hurt?"

"No, i' faith; *I* am returned scathless; but it is not so with mine adversary."

"Hast thou slain him, then?" she inquired with startling earnestness.

"I believe so," replied Fitz-Arnold, affecting indifference.

Scarcely, however, had he uttered the words when his wife fell heavily at his feet, as if struck by lightning.

"What ho! Madge!—Walter!—Sam! help! —your mistress is dead!" shouted the mercer, snatching up the senseless form of his wife from the floor, and violently ringing a bell which stood on the table.

His two apprentices and the maid rushed into the room in alarm; and, while they endeavoured to revive their mistress, the citizen

paced hurriedly up and down the apartment, a prey to a thousand conflicting feelings. Alice Fitz-Arnold was borne to her chamber in a state of utter insensibility, from which she did not recover until several hours afterwards.

CHAPTER V.

THE FLIGHT.

Matthew Fitz-Arnold was not naturally an unfeeling man: but insult had steeled his heart. He felt that he had received an injury beyond reparation: his domestic peace had been invaded, and his wife's affections for ever estranged from him: he dreaded the ridicule of the fool and the knave: he knew his fellow-citizens would flout him when his shame was published to the world; yet all this was but light when he thought on the effect which his feigned tale of Courtenay's death had produced upon his guilty partner—that thought seared his brain, and rendered him insensible to remorse or pity.

Like all peaceably-disposed men, when once roused, the mercer was difficult to appease; and if his rage did not at once burst upon his wife, it was only because he meditated some deep and direful plan of vengeance.

Alice Fitz-Arnold had yet to learn that her husband knew of her infidelity. She trusted to her maid; who, however, by threats, and promises of reward, had been induced to disclose everything. Every act of her mistress was duly noted and related to the mercer, who waited only for an opportunity to crush his enemy.

A calm bright evening had succeeded a warm sultry day, and the sun, still lingering above the horizon, glared on the house-tops and weathercocks of the little town of Acton. The roaring of the smith's forge in the High Street had ceased, and the begrimed cyclop himself was standing at the door of his smithy, conversing with one or two of his neighbours. The subject of their gossip is not recorded, but, doubtless, it partook of the same character

with that of such confabulations at the present day.

The *conversazione* was, however, for a moment interrupted by the passing of some strangers, whom we must pause to describe.

Side by side rode a man, of handsome and gallant aspect, and a lady, whose face, half hidden as it was by her wimple and gorget, yet showed a pair of eyes of surpassing brightness. Behind them, on a rather spare-looking horse, rode a boy, with a saucy-looking face, shaded by a profusion of long light hair. He had charge of a large leathern bag, or valise, which was strapped to the saddle; and he stared impudently at the towns-people, and leered at the windows as he passed along.

The travellers did not halt in the town, but seemed rather anxious to proceed onward; yet their transit was not unobserved.

"They are a gallant couple," said the smith.

"I 'll venture a pottle they 're runaways," observed his neighbour, the baker. "Did ye mark the lady's downcast look as she rode

along, and how proudly the man of her choice bore himself."

"Ay, marry," rejoined the smith; "a man may well be proud when he has such a sweet face to travel by 's side. God speed them, say I."

"Amen, good-man smith," said the town crier, as he joined the group. "Amen, say I, an' they be honest; but what if the dame be another man's wife, eh, gossip?"

"Go to, Sam," said the baker, "with thy fardel of suspicions. Heaven help thee when thou art married! An' I were a woman, I would not be thy wife to 'scape purgatory."

"Wert thou my wife, I would discipline thee with a hazel rod," said the crier. "I would make thee serve me on thy knee, and thou should'st always style me"——

"*Ass!*" cried the baker. And there was a loud laugh at the interpolation.

"'Ware the ass's hoofs," muttered the functionary. "Wert thou my wife, I say, I would make thee as tame and gentle as a pet lamb,

under my discipline. Thou should'st stand at my chair-back while I fed, and should'st provide me with"——

"A pair of noble antlers!" again interrupted the baker,—when the deep voice of the smith chimed in.

"Peace, gossips!" said he; "this is idle pastime. I marvel who those travellers may be;—but here comes old Thomas, the sexton: I saw him peering at them as they passed the churchyard. Ho! master Thomas, thou art death's chamberlain, but thou hast a shrewd knowledge of the living. What think'st thou of those travellers who passed scarce half an hour hence?"

"Think," replied the old man, his grey eyes twinkling beneath the tufts of white hair which overshadowed them, "think—why, that they be *runaways*."

"I could ha' sworn it!" cried the baker; "the lady's eyes were cast downward, and she raised them but once to look upon her companion."

"She was passing fair," continued the sexton, "and the gallant was a proper man, and comely to look upon; but the boy who followed would become the gallows well. 'Thy garden is full of weeds, old sir,' cried he, as he saw me digging in the churchyard; 'thy labour is ill bestowed.'—'Heaven send thee a coverlid of grass, young coistrel, when thy race is run,' quoth I: at which he grinned like a babion."

"It was a saucy-looking urchin, truly," said the smith: "if the proverb be true, 'like master like man,' he follows a bold spirit. But who have we here?"

As the smith spoke a cloud of dust was observed at the entrance of the High Street, and four horsemen advanced at full speed: they halted before the smithy.

"Good friends," said the leader, who was no other than Matthew Fitz-Arnold, "have any travellers passed through your town since noon-tide?"

"Why would ye know, master?" queried the baker; while the smith, who deemed the

mercer no less than the runaway lady's father, dived into his shed, muttering something about the cruelty of separating true lovers.

Fitz-Arnold bit his lip with impatience, and wiped the dust and perspiration from his brow.

"I will bestow an Edward noble on any one who can give me intelligence," said he, drawing forth the glittering bait, and holding it up between his thumb and finger. "Who speaks?"

The baker looked shyly at the noble; the sexton shrugged his shoulder, and uttered a "Humph!" while the crier leered at the coin in a manner that betrayed his feelings; but he dared not take it while his neighbour stood by; so, like them, he remained mute.

At that moment a little urchin, who had been playing with a group of children, a few doors off, came up, and began to stare at the strangers.

"My pretty boy," said Fitz-Arnold, snatching at the opportunity, "has a lady passed through the town on a sorrel pony?"

"Ay, sir," replied the child, his eye fixed

on the gold piece, which the mercer still held between his thumb and finger; "a beautiful lady, and a brave knight with gold spurs, and a gold chain round his neck, and a"——

"Enough! enough!" cried Fitz-Arnold, tossing the noble to the little fellow. "Forward! Neave,—forward, boys!" and, dashing the spurs into his horse's flanks, he and his companions went thundering through the town.

"They will soon run down their game," said the smith, as he emerged from his retreat. "I grieve for the poor lady. Did ye mark, neighbours, that one of the tall lads who followed that stern-looking man carried a bow in his hand, and had a sheaf of arrows in his belt?"

"There will be a breach o' the king's peace, and, mayhap, murder, ere nightfall," observed the crier.

In the mean time the mercer and his assistants pursued their way at full speed, and soon came in sight of the fugitives, whom the reader has doubtless recognised. Considering

themselves safe at that distance from the city, they were proceeding at a leisure pace along the high road, unconscious of the peril that threatened them. Great, therefore, was the surprise of Courtenay, but greater still his affright, when, on turning his head to see who was approaching, he beheld four horsemen advancing at full gallop. One glance sufficed to assure him that the foremost of the pursuers was Matthew Fitz-Arnold. Flight was impossible; and there was death, certain death in the inevitable encounter.

Courtenay leaped from his horse just in time to save the companion of his flight from falling to the ground.

"Dearest Alice!" said he, taking her insensible form in his arms, "I will save thee, or die."

"And die thou shalt!" cried Fitz-Arnold, who arrived at the moment, "or I carry a sword of lath."

The knight delivered his fair burden into the hands of that saucy-looking boy, whose

appearance has been described. She lay in his arms mute and motionless, and the boy placed her with her back against a large elm by the road side, and fanned her face with his cap.

The mercer here advanced towards his wife, when her seducer interposed.

"Back!" cried he fiercely; "she shall not be removed while I live to protect her!"

"Back thyself! base robber!" cried Fitz-Arnold, in a voice of thunder. "Stand back, or I will not give thee the 'vantage of a man, but strangle thee like a dog!"

At that instant Peter Neave grasped the knight by the throat, and he was quickly deprived of his sword and dagger by the two apprentices.

Courtenay struggled hard to free himself, but without avail. And the next moment he saw one of the boys remount, and receive from the mercer the drooping form of Alice Fitz-Arnold; the other 'prentice also remounted; and, at the command of their master, they

both proceeded with their charge at a brisk trot down the road.

Courtenay again struggled violently, and succeeded in disengaging himself from the grasp of Neave; but he stood unarmed, half choked, and defenceless before his enemy.

"Nay, chafe not," said the mercer, bitterly; "thou shalt have back the weapon thou hast dishonoured; I am no common stabber; I murder not thee or thy *reputation*. Take up thy sword, vile disturber of an honest man's peace; take up thy sword, and defend thyself, if thou canst!"

He pointed to the unsheathed sword which lay on the ground. The caitiff knight snatched up the weapon; his eye rested for a moment on the receding figures of the two apprentices, who were bearing off their mistress, and then fell on the boy who had accompanied him in his flight.

"Ralph," said he, "if I fall, the few things thou hast in those mails are thine own; carry my body to the abbot of Westminster, who

will give it decent burial, for my mother's sake."

Here his voice faltered, and his lip quivered; but whether his emotion was sincere or feigned it availed little with his adversary, who, in a stern voice, bade him defend himself, and advanced upon him with uplifted blade.

The reader will bear in mind, that in those days gentlemen did not "fight by the book of arithmetic," that the rapier was then unknown, and that a man was slain or disabled by a slashing blow, which cleft his skull, or inflicted a deep gash, instead of receiving a stoccado, which pierced through "liver and lungs baith." We laugh at Falstaff's account of his fight, a full hour by Shrewsbury clock, but it should be remembered that, up to the time of Elizabeth, the broadsword and buckler were much in repute; and that, consequently, single combats were often prolonged and kept up with a degree of obstinacy which would surprise our mo-

dern duellists. Here, however, the combatants were armed only with their swords, the broad heavy death-dealing weapons of the period.

Courtenay fought with caution, and parried with great dexterity several of his adversary's strokes; but he was opposed to a man who, though by many years his senior, had not forgotten the athletic exercises of his younger days, nor consumed his strength in riot and dissipation: he fought, too, merely in self-defence, while Fitz-Arnold was nerved by a desire of vengeance.

Neave stood by, an anxious spectator of the combat. At length the sharp angry click of the weapons was interrupted by a dull heavy blow, which told that one of them had taken effect: the sword of Fitz-Arnold had descended on the breast of his adversary, laying open his vest, and inflicting an extended wound, which, but for his gold chain, would have been deep and decisive.

The knight stepped back, lowered his wea-

pon, and pressed his hand upon his breast until the blood streamed between his long white fingers.

"Mercer," said he, firmly, though his face was ashy pale, "thou hast drawn my blood—art thou content to let me pass on my way? If I have done thee harm, thou hast requited me."

"Wretch!" cried Fitz-Arnold, in a stern determined tone, "*I came to slay thee, or be slain!* think not to escape me, thou shame to knighthood! Yon bright sun will shine no more on one of us. Robbed of all I held dear, and taunted in mine own city, where my name has long been honoured, I wish not to live but for one purpose, to crush the vile destroyer of my earthly happiness. Villain, defend thyself!"

He rushed again upon his bleeding enemy, and their swords met with a loud clash; but the die was cast; ere half a dozen blows had been exchanged Fitz-Arnold's weapon descended on the face of Courtenay, and

sent him staggering backwards to the foot of the large elm. The wounded man made an effort to recover himself, and raised his sword, but the next moment his head fell on his shoulder, and Fitz-Arnold smote him on the neck with all his might. Courtenay uttered a loud groan, and dropped at his feet.

At that moment a shrill cry, which caused the mercer and his friend to start, was uttered by the boy, who had waited in an agony of suspense a few paces off. The stripling rushed to aid his master, and threw himself upon the quivering body with the wildest exclamations of grief and despair.

Fitz-Arnold was touched by this demonstration of the poor boy, and attempted to remove him from the body.

"Away with thee!" cried the youth, wildly; "thou hast slain my master."

"He is indeed dead," said Neave, looking on the body. "And here is a troop of lances coming to arrest us!"

He pointed to several horsemen, who were advancing on the spur towards them. Flight would have been vain, and the mercer and his friend yielded themselves prisoners.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

It was all but dark, and Lud-gate creaked on its hinges, preparatory to its being closed for the night, when Fitz-Arnold and his friend Neave came galloping up the hill, and, upon being recognised as citizens, were immediately admitted by the guard. They had been detained at Acton during a brief examination; but ample evidence was given that the combat was fair, and that the provocation which the victor had received was extreme. Even the boy, the faithful, but unscrupulous follower of an unworthy master, bore testimony that the fight was maintained according to the established custom of Englishmen, and that the wounds which Courtenay had received were in the front, and inflicted with the *edge* of his antagonist's weapon.*

* Before the reign of Elizabeth, a blow below the girdle was reckoned unfair, and to turn the point upon a man was

The citizens stopped not a moment, but held on their way through St. Paul's Church-yard, the Cheap, and the narrow streets, until they reached Aldermanbury.

Fitz-Arnold dismounted in haste, and entering his house was followed by Neave. His first inquiries were of his wife. She had been brought home in safety, and was in her chamber. Thither he proceeded. It was now time to upbraid her; her seducer was slain, his deadly foe had fallen; but he had vengeance in store for his abandoned partner, and that vengeance could be no longer smothered.

He drew from his bosom three gold rings, which he had taken from the fingers of the dead Courtenay, to whom they had been presented by his faithless wife. They were strung on a lock of the slain knight's hair, which the

considered assassin-like; but, during the reign of the "Virgin Queen" one York, a desperate adventurer, who was afterwards poisoned by the Spaniards in the Low Countries, brought into England the foreign custom of fighting with the rapier, together with the slang of the feneing schools, which both Shakspere and Ben Jonson, indulging the popular humour, did not fail to ridicule and contemn.

mercer had cut off with his dagger before they were apprehended.

The mercer hurried to the chamber, and lifted the latch of the door, which, however, was secured on the inside. He demanded admittance; but no answer was returned.

"Strange!" muttered Fitz-Arnold. "She cannot *sleep!* Alice Fitz-Arnold, it is thy husband!"

Still no answer; not the slightest noise met his ear from within. His wife's maid interposed, weeping bitterly, and entreated him to withdraw.

"Begone, wench!" said he, in a terrible tone; "and bid Sam bring me a crome; I'll burst the door, if she will not come forth."

Neave and the apprentices here ascended the stairs, and entreated him to desist, but he was inexorable; and the bar having been brought, he applied it to the door. The strong oak groaned under his efforts, and in the midst Fitz-Arnold paused, as if he fancied that his wife was stirring; but all remained still, and he renewed his efforts to break open the door.

"Dear friend," said Neave, whose nerves had been unstrung by the sad scene he had witnessed that afternoon; "prithee, desist until the morning."

The mercer turned his haggard and bloodshot eyes reproachfully upon his adviser, and again applied his crow, when the door, torn from its hinges, no longer opposed his entrance.

Still grasping the implement, he rushed into the chamber, when a spectacle, as heart-rending as it was unexpected, met the gaze of the horror-stricken husband. Stretched on the bed, divested of a portion of her travelling dress, and still grasping in one hand a small chased gold pouncet-box, lay Alice Fitz-Arnold, still warm and lovely, but lifeless! The box contained a black powder, and explained the manner of her death.

That evening there was loud weeping and wailing in the house of Matthew Fitz-Arnold, the wealthy mercer of Aldermanbury, and lights were seen passing and repassing by the

latticed windows; and the next morning the death-bell was swinging heavily in the tower of St. Mary's Church.

Our tale is told. The mercer, crushed by misfortune, divided his wealth partly among his friends and relations, and partly among the poor, and died a cowled monk in the Black-friars Monastery five years afterwards.

THE ALDERMAN.

A LEGEND OF

THE WARD OF CHEAP.

The stage is more beholding to Love than the life of man; for as to the stage, Love is even matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a Syren, sometimes like a Fury.

BACON.

THE ALDERMAN.

CHAPTER I.

HE hour was late: the lights in the dwellings on London Bridge were one by one disappearing, and scarcely a sound broke the stillness which prevailed over the city. The night was cloudy, but the evening star shone out when not obscured by the dark masses of clouds, which crossed it at intervals.

In the east appeared the broad red disc of the moon, lighting up the turrets of the White Tower, and throwing on the river a lurid glare,

which became brighter and brighter as she ascended, until the noble stream reflected every surrounding object like a vast mirror. The tide was running up, and the water sparkled brightly in the moon-beams as it dashed upon the starlings of the ancient bridge. The vessels moored alongside the quays rocked to and fro with the current, and the night-wind, in faint and fitful gusts, sighed mournfully among the rigging.

On the deck of one of the large craft, lying off Galley Quay, two men were engaged in earnest conversation as they paced to and fro. One of them was a short sturdy figure, dressed like a mariner of that period; the costume of the other, a tall elegant youth, was rich if not splendid; yet there was a familiarity in the tone of the sailor which ill accorded with the contrast in their appearance.

"I have weighed the chances, Master Alleyne," said the young man, "and am still resolved to risk all for her dear sake."

"You will thrust your head into the lion's

mouth, then," remarked the mariner; "you will cause your uncle to renounce you, and bring upon you the ban of the church,—and for what, I pray? for a pretty face—a pair of black eyes, which may be found as beautiful in the head of a Christian lass."

"Prithee cease, Alleyne!" cried the youth impatiently; "thou dost but torment me. I tell thee that I will risk all for that face; therefore, no more of thy sage preaching, but help me with my plan."

"Master Arthur," said the sailor, making a dead stand and fixing his eyes earnestly on the youth, "you may laugh at the preaching of an old shipman, but he gives you wholesome advice. Twenty years ago your uncle gave me a start in the world, released me from prison, helped me with money, and gave me letters to many rich merchants across the seas. To him I owe all I possess; shall I then counsel one, whom he dearly loves, to play the truant and leave him in his old age? No, Master Arthur; go seek some one who loves

not you and yours; I cannot, I will not assist you."

"You are a churl, Alleyne," replied the youth. "I wot not that I should ask of you in vain; but the master of the Falcon has become rich and proud; he hath no favour for citizens' sons."

"The master of the Falcon—heaven bless the good old man who made me its master!" rejoined the sailor vehemently, "warns you of your danger. The breakers are a-head, master Arthur; take heed, and slacken sail, or you are lost. Ah! little thought I, when you came to your uncle's a curly-headed boy, scarce three years old, an orphan, the picture of your sainted mother, and mild and gentle as that sweet lady, that you would become so wild and wilful. But go your way, sir, I will not assist you; and may the deep sea sink those who do."

The skipper resumed his walk, and the young man remained mute for some moments, looking vacantly on the rushing tide; at length, with

an apparent effort, he attempted to renew the conversation.

"Master Alleyne," said he, "you spoke of my uncle's love: methinks he is of late estranged from me."

"He thinks it time, perhaps, to curb you," replied the master, with the licence of long acquaintance. "He has heard of your mad pranks: he would make a man of you, master Arthur, and wean you from the wild youths you consort with."

"Excellent morality! most philosophical conclusion!" said the youth, with a laugh. "Who would have looked for such wise sentences from the master of the Falcon. 'Fore George, thou should'st have been a priest, Alleyne!"

"It is the spring-time of youth, and hot blood with you now," observed the mariner; "but storms and tempests will come, and tears and repentance."

"Storms and tempests I can brave; tears are for women and children; and repentance for dotards," said the youth haughtily.

"You are acting unwisely and cruelly," said the master of the Falcon: "your uncle loves you dearly, and your leaving him will break his heart."

The mariner had here touched on the only obstacle which stood between the young man and his desires. He was evidently disconcerted at the remark, and in his turn began to pace the deck in great perplexity.

"Think well of this, Master Arthur," continued the shipman; "think well of it. Look out ere you take the leap; it is a bold one."

"I know it!" replied the young man, who continued to pace the deck while he nervously twitched the chain which hung around his neck; "I know it."

"It will be your ruin," rejoined Alleyne. "Christian men will eschew your company."

"I have forsworn the company of men," remarked the youth; "and it is plain by thy speech I have not much to repent me of."

"You wrong me, Master Arthur; you wrong me," replied the mariner. "Heaven

is my witness that I give you good counsel. Bethink you of your purpose, and hear the warning of an old man who loves you well, who hath weathered many a storm on the ocean of life, and gained experience, which, like the stern-lights of my barque, shows us what we have passed."

"Excellent!" cried the young man, suddenly staying his march: "the very saw I heard at Paul's Cross last week. Pity thou wert not ordained a priest, Alleyne! What next?"

"I have no more to say, sir," rejoined the shipman gravely. "I am a fool to give good counsel to one who, to please his own stubborn will, would break his aged uncle's heart."

"I am sorry to leave the old gentleman," said the youth with a forced laugh, for it was on that subject alone that he was vulnerable. "I am sorry too, to leave merry England; but what can I do, friend Alleyne?"

"Do?" replied the sailor, who thought he could discover something like irresolution in

the querist. "Do? why, make up your mind to think no more of the girl, but turn your eyes upon some citizen's fair daughter: London lacks not sweet faces and comely figures."

"True, Alleyne; but the world has not another whom I love."

"Ah! I was once like you," sighed the master. "No one was nimbler in pavise or galliard. I have danced with the fairest in this good city; but grey hairs and wrinkles came at last, and warned me that such follies must have an ending; yet, the Saints be praised, I looked not on the dark-eyed daughters of that accursed race, whom God in his wrath has scattered through the wide world. Heaven help you, sir! whither would you fly?"

"To Flanders," replied the young man.

"You will find no refuge there," remarked the sailor.

"I will make the trial, Alleyne."

"Do so then," said the master angrily; "but seek some other vessel for your purpose: he Falcon shall not carry you."

With these words he dived below, and left the gallant to ponder on what he had heard.

"The devil take the old churl!" muttered the youth; then, giving a low whistle, a boat, which was lying off the quay, came alongside the vessel. He jumped into it without uttering a word, and the next moment it was gliding silently up the river.

CHAPTER II.

STARTLING NEWS.

The "courteous reader" is referred to the minute old antiquary Stow for a description of Cheapside, or, as it was then called, the West Cheap, "before the greate and dreadfull fire," which laid ancient London in ruins.

What that great thoroughfare was in those days may be easily imagined, by any one who has observed the appearance of the High-Streets of our country towns, into which modern improvements have not yet crept. Let the reader therefore endeavour to forget its present appearance, and picture to himself a broad thoroughfare, with a closely packed row of houses of unequal heights and sizes on each

side. Let him fancy the quaintly carved and grotesque looking figures which supported the upper stories of the various dwellings; the weather-cocks, which crowned many of the gables; the large many-paned windows; the huge oak rafters which intersected the walls; and, above all, the numerous sign-boards, which swung over the heads of the passengers, upon which griffins, dragons, lions of all colours, and various other heraldic monstrosities, sprawled in truly gothic variety. Here and there a tall elm might be seen rising majestically above the houses, its rich foliage darkened by the tenements of the social bird the "burgher rook," while the jackdaws had taken undisturbed possession of the church towers.

Besides these there were several other objects of interest to which old records and our city histories often allude; there were the cross, the conduits, and the standard, all of which have long since disappeared from that well-known thoroughfare.

In those days a man might talk to his neigh-

bour at mid-day in Cheapside without bawling at the top of his voice; but the head-splitting din now constantly heard in that neighbourhood has driven the rook and the jackdaw for ever from the spot.*

Early one fine morning, just as the good folks of the West Cheap were bestirring themselves for the day, the master of the Falcon was seen to give a hearty tug at the great bell of Master Richard Herlion's house, near the church of St. Mary-le-Bow.

The outer gate quickly opened at the summons, and the honest face of the sailor being recognised by the porter, his arrival was immediately announced to Master Herlion.

Richard Herlion was a merchant of great

* We must not, however, forget to mention that, a few years since, a pair of rooks built their nest in the elm which stands in the church-yard at the corner of Wood Street, perhaps the very noisiest part of the city, to the very great astonishment of the citizens. There is a rookery in the elms within the Tower of London, and the jackdaws build their nests in the *crowns*, on the summit of "The White Tower," every year.

wealth and unblemished reputation, and had held the office of alderman several years during the reign of Edward the Fourth, to the very great satisfaction of the inhabitants of the Ward of Cheap. He had long been a widower, and his children had died in their infancy, one of them having been lost in a tumult which had taken place in the city many years back; but he had a nephew, upon whom he doted, whom he had humoured and indulged to an absurd degree, to his own disquiet and the youth's total ruin.

This nephew was no other than the young gallant who has been introduced to the reader in the previous chapter. To complete the catalogue of his wild tricks, he had lately fallen desperately in love with a beautiful Jewess, the daughter of an old Israelite, residing in the city. How this acquaintance first commenced, nobody knew; and, to the surprise of every one, his uncle was as yet ignorant of the fact, although with his neighbours it often formed the subject of conversation.

Arthur had been seen by more than one of his uncle's friends walking with a tall elegant female in the outskirts of the city, and scandal soon set afloat the story that the alderman's nephew was enamoured of a Jewess. Nay, some had gone so far as to say that they had seen the damsel and her lover disembark at the Temple Stairs, and proceed to the young man's lodgings in the Strand; yet Master Herlion was as yet entirely ignorant of his nephew's strange attachment.

The master of the Falcon found his old friend and benefactor sitting at his morning's meal, which in those days was a substantial one: no slops; no toast or muffins drenched in butter, and rendered more abominable by hot draughts of tea or coffee, then spoiled the digestion of Englishmen and helped them to the blue devils. A round of beef, brawn and mustard, and a cold pasty, displayed their charms on the alderman's breakfast table, and a large silver flagon stood foaming to the brim with ale.

"Ah! Alleyne," said the old citizen, extend-

ing his hand to the sailor; "you are early, but you are welcome."

"I have much to tell ye, sir."

"Well, sit ye down, and when we have taken our meal, I will hear what thou hast to say."

Alleyne needed no second bidding, but instantly commenced a vigorous attack upon the good things before him.

The alderman supposed that his visiter had news of a totally different description to that which he was shortly to hear, and therefore betrayed no eagerness to receive his news; but when the master of the Falcon acquainted him with his nephew's conduct, grief and indignation by turns made the old man rave like a maniac. Grief, however, predominated when he learned, that Arthur meditated an escape from England with the object of his affections, and Alleyne left him, half inclined to doubt the humanity of his interference.

CHAPTER III.

EVIL TIDINGS.

In one of the narrow dirty streets leading out of the principal thoroughfare near Aldgate, lived Abraham the Jew. He had long been a widower; but one child, a daughter, the most beautiful of her sex, consoled the old man for all the afflictions which had befallen him during his residence in England.

They are a curious people, the Jews! What a persecution has their race suffered since the accomplishment of that prophecy which foretold their dispersion! Plundered by all nations, whom in return they plundered more effectually, though more slowly, and subtilely,

and scattered through many countries for centuries past, they are still a distinct race, with which Christians of all denominations are averse to commune.

A history of the Jews in London, during the last eight centuries, if compiled from authentic sources, would present a curious picture of society in our metropolis.

Before the reign of Henry the Second, the Jews were permitted to bury their dead in London only, but this monarch abrogated the strange law, and permitted them to bury where they pleased, which we may suppose to mean in the neighbourhood where they dwelt. The exactions and cruelties practised upon them by Richard and John, are well known; and it is said that, in the reign of Henry the Third, one Abraham paid a fine to the King of seven hundred marks. Another Jew exclaimed against the injustice of Henry, who at various times had wrung from him thirty thousand marks of silver, besides two hundred marks of gold!

Henry, for a valuable consideration, let them out to farm to his brother; but, as some amends for these extortions, he built in London a church for converted Jews!

During the reign of Edward the First, the Jews suffered repeatedly from the violence and rapacity of the monarch and his people. Numberless crimes were charged upon these unhappy wretches, and among others the very common one of those times—that of forging and clipping the public money. Two hundred and ninety-seven Jews suffered in this reign the extreme penalty of the law for such offences; and, if we may credit the chroniclers, there was some justice in the case, for the sufferers were found to be possessed of great wealth,—a fatal possession to a Jew in those fierce days. One half of the effects of the criminals (if such they really were) was bestowed on those who undertook the conversion of the race, and the support of the converts and their house, called *Domus Conversorum*. This king obliged them to wear constantly a

badge, or cognizance, on their upper garment; but that was afterwards not considered sufficient, and they were ultimately banished the kingdom.

Although humanity shudders at the brutal excesses to which this people were repeatedly subjected, in the middle ages, there is nevertheless good reason to believe that their rapacity, cunning, and extortion sometimes provoked such treatment; for their wealth was even then proverbial, and they continued to reside in such cities as were profitable to them, notwithstanding the outrages to which they were occasionally exposed, so powerful, so all-absorbing is the passion of avarice.

There are many reasons why the Jews cannot acquire a footing in society. The fierce bigotry of former ages rendered them the most wretched of human creatures, and the Jew at the present day cannot forget that he lives among the descendants of those who persecuted his race; hatred of the Christians is the legacy bequeathed to him through many generations. Necessity

has made numbers of them worldly and vicious, —an assertion which is verified by the fact that a Jew always prefers trading with Christians to dealing with people of his own race. We speak not of the wretched creatures who may be heard on a cold morning before we rise from our beds, with their eternal cry of "cloesh." These miserable beings are objects of pity, cunning and roguish as they proverbially are, for their privations must be great indeed. We have seen feeble old women, "of the Jewish persuasion," as our newspaper reporters phrase it, sitting at mid-day on the step of a door, devouring a hunch of dry bread—their only dinner, after a fruitless walk of many miles! There is no "shamming Abraham" in this,—these poor creatures cannot do it to excite compassion, for they would obtain none: they devour their crust in silence, without a murmur, and prefer a wretchedly precarious subsistence to servitude among Christians.

As regards the wealthier Jews, the hereditary dislike of those whose creed they despise

cannot be extinguished so soon as some of our soi-disant philanthropists suppose; but, as our fair readers will think we are becoming political, and vote us a bore if we say more on this subject, we will leave the tribe of Israel, and forbear further remark, lest we should be tempted to express a doubt of their "usefulness" to a state, in opposition to the notions of a certain member of our legislature, who perhaps may have cogent reasons for forming such an opinion.—But to our story.

The dwelling of Abraham, the Jew, was situated in a dirty and miserable quarter of the town; yet it was roomy and commodious. He was rich, too, and therefore had many friends, and of course a few enemies besides those who hated him because he was a Jew. His daughter, it has been said, was fair; and as she did not much resemble her father in feature, there was no lack of scandalous stories in the neighbourhood. These, however, gave Abraham but little uneasiness; he valued not the opinion of the *Christian*

But there was one tale which had reached the ear of the old Israelite, and caused him some disquiet: report said that his daughter had a lover, and that that lover was a Christian.

The news of his daughter's attachment was gall and wormwood to old Abraham: he loathed the whole race of Christians: he had made up his mind to pay them tax and tallage without a murmur; but that his only child should fix her affections on one whose religion taught him to regard the Jews as creatures scarcely human, was insupportable; he dared not believe it; yet he waited impatiently for a confirmation of the scandal.

He did not wait long.

One day, as he returned from the Synagogue, Israel, the usurer, took him by the arm.

"Friend Abraham," said he, in an under tone, "there are evil reports of your fair daughter."

The old man winced like a galled horse at this remark, but he smothered his indignation,

and replied carelessly, "Idle tongues will be wagging, neighbour."

"Ay, truly," continued Israel; "idle tongues will be wagging, and eyes that be not dim will see."

"How now!" cried Abraham, angrily, "speak ye of your own knowledge?"

"I do," replied the usurer.

Abraham suddenly stopped, faced about, drew up his figure to its full height, and stroked his long white beard.

"Neighbour," said he, "you speak daggers; yet I would fain know more of this matter: prithee, let me hear all."

"Your daughter was seen, three days ago, walking in Finsbury Fields, with Arthur Lechmere, nephew of old Herlion, of the West Cheap; he who put Aaron's son in the stocks last Pentecost-tide."

Abraham muttered something about Beelzebub.

"Ay," said the usurer, "Beelzebub and the Christians are boon companions,—the devil

knows his own. They talk of another tax on the Jews: their king hath more mad wars to make, and we must find the means, neighbour."

"'Tis ever so with the weakest," remarked Abraham; "we are but strangers here, and our very lives are scarce our own—but you spoke of my daughter?"

"I saw her hanging on the arm of Herlion's nephew," replied Israel; "and I wished for the strength of my youth, that I might have smitten the Christian to the earth for his presumption."

"Marked ye her conduct, and heard ye aught of their discourse?" inquired Abraham, still endeavouring to suppress his emotion.

"I saw enough to offend both eye and ear," replied the usurer; "and I marvelled that the fair daughter of Abraham, the son of Simeon, should lay claim to the painted face and the party-coloured hood."

Old Israel was a mean, envious, grasping wretch, who loved to see every one unhappy. He enjoyed Abraham's mortification; but he had gone a little too far, and the distressed father's blood, which had been seething and simmering during the dialogue, now boiled over with indignation at the obvious allusion.

"Away, Beelzebub! begone!" cried Abraham, in a voice hoarse with wrath, and, giving the usurer a shove which sent him staggering into the kennel, he abruptly turned a corner, and hurried home to upbraid his child.

He entered his dwelling with a throbbing heart, and a frame trembling with emotion.

"The cubless tigress, in her jungle raging,
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The ocean, when its yeasty war is waging,
Is awful to the vessel near the rock:
But violent things will sooner bear assuaging—
Their fury being spent by its own shock—
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a sire."

But the object of his wrath was absent, and he sat himself down to wait her return, and brood in silence on the disgrace he had suffered.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TAVERN.

Night had closed in, and a party of young gallants were carousing in "The Holly Branch," situated near the building called, of old, the king's cambium, or exchange, on the east side of St. Paul's Church-yard. Among them was Arthur Lechmere, who had sought their company in the hope of diverting sundry unpleasant reflections with which he had been troubled since his interview with the master of the Falcon. He, however, found this no easy matter; his disquiet was soon perceived by his wild companions, who of course did not fail to banter him without mercy.

"Why, Arthur, my king o' the round table!" cried one, "thou look'st as demure as a maid at her shrift! what ails thee man? At mass or at merry-making thou art always the same!"

"Nay, rather like one who dreads a warrant of capias," roared a law student—"confusion to all the tipstaff tribe!" and he drained his drinking cup to the bottom.

"He is betrothed to a shrew!" cried another, "and becomes melancholic by anticipation!"

"Silence!" halloed a fourth—"silence, ye bawlers, or we shall have a visit from the city watch, anon."

At this moment a gaily dressed young man came into the room, humming a tune with which his unsteady shuffle kept time.

"Hal Pearce," murmured Arthur; "and drunk, as usual."

"Ha! Arthur!" cried the new comer, "art thou there? Good even to thee, my king of roaring boys. Wilt thou beat the watch to-

night, or break old Turnpenny's lattice? I—I—I— (hiccup) I 'm bent on mischief—Body o' St. Bride, but we 'll scour the Cheap to-night. Will Lovelace too!"——

"Ay," replied the young man whom he had just recognised, "even as thou see'st, Harry. This is the council of asses; and he who brays loudest to-night shall be president for the year."

"The ass brays before rain, my boy," said Pearce; "if there be much braying, we shall have St. Swithin upon us betimes; and, by my beard, your water is good only for brute beasts; 'tis a villanous liquor, unfit for the stomach of man."

"A wise saw, a notable saw!" cried the company; and Pearce took his seat among them, amidst a roar of laughter and a very Babel of voices.

"Heigho!" sighed Pearce, affecting the pathetic. "I beheld a sad sight as I passed Ludgate. The sergeant-at-arms and his men were dragging a fair young creature to Newgate!"

"Ho! ho!" cried the company.

"You may laugh, my masters," continued the drunkard, "but it was a sad sight. She was a sweet creature, and looked far too lovely for a witch. They said she was a Jewess, and had charmed one of our citizen's sons."

An icy chillness shot to the heart of Arthur on hearing these words. He set down the cup which he had just raised to his lips, and with open mouth and outstretched neck awaited the remainder of Pearce's story.

"I could ha' broken the rascal's head when he rudely tore off her wimple, and abused her for a Jew's whelp," continued Pearce.

He had said enough.

Arthur rose hastily from his seat, and, muttering an excuse for his abrupt departure, rushed frantically out of the tavern.

The buzz of astonishment at his departure was unheard by the distracted young man, who bent his hurried steps towards the gloomy prison of Newgate. Doubt and fear urged him forward, and in a few minutes he was knocking loudly at the huge iron-studded gate.

A savage-looking face appeared at the wicket.

"What would ye have?" queried a gruff voice, which contrasted strongly with the faint and hurried tone of that which replied to it.

"Good friend," answered Arthur, "prithee, tell me if a maiden—a—Jew—ess—has been brought to your prison since even-song."

The grisly porter, upon whose face the light of a lamp within the gate glared strongly, smiled in derision.

"Blaspheming dog," said he, bitterly, "thy sister *is* here,—Miriam, the daughter of Abraham the Jew."

Arthur groaned in anguish.

"May he who died to save us," he replied, "soften thy heart and incline thee pity,—that sweet girl is innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty. For Jesu's sake, be merciful: take this ring; convey it to her, and bid her be of comfort; tell her that all will be well anon. Here; hold thy hand,—there is the ring, and a noble for thyself. Be trusty, and I will reward thee."

A large broad hairy hand was eagerly thrust through the opening. The porter's huge palm

received the ring and the piece of gold. The next moment the wicket was closed violently, and a loud "Ha! ha!" was heard within.

Arthur gnashed his teeth in despair,—the Cerberus of Newgate was not to be bribed; he rushed from the spot, and, hurrying along the now deserted streets, reached his lodgings, tormented by a thousand alarms for the safety of her for whom he had resolved to abandon friends, kindred, and country.

CHAPTER V.

CONSOLATION IN AFFLICTION.

Custom has awarded many privileges to the story-teller: he may bring forward, or keep in shadow, certain points in his narrations as he may think fit. His heroes are, perhaps, represented as eating or drinking only once during a space of many months, yet he does not suppose his readers, or hearers, to be so obtuse as to imagine that they are of the chamelion breed, living upon air. They walk off and on the stage like your players, and you are, of course, to suppose that they have performed many things while not before the audience.

Having thus gossiped an exordium, we shall proceed to inform the reader, that when the master of the Falcon quitted his friend and patron, after making the gratifying communication described in the second chapter, the alderman, having recovered from his first burst of sorrow and indignation, sat down to deliberate on the most expedient means of winning his nephew from the mad attachment he had formed. Various plans suggested themselves to the old merchant; but, ere he had resolved on one of them, the priest of St. Mary-le-Bow was announced.

Father John was a man of dignified mien and commanding stature; with "one of those heads that Guido loved to paint,"—calm, pale, and thoughtful; "a countenance," as my Lord Bacon has it, "becoming the churchman."

Father John was a bitter enemy of the Jews; he hated them because they were unbelievers. Master Herlion's hatred was from the same cause; moreover, he considered the

Jews as foreigners, who did a great deal of harm to the trade of the city; so that, as a Christian and an alderman, he was a very conscientious hater.

The priest shook his head at every pause in Master Herlion's relation of his nephew's behaviour, and, when it was ended, scratched his ear, an action which always shows that a man is much perplexed.

At length he spoke.

"The cause of these mad passages is plain," said he, as his pale face flushed deeply. "'Tis the work of Satan,—'tis *witchcraft;* but the church may yet have power to save him."

The alderman looked aghast. This was consolation he had not expected; the thought of witchcraft had never entered his head; it was adding to the misery which had overwhelmed him: his nephew was then on the confines of the devil's territory.

"'Tis well that I am informed of it thus early," continued the priest, without seeming to notice the consternation of his auditor.

"And yet 'tis a sad mischance. The Evil One has been active in our times. Ye wot how the devil, in the garb of a Capuchin, entered the church of Banbury last Martinmas, and how he overthrew the sacristan and"——

"Oh! oh! oh! oh!" groaned the merchant, "that I should live to see my sainted sister's son leagued with Beelzebub!"

"Then," continued the priest, "he was last year seen seated in the fridstool in the monastery of the Blackfriars, grinning like an ape!"

"Alas! alas!" sighed the alderman, "my boy is lost for evermore!"

"Prayer and penance may do much," remarked father John; "he may yet be saved."

"The saints grant that he may," ejaculated the alderman; "or my old heart will break."

"Who is the woman who has done you this wrong?" inquired the priest.

"I wot not," replied the old man, wringing his hands; "but my intelligence is good. Oh, father, help me in this sad extremity."

"I will," murmured the priest, and he arose to depart; "you shall see me after vespers."

He retired, and the old merchant was left to his own reflections.

CHAPTER VI.

THE QUESTION-CHAMBER.

On the following morning, strange tales were afloat in the city. Scandal had a rare feast,—old and young, male and female, poor and wealthy, all tongues were moving on one theme,—young Arthur's bewitchment, and his strange disappearance from his lodgings and his usual haunts.

Search had been made for the infatuated youth in vain, in all quarters of the city, and it was generally supposed that the evil spirit who had led him astray from the good faith, had finished the hellish drama by spiriting him away to other regions.

The reputed instrument of Beelzebub, Miriam,

the fair daughter of Abraham the Jew, was in safe custody. The delightful dream of the poor maiden had been exchanged for sad reality; the home of her fond parent, for a damp cell in the grim prison of Newgate, whither we must now lead the reader.

The Question-Chamber, or Hall of Torture, was a spacious apartment in the very interior of the prison, lit by a large window at one end, but the dust of many years, and the accumulated tapestry of several generations of spiders, almost excluded the light of heaven. The last scenes in the lives of saints and martyrs, emblazoned on the panes which filled the upper compartments, glimmered faintly in the morning's sun, and cast additional gloom over the vast apartment. On one side was ranged a row of stalls of carved oak, and within sat several men in furred robes and gold chains, the light which streamed through the hall crossing their countenances, but leaving the rest of their persons in shadow. The bald head of an ecclesiastic was seen among the judges.

In the centre of the hall stood a large chafing-dish, supported on a tripod, its charcoal fire glowing with a crimson heat; near it grinned that hideous instrument of a barbarous age, the rack;—on the floor were scattered various iron implements of torture.

Suddenly a door opened, and two men, the executioner and his assistant, entered, carrying between them a female form, whose garments were dank with the moisture of the cell from which they had borne her.

As they entered, the female disengaged herself from her grim supporters, and with an apparently violent effort walked slowly but firmly into the middle of the hall.

The executioner, with bared arms, and untrussed jerkin, here advanced and trimmed the fire. Then a voice spoke from the stalls:

"Woman, you are charged with the detestable and soul-damning sin of witchcraft; what would ye say?"

The prisoner raised her head, passed her hand across her forehead, and while tears stood in

her large dark lustrous eyes, falteringly replied:

"Alas! what *can* I say, when all here are in array against me?"

"Do you repent?" queried the stern voice which had spoken before.

"Repent! is it a sin to love him then?" murmured the poor maiden in a voice which was only audible to herself.

"Do you mutter threats against the court?" cried another voice from the stalls.

"Hold," said the ecclesiastic, who was no other than the priest of St. Mary-le-Bow,—"*I* will question her. Daughter, the church is merciful; will you repent and save yourself."

"I have nought to repent me of," replied the prisoner.

"Where is Arthur Lechmere?" said the priest, sternly.

Instantly the prisoner's frame was convulsed violently; she raised her head for a moment, glanced round the hall, and then turning towards the judges, seemed about to reply, when

her strength forsook her, and she sank on the floor. The men advanced and raised her up, but she was insensible. A long pause succeeded; then the judges whispered to each other, and the priest descended and handed to the executioner a small vial of distilled waters, which restored their victim to consciousness.

"Where is Arthur Lechmere?" muttered the priest, whose stern nature seemed somewhat subdued, as he gazed on so much beauty.

Had the prisoner been accused of any other crime, Father John could have believed her innocent; but he remembered the numerous legends, from St. Anthony downward, which told of the temptations of holy men by fiends, who assumed fair forms like that before him.

Miriam raised her head, and looked for a moment on her questioner.

"Ah," sighed she, "can a minister of that God whom we all worship, join in persecuting a poor weak maiden?"

"Where is your leman?" said the priest, with a frown; "where is the youth you have betrayed to ruin?"

"Betrayed! ruin!" echoed the poor girl; "what mean ye? O that he were here!"

A stern voice interrupted her—it was Master Herlion's.

"Witch!" cried he, "where is my nephew? Answer, or we pull thee limb from limb:" then addressing the priest, "Father, we idle time,—the rack hath made the dumb speak ere now."

The priest retreated to the stalls, and the executioner advanced. At a signal the prisoner was again seized, and, spite of her struggles, divested of her upper garment. The embroidered band, too, which crossed her forehead, became unloosened, but ere her dark hair descended, her judges caught a glimpse of her neck and shoulders, which it shrouded like a veil. The priest averted his head at the sight.

"She is beautiful as the Virgin," thought Father John; "O that the fiend should dwell in such a sweet form!"

Meanwhile the poor girl trembled and panted, like a bird in the net of the fowler. Her colour

alternately mounted to her pale cheeks, and then forsook them; and with maiden modesty she essayed to hide what the rude hands of the executioner and his man had so recklessly exposed. Another signal was given, and Miriam the next moment was laid on the rack, to which she was bound tightly with small cords, which the executioner carried at his girdle.

There was another pause, and the fall of a leaf might have been heard in the vast hall.

"Ah, Arthur!" sighed the wretched girl, as her heart fluttered in frightful anticipation of what was to follow, "Hast thou left me for aye?—then God have mercy on an innocent girl!"

Those who have visited the venerable Abbey Church of St. Alban's, will remember the curious echo in the roof of the aisle, which repeats a stamp of the foot, or a clap of the hands at a particular spot many times in quick succession. A similar echo was heard above the spot where the rack stood in the hall of Newgate,

and the words which the poor girl had murmured were repeated audibly by the raftered roof above. It seemed to the executioner, that a voice spoke in reply to the ejaculation of the prisoner, and he started as if a spectre had greeted him. His fear, and the cause of it, were not unobserved by the judges; even the priest looked aghast.

"Ha!" cried the ecclesiastic, "*she mutters her familiar, and he answers!*—Proceed—proceed!" No second bidding was necessary.

The machinery of the rack creaked and groaned, the cords tightened, the wheel revolved, and something snapped like an overstrained bowstring. A convulsive sigh burst from the poor maiden, who swooned under the hideous torture, and lay mute and motionless on the cruel engine.

Again the priest's vial was put in requisition, but his attempt to restore the victim was vain; death seemed to have robbed them of their prey; the body of Miriam was removed from the rack, and borne back to her cell; the judges descend-

ed from the stalls and conferred together in suppressed whispers; and old Herlion, covering his face with his furred gown, hurried from the hall, overwhelmed with grief, shame, and remorse.

CHAPTER VII.

HOPE REVIVED.

On the evening of the following day, about an hour after moon-rise, a horseman entered the village of Hackney; and, having put up his steed at the nearest inn, repaired to a small cottage, and knocked softly at the door: which was opened by a woman well stricken in years.

"Save you, mother," said the visitor, "I would fain see your lodger."

"I' faith, sir, you must have come to the wrong house," was the reply: "there be no lodgers here."

"Tut, tut!" interrupted the man; "I am his friend—you need not fear me."

At that moment Arthur Lechmere came forward, and eagerly grasped the hand of the visitor.

"Ha! Will Lovelace!" he cried: "come in, man; come in, and let me have thy fardel o' news, for I am well nigh distraught with apprehension."

Having entered the cottage, and dismissed the old woman, Arthur commenced a string of interrogatories.

"What news, Will; what news hast thou brought me? I am dying of impatience to hear of my poor Miriam. Prithee, open thy budget."

"It 's a sorry one," observed Lovelace. mournfully; "there is no hope of her."

"Ha! what?" cried Arthur, starting; "no hope, didst thou say?—no hope of what?"

"Of her being saved," replied Lovelace.

"Thou dost not think so, Will?"

"But I do."

"Nay, nay; it cannot be," continued Arthur, looking aghast; "thou dost but mock me."

"By heaven!" replied Will Lovelace, with more of seriousness than usually belonged to him, "I mock thee not. Would that I had better news to tell thee, for this makes my heart ache."

"Hast thou heard of her?" asked Lechmere, earnestly.

"I have."

"Where is she?"

"In her cell! That grim prison rarely gives up its tenants except to the block, the gibbet, or the stake."

"Horrible!" ejaculated Arthur, shuddering violently.

"Marry, thou sayest truly; it is horrible," observed Lovelace. "She is past all mortal aid."

"Hast thou seen my uncle?" inquired Lechmere. "Hath he no heart left? Hath age withered all kindly feeling? Hath his love for his money-bags stifled all pity?"

"I shrewdly suspect father John to be at the bottom of it," continued Lovelace; "he is with your uncle continually."

"Eternal curses on the hypocrite!" cried the youth. "If they dare to offer violence to my Miriam I will tear out his false tongue. He shall be a warning to all saintly confessors for ages to come."

"They have already administered the question," remarked Lovelace.

"Ha!" cried Arthur, wildly; "thy words are daggers. The question, dost thou say? They dare not; they dare not, Will. Say not so. Tell me not that they have given those fair limbs to the torture."

"I have told thee nought but the truth," said Lovelace; "and I would rather that some one besides myself had told thee that."

He was interrupted by the violent paroxysms of his friend, whose grief vented itself in the most wild and extravagant cries and gesticulations. Arthur wept and groaned by turns; then burst into bitter imprecations upon the priest, his uncle, and the city authorities.

Lovelace witnessed his friend's misery with evident distress, and forbore to interrupt this

passionate ebullition of grief, in the hope that when it subsided he would be prepared to hear the worst.

Meanwhile Arthur raved like a maniac; tore handfuls of hair from his head, and beat his breast with the wild frenzy of despair. Had he encountered at this moment the authors of his misery it is probable he would have wreaked his vengeance upon them by some act of violence; but now it was turned upon himself. Plucking out his dagger, he would have thrust it into his heart, but Lovelace anticipated him, and wrested the weapon from his trembling hand.

"Give me back my weapon," cried the frantic youth; "give me back my weapon, or turn it upon me thyself."

"I will do neither, madman," said Lovelace.

"Ay, madman, indeed! Thou sayest truly," replied the wretched young man, bursting into a fresh flood of tears, and sobbing violently, "I *am* mad, Will. Would to God that I had

died ere I had seen this heavy hour. Oh, Miriam! Miriam!"

"When thou art calmer I will tell thee more," said Lovelace; "but I fear to let thee know the worst while this fit lasts."

Arthur ceased, and bent on his friend a look so wretched and wobegone, that it seemed to Lovelace more distressing than his previous violence.

"Let me hear all," said the unhappy youth in a tone of despair; "let me hear all—that she is doomed—that rude hands will deprive of life the fairest sample of Nature's handy-work within our walls. I will be still, Will Lovelace, like that boy, which ancient story tells us of, who forbore to complain while the fox was rending his bowels. Let me hear all. I can suffer no more—the bolt is sped—my heart is riven!"

"Listen, then," said Lovelace; "they will burn her as a witch."

Arthur groaned involuntarily, but quickly suppressed all appearance of suffering as he perceived Lovelace pause.

"Ay, as a witch," continued his friend, "near the Elms in Smithfield"——

Arthur here interrupted him by a shout of exultation.

"Now, by the Rood!" exclaimed he, "thou givest me life again, Will—I will save her or die with her."

"Thou will find it a work of some danger," remarked Lovelace; "thy single hand will never achieve it."

"Have I no friend left who will aid me?" said Arthur, mournfully, with marked emphasis on the word friend.

"Ay," replied Lovelace, "there are some who would lend assistance, though 'tis a perilous task; but they fear to bring upon them the ban of the church."

"My uncle is wealthy, and hath weight with the citizens," observed Arthur, earnestly. "Could we snatch her from the stake, and bear her to a place of safety, there will be various ways of appeasing their wrath."

"But there is the mass-priest of Saint Mary-le-Bow, who will accept no terms," rejoined Lovelace; "he hath your uncle enchained."

"Curses on the bald pate!" said the youth vehemently. "I would as soon turn Lollar as be a priest-ridden old man like the alderman, my dotard uncle. But, thou dost not say whether thou hast seen him?"

"I saw him at his house this morning," said Lovelace, "and urged your despair, and the innocence of the poor maiden; but I might have preached to the Standard in Cheap for aught that came of it."

There was a long pause; during which Arthur seemed deliberating on some scheme for the accomplishment of his purpose.

"I will cleave that arrant rogue the priest to the chine," said he. "My uncle, you say, was not to be moved, Will?"

"Ay, truly," replied Lovelace; "he was moved—moved to wrath against me for meddling in the matter, and swore he would

bring me before the court for abetting you in your mad enterprise."

"And what saidst thou?"

"Marry, I was tempted to be malapert; but I restrained myself for thy sake, and told him that he was acting cruelly and unjustly; whereupon he swore bitterly that I was worthy of the Elms, and that he would bring me there eftsoons."

"What then?"

"I left the old man, and tried the law students, but all, save Hal Pearce, shirked the business, and declared that they dared not help you now the Church hath stirred. They have got information that the Bishops Somner is on your traces, and they are as terrified as a parcel of coneys when the weasel is laid on."

"And Hal Pearce; what said he?" inquired Arthur.

"Oh, that he would be with you when required, like a true friend."

"He *is* a true friend, Will. I would trust Hal Pearce with my life."

"Ay," remarked Lovelace, "if thou dost not trust him with the wine-cup at the same time."

"He hath a warm heart and a stout stomach, like thyself, Will," continued Arthur. "We must—we will save the priest's victim. O Miriam! Miriam! would that I could have borne the torture which these butchers have administered to thee!"

"I would have tried the 'prentices," remarked Lovelace; "but they bear us no good-will since the ruffle in Soper's Lane, on St. Anne's day."

"I mistrust them," said Arthur. "They espouse a cause according to their mad humour, and without considering the law and justice o' the case. Better to try those who, for a noble or two, will do your bidding. A score of stout watermen, and a few of the lads of St. Nicholas' shambles, would be sufficient for our purpose."

"'Tis a perilous enterprise," observed Lovelace.

"If I cannot succeed, 'twill be sweet to die with her," said his friend.

"Ay, truly; but we are not all lovers, Arthur," remarked Lovelace, laughing. "Though beshrew me if your lover is more anxious than other men to meet the death he calls for."

"Forgive me, Will — forgive me," said Lechmere. "Our sorrows make us selfish. Yet heaven forefend that harm should come to thee in this enterprise."

"Well, I will see thee again on the matter," said Lovelace, throwing his cloak about him and grasping the hand of his friend. "But I must away now, or my absence will be noted. I am watched. My steps are dogged from one end o' the city to the other; and I was constrained to make my exit to-night by Aldersgate."

"Good-night! my true, my tried friend," said Arthur, wringing the hand of Lovelace. "I shall look to see thee again right early."

The distracted youth watched the receding figure of his friend until it was lost in the gloom, and then re-entering the cottage, again indulged the grief which he had restrained during their interview.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HOMILY AT PAUL'S CROSS.

There was a full attendance of the citizens at Paul's Cross on the Sunday following. Dr. Lamplough thought it a fitting occasion to descant to those around them on the sad consequences of evil communication, and the necessity of being constantly on the watch, lest, in an unguarded hour, the Tempter might cajole them, as he had of old cajoled their common mother Eve.

The preacher first premised, that those who were not believers in witchcraft and sorcery, of various kinds, were no better than atheists; that Epicurus and Democritus were in this category; and that he feared there were many

then living who were tinctured with their doctrines.

He ran over a list of those who had done injury to the cause of true religion, from the Gnostics down to Wiclif. He expatiated on the heresy of Arius, and the vagaries of those who had lost themselves in the subtle question of the Monothelite will. Then there was that most subtle of all subtleties, the Alcoran of the impostor Mahomet, whose book was compounded of all the worst heresies which had been broached since the world began.

But all this was nothing to the vile doctrines of those atheistical men who denied magical science, though Holy Writ might be cited in many places to prove that there are spirits and devils obedient, for a time, to those who have learnt the art of invoking them, and who, in the end, claimed the fearful price always exacted by such servitors.

No man there could deny these things. Had they not heard of that woman of "Pythonical spirit" who raised up the prophet

Samuel to denounce the apostate Saul and his family? Did not the Jews learn strange arts of those among whom they sojourned? Who was Simon Magus? Doth not Eusebius tell us of one Manes, who flew out of sight before a vast multitude of people? Was not Joseph's cup that in which he was wont to perform his auguries and divinations? Then there was abundant testimony from Pagan sources: Apuleius, Labeo, Varro, Porphyrius, all spoke of demons, and demoniacal influence; and the early Christian princes had said "Ars mathematica damnabilis et interdicta est omni modo."

He had quoted authorities sufficient to show that he who held that sorcery was only an imagined science, was an atheist beyond redemption.

The Jews were especially addicted to these vile practices; and, at this time, the nephew of a citizen of fame and reputation had been spirited away by the incantations of a Hebrew girl, whose demon, it was clear, had forsaken

her, since she was now in durance in the prison of Newgate hard by.

The learned doctor explained to his marvelling auditory the names of Incubus and Succubus; how that the former was the mandevil, and the latter the she-fiend, who gave their masters, *pro tem.*, unlimited power over the softer sex; and he finished the infernal muster-roll by an account of those men who, by magical power, transformed themselves, *ad libitum*, into wolves.

It will be scarcely necessary to recall to the reader's recollection that Paul's Cross stood before the Cathedral; that it was a wooden pulpit, covered with lead, and with a flight of stone steps. Here the most eminent divines preached every Sunday morning; and we are told, that their hearers were not only the mayor and the court of alderman, but, often, even royalty itself.

From Paul's Cross the arbitrary decrees of the sovereign were promulgated, papal bulls were distributed, benedictions pronounced, ana-

themas launched, and recantations read; and we learn from the chroniclers that, in the year 1259, Henry the Third commanded the lord mayor to swear, before it, in the presence of the whole court of aldermen, every person of twelve years and upwards to be loyal to him and his successors.

As a sample of the curses here pronounced we may cite that of Ralph de Baldoc, dean of St. Paul's, who, in 1299, cursed all those who had searched for treasure in the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

To Paul's Cross, in the year 1483, was the unfortunate Jane Shore brought to make her confession; on which occasion her beauty and her misfortunes made, according to honest Holinshed, a deep impression on the wondering and sympathising Londoners, who, in gazing on the woman renowned for deeds of kindness and charity, forgot that she had been the wanton mistress of their late licentious prince.

Here the panders to the usurper Richard, Doctor Shaw, the brother of the mayor, and

Pinke, an Augustine friar, preached of the bastardy of the deceased Edward's children.

But it would require a volume to contain an account of all the public acts performed at this celebrated spot; and we must close this passing notice by observing, that the tyrant Henry the Eighth forced the Bishop of London to send to Paul's Cross, "from Sonday to Sonday," preachers to preach down the Pope's authority, and to show that he was nothing more than the Bishop of Rome. "And thus," it has been wittily observed, "his holiness's bulls were fairly baited out of the kingdom by his own dogs."

There was a very respectable attendance of the Londoners, considering that the weather was now becoming damp and chilly. Several elderly persons, in the dress of the aldermen of the city, wearing their gold chains, sat near the pulpit, for there were seats for the better classes around it. Among them was Master Herlion, the alderman of Cheap-ward. He sat apparently absorbed in grief, his hands

resting on his walking-staff, his head thrown back, and regarding the preacher with fixed attention. As any portion of the discourse touched upon the disappearance of his unworthy nephew, a tear would start, and trickle down his venerable cheek, which sorrow had rendered more than usually pallid.

While the doctor held forth on "the detestable and damnable sin of witchcraft" several passers-by were attracted to the spot by the vehemence of his manner. Among these were two young men, dressed in the gay costume of the time. One of them bore a hawk upon his fist, and was followed by a couple of dogs, which instantly began to pick a quarrel with some of their canine fellows belonging to the congregation. The uproar which ensued was, however, soon silenced by a man who stood beneath the pulpit with a large whip, which he vigorously applied to the hides of the belligerents.*

* In Brant's "Ship of Fools," translated by Barclay, the indecent practice, so prevalent in the middle ages, of

The young man with the hawk and the dogs was William Lovelace, and his companion was Harry Pearce.

It was quite evident that curiosity, and not devotion, induced them to pause and listen to the discourse of the preacher. They were well known to many of the citizens, who eyed them intently for some time, while the gallants stared about them in an impudent and hectoring manner.

Master Herlion bent on Lovelace a stern look of displeasure; and the young man was

going to church with hawk and hound, is justly censured in the following lines:

"Into the church then comes another sotte,
Withouten devotion, jetting up and down,
Or to be seene, and showe his garded cote.
Another on his fiste a sparhawke or faweone,
Or else a cokow."

In the accounts of the churchwardens of Broad Blunsdon, in Wiltshire, during the early part of the 17th century, there is frequent mention of a disbursement in the following terms:

"Item, paide to y^e^ clerk for washing the church linen and whipping the dogges out of the church . . vi^d.^"

for a moment disconcerted by that look, but he soon resumed his self-possession and whispered to Pearce — whose features assumed a grimace expressive of contempt. He then made a sign to his companion to follow him. As they swaggered through the church-yard towards Cheap, the eyes of several of the congregation followed them until they were out of sight.

The boon companions sauntered down the Cheap, laughing, talking aloud, leering at the windows, and peeping beneath the hood of every female who passed them. Arriving in the Poultry, they began to converse in a lower tone.

"I would we had got through this business," observed Pearce; "for wherever I walk out, I am dogged by the city-sergeants, who follow me like mine own shadow. I 'd wager a pottle that fellow on the other side o' the way is one o' them in disguise." Then hallooing at the man to whom he alluded — "Harkee, sirrah, I 've a mind to teach thee

a lesson, and break my walking-staff on thy costard!"

"Whist, whist!" said Lovelace, taking him by the arm; "'prithee, be not a fool; thou wilt only provoke the knave, if he be an officer; and if he be not, he may break thy head and cause a fray, which would bring every eye upon us."

"Tut, tut," replied Pearce, petulantly: "I 'll teach the knave that a gentleman's son is not to be followed like a cutpurse."

"Be still," continued Lovelace; "be still, I tell thee. Our business is to shun remark with all the care we can; and, by the Rood! thou art bringing it upon us. If we are once embroiled with these citizens, they 'll reck little for thy gentility."

By this time they had reached Lombard Street; and Lovelace, looking over his shoulder, was rejoiced to find that the cause of Pearce's uneasiness was not in sight. Threading the narrow lanes, they reached Fish Street Hill, crossed London Bridge, took boat at St.

Olave's stairs, and ordered the waterman to row over to a small fishing-vessel lying in the stream off Billingsgate.

"Beshrew me if thou 'rt not as cunning as a fox, Will," said Pearce, in a whisper, to his friend. "I was cudgelling my brains to guess why you crossed the water—but I see it now."

They were soon alongside the fishing-boat; which was called "the Laverock;" and Lovelace, scrambling up on the deck of the vessel, bidding Pearce remain in the wherry, entered into conversation with the Master.

"Mass!" muttered Pearce to himself; "how Will 's paying court to that man-fish, the skipper. Ha, the fellow shakes his head! He 's not to be had. So, Will turns his back to us while he pops a noble in his hand. Ha! the knave's face brightens now. He 'll grin like a hyena when he gets a hundred shillings for this service.

In a few minutes Lovelace returned; and bade the waterman row them back to St. Olave's stairs, where they landed.

"Now," said Pearce, "let 's to the *Tabberd*, Will, and have a stoop of wine, for my throat is like an oven."

"Have with thee, then," cried Lovelace. "Though 'twould take all the wine in Christendom to cool thy throat." And linking his arm in that of his friend, they proceeded to the well-known inn in Southwark.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STAKE.

A WEEK passed away, and no tidings were heard of Arthur Lechmere. He appeared neither at mass nor at merry-making: the choice spirits who mustered at the "Holly-branch," marvelled that he came not; and Master Herlion had taken to his chamber, absolutely refusing to see anybody except his gossip and spiritual pastor, the priest of St. Mary-le-Bow.

All this while poor Miriam lay in her damp cell within the prison of Newgate. Hope had deserted her; she prayed for death, but death came not to her relief. Arthur was lost to her—she felt assured of that, and she waited for the sentence which she knew would consign her to the flames.

Old Abraham, as may be supposed, was fran-

tic with grief; he had applied in vain at the prison for an interview with his beloved child, but he met only with insult and derision. The gaoler spat in his face; and those who saw the wretched old man daily walking distractedly before the dismal building which contained that which he valued far before his wealth, pitied him not, because he was a Jew and an unbeliever. No tear dimmed the haggard and blood-shot eyes of the old Israelite, yet his rent gaberdine and uncombed beard, and grief-stricken aspect, bespoke that mental agony which finds no relief in weeping.

It was autumn, and dan winter had given notice of his approach betimes; the evenings were misty and chilly, and the citizens, gathered round their cheerful fires, mingled with the tales which were wont to amuse them, the story of Arthur's bewitchment, the imprisonment of the witch woman, and her approaching fate, not forgetting the disappearance of the young man, which, in the spirit of the times, of course was attributed to supernatural agency.

It was autumn,—the mists and fogs which rose from the river and the marshes on its southern bank, now began to envelope the city in their heavy mantle: several gloomy days succeeded; then it blew a hurricane, and the rain descended in torrents, till the grim figures at the ends of the water-spouts on the tower of St. Mary-le-Bow seemed to vomit forth another deluge,—fit type of the tears that flowed in the house of one who dwelt near it. Dense fogs followed, and early one morning the city was shrouded in almost Egyptian darkness. Anon the sun appeared, and ascended the east like a huge globe of fire, but the fog was still dense and impenetrable. The citizens were yet in their beds, and those only whose business called them abroad at that early hour, were stirring; even the noisy, saucy, chirping and cawing of the sparrows and jackdaws were not yet heard.

It was not so in Smithfield. There, near to the place where stood that huge permanent gibbet, to which old records so often allude, where wretched criminals expiated their crimes,

and in after ages martyrs perished for their faith, was fixed a large post, or stake, and near it was piled a heap of fagots, the preparations for burning a human creature alive. The victim was Miriam, the daughter of Abraham the Jew.

As the sun ascended, the fog gradually thinned, and windows and gables became visible. The city began to give signs of re-animation; various sounds within the walls denoted that the Londoners had risen from their slumbers. Two ruffianly men, who had remained like statues near the pile of fagots, shook themselves,

"And swung around their waists their tingling hands;"

for at that early hour the cold was intense. They were savage-looking wretches, fit actors for the inhuman scene in which they were about to be engaged.

As the two worthies conversed together, they looked earnestly towards the city gates, which were now thrown open; but the victim came

not; the doors of Newgate prison remained closed.

Several of those shivering houseless wretches who are always to be seen in great cities, and who had probably passed the night under the stalls and pent-houses of St. Nicholas' shambles, now came forth, and drew near the pile of fagots. Sturdy rogues were some of them, who had probably in their time excited other feelings than those of charity in their applications for relief to the good citizens in the fields and lanes in the neighbourhood of London. Others also came to the spot; in fact, the crowd was gradually increasing, and the gentry composing it were the reverse of reputable, either in manner or appearance.

Meanwhile, the east was brightening, misty vapours rolled off, and hung on the hills which surround London; weathercocks creaked, and flashed back the sun-beams, and the pigeons commenced their morning's flight, while wreaths of white smoke began to rise from the house-tops.

At length the mournful tolling of a bell sounded within the prison, a bustle was heard at the gates, which were thrown open, and a party of bill-men ranged themselves in order for the procession, which was immediately in motion. The sheriffs came forth, attended by the city sergeants, mounted their horses, and the word was given to set forward.

The Jewess appeared. The bill-men fell into line, and the sad procession advanced towards the stake, the chaplain of the prison at its head. The bell tolled dismally, and the priest moved slowly along, repeating the verses of the psalm from an illuminated volume, the gilt ornaments of which had become sadly obscured by his reverence's heavy thumb.

All eyes were immediately turned towards Miriam; she was divested of her upper garments; her long dark hair swept over her shoulders, and her feet and legs, which were encircled by livid bands, the marks of the cords which had bound her to the rack, were entirely bare. Many were there, who, in gazing with ardent

admiration on those beautifully turned and snowy ankles, forgot that in a few minutes the greedy flames would devour them. She held a lighted taper in her right hand, and walked with a faltering step, but without assistance. Her eyes, which seemed to derive more intensity of lustre from the contrast with her complexion pallid with agony, were tearless, but cold drops stood on her brow, and glistened in the sickly light of the taper she held. Behind her walked the executioner and his assistants. All the while, the sonorous voice of the burly priest was heard; while ever and anon the solemn booming of the death-bell chimed in, as if to render the entrance to eternity yet more awful.

The procession reached the stake, and halted, and the executioner, taking the taper from the hands of the Jewess, bade her prepare for death. The buzz among the crowd at once subsided, and each one, craning his neck, tried to obtain a view of the innocent victim of a gross superstition.

Among the throng was a mendicant friar, clad in a coarse and ragged frock, girt with a rope, and with his cowl drawn over his face: this person seemed to watch the proceedings with intense interest; but he spoke to no one.

On a sudden, three horsemen advanced at a trot down the road, which led them from St. John's Priory, at Clerkenwell. They were well-mounted, but plainly dressed, and were apparently of the better class of yeomen. They held on their way towards the city, but espying the crowd which had assembled round the place of execution, they altered their course, as if desirous of witnessing the sad spectacle.

"Where is the malefactor?" inquired the foremost horseman, as he reined up his steed.

"It is the witch-woman yonder," was the reply.

"Mother of God! so young and so beautiful! —it cannot be!"

The horseman who had uttered this exclamation dismounted, and threw the bridle to one of his companions. He then pushed his way through the crowd, in which he was assisted by the begging friar, who had hitherto been looking on with folded arms, a quiet spectator of the scene; at the same moment, a shrill whistle was given, which had a magical effect upon the crowd.

Instantly all was uproar and wild confusion. Fierce cries arose on all sides: the circle formed by the bill-men round the stake was broken, and the pile of fagots scattered as if by a whirlwind; the larger sticks which they contained furnishing weapons to the most violent.

The sheriffs were thunderstruck, and called out to the guard to stand firm. But the call was drowned in wild cries of "Rescue!—rescue!"

The mendicant friar, who had overturned several in the scuffle, was now by the side of the Jewess.

"My sweet Miriam!" cried he, throwing off his disguise—"thy lover will save thee or perish."

It was Arthur; he cast aside the coarse garment in which he was clad, and appeared armed from head to foot. Miriam uttered a faint shriek, and fell into his arms.

The executioner rushed forward and roughly seized his victim, but was struck to the ground by a blow from Lechmere's mailed fist.

The young man looked on the pale face of his love with an expression of the deepest pity, and then pressed his lips to her bloodless cheek. In the anguish of his heart he had become unconscious of his situation.

"Arthur! Arthur!" cried Hal Pearce, whom the reader will remember in the Holly-branch. "God ha' mercy, man! art distraught! quick,—mount, or we are lost."

The tumult increased; blows, shouts, and execrations bespoke the obstinacy of the struggle. The bill-men did their best to prevent the rescue, but their weapons were of little use in

the crowd, which hemmed them in on all sides, and some of the sturdy beggars had succeeded in dismounting the sheriffs, though not before one or two of them had fallen beneath the swords of those officers.

Arthur's immediate friends kept as much as possible aloof from the scuffle, in order that they might be enabled the more effectually to cover his retreat, which was effected with some difficulty. The bold youth was soon on horseback, and the disarmed sheriffs had the mortification to see him ride from the field, bearing before him on his powerful steed, the object for which he had achieved so dangerous an enterprise. His friends, Pearce and Lovelace, followed in his rear, and struck down two or three men who attempted to stop their flight; while the executioner and his assistants escaped from the spot, amid the hootings and peltings of the crowd, and ran off to Castle Baynard, for a party of mounted archers to pursue the fugitives.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST PANG.

On the evening preceding the morning described in the last chapter, Master Herlion had retired to his chamber at an earlier hour than usual.

The old man was unprepared for the stroke which he had received. He felt that the youth who had been the sole object of his most anxious care and solicitude, was estranged from him; and he had now nothing left in the world for which life was desirable. Hideous dreams were his companions for the night. Ghastly spectres, assuming the semblance of his much loved but unworthy nephew, hovered over his couch and seemed to

implore pity and forgiveness,—then a huge chasm yawned at his feet and belched forth crimson flames, through which grim fiends were dragging Arthur, and the woman who had lured him, to destruction.

Such were the horrors which superstition lent to "a mind diseased," and haunted the slumbers of the Alderman, until the beams of the sun breaking through the fog, gleamed on the window of his chamber. He arose, pale and enfeebled, and having made his toilet, knelt before a large crucifix which occupied a niche in the wall; scarcely, however, had his lips moved in prayer, when a hasty knocking at the door caused him to start to his feet.

"Who knocks?" inquired Master Herlion, hoping, yet doubting that some one had brought news of his nephew.

His surprise and vexation were, however, great indeed, when he learned that an aged Jew was waiting to see him, and had forced his way into the house in spite of the oppo-

sition of the porter, whom he had overthrown in the scuffle.

As the Alderman descended, his frame quivered with a thousand emotions—hope, fear, doubt, and dread palsied the old man, and he entered the room in which the intruder was waiting, trembling like a criminal.

There stood Abraham the Jew, who immediately, in a strain of piteous entreaty, besought him to intercede for his daughter.

Master Herlion was not unmoved at the Israelite's passionate appeal, but he felt that it was now too late.

"It is of no avail," said he; "I would not save her if I had the power. Appeal to Satan, who has brought her to this pass."

Big tears rose in the eyes of Abraham on hearing these words. It was well perhaps for Master Herlion that grief had rendered him weak and helpless, or he might in his despair have been tempted to revenge himself upon the Christian.

"Alderman," said Abraham, falling at his

feet and catching the skirt of his furred gown, —"hear me—hear me, as thou wouldst thyself be heard at that great day when the Jew and the Christian shall be summoned to the judgment. The sweet girl who has been doomed to death is innocent as thyself of sorcery. O Christian! if thou ever hadst a child, think for one moment on the agony of him who kneels at thy feet. Before the most High God, I do proclaim her innocent. Take my life—my wealth—thou knowest I am wealthy—but spare my child."

The Alderman averted his head, and drew his right hand across his eyes.

"I cannot serve you," said he—"she is beyond my power—you should have appealed to the court. I, too, have lost a child!"

"I did—I did appeal," cried the Jew hysterically, "and they bade me begone and try the hearts of those who had doomed my child. You, Master Herlion, saw her on the accursed engine. Looked she like a witch, think ye? can so much innocence consort

with vain and wicked arts? Angels might look upon that sweet girl and claim her as their sister—and you,—oh! cruelty of unjust man!—you were present when her fair limbs were given to the torture!"

Master Herlion attempted to reply, but emotion choked his utterance. He turned towards the door as if he would have escaped from the room, but the Jew anticipated him, and starting on his feet opposed his exit.

"Stay!" cried Abraham. "I read thy heart, old man: thou wouldst save her,—but she is a Jewess. Lo! I discover what threats or persuasions could never have wrung from me; not even that rack which *Christians* delight to use."

He took from his bosom a small enamelled locket with a representation of the Virgin and Child, to which was appended a green silk cord.

"Behold this jewel!" cried the Jew; "twenty years ago I took it from the neck

of that dear child whom I have called my daughter."

The alderman writhed at the sight of the trinket, as though he had been transfixed with a lance, and staggering backwards, sunk into a chair, gasping like a dying man. Abraham paused for a moment, but attributing the shock to some other emotion continued :—

"Yes; twenty years ago, Alderman. It was the Fast of Kipur: the Londoners fell upon and despoiled the Jews. I was a young man, and strong of limb then. I helped my brethren to beat off the rout, that drove them through Leadenhall Street like a herd of deer. The citizens armed at last, and put down the tumult, but not before many had fallen in the fray."

"But the jewel?" said the alderman, recovering himself.

Abraham waved his hand as if enjoining silence, and continued :—

"Yes; the hellish rout slew in their fury both women and children; my Miriam and

her little ones perished, and I could not revenge them then—my costly merchandise was burned, with all my goods. Now mark, Alderman: we found shelter in a large and strong place near Aldgate, and there we remained till the wrath of our enemies was appeased."

"What of the jewel?—what of the jewel?" cried Master Herlion, rising from his seat and advancing with a threatening gesture. Horrible doubts arose in the breast of the alderman.

"Be still, Christian," he repeated; "be still, and thou shalt hear all; but move one step, or call thy servants, and my tale is ended. —Hearken! one night, when all were sleeping soundly, three of my brethren came to me: 'Up, Abraham,' said they; 'arouse thee and come with us.' I followed, scarce knowing whither I went; we reached a vault; a fire burnt brightly;—but I see thou art impatient, and I will be brief; they were about to sacrifice a child to the Spirit of Evil, and *that child was a Christian's!*"

Master Herlion shuddered violently, but he waited without speaking, to hear what followed. Abraham continued:—

"Alderman, that child looked in my face as the lamb turns its mild eyes upon the butcher—it clung to my gaberdine for protection—it supplicated for its little life; and *although a Jew*, my heart melted. I swore by the God of my fathers that it should not be harmed."

"What then?" said the alderman, gasping for breath. "What then?"

"*It did not plead in vain!*" shouted the Jew in a voice of thunder: "I saved its life, but at the price of five hundred marks, and oh, it was a life worth saving. For twenty years I have treasured up the bauble which then hung around its neck, and now my darling is torn from me for ever!—for twenty years——"

He paused. The alderman, faintly ejaculating "*Christ Jesu! my child!*" had once more sunk into his chair, where he lay with-

out sense or motion; a crimson stream issued from his mouth and dyed his vest.—Death had come to his relief, and severed the father and his child for ever!

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE'S LAST STRUGGLE.

ARTHUR LECHMERE'S desperate and successful enterprise was soon noised over the city, and a few minutes after his flight, a party of mounted archers and cross-bowmen dashed through Cheap in pursuit of the fugitives, whose course had been marked by the watchmen on the city walls. Arthur and his friends, as soon as they had cleared all impediments, made a diversion to the right, and in less than half an hour were on the road to Stratford-le-Bow, where he had in readiness proper disguises for himself and the partner of his flight, preparatory to their pro-

ceeding on board the Laverock, which lay at anchor in the Thames at Barking Creek.

But the road they had taken was circuitous, and their pursuers were gaining on them unobserved, in their way through the city. They had scarcely arrived within sight of Bow, when the shouts of the party in pursuit struck on their ears. Arthur shuddered, and looked back on the advancing troop; he urged forward his steed, but the noble animal was oppressed by the unusual burthen. The waters too were out, and the flat marshy country, which even at this day is subject to inundations in wet seasons, was flooded by the recent rains, so much so, indeed, that the road was rendered impassable.

"Courage, my boy! courage, Arthur!" cried Hal Pearce, observing that his friend appeared irresolute, and mistrustful of the water: "'twill reach but to your saddle-girths, —haste, or we are lost."

The water was rushing furiously across the

road, and gurgled fearfully, and the tottering steeds were carried off their legs; yet it was death to hesitate. Arthur clasped his Miriam tightly, gave his horse the rein, and bade her take courage; but, alas for the lovers! the pursuers were upon them. Two or three of the archers dashed fearlessly into the water, but their horses were carried down the stream, and their companions began to pour their shafts upon the fugitives. Pearce and Lovelace soon fell, covered with arrows, but Arthur's mailed coat of proof protected him, while he shielded with his body the terrified girl whom he had snatched from the stake, and still urged forward his steed, quivering and plunging under the galling discharge of the archers. At length an arrow pierced its flank, and the poor animal, in the throes of death, rolled over and plunged the lovers in the flood! There was a faint shriek from the unfortunate girl as she disappeared below the surface of the waters, and a momentary struggle

of her lover; but his heavy mail, which had so well protected him from the arrows of the pursuers, prevented his swimming, and rendered escape impossible; the waters rolled over them, and locked in each other's arms, they sunk beneath the flood!

The archers with difficulty saved themselves from a similar fate; and having regained the land, and become satisfied that their prey was beyond their reach, collected together and proceeded back to the city, where all was astonishment and wonder. The death of old Herlion, and the sad fate of his daughter and his nephew cast a gloom over the honest folks of the West Cheap; but few pitied Abraham, the Jew; he was an unbeliever; and Christians in that age could find no sympathy for an old Israelite, who had wilfully concealed the child of another. On the morrow he was seized by the officers of justice, his wealth confiscated, and he himself committed to Newgate, where he died

broken-hearted, a few days afterwards, exclaiming with his last breath against the cruelty of those who had destroyed his adopted child.

THE END.

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