

THE  
LIFE AND ADVENTURES  
OF  
JACK OF THE MILL:

COMMONLY CALLED LORD OTHMILL;

CREATED, FOR HIS EMINENT SERVICES, BARON WALDECK, AND KNIGHT OF KITCOTTIE.

*A Fireside Story.*

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

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# THE ORIGIN.

THE family was assembled in the drawing-room in the evening. The shutters were closed, the curtains drawn. All the elements of English comfort were brought together; a bright fire and lights within, a dark night and wild winds without. The father was conning the last page of his newspaper; the mother was sewing at her little table on the opposite side of the hearth. A boy and girl were in one place, deep immersed in a game of chess; and not far from the father sat a young boy on a sofa, with his legs drawn up under him, and his eyes fixed on the father, as if watching for something.

The father laid down his newspaper with a sigh.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asked the mother.

"Disturbances again in those wretched manufacturing districts. The iron-works in Warwickshire and Wales blowing out their furnaces; the wages of the agricultural labourers dropped to nine shillings a week, little work, and bread raised a penny the quarter loaf. There'll be a pretty winter."

The mother sighed, "Poor people! what can be done?"

"I know not," said the father; "but now let us read something. There are many good hearts in the country. We must help what we can; but to-night we can do nothing but drive away sad thoughts."

"Oh then, Papa," exclaimed the watching boy on the sofa, suddenly putting down his legs, and his eyes kindling into an eager brightness, "tell us one of your stories; such as you used to tell at school, which you called 'hatch-ups.' I do like them so. Nothing drives away sad thoughts like one of them."

"And what do you know of sad thoughts, Claude? But, indeed, I used to be very fond of those 'hatch-ups' myself. Wiffen, the translator of Tasso—so soon cut off, poor fellow! he and I used to sleep in a large chamber, with sixty other boys; and as we went to bed at eight o'clock, we used to entertain the lads with relating such stories as came into our heads without any forethought or preparation. Night after night it continued, and became as exciting and absorbing as one of the tales of the Arabs round their evening fires in the Desert. Every night, so soon as all were

in bed, there was an eager cry of 'Well, now then, go on with the hatch-up!'"

And by-the-bye, what an age this has been for hatch-ups! The whole reading public, like that bedroom full of school-boys, has hung from month to month, and year to year, on the splendid hatch-ups of such a set of story-tellers as the world scarcely ever before possessed. For what are the grand romances of Scott and others, but glorious hatch-ups? Lives, histories, characters, and wonders, created out of nothing—the visions of fertile brains, in which all the sunshine of all their past summers was hoarded, to come forth in this shape, for the delight of all generations. Scott, Bulwer, Boz, Cooper, Irving, Godwin, James, Hook, Galt, etc. etc.; and the ladies too, how delightfully have they hatched-up stories of deathless interest for us all. Austen, Edgeworth, Ferrier, Gore, Sedgwick, Bremer, Martineau, and a long and luminous list. It is all hatch-up, but it is none the worse for that. In the great stream of invention, what a mighty mass of truths and experiences floats along for our delight, between banks of poetic beauty, and overhung with the lamps of wit and knowledge. And to look back to Shakspeare, what hatch-ups are there! To Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Bunyan, Cervantes, Boccaccio, and most of the great poets, like Ariosto, Tasso, Byron; to the romances of all lands—'t is all hatch-up! But what then? what in life is half so real, and half so enchanting?

But leaving this great tribe to the full mirth or intensity of *their* elaborate hatch-ups, let us endeavour to catch as much as possible the form and spirit of one of our own, in the young days we are talking of. This then shall be "The Hatch-up of Jack-of-the-Mill."

The father commenced his story. The little boy on the sofa from time to time rubbed his hands and chuckled to himself. The elder boy and girl went on, deep and silent, with their game of chess; the mother with her sewing, her thoughts evidently engaged on some matter of her own. Anon, however, the laughter of the little boy on the sofa, who had again drawn up his legs under him, and was occasionally hammering with his right hand on the head of the sofa, saying, "That is good! that pleases me!" drew the attention of the mother; she smiled and lis-

tened too. The elder boy and girl, stopped at a new fit of laughter, seemed half inclined to be angry at the interruption of their game; but listened an instant and then laughed too. They left their chess-board standing, and drew into the fireside circle. In a while, father, mother, children—all, seemed equally interested in the adventures of "Jack of the Mill." Evening after evening it was called for, and continued till finished.

The next cry was, "Tell it again, papa—tell it again!"

But the father's answer was, "What so tedious as a twice-told tale?"

"Then write it down for us, do write it down!"

This demand was often repeated; and after many weeks, as eagerly as ever; the father's answer was only a shake of the head.

On the next Christmas-eve there was, something after the fashion of Germany, a Christmas-tree set up in the drawing-room, and amongst the presents of the children, which lay on the table under it, was a neatly bound book, which, on being opened, was saluted by a universal exclamation—"Ah! the famous Hatch-up of Jack-of-the-Mill!"

It was there in manuscript; and, as the consequence of the next request, it is here in print.

THE  
LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF  
JACK OF THE MILL.

CHAPTER I.

WHERE JACK SPRUNG FROM, AND WHAT HE WAS.

AGRS ago, when England and all the world were very old-fashioned, one fine summer evening might be seen on the edge of a long common, one of those snug cottages, half timber half brick-work, which yet may be found in many a nook of our happy island, and that are at once so rustic and so attractive. It stood in its old enclosure, a mixture of garden and orchard, as it had already stood for scores of years. Old fruit-trees thickly covered the greater part of it; some of them leaning one way, and some of them another,—like a parcel of old fellows that had led a jolly life together, and now having met, perhaps for the last time, at the village wake, had made so free with their morning cup, that not one of them could stand upright. One seemed to say to his neighbour, "Help me, John, or I shall be down on my nose;" and the other to answer, "Lack-a-day, Thomas, I can't keep on my legs myself;" and so one went down on his knees, and another slipped down on his side, and a third had clutched hold of his tottering neighbour, and there they stood, and laughed together till they both rolled down the hill, and all the rest laughed at them till they fell too, or were obliged to prop themselves against anything they came near. Just so were the old orchard trees. They all looked more than half worn out with age, and yet all hardy and tough, and setting time and infirmities at defiance. They were bent and tumbled about, nay, in more than one place tumbled over each other, till you might almost fancy you heard them cry out—"Heavens! what a weight! Off, off, old boy there, or I shall be squeezed into the ground like a nettle-stalk that a cart-wheel has gone over!" Yet they all turned up their old heads, and laughed in the sunshine. They were of kinds that few people now know. Nobody could tell when they were planted, and they seemed determined to live on forever. Some were quite hollow, and the tomtit and the pea-bird had built their nests in their innermost boles for generations; and some, where they formerly had a great bough, had now a great hole in their shoulders filled with black mould, out of which sprouted a wild gooseberry-bush, or from which a bramble hung down; yet, spite of all this, they had twisted up their sturdy trunks again so resolutely, that they had fairly bent them into an elbow; and though some of them had been knocked so completely on their knees by a desperate blow of a thunder-bolt, or whiak-

ed over by a giant of a storm-wind, that brushed past as suddenly and as rudely as if he had been stung by a hornet,—yet, I say, there were their old heads all turned up to the sunshine with an air that seemed to say, "Here we are, after all, as stout and clever as ever!"

And really it was astonishing what quantities of fruit those old heads were covered with, which, as the sun was now verging towards autumn, began to show themselves in their various and peculiar characters and colours. There were top-apples and John-apples, leather-coats and golden-pippins, ladies'-fingers and Whiking-pippins, seek-no-further and crab-minchings; there were Eve-apples and penny-loaf-apples, apples with red cheeks, and apples as green as spring-grass; apples all striped with bright red stripes, and crab-apples for making verjuice, which looked as gay and gallant as any of them, yet were in reality so sour, that if you bit one it would twist up your face just as a washerwoman twists up a piece of linen that she is wringing out.

There were pears almost as various. Swans'-eggs and honey-pears; the latter, little sweet yellow and rosy things, already ripe, and shewing, by sticks and stones, and broken pieces of branches, and quantities of green leaves lying under these trees, that somebody knew of them. There were very tall trees hung with pears called bell-pears; and on these bells I know somebody who has rung many a peal. There were other large pears called Warden, which might almost as correctly have been called wooden-pears; for till they were baked they were as hard as knobs of wood: but then, as the old woman of the cottage used to produce them in her great brown steen-pot from the oven, so red, so juicy, and so sweet, that they needed a warden to prevent them being all eaten up; and perhaps it was from this that they had their name. Besides these there were various others, none of which we need here particularize, except that delightful old pear, covered with little round white spots, called a choke-pear; because, though very juicy, its juice had the odd property of choking you. Amongst its plums, too, stood conspicuous that yellowish reddish plum, about as big as a marble, called the old English bullace, said to have been formerly a wild plum native to the country, and yet to be seen in old-fashioned orchards and garden hedges that have stood perhaps for centuries.

Besides these stood here and there a quince, with its yellow-green fruit, a medlar, and a mulberry; and under one of the largest apple-trees,

the stout old press for the verjuice. Underneath the trees, here and there also, and in the open space that might be more properly called the garden, grew cabbages and turnips and other garden stuff, and bushes of overgrown ribwort-nuts and barberry. At one end of the house grew a great yew-tree, and all about the other a wilderness of ancient and wrinkled elder-trees, in which the hens roosted. There was a turf-bank by the cottage door, on which grew camomile; and about the windows and under them, all those old English plants, rue and rosemary, hawthorn and box, marigolds and polyanthes, that no old cottage garden could be without. Of course there was a stand of bees, and at this very time these bees were making a most summer-like hum, not only in the honeysuckle which hung over the door, but just as merrily in the poisonous sewers of the blue meadow and spurge, and in the very weeds which ramped in that not very well weeded garden.

This little peasant's nest, with its old orchard and garden, was fenced in by an old fence, partly of rotting pales green with age, and partly by a hedge that had grown as wild as the ass and cattle on the common would let it. From their depredations it was luckily, in a great measure, protected by a great, wide, deep, straggling ditch, on the banks of which, dry with the long draught of a warm summer, and under the canopy of overhanging bushes of bramble and sloe, were scuffling and rolling in the dust a considerable flock of fowls. Just below, in a pool, swam as large a company of ducks and geese, while the old man of the cottage looked over his little garden-gate at them with evident satisfaction, and then went to see how the bed of onions flourished that were to stuff them on their roasting day, and to gather peas to carry to town with three couple of the ducks on the morrow.

Far and wide around stretched the common, scattered with bushes of broom and gorse, with sheep and pigs, cattle and shaggy ponies; and in a hollow not far off, lay on his back, kicking up his heels in the sunshine, and singing as loud as he could, a queer kind of an urebin, that might be fourteen, or that might be twenty, for aught that the cleverest judge of age could tell. If you looked at his size at a distance, you would say that he was about twelve or so; but if you came to look near at him, you found him such a queer, old-fashioned sort of a cub, that you did not know what to make of him. He was as nimble and agile as a monkey. He could twist his limbs into every sort of shape that he pleased; run up a tree, like a cat; scour along the ground on all fours, like a dog; creak up his heels suddenly in the air, and walk along on his hands just as well as on his feet; while, with his body bent back into a perfect ring, he went along knocking the back of his head with his heels. Throwing himself as suddenly out of this form, he would spin along the greensward like a wheel—now his heels in the air, now his hands—yet so rapidly that his flying limbs resembled the spokes of the wheel of which his odd little body was the nave. There was no place where he was not seen exercising his exploits. At one moment he was climbing up the loose precipice of a stone quarry, in pursuit

of a sand-marten's or a wagtail's nest; and more than once had whole loads of slightly-suspended stones given way with him, and come thundering down with him to the bottom, half-burying him alive, and bruising him black and blue; yet he had crept out like a crushed rat out of the ruins of a fallen house, shaken himself, and gone off as if nothing was amiss. At another time he would be seen hanging by a single branch over a deep river, stretching with all his might after some floating trifle or other; the branch has given way, he has plunged headlong in, where it was deep enough to take a tolerable church-steeple over head, and the country fellows who saw him have said, "There Jack is gone from home safe enough; he can't swim, and that hole is deep enough to drown Gog and Magog." But Jack has come up, given a snort like a rhinoceros, and though he never swam an inch before in his life, has floated and struggled on, with a motion something between that of a toad and a blind kitten, come to the bank, crept up it like a great lizard, shook himself, blown his nose, taken off his great shoes, and spouted the water out of them, and trotted off home to dry himself. Another time he would be seen on the top of an old man's cottage, peeping down the chimney, and amusing himself with dropping a piece of mortar or brick that he has picked from the wall into the porridge-pot, to the wonderful consternation of the good folks below; or he would be discovered climbing up the spouts and quoins-stones of the church tower, and creeping in at the belfry window in quest of pigeon nests. There was no mischief and no dangerous place that the young monkey was not getting into; and the whole neighbourhood settled it, without a dissenting voice, that he would be good for nothing while he lived, and must come to some uncommon end. "I shall not live to see it, may be," said old men, and old women too; "but those that do live to see it, will see something unaccountably strange in that young fellow's finishing off. He's just the gracelesslest scapegrace that ever winked in God's daylight!"

If you took a near view of the restless subject of these comfortable prophecies, you seemed at last to have found a complete falsification of the adage, that you can't set an old head on young shoulders, for here it was. Upon that lanky little body, which seemed as if it was made out of a snake, with its tail split in two for a pair of queer legs, and which was bending about in all sorts of uneasy ways in the most easy manner possible while you looked at it, stood a big-gish rough head, with rough, brown, sunburnt hair, that seemed never to have had such a thing as a comb in it since it grew, and a broadish, longish face, with a very healthy, but very odd look. Under a broad sun-freckled forehead, and a pair of shaggy eyebrows, twinkled also a pair of the most sly, and at the same time quietly-laughing, mischievous, and yet good-natured eyes you ever saw. You could not help taking a great fancy to the strange animal, and yet having a feeling that there was something impish and over-knowing about him.

Whatever was astir in the parish, Jack was always on the spot. He was one of those idly-active creatures that contrive to be in at all accidents, to see all strange sights, to hear the

first news. If a barn was on fire, a horse had staked itself by leaping a fence, a cow had fallen dead, or somebody's sheep had been worried by a strange dog, Jack was always to be seen thrusting in his shaggy head between the legs of the first group of eager-spectators, and was the first to run off as a messenger for help. To tell the truth, he would soon raise the whole neighbourhood. Over hedge and ditch he went; his rough locks flapping, his old brown coat flying behind, his odd legs spinning away in the most marvellous manner. He ducked and threaded the copse-wood like a hair, tripped over the stepping-stones of the brook like a cat, swung himself over a five-barred gate like a merry-andrew, and came suddenly round the corner of a wood on labourers in the fields, or springing into a farm-yard or a cottage garden, with his whole body on fire with eagerness, his eyes so full of wonder, and dealt out with such sharp and hungry words his news, that all heads were speedily popped out of their doors, and the entire lordship was in a fever of inquiry.

If strangers appeared in the place, Jack was sure to creep to their sides, listen if they wanted to find out anybody or to see anything, and then proffered to show them the way to their object. The lad had a cocket way with him that infinitely amused many strangers. There was nothing that they could say to him that he did not give a smart reply to. By attaching himself to wandering traders, and old soldiers, that had come there at different times, he had, as if by instinct, rather than by any common means, picked up the common conversational knowledge of various languages; and when foreigners that have halted at the village inn, struck with the uncommon quickness and grotesque character of the lad, have made remarks to one another in their own language, that he might not understand them, they have been astonished to hear him break out upon them in the same with a merry jeering, "O, O! good master, so you thought you had me there, eh?"

On such occasions Jack was often of great use to foreigners, who did not well know his language. He ran for conveyances for them, trudged on as guide through the neighbouring woods, where the roads were both difficult to find, and difficult to travel when they were found. For in those days they were often much worse than God and nature made them, sometimes being so deep in mud that the wheels sunk in the ruts deep as the axles, and on each side stood up walls of mud as high as the wheels themselves. They passed through wild, stony streams where, if a man did not know the track well, he would very soon smash his travelling wagon, and sink both himself and his wares in the flood. Sometimes they passed over the roughest ground scattered with huge blocks of stone, or down such steepes in the woodlands, that were enough to terrify the stoutest traveller. But in all such extremities, Jack's spirits and ingenuity were unailing. He would mount the horses' backs, and shout and whip, and inspire them, or guide them with the steady hand of an old man, that made the travellers think him worth any money; and more than once they have made him great offers to go with them. But Jack, though restless at home, never seemed to make up his mind to

leave it. He would only shake his head, and say, "Nay, nay, what is so heroic of the old folks, when I'm gone?" as if he did ever so much towards their support!

On these trips, however, Jack sometimes disappeared for days and even weeks; and his parents gave themselves no trouble about him, for they said, "Ay, Jack'll take care of himself;" and in truth he often came back with so much money in his pocket as quite astonished the old people.

The roads in these days were no safer than they were good; and Jack, who seemed to have patrolled the whole neighbourhood, had several times warned travellers when they came to dangerous places, and had enabled them to escape or prevent robbery, for which he always got well rewarded. When the travellers too, who sometimes amounted to a little troop, with their pack-horses and servants, stopped in the wood at noon to eat their dinners, Jack would point out a pleasant spot on the slope of some open glade, where they could seat themselves under the arceut if it was hot, or screen themselves from the wind when it was cold. At such times he was always infinitely amusing by his tricks, as well as useful by his offices.

With a kind of grey, lanky, rough dog, with one lame fore leg, that he called Timothy, he would watch the horses while they grazed, released from their loads: and the travellers would sit and snark his antics and his schemes with vast merriment. Fixing himself on a knoll, he would put Timothy to school, and make him go through a variety of lessons and manoeuvres, which he performed with a most laughable gravity. If the horses in the mean time offered to take advantage of this, and blyly wander wide, Jack's eye was on them. Timothy's exercises,—in which he acted a soldier, holding a stick for a spear, a baggar hopping on a crutch, or a parson preaching, being reared up by the boll of a tree for the purpose,—were suddenly broken off, and scampering round the troop with a wonderful agility, considering his lameness, he soon had them again within due limits. At other times, Jack caught hold of the down-hanging branches of a large tree, and swinging himself up into it, would sit and rock, and sing for an hour together; while Timothy would sit below, looking up at him, and whining and barking in chorus; but at a word of Jack, "up 'Tim!" would dart off, and bring back some straggling delinquent. When his charge appeared particularly restless, Jack would leap from tree to tree sometimes, more like a monkey or a squirrel than a human creature, and suddenly dropping to the ground before the face of the unruly beast, would startle him back in a hurry, or would dart through the thicket, and leap out before the culprit with a shout that made him wheel round as if shot.

At other times, when these services were not needed, he would sit on the ground by the strangers, and while he ate the dinner they gave him, equally amuse them by his conversation. He told them stories of his village life, his neighbours, his father's case which he called Ben, of the old fat Miller, and other things, which, though they had little in them, were comical from the odd countenance and grotesque

gravity with which they were related. One traveller asked him what was his name besides Jack. "I know not," said he, "Jack is enough, is it not, if I come when I'm called!"

"But you have another name, I suppose."

"I reckon so," said Jack.

"And what is it?"

"O! what you please; Bartholomew, or anything."

"Bartholomew!"

"Yes, you may call me Bartholomew in a morning before breakfast. Give me my breakfast, and then you may call me Tholomew. Give me my dinner, Old Thol, if you like; and if you give me my supper, why then—Spade, or anything."

## CHAPTER II.

### OLD BOWES THE MILLER, AND HOW HE WON A RACE.

THE old Miller seemed to have taken the greatest hold on Jack's affections. He lived down in a deep valley in the woods, where, as Jack described it, there were such beautiful streams, and such nice green alders hanging over them, and such quantities of nice fish; and the Miller was such a nice fat man, with such a deal of good-nature. "O! he was such a good 'un," said Jack. "He had legs like an elephant, and a face like the rising sun, and such a great fat body! and when he stood with one hand in his great waistcoat pocket, and the other leaning on his stout stick, and asked me about my old mother, and whether a bit of beef wouldn't do her good for her birth-day dinner—didn't he look a hearty old soul! and could anybody wonder that he had got so fat!"

"Good old Bowes—that was his name—he seldom went far from home; and what need had he, when he'd such a good home, with plenty o' every thing that a man can want! And especially when he was so corpulent. But once he was obliged to go to the county town to attend the assizes, and there he had to stay several days. The people in the town, where it is so smoky, and where they haven't such nice mills, and nice flour, and such nice meadows with green alders, but have to walk about on hard stones and against hot walls, and arn't so good-humoured, and consequently don't grow so fat, were quite astonished to see such a noble size of a man. They came round him just like bees about the beehive; and some looked at him before, and some at him behind; and one man—he was a cloth-dealer—said what a famous customer he'd be for cloth; and another, how he should like to make him a pair of boots, because he would go down into them like going into a well, and finish them off so nicely in the inside. Then a tailor clapped his measure across his back, and stood fairly speechless in amazement! One asked him if he had come there on horseback, or on foot, or in a wagon; and then another replied, if he came on horseback, he was sure the horse's back was broken; and if he came on foot, they might soon know where he came from, for he must have made a dint in the ground at every step; and if he came in a wagon or a cart, they need look nowhere for it but

at the wheelwright's, for it must be fairly broken down. Then came up a brisk fellow, and offered to run him a race, and give him a hundred yards for a start. The good-humoured Miller said, 'Ay, ay, my running days are over, lad; thou mayst safely give me five hundred while thou art doing.' But I gave him a wink," said Jack; "for he had taken me with him, and said, 'Take him, Mester; take him, for a race to the next church; take him, you'll beat him.' The good Miller thought I had some rare joke in my head, and so he said, 'Well, I'll run thee! Done, my man! and at twelve to-morrow be it, from here to the next church.'

"His offer was closed in with hearty laughter by all the folks; and Bowes slowly walked off to his arm-chair, and calling for a tankard of ale, asked, as soon as we were alone, what I meant by advising him to accept the bet? I told him that the greater part of the way to the next church was through a very narrow passage, and that if he managed to get into that passage before his antagonist, he would fill it quite up, and then he could go on as slowly as he pleased. The church, when he issued from this passage, was only across the street, and if he put out his strength then for a single minute, the day was his own. As I told him this, I saw the worthy Miller's face grow crimson with an inward chuckle. 'Thou art right, lad; thou art right,' said he. 'I'll beat the coxcomb; I'll beat him, and shew these puny pavement-treaders that the old Miller has some kernel in him yet.' He quaffed off a good draught of his ale, pushed the tankard to me, gave me a hearty slap on the back, and marched off to his bed, which was made in the next parlour, because he was too heavy to walk up stairs.

"At twelve the next day nearly all the town was collected about the inn door to see this curious race; and when Bowes appeared, they gave a tremendous shout. The worthy old fellow did not appear a whit daunted. He came coolly out, and looking round with his great rosy countenance, and a pleasant smile on it, on the crowd, said to those nearest—'Yo've but little to do in yo're town I think, while so many on you are got together to see a little whipper-snapper jack-a-dandy run a race with a fat old fool of a miller. But stand aside now, and clear the causeway there, for I want a pretty good share of elbow room, and I shall not stir a step till I see the coast clear.'

"The way was opened; the people were all very merry; and Bowes turning round, and looking down as if he were seeking for a little dog, or something of the sort, said, 'Where is this little chap, then? O! there you are, my lad o' wax. Stand you by the inn-door post. My strides are yards. When I've counted a hundred on 'em, I shall turn round and lift up my stick; and then, my boy, go your hardest.'

"Good! good!" said the man who had challenged. There was another shout and clapping of hands. The brave old Miller, first looking round with a grave and consequential air, planted his stick on the ground, put forward his buge right leg, and commenced a slow and stately march, which was followed by the whole street with peals of laughter. The Miller, seeming not to pay the slightest attention to it, marched slowly and still more slowly on his way, till as



he approached the hundredth step he scarcely moved at all. Then setting down his foot with a sort of a stamp, and turning round and lifting up his stick, he cried, 'Now for it!'

"The man walked briskly on from the inn-door; the crowd streamed after, closing in like a swarm of bees, crying and jeering, 'Now for it! run for it Goliath, or you'll lose!' which was followed by a fresh roar of laughter. Mean time the Miller was advancing on his way with gigantic strides. He did not pretend to run; for had he done so, he would probably have shaken himself to pieces, and dashed his enormous bulk on the pavement, like the huge carcass of a stranded whale on the shore. But he put out that stupendous strength for which he had in his day been famous beyond that of any man of his time. Swinging his stick wide to keep the crowd clear of him, he moved on with the unwieldy movement but the speed of an elephant. Those vast legs stumped on the causeway like the rammers of a pavior. His arms swung to and fro like huge beams. His whole body was strained with gigantic exertion, and perspiration dropped, as he went, from his face, which was red as a fire. The people, who were amazed at his strength and speed, now cried, 'Well done, Miller! well done, good Miller!' and the antagonist, and the crowd at his heels, who had been in no haste, now came on, more in curiosity to see the ponderous and desperate exertions of Bowes than in any anxiety for the fate of the day. In short, much as the multitude were surprised and interested by the unexpected display of vigour on the Miller's part, there did not seem the slightest chance for him in the race. The church, their goal, was still far off; the antagonist in a few minutes was at Bowes's side, and greeting him with a short nod and smile, said, 'Well, my friend, so now we'll walk on together.' And in truth, without shewing any anxiety at present to pass him, he walked on coolly at his side; said it was a fine day, hoped he would not take a cold, or a fever, and so on. The crowd, amused at this wit on the part of their townsmen, again shewed much merriment; and Bowes, as if himself giving up the contest, paused, pulled out his pocket handkerchief, wiped his brow, and swelling up his cheeks, blew out a puff of breath, hot enough to have singed a fowl, and which seemed to signify that he deemed it a desperate case. Suddenly, however, wheeling aside, he darted into a narrow passage, turned round with a very significant face to his opponent, nodded to him over his immense shoulder, and said, 'A fine day, my friend! I hope you'll not take any cold or fever from your exertions; and lest you should, I think we'll now go a little more leisurely.'

"The man, who had never for an instant dreamed of going out of the main street, but now suddenly recollected that this indeed was the most direct way, stood for a moment with a face of blank amazement; and the people, who now saw the whole of the joke, burst out with deafening cries of—'Bravo, Miller! bravo! bravo, old boy, bravo!'

"The little man, now recovering from his surprise, gave way to as great a rage. One moment he exclaimed against the Miller's right to go this way, the next he attempted to push

past him. His exclamations and his attempts were equally vain. The people cried out, 'All fair! all fair! right, right!' and the Miller's mighty bulk filled up the passage beyond the slightest possibility of pushing by him.

"Coolly and soberly he now stalked on his way, alternately wiping his reeking brows with his handkerchief, breathing out large puffs of hot breath, and then looking over his shoulder at his fuming foe, continued to address him: 'So, my friend, so. Don't hurry, don't fret. We shall both be there in time, and to hurry ourselves would cut short the amusement of all these good people, who have so kindly given us their company.'

"So they went on; the throng pressing with loud laughter at their heels, and the little townsmen ready to knock his head against the wall from ridicule and vexation. But as they drew near the end of this narrow passage, the church came directly before them in sight. This object instantly produced the most opposite effects on the two opponents. The little man behind, like a rat in a box-trap, began to dart here and there; to peep first under one arm and then under the other of the Miller; to fume and dance with utter impatience; and to watch, with eyes as of a ferret, the moment to spring out and fly before his heavy antagonist to the church.

"The Miller, on the contrary, only became more cool, and slow in his progress. He seemed to consider these as precious moments of relaxation and refreshment that were not to be wasted. He seemed to swell out his great bulk into still more ample proportions, so as to close every atom of the way, and give to his foe not breadth enough to poke a finger past him. As he moved with most measured pace, he lifted up his eyes and took a view of the lofty tower of the church; darted a glance across the street, as if measuring the distance; and then looking right and left, as to see that all was clear, he actually stood still a moment before he issued from the mouth of the passage. 'A fine church, young man,' said he, turning coolly to the little fellow, who was biting his lips, and clenching his hands behind him for rage; 'a fine church, and their heads as built it don't ache now.' 'Ache, and be — to them, and to all cursed great millers,' said the little man, stamping furiously; 'won't you move on, then!'

"'This is an eventful movement,' added Bowes, casting a quizzical look at the little outrageous fellow; then throwing himself forward, he put forth the whole of his vast physical power in impelling his monstrous load of mortality over the brief intervening space. His ponderous limbs, as if moved by some supernatural force, were carried onward in huge and convulsive bounds. It was like the last effort of a giant. His arms swung with the violence of battering-rams, and he cleared the street with the fury and heavy rush of a mad mammoth. His opponent, flung out of the mouth of the passage by the impatient impetus of the dense mass behind, was thrown off his balance, and was carried stumbling across the street by the pressure of the crowd, rather than run across it; and only became conscious that his foe had actually outstripped him, by being dashed by the impetuous throng up against him,

was he leaped panting and puffing and steaming against the door of the church. A loud shout announced the victory of the Miller; and mounting his stout cart, which he had had brought thither in readiness, he rode back to his inn in triumph.

"Ah! he was a good 'un," said Jack, as he finished this relation, much to the amusement of the travellers; "but I shall never forgive myself encouraging him to run this race. I knew it'll be the death of him; and then I and all the neighbourhood will lose the best friend we ever had."

"What's amiss?" asked the travellers.

"What's amiss?" Jack shook his head. "I wish I could tell what's amiss; but I can give a pretty good guess. The old man's not long for this world."

## CHAPTER III.

JACK CONTINUES THE STORY OF THE MILLER—  
THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RACE, AND THE  
MERRY HOAK OF THE HOLY WATER.

"That day, when the good old Bowes got back to the inn, with the crowd pouring at his heels, and many of them wanted to drink with the jolly Miller, that had made better sport than had been seen in this town for many a day before, he said, 'With all my heart, lads; with all my heart.' Then they ordered, a dozen of them at once, each a tankard of ale; and one cried, 'Here, fine fellow, drink with me first;' and another, 'Drink with me next;' and another, and another, 'Drink with me;' and while he was drinking from one tankard, a whole lot of others were held up all round. Bowes took first one and then another, and said, 'Here's your healths, my lads; here's your healths!'

"But when he saw so many still held up, he stopped, held one fast, foaming tankard in his right hand, and looking at the crowd with a fancy smile, said, 'I say, my lads; pretty well of one feat for one day. I've showed you a pretty good touch in the walking line, I think. Eh? don't you think so?'

"They all shouted, 'Ay, ay, bravo, old Miller!'

"Then said he, 'Let that serve. I'd drink all your healths, one after another, with all my heart, if I could do it without ruining my own. But my health is as dear to me as yo're is to ye. I've a wife and five children at home, and six fat horses, and a wagoner, besides cows, and colts, and sheep, and two servant wenches, and various other stock, as wants a watchful eye over 'em; and what's to become of 'em if I drown myself here in ale, in drinking a thousand men's healths? You may think I've a biggish body, and so I have, but I can no more drink all your ale than I can drink my own mill-dam dry. So once for all, here's all your healths together, and an end on't.'

"He gave a hearty quaff; the folks gave a stunning hurrah; and he turned into the inn.

"I never seed him in such spirits as on that day. When the man came to pay the money that he had lost by losing the race—and it was a good sum—he said, 'Well, my lad, what think-est thou now of running a race with a fat old

man in a narrow passage?' The man shook his head, and said, 'What's past, let that be. I've been a fool, sure enough; but I'm not the first that's been seen in this town or in others.' He laid down the money, and made his bow. 'It goes agen me,' said Bowes, taking the man friendly by the hand, 'to take this money; but I hear thou's plenty more; and when a man has been rather ocket, why it's best for him to be taken down a button-hole, and then he remembers it. We're friendly, I hope, and I shall not touch the money; but here's a poor lad,' said he, turning to me, 'that has an old mother that it'll do good to, and she shall have it.' He handed the bag over to me, and then ordered his horse and cart out.

"As we drove home, he was very full of his exploit. Said he had thought that he hadn't so much in him yet; burst out a laughing several times at the way he had so taken in the folks, and said to me, 'Jack, why thou'rt a desperate long-headed fellow; thou art as deep as th' north star.' He had scarcely got home when he ordered his supper; 'had several of his old neighbours, the wagoner, the miller, and me too, in; and set on to tell them all the story. You may be sure there was laughing enough; and the wagoner said, 'Yo've been too deep for 'em, Master, this time, sharp as they think theirsow's i' th' town.'

"'Nay, lad,' said he, 'it's Jack here, it's Jack.'

"His wife was the only one that did not laugh much. She shook her head; said she didn't think at his years, and with his size, he'd been such a goose; and hoped no worse might come of it. She'd more sense than us all. Next day the Miller was in bed. He told 'em they must send me in to him when I came. There he lay, as hot as he was the day before, after he had run his race, without a drop of moisture on him. He said he was very thirsty, and yet drinking did him no good; and that he was as sore all over as if he had been beaten with a cudgel. He thought he had shook his fat all into a jelly. He got worse and worse, for a week. The doctor was there every day with his physio; and I knew it must go hard with him, for he'd never been used to take any physio but his own ale. Every day the doctor only shook his head more solemnly when he went away, if anybody asked him how he was. It was reckoned to be all over with him. One day there was a rumour that he was dead. The carpenter had been sawing up an immense broad elm tree into boards, and everybody said that it was because he had none wide enough for the Miller's coffin. But the rumour was false; and the carpenter had only been sawing up the boards in case they should be wanted, for he knew that if such a fat man died, he must be buried very soon.

"The good Miller cheated the doctor, and got better. But what a change was there! I could scarcely believe my eyes when I first saw him again, as he sate in his arm-chair. He had lost half of his fat. His rosy face was gone, and the rosy knowing smile was gone with it. His clothes hung like bags on him, only his legs looked as thick as ever, and were wrapped in flannel. His cheeks hung yellow, and lank, and wrinkled. He looked melancholy and sad; he looked twenty years older. You've seen, gen-

stones, in your travels a grand castle, like what stands not far from here, when the lord's there with its flag on the top, and its folks all about, and its windows and walls all looking so heart-  
some and cheerful: and you've seen another, like the old 'un that stands just a 'tother side the valley, with nobody in it; with its roof all tumbling in; with jackdaws and owls haunting its upper rooms, and the stones crumbling, and bushes growing out of its windows. Bowes used to be like the grand castle, but now he looked for all the world just like this that's tumbling down. In time he got up some of his fat again; but he never got up his spirits. Sad thoughts, just like those owls and jackdaws, were always in his head. He knew it was all up with him. He used to stand before the door sometimes when the spring sunshine was a little warm, but he looked heavy, and as if he had not strength to bear his own weight; and he'd shake his head, and hobble in again. He used to strike himself on the side, and say, 'I'm fatter again; but it's not the thing, Jack, it's not the thing. I have no relish for my meat, and it does me no good. This is not healthy; it's nothing but blubber.' His legs now became a great torment to him. They swelled as thick as two, plagued him sadly, and were very hot. The doctor's stuff did him no good.

"One day, as a tramping man came in, and expressed his astonishment at the wonderful change in him since he saw him last, he said, 'Ay, ay, I know it's all Dicky with Pincher;' that was a saying of his, when he meant it was all up, 'but if I could only have ease for these legs, I would give any money.' The man said he couldn't undertake to cure his legs, but he knew what would give him ease, and that was water from a holy well that he knew of, by an old ruined priory in the forest, but it was a good way off. The Miller was to bathe his legs with it continually. He caught at the idea; and the man agreed to come once a week with a large bottle of this water, and for every third bottle he was to have a noble. The next day, accordingly, he came with a bottle. Bowes began to apply cloths dipped into this water, and found it gave him immediate relief. For weeks the man came regularly, and Bowes declared nothing had done him such wonderful good. It was true that when the wet cloths were off he could not bear himself, but when they were on, he was so comfortable, and so cheerful. He had an idea that the saint who had blessed the well must have been a very holy man indeed to have conferred such a lasting virtue to this water.

"One day, however, as he had rambled out a little by the side of his mill-dam, and was thinking with pleasure that this very day the old wayfarer would arrive with another bottle of the holy water from the forest, what should he see but this man actually stooping down and filling his large bottle from his own dam! The truth flashed upon him. He had been bathing his legs all this time with his own mill-dam water, and boasting to everybody of its wonderful virtues! Enraged at his own folly, and at the rascality of this impudent impostor, he was first tempted to step forward, and while the man was still stooping, to push him head foremost into the water; but restraining himself, he stepped quietly back to the house, favoured by the trees, and awaited the arrival of this arrant knave.

"Scarcely had he seated himself; when the fellow came in, made his greeting, set down his bottle, and beginning to wipe his brow, complained how weary he was with carrying this heavy bottle so far in the hut-  
sen. Bowes only answered with a short grunt; but as the man went on with his lies, disgusted with his hypocrisy, he slyly gave the bottle a poke with his foot, and turned it over. The bottle was smashed, and the man setting up a loud lament over the loss of the water that was streaming along the floor, and now having to go again so far for it—Bowes started to his feet, and crying, 'Out! out! rascal, with thy mill-dam water! I saw thee, rascal, I saw thee!' and he belaboured him with his oaken staff till he fled for his life.

"From that day he lost all faith in doctoring, and is now going fast. Sometimes as he sits on his bench for a bit in the sunshine by the door, he'll say to me, 'It's a fine thing to be young, Jack; a very fine thing, remember that, lad. I was once young myself; and though I shall soon go out now, like the snuff of a candle, yet I can't say but that my time has been cast in very pleasant places.'

"'Yes, meester,' said I, thinking he was speaking of the mill-dam and the brook, 'they're both very pleasant places, and plenty o' fish in 'em. I think the mill-dam must have some tremendous pike in it, it's so long since it was drawn; and in the brook the gudgeons are as thick as thunder.'

"'I was not speaking of them, Jack, but of my line of life in this pleasant old place, and in this good old mill. My father and my grandfather were here before me, and I have been here all my life from the day I was born. I know every inch of ground, and every bush and nook so well—ay, and almost every leaf—that it seems to me very odd how one can ever go away from it. I remember the day when I was a lad no higher than my own knee is. I remember when I first began to hunt birds' nests, and how, when I went under the arching boughs of the old crab-tree, and saw its crimson bunches of blossoms in the spring, how I was suddenly struck with their beauty, and the beauty of the green leaves through which the sun was shining; and wondered that I had never noticed them before.

"Then I was a great lad like thee, Jack, full of life, and every day made me see more and more of the pleasant things that were about me in the world; for one does not find them all out at once. Living is like playing in a dark room, where you first open one shutter, and then another, and at every fresh stream of light you see something that you did not see before; and then when you think you see all, a little brother starts up from behind a screen, and a little sister from behind a door, and you all laugh together, and find that playing in the room would not be half so pleasant if you were playing by yourself.

"'Oh! it's a fine thing to be young, Jack, a very fine thing, indeed. And to have your parents with you,—be good to your father and mother, Jack; there's nothing like a father and mother in this world. Well, well, nothing lasts for ever; and I've enjoyed my life as much as most folks.' When I was a young, hearty fellow, and rode a spanking horse to market, and

bought my corn, and came home and found my mill going, and held my hand in the flour as it streamed down into the sacks, and thought how much I should make that year,—that was a fine time, Jack, a fine time. And then when I became acquainted with my Nancy here, God bless her! and used to take my stick of a frosty evening, when the moon was shining, and the white grass crushed crisply under my active tread, as I strode along to the next village where she lived, to see her,—Lord! wasn't that a fine time! and could one ever think, as we felt then, how it could be to feel as one feels now! And then, when my children were young things about me, and the mill was going almost night and day, and I bought the windmill on the hill too, and the next farm,—wasn't that a time? But I lost my only lad, that dashed me down. He was seventeen; as fine, handsome a lad as ever you saw, and promising to be as jolly as myself.

“Was he really?” I said.

“Yes, Jack, yes; but he drank cold water when he was a-mowing, and I think that curdled his blood. He turned as white, and looked as curdled, as a new-made cheese, only more blue and purple. I cannot tell how, but he never could shake it off. A cough seized him, and he was soon gone. And soon, Jack, thou'lt find us lying side by side in the same corner, at the right hand of the church porch. Thou'lt give a peep at us as thou passes, and think of old times!”

Jack could not help crying as he finished his story; and the travellers, pleased with his cleverness and with his feeling, again offered to take him along with them. But he would not consent. He must see his parents and the old Miller again. The old Miller soon after this died, and in him the only person out of his own house, besides those travellers, who had given him credit for a heart, or for anything but mischief. As he was lying on the common in the manner in which we found him at the opening of this volume, he was revolving in his heart whether it would not be best, after all, to set out and seek his fortune. These travellers, with whom he had occasionally been, he had heard talk of many and fine countries, of many and strange things. They had, in fact, awoke a desire in his restless mind to see the world; and he thought to himself, what was the use of sticking his whole life on this spot, where he was little esteemed. It were better to have a stirring life, though it were a short one, than to grow like a cabbage, for ever on the same plot of ground. His parents were the only tie, and to them he was of little use. If he succeeded in the world, he might be of far more. As he had sate by the fire, he had several times said to his father and mother, if he had only Ben and Timothy, he should never fear going all over the world. His father, who thought he only spoke in his ignorance of what the world was, and that a very little taste of it would satisfy him, said, “Well, well, away with thee! Take Ben and Timothy whenever thou likes, and just go as far as thou pleases. Thou'lt my consent.”

Jack now thought—“What if I should take my father at his word? And I will!” said he, leaping up. “I'll be off in the morning. Ben,

boy! Timothy, boy! we'll be off, my boys, like a shower of rain.” With that he pulled Timothy by the ears; ran, and clasping his arms round the ass's neck, and throwing his heels over his mane, twisted himself up upon his back. The ass laid down its ears, and whiaked its tail, as if angry—but it was only pretence; walked a few paces, and slipping on its knees, gently rolled Jack off on the ground, where they lay playing together, as they had done many a time before. In fact, Jack and Ben and Tim were old companions; they had passed many a day together, and perfectly understood each other. Jack had taught them many odd tricks, and it would be difficult to say which was fondest of the other.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### JACK SETS OUT TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE.

ACCORDINGLY, before peep of day, Jack was off. He slipped out of the house as silently as a mouse, so that the old people never awoke. He had taken a little bag to bed with him. In one end of this, he stowed away the few articles of clothing that he wanted; and the next morning, treading on tiptoes, he stole down stairs, expecting every moment that a loose board would give a creak, and the old man would cry out—“What's that?” For, on such occasions, it is astonishing how noisy every thing is. Stairs that you have gone up and down a hundred and a thousand times, and which always seemed as firm as rocks, then seem as loose and crazy as if they were made of wickerwork. Not a step do you set your foot on, but it cries out as if it were hurt. You are sure to step on that board in a floor that creaks; doors that never sung on their hinges, then sing out confoundedly. You tread on a dog's foot as he lies sleeping, of all places in the world, at the foot of the stairs; or upset a pot, which goes gingling and smashing down to distraction. In short, all nature seems up against you, and you find a traitor in every thing about you. Your shoes, when put on, make an infinite clamour; a cur whines, and then barks out for joy that you are going abroad; locks and bolts grind and scream as they are drawn back; and when you are once out, there is sure to be some uneasy souk that cannot sleep, at some window or other, to witness your departure.

But Jack was particularly lucky; in fact, he was born to be lucky. A cat could not steal out more lightly than he could. He deposited a loaf and a little cheese in the opposite end of his bag; threw it over the neck of Ben, who stood ready by the gate, as if he had understood Jack the day before; clapped the old easy pad on his back, the bridle in his mouth, and mounted, and away! Timothy, who was too discreet to make any outrageous demonstrations of joy, followed at Ben's heels. Jack himself was clothed in a close jerkin and hose of stout brown cloth, and had a little cap on his head with a short black heathcock's feather in it. His jerkin, though fitting close, had short skirts, cut pretty full and meeting before, and was buttoned up with the largest buttons to his throat; so that he had a somewhat jaunty, though quaint air, and was fit to run or climb without impediment.

Strapped on his pad behind, he had a cloak for cold or rainy weather; and at his back hung, in a strap and a little leathern case, a little round pan. In the pan were stowed away a bottle of cordial, a horn for drinking, and a tinderbox. By the side of his thigh, in his hose, stuck in a case on one side, in a sheath, his knife and spoon and fork; in the other, a small hammer and pincers, so that he could, on occasion, fasten on one of his ass's shoes, when at a distance from a town. This was the apparatus, the vast advantage of which he had learned from the travellers with whom he had been, and in procuring which he had spent some of the money which he had received from them.

Thus equipped, he could travel, if necessary, night and day, and could pass those vast and solitary forests, which in that day covered the country. Abbeys and hermitages scattered here and there far from towns, in woods and wild valleys, he knew would offer him shelter, or at least protect him for the night; but if he did not reach any of these, nobody could manage to pass the night better than Jack. What he had to defend himself from, were robbers, wolves, snakes, and cold. With the first he must do as well as he could, and trust to his ingenuity when he met them. As merely an odd sort of a lad travelling on an ass, and pretending as he proposed, to represent himself as a blacksmith's apprentice going to see his grandfather, he thought he had not much to fear. He had provided himself with a tolerable sum of money, and he had taken an odd way to secure it, as we shall see; but as a blacksmith's apprentice, he would not be suspected of carrying much of that article with him. It was more likely that he would often be in request by them to shoe them a horse, or weld them a broken sword, or point them a spear anew; and for all these purposes Jack had provided himself.

He had gone with the horses belonging to the travellers to the smiths' at different places they passed through. On all these occasions, Jack had made himself very useful; had blown the bellows for the smiths, handed them nails or tools, as they shod the horses, and even helped them, when short of a hand, to hammer a piece of hot iron on the anvil, for he was as remarkably strong as he was active. There was nothing that he had not turned his hand to when he had an opportunity, and could do a variety of things that he had joined people in, and had watched them at, in his wanderings. He was a very decent smith and carpenter. He could shoe a horse much more cleverly than many a bumpkin that had been at the trade for years. Often, when with the travellers, he had not only fastened the loose shoes of the horses when far from a town, but had taken them off, and altered them when they were made too narrow, as is sometimes the case, so as to contract the horse's foot, and make him go lame, or too wide at the heel, and cut the horse's opposite fetlock joint. For this purpose he was always supplied with a small anvil not bigger than his fist, which had a spike to it, by which he could fix it on any stump or block of wood by the wayside, and do his work upon it. A small hole in it enabled him to make nails as they were wanted, as the smiths make theirs, and a fire was always to be had in those days of great

forests. Thus he feared not robbers, but expected even to be useful to them. And though Jack with his natural activity had gathered up this accomplishment for himself, let no one think that was anything uncommon in those times. The vast solitudes and rude countries through which merchants had to travel, made it necessary that some one exercising the office of a smith should be in their caravan, and even farmers living far from villages were obliged to be something of smiths for themselves. To this day in solitary situations nothing is so common as to find a joiner's and a smith's shop at farms, where the farmer himself can mend a gate, or a plough or harrow; can sharpen his ploughshares, and shoe his own horses.

Wolves Jack had most need to dread when obliged to sleep in the open air. They were sneaking villains, that would devour both him, his ass, and his dog. All his ingenuity he knew would be needed, should he fall in with them, to fortify himself and his two companions against them. But luckily these scoundrels of the forest were now become very rare. The wild cattle of the woods were far more numerous and more dangerous. They would come round a travelling party in vast numbers, snort, and bellow, and tear up the ground, then scamper off, only to return nearer and with greater fury, till they rushed in upon them, tossing them into the air, trampling them into the earth, and making a furious attack on the pack-horses and bales of goods of the merchants. The only safe defence against these animals was to make as speedily as possible fires around the party, and to wave firebrands on all sides in their faces. Jack being alone, proposed to find wherever he could a cave, where, planting a fire at the mouth, they would be safe altogether, or where he could only find a nook in the rocks, or even a bare precipice, to sleep at the foot, and plant two or three fires around them. Timothy would always give the alarm; and as he meant to cut himself a stout yew bow as he went along, and make himself a sheaf of arrows as amusement when he had occasion to stay for a night, or on a rainy day, he should speedily dispatch a few of those amongst them.

Cold he should ward off as much as possible by wrapping himself in his cloak, and, when necessary, by cutting down the leafy boughs of trees, and laying them upon him. Cold winds he could speedily ward off from his temporary quarters by making a screen of green boughs; for besides his accoutrements already mentioned, he carried in his belt round his waist a small axe, and at his left side hung a banger, or short sword. Snakes, of which he had a great hatred, he trusted to the watchful instinct of Timothy to guard him against; for Timothy was not only remarkably quick in observing them, but could smell them at a great distance, and gave notice of them by setting up his bristles, growling, and snuffling in a manner so peculiar, that Jack always knew whether it was a snake, or whether it was some wild beast that he perceived.

So provided against foes, Jack also was provided against necessity. His little round pan at his back was his kitchen. With that, hung from two stout sticks, he could at any time cook a supper, if he had got it. His flint and

steel would give him fire; wood or waste furnished him ever ready fuel; every streamlet would afford water; and Jack had no more fear of filling his pot when it was ready than the gypsies have, who live continually out on the broad estate of nature. Timothy, who had a smack of the herker in him, was a clever hand at stealing upon a hare or wild rabbit; of pouncing upon a sleeping fawn, or of surprising young wild ducks and geese before their wings were grown long enough to enable them to fly, till which time, on the approach of danger, they skulk close in the long grass and rushes on the banks of the streams and in the marshes where they haunt. Timothy had more than once even brought to the travellers' rendezvous a cock-of-the-wood, or a thumping bustard, that he had surprised; and, in truth, there was, in those days, for a youngster of Jack's talent, less danger of supplying his pot, than of himself or his dog falling into the hands of the royal foresters, and under the bloody fangs of the merciless forest laws. Jack, however, proposed to be especially cautious when crossing the royal domains, and to trust in emergencies to his ingenuity, of which he had a very good opinion, to extricate himself from such perils. His bow and arrows—for he had practised archery of a rustic sort ever since he could bend the slightest willow twig, and tie it with a piece of his mother's worsted, or could send an inch-long bok from a cross-bow which his father had made him—he knew would bring him down any bird, or even, if necessary, stick a piece of venison on a pointed prong by his evening fire. To an imp like Jack all nature became a larder. The mushrooms in the forest glade; the wild orch to roast in his fire; the crimson cornel-berry,\* and the blackberry hanging in rich jerry clusters; the young wood-pigeons, fat and heavy, in their nest; the hazel-nuts that in autumn he could shake down, brown and almost barrelling with rich kernel; the crayfish and the trout under the grassy banks of the forest stream—all were materials for his mid-day or his evening feast, or to pluck, as he idly sauntered on his way.

Thus equipped for his enterprise with internal and external resources, Jack rode slowly away. It was not more than two o'clock in the morning, and in the advanced summer was yet but faintly light. All was silent around him but the cocks, which from the roosts of the shut-up cottages round the common, crew drowsily and hollow; and one solitary lark—that bird of all meet early—which, as if watching to bid him good-bye, rose up from the shadowy ground and soared into the shadowy sky with a lay of exuberant joy, that seemed to promise him fortune and fame. The watch-dogs had barked themselves to sleep; and in the stillness that reigned, Jack heard the crickets singing on the warm dim cottage hearths as he passed, and their brethren of the hedges giving them an occasional shrill and shivery answer.

\* It would seem as if this beautiful tree, with its beautiful berry, which now stands so fairy-like in the forests of Austria, at this time was known to our forests. If so, it is a pity that it is lost. The tree grows to the size of a tolerable apple tree, and is covered with oblong berries as long as cherries, of a fine acidulous flavour, which are not only eaten as dessert, and preserved, but are ravenously devoured by wild swine.

This sound touched Jack's heart more than all others, and brought over him such a lively feeling of his old native fire-side, with his mother spinning in one corner, and his father sleeping in his old patch-work cushioned chair in the other, after his day's work in the air, or his walk to the town, that he instantly turned Ben round, looked back at the cottage in the distance, and as he saw its little chimney peeping over the alder-trees, he said in his heart, for his words stuck in his throat when he tried to bring them out—"God bless you altogether there! I shall see you again some day, and won't I bring you a pretty heap of merrily!" Whom Jack included in the 'altogether' we cannot exactly say, seeing that of human creatures there were only two, his father and mother; but there can be little doubt but that he grouped in with them the cat, the hens, and the crickets, all of whom he was accustomed to consider in his mind as 'parts of the family.' Be this as it may, having uttered internally this short but comprehensive adieu, he put Ben on again, and a hollow road descending a hill, shut out his native nest from his eyes for many a month and year.

## CHAPTER V.

THE DINNER BY THE FOREST SPRING, AND JACK'S ARRIVAL AT THE GIPSEY CAMP.

JACK now rode on steadily. The day advanced bright and cheery. The dew lay thick and silvery on the ground. The sun came up amid clouds of rich crimson, and lit up every drop on blade and hanging leaf into flashing diamonds. The lark soared into the air; sounds of cattle and of yaffing dogs, told that the inhabitants of the farms were astir. Now and then a hare, hopping unwillingly to her day-long retreat, crossed the road; a labourer, or a milkmaid all draggled with the dew, appeared—and a spirit of cheerfulness born with the new day, flew in the air and over the earth; and Jack, forgetting all his home thoughts, trotted on and sung aloud in the joy of his heart.

His restless and aspiring spirit flew on into the boundless world before him. He imagined a thousand adventures. He seemed now only to begin to live. The colours of the opening sky of his existence were as gay and brilliant as those in the external horizon. There seemed nothing that the world was not capable of affording, and he of finding and enjoying. The sandy banks hanging over the wayside, gay with the azure and waving tufts of the harebell, the lovely crimson of the wild pink, and the stately beauty of the fuchsia; the woods through which he passed, the heaths bursting into rosy bloom with the heather—the stream that rushed murmuring to itself across the way, and the distant hills that now and then reared their blue and airy heads above the forest, all were to him full of beauty and a living sense. His heart danced with a sort of intoxicated delight. He snapped his fingers at Ben, who laid down his long ears, and gave a sidelong grin in token of sympathy; cried a loud "Yoo-hoo! yoo-heo!" to Timothy, who limped along before him on the eternal hunt after whatever came within the field of necessity; whistled to the squirrels that

ran up the trees at his approach, and then sang aloud to his own fancy. Many a grand castle in the air did he build before noon, when coming to a most lovely spring in a hollow of the woods, he determined to stop and dine. He dismounted, lugged the sack from Ben's neck, and the pad from his back, and let him help himself to the grass that grew plentifully around. He took out his bread and cheese, filled his horn from the spring, and seated himself on its margin. Tim laid himself down near him in readiness to dine too, and Jack looked round him in admiration at his dining room.

It was as charming a scene as an old forest could furnish. At his back ran a range of forest hills, of a considerable ascent, which was scattered with hanging birches mixed with dark firs. Patches of crimson heath hung here and there, and a sort of sand rocks projected from the half slope, half precipice, of the hill-sides in the ugliest manner. Beside him on the greenward lay the spring. It formed a circular basin of several yards across, deep, and of the most lovely transparency. At the bottom, a clear white sand danced fantastically in the up-gushing force of the fountain; and a variety of aqueous plants rose up through the crystal mass of water, with green taper stems, fair green leaves, and starry flowers that seemed to drink in the rays of the sun, and congeal them into an unearthly beauty. The water which overflowed from this glorious spring, went leaping away to a forest stream that wound a little way off through all that witchery of foliage, rock, and sedge, which makes the poetry of woodland water; and on either hand sloped down in an ancient and most park-like character, the old forest, with its massy oaks, and its hollow lawns and rounded knolls scattered with fern.

Here Jack dined, throwing every moment a portion to Timothy. He then slept on the warm turf, and was astonished on awaking to find the afternoon far advanced. He leaped up, and hastened his departure with all speed. He was surprised to see how grey and sober the day was become, and to feel how the buoyancy of his morning spirits had vanished too. Instead of all the romantic visions of the forenoon, he felt a sort of misgiving, and could not help a sensation creeping over his mind as if his enterprise was a very great piece of folly. All his fine castles in the air now looked very much like nonsense. His schemes of living in the woods so grandly, very meagre; and as he still rode on, and the day cleared fast without sight of a place to stay for the night, he more than half wished himself at home again. His fire and his kettle-boiling, and his schemes of caves, and of beds made of boughs of trees, and all his valiant exploits that he was to do—zounds! he could have laughed at them heartily if he had not been too sad to laugh. Such an odd little animal as he, what was he to do in the world but to be made fun of by every great booby, and how was he to win wealth and honour! If he had had a body as big as his spirit was, "then," said he, stretching himself up, "I might have killed giants, overturned armies, rescued princesses, and become a great man in no time; but now?"— He kicked Ben on the ribs, made a comical, low sort of whistling to himself, and trotted on.

He rode on for hours, till it was dark, without seeing a single place where he could stop. By this time, however, he had wound up his spirits again to a kind of dogged determination, and had persuaded himself that there was many a thing in the world that a little, tough, active and cunning fellow like himself could do, that a bigger man could not. "Is it the war-horse that skips up to the top of the mountain, or the goat? Is it the bullock that bounds up to the top of the highest trees, or the squirrel? I'll be up amongst them yet, on the heights some day or other; ay, and sling down stones on the great jokersheads that have grinned at me below!"

Having made this comfortable speech, he now pored on his way more eagerly for a place to lodge. But he neither saw cave, nor a nook in the rocks, nor a precipice, nor any of the very convenient spots that he had proposed to pitch his tent in. On the contrary, his way lay over a seemingly endless and naked ugly heath. A few gorse and bramble bushes were all its variations of feature. The ass went wading along in sand, or, if he turned him out of it, stumbling along over lumpy ground in a still more miserable manner. He at length resolved to take the first good big bush for his screen, and there pass the night. He had alighted, and was in the act of unloading Ben, when in the distance he discerned a light. In an instant he mounted again, and made for it. He did not, however, reach it quite so soon as he expected.

He went on for more than an hour over the same lumpy ground, and still seeming to get nearer to the light. Sometimes he came to bogs, which threatened to put a stop to his progress altogether; and at other times found himself on the edge of a steep descent, down which he would have plunged headlong, had it not been for the clearer instinct or perception of Ben. At length the light suddenly seemed to get larger, and to be near at hand. He perceived that it was a fire on the border of a black pine wood, and could discern figures darkly moving about it. To his great consternation, he discovered that it was an encampment of gipsies, and would have drawn off again, but all at once there was a loud barking of dogs, which seemed to be loose and making towards him, and several hoarse voices commanding them to be still. By the blaze of the fire, which was now stirred up, so as to throw its light far around, and by that of some flaming brands that were held aloft by a number of wild figures of both men and women, he saw that he was on the very edge of their camp, and they saw him, and called to him to come forward.

Almost blinded by the glare, Jack rode slowly up, and was just going to say "Good evening!" to the people, when Timothy, who was at Ben's heels, was suddenly set upon by a dozen of the gipsies' curs. Tim howled out, at the same time turning himself about from one side to the other, and biting right and left. The clamour of the scuffling dogs was deafening. They snarled, howled, yelped altogether; while the cries of men, women, and children, who rushed in to beat off their curs from Timothy, made the hubbub astounding. With the well applied blows of a dozen heavy sticks, the gipsy men made their dogs fly yelling in various directions,

and Timothy running for security under Ben, Jack rode into the midst of the group.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JACK'S FIRST ADVENTURE.

It was a scene that would have daunted anybody but such an urchin as Jack; and, in truth, he did not much relish it. By the blaze of the fire of pine-branches, he saw around him at least a score of gipsies, of all ages, from the ancient hag to the little child that, with but a very small piece of flannel shirt, stood by the fire, and stared at him with great black eyes, that seemed evidently opened by the clamour, out of a sleep that would soon master them again.

The men were those great swarthy figures with bushy black hair that need no description—they are too common to the tribe; and the women, as wild but more artful-looking, were in a ruder dishabille than is their wont, and evidently on the point of retiring into their tents for the night. In the tents that were pitched around were seen other figures, many of them great children, and young girls with black beads and flashing eyes, all peering forth to see what was the matter. The women accosted Jack with expressions of wonder where he could have sprung from in such a dark night, and asked whether he was lost. Jack told them, as he had planned, that he was a smith's apprentice going to see his grandfather at the next town, but was overtaken by the night, and seeing their light, had come to see if it were any place where he could lodge.

"Ay, to be sure, boy," said two or three of the men at once—"to be sure, you can pass the night here very well."

"Ah! the poor boy!" said the women, "to be sure he can. It's beyond the power of man, let alone such a boy as this, to find his way to-night over this moor. It's lucky that you found your way here, young one, it is; for there are people about that are no better than they should be."

Jack thought to himself, "Ay, and not far off neither."

"Here," said a tall, handsome quean, with a red handkerchief tied over her rich black locks, "here, he can sleep in our Toney's tent, as he is away to-night, and I dare say his ass won't go far away from ours."

"No," said Jack, "Ben won't go far from where I am."

They now helped Jack to unload Ben, and put his bag and pad into his tent, and then asked him if he would have some supper. Jack, who did not care to produce his loaf and cheese, as he knew that they would have a very poor chance of ever leaving the spot again if once seen, said he had no objection, if they had anything to give him.

"But, young man," said a cunning-looking woman, glancing knowingly at him, "may be you've got some little bit of a thing in your bag yourself!"

"O!" said Jack, who knew that he was amongst a set of deep ones, and that it was of no use making many excuses; "why, I've a

loaf and a cheese to be sure, that I'm taking as a present to my grandfather; but I'll be glad to go shares with you at anything you've got, and so not spoil the old grandfather's present."

"Phoh!" said the woman, "the old gentleman has plenty of bread and cheese at home, I warrant; so we'll be glad to go shares with you, young man. We'll give you lodging, and you shall give us a supper. I think that's but fair, any how."

"With all my heart," said Jack; went straight to the tent, and fetched out the loaf and cheese.

"Aha! aha! by the powers, that's a brave piece of prog though!" cried a dozen voices at once, as they saw the loaf and cheese in Jack's hands.

"Sit round, brothers and sisters, sit round all; we'll make a pleasant little snack of it. Bring out the black bottle there from under the ling, Simrock, and tot round while a drop is left in it. This is the right country cate to smack with a horn of old ale."

Old and young flocked round the fire. From tents, and out of corners unseen before, came a dozen or more of half-grown gipsies, wrapped only each in a blanket, and squatted themselves down eagerly for the feast. Young lanky girls, with skins as tawny as the adder's back, teeth as white as milk, and roguish leering eyes, clapped themselves down familiarly by Jack, saying, "Shaushan, Palla!"—"How do you do, brother?" and throwing back their clouds of long black hair, which completely hid their faces and necks down to their shoulders, began to talk with one another eagerly in a language which Jack did not understand.

One thing he understood. His loaf and cheese were flying in good slices all round the circle, and rapidly vanishing amid unbounded commendations.

"Ay, this is true home-baked," said one old hag, clapping her slice to her long nose, and snuffing up with great satisfaction. "Your mother, young man, has spared no pains over the old grandfather's loaf."

"And this cheese," said another, "is a brave one. It has not been robbed before it was made, as many a one is. What the farmers' wives sometimes give to us poor good-for-nothing vagrants, as they call us, that we mayn't borrow any of their fowls, and what one buys in the village shops, why you might often as well try to digest a horn lantern."

"Ay, or a bullock's horn," said another. "Or a brick," said a third. "Or a thunder-bolt," said a fourth. "But this—it melts in one's mouth like a honeycomb. Tot round there, I say, Barney Beggs, if the ale isn't so old that it can't travel."

"Ay, travel can it though," said Barney Beggs, a great black fellow, that one would rather have met at a wake than in a wood—"travel can it, and that to some tune too. One horn springs after the other so nimbly, that Barney Beggs can hardly catch one of them," winking with a wild, sensual greediness of enjoyment on the worshipful company, and teasing a hornful down his throat with a smacking relish that made it croak again in its descent.

The whole clan were right merry. Jack found the ale capital; and though he had a suspicion that they wanted him to drink and grow



sleepy, he would not seem to shun it. He ate and drank, and laughed with them heartily. He knew how to make himself very agreeable to such a sort of people, and thought it the best to put them into good humour with him. When, therefore, the boys began to romp and play, Jack romped and played with them, and suddenly kicking up his heels, and walking on his hands, went round the whole circle, and made bows to each of them with his feet. Then he turned himself into a wheel, and spun after the youngsters, who laughing and screaming with delight, flew in all directions before him. Jack then danced several dances, such as he had seen amongst the servants of the travellers, leaped, sprung over their tents one after another, and then came and seated himself once more in the circle. The whole clan was in raptures. They declared him worth his weight in gold. "He waste his wonderful talents in a blacksmith's shop, in welding old iron, and acting the shoemaker to horses! It was a sin! It was a shame! No! no! young man," said they, "you haven't lost your way to-night, you have found it. You never were in your right way until now. You must stay with us, and your fortune is made. Lor! what crowds would you have to see you at the fairs, and the races, all over the country. We'll have you cried as 'THE WONDERFUL BOY. THE FLYING BOHEMIAN,' that can walk on his head; dance on a horse hair, between the tops of two poles. Leap over the moon if he chooses, and wheel round the ceiling of the booth as quick as a flash of sunshine. There's nothing that you can't do, and can't learn, if you like. Lucky's the day you came here!"

Jack thanked them for their intended kindness, and their compliments, and said "nothing would please him better, but that his master would hunt the whole country after him, and that he was a dreadful vengeful fellow, and would set the whole nation on them sooner than let him be with them."

"O!" said they, "a besom-stale for the old blacksmith! Say the word, and in twenty-four hours we'll put you into such a shape and colour that your own father shan't know you. If need be we'll go off with you five hundred miles, or over the sea, three or four thousand. Our people are everywhere, and our trade is as good in one country as another,—then, when you've seen a little of the world, you can come here or where you will, and the de'il himself shan't know you."

Jack said he must take till morning to consider of it, and in the mean time would go to bed. They all bid him good-night, and hoped he would sleep well; and one of them lighting him to his tent with a firebrand, he crept in, and Timothy clapped himself down at the entrance.

Jack, who was pondering how he was to get away from this crew, lay and thought of many a plan; but none seemed equal to the difficulties. He knew that they were as early risers as he could be. That if he attempted to steal away in the night, their curs would bark, and they would be all on their legs in a twinkling. If he stayed till morning he might be forcibly detained. He might be gagged and hidden, and conveyed by night from one of their haunts to

another; and over the sea, as they had given him to understand that they had connexions there. If he should consent to stay a while with them, pretending to fall in with their views, and then to watch his opportunity and escape, he might in the mean time have Ben and Timothy killed, or conveyed away, to make him more dependent on them, and then he should have lost the two faithful creatures that he liked best in the world.

He could not for his life tell what was best to do. From time to time he still heard the gipsies at their carouse; and looking through a nick in his tent, he could see that they were eagerly discussing some important matter. They were full of gesticulations, pointing here and there, then muttering altogether with their heads stooped to one another; and ever and anon they gave glances towards his tent, that made him sure he was the subject of their talk. He looked out to see if he could perceive Ben anywhere so near that he could possibly steal forth at the back of his tent, and creep away while they were in the midst of their deliberations; but scarcely had he put his head out, when a figure, moving backward in the dark, convinced him that he was watched. He lay down again, completely at a loss what was to be done. He lay, and thought, and thought. The noise of the gipsies grew less; the fire sunk dim amidst its ashes; and he flattered himself that all would soon be asleep. In a while he raised his head, and peered cautiously round. He could see nothing, nor hear anything but the crunching of the grass, as the horses near him were grazing. Cautiously he raised himself, and stole out; but as he turned towards the back of his tent he again became aware of something moving in the gloom. It was a young gipsy, who, wrapped in his blanket, addressed him in a strong whisper—"Do you want something, young man!"

Jack, whose presence of mind never forsook him, said, "Yes, I want to see if my ass is anywhere near?"

"O to be sure he is! he is with the rest of the beasts here."

"But what makes you walk about in the dark?" said Jack.

"We all's watchee," said he. "There are those about that we don't like, and they might carry off some of our horses before morning. Let your eyes walk in the night, that your legs mayn't have to run i'the day time, my young'un—that's the way on't, as we thinks."

Jack saw it was a bad case; wished the young gipsy joy of his job, and flung himself again into his tent. As all chance of escape seemed vain; and as he deemed himself too valuable a subject for them, he did not expect any injury or robbery before morning, and therefore turned himself resolutely on one side, and was soon asleep. Out of this sleep he was startled by a loud sound of barking and snuffling somewhere behind the tents. He lifted up his head, and could plainly hear Timothy's voice in the midst of the clamour. Knowing that Timothy would not have quitted his post without some sufficient cause, he immediately suspected that there was an attempt to secure Timothy, or Ben, or perhaps both. He was starting up to fly to their assistance, when he found

himself suddenly plucked down, at the same moment, a cry of agony set up close to his ears that for a moment puzzled and confounded him. Trying, however, to disengage himself, and still feeling dragged down to one side of his tent, while the same voice, as of a man in extreme pain, continued cursing and howling, it flashed on him what it was. He felt and found it so. There was a brawny hand thrust into that pocket of Jack's in which he had secured his money; and tracing the arm connected with it, he found it proceeded from the outside of the tent.

The reader will not, however, understand what could be the cause of these outcries; but Jack knew very well. To keep his money safe, after many schemes, he had sewn down his leather purse at the bottom of his jerkin pocket, and in the upper part of the pocket he had introduced a little bag the width of the pocket, and which formed indeed a false pocket. This he had secured by a couple of buttons, so that it could any time be taken out at once; and in this bag he had stitched a number of fish-hooks upside down, so that if any thief thrust his hand in, he could not pull it out again without half-a-dozen fish-hooks holding him fast. The gipsy who had been attempting to search Jack's pockets while he was asleep, was now caught, and by Jack suddenly at the moment jumping up, the hooks were stuck deep into the fleshy part of his hand, and he was writhing and howling in this unexpected man-trap, like a bear at the storming of a beehive.

Jack cried out, "Hold! hold! rest quiet a moment, rest quiet a moment!" while he crept under the side of the tent. "Ah!" said he to the gipsy, who was now surrounded by a throng of his fellows with firebrands, looking in their shirts, as wild as so many Indian ghosts raised by a necromancer, "Ah! what were you doing to get your hand into my fish-bag?"

"I was feeling," said the gipsy, a great strapping young fellow, "if there was a bit more bread and cheese."

"Ah!" said Jack, who affected great simplicity, "Ah! but you should have had a care not to put your hand into my fish-bag. That's my fish-pocket. When I have to wade through a stream, that's my pocket that I prop open with a stick for the little fishes to swim into. But hold, hold a moment, and I'll set you at liberty."

He unbuttoned the bag, and it came out at once, but still stuck fast to the fellow's hand, who writhed, and stamped, and swore, while the blood ran down his arms in copious streams, for in his surprise and Jack's starting up, the fish-hooks had torn the hand excessively.

"A cursed fool!" muttered the gipsies, "to put fish-hooks in his pocket!"

"A fool!" said another, "the most gallows young knave that ever I yet clapped eyes on."

The noise behind the tents was still going on. Jack heard Timothy barking furiously and howling at the same time as if hurt, yet fighting on. Leaving the fellows, therefore, to get of the fish-bag as best they might, he said, "There, get that off, while I see what my dog is after." He darted away, ducking down as he disappeared behind his tent, and snatching his bag and pad from under it, lest they should be stolen in his absence. The gipsies, too much occupied with getting their worthy brother out

of his new-fangled and not most comfortable of gloves, did not observe the action. Jack ran on in the direction of the sound, and soon saw three or four gipsies attempting to surround and capture Ben, who was showing them his heels in fine style, whenever they came near him. They had already managed to throw a rope over his neck, and some were dragging at it, while others tried to secure his head, but come which way they would, he managed to give them a good gripe by the arm with his teeth, or to lash out with his heels with a capital aim. Tim, all the while, was close to Ben, fighting and biting whenever he could come near any one of them. Several of them had got tremendous staves, and seemed now bent on knocking out Tim's brains. At the moment that Jack was running in, and shouting to them to hold, they made a sudden onslaught on Timothy, but Timothy retreated under the legs of Ben, and Ben lashing out at the men, as they rushed near, caught one under the ribs with a tremendous stroke with both heels. Jack heard the blow sound heavy and dead. The fellow doubled himself up in a moment, gave a groan, and fell with his head under him on the earth. With an oath the others cried, "There! he's done for Barney Beggs!" while Jack rushed in crying, "Hold! hold! what are you doing! That ass is dangerous. For Heaven's sake, keep off!"

"The fiend's in him and you too!" said one of them, holding up his cudgel, and looking more like the fiend he talked of, than a human creature. He was blazing hot with his exertion. His tawny skin burned with a copper-red. Perspiration stood shivering on his face, and his black heap of hair, brighter than ever with perspiration, hung about his neck in snaky masses.

"Stand back! stand back!" cried Jack, "you can't manage the ass, but I'll do it in a moment for you. Here Ben! here Tim!" As he called out, he ran forward towards the wood. Ben slipped his head from the halter in an instant, and ran forward with open mouth, snatching at first one of the gipsies and then at another, as they tried to stop him. Tim flew after him, and in the next moment all three were lost in the black shadow of the wood.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHASE.

Jack clapped the pad on Ben in a twink, and with his bag in his hand galloped through the pitchy darkness at full speed, trusting to Ben's faculties for missing the trees, and going on safe ground. He could hear the whole camp in motion. There was a sound of men shouting, women and children screaming; and lights blazed up at once in two or three places. He hoped they would find enough to do to attend to their two wounded fellows, if one indeed was not killed. But presently, as he turned his head, he could see at least a dozen torches carried at full speed in different directions, whilst shouting voices, and cries of women from the camp, seemed to urge on the chase to the utmost fury. The greater number of torches took a direction immediately in pursuit of him, but others went off, some right and some left, so as

to secure all chances. Jack knew that not a moment was to be lost. He knew that it was a chase of life and death. He knew the merciless nature of his pursuers, when the blood of their tribe wants avenging. He knew too that, wild as the woods and the elements, accustomed to all chances from their childhood; to travel any distance, to bear fatigue, to fly from the rigour of their foes, who had chased them from many lands, or in pursuit of those objects which led them over the whole earth, they were as swift and indefatigable as they were desperate when their blood was up. He knew that, as it has since been found in the American Indians, they had instincts that we have lost in artificial existence. That their senses retained an original acuteness, which conferred on them in the eyes of the common people the character of a supernatural agency. They could see, hear, smell, with the keenness of eagles and beasts of prey. He had not a doubt but that by their torchlight they would trace the prints of his ass's feet in the brown surface of the woodland earth, which was covered with a carpet of the fallen needle-like leaves of the fir; and that when these failed, their ears would enable them to pursue the track. There were ten chances to one against his escape. If they overtook him, he was a dead man.

He reflected but a moment what course to pursue. If he went on in a direct line, he was certain they would overtake him speedily. If he held sideways, he should be observed at the latest as soon as it grew light by those in that direction. He therefore struck into a middle course, and held away at an angle between the two. This would carry him as far as possible from the present course of the pursuers, and the farther he went the farther he would become from either. But whether he was going in the darkness and confusion of the night he had no conception. What was the nature of the ground, or by what obstacles he might be met. Whether the woods were of great extent, or soon again led to open country. He had a feeling, however, from having formerly gone not far from his present route, that this forest was dense and wide.

On, therefore, he flew. Ben, who seemed rejoiced to have escaped his tormentors, and to have a sense of some imminent danger, put out his best speed. The ground continued as level as a house floor. Jack could not yet discern the holes of the trees from the darkness, so close was the wood. He often felt his knees brush against a stem; and sometimes, as if they passed through a spot where other sorts of trees grew, he was lashed on the hands and face by law boughs. But he had the great satisfaction to have left the sound of his pursuers entirely; and soon, the trees standing farther apart, he found the daylight rapidly advancing. Short, indeed, must his sleep in the camp have been, for it could now be little past midnight. He went still on and on. It seemed as if no opening in the woods would ever come. The ground, covered with one unbroken brown carpet of fir leaves, with only here and there a few pale and sickly stems of fern, sounded somewhat hollow under the feet of his ass, as such woodland ground often does. Ever and anon a large bird rushed dashing from its roost in the

thick tree-tops over his head; and once or twice he could again plainly hear the distant dream-like shout of his pursuers, which seemed now far on the right, and now on the left. As the pale light of morning grew stronger, suddenly a white sparc appeared before him. He paused. It looked like an expanse covered with smoke or mist; in a moment more he perceived it was water. It was a lake that lay in the heart of the woods. He could soon see that, on the side nearest to him, it was margined with rocks, and thick bushes and reeds. Dreading to emerge from the screen of the wood, lest he should be perceived by his enemies, and yet anxious to ascertain whether any house was there to which he might fly, he advanced cautiously to the outward line of trees, and glanced anxiously and carefully around. There was no smoke visible to indicate a single dwelling, yet so early in the morning he knew it was not likely that there would be. This was a loss, as by a smoke he might have discovered a house that now might lie concealed from him in the wood. It was a solitude so profound that in his present situation it had something frightful in it. Timothy, however, whose run through the woods had made him particularly attentive to the instinct for water, ran forward to lap from the lake. In a moment there was a rust, and a clang that made Jack's heart leap into his mouth. It was that of thousands and thousands of wild water-fowls, that from the reedy margin of the lake rose up from their sleep in a quivering cloud that filled the whole air, and with a sound of rushing pinions and clang of voices which can only be conceived by those who have heard the like. Wild geese, ducks, teal, widgeons, coots, and bitterns, mingled their agitated flight and their wild clanging cries with a host of gulls and terns, which from the distant sea came there in summer to build, and to rear their broods. The whole air, that an instant before was as silent as a tomb, was now one living mass of flying, wheeling, screaming, and lamenting creatures, that was actually astounding. Jack was startled not more by the clamour than by the reflection that this must be heard for miles round in those silent woods, and would give to his sagacious pursuers an instant idea that thither he had come in his flight.

Once more, therefore, he gave the reins to Ben, and urged him forward through the woods; but very soon he found himself stopped by the approach to boggy ground. A valley of considerable width lay before him, occupied with one great morass, out of which, as he paused to consider what he should do, one flight of wild ducks after another arose with loud outcries, and the solitary fisher of the fens, the heron, soaring up silently, and gradually mounting higher and higher into the air, directed then his flight over the woods to Jack's not less alarm. He knew that, once disturbed, this bird often flies far to some distant water before he alights again; and to the gipsy, well acquainted with his habits, would, by the direction of his course, be a confirming sign of his having reached this place.

He was now compelled to turn to the right or left, and he took the left because it seemed to lead him farther from the track of his foes

than the right did, where he had a feeling that the woods sooner terminated. It was not long before he found himself on the edge of a stream which issued from the lake, and pursued its way down the marshy vale. It was not wide, but deep and rapid. It was equally impossible for him to leap it, or to swim his ass through it, as the banks stood up high and slimy above the current—and once in, would make it next to impossible to get out again. He began to feel the greatest anxiety and perplexity. To have to retrace his steps, and circle three-fourths of the lake, was almost certain destruction. He trotted on, gazing anxiously before him, every moment becoming more and more fidgety and feverish. When, to his infinite joy, he saw a little bridge of poles and turf, which had apparently been laid long ago by sportsmen in their progress to the lake. He trotted over it, and thanking God, galloped on again for the woods.

Scarcely had he entered those on the other side of the valley when, to his regret, he found himself at the foot of steep hills. These he thought would delay his progress, and if he came to any open space, might expose him to the watchful eyes of his enemies. There was, however, no alternative, and no time to deliberate. He dismounted from Ben, tied his bag to the pad, and skipped along up the steep hill-sides. Ben and Timothy followed his steps, and presently he had reached an elevation which gave him a view over a great extent of country. He was amazed to see over what an apparently boundless space of unbroken black woodlands his career had led. Far to his left, as he stood, he could perceive the open country; but all the rest was one vast ocean of dense and profoundly silent forest.

Jack took comfort from this view. In such a mighty waste his enemies must know that he might be sought for days, and yet not be hit upon. The lake lay still partly visible below; a few solitary birds, too, might still be seen circling in the air, but no sound reached him from them. He now continued his ascent, and in a few minutes stood on the ridge, which showed the country beyond. It was still waste and woodland. Round hills swelling up here and there, all covered with pines, broke the view, and gave a greater wildness to its character. It was now near sunrise. Faint streaks of red tinged the clouds on the horizon, and mists lay white in the hollows of the landscape. To the left, the pine woods seemed to change to those of oak, or other deciduous trees; and he fancied he could in that direction discern more than one faint column of smoke. Thitherward he bent his course.

A quarter of an hour brought him again to the foot of the hills, and once more a dead level seemed to extend before him for leagues.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A DEADLY ENCOUNTER.

JACK was now astonished at the different character which the woods assumed around him. The ground, unlike that over which he had passed on the other side of the hills, which was sandy and dry, was here livid and slippery, as

if from never-evaporated moisture. The trees hung dank and cheerless. Some, slender and sickly, stretched their feeble branches far and wide in the pale dim light of the other overshadowing trees, as if seeking a breath of upper and more vivifying air. Night-shades, on the contrary, grown almost to tree-like size, stood here and there, with yellow branches and thinly scattered leaves, and already began to display the purple richness of their poison fruit. Tangled masses of bramble formed the undergrowth, and huge fungi, livid and rotting into masses of venomous pulp, shewed themselves in every direction. It seemed a place made for the abode of loathsome reptiles, and natures in alliance with them. Jack, who an hour before would have given worlds for the sight of a human habitation, now actually started to perceive a cottage standing in this baleful region. It was in full keeping with all around it. It was of wood, grown green with age. A rotting thatch covered it. Instead of pleasant enclosures and a neat little garden about it, lay heaps of damp ashes, with beds of rampant docks and thistles, and amongst, and half buried by them, trees that had been felled, and had lain till they rotted piecemeal, and were covered with whole crops of yellow fungi.

As Jack glanced over this chilling scene, he heard a stick crack, and turning, saw not far off an old woman, fit habitant of the place. She was old, and, luckily for him, apparently nearly blind and deaf; for, as she gathered her sticks to light her fire, she appeared totally unconscious of all around. She was in the extremity of feebleness. While she stooped to gather sticks and broke them under her foot, and then laid them in an old basket, she leaned trembling on a strong staff in her left hand. Her arms were mere skin and bone, and the skin was as wrinkled as the bark of an oak, and as brown. Her sharp and prominent features were of the same character; and her eyes were set in lids as red and bleared as if she had all her life lived in a pungent and acrid smoke.

Jack, who had all the belief of his age in witches, sat motionless on his ass till the old beldame had finished and carried her load into her cottage, when he stole past as silently as possible, and then put Ben to his utmost speed. Not many hundred yards, however, from the house, he suddenly came upon an old man, as old in look, and as evil in look, as the old woman. He had a greasy suit, as of black leather, an old slouching hat with torn brim, and stood propped on a crooked stick, round which a rudely-carved snake twined. He had something in a bag on his back, and he tottered from head to foot with palsy. As Jack saw him, he involuntarily drew up, gazed at him with awe, and said, "Good morning, good master." The old man, instead of answering, muttered between his teeth, still nodding and tottering with palsied weakness,

"Ay, ay—one—two—three—  
Cursed lad, and cur, and ass:  
Let 'em flee, he's by the tree—  
Catch 'em devil, as they pass."

The old man went tottering and nodding on, with a fiendish leer on his face. Something in his bag rolled and twisted, as if it were alive; the old man cursed it, and went on. Jack, fill-

ed with a horror of this malicious old man, also trotted on as fast as he could, while Timothy cringed to the side of Ben, and whined piteously to himself.

Ere long Jack had the pleasure to issue from this baleful wood. The sun had risen bright and warm; a stream, in a valley below, ran glittering on its way; all looked cheerful; and a narrow opening in some rocks that flanked the brook seemed to promise an outlet to some cultivated country. He descended to the stream, let Ben drink, and was in the act of riding through the water, when, leaning against a tree that sprang out of a rock in the narrow pass before him, he saw a powerful young gipsy with his eyes already silently fixed on him. It was now too late to flee. Jack paused a moment, and, though the case seemed desperate, determined to put a good face on the matter, and go on.

As he drew near, the man planted his brawny figure full in the way, raised his knotted cudgel of blackthorn, and said, savagely, "So, youngster, you are met."

"What want you with me?" said Jack.

"Imp of darkness," he replied, "what do I want! Prepare to go to the devil that sent you here. Do you pretend, you soury curmudgeon, to come and play your infernal tricks on men like us? Do you come with your fish-hooks and your fiend's foal of an ass, that has killed Barney Beggs dead on the spot? Take that for your pains, you villain!"

With that he sprang upon Jack, and with the fury of a giant whirling his cudgel aloft, he aimed a blow at Jack's head, which, had it been as hard as a stonemason's mallet, would have cracked it as if it had been a pumpkin; but Jack, who had no desire to try its effects in that way, ducked with his accustomed celerity, and pushing in close on his antagonist, aimed a thrust with his hanger at his chest. The active gipsy, who was as lithe as a serpent, drew back enough to allow the thrust only to take a slight effect on his right shoulder; and seizing Jack with his left hand, plucked him from the ass and dashed him down on the road. In an instant he drew a large long-pointed knife from his belt, and another second would have seen it plunged through Jack's heart; but Timothy, who had made a furious attack the moment he saw Jack aimed at, now seized the gipsy by the calf of the outstretched leg, with such a sudden and teeth-meeting gripe, that, groaning with the pain, he turned to dart his knife into the dog. Timothy, however, who saw the flash of the blade, let go his bold, and sprang aside ready for a pounce upon a fresh quarter; and Jack, who was not a youth to let slip the slightest advantage in his favour, sprang upon a projecting piece of rock, and drawing his axe, struck the gipsy on the back of the head a blow which sent him head foremost under the feet of Ben, who stood quietly awaiting the issue. The blow was mortal. Jack paused a moment—when, seeing a flood of gore drench through the black locks of the fallen man, he descended, lifted up his head, then letting it gently fall again, said to himself, "Ay, it's over with him safe enough, however." He at first was inclined to leave him where he was, as it was a solitary place, and that it might be long enough before he was found for himself to

have got far from this part of the country. But reflecting that the clan was all out, that the direction and post of each had probably been assigned him, and that when this man did not return to his comrades at night, a fiery search and hue-and-cry would be made after him, he concluded it best to hide the body. His first thought was to cast it into the stream; but, recollecting the strange words of the strange old man he had so lately met, he deemed that there was a connexion or an understanding between the gipsies and these uncanny dwellers in the wood, and that the body floating down the stream might speedily be descried by some of them; he was unsatisfied with this. He therefore again crossed the stream, turned into the wood in a side direction, and at some distance found a wild and solitary hollow, where sand appeared to have been dug for ages, either for building, for glass-works, or to carry to the city for household purposes. It was to Jack a startling and convincing proof that he was not far from an inhabited place. Here, indeed, stood the ruins of a hut, that at some former time had probably been inhabited by the sand-diggers. There were traces of a garden, and wild plum-trees and garden plants still stood amid weeds and sand. Around were precipices of sand, overhung with old black pines, and scooped out into caves of great extent. Many of these, from the loose nature of the material, had fallen in, and carried down with them enormous pines, which now stood leaning in many a strange direction, but growing, and as flourishing as ever. The whole had a most desolate and gloomy aspect. The caves around seemed like the deserted abodes of some solitary recluse. The silence was awful, and Jack's first thought was, that it was just the place for a murder to be committed in; his next, that it was that of all others to conceal the man whom he murdered. His own purpose had too much of the same character to need another reflection. He strode hastily back again, managed to raise the body and lay it across the ass, and return thither with all possible speed.

The fact that many of these caves of sand had fallen in, furnished him with a hint for the accomplishment of his object. He took a survey of them in succession, and observing one where the superincumbent mass, surmounted by a large tree, wanted only a slight impulse to come down altogether, he deposited the body in this cavern, and by dint of cutting away with a pointed stake the soft sand from the sides of its entrance, and then mounting into the tree and swaying it to and fro, in less than an hour the whole fell in with a thundering hollow sound, and the man, buried deep in his sandy vault, might lie for ages before he was discovered. Jack, precipitated by the fall of the tree to some distance into a heap of sand, readily sprang again to his feet, and again set forward on his way.

Though it had been a case of life for life, and of desperate self-defence, as he looked around on that wild and dismal scene, ere he quitted it, he could not help feeling a sensation of deep melancholy and regret for the fate of a fellow-mortal, though that mortal would so willingly have sacrificed him. When he looked round on the solitary sand caves, and between the

holes of the pine-trees in the shadowy wood, he could not help fancying that he heard the cracking of a stick, and even saw the nodding and gabled figure of the old man in the distance. As he entered the defile which had been the scene of the contest, Ben did not pass the blood-stained spot without snorting and hanging back; and Jack himself rode over it with a shudder, and expected at almost every step to see another huge gipsy start up and dispute the passage with him. But all was still; and arriving soon after at a village, he refreshed himself and ass, and rode on yet far before evening.

## CHAPTER IX.

JACK MEETS WITH SOME HONEST MEN AT A SOLITARY INN, AND THE UPSET OF IT.

As the day closed, he arrived at a large solitary hostel, where he alighted for the night. The place was a great, slovenly, and forlorn concern. A large passage ran through it, ill paved; and a wooden staircase, leading out of it into the upper rooms—the steps composed apparently of solid blocks of oak—looked as if it had been travelled up by the whole country for half a century, and never swept down. On one side of the passage, Jack looked into a miserable kitchen, where a middle-aged stately woman was dallying rather than busy amid her greasy collection of pots and pans, and wooden tubs, and sack bags, and other lumberly articles; and on the other, into what was called the house-place, that is, the regular sitting and drinking room. The guests he found here, and the host, who was drinking with them, did not please him more than all the rest he saw. The host was a big, broad-built man, who was dressed in a sort of sallow-drab hose and doublet, with broad flaps, in which he had large pockets, wherein he stuck his hands continually, as well as where he deposited his money. He had a slouching sort of cap on; a great round face, with a beard that neither could be said to be wholly shaven, nor yet was allowed to grow naturally. It appeared thinly scattered, yet bristly and grised, and as if it were clipped pretty close once a month or so. He moved his limbs about loosely, and as if with a consciousness that they were heavy. At present, however, he did not move them at all more than to beckon with his hand, when Jack went in to ask where his ass could be stalled, that he might take it up past the house into the yard at the back. Jack followed his direction, and found his way into a large yard, as littery and neglected as the house. Great stacks of wood and sticks for firing, which had been carelessly piled as wanted till they were tumbled into confused heaps, quantities of loose straw, old carts, trestles, and boards, lying about amidst decaying buildings. He first opened one door, and then another. One was a lumber hole, full of farming tools, ladders, and such things; another, an ash-hole; a third, a hen-house; a fourth, a great and pestiferous pigsty, where heaps of enormous swine lay in a warm and steaming mass of manure—the accumulation of years—of swine that rose up and came bolting to the door with a tremendous guffaw and grunting, no doubt expecting to be fed. Others were cowsheds and cowsheds, and a barn, which did not appear to have been used for a long time.

At length he opened one door, and found it a stable, where, to his surprise, he found half-a-dozen horses, and the place having, unlike all the rest, the air of much and daily use. The horses were not for farm employment, but roadsters, with their saddles and bridles hanging on the stallposts near them; and they looked as if they had not long come in from a good scouring journey across a dirty country.

On returning to the house, Jack walked into the room, doffed his cap to the host and his guests, who were sitting at a large, old oak table, and seemed to have despatched a hearty supper after their ride; for they evidently, by their dress and splashed boots, were the owners of the horses.

They returned Jack's salutation with a short nod each and a "good e'en;" and as he marched up to the fire, sat and looked at him with evident wonder. The fire was a good pile of wood, burning on the hearth, under one of the wide chimneys of those days; a chimney, in fact, of immense dimensions. Jack clapped himself down on one of the side-benches under the chimney, rubbed his hands before the cheering blaze—for after his hard ride in the morning he felt chilly—and inquired what he could have for supper.

"Just," said his host with a significant smile, "what he would like to pay for. He could have bread and cheese and a can of beer, or he could have a haunch of venison, or a brace of wild ducks, if it better suited his appetite and his purse."

Jack said he was only a poor smith's apprentice going to see his grandfather, and could not pretend to much money; but he had ridden a long way, and wanted something substantial, so he would even have a few slices of bacon and an egg or two. These, after a good while, were set before him by the stately cook, who also appeared to be all the hostess that there was. While Jack had been waiting, he had had opportunity to observe the other guests, and the more he looked the less he liked them. He was inclined to think his first day's adventure with the gipsies had made him suspicious of everybody. These, thought he, are probably honest yeomen, who have been to their market or fair, and are on their way home; but to my eye they look more like a set of scoundrel thieves and murderers than I ever saw or dreamed of. They talked with their host, with whom they seemed to be on the best terms, of things which Jack could make neither head nor tail of, but which he was strongly persuaded related to villainies done and others planned. They were booted and belted, and wore each a heavy sword—but that was common to all travellers in those times; but it was their looks which seemed to stamp them as thorough and vulgar rascals, as plain as looks could do. They had none of the open, honest spirit about them that honest yeomen and travellers on honest business have. They plied their leathern jacks stoutly, and talked now and then boisterously and vehemently; but their conversation always came down again to a low key, and a sort of undertone, which betrayed an habituation to caution and inward anxiety. By various looks, which from time to time they had cast at Jack, he was aware that they were speculating about him; and when he had done his supper, mine host twisted round his stool towards him, and said, "Well, my boy, hast made a good supper?"

"Good?" said Jack; "a right hearty one."  
 "But art a boy, or a man?" said the host.  
 "Thou'rt the book (bulk) of a lad, but the look of a man. Art just in thy 'prenticeship, or art about out?"

"About half way," said Jack.  
 "And where may ye be going then? Where does this grandfather of thee live?"

"At Brinklee," said Jack.  
 "At Brinklee!" said the host; "where's that? I should know this country pretty well, for I've lived all my life in it; but Brinklee, it's the very first time I ever heard of it."

"Ay," said Jack, "it's a good way out to the left here. I dare say you never were there."

"And it's odd to me, young 'un," said one of the fellows at the table, "if you were ever there yourself either. What is it near, Wandsborough, or Pegworth, or Brokehope, or where is it? To the left? I think we've been pretty well over the country to the left, and the right too, but I never stumbled on such a place; and did you, neighbour?" said he, turning to the others.

"Faw!" said they, "it's all a lie. The youngster knows better."

"Master Fox," said another, "you may be reckoned a sharpish lad at home, but these tales won't go down with us. We've seen a thing or two in our time; and I can tell you, you are no more a smith's apprentice than my grandmother is. So set with the truth, for we've a desire to know, and there's that about you that gives the lie to your pretended tale. Confess now, art't you a messenger to somebody or other in this country?"

"I wish I was" said Jack; "but what I tell you's the fact, and I can make no more of myself than I am."

"No, but you can make a little less; and to be plain with you, it concerns us to know what news is carried in and out of these parts; and therefore if you don't come honest John with us, and tell a pat story, with none of your Brinklees and your granddads, we shall take the liberty of examining you ourselves."

"Mine host," said Jack, "will you suffer such things to be done under your roof? I'm under your protection, and I expect you to protect me. I'm nothing that these gentlemen suspect me of, and as an honest lad I scorn to be searched."

The host shook his head, and said, "These honest men won't hurt you if you be reasonable, and it's not in my power to prevent them doing their pleasure."

"Then," said Jack, starting up, and drawing his hanger, "the first man that touches me let him take care of this."

The fellows laughed, all rose up together, pushing their seats away behind them, and said, "Well done, little cock! That's a brave stomach, however. But see! for one little cheese-toaster of thine, here are half-a-dozen spits."

They drew their swords and advanced, to hem in Jack as they would hem in a sheep or a colt.

"Be reasonable, my cock-o'-the woods," said they coaxingly; "be reasonable now," added they, laughing and still approaching.

"What a bully-boy it would be though," said one, "if he were but as big as his heart is!"

Jack, without waiting further, sprang upon the table on which he had supped, at another spring he was on the shelf over the great wide chimney-piece, and flourishing his sword, said, "Gentlemen! there is more in me than you think of; you had better desist."

They stood a moment with open mouths and staring eyes, astonished at this agility; but again bursting with laughter, said—"What a young monkey of a Jack-pudding! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Why, thou'rt escaped from thy master, the Merry-Andrew! A smith, indeed! But come there, Hop-o'-my-thumb, or we shall find means to reach thee!"

All of them now reached upwards with their swords towards him; but these not being long enough, one ran and brought a long pike, and poked at him, crying, "Does't yield?"

"Never!" cried Jack, cutting the pike asunder with a stroke of his sword. "Never! and in token of it, take that—and that—and that!" and with these words he flung down the heavy smoking tongs, which were ranged up there by the hostess. So unexpected was this assault, that not a missile but took effect. One iron struck mine host in the centre of his capacious chest, and felled him of a heap against his great table. The second struck one of the fellows on his right shoulder, and his sword went jingling out of his hand to the floor. The third took effect full on the cheek of another, and marked him for life. He reeled away to the wall, and clapping his hands before his face, groaned aloud. The rest, astonished and enraged at this outbreak, swore desperate vengeance; and mounting on tables and chairs, struck with fury at Jack, who, still out of their reach, now plied his missiles with incessant activity. Irons, weights, candlesticks, flew down about the heads of his assailants in a shower which did not miss those against whom it was directed. A huge cleaver and various iron steppans, that hung within reach, fell down without loss of time. On a corner cupboard near, stood a mussy jar full of salt, to keep it dry. Jack sprung upon the cupboard, hoisted the jar in both hands, and discharging it on his foes with all his might, it fell on the back of a chair, and carried it and the man who stood on it down together. Reeling against his fellows, there was a general tumble and confusion. The host, who had now recovered his breath sufficiently from the blow on his chest, seeing the destruction that was going on, cried out, "Stop, stop, then young devil! stop—enough! His engage for these honest men!" But Jack, who had the moment before espied a glorious advantage, was too eager to heed him. He had leaped back to his former position on the mantel-piece, and cutting the two front strings of a huge back-rack which hung from the ceiling, down went, on the falling and sumbling foes, bacon, ham, sticks, and several large cheeses, which had been laid there to dry, in a horrible chaos.

The host, who saw it coming, clapped his hands to his ears, and rushed out of the house. The rest of the assailants, overwhelmed by this ponderous descent of commodities, that fell more agreeably into hungry stomachs in suitable doses than in the wholesale upon heads, lay sprawling and stunned about the floor. Without waiting for their resurrection, Jack leaped down from his elevated station, stepped over chairs and tables and prostrate bodies, and made the best of his way to his room. Here he determined to barricade himself for the night, if possible; and if not, to make his escape out of a window. He trusted to the astounding success which he had had, to inspire the vanquished fellows with some idea of his possessing arts which in those days such men believed in and dreaded. It was not unlikely that they would set him down as belonging

to his Spanish majesty's forces, and molest him no more. But if they did, as it was yet too dark voluntarily to venture forth again into a country which appeared to swarm with desperate characters, he must fortify himself as well as possible. For this purpose, he reconnoitred his quarters, and was by no means pleased to find his door unfurnished with either lock or bolt, and over the latch a hole big enough for a man to put his hand in, and pull out any thing with which he might fasten it down. He, however, split off a piece of wood from his bedstead with his axe, drove it fast in over the latch, and then examined what egress he could find from the windows.

One small window looked out upon the gutter of a lower roof, and from thence he saw it would be easy, in case of necessity, to make his escape, and Timothy with him. Adjoining this roof were lower buildings, so that he could from them drop without injury, into the yard. Satisfied with this, he determined not to go to bed, but to await in readiness what might happen.

To favour the idea of his being something uncanny, as the Scotch say, instead of getting into bed, he ordered Timothy to get into it, with his head to the feet, so that he could be well seen from the door. He threw a blanket over him, leaving his head uncovered; and then wrapping himself in the quilt, which was of a bright red, he mounted on an old clothes-press, or kind of wardrobe, which stood by the wall opposite to the door; and crossing his legs, squatted down like an old Indian idol. He held his axe in one hand, and his sword in the other, upright, or at least had them ready so to be held, if he heard any one coming up stairs; and striking a light with his tinderbox, he kindled a piece of touchwood about the size of his finger, which he always carried about with him, because without flame, it would continue to burn for hours, and could be soon blown up into a glow that would fire dry leaves or dry grass, when he wanted a blaze in the woods. Thus prepared he awaited the approach of his enemies, if they should come.

The clothes-press was ink-black with age, and carved with old and grotesque figures. Jack seated upon it, instead of sleeping in his bed, in his red robe, in one hand his axe, in the other his sword, on his head his cap, set up as high as possible, and in his mouth a piece of touch-wood, held between his teeth, and breathed on till his mouth seemed a cavern of glowing fire, as you have seen boys sometimes make theirs, he thought would present such a spectacle to superstitious fellows with bad consciences, that they would be no little astounded. He was right. It was not long before he heard steps slowly and as silently as possible ascending the stairs. The steps paused at his door. A candle was presented to the hole over the latch, and he recognised the broad face of the host presently peeping in. One good look seemed to satisfy him. Jack saw that his eye, first of all, caught his figure as he sat aloft breathing fire from a most grinning visage, and then glancing to where Timothy lay in the bed, setting up his bristles, and grinning, and growling most fiercely also at him. His red face went as pale as that of a ghost; he muttered the name of God hastily; darted from the door, and by the thump and lumber that Jack heard, had evidently taken a leap down stairs, and had gone rumbling and rolling to the bottom.

This was followed by a most awful silence below. Jack sat a while, laughing to himself; but he might have gone to bed and slept in perfect peace. Not another soul returned up stairs. They were too much convinced that they had been engaged with the foul fiend, to wish to come any more near him. Jack heard a great bustle, and going in and out below, till after midnight, and he guessed that they were dressing their bruises, and restoring the chaos to order again. At length all was still. Throwing himself on the bed, he fell fast asleep, and awoke in the full sunny light of the morning. He now cautiously unfastened his door; descended cautiously the stairs; and peeped into the room where the singular contest had taken place over-night. Not a soul was there; but all was restored to its former state, except that the huge salt-pot was not standing on the corner cupboard. The fire burned on the hearth. His breakfast of beef, black bread, and a black jack of ale, stood ready for him; but mine host was not visible. Jack ate down and ate his breakfast, but nobody appeared. When he had finished, he knocked on the table with the haft of his knife, but no one attended. He then marched to the door of the kitchen. There was the housewife slowly moving amid her pots and pans, who, when she saw him, set her hands on her hips and stared at him, but said nothing. He asked what he had to pay, but she only crossed herself, and made no reply. Jack took out some money, and offered it to her, but she only crossed herself the more earnestly; muttered something to herself, and beckoned with her hand for him to be gone.

Jack asked her how those honest men were this morning, and where they were; but she shook her head, crossed herself again, and Jack finding all answers hopeless, flung down the money, and went out.

The stable was empty of its horses. Bea seemed to have made good use of his night. He had slipped his halter, and helped himself to the remains of corn and hay in the horses' stalls; and Jack equalizing his bag by parting his clothes into two lots, mounted and away.

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## CHAPTER X.

JACK TRAVELS ON, BUT DOES NOT MEND HIS COMPANY.

His journey this day was through a more cultivated and agreeable country. There were fields and villages and scattered farms; here and there, heaths and woods; and then again, enclosures and old-fashioned dwellings, half buried in their fruit trees. About noon he came down to a very pleasant vale. A river, running over clear gravel, was divided into two or three streams, which hastened on glittering in the sun, or running in the shade of overhanging willows and other trees. Green islands lay between these branches of the streams, with high flowery banks stooping to the water. Meadows with sheep and cattle were around; little cottages glanced from amongst embowering trees; and again, at a distance, the borders of deep woods closed the scene. Jack crossed two or three of these streams; and as he approached the third, he saw a very old woman standing under some willows on its banks. A large flock of geese were swimming in the water, all white as snow. The old woman nod-



ded her head, and tremulously moved her whole frame with extreme age. She had a tall stick in her hand, and a large pair of wooden shoes on her feet. Jack stopped and gazed at her; for he thought perhaps some time, years hence, when he saw his mother again, she might be as old and as time-worn as this poor woman was.

"It's a pleasant country, this of yours, mother," said Jack; "but why, at your age, do you stand there alone?"

"I watch my geese," she said, "and I'm not alone. Angels won here, and I often see them. That's why I like to be here. There's no place like it. Those that were young when I was, they are all angels now, and I often see them, all in white, and smiling as I used to see them then. They come to cheer me, and tell me they want me above; but the Lord don't release me yet."

"But, good mother," said Jack, "why do you stand so long with your trembling limbs? Why don't you let some young boy or girl look after your geese?"

"O! I'm never tired. I sit on a bank sometimes, and listen to the songs that the angels are singing; and then, when my geese wander, I can float after them—these are my boats," pointing to the wooden shoes, "that I float away in."

Jack bid the old woman good-bye, and went on, busy with many thoughts about his mother and the old woman; and wondering whether the old woman really saw the angels, or whether it was a superannuated fancy; and whether she was nappier when she was young, or now when she was so old, and quiet, and withered, and looked so silently out of her large grey eyes, and was wrapped in such beautiful visions.

But before he could satisfactorily settle these questions, he began to descend a steep and story hill, which the road wound about, and shewed him that he was descending into a deep and woody valley, which appeared by the glimpses that he got ever and anon from high turns in the road, to be of great extent, and to have other valleys here and there running out amongst hills of considerable height. Before he reached the bottom, it was drawing towards evening; and charmed with the beautiful appearance of the country, he began to look about for a place to lodge. It was not long before he saw a neat little cottage of framed timber and brickwork, lying at the foot of some pleasant hilly green crofts, and with a little palisadoed garden before it. An old man sate on a stone by the door, leaning on a stick; and Jack took a great fancy that he should like vastly to stop there for the night. There was a wooden outbuilding where Ben might be, or he could run in the croft; and there was something so homelike and friendly about the place, that if he could persuade the old man to give him a night's lodging, he thought he should be very happy. He had a dread of hostels after his last night's reception, and after hearing that the country was in so disorderly a state. He therefore trotted up to the door, respectfully accosted the old man, told him that he was on a journey, and should feel very proud if he would let him have a night's lodging there.

The old man looked at him, shook his head, and said that his house was no hostel, and that these were not times to take in strangers. Jack said that he had found to his cost this was not a country to travel in with any security, and therefore it was that he wished, if possible, to procure a night's lodging at a private house. As they

were speaking, the old man's wife came out. She was a very decent, comfortable-looking old dame, with her gown pinned back, and shewing her thick, dark, quilted petticoat. She had a round, healthy face, and a very motherly look. As she heard Jack's request, she questioned him as to where he came from, and where he was going; and Jack, who felt that he could not tell her a false story, as he did to the gipsies and men at the inn, said he was going to seek a good service, if he could find it, in some nobleman's house, for he had a notion that such a life would suit him better than the dull one of a village. He must be active, and he had a desire to be engaged in stirring adventures.

"By Our Ladye," said the old woman, "but you may soon get into employment, and that not amongst those who would do you any good. The country here is overrun with bad men, and there's nobody but they can find some mischief for them to do. We live in fear of our lives every day; and may be now, youngster, you may be connected with those that are threatening to rob, and perhaps to murder us."

"Good mother," said Jack, "while the country is as you say, you have a great right to suspect any stranger that comes; but, thank God! I am not yet quite come to be as bad as you would suppose. I am connected with nobody; I have just escaped, and that narrowly, with my own life from robbers and murderers, and that in a hostel too; but I won't urge you any further, as you don't know me, and so I bid you good-bye."

"Stop, stop," said the old woman, "not so hasty. Do you know any great man that can employ you? Have you a letter to any one?"

"I have no letter," said Jack, "and I know no one."

"Then, in God's name, stop here for the night. I think thou'r't honest, and I wouldn't have any harm happen to a youth that wishes to be so. We are going to leave this place ourselves, for we're not safe here, and going to live near a noble old knight, who will protect us, I know, if he can. May be he can find something for such a youth as thee to do."

Jack thanked them and dismounted. When he had turned out Ben, and he and the old people sate on the hearth together, Jack told them of what happened to him amongst the gipsies and at the hostel. The old people said—Yes, it was a dreadful state the country was in. There was nothing but distractions. People were divided about government and religion, and rogues took the advantage, and did as they pleased. Here was in this neighbourhood a wicked nest of them; and though the inhabitants had sent, and prayed the magistrates to send for forces to protect the people, no help came, and nobody knew what to do. Some of these men, who lived in a strong castle in the woods, under a man who pretended to have authority, but who in reality only plundered the country, and nobody dared call them to account, had been there often and extorted money from them; and now they expected them every night to come again, to rob them of all they had, and perhaps to murder them.

Jack proffered to help them to pack and get away as soon as they could. It was better to leave their property to lie waste than to lose their lives and all. They sate and talked till it was late, and agreed the next day to pack up their goods and get away as soon as they could.

but they must have help and horses from the old knight before they could convey their things in safety. While they talked, they heard footsteps; there was a thundering knock at the door, and the old man and woman started to their feet, and trembled in every joint. Doors and window-shutters were locked and barred already, and Jack made signs to them to remain quiet, while he ran up stairs and endeavoured to discover who it was. As he reached the chamber and opened the window, the knocking became louder than ever, and oaths and dreadful threats were heard from hoarse tongues. Jack now called out, and demanded who was there and what they wanted. The men, whoever they were, were evidently surprised to hear a strange voice, and remained silent for a moment, then spoke to one another, and then said, "Open the door, or we'll break it down, and quickly let you know what we want."

Jack, who could only discern in the gloom two stout figures, and thought he recognised the voice of one of the men of the hostel, cried out, "Aha! what, that's you there, is it? Haven't you had enough at the hostel? Must I have another bout with you? If I have, it will go harder with you than under the bacon-rack."

As he said this, he saw the two fellows start from the door, gaze up earnestly at the window, then hurry off, saying, "That's he, sure enough! but if it's the devil himself, we'll have a force before morning enough to drive him from his hold, and burn the house about his and the old wretches' ears."

Jack, on going down, found the old people half dead with fright. He told them that the fellows were for the present gone, but threatened to be back before morning, and burn the house about their ears. At this, they set up a loud cry, fell on the ground, and prayed to God to help them; and then rose, wringing their hands, and exclaiming—"It's all over with us! it's all over!"

Jack said—"My good people, it's of no use despairing. Much may be done by exertion. Have you no neighbours that we can alarm?"

"No, no," they replied, "there are none nearer than a mile; and if they were at hand, they durst not help."

"But," said Jack, "you must not be lost. We must do what we can. See here. These men probably won't be here these two hours. I observed a well in your garden, very near the road that leads to the door. We have only to shift the two rows of paling a little, let the road lead directly over the well, and I'll answer for it that not many of the villains escape to set fire to the house."

"O my God! what a horror!" exclaimed the old woman. "What, drown the poor wretches with all their sins on their heads!"

"Ay, drown them," exclaimed Jack, "every mother's son of them, or they'll burn you. It's a christian duty to clear the land of such vermin; for Jack had learned such doctrine as a sacred duty, and had no more compunction for such desperadoes when his blood was up, than he would have for so many wolves.

The old woman wrung her hands, and cried, "Rather let us die then, than be guilty of any fellow-creature's blood."

But the old man had fallen into Jack's opinion; lit his lantern; beckoned Jack to the door; hopped off, and brought a spade and a mattock; and but they went. Jack did not find it a hard

matter to rip up the paling. It came away in huge, long masses. It was not necessary to put down the posts again very firm. So that they stood up, it was enough. The old man held the lantern, and wondered to see Jack work so bravely. Often they stopped and listened if they heard anybody approaching, and then set to again faster than ever. Often the old woman came to the door, and begged them, in God's name, to desist and come in. The gateposts took the most shifting, as it was necessary to make them somewhat firm; but before an hour was over, the two rows of pallsades were standing of a fashion, but so as the difference could not be seen in the dark. The well-lid was taken away. The two spent yet some time in tying and securing the pales with ropes and pieces of wood, of which good store lay behind the house; and at length, on the fancied approach of some sound, the two busy labourers retreated into the cottage.

They planted themselves at the chamber windows, and waited with breathless anxiety the result. Another hour rolled away, and often did the old woman wish that she might be allowed to carry the well-lid, and lay it down again; and then began to fancy that she could see a streak of dawn in the east, and that the robbers would not come. Jack, on his part, began almost to fear that they would not come, or that some innocent night-wanderer might fall into his trap. But at length a sound of horse's feet was heard hurrying near. Half-a-dozen men came suddenly and at full speed out of a side lane, rode rapidly up to the gate, dismounted, and tied their horses to the front pales. Jack's heart beat pit-a-pat; it was but a moment, and he saw the group hasten in at the little gate. They were all talking together; another moment, and there was a plunge—a heavy fall—a cry of horror,—and he missed two out of the shadowy figures. Two were seen hurrying back; a third, who had now nearly reached the door, turned back on seeing his companions retreat, and crying, "What is it? what is it?" turned to follow them. The next instant he disappeared in the well too. Those who had escaped did not stay to look behind them. They snatched their horses from their fastenings, mounted, and galloped off at full speed.

Jack, who was in exultation at the success of his scheme, could not contain himself, but cried after them as loud he could, "Stay there! stay there!" Their horses were heard going at full speed till lost in the distance of the valley.

"We must lose no time now," said the old man, "or in the coming night they will be upon us again, and massacre us without mercy. You must fly, my brave youth, to the old knight's, and pray him for horses and a wagon to carry us and our goods, and for men to guard us; and the sheriff must come and see to the men in the well."

Jack took the old man's directions, mounted one of the horses of the dead men, which their fellows had left hanging at the gate, and galloped away. Before the sun rose, he had reached the old knight's. Men and horses and a wagon were sent to fetch the old people and their chattels, and word forwarded to the sheriff of the robbers that were fallen into the well. Before noon all arrived at the cottage. They crowded round the well to see the bodies of the drowned drawn up; who no sooner came to the light, than Jack recognised them as his old acquaintances of the hostel, and the rest of the bystanders as amongst the most desperate freebooters in the country.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE FLITTING OF THE OLD FOLKS, AND HOW THEY WERE RECEIVED BY THE OLD KNIGHT'S STEWARD.

Leaving the sheriff and his men to take charge of the dead bodies and of the robbers' horses, the old knight's men, assisted by Jack, set about in earnest to pack the old people's goods, and load them with all despatch in the wagon sent from the knight. The little cottage, which had been so long the home of the old people, was shut up; the well-lid laid down again; and the wagon drove away. The two old people, who were seated on the top in a sort of little hollow made in the middle for them, where the beds and bedding were laid so that they could sit at their ease, looked back at their beloved home of so many years, which, unless the country become more settled, they would probably never see again, and wept. As they were gazing, with their heads turned backwards, on the old place through their tears, as if they would not lose a moment's view of it while they were in sight, the cat, which had probably been frightened away into the bushes by the appearance of so many strange men in the house, packing and ransacking, and by the dogs that were with them,—amongst which our Timothy was not the least active, taking it into his head to gambol, and run up stairs and down stairs, and sound and roard in the croft, with the other dogs, as if he had been only a half-grown whelp,—appeared at the corner behind the house, and lifting up one forefoot, stood looking after the wagon, and mewed most piteously. The old woman forgot her tears in a moment, and cried out, "Oh my cat! my cat! Stop, good folks; my cat! my cat!"

The men stopped to learn what was the matter; and when they understood what it was, and saw the cat where the old woman pointed, "O," said they, "never mind the cat; there are plenty of cats where you are going, and cats don't like to leave their old haunts."

But the old woman would not be pacified without the cat. She begged they'd let her husband get down and fetch her; but Jack said, "O, I'll fetch her, mother; I'll fetch her." He sprang over the hedge, and ran up the croft the nearest way to the house. No sooner was he over the hedge, however, than Tim sprang over after him, and after Tim the other dogs. The old woman cried out again, louder than ever, "Oh, my cat, my cat! they'll worry my cat!" The men cried sternly to the dogs to come back; Jack turned, and drove Tim back too; but the cat had taken alarm at the sight of the dogs, and stood with her bristles set up on her back, which was drawn up like an arch, and her tail swelled out to the size of a fox's brush. As Jack drew nearer, crying, "Pussy, pussy," very coaxingly, she spit at him with a sudden spurt, gave a low "how!" and leaping upon a water-tub, thence sprang up to the water-spout, that came sloping down the house-end, and in the next moment was on the house-top, still bristled up like a porcupine, and mewing more piteously than ever.

Jack made no difficulty of the matter. He climbed up an old pear-tree that grew by the house, scrambled up the thatch like a monkey, and, to the astonishment of the men with the wagon, an instant afterwards was seen on the very ridge of the cottage, where, striding across it, he hopped along, by means of his hands, like a

dog, and approached the cat, which now stood drawn up against the chimney, spitting and mewling most savagely. Jack continued his endeavours to pacify her, still crying, "Pretty pussy! pretty pussy!" but all in vain. There was a little dormant window in the roof, where, no doubt, the cat had been used often to enter, and at the moment that Jack made himself pretty sure of her, she darted down the thatch, and in at this window. The men at the wagon, now diverted beyond bounds, laughed aloud; but the next moment, as Jack himself nimbly descended the thatch to follow the cat through the window, and the old rotten thatch crumbled and tumbled down in dust under his tread, all cried out in horror, "He'll be killed, the madman! he'll be down! he'll be killed!"

The old man and woman held up their hands in speechless terror, but Jack in the mean time had disappeared through the window. Timothy, however, on seeing this, could no longer be restrained; he sprang over the hedge with a howl, and the rest of the dogs after him. It was of no use calling; away they rushed, barking. The old woman again cried, "My cat! my cat! they'll worry my cat!" and began to hobble over the chairs and tables to descend from the wagon. The men, who cursed the cat, and wished it at the bottom of seven seas, now thought it best that the old woman should be helped down, to catch her cat, as they saw no other prospect of getting away that day; but while they were in the act of assisting, Jack appeared from the house, running with the cat in his arms, which did not cease to scratch, and swear, and struggle, in a most catlike style. Luckily, Jack had found the door of the chamber into which the cat jumped shut, or he would have found it a much more difficult business to decoy the cat into his grasp than he had to decoy the thieves into the well. He clapped the window to after him. The cat seeing herself enclosed in the room, then took to a closet that stood open, scrambled up to the top shelf, where she stood howling, swearing, and spitting out mist and musky breath, while Jack mounted up to seize her. Before he could do that, she leaped down again, and flew to the chimney. This was fortunately stopped with a bundle of straw; and as Jack extricated himself from the cupboard, she was in the act of springing up to the window. The glass flew to shivers as she bounced her head against it; and another moment, and she would have been again on the house-top. But Jack seized her as she was half-way out, dragged her back, and at the expense of various scratches, and by a firm hold, brought her captive.

Being now consigned to her mistress, who wrapped her in her apron, and from which peeping out she continued for a long time to testify her uneasiness by whining and grumbling, the wagon once more proceeded. The excitement of the cat, and the attempt to pacify her, had the best effect on the spirits of the old people. They seemed almost to forget the old house in the attention to her; and when it was out of sight, sate for the rest of the journey quietly, remarking on the country they passed through, and talking to the men who walked on by the side of the wagon. Jack, with his ass and dog, trotted on before to give notice of their approach; and that night saw all safely arrive at the village near the old knight's.

The next day Jack assisted in putting the tur-

niture into the cottage that was appropriated to the old people; and here a bed also was set up for himself. The steward, who seemed a grave and consequential man, came and gave orders that Jack's ass should be turned into a sort of paddock behind the buildings, belonging to the hall; asked Jack what he did with such a dog; and Jack, who had never been asked such a question before, and never dreamt of being asked such an one, said he did not know exactly; that he was very fond of him, and took him for company and safety.

"Young man!" said the steward, looking very hard at Jack, and with a severity in his manner and tone that a good deal surprised him, "a person is known by his company, as a bird is known by its feathers; and let me say, that a more scoundrel-looking cur I never set eyes on. Take care, while you stay here, that he is not found prowling in the park, or he will instantly have a bolt sent through him from the keeper's crossbow; and you will have an order to march at a minute's warning. You'd better take my advice, and have him destroyed at once."

Besides this, he went on to question Jack as to his own identity and objects in rambling about the country with an ass and sneaking cur. Jack, who conceived a deep and inward dislike to this man, and thought if the old knight was at all like him he should not require any order to march, for he should soon be on his way again, gave the steward no other answer than that he had a little business with the Knight. This only seemed to fix the steward's attention more deeply on him, instead of putting an end to it. He surveyed Jack from head to foot with a scrutinizing look, and said—"And pray what may your business be, young fellow? I am the man to whom all business must be opened. It can only go to the knight through me; for his worship will not be troubled by every impertinent groom with his sordid matters; and by your appearance, I conceive you can have no very weighty business with the noble Knight. What have you to say then boy? What would you?"

Jack, whose antipathy to the man was every moment getting quite enormous, and who yet felt that he might be making an enemy of him, which might destroy all his hopes of employment with the Knight, doffed his cap, made the steward a profound bow, and said—that he could have no objection whatever to tell him what he wanted; on the contrary, as his business was merely to solicit to be taken into the Knight's employ, he should be glad to secure his good services for him.

"And pray," asked the steward, "what kind of employment dost look for, then? For a place in the stable, or in the scullery? Is it to chop and carry wood for the fires, to help the gardeners, or drive plough and fetch and carry for the farm hands?"

Jack replied, that for such work as that he needed not to have come so far from home; those jobs were to be had anywhere. But he conceived that he had wit enough in him to make him useful in a higher walk: as a page, a running footman, to carry confidential messages, to wait on the Knight in the hall, or even to bear a bow in the field, if he were not lusty enough to carry a pike.

At the hearing of this, the steward threw up his eyes and hands with an air of the utmost astonishment and contempt. "What, pigmy!"

said he, "dost aspire to the offices of a full-grown and well-grown man? Carry a bow!—wait in the hall! Zounds! art thou come of gentle blood? Can such a queer undersized man-o'-the-moors ever have come of decent parentage? Speak, mannikin! what art? Whence springest thou? Art thou the abortion of some ancient family, that has committed some monstrous crime, and have had thee sent as a punishment? Or art thou the growth of the basest of life; sprung like a toad-stool from the stump of a rotting tree? Get thee gone for a moonstruck jackanapes, if such be thy notions! but if a shovel or a pick can content thee, or a leathern apron, to cut up carrion flesh for the kennels, why say so, and there is bread for thee."

Jack, instead of appearing angry or cast down by this address, though his heart seemed on fire within him, and he felt that he should like to send his sword through the well-fed villain's massy carcase, only made him another bow, and replied with a smile, that he thanked him for his noble offers, but begged to say that they did not exactly chime in with his views. He turned into the old people's cottage; but the steward stepped in after him, and said, "Mind, young puppy! attempt not to get to the presence of the Knight. I shall look to that; and it were better for thee to leap at once into the dog-kennel, and be rent to pieces, than to be found attempting any such thing."

He appeared in no good humour neither with the old people, said something about 'hangerson,' and 'old snudgers,' that, like rotten apples, were best in the ground, and went away. Jack expressed his wonder and indignation to the old people, and said that if the master were like the man, he was sorry they were come thither, and that, for his part, he should soon be on the way again.

"Oh!" said the old people, "be patient, good youth—be patient. The man has a bad name, but there's one that keeps him in check. The old Knight, God bless him, is as good as this man is bad. Folks wonder that he has kept him so long about him, but he manages to get on the blind side of the worthy old gentleman. Pray God, that things may not be as some say, in his affairs. But there's a just God above—and as for us—let us be silent. Hedges have eyes, and walls have ears, and a little bird often flies over the house, and tells things."

While they spoke there came another old servant to bid Jack come to the old Knight. This man seemed to be about fifty years of age. His hair had become somewhat grizzled with time, but he had a fresh and healthy complexion, and though of a solemn aspect, yet there was a friendliness in his tone and manner, which, after the steward's treatment, struck upon Jack's heart like pleasant music. He was the butler. He spoke very cheerfully to the old people, hoped they would find their new house pleasant to them, and said he had already been speaking with the Knight about their future plans; and that the old man would have a nice tantalizing job to chop wood for winter, to sweep the walks about the house, and do such little things at his ease. The old people expressed their gratitude, and told him in a whisper what the steward had said. The worthy man only indicated by an upward motion of his hands and eyes his sense of the affair; said, "Time and patience, my good friends; you know him. Don't be disturbed, and all will go well." He withdrew with Jack.

## CHAPTER XII.

JACK'S INTERVIEW WITH THE OLD KNIGHT; HE RECEIVES A WEIGHTY COMMISSION, AND SEES A HORRIBLE SIGHT.

As Jack followed the butler to the hall and the Knight's presence, he noticed the place more particularly than he could do on his hasty visit as the messenger of the old people, the other night. It had then been scarcely light, and moreover the old knight was in bed, and had received his message through a servant, so that Jack had not seen him. He now saw that the house was a fine old stately place, standing in the middle of the valley. Around it were hills, partly opening in green slopes, partly scattered with trees, and here and there, especially in the various hollows into which the hills sank, covered with thick bushes of hazel, maple, crab, and other trees. It was the park, and fine herds of both fallow and red deer, besides cattle and horses, might be seen resting under the trees, or grazing on the open lawns and the hills.

At some little distance from the house ran a deep and considerable stream, which was taken advantage of to fill a broad moat which surrounded the house, enclosing it with all its out-buildings, in a quadrangle of considerable size. In front of the house lay the garden, enclosed with great walls, and behind were green paddocks, scattered with fine old elms; and there appeared beyond, great woods. The village was a few hundred paces on one side, on the banks of the stream. The house itself was one of those picturesque, large, old mansions, with small, strong windows, battlements, projecting gateways, and various towers, which are almost more of castles than halls, and of a style most like what are now called Tudor. It was built round two courts. Over the gates and on various towers, were seen carved in stone the coat of arms of the old Knight's family. Numbers of grotesque animals seemed to have started out in some former ages, in various places, and to have stood so long that they had stiffened into stone spouts on battlement and porch. Draw-bridges led over the moat, and numbers of starlings and jackdaws cawed and whistled from the old, grandly twisted chimneys; and rooks in thousands, though their building and rearing had long been over, hovered in one of those occasional visits, which they sometimes make in the day-time to their old haunts, as well as each night to roost, over the adjoining elms in a black cloud, and with one mingled and sonorous cawing, which seemed to indicate that it was a day set apart by them for some great discussion or rejoicing.

The whole was, in short, the residence of the old English gentleman. As Jack walked past the windows, which were half buried in some parts by an immense growth of ivy, and then advanced under the gateway into one of the inner courts, he felt something of that awe, which especially the young and inexperienced feel when they see around them the proud towers and halls of the great, particularly when there seems to reign an ancient spirit of order and of stately life. All here was solemn and subdued. The porter, as they passed in at the portal, rested on his tall, stont staff, and surveyed Jack with a silent, half-indifferent air. When the doors of the entrance-hall opened, and Jack saw its size and loftiness; the arms and pieces of

armour displayed on its walls; the large escutcheon in carved and coloured oak, at one end; the old banners that here and there drooped, tattered and dusty, from the ceiling, which in white stucco presented the figures of flying angels, and heads of cherubs in scrolled corner compartments, looking down amid huge roses and thistles of an antique grace, his awe was greatly increased. Another door was opened, and he found himself in a large low room, dimly lighted, where, in the recess of one of the windows, sat reading, the old Knight.

His book, which was a huge folio, was supported on a small black table; and his chair, whose high back was richly carved, was to Jack's eye most luxurious, with cushions of richly embroidered silk. The Knight himself was an old man of a pale but most benevolent countenance, and of a thin but rather tall figure. For a moment, as if deeply absorbed in his volume, he did not lift his eyes from it; and the old butler continued to stand at a respectful distance, with Jack at his side, in motionless silence. Jack, during this period, cast a furtive glance round the room, and thought it was very grand indeed.

The old carved furniture, chairs and massy tables, and cabinets nearly jet black with age, but polished to almost glassy brightness by constant rubbing, the curiously embossed ceiling, the as curiously inlaid floor, the portraits of warriors and ladies on the walls, and the tall, folding screen which protected the hearth from the draught of the door, were each and all to him matter of wonder. A fire burned on the ample hearth, for the old Knight was of delicate health; and in truth, this shady room seemed as though it could seldom be visited too often by the sun. A dead hush pervaded the apartment, and apparently the whole house, and a servant that came in with a fresh supply of wood moved as softly as if he feared to disturb the meditations of his master.

At length the old Knight raised his eyes from his volume, gave a deep sigh, and then turning to them, the butler made a silent bow, and withdrew. The old Knight, who seemed to wake himself out of a reverie, and to bring his mind away from some very distant place and concerns, in which it had been engaged, looked at Jack for a moment, and without seeming to observe anything unusual in his appearance, said, "So, thou art the messenger who brought the tidings of the jeopardy of the old people the other night? And so they are safely brought hither now, are they?"

Jack replied in the affirmative.

"That's right," said the old Knight; "we'll have them made comfortable, and thee too. I take it thou art their son?"

Jack assured him that he was not at all related to them. Was a perfect stranger in those parts; and had only, by chance or by Providence, happened to come to their aid at the right time. That he was seeking employment, and hoped that he might have the good fortune to find it with so noble a gentleman.

At this the old Knight seemed to wake more clearly out of his reverie, raised himself in his chair, passed his hand over his eyes, and surveyed Jack attentively. "O!" said he, and his surprise evidently increased every moment as he kept his gaze fixed on Jack's face and figure. "Seek employment? And where, good youth, or man, or boy, whatever it may be, for there is

something extraordinary about thee, where comest thou from? Surely from far hence? And what is it that thou seekest?"

Jack now set on, and as the way seemed open, and as the old Knight's interest about him seemed to grow, related to him his views and desires, and his last day's adventures. The old Knight listened to him with extraordinary attention, questioned him strictly on what he related, then rising, went to the door, called for the butler, and on his appearance, bidding him close the door again, said, "If I mistake not, Providence has sent us here an instrument that may be most useful to us. Singular as his exterior is, he seems to possess those qualities of body and mind that we are greatly in need of. Take him; see that he is made comfortable. Let him, under your care, do such things about the house as may keep him from the temptations of idleness. Try him as a messenger in some light matters; and if he prove to have as much wit as I imagine he has, and withal probity and a faithful zeal, it will be a sign that the great Director of events has sent him hither for good ends."

We may now in few words say, that Jack found himself now vastly to his own satisfaction. The whole house and its contents were matter of curious wonder to him. The friendly butler took the kindest interest in him; questioned him of his parents, his life, his education, and his views. Jack opened his whole heart, and shewed such a desire to distinguish himself by worthy actions, that the good man looked on him with particular satisfaction; told him that if he only maintained these desires, and was active and obedient, he had nothing to fear on the score of securing the worthy Knight's favour. He was highly pleased with the spirit and cleverness with which Jack set about every thing that he desired him to do. Occasionally he put him to do some menial and irksome office, that he might try whether his mind, which he saw plainly was proud and aspiring, was willing to bend itself to obedience, even contrary to its own wishes and feelings, when it had reason to know that the tasks were not imposed by those who sought purposely to humiliate him. From these trials Jack came forth nobly; and he never felt prouder in his life, than when the friendly butler said, with sparkling eyes and a cordial pressure of his hand on his shoulder, "My boy, by thy cheerful obediences thou hast given a great pleasure. I see that thy heart is made of true steel, and now I will try thee in a matter which is more important to thy patron, and I am sure will be more agreeable to thy disposition."

Jack was yet a stranger to the neighbourhood, but the good butler, whom we shall henceforth call Andrew, asked him if he would venture to carry a packet to the next town, about five miles off, and deliver it as directed, though at the risk, if found with it, of imprisonment, or even of his life! Jack said, if it would serve the old Knight, or him, he would undertake it not only cheerfully, but with pleasure. Andrew replied that it would serve many, and that greatly; but that Jack, as a confidential messenger, was to carry it, to hold no communication with any one, to ask no questions of any one, whatever he might see; and having executed his trust, to return as speedily as possible. Jack accepted the office with alacrity. He was told that he would probably see strange things, and

might be questioned as he entered the city gate, and therefore it would be as well for him to go in some disguise. Jack chose at once to go as a country lad to market, and desired to be furnished with a basket of fruit, and a labourer's frock.

The next morning in good time, equipped in his frock, with a carter's old hat on, and a stout sapling in his hand, he knocked at the butler's door, and being let in, acted the young clown so well, pretending to be come to know if the butler wanted any green geese to fatten, that worthy Andrew knew so little that it was Jack, that he had actually agreed with him for the purchase of the geese, before Jack, bursting into a loud laugh, and reassuming his natural tone, let him recognise him.

The good man was so delighted with Jack's power of acting, that he carried him immediately to the old Knight. But if Andrew had not been able to detect him, far less was the worthy Knight likely. Jack made a clumsy bow as he entered, holding his hat in both hands, and begged to know if his honour wanted a lad to tend geese, as Mr. Andrew had bought his geese of him to fatten.

"O Andrew!" said the Knight, "agree with the boy as you please—agree with him—why bring such matters to me?"

Hereupon, Jack in his natural voice and tone, begged the Knight's pardon. The Knight looked astonished; and Andrew, vastly delighted, informed him that his boy was no other than Jack, equipped for his trip to the town. The Knight was charmed. Jack had instantly a sealed packet handed to him. Securing his document in the inside of his jerkin, two minutes afterwards Jack was trotting out of the yard on Ben, with Timothy at his heels.

In a few hours Jack returned. He had faithfully executed his trust, and brought back a letter from the party to whom he had carried the packet; but he looked sad and thoughtful, and the worthy butler, shutting his pantry door, asked whether he had encountered any difficulties. Jack said, none. He had gone into the town unquestioned. There were crowds going; he had sold his fruit in the market, and made the best of his way back.

"But you look pale," said the butler; "you have seen something; tell me now what you have seen."

Jack stood some time and gazed on the butler, and moved his lips as if he would speak; but no words came, and he gazed again on Andrew.

"I can well believe," said Andrew then, "that thou canst find no words to tell what thou hast to-day seen. I must speak it for thee; thou hast seen a fellow-creature perish in flame!"

"And never," said Jack, clapping his hands before his face, and trembling as if shook with a sudden ague, "never shall I forget the horror of it till I die! They said he was a heretic and a Lollard; that he denied the holy Mother Church. I asked no questions; but Andrew, my friend, may I not ask you—what is a Lollard? The man, who was an old man, with white hair, and—"

"Describe him not," said Andrew, suddenly closing his eyes, and making a quick motion with his hand. "I have his image only too well before my mind's eye. But what said he?"

"He praised God and Jesus Christ, and blessed the people, and prayed for his enemies, and said that the Truth would yet go over the land

like a whirlwind, and lay prostrate all that was rotten in the garden of the Lord, and shake every unsound tree, root and branch."

"And how did he behave?"

"Behave? As if he were a spirit, and the fire were only the element in which he appeared to mortal eyes to announce his great message. He seemed to tread it in his bravery, and to soar up into heaven with it, rather than to be consumed by it. My God! never till now did I know how mighty some men are! And do they burn such men as this——"

"Hush!" said Andrew, "enough. Thou hast seen a horror, and a murder. Lock it in thy heart, and anon thou shalt know more. Sawest thou aught else?"

"No—only as I stood at a distance and looked on, holding Bea by his bride, and Timothy lying at my feet, there came a man and looked at them, and then at me, and asked me how long I had had these creatures. When I looked at the man, I knew him to be one of the men whom I saw at the hostel. I was going to tell him a feigned tale; but I looked at the man triumphing in the fire, and I scorned a lie! I told him—many a day. 'Tisn't true,' said he; 'I have seen them lately in other parts.' 'As you will, master,' said I, seeing that he didn't know me, 'I won't dispute it with you; but I must sell these plums. Will you buy? will you buy?' He continued only to stare on me, and again presenting my basket, saying, 'Will you buy?' I moved off to another quarter. But he came again with a woman, who bargained for the plums, and asked me where I brought them from. I would have told her at once, for I had a vast contempt for a lie in me, but I recollected your words to hold me communication with any one; so I assumed a waggish look, and said, 'Ha! ha! mistress! so you don't know where I get my plums? What! you'd be before me, would you? Nay, say, good mistress, not so neither!' The woman affected to laugh, but I saw that all the time the man was watching me narrowly; so I in a careless manner shifted my ground, and watched out that horrible sight; but when it was over, the man was again near me. In returning, I struck through the woods; but as I drew near the gates here, the woman, mounted on a pillion behind the man, rode past, and nodding to me, said, 'I know where your plums grow.'"

Andrew sat and thought; at length he said, "Ay, I fear there's more evil in the wind. Thou hast been the means, in the hand of Providence, of crushing some of the hornets which afflict this neighbourhood, and now it will go hard but they'll crush thee. I see too the steward lowers on thee—it were well for thee to remove hence."

"Not an inch," said Jack, "if I can be of any service to the Knight and you. Let them find me; 'tis a cunning fowler that can lay a snare for me, and good lime that can hold me. Leave me, good Master Andrew, in God's hands; for since I have seen what I have seen to-day, I desire to be valiant."

Old Andrew laid his hand on Jack's shoulder, and looked up as if uttering a prayer, and then said, "As God will! He knows best, but, my son, we must be on the watch, for I feel sure that not long will go over without some wicked assay."

CHAPTER XIII.

A HUE-AND-CRY AFTER JACK; AND A GLIMPSE INTO STRANGE SECRETS.

AND SURE ENOUGH three days were scarcely over when the old man of the cottage sought Andrew in haste, and informed him that a hue-and-cry was out against Jack. He was charged with having killed a gipsy, with assailing and severely injuring several honest travellers in a hostel, and with decoying three worthy yeomen into a well in the night. A warrant was issued, and the men who lived in the castle in the wood were vehement for his capture. While they spoke, and almost before they could inform Jack, there was a clatter of horses' hoofs, and the sheriff and his men rode into the court.

Jack was at that moment in the kitchen, watching the cook cutting a piece of bacon from the store on the rack, which was suspended by pulleys to the top of the large kitchen, and was now let down for this purpose. Andrew rushed in, crying, "Away, or thou art lost! Fly for thy life, to the garrets, to the cellars, to——" Heavens! the house is surrounded, fly to——"

"To this bacon-rack," said Jack coolly, snatching a handcloth from the dresser just by, laying it on the huge slices of bacon, and flinging himself upon it. "Pull away!" he cried, "and then be off as fast as you can."

Andrew and the cook caught instantly at the idea. They pulled away with all their might. Jack was soon high aloft, close to the rafters; but before they had secured the ropes to their fastenings on the opposite walls, in rushed a number of the sheriff's men.

"Where is he?" they cried; "where is that boy?"

The cook and Andrew looked wild and pale with fear. Their looks might have betrayed them. They thought they were taken in the fact, and stood speechless and staring at the men. But the cook's knife and the piece of bacon lay on the floor, and the naturalness of the act saved them. Their confusion was attributed to surprise. The men cried—"We lose time on these dolts," and rushed on to other apartments. Jack lay outstretched gazing down between his slices, and laughed in his sleeve as they departed. High and low the fellows eagerly ran in their quest. They demanded of old Andrew, of all the servants, if they knew where he was. Nobody attempted to deny that he had been there just before; but the old Knight declared truly that he could not tell where he might have fled to. Andrew, when questioned, said most likely he had fled to the wood; and the cook said he had been in the kitchen not half an hour ago, and talked of going after the swine; each answer being true according to their meaning. Nobody else knew where he was, and the servants protested truly that they had no idea whither he had escaped.

The steward was observed eagerly to join in the quest, and opened closets, and turned over beds, and dived into cellars, where the strange men could not have found their way. The old Knight remarked it, and looked more grim and stern than he had ever been known to do before.

The search was in vain. After they had traversed the whole house, they were once more assembled in the kitchen; and Jack, lying aloft, heard all their remarks, their vows of vengeance, and their plans of further search. They then rushed out, to scour the woods, and hunt through the outbuildings.

Till night, Jack lay on the rack, which, though not particularly easy, he thought to himself was much more so than the rack they would probably put him on if they caught him. When all was still, when the other servants were retired to rest, the cook and Andrew released him from his confinement, and conducted him to the Knight.

When they had withdrawn, the good old gentleman kindly took him by the hand, and said he thanked God for his present escape. "But these sons of Belial," said he, "will come again. We must be prepared for them; and therefore, my son, I must now open to thee things that are known only to the most faithful and tried. I do believe," he added, "that all in this house, saving perhaps one Judas, and he, thank Heaven! does not lodge within these walls, are faithful. All, with this exception, I think are sound; but it is not expedient to let them know all. From thee, my son, I exact no promise of secrecy. I read thy truth in thy actions and thy eyes. Therefore thou shalt know more anon; for the present, follow me."

He took a lamp, and bade Jack do the same. Then drawing aside part of the tapestry which covered the walls, he entered a narrow opening. Jack at his desire entered also, and the tapestry was let fall again. Here was a little rude closet, in which, on shelves stood various preserves in jars. "This is a dry place, my son, and well adapted for the preservation of these luxuries," Jack nodded assent. "But this closet has another use." The old man pushed at one of the shelves, and the whole range on one side of the little closet moved back, being, in fact, a door on hinges, and revealed a flight of narrow stairs. The door being again closed, as the two entered, they now stood at the foot of the stairs.

"See here," said the Knight, "this bolt thus shot on this side, the shelves with the preserve jars are firm, and no one can by any other way approach these stairs. So now again follow me."

They ascended, and on reaching the top of the stairs found themselves in a little room in which stood a small bed, and a little table fastened to the wall, so that it could let down, and be out of the way. On the table stood Jack's supper.

"This closet, my son," said the Knight, "is for the present thy retreat, and safe castle. Truly there is no spare room in it, for it is contained in the thickness of the wall; but there is safety, and that is better. Sleep in peace, in the morning we will converse further."

The old Knight withdrew, desiring Jack to descend the stairs after him, and bolt the door. Jack slept as sound as if he had been on his little flock bed at home, and as if no price was set upon his capture. In the morning, the light streaming in through two narrow slits in the wall, which on the outside were not discernible for the ivy, woke him early, and anon the old Knight came and desired him to follow him again down into his room.

"Here," said he, "we can converse without much fear. At any moment, comes there an alarm, thou canst fly into thy retreat, and all is safe again."

He then went on to question Jack whether he had learned to read; and whether he had a desire to read. On Jack replying in the affirmative, he added, that Providence had planted talents in him that might be of great service both to himself and others. That now was a time when he could not employ his energies on any-

thing else, and that to beguile the sense of his solitude, were it for no higher purpose, it were well to read.

"Here then," he continued, "is a book of all books the most extraordinary, and happily for us, of all books the most true. It is a book written at the command, and under the guidance of God himself."

Jack crossed himself, and made a profound and reverential bow.

"If, my son, those knights who for years have lain in many a land, in the dungeons of their enemies, had had this book for their solace and companion, how happy would they have deemed themselves. The lay of the finest minstrel, or the story of the greatest master of romance, what would they have seemed in comparison, but the jingling of a Jew's harp, or an old wife's tale. For here are the most wonderful relations, the most witching and triumphant poetry; the most touching passages of human love and trouble; the most glorious prophecies; and, what is greater than all, the grandest truths that ever came out of heaven to us poor mortals upon earth. Ay, had those captive knights, of whom I often sit and think when the frost hisses without, and the fire burns cheerily on the hearth within, and the cordial wine-cup stands by me ere I retire to my bed,—had they, my son, had this volume in their deep and underground dungeons hewn in the eternally dark and solid rock, and closed with doors of heavy stone,—how would they have wrapt away into the rainbow bowers of Paradise, and have heard the songs of angels, and seen the faces of the mighty and the wise of old, and have forgotten their limbs which lay chilled on the damp straw, and their fingers which were cramped into the shape of birds' claws by the deadly cold of their living graves. Carry, my son, this treasure to thy cell; and if God has given thee a heart capable of longing after what is great and good, the world will be henceforth for thee another place, and thy life another subject of thanksgiving."

The old Knight spoke with an earnestness and a deep and solemn feeling that thrilled through Jack's heart in a manner totally new to him. Once more he crossed himself and bowed low; and as the old Knight lifted the heavy volume, heavy with its massy boards and his ornaments and clasps of brass, from the table, Jack dropped on his knees to receive it; kissed it with a feeling of the deepest reverence; and kissed also, ere he withdrew it, the hand of the noble old Knight with fervent devotion. Jack saw that the tears had started into the Knight's eyes while he had spoken to him of this volume; that a faint but vivid flush had kindled in his cheeks; and as Jack mounted up the stairs with his ponderous charge, he found that he also must dash some tears from his own eyes in order to see his way.

For us, who have been familiar with the Bible from our childhood, it is quite impossible to represent to ourselves the astonishment and delight with which Jack went over this book. It is only by going back into our young years, and recalling how we then thought and felt, as we perused and reperused it for the twentieth time, that we can in any degree conceive his state of entrancement. His cell, and his enemies thirsting for his life, were all forgotten. He was sent abroad, as by the power of a mighty enchanter, into new worlds and amongst new people. He wondered that all the world had not this book;



how the old Knight alone could have got it; whether it had actually been sent down from heaven to him for his goodness; and a thousand times, as he came to something which particularly enraptured him, did he wish that he could be transported to his mother, and sit and read to her through the long winter evenings out of it. He found himself continually putting himself in the place of those he was reading of. Now he was Noah, now Abraham, now Joseph; he was David in his young and heroic days, and Solomon in his glory. But when one of his heroes fell from his heroic height, then he was no longer he, but a warning spirit. He thought that had he but been in Paradise with Adam and Eve, how with one stroke of his sword he could have cut off the head of the deceitful serpent. How he should have cried out to Sgan, and David, and Solomon, when they began to betray their human weakness. Joshua and Judas Maccabæus were most magnificent in his eyes; and when he read of the death of Christ, he was like Clovis, who wished he had been present with his brave Franks, to avenge on the Jews their insults to the Saviour, and to have snatched him from their hands. He now comprehended the victorious strength of the man in the fire, and thought that to live without doing some signal deed of heroism for mankind was worse than death.

Every day the Knight asked him of his progress and his satisfaction; and as Jack related what he had read, what he had thought and felt, and as he sate and was all on fire with his zeal, the worthy Knight's countenance brightened up with a radiance of smiles and happy energy such as Jack had never yet seen in him. "'Tis well! 'tis well!" said he, "'tis as I wished and hoped. God be praised!"

Jack had observed that every evening he had sent to him Andrew the butler, who alone besides knew of his retreat, to fetch down the Bible. He had heard the Knight reading aloud, as he supposed in it, and then Andrew brought it back again. But now the Knight, when Andrew came for it, ordered him also to come down with it. As they stepped into the room, Jack was surprised to see all the household there assembled. The book was laid before the Knight, and he proceeded to read a certain portion aloud; and then making a few comments upon it, the servants quietly withdrew. When they were gone, the Knight called Jack, and told him that this was his daily habit, and that from this time forward, if he were not in immediate danger from his enemies, he would also assemble with them. He also told him that he was now convinced that his hopes of Jack were not without ground, and that the good parts and powers in him must be cultivated for the honour of God and the good of his people. He then went on to unfold to Jack the history of the wonderful book, of the corruptions of Christ's church, of the translation of this Bible into the mother tongue by Wickliffe, and of the persecution of those good men, under the name of Lollards, who determined to abide by the words of this book, and to make it everywhere known. The days of heroism and combat then were not over. There was no need to have lived in the days of David or Maccabæus to become God's champions. Here Jack's eye kindled into fire, and he breathed short and deeply. "But," continued the Knight, "God's warriors have now a harder warfare than the champions of old; for they are not allowed, like them, to in-

dulge in vainglory, and to revenge their own wrongs with blood and bitterness. A higher and more heavenly rule is set before them; and the first thing which they have to do is to discipline their spirits, as the old heroes disciplined their bodies, in armour. As they compelled their frames into iron habiliments, we must now subdue ourselves to the limits of a spiritual discipline. The passions and the will must be made obedient to the law of heaven, as the warrior's steed to his hand; and that divine and love-breathing example of Christ must open to us higher triumphs over ourselves, and for mankind, than the world has yet seen or conceived."

As the Knight said this, Jack sighed and looked down. The Knight continued:

"We have all, some more, some less, the power to do great and christian deeds; and thou, my son, I trust mayst win no trivial share in these achievements; but, in order to that, the aids of learning may greatly contribute; and happily these aids are within our reach. I will now open to thee another scene."

The Knight rose from his chair, and Jack advancing, again kneeled and kissed his hand. Laying his hand on Jack's head in token of approbation, he proceeded up a private staircase, bidding Jack follow, through a long passage into another large and well-furnished room. Advancing to the chimney, which was large and ad open, and where stood a pair of bright and massy steel dogs, on which wood lay ready for lighting, he struck three strokes with the end of his staff against the wall. To Jack's surprise, he presently saw the foot of a ladder protruded down the chimney, planted on the hearth, and his patron ascend. Jack followed, wondering to what this strange ascent would lead; and when at the top of the ladder, he found himself looking through an opening, sufficiently large to admit a man down it into a small apartment, where the Knight stood with two other venerable-looking men, and into which he commanded him to descend.

The moment he touched the floor, the ladder from the outside was drawn up again, and the hole closed by a door, which was made to match with the rest of the wall. Light and air were admitted into this room by a small window so thickly overgrown with ivy, that it defied the most curious search from without; and the portion of light admitted was therefore so small, that it was only when a person had been some time within the room that objects became quite visible. The window, in fact, was often superseded by a lamp, whose rays were again carefully prevented from becoming observable without, both by the distance from the ground, and by a thick painted blind hung before it, yet not so close as to exclude the air. Jack here found himself surrounded by books and instruments, of whose use he could form not the slightest conception. The Knight, now addressing the two men, said this was the brave and good youth of whom he had spoken to them, and he now put him into their hands as a pupil, trusting that they would find him as quick to receive instruction as he supposed him to be capable of it.

The two men shook him cordially by the hand, and promised to do all that lay in their power; and the Knight, turning to Jack, said, "Here, my son, you behold two of those Lollards of whom you have heard, and from whom you may learn more; here you see two of God's true and trusty warriors, who have stood in the field and

the breach against his bitterest foes; who have not escaped without jeopardy and severe loss; and who would not hide here, were it not for the hope of reserving themselves for the further triumphs of the Truth. They are friends of the man in the fire. Honour them by obedience, and by imbibing with all diligence the knowledge that may advance the righteous cause."

So saying, he departed by the way he came; and Jack was left with his new teachers. room?

#### CHAPTER XIV.

JACK GROWS IN KNOWLEDGE AND FRIENDSHIP WITH THE MEN IN THE WALL. HE, BY THEIR AID, EXPOSES AND PUTS TO FLIGHT THE UNJUST STEWARD. THE MERRY ADVENTURE OF THE RUINED ABBEY.

We will not here pause to trace minutely Jack's progress in his new course. It is enough to say, that he fulfilled the proudest hopes of his venerable patron, and found himself in a new world, in which he was never weary of making wider and wider excursions. The powers of calculation and mensuration were cultivated in him; the languages in which the Scriptures were written, and in which the learned of all nations found a common medium of communication, were taught and studied with ardour. The histories of the world, and of religion, were read and discussed; and the finest poems, in various languages, were made familiar matter of conversation. The men in the wall taught Jack the mysteries of the moon and planets, and their changes; and something of the healing nature of plants, and the properties of minerals. The ease and avidity with which he imbibed all that they could lay before him, excited their wonder; and the ingenuity with which he found means to serve them on many occasions, gave them the greatest hopes of his services to their cause.

It was not always that they were cooped up in this small room. When danger was not pressing, they usually spent the day in the large room, and even ventured to sleep in others. This quarter of the house had the reputation of being haunted, and nobody came near it but the butler, and an old woman who had lived in the family from a child, and was admitted to all its secrets of this kind, and was deeply interested in its faith. Many times the two learned men descended and walked in the garden when the moon shone, pacing, however, only those walks that were screened by their tall hedges of yew and holly from the view of the house. When danger seemed to sleep, they even stole out into the woods, and wandered about them for days, refreshing their spirits by the fresh air and the presence of nature, for further immersement and future toils. At other seasons, they issued forth and made journeys to their friends and fellow-believers, stirring them up to renewed zeal. On all these occasions Jack was their companion, and was in a thousand cases their best helper and extricator in emergencies. He was always on the watch, always inventive. A strong and mutual friendship had thus grown up between them; and Jack, though he found them of very opposite dispositions, yet came to have the deepest sympathy with them both.

One was grave and inclined to melancholy. He had seen cruel usage, and stood stripped of connexions in the world through the savageness of persecution; yet, though it was obvious that

he suffered severely in his innermost mind, and was racked bodily with rheumatic pains and spasms, which had been brought on by lying in cold prisons, still he was uncomplaining, and so set on fulfilling his sacred duty, that it required a restraining hand to keep him from running into constant danger. This good man was Henry Templeman, a bachelor of divinity.

The other, who was called Dr. John Hempage, a younger man, and of a round and full, though small person, was naturally of a gay and rejoicing temperament. His face short and ruddy, and his sparkling eyes, that were ever ready to gleam with merriment at the slightest turn of things towards the cheerful and ludicrous, seemed to point out a man who was meant for happy times, and in learned halls to enjoy the good things of life, and make his heart sing amid the leaves and flowers of May. When they got away into the woods of a fine summer day, as they sate in the thicket and ate their morsel on their distant journeys, he would stretch himself out on the grass and give his fancy and his tongue a scope amongst witty and poetical things—imagining romantic adventures and building castles in the air, in such a manner, that no one could fancy him one that had ever done anything but bask on the sunny side of life, and make playthings, like a child, of the summer blossoms; much less that, on a future day, he should stand amid the fire, and still sing there. Never was Jack so surprised as when he first saw this joyous man come forth in a midnight assembly of the Lollards, when they were pressed with imminent peril, and grave and serious as an apostle, preach in the words of a deep and burning eloquence, that went like lightning through all hearts, and knit them up to a stern resolve to meet and bear what might come.

Twelve months had rolled away in this manner. Jack had gone on various important missions to various parts; in one of which he had visited London, and met the adherents of the cause in their great yet secret meetings, and had carried to and brought back from their most eminent leaders, letters of the weightiest importance. In these transactions he was known by the name of John Othmill. This name, which the witty Hempage had, in his merriment, condensed from our hero's familiar name amongst his early comrades of Jack-of-the-Mill, because he had been so much at old Bowes's, came to stand as his regular cognomen by all who knew him in this position and character, though we shall continue to call him at present by the old familiar name by which he is so well known to us.

In all these affairs he had shown the most admirable address. The old Knight had consequently admitted him to a great share of his confidence, and employed him to settle accounts which belonged to matters connected with his faith, and which he would not confide to his steward. In the course of these, Jack had to pore through various ledgers and documents, and as he did this, a strange light seemed to dawn upon him. At first he could scarcely credit the correctness of his impressions; but on tracing and retracing his observations, he became more and more certain, and more and more agitated. Discoveries in the accounts drawn up by the steward forced themselves on his attention to an alarming extent. Statements, though balanced in the gross, when pursued into particulars, presented inconsistencies and exaggerated charges that would not bear a moment's testing.

For some time he held this momentous secret closely locked in his own breast; but the proofs every day became so much more glaring and monstrous, that he could no longer conceal the fact from the Knight. The worthy old gentleman at first only shook his head; but when the matter was further searched into, he sunk back in his chair, became pale as ashes, and tears beginning to stream down his cheek, he said, "'Tis so! 'tis too clear! Long have I suspected that this man was an enemy to the true knowledge; but a traitor to his trust! a thief! Alas! alas! And yet," said he, recovering himself, "have I not long wondered at the smallness of my rental, at the unproductiveness of my affairs? And he ever replied, 'Your worship, it is the Interdict. The farmers now pay as they please. They make also charges for depredations by soldiers and evil-disposed persons, against whom, under present circumstances, you have no protection.' O Judas! Judas!"

To make the matter certain, Jack proposed to go through the accounts with the two Lollard leaders. The Knight consented. The books were carried into the large upper chamber, and a long and laborious investigation placed, on the most undeniable proof, the most astounding frauds. The Knight ordered Jack to make out a fair statement of these particulars, and their proofs, and to be present when he presented it to the steward; but inquiries which had already been made amongst the farmers had reached the false steward's ears. He fled, and joined himself to the hostile party at the Castle in the Wood.

"Prepare now for a storm," said the old Knight. "This man has gone off with an evil conscience and the shame of detection; and in proportion to his crimes against me, will be the fury of his malice."

And it was not long before the storm fell thick and fast. Soldiers beset the house to search for 'Jack-of-the-Mill,' as he was styled in a new proclamation issued against him. Luckily, the steward was not aware of the presence of the two Lollard leaders; but every quarter of the house was searched for Jack, high and low, within and without. Walls were sounded, and in various places pierced; floors were pulled up; and the old gentleman, who gave them free scope to search as they would, but refused to say yea or nay to their questions if he knew where this Jack or John-of-the-Mill lay concealed, was threatened with imprisonment and even torture. He only replied, "As God will!" and the desperadoes were too much afraid of one whom we shall presently mention to touch the gentle and submissive man.

Sentinels were posted about the house; other soldiers took up their quarters in it; and to any one but Jack it would have been impossible to escape; yet for the comfort and benefit of his fellow-prisoners, he many a time, aided by the butler, descended by night, and pursuing his way between the tall severing hedges of the garden, paddled himself over the moat in a tub, and went on different little journeys for them, to take and receive letters. These journeys, however, every day became more hazardous. Spies were in the village. Rude fellows ranged through the woods, at once plunderers of the Knight's deer, and watchers on all that went through them. Depredations were committed on the farmers; their buildings were set on fire, and their cattle killed or injured; so that they vowed

to quit the Knight's lands, and leave them to be filled by himself, if he pleased. It was easy to tell that the false steward was at the bottom of these evils, thinking to heap all possible vengeance on the old Knight's head; but he groaned in secret, and complained not.

In a while, these outrages seemed to have exhausted themselves. The soldiers retreated from the house, the marauders from the woods, and all again was quiet. The two Lollards received intelligence from their friends in the neighbourhood, for their faith was rapidly spreading amongst the people, that the enemy had disappeared. They therefore ventured again carefully abroad by night, and held, as they had done before, nocturnal meetings, to encourage and strengthen each other. Their place of meeting was a ruined abbey in a glen, some distance below the village. This was extensive; hung with vast masses of ivy; and had so evil a name, from the tradition of dark deeds done there by an abbot of some former time, which had occasioned the place to fall to decay, that they imagined none but those concerned would ever come within hearing of it, as no path passed near it, and as a considerable wear in the river, which flowed almost round it, made a perpetual roar, which might drown the sound of voices when they sang. Watches were always stationed at a distance, to detect the approach of any hostile or indifferent party. They had a watchword. In case of the appearance of any suspicious person, the watcher gave a peculiar cry, imitating that of a curlew so naturally that it might pass for one. This, taken up by a second watch near the abbey, gave notice to the assembled people, and all was instantly hushed and made dark. If the danger increased, a second and more plaintive cry was the signal to disperse, when the parties retreated to the neighbouring woods, and disappeared by ways known to themselves. If the danger passed, a partridge-call gave token of security, and the service went on.

Spite of these precautions, however, and spite of the fearful belief of the ignorant portion of the people, that the devil on certain nights used to lead the soul of the wicked abbot about the ruins by a red-hot chain, and then plunged him repeatedly into the river, it was not long before lights had been seen down in these ruins; which must have been those of persons finding their way through them by the aid of dark lanterns, for the assemblies were held in a spacious crypt below, which had been revealed to them by the Knight, who had found it some years before, though its entrance was closely concealed by the thick boughs of an elder bush.

Rumours of these lights soon flew about; and as is always the case, grew rapidly, and became every day more marvellous. White figures and ghostlike faces, it was soon said, had been seen gliding about and peering from the windows. As a number of the superstitious villagers were collected one evening on a knoll at some distance above the abbey, to see if they could observe any of these lights or apparitions, and were recounting many of the strange things which were said to have happened in this place, till they were so fearful that they were ready to run if a cat had mewed, an urchin of a miller's lad, with a little sack of flour on his back, suddenly cried, "Let us all gang down, and see what there is!" They all looked at him, and asked him if he were a fool. He replied with a sort of arch simplicity, "Na, he never had been reckoned a

fool. He was Sim Mack o' Burnby Mill, and he'd go if any body else would."

One fellow struck at him with his huge hand, intending to knock his hat off, and asked him, "If he'd tempt the devil to show himself?" but Sim ducked very nimbly, and the fellow hit his knuckles a hard knock on a post; at which all the rest laughed aloud, and some plucked up spirit to bid the miller's boy go if he dare.

"Dare?" said he. "Why, what is there to be scared at? I dunna believe any such nonsense as ghosts an' things. Gipsies ha bin lodging i' th' owd abbey, and making a light there; an' gasts I've seen there; an' owls I've seen there; but ghosts I never seed there. Howsomever," said he, throwing down his bag, "here goes! and let them that dar', follow."

The lad, to the amazement and horror of the villagers, ran off down to the abbey, and was soon lost in the darkness. Presently they heard a shout. They were ready to fly, imagining that he was seized by a ghost, or by Satan with his burning chain, and was crying for help. But they lingered a moment longer, and could hear a second cry, "I ha' him! I ha' him!" In the next instant, they saw something white rapidly flying towards them. They gazed; it was all white, and coming at a great rate. The next instant, they could discern a white face with a long white beard and horns, and over it something in the dark that was waving about in all directions. There was a loud panting and a short quaint cry, and the whole pack took to their heels. They flew to the village; they cast but one glance behind them, and instead of one white figure, saw two standing on the very spot they had just left. Once more they fled, and once more the apparition pursued at full speed. They heard an unearthly cry or singing of "Yoo-hoo-hoo! yoo-hoo-hoo!" and headlong they rushed into the village, many of them screaming in the wildest affright. All doors were flung open, to see what was the matter. The terrified fugitives dashed into the first house they could reach, and the next moment sprang in after them the ghost, in the shape of the miller's lad on the old white goat belonging to the hall!

At the upshot of this adventure, the laughter of the whole village was turned upon the cowardly troop of ghost-watchers. It flew far and wide, and for a while diverted the attention of the idly curious from the abbey, so that the Lollards could occasionally resume their meetings there. Nobody but the two preachers and Andrew ever discovered that Sim Mack of Burnby Mill was no other than Jack.

## CHAPTER XV.

A CHARMING DAY, AND AN EVENTFUL EVENING.—A CONTEST AT SCALHOPE TOWER.—THE "MEN N THE WALL" ARE TAKEN.

BUT the enemy had only withdrawn from sight more subtly to lay in wait; and an opportunity was not long wanting to pounce upon Jack, and to make the joyful discovery that the two celebrated Lollard divines were also lying hid here.

The three friends, lured by the freshness of an autumnal day, had wandered out through the woods and over the hills. It was one of the fresh, clear, inspiriting days which seem to give to the frame a life and buoyancy unbounded, to

fill the heart with a similar rejoicing activity, and to give to the mind a power and eloquence of thought beyond the highest woe of bur individual being. They went on with rapid steps, expressing their sense of enjoyment, like birds escaped from a cage and stretching their wings high up in the blue ether. The woods were brilliant with their richest colours. Over the hill-tops gleamed the sky of the deepest, purest blue. The sun shone without much warmth, but so as to give a solemn splendour to the whole scene. The fresh turf over which they bounded, the bushes with their coloured leaves, and hanging clusters of ripe blackberries and privet berries, with here and there a harebell still lingering at their feet, in its sweet fairyland azure, were all full of life, and charm. Under the oaks which stood, here and there, overshadowing the forest turf, went the herdbooy sounding his horn to keep together his host of swine, which now rioted on the abundance of acorns that every slight breeze sent down; and in distant glades slowly turned and gazed at them the deer, or trotted off into the thicket.

The day and the scene seemed to clear off the habitual melancholy from the pale face of Templeman. He looked round and said repeatedly, "How grand! how inspiriting!" While Hempage rubbed his hands and cried, "Glorious! glorious!" He seemed overflowing with energy, offered to run Jack a race, and actually joined in a game at leapfrog to which they invited Templeman, but who shook his head with a quiet smile, and declined. Hempage then took Jack's axe from his belt, cut a huge green hazel from a thicket, round which a woodbine growing had caused it to assume an odd, twisted appearance, and employing himself with cutting the knob into the shape of an old man's head, went on talking at a great rate.

Now a gossamer spider sailing along with its silken thread in the breeze, attracted his attention, and caused him to dilate on the wonders of nature; and now a rabbit bounding from a bush with Timothy after it, made him stand still to see the issue of the chase, and drew from him a shout of exultation as the little creature bounced into its hole, and set Tim at defiance. "Well done, little cony!" he cried; "I don't know whether we ought to check the natural instinct of the dog, which is, no doubt, given him for our own service, but I cannot help rejoicing when I see anything escape its natural enemy, and prolong for a little while its existence. To-day, especially, I would not willingly see anything, however mean, die. There is something so full of life and enjoyment in this fresh air and this beautiful world about us, that all which live seem doubly to live, and for anything to die, would be doubly to die. I would not, if I knew it, even crush a beetle in the turf where we tread."

So they went on. Now they pulled down crabs, which hung in thousands, as yellow as gold, on an old forest tree; and for an hour were eagerly engaged in a hollow where the hazels yet retained their nuts, but so ripe and loosely hung, that at the slightest touch they all rattled to the ground. As noon approached, they adjourned to a farmhouse, whose master was a staunch adherent of their doctrine, and after enjoying a hearty dinner and much cheering chat, they walked round to the cottages of other friends. It was drawing towards evening, after a day of most singular enjoyment of out-of-door and in-door satisfaction, that they were returning home,

and staid for a few moments to ascend a ruined tower, which stood on a high knoll on the forest hills overlooking the vale, and which was called Scalhope Watch.

The sun was descending in a sky as clear as it had been the whole day, and threw a splendour across the landscape which lit up distant spots into uncommon distinctness, and the three friends were pointing out to each other far-off places that could be seen with the naked eye in an atmosphere so transparent, when their attention was arrested by seeing a man on horseback, attended by three others on foot, coming hastily towards the tower. A moment's survey shewed them that the horseman was the false steward, and the men on foot were three of those sturdy knaves in saffron-drab, half poachers and wholly thieves, who belonged to the Castle in the Wood. That their design was hostile there could not be a moment's doubt. The two Lollards exclaimed, "We are lost!" But Jack said, "Nay, not so quick with such an idea. If we yield, we are lost beyond redemption. Let us then, if we must be taken, at least fight like men to the last. It were better to die here, than on the gallows or at the stake."

He instantly cut down two stout young ashes which grew up from the rubbish of the old tower wall, pointed them sharply, telling his friends to charge with them when the men attempted to ascend the tower steps, as a knight charges his antagonist at a tourney. The two accordingly planted themselves at the head of the broken steps which led up to where they stood; and Jack, mounting cautiously to the edge of the wall over the entrance, saw the three men enter below. Calling to his friends to be on their guard, he kept his eye on the steward, who riding forward, stood with his horse's head under the doorway, and appeared to be giving instructions to the fellows within. At this moment, Jack lifting from the wall a stone as large as his head, hoisted it with the intention to discharge it if possible on the steward's scull. It missed him, but fell so close as to brush the horse's shoulder; and with such a shock on the pavement, that horse and man, equally startled, sprung back. The steward glanced up with a fearful look to the top of the tower, and saw Jack there, standing on the very battlement, and discharging a second stone. Ere he could wheel aside, it came whizzing so close to the horse's head, that it crouched almost on its haunches, snorted, and whirling round, the steward was only saved from falling by seizing with a convulsive gripe the mane. The moment he regained his seat he spurred away down the hill; and Jack, feeling sure that it was with the purpose of fetching more assistance, now rushed down to his friends on the stairs.

"On! on!" he whispered; "there is no time to lose; we must get clear of the tower, or we are lost!"

The three fellows were attempting to ascend the stairs. They came two a-breast, the steps being too narrow for the three. With their pointed poles the two Lollards were stoutly resisting; and they on their parts were now striking to cut them with their swords, but finding that the narrowness and lowness of the passage prevented their swords having full play, they strove to seize and drag the poles out of the Lollards' hands. As they were doing this, the third fellow behind was placing a bolt in his cross-bow to shoot at them over the shoulders of his

companions. Jack saw the danger, and crying "Stand aside!" to his friends, each leaned himself towards the wall so as to give him some room, and in the next moment a ponderous stone was sent down the staircase, which struck the bowman on the arm, and dashed the bow from his hands. The two Lollards, seeing at once the superior advantage of Jack's missiles, drew back; lifted stones, which lay in plenty, and sent such a volley below, that the passage was instantly cleared, and the fellows in flight. Not a moment was lost; the Lollards snatched up their poles again, and sallied down. At the doorway the men at last turned again to renew the contest; but the bowman and bow were disabled, and they were now only two to three. It is true that they had the advantage of swords, but the two Lollards drove on manfully with their poles. The men gave back for a moment; and the Lollards, having now got room for their weapons, began to ply them about the fellows' heads in dexterous and ponderous strokes. Jack had armed himself with Hempage's heavy stick; and, as he knew that every moment was precious, getting behind the knaves, he struck at their heads without mercy. The contest was desperate, but soon over. The men, enraged at one or two sound salutes from Jack's cudgel, turned in wrath to thrust him through; but Jack stuck valiantly to them, and they might as well have tried to hit a Jack-a-dandy which a boy flings from a sunny basin of water on the ceiling of a room. He leaped from spot to spot; and in the mean time the two Lollards, and especially Hempage, who was fired up to a pitch of great excitement, discharged their blows so liberally and effectually, that the fellows took to their heels and fled.

The three did not attempt to pursue. They descended the opposite side of the hill, so that the men should not see which way they took, and plunged into the woods. Here, as they passed a moment to consider what course they should take, they became sensible into what a heat they were thrown, and how their poles were hacked and hewn with their enemies' swords. Hempage's, in particular, was reduced to about half its original length; and he had also got a slight cut on the ear, which, however, was more troublesome on its bleeding than of any consequence. Their first thought was to retreat to the farm where they dined at noon; but they considered that they might bring trouble on their friend the farmer, and that if their foes tracked them thither, there was no secret stronghold to retire to; they resolved, therefore, to make their way to the Hall, if possible. They would cautiously through the woods, listening ever and anon to ascertain if they could catch any sound of their foes, but without effect. They had reached the valley, and drew near the fine where the woods ceased, and where only scattered trees stood in the paddocks. As they were about to emerge, and steal beneath these trees to the back of the Hall, where Jack's tub lay concealed in the weeds, they saw, to their grief and disappointment, that various sentinels were placed, and they were totally cut off. They retreated into the wood, and having waited till it was dark, endeavoured to reach the village; but they became aware that here too every point of access was guarded; fires were lit, and dogs, placed at mid-stations, gave instant alarm at their approach.

Their situation now became seriously alarm-

ing. There was no hope of reaching the Hall or the village; and the only alternative was, to seek refuge in one of the houses of their country friends. The farm where they had dined was their selection. They could again quit it early in the morning, and remove the next day to a greater distance, till a chance of once more returning to the Hall presented itself. Sad, and considerably dispirited, they retraced their way. It was now quite dark; every leaf that was moved by the wind, and every creature that stirred in the brake, startled them. They hastened on, avoiding the roads, and therefore encountering the roughest walking, and entanglement in boggy ground and briery thickets. It was midnight as they drew near the farm; but here the dogs set up on their approach such a clamorous barking, that, alarmed lest the noise should be heard by any enemy on the watch, and draw their pursuers thither, they quietly stole off again, and sought a shed in the fields at some distance. Here, chill and anxious, they awaited the dawn. With the first glimpse of light they were on their way; but they soon found that the whole country was alarmed. The most ignorant of the peasantry were led on by others, and all ways were beset. It was not long before they were observed, surrounded, and the two Lollards secured. Jack, who deemed it the only chance for their safety that he should escape, dodged with those who sought to catch him. A whole posse of rude clowns were after him. He took up a hollow, which appeared some time to have been a marl or chalk pit, but was now overgrown with the shortest, greenest turf, and some scattered bushes. Backward, it terminated in an almost precipitate ascent, crowned with wood. Jack hoped by his superiority or lightness to scale this height before his heavier and clumsier foes could overtake him; but at every few steps, another fellow started up from behind a bush, and darted at him. Jack was thus compelled to spring sometimes this way, sometimes that, and ever and anon to return into the very path of his foes. By this he became almost surrounded. It was an actual baiting. The country fellows, who had heard extraordinary stories of the powers and doings of Jack-of-the-Mill, were at once eager to secure him, and afraid to do it. They reached at him, with poles and pitchforks, and surrounded him in a fearful and hallooing circle, just as they would have done a mad dog. "Down with him! Smash him! Break his skull! Break his legs!" they cried to one another, while Jack all the time made some little ascent upwards. In the midst of this critical contest there appeared at full gallop the steward, who shouted, "Down with him! down with that devil's brat! For your lives don't let him escape!" At this the clamour and onset became furious. The raging clowns seemed to forget their fears, and rushed in on Jack like so many madmen. There was not a moment to lose. Jack darted up the slope with a surprising agility; struck the fellow nearest to him in this direction a smart blow on the arm with the back of his axe; took as it were up the very face of the precipice, rather with the lightness of a flying shadow than of a man; turned and gazed on his enemies a moment from a clump of projecting stone far aloft, and then darting into the woods above, disappeared. He heard the steward cursing most furiously the unlucky clowns, who, lost in wonder, stood gaping upwards as if they could

not comprehend how their prey could have escaped them. He descended, under covert of the woods, and hovered near enough to see in what direction they took his unhappy friends, whom he saw, with their hands bound behind them, marched in the midst of the exulting troop of clowns towards the village.

Having satisfied himself that this was their destination, he sprang away through the woods in search of the little swineherd, with whom he had made himself very friendly, and who detested the steward because he had found him asleep in the forest, and had cudgelled him most unmercifully. Jack found where he had been the day before; made him understand that the steward had seized the worthy clergymen, and would burn them if they were not rescued. Jack proposed to herd his swine for him while he went and brought the old man from the cottage to him. This the boy gladly agreed to do; and in half an hour, during which Jack had endured ages of torment in imagining his friends condemned to the flames, the old man arrived. Jack told him all that had happened; bade him fly to the Knight and the butler, and beg them to send out and rouse all their friends to be in readiness for the rescue, and that he would join them at the first possible moment. Jack then took a direction so as to recover the view of his captive friends. He found them now advanced nearly to the village. The company had swelled into a crowd, amid which he could see the false steward riding triumphantly. By means of crawling and creeping on all fours, Jack managed to get so near that he could observe his friends, who walked on, evidently wearied and jaded, yet with a heavenly calm on their countenances, which formed a wonderful contrast to the vulgar triumph and coarse taunting that rade on the faces of the throng; and to the devilish malice of the steward, who eyed the prisoners with a smile of savage pleasure, and said to the mob, "Good people, take heed to your charge. I see fuel there for the fire!"

About noon they marched in triumph into the village. The ignorant inhabitants, spurred on by their bigoted leaders, came crowding out in eagerness, and the village musicians with the church banners, met them as for a festival, and piped into the hamlet before them. They were conveyed to the alehouse, and the crowd thronged around it like bees at swarming-time about the hive, and with as loud a buzz. Jack saw that every soul, except the secret adherents to the new faith, had so completely deserted every place to flock hither, that he walked openly up the way to the Hall, and entered it without opposition.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SURPRISE AND SKIRMISH AT COCK-CLIFF HILL.

IN the Hall were nothing but sorrow and consternation. The old Knight was disconsolate. Messengers had been dispatched to rouse the friends of the Lollards, who were to draw to a place at the foot of a hill called Cock-cliff Hill. Here the stream spread out wide where it crossed the road to the town, and the woods beyond growing thick up to the very bounds of the road, offered a good place for an ambush. Andrew, himself, as well as the other servants, had armed for

the occasion. The opportunity had been seized, of the flocking of the people and sentinels to see the captives, to send a quantity of halberds and other arms, in a cart-load of straw, to the place of rendezvous. But soldiers were sent for from the town, and a bloody struggle was expected. Jack and the servants set out. They took a circuit through the park to avoid notice, and on arriving at the place of rendezvous, found about forty people already arrived, most of them full of ardour. Others, every few minutes came dropping in. They divided themselves into two parties, one occupying the wood on each side the road. Hours went on, and neither soldiers arrived from the town, nor the people from the village. It was already growing dark, when a young man joined them with the news, that as by some mischance the soldiers did not arrive, the steward and his crew had resolved to set out, hoping to meet the military on the way.

All was now the keenest watchfulness and attention. The two parties lay close in the thick underwood, keeping a quick ear to catch the faintest sounds of approach. At length they heard a clamour of voices, and the tread of many disorderly feet. The party came on the road from the village, and in a few minutes were in sight. First came the musicians, who, however, were now sparing their breath till they should meet the soldiers or enter the next village, or rather, they were, by way of relaxation, expending it in a different mode, for their tongues were going as loud as those of the rest. Next, guarded on each side by a set of fellows with rude partizans on their shoulders, came the two prisoners bound, and seated in a cart. When they had reached the water, where was only a narrow plank for foot passengers, the driver of the cart seated himself on the shaft, and the people began to defile over the plank. When, therefore, the cart reached the side on which the ambush lay, very few of its guards had come up with it, for a number of the people had crowded upon the bridge before them. No sooner, then, was the cart over, than the hidden parties sprang silently forward on each side of it; the horses, suddenly lashed by them on both flanks, started forward at a brisk rate, and the friends of the Lollards, with glittering swords and halberds, stood between them and their pursuers.

The surprise and confusion were inconceivable. The guards, with their partizans, made a show of resistance; but the people, who had come in idle curiosity, raised a most lamentable cry at this unexpected sight of so many armed men. Those who had got over, attempted to fly into the woods; but here they were repulsed by the numbers, still sword in hand, pouring out of ambush, and they again flew backwards, not staying to take the plank, but plashing through the stream like so many scuffling geese, and with as much clamour. Amongst these were the poor musicians, who, in the fright, let fall their pipes, and played a rapid march with their legs. The steward, rushing forward, cried, "On there, men! on! Strike down the knives! Spare none. Strike! strike!"

He himself laid about him with his stont stick, and the men with the partizans began to follow his example; but when they saw the numbers and the vigour of those who appeared against them, and felt a few of their sturdy blows, they turned and fled. The rescuing party made a hot pursuit, striking, however, only with the flat of their swords and the shafts of their halberds, so

as to do no mortal injury, and yet to inflict a severe chastisement. The surprised crowd made the most ludicrous spectacle imaginable. In their precipitation, they tumbled over one another; some were rolled into the ditches, some had their clothes nearly torn off their backs by their terrified fellows clutching at them to help them along. The steward, who seemed excited to madness by his disappointment, made a fierce resistance, fighting with his stick, and laying about him on all heads that came near him indiscriminately. But as there were many who owed him an old grudge, he was soon struck from his horse, which took to flight in the rear of the villagers, and knocked down and bruised several of them severely before it bolted off the road and disappeared in the forest. The steward himself, having got a good sound drubbing from hands that felt the greatest satisfaction in the work, was dragged through the stream, and rolled into a ditch on the other side. The pursuers again dispersed through the woods; the routed rabble pursued their flight towards the village; and in ten minutes afterwards, there lay a silence over the stream and the valley as great as if no such bustle had taken place there.

In the mean time, the prisoners had been liberated, and conveyed to a place of safety and refreshment. Scarcely was the cart over the water, when Jack sprang up into it, cut the cords that bound his friends' hands, and lashing on the horses, proceeded at a great rate till they came to a narrow side-lane. Here turning in the cart, he bade his friends dismount, and taking the horses from the shafts, left the cart in the middle of the way, to stop any hasty pursuit. The horses he led to a considerable distance, and then turned them adrift in a meadow. He and his friends hastened forwards till they came to a cottage standing in a very hidden and woody place. They knocked at the door, which was opened by a middle-aged woman, who lifted up her hands in joyful surprise at the sight of the Lollards. Her husband was gone to the rescue, and Jack assured her that it was all over before this time. He begged her to get some refreshment for his friends, who were greatly in need of it, and who must this night yet travel on farther from this neighbourhood. While they were eating and blessing God for this deliverance, came the husband himself. He was in high spirits, and described the flight and the drubbing and sousing of the steward in terms of great glee. Jack could not help laughing right heartily; and even Hempage, though sorely exhausted with fatigue and excitement of spirits, gave a faint smile.

Another hour, and they must depart. It was a sorrowful separation. Jack would fain have gone on with them: but they represented the danger of the three being seen together, and the need the Knight would have of him. After embracing again and again, they bade each other farewell, hoping to meet in better days; and the Lollards promised to write as soon as they came to a place of rest and security.

## CHAPTER XVII.

TRICKS UPON TRAVELLERS, AMONGST WHOM THE FALSE STEWARD AND THE SOLDIERS FIGURE PRE-EMINENTLY.

WHEN Jack returned to the place of the late encounter, he could not help pausing and woa

dering at the strange contrast of its present solitude. As he leaned on the handrail of the bridge, however, he thought he heard a groan. He listened. Perhaps, thought he, it is some poor wretch wounded, and perhaps dying. He listened more intently,—he heard it again. Following the direction of the sound, and drawing quietly near, he at length beheld a large figure sitting on the bank by the wayside. Another glance convinced him that it was the steward. Jack then cautiously drew back; stepped into the woodland; and then again cautiously approaching, planted himself behind the bole of a large oak, not more than two yards from the steward. Here he soon perceived that he was groaning more over his inward mortification and wounded pride, than over his bodily bruises. His wounds, indeed, were in the very tenderest part of a proud bad man's being. He sat and rocked to and fro; smote his hand on his knee, and then cursed the soldiers that had not come to prevent this catastrophe. "And they are gone!" said he, "the heretics are escaped!—that imp of darkness has escaped! I am disgraced before the whole country, and—but there are those who shall rue it yet!" Here he began to utter vows of vengeance against the Knight; and rending a stake from the hedge, commenced marching stiffly and slowly on his way.

Jack was so much disgusted with the base and fiendish malice of the man, that he determined he should not escape without a further punishment. Hastening back, therefore, to where the cart stood in the side-lane, he brought away the chain back-band of the shaft-horse, and running with all speed, he soon came near the wretch, who from his chastisement was in no condition to move fast. He crept through into the wood, and when he was parallel with the steward, he gently shook the chain. The steward stopped, listened,—and again went on. Once more Jack shook the chain, and once more the steward stopped. Hearing nothing further, he again walked on, but this time with increased exertion. Jack now stole across the road just behind him, having the chain round his body, and entered the fields on the other side. Coming parallel again with the steward, once more he shook the chain, and began to trail it along the ground. The astonished man, after listening a moment, hastened across to the hedge, and climbing up the bank, began to peer over it with eyes which betrayed as much terror as curiosity. But Jack had withdrawn himself into a thick bush, and he could discern nothing. Scarcely, however, had he regained the middle of the road, when the rattling of the chain was again heard, and thus it continued, first on one side of the way, and then on the other, for the distance of half a mile. The poor wretch was now wrought up to a pitch of great excitement. At one moment he put out all his strength to press forward; then he stopped, and seemed as if he would retreat, and then he pushed forward again.

Jack now determined, if possible, to put a climax to his fear. It was yet a mile and a half to the village, and would require a good while for the steward to reach it; dropping, therefore, the chain, he ran on at his best speed; reached the Mill, and carrying off in a pail a curious substance, which the Lollards had taught him to prepare, as well as his tinderbox and a piece of touchwood, he flew back to the public road. At a few hundred yards from the village was a

gate across the way to prevent the cattle straying along it. The road here was densely overshadowed with huge lime trees, whose long lower boughs hung almost across it, at a height scarcely more than was necessary for a load of hay or corn to pass under. Here Jack mounted a tree, and planting himself on the bough just over the gate, awaited anxiously the coming up of the steward. To his surprise he heard a horseman approaching, and as it was at a slow rate, he imagined that some one had overtaken the steward, and was suiting his pace to bear him company. In that case his plan was defeated, for it is amazing, however cowardly superstitious people are alone, how they pluck up courage, and seem to open their eyes and their wits too, when they are two or more together. But his astonishment was great as the horseman drew near to behold that it was no other than the steward himself, and mounted on his own steed. The horse, no doubt, had found his way again to the high road, and was grazing there when overtaken by his master, and the steward's soreness was sufficient cause, that spite of his fears, he now found it necessary to ride slowly.

Jack on seeing him lost no time. He hastily smeared his face and hands with his drug, giving various flourishes of it also to his clothes in front, and fixed his already-lighted touchwood between his teeth. As the steward came up, and was in the act of stooping to pull open the gate, he gave an odd sort of growling sound in the tree. The steward looked up, and seeing an impish figure perched on the branch above him, which seemed breathing fire, and, moreover, was enveloped with blue flame, he sat as one stupefied. Jack, leaning forward and grinning, said in a low, sepulchral tone, "Who robbed his master?"

With this act he dropped like a bat from the tree, and was seated behind the terrified man on the horse. Horse and man seemed equally terrified. The steward uttered a loud yell of fear; the horse flew forward, snorting and bounding; the imp stuck behind, silent as death; and thus darted horse and man and imp at full speed through the village street. When the steward reached the alehouse, he fell from his horse at the door, and was picked up and carried to bed. He himself gave no account of what had happened to him; but various persons, who had looked out as the horse darted past, declared that they had seen the foul fiend riding behind him, and nothing could make them say otherwise to the day of their death.

The rumour of these affairs caused, however, no little consternation in the country. The rescue of the Lollards by force and arms shewed that there was a strong party of their adherents in that neighbourhood. The Knight's servants were openly declared to have been concerned in it. He himself, when questioned by officers sent for the purpose, refused to give any answer; and it was thought that the Knight would be arrested and carried to London. Yet, contrary to general expectation, he was not. Parties of soldiers scoured the country, and made nightly visits to houses suspected of favouring, and probably harbouring, the rescued Lollards, or the now notorious Jack-of-the-Mill, or, as called by others, John-of-the-Mill, and by some John Othmill, whose deeds and strange acts and ingenious stratagems were talked of far and wide, and in distant shires magnified and metamor-



phosed into shapes and colours most extraordinary. With some, he was a double-jointed miller, who was as broad as he was long; could carry his own mill on his back, trundle a mill-wheel as a boy does his hoop, and had been known to take a trooper and his horse and chuck them together over a wall into a well. With others, he was as slim and as little as a girl of six years old, but had the strength of a giant, and could spring up trees and over houses far beyond any mountebank. He was in league with Satan, and also with the Lollards. He had been sent for by the old Knight out of Turkey, and was kept by him to uphold Lollardism. At one time he was in the Hall, and in an hour after in London. He had shook down a tower on the Knight's steward; had rescued a whole cart-load of Lollards from a troop of soldiers, by carrying off them and cart and all. Heavens knew how—the cart being found stuck in a bog, and the horses loose on a moor a hundred miles off! Such were the extravagant stories manufactured out of Jack's simple exploits; and in London, ballads full of these wonders were sung about the streets, of the awful John-of-the-Mill. In the mean time, the soldiers found neither John-of-the-Mill, nor the Lollards; the latter worthy divines, indeed, as both Jack and the Knight knew, were safely housed in a distant city.

In one of their nocturnal expeditions, the soldiers, however, had the luck to meet with Sim Mack, the miller's boy of Burnby Mill. They asked him where he came from? If he had seen these Lollards who were so much talked of? He said, "Yes, he'd seen 'em often. He'd heard 'em preach, and hoped to hear 'em agen." The soldiers thought they had got hold of a right subject. They asked him if he had seen them lately?—He said, "Yes." How long ago?—He couldn't tell. Was it before the rescue, or after?—"O! after; some time after." They then asked him if he could tell them where they were now? He said, "Yes, he could, he knew very well."

"Then, my boy," said they, "you must tell us." "Nay," said he, "I shonna. That's what my master says I never mean tell to nobody."

"But," said one, dismounting and seizing him, "in the king's name, I charge you to tell me; and if you don't, here you shall die."

With that he drew his sword, and Sim appearing to be very much frightened, begged they would not kill him, and he would tell them; but they mustn't let his master know that he told. They promised this. Then said he, "Some say they're here, and some there; but I say if you find them anywhere hereabouts, it'll be i' th' vault under Sealhope Tower."

"Why, that is where they were seen before!"

Sim nodded knowingly.

"Mount, young Thrifty, and shew us the way," said the officer. They clapped the lad behind a trooper, who rode on first. Sim led them through woods and along some dreadfully deep roads, till the officer said, "Where are you leading us? This seems a very long way."

"To the Tower," said the lad. "Isn't it there you want to go?"

Presently they came to the foot of the hills.

"There," said the lad, "the Tower is just above; but it is so dark you can't see it. And here is a gate you must go through; if it claps, they are sure to hear it, if they are there."

Jack slipped down, and set open the gate, holding it for them all to pass through. Scarcely had

they got through, however, before there was a confusion heard before, and a cry of "What's this? This is no road! Where is the lad?"

"What is this?" said the trooper, taking up the cry, and turning to where the lad had stood, but no lad was there! To his astonishment he had vanished, he could not tell where. He rode back through the gate, looked here and there, dismounted, peered under the bushes; but nothing was to be seen. Hastily remounting, he peered over the hedge, leaped the fence into the field, galloped here and there—not a trace of the lad was to be caught. As hastily he rode back to the troop; there all was disorder, a score of voices calling for the boy and the trooper. When he came up, and informed the officer that the boy had vanished, "Villain!" said he, "thou shalt answer for his escape. Here is no tower, no road; but an old stone quarry, half full of water. It is a wonder that we have not broken our necks, and are not all drowned together."

The soldiers, left in the now fast closing darkness in this wild spot, found it no easy matter to find their way back. They tried first one direction and then another. One way led them again into old and very extensive gravel-pits, another into a great morass. In the dark woods through which they attempted to retrace the way, their horses floundered and fell: they lost their way, and were compelled to dismount and lead their steeds, every moment expecting to plunge into pits or ditches; at one time up to the knees in water, at another completely entangled in a labyrinth of thickets. The greater part of the night, wet and hot, weary and covered with mud, did they thus plunge and grope about in this wild country; cursing heartily the Miller's mischievous cub, and ever and anon shouting with might and main to make some one hear. Escaping at length from the woods, it was only to find themselves in the midst of deep ploughed lands, out of which there appeared no outlet, except by crossing stagnant dykes. Here, as morning dawned, they were descried by a ploughman, a wretched spectacle of men and horses, covered with mire, and haggard with weariness and vexation. Nor was that vexation at all diminished by learning that the boy had really led them to the foot of the hill on which Sealhope Tower stood, but on a side from which it was totally inaccessible; that he had led them some miles round, through the worst roads in the country, and left them in their wretched plight not three furlongs from the village!

The soldiers came in for a full share of the ridicule which had fallen on the ghost-watchers. The tale flew round the country; but nobody was more surprised than the old Miller of Burnby Mill, who declared that he had never had this Sim Mack in his service in his life, nor did he know him at all!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KNIGHT DELIVERS JACK AN ADMIRABLE LESSON ON CONTENTMENT WITH OUR LOT, AND RELATES TO HIM HIS OWN STORY.

THE quiet and the molestation in the neighbourhood of the old Knight now gradually ceased. People were pretty well convinced that the two celebrated Lollard leaders were no longer there; and that, moreover, there was a large

and formidable party belonging to their faith in that quarter, with whom it was as well, perhaps, to be at peace. The old Knight lived quietly; and, by the advice of Jack, had appointed a new steward, a man of probity and in the prime of life, who soon put his farms into good hands, and produced a very salutary change in the amount of his income. Jack and he, by the loss of their two old friends, and by the zeal and activity which Jack had shewn in his and their behalf, were drawn into a closer confidence and intimacy; and on one occasion—as Jack was lamenting that Nature had, in her vagaries, thought fit to bestow on him so small and plain an exterior, or he might, through his natural activity and the arts and knowledge which by his favour he had acquired, have done great service to religion and mankind—the old Knight addressed him as follows:

“My son, I wish with all my heart that you were as handsome as Antinous, and as great and strong as any of the heroes of old, if it would contribute to your happiness and to your power of usefulness; but neither of these consequences being certain, endeavour to be submissive to the decrees of Providence, and be content with being what you are. You have already done good service to the cause of God. Thousands and tens of thousands go through the whole of their lives without being able or willing to do as much. Thousands and tens of thousands live long lives with little more light, and little more desire to advance the interests of the great human brotherhood, than the ox which ploughs the glebe, or the badger that barks in the mouth of his sandy den. To eat, and drink, and sleep, content millions; nay, millions are not allowed to do this as they please, but as imperious masters of their lives and fortunes please. Some swelter in mines; and some in armies, that suffer in huge marches, frosts, and watchings, only for the vain-glory of some king, who, had he what he wishes for, need not employ and compel these wretched labourers. How much better off then are you than any of these, even the king of them, for we see he has not what he wishes; or of those who spend their lives on weary beds, or in more weary prisons; or with crippled limbs, or racked with pain, or plagued with madness. You have health, uncommon vigour, and powers of mind which may lead to extreme usefulness, and to the fruit of it, lasting, sweet, holy satisfaction.

“I grant, that to self-love it is more agreeable to be an object of general admiration for our personal graces; but what are so apt as graces and admiration to pervert their possessors, and defeat the very object for which they are given? Therefore, I am persuaded that Providence, like a wise and prudent contriver, often places his greatest gifts in the most ordinary vessels, that they may escape molestation. A lamp of red earth may shine on and give light long and far, and in most essential needs, where one of gold would be snatched away, or one of curious workmanship be handled, and admired, and let fall.

“And as for you, why I see no cause of discontent at all. You are not so tall as I am, to be sure; but you are young, and not yet by several years at full growth. To my thinking, you are considerably taller than when you came here, and, for aught I see, may yet be of the

middle height; and how many of the greatest kings and heroes have been no more.

“I confess to you, that when I first saw you, there was something quaint and old-fashioned in your aspect; but, I know not how it is, I see nothing of it now; and I protest to you, that there is no face that I see anywhere that pleases me more. Perhaps it is, that where there is a noble soul, it looks through its mortal tenement so clearly that every day we see more of it, and less of that which contains it; or, perhaps it is the studies in which you have been engaged, the fine spirits with whom you have consorted, and the grand and beautiful imagery that has filled your whole mind, may have operated that wonderful change, which they often do.”

Jack, whose heart was deeply touched by these remarks of his noble patron, knelt and kissed his hand; but the old gentleman said, “Nay, sit there, and I will open a few passages connected with my life, which may make you more contented with your own, and may enable you to consult with me on an object very dear to me.

“How much less have you cause to complain of than I have. Your complaints are not against yourself; your just desires may yet all be fulfilled; but I look back with sorrow to my own course, and feel that mine never can. And yet, I had in my youth all that you pine for: wealth, rank, education, ancestral honour, and a person which, though it becomes me not to praise myself, procured me at court high favour and many flattering attentions. Yet with all these, what have I done? My family peace has been wrecked; in my old age I live solitary, the ghost of my former self; and I look back to opportunities lost of rendering great service to my fellow-creatures, who cast their reproaches at me, when I have sorrows enough without them.

“But in my youth my mind was directed by my guardians and advisers to courtly distinction; to raise my fortunes; to add to the family honours. My parents died young. I was left with one only brother, two years younger than myself; and I was early put in possession of wealth. I desired not only to raise myself, but to fix my brother also in a rank worthy of his birth. My brother devoted himself to the church; and it was my object by frequenting the court to create an interest there both for myself and for him. My reception there was brilliant and flattering. The monarch shewed me the highest marks of favour; and amongst the young nobles I was welcomed and caressed in a manner that was enough to create no little vanity, and to excite to folly, heads and hearts much stronger than mine. With the fair ornaments of the court I won not less regard. In all schemes of amusement I was consulted, and in the hour of social divertisement I found myself listened to with the most evident satisfaction. In jousting, hunting, in sword-play, in dancing, and courtly carriage, I was soon pronounced perfect, and bore away the honours, which are particularly intoxicating to a young man. A spirit of rivalry sprung up amongst the young nobility which should outshine his fellows in trains of attendants, in the richness of their liveries, in splendid suits of armour, in noble steeds, and in the wealth of jewellery

with which, on occasions of court state, to appear in the brilliant circles. Many of those whose estates would one day more than treble mine, were not able to compete with me, who was in present possession of a large rental. In costly arms, in beautiful horses, in suits of silk and satin of the most superb colours, and splendid with the most precious stones, I expended vast sums. My house was beset with Jews and Eastern merchants; and whatever was imported that was new and curious, came first to me. I gave a joust at my ancestral mansion here, to which artists of all kinds were invited, to give the greatest fitness and grace to all the preparations. The noblest and the loveliest of the land met here; and for ten days, in tourneying, hunting, and dancing, in various shows and quaint devices, my house and gardens—in which latter was a pavilion with a band of the richest music, the woods with temporary hermitages, and satyrs, giants, and dragons inhabiting various solitary parts—and, in short, my whole estate, was turned into an enchanted region. So much indeed did the goodness of the place, and the rich breadth of my lands, please many a great and noble baron, and many a fair damsel, that I had various offers of the highest alliances. I employed, however, the favour they won only to advance my brother in the church, and soon had the pleasure to see him on the next step to a bishopric, with the promise of the first falling vacant. For myself, I chose to remain free, and to see a little of the world, as well as to be seen by it. I therefore determined to pass over to Flanders, to France, and thence to Italy, attended by a fair train, and there to engage in all the courtly exercises of arms and chivalrous pastimes with the most celebrated knights. A troop of young nobles instantly resolved to accompany me, each attended by suitable followers.

“Seldom, except on royal occasions, have so goodly a troop of its most distinguished youth passed from the shores of this island to the Continent. In every court we were received with the highest distinction. Opportunities were eagerly offered to contest with us the meed of knightly prowess and accomplishment. Everywhere we carried off unwonted honours. Our fame ran before us; and in the chief capitals we received from the delighted monarchs, offers of the most flattering kinds if we would consent to take service in their courts. Three years we spent in this gay and stirring life of errant pageantry and adventure, in every great city showing evidences of our bravery, and at the same time neglecting no opportunity of making ourselves acquainted with the works of art, the architecture, the modes of government and condition of the various people. We conversed with many celebrated men, poets, philosophers, and artists, and returned with much honour to our native land.

“The king, who was greatly pleased with the honour we had done to our country, placed each of us near his person. To myself he was particularly gracious, and pressed me now to marry, assuring me of his whole interest in my behalf. At this time the daughter of a proud and ancient line was newly introduced at court. Her beauty and wit soon won universal admiration. The heads of all the young nobles

seemed fairly turned with this enchantress, but though very young and fond of admiration, she seemed to feel no real preference for any, except so far as the attentions of the most noble and accomplished, gave a moment's flattering distinction to her above her fellows. To all she displayed the most winning courtesy, and was the soul of all the gaieties and pageants of the court. The youth vied still more in splendour and expense. She had an inexhaustible invention in schemes of pleasure, into which all fell with avidity; and the brilliancy of her wit, and grace of her high accomplishments, were the theme of general wonder. To secure her favour became the great subject of rivalry, and as I had borne off the crown on so many occasions, I vainly resolved to attempt it here. The king seconded my purpose, as soon as it became known, and to my surprise I found my proposals at once accepted, and with joy.

“I know not how I might carry outwardly the show of my triumph, but inwardly, instead of the rapture which ought to be the result of a success of that kind, I felt a sort of shock. A blank and misgiving feeling seized me, which I could not master. I asked myself whether I had not cause of pride and gratulation? Whether I could hope to see a more beautiful or more accomplished creature? but my heart did not make any answer to these queries. In all my gaieties I had looked forward to a time when, with a congenial soul, I should retire to my paternal estate, and enjoy that repose which a course of excitement is sure to beget in sensible spirits. I had never lost the presence of a feeling, that man is made for something beyond mere purposes of show and gallantry, and that to promote the happiness of those whom Providence has placed under your charge, is a high and holy duty. I was sensible that I had made enormous demands on my estate; and as this alliance would bring me into close connexion with a proud and great house, I felt alarm at the state and expense that would be consequently perpetual. I now first began to consider whether I had any grounds to expect that my bride elect had any one quality which promised me real happiness; and I was forced to confess that, beyond her wit and cleverness in all matters of gaiety, I really knew nothing of her heart and mind.

“But it was too late to repent. The alliance was accepted by her family; to draw off would at once expose me to the unmitigated resentment of the king, and of her powerful relatives, which could end in nothing but banishment or death. The marriage was soon celebrated, and with great splendour; and in the gaieties of the first month of our wedded life, the engaging and acquiescing disposition of my wife made me rejoicingly hope that I had only entertained very unworthy fears. We visited in succession the halls and castles of her family; and everywhere the honour and cordiality with which we were entertained, were highly agreeable. Finally, we proceeded to this place. Here matters were not so much to my satisfaction. On entering with my steward into the state of my affairs, I was astonished at the condition into which my extravagances had driven them. I had sent peremptory orders from time to time for money, especially while abroad, and when my steward

had written that my annual rents were already consumed, I had told him not to trouble me with such messages, but to raise cash till the fresh rents were due. In consequence, I found that he had been obliged to resort to the Jews; to procure money at most exorbitant interest; and that now there were debts on the estate that would take years to work off. My wife, though she had brought me a powerful connexion, had brought but little fortune. To return to court appeared, therefore, the height of folly, and it now remained to be seen how far her affection for me would reconcile her to the idea of abandoning the scene of her flatteries, and of leading a sober country life.

"The care which had seized on my heart with an iron gripe, had thrown a natural cloud upon my brow. She herself had conceived a horror of this place, which now was so still and so different to what it had been in the dissipation and riot of the tournament. She at once conceived that it was this which similarly affected me, and said, 'Let us fly from the baleful desert, fit only for the residence of the clowns who till the ground, and the cattle which graze it. To tarry here will be the death of us both, and the dear court—oh! it will be like returning to the regions of the sun again!'

"As she said this, she clasped her hands in an ecstasy of anticipated delight, and added, 'This very day we will set out!' She was flying off to give instant orders for this joyful escape, when I seized her hand, and begging her to sit down a moment, opened to her the real state of affairs. Instead, however, of being struck with soberness and filled with a sad thoughtfulness, when I had concluded, 'Is that all!' she exclaimed, 'What young man of rank and figure has not in his youth incurred the same trifling difficulties!—but that is only another reason why we should fly hence, and back to the court. The court! the court! that is the place to push one's fortune, and fill the hollows made by the necessary outlay for youthful distinctions. Here, what can you do! You cannot make more out of your acres by all your cares and petty cumbers. But there! you have a nation for your farm, and a people to fill your purse. That is the true gold mine—a nation's wealth, and a monarch's favour to turn it into your purse. The monarch's favour you have; my family will not be wanting in the exercise of the necessary influence, and all will be speedily as well as it need be.'

"Once more, therefore, we found ourselves in the bright circle of court life. My wife was more gay, more beautiful, and more admired than ever. We had a large and expensive establishment; but, to my horror, the promised sources of wealth did not so soon open. The King, who was growing indolent, was becoming every day more careless of his affairs. Offices of emolument, which, as they were offices of great trust, had been usually given to grave and experienced men, now fell into the grasp of servile favourites. To the young and more patriotic were assigned posts of active exertion and pageantry, which rather added to expenditure than brought in wealth. I became every day more sickened with waiting, and agorized with the accumulation of debt. In my wife, I found, to my chagrin, no participation

in my anxieties. She still shone in the front of pleasure and fashion. My house was crowded with visitors; and when I remonstrated in private, the only answer was, 'Wait! have patience, man; all will come in time.'

"Things, however, were now come to that pitch that I could endure it no longer. At every turn I was met by demands of instant payment, and by Jews, who, knowing my difficulties, were trying to lay me under the most tremendous obligations. I determined to retreat to my estate, and gave my wife notice of it accordingly. I wish I could ever banish from my memory the scene which succeeded, and many that followed upon it. It had never entered my imagination, in the gay and thoughtless life I had led, into what a frightful creature unrequitable passions could metamorphose a lovely and gay woman. When I persisted in my firm resolve for a speedy departure to country life, she rose silently from the chair whereon she was sitting opposite to me. It was as if, at that moment, another and an infernal spirit had taken possession of her. That lovely roseate bloom which mantled over her cheek, deepened rapidly into a livid yet purple pallor; her eyes flashed with a desperate light; and standing rigid and motionless with passion, she said, in a low, hollow voice, 'What! will you bury me alive in that hateful wilderness? Was it for that I married you? No!' she exclaimed, coming forwards, and standing wild and expanded, as it were, with excitement; 'kill me; but never will I consent to banish myself thither!'

"Over the outrageous storm of passions which then, like a tornado, broke loose, and over many a future miserable hour, let me draw the veil which is due to a wife and the dead. From that hour my peace was destroyed. Imperative necessity compelled me to be firm; and that imperious haughtiness and obstinacy of soul which circumstances thus brought to light in my wife, called in all the impertinencies of her friends and family to torment me into acquiescence with her wishes. Every motive which can act upon the human heart was brought with vehemence or with persuasion to bear upon mine. I was throwing away fortune in the very hour of its dawn: but the dawn was by no means visible to my long-watching eyes. I was sacrificing a woman formed to be the ornament and happiness of the highest society from my chicken-heartedness. I should be bold, and seize Fortune by the forelock: but, unfortunately for me, not a hair, much less a lock of Fortune, ever came within my view; and I was at a loss to comprehend what that boldness could be which should win from the King what both myself and my wife's powerful relatives had so often solicited in vain. Her father, however, showed no lack of prudence. He fully agreed that retreat was at present our true wisdom. He strengthened my hands, and we came hither.

"I need not say that it was not to happiness; it was not even to quiet. Nothing could reconcile that unhappy soul to the loss of public admiration and pleasure to which she had been formed by education. At one time she would have the mansion full of guests and gaieties, in order to find the best possible substitute for the

court; at another, she would fly to visit her relatives, and refuse for many months, in one case for years, to return hither. In the mean time, I laboured hard to restore the state of my affairs. I applied to my brother, now in possession of a wealthy see, for a loan, to rid me of the importunities and extortions of Jews. It was granted; but, to my surprise and mortification, with a gravity of advice that I had not expected from one for whom I had done so much.

"In those unhappy years were born to us a son and daughter. That which should have been a source of union and confidence became one only of further strife and anxiety. Their mother wished to form them on her model—I on mine. To give them the advantages of education, I again lived in the capital; and it was here that now the top-stone was put to my misery. Great was become the public noise and rumour of the Lollards. Their increase, their meetings, the schemes and plots attributed to them, were everywhere heard of. They were pursued, captured, beaten, brought to trial, and to the stake. Men of high station were more than suspected of holding their principles, and securing them from pursuit. I was anxious to see something of them. I attended the trials of some of them, and was struck, not only with the modest boldness of their demeanour, but with the doctrines they advanced. I applied to one of illustrious rank, and by him was that Bible put into my hands which I now possess. From the study of this divine volume I rose up in heart and soul a new man. All those dim perceptions and deep feelings of duty which had ever clung to me were now clarified and confirmed. I resolved henceforth to live for mankind, and to spread the truth with all my power. But it was not long before my wife, who had a sort of instinctive quickness of penetration such as I have never seen in any other woman, had dived into my secret. She laid her hand on this book, and asked me if I were now so mad as to doom my soul to the damnation of heresy, and to brand my children and herself with the shame of contamination with the desperate doctrines of this detested and despised people? In the agony of her shame and fear, she brought all her alarmed relatives upon me. She flew to my brother the bishop, and startled him with an instant visit of trepidation and horror. I did not deny that I had read the Bible for myself, and that what I had found there I heartily and with all my soul believed. My brother, who now was grown a most grave and solemn man, adding to all the height and pride of his ancestral bias that of his spiritual and elevated station, seemed no longer the same being with whom I had shared the light and laughing hours of boyhood, and the gay frolics and generous aspirations of youth. He argued, upbraided, and, as he saw my firmness, threatened with all the stern and sanctified fire of his order. No doubt he was guided by the strictest dictates of his conscience; but his conscience had been moulded by his professional education and views to a very different shape and tone to mine, and to him toleration seemed the crime of high treason against Heaven.

"By his advice, my children were sought to

be removed from me. I, therefore, retired hither with them, engaging two learned men, who privately held my own sentiments, and the wife of one of whom was a very accomplished woman, to educate them. But even here they were not in safety. As they were playing one day in the park, they were suddenly accosted by their uncle, who took them to his coach, in which their mother was waiting, and hastily drove away with them. It was some time before I could find a clue to their disposal. At length I obtained it, and without ceremony reclaimed with my own hand my son from the school where he was placed, and my daughter from the convent in which she was carefully concealed. On this last act, a loud clamour was raised. It was soon exaggerated and grew, and flew far and wide—a story, that I had forcibly violated the sanctity of a convent, and carried off a nun. My enraged relatives appealed to the king, before whom I was summoned; but, on hearing my case, he only warned me solemnly to eschew all error, and banishing me to my estate, there gave me still permission to retain my children; only saying, that their blood would lie upon my head if I led them into heresy, and that my wife could there also attend them and watch over them.

"Pricked to the heart with this decision, my brother now grew outrageous, and launched against me the thunders of the Church. My children, one day coming home from a week's visit with their tutors to a neighbouring gentleman who held our reformed notions, were struck with terror to see a hearse, with all the apparatus of mourning, drawn up at the gates, and rushed frantically into the house, imagining that I was dead and on the point of interment. It was difficult to make them understand that this was but one sign that an interdict was issued against me; and that all persons were, on pain of eternal punishment, forbidden to hold communication with me, to sell me the smallest article of life, to cultivate my lands, or to pay me any rent. They beheld with horror the train of monks, who, with bell, book, and candle, came and cursed me before God, and as an outcast from salvation and the consolations of the Church. My servants fled the place, as the very ground of perdition; all but the faithful Andrew. The village and farms were soon deserted; and it was long before the exertions of my Lollard friends, many of whom were among the most ancient nobles, could send me a fresh supply of tenants and dependants.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE KNIGHT CONTINUES HIS STORY.

"My children, however, spite of the inauspicious circumstances by which their youth was surrounded, grew up noble and full of promise. They had conceived, nevertheless, a deep horror of their uncle, and felt towards their mother a sorrowful but hopeless yearning. She now, expelled by the Bann, as by a last and insurmountable cause, from this polluted ground, lived in the gay circle of the court, where now the Bolingbroke reigned; and I, though often to my heavy inconvenience, never refused the

demands made upon me for her expenditure. Many follies have been reported to me in her conduct; but I give them no credit, further than what belong to that love of pleasure, splendour, and admiration to which she was educated, and, I may almost say, born. Towards her son, whom on several occasions she saw, she shewed a lively affection. She seemed to gaze on him with pride, for he was in truth of a noble countenance and stature; and often with tears she besought him to return to the faith of his ancestors. To her daughter, she, on the contrary, shewed a marked aversion. She on one occasion told her that she hated her for her likeness to her father, and for the sanctified softness, as she termed it, of her look. The poor girl, than whom in truth a more gentle and loving heart never existed, was deeply wounded by this cruel circumstance, and in private shed many a bitter tear over it.

"Years went on. One day we heard that my wife was chosen the Queen of Beauty, at a tournament held at a castle not far distant from this place. That, admired by all for her undiminished grace and loveliness, she was diffusing gaiety and unbounded enjoyment through the whole noble throng assembled. The next came a flying messenger to inform us that, probably from a cold taken on the occasion, for it was late in the autumn, she now lay in a fearful sickness on her bed. We lost not a moment in speeding to the castle, little, however, hoping that she would admit us to her presence; but we were mistaken. We learned that she was every moment inquiring if we had arrived; and without delay we were called to her chamber.

"Let me spare myself the description of that harrowing scene. She lay in a burning and consuming fever. The voice of nature had now triumphed over the power of education and of disposition. She clasped us in succession to her heart; deplored the evils that had separated our lots, and blasted our affections. She exclaimed, 'O the lost years, that might have been such years of affection and felicity!' and prayed earnestly, even frantically, that she might be spared to live and die with us.

"But it was not granted. We removed not a moment from her bedside. Her daughter tended her with a love and unwearied tenderness which seemed to melt her into remorse and astonishment. The leech gave no hope of recovery. We soothed and exhorted her to trust in the mercy of Christ for pardon and peace, and it seemed to fall on her like a balm from above. The fever departed; she sunk into a state of quiet, and on the third day expired as in a gentle sleep.

"A time of melancholy peace now succeeded; but the troubles of this world had not yet done with me. The son of my Lollard neighbour had been the companion of my children. An affection had sprung up between this youth and my daughter. The prospect of this alliance was favourable to both his parents and myself. The time was now come that my son and he should proceed to college to finish their education; and we selected one where we knew that we had professors favourable to our religious views. But scarcely had a year elapsed before a change was perceptible in this

youth. He began to argue with my son against the reformed opinions. He associated chiefly with the most bigoted zealots of the college. From that open-hearted and generous warmth, which before distinguished him, seemed to have sprung, under the influence of newly imbibed notions, as it were a new leaven or fermentation of mind, which, as is the case in sweetest liquors, produced the sharpest acidity. He became hot, fiery, disputatious, and eventually dogmatic and narrow. My son in sorrow withdrew gradually from his converse; but the worst effect was produced in his letters to my daughter. At first she was puzzled and astonished by their change of tone. Then, finding that her attempts gently to defend her opinions only brought the most violent and controversial replies, mingled with condemnation of the opinions of herself and friends, and exhortations to follow his example, and return to what he called the soundness of the faith, she dropped the attempt, and bitterly grieved over the disastrous change. Time only increased the evil. He upbraided her if she did not write often and openly to him, and yet never ceased to importune her to come out of what he called this creeping and cursed heresy. She now learned from his letters that he was become a *protégé* of her uncle the bishop, who gave him the most brilliant promises of influence with the crown, if he chose to pursue a statesman's course. At length wearied out, and seeing all prospect of future happiness destroyed, she resolved, cost her what it would, to resign her claims upon him, and close the correspondence, which was wearing out her life piecemeal. But to this he would not consent. He became desperate and furious. Letter after letter came, full of vows never to resign her, strongly mixed with reproaches and bitterness. Overwhelmed with trouble, she consulted me what she was to do; and, with the advice of his own father, it was resolved to receive no more of his communications. This seemed to put him beyond the sphere of reason. He accused my son of being the instigator of this course. When he met him, he openly and fiercely insulted him. He accused him before the heads of the college of heresy, and excited his companions to persecute him, and chase him from the school. My son, who is not naturally disposed to bear open insult from any one, yet pitying his feelings, and out of regard to the peace of his sister and of us all, avoided him, and treated him, when accidentally brought together, with a wonderful forbearance; but being suddenly met by him as he issued one night from a hostel with a troop of his fiery companions, then probably flushed with wine, and being at once assaulted by them, my son was compelled to defend himself, and in doing that, not only wounded several of the roisterers, but ran this unhappy man through the body.

"The news of this fatal occurrence was the death-blow to my daughter. Claspings her hands in a sudden agony, she fell senseless in my arms, and was carried to the bed from which she never rose again."

## CHAPTER XX.

THE KNIGHT CONCLUDES HIS STORY. HE RELATES THAT OF THE DEFORMED SCULPTOR. JACK REMARKS FOR HAMBURG IN QUEST OF THE OLD KNIGHT'S SON.

THE old Knight paused at the relation of his daughter's death, overcome by his feelings. At length resuming, in some degree, his composure, but in a tone of the deepest melancholy, he said :—

“ Judge now if any lot of condition of humanity can be more desolate than mine. My wife perishing at the moment that her eyes and heart were opened to a sense of true happiness ; my beloved daughter, than whom there never moved on this earth a more loving and beautiful spirit, snatched from me by the violence of an apostate's passion ; my son obliged to fly into a foreign land. I have now lived here these four years, a stripped and solitary man. My brother, who should have proved to me a comforter, as he is sole remnant besides myself of my paternal line, has continued to persecute me the more, as he has seen me become more weak and forlorn. God forgive him, what in his perverted, but perhaps honest, feeling of duty, he has done to me ; and this good he has also done, that he has not suffered me to be consumed, because he yet hopes that my son may return to the church in time to allow him to withdraw the interdict, and prevent the ancestral property, on my demise, falling to the crown ; and with it the extinction of the ancestral name of which he is proud.

“ But there is yet one passage which I will notice. You have seen my son, in the church, the monuments of my deceased wife and child, and like all who have gazed on them, have been struck with admiration of their heavenly beauty. They lie on a broad altar-tomb of richest workmanship—two effigies of pure snowy marble, so life-like that they seem not dead, but merely to sleep, and yet filled and overflowing with a sentiment of such divine grace and sweetness as belongs not to this world. Would you not, have you not believed, as you stood in silent wonder over them, that they must be the work and emanation of some noble sculptor, himself embodying in his own person, the rich and godlike form which he can so divinely bestow on others ? Hear then, my son ; they were chiseled by the hand of one who ranks lowest amongst the miserable shapes to which humanity is sometimes condemned.

“ My mitred brother now builds from the rich revenues of his see, a noble church in the next town. In times when we yet met, he was in want of an able sculptor, to carve the finest work for his erection, and to chisel the images of the Saviour, the Virgin, and the Apostles, in a style worthy of the fabric. In my sojourn in Italy, I had seen works in the studio of a celebrated sculptor which excited my wonder. I praised them as amongst his finest ; but he told me they were not his, but those of one of his pupils. I begged to see this pupil. ‘ You will wonder,’ said he, ‘ more when you see him than you now do.’ He took me into another room, where a man was at work on a block of marble. ‘ Signor ——,’ said he, ‘ this English gentleman is a great admirer of your productions.’

The man looked up, and then rose to return my salutations, and great indeed was my amazement !

“ On a little crooked and limping body sate a huge head, with features of a baboonish, thick, and unusually ugly mould. His hair was rough and unpliant ; and he had an ungainly manner, a degree of sheepishness, that seemed to deprive him of all address. It was some time before I could win sufficiently upon him to draw him into conversation ; but at length I succeeded, and found him one of the most extraordinary of men. He himself told me his story. He had been originally the son of a stonecutter. In his youth, to add to his natural deformity, a fall of stone had crushed him, and crippled him for life. By his father, he was treated harshly and as a drudge ; and by the workmen, he was kicked about as an ape with human sense. He described the effects of the taunts of ugliness, and the savage jokes which were played upon him, as growing in him to something so fell and venomous that his passions became uncontrollable. He would fling chisels, mallets, or any dangerous weapon that he had in his hand, at those who provoked him ; and has often gone into solitary places to nurse his feelings of vengeance against mankind, whom he deemed as his enemies and no better than fiends, till he longed to be able to crush them under his feet, or see them die in torments before him. At length, wearied out, he wandered from home, but only found himself, wherever he went, worse and worse treated. He lay out in the streets of great cities, and fought with the dogs for what was given to them, because every one turned their eyes away from him in abhorrence, and stopped not to listen to his petitions for food. At length, reaching Rome, he went into the churches, to see whether the pious would not treat him better ; and there was struck with such astonishment at the works of great artists, statues and paintings, that, forgetting his miseries, he sate on the pavement for hours gazing on them and weeping.

“ At length it came into his mind, that those who created works so full of holiness and beauty must themselves be more compassionate and noble than their fellows. He listened to the remarks of those who daily came to gaze on them, and learned that the greatest of those artists was then living and working in that city. He learned too the place of his abode ; and posting himself by his gate, waited from day to day to get a sight of him. The servants, who saw him there, desired him to be gone ; and at length, one more savage than the rest took him by the shoulders and flung him forwards into the street. A crowd, hearing his cries, stopped as they went by, to learn what was the matter ; and when they saw that object of misery, and heard his treatment, they cursed the hard-hearted fellow, flung him some small coins, and went on. One gentleman, of tall and graceful mien, however, stood, and bade the poor wretch draw near, and tell him again his story. It was the artist himself. He sent for the servant, upbraided him for his inhumanity, paid him on the spot, and dismissed him from the house. Then addressing himself to the forlorn and bleeding object, he asked if he could do anything for him ; and offered to

send him to an hospital for the disabled poor. Great, however, was his astonishment, when he heard the poor creature crave to be taken into his employ, if it were only to cut the roughest portion of the stone, so that he might be able to gaze daily on the divine works which he was executing.

"That," said the great sculptor, "I fear is impossible. But come in; you can, at least, sweep and carry out the chipped-off stone, and do other little things; and here you will certainly be secure from daily ill-treatment."

"He had him washed, and clothed, and fed; and learning that he had been accustomed to handle a mallet and chisel, put them into his hand, and gave him a rough block of stone to reduce. The soul was awake in this uncouth form. He soon gave such proofs of his capacity as astonished his master; and, when I was at Rome, had arrived at that degree of skill which so much pleased and surprised me. This man I recommended to the bishop. He has already worked some years on his church to universal admiration, and from his hand is this tomb.

"The change which has been wrought in his own mind is not the less wonderful. From one of the most vindictive of men, he is become one of the most forbearing and divine examples of christian charity. He says that he has always found the greatest possessors of genius, the greatest possessors of a kind and generous spirit. They are the mere clever men who are envious, carping, and contemptuous. Genius is an emanation of heaven, and cannot avoid bearing about it the air and spirit of its native region—something great, candid, and magnanimous. He looks on mankind in general as malicious, only because they are ignorant; and declares, that in no case has he avenged the injuries and indignities offered him by his fellow-workmen, or others of vulgar mind, except by occasionally carving the faces of these on the corbels of the church, where the likeness is too striking to be overlooked, and yet is combined with such an ugliness and with such grotesque grimaces, that it fills them with the greatest wrath. 'My ugliness,' has he said, addressing them, 'will go to the grave with me, while my works will remain to testify that I was not without some comeliness of soul; but for you, you will go down to all generations in unmitigated deformity.' The punishment is severe, and not unmerited. They are laughed at by the whole parish, and every week only renews the remembrance of the jest."

The old Knight here paused; and, after a while, turned the conversation on his son. It was four years since he had quitted England, and had set out for Prague; where, in that most celebrated university, the doctrines of the Reformation were said to be spreading, and where he hoped to complete his education. His letters from time to time had given satisfactory intelligence of his progress and health, but for the last twelve months had totally ceased. This had filled his mind with the deepest uneasiness. His latter ones had spoken of many and fierce bickerings in Germany; and that a storm seemed hovering over Bohemia, which was not without its troubles. In this storm, it was possible that his son had become involved; had, perhaps, fallen one of its victims. Perhaps even now

he lay in some dismal stronghold, if he even lived. "Yet at times," continued he, "I flatter myself that it may be only the distracted state of Germany which prevents the arrival of letters or his return. My son, canst thou help me with thy counsel, to devise a means of arriving at the truth?"

Jack had often heard him speak of his son's absence, and of his anxiety about him, but till this moment he did not understand the extent of his sorrows; and now, without waiting a moment, he replied—"Yes, I can tell what must be done. I will myself set out and seek him."

The old Knight, seizing Jack's hand, and bursting into tears, cried—"Nay, nay, my son, that cannot be. What am I to do without you? And what if you come also to some evil fate?"

Jack, however, persisted in his resolve, and spoke so cheerfully and confidentially of finding the young man, and of either returning with him, or of bringing good news, that at length the Knight gave him his consent and his blessing. Jack made the necessary preparations. He deemed it best to leave Ben and Timothy; and equipping himself accordingly, make the journey on foot, or in such conveyances as might present themselves on the road. He trusted to join himself to companies of travelling merchants, and where it was thus secure, to supply himself with a horse. For all which needs, the Knight furnished him with ample funds. In a week from the day of this conversation, he was on his way to the distant port whence he was to sail over to Hamburg.

## CHAPTER XXI.

JACK EMBARKS FOR GERMANY; MEETS WITH AN OLD FRIEND ON THE VOYAGE, WHO INTRODUCES HIM TO MANY NEW FRIENDS IN HAMBURG. PREPARES FOR HIS GRAND EXPEDITION.

WE now enter on a totally new career in the life of our hero. Our readers, as well as ourselves, must be very sensible that the queer and country lad, the Jack-of-the-Common, and the Jack-of-the-Mill, has been gradually growing in dignity of character. From the day that he set out circumstances had conspired not only to change his fortunes, but even his name. At the moment that he was quitting his native country to explore new ones, in the service of his valued patron, his name and fame as John-o'-the-Mill, or now as common John Othmill, and Othmill the Lollard, resounded through every nook of the nation. In the palaces of the great, where the dread of Lollard insurrections reigned, and in the cottage, the farm, and the hostel, everywhere were recounted the singular and daring deeds of Othmill; and everywhere it was believed that did the Lollards take any bold stand against their persecutors, Othmill would be found the most formidable of their leaders. There was a feeling abroad of his adroitness, his speed, and almost of his ubiquity. Jack had felt it his duty to visit his parents before leaving the country, as he had often before sent them word of his well-being, accompanied by substantial tokens of his filial remembrance. Not a little was he then diverted to hear, by his native fireside, his father and mother begin and relate



the exploits of Othmill—called, said they also, John-o'-the-Mill. Here he saw himself clothed out in such a shape, and with such strange and improbable deeds, that he could not forbear breaking out into immoderate laughter; which not a little surprised the old people, who had imbibed all the popular belief of John-o'-the-Mill, and were descending on the most sublime of his deeds. It was quite impossible to convince them that John-o'-the-Mill, and Othmill the Lollard, were no other than their own son. When Jack gave them the real history of events, and stripped it of all its adventitious marvels, the only result was, that this became quite another story to them, and might be Jack's story, but was not that of John-o'-the-Mill. This popular hero was fast engraven on their imaginations, and nothing, at present at least, could remove it. Yet when, after Jack's departure, with that inconsistency which springs out of the secret pride of human nature, Jack's mother once dropped a hint amongst her gossips that John-o'-the-Mill was no other than her Jack, there was actually a scream of indignant ridicule; and so did the story with jibes and laughter fly round the parish, that the poor woman closed her mouth, and never again opened it on that subject; nay, never did she venture, except to her husband, to mention the name of John-o'-the-Mill; and never did she hear his name mentioned without feeling laughing eyes secretly fixed on her, and boiling water running down her legs.

Many were the strange stories that Jack heard of himself as he travelled on towards Hull to embark. In wayside inns John-o'-the-Mill was the great theme, and with endless variations. Once he attempted to correct the narrative of a schoolmaster, who, as the oracle of the alehouse nook, was telling a very florid story of him. Jack represented that he came from the part of the country where Othmill lived; knew him well; knew the Knight, and all the circumstances well;—but he might just as easily have set himself to put down a hurricane. The schoolmaster fiercely asked "where John-o'-the-Mill did live? Where his exploits were done? Were they not all over the country? Was there a meeting, or a skirmish, or a stratagem in any part of the nation where Othmill was not at the bottom of it? Know him, indeed! Who could say he knew him? Was he not now in this shape, now in that—now here, now there? There were knowing-ones who believed him to be no other than Friar Bacon come back again; and others felt certain it was the Wandering Jew. But a learned monk of St. Alban's, Widdowin, had seen him, and vowed that by the cut of his face he could not be less than three hundred years old!"

All cast the hottest and savagest looks at Jack. He was looked upon as little better than a heretic, and an actual impostor. He was really silenced on the subject of his own identity.

But while he left behind him John-o'-the-Mill thus figuring over the country, a sort of grotesque but gigantic phantom sprung up from his own shadow; he himself went forth in his real character, a man of high mind and aim, and with credentials from eminent men, in which the bearer, John Othmill, was recommended as a person in eminent trust and esteem. We should, therefore, feel ourselves to be acting with a very undue sense of our hero's dignity and importance, if we any longer called him by the ab-

rupt and familiar appellation of Jack. That was the befitting cognomen of a former day,—that day is over; and henceforth we respectfully know only John Othmill, as the subject of our narrative.

It was now the very opening of the year. The winter, which had passed over since the transaction related in our last chapter, was but just passed, and Othmill found it some time before he could secure a passage. When that was obtained, they had a stormy and dangerous voyage; and John Othmill, to whom the sea was new, soon thought that he should go to the bottom, and never would the old Knight hear more of him than he had done of his son. Is it any wonder, said he to himself, that the young man has never returned? and can anything be more likely than that in voyaging homewards, he has long ago been swept away into these boundless and turbulent waters? Othmill, however, not only landed safe in Hamburg, but with more advantage than he had reason to hope for. In this very vessel he found one of those merchants to whom he had formerly gone as guide, and who had been so much pleased with him, as to entreat him to go along with them. Nothing could exceed the interest with which this worthy man listened to Othmill's history of his fortunes since that time, and the astonishment with which he regarded the improvement in his person and manners, and the knowledge which he had acquired. He was greatly amazed when he learned, that our and his quondam acquaintance, Jack, was actually that John-o'-the-Mill, of whom he had heard such wonderful stories in England. The good man was a merchant of Hamburg, who had connexions in the chief cities of all parts of Germany, and offered him letters to men of mercantile note and influence in such places as he might possibly visit, if he persisted in his enterprise. But he earnestly conjured him to abandon the idea of personally attempting what he represented to him as the most arduous and perilous undertaking, and to content himself with endeavouring to trace the fate of the youth by letters, which he engaged to forward for him, to the University of Prague, and to such persons there besides as would be able to unravel, if there was human possibility of it, the mystery of his fate.

He informed him that Bohemia was torn to pieces with religious and political dissensions. The unfortunate king, Wenzel, had been dethroned. His brother, the Emperor Sigismund, who was also king of Hungary, who had succeeded him, had violated his word in giving a safe-conduct to John Huss, the celebrated disciple of Wycliffe, to the Council of Constance, before which he had been summoned, in consequence of which that great man had been burnt at the stake. His colleague, Jerome of Prague, had also suffered the same fate; and the Hussites, breaking forth under their irresistible leader Ziska, were carrying destruction everywhere on their enemies. In these commotions, the university of which Huss and Jerome were the chief teachers, had of course been closely involved. The students had risen with the people in fierce resentment. The Rath, or council-house, in the city, had been stormed by the mingled multitude of students and citizens: no less than fourteen of the councillors, who had insulted the Hussites when passing below in procession to the church, by flinging stones from the windows upon them, had been themselves

pitched from the same windows into the midst of the mob, and caught upon their spears. The Hussites victorious, had far and wide revenged the cruelties of the Germans by making inroads into Saxony, Austria, and other states; and that it would be almost impossible to penetrate these districts without falling into the hands or under the weapons of one or other of the exasperated parties.

But this was not all. He informed him that, in consequence of the weak and impolitic government of the late Emperor Wenzel, the wars and bickerings betwixt the petty princes of the different small territories into which Germany was so unhappily divided, had risen to a height such as had not been seen since the great Rudolph of Hapsburg had, with a strong hand, crushed them into silence. A century of disorders, of rival emperors and rival popes, had succeeded; and the wild license which this had allowed and created, had risen to a monstrous climax under Wenzel, who, involved in troubles of his own creating in his native territories of Bohemia, had kept aloof, and let the rude combatants, like so many wolves, devour each other. Sigismund had now his hands too full with the overflowing and overpowering Hussites, who had burst forth under Ziaka, to put any check on these disorders. The Fehmgericht, or Secret Tribunals, which had been instituted and had spread far and wide, as a means to procure justice on the part of the people, against the strong hands which defied the open laws of the country, and had struck terror into and executed justice on many a proud tyrant—now found it impossible to cope with the universal disorder, and were in many instances become only the tools of these violent men. The Raub-Ritter, or Robber Knights, whose castles were perched on every height, now infested every public road; and it was only under the most powerful military guards that the wagon-trains of the merchants could effect in safety the passage from one city to another. At every step, then, he would meet with a reckless and ruthless enemy. In the forest, on the road, in the hostel, everywhere he would be in peril from the sword of the marauder or the grasp of the emissaries of the so-called Frei-Gericht, or Free Tribunals.

This account filled John Othmill with surprise, and with alarm for the fate of the Knight's son, whose return home was now no longer a matter of wonder to him. It appeared only next to impossible that through such a country a man could return at all. But on inquiring how long it would be ere an answer to letters on this subject might be expected from Prague; and being told that six months at least would be requisite, as the letters must go, and the reply come back, with the caravans, which, in such a state of things, would travel slowly, and often be delayed in cities, from which they would not venture to set forth, for want of sufficient escort—Othmill's patience could not brook the idea. He assured the merchant that he would ten thousand times rather travel along with the trade-wagons, however slow, or run every risk of capture or death, rather than suffer for six months, or perhaps nine, the suspense of an inactive waiting, and in the end, perhaps, not feel sure that all had been done which was possible.

The merchant, finding it vain to attempt to daunt him or induce him to give up the enterprise, praised his faithful zeal, and told him, that

at least some delay and some preparations were indispensable, before he could set out. In the first place, no wagon-train would set out for Hanover and Magdeburg, the first great cities on his route, for some time. The roads were too dreadful at this early season, from the winter frosts and rains, for them to pass, and the days too short for them to make much progress in safety. In the next place, though he had acquired a tolerable facility of speaking Latin, which would serve him with all the clergy and with learned persons, and had some knowledge of the German, which he had picked up in their former acquaintance; yet it was absolutely necessary that he should render himself much more conversant and familiar with the latter, in order to pass with common safety amongst the people. He must be able to understand them, as well as to make himself understood. It was not necessary that he should speak the language with great grace and correctness, because, as in almost every State the pronunciation varied, he would in one only be thought to be a native of another; but he must guard against being known as an Englishman, lest he should be suspected of bringing communications, and perhaps promises of aid to the Emperor, from the English monarch, between whose family and some of the princely ones of Germany there were rumours of alliances, as there had been in former times, especially with Austria and Bohemia.

Mr. Othmill saw the reasonableness of these remarks. He had felt what a new and strange world he was about to plunge into, as he rambled about the busy streets of Hamburg, where the language of the people fell on his ear, spite of his having picked up some fragments of it from the merchants, as an utter Babylonian jargon. He determined to familiarize his ear to it by a daily and constant listening to it, and at the same time to study its construction diligently under the guidance of the friendly merchant. This good man also advised him to write to the Knight to inform him of the necessity of his tarrying three months in this city, and to represent to the Knight how much it might tend to the success of his enterprise if he could procure for him a letter to the Emperor from the English king, praying that if the young man had fallen by any youthful indiscretion into the hands of his government, he might be released, and committed to the safe-conduct of this messenger. The merchant undertook to forward Mr. Othmill's letter, and to take measures for obtaining the answer in time.

Mr. Othmill could not sufficiently thank his friendly adviser for his wise and invaluable suggestions; and assuring the worthy Knight that no dangers or difficulties should induce him to leave one stone unturned which might be necessary for the success of his search, and that he would die in the attempt rather than return without a knowledge of what had become of his son, he delivered his letter to the merchant, and then fell at once to the study of the language, and the condition of the country through which he had to pass. The merchant and his family—which consisted of the lady his wife, and of six sons and daughters, some of whom were yet quite children, but two of them, a son and daughter, nearly at their growth—were all astonished at the progress he made; he seemed to pick up the tongue by instinct. They observed that what he once comprehended, he never again forgot; and every day made new acquisitions. Othmill

on his part, however, said that it was such a pleasure to live amongst and converse with so kind and happy a family, that it required no labour, but was a great gratification to listen, and to learn the words which they made so agreeable. Indeed they did all that was possible to make his abode with them delightful. The merchant took him with him on all occasions into the city, to the counting-houses of his mercantile friends, and amongst the shipping, which was a source of great interest and curiosity to him. The good man omitted no opportunity of creating a friendly sympathy for him amongst those of his friends who had concerns in the cities through which he might pass; and thereby procured him much information of essential importance, and letters to grave men in those cities, and to the hosts of hostels on the way, which might be worth more to him than any money, or any wit or wisdom that he could carry with him.

The son also took Mr. Othmill through the city and neighbourhood, shewing him those things which were more particularly to his taste; and in the ready colloquial flow of this ardent and active youth's language, Othmill found the most rapid of instructors. When they returned to the house, the mother and sisters questioned Mr. Othmill of what he had seen, and the younger children getting about him, and listening, and then demanding of him relations of what he had seen in England; it was no wonder that by the time that the three months had expired he had advanced farther in a fluent use of their tongue than many would have done under ordinary circumstances in three years.

In the mean time the desired letter from the Knight had arrived, enclosing one from the monarch of the most satisfactory kind, not merely requesting the desired aid in the present inquiry, but adding that it would be regarded as a mark of friendship from the Emperor to the king himself. Furnished with this invaluable document, Mr. Othmill waited with impatience for the setting out of the train. The day before it departed, the merchant took Othmill into his private room, and giving him, in exchange for his money, bills upon his correspondents in various cities, which, for greater security, he instructed him to secure between the leather and the lining of his boot, so that on no occasion might he be left destitute; he then presented him with a weapon of defence, of which he displayed to him the structure and use. Othmill regarded this with an astonishment and delight that may be readily conceived.

Gunpowder had been discovered, and a rude species of cannon introduced into warfare, for three quarters of a century. A species of hand-guns, which were discharged by means of a piece of burning tow, called matchlocks, were now fast introducing among us; but this was a piece so small, that it could be carried in the belt, and discharged with one hand. Instead of the match-lock, it had also a very superior contrivance, called a wheel-lock. By means of a spring, at the moment that the trigger was pulled, a small steel wheel in the lock rapidly revolving struck fire upon flint suitably disposed, and gave an instantaneous discharge. This small and ingenious piece, called a pistol, was the workmanship of a friend of the merchant, an eminent mechanic at Nuremberg, and had been presented to him by the maker when over there, and on various occasions had proved of the most signal service.

It was of plain but excellent workmanship, that it might not tempt the greedy eyes of speculators; and was so contrived that it would occupy a sheath no longer than a dagger, and might on occasion pass for one; nay, it could be made on removing the lock, to screw into the stem of a walking-stick, and so pass only for its head; or it might be concealed in the bottom of a knapsack. The merchant also furnished Mr. Othmill with a quantity of powder and balls, with a mould to cast more of the latter, and a receipt to prepare his powder, if absolutely necessary, for himself; but he most solemnly enjoined him not to produce this invaluable weapon except on urgent occasions, and to look upon it as a last resource in imminent peril of life, which kings would justly be proud to possess, and every rapacious knight would eagerly endeavour, if seen, to wrest from him.

Othmill could not sufficiently thank his generous friend for all his kindness. The merchant then led him back to his family, where he found a company assembled to partake of a farewell dinner. Amongst these were some of the merchants who were to be Othmill's companions on the way to Hanover and Magdeburg, and others as far as Leipsic; and in the cheerful sociality of the evening, a friendly feeling was thus established, which was to Mr. Othmill not the least of the benefits which the merchant had found the means of conferring on him. Othmill took an affectionate and grateful leave of this kind family and their friends at the breaking up of the party, and arose before the break of day to accompany the train, which was to set forward at earliest dawn. His friends, the merchant and his son, accompanied him to the place of rendezvous, where they found a great company of other citizens, men, women, and children, who had either goods of great value in the wagons, or who had relations amongst the mercantile or the military part of this expedition.

The train consisted of nine wagons, each drawn by eight horses, and accompanied by a troop of thirty stout and well-armed horsemen. The drivers and the merchants themselves also carried arms; and in one of the wagons they had tools for cutting down trees, throwing up embankments, and thus, on any occasion, of barricading and defending their property to the last. The wagons were arched over with wooden roofs, and furnished with doors and strong locks, so that the goods could not, except when the wagons were fairly treated from the owners, be readily got at. There were several matchlocks and good store of crossbows in possession of the party, with arms and ammunition.

When the train arrived at the top of a hill at some distance from the city, the bulk of the crowd took their leave with many tears and good wishes for the safe return of the adventurers, and only a few mounted merchants rode on with it somewhat further. These, amongst whom were Othmill's two friends, the merchant and his son, then took a cordial farewell, and the train moved slowly on its way.

## CHAPTER XXII.

ADVENTURES ON THE WAY. OTHMILL QUITS THE WAGON-TRAIN, AND FOLLOWS THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK INTO THE HARZ COUNTRY. ARRIVES AT LEIPSIC.

For some time our traveller found the journey

amusing and agreeable. It was altogether new and curious. The way lay over vast and sandy tracts, scattered here and there with woods of pine, many of them stunted and thin, and in some places having the whole surface of the ground beneath them carpeted with a silvery lichen, which gave a grey and strange aspect to them. At others, the waysides were glowing with the most beautiful and fragrant flowers, such as he had never seen in his own country; and he could not sufficiently satisfy himself with hanging his horse to the rear of one of the wagons, and gathering them as he walked along with some of the young merchants. At times a roe or a wild swine, roused from the thicket, afforded them a chase, when far from castles or villages, where they feared giving no offence to the lord of the country. At noon they would select some agreeable place by a fountain or stream, and giving their horses to feed under the care of men who attended the train as grooms, they seated themselves on the turf in groups, and producing their provisions—of which they carried with them good store, for few hostels or hamlets lay on the way—they made fires, and ate in much merriment. On all these occasions, however, a guard stood ever on the watch against surprise; for in no age had the country been in a more disordered state.

Othmill listened with eagerness to the stories which circulated of former adventures on such journeys: of attacks from robbers of both high and low degree; of the strange legends which attached to every old castle, and to many a forest spring and stream. Spirits and witches, wild huntsmen, and ancient kings leading an enchanted life in the vaults and ruins of decayed strongholds, where they had formerly done strange deeds, and where, in scenes of midnight splendour, they awaited the last judgment—were subjects of conversation by the evening fire, till Othmill began to imagine that every dark tree was an apparition, and every rustle of a leaf was a robber.

At night, drawing all their wagons into a circle, the centre of which, on the slightest alarm, they could drive their horses, they set a strong watch; and after snuffing in the circle, made their beds in the same. If it were wet, they cut poles, which they drove into the ground, and stretching others from one to the other of these upright ones, threw across them canvass sheets, and thus formed speedy and convenient huts. As many as could, took up their quarters under the wagons; and thus they presented every evening the appearance of a small camp, of which their wagons formed their stronghold, or, as they termed it, their Wagonburg. If any danger were apprehended during the day, they quickly threw themselves into this form; and at night, an alarm from the watch, or the barking of the dogs, quickly roused them, they took their stations behind their wall of wagons, and were ready, with crossbows and matchlocks, to pour a volley upon the foe, or to sally forth upon them.

Such was the manner in which the adventurous merchants of those days were obliged, in that country, to carry on their traffic; and custom had made it tolerable to them. Nay, there were always found adventurous spirits who preferred this kind of life to the securer but more monotonous business of cities. To secure themselves, however, as far as possible, they entered into engagements with the princes of the differ-

ent states through which they passed, to furnish them with a guard for an annual payment. This guard, therefore, accompanied them from one boundary or state to the other, and giving them into the charge of the guard of the next state, then returned. The free cities also, on occasion, furnished them with conductors; for it was the interest of all parties that their goods should circulate. Still the poor merchants were often dreadfully plundered and abused by robber-bands and robber-knights, who set all laws at defiance; and trusting to the strength of their castles, retreated thither with their booty.

Othmill soon began almost to wish for an attack, for the progress was so slow, that it became wearisome to his active spirit, and to his impatience to reach the end of his journey. The roads were deep with loose sand, or through the muddy soil of richer lands. Wearily and heavily paced along the wagons; one long day was like another; and at this rate there seemed as though there would come no end. Glad was he when they at length reached Hanover, and receiving a fresh guard, set forward on the way to Magdeburg. They were now in the territory of Brunswick, in a wilder and more hilly country, and at every Dorf they heard rumours of disturbances, and of flying troops of Hussites, which having burst from Bohemia, now overrun and plundered the German states far around. They came at length to where the road to Brunswick turned off, and here they dismissed one of their wagons which was bound thither, and a portion of their guard for its protection. Scarcely, however, had they set forward on their way again, when one of the guards galloping back, brought the news that the wagon was set upon by a troop of robbers, and the attendants obliged to flee. A halt was instantly agreed upon. The wagons prepared to draw themselves into a posture of defence, and as many of the guard as possible were spared to pursue and recapture the wagon. Othmill joined this party, and with full speed they flew forward. They soon met the small troop of guards and attendants, who, seeing no chance of resisting the attacking party, which was very numerous, had deemed it best to send as quickly as possible for succour to their old comrades, and now returning with them, the whole troop dashed forward to the rescue. The robbers had drawn the wagon from the way into the wood, and having most of them dismounted, were eagerly proceeding to drag out its contents. The sound of the galloping party alarmed them. They sprang to horse, and turned to resist the onset. The pursuers, however, dashed upon them with loud cries. Othmill, whose spirit rose to a degree of wildness at the sight of adventure, was one of the foremost. He spurred his horse on the leader of the thieves, and discharging his pistol at his head, saw him instantly fall headlong. Nevertheless the thieves stood their ground firmly, and the next moment there was a close and general fight. Several fell on both sides, and it would have gone hard with the merchant party, had not a troop of soldiers suddenly fallen on the rear of the robbers, and decided the fate of the day in a moment. The thieves took to flight, and a wild chase through the woods ensued. Othmill, who had done wonders in the fray, dashed exultingly on with loud cries. The robbers, who were well mounted, flew in various directions, and it was soon more like a hunt of wild beasts than a chase of men. As the pursuers and the pursued became broken

into smaller parties, and each at a greater distance from the rest, ever and anon would one or more robbers turn, and with savage fury endeavour to strike down their assailants. Othmill, who perceived this, halted a moment, reloaded his pistol, and stuck it in his belt. He then set himself to call together as fast as possible the scattered merchants. He galloped hither and thither, begging them to desist from the chase and look to their own safety. While engaged in this attempt, he heard near him the active strokes of weapons falling on armour, and loud outcries of some one for help. He burst through the thicket and beheld one of the merchants beset by two burly thieves. The merchant was a large and strong man, but clad only in his ordinary garb, while his opponents were sheathed in iron hauberks, and their heads protected with steel caps. The merchant wielded a battle-axe with wonderful adroitness and vigour, but against the swords of two such opponents there was little chance, and another moment must have ended the fray. Othmill's sudden appearance, at once relieved the merchant of one of his antagonists, who had turned to attack the new comer. Othmill discharged his pistol full at the fellow's chest. He reeled and fell backwards, and his comrade seeing this, once more took to flight. The merchant, whose blood seemed up, gave furious pursuit, in which Othmill joined. In a few minutes they found themselves rushing across the road, and in the very face of the wagon-burg. There was a loud shout of surprise. The robber, who thus had plunged into the very heart of his enemies, halted not a moment, but spurring his steed, dashed past with the mad courage of despair, and was the next instant again lost in the forest, with Othmill and the merchant in his rear. But the man, who knew the woods far better than they, soon left them behind; and returning to the wagons, Othmill and the merchant, who was not a little elated with his exploit, found their party now all drawing together from the chase, and preparing to barricade themselves for the night. The unlucky wagon was also brought back to await a stronger escort on the morrow, and the fallen soldiers and robbers were committed to the earth.

The preparations were carried on with eager vigour and bustle by the whole party. Several trees were cut down, so as to extend a thick screen on one side. Stakes were cut and driven into the ground on the other, with their points outwards, and the whole body constituted a watch. Morning dawned, however, without any further alarm. They waited only the escort from the city to receive the solitary wagon, which about ten o'clock arrived. With it also appeared the young Duke of Brunswick, with a strong party of horse. His father had been killed, when he was a boy, on his way from the Assembly of the States, by his enemies, and now the news of these still more disordered times demanded his utmost vigilance. The Bohemians, in the fanatic effervescence of their zeal, and their victories over their enemies and their own monarch, had styled their country the Promised Land, and all their German neighbours Canaanites and Philistines. They streamed in desperate hordes through Austria, Saxony, Franconia, Hungary, Brandenburg, and even as far as Dantzic. Towns were stormed and plundered, convents ransacked and burnt by them, and their terror spread far and wide. Various hosts, sent

against them were overthrown, and every prince felt himself bound to have all his power and his vigilance in exercise. The Duke was on his way to his castle of Blankenburg, which lay in the Harz country, and more in the quarter whence attack was likely to come. The soldiers which so opportunely came over-night to the assistance of the wagon were a small detachment sent in advance, as scouts, and some of these had ridden back and hastened the Duke onward.

Othmill, who was weary of the tardy pace of the wagon-train, begged to be allowed to ride in the Duke's train, as it would take him more directly on his way to Leipsic, and at a quicker rate. This was readily granted, but the merchants were very unwilling to consent to his departure. They had not only been much pleased with his company, but had seen with admiration in the skirmish his dauntless bravery and address. They warned him of a thousand perils and difficulties. They represented the almost, if not entire impossibility, of his entering Bohemia, if once known to have been in the train of any of the German princes, and argued with much eloquence how much the security of the merchant-train would compensate for its slowness. All this, however, produced no effect on Othmill. He took a hearty farewell of his old travelling companions, and rode away with the soldiers. The young Duke, who had listened to what had been said, and had heard Othmill's praises, now conceived a great respect for him; had him to ride near him, and questioned him of the object of his visit to so mad and violent a country as Bohemia at this moment. Othmill did not hesitate to tell him candidly but privately the object of his journey. The Duke shook his head when he heard it, and said that a more dangerous, and he might say hopeless, enterprise never had been undertaken by mortal man. He also joined in endeavouring to dissuade him from it, but in vain. He said that no doubt the young man had fallen in one of those fierce insurrections which had arisen in Prague, and with hundreds of others had been swept away never more to have their fates discriminated. Othmill, nevertheless, stood firm to perish, or effect his object; and the Duke promised to see him safe as far as Leipsic, where he must steer his course as circumstances might direct.

They now advanced rapidly into the region of the old Hycrynian Forest, by the German tribes called the Harz. The Duke's party, which was one of observation, roved on, hunting as they went. Othmill was equally delighted with this mode of life and with the country. They were now amid mountains and forests of the wildest and most savage description. The Brocken lifted its bleak and still snow-capped summit before them, amid the dark forest-clad wilderness of other hills. Torrents thundering down from their sides in wild and headlong clamour, overhurling with huge pines, and bordered by confused masses of rocks and moss-clad stones, presented, as they dashed from one dark stony ledge to another, forms and sounds of nature's rude magnificence such as Othmill had never met with. His mind caught new feelings of awe and enthusiasm. He sent his gaze round under the dim shade of the mountain woods, and heard the torrents which made their way, roaring and yet unseen, beneath the chaos of rocky fragments which loaded the mountain sides, and no longer wondered at the

strange and visionary beings with which the inhabitants had peopled those grim solitudes. Ever and anon they came to some green little Dale deep amid the forest hills, where, by the rapid stream, the hamlet lay in its own small world; and here they pitched their tents, and tarried for some days, making the peasants their guides to the haunts of the deer, or the lairs of the wild boar and the bear, which still grew there to monstrous size and grimness. Many a desperate encounter did Othmill witness with these forest savages. In their erratic course they now entered the little quaint city of Halberstadt, and Othmill joined in worship in its grand and most ancient cathedral. Now they pursued the chase into the woods again, and feasted in the lofty castle of Wernigerode, where they followed the picturesque windings of the Sankenthal; gazed with wonder on the lofty precipices of the Roestrappe; and listened alternately to the legends which hung around it—the miraculous leap of the princess, the pursuing giant, and the false bishop, who stands there yet exposed in everlasting stone; and to the rush of its waters between its deep cliffs; and the yelling of the hounds, with a thousand reverberations, gave notice of some shaggy beast in his den. So they came to Blankenburg.

If Othmill had not had a great and sacred object to urge him on his way, he would have delighted to linger here for ever. There was a wild charm about this scene that never wearied with him. The castle, on its lofty heights, overlooked a landscape after his own heart: Deep below it lay the little old town. Around, behind it, stretched woods and hills of vast extent and solemn beauty. The forest hills, descending in various rapid slopes and glens into the plain, abounded with wild boars and deer in abundance. On the other hand, all before, stretched out a vast champaign, with mingled woods and ploughed lands and smoking villages. Immediately in front of the castle, quaint gardens lay on the precipitately descending slopes, with orchards and lawns down to the town; and here and there in the foreground arose long ridges of hills, their sides green with grass and scattered trees, and their summits jagged with naked rocks, which stood up like the rude ruins of some mighty wall, built by giants in days now forgotten. So much did they suggest this idea, that the ridge nearest to the castle, and running in a sideward direction away from it to the right, was called the Teufel's Mauer, or Devil's Wall.

In the woods, on the other side of this Teufel's Mauer, at the foot of a wild and splintered deity, a huntsman one day pointed out, with horror to Othmill, the entrance of a vast cave, in which the Fehm-gericht had ever and anon its sittings; and by its mouth stood a tree, on whose branches many a wretch, doomed to a hasty death by its midnight judges, had swung, and still slept soundly neath its shade. Othmill took a fearful glance at the mysterious cavern, and both strode on in silence, as if at every step some messenger of this dreadful tribunal might greet them. The pure and salutary justice which once swayed their decisions, and rendered them welcome to the people, had now given way to power and corruption, and deeds of darkness made them terrible. Othmill heard stories, probably because they might be related to him with safety, which made his blood run cold; and he longed to exchange these secret horrors

for the more open ones with which he was threatened amongst the Bohemians: His desires were soon accomplished. A safe escort soon presented itself to Halle and Leipzig. In these cities he found many students who had fled from the disturbances at Prague, and some who had well known his friend's son. They represented him as of high and strong bias to the reforming party, and quite likely to have fallen in some of the many contests which had arisen; but they knew nothing more. These, however, with one voice recommended him to join himself to the first homeward troop of Bohemians that he could fall in with; as the only possible means of reaching Prague in safety. In the busy town of Leipzig not a merchant nor a wagon could be found preparing for Prague. All thitherwards was fear and horror. Tales of pillage and massacre, and burning, filled every mouth, and made Othmill look upon his course as that of a martyr, from which nothing but a miracle could ever bring him back again. So satisfied was he of this, that when he set off, he did not even tell any one of his resolve. He sold his horse, and putting on the frock of a wandering mechanic, slung his knapsack on his back, and set out.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### OTHMILL FALLS IN WITH THE ARMY OF THE HUSSITES. THE MARCH TO PRAGUE.

OTHMILL'S way was direct before him. It required him to go neither to the right nor the left; but he carefully avoided passing through any town or note, which, indeed, lay thinly scattered, and when he saw any body of people approaching at a distance, he concealed himself in the thicket, or in a tree, till they went past. Parties of soldiers were what he saw most frequently. The country people were not to be seen on the way with their wagons or their cattle; and he observed that, when any one like himself saw a number of others approaching, he fled. The fields lay but half cultivated, and marks of fire began ever and anon to meet his eye. He dreaded to go deep into the woods for fear of robbers, and it was only when pressed for food that he diverged far from the highway. He has stood sometimes on a hill, and has seemed to be in an uninhabited land, till the faint, dull sound of a stamping mill, in some deep and retired valley, or the crow of a cock, has caught his ear, and led him to a hamlet. Here he became an object of suspicion and interrogation. He found a miserable shelter for the night, and heard nothing but accounts of ravages and deeds of evil. Many a time he has been compelled to pass the night on the broad branch of a mossy tree, secured by its ivy, and to avail himself of the benefit of his pistol to bring him down a dinner.

As he approached Chemnitz, rumours threatened upon him that it was in possession of the Hussites, and it proved to be the case. He now considered that the crisis of his fate had arrived. If allowed to join himself to any of their homeward parties, he had no fear of attaching the object of his inquiry; but the attempt to join them was full of peril. He sat long by the wayside, revolving with himself what was the best mode to pursue, but could find none better than that of presenting himself boldly at the gate. He

marched, therefore, coolly up to it, and was immediately seized by a huge fellow who stood sentinel, with a morgenstern, or pole, to which was attached, by a short chain, a ball of iron thickly set with spikes, on his shoulder. The man addressed him in a language he did not understand; Othmill addressed him in Latin, but the fellow only shook his head. Dozens of other men instantly crowded about him, clamorously demanding, as he supposed, who and what he was; but he could understand nothing; and now considered, for the first time, that he was entering a country where he had to encounter another tongue. He tried to address them in German and in Latin, but the noise and the crowd became so great that nothing could be heard. He saw throngs of fierce and scowling faces round him, weapons were lifted as to cleave him down, and he was dragged hither and thither. In the midst of the tumult, however, a gigantic young man, with open breast, and great growth of flowing brown hair, his short frock bound with a broad belt, and in his hand one of those huge swords which seem to require the strength of Samson to wield them, broke through the vociferous press, and demanded what was the matter. All gave way to the right and left before him; and planting his great sword in front of Othmill, and which reached considerably above his head, he asked him, in good German, who he was, and how he came there.

Othmill replied that he was in search of a friend of his, a student at Prague, whom his relatives had lost sight of, and who feared that he might be dead. He had volunteered to reach Prague and inquire, and now sought their protection on the way.

The gigantic youth demanded who this student was; and when Othmill described him, he immediately replied: "I knew him well; he was a brave and true man; but he is dead, and it begets to go no further. But," added he immediately, "he was an Englishman—you, therefore, are English too!"

Othmill replied in the affirmative.

"Ay, ay!" said the gigantic leader, "but that is important. Are you sure that you are only what you pretend to be? Are you no emissary? Bring you no offers of money to any party? We must see!"

In an instant again, however, he added: "But it avails not! No power can snatch our victory from us. Young man, to-morrow we set forward for Prague. March in our train and you are safe. Attempt to flee, and take the consequences on your own head."

He addressed the multitude in the same quick and peremptory manner; and all with a rapid change of countenance ceased to offer further molestation to Othmill, who was conducted by this extraordinary personage to a lodging for the night, and left there.

Othmill, who could hold no communication with the soldiers with whom he was quartered, took such refreshments as were set before him, and threw himself on the straw assigned for his bed. Here he lay and thought with profound melancholy on the assurance that he had received of the death of the old Knight's son. Early in the morning all was in motion; and issuing forth with the soldiers, he saw crowds of military and others hurrying to the marketplace. Here the extraordinary and huge young man was marshalling them. It was a wild and

motley multitude. Soldiers and mechanics and countrymen, in all sorts of garments, and with all species of arms. Some were mounted, but most on foot; and there was a vast train of wagons, and carts, and horses, loaded with goods, the plunder of the expedition, besides quantities of cattle. Part of the cavalry was placed in the front, part ordered to the rear. The wagons and cattle came on in the middle of the foot people, and forming an immense train; the drums beat, and all was in motion.

The colossal youth, whose name was Pohnitz, marched ever on foot, with his great sword on his shoulder, in the van of the pedestrian multitude, and maintained as much order as was possible to be preserved in so strange an army. The whole went on in loud and earnest conversation amongst themselves, accompanied ever and anon with violent gesticulations. Sometimes they broke into one general song, as of victory. It was not long before Othmill found amongst them those who could speak German, and then found that they were singing songs of victory over the Cabanians and Philistines whom they had wasted, and over the spoil which they were carrying home. He soon understood that the spirit of John Huss, under the banner of whose name and doctrines they had risen, was no longer that which guided them; but that of rapine and vengeance, and of that license into which the spirit of liberty in a people long abused by slavery and superstition, when let loose, unhappily so rapidly degenerates. He called to mind the far different mind of his old friend the Knight, and thought, with a sigh, that it must have been with different hopes of this people that his son had fought and fallen.

For several days this wild march continued, every day the country becoming more level and uninteresting as they advanced. Ploughed and treeless lands, and naked villages, in which dwelt stupid serfs—one common property of the lords of the soil—were all that diversified it. Othmill was not led to conceive a very magnificent idea of the capital of such a country; how great was his surprise, therefore, as, arriving on an eminence, the whole band burst into a simultaneous shout, and Othmill, pressing forward to learn the cause, beheld the city lying below them!

It was one of the noblest and most impressive sights which had ever met his vision. In a valley like a mighty basin, the boundaries of which rose all round in green or naked eminences, spread out this great city. The Moldau, a noble river, wound its way through it; and towers, domes, and spires of many a bold and antique form, reared themselves with stately grace above its Oriental roofs far and wide. Beyond the river towered a lofty hill, clustered on all sides with noble piles of building, and covered with palaces of vast extent, churches, and convents. Gardens and groves, and pleasant islands, in its fair stream, gave a diversified beauty to the aspect of the city, and around its battlemented walls spread greenest fields cultivated to the richest fertility.

Othmill did not wonder at the enthusiasm that burst forth from these wild marauders at the sight of their native city, for truly it was a noble one. As they drew near, they beheld on a neighbouring eminence a camp, with ditches and ramparts, newly thrown up, and on its earthen walls hundreds of forms quickly appeared to watch their approach. Once more a

reading about was raised, which was returned by those from the camp with equal enthusiasm; and from the name of "Ziska! Ziska!" loudly and everywhere repeated, he understood this to be the camp of this great leader, of whose invincible powers he had heard so much. As they drew near the city gates, forth rushed numbers from the camp. There was a stirring scene of embracing, and loud exchanging of inquiries and answers, as to what had occurred both at home and abroad. From the city then too came flying men, women, and children; and all was clamour, recognition, salutations, and the mighty sound of a thousand voices of exultation. The cattle was driven into meadows near the camp, for its use, and the wagons loaded with spoil were conducted into the city, amid the jubilant commotion of the swarming and crushing inhabitants.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHN OTHMILL SEES STRANGE SCENES IN PRAGUE, AND RECOVERS A GLIMPSE OF HOPE.

In this great and strange place, our friend John Othmill was indebted to a man who spoke German, and with whom he had conversed on the way, for the procurement of a good lodging; and having a little rested and refreshed himself, he set forth to find the university, and to learn with more certainty the fate of his friend's son. As he wandered through the streets he was more and more impressed with the picturesque beauty and extent of this old capital. The many churches, the vast pile of the University, where but a few years before forty thousand students were said to receive instruction, and where yet half that number, spite of the great German Marching Forth, and the succeeding troubles of the times, might be counted—these, and the crowds of busy and well-dressed people, impressed him with a sense of its importance. He gazed with a feeling of melancholy on that old Rath-Haus, where such scenes of popular fury had been acted, and before which the object of his quest had probably fallen. The huge horn fastened to the battlement of its tower seemed to his imagination ready once more, at the blast of some fiery herald of alarm, to rouse the hurrying swarms of citizens to deeds of blood and terror. He walked thoughtfully along that old and statue-carved bridge, and stepped upon the spot where the infatuated Wenzel, brother of the 'Good Queen Anne' of England, had caused the holy father Nepomuck to be plunged into the river, whence by miracle of guiding flames the body had been said to be again raised by the people; and giving one more glance around at the magnificent whole, of river, hills, and town, hastened back to the University to deliver his letters, and prosecute inquiries.

John Othmill found among the professors the readiest attention, and the greatest sympathy in his undertaking. They knew well the young man. He had been noticed by those even under whom he had not studied, for his handsome person, his gallant bearing, his spirit of liberty, and his social and cordial manners. But they all assured him that he was dead. It was now more than a year ago that he had fallen at the storming of the Rath-Haus. In the foremost crowd which had rushed upon it he had been conspicuous. A stone flung from the upper windows had

felled him in the street, and they supposed that amongst others he had been carried away and buried; but such had been the confusion which ensued that they doubted if any one could give single further particular.

John Othmill thought with sorrow on the melancholy news that he must carry to the old man. He saw no reason to hope that this was not too true, but he was still anxious to obtain if possible some more definite knowledge of the fact. He inquired if they could not name to him students yet here who had been his friends and companions, and would therefore feel a more particular interest in his fate, and might possess some further knowledge of it. Several of the names of these with their addresses were immediately furnished him from the printed annual lists of the college, and he took his leave with many thanks, and set out to visit these youths. His inquiry was shorter than he had reason to expect. Many of these students were in the habit of lodging under the same roof, in what they termed a Philister-House; and they had also their evening places of meeting, where they assembled in large numbers to drink together and sing the national songs. In these assemblies the spirit of religious as well as political freedom had found a rapid growth, and from the enthusiasm inspired here by song and warm discussion, had sprung forth such eager thousands to avenge the deaths of Huss and Jerome, and to second the energetic zeal of Ziska. No sooner, therefore, had Othmill called on one or two of these young men than they conducted him to others. They entered with warmth into his desire to learn more of the particulars attending his young friend's death, though they themselves made no doubt of it. Some had witnessed it, all had heard of it; but they had during the last year been involved in so many contests, their fellows had often been swept away in such numbers, that they had traced their fates no further than to pay them the funeral honours peculiar to their college customs, and to celebrate their united glory in their songs.

The news of this remarkable fact soon flew far and wide amongst them. All testified the utmost interest in promoting the inquiries of a youth who had adventured his life through strange countries, and amid strange times, to satisfy the mind of his ancient friend. In the evening, a number of them came to their social assembly, where his arrival and its object had been mentioned, and had excited general curiosity. He found them in a large room of an old hostel overlooking the river, to the amount of several hundreds; they were sitting at long tables, each with his covered beer-jug before him, and in the midst of the general chorus of a song, which he was told was a very merry and witty one, but which, to his ear, had more of melancholy than rejoicing in it. As his conductors paused a moment at the half-opened door to allow the song to come to a termination, John Othmill had time to cast his eye over the whole assembly; and he thought that never in his life had he beheld so singular a scene. Their dress had something wild and uncouth about it. With huge volumes of hair rolling down their backs, with caps of smallest size set just upon the summits of these bushy crowns, with giant swords held before them—they sate and sang with a solemnity and fire which was more like the expression of men uttering a vow of some great national avengement, than of young schol-



are enjoying a festive evening; and when, as the strophe closed, they all rose and clashed their swords together in the wildest manner, with loud hurrahs, he stood in astonishment, and half dreaded to enter. A universal hum and clatter of tongues succeeded this exhibition. They pledged each other in their cups; and wild bearded countenances, and dark flashing eyes, many of them of an oriental expression, met his gaze as they turned towards each other in eager conversation. What, however, did not fail to attract John Othmill's notice was, that the colossal Pointz sat at the head of the chief table as president of the assembly; and his sword lay on the table before him.

As the party entered all rose up, and gathering about John Othmill, all that could get hold of his hand shook it heartily. They welcomed him to Prague with zealous kindness; and Polnitz coming forward, said, "Ah! my friend, how has Prague pleased you? Perhaps it cannot bear a comparison with royal London; but in London you shall not find a band of more generous spirits than you see here before you. Take your places, gentlemen, and drink a welcome to the friend of the brave friend of Bohemian freedom!"

All took their seats. John Othmill was conducted to the right hand of the president; and at a sign from Polnitz, the whole company rose and drank a solemn pledge to the memory of the young English champion who fell for the liberty of the Promised Land. Then reseating themselves, they sung with a melancholy cadence, and with a grave and mournful mien, some verses of a hymn, probably extemporised for the occasion by the strange and universal genius of Polnitz, to some old and well-known tune.

He has fallen with the free!  
 He has fallen with thousands more!  
 But like his stormy native sea,  
 That sweeps his native shore,  
 He shall rise for ever more.  
 Yes! his dauntless soul shall rise,  
 And o'er and o'er, and o'er and o'er,  
 Strike tyrants with surprise!  
 And blast, etc.

They have fallen! their heaped graves  
 Wept, beneath our walls do lie;  
 But, like the ocean's mighty waves,  
 They lift their heads on high,  
 And from the eternal sky  
 They look all fiery down.  
 And blast, where'er their glances fly,  
 The slaves of crook and crow!  
 And blast, etc.

In freedom's dawn they fell!  
 But as their spirits rose,  
 They saw our arms avenge them well,  
 And crush their haughty foes.  
 And still they mark how grows  
 The sacred brother band,  
 Which wide o'er Canaan slings God's woes  
 Out from the Promised Land!  
 Which wide, etc.

The singing of this wild song produced the strangest sensations in John Othmill's bosom. The manner, the tone, the sentiment, had something so expressive of a deep and fixed feeling of fellowship and regret for the fallen, mingled with such a stern spirit of vengeance, that he conceived yet more awful manifestations of it would find a place in their history. Their conversation soon explained to him the immediate spring of their excitement. In many battles they had beaten and dispersed their enemies; but at this moment, the Emperor Sigismund resolving, if possible, at one blow to crush them,

had advanced with an army of ten thousand picked men, and lay encamped at no great distance from the city. Ziska, on the other hand, had planted himself on that hill, eastward of the city, where they saw his camp, and which still to this day bears his name. Hasty messengers had been sent to recal as many as possible of those troops which in various directions had pierced into Germany, to avenge many old grievances on what they called the Canaanites, the Amorites, and Philistines, that is, the Germans of different states. Amongst these troops, those under the command of the student Polnitz, which had advanced into Saxony, and had loaded themselves with spoil, were the first to receive and obey the summons. News of the rapid approach of the predatory bands had been this evening received and communicated, and it could not be long before a desperate and decisive engagement must take place under the very walls of Prague. Othmill listened with intense interest to the fierce and fiery conversation that was going on around him on this point; but at once the huge hand of Polnitz was heard striking on the table, and the word 'silencium,' pronounced in a stentorian tone, produced a profound pause.

Polnitz then, addressing the company, said—"Brothers! our English friend here is anxious to ascertain, and carry to the aged father, all particulars connected with the death of his son. Can any brother communicate aught? Is aught known of his burial? Did any one see the body after its removal from the street?"

"Yes!" instantly replied several voices. "We saw the youth struck down by the stone. He was our dear friend and comrade. Some of us, too, are his countrymen. We raised him from the pavement and bore him to some distance, where he might lie undisturbed, without being trodden by the rushing multitude; but all life appeared extinct. Part of us stood guard over him, while the rest rushed away to the attack; but the contest became furious: we heard a shout of triumph; we ran forward to see what was the cause; the people had burst open the door of the Rath-Haus, and were pressing in in a dense and desperate crowd. In the next instant we saw a number of the exasperated people appear at the window. They had hold of a struggling enemy, the senator who had flung down the first stone on the priest as he passed beneath with the sacramental cup, and they would force him through the window. At the sight of this, the crowd below shouted fiercely, 'Down with him! down with him!' There was a heave—a fierce struggle; the wretched man clung here and there, and stretched wide his legs and arms to catch against walls and jambs, but another push, and he flew headlong down upon the raging multitude, who caught him on their spears, and tossed him to and fro. There was another—and another! The scene which ensued made us forget all else; and when we returned to where we had laid the body of our friend—it was gone! We eagerly inquired of all around, but all had been too much engrossed with the terrible spectacle which had been exhibited at the Rath-Haus, to have noticed anything else. A dirty-looking boy alone said he had seen the Jew Melchior, with the aid of some of his brethren, lift him up and carry him away, but his lying tribe denied that he was in the city; and from that day to this nothing indeed has been seen of the Jew."

"That is strange! der Teufel!" cried Polnitz,

writhing his huge and clenched fist on the table; "the head's-foot of a Jew!" But if he lives we will drag this cunning son of Jacob forth, or his whole tribe shall smoke for it. We must know more of this! Perhaps our brother yet lives! The Jew does not cumber himself about dead men! But we will tear the truth from these wily Israëthies, or we will burn them, like vermin, out of their hiding holes!"

The words of Polnitz were loudly applauded; but John Othmill, who now caught a ray of joyful hope that the youth yet lived, begged that nothing might be attempted against the Jews till he had tried, by mild means, to come at this singular mystery. He only begged that he might have the guidance of one or two of those who knew the residence of the Jew Melchior; and if he found himself unable to make progress in the inquiry, he would again throw himself on their friendship and assistance. A number of young men at once offered themselves; but Polnitz, naming two of their number, they agreed to call on John Othmill in the morning, and the assembly broke up. Scarcely had Othmill issued into the street, when he felt a strong grasp on his shoulder, and looking round, it was Polnitz. He stooped down, and speaking low, said, "Come to me in any need; you will find me in Ziska's camp!" He gave him a word by which the sentinel could at any time admit him, and strode off.

"That is a most remarkable man," said Othmill to the young men around him.

"A wonderful fellow!" said they; and then proceeded to relate so much of him and his deeds as would fill this volume of themselves. He was the son of a wealthy Count. Had led a careless jovial life in the University till the breaking out of the revolution. His powers of mind and body appeared alike gigantic. In every branch of learning he was at the head of his fellows. In art, in poetry, in music, he was without a peer. In feats of strength and activity he was equally matchless. Since the breaking out of the war he had been seen leading the way into any danger, and had performed feats of valour which would have defied him of old. With the people, as with the students, his influence was boundless; and with him, Ziska, and the two leaders, Procopius and Rotizana, the Bohemians deemed themselves invincible.

## CHAPTER XXV.

JOHN OTHMILL GOES IN QUEST OF THE JEW MELCHIOR, WHICH LEADS TO STRIKING RESULTS.

In the morning, the two students were early with Othmill, and conducted him to that part of the city inhabited by the Jews. It was a low and crowded quarter. Narrow streets, and dingy narrow houses, swarming with as squalid inhabitants, by no means gave an idea that these were the original inhabitants of Prague, claiming to have wandered hither immediately on their expulsion from their native city, and on this spot, then a wilderness, to have built them another home. As little did it afford any idea of that wealth which had so often made them the creditors of kings, and not more unfrequently the victims of their avarice. John Othmill, who understood that this Melchior was one of the most wealthy and influential amongst them, was surprised to see his companions turn into a miserable court, and ascend a gloomy and dirty staircase, apparently the highway to the abodes of a

number of families, and almost stifling with the fumes of fish, cheese, saur-kraut, and other odiferous articles of daily food. At a door in one of the upper stories they stepped and knocked. The door was opened by an old woman of a markedly Jewish, but not unpleasant, countenance. Their inquiry for Melchior was answered by a shake of the head, and an assurance that he was far off in Turkey. They then informed her of the object of John Othmill's visit, of his journey from England, and adjured her, if she knew anything of the missing youth's fate, to let him know it, and ease an old and worthy man's heart; but she told them that it was impossible that Melchior could know anything of this affair, as at that time he had set out on his journey. It was not the first nor the second time that this young man had thus been inquired after, and she wished to God that they could give them any tidings.

It was in vain to urge the matter. Othmill drew the most moving picture he could of the old Knight's distress; did not forget to throw out that for his discovery and liberation a rich reward would not be wanting; and, spite of the positive nature of the old woman's assurances, did not quit the house without internally resolving to return to it again. The two youths also added, that the whole of the Hussites took a special interest in the fate of this young man, and that a fiery search would of a certainty be instituted for the clearing of it up. The old Jewess at this raised her hands with an expression of hopeless distress, and exclaimed as they turned away, "The God of Jacob defend us, for we are a trodden and suffering race!"

It was just growing dark in the evening as John Othmill sat in his lodging, pondering on the singular circumstances of the concealment of the Knight's son, for which neither he nor the students could conceive a motive, when a little girl entered his apartment, and put a billet into his hand. In it stood in German character and the German tongue, "At ten o'clock this evening let the English youth seek the ancient cemetery of the Jews. If he hope for news of consequence—alone."

John Othmill's heart leaped with joyful expectation at these words. He turned to say that he would do exactly as required—but the little girl was gone. He now recollected that he had no knowledge of the location of this cemetery whatever; but he took it for granted that it lay in the Jews'-town, as it was called, whither he had that day been; and he instantly set out to find it. As he was fearful of putting any questions to persons in the streets, lest it might lead to any suspicion or observation, he traversed these narrow streets and lanes in all directions, till an old wall, encircling an inclosure, and overgrown with low trees, induced him to believe that he had found it; and clambering up, one glance shewed him that he was correct. In the advancing summer—for it was now the commencement of June—the night was by no means dark; and he could discern a singular scene of confused mounds and stones. While he paced the foot of the wall to find a gate or entrance, the voice of a watchman at a distance proclaimed it ten. At the same moment, a gap in the crumbling wall, through which the earth from the high-piled interior had poured down to the road, offered him the means of ingress. He passed through, and stood in surprise at the scene before him.

The soil, with the apparent funereal deposits of more than a thousand years, had grown and swelled up till it overtopped the wall within. It had, moreover, become flung into heaps and hollows of the most chaotic character; and this strange wilderness of the dead was planted thick in every direction with heavy headstones, inscribed all over with Hebrew characters, and all dark with the stains and lichens of centuries. Some stood, some leaned here and there, some lay broken and half buried in weeds. Over all grew a tangled thicket of elder-trees, whose rugged stems and twisted branches also gave evidence of an immense antiquity, and many of them leaned for support on the tombs. Here and there, in the gloom of the overshadowing trees, he could discern other and more massy tombs, erected like small tenements, and which truly might be called the houses of the dead. On some lay piled little stones, which the piety of the living had laid as tokens of veneration towards their ancestors, who had slept below for many generations, but yet were not forgotten in their tribes. The lion of Judah and the ewer of Levi might be seen carved on some of them, in violation of the ancient strictness of the law, which said that they should not make to themselves the likeness of any living thing, and thereby denoting, that though time has not been able to shake their attachment to their national faith, in this one particular their long abode amongst the Gentiles had warped the fixed texture of their minds.

As John Othmill penetrated deeper and deeper into this singular region, he was surprised at the extent of it. Through numerous alleys, in which the green boughs of the elder met, and had to be pushed back for his advance, he had proceeded so far that he could not in any direction see the boundaries. A profound silence reigned; and in the heart of this great city, he seemed to be lost in a forgotten and overshadowing desert. A momentary fear flashed through his mind. What if he should be invited hither for any evil purpose? To choke any further inquiry? To secrete him as his friend's son had been secrete? But it was only for a moment. There could be no sufficient cause. If evil was aimed at him, he had the means of defence. He laid his hand on his pistol, to assure himself that it was in his belt, and went on. Through the rankly-spreading boughs he manfully pushed his way, and anon found himself once more at a wall, which here was much higher. He pursued a small path which ran parallel with it; and as he drew near the most remote and shaded corner, he observed two dark figures standing silently, as awaiting him.

The man was of remarkably short stature. He was clad in a dark robe, which reached nearly to his feet, and was bound at the waist by a belt. He appeared at least of seventy years of age. His beard was large and white, his hair brown, and his complexion much lighter than is often seen in his race. The young woman, on the contrary, was dark as the darkest of Israel's daughters. Her hair was black as jet, and her eyes dark and brilliant. Her form was of the slenderest mould; and her countenance, though full of melancholy, of a singular beauty.

John Othmill was the first to speak. He said he was the English youth, and they, he presumed, were those from whom he had received the note, which at the same time he held in his hand.

The old man nodded. "Honourable sir," said

he, "we have incurred some danger to meet you. You seek to learn the fate of a friend. What little I know, I am ready to communicate; but first swear that you will not reveal to the Hussites with whom you have been, nor to any party in this city and country, the source of your knowledge. I seek not to draw you into any snare, to throw any impediment in the path of your inquiry, I seek only to protect myself."

Othmill gave him the required oath. The old man then assuming a more open expression, said, "I am the Jew Melchior."

"The Jew Melchior?" exclaimed Othmill. "What! were we not told that the Jew Melchior was now in Turkey?"

The old man waved his hand with a gesture of impatience: "Comprehend you not," said he, "that to my enemies, to my devourers, to those who seek to suck me dry as an egg, and then fling the worthless shell upon the dunghill or the fire, that to them I am in Turkey; to you at this moment in Prague? Listen, and believe. It is not any thing that is connected with the circumstances of your friend which has involved his fate in mystery, it is the necessity of protecting myself which has occasioned it. For the last five years, the Christians have been fighting and destroying one another about their ceremonies and their dogmas, as for ages they have trampled upon us, because we cannot believe that upon which they themselves are not agreed. With both parties have we Jews fallen into the deadliest jeopardy. A plague breaks out; it is us who have poisoned the fountains. The people pursue us to death. The Hussites, inflamed to madness with fanatic zeal, plunder and maltreat us, because we are amongst those Canaanites and unbelievers whom they want to extirpate from the earth. The Emperor, met by rebellion and by troubles on all hands, wants money, and Melchior must find it. But Melchior sees that the Hussites every where prevail. Their one-eyed leader, Ziska, carries victory before him, and Melchior knows not how he is ever to recover the precious coin which he has already lent to the government. Melchior, therefore, makes a journey into Turkey; you comprehend. He is gone; he cannot be found. The Emperor's emissaries seek him as they would seek a rat, in the holes and walls of an old house. Is Melchior to be wrung as dry as a washerwoman's linen? Is that little which, with many journeyings and carings, and hard labour, he has laid up for his child, to be spent on soldiers who would cut the Hussites' throats, or on Hussites who would cut his? No, Melchior cannot be found.

"But on that day, of which, no doubt, you have heard, when the Rath-Haus was beset; when the whole city ran together, as if the people had been struck with a furious madness; when they dashed in the doors, and flung out the counsellors, and the thousands and tens of thousands of raging people, like hornets buzzing in their exasperation, swarmed round the devoted victims; and we sat in our houses and listened to the terrible rumours,—then came one flying and said that your friend was struck down and bleeding in the street, and that if not speedily removed thousands would trample over his body, and tread it to clay. That youth had been the saviour of me and mine. When the blind and furious multitude would have dragged us to death as prisoners and murderers, he alone dared to defend us. He snatched us from the hands

of those who would have dashed us on the stones, and have trodden us to atoms. He saved my child from insult. He pushed us into the house, clapped the door behind us, and drawing his sword, bade those who wished for death to advance against that dwelling.

"The crowd paused, laughed at the heroic act of the brave youth, and streamed on after other victims. Melchior is not such a dog as the Christians would paint him. He could not suffer his deliverer to perish, if it were in his power to rescue him. He summoned his friends, and rallying forth, found him, and bore him away.

"There was life in him, and, in a word, he recovered."

"He recovered!" exclaimed John Othmill, clapping his hands together in ecstasy. "He lives then—he lives!"

"Gently," said the old Jew, laying his hand on Jack's arm, and looking anxiously around. "Be silent, or we may be lost! Listen: I know not that he lives yet. He *did* live; but that he lives *yet* is not so certain. He lay for a fortnight in my house. He lay in weakness and in fever. My wife and my child here tended him night and day, and soon, I doubt not, would he have been able to return to his own abode and acquaintance, but Melchior had been abroad; the emissaries of the Emperor were once more upon me. I escaped as by a hair's breadth; but unhappily they found the youth, and recognised him as one of the most active of those concerned in the death of the counsellors, and bore him off."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Othmill, "and what has become of him? Has no—"

"Whist!" said the Jew: "there has been no lack of efforts to rescue and ransom him. Melchior's friends have offered a sum equal to the half of his fortune; the cunning Monarch demanded to treat face to face with Melchior himself; and even with this was I preparing to comply, when more storms broke out, the Emperor was obliged to retreat to Hungary for fresh forces, and the fate of the young man yet lies in mystery."

The moon was rising over the hills beyond the Moldau, as the old Jew finished this sentence. He drew back to retreat further into the shade, and Othmill catching a view of the maiden's face, saw that it was pale as with an inward agony, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

"He must be saved, father," said the damsel, turning to the Jew, and laying her hand on his arm, as she earnestly gazed into his face. "He must be saved! Yet lies he, without doubt, in some of the Imperial dungeons. His life is too precious to a prince who needs money. This gentleman can intercede. His friends, the Husites, can give him safe conduct to the Emperor's camp. Make him the bearer of your own offer,—give largely, give all if needful, it is but life for life,—and then it must—it must succeed!"

The old Jew paused a moment. "We must now retire," said he, "but to-morrow, early in the morning—be it at four o'clock, come to our ancient synagogue, and receive my commands."

The old Jew and his daughter disappeared amongst the bushes, and John Othmill, filled with a rush of the wildest hopes, retraced his way.

It may be believed that he did not sleep much that night; that he did not fail to present himself duly at the door of the old synagogue. As

little had he thought to inquire where it stood, as he had before inquired the site of the burial-ground; but he had no scruple in inquiring, and it was quickly pointed out by a drowsy watchman now drawing homewards wearily from his last round. He paused a moment before it, and looked up. It was an erection as humble and as dingy as the dwellings of the Jews themselves; and denoted sufficiently that, in the early ages of their residence here, small were the buildings, even for their public use, which satisfied them; and perhaps the more so, as circumstances soon showed them the necessity of making the least possible display of their wealth. Othmill knocked, and the door was slightly opened, so that the person within could take a survey of the applicant for entrance. The result appeared satisfactory, for the door was then opened fully, and he was requested to step in. It was more, however, like descending into a vault, than walking into a place of public worship. Several steps led down into it. The entrance was narrow, and the interior dark. One lamp only burned low and faintly with a crimson light, which, however, was not enough to enable Othmill at first to discern the extent or character of the place in which he was, much less to see who was there. By degrees, indeed, the thickest darkness seemed to retire from his eyes, and he could perceive that it was of no greater extent than its exterior had promised. Heavy pillars, on which seemed to hang iron lamps of the rudest construction, supported the roof, which looked in the gloom as black as ebony. The walls also, as they became dimly perceptible, appeared naked and grimy with age and lamp-smoke. There were no pictures, no statues; alone, one solitary banner, black and worn by centuries to a mere fragment, depended from the roof; Othmill did not inquire what hero, or what scene of triumph, had arisen to illustrate their long track of injury and contempt with a solitary beam of glory. Below, stood on the floor, a close array of rude benches, and having each before it a sort of simple desk, a support for the volumes of psalms and hymns which the people sung in their worship. The lamp with its crimson light, and which from age to age was kept burning, hung down above the altar or table at which the Law was read; and a curtain behind it, hanging low, bordered with bells and carved pomegranates, seemed to conceal some mystery.

As John Othmill stood struck with curious wonder, contemplating this singular scene, he now perceived the old Jew Melchior standing near him.

"You are surprised, honourable sir," said he, "at our old synagogue. In truth, it is a poor and humble place; but from it the Christians, if they could learn anything, might learn that we stand not by our own strength, but by the will of God; and that it is as vain for them to hope to destroy us, as to dry up the Moldau. As this old fabric has reared its head for a thousand years, and as that lamp has not ceased to burn, faint though it be, through all the long night of our trial, so neither have they been able utterly to deny us a tabernacle, or to put out the light of our existence in the midst of them. When I see the Eternal Law still in its ark," said he drawing back the curtain behind the table, and revealing a huge roll of yellow parchment lying in a recess, "I feel that He who gave it to our fathers is yet with us, and fear not what the Gentiles can do to us.

"But," added he, "I delay you. For myself I abide here to-day. It is a sacred day with us, and I came hither in the night, to be unseen. Here is my letter to the Emperor. It is written, as from a distant land: you have only to say that you received it from my family, where it has lain for a safe conveyance. In that I have given proof that a Jew is not without gratitude, and I have only to ask that you will let us hear how you succeed. The God of Israel be with you!"

He put the packet into Othmill's hand, who concealing it in his bosom, returned the Jew his heartiest thanks, and withdrew. As he stepped out of the old synagogue the light of the summer morning almost blinded him. The sun had already risen. All was bright and warm, and crowds of people, according to their early habit, were already passing to and fro. Othmill felt as if endued with a new feeling of existence. He strode hastily onwards to the camp of Ziska. The word given by Polnitz, after a moment's pause, and a curious look from the sentinel, procured him admittance; and inquiring for the tent of Polnitz, the man, without uttering a word, pointed it out with his arm. Othmill gazed with intense interest on all around him, as he passed along. The busy swarms of soldiers and soldier-citizens that inhabited the camp were all in motion. In the centre, raised on a lofty arch of triumph, which was covered with the green boughs of the fir, stood aloft the great banner of the united Hussites, while on lower standards, on each side, flapped also pennons of the different parties into which they were divided. At the head of the different sections of the camp were seen again the standard of each particular sect planted before the tent of the leader. Here stretched in long streets the tents of the Utraquists, in whose banner the sacred chalice was displayed; there, rose that of the Taborites, their standard bearing the conical mountain, whence they derived their name; and there again waved the ensign of the Horebites, the imagined likeness of their adopted hill, flapping in rivalry of the actual Bohemian mount of their Taborite fellows. At the head of each line of tents a green garland suspended marked that of an officer, and arms and horse harness lay about ready for instant use. Everywhere before their huts sat the men busy polishing their weapons, and Othmill remarked with wonder the strange variety of these weapons. They were of all ages and all fashions, as if they had been brought forth, as probably they had been, from the hoarded stores of the Imperial armory. Here were weapons, half scythe, half axe, fixed on poles halbert fashion, with edges so huge and sharp that they seemed calculated to cleave a man down at a blow. There again reared those fearful morgen-sterne, or morning-stars, as they were called, heavy spiked balls suspended on stout poles by a short chain, of which one fair stroke on the head was enough for any many. There were numbers of those huge two-handed swords used by the knights of earlier ages; and even of those with waved edges, which when wielded over the heads of their enemies must have appeared like the jagged lightnings of destruction. Besides these were no lack of lighter swords and arms of the day, daggers, and cross-bows, and match-locks.

John Othmill saw, indeed, with surprise, the order and activity which reigned in the midst of a multitude which must have been gathered from all sorts of people, and from the four winds

of heaven. Horses neighing, and arms of the completest kind which hung on the poles by the tents, testified that there was no lack of regularly equipped and disciplined cavalry. Everywhere the camp was astir. Numbers of the soldiers in their camp-dress were preparing for breakfast. Fires of logs of wood blazed here and there in the spaces between the tents, over which pots were boiling. Heaps of black loaves lay on the ground. In some places, a busy soldier was dealing out the beef from the pots to his fellows, and cutting it into regular portions according to the number of pot-companions. In others, seated round a hole which they had dug in the earth, so as to allow their feet sufficient descent, and with their large dish placed on a pillar of the earth left in the centre as a table, a hungry group were, with long wooden spoons, helping themselves to broth from the common vessel. Others again, had prepared a pudding in an iron pan for a luxurious dinner, and only waited for the fire being at liberty to set it there to bake. In other quarters, parties were seen at drill, and hundreds more were busily employed in strengthening and raising the earthen barriers of the camp.

Amongst these, Othmill found Polnitz engaged with an active and commanding looking officer, whom, when he came near him, Othmill perceived, by his having lost one of his eyes, to be no other than Ziska. He received our brave countryman with a ready and affable familiarity, as Polnitz introduced him; and said he hoped he was on the side of that mighty truth which had first dawned in his own country, and which his young friend had fought for here. John Othmill gazed with great interest on this remarkable man. He had pictured him to himself of a gigantic stature, according to the fame of his deeds and strength; and was at first somewhat disappointed to find him actually of less than middle height. But the more he looked at him, the more the hero seemed to grow visible. Short though he was of stature, he was of Herculean breadth of shoulder. His body was built like a low massy tower. His head was Titanic, round, and close shorn. On his forehead, he had a crooked line, resembling a horse-shoe, which was said, in the moment of excitement, to grow dark and prominent, and in battle to glow luridly—the manifest thunderbolt of his unsparing vengeance. His nose was of the true eagle cut, and beneath it burned a fire-red moustache. The fire of a great and ardent, if at the same time impetuous, and capable of being wrought by circumstances into a sanguinary, mind, shone in every feature and motion. The longer Othmill watched him, the less he wondered at the influence he had acquired, or the victories he had achieved. He carried in his hand that staff, with its spiked head, with which he is handed down to us in the profile of him in the Strahlhauer Convent at Prague; and proceeded from spot to spot, inspecting, ordering, and inspiring all the labours of the soldiers, with the quick intuition of a master mind.

As they went along, John Othmill communicated to Polnitz the information which he had gained, that his friend's son was in the hands of the Emperor, and that he had a letter to Sigismund from the King of England, which, that no suspicion might rest on his mission, he immediately put into Polnitz' hands, and begged that he would now do what only was necessary, procure him a guard to the entrance of the Emper-

or's camp. Polnitz, with that prompt frankness for which he was so distinguished, immediately communicated these particulars to Ziaka. The request was instantly complied with. A horseman, bearing a white flag, was sent with him, and John Othmill in half an hour found himself at the outpost of the Imperial army. Here the small white banner was put into his hand; the barrier opened without hesitation, and he was conducted by a guard of soldiers to the Emperor. After waiting a short time, while his arrival with the flag was announced, he was admitted to the tent.

The Emperor, a tall and majestic man, apparently in the prime of life, was sitting already clad in a suit of armour richly inlaid with gold. His helm alone was off, and stood on a table near him; and his flowing and yellow hair rolling on the richly burnished steel which sheathed his shoulders, and his somewhat long and ruddy features, presented a noble image of the warrior king of the Middle Ages. Near him, at another table, sat his Secretary, who appeared to have been busy writing to his dictation, till interrupted by this visit. Sigismund looked on Othmill, as he entered, with a grave and inquiring look, and demanded what message he brought him from the Hussite camp? Othmill observed an air of great surprise, and he thought of some disappointment, spread over the features of both Monarch and Secretary, when he said that he was not come as a message-bearer from the Hussites, but as a suppliant to the Emperor, as he had been to them, to enable him to discover and restore the son of his aged friend, a noble knight in England, who had studied in Prague, and had been long unheard of by his father. He had come from England, though aware of the distracted state of Bohemia, solely to allay the worthy Knight's anxiety; trusting that, as he had no concern with the disputes which now unhappily raised the subjects against their noble Monarch, all parties would at least allow him to prosecute his search; he had heard, he added, in the city, that the youth had fallen into the hands of his Imperial Highness, and he now threw himself at his feet to implore his release.

The countenance of Sigismund had darkened, as Othmill proceeded, and instead of giving him a direct answer upon the subject of his petition, he questioned him strictly where and from whom he had heard that this youth was in his hands. Othmill, who had determined, if it were possible, not only not to commit the Jew Melchior, but not even to tax his generosity by producing his offer for the ransom of his friend, if other means would avail, replied that it was spoken of in the city as a matter which did not admit of a doubt. The soldiers of his highness had been seen bearing him away from the house of a Jew where he had lodged, and the thing was not questioned.

The Emperor glanced at the Secretary with a look of surprise, which seemed to say, "What will escape the observation of this turbulent and pragmatical people?" But Othmill kneeling before him, now presented the letter of the King of England. Sigismund motioned him to give it to the Secretary to read, and at its conclusion, said, "My brother of England does me much honour; and for the sake of his friendship, it is much that I would yield; but this youth has shamefully violated the pledge given by him, to live peaceably in a foreign country, which allowed him, like one of its own citizens, there to enjoy the privileges of its High School of learn-

ing,—and has been one of the most daring leaders of those who have now grown to such a pitch of open rebellion."

"Your Imperial Highness may remember too," interrupted the Secretary, "that it is for this youth that the Jew Melchior has already offered a very large ransom."

"True," said the Emperor, "a very large ransom—thirty thousand—"

John Othmill's heart sank. He lifted his hand to his bosom, he felt that he must even sacrifice the Jew's now probably augmented offer; and still there was a deadly fear in his bosom, that even the combined influence of that and the letter of the English king, might prove in vain. Various thoughts now seemed passing in the mind of the emperor; various sentiments expressed themselves on his features, and in his hesitating and undetermined manner; and had Othmill been fully apprised of the character of Sigismund, he would have read in these signs much which history has attached to him. His irresolution on great occasions; his better resolves merging in a weakness, which became eventually treachery; that degree of effeminacy, unworthy of a hero, which his love of pleasure had infused into his frame, and which undermined and betrayed those many higher qualities which, under wiser tutors and in better times, might have made for him a very different niche in the history of his country, and of the world. As he was sunk in what seemed varying and perplexed thoughts, the secretary approached his ear, spoke some low but earnest words to him; there was a moment of reflection—a cloud seemed to pass from his heart and his brow, and he said, "It shall not be a matter of gold or of justice betwixt us and Henry of England; it shall be as one great monarch should treat another, 'Tis a slight request that I should grant him—the life of a subject—when he has sent thus far for it, and it shall be granted. Tell your valiant monarch, that though his throne was planted by his father on the damage of our house, I have granted his request; I would have done so had it been a greater; and I am sure that if I one day ask a boon at his hands, 'twill not be the less readily conceded."

John Othmill sprang forward with an astonishment of gratitude, clasped the Emperor's feet, and kissed them; and then burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"'Tis a faithful fellow," said Sigismund, looking on Othmill with great complacency; "and happy is the king who possesses such subjects." He sighed, as if comparing in his mind the rebellion of his own.

"But stay!" said he, "something more is needed. This youth lies in the fortress at Znaim. It will be necessary to give you not only an order for his release, but one to enable you to pass both of you safely out of the kingdom."

He then dictated to the Secretary these respective orders, adding to the latter a request to the other Princes of Germany, through whose states they must pass, for their free and secure travel. Turning then to Othmill, he said, "I am sure I need not enjoin you to reveal nothing that you have observed in my camp to the Hussites, as you again revisit the city. But I lay it on you, as a burden of honour, that you quit Prague as speedily as possible."

John Othmill returning him his heartiest thanks, assured him that not a word of what he

had seen should pass his lips, and that not an hour should be spent in Prague more than was necessary to bring away his few articles of travel. The Emperor then, setting on his helmet with open vizor, mounted his horse, which already pawed at the front of the tent; and, as Othmill retraced his way, he beheld him at a distance inspecting a vast body of cavalry, all clad in complete armour, and presenting the most gallant appearance. Far around stretched the camp. The soldiers well grown men, well armed and well clothed, Bohemians, Hungarians, and paid troops from Saxony and Franconia, each ranged under their own national banners, were manœuvring in different quarters of the field. Othmill could not help being struck with the mechanical and silent spirit of these troops, compared with those of the Hussite camp; and went on wondering to himself what would be the result of that combat which could not be far off.

But the crowding and exulting thoughts of his own wonderful success allowed him little time for these reflections. He had found his friend's son, whom he had every reason to believe dead! He had got the order for his release in his possession! He should in a few days see him; call him forth from his weary, and perhaps hopeless dungeon! He should have the delight to travel homewards with him, light at heart, and full of life! He should have the proud satisfaction to return to the old Knight, the artificer and herald of success, and to set before him his long-lost son, safe and sound! If human life can have a moment of perfect felicity, that moment was such to Othmill. He bounded on towards Prague with rapid steps. He entered the camp, and flew to announce his success to Polnitz. The good-natured youth flew to Ziska with the news, as if it had been a triumph of his own, and soon came back with a letter of protection, which to Jack, who had to travel through a country swarming with Hussites, was as requisite to the accomplishment of his object as that of the Emperor. Then grasping John Othmill's hand with a farewell squeeze, which he felt from his fingers' ends to his elbow for hours afterwards, he wished him happily in England with his friend, promised to communicate his good fortune to the students, and Othmill then hurried away to his lodgings. He flung his knapsack on his back, and prepared to quit Prague; but there was one more visit which his heart would not allow him to omit, and that was to Melchior the Jew. Once more he hastened towards the old synagogue. The Jews, as he drew near, were pouring out of it in numbers which appeared wonderful, when the narrow limits of the building were considered. He could not help stamping with impatience at the delay which this occasioned, while his heart was on fire to be off on his journey, when, from another door, he beheld the women issuing from that outer apartment which alone they are permitted to enter. His eyes quickly singled out the daughter of Melchior. She as speedily noticed him; and with the old Jewess, whom he had seen at their house, and whom he now found to be her mother, hastened to meet him.

Othmill, in a burst of joy, announced to them his success; handed to them again the letter of Melchior, and bidding them assure him of his lifelong gratitude, was in haste to depart. While he spoke, the expression of the Jewish maiden's

face changed like the lights and shadows of an April day. She clasped her hands in surprise and delight; her eyes glanced to heaven, as uttering in one thought a whole soul of thanksgivings. Then as rapidly fled the colour from her cheek. She glanced with eager eyes at Othmill, as if she would have said something; her lips opened, but no words came. She once more clasped her hands together, cast down her eyes, and turning away, she seized the old lady's arm, and they went slowly up the street.

John Othmill gazed after them. He had never been in love, but he thought if ever there were a noble heart and a beautiful woman in this world, they were there together. He had certain dim ideas, too, that the lovely Jewish maiden found not only an unspeakable transport, but a strange trouble also, in the news he imparted; and as he marched on his way, day after day, he wondered and pondered on it more and more.

Day after day, night after night, with little pause for refreshment, did he hasten on his way, over the vast plains of Bohemia, towards Znaim, the ancient capital of Moravia. The glorious moon lit him on his way, as if it partook of his pleasure. His way was over one immense campaign, almost without sight of tree, or water, or hill, save the blue tops of mountains in the distance; in one direction, the ancient height of Mount Tabor; in another, the Riesengebirge, overlooking the wilds of the Böhmer Wald, or Great Bohemian Forest, which marked the great basin of Bohemia as a dark and chased margin. Here and there he passed through vast pine woods, and then again over as extensive trackless and hedgeless corn lands. In wood or plain, he met little impediment or danger. The whole country was quiet, as if it had concentrated all its elements of restlessness in the armies which now lay in hostile array under the walls of Prague; and great as was John Othmill's eagerness to reach and liberate the old Knight's son, he journeyed on with a new and singular pleasure. He seemed to have within him a peculiar and exhaustless buoyancy. The country had to him new and curious features. The peasantry—men, women, and children, everywhere at labour in the fields, in their houses, and their vineyards—were eager to learn news; and though but few of them could speak German, and the Bohemian speech was as strange to Othmill, yet, by one means or other, they contrived to inquire, and he to tell much that interested them. When they knew that he came direct from Prague, that he had been in immediate intercourse both with the Emperor and Ziska, they were all curiosity. As they sat at their dinners in the field, their fresh bread, their fruit, and wine, were set freely and cordially before him; and he more than repaid them in the intelligence he imparted. On other days, he saw them all dressed in their gay attire, on Sunday or saint-day, streaming with equal zeal to church, and to the wine and dance house. The woman were clad in the most bright colours of red, yellow, blue, and white, and glowed over dale and down like rows and masses of showy flowers. Processions, carrying Saint and Virgin, with priest and song, were moving on the clear unbroken plains to different churches, with pilgrim-banners waving, and the sound of their hymns came gladly to his ears, with the merry din of bells from near and far-off steeples. There was a holiday feeling, so full of peace and repose, so different to the agitations that tore up

the vicinity of Prague and the borders of the German states, and so in unison with his feelings, that Othmill often paused for hours on the brow of some slight eminence, and gazed on the scene which lay for leagues all in perspective around him.

The air was clear as crystal; the heaven blue and cloudless; and the villages and towns, scattered plentifully over the open country, had a sunny and a Sunday aspect. It is true they were bald and naked. Scarcely a tree shielded them from the hot sun. They were all white as snow; and old towers, and spires with Turkish domes, covered with bright metal or tiles painted of various colours and brightly enameled, gave a very picturesque aspect to them. From this warm, open, and glowing scene, it was again a charming change for him to plunge into the great pine forests which came ever and anon across his path. Here he delighted to supply himself with provisions in the wayside villages, and lie for hours at noon under the great pines, during the heat. There he dined and slept luxuriously, or lay and listened to the sounds of the forest, the song of the winds in the dark tree-tops, or the hum and chime of seen or unseen insects in the air or skimming over the warm sandy earth. The crimson glow of the wild fruit was delightful to his eye, and not less to his sense of smell the delicious aroma breathed abroad through the forest by the pines beneath the fervid influence of noon. It was equally a delight to him to march on through these woods, and white villages, in the long moonlight nights. All then was so still, so clear, so fresh, so like one great fairyland. The tall boles of the pine-trees, white as pillars of burnished silver in the flood of moonlight; the waving shadows of the dark green boughs, the fresh spirit of the air, the clear transparency of the sky, every thing had its indescribable charm to his eye and his heart. Here the little white cottages of a forest village, lying amid their green slopes, in a dell down which a little streamlet ran all crystal joyousness and music, stood in the moonlight so silent, so shut up, as if the very houses, as well as their inhabitants, slept. Othmill, in his then mood of mind, saw something extremely beautiful in the homelike air about them; their little gardens breathing forth on the night air each their tribute of perfume of flowers; their agricultural implements lying here and there, something beautiful and touching in the trustiness in which all domestic creatures slept under the guardianship of men—and man under that of God! Himself, the citizen of a far-off land, went on like a silent spirit, through the bright and balmy night, with his desires resting only on his own distant country, but sympathizing with the peaceful enjoyment around him, and thanking God for it, because he felt all these unknown and unseen beings to be his kindred and brethren. Through his whole life Othmill used often to speak of these long and delightful moonlight journeys through the woods of Bohemia.

As he drew near Znaim, the country became higher, if possible more destitute of trees, and on hills of sand, so fine that in the mass it resembled marl, the vine grew in vast expanses, and its heavy bunches ripened rapidly in the sun, which burned on the bare sandy banks. Fields of millet, as well as corn, waved around, and huge golden-looking pumpkins lay on the hot open garden-ground. Anon, the quaint old

city of Znaim met his eyes, perched on its sandy yet fruitful hill.

We shall not attempt to describe John Othmill's sensations as he drew near its walls, and thought that within those towers lay the object of his long journey. We shall not attempt to describe the meeting of him and the old Knight's son. In a short time his order had been delivered to the Governor; the youth was brought from his cell, and John Othmill and he stood in each other's presence. They had never seen each other before; of Othmill, the youth had never even heard. But when John Othmill gazed on the noble form, and clear open countenance of the young man, he was sure that he was worthy of all his father's care and praises; and when the youth heard what Othmill had undertaken and achieved for him, he was filled with equal wonder and gratitude. The effects of his injury in Prague, of his long confinement, and his despair—thus far from his native country, and without means of making his situation known, of once more regaining his liberty—had considerably blanched his cheek, and filled him with melancholy, yet he could not help tracing a strong likeness in both form and feature to his father. As he once more, however, breathed the free air; and, having purchased horses for their purpose, as Othmill went on from day to day, while they pursued their journey, to inform him both of what had taken place at home since his departure, and what in Prague, he began to show that ardent and enthusiastic spirit which animated him. Of the progress of the cause of the Reformation in England, of Polnitz, Ziska, the Students, and the family of Melchior the Jew, he could never hear enough. One moment he wished himself once more on the mount of Ziska, with a good sword in his hand; but the next, the generosity of the Emperor checked this thought, and he turned his spirit to the state of affairs in England. Othmill soon discovered, that with much of the mildness of his father's disposition, he also inherited the more bold and active spirit of his mother. Every day, as they rode along, Othmill saw with pleasure that his strength and colour visibly returned; and he often gazed on him with delight, thinking what a rich reward for all his toils would be that of delivering so promising a youth into the arms of his father.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

OTHMILL AND HIS YOUNG FRIEND MAURICE BEVOR, ON THEIR RETURN, ENCOUNTER THE ROBBERS-KNIGHT HANS VON STEIN, AND ASSAULT HIS STRONGHOLD. IN WHAT FOLLOWS THE READER WILL SEE WHAT FOLLOWS.

We must not attempt to follow step by step the course and adventures of the journey of our two young heroes. They took a distant and somewhat more circuitous but safer route, since it lay wider of the contending parties with which they had been involved; and because it gave them an opportunity of seeing something also of the chief capitals and countries of Germany. They passed through Vienna, Munich, Augsburg, and Nuremberg. In the two latter cities especially did they spend some days with the greatest gratification. The wealthy weavers of Augsburg, the Welsers and Fuggers, with



their vast concerns; the various artists of Nürnberg, with their exquisite carvings in ivory, their works in steel, and in every description of mechanical excellence; and the richly picturesque buildings of these cities, with their frescoed walls, and the noble paintings and monuments in their churches, filled them with the highest admiration. Of their adventures in the forests of Thuringia and in other places on their track, we must also be silent; they would fill a volume. It must suffice to say, that in little more than two months John Othmill had the proud delight of walking into the house of the merchant at Hamburg, and presenting to the astonished family his friend. We may be sure that it was with no little curiosity and wonder that they listened to all that had befallen him on the way. They could not enough rejoice in the complete success of his enterprise, and entertained thenceforth an unbounded opinion of Othmill's courage and address. They were also charmed with the old Knight's son, and would scarcely allow them, spite of their natural impatience to reach England, and set the old gentleman's heart at ease, to think of setting sail. In a few days, however, a ship was sailing, and they prepared to make the passage in it. The friendly merchant once more invited his friends to a farewell dinner; and here Othmill was called on again and again to relate his adventures, which drew forth general applause, but none of them more so than one which we have not ourselves yet related. It was what befel them with a desperate robber-knight of Bavaria, called Hans von Stein. The merchants listened with the most breathless attention to this adventure, for all of them had heard too frequently of the outrages of this arch-ruffian; several had suffered great loss of goods by him; and now there was no more jeopardy of their lives at his hands as they passed that way.

This Hans von Stein was one of the most villainous robbers who, at that time, infested Germany. He had no taste for anything peaceful or intellectual. To hunt the boar and the wolf, and to plunder the peaceful merchant or traveller, were his great business and delight. He was unable to read, and he looked on all those who followed any more peaceful or refined calling than his own, as cowards and milksops. He had a set of followers as savage and reckless as himself, and the deeds which they daily committed were such as in any less distracted country would have long ago raised them to the eminence of the gallows. There existed for many generations a knightly family at Neckarsteinach, near Heidelberg, on the Neckar, the ruins of whose castles yet stand proudly there on their heights, who were such rank reivers, that the family name became and continued—Landschaden, or Bane-of-the-Land; and whose monuments in the church there, yet attribute to them many virtues, which, if done at all, were done in the most secret manner, for no one knew of them, while their atrocities are still the theme of tradition. But these Landschadens were saints compared to Hans von Stein.

This fellow, whose fathers very likely were not much better before him, found himself very well situated for his nefarious trade. His castle was perched on the top of a precipice, over-

looking the road from Saltzburg to Munich. Here he could spy at a distance whoever approached, come in what direction they would. Whether they wound down the hill from Wasserburg in the direction of Munich, or came up the wide plain from Saltzburg, he saw them in sufficient time to enable him to ride down, and fall upon them before they could pass. It mattered very little to him whether it was the wagon-train loaded with rich stores; or the poor journeyman wandering with his knapsack on his back, to complete the three years required of him by his guild, to visit different towns and learn under different masters therein; he assaulted all, and would empty the poor contents of a knapsack with as fell a ruthlessness as the purse of the rich merchant. He had a savage pleasure in flinging his victims into his dungeons, and seeing their misery and despair, especially where they had made a stout resistance, and perhaps given him some rough knocks on his iron cap, or cost him one or two of his men.

His brutality and lust of revenge seemed to grow with his years, and as his dungeons were not equal to his wishes, he got all the strong prisoners that he had, and captured more for the purpose, to hew out continually fresh ones in the rock beneath his castle, which yet remain, and which have been visited by many English travellers. Within four or five feet of the face of the precipice, he caused these poor wretches to hew out a long suite of these dungeons, cutting small alits through, so as just to admit air enough to keep them alive, but scarcely light to see. These accomplished, he caused them to commence the excavation of a still lower range, with steps to descend into it. As these various cells were completed, he stored them with his victims, feeding them on such poor and scanty fare, that they were continually suffering the pangs of hunger, and in winter, of deadly cold. He had a passage cut through the solid rock with a gradual ascent into his castle, so that he could at any time descend to feast his eyes on his victims, or to add fresh ones to their number; but the entrance to this passage was so nicely fitted with a door of solid stone cut from the same rock, and fastened with a lock, to which the keyhole was not readily perceived, that his castle might be taken by his enemies half-a-dozen times without their detecting these dungeons; and in such a case, the miserable prisoners might all have perished of starvation.

Had this been likely to occur, and had he been aware of it, it would have given him a particular pleasure, even in the pangs of his own death. Starvation was, of all others, his favourite mode of torturing his victims. For this purpose he had, in the lowest range of his dungeons, one cell cut out, which he termed his Hunger Hole. It was without a single window; and, indeed, no window could it well have, for it was in the very heart of the rock, and was closed with an iron door. In the centre of this cell was sunk, with infinite labour, a circular pit of fifty or sixty feet deep. When he determined to wreak his especial vengeance on any of his victims, he had him conducted into this cell, and there left with a piece of bread and a horn of water. Happy would it have been for the miserable wretch, when he once found him-

self strait up there, if he had thrown himself headlong into that pit which stood gaping there in the middle of his pitch-dark cell, as if to tempt him thus to accelerate his end; for when the victim had devoured the bread, and drunk the water, and become faint with exhaustion, this dreadful monster then entered with his pitiless followers, and seizing the devoted creature, spite of cries or petitions for mercy, let him down by a cord to the bottom of the pit. Here the iron door of the cell being closed, the perishing man might call for help or pity in vain. No one heard him, or they only who could not aid, but could only tremble with terror, lest their turn should come. It was not till the miserable wretch was supposed to be dead, that the monster von Stein came and had him drawn up.\* It is even said that such was his hardened nature, that it was his habit, in order to ascertain before he drew them up whether they were quite dead or not, to let down a torch till he could perceive the prisoner, and then would let fall stones upon him, to see if he would move. It is added too by the inhabitants of Stein, that on more than one occasion, the poor sufferer, beyond the belief of human endurance, has been found still alive; and that from the bottom of that pit looks of such pleading pale faces, and eyes wild with famine, and uplifted hands, and faint breathings for mercy in the name of God, have been seen, as would have melted the heart of the devil himself,—but never moved one feeling of this detestable tyrant.

In those ages, the human heart, by the peribious mode of life, and the perpetual feuds and animosities which cursed that country, seemed turned into something worse than infernal, and such monstrous crimes as these were not uncommon. In some of the strongholds of these knights and princes have been discovered pits, even in modern times, filled with wheels and set round with knives, into which, through a trap-door, the victims were suddenly let fall, and the horrible machinery being put in motion, they were cut and torn into a thousand pieces. In others, they were ordered before execution to advance and kiss an iron figure of the Virgin, placed in a recess at the end of a subterranean dungeon, which, on being touched by the victim, suddenly started forward, and pressed him in his arms, while a number of sharp daggers, springing from the body of the statue, pierced him to the heart.

Such dens of ancient cruelty the author himself has seen in various parts of that country, and therefore cannot doubt the stories which are both related by the people and recorded in the histories of those times. Nay, but a few years ago, in an old and ruined castle at Hantschweheim, near Heidelberg, in breaking open a wall, the skeleton of a knight was found in a recess within it. He was seated in his armour, and in this manner had been built up alive by his ruthless enemy; and that enemy, continuing to live in this castle, had sate down day after day to his well-supplied table, and thrown himself on his bed at night, without a care for the famine and the dying agonies of his victim, perhaps rather with a delight in the conscious-

ness of them. It was evident that he had never had the curiosity or compunction during the remainder of his life to have this wall opened, and the body removed. This singular skeleton and its covering armour are now preserved in the public museum of the capital of Baden, Karlsruhe.

Such a temper of barbarous cruelty is only too well authenticated by the bloody annals of past ages; but this Hans von Stein was even then an unmatched villain. In a dark dungeon, still shewn, it is said that he imprisoned his own wife soon after their marriage. In this dungeon his only son was born, and here he still kept the miserable mother eleven years. When his son was grown up, too, it is asserted that he became attached to a village maiden of great beauty and goodness. The maiden, however, soon disappeared; and the son suspecting his father of having seized her, for he had been furiously angry at the report of his son's attachment, contrived to obtain a false key from the smith, and explored in the night his father's dungeons. He found his maiden actually there, and already, to his horror, in the Hunger Hole. Having drawn her out, they were proceeding through the long passage of the lower range of dungeons, when von Stein becoming aware of some noise, or of the light there, hastened down from his bed. The terrified youth, when he heard his approach, extinguished his torch, and retreated to some dark corner, where they might lurk unobserved. But the stealthy villain was soon at their heels, and perceiving some one moving before him, for he had not staid for a light, he stabbed the person in the back with his dagger, and then rushing out for a torch, discovered on his return that it was his own son.

Shocked as even his millstone heart was at this sight, it only converted him into a more desperate monster. He flung the maiden, who had fainted, into the pit, and issued forth into the country like a raging bear, to carry his fury against every one that he met. He had now nothing to live for but the gratification of his malignant passions. He went unwashed, untrimmed. He lay in his armour on the floor, with a log of wood for a pillow. He caroused with his followers enormously; and it became a favourite habit of his, instead of attacking travellers on the road, to fawn upon them, and invite them to his castle, where he feasted them, and made them drink, till he could fall on them, plunder them, and commit them to his dungeons.

He became so detested that repeated bodies of people came against him from the surrounding country, but with little success. His castle stood on the edge of an inaccessible precipice. On two sides, by the precipice and by the steepness of the hill, it was unapproachable. On the other two, it was strongly fortified by ditches and high walls, in which there was no doorway larger than would admit his horse; and which, on the approach of any hostile force, he had barricaded with whole wagon-loads of stones, which lay ready for the purpose. The door of his castle was also built up, and it was only accessible by a ladder which was drawn up into the inside. Fire was more than once applied to burn him out; but the walls were so thick, and the window-jambes being of stone,

\* These are no imaginary horrors; this account of von Stein and his dungeons is only too true. The author, in 1841, visited this den of terror, and found the gloomy fame von Stein as fresh as ever in the public mind.

there was nothing for the fire to lay hold of. Moreover, in the higher stories of the tower, he kept up such a sharp and well-directed discharge of bolts from powerful cross-bows, that it was not possible long for any enemy to maintain his ground. The scoundrel had also a contrivance which remains there to be seen to this day. In the narrow alits, out of which he and his men discharged their arrows or their matchlocks, were fitted solid cylinders of oak, which turned round on a pivot at top and bottom. Through each of these cylinders was cut a slit in one direction, so as to admit of the discharge of an arrow. The moment it had taken place, the cylinder was turned, and thus the slit or window became closed, and impervious to any return of the shot from without.

John Othmill and his young friend, whom we shall distinguish by his christian name of Maurice, heard so much of the villainies and atrocities of this fellow as they approached that part of the country, that they felt the utmost indignation against him; and spite of the most earnest warnings and dissuasions, were wrought up to a determination to travel through the place, and, if necessary, have a brush with him. It was drawing towards evening as they rode along the highway near the dorf of Stein; and they rode leisurely, that they might give the old harpy every chance of seeing them, and pouncing down on them. Othmill hugged himself with the idea that with one discharge of his pistol he could send a bullet through his head, and thus rid the country of its incubus. To their surprise, however, no Hans appeared. They rode unmolested on their way, and drew up at the door of the village hostel. The host, a young fat man, of a good-natured countenance, came out with a face of evident wonder to see them there. They appeared not to notice it, but threw carelessly the reins on the necks of the horses, and, leaping down, told him they meant to spend the night with him. They removed their saddle-bags, which, in fact, were their knapsacks, with their own hands, carried them into the inn, desired the host to shew them their rooms for the night, and having locked their doors, went out to see that the horses were well-groomed and fed. Every minute they expected the old robber-knight, of whom they had heard such hundreds of stories, would come galloping into the yard; but no Hans von Stein appeared.

They ordered supper, and the host soon set a good piece of smoking venison, with black bread, cabbage, and beer before them, and they fell heartily to work upon it. They insisted, as was the custom of the time, that the host should take a seat and a share with them, which he did very willingly. They then began to ask him about the country, the roads, and whether it was safe travelling thereabout. The host, who evidently was astonished, getting up, and closing and bolting the door, for in the great room of which this formed a sort of side-closet, or bar, were a good many country fellows drinking, and probably some of von Stein's crew; he seated himself softly again at the table, and, addressing them, said:

"Gentlemen, I think you must have travelled hither from a very distant part, and can have held little communication with any one on the road, or you must have learned that you are

now just in the most dangerous place in all Germany. 'Tis rare that I see any one in this hostel, except the peasants of the lands here, or a wagon-train, or a company of merchants so numerous and strongly armed as to fear no ordinary attack. But gentlemen travelling, as you do, I never see, and, in truth, never care to see. It grieves me to see you here now; and I cannot hope for a safe escape for you hence. Have you never heard—is there a man within a thousand miles who has not heard, of Hans von Stein!"

He looked hard at them, expecting at the sound of this name that they would turn pale as ghosts; for he thought they had stumbled unwittingly on this place, without knowing in reality where they were. But, to his amaze, they altered neither in colour nor in cheerfulness. They pledged the host in a draught of wine; and coolly replied, as they went on with their suppers, and praised at the same time his venison and his cookery, that they had heard enough of him, but entertained no fears, as they travelled with a letter of protection from the Emperor, which they had found all Princes and Knights to respect.

The amazement of the host became greater than ever. He fairly stared at them with open mouth, and, snapping his fingers with a loud 'pish,' cried—

"A letter of protection from the Emperor! Why, Hans von Stein would care no more for a letter of the Emperor than he would for a leaf out of an old mass-book. If that, gentlemen, be your only trust, in the name of God, up and ride in for Wasserburg to-night! 'Tis probable that Stein is sunk in one of his drinking bouts, that now come more frequently on him; but be sure that by morning his spies will have apprised him of your being here, and I lay my life that you rue his meeting you!"

The two travellers thanked the host heartily for his concern on their behalf; but expressed their intention to abide all night, and take their chance.

In the morning they appeared somewhat late to breakfast, and shewed no hurry to be gone. The host, who was more and more astonished that Hans had not before this been there to seize them, could not sufficiently marvel at their indifference and delay, and said that, for two clever and gentlemanly young men, he never knew such fool-hardy ones. In a few minutes he came running to say that Hans von Stein was actually setting out a-hunting, and now was the time to be on the way with any chance of escape. To put the finish to this wonder and horror, they now, instead of making off in the direction of Wasserburg, asked which way Hans had taken, and expressed their resolution to follow and join him in the chase.

The host stood actually petrified, as it were, into an image of unbounded astonishment; then, clapping his hand on his thigh, he exclaimed, "Gentlemen, are you moonstruck mad? Will you run your heads into wilful destruction? Did any man ever trust himself in the hands of von Stein! Did any man, except in the midst of a strong troop, ever escape him? Heaven and earth! as you value your lives—ay, as you would not pass for crazy idiots—desist, gentlemen, desist, and over the hill to Wasserburg in a crack."

The two youngsters, however, only smiled at his earnestness, nodded a good-bye to him, and leaving him looking for all the world like the moon-struck man he imagined them, they put spurs to their horses, and rode up into the woods in the direction that the grim old Knight had gone.

When they reached the eminence, they could not perceive any sight or sound of the hunters; they therefore rode on rapidly, trusting ere long to come across them, or to catch some note of them. They had ridden to and fro in the forest for more than an hour, when, in a narrow glade, they heard a tremendous clamour of dogs and men, which seemed to be coming as fast as possible towards them. They therefore stood upon their guard, and directly the party came in sight.

There were four or five men, and as many dogs, in chase of a huge boar, which, foaming with heat and fury, was dashing up the hollow. There was no alternative but to retreat or advance; to move right or left was impossible from the steepness of the cliffs. Othmill, therefore, who was first, spurred on his horse, and leaped to the ground in the face of the infuriated animal. The hunters, who were just behind, gave a loud shout of involuntary amazement; the boar with a tremendous guffaw rushed upon Othmill, but at the moment when the pursuers expected to see him rent and tossed to the earth, they beheld the stranger with one stroke of his axe, dealt in the centre of the monster's skull, fell him to the ground. In the next instant, dogs and men were upon the boar, the spear of the first man was thrust into his grisly flank, and all sprung from their horses to feast their eyes upon him. Von Stein, however, whom the youths instantly knew by his villainous and filthy look, turned in evident amaze, and asked whom he had the pleasure of seeing there? They told him they were merely passing travellers who had heard that he was out hunting, and, as great lovers of the chase, had felt an irresistible desire to join him. They hoped that they had not been intrusive; and informed him that, as they travelled with a passport from the Emperor himself, they felt themselves so much in security on the way, that they could indulge now and then in a little disport.

The wily old fox thought he had got two rawheads into his net. He leered on them with a smile that was meant to appear very patronizing, but was, in reality, a horrible smile of villainous ugliness. He professed himself much honoured; brave men, he said, he was sure they were, and hoped they would go and dine with him after the chase. They accepted his invitation with great readiness, and inwardly chuckling over the certainty of seizing them, he rode on with them after the hounds. For the greater part of the day they pursued the sport; and, in truth, a fine day's sport they had. They returned towards evening, well laden with roebucks and their fine old boar, to the castle of the arch-scamp. He apologized to them for having to mount into his tower by a ladder, but said that in these unsafe times, there was nothing like caution; and as he had neither wife nor child, this way did very well for him.

He led them up to his eating-room, which was almost at the top of the house, and where stood a huge massy table, and already arranged upon it rude dishes and knives for eating. The

walls were of naked whitewash, and only adorned with some large rude drawings in black chalk, which the vanity of the old vagabond had occasioned him to have sketched out. One represented him with a cross-bow in his hand, and a boar of monstrous bulk running before him. It would have been difficult to say which of the two savages made the most uncouth appearance. Under the boar was written in great rude letters—

Hanz von Stein, unverdrossen,  
By Oetting hat er mich geschossen.

that is,

Hans von Stein, unwearied man,  
Shot me at Oetting as I ran.

Others were caricatures of his enemies; others, men hanging, and others, men fighting; all alluding to his own history, and all illustrated by coarse verses; no doubt done at his command by some of his train, who boasted the arts both of writing and rhyming.

Scarcely had he, his guests, his men, dogs, and all entered his room, and the men seated themselves at table, and the dogs eagerly round it, than fellows of an equally ill-look entered with great pieces of roast and boiled meat, great dishes of cabbage, and jugs of beer. Never in all their wanderings had the young friends seen such a scene of coarse and disgusting manners. They seized bones in their hands, and tore the meat with their teeth; and then flinging the picked bones to the dogs, they wiped their great greasy hands on their doublets, and drank from the jugs, hoisting them with both hands to their heads. The dogs in the mean time quarreled and snuffled on the floor, and under the table, about their share; the fellows laid on them lustily with staff, or broad side of sword, to settle their disputes; and the two guests were not a little apprehensive that they should get their legs mistaken for dogs by the men, who kicked and punched fiercely at the hounds under the table; or by the dogs for one another, and get either a good bruising on the shins, or a not less solid gripe.

Old Hans pushed the beer about, and our two youngsters did not shun it. They hoisted the great jugs manfully to their mouths, and made a great shew of drinking, but in reality drank very little. They looked out of the narrow windows, and expressed their admiration of the landscape, which in reality is very fine. The road came winding down the hill on the right from Wasserburg, into the green and pleasant valley, along which ran a clear, rapid, and very charming stream. On the left ran in all their magnificence the sunny summits of the Alps, in the neighbourhood of Salzburg, standing prominently forward in glorious greatness in the landscape, and stretching far and wide away, in silent sublimity, to the very limits of the horizon.

"You have a magnificent position here," said Maurice Bevor; "what a fine rich vale! What a grand stretch of Alpine scenery!"

"Oh, ay, fine! wondrous fine!" said Hans von Stein; "but what signify Alps and strong mountains! give me the scene nearer home here, the rich valley, the green slopes there opposite. There is richness, if you will—here is wealth!"

"Yes," said Maurice, "the crops must be good here."

"Crops!" responded Hans, "ay, good are they—and pretty frequent."

"Frequent!" said Maurice Bevor in surprise. "What, have you more than one crop a year?"

There was a merry twinkle in the eyes of von Stein, which was sympathised in by his followers with broad knowing grins.

"More than once a year!—ay, more than once a month, or once a week. Our crops start up here like mushrooms. In a night, in an hour, there is a harvest worth a king's reaping. Often, as you sit here, you may see it growing on the hills opposite; and on no part so fast as on the road."

"On the road!" exclaimed Maurice in surprise again.

"Ay, on the road, I warrant me," echoed half-a-dozen of the now red-faced and half-tipsy fellows. There was a sound of suppressed laughter.

Othmill, who understood the jest of the old reiver, said out bluntly—

"What a rare nest were this for a cursed old robber-knight! How he could see the travellers and the wagon-trains come over the hill here. How he could up here with his booty, and bid the devil himself knock at his door, and be hanged to him!"

"Robber-knight!" repeated old Hans, who now thought the joke became too palpable, and that his guests, at least this saucy little fellow, were getting suspicious: "Robber-knight!" said he, "who talks of robbers here!"

"Ay, who talks of robbers here!" said a dozen of the ruffian fellows, with black and scowling looks.

"I!" said Othmill, "I! and let a score of them set on me, if I had a tower like this over my head; and I would sit at the window and drink to them: Your healths, gentlemen!"

"He is getting pretty well fuddled," said old Hans to himself; "what stuff he talks!"

Maurice thought old Hans was pretty well fuddled too, and half crazed to boot. Mean time, the common fellows had tunned no ordinary quantities into them. They grew crimson in the face, vociferous, and quarrelsome. Othmill, affecting to be as deeply touched with the liquor as themselves, stared wildly around him; but, in fact, to make his observations. He saw with pleasure that the old fellow's keys hung at his belt, and that around on the walls also hung plenty of straps and cords, probably used for binding their prisoners as well as their dogs. He kept a sharp look out, lest any one should come behind him or his friend; to prevent which they had chosen their seat as near as possible to the wall. Anon entered, in honour of the guests, a great bowl of glüh, or spiced wine; and Othmill, drinking after his friend, and giving him a private sign under the table, contrived, while drinking himself, to pour into this a phial of liquid opium, which, amid his various precautions, he had long carried about him for some such emergency. It was not long in producing its effect. The old fellow had gone on to affect deeper drunkenness, and to throw out odd innendoes at his guests, with nods and winks at his followers, who grew every minute more queer and insolent—the prelude, as the two youths felt well enough, to more outrageous proceedings,—when, by de-

gree, one began to rub his eyes and to yawn, and then another. One cursed the fire, that was too hot; and another laid it on the air of the hills; but Othmill sate and laughed in his sleeve, and soon had the pleasure to see old Hans nodding soundly in his chair. First one and then another of the fellows laid his head on the table and snored; others, stretched themselves on the floor, and in less than ten minutes there was not a man who was not as safe as if he were already bound hand and foot.

Othmill lost not a moment. Stepping lightly to the old scoundrel, he cut away at once the keys from his belt, snatched a lamp from the table, and motioning Maurice to bring another, lest one should get extinguished, they quietly went out:

The first thing was to lock the sleepers safe in their room, though there was little chance of their presently awaking. They then descended cautiously the stairs, peeping into every room as they went past. The few servants below were already all fast asleep, and they took the same precaution to lock their doors. Arriving at that stone door of which Othmill had heard a good deal from a merchant in Vienna, who had been immured here, and escaped only by the sacrifice of half his fortune in ransom, it was not without the greatest difficulty that they could discover the keyhole, which was concealed in one of many small cracks or fissures natural to the stone. They finally succeeded; but on pushing the ponderous door backwards, which was more than a foot in thickness, it moved with a dolorous and so loud a sort of moaning noise on its hinges, that they were startled. They had no doubt that this was a sound which would, under any ordinary circumstances, have brought Hans speedily upon them; and with palpitating hearts they even now listened, lest any one should awake and make an outcry. But all was still. Hans himself was deeply drugged, and those of his men who were not, were, no doubt, too well acquainted with his midnight visits to his dungeons to move at the well-known sound of this door. Probably, if they heard it, they would suppose that he was carrying down his two new victims.

A thought now occurred to Othmill. What, if any one *should* awake, and get out while they were down in the dungeon, and close this door upon them? What, if there were another key? The idea was horrible. He proposed that Maurice should descend while he stood sentinel there, ready to shoot down the first man that should present himself from above. But then, if he should be overpowered before Maurice returned, what better were it? They agreed, therefore, to trust to Providence and their potent drug, and descend together.

There was another thought which came also almost as quickly. When they had set any prisoners at liberty, they had no weapons; and what could they do in case of emergency. Othmill resolved, hazardous as it was, to return up stairs in quest of weapons; and, hastening up, soon returned with an armful of swords and spears, which he had found in a room which appeared to be a regular store of plundered arms and goods. There were plenty, he said, to arm a regiment of men.

With these they hastily steered their way along the narrow passage in the rock, and soon

discovered such a scene of misery and villainy as made their blood boil with fury against the monster who had created it. Here were men, young and old, nearly naked, with little straw to lie upon, in dungeons, some of them so close and pestiferous, that it was wonderful that anything could live in them. It was some time before Othmill could hit upon the right key which unlocked their fetters, and he actually began to fear that he had not got it on the bunch, when luckily he discovered it. But here another difficulty occurred. Some of the prisoners were so faint, and appeared so stupefied with their long confinement, they could not comprehend what was wanted. Some begged for bread; some that they might not be put into the Hunger Hole; and some that they might be killed outright. Othmill and Maurice endeavoured to make them understand that they were come to liberate them, but this only seemed to bewilder them the more. Others, who caught at the meaning, were too faint to rise, and too much cramped with rheumatism to be able to walk. Others again, young and strong, were seized with such an impatience, that they tugged at their chains, and could not by any persuasions keep themselves still, so as to allow their deliverers to unlock them. They were obliged to threaten these to leave them where they were, and go off with the rest, before they could compel them to sufficient quietness. But once loosed, to these they gave swords, and ordered them to follow them. Rapidly they ran from cell to cell, liberating all, and letting such as could follow their train. But now they became threatened with as great a danger. As the number set free became considerable, their transport was so great that they began to laugh out in obstreperous and convulsive peals; others began to cry as vehemently, and wrung their hands as in the intensest distress. There were friends who, on seeing one another at liberty, flew into each other's arms, and gave vent to their violent joy with such commotion, that their deliverers were seized with alarm, and entreated them, as they hoped to escape, to restrain themselves, and preserve silence. To effect anything like obedience, however, was altogether impossible. Some came and flung themselves on their liberators while they were unloosing others, and clasped them in such vehement embraces, and kissed them with such impetuosity, that they were nearly smothered, and with the greatest difficulty could proceed with their task.

Othmill fixed on half-a-dozen of the strongest and most orderly of them to march to the stone door, and there, with drawn swords, to maintain a silent watch, but charged them on their lives not to advance a step farther, nor to create an alarm.

They now came to the Hunger Hole, and as a torch was suspended to a cord, and let down into this notorious and awful pit, the feeling of its horror checked every other sensation, and the haggard group of prisoners stood round in breathless silence. Luckily it was empty; but the sight of the black depth, in which many a human being had worn out his last days in famine and despair, caused a general groan, and all hurried away from it, as if half-fearing to be seized and plunged in.

Having now searched in every direction, and satisfied themselves that they had explored ev-

ery quarter of this hateful den, Othmill placed himself at the head of the liberated throng with his friend, and addressing them, said that now they must proceed to secure the Robber-knight and his gang; but as himself and friend had risked their lives to achieve their liberty, he now demanded that they should put themselves under their guidance, and should be strictly subject to their commands, till their work was fully completed. They promised; and Othmill and Maurice leaving the way, entered one by one the rooms of the servants, and seizing them in their beds, bound their hand and foot. It would not be easy to conceive the astonishment of these fellows, as thus roughly handled, they started from their sleep, and found themselves surrounded by the wild throng of prisoners. It was with the utmost difficulty that Othmill and Maurice could prevent the prisoners, spite of their promises, cutting these men to pieces, so frantic was their rage at sight of them from whom they had, no doubt, received many injuries, and by whom they had probably been captured. Othmill had to fly and strike up the sword of first one and then another, and sternly to threaten reincarceration to any one who disobeyed his orders; though he knew well enough that it would be no such easy matter to carry his threat into effect, now these men had arms in their hands, if they were aware, as, however, they were not, that he and his friend were totally unsupported by forces at hand. As he advanced up stairs, he still heard behind him deep and muttered curses against the captured ruffians, and scarcely expected that they would be left alive.

But they were now at the very door of von Stein himself; and as Othmill put the key into the lock, the dogs within set up so fierce a yelling that it was a warning to spring forward without loss of a moment. As, however, they bolted into the room, the hounds, which were of a huge and most savage species, flew upon them with fury. The sight of so wild a company entering with brands and torches awakened all the rage of their instinct; they fought with a strength and desperation against which unarmed men could not have had a moment's chance; and it required all the vigour and skill of the assailants to avoid their horrid fangs, and to cut them down. There was a terrible clamour and confusion; men shouting and cursing, hounds howling and tearing, which speedily roused the sleepers, who started up and drew their swords for defence. Von Stein himself snatched his boar-spear, which stood near his chair, and charged them with vigour; nay, it was with a fellness of white and deadly rage, when he saw the prisoners, and comprehended what had happened, which gave him more the look of a devil than a man. His favourite hound, a creature huge and gaunt, and savage as himself, at sight of his master with his spear in his hand, sprung upon the table close to his shoulder, and grinned and yelled with an equal fury. On the other hand, the prisoners, at view of von Stein, seemed to lose all self-command. They dashed forward, beating down with fury and curses the spear of the robber and the swords of his men, as if they had been reeds; but not without the hounds springing full at their throats, and dragging one of them to the earth. The man and dog rolled together in

the midst of their feet with a horrible stagger and confusion, and no man dared for a moment to thrust at the dog, lest he should run his sword through the man. But the man was soon overpowered; the hound uppermost darted with ravening jaws at his throat, and another instant would have seen him tear away his life, when Othmill stunned the savage with a blow of his axe. In the mean time, the infuriated prisoners had borne down von Stein and his whole gang. Several rolled on the floor in their blood, and not a man would have been spared, had not Maurice and Othmill, with loudest cries and energetic vigour, beaten back the weapons of the prisoners, and commanded them to desist. Half-a-dozen swords were already pointed at the breast of von Stein, who had been knocked down against the wall, and had already received a severe cut on the head. Othmill cried, "Hold! hold! back! back!" But the pressing throng, glaring on von Stein with inexpressible hate, cried, "No! cut the wretch to atoms! fling him from the tower!"

"Nay! nay!" cried Othmill; "that is far too good! To the Hunger Hole! to the pit with him!"

The utterance of that word was like the sudden explosion of a mine. The shout of exultation was stunning. "Ay, God in heaven! to the pit! to the pit with him!"

In a moment von Stein was seized by the legs and arms, and hair of the head; and amid curses and laughter, and wild jubilee, was hurried down stairs. Even as he went many could not help striking at him, and grinding their teeth over him in a rage. The hardened villains, who had heard well the cry of the pit, did not utter an exclamation, or groan, but the wildness of his look showed his inward terror; and writhing like a huge snake, he struggled and kicked with a strength which was amazing. It availed not however. His triumphant captors bore him forward, and as they entered the dungeons, and traversed the long passage, they taunted him as they went, "Villain! knowest thou these dungeons! Knowest thou this spot, where thou stabbed thy own son! Dost thou not see him there! Dost thou not see his bride beckoning thee to the pit! Dost thou not hear thy mother call thee!"

Miserable creatures who had been too weak to follow up stairs, gazed wildly on him as he was borne past; and he glared on them as if they were the ghosts of those who had been invoked.

They had now reached the Hunger Hole. The cord hung ready suspended from its pulley at the top of the cell. It was speedily slipped under his body, and he hung and swung over the yawning pit. "Down with him!" cried a dozen voices at once; but as they let the rope give way, and he was about to disappear, a young knight named Siegfried, whom he had captured about a year before, after a desperate contest and killing the whole of his followers, and had detained him in the hope of getting the enormous ransom which he demanded, suddenly crying, "Never shalt thou have a chance of coming out of that pit alive!"—plunged his sword through him. The dying wretch rolled his eyes convulsively, and the rope rapidly loosened, sent him spinning into the darkness below.

Having executed this signal piece of justice and vengeance, the liberators ordered the strong prisoners to carry the infirm ones from the cells to the kitchen. Here, when all were assembled, who proved to be more than thirty persons, never was such a company! Pale, half-naked creatures with hair, and beards, and nails, and saw and filthy skirts, which attested their horrible usage; they looked more like a throng of people called from their graves than aught else. The ravenous fury of famine raged in their hollow eyes and ghastly faces; and there now remained the most arduous labour of all, to prevent them destroying themselves by their voracity. Luckily, there was no great store of provisions left from the last night's feast. The game killed the day before was deposited in a building in the court; and the latter cut in the solid rock, near the kitchen, Othmill kept locked, and as much as possible unknown to any of them. He and Maurice exerted themselves to distribute, as equally as they could, the cooked provisions remaining; but they found it impossible to prevent dreadful scenes of snatching and voracity.

When the food was devoured, he ordered them, as they must prepare to appear in the open air, and before their fellow countrymen, to wash and trim themselves into some degree of decency. There was plenty of water brought by wooden pipes from the hill into the kitchen; and tubs were speedily set, and heaps of linen brought from the store-room, for towels. Many a poor wretch who had never before scrubbed his skin with anything finer than a hempen cloth of home manufacture, this day wiped himself with whole lengths of most luxurious damask linen, intended for the use of princes—the plunder of luckless merchants. It would have been a curious scene to have witnessed this general ablution. Some rushed into the water, and dashed it over them as the very water of life; but many others, who for years had lain in the dry rock, shrunk from it as from so much ice. They had grown out of the use of it, and made the most determined resistance to the very touch of a wet towel, imploring with piteous cries to be left in their year-long filth; but there were jolly and robust spirits, who having themselves revelled in the new luxury of water, determined that every other soul should, and thence commenced a splashing and dashing, a dragging into, and a dragging out of, great water-tubs, with a din of laughter, shouts, cries, curses, and jokes, that now made ten times more of a Babel than the original Babel itself. While this process was going on, Othmill and Maurice made a survey of the castle. They once more traversed every dungeon to see that no poor wretch was left behind, and explored every place where any thing was likely to be deposited. In the knight's chest they found a surprising sum of money, and in different rooms a vast mass of plundered goods and arms. They then despatched some of the nimblest prisoners down to the hostel and dorf, to summon horses and wagons to convey the goods and people to Saltzburg. It was not long before numbers of the peasants came flying up to the castle at this extraordinary news. At their head appeared the host of the hostel, who with a face of more wonder than ever, now doffed his cap, and bowed to the very ground to Jehu

Othmill and Maurice, pronouncing them the greatest champions that had ever appeared in that country. The news flew like wildfire. There was a general rejoicing, that the country was rid of this pestilent crew, who had prevented travellers frequenting this road, and spending their money in the place. Wagons and horses were soon in numbers on the hill. The goods and arms were hoisted by ropes out of the windows, and loaded with great alacrity. The weakly people were also let down, and seated in a wagon upon beds, and amid warm clothing.

Othmill and Maurice opened the old robber's chests, and richly paid the people for their help, besides giving to the host a sum for a general rejoicing at his house. They presented the honest man, moreover, with a fine matchlock, which they found in the castle; besides a curious old schrank or wardrobe, on which he seemed to set his heart, with other articles, in testimony of the honest zeal which he had shown in their behalf; and calling together the prisoners, they assured them that the treasures of the knight should all be distributed amongst them, his victims, in proportion to their necessities and infirmities; and that this should be done under the superintendence of the magistrates and other honourable men at Saltzburg.

For themselves, they only selected from the captured articles a couple of swords and daggers, in sheaths of gold set with precious stones; two cross-bows, with stocks most beautifully inlaid with ivory; and two Nuremberg eggs, as they were called, or watches for the pocket, truly then as thick as eggs, but most admirably cased in gold and jewels. All these were of Nuremberg workmanship; and must, from their exquisite beauty and value, have belonged to persons of high rank. The two friends, addressing the freed prisoners and those around, said—"These they should hope to hand down in their families to future times, as memorials of an achievement on which they never should cease to congratulate themselves."

Amongst the prisoners were knights and merchants of great wealth, who had been detained in order to wring immense ransoms from them, or because they had stoutly resisted old Hans, and excited his implacable hatred. These came forward, and asked if there was nothing by which they could testify their sense of gratitude to their deliverers; but the two youths replied, that they were only too well repaid already by ridding the country of such a monster, and restoring so many fellow-creatures to liberty and their friends. One thing only did they solicit, and that was, that these worthy knights and merchants should undertake the division of the spoil, with the assistance of the Saltzburg magistrates, inquiring carefully into the exact circumstances of each individual, and so apportioning the property, that any infirm person, destitute of means, should have such proportion as would provide for him for life; and that such also should have, over and above, ample allowance for the expenses of their reaching their homes; the rest of the property to be equally divided amongst the remaining better circumstanced prisoners. The knights and merchants expressed with the utmost alacrity their pleasure in faithfully carrying out this excellent arrangement, and the two young men

took their leave. The prisoners crowded round them with tears and many salutations, blessings and prayers, for God to reward them in the happiness of their lives; and, amid loud and repeated plaudits, they mounted and rode away.

On the hill above the dorf of Stein, between Saltzburg and Wasserburg, yet stands the dilapidated castle, and yet remain its numerous and horrible dungeons in the rock beneath; and the legends of the neighbourhood are not a whit less dreadful than we find this history. On the walls of von Stein's rude eating-room, were at the time of the author's visit in 1841, still to be seen figures of himself, his horse, his dogs, and the boar, renewed by some recent hand; and his spear, his sword, and saddle, and some parts of his old rusty armour, were also there remaining. There were still inscribed on the wall some very rude verses, in which the breaking into his hold is attributed to the people of Saltzburg and Wasserburg, and in which it is also stated that Siegfried Gelbsattler, whose lady he had carried off from Trossburg, had slain Hans. This is probably the knight Siegfried, who stabbed him as he was descending into the pit. So dimly and distortedly descend to posterity, through the medium of tradition, some of the most brilliant of heroic deeds.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

OTHMILL IS KNIGHTED. AS SIR JOHN OTHMILL, HE PERFORMS GREAT SERVICES IN THE ROYAL FORESTS. THE FAMOUS SIEGE OF WALDECK, AND THE EXPLOIT OF THE THREE TAILORS. SIR JOHN IS MADE BARON WALDECK AND KNIGHT OF KITKOTTIE.

The two youths arrived in England in the early autumn; they found that the old Knight had removed to London, where he could enjoy the society of his Lollard friends. His estate was left in the care of his steward; and he complained heavily of the lawless state of the neighbourhood, and of his difficulties in warding off aggressions, while he was unsupported by his lord. Maurice and Othmill promised to be speedily back to assist him, and then hastened to London, where the joyful son threw himself into the arms of his father, and was received as we may well imagine. To Othmill, the old Knight could not sufficiently express his thanks, and his sense of his admirable address and courage. He insisted, not only with the full consent, but zealous concurrence of his son, on settling on John Othmill a certain estate, which was unentailed and entirely at his own disposal, but Othmill would not for a moment listen to it. He said he was already too well repaid by his success, and the friendship of both the Knight and his son; and that he would trust to his fortune to find him as much wealth as he should have any occasion for.

Maurice and Othmill, as it is not to be wondered at, had in their wanderings and adventures acquired the strongest friendship for each other, and were almost inseparable. Maurice had recovered all his strength and good looks, and was regarded as one of the finest young men of his age; while Othmill, on his part, had so much improved on his travels, that, though still of a low stature, he was strongly built, and had an air of smartness and command about



him which immediately struck the beholder, and inspired him with an idea of his great parts and knowledge of the world. He wore a doublet and hose of a rich ruddy brown. In a handsome embroidered belt were usually to be seen his pistol and rich dagger. A short velvet mantle of deep crimson with a border of gold, and a black velvet cap and eagle's feather, in public, gave him a striking and noticeable air. His beard, which was grown crisp and full, took off somewhat the effect of his rather long face; and his ruddy countenance and bright eye bespoke a healthy and lively constitution; while the firm activity of his tread and cheerful ease of his carriage were not less indicative of a confident, aspiring, but generous character.

The two young friends, having stayed some time in London, departed again for the Knight's estate. It was necessary that a free pardon from the King should be obtained for Maurice, to protect him against the consequences of the unfortunate fray in which he had killed the fanatic student at Oxford; and the old Knight apprehended that, as the King had shewn a growing severity against the Reformers, this might be attended with some difficulty. Till it was effected, he would be safer in the country; where he would have his servants about him, and where, for the protection of the property, it was the intention of Maurice and Othmill to arm and discipline the tenants and their hands. In this scheme they were eagerly seconded by the young farmers. They had been too often insulted by neighbouring proprietors, who relied on the well-known Lollard tendency of both the Knight and his son, for committing depredations on them with impunity, not to be ready to put themselves in a posture of self-defence. Their courage had been amply shewn at the rescue of the Lollard preachers. Through the autumn, and the milder intervals of winter, they met well armed and mounted, and manœuvred in the park to the number of fifty; and soon shewed so much skill in arms, that they had longer to complain of the inroads which before they suffered. The two young commanders looked on them with feelings of confidence and pride.

In the spring, the old Knight wrote that the monarch Henry V. had returned from his glorious campaign in France, for a little while, to London; but as he contemplated speedily returning to Paris with fresh troops, he could only grant Maurice a free pardon on condition that he took arms and accompanied him to the war. This was news of the most acceptable kind to Maurice, who felt a great desire not only to share in the glory of the French victories, which had rung through all Europe, but at the same time to cultivate an acquaintance with the young nobles of his own country, who were for the most part there assembled. The Monarch's proposal was at once accepted, and Othmill accompanied his friend to London. The King had been pleased to inquire very particularly after their adventures in Bohemia and Germany, of which many rumours had spread amongst the young nobles; and so much was he charmed by the recital of them, and especially with the gallantry and address of John Othmill, that he knighted the two young men on the spot; and at the same time saying, it was but fitting, as they had travelled and passed through so many

dangers together, that they should together reap the deserved honour. Maurice became Sir Maurice Bevor, and received a distinguished command. His Highness was about to confer the same on our hero, now Sir John Othmill,—but here the old Knight interposed, saying that, however much it would add to his comfort that his son should enjoy the company and advice of Sir John Othmill, he yet conceived that both his own and his Highness's affairs would suffer in this kingdom by his absence. The old Knight here drew such a picture of domestic disorders, and the insolence of bad men, in his part of the kingdom, while the Monarch and so many influential nobles and gentlemen were abroad, that the King said, "Ay, it was but too true." He thanked the Knight for reminding him of it, and charged Sir John Othmill to exert his talents and address in maintaining order in these parts. For this purpose he gave him also the rank of a colonel in the army; and in a very familiar conversation, by which he shewed to his courtiers how much he esteemed the character and abilities of Sir John, he told him that the fine army which he had seen in the camp of Sigismund at Prague had been beaten and dispersed with great slaughter by the Hussite Ziska, and that his friend Polnitz had performed miracles of valour at the head of his Taborites.

The Monarch set out for France, Sir Maurice and many other young and gallant aspirants for fame in his train; and Sir John Othmill giving one sigh for the departure of his friend, and another for his own inglorious inactivity at home, departed for the old Knight's estate.

But he was not long allowed to continue in that inactivity. The town of Waldeck, situated in the Royal Forest, at about ten miles distance from the old Knight's house, had sent a memorial to the King, complaining of the dreadful manner in which the Royal domains were overrun by marauders, in the absence of the King and the army, and of the daily outrages that were committed on the lives and property of the inhabitants of that town, his Highness's borough, and praying for help. The King, before his departure, gave Sir John Othmill a warrant to pursue, capture, and bring to justice these disturbers of the peace. Sir John was delighted at the receipt of this commission, which so well seconded all his intended measures for the security of the old Knight's estate. He quickly marched his troop of brave yeomanry, who were equally eager for the adventure, and rode at an early day to Waldeck. The Mayor and people heard with shouts of joy the news; but they informed Sir John that the whole country, to an immense extent, was so overrun by lawless bands, that he would find it no easy matter to quell them. Sir John, however, set at once to work. From day to day he scoured the woods with his band; and, in various skirmishes, defeated detachments of the marauders, and took them prisoners. These were hanged before the city gate without delay, as a terror to others, and for some time produced the most striking effect. The rumour spread that Sir John Othmill, or as he was more commonly still called in those parts, the dreaded John-o'-the-Mill, was appointed by the King commander and justice for that part of the country. The woods became free; the

roads unobscured; and the thieves retired from the town to distant districts.

Not many weeks, however, had passed over before men came flying with the news that the lawless bands had collected to revenge their fellows, or rather were stirred up by a notorious freebooter of that neighbourhood, the Knight of Kitcottie, who saw all his lawless influence at an end, if Sir John Othmill was allowed to keep possession of Waldeck. Far and wide this turbulent fellow had gone and stirred up the freebooting disturbers of many a district, telling them that now was the time to crush John-o'-the-Mill and his attempts in their infancy. The king and the army were abroad, and few men of note and influence were left at home; one bold effort, and they would be rid of this upstart of a Saracen conjurer, who otherwise would soon grow into a might and influence that would carry everything before them. Waldeck would become his head-quarters, and from thence he would stretch his jurisdiction round till not a free walk was left in any of the King's woods; and the acendrel priest and the craven merchant would parade the highways, fearing no longer the free hearts and bows of the forest. The jolly life of the green wood would be over for ever.

These representations speedily brought up from many a wood and wild and rude holt, inhabited by hordes, half paccher and half thief, swarms of fierce fellows, all hastening to attack the town of Waldeck, vowing to hang up John-o'-the-Mill and his men, spite of the king's warrant, to set the Mayor in the pillory, and burn down the town.

The people, who had been before ready to leap out of their skins with exultation at the dispersion of the freebooters, were now ready to shrink into their own shoes. There was nothing but lamentation. Many were anxious to fly with any safety. The marauders gave out that John-o'-the-Mill was but a Saracen necromancer, brought by the old Lollard Knight out of the East, and where he had sent his son to learn Mahomedanism, and whence John-o'-the-Mill had lately been to fetch him, he having now been duly instructed in the Black Art and all unchristian practices by John-o'-the-Mill's accomplices and countrymen. But they vaunted that they had a friend in the forest, another Friar Tuck, that would speedily break the power of John-o'-the-Mill's enchantments, and with the Sacred Host put the demon of his strength to flight. They said that Othmill, thus deprived of his infernal support, would drop like a proud swelling bladder when pierced with a knife. They should see him drop from his height, which he owed to his false acts, like a dead carrion-crow from the top of an oak where the arrow had hit him, and they would gibbet him on the city gate.

These swaggerings made the people quite frantic with fear. They began packing up their goods, and prepared to run off anywhere, rather than be given up to the desperate freebooters. But Sir John ordered the gates to be all closed, to be strictly guarded, and all the cattle, and as much fodder as possible, to be collected into the city. In two days, the forces of the outlaws were seen advancing up the distant forest glades. On the following day, they sat down before the town; and cutting boughs, construct-

ed tents for themselves. Their numbers could not be less than a thousand. The inhabitants, who, of themselves, far outnumbered these stout and able-bodied men, most of whom had been accustomed to handle a bow in the forest from lads, were still a peaceable sort of people—for the most part weavers and other handicrafts, and were filled with the most unmanly consternation. The lawless besiegers began now to scale their walls with rope-ladders, and to insult them with the most insolent language; telling them to give up that little Jack-a-napes and his broad-and-cheese soldiers, that they might hang them; and then they would only mercifully burn their gates and take their cattle, and go away. Sir John told them to keep quiet, and he would soon teach these fellows a different song; but it was difficult to keep them from wringing their hands and crying in the very face of their enemies.

The town was surrounded by two walls. Between the one and the other was a wide, green space, where, as now, in case of alarm, the cattle was kept. Through this, under both outer and inner walls, ran deep, broad moats, through which the stream which watered the town was conducted, and over these, at each gate, was a drawbridge. The town, therefore, was strongly fortified, and with a tolerable spirit in the people, could not easily be taken. There were also on the inner wall various towers, and a breastwork, behind which the people could take their stand, and discharge their arrows upon their foes. Sir John Othmill placed on these walls his own men, and between every one of them two of the inhabitants, who, under their guidance and example, could at least shoot a bolt from a crossbow. Sir John had received matchlocks from the old Knight for his troop, but these he kept in reserve, because he did not so much wish to alarm and drive away the ruffians, as to take such a vengeance and make such a clearing of them, as he had them now here collected, as should spare the country years of future harassing and labour. He contented himself, therefore, all that day with popping off such of the fellows as had the audacity to put their heads above the walls. This soon put a check to their insolence, but excited them to such a rage that they attacked the gates with amazing fury. They battered at them with showers of tremendous stones which they collected in the forest, and Sir John, mounting with a detachment of archers into the towers over them, assailed them in return. The combat raged with fury till night, when the murderers collecting huge quantities of heath and dead boughs, and fallen timber, from the wood, showed their determination to burn the gates.

Sir John now hastened to the Mayor, and told him that he must now feign fear of the town being taken, and offer, on condition of its being spared, to betray Sir John and his men into their hands. He was to agree to open to them at ten o'clock at night, privately, the opposite gate of the town, where, in the mean time, he would send men with boats, and undersaw the drawbridge, so that the moment it became loaded with the invaders, it would give way with them.

The Mayor, who was a cunning fellow in his way, entered into the scheme, and that very opportunely, for at this instant was seen a pre-

cession advancing with many lighted tapers from the forest. It was led by a priest, who, with the host extended in his hands, advanced towards the city wall. He was followed by a train of monks, supposed to belong to a monastery in the forest, more notorious for hunting and reveling than for God's worship. They came on with crowns new shaven, and in their best robes, each carrying a crucifix; there were boys in white gowns, with their bells and censers, and a mass-priest also, with his open mitre. The train advanced solemnly towards the gate where the wood was piled for lighting, singing with solemn emphasis, "Dies iræ, dies illa!" The assailants ceased their attack the moment they saw this procession drawing near, and all knelt reverently on the turf as it came up. The besieged also, as if filled with awe and wonder, ceased to shower their arrows from above, and stood to see what would take place. The priestly train advancing in profound solemnity to the very front of the gate, the mass-priest then solemnly read his exorcism, "in nomine Domini," against John-o-the-Mill's familiar demon, or cursed spirit of Mahomed. He then excommunicated Sir John, and all who dared to lift a hand in his behalf; and cursing him with bell, book, and candle, there was a great muttering of curses, fuming of censers, and jingling of bells; and again singing, "Dies iræ," they retraced their way towards the wood in solemn dignity.

The people, both without and within, expected nothing less than to see the fire at the gate kindle of itself against the city, which dared to harbour a monster denounced by Holy Church; and that all the arrows shot thence, if indeed any spirit was strong enough, or any one strong enough, to shoot them, would of themselves fall dead to the ground, or turn back upon their senders. But not one arrow was shot off; and every one believed, because all arms were paralyse by the anathema of the church; nay, the Mayor was observed from a part of the wall, where Sir John, who was over the north gate, which was threatened with the fire, could not see him, beckoning to an outlaw without; and was overheard desiring him to send him his captain, the Knight of Kitkottie. Kitkottie was soon there, and the Mayor propounded to him his proposal, which was eagerly accepted by the ruffian knight.

The Mayor informed Kitkottie that Sir John was eagerly bent on internally barricading both gates, and was resolved to destroy the whole of the wretched inhabitants with famine, rather than yield; but that they did not mean to permit that, and that he could find a means of diverting him from the south gate, if they kept up a great show of assaulting the other.

This was done that Sir John's sawing might not be heard or suspected. Sir John knowing therefore, that all was agreed upon, ordered a great hammering to be made on the inside of both gates, as if fastening on additional battings, or iron plates; but about nine o'clock, as the sawing of the drawbridge was completed, and the enemy had made a considerable fire against the other gate, he ceased the hammering then to cease, and ordered a number of the townsmen to occupy the tower over the north gate, and pour down quantities of arrows and stones. This was done by letting over the townspeople

a cavalry-serjeant, of whom they had a great dread. In the mean time, desisting with his men over the second drawbridge, and taking a good number of the most courageous of the townsmen in their train, whom, though they were now shockingly unerved by the terror, he did not fear would pluck up more courage than ever the moment that they saw that the band had taken no effect,—he marched quietly under the wall to a small sallyport, not far distant from that which was to be considered as the traitor's gate. Here he waited the Count.

About ten o'clock, a man, marching from Sir John's station, proceeded to open the gate to the enemy, while Sir John as silently issued from the sallyport with his followers, and stealthily approached in the dark so near as possible without detection to the rear of the outlaws, who, all impatient for the opening of the gate, stood, with eyes fixed on it, and torribles like those of Gideon, held under pitchers, ready to be taken out at the eventful moment.

A loud rush announced the opening of the gate, and Sir John, springing forward with his band, was on their rear at the moment that the bridge giving way, crowded with men, occasioned a sudden cry of horror, and all was tumult and confusion. At this instant he gave the command, and a volley was poured from the command, and a volley was poured from such a panic of terror into the fellows, who expected no such arms, that they ran against each other, and such of them as had escaped plunging into the moat, and knew not where to fly. Sir John and his band, now rushing forward with loud cheers, attacked the disordered and terror-stricken multitude, knocking down some with the butt-ends of their guns, and running others through with their swords, that there was a dreadful slaughter amongst them. The Mayor, who heard the outcry, now sallied from the other gate, whence the blustering few who had been left there fled, and wheeling round the nearest side of the town, fell also on the flying crowd. The people, who saw at once that the bann was no bann at all, now believed what the Mayor told them, that the monks were a lewd and wicked crew, who had no chance of being heard by God; and, on the contrary, Sir John Othmill was, so far from a necromancer, a most able and valiant man, honoured by their own liege lord and king with his commission and commands, instantly plucked up courage, as such people do, especially when the danger is passed, and were only the more furious because they could wreak their fury on the helpless, joined almost to a man in the chase. Leaving, at the entreaty of the serjeant of cavalry, scarcely sufficient behind to close the gates and keep watch over them, they flew with hue and cry after the routed outlaws. The pursuit was kept up with torches until the very day dawned. Sir John Othmill and his fifty, with their matchlocks, managed to reach fiers that others could not overtake. Some of the townsmen, especially a number of tailors, shewed the nimblest legs, and committed the most desperate barbarities; for it is notorious that those men who sit so much cross-legged on their shopboards, and are generally such as are too light and feeble for heavy employments, when they get abroad are so excitable that,

whether in sport or in earnest, they run into the wildest extravagances, and lose, as it were, all power over their fiery fancies. In short, there never was a more entire rout and slaughter.

It was some days before they could collect all the dead out of the forest, which, when effected, they found to amount to six hundred men. Of the townsmen only fifteen had fallen. The bodies of the foes were found in an open space not far from the postern-gate where they were so entrapped, and a mound of earth raised over them, which to this day is called "The Robber's Round."

Sir John Othmill left the Mayor and his people to repair their bridges, and make all right and tight again, and set out to follow up his advantage, and complete his work while he was about it. He rode through the country, hunting the predatory bands from their haunts, and redressing the wide-spread disorders. The farmers, the gentry, nay, the whole people, received him as an angel from heaven. The king's warrant, and the height to which the misrule of the times had grown, procured him, everywhere, the most prompt information and support. He chased the already discomfited marauders from place to place, burnt down their lodges where he found them in the forest; and by the summary powers conferred upon him, caused the sheriff to hold a circulating forest court, to try all that were found with arms in their hands, and to execute them on the spot. In very few weeks the whole country was cleared of the nuisance which had so long infested it; and the farmers and peasants could now once more in peace cultivate their lands, and see their flocks and herds graze in safety.

In the woods, however, the game was dreadfully decreased, and there was one fellow, the most notorious of all, whom Sir John could not secure; and till he had him in his hands he did not deem his work perfectly finished. This was the brutal knight, called the Knight of Kitkottie, who had been expelled from all honourable society for his excesses and crimes, and had put himself at the head of those lawless throngs who were now annihilated. He had, as we have seen, raised this storm, which had fallen with such signal destruction on the heads of his followers. He had been captain at the siege of Waldeck; and in the flight, Sir John had made a keen and particular pursuit after him. Several times he had information of his being not far off, but he always contrived to elude him. Sir John assaulted and took his castle, or as it was called, 'Tower of Kitkottie,' which stood only a league from Waldeck, and hunted the whole neighbourhood through, as he was suspected to be lurking there, but without effect. Kitkottie was too well acquainted with all the secret tracks and concealed haunts of the woods. Sir John lamented bitterly that he could not seize this arch-roguer, of whose atrocities and boorish insolence he everywhere heard. A very pleasant incident at length put into his power that which all his diligence had not been able to effect.

Three tailors who were in the pursuit, or, as it came to be commonly called, 'Waldeck Races,' there seized three horses and armour, which they stripped from the slain. As they heard daily accounts of the success of Sir John

and his band, they became seized with a fancy that it was a very fine thing to ride after robbers and take castles, and that they could do it as well as anybody. With this, they rose up early one morning, clad themselves in their armour, mounted their horses by means of a flight of steps before the old townhouse at Waldeck, and rode forth in quest of adventures. They rode on and on; it became a very warm day. No straggling outlaw, nor tempting castle, appeared in view, to afford them an adventure; and at length they became so weary with the weight of their armour, and as much roasted in it as their own goose had ever been at the fire, that they heartily wished themselves home again, but were ashamed of going back after their swaggering to their comrades of what they would do. Espying a huge tree which lay overthrown, they thought it a fine opportunity to alight from their horses without shaking themselves so dreadfully as they otherwise must; and prepared to enter the thicket, seek some place of repose, and there taking off their armour, to cool and rest themselves.

Scarcely, however, had they alighted, and tied their horses to the bushes out of sight of the road, when, in a little opening in the wood, they descried a man lying asleep on the ground. He had a spear lying by him, and a sword by his side. They were sure it was one of the outlaws; all their courage revived at the sight; one stealthily drew near, and as quickly drawing the sword from the man's sheath, which they hid, they then all rushed upon him with a loud shout, and planted their spear points against his face.

The man, starting from his sleep, and seeing himself disarmed, and beset by three men armed cap-a-pie, cried out that he yielded on condition of ransom. The tailors, transported at the idea of ransom, demanded how much he meant to pay? He replied a hundred marks. "Good! good!" said they, "we agree; but where are these same marks?"

"They are at hand," said the man, "in the cottage of a friend, not half a mile on the way here."

"Up and budge then," said the knights of the steel bar, who placed themselves one on each hand, and one behind him. There was a difficulty as to how they should prevent his escape while they mounted; but two of them stood with their spears pointed, one at his breast and one at his back, while the third mounted; and this great deed being accomplished, they marched on their way. It is ten to one but the prisoner, who stared in strange wonder at their proceedings, would, before proceeding far, have discovered the real quality of their captors, but he attributed their awkwardness to their being raw soldiers, and to their excessive fear of his escape. Luckily, however, they had not advanced many hundred yards when they met Sir John Othmill and his troop, in full trot, on their way to Waldeck.

Sir John halted instantly at the sight of this unknown party. "Who are you, my men?" he demanded; "and whom have you there?"

"'Tis a prisoner of ours," said they, giving no account of themselves, "and he is going to fetch his ransom."

"Ransom?" said John.

"Why, 'tis the Knight of Kitkottie!" ex-

claimed some one in the troop, close behind Sir John.

At the name of the Knight of Kitcottie, the tailors, who had no idea that they had been dealing with so dreadful a personage, dropped their spears from their hands, and turning their horses, fled for their lives. The whole company seeing the men in armour thus flying, were struck with amazement; but Sir John, suspecting some treachery, said, "Pursue! Stop them! Secure this man!"

Part darted forward after the flying warriors, part surrounded the Knight, who, perceiving something strange, and alive to what concerned himself, first caught one of the spears which the tailors let fall, and prepared to dart into the thicket. Another moment, and this formidable foe were once more within the shadow of the wood, and then nimble and fleet were the men who should retake him. But two stout troopers dashed furiously their horses between him and the wood side; numbers of others were in a second on each side of him. The fell scoundrel, however, had again a spear in his hand, and was sure to make good use of it. He thrust it at once into the chest of the horse of one of the soldiers who interrupted his passage to the wood. It reared and plunged forward, flinging its rider over Kitcottie's head. The supple knave stooped and dashed headlong with his reeking spear at the chest of the other steed which stood in his way; but the rider, warned by the fate of his companion, wheeled his horse partly round, to avoid the direct thrust of the ruffian's spear, and adroitly stooping forward, cut it asunder with a stroke of his sword. Kitcottie, fire-red with rage, tilted full at this man with the headless spear, and hitting him on the chest, sent him from his horse. With the headless shaft in his hand, he then turned rapidly to bolt into the wood; but the eager yeomen were too nimble for him; a mass of horse had again got the start of him, and he was surrounded; and though he stood like a bear at bay, with his stout spear-shaft laying about him, he was finally overpowered and seized.

In the mean time the flying captors were brought back; and Sir John demanding what and who they were, they gave their names. The fact that they were really three tailors of Waldeck could scarcely be believed; but Sir John ordering their helmets to be taken off, they saw there such ludicrous objects, that the whole troop burst into convulsions of laughter.

The Knight of Kitcottie, on discovering that he had really surrendered to three Tailors, was filled with the fiercest rage and shame, and desired that they should instantly shoot him, as he did not wish to live an hour longer. Sir John, however, ordered him to be mounted on a horse between his three captors, with his hands bound, so that he might be conducted to Waldeck. It would be difficult to say whether the Knight or the Tailors were in the more enviable situation. With bare heads, and in their armour, they rode on at the head of the cavalcade; and in this manner they entered Waldeck, amid the shouts and laughter of the populace.

The Knight of Kitcottie was the next day hanged, and the three tailors, recovering something of their spirit, actually came forward, and claimed the reward which had been offered for

the taking of Kitcottie. Sir John told them that had they actually delivered him safe into his hands, they would have had the clearest claim to the reward, and also to the thanks of the country; but as they had only half done their business, having fled and left him, and thereby nearly occasioned his escape, they must be contented with half the money, the rest of which should be given to the soldiers who had completed his capture. These, however, who were substantial farmers, said, "Nay, with the worthy commander's permission, the Tailors should have that too; for that three more valiant Tailors they had never seen, and the fun they had occasioned them was worth far more than that. With this the Tailors went away highly delighted; and, after all, began to think themselves no ordinary champions, and, in reality, to have put the finish to the war.

Sir John Othmill sent immediate intelligence to the King of his success, not forgetting to add a letter to his friend Sir Maurice. The King was highly diverted with the adventure of the three Tailors, which Sir Maurice related from his letter. He despatched a messenger the next day to England, bearing a patent of nobility to Sir John, under the style and title of John, Lord Othmill, Baron of Waldeck, and Knight of Kitcottie. He bestowed the seigniorial rights of the town of Waldeck, with a large tract of country in its vicinity, on him and his heirs for ever. He also conferred upon him the tower and lands of Kitcottie; which were to be held on the tenure, that whenever the King came into those parts, himself or his descendants, the possessor for the time being, should appear before him with three Tailors armed cap-à-pie.

Sir Maurice sent his heartiest congratulations to Lord Waldeck, and it may be believed that Sir John himself was not a little astonished and delighted. The Tower of Kitcottie was of all places such a one as he would have chosen for his residence. It stood on the slope of a lofty hill, having fine old woods around, and in front a view over a wide expanse of fine country. Below it ran, dashing down a shelving descent, and through a sweet glen, the stream which ran on to Waldeck, having first spread itself out into a wide lake, where abundant fish and wild-fowl offered sport for many a pleasant day.

Lord Waldeck was now appointed Chief Ranger of the Royal Forests in that part of the country, and empowered to raise a sufficient force to maintain good order. As his yeomanry were anxious to be dismissed to their houses, the summer now advancing fast, Lord Waldeck hastened his levy of fresh troops, and then giving his old friends and companions in arms a farewell feast at his castle of Kitcottie, he dismissed them with many thanks and good wishes.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH VARIOUS PARTICULARS ARE RELATED FOR THE SATISFACTION OF THE READER, AND PARTICULARLY THE EXPLOITS OF LORD WALDECK AT SEA.

We have now arrived at the crowning point of Jack's fortune, who, in a very few years, from the old hut where we first saw him, had

has become a great man, and had not only travelled far, but had rendered essential services to his country. It was by the simple and straightforward course, by obedience to the dictates of a good and brave heart, that he had won his way, and we might take our leave of him here with great propriety. But as our readers will, we doubt not, still wish to have a few further particulars, we shall briefly endeavour to satisfy them.

The first thing which Lord Waldeck did, was to order Ben and Timothy from the old Knight's, where, till now, they had remained, to Kitcottie, where he resolved that they should agreeably spend the remainder of their days, and where he indeed often indulged himself with riding through the woods on Ben, with Timothy at his heels. Tim also was allowed to accompany him a-hunting; for though he had now got considerably fat and lazy, being somewhat old for a dog, yet he liked to scuffle after a buck, though the farther he ran the farther he was behind, and was glad to come up, if not when the buck was killed, at least when it was cooked.

His Lordship's next act was to mount his horse and ride over to see his father and mother. He had, indeed, done this repeatedly from the old Knight's, and had sent them many a token of his remembrances; but he now resolved that they should come, and near him spend the remainder of their lives. They were growing old, yet still hale and hearty. He had a nice little house built for them in the park, near the village: and while the old man took great delight in rambling with the keepers through the woods, the old woman was equally happy to have found in the housekeeper at the Tower, and in another old dame or two in the village, cronies after her own heart. They were at once religious and old-fashioned; and in talking of the good old times, and in the prospect of still better in the next world, they were extremely happy.

In journeying to visit his father and mother at different times, before their final removal to his own estate, Lord Waldeck had felt a curiosity in tracing the scenes of his first adventures on this road. The two old people, whom he had rescued from the robbers, were still living, at an advanced age, at the old Knight's. The country becoming settled, they had sold their cottage and little farm, never wishing to return to it; and there Lord Waldeck, as he passed, not only saw the house and crops looking in excellent order, but a buxom woman of some thirty years of age, drawing water out of the very well into which he had decoyed the thieves, and three or four merry children peeping out of the door, to see him go by.

The cottage in the baleful wood was sunk down into a heap of dank ruins, overgrown with weeds. He rode into the pine-woods to visit the sand caves in which he had buried the gipsy; but here was a great change. The sand caves were now in active diminution for the supply of some great glass-works built near them. The pines themselves had been continually felled to supply the furnaces; and he found that the body of the gipsy, which he supposed would lie there perhaps for ages, had some years ago been actually dug out. It had occasioned a great rumour and speculation; but the tribe came and claimed it, and had it buried with great ceremony in the next village church-

yard. Little did the carter, who carried sand to the glass-furnace, as he related this to Lord Waldeck, and added that it was supposed to be a man killed by the notorious Jack-o'-the-Mill, imagine whom he was addressing.

The hostel, where he had the encounter with the "honest men," was now become a bright, bustling, and well-to-do inn, on a good and highly frequented road; but the story of the exploits of Jack-o'-the-Mill was still fresh there, and hung around the very room, now however much modernized, in gaudy-coloured pictures, in which Lord Waldeck could not help laughing at his own person, which had a head as large as his body, a very long nose, and a mouth that left but little room on his face for cheeks; yet he was gravely assured by the host that it was declared to be an admirable likeness by those who had seen the hero!

It may be supposed that Lord Waldeck did not fail to wander once more round old Bowes's Mill, and to visit the old Miller's grave in the left hand corner of the church porch. He met very near his own house one day a numerous gang of gipsies, and felt sure that he recognised several of his old acquaintances in his first adventure, though he was too much changed to be recognized by them. They were clamorous to tell his fortunes, which he permitted to one old woman, who pronounced him, with looks of evident surprise, the luckiest man of his time, and that his greatest luck had not come yet, but lay on the other side of the sea.

Lord Waldeck had often the happiness of entertaining at his house for weeks, and sometimes months together, his two old and most dear friends—"the men in the wall," that is, the two Lollard preachers, Templeman and Hempage. While he had been pursuing his various fortunes, they had been traversing the kingdom in their religious labours, sometimes in great jeopardy, and yet with wonderful success in their exertions, and growth of honour and affection amongst those of their faith. One of them was yet destined to perish in the cause, but that was on a future day; at present they were the welcome guests at the Tower of Kitcottie; and these friends roamed sometimes over the hills and through the woods, talking of many a past occurrence, and as full of joy as they were on the eventful day of the battle of Scalhope Watch. Templeman was become less melancholy, but more venerable in appearance. Hempage was as witty, as merry, but much fatter than ever.

In the year after Lord Waldeck was settled at the Tower, death put a period to the victorious career of the King, in France; and though Sir Maurice continued some time serving with great distinction in that country, the retrograde course of the commanders there, after that event, determined him at length to retire from the army. The state of the old Knight's health tended to hasten this resolve. The good old man, who continued in London unweariedly labouring to assist and defend the friends of the Reformation, had now, however, become very infirm. He thought his end drawing nigh; for though he was not at a very advanced age, yet his constitution had apparently never recovered from the shock of his domestic calamities. In the following autumn he breathed his last, having the satisfaction to see both his son and

Lord Waldeck at his bedside, and to receive from them their solemn promises that they would continue to succour and maintain the true doctrines, and the friends of them.

Lord Waldeck soon afterwards made a voyage to Hamburg, where he married the daughter of his friend the merchant. Sir Maurice, on the contrary, made a journey to the East, and in about two years from that time returned to his paternal estates, bringing with him an Oriental bride, of whose beauty fame gave the most extraordinary account. By some she was called a Saracen, by some, a Persian, and by others, a Circassian; but Lord Waldeck, on hastening to embrace his old friend on his return, was by no means surprised to find in Lady Bevor the daughter of Melchior of Prague. He regarded it only as a proof of the liberal mind of his friend, that he could rise superior to the prejudices of all ages, and especially to that of his own, against an alliance with Jewish blood; but when he looked on her for whom this proof of strong affection had been made, he again was scarcely able to regard it as any effect of magnanimity. As he thought in the momentary interview in the streets of Prague, he thought now—that never had he set eyes on a woman of so glorious a beauty. Between his own sweet wife and Lady Bevor there was a most striking contrast. The one was tall, consummately graceful in every motion, of a most perfect form, and her large dark eyes were full of love and a deep sentiment. The other was of a middle stature, of a soft and rounded figure; her auburn hair was parted above a pair of bright blue eyes of the softest and most gentle expression, and a countenance at once ruddy, full of purest health, and yet delicate and beaming with kindness. They were, as they sat together, as different in appearance as a raven and a dove; and yet the spectator, weighing all their attractions and their qualities, would hardly know which to prefer. They themselves became almost instantly the warmest and most lasting friends. Lady Waldeck was perhaps better prepared than many to surmount the prejudices of the case, as her father had, for a long course of years, had transactions with many of the best specimens of the Jews, as merchants; and Lady Waldeck had therefore seen only the best specimens in their social intercourse. Lady Bevor, whose noble and devoted character every year only made more conspicuous, had adopted the religious faith of her husband; and proved herself, by her energetic and liberal aid to the Reformers in all their troubles, truly a nursing mother in Israel. She brought Sir Maurice an immense fortune, and, to crown it, a flock of the most handsome dark-eyed children that ever blessed a noble house. So little was the intercourse betwixt this country and her own, that never was a single rumour of her real lineage spread abroad; but she was always called the Moorish Lady.

It was a beautiful sight to see the mingled troop of dark and fair creatures, which sometimes at Bevor Manor, some times at Kitcottie Castle, were scampering in the garden or the park; or mounted, three or four of them at once, on old Ben, while he was somewhat unwillingly led by Andrew or Lord Waldeck's father, still an old hale man, who seemed as if he would live for ever.

In the unhappy divisions of the succeeding reign, Sir Maurice Bevor shewed himself the steady friend of that Monarch, whose father he had followed in the field with so much distinction; and though he never plunged pre-eminently into the front of the civil broils, yet he had often the satisfaction to shelter the head of his peaceful and persecuted king in his own happy mansion for weeks together, and to aid him by advances of munificent sums. By means of his wise moderation, towards which Lady Bevor no little contributed by her advice, contrary to his own naturally ardent and active spirit, he was enabled not only more effectually to protect the interests of his religious party, but also to protect his children from those bitter changes which advancing times only more and more whelmed upon the leaders of the adverse parties.

Lord Waldeck, at this period, spent some years at sea, to the great delight of his own indefatigable spirit, and with signal advantage to his country. From the period of his first voyage to Hamburg, he had acquired a strong attachment to the sea. Successive visits, which he made with his wife and children to their worthy relatives, only increased this passion; and two of his wife's brothers being as enthusiastically fond of it, and being captains of their own trading vessels, he had been a voyage with them to Spain, and had seen the insolence with which pirates, encouraged by the troubles of England, infested the seas, and insulted the very shores and ports of his own country. This had led him to the purchase of an armed frigate, with which, under the authority of his own government, he had gone out, and displayed a hardihood and an activity of spirit, never destitute of happy resources, as distinguished as that which had attended him on land. He attacked, and sunk or captured, some of the most desperate of the pirate ships, especially those of two most notorious felkows belonging to the German Netherlands, now known as Holland; namely, Van Rake and Van Harrow, whose ships, after a desperate combat, he brought into the port of London.

On one occasion, in pursuing a fast-sailing pirate far southward, a storm came on of such fierceness and duration, that he not only lost sight of the vessel of which he was in chase, but was driven so far out to the west that he came in sight of land, which from his description, and from relics brought back by him, was afterwards believed by his descendants to have been a part of that country more than once seen, and termed Vineland; and afterwards proved by more definite discoveries to have been a part of America, or an island of the West Indies. He spoke of trees and fruits, and birds, totally different to anything he had elsewhere seen; in fact, of a new kind of country altogether, whose inhabitants were nearly as dark as those of Africa. He related that they landed, also, on some sandy rocks on their return, where they captured numbers of turtles, one of whose shells he brought with him, and from it had had various beautiful combs and other ornaments made, part of which he presented to Lady Bevor. But what he always told, with as much pleasure as anything, was an engagement which he had, on his approach

to the coasts of Europe, with two strange vessels.

As he came in sight of these vessels, they were engaged in a sharp fight. He bore down upon them with all possible speed, in order to ascertain whether one of them belonged to his own country, or to any ally to whom he could give aid. As he drew near he could perceive that one was a Spanish pirate, the other a British merchantman. What astonished him was to observe no men on board the merchantman, and yet a firing was kept up from its port-holes, slow, indeed, but effective. The Spaniard, which appeared crowded with men, was evidently already in a sinking state; and the moment he came near, not only lowered her flag to him, but made signals of distress. His boats were hastily put out, the people flocked into them, and, coming unarmed alongside of his ship, were received on board and placed in custody. On hailing the British ship, two men appeared on deck, who being asked through the speaking-trumpet who and what they were, replied, to the general astonishment, that they were the only men on board.

Lord Waldeck, on this surprising intelligence, went at once on board of her, and learned that they were the sole remains of a crew which, returning with a cargo of wine from Oporto, had struck on a sandbank within sight of land, and being expected to go to pieces, had been deserted by all the rest of the hands. They were the captain and the mate. After lying six or seven hours, and staving in a number of wine casks which lay on the deck, in order to lighten her, the wind shifting, had heaved her off, but, as they were unable to manage her, had driven her out to sea. They had made many signals of distress, but nobody had come off to her; and drifting with a brisk wind, the next morning they were out of sight of land.

For nine days they had been floating, doing their best to bring her into a homeward course, when they fell in with this pirate. They had determined rather to blow up the vessel than to be taken, but before it came to that to resist to the last moment. Leaving the ship, therefore, to herself, they had applied themselves to send as much shot as possible into the sides of the pirate, and that with such effect, that they now saw that she would speedily go down; and had not his Lordship arrived, it was probable that they should have all perished together, for they would have blown their own vessel up rather than let the pirates come on board, knowing then what would be their own fate.

His Lordship and his crew could not sufficiently admire the unconquerable spirit of these two men. He gave them as many hands from his own crew as would enable them to work her. The Spanish vessel speedily sunk, and they sailed on their way. On their voyage they fell in with an Algerine Corsair, to which they gave chase. Lord Waldeck's vessel, which was a fast-sailing one, soon came up with the Corsair, but in the mean time had left behind its companion, which was a much slower vessel. The Corsair seeing this, tacked about, and assailed his Lordship briskly. His Lordship did not fail to return the fire with equal spirit, and

in the midst of the engagement, the merchantman coming up, did so much service, that the pirates were soon compelled to yield. On going on board, Lord Waldeck found that they had a great number of people in the hold, whom they had carried off from the south coast of France, where they had surprised and burnt a village in the night, and were carrying away the wretched inhabitants in order to sell them for slaves.

His Lordship immediately reversed the order of things; clapping the pirates in chains, and liberating the prisoners. Some of these were fishermen accustomed to the sea; and under the direction of the merchant's mate, who took charge of her, they in about three days made Bordeaux, on the coast of France, where he delivered the pirates and their vessel up to the authorities; and having received their hearty thanks, amid the prayers and blessings of the liberated people, again set sail for London. He brought the merchantman safe into port, much to the astonishment of the owners, who had already heard that she had foundered on the coast of Spain.

The brave conduct of the captain and mate became the theme of universal wonder and applause among the shipping people. A subscription was raised by the chief merchants, as a reward for their noble fidelity and valour; and Lord Waldeck, now determined to quit the sea, resolved to finish his maritime exploits in a style worthy of a British sailor. He, therefore, in testimony of the matchless prowess and unconquerable spirit of these men, made them a present of his tight little frigate, trim and complete as it was, in all its appointments. The men, whose fortunes were thus made, afterwards did such service to the merchants of London, in conveying and protecting their vessels, as well warranted his Lordship's princely liberality.

For Lord Waldeck himself, in the happy society of his own family, and that of his friends, Sir Maurice and Lady Bevor; in hunting and shooting, in which he found great delight; in active exertions for the peace and prosperity of his neighbourhood; and above all, in the greatest satisfaction which a good man can enjoy, that of seeing his children growing up with a rich promise of virtues and of talents—his life moved brightly on at his Tower of Kitcottis, and he no longer wished himself a handsomer or a taller man, a greater hero, or a more wonderful philosopher. Two sentiments which contribute essentially to the happiness of existence, reigned ever uppermost and ever livingly in his heart—that his years had not been spent without benefit to his fellow-men; and that a devout gratitude to God, for having been thus honoured and privileged as His instrument, and for the thousand other blessings that were showered on him, was present to him in his bosom as an ever-ready guide and guardian through the world; neither suffering him in the lapse of years to harden, as it were, into a clod of worldliness, nor be blown by the winds of pride into the barren air—the two perils which so often darken and dwindle into contempt the latter days of many a bright career.

THE END.



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