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#153 in our series by Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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BOOK XII.

THE BATTLE OF BARNET.

CHAPTER I.

A KING IN HIS CITY HOPES TO RECOVER HIS REALM--A WOMAN IN HER CHAMBER FEARS TO FORFEIT HER OWN.

Edward and his army reached St. Alban's. Great commotion, great joy, were in the Sanctuary of Westminster! The Jerusalem Chamber, therein, was made the high council-hall of the friends of York. Great commotion, great terror, were in the city of London. Timid Master Stokton had been elected mayor; horribly frightened either to side with an Edward or a Henry, timid Master Stokton feigned or fell ill. Sir Thomas Cook, a wealthy and influential citizen, and a member of the House of Commons, had been appointed deputy in his stead. Sir Thomas Cook took fright also, and ran away. [Fabyan.] The power of the city thus fell into the hands of Ureswick, the Recorder, a zealous Yorkist. Great commotion, great scorn, were in the breasts of the populace, as the Archbishop of York, hoping thereby to rekindle their loyalty, placed King Henry on horseback, and paraded him through the streets from Chepeside to Walbrook, from Walbrook to St. Paul's; for the news of Edward's arrival, and the sudden agitation and excitement it produced on his enfeebled frame, had brought upon the poor king one of the epileptic attacks to which he had been subject from childhood, and which made the cause of his frequent imbecility; and, just recovered from such a fit,--his eyes vacant, his face haggard, his head drooping,--the spectacle of such an antagonist to the vigorous Edward moved only pity in the few and ridicule in the many. Two thousand Yorkist gentlemen were in the various Sanctuaries; aided and headed by the Earl of Essex, they came forth armed and clamorous, scouring the streets, and shouting, "King Edward!" with impunity. Edward's popularity in London was heightened amongst the merchants by prudent reminiscences of the vast debts he had incurred, which his victory only could ever enable him to repay to his good citizens. [Comines.] The women, always, in such a movement, active partisans, and useful, deserted their hearths to canvass all strong arms and stout hearts for the handsome woman-lover. [Comines.] The Yorkist Archbishop of Canterbury did his best with the ecclesiastics, the Yorkist Recorder his best with the flat-caps. Alwyn, true to his anti-feudal principles, animated all the young freemen to support the merchant-king, the favourer of commerce, the man of his age! The city authorities began to yield to their own and the general metropolitan predilections. But still the Archbishop of York had six thousand soldiers at his disposal, and London could be yet saved to Warwick, if the prelate acted with energy and zeal and good faith. That such was his first intention is clear, from his appeal to the public loyalty in King Henry's procession; but when he perceived how little effect that pageant had produced; when, on re-entering the Bishop of London's palace, he saw before him the guileless, helpless puppet of contending

factions, gasping for breath, scarcely able to articulate, the heartless prelate turned away, with a muttered ejaculation of contempt.

"Clarence had not deserted," said he to himself, "unless he saw greater profit with King Edward!" And then he began to commune with himself, and to commune with his brother-prelate of Canterbury; and in the midst of all this commune arrived Catesby, charged with messages to the archbishop from Edward,--messages full of promise and affection on the one hand, of menace and revenge upon the other. Brief: Warwick's cup of bitterness had not yet been filled; that night the archbishop and the mayor of London met, and the Tower was surrendered to Edward's friends. The next day Edward and his army entered, amidst the shouts of the populace; rode to St. Paul's, where the archbishop [Sharon Turner. It is a comfort to think that this archbishop was, two years afterwards, first robbed, and then imprisoned, by Edward IV.; nor did he recover his liberty till a few weeks before his death, in 1476 (five years subsequently to the battle of Barnet).] met him, leading Henry by the hand, again a captive; thence Edward proceeded to Westminster Abbey, and, fresh from his atrocious perjury at York, offered thanksgiving for its success. The Sanctuary yielded up its royal fugitives, and, in joy and in pomp, Edward led his wife and her new-born babe, with Jacquetta and his elder children, to Baynard's Castle.

The next morning (the third day), true to his promise, Warwick marched towards London with the mighty armament he had now collected. Treason had done its worst,--the metropolis was surrendered, and King Henry in the Tower.

"These things considered," says the Chronicler, "the earl saw that all calculations of necessity were brought to this end,--that they must now be committed to the hazard and chance of one battle." [Hall.] He halted, therefore, at St. Alban's, to rest his troops; and marching thence towards Barnet, pitched his tents on the upland ground, then called the Heath or Chase of Gladsmoor, and waited the coming foe.

Nor did Edward linger long from that stern meeting. Entering London on the 11th of April, he prepared to quit it on the 13th. Besides the force he had brought with him, he had now recruits in his partisans from the Sanctuaries and other hiding-places in the metropolis, while London furnished him, from her high-spirited youths, a gallant troop of bow and bill men, whom Alwyn had enlisted, and to whom Edward willingly appointed, as captain, Alwyn himself,--who had atoned for his submission to Henry's restoration by such signal activity on behalf of the young king, whom he associated with the interests of his class, and the weal of the great commercial city, which some years afterwards rewarded his affection by electing him to her chief magistracy. [Nicholas Alwyn, the representative of that generation which aided the commercial and anti-feudal policy of Edward IV. and Richard III., and welcomed its consummation under their Tudor successor, rose to be Lord Mayor of London in the fifteenth year of the reign of Henry VII.--FABYAN.]

It was on that very day, the 13th of April, some hours before the departure of the York army, that Lord Hastings entered the Tower, to give orders relative to the removal of the unhappy Henry, whom Edward had resolved to take with him on his march.

And as he had so ordered and was about to return, Alwyn, emerging from one of the interior courts, approached him in much agitation, and said thus: "Pardon me, my lord, if in so grave an hour I recall your attention to one you may haply have forgotten."

"Ah, the poor maiden; but you told me, in the hurried words that we have already interchanged, that she was safe and well."

"Safe, my lord,--not well. Oh, hear me. I depart to battle for your cause and your king's. A gentleman in your train has advised me that you are married to a noble dame in the foreign land. If so, this girl whom I have loved so long and truly may yet forget you, may yet be mine. Oh, give me that hope to make me a braver soldier."

"But," said Hastings, embarrassed, and with a changing countenance, "but time presses, and I know not where the demoiselle--"

"She is here," interrupted Alwyn; "here, within these walls, in yonder courtyard. I have just left her. You, whom she loves, forgot her! I, whom she disdains, remembered. I went to see to her safety, to counsel her to rest here for the present, whatever betides; and at every word I said, she broke in upon me with but one name,--that name was thine! And when stung, and in the impulse of the moment, I exclaimed, 'He deserves not this devotion. They tell me, Sibyll, that Lord Hastings has found a wife in exile.' Oh, that look! that cry! they haunt me still. 'Prove it, prove it, Alwyn,' she cried. 'And--' I interrupted, 'and thou couldst yet, for thy father's sake, be true wife to me?'"

"Her answer, Alwyn?"

"It was this, 'For my father's sake only, then, could I live on; and--' her sobs stopped her speech, till she cried again, 'I believe it not! thou hast deceived me. Only from his lips will I hear the sentence.' Go to her, manfully and frankly, as becomes you, high lord,--go! It is but a single sentence thou hast to say, and thy heart will be the lighter, and thine arm the stronger for those honest words."

Hastings pulled his cap over his brow, and stood a moment as if in reflection; he then said, "Show me the way; thou art right. It is due to her and to thee; and as by this hour to-morrow my soul may stand before the Judgment-seat, that poor child's pardon may take one sin from the large account."

CHAPTER II.

SHARP IS THE KISS OF THE FALCON'S BEAR.

Hastings stood in the presence of the girl to whom he had pledged his truth. They were alone; but in the next chamber might be heard the peculiar sound made by the mechanism of the Eureka. Happy and lifeless mechanism, which moves, and toils, and strives on, to change the destiny of millions, but hath neither ear nor eye, nor sense nor heart,—the avenues of pain to man! She had—yes, literally—she had recognized her lover's step upon the stair, she had awakened at once from that dull and icy lethargy with which the words of Alwyn had chained life and soul. She sprang forward as Hastings entered; she threw herself in delirious joy upon his bosom. "Thou art come, thou art! It is not true, not true. Heaven bless thee! thou art come!" But sudden as the movement was the recoil. Drawing herself back, she gazed steadily on his face, and said, "Lord Hastings, they tell me thy hand is another's. Is it true?"

"Hear me!" answered the nobleman. "When first I—"

"O God! O God! he answers not, he falters! Speak! Is it true?"

"It is true. I am wedded to another."

Sibyll did not fall to the ground, nor faint, nor give vent to noisy passion. But the rich colour, which before had been varying and fitful, deserted her cheek, and left it of an ashen whiteness; the lips, too, grew tightly compressed, and her small fingers, interlaced, were clasped with strained and convulsive energy, so that the quivering of the very arms was perceptible. In all else she seemed composed, as she said, "I thank you, my lord, for the simple truth; no more is needed. Heaven bless you and yours! Farewell!"

"Stay! you shall—you must hear me on. Thou knowest how dearly in youth I loved Katherine Nevile. In manhood the memory of that love haunted me, but beneath thy sweet smile I deemed it at last effaced; I left thee to seek the king, and demand his assent to our union. I speak not of obstacles that then arose; in the midst of them I learned Katherine was lone and widowed,—was free. At her own summons I sought her presence, and learned that she had loved me ever,—loved me still. The intoxication of my early dream returned; reverse and exile followed close; Katherine left her state, her fortunes, her native land, and followed the banished man; and so memory and gratitude and destiny concurred, and the mistress of my youth became my wife. None other could have replaced thy image; none other have made me forget the faith I pledged thee. The thought of thee has still pursued me,—will pursue me to the last. I dare not say now that I love thee still, but yet—" He paused, but rapidly resumed, "Enough, enough! dear art thou to me, and honoured,—dearer, more honoured than a sister. Thank Heaven, at least, and thine own virtue, my falsehood leaves thee pure and stainless. Thy hand may yet bless a worthier man. If our cause triumphs, thy fortunes, thy father's fate, shall be my fondest care.

Never, never will my sleep be sweet, and my conscience laid to rest,
till I hear thee say, as honoured wife--perchance, as blessed and
blessing mother--'False one, I am happy!'"

A cold smile, at these last words, flitted over the girl's face,--the
smile of a broken heart; but it vanished, and with that strange
mixture of sweetness and pride,--mild and forgiving, yet still
spirited and firm,--which belonged to her character, she nerved
herself to the last and saddest effort to preserve dignity and conceal
despair. "Farther words, my lord, are idle; I am rightly punished for
a proud folly. Let not woman love above her state. Think no more of
my destiny."

"No, no," interrupted the remorseful lord, "thy destiny must haunt me
till thou hast chosen one with a better right to protect thee."

At the repetition of that implied desire to transfer her also to
another, a noble indignation came to mar the calm for which she had
hitherto not vainly struggled. "Oh, man!" she exclaimed, with
passion, "does thy deceit give me the right to deceive another? I--I
wed!--I--I--vow at the altar--a love dead, dead forever--dead as my
own heart! Why dost thou mock me with the hollow phrase, 'Thou art
pure and stainless?' Is the virginity of the soul still left? Do the
tears I have shed for thee; doth the thrill of my heart when I heard
thy voice; doth the plighted kiss that burns, burns now into my brow,
and on my lips,--do these, these leave me free to carry to a new
affection the cinders and ashes of a soul thou hast ravaged and
deflowered? Oh, coarse and rude belief of men, that naught is lost if
the mere form be pure! The freshness of the first feelings, the bloom
of the sinless thought, the sigh, the blush of the devotion--never,
never felt but once! these, these make the true dower a maiden should
bring to the hearth to which she comes as wife. Oh, taunt! Oh,
insult! to speak to me of happiness, of the altar! Thou never
knewest, lord, how I really loved thee!" And for the first time, a
violent gush of tears came to relieve her heart.

Hastings was almost equally overcome. Well experienced as he was in
those partings when maids reproach and gallants pray for pardon, but
still sigh, "Farewell,"--he had now no words to answer that burst of
uncontrollable agony; and he felt at once humbled and relieved, when
Sibyll again, with one of those struggles which exhaust years of life,
and almost leave us callous to all after-trial, pressed back the
scalding tears, and said, with unnatural sweetness: "Pardon me, my
lord, I meant not to reproach; the words escaped me,--think of them no
more. I would fain, at least, part from you now as I had once hoped
to part from you at the last hour of life,--without one memory of
bitterness and anger, so that my conscience, whatever its other
griefs, might say, 'My lips never belied my heart, my words never
pained him!' And now then, Lord Hastings, in all charity, we part.
Farewell forever, and forever! Thou hast wedded one who loves thee,
doubtless, as tenderly as I had done. Ah, cherish that affection!
There are times even in thy career when a little love is sweeter than
much fame. If thou thinkest I have aught to pardon thee, now with my

whole heart I pray, as while life is mine that prayer shall be murmured, 'Heaven forgive this man, as I do! Heaven make his home the home of peace, and breathe into those now near and dear to him, the love and the faith that I once--'" She stopped, for the words choked her, and, hiding her face, held out her hand, in sign of charity and of farewell.

"Ah, if I dared pray like thee," murmured Hastings, pressing his lips upon that burning hand, "how should I weary Heaven to repair, by countless blessings, the wrong which I have done thee! And Heaven will--oh, it surely will!" He pressed the hand to his heart, dropped it, and was gone.

In the courtyard he was accosted by Alwyn--

"Thou hast been frank, my lord?"

"I have."

"And she bears it, and--"

"See how she forgives, and how I suffer!" said Hastings, turning his face towards his rival; and Alwyn saw that the tears were rolling down his cheeks--"Question me no more." There was a long silence. They quitted the precincts of the Tower, and were at the river-side. Hastings, waving his hand to Alwyn, was about to enter the boat which was to bear him to the war council assembled at Baynard's Castle, when the trader stopped him, and said anxiously,--

"Think you not, for the present, the Tower is the safest asylum for Sibyll and her father? If we fail and Warwick returns, they are protected by the earl; if we triumph, thou wilt insure their safety from all foes?"

"Surely; in either case, their present home is the most secure."

The two men then parted. And not long afterwards, Hastings, who led the on-guard, was on his way towards Barnet; with him also went the foot volunteers under Alwyn. The army of York was on its march. Gloucester, to whose vigilance and energy were left the final preparations, was necessarily the last of the generals to quit the city. And suddenly, while his steed was at the gate of Baynard's Castle, he entered, armed cap-a-pie, into the chamber where the Duchess of Bedford sat with her grandchildren.

"Madame," said he, "I have a grace to demand from you, which will, methinks, not be displeasing. My lieutenants report to me that an alarm has spread amongst my men,--a religious horror of some fearful bombards and guns which have been devised by a sorcerer in Lord Warwick's pay. Your famous Friar Bungey has been piously amongst them, promising, however, that the mists which now creep over the earth shall last through the night and the early morrow; and if he deceive us not, we may post our men so as to elude the hostile

artillery. But, sith the friar is so noted and influential, and sith there is a strong fancy that the winds which have driven back Margaret obeyed his charm, the soldiers clamour out for him to attend us, and, on the very field itself, counteract the spells of the Lancastrian nigromancer. The good friar, more accustomed to fight with fiends than men, is daunted, and resists. As much may depend on his showing us good will, and making our fellows suppose we have the best of the witchcraft, I pray you to command his attendance, and cheer up his courage. He waits without."

"A most notable, a most wise advice, beloved Richard!" cried the duchess. "Friar Bungey is, indeed, a potent man. I will win him at once to your will;" and the duchess hurried from the room.

The friar's bodily fears, quieted at last by assurances that he should be posted in a place of perfect safety during the battle, and his avarice excited by promises of the amplest rewards, he consented to accompany the troops, upon one stipulation,--namely, that the atrocious wizard, who had so often baffled his best spells,--the very wizard who had superintended the accursed bombards, and predicted Edward's previous defeat and flight (together with the diabolical invention, in which all the malice and strength of his sorcery were centred),--might, according to Jacquetta's former promise, be delivered forthwith to his mercy, and accompany him to the very spot where he was to dispel and counteract the Lancastrian nigromancer's enchantments. The duchess, too glad to purchase the friar's acquiescence on such cheap terms, and to whose superstitious horror for Adam's lore in the black art was now added a purely political motive for desiring him to be made away with,--inasmuch as in the Sanctuary she had at last extorted from Elizabeth the dark secret which might make him a very dangerous witness against the interests and honour of Edward,--readily and joyfully consented to this proposition.

A strong guard was at once despatched to the Tower with the friar himself, followed by a covered wagon, which was to serve for conveyance to Bungey and his victim.

In the mean while, Sibyll, after remaining for some time in the chamber which Hastings had abandoned to her solitary woe, had passed to the room in which her father held mute commune with his Eureka.

The machine was now thoroughly completed,--improved and perfected, to the utmost art the inventor ever could attain. Thinking that the prejudice against it might have arisen from its uncouth appearance, the poor philosopher had sought now to give it a gracious and imposing appearance. He had painted and gilt it with his own hands; it looked bright and gaudy in its gay hues; its outward form was worthy of the precious and propitious jewel which lay hidden in its centre.

"See, child, see!" said Adam; "is it not beautiful and comely?"

"My dear father, yes!" answered the poor girl, as still she sought to

smile; then, after a short silence, she continued, "Father, of late, methinks, I have too much forgotten thee; pardon me, if so. Henceforth, I have no care in life but thee; henceforth let me ever, when thou toilest, come and sit by thy side. I would not be alone,--I dare not! Father, Father! God shield thy harmless life! I have nothing to love under heaven but thee!"

The good man turned wistfully, and raised, with tremulous hands, the sad face that had pressed itself on his bosom. Gazing thereon mournfully, he said, "Some new grief hath chanced to thee, my child. Methought I heard another voice besides thine in yonder room. Ah, has Lord Hastings--"

"Father, spare me! Thou wert too right; thou didst judge too wisely. Lord Hastings is wedded to another! But see, I can smile still, I am calm. My heart will not break so long as it hath thee to love and pray for!"

She wound her arms round him as she spoke, and he roused himself from his world out of earth again. Though he could bring no comfort, there was something, at least, to the forlorn one, in his words of love, in his tears of pity.

They sat down together, side by side, as the evening darkened,--the Eureka forgotten in the hour of its perfection! They noted not the torches which flashed below, reddened at intervals the walls of their chamber, and gave a glow to the gay gilding and bright hues of the gaudy model. Yet those torches flickered round the litter that was to convey Henry the Peaceful to the battlefield, which was to decide the dynasty of his realm! The torches vanished, and forth from the dark fortress went the captive king.

Night succeeded to eve, when again the red glare shot upward on the Eureka, playing with fantastic smile on its quaint aspect. Steps and voices, and the clatter of arms, sounded in the yard, on the stairs, in the adjoining chamber; and suddenly the door was flung open, and, followed by some half score soldiers, strode in the terrible friar.

"Aha, Master Adam! who is the greater nigromancer now? Seize him! Away! And help you, Master Sergeant, to bear this piece of the foul fiend's cunning devising. Ho, ho! see you how it is tricked out and furbished up,--all for the battle, I warrant ye!"

The soldiers had already seized upon Adam, who, stupefied by astonishment rather than fear, uttered no sound, and attempted no struggle. But it was in vain they sought to tear from him Sibyll's clinging and protecting arms. A supernatural strength, inspired by a kind of superstition that no harm could chance to him while she was by, animated her slight form; and fierce though the soldiers were, they shrunk from actual and brutal violence to one thus young and fair. Those small hands clung so firmly, that it seemed that nothing but the edge of the sword could sever the child's clasp from the father's neck.

"Harm him not, harm him at your peril, friar!" she cried, with flashing eyes. "Tear him from me, and if King Edward win the day, Lord Hastings shall have thy life; if Lord Warwick, thy days are numbered, too. Beware, and avaunt!"

The friar was startled. He had forgotten Lord Hastings in the zest of his revenge. He feared that, if Sibyll were left behind, the tale she might tell would indeed bring on him a powerful foe in the daughter's lover; on the other hand, should Lord Warwick get the better, what vengeance would await her appeal to the great protector of her father! He resolved, therefore, on the instant, to take Sibyll as well as her father; and if the fortune of the day allowed him to rid himself of Warner, a good occasion might equally occur to dispose forever of the testimony of Sibyll. He had already formed a cunning calculation in desiring Warner's company; for while, should Edward triumph, the sacrifice of the hated Warner was resolved upon, yet, should the earl get the better, he could make a merit to Warner that he (the friar) had not only spared, but saved, his life, in making him his companion. It was in harmony with this double policy that the friar mildly answered to Sibyll,--

"Tusk, my daughter! Perhaps if your father be true to King Edward, and aid my skill instead of obstructing it, he may be none the worse for the journey he must take; and if thou likest to go with him, there's room in the vehicle, and the more the merrier. Harm them not, soldiers; no doubt they will follow quietly."

As he said this, the men, after first crossing themselves, had already hoisted up the Eureka; and when Adam saw it borne from the room, he instinctively followed the bearers. Sibyll, relieved by the thought that, for weal or for woe, she should, at least, share her father's fate, and scarce foreboding much positive danger from the party which contained Hastings and Alwyn, attempted no further remonstrance.

The Eureka was placed in the enormous vehicle,--it served as a barrier between the friar and his prisoners.

The friar himself, as soon as the wagon was in motion, addressed himself civilly enough to his fellow-travellers, and assured them there was nothing to fear, unless Adam thought fit to disturb his incantations. The captives answered not his address, but nestled close to each other, interchanging, at intervals, words of comfort, and recoiling as far as possible from the ex-tregetour, who, having taken with him a more congenial companion in the shape of a great leathern bottle, finally sunk into the silent and complacent doze which usually rewards the libations to the Bromian god.

The vehicle, with many other baggage-wagons in the rear of the army in that memorable night-march, moved mournfully on; the night continued wrapped in fog and mist, agreeably to the weatherwise predictions of the friar. The rumbling groan of the vehicle, the tramp of the soldiers, the dull rattle of their arms, with now and then the neigh

of some knight's steed in the distance, were the only sounds that broke the silence, till once, as they neared their destination, Sibyll started from her father's bosom, and shudderingly thought she recognized the hoarse chant and the tinkling bells of the ominous tymbesteres.

CHAPTER III.

A PAUSE.

In the profound darkness of the night and the thick fog, Edward had stationed his men at a venture upon the heath at Gladsmoor, [Edward "had the greater number of men."--HALL, p. 296.] and hastily environed the camp with palisades and trenches. He had intended to have rested immediately in front of the foe, but, in the darkness, mistook the extent of the hostile line; and his men were ranged only opposite to the left side of the earl's force (towards Hadley), leaving the right unopposed. Most fortunate for Edward was this mistake; for Warwick's artillery, and the new and deadly bombards he had constructed, were placed on the right of the earl's army; and the provident earl, naturally supposing Edward's left was there opposed to him, ordered his gunners to cannonade all night. Edward, "as the flashes of the guns illumined by fits the gloom of midnight, saw the advantage of his unintentional error; and to prevent Warwick from discovering it, reiterated his orders for the most profound silence." [Sharon Turner.] Thus even his very blunders favoured Edward more than the wisest precautions had served his fated foe.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April, the Easter Sabbath. In the fortunes of that day were involved those of all the persons who hitherto, in the course of this narrative, may have seemed to move in separate orbits from the fiery star of Warwick. Now, in this crowning hour, the vast and gigantic destiny of the great earl comprehended all upon which its darkness or its light had fallen: not only the luxurious Edward, the perjured Clarence, the haughty Margaret, her gallant son, the gentle Anne, the remorseful Isabel, the dark guile of Gloucester, the rising fortunes of the gifted Hastings, --but on the hazard of that die rested the hopes of Hilyard, and the interests of the trader Alwyn, and the permanence of that frank, chivalric, hardy, still half Norman race, of which Nicholas Alwyn and his Saxon class were the rival antagonistic principle, and Marmaduke Nevile the ordinary type. Dragged inexorably into the whirlpool of that mighty fate were even the very lives of the simple Scholar, of his obscure and devoted child. Here, into this gory ocean, all scattered rivulets and streams had hastened to merge at last.

But grander and more awful than all individual interests were those assigned to the fortunes of this battle, so memorable in the English annals,--the ruin or triumph of a dynasty; the fall of that warlike baronage, of which Richard Nevile was the personation, the crowning

flower, the greatest representative and the last,--associated with memories of turbulence and excess, it is true, but with the proudest and grandest achievements in our early history; with all such liberty as had been yet achieved since the Norman Conquest; with all such glory as had made the island famous,--here with Runnymede, and there with Cressy; the rise of a crafty, plotting, imperious Despotism, based upon the growing sympathy of craftsmen and traders, and ripening on the one hand to the Tudor tyranny, the Republican reaction under the Stuarts, the slavery, and the civil war, but on the other hand to the concentration of all the vigour and life of genius into a single and strong government, the graces, the arts, the letters of a polished court, the freedom, the energy, the resources of a commercial population destined to rise above the tyranny at which it had first connived, and give to the emancipated Saxon the markets of the world. Upon the victory of that day all these contending interests, this vast alternative in the future, swayed and trembled. Out, then, upon that vulgar craving of those who comprehend neither the vast truths of life nor the grandeur of ideal art, and who ask from poet or narrator the poor and petty morality of "Poetical Justice,"--a justice existing not in our work-day world; a justice existing not in the sombre page of history; a justice existing not in the loftier conceptions of men whose genius has grappled with the enigmas which art and poetry only can foreshadow and divine,--unknown to us in the street and the market, unknown to us on the scaffold of the patriot or amidst the flames of the martyr, unknown to us in the Lear and the Hamlet, in the Agamemnon and the Prometheus. Millions upon millions, ages upon ages, are entered but as items in the vast account in which the recording angel sums up the unerring justice of God to man.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April. And on that very day Margaret and her son, and the wife and daughter of Lord Warwick, landed, at last, on the shores of England. [Margaret landed at Weymouth; Lady Warwick, at Portsmouth.] Come they for joy or for woe, for victory or despair? The issue of this day's fight on the heath of Gladsmoor will decide. Prank thy halls, O Westminster, for the triumph of the Lancastrian king,--or open thou, O Grave, to receive the saint-like Henry and his noble son. The king-maker goes before ye, saint-like father and noble son, to prepare your thrones amongst the living or your mansions amongst the dead!

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April. The heavy mist still covered both armies, but their hum and stir was already heard through the gloaming,--the neighing of steeds, and the clangour of mail. Occasionally a movement of either force made dim forms, seeming gigantic through the vapour, indistinctly visible to the antagonistic army; and there was something ghastly and unearthlike

in these ominous shapes, suddenly seen, and suddenly vanishing, amidst the sullen atmosphere. By this time, Warwick had discovered the mistake of his gunners; for, to the right of the earl, the silence of the Yorkists was still unbroken, while abruptly, from the thick gloom to the left, broke the hoarse mutter and low growl of the awakening war. Not a moment was lost by the earl in repairing the error of the night: his artillery wheeled rapidly from the right wing, and, sudden as a storm of lightning, the fire from the cannon flashed through the dun and heavy vapour, and, not far from the very spot where Hastings was marshalling the wing intrusted to his command, made a deep chasm in the serried ranks. Death had begun his feast!

At that moment, however, from the centre of the Yorkist army, arose, scarcely drowned by the explosion, that deep-toned shout of enthusiasm, which he who has once heard it, coming, as it were, from the one heart of an armed multitude, will ever recall as the most kindling and glorious sound which ever quickened the pulse and thrilled the blood,—for along that part of the army now rode King Edward. His mail was polished as a mirror, but otherwise unadorned, resembling that which now invests his effigies at the Tower, [The suit of armour, however, which the visitor to the Royal Armoury is expected to believe King Edward could have worn, is infinitely too small for such credulity. Edward's height was six feet two inches.] and the housings of his steed were spangled with silver suns, for the silver sun was the cognizance on all his banners. His head was bare, and through the hazy atmosphere the gold of his rich locks seemed literally to shine. Followed by his body squire, with his helm and lance, and the lords in his immediate staff, his truncheon in his hand, he passed slowly along the steady line, till, halting where he deemed his voice could be farthest heard, he reined in, and lifting his hand, the shout of the soldiery was hushed; though still, while he spoke, from Warwick's archers came the arrowy shower, and still the gloom was pierced and the hush interrupted by the flash and the roar of the bombards.

"Englishmen and friends," said the martial chief, "to bold deeds go but few words. Before you is the foe! From Ravenspur to London I have marched, treason flying from my sword, loyalty gathering to my standard. With but two thousand men, on the fourteenth of March, I entered England; on the fourteenth of April, fifty thousand is my muster roll. Who shall say, then, that I am not king, when one month mans a monarch's army from his subjects' love? And well know ye, now, that my cause is yours and England's! Those against us are men who would rule in despite of law,—barons whom I gorged with favours, and who would reduce this fair realm of King, Lords, and Commons to be the appanage and property of one man's measureless ambition,—the park, forsooth, the homestead to Lord Warwick's private house! Ye gentlemen and knights of England, let them and their rabble prosper, and your properties will be despoiled, your lives insecure, all law struck dead. What differs Richard of Warwick from Jack Cade, save that if his name is nobler, so is his treason greater? Commoners and soldiers of England, freemen, however humble, what do these rebel lords (who would rule in the name of Lancaster) desire? To reduce you to

villeins and to bondsmen, as your forefathers were to them. Ye owe freedom from the barons to the just laws of my sires, your kings. Gentlemen and knights, commoners and soldiers, Edward IV. upon his throne will not profit by a victory more than you. This is no war of dainty chivalry,--it is a war of true men against false. No quarter! Spare not either knight or hilding. Warwick, forsooth, will not smite the Commons. Truly not,--the rabble are his friends! I say to you--" and Edward, pausing in the excitement and sanguinary fury of his tiger nature,--the soldiers, heated like himself to the thirst of blood, saw his eyes sparkle, and his teeth gnash, as he added in a deeper and lower, but not less audible voice, "I say to you, SLAY ALL! [Hall.] What heel spares the viper's brood?"

"We will! we will!" was the horrid answer, which came hissing and muttered forth from morion and cap of steel.

"Hark! to their bombards!" resumed Edward. "The enemy would fight from afar, for they excel us in their archers and gunners. Upon them, then, hand to hand, and man to man! Advance banners, sound trumpets! Sir Oliver, my bassinet! Soldiers, if my standard falls, look for the plume upon your king's helmet! Charge!"

Then, with a shout wilder and louder than before, on through the hail of the arrows, on through the glare of the bombards, rather with a rush than in a march, advanced Edward's centre against the array of Somerset; but from a part of the encampment where the circumvallation seemed strongest, a small body of men moved not with the general body.

To the left of the churchyard of Hadley, at this day, the visitor may notice a low wall; on the other side of that wall is a garden, then but a rude eminence on Gladsmoor Heath. On that spot a troop in complete armour, upon destriers pawing impatiently, surrounded a man upon a sorry palfrey, and in a gown of blue,--the colour of royalty and of servitude; that man was Henry the Sixth. In the same space stood Friar Bungey, his foot on the Eureka, muttering incantations, that the mists he had foretold, [Lest the reader should suppose that the importance of Friar Bungey upon this bloody day has been exaggerated by the narrator, we must cite the testimony of sober Allerman Fabyan: "Of the mists and other impediments which fell upon the lords' party, by reason of the incantations wrought by Friar Bungey, as the fame went, me list not to write."] and which had protected the Yorkists from the midnight guns, might yet last, to the confusion of the foe. And near him, under a gaunt, leafless tree, a rope round his neck, was Adam Warner, Sibyl still faithful to his side, nor shuddering at the arrows and the guns, her whole fear concentrated upon the sole life for which her own was prized. Upon this eminence, then, these lookers-on stood aloof. And the meek ears of Henry heard through the fog the inexplicable, sullen, jarring clash,--steel had met steel.

"Holy Father!" exclaimed the kingly saint, "and this is the Easter Sabbath, Thy most solemn day of peace!"

"Be silent," thundered the friar; "thou disturbest my spells.
Barabbarara, Santhinoa, Foggibus incresebo, confusio inimicis,
Garabborra, vapor et mistes!"

We must now rapidly survey the dispositions of the army under Warwick. In the right wing, the command was entrusted to the Earl of Oxford and the Marquis of Montagu. The former, who led the cavalry of that division, was stationed in the van; the latter, according to his usual habit--surrounded by a strong body-guard of knights and a prodigious number of squires as aides-de-camp--remained at the rear, and directed thence by his orders the general movement. In this wing the greater number were Lancastrian, jealous of Warwick, and only consenting to the generalship of Montagu because shared by their favourite hero, Oxford. In the mid-space lay the chief strength of the bowmen, with a goodly number of pikes and bills, under the Duke of Somerset; and this division also was principally Lancastrian, and shared the jealousy of Oxford's soldiery. The left wing, composed for the most part of Warwick's yeomanry and retainers, was commanded by the Duke of Exeter, conjointly with the earl himself. Both armies kept a considerable body in reserve, and Warwick, besides this resource, had selected from his own retainers a band of picked archers, whom he had skilfully placed in the outskirts of a wood that then stretched from Wrotham Park to the column that now commemorates the battle of Barnet, on the high northern road. He had guarded these last-mentioned archers (where exposed in front to Edward's horsemen) by strong tall barricades, leaving only such an opening as would allow one horseman at a time to pass, and defending by a formidable line of pikes this narrow opening left for communication, and to admit to a place of refuge in case of need. These dispositions made, and ere yet Edward had advanced on Somerset, the earl rode to the front of the wing under his special command, and, agreeably to the custom of the time, observed by his royal foe, harangued the troops. Here were placed those who loved him as a father, and venerated him as something superior to mortal man; here the retainers who had grown up with him from his childhood, who had followed him to his first fields of war, who had lived under the shelter of his many castles, and fed, in that rude equality of a more primeval age which he loved still to maintain, at his lavish board. And now Lord Warwick's coal-black steed halted, motionless in the van. His squire behind bore his helmet, overshadowed by the eagle of Monthermer, the outstretched wings of which spread wide into sable plumes; and as the earl's noble face turned full and calm upon the bristling lines, there arose not the vulgar uproar that greeted the aspect of the young Edward. By one of those strange sympathies which pass through multitudes, and seize them with a common feeling, the whole body of those adoring vassals became suddenly aware of the change which a year had made in the face of their chief and father. They saw the gray flakes in his Jove-like curls, the furrows in that lofty brow, the hollows in that bronzed and manly visage, which had seemed to their rude admiration to wear the stamp of the twofold Divinity,--Beneficence and Valour. A thrill of tenderness and awe shot through the veins of every one, tears of devotion rushed into many a hardy eye. No! there was not the ruthless captain addressing his hireling butchers; it was the chief and father

rallying gratitude and love and reverence to the crisis of his stormy fate.

"My friends, my followers, and my children," said the earl, "the field we have entered is one from which there is no retreat; here must your leader conquer or here die. It is not a parchment pedigree, it is not a name derived from the ashes of dead men, that make the only charter of a king. We Englishmen were but slaves, if, in giving crown and sceptre to a mortal like ourselves, we asked not in return the kingly virtues. Beset of old by evil counsellors, the reign of Henry VI. was obscured, and the weal of the realm endangered. Mine own wrongs seemed to me great, but the disasters of my country not less. I deemed that in the race of York, England would know a wiser and happier rule. What was, in this, mine error, ye partly know. A prince dissolved in luxurious vices, a nobility degraded by minions and blood-suckers, a people plundered by purveyors, and a land disturbed by brawl and riot. But ye know not all: God makes man's hearth man's altar: our hearths were polluted, our wives and daughters were viewed as harlots, and lechery ruled the realm. A king's word should be fast as the pillars of the world. What man ever trusted Edward and was not deceived? Even now the unknightly liar stands in arms with the weight of perjury on his soul. In his father's town of York, ye know that he took, three short weeks since, solemn oath of fealty to King Henry. And now King Henry is his captive, and King Henry's holy crown upon his traitor's head. 'Traitors' calls he Us? What name, then, rank enough for him? Edward gave the promise of a brave man, and I served him. He proved a base, a false, a licentious, and a cruel king, and I forsook him; may all free hearts in all free lands so serve kings when they become tyrants! Ye fight against a cruel and atrocious usurper, whose bold hand cannot sanctify a black heart; ye fight not only for King Henry, the meek and the godly,--ye fight not for him alone, but for his young and princely son, the grandchild of Henry of Agincourt, who, old men tell me, has that hero's face, and who, I know, has that hero's frank and royal and noble soul; ye fight for the freedom of your land, for the honour of your women, for what is better than any king's cause,--for justice and mercy, for truth and manhood's virtues against corruption in the laws, slaughter by the scaffold, falsehood in a ruler's lips, and shameless harlotry in the councils of ruthless power. The order I have ever given in war I give now; we war against the leaders of evil, not against the hapless tools; we war against our oppressors, not against our misguided brethren. Strike down every plumed crest, but when the strife is over, spare every common man! Hark! while I speak, I hear the march of your foe! Up standards!--blow trumpets! And now, as I brace my bassinet, may God grant us all a glorious victory, or a glorious grave! On, my merry men! show these London loons the stout hearts of Warwickshire and Yorkshire. On, my merry men! A Warwick! A Warwick!"

As he ended, he swung lightly over his head the terrible battle-axe which had smitten down, as the grass before the reaper, the chivalry of many a field; and ere the last blast of the trumpets died, the troops of Warwick and of Gloucester met, and mingled hand to hand.

Although the earl had, on discovering the position of the enemy, moved some of his artillery from his right wing, yet there still lay the great number and strength of his force. And there, therefore, Montagu, rolling troop on troop to the aid of Oxford, pressed so overpoweringly upon the soldiers under Hastings, that the battle very soon wore a most unfavourable aspect for the Yorkists. It seemed, indeed, that the success which had always hitherto attended the military movements of Montagu was destined for a crowning triumph. Stationed, as we have said, in the rear, with his light-armed squires, upon fleet steeds, around him, he moved the springs of the battle with the calm sagacity which at that moment no chief in either army possessed. Hastings was thoroughly outflanked, and though his men fought with great valour, they could not resist the weight of superior numbers.

In the midst of the carnage in the centre, Edward reined in his steed as he heard the cry of victory in the gale.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "our men at the left are cravens! they fly! they fly!--Ride to Lord Hastings, Sir Humphrey Bouchier, bid him defile hither what men are left him; and now, ere our fellows are well aware what hath chanced yonder, charge we, knights and gentlemen, on, on!--break Somerset's line; on, on, to the heart of the rebel earl!"

Then, visor closed, lance in rest, Edward and his cavalry dashed through the archers and billmen of Somerset; clad in complete mail, impervious to the weapons of the infantry, they slaughtered as they rode, and their way was marked by corpses and streams of blood. Fiercest and fellest of all was Edward himself; when his lance shivered, and he drew his knotty mace from its sling by his saddlebow, woe to all who attempted to stop his path. Vain alike steel helmet or leathern cap, jerkin or coat of mail. In vain Somerset threw himself into the melee. The instant Edward and his cavalry had made a path through the lines for his foot-soldiery, the fortunes of the day were half retrieved. It was no rapid passage, pierced and reclosed, that he desired to effect,--it was the wedge in the oak of war. There, rooted in the very midst of Somerset's troops, doubling on each side, passing on but to return again, where helm could be crashed and man overthrown, the mighty strength of Edward widened the breach more and more, till faster and faster poured in his bands, and the centre of Warwick's army seemed to reel and whirl round the broadening gap through its ranks, as the waves round some chasm in a maelstrom.

But in the interval, the hard-pressed troops commanded by Hastings were scattered and dispersed; driven from the field, they fled in numbers through the town of Barnet; many halted not till they reached London, where they spread the news of the earl's victory and Edward's ruin. [Sharon Turner.]

Through the mist, Friar Bungey discerned the fugitive Yorkists under Hastings, and heard their cries of despair; through the mist, Sibyll saw, close beneath the intrenchments which protected the space on

which they stood, an armed horseman with the well-known crest of Hastings on his helmet, and, with lifted visor, calling his men to the return, in the loud voice of rage and scorn. And then she herself sprang forwards, and forgetting his past cruelty in his present danger, cried his name,--weak cry, lost in the roar of war! But the friar, now fearing he had taken the wrong side, began to turn from his spells, to address the most abject apologies to Adam, to assure him that he would have been slaughtered at the Tower but for the friar's interruption; and that the rope round his neck was but an insignificant ceremony due to the prejudices of the soldiers. "Alas, Great Man," he concluded, "I see still that thou art mightier than I am; thy charms, though silent, are more potent than mine, though my lungs crack beneath them! Confusio Inimicis Taralorolu, I mean no harm to the earl. Garrabora, mistes et nubes!--Lord, what will become of me!"

Meanwhile, Hastings--with a small body of horse, who being composed of knights and squires, specially singled out for the sword, fought with the pride of disdainful gentlemen, and the fury of desperate soldiers--finding it impossible to lure back the fugitives, hewed their own way through Oxford's ranks to the centre, where they brought fresh aid to the terrible arm of Edward.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE.

The mist still continued so thick that Montagu was unable to discern the general prospects of the field; but, calm and resolute in his post, amidst the arrows which whirled round him, and often struck, blunted, against his Milan mail, the marquis received the reports of his aides-de-camp (may that modern word be pardoned?) as one after one they emerged through the fog to his side.

"Well," he said, as one of these messengers now spurred to the spot, "we have beaten off Hastings and his hirelings; but I see not 'the Silver Star' of Lord Oxford's banner." [The Silver Star of the De Veres had its origin in a tradition that one of their ancestors, when fighting in the Holy Land, saw a falling star descend upon his shield. Fatal to men nobler even than the De Veres was that silver falling star.]

"Lord Oxford, my lord, has followed the enemy he routed to the farthest verge of the heath."

"Saints help us! Is Oxford thus headstrong? He will ruin all if he be decoyed from the field! Ride back, sir! Yet hold!"--as another of the aides-de-camp appeared. "What news from Lord Warwick's wing?"

"Sore beset, bold marquis. Gloucester's line seems countless; it

already outflanks the earl. The duke himself seems inspired by hell! Twice has his slight arm braved even the earl's battle-axe, which spared the boy but smote to the dust his comrades!"

"Well, and what of the centre, sir?" as a third form now arrived.

"There rages Edward in person. He hath pierced into the midst. But Somerset still holds on gallantly!" Montagu turned to the first aide-de-camp.

"Ride, sir! Quick! This to Oxford--No pursuit! Bid him haste, with all his men, to the left wing, and smite Gloucester in the rear. Ride, ride, for life and victory! If he come but in time the day is ours!" [Fabyan.]

The aide-de-camp darted off, and the mist swallowed up horse and horseman.

"Sound trumpets to the return!" said the marquis. Then, after a moment's musing, "Though Oxford hath drawn off our main force of cavalry, we have still some stout lances left; and Warwick must be strengthened. On to the earl! Laissez aller! A Montagu! a Montagu!" And lance in rest, the marquis and the knights immediately around him, and hitherto not personally engaged, descended the hillock at a hand-gallop, and were met by a troop outnumbering their own, and commanded by the Lords D'Eyncourt and Say.

At this time Warwick was indeed in the same danger that had routed the troops of Hastings; for, by a similar position, the strength of the hostile numbers being arrayed with Gloucester, the duke's troops had almost entirely surrounded him [Sharon Turner]; and Gloucester himself wondrously approved the trust that had consigned to his stripling arm the flower of the Yorkist army. Through the mists the blood-red manteline he wore over his mail, the grinning teeth of the boar's head which crested his helmet, flashed and gleamed wherever his presence was most needed to encourage the flagging or spur on the fierce. And there seemed to both armies something ghastly and preternatural in the savage strength of this small slight figure thus startlingly caparisoned, and which was heard evermore uttering its sharp war-cry, "Gloucester to the onslaught! Down with the rebels, down!"

Nor did this daring personage disdain, in the midst of his fury, to increase the effect of valour by the art of a brain that never ceased to scheme on the follies of mankind. "See, see!" he cried, as he shot meteor-like from rank to rank, "see, these are no natural vapours! Yonder the mighty friar, who delayed the sails of Margaret, chants his spells to the Powers that ride the gale. Fear not the bombards,-- their enchanted balls swerve from the brave! The dark legions of Air fight for us! For the hour is come when the fiend shall rend his prey!" And fiendlike seemed the form thus screeching forth its predictions from under the grim head-gear; and then darting and disappearing amidst the sea of pikes, cleaving its path of blood!

But still the untiring might of Warwick defied the press of numbers that swept round him tide upon tide. Through the mist, his black armour, black plume, black steed, gloomed forth like one thundercloud in the midst of a dismal heaven. The noble charger bore along that mighty rider, animating, guiding all, with as much ease and lightness as the racer bears its puny weight; the steed itself was scarce less terrible to encounter than the sweep of the rider's axe. Protected from arrow and lance by a coat of steel, the long chaffron, or pike, which projected from its barbed frontal dropped with gore as it scoured along. No line of men, however serried, could resist the charge of that horse and horseman. And vain even Gloucester's dauntless presence and thrilling battle-cry, when the stout earl was seen looming through the vapour, and his cheerful shout was heard, "My merry men, fight on!"

For a third time, Gloucester, spurring forth from his recoiling and shrinking followers, bending low over his saddle-bow, covered by his shield, and with the tenth lance (his favourite weapon, because the one in which skill best supplied strength) he had borne that day, launched himself upon the vast bulk of his tremendous foe. With that dogged energy, that rapid calculation, which made the basis of his character, and which ever clove through all obstacles at the one that, if destroyed, destroyed the rest,--in that, his first great battle, as in his last at Bosworth, he singled out the leader, and rushed upon the giant as the mastiff on the horns and dewlap of the bull.

Warwick, in the broad space which his arm had made around him in the carnage, reined in as he saw the foe and recognized the grisly cognizance and scarlet mantle of his godson. And even in that moment, with all his heated blood and his remembered wrong and his imminent peril, his generous and lion heart felt a glow of admiration at the valour of the boy he had trained to arms,--of the son of the beloved York. "His father little thought," muttered the earl, "that that arm should win glory against his old friend's life!" And as the half-uttered word died on his lips, the well-poised lance of Gloucester struck full upon his bassinet, and, despite the earl's horsemanship and his strength, made him reel in his saddle, while the prince shot by, and suddenly wheeling round, cast away the shivered lance, and assailed him sword in hand.

"Back, Richard! boy, back!" said the earl, in a voice that sounded hollow through his helmet; "it is not against thee that my wrongs call for blood,--pass on!"

"Not so, Lord Warwick," answered Richard, in a sobered and almost solemn voice, dropping for the moment the point of his sword, and raising his visor, that he might be the better heard,--"on the field of battle all memories sweet in peace must die! Saint Paul be my judge, that even in this hour I love you well; but I love renown and glory more. On the edge of my sword sit power and royalty, and what high souls prize most,--ambition; these would nerve me against my own brother's breast, were that breast my barrier to an illustrious future. Thou hast given thy daughter to another! I smite the father to regain my bride. Lay on, and spare not!--for he who hates thee

most would prove not so fell a foe as the man who sees his fortunes made or marred, his love crushed or yet crowned, as this day's battle closes in triumph or defeat. REBEL, DEFEND THYSELF!"

No time was left for further speech; for as Richard's sword descended, two of Gloucester's followers, Parr and Milwater by name, dashed from the halting lines at the distance, and bore down to their young prince's aid. At the same moment, Sir Marmaduke Nevile and the Lord Fitzhugh spurred from the opposite line; and thus encouraged, the band on either side came boldly forward, and the melee grew fierce and general. But still Richard's sword singled out the earl, and still the earl, parrying his blows, dealt his own upon meaner heads. Crushed by one sweep of the axe fell Milwater to the earth; down, as again it swung on high, fell Sir Humphrey Bourchier, who had just arrived to Gloucester with messages from Edward, never uttered in the world below. Before Marmaduke's lance fell Sir Thomas Parr; and these three corpses making a barrier between Gloucester and the earl, the duke turned fiercely upon Marmaduke, while the earl, wheeling round, charged into the midst of the hostile line, which scattered to the right and left.

"On! my merry men, on!" rang once more through the heavy air. "They give way, the London tailors,--on!" and on dashed, with their joyous cry, the merry men of Yorkshire and Warwick, the warrior yeomen! Separated thus from his great foe, Gloucester, after unhorsing Marmaduke, galloped off to sustain that part of his following which began to waver and retreat before the rush of Warwick and his chivalry.

This, in truth, was the regiment recruited from the loyalty of London; and little accustomed, we trow, were the worthy heroes of Cockaigne to the discipline of arms, nor trained to that stubborn resistance which makes, under skilful leaders, the English peasants the most enduring soldiery that the world has known since the day when the Roman sentinel perished amidst the falling columns and lava floods [at Pompeii], rather than, though society itself dissolved, forsake his post unbidden. "Saint Thomas defend us!" muttered a worthy tailor, who in the flush of his valour, when safe in the Chepe, had consented to bear the rank of lieutenant; "it is not reasonable to expect men of pith and substance to be crushed into jellies and carved into subtleties by horse-hoofs and pole-axes. Right about face! Fly!"--and throwing down his sword and shield, the lieutenant fairly took to his heels as he saw the charging column, headed by the raven steed of Warwick, come giant-like through the fog. The terror of one man is contagious, and the Londoners actually turned their backs, when Nicholas Alwyn cried, in his shrill voice and northern accent, "Out on you! What will the girls say of us in East-gate and the Chepe? Hurrah for the bold hearts of London! Round me, stout 'prentices! let the boys shame the men! This shaft for Cockaigne!" And as the troop turned irresolute, and Alwyn's arrow left his bow, they saw a horseman by the side of Warwick reel in his saddle and fall at once to the earth; and so great evidently was the rank of the fallen man that even Warwick reined in, and the charge halted midway in its career. It was

no less a person than the Duke of Exeter whom Alwyn's shaft had disabled for the field. This incident, coupled with the hearty address of the stout goldsmith, served to reanimate the flaggers, and Gloucester, by a circuitous route, reaching their line a moment after, they dressed their ranks, and a flight of arrows followed their loud "Hurrah for London Town!"

But the charge of Warwick had only halted, and (while the wounded Exeter was borne back by his squires to the rear) it dashed into the midst of the Londoners, threw their whole line into confusion, and drove them, despite all the efforts of Gloucester, far back along the plain. This well-timed exploit served to extricate the earl from the main danger of his position; and, hastening to improve his advantage, he sent forthwith to command the reserved forces under Lord St. John, the Knight of Lytton, Sir John Coniers, Dymoke, and Robert Hilyard, to bear down to his aid.

At this time Edward had succeeded, after a most stubborn fight, in effecting a terrible breach through Somerset's wing; and the fog continued still so dense and mirk, that his foe itself--for Somerset had prudently drawn back to re-form his disordered squadron--seemed vanished from the field. Halting now, as through the dim atmosphere came from different quarters the many battle-cries of that feudal-day, by which alone he could well estimate the strength or weakness of those in the distance, his calmer genius as a general cooled, for a time, his individual ferocity of knight and soldier. He took his helmet from his brow to listen with greater certainty; and the lords and riders round him were well content to take breath and pause from the weary slaughter.

The cry of "Gloucester to the onslaught!" was heard no more. Feebler and feebler, scatteringly as it were, and here and there, the note had changed into "Gloucester to the rescue!"

Farther off rose, mingled and blent together, the opposing shouts, "A Montagu! a Montagu! Strike for D'Eyncourt and King Edward!"--"A Say! A Say!"

"Ha!" said Edward, thoughtfully, "bold Gloucester fails, Montagu is bearing on to Warwick's aid, Say and D'Eyncourt stop his path. Our doom looks dark! Ride, Hastings,--ride; retrieve thy laurels, and bring up the reserve under Clarence. But hark ye, leave not his side,--he may desert again! Ho! ho! Again, 'Gloucester to the rescue!' Ah, how lustily sounds the cry of 'Warwick!' By the flaming sword of Saint Michael, we will slacken that haughty shout, or be evermore dumb ourself, ere the day be an hour nearer to the eternal judgment!"

Deliberately Edward rebraced his helm, and settled himself in his saddle, and with his knights riding close each to each, that they might not lose themselves in the darkness, regained his infantry, and led them on to the quarter where the war now raged fiercest, round the black steed of Warwick and the blood-red manteline of the fiery

Richard.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BATTLE.

It was now scarcely eight in the morning, though the battle had endured three hours; and, as yet, victory so inclined to the earl that nought but some dire mischance could turn the scale. Montagu had cut his way to Warwick; Somerset had re-established his array. The fresh vigour brought by the earl's reserve had well-nigh completed his advantage over Gloucester's wing. The new infantry under Hilyard, the unexhausted riders under Sir John Coniers and his knightly compeers, were dealing fearful havoc, as they cleared the plain; and Gloucester, fighting inch by inch, no longer outnumbering but outnumbered, was driven nearer and nearer towards the town, when suddenly a pale, sickly, and ghostlike ray of sunshine, rather resembling the watery gleam of a waning moon than the radiance of the Lord of Light, broke through the mists, and showed to the earl's eager troops the banner and badges of a new array hurrying to the spot. "Behold," cried the young Lord Fitzhugh, "the standard and the badge of the Usurper,--a silver sun! Edward himself is delivered into our hands! Upon them, bill and pike, lance and brand, shaft and bolt! Upon them, and crown the day!"

The same fatal error was shared by Hilyard, as he caught sight of the advancing troop, with their silvery cognizance. He gave the word, and every arrow left its string. At the same moment, as both horse and foot assailed the fancied foe, the momentary beam vanished from the heaven, the two forces mingled in the sullen mists, when, after a brief conflict, a sudden and horrible cry of "Treason! Treason!" resounded from either band. The shining star of Oxford, returning from the pursuit, had been mistaken for Edward's cognizance of the sun. [Cont. Croyl., 555; Fabyan, Habington, Hume, S. Turner.] Friend was slaughtering friend, and when the error was detected, each believed the other had deserted to the foe. In vain, here Montagu and Warwick, and there Oxford and his captains, sought to dispel the confusion, and unite those whose blood had been fired against each other. While yet in doubt, confusion, and dismay, rushed full into the centre Edward of York himself, with his knights and riders; and his tossing banners, scarcely even yet distinguished from Oxford's starry ensigns, added to the general incertitude and panic. Loud in the midst rose Edward's trumpet voice, while through the midst, like one crest of foam upon a roaring sea, danced his plume of snow. Hark! again, again--near and nearer--the tramp of steeds, the clash of steel, the whiz and hiss of arrows, the shout of "Hastings to the onslaught!" Fresh, and panting for glory and for blood, came on King Edward's large reserve; from all the scattered parts of the field spurred the Yorkist knights, where the uproar, so much mightier than before, told them that the crisis of the war was come. Thither, as

vultures to the carcass, they flocked and wheeled; thither D'Eyncourt and Lovell, and Cromwell's bloody sword, and Say's knotted mace; and thither, again rallying his late half-beaten myrmidons, the grim Gloucester, his helmet bruised and dented, but the boar's teeth still gnashing wrath and horror from the grisly crest. But direst and most hateful of all in the eyes of the yet undaunted earl, thither, plainly visible, riding scarcely a yard before him, with the cognizance of Clare wrought on his gay mantle, and in all the pomp and bravery of a holiday suit, came the perjured Clarence. Conflict now it could scarce be called: as well might the Dane have rolled back the sea from his footstool, as Warwick and his disordered troop (often and aye, dazzled here by Oxford's star, there by Edward's sun, dealing random blows against each other) have resisted the general whirl and torrent of the surrounding foe. To add to the rout, Somerset and the on-guard of his wing had been marching towards the earl at the very time that the cry of "treason" had struck their ears, and Edward's charge was made; these men, nearly all Lancastrians, and ever doubting Montagu, if not Warwick, with the example of Clarence and the Archbishop of York fresh before them, lost heart at once,--Somerset himself headed the flight of his force.

"All is lost!" said Montagu, as side by side with Warwick the brothers fronted the foe, and for one moment stayed the rush.

"Not yet," returned the earl; "a band of my northern archers still guard yon wood; I know them,--they will fight to the last gasp! Thither, then, with what men we may. You so marshal our soldiers, and I will make good the retreat. Where is Sir Marmaduke Nevile?"

"Here!"

"Horsed again, young cousin! I give thee a perilous commission. Take the path down the hill; the mists thicken in the hollows, and may hide thee. Overtake Somerset; he hath fled westward, and tell him, from me, if he can yet rally but one troop of horse--but one--and charge Edward suddenly in the rear, he will yet redeem all. If he refuse, the ruin of his king and the slaughter of the brave men he deserts be on his head! Swift, a tout bride, Marmaduke. Yet one word," added the earl, in a whisper,--"if you fail with Somerset, come not back, make to the Sanctuary. You are too young to die, cousin! Away! keep to the hollows of the chase."

As the knight vanished, Warwick turned to his comrades "Bold nephew Fitzhugh, and ye brave riders round me,--so we are fifty knights! Haste thou, Montagu, to the wood! the wood!"

So noble in that hero age was the Individual MAN, even amidst the multitudes massed by war, that history vies with romance in showing how far a single sword could redress the scale of war. While Montagu, with rapid dexterity, and a voice yet promising victory, drew back the remnant of the lines, and in serried order retreated to the outskirts of the wood, Warwick and his band of knights protected the movement from the countless horsemen who darted forth from Edward's swarming

and momentarily thickening ranks. Now dividing and charging singly, now rejoining, and breast to breast, they served to divert and perplex and harass the eager enemy. And never in all his wars, in all the former might of his indomitable arm, had Warwick so excelled the martial chivalry of his age, as in that eventful and crowning hour. Thrice almost alone he penetrated into the very centre of Edward's body-guard, literally felling to the earth all before him. Then perished by his battle-axe Lord Cromwell and the redoubted Lord of Say; then, no longer sparing even the old affection, Gloucester was hurled to the ground. The last time he penetrated even to Edward himself, smiting down the king's standard-bearer, unhorsing Hastings, who threw himself on his path; and Edward, setting his teeth in stern joy as he saw him, rose in his stirrups, and for a moment the mace of the king, the axe of the earl, met as thunder encounters thunder; but then a hundred knights rushed into the rescue, and robbed the baffled avenger of his prey. Thus charging and retreating, driving back with each charge farther and farther the mighty multitude hounding on to the lion's death, this great chief and his devoted knights, though terribly reduced in number, succeeded at last in covering Montagu's skilful retreat; and when they gained the outskirts of the wood, and dashed through the narrow opening between the barricades, the Yorkshire archers approved their lord's trust, and, shouting, as to a marriage feast, hailed his coming.

But few, alas! of his fellow-horsemen had survived that marvellous enterprise of valour and despair. Of the fifty knights who had shared its perils, eleven only gained the wood; and, though in this number the most eminent (save Sir John Coniers, either slain or fled) might be found, their horses, more exposed than themselves, were for the most part wounded and unfit for further service. At this time the sun again, and suddenly as before, broke forth,--not now with a feeble glimmer, but a broad and almost a cheerful beam, which sufficed to give a fuller view than the day had yet afforded of the state and prospects of the field.

To the right and to the left, what remained of the cavalry of Warwick were seen flying fast,--gone the lances of Oxford, the bills of Somerset. Exeter, pierced by the shaft of Alwyn, was lying cold and insensible, remote from the contest, and deserted even by his squires.

In front of the archers and such men as Montagu had saved from the sword, halted the immense and murmuring multitude of Edward, their thousand banners glittering in the sudden sun; for, as Edward beheld the last wrecks of his foe, stationed near the covert, his desire of consummating victory and revenge made him cautious, and, fearing an ambush, he had abruptly halted.

When the scanty followers of the earl thus beheld the immense force arrayed for their destruction, and saw the extent of their danger, and their loss,--here the handful, there the multitude,--a simultaneous exclamation of terror and dismay broke from their ranks.

"Children!" cried Warwick, "droop not! Henry at Agincourt had worse

odds than we!"

But the murmur among the archers, the lealest part of the earl's retainers, continued, till there stepped forth their captain, a gray old man, but still sinewy and unbent, the iron relic of a hundred battles.

"Back to your men, Mark Forester!" said the earl, sternly.

The old man obeyed not. He came on to Warwick, and fell on his knees beside his stirrup.

"Fly, my lord! escape is possible for you and your riders. Fly through the wood, we will screen your path with our bodies. Your children, father of your followers, your children of Middleham, ask no better fate than to die for you! Is it not so?" and the old man, rising, turned to those in hearing. They answered by a general acclamation.

"Mark Forester speaks well," said Montagu. "On you depends the last hope of Lancaster. We may yet join Oxford and Somerset! This way through the wood,--come!" and he laid his hand on the earl's rein.

"Knights and sirs," said the earl, dismounting, and partially raising his visor as he turned to the horsemen, "let those who will, fly with Lord Montagu! Let those who, in a just cause, never despair of victory, nor, even at the worst, fear to face their Maker, fresh from the glorious death of heroes, dismount with me!" Every knight sprang from his steed, Montagu the first. "Comrades!" continued the earl, then addressing the retainers, "when the children fight for a father's honour, the father flies not from the peril into which he has drawn the children. What to me were life, stained by the blood of mine own beloved retainers, basely deserted by their chief? Edward has proclaimed that he will spare none. Fool! he gives us, then, the superhuman mightiness of despair! To your bows!--one shaft--if it pierce the joints of the tyrant's mail--one shaft may scatter you army to the winds! Sir Marmaduke has gone to rally noble Somerset and his riders; if we make good our defence one little hour, the foe may be yet smitten in the rear, and the day retrieved! Courage and heart then!" Here the earl lifted his visor to the farthest bar, and showed his cheerful face--"Is this the face of a man who thinks all hope is gone?"

In this interval, the sudden sunshine revealed to King Henry, where he stood, the dispersion of his friends. To the rear of the palisades, which protected the spot where he was placed, already grouped "the lookers-on and no fighters," as the chronicler [Fabyan] words it, who, as the guns slackened, ventured forth to learn the news, and who now, filling the churchyard of Hadley, strove hard to catch a peep of Henry the saint, or of Bungey the sorcerer. Mingled with these gleamed the robes of the tymbesteres, pressing nearer and nearer to the barriers, as wolves, in the instinct of blood, come nearer and nearer round the circling watch-fire of some northern travellers. At this time the

friar, turning to one of the guards who stood near him, said, "The mists are needed no more now; King Edward hath got the day, eh?"

"Certes, great master," quoth the guard, "nothing now lacks to the king's triumph except the death of the earl."

"Infamous nigromancer, hear that!" cried Bungey to Adam. "What now avail thy bombards and thy talisman! Hark yet--tell me the secret of the last,--of the damnable engine under my feet, and I may spare thy life."

Adam shrugged his shoulders in impatient disdain. "Unless I gave thee my science, my secret were profitless to thee. Villain and numskull, do thy worst."

The friar made a sign to a soldier who stood behind Adam, and the soldier silently drew the end of the rope which girded the scholar's neck round a bough of the leafless tree. "Hold!" whispered the friar, "not till I give the word. The earl may recover himself yet," he added to himself; and therewith he began once more to vociferate his incantations. Meanwhile the eyes of Sibyll had turned for a moment from her father; for the burst of sunshine, lighting up the valley below, had suddenly given to her eyes, in the distance, the gable-ends of the old farmhouse, with the wintry orchard,--no longer, alas! smiling with starry blossoms. Far remote from the battlefield was that abode of peace,--that once happy home, where she had watched the coming of the false one!

Loftier and holier were the thoughts of the fated king. He had turned his face from the field, and his eyes were fixed upon the tower of the church behind. And while he so gazed, the knoll from the belfry began solemnly to chime. It was now near the hour of the Sabbath prayers, and amidst horror and carnage, still the holy custom was not suspended.

"Hark!" said the king, mournfully, "that chime summons many a soul to God!"

While thus the scene on the eminence of Hadley, Edward, surrounded by Hastings, Gloucester, and his principal captains, took advantage of the unexpected sunshine to scan the foe and its position, with the eye of his intuitive genius for all that can slaughter man. "This day," he said, "brings no victory, assures no crown, if Warwick escape alive. To you, Lovell and Ratcliffe, I intrust two hundred knights,--your sole care the head of the rebel earl!"

"And Montagu?" said Ratcliffe.

"Montagu? Nay, poor Montagu, I loved him as well once as my own mother's son; and Montagu," he muttered to himself, "I never wronged, and therefore him I can forgive. Spare the marquis.--I mislike that wood; they must have more force within than that handful on the skirts betrays. Come hither, D'Eyncourt."

And a few minutes afterwards, Warwick and his men saw two parties of horse leave the main body, one for the right hand, one the left, followed by long detachments of pikes, which they protected; and then the central array marched slowly and steadily on towards the scanty foe. The design was obvious,--to surround on all sides the enemy, driven to its last desperate bay. But Montagu and his brother had not been idle in the breathing-pause; they had planted the greater portion of the archers skilfully among the trees. They had placed their pikemen on the verge of the barricades made by sharp stakes and fallen timber, and where their rampart was unguarded by the pass which had been left free for the horsemen, Hilyard and his stoutest fellows took their post, filling the gap with breasts of iron.

And now, as with horns and clarions, with a sea of plumes and spears and pennons, the multitudinous deathsmen came on, Warwick, towering in the front, not one feather on his eagle crest despoiled or shorn, stood, dismounted, his visor still raised, by his renowned steed. Some of the men had by Warwick's order removed the mail from the destrier's breast; and the noble animal, relieved from the weight, seemed as unexhausted as its rider; save where the champed foam had bespecked its glossy hide, not a hair was turned; and the on-guard of the Yorkists heard its fiery snort as they moved slowly on. This figure of horse and horseman stood prominently forth amidst the little band. And Lovell, riding by Ratcliffe's side, whispered, "Beshrew me, I would rather King Edward had asked for mine own head than that gallant earl's!"

"Tush, youth," said the inexorable Ratcliffe, "I care not of what steps the ladder of mine ambition may be made!"

While they were thus speaking, Warwick, turning to Montagu and his knights, said,--

"Our sole hope is in the courage of our men. And, as at Towton, when I gave the throne to yon false man, I slew, with my own hand, my noble Malech, to show that on that spot I would win or die, and by that sacrifice so fired the soldiers, that we turned the day, so now--oh, gentlemen, in another hour ye would jeer me, for my hand fails: this hand that the poor beast hath so often fed from! Saladin, last of thy race, serve me now in death as in life. Not for my sake, oh noblest steed that ever bore a knight,--not for mine this offering!"

He kissed the destrier on his frontal, and Saladin, as if conscious of the coming blow, bent his proud crest humbly, and licked his lord's steel-clad hand. So associated together had been horse and horseman, that had it been a human sacrifice, the bystanders could not have been more moved. And when, covering the charger's eyes with one hand, the earl's dagger descended, bright and rapid, a groan went through the ranks. But the effect was unspeakable! The men knew at once that to them, and them alone, their lord intrusted his fortunes and his life; they were nerved to more than mortal daring. No escape for Warwick--why, then, in Warwick's person they lived and died! Upon foe as upon

friend, the sacrifice produced all that could tend to strengthen the last refuge of despair. Even Edward, where he rode in the van, beheld and knew the meaning of the deed. Victorious Towton rushed back upon his memory with a thrill of strange terror and remorse.

"He will die as he has lived," said Gloucester, with admiration. "If I live for such a field, God grant me such a death!"

As the words left the duke's lips, and Warwick, one foot on his dumb friend's corpse, gave the mandate, a murderous discharge from the archers in the covert rattled against the line of the Yorkists, and the foe, still advancing, stepped over a hundred corpses to the conflict. Despite the vast preponderance of numbers, the skill of Warwick's archers, the strength of his position, the obstacle to the cavalry made by the barricades, rendered the attack perilous in the extreme.

But the orders of Edward were prompt and vigorous. He cared not for the waste of life, and as one rank fell, another rushed on. High before the barricades stood Montagu, Warwick, and the rest of that indomitable chivalry, the flower of the ancient Norman heroism. As idly beat the waves upon a rock as the ranks of Edward upon that serried front of steel. The sun still shone in heaven, and still Edward's conquest was unassured. Nay, if Marmaduke could yet bring back the troops of Somerset upon the rear of the foe, Montagu and the earl felt that the victory might be for them. And often the earl paused, to hearken for the cry of "Somerset" on the gale, and often Montagu raised his visor to look for the banners and the spears of the Lancastrian duke. And ever, as the earl listened and Montagu scanned the field, larger and larger seemed to spread the armament of Edward. The regiment which boasted the stubborn energy of Alwyn was now in movement, and, encouraged by the young Saxon's hardihood, the Londoners marched on, unawed by the massacre of their predecessors. But Alwyn, avoiding the quarter defended by the knights, defiled a little towards the left, where his quick eye, inured to the northern fogs, had detected the weakness of the barricade in the spot where Hilyard was stationed; and this pass Alwyn (discarding the bow) resolved to attempt at the point of the pike, the weapon answering to our modern bayonet. The first rush which he headed was so impetuous as to effect an entry. The weight of the numbers behind urged on the foremost, and Hilyard had not sufficient space for the sweep of the two-handed sword which had done good work that day. While here the conflict became fierce and doubtful, the right wing led by D'Eyncourt had pierced the wood, and, surprised to discover no ambush, fell upon the archers in the rear. The scene was now inexpressibly terrific; cries and groans, and the ineffable roar and yell of human passion, resounded demonlike through the shade of the leafless trees. And at this moment, the provident and rapid generalship of Edward had moved up one of his heavy bombards. Warwick and Montagu and most of the knights were called from the barricades to aid the archers thus assailed behind; but an instant before that defence was shattered into air by the explosion of the bombard. In another minute horse and foot rushed through the opening. And amidst all the din was heard the

voice of Edward, "Strike, and spare not; we win the day!" "We win the day! victory! victory!" repeated the troops behind. Rank caught the sound from rank, and file from file; it reached the captive Henry, and he paused in prayer; it reached the ruthless friar, and he gave the sign to the hireling at his shoulder; it reached the priest as he entered, unmoved, the church of Hadley. And the bell, changing its note into a quicker and sweeter chime, invited the living to prepare for death, and the soul to rise above the cruelty and the falsehood, and the pleasure and the pomp, and the wisdom and the glory of the world! And suddenly, as the chime ceased, there was heard, from the eminence hard by, a shriek of agony,--a female shriek,--drowned by the roar of a bombard in the field below.

On pressed the Yorkists through the pass forced by Alwyn. "Yield thee, stout fellow," said the bold trader to Hilyard, whose dogged energy, resembling his own, moved his admiration, and in whom, by the accent in which Robin called his men, he recognized a north-countryman; "yield, and I will see that thou goest safe in life and limb. Look round, ye are beaten."

"Fool!" answered Hilyard, setting his teeth, "the People are never beaten!" And as the words left his lips, the shot from the recharged bombard shattered him piecemeal.

"On for London and the crown!" cried Alwyn,--"the citizens are the People!"

At this time, through the general crowd of the Yorkists, Ratcliffe and Lovell, at the head of their appointed knights, galloped forward to accomplish their crowning mission.

Behind the column which still commemorates "the great battle" of that day, stretches now a trilateral patch of pasture-land, which faces a small house. At that time this space was rough forest-ground, and where now, in the hedge, rise two small trees, types of the diminutive offspring of our niggard and ignoble civilization, rose then two huge oaks, coeval with the warriors of the Norman Conquest. They grew close together; yet, though their roots interlaced, though their branches mingled, one had not taken nourishment from the other. They stood, equal in height and grandeur, the twin giants of the wood. Before these trees, whose ample trunks protected them from the falchions in the rear, Warwick and Montagu took their last post. In front rose, literally, mounds of the slain, whether of foe or friend; for round the two brothers to the last had gathered the brunt of war, and they towered now, almost solitary in valour's sublime despair, amidst the wrecks of battle and against the irresistible march of fate. As side by side they had gained this spot, and the vulgar assailants drew back, leaving the bodies of the dead their last defence from death, they turned their visors to each other, as for one latest farewell on earth.

"Forgive me, Richard," said Montagu,--"forgive me thy death; had I not so blindly believed in Clarence's fatal order, the savage Edward had

never passed alive through the pass of Pontefract."

"Blame not thyself," replied Warwick. "We are but the instruments of a wiser Will. God assoil thee, brother mine. We leave this world to tyranny and vice. Christ receive our souls!"

For a moment their hands clasped, and then all was grim silence.

Wide and far, behind and before, in the gleam of the sun, stretched the victorious armament, and that breathing-pause sufficed to show the grandeur of their resistance,--the grandest of all spectacles, even in its hopeless extremity,--the defiance of brave hearts to the brute force of the many. Where they stood they were visible to thousands, but not a man stirred against them. The memory of Warwick's past achievements, the consciousness of his feats that day, all the splendour of his fortunes and his name, made the mean fear to strike, and the brave ashamed to murder! The gallant D'Eyncourt sprang from his steed, and advanced to the spot. His followers did the same.

"Yield, my lords, yield! Ye have done all that men could do!"

"Yield, Montagu," whispered Warwick. "Edward can harm not thee. Life has sweets; so they say, at least."

"Not with power and glory gone.--We yield not, Sir Knight," answered the marquis, in a calm tone.

"Then die, and make room for the new men whom ye so have scorned!" exclaimed a fierce voice; and Ratcliffe, who had neared the spot, dismounted and hallooed on his bloodhounds.

Seven points might the shadow have traversed on the dial, and, before Warwick's axe and Montagu's sword, seven souls had gone to judgment. In that brief crisis, amidst the general torpor and stupefaction and awe of the bystanders, round one little spot centred still a war.

But numbers rushed on numbers, as the fury of conflict urged on the lukewarm. Montagu was beaten to his knee, Warwick covered him with his body; a hundred axes resounded on the earl's stooping casque, a hundred blades gleamed round the joints of his harness. A simultaneous cry was heard; over the mounds of the slain, through the press into the shadow of the oaks, dashed Gloucester's charger. The conflict had ceased, the executioners stood mute in a half-circle. Side by side, axe and sword still griped in their iron hands, lay Montagu and Warwick.

The young duke, his visor raised, contemplated the fallen foes in silence. Then dismounting, he unbraced with his own hand the earl's helmet. Revived for a moment by the air, the hero's eyes unclosed, his lips moved, he raised, with a feeble effort, the gory battle-axe, and the armed crowd recoiled in terror. But the earl's soul, dimly conscious, and about to part, had escaped from that scene of strife, its later thoughts of wrath and vengeance, to more gentle memories, to

such memories as fade the last from true and manly hearts!

"Wife! child!" murmured the earl, indistinctly. "Anne! Anne! Dear ones, God comfort ye!" And with these words the breath went, the head fell heavily on its mother earth, the face set, calm and undistorted, as the face of a soldier should be, when a brave death has been worthy of a brave life.

"So," muttered the dark and musing Gloucester, unconscious of the throng, "so perishes the Race of Iron. Low lies the last baron who could control the throne and command the people. The Age of Force expires with knighthood and deeds of arms. And over this dead great man I see the New Cycle dawn. Happy, henceforth, he who can plot and scheme, and fawn and smile!" Waking with a start from his reverie, the splendid dissimulator said, as in sad reproof, "Ye have been over hasty, knights and gentlemen. The House of York is mighty enough to have spared such noble foes. Sound trumpets! Fall in file! Way, there,--way! King Edward comes. Long live the king!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST PILGRIMS IN THE LONG PROCESSION TO THE COMMON BOURNE.

The king and his royal brothers, immediately after the victory, rode back to London to announce their triumph. The foot-soldiers still stayed behind to recruit themselves after the sore fatigue. And towards the eminence by Hadley church, the peasants and villagers of the district had pressed in awe and in wonder; for on that spot had Henry (now sadly led back to a prison, never again to unclothe to his living form) stood to watch the destruction of the host gathered in his name; and to that spot the corpses of Warwick and Montagu were removed, while a bier was prepared to convey their remains to London; [The bodies of Montagu and the earl were exhibited bareheaded at St. Paul's church for three days, "that no pretence of their being alive might stir up any rebellion afterwards; . . . they were then carried down to the Priory of Bisham, in Berkshire, where among their ancestors by the mother's side (the Earls of Salisbury), the two unquiet brothers rest in one tomb. . . . The large river of their blood, divided now into many streams, runs so small, they are hardly observed as they flow by." (Habington's "Life of Edward IV.," one of the most eloquent compositions in the language, though incorrect as a history).--"Sic transit gloria mundi."] and on that spot had the renowned friar conjured the mists, exorcised the enchanted guns, and defeated the horrible machinations of the Lancastrian wizard.

And towards the spot, and through the crowd, a young Yorkist captain passed with a prisoner he had captured, and whom he was leading to the tent of the Lord Hastings, the only one of the commanders from whom mercy might be hoped, and who had tarried behind the king and his royal brothers to make preparations for the removal of the mighty

dead.

"Keep close to me, Sir Marmaduke," said the Yorkist; we must look to Hastings to appease the king: and, if he hope not to win your pardon, he may, at least, after such a victory, aid one foe to fly."

"Care not for me, Alwyn," said the knight; "when Somerset was deaf save to his own fears, I came back to die by my chieftain's side, alas, too late! too late! Better now death than life! What kin, kith, ambition, love, were to other men was Lord Warwick's smile to me!"

Alwyn kindly respected his prisoner's honest emotion, and took advantage of it to lead him away from the spot where he saw knights and warriors thickest grouped, in soldier-like awe and sadness, round the Hero-Brothers. He pushed through a humbler crowd of peasants and citizens, and women with babes at their breast; and suddenly saw a troop of timbrel-women dancing round a leafless tree, and chanting some wild but mirthful and joyous doggerel.

"What obscene and ill-seasoned revelry is this?" said the trader to a gaping yeoman.

"They are but dancing, poor girls, round the wicked wizard whom Friar Bungey caused to be strangled, and his witch daughter."

A chill foreboding seized upon Alwyn: he darted forward, scattering peasant and tymbestere with his yet bloody sword. His feet stumbled against some broken fragments; it was the poor Eureka, shattered, at last, for the sake of the diamond! Valueless to the great friar, since the science of the owner could not pass to his executioner,-- valueless the mechanism and the invention, the labour and the genius; but the superstition and the folly and the delusion had their value, and the impostor who destroyed the engine clutched the jewel!

From the leafless tree was suspended the dead body of a man; beneath, lay a female, dead too; but whether by the hand of man or the mercy of Heaven, there was no sign to tell. Scholar and Child, Knowledge and Innocence, alike were cold; the grim Age had devoured them, as it devours ever those before, as behind, its march, and confounds, in one common doom, the too guileless and the too wise!

"Why crowd ye thus, knaves?" said a commanding voice.

"Ha, Lord Hastings! approach! behold!" exclaimed Alwyn.

"Ha, ha!" shouted Graul, as she led her sisters from the spot, wheeling, and screaming, and tossing up their timbrels, "ha! the witch and her lover! Ha, ha! Foul is fair! Ha, ha! Witchcraft and death go together, as thou mayest learn at the last, sleek wooer."

And, peradventure, when, long years afterwards, accusations of witchcraft, wantonness, and treason resounded in the ears of Hastings,

and, at the signal of Gloucester, rushed in the armed doomsman, those ominous words echoed back upon his soul!

At that very hour the gates of the Tower were thrown open to the multitude. Fresh from his victory, Edward and his brothers had gone to render thanksgivings at St. Paul's (they were devout, those three Plantagenets!), thence to Baynard's Castle, to escort the queen and her children once more to the Tower. And, now, the sound of trumpets stilled the joyous uproar of the multitude, for in the balcony of the casement that looked towards the chapel the herald had just announced that King Edward would show himself to the people. On every inch of the courtyard, climbing up wall and palisade, soldier, citizen, thief, harlot, age, childhood, all the various conditions and epochs of multiform life, swayed, clung, murmured, moved, jostled, trampled,-- the beings of the little hour!

High from the battlements against the weltering beam floated Edward's conquering flag,--a sun shining to the sun. Again, and a third time, rang the trumpets, and on the balcony, his crown upon his head, but his form still sheathed in armour, stood the king. What mattered to the crowd his falseness and his perfidy, his licentiousness and cruelty? All vices ever vanish in success! Hurrah for King Edward! THE MAN OF THE AGE suited the age, had valour for its war and cunning for its peace, and the sympathy of the age was with him! So there stood the king; at his right hand, Elizabeth, with her infant boy (the heir of England) in her arms, the proud face of the duchess seen over the queen's shoulder. By Elizabeth's side was the Duke of Gloucester, leaning on his sword, and at the left of Edward, the perjured Clarence bowed his fair head to the joyous throng! At the sight of the victorious king, of the lovely queen, and, above all, of the young male heir, who promised length of days to the line of York, the crowd burst forth with a hearty cry, "Long live the king and the king's son!" Mechanically Elizabeth turned her moistened eyes from Edward to Edward's brother, and suddenly, as with a mother's prophetic instinct, clasped her infant closer to her bosom, when she caught the glittering and fatal eye of Richard, Duke of Gloucester (York's young hero of the day, Warwick's grim avenger in the future), fixed upon that harmless life, destined to interpose a feeble obstacle between the ambition of a ruthless intellect and the heritage of the English throne!

NOTES.

I.

The badge of the Bear and Ragged Staff was so celebrated in the fifteenth century, that the following extract from a letter addressed by Mr. Courthope, Rouge Croix, to the author, will no doubt interest the reader, and the author is happy in the opportunity afforded of expressing his acknowledgments for the courteous attention with which Mr. Courthope has honoured his inquiries:--

"COLLEGE OF ARMS.

"As regards the badge of Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick,--namely, the Bear and Staff,--I agree with you, certainly, as to the probability of his having sometimes used the whole badge, and sometimes the Staff only, which accords precisely with the way in which the Bear and Staff are set forth in the Rous Roll to the early earls (Warwick) before the Conquest. We there find them figured with the Staff upon their shields and the Bear at their feet, and the Staff alone is introduced as a quartering upon their shields.

"The story of the origin of these badges is as follows:

"Arth, or Arthgal, is reputed to have been the first Earl of Warwick, and being one of the knights of King Arthur's Round Table, it behoved him to have a cognizance; and Arth or Narth signifying in British the same as Ursus in Latin, he took the Bear for such cognizance. His successor, Morvidus, Earl of Warwick, in single combat, overcame a mighty giant (who had encountered him with a tree pulled up from the root, the boughs of which had been torn from it), and in token of his success assumed the Ragged Staff. You will thus see that the origins of the two were different, which would render the bearing of them separately not unlikely, and you will likewise infer that both came through the Beauchamps. I do not find the Ragged Staff ever attributed to the Neviles before the match with Beauchamp.

"As regards the crest or cognizance of Nevile, the Pied Bull has been the cognizance of that family from a very early time, and the Bull's head, its crest, and both the one and the other may have been used by the king-maker, and by his brother, the Marquis Montagu; the said Bull appears at the feet of Richard Nevile in the Rous Roll, accompanied by the Eagle of Monthermer; the crests on either side of him are those of Montagu and Nevile. Besides these two crests, both of which the Marquis Montagu may have used, he certainly did use the Gryphon, issuant out of a ducal coronet, as this appears alone for his crest, on his garter plate, as a crest for Montagu, he having given the arms of that family precedence over his paternal coat of Nevile; the king-maker, likewise, upon his seal, gives the precedence to Montagu and Monthermer, and they alone appear upon his shield."

II.

Hume, Rapin, and Carte, all dismiss the story of Edward's actual imprisonment at Middleham, while Lingard, Sharon Turner, and others, adopt it implicitly. And yet, though Lingard has successfully grappled with some of Hume's objections, he has left others wholly unanswered. Hume states that no such fact is mentioned in Edward's subsequent proclamation against Clarence and Warwick. Lingard answers, after correcting an immaterial error in Hume's dates, "that the proclamation ought not to have mentioned it, because it was confined to the enumeration of offences only committed after the general amnesty in 1469;" and then, surely with some inconsistency, quotes the attainder of Clarence many years afterwards, in which the

king enumerates it among his offences, "as jeopardying the king's royal estate, person, and life, in strait warde, putting him thereby from all his libertye after procuring great commotions." But it is clear that if the amnesty hindered Edward from charging Warwick with this imprisonment only one year after it was granted, it would, a fortiori, hinder him from charging Clarence with it nine years after. Most probable is it that this article of accusation does not refer to any imprisonment, real or supposed, at Middleham, in 1469, but to Clarence's invasion of England in 1470, when Edward's state, person, and life were jeopardized by his narrow escape from the fortified house, where he might fairly be called "in strait warde;" especially as the words, "after procuring great commotions," could not apply to the date of the supposed detention in Middleham, when, instead of procuring commotions, Clarence had helped Warwick to allay them, but do properly apply to his subsequent rebellion in 1470. Finally, Edward's charges against his brother, as Lingard himself has observed elsewhere, are not proofs, and that king never scrupled at any falsehood to serve his turn. Nothing, in short, can be more improbable than this tale of Edward's captivity,--there was no object in it. At the very time it is said to have taken place, Warwick is absolutely engaged in warfare against the king's foes. The moment Edward leaves Middleham, instead of escaping to London, he goes carelessly and openly to York, to judge and execute the very captain of the rebels whom Warwick has subdued, and in the very midst of Warwick's armies! Far from appearing to harbour the natural resentment so vindictive a king must have felt (had so great an indignity been offered to him), almost immediately after he leaves York, he takes the Nevile family into greater power than ever, confers new dignities upon Warwick, and betroths his eldest daughter to Warwick's nephew. On the whole, then, perhaps some such view of the king's visit to Middleham which has been taken in this narrative, may be considered not the least probable compromise of the disputed and contradictory evidence on the subject.

THE END.

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