

Thomas Gaspey

THE LOLLARDS :

A Tale,

FOUNDED ON THE

PERSECUTIONS WHICH MARKED THE EARLY PART
OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE MYSTERY, OR FORTY YEARS AGO ; AND OF
CALTHORPE, OR FALLEN FORTUNES.

Forgotten generations live again.

H. K. WHITE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

PATER-~~NOSTER~~-ROW.

1822.

English
Homes
7-26-43
47802
34.

P R E F A C E.

IN the following pages it has been attempted to furnish correct sketches of scenes which actually occurred four centuries ago. The author, — the compiler, perhaps, he should rather call himself, has supplied from imagination what he considered necessary to give them connexion; but generally, he has kept as closely as possible to history. This will account for some of the incidents bearing more resemblance to each other than would be desirable in a work purely fictitious, and anxiety to picture the manners of the times will perhaps avert

© B-3-43 SKV

censure from some of the characters, who appear rather negligent of that dignity in which the heroes of romance have commonly an advantage over those of real life. Should a smile of disdain be provoked by the habits and amusements pourtrayed, it may be well to remember, that they are given as belonging to an age not a century removed from that, in which the expenses of a British monarch appear to have been augmented by his devotion to the undignified game of tossing up head or tail, or "*cross and pile*," as it was then called; and when an entry like the following was not considered degrading or extraordinary:—

"Item, païé a Roi mesmes, pur jewer a cros et pil, par les meins Richard de Mereworth, resevivant les deniers, xij."

"Item, paid to the King himself, to play at cross and pile, by the hands of Richard de Mereworth, the receiver of the treasury, twelve pence."

Originally, it was the intention of the

writer to subjoin, in notes, the authorities for his incidents and descriptions. But he conceived that this would appear too formal, and from the ease with which a preface can be, and generally is, passed over by a large class of readers, he decided to give in that form, for the satisfaction of those who might require them, such explanations as he considered necessary.

Here then, he would state, that Maitland, Pennant, Malcolm, Douce, Henry, Beckmann, Baker, Monstrelet, Hollingshed, and Grose, are responsible for most of the historical facts and local representations. Other aids have been drawn from different sources. No apology is offered for giving a comparatively modern dress to the conversations: the extracts from various books and from documents of the time will sufficiently prove, that to have adhered to the language of the period, would have made the tale nearly unintelligible to the general reader. The

expressions put into the mouth of John Huss, are often transcribed from his letters, or from the narratives of Fox, Clark, and Gilpin. That journey is given to Huss which, from veneration for the principles of Wickliffe, was actually performed by his friend Jerome of Prague. The sufferings of Huss towards the close of his career are collected from a variety of respectable Protestant authors.

The petition brought forward by one of the characters, is a real document belonging to the reign of Henry VI., the amount of the public debt being reduced to what it may be supposed to have been in the time of that monarch's father. It has not been thought necessary rigidly to adhere to chronology. The affair of the Mayor of Chester occurred about forty years after the period assigned to it in the tale, but the state of things by which it was produced continued from the time of Owen Glendower. The incident, it is

therefore presumed will be regarded as little out of its place, where it only serves to mark the spirit which actually animated the Welsh borderers at the date of those events with which it is connected.

The writer may be thought less excusable for introducing the art of printing, which is generally supposed to have been unknown till the reign immediately following that to which he has given it. Mr. Nichols says, "It does not appear that any book was printed in this kingdom till 1464, when William Caxton opened a shop at the Sun, in Fleet Street." It is, however, not contended, that the invention of printing was previously unknown. Playing cards were printed for the amusement of Charles the Sixth of France, who was contemporary with Henry the Fifth of England. This may not seem much to the purpose, but we are told by Mr. Ellis, that he saw at

Haarlem, a volume, 'the *De Spiegel onser Behoedinge*, which had been printed by Coster, so early as 1480. Mr. Ellis minutely describes the book, and his statement is supported by Schrevelius. The last-mentioned writer has been called '*un compilateur sans discernment, et un critique sans justesse.*' But his English biographer describes him very differently, and Schrevelius in this case is supported by Boxhornius and others, who do not labour under the stigma cast on him in the *Dictionaire Historique*.

In our day, printing and publishing are so closely united, that speaking of one we are likely to confound it with the other. This was not always so. When we read of William Caxton opening his shop, in 1464, we are led to the conclusion that he then published his book as well as printed it. Various circumstances might prevent publication till a consider-

able period after the art of printing had been discovered, and might supply a motive for using concealment. "In 1429 Nicholas Belward, of South Elmham, in Suffolk, was accused of having in his possession a New Testament, which he had bought in London for four marks and forty pence, 2*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*; a sum equivalent to more than 40*l.* at present, an astonishing price to be paid by a labouring man, for such Belward appears to have been." * If 40*l.* were paid for a written Testament by a labouring man, who, it may be presumed, did not go to the dearest market, it will be seen that a few individuals who were capable of imitating manuscripts (which we know the first printers aimed at,) by the easy and rapid process of printing, might realize great wealth, if they kept the secret to themselves. In the tale, two of the characters are placed in the situations of Fust and Coster, and that fifteen years be-

* Townley's Illustrations of Biblical Literature

fore the printing of the book mentioned by Mr. Ellis. It will, however, be remarked, that the art which they possessed is supposed merely to have existed — not to have been generally known to exist. That it was in being at, or close upon that time, other proofs might be adduced.

Horne tells us that Baron Heinecker found a very curious wood-cut of St. Christopher in the convent of the Chartroux, at Buxheim, near Memmingen, at the foot of which he read the following words engraved and printed, together with the figure: "*Cristoferi faciem die quâcunque tueris. Illâ nempe die morte malâ non morieris Millesimo CCCC XX tertio.*" It surely, then, will not appear very extravagant to imagine that that mode of printing might be known to one or two persons in 1415, which we have positive proof was known in 1423. This is not the place to answer the question which so long occupied the attention of the learned;—how came the art of

printing, if known at or before the year 1430, to lie dormant till the revival at Mentz? What has been stated, may in some degree account for that circumstance. At all events, if the invention, important as it was, were lost sight of for thirty or forty years, it is not the only one that has experienced such a fate. In 1736 a patent was granted for navigating vessels by *steam*, but what advantage resulted from that magnificent discovery in the sixty years which immediately followed?

In taking a general view of that period which has furnished the succeeding scenes, no feature is more singularly striking than the hostility which pursued English translations of the Bible. The history of the world presents not a more remarkable contrast between the policy of a government at different times, than is here furnished. At the opening of the fifteenth century, reading the Bible in English was a crime, which the law

visited with severest vengeance, and reproach even attached to those who learned to read, from a suspicion that they did so for the purpose of perusing that revered volume, which British ministers now desire to make known to every human being. The sufferings growing out of the apprehension once entertained of the fearful effects of permitting the Bible to be read in the vulgar tongue, furnish the following pages. But the author, in describing what appears to have occurred, wishes to cast no illiberal stigma on any sect. The crimes he depicts, he gives not as the characteristics of any particular faith, but as those of the individuals by whom they were perpetrated; of the age in which they lived, and of the opinions which then prevailed.

An author who has twice had the honour of being translated, may be pardoned for supposing that his present production will have foreign readers. He

would briefly remark, that though he has given the English that superior fortune in war, which chroniclers assign to them at the epoch here recalled, he trusts that nothing has escaped him that can offend the national pride of others. He confidently anticipates that no reader of "The Lollards" will accuse him of making such a return for the favourable notice bestowed in France on "The Mystery" and "Calthorpe."

He will extend these remarks no further. Some explanation seemed necessary, as incidents mean and puerile, if contemplated as efforts of imagination, frequently become interesting when recognised as belonging to real history. Among those who annually quit London to contemplate the local peculiarities as they now exist, of distant places celebrated in story, or famed in song, he hopes that some will be well content to be reminded that the theatres of scenes of memorable interest may be found

nearer home. From such "The Lollards" may experience a welcome; and, till the season admits of an excursion to more romantic spots, the inhabitant of the metropolis may derive some amusement from sketches of London as it was, and from a description of some of the circumstances which once gave *eclat* to Cheapside, Fleet Street, and Smithfield.

THE LOLLARDS.

CHAPTER I.

“ He lifts his radiant eyes, which gleam
“ With resignation’s sainted beam.”

MRS. ROBINSON.

THE despotic sway which the Church of Rome had long exercised over the rights and opinions of mankind, called forth, towards the close of the fourteenth century, a spirit of resistance on the part of several of those who were most distinguished for their scholastic acquirements and superior intellect. Wickliffe, by his

efforts to convey a knowledge of the Scriptures to the lower classes, had laid the foundation for one of the most important changes recorded in our history. Many persons of reputed piety denounced him as a heretic, and an enemy to true religion; but the forcible appeal which he had made to the understanding was not to be answered by sanctified invectives; and the taste for what was called "Wickliffe learning," continued rapidly to increase. The bishops and clergy saw first with contempt, then with indignation, and finally with dismay, the indecorous efforts of the unlettered multitude to obtain the means of judging for themselves in those matters which affected their eternal welfare; and considered it expedient to oppose, with all their might, the fearful torrent which threatened to annihilate what they regarded as most essential to true religion — the ancient authority and rights of the Church.

To them it appeared wise to have re-

course to measures of severity. A sect had newly sprung up, important from its numbers, as well as from its influence, the members of which were denominated Lollards. It was against these that the hostile measures of the established Church were directed; but the success which attended them was not equal to the barbarity by which they were accompanied. While Henry IV. sat on the throne of England, the fires of persecution had been kindled; but the victims which bigotry claimed, when they suffered for their own transgressions, did not reclaim their brethren from the errors into which they were supposed to have fallen; and after the crown had devolved on the fifth Henry, the nation being still divided by religious differences, new examples were considered necessary to vindicate the purity of the true faith.

Thomas Arundel, then archbishop of Canterbury, incensed at the spread of "Wickliffe learning," determined to at-

tempt its extirpation, by a bold attack on its most popular advocate, Sir John Oldcastle, commonly called Lord Cobham, from his having married the heiress of that title. Arundel in this proved his courage to be as great as his policy; for Cobham was not only viewed with admiration by the people, but he was a favorite with the king, in whose household he held a situation. He had served in France with great credit, and was not less esteemed for his valour, than admired for the polished accomplishments of the courtier. When Henry heard the charge which Arundel had to prefer, he took upon himself to interrogate Cobham on the subject of his religious principles; not suspecting that the loyal submission which he had found in every other instance would be wanting here, and promising himself the satisfaction of saving his favourite from the impending storm, and the glory of restoring to the Church one who had incautiously ventured to oppose some of its doctrines.

But the monarch deceived himself. Cobham stoutly defended the principles which he had adopted, and offered, according to the custom of that age, to prove their soundness by bringing a hundred warriors to combat for them, against an equal number who condemned them as heretical. He might be excused for thinking that such a proposition would not appear unreasonable to a Prince of Henry's character; but the circumstances in which the young King was placed, imposed upon him a line of conduct very different from that which his natural vivacity led him to prefer. He had found it necessary, on coming to the throne, to conciliate those grave and venerable characters whom till then it had been his pleasure to hold up to derision; and he considered it of the last importance to establish a high reputation for piety. In consequence of this impression on the part of the King, Cobham received an answer on which he had not calculated; and the

monarch re-urged his former arguments with increased earnestness, but only to hear them opposed with unbending resolution. In common life, when equals argue warmly, respect and friendship often rapidly diminish ; but when a subject will not be convinced by the eloquence of his sovereign, the latter must be very different from the rest of mankind, if he can brook such disrespect with patience. That conduct on the part of Lord Cobham, which has for ages enjoyed the character of heroic intrepidity, was viewed by Henry as an instance of stubborn insolence. Arundel had complained that his messengers had been treated most injuriously by Cobham, and Henry now thought he saw just reason to conclude that the statement he had heard was correct. His presumption in questioning the correctness of royal reasoning, satisfied the King that what he had been told of the contemptuous manner in which the officers of the archbishop had been repel-

led from Cowling Castle (the residence of Lord Cobham), when they were sent to cite him to appear before Arundel, was true. He could not doubt that one so deficient in respect to himself, would be capable of treating every thing that was sacred with indecorous neglect, or offensive ridicule.

Unawed by the frowns of his sovereign, the Lord Cobham, confident in the goodness of his cause, still hoped to make it appear to the King what it really seemed to himself. But his powerful opponent was now securely fortified against conviction. The energy which Cobham had at first to encounter was no more; but a chilling coldness met all that he advanced; and when, as a last effort, he again demanded to be allowed to vindicate his principles according to the law of arms, on a signal given by the King, one of the officers who had in vain sought admittance at Cowling Castle, entered the apartment, and served Cobham with a citation to ap-

pear before his inflexible enemy, the archbishop. He felt indignant, and involuntarily directed a reproachful glance towards the King. Henry understood it well; and with that resentment which those who do an injury commonly feel, if the victim is so indiscreet as to complain, when Cobham avowed an intention of appealing to the Pope, the monarch fiercely exclaimed — “Thou shalt never have an opportunity of prosecuting thy suit;” and by his command, the refractory disputant was immediately committed to the Tower.

Cobham was shortly brought before the convocation assembled in the Chapter House at St. Paul's. At the preceding session, he had been formally excommunicated for refusing to appear. He was now reminded of this by the archbishop, and admonished to renounce the heretical opinions which he was known to have imbibed. Arundel, with an air of paternal regard, offered to give him absolution

on his yielding submission to the Church. This indulgent kindness was lost upon Cobham. He took no notice of the proffered absolution; but desired to read the principles for which he had heretofore contended, and which he was now prepared to vindicate. These may be described in very few words. He admitted the real presence in the bread used in the sacrament, but denied that the bread ceased altogether to exist as bread. Penances for sins, as a sign of contrition, he held to be proper. For the use of images, he contended that they could only be worshipped, not for themselves, but as the representatives of heavenly things; and those who offered them divine worship in any other character, he maintained were blind idolaters. Pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, he asserted to be useless. The archbishop told him that some of his principles were orthodox; but on certain points, it was necessary that he should give more explicit answers. Cobham

declared that he had no others to offer. His body, he added, was in their hands, they might do with it what they pleased, without disturbing him, convinced as he was that his eternal part was safe. — Arundel, in dealing with a man so popular as Lord Cobham, considered it to be politic to affect the greatest mildness, and he therefore allowed him till the following Monday to re-consider his answers.

Nothing could tend more to raise Cobham in the estimation of the people, than the firmness which had marked his deportment on this occasion. Admiration for him, failed not to produce hatred of those who were regarded as his persecutors. This rose so high that it was thought prudent not to allow his final examination to take place at St. Paul's; and Sir Robert Morley, the lieutenant or constable of the Tower, was accordingly instructed to convey his prisoner to a Dominican convent, within Ludgate, which was thought a place of greater

security. Thither Cobham was conducted on the appointed day, under a strong guard, and received by a numerous body of friars and monks, through whom he undauntedly advanced to defend his faith.

Arundel demanded whether he believed that any of the material bread remained after consecration, insisting that the sacramental words once spoken, the bread and wine were instantly changed into "very flesh and blood." Cobham's answers were in substance but a repetition of what he had previously advanced; and he roundly taxed the clergy with supplanting the Gospel, by introducing absurdities of their own. He was frequently interrupted by cries of "heresy!" "Wickliffe learning!" and "away with him!" When he attacked the friars for the profits which they made by their images, shrines, and absolutions, a general murmur of horror ran through the assembly, and one Dominican, raising up his eyes to Heaven, could not refrain from

the pious exclamation, "What desperate and devilish wretches are these disciples of Wickliffe!"

Fired at the indignity thus offered to the memory and principles of Wickliffe, Cobham replied, with great animation :

"Now, before God do I profess, that till I knew that good and holy man, I never did abstain from sinful doings; but he it was that opened my eyes to see my errors; and following his example, I hope, with all humility I speak, that I reformed them."

"Truly most hard methinks had been my case," said Arundel, "if in an age so marvellously enlightened as this, and so liberally supplied with pious and learned men I had still been unable to amend my ways, and lead a holy life, until I went to hear the devil preach."

"Go on," cried the accused; "go on in the steps of your fathers the Pharisees, and ascribe every good to the devil, which you find opposed to your iniquities."

Language like this could not but exasperate those who had to decide on his fate. The insults which they had received augmented their zeal to avenge the wrongs of the Deity, and devotion derived new fervour from rage. Cobham furnished them with but too fair an excuse for proceeding to extremities. Not content with condemning idols, pilgrimages, and offerings at the shrines of saints, he, in no very measured language, ridiculed the worship of the cross; and rites which successive ages had agreed to hold sacred, he fearlessly treated with that contempt which many of his hearers could not regard as any thing short of the most appalling blasphemy.

The archbishop, when he had finished, stood up; the other members of the convocation did the same. He raised his eyes to Heaven for some moments, as solemnly appealing to the Almighty, to attest the justice of the sentence which he was about to pronounce against a bar-

dened sinner; and having recapitulated the former proceedings, and briefly animadverted on the contumacious conduct of the accused, he declared it to be his painful duty to pass sentence on the prisoner, as a most pernicious and detestable heretic, and to hand him over to the secular power that he might be put to death. At the same time, he denounced as accursed, all who might defend the errors of the accused, or favour or assist him in any way whatever.

The courage of Cobham did not desert him in this awful moment. He heard his sentence with perfect composure, and reiterated the declaration that he regarded not the fate of his body, happy in the joyful conviction, that his soul was safe. He addressed the populace in the same strain on his way to the Tower, conjuring them, one and all, to secure their everlasting happiness, by following in the track of the illustrious Wickliffe.

It was expected that execution would

promptly follow; but Henry was reluctant to commit to the flames one for whom he had formerly felt so much regard; and a respite of fifty days was granted by his command. During this time, the efforts of the friends of Cobham were unremitting to sustain and increase his reputation. It is probable that the kindness inspired in the minds of the people, would only have produced applause in honour of the constancy of the martyr, had the captive, relying on their affection, been negligent for himself. He thought he saw the means of escaping, and having communicated his plan to two of his friends, they approved of it, and promised that on a night which was named, they would be in waiting on Tower-hill, to carry him from the vicinity of his prison, if he could find the means of conveying himself to the outside. He succeeded in making a breach in the wall of his apartment, by which he purposed to pass to the ramparts. It was half large enough

to admit of his making the attempt, when he heard the door unlocked, and Sir Robert Morley entered. Cobham, before he commenced his operations, had carefully hung his cloak over that part of the wall which he was about to attack, so that it might be instantly let down and conceal the meditated dilapidation, before his work approached completion. But it was now so far advanced that the garment but imperfectly covered the hole; and the scattered cement which strewed his chamber, it was impossible to hide. He therefore abandoned all hope of deceiving Sir Robert, and resigned himself to his fate. To his great surprise, however, the lieutenant retired, taking no notice of the disorder which prevailed. Cobham was extremely embarrassed by this incident. He had not usually been visited by Sir Robert at so late an hour, and his coming indicated unusual apprehension. That he had made no remark on what seemed to force itself on his attention, was a

circumstance for which Cobham was unable to account, as he was confident that the lieutenant had glanced suspiciously at the cloak. Upon the whole, he came to the conclusion, that his project had by some means transpired; and that Sir Robert only deferred acting upon the information he had received, that the mortification of the defeated captive should be rendered more complete, by detection at the very instant when the last obstacle to escape had been removed. A slight noise in the vicinity of his chamber strengthened this idea; and now convinced that his motions were watched, to continue his labour seemed useless, and he resolved to deny his jailor the malignant joy on which Cobham doubted not he had calculated, by receiving him as one whom he expected. He accordingly seated himself in his chair, to await the re-entrance of the lieutenant.

CHAP. II.

“ Nothing hath privilege 'gainst the violent ear;
“ No place, no day, no hour (we see) is free,
“ (Not our religious and most sacred times)
“ From some one kind of cruelty.”

JONSON.

THE noise which Lord Cobham had heard near the door of his apartment had ceased, and a more than usual silence prevailed. For nearly two hours he remained motionless on his seat, firm to the resolution adopted not to resume his interrupted labour. He had wrought his mind into a state of perfect composure, and was fully prepared for the taunts and insults which he anticipated would requite his unsuccessful attempt. Such were his feelings when a sudden flash of light illumined his apartment, by the aperture which he had made, and

from which his cloak had been removed. He shook his head at the sight, and sorrowfully exclaimed :

“ It is all in vain. You are faithful, my friends, but alas ! your hopes will not be realized. I shall not be enabled to defeat my persecutors by flight ; all that remains for me to do, is to meet them with courage.”

He then endeavoured to resume the train of thought which the signal concerted to announce the arrival of his friends had interrupted. But he found it no easy task to subdue the agitation it had caused. Reminded of the hopes in which he had indulged, he could not revert to his actual situation, without mourning the discovery which he supposed to have taken place. He felt deeply affected, not merely for the consequences to himself, but for the grief and mortification which must fall on those who had encouraged, and were now prepared to assist, an escape.

The signal was repeated; the flashing of torches told that he was impatiently expected, and led him to question the decision to which he had come after the visit which he had received from Sir Robert. Strange as it was that the lieutenant should overlook the disorder which presented itself to view, the moment the door of his prison was opened, it was not less strange that, if seen, no precaution had yet been taken to guard against that flight which was meditated. It was possible that the lieutenant, occupied with other matters, had not remarked the situation in which the prisoner was found. This was certain, that there was no appearance of any difficulty being thrown in his way, on which he had not calculated, and with which he was not prepared to grapple. At the worst, he had no evil to dread from detection, when his preparations were complete, to which he would not be exposed by what he had already done. In justice, then, to those

friends who so kindly interested themselves in his fate, he ought not to have suffered a mere surmise to arrest his labours; and even now, though after so much time lost the chance of success was greatly diminished, it might be due to them to endeavour at repairing his error.

While these thoughts ran through the mind of Cobham, he returned to the work in which he had been so unfortunately interrupted. His vigour was restored by the rest in which he had indulged, and to widen the aperture he had made required less labour than it had cost him to make the original breach. It was not long before it appeared sufficiently large. He tried to force himself through, and with such good fortune, that he was in no small danger of breaking his neck through the expedition with which he cleared the wall and commenced his descent head downwards, holding the rope which he had made fast to a

staple in the chamber, by one hand. This was in consequence of part of the wall giving way, which he was not aware that he had loosened. He, however, held fast by the rope, and lowered himself more gradually, though still with such inconvenient rapidity, that his hands were severely burned by the friction; and he was obliged at last to let go, when his feet were still six or eight feet from the ground. He was alarmed at the noise with which he closed his descent; but he saw no centinel, and passed, without encountering any new difficulty, to the ramparts. Thence he let himself down to the moat, with more caution than he had previously used. Having reached the surface of the water, he was on the point of relinquishing the line by which he had effected this, when he heard a confused noise in the garrison. Several soldiers drew near that part of the ramparts which he had just quitted; something fell close to him, and "There he

goes! there he goes!" was repeated by half a dozen voices. Cobham thought he had no time to lose, and instantly committed himself to the water. A general shout of surprise followed, and a volley of stones which had been collected for the rat, the original object of pursuit, was now directed at the adventurous swimmer. Several of them struck him, but though they inflicted pain they did not impede his flight. In the fortress, it was rightly conjectured that the person seen in the moat was no other than Lord Cobham. The breach which he had made, and the line pendant from it, removed all doubt, and the alarm was instantly given. Cobham made his way across the ditch to the spot where the torches still waived — his approach was sufficiently announced by the tumult within the walls. Tower-Hill was then but a wide neglected field, to which few persons repaired after night-fall. The friends of Lord Cobham, accompanied by his son Edward, had

drawn him from the ditch without danger of encountering the observation of curious passengers, and mounted him on a fleet horse, before any attempt to interrupt their operations could be made on the part of Sir Robert Morley. The moment Cobham was lifted from the moat, the torches were extinguished, and the party separated. The late captive passed by the then new abbey called Eastminster, and on to Aldgate. Turning to the right he took his road through Bow and Stratford, to a cottage on the borders of Epping Forest. Here he was provided with a change of clothes, and with refreshments, of which he stood much in need, and his happy liberation was celebrated by pious thanksgivings and prayer.

It was not till several days had passed that those immediately concerned in effecting the escape of the Lord Cobham, ventured to rejoin him. The joy of the populace at hearing of his flight, was

great. While he was in the Tower, a rumour had gone abroad that he had recanted all that he had before advanced in favour of the doctrines of Wickliffe. But not all the perils which then encompassed him, could induce him to suffer such a calumny to pass uncontradicted. He accordingly from his prison dictated a paper, which was copied and posted in the most public streets, declaring the charge to be unfounded, and asserting his determination to adhere to the confession of faith which he had previously made. This intrepidity added to the admiration which his conduct had previously inspired, and the joy of the common people at Cobham's escape, was only equalled by the satisfaction with which they learned that all the exertions made by his enemies to discover his retreat proved fruitless. The opinions which he had entertained, gained importance with those who had till then considered them as unworthy of serious attention.

The resolution of the man was thought to prove the excellence of his creed, and many who found it more easy to adopt than to form an opinion, took it for granted, that because Cobham was resolute he must be right.

That Lollardy rapidly increased was clear to every one. In his concealment, Cobham was refreshed from time to time with the most gratifying assurances of this fact, and when the vigilance of his pursuers was thought to be somewhat abated, he ventured to present himself to parties of his admirers, who were in the habit of meeting at night to indulge in religious exercises. The gratification which they experienced at finding themselves in company with those to whom they could freely pour out their sentiments, caused these meetings to be multiplied. They were usually held in the environs of London. The Lollards repaired to the place of rendezvous, some retired and unfrequented spot, shortly

after nightfall, There, having compared the progress of their minds in spiritual matters, they applied themselves to prayer, and, occupied with various pious exercises, it was commonly midnight before they separated.

These nocturnal meetings soon attracted notice, and became the subject of anxious enquiry on the part of the government. The bishops and others, who were engaged in the extirpation of heresy, thought it necessary that they should be put down, as they rightly conceived that the laws which had been passed against Lollardy would prove wholly nugatory, if those against whom they were directed continued to hold such assemblies with impunity. They, in consequence, never ceased to importune Henry to interfere with a strong hand; alleging that to make a severe example, would be to inspire a salutary terror, and would, therefore, serve the cause of humanity. He was slow to attend to these suggestions;

but his reluctance was at length vanquished by the mysterious reports which reached him, representing the meetings of the Lollards to be connected with a traitorous scheme for the overthrow of his government. Every thing that transpired, when this idea had once been thrown out, was thought to confirm it; and those who were the first to adopt it, were thought to argue with irresistible force, when they asked, if the designs of those who formed these meetings were good, or even harmless, why should they meet in darkness? It did not occur to many, that a reasonable answer was supplied by the fact that at no other time could the Lollards assemble for the purposes which some of their friends alleged were the only ones which they had in view, without exposing themselves to persecution, under the sanction of law.

The king was in the highest degree indignant against Cobham, who was said to be the chief promoter of the treason-

able practices then in progress. To the impetuous monarch the most odious ingratitude seemed to mark the conduct of that nobleman. He had endeavoured to enlighten Cobham when his wanderings first attracted the notice of the church; and when obstinacy had made this effort of no avail, and produced conviction before the Convocation, that a respite of fifty days was allowed him, he owed to the humanity of his royal master. Henry also knew that he was under one other obligation to him, of which Cobham himself was not aware. Though the angry disputant had fiercely handed over a refractory opponent to the offended church, the relenting sovereign shuddered at the idea of his suffering execution; and anxious to prevent this without being seen to interfere, he caused it to be privately intimated to Sir Robert Morley, that if he could restore his prisoner to liberty, making it appear that Cobham had effected his escape by his

own means, the supposed negligence should never operate to his prejudice. It was in consequence of this, that the captive received a visit from Sir Robert, when he least expected or desired such a mark of courtesy. The lieutenant had intended to suggest a way by which Cobham might break prison. What he saw, at once convinced him that his interference was unnecessary, and affecting not to perceive the evidences of Cobham's undertaking, which forced themselves on his observation, he immediately withdrew, and only favoured the attempt by this wilful blindness, and by removing those sentinels who were nearest the scene of the prisoner's operations. For this clemency, Henry thought that Cobham, all ignorant as he was of the intended mercy, ought to have made a return very different from that which he now understood him to be making; and the rebellious conduct imputed to him appeared, in the view of the king, an

odious combination of the foulest treason, and the blackest ingratitude.

A proclamation had already been issued against the Lollards' night meetings, but without effect. Satisfactory proof was obtained that many who attended them went armed. This ought not to have excited either alarm or suspicion. Persons expecting to be late from their homes, and having the lonely plains to traverse which then intervened between the metropolis, and the spot on which they frequently assembled in St. Giles's, might be excused, the defective state of the police considered, for availing themselves of such protection as weapons of defence could offer. But no such consideration was entertained for the Lollards; and the fact of their having endeavoured to secure themselves against lawless violence, was held to demonstrate that their object was to put down all law.

Such was the opinion entertained of these unfortunate sectarists, when news

was brought to the king, he being then at Eltham, that the Lord Cobham was about to raise the standard of revolt, and was already in St. Giles's Fields, then called Thicket Fields, at the head of twenty thousand men. Henry forthwith advanced on the supposed rebels; the gates of the city had been shut by his orders, and he attacked the assembling devotees, who were instantly dispersed. Some were killed, and the retreat of the rest to their homes being cut off by the precaution which Henry had taken, many were made prisoners.

The king was much exasperated at finding that Cobham, against whom his rage had principally been directed, was not taken. Torture extorted from those who had fallen into his power, a confession that he had been present. The principal prisoners were brought to trial, and expiated their offences with their blood. At the instance of Henry, a bill of attainder against Cobham was framed,

and laws imposing additional penalties on the Lollards generally, were passed by the Parliament.

Lord Cobham no longer ventured to remain in London or its neighbourhood. He fled alone, and directed his steps to Wales. Very few of his late friends were made acquainted with the place of his concealment. Prudence suggested that he ought not to put it in the power of the incautious to disclose his retreat, as the king for the more effectually securing the punishment of so great an offender, had offered, by proclamation, a reward of one thousand marks for his apprehension, with exemption from taxes to any town in which he might be discovered.

CHAP. III.

“ Do but look on her eyes, they do light

“ All that love's world compriseth !

“ Do but look on her hair, it is bright

“ As love's star when it riseth !”

JONSON.

THE persecution of which the Lord Cobham had become the object, much as it might afflict him, pressed with equal severity on others, who have not yet been named in these pages. It had been thought advisable that his son Edward should not accompany the fugitive, as, however desirable his assistance, the chances of recognition would have been increased by their journeying together ; and there was, besides, one not so capable of enduring the hardships of a flight,

and such a flight as theirs, who claimed their tenderest care. This was Alice, the daughter of Lord Cobham. She was now sixteen years of age, and admired as a beauty. Separated from her father, she required all the protection a brother could afford, as her mother had but recently paid the debt of nature.

Near the hospital of Saint Mary Rouncival, in the village of Charing, lived Sir Thomas Venables, an opulent knight of ancient family. He had been one of the first to join the standard of Henry the Fourth, when Richard was deposed, and was accompanied on that occasion by his friend Sir John Oldcastle. Their intimacy had lasted through many years; and before those differences on matters of religion, in which Lord Cobham acted so distinguished a part, disturbed the public tranquillity, it was proposed to form a still closer union between the two families, by the marriage of Edward Oldcastle with Matilda, the heiress of Sir

Thomas. The project, a favourite one with both the fathers, had this peculiarity attached to it, that it was nothing repugnant to the wishes of those who were still more deeply interested in the event. Edward had been the companion of Matilda's infancy; he became the friend of her youth; and the qualities of her heart, and the accomplishments of which she had possessed herself, would have converted friendship to love, had her ripening years disclosed charms less dazzling than those which met the enamoured eye of the son of Lord Cobham. But when the admirably perfect figure of Matilda and her nobly animated countenance met his view, he gave himself up to the most rapturous contemplations. Her full, dark, expressive eye indicated the resolution of a man, while it beamed with that benevolence which is the most captivating ornament of woman; and when she spoke, the lover was only embarrassed to decide which most charmed his senses, energy

or intelligence. Sir Thomas, though not very remarkable for a sordid disposition, found no small inducements in favour of this marriage, in the riches, renown, and high credit at court, which his old friend enjoyed. The youth of the parties alone delayed the celebration of the nuptials, and this obstacle was considered to be nearly removed, when the principles of Lord Cobham first attracted the notice, and the hostility of Arundel. The events which followed, withdrew many of the attractions which the intended union had originally held out to the knight. That which affected him more than all the rest, was the horror which the heresies of the father of his intended son-in-law had inspired. Those with whom the knight was most intimate never ceased to declaim against the monstrous impiety of Cobham, and their representations made Sir Thomas shrink with unaffected dread from the completion of those engagements which it had previously been the dearest object of his heart to form.

Henry Chichely, then Bishop of St. David's, a name celebrated in the annals of the church, was one of the most particular friends of Sir Thomas. To him the conduct of Cobham appeared so atrocious, that he frequently expressed astonishment at the forbearance of the Most High, in not selecting him as the instant victim of divine wrath. He strengthened the impressions which others had made; and Sir Thomas, though reluctant to incur the suspicion of meanness from breaking with an old friend when overtaken by distress, yielding to the arguments of Chichely, at length made known his final resolution, and that resolution was fatal to the hopes of Edward Cobham.

But this was not sufficient for the Bishop of St. David's. He suspected the relenting character of Sir Thomas, and wished to place him in such a situation, that it should not be in his power to depart from that resolution to which he had wrought him. While, therefore, he continued to descant on the iniquities of

Cobham and his son, he was eloquent in praise of the virtues of another young nobleman, whom he desired to see received as the future husband of Matilda. This was Octavius, the son of Earl Powis, whom he represented to be endowed with every personal advantage that favouring Heaven could confer on a brave and truly orthodox young soldier; for the person in whose favour he thus warmly interested himself, was devoted to the profession of arms.

Sir Thomas Venables had marked the deep affliction of his daughter, when he announced to her that she must no longer regard young Cobham as her lover. He pitied the distress of which he was the cause, but wanted resolution to revoke his late decision. He could think of no means so likely to diminish the grief of Matilda for the loss of one lover, as the introduction of a new suitor. Nothing could be more reasonable than this calculation; and it can hardly be doubted that

the knight's experience justified an idea that the meditated experiment would be attended with complete success. Be this as it may, he listened with satisfaction to the recommendations of Chichely, and expressed himself content to receive the young nobleman the Bishop had mentioned. Lord Powis was speedily informed of all that had passed, by the Bishop ; and as his Lordship's affairs were somewhat deranged, he was much rejoiced at the idea of seeing his only son carry the rich and beautiful heiress of Sir Thomas Venables. A letter was soon received, expressing the high pleasure which he had derived from the communication made to him by Chichely, and further stating, that Octavius, who was preparing to accompany the armament then understood to be fitting out against France, would, before he sailed, have the honour and the felicity of presenting himself to his intended mistress at Charing.

These tidings were conveyed to Ma-

tilda. It was her aunt, the Lady Mary Walworth, who was the bearer of them, and who now, in compliance with the request of Sir Thomas, exhorted her to dismiss all regret for the past, and to rejoice in the new prospects of happiness which opened to her view.

“ Spare me, my aunt,” was the reply of Matilda; “ spare me this cruel consolation. I did understand it was my duty to love Cobham, and God knows I yielded willing obedience to the wishes of my parent. But having done so, he—he himself has put it out of my power to obey him a second time.”

“ Your father,” said the Lady Mary, “ told you to love the son of Lord Cobham, because he was worthy of you. When he ceased to be so, he in fact failed in constancy to you, as in loyalty to his King, and in duty to his God.”

“ You are deceived,—indeed you are, good madam. I have known Edward from his boyish days, and certain do I

feel that all his thoughts have to me, been open as my own. That he would waver in his love I cannot credit; and for loyalty, full sure I am, a truer heart no monarch can command. I know that in religious matters he ever differed from some churchmen; but I think he only did object, not to the creed, but to such practices as went to throw discredit on their preachings."

"Do you not see," the aunt replied, "this is the subterfuge by which the wily infidel seeks to approach the defences of the church; that affecting to reform, he may gain the means of assailing the sacred work of ages. Methinks your shrewdness hardly can be wanting to penetrate so poor a disguise."

"You little know the character of Edward, if you believe that he would wear disguise to me. It is not for a simple maiden to engage in the discussion of abstruse questions which affect religion. I have never heard from him opinions,

but such as holiest fathers of the church have sanctioned. Now, his crime, it should appear, amounts but to this,—that he is faithful to a parent's cause; and ought a parent, gentle aunt, to think this quite unpardonable?"

Lady Mary discreetly evaded this question, by saying, "If you have such unbounded reverence for filial obedience, you will endeavour to serve the cause you advocate by example. Your duty to a parent requires you to think of Edward no more."

Matilda looked sadly on the countenance of her relation, as if soliciting more consoling language. Then averting her tearful eyes, she exclaimed, "And can it be my duty to perform impossibilities? Forget him I can never."

"That may be true. I do not ask you to forget, but I would have you to remember him as one who has forfeited all claim to your regard. Henceforth let your thoughts rest on the son of

Earl Powis. He, the good Bishop of St. David's has told me, is all that a young nobleman ought to be."

"The Bishop is a very pious man; but his anxiety to serve a friend may make him partial. I have heard before of this same youth, and I have heard, that a wilder student was never seen in Oxford. With Edward he was there for some years, and though from him I never heard disparaging language of young Powis, yet has it oft by accident transpired that he was ever first in riotous folly—the daring ringleader in every broil: but less distinguished in the paths of learning, and no proficient in the various arts, in which the world, reluctant still to praise, acknowledge Edward Oldcastle to excel."

The aunt replied, by describing the expected suitor to have relinquished all the follies into which his vivacity had hurried him at College. She could not deny that he had committed some excesses, but she spoke eloquently in extenu-

ation of them. Merry mischief in a handsome young man, (which the son of Earl Powis was said to be,) often appears very excusable to a widow of six and thirty; and such was Lady Mary Walworth. She insisted that many who were distinguished for their wildness in youth, proved most excellent characters in mature age. This doctrine was peculiarly fashionable at that period, and reference was on every occasion made to the highest authority, that of the King, whose former and whose present conduct seemed to establish the principle. Matilda, like the majority of her sex, would perhaps, have admitted that there was some force in the arguments of her relation, if a prepossession in favour of another had not occupied her bosom. But that made her deaf to all that could be advanced in favour of the young nobleman, to whom she was now required to transfer her affections. Though she had been taught to regard the bishop as a holy man,

she had perceived that his conduct was in some instances regulated by worldly motives, and this led her to conclude, that his known hostility to Cobnam might prompt the praises he had bestowed on Octavius, more than a sense of his merits. Earl Powis was reported to be a sordid man, and Matilda could not help suspecting that this peculiarity extended to his son. That such was the case she could scarcely doubt, from the readiness with which he lent himself to the views of the Bishop and the Earl; and had Edward never been in existence, she persuaded herself she could have had but a slender chance of happiness with one whose affections were so easily taught the dutiful obedience, which she understood him to yield to the wishes of a parent, whose heart was fixed on the acres to which she was heiress.

Such were the reflections of Matilda, when left to herself. To the praises bestowed on the person of the expected

suitors, she was perfectly indifferent: but the mind will occupy itself, when much is heard of an individual, in sketching his portrait. Matilda formed an ideal picture of young Powis, which presented itself to her imagination whenever his name was mentioned. She imaged a young man with a countenance flushed by excesses, and wearing an air of reckless effrontery, to disguise the avarice of which he was the instrument and the accomplice. Already she shrank from the libertine gaze which she expected would be fixed on her, the moment she was compelled to endure his presence, and receded from the offensive flattery, or insolent boastings, with which she doubted not her ears would be assailed, while the rude stare of curiosity occasionally gave place to a greedy glance at the surrounding indications of wealth.

Thus did Matilda represent to herself the man whom she was required to receive as her future husband. Each passing

day was regretted, as having brought nearer the dreaded hour at which she must be introduced to the son of Earl Powis. It arrived. One morning she was summoned rather earlier than usual to the breakfast table, and first Lady Mary, and then Sir Thomas, came to announce that the visitor they looked for had just made his appearance at Charing, and to admonish her as to her carriage on so important an occasion. All that Matilda had courage to offer in the shape of remonstrance had previously been urged, and silent tears conveyed her answer to the unwelcome intelligence now communicated. These she dried at the command of her father, and was led, without speaking, to the parlour, in which Octavius, with the Bishop of St. David's, awaited her approach. The former started as she entered, and looked round to the bishop who stood on his left, as acknowledging the accuracy of the description he had received of Matilda's beauty. He advanced

with an easy confidence, but with so graceful an air of profound respect, that, prejudiced as she certainly was, Matilda could not but feel that she had wronged him. Though her eyes were but seldom directed towards him, she plainly saw that he was little like what she had expected to find the son of Earl Powis. His features had scarcely received the finishing stamp of manhood, and were somewhat tanned from the journey which he had performed, or from the field sports in which he was accustomed to indulge. His beard, then regarded as no unimportant appendage to a fine face, had just become conspicuous, and was perfectly black, as were his bold eye-brows, and the curling locks by which they were surmounted. His eye, keen and piercing, indicated courage without ferocity; and his unembarrassed deportment was very remote from that rudeness and arrogance which the heiress he was intended to woo, had expected to detect among his most

prominent characteristics. In a word, his whole appearance and deportment were such, that Matilda felt they threw no discredit on the praises which had been lavished on his person and accomplishments by Chichely; and though far from pleased to see him in the character which he was to assume, she saw nothing but what, under different circumstances, she might easily have been taught to admire.

CHAP. IV.

“ I think you are happy in this second match,
“ For it excels your first.”

SHAKSPEARE.

OCTAVIUS was in high spirits, and the pleasantries which he uttered while doing justice to the hospitality of Sir Thomas, convulsed the baronet, Lady Mary Walworth, and even the bishop with laughter. The baronet was delighted with his soldier-like affability, which appeared to Lady Mary decidedly preferable to the complacent but somewhat reserved deportment of Edward Oldcastle. The bishop's eyes sparkled with ecstasy at witnessing the noble bearing of the young warrior, and the impression which he at

once perceived that it had made on all but Matilda. Octavius ate heartily of the poultry and venison, but indulged very moderately in the wine, which Sir Thomas pressed on him to complete his breakfast. He was unremitting in his attentions to Matilda; but these were so well timed, that she, however reluctant to approve, could not feel them irksome.

The conversation turned on the expected war, and Octavius spoke with animation of the gallant enterprize, in which the King intended to engage.

“ You speak,” said the bishop, “ as well becomes a soldier, but I am grieved to damp your generous hopes, by telling you that even to this hour the King hath not decided on a war, and there are those within this realm of England who think, at least who do profess to think, the Salic Law, which France doth put in bar to our King’s rightful claim, derived from his great grandmother Queen Isabella, deserveth to be treated with respect.”

“ Much do I wonder even France herself,” Octavius answered, “ in enlightened times like those in which we live, can for a moment sanction such a law, and hold it worthy reverence. Frenchmen, till now, I still have understood, in all affairs of gallantry, stand hardly second even to Englishmen. How, while they boast their love for womankind, can they uphold that vain and barbarous law, that excludes those who most deserve to rule, from the throne which their charms would grace ? ”

While he spoke, a glance of rapturous admiration fell on Matilda. The bishop remarked it, and smiled at the adroitness which found the materials for a compliment, in a speech like that which he had made. He replied, —

“ Indubitable as our monarch’s right is, we have among us those who question it, and the late efforts at rebellion prove too clearly, how desperately vile malcontents are bent on thwarting the

King's views, and all the nation's hopes of glory. Our worthy host has had a sad example of this, in one who formerly was his friend. Need I add, I speak of Oldcastle, now called Lord Cobham?

"His was indeed, my Lord, a desperate project, as I have heard it told. Was his son thought to share in it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Indeed! — Poor Ned!"

These words were uttered with an air of sympathy, that was not lost on Matilda. The generous feeling which they seemed to indicate, gave new interest to the visitor.

"You speak of the young Lollard," said Chichely, "as though you were acquainted. Know you the traitorous boy?"

"Too well, my Lord, did I know him, when we were at Oxford, and, to say truth, I liked him little."

How different were the sensations of Matilda from those which had thrilled

her heart but a moment before! She now regarded Octavius as the mean traducer of the virtuous youth whom he had affected to pity. The bishop, delighted to hear anything that tended to lower the Oldcastles in the estimation of Sir Thomas, caught at the words just heard, and anxious that nothing should remain behind, which might be brought forward to the prejudice of either father or son, invited the young nobleman to proceed, by saying, —

“The sorrow you have manifested for having been companion to young Oldcastle, becomes you well; and that you never liked him proves how soon a pious mind discriminates.”

“My Lord, you praise me much too highly. Small is the credit that I ought to claim, for having evermore disliked young Oldcastle.”

“I comprehend you. What you would say is this, that his depravity was even then so glaring, that every one perceived,

as you did, the ripe iniquity which singled him from all his fellows.”

“Not I, by heaven!” cried Octavius, turning quick upon the bishop—“I were no man to tell such stories of an old companion. Never did I hear his conduct questioned—never did I see any act of his that called for censure—never did I hear till now of aught connected with his character, that I would not gladly have reported of me.”

Matilda hastily turned from the table, to conceal the grateful emotion which she could not repress.

The bishop was confounded by the tone and language of Octavius, which were so opposite to what he wished, and had reason to expect. He, however, did not give up the point, but endeavoured to bring Octavius back to the charge, by reminding him of what he had previously advanced.”

“But you said you knew this Oldcastle too well, and that you ever did dislike him.”

“Aye, my Lord, did I. Too well I knew him for my own ease and reputation, and I had abundant cause for disliking him; for he was ever so sedate and studious, that my irregularities seemed all the worse from contrast with his merit. He so excelled in all that I neglected to acquire, that my ignorance was ill at ease in presence of his learning, nor could my graceless folly endure his virtue.”

Matilda endeavoured to appear composed; but the inexpressible delight which every word that fell from Octavius afforded, made this a task of no common difficulty. “How have I wronged this generous, gallant heart!” was her mental exclamation; and could the bishop and Sir Thomas have known the admiration which the new suitor had already inspired, they would have judged the day was not very remote, when Octavius would triumph over the absent Edward.

“That virtue,” said the bishop, with some severity of tone, which was intended to admonish Octavius that he ought not to continue the strain of panegyric in which he had indulged—“that virtue of which you tell us, hath passed away with no common rapidity. You do not well to speak so warmly in a Lollard’s praise; nor is it prudent, I must add, that, standing in your present situation, you thus exalt one fallen as he is, and paint him so superior to yourself.”

“I speak, my Lord, but that which I know, and only tell what once poor Cobham was. If he in latter days has turned from that fair path he erst so nobly trod, I meddle not with that, for this simple and sufficient reason, it is to me unknown. How I have acted in this imprudently, I do not comprehend; but must with humility confess, I never was expert at calculating consequences.”

Chichely endeavoured to smile, but it

was a reproving smile that sat on his stern features, while he said, "You must, methinks, be marvellously slow at calculation, if you can suppose that thus to labour for your own disparagement, would much advance your suit with that high-born damsel."

"Humbly I hope I have not offended her; but truth, my Lord, is truth. I will not praise that fair one in her presence, but surely he who aspired to such a treasure could never reach it by ignoble paths. I would not basely grovel into favour. So, please your reverence, I am fixed to take a far bolder course. My Lord, and you Sir Thomas, shall see me strive to climb above young Cobham's level, but never seek to pull him down to mine."

"Demean not yourself by speaking thus," cried the bishop, now taking the undisguised language of reproof. "You seem forgetful of the stripling's crimes, and overlook the damning facts in proof

that he is believed to have rebelled against his King, and sinned against religion."

"My Lord, I understand that his opinions in religious matters, are much opposed to those our holy church has long adopted. To me this seems an error."

"An error! — Why such lenient language? Our holy faith is part and parcel of the law, and he who dare erect himself against it, rebels against his sovereign."

"In some cases —" Octavius began,

"In any case," vociferated Chichely.

"From this, my Lord, with all humility I differ. A subject's thoughts of heaven I think his own. My body is my sovereign's. Born in his land and nourished on his soil, this person is of right devoted to the service of its king. My soul is native of another place; it claims no sustenance from this his land; and, therefore, I presume to think its situation

different. In fine, my Lord, I should say it owes no duty but to Him who gave it being, no homage but to Heaven's eternal King."

"You claim too great a latitude, young man. False liberality carries you away. Such language from another would lead me to suspect he favoured Lollardy. I would not think the son of mine ancient friend could be led away by the pernicious heresies of the times."

"O no, my Lord; I am no reformer of the church. It is for holy and learned men, like you, to determine what is the true faith, and not for thoughtless idlers to undertake the regulation of such matters. I have neither skill nor time, and so am not furnished with an excuse for doubting."

The bishop was proceeding to point out the unsoundness of some of the opinions which Octavius had seemed to advocate, when he was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger from Can-

terbury ; who not finding Chichely at his own residence, had been directed to seek him at the house of Sir Thomas Venables, to deliver a letter, with which he was charged, into the bishop's own hands. To Chichely, the contents of the letter were of such importance, that he thought no more of correcting in his young friend a disposition to favour Lollardy. The letter announced, that the prior and monks of the church of Canterbury had, by the general suffrage of the whole body, determined on requiring that he should fill the archiepiscopal chair of that see, which had become vacant by the death of Arundel. This communication came from an emissary of Chichely's, who had been stationed at Canterbury to obtain the earliest possible intelligence of the decision come to respecting the appointment of a successor to the late archbishop. Joy, but thinly disguised under the mask of humility and professions of unworthiness, sparkled in his eyes, and gave

his countenance a glow of unusual animation. His correspondent had further informed him, that two monks were about to be dispatched to London, to communicate the proceedings of the body to which they belonged, in a formal and official manner; and the bishop of St. David's forthwith proceeded to take his departure from Charing, that he might be ready to receive them on their arrival. He excused himself to the knight and his family, for abruptly leaving them, and received their congratulations with an air of composure, while he declared the wishes of the brotherhood could never be carried into effect, for he, (though nothing averse to comply) seeing that he was already bishop of St. David's, could not be divorced from that see, but by the special interference of the Pope; and he affected to think it was little probable, that the successor of St. Peter would condescend so largely to interest himself in what concerned so humble a son of the church as Henry Chichely.

But those to whom he addressed himself doubted not but his translation would be speedily effected, and Sir Thomas, if anxious before to stand well with the King's confessor, (for such was Chichely) was not less disposed to gain the approbation of the archbishop of Canterbury, by giving his daughter to the son of Earl Powis, who seemed to him in every respect most eligible to become his son-in-law. Both he and Lady Mary Walworth, exulted beyond measure, at having found so accomplished a youth to succeed Edward Oldcastle in the affections of Matilda. That he would speedily do so they could not doubt, for they thought they perceived that the hold which young Oldcastle had had on her affections, was loosened. To Lady Mary she spoke no longer disparagingly of Octavius, nor was she disposed to recall what she had heard of his former excesses. The noble frankness of his manner appeared, even to Matilda, to atone for the errors it acknowledged; she listened to his praises

with pleasure ; and if but little disposed to assist in carrying the wishes of Sir Thomas into effect, the person recommended to her love, completely succeeded in establishing himself in her esteem.

CHAP. V.

“ Observe this rule, one ill must cure another,

“ As aconitum, a strong poison, brings

“ A present cure against all serpents' stings.”

WEBSTER.

EARL POWIS was so much impoverished by various circumstances, that he attached the utmost importance to the resources which he flattered himself would be brought within his reach, by the union of his son and the daughter of Sir Thomas Venables. Octavius, before he left home, understood this well, and was somewhat reluctant to enter upon the journey, from an apprehension, notwithstanding the praises which he had heard lavished on Matilda, that he should not find in her the person he could desire to call his wife. Having resigned himself to the wishes of

his father, it was rapture to discover that he could accomplish the object of the Earl, without sacrificing his own happiness.

Matilda was not blind to the merits of Octavius. His manly accomplishments appeared to her entitled to the praises which she heard lavished on them; but what she admired most, was the unaffected frankness and unobtrusive benevolence, which various little incidents proved and disclosed. Confident of his generosity, she sometimes resolved on praying him to consult her peace, by fixing his affections on another. But her delicacy shrunk from the avowal which she wished to make, and as often as an opportunity offered for communicating the sentiments of her bosom, fear and embarrassment made her dumb. She consoled herself by reflecting that delay was not very important. That, at all events, the union so dreaded would not be pressed on her till Octavius returned

from the campaign, which was expected shortly to commence; and there was a chance that he might return no more. Death might arrest the youthful warrior at the very opening of his career; but that was an event to which all her resolutions of constancy to Edward were incapable of reconciling her mind.

An application was made to the Pope, praying his sanction to the translation of Chichely. A favourable answer was returned. Chichely soon received the holy pall, which was to "give him power over bishops, to enable him to call synods, and confer sacred duties." This ceremony was performed with great pomp in the King's palace at Sutton; and the revenues of the see were next conferred on him by the favour of the crown, on his redeeming the half year's rent, which had fallen to the Exchequer, by a payment of six hundred marks.

The patriots of those days had attempted, in various ways, to call the attention

of the crown to the abuses of the church. Many who expressed the most pious abhorrence of the crime of Lollardy, and the most constitutional hostility to "Wickliffe learning," had contrived to direct the attention of Henry to the immense wealth enjoyed by the clergy. All the influence of the new archbishop was exerted to counteract these public spirited persons, and no more effectual way of saving the property of the church suggested itself, than an appeal to the martial character of Henry in favour of a war with France. Chicheley therefore in council, raised his voice most decidedly in favour of enforcing the claim of Henry to the crown of that kingdom, and backed his arguments with the offer of a liberal grant from the clergy. Eloquence so persuasive was not to be withstood. The archbishop triumphed, and the French ambassadors, who had been sent to England with a view of adjusting the matters in dispute between the two monarchs by

negociation, were dismissed, with an intimation that Henry would compel compliance with the demands which he had urged, by invading France with a powerful army.

Joy sparkled in the eyes of Octavius when it was announced to him by the archbishop, that the formidable warlike preparations which had been thought necessary, had not been made in vain ; and that before the close of the ensuing month, it was probable that English warriors would again be seen in the territories of the King of France. Chichely was delighted at witnessing the ardour of the young soldier ; and he warmly expressed his satisfaction.

“Right glad am I,” he said, “to find that the son of my old friend inherits so much of the spirit of his ancestors. Just ground is there for exultation, that his highness is at length resolved to vindicate his honour, and compel the dishonest French to render unto him his just inheritance;

That he has come to this decision, and is enabled to carry into effect his wise purpose, is mainly owing to the good council and liberal aid which he has received from the bishops and clergy, whom impious men have wished him to despoil."

"In this," Octavius remarked, "all the land shall confess that they have displayed a spirit worthy of men who claim to stand pre-eminent."

"My son! my son! the times in which we live require that holy men should act with more than customary vigour, and the world shall see that I at least will not disgrace the high situation to which I have been called, by timidly shrinking from the duty. The disorders which have lately occurred may all be imputed to the heresies of Wickliffe. As yet, none have dared to meet the evil as it ought to be met. New measures shall be tried."

He spoke with an air of stern resolution. Octavius was surprised at the fiery zeal which he remarked, and ventured to en-

quire the character of those measures which the archbishop desired to see adopted; and Chichely, speaking with the same animation which he had previously displayed, announced it to be his intention to propose, that the reading of the Scriptures in English, should be punished by forfeiture of land, cattle, and goods; and that those who might so offend a second time, should be held liable to be first hanged for treason against the King, and then burned for heresy to God.

The soldier started at the measureless severity of the law which Chichely contemplated, and replied with some emotion:

“I know, my Lord, full well, that it is not your habit to sport; yet I cannot persuade myself, that you, upon mature deliberation, have resolved to raise your voice in favour of a law that seems so harshly to punish those who, if they offend, do so in error, not in malice.”

This opposition recalled to Chichely the language which had moved his dis-

pleasure, when Octavius first arrived at Charing. He was equally surprised and indignant at what Octavius had now advanced, and with a scrutinizing look he reproved it.

“ And seems it then to you so light a matter, that wicked men should plot against the church, and strip it of those funds which have for ages been wisely applied to its support? Is it from you — from you, whom I would cherish as though you were the son of my own loins, that my outraged senses must hear such impiety defended?”

“ Trust me, most reverend Lord, you have not heard aright. Such acts I have not defended. I but designed to say, that less appalling punishments than those you mentioned, might fitly be resorted to against such men as offend the law, by merely reading the Bible in the English tongue.”

“ By merely reading!” the archbishop retorted — “ by merely reading the Bible

in the English tongue! Who hath perverted thy unsteady youth, and made thee so familiar with depravity, that thou can'st think on such a crime as this with calmness; nay, even with indulgence? That which thou regardest as of such trifling import, seemeth to those, whom many years of study have given some insight into spiritual matters, most fatal to the interests of the true faith."

"My ignorance is much surprised I own, to learn that the Englishing of those holy writings which I evermore have been taught to view as pregnant with divine instruction and nourishing truths, should be considered a crime of such appalling magnitude."

"Youth," replied Chichely, "it seemeth passing strange that you should have to learn that the sacred mysteries, of which the fathers of the church are the appointed guardians, must not be profaned by being disclosed to vulgar eyes. Should rudeness dare to lift your mis-

dress's veil, your wrath would strike the offender dead. Would you, then, deal more mildly with the sacrilegious hand which exposes those stores of sacred knowledge confided to the keeping of the clergy?"

"May I presume to ask, why the Revelation, if not intended to be made known to mankind at large, was made at all?"

"Peace, young man," said the archbishop. "The enquiry is profane. As well might you ask why the tree of knowledge was permitted to flourish in the garden of Eden, seeing our first parents were denied to eat thereof."

"Some evils would, perhaps, arise from the misconceptions of the ignorant, were translations sanctioned; but might not a counterbalancing good be derived from the diffusion of knowledge which this would promote?"

"Assuredly not. The Scriptures, in the hands of the vulgar, might be made

an engine of infinite mischief. Since copies of the translation made by the heretic Wickliffe have got among the people, behold how turbulent they have grown."

Octavius scrupled not to oppose the opinions of the archbishop with his accustomed intrepidity. He reminded him that if rebellions had been attempted since the works of Wickliffe had become popular, they were not the first insurrectionary efforts recorded in our history; and consequently it was not proved that they really sprang from that which Chichely was disposed to regard as their source. Such language subjected him to new reproofs from the zealous churchman; and the soldier, though not convinced by his arguments, felt embarrassed how to answer some of them, without advocating the principles contended for by the Lollards. This he was little disposed to do. He had not given so much attention to religious

matters as to feel great horror for the errors and alledged impieties of those who were then the objects of persecution; but the severities to which they were exposed, were sufficient to induce a youth of his careless, unreflecting character, to take it for granted that there must be something bad in their tenets or practices, to call forth that deadly hostility which he saw arrayed against them. This feeling caused him to give up the contest, and the archbishop, gratified with what he regarded as the triumph of his eloquence, soon relaxed from the harsh tone he had assumed, to converse on matters connected with the prospect of glory which the war about to commence opened to youthful ambition.

While thus engaged, Matilda entered, and the archbishop smiling most graciously, enquired if she had a scarf ready to bestow on the warrior who was about to go forth as her knight. On her replying that she had not made such preparation, he

remarked that she would do well to set herself about it strait, as her hero would very shortly find himself in the field of glory ; but trusting that Octavius would plead better for himself than a man of his years could do for him, he would leave him to try his fortune alone.

Chicheley retired, and Matilda remained with Octavius. She felt alarmed at the tranquil manner in which the archbishop had assumed that she, as a matter of course, must regard the son of Earl Powis as her knight ; and the hint which had been given to the young soldier to press his suit, added to her embarrassment.

Octavius wanted no greater encouragement than that which he had received from his reverend friend, to apply himself in earnest to obtain some mark of Matilda's favour, before he took his departure. This he solicited with a degree of eager anxiety for which she was not prepared, and which, at once respectful and energetic, compelled atten-

tion. The manly frankness of his language and deportment was not lost upon Matilda, and she felt real pain at the idea of giving an answer that would be fatal to his peace. Though much disposed to seize this opportunity for making the disclosure which she had contemplated, Matilda could not summon sufficient resolution to execute her purpose. She endeavoured to get rid of the subject for the present, by expressing disapprobation of the practice which had obtained, of calling on females to give their sanction to war, and employing them to inspire in the soldier, about to go forth to battle, a keener appetite for bloodshed.

“That war is too often necessary,” said she, “I do not deny; nor would I withhold the meed of gratitude due to the defender of his country. But I shudder at the idea of a human being glowing with impatience to be engaged in destroying his fellows. That you, in all else gentle and humane, should sigh for car-

nage, calling it glory, excites my astonishment."

"Lady, methinks you are too critical," replied Octavius. "The warrior has ever been considered to tread the path of glory. I cannot control the opinions of the rest of mankind. I must take the world as I find it, and seek to make myself valued in it, by acting in conformity with the ideas of my fellow men. Were there a peaceful path to glory pointed out to me, I will confess, I much fear that my temperament would not be best fitted to tread it; so all hail, glorious war! Yet frown not on me, while I avow my weakness. I much mistake myself, if I am that ferocious being, your gentleness would picture every soldier. It was but now that I fell under the displeasure of my Lord Bishop, for speaking too warmly against that shedding of blood, which he, though a man of peace, considers necessary for the well-being of the state."

"Indeed! — What blood can he desire to shed?"

“ It is that of the Lollards that he would pour forth ; and methinks, the law which he meditates, is especially aimed at the destruction of the unfortunate Cobham. He may, possibly, have offended much ; yet I cannot help feeling sincere grief that such calamity should fall to his share ; nor see I that the crime imputed to him is one that bears so deep a dye, as fitly to call down the punishment of death.”

“ No more do I. Methinks the sins of thought were better left to the punishment of Him who sees all hearts, and who, when his laws are insulted, needs not the feeble arm of man to aid his vengeance.”

“ Even this,” said Octavius, “ did I tell to the archbishop, but he rebuked me as profane. Still, though my everlasting hope depended on it, I cannot choose but sorrow for Lord Cobham.”

“ And for his son ?”

“ Aye, lady, from my heart ; and much

I wish that it were mine to bear him comfort."

"Would you now—let me put a case to you,—" said Matilda; "would you adventure on a perilous journey to do him service?"

"By Heaven, I would go to Palestine to do it."

"You need not journey quite so far, for I do know that he is now in England. But distant is the place, and dangerous the road; and, peradventure, I should not do well to suffer you to encounter such perils as would beset you in your journey, if I besought you to carry him that solace which, it may be, a friend of his would be able to supply."

"I do entreat you let this task be mine. Ah! lovely one! how doth this gentle pity become that beauteous countenance!"

"Nay, cease this language now," cried Matilda hastily; "I would show

you that it is misplaced. I could wish to tell you what much concerns you; — in a word, —” she added, in a tremulous voice, “ I would implore you —— ”

She paused. Octavius listened with astonishment; but Matilda was silent.

The voice of Sir Thomas was heard in the next apartment. She made a sign for Octavius not to pursue the subject. He understood her, and was anxious to start a new topic, but none suggested itself. Looking towards the window, the cross erected by the first King Edward, in honour of his deceased Queen, which then formed the most conspicuous ornament at Charing, met his eye, and relieved him from the embarrassment.

“ Though you, Matilda, approve not the warrior’s calling, such has not been the feeling of illustrious and amiable females in other days. Yonder pile attests that the consort of Edward was so far from experiencing all that

repugnance which military labours inspire in you, that that famous princess trod the tented field with her husband, anxious to participate in the dangers of war."

"The duty of the wife, might carry the intrepid Eleanor to scenes which the feelings of the woman inclined her to abhor; and I must not suffer you to wrong her memory, by considering the monument which perpetuates an effort of devoted affection, as proving a sanguinary love of bloodshed."

Sir Thomas did not appear, but he was heard engaged in conversation with the archbishop, who appeared to be taking his departure. Expecting every moment that he would join them, Matilda, in reverting to the subject nearest to her heart, could only say, —

"I will not express at this time what I wished to confide to you. By two of the clock this afternoon I am to ride with my father. I commonly go forth a short

time before him. My palfrey will pass through yonder shady lane," and she pointed to the way, which has now long been known as a thickly-inhabited street — Saint Martin's Lane. "Thence by Lord Fitzosborne's villa, near Thicket fields, on to the Oxford road. Should you be able to join me before I am overtaken by my father, I will unfold to you the means by which you may, in some degree, administer to the unfortunate Edward Oldcastle. But to accomplish this, it will be needful that you should, on some pretext, claim absence for a week. Should I be denied the opportunity of speaking with you, I will be prepared with that which shall teach you whither you should journey."

"Depend on me, lady. Your benevolence shall not be balked for lack of a trusty and expeditious messenger. I shall not fail to find a seemly excuse; and my horse, trained as he has been to forced marches, shall soon reach any part of this

island, to which your bidding may direct his master. Never trust me, fair one, if the very idea of comforting Ned Oldcastle will not save me from all sense of fatigue."

Sir Thomas entered, and the conversation was dropped.

CHAP. VI.

“ His ready smile a parent’s warmth express’d,
“ Their welfare pleas’d him, and their cares
“ distress’d.”

GOLDSMITH.

WHEN Lord Cobham fled to Wales, his son and daughter, who were left behind for reasons already stated, retired from the capital, and sought a retreat remote from those parts in which they had been accustomed to reside. They went to Lutterworth, in Leicestershire; to which place they were invited by a friend of the family, Mr. Whittington, brother to the celebrated Sir Richard, who, possessed of a competency, and being like his friend, Lord Cobham, enamoured of the works of Wickliffe, had taken up his

abode at Lutterworth, for the satisfaction of being near the spot where the bones of that celebrated man reposed.

Here, sheltered from the pitiless storm which persecution had raised, their hours glided away not free from sorrow, but cheered with hope, the gay companion of youth. Taught resignation by the precepts and example of their revered father, they endeavoured to bow with submission to the visitations of Providence; and if regret, when memory told of the gay visions which were passed, sometimes disturbed their bosoms, no murmur ever escaped their lips.

One evening towards the decline of the year, seated with their host after supper, at his request, Edward indulged him with the dear prohibited delight of hearing a few chapters read from the Scriptures. Lord Cobham had obtained a copy of Wickliffe's translation, from Wickliffe himself. This was considered by him of greater value than all he

possessed in the world beside. Edward had made a copy from that which belonged to his father, and he had executed it with such persevering care and exquisite ability, that it was a perfect fac-simile of the original. It was, indeed, so like, that to guard against its ever being forgotten which had actually come from the venerable translator's hands, a mark had been put on the rude iron-edged binding, which had been supplied to protect it from injury. Edward, in compliance with the wish of Mr. Whittington, was engaged in reading the first chapter of the third gospel, and was proceeding with the following verses: —

“ And it bifel that whanne Zacarye schould do the office of presthod in the ordir of his course to fore God.

“ After the custom of the presthod, he wente forth by lot, and entride into the temple to encensen.

“ And al the multitude of the pupel was without forth, and preyede in the our of encensying.

“ And an aungel of the Lord apperide to him, and stood on the right half of the auter of encense.”

“ Methought,” said Edward, offering to close the book, “ that I heard a knocking without.”

“ No,” cried Mr. Whittington, — “ no such noise have I heard. Close not thy book, but proceed.”

Edward complied.

“ And Zacarye seying was afrayed : and drede fel upon him.

“ And the aungel sayde to him, Zacarye drede thou not.”

Here a loud knocking was heard. Alarmed lest the spies, whom he had but too much reason to believe followed his steps, had discovered his retreat and the manner in which he was occupied, he hastily shut the volume, and removing a pannel in the wainscot which disclosed a small closet prepared by himself, and appropriated to the reception of this valued book, he there deposited it with

all expedition. Mr. Whittington shared the apprehensions of his guest, for the knocking was at the back part of the house, to which, for safety, he had been accustomed to retire, whenever he meditated a violation of the law, by reading the Bible. In the fear of the moment he could not but tremble for the heavy penalties which might fall on him. He had set his heart on a higher treasure than the earth contains, yet he could not but contemplate with pain the probable forfeiture of all his worldly goods.

Endeavouring to conceal his emotion, he demanded in an authoritative tone, who it was that disturbed his family so long after the usual hour of retiring to rest, it being then nine o'clock.

He was answered in an unknown voice, with the words which Edward had last read,

“Drede thou not.”

It was now quite plain that whoever the party without might be, the reading

had been overheard. Edward and Mr. Whittington exchanged looks of surprise and uneasiness, when the voice was again heard.

“Drede thou not, for they preier is herd.”

Their apprehension, though not their surprise, was somewhat diminished by this. The stranger, in continuing the verse, had proved that he possessed an intimate knowledge of the prohibited work, which was hardly to be expected in one who came as an enemy.

“What wantest thou?” demanded Whittington.

“Y am sent to thee, to speke and to evangelise to thee,” was the reply; the stranger still continuing to quote from that chapter of the English translation of the Testament, which Edward had been reading. He added—“I am a friend to thee, and to thy house; therefore, admit me strait.”

The master of the house looked doubt-

fully at Edward, as if wishing to have counsel from him on the step proper to be taken in this emergency. He felt that if the person without was a legal enemy, he exposed himself to no new danger, by admitting him, the cause of his alarm having been deposited already in what he considered a place of secure concealment.

Determined by this reflection he advanced to the door, and cautiously opened it. The person with whom he had conversed immediately entered. It was a man who appeared rather advanced in years. He was of tall stature, but his habitual stoop so reduced his height, that at first sight he would not have been pronounced above the middle size; his habit was spare, and the sallow hue of his countenance, combined with an air of studious observation, told that much of his life had been passed in labours of a sedentary character. His eyes were grey, and rather sunken, but they

glistened with more than common intelligence. His nose, which inclined to the aquiline, communicated a sharpness to his countenance, rather at variance with the mildness and humility, which the rest of his features expressed; and his beard, fast turning grey, was suffered to grow on his upper lip, and from the centre of the chin, was brought down to a point. His manner was dignified and unembarrassed, but those whom he had disturbed, looked in vain for that insolent importance, which was then, as it is now, the distinguishing characteristic of underlings in office, one of whom they had expected to appear. He advanced with an assured step towards the master of the house, and proceeded to accost those whose wondering regards were fixed on him with breathless astonishment.

“Friend Whittington, I greet ye well. Your name, and that of your brother Sir Richard, have long been familiar to my ear. I rejoyce to learn that you have

happily gained that good part which shall not be taken from you. For you," he continued, addressing himself to Edward, "I feel, as I trust a man should feel, for the son of his dear friend, and brother in the faith; and for thee," (looking at Alice,) "thou tenderer bough of the same tree, I do flatter myself that mine shall be the joy to aid the kind hand of thy protector here, in sheltering thee from those enemies who would pursue even unto the death, thy gallant father and his guiltless race."

Universal surprise sat on every countenance. Benevolence was in the looks as well as in the words of the stranger; yet believing themselves to be surrounded by spies, they doubted whether to consider what they heard as the language of friendship and sincerity, or that of hostility and fraud. Whittington replied:

"Albeit I have never seen thee before, I would fain regard thee as being what thou seemest. Yet must I add, and

trust me, much I sorrow to confess it, the times in which we live produce so much iniquity, that I am embarrassed whether to decide that thou comest in friendship, or to regard thee as the foe of truth, a traitor, and a spy."

"I lament that such suspicions should be but too well justified, by the mournful facts which have within my own experience fallen out. But thou shalt know that I am not the man who would practise to harm thee."

"Yet that you come at this untimely hour, and in such manner too, not by the common road, but by the garden, to the most retired part of my dwelling, is more like the serpent who would secretly glide where he could not openly gain admittance, than the friend who seeks an honest, open welcome."

"But even this which I have done," said the unknown, "and which excites thy distrust, I have performed to the end that thou shouldest have no doubt of my

real errand hither. I have shown that I know how and where to seek thee. More will I do, and prove that if I were a spy, I should not lack the power to do thee harm. I heard the youth read the Scripture, and I now will show him and thee where the treasure is concealed."

With these words he advanced to the closet, in which Edward had bestowed the manuscript, opened it, and displayed the book to the astonished group around him.

The stranger started with unaffected surprise. He gazed on the book which he had snatched from its place of concealment; turned over its pages, then pressed it to his lips, in an ecstasy of joy.

"Trust me," said he, "I am amazed. I had heard much of thy skill," he continued, addressing himself to Edward; "for though I never saw thee before, I need not ask thy name, I read it in thy face; much, I say, I have heard of thy talent, as a transcriber of the sacred

writings; but I believed not such perfection attainable as that which I now witness. Here I behold the hand-writing of the immortal Wickliffe, so faithfully copied, that I, well skilled as I am in all that his grace-directed pen left behind, can scarcely believe that this precious produce of thy industry is thine indeed, so wondrous like I find it to the revered original."

The perplexity into which the stranger had previously thrown the inmates of the house to which he had introduced himself, was not a little augmented by the intimate knowledge both of them and of their habits, which it was manifest he possessed. The suavity of his speech, and the frankness of his manner, were well calculated to disarm suspicion; but the terror which he had caused when he first made known his approach, was not wholly dissipated, and each feared to answer with that confidence which he invited, lest some unwary admission should

escape, of which advantage might be taken. He understood their confusion, and hastened to relieve them from the painful suspense in which they had been plunged.

“ I see,” he remarked, “ that my presence and my conduct, which must seem passing strange, have created some alarm. Yet thus have I acted to spare you groundless apprehension. My friend, Lord Cobham, directed me so to approach, and so to act, that I might prove myself at once his bosom friend. He supplied me with the information, which has enabled me thus to surprise. Doubt ye still? Behold his letter — see the plan traced out, by following which I have thus come upon ye; and let this paper assure ye that I am the friend he taught you to expect would shortly be on his way from Bohemia.”

“ John Huss!” exclaimed Edward and Mr. Whittington, in the same moment, with equal transport and astonishment.

“Such, indeed,” replied the Bohemian, “is my unworthy name.”

“Most welcome are you here; most blessed am I of Heaven,” said the master of the house, “to see so bold a champion in the cause of truth beneath my humble roof.”

“And truly,” said Edward, “it gives my heart unwonted joy to see the friend of my father, so much earlier than he had taught us to expect you would be likely to reach England.”

“Verily,” said Huss, “in this the hand of Providence is seen working good out of evil. Not so soon could I have hastened to the succour of my persecuted friend, had not my enemies prevailed against me for a season, and suspended my pastoral labours in my own country. Their brief triumph has enabled me to execute a design long since formed, and long fondly cherished in vain; that of visiting the hallowed sepulchre of Wickliffe; not in the way of a vain pilgrimage

as weak idolaters hie them to that cunningly devised toy, the crucifix, called the *Rood of Grace*, to see the doll which is profanely made to represent the Redeemer, open and shut its eyes; nor as others, to go to the shrines of *Thomas à Becket*, and *Darvel Gatherin*; but for the holier purpose of striving to collect such writings as were left by that good man, which have not yet been added to my spiritual wealth."

Willingly did Edward and Mr. Whittington assure the Bohemian Reformer, that their assistance in the search should not be wanting. He thanked them for their proffered aid, and cheerfully partook of the refreshments which were promptly set before him. Thus engaged, his attention again rested on Alice. He gazed on her with admiration; but it was not the delicate and transparent fairness of her countenance, nor the flaxen ringlets which graced her brow, that claimed attention. It was the air of holy re-

signation which, while it spoke Alice content under severe privation, proved her heart the seat of pious hope, and told that mild obedience and gentle love were inmates there.

“And why, blue-eyed one,” said he, “shrink you from a stranger? Is it thy maiden bashfulness that would retire from the view of thy father’s friend, or does sorrow prey on thee, and subdue those bounding spirits, which in other days, as I have heard, made the walls of Cowling Castle resound with mirth?—By mirth I mean, not that idle and boisterous folly which usually bears the name, but the rational gaiety, which, springing from a guiltless heart, and emanating from gratitude for acknowledged benefits, is at once the offspring of innocence, and the essence of religion.”

Alice replied, “I fully share the joy which your presence has inspired; but I need scarcely say that a simple maiden is ill prepared to hold conversation in pre-

sence of a teacher so learned ; and, therefore, I am silent from dread, that speaking I should but expose mine ignorance, and give offence."

"Methinks, thy bashfulness doth go too far. I would not woo thee to a formal disquisition; for, truth to tell, I never wished to find a skilful doctor in a woman's coif. But I do hope your converse shall enliven many an hour. Thou art, peradventure, aware my coming here is in part to fulfil a promise made to thy father, to bear thee to Bohemia, and there adopt thee as my own daughter. Though kindness here has afforded an asylum from which want is excluded, it cannot give that security from the enemies of thy brave father which thou mayest find with me."

Alice expressed gratitude, but felt pain at the idea of leaving her native country, and of being so widely separated from her father. Whittington regretted the proposed removal of Alice, but was con-

soled by the hope that superior protection would be hers with John Huss, from the great influence which he had acquired over his countrymen.

The Bohemian did not confine his proposal to Alice, but wished her brother to accompany him also. This, he hinted rather mysteriously, was for a purpose which he was not at liberty then to explain, but one in which Edward himself was largely interested. The young man objected to leave England while his father was in such perilous circumstances; but assured by Huss that what he contemplated might prove of essential service to the Lord Cobham, and would probably detain him but a short time on the Continent, Edward offered no farther opposition. It was agreed, subject to the decision of his father, that he should accompany Alice to Bohemia. To obtain Lord Cobham's consent, Huss desired to be conducted to him without delay; and proposed setting out for the place where

Edward had stated his father to be concealed, on the next morning. This was objected to, as travelling by day might expose them to be watched and tracked; but Edward declared himself ready to set forward on the following night. Huss approved of his caution, and Mr. Whittington undertook to have two horses saddled for them, by the time at which it was proposed that they should depart.

CHAP. VII.

“ There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remain, which have noted three things to be marvellously altered within their sound remembrance. One is the multitude of chimnies lately erected ; whereas, in their young days, there were not above two or three, if so many, in most uplandish towns of the realm ; (the religious houses and manor places of their lords always excepted, and, peradventure, some great personage) ; but each made his fire against a reredosse in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat.”

HOLLINGSHEAD.

THE promised visit of John Huss, was that to which Edward had long looked forward with impatient hope. His vast importance in Bohemia, and the reverence with which his name was always mentioned in England, as a successful labourer in the cause of reform, so far as the

church was concerned, inclined Edward to regard it as a felicity to have beheld that far-famed man. To see his sister placed under the powerful protection of the Bohemian pastor, was that which he could most desire, as, while it ensured her, as he doubted not it would, perfect safety and comfort, it would relieve the friendly Whittington from a charge which he had already borne for a considerable period ; and still more, from the risk to which his kindness exposed him, by arraying against him the fierce and exasperated enemies of Lord Cobham. But when he reflected that yielding his consent, he must be so far removed from his father, that in no emergency could his assistance be calculated upon, and cut off from all intercourse with his English friends, except by letter, (in those days a very tedious, doubtful, and dangerous mode of communication,) his heart was torn with no common pang.

It ought to be added, that anxiety for

his father and his friends, was not the only feeling that disturbed him. His thoughts were never long absent from Matilda. Though calamity had thrown him to such a vast distance from the object of his love, that he could aspire to her hand no more; though the most flattering day dream in which a youthful heart might indulge, could hardly suggest a possibility of regaining the envious height from which he had fallen, yet it seemed an aggravation of affliction, before sufficiently great, that he should now be doomed no longer to breathe the same air, and tread the same soil with the mistress of his affections. In England, denied the happy triumph which he had thought his own, — forbidden to claim that hand to which he was formerly invited to aspire, — though the object on which his best affections had long been irrevocably fixed was no more permitted to avow that he still retained her love, favouring circumstances might enable her

to assure him that he was still regarded as entitled to her pity and esteem. This, if but little to what he had once enjoyed, was in the lover's fond imagination of such importance, that he could not easily conceive any advantages to be gained by a visit to Bohemia, that would compensate for the sacrifice which he must make to obtain and secure them.

Huss rose early in the morning, and appeared refreshed in body and in mind. The day was wet and chilly, and, in consequence, a fire was lighted. It was made of wood and coals, which were supplied from time to time with the aid of an enormous pair of tongs, or tangs, as they were then called, and which were occasionally made to perform the office of a poker. The wood and coals were not deposited in a grate or stove, such articles not being then in use, but laid on the hearth. Whittington thought it necessary to offer something like an apology for allowing of the introduction of so effemi-

nate a piece of luxury, as a chimney was thought to be by the admirers of old English habits, at the commencement of the fifteenth century.

“It may be, learned sir,” he began, “that you suspect, because I admit into common use the fire-place, which some do think ridiculous refinement, that I give into all the affected follies which mark the sparksome gallants of this inglorious age. In that you will do me wrong. I like not their fantastic ways. I still dine at the good old-fashioned hour of ten, that I may have wherewithal to sustain my frame through the day; while others think it a most goodly and polished thing not to eat their dinner till high noon, when half their toil is over, and others even put it off an hour beyond; so that workmen, and people of the common sort, now actually dine before their masters and those of superior condition, which no man ever could have thought he should live to see. You find not in my house a gay display

of splendid pewter platters, as some have; — hollowed too, they say is now fast becoming the mode, so that that off which men eat, in some sort resembles the cups from which they drink. I still adhere to the *treene*, nor think my meat retains its proper flavour, but when I eat it from the wood; and for my beds, yourself can testify, you have not found a pillow stuffed with feathers, which some voluptuaries claim to revel on, but a true log of honest English oak, on which the head that is sound within, I know, prefers to rest.”

“Your fare,” said Huss, “is hospitable, is good, and is not chargeable with the phantasies which you justly condemn.”

“But for the chimney,” Whittington returned, “since I became advanced in years, I have been afflicted with an asthma, and ill endure the fumes of smoke, which, albeit some say it removes many complaints and maladies, is

no good doctor for a cough, and therefore, I indulge me in the luxury of a chimney as you remark, by means of which I breathe so much more at my ease, that, trust me, I should not vastly be surprised, though you may smile at the idea, if, (in the course of years I mean,) they should become common in the houses of aged men, affected as I am."

"I much incline to think," replied the Bohemian, "they would be found comforting to all who are so affected; but rich as this famed isle is said to be, its wealth must be enormously increased ere that can come to pass, — ere all who suffer from catarrhs or asthmas can find the means of indulging in such splendid convenience."

The conversation was interrupted by the introduction of breakfast. A flaggon of wine was placed near John Huss, a quart of home-brewed ale by the master of the house; a bowl of milk occupied the centre of the table; and a cup or

horn was placed for each person to help himself to that which he preferred to drink. Brown bread was supplied, and salt fish, and part of a chine of beef, boiled, completed the preparations for the morning's repast.

“ This land of England,” said the Bohemian, “ is renowned abroad for its good cheer, and most especially for its fat oxen ; and, truth to say, the sample now before me proves that such praise is not unwisely given.”

“ Alas !” said Whittington, with a sigh, “ England, I fear, will never be again what England has been. Time was, indeed, our lands were fitly cultivated, and English beef would cause the foreigner to marvel : but grieved am I to say, in latter years we have degenerated.”

“ This surpriseth me. To what can you ascribe this falling off ?”

“ To vanity. We grow too proud to imitate our wise progenitors. In good King Edward's reign, the peasant dared not to think of rearing his son, but to

that industry to which himself was bred. Thus we had ever labourers in abundance; but now, our saucy clowns must make their youth more potent than themselves, and every now and then, forsooth, we find the ploughman's son has left his father's cot, to come back some day, and make the village stare at the spruce lorimer * or upstart fletcher."†

"Was not this," enquired Huss, "formerly the case? It seemeth but natural that man should labour to advance his offspring, and addicted as the English are to commerce, it doth not move my wonder that enterprises like those of which you speak, should frequently be made in this land of freedom."

"Such licentiousness," returned the English patriot, "hath not always been permitted, nor hath it now the sanction of our laws. But sad is the truth which I must speak, the laws are not enforced (save those which favour the abominations of the church) with sufficient vigour. Eight

* Saddler.

† Arrow-maker.

or nine years since, a show was made of reviving the old statute, and it was re-enacted, 'that no man or woman, of whatsoever state or condition they might be, should put their son or daughter,' (I repeat to you the very words of the said statute,) 'of whatsoever age he or she may be, to serve as an apprentice to no craft or labour, within any city or borough within the realm, unless they have rent or land to the value of twenty shillings at the least.' "

" And what was the penalty accruing on the violation of this law ? "

" Parents of this sort were ordained to such labours as the estates did require, upon pain of one year's imprisonment, and to make fine and ransom at the King's will. "

" I much question if a law like that would contribute to the public weal. "

" A wise, discreet, and thoughtful man as thou art, need not be told ' the pudding's proof is found in the eating thereof. '

Now to the proof. I do remember when this law was young, that is, perhaps, some forty years ago, and this I can avouch, that much benefit thence arose, and long it was not ere such abundance was produced, that that same statute which did pass to keep the prices of provisions down, as they should not too largely drain the subjects of this kingdom, was wholly set at nought."

The Bohemian, though not much in the habit of giving his attention to matters of political economy, felt his curiosity excited to learn the effect of laws like those which Whittington had described, and the question which this prompted, received an answer setting forth, that in the reign of Edward the Second, it being then a time of grievous famine, the parliament declared the highest prices at which provisions might lawfully be sold. The best stalled ox might not cost more than forty-eight shillings; a fat wether with the wool on, five shillings; or shorn,

three shillings and sixpence halfpenny might be demanded; a fat hog, fit to be made into bacon, might be sold for ten shillings.

These prices Huss regarded as enormous, and such as could only be thought of in time of famine. No nation on the face of the earth (so it appeared to him), could endure such extravagant charges in ordinary times, and for a long continuance.

“ I grant you,” Whittington replied, “ that this law was passed in time of famine; but take you with it this, that these same prices were fixed to be a *maximum*, as that more should not be demanded; to the which, from naming them, methinks it is most clear, that those who made that statute did look forward. But mark the result which in the following reign did presently ensue, from that famed statute, which put down, and with a potent arm, the restless fancy for unseemly changing, which led the sower or the cattle-

tender, though he received not one shilling rent, to send his boy to learn the weaver's art, or pick up the cordwainer's trade, expecting he in time would sure become — in what mad hopes vain mortals do indulge! — a wealthy cobbler.*

“But what,” said Huss, who began to think his host more than sufficiently diffuse, “what was the effect produced by this same law?”

“You mind me well of what I wish to mention — Labourers being plentiful, an ox might be purchased for fourteen shillings, — a sheep for two and ten pence, all unshorn; a hog for four and sixpence; and wheat and oats were also then so

* “*Cordwainers.*—This fraternity was incorporated by letters patent of Henry the Fourth, Anno 1410, by the name of *Cordwainers and Cobblers*, the latter whereof at that time was no despicable epithet as at present; for the genuine meaning thereof then was, that it not only signified a shoemaker, but likewise a seller or dealer in shoes, for it does not appear that the word shoemaker was then in use.”

MAITLAND.

cheap, that none of the impoverishment at present seen was visible, and labourers paid two-pence by the day, or two-pence halfpenny as sometimes chanced, might live in comfort and abundance. Now things are different; and a sheep unshorn will cost you what was Edward's famine price, and for the chine of which we have partaken, I pay no less than fifteen pence the stone."

"Such," remarked the Bohemian, "are the sad and ever-varying changes of this transient being, doubtless intended to exercise our patience."

"From that, though still I must defer to you, I feel disposed to differ. To me it is not clear that Providence ordains the wrongs done by man. Much of what we endure is caused by the taxes which are imposed, beneath which the people of England must groan till by some means the rapacity of the churchmen shall be abated. The King should resume the grants which his ancestors

have unwisely made to the clergy; thus might he replenish his coffers, and yet spare his people."

"But can he do so according to law?"

"Assuredly his highness may. His father did before him; and if those grants which have been made to the injury of his estate, be not recalled or suspended, the nation's ruin must speedily ensue, for it can in no wise be borne. Largely indebted as the crown is at this present, you cannot but be marvellously astonished that total ruin has not already fallen on this entire realm, when I mention, — you scarcely will believe the fact, but lie I will not — that the King of England, — so I may say the land of England, oweth no less than — I know it will surpass all credence — a hundred thousand pounds!"

The surprise of Huss at hearing that England could sustain a national debt of such vast magnitude, was as great as Whittington expected it would prove.

The latter went on : — “ This evil must find a remedy, or this great land will fall to utter decay. Our sovereign must be manfully reminded of his duty by his Commons. We should tell him (for I am forced, as peradventure you have heard, to be one of the Commons body,) as we did King Richard, ‘ we have a constitution, and it was not many ages since experienced, that if the king, through any evil council or weak obstinacy or contempt of his people, shall alienate himself from them, and refuse to govern by the laws and statutes of the realm, according to the laudable ordinances and their faithful advice, but will throw himself into wild designs, and stubbornly exercise his own singular and arbitrary will ; that from that time it shall be lawful for his people to depose that king from his throne ! ’ ”

“ And used you such language as this to your rightful king ? ”

“ Aye, by my holy dame did we, and it brought the king from a froward turn to a better temper, so that he did grant our petitions, and soon, behold, the Bishop Arundel — then of Ely — became Lord Chancellor instead of the Earl of Suffolk.”

By this time breakfast was over, and Whittington, engaged as he had been in conversation, was surprised to find that notwithstanding it was nearly seven o'clock, he was still seated at the table. He now gave directions to have the next and most important meal of the day ready between ten and eleven, remarking by the way, “when four hours be past after breakfast, then a man may safely taste his dinner.”

Whittington took the Bohemian Reformer to the dwellings of several of his friends, whose opinions in matters of faith coincided with those of Wickliffe; and from these Huss obtained certain tracts

written by that distinguished man, which he regarded as invaluable.

Edward, in the mean time, was occupied in making preparations for their journey. It did not then enter into the calculation of a man who was about to move to a considerable distance from his home, that the comforts he might require could be abundantly supplied by the inns he must pass in his road. A flaggon of ale, and permission to recline on a settle, or at best a straw pallet, with a coverlid of dogswaine or hopharlots, (coarse substances of the rug kind,) were all that could be expected. For himself Edward required but little accommodation, and the plain and simple habits of the Bohemian, called for no extensive arrangements. All then was ready for their departure, before five o'clock, the hour of supper in Mr. Whittington's family. At that meal Mrs. Whittington, who had been at Leicester when Huss arrived, presided.

When it was ended, after a short time given to devotional exercises, Huss and Edward, by desire of their host, sought a few hours repose. They arose about nine o'clock, and their horses were led forth. The night was favourable for persons wishing to escape recognition; the gloom was most profound, and the perfect silence that prevailed, satisfied the Bohemian and his friends that their motions were unobserved, and that all who might have been disposed to notice them at an earlier hour, were buried in sleep.

The parting words of affection were soon exchanged, and the last embrace given. The hopes expressed for the happy accomplishment of their expedition, were not unmingled with apprehension, and Alice, while eagerly availing herself of the opportunity which it presented, of sending her fond regards to her father, shuddered at the thought that it was perhaps for the last time that she gazed on her brother. Edward

hastened to terminate this scene, and affecting an air of indifference, expressed joy at finding the night so dark and dry, and urged his horse forward at a round trot, closely followed by the Bohemian.

CHAP. VIII.

“ It was the manner in those days that the murderer onely, and he that gave the death's wound should flye, and he was called in Wales a Llawrudd, which is a *Red-hand*, because he had blooded his hand.”

“ They had their alliance, partisans, and friends in all the countreys round thereabouts, to whome, as the manner of the time was, they sent such of their followers as committed murther or manslaughter, which were safely kept as very precious jewells.”

Wynne's Life of the Gwedir Family.

THE road was dreary, and the journey fatiguing, but Huss, despising bodily pain, rode cheerfully on, rejoicing in the hope of soon seeing his ancient friend. Agreeably to the plan laid down at Lutterforth, they advanced with all the speed of which their horses were capable during

the hours of darkness, and courted repose through the greater part of the day. Edward was frequently lost in melancholy abstraction, which his companion failed not to observe. He applied himself to dissipate the gloom that overhung the spirits of the young man, sometimes by arguing on the folly of suffering the cares of life to produce despondency, and sometimes by quoting and commenting on the passages of Scripture best calculated to administer consolation to a troubled bosom.

This he conceived to be his duty. He hoped the spiritual considerations which he pressed on his friend would not be useless, but he had seen enough of the world, to know that there were objects vastly inferior indeed to the subjects of his meditations, which were still so alluring, that the remote prospect of gaining them might best assist in tranquillizing the mind which calamity had disturbed. Under this impression

he again declared it to be his confident belief that once arrived, he could speedily point out a way by which Edward might raise himself above the difficulties to which, from the loss of fortune, he was at present exposed; and he conjured him not to deny himself the solace of that joy, which the hope of finding himself in a condition to help those who were dear to him, might reasonably inspire.

It was on the fifth day after their departure that they found themselves at twilight, on the margin of the Dee, and nearly opposite the ancient city of Chester. The retreat to which Lord Cobham had fled, was situated near Holywell, and though the road to it was circuitous and intricate, the travellers hoped to greet him before the opening of a new morrow. They were leaving the hovel in which they had reposed since the morning, and Huss had already mounted his horse, when the attention of Edward was arrested by the appearance of a short.

thickset man, who had sought the same resting place, and who had not before challenged particular observation. There was an expression of settled ferocity in his countenance, which the gloom of the evening seemed to aggravate rather than to veil, and while the eyes of Edward were involuntarily rivetted on this unexpected apparition, though little accustomed to such impressions, he felt as if the gaze of a demon had rested on him in return.

Advancing with an air of reckless indifference, the being who had so strongly attracted observation came almost close to him and accosted him.

“Well! — have you looked your fill? I suppose you are now satisfied that you shall know me again, when next we chance to meet.”

The harsh tone in which these words were spoken, astonished Edward as much as the words themselves. Though his attention had been occupied, and his

looks fixed, he knew not why, on the ruffianly individual who stood before him, he was unconscious that there was anything in his manner, which the most cautious prudence, anxious to avoid giving offence, would have schooled, or endeavoured to repress. Confused at finding that the feelings inspired in his bosom had transpired, although he had abstained from speaking, he was embarrassed what answer to give, and irresolute how to act, he continued silent.

“Have you scanned me sufficiently yet?” demanded the stranger, with increasing impetuosity.

“You speak,” said Edward, “like one who has been injured. I meant not to disturb you, and hoped at least that I might look towards the place where you stood, without offence.”

“At least you thought you might do it without fear of resentment. Doubtless you expected to frown me into nothing, believing that the scorn your inso-

lent presumption dared to wear, when first we met, might be continued with impunity."

"I know not," replied Edward, "of what sins against decorum and humility I might have been charged at the period to which you refer, for it lives not in my memory; neither have I any knowledge of the fact that we have met before."

"Indeed! — Is mine that commonplace countenance, that it can be seen and not remembered? Till now, I did believe a wolf might as well seek to hide from the pursuing shepherd, by mingling with the flock he lives to prey upon, as that the Llawrudd of Ap Griffith's mansion, could mix among the rest of human kind with chance of passing for a common clown. Such dissembling will not do with me. Or treachery or fear leads you to this. I knew the moment that your lowering eye had fallen on me, that you had recognized the *Red-hand*, whom, when younger and more honest, you ever

spurned with undisguised scorn, as though some grovelling toad had crossed your path, whose venom you did loathe, while you despised his weakness."

"With whatever feelings I might once behold you, I knew you not now, nor was it in my thoughts, either to court your alliance, or to pursue your crimes. If unfavourable remembrances of you recur to my mind, it is yourself have revived them. This matters not. We are not needful to each other. Choose you your way, and I by seeking mine, will prove, at least, to your contentment that I desire not to dog your steps, and seek out your retreat."

"Rightly you judge that were no pleasant sport, if life retains its value in your eye. How well my dagger sped among the Kyffins, you heard while residing with Ap Griffith; and it is natural for you to guess, I wear my weapon still."

"It boots not thus to talk. I sought

you not — I knew you not, till yourself disclosed your quality; and knowing you, I seek no further converse with a wretch who stabs for hire.”

“ Why, take your course, or tell me ere you go, as once you ventured to declare, that the very mark of Cain is set upon me. If stabbing be my calling, 'tis a trade I need not blush to own in times like these. Where mobs of stabbers pillage and destroy under the orders of some royal bravo, they are called heroes. I am myself an army, and if they are not misnamed, may claim to be called hero as well as any of them.”

“ Be it so. I care not what you call yourself, or what name others may bestow upon you; 'tis sufficient that I know what you are; and now, without more speech, am well content that we should part for ever.”

“ That,” replied the *Lawrudd*, “ will answer well the purpose of one of us; but it may possibly chance that I shall not be

that one. You might have made me yours ; — my steel could have found out your deadliest foe.”

“ I want not its aid,” said Edward, “ in any quarrel of mine.”

“ Ere long, perhaps, you may confess its power, and wish, too late, the hand that grasps it battled on your side.”

“ Begone. — Your braggart tongue compels resentment, and enforces me to tell you, that this insolence continued, not even your boasted dagger may prove sufficient to protect its wretched owner. Put me further to the proof, and you shall find that though slow to threaten, I wear an arm capable of making a bolder, braver villain bite the dust, than ever wore your doublet.”

The menacing tone in which these words were uttered, rather abated the daring of the outlaw. He paused for some moments before he spoke, and at length murmured, —

“ Why, this is well. — Dog should not

prey on dog; but if it must be so, content. I did think that you, whatever was once your foolish pride, might now have better understood life's chances, than thus to shrink with childish abhorrence from the fraternity of an outlaw. A price, indeed, is put on Roderick's head, but one still higher has been set on some to whom he has become a neighbour. A time may yet arrive, when even a *Red-hand* will not be despised as the ally of justice."

Edward made no reply. He turned to Huss, who had gone forward a short distance, but on finding him detained by the ruffian, had returned time enough to hear the latter part of their conversation. Both were alarmed at the last words which had fallen from the Red-hand, as they seemed but too distinctly to indicate that he knew, or at least suspected, Cobham to be concealed in that neighbourhood.

"Truly it is a melancholy thing,"

said Huss, "that one so bland, and so accomplished as my ancient friend, your brave father, should have no better resource than hiding among such rude and uncivilized beings, as all those appear whom I have seen since we have been on the borders of Wales. Trust me, I scarcely can persuade my reason, that they belong to the same race which I have lately beheld in other parts. How mighty the difference between the aspect of this fierce-looking marauder, with his unmasked face, uncombed hair, untrimmed beard, slouched bonnet, soiled doublet, and worn-out sandals, from the gay gallants I did see in London as I passed through, with beards so nicely fashioned and perfumed, and hats so elegantly turned up in front, with hair combed down over their foreheads, as if they desired to hide from all the world the part which received the sign of the cross in their baptism. Then see what noble cloaks they wear; and then the

gorgeous boots with beaks that almost reach up to the knee, and are fastened thereto with a silver chain."

"The contrast must astonish. How would they gaze in London, could this same fellow in his present gear, be dropped among these studiers of fashions some gay day, when they fill the walks of Paul's."

"But," said Huss, "I understood not well how this strange man became known to you."

Edward explained. On a visit at the Castle of Owen ap Griffith, who had been one of his father's friends in the day of his prosperity, he had seen the ruffian with whom they had just parted. Having distinguished himself by assassinating several Kyffins, who were at variance with the clan of the Trevors, he was sent by the latter to Ap Griffith, that residing near him, he might be secure from the vengeance of the Kyffins. To afford a shelter to such persons, was then.

but a common act of courtesy, which the head of one family thought it no degradation to solicit of another, and the murderer so received, it was common to treat as a personage of some importance. Thus Roderick was honoured with great consideration, while in the Castle of the Ap Griffiths. Presuming on this, he had been disposed to put himself on a familiar footing with Edward, who at once disdainfully repulsed him, and left the residence of Ap Griffith, indignant at having been exposed to the advances of one of the Red-hands' calling.

The friends journeyed on, and having passed to the left of Flint Castle, they again turned towards the Dee. The river had overflowed its usual limits, and Edward found that the path he had purposed taking, was almost wholly concealed by water. This occasioned them much embarrassment and loss of time, and the night was far advanced, before the trav-

ellers found themselves in a situation favourable to their hopes. Having passed the dreary causeway, they explored the windings of a narrow road, which the rains that had lately fallen had made a perfect swamp, and emerging from this they ascended a rising ground, where the harder soil enabled them to proceed with more celerity. As they approached the highest point, the moon, then in the wane, rose pale and lustreless, shedding a dim ray on the scenes around, and enabling them to discern in the distance, the bold outline of the mountainous country before them.

But an object of greater interest caught the view of Edward. He perceived a tree which grew on the summit of a hill, steep, but of moderate elevation, and surmounted by a small cottage, in which Lord Cobham had taken up his abode.

“At length, my honoured friend,” said he, “I may congratulate you —”

He started, for he thought that he

heard the step of a pedestrian. The same sound had more than once struck on his ear before. He looked round, and the whole of the lane was then so far illuminated by the increasing light of the moon, that he was satisfied his alarm was groundless.

“ I congratulate you,” said he, “ for now with delight I behold the spot where terminates our journey — the spot where — ”

Here he perceived the shadow of a man by the side of his own, and was certain that he was watched. He had sufficient command of himself not to turn on the instant, but perceiving that the lurker was listening, he continued his speech in the hope of misleading him.

“ The spot,” he resumed, in a louder tone, “ where the well of Holy St. Winifred for ever flows, to cool with its pure and grateful waters the parched mouth of the devout pilgrim, and to restore health to the afflicted, who believe in the miraculous virtue of the saint.”

“ Verily,” Huss rejoined, “ you speak with unseemly admiration of this said Winifred and her spring. As soon should I have thought to hear you tell of the virtues of the holy blood at Hales, to which, (although as I am well-informed the body of a duck from time to time supplies it), so many pious Christians send a groat each year, who would not give a single mite to cheer a dying brother, still pretending their incomes are too small, and their estate too lowly to bear such charges.”

This speech was not that which Edward could have wished to hear at that moment, tending, as it did, to counteract the impression which it had been his object to make on the listener. But he was still more annoyed, as the Bohemian proceeded :

“ It was my hope when you began to speak, that you were on the point of saying, you even then could point my

longing eye to where Lord Cobham sojourns. For that same well, which lying legends have made famous—”

“That holy well, I hope we yet shall gain, if not before, by earliest peep of day,” cried Edward, raising his voice in the hope that his companion might not have been heard; and that the man, whom he still perceived as they descended through a woody winding lane which led towards the holy well, would suppose them to be pilgrims. Huss turned round upon Edward, more than ever surprised at the tone which he had taken; when the latter, checking his horse, and addressing the individual he had before seen, and whom, though not so close as he had been, he could discover endeavouring to elude observation, by crouching under the bushes which grew on the left of the travellers, he demanded—

“Who goes there?”

No answer was returned; and before the enquiry could be repeated, the un-

known had plunged into a thicket, and was no longer visible.

Edward had not looked towards him while he was in a situation to see the figure if not the face of the individual distinctly, conceiving it to be policy, by affecting unconsciousness of his presence, to hold a conversation which might induce him to believe that the object of their journey was merely to drink at the spring of Saint Winifred. Afterwards, the lurker was too much confounded with the gloom to which he had retreated, to be recognised with any degree of certainty. Edward could not, however, but believe that it was the Red-hand. Little as he had seen of his late follower, he thought he could distinguish the air of reckless effrontery which marked the deportment of Roderick; and when he recalled the parting threat of the desperado, it seemed not improbable, that by his superior knowledge of the country, he had removed himself thus far from the

place where he had first been seen. This he might have done with the intention of ascertaining their real destination, which both Edward and the Bohemian feared he rightly guessed to be the present abode of Lord Cobham.

“ I mentioned the spring of Saint Winifred, as I did,” said Edward, when having urged their horses to unwonted speed, they found themselves at a considerable distance from the spot where they halted, “ to make that listener conclude we were about to hie thither as pilgrims, for purposes of devotion, or as patients to recover health, for I discovered him just as I was about to direct your eye to the dwelling of my father.”

“ Your cunning was commendable, but I, unknowing your intent, have marred it. It seemeth then, that we are close upon the residence of him we seek. This glads me.”

“ We have been nearer to it than we are at present. To baffle him who

watched us, I have come beyond the point at which we ought to have dismounted. Now being very near the place I named, my counsel is that we go on, and take refreshment at the well. There is one who abideth near to tend all comers, who will take our horses into his keeping. On foot we will return, and that by day-light. So shall we better see if we be dogged; and as pedestrians, we can make our way in these wild parts where horses cannot travel."

The Bohemian approved of the suggestion, and now entering Holywell, they took their way to the far-famed spring said to have been furnished by the intrepid virtue of St. Winifred, whose sanctified career, according to the legend, was not to be terminated even by the process of beheading, which in other cases has furnished a very efficient check to the finest enthusiasm. Descending the hilt which the head of the saint had consecrated by its rolling, they approached

the hallowed spot in the valley formerly called *Sych Nant*, where the said head was arrested in its course, again to grace the shoulders from which it had been detached, and saw the chapel dedicated to St. Winifred's glory, and the copious and transparent stream said to possess such miraculous virtue, that the sick, the lame, and the blind had only to drink thereof, in order to be perfectly restored. Here were seen the crutches, and other aids by which the tottering patient had approached the healing pool, hung up in the small uncouth building of stone, raised over the spring, as grateful memorials of the cures performed. Whether John Huss and his companion believed that the decorations alluded to had been thus obtained, or supposed them to have been supplied by those who profited from the resort of pilgrims and patients to Holywell, it is not our purpose to enquire; but cheaply as they might hold the miracles recorded of the saint, having given their

horses to the then distributor of her bounty, they rendered a willing tribute to some of the virtues of the spring, by indulging in repeated draughts. The first rays of the sun brightened the summits of the neighbouring mountains, and enabled them to distinguish through the transparent ever-bounding wave, the red spots on the stones below, said to have been contributed by the blood of Saint Winifred, and which to this day may be seen. To the sacred character assigned to these appearances, John Huss and Edward paid but little reverence, but they gazed with devout admiration on the stupendous works of Nature, which rose in primitive magnificence before them, and refreshing themselves with what remained of their provision, while contemplating the romantic scenery around them, the prayer of gratitude ascended from "nature up to nature's God."

CHAP. IX.

“ ——— I am hushed

“ As a spent wave, and all my fiery powers

“ Are quenched.”

LEE.

AFTER resting for two hours, the morning being beautifully fine, they left the spring, and retraced part of the ground which they had recently passed over. Frequently did they turn to ascertain whether their progress was watched, but nothing occurred to excite alarm or suspicion. Edward left the road, and proceeded through a series of bye-paths, which, from the frequent turnings they presented, made it impossible for any one to witness their advance without coming so close as to expose himself to their observation. The way was considerably lengthened by this precaution; but Ed-

ward was young and felt not fatigue, and the Bohemian was too much occupied with the thought that the moment was almost at hand when he should behold his friend, to regard as a hardship that exertion which had for its object the security of Lord Cobham.

The travellers again approached the Flint road, if the rugged, neglected, and solitary way from Holywell to Flint Castle deserved that name. Edward saw the tree on which his eyes had been fixed that morning, when his speech was so disagreeably interrupted by the listener, whom he suspected to be the Red-hand. He used no congratulations now as he had done before ; but looking round with extreme caution in every direction, and perceiving nothing to create new alarm, he led the way to a steep hill, at the foot of which a cottage appeared ; while at the top, a smaller erection met the eye. The elevation on which the latter dwelling rested, presented a front of almost

perpendicular steepness, and the hut there established was so immediately over the cottage below, that a stone dropped from the one must inevitably have fallen on the roof of the other. As they approached they heard a loud barking, and a man in the dress of a labourer appeared at the entrance of the lower cottage. At the same instant a mastiff sprang furiously forward, but instantly checked his career, and submissively approached Edward. The stern countenance which the man had worn when he first presented himself, was dismissed as speedily as the boisterous rage of his follower; and Edward was saluted with a friendly welcome. He then applied a whistle to his mouth, which he blew twice. This was to indicate to Cobham that friends were coming, and Edward and the Bohemian began to ascend the narrow path, which wound round the hill—the only one by which the retreat of their friend and father could be gained.

It was the local peculiarities which have been described, that induced Lord Cobham to fix his abode here. Among those who had embarked in that cause which had so fatally marred his earthly prospects, was the owner of these two cottages, the occupant of the lower one. As a breeder of cattle, he had acquired a small property, and his enthusiastic attachment to those principles of which Cobham was the advocate, led him to offer that asylum which the latter thought it adviseable to accept. Evans, that was the name of the proprietor, had been some years in London, at the time when Arundel made his most determined attack on Lord Cobham and the Lollards; and the scenes which he then witnessed in the metropolis made him anxious to regain his former abode, on the banks of the Dee. To take with him that leader whom he had so much admired, seemed to him the very consummation of happiness — to be his sentinel

or guard, the highest honour to which devout ambition might aspire. He, therefore, set forth the advantages of the situation to Lord Cobham, in the most glowing terms: he explained to him that a signal from the lower cottage could announce at any moment, approaching peril, and indicate whether it had become necessary to fight or to fly; while from the cottage on the hill a sign might be made which would elude all observation, by which, should his enemies contrive to baffle the vigilance that would be constantly exerted below, assistance might easily be summoned at any hour of the day or night. Cobham felt the kindness which prompted this offer. The situation appeared favourable to concealment; the person by whom it was offered could return to his former dwelling without exciting observation or surprise; and he himself need hardly ever be seen, till some improvement had taken place in his circumstances. These considerations de-

terminated him to avail himself of the kind proposal. He accordingly took up his abode at the spot to which Edward had conducted the Bohemian.

The signal which announced approaching friends, was heard by the exile. He advanced from the cottage, and descended the winding path a few steps, till he came to a part where it was so narrow, that one man could not advance without difficulty; and where the branches of a tree which had been trained across, came so low, that without stooping, a human being of the ordinary stature could not get forward at all. He came thus far, as well from impatience to see his friends, as from a cautious desire to be upon his guard against enemies, who might by any chance have possessed themselves of the signal which it had been concerted between him and Evans, should be given to announce the character of those who might interrupt his solitude.

To see a friend, was to Lord Cobham

no common joy. The place of his concealment had been communicated to but few of those with whom he was most intimate; and of that few, not more than two individuals had found leisure to visit him. Edward had several times ventured from Lutterworth, and he was expected to arrive at about this period. Lord Cobham, on hearing the signal of Evans, instantly concluded it was his son who was about to appear; he saw with true delight that it was indeed Edward, but it were vain to attempt description of the rapturous glow which pervaded his bosom, when he recognised in the companion of the youth, his esteemed friend, the revered and celebrated Bohemian, John Huss.

They embraced and gazed on each other in perfect silence. The sincere joy which was felt by each, could not at once descend to expression. Tears filled the Bohemian's eyes; and Cobham, though the pride of the soldier forbade him to

give vent to his feelings in that way, could with difficulty refrain from indulging in the luxury.

Huss observed the struggle of Cobham against the weakness of nature, and on that subject first broke silence.

“I cannot choose but weep, and you, perhaps, contemn this childish softness; but with me, tears grow on rapture, faster than on pain. To meet a friend so beloved, after so long an absence, images to me the bliss congenial spirits will experience, when they shall freely mingle in the skies, triumphant over the last enemy — death. Yet I do not know, that all is joy which swells my agitated bosom. Though I have been a minister of peace, and never loved what men call glorious war, it pains me to reflect how changed your situation since we met; while I see beneath that peasant’s garb, he who once, in all the warrior’s gay attire, appeared before me, fresh from the scene of his triumph, the capital of France.”

“ 'Tis true,” said Cobham, “ I no longer wear the glittering trappings which were then my pride, and not less changed is my fortune than are my garments. Then, crowned with victory, I was returning to receive those honours which my applauding sovereign panted to bestow; now, pursued by obloquy, I am chased like a wild beast whom it is thought virtue to destroy, and the son of that sovereign who held he mainly owed his crown to me, dooms me to die, and brands me with a malefactor's name.”

“ Such are the ills which mortals must endure, to prove their courage and their faith. Thrice happy still, since threatened with such dire calamities, your heart remains the same.”

“ My present fortune I must needs regard as a cloud — an awful cloud that overhangs my prospects; but it will pass away, and one bright ray of sunshine breaks through its gloom, since I am not denied to see my ever-honoured Bohe-

mian friend on British ground. I did indeed expect, from the kind letters which cheered me when calamity first assailed my family, that you would endeavour to see my helpless offspring, but I doubted if you would get the letter directing you how to seek them so soon. Then I did fear, if safely you arrived at Lutterworth, you would want strength to sustain the additional fatigue of journeying hither through paths so rugged, and through hordes of men so desperate, wild and daring, as are those who harbour in the vicinity of this poor hut."

" And did you think I dared not brave those ills for a brief season, in the midst of which, you have adventured to establish your abode? The perils that await the traveller, or on the land or mighty waters, I view without alarm, and care not where Death happens to overtake me, nor what manner of form he may wear, most happy when my task is ended, to claim emancipation from these fleshy

trammels, and return to my eternal home."

He spoke with animated enthusiasm, his eyes were lifted towards the Heaven he contemplated, glistening bright with the sacred hope that warmed his heart.

"Your mind," Cobham remarked, "is, I perceive, as much detached from worldly objects, as when we formerly met."

"Yes, I have not those ties to restrain me, which bind the many to this world of sorrow. These have been spared — I once had said, denied me. There was a time when this dull orb appeared as fair to me, as now it shines to those whom I must pity, and dreams, vain dreams of happiness on earth, pervaded all my bosom."

Cobham enquired if these had not been interrupted by calamity.

Huss paused, and labouring to repress the emotion which the question inspired,

with an air of assumed composure he replied,—

“ I know not whether I should so consider that, which calling my thoughts from low concerns, enabled me to give my undivided mind to sacred cares. But, O ! whatever reason may pronounce it, now mellowing time has tempered frantic passion, I found it through a long and mournful season, severest misery.”

“ This do I think you hinted once before, exciting curiosity which you declined to gratify.”

“ I doubt it not, for though the tale be brief, till many winters had passed away, after that period of which I speak, I dared not trust my tongue with speech, while memory by retracing renewed the burning, bleeding wounds my heart had sustained.”

Lord Cobham interrupted the Bohemian, to request him not to inflict that pain upon himself now.

“ Now,” replied Huss, “ thanks be

to 'Him who chasteneth those he loveth,' my soul, become familiar with its woe, has won from growing age tranquillity. I, in my youth, as happens to most mortals, became enamoured of a fellow creature. Elgiva's beauty excited wonder, her gentleness and intelligence wrought up admiration to love. No eyes so brilliant had ever sparkled in Bohemia: at least I thought so — 'twas a lover's phantasy; and fondness while I gazed upon her face became almost idolatry. I half believed she was, indeed, celestial, and that earth could claim no share in that seraphic form. Oftentimes, in the words of your modern poet Gower, for English is a language I do love, and poesy hath ever charms for me, I would exclaim, in the transport of a lover:

“ — If it so befalle among,
That she carol upon a song,
Whan I it hear I am so fedd,
That I am fro' miself so ledd
As though I were in Paradis:
For certes as to-myn avis,

Whan I hear of her voice the steven,
Me thinketh it is a blisse of heven."

Cobham listened with profound attention, and Edward, in the description of the Bohemian's feelings, recognised those himself had proved for Matilda. The narrator proceeded.

"How awfully were my wandering thoughts recalled to the truth!—Love answered love; Elgiva's vows were given for mine. No sordid parent opposed our hopes, or sought to prevent our union. The day was fixed for the celebration of our nuptials, and had nearly arrived, when a fatal malady assailed Elgiva, and her life was considered in danger. Youth seemed to triumph over sickness—the roses were again reinstated in her cheeks—and I exulted in her perfect restoration, which I deemed beyond all question. One summer's evening I sought her father's house. She had walked forth. I followed to overtake, but found her not. She came not home

that night: alarm was felt, for she was wholly unattended, and had gone out by stealth. Though her health had continued to improve, her spirits had seemed to decline; strange sounds were heard to escape from her lips, and her mind was thought deranged; but then she became calm, and though silent and melancholy, was perfectly collected."

"And when did she return?" enquired Cobham.

"She returned no more. Enquiry was long useless, but at length chance directed me to a rustic on the borders of the Black Forest. He, about a fortnight before, had been disturbed by the howlings of a frantic female, who had entered the woody maze with that horrible noise, which persons bitten by a rabid animal are known to make. The awful truth burst on my startled senses. A favorite dog had recently been destroyed as mad, and I rightly concluded that he had caused the derangement of his kind, in-

cautious mistress. My skill in surgery, I flattered myself, might restore the dear one. I plunged into the darkest mazes of the forest, sought her on all sides, but the search was fruitless. Often bewildered in the dreary labyrinth, I strove in vain to extricate myself, and passed the night in the woods. This melancholy toil occupied me for many days; at length it terminated, and I saw Elgiva."

"You found her!" exclaimed Edward, "and did she live?"

"No; life had fled. No ruffian dagger, no prowling wolf had marred that beauteous form, but awful was the change which I remarked. The livid hue, the haggard sharpness of death, made me recoil with wonder from that countenance, in which the freely-circulating blood had lately mantled. All those charms had vanished, which I had dreamed were permanent as rare. Her eyes were open, but the radiant blaze of mild ætherial light and beaming love which

once dwelt in them, and which I had gazed upon, till half persuaded they were no other than twin stars from Heaven sent down to decorate a mortal brow, was seen no more. On the sunken orbs the hateful mildew had presumed to settle, as if to triumph in their perished lustre, and on her lips, now frightfully pale, it rested. I kissed them, but the clammy touch of death startled me; I will not dwell upon the awful picture."

"And did you never learn aught respecting the manner of her death? But," added Cobham, "the question is perhaps an idle one, for after your description of the circumstances that were almost impossible."

"No eye beheld the fair one breathe her last; but a letter was found in her bosom, which told, that knowing well the horrible character of the malady which was coming over her, she took the resolution of flying from all her friends,

lest in the coming paroxysms she might injure those whom she most valued. Me she named with all that fervent love, of which I had long been the favoured object, and praying for my happiness on earth, hoped to rejoin me in her native heaven."

Here the Bohemian paused, while exclamations of wonder and compassion burst from the lips of his sympathizing auditors. He went on.

"I will not seek to tell, for every language which Babel's ruin gave this joyless world, would prove unequal to the needless task of painting the emotions which I experienced in that terrific hour. How this weak frame sustained such fearful throes, as those which followed the knowledge of Elgiva's death, I but imperfectly comprehend. Reason long trembled on her seat, and sometimes I have madly climbed the mountain, to lift my body nearer to the sky which she inhabited, and from its towering sum-

mit thought to hear, mixed with the sounds of angels' golden harps, the music of that voice ascend in heaven, which breathed divinest melody on earth."

"I marvel not, that you were thus disturbed," said Cobham; "a love so ardent, terminated in such woe, might well provoke and justify excess."

"Sometimes my frenzy has gone so far that I have believed I heard her call me: and once her voice came so distinctly to my ear, that I replied, — 'I come, Elgiva,' and with a spring, I sought to leap from the stupendous height on which I entertained these reveries. Just then it fortuned that my friend Hierom was at hand. He forcibly restrained, and by reminding me that prematurely seeking to rejoin Elgiva, the suicide I contemplated must extend our separation, from a few short years to all eternity; — my mind revived, led by religion back to reason."

Cobham again expressed his sense of

the severe trial which the Bohemian had endured. — The latter replied, —

“ ’Twas sad — it was a fearful visitation, but, doubtless, sent for purposes of good. Schooled by calamity, I have been enabled to give my whole soul to higher duties which claimed my care, and scarcely known one rebellious throb. Through the full maturity of life, I have tasted much of the repose of age. Grief and unremitting study, have made upon my health and strength those inroads, which twenty added years, were circumstances different, would hardly have accomplished; so that at forty I in truth conceive myself as old in constitution, as many who have numbered sixty summers.”

Huss now apologised for dilating so much on his own sufferings, and the conversation turned on the persecution which the Lollards had experienced generally in England, and the fierce hostility which had pursued Cobham in

particular. Edward undertook to return to Holywell to see the horses safely bestowed for the night, and it was resolved that the visit should be prolonged till the evening of the following day, by which time Cobham would be able to furnish a supply of provisions, sufficient to subsist them till they again saw Leicestershire.

CHAP. X.

“ Ther be thre estates of men that be knowen in thre maners, that is to witt, the pacient is not knowen but in his adversite, and in his ire; the valiaunt man is not knowen but in werre; and the frende is not knowen but in necessite.”

ANTHONY WYDVILLE, EARL RIVERS.

WHEN friends, long separated by untoward circumstances, are at last brought together, great is the luxury they find in freely unbosoming themselves, and fully explaining to each other their views with respect to matters but imperfectly discussed before. There are few who not in this manner felt their minds relieved at gaining an opportunity of correcting what had been misunderstood, and of guarding against those doubts which letters intended to be most ex-

PLICIT, frequently occasion. If this satisfaction is even now derived from an interview with a friend, long known but as a correspondent, it will easily be conceived how immense the gratification which men like Cobham and Huss enjoyed from meeting, at the period when those events occurred which form the subject of this narrative. If, where the most unrestricted correspondence can take place, favoured by all the facilities which arrangements of modern date afford for the exchange of letters, a difficulty is sometimes felt in communicating all that it is desired to impart, how prodigious was the inconvenience in those days, when letters could only be sent by chance messengers, who frequently travelled by routes the most circuitous and were too much occupied in attending to their own affairs, to pay great attention to the wishes of those who charged them with the delivery of their epistolary productions.

Huss and Cobham, made the best use of the interview which they had been fortunate enough to obtain, and their conversations were but little interrupted by their repasts or their repose. The assurances which the Bohemian gave on the subject of the advantages which might result to Edward from accompanying him to Prague, though he professed inability to explain himself fully, made Cobham not only willing, but anxious that he should go. For himself he had little apprehension, and considered that the dangers which surrounded him were not great; as he was persuaded that the wild and lawless conduct of the borderers in the neighbourhood of his retreat, since it tended to discourage those who were most disposed to seek his life from directing their inquiries that way, contributed to his safety. The listener observed by Huss and Edward on their way, gave him no alarm, as he doubted not it was the object of

the lurker merely to discover whether or not the travellers were Chester-men, and whether their journey was in any way connected with an enterprise which had been undertaken a few days before from that city against a Welch chieftain; whose dependants had plundered some of the townsmen. The words of the Red-hand seemed to him only to indicate a knowledge of that which had been noised over the whole kingdom; by the large reward offered for the apprehension of the heretic and traitor, as he was called by the priests and their adherents. He finally declared that, exclusive of his wish to remain in Wales; that he might be ready to present himself to his friends at a short notice if necessary, he was satisfied that, concealed where he was, he ran less risk of detection, than he must be exposed to in any other place; and the especial care which had been taken to look out for him at all the ports, convinced him that to attempt

crossing the sea would be at once to throw himself into the hands of his pursuers.

“There is,” said Huss, “no small similitude in the persecutions and trials to which we have been exposed; but I, although suspended in mine office, and for a season withdrawn from being useful, am still abundantly protected in my own land from the base violence which assails your life. Truly, it seemeth all too plain, that the words which Wickliffe spoke in his time, ‘Freres keepen not correption of the Gospel against their bretheren that trespassen, but cruelly don them to painful prison,’ might again be uttered here with like truth and appositeness.”

“Nay, their evil rage blazeth up with more of fury than aye was known before. That pride which is most unmeet in Christian pastors who still profess to follow, and at a humble distance imitate, Him who when below was meekest of the

meek, since I have dared to wound it, pursues my life with deadliest vengeance. First I offended by favouring a plan, which wisely counselled the King to make resumption of the Churches' property, now hugely overgrown. But not my least offence is this, that I adventured to condemn the pomp, in which those who teach that all worldly homage is naught, have scrupled not to revel themselves."

"I knew not that," said the Bohemian.

"'Tis even so; for I presumed to laugh when the late Bishop Arundel suspended the bells and organs of divers churches because the ringers, as he passed along, the cross being borne before him, sent forth no merry peals from out their steeples, as he considered the 'comeliness of the see of Canterbury' required."

"But was this one of the charges preferred against you at Paul's?"

"Not in right form, as others were; but I was reproached with it, though what I said amounted to but this, — that

I did marvel why the trumpeters who came not in his way, were not all shent, for that their harmony was wanting, and I (perhaps it was too lightly said) averred 'twas hard on the poor organs, that they should be silenced in their choirs, because the bells, upon a certain day, with whom these organs could have no concern, were quiet in their steeples."

"But," said the Bohemian, "still greater offence I guess you gave, denying that the pilgrimages were beneficial to true Christians."

"Yea, it was thought a fearful blasphemy that I uttered, when I said the pilgrims did often most unseemingly tramp along, indulging in lewd songs, sung to the bagpipe's strains, and falling into many kinds of vice, which haply would have been avoided if at home they had tarried: and for the wealth disbursed in these marchings, and given at Becket's or the Virgin's shrine, I there, even in that room at Paul's, which they

do call *Caiaphas his Chamber*, declared, much better in my judgment it had been, to give it to the impotent and poor, whom they might find without such lengthened journeyings."

"Then you transgressed, so to me it was reported, because you thought no crucifix claimed worship, and would not make a cross your wooden god."

"That was when to the convent within Ludgate I had been taken. There was a crowd of bishops, doctors, friars, and with them a troop of bell-ringers, parish-clerks, and pardoners, who ever and anon, with shouts and scoffings, tried to abash and put my spirits down, still calling when my answers ended — 'That is a heresy, so note it well.'"

"What said they of their images?"

"Why truly one did ask me why I should think it needful to object to worshipping good images. 'O!' quod I, 'right well I would honour them, by wiping off the dust which grimed

their faces, because a towel, I suspect, for them, were better than a prayer.' Then Friar Palmer asked, if I would worship the real cross? 'Where is it,' questioned I. He answered not to this, but called upon me then, to suppose it there — 'How passing wise,' quod I, 'this holy man is, who deigns to question me about a thing, the which he cannot tell me where to seek it! But still I fain would learn, what worship I should pay to it.' "

"Replied they to you then?" said Huss.

"A clerk eked the learned Friar out, and forthwith said that I should yield such worship as Paul sanctioned, when he did desire, he might rejoice but only in the cross. 'Yea,' said I then, 'but never did he mean his joy was in the piece of very wood;' and having pointed to my form, I that same moment stretched my arms out thus,

‘and this,’ said I, ‘which now you see before you,’ meaning myself while standing in that form, ‘is a living cross, and better far than that of which you speak, because the great Creator of the world did make it; yet, claim I not that you should worship it: why then expect that I should bow to a mere log of lifeless wood, carved out and coloured by a mortal’s fancy.’”

“Spoke they then of the pope?”
Huss enquired.

“They did; and thus I answered. — ‘The pope and you make up the monster, Antichrist; the begging friars and cheating pardoners do form his wagging tail.’ Thereat, the troop of that quality who thronged the hall again called out with might and main, ‘O! shocking heresy:’ so did that seem to them, which went to touch their purses and extortions. But little more, I will not rehearse it, was said, and then they read the sentence they had resolved to pass.”

“It was the Bishop Arundel who read it.”

“He was the man,” said Cobham, “and awful was the judgment that ensued. The hand of the Avenger soon appeared, and an unknown malady assailed his life. His speech did suddenly fail him; for that same tongue which read the iniquitous sentence passed on me, became so swollen, that it in vain essayed to articulate a prayer for mitigation of the fearful doom, pronounced against its owner.”

“This I did hear of, and, trust me, I failed not to make it known through all Bohemia. Thus, at the end, will the justice of the Mighty One be known. Sufficient is it for us to know, that in due time his mercy shall be triumphant; and still confiding in that, though all mankind were leagued against me, I should not fear their malice. While living here, adhering to the right, so I can feel that I perform my duty, I know myself supe-

rior to calamity ; and all the terrors tyrants, popes, or priests would wake, with sword or flame, or agonizing wheel, I laugh to scorn."

Animating each other to constancy and courage in the cause they had espoused, the two Reformers found their hours glide with unwonted swiftness. Sometimes they were silent for a space, not because the topics on which they wished to converse were exhausted, but because each, fearful that something he desired to impart had escaped his recollection, wished to recall it, lest the golden opportunity of communicating it while they were together should be lost ; but the subjects which occurred to each were so numerous, that if instead of two days, they could have passed as many months under the same roof, they would not have been weary of each other's society.

The evening fixed for their departure had arrived. Edward, yielding to the united wishes of his father and the Bohe-

mian, agreed to accompany the latter to Prague.

“And now,” said the Bohemian, throwing himself into the expanded arms of Cobham, “we must part.”

“Yea,” returned the latter; “but the fond recollection of this visit shall never part from me. Thy spirit shall seem to linger here, and communicating with mine, shall brighten the hours of solitude with its imagined presence.”

He then embraced his son, and charged him with messages of love to Alice, and the hospitable Whittington; after which, addressing himself to the immediate wants of Edward and Huss, he spoke to this effect.

“Provisions I have ready for your use. Here is some salmon salted, and, besides, good mutton; and I moreover have provided this little cage for half a dozen hens, which, should fit season offer, when the palate is wearied of other victuals, may stand you in good stede, only take

care of this small pouch of mele seed, which shall sustain them, till you desire to feed on them. Now, when you do conclude your present journey, and shall prepare yourself to cross the seas, I counsel you procure so many more, or even get a larger number, for Alice is young and tender, and such things for her may be full necessary. Take knives sufficient too, and such small japes which may be scarce; for being in a ship is much unlike a man's well-garnished home on land. I found the 'vantage of such advice, when in my youth I went, with others like me, on a pilgrimage, and sailed from Venice to Port Jaffa."

"That might enlarge your knowledge," Huss remarked; "but you had easier done so, by reading Ebn Haukal, who, though an infidel, has told much truth; Vincentius Belovacensis, or Scherifal Edrisi's narrative; or those of your own countrymen, Roger Bacon and Mandeville. But thriftless is it to talk of this; and

he who tends our horses may impatiently expect us, seeing the appointed time has arrived."

Edward concurred, and set forth the importance of getting as far from that spot as possible, under cover of the first night. All felt the necessity of parting, yet all hesitated to utter the last word.

"Farewell!—Farewell!" said Cobham, making a great effort at firmness. "So sweet has been our communion here, so vast the joy of our meeting, that I will not forego the hope that we may again be permitted to approach each other."

"We shall meet again," said Huss; and then as if all the perils to which both were exposed had been suddenly displayed to his view, he added in a firm but solemn tone—"we shall meet again, but not on earth."

Cobham replied, with equal solemnity, while the sublime subject of his contemplation gave unusual brightness to his eye and animation to his countenance—

"How great!—how boundless then

our joy, performed the task imposed upon us here, and freed our souls from all the grovelling habits connected with mortality, to meet in a better world! There, as our bardling, Richard Rolle, hath happily worded it—

“ There is lyf withoute ony deth,
And there is youth withoute ony elde;
And there is alle manner welthe to welde,
And there is reste withoute ony travaille,
And there is bright somer ever to se,
And there is never wynter in that countree.”

“ Right,” said Huss; “ and as we in manhood have often laughed full merrily at the little woes which erst afflicted us in infancy, even so shall our matured spirits, removed into a more goodly state of being, smile at recalling the brief sorrows of our spiritual childhood, when we were only mortal men.”

They again embraced; and Edward descended the hill, followed by the Bohemian, and striking into the paths by which they had approached, both were instantly concealed from the view of Cobham.

CHAP. XI.

“ Soe bloody and irefull were quarrells in those days, and the revenge of the sword at such libertie, as almost nothing was punished by law, whatsoever happened.”

Wynne's History of the Gwedir Family.

HAVING reclaimed their horses, unobserved, as they had reason to believe, by every human eye, but that of the man to whom the animals had been confided, they mounted and set forward.

Edward knew little of that part of the country, but he thought his knowledge would suffice to conduct them towards Chester, without taking the same route by which they had passed to Holywell. This he was desirous of avoiding, for though he had no reason to suppose that the Red-hand, if indeed it was the

Red-hand whom he had seen near the dwelling of his father, had any fixed residence near, he judged it not unlikely that the same motive which prompted him to lurk there on the night but one preceding, might still keep him on the watch.

The melancholy, which the moment that saw the Bohemian separated from Cobham had thrown over the mind of the former, began to give way to pleasurable reflections, arising from the success which had thus far attended his journeyings.

“While life and recollection remain mine,” he exclaimed, “I shall ever think with much delight on the happiness which I have tasted in the society of him, whom we have just left, but whom in our wanderings it may be little prudent to name. I rejoice also to have seen the holy book traced in the very hand-writing of Wickliffe, of which you possess so marvellously excellent a copy. Great

was the patience and the skill employed in turning the Scriptures out of Hebrew, which vastly learned clerks alone may read, into a language like that of England, in which I find the strength of so many other tongues combined."

"So I consider it," replied Edward. "Taken originally from the Old German, the very defeats which our arms have at different whiles sustained, have proved the triumph of our speech, and enriched our utterance; so that now our language unites the Old English, the Saxon, and Norman-French, as doth the French the Latin-German and the Old Gallic."

"Or," added Huss, "as the Spanish doth Latin, Gotish-German, and Saracen or Morisquo; and the Italian the Latin and Gotish-German."

"And I," resumed the youth, "have often thought much benefit this realm of England doth owe to the efforts of Wickliffe, speaking simply in relation to the richness with which he hath endowed its

language, and putting aside for this season, the important truths which by his care are placed within the reach of many of his countrymen. Sometimes I have delighted to trace the various changes through which the prayer of our Lord hath passed in this island, ere it attained that elegant perfection of wording in which we now behold it clothed."

"The self-same thing hath often struck me, while studying your tongue, and I have traced it from the Gothic, in which it beginneth 'Atta unsar thu in himinam, veihnai namo thein;' to the Saxon which openeth thus 'Fæder ure thu the eart on heofenum, si thin nama gehal-god.'"

"Or, as some have it," interrupted Edward, 'Vren Fader thic arth in heofnas, sic gehalgud thin noma.'"

"Right, Edward; the rendering I repeated is more modern by two hundred years, than that of which you have reminded me. The next to the one which

I mentioned was that of 1180, which opens with ‘Fader me the art in heofone, sy gebletsob name thin.’ After this stands the version sent by the English Pope Adrian, from Rome, in rhyme, which came here, I think, at or before the time of Cœur de Lion, and did commence in this way —

“ Ure fader in heaven rich,
Thy name be halyed everlich : ”

This, Edward remarked, was somewhat varied in the time of John; the two first lines being

“ Fadir ur that is in heven
Halud be thi nam to reveue : ”

and in the reign of Henry the Third, still continuing in rhyme, it was made to begin,

“ Fader that art in heavin blisse,
Thin helge nam it wurth the blisse ; ”

“ But O! how far short,” he exclaimed, “ doth this fall of the worthy

elegance conferred by the majestic modern prose of Wickliffe. "Our Fadyr, that art in heaven, halloed be thy name, thy kingdom com to—"

"Be thy will done, soe in heaven and in erth," continued the Bohemian, who now perceived that their way was obstructed, and their persons surrounded by armed men. Edward beheld, while he was yet speaking, the danger which awaited them, and saw that flight and resistance were equally impossible.

"What be ye," demanded a voice, whose owner could not be seen, from the pitchy darkness which enveloped him, standing as he did beneath a small projecting crag."

"We are travellers," replied Edward.

"And what seek ye?"

"We seek to return to our homes, having performed the errand on which we ventured forth."

"What was the errand of which ye speak?" enquired the same voice.

“ To visit —” said Huss.

“ We have been,” said Edward, interrupting his friend from an apprehension that his speech would not be sufficiently guarded, “ We have been to Holy Well ; there, having drunk at the fair spring of Saint Winifred, we now direct our steps homeward, and would fain arrive —”

“ Where ?” several voices eagerly demanded.

“ At the ancient city of Chester.”

A shout followed these words. Edward and the Bohemian, confounded at what they heard, yet not understanding its import, remained silent. When the shout had subsided, the person who had accosted them before, exclaimed, with an air of triumph, “ O ! then ye be Chester men !”

This was followed by another shout, the meaning of which was as little understood by the captives, (such Edward and Huss may now be called,) as that which preceded it had been ; and, in the con-

fusion of the moment, neither had sufficient presence of mind to recollect the animosity which Cobham had described as arming the inhabitants of Chester against the fierce inhabitants of the borders of Flintshire; and no effort was made on their part to offer any explanation which might remove the idea, that they were Chester men.

But had such an attempt been thought of, it is more than probable that it would have been of no avail. The exultation which barbarians feel when they think they have surprised an enemy, is so sweet, that they are reluctant to surrender it to the conviction that he is no enemy on whom they propose to wreak that vengeance in which they pant to indulge. The furious threats breathed, and the joyous exclamations which burst from the ferocious band, denied the Bohemian, and his brother in misfortune, an opportunity of undeceiving those who surrounded them; and,

when something like silence was restored, they did not very clearly understand the speech, which the leader, who had previously taken upon himself to examine them, thought it right to address them, and which ran thus: —

“ Right glad are we to see ye, men of Chester. You come in good season to witness the departure of a townsman, or peradventure to accompany or follow him. Now shall ye see that the true-hearted men of Mold, are not so awed by your saucy expedition, but they dare to execute, and on your leader, the justice which they promised.”

With these words the bridles of the travellers were seized, and their horses made to advance in the midst of the party which had surprised them.

“ Fear not, my brother,” said Huss, in a calm and collected tone; “ though we seem to be in the power of cruel men, we still remain in the hands of Him,

whose all-seeing eye piercing the dim veil which now dwells on the face of nature, beholds our mishap, and will interpose in his own good time."

Edward perceived those about him listened for his answer, and he accordingly replied aloud, —

"I nothing fear. Perceive you not we are mistaken for other men, whom haply we resemble. These being speedily taken, will doubtless gain us liberation?"

No notice was taken of this conversation, and the party advanced in silence. On their way, Huss and Edward perceived that they were the subject of an animated discussion between two of the band, which, however, they but imperfectly heard. The expressions which reached them were to this effect: —

"They will tell what they have seen."

"Be it so; so shall the fame of our darings intimidate and prevent new attacks."

“ But the fuller the revenge, the greater shall be the terror it will spread.”

“ That I question not, but answer me this: how shall the tale be told without mouths to tell it ? ”

“ Their severed bleeding heads, and mute mouths, will better make it known than the most cunning tongue that ever fashioned phrase.”

“ And who shall be the bearer of them, I would know ? Would'st thou undertake the office ? — The load, I trow, would'st be heavy going thither, but thou would have another head to bring back — The head which thou wearest on thy shoulders, I guess, would be packed in thy sack.”

“ There needs not any one to carry them into town. They may be so disposed that — ” Here his voice fell so low, (or was interrupted by the roaring of the wind,) that they heard no more for some minutes. His conclusion, how-

ever, was sufficiently audible — “ So let them die.”

“ Nay, hang them, if you list,” replied the other, in a mild and conciliating tone, as if he felt disposed, from a love of peace, to give up the point to his fiercer opponent ; “ I will not churlishly jar for such a trifle.”

They continued their journey through paths unknown to the captives, and at length reached a strong stone building, enclosed by a thick wall, and presenting the formidable aspect of a castle. Little time was allowed to Edward and his friend to make observation on the exterior of this edifice, which they rightly concluded to be the head-quarters of the marauders who were masters of their fate. A signal from the arriving body was promptly answered by those within, and admission given. They passed into an apartment, in the midst of which was a fire, near which two men were reclining,

who had just been awakened by the return of the other members of the banditti, as without a violation of truth, this fraternity may be denominated. From this they were conducted up a stone staircase, and through a small closet, into a spacious apartment, which was frequently the hall of feasting on one day, and the scene of execution, or rather of murder, on the next.

“And now shall ye know, ye good men of Chester, the hearts of the men on whom ye have dared to make war,” cried one to whom all the others seemed to look up as to their leader, and who was no other than the celebrated Reinalt ab Meredydd ab Gruffyd, or Griffith. He was of middle stature, and well made, but his countenance, exposed unceasingly to the weather, wore a dark tawny hue, and an habitual frown, gave it an expression of fierceness, which accorded well with his lawless habits, while his small

piercing grey eyes glistened with equal shrewdness and ferocity.

The two persons, whose conversation had been listened to by Huss and Edward, had reported to him the course of their proceedings, and the manner in which they had surprized the captives now before him. He gazed exultingly on them, and went on :

“ What think you, because the race of Ab Gruffyd be few in numbers, that they may be safely hunted down? — and hope you, when their pursuers fall into the toils prepared for them, that we fear to use the advantage we have gained, lest, forsooth, it should not pleasure you? Never believe it: — pursue your course — hunt us from the face of the earth if you can — spare us not when you conquer — expect not to be spared when you are overtaken by defeat.”

Edward attempted to inform the outlaw that he was mistaken, in supposing that he had two Chester men in his

power. But he in vain solicited his attention. Occupied with the completion of a darling scheme of vengeance, Gruffyd listened not to the speaker. His eyes, and with them his thoughts rested on another object which now, in obedience to a signal that he had passed, was forced into the hall. This was the mayor of Chester, who had headed a party of his fellow-townsmen in an attack made on the sept of Ab Gruffyd, to revenge an outrage sustained from the latter at the preceding fair. In ancient times the law was too feeble to restrain the turbulence of those who resided so far from the seat of government ; and the Welsh, sore from the punishment inflicted on them, in consequence of the insurrection in which Owen Glendower lost his life, glowed with indescribable rage at the very mention of the English, or, which to them was the same thing, of the Saxon name. The Chester men, robbed at Mold Fair by the adherents of Ab Gruffyd,

were anxious to revenge the insult, and the wrongs which they had sustained from those with whom they were almost constantly embroiled. They, in consequence, crossed the Dee in considerable force, confident of accomplishing their object, and of inflicting exemplary chastisement on the robbers. But the artful arrangements of Ab Gruffyd baffled all their plans; and divided and attacked at great disadvantage, they were obliged to seek safety in flight. Their leader happened to be taken, and he it was that was now brought forward, to be dealt with according to the outlaw's ideas of justice and policy. The faint unassured glimmer of approaching day, was at this moment just perceptible, but the gloom was still so great, that the torches which threw their red glare over the sad countenance of the intended victim, were absolutely necessary to light the hall.

“ I promised yesternight,” he thus

accosted the mayor, "that all your troubles should know pause soon after this morning's dawn, and luckily hath it chanced, that two of your townsmen have come hither to see that Reinalt keeps his word, though much I doubt if they will ever report it; first because you Chester men deal little in the truth; and, secondly, because, as I have no power to make them do so, it may seem good to me to do that which *is* in my power, and which is the next desirable thing, prevent them from telling more lies, by giving their necks to a halter."

"Man of sin," cried Huss, "you err most fearfully. I, simple as I am, will undertake to propound that you are in utter darkness on this subject. In the first place you have no right over the life —"

"Stop a fool's tongue, and be silent," cried Ab Gruffyd, with a look of mingled wrath and scorn.

“And must I then be silent? ———”

“Peace, Saxon,” roared the chief, and the command was fiercely reiterated by all around him. Huss was nothing awed by the menacing tones and angry looks which burst on his ear, and met his eye in every direction, and was about to proceed, when the loud voice of Ab. Gruffyd, who again addressed the Mayor, arrested his attention, while it satisfied him that a new effort to obtain a hearing would be useless, or worse than useless.

“Now, mayor of Chester,” said the chief, “look on that iron,” pointing to a strong staple fixed in one of the enormous joists, which supported the flooring of the apartment above; “look on that, and if you have any thing to say in the way of recommending your soul to God or devil, say it strait. Let it be brief, and breathed with speed, or you must take it with you to the worms; for before time shall have passed away, which

might suffice for counting thrice a hundred, it will be tried whether or not that said iron can sustain your weight."

The unhappy man unclosed his parched lips, as if to address his cruel enemy; but in the same instant the conviction that it could be of no avail came over him, and he frantically raised his eyes to Heaven. A sickly paleness had overspread a countenance naturally florid. He looked as if his blood had suddenly become stagnant from horror, and cold perspiration hung on his brow. He attempted a prayer, but his trepidation was so great that he could not withdraw his thoughts from the scene in which he was thus mournfully conspicuous. Lost to every hope of life, he was not resigned to die, and while attempting to implore the mercy of his Creator, he started every moment, at the slightest movement in the hall.

One of the band now carelessly passed one end of the halter through the

staple, and the word was given to dismiss the sufferer from life. As the noose was forced over his head, he eagerly applied himself anew to his devotions, raising his clasped hands to a level with his face. He was again interrupted, and his hands were seized and tied behind him. The rope then was drawn from the extremity, and made so nearly tight as not to admit of the slightest inclination of the head. Trembling with horrible emotion, the unhappy being glanced round the hall, and his streaming eyes rested with imploring earnestness on those of John Huss. The Bohemian stepped forward, and exclaimed in a loud but collected tone, —

“Hurry not a fellow creature, thus. He is not yet fitted for his passage. Give permission, that I may assist him with a prayer before his departure.”

“Send it after him,” cried a hoarse voice near him; and the unfortunate mayor was that instant drawn up to the

ceiling, or rather to the top of the apartment, for ceiling there was none.

A shout of savage delight burst from the 'vengeful band, as the body of the Chester magistrate was suspended from the centre of the hall; and when this subsided, the ruffian, who had before replied to John Huss, took an opportunity of continuing his speech.

“If you like it, you may send your prayer before him; for if you speed it now, it will get to Heaven ere he has finished dancing here.”

This brutal allusion to the struggles of the dying man, called forth the risibility of those who stood nearest to Huss. He, however, heard it not, for his mind was actually engaged at that moment, as the outlaw had sneeringly advised that it should be. But the attention of Edward was instantly fixed on the wretch, in whom he then recognised the Red-hand, and saw that the recognition was mutual.

Gruffyd gazed stedfastly on the last

motions of the unfortunate sufferer, and watched with a curious eye the progress of his dissolution. When the mayor had ceased to move, he looked round for those whom he considered to be the townsmen, if not the kindred of the murdered magistrate, and addressed them in the same tone as before.

“Behold the fate of your leader. He boastfully threatened when he last left Chester that he would root out and extirpate the brigand, so did he presume to call Ab Gruffyd : but he pays the penalty of his daring, and first sleeps the long sleep. It is now to be considered which will be better vengeance, to send you forth to tell how he has fared, or to give each of you a like promotion.”

“We are in your power,” said Huss, “and can in no case offer resistance. After what we have witnessed, you may kill, but cannot take us by surprise. We know how little we have to expect from your justice or your mercy.”

“ Let down that carcass,” cried Ab Gruffyd, “ and clear the noose for another neck.”

The halter which had been made fast at the farther end was loosened, and the dead body lowered. As it descended, the ghastly purple hue, which the last convulsions had spread over the visage of the dying man, attracted the chief’s notice. He pointed to it, and said, addressing himself to Huss,—

“ Look ye on this, my master. Even this complexion I can bestow, in a few brief moments, to recompense a saucy tongue.”

“ That did I know ;” replied the undismayed Bohemian. “ You can indeed, array this faded countenance in the purple livery of agony and death ; but while my heart tells me that I have done no wrong, there is one aspect which you, with all these bravos at your back, can never put on me.”

“ And what is that ?”

“ The pallid hue of fear.”

“ Art sure of that ?” enquired Ab Gruffyd. Then turning to those who had been occupied in extricating the lifeless victim from the rope in which he perished, he directed them to put the noose over the head of John Huss.

The stern mandate was obeyed. The Bohemian stroked up his beard to give the rope free passage to his neck. A part of the beard of the former sufferer adhered to it. He saw it, but made no remark, and hastily turned to speak to Edward, who that moment addressed the chief.

“ Beware ! beware Ab Gruffyd, or you will do that which even yourself shall repent, when it is all too late.”

“ That will I risk. Think you my course is to be impeded by threatenings ?”

“ I threaten not. But when you shall know that I and my companion are not the men you take us for, are not men of Chester, then shall you repent that you did deal so hardly by us.”

“ And be ye not men of Chester then ?
Is this a shuffle, or have I been already
imposed upon ?”

“ When we first questioned them, they
fairly owned that they were on their way
to Chester,” said one of the party who
had brought them in.

“ I deny not that,” Edward replied ;
“ but I did never say that we proposed to
tarry there. We journey on to Chester,
but only to pass through to parts more
distant.”

“ Were ye not followers of that daring
boaster, whom I have made a banquet
for the crows ?”

“ This unhappy man, who has fallen
before the tempest of your wrath, was
never seen by either of us till we came
hither.”

“ What be ye, then ?”

“ Strangers, who having been to the
spring of St. Winifred, would now return
to our distant homes.”

“ If such ye be, and nothing more, ye
are not worth our notice, nor would we

spend that time in hanging ye, which we have other calls upon. Does no man know that these be Chester men, and followers of that noble leader?"

As he spoke, he pointed scornfully to the corpse. No answer was returned.

"Can no man speak aught about them?" he again demanded — "Can no man tell of either of these knaves, who he may be in very truth?"

"That can I," said the Red-hand, who now stepped forward. "When they would palm themselves on you for pilgrims, who seek the holy stream of good St. Winifred, believe them not. This sparksome younker, I knew years since, when I sojourned a while with your proud kinsman, Ap Griffith,"

"And who is he?"

"He is an Oldcastle, the son of him they call Lord Cobham."

"Then it seems plain he is no Chester man. Since it is so, let them begone."

"Not so. — Let me remind you first

that for the father of this stripling, a large reward is offered. It is, methinks, past doubt that the cub must know the old fox's hiding place. Compel him then, at point of sword, incontinently to conduct us to it."

"Small gain would thence arise methinks. Perhaps indeed when we should render him, the proffered marks would honestly be paid by those appointed to receive him; and that done, the bringer might obtain the further boon of being hung up at the castle-gate."

"No, Ab Gruffyd, his capture would gain pardon for thrice our number, though we had hanged a mayor a day for months together; and, take heed, the reward is, if I mind it right, a thousand marks."

"I'll none of it. Since Cobham is thus pursued, we are in little danger from his son. An outlaw like ourselves, we will not harm him."

"But the thousand marks! Will you not have them?"

“ Away. — Of all, thou art the last that ought to urge this business on mine ear. Stained as thy dagger oft has been with blood, wilt thou become appendage to the law? Thy avarice disgusts while it astonishes, since, not contented with the Red-hand’s hire, thou wouldst be striving for the hangman’s fee.”

These words produced a laugh at the Red-hand, who retired to conceal his discomfiture. The halter was removed from the neck of the Bohemian, who saw it taken from him without evincing the slightest emotion of joy or surprise. The serenity of his countenance through this scene won the admiration of Gruffyd, who now spoke to him and to Edward, in milder terms. To the latter he remarked that his fowls had been appropriated by those who brought him there, and had by that time been killed and eaten. He added, as if to apologise for this seizure, that it had been concluded those to whom they belonged

would have no inclination to eat again ; but since this had chanced otherwise, they should be well supplied from the stores of the castle. Such provisions as he possessed he proffered to them in abundance, and then having told them their horses were ready, he gave them the choice of remaining there to rest themselves, or of departing forthwith. They chose the latter course, anxious to quit, without delay, the theatre of a crime so atrocious, as that which they had seen perpetrated. Rendering brief acknowledgements for the alternative submitted to them, they at once prepared for their retreat, determined to pursue their journey, though it was broad day, rather than remain longer in the power, and in the society of a band of assassins.

As they quitted the hall, the Bohemian preceded Edward. The Red-hand interposed his form between them. Fury glared in his eye, while accosting Ed-

ward, he took leave of him with these words:—

“So, then, ye ’scape this time! Be it so; but I shall not always watch your footsteps in vain. Perchance, ere you finish your journeyings, you will again have cause to remember me, and to rue the hour when you scorned Roderick the Red-hand.”

CHAP. XII.

“ Low fear

“ Becomes the guilty, not the accuser : then

“ Shall I, none's slave, of high-born or rais'd men

“ Fear frowns ?”

DR. DONNE.

THE travellers were detained at Chester; first by suspicions directed against themselves, and next by the numerous interrogatories which they had to answer, after they had communicated the melancholy particulars of the scene they had been compelled to witness. Edward concealed his name, and when permitted to depart, they had recourse to the precautions observed before their capture, and at length closed their journey without further interruption.

After resting for a few days, Huss became anxious to quit Lutterworth. The main objects of his journey were accomplished, and he earnestly urged the importance of their immediate departure for Prague.

Mr. Whittington announced it to be his intention to accompany them to the capital, to which they were in the first instance to proceed. His wife was somewhat disturbed by the resolution he had come to, but it was not to be shaken. Anxious to use his best efforts to procure *an act of resumption*, he had prepared a bill or petition, which he was determined to submit to the Parliament on its next assembling at Leicester; and it was now his wish to go to London, in order to get the advice and assistance of his friend Fortescue, a young lawyer, who was considered to be a man of very promising talents.

“In prosecuting this matter,” said he, “which I have so much at heart, I am

afraid of failure through some error into which I may ignorantly fall; seeing I cared not sufficiently to obtain learning in my youth, and, therefore, I do crave the aid of some one better read than I am, to determine me if that which I have drawn up on this great occasion be proper. Methinks it would be best courageously to follow the precedent set in the reign of Richard, the second of that name, when it was fairly stated, as you will find it in the Rolls of Parliament, that if his Highness then upon the throne 'were reasonably governed in his expences both within and without the realm, he would have little need to charge his Commons, who even then considered themselves to be too much impoverished.' "

The member of parliament then proceeded to read that petition which he had drawn up, and which if adopted would, as he flattered himself, remove all the grievances of which the na-

tion had to complain. It began thus :
“ Prayen the Commons, in this youre present parliament assembled, to consider that youre chancellore of youre reaume of England, youre tresorer of England, and many of the lords of youre counseill by your high commandment shewed, being thus called upon, and declared the state of youre reaume, which was that ye werē indetted in one hundred thousand pounds, which is grete and grevouse, and that youre livelode in yearly value to youre high and notable estate to be kept, and to paie your dettes well noight suffice; therefore must your high estate be relieved.”

It then set forth, that it had been also declared, that the expenses necessary to the household of the king surpassed the provision made.

“ And now — now,” said Whittington, “ go I on to tell the king some wholesome truths, as thus : ‘ Also please it your highness to consider that the

Commons of youre said reaume, been as well willed to their pore power, to relieving of youre highness, as ever were peple to any kyng, of youre progenitours, that ever reigned in youre said reaume of England, but youre said Commons been so empoverished.' ”

“ Shall you not touch on the causes of their being so impoverished ? ”

“ Attend ye — ‘empoverished, what by taking of vitaille to your household, and other things in youre said reaume, and nought paid fore, and the quinszisme by youre said Commons, afore this tyme so often graunted.’ ”

“ May not his highness take offence, to be so reminded of the grants made to him by his people ? ” enquired the Bohemian.

“ Strong truths must be spoken in times like those in which we live,” replied the political reformer ; “ and I stop not at that which you have heard, but further I would say, — ‘ And by the

graunt of tonnage and poundage, and by the graunt. of the subsidie upon the Wolles, and other grauntes to youre highness, and — ' now observe ye, comes the boldest part of all, ' and for lakke of execution of justice, that youre pore Commons been full nighe destroued, and if it shuld continue lenger in such grete charge, it cowde nought in oney wyse be hade or borne.' ”

“ Really,” said Edward, “ I fear this part of your petition will be thought to breathe a threat.”

Whittington, as commonly happens with those who submit what they have written to their friends, was too much occupied with the merits of his own performance, to lend an attentive ear to the criticisms which it called forth, and merely remarking that he saw nothing in the world that could be omitted, he continued the reading of the paper, which went on to recommend to the king that he should “ resume, seise and reteine ”

in his possession all "honours, castelles, lordshippes, townes, towneshippes, manours, londs, tenements, wastes, rentes, reversions, fees, feefermes and services, with all their appurtenances in Englonde, Wales, and in the marches thereof; Irlond, Guysnes, Caleys, and in the marches thereof; as also the like in the Dutchie of Lancastre, as they were at the time of their being granted."

"But," enquired Huss, "why counsel you not his highness to make an especial resumption of the goods of the lazy, luxurious, overgorged clergy?"

"I deemed it not discreet to put them in the front. Nathless, after calling on the king to resume 'his letters patent, his grants of herbage, pannage, fishing, pasture;' then point I to the possessions 'granted to any abbot, priour, deane, chapitre, maistre, or wardeyne of college, fraternity, crafte or gilde, and pray him to make the same to be voide and of noone effect.'"

“ There you strike a formidable blow at the evil.”

“ Nor stop I there, but aiming more directly at the churchmen, this following do I add: ‘ And over that, that all grauntes and relesses made by you, syth the first day of your reigne to oney abbot, priour, covent, or to oney other persone or persones, for discharge or quytclayme of oney corrodies or corody, pensione or pensiones, dismes spirituelles, or quin-zimes, dismes temporells, rentes, or services, or oney other charge, be voide and of noone effect.’ ”

“ I fear,” said Huss, “ that the proceeding you purpose, albeit it may be highly commendable in the main, will be found in some cases to press with much severity on divers persons.”

“ But for that, in all meritorious cases, I have a remedy in savings to be made in favour of each sufferer. The annual pensions of those capitaines and leaders who have done the state good service,

although several of those brave commanders receive yearly well nigh fifty pounds each, I mean not to touch; the grants to colleges I would spare; and I propose to suggest a saving for the lord chancellor, treasurer, privy-seal, justices, barons of the exchequer, sergeants at law, attorney and officers in the king's courts of record, for accustomed wages, rewards or clothing."

To give this his favourite plan all the perfection that friendly criticism and learned comment could supply, Mr. Whittington had long meditated a journey to London. But the appalling dangers and difficulties, then regarded as inseparable from such an expedition, had deterred him from giving effect to his intention. The opportunity which now offered of travelling all the way in company, favoured his views, and he purposed remaining in the metropolis till parliament should next be summoned to meet, when he calculated so many of his friends

would be on the road to Leicester; that the dangers to be apprehended under other circumstances, would vanish, or at any rate be greatly diminished.

The necessary preparations were made with all practicable expedition. But a journey from Leicestershire to London was not quite so easily performed in the early part of the fifteenth century, as it may be now. It was not merely putting a few trifles into a portmanteau, and taking a place in the stage-coach that passed every day, that would complete the arrangements requisite for such a trip, and secure the party in ten or twelve hours, an arrival at the Bull and Mouth, or at the White Horse, Fetter Lane. The convenience of a swiftly-travelling vehicle, open to every one, had not then been thought of, for even coaches had not been invented. Such a journey could only be performed within any moderate time, on horseback; and in this way, various circumstances made

the progress of the traveller very slow. In the first place the roads were bad, and much more circuitous than at present; in the next, the cattle, from the injudicious manner in which horses were then managed and trained, were incapable of exertions like those which are ordinarily imposed upon them now; and, in the third place, the inns were such miserably unprovided hovels, that the traveller found it necessary to take provision with him for the whole of his journey; or, at least, for so much as would bring him to the residence of a friend, or to some populous town on a market-day. It was, therefore, indispensable for him to prepare a stock of food, and the inconvenient burden which it formed, precluded him from getting forward but at a very cautious pace.

There were yet two other sources of delay to be encountered, before those whose proceedings are the subject of this narrative, could quit Lutterworth. In

the first place, it was necessary for Mr. Whittington to take a formal leave of all his friends in that part of the country. Neglecting to do this would have been considered the height of unkindness as well as of rudeness, when he was on the eve of undertaking a journey, from which as they would have expressed themselves, "God, he alone knew if it would ever be his fortune to return;" and then before venturing on so formidable an expedition, it was thought but prudent that a man in his circumstances should make a will. These forms and precautions were satisfied and taken as rapidly as circumstances would admit, but not so rapidly as Mr. Whittington could have desired. His friends, when told of his anxiety to perfect his petitions, under the auspices of Mr Fortescue, approved of his ideas and considered that which he wished to recommend to Parliament would be equally beneficial to the king and his people; but, nevertheless, the

majority of them were of opinion — and some few were frank enough to express it — that he would never think of exposing himself to the manifold perils of a journey to London, merely for the purpose of serving his country, if he were not half mad.

It is not improbable that some were put on making this fair avowal of their sentiments by Mrs. Whittington, who had been opposed to his project from the first, and whose uneasiness had much increased, as the day of their departure drew nigh. Though not young, they were warmly attached, and they had so seldom been parted for more than a day or two, that the lengthened separation which a visit to the metropolis must occasion, was contemplated by both with pain, but by the wife with infinite alarm. She commiserated the silent sorrow which sat on the brow of the interesting Alice, whom she had seen once as gay as

she was beautiful; she wished Edward and the Bohemian safe at their journey's end; but her feelings were most acute, when she suffered her mind to dwell on the dangers and hardships to which her lord was about to expose himself. Her alarm produced some uneasiness on his part, but he had gone too far to recede; and now, having signed his will in the presence of proper witnesses, and taken leave of his friends and relations, he had only to bid his anxious consort farewell. On this trying occasion (such did they consider it) the lady burst into tears, and then fainted. Whittington, by an extraordinary effort of fortitude, preserved much of his usual serenity, though it was evident to all present that his firmness was somewhat shaken. He, however, soon rallied sufficiently to console the reviving Mrs. Whittington, by expressing a lively, but not too confident hope, for that would have ap-

peared presumptuous, that she would see him return in safety ; and so this weighty matter terminated.

It was not thought advisable that Edward or his sister should travel by night. Now that they no longer wanted a home in England, and that the course they pursued could not lead to the discovery of Lord Cobham, no adequate reason suggested itself for denying the advantages of daylight to any of the party on their road to London. It was, however, arranged that Edward should not lead the way. Whittington desired that himself and the Bohemian should go forward with Alice, and be followed by Edward at a moderate distance. Acting thus, should any danger arise, they persuaded themselves, that it would be in their power to give him, by signal, such timely notice of its approach, as would enable him to provide for his safety by retreat. Still they were of

opinion that there was little cause for fear, as the reward offered for the father could only cause pursuit of the son with a view of tracing his steps to the abode of Lord Cobham, and in this case the enemies of the Lollards could only be baffled and misled by their own activity. But comfortable as this reflection was, a dread lurked behind, lest the perjuries which had placed one guiltless individual in jeopardy, should now be directed against the offspring of that individual. They were, therefore, decidedly of opinion that the arrangement which had been devised ought not to be laid aside. The Bohemian enforced this, by remarking that their confidence in the Eternal, ought not to induce them to neglect endeavouring to provide for their own safety. "Though," added the pastor, "no man born of a woman can feel more potently than I do, that when all human prudence can no more avail, we ought not

to despair. This hath but recently been seen in mine own case, and truly may I say it in the words of the holy book as englished by Wickliffe — ‘*for he that is mighti hath don to me grete thingis, and his name is holy.*’ ”

CHAP. XIII.

“ O! my Maria,
“ I am whipp'd, and rack'd, and torn upon the wheel
“ Of giddy fortune ; she, and her minions,
“ Have got me down, and treading on my bosom
“ They cry, Lie still.”

MARLOWE.

THEY quitted Lutterworth in the order agreed upon, and encountering no obstacle in their journey, closed their first day's march at Northampton. Here they were fortunate enough to find an inn so capable of accommodating travellers, that a good flock bed was obtained for Alice, it being previously agreed that a penny should be paid for the use of it ; and rushes and clean straw were abundantly supplied to all. It was matter of exultation that they had procured so good a lodging for Alice, though Mr. Whitting-

ton could not help inveighing against the avarice which extorted the sum mentioned above, merely for a lodging. That rest should be charged for, as ale was, appeared to him a monstrous innovation; but he philosophically consoled himself with the reflection, that an extortion so extravagantly out of the way, must of necessity work its own remedy, as it was not likely that the innkeeper would very soon enjoy a repetition of his present success, for but few travellers could pass, whose means were so abounding, as to admit of their sacrificing any part of their substance by paying for their sleep.

They re-commenced their journey at an early hour on the following morning, and had advanced some miles without interruption, when they perceived a single horseman coming towards them. He saluted them courteously, but hastily, when happening to fix his eyes on Alice just as he was passing, he checked his animal, and accosted her :

“Lady, I fear you will think it little behoveful in me, thus steadily to gaze upon a face I have not seen before, but I have two excuses handy. In the first place, it may be allowed that I say, where eyes so bright and features so divinely —”

“Stranger,” said Huss, “it is not well that you should thus delay a maiden on her road, to fill her modest ears with idle flattery.”

“I crave your pardon, father. By my body’s faith! methinks you lose no time to blame. With you, rebuke lingers not far behind offence.”

“I would admonish,” said the Bohemian, “to guard your vanity from giving offence.”

“But for the interruption you supplied, I had ere this, spoken to this young fair one on matters of some import to her happiness; unless, but that I think cannot be, I do mistake her. I guess you are the daughter of Lord Cobham.”

“ This greeting startled the party. They would gladly have conferred together, as to the answer which it might be fit to give ; but this could not be done ; and Huss, therefore, interposing his horse between the stranger and Alice, replied with some severity, —

“ She is not to be idly questioned by one unknown to her. Whoever she may be, her right to pass on this the king’s highway is not to be disputed.”

“ Why, that is true, and since you will not let me speak in my own way, I must perforce make known my wish as briefly as I can. Convinced this is the daughter of Lord Cobham, I fain would ask of her brother. Him I must find if possible, this day ; and if he late hath shifted his abode, trust me, you had as good direct me to where he now abideth.”

Edward, who pursuant to their original plan, had remained considerably in the rear, was so occupied with his own me-

ditions, that he observed not the halt which had taken place, and was rapidly coming up to his friends, without perceiving them or the signal for retreat, which they thought it right to make. He was within a very few yards of them, when it was repeated. That instant he turned about, but it was too late to escape recognition. The stranger sprung forward; and Edward finding that he was pursued, urged his horse to its greatest speed.

The expedition with which the young man fled, seemed to cause the supposed enemy a momentary embarrassment. He, however, saw that he must lose the object of his enquiry altogether, unless he could overtake him. He, therefore, spurred his horse forward, and rapidly gained ground on Edward, till he got so near that he could be heard by the fugitive, whose alarm he now attempted to dissipate.

“Tarry!—Whither away so fast?—

What a plague dost take me for? Stop, Ned. — Dost not know me? Never fly from an old school-fellow; never fear injury from your brother Oxonian.”

These words at once arrested Edward. He had felt that he must inevitably be overtaken; and it was a great relief to him, to find that his pursuer was no other than Octavius. From him, though they had never been united by intimate friendship, he had little to dread in the shape of hostility, and nothing from treachery. He, therefore, slackened his pace.

“I joy to see thee,” cried Octavius, “and I do trust that thou wilt not be sad, thus to have fallen in with me. I bring thee no bad tidings, man; but turn thy steed, and let us rejoin thy friends.”

“Then I suppose we must part, for we seem to be journeying different ways.”

“Thy way is mine, man; for I am sent express to seek thee — nay, never change colour; dost think I am an espial — and on thee, Ned?”

“ I did you no such wrong ; but the hearing that you came express to seek me, might warrant some surprise.”

“ True ; and so might the manner in which I found thee. Trust me, Ned ; thy sister is much like thee — a marvelously handsome likeness, mind me. Thou, for a man, art well enough to pass ; but thy sister is loveliness itself ; and yet so resembling thee, that when I looked upon her, (having been thinking of her as well as of you), I knew she must be relation of thine, rightly judged you might not be far off, and so accosted her.”

“ But what may your errand be, since you were dispatched to seek out me ? By whom were you sent ?”

“ Marry, I late left Chichely, who thinks thee so excellent a heretic, that he would fain make use of thee in Smithfield, to enlighten the world ; conceiving, that you being well stacked up with faggots, might furnish to the Lollards ; as

well as to the true sons of the church, a very edifying blaze."

"And what would Chichely with me?"

"Have I not told thee — that is, as I guess, for I am not his messenger."

"Nay, if you were, seeing he has long been the friend of your family, it nothing would surprize me — you being orthodox."

"I being orthodox!" — cried Octavius; — "now you would twit me with my former sinnings. — I am thought faithful to the church, because I am too indolent to differ from it. Nature hath given me, I thank her, a tolerable set of limbs, but she hath not vouchsafed to provide me with that capacity which you possess, to study law, physic, and divinity. You excel in each, and I gratefully remember when I broke my leg by jumping from Joan Wotton's window, you aided me so well, that no barber surgeon could have tended me better."

"Name not that."

“ I wish to say but this, I am that common fellow, that I must go the beaten track. A feather on the stream, I float wherever the tide may bear me, and this, perhaps, it is that keeps my faith firm, and so protects my fortune from some of the perils that otherwise might endanger it, such as it be.”

By this time they had turned their horses, and were pursuing the track of Alice, Whittington and Huss. Octavius continued to sport with the curiosity of Edward, till perceiving the latter had become somewhat impatient for an explanation, he took a graver tone.

“ I came from one whose beauty might warm an anchorite.”

Edward started at this beginning, for when beauty was mentioned, his thoughts were never long in travelling to Matilda.

“ Before I say more, I ought to invite your congratulations, for I am to be the husband of the fair one I am about to name. — I come from the daughter of Sir Thomas Venables.”

“ From Matilda ? ”

“ Even from Matilda. — Is she not an angel ? ”

At any period of his life Edward would have greedily listened to the praises of Matilda's beauty, but at this moment one single idea occupied his mind: the question which Octavius had put passed unheeded, and he faltered in a low tone, —

“ Are you to be her husband ? ”

“ I am. — You seem surprised ; but why not give me joy ? Did you ever see a fairer object ? — how exquisite her figure ! — how noble her mien ! — how rich the ruby of her lip ! — how dazzling bright the lustre of her eye ! The first moment that I gazed upon her, I thought I had never seen so magnificent an object, but her charms gained new splendour in my view, when pity made her speak of your misfortunes, and heavenly benevolence prompted her to make me the messenger of her good will.”

“ And have you then the happiness to possess the affections of Matilda ? ”

“ Maidens you know — such is the foolish fashion of our country, — are not expected to speak honestly their minds. They sharpen love in others, by seeming coldly insensible themselves. But I think I have no reason to complain, having known her for so short a time ; since, besides that she seems less appalled at my presence than formerly, she has, already, from her growing regard, selected me as one entitled to her confidence to seek out you. This springs from kindness for your father.”

“ Said she it was from kindness for my father ? ”

“ I think so. I know we spoke of the misfortunes of Lord Cobham, and of your evil plight in consequence ; and then she asked me if I would be her courier to seek you out, and bear that to you which might relieve your grief.”

With these words he presented a small

packet. Edward was silent, for he feared to attempt speech, lest he should betray all the torturing emotion which wrung his heart. Octavius saw his affliction, and guessed the cause of it.

“Why, Ned,” said he, “a tear is trembling in your eye. I thought not to see your philosophy so worsted. Much do I fear — and now it strikes upon my brain, some one has named it to me, that you have loved Matilda.”

“I crave your pardon. You, who know her value, may best excuse my sorrow for her loss.”

“By the true faith, I am sorry for it — sorry that this is added to your other calamities; and rich as is the prize, may shame be mine if I would not relinquish the hope of gaining it, could you profit by the sacrifice.”

Edward turned his head aside, but made no answer. The air of sincerity

which marked the deportment of Octavius touched him, and, added to the other emotions excited in his bosom, produced sensations so mingled and so acute, that he had no power to embody them in language. Octavius was affected. To triumph over a friend, and a friend so reduced by misfortunes as he knew his old fellow-student to be, was painful; yet to give up Matilda was that for which he was not prepared, and when this idea crossed his mind, he could not refrain from saying,—

“ But, Ned, I know yours is not that currish soul, that would seek (like the dog of which old Æsop tells,) to debar another from what you cannot enjoy yourself. Could I control circumstances, your situation should be very different; but seeing what has chanced, it were folly for me to give up my own good, without the prospect of bettering your condition.”

“ I have no right to ask it.”

“ Nor reason to wish it, so doth it appear to me. — Were there a hope —”

“ This only would I solicit, that no compulsion where you are concerned shall be used towards Matilda.”

“ That will I most religiously promise. If with the advantages of being often with her, and licence to persuade, I cannot succeed, then will I leave her for some better man. If I do not make her love me, I will never suffer that she shall be constrained to endure —”

“ But this her friends might attempt.”

“ Then it shall be for another, and not for me. If I cannot prevail with herself, it is not the consent of fifty fathers that shall suffice ; for he who claims a woman merely by virtue of her parent’s calculations, woos not a wife, but springs upon a victim.”

“ I thank you for this generosity.”

“ Then, by the mass, you do a foolish thing,” cried Octavius ; “ for in what

I promise, there is policy, but not a whit of generosity. The plodding, sordid lout, who acts that part which I will not act, though scorned at first for his meanness, is generally an object of pity in the end, with those who know not, or who forget his depravity. I shall succeed with Matilda herself. My front is well nigh as good as yours: women trouble not themselves about the rest; and, seldom estimating a man for his intrinsic value, know not the difference between a shallow-pated trifler like me, and a scholar and philosopher like you."

Edward might at one time have felt flattered by such a compliment, and blushed to receive it. But his heart was too much occupied to recognise or think of it in this instance, and he made no reply. They now were fast gaining ground on Whittington and the Bohemian, whom they saw waiting to be overtaken, rightly judging from the amicable manner in which Octavius and his old

fellow-student rode together, that their alarm had been groundless. On coming up with them, Octavius apologised for the confusion he had created in their little troop, of which he begged to be admitted a member. To this no objection could be started, and he, having performed the task assigned to him, considered himself fortunate in having an opportunity of retracing his steps in such society.

When they halted, Edward retired from the observation of his friends, to open the packet of which Octavius was the bearer. He found in it a letter which described to him the new severities to which it was proposed to subject the Lollards, and prayed him to take the most effectual means to provide for his own safety, and for that of his father. It supplicated him to accept, in furtherance of that object, a sum of money which accompanied the letter. This request was most earnestly enforced, and with it

another that he would not defy her the felicity of aiding him in a similar way, as circumstances might require or opportunity offer. The joy of doing this, she added, was the only one that remained to her in connection with his name. He also found a gem of remarkable brilliancy, which she prayed him to accept, and to consider when he looked upon it that his character was in her estimation, spotless, and radiant as that jewel; and breathing on it he would see, in the rapidly vanishing cloud thus thrown on it, how promptly the calumnies which might assail his fame should be dismissed from her mind. Of the noble conduct of Octavius, she spoke in terms of the warmest praise, and her letter closed with the assurance, that whatever untoward circumstances might continue to oppose their love, he should ever possess her sincerest esteem.

The tender anxiety manifested for his welfare by Matilda, affected Edward, and awoke the warmest transports of grati-

tude. But the praise which he found heaped on Octavius, alarmed the jealousy of the lover; and the distinction which she took, at the conclusion of her letter, between love and esteem, seemed to indicate that her mind was, in some measure, reconciled to regard another as her future husband. Looking at this, he could not but think that Octavius might be justified when he anticipated a perfect triumph. A fiery heat succeeded to the genial glow which had at first warmed his bosom, but reflection succeeded; and when he considered how hopeless his own situation, he doubted whether the course which true love should dictate to one in his circumstances, would not urge him to favour the suit of his rival, that the mistress of his affections might be secured from the importunities of less worthy aspirants.

Continuing their journey, the next day brought the travellers to St. Alban's. Here it became necessary that they

should make a short stay, to give Alice time to recover from the indisposition which had seized her, through the fatigue she had experienced. Octavius went on, impatient to announce to Matilda how successfully he had executed his mission, and bearing those acknowledgments which Edward thought it wise to send by such a messenger. Octavius reiterated his former declarations at parting, and endeavoured to console his old fellow-student, with the assurance that if he succeeded in carrying Matilda, as he should ever consider himself to have been enriched at his friend's expense; his fortune should ever be at that friend's command.

Having rested two days at St. Alban's, they rose at a very early hour on the third day, and proceeded on their way. Anxious to reach London before its close, Whittington pressed them to allow of the least possible delay on the road. They advanced with the same

caution as when they commenced their journey, but met with no new incident to disturb them. The sun was about to set, when Whittington remarked with great satisfaction, that they now approached the end of their journey.

“ I purpose not,” said he, “ to go into the close and crowded city to reside, while I remain from home, but in this fair and salubrious — this gay and smiling spot, — here, at Saffron Hill, will I abide. My friend Stephen Haggerston hath a goodly house, where for the present we may all be kindly entertained. Here I shall be at a moderate distance from the metropolis, and a walk through the meadows of the Old-burne will speedily take me thither.”

They advanced on the hill, which then was decorated with a few fanciful dwellings, belonging to persons of opulence, who were led by a taste for rural scenes and open views, to establish themselves there; and, at the time when Whitting-

ton spoke, they saw the buildings of Clerkenwell.

“There seemeth a fair place of worship,” said the Bohemian, pointing to the Church; “what may it be entitled?”

“That,” replied Whittington, “is the church, and the large building adjoining it, and of which in truth it formeth a part, is the Priory of Clerkenwell. Look ye lower, and some little space from where the hill begins abruptly to decline, you see a modern erection. That protects the celebrated spring by which our parish clerks, with others who aid their doings, assemble at divers stated times to enact moralities and mysteries, of which, no doubt, ye have heard.”

“I have, but it pleaseth me not. There shall ye see, so I have heard, the whole creation of the world pictured, and mimicked, and mortal men do then pretend to be angels and even the very God-head.”

“With you,” said Whittington, “I

think it lacketh meet solemnity, for often doth it happen that those who can best enact, are neither holy nor discreet men. When lately I was there to see them, he who was clepid the *Angel Gabriel*, was found so top-heavy from drink, that he reeled and almost knocked down the *Deus Pater* of the mystery; who being no over-sober personage himself, did curse and swear so profanely, thus to be staggered, that my brother Sir Richard, then Lord Mayor, was well minded to send his godship to the gaol of Newgate."

"More needs not to prove that such rites are but folly, and serve not the cause of religion."

"But," said Whittington, recurring to his favourite topic, "is not this a delightful scene, and doth it not command a view of many pleasing objects? Lower down, those tall Elms, mark the spot where the Skinners' Well is found, where

that craft do repair to enact, at times, mysteries of their own, after the manner of the parish-clerks. How noble looketh the vast square tower of Paul's, which seemeth lord over all the neighbouring churches, whose tops are now seen. How gay is this hill which we now stand upon, and what a beauteous verdure decketh, late as is the season, that, which holds the Priory on its summit! Then, further south, mark you another noble building? That is the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, and leading from it, citywards, behold the mills which belong to the fraternity, and which are worked by means of that brook which windeth along in the valley. Turn-mill brook is it called, and you may almost see it join the river of Wells, while the Oldbourne is hastening from the west to meet and unite with it. Then near the place of their junction, ye must observe a mighty edifice adorned with much modern work-

manship and cunning. That standeth hard by the Old-burne, and is the palace of the Bishop of Ely. It was thus handsomely set forth by Bishop Arundel; when he did fill that See. Looking at so costly a pile, and its spacious gardens, and at the other objects which I have turned your eyes to, and contemplating these shady retreats, while ye survey at so small distance the whole extent of London, say have ye often seen an eminence commanding in its prospects so much of the gallant magnificence of art, and possessing in itself so largely the marvellous beauties of nature, as this same right famous Saffron Hill!"

The place on which they stood, at that period merited the praises which it received from the admiring Whittington, and the smiling village of Holborn or Oldburne, as seen from it, built irregularly, but beautifully diversified with gardens attached to the houses — adorned

with arbors, May-poles, and grottos, was most interesting. The meadows appropriated to the exercise of archery, provided with butts, and seats for the umpires, heightened the variety and compelled Huss to admire, not less than his friend did, the surrounding scenery.

CHAP. XIV.

- “ *Sic visum superis* it seems,
“ Who only give me, golden *dreams*,
“ And though Hope's fairy fingers mark
“ Out future purses in the dark,
“ Yet stern Distress, a rogue unpleasant,
“ Like bailiff stands to point the present.”

DERMODY.

NOT all the delights of Saffron Hill, backed by the most endearing hospitalities, could divert the Bohemian from his purpose, or induce him to delay his departure for many days. He had possessed himself of as much spiritual information, or manna for the soul, as he would sometimes call it, as he could hope to obtain; he had seen his friend Lord Cobham, and he had made those arrangements with respect to the son and daughter of his friend, which he

hoped would secure their future comfort, and now, his duty, appeared to him imperatively to require his speedy return to Prague.

Huss, therefore, soon took leave of Whittington, and while that personage pursued his political reforms, set out on his journey, accompanied by Edward and Alice. The latter, in quitting her native country, felt cheered and comforted, by the presence of her brother. This was a happiness on which she had not calculated, when the idea of providing her with an asylum in Bohemia, was first mentioned, and her situation was, therefore, much less painful than she had expected it would prove, on parting from her English friends. Edward, though he knew how to value the society of his sister, and though he rejoiced in the opportunity of watching over her safety, was much depressed by the peculiarities of his lot. He wished to behold Matilda before he left England,

and more than once at nightfall, he directed his steps to Charing, in the vain hope that being near the mansion of which she was an inmate, some inconceivable accident might afford him the felicity of seeing and of speaking to her ; though had the fond dream been realised, he knew not how he could profit by it — he knew not what he could say, — that she was interested in hearing, or that it would be advantageous for him to communicate. While he tarried, wildly desiring access to her, he trembled lest she should appear ; and when the lateness of the hour dismissed the last ray of expectation, he retired almost as much relieved as mortified, by the disappointment.

The deepest melancholy oppressed his spirits, while from the deck of the vessel, in which the Bohemian and Alice with himself were embarked, he gazed on the receding shores of England. He contemplated the varieties of woe which he

had been fated to experience, the persecution which a revered father had endured, the ruin which had descended on all connected with him — and the consequent rupture of those engagements, which through a series of happy years he had been encouraged to hope, would prove as permanent, as they were delightful. The sullen murmur of the ocean, reminded him of the distance which already intervened between him and the being so devotedly loved, and his heart sickened at the reflection, that the distance was still to be increased, and that even if the views of Huss should be realized, of which after the mortifications he had known, he entertained some doubt, he could not speedily return to England even as the destitute fugitive, that left it.

Such reflections occupied his mind on the voyage; nor could all the soothing attentions of the Bohemian, dissipate the cloud of sorrow which hung over his

mind. He felt the kindness of Huss, and lamented that he could not respond to it by wearing a more cheerful aspect; but while his restless thoughts incessantly reminded him of the decline which his fortunes had experienced, and pointed to the mysterious future, he found this impossible.

Arrived in Prague, the joy which the return of Huss inspired in the whole population gave him sincere satisfaction, as it assured him that, placed under the care of a man so truly virtuous, who was himself the object of such peculiar kindness, the comfort and safety of Alice were thenceforward sufficiently provided for.

Among those who were most rejoiced at the re-appearance of Huss, were the Baron de Chlume, Hierom or Jerom of Prague, as he is commonly called, and Eugene de Marle. The last mentioned personage was a young man, who had studied at the University under Huss.

He was a Frenchman, and was now in the bloom of youth. His friends had intended him for the Church, but he had disappointed their wishes; not because he entertained those conscientious objections to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, that had made the Pope and his supporters the enemies of his old preceptor; but, because his active spirit preferred the nobler profession (as he considered it,) of arms. A very good Catholic himself, he thought Huss had fallen into some errors which he would do well to abjure; but he respected him sincerely as a good man; and when he heard of the suspension of the Bohemian, and of his forced retirement from his public labours, he hastened to Hussinez, to console him under his misfortune. There informed of the voyage which Huss had made to England, de Marle had repaired to Prague, to await his return.

Edward and Alice were received with the utmost cordiality by the friends of

the pastor, and could hearty welcomes and kind greetings have removed all cause for grief, the brother and sister had been happy. But Edward still sighed for the condition in which he found himself. He panted for the arrival of that moment when he might boast that he could live by his own exertions: when, as the Bohemian had given him cause to hope, he might be enabled to assist those who were dear to him, from the fruits of his own industry. Situated as he was at Prague, this seemed unnecessary; wealth would have been useless; but still he regretted that the Bohemian had not justified the expectations he had encouraged, for to Edward the most splendid dependence would have been irksome.

His skill, which Huss had praised as a transcriber of the Scriptures, had procured him many applications for copies of the Gospels, and of different books and chapters in the Bible. The sum paid for these by purchasers, for something like a

regular price had been established among that numerous class to which Edward and his father belonged, was considerable; but yet the labour was so great, that with all the celerity which he had acquired, he found in this mode of occupying himself but a very inadequate resource. It was however his only one, and he determined resolutely to apply himself to it, even while he remained at Prague. The Bohemian, one day, surprised him thus employed.

“What! is it even so,” exclaimed Huss. “Are you labouring, and in secret! I thought not to see you so occupied, for I expected that your curious youth, being in a foreign land, would claim a longer respite from toil than you have enjoyed, and so I designed not yet to speak to you of that which prompted me to bring you hither. But since it is not so; since prudence denies that repose and recreation which I suspected you would crave, it is fitting that I direct you

to the most beneficial mode of using those talents, with which *you* are gifted."

Joy sparkled in the eyes of the young man while Huss was speaking, and he listened to the remainder of his friend's address with the most eager attention.

"I have now," continued Huss, "to unfold that, which, without the consent of another, I had no right to impart. There is a man living in this city, who is possessed of an art so extraordinary, that while I tell of it, I am well aware thou wilt almost doubt whether such thing be possible. It is an art, which, when described, will strike thy senses to resemble potent magic. Start not, young man, for sure thou canst not think that ever I would sanction those fearful efforts, by which the powers of darkness are invoked, and the great enemy of man wooed to be his ally. Yet what wouldst thou think, thou, who knowest so well what weeks and months of painful labour are requisite to produce a single copy of

the New Testament, and how great the toil, to write fairly in legible characters, the Gospels of the Evangelists; what wouldst thou think, I enquire, if power were given thee to multiply transcripts so fast, that one short hour, should enable thee to outstrip the present labour of a week?"

"I comprehend you not. How loaves and fishes once were multiplied by Him, who, though he wore the aspect of man, was God, I oft have read; but the days in which such miracles were to be witnessed have passed from us, and can return no more."

"It is no miracle; and yet it is miraculous that human intelligence should be competent to perform a feat so wondrous without a miracle. But this is truth, that copies may be multiplied from one, so that a hundred, and as I think more, you may produce in less time than it now costs you to write a single transcript."

"I cry your grace, for, as you did sur-

mise, this seemeth most incredible. Still I am certain that a grave and holy man, as I know you are, would not tell this, unless he believed it; but if I may adventure to say all that I think, I cannot help suspecting—”

“That my penetration has been imposed upon,” interrupted the Bohemian. “Be this thy belief for awhile. Thou shalt soon be undeceived. But answer me this: if such an art were taught, what wouldst thou think of it?”

“I know the foe of all our race cannot endure the truth, and, consequently, cannot approach that book which containeth the word of God. Yet it galls my reason sorely, to be told that powers so mighty have been confided to mortal man.”

“But what wouldst thou think of that art? I ask the question as a worldly man; what would be its value, if thou, and thou alone, of all thy country, hadst it in thy keeping? What gain would it be to thee, I demand?”

“ It would be like a shower of gold poured into my abode, or a mine of wealth transferred to my ownership.”

“ It will be thine. A man there is, who in his need, devised a plan for making wood and metal plates ; on which he contrived to arrange words and sentences, and chapters ; and then to produce their impression in ink, on paper. But his poverty precluded him from gaining advantage by this his invention. To me, then, he applied for money and aid, wherewithal he might bring it to perfection. He has succeeded admirably. I, seeing thy skill in copying, felt that nought was needful to enrich thee, but to give thee possession of this rare mystery. Therefore did I bring thee hither ; and he, in gratitude for the timely aid which I was enabled to afford, hath consented that I should disclose it to thee ; and he will even instruct thee in the same, so thou consentest to the two conditions which he has coupled with his assent to my entreaty.”

“Those conditions,” said Edward, “must indeed be hard, if they are such as I must reject, where so mighty a boon is offered.”

“They are not hard,” replied Huss. “The first it would for a long time be impossible, or well nigh impossible for thee to sin against; for the second, thou shalt be bound to observe it by regard for thine own interest. — Not to detain thee longer, he requireth that thou forthwith do make a covenant, that never shalt thou essay to apply the art, which thou art soon to learn, to aught in the German tongue; and never to disclose to any one, the means by which thou shalt be enabled to perform what must appear so passing wonderful.”

Edward’s bosom glowed with transport, when he found that the terms were of such a character, and unhesitatingly agreed to give all possible security on both points. That same day the Bohemian required Hoffmann, (the person of whom he

spoke), to perform what he had promised. On visiting his residence, they learned that Hoffmann was from home; but Huss, resolute to accomplish his purpose, ceased not to seek him in every part of the city. The search was for some hours useles, but by accident they met in the evening in the street, just as Huss, disheartened by disappointment, was returning to his own dwelling.

Hoffmann accompanied Huss to his house. Conducted by the Bohemian to his study, which was also his bed-chamber, he was requested to make the promised disclosure. He did not immediately reply, but gazed steadfastly for some moments on the countenance of Edward, as if he sought to read there, whether he could, with safety, confide a secret of such importance to one so young. The result of this scrutiny was not unfavourable to the hopes of the candidate for knowledge, and he replied in

the following terms to the application which had been made to him.

“ Not only gratitude for the important benefits which you have rendered unto me, but an earnest, anxious desire to promulgate those truths, which it is the object of this young Englishman to make more generally known, by means of the art which he would acquire, incline me to compliance with your wishes. But is he prepared to take the oath, which I have already declared that it is my resolution to exact from him to whom I entrust the mystery, which now is in my keeping?”

“ Name you the oath to him,” said Huss, “ and he shall answer for himself.”

“ I call upon him then to swear by the Creator of the universe ; — by the Saviour of man ; — and by the Holy Spirit ; — in a word, by the Sacred Trinity, that neither the hope of reward, not the fear of punishment, that neither the greatest good on earth shall induce, nor the most

fearful calamity that can be endured by frail humanity extort, disclosure of the secret I reveal to him."

The solemn tone in which Hoffmann spoke, and the awful names which he had demanded should be invoked, startled Edward, and, turning to the Bohemian, he demanded if it were fitting that he should take the oath.

Huss answered, "Albeit I am not convinced that it is necessary, and, therefore, had rather that it had not been demanded; yet it doth seem but reasonable, that he who is the master of such a mystery should also be master of the terms on which it shall be imparted to another, and may with reason claim assurance, if he give to a fellow-creature that which is undoubtedly his to give, that the man so entrusted, shall not do what may be to the prejudice of his benefactor. Therefore I think the oath proposed, is one that you may take."

Edward expressed his readiness to comply with the demand of Hoffmann,

who repeated the oath, dwelling with strong emphasis on the words which went to bind him to whom it was tendered, to despise rewards and punishments, if these should be resorted to with a view of obtaining the revelation of a secret so important. Edward pronounced the words after him, in a manner which satisfied Hoffmann that their import was well understood, and that the oath was taken by one on whom it would be binding.

Satisfied on this head, he proceeded to describe the art he had studied and laboured to perfection: that of printing from plates of metal, or blocks of wood. These, he remarked, would afford the fullest opportunities for displaying the elegant taste and judicious arrangement, by which Edward's manuscripts were said to be distinguished. He took Edward to his own house, and displayed before him the whole of his ingenious apparatus. To describe the surprise of Edward at what

he saw, would be equally difficult and superfluous, and no language can convey an adequate idea of the benevolent joy in which the virtuous spirit of Huss revelled, when he saw all that he had regarded as most intricate and perplexing, appeared to Edward perfectly simple and easy. Hoffmann was surprised at the intelligence he remarked in his pupil, and hesitated not to affirm that a very brief period would give him all the theoretical knowledge, and practical dexterity necessary.

The printer had so much to tell, and to show, and Edward was so deeply interested in all that he undertook to reveal, that hour after hour stole imperceptibly away, while he was thus engaged, and it was midnight before he retired. On getting home with Huss, the Bohemian repaired to his chamber. When leaving it, he had fastened the door, and it was found still secured; but the moment he entered a gust of wind

almost extinguished his lamp. It came from a window near his bed, which he recollected had been closed when he was last in the room. On removing the curtains of his couch, it appeared as if some one had recently lain there, and the print of feet on one side indicated that the person, whoever it was, had passed thence to the window. Nothing had been purloined, and he was puzzled to guess who could have been there; and what could have induced the individual, whoever he might be, to make his exit but by the door. Suddenly it struck him that possibly some one had been there concealed, at the moment when Hoffmann was confiding to Edward the particulars of his invention. For a moment he suspected that the party had concealed himself for the purpose of listening; but this idea he immediately repelled as extravagant. He himself had not known that Hoffmann would be there, at the hour which he had

taken him to his study, and it was, therefore, impossible for any man to have repaired thither, for the purpose of overhearing their conversation. Consoled by this reflection, he deemed what had at first startled him, to be unworthy of further consideration, and dismissed it altogether from his mind.

CHAP. XV.

“ Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
“ And pause a while from learning to be wise ;
“ There mark what ills the scholar’s life assail.”

DR. JOHNSON.

HOFFMANN was not deceived, when he anticipated that little instruction would be necessary to teach Edward all that he had occasion to learn. One part of his task, and not the least important part, was to suggest to Edward the various ways in which he might occasionally avail himself of the labour of others, without initiating those employed into the secrets of the art, and without confiding to them the object in view. To effect this was difficult, but if not effected, all that Hoffmann taught was useless.

To multiply copies of the Gospels in English, as he proposed to do, would, if discovery took place, subject him to the severest penalties. Desirable therefore as it might be, that in some instances his efforts should be aided by the vigour and ingenuity of others, it was most essential that he should guard with unremitting vigilance against detection. This was not less necessary for the preservation of his own life, than to keep his oath inviolate.

Hoffmann had previously had to contend with these difficulties, and the same genius which compassed so mighty an invention, enabled him to triumph over those circumstances which endangered the advantages he had calculated on realising, in the event of success. Edward, guided by him, and liberally supported by John Huss, who spared no sacrifice, soon rejoiced in seeing so much already accomplished, that he felt no fear, — no doubt, that his own unassisted efforts

would be equal to the rest. But that no apprehension should remain, Huss besought him to rest some months longer in Prague, and to make his first perfect experiment there. To this Edward consented, and, not to enlarge on the subject by a technical description of the means, in every instance he surpassed his own most sanguine expectations, as well as those of his friends. He could now produce on plates or blocks, the exact resemblance of what he had written on paper, and then transfer to paper, what he had traced on the harder substances. To transcribe the Scriptures entire, claimed so much time and labour, that in England a whole Bible cost a sum which but few could afford to pay. But as its value became more and more appreciated, those who could not purchase the whole, would make an effort to possess themselves of a part. Among the numerous body of Lollards, the four Gospels were in constant demand, and

the acknowledged excellence of those produced from the pen of Edward Oldcastle, had caused him to receive many applications, to which he could not possibly attend. Pious persons, who had not the means of obtaining all the books of the evangelists, would endeavour to rest satisfied with one of them, and the gospel of Saint Luke, from its superior length, was particularly sought after. Provided with copies of this, Edward could feel at no loss for a resource on his arrival in England, but there was some risk in transporting them; and he had as good reasons for dreading a particular inspection of his effects, when he should touch the shores of his native land, as many modern voyageurs have, when on landing they find their persons and baggage, on their way to the custom house.

There was no longer any motive for the prolongation of Edward's stay at Prague, and sincerely grateful to the

generous Bohemian for the benefits conferred on himself, and, if possible, still more sensible of the kindness extended to Alice, he took leave of Huss and his friends. It was not without a throb of exquisite pain, that he embraced Alice for the last time. Her ripening years had given a finish to her charms, which he had never anticipated; and remembering to what she had been born, and what prospects might then have opened on one like her favoured by nature, but for the persecution of which her father and herself were the victims, not all the comforts that surrounded her, could reconcile him to the reflection that he was obliged to leave a sister so fondly beloved in a foreign land, dependant on the bounty of one in no way connected with her by ties of blood. But to indulge in such reflections was worse than useless; and, resolutely dismissing the unavailing tear, he hastened to depart.

Alice mourned the absence of her

brother, though his unremitting industry, the peculiar character of which was kept secret even from her, had seldom allowed her the enjoyment of his society, while Edward continued at Prague. Still to know that he was near her had been comfort, and now to feel that she had no longer a single relative on that continent to which she had been conveyed, was pain. Huss sought to inspire hope, nor was the attempt long unsuccessful. The animated piety of his life was well calculated to impart that consolation, which can best sustain a troubled spirit. Early sorrow, sedentary labours, long continued and incessant meditation had given him the venerable appearance of age. But his voice was clear and melodious, and when, as was sometimes his custom, in imitation of David, he took the harp and accompanied himself, while he sung the strains of the Israelitish monarch to its solemn sounds, the bold but sweetly blended harmonies, that filled her ears —

the grave and dignified figure that met her eyes, and the glow of sacred enthusiasm which animated the revered pastor, while he celebrated the mercies of his Creator, seemed, to the view of Alice, fully to realise the ideas of the Bohemian himself, and she could almost fancy that she saw before her the psalmist of the chosen people, and the peculiar favourite of his God.

Considering life as valueless for itself, and only important as being the passage, or vehicle, by which the human race were appointed to be conveyed to an eternal state, without reproaching any occasional dejection that he remarked, Huss mildly exposed the weakness which could entertain it. The calamities to which mortals were exposed, he likened to the gales which annoy the traveller on the seas, but always insisting that the heart, faithful to its duty, was secure of gaining its destined port, and certain one day to repose in a blessed haven. For

persecution on account of religious opinions he held it to be as ridiculous as it was wicked, ever grateful to that Being, who had provided that no effort of tyranny — no bolts, no chains, should be able to cut off the communication between the creature and the Creator, and taught the humble spirit to bound from earth to Heaven there to claim the rewarding smile, and needful aid, of the Deity it adored.

A sweet repose grew on the reasonings, and yet more on the example, urged and supplied, by the language and the life of the Bohemian. The regrets of Alice were insensibly diminished, and she gave herself up to all the tranquil delight, which such a holy calm was well calculated to bestow. The society of Jerome of Prague tended to sustain the impressions made on the mild spirit of Alice, and the generous ardour of De Marlé, who was their frequent guest, formed not the least interesting feature of their so-

cial circle. On Alice the eyes of De Marle sometimes rested with an expression of admiration, that seemed to absorb his every thought. It escaped not the observation of Huss, who, highly as he thought of the principles of his pupil, had still too much suspicion of his youth to rejoice in what he saw, or to suffer his prudence to be disarmed by his confidence, so far as to sanction the reception of De Marle's visits by Alice, when he himself was not present. But wherever she went, the young Frenchman would follow; and when Huss climbed the mountains to gaze on the romantic scenes, which were thence to be viewed in the neighbourhood of his native village, the assisting hand of De Marle was always ready, to diminish the difficulties and fatigue of the ascent to Alice. Once, when thus occupied, the Bohemian being somewhat behind his pupil, while a tear of rapture, prompted by the situation in which he then found himself, beamed in

the eye of De Marle, he could not help softly exclaiming, —

“ O! that it were always so! — O! that the rugged paths which Alice is destined to know, might ever thus be surmounted by the blissfully accorded aid of De Marle.”

Alice shrunk from the warm pressure of his touch, and the pastor approached. She made no reply, and De Marle neither at that time, nor in their future interviews, offered explanation. Indeed he had but few opportunities of doing so, had he thought it necessary, as the vigilance of the Bohemian was such that they were seldom left alone for a moment. De Marle's conversation was always lively and interesting to Alice, and she felt perfectly unembarrassed in his presence, never suspecting that which Huss firmly believed, that many of Eugene's visits might be placed to her account.

But the repose which she tasted was not to be of long duration, and her pro-

tector was doomed to experience storms in his passage through life, and in that part of it which yet remained to be performed, more tremendous in their character than any to which he had believed himself exposed. The opinions and exemplary life of John Huss, had gained him great popularity and many friends; but among those attached to the system then acted upon by the church of Rome; he found not a few enemies. For a time the opinions and writings of Wickliffe had been treated with contempt, but the powerful effect which they produced on the minds of the many about this period, had caused their opponents to change their ground, and what had hitherto been laughed at, as silly extravagance, was now denounced as horrible heresy. A bull, issued by the Pope on this subject, had been promulgated by Sbinco, the Archbishop of Prague, and accompanied by a rescript of his own, ordering all who possessed

the works of Wickliffe to bring them to him. This was done. The owners, expecting that they were only to be examined, were highly exasperated at seeing them committed indiscriminately to the flames. Loud complaints were raised against Alphabetarius, or the A B C doctor, as in derision of his ignorance, Sbinco was called, and the Gospellers — that name had been given to those who favoured the doctrines of John Huss, — sought to revenge themselves by burning the rescript of the Archbishop in the High Street, with every mark of contempt that strong indignation could devise. Such a proceeding was too violent to meet with the approbation of Huss, but the friends of Sbinco, nevertheless, gave him credit for being its author. The death of Pope Alexander took place about this time. He was succeeded by Balthasar Cosa, who left the arrangement of religious affairs, in most cases, to the Cardinal Columna.

This priest, disturbed by the progress of those doctrines which had found an able advocate in the Bohemian pastor, ordered Huss to appear before him on a day which he appointed. The reformer was well aware that obedience to this mandate was likely to compromise his safety, and was not so regardless of life as to rush forward to court danger. He claimed the interference of the Prince Winceslaus, who was prevailed upon to send ambassadors to the Pope, to pray that the personal attendance of the pastor might be dispensed with. To give effect to these representations, and at the same time to mark due respect for the authority of the Cardinal, Huss sent with the ambassadors three proctors to act as his representatives, who were enjoined to hear and to answer, that which might be objected to the supposed heresies of their master. These individuals met with a very ungracious reception at Rome. Immediately on their arrival

they were committed to prison, and their master, without further enquiry, received sentence of excommunication. In consequence of this, Huss had been precluded from following up his theological labours, in public, as he had been accustomed to do, though it was impossible for one of his active turn to remain idle. His popularity continued to increase, and on one occasion an alarming riot was quelled by his influence. Calumny itself could impute no misconduct to Huss in this instance, but the power which it was seen that he possessed, gave alarm to some, who had previously been disposed to view his exertions with favour, and Wincellaus was at length persuaded to banish him from Prague. The seclusion thus imposed upon Huss, left him leisure to visit England, and also enabled him to produce several papers in support of his opinions. These were directed against indulgences, the abuse of ex-

communications, and unlimited obedience to the see of Rome. Though highly applauded by his friends, they did not have the effect of diminishing the number of his enemies, or of rendering their hostility less virulent than it was before.

It has been seen that the banishment to which Huss had been sentenced, had not the effect of removing him from the city of Prague for a very long period. His zeal was augmented by the opposition he had experienced, and, perhaps, his courage was confirmed by the impunity which for a season he enjoyed, after he had ventured to disobey the mandate of Winceslaus. But he did not long remain unmolested. The council of Constance, was at this period about to commence its labours, and Huss was summoned, in the name of the Pope, to appear before it. After the treatment which his proctors had met with, when they presented themselves at Rome to

explain away the errors imputed to the Bohemian pastor, it is not improbable that this new call on him to go in person to defend his doctrines, would have been wholly disregarded, if the Emperor Sigismund had not intimated to him, through some of his household who were dispatched to Prague, that it appeared to him of importance that Huss should attend the council, to clear himself of the charges which had been preferred against him. Right well did the Bohemian comprehend, that the recommendation of so potent a monarch must be viewed as a command, and met, either by prompt acquiescence, or sudden flight. The latter course he could not easily take; and when he considered the scandal which it would be the means of throwing on all his followers, as well as on the tenets which he had espoused, he felt that he had no alternative; and, in consequence, signified his readiness to present himself to the council, provided

the Emperor would give him a safe conduct. This was promised, and he was assured, that he might at once dismiss all apprehensions, respecting his personal security.

Nothing remained but that he should prepare for his journey to Constance. He determined that Alice should go with him. Sad forebodings made her anxious to dissuade, if possible, her revered friend from acting on the resolution which he had been induced to adopt. She knew something of the rancorous enmity, which pursued his footsteps even in Bohemia, and she trembled to reflect on the perils which might surround him, when his enemies there, should be joined to their friends at Constance. She had heard of the punishment by fire, being in some instances promptly resorted to by the adherents of the Pope, to repress heresy ; and, in imagination, she already saw the good Bohemian, an insulted victim, conducted to the fatal stake. She

thought not of the melancholy and destitute situation in which she herself must be placed, if cruelty should take this course, bereft, as she would then be, of her only stay, of the only friend whose fostering care she could claim, and left a stranger in a foreign country. Alice only thought of the terrific sufferings to which Huss went to expose himself; but he, when this subject was pressed on his attention, mournfully revolved in his mind all the fearful perils to which, in the case imagined, his young and lovely charge must be exposed. He persuaded himself that it was folly to entertain such fears; and dismissing them from his own mind, he applied himself to discharge them also from that of Alice. In this he did not succeed to the extent of his wishes; though the promise which he had obtained of a safe-conduct from Sigismund, afforded her some consolation. But Alice doubted that this promise would not be fulfilled. In this instance

her alarm proved ill-founded, as shortly afterwards the promised document was received. It was written in the Latin and German languages ; and in order that a just idea may be formed of the value of imperial protection in that age, it may be proper here to insert a translation of that paper, to which Huss attached so much importance ; and which, for his personal safety, he had thought it absolutely necessary to obtain, before he placed himself within the grasp of the priests and others, who were to form the council of Constance. It ran as follows :

“ Sigismund, by the grace of God, king of the Romans, of Hungary, Denmark, Croatia, &c. To all Princes, as well ecclesiastical as secular, Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Barons, Captains, Boro-masters, Judges and Governors, Officers of towns, Burgesses, and villages ; and unto all rulers of the commonalty ; and generally to all the subjects of our empire, to whom

these letters shall come, grace and all goodness.

“ We charge and command you all, that you have respect unto John Huss, the which is departed out of Bohemia, to come unto the general council, the which shall be celebrated and holden very shortly, at the town of Constance. The which, John Huss, we have received under our protection, and safeguard of the whole empire, desiring you that you will cheerfully receive him when he shall come towards you ; and that you entreat and handle him gently, showing him favour and good-will ; and showing him pleasure in all things as touching the forwardness, ease, and assurance of his journey, as well by land as by water. Moreover, we will, that he and all his company, with his carriage and necessaries, shall pass throughout all places, passages, ports, bridges, lands, governances, lordships, liberties, cities, towns, burgesses, castles, villages, and all other your dominions,

without paying of any manner of imposition or dane money, peage tribute, or any other manner of toll, whatsoever it be. We will also, that you suffer him to pass, rest, tarry, and to sojourn at liberty, without doing unto him any manner of impeachment, or vexation, or trouble; and that if need shall so require, you do provide a faithful company to conduct him, withal for the honour and reverence which you owe unto our Imperial Majesty. Given at Spire, the 18th of October, in the year of our Lord God, 1414."

CHAP. XVI.

“ Let me indear thee once more to my bosom,
“ Groan an eternal farewell to thy soul.”

LEE.

BEFORE John Huss took his departure from Prague, he thought it right to prepare public notices, setting forth the occasion which demanded his presence at Constance. Bills were accordingly posted in different parts of the city, and on the gates of the king's palace, announcing that he was about to appear before the general council, to vindicate the opinions he had held; and calling on all those who had aught to charge against him, to meet him at Constance.

The publicity thus given to the intended expedition of the pastor, and the in-

trepidity with which he prepared to meet his enemies, created a great sensation throughout all Bohemia. Thousands assembled to see him leave that city in which he had been so greatly distinguished, and the applause and consoling assurances which he received, it seemed to him, presaged a happy issue to the experiment he had resolved to make, and a return as triumphant, as his present departure was public.

He took leave of all classes with an air of perfect serenity, though inwardly much affected by the kindness of which he saw himself the object. By far the greater number of those who attended to bid him adieu, endeavoured to smother their regret, by expressing a confident hope that they should soon behold him again, more happy and more exalted than he had yet been. But one of his followers, a humble artisan, made himself conspicuous in the crowd, by taking a different course. Earnestly pressing the hand of

the Reformer, he kissed it, while a tear stood in his eye, and still clasping it, as reluctant to relinquish his hold, from the lively apprehension that he would have no opportunity of so testifying his love again, he exclaimed : —

“ God be with you!—God be with you! for I think verily, my dear and good master John, that you shall not return to us again.”

“ Thy kind anxiety,” Huss replied, “ carries thee too far. So doth it my good and holy friend, Jerome ; who saith it is his conviction that I shall never pass safe from the Council.”

“ I do believe it,” said the poor man, “ and my eyes now gaze on thee with greediness ; believing, as I do, that it is the last time they shall be feasted with a view of thy earthly form.”

There was an expression in the countenance and manner of the man, that gave his words importance. A feeling that they were prophetic, came over

Huss ; and Alice, who heard them, trembled while he spoke. The pastor remarked it, and anxious to remove the impression which he perceived they had made on the daughter of his friend, he said : —

“ You do not well. Such fears are idle. He who made me, should such be his high pleasure, can preserve my life at Constance : — should he will the contrary, dost thou think I could escape by tarrying here ? ”

This was perfectly unanswerable ; but feeling in the man who had accosted him, was still too potent to be controlled by reason.

“ Rebuke me not,” he cried. “ Let not a reproving sound be the last that mine ear shall drink from thy lips ; — for this I do feel is the last time that we shall meet. The king, not of Hungary, but of Heaven reward you, with all blessings for the faithful doctrine, which I have received from your ministry.”

Huss spoke with his accustomed kindness, and the artisan, still weeping, retired among the crowd. Many of the inhabitants of Prague, accompanied their respected pastor some miles on his road, and the Baron de Chlume, and several Bohemian noblemen determined on going with him to Constance.

Notices like those which Huss had put up in Prague, were published in all the towns through which he passed, and affixed to all the cathedrals. He felt that he was now fairly embarked in the cause; — that the eyes of the whole Christian world were fixed on the struggle, and he determined that the opinions he had avowed, should not be discredited by his shrinking from refutation or attack. Strong in the conviction that he went forth as the champion of truth, without arrogating to himself extraordinary powers, he was inwardly rejoiced by cheering visions of a happy result, and by a hope that, in the awful hour of trial,

he should find himself competent not only to the task of defending himself, but to that of satisfying those who imputed errors to him, that they themselves were in error, and thus convert his most implacable enemies into sincere friends.

The safe-conduct which was granted by the Emperor, did not reach Huss, till he was already on the road to Constance. He had some misgivings on this subject before he set out, though his own integrity forbid him to suspect that, being promised, it was not intended to be given. But when he found it in his possession, it afforded him comfort which he had not previously enjoyed, as it gave him the most perfect assurance that the professions which had been made by those who had come to him from Sigismund, were made in sincerity.

Arrived in Constance, he found the influx of strangers so great, that he at first anticipated some difficulty in finding a lodging. But the reputation of

his piety was of service to him, and a widow, who held a house in St. Gall's Street, in that city, besought him to take up his residence under her roof.

He had been welcomed in every town, in a much more public way than his unambitious mind could approve, and it was a relief to his peaceful spirit to find himself once more in a private house, and alone with Alice.

"Dearest," said he, "I feel such luxury in being left to myself, that were it not imposed on me as a duty, I never more would meet the public gaze."

"Would that you could avoid it!" said Alice; and while she spoke, the satisfaction which beamed from her eyes, contrasting their present peaceful situation with the scenes which they had lately known, made him feel, more than before, the value and importance of his present respite. He replied,—

"Thy loved society is now so sweet, — so precious are these fleeting happy

minutes, that my harassed spirit seems to cling to them, as though they were rare gems adorning the wings of time, which it would fain despoil of them, and keep for ever here. I will not think that they are nearly the last that shall glad me in my earthly wanderings, but it is meet that you should well remember this may be. No mortal can unfold the awful future; and, peradventure, a few short weeks may destine me, unworthy as I am, to wear the crown of martyrdom."

"Then fly this place — haste from this hated Constance."

"That must not be. — What, shall my fainting spirit betray the mighty cause at issue? — Never. I do trust, less for my own sake than for thine, that my mortal life will yet be spared awhile. But we must ever remember that the saints have heretofore passed to the joys of eternal life, through many tribulations. Some have been cut and chopped to pieces; some have had their

eyes bored through, some have been roasted, some flayed alive, some buried quick, some stoned, some crucified, some ground between mill-stones."

"This I know; and, therefore, do I think it cannot be a sin to fly."

"My word is given that I will vindicate before the council whatever I have taught; but rest thee cheerful, Alice, hoping all the best, yet not wholly forgetting to fortify thy mind against weakness, should the very worst befall. My cause is that of truth, is that of Heaven,—is that which ultimately must prevail. The glory may be reserved for some more deserving instrument, but in me it were sin and folly to despair."

He then applied himself to give Alice such directions for the regulation of her conduct, as he thought her youth and inexperience demanded from him. He warned her especially against lending a ready ear to the vain praise of which she might find herself the object, in those

moments when she might chance to be without his protection. He cautioned her against De Marle: "Not," said he, "that I deem him other than sincere and just, but I know the fiery rage of youth, and know that it is all too often seen that virtuous principle, opposed to passion and inviting opportunity, is but a feeble combatant."

The streets of Constance became every day more crowded. Princes, Dukes, Archbishops, Earls, Bishops, Abbots, and Doctors, continued to arrive in rapid succession every hour. Their attendants were numerous, and these were necessarily followed by many meaner personages, who sought employment and profit, by labouring for the comfort of their superiors. Notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion, there were not wanting those whose presence, according to the ideas of modern times, could only be wanted to swell the revelry and dissipation of a mirthful holiday. That

cooks would be invited, may be very easily conceived. That barbers, also, should be in some request, can be accounted for, and it excites no great surprise, that six hundred of them were engaged at Constance; but it seems not a little singular that minstrels and jesters should be found at a general meeting of the fathers of the church. These, for the most part, accompanied those noblemen, of whose household they formed a part. But still it is remarkable that their presence was not dispensed with at this juncture, when the prelates of all Christendom were invited to assemble, for the purpose of deciding on questions of the last importance to the church.

Such persons, however, were there, and in considerable numbers, and the concourse of strangers from various parts was so immense, that it is estimated Constance at that period contained more than sixty thousand visitors. The confusion which must prevail at such a time

may be easily conceived. Not to weary attention with unimportant details, we hasten to the opening of the Council.

The Council had been called to determine on the pretensions of three individuals, each of whom claimed to exercise the functions of the head of the church. These were Balthasar Cosa, called John XXIII., Peter de Luna, called Benedict XIII., and Angelus Corarius, called Gregory XII. The dissensions created by these rivals had long disturbed the church, and it was now proposed to terminate the discord which had sprung from this fruitful source of contention. It was by virtue of a bull from John, that the council was held. He had been anxious that it should not assemble at Constance, but disappointed in this, he thought it wise to submit with a good grace to a decision which he could not control; and he accordingly opened its first session, by admonishing those who were to decide on his claim to the ponti-

ificate, to avoid all tumult, wrangling, and clamorous talk, — to unite in order to extirpate all heresies, and especially those of Wickliffe, and to abstain from unprofitable disputes. The council then proceeded to appoint its officers and its presidents, and thus engaged, it gave the Pope (if that title may be given to one, which was claimed by three,) a sample of the harmony which his advice promoted.

France, Italy, Germany, and England, had sent representatives to Constance. John, the patriarch of Antioch, was proposed as president for France; Anthony, Archbishop of Rigen, as president for Italy; Nicholas, Archbishop of Gene-suensis, as president for Germany; and Nicholas, Bishop of Bath, for England. When this nomination of the presidents came under the consideration of the council, the Patriarch of Antioch thought fit to object to the appointment of a president for England as the representative of a fifth nation, in the council.

Not opposing the arrangement as a temporary one, the president for Spain being absent, he gave it as his opinion that when a prelate from that country arrived, England must be regarded as represented by the president for Germany. The Bishop of Bath was highly offended at this indignity, but the patriarch, aware that any slight thrown on England would be most grateful to the king his master, serenely pursued his object, supporting himself on one of the decretals of Pope Benedict XII., which divided the papal dominion into four general parts. The first contained France, Navarre, Dauphiny, Burgundy, Savoy, and Provence; in the second were included Germany, England, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Scotland; the third comprehended the kingdoms of Castile, Leon, Arragon, and Portugal; and to the fourth were allotted Apulia, Calabria,

Terra di Lavoro, Tuscany, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Cyprus, and Sclavonia.

This, the Bishop of Bath contended, had little to do with the matter then under consideration. The design of Pope Benedict, in the decretal quoted, was not to divide Christendom into four great portions, but only to assign to his visitors the several countries in which they should make their visitation; and it was clear, that he never meant to reckon England as a part of Germany, since, in that very decretal, the Provinces of Canterbury and York, and of Armagh, Dublin, Cassels, and Tuam, in Ireland, and the Province of Scotland, were not placed among those of Germany. He added, it was not the way to ensure a happy termination of their councils to commence by creating discord, and by attempting to deprive England of her rank as a nation.

The French prelate replied: — “ I deny not that England is a nation and a

kingdom, but yet I cannot allow that it has a right to represent a fourth or a fifth part of Christendom, so that it shall be held equal in authority with Italy, Germany, Spain, or France. Know ye not that France containeth eleven sees of Archbishops, and a hundred and one cathedral churches? Much wrong, then, were done to so mighty a nation, were an island like England, treated as its equal in dignity, which surpasseth not in greatness, one of the provinces of France."

"I will concede before this high assembly," retorted the English Bishop, "that wrong were done, if England were treated as the equal of France, and it is only in the spirit of Christian humility, that I could consent to waive its superiority. Well is it known to all the world, that England had antiently, and hath now, under its dominion, many lands, each of which is not less considerable than France. Besides duke-

doms and islands, claims not the British crown eight kingdoms, three of which, England, Scotland, and Wales, form the island of Great Britain? To these, with others which I will not pause to mention, are to be added the potent isle and kingdom of Man, and the territory of John, Prince of the Orcades."

"It cannot be disputed," said the Frenchman, "that England is vastly above France in power and dominion, if we reckon as hers all the kingdoms which, like Scotland, have a monarch of their own, and who are commonly the potent enemies of the British king."

"And if all are to be subtracted who do not immediately acknowledge their king, from the greatness of their nation, then take you Province, Dauphiny, Savoy, Burgundy and Lorrain, from your France, as not being properly numbered among the French king's dominions. Comparisons are odious, but since the Patriarch of Antioch begins,

'tis fit that I do state that the antiquity of England, the majesty of its kings, the dignity of its clergy, and the riches of its people, give it superiority over France. France, if we speak in strictness, has but two episcopal sees, Rheims and Sens, and twenty dioceses, and but sixty are found in all the French dominions, while, in the kingdom of England alone, we find two large provinces, Canterbury and York, twenty-five dioceses, and in all our lands the mighty number of one hundred and ten. In the proper kingdom of France, there are but six thousand parishes; in England there exceedeth fifty-two thousand, the same being richly endowed, besides cathedral and collegiate churches, monasteries, and hospitals."

Though in modern times, English ambassadors may not have found the topics here urged very serviceable to their diplomacy, the mention of them by the Bishop of Bath, and especially his nam-

ing the mighty kingdom of the isle of Man; as being under the controul of England, impressed the council with a high sense of the dignity and importance of the king of that nation, and the patriarch found it necessary to make a new exertion, in order to establish the superior dignity of France.

“ I little thought,” he said, “ when we so lately were admonished to shun all idle words and vain disputes, that England would consume so much of your good time, by childish efforts to make herself seem like France important. The Bishop of Bath forgetteth when so he speaks, our vine-spread plains, our fruit-surmounted hills; he forgetteth how different these from aught that meets the sight on the bleak shore of England, (the which he must have read, for I know his learning great,) is proved by the form of its shore, now prominent, now indented, still answering to the opposite coast, was once a part of France,

but broken therefrom by kind Nature, who would not see so vast, so fair a picture as our land presents, marred by a little, vile and worthless blot, like Britain."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Bishop of Bath, with energy, "if that were true which is a foolish fable, it had been well for France, had that same blot been borne to some greater distance, or in the sea engulfed; for even where it is, we sometimes have beheld it mar the picture of which mention hath been made. It may be verity that England comprehendeth fewer acres than France, nor doth her soil produce redundancy of luxury. No mighty tracks of useless land she boasts, which claim defence, instead of yielding strength; but she is rich in all that freemen want, rich in her crops, her flocks, her mines, and men; and she sends forth, you have not now to learn, such swords and hearts, as France could never match."

“But both of which,” said the patriarch, “she well knows how to break.”

“The knowledge then is new to her,” returned the English prelate, “or with most exemplary charity she has forborne to use it. It served her little on Crescy’s plain, and Poictiers’s blood-stained field. Shall I remind my Lord of Antioch, how then your routed recreant cohorts fled, from numbers far inferior, even like sheep before the gallant mastiff, forsaking all that warriors should defend, their prostrate country and their captive king? Now speak again disparagingly of England, if you list, remembering, as you must, how great her power, how vast her influence; and, remembering too, how oft when France ventured to assail, her enmity hath been chastised, her pride shipwrecked on the Heaven-defended shores of England.”

“The Heaven-defended shores of England!” the patriarch exclaimed, contemptuously, repeating the words of his

antagonist. "'Tis true, that England has sometimes found opportunity to gratify her taste, for despoiling all that is fair and noble. A host of English gnats, have in times past, surprised the Gallic lion sleeping. Compassion forbids me to tell what has followed, But when your idle tongue dare talk about your Heaven-defended shores, I half suspect we speak of different places. Mean you that England which Rome conquered — that was the common fate of the world, but which the Romans abandoned, as too worthless to retain; that England, which then changing masters, was now enslaved by the Saxons, now tributary to the Dane, and which was next conquered by one dutchy of the realm of France; and conquered in such sort, that not an atom of your soil remained unsubdued; that even your language but half survived; and all that remained to the Heaven-defended shores of England, was their name, and that was spared, because the con-

queror, (being a man of small taste), chose to wear it."

"Right glad am I to see that it is needful to travel back so many ages, to find the time when England was vanquished."

"Methinks you need not marvel at that, seeing that your England was so steeped, so absorbed in conquest, that it has but newly obtained importance enough to make it an object worth re-conquering. The Norman progeny still wears its crown. The blood of France still governs you; at first but bastard blood, yet let me not be understood to say it was not good enough to govern Englishmen."

"And doubtless," said the Bishop of Bath, "of that blood France has such store, that she could people all the thrones of Europe with it, yet still retain sufficient for her own land, and have to spare. But if to come from Norman William's loins be deemed disgrace, go tell your master:

so, and flout *his* pedigree, for intermarriages have given his race as large a rule in France, as they possess in England. Then take your scoffings back again, which to this high assembly needs must prove, more than could words of mine, how irrational your arrogance, which in aught would extol France above England ; that England which Pope Innocent sighed to see ; which the holy monk Brithwald heard a voice, not human, proclaim to be God's own kingdom, and which renowned and famous isle, 'had the Omnipotent fashioned the world round like a ring to wear upon his finger, would have been the brightest gem in it.' ”

The other members of the Council now interfered. Petrus de Alliaco, Cardinal of the Camera, favoured the pretensions of the French Prelate, as did others of its members ; but, after some deliberation, it was decided that England should be recognised as a fifth nation ; and the Bishop of Bath, who knew the

sentiments of the king, his master, sat down exulting in the reflection, that a triumph over the French Prelate in that assembly, would be thought hardly less important than a victory in the field. He affected the most perfect composure, as if the result was but a matter of course; but sometimes his joyous glance would, in spite of himself, fall on his late opponent, and banquet on the gloomy chagrin which overspread the countenance of the patriarch of Antioch.

But if such discordant feelings, existed among the members of the Council on some points, there were others on which no difference could arise. Whatever distinction the pride of one might claim over another, all were fully resolved to pursue the heresies of Wickliffe; and, consequently, all were well disposed to unite for the purpose of accomplishing the destruction of John Huss.

CHAP. XVII.

“ O! give me patience to endure this scourge,
“ Thou that art fountain of that virtuous stream ;
“ And though contempt of witness, and reproach,
“ Hang on these iron gyves, to press my life
“ As low as earth, yet strengthen me with faith,
“ That I may mount in spirit above the clouds.”

History of Sir John Oldcastle.

Huss had expected that he should be brought to his trial immediately. But the question respecting the pretenders to the pontificate was first to be disposed of, and he learnt with regret that he must remain some months in Constance. To him it appeared sinful to suffer so much time to be consumed in indolence, and surrounded as he knew himself to be by spies, and persons whose sole business at Constance was to give evidence

against him, he had the courage to preach, and to labour as zealously in that cause to which he had devoted himself, as he had ever done elsewhere.

He soon received a message from the Pope, commanding him to desist. This he neglected to obey, and for that offence he was promptly deprived of his liberty. His friend, the Baron de Chlume, made a representation to the Pope, complaining of the severity with which he had been treated, but without producing any good effect. On the arrival of Huss, the same nobleman had waited on His Holiness (Balthasar Cosa, or John XXIII.) to obtain from him a confirmation of the safe conduct granted by the emperor; and, on that occasion, he gave the remarkable answer, that even though the Bohemian had killed his (Pope John's) own brother, he would suffer no injury to be done to him while he remained at Constance. The baron did not scruple to remind him of this, but, instead of

inducing him to mitigate the severity with which Huss had been treated, it only called forth expressions of displeasure, with an intimation that the safe conduct of the emperor, was not to be held of sufficient force to protect a heretic, when given without the privity and concurrence of the pontiff.

Huss now saw the gloom around him increase daily. Every circumstance that transpired brought conviction to his mind, that the object of those who had caused him to repair to Constance, was not enquiry but vengeance. Though he had contemplated death, as that which might by possibility be the punishment awarded against him, it had ever appeared extremely improbable, that the council would deal so severely with one whose popularity was known to be so great. Strong in his own integrity, because he knew that many of the charges preferred against him were false, he flat-

tered himself that he should be able to prove that they were so.

But he found that charges were to be brought against him, which he could only oppose with his simple denial. Michael de Causis and Stephen Palletz, two Bohemians, who had long been most hostile to him, were ready to prove him to have counselled those he taught, that after the manner of Moses, they must resist with the sword, all who should gainsay the doctrines they espoused. The vehement zeal, which he found raging against the name and memory of Wickliffe, satisfied him that it would be regarded as a most meritorious action; to shed the blood of a preacher who was considered to be the chief of his disciples.

The voice of popular applause, which had hitherto sustained him, and which had seemed to secure him from danger, was now heard no more, or heard but to be contemned and reprobated; yet calm

and unappalled, the reformer only regretted that the day was still remote, which would confront him with his enemies, and the lively assurance of happiness beyond the grave would have lifted him superior to all that malice could accomplish, but for one care that pressed heavy on his heart. He could not reflect with tranquillity on the very exposed situation in which Alice would be left, if his enemies succeeded in condemning him to the flames ; and this thought gave additional bitterness to the indignities now heaped upon him.

At first he was sent to the Chapter House of the great church, but after eight days confinement, he was removed to the abbey of the jacobines on the banks of the Rhine, and there confined in a damp and loathsome dungeon. Here several friars, coming to see him under charitable pretences, had the meanness and the cruelty, by affecting ignorance on certain disputed points, to endeavour

to entrap him into new offences against the church. This attempt was defeated by the penetration of the Bohemian, and he was relieved from the presence of intruders so unwelcome. De Marle and the Baron de Chlume, had visited him in his confinement, as often as they were permitted to do so. He acknowledged their kindness in following him to his dismal cell, with tears of unaffected gratitude. But he was somewhat disturbed by the eagerness with which De Marle always sought to change the conversation, that he might speak of Alice. To De Chlume he expressed his thoughts on this subject, when they were alone, and the baron, in compliance with his earnest representations, engaged to withdraw Alice from the widow under whose care she had till now remained, and place her in the house of an elderly female to whom he was related, who resided in the neighbourhood.

The miserable captivity to which Huss

was doomed, destroyed his health, and his life was considered to be in danger. In the opinion of some of the members of the Council, this circumstance made it necessary to expedite his process, lest he should die while yet his heresies were not sufficiently punished, and he was accordingly summoned before them. The messenger found Huss so ill, that he could with difficulty sit up in his bed. He told the person sent on this cruel errand that he was not in a state to defend himself, nevertheless he would make the attempt, if he might be allowed the assistance of an advocate. He was told that he claimed an indulgence which could not be conceded, as it was forbidden to advocates to plead for heretics. It was in vain he argued that not being convicted of any heresy, he came not as yet under that description. The answer he obtained came to this, that the order could not be recalled, and no advocate, seeing all were prohibited from defend-

ing heretics, could in any case interest himself for him.

But the very strong hold which the contentions of the rival popes, took on men's minds at this time, interposed that delay which the enemies of Huss were unwilling to accord; and their malice at length put on the garb of humanity, and sent a physician to his relief. The pretence, was, to save his life — the motive, to guard against the escape of a victim, from the terrible punishment reserved for offenders against the church.

The nobles of Bohemia, at the instance of the Baron de Chlume, addressed a memorial or petition to the Council, on the subject of the imprisonment of Huss, in which they complained of the little regard had for the safe-conduct granted by the emperor; and further showed that the heretics condemned at the council of Pisa, in 1410, were treated with less rigour, after condemnation, than he had experienced even before

being put on his defence. Their arguments were replied to by the Bishop of Luthonis, and this produced an answer from the nobles, which they followed up by a new supplication in behalf of Huss. These representations were but little attended to; but, after a time, the subject of them was led to hope that they operated in his favour, as it was announced to him that he was to be removed from the prison in which he had till now languished, to the castle of Gottlebien.

He deceived himself. It was night when he was removed, and the cell now destined for him was nothing better than that from which he had been taken. A groan, that seemed to be extorted by the most intolerable agony, burst on his ear as he passed the iron-door. Those who had conducted him thither, turned towards the wretch from whom it came, and, with an air of horrid mockery, exhorted him to proceed with his melody, and instruct the captive now introduced, how to bear

his share in the concert. Huss looked round, and as the lights borne by his unfeeling attendants, flashed on the enormous pillars, which sustained the fabric he saw, beneath a low Saxon arch, the figure of a man seated on the ground. The wretched being he looked upon, concealed his face with his hands, as if from long incarceration, his enfeebled organs of vision were incapable of sustaining the glare, which now illumined the dreary abyss. Huss was chained to the wall, and those who had brought him there retired.

Another groan resounded through the cell: Huss started with emotion, and would have hastened to his fellow-prisoner had not the chain restrained him. The effort to spring forward made a noise, which caught the ear of the other captive.

“Is any other unfortunate in this abode of sorrow?” he enquired, in a faint and faltering tone.

Huss replied, "Yea, my brother, you pine not alone."

"I am sad to hear it;" said the other. A sigh followed, and he was silent.

In the midst of his own sufferings, the Bohemian felt for those of his neighbour. He desired to know for what offence he had been confined; but first he enquired what torture he sustained, that had caused the appalling groans which he had heard.

"I am weak;" was the reply, "and fortitude, if not hope, is exhausted. I am chained by the leg, and the iron which grasps me is made purposely so tight, that it inflicts indescribable pain."

"And have you been long in this dungeon?"

"Nearly four months."

"And for what imputed offence?"

"For obeying the dictates of conscience — for believing the word of the Eternal, in opposition to the fantasies of men. I am accused of heresy."

“Who is your accuser?”

“I love not to name the man; for Christian charity fails me when I think of him; — I was placed here by Michael de Causis.”

“Truly,” exclaimed John Huss, “we are in all respects brothers in calamity; for he also is one of my accusers.”

“Indeed! — then possibly — but no, I cannot be so happy. — Yet if it were so, it would be but additional affliction; — you may possibly be that good man, John Huss.”

“Huss is my name.”

“And blessed be that name for ever,” the other responded with energy. “It was you who first opened my eyes, and what you have taught, has sustained my sinking soul, even in the gloom of this dungeon. To you do I owe all that I have known of comfort, through the long weeks and months that I have counted, in solitude and darkness.”

“I render thee immortal thanks, O

"Father of the universe!" cried Huss, with uplifted eyes, "for that even here, mine enemies are defeated; and for that this moment, which they designed to be one of aggravated bitterness, is made one of purest joy."

"You taught me the value," said the other inmate of the dungeon, "of those truths which are called Wickliffe's heresies. He was truly a saint — his opinions will stand the test of time."

"I never did embrace the whole of them, but many I think are good; however that idol, *the God of the earth*, as he would be considered —

"You mean the Pope."

"Yea, however he may regard them, I deem them good, and believe them to be opposed but by those whose rapacity, pride, indolence, and impiety, throw scandal on the church."

"And for Wickliffe himself, whom dead, they now seek to punish, he was a pious man."

“He was such as the world has seldom seen; and earnestly I hope my soul may pass to that place where his reposes.”

“We are happily of accord,” Huss was answered by his companion; “and though I am sad that you are a captive like me, yet do I exult that you have been brought hither at this time. I have for months past meditated escape. I am provided with tools to extricate myself from my bonds, and thou shalt be companion of my flight.”

“Not so,” replied Huss. “I must face mine enemies, however great their numbers and their power; or I shall seem to abandon that which is vastly more important than my life.”

“But remaining here, you must be sacrificed to the rage of your foes.”

“I do believe it. This I do think hath been revealed to me, but it hath also been unfolded, that my death shall not be that of the cause in which I am engaged; for I remember I dreamed in

Prague, that I was painting images of God, when, lo! the pope and his cardinals did come and blot them out, and put me down. But other painters thereupon arose, and made such innumerable goodly pictures, that the utmost efforts the pope could make, with all his crew, to blot them out, were useless. I deem this to denote that my poor labours soon shall terminate, but that other abler labourers will arise to forward the good work, who shall triumph over all opposition."

"But will they not triumph all the sooner, if you remain to aid them for a longer period?"

"I know not that. It may be that my death will serve the cause more than my life. Can you forget that flight will seem to indicate that in my judgment those principles which I came to uphold and vindicate, are not to be defended."

"Not so; but it will appear that not being left at liberty to prepare for your

defence, your safe-conduct being violated, and your life in danger, you exercised the right which belongs to all created beings, that of providing for your own safety."

There is in human nature a lingering love of existence, that ensures, in almost every case, a favourable hearing for arguments in favour of preserving life. John Huss experienced this, while listening to his fellow captive. He could fairly plead that it was not a selfish feeling that inclined him to prolong his days, but anxious care for another who would be left a destitute stranger when he was no more; yet it may be doubted whether in the absence of such a plea, he would not have listened to reasons so cogent as those which had been pressed on his attention. He replied, —

“That which thou hast said is not unworthy of consideration. I expected to be placed in a situation widely differing from that in which I now find myself,

and did I not fear my motives will be thought other than they are —”

“Can you not explain them to the world?” was the instant reply; “and will not what you report meet with as much credit as aught that may be said by others, seeing it is notorious to all that you have been imprisoned before condemnation?”

“Questionless that is a truth, and I do not think it will be unlawful for me to pass away under such circumstances, notwithstanding *Paul* and *Silas* would not quit their prison, when its walls could no longer restrain them.”

“You consent then to fly with me.”

“I do, — but where are the means?”

“Listen to me. The instrument which I now apply to the fetter which has so sorely tried my weakness, will soon relieve me from its thralldom.”

“How shall we then burst these walls?”

“ You shall hear. Above your head there was a small hole in the wall, through which I used to see the torches gleam. Its use I suspect was formerly to convey to listening spies the conversations of those who might be immured here. Before my fetter was prepared, I enlarged the hole, by removing a stone of such a size that a man not being too large might pass by the space which it occupied. The stone I made my seat, and it hath not been observed, and for the hole, bread spared from my scant allowance thrust therein, and a cement which I made of the dry mortar that strewed my cell, hath concealed the breach, which however can be re-opened presently. Once out of this dungeon, I shall pass with ease to an unguarded postern. A cart laden with straw has waited for me many nights; I doubt not it is there now. In this we can both pass off without being seen.”

Huss attempted to start objections to this plan, but his more sanguine companion made light of every difficulty which he suggested, speedily relieved himself from his fetter, and clasped the Bohemian in his embrace, who with equal satisfaction and astonishment felt his own chain fall off in the next moment.

“What now,” exclaimed his active companion, “shall Michael De Causis say, when he finds we are no longer prisoners?”

“Truly I fear,” Huss replied, — “I speak it not from hatred, — that it will be a sore disappointment if we get free, both to him and his fellow-labourer in evil, Stephen Palletz.”

It was now suggested that it would be imprudent to make the attempt before midnight. Engaged in conversation, time passed rapidly, and the hour of twelve having arrived, further delay was deemed unnecessary.

“ Now then,” said the planner of the escape, “ all is ready. Mount by my shoulders. You will feel the place with your hands, — push out the bread and mortar which I mentioned, and force your way through.”

“ Nay,” replied the Bohemian, “ that must not be. Peradventure you will be unable to follow, seeing no one will remain to assist you in like manner. Go you first. If one must remain behind, it surely shall be me, whose cunning sufficed not to project this enterprise.”

“ Fear not,” the other returned. “ I am more accustomed to climb than you, and the means by which I mounted to remove the stone will enable me to follow. Never pause, I pray you, but ascend.”

While he spoke, he almost compelled Huss to do as he had directed. Mounted on his shoulders, the Bohemian found no difficulty in making his way. He was

in the act of passing through the breach, when his companion enquired, —

“ Shall I lift you further ? ”

“ No, I thank thee. The aid thou hast given is enough.”

“ It is enough ; ” was repeated in a voice differing from that of the person with whom he had previously spoken.

“ Didst thou speak ? ” asked Huss.

“ No.”

“ Yet methought I heard some one repeat close to me, ‘ It is enough.’ ”

“ Indeed ! ” was the exclamation of his companion.

“ Mine ears must have deceived me ; ” Huss remarked.

“ Your ears deceived you not,” rejoined the voice he had previously heard ; — “ It is enough.”

Lights approached, and Huss now perceived that Stephen Palletz awaited his approach, attended by several soldiers, who, with himself, had been listening to

the conversation which passed in the dungeon.

“ We are lost ! — God’s will be done ! ” he exclaimed as he sunk back into the cell.

The door opened, and those he had seen without entered. However deplorable his own situation, he did not forget his companion in woe. He turned to him in speechless sorrow, but with a look of sincere commiseration for the cruel disappointment he believed him to have sustained, when with astonishment and horror, which no language can depict, his eyes fell on the well-known countenance of Michael De Causis.

“ By the help of the Almighty,” cried the indurated wretch, affecting piety, while he gazed with savage exultation on his guiltless victim, “ we shall soon burn this pestilent heretic. ‘ It is indeed enough.’ He has said and done sufficient.”

A laugh burst from the surrounding fiends while he spoke, and the mournful truth flashed on Huss that it was his bitter foe, De Causis, who had claimed his pity, and pretending to be himself an object of persecution, had led him to speak in the hearing of witnesses stationed to catch aught that might make against him; and to misrepresent what might be harmless. The ready prepared fetters with which they proceeded to load his emaciated frame, announced that the proposal to escape was but a base artifice to discredit him, and to furnish a pretext for subjecting him to additional rigour.

“O traitor! traitor!” sighed the betrayed pastor, “I will not reproach thee. I leave thee to Him whom thou canst not escape; but whose mercy, seeing that it is boundless and inexhaustible, may extend even to wretches like thee.”

“We have now ample proof of all that we would establish,” vociferated Palletz.

“ This pious stratagem will relieve the church from its most deadly foe.”

“ Yes, accursed heretic,” added De Causis, “ no cloke can longer hide thy depravity ; — thou hast only to think of preparing for the stake.”

Huss was chained by the leg to the wall, and by a ring passed round his waist to the earth. But he had had time to collect his thoughts, and standing erect among his persecutors, he surveyed them with an air of calm disdain, that made them shrink, abashed at their own littleness ; and to the last brutal taunt of the perfidious Michael, and the revilings of his associates, he serenely replied, —

“ I deign not to expostulate with beings that disgrace God’s creation as ye do. May ye repent before it be too late ! For myself I ask no favour, and expect no mercy. Pay this Judas the price of my blood, and as I fear, of his salvation. Thanks be to Him who strengthens those

who fear Him, I am nothing dismayed,
and am even prepared, joyfully to hail
the hour when your unhallowed rage
shall light the fire, and lead me to my
doom."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

Digitized by Google

DO NOT CIRCULATE