The Young Lovell

by Ford Madox Ford

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Young Lovell: A Romance

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Young Lovell: A Romance

Creator: Ford Madox Ford

Release date: May 24, 2013 [eBook #42801]

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42801

Credits: Produced by Al Haines

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YOUNG LOVELL: A ROMANCE ***

THE YOUNG LOVELL

A ROMANCE

BY FORD MADOX HUEFFER

"When they were come to Hutton Ha'

They ride that proper place about,

But the laird he was the wiser man,

For he had left nae gear about."

Border Ballad.

LONDON CHATTO & WINDUS 1913

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED LONDON AND BECCLES

All rights reserved

HISTORICAL NOVELS BY FORD MADOX HUEFFER

THE FIFTH QUEEN PRIVY SEAL THE FIFTH QUEEN CROWNED

THE HALF MOON THE PORTRAIT LADIES WHOSE BRIGHT EYES

THE YOUNG LOVELL

PART I

I

In the darkness Young Lovell of the Castle rose from his knees, and so he broke his vow. Since he had knelt from midnight, and it was now the sixth hour of the day, he staggered; innumerable echoes brushed through the blackness of the chapel; the blood made flames in his eyes and roared in his ears. It should have been the dawn, or at least the false dawn, he thought, long since. But he knew that, in that stone place, like a coffer, with the ancient arched windows set in walls a man's length deep, it would be infinitely long before the light came to his eyes. Yet he had vowed to keep his vigil, kneeling till the dawn ...

When the night had been younger it had been easier but more terrible. Visions had come to him; a perpetual flutter of wings, shuddering through the cold silence. He had seen through the thick walls, Behemoth riding amidst crystal seas, Leviathan who threw up the smoke and flames of volcanoes. Mahound had passed that way with his cortège of pagans and diamonded apes; Helen of Troy had beckoned to him,

standing in the sunlight, and the Witch of Endor, an exceedingly fair woman, and a naked one, riding on a shell over a sea with waves like dove's feathers. The Soldan's daughter had stretched out her arms to him, and a courtesan he had seen in Venice long ago, but her smile had turned to a skull's grinning beneath a wimple. He had known all these for demons. The hermit of Liddeside with his long beard and foul garments, such as they had seen him when they went raiding up Dunbar way, had swept into that place and had imperiously bidden him up from his knees to drive the Scots from Barnside, but he had known that the anchorite had been dead this three years and, seeing that the Warden of the Eastern Marches and the Bishop of Durham, with all his own father's forces and all theirs, lay in the castle and its sheilings, it was not likely that the false Scots would be so near. Young gallants with staghounds, brachets and Hamboro dogs had bidden him to the chase; magicians with crucibles had bidden him come view their alembics where the philosopher's stone stood revealed; spirits holding flames in their hands had sought to teach him the sin against the Holy Ghost, and Syrians in robes of gold, strange sins. There had come cooks with strange and alluring messes whose odours make you faint with desires, and the buttling friars from friaries with great wine-skins of sack. But all of them, too, he had known for demons, though at each apparition desire had shaken him.

All these he had taken to be in the nature of the very old chapel, since it had stood there over the tiresome and northern sea ever since Christendom had come to the land, and it was proper to think that, just as those walls had seen the murdering of blessed saint Oddry by heathens and Scots whilst he sang mass, and even as pagans and sorcerers had in the old times contended for that ground, now, having done it in the body, in their souls they should still haunt that spot and contend for the soul of a young lording that should be made a knight upon the morrow. But when the tower-warden had churned out four o'clock the bird of dawn had crowed twice....

Three times would have been of better omen. At that moment Satan himself, the

master fiend, with legs of scarlet, a bull's hide sweeping behind and horns all gold and aquamarine, had been dancing with mighty leaps above a coal fire, up through which, livid and in flaming shrouds, there had risen the poor souls of folk in purgatory. And with a charter from which there dangled a seal dripping blood to hiss in the coals and become each drop a viper—with this charter held out towards Young Lovell, Satan had offered him any of these souls to be redeemed from purgatory at the price of selling his own to Satan.

He had been about to say that he knew too much of these temptations and that the damnation of one soul would be infinitely more grievous to Our Lady than the temporary sojourn in purgatory of an infinite number. But at the crowing of the cock Satan and his firelit leer had vanished as if a candle had been blown out in a cavern....

There had begun an intolerable period of waiting. He tried to say his sixty Aves, but the perpetual whirling of wings that brushed his brow took away his thoughts. He knew them now for the wings of anxious bats that his presence disturbed. When he began upon his Paters, a rat that had crept into his harness of proof overset his helmet and the prayer went out of his head. When he would have crossed himself, suddenly his foster-brother and cousin, Decies of the South, that should have watched in the chapel porchway, began to snore and cried out in his sleep the name "Margaret." Three times Decies of the South cried "Margaret."

Then Young Lovell knew that the spirits having power between cockcrow and dawn, in the period when men die and life ebbs down the sands—that these spirits were casting their spells upon him.

These were the old, ancient gods of a time unknown—the gods to whom the baal fires were lit; gods of the giants and heroes of whom even his confessor spoke with bated breath. Angels, some said they were, not fallen, but indifferent. And some of the poor would have them to be little people that dwelt in bogs and raths, and others

held them for great and fair. He could not pray; he could not cross himself; his tongue clove to his jaws; his limbs were leaden. His mind was filled with curiosity, with desire, with hope. He had a great thirst and the cramp in his limbs. He could see a form and he could not see a form. He could see a light and no light at all.

Yet it was a light. It was a light of a rosy, stealing nature. It fell through one of the little, rounded windows, the shadows of the crab-apple branches outside the wall, moving slowly across the floor. When he looked again it was gone and not gone. Without a doubt some eyes were peering into the chapel; eyes that could see in the dark were watching him. Kind eyes; eyes unmoved. His heart beat enormously....

And then he was upon his feet, reeling and stretching out his arms, with prayers that he had never prayed before upon his lips. Then prudence came into his heart and he argued with himself. It was to himself and to no other man or priest that he had vowed to watch above his harness from midnight to dawning. That was a newish fashion and neither the Border Warden nor the Prince Bishop would ask him had he done it or no. They would knight him without this new French manner of it. Then he might well go to see if the dawn were painting the heavens. He fumbled at the bar and cast the door open, stepping out.

It was grey; the sea grey and all the rushes of the sands. The foam was grey where it beat on the islands at sea and in the no-light the great cliff of his father's castle wall was like grey clouts hung from the mists. He perceived an old witch toiling up the dunes to come to him. She had a red cloak and a faggot over her shoulder. She waved her crutch to make him await her, and suddenly he thought she sailed, high in the air from the heavy sand to the stone at his feet. He thought this, but he could not be sure, for at that moment he was rubbing the heavy sleep from his eyes.

"That ye could do this, well I knew," he said, "but I had not thought to see ye do it over my ground."

Often he had seen the old witch. Sometimes she was in the form of a russet hare,

slinking into her bed when he had been in harness without bow or light gun or hounds to chase her with. At other times he had seen her in her red cloak creeping about her affairs in the grey woods by Barnside.

Her filthy locks fell across her red eyes and she laughed so that he repented having spared her life in the woods.

"Gowd ye sall putten across my hand," she said, and her voice was like the wither of dried leaves and the weary creak of bough on bough in a great gale when the woods are perilous because of falling oaks. He answered that he had no gold because he had left his poke in his chest in the castle.

And with great boldness she bade him give her one of the pearls from the cap that hung at his belt. He reached to his left side for his sword, but it lay in the chapel across his armour of damascened steel and bright gold.

"Ye shall drown in my castle well when I have this business redded up," he said, but he wished he had slain her with his sword, for she was a very evil creature and it was not well in him to let her corrupt the souls of his poor. He lifted from his girdle his tablets to write down that the witch must drown, but the tablets the pen and the knife were tangled with their red silken tassels and skeins. A heavy snore came from within the chapel porch where Decies of the South was sleeping against the wall.

"If my bride had not begged your life of me..." the Young Lovell began.

Decies of the South muttered: "Margaret," just at his left hand.

"Bride," the old witch tittered. "Ye shall never plight your troth. But that sleeper shall be plighted to my lording's bride and take his gear. And another shall have his lands."

"Get you back to Hell!" the Young Lovell said.

"Look," the witch cried out.

She pointed down the wind, across the miles of dim dunes underneath where the

Cheviots were like ghosts for the snow. The dunes rose in little hummocks amongst grey fields. A high crag was to the left. It was all grey over Holy Island; smoke rose from its courtyard. Dunstanburgh was lost in clouds of white sea spray, and in great clouds the sea-birds were drifting inland in strings of thousands each. Still no sun came over the sea.

The witch pointed with her crutch....

A little thing like a rabbit was digging laboriously at the foot of the crag; it ran here and there, moving a heavy stone.

"That man shall be your master," the witch cried.

A white horse moved slowly across the dunes. It had about it a swirling cloud of brown and a swirling cloud of the colour of pearly shells.

"And that shall be your bane," the witch said, in a little voice. "Ah me, for the fine young lording."

Young Lovell coursed to the shed beyond the chapel yew where his horse whinned at the sound of his voice. He haled out the goodly roan that was called Hamewarts because they had bought him in Marseilles to ride homewards through France; his father and he had been to Rome after his father did the great and nameless sin and expiated it in that journey. He had ridden Hamewarts up from the Castle of Lovell so that, standing in the shed whilst his master kept his vigil, the horse might share his benediction.

The roan stallion lifted his head to gaze down the wind. He drew in the air through his nostrils that were as broad as your palm; he sprang on high and neighed as he had done at the battle of Kenchie's Burn.

The horse had no need of spurs, and young Lovell had none. It ran like the wind in the direction of the white steed at a distance. Nevertheless, the rider heard through the muffled sound of hoofs on the heavy sand the old witch who cried out, "Eya," to show that she had more to say, and he drew the reins of his charger. The sand flew

all over him from beneath the horse's feet, and he heard the witch's voice cry out:

"To-day your dad shall die, but you's get none of his lands nor gear. From the now you shall be a houseless man."

But when he turned in his saddle he could see no old beldam in a scarlet cloak. Only a russet hare ran beneath the belly of Hamewarts and squealed like a new-born baby.

Whilst he rode furiously as if he were in chase of the grey wolf Young Lovell had leisure to reflect, he had ample time in which to inspect the early digger and the beclouded horse. At eight o'clock he was to be knighted by the double accolade of the Warden of the Eastern Marches and of the Prince Bishop, following a custom that was observed in cases of great eminence or merit in the parties. And not only was Young Lovell son to Lord Lovell of the Castle, but he had fought very well against the Scots, in the French wars and in Border tulzies. So at eight, that he might not fast the longer, he was to be knighted. It was barely six, for still no sun showed above the long horizon of the northern sea.

It was bitter cold and the little digger, with his back to the rider, was blowing on his fingers and muttering over a squared stone that had half of it muddied from burial. At first Young Lovell took the little man for a brownie, then for an ape. Then he knew him for Master Stone, the man of law.

He cried out:

"Body of God, Master Furred Cat, where be's thy gown?"

And the little man span round, spitting and screaming, with his spade raised on high. But his tone changed to fawning and then to a complacence that would have done well between two rogues over a booty.

"Worshipful Knight," he brought out, and his voice was between the creak of a door and the snarl of a dog fox, though his thin knees knocked together for fear. "A man must live, I in my garret as thou in thy castle bower with the pretty, fair dames."

"Ay, a man mun live," the Young Lovell answered. "But what sort of living is this to be seeking treasure trove on my land before the sun be up?"

"Treasure trove?" the lawyer mumbled. "Well, it is a treasure."

"It is very like black Magic," Young Lovell said harshly. "A mislikeable thing to me. I must have thee burnt. What things a man sees upon his lands before the sun is up!"

"Magic," the lawyer screamed in a high and comic panic. "God help me, I have nothing of Mishego and Mishago. This is plain lawyer's work and if your honour will share, one half my fees you shall have from the improvident peasants."

At the high sound of his voice Hamewarts, who all the while was straining after the white horse, bounded three strides; when Young Lovell took him strongly back, he had the square stone at another angle. Upon its mossed side he saw a large "S" carved that had two crosses in its loops, upon the side that was bare was one "S" with the upper loop struck through.

"Body of God, a boundary stone," he cried out. "And you, Furred Cat, are removing it." He had got the epithet of Furred Cat from talking to the Sire de Montloisir whilst they played at the dice.

"Indeed it is more profitable than treasure-troving and seeking the philosopher's stone," the lawyer tittered, and he rubbed, from habit, his hands together, so that little, triturated grains of mud fell from them into the peasant's poor, boggy grass. "This is Hal o' the Mill's land, and I have moved the stone a furlong into the feu of Timothy Wynvate. There shall arise from this a lawsuit that shall last the King's reign out. Aye, belike, one of the twain shall slay the other. His land your honour may take back as forfeit, and the other's as deodand. I will so contrive it, for I will foment these suits and have the handling of them. By these means, in time, your lordingship may have back all the lands ye ever feu'd. In time. Only give me time...."

The Young Lovell lifted up his fist to the sky. The most violent rage was in his

heart.

"Now by the paps of Venus and the thunder of Jove, I have forgotten the penalty of him that removeth his neighbour's landmark! But if I do not die before night, and I think I shall not, that death you shall die. Say your foul prayers, filth, your doom is said...."

Master Stone lifted up both his hands, clasped together, to beg his life of this hot but charitable youth. But Young Lovell had leaped his horse across a dune faster than the words could follow him.

He came upon a narrow strip of nibbled turf running down a valley of rushy sand-hills. Hamewarts guided him. They went over one ridge and had sight of the white horse; they sank into another dale and lost it.

On the summit of the next ridge Hamewarts became suddenly like a horse of bronze and the Young Lovell had a great dizziness. He had a sense of brown, of pearly blue, of white, of many colours, of many great flowers as large as millstones. With a heavy sense of reluctance he looked behind him. The mists were rising like curtains from over Bamborough; since the tide was falling the pall of spray was not so white on Dunstanburgh. Upon his own castle, covering its promontory near at hand, they were hoisting a flag, so that from there the tower warden must have already perceived the sun. From over the castle on Holy Island the pall of smoke was drifting slowly to sea. No doubt in the courtyard they had been roasting sheep and kine whole against the visit of the Warden and the Prince Bishop who would ride on there with all their men by nine of the clock.

In every bay and reedy promontory the cruel surf gnawed the sand; the ravens were flying down to the detritus of the night, on the wet margins of the tide. The lawyer was climbing over the shoulder of a dune, a sack upon his back; a shepherd, for the first time that spring, was driving a flock of sheep past the chapel yew. There was much surf on Lindisfarne.

Suddenly, from the middle of the bow of the grey horizon there shot up a single, broadening beam. Young Lovell waved his arm to the golden disk that hastened over the grey line.

"If you had come sooner," he said to the sun, "you might have saved me from this spell. Now these fairies have me."

Slowly, with mincing and as if shy footsteps, Hamewarts went down through the rushes from that very real world. Young Lovell perceived that the brown was a carpeting that fluttered, all of sparrows. It had a pearly and restless border of blue doves, and in this carpet the white horse stepped ankle-deep without crushing one little fowl. He perceived the great-petalled flowers, scarlet and white and all golden. On a green hill there stood a pink temple, and the woman on the back of the white horse held a white falcon. She smiled at him with the mocking eyes of the naked woman that stood upon the shell in the picture he had seen in Italy.

"But for you," he heard himself think, "I might have been the prosperest knight of all this Northland and the world, for I have never met my match in the courteous arts, the chase or the practice and exercises of arms."

And he heard her answering thoughts:

"Save for that I had not called thee from the twilight."

II

The Warden of the Eastern Marches, who was Henry Percy, fourth Earl of Northumberland, said that there was too much of this silken flummery. He desired to get back to the affairs of King Henry VII and a plain world where there were too many false Scots. The Lord Lovell of the Castle agreed with him, but said that the women would so have it. He was an immense, gross man, the rolls of fat behind his head, growing black curly hair that ran into his black and curly beard, mantled high up on his neck. His eyes were keen, peeble-blue, sagacious and mocking. The Lady Rohtraut, his wife, a fair, thin woman of forty-three, one of the Dacres of the North,

leaned across the Bishop Palatine to disagree with the Warden. Thin as she was she wore an immense gown of red damask worked with leaves, birds and pomegranates. Her sleeves brushed the ground, her hood of black velvet had a diamond-shaped front, like the gable of a house, and was framed in yellow gold set with emeralds that her lord had brought from Venice to get her back to a good temper, though he never did. The broad edging of brown fur from her sleeves caught in a crochet of the gilded steel on the Bishop Palatine's armour which had been taken from the Saracens in the year 1482, they having rieved it from the Venetians.

The Lady Rohtraut said that these things had been ordered after the leaves of a written book that had been sent her by her cousin Alice from the King's court in London. This book was called "Faicts of Arms," and the King himself who loved good chivalry had bade it be printed tho' that would be long in doing. There the order of these things had been set forth, and she had done her best to have fashion of it right, though with only men to help her, she imagined that Messire de Montloisir would laugh if he did not happen to be on his bed of sickness.

But she had them there to the number of eleven score, gentry, priests and commonalty with many men-at-arms to hold the herd back with their pike-staves. The great stone hall she had had painted with vermilion, green and gold. Enormous banners with swallow-tails fell from the gilded beams of the roof. They displayed the snarling heads of red tigers, portculles, two-hued roses, and a dun cow on a field of green sarcenet in honour of the Bishop Palatine. The table at which they sat, the men divided from the women, had its silken cloth properly tabled out in chequers of green and vermilion. The pages with their proper badges walked to and fro before the table as they should do, and, as they should be, the people of no privilege were penned in behind the columns of the hall where they made a great noise. She would not have anything lacking at the sacring of her one son.

Sir Walter Limousin, of Cullerford, who had married her daughter Isopel, sneered at

these words of his mother-in-law. He sat at the right hand of his father-in-law. Sir Symonde Vesey, of Haltwhistle, who had married the daughter Douce, and sat beyond Sir Walter, said loudly that too much gear went to waste over these Frenchifications of the Young Lovell and his dame. Their two wives said that indeed their mother was over-fond.

Their mother, who was a proud Dacre with the proudest of them, flushed vicious red. She said that her daughters were naughty jades, and if their husbands had not three times each been beggared by Scots raiders they might have had leave to talk so. But, being what they were, it would be better if they closed their mouths over one who had paid all his ransoms, whether to the Scots or on the bloody field of Kenchie's Burn, with sword-blows solely. She had paid one thousand marks to artificers of Brussels for stuffs to deck that hall and the street of the township where it led from the chapel whence her fair, brave son should come; so that banners and carpets hung from the windows, the outer galleries, stairways and the roofs where they were low. And she wished she had spent ten thousand on her son who had won booty enough to pay all she had laid out on him and her daughters' husbands' ransoms besides—after the day of Kenchie's Burn.

The Warden said that he wished by the many wounds of God that the stripling would come. There was too much babble of women there. They had come into these parts, the Bishop of Durham and he, to see what levies might be made from castle to castle and so to broom all false Scots out of the country from thereaways to Dunbar. And there they sate who should have been on the northward road before sunrise listening to this clavering of women. The young Lovell was a springald goodly enow, and the knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle were known to blow on their fingers when they should be occupied with the heavy swords.

Sir Walter Limousin looked down his nose. He was a grim and silent craven that did little but sneer. Sir Symonde, who was brave and barbarous enough, but unlucky,

smote so heavily the silver inkhorn standing before him that it flattened down its supports and stained the chequered fairness of the table.

The Percy cast his old glance aside on Sir Symonde.

"Aye, Haltwhistle," he said drily, "ye will break more than ye will take." And he went on to say that, in his day, he having been dubbed knight on the field, it had been done with a broken sword and the wet on it wiped across his chops to blood him the better. And he wished that Young Lovell would come.

The Lady Rohtraut said that without doubt her son was saying some very long and very precious prayers. The Warden said that belike, and more likely, the young fellow was unable to fasten the whimsy-marees of his new-fashioned harness and was stuck up there in the old chapel like a fool amid the evidences of his folly. The Lord Lovell said nay then, that a band of youngsters had gone up to the chapel, and the little Hal his son's page had reported that his master would soon be there, the page having run, whilst the Young Lovell was riding at a foot pace.

"He had better have kept his page to buckle his harness," the Border Warden harped on.

"Nay then," the Lady Rohtraut said with a flushed and angry face—no person nor page could enter into the sacred chapel till her son should be issued out in his panoply least they should disturb the angels of God who would invisibly assist her son at his harnessing.

The Bishop, whose dark head came out of its steel armour like a cormorant's out of a hole, looked all down that board to find a sympathetic soul. He had a lean, Italianate face, and had pleased the King Richard the Third—then Duke of Gloucester—rather because of a complaisance than a burly strength. He was very newly come to the Palatine Country. For he had been the King's Friend in Rome many years and, in fear of King Henry the Seventh—because the Bishop was reputed a friend of Richard Crookback after Bosworth—he had gone across the seas until now.

So that what with the clerkly details of his coming into the bishopric, this was his first tour of those parts and he did not well know those people. Therefore he had spoken very little.

This John Bishop Palatine was, in short, a cautious and well-advised churchman, well-read not only in the patristic books but in some of the poets, for in his day he had been long in Rome and later dwelt in Westminster, where the printing was done, though the King was even then pulling down Caxton's chapel to build his own more gorgeous fane.

This bishop then, set first the glory of God, good doctrine and his see, as his duty was. And after that he hoped that he might leave renown as a great clerk who had added glory, credit, power and wealth, whether of copes of gold or of lands, to his most famous bishopric.

That was why, throughout this discussion he had observed the face of a young woman that sat beyond the ladies Rohtraut, Isopel and Douce. She was the Lady Margaret of the Wear, coming from the neighbouring tower of Glororem, and that day he was to bless her betrothal to Young Lovell of the Castle. She was a dark girl, rising twenty, and with brownish features, open nostrils, a flush on her face and dark eyes of a coaly-sheen, all of one piece of black, so that you could not tell pupil from iris.

She had never spoken, as became her station, since she was the youngest woman there. But the Bishop Palatine had observed her looks as each uttered his or her thoughts, and from this he knew that she regarded the Lady Rohtraut with tender veneration, and the lower classes behind the pillars with dislike and contempt, for when their voices became loud she had lowered her black brows and clenched her hand that lay along the table.

Upon the Border Warden and upon the gross Lord Lovell she had gazed with a tolerant contempt, upon the Knight of Cullerford with a bitter scorn, upon

Haltwhistle with irony, and upon their two wives that should be her sisters-in-law, with high dislike. He perceived that, like the Lady Rohtraut, she had read the book called "Faicts of Arms," for, when the lady Rohtraut had been speaking of it, she had leaned sideways over the table, her lips parted as if she could hardly contain herself. He saw also that she was of great piety, since every time Our Lady was mentioned in that debate she inclined, and when it was Our Lord, she did the like and crossed herself. And this pleased the Bishop Palatine, for these observances were not so often seen as could be done with. Moreover, he knew that, plainly to the eye she had given all her heart—and it was a proud and hot one—to the Young Lovell. At each mention of his deeds her dusky cheeks would flush up to her white forehead and she would pass her gemmed hands before her eyes as if they saw a mist of gladness.

The Bishop was glad that the will of God and the bent of his own mind could let his speech, that he was thinking upon, jump so well with that lady's desires, and so he addressed himself at first to the Lady Rohtraut, young Lovell's proud mother.

He had not, he said, spoken before in that high assembly because he was so newly come among them that, although he well knew that he was their father in God and in a sense their temporal protector, yet he did not wish to show himself to them as a rash and ardent fool by dictating upon matters that he might well know little of.

But still, having listened a decent while to their minds he would say something. Of facts and the practice of arms he would not declare himself all ignorant. He was a churchman, but he was of that church militant that should one day be the Church Triumphant—triumphant there in Heaven, but here in Northumberland, militant very fully. It was true that it would not much become him in those days of comparative peace to strike blows with the iron mace. It was rather his part to stand upon a high place observant of battles and sieges. And, if he wore arms, it was rather as a symbol than as of use. He hoped that, as his reverend and sainted predecessors in the see had done, he might confer on such arms a grace of holiness, and therefore with much

travel and research, he had arms as golden as might be found for him by his trusty messengers, that their fair richness might shine to the greater glory of God. For himself he would as lief wear sackcloth and rusty pots.

In most things he must bow to the wiseness of the Earl of Northumberland. Being blooded upon a hot field with spurs gilded with the tide from the veins of men had produced very good men. It had doubtless produced better men than to-day might see the doubles and counterparts of. Those days before had been simpler and better. These days were very evil. There was in the land a spirit of luxury, sinful unless it had guidance, bestial unless it had control, and for want of counsel horrid, lecherous and filthy by turns. Theirs, by the will and blessing of God and by the wise rule of His vice-gerent—for so he would style their good King, though it was not the habit—theirs were days of near peace. The kingdom was no longer rent by dissensions; famine and pestilence came more seldom nigh them than in the days of their fathers of which they had read. In consequence, they had great wealth such as had never before been seen. Where their fathers had had woollens they had silks, satins and patterned damasks beyond compare for lascivious allurements; where their fathers had eaten off trenchers of bread, they had plates of silver, of gold, of parcel gilt or at the very least of latten.

Now all these things were the blessing of God in the highest, but they might well become the curse of Satan that dwelleth in the Pit. God had given them bread, but they might turn it to bitter stone; He had given them peace, but it might turn to a sword more sharp than that of Apollyon or Geryon. Arma virumque cano, the profane poet said, but the man he sang of was blessed and so his arms.

Therefore he, the Bishop Palatine, since he would not see all this splendour of God go down, as again Vergil saith, sicut flos purpurea aratro succisa, leant all his weight in the scale for the blessing and the sacring of arms. In the books of chivalry they should read not of vain pomps, but of how arms should be laid upon altars; not of

luxurious feasts, but of how good knights held vigils and fasts and kept themselves virgin of heart to go upon quests that the blessed angels of God did love. So they might read of the blessed blood in its censor and of the lily-pure knights that sought it through forest and brake. And these books were very good reading.

The Warden suddenly laughed aloud.

"God keep your washed capons from a border fray!" he exclaimed, and shook his lean sides. The Bishop looked sideways upon him.

"I have not heard that Sir Artus of Bretagne slew the less pagans because he was of a cleaned heart, nor Sir Hugon of Bordeaux neither."

"I do not know those knights," the Percy said grimly. "Maybe they would have slain less if it had been Douglases and Murrays and other homely names."

"Nay, it was fell pagans," the Bishop said seriously. "You may read of it in virtuous and true histories it were a sin to doubt of, so greatly does the virtue of God and His glory shine through them."

"Well, if it be matter of doctrine my mouth is shut," the Warden said good humouredly. "I did not know it had been more than a matter of fashion. Yet I think it is early days to prate of our peaceful times. It is but three months since Kenchie's Burn and not three years since the false Scots had their smoke flying over the walls of Durham."

The Bishop bent his head obediently before the Warden.

"In these matters I will learn of you," he said; and the Warden answered:

"They are all I have to teach you. In my high day there were none of your books and stories."

It was agreed that the Bishop and the Warden came off with level arms, the Bishop having spoken the more, but the Warden had sent in heavier stone shot. And all people were agreed that the Bishop was a worthy and proud prince.

At that moment the Almoner whispered in the Bishop's ear and laid a parchment before him. He begged the Bishop to sign this appointment. For the day drew on, they must ride very soon and might not again be in those parts for a year or more. It was to make the worthy Magister Stone, of Barnside, bailiff for the Palatinate in those parts, this side of Alnwick to the sea. This lawyer was a very skilled chicaner and there were suits to come very soon between the see and the Lords Ogle and Mitford, touching the Bishop's mills at Witton and on Wearside. The Bishop was aware that one of the Almoner's clerks must have had money of the lawyer; nevertheless he signed the appointment, for he knew they would never let him have any other man. A Prince Bishop cannot go searching for scriveners of honesty like Diogenes lacking a lanthorn.

The dispute as to the rules of chivalry went on in spite of the Bishop's abstraction from it. Indeed, the Lord Lovell of the Castle, who had not much reason for loving churchmen, spoke the more loudly because the Bishop was occupied with his papers. He was a jovial man, not much loved by his wife whom he delighted to tease. If he had any grief it was that his natural son, Decies of the South, had never shown himself a lad of any great parts. This lad was reputed to be his natural son, though he was called Young Lovell's foster brother. Nevertheless who was his mother no man knew.

What was known was this.

Six years before the Lord Lovell did some grievous sin, but what that too was, no men knew. He had been called before the former Bishop of Durham; the Lady Rohtraut had, then and afterwards, been heard to rate him soundly. He had given five farms to the Bishopric and had then gone on a Romer's journey, by way, it was considered, of penance. At any rate, he had gone to Rome in sackcloth, taking with him his son, the Young Lovell, who travelled very well appointed and, on the homeward way, had acted as his page. They had taken ship from the New Castle to

Bordeaux and from Bordeaux to Genoa, where, falling in with a party of English Condottieri in the pay of the Holy Father, they had travelled in safety to the city of the seven hills.

On the homeward road they had travelled more like great lords, having enlisted a train of followers, and staying in the courts of Princes of Italy until they came again to Marseilles. The Young Lovell, who was then sixteen, had been permitted, by way of fleshing his sword, to fight with the captains of the Prince of Fosse Ligato against the men of the Princess of Escia. He had slept in pavilions of silk and saw the sack of two very rich walled cities whilst his easy father, who had seen fighting enough in his day, dallied over the sweet wines, lemons and the women with dyed hair of the Prince's Court.

In Venice, whilst his father had toyed with similar cates, the young Lovell had been present at a conclave, between the turbaned envoys of the Soldan and the Venetian council, over the exchange of prisoners taken in galleys of the one side and the other.

Therefore as travelling went, the young man had voyaged with his eyes open, having made friends of several youths of Italy and learned some pretty tricks of fence as well as sundry ways of dalliance.

The father regarded his son with not disagreeable complacency, like a carthorse who had begotten a slight and swift barb. The boy's soft ways and gentle speeches amused him till he laughed tears at times; his daring and hot, rash passions pleased his father still more. He had challenged six Italian squires on the Lido to combat with the rapier, the long sword, the axe and the dagger, and only with the rapier had he been twice worsted—and this quite well contented his father, who regarded him as a queer, new-fangled growth, but in no wise a disgraceful one. He set the boy, in fact, down to his mother's account. And this he did with some warrant, for the boy was the first blond child that had been born to the Lovells in a hundred years.

Further back than that the Lovells could not go. They were descended from one Ruthven, a Welsh brigand of whom, a hundred and twenty years before, it was written that he and his companions kept the country between the Rivers Seine and Loire so that none dare ride between Paris and Orleans, nor between Paris and Montargis. These robbers had made that Ruthven a knight and their captain. There were no towns in that district that did not suffer pillage and over-running from them, not Saint Arnold, Gaillardon, Chatillon or even Chartres itself. In that way Ruthven had amassed a marvellous great booty until, the country of France having been submitted to the English, he had set sail, with much of his wealth, for Edinburgh, but liking the Scots little, after he had married a Scots woman called Lovell, he had come south into the Percies' country. It had happened that the Percies had at that date five squires of their house in prison to the Douglas and had little money for their ransoming. So this Ruthven had bought of them seventy farms and land on which to build an outer wall round the fortress that, boastfully, he called the Castle, as if there had been no other castle in that land. And indeed, it was a marvellously strong place, over the sea on its crags of basalt.

Thus had arisen, from huge wealth, the great family of the Lovells of the Castle. For Ruthven had not wished to be known by his name, and indeed King Henry V swore that none of that name should have Lordship nor even Knighthood, though the Ruthven of that day fought well at Agincourt, losing three horses, two of which he had taken from French lords. So, since that day they had been the Lords Lovell of the Castle with none to gainsay them, though till latterly they had been held for rough lords and not over-reverend. The Percies looked down their noses when they met them, and so did the captains of Bamburgh and Holy Island. However, in the year 1459 the Lord Lovell had found the Lady Rohtraut of the Dacres to marry him and, having had three daughters, she bore him the Young Lovell though one of the daughters died.

At any rate; they had travelled home from Marseilles, father and son, very peaceably

together, going from castle to castle of the French lords and knights, under a safe-conduct that had been granted them by the French envoy to the Holy Father in Rome, though there was war between the countries of France and England, the King Edward the Fourth having suddenly made a raid into the country of the lilies. And the courteous way with which the French lords treated them made them much wonder because they did not think a Scots lord would have so easily travelled through the Border Country or a Border lord through Scotland.

Therefore, when they came to Calais, they went quietly home to England without turning back to war in France. That was according to their oath to Messire Parrolles at Rome, though some of King Edward's lords and courtiers mocked at them and it was said to be in the King's mind to have fined them, not for having observed, but for having taken such an oath. However, when they came into the North parts, at Northallerton, they met with the Duke of Gloucester, the King's brother, who treated them very courteously and absolved them of ill intentions because at the time they had taken the oath peace had been between England and France, or at least no news of the war had reached Rome. This Richard, Duke of Gloucester, brother of King Edward, was much loved in the North, of which region he was then Lord-General. He dealt with all men courteously, giving simple and smiling answers to simple questions and never failing to answer favourably any petition that he could grant, or refusing others with such phrases of regret as made the refusal almost a boon of itself. He inflicted also no harsh taxes and took off many others, so that in those parts he was known as the good Duke of Gloucester.

He treated the Lord Lovell and his son with such smiling courtesy that they very willingly went with him, before ever their home saw them, on a journey that he was making towards Dunbar, and it was in the battle that some Scots lords made against them on the field of Kenchie's Burn that the Young Lovel did such great things. He took prisoner with his own hands a great Scots lord, own cousin to Douglas, in a hot mêlée, where, before he was taken, the Scots lord, being otherwise disarmed by the

Young Lovell, knocked with his clenched fist, nine teeth down the throat of Richard Raket, that was the Young Lovell's horse boy. And this lord having cried mercy, the Young Lovell pursued so furiously against the Scots that he slew many of them before nightfall and was lost in a great valley between moors and slept on the heather. There he heard many strange sounds, such as a great cry of dogs hunting overhead, which was said by those who had read in books to be the goddess Diana chasing still through the night the miserable shade of the foolish Actæon. And between two passages of sleep, he perceived a fair kind lady looking down upon him, but before he was fully awake she was no longer there, and this was thought to be the White Lady of Spindleston, though it was far from her country. But still that spirit might have loved that lording and have sought his company in the night for he was very fair of his body. And it was held to be a sign that he was a good Christian, that this lady vanished upon his awakening, for in that way spirits have been known to follow Good Knights from place to place for love of them, and in the end to work them very great disaster.

So at least that was interpreted by the young monk Francis of the order of St. Cuthbert who was with the army when, in the morning, Young Lovell came to it again after he had been held for dead. But the monk Francis had read in no books, having been an ignorant rustic knight of that country-side, that had become a monk for a certain sin. The Young Lovell found, indeed, that, whilst he had been so held for dead this young monk had much befriended him. For his father, the Lord Lovell, had shewn a disposition to adopt that Decies of the South and to give him the fruits of the young Lovell's deeds, such as the ransoming of the Scots lord and the knighthood that the Duke should have given him had he been found on the field at the closing of the day. The young monk had however protested so strongly that the Young Lovell was not dead, but had in his face the presage of great and strange deeds, whether of arms or other things—so hotly had the young monk made a clamour, that the old lord was shamed and had for the time desisted.

That Decies of the South was a son much more after the old lord's heart than ever the Young Lovell, for all his prowess, could be. He loved the one son whilst he dreaded the other, since he was too like his mother that was a Dacre and despised the Lovells or the Ruthvens.

This Decies the Lord Lovell had picked up at Nottingham on their homeward road, and, finding him a true Lovell, had made no bones about acknowledging him for a son though he never would say who his mother was or how he should come by the name of Decies. But he was rising twenty-one, like the Young Lovell, heavy, clumsy, very strong and an immense feeder. He was dark and red-cheeked and cunning and he fitted his father as a hand fits a glove. Nevertheless he had done little at Kenchie's Burn, he had slept so heavily. It had been no man's affair to waken him, he having drunk very deeply of sweet wines the night before. That battle began at dawn and travelled over many miles of land, so that when Decies of the South came up the Scots were already fleeing.

The old lord did no more than laugh, but he felt it bitter in his heart. And, as it had been on that day, so it continued, the one half-brother being always up in the morning too early for the other. They made very good companions hunting together, though it was always the Young Lovell that had his dagger first in the throat of the grey wolf or the red deer, and the Decies who came second when outlaws, or else when the false Scots, must be driven off from peel towers that had the byres alight beneath them and the farmers at death's door above, for the smoke and reek. Nor was it because the Decies lacked courage, but because he was slow in the uptake and, although cunning, not cunning enough.

Or it may have been that he was too cunning and just left the honours to the Young Lovell who was haughty and avid of the first place. For the Lady Rohtraut took very unkindly to the Decies and made him suffer what insults she could; only the lower sort of the castle-folk willingly had his company, and the old lord was growing so

monstrous heavy that it was considered that his skin could not much longer contain him. He had led a life of violence, sloth, great appetites and negligent shamelessness, so that the Decies considered that he would soon have need of protectors in their place. The old lord might leave his lands, but much of his lands were the dower of his wife and upon his death would go back to her hands alone. For the lands of the Castle and the gear and gold and silver that were in the White Tower under the night and day guard of John Bulloc, the old lord might leave the Decies what he would, but the Young Lovell could take it all.

The Decies would find neither lord nor lord bishop nor lawyer to espouse his cause. Moreover, though his father might give him gold and gear whilst he lived, the Decies had no means whereby to convey it to a distance and no place in the distance in which to store it, besides it would surely be taken by moss-troopers and little cry made about it. For in those days all the North parts were full of good, small gentry robbing whom they would, like the Selbys of Liddell, the Eures of Witton or Adam Swinburn.

For the times were very unsettled, and no man could well tell, in robbing another, whether he were a knight of King Richard's despoiling the King's enemies or a traitor to King Henry robbing that King's lieges, and there was little for the livelihood of proper gentry but harrying whether in the King's cause or in rebellion. So that if the Decies' money on its way to safe quarters should be taken, there would be little or no outcry since he was nothing to those parts. So he was a very good brother to the Young Lovell and followed him like his shadow.

III

So there they all sat at the chequered table and the Lord Lovell watched them with his cunning eyes and speculated upon the dissensions that lay beneath all their fair shew of courtesy. And he wondered how, from one or the other, he might gain advantage for his son Decies. It was not that he hated the Young Lovell, but he

wished Decies to have all that he might and something might come of these people's misliking of each other.

For all Bishop Sherwood's praising of the security of the times under a beneficent vice-gerent of God, he knew that the Bishop little loved King Henry the Seventh, and the King trusted him so very little that never once would that King send to the Bishop the proper letters of array that should empower him to raise forces along the Borders. Thus the Bishop could raise men only in his own dominions between Tees and Tyne and westward into Cumberland.

The Bishop had made his speech and shewed great courtesy only for the benefit of the Earl of Northumberland, whilst for that Border Warden he felt really little but contempt and some dislike. For this Henry, Earl Percy, Warden of the Eastern Marches and Governor of Berwick Town, had deserted King Richard very treacherously on the field of Bosworth, for all he spoke and posed as a bluff and bloody soldier who should be a trusty companion.

Thus the Bishop feared the Percy, regarding him as a spy of the King's, for King Richard was much beloved in the North and the Bishop of Durham had been one of the only two Bishops that had upheld him at the coronation, which was why his banner of the dun cow upon a field of green sarcenet had then been carried before that King. And after Bosworth where King Richard was slain, the Bishop had fled to France, from which he had only ventured back the August before. There had been many rebellions in the North and they were not yet done with; nevertheless the Bishop feared that the cause of the King Usurper would prevail.

The Earl Percy, on the other hand, distrusted the Bishop, since, unlike the Duke of Gloucester, he knew himself to be hated by gentle and simple in those parts, and more by simple than the others. Many poor men—even all of the countryside—had sworn to murder him, for he was very arrogant and oppressive, inflicting on those starving and disturbed parts, many and weary taxes for the benefit of his lord, King

Henry the Seventh, and the wars that he waged in other places. This was a thing contrary to the law and custom of the North. For those parts considered that they had enough on their hands if they protected their own lands and kept the false Scots out of the rest of the realm. Nevertheless, the Lord Percy continued to impose his unjust taxes, taking even the horse from the plough and the meat from the salting pots where there was no money to be had. The Lord Percy knew that he went in great danger of his life, for when, there, a great lord was widely hated of the commonalty his life was worth little. Nay, he was almost certain, one day, to be hewed in pieces by axes or billhooks, since the common people, assembling in a great number would take him one day, when he rode back ill-attended from hunting or a raid.

Thus the Percy desired much to gain friendship of the Bishop and his partisans to save his life. So he shewed him courtesy and spoke in a pious fashion and had invited him, as if it were his due, to ride on this numbering of the men-at-arms in Northumberland, although, since the King had sent the Bishop Palatine no letters of array, it was, strictly speaking, none of the Bishop's business.

The Lord Lovell himself had taken no part at Bosworth Field, and glad enough he was that he had not, for he would have been certain to have been found on the losing side. But he had been sick of a quinsy—a malady to which very stout men are much subject—and, not willing that the Young Lovell should gain new credit at his cost—for he must have gone with his father's men-at-arms, horses and artillery—the Lord Lovell bade his son stay at home and not venture himself against the presumptuous Richmond.

And, looking upon the people there, the fat man chuckled, for there was not one person there who had not lately suffered from one side or the other. The Lord Percy had spent many years in the Tower under Edward IV; Henry VII had taken from the Bishop many of his lands and had made him for a time an exile. His haughty wife had suffered great grief at the death of her best brother whose head came off on

Tower Hill to please the Duke of Gloucester, and Edward IV had had Sir Symonde Vesey five years in the Tower and had fined Limousin of Cullerford five hundred pounds after Towton Field. The proud Lady Margaret had lost her father and all his lands after the same battle, the lands going to the Palatinate.

The Lady Margaret and her mother—they were Eures of Wearside—had sheltered in farms and peel towers, lacking often sheets and bed covering, until the mother died, and then the Lady Rohtraut had taken the Lady Margaret, to whom she was an aunt. All these Tyne and Wearside families were sib and rib. The Lady Rohtraut had had the Lady Margaret there as her own daughter and kinswoman, and the Lord Lovell had had nothing against it. For the Eures and Ogles and Cra'sters and Percies and Widdringtons and all those people, even to the haughty Nevilles and Dacres of the North, were a very close clan. He himself had married a Dacre to come nearer it, and it made him all the safer to shelter an Eure woman-child. And then, in his graciousness at coming into the North, and afterwards, after the battle at Kenchie's Burn, the Duke of Gloucester, at first making interest with his brother, King Edward IV., and then of his own motion, had pardoned that Lady the sins of her father, had bidden the Palatinate restore, first the lands on Wearside and then those near Chester le Street, and also, at the last, those near Glororem, in their own part, which were the best she had. And, finally, King Richard had made the Lady Rohtraut her niece's guardian, which was a great thing, for since she was very wealthy, the fines she would pay upon her marriage would make a capital sum.

So they had found the Lady Margaret on their coming back from Rome, wealthy and proud, sewing or riding, hawking, sometimes residing in their Castle and sometimes in her tower of Glororem which was in sight. The young Lovell had lost his heart to her and she hers to him between the flight of her tassel gentle and its return to her glove, so that it looked as if the name of Lovell bade fair to be exalted in those parts, by this marriage too, and if the Lord Lovell had anything against it, it was only that she had not chosen his other son Decies. But there it was, and he must content

himself with paring what he could from her gear, and his wife's and young Lovell's while he lived, for he intended to buy Cockley Park Tower of Blubberymires from Lord Ogle of Ogle—and to set the Decies up in it. And his wife had some outlying land at Morpeth that he would make shift to convey to his son, so that Decies would have a goodly small demesne and might hold up his head in that region of the Merlays, Greystocks and Dacres.

His son should have the lands of Blubberymires and part of Morpeth; furnishings for his tower to the worth of near a thousand pounds, jewels worth nine hundred and more, fifty horses and the arms for fifty men, and for his sustenance firstly his particular and feudal rights, market fees, tenths, millings, wood-rights, farmings, rents and lastly such profits of the culture of his lands as it is proper for every gentleman to draw from them. And, considering what he could draw from his own Castle, he thought that the Decies should have such beds, linen, vessels of latten and of silver, chests and carvings in wood, tapestries, utensils, and all other furnishings as should make him have a very proper tower. From his wife's castle at Cramlin, or her houses at Plessey and Killingworth, he could get very little. Upon his marriage and since, he had stripped them very thoroughly, and when he last rode that way, he had seen that at Cramlin, the rafters, ceilings, and even the very roofs had fallen in, so that it had become very fitting harbourage for foxes. And this consideration grimly amused him, to think what his lady wife should find when he was dead and her lands came to her again. For she had not seen them in ten years, and imagined her houses to be in very good fettle, but he had turned the money to other uses. It was upon these things that this lord's thoughts ran, since he had nothing else for their consumption. He was too heavy to mount a horse in those days; he could read no books, and talking troubled him. Even the lewd stories of his son Decies in his cups sent him latterly to sleep; he could get no more much enjoyment from teasing his proud wife by filthy ways and blasphemy, and he hated to be with his daughters or their two husbands. Thus, nothing amused or comforted him any longer save

watching contests of ants and spiders, and even these were hard to come by in winter, as it was then in those parts where spring comes ever late.

There penetrated into the babble of their voices slight sounds from the open air, and a hush fell in the place. Without doubt they heard cheering, and quickly the pages of all the company ranged themselves in a parti-coloured and silken fringe before the steel of the men at arms that held the commonalty behind the pillars. The great oaken doors wavered slowly backwards at the end of the hall, and they perceived the road winding down from them through the grass on the glacis, the greyness of the sea and sky, and the foam breaking on the rocks of the Farne Islands. A ship, whose bellying sails appeared to be almost black, was making between the islands and the shore. At times she stood high on a roller, at times she was so low amongst the tumble that they could hardly see more than the barrels at the mastheads and the red cross of St. Andrew on her white flag. The Border Warden said that this was the ship of Barton, the Scots pirate, and some held that this was a great impudence of him, but others said that the weather was so heavy outside that he was seeking the shelter of the islands, and certainly none of their boats could come at him in the sea there was. And this topic held their attentions until the sound of a horn reached them. This was certainly the Young Lovell's page seeking admission to the Castle, so that he was near enough.

The monstrous head of a caparisoned horse, held back by ribands of green and vermilion silk, came into view by the arch. It rose on high and disappeared, so that they knew it was rearing. Then it came all down again and forged slowly into view, the little page Hal and Young Lovell's horse boy, Richard Raket, that had lost his teeth at Kenchie's Burn, holding the shortened ribands now near the bit on either side. The common men threw up their bonnets and took the chance of finding them again; the ladies waved scarves, the Bishop made a benediction. The man in shining steel was high up in the archway against the sea. Such bright armour was never seen in those parts before, the light poured off it in sheathes, like rain. The head was quite

round, the visor fluted and down, at the saddle bow the iron shaft of the partisan was gilded; the swordbelt and the scabbard were of scarlet velvet set with emeralds. This was the gift of the Lady Rohtraut, and those were the Lovell colours. The shield showed a red tiger's head, snarling and dimidiated by the black and silver checkers of the Dacres of Morpeth; the great lance was of scarlet wood tipped with shining steel.

Those of them who had never seen the Young Lovell ride before, said that this vaunted paragon might have done better. For, when the horse was just half within the hall, and after the rider had lowered his lance at once to salute the company, and to get it between the archway, and had raised it again, the horse, enraged by the shout that went up from that place like a cavern, sprang back so that its mailed stern struck the rabble of grey fellows and ragged children that were following close on. The steel lance-point jarred against the stone of the arch, and the round and shining helmet bumped not gracefully forward over the shield. This was held for no very excellent riding, and some miscalled the horse. But others said that it was no part of a knight's training to manage a horse going rearwards, and no part of a horse's to face festivals and cheers. A knight should go forward, a horse face war-cries and hard blows rather than the waving of silken scarves.

But they got the horse forward into the middle of the hall, where it stood, a mass of steel, as if sullenly, on the great carpet of buff and rose and greens. This marvel that covered all the clear space hung usually on the wall to form a dais, and the Young Lovell had bought it in Venice with one half of the booty that he had made in the little war against the Duchess of Escia. It weighed as much as four men and four horses in armour, and had made the whole cargo of a little cogger from Calais that brought it to Hartlepool harbour, whence, rolled up, it had been conveyed to the castle upon timber-trugs. Few men there had seen the whole of it. It had been taken by Venetians from a galley of the Soldan's, and was said to be a sacred carpet of Mahound's. Some men were very glad to see it, but some of the monks there said

that it favoured idolatry and outlandish ways. But these were the very learned monks of St. Cuthbert that had a monastery at Belford, near there. They stood to the number of forty behind the Bishop and had habits of undyed wool. But the young monk, Francis, who had befriended the Young Lovell before, maintained now stoutly that it was a very good thing that the gear of Mahound should first be trampled underfoot and then coerced into a Christian office such as that of the creation of a good knight. The Lady Rohtraut heard his words, and looking round at him said that he should have a crucifix of gold for his inner chamber at Belford, if the rules allowed it, or if not, five pounds of gold and ambergris to anoint the feet of his poor and bedesmen at Maundy tide. The young monk lowered his eyes and thanked her. He was a Ridley that had killed his cousin by a chance arrow sent after a hare, and so he had gone into this monastery to pray perpetually for his cousin's soul.

That man in armour now delivered his lance to his little page, his shield to the page of a friend of his, a Widdrington; his sword to Michael Eure, a cousin of the Lady Margaret, to be an honour to her, and Richard Raket and other grooms came round the horse while the rider descended and then they led the horse away. But he never raised the fluted steel of his visor. And when he was kneeling on high cushions of black velvet, since his steel shoes of tapering and reticulated rings were near two foot long, as the fashion was, the Bishop asked him if he would not uncover his face. But he whispered in the ear of the little page, and presently that boy said without fear in a high voice that the worshipful esquire had sworn an oath in the chapel that no woman should look upon his face or hear his voice until he was both knighted and betrothed. Those who upheld pure knight errants said that this was a very good vow, but the Percy laughed till his tears came.

Then, in a high voice, but in an Italian accent, for he had been many years the King's Advocate and Ambassador at Rome and had there learnt his latinity and love for the profane poets, Ovid, Vergil the Magician, and many others—the Bishop recited the words of the oath that this esquire should take. There was his duty to the Bishop

Palatine to find for him, when he came to be a baron, sixteen knights when letters of array were sent out, and, by the year, sixty bushels of wheat, one hundred of oats and peas, ten carts of oat straw and ten of wheat when the Bishop and his men harboured within ten miles of the Castle, and the Bishop to have the rights of infangthef throughout his lands. Also he would observe the privileges of all clerks and of Durham sanctuary within those lands. The Bishop read also the oath to the King, for the Lord Percy had little Latin. The Knight, when he came to be a Baron, should find for the King's service, north of the Humber when the King's letters of array were read, twenty-two knights, or six only if the Bishop had before sent his letters calling for sixteen. For such lands as he should get from his mother he should pay the King four horseshoes of gold whenever the King lay at Morpeth, and for the Lovell lands a gold cup filled with snow whenever the King lay within the Cheviot country. The goods of all those convicted of treason within his territories at Morpeth should go to the Bishopric; those from the other parts one-tenth to the King, six-tenths to the Bishop, one-tenth to the monastery of St. Cuthbert at Belford, and the remainder to himself.

These oaths having been recited, a page of the Bishop's brought a feretory that had lain on the coffin of St. Cuthbert, and a Percy page a testament; the esquire laid his right hand first on one and then on the other, being still on his knees, and then held up his hand whilst the page recited that that good esquire vowed faithfully all these things. Then the Bishop drew his sword and touched the steel left shoulder of the esquire with the hilt that had the form of the cross, this being the symbol that he would be a good knight and soldier of Christ and Our Lady. Then all the people cheered and cried out and the Bishop said loudly—

"Surge et vocabitur in nomine Dei et Regis nostri Sir Paris Lovell Castelli."

The Percy laughed and asked what those words were, and when the Prince Bishop had told him, still laughing, he smote the metal in the same place with the flat of his

sword and mocked the Bishop with the words—

"Stand up in the name of God. And in the King's name be called henceforth, Sir Paris Lovell of the Castle." To name her son Paris had been a whimsy of the Lady Rohtraut since Paris of Troy was a goodly knight, and also it stood for a symbol that he might retake Paris Town if the English had it not at the time when he was a man, and so that name had pleased the great Talbot which was a good thing at the time of his birth.

Then the good knight stood up upon his long feet and the Percy cried out that they should get the business of the betrothal over with speed, and so they did, the knight and the Lady Margaret who came out, kneeling on black cushions before the Prince Bishop. She was wearing a great and long green gown, to the making of which there had gone twenty-six yards of patterned damask from the city of Bruges. It was worked with leaves and birds and pomegranates, so that it was very rich in folds. Her ribbons in her shirt were of scarlet silk and her fur edgings of the red fox. Her hood was of white and red velvet, the gables at the front being of silver set with large pearls, and her hair fell in two black plaits to her heels where she knelt. So when the Bishop had recited their oaths they stood up and the knight pushed up his visor and looked at the lady. Those few that could see his face cried out as if they had seen a ship strike on a rock, so they raised their hands. The others only marked that haughty lady shrink back upon her feet, with a great flowing of her garments as she drew them together towards her. She cried out some words of detestation that no man heard but he, and then with her fist she struck him in the face.

Then he turned upon the high table, grinning and unashamed, the dark eyebrows that seemed to have been painted in with tar, the red cheeks and the lascivious lips of Decies of the South.

All those at the high table stood up on their feet, lifting their hands above their heads and crying out. The Decies cried towards his father, lifting also his mailed arm to

heaven—

"See justice done to me. My half-brother is gone upon a sorcery. His lands and gear are forfeit to me that inform against him and his name and bride have been given me by the Prince Bishop."

Then the lawyer, Magister Stone of Barnsides by Glororem, ran across the hall from the little door in the great ones. He began, as it were, a sort of trafficing between the Knight and the Bishop, not neglecting the Lord Percy and the Knight's father, but running backwards and forwards between the one and the other, raising his hands to their breasts and squeaking, though there was no hearing what he said. His weazened face, his brown furred gown, his chattering voice and his long jaw worked incessantly so that he resembled a monkey that was chewing straws with voracity and haste. A Widdrington, a Eure and a Selby, desperate young men and fast friends of the young Lovell, rushed upon the Decies with their daggers out. But the Bishop pushed them back and cried out for silence. And because all there saw that the Lady Rohtraut, upon her feet, was pointing down at the Lord Lovell and calling out to him, they held their tongues to hear what she was saying. They caught the end of a sentence calling upon the Lord Lovell to have that filthy and blaspheming bastard cast from the top of the White Tower. Then all eyes saw that the Lord Lovell was laughing.

He had begun with a slow grin: by little and little he had understood that his son at last had made a fine, impudent stroke. He had struck his thigh with his hand; he had tried to cry out that this was the finest stroke of all and that his son had got up early enough, at last. But he could get no words out.

Then he had begun his laughing. He laughed, rolling from side to side: he laughed, shaking so that his leathern chair cracked beneath him. His stomach trembled in an agony of laughter, his eyes gazing painfully and fixed at the scarlet and green chequers of the tablecloth. Between tornadoes of shaken laughter he gasped for

breath, and all the while the Lady Rohtraut stood gazing down upon him as if he were a loathsome dog struck with a fit. All men there stood still to watch him laugh.

And suddenly he threw his arms above his head, his face being purple and his eyes closed like a drunkard's. With the passion and strength of his laughter the blood gushed from his mouth and nose like falling scarlet ribbons. His body came forward on the tablecloth; monks and doctors craned forwards over him. The Percy moved disdainfully away as if from a sick and filthy beast, and over the table the body shook and quivered in the last gusts of laughter.

The Decies, with his sword drawn, moved backwards to the arch at the door, and first the Lady Isopel of Cullerford, the Lord Lovell's daughter, came round to speak to him, and then the Lady Douce of Haltwhistle, her sister. They stood looking back at their mother, and then they called to them their husbands, Sir Symonde and Sir Walter Limousin. They stood at talk, Sir Symonde shrugging his shoulders and Cullerford grunting whilst the ladies caught them earnestly by the arms, leaning forwards. Then they called to them the lawyer, Magister Stone, who was no great distance away, and he brought with him the Prince Bishop's Almoner, a dry man with but one eye who had a furred hood up, to keep away the draughts, since he suffered from the earache. Then they beckoned to them certain of their armed men and Sir Henry Vesey of Wall Houses, a knight of little worth in morals but a great reiver. And so, by little and little, they had a company, mostly ill-favoured but violent around them. So they perceived that the Lady Rohtraut had fallen in a swoon, and the knight of Cullerford went forward and begged the lords and lordings and the company to avoid that hall and go upon their errands, since there was sorrow enough, and his brothers-in-law and their wives would take it kindly if they could be left alone with their mother. And, since he was the husband of the lady's daughter, they listened to him and went out, and the Vesey of Haltwhistle saw to it that they had their horses, and soon there were few left in the hall but the Lord Lovell, who had a leech, bending over him. The Lady Rohtraut, having fallen back in her chair,

was being tended by the Lady Margaret and an old woman of seventy called Elizabeth Campstones. Then the daughters and the Decies went about in the Castle and were very busy.

IV

The Young Lovell felt as if he had came up out of a deep dream. He knew that the lady of the white horse thought to him:

"And I have all the time of the sea and the sky and beyond," but she spoke not at all—no words and no language that he knew. Only it was as if he saw her thoughts coursing through her mind as minnows swim in clear water. And he knew that, before that, he had thought, as if beseechingly:

"Even let me go in Christ's name, for I have many businesses."

She had a crooked and voluptuous mouth, mocking eyes of a shade of green, a little nose, a figure of waves, a high breast crossed with scarlet ribbons, and hair the colour of the yellow gold, shining with the sun, each hair separate and inclining to little curls. In short she was all white and gold save for her red and alluring lips that smiled askant, and he thought that he had never seen so bright a lady, no, not among the courtesans of Venice. His heart at the sight of her hair beat in great, stealthy pulses; his throat was dry and the flowers grew all about her. And she sat there smiling, with the side of her face to him, and he heard her think—

"This mortal man shall be mine."

It had been then that he had prayed her in Christ's name to let him go, and that she had answered that she had all the time of this earth and beyond it.

He turned Hamewarts slowly down the dune, though his heart lay behind him, and, like a mortally wounded man upon a dying horse, he rode towards his Castle where it towered upon the crag. The day was very bright, in the white sand the wind played with the ribbed rushes, and very slowly Hamewarts went. To judge by the sun he had not stayed more than a half-hour in that place, if so long, for it was very little

above the horizon. He had not thought the day would prove so bright. The sea was very blue: the foam sparkled and was churned to curds, and the little wind was warm from sunwards. He saw the shepherd coming down a very green slope below the chapel, and the white sheep, with whiter lambs, spreading, like a fan below him. Behind him, over that shoulder, Meggot, their goose girl, was driving her charges, a great company of grey with but three white ones amongst them.

In a stupid way he thought that this great brightness in an early and raw spring day must come from having seen so beautiful a lady; so, it was said in stories, were good knights' hearts elated after such a sight. But he was aware that his heart was like the grey lead in his side, and leaden sighs came heavily from him.

When he came to the gate in the outermost wall he tirled wearily at the pin. He was aware of a monstrous heaviness and tire in all his limbs. A man opened the little grating; loud yawns came from him and, very sleepily, he let down bars and chains and the gate back. From this gateway a short, white road went slantwise, up a green bank, to the chief gate of the Castle.

Young Lovell never looked at this man's face, and slowly he rode up the steep. He heard the man say:

"What lording be ye?" but he rode on mute. The man came running after him, his armour rattling like pot-lids. He caught Hamewarts by the bridle and, looking earnestly at Young Lovell's face, he said:

"Master, I mauna let ye pass only I ken your name." And then he cried out, and his eyes were almost out of his head:

"The Young Lovell!" He ran like a hare up the broad road; his hose were russet coloured.

Young Lovell grumbled to himself that it was strange to set so new a man to the gate that he should not know his master's son, and stranger still that the man should be of the men of his sister's husband of Cullerford, for all their followers had russet

beneath their steel facings.

And then he saw old Elizabeth Campstones that had been help-maid to his mother's nurse, coming out of the littlest door of the inner castle wall and down the path across the green grass of the glacis. She was all in hodden grey, she carried a great basket of tumbled clouts upon her head, and so the tears poured from her red eyes that at the first she did not see him though she came into the road at his horse's forefoot. But when he said:

"Why greet ye, Elizabeth?" she looked up at him on high as he sat there, as if the sun dazzled her eyes. And then she screamed, a high long scream. She caught at her basket and she ran to his bridle.

"Come away," she cried out. "Cullerford and Haltwistle have ta'en your bonny Castle. Your father's dead. Your mother's jailed. There is no soul of yours true to you here."

If there was one thing that distinguished the Young Lovell amongst the captains of the North—and his name was very well known to the Scots of the Border—it was that he was quick in thinking. And now, the kindling passion of war being the one thing that could drive away the thirst of love, made him see, as if it were a clear table laid out before him, the minds of his sisters that he knew very well and the dispositions of his brothers-in-law as well as the reed of the Decies that was not concealed from him. And, there being very little decency in his age, he knew that an hour or so in the Castle with his father dead and his mother no doubt grieved and shut in her bower, the men leaderless, since he, that had been his father's lieutenant and ancient was absent—that short hour or two that had gone by—and it might well have been that his father had died over his cups at the board whilst he himself, the night before, was a-watch over his arms—would very well suffice to put Cullerford and Haltwhistle in possession of his Castle with all his own men butchered during their sleep. In those days it was grab while you could and get back at your leisure.

With the pressure of his knee, he moved Hamewarts a yard forward and aside; he leant over his saddle bow and caught the old woman under the shoulders. He lifted her, basket and all—for in the midst of grief, fear and danger, she would cling first to the clouts that were her feudal duty—and the great horse with the pressure on his mouth, cast up his head and wheeled round again towards the gate at which they had entered. There came the bang of a saker, but without doubt it was rather to rouse the Castle than aimed at them, for they heard no ball go by them. Then there was a sharp scratch as if a cat had spat, and just above his head an arrow stuck itself through the basket of clouts. Hamewarts went back downwards in long bounds.

Three other arrows set themselves in the grass beside their course; one fell on the road, one carried off his scarlet cap with its frontal and jewel of pearls. But that arrow too transfixed itself in the basket and pinned the cap there; so it was not lost, and that was a good thing, for the pearls were worth two hundred pounds. And as he rode he thought that that was not very good shooting.

The men-at-arms, wakened from sleep, had gummy and unclear eyes; their bows, too, must have been strung all night and that had made the strings slacken and be uncertain. It was an evil and untidy practice, but it showed him firstly that fear of attack must be in that place, and secondly that some of his own men might be without the castle and apt to essay to take it again. Moreover, though he had not time to turn, he knew that they must have fired from the meurtrières of the guard house; if they had taken time to open the great doors they must have struck him like a hare, for he had not been thirty yards from the walls.

Hamewarts clattered in his heavy gallop under the archway of the gate out into the village street, and the Young Lovell thanked our Saviour that the porter had been too amazed to go back and close it, but had run to warn the Castle. Without that he had been caught like a fox in a well. When he was through and well outside, he caught up his horse, and turning, gazed in again under the arch. The inner walls of the

Castle rose immense and pinkish, with their pale stone, above the green grass. The sun shone on such of the windows—about twenty—that had glass in them. One of these casements opened and he saw the naked shoulders of his sister Douce, holding a sheet over her breasts as she gazed out to mark why the tumult was raised. He observed thus that, in one night, as he thought it, his sister had taken their mother's bower for herself. It was no more than he would have awaited of her.

He perceived then the large gate of the Castle on top of the mound roughly burst open and there came running out thirty men in russet who ranged themselves in a fan-shape on the slope. Last came a man in his shirt and shoes—Limousin of Haltwhistle. The men in russet held bows in their hands and the man in his shirt waved his hands downwards. The archers began to come down, but not very fast and with caution. The Young Lovell knew they thought that very belike he had already raised the country against them and had men posted in ambush behind the outer walls.

He rode slowly away with the old woman before him. The street was very broad and empty in the morning sun. The cottages were all thatched with sea-rushes and kelp, all the doors stood open and the swine moved in and out. Two cottages had been burnt to the ground and lay, black heaps, sparkling here and there with the wetness of the dew. He marvelled a little that they did not still smoke, for they must have been set alight since last nightfall. He considered the sleeve of his scarlet cloak that was very brave, being open at the throat to shew his shirt of white lawn tied with green ribbons. He saw that the scarlet was faded to the colour of pink roses. He looked before him and, on a green hill-side, he was aware of a great gathering of men and women bearing scythes whose blades shone like streaks of flame in the sun. Also, at their head went priests and little boys with censers and lit candles. The day was so clear that, though they were already far away, he could see the blue smoke of the incense.

He rode slowly forward, pensive and observing all that he might. The old woman sat before him, but she was breathing so fast with the late galloping of the horse that she could not yet speak. The windows of the one stone house in that place were still shuttered and barred, so that without doubt the lawyer still slept. Then he remembered that he would have that man hanged without delay. Without doubt he left his windows shuttered to give false news, for certainly, that morning, he had seen him moving those stones. He looked about him to see if in the open barns and byres he could not see any horse of the Prince Bishop or the Percy or any of their men polishing their head-pieces or their pikes. But, though many of the barns stood open, none could he observe.

He looked over his shoulder and saw that the archers were come to the gateway and were peering sideways out, with a due caution. Then some of them came through and stood with their backs to the wall, waving at him their hands and shouting foul words. They would not come any further for fear he had an ambush hidden amongst the byres and middens of the village. So, still slowly, he rode on between heaps of garbage where the street was narrow and a filthy runnel went down.

At the top the street grew very wide till it was a green swarded place with many slender, sea-bent trees to make a darkened shade up against the walls of the small monastery of Saint Edmund. He considered whether he should go in there, but he remembered that there were only a few monks and they had no men-at-arms to guard those who sought sanctuary with them from pursuers not afraid of sacrilege. He determined, however, to make his way to another monastery—the great and powerful one of Belford, where they had fifty bowmen and two hundred men-at-arms to guard them against the Scots. There he would go, unless the old woman told him other news when her breath came back. Then the old thing whimpered:

"Set me down, master. I cannot speak on horse-back." He let her slide to the ground

and, with the basket transfixed by the two arrows, she fell on her knees. And then she crossed herself and gave thanks to God for his coming so well off, and afterwards, his long-toed shoes being just on a level with her lips and she on her knees, she set her mouth to the shoe that was on the right side where she was, and then placed it over her head as far as the basket gave her space. He wondered a moment that this old woman should be so humble that was used to treat him as a dirty little boy, long after he had fought in great fights, she having nursed his mother before and him afterwards. But then he considered that she was doing homage for such small goods as she had and this was the first of his vassals to do this thing. And again he observed that the bright scarlet of his shoe and the bright green—it being particoloured and running all up his leg to his thigh—these were dull pink and dull brown. They had been the brightest colours that you could find in the North.

Elizabeth Campstones stood up.

"Where will you go to, my master Paris?" she asked. "Woeful lording, where will you find shelter?"

"The Belford monks, I think, will give me the best rede and admonition," he said. "There I am minded to ride now."

"Then come you down from the brown horse," she said, "and walk beside me on Belford road, for ye could go no better journey, only I cannot speak up to you with this basket on my poll."

He came down from the brown horse, and as he did so his stirrup leather cracked and that was more than passing strange for he had had them new two days before. So when he was come round Hamewarts' head and had the reins through his arm, he said to the old woman:

"Now tell me, truly, what day is this?"

"This day is the last day of June," she answered. "My master Paris, it is three months from the day that you gat you gone, and ye are a very ruined lord and the haymakers

have gone to the high hills."

He answered only, "Ah," and walked thoughtfully forward. He had known that that lady was a fairy....

He walked with the old woman beside him, through the little grove of thin trees, by the bridle gate into the yard of the square, brown church with the leaden roof, and so out into the field where it mounted towards the Spindleston Hills.

Halfway up the low hillside there was a spring with blackthorn bushes, sea-holly and broom in thick tufts about it. The sun fell hot here, early as it was. A grey goat wandered through the rough and flowery thicket and many great bees buzzed. He sat himself down upon a soft-turfed molehill and left Hamewarts to crop the bushes. The old woman stood looking at him curiously and with a sort of dread, for a minute. Then she took the basket from her head and began to lament over it.

The two arrows transfixed it through and through, so that it was impossible for her to draw out her cloths and linen. Lord Lovell came out of his trance of thought a moment. He looked upon the woman, and then, taking the basket from her, he broke off the feathered end of each arrow and so drew them right through the basket. The old woman pulled out her clouts and said, "Eyah, eyah." Through each clout one arrow or the other had made one, two or many round holes.

"These," she lamented, "are all that your mother has for her bed or her body. All her others your sisters have taken."

"I am considering," he answered her, "how I best may save my mother."

She took her linen to the spring which was deep and clear, and began sedulously to soak piece after piece, rinsing it over and over as she knelt, and beating it with an oaken staff upon an oaken board that she had in her basket bottom. And as she hung each piece over the bramble bushes she looked diligently into the scene below her to see what was stirring in the Castle or the village. Young Lovell had selected that high spot so that they might know what was agate by way of a pursuit. She saw, at

intervals, three men on horseback go spurring up the street from the Castle arch, but she did not disturb her master with the news. She thought it better to leave him to his thinking, for she considered that he would hit upon some magic way out of it. She imagined that he had dwelt that three months amongst wizards and sorcerers that he should have met during his vigil in the little old chapel that was a very haunted place.

At last he raised his head and said:

"Old woman, tell me truly now, all your news."

What she knew first was that, on the morning when the Lord Lovell had died, all the lords and knights and the Prince Bishop and the others being gone from the hall, there remained only the dead lord, his wife in a swound, the Lady Margaret Eure and her. Then Sir Walter Limousin of Cullerford with his wife Isopel and the other sister had approached with several men of theirs in arms and had carried the good body of her senseless lady up to a little chamber in the tower called Wanshot, in the very top of it. She, Elizabeth Campstones, had carried her lady's feet, but all the rest of her bearers had been men-at-arms. The Lady Margaret had followed them up into that little stone cell and asked them what they would do with that lady in that place. But no one of them answered her a word, high and haughty as she was, and at last they went away and left them, the Lady Rohtraut just coming to herself on a little, rotting frame bed that had no coverings but the strings that held it together.

The Lady Margaret had sought to go out with them, calling them all proud and beastly names and she was determined to set her own men that she had there, to the number of twenty, all well armed, to make war upon these and to raise the Castle. But when she came to the doorway that was little and low Sir Simonde Vesey set his hand upon her chest and thrust her back so hard into the room that she fell against the wall and lost her breath. When she had it again the door was locked and it was of thick oak, studded deep with nails.

Finely she raved, but when she came to, the Lady Rohtraut was in a sort of stupour, sitting still and shaking her head at all that they said. She thought this must be a dream that would vanish upon her awakening, and so it was lost labour to talk.

So they remained until well on into the afternoon, seeing nothing but the ceaseless run of the clouds and the sky and the gulls upon the Farne Islands and the restless sea, from their little window. Then there came three weeping maids of their lady's, bearing bedding that they set down on the floor, and a little food and some wine that were placed upon the window-sill. But these girls spoke no word, for Sir Simonde Vesey stood outside and looked awfully upon them. The Lady Margaret made to run from the room, but two men that stood hidden put their pikes to her breast so that she ran upon them, and would have been sore hurt only they were somewhat blunted.

The Lady Rohtraut sat for a long while eating a little white bread that she crumbled in her fingers, and sipping at the wine from the black leather bottle, but still she said little, which was a great pity.

Towards four of the afternoon, to judge by the shadows, Sir Simonde let himself in at the door and asked the Lady Margaret if she would forthwith marry the Decies. She said no, not if Sathanas himself branded her with hot irons to make her do it. Sir Simonde said she might as lief do it since she was betrothed to that good knight and that could never be altered. Then she caught at the little dagger with which she was wont to mend her pens. It hung in her girdle, and Sir Simonde went swiftly enough out at the little door.

The Lady Margaret chafed up and down that small place, but those women said little, for they knew well what this all meant in the way of robbery and pillage and bending them to their wills. But the Lady Margaret swore that she would have the Eures of Witton and the Widdringtons and the Nevilles themselves—aye and the spy Percies—who were all her good cousins, and they should hang the Decies and do

much worse to the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle.

And no doubt she had the right of it, for long after it was dark they saw a glow of light illumining in a dreary way the face of the White Tower, so that the Lady Margaret thought it was a fire of joy or at least a baal-blaze, but Elizabeth Campstones said that it was houses burning in the township. Then a man with a torch came through the little doorway and lighted in the Magister, or as he now was, the Bailiff Stone, since the Prince Bishop had signed the appointment for him that morning. This rendered him safe against any persecution or processes of laymen in those parts, nevertheless, when the torch-bearer had stuck his torch in a ring by the door and gone away, the lawyer would have the little door left open, and they knew afterwards that it was done so that the men without might rescue him if the Lady Margaret meant to strike or slay him, for she could have slain five of such lean cats.

Before the Lady Margaret could bring out a question, for she was astonished and could not think why such a person should come there, he broke into a trembling gibber:

"Oh, good kind ladies; oh, gentle sweet and noble dames, for God His love and sufferings, save all our lives and houses of which two are burning!"

The Lady Margaret asked highly what all this claver was and what he wanted.

"These are very violent and high-stomached people," the lawyer babbled quaveringly on. "Two houses of the township they have burned, and hanged the husbandmen for an example. So that if you do not save us...."

He stretched his hands to the Lady Rohtraut, but she looked before her and said nothing.

"Well, go you and make common cause with them," the Lady Margaret said to him contemptuously. "So you will save your neck.

"Ah, but no," he answered miserably but with a sort of professional and cunning air. "I must be on the side of the law."

"Then what does the law say?" she asked as bitterly. "I will warrant you will not be far from the top dog."

He began, however, to whine and wring his hands and said that he had not long to live if he could not win these ladies to do the wills of the violent people who had taken that Castle, not but what it might not be said that they had not some shew of equity on their sides.

"I thought we should come near there," the Lady Margaret said; "come, Master, what is the worst on 't?"

"Ah, gentle lady," the lawyer said, "this is at the best a grievous matter; at the worst it is...." And he waved his hand as if there were no speaking of it.

"Go on," the Lady Margaret said grimly.

"I have been so confused," the lawyer answered, "with much running here and there and seeing such blood flow and the hearing of such threats...."

"Come, come," the lady said, "you are a man of law and such a clever one that if I threw you out of this window you could tell the law of it or ever you fell to the ground."

"I am not saying," he retorted, with a sort of relish, "that I go in doubts concerning the law. What perplexes and affrights me is the fall of great and powerful lords. As to the torts, replevins, fines, amercements and the other things too numerous to recite, I am clear enough."

"Well, it is in the fall of mighty lords that the rats of your trade find bloody bones to gnaw," she answered him. "But if you are too amazed at the contemplation of the wealth that you shall make out of this to tell me, get you gone. If not, speak shortly, or I warrant you a few cousins of mine shall burn this Castle and you in a little space."

The lawyer shrank at these words and she went on:

"I trysted with my cousin Widdrington to meet him at Glororem at six to-night and bade him fetch me hence with what companions he needed at twelve if I were not home, so you have but an hour."

"Ah, gentle lady," the lawyer said, "it is three hours."

"Well then, you have kept me twelve hours here," the lady said; "I shall pay you in full for your entertainment."

"Ah, gentle lady," the lawyer sighed, "not me, not me!"

She answered only: "Out with your tale."

He hesitated for a moment, and then began with another sigh:

"For your noble cousin Paris, Lord Lovell, I fear it is all done with him."

"I think he may be dead that he did not come to his betrothal with me," the lady said. "If that is so you have my leave to tell me."

"It is worse than that," he groaned. "Woe is me, that noble lordings should bend to violent passions."

The Lady Margaret looked at him with disdain.

"If ye would tell me," she said, "that the Young Lovell is gone upon a sorcery, ye lie."

Again the lawyer sighed.

"It is too deeply proven," he said. "These poor eyes did see him and two other pairs—both his well-wishers, even as I am."

"Even whose?" she asked. "And what saw ye?"

"For the eyes," the lawyer said, "they were those of the Decies and of an ancient goody called Meg of the Foul Tyke."

"For well-wishers," the Lady Margaret answered, "you well-wish whence your money comes; the Decies would claim my cousin's land and gear: and Meg of the

Foul Tyke, though the best of the three is a naughty witch in a red cloak. I have twice begged her life of my lording."

"The more reason," Master Stone said, "why you should not doubt she is your well-wisher, even more than the young lording's. And that is why she would see you have a better mate."

The lady said: "Aha!"

"I will tell you how it was," the lawyer said. "I could not very well sleep that night because I had been turning of old parchments, where, to make a long story short, I had found that if the Lord Lovell should, on the next day, swear to give the Bishop the rights of ingress and fire-feu over his lands in Barnside he should do himself a wrong. For, since the days of that blessed King, Edward the Second, those lands have been held by carta directa..."

"Get on; get on," the Lady Margaret cried.

"But this is in the essence of the thing," the lawyer protested, "for a carta directa..."

"I will not hear this whigamaree," the lady said, "Let us take it, though no doubt you lie, that you had found certain parcels of sheepskin. But understand that we have stomachs for other things than that dry haggis."

"That is a lamentable frame of mind," the lawyer said, "for look you, a carta of that tenure is the best that can be come by." But, at a gesture of the lady's hand, he began again very quickly: "I spent a night of groaning and sighing, for it was a grievous dilemma. On the one hand, my beloved young lord might do himself a wrong by swearing away his chartered rights. On the other hand, if I should tell him that I had found them, this might be deemed foul play by the Pro-proctor Regis Rushworth, who is a lawyer for the house of Lovell in the Palatine districts. Though how it is that Rushworth knoweth not of this charter I cannot tell."

"How came you by them?" the lady asked. "Without a doubt you stole them to make work."

"They were old papers that were there when I bought the study of my master that was Magister Greenwell," the lawyer answered, and again the lady said: "Get on; get on."

"So, at the last," Stone continued, "I made, after prayer, the resolution and firm intent to tell my lord. And so I arose, remembering how he would be praying in the chapel, and gat me into the street. And there, in the grey dawn, I lighted upon Meg of the Foul Tyke, who was returning from gathering of simples by the light of the moon in the kirkyard."

"There was no moon last night," the Lady Margaret said.

"Then, by the light of the star Arcturus," the lawyer claimed. "Well, my first motion was to rate her for a naughty witch. And so I did full roundly till that woman fell a-weeping and vowed to reform."

"Well, you were more powerful than the prophets with the Witch of Endor," the lady mocked him.

"And, seeing her in that good mind," Stone went on with his tale, "I remembered that she was a very old woman—the oldest of all these parts. So I told her that if she could remember matters of Barnside years agone, since she was in a holier mind, without doubt the young lording would be gracious to her and would grant her a halfpenny a day to live by; so she might live godly, after repenting in a sheet.... So she remembered very clearly that one Hindhorn of Barnsides, Henrice Quinto Rege, had been used, once a year, at Shrovetide, to drag with three bullocks, an oaken log bound with yellow ribbons to the Castle. This was direct and blinding evidence that the right of fire-feu ..."

"Well, you went with the old hag to the chapel," the Lady Margaret said. "I can follow the cant of your mind and spring before it."

"But you may miss many and valuable things," he retorted. "As thus.... Whilst we went up the hill, this old goody, being repentant and weeping, cried out when she

heard whither we were bound: 'Alas! Horror! Woe is me!" and other cries. And, when I pressed for a reason, she said that the young lording was a damned soul and that was one of her sins. For she had taught him magic and the meeting-places of warlocks; one of which was that chapel that was an ill-haunted spot, and that was why the lording was there at night. And she was afraid to go near the chapel; for the warlocks would tear her limb from limb. And the familiar and succubus of the Young Lovell was the toad that was, in afore time, the step-mother of the Laidly Worm of Spindleston, that to this day spits upon maidens, so much she hateth the estate of virginity, as often you will have heard."

The lawyer paused and looked long at that lady.

"So that old witch repented?" she said at last, but she gave no sign of her feelings.

"There was never a more beautiful repentance seen," the lawyer said. "So she sighed and groaned and the tears poured off her face to think that she had corrupted that poor lording...." And it had been her repentance, he went on, that had let them see what they had seen, and so made it possible for them to save him.

Now when they came to the chapel, said the lawyer, the young lording, as if he were demented, came rushing out from the door, and the Decies who had watched all night in the porch came out after him, and asked him what he would. But he answered nothing to the Decies and nothing to them, but, with a marvellous fury, like a man rushing in a dream, he ran into the shed where his horse was tethered, and bringing it out, so he galloped away that his long curls of gold flapped in the wind. It was not yet cockcrow, but pretty clear.

Thus those three, standing there and lamenting, saw how, at no great distance, but just under Budle Crags, there was a fire lit, and round it danced wonderful fair women and some old hags and witch-masters, but most fair women.

The lawyer, saying this, gazed hard at the Lady Margaret, but once again the lady said no more than—

"Aye, my cousin was always one for fair women."

"So he kissed and fondled them; it was so horrid a sight...." the lawyer went on.

"Now is it a horrid thing," the lady asked, "to see a fine lording kiss a fair woman?"

"I only know," the lawyer said, "that at once all we three fell to devising how you, ah, most gentle lady, might be saved from the embrace of this lost man; and how that poor lording might be saved from his evil ways, and have his lands and all his heritage preserved to him."

"And the upshot," the lady asked, with a dry pleasantness, "was what the Decies did in the Great Hall."

When the Young Lovell, sitting amongst the furze and broom, had heard so far, he sighed with a deep satisfaction. The old Elizabeth had told her tale of sorcery alleged against himself at an intolerable length, dwelling on the nature of linen clouts here and there, and upon all that she had said to the Lady Rohtraut when she lay in the swoon. But he kept himself quiet and did not interrupt her; he had listened to her tales since he had been a young boy, and knew that if you hastened her they took five times as long. Yet he sat all the while on tenterhooks for fear she should say they had seen his meeting with the lady that sat upon a white horse amongst doves and sparrows. Had they seen that it might have gone ill with him in a suit at law. For, if they had seen it, it was twenty to one that there would be other witnesses; the place was well frequented by people journeying from Bamburgh to Holy Island. Nay, he would have been visible to the very fishers upon the sea, and to stay with such a lady, he well knew—though at the moment he sighed deeply—would be accounted a felony of the deepest magic kind in any ecclesiastical court.

But now he knew that this lawyer was simply lying, and that was an easier thing. He saw, and so he told Elizabeth Campstones, how they had hit upon that tale. The lawyer coming by the chapel, after the Young Lovell had threatened him with death

for the moving of his neighbour's landstones, and the old witch meeting with him, after she had been threatened with drowning for her wicked ways; both trembling with fear, since they knew him for a man of his word and a weighty but just lord in those lands, had come together to the chapel door. No doubt they had entered in, meaning to steal his armour that was visible lying there, and hold it for ransom as the price of their miserable lives. But in the deep porch they would see the Decies snoring like a hog.

Him they wakened, and, the old witch's mind running on sorcery, the lawyer's on suits, and the Decies desiring to have his heritage and his bride, whilst the other two desired to save their lives; all three together had hit upon this stratagem that would give them what they desired. For in those days there was in Northumberland a stern hatred of the black arts, which had grown the greater since the twelve children of Hexham, two years before, had been slain, that their blood and members might stew in a witch's broth—a thing proven by many competent witnesses. So that, if the Decies should come in and claim the Young Lovell's knighthood, name, and the rest, he might, with the support of his father, make a pretty good suit of it, and, maybe, take the whole. And, if the Young Lovell should come back soon for his armour, they would murder him. Thus, the lawyer, and the witch, the one with a rope to cast over his neck, and the other with a sharp dagger, hid waiting behind the thick pillars, whilst the Decies dressed in his half-brother's harness.

And it had worked better for them than they had expected, so that now they held the Castle, and the law might be very hard set, if it ever made the essay, to get them out of it.

For, as Elizabeth Campstones presently told him, they had taken all the charters and the deeds of the Castle to Haltwhistle, where the one knight had them hidden up, and all the deeds and charters of his mother's lands and houses to Cullerford, where the other kept them. The Castle itself they held all three, the Decies and the two

knights—or rather their two ladies—being captains there by turns of three days each, and dividing the revenues of it very fairly.

They had cast out all the men-at-arms that were any way faithful to the Young Lovell, taking away their arms too. For they, with their armed men, had been in possession of the Castle and had taken the keys of the armoury, whilst the Lovell men were without arms and leaderless. So that some of the Lovell men had become bedesmen at the monastery at Belford, and many perished miserably about the country in the great storm of the second day of April, whilst some had taken to robbery, which was all that was left them. Those in the Castle had hired men from the false Scots and other ragged companions of the Vesty that was Sir Symonde's brother, and there they all dwelt comfortable, having between them about three hundred men-at-arms and a numerous army of bowmen, but no cannon. They deemed that they could well await any assault of the Young Lovell if he should return. They considered that he had been slain by the outlaw Elliotts, who had been seen to ride by, three miles north of the Castle, going up into the Cheviots.

But all these things happened only after they had settled with the Lady Margaret in that little room. And that had happened in this way, Elizabeth Campstones said:

After the lawyer told her the tale about the fair witches she had broken into no cries and oaths as he had expected; not even when he had particularised one witch with red hair and great breasts that danced and sprang all naked over a broomstick, with her hair tossing, and how the Young Lovell had singled this witch out for favours apart. The Lady Margaret said only—

"And so you two and the Decies...."

"We stood there weeping and lamenting," the lawyer said.

"I marvel that not one of you had heart to adventure for the caresses of such fair women as you have told me of. Had ye been men ye would."

The lawyer answered with an accent of horror:

"But witches and warlocks!"

"Ah, I had forgotten," the lady said. "So ye wept and turned your heads away. And afterwards?"

"After they were gone," Magister Stone answered, "we fell to devising how we might rescue you, ah gentle lady, from that lost knight and himself from himself." That was to be in this way: The Decies should seek to possess himself of the lands, knighthood and name of the Young Lovell, and, if he did this with the irrevocable blessing of the Lord Bishop, the act of the Border Warden, who in those parts stood for the King, as well as in presence of his father, he might establish a very good title whether of presumption or possession. And if in the same way he might be betrothed to the Lady Margaret in the presence of the Lady Rohtraut to whom she was ward and with the formal rite of the Church, which like the other is irrevocable, the Young Decies would be in a very fair way to achieve his pious desires.

"And that should be as how?" the Lady Margaret asked.

He desired, the lawyer said, to hold the Young Lovell's heritage only as a faithful steward and brother and, so holding it with a very arguable title, neither Prince Bishop or King could extort from it any very great fines or amercements. Meanwhile the Decies should consummate that very night his wedding with the Lady Margaret whom, after the betrothal, he alone could marry. And they had a good priest there present and himself ready to draw up marriage charters enough to fill two bridal chests. And, the more to incline her to this, it was the mind of the gallant Decies to allow her such marriage lots, dowers and jointures, out of the heritage of the Young Lovell as together with her own lands of Glororem and the other places, and by inducing the Lady Rohtraut to forego the great fine that they should pay her upon her marriage, would leave them one of the richest married pairs of that part of the King's realms.

And when the Lady Margaret asked how that should be brought about, and the

particulars, feudal and direct, of the deeds he would make, he went off into a great flood of Latin and Norman words of the law. At last she said:

"I make out nothing of all this talk. But I think I will not marry with a great toad that hath a weasel gnawing at his vitals."

"Ah, gentle lady..." the lawyer began, and his voice rose in its tones.

"To put it shortly," the lady continued, "the great toad is the gallant Decies, for toads do shelter under other men's rocks and stones, and this gallant—for I will not rob him of the title you give him, and I know no other by which to call him—is minded to shelter under the stones and rocks of my cousin's Castle that in God's good time shall be my cousin's and mine. And for who the weasel is that gnaweth at the vitals of the gallant Decies I will not further particularise, since I might well go beyond courtesy. So now get you gone, or I will wave one of the clouts from this little window which, by the light of the burning houses, my cousins the Eures and the Widdringtons and the Percy shall perceive from where they wait upon Budle Crags, and very soon you shall be hanging from the White Tower to affright the morning sun. And that I promise you...."

The lawyer protested in various tones, rising to a sick squeak, but she said no more to him. It was not true what she said, that her cousins were waiting to fall upon the Castle, though they would well have done it on the next morning or in two days' time. But the lawyer did not know that it was not true and so he shivered and went away.

A little later there came Henry Vesey of Wall Houses, the evil knight that was brother to Sir Symonde. He had a red nose, a roving eye and staggered a little. He affected a great gravity, but she laughed at him. His cloak was monstrous and of green, slit all down the great sleeves to show the little coat of purple damask. His shirt was wrought up into a frill very low down in his neck, so that it showed much of his chest, and in his stiff biretta of scarlet he had a jewel of scarlet that held five

white feathers. His hair, which was reddish, fell almost to his shoulders, for he affected very much to be in the fashions of his time—more than most lordings and knights of that part. And, indeed, the Lady Margaret considered him a very proper, impudent gentleman.

"Cousin Meg!" he began, and then he stammered with the liquor that was in him. But he achieved again an owlish gravity and a sweet reason. His proposition was that, still, she should marry the Decies and that he himself would wed the Lady Rohtraut so that he could defend her interests the better. And so they could all live there comfortably together, for it was better to live in one great family than scattered here and there. The Lady Margaret was already laughing, but he continued with a great gravity, that, as for the Decies, he loved her so desperately he did not dare to come nigh her, but, now he had no need to conceal it, was rolling about the carpet in the great hall, bellowing with the pain of his passion.

"Well, I have been aware of it this many months," the lady said, "and it is a very comfortable love that will not let him come nigh me. I pray it may continue."

At that Vesey of Wall Houses fell to laughing.

He tried to explain that he had come to her with the idea that she might be more apt to wed the Decies if she knew that, by his wedding the Lady Rohtraut, the Castle should have for its head and guidance, such a sober, answerable, prudent and valorous head as himself.

"So the cage of apes made the parrot their captain when they went a-sailing to the Indies," she said, and then he laughed altogether.

"Nay, indeed Meg, sweetmouthed Meg," he said, "will ye still keep troth to the monstrous wicked, idolatrous, blaspheming lording called Lovell that dances with fair naked witches and all the other horrid things that we would all do if we could? Consider your wretched soul!"

But his liquorish manner showed that he believed nothing of that witches' dance, and

indeed he was pretty sure that the Young Lovell had been carried off by the outlaw Elliotts that had been seen near that place, and that he would return and send them ransom.

"Friend Henry," the Lady answered, "good Sir Henry, if my love, who is a gallant gentleman, would not dance and courteously devise with beautiful women, naked or how they were, I should think the less of him supposing they entreated it. But I do not believe that he did this thing such as the calling up of succubi, however fair, since his desire for me only was so great, and that ye well wis."

"Ah well," the Vesey sighed, "sweet mouth that ye are, if it was I that had the ordering of this Castle I should not let you go so easily."

"That I well believe and take it kindly," the lady said.

"But, being as it is," he continued, "the poltroons, my brother and Cullerford and their wives and the Decies and the lawyer tremble so at the thought of your kinsmen camped on Budle Crags that they are minded to open the gates on this pretty bird. But well I know that it is a lie, though they will not hear me."

"In truth there is a monstrous great host awaits the waving of my kerchief," she said, "with nine culverins planted there and all; and ye know what the culverins did to Bamburgh?"

He closed one eye slowly and then he sighed. "Well, I must take you down," he said, "I am a reckless devil, woe is me, and if there are no Widdringtons and the rest there now, I know that Wall Houses would burn to-morrow and I should hang when they caught me.... But oh, I repent me to let you go...." And he regarded her with very amorous and melancholy laughing eyes.

"Friend Henry," she laughed, "if you will open the doors for me, for me, for your good behaviour you may kiss me twice, once here and once at the gate, for I dare say, if the truth be known, though you are too much drunk to be clear and not drunk enough to speak the truth, you are more the friend of me and of my love than any

here."

"Well, they are a curst crew," he said, "and I will not hang with them; only, where there are pickings I must have my poke, and that is good Latin."

So, approaching and lifting his legs, as high as he might in the politer fashion of the day, though once in his progress he fell against the wall, he took her by the hand and kissed her on the cheek. She said she wondered how a man could make himself smell so like a beast with wine, and so he led her forth from the room, after he had waved away the guards and after she had taken leave of the Lady Rohtraut who spoke never a word. And that was as much as Elizabeth Campstones knew of her at that time, except that she promised not to rest a night in bed until she had roused all the Dacres of the North to come to her aunt's assistance.

But afterwards Elizabeth heard that the Vesey of Wall Houses had conducted the lady very courteously, not only to the gate, but, having found her a horse and guards, to her very tower of Glororem. And on the way he gave her very good counsel as to how she should aid her aunt. But that had proved a very difficult matter, for the Dacres themselves, in those disturbed and critical times, lay under such clouds of suspicion that the best of them were detained in London near the King and his court; so that, if they were not actually in the Tower or some other prison, they might as well have been. As for coming to rescue the Lady Rohtraut by force, they could not do it and, as for aiding her by any process of law, that was a matter well-nigh impossible for its slowness and because the Knight of Cullerford had stolen all her deeds and titles. Moreover, all the middle part of Yorkshire was in a state of rebellion, so that it was very difficult for messengers to come through, either the one way or the other. It is true that a lawyer from Durham came to the Castle and sought an interview with the lady on behalf of the Prince Palatine, but they pelted him from the archway with dung at first and then with flint-stones so that they never heard what his errand was. And although many in that neighbourhood would gladly have

set upon the Castle and sacked it, it was difficult to find a leader and head. For the Percy was afraid, not knowing how the law was or how he should best please the King, and the Nevilles were in the South, so that there was no one left of great eminence.

The Lady Margaret and some young squires of degree raised a force of a couple of hundred or so and began to march on the Castle. But before they reached it the men-at-arms repented, saying that they would not be led by a woman and a parcel of beardless boys; and when the Lady Margaret beat them with a whip these men shrugged their shoulders and rode back the faster to their homes. She had two of them led to the gallows and the ropes round their necks till they fell on their knees and sued pardons. But that did not mend things much and there the business sat.

The Lady Rohtraut came to herself one night and knew it was no dream. And she would have letters written to the Lord of Croy in Germany, that was her mother's father, that he might come to her rescue. And no doubt he would have sent ships, though he was a very ancient man. He was a mighty prince, and had taken prisoner, in the old time, Edward Dacre, the Lady Rohtraut's father, in a battle that his suzerain the Duke of Burgundy, who was of uncertain mind, fought against the English in Flanders. So, waiting in the Castle for his ransom to come, Edward Dacre loved the Duke's daughter, the Princess Rohtraut, and was beloved by her. And, at the intercession of the Talbot, for the better soldering of a new friendship between the English and the Burgundians, the Duke, though sorely against his will, had given his daughter to Edward Dacre, he being made a baron of England on the day of the wedding. Her mother, the Princess Rohtraut, was still alive and lived with her son, the Lord Dacre, in London. But between mother and daughter there was a lawsuit about some of these very lands that her daughters sought to take from her, and in that way there was no commerce between them.

Thus it was that the Lady Rohtraut was very haughty, and would in no way submit

to the importunities of her daughters and their husbands, for she had the pride of the Dacres and of a Princess of Low Germany. The daughters would still have had her marry the Vesey of Wall Houses, so that they might have the management of her properties, but she answered that for nothing in the world would she do that thing, and that it would be to give them both to Satan. She had the right to an annual dower of 3,000 French crowns and to all the furnishings that had been taken by her husband, upon their marriage, from her Castle at Cramlinton, as well as her houses at Plessey and Killingworth. And she had the right to enter again, her husband being dead, into the possession and administration of those places as well as of her lands by Morpeth.

She was minded to live as a proud and wealthy dowager and she was not minded to abate one jot of her rights and possessions to buy her freedom, though her daughters and their husbands came day by day and clamoured to her to do it.

So there abode, like a prisoner in that little room, the Lady Rohtraut till that hour. All of her servants were driven away from her, and she had only Elizabeth Campstones to dress and undress her: and of linen she had so little that the old woman must come forth and wash it every three days. And, when she brought it forth, the daughters searched it into the very seams to see that there was no letter to the Duke of Croy or to the Dacres concealed within it. And the Lady Rohtraut fell ill, and she thought her daughters had poisoned her with a fig laid down in honey, till the doctor cured her with another such fig, the one poison, if it were a poison, driving out the other.

PART II

I

So the Young Lovell sat listening to the old Elizabeth in the sun that grew hottish amongst the flowering bushes. He thought to himself nigh all the time, and still every second thought was of that lady.

His thoughts went like this—

There could be no doubt that the law would not help him to retake his Castle; but he longed for her red, crooked, smiling lips. He must therefore get together a band and besiege that place; and at the thought of climbing through a breach in great towers whilst the cannon spoke and the fascines fell into the ditches, arrows clittered on harness, greek fire rustled down, and the great banners drooped over the tumult, his blood leapt for a moment. But her hair he remembered in its filaments and it blotted out the blue sea that lay below his feet and was more golden than the gold of the broom flowers and the gorse that surrounded him. He thought that, first, he must have the sanction of the Bishop Palatine and his absolution from any magic he might in innocence have witnessed; but, in longing for her queer smile, he could scarcely keep from springing to his feet. He knew he must be moving over the hills, but the remembrance of her crossed breasts with her girdle kept him languishing there in the hot sun as if his limbs had lost their young strength.

So, when the old woman had finished her story, she sat looking at him with a queer glance. He spoke no word until she could not but say—

"Master, where did ye bide? Was it with the bonny witch-wives?"

He contemplated her face expressionlessly.

"Tell me truly, old woman," he said, "where will ye say that I did bide, to save my name?" for he knew that this old woman could tell a very good tale.

"I will say Gib Elliott took ye up into Chevyside and held ye there in an old tower, till a scrivener of Embro' could be found to take your bond for a thousand marks. And ye shall send fifty crowns to Gib by me—he was my mother's sister's foster son—and he shall say that so it was."

"Say even that," he answered, without either joy or sorrow in his tone.

"Oh my fair son," she cried out in an unhappy and lamenting voice, "I knew ye had been among the witch-wives; and shall your face, a young comely face of a golden

lording...."

"What ails my face?" he asked.

"Sirs," she cried out, "his face is like the very still water of old grey rock-pools, with no dancing before the wind and sun."

"Even let it be so," he answered.

"Ay, ye are in a worse case than your dad," she cried. "All the Ruthvens had these traffics."

He looked at her hardly.

"My brother Decies was a witch's son?" he said. "That was my father's sin that sent him roaming?"

"Of a witch that dressed as a nun and stole into a convent," she said, and rocked herself woefully where she sat beside her washing board at the edge of the pool. "They found witch marks upon her. They should have drowned the child, but he took it by force and with great oaths and sent it into foreign shires. And that made his sin the heavier."

"Ah, well!" the Young Lovell said.

"You Ruffyns," the old woman went on lamenting, "for, call yourselves never so much Lovells, Ruthvens ye will remain, and ye are never of this countryside but of the Red Welsh or the Black Welsh or of some heathen countryside. And always ye have had truck with witches and warlocks. The first of ye that came into these parts was your grandfather's father and he had a black stone, like a coal but not like a coal. That was given him by a witch that loved him, as she went on the way to the faggots, for they burnt her. And without it, how could he have made his marvellous booties, riding thro' the land of France, from how 'twas to how 'twas, and sacking the marvellous rich and walled cities? And I had thought to have saved you from these hussies, seeing that you might well be of a better race, your mother being of a

German house and the Almains, as all the world tells, being foul and dirty in their lives, but almighty pious so that nine crucifixes in ten that we buy come from there. Therefore as you came first from your mother's womb I put the fat of good bacon in your mewling mouth, and your sleeves I tied with green ribbons, and I took you to the low shed in the tennis court and rolled you down the roof—and the one thing should have saved you from the fiends and the other from the witches, and the third even from the fairy people. And these things are older than holy water, though you had enough of that...."

"May it save me yet!" the Young Lovell said. "But what I now have to consider is how to take my mother from these people and to get back what is mine own."

"Aye," the old woman said, "you were ever a good child to your mother; therefore I had hopes of you. For your sisters, they were all black Ruffyns, bitter and so curst that they had no need for resort to the powers of evil to help them."

"Tell me truly now, old woman," her master said, "how long may my mother live and abide the treatment that she now has and not die?"

"Ah," the old woman lamented, "how altered is now her estate from what it was, who had the finest bower that was to see in the North Country! Not a Percy lady nor any Neville nor any mistress of a Canon of Durham had such a one. Remember the great red curtains there were to the bed, and the painted windows that showed the story of the man without a coat. And the great chest carved with curliecues from Flanders, and the other chest with the figures of holy kings, and the third that was from Almain and stood as high as my head upon twisted pillars and had angels holding candles at each corner. And for what was in the chest—the stores of gowns, the furs of zibelline and of marten, the golden chains joining diamond to diamond and pearl to pearl! ... And now she lieth upon a little pallet, and here, upon these bushes, is drying all the linen that she hath. The one gown of scarlet is all that there is for her back, except for the great slit coat that they have given her for fear that she

die of the cold. And her little dog Butterfly is all that she hath for comfort, that sits in her sleeve.... But yet I think she will not die, and it is certain that none of them wish her death that should bring against them the mighty house of Dacre to have her heritage. But day after day they come in, now one, now two, now three and cry out upon her with great and curious words seeking to gar her give them her lands and render up her yearly dower. And so she sits still; and sometimes she gives them back hard words, but most often she says no more than that they shall give her her due and let her go. And so they rave all the more. But I do not think that she will die..."

"And has she never sent word to her own mother?" the Young Lovell asked, "I think that ancient dame could do more than another to save her."

"I think she is too proud," the old woman said. "Of the Duke of Croy she has spoken often enough, but of her mother never one word, so that, God forgive me, I had forgotten that she had that mother though it was in her house I saw the first of God His good light three score and twelve years was. For you know that these ladies have never spoken together nor written broad letters since your grandfather Dacre died, and your father, on the day the funeral was, was sacking the castles and houses that were your mother's inheritance. And the old lady thought they should have been hers; so that to this day she is wealthy enough in gold but hath little or no land and dwells in but a moderate house in the Bailey at Durham, though when her son, the Dacre, is in London she is mostly there herself."

The Young Lovell stood up upon his legs.

"Then if there is no great haste to save my mother's life," he said, "it is the better. I would else very well have hastened to get together twenty or thirty lusty bachelors and so we might have burst into this Castle of mine. But if my mother may stay out a fortnight or a month it is the better. For I will get together money and a host and cannon and so we may make sure."

"Ay," the old woman said, "but hasten all ye may for the sake of Richard Bek and

Robert Bulmer."

"Now tell me truly what is this?" her master asked.

The old woman burst out into many ejaculations how that with the haste and her master's strange looks she did not know what she had told him and what she had missed out.

Certain it was that Richard Bek, Robert Bulmer, and Bertram Bullock held the White Tower for him, the Young Lovell. The others could not come to them for the White Tower stood on a rock twenty yards from the Castle and joined to it by such a narrow stone bridge that it was, as it were, a citadel. It could stand fast though all the rest of the Castle should be taken, having been devised for that purpose. Richard Bek and Robert Bulmer, poor squires, or almost of the degree of yeomen, had always been captains of the White Tower and in it the dead Lord Lovell had kept his marvellous store of gold—as much as four score thousand French crowns, more or less—and all these were theirs still, with such strong cannon as might well batter down the Castle; only Richard Bek would not do this. And to him there had resorted from time to time certain strong fellows that were still faithful to their master, creeping in the night along the narrow bridge into the tower ... such as Richard Raket, the Young Lovell's groom that had lost his teeth at the fight of Kenchie's Burn. There might be a matter of twenty-five of them that held it and victualled it by boats from the sea at night.

"Old woman," the Young Lovell said, "ye keep the best wine for the last, but ye have our Lord's warrant for that."

So he got slowly up and put the bit in the mouth of Hamewarts, that had been grazing, and when he was on that horse's back he looked down on Elizabeth Campstones and said—

"Old woman, tell me truly, shall I take thee with me upon this great horse; for I think my kin will very surely hang thee for having talked and walked with me?"

She looked up at him with a surly, sideways gaze.

"Ah, gentle lording," she said, "if I may not with my tongue save my neck from thy sisters and their men I may as well go hang, for my occupation will be gone." He left her straining a twisted and wet clout over the dark pool.

When he came to the high uplands where there was some heather, he saw a man with a grey coat with a hood, and as soon as that man was aware of him, he went away with great bounds like a hare, but casting his arms on high as he sprang. The Young Lovell was well accustomed to that stretch of land. It was full of soft, boggy places and he knew therefore that that man had some money in his poke and desired to betake himself where no horse could follow. But because the Young Lovell knew that land so well, he threaded Hamewarts between bog and soft places, calling the notes of the chase to hasten him. Thus the great horse breathed deep and made large bounds. And the Young Lovell thought that times were not all that they should be when every footman must run from every gentle upon a horse and upon Lovell ground. For either that man was a felon, which was not unlike, or he feared that the gentleman should rob him, which was more likely still. The Young Lovell was resolved that these things should be brought to better order on his lands, for he would fine, hang, or cut the ears off every felon of simple origin that was there. To the gentle robbers too, he would not be very easy, though this was not so light an enterprise, since most of them would prove to be his cousins or not much further off. Still, they could go harry the false Scots.

In five minutes he was come up to that man in grey, and that man cast himself at first on his knees in the heather and then on his face, for his sides were nearly burst with running and leaping. The Young Lovell sat still and looked down upon the hind, for he was never a lord of much haste. And afterwards, the man, with his face still among the heather, for he was afraid to look at death that might be ready for him—this man fumbled for the grey woollen poke that lay under him. He pushed it

out and bleated—

"I have but three shillings;" and when the Young Lovell asked him how he came by his three shillings, he said that he was bound for Belford neat's fair to buy him a calf.

"Then I wager two cow's tails," the Young Lovell said, "Hugh Raket, you owe me those shillings; for such a knave as you, for docking me of my dues, I have never known. You should pay me twelve pence and five hens and three days' labour a year—yet when did you pay my sire even the half of the hens in one year?"

This Hugh Raket turned himself right over upon his back and setting his arm above his head to shield his eyes from the sun he gazed upwards at the rider's head. His jaw fell though he lay down.

"If I am no Scot," he said, "ye are the Young Lovell."

"I am Lord Lovell," he got his answer, "get up and kiss my foot, for that is your duty."

He looked down at the man whilst he did his homage and said with an aspect of grimness:

"Ay, Hugh Raket, if you were not my horse-boy's brother you would be a poorer man and I a richer!"

The man looked up at his lord with an impudent shade on his face that had a thin beard. It was true that he had not many times done either suit or service since the field of Kenchie's Burn, for so surely did a Court Baron come round so surely would Hugh Raket be away on the hills after a strayed sow or goose, and Richard, his brother, would beg him off from the Young Lovell. Nevertheless, from time to time, the Young Lovell would take a couple or two of hens from him by force, for this was a very impudent family, and if they had the land scot-free and lot-free for a few years they were such fellows as would swear it was their free-holding—gay fellows they were, both brothers, but they had always a wet mouth for the main chance:

"Friend Raket," his lord said now, "that you are a very capable cozener I have known very well ever since your brother aided me upon the field. But, if you are upon Belfordtrod, catch you hold of my stirrup leather and you may have its aid as far as that town is. And, if hidden hereabouts—for you hold this land of me—you have any sword or crossbow or pike or such arms as naughty knaves like you are forbidden to have, you may go dig it up and bring it to me and I will look the other way. For, since I came out of my prison I have no arms at all, and it is not meet or seemly that I should ride unarmed."

The husbandman looked keenly at his lord; for, since Bosworth Field, the King had ordered that none of the simple people, unless they bought a licence at the cost of one pound English, should carry more arms than a short knife.

"Friend Raket," his lord said, "I think I can find thy arms as well as thou canst, for well I know this terrain, and they lie in a stone chest over beside that holed rock. But, if you will fetch them for me, giving me the sword and carrying for me the crossbow and for thyself the pike, I will call thee my man-at-arms, and so you shall have licence to keep all the arms you will in your own steading, which shall much comfort you when you think of the false Scots in the night-time." And at that, calling out, "O joy!" and ducking his head between his hands, the fellow ran over the ling to a great stone with a round hole in it that maidens were accustomed to pass their hands through up to the elbow to show their lovers or bridegrooms that they were pure. He knelt down beside this stone.

The Young Lovell sat on his horse in the summer weather. He gave one great sigh and gazed upon the blue sea behind and below him and the green plain before and on a level. The husbandman came back to him. Upon his head he had a cap of steel; over his back a small target was slung; in his left hand he held a pike with a steel head three foot long and armed with a hook such as the common sort use in battles to pull knights from off their horses. Bundled together in his arms were a Genoese

cross-bow, a great sword and a little dagger, whilst slung across his back was a leather bag filled with such heavy steel quarrels and bolts as should fit the cross-bow. These arms Hugh Raket and his fellows used when they went raiding into the Scots or the Middle or the Western Marches; for they cared little whom they journeyed upon; even, when they heard that the Scots marched with a strong body upon Carlisle or the Debateable Lands they would take a hand with the Scots and bring back what they could.

And without any manner of doubt these arms—the knight's great sword and dagger which were a pair, and the Genoese bow—had been taken in a foray when the Lord Dacre was Warden of the Middle Marches and had some Genoese and many gentlemen to help him, though he had not made much of it. The little target had certainly been taken from the Scots, for it was such a one as the Murrays and the Macleods use, being not much larger than a cheese-top with many bosses and bubbles. But the pike and the steel cap this fellow might have made himself, for they were rude enough.

He stood looking up at his lord with a face of anxious roguery, but the Young Lovell never heeded him till the husbandman spoke; he was gazing to northward as if his eyes would start from his head.

The man continued watching his lord and thinking his thoughts as to where that lord had been until he spoke and asked the Young Lovell whether he should indeed have leave to bear all these weapons and be a man-at-arms. The Young Lovell came out of his reverie and said:

"Yes, yes; ye shall be my man-at-arms." And then he said: "Give me the great sword and the dagger. I will make them serve as arms enough till we come to Belford."

The bondsman was intent upon his own bargaining.

"Then if I be a man-at-arms," he said, "I shall no longer be a bondsman."

"If you will give me back your lands, that is so," said his lord. He was buckling on

his sword and he hung the dagger from the belt. He drew the sword from the scabbard to see that it was not rusted in, and it came out very easily, for it had been lately greased.

"It is not very long since you used this sword in gentle feats of arms," the Young Lovell said.

"For using it," the man said, "I will not say that; cudgels and stones proved enough."

"Well, you shall tell me," Young Lovell said. "But now take my stirrup leather and let us go to Belford, for the sun is high."

The man took the stirrup, and whilst he ran lightly beside the great horse over the ling and the mosshags he called, a little coyly, his story up to his lord. It was a long tale, or he made it so, for there was a great deal to tell as to how a Milburn called Barty of the Comb and Corbit Jock had called the bondsmen of the Castle Lovell together, and of how they had said that in the absence of the Young Lovell they would pay no heriots, nor yet hens, nor yet bolls of wheat. So, when the bailiff of the Castle had come among their steadings and had sought to take heriots for the death of the Lord Lovell and tythes in hens and pence, they had greeted him at first civilly and had asked to see the charters and papers of their lands, saying that that was the custom upon the death of the lord.

That had occasioned some delay, since the charters and papers had all been taken to Cullerford, to the tower of Sir Walter Limousin that had married the Young Lovell's sister, the Lady Isopel. So a strong guard was sent to Cullerford and brought the charters back for the time. At beat of drum the charters, customs, the number of the rent-hens and such things had been read out by the bailiff and the lawyer called Stone, standing upon a little mound at the head of the village. From here these things had been read from time immemorial, even to the oldest ages when it had been called the Wise Men's Talking-place. The lawyer Stone had told them that the heritage of the old Lovell had fallen to those three, the Decies, called now Young

Lovell and the husbands of the ladies Isopel and Douce. They had, the lawyer read, fyled a suit against the late Young Lovell for sorcery, at a Warden's Court held in the Debateable Land on St. Mark's Day last gone. Since the Young Lovell had not appeared, that bill had been fouled and those three had taken his lands and all he had. And the lawyer Slone, standing upon that mound had bidden them go back to their byres and, peaceably, to do suit and service and pay their heriots and rent-hens and bolls of corn and the rest.

Then Barty of the Comb and Corbit Jock, his friend, and Robert Raket, had answered for the other bondsmen that they would think upon it. Then the three of them had ridden to Lucker, where there was a lawyer called Shurstanes, and had taken counsel with him. So when, upon the morrow, the bailiff of that Castle came again, those three cunning ones had met him courteously, and said that, for a suit of sorcery, a Warden's Court could not foul or find a bill. It must go before a court of the Bishop Palatine. They had great respect for the Lord Warden, but so it was and his court was only for raidings in the Marches. And for the dispossession of a barony that could only be tried (after the Bishop's Court in Durham had found a true bill of sorcery) in an assize of the King's justices travelling, Alnwick or wheresoever it might be. And any such finding of the assize court must be ratified by the most dreadful King of England in council before ever the Young Lovell could be dispossessed of his lands.

And those three cunning men had further answered the bailiff that they were very willing to pay rent-hens and tythes and heriots and pence and whatever was rightfully to be had of them. But first they must be assured of what the King said in his council. Else the Young Lovell, coming again, might have it all of them a second time, and that, being poor men, they could not well abide.

Then the bailiff went back to the Castle—he was not the old bailiff of the Lord Lovell who had been cast out of his dwelling in the King's Tower and had gone to

live at Beal—but it was a new bailiff that Sir Walter Vesey had brought from Haltwhistle, where he had been a surveyor's clerk.

But, in three days, the bailiff had issued again from the Castle and had gone to the byres of the poor widow of Martin Taylor, having about him ten pikemen for his protection.

Then Barty of the Comb and Corbit Jock and Richard Raket considered that if this thing were done, even upon the poorest of them, it might well serve as a precedent. They had called together all the bondsmen and their sons, and the number of sixty-seven men and all the women had come, being ninety in number, and the more noisy because it was a woman and a widow that the bailiff sought to oppress. So they had thrown stones at the pikemen who were bearing off the widow's donkey, and had broken out the bailiff's teeth, and driven them all back to the Castle.

And, in expectation that the bailiff should come again with a greater force, they had fetched from their hiding-places all their arms, and had them ready. But the people from the Castle never came again; without doubt they thought they were not strong enough; the bondsmen of Castle Lovell were all very notable reivers and fighting men.

Thus, if Sir Walter and Limousin and the Decies came out with such forces as they had, it was very likely—nay it was certain—that the men who were in the White Tower and still faithful to the Young Lovell would issue behind them into the Castle with their cannons, and so, if they might not take the Castle they might at least set free the Lady Rohtraut, and have her away by sea; for they of the Castle had no boats, and no fisherman would help them.

The Young Lovell listened as attentively as he might to what Hugh Raket had to say, and, at the end of the story, they were come to the hill top where the heather and marshy ground ceased. They saw before them great plains of green grass with people going about everywhere, and there getting their hay. And a little way away

there were going, along a trodden road, some ten armed men and another amongst them, all on horseback.

So the Lord Lovell kept himself apart, but sent Hugh Raket to look who these men were that went abroad upon his lands. Before him, but a little to the right was the town of Belford, but the monastery, with its great church and its great tower just in building, was a little to the South, near the wood called Newlands. Further to the South was the little hamlet of Lucker. He cast his eyes behind him and he frowned. For, apart from the sea and the sky, the two Castles and the islands set in foam, he had seen mostly the square tower of Glororum. A little company, in the clear weather, were riding out of this tower, and there the Lady Margaret dwelt. It seemed a weary thought to him since he remembered the lady with the crooked smile.

Hugh Raket came back to him and said that those ten men rode with a prisoner that had been convicted of theft in the Courts of the Nevilles. He had appealed to the Bishop's Courts in Durham, and so they were taking him there. Hugh Raket thought that it was a folly to make such matter of a felon. Let them hang him to the first tree and ride back. For this appeal, before they had the thief strung up, should cost the Neville lord, for guards and victual and horsemeat and harbouring, nothing less than ten pounds which was a great sum of money, and a folly too.

He was of opinion that, if such great lords as the Nevilles and the Darceys and the Young Lovell suffered none to appeal from their courts, but hung every man that came before them, it would be much better; for then there would be none of this monstrous outlay that was for ever occurring, and the great lords could excuse their poor bondsmen their rent-hens and their suit and service.

The Lord Lovell made Hugh Raket tell all over again his story of how they had contended with the bailiff. For, the first time, he had not been very attentive. But now he bent his brows firmly on the face of this cunning bondsman and gave him all his mind. And then it speedily appeared to him that it was this fellow that had really

moved in the resistance to the bailiff, and that Barty of the Comb and Corbit Jock had had little to do with it, for they were simple, slow fellows. So the Young Lovell frowned upon Hugh Raket and called him a naughty knave, for the Young Lovell prized good order in his dominions above everything.

The bondsman began to cry out then, that if they had paid their tributes, heriots and what not to the bailiff of the false pretenders, they would have none wherewith to pay the Young Lovell's bailiff when he came in turn as come he would.

"Now are you a very naughty fellow," the Young Lovell cut into his outcry, "for well ye knew ye thought I should never come again, but was away amongst the false Scots and dead, or amongst the false witches and worse. So ye were minded to escape all your suits and services for ever. And, for the bailiff of a great lord, proclaimed with drums upon his hill, he is no person for such scum and vermin as ye are to protest against, or against whom to cry out to lawyers. It is for you to do your services to those whom God for the time sees fit to set over you, and to our Lord the King and the Prince Bishop and the Lord Warden and others. For, if such fellows as you are to question whom ye shall pay and whom ye shall not pay, what peace or order should we have in these my lands? Nay, we shall see ye rise up against mine own bailiffs, so that, by God His sorrow, I must speedily come against ye with fire and brands...."

The Lord Lovell set his teeth and the bondsman shrank back. Nevertheless, he mumbled that they were very poor folk and could never pay two sets of masters, the one against the law and the other their rightful lord.

"Sir, you lie," the Lord Lovell said. "For very well ye know that such a parcel of rich scoundrels are not between Tweed and Tyne. For my Castle is a very strong Castle, and I have been and shall be to you a very powerful lord at whose name all the false Scots do tremble. So that, from the shadow of that my Castle, ye go burning and reiving into Scotland and the Marches, whereas none dare ever come against ye to

take what ye have by right or what ye have falsely stolen. I have had complaints against ye, in my father's time, that, in one winter season, you and Barty of the Comb and the other Milburns and Jock Corbit and his fellows and others that are upon my lands, with fellows from Haltwhistle, and God only knows where or under whose leadership (though I think it was a Wharton that led ye), you cast down or burned ninety-two towns, towers, stedes, barnekyns, and parish churches; ye slew one hundred and seven Scots, and prisoners taken were two hundred and nine, who were ransomed with whitemail and black; 2,700 horned cattle ye took, and 3,039 sheep, along with nags, geldings, goats, swine and eight hundred bolls of corn...."

Hugh Raket mumbled that he had had very little of all this.

"Filthy knave," his lord said, "I know not what you had but you had your share, you and Barty of the Comb and Jock Corbit. And well I know that I was—God help and save me—surety for you and my other men at the Warden's Court where complaint was made against ye. And well I know that when ye should have assoiled yourselves by arms, it was my armourer that had made the arms ye wore, and so war-like did ye appear that none came into the field against ye, the complainers being mostly Scots widows that ye had made. God keep and save me! now I wish I had never done those things for you, for you came away with no bills fouled against ye and ye had the Scots horned cattle, and black and white mail, and their nags and geldings and goats, and so ye have waxed fat, and would rise up against your betters."

The bondsman was silent, deeming that the better course before the visible anger of his lord, and the Young Lovell continued:

"If ye would not pay your just dues to me where then should ye be? If it were not for the fear of my name how should you be safe in the nights? And how may I make my name feared but by keeping a great store of knights and men-at-arms and bondsmen and my Castle very strong? Where should ye be if I had no lead upon my roofs, and the rain and frost destroyed my towers? Ye would be men undone, for the false

Scots would come burning and slaying, and the Lords Percy should take all ye had, and the Bishops Palatine would sell ye into slavery. So I rede ye well, pay me what ye owe me, or I will be in your steads and barnekyns a very burning torch, and upon your nags and geldings a death rider such as ye never saw."

The bondsman fell upon his knees before his lord's horse.

"Ah gentle lording," he cried out, "God forbid that we should not pay ye all that we owe. Then indeed were we all undone, for no men ever had lord so gentle and so kind."

"Foul knave," his lord said, "I know that if by my murder ye might well profit, murder me ye would, you and your fellows; but ye dare not for fear of the Scots."

The bondsman wept and groaned with his hands held up, and his hood fallen from his face.

"Now, by God's dreadful grace, that is not so," he cried. "For if I would have murdered ye—and I tremble at that word—might I not have done so even now, when I had the arms and weapons that I surrendered to you so that ye might have killed me? Ye are my very dread lord, and well I know it. For I have sate under the mass priest and heard his sermons, and well I know how that the lion is the symbol and token of Antichrist, the dragon of Satan, the basilisk of death, and the aspic of the sinner that shut his ears to the teachings of life. And have I not seen all these trampled beneath the feet of the Saviour in stone set upon the church door? And shall I be like unto the aspic and pass from life to hell ... the aspic that shutteth his ears? Alas, no! I do know that there are set over me, God and the Saints and the most dreadful King Henry, Seventh of that name, and the Bishop Palatine and the Border Warden and the monks of St. Radigund. But before all these men and next only to God, comes my most dread Lord Lovell of the Castle, and that if I do not serve him with all rights and dues, fire and sword will be my portion in this life or else the barren hillside and hell-flame in after time...."

The Lord Lovell said:

"Well, ye have learnt your lesson, the mass priest has taught you well."

Then the crafty bondsman, seeing that his lord's face was softened, and hoping, by means of his brother, still to escape his due payments, sighed and said:

"I would indeed, and before the saints, that I must give greater payments to my lord if there were none to other people. For there is no end to this payment of taxes and tithes. No sooner is my lord's bailiff gone than there come my Lord Warden's men seeking to take my horse for the King's wars in France—God curse that Lord Warden! And he gone, comes the Bishop Palatine's bailiff seeking payment for the milling of my corn at his mills on the Wear though the grists were all my own. Then comes the prior of St. Radigund's for a half tithe; then Sir John, the mass priest, for a whole. Then there are the market dues of Belford—for God His piteous sake, ah gentle lording, set us up here in Castle Lovell a market where we may sell toll free—we of the Castle. Now if I will sell some bolls of wheat and ship them to the Percies at King's Lynn, I must pay river dues at Sunderland according to the brass plate that is set in the Castle wall at Dunstanburgh. And if I pay that due it is claimed of me again a second time by the Admiral of the Yorkshire coast, saying that I should not have paid it the first, though God He knows what maketh the Admiral of Yorkshire in our rivers and seas. So with wood haulage to Glororem, and maltings to the King's Castle guard at Bamburgh, and a day's work of service here and two days in harvest there, God knows there is no end to a poor man's payments. But this I know..." and the peasant scowled deeply, "that my Lord of Northumberland may rue the day when he taxed us for the French wars. It is not that Lord Percy that shall live long."

The bondsman allowed himself these words against the Percy partly out of his great hatred, and partly because he knew his lord did not love this Earl of Northumberland for his treachery to King Richard upon Bosworth Field.

They were still halted at the edge of that plain that the lord might the better hear his bondsman. But the Young Lovell heard only parts of what the peasant said, for he was nearly lost in thought whilst the great white horse cropped the grass. At last the Young Lovell spoke.

"For what you say," he exclaimed, "as to the multiplicity of burdens there is some sense in it. And it might well be that I could buy some of these rights from the King, or the Prince Bishop, or others, as it chances. And, for a market, I am well minded to buy the right to hold one from the King. And so was my father minded before me. But you know very well that your gossip, Corbit Jock—like the tough rogues that ye all are—this Corbit Jock stood in the way of it. For the only piece of land I have that is fitting for a market lies under the wall of that my Castle on the way running through that my township of Castle Lovell. And amid most of that, as ye know, Corbit Jock has a mound of his holding. How his father got it I know not. But there, running into my Castle wall, is his mound, and on it a filthy barn leaning against my Castle wall, and before the barnekyn a heap of dung and a shed that might harbour five goats. The whole is not worth to him ninepence by the year, and it is far from his house and of no use to him. Yet, though I would well and willingly buy this of him, and my father would have bought it of his father that there we might have a market holden, ye know very well that this Corbit Jock will not sell and I have no power to take it from him. For, though I might get a broad letter from the King in his Council to take this mound by force, and to pay him full value, yet such a letter must cost me much gold, and it is doubtful if the King's writ, in such matters, runneth in these North parts. In the country of France, as I heard when I was there of the Sieur Berthin de Silly, such things are done every day by the King's letters. Nay, he was about then engaged in such a matter with a peasant, whom he dispossessed, but paid well and so has a fair market below his Castle of La Roche Gayon. And so it may well be in the South of this realm for aught I know. But here it is different, and I am not minded to have a hornet's nest of lawyers about my ears in order to give a

market place—that should cost me dear enough when I bought the rights of my lord the King—to such rogues and cozeners as you and Barty of the Comb and Corbit Jock and the widow of Martin Taylor. But, if ye will talk of the matter with Corbit Jock that he may sell his mound to me, I will promise you this, that you shall have your market. For I am your very good lord. And so no more of talk for this time."

He set his horse towards Belford, going decently by roundabout ways and paths from landmark to landmark that he might not trample down the long grass of which his bondsmen were making their hay all about him. Of late years, since his father had been too heavy to ride, the Young Lovell had considered much the matters of his lands, and he had done certain things, such as selling by the year to third parties of the rights to collect his dues, whether on malt, hens, salt, housing and of other things. And these new methods, of which mostly he had heard in the realms of France, Gascony and Provence, had worked well enough, for his incomings had been settled and the buyers of his rights had neither the power to steal his moneys nor so much to oppress the bondsmen as his own bailiffs had. So that, in one way and another, he could talk of these things to his bondsman whilst he thought of other matters. And one of these matters came into his head from that talk of the shed of Corbit Jock that leant against the very rock below his Castle wall.

From below the flags of the men-at-arms' kitchen, in the solid stone of the rocks, there ran a passage going finally through the earth not ten feet from the mound of Corbit Jock. The only persons that might know of this passage had been the dead lord and Young Lovell himself. The Decies might know of it, for the dead lord had prated of all things to his bastard. But it was odds that it would never come into the Decies' head, for he was a very drunken fellow and remembered most things too late.

Now if, under cover of night, the Young Lovell could introduce a dozen or twenty lusty fellows with picks and other instruments into Corbit Jock's barnekyn, in five

hours or less they could dig a way into that tunnel where it went under the ground. Then it was but pushing up the flagstones of the kitchen and they would be terrifyingly and surprisingly within the Castle whilst all the men-at-arms could be drawn off from those parts with a feigned attack on the outer walls. Or, if by chance there were men in that passage and guarding it, they could put into it a great cask of gunpowder and so kill them all. It was a task much easier than my lord of Derby and Sir Walter Manny had, who tunnelled under the Castle of la Réole for eleven weeks when Agout de Baux held it and yet could not take that place which is in Languedoc, though he had with him three Earls, five hundred knights and two thousand archers. The young Lovell thought he would have his Castle more easily.

And as he rode through the fields, the thoughts of war driving out those of the lady with the crooked smile, the siege of that Castle grew clear to him and like a picture, red and blue and pink, at the edge, or the head of a missal. At first, hearing that the White Tower was held for him with its gold and cannons, he had thought that, going by sea into that place, which was like a citadel over against a walled city, such as he had seen at Boulogne and Carcassowne and other places, he would set the cannon to batter down the walls and so enter in with what many he could get together.

But then it had seemed to him that that was his own Castle and, if he beat down its walls, he must build it up again at his own pains and great cost—for the building of castles is no light work to a lord, however rich. Moreover, his sisters would certainly set his mother in whatsoever part of the Castle he began to batter—so that he must either kill his mother or leave off; for that was the nature of his good sisters.

And then he began to think of stratagems and devices by which he might, more readily and at less cost, come to his desires. And so he cast about for a cunning device by the means of which he might get possession of the great gate of that Castle. But at that time he thought of none.

So he rode an hour through the fields, diverting himself with that picture in his mind

and with his bondsman stepping beside him. Then they came to a brook which was a bowshot from the frowning and high tower of Belford monastery. This was so new that the stones were still white and the scaffold poles and planks all about its crenellations. The Young Lovell stayed his horse by the streamside and spoke to his bondsman.

"Now this I will do," he said, "and you may set it privately about the countryside. For I know well, Hugh Raket, that it is you that are the masterful rogue in these affairs. Although in your story you have sought to make it appear that Barty of the Comb and others had a great share in devising a mutiny against that bailiff, yet it was you alone that stirred up the people. So let it be known to my men a fortnight hence, at nine at night they shall meet me at a certain place of which I will warn you later. And each man shall be armed as he is when he goes against the Scots. Then they shall come into my service for four or five days each, as if it were harvest time and they doing their services due to me. Then they shall sack a tower and have their sackings. And of the prisoners that they take in another place they shall have the ransoming, unless I prefer to hang those prisoners. In that case I will pay them what the ransoming would have been. And, for the men out of the sea, they shall be excused all rent-hens and services and heriots that they owe me. You—that is to say—have called them heriots, but rather they should be called deodanda. For a heriot is paid, the tenant being dead, by the tenant's heirs. But in this case it is the lord that is dead and what is paid is paid by the bondsmen as a fine or a forfeit, because they did not save the life of their lord."

The bondsman looked upon the face of his lord and marvelled what manner of man this was that, in the very conception of a martial scheme, could so hang upon the niceties of words. But the Young Lovell was a very sober, hardy and cunning lord. In all that he said he had his purpose. So that, before the peasant could speak and ask him for more particulars of that bargain, the young lord drew up Hamewarts' mouth from the water where he had drunk sufficiently and went on, lifting his hand in the

sunlight.

"So that it is in the nature of deodand rather than of heriot. And how it works is in this wise—that, every tenant having to pay and suffer upon the death of his lord, so he works very carefully to keep his lord alive. So mark you well that, Hugh Raket. For, if I succeed in this enterprise, two out of three of you shall be excused all rent-hens and deodands due at the death of my father. But if I fail and die—and, full surely I will not live if I fail—ye must all of you pay double, rent-hens, deodands and all. For then shall my sisters be my lawful heiresses and you must pay to them firstly all that you owe upon my father's death and then all that you owe upon mine who am your rightful lord. So you will be in a very pitiful case if I die, and it will well repay you to fight well for me. Mark that very carefully and report it where you will. But, if you think rather to make favour with my sisters, you know very well it is not they that will go to the sweat and cost of getting leave of our lord the King to hold markets. No, but they will get them to Cullerford and Haltwhistle and strengthen these places, and the Castle will be thrown down, and the Scots will come in upon you and you will be in a very lamentable case."

He paused and looked earnestly upon his bondsman. And then he continued:

"So I have spoken what was in my mind very soberly and I think well. For this business of being a great lord is not merely the riding about in summer time and the sacking of castles. But I have to think what is good for me to do for my people. For your good is mine and I study how to bring it about. And that I learned of the Lord Berthin de Silly when I was in France. Now think well upon what I have said and give me your answer, yea or nay. For I know well that the others will be guided by you."

The bondsman looked upon the stream and upon the monastery whose wall, like a castle's, lay new and square in the sunlight.

"I take thought," he said, "not that I doubt the upshot, but that I may find words. For

these matters are above my head that you have deigned to speak of. But of this, gentle lording, you may make sure that, at eight of the clock a fortnight hence, I will meet you at any place of which you shall send me the name. And there shall be with me sixty-eight or seventy stout men and well armed after our fashion."

He went on to try to say that this lording was a soldier so cunning and so great a knight that all the countryside said they would very gladly go a-riding or a-foot with bows, into Scotland or Heathenesse or the South, whatever his enterprise. But, since he was a better hand at grumbling at taxes than in praising his lord, he got little of it out. Nevertheless he made it plain that fighting men would be there on the appointed day, and so they parted—the lord riding across the stream to the monastery and the hind along it to Belford town.

II

The monk Francis was a small, dark, quiet man and not overlearned. He was rising thirty and he was always at work. The monastery of Belford was one given over rather to study and learning so that he, the active one, had always much upon his hands. But all such time as he could save from his duties he devoted to praying for the soul of the cousin he had slain by mischance, taking her for a deer and slaying her with an arrow, as she came to him amongst thick underwood to tell him that the Scots were marching southwards through the Debateable Lands.

That had been ten years before; nevertheless he had prayed that morning very reverently for his cousin's soul, walking up and down between the rows of haymakers and their cocks, in the sunshine; keeping one finger between the leaves of his book of prayers and yet marking diligently that none of the bondsmen slipped away into their own grass to use the scythe there. For it was marvellously fine weather, and such as had never in the memory of man been known in those parts for the heat of the sun and the dry clear nights. So that it was considered that the saints must be blessing that part. Nevertheless, these naughty bondsmen, owing some

three, some five days' labour of themselves and their wives and children to the monastery, must needs always be seeking to slip away to their own lands and doing their scythe work there. This they would do, if no monk watched them, though by so doing they robbed the monastery and went in danger of excommunication. But those, as the learned Prior said, were evil days, so that it might almost be said, as was said aforetime of the accursed robber who came against the Abbey and Church of St. Trophime, that he proclaimed that a thousand florins would get him more soldiers than seven years of plenary absolution from the Pope at Avignon. As to whom, said the Prior, Froissart, the chronicler declared that men-at-arms do not live by pardons nor set much store thereby. And as much might be said of their bondsmen.

For it was to be said for this monastery of Belford that the monks set more store by a great chronicle that they were assisting the monk Oswald to write—all of them searching here and there—than by the work done by their bondsmen, the good estate of the lands of the monastery or even the saying of the offices. They set more store by learning than by aught else.

Their lands were administered by laymen, so that they were often robbed, and when the monk Francis had come amongst them their revenues had been scarcely an hundred pounds by the year, or very little more. And, even at the time of his coming, the monks had been against receiving him, for they said that here was a man, though of piety undoubted, who could not tell the chronicle of Giraldus Cambrensis from that of the monk Florence, or Asser from Vergil and Flaccus. But, in those days, the Prior had over-ridden them, pointing out that this novice was very wealthy; that their kitchen and dinner tables were in a sad state, that they had no longer money enough to pursue, upon a princely scale, the succouring of the poor that sat upon their benches, and that they could with the greater serenity pursue their studies and sleep after meat, if they had amongst them a knight who had proven himself diligent upon his own affairs and had increased his substance in the world. For, though they had

butlers and cellarers amongst their number, yet the butler thought more of Brute than of his office and the cellarer was more minded to know where lay the bones of the British Kings than where were his keys. The ungodly came in and drank their wine in the cellar, yea, and carried away the mead in black-jacks.

These monks were portly, learned and somnolent, religious with a solid contempt for the unlearned—though they would upon occasion, being large men, line the walls and hew down attacking raiders with balks of timber, bars of iron and other weapons that drew no blood, those being, according to the canon, the proper arms for churchmen. These haughty monks accepted this Francis, who was known to the world as Sir Hugh Ridley, to be of their holy and learned brotherhood. But yet they regarded him as little more than a lay brother, though he wore the monk's frock, and they never voted for his advancement to any office such as sub-prior or the like.

Yet that day he had said two offices for them, had watched in the hay fields and was now coming in, at noontide to check accounts with the bailiff of the Priory about the great tower that was then in building. Seventeen monks there were and twenty lay brothers who were a lazy band. Thirty men-at-arms they had for their protection under the leadership of a knight, Sir Nicholas Ewelme, and they afforded shelter and victuals for 136 poor men, each of the seventeen monks being the patron of eight of them. These poor men sat in the sun on benches, each before their patron's room and should be served by him at meals. But this was nowadays, mostly done by the lay brothers, the learned monk laying one finger beneath a dish or vessel served to the poor men, so that it would not be said that the custom had died out.

The monk Francis, in his grey cloak came in by the little postern gate from the hayfields. He went to his rooms across the quadrangle; and he perceived how certain peasants in hoods of black cloth with belts of yellow leather were bringing in sacks and baskets. These sacks and baskets, as the monk Francis knew from the dress of those peasants, contained ammunition, small round balls of lead or, in the

alternative, well-rounded stones from the beach. These peasants were workers in the lead mines upon the lands of the monastery and it was so they paid tribute with balls to shoot against the false Scots if they came a-raiding to Belford.

And, as he was going into his room, before his benchful of poor men that stretched their legs in the sun, it happened that one of the peasant's bags burst open and all the round, leaden balls ran out under the archway. Then there was a great bustle, the guards on duty and the guards that came out of the chambers in the arch starting to pick up the balls. And the monk Francis smiled to think how universal is the desire in men to help in picking up small, round objects that fall out of a sack. So that if the false Scots had been minded to take that place, they could have done it very well then, all the guards and peasants and others being on their hands and knees, huddled together and the gate open. And it seemed to the monk Francis that that would be a very good stratagem for the taking of a tower or the gateway of a strong place.

One of the poor men had been a man-at-arms at Castle Lovell, but was put out now and masterless. He came to the monk Francis as he went in at his door, and reported that it was said that the young Lord Lovell had been seen, having come out of captivity of the false Gilbert Elliott. The monk said he hoped well that that was so, for then all the men-at-arms from Castle Lovell that were there could go again to his service, and that he was a very good lording and his good friend in God.

He wished to cut the matter short for that time because he knew that there awaited him in his outer room John Harbottle an esquire, and the receiver of many domains of the Earl of Northumberland. This esquire was come with the accounts for the building of the great new tower that the Earl had given to the monastery. But the former men of the Lord Lovell crowded before the monk and after him into his outer room, all bringing tidings that the Young Lovell had been seen to ride through his township. And, to the number of thirty or so, they clamoured all at once, asking for his advice as to how they should find their lord and what to do when he was found.

The monk Francis was very glad to think that the Young Lovell was come back, not only because he was his true friend but also because this rabble of disemployed men-at-arms was a burden to the monastery and he had it on his conscience that he let them bide there. For that he had done, so that they might serve his friend if he came back. That monastery was rather for the relief of poor men ruined by raiders, for travellers and for criminals seeking sanctuary. He would very gladly have had news of his friend whom he loved, and have settled the disposal of these sturdy, idle and hungry men. Yet, being a man of many affairs, he thought that the day could only be got through by doing all things in order, and behind all these ragged men in grey, he perceived the esquire, John Harbottle, a portly, bearded man in a rich cloak of purple, with a green square cap that had a jewel of gold. This John Harbottle appeared not greatly pleased at the clamour, for he also was a man of many affairs, being the Percy's receiver, and a very diligent one.

So, without many words, but quietly, the monk Francis drove out some of these fellows, and then, calling to a grizzled and dirty lay brother, he bade him drive out the rest and bar the door. And so he took John Harbottle by the sleeve of his purple coat and drew him through the doorway into his inner room and closed the door. Then there was peace.

This inner cell was a light room with no glass in the windows. Beside the bed head there was a shelf that had on it the water-bottle of the monk Francis, his plate, his cup, his napkin and the book of devotions in which he read during the dinner hour, his needles and bodkins, his leather book of threads and such things as he needed for the repair of his clothes. Beneath this shelf was a curtain, and this hid the spare garments of the monk, as the vestments in which he said the simpler offices, his spare breeches, stockings, braces, and belt. At the other side of the bed head was a large crucifix of painted wood, from which there hung Our Lord who was represented as crying out in a perpetual agony. Before the crucifix was a fald stool, that had across one corner, a great rosary of clumsy wooden beads, and upon it a

skull whose top was polished and yellowed by this monk's hands. For he had it there the better to be reminded of what death is when he prayed for the soul of the cousin he had slain.

When he had killed that woman he had been possessed rather with the idea of what he could do for her poor unhanselled soul than with agonies of ecstasy. And so, with a strong will he prayed, year in, year out, for her sooner relief from the pains of purgatory, knowing God to be a just Man and prayer most efficacious.

So, having brought John Harbottle in, he sat himself down on his three-legged stool of wood before his double pulpit. This had in its side a round opening, and in the interior such books, papers, or parchments as the monk Francis had in immediate use. He was of a very orderly nature, rather like a soldier than a priest.

He reached into the inside of his pulpit for his parchment that he was to peruse with John Harbottle, and that esquire stood behind him leaning over his back. Then John Harbottle said:

"Meseems the Master of Lovell has come back?"

"That I hear," the monk Francis answered.

"I think there is heavy trouble in store for him," John Harbottle said.

"I think there is but little," the monk answered. John Harbottle meant that the Earl Percy, in the Border Warden's Court, had given judgment against the Young Lovell. The monk meant that the religious of that countryside were not best pleased with the Earl Percy; they considered that sorcery was a matter for the courts ecclesiastical. But each was a man of few words, and without any more, the monk Francis unfolded his parchment. They went to their accounts, John Harbottle standing behind the monk and checking each item as he read it:

"And in the like payment of money to the prior of the house of the Brethren of St. Cuthbert, within the parish of Belford, near the wood called Newlands, for this year, (as well for that part of the work of the new tower there as for the carriage of stone

and other stuff by the contract, in gross) 100 shillings...." The Earl was giving the tower to the monks, they employing two contractors called Richard Chambers and John Richardson to build it for them and the Earl paying the accounts.

"Just!" John Harbottle said, and the monk read on—

"Carting four loads of lead, 24s. 6d.; bought eight loads of stone, 10d.; iron, with the workmanship of the same, for the doors and windows, 8s.; bought seven locks 4s. 2d., with keys; six latches 12d.; and snecks and other iron 4s. 2d...." So the monk read on, and the receiver nodded his head, saying, "Just."

Once he said—

"I wish I could have things so cheap for my lord."

"Then," the monk answered, "you must haggle as I do and in God His high service."

So they made out between them that all these things, and making the arch between the great chamber and the tower came to £10 6s. 4d., and since they owed Robert Chambers and John Richardson already £17 13s. 4d., the whole payment then to be made was £27 19s. 8d.

The esquire, John Harbottle, pulled his money bag from beneath his girdle and counted out the money, throwing it on to the bed, for there was no table in that cell.

Then he drew from his belt two papers and so he said:

"My lord will have you buy from Christiana Paynter the armorial bearings of my lord to set up upon the tower, and that shall cost you 3s. And this you shall have carved upon the same stone:

"'In the year of Xt. jhu MCCCCLXXXV

This tower was builded by Sir Henry Percy

The IV. Earl of Northumberland of great honour and worth

That espoused Maud the good lady full of virtue and beauty

... Whose soule's God save.'"

"That shall be set up," the monk said.

"Then," John Harbottle said, "there is this you may do to convenience me who have been your favourer in all things. That you may the earlier come to it, read you this paper which I have written out, but in English, for I have no Latin beyond mass-Latin."

"What we may do to please you," the monk said, gravely, "that we will, if it be not to the discredit of God."

"It is rather to His greater glory," the esquire said.

So the monk took the paper and read:

"The Prior of Belford, Patent of XX merks by yere. Henry Erle of Northumberland...." The monk glanced on, and his eye fell upon the words, "myn armytage builded in a rock of stone against the church of Castle Lovell," and, later on ... "the gate and pasture of twenty kye and a bull with their calves sukyng,"—"One draught of fisshe every Sondaie in the year to be drawen fornenst the said armytage, called the Trynete draught...."

The monk looked up over his shoulder at the esquire.

"I perceive," he said, "that you would have us to take over the commandment of my Lord's hermitage at Castle Lovell."

John Harbottle looked down a little nervously at his hands. That was what he sought.

"I have heard that the holy hermit is dead?" the monk asked.

"It is even that," John Harbottle said. "I am worn with the trouble of riding over from Alnwick to Castle Lovell. It is a great burden, yet there is the hermitage that must be kept up for the honour of the Percies."

"That," the monk said, "was because it was esteemed a privilege to house a holy anchoret."

"Then," John Harbottle asked, "may not my lord save his soul as well by making

your brotherhood a payment to watch over the holy man?"

"I am not saying that he may not," the monk said.

"Then of your courtesy, do this for me," John Harbottle said, "for it is a troublesome matter. This last year, once a month, news has been sent me that this holy man was dead. Then I have ridden over to Castle Lovell and lost a day, calling into the hole in his cell to see if he would answer 'Et cum spiritu tuo,' as his manner was. And, after a whole day lost, he will answer; or maybe not till the next day, and there are two days lost when I should be getting rents or going upon my lord's business. And I am not the man to have much dealing with these holy beings. A plain blunt man! It gives me a grue to be thus calling in at a little hole. And the stench is very awful. I do my duty by the blessed sacraments on Sundays and feast days. And if he be dead, I must find a successor. It will not be very easy for me to find a man to go into that kennel and be walled up. And never again to come out...."

The monk looked again at the paper with the particulars of the gift.

"Well, I will think of it," he said, "or rather I will commune with the worshipful Prior and Sub-Prior. But I would have you know that if they agree to do this thing it is upon me that the pain and labour will fall, for there is none else in this monastery to do it. So I must go over to Castle Lovell once by the week at least to see that the holy hermit is given bread and water. And if he be truly dead it is I that must find his successor; that will not be easy."

"But twenty marks by the year for doing it," John Harbottle said, "that is a goodly sum to fall to your brotherhood."

"I do not understand," the monk answered him, "for this patent is not very clear—whether that twenty marks is in addition to the grassground, the garden and orchard at Conygarth, the pasturage of kine, bulls, horses and the draughts of fishes. Or are the draughts of fishes and the rest to be taken as of the value of twenty marks by the year?"

"It is the last that is meant," John Harbottle answered, a little dubiously.

"Then it is not enough," the monk said firmly and made to roll up the paper, "I cannot advise the Prior to accept this gift. For the monastery must lose so much of my time and prayers, though, God knows, those are little worth enough; yet I, a not very holy man, am all that these saintly brothers have to care for their temporalities."

John Harbottle grumbled some retort beneath his breath, and then he sighed and pushed the paper with his hand.

"Then take and write," he said, and when the monk had mended his pen he dictated. "'And in addition the said stipend of XX markes by year to be taken and received of the rent and ferm of my fisshyng of Warkworth, by thands of my fermour of the same for the tyme beynge, yerly at the times there used and accustomed to, even portions. In wytnes whereof to these my letters patentes, I the said erle have set the seale of my names.' ... That," John Harbottle continued, "if you will agree to, you shall have written out fair on parchment, and so the matter ends."

"I think it will end very well," the monk answered, "and the Earl of Northumberland shall have honour of it in Heaven. And, since I am about to do this thing in your service, and to relieve you of travels and the fear of a holy man, having no advantage myself and seeking none, since I am a monk, so I will take it as a kindness if you will do, for my sake, what you can at odd moments to advantage the cause of my friend, this Young Lovell, who is lately come, as I have heard, from prison amongst the false thieves of Rokehope and Cheviot."

John Harbottle did not answer this, for he thought there was little love lost between his lord and that young lording. Within himself he thought that, if the religious should espouse that lording's cause it would be a good thing for the Percy to be advised to let him be, and this monk had great voice with the lower order of people whom the Earl had cause to fear, since they were sworn to have his blood because of the taxes that, in the King's name, he laid upon them. But he did not speak upon

those matters, saying aloud:

"It is strange, though I know it to be true, that my lord shall have honour in heaven by reason that a man be found to be walled up in a space no larger than the kennel of my hound Diccon and so live out his life."

"My friend," the monk said, "I may not listen to you further, for that would come near conversing with a heretic. And the penalty for such conversation is that at every Easter and high feast I must stand beside the high altar, in a robe of penitence, having in my hand a rod or peeled wand ten foot in length and other penances, a many I must do."

"God forbid!" John Harbottle said, "for I am no heretic and no more than a plain, blunt man. And surely these things are hard to understand."

"My son," that monk said, and by the creasing of his tight lips John Harbottle knew that he had been pleasant with him before and had not meant in earnestness to call him a heretic. "Every day you hear of the ways of God that are hard to understand. You have heard to-day or yesterday of the miracle that was wrought on Tuesday in the Abbey of our own town of Alnwick—how that the foot of Sir Simon de Montfort, that there they have and that is incorruptible, cured a certain very wealthy burgess of Newcastle called Arnoldus Pickett. For he was not able to move his foot from his bed or put his hand to his mouth or perform any bodily function. And so, in a dream he was bidden to go to your Abbey of the Premonstratensian Brotherhood and the foot of Simon de Montfort should cure him. Which, when it was known to the canons, there serving God, in order that this merchant might approach more easily—for as yet he heavily laboured in his lameness—and lest he should suffer too much, two of them brought it reverently to him, in its silver shoe. But, before the patient was able to approach for the purpose of kissing it, and by the mere sight of the slipper, on account of the merits of Simon de Montfort, he was restored. And this, to-day, our monks are writing in their chronicle and praising God. And consider

what glory there will be in this foot of Simon de Montfort when it is reunited to his whole body after the great judgment, by comparison of its efficacy before Doomsday, when such healing virtue went out of it as a dead member, concealing itself in a slipper of silver...."

The monk was determined very thoroughly at once to abash and edify this minion of the Earl of Northumberland and so to bring that Lord more thoroughly to the reverence of the Church and more particularly of the Bishop Palatine with whom these monks had a great friendship. And this not only in the matter of the Young Lovell, where the Earl had sought to give judgment in a matter that was full surely ecclesiastical and not pertaining to the lay Court of the Border Warden. So that monk continued in a loud voice:

"Shall you seek to understand these miracles that are of daily happening and occur all round you, God knows, often enough? For in the monastery or priory of Durham they have not only the most famous bodies of St. Cuthbert and St. Bede, but the cross of St. Margaret that is well known to be of avail to women that labour with child. And in the Cella of Fenkull they have St. Guthric, and in Newminster the zone and mass-book of St. Robert, and in Blondeland the girdle of St. Mary the Mother of God. And all these cure, according to their marvellous faculties, the halt, the blind, those who have the shaking palsy and those with the falling sickness. And in Hexham they have the Red-book of Hexham, and at Tynemouth they have not only the body of St. Oswin, King and martyr in a feretory, but also the spur of St. Cuthbert, the finger of St. Bartholomew and the girdle of Blessed Margaret.... And all these things being under your very eyes or at a short day's journey, you will question the glory and the strangeness of God and you will set yourself up—oh, stiffnecked generation! ..."

A gentle knocking came at the cell door and the old and dirty lay-brother who was in the outer room pushed it ajar. They heard immediately a great outcry from beyond

and the lay brother whispered that, at the outer door stood the Young Lovell asking for admittance with all his men-at-arms around him.

The monk opened a little door in the wall that gave into a passage leading to the church of the monastery. Through this he led John Harbottle, and at the entrance to the church he let him go. For, because John Harbottle was receiver for the Earl of Northumberland, he was not much beloved by the Lovell men-at-arms, and the monk Francis feared that they might offer him some violence now that their spirits were inflamed, and their stomachs rendered proud and rebellious by the return of their lord who should take them into his service again. And when the monk had thrown himself down before the image of the Mother of God that was in the Lady Chapel near that entrance, and had laid there long enough to say twelve "Hail Maries," he arose and went back to his cell and bade the lay brother let in Young Lovell.

III

When the Young Lovell was admitted to the inner cell, a fine smile of friendship came over the monk's hard face. He loved this young lord for his open features, his frank voice, his deeds of arms and his great courage. He stretched forward his hand towards the Young Lovell, but, in his faded scarlet cloak, and with his pierced cap in his hands the young lord went down upon his knees and wished to confess himself.

The monk Francis blessed him very lovingly, but said that he did not wish to hear a confession, and that the Young Lovell should seek a holier man. But he was ready to hear the Young Lovell's true story, and to take counsel with him as to how all things might be turned to the greater glory of the Most High. He observed with concern the saddened and blank eyes of his friend, his faded clothes, in which he appeared like a figure in a painted missal that the dampness of a cell had rendered dim. And he was determined, if he could, to render aid to his friend, for twice already he had befriended the young man, once after the battle of Kenchie's Burn, and he had done

it since. For indeed, when he had had time, he had gone to the township of Castle Lovell, and had talked with the lawyer Stone and with the witch called Meg of the Foul Tyke. With the Decies he had not talked, but he had heard him on that day in the Great Hall and knew him for a false knave. He had observed, too, that the stories of the lawyer Stone and of the old women did not in all things tally. One talked of the naked witch as having black hair and six paps; the other said she was most fair and had no deformity. The lawyer placed the witches' fire to the left of the large rock called Bondale that was before the chapel, and the old woman said it was to the right, with the wind from the east, so that if it had been a real fire there must be the marks of burning upon it.

The monk had asked his questions very cunningly, rather as a religious anxious for information as to the ways of sinners, in order that he might the better detect and punish them, than as one desiring to sift their answers. But he was very certain that they were evil liars, and he was sure that, were they brought before the Bishop's courts in Durham, he would be able to bring their perjuries to light. So he was very certain that the lording had been taken by Gib Elliott and held for ransom, and well he knew that no one in the Castle would ransom him, so that it was small wonder if they had heard nothing of it. The Decies and his confederates would conceal any news they had from Elliott, and perhaps slay his messenger or keep him jailed that the outlaw might be angered and slay the Young Lovell. So that it was with a great cheerfulness that now he offered to have brought to his friend, food and clean linen and hot, scented water, and a serving man to wash his feet; for he thought he must be come from far after having fared ill enough.

But the Young Lovell would have none of these things, neither would he be persuaded to rise from his knees; but, being there, he said a long prayer to Our Lord that hung from the crucifix and appeared in an agony. And the monk sat himself at the foot of the box of straw covered with a rug that was his bed and again marvelled at the face of his friend. For the long, brown hair was blanched by the sun, the

closed eyes were sunken, the lids gone bluish, the lips parched as if with desire. And so, whilst the lording prayed, the monk sat on the bed foot. Then he heard a rustle of wings and, on the sill of the glassless window, he saw a blue dove and, in the sunlight without, a fair woman that peered in at that window and smiled—all white and with the sunlight upon her.

The monk got down from the bed foot, to reprove her courteously, for no woman should be seen there between the church and the monk's cells. But then he considered that it might be a penitent of one of the other monks, and when he looked towards the window again, the woman and the dove alike had vanished from the view of that window, and he judged he had better let the matter be. And so he sat down upon the bed foot.

The Young Lovell groaned several times in his praying, and most he had groaned when that fair woman had looked in at the cell. His breathing made a heavy sound in the silent room. And then he cried out in a great, lamentable voice:

"I have been with a fairy woman! Three months long I have looked upon the whiteness of a fairy woman! Who shall absolve me?"

The monk slipped down from the bed.

"Ah misericordia!" he cried out and: "Jesu pity us!"

His face went pale even to the edges of his lips and, involuntarily, he moved backwards away from that sinner until he crouched against the wall. Then they were silent a longtime and the large flies buzzed in at the window and out.

Then the monk took his courage to himself again.

"But if you truly repent," he said quickly, "lording, and my friend, and sinner, you may be pardoned."

And since the young lord still kept silence he asked many swift questions: What sort of woman was this? Where was her bower? How had she entertained him and he

her? Had he eaten of fruits from her dishes? Had he done deeds of dishonesty with a willing heart? How did he know her for a fairy woman? Had he partaken of magic rites; sprinkled the blood of newborn babies; taken gifts of gold; witnessed a black mass; gathered fernseed?

The monk asked all these questions with a breathless speed that they might the more quickly be affirmed or denied. And at last the young lord cried out as if in an agony:

"All that is a child's tale! All that is a weary folly! It was not like that...."

And then he cried again:

"I say I looked upon this woman, clothed in the white of foam and the gold of sun.... I looked but spoke no word.... Three months went by and I knew not of the wheeling of the stars, or the moon in her course, nor the changes of the weather.... I had seen Sathanas and Leviathan and Herod's daughter in the chapel...."

The monk now came more near him and with a calmer eye regarded him. He had known of knights and poor men, too, that had had visions born of fastings, vigils, hot suns and the despair of heaven. For himself he had desired none of these visions, for to each, as he saw it, God gives his vocation. But some that had seen such visions had been accounted holy and had taken religious habits; others, truly had been deemed accursed and burned or set in chains; and yet again others had proved later true knights of God, had fought with Saracens and the heathen, and at their deaths had been accounted saints. And he looked upon his friend whom he had loved, and he considered how tarnished and stained he was with the air and with fasting. And he remembered how, in the tents before and after Kenchie's Burn, they had talked together. Then it had seemed to him, from the way Young Lovell spoke, that it was as if it were more fitting that he, the monk, should be a rough soldier, and that the esquire and lord's son a churchman.

For the Young Lovell had talked always of high, fine and stainless chivalry, of the Mother of God as the Mystic Rose, of the Tower of Ivory, and of the dish that had

the most holy blood of God. Of none of these things had Sir Hugh Ridley that was afterwards the monk Francis, heard tell, when he had been a knight of the world. He had considered rather his forbear Widdrington that fought upon his stumps at Chevy Chase as the very perfect Knight; and, rather than of the death of King Arthur of Bretagne, he was accustomed to sing:

"Then they were come to Hutton Ha'!

They ride that proper place about,

But the Laird he was the wiser man

For he had left na' geir without."

But this young Master of Lovell, who had lain in those tents, had travelled far and seen our father of Rome and the courts of France and the envoys of Mahound. Therefore, he might well have other knowledges. And certain it was that the monk Francis had never heard him speak otherwise than decorously of the lords set over him, charitably of the poor, firmly of his vassals and bondsmen and with yearning and love for Our Lady, St. Katharine, Archangel Michael, St. Margaret and of our blessed Lord and Saviour and St. Cuthbert.

And, remembering all these things, the monk Francis considered that too much fasting and too much learning might have made this lording mad. And he deemed it his duty rather to bring his mind back to regaining of his lands so that he might prove a valiant soldier in the cause of the Bishop Palatine and Almighty God.

Therefore he said now:

"Tell me truly, ah gentle lording and my son, what it was that befell you. So I may the better judge."

And when the monk heard first how the young man had watched his harness within the chapel, that alone seemed to him a proof of a midsummer madness such as a reasonable confessor should have persuaded him against. And he gained in this

conviction the more when he heard how Behemoth, Leviathan, Mahound, Helen of Troy, the Witch of Endor and Syrians in strange robes had visited the young man and had tempted him there in the darkness. All these things were strange to the good and simple monk whose knowledge of sorceries ended at crooked old women and the White Lady of Spindleston. He knew not more than half the names of the Young Lovell's hobgoblins.

Then he marked how the young man spoke of a woman's face that looked in on him in the chapel and seemed to tempt him, and the monk considered that that might happen to any man, for had he not, a minute gone, seen a woman, fair enough to tempt any man to follow her, looking into his cell. For he remembered her as the fairest woman he had ever seen, with dark and serious eyes; though she smiled mockingly too, which was what, in the life of this world, this monk had asked of women. And he had yet to learn that the desire to follow after a fair woman was, in a gallant lording, any mortal sin, else Hell must be fuller than the kind Lord Jesus would have it Who died to save us therefrom.

Thus all things hardened this monk in the conceit that the Young Lovell suffered more from over fasting than from any cardinal sin, and when it came to the story of the very fair woman sitting upon a white horse amidmost of doves and sparrows and great bright flowers, though it gave him some pause to think that this had lasted for ninety days, yet it abashed him very little.

Then the Young Lovell was done with his tale. The monk asked him first of all:

"Now tell me truly, my gentle son; how can you tell this lady from one of the kind saints or from the angelic host?"

"In truth I could not tell you that," the young lording said, "it is only that I know it."

"And if you spake no word with her," the monk asked further, "how may you know that her thoughts were wicked? Had you not fasted long? Had you dwelt especially upon lewd thoughts before that time? Should you not have been, if any poor mortal

may be, in a degree of as much grace as we may attain to?"

"It is true," the Young Lovell said, "that I had done my best, but we are all so black with sin as against any true and perfect knights...."

The monk would not let him finish this speech.

"Hear now me, Young Lovell," he said, "and what my reading of these matters is. I am not thy confessor, but until a better shall come I order you to believe what I say and that is your duty as a Christian man. And I bid you believe that this lady was from heaven itself, and if not one of the saints then one of the blessed angels of God. And how I read that is this: Firstly, is it not written that the hosts of heaven shall be clad in white raiment, with the glory of the sun about them and the light of the dawnstar upon their faces? And as for the doves, is it not written that those fowls of the air are the symbol of innocence, it being said: 'Be ye wise as the serpent and free of guile as the dove'? For the sparrows we have the words of our Lord God His well-loved Son, that the Almighty had them in His especial keeping, and many such may well flutter about the fair courts of heaven. So that if you had seen serpents that are horrible monsters you need not have been abashed, yet you saw only doves and sparrows. And for the white horse, it was upon such a beast that the blessed Katharine, the spouse of Our Lord, rode to the confrontation of the forty thousand doctors. It may well have been that most happy and gracious Lady; though if you did not mark that she had a wheel, which as I think is the symbol of that saint, perhaps it was not she. Or again it may have been. For without doubt the blessed saints in heaven are relieved of the labours of bearing what were their symbols here on earth. And indeed that is most likely. And for the great flowers, what should they be but the blessed flowers of paradise itself. And that they should be in that place is in nowise wonderful. Are we to think that, having been once set around by those blossoms like the jewels of Our Lady's diadem, any one of the hosts of heaven would willingly go without them? Not so, but assuredly our Lord God will let them

have the company and stay of such flowers, Who hath promised to those bright beings an eternity of such bliss as shall surpass mortal imaginations....'

The monk had spoken these words with a tone nearly minatory and full of exhortation. But now he approached the Young Lovell and set his arms around his shoulder and spoke soft and in a loving fashion.

"My beloved son in religion whom I should hold as a brother if I were of this world," he said, "I cannot say if you were pure in heart at that season, yet I hope you were. If you were you may take great pride and be very thankful. If you were in a state of sin then consider this for a warning and amend very much your ways. And it may well be that the hosts of heaven who are all round us and watch very attentively that which we do on earth—that they are and have been concerned to see how that you regard too little the needs of the Church that is militant here in earth, forgetting it in the too frequent contemplation of the Church Triumphant that is in heaven. For I think that your tales of chaste knights of Brittany and the pursuers of the Holy Grail are rather glimpses vouchsafed to us of how it shall be with the Church Triumphant than of anything that can be until that day. In these North parts the times are very evil and we have more need of a great lord and one ready to be a strong protector than of ten Sir Galahads seeking mysteries, though that too may be a very excellent thing in its time and place. Yet I would rather see you Warden of these Marches, since the one that we have, though an earl pious and generous enough, turns rather his thoughts in fear to the King in London Town than in love and homage to the Prince Bishop that is set above us. And I make no doubt that it was to exhort you to this that that angel or that saint came down. And, in token, you have, for the time being, lost your lands to very godless people who have sought to dispossess you by having recourse to the courts temporal upon a false charge. You say to me that ever since you saw that lady's face this world has seemed as a mirror and an unreality to you so that you cannot cease from sighing and longing. I will tell you that those very same words were written of Gudruna, Saint, Queen and Martyr

of these parts. Being an evil and lascivious queen she had in sleep a vision of the joys of paradise and so she said that she never ceased from sighing for them all the days of her life. Yet nevertheless that did not hinder her from waging war against the heathen and winning a great part of this kingdom from Heathenesse, so that she converted forty thousand souls. And, for the fact that three months have passed, I will have you remember the case of the founder of this monastery—blessed Wulfric. For walking in the fields here, Our Lady came to him and so he remained upon his knees by the space of forty and nine days in a swoon or trance, being fed by such as passed by or as gradually flocked there to see that wonder. And so, being restored to himself, he said that Our Lady had but just gone from him, having staid, as he thought, but a very short while. And that is explained by this, that to the dwellers in heaven and in the sight of God, even as marriage is not, so time is not, it being written that in His courts one day is as a thousand years. So it may well be that that angel—and by that I think it may have been rather an angel than a saint—having no knowledge of time and none either of the necessity of mankind for shelter or food—for the heavenly host have no need of either—so this fair, pretty angel in staying ninety days before you may have thought it was but the space of a minute, for it is only God that is all-wise. Yet may God, observing these things from where He sate in Heaven, and desiring neither to abash the angel nor to starve and slay you, have conveyed nourishment to you by the hands of other angels and have rendered mild the winds. And now I think of it, in these last ninety days, there has been very little or no rain at all so that the hay harvest and fenaison is a month before its time and all men have marked this for a marvel. So I read these wonders, and so I command you to regard them until you come upon a man more holy, to interpret them otherwise. And for that, if I be wrong, we shall very soon know it, for I will have you go with me—as soon as I shall have arranged certain matters of this monastery—to the Prince Bishop himself in Durham. And there, if he do not find me at fault, we will devise with him how best you may again be set in your inheritance.

For I will tell you this. A fortnight gone I had speech with that gracious prince for a space of two days touching the affairs of the diocese, and he said that he would very well that you should be set back in your lands. And I ask you this: If such a mighty prince and wise and reverend servant of God shall say that, commending you, what would it be in you but a very stiff-necked perseverance in humility and the conviction of sin to gainsay him, a prince palatine that hath spent many years in the city of Rome before the face of the pope himself?"

The Young Lovell sighed deeply. In all those long speeches he had heard rather the voice of a friend that sought to enhearten him than that of a ghostly pastor and comforter. And at last he said:

"For what you say, father, of my retaking my Castle I will do it very willingly, and so I will administer my lands that, with the grace of God, it shall be to His greater glory, if so I may. And for what you have bidden me believe I will seek to believe it, but strong within me is the thought of what before was in my mind that I may not change it all of a piece. Nevertheless, by prayer and fasting I may come to it."

The monk, who had observed his penitent's face to light up at the mention of his Castle, said quickly:

"Why, I think you have fasted enough," and so he bade the lay brother to bring there quickly wine and meat, and hot water to wash with, and clean linen if they had any good enough. And so he bade the young lord lay off the heavier of his garments and unbrace his clothes, for it was hot weather. And so food and a table were brought and the lay brother washed the feet of the lord, whilst he reclined upon the bed-foot. Whilst he ate, little by little the religious brought the Young Lovell to talk of how he should have arms and money for his men-at-arms and other costs.

And the Young Lovell saw that he had still in his cap his string of great pearls and this he pledged to the monk Francis for the sum of two hundred pounds.

Of this sum, one hundred pounds the monk Francis had of the funds of the

monastery, and he could just make it with the twenty-eight pounds that John Harbottle had paid him. This hundred pounds the Young Lovell should take with him upon his adventure to Durham and the other hundred should remain with the good monk. And this should pay for the keep of thirty men for a fortnight, at the rate of fourpence a man, and that would be seven pounds. And the men should have arms from the armourer of the monastery and from the men-at-arms there until they came to arms of their own. And if they should return those arms unbroken and unharmed the Lord Lovell should pay for their hire at the rate of one shilling the man per week, and all that should be matter of account out of the hundred pounds that remained.

So the monk Francis bargained for the good of his monastery, for he held it against his conscience to give these things for less. Moreover, he perceived that in talking of these things the Young Lovell appeared to come back to life. Then the Young Lovell told this news to his men-at-arms who stood before the door.

Afterwards the Young Lovell bought of the knight of the monastery, Sir Nicholas Ewelme, some light armour for his horse; and for himself he bought a light helmet, a breastpiece and an axe, which were not very fair, but sufficient to make the journey to Durham. And all these things having taken many hours, it was decided that they should put off their departure until the next day at dawn when the Young Lovell should take with him ten of his men-at-arms. By that evening, the news of his being at the monastery having spread, more than twenty more of his men, with an esquire called Armstrong, came there and entered his employment.

IV

The Lady Margaret of Glororem had that day, near dawn, abandoned hope that the Young Lovell, her true love, would come again, and for that reason she rode south to Durham to set about the releasing of the Lady Rohtraut in good earnest. She had been unwilling to do this before hope departed of his returning, because he was her lord and might have plans for the retaking of his Castle and the rest, and any action

that she might take might hinder these.

She had said that she would ride to Durham on the day when the Young Lovell should have been ninety days away and that was the ninety-first. That night she lay at Warkworth where she had the hospitality of the Percies. She had with her an old lady called Bellingham and three maids with forty men-at-arms under the direction of the husband of the lady called Bellingham, an old esquire who had never come to be a knight, but yet a very honest man and capable for such a post. For if he had little skill or desire to take fortresses or the like, he could very well set out his men so as to drive off any evil gentry.

And that night the Lady Margaret, after supper—which was late because it was the time of the haying when every man of the largest castle must be in the fields whilst daylight lasted—the Lady Margaret held a hot discussion with the Earl of Northumberland. The Lady Maud his wife was by, that was daughter to the Earl of Pembroke, and she sought to moderate at once the anger of that lord and the importunities of that hotheaded damsel. The Lady Margaret would have the Percy raise his many with cannon and siege apparatus and march against Castle Lovell to release her aunt, the Lady Rohtraut who was also that Earl's cousin. And so she exhorted him, in the light of a great fire of sea coal, for the nights were chilly enough if the days were fine.

She said many words in that sense to the Earl before he answered her. At last he spoke to a page standing behind her, that was son to the esquire, John Harbottle, and gave him a key and bade him bring a little box that he would find in an aumbry in the tower where his muniments and charters were locked up. For this Earl, according as he was at Alnwick which he did not much love, or at Warkworth where he much delighted to be, so he moved his window-glass, his muniments and his charters from the one Castle to the other, and for their greater safety they were placed in the tower called the Bail. Night and day watch was kept in the chambers that were both above

them and below, with the best ancients and lieutenants that he had, keeping watch upon the men-at-arms. So high a value did his lord set upon his charters.

And when the box was brought to him he opened it with another key and took out certain old and stained papers and parchments which he bade this lady read. And she could make little of them because there was no light but the firelight, for the Earl and his wife were accustomed to go to bed after supper.

When she could not read them, the Earl took them from her and read them easily enough, for he had them nearly by heart, though the writing was cramped and nearly fourscore years of age, or more. And once, whilst he read them, the Earl looked over the edge of a parchment at the Lady Margaret and asked her if she had heard of a Percy called Hotspur. She answered, yes, indeed; so he read out lugubriously what was in that writing.

"The King to the mayor and sheriffs of York, greeting: Whereas of our special grace we have granted to our cousin Elizabeth who was the wife of Henry de Percy, Chevalier, commonly called Hotspur, the head and quarters of the same Henry to be buried: we command you that the head aforesaid, placed by our command upon the gate of the city aforesaid you deliver to the same Elizabeth, to be buried according to our grant aforesaid." And, with a droning voice the Earl followed other pieces of the body of that Henry Percy about the realm, a certain quarter of him having been placed upon the gate at Newcastle, another at Chester, another at Shrewsbury, and so on. And when he had done with Hotspur, the Earl went on to read of the fate of the father of Hotspur, Henry, the Fourth Lord Percy of Alnwick. This lord fell at Bramham Moor fighting against King Henry IV, as Hotspur had done at Hately Field, fighting against the same King four years before. This lord's head and quarters were placed upon London Bridge: one quarter upon the gate of York, another at Newcastle, and yet further pieces at King's Lynn and Berwick-on-Tweed. Lugubriously and in a level voice this Earl read out all the writs that he had

collected, whether by the King's hand or Privy Seal, whether of setting up or for burial. He looked gravely upon the Lady Margaret and asked her what she learned from them. And when she said that she learned that those Percies were very gallant men, he shook his head and said that he found from them this lesson, that it is not healthy for a Percy to rebel against a King Henry that slew a Richard. For, just as Henry IV had put down King Richard II by the aid of the Percies that afterwards rose against him, so King Henry VII had put down and slain King Richard IV on Bosworth Field with the aid of that Percy that there spoke to her. And very surely it would be upon no Bramham Moor or Hately Field that that Percy would fall, for he was determined to be a very good liege man of King Henry VII and that was all he had to it.

Then the Lady Margaret said boldly that, for this present King she knew nothing of him, nor either could anybody, seeing that he had reigned but a little while. The Percy made sounds of disagreement and anger, for he was afraid of having such things said in his Castle, and moreover desired to be in his bed.

She exclaimed loudly that she regretted having seen the day when a great lord should talk of loyalty to a King not a year on the throne, where they, the great barons of this realm, had set him. For the Percies were a respectable family though they were not of the standing and worth, in those parts, of the Eures, the Dacres, or the Nevilles; they had acquired the most part of their lands by a gradual purchase of Bishop Anthony Bek, who betrayed his ward the young Vesey, so that the Veseys ever since were poor enough and some of them as they knew had taken to evil ways. Still the Percies had had some very good knights amongst them, such as that Hotspur and his father Henry, and others.

At that point the Countess Maud sought to calm her, but the Lady Margaret would not be quieted. For she said that this was what all the North part was saying, and it was better for the Earl to hear it than to sit all day surrounded by flatterers of the

make of John Harbottle and his like, or than setting up tablets on the walls of towers as John Harbottle was doing at Belford, praising the credit and renown of this Earl.

The Lady Margaret looked a very fair woman and the Earl had an eye for such, or very certainly he would have had her taken away, for he regarded himself like a second king in those North parts. Her eyes were very dark and flashed with the firelight; her black hair fell in two plaits, one over her back and one over her shoulder, and when she pointed at him her white hand, on which were many rings set with green stones and red stones, her ample sleeves of scarlet damask touched the firelit carpet. In the dark hall of that place her angry figure appeared to wave as the flames went over the logs of the sea coal, and over her shoulder looked the white face of the old lady, Bellingham, her duenna, who was much afraid. For the Lady Margaret continued her rude speeches. She was so vexed that the Percy would not go to the rescue of her aunt, the Lady Rohtraut.

"Sir Earl," she said, "this is the manner of the governance of this realm of England, that, if the great barons dislike a King they set him down. So they did, for one cause or another, with Edward II and with Richard II and with Henry VI and with Edward V and with Richard III. He, I think, was a very good King; nevertheless you and others betrayed him on Bosworth Field, God keeps the issue. And when we put down Edward II we set up Edward III; misliking his grandson we set up Henry Bolingbroke instead. And that Bolingbroke, called Henry IV, we did not well like when we had set him up. Yet I do not blame anyone either for setting him up nor yet for seeking to force him down again. For somebody must be King. He will make fair promises before we come to it, and if he break them afterwards it must be put to the issue of swords, pull devil, pull baker. So this Henry IV was too strong for Hotspur, God rest his soul... Then came Henry V that was a King after my heart and all good people's hearts, and so it went on... But that you, a Percy, should cry out before this King has sat in his saddle a year, that you are afraid of the fate of your grandsire Hotspur; that I think is a very filthy thing and so I tell you. And we of the North

parts are not like to suffer it."

The Percy smiled a red smile in the firelight.

"Then you of the North parts," he said, "women and jackanapes, will do what you are held down to do... For I tell you this: this Henry Tudor sitteth so firm in his saddle by my aid that we will break all your necks or ever you raise them from the dust where you belong. And that I say to the North parts, brawling and fighting brother against brother as ye are ever doing... And this I say to you Margaret Eure and my gentle cousin: that your aunt, who has broad lands should be in prison to your cousins of Cullerford and Haltwhistle and to Bastards suits well my case and there she shall stop for me. For she has broad lands and the Lovells have broad lands and so have the Dacres, to whom she belongs, and whilst they are at each other's throats it is well for the King in London Town and for me at Alnwick. And I wish you were all at each other's throats more than you are; for the King shall have his pickings by way of fines and amercements, and so will I, and so will lawyers and bailiffs and others, and so ye are weakened the more. And it was for this reason that I gave judgment against your true love, the Young Lovell, in my Warden's court, though I knew that judgment should not stand... For I think that Young Lovell was a dangerous whelp, with his prating of this and that, and his being a very good knight and commander. And so I would be very willing to pull him down again if the Scots had not hanged him, as I hope they have. And I have written a broad letter to the King in London that these Lovells are a dangerous race with their hearts full of love for Richard Crookback. If the King do not forbid it, and, if Young Lovell shall come again to raise men and march upon Castle Lovell, I will march out with men and cannon and hot-trod and hang him upon the first gallows I come to. So say I, Henry, Earl Percy."

The Lady Margaret swallowed her hot rage and considered that she might better sting this lord with a low voice. So she spoke very clearly as follows:

"Henry Earl Percy, thou art a very filthy knave, and so thou knowest and so know all thy neighbours. Thou wast a foul traitor to Richard; thou art a foul traitor to thy kith and kin and to thy peers. For thou mightest well put down Richard Crookback. That was open to any man that could. And thou mightest well set up Henry and seek to maintain him till he has time to prove himself. But to seek to weaken thy kith and thy kin and thine order and thy kind that he may sit firm rivetted whether he deserve it or not, with the house of Percy as his flatterers, servants and pimps—that is not a pretty and gallant thing. For my cousin Lovell, I do not think ye dare set out against him, for if ye did, all the North part—and it is not yet so cast down—should rise upon you, and there should not remain, of Alnwick, nor yet of Warkworth, one stone upon another. And for this thing of my cousin and true love, I think you have a little mistaken it. For whiles my true love is away we, such as the Eures and the Dacres and the Nevilles and the Widdringtons and the Swinburns and the commoner sort, and the Elliotts and Armstrongs, go a little in doubt. For, if my true love be dead, it is his sisters that are his heirs, and to set them out of that Castle would be to set down his heirs, which is a thing not to be done. But if the Young Lovell should come again I think you should see a different thing, for there is not one of these people but should rise upon you, aye, and the Prince Palatine. I think you could not stand against us all. For that so they would do I have upon their oaths...."

The Countess Maud said then:

"So there you have the end of it." But the Earl was in haste to seize a point:

"Then there you are convicted by your own mouth," he said hatefully to Lady Margaret. "I hold that Young Lovell to be dead and his sisters' husbands are the heirs of that Castle. How then shall I march upon a Castle that is the lawful property of Cullerford and Haltwhistle upon an idle peasant's tale that a lady there is captive?"

The Lady Margaret made him a deep reverence, leaning back in her scarlet gown

that had green undersleeves.

"Simply for this," she said, "that there are Percies that would have done it." Then she laughed; and after she was done with her curtsy that took a long time, she said:

"So, now I have what I wish, I will get me gone from this your Castle of Warkworth."

So she made her way to her room that had dark hangings all of the crowned lion of the Percies. And when she was there she called to her the old squire, John Bellingham, that had charge of her men-at-arms. He had gone to his bed and was some time in coming.

So she bade him rouse all her men because she would ride forth from the Castle. Then he said it would be very dangerous, seeing the darkness of the night and the rumours of Scots being abroad. She answered that, if the night were dark it would be as hard for the Scots to see them as for them to see the Scots. And she had chosen him, John Bellingham, to be the ancient of her men because he was said to possess much knowledge of the different ways of that country-side, that never the Scots could come to him if he had but two minutes' start by night.

In the middle of that dispute came the Countess Maud a knocking at the door. She cried out that it was not to be thought of that this lady should leave their Castle in that wise. She, the Countess, had done as best she might to make hospitality for that lady, and it would be an ill discourtesy if she left them so. This Countess Maud, daughter of Sir Herbert Stanley, Earl of Bedford, was of the South parts, and she was amazed at all these clamours. Indeed she had not well understood all that had been said, for when the Earl and the Lady Margaret had become heated they spoke in the Northern fashion of which she knew nothing. So the Countess said again that she had done all she knew to do honour to that her guest. If she had fallen short of due hospitality, very gladly she would amend it. This Countess was a large, white woman that had once been very fair. And she wrung her hands.

Then the Lady Margaret laughed and bade peremptorily John Bellingham to bid her men arm themselves and lie all together under arms, for they had been scattered about the Castle. And, at all those noises the women of the Lady Margaret awakened and came into the little room where they slept; two were in their shifts and one had her bed clothes about her. Then the Lady Margaret bade them dress themselves and lie down upon their beds; but to be ready. After that she answered the Countess Maud that her entertainment had been such as she had seldom had before, lacking nothing, but with certain dishes added, that in their rough North parts they had seldom seen before though they had heard of them. Such were the scents in the water for washing hands, the golden apples of Spain, and the fowl called a Turkey. And indeed the Countess had made her great cheer. Nevertheless, since eating these things she and the Earl had become sworn enemies, and it would be contrary to the rules of hospitality if she stayed longer in that Castle.

The Countess wrung her hands again and said, "What was this of making enemies and why could they not live amicably together as cousins did in the South?" The Lady Margaret laughed and answered that if the people of the South were better than they of the North in these matters, then they were better than God meant men to be; nevertheless she was glad of it.

Then came John Bellingham, who by now understood the danger of the matter, to say that the Lady Margaret's men were all together and armed in a room in a wall by the postern gate and at the foot of a stairway just beside that lady's chamber-room. Then the Lady Margaret bade him let her men lie down upon straw in that room; but upon any sound that the Percy's men were arming or at any movement of lights in the Castle, he should come at once to her.

Then the Countess Maud asked what was this, for she had not understood what had passed between the lady and her ancient, by reason that they spoke in the Northern tongue. Then came a knocking at the door and the dame Bellingham said that there

stood the Earl Percy in his night-gown. So the Lady Margaret said that was what she feared—that the Earl should come down at night with amorous proposals; but she was jesting. The Countess did not know this and she went to the door and began to cry out upon that lord for desiring to dishonour her.

Then between the two of them came a great clamour, the Countess holding to that, and the Earl crying out that she was a fool and that this matter might lead to the deaths of them all if she would not let him come in to speak to the Lady Margaret. This the Countess did not wish to allow, for the Countess Maud had no comprehension at all of what all this trouble was about, and it seemed to her to be nonsense to say, as her lord did, that this matter might lead to the deaths of them all.

Nevertheless, when the Lady Margaret heard those words she laughed very silently but long to herself. For she knew that now, if she could come out of the Castle and get safe away, she had a power that might well drive that Earl to do all that she wished later, or some of it.

Henry, Earl Percy, had indeed said much and so much to his kinswoman in his anger. For it was indeed his intention, secret but resolute, to break the power of all the barons and great nobles in the North, so that King Henry VII should be almighty and himself the King's viceregent. When the day came there would be indeed no end to his power in those parts, for the King would be very distant and there would be no one to oppose him. So he fomented all the quarrels that he could amongst these people, and he had seen with joy the troubles that were afoot about the Castle Lovell.

But as yet he was not ready; for all these people were still very strong in armed men, wealth and lands, and, if they joined together they might well overset both himself and King Henry VII with him. Thus he wished he had bitten his tongue out before ever, in his anger, he had revealed what was his secret design to his cousin. For the Lady Margaret was a great gadabout and, if he could not come to her, either to

modify what he had said or to bind her to secrecy, there would not be a Dacre or a Eure or a Widdrington that would not soon know the worst of his design.

He had sought his bed, but his pillow had seemed to be of nettles, and since he had discerned that it might be her design to ride away early, he had sought her chamber door to have speech with her. He did not in truth know what to do. He was very willing to have laid her by the heels and to keep her a prisoner in that tower. But he was afraid that that might bring about his ears a hornet's nest of his cousins, and even it might bring him reproof from the King. The King was not at all willing or ready to have the whole of Northumberland rise upon him at that time. Nay, Henry VII had bidden him to be very careful that, whilst he weakened these troublesome people as much as he could, he should rouse their anger as little as he might.

All this, laughing behind the door, the Lady Margaret knew very well, even to the fact that the Lord Percy might come to shutting her up in prison. But she knew that, whilst the silly Countess kept him crying at the door, he could not bid his men to arm against her, and whilst her men were armed and his not, he could do little or nothing at all. They could all go out at the postern gate and so into the trackless sedges of the sea and the marches. Moreover, the Percy and his Countess were such married people that, upon any occasion they quarrelled furiously and at great length and so they did now.

For the Countess was well begun upon her grievances such as, as how the Earl had dealt with his lands of her dowry, as to the little attention he paid her as his wife, as to the fact that she had no more than four damask dresses and, very particularly, as to the store he set by one of her ladies called Isabel. And at the last she pushed the door to against his resistance and set the bar across it.

The Earl thundered upon it very violently but in the end he went away. The Lady Margaret did as best she might to comfort the Countess Maud until at last John Bellingham came to tell her that people were astir in the Castle with some lights,

though whether they were about arming themselves or getting ready for the day and the hay harvest, he could not well say. But indeed the Earl Percy had twice ordered his men to arm and seize the lady and twice he ordered them to desist, during that night; for he was in a very great quandary.

So the Lady Margaret went down the little stairway, after she had roused her women, and found her men by the postern gate. The keeper of the gate did not dare to withhold the keys for he knew that they, being thirty to one, could slay him very peacefully.

When they had walked from the walls of that Castle over the bridge and two good gunshots beyond and the day was beginning to break, they all stood together upon a little mound, and the Lady Margaret sent a little boy called Piers, that was her kinsman and page, back to the Castle to ask for their horses. For they could not have taken horses out by the postern way which went narrowly down twisting steps. She did not think that the Earl would dare to come and take her there. It would have been too great an outrage, to set upon a lady of her quality in the open; besides, being thirty and more, they would be able to give account of themselves and no doubt get away by tracks that John Bellingham knew very well. So the ladies sat down upon shields of the men-at-arms, for the grass was wet with the night's dew, and they watched the dawn come up over the sea and across the wide stretches of the Coquet river. The Lady Margaret and her handmaidens made merry and played a game with white stones that they picked up; but the old lady Bellingham moaned and grumbled a great deal, for she was weary with having watched and stiff with the rawness of the air.

So, after a time, when it was quite light, the page called Piers came back. He reported that at first the Earl had been in a great rage and had threatened to hamstring all the Lady Margaret's horses; but, afterwards, he had seemed to change his mind and had given orders that all the horses should be sent out to her.

Moreover, he sent her word that, if she would come back into the Castle he would give her news of the Young Lovell, for his receiver, John Harbottle, had sent him, through the night a messenger from Alnwick with very certain tidings, and these she should have and might make a treaty with the Earl if she would go back.

But she believed this to be more lying in order to get her back into his power; so she sent ten of her men to fetch the horses from the Castle gate and very soon they perceived all the horses come round the Castle wall, to the number of thirty-two with eleven mules. The Lady Margaret rode a tall horse called Christopher, a brown, that she loved, and John Bellingham had another tall horse. But the old lady and the three maids had mules, and there were seven pack mules that carried the Lady Margaret's hangings, furnishings for her room if she slept in an inn, her dresses and much things of value as she would not willingly leave in the Tower of Glororem. The men-at-arms rode little, nimble horses, such as the false Scots had, very fit for picking their way amongst springs, heather and the stones of hillsides. This lady could not bring herself to believe that her true love was not dead, so that, although she laughed and jested to keep up the hearts of her maids, as her plain duty was, within herself she was a very sad woman.

When the sun was off the horizon they broke their fast with small beer and cheese that they got from a husbandman's tower near Acklington, for they were sticking inland. This husbandman advised them to go by way of Eshot Hill and Helm, for, by reason of the dry weather, the road from this latter place to Morpeth was very good travelling, and it ran straight. The Lady Margaret was minded to sleep that night at Newcastle, which would be twenty-four miles more or less, for she had no haste to be in one place more than another. She had little pleasure in life; although she wished to rescue the Lady Rohtraut she thought this could only be done by means of the Lady Dacre, her mother, that had been a Princess of Croy. And, from the news she had, it was very unlikely that that ancient lady would reach her house in the city of Durham before that night or the next day.

So, as they rode between the fields, the sun rose up—its rays poured down fiercely and smote on them. It was marvellously hot weather, so that those ladies must at first lay off their gray cloaks and then open their shifts at the neck and fan themselves with their neckerchers. A great langour descended upon the Lady Margaret; her head ached sorely and her sadness grew unbearable.

And all, even to the men-at-arms and the page Piers, complained of the great heat and because they had had little sleep the night before, and the ladies yawned and half slept upon their mules. So, when they came to a little green hill where ash trees climbed to the top, the Lady Margaret said, out of compassion to them, that when they were at the top of the hill, so that they could see the flat country all round, they might get down from their horses and mules and sleep the noontide away in the shade. And so they did.

The men-at-arms got down from the sumpter mules mattresses that the ladies might lie upon them, and there, in a shady grove, they lay and slept. The men set their backs against trees and let their heads fall forward between their knees. One or two were set to walk as sentries outside that wood, to watch the flat country below, so that no sound was heard in that little wood save the light noises of steel and of buckles clinking as the watchmen walked. And so they lay a long time, all recumbent, some covering their faces with their arms, some casting them abroad.

The Lady Margaret awakened from a slumber, and the sun had climbed far round in the heaven. Then she perceived a lady watching her through the trees and smiling. So beautiful and smiling a lady she had never seen. She stood between the stems of two white birch trees and leaned upon one, with her arm over her head in an attitude of great leisure. The Lady Margaret rose from her mattress and went towards that lady; she had never felt so humble, nor had her eyes ever so gladdened her at the sight of the handiwork of God.

Then that lady walked through the wood, very light of foot, so that the long grass

was hardly trampled at all, and no briars caught at her gown. Yet the Lady Margaret could not overtake her. So that lady came to the edge of the wood and the hill to the west, looking over the tower called Helm, where the white road ran southward and the green lands swung up towards the distant hilts. And here there was a white charger and a great company of ladies-in-waiting, all very beautiful, in gowns of sea-blue silk with girdles of silver and gold. The Lady Margaret had never seen so fair a company, though she had seen the Queen of Richard Crookback with all her court. Then it seemed to her that that lady pointed down into the plain as if she wanted to show her lover and her lord. On the road that came from the North, the Lady Margaret perceived one that she knew for a knight, by the sun upon his armour, and a monk that walked beside him. And a mile behind, by the cloud of dust that rose, she knew there were men-at-arms, and perceived their spears above the dust. The Lady Margaret knew that this must be the other lady's husband, for certainly such a troop of fair women would never ride abroad in that dangerous country without men to guard them.

Then she saw that lady riding down the hill, with all her many, towards the little figures in the plain; but they went so quickly that it was like a flight of blue doves in the sunlight below her. Then the Lady Margaret wondered who that lady must be, for she knew of none in that neighbourhood that could keep up so fair a state, except it were the King of Scots, and not even he, and that could not be the Queen of Scots, for she was a stout, black lady, whereas this one had been a tall woman with red-gold hair, such a one as she could have loved if she had been a man. And, at the thought that that woman was going to her lover and her lord, the Lady Margaret wept three or four tears, for that she would never do herself, and going back to her guards, she upbraided them for that they had let that lady pass unchallenged. But they said they haD seen no one.

V

The Princess Rohtraut of Croy, Tuillinghem and Sluijs, Duchess of Muijden and Lady Dacre, dowager of the North, was a vociferous old German woman who passed for being ill to deal with. She would cry at the top of her voice orders that it was very difficult to understand, and, when her servants did not swiftly carry these out, she would strike at them with the black stick that she leaned upon when she hobbled from place to place. This she did so swiftly that it was a marvel; for she was short and stout. She could not move without groans and wheezing and catching at the corners of tables and the backs of chairs. Nevertheless she would so strike with her stick at her servants, her stewards, the gentlemen attendant upon her son, the Lord Dacre, or even at knights, lawyers, or lords that frequented her son. She had told the King, Richard III, that he would come to no good end; she had told the Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, that she was an idle fool, and King Henry VII that his face was as sour as his wine. For that King, being a niggard, served very sour wine to his guests. Richard III had laughed at her; the Queen Elizabeth Woodville had gone crying with rage to King Edward IV. King Henry VII had affected not to hear her, which was the more prudent way. For her father, the Duke of Croy, who still lived, though a very ancient man of more than ninety, was yet a very potent and sovereign lord in Flanders, Almain, and towards Burgundy. Seventy thousand troops of all arms he could put into the field either against or for the French King, and eighty armed vessels upon the sea. The Emperor of Rome was afraid of him, for he was very malicious and had great weight with all the Electors from Westphalia to Brunswick and the Rhine. Moreover, though he himself rode no longer afield, his son, the brother of the Princess Rohtraut, was a very cunning, determined, and hardy commander. And that was to say nothing of the powers of the Dacres in England.

So those Kings and Queens did what they could least to mark the outrageous demeanour of this Princess. They did no more than as if she had been a court jester, and affected to wonder that she had once been a beautiful and young Princess, for love of whom her husband, then a simple esquire, had languished longer than need

be in prison in Almain. Yet so it was.

This Princess spent the winter of most years, latterly, in London for the benefit of the climate. The summers until lately she had been accustomed to spend in Bothal Castle or Cockley Park Tower, which she hired of Sir Robert Ogle, who had lately been made Lord Ogle of Ogle. Upon the death of her husband she had inherited much land near Morpeth and she considered that she would have had much more had not the Lord Lovell, lately dead, seized so much of it by reason of his marriage with the Lady Rohtraut, the Princess's daughter. The lawsuits about these lands were not yet concluded, and it was these that the knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle were seeking to force from the Lady Rohtraut by keeping her imprisoned. The Princess had, however, by no means abandoned her claim to these lands and it was to prosecute her lawsuits that, each summer, she came to the North. She was otherwise a very rich woman, having many coronets, chains with great pearls, rubies, ferezets, silks, hangings, furniture and much gold. Moreover, she was for ever trafficking in parcels of land with the Ogles, the Bartrams, the Mitfords and other families round the town of Morpeth. In that way she had both occupation and profit, and she harried the leisure of the several receivers of her son, the Lord Dacre whom the King kept in London.

Now, upon a day, being the second day in July of the year 1486, this lady sat upon a chair resembling a high throne upon three stone steps covered with a carpet. She had behind her yet another carpet that mounted the wall and came forward over her head in the manner of a dais. This old lady inclined always to the oldest fashions.

Thus, upon her round, old head she had an immense structure that bent her face forward as if it had been that of our Father at Rome beneath the triple tiara. It was made of two pillows of scarlet velvet, covered with a net of fine gold chains uniting large pearls. Such a thing had not been seen in England for two or three score years, but the ladies at her father's court had worn them when she had been a girl. For the

rest of her, she was dressed in black wool with a girdle, from which there hung ten or a dozen keys of silver, steel, or gold inlaid with steel.

The room was fair in size, but all of stone and very dark because of the smallness of the windows. The roof went up into a peak. All painted the stone walls were, with woods and leaves, with fowlers among trees setting their nets, and maidens shaking down fruits, and men and women bathing in pools, and the vaults of the ceiling showed the history of the coffin of St. Cuthbert. Each history was divided from the other by ribs of stone painted fairly in scarlet with green scrolls. There you might see how the good monks set out from Holy Island, or how the coffin floated of itself, or how the women called one to the other about the Dun Cow. This room without doubt had formerly been some council chamber or judgment room of the Prince Bishop's in old days. But its purpose was by now forgotten, and the Lord Dacre had bought the house lately, for he considered the practice of living always in castles to be barbarous and uncomfortable. It was his purpose to pull down this old stone house and build there a fair palace where he might dwell in comfort. But, for the time being, it suited his mother well enough to dwell there.

She was sitting in the chair like a throne, leaning forward and perusing a great book of accounts held up to her by an old fellow who knelt before her in black cloths with the badge of the Dacres upon one shoulder and the silver portcullis of Croy upon the other. The old lady puzzled over this tale of capons, pence, eggs, bolls of wheat, oats and the rest that her tenants owed her. She thought it was not enough. And consequently messengers came in from the Prince Bishop, from the Dean, from the Chapter, down to the sacristan, to ask how it was with her health after her long journey from London city to Durham. She had come there the night before. And one brought her the offering of a deer, another of two fat geese, a third a salmon, a fourth a basket of strawberries grown beneath a southern wall. And, as each of these things was brought before her, she would lean forward and look upon it, and so she would lose her place in the book of accounts and scold perpetually at the old man that held

it up for her.

In one of the deep, narrow window spaces stood a notable man of forty, stout and grave, with a brown beard cut squarely, and wearing a very rich blue cloak and blue round hat with a great white plume. He said nothing at all, but pared his finger-nails with a little knife. He looked between whiles out upon the high, wooded banks of the Wear that confronted his gaze across the river, and were all ablaze with the sunlight: once the Princess Rohtraut turned her head stiffly to have sight of him. But he was standing too far in the depth of the window, her chair being between one window and the other. So she cried out in a rough voice that was at once insulting and indulgent:

"This is very easy spying for King Henry." Then she chuckled and added, "Do you hear me, Sir Bertram of Lyonesse? This is very easy spying for King Henry."

He made no answer to this gibe, but instead he pushed open the window and carefully surveyed the deep gorge beneath him, for this place was new to him. The night before they had come in by torch-light, over a steep bridge above a black river. The gate into the tower had been opened for them only after long parleying, but he had perceived walls well planned and formidable, great heights in the blackness, and steep, up-and-down streets amongst which they went between strong, stone houses. But he had been aware that this city of Durham was a very strong place.

He had been set to sleep that night in a room that faced inwards, and rising in the morning he had seen that just before his face were the great stones of the wall surrounding and fortifying the cathedral. Beneath his gaze were two great towers, pierced with meurtrières, which are slits through which arrows may be shot. Between these two towers was a gateway which he doubted not had a double portcullis, devices for dropping huge stones and rafters upon any enemy that should break through the first portcullis and be captured by the second, so that they would be like rats in a trap. By craning his head out of his window he could see, further

along, both to his right and to his left, tall towers in this inner wall, each tower having the appearance of an arch let into its face. But this Sir Bertram was an engineer well skilled in the plans of fortresses, and he knew that what appeared to be arches led up to two slanting holes in each tower, and that the slant of each hole was directed with a fell and cunning purpose. For, to each tower foot a steep and narrow street of the town came up. So, if any enemy should have won the town itself and should come up those streets, then those in the tower would set running down these slanting holes balls of stone weighing two, three or four hundred pounds. By the direction of the slantings, those balls of stone would run bounding down those narrow streets and cause dreadful manglings, maimings and death, principally by the breaking of legs.

By those and other signs, this Sir Bertram knew that here, even within the walled town was a fortress almost impregnable and dreadful to assault. This Bishop might well be a proud and disdainful prelate. He was safe, not only from foreign foes, but from his own townsmen, which was not so often the way with Bishops. For it is the habit of townsmen to be at perpetual strife with their Bishops, seeking to break in on them by armed force and to make the Bishops give up their rights and rents and fees in the towns, which if the Bishops could not prevent was apt to render them much the poorer. But at this Prince Bishop the townsmen could never come, so strong was this citadel within the town.

So he would become ever richer, not only for that reason but because of the great shrines of St. Cuthbert and of the Venerable Bede. To these, year in, year out, at all seasons and in all weathers, thousands resorted with offerings and tolls and tributes.

So this Sir Bertram perceived it would be no easy thing to humble this Palatine Prince even though the Percy had reported to King Henry VII that he could smoke out Bishop Sherwood at very little cost.

It was true that, as the Percy thought, King Henry VII heartily desired the downfall

of this Bishop Sherwood. He had supported Richard Crookback and loved little King Henry. And indeed, Sir Bertram knew, for he had the King's private thoughts, that the King would very willingly see the downfall not only of the Bishop Sherwood but of this whole see of Durham. For it was contrary to that Prince's idea of kingship to have within his realm a Palatine county with a Bishop there having such sovereign powers that it was as if there was no King at all in the realm. But, to be rid of the bishopric, even King Henry thought would be impossible since it would raise against him all the Church and get him called heretic and interdicted as King John had been. So that the King would very willingly have had the Percy to act as his catspaw and make civil war upon Bishop Sherwood and so drive him out of the land. That might impoverish and weaken the see a little, but not much. For a Bishop is not like a temporal baron; though Sherwood be cast out another must succeed him and have all his rights and grow as strong or stronger.

It was upon these things that this Sir Bertram—a cool and quiet knight, loving King Henry and beloved by him above most men—meditated whilst that old lady cast up her accounts, and he trimmed his finger nails. So, when he leaned out of that bright window, he perceived how steeply perched was the house in which he was. Sheer down to the river ran rocky paths with here and there a tree. At the bottom was a high wall well battlemented and slit for archers to hold it. The river ran very swiftly. On it there was a fisherman casting his nets from an anchored boat. The boat tugged and tore so at its chain that even the practised fisherman had difficulty to stand. So the river must be very swift, and there would be no mining there.

On the other side of the river the banks rose as steeply and were clothed with trees. There cannon might be set against the town. But to shoot so far they must be great guns and the Percy had none of these, nor were there any large enough nearer than Windsor. If the Percy had them, it was difficult to think that he could drag them there into position, and all that would take a year or two years. So, this Sir Bertram, who had been sent there by the King to advise him, considered, as his first thoughts,

that if the Earl of Northumberland attacked this Bishop Palatine he might take the city, but hardly the inner citadel, and never at all the castle within. Or, if the King lent him cannon, he might break the wall of the citadel.

On the other hand, having the Bishop shut up in the castle the Earl might starve him out—but this he could not do unless all the country round were friendly to the Earl and hated the Bishop. Without that there would be no doing it. And the same might be said of any project for dragging cannon on to those heights. For the cannon must be brought up narrow valleys where ambushes very easily could lie, and that could not be thought of in a hostile country.

The Percy had reported himself to King Henry as being cock of all the North parts; if that were true, he might very well be loosed upon the Bishop. But from conversations that he had had with the Lords Dacre and Ogle, as well as with the Abbot of Alnwick and lesser men, this Sir Bertram thought it was possible that the Earl Percy was not so strong nor yet so beloved in those parts as he would have the King believe. In that case, if he relied upon this Earl and this Earl's faith, the King might get great discredit and no profit either in those parts or elsewhere. It was in order to study and inquire into these things that this cautious Sir Bertram was come into those parts. So he leaned upon the sill of the window and looked down upon the river that appeared two hundred feet below.

After he had watched the river and reflected a long time, for he was a slow thinker, adding point to point in his mind, to have as it were a strong platform on which to build, he heard a woman's voice say highly:

"I tell you, ah, gentle Princess, that there is no man more hated in these North parts, and if you will lend your sanction and your wealth we may speedily have down not only these robbers that hold your daughter imprisoned by his encouragement but also that flail of the North himself."

Sir Bertram turned slowly on his elbow, leaning upon the sill and looked into the

room. There he saw a monstrous beautiful young lady that kneeled with her voluminous rich gown all about her and held out her two hands towards the Princess whom he could not see. The Princess did not speak, and that lady held her peace, so that knight moved softly and deliberately forward, and when he was near the younger lady he asked her:

"Even who is this man who is so hated in the North parts?"

That young lady looked at him with astonished lowering and resentful eyes, as much as to say, who was he that he should ask her such a question? The Princess had been leaning back in her chair with both elbows upon the arms and a hand caressing her chin, for all the world as if she had been an old man considering a knotty point. But, when she saw Sir Bertram and heard his voice, she said hastily and harshly:

"Get up, child and your ladyship. It is not decent that a lady of high rank and my kinswoman should be spoken to kneeling by a Cornish knight of nowhere and yesterday, God help me, if he be ten times a King's spy!" And so she bade the lady, who was the Lady Margaret of Glororem, to fetch a stool from a corner of the room and set it by her throne on the step. And there she had the Lady Margaret sit beside her and that Sir Bertram fetch off his hat with the large feather and so stand before them. "For," said she to that knight, "you may well be the King's companion, but in this place the King's writ does not run and I am a royal Princess and this is my cousin and niece."

It was nonsense and a tyranny, but Sir Bertram did it with calmness. He cared little about forms when there was news to be had that could help him and only one old woman and one very beautiful and proud one before whom to abase himself. So he made an apology, saying that he had not known that lady to be of such high rank, she being in the dim room and not over plain to his eyes which had been gazing on the sunlight. He bent one knee and stood there composedly with his hat in his hands before him.

Then that old Princess, who had affected anger affected now a complaisance towards that gentleman. She spoke as follows, formally to the Lady Margaret:

"This Sir Bertram of Lyonesse," she said,—"though God knows where Lyonesse is; I have heard it is some poor islands in Scilly or Cornwall or where you will,—so this Sir Bertram of Lyonesse is the King's commissioner to inquire into the state of these North parts. And if you will ask me what make of a thing a commissioner is, I will answer you that he is what you and I and other simple folk do call a spy. But the King calls him his commissioner and that is very well."

She looked upon Sir Bertram maliciously to see if he winced. But that knight turned his face composedly to the Lady Margaret.

"Ah, gentle lady," said he, "you may count that for truth. I am here to find out what I can."

The old Princess liked this Sir Bertram, in truth, very well. She counted him so low, on account of his obscure and distant birth and his former poverty, that she could jest with him as if he had been a peasant boy. She considered English lords as of so low a rank against her own that she thought not much about them, one with another, except may be it was the Dacres and their kin. So she was very glad to keep this Sir Bertram, if she could do it without trouble or expense, and have some amusement from it.

She turned upon the Lady Margaret and said again:

"You must know that, though in a concealed manner, this Sir Bertram is of great worth in the counsels of King Henry VII. Why this should be so, God knows, for one says one thing and one will say another. But so it is; in all matters in which a king may be advised this new knight rules the King."

Then again Sir Bertram looked upon the Lady Margaret:

"Ah, gentle lady," he said, "to dispel what may appear of mystery in this royal Princess's account of me, let me say this—for I would not have you think evil of me:

I have twice saved this King's life, once by discovering assassins sent to murder him in France before he was King and once, since, at Windsor where I caught by the wrist a man with a knife that came behind him when he walked in the gardens. And I have farmed the King's private lands to greater profit than came to him before and, having studied the art of fortifying of a pupil of the monk Olberitz that made most of the strong castles of France, I have designed or strengthened successfully certain strong places for this King. If I could say I had saved this King's life in gallant battles I would rather say it, for it would gain me greater honour in your sight. But I am rather a man of the exchequer board than of the tented field. It is for caution, defence and prudence that the King trusts me rather than for things more gallant that should stir your pulse in the recital. I wish it were the other way, but that is not the truth of it."

"Well, it is true what this knight says," the old Princess confirmed him. "He has twice saved the King's life by caution and has increased the King's gear and so on. Now he is sent here as the King's spy—the King's reconciler or the King's trumpeter or what you will. For his mission is to take a survey of these North parts first and then to prove to them that the King is a mild, loving, gracious and economical sovereign."

"Well, that is my mission," Sir Bertram said to the Lady Margaret, "and I hope I may do it."

"I will tell you what I think of it," the Lady Margaret said then, "as soon as I have your opinion on certain words I said two nights ago to Henry Percy, my cousin, Earl of Northumberland."

"I shall hear them very gladly," Sir Bertram answered.

Then, in her own way, the old Princess exposed all these matters to Sir Bertram of Lyonesse, how certain filthy rogues had taken prisoner her daughter Rohtraut, and the rest. Sir Bertram had heard all that before. The King had ordered him to travel to

the North with the Princess of Croy, protecting her the better with his train and bearing a share of her expenses, so that he might the better make out the affairs of the Dacres, what was their wealth, who resorted to them, and whether they seemed to conspire with other rebels. And, upon the road, in three various towns, three delayed messengers had met the Princess of Croy, coming from that very Lady Margaret with broad letters in which she told the story of the things that passed at Castle Lovell. So Sir Bertram had heard most of the tale before, nevertheless he heard it very gladly again, more particularly as the Lady Margaret corrected the old Princess here and there and made things the plainer.

It was a very long congress that they held in that room with the vaulted ceiling and the painted walls, that were all sprays of leaves and dark green boskage with the figures of men and women in scarlets and whites and blues, holding bows and fowling nets and fish nets and falcons. For, when the Princess had told that story she was impatient to know, but with sarcastic and hard words, what this adviser of the King would advise her to do. For her own part, she said, it was her purpose to go with a small train, and unarmed, up to that Castle Lovell and in at the door. And she did not think it was those robbers who would withstand her when she set free her daughter, opening the door of her prison with her own hands, and so leading her out into the light of day and so there to Durham, where she might dwell till justice was done about the lands and other things that were in dispute.

The Lady Margaret said she was very glad to hear this, for she had been afraid that the Princess had too much displeasure against her daughter, seeing that in fifteen years she had not spoken to her or written broad letters.

The Princess erected her old, round head stiffly, with the pillows upon it, and exclaimed that it was not the fashion of their royal house to quarrel with its daughters or to do less than decency demanded for their rescue and sustenance. She would not wish that Lady Rohtraut to dwell in her house and at her charges for ever,

for she must have her due train and estate, and that would make a great charge. But, until she were set up in her own lands and had her wealth again, that Princess would there maintain her and her train.

The Lady Margaret said again that she was very glad of it, and she was certain that those robbers would very quickly release the Princess's daughter. For they would fear the might of the Dacres and the Duke of Croy with his tall ships, his cannon, and his thousands of men that would come by sea and burn that Castle.

It was at that that Sir Bertram said that the King of England would not very willingly seE Flemings and Almains landing in his dominion; but the Lady Margaret might be certain that that King would see justice done to that injured lady by his own knights and the terror of his name.

Then the old Princess scowled upon both that knight and the lady so fiercely that her eyes grew red and dreadful. She smote her breast with the handle of the black crutch that dangled from her wrist and cried:

"Mutter Gottes! By the mother of God! It is not the King of England nor my father, the Duke of Croy, that shall go to that Castle but I alone and bij Gott! It is at my wrath that the knees of these robbers shall knock together and the keys fall from their hands."

Then the Lady Margaret said that that might well be the case and Sir Bertram said that so it would be much better. The old Princess bent her brows upon that knight and asked him, jesting bitterly, if he had any better advice to give her. He said that he had none, but that he would very gladly hear what Henry, Earl Percy, had had to say to the Lady Margaret and she to him and also something of Sir Paris Lovell, that well-esteemed lording.

The Lady Margaret told him very clearly all that she knew, and that knight considered her to be as sensible as she was fair. When she told him of the disappearing of her true love and of the rumours that were told against him he had a

pensive air; but when she told him of the Percy's high words of how he was minded to break the great lords of the North and that that was the King's mind, Sir Bertram frowned heavily. When she said that it was the duty of great lords not to support too readily a new King that they had set up, nor too abjectly to obey him or lavishly fawn upon him, that knight's eyebrows went up, for this was a new thought to him. And so, whilst she recited to him the history of this realm of England as she had done to the Percy, he continued with his left hand behind his back holding his blue hat with the white feather and his right hand to his mouth whilst he hit the knuckles and reflected.

The old Princess of Croy said that all that the Lady Margaret uttered was nonsense; the truth of the matter was that all the English and their lords were murderers and wallowers in blood, slaying their kings without reason or pity or the fear of God, but like hogs fighting at a trough.

When she was done Sir Bertram took down his hand from his mouth and smoothed his beard. He said that if that was the mind of the Northern lords, though it was a new thought to him, he need quarrel little with it. For, though he might need to reflect further upon the principle, yet undoubtedly the case of King Richard III had gone in favour of the Lady Margaret. He was a King set up by certain lords and pulled down again when they found him evil. And, as far as the practice went, he would be satisfied to have that the touchstone for King Henry VII. For he was certain that that King would prove a dread lord benign, loving and prudent; all mighty lords and Princes of the North parts would gladly acknowledge—in the course of a year or two—that there had never been so good a King and they would all of them very willingly support him. And, if King Henry VII did not prove as good a King as he then reported, Sir Bertram, though he loved him, would very willingly see him cast down as Richard Crookback had been.

The Lady Margaret said she was very glad to hear it, and that upon such terms they

might soon be good friends. Then Sir Bertram smiled a little in his beard and said:

"Ah, gentle lady, I perceive from certain words you have dropped that you did not think all these thoughts of the constitution of this realm of England by your lonely self." And so he perceived certain tears in that lady's eyes.

"Nay, truly," she said, "I learned them of the lips of my lord, Sir Paris Lovell, in sweet devising and conversations that we had before his death, and may God receive his poor soul and give him sweet rest in paradise! For such a gentle lording or one so wise in the reading of books, anxious for the good of his estate, so fine of his fair body, so fierce in war and fightful in the breach, or so merciful to his foes, they being down, God never did make. Though he was of young age yet he had fought in Italy, in Ferrara, in Venice, in France, in harness; in this realm against the false Scots and upon fightful journeys into Scotland."

Sir Bertram lowered his head a little.

"I wish I had been such a one," he said. "This was a very gallant gentleman. I have heard other such reports of him."

The old Princess said:

"I did not know I had had such a swan and phoenix amongst my grandchildren."

"Why, it is true, madam," Sir Bertram said. "You have lived too much amongst the Dacres to know that you had this lording for part heir."

Now this house, built in the old days before that time, and all of stone, like a fortress, had for its greater strength only one staircase. It wound round in a little space, all of thick stone, so it would be very difficult for an enemy to come up it if it were at all defended. On the lower floor there were no windows at all towards the street, to make it the stronger, and that staircase served all the rooms. This old fashion struck the Lord Dacre as very barbarous, and he would have it all pulled down, with a big hall and hangings upon the ground floor and large square windows with carvings on them, as was the pleasanter fashion of London and that new day.

The paintings, too, in that room he would have whitened over, and the stone ceilings covered in with wood and beams, that should be bossed and carved and gilded and with coats of arms. But, for that time, so it was, and the staircase came up from the street.

Now it happened that, below, the door into the street was open, and a fisherman owing a tithe of fish for that Princess's table stood before it offering fish. The old steward had gone to him and complained that his fish and trout, eels and lampreys, were not fine enough to set before that Princess. Much of this could be heard in that room, and then came the sounds of the feet of a company of horse and the clank of armour and loud knockings upon the gate that went into the cathedral precincts and voices crying out and answering. With one thing and another none of those three could hear a word that there they uttered.

So the Princess was angry and clapped her hands for an old woman to come that had a white clout hanging down before her chin, for all the world as if it were a beard. The Princess bade take that fisherman into the kitchen and he to be given twenty stripes—for she had heard what passed between him and the steward—the door into the street was to be shut and news to be brought her what knight that was that rode with his many up the street. And if it was a knight of these parts and one she knew, she ordered him to come to her for she desired news of that countryside.

So that old woman, as best she could, went down the stairway sideways, for she was very old and fat and the stairway very little and winding. Then they heard her clamorously upbraiding alike old steward and the fisherman for the clamour they had made. Afterwards, the door was closed and there was peace. Then Sir Bertram looked gravely upon the Lady Margaret. And:

"Ah, gentle lady," said he, "from what I have observed of your conversation I can tell you this much. You tell me that this Sir Paris Lovell was a good friend to Richard Crookback that is dead. And I do not much blame him for it, since, as you

tell me, that late King showed great courtesy here in the North parts when he was Duke of Gloucester. And well King Richard III knew how to bear courtesy when it suited him, though at other times he was a false tyrant. So that this Sir Paris Lovell was a friend to Crookback and could have aided him against my King if his father would have given him leave. But this his father would not do and it is so much the better.

"And further you have reported to me that this Sir Paris Lovell has said to you, in his own words: 'Now this King Richard is dead and alas for it! And we have another King of whom I, Sir Paris Lovell, know little, though I fear he may be a heavy ruler. But so as it is'—so you say you remember the words of this lord—'what I am minded to do,' said he, 'is to set up a chantry where masses may be said for the dead King's soul. If he had been alive I would have fought for him, but now I will see if I may live at peace with Henry of Richmond for a King. For to be sure, what we need in these North parts is peace amongst ourselves, that husbandry and mining and fisheries may flourish on my lands and others. And so one may make such a great journey into Scotland that the false Scots may not raise their heads for fifty years or more again. And so we may have leisure to go upon our own affairs. Therefore I, Sir Paris Lovell, for one will, if I may, live at peace with King Henry VII and be his subject if he will be bearable.' ... Now therefore I, Sir Bertram of Lyonesse..."

"God keep us," the old Princess cried out here, "you speak more like a lawyer drawing a bond than a gallant knight."

"Madam and gentle Princess," Sir Bertram said, "I am more like a lawyer than a gallant knight." And so he looked again gravely upon the Lady Margaret who, in her voluminous gown, sat on her little stool beside that kind of throne and leaned her arm along its arm, folding her hands together. She looked upon him earnestly and, after a time, she said:

"Good Knight, if you talk with me thus to make an agreement with me in the gentle

Lord Lovell's name, I tell you that can never be, for he is dead."

"Ah, gentle lady," Sir Bertram answered, "how can it be said that any man is dead that is but three months away? These are strange and evil times. God knows I am no very learned knight and one not overways well-read in the lore of Holy Church. Yet nowadays strange things are seen, books not written by hand, Greek sorcerers, as I have heard, driven out of Byzantium by the Sultan, who press with new learnings across Christendom. I have heard there was lately one new Greek Doctor at London called Molossos, or some such name, though I never came to see him. And he had crabbed books of Greek and other sorceries. So, if your true love and lording be but ninety days away..."

"Sir," the Lady Margaret said, "my lord was never for so long a prisoner amongst the false Scots or the thieves of Rokehope without news to me. Surely they have killed him."

"I do not well know this country as you tell me; but let me ask you this: if the false Scots had killed so great a lord would they not boast and say great things? Or if the thieves of Rokehope or the Debateable Lands, or of those places that I do not know, had taken him, would they not have made more attempts at his ransoming than once sending to Castle Lovell? For you tell me that you think he was taken by Gib Elliott, as you call him, or some such naughty villain, and that Gib Elliott sent to Castle Lovell for his ransom and that the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle refused to give either white mail or black, as the saying is. And maybe, as you think, they clapped that messenger into prison for greater secrecy, so that the countryside might have no news of your lord but consider him gone away with warlocks and others. But, in the first place, is it to be thought that such a messenger could be come from that Elliott to Castle Lovell and no one know it? Would not the Castle Lovell bondsmen see him and report it to your bondsmen and so on through all the countryside? For what cause should that messenger have in going to Castle Lovell,

to be very secret, though Cullerford and Haltwhistle should desire to keep it secret afterwards? Or again, why should Gib Elliott, if that be his name, slay the Lord of Castle Lovell merely because Haltwhistle and Cullerford refused ransom or imprisoned his messenger? Gib Elliott I take it, is as other men, and seeketh money and how best he may have it. Moreover, Castle Lovell is a great Castle, and cannot be taken in a little corner. I will tell you this: that within a fortnight that news was known to us in London Town; for merchant wrote it to merchant at the bottom of his bills, and packman passed the news on to packman from town to town."

"Say you so!" the old Princess called out at this. "Ye knew it and I did not, yet ye never told me!"

"Madam and gentle Princess," Sir Bertram answered, "that is the duty of the servants of a King, to be all ears and no tongue. And partly that is why I am here, for the King desired to know if such lawless robberies could be done in any part of his realm. So now I am inquiring into this matter. And this I will ask you, my fair and gentle lady—if that news was known in London Town under a fortnight, should not that Gib Elliott know it in a day or two days at the most, seeing that all the countryside talked of that and nought else? For it is not every day that a great lord dies and robbers seize upon his Castle and imprison his sad widow. So, very surely, this Gib Elliott would hear of this thing or ever his messenger could come to Castle Lovell and back again. And then, very surely, he would send another messenger to some friend of the Young Lovell, to see if he might not get a ransom of them, since his enemies held his Castle. Consider how that would be with a cunning robber. Full surely he would have sent a messenger to yourself, ah, fair and gentle lady, to have money of you, if of none others?"

"Sir," the Lady Margaret interrupted him hotly and with a sort of passion—"I am very certain that that lord is dead. For three times Saint Katharine, whom I love above other saints, appeared to me in a gown of gold and damask and leaning upon

her wheel. She looked upon me sorrowfully, as who should say my true love—for whom I had besought that saint many times—was dead to me."

The Cornish knight raised his hand.

"God forbid," he said, "that I should say anything against that sweet madam Katharine. Yet there are true dreams and false dreams and dreams wrongly interpreted. And of this I am instantly assured, that this Lord Lovell is held prisoner by no border raiders. It is not to be thought upon."

The Lady Margaret spoke to him contemptuously and almost with hatred, so her breast heaved as she bade him say then where he considered that that lord should have been or should even then be hiding. The Cornish knight answered slowly:

"Ah, gentle lady, what to believe I do not so well know. But this I know that I would rather believe in tales of sorcery in this matter than in that idea of border robbers. For these are strange times of newnesses coming both from the East and the West. From the East is come new learning which is for ordinary men, a thing very evil at all times, leading to sorceries and civil strife and change. And from the West is talk of a New World possessed with demons and pagans and dusky fiends as is now on the lips of all men. And I hold it for certain that, if anything evil and inexplicable shall occur in this land from now on it shall come from that East or that West. The path to the West having been found, shall it not lead those demons and dusky fiends in upon us? And, all the contents of Byzantium having been set flying in upon us, shall we go unharmed?"

"This is very arrant folly," the old Princess said; "what shall a parcel of soft Greeks or Indian savages do to this island in the water?"

"Madam and gentle Princess," the Cornish knight answered, "I speak only the misgivings of wealthy and sufficient men of London Town. It may be a folly here. But this I hold for strange: this lording was the one of all the North parts to have most of new-fangled lore, as I have heard: he has read in many books of which I

know not so much as the name; such as Ysidores Ethimologicarum or Summa Reymundi—or maybe I have the names wrong. And he has travelled to Venice where many evil, eldritch and strange things are ready for the learning.... And now I will ask you this: ah, gentle mistress ... Have you of late had news of a monstrous fair lady that several people have seen to ride about these parts, attended, or not attended at all ... upon a white horse?"

"Such a one I saw yesterday," the Lady Margaret said, "and so fair and kind a lady it made me glad to see her."

Then Sir Bertram crossed himself.

"And have you," he asked, "heard where she dwells or who she is?"

"I never heard," she said; "I thought she was the King's mistress of Scotland, for a lesser she could not be."

"I have heard of her this many months," Sir Bertram said, "for, for this many months, I have been set by the King to gather information about these North parts. And now from one correspondent, now from another; now by word of mouth, now here, now in Northumberland, I have heard tell of this White Lady. And this again I will tell you.... An hour agone, as I looked out of this window, I saw a knight, with a monk and a small company of spears go over Framwell Gate Bridge. The sun was upon their armour. And, as they rode over it, I perceived upon the banks before me a wondrous fair figure of a woman in white garments, going among the thick of the trees as lightly as if it had been a flower garden. And, as she went, she held her hand over her eyes to shield them from the sun so as to gaze upon that knight. And I think that was that strange lady. And, if you ask me what she is, I think she is a vampire, a courtesan or a demon from the East. And if you ask me where your lord is, I will say I think she has him captive amongst weary sedges and the bones of other knights, if they have been dead long enough to become bones. And there he sits enthralled by her and she preys upon his heart's blood...."

The Lady Margaret stood up with her hand to her throat. Her face was blanched like faded apple blossom.

"Good sir," she said, "I think ye lie. For that lady had the kindest face that ever I saw."

"Yet such fair faces," Sir Bertram said, "are, as is known to all men, best fed by the heart's blood of true knights."

"Before God," the old Princess cried at him, "I have heard such tales of my bondsmen's wives...."

"Or, if you will have it a little otherwise," Sir Bertram said to the Lady Margaret, "let it be thus. This monstrous fair and magic lady saw this Sir Paris in a grove or amid the smoke of war or where you will in Venice or near it. And so she fell enamoured of him. Such things happen. And so, coming in a magic boat, in the morning before cockcrow she finds him—having waited many years for this chance—by the sea-shore where you say that chapel was. And so she beguiles him to step aboard and miraculously they are transported to the very isles of Greece. And there, poor man, he sitteth in the sun, lamenting beneath a vine as they say there are in Greece, and to beguile him she dances before him...."

The Lady Margaret held out her white hand to silence the words upon his lips. And so they heard a voice speak to the porter below and a heavy tread upon the stairfoot.

"Sir," the Lady Margaret said to the Cornish knight, "I think you do lie. For I hear my true love's voice and his foot upon the stair."

At that heavy beating of an iron foot on the stone steps a sort of fear descended upon both Sir Bertram and the Lady Margaret; but the old Princess said jestingly:

"Now I shall see the eighth wonder of the world."

VI

John Sherwood, Bishop Palatine of Durham, was seated in a deep chair, in the

vestiary of his dwelling in Durham Castle. He had just come in there from the cathedral, and he was very weary with having sung a solemn mass for the soul of Sir Leofric Bertram, one that had, in times past, been a great benefactor of that see. This mass was sung every year upon the second day of July and, along with the oration, it lasted a full two hours. He had had a little fever too, and was weak with the monthly bloodletting which had been done the day before; for the Prince Bishop and his household were bled upon the first day of each month. Moreover, he was fasting till then, and it was close on the stroke of eleven.

So, although a good dinner awaited him, of five courses, each of fifteen dishes, he had felt so tired that there, in his own vestiary—for he did not wear the vestments of the cathedral or the monastery, but, in all his canonicals, walked across the green from the cathedral down to the castle with the people all kneeling and candles and a great cross and his crozier carried before him—he had fallen down into the deep chair in his mass garments. It made it the worse that his vestiary was up two flights of stairs in the castle that was old and not well arranged.

This vestiary was a large hall, but so tall that it seemed narrow and, in spite of two deep window spaces, its sombre vaulting of stone went up into darkness. The Bishops of Durham had always very many and very splendid vestments of their own, not belonging to the cathedral, and so on three sides of the room and from twelve feet high or more there were chests of oaken wood to hold vestments, with round cupboards in which copes could be laid out. In the two angles of the wall between the windows were all manner of great pegs and wooden bases upon which armour was hung or displayed. Upon three of these pegs were three helmets, the gauntlets hanging beneath them. Below each were the breastplates, the thigh pieces and so on. The great swords, with their crossed hilts, and scabbards covered in yellow velvet, were in stands along the bottom of the wall, like a fence. Above them were the more splendid and bejewelled plumed hoods for his falcons, their jesses, and leashes for his hounds; and tall steel maces made, as it were, panels between

them. Spears or lances this Bishop had none, his arm being the heavy mace. He had four suits of armour, a black one, English, and kept well greased, for rainy weather or dangerous times; a French one of bright and fluted steel that he wore on Spring days; and one Milanese, very light and so beautiful in its lines that it pleased him to see it—a steel helmet that seemed to float like a coif, without a visor at all, and steel chain-mail as light as silk yet impenetrable even to the steel quarrels of arbalests.

These three suits were arranged upon the wall. The suit of state, of black steel inlaid thickly with gold, stood upon a stand, like a threatening man, between the two windows and catching the light from each. This piece came from Nuremberg, where it had been worked for the Prince Bishop of Münster, but he dying, the Bishop had bought it of the heirs. Upon the helmet was a prince's circlet of gold and all the breastplate, the thigh and kneepieces were hammered and graved and inlaid in gold with scenes from the life of Our Lady. Her Coronation in Heaven was shown upon the visor. This fine piece the Bishop wore only upon occasions of great state, such as if he should make a progress through the Palatinate with the King upon his right hand out of courtesy, since, of right, his left alone belonged to the King and the right to the Pope of Rome alone. This Bishop Palatine thought himself a delicate rather than a splendid prince; he had, before being Bishop, spent many years in Rome, as the King of England's friend and advocate; so he thought that better could be done by a display of simplicity and elegance, for a sovereign Bishop, than by great profusion of coarse things. Thus, such Bishops as Anthony Bek, that was Patriarch of Jerusalem as well, had had forty suits of mail to his own body alone.

So there, now, Bishop Sherwood sat, leaning back in his chair and crushing up his cope which was a grief to his vestiarius, an old and orderly man. For this was a very splendid cope of black velvet from Genoa; it was worked with broad silver in pomegranates, the sacred initials being of seed pearls over silver, and the vestiarius did not like to see it crushed. The crozier leant against an oaken case in the corner; and a great cross was against the heavy table where the Bishop sat. The Bishop had

sent away his pages and attendants, saying that his head ached so that he could not bear the opening and closing of cases where these things should be placed. He had sent for some wine, a manchet of bread and a little salt to refresh himself with and these, in vessels of silver, stood before him. He had made shift to pull the rich glove off his right hand, and so he had taken a sip of wine and was dipping the bread in the salt. He felt himself a little refreshed. Before him, upon the table, stood two mitres, and his glove lay between the silver dish of bread and the wine cup.

Then the vestiarius, who stood in the doorway, perceived that Bishop, all black and silver, lean forward in his chair, gazing out of the window with his jaw falling down. The sunlight was streaming in. The vestiarius considered with disfavour—for he was a sour old priest—that the Bishop was undoubtedly ill, and God knew when he should get those vestments put away, which should be done before the stroke of noon. So the Bishop passed his hand across his eyes, after he had made the sign of the cross repeatedly.

"Gilbert," the Bishop said, "my eyes are very tired."

"It would be better, then," the vestiarius said, "not to look out at that window upon the sunlight. You have tired them with looking upon the picture of the new missal while you said mass."

"That may well be," the Bishop said. He was a little afeared of the anger of his vestiarius, who had been with him twenty years, and would not let him do as he would. So he continued for a little looking at the napkin they had laid beneath his refection. It was worked in white damask with the letter M, being the initial of Our Lady's name.

After a while, being anxious to lessen his weakness in the eyes of his servant, the Bishop raised his eyes to the two mitres that stood before him. Both were of white silk stuff, very curiously and beautifully sown, but one was high and the other more squat. The Bishop was about to speak of these, to placate the old sour man—for it

was in such things that he took most interest. It was very quiet in that room.

There came a knocking, like a fumbling at the door. So the vestiarius went to it, and, opening it by a crack, whispered out by that way. And then he turned and said sourly:

"Here is a monk. A monk of Belford called Francis. He says he has your word that he may come to you at all times and seasons." The Bishop made a sign with the hand, that hung over the arm of his chair, that that monk should come in. And indeed the Bishop had given orders that the monk Francis should come in to him at all times.

For those, as the Bishop saw them, were evil days and full of sudden perils that must very suddenly be reported to him. And, as far as peril from the North went—and mostly from Alnwick way—he knew no man, monk or laymen, that could more swiftly warn him. Besides, the Bishop heard his conversation with pleasure and counted him a very holy young monk, so that he would gladly have had him for his confessor.

He accounted him the best adviser that a Bishop could have in that see. For of the religious that he had round him there, the lay priests were too ignorant, with a rustic simplicity; the monks of Durham were too haughty; those of Belford too learned; those of Alnwick too set upon the glory of their abbey. The ecclesiastical lawyers quibbled too much over parcels of land; the knights were too formal and concerned for the state of the see. But this monk Francis loved God and considered the world.

The Bishop had been reflecting in that way for some time whilst the monk, entering in his woollen robes had knelt beside his chair. Then the Bishop stretched his hand languidly out and the monk set his lips to the ring upon it. So the Bishop pointed a finger to the taller of the two mitres.

"This is my new one," he said, "it has just come to me from Flanders, while I was at mass."

The monk Francis looked upon the new mitre.

"I have never seen finer stitching in silver," he said. The vestiarius said harshly:

"I consider the old one more fitting. For a Prince of the Church Militant it is more fitting. It sits more squatly upon the head, like a helmet."

The monk Francis looked upon him, and seeing that the Bishop did not wish to speak, he said:

"That is true! But then this new one, with its greater height is more graceful and seemly. Moreover there is room upon it for another panel over the forehead. The old one, you perceive, has only a picture of the crucifixion of our Lord worked in pearls and silk. Whereas the new one has below it a picture of Our Lady at the Tomb. It is always good to have a picture of Our Lady."

This was a thing that the vestiarius could not gainsay. So he brought out:

"Well, if the Bishop and monks are content with it, it may work to the greater glory of God;" and then he said: "Prince Bishop, I would have you go to another room that I may put away your vestments."

The Bishop stood up upon his feet and the vestiarius went down upon his knees. So the Bishop blessed him and put his hand heavily into the arm of the monk Francis.

"You shall lead me to my chamber," he said.

"God help us," the vestiarius cried, "shall I not first take off your vestments?"

"I had forgotten," the Bishop said. So he stood by the table whilst that old man took off the great cope, the silver cross and the white robes and stole that were beneath and fetched a purple gown edged with fur—for he considered that Bishop to be cold and weak with the blood that had been let from him the day before as the custom was. Upon the Bishop's head he set a furred cap, covering his ears, and hung round his neck once more the silver chain with the great crucifix in silver dependent. And so the Bishop, when he had drunk a little more wine, went up the stairs slowly to his

chamber, and the vestiarius called in several pages and young boys and saw to it that they laid those vestments away in due order.

The Bishop's chamber had been taken out of a Norman gallery with pillars and arcades. Here many men-at-arms in parti-coloured woollen garments of natural wool and yellow, sat about on the floor or between the arcades, playing at dice together or drinking from flagons. Their immensely long pikes stood against the arches beside them. One, with his eyes shut, leaned back against the wall, saying prayers in penance for a crime he had committed.

The Bishop, upon the monk's arm passed slowly down this corridor to his chamber which had bare walls painted yellow in honour of St. Cuthbert; a great quantity of books, very big or very little, were upon shelves. A great many manuscripts in rolls lay upon other shelves, and papers that overflowed from chests, of which there were five, along one wall. There was a pallet bed in this room; a three-cornered stool and a coarsely hewed lectern; a prie-dieu and a crucifix. Thus it was a very bare room. This Bishop, though he affected somewhat great state before the people, was, in secret, a very ascetic man.

Few people, however, came into this bare room—not even his highest officers. The square windows—but that had been done in Bishop Skirlawe's days just a hundred years ago—were filled with bright glass, showing once again the history of the translation of St. Cuthbert. All in little squares this history was, monks with shaven heads crouching down as if the space would not contain them, and the head of Dun Cow showing yellow against a background of glass shining like pigeon's blood rubies. One of these little, square casements hung open and through it the distant landscape showed clear, with hills grey and woods grey-blue, astonishing for its tranquillity.

So, the monk Francis being sat up on his three-legged stool, the Bishop began to pace up and down before the long window space—backwards and forwards over the

tiles, with an immense swiftness. Once he turned his face imperiously to where the monk sat and said harshly:

"Pray God, you bring me no ill news."

The monk, who had been gazing, out of respect, at the tiles, raised his glance to say:

"I think it is rather good news."

The Bishop said:

"I thank God!" and touched his fur cap. Once again he resumed his pacing, biting his lips and clenching and unclenching his fingers.

Suddenly, in the stillness there resounded a rustle of wings, and, balancing unsteadily upon the iron frame of the open window, there appeared a blue pigeon that craned its head to one side or the other, watching the Bishop. From outside there came a still greater rustle of wings.

Then the monk's face grew colourless.

"Father in God," he said in a low voice, "what is that fowl?"

The Bishop turned his lean head round over his shoulder, when he saw the pigeon that gazed anxiously at him, he smiled a kindly and soft smile.

"That is my weakness, Brother Francis," he said. With his brushing step he crossed the smooth tiles towards one of the chests that was filled with parchments. As he lifted the lid that pigeon flew from the window on to his shoulder. And immediately another pigeon took its place in the opening. "Brother Francis," he continued, "you are a stern man, yet be indulgent to my weakness. It was your namesake that was called 'of the Birds.' And in Scripture you may read the exhortation: 'Be ye guileless as doves and with the wisdom of the serpent.'" So he lifted that chest-lid and took from it a little linen bag of pease.

Then the face of the monk became radiant.

"Father in God," he said, "I thank heaven for this. For those very words I used

twenty hours ago and now you use them again."

"Why," the Bishop said, "what harm ever came from these pretty fowls of heaven?" The pigeon on his shoulder stretched its neck out to reach his mouth with its bill. Urgently and insistently it did this. And others were entering the window space. Then, before the flutter of their wings should drown his voice, the Bishop said that these birds reminded him that his dinner hour was come. And he begged the monk Francis to tell a page that he should find amongst the men-at-arms in the gallery that the Lord Bishop would have his guests sit down to dinner and eat with a good appetite; whereas he himself was a little indisposed and would have his own cook send up to him four eggs with a little saffron and some of the drink called clary, such as the cook knew he wished for when he was ill. So, the monk Francis went out and, after some time, found that page, who was playing knucklebones with another in the stairway. And when the monk had cuffed him well he sent him upon his errand, and so went back to the room. The Bishop was smiling down at from twenty to thirty pigeons. They were around his feet, upon his bed where he had sat down, upon his knees and, precariously they found footholds, fluttering their wings upon his moving arms.

So there he sat, looking upon those fowls of the air and smiling. And in a little time that page brought him the four eggs, the saffron and the beverage called clary. And so the Bishop ate his meal, sprinkling the saffron upon the eggs. He scattered fragments of the hard yolk amongst the pigeons. And when he was done and had drunk his drink he shook the crumbs off his gown and came over towards the monk Francis, all the pigeons scattering before his feet.

The Bishop was a man much taller than the monk and much thinner in the features. That is to say that, of late years, he had grown thin with his cares, but his purple and furred gown gave him a certain bulk. So he looked down upon the monk and said:

"My brother in God, you have perceived my weakness, for each day I spend certain

minutes upon these birds and gain comfort from the contemplation of their beauty and guilelessness. And I think they are the only friends I have, so lonely is my state in these great and peopled halls. Time was, no doubt, when a Prince Bishop was beloved, dwelling amongst people of a simple piety. And in such a day I could have done well. But, as I have often told you, my brother, in this place I cannot see my way. I am troubled with many doubts. If these were again the days of St. Thomas of Canterbury, I could at least extend my neck to the butcher's sword. I think I should have had that courage.... But this then is my road and in which God has set me. And very willingly I totter along it. Only, from time to time, my brain reels; I seem to see nothing, amongst great defiles, with rocks that roll down upon me. And this my see appears like a little church set between towering precipices.... And so I rest my brain by playing with these birds."

"So," the monk Francis said, "St. Gerome had a lion, that lightened his labours and the solitude of his cell, and so many other saints had."

"But I am no saint," the Bishop said, "and have no licences so to disport myself as they had.... But even so it is! God give me guidance. For it is certain that the King that we have hates me a little and in some sort fears me. And he is a strong, persevering and cunning prince. And I do take him to be an evil prince that murdered a very good King, my friend and the friend of this see. And if I had courage and could see clearly, I should raise up the standard of this my see and call to me the barons and the knights and so, in a crusade, march to the dethroning of this King. But, as you know, I am not framed for such a part. I am no commander, neither has God given me the golden gift of oratory to inflame men's hearts to a holy war. Nor yet, in this age, is the spirit of piety abroad among the people, and I know not who are my friends.... So here I sit in doubt and perplexity. And now there is come, even to this my city, a man calling himself commissioner of this upstart King. For such a man thundered upon the city gates last night. And very willingly I could have refused him entrance, but in my trouble and perplexity I did not dare. What say

you then, brother Francis, to all these things, for I will hear you very willingly?"

The monk kept his eyes for some time longer upon the floor and at last he spoke:

"My lord and prince," he said, "pardon me beforehand if in what I shall tell you now I have done aught amiss. But this I will tell you at once: this commissioner of King Henry's is a subtle spy. Therefore, taking upon my own person the shame, if shame there be, I have set myself to counterspy him. For it fell out in this way: in certain secret manners—not under seal of confession—I have known for some time past that this Sir Bertram of Lyonesse, was gathering news of the North parts. There are certain contractors for the building of our Tower in Belford, and one of them is called Richard Chambre, a burgess of Newcastle. And because I have lent him now and then a little money and much good advice, this contractor is my good friend and child. So one day, last September, this Richard Chambre told me, whilst devising of other things, that there was one, John of Whitley, a burgess of Newcastle, that went gathering news for a knight of the King's court called Sir Bertram, of Lyonesse. He was writing him letters and the like, and this John of Whitley had come to Richard Chambre, and had asked him for news of our monastery of Belford, and of how we monks were affected towards the new King.... And so, gathering here a piece of news and there another, I gathered that this Sir Bertram had agents here and there—one a monk in Alnwick called Ludovicus and another, a bailiff of our own, called the Magister Stone at Castle Lovell. But that Magister is much in Durham...."

"God help me," the Bishop said, "I have seen him often upon the affairs of the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle...."

"Well, he is an agent of that Sir Bertram's," the monk said. "Now let me go on further with my story."

"But this is very terrible hearing," the Bishop said. "All this spying and treachery is a new thing. It is even as it is in Italy."

"This is a new age, Father in God," the monk said, "and you will find this King to

employ as many spies as any Duke Borgia or of Ferrara. And so it will go from bad to worse. Therefore let us be prepared.... So this matter is: I came this morning, riding with a certain knight and lord, to Framwell Gate Bridge, just as they opened it. And because I would speak certain private words with that lord I had ridden with him a mile ahead of his spears. So we waited at the bridge for them to come up. Then I fell a-talking with the captain of the bridge as to the news and so I heard, as ye know, that this same Sir Bertram, calling himself commissioner of the King had come in last night with the old Princess of Croy and her train—but his own train had been sent to lodge in Old Elvet. So I learned where he was, for every woman in the street could tell me.

"I went swiftly afoot to the house of the Princess of Croy, and the door stood open with the old steward before it, chaffering with a fisherman. So, frowning fiercely upon that steward, I crept up that stairway, my sandals making no sound, and going higher than the door, I stood upon the stairs and had a fair view of this Sir Bertram and heard much of what he said.... I would have come to you the sooner, Father in God, but this was a very pertinent matter and I heard you were saying of mass."

Then the monk Francis reported to the Prince Bishop much of what that Sir Bertram had said, but keeping back some of it for the time. The Bishop stood before him, clasping and unclasping his hands; the pigeons, having dispersed about the tiles in the search of pease that had rolled away, flew now, by ones and twos, out of the little window again.

In the view of the monk Francis the coming of this Sir Bertram meant, as he under-read that knight's words, an immediate calm in those parts, but afterwards, in three years or four, a much greater danger. For, as the monk saw it, it was the design of that King Henry Seventh to show himself to the great lords of the North, a very kind, indulgent and lenient ruler. So he should gather them under his wing to be a potent engine against that see of Durham, that powerful kingdom within his

kingdom. Thus, for the time being, the monk perceived no danger for that see. He thought—and time would very likely prove him right—that that Sir Bertram would begin, to the Bishop as to the great lords, with kind and soothing words, or even with presents. So, peace being there established and the memory of King Richard forgotten, the King would begin to move the lords of the North against that bishopric. And, doubtless, the further extent of his design—the bishopric being weakened by the meeting of the lords—would be to lop off the great lords, one by one, advisedly and with caution until the King had the upper hand of all in those parts....

"This is a very fell scheme, my brother," the Bishop said. "I had rather the King would march upon me with his flags on high."

"So would all the King's enemies," the monk Francis said, "for that would bring him down. He is not strong enough for that." He paused for a moment: "If my lord and prince will let me speak my mind..." he began again.

"You are here for that," the Bishop said. "What I need is counsel."

"Then I will say this," the monk Francis began again: "To a mine you set a countermine and so may we. This subtle King will by acts of graciousness win the North parts to him. My lord and prince under God, you may do this very much more easily than he. For, by the grace of God, in these days you are a very wealthy Prince but he for a King is very poor, he having great expenses for wars in France and elsewhere where rebellions break out. And acts of graciousness, in this world, end either in gifts of money or the remission of fines, rents and amercements. These this King cannot come to do, or he will starve. But all these things you can do very easily. If he can spare the nobles a little he will do it, but he must then press the more heavily upon the commons and so great cries against him will rise up in these parts.... But you, lord and prince, can be gracious to all. And so I would have you show yourself. Thus, at the end of three or four years this King may find himself

only the poorer for his efforts."

"I hope you may be right," the Bishop said.

"Time will show it," the monk answered, "and the grace of God. Now I will talk to you of the Young Lovell.... He is come here again."

"God help me," the Bishop said, "I have been talking of him all this morning."

The monk Francis said:

"Ah, that is what I had thought. And it was with that bailiff—the lawyer, Master Stone."

"It was even with him," the Bishop said. "He seemed a worthy and a pious man and full of zeal for this see of Durham."

"Well, you shall hear," the monk said. "I will wager he came with this advice—that you should lay hands upon the estates of the Young Lovell under a writ of sorcery, and so divide them between yourself and the Knights of Haltwhistle and Cullerford. Thus you should be beforehand with the Earl of Northumberland who would do as much for the King's disgrace in these parts."

"It was even that that he reded me do," the Bishop said. "He urged the see should gain much good land thereby."

"And lose much worship," the monk said. "It is that that Sir Bertram wishes."

"I can see as much as that," the Bishop answered. "And this Master Stone—who is an ill-looking man—never told me that the Young Lovell, as you say, was come again, but said that he was dead and that Cullerford and Haltwhistle, being by marriage his heirs, would very willingly divide with me. He was insistent with me to issue that writ this afternoon."

"Well, it was a clever, foul scheme," the monk Francis said. "For well that bailiff knew the Young Lovell had been seen riding into Castle Lovell! Hard he has ridden here—if a lawyer can ride hard—to get that writ against the Young Lovell or ever

we could come to you. So with that he would have earned great disgrace for you and this see. But what I would have you do is to confirm, as far as the see goes, that Young Lovell in his inheritance. So it will rest with the King, the Earl of Northumberland, and this Sir Bertram to dispossess him. And thus shall their names stink in the nostrils of all this country-side. For that young man is very beloved, by gentle and simple, having fought well against the false Scots at Kenchie's Burn, as these eyes did see."

The monk spoke long and earnestly in that sense; and indeed he had the right of it. There would have been none in that country that would not have cried shame on the Church for her greed, if the Bishop had divided these lands with foul knights like Sir Walter Limousin and Symonde Vesey and Vesey the outlaw and the Decies. But if the Bishop would confirm Sir Paris Lovell in the lands over which the see had rights and overlordships, great discredit would fall upon the Percy for having, in a Warden's Court, essayed to ruin the Young Lovell on a false charge.

And after the monk Francis had talked in that way for some time, the Bishop was convinced of—nay he shuddered at—the trap into which he had nearly fallen. But, he said, the lawyer Stone had so bewildered him with one legal point and another—such as how the Decies, being knighted and plighted by the Prince Bishop himself in the name of the Young Lovell, had all the rights forfeited by that lording. He would very willingly resign a portion of his rights by way of fine; it was, moreover, in the protocol of the Bishops of Durham that no Bishop could refuse such a gift freely made, to the disadvantage of the see. And the lawyer said, from his knowledge of canon law, that, the Bishop having made the Decies into Young Lovell and a knight of the Church and the betrothed of the Lady Margaret of Glororem, nothing could undo all those things but a bull or dispensation of the Pope.

"Well," the monk Francis said, "I have considered that point and have read in such books as our poor monastery hath, both upon the canon and the civil law—such as

the book of decrees of which the first leaf begins 'Jejunandi' and the penultimate leaf ends 'digestus erif,' or the book of decretals which begins 'Nullain res est' and ends: 'in causa negligenciae.' Also I have spoken with the most learned of our brethren upon this case and with your sergeants of law and your justices and all with one accord agree that a long law case might be made out of it. That Decies hath his grounds of appeal, at least upon the matter of knighthood and betrothal. For it is very uncertain if you could unknight him or break his betrothal with the Lady Margaret of Glororem without an appeal to our Father in Rome.

"As to the matter of the other rights conveyed by that name, that is much simpler. For the Young Lovell has only to make appeal to you through a person of the Church as his best friend. Then you shall give him licence, under the decretal 'in causa negligenciae' and he may at once enter upon his lands by force or how he may...."

"What then should the man called Decies do?" the Bishop asked. "I am not very learned in these laws; but that lawyer Stone said he may do great things."

"For that," the monk Francis said, "he might. But, if I can have a say with that Decies, he shall hang from a very high tree. Or, if the Young Lovell is too tender of his half-brother, for that the Decies is, the Decies shall at my complaint to your officers and, after a fair trial, be broken upon the wheel. For before a court non-ecclesiastical he hath brought false witness against a vassal of your see upon an ecclesiastical charge, to wit sorcery. There is no escape for him."

The Bishop was, by that, hot to do grace to the Young Lovell. And, after he had made the monk Francis recite over again all that he had said, he agreed very heartily to do all that that monk asked of him. For that was a position that jumped very well with Bishop Sherwood's character, and one that made all things the plainer to him. Being a churchman, subtle rather than vigorous, he desired above all things the good and glory of his see. He desired that, so much above his own glory and good, that in

later years he left his see and went into exile rather than that the bishopric should suffer from the King's hatred of his person. But he could see very well that the bishopric of Durham would lose rather than gain by taking the lands of a young lord, well loved and deserving well of those parts. The Church, as he was aware, was called, in those days, avaricious, gluttonous and avid of lands and rent. But here, by a shining instance, he might show that the see-palatine of Durham held its hand and so that see should gain in credit and renown at the expense even of all other bishoprics in the realm and of the realm itself. And here was a course of action that this Bishop could very well understand and set going. Besides, of his own predilection, he had a hearty inclination towards such high and chivalric natures as was the Young Lovell's. He saw in him a shining and armoured protector against the foes of his see. Seeing things very much in symbols and pictures, this Bishop seemed to see that young lord, in silver harness, shining in the sun and raising his sword against the mists, fumes and flames that beset this fair city of Durham.

Therefore he said hastily to the monk Francis that if that monk would take a sheet of parchment and write the various matters of canon law and the rest, he, the Bishop, would commit them to memory, and, that evening he would call before him the lawyer Stone, the Young Lovell and, if it seemed advisable, the King's commissioner and announce to them what his rede was in all these matters.

So he gave the monk a great sheet of parchment from a chest and the monk turned round to the pulpit and began to write. The Bishop walked up and down behind his back, rubbing his hands delicately together with pleasure at that their scheme and at the discomfiture of the King's commissioner that must ensue therefrom.

Now let us turn for a moment to what passed in the house of the Princess Rohtraut of Croy, Lady mother of Dacre, during this time, whilst the monk wrote.

VII

At that heavy beating of iron upon the stair the Lady Margaret and Sir Bertram of

Lyonesse looked into each other's eyes, crossing glances of apprehension in the one case and of terror in the other. For the Lady Margaret was divided between joy and love and the sad and sorrowful gaze that three times the Bride of Christ had cast upon her in her dreams. Sir Bertram, for his part, was filled with dread of sorceries, fearing for his soul. For, if in matters of statecraft and the affairs of this world he was a very cool man, yet—as is often the case with those who are half men of law, half men of state, new and rising men not very scrupulous of means but solidly set upon matters of their day—this Sir Bertram quailed like a dog before thoughts of death, sorcery, the omens of superstition and hell fire. So he crossed himself again and again. For, though much of his talk with those ladies had been wary and cautious, he had very sincerely believed when he said that this Paris Lovell had been carried off by a white witch or a magic courtesan. Such things he believed in as he believed in treachery, guile, want of faith in men and the deceit that lies in women, coming from Adam's snake-wife, called Lilith.

Only the old Princess leaned forward in her throne-chair, watching the dark stone doorway with pleasant eyes, for she believed neither in the sorceries nor the prowess of her grandson, but made sure of finding him an arrant fool.

So a figure in very shining steel stood in that little painted arch. At sight of it, at the very first, the Lady Margaret cried out. For she knew very well every detail of the silken dresses and accoutrements of her lord and love. And there he stood in his armour of state, fluted, with long steel shoes and a round helmet without a plume, like the head of a bull-dog. This suit of armour she had last seen upon the Decies, and it seemed to her like a sort of sorcery that he should wear it there. For she never thought it was the Decies that stood before her; she had known too well the young lord's voice upon the stairs.

How he had come by that suit was no sorcery but a very simple matter.

At Castle Lovell, since they could by no means come at the late lord's gold in the

White Tower, they were much in need of money; for they could gather no rents and no fines and no tolls. The people would not pay them. Therefore, in those months past, without remorse they had sold all such furnishings of the Castle as they could find buyers for. For the jewels of the Lady Rohtraut they could not do it very easily, since the goldsmiths of Newcastle set their heads together and would have none of them, fearing the reprisals of the Dacres and suits at law and the like. But certain hangings and furniture they sold for a good price to a German of Sunderland, who shipped them beyond the seas. And certain arms that they had, more than they had men for, they sold for what little these would fetch to certain armourers of the town of Morpeth. Amongst these had been this suit of state. For this suit was too small for the Decies; it had galled him very uncomfortably beneath the arm-pits and between the thighs, when he had played the part of his half-brother, and he had been heartily glad to be out of it. It had been too large for the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle, so that they rattled inside it like walnuts in their shells in June. As for Henry Vesey of Wall Houses, the evil knight, he said he would be hanged if he wore the Young Lovell's armour, for it would bring him ill-luck. So they sold it for forty shillings to a Morpeth armourer called Simon Armstrong, who thought he had a bargain. But he found that neither knight nor esquire of that countryside would take it of him, for the reasons given by Henry Vesey. So there it was in his store.

Now two days before, very early in the morning, the monk Francis, Young Lovell and ten men-at-arms, well found, had set out from the monastery of Belford, the monk upon a trotting mule, the Young Lovell, in light armour, upon Hamewarts, and the men-at-arms upon little galloways, small horses such as the Scots use when they came raiding over the borders. But at the monastery gate they found nine men of the old Lovell men-at-arms waiting to come into Young Lovell's service. There was no room for them to be harboured in the monastery, so they must come along with the Young Lovell. And, ever as he rode along—and he went slowly for that purpose—came men-at-arms and bowmen hastening out of the hay-fields, where

they had taken service, to come under the banner of the Young Lovell, until he had forty men and more. And at a cross in the hill-paths, ten miles below Belford, there were awaiting them Cressingham and La Rougerie, esquires that had been in service at Castle Lovell. They were well armed, upon little Scots horses, and came out of the hills where there was a deserted tower. They had with them seventeen men, and four women that had served in Castle Lovell, and all were well fed and found, so what they had done in the meantime it was better not to inquire, though they swore that all they had came from the Scots' side of the border. The Young Lovell was well heartened by the sight of all these men, and they rode onward, to the number of sixty-five men and two esquires; twenty-two men having no horses and holding by the stirrups of them that had.

They made a circuit round Alnwick, for the monk Francis doubted the friendship of the Earl of Northumberland. So they went from the high ground by Hagdon to Eglingham and so, holding always to the hills and moors, above Broom Park and Overthwarts and across the North Forest, going south and to the east of Rothbury. There they deemed themselves safe of the Percy, and they could take to the lower grounds and such roads as there were. There being a good road from Eshot Hill to Morpeth, they made for that, and hit upon it towards two in the afternoon, having come nearly forty miles since four of that morning because of the roundabout path they had followed.

There, because they were near his mother's lands, it came into the Young Lovell's head, and seemed good to him to visit these places and take possession of them in her name. Therefore they made what haste they could and so came to the Castle at Cramlin by six of the evening. This Castle of his wife's the late Lord Lovell had very much neglected, having stripped it of all its furnishings and even of much of the lead upon the roofs. And, where there were slates or stone roofing, the rains and snows had penetrated to the upper floors. Nevertheless the lower rooms were sound enough. So the Young Lovell said that that night he would sleep there. Mattresses

and bedding were brought from the bondsmen of that place for the Young Lovell, the monk and the two esquires; the men slept very well upon straw in the stables. Also the Young Lovell sent the esquire Cressingham with the men to his mother's house at Killingworth, and the esquire La Rougerie with the men to her other house at Plessey, which stood in a pleasant place. So then the monk Francis went to his prayers and the Young Lovell round the battlements of that smallish Castle. He noted carefully what stones were sound and which tottered, and so he came to the conclusion that, with a little mason's work well expended, his men might hold it very well for a space.

Then came back those two esquires, having left five men each in the houses at Plessey and Killingworth. The houses they reported to be in as sad a plight as that Castle, or worse, so that it seemed that they must fall into utter ruin. At a bondsman's house the esquire Cressingham had come upon a fellow calling himself the receiver for the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle. This man the esquire had brought with him and he proved of much use. For, in the first place, he had taken some money which he had about him and, in the second, he had a great book of accounts which showed what was due to the Lady Rohtraut from each holding. So they kept that fellow in a stable, taking from him the money and the book. Both these esquires said that all the men of these villages and hamlets welcomed the coming of their lord and were ready to do him suit and service. In those parts the Lady Rohtraut had nine thousand acres of serviceable land and twenty of heathery and indifferent. So they slept very well that night.

On the morrow they had much to do. Thus the monk went with the esquire Cressingham and men bravely armed from farm to farm, warning the men there that those were the lands of the Lord Lovell and his mother. They had that false bailiff well trussed upon a little horse to show them the way; but long before noon he had begged to be allowed to take up the service of the Lord Lovell, and so they were the quicker done and had no hindrances, all the peasants vowing to do their services

very willingly.

One other thing was good, and that was that the esquire La Rougerie was the son of a Frenchman, very skilled in matters of fortifying and building in stone. This Frenchman the old Lord Lovell had brought from France to see to the building of the White Tower, which he wished to make a citadel, as it were, of Castle Lovell. And this esquire had learned much of his father; the Young Lovell could trust him very well. So the Young Lovell sent that La Rougerie into the countryside to find masons and stone workers, and he found some, though not many, for most men of that class worked in the fisheries in summertime, coming back to building only when the storms drove them off the seas. The Young Lovell was minded to have that Castle put first into a state to withstand an assault and later to have it roofed and rendered fair, with the lower part of one of the round towers turned into a wheat-pit and another made into a great pit of brine, in which they could cure whole carcases of oxen, swine and sheep, to the number of five hundred or more. So, when he had showed La Rougerie the weak places he had discovered the night before, he took thirty of his men for the greater safety and rode unto the town of Morpeth, Here he sent for the bailiff of that town to come to the market place and told him that his errand was very peaceable. For he desired to buy arms and bows for twenty of his men, with twenty-five pikes and two hundred barrels of arrows and several pack-horses, and a saker or two for the defence of Castle Cramlin and ten or more pack-horses to carry all these things. So the bailiff of that town answered him very civilly saying that he was glad of that lord's visit because he was akin to the Dacres and the Ogles and the Bertrams and other lords that had been friends to the good town of Morpeth. And he did what he could amongst the armourers and citizens that had arms to sell. So, in a short time, the Young Lovell had a good part of what he sought. This would not have been the case so easily but for the arms that those of Castle Lovell had sold to these very armourers. As it was, many of the Young Lovell's men got back arms that they had borne in that Castle before. Then came the

armourer called Armstrong to the Young Lovell and begged him to be his good lord and pardon him. This the Young Lovell said he would do if his crime was not very great. So that armourer revealed to the Young Lovell that he had that lord's armour of state which he had bought for forty shillings, but no knight of that part would buy it of him. And he said that if the Lord Lovell was his very good lord he would pay him again that forty shillings, but, if not, he might take it and welcome. Then the Young Lovell was glad of that armourer, and said that if Armstrong would put new straps to all places where straps should go he would pay him fifty shillings for his honesty. So the armourer was very glad.

It was four of the afternoon before the Young Lovell came back to Cramlin Castle, having nearly all that he needed of harness, pikes, bows, pack-horses and the rest, but only one hundred and twenty barrels of arrows, three sakers and a little gunpowder, for the town of Morpeth could not supply more at that time. Still it was well enough, and there he found that La Rougerie had brought masons and carpenters enough to do his work roughly in a week's time, and afterwards to amend it fairly and in permanence. And, towards six, came back the monk Francis and the others with good news of the bondsmen's submission. They drove before them three young oxen and over thirty sheep and lambs, and these things were offerings from the various hamlets of the Lady Rohtraut, together with eleven hogsheads of beer and other things eatable that should come after. And these bondsmen promised that for six months they would supply all that should be needed for the support of such men as the Lord Lovell should see fit to leave in that Castle, the price being left in account between that lord and them, and the men-at-arms to be ready to defend them against raiders if any should come.

So the Young Lovell began to be of better spirits for, with all these preparations for warfare, he had thought less of the lady of the doves. And the monk Francis encouraged him in this, though once or twice he sighed. But when the Young Lovell asked him why this was, he said it was because of his cousin that he had slain. One

thing that had given heart to the Young Lovell was this, that amongst the arms that had come from Castle Lovell unto the hands of the Morpeth armourers was a fair lance and rolled round it a small fine banner of silk with the arms of Lovell upon it. Now, the Lord Lovell, because of his estate in those parts, had the right to ride across the lands of the Bishop of Durham with his banner displayed, and he would have ridden to that city very unwillingly without it.

So, after taking counsel together, they decided that they would lie down and sleep at six and, rising at twelve, should ride to Durham so as to come there at the dawn. The Young Lovell would take with him twenty spears and the esquire Cressingham to bear the banner, who was a fine man of thirty with good armour of his own. And the twenty spears should be all fine men on the best horses that they had. So they should make a fair show when they rode into the city of Durham; and, the more to that end, the Young Lovell took with him his armour of state upon a pack horse, that he might put it on when he was a mile or so away from the bridge.

The remaining five and forty men with the esquire La Rougerie, who was a man to be trusted, should remain to hold Castle Cramlin for the Young Lovell and to aid in the buildings that should go forward there. In that way the Young Lovell rode out from a Castle of his own.

And, in that way too, he came before the Lady Margaret and his grandmother, the Princess Rohtraut, as well as Sir Bertram of Lyonesse, in his armour of state. He seemed to survey them for a space through the opening of his helmet. This he had kept closed in riding through the city for fear any friend of the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle should by chance be in those streets and aim an arrow at him from a window or from behind a buttress. Then he pushed up the visor.

Stern he always looked when his face was framed in iron, but so stern as he looked that day the Lady Margaret considered that she had never seen him. He had broad, level eyebrows of brown, a pointed nose, firm lips and a determined chin. The Lady

Margaret knew that he had a pleasant smile but he showed none of it then, and he paid no attention either to her or to the Cornish knight. His grandmother regarded him with a keen, hostile glance, and with his eyes set upon hers he advanced grimly towards her. His short dagger was girt around him, but he had no sword. So, in that shining harness, he knelt before that old lady on the second step. He lifted up his hands and said:

"Madam, Princess and my Granddam, to whom I owe great honour...."

"That is a good beginning, by Our Lady," the Princess said.

"I would not so soon have come to you," he continued in firm tones, "but that you sent me your commands."

"Well, this grows better and better," the old woman said.

"It is neither out of lack of duty, nor of due awe and natural affection, that I had not the sooner come," the Young Lovell said.

"That passes me!" the Princess cried out. "By Our Lady, I do not understand that speech."

The Young Lovell who towered on high when he stood, and was tall enough though he knelt, appeared like a great hound, attacked by this fierce little woman as by a savage lap-dog.

"Madam and gentle Princess," he said slowly, "I cannot easily say what I would say, for no man would say it easily."

"Then you are on a fool's errand," the Princess said, "for a wise man can say most things." She considered him for a moment and then said jeeringly: "If you had business in the town, stiff grandson of mine, say you had business: if you were gone after wenches, lie about it. But I care very little. I sent for you to have your news; so leave the complimenting and give me that."

"Madam and gentle Princess," he began again, though the old lady grunted and

mumbled. "I did not come before because I sought assoilment."

"What is assoilment?" she asked.

He answered briefly:

"Pardon for sin, witting and unwitting."

"Well, get on," she said impatiently.

"Lacking that assoilment," he said, "I did not know if I were a fit knight to come into your presence."

"Why, I am an old horse," she said, "and not to be frightened by a dab of pitch. If you never showed yourself but after confession you might live in a cave, or so it was in my time."

"Then," said he, "know this. I came to my Castle and they shot upon me. So I have gathered together certain of my men and have taken my mother's Castle of Cramlin and hold it. So that is my news. And when I have the pardon of the Bishop and have paid forfeit, or what it is, I will get more of my men. For my standard is set up in Castle Cramlin and my men come to it from here and there. So in a fortnight or less I will retake my Castle; and I shall hang my brothers-in-law, send my half-brother across the sea, and put my sisters into nunneries. These are my projects."

"Body of God!" the old lady said. "By the Body of God!"

Then the Cornish knight moved round and stood beside the Princess and spoke to the Young Lovell.

"Ah, gentle lord," he said, "may I ask you a fair question?"

"By God's wounds," the Young Lovell said, "you shall ask me none. Who be you?"

"A poor knight," Sir Bertram answered, "but the commissioner of the most dread King Henry!"

"Then you are a friend of the false Percy," the Young Lovell said. "Get you gone. You are no friend to me."

And at that the old Princess cried out:

"Body of God! You have taken Castle Cramlin? Then without doubt you have taken Plessey House and Killingworth?"

"Madam and gentle Princess," the Young Lovell said, "I have taken and hold them for my mother. And so I will do for all my mother's lands whether round Morpeth or elsewhere."

"Then I have no more to say," the old Princess said. "Get you gone." The Young Lovell remained nevertheless kneeling for a space.

"Madam," he said, "it comes to me now that ye have a lawsuit with my mother for certain of those lands."

"Aye, and I will have them," she said. "It is not you nor any stiff popinjay shall hold them from me." She leaned out from her chair and cried these words into his face, her own being purple and her eyes bloodshot. So he crossed himself with his hand of bright steel.

"Madam," he said, "I cannot talk of lawsuits. They have done me too much wrong."

"But I will talk of lawsuits," she said. "By God, I will take a score of my fellows and drive your rats from my Castle of Cramlin!"

"Madam and gentle Princess," he answered, "you could not do it with ten score nor yet twenty. For I have there forty of the best fighting men of this North country; and in two days I think I shall have six score. How the rights of this lawsuit may be I do not know. But my mother's necessity is great. She has languished for a quarter year in prison during which time you have done nothing for her. When the lands fall to me upon my mother's death you and the Dacres may have them again. That is all that I know. And so I pray our gentle Saviour to have you in His keeping; and so I get me gone."

All this while the Lady Margaret had sat motionless, gazing upon her true love's face

that never cast a glance aside at her. For it was not manners that she should speak before that old lady. But when he was on his feet and near the door, she ran down from that throne-step, and her rich robes and her great veil ran out behind her. The Cornish knight was already in the stairway, and the Lady Margaret came to it before the Young Lovell, for he walked slowly on account of the weight of his armour. So in the stairway she came before him and held up her hands to his steel chest:

"Ah, gentle lord," she said, "will you speak no word with me?" And, in having said so much, because she had spoken before he had, she had said too much for manners, and she hung her head and trembled, for she was a very proud woman.

He looked at her with stern and affrighting eyes.

"Ah, gentle lady," he said, "you are plighted to my false brother."

"No! No!" she said, "not with my will. Would you believe I am in a tale against you, with your false sisters?"

He raised his voice till it was like the harsh bark of the male seal; his eyes glowed with hatred.

"Gentle lady," he cried out, "ye should have known!"

The sight of this lady had been to him a sudden weariness, like the sound of a story heard over and over again. And hot anger and hatred had risen violently in his heart when she spoke.

But then he perceived her anguished face, the corners of the proud lips drawn down and the features pale like alabaster. And he remembered that all things, to pursue a fair course, must go on as they before would have gone—even all things to the end. So that, although his heart was weary for the lady of the doves and sparrows, he said:

"Ah, gentle lady, I believe you. I remember me. My false brother was inside these pot-lids. You could do no otherwise. All these things shall be set in order. We will

sue to the Pope. So it shall be." He could not easily find words; that was very difficult speaking for him; for still this lady was wearisome beyond endurance to him, because of the lady of the doves and sparrows. But he would not let her see this, for he knew she was a loyal and dutiful friend to him, and he must take her to wife when he had his Castle again and the dispensation of our Father that is in Rome. And indeed she fell upon her knees before him there in the stairway:

"Gentle lord, my master and my love," she said, "I smote your false brother on the mouth in that day. And all my lands are yours and my towers of Glororem and on Wearside; and all my red gold and all my jewels of price. And all my men-at-arms are yours, to the number of eight score, and two esquires; and all my bondsmen that can bear bows, and my rough pikemen...."

He stepped back stiffly in his arms, so that he was nearly within his grandmother's chamber again. And this he did that he might avoid her touch. And he said "No! No!" That he said because it seemed horrible to him to have her aid in the retaking of his Castle. But, before she was done speaking with her deep and full voice, he knew that these things too must be.

Therefore he advanced upon her courteously, and stretched out his hands in steel and raised her up.

"Ah, gentle lady," he said, "all these things shall be, and I thank you. And peaceful times shall, God willing, repay these troublous ones."

She looked upon him a little strangely; but she held her cheek to him.

"Ah, gentle lady," he said, "I may not kiss you. For, as I stand before you, I am a man under a ban, so I think I may not do it until my lord the Prince Bishop shall have assoiled me and taken cognisance of my plea to Rome against my false brother."

She wished to have said: "Ah, what reck I of that!" and so to have taken him in her arms, steel and all. But that she might not do for fear of her manners. For she had

been well schooled, and, whereas, she might well, if she would, give him her towers and lands and men and bondsmen, still she could not go against the ban of the Church; for the ladies of her house of Eure were very proud ladies. Neither, for pride, though the tears were wet upon her cheeks, would she ask him what ban it was that he lay under.

So, seeing those her tears, he said as gently as he could—for when the head of the axe is thrown the helve may as well go with it:

"Ah, gentle lady, be of very good cheer! For I am assured of assoilment by such a very good churchman that I know no better. And, that once had, shall we not make merry as in the old time? Aye, surely, for if you will, I will well. And so, that it may be the sooner done, I will go to that good prince." Yet, as he said these words, he sighed. Then he added: "In a little while, gentle lady and my true love, I will come back to you."

So she stood back in the stairway to let him pass; but it was piteously that she looked after him. For she had never seen him so earnest and so sober. He seemed the older by twenty years, and never had his foot been so heavy on the stairs; it was like the beating of a heart of lead.

Now when the Young Lovell came to the stair-foot where there was a square space, there there was standing the Knight Bertram of Lyonesse. And so he stood before the Young Lovell that that lord could not pass him or get to the street. And hot rage was already in that lording's heart, for never had he talked so painfully as he had done to that Lady Margaret, and it seemed as if his breast must burst its armour. Up to him stepped that Cornish knight and spoke in gentle tones, bending his particoloured leg courteously, in the then fashion of London town.

"Gentle lording," he said, "you called me even now the friend of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland. Let me say presently that by my office I stand above that lord, though far below him in my person. So I am no friend of his, though not his foe."

The Young Lovell held his brows down and gazed upon this man beneath them, breathing heavily in his chest.

"Go on," he said.

"Then I will tell you this," the Cornish knight went on. "I have heard you twice say ye were beneath a ban. Now that may well be and I think it is along of a White Lady."

The Young Lovell loosened his dagger within its sheath.

"My silken knight," he said, "ye were never so near your death."

"Gentle lording," that knight answered, "if I die another will take my place and no one will lament me. But it is my function and devoir to talk and so I take it." He paused for a moment, and then he went on: "God forbid that I should say word against Holy Church; I am not one that does it. Yet I will say this: If Holy Church will not raise the ban from you, yet I, Sir Bertram of Lyonesse, who have some skill at inquiries, will so put this matter to the King and dread lord that, without more words said, that judgment of the Warden's Court against you shall be revised, and if those false Knights shall withhold your Castle from you you shall have instant licence to take it again and do justice upon them as you will. And the fines due of you under that judgment shall be remitted to you. For I acknowledge that therein the Percy hath overstepped himself; for firstly he can give no judgment and foul no bill upon a suit of sorcery. And secondly, I am convinced that here was no sorcery. For, touching that White Lady...."

"Sir Knight," the Young Lovell said, "I bid you stand aside from that door and see a thing...." Then Sir Bertram stepped down into the roadway.

The Young Lovell took out his dagger and raised it above his shoulder. It was of the length of his forearm. The door that stood against the wall, being open, was of thick oak, studded with large bosses of iron. The Young Lovell brought forward that dagger over his head and it sank into that door up to the hilt, and sank in and passed

through the door, and so into the mortar between two stories and the door was nailed there.

"Sir," the Young Lovell said, "seek to withdraw that dagger."

"Nay, that I cannot do," Sir Bertram said.

"Neither can I nor any man," the Young Lovell said. "And I am glad of it. For if you had spoken more upon that theme, that dagger should have gone through your throat. And this I tell you: there is no knight in all the North parts that could have done that, and I think none in all Christendom. How it may be in Heathenesse I do not know, for I hear that the Soldan has some very good knights. And that I did to show you that I am no braggart if you will hear me further."

"Very willingly will I hear you further, ah, gentle lording," the Cornish knight answered, and again he bent his knee where he stood in the street.

"Then," the Young Lovell said, "it is because I can do such deeds as that you have seen that all the men of the North parts will willingly follow me upon any journey. So it would be well if the Percy let me be. For—an he will not I will come to Alnwick and to Warkworth with twice four thousand men for this Percy is little beloved. And so, with scaling hooks and hurdles and faggots and the rest I will smoke him out of Northumberland and hang him upon the first tree in this County Palatine. And that you may tell your King."

"Ah, gentle lording," Sir Bertram said, "I tell you that judgment is already reversed."

"Of that I know nothing," the Young Lovell said. "But so it is as I have told you. If your King will dwell at peace with us of the North parts he may for me, and I ask nothing better. And so much more I will say, that he has good servants; for no man ever went nearer his death than you when you spoke to me now. And I think you know it well, yet you gave no ground and spoke on. I do not like your kind, for I have seen some of them about the courts of princes, here and elsewhere and you are the caterpillars upon the silken tree of chivalry that shall yet destroy it. Yet that was

as brave a feat as ever I saw, and your King is happy if he have more such as you."

VIII

In the meanwhile that monk Francis sat writing in the Bishop's room and the Bishop walked up and down behind his back. Once or twice the Bishop paused in his walking as if he wished to speak to the monk, but again he walked on and the monk Francis continued to write rapidly, pausing now and then and looking upwards as he sought to remember the words of the decree beginning: "Jejunandi," or the Decretal: "Nullam res est...."

So at last the Bishop stood for a long time near the door, looking down at the nails of his fingers, and then suddenly:

"Touching the matter of sorcery, my brother in God...." he said.

The monk swung quickly round upon his stool:

"There was no sorcery," he said determinedly. "Those three of Castle Lovell were perjured."

"So I gathered," the Bishop said softly; "I considered that; it appeared so from what was said to me by the lawyer, Magister Stone."

The monk looked with the greater respect at the Bishop.

"Father in God," he said, "will you tell me how you came upon that thought?"

The Bishop smiled a little faint smile of pleased vanity. For he liked to be considered that he was a subtle reader of the hearts of men. In that he thought that he was the superior of this monk.

"When a man comes to me," he said, "with two tales, to each of which he will swear to find many witnesses, I am apt to think that one is false. So it was with this our friend called Stone."

"May I hear more?" the monk asked.

"It was in this way," the Bishop said, "and now you will see why I was troubled in

my conscience when you found me. This lawyer Stone took it for postulated that I thirsted for the lands of this Young Lovell. He would have it no other way. Though once or twice I said I loved justice better than land he would have it no other way, but took my protestings for the solemn fooleries of a priest. He is, I think, a very evil man, with the face of an ape, stiff gestures, and the voice of a door hinge."

"I know the man very well," the monk Francis said. "He has twice proposed to me the spoliation of widows with false charters for the benefit of our monastery."

"So," the Bishop said, "he would have it that I was greedy of gold and lands for my see. And indeed I am if I may have them with decency. So he saith to me under his breath that, in two ways I might have Castle Lovell. One tale was that this Young Lovell had capered with naked witches and others round a Baal fire. For that he had as witnesses himself and another gossip called Meg of the Foul Tyke and that bastard called the Decies."

"It is because of that false witnessing that the Decies shall be broken on the wheel," the monk Francis said.

"Well, it was false witnessing," the Bishop said. "And so I divined. For, afterwards, this lawyer, brings along another story. And it was easy to see that this lawyer considered this the better story of the two and would be mightily relieved of doubt if I would adopt it. And it was this."

The monk Francis looked now very eagerly upon the Bishop, who stood straight and still in his furred gown, lifting one hand stiffly:

"There is in the village of Castle Lovell," he said, "a fair lovechild called Elizabeth. Some will have it that the father is the Young Lovell, some that it is of the Young Lovell's father. How that may be I do not know, but it is certain that that child is of the Lovell kin and Harrison is its name. Now, as May comes in, that child, as children will, goeth afield seeking herbs for a coney that the mother had a-fattening. So the child Elizabeth goeth further and further amongst these hills of sand where

green stuff is rare. For, that she might not pluck herbs in the bondsmen's fields, that are laid down to hay, that child very well knew. So, looking up suddenly, that child perceived upon a high sand-hill, and sitting upon a brown horse that she well knew, a knight that very well she knew too, being the Young Lovell. For this lording was accustomed to bring the child Elizabeth pieces of sugar and figs and to give her fair words and money to the mother.

"So that child had no fear of the Young Lovell, but ran up to him crying out for sugar and figs. But he paid no heed to her, only sat there upon his horse. So the child looked further and perceived, upon a white horse, a lady in a scarlet gown, in a green hood, who smiled very kindly at her. So that child was afraid, as children are, and ran home. That was in the midst of May....

"Now came fell poverty into the hut where dwelled that woman and her child. The last pence were gone, the fatted coneys eaten; they must go batten upon roots, and when that mother sought relief of the Ladies Douce and Isopel in the Castle they jeered and spat upon her. And ever the mother cried that if the Young Lovell would come they would find relief. Then at last that child took courage and said that she knew where the Young Lovell was and would lead her there.

"So she leads her mother through these hills of sand—and it was then close to July, the 29th of June as it might be. There upon the hills of sand that mother perceives the Young Lovell. He sat upon his brown horse, in his cloak of scarlet, with his parti-coloured hose of scarlet and green. He wore his cap of scarlet set about with large pearls...."

"These pearls," the monk Francis said, "I have as a gage in my aumbrey of Belford."

"His long hair fell down upon his shoulders and he looked away. Then wearily that mother climbed the sand-hill crying out to the Young Lovell for gold. He never looked upon her but gazed always away; nevertheless he fingered his girdle and found his poke and cast down to her a French mark of gold."

"I thank God he did that charity," the monk Francis said, "even if he did not know it; and I think he did not."

"Why let us thank God," the Bishop said. And he asked: "Then this is a true tale?"

"I think it is," the monk Francis answered. "But, of your charity, tell me more."

"Then," the Bishop said, "that poor woman fell upon that piece of gold in the sand and kissed it. And, as she looked up over it to kiss too the Young Lovell's hand, so she saw a fair, kind woman. Red hair she had and was clothed in white with a jewel of rubies in a white hat. Such a kind, fair lady that woman had never seen, and the Young Lovell gazed upon her and she into his eyes. Then tears blinded that woman and grief and pain at the heart. So she came back to her hut, she knew not how; and, indeed, she knew no more until there came the lawyer Stone holding a cordial to her lips.

"For, you must know that that child, taking that piece of gold from her mother's fingers and being all innocent, went away into the village to buy food for her mother. So the first man she came to, seeing her with it, took her to the house of the lawyer Stone to have the right of it. Then the lawyer having beaten her, she told him that the Young Lovell had that day given it to her mother.

"So the lawyer, avid of news of the Young Lovell, jumped like an ape to that poor hut. But it was two days before that woman could speak, though he nursed her and fed cordials to her never so. Then that lawyer got men-at-arms and scoured the country according to her directions. But upon the Young Lovell he never came."

"By that day," the monk Francis said, "he was in my cell commending himself to God."

The Bishop looked apprehensively upon the monk Francis.

"Then this you take for a true tale," he said. "Woe is me."

They were both silent for a while, and then the monk said—for they were looking

with faces of great weariness upon the tiles:

"Father in God, tell me truly, I do pray, all that you know from this lawyer."

"Brother," the Bishop said, "God help us, this lawyer was insistent that the tale of sorcery against this lording should be let to lapse or changed for another, such as that he consorted with old fairies and worse."

"How then," the monk Francis said, "would he put aside his former perjuries?"

"He would say," the Bishop said, "that his eyes deceived him, magic being in the air, and that on that morning the Young Lovell rode furiously past him going as if he knew not whither."

"Why so he did!" the monk Francis said, "but that shall not save the lawyer. His former oaths are written down."

"Brother," the Bishop said, "it is that lawyer's plan to begin another suit in the courts ecclesiastical and there not to swear at all, but ignoring the bill before the Wardens, to bring many witnesses about this fairy lady."

"What other witnesses has he?" the monk Francis asked. He spoke like a man without hope.

"You must know," the Bishop said, "that this lawyer during these months was enquiring of the Young Lovell in the past. So in Newcastle he found a master-tailor to whom the Young Lovell for long owed four pounds. And one day in February this tailor, needing money, went out from Newcastle towards Castle Lovell, riding upon an ass. And so, upon the way, he saw a lady that had a white horse and was little and dark. He was in tribulation for his money and pondered much upon the Young Lovell whether he was a lording that would pay him or one that would have him beaten at the gate.

"And, as he thought that, this lady looked upon him as if she would ask the way to where the Young Lovell dwelt. She was little and swart and had a green undercoat.

"And again in February there was a ship boy that went from Sunderland with a white falcon his ship had brought from Hamboro', for the Young Lovell. Now, upon this voyage, this ship boy had conceived a great love for that falcon even as boys will that upon ships are beaten by all and conceive loves for dumb beasts. So that ship boy went pondering with the white hawk and wondering and almost weeping to think that that lording might be a cruel master to the falcon. For he loved that falcon very well. So he was aware of a kind, fair lady with a white horse that looked upon him as much as to say that the Young Lovell would be a gentle and kind lord to that fowl. She was a great fair woman in a German hood of black velvet—such a one as that ship boy had seen and, as boys will, had conceived an ardent love for, in Hamboro'."

The monk Francis said: "Ah," and then he brought out the words: "Father in God, I too have seen her—and twice. When I thought of the Young Lovell."

Then the Bishop groaned lamentably; three times and very swiftly he walked from end to end of the cell, holding his hands above his head. Then he ran upon a shelf and with a furious haste pulled out a large book bound in white skin. He threw it open upon his bed and bade the monk come look at a picture.

This picture was all in fair blues and reds and greens, going across the two pages of the book.

"I had this book in Rome," the Bishop said, "of a Greek called Josephus. Look upon this picture."

The picture showed a mountain with trees upon it. And round the mountain went a colonnade of marble pillars. In between the central columns, where it was higher, sat a grey-bearded and frowning man. Naked he was to the waist and he was upon a throne of gold. At his left hand was an eagle; in his right the forked lightning of a thunderbolt. Beside him stood a proud woman in purple with a diadem of gold. In the next temple was a helmed woman that leaned upon a great spear; next her, a man

all furious, that held up a great round shield and a pointed sword. Over against him reclined a great man with a lion's hide who leant upon a club; beyond him a man all white with the sun in his hair and beyond that a youth with wings upon his feet, upon his cap and upon a rod, twined with snakes that he held. All these were in the temple, and many more, such as a woman in a chariot drawn by oxen, and an old crowned man rising from the blue waves of the sea.

Then the Bishop laid his trembling imperious fingers upon a place higher up the mountain, above the temple.

"Look upon this," he said. There, amongst olive trees, the monk perceived a pink, naked woman. In one hand she held a mirror into which, lasciviously, she smiled. Her other hand held out behind her a wealth of shining hair like gold. Above her, clouds upon the blue sky turned over and let down a rain of pink roseleaves.

"I do not know who these be," the monk Francis said. "I was never in Rome."

Then the Bishop said harshly:

"Was the woman you saw like this woman?"

"Not so," the monk answered, "she had dark hair divided down the middle and parted lips. She was like the cousin that I slew and so she smiled."

The Bishop groaned. And so he wrung his hands and cried out:

"As God is good to me, I saw that naked woman stand so and smile so, in my vestiary, this morning after I had said mass. Six times I made the sign of the cross and she went not away. I was pondering upon the case of the Young Lovell.... She went not away.... Pondering.... God help me, a sinful man.... The eremites of the Libyan desert.... But no, it was not so.... No temptation...."

The waves of terror shook that Bishop with the thin features. His hands were so knitted and squeezed together in a paroxysm that it seemed the blood must spurt from his finger nails. And even as he stood, so he groaned with a hollow and

continuous sound. Then the monk Francis cried out:

"Those are the fairies! Those women are the fairies! God help you, Lord Bishop, you cannot condemn my friend because he has seen them, if you cannot keep them out of your own vestiary.... For all about this world they are.... They peer in upon us. Thro' the windows they peer in! Looking! Looking! You cannot condemn my friend.... Like beasts of pray in the night they peer into the narrow rooms.... Hungering! ... Hungering!" His voice was like heavy, fierce sobs and it sounded against the Bishop's moans.

"God forgive me," he cried out, "it was upon these that I thought when I comforted my friend with talks of angels and saints.... I lied and thought I was lying.... Angels! These are the little people! The little angels, as the country people say, that were once the angels of God. But they would not aid Him against Lucifer, doubting the issue of the combat.... They it is, have brought this fine weather we enjoy. A great host of them, like fair women, is descended upon this country. They cannot live without fine weather...."

Both these churchmen were weakened with fasting and prayers when they might have slept. The monk Francis had great fears, their minds leapt from place to place. That long, bare room seemed surrounded with hosts of fair, evil fiends. He imagined devils with twisted snouts and long claws scraping and scratching at the leads of the painted glass and at the stones of the mortar.

Then the Bishop cried out upon him with a fearful voice, calling him ignorant, a fool rustic monk, a low, religious filled with barbarous superstitions. He came close to the monk Francis and cried into his very face:

"God help me, thou fool, bleating of fairies.... All those women were one woman! ... And again God help me! When I heard thee bleat ignorantly of the prowess of that young knight I did not believe thee.... But now I do believe he is the most precious defender we have in this place.... I will asperge his shining armour with holy oils.... I

will bless his sword.... God help him.... How shall he fight against a goddess with a sword of steel.... Yet she is vulnerable! All writings say she is vulnerable...."

He began a pitiful babble that the monk could not well understand, of Italy where he had lived many years as the King's Friend. So he spoke of cypress groves and the ruined corners of old temples, and fireflies and nights of love. He spoke of earth crumbling away in pits and great white statues with sightless eyes rising out of the graves on hill-sides, tall columns that no one could overset, and the gods of the hearth. Of all these things the monk Francis knew nothing. The Bishop spoke of crafty Italians with whom he had spoken, and of subtle Greeks of the fallen Eastern Empire; and of how this subtle creature, as the credible legends said, dwelt now, since the fall of Byzantium, upon a mountainside in Almain, and of an almond staff that flowered....

Then that Bishop cast himself upon his bed, face downwards, and so he lay still.

That monk sat there many hours upon the little stool, and whether the Bishop slept or thought he could not tell, for the Bishop never moved. Then that monk considered that that Bishop had many and strange knowledges, having passed so long a time in foreign parts. And there was fear in that monk's heart, for he thought he was with a sorcerer that aimed to make himself pope by sorceries. And afterwards he fell to considering of how this Bishop should deal with his friend the Young Lovell, for that Bishop was master and lord.

And so, being the harder man of the two, he went over in his mind the necessity that that see had for a champion in those parts and how there could be none so good as the Young Lovell, even though that knight were, as he feared, a man accursed and certain of a pitiful end. Yet he might as well do what he could for the Church before that end came. And the monk thought of the evil King and the subtle Sir Bertram and the grim coward that the Percy was and the discontent of the common sort and how that might be used. And he thought of all these things for a long time, as if they

were counters he moved upon a chess-board. And he cried to himself: "Ah, if I were Bishop I would control these things."

And then he remembered that it was long since he had prayed for the soul of his cousin that he had slain. So he set himself upon his knees and sought to make up for lost time in prayer. Those windows faced towards the west, being high over the river that rushes below. And from where one knelt he could see the tower of St. Margaret's Church through the open casement of stained glass. And at last, towards its setting, the sun shone blood red through all those windows of colours, ruby, purple, vermeil, grass green and the blue of lapis lazuli. All those colours fell upon the tiles of the floor that were hewn with a lily pattern in yellow of the potter. Twenty colours fell upon the figure of the Bishop, lying all in black upon his bed and as many upon the form of the monk where he knelt and prayed. Scarlet irradiated his forehead, purple his chin and shoulder, and to the waist he was bluish.

The voices of the pigeons on the roofs lamented the passing of the day with bubbling sounds, the great bell of the cathedral and many other bells called for evening prayer in the fields; it was late, for that was the season of hay-making. Then that praying monk perceived, through the small window, a great red globe hastening down behind the tower of St. Margaret's Church and, with a sudden deepening, twilight and shadows filled that long room because of the opaque and coloured windows.

And ever as the monk prayed there, he was pervaded by the image of his cousin's face—Passerose of Widdrington she had been called, for she was held to exceed the rose in beauty. In that darkness where he knelt he was pervaded by the thought of her face with the hair divided in the middle, the smooth brow, the so kind eyes and the parted lips. He knew she must be in purgatory for that space, for he had killed her with an arrow in the woodlands, unassoiled, and he could not consider that his prayers yet had sufficed to save her so little as five hundred years of that dread

place. Yet, tho' he knew her to be in purgatory, in those dark shadows he had a sense that she was near him so that he could hear the rustle of her weed moving around him. She had loved green that is very dark in shadowy places. A great longing seized upon him to stretch out his arms and so to touch her. Then he remembered that it was that face that had looked kindly in upon him in his cell, and he groaned and cried upon our Saviour and His Mother to save him from such carnal longings. He had much loved his kind cousin whilst he had been a rough knight of this world. Many had loved her, but he alone remembered, and he considered how she that had been most beautiful was now no more than a horrible and grinning skull, God so willing it with all beauty that is of this world and made of the red blood that courses through the veins.

At the sound that he then gave forth he heard another sound which was that of the Bishop where he stirred upon his bed. And, in the deep shadows, he was aware that that Bishop sat up and looked upon him. And at last John Sherwood, Bishop Palatine spoke, his voice being harsh and first.

"Brother in God," he said, "I have determined that this Young Lovell shall have my absolution and blessing upon his arms and the sacrament of knighthood and all the things of this world that you desired for him. Touching the things that are not of this world I will not say much, but only such matters as shall suffice for your guidance. For of these matters I know somewhat and you nothing at all."

The Bishop paused and the monk said humbly:

"Father in God and my lord, I thank you."

"I lately rebuked you," the Bishop said, "for meddling brutishly in things of which you knew nothing. For you cried out to me ignorant and rustic superstitions, such as it is not fitting for a religious to meditate upon. And so I rebuke you again and I command you that you ask of your confessor such a penance as he shall think fitting for one that has miserably blasphemed, and in a manner of doctrine.... Now this I tell

you for your guidance.... This apparition that you have seen and I, appeareth with many faces and bodies, being the spirit that most snareth men to carnal desires. So doth she show herself to each man in the image that should snare him to sin, with a face, kind, virtuous and alluring after each man's tastes. That is the nature of such false gods. For this is a false god, such as I have discerned you never, in your black ignorance, to have heard of. But Holy Writ, which I have much studied and you very little, after the fashion of certain monks, enjoins upon us to believe in the existence of false gods. So there are ever strange and cold creatures, looking upon this world with steadfast eyes. For Lucretius says, that was a writer, pagan yet half inspired: 'The universe is very large and in it there is room for a multitude of gods.' So I rede you, believe of false gods."

"Father in God, I will," the monk said, "I perceive it to be my duty. For now I remember me the Church enjoins upon us to be constant in fighting against such, therefore they must exist."

"Then this too I command you as a duty," the Bishop said from the thick darkness, "that for the duration of his life you quit never this knight but be ever with him, seeking how you may win him from the perception of this evil being. For signing of the cross shall not do it, neither shall sprinklings with holy water such as avail with the spirits of men deceased or with Satan and such imps. For this is even a god and the only way you may prevail against it is by keeping the mind of your penitent upon the things of this world of God. If you shall perceive this form of a woman here or there you shall speak to him quickly of setting up an oratory, or charity to the poor, or riding, in the name of God, against the false Scots. This shall avail little, but somewhat it may. Do you mark me?"

"Father in God," the monk said, "you put me in much better heart than I was before. For if I may, I will tell you how once I have done."

So the monk, from the darkness, told the Bishop how for the second time he had

seen that lady. This was upon the road below Eshot Hill, going to Morpeth, near the farmhouse called Helm. Here, as he rode with the Young Lovell, a little before his men, he had seen that lady come out of a little wood and mount upon a white horse with a great company of damsels upon horses about her. And so all that many, brightly clad, rode down to a little hillock and watched that lording pass them, all smiling together. So that monk for the first time had been afraid that this was no St. Katharine and no angel of God.

But the Young Lovell had gone drooping in the hot sun and thirsting within himself and had not seen that lady. And at first that monk had wished to pull out his breviary and bid the Young Lovell read a prayer in it. But in his haste he could not come upon it amongst his robes for he was riding upon a mule. So, in that same haste, he had made certain lines with his finger nail upon the saddle before him and commanded the Young Lovell to look upon them saying it was a plan of Castle Lovell that he scratched, and the White Tower. And to have money, he told the Young Lovell, that lord must go with a boat to below the White Tower where it stood in the sea. And so Richard Raket should lower him gold in baskets at the end of a rope.

And the Young Lovell had looked down upon these markings attentively and said it was a good plan and never looked up at that lady and her company who sat there, all smiling, until they were passed.

"Well, she can bide her time," the Bishop said; then he said: "Brother in God, I have never seen this Young Lovell, but I perceive that he must be fair in his body."

"He is the fairest man of his body that ever I saw," the monk answered, "And as I have heard said by servants that went to meet him and his father, to Venice, he was esteemed the fairest man that those parts, as all the world, ever saw. But how that may be I know not."

"You may say he is the fairest knight of Christendom," the Bishop said. "That is

very certain. I know it that have never seen this lord.... But so it is that I see you are not so great a fool as I had thought. And it is ever in such ways that you shall deal with this Young Lovell as you did then."

"I will very well do that, if I may," the monk said. "And if I may do nothing more I will spit upon that foul demon who without doubt beneath a fair exterior beareth a beak or snout, claws, and filthy scales...."

"Nay do not do that," the Bishop said, "for if God who is the ancient of days permitteth these false gods to walk upon this godly earth that is His, shall we not think that they are in some sort His guests? Or so I think, for I do not know."

So by that hour both these churchmen were very hungry and weary too. For that reason the fury was gone out of them, and it was ten at night. So the Bishop called for torches in the gallery and went into a little refectory that he had in that part of the Castle. Whilst these two ate heartily together, the Bishop sent messengers to the higher officers of the monastery to rouse them from their beds and to say that shortly after midnight, as soon as they might, the Prince Bishop begged them to rise from their sleep and sing a Te Deum in the cathedral, upon a very special occasion.

In the black cathedral, near the steps that pass into the choir, the Young Lovell knelt. Beside him, since he was so great a lord, stood the esquire Cressingham supporting his banner and his shield and having in his arm the helmet of state. There were lay brothers up before the altar, moving into place a great statue of Our Lady that ran upon wheels. This they were bringing from near the North door to stand before the high altar. This statue was twelve foot high of brass gilt and, the better to see, these lay brothers had placed a candle upon Our Lady's crown. That was all the light there was in the great space that smelt of incense and was sooty black.

As near as she might to the black line in the floor—beyond this no woman may go in the cathedral of Durham and even Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine had been beaten with rods by the monks when she passed it to join King Edward—beyond this line

knelt the Lady Margaret of Glororem in the darkness, and behind a pillar was the lawyer Stone who would fain speak some words with the Young Lovell. For he wished to have sold the people of Castle Lovell to him if the Young Lovell would pay him a small price.

The lawyer had waited all that night from seven or earlier.

Then a little noise began to be heard in the great cathedral, and two little boys came in and lit candles by the North door and then came a page bearing a great sword. He leant it against a vast pillar and began to laugh with the little boys that had lit the candles. Then there came in the Bishop with his chaplain and the monk Francis.

So the Bishop went and stood before the Young Lovell and said he had permission of them of the monastery to hear that lord confess himself there where he knelt. So the esquire Cressingham removed himself to a distance and drove away the little boys when they would have approached. And so the Bishop absolved the Young Lovell and bade him rise from his knees and go with him to where the Lady Margaret of Glororem knelt in darkness.

Her too he bade rise from her knees, and so walked up and down between them, saying comfortable things and exhorting them, when the Pope should have given them licence, to marry one another and live faithful each to each and to be charitable and piteous to the poor and be good children of Holy Church. And so by twos and threes monks began to come in, and, going behind the high altar, they sang a mass with a Te Deum, for it was just past midnight.

Then the Prior of that monastery placed between the lips of the Young Lovell the flesh of our Lord. The Prior wished to do this that he might do honour to that young lord, and that great boon of giving him the sacrament. And, afterwards, with the sword that page had brought, sitting in his stall the Bishop made a Knight of that lord.

In that way the Young Lovell had his knighthood and his pardon.

PART III

I

On the fourteenth day of July in the year of our Lord, 1486, in the dark of the night between two o'clock and four, the Young Lovell took the Tower of Cullerford, setting fires all round it and beneath it and driving out all its inhabitants. On the seventeenth, a little before six in the morning, he stood on the height of the White Tower and looked down into Castle Lovell. This was a very still dawn, the sun being already risen, for it was near midsummer. The sea was a clear blue, and in a sky as clear that sun hung, round and pale gold. To the eastward, towards the seas called The Lowlands, were several monstrous grey shapes, going up into the heavens like tall columns in a church and twisting in a writhing manner as if they had been pallid serpents in an agony. They advanced towards one another as if they had been dancers. Separated again and so ran before the pale sun, that they appeared to be sentient beings. But, waterspouts such as these, far out to sea, were no very unfamiliar sight in those parts during hot weather and no man heeded them very much.

The better to have a sight of this Castle of his—for the great courtyard was occupied with many hovels, so that even from on high it was difficult to see who there was moving—the Young Lovell mounted upon the parapet of the battlements and stood looking down. He was all in his light armour, for it would fall to him to be very active that day, so that he had steel only upon his chest, his arms, and the forepart of his thighs, shins, and feet. In such accoutrement he could spring very easily over a wall five foot in height, and his round helmet was a very light one of black iron surmounted by a small lion's head.

This Castle that he now looked down upon was a very fair great Castle. The battlements which were a circle of nearly a quarter of a mile, had in them three square towers of three stories each and two round ones of two, the peaked roofs of

all these towers being of slate. In the centre of the space enclosed by the battlements rose up the keep, a building of four stories, four round towers being at each corner that spread out at the top with places for pouring down lead, Greek fire, or large stone bullets upon any that should assault those towers. But, in between the keep and the battlements, there had gradually grown up a congeries of hovels like a dirty thatched town. The Young Lovell had never liked this in his father's day, but then he had been the son and had had no say in these matters.

This state of things had arisen, although the tenure of the lands appertaining to the Lovells was as follows: that is to say, that in time of war each of the outer towers should be manned by able-bodied fellows from the one hundred and twenty-seven hamlets, villages, townships, and parishes that the Lovells owned. Thus, giving on the average five capable tenants to each of these, there should have been six hundred men to hold the outer walls, being forty men to each of the towers in the walls and two hundred and eighty for the battlements between. The inner keep should in such a case be held by the best men-at-arms and the knights and the squires that a Lord Lovell should have about him. And the tenure of the six hundred bondsmen from those hamlets and parishes was such that, by giving their services for indefinite periods during times of war for the defence of that Castle, they were excused all further services, or service in any other parts. For it was held, that the defence of that Castle was very necessary for the protection of the realm from the false Scots if they should take Berwick and so come down into England by that way.

That had been the original tenure, but by little and little, when the Percies had had those lands of the Vescis by the treachery of Bishop Anthony Bek, they had begun to make changes in these tenures, desiring to have men to accompany them upon journeys whether against the Kings of England or Scotland, as suited their humour. So that in many townships and parishes the Percies bargained with their bondsmen for so many days' service in the year and rent-hens and other things. And this the bondsmen had agreed to readily enough. For, on account of the perpetual takings

and re-takings of the town of Berwick by the Scots and the English, there was never any knowing when they might not be called in to defend that Castle for a year's space at a time, and so their farmings would go to rack and ruin, and their towers, barnekyns and very parish churches lie undefended at the mercy of the false Scots. And when the Lovells had bought these lands of the Percies they had changed the tenure still more, not so much because they desired to ride upon journeys, for by comparison with the Percies, they were stay-at-homes, but because, as a family, the Lovells were greedy of money and desired rather the payments of rents and the service of men in their own fields than much military doings.

So they had had to hire men-at-arms by the year or for life. Thus, in that Castle, which had been meant to be defended by six hundred men upon varying services, sleeping on the floors of the towers, or here and there as they could, the Lovells would have a certain number of men-at-arms, but seldom more than two hundred and fifty that dwelt there in the Castle. And because these men-at-arms would have wives and children and kith and kin, or they would not stay there, they could not sleep to the number of many families in these towers, whether round or square, that went along the battlements. Some of them, it is true, took these towers for homes, making great disorder, keeping them very foul and filthy, shutting up the meurtrières, or slits for arrows, in order to keep out draughts, and much unfitting that Castle for defence when sieges came. For there, in those towers which should be places of defence, there would be warrens of children crying out and shrieking women. And other men-at-arms had built them hovels between the battlements and the keep, building with mud and roofing with rushes, so that all that space was like a disorderly town with little streets and sties for pigs and middens and filthy water that ran never away.

Thus this place had become a source of manifest danger, but the Young Lovell's father would not clear out all these places, because to him they were a source of much profit, for he employed the women and children and the hangers on and rabble

to work in his fields all the year round, and so he had much money by that means. But because he recognized that his Castle was thus in some danger—for any enemy that won on to the battlements might, by casting down a few torches, set all these roofs on fire, and so the inner keep would stand in the midst of a furnace and all those people within the battlements be burned and slain like rats in a well—the old Lord Lovell had determined to make a safe place for himself and for the money that he and his father had hoarded up, being a very vast sum. So he had hired to come to him out of France an esquire called La Rougerie, being the son of the man that the King Louis XI of France used to build all his fortresses. So this La Rougerie had considered very well the situation and extent of this Castle that upon three faces was thundered upon by the seas at high tide. Then that La Rougerie perceived at about ten yards from the North-east end of the Castle, a crag of rock well in the sea even at high tide, in shape like a dog's tooth and nothing useful except to gannets, and not even to them of much use, for they would not build their nests so near the Castle. So this La Rougerie had advised that Lord Lovell that he should build upon that rock a great slender but very high tower, with walls of stone six yards in thickness. For the first eighty feet of its height there should be no openings at all, not so much as slits for the firing of arrows. And in the windowless chambers there the Lord Lovell should keep his treasure walled up. And above these there should be rooms for the guards with arrow holes in the form of crosses, and above these fairer rooms with somewhat larger windows, where the Lord Lovell and his family might retire, if so be his Castle should be taken, and above these dwelling rooms should be attics and granaries where gunpowder and ammunition should be stored and arrows and the quarrels of cross-bows, and there the sakers should be kept so that they should not rust upon the battlements in time of peace. And there were pulleys for hauling up these cannons on to the battlements above. Seven of these sakers there were that could cast a bullet weighing thirty pounds of stone or fifty of iron, in full flight into the furthest part of that Castle upon which those battlements looked down as a

church steeple looks into the graveyard. For this tower was intended solely for the protection of that lord and his people in case any enemy should take the Castle itself. They would retreat there by a little narrow drawbridge giving into a very little door at the foot of the tower, being thirty feet long, and over a piece of sea that by nature of the currents, and by reason that the Frenchman hollowed out the rocks, ran there almost tempestuously if there were any wind at all, which happened on most days in these parts. And once there, the Lord Lovell could thunder upon his Castle thus taken by enemies with cannon balls of stone and iron, with arrows and with iron bolts shot by arbalists. There could not any inch of that Castle go unsearched, for the battlements were one hundred feet above the keep itself.

This then was the White Tower upon which the Young Lovell stood. Up to the seaward side of this tower he had come from a boat, just before sunrise, climbing up iron spikes that were inserted in the mortar for that purpose, and coming to a very small door in the guard room. This tower had been held for him by Richard Bek, Robert Bulman, and Bertram Bullock, who had been its captains, and dwelt there in his father's day, being much trusted by the old Lord Lovell. These esquires, with ten men, had held this tower very stoutly against them of the Castle that could in no wise come to them. To them had resorted ten or fifteen other stout fellows, that had slipped in over the drawbridge or came there by climbing up the spikes of the seaward wall. They victualled themselves how they could from the sea; but indeed they had food enough within the tower of the old lord's storing, except that at first they lacked of fresh meat, which in the summer time was a grievous thing.

What the Young Lovell could not tell was how many men they of the Castle had, for some reported that they had as few as a hundred and eighty, and others as many as three hundred. How that might be it was very difficult to say, for there was a constant coming and going between Castle Lovell and Cullerford and Haltwhistle, as well as Wallhouses, where the evil knight, Henry Vesey, had his men. In short, if they had withdrawn all their men into Castle Lovell they might have three hundred

well armed between them. And this the Young Lovell thought might be the case, for when he had taken the tower of Cullerford there had been very few men there, or none at all. So he judged that Sir Simonde Vesey would have been forced by agreement to withdraw all his men from Haltwhistle to the defence of that Castle if Sir Walter Limousin had agreed to leave Cullerford defenceless. And without doubt, too, the Vesey of Wallhouses would have his men there as well. Thus there might be as many as three hundred stout fellows there, and that might make the adventure a difficult one, for the Young Lovell had not gathered any more men himself, though what he had were mostly very proved fighting men, there being five knights that were his friends, twenty-seven esquires, one hundred and twenty of his own men, and those the best, and one hundred and seventy that were the picked men of his friends and of the Lady Margaret of Glororem.

So he had gone up to the battlements to see how many men he could observe in that Castle. But because he could not very well see between the openings in the battlements, he seized his chance and sprang on to the very top of the stones. He had observed the watchman on the keep below him. This man walked regularly from side to side, keeping his watch, and at each turn he would be gone regularly for as long as you could count ninety-eight. So, in the absence of that watchman, he stood there and looked down.

But until he stood there many things had gone before; there were so many people active about his affairs. There were the Bishop Palatine, Sir Bertram of Lyonesse, the old Princess of Croy, the Lady Margaret, the Earl of Northumberland, the bondsman Hugh Raket, and the people in the Castle themselves. And all these ran up and down that county of Northumberland upon the Young Lovell's affairs.

Let us consider them in that order.

First there was the Bishop Palatine, John Sherwood. He did not stir himself much. Nevertheless he sent a messenger to the people of the Castle—the Knights of

Cullerford, Haltwhistle, and Wallhouses, as well as the Decies. He warned them that he had given his full absolution to the Young Lovell, and had accepted his homage as a tenant-in-chief of the See of Durham. He commanded them, therefore, on pain of absolution, to evacuate the Castle and lands of that lord. Those in the Castle replied with an assurance of their ready and prompt obedience to the Prince Bishop. They said that they would immediately set the Young Lovell in possession of all such lands and emoluments as he held as tenant-in-chief of the Palatine see. They would do it immediately upon his producing to them the title deeds and charters of such lands of his. For, as matters were, they did not know which of his lands and townships he held of the Prince Bishop and which of the King, their most dread lord. As for his holdings from the King, those they could not, nay, they dare not, surrender; for these had been adjudged to them by a writ fouled in the court of the Warden of the Eastern Marches. That might be a small matter in itself, but, in addition to the assigning of the lands to themselves, there went certain huge fines to the King, as was fit and proper. At that moment they were very ready to surrender their own holding of the Castle, but they could not themselves pay the fine to the King, for they had not so much money amongst them. Supposing, therefore, that the Young Lovell held that Castle of the King, they would be guilty of high treason if they surrendered it without paying those fines, and they could not pay themselves, neither could they have any security that the Young Lovell would do so.

So they said they would very willingly surrender all the lands that that lord held of the Palatine see as the Young Lovell should produce to them his charters and show which was which.

This was a very cunning answer, for by professing to be so ready to surrender at the command of the Bishop that prelate was precluded from proceeding to their instant excommunication which he would have done. That would have caused at least half of their men, if not a greater proportion, to fall away from them, for there was a sufficiency of piety left in the North parts. Moreover, as against that answer, the

Bishop was advised that he could not, as he would willingly have done, send his own forces with the Young Lovell against the Castle. For it was true enough that, until the Young Lovell could appeal against that judgment of the Lord Percy's, those false knights held a certain part of his lands in the interests of the King, so that the Prince Bishop could not well war upon them.

As for the Young Lovell's deeds and charters they were hidden up by the Knight of Haltwhistle in his tower at that place, so that, for the moment, he could by no means come at them and it was difficult for the Bishop's advisers to say how he might have them again. For they had not even any certain evidence that those muniments were at Haltwhistle. The Young Lovell had the news of Elizabeth Campstones, his old nurse, and she was a prisoner in the Castle. It was true that the lawyer Stone had by that time come round to the side of the Young Lovell, and he was assured that those charters and deeds had been removed to the tower at Haltwhistle. Still he had not seen this done, for they had gone at dead of night.

Therefore the Bishop wrote another letter to them of the Castle, saying he was assured that they and no others held all those deeds and summoning them immediately to surrender. To this the Decies answered that he had not those deeds and papers: that they were very certainly not in that fortress as far as he commanded it: that he would very willingly surrender them, but he did not know where they were. He imagined that they might be in the White Tower over which he had no control.

The lawyer Stone said that that might very well be the truth that was in the Decies' mind. For that ignorant fool was mostly heavy with wine. The evil Knight of Wallhouses had counselled the others that they should make the Decies commander in name of that Castle at the very first, so that if any penalties should fall on any heads for the seizure it should be on the Decies'. Moreover, they had removed the muniments without telling the Decies, so that they might the more easily be rid of

him when it served their turn.

Thus the Bishop's advisers said that here was a very difficult and lengthy matter to deal with. For if the Bishop should write to any one of those cunning people for those deeds he would immediately, or beforehand, pass them on to the other and say he could not surrender them since he had them not. If on the other hand he wrote to them all at once they would give the deeds to their wives or to some safe person and so make the same answer. So they must issue writs against all the county at the same moment.

So far the Bishop had got in those fourteen days. In the meantime it was the turn of the Knight of Lyonesse.

This Sir Bertram rode well attended to the Castle of Warkworth to talk with the Earl of Northumberland and to lay before him all the truth of that matter, and how the King did not wish that the North parts should be enraged against him. And at first the Earl treated this Cornish knight with little courtesy. But very soon that Sir Bertram showed to the Earl a paper that he had of the King to empower Sir Bertram to remove the Earl from the wardenship of the Eastern Marches if the Earl would not do all that Sir Bertram bade him. And Sir Bertram proved to the Earl how necessary it was, the King's purse being at that time in no good condition, to win the goodwill of the great lords of the North. He said that the Earl might take all that he could get from the poorer people, but the nobles he must keep his claws from.

Then the Earl agreed with Sir Bertram upon that matter and they set their heads together to see what they might do. And here again it was no easy matter to act by course of law. For there was no doubt that the Earl had given his judgment against the Young Lovell, and there was no process that he knew of by which he could reverse a judgment that he had once given. The Young Lovell must make an appeal to the King in Council and that was a long process. The Earl was willing—though not over-willing—to call out his own ban and arrière ban and to take Castle Lovell

by due course of siege. But, if he did that, he must kill utterly the Decies, the two other knights, Sir Henry Vesey of Wallhouses, and the two sisters of the Young Lovell. Moreover, to do as much, the Earl must draw off a great number of his men, and he did not trust some of his neighbours over much. Also, if any one of those persons escaped he or she would have cause to begin endless lawsuits against the Percy for slaying the others or even for taking the Castle from them. For they had his own writ for holding it. Moreover, the Young Lovell would by no means hear of the Percy's laying siege to his Castle. For all that Sir Bertram could say, he declared that if the Percy did this he would fall upon the Percy's forces with his own men. He said that, in the first place it would be black shame to him; in the second, the Percy must needs bang Castle Lovell about more than he himself would care to see, before ever he came in; and finally the Young Lovell shrewdly doubted whether the Percy would ever come out again once he was in.

In the same way the Young Lovell would have no men of the Percy to help him in the attack on his Castle, for he would not trust the Earl of Northumberland. Thus the Knight of Lyonesse did very little of what he was most minded to do. For he wished not only to help the Young Lovell and so make him a friend to the King, but he desired to reconcile him with the Earl of Northumberland that there might be peace in the North parts. However, Sir Bertram achieved this much, that the Young Lovell would let the Lord of Alnwick be in peace if the Lord of Alnwick would let him be, and that was something gained, for at first the Young Lovell had declared that he would try it out with the Percy as soon as he had achieved his first enterprise. But the Percy sent him a very courteous apology, saying that he had delivered his judgment against the Young Lovell only because he must do so as a justice according to the law as the lawyers advised him and that now he was very sorry that he had done it.

For now the raider Gib Elliott was boasting in all the market towns that he had access to, saying that he had held the Young Armstrong prisoner for three months

and had ransomed him in Edinburgh. This Elizabeth Campstones, his foster-cousin, had got him to do, sending him word by a little boy and the promise of fifty French crowns. And indeed he was very glad to do it, since it might not only cause strong fellows to resort to him for the renown of it, but it might gain him the friendship of the Young Lovell, which would be a good thing for his widow when he came to be hanged at Carlisle.

And everybody was very glad of that rumour—the Bishop Palatine because it was more to the credit of the Young Lovell whom he supported; the Earl of Northumberland and Sir Bertram of Lyonesse, because it afforded them an excuse for writing broad letters to the King and his Council, asking that the former judgment given by the Earl might be reversed because of the perjury by which it was obtained. The Young Lovell was glad of it too. He thought that it was better for his bondsmen that they should not believe that their lord had spent three months gazing on a fairy woman. For that otherwise they would believe and that it was some make of sorcery, for all that the Bishop had given him absolution. The Young Lovell considered that it is not always good for the lower orders, set in their places by God, to know truths apart from the truths of Holy Church. For the lower orders have weak brains wherein too much truth is like new wine in feeble bottles.

But the Knight of Lyonesse, who had been bidden by King Henry, if he could, to establish himself in the North parts with lands and worship, and to do it, if possible, without calling upon the King to pay for it, went upon another enterprise before June was fourteen days old. For on all hands he heard that the Lady Rohtraut of Castle Lovell was the richest dowager for lands in all Northumberland, and by the disposition of his mind he was not desirous of marrying a young girl that might make a mock of him or worse. Moreover, he heard that the Lady Rohtraut was a fair enough woman of forty-three, with a good temper if she were well-used and not dishonoured, and that he thought he could do well enough. So he was doubly anxious to be of service to the Young Lovell, for, the more he heard of it, the more

he was certain that this lady would make a good match for him, and that so he would please King Henry.

For her lands were broad and mostly fertile for the North; her Castle at Cramlin would be a very strong Castle after the Young Lovell had finished the repairs to it at his own expense and it stood very handy at the entrance into Northumberland, so that with help in men from the King, he might very easily work against troubles in that part, whether they came from the North or the South.

So, being in that mind, he went after ten days to pay his devoirs to the old Princess of Croy, for, after he had dwelt with her for one day, he had considered that she desired to charge him too much for his lodging and that he could do better for himself at an inn, where he could send out for his meat and have it cooked by his own man at the common fire. He had enquired of the prices of meat in that town and found that that was so.

But now he wished that he had not done that, since he might have gained more of the old Princess's favour by paying her exorbitant prices. However, he found that that was not the case, for that Princess had so great a respect for money that she esteemed a man the more for being careful of his purse strings, even though it hurt her own pocket. So she greeted him with pleasure and said that she wished her son, Lord Dacre, had been another such.

Sir Bertram had observed a great white mule—the largest he had ever seen—to stand before her door, and she told him that she was just about to set out upon a journey. For, said she, and her face bore every sign of fury, the Young Lovell, as Sir Bertram had heard, had treated her with lewd disrespect and she was minded to read him a lesson. "Madam and my Granddam and gentle Princess," he had said to her—and she mimicked his tones with so much anger that she spat on each side of her, "my mother has languished in prison during half a year and all that time you have done nothing for her."

And now, the old woman said, she was going to do something for her daughter that the Young Lovell would never dare to do. For upon a pillion on that mule, behind her old steward, she was about to ride to Castle Lovell. No guards she would take and no bowman, and there was no other Christian in the City of Durham that dare do as much in those dangerous lands. And being come to Castle Lovell, she would release her daughter with her own hands and all alone, and what make of a boasting fool would that Young Lovell appear then!

The Knight of Cornwall, when he heard those words, bent one knee on the ground and begged that that Princess would take him with her, for he would gladly do so much for that fair lady as well as witness the Princess doing these things. The Princess looked at him sideways in a queer glance and said that he might do if he would bring no men-at-arms to spoil the fame of her feat. He answered that he had the courage for that, but he said gravely that it might be for the comfort of the Lady Rohtraut, who had not the courage of her mother and would fear to travel alone, if his men-at-arms to the number of forty followed behind them, and so, meeting them at Belford or somewhere in that neighbourhood, guarded them on the homeward road. The Princess said that he might do that.

So they rode out and in four days' time they came to Castle Lovell. The Princess was on the white mule behind her steward and Sir Bertram was on a little horse. For, although he would have presented a more splendid appearance to the Lady Rohtraut upon a charger, he did not wish to be at the charges for horsefeed for such a great animal, whereas the galloway could subsist off the grass and herbs that it found by the roadway, though all green things were by that time much withered by the drought. Such weather had never been known in the North parts.

They met with no robbers; only, as they went near the sea to avoid the town of Morpeth so that the Young Lovell should not hear of this adventure, he being at Cramlin all this time—near High Clibburn and just north of Widdrington Castle

there met with them Adam Swinburn, a broken gentleman with ten fellows and would have robbed them. But when he heard how they were going to rescue the Lady Rohtraut that all the world was talking of he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. For he had never had such cause for amusement as to see this fat old woman holding on behind a lean old servingman, with a man all in silks and colours with a great brown beard upon a little horse beside her, his feet brushing the ground. And these three were going to storm a mighty Castle that no forces before ever had sufficed to take. So, when he had done laughing, he rode with them a great piece of the way, even as far as Lesbury and past Warkworth. For he said that if the Earl of Northumberland saw them he would certainly rob them and so deprive that countryside of a great jest. Sir Bertram found this Adam—who was red-headed like all the Swinburns—very pleasant company, and when they parted Sir Bertram swore that when it came to hanging that Adam he would pray the King, if he could not save his life, at least to let it be done with a silken rope.

So, on the fourteenth day of June, at eleven in the morning—and that was seven hours after the Young Lovell took and burned the tower of Cullerford—the mule being very tired and the galloway none too fresh, that company of five, men and beasts, climbed wearily up the hill to Castle Lovell. The captain of the tower called Wanshot where the gate was, let them pass, for he could not see any danger from this old woman and the man in silks. At the door of the keep the Princess slid down from her mule, and pushing the guards there in the chest with her crutch, she went past them into the great hall and the guards let Sir Bertram follow her. In the hall, and crossing it, they found Sir Henry Vesey devising beside a pillar with his sister-in-law Douce that was a little woman. The Princess with a furious voice bade this Lady Douce fall upon her knees, for this was her granddam. That the Lady Douce did, for she could think of no reason to excuse her from it.

Then the Princess Rohtraut began to call out for the keys of her daughter's room, and various men came running in as well as the Lady Isopel, that was the other

grand-daughter. There was a great noise, and so Sir Bertram of Lyonesse drew Sir Henry Vesey behind a pillar, and in a low voice strongly enjoined on him to let the Lady Rohtraut go. For he said that he was the King's commissioner and that all that were in that Castle were in a very evil case, for very likely it would soon be taken and all the men there hanged. And he said that Sir Henry was in a different case from the other leaders and that he, Sir Bertram, promised to save his life and gain favour for him with the King if he would let the Lady Rohtraut go. Moreover, he whispered that, Sir Symonde his brother being dead, Sir Henry might have his lands and be free to love his sister-in-law as he listed. For the rumour went that this evil knight was over-fond of the Lady Douce, and it was in that way Elizabeth Campstones saved her life. For, when there was talk of hanging her for having talked to the Young Lovell, she told the Lady Douce that she would inform against her to her husband—which well she could do. So the Lady Douce begged her life of the others.

And after Sir Bertram had talked for a time to Sir Henry Vesey, making him those fair promises, Sir Henry sent a boy for the keys of Wanshot Tower. When he had them he begged that Princess very courteously to follow him, saying that he would take her to her daughter and so set her free. Then began a great clamour between the Ladies Douce and Isopel. The Lady Isopel said that Sir Henry should not do this, the Lady Douce that he should, for she was in all things the slave of Sir Henry, and that the Lady Isopel told her very loudly. But the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle had ridden out to see if they could have news of the Young Lovell, for they knew that he was gathering his forces to come against them.

So Sir Henry did not at all heed the clamour of the Lady Isopel, but walked very grandly before the Princess Rohtraut to Wanshot Tower, and sparks of triumph came from that hobbling old woman's eyes. So when he was come to the door on the inner side of the wall Sir Henry gave into the hands of the Princess the two keys, one of that door and one of the room where the Lady Rohtraut was. Then the Princess went

into that tower, and after a space down she came again, and with her were the Lady Rohtraut and Elizabeth Campstones. The Lady Rohtraut took nothing away with her but the clothes she had on her back. Only in her great sleeves she had her little lapdog called Butterfly.

They went as fast as they could up the Belford road, for they were afraid of meeting with Cullerfurd or Haltwhistle. But they had only been gone a little way—the Lady Rohtraut and Elizabeth Campstones riding on Sir Bertram's galloway—when they came upon Sir Bertram's men that were riding over the lea to find him.

That was the first sight Sir Bertram had of that lady whom afterwards, to the scandal of all the North parts, he married. For he was accounted a man of very mean birth and she a very noble lady. But he made her a very good husband, doing her proper honour and very ably conducting her lawsuits, so that she had never a word to say against him.

As for Sir Henry Vesey, when the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle came back, the Lady Isopel cried out against him, calling him a false traitor. But Sir Henry said that the King's commissioner had given him very good reasons why they should let the Lady Rohtraut go. As thus: The Young Lovell, as they had known for a week, held that lady's Castle of Cramlin as well as her houses of Plessey and Killingworth and all her lands. They, on the other hand, held her title deeds, so that was all they could have. If they could have known of the taking of Castle Cramlin earlier, they might have taken it again, by going there in a hurry, but now the Young Lovell sat there, and he was a very difficult commander, and every day more men came in to his orders. They could never get him out of that Castle.

But they held that lady only in order to force her willingly to resign those very lands to them. What, then, would it avail them to hold her any longer, since, if she resigned them twenty times over, the Young Lovell would never let them go? As for threatening to slay that lady if the Young Lovell did not give them her lands, that

was more than they dare, so it would enrage all that countryside against them. Even as it was, some that they had counted on as being their friends had fallen away and, if that went further, they would never be able to have fresh meat from their towers.

So Sir Henry gave them many excellent reasons for his action. The Knight of Cullerford would have grumbled against him, for his wife, the Lady Isopel, set him to it. But his brother, Sir Symonde, said he had done very well, for his wife made him say that. The Decies was drunk and took no part in that council. Moreover, they were all afraid of Sir Henry Vesey, and he treated them like children that must do his bidding.

II

Indeed they had few of them much joy in that Castle where at first they had thought to have had great mirth. Only three days before Adam Swinburn, that had sworn to stand their friend, had ridden to a knoll near at hand and had asked to have speech with Sir Symonde Vesey, who was more his friend than the others. So Sir Symonde had gone to a little window that was near the ground in the tower called Constance, and from there had spoken with him. And Adam Swinburn had said that in no way could he any longer promise to aid them, for it was grown too dangerous. He preferred to rob upon the roads. And he counselled them very strongly to make a peace with the Young Lovell who was gathering many men, all the countryside being his friends, and had sworn to hang every man of them that was a leader from the White Tower, and to put his sisters into nunneries. And he said that John of Rokehope and James Cra'ster the younger, as well as Haggerston and Lame Cresswell, who desired to make their peace with King Henry, were all of like mind with him.

It was upon his homeward journey from saying this that Adam Swinburn had come upon the Princess Rohtraut and Bertram of Lyonesse.

All these people, Cra'ster, Haggerston, Lame Cresswell, Adam Swinburn, and others

had, in the earlier days of their being at Castle Lovell, held high revel there with them. They were mostly rude and boisterous gentry of very good family who, having been ruined fighting for or against King Edward IV, King Richard or King Henry, were outlawed and lived by robbery, which was also the case with Sir Henry Vesey, of Wallhouses. And when those of the Castle had at first seemed to be triumphing these raiders had made great cause with them. They hoped that thus they might get their lands again of the King. So they had feasted there and drunk and slept in one tower or another along the walls, and had sworn to hold those towers if ever Castle Lovell was attacked.

But, by little and little, all of these gentry had wanted money, and of that those of that Castle had very little or none at all to give them. All the old Lord Lovell's money was in the White Tower, and the bondsmen and other feudal debtors of Castle Lovell refused them their dues.

These things were very sore blows to those of the Castle. They had hoped that Richard Bek, the captain of the White Tower, would surrender that money to them so that they would have been able to give some of it to those boon companions. But Richard Bek would not even answer their summonses; and when they had begged the outlaws to aid them to take the White Tower, James Cra'ster had answered courteously for the rest that they would very willingly have done it had they had wings, but they were not gannets nor yet the angels of God, and so they could not. It was the same thing when those of the Castle asked the outlaws to ride down among the bondsmen that would not pay their rent-hens. None of them would do it.

For the truth of the matter was that Adam Swinburn and the rest were too good friends of Hugh Raket, Barty of the Comb, Corbit Jock, the Widow Taylor with her seven able sons, and the rest. They were the most capable rievers that they could find to ride under their leadership into Scotland or elsewhere. Even Sir Henry Vesey, of Wallhouses, had their aid and company at times.

For the matter of that, Sir Henry Vesey, of Wallhouses, was not so very eager to aid them of the Castle; as the time went on he grew less keen about it. For what they got out of it beyond the shelter of the stone walls he could not tell.

At the first his brother and Sir Walter Limousin had promised him his share of the plunder in the Castle and the money in the White Tower. But the plunder in the Castle had been a small matter. It was not much they had got for the armour sold to Morpeth, though he had taken some of the best pieces and sent them for safety to Wallhouses; they had got very little for such furnishings and carpets as they had sold to the German at Sunderland, and the jewels, as has been told, they could not sell at all.

They had the Castle, but in it not much more than two hundred men, which was little to hold so so great a place with. Thus they could not hold it, as castles are held, as a place from which to ride out and rob in the Borders; they could not spare the men.

So, when Adam Swinburn and the others understood how that case really was, they went, one after the other, away from the towers in the wall where they had slept with their men. They went with courtesy, saying that they would come again and defend those towers if there were need of it. But the truth of the matter was that all of the fresh meat was eaten, which is a thing very unbearable in summer; the best wine was all drunk, for they had pressed heavily on the liquors in the early days; they had tired of all the serving maids that there were in the Castle; the Lady Douce was occupied with Sir Henry Vesey; the Lady Isopel was ugly and a shrew. So they had neither desirable wine nor women; not much prospect of meat nor gold, and what else should keep them? Therefore they rode away.

Then those of the Castle sat down there to wait until Richard Bek, the captain of the White Tower, should surrender, so that they might take the gold. But that was a long matter. For Richard Bek and his men had at their command a great store of the best commodities that had belonged to the late lord. He had stored them in that strong

place that was made for it. Sugar even they had and pepper and pippins, and the best wine and figs in honey. They of the Castle had not even fish for Fridays or none but salted cod. But they could see Richard Bek and his men catching fish from the sea with long lines. The water did not come up far enough to let those in the Castle catch fish even at high tides; but to the foot of the White Tower which was further out it came at all times, and the Lord Lovell, under the directions of the French castle-builder, had had the rocks there hollowed away so that a boat could ride there very comfortably when the weather was not too rough. Nevertheless, over that sort of boat-house a machicolation jutted out, so that the boats of any enemy could be swamped with great stones or set burning by means of Greek fire.

Thus those in the Castle could perceive those of the Tower receiving from the sea the carcases of sheep, goats, and small bullocks, so that those men lived very well and comfortably, and there seemed little reason for their ever rendering up that place which the Lord Lovell had built very cunningly for just such an occasion. Of wheat in the Castle they had a sufficient store, and also of salt meat and stock fish.

For two of the towers in the outer wall, that called Constance and that called de Insula, after the Bishop of that name, were nothing less than the one a wheat pit and the other a brine cistern. Those towers contained a chamber each, in the upper story, but all beneath it, to the ground, was windowless space. In the brine that filled thus the tower Constance there floated the carcases of two thousand sheep, one thousand swine, five hundred goats, and five hundred oxen.

Thus they had enough of that sort of food, and in addition they had a great quantity of peas in a barn. But of fresh meat they had none at all. When they wished for it they must send for beasts to Cullerford or Haltwhistle, and on the second occasion that they did this they lost fourteen steers and a quantity of sheep and goats. For, as their men drove these beasts along by the Roman Wall, in a very lonely spot, there came springing down upon them a great number of men well armed, but with their

faces blacked. These killed two of the Castle Lovell men and drove away all their cattle through a gap in the Wall towards the North. Those in the Castle thought that this had been done by Haggerston and Lame Cresswell, who were fast friends, and by Barty of the Comb and his fellows. But they had no proof of this, so they could not even fyle a bill against them in the Warden's Court. Moreover, three weeks before they had heard that a vessel was come to Hartlepool that had a number of cannon on board and more than she needed for her defence. These they desired to buy so as to try conclusions with the White Tower. They had with them at that season a Ridley of Willimoteswick as a guest. He was going by sea into Holland, and to this Ridley they confided the buying of such cannon as he could get for them from that ship as well as a great store of gunpowder, for this Ridley was a very honourable man and they could well trust him. So they gave him a hundred and fifty pounds. One or other of those knights might have gone on this errand, but by this time they were all grown very irritable and suspicious, and believed each of them that the others would work him some mischief if he went away even for a little time. For there they were kicking their heels in that fine summer weather, without comfort or occupation. They hardly dared to ride hunting without such a troop of men-at-arms as scared all the deer out of the woods, and at that season of the year they should have been riding into Scotland for their profit and to do feats of arms. Yet there they sat.

A week after that they had a letter from that Ridley of Willimoteswick to say that he had not bought their cannon and should not. For he had heard from his cousin Ridley, that was the monk Francis of Belford, how the Young Lovell was alive that they had sworn to him to be dead. Moreover, that lord had done no sorcery at all, but all that was false witnessing. Therefore Ridley of Willimoteswick counselled them very earnestly to give up that Castle to its rightful lord or he would never be their friend again. Moreover, he said that the monk Francis advised him that the hundred and fifty pounds they had given him for the purchase of cannon was no money of

theirs but belonged of right to the Young Lovell. How that might be he did not know, but he was determined to buy them no cannon and to hold that money in his own hands until the rightful ownership should be determined.

Then those of the Castle cried out on the evil that there was in their world and time, and that there was neither faith nor truth in man. The heat blazed down upon them; the Castle stank, and now terror began to come into their souls so that the women wakening in the night or walking round the corners of the stony corridors would scream out suddenly. For on all hands they heard how the Young Lovell's men resorted to him and how Richard Bek had sent him basketsful of gold from the White Tower, lowering them to boats that came on his behalf in the dawn. And knowing him as well as they did, they knew that he was a very fierce and cruel man to evil-doers and destroyers of order in his lands.

Then there came those letters from the Bishop and spread dismay amongst them, for the Lady Isopel had a great dread of priests and raised perpetual outcry in the Castle, asking that it should be given up to the Bishop. So they answered those letters as best they could. Then came other letters from the Earl of Northumberland in which he reded them very strongly to give up that Castle and sue for mercy. For, said the Earl, he must now withdraw from them all his countenance and he had written a broad letter to the King in his Council praying him to reverse the judgment that that Earl had given, on false witness brought before him, against the Young Lovell.

So, upon that, they sent for all the armed men they had from Cullerford and Haltwhistle and Wallhouses, and kept men continually on the walls in arms, for they could not tell at what moment the Young Lovell might not break in upon them like a raging wolf. And at last Sir Henry Vesey said that the moment was come for them to make the best terms that they could with their kinsman, and that if they would not he would get him gone from that Castle with all his men, for who could tell at what moment that lord might not burn down Wallhouses itself? Therefore they sent a

letter to the Young Lovell at Cramlin Castle where they heard that he was, saying that if he would surrender to them half his mother's lands and ten thousand pounds in gold they would give up to him that his Castle and go to live in their own houses and towers, and as for the Decies the Young Lovell might deal with him how he would.

To that letter no answer came and their messenger that bore it never came back. Fear fell still more upon them because of this silence, in which they seemed to read better than in any letter the menacing nature of their kinsman's fell spirit. And at that time they began to talk of running each to his own home, and this they would have done but that they feared that in that way the Young Lovell would fall upon them the more easily, each one in his little tower. Moreover, their own men would by no means suffer this.

These men were of several minds. Some had been promised great sums of money to come into that Castle, and they would by no means let the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle go unless they had their pay, but proposed to hold them prisoners there in the hope of receiving pay from the Young Lovell. Others thought that they could very well hold that strong Castle, beat off the Young Lovell and take the White Tower, if one of their number were elected their captain instead of these irresolute knights. Others desired to murder those knights and their ladies, and to take the jewels that they had and so to scatter about the country each to his own intent.

The men of Sir Henry Vesey were, however, faithful enough to him. He made the others pay them at least, though they could not pay their own, and even without it they would have been his very good servants, for he was always a fortunate commander in raids, being as cunning as a fox and very brave. So he knew himself to be very safe, and he assured the Lady Douce that she need have no fear, for his men would protect her as well as him. Of late he had thought much of the Lady Margaret Glororem in the way of love—more particularly when he had considered

the Young Lovell to be dead. And indeed that lady had no hatred for him, since she considered him to be cunning and humorous and brave. And possibly she would have married him, for marry somebody a rich young maiden must, be her heart never so broken, in the North.

So, in that time, Sir Henry Vesey and the Lady Douce had quarrelled bitterly, for she was most jealous. But since the Young Lovell had come again they were once more friends.

So there they all sat and waited, the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle riding out daily a little way to see what news they might get. They heard that there was a great gathering of Eures, Ridleys, Widdringtons and others at Glororem, and at the neighbouring Castle of Bamborough where the King's captain gave them shelter. But of where the Young Lovell might be they could get no news; only they heard that he had left Cramlin, having with him nearly a hundred men.

Of when he would come against them they could not tell at all; they could not even tell whether their own men would fight for them. Only they thought they might; for the men of the North parts of those days were great fighters and would seldom miss an opportunity of a tulzie, unless there was a great football match to go to, and even for that generally they would contrive to leave off a fight for the time being, to resume it after the game was over. And they would do as much for a horse-race, though they preferred football, as being the more dangerous.

III

In the meantime the Young Lovell had dwelt at Cramlin. There was nothing that had not prospered with him, or that by diligence, cunning or swiftness he had not made to prosper. Daily men resorted to him and sought his service, coming in from the hills and moors and Debateable Lands, all strong and hardy men so that it was difficult to make a choice.

In a week's time it was known what his terms were. To every man that he took with

him he would give three pounds English, for there would be little booty; such prisoners as they took he would ransom himself, for he wished to have them at his disposal to spare or to slay as seemed best to him. Such cattle as they took they might keep for themselves, or he would buy them at a fair price, for he understood that there were none left at Castle Lovell, where he would need them when he was the lord settled in that place. These terms he would make with every man, whether of his own men-at-arms, those he hired especially, or those that were the men of his friends. In the meantime he would find them in wine, meat, beer, bread and shelter.

In that way he had soon four hundred picked men—being one hundred and fifty archers, two hundred men-at-arms, and fifty of his bondsmen or bondsmen of his friends, men that were notable, light and swift-moving rievers.

There had joined him at Cramlin five young knights and eleven esquires that had been his friends before. These were Eures, Ridleys, Widdringtons, Riddells of Felton, Greys and Roddams, all being young men of his own generation. At first those of them that had fathers, uncles, or guardians found it a hard thing to get the consent of these to their going. For the days were past then of riding upon knight errantry, crusades, chevauchees, and other enterprises more splendid than profitable, and most fathers would not very willingly let their young men go fighting unless the gain in money much outweighed the costs. They would ride very well into Scotland if they were a great many together, so that it was a safe journey; but at that day France was lost to England. Most fathers would have gladly let their sons ride into France; such an enterprise as that of the Black Prince was still talked of. In that chevauchee he had ridden through France from north to south, from Calais to Marseilles, and had sacked more than six hundred towns and slain more than sixty thousand men, meeting with very little resistance. That had been a very chivalrous, gentle, joyous, and splendid raid. But since then France was gone; no Prince should ever make such a chevauchee again across that pleasant land; and the wars between King Henry VI and King Edward IV, and later between King Richard III and him

that was then King Henry had impoverished and embittered all the older men of the North that knew things by hard facts rather than books of faicts of arms. These men were rather bitter, cynical, and perforce mercenary, than loyal, pious, and chivalric. They viewed with disfavour this enterprise that meant the attacking of a strong Castle, strongly held, with only a few men, no cannon, and not so much as a mangonel, a catapult, or such old-fashioned things. On the other hand, if their sons went to such a siege, they must go, richly caparisoned, in the best armour that they or their fathers had, and at great cost, for the Young Lovell was a great lord, and they could not let their sons and nephews come before him in ill harness. Yet, in such a desperate siege, such armour must at least be battered and dinted, the silken housings torn, the great chargers lamed, even if the young men were not killed or held for ransom in black mail or white. And even if that Castle should be taken there would be no great rewards—they could not sack it, for it would be their friend's. They would have nothing for it but praise, renown, the love of God, and the approval of Holy Church, as well as some plenary indulgences. But these were all things that filled no bellies and brought no cattle home.

Nevertheless, as from the first news of Young Lovell's home-coming the days went on, there came every day fresh news of how blind Fortune held her wheel still and favoured that lord. Those elders heard how, as it seemed, miraculously, he had taken Cramlin and held his mother's broad lands; how the Bishop had blessed and knighted him; how the King's commissioner hastened to do him service, and bent before him, and the Earl of Northumberland at his side. Then they heard of men-at-arms flocking to him, and, at last, how the White Tower was held for him that had in it one hundred and forty thousand pounds in gold and many rich stores. And they heard how, in boats, during four days at dawn, Richard Bek had sent him six thousand pounds, so that he could very sumptuously entertain any knights that came to him. Then, indeed, it seemed to these elder men that it might be profitable then, and in the future, to aid this favourite of the blind goddess—for some of them

had learning enough to have heard that Fortune is blind, though many had not.

And all this while their sons and nephews and bastards pressed them unceasingly for leave to go on this enterprise, saying that it was not easy to have experience in the taking of strong castles, and that the Young Lovell was a leader that it would be great glory to serve under. So the elders yielded under these considerations, doing what they would not for the love of God at the bidding of Holy Church, or for the sake of oppressed chivalry. Therefore, the monk Francis, who heard of many of these discussions, and took part in one or two where the lords were in easy reach, said that those were very evil times where no thought was of anything but money, and God so nearly forgotten. And he said that before long a great calamity should fall upon England; nay, that the saints of God must soon leave hovering over a country so vile.

Nevertheless, afterwards he somewhat changed his note when he saw how many young knights of good family came to join the Young Lovell. These were, as has been said, five knights and eleven esquires of the families of Eures, Ridleys, Widdringtons, Riddells of Felton, Greys and Roddams. Amongst them was one older than the others, being Sir Matthew Grey, that had seen the French wars under Edward IV. Of him the Young Lovell was very glad, for he intended to divide his forces into two camps, and needed a commander.

So, on the flat ground around the Castle of Cramlin arose many tents, and it was like a fair in the sunshine on the short and baked grass. The Lady Margaret of Glororem had had made in the city of Durham a great tent all of fair silk, in the green and vermeil colours of the house of Lovell, and from that city the Young Lovell had had brought many vessels of silver, salt-cellars and great dishes and goblets that he had bought of a Canon of Durham, having more than he needed. A silversmith had wrought on them very swiftly the arms of that lord, and it was his intention to leave those furnishings in Castle Cramlin, that his mother might be fairly served when she

came there.

They set up that tent on the eleventh of June, and were two days arranging the banquet that there was given by the Young Lovell. Many fair ladies came from Durham and Morpeth and the Castles around, and cooks came, and scullions and servers, for those knights and esquires lent to the Young Lovell their pages, that they might go to all the places around and deliver his invitations. Those ladies might all sleep in that Castle, for by that time he had bought for it, out of the gold that Richard Bek had sent him, furniture, hangings, beds a many and all such silken stuffs as should make it fair. This he did to be an honour to his mother when she came there.

So all those esquires and knights, and the ladies and the Lady Margaret, and the Young Lovell sat to take their dinner in the silken tent. That banquet began at noon, and at seven in the evening they still sat at the board. Five courses that meal had, each of sixty dishes, each dish being different, so that it was agreed that such a banquet had never been given in those parts, unless it was one that the Earl of Warwick gave upon the occasion of the marriage of his daughter. The sides of that tent were held up upon gilded staves, for it was very hot and breathless weather, so that many men said a storm must soon come. The haze of heat ran all across that champaign country; the high banks of the river were all clothed with green and whitened here and there with elder. The men-at-arms marched before them in shining steel; the bowmen in green, each with the badge of the esquire or knight that he served upon his shoulder; and the bondsmen, having each a little target, a great sword, and a very tall pike with a hook at its end. Upon these pikes they could set torches the better to put fire upon roofs or in at the upper windows of peel towers. So, before their eyes, the bowmen set up targets and shot at them for their entertainment, and they passed these hot hours very joyously. When the cool of the evening was come, the Young Lovell took Sir Matthew Grey apart into a grove beside the river.

He told that knight very carefully how he would have him dispose the men that should be under his command, for he should not see those men again before they met victoriously in the Castle. Sir Matthew Grey listened to him and said that that was a very good scheme and he would observe it carefully. So, just as the young moon set, Sir Matthew Grey with all the men-at-arms, all the bowmen and fifty of the rievers, making in all two hundred and fifty men, having with him all the knights and esquires as well as the Young Lovell's most trusted esquire, Cressingham, that knew very well the ways into Castle Lovell—all rode over the whiteness of the river at the ford and were lost beneath the light of the stars. Then such of the ladies as would sleep at Castle Cramlin went into it; the others had already ridden away with their attendants. The cooks and scullions and serving men began to take down that great silken tent, and the men-at-arms that remained struck those that had sheltered their former comrades. The Young Lovell begged the Lady Margaret very courteously that she would walk with him in the grove of the river where he had talked with Sir Matthew Grey. The white small moon looked in on them through the branches; the river ran very swiftly.

There walking, he told once more to that lady very carefully his plan for the taking of Castle Lovell, for it was such things that she heard of more willingly than of any others. Sieges, tourneys, journeys, feats of arms and dangerous quests, of these she was never tired of talking; she loved them better than putting on the newest hood made after a Queen's model of France.

This plan for the taking of Castle Lovell was as follows, and it was to get under way at the hour of five on the sixteenth day of June —— that was to say, in three days' time. There were three entries to be made into that Castle within five minutes, one through the great gate that was beneath the tower called Wanshot: one through the passage coming up beneath the flagstones in the men's kitchen that was built into the wall between the towers Constance and de Insula; the third was to take place from the White Tower over the little drawbridge that connected that hold with the Castle.

The first entry, that through the great gate, was to be conducted by the Young Lovell's esquire Cressingham that well knew the ways into the Castle. This was a very dangerous enterprise, or one with no danger at all as it turned out. Besides the esquire Cressingham there were to be engaged upon it four young knights greedy of glory—Sir Michael Ridley, Sir Thomas Eure, the Lady Margaret's cousin, Sir Hugh Widdrington, and Sir Edward Riddell of Felton. It was in this way. There were usually five guards at that great gate, four to man the meurtrières and one to go to the grille; the space there was scarcely sufficient for more, nor were more necessary, so strongly was the gate protected from above by machicolations, stone balls and bowmen. So there were usually no more than five men there. Now those four knights, under the command of the esquire Cressingham, covering their armour completely with peasants' clothes and cloaks, should go up to that gate in the quiet of the morning with sacks on their backs. In these sacks they should have a good store of last year's walnuts and apples—though it was difficult enough to find these in June, yet some they had found that had ripened very late the year before. So these pretending peasants should say that they had heard that there was a great dearth of agreeable meats in that Castle, and that they were come with some fruits for sale from the neighbourhood of Sunderland. Then, very surely, those guards would desire to see those fruits, for it was certain that they all in the Castle were thirsting for such things. The false peasants should make to open a sack, and it would be a very easy thing to let the contents of one whole one fall to the ground and run rolling here and there. Very surely, too, then those guards would bend down to pick up those fruits and nuts, for it is not in human nature to withstand such a temptation.

The four knights and the esquire Cressingham should have their daggers privily ready under their cloaks and so they might very easily stab each of those guards in the back of the neck, and if they did that with skill they might slay them so peaceably that they would speak never a word. It was in that way that the Spaniards won the city of Amiens from the French a little later.

If then those guards died without tumult the esquire Cressingham should go quietly to the within-side of the gateway and wave a little cloth up to those on the White Tower. If, on the other hand, they make a noise, that outcry in itself should serve for a signal. The danger of this enterprise was this, that if the Castle was at all diligently guarded there would be in the chamber above that gate a great company of archers under a captain, and if those guards should make an outcry the archers might very easily come down and work some mischief to those knights. Moreover, the herse or portcullis was worked from that upper chamber by means of pulleys and chains. Thus the archers there if they knew what was passing below might let down that portcullis and thus not only should they catch those knights like rats in a trap, but they should prevent others entering in.

To guard against this the Young Lovell gave the following directions: In the first place, as soon as those guards were over-mastered or slain, one of the knights should close the door that let men down from the upper chamber. A very strong door it was, at the bottom of narrow steps, so that it would be no easy task to break through it. Thus, if those archers desired to come at those knights they must run along the battlements and down by the steps of the tower called de Insula, and that would take time. As for the portcullis, there was across the great gate a very strong and stout balk of wood, running in bolts. This they should take out and set upwards in the slots down through which the herse descended. Once that was there there should be no closing that way. This the Young Lovell knew very well, for once when he had been a boy he had done it out of devilment to plague the captain of the archers.

Upon the sign from the esquire Cressingham, or upon hearing a tumult in the gate house, the Young Lovell, from the top of the White Tower, should fire cannon shots into that Castle, and the firing of those shots should serve a double purpose. In the first place they should be for a signal to all the others to go forward; in the second, they should serve to frighten and distract the archers in that upper chamber if that were necessary.

Upon those sounds at once the men in the tunnel should issue out into the kitchen and fall upon the hovels that were around the keep and slay all that would not yield and afterwards set fire to the hovels themselves, for that would make not enough flame to burn down the keep but enough to smoke out all that were in it. Those that were in that tunnel were to be the Castle Lovell bondsmen, Hugh Raket, Barty of the Comb, and others. They should have introduced themselves secretly and under cover of the night into Corbit Jock's Barn that stood, as had been said, against the Castle wall, not fourteen feet from where that tunnel came into the grassy mound. Under cover of that same darkness Sir Matthew Grey, the elder knight, should have hidden himself with one hundred men-at-arms and esquires, all mounted, and one hundred bowmen in the houses of the township of Castle Lovell and in the barns, some of which were not twenty yards from the Castle gate. And upon the firing, those bowmen from behind the middens and the hillocks should rain arrows at those that were on the battlements, and Sir Matthew Grey with his men-at-arms should ride furiously up to the gate that should be kept open for him by those five knights, and a little afterwards those bowmen should follow, putting up their bows and drawing their hangers and dirks.

Then, when all these engaged the attention of those of the Castle, the Young Lovell, giving up his firing of artillery, should issue fiercely from the White Tower over the drawbridge with the twenty or thirty men that that tower held, and he could not well doubt that that should be the coup de grâce to those of the Castle. Then he would hang the Knights of Cullerford and Haltwhistle and Henry Vesey. His sisters he would put into nunneries, and the Decies send beyond the seas if the monk Francis did not claim him for the courts ecclesiastical to be broken on the wheel. But this the Young Lovell did not wish, for the Decies was his father's son.

The Lady Margaret said that that was the very properest scheme she had ever heard for the taking of a castle, part by stratagem and part by force. And they walked, devising of that scheme for a long time, beneath the night-black boughs, with the

thin white moon that peeped between and the swiftness of the river below their feet. And ever the Lady Margaret was aware of a bitter grief in his tones, spake he never so hotly. Ever the Young Lovell was aware that the thought of marrying with this woman was an intolerable weariness to him, though she was gallant and fair and loving. He looked upon her face in the moonlight and saw how fair it was with the shadows of the hazel wands across it. That place was called the banks of Cramlin, and bitter banks they were to him. For there was no mark against that lady and none in those parts could be a fitting mate for him but she. And he considered how she had cherished him and helped him, and that he had no grief against her. Ever he sighed deeply and yet talked of the joy they would have in pleasaunces and in the wilderness hawking, in devising, in the stables, picking the wild flowers in spring, watching their husbandmen with the ploughs, sitting in the little chambers before the fire in winter, and at bed and board. And ever the Lady Margaret put aside the talking of those things and talked of firing cannon into Castle Lovell with the bitter tears on her lids. She knew him so well she read his heart.

So with a heavy sigh he kissed her on the cheek her that had been used to lie in his arms, and her tears were wet upon his lips, and in the darkness, amidst the waternoises of those Cramlin banks—for the miller had let down his sluices whilst they talked—amidst the glimmer of the birch trunks that grew with the hazels, he left her that he should never see again for many weary years. Then, with his fifty bondsmen, he rode north into the black night beyond the ford.

It was three in the morning when the Young Lovell came to Cullerford Tower, and it was very dark. By daylight that baleful place upon the open moor was smoking to the sky, and that was not much more difficult to do than cracking a walnut, though a very great and square tower it was, more like the keep of a castle than a peel, though it followed those lines. Forty-seven paces it was in length and twenty across, the walls being three yards deep in solid stone. It was entered from the ground by a door like that of a barn, and indeed the lowest story was no more than such a barn,

containing no rooms nor partitions, and serving, in dangerous times, to store wheat, cattle or whatever the Knights of Cullerford had that was of value. No staircase led from this story to the rooms above, but only a ladder going to a trap hatch, so that when that ladder was drawn up there was no coming to them of the tower. At that time there were no men-at-arms there at all, only several old fellows under the command of an old man called Hogarth, together with a few women and several children, and the cattle were all in the barn below them. The hay that they had lately got stood in stacks round about that tower, and a hundred yards away were nearly three hundred lambs that should have been driven to market the next day, and filled the night with their bleatings, for they were but newly taken from their mothers. But so sorely did Sir Walter Limousin need money that he wished to sell them before they were ready.

The Young Lovell had with him fifty rievers mounted on little horses and fifty men-at-arms that he had taken from Cramlin, where he had left one hundred men under the command of the esquire La Rougerie, and that bleating of lambs aided those rievers to creep up to that tower door. They had the door half burst down before ever those above were aware that they had come. Then a great wail went up from those women and children in the tower, for they thought it had been the false Scots and that their deaths were near. Some old men came running up on to the battlements on the top of the tower, intending to cast down rocks and other things on the rievers that were at work upon that stout door. But the Young Lovell bade shoot so many arrows up that that handful of old men could not stay there, and very loudly he called out to them his name and titles. So an old man came to a window and said that his name was Adam Hogarth and that he had command there. So the Young Lovell bade him render up that tower, for he was in a hurry and could not stay to be gentle with them, which was the greater pity, for the number of women and children that he could hear were there by their cries. Adam Hogarth said that he would not render up that place until they had fought well for it, not to the brother of his lady

and mistress or to any man. Then the Young Lovell said that he was sorry for it.

It was very dark then, but those rievers were skilful men, and whilst the Young Lovell spoke with Adam Hogarth they had that great door open and began to drive out the cattle that came willingly enough in the darkness, but it was dangerous work because of the horns. One hundred and forty-seven steers were there and nineteen cows with calves, as well as over a dozen heifers. Whilst these came out an old man at a window above that door came with a crock of boiling water and poured it out. It fell on no man, but on the backs of several bullocks that stampeded into the night and came amongst the men-at-arms that were upon horseback. This caused some confusion and the Young Lovell bade light a torch or two, and indeed there were some torches lit in that lower barn so that it showed like an illuminated caravan beneath the black shape of the tower. The stars were very fine and it was very dark just before the dawn. All the while cries went up from the women and children in the tower; so that the night was unquiet.

Then that old man came again to the window to pour out boiling water, but there was a little light behind him from the fire that he had used for the heating. The Young Lovell had a bowman ready and that man loosed an arrow. It sped invisible through the night and went in that old man's mouth and killed him there, so that he never poured any more water. The Young Lovell said that was very well shot, considering the darkness of the night, and he gave that bowman two French crowns for having done it.

Then Adam Hogarth loosed off a demi-saker that he had in an upper room. He aimed it at the Young Lovell who stood upon a little mound with a torch flaring near him. But that bullet went a shade wide, nevertheless it killed a steer, striking that beast on the cheek beside the eye. Then the Young Lovell bade put out the torches and commanded his bowmen to direct a stream of arrows against all the windows that were on that side of the tower, so that though that demi-saker sent out once

more its stream of flame and spoke hoarsely, that was the last of it. For the rest of that work they could see well enough without torches; it consisted in taking mounds of hay into that barn, and when it was half filled they poured water and fat upon it so as to damp it, and a little tar. Then into that mass they cast three or four torches and so they watched it smoulder. Of flame there was very little, but the smoke and stench in verity were insupportable, and that filtered into the upper part of the tower.

Then the dawn began to point over the Roman wall and grey things appeared, and fat smoke curling up all around the doomed tower in the still air of the morning. It grew a little cold so that they must slap their arms around them, and said that that waiting was slow work. As soon as it was light enough, the Young Lovell began to count those cattle. He sent men also to drive up the hurdled lambs that had cried all night, and others to find their dams that were in charge of a shepherd in the fields beyond the Wall. The Wall began to show clear on top of a rise, running over the tops of hills and down into hollows, grey, into invisibility. Then after a time, those men brought in the sheep. They had caught that shepherd where he slept, and drove him before them, pricking him with lances so that he commanded his dogs to drive those sheep where they should go. Thus then were all the flocks and herds of Cullerford collected together in a goodly concourse, and when the Young Lovell knew that he had them all, he ordered the men-at-arms that he had brought from Castle Cramlin to drive them to that place, for he had no more need of men-at-arms.

So they went away over the moors to the north and east, going through a gap in the wall just after they were out of sight. Those sheep and cattle the Young Lovell meant for the provisioning of his mother. He thought that his sister would not need them when her husband was hanged and herself in a nunnery. So, whilst he stood and watched that fatly smoking tower from which there came a strong odour of burning grease, a great sadness fell upon him at the thought that all this profited him nothing, for he desired none of these things for his intimate pleasure. It was all for decency and good order in his lands that he did it, and to punish evildoers. So his

head hung down and he sat his horse like a dying man.

It was these moods in him that the monk Francis dreaded. But the monk Francis thought he had him safe for two days or three, for he himself had urgent business in his monastery of Belford, more particularly over the affair of the hermitage of Castle Lovell. For it was reported to him that that pious hermit was really dead. During ten days he had spoken words none at all and the stench that came out of the little hole where they put in his bread and water was truly unbearable and such as it had never been before. So the monk Francis had gone to Belford to see how that might be. The Young Lovell he thought he might well leave. For with the banquet and the sending off of his troops he would be well occupied, and he had made the Lady Margaret promise to be a zealous lieutenant and see that that lord was never unoccupied till he rode on that raid. For the monk Francis considered that whilst he was upon a raid, that emissary of Satan or whatever she was would have no power over him, so ardent a soldier was this young lord.

But here he had reckoned without the obstinacy of Adam Hogarth who kept all those aged men and the women and children stifling in that fat smoke. The Young Lovell was never in greater danger. He looked down upon the ground and sighed heavily. He had it in him to ride into a far country and leave all those monotonies. But at last on the top of the tower he perceived Adam Hogarth, who held up his hands. So he knew that that tower had surrendered. Then he called out that all those in the tower might come down a ladder that they might set down from an upper window, and that they might bring down their clothes and gear and take it away with them where they would—all except Adam Hogarth, with whom he had some business. As for that Tower he meant to burn it out.

So down the ladder came thirty or forty poor people with ten or a dozen children. Their eyes were red and wept grimy tears, and they were all in rags of grey homespun, such as the poor wear, for Sir Walter Limousin and his wife were very

bad paymasters, and such a collection of clouts the Young Lovell thought he had never seen in the grey of the morning. Nay, he was moved to pity at the thought that this dishonoured his kin, and to each of those poor people he gave a shilling that they might have wherewithal to live till they found other masters, and to women that had children he gave four groats. Some carried pots, some pans, and all of that ragged company filed away over the moorlands beneath the Wall, making mostly for Haltwhistle, and showing no curiosity at all, except two or three old women that had to do with Adam Hogarth.

Then the Young Lovell took Adam Hogarth down to a little grove of trees that was near the ford and asked that blear-eyed old man where his master, Cullerford, had hidden the charters and muniments of his mother the Lady Rohtraut; for he knew that there they were. Adam Hogarth said that he did not know and set his teeth. Without more words the Young Lovell had a rope brought and a slip-noose made. He sent a man up a great elm to drop the noose over a stout branch and Adam Hogarth watched him dumbly. Then the Young Lovell had that noose set round Adam Hogarth, beneath the arm-pits and three men hauled him up till he hung thirty feet high, looking down with the tears dripping out of his red eyes. So when the Young Lovell had watched him for a minute or two and he spoke no word, the lording walked away to where the womenkind of that pendard were, and asked which of them were his kinswomen. One red-eyed crone was his sister, another his wife. So the Young Lovell took that sister to where Adam Hogarth hung and pointed him out. He bade her tell him where those charters were, but she would not. Then he had Adam Hogarth let down. The rope was set about his neck and the Young Lovell bade his men haul slowly. Adam Hogarth choked in his throat and rose up to his tip-toes, but he would make no sign with his hand and his sister would not speak. Then that man was let down again and the Young Lovell said it was the greater pity, for he must bring the wife. So the other old woman was brought, and when Adam Hogarth swung the height of a man's thigh with his feet off the ground, and his legs

were working like those of a frog and his face purple with the hempen collar round his neck and the knot beneath his ear so that he should not die very quickly, that old woman fell on her knees and cried out that she would tell the Young Lovell that news. So the Young Lovell cut through that rope with his sword to do Adam Hogarth greater honour, and he fell to the ground very little the worse for wear.

The old woman took the Young Lovell to a haystack where, beneath the trampled hay around it, there was a well-head locked with a great padlock. This padlock a man with a hammer knocked off, and a chain went down into that well, the well being dry. So they pulled up that chain, and at the end of it was the muniment-box of the Lady Rohtraut that the Young Lovell well knew. So when he had had the iron lid prised open with a lance-head—for without doubt the Lady Isopel wore the little gold key of it round her neck—the Young Lovell recognised that the deeds were there, for, though he had no time to read them, he knew them by their seals. Then he was well content for his mother's sake, for, though it is a good thing to have lands in actual possession, it is twice as well to have the muniments appertaining to them.

Then he bade his men get together what balks of timber and wood they could find and cast them into the hay that still burned in that lower story so that the fire might spring up, and also to take torches and cast them through the upper windows so that that tower might well burn in all parts where it was wooden. After that he called before him that Adam Hogarth and commended him for his faith to his master and commended his sister as well. And he said that that man and his sister might have for their own, to divide between them, such steers as had escaped during the stampede of the night before, as well as three bulls that were upon the upper pastures with several sheep, and some pigs and hens that were in a barn by the river and had escaped observation. And he said that Adam and his sister might dwell in that tower, after the fire had well burned it so that it could not be held as a fortress, but it would shelter them very well until he should decide whether he would hold that tower himself or till the heirs of Sir Walter Limousin should compound with him for his

sister's dower. For Sir Walter, he said, was as good as a dead man. As for Adam Hogarth's wife, they might do what they liked for her, but he would give her nothing, for he held that she had not done well in betraying her master's secret, to keep which should be the first duty of a servant, man or woman. And as for his reward to Adam Hogarth, he gave him those things which would make him richer than he had ever been in his life before in order to encourage such faith as he had shown. And if he husbanded those cattle well they would increase and multiply. But Adam Hogarth said no more than "Least said is soonest mended," for he was a crabbed old man of few words.

Then the Young Lovell and his men made a breakfast of some small beer and bread that they found in that tower, and so they rode away northwards through the Wall, for it was five o'clock with the sun high and they had far to go, but their little horses would carry them well. He left two or three men to see that Adam Hogarth and his wife and sister did not seek to quench that burning. But he did not think they would, for when he looked back he could see against the pale sky the pale flames rise over the hill.

But as soon as he was gone that Adam Hogarth fell upon his wife and beat her very furiously. He said that he knew very well that that Young Lovell would never have hung him, for there was no priest there to confess him, and that never would he have betrayed that secret until after the Young Lovell had let him be shriven. So the Young Lovell must have paid him much money. Besides, he could have borne with hanging for a quarter of an hour longer and come to no harm. So he beat that woman and she screamed out, and the men that the Young Lovell had left behind roared with laughter and the tower burned.

So, when those men caught up with the Young Lovell, which they did near Fontoreen, west of Morpeth, they told him of the cunning of that husbandman. So the Young Lovell did not know whether to be more vexed with that peasant, because

it was not so much love for his master as greed that made him be half-hanged, or whether to marvel that such a low fellow should have read his mind so well, for surely he would never have hanged him unshriven.

They rode on all that day until they came to Sea Houses by North Sunderland, having covered nearly sixty miles of rough country, for they went by the South Forest and past Rothbury and the high moors so that they might not be observed. Four miles from Sea Houses, it being then ten o'clock at night, the Young Lovell sent his men forward towards Castle Lovell, and in a fisherman's hut on the sounding pebbles of the sea he found the monk Francis, who was very glad to see him and glad of his news. The monk had been that day in the village of Castle Lovell and had found that the hermit was indeed dead. So he had appointed the day following at six in the evening for skilled masons to come and disinter that holy man to give him holy burial. For he thought that by that hour the Young Lovell would be well established in his Castle.

So when they had exchanged their news the lord and the monk lay down to sleep a little on a pile of nets that the fisherman heaped up for them in a corner of his hut, he himself lying outside upon seaweed with his wife. At a quarter to three he waked them and they set out upon their voyage to the White Tower. There was a good following breeze from the due south, so that they might well come to Castle Lovell in an hour or a little under. But the dancing motion of that little boat made that monk Francis very ill, which was great pity for the Young Lovell. With fasting, prayer and vigil that good monk was become very weak, though he had once been a very strong knight. He lay on the bottom-boards of that boat, and so deeply had he fainted that when they had come to the little harbourage beneath the White Tower he was insensible and they could not tell that he was not dead. So there was no getting him up the ladder of iron spikes that was all the way there was into that tower from the sea. The Young Lovell would not trust those spikes to bear the two of them or he would have carried the monk up. So he climbed up alone, and Richard Bek and the

others were awaiting. But the fisherman rowed that monk straight to the shore and carried him over the sand to the township. Here in a hut he found the Lady Margaret of Glororem, who had ridden all that day and night before to come there. So she tended that monk and in about an hour he could stand again. But then there was no way of coming into that tower.

Therefore the monk Francis and the Lady Margaret went up to the little mound on which was the chapel the Young Lovell had first watched his harness in. This was so near the Castle that half of the bowmen under Sir Matthew Grey had been appointed to spend the night in it so that they might come out when the gun fired and shoot their arrows against the battlements between de Insula and Wanshot Towers. So that monk and that lady knelt in that porch, and between their prayers for the success of their dear lording they watched the dawn pointing over the sea, which came with the grey forms of waterspouts. These moved silently, here and there upon the horizon. So they saw the sun come up white and fiercely shining between those monstrous appearances. The monk Francis said that that pale sunrise was a certain sign that the weather was breaking, and he thanked God that all their hay was in. Then they saw the Young Lovell spring up on to the coping of the White Tower. So clear the weather and the light were that they could mark the little lion's head that was carved on the peak of his helmet like the handle of a curling stone.

So he went down out of sight again and they prayed very fiercely, holding each other's hands for comfort. The bowmen whispered from the door behind to know if it were not near time. White smoke flew out from the top of that tower, and the monk cried out so loudly that they never heard the sound of the shot, for he knew that the great gateway was taken. Out ran the archers with their bows bent and stood on the green sward. They shot arrows high so that they fell over the battlements—long arrows with great feathers of the grey goose that journeyed intently through the air. So that gun sounded again and again, and they saw the Young Lovell once more upon that coping. The bowmen in the Castle were sending

arrows up against him, but they glanced off his armour because of their slanting flight. He stood there looking down and behind him were the grey waterspouts.

Now as for such as dwelt within the Castle:

A little before the exact minute of sunrise such of them that slept were awakened by the firing of cannon shot, two following. A stone ball came into the window of the Lady Douce and broke a chest. Then from many quarters there came cries, sharp but short like gun shots. And then one scream so high and dreadful that all men stood deaf and amazed. Such a cry had never before been heard in all Northumberland amidst the rain of arrows. There were men bursting in at the great gate of the Castle and others with their swords high coming from the men's kitchen that was between the tower called Constance and that called Wanshot. The men upon the battlements had their bows bent or held up beams and bolts of iron, or were setting iron poles under great stones to roll them down through the machicolations. And the Knight of Wallhouses was whispering to the Lady Douce, who had run down into the great hall, that there were no men coming against the little postern nearest the sea, and that he and she and his men would make their way out of the Castle by the gate.

That tide of dreadful war had come upon them so quickly that it seemed as if, before Henry Vesey's eyes could see, men were bursting in at the great gate and from other places in the Castle. Then he knew that the Young Lovell must be aware of secret ways in that none of them had heard of, and before that fray was two minutes gone he knew that they were lost. Therefore he made ready to get himself gone by the postern.

But when that most dreadful cry was heard all those people stood still; the men with bows, balks, and levers, the men running in with swords; Sir Henry whispering; the Lady Isopel calling from her window; the Decies turning in his bed, and Sir Symonde running along the battlements. That cry deprived them of the powers of motion and made their bones quiver within their flesh like shaken reeds. Some that

then heard it said afterwards that it was no more than the voice of the elements.

The monk Francis deemed to the end of his life that he had heard the cry of fear of a false goddess, for, when he went, a broken man, to commune of these things with the Bishop Palatine, that Bishop told him that so that false goddess whom they most dreaded and who is the bane of all Christendom, since in quiet hearts she setteth carnal desire—so that false goddess had cried out when, in the form of a cloud of mist or may be of a rainspout, she had hastened to the rescue of the hero Paris. That had been at the siege of a strong Castle called Troy. That Paris of Troy she had carried away to the top of a high hill near the town, as it might have been Spindleston Crags, and there she had kept him till that battle was done. And part of the cry had been for fear, and partly it was from pain because an arrow had struck her, she being vulnerable, though her blood would turn to jewels.

So the monk Francis was very certain that he had heard at least the cry of fear of a false goddess wailing for her love, and that in the waterspout that bore the Young Lovell away he had seen her twisting and writhing form. Whether she were wounded or not he did not know, but he hoped she was, and well she might have been, for arrows a many were glancing round the form of the Young Lovell where he stood upon the battlements, and all around him and below people stood rigid like figures seen in a flash of lightning whose hearts had ceased to beat, and it fell as black as in the hour before the dawn.

Sir Symonde Vesey, who had been running along the battlements looking up, perceived, so near his hand could touch them, millions of little black clouds twisting in an agony like snakes. Then all that water fell upon him and hurled him from that height into the inner court, where he lay senseless a long while, and so was drowned in a gutter. There was no man there could stand up against that torrent of rain twisting round. Four waterspouts struck that Castle one after the other, and for ten hours so it rained that most of the hovels in the courtyard were washed down, and

the mud there was so deep it was up to a man's thighs.

Men fought a little in the corridors, and some three or four were killed in the great kitchen where some had taken refuge. But they could find none of their leaders for a long time, and most of them gave over.

IV

At seven of that night the monk Francis with his masons had opened the hermitage, and lay brothers from the little monastery had borne the hermit's rotten corpse in a sheet into the church where a coffin was. So, because of the terrible smell, they carried the coffin itself out from that church and set it in the grave, though that was so full of rain-water that the coffin floated in it and the funeral rites were inaudible in the heavy gusts of rain. Though it was no more than eight o'clock in July the sky lowered, so that in the shadow of the church it was night.

The monk Francis staggered as he walked; his face was like alabaster where no mud was on it, and mud was over all his habit, splashed above the shoulder as if he had torn through brakes above water-courses. All that while he groaned and beat his chest and looked fearfully, now up the hills, now out to sea, now towards Scotland. Once whilst the masons worked he had fallen on his face in the water that ran round the church end.

But he had that hermitage for his charge and he would let no man lead him away. So, in that darkness, whilst the wind sighed furiously in the trees and the rain was in all their faces, they buried that holy man as best they might, saying that they would hold a fairer ceremony upon another day, for they were all affrighted and cast down by the events of that day and the heavy disasters that might follow. Then, as the lay brothers were bearing away the stretcher upon which they had carried that coffin, one of them cried out like a scream. Against the steely light of the North he had perceived a great cloak tossing out, over the churchyard wall. Then all heard a voice calling to them to send a religious there. So the abbot bade an old monk go, for that

might be some sinner that desired to become an eremite in place of that holy man now dead. For thus God works in His wondrous way.

And so indeed it proved. They all stood there in the rain whilst the old monk talked to that form of darkness. The monk Francis was on his knees. Then that old monk came back to them and said that here indeed was come one that desired to go into that little hermit's kennel and there end his days. He was one that had been a good knight, but had sinned so grievously that until he was shriven he would not come upon the holy ground of that churchyard, and he desired the monk Francis to come to him and shrive him! Then that monk cried out with fear, but afterwards he went without the wall and stayed there. The tossing form had disappeared; for the man had kneeled down for his confession.

In the thick darkness the monk Francis came back to those that stayed and said that he approved that that man should be the eremite.

It all passed in the black night. That shape passed in at the little hole the masons had made, and an old mason, so skilled that he could do his work in the dark, put again those stones in their places. Then those monks sang as best they could the canticle "Ad te clamavi," and all men went away to talk under their beaten roofs of these fearful things. Upon all that place the black night came down, whipped by the fell and chilly rain, and all over that churchyard the water gurgled and washed, for it lay very low and all the gutters of the church poured down their invisible floods.

In a very high valley of Corsica the mistress of the world sate upon a throne of white marble in a little round temple that would not hold more than two or three people. A round roof it had, like a pie-dish, and little columns of white marble. All up the green grass of that valley amongst the asphodels walked her women, devising and sporting, in gowns of white and playing at ball with a sphere of gold. Down the valley ran a fierce stream with great and vari-coloured rocks, and in that warm place the sound of its torrent was agreeable to the ear. Agreeable too was the sight of the

dazzling snows upon the Golden Mountain; they shone in the sun and the sky was more blue than can be imagined. At the feet of the goddess sat a large woman and extremely fair. Beside her, so that he held her hand, sitting on a couch of rosemary, was a dark shepherd very limber in his bronzed limbs, wearing a tunic of goat skins, a chain of gold that supported a gourd, a Phrygian cap of scarlet woollen work that was entwined with the leaves of the vine upon his black locks. He had in his hand a bow of ivory with tips of gold.

So they sate at ease and looked out of that temple. In his shining armour a young knight that sat upon his steel horse was devising with a hero of the gentle feats of arms. This hero was lithe rather than huge of form. His face was stern and commanding at the same time that it was open and courteous and attentive. He was naked, and whilst he gazed with attention upon the young knight's arms, he rested his harmonious limbs, leaning upon a round shield of triple-plated bronze. Upon his head was his helmet of shining bronze with a great plume of horsehair that nodded far forward over his brows; in his right hand was a very heavy spear tipped with bronze, and upon his bare legs he had bronze greaves. And they were talking of the respective fitnesses of the arms that they bore. Just where they stood was a level sward that might be a quarter of a mile across.

Then that hero signed with his spear and there came out from a thicket a chariot of ivory drawn by four white horses driven by a helmeted charioteer. So that hero mounted into the chariot and covered the charioteer and himself with the great shield and took from the charioteer three casting spears that were very heavy in the beam, and so they went at it for the entertainment of the onlookers. Here and there over that little plain darted the ivory chariot with the white horses. That hero was seeking to get to the hindward of the young knight to cast his spears, for he considered that the war-horse was not limber. But he was limber enough, and always the shield with the chequers of green and scarlet faced the white chariot. So they went at it.

At the last the hero cast his three spears, one upon the horse, one upon the shield, and one upon the helmet of the good knight. But the bronze bent upon the steel; it would not enter in though it were thrown with never such a force. The young knight reeled in his saddle, and his steed upon his feet. Yet, as that hero drove the chariot in, to cast the last spear, the young knight spurred his horse suddenly in upon them, and though the charioteer was very agile with his car, nevertheless the young lord's spear met the great shield of bronze and pierced it through; between the hero and the other the point went, and the ivory wheels of the chariot broke and the white horses fell one upon the other, being taken upon the side by that steel-clad horse. Then that hero sprang from the chariot and ran more swiftly than the young lord could follow to a great rock that was in the grass by the streamside. So he had up the great rock of marble before ever Hamewarts was upon him, and cast that rock upon horse and rider so that both fell down among the asphodels. Then that knight in armour drew himself from under his horse, for the ground there was soft and marshy, and he was but little crushed. And so he stood up upon his feet, having in one hand his bright dagger that was the length of his fore-arm. And that hero had had no time to cast himself upon the knight, for he was for the moment out of breath with the exertion of casting that great rock.

So all there were well pleased and declared that that was a drawn battle. They had off their harness and their clothes and went all a-bathing in the foam of that rapid stream. And, as each one would have it, so those bright waters were warmed by the heat of the sunlight through which they had passed, or icy with the snows that had been their origin.

And afterwards, the women of the goddess anointed the limbs of those combatants with juices and oils so that all their wounds were healed whether of the horses or the heroes. And those women took the harness, both of the bright steel and of the sounding bronze, and rubbing upon the dents with their smooth fingers, soon they had all marks of that combat erased so that the armours shone like waters reflecting

the blue sky or like the beaten gold of a bride's girdle. Then all lay them down upon couches of rosemary, heather or asphodel, that were covered with the white fleeces of rams, each person being with whom he would. And they fell to devising from couch to couch, some of times past, some of times to come, and others upon what should have been the issue of that late combat had it been fought upon the wearisome fields known to mortal man. Some said the hero would have won it though arms he had none, for he could run the more swiftly, and might make shift with rocks and stones to pelt that knight until his armour broke. But others said that soon that horse would have revived and the knight, mounting there upon and recovering his great spear would spit that naked hero as he ran, through the back.

Through the opening of that valley the goddess showed them the blue sea with triremes upon it, the white foam going away from their oars as they had fought at Actium. The galleys of Venice she showed them too, all gilded and with the embroidered sails bellying before the soft winds. The cities of the plains they saw, and Rome and Delphi and Tyre, and cities to come that appeared like clouds of smoke, with tall columns rising up and glittering. So, courteously, they devised upon all things, and that knight thought never upon the weariness of Northumberland or upon how his mortal body lived in the little hermitage not much bigger than a hound's kennel that was builded against the wall of the church....

No, there they lay or walked in lemon groves devising of this or that whilst the butterflies settled upon their arms. And when they would have it night, so there was the cool of the evening and a great moon and huge stars and dimness fit for the gentle pleasures of love.

THE END

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YOUNG LOVELL

***

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YOUNG LOVELL: A ROMANCE ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at

www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg

are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted

with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon

request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic

work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a

defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project

Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years,

he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.