

GUY FAWKES
VOLUME II
BY
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THE DISCOVERY

The next point to be considered is the means to compass and work these designs. These means were most cruel and damnable;—by mining, and by thirty-six barrels of powder, having crows of iron, stones, and wood, laid upon the barrels, to have made the breach the greater. Lord! What a wind, what a fire, what a motion and commotion of earth and air would there have been!—Sir Edward Coke's Speech on the Trial of the Conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot.

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CHAPTER I

THE LANDING OF THE POWDER

Towards the close of the sixth day after their departure from Ordsall Hall, the party approached the capital. The sun was setting as they descended Highgate Hill, and the view of the ancient, and then most picturesque city, was so enchanting, that Viviana, who beheld it for the first time, entreated her companions to pause for a few minutes to allow her to contemplate it. From the spot where they halted, the country was completely open to Clerkenwell, and only a few scattered habitations lay between them and the old grey ramparts of the city, with their gates and fortifications, which were easily discernible even at that distance. Above them rose the massive body and central tower of Saint Paul's cathedral,—a structure far surpassing that which has succeeded it,—while amid the innumerable gables, pointed roofs, and twisted chimneys of the houses sprang a multitude of lesser towers and spires, lending additional beauty to the scene. Viviana was enraptured, and, while gazing on the prospect, almost forgot her sorrows. Guy Fawkes and Catesby, who were a little in advance of the others, turned their gaze westward, and the former observed to his companion,

“The sun is setting over the Parliament House. The sky seems stained with blood. It looks portentous of what is to follow.”

“I would gladly behold the explosion from this hill, or from yon heights,” replied Catesby, pointing towards Hampstead. “It will be a sight such as man has seldom seen.”

“I shall never live to witness it!” exclaimed Guy Fawkes, in a melancholy tone.

“What! still desponding?” returned Catesby, reproachfully. “I thought, since you had fully recovered from your wound, you had shaken off your fears.”

“You misunderstand me,” replied Fawkes. “I mean that I shall perish with our foes.”

“Why so?” cried Catesby. “There will be plenty of time to escape after you have fired the train.”

“I shall not attempt it,” rejoined Fawkes, in a sombre voice. “I will abide the result in the vault. If I perish, it will be a glorious death.”

“Better live to see the regeneration of our faith, and our restoration to our rights,” rejoined Catesby. “But we will speak of this hereafter. Here comes Garnet.”

“Where do you propose we should lodge to-night?” asked the latter, riding up.

“At the house at Lambeth, where the powder is deposited,” returned Catesby.

“Will it be safe?” asked Garnet, uneasily.

“We shall be safer there than elsewhere, father,” replied Catesby. “If it is dark enough to-night, Fawkes and I will remove a portion of the powder. But we are losing time. We must pass through the city before the gates are closed.”

In this suggestion Garnet acquiesced, and calling to Viviana to follow them,—for, since his late atrocious attempt, Catesby had not exchanged a word or look with her, but during the whole of the journey kept sedulously aloof,—the whole party set forward, and proceeding at a brisk pace, soon reached the walls of the city. Passing through Cripplegate, they shaped their course towards London Bridge. Viviana was filled with astonishment at all she saw: the multitude and magnificence of the shops, compared with such as she had previously seen; the crowds in the streets,—for even at that hour they were thronged; the varied dresses of the passengers—the sober garb of the merchant, contrasting with the showy cloak, the preposterous ruff, swelling hose, plumed cap, and swaggering gait of the gallant or the ruffler; the brawls that were constantly occurring; the number of signs projecting from the dwellings; all she witnessed or heard surprised and amused her, and she would willingly have proceeded at a slower pace to indulge her curiosity, had not her companions urged her onward.

As they were crossing Eastcheap, in the direction of Crooked-lane, a man suddenly quitted the footpath, and, rushing towards Garnet, seized his bridle, and cried,

“I arrest you. You are a Romish priest.”

“It is false, knave,” returned Garnet. “I am as good a Protestant as thyself, and am just arrived with my companions from a long journey.”

“Your companions are all rank Papists,” rejoined the stranger. “You yourself are Father Garnet, superior of the Jesuits, and, if I am not deceived, the person next you is Father Oldcorne, also of that order. If I am wrong you can easily refute the charge. Come with me to the council. If you refuse, I will call assistance from the passengers.”

Garnet saw he was lost if he did not make an immediate effort at self-preservation, and resolving to be beforehand with his assailant, he shouted at the top of his voice,

“Help! help! my masters. This villain would rob me of my purse.”

“He is a Romish priest,” vociferated the stranger. “I call upon you to assist me to arrest him.”

While the passengers, scarcely knowing what to make of these contradictory statements, flocked round them, Guy Fawkes, who was a little in advance of Catesby, rode back, and seeing how matters stood, instantly drew a petronel, and with the butt-end felled the stranger to the ground. Thus liberated, Garnet struck spurs into his steed, and the whole party dashed off at a rapid pace. Shouts were raised by the bystanders, a few of whom started in pursuit, but the speed at which the fugitives rode soon bore them out of danger.

By this time they had reached London Bridge, and Viviana, in some degree recovered from the fright caused by the recent occurrence, ventured to look around her. She could scarcely believe she was crossing a bridge, so completely did the tall houses give it the appearance of a street; and, if it had not been for occasional glimpses of the river caught between the openings of these lofty habitations, she would have thought her companions had mistaken the road. As they approached the ancient gateway (afterwards denominated Traitor's Tower), at the Southwark side of the bridge, she remarked with a shudder the dismal array of heads garnishing its spikes, and pointing them out to Fawkes, cried,

“Heaven grant yours may never be amongst the number!”

Fawkes made no answer, but dashed beneath the low and gloomy arch of the gate.

Striking into a street on the right, the party skirted the walls of Saint Saviour's Church, and presently drew near the Globe theatre, above which floated its banner. Adjoining it was the old Bear-garden—the savage inmates of which made themselves sufficiently audible. Garnet hastily pointed out the first-mentioned place of amusement to Viviana as they passed it, and her reading having made her well acquainted with the noble dramas produced at that unpretending establishment—little better than a barn in comparison with a modern playhouse,—she regarded it with deep interest. Another theatre—the Swan—speedily claimed her attention; and, leaving it behind, they came upon the open country.

It was now growing rapidly dark, and Catesby, turning off into a narrow lane on the right, shouted to his companions to keep near him. The tract of land they were traversing was flat and marshy. The air was damp and unwholesome—for the swamp had not been drained as in later times,—and the misty exhalations arising from it added to the obscurity. Catesby, however, did not relax his pace, and his companions imitated his example. Another turn on the right seemed to bring them still nearer the river, and involved them in a thicker fog.

All at once Catesby stopped, and cried,

“We should be near the house. And yet this fog perplexes me. Stay here while I search for it.”

“If you leave us, we shall not readily meet again,” rejoined Fawkes.

But the caution was unheeded, Catesby having already disappeared. A few moments afterwards, Fawkes heard the sound of a horse's hoofs approaching him; and, thinking it was Catesby, he hailed the rider.

The horseman made no answer, but continued to advance towards them.

Just then the voice of Catesby was heard at a little distance, shouting, “I was right. It is here.”

The party then hastened in the direction of the cry, and perceived through the gloom a low building, before the door of which Catesby, who had dismounted, was standing.

“A stranger is amongst us,” observed Fawkes, in an under tone, as he rode up.

“Where is he?” demanded Catesby, hastily.

“Here,” replied a voice. “But, fear nothing. I am a friend.”

“I must have stronger assurance than that,” replied Catesby. “Who are you?”

“Robert Keyes,” replied the other, “Do you not know my voice?”

“In good truth I did not,” rejoined Catesby; “and you have spoken just in time. Your arrival is most opportune. But what brings you here to-night?”

“The same errand as yourself, I conclude, Catesby,” replied Keyes. “I came here to see that all was in safety. But, who have you with you?”

“Let us enter the house, and you shall learn,” replied Catesby.

With this, he tapped thrice at the door in a peculiar manner, and presently a light was seen through the windows, and a voice from within demanded who knocked.

“Your master,” replied Catesby.

Upon this, the door was instantly unbarred. After a hasty greeting between Catesby and his servant, whom he addressed as Thomas Bates, the former inquired whether aught had occurred during his absence, and was answered that, except an occasional visit from Mr. Percy, one of the conspirators, no one had been near the house; everything being in precisely the same state he had left it.

“That is well,” replied Catesby. “Now, then, to dispose of the horses.”

All the party having dismounted, their steeds were led to a stable at the back of the premises by Catesby and Bates, while the others entered the house. It was a small, mean-looking habitation, standing at a short distance from the river-side, on the skirts of Lambeth Marsh, and its secluded situation and miserable appearance seldom induced any one to visit it. On one side was a deep muddy sluice communicating with the river. Within, it possessed but slight accommodation, and only numbered four apartments. One of the best of these was assigned to Viviana, and she retired to it as soon as it could be prepared for her reception. Garnet, who still carried his arm in a sling, but who was in other respects almost recovered from his accident, tendered every assistance in his power, and would have remained with her, but she entreated to be left alone. On descending to the lower room, he found Catesby, who, having left Bates in care of the horses, produced such refreshments as they had brought with them. These were scanty enough; but a few flasks of excellent wine which they found within the house made some amends for the meagre repast. Viviana was solicited by Guy Fawkes to join them; but she declined, alleging that she was greatly fatigued, and about to retire to rest.

Their meal ended, Catesby proposed that they should ascertain the condition of the powder, as he feared it might have suffered from being so long in the vault. Before making this examination, the door was carefully barred; the shutters of the windows closed; and Guy Fawkes placed himself as sentinel at the door. A flag beneath the grate, in which a fire was never kindled, was then raised, and disclosed a flight of steps leading to a vault beneath. Catesby having placed a light in a lantern, descended with Keyes; but both Garnet and Oldcorne refused to accompany them.

The vault was arched and lofty, and, strange to say, for its situation, dry—a circumstance owing, in all probability, to the great thickness of the walls. On either side were ranged twenty barrels filled with powder; and at the further end stood a pile of arms, consisting of pikes, rapiers, demi-lances, petronels, calivers, corslets, and morions. Removing one of the barrels from its station, Catesby forced open the lid, and examined its contents, which he found perfectly dry and uninjured.

“It is fit for use,” he observed, with a significant smile, as he exhibited a handful of the powder to Keyes, who stood at a little distance with the lantern; “if it will keep as well in the cellar beneath the Parliament House, our foes will soon be nearer heaven, than they would ever be if left to themselves.”

“When do you propose to transport it across the river?” asked Keyes.

“To-night,” replied Catesby. “It is dark and foggy, and fitting for the purpose. Bates!” he shouted; and at the call his servant instantly descended. “Is the wherry at her moorings?”

“She is, your worship,” replied Bates.

“You must cross the river instantly, then,” rejoined Catesby, “and proceed to the dwelling adjoining the Parliament House, which we hired from Ferris. Here is the key. Examine the premises,—and bring word whether all is secure.”

Bates was about to depart, when Keyes volunteering to accompany him, they left the house together. Having fastened down the lid of the cask, Catesby summoned Fawkes to his assistance, and by his help as many barrels as could be safely stowed in the boat were brought out of the vault. More than two hours elapsed before Bates returned. He was alone, and informed them that all was secure, but that Keyes had decided on remaining where he was,—it being so dark and foggy, that it was scarcely possible to cross the river.

“I had some difficulty in landing,” he added, “and got considerably out of my course. I never was out on so dark a night before.”

“It is the better for us,” rejoined Catesby. “We shall be sure to escape observation.”

In this opinion Guy Fawkes concurred, and they proceeded to transport the powder to the boat, which was brought up the sluice within a few yards of the door. This done, and the barrels covered with a piece of tarpaulin, they embarked, and Fawkes, seizing an oar, propelled the skiff along the narrow creek.

As Bates had stated, the fog was so dense that it was wholly impossible to steer correctly, and Fawkes was therefore obliged to trust to chance as to the course he took. However, having fully regained his strength, he rowed with great swiftness, and, as far as he could judge, had gained the mid-stream, when, before he could avoid it, he came in violent contact with another boat, oversetting it, and plunging its occupants in the stream.

Disregarding the hints and even menaces of Catesby, who urged him to proceed, Fawkes immediately lay upon his oars, and, as the water was perfectly smooth, succeeded, without much difficulty, in extricating the two men from their perilous situation. Their boat having drifted down the stream, could not be recovered. The chief of these personages was profuse in his thanks to his deliverers, whom he supposed were watermen, and they took care not to deceive him.

“You may rely upon my gratitude,” he said; “and when I tell you I am the Earl of Salisbury, you will be satisfied I have the means of evincing it.”

“The Earl of Salisbury!” exclaimed Catesby, who was seated by Fawkes, having taken one of the oars. “Is it possible?”

“I have been on secret state business,” replied the Earl, “and did not choose to employ my own barge. I was returning to Whitehall, when your boat struck against mine.”

“It is our bitterest enemy,” observed Catesby, in an under tone, to Fawkes. “Fate has delivered him into our hands.”

“What are you about to do?” demanded Fawkes, observing that his companion no longer pulled at the oar.

“Shoot him,” replied Catesby. “Keep still, while I disengage my petronel.”

“It shall not be,” returned Fawkes, laying a firm grasp upon his arm. “Let him perish with the others.”

“If we suffer him to escape now, we may never have such a chance again,” rejoined Catesby. “I will shoot him.”

“I say you shall not,” rejoined Fawkes. “His hour is not yet come.”

“What are you talking about, my masters?” demanded the Earl, who was shivering in his wet garments.

“Nothing,” replied Catesby, hastily. “I will throw him overboard,” he whispered to Fawkes.

“Again I say, you shall not,” replied the latter.

“I see what you are afraid of,” cried the Earl. “You are smugglers. You have got some casks of distilled waters on board, and are afraid I may report you. Fear nothing. Land me near the palace, and count upon my gratitude.”

“Our course lies in a different direction,” replied Catesby, sternly. “If your lordship lands at all, it must be where we choose.”

“But I have to see the King to-night. I have some important papers to deliver to him respecting the Papists,” replied Salisbury.

“Indeed!” exclaimed Catesby. “We must, at least, have those papers,” he observed, in a whisper, to Fawkes.

“That is a different affair,” replied Fawkes. “They may prove serviceable to us.”

“My lord,” observed Catesby, “by a strange chance you have fallen into the hands of Catholics. You will be pleased to deliver these papers to us.”

“Ah! villains, would you rob me?” cried the Earl. “You shall take my life sooner.”

“We will take both, if you resist,” replied Catesby, in a menacing tone.

“Nay, then,” returned Salisbury, attempting to draw his sword, “we will see who will obtain the mastery. We are equally matched. Come on; I fear you not.”

But the waterman who had rowed the Earl was not of equal courage with his employer, and refused to take part in the conflict.

“It will be useless to contend with us,” cried Catesby, relinquishing the oar to Fawkes, and springing forward. “I must have those papers,” he added, seizing the Earl by the throat, “or I will throw you overboard.”

“I am mistaken in you,” returned Salisbury; “you are no common mariner.”

“It matters not who or what I am,” rejoined Catesby, fiercely. “Your papers, or you die.”

Finding it in vain to contend with his opponent, the Earl was fain to yield, and reluctantly produced a packet from his doublet, and delivered it to him.

“You will repent this outrage, villain,” he said.

“Your lordship will do well to recollect you are still in my power,” rejoined Catesby. “One thrust of my sword will wipe off some of the injuries you have inflicted on our suffering party.”

“I have heard your voice before,” cried Salisbury; “you shall not escape me.”

“Your imprudence has destroyed you,” retorted Catesby, clutching the Earl's throat more tightly, and shortening his sword, with the intent to plunge it into his breast.

“Hold!” exclaimed Fawkes, grasping his arm, and preventing the blow. “I have already said you shall not slay him. You are in possession of his papers. What more would you have?”

“His life,” replied Catesby, struggling to liberate his arm.

“Let him swear not to betray us,” rejoined Fawkes. “If he refuses, I will not stay your hand.”

“You hear what my companion says, my lord,” cried Catesby. “Will you swear to keep silence as to what has just occurred?”

After a moment's hesitation, Salisbury assented, and Catesby relinquished his grasp.

During this time, the boat had drifted considerably down the stream, and, in spite of the darkness, Catesby noticed with some uneasiness that they were approaching more than one vessel. The Earl of Salisbury also perceived this, and raised a cry for help, but was instantly checked by Catesby, who took a seat beside him, and placing the point of his rapier at his breast, swore he would stab him if he made any further clamour.

The threat, and the dangerous propinquity of his enemy, effectually silenced the Earl, and Catesby directed Fawkes to make for the shore as quickly as he could. His injunctions were obeyed, and Fawkes plied the oars with so much good-will, that in a few minutes the wherry struck against the steps, which projected far into the water, a little to the right of the Star Chamber, precisely on the spot where Westminster Bridge now stands.

Here the Earl and his companion were allowed to disembark, and they had no sooner set foot on land than Guy Fawkes pushed off the boat, and rowed as swiftly as he could towards the centre of the stream. He then demanded of Catesby whether he should make for the Parliament House, or return.

“I scarcely know what to advise,” replied Catesby. “I do not think the Earl will attempt pursuit. And yet I know not. The papers we have obtained may be important. Cease rowing for a moment, and let us listen.”

Guy Fawkes complied, and they listened intently, but could only hear the rippling of the current against the sides of the skiff.

“We have nothing to fear,” observed Catesby. “He will not pursue us, or he cannot find a boat.”

As he spoke, the glimmer of torches was visible on the shore, and the plunge of oars into the water convinced him his opinion was erroneous.

“What course shall we take?” inquired Fawkes.

“I care not,” replied Catesby, sullenly. “If I had had my own way, this would not have happened.”

“Have no fears,” replied Fawkes, rowing swiftly down the stream. “We shall easily escape.”

“We will not be taken alive,” returned Catesby, seating himself on one of the barrels, and hammering against the lid with the butt-end of his petronel. “I will sooner blow us all to perdition than he shall capture us.”

“You are right,” replied Fawkes. “By my patron, Saint James, he is taking the same course as ourselves.”

“Well, let him board us,” replied Catesby. “I am ready for him.”

“Do as you think proper if the worst occurs,” returned Fawkes. “But, if we make no noise, I am assured we shall not be perceived.”

With this he ceased rowing, and suffered the boat to drop down the stream. As ill-luck would have it, it seemed as if the hostile bark had struck completely into their track, and, aided by the current, and four sturdy rowers, was swiftly approaching.

“The Earl will be upon us in a few minutes,” replied Catesby. “If you have any prayers to offer, recite them quickly, for I swear I will be as good as my word.”

“I am ever prepared for death,” replied Fawkes. “Ha! we are saved!”

This last exclamation was occasioned by his remarking a large barge, towards which they were rapidly drifting.

“What are you about to do?” cried Catesby.—“Leap on board, and abandon the skiff, together with its contents?”

“No,” replied Fawkes; “sit still, and leave the rest to me.”

By this time, they had approached the barge, which was lying at anchor, and Guy Fawkes, grasping at a boat-hook, fixed it in the vessel as they passed, and drew their own boat close to its side—so close, in fact, that it could not be distinguished from it.

The next moment, the chase came up, and they distinctly perceived the Earl of Salisbury seated in the stern of the boat, holding a torch. As he approached the barge, he held the light towards it; but the skiff being on the off-side, entirely escaped notice. When the chase had got to a sufficient distance to be out of hearing, the fugitives rowed swiftly in the contrary direction.

Not judging it prudent to land, they continued to ply the oars, until fatigue compelled them to desist, and they had placed some miles between them and their pursuers.

“Long before this, the Earl must have given up the chase,” observed Catesby. “We must return before daybreak, and either land our powder near the Parliament House, or take it back to the vault at Lambeth.”

“We shall run equal risk either way,” replied Fawkes, “and, having ventured thus far, we may as well go through with it. I am for landing at Westminster.”

“And I,” rejoined Catesby. “I do not like giving up a project when I have once undertaken it.”

“You speak my sentiments exactly,” returned Fawkes. “Westminster be it.”

After remaining stationary for about an hour, they rowed back again, and, aided by the stream, in a short time reached their destination. The fog had in a great degree cleared off, and day began to break as they approached the stairs leading to the Parliament House. Though this was not what they desired, inasmuch as the light added to the risk they would have run in landing the powder, it enabled them to ascertain that no one was on the watch.

Running swiftly in towards a sort of wharf, protected by a roofed building, Catesby leapt ashore, and tied the skiff to a ring in the steps. He then desired Fawkes to hand out the powder as quickly as he could. The order was promptly obeyed, and in a few minutes several barrels were on the strand.

“Had you not better fetch Keyes to help us, while I get out the rest?” observed Fawkes.

Catesby assented, and hurrying to the house, found Keyes, who was in great alarm about them. He instantly accompanied the other to the wharf, and by their united efforts the powder was expeditiously and safely removed.

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER II. THE TRAITOR.

The habitation, to which the powder was conveyed, adjoined, as has already been stated, the Parliament House, and stood at the south-west corner of that structure. It was a small building, two stories high, with a little garden attached to it, surrounded by lofty walls, and belonged to Whinneard, the keeper of the royal wardrobe, by whom it was let to a person named Ferris. From the latter it was hired by Thomas Percy, one of the conspirators, and a relative of the Earl of Northumberland,—of whom it will be necessary to speak more fully hereafter,—for the purpose to which it was now put.

Having bestowed the barrels of powder carefully in the cellar, and fastened the door of the house and the garden-gate after them, the trio returned to the boat, and rowed back to Lambeth, where they arrived without being noticed. They then threw themselves upon the floor, and sought some repose after their fatigue.

It was late in the day before they awoke. Garnet and Oldcorne had been long astir; but Viviana had not quitted her chamber. Catesby's first object was to examine the packet he had obtained from the Earl of Salisbury, and withdrawing to a corner, he read over the papers one by one carefully.

Guy Fawkes watched his countenance as he perused them, but he asked no questions. Many of the documents appeared to have little interest, for Catesby tossed them aside with an exclamation of disappointment. At length, however, a small note dropped from the bundle. Catesby picked it up, opened it, and his whole expression changed. His brow grew contracted; and, springing to his feet, he uttered an ejaculation of rage, crying, "It is as I suspected. We have traitors among us."

"Whom do you suspect?" cried Fawkes.

"Tresham!" cried Catesby, in a voice of thunder,— "the fawning, wily, lying Tresham. Fool that I was to league him with us."

"He is your own kinsman," observed Garnet.

“He is,” replied Catesby; “but were he my own brother he should die. Here is a letter from him to Lord Mounteagle, which has found its way to the Earl of Salisbury, hinting that a plot is hatching against the state, and offering to give him full information of it.”

“Traitor! false, perjured traitor!” cried Fawkes. “He must die.”

“He shall fall by my hand,” rejoined Catesby. “Stay! a plan occurs to me. He cannot be aware that this letter is in my possession. I will send Bates to bid him come hither. We will then charge him with his criminality, and put him to death.”

“He deserves severe punishment, no doubt,” replied Garnet; “but I am unwilling you should proceed to the last extremities with him.”

“There is no alternative, father,” replied Catesby. “Our safety demands his destruction.”

Garnet returned no answer, but bowed his head sorrowfully upon his breast. Bates was then despatched to Tresham; and preparations were made by the three lay conspirators for executing their fell design.

It was agreed, that on his arrival, Tresham should be seized and disarmed, and after being interrogated by Catesby touching the extent of his treachery, should be stabbed by Guy Fawkes. This being resolved upon, it became a question how they should act in the interim. It was possible that, after the loss of his papers, some communication might take place between the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Mounteagle, and through the latter with Tresham. Thus prepared, on the arrival of Bates, Tresham, seeing through their design, instead of accompanying him, might give information of their retreat to the officers. The contingency was by no means improbable; and it was urged so strongly by Garnet, that Catesby began to regret his precipitancy in sending the message. Still, his choler was so greatly roused against Tresham, that he resolved to gratify his vengeance at any risk.

“If he betrays us, and brings the officers here, we shall know how to act,” he remarked to Fawkes. “There is that below which will avenge us on them all.”

“True,” replied Fawkes. “But I trust we shall not be obliged to resort to it.”

Soon after this, Bates returned with a message from Tresham, stating that he would be at the rendezvous at nightfall, and that he had important disclosures to make to them. He desired them, moreover, to observe the utmost caution, and not to stir abroad.

“He may, perhaps, be able to offer an explanation of his conduct,” observed Keyes.

“Impossible,” returned Catesby. “But he shall not die without a hearing.”

“That is all I desire,” returned Keyes.

While the others were debating upon the interrogations they should put to Tresham, and further examining the Earl of Salisbury's papers, Garnet repaired to Viviana's chamber, and informed her what was about to take place. She was filled with consternation, and entreated to be allowed to see Guy Fawkes for a few moments alone. Moved by her supplications, Garnet complied, and presently afterwards Fawkes entered the room.

“You have sent for me, Viviana,” he said. “What would you?”

“I have just heard you are about to put one of your companions to death,” she replied. “It must not be.”

“Viviana Radcliffe,” returned Fawkes, “by your own desire you have mixed yourself up with my fortunes. I will not now discuss the prudence of the step you have taken. But I deem it necessary to tell you, once for all, that any attempts to turn me from the line of conduct I have marked out to myself will fail. Tresham has betrayed us, and he must pay the penalty of his treason.”

“But not with his life,” replied Viviana. “Do you not now perceive into what enormities this fatal enterprise will lead you? It is not one crime alone that you are about to commit, but many. You constitute yourselves judges of your companion, and without allowing him to defend himself, take his life. Disguise it as you may, it is assassination—cold-blooded assassination.”

“His life is justly forfeited,” replied Guy Fawkes, sternly. “When he took the oath of secrecy and fidelity to our league, he well knew what the consequences would be if he violated it. He has done so. He has compromised our safety. Nay, he has sold us to our enemies, and nothing shall save him.”

“If this is so,” replied Viviana, “how much better would it be to employ the time now left in providing for your safety, than in contriving means of vengeance upon one, who will be sufficiently punished for his baseness by his own conscience. Even if you destroy him, you will not add to your own security, while you will commit a foul and needless crime, equal, if not exceeding in atrocity that you seek to punish.”

“Viviana,” replied Fawkes, in an angry tone, “in an evil hour, I consented to your accompanying me. I now repent my acquiescence. But, having passed my word, I cannot retract. You waste time, and exhaust my patience and your own by these unavailing supplications. When I embarked in this enterprise, I embraced all its dangers, all its crimes if you will, and I shall not shrink from them. The extent of Tresham's treachery is not yet known to us. There may be—and God grant it!—extenuating circumstances in his conduct that may save his life. But, as the case stands at present, his offence appears of that dye that nothing can wash it out but his blood.”

And he turned to depart.

“When do you expect this wretched man?” asked Viviana, arresting him.

“At nightfall,” replied Fawkes.

“Oh! that there were any means of warning him of his danger!” she cried.

“There are none,” rejoined Fawkes, fiercely,—“none that you can adopt. And I must lay my injunctions upon you not to quit your chamber.”

So saying, he retired.

Left alone, Viviana became a prey to the most agonizing reflections. Despite the strong, and almost unaccountable interest she felt in Guy Fawkes, she began to repent the step she had taken in joining him, as calculated to make her a party to his criminal conduct. But this feeling was transient, and was succeeded by a firmer determination to pursue the good work she had undertaken.

“Though slight success has hitherto attended my efforts,” she thought, “that is no reason why I should relax them. The time is arrived when I may exert a beneficial influence over him; and it may be, that what occurs to-night will prove the first step towards complete triumph. In any case, nothing shall be wanting to prevent the commission of the meditated atrocity.”

With this, she knelt down and prayed long and fervently, and arose confirmed and strengthened in her resolution.

Meanwhile, no alteration had taken place in the purposes of the conspirators. Night came, but with it came not Tresham. Catesby, who, up to this time had managed to restrain his impatience, now arose, and signified his intention of going in search of him,

and was with difficulty prevented from carrying his threat into execution by Guy Fawkes, who represented the folly and risk of such a course.

“If he comes not before midnight, we shall know what to think, and how to act,” he observed; “but till then let us remain tranquil.”

Keyes and the others adding their persuasions to those of Fawkes, Catesby sat sullenly down, and a profound silence ensued. In this way, some hours were passed, when just at the stroke of midnight, Viviana descended from her room, and appeared amongst them. Her countenance was deathly pale, and she looked anxiously around the assemblage. All, however, with the exception of Fawkes, avoided her gaze.

“Is he come?” she exclaimed at length. “I have listened intently, but have heard nothing. You cannot have murdered him. And yet your looks alarm me. Father Garnet, answer me,—is the deed done?”

“No, my daughter,” replied Garnet, sternly.

“Then he has escaped!” she cried, joyfully. “You expected him at nightfall.”

“It is not yet too late,” replied Fawkes, in a sombre tone; “his death is only deferred.”

“Oh! do not say so,” she cried, in a voice of agony. “I hoped you had relented.”

At this moment a peculiar knock was heard at the door. It was thrice repeated, and the strokes vibrated, though with different effect, through every bosom.

“He is here,” cried Catesby, rising.

“Viviana, go to your chamber,” commanded Guy Fawkes, grasping her hand, and leading her towards the stairs.

But she resisted his efforts, and fell on her knees.

“I will not go,” she cried, in a supplicating tone, “unless you will spare this man's life.”

“I have already told you my fixed determination,” rejoined Fawkes, fiercely. “If you will not retire of your own free will, I must force you.”

“If you attempt it, I will scream, and alarm your victim,” she replied. “Mr. Catesby,” she added, “have my prayers, my entreaties, no weight with you? Will you not grant me his life?”

“No!” replied Catesby, fiercely. “She must be silenced,” he added, with a significant look at Fawkes.

“She shall,” replied the latter, drawing his poniard. “Viviana!” he continued, in a voice, and with a look that left no doubt as to his intentions, “do not compel me to be your destroyer.”

As he spoke, the knocking was repeated, and Viviana uttered a prolonged and piercing cry. Guy Fawkes raised his weapon, and was about to strike, but his resolution failed him, and his arm dropped nerveless to his side.

“Your better angel has conquered!” she cried, clasping his knees.

While this was passing, the door was thrown open by Catesby, and Tresham entered the room.

“What means this outcry?” he asked, looking round in alarm. “Ah! what do I see? Viviana Radcliffe here! Did she utter the scream?”

“She did,” replied Viviana, rising, “and she hoped to warn you by it. But you were led on by your fate.”

“Warn me from what?” ejaculated Tresham, starting. “I am among friends.”

“You are among those who have resolved upon your death,” replied Viviana.

“Ah!” exclaimed Tresham, making an effort to gain the door, and draw his sword.

In both attempts, however, he was foiled, for Catesby intercepted him, while Fawkes and Keyes flung themselves upon him, and binding his arms together with a sword-belt, forced him into a chair.

“Of what am I accused?” he demanded, in a voice tremulous with rage and terror.

“You shall learn presently,” replied Catesby. And he motioned to Fawkes to remove Viviana.

“Let me remain,” she cried, fiercely. “My nature is changed, and is become as savage as your own. If blood must be spilt, I will tarry to look upon it.”

“This is no place for you, dear daughter,” interposed Garnet.

“Nor for you either, father,” retorted Viviana, bitterly; “unless you will act as a minister of Christ, and prevent this violence.”

“Let her remain, if she will,” observed Catesby. “Her presence need not hinder our proceedings.”

So saying, he seated himself opposite Tresham, while the two priests placed themselves on either side. Guy Fawkes took up a position on the left of the prisoner, with his drawn dagger in his hand, and Keyes stationed himself near the door. The unfortunate captive regarded them with terrified glances, and trembled in every limb.

“Thomas Tresham,” commenced Catesby, in a stern voice, “you are a sworn brother in our plot. Before I proceed further, I will ask you what should be his punishment who violates his oath, and betrays his confederates? We await your answer?”

But Tresham remained obstinately silent.

“I will tell you, since you refuse to speak,” continued Catesby. “It is death—death by the hands of his associates.”

“It may be,” replied Tresham; “but I have neither broken my oath, nor betrayed you.”

“Your letter to Lord Mounteagle is in my possession,” replied Catesby. “Behold it!”

“Perdition!” exclaimed Tresham. “But you will not slay me? I have betrayed nothing. I have revealed nothing. On my soul's salvation, I have not! Spare me! spare me! and I will be a faithful friend in future. I have been indiscreet—I own it—but nothing more. I have mentioned no names. And Lord Mounteagle, as you well know, is as zealous a Catholic as any now present.”

“Your letter has been sent to the Earl of Salisbury,” pursued Catesby, coldly. “It was from him I obtained it.”

“Then Lord Mounteagle has betrayed me,” returned Tresham, becoming pale as death.

“Have you nothing further to allege?” demanded Catesby. As Tresham made no answer, he turned to the others, and said, “Is it your judgment he should die?”

All, except Viviana, answered in the affirmative.

“Tresham,” continued Catesby, solemnly, “prepare to meet your fate like a man. And do you, father,” he added to Garnet, “proceed to shrive him.”

“Hold!” cried Viviana, stepping into the midst of them,—“hold!” she exclaimed, in a voice so authoritative, and with a look so commanding, that the whole assemblage were awe-stricken. “If you think to commit this crime with impunity, you are mistaken. I swear by everything sacred, if you take this man's life, I will go forth instantly, and denounce you all to the Council. You may stare, sirs, and threaten me, but you shall find I will keep my word.”

“We must put her to death too,” observed Catesby, in an under tone to Fawkes, “or we shall have a worse enemy left than Tresham.”

“I cannot consent to it,” replied Fawkes.

“If you mistrust this person, why not place him in restraint?” pursued Viviana. “You will not mend matters by killing him.”

“She says well,” observed Garnet; “let us put him in some place of security.”

“I am agreed,” replied Fawkes.

“And I,” added Keyes.

“My judgment, then, is overruled,” rejoined Catesby. “But I will not oppose you. We will imprison him in the vault beneath this chamber.”

“He must be without light,” said Garnet.

“And without arms,” added Keyes.

“And without food,” muttered Catesby. “He has only exchanged one death for another.”

The flag was then raised, and Tresham thrust into the vault, after which it was restored to its former position.

“I have saved you from the lesser crime,” cried Viviana to Guy Fawkes; “and, with Heaven's grace, I trust to preserve you from the greater!”

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER III.

THE ESCAPE PREVENTED.

Viviana having retired to her chamber, apparently to rest, a long and anxious consultation was held by the conspirators as to the next steps to be pursued. Garnet was of opinion that, as the Earl of Salisbury was aware of a conspiracy against the state being on foot among the Catholics, their project ought to be deferred, if not altogether abandoned.

“We are sure to be discovered,” he said. “Arrests without end will take place. And such rigorous measures will be adopted by the Earl, such inquiries instituted, that all will infallibly be brought to light. Besides, we know not what Tresham may have revealed. He denies having betrayed our secret, but no credit can be attached to his assertions.”

“Shall we examine him again, father,” cried Catesby, “and wring the truth from him by threats or torture?”

“No, my son,” replied Garnet; “let him remain where he is till morning. A night of solitary confinement, added to the stings of his own guilty conscience, is likely to produce a stronger effect upon him than any torments we could inflict. He shall be interrogated strictly to-morrow, and, I will answer for it, will make a full confession. But even if he has revealed nothing material, there exists another and equally serious ground of alarm. I allude to your meeting with the Earl on the river. I should be the last to counsel bloodshed. But if ever it could be justified, it might have been so in this case.”

“I would have slain him if I had had my own way,” returned Catesby, with a fierce and reproachful look at Fawkes.

“If I have done wrong, I will speedily repair my error,” observed the latter. “Do you desire his death, father? and will you absolve me from the deed?” he added, turning to Garnet.

“It is better as it is,” replied Garnet, making a gesture in the negative. “I would not have our high and holy purpose stained by common slaughter. The power that delivered him into your hands, and stayed them, no doubt preserved him for the general sacrifice. My first fear was lest, having noticed the barrels of powder within the boat, he might have

suspected your design. But I am satisfied his eyes were blinded, and his reason benighted, so that he could discern nothing.”

“Such was my own opinion, father,” replied Fawkes. “Let us observe the utmost caution, but proceed at all hazards with the enterprise. If we delay, we fail.”

“Right,” returned Catesby; “and for that counsel I forgive you for standing between me and our enemy.”

Upon this, it was agreed that if nothing occurred in the interim, more powder should be transported to the habitation in Westminster on the following night,—that Fawkes and Catesby, who might be recognised by Salisbury’s description, should keep close house during the day,—and that the rest of the conspirators should be summoned to assist in digging the mine. Prayers were then offered up by the two priests for their preservation from peril, and for success in their enterprise; after which, they threw themselves on benches or seats, and courted slumber. All slept soundly except Fawkes, who, not being able to close his eyes, from an undefinable apprehension of danger, arose, and cautiously opening the door, kept watch outside.

Shortly afterwards, Viviana, who had waited till all was quiet, softly descended the stairs, and, shading her light, gazed timorously round. Satisfied she was not observed, she glided swiftly and noiselessly to the fire-place, and endeavoured to raise the flag. But it resisted all her efforts, and she was about to abandon the attempt in despair, when she perceived a bolt on one side, that had escaped her notice. Hastily withdrawing it, she experienced no further difficulty. The stone revolved on hinges like a trap-door, and lifting it, she hurried down the steps.

Alarmed by her approach, Tresham had retreated to the further end of the vault, and snatching up a halbert from the pile of weapons, cried, in a voice of desperation—

“Stand off! I am armed, and have severed my bonds. Off, I say! You shall not take me with life.”

“Hush!” cried Viviana, putting her finger to her lips, “I am come to set you free.”

“Do I behold an inhabitant of this world?” cried Tresham, crossing himself, and dropping the halbert, “or some blessed saint? Ah!” he exclaimed, as she advanced towards him, “it is Viviana Radcliffe—my preserver. Pardon, sweet lady. My eyes were dazzled by the light, and your sudden appearance and speech,—and I might almost say looks,—made me think you were some supernatural being come to deliver me from these bloody-minded men. Where are they?”

“In the room above,” she replied, in a whisper,—“asleep,—and if you speak so loud you will arouse them.”

“Let us fly without a moment's delay,” returned Tresham, in the same tone, and hastily picking up a rapier and a dagger.

“Stay!” cried Viviana, arresting him. “Before you go, you must tell me what you are about to do.”

“We will talk of that when we are out of this accursed place,” he replied.

“You shall not stir a footstep,” she rejoined, placing herself resolutely between him and the outlet, “till you have sworn neither to betray your confederates, nor to do them injury.”

“May Heaven requite me, if I forgive them!” cried Tresham between his ground teeth.

“Remember!—you are yet in their power,” she rejoined. “One word from me, and they are at your side. Swear!—and swear solemnly, or you do not quit this spot.”

Tresham gazed at her fiercely, and gripped his dagger, as if determined to free himself at any cost.

“Ah!” she ejaculated, noticing the movement, “you are indeed a traitor. You have neither sense of honour nor gratitude, and I leave you to your fate. Attempt to follow me, and I give the alarm.”

“Forgive me, Viviana,” he cried, abjectly prostrating himself at her feet, and clinging to the hem of her dress. “I meant only to terrify you; I would not injure you for worlds. Do not leave me with these ruthless cut-throats. They will assuredly murder me. Do not remain with them yourself, or you will come to some dreadful end. Fly with me, and I will place you beyond their reach—will watch over your safety. Or, if you are resolved to brave their fury, let me go, and I will take any oath you propose. As I hope for salvation I will not betray them.”

“Peace!” cried Viviana, contemptuously. “If I set you free, it is not to save you, but them.”

“What mean you?” asked Tresham, hesitating.

“Question me not, but follow,” she rejoined, “and tread softly, as you value your life.”

Tresham needed no caution on this head, and as they emerged from the trap-door in breathless silence, and he beheld the figures of his sleeping foes, he could scarcely muster sufficient courage to pass through them. Motioning him to proceed quickly, Viviana moved towards the door, and to her surprise found it unfastened. Without pausing to consider whence this neglect could arise, she opened it, and Tresham, who trembled in every limb, and walked upon the points of his feet, stepped forth. As he crossed the threshold, however, a powerful grasp was laid upon his shoulder, and a drawn sword presented to his breast, while the voice of Fawkes thundered in his ear, “Who goes there? Speak, or I strike.”

While the fugitive, not daring to answer, lest his accents should betray him, endeavoured vainly to break away, Viviana, hearing the struggle, threw open the door, and exclaimed, “It is Tresham. I set him free.”

“You!” cried Fawkes, in astonishment. “Wherefore?”

“In the hope that his escape would induce you to abandon your design, and seek safety in flight,” she rejoined. “But you have thwarted my purpose.”

Fawkes made no reply, but thrust Tresham forcibly into the house, and called to Catesby, who by this time had been roused with the others, to close and bar the door. The command was instantly obeyed, and as Catesby turned, a strange and fearful group met his view. In the midst stood Tresham, his haggard features and palsied frame bespeaking the extremity of his terror. His sword having been beaten from his grasp by Fawkes, and his dagger wrested from him by Keyes, he was utterly defenceless. Viviana had placed herself between him and his assailants, and screening him from their attack, cried—

“Despatch me. The fault is mine—mine only—and I am ready to pay the penalty. Had I not released him, he would not have attempted to escape. I am the rightful victim.”

“She speaks the truth,” gasped Tresham. “If she had not offered to liberate me, I should never have thought of flying. Would to Heaven I had never yielded to her solicitations!”

“Peace, craven hound!” exclaimed Fawkes, furiously; “you deserve to die for your meanness and ingratitude, if not for your treachery. And it is for this miserable wretch, Viviana,” he added, turning to her, “that you would have placed your friends in such fearful jeopardy,—it is for him, who would sacrifice you without scruple to save himself, that you now offer your own life?”

"I deserve your reproaches," she rejoined, in confusion.

"Had I not fortunately intercepted him," pursued Fawkes, "an hour would not have elapsed ere he would have returned with the officers; and we should have changed this dwelling for a dungeon in the Tower,—these benches for the rack."

"In pity stab me!" cried Viviana, falling at his feet. "But oh! do not wound me with your words. I have committed a grievous wrong; but I was ignorant of the consequences; and, as I hope for mercy hereafter, my sole motive, beyond compassion for this wretched man, was to terrify you into relinquishing your dreadful project."

"You have acted wrongfully,—very wrongfully, Viviana," interposed Garnet: "but since you are fully convinced of your error, no more need be said. There are seasons when the heart must be closed against compassion, and when mercy becomes injustice. Go to your chamber, and leave us to deal with this unhappy man."

"To-morrow you must quit us," observed Fawkes, as she passed him.

"Quit you!" she exclaimed. "I will never offend again."

"I will not trust you," replied Fawkes, "unless—but it is useless to impose restrictions upon you, which you will not—perhaps, cannot observe."

"Impose any restrictions you please," replied Viviana. "But do not bid me leave you."

"The time is come when we must separate," rejoined Fawkes. "See you not that the course we are taking is slippery with blood, and beset with perils which the firmest of your sex could not encounter?"

"I will encounter them nevertheless," replied Viviana. "Be merciful," she added, pointing to Tresham, "and mercy shall be shown you in your hour of need." And she slowly withdrew.

While this was passing, Catesby addressed a few words aside to Keyes and Oldcorne, and now stepping forward, and fixing his eye steadily upon the prisoner, to note the effect of his speech upon him, said—

"I have devised a plan by which the full extent of Tresham's treachery can be ascertained."

“You do not mean to torture him, I trust?” exclaimed Garnet, uneasily.

“No, father,” replied Catesby. “If torture is inflicted at all, it will be upon the mind, not the body.”

“Then it will be no torture,” observed Garnet. “State your plan, my son.”

“It is this,” returned Catesby. “He shall write a letter to Lord Mounteagle, stating that he has important revelations to make to him, and entreating him to come hither unattended.”

“Here!” exclaimed Fawkes.

“Here,” repeated Catesby; “and alone. We will conceal ourselves in such manner that we may overhear what passes between them, and if any attempt is made by the villain to betray our presence, he shall be immediately shot. By this means we cannot fail to elicit the truth.”

“I approve your plan, my son,” replied Garnet; “but who will convey the letter to Lord Mounteagle?”

“I will,” replied Fawkes. “Let it be prepared at once, and the case will be thought the more urgent. I will watch him, and see that he comes unattended, or give you timely warning.”

“Enough,” rejoined Garnet. “Let writing materials be procured, and I will dictate the letter.”

Tresham, meanwhile, exhibited no misgiving; but, on the contrary, his countenance brightened up as the plan was approved.

“My life will be spared if you find I have not deceived you, will it not?” he asked, in a supplicating voice.

“Assuredly,” replied Garnet.

“Give me pen and ink, then,” he cried, “and I will write whatever you desire.”

“Our secret is safe,” whispered Catesby to Garnet. “It is useless to test him further.”

“I think so,” replied Garnet. “Would we had made this experiment sooner!”

“Do not delay, I entreat you,” implored Tresham. “I am eager to prove my innocence.”

“We are satisfied with the proof we have already obtained,” returned Garnet.

Tresham dropped on his knees in speechless gratitude.

“We are spared the necessity of being your executioners, my son,” pursued Garnet, “and I rejoice at it. But I cannot acquit you of the design to betray us; and till you have unburthened your whole soul to me, and proved by severe and self-inflicted penance that you are really penitent, you must remain a captive within these walls.”

“I will disguise nothing from you, father,” replied Tresham, “and will strive to expiate my offence by the severest penance you choose to inflict.”

“Do this, my son,” rejoined Garnet; “leave no doubt of your sincerity, and you may be yet restored to the place you have forfeited, and become a sharer in our great enterprise.”

“I will never trust him more,” observed Fawkes.

“Nor I,” added Keyes.

“I will,” rejoined Catesby: “not that I have more faith in him than either of you; but I will so watch him that he shall not dare to betray us. Nay, more,” he added, in an under tone, to Garnet, “I will turn his treachery to account. He will be a useful spy upon our enemies.”

“If he can be relied on,” observed Garnet.

“After this, you need have no fears,” rejoined Catesby, with a significant smile.

“The first part of your penance, my son,” said Garnet, addressing Tresham, “shall be to pass the night in solitary vigil and prayer within the vault. Number your transgressions, and reflect upon their enormity. Consider not only the injury your conduct might have done us, but the holy church of which you are so sinful a member. Weigh over all this, and to-morrow I will hear your confession; when, if I find you in a state of grace, absolution shall not be refused.”

Tresham humbly bowed his head in token of acquiescence. He was then led to the vault, and the flag closed over him, as before. This done, after a brief conversation, the others again stretched themselves on the floor, and sought repose.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE MINE.

Some days elapsed before the conspirators ventured forth from their present abode. They had intended to remove the rest of the powder without loss of time, but were induced to defer their purpose on the representations of Tresham, who stated to Garnet, that in his opinion they would run a great and needless risk. Before the expiration of a week, Tresham's apparent remorse for his perfidy, added to his seeming zeal, had so far reinstated him in the confidence of his associates, that he was fully absolved of his offence by Garnet; and, after taking fresh oaths of even greater solemnity than the former, was again admitted to the league. Catesby, however, who placed little faith in his protestations, never lost sight of him for an instant, and, even if he meditated an escape, he had no opportunity of effecting it.

A coldness, stronger on his side than hers, seemed to have arisen between Viviana and Guy Fawkes. Whenever she descended to the lower room, he withdrew on some excuse; and though he never urged her departure by words, his looks plainly bespoke that he desired it. Upon one occasion, she found him alone,—the others being at the time within the vault. He was whetting the point of his dagger, and did not hear her approach, until she stood beside him. He was slightly confused, and a deep ruddy stain flushed his swarthy cheeks and brow; but he averted his gaze, and continued his occupation in silence.

“Why do you shun me?” asked Viviana, laying her hand gently upon his shoulder. And, as he did not answer, she repeated the question in a broken voice. Guy Fawkes then looked up, and perceived that her eyes were filled with tears.

“I shun you, Viviana, for two reasons,” he replied gravely, but kindly; “first, because I would have no ties of sympathy to make me cling to the world, or care for it; and I feel that if I suffer myself to be interested about you, this will not long be the case: secondly, and chiefly, because you are constantly striving to turn me from my fixed purpose; and, though your efforts have been, and will be unavailing, yet I would not be exposed to them further.”

“You fear me, because you think I shall shake your resolution,” she rejoined, with a forced smile. “But I will trouble you no more. Nay, if you wish it, I will go.”

“It were better,” replied Fawkes, in accents of deep emotion, and taking her hand. “Painful as will be the parting with you, I shall feel more easy when it is over. It grieves me to the soul to see you—the daughter of the proud, the wealthy Sir William Radcliffe—an inmate of this wretched abode, surrounded by desperate men, whose actions you disapprove, and whose danger you are compelled to share. Think how it would add to my suffering if our plot—which Heaven avert—should be discovered, and you be involved in it.”

“Do not think of it,” replied Viviana.

“I cannot banish it from my thoughts,” continued Fawkes. “I cannot reconcile it to my feelings that one so young, so beautiful, should be thus treated. Dwelling on this idea unmans me—unfits me for sterner duties. The great crisis is at hand, and I must live only for it.”

“Live for it, then,” rejoined Viviana; “but, oh! let me remain with you till the blow is struck. Something tells me I may yet be useful to you—may save you.”

“No more of this, if you would indeed remain,” rejoined Guy Fawkes, sternly. “Regard me as a sword in the hand of fate, which cannot be turned aside,—as a bolt launched from the cloud, and shattering all in its course, which may not be stopped,—as something terrible, exterminating, immovable. Regard me as this, and say whether I am not to be shunned.”

“No,” replied Viviana; “I am as steadfast as yourself. I will remain.”

Guy Fawkes gazed at her in surprise mixed with admiration, and pressing her hand affectionately, said,

“I applaud your resolution. If I had a daughter, I should wish her to be like you.”

“You promised to be a father to me,” she rejoined. “How can you be so if I leave you?”

“How can I be so if you stay?” returned Fawkes, mournfully. “No, you must indulge no filial tenderness for one so utterly unable to requite it as myself. Fix your thoughts wholly on Heaven. Pray for the restoration of our holy religion—for the success of the great enterprise—and haply your prayers may prevail.”

“I cannot pray for that,” she replied; “for I do not wish it success. But I will pray—and fervently—that all danger may be averted from your head.”

At this moment, Catesby and Keyes emerged from the vault, and Viviana hurried to her chamber.

As soon as it grew dark, the remaining barrels of powder were brought out of the cellar, and carefully placed in the boat. Straw was then heaped upon them, and the whole covered with a piece of tarpaulin, as upon the former occasion. It being necessary to cross the river more than once, the conduct of the first and most hazardous passage was intrusted to Fawkes, and accompanied by Keyes and Bates, both of whom were well armed, he set out a little before midnight. It was a clear starlight night; but as the moon had not yet risen, they were under no apprehension of discovery. The few craft they encountered, bent probably on some suspicious errand like themselves, paid no attention to them; and plying their oars swiftly, they shot under the low parapet edging the gardens of the Parliament House, just as the deep bell of the Abbey tolled forth the hour of twelve. Keeping in the shade, they silently approached the stairs. No one was there, not even a waterman to attend to the numerous wherries moored to the steps; and, without losing a moment, they sprang ashore, and concealing the barrels beneath their cloaks, glided like phantoms summoned by the witching hour along the passage formed by two high walls, leading to Old Palace Yard, and speedily reached the gate of the habitation. In this way, and with the utmost rapidity, the whole of the fearful cargo was safely deposited in the garden; and leaving the others to carry it into the house, Guy Fawkes returned to the boat. As he was about to push off, two persons rushed to the stair-head, and the foremost, evidently mistaking him for a waterman, called to him to take them across the river.

“I am no waterman, friend,” replied Fawkes; “and am engaged on business of my own. Seek a wherry elsewhere.”

“By heaven!” exclaimed the new-comer, in accents of surprise, “it is Guy Fawkes. Do you not know me?”

“Can it be Humphrey Chetham?” cried Fawkes, equally astonished.

“It is,” replied the other. “This meeting is most fortunate. I was in search of you, having somewhat of importance to communicate to Viviana.”

“State it quickly, then,” returned Fawkes; “I cannot tarry here much longer.”

“I will go with you,” rejoined Chetham, springing into the boat, and followed by his companion. “You must take me to her.”

“Impossible,” cried Fawkes, rising angrily; “neither can I permit you to accompany me. I am busied about my own concerns, and will not be interrupted.”

“At least, tell me where I can find Viviana,” persisted Chetham.

“Not now—not now,” rejoined Fawkes, impatiently. “Meet me to-morrow night, at this hour, in the Great Sanctuary, at the farther side of the Abbey, and you shall learn all you desire to know.”

“Why not now?” rejoined Chetham, earnestly. “You need not fear me. I am no spy, and will reveal nothing.”

“But your companion?” hesitated Fawkes.

“It is only Martin Heydocke,” answered Chetham. “He can keep a close tongue as well as his master.”

“Well, sit down, then,” returned Fawkes, sullenly. “There will be less risk in taking them to Lambeth,” he muttered, “than in loitering here.” And rowing with great swiftness, he soon gained the centre of the stream.

“And so,” he observed, resting for a moment on his oars, “you still cherish your attachment to Viviana, I see. Nay, never start, man. I am no enemy to your suit, though others may be. And if she would place herself at my disposal, I would give her to you,—certain that it would be to one upon whom her affections are fixed.”

“Do you think any change likely to take place in her sentiments towards me?” faltered Chetham. “May I indulge a hope?”

“I would not have you despair,” replied Fawkes. “Because, as far as I have noticed, women are not apt to adhere to their resolutions in matters of the heart; and because, as I have just said, she loves you, and I see no reasonable bar to your union.”

“You give me new life,” cried Chetham, transported with joy. “Oh! that you, who have so much influence with her, would speak in my behalf.”

“Nay, you must plead your own cause,” replied Fawkes. “I cannot hold out much hope at present; for recent events have cast a deep gloom over her spirit, and she appears to be a

prey to melancholy. Let this wear off,—and with one so young and so firm-minded it is sure to do so,—and then your suit may be renewed. Urge it when you may, you have my best wishes for success, and shall have my warmest efforts to second you.”

Humphrey Chetham murmured his thanks in accents almost unintelligible from emotion, and Guy Fawkes continued,

“It would be dangerous for you to disembark with me; but when I put you ashore, I will point out the dwelling at present occupied by Viviana. You can visit it as early as you please to-morrow. You will find no one with her but Father Oldcorne, and I need scarcely add, it will gladden me to the heart to find on my return that she has yielded to your entreaties.”

“I cannot thank you,” cried Chetham, warmly grasping his hand; “but I hope to find some means of evincing my gratitude.”

“Prove it by maintaining the strictest secrecy as to all you may see or hear,—or even suspect,—within the dwelling you are about to visit,” returned Guy Fawkes. “Knowing that I am dealing with a man of honour, I require no stronger obligation than your word.”

“You have it,” replied Chetham, solemnly.

“Your worship shall have my oath, if you desire it,” remarked Martin Heydocke.

“No,” rejoined Fawkes; “your master will answer for your fidelity.”

Shortly after this, Guy Fawkes pulled ashore, and his companions landed. After pointing out the solitary habitation, which possessed greater interest in Humphrey Chetham's eyes than the proud structures he had just quitted, and extracting a promise that the young merchant would not approach it till the morrow, he rowed off, and while the others proceeded to Lambeth in search of lodging for the night, made the best of his way to the little creek, and entered the house.

He found the other conspirators anxiously awaiting his arrival, and the certainty afforded by his presence that the powder had been landed in safety gave general satisfaction. Preparations were immediately made for another voyage. A large supply of provisions, consisting of baked meat of various kinds, hard-boiled eggs, pasties, bread, and other viands, calculated to serve for a week's consumption, without the necessity of having recourse to any culinary process, and which had been previously procured with that view, together with a few flasks of wine, occupied the place in the boat lately

assigned to the powder. At the risk of overloading the vessel, they likewise increased its burthen by a quantity of mining implements—spades, pickaxes, augers, and wrenching irons. To these were added as many swords, calivers, pikes, and petronels, as the space left would accommodate. Garnet and Catesby then embarked,—the former having taken an affectionate farewell of Viviana, whom he committed, with the strictest injunction to watch over her, to the care of Father Oldcorne. Guy Fawkes lingered for a moment, doubting whether he should mention his rencounter with Humphrey Chetham. He was the more undecided from the deep affliction in which she was plunged. At last, he determined upon slightly hinting at the subject, and to be guided as to what he said further by the manner in which the allusion was received.

“And you decide upon remaining here till we return, Viviana?” he said.

She made a sign in the affirmative.

“And you will see no one?”

“No one,” she answered.

“But, should any old friend find his way hither—Humphrey Chetham, for instance—will you not receive him?”

“Why do you single out him?” demanded Viviana, inquiringly. “Is he in London? Have you seen him?”

“I have,” replied Guy Fawkes; “I accidentally met him to-night, and have shown him this dwelling. He will come hither to-morrow.”

“I wanted only this to make me thoroughly wretched,” cried Viviana, clasping her hands with anguish. “Oh! what unhappy chance threw him across your path? Why did you tell him I was here? Why give him a hope that I would see him? But I will not see him. I will quit this house rather than be exposed to the meeting.”

“What means this sudden excitement, Viviana?” cried Guy Fawkes, greatly surprised by her agitation. “Why should a visit from Humphrey Chetham occasion you uneasiness?”

“I know not,” she answered, blushing deeply; “but I will not hazard it.”

“I thought you superior to your sex,” rejoined Fawkes, “and should never have suspected you of waywardness or caprice.”

“You charge me with failings that do not belong to me,” she answered. “I am neither wayward nor capricious; but I would be willingly spared the pain of an interview with one whom I thought I loved.”

“Thought you loved!” echoed Fawkes, in increased astonishment.

“Ay, thought,” repeated Viviana, “for I have since examined my heart, and find he has no place in it.”

“You might be happy with him, Viviana,” rejoined Fawkes, reproachfully.

“I might have been,” she replied, “had circumstances favoured our union. But I should not be so now. Recent events have wrought an entire change in my feelings. Were I to abandon my resolution of retiring to a cloister,—were I to return to the world,—and were such an event possible as that Humphrey Chetham should conform to the faith of Rome,—still, I would not—could not wed him.”

“I grieve to hear it,” replied Fawkes.

“Would you have me wed him?” she cried, in a slightly mortified tone.

“In good sooth would I,” replied Fawkes; “and I repeat my firm conviction you would be happier with him than with one more highly born, and of less real worth.”

Viviana made no reply, and her head declined upon her bosom.

“You will see him,” pursued Fawkes, taking her hand, “if only to tell him what you have just told me.”

“Since you desire it, I will,” she replied, fixing a look of melancholy tenderness upon him; “but it will cost me a bitter pang.”

“I would not tax you with it, if I did not think it needful,” returned Fawkes. “And now, farewell.”

“Farewell,—it may be, for ever,” replied Viviana, sadly.

“The boat is ready, and the tide ebbing,” cried Catesby, impatiently, at the door. “We shall be aground if you tarry longer.”

“I come,” replied Fawkes. And, waving an adieu to Viviana, he departed.

“Strange!” he muttered to himself, as he took his way to the creek. “I could have sworn she was in love with Humphrey Chetham. Who can have superseded him in her regard? Not Catesby, of a surety. 'Tis a perplexing sex. The best are fickle. Heaven be praised! I have long been proof against their wiles.”

Thus musing, he sprang into the skiff, and assisting Catesby to push it into deep water, seized an oar, and exerted himself stoutly to make up for lost time. The second voyage was as prosperous as the first. A thick veil of cloud had curtained the stars; the steps were deserted as before; and the provisions, arms, and implements were securely conveyed to their destination.

Thus far fortune seemed to favour their undertaking, and Garnet, falling on his knees, offered up the most fervent thanksgivings. Prayers over, they descended to the cellar, and their first care was to seek out a place as free from damp as possible, where the powder could be deposited till the excavation, which it was foreseen would be a work of time and great labour, was completed. A dry corner being found, the barrels were placed in it, and carefully concealed with billets of wood and coals, so as to avert suspicion in case of search. This, with other arrangements, occupied the greater part of the night, and the commencement of the important undertaking was deferred till the morrow, when an increase of their party was anticipated.

Throughout the whole of the day no one stirred forth. The windows were kept closed; the doors locked; and, as no fires were lighted, the house had the appearance of being uninhabited. In the course of the morning they underwent considerable alarm. Some mischievous urchins having scaled the garden wall, one of them fell within it, and his cries so terrified his playmates that they dropped on the other side, and left him. The conspirators reconnoitred the unhappy urchin, who continued his vociferations in a loud key, through the holes in the shutters, uncertain what to do, and fearing that this trifling mischance might lead to serious consequences, when the subject of their uneasiness relieved them by scrambling up the wall near the door, and so effecting a retreat. With this exception, nothing material occurred till evening, when their expected associates arrived.

The utmost caution was observed in admitting them. The new-comers were provided with a key of the garden-gate, but a signal was given and repeated before the house-door was opened by Bates, to whom the office of porter was intrusted. As soon as the latter had satisfied himself that all was right, by unmasking a dark lantern, and throwing its radiance upon the faces of the elder Wright, Rookwood, and Percy, he stamped his foot thrice, and the conspirators emerged from their hiding-places. A warm greeting passed between the confederates, and they adjourned to a lower chamber, adjoining the vault,

where the sound of their voices could not be overheard, and where, while partaking of a frugal meal—for they desired to eke out their store of provisions as long as possible—they discoursed upon their plans, and all that had occurred since their last meeting. Nothing was said of the treachery of Tresham—his recent conduct, as already observed, having been such as to restore him in a great degree to the confidence of his companions. Percy, whose office as a gentleman-pensioner gave him the best opportunities of hearing court-whispers and secrets, informed them it was rumoured that the Earl of Salisbury had obtained a clue to some Catholic plot, whether their own he could not say; but it would seem from all that could be gathered, that his endeavours to trace it out had been frustrated.

“Where is Lord Mouteagle?” demanded Catesby.

“At his mansion near Hoxton,” replied Percy.

“Have you observed him much about the court of late, or with the Earl of Salisbury?” pursued Catesby.

“No,” replied Percy. “Yet now, I bethink me, I did observe them together, and in earnest conversation about a week ago. But Lord Mouteagle knows nothing of our plot.”

“Hum!” exclaimed Catesby, shrugging his shoulders, while significant looks were exchanged by the others, and Tresham hung his head. “Lord Mouteagle may not know that you or I, or Fawkes, or Rookwood, are conspiring against the State; but he knows that a plot is hatching amongst our party. It is from him that the Earl of Salisbury derived his information.”

“Amazement!” exclaimed Percy.

“A good Catholic, and betray his fellows!” cried Rookwood; “this passes my comprehension. Are you sure of it?”

“Unhappily we are so, my son,” replied Garnet, gravely.

“We will speak of this hereafter,” interposed Catesby. “I have a plan to get his lordship into our power, and make him serve our purposes in spite of himself. We will outwit the crafty Salisbury. Can any one tell if Tresham's sudden disappearance has been noticed.”

“His household report that he is on a visit to Sir Everard Digby, at Gothurst,” replied Rookwood. “I called at his residence yesterday, and was informed that a letter had just

been received from him dated from that place. His departure, they said, was sudden, but his letter fully accounted for it."

"The messenger who bore that letter had only to travel from Lambeth," observed Catesby, smiling.

"So I conclude," returned Rookwood.

"And, now that our meal is ended, let us to work," cried Fawkes, who had taken no part in the foregoing conversation. "I will strike the first blow," he added, rising and seizing a mattock.

"Hold, my son!" exclaimed Garnet, arresting him. "The work upon which the redemption of our holy church hangs must be commenced with due solemnity."

"You are right, father," replied Fawkes, humbly.

Headed by Garnet, bearing a crucifix, they then repaired to the vault. A silver chalice, filled with holy water, was carried by Fawkes, and two lighted tapers by Catesby. Kneeling down before that part of the wall against which operations were about to be directed, and holding the crucifix towards it, Garnet commenced praying in a low but earnest tone, gradually raising his voice, and increasing in fervour as he proceeded. The others knelt around him, and the whole formed a strange and deeply-interesting group. The vault itself harmonized with its occupants. It was of great antiquity; and its solid stone masonry had acquired a time-worn hoary tint. In width it was about nine feet, and of corresponding height, supported by a semi-circular arch, and its length was more than twenty feet.

The countenances of the conspirators showed that they were powerfully moved by what was passing; but next to Garnet, Guy Fawkes exhibited the greatest enthusiasm. His ecstatic looks and gestures evinced the strong effect produced upon his superstitious character by the scene. Garnet concluded his prayer as follows:—

"Thus far, O Lord, we have toiled in darkness and in difficulty; but we have now arrived at a point where all thy support is needed. Do not desert us, we beseech thee, but let thy light guide us through these gloomy paths. Nerve our arms,—sharpen our weapons,—and crumble these hard and flinty stones, so that they may yield to our efforts. Aid our enterprise, if thou approvest it, and it be really, as in our ignorance we believe it to be, for the welfare of thy holy Church, and the confusion of its enemies. Bear witness, O Lord, that we devote ourselves wholly and entirely to this one end,—and that we implore success only for thy glory and honour."

With this he arose, and the following strains were chanted by the whole assemblage:—

HYMN OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

The heretic and heathen, Lord,
Consume with fire, cut down with sword;
The spoilers from thy temples thrust,
Their altars trample in the dust.
False princes and false priests lay low,
Their habitations fill with woe.
Scatter them, Lord, with sword and flame,
And bring them utterly to shame.
Thy vengeful arm no longer stay,
Arise! exterminate, and slay.
So shall thy fallen worship be
Restored to its prosperity.

This hymn raised the enthusiasm of the conspirators to the highest pitch, and such was the effect produced by it, as it rolled in sullen echoes along the arched roof of the vault, that several of them drew their swords, and crossed the blades, with looks of the most determined devotion to their cause. When it was ended, Garnet recited other prayers, and sprinkled holy water upon the wall, and upon every implement about to be used, bestowing a separate benediction on each. As he delivered the pick-axe to Guy Fawkes, he cried in a solemn voice—

“Strike, my son, in the name of the Most High, and in behalf of our holy religion,—strike!”

Guy Fawkes raised the weapon, and stimulated by excitement, threw the whole strength of his arm into the blow. A large piece of the granite was chipped off, but the mattock snapped in twain. Guy Fawkes looked deeply disconcerted, and Garnet, though he concealed his emotion, was filled with dismay.

“Let me take your place,” cried Keyes, advancing, as Guy Fawkes retired.

Keyes was a powerful man, and exerting his energies, he buried the point of the pick-axe so deeply in the mortar, that he could not remove it unassisted. These untoward circumstances cast a slight damp upon their ardour; but Catesby, who perceived it, went more cautiously to work, and in a short time succeeded with great labour in getting out the large stone upon which the others had expended so much useless exertion. The sight restored their confidence, and as many as could work in the narrow space joined him.

But they found that their task was much more arduous than they had anticipated. More than an hour elapsed before they could loosen another stone, and though they laboured with the utmost perseverance, relieving each other by turns, they had made but a small breach when morning arrived. The stones were as hard and unyielding as iron, and the mortar in some places harder than the stones.

After a few hours' rest, they resumed their task. Still, they made but small progress; and it was not until the third day that they had excavated a hole sufficiently wide and deep to admit one man within it. They were now arrived at a compost of gravel and flint stones; and if they had found their previous task difficult, what they had now to encounter was infinitely more so. Their implements made little or no impression on this unyielding substance, and though they toiled incessantly, the work proceeded with disheartening slowness. The stones and rubbish were conveyed at dead of night in hampers into the garden, and buried.

One night, when they were labouring as usual, Guy Fawkes, who was foremost in the excavation, thought he heard the tolling of a bell within the wall. He instantly suspended his task, and being convinced that he was not deceived, crept out of the hole, and made a sign to the others to listen. Each had heard the awful sound before; but as it was partially drowned by the noise of the pick-axe, it had not produced much impression upon them, as they attributed it to some vibration in the wall, caused by the echo of the blows. But it was now distinctly audible—deep, clear, slow,—like a passing bell,—but so solemn, so unearthly, that its tones froze the blood in their veins.

Guy Fawkes and the other Conspirators alarmed while digging the mine
They listened for a while in speechless astonishment, scarcely daring to look at each other, and expecting each moment that the building would fall upon them, and bury them alive. The light of a single lantern placed upon an upturned basket fell upon figures rigid as statues, and countenances charged with awe.

“My arm is paralysed,” said Guy Fawkes, breaking silence; “I can work no more.”

“Try holy water, father,” cried Catesby. “If it proceeds from aught of evil, that will quell it.”

The chalice containing the sacred lymph was brought, and pronouncing a solemn exorcism, Garnet sprinkled the wall.

The sound immediately ceased.

“It is as I thought, father,” observed Catesby; “it is the delusion of an evil spirit.”

As he spoke, the tolling of the mysterious bell was again heard, and more solemnly,—more slowly than before.

“Sprinkle the wall again, in Heaven's name, father,” cried Fawkes, crossing himself devoutly. “Avoid thee, Sathanas!”

Garnet complied, and throwing holy water upon the stones, the same result followed.

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER V THE CAPTURE OF VIVIANA

On the morning after his encounter with Guy Fawkes, Humphrey Chetham, accompanied by Martin Heydocke, took his way to Lambeth Marsh. With a throbbing heart he approached the miserable dwelling he knew to be inhabited by Viviana, and could scarcely summon courage to knock at the door. His first summons not being answered, he repeated it more loudly, and he then perceived the face of Father Oldcorne at the window, who, having satisfied himself that it was a friend, admitted him and his attendant.

“You were expected, my son,” said the priest, after a friendly greeting. “Guy Fawkes has prepared Viviana for your coming.”

“Will she not see me?” demanded the young merchant, uneasily.

“I believe so,” replied Oldcorne. “But I will apprise her of your arrival. Be seated, my son.”

He then carefully fastened the door, and repaired to Viviana's chamber, leaving Chetham in that state of tremor and anxiety which a lover, hoping to behold his mistress, only knows.

It was some time before Viviana appeared, and the young merchant, whose heart beat violently at the sound of her footstep, was startled by the alteration in her looks, and the extreme coldness of her manner. Oldcorne was with her, and motioning Martin Heydocke to follow him, the youthful pair were left alone.

“You desire to see me, I am given to understand, sir,” observed Viviana, in a freezing tone.

“I have journeyed to London for that express purpose,” replied Humphrey Chetham, tremulously.

“I am much beholden to you, sir,” returned Viviana, in the same repelling tone as before; “but I regret you should have taken so much trouble on my account.”

“To serve you is happiness, not trouble, Viviana,” replied Humphrey Chetham, ardently; “and I am overjoyed at finding an opportunity of proving my devotion.”

“I have yet to learn what service I must thank you for,” she returned.

“I can scarcely say that I am warranted in thus intruding upon you,” replied Chetham, greatly abashed; “but, having learnt from my servant, Martin Heydocke, that Doctor Dee had set out for London, with the view of seeking you out, and withdrawing you from your present associates, I was determined to be beforehand with him, and to acquaint you, if possible, with his intentions.”

“What you say surprises me,” replied Viviana. “Doctor Dee has no right to interfere with my actions. Nor should I obey him were he to counsel me, as is scarcely probable, to quit my companions.”

“I know not what connexion there may be between you to justify the interposition of his authority,” replied Chetham; “neither did I tarry to inquire. But presuming from what I heard, that he would attempt to exercise some control over you, I set out at once, and, without guide to your retreat, or the slightest knowledge of it, was fortunate enough, on the very night of my arrival in London, to chance upon Guy Fawkes, who directed me to you.”

“I am aware of it,” was the chilling answer.

“I will not avouch,” pursued Chetham, passionately, “that I have not been actuated as much by an irrepressible desire to see you again, as by anxiety to apprise you of Doctor Dee's coming. I wanted only a slight excuse to myself to induce me to yield to my inclinations. Your departure made me wretched. I thought I had more control over myself. But I find I cannot live without you.”

“Alas! alas!” cried Viviana, in a troubled tone, and losing all her self-command. “I expected this. Why—why did you come?”

“I have told you my motive,” replied Chetham; “but, oh! do not reproach me!”

“I do not desire to do so,” returned Viviana, with a look of agony. “I bitterly reproach myself that I cannot meet you as of old. But I would rather—far rather have encountered Doctor Dee, had he come hither resolved to exert all his magical power to force me away, than have met you.”

“Have I unwittingly offended you, Viviana?” asked Chetham, in astonishment.

“Oh! no—no—no!” she replied, “you have not offended me; but——”

“But what?” he cried, anxiously.

“I would rather have died than see you,” she answered.

“I will not inquire wherefore,” rejoined Chetham, “because I too well divine the cause. I am no longer what I was to you.”

“Press this matter no further, I pray of you,” returned Viviana, in much confusion, and blushing deeply. “I shall ever esteem you,—ever feel the warmest gratitude to you. And what matters it whether my heart is estranged from you or not, since I can never wed you?”

“What matters it?” repeated the young merchant, in accents of despair,—“it matters much. Drowning love will cling to straws. The thought that I was beloved by you, though I could never hope to possess your hand, reconciled me in some degree to my fate. But now,” he added, covering his face with his hands,—“now, my heart is crushed.”

“Nay, say not so,” cried Viviana, in a voice of the deepest emotion. “I do love you,—as a sister.”

“That is small comfort,” rejoined Chetham, bitterly. “I echo your own wish. Would we had never met again! I might, at least, have deluded myself into the belief that you loved me.”

“It would have been better so,” she returned. “I would inflict pain on no one—far less on you, whom I regard so much, and to whom I owe so much.”

“You owe me nothing, Viviana,” rejoined Chetham. “All I desired was to serve you. In the midst of the dangers we have shared together, I felt no alarm except for your sake. I have done nothing—nothing. Would I had died for you!”

“Calm yourself, sir, I entreat you,” she returned.

“You did love me once?” demanded Chetham, suddenly.

“I thought so,” she answered.

The young merchant uttered an exclamation of anguish, and a mournful pause ensued, broken only by his groans.

“Answer me, Viviana,” he said, turning abruptly upon her,—“answer me, and, in mercy, answer truly,—do you love another?”

“It is a question I cannot answer,” she replied, becoming ashy pale.

“Your looks speak for you!” he vociferated, in a terrible tone,—“you do! His name?—his name?—that I may wreak my vengeance upon him.”

“Your violence terrifies me,” returned Viviana, withdrawing the hand he had seized. “I must put an end to this interview.”

“Pardon me, Viviana!” cried Chetham, falling on his knees before her—“in pity pardon me! I am not myself. I shall be calmer presently. But if you knew the anguish of the wound you have inflicted, you would not add to it.”

“Heaven knows I would not!” she returned, motioning him to rise. “And, if it will lighten your suffering, know that the love I feel for another—if love, indeed, it be,—is as hopeless as your own. But it is not a love of which even you could be jealous. It is a higher and a holier passion. It is affection mixed with admiration, and purified from all its grossness. It is more, perhaps, than the love of a daughter for her father—but it is nothing more. I shall never wed him I love—could not if I would. Nay, I would shun him, if I did not feel that the hour will soon come when the extent of my affection must be proved.”

“This is strange sophistry,” returned Chetham; “and you may deceive yourself by it, but you cannot deceive me. You love as all ardent natures do love. But in what way do you mean to prove your affection?”

“Perhaps, by the sacrifice of my life,” she answered.

“I can tell you who is the object of your affections!” said Chetham. “It is Guy Fawkes.”

“I will not deny it,” replied Viviana; “he is.”

“Hear me, then,” exclaimed Chetham, who appeared inexpressibly relieved by the discovery he had made; “in my passage across the river with him last night, our conversation turned on the one subject ever nearest my heart, yourself,—and Guy Fawkes not only bade me not despair, but promised to aid my suit.”

“And he kept his word,” replied Viviana, “for, while announcing your proposed visit, he urged me strongly in your behalf.”

“Then he knows not of your love for him?” demanded Chetham.

“He not only knows it not, but never shall know it from me,—nor must he know it from you, sir,” rejoined Viviana, energetically.

“Fear it not,” said Chetham, sighing. “It is a secret I shall carefully preserve.”

“And now that you are in possession of it,” she answered, “I no longer feel your presence as a restraint. Let me still regard you as a friend.”

“Be it so,” replied Humphrey Chetham, mournfully; “and as a friend let me entreat you to quit this place, and abandon your present associates. I will not seek to turn your heart from Fawkes—nor will I try to regain the love I have lost. But let me implore you to pause ere you irretrievably mix yourself up with the fortunes of one so desperate. I am too well aware that he is engaged in a fearful plot against the State,—though I know not its precise nature.”

“You will not betray him?” she cried.

“I will not, though he is my rival,” returned Chetham. “But others may—nay, perhaps have done so already.”

“Whom do you suspect?” demanded Viviana, in the greatest alarm.

“I fear Doctor Dee,” replied the young merchant; “but I know nothing certainly. My servant, Martin Heydocke, who is in the Doctor's confidence, intimated as much to me, and I have reason to think that his journey to town, under the pretext of searching for you, is undertaken for the purpose of tracing out the conspirators, and delivering them to the Government.”

“Is he arrived in London?” inquired Viviana, eagerly.

“I should think not,” returned Chetham. “I passed him, four days ago, on this side Leicester, in company with Kelley and Topcliffe.”

“If the wretch Topcliffe was with him, your conjectures are too well founded,” she replied. “I must warn Guy Fawkes instantly of his danger.”

“Command my services in any way,” said Chetham.

“I know not what to do,” cried Viviana, after a pause, during which she betrayed the greatest agitation. “I dare not seek him out;—and yet, if I do not, he may fall into the hands of the enemy. I must see him at all hazards.”

“Suffer me to go with you,” implored Chetham. “You may rely upon my secrecy. And now I have a double motive for desiring to preserve Fawkes.”

“You are, indeed, truly noble-hearted and generous,” replied Viviana; “and I would fully confide in you. But, if you were to be seen by the others, you would be certainly put to death. Not even Fawkes could save you.”

“I will risk it, if you desire it, and it will save him,” replied the young merchant, devotedly. “Nay, I will go alone.”

“That were to insure your destruction,” she answered. “No—no—it must not be. I will consult with Father Oldcorne.”

With this, she hurried out of the room, and returned in a short time with the priest.

“Father Oldcorne is of opinion that our friends must be apprised of their danger,” she said. “And he thinks it needful we should both go to their retreat, that no hindrance may be offered to our flight, in case such a measure should be resolved upon.”

“You cannot accompany us, my son,” added Oldcorne; “for though I am as fully assured of your fidelity as Viviana, and would confide my life to you, there are those who will not so trust you, and who might rejoice in the opportunity of removing you.”

“Viviana!” exclaimed Chetham, looking entreatingly at her.

“For my sake,—if not for your own,—do not urge this further,” she returned. “There are already dangers and difficulties enow without adding to them. You would be safer amid a horde of robbers than amidst these men.”

“And it is to such persons you commit yourself?” cried Chetham, reproachfully. “Oh! be warned by me, ere it is too late! Abandon them!”

“It is too late, already,” replied Viviana. “The die is cast.”

“Then I can only lament it,” returned Chetham, sadly. “Suffer me, at least, to accompany you to some place near their retreat, that you may summon me in case of need.”

“There can be no objection to that, Viviana,” observed Oldcorne; “provided Humphrey Chetham will promise not to follow us.”

“Readily,” replied the young merchant.

“I am unwilling to expose him to further risk on my account,” said Viviana. “But be it as you will.”

It was then agreed, that they should not set out till nightfall, but proceed, as soon as it grew dark, to Lambeth, where Humphrey Chetham undertook to procure a boat for their conveyance across the river.

The hour of departure at length arrived. Viviana, who had withdrawn to her own room, appeared in her travelling habit, and was about to set forth with her companions, when they were all startled by a sudden and loud knocking at the door.

“We are discovered,” she cried. “Doctor Dee has found out our retreat.”

“Fear nothing,” rejoined Chetham, drawing his sword, while his example was imitated by Martin Heydocks; “they shall not capture you while I live.”

As he spoke, the knocking was repeated, and the door shaken so violently as to threaten to burst its fastenings.

“Extinguish the light,” whispered Chetham, “and let Father Oldcorne conceal himself. We have nothing to fear.”

“Where shall I fly?” cried Oldcorne despairingly. “It will be impossible to raise the flag, and seek refuge in the vault.”

“Fly to my room,” cried Viviana. And finding he stood irresolute, as if paralysed with terror, she took his arm, and dragged him away. The next moment the door was burst open with a loud crash, and several armed men, with their swords drawn, followed by Topcliffe, and another middle-aged man, of slight stature, and rather under-sized, but richly dressed, and bearing all the marks of exalted rank, rushed into the room.

“You are my prisoner!” cried Topcliffe, rushing up to Chetham, who had planted himself, with Martin Heydocke, at the foot of the stairs. “I arrest you in the King's name!”

“You are mistaken in your man, sir,” cried Chetham, fiercely. “I have committed no offence. Lay a hand upon me, at your peril!”

“How is this?” cried Topcliffe. “Humphrey Chetham here!”

“Ay,” returned the young merchant; “you have fallen upon the wrong house.”

“Not so, sir,” replied Topcliffe. “I am satisfied from your presence that I am right. Where you are, Viviana Radcliffe is not far off. Throw down your arms. You can offer no resistance to my force, and your zeal will not benefit your friends, while it will place your own safety in jeopardy.”

But Chetham fiercely refused compliance, and after a few minutes' further parley, the soldiers were about to attack him, when Viviana opened a door above, and slowly descended the stairs. At her appearance the young merchant, seeing that further resistance would be useless, sheathed his sword, and she passed between him and Heydocke, and advanced towards the leaders of the band.

“What means this intrusion?” she asked.

“We are come in search of two Jesuit priests, whom we have obtained information are hidden here,” replied Topcliffe;—“as well as of certain other Papists, disaffected against the State, for whose apprehension I hold a warrant.”

“You are welcome to search the house,” replied Viviana. “But there is no one within it except those you see.”

As she said this, Chetham, who gazed earnestly at her, caught her eye, and from a scarcely-perceptible glance, felt certain that the priest, through her agency, had effected his escape. But the soldiers had not waited for her permission to make the search. Rushing up-stairs they examined the different chambers,—there were two small rooms besides that occupied by Viviana,—and found several of the priests' habiliments; but though they examined every corner with the minutest attention, sounded the walls, peered up the chimneys, underneath the bed, and into every place, likely and unlikely, they could find no other traces of those they sought, and were compelled to return to their leader with tidings of their ill success. Topcliffe, with another party, continued his scrutiny below, and discovering the moveable flag in the hearth, descended into the

vault, where he made certain of discovering his prey. But no one was there; and, the powder and arms having been removed, he gained nothing by his investigations.

Meanwhile, his companion,—and evidently from his garb, and the deference paid him, though he was addressed by no title which could lead to the absolute knowledge of his rank, his superior,—seated himself, and put many questions in a courteous but authoritative tone to Viviana respecting her residence in this solitary abode,—the names of her companions,—where they were,—and upon what scheme they were engaged. To none of these questions would she return an answer, and her interrogator, at last, losing patience, said,

“I hold it my duty, to inform you that you will be carried before the Council, and if you continue thus obstinate, means will be taken—and those none of the gentlest—to extort the truth from you.”

“You may apply the torture to me,” replied Viviana, firmly; “but it will wrest nothing from me.”

“That remains to be seen,” replied the other; “I only trust you will not compel me to put my threat into execution.”

At this moment Topcliffe emerged from the vault, and the soldiers returned from their unsuccessful search above.

“They have escaped us now,” remarked Topcliffe to his superior. “But I will conceal a party of men on the premises, who will be certain to capture them on their return.”

Viviana uttered an exclamation of irrepressible uneasiness, which did not escape her auditors.

“I am right, you see,” observed Topcliffe, significantly, to his companion.

“You are so,” replied the other.

As this was said, Viviana hazarded a look at Humphrey Chetham, the meaning of which he was not slow to comprehend. He saw that she wished him to make an effort to escape, that he might warn her companions, and regardless of the consequence, he prepared to obey her. While those around were engaged in a last fruitless search, he whispered his intentions to Martin Heydocke, and only awaited a favourable opportunity to put them in execution. It occurred sooner than he expected. Before

quitting the premises, Topcliffe determined to visit the upper rooms himself, and he took several of the men with him.

Chetham would have made an attempt to liberate Viviana, but, feeling certain it would be unsuccessful, he preferred obeying her wishes to his own inclinations. Topcliffe gone, he suddenly drew his sword,—for neither he nor Heydocke had been disarmed,—and rushing towards the door, struck down the man next it, and followed by his servant, passed through it before he could be intercepted. They both then flew at a swift pace towards the marshy fields, and, owing to the darkness and unstable nature of the ground, speedily distanced their pursuers.

Hearing the disturbance below, and guessing its cause, Topcliffe immediately descended. But he was too late; and though he joined in the pursuit, he was baffled like his attendants. Half an hour afterwards, he returned to the house with an angry and disappointed look.

“He has given us the slip,” he observed to his superior, who appeared exceedingly provoked by the young merchant's flight; “But we will soon have him again.”

After giving directions to his men how to conceal themselves, Topcliffe informed his companions that he was ready to attend him. Viviana, who had remained motionless and silent during the foregoing scene, was taken out of the house, and conducted towards the creek, in which lay a large wherry manned by four rowers. She was placed within it, and as soon as his superior was seated, Topcliffe inquired—

“Where will your lordship go first?”

“To the Star-Chamber,” was the answer.

At this reply, in spite of herself, Viviana could not repress a shudder.

“All is lost!” she mentally ejaculated.

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER VI.

THE CELLAR.

It was long before the conspirators gained sufficient courage to recommence digging the mine. Whenever holy water was thrown upon the stones, the mysterious bell ceased tolling, but it presently began anew, and such was the appalling effect of the sound that it completely paralysed the listeners. Prayers were said by Garnet; hymns sung by the others; but all was of no avail. It continued to toll on with increased solemnity, unless checked by the same potent application as before.

The effect became speedily manifest in the altered looks and demeanour of the conspirators, and it was evident that if something was not done to arouse them, the enterprise would be abandoned. Catesby, equally superstitious with his confederates, but having nerves more firmly strung, was the first to conquer his terror. Crossing himself, he muttered a secret prayer, and, snatching up a pick-axe, entered the cavity, and resumed his labour.

The noise of the heavy blows dealt by him against the wall drowned the tolling of the bell. The charm was broken. And stimulated by his conduct, the others followed his example, and though the awful tolling continued at intervals during the whole of their operations, it offered no further interruption to them.

Another and more serious cause of anxiety, however, arose. As the work advanced, without being aware of it, they approached the bank of the river, and the water began to ooze through the sides of the excavation,—at first, slightly, but by degrees to such an extent as to convince them that their labour would be entirely thrown away. Large portions of the clay, loosened by the damp, fell in upon them, nearly burying those nearest the tumbling mass; and the floor was now in some places more than a foot deep in water, clearly proving it would be utterly impossible to keep the powder fit for use in such a spot.

Catesby bore these untoward circumstances with ill-concealed mortification. For a time, he struggled against them; and though he felt that it was hopeless, worked on like a desperate military leader conducting a forlorn hope to certain destruction. At length, however, the water began to make such incursions that he could no longer disguise from himself or his companions that they were contending against insurmountable difficulties, and that to proceed further would be madness. He, therefore, with a heavy

heart, desisted, and throwing down his pick-axe, said it was clear that Heaven did not approve their design, and that it must be relinquished.

“We ought to have been warned by that doleful bell,” he observed in conclusion. “I now perceive its meaning. And as I was the first to act in direct opposition to the declared will of the Supreme Being, so now I am the first to admit my error.”

“I cannot account for that dread and mysterious sound, my son,” replied Garnet, “and can only attribute it, as you do, to Divine interference. But whether it was intended as a warning or a guidance, I confess I am unable to say.”

“Can you longer doubt, father,” returned Catesby, bitterly, “when you look at yon excavation? It took us more than a week's incessant labour to get through the first wall; and our toil was no sooner lightened than these fatal consequences ensued. If we proceed, we shall drown ourselves, instead of blowing up our foes. And even if we should escape, were the powder stowed for one day in that damp place, it would never explode. We have failed, and must take measures accordingly.”

“I entirely concur with you, my son,” replied Garnet; “we must abandon our present plan. But do not let us be disheartened. Perhaps at this very moment Heaven is preparing for us a victory by some unlooked-for means.”

“It may be so,” replied Catesby, with a look of incredulity.

As he spoke, an extraordinary noise, like a shower of falling stones, was heard overhead. And coupling the sound with their fears of the encroachment of the damp, the conspirators glanced at each other in dismay, thinking the building was falling in upon them.

“All blessed saints protect us!” cried Garnet, as the sound ceased. “What was that?”

But no one was able to account for it, and each regarded his neighbour with apprehension. After a short interval of silence, the sound was heard again. There was then another pause—and again the same rushing and inexplicable noise.

“What can it be?” cried Catesby. “I am so enfeebled by this underground life, that trifles alarm me. Are our enemies pulling down the structure over our heads?—or are they earthing us up like vermin?” he added to Fawkes. “What is it?”

“I will go and see,” replied the other.

“Do not expose yourself, my son,” cried Garnet. “Let us abide the result here.”

“No, father,” replied Fawkes. “Having failed in our scheme, what befalls me is of little consequence. I will go. If I return not, you will understand what has happened.”

Pausing for a moment to receive Garnet's benediction, he then strode away.

Half an hour elapsed before Fawkes returned, and the interval appeared thrice its duration in the eyes of the conspirators. When he re-appeared, a smile sat upon his countenance, and his looks instantly dispelled the alarm that had been previously felt.

“You bring us good news, my son?” cried Garnet.

“Excellent, father,” replied Fawkes: “and you were right in saying that at the very moment we were indulging in misgiving, Heaven was preparing for us a victory by unforeseen and mysterious means.”

Garnet raised his hands gratefully and reverentially upwards. And the other conspirators crowded round Fawkes to listen to his relation.

“The noise we heard,” he said, “arose from a very simple circumstance,—and when you hear it, you will smile at your fears. But you will not smile at the result to which it has led. Exactly overhead, it appears, a cellar is situated, belonging to a person named Bright, and the sound was occasioned by the removal of his coals, which he had been selling off.”

“Is that all?” cried Catesby. “We are indeed grown childish, to be alarmed by such a cause.”

“It appears slight now it is explained,” observed Keyes, gravely; “but how were we to know whence it arose?”

“True,” returned Fawkes; “and I will now show you how the hand of Heaven has been manifested in the matter. The noise which led me to this investigation, and which I regard as a signal from on high, brought me to a cellar I had never seen before, and knew not existed. That cellar lies immediately beneath the House of Lords.”

“Ah! I see!” exclaimed Catesby. “You think it would form a good depository for the powder.”

"If it had been built for the express purpose, it could not be better," returned Fawkes. "It is commodious and dry, and in an out-of-the-way place, as you may judge, when we ourselves have never hitherto noticed it."

"But what is all this to us, if we cannot use it?" returned Catesby.

"We can use it," replied Fawkes. "It is ours."

There was a general exclamation of surprise.

"Finding, on inquiry, that Bright was about to quit the neighbourhood," continued Fawkes, "and did not require the place longer, I instantly proposed to take it from him, and to create no suspicion, engaged it in Percy's name, stating that he wanted it for his own fuel."

"You have done admirably," cried Catesby, in a tone of exultation. "The success of the enterprise will now be entirely owing to you."

"Not to me, but to the Providence that directed me," replied Fawkes, solemnly.

"Right, my son," returned Garnet. "And let this teach us never to despair again."

The next day, Percy having taken possession of the cellar, it was carefully examined, and proved, as Fawkes had stated, admirably adapted to their purpose. Their fears were now at an end, and they looked on the success of their project as certain. The mysterious bell no longer tolled, and their sole remaining task was to fill up the excavation so far as to prevent any damage from the wet.

This was soon done, and their next step was to transport the powder during the night to the cellar. Concealing the barrels as before with faggots and coals, they gave the place the appearance of a mere receptacle for lumber, by filling it with old hampers, boxes without lids, broken bottles, stone jars, and other rubbish.

They now began to think of separating, and Fawkes expressed his intention of returning that night to the house at Lambeth. No intelligence had reached them of Viviana's captivity, and they supposed her still an inmate of the miserable dwelling with Father Oldcorne.

Fawkes had often thought of her, and with uneasiness, during his toilsome labours; but they had so much engrossed him that her image was banished almost as soon as it arose. Now that grand obstacle was surmounted, and nothing was wanting, however, except a

favourable moment to strike the blow, he began to feel the greatest anxiety respecting her.

Still, he thought it prudent to postpone his return to a late hour, and it was not until near midnight that he and Catesby ventured to their boat. As he was about to descend the steps, he heard his name pronounced by some one at a little distance; and the next moment, a man, whom he immediately recognised as Humphrey Chetham, rushed up to him.

“You here again!” cried Fawkes, angrily, and not unsuspiciously. “Do you play the spy upon me?”

“I have watched for you for the last ten nights,” replied Chetham hastily. “I knew not where you were. But I found your boat here, and I hoped you would not cross the water in any other.”

“Why all this care?” demanded Fawkes. “Has aught happened?—Is Viviana safe?—Speak, man! do not keep me longer in suspense!”

“Alas!” rejoined Chetham, “she is a prisoner.”

Guy Fawkes laying the train

“A prisoner!” ejaculated Fawkes, in a hollow voice. “Then my forebodings were not without cause.”

“How has this happened?” cried Catesby, who had listened to what was said in silent wonder.

Chetham then hastily related all that had taken place.

“I know not what has become of her,” he said, in conclusion; “but I have heard that she was taken to the Star-Chamber by the Earl of Salisbury,—for he, it appears, was the companion of Topcliffe,—and, refusing to answer the interrogations of the Council, was conveyed to the Tower, and, I fear, subjected to the torture.”

“Tortured!” exclaimed Fawkes, horror-stricken; “Viviana tortured! And I have brought her to this! Oh, God! Oh, God!”

“It is indeed an agonizing reflection,” replied Humphrey Chetham, in a sombre tone, “and enough to drive you to despair. Her last wishes, expressed only in looks, for she did not dare to give utterance to them, were that I should warn you not to approach the

house at Lambeth, your enemies being concealed within it. I have now fulfilled them. Farewell!"

And he turned to depart.

"Stay!" cried Catesby, arresting him. "Where is Father Oldcorne?"

"I know not," replied Humphrey Chetham. "As I have told you, Viviana by some means contrived his escape. I have seen nothing of him."

And, hurrying away, he was lost beneath the shadow of the wall.

"Is this a troubled dream, or dread reality?" cried Fawkes to Catesby.

"I fear it is too true," returned the other, in a voice of much emotion. "Poor Viviana!"

"Something must be done to set her free," cried Fawkes. "I will purchase her liberty by delivering up myself."

"Your oath—remember your oath!" rejoined Catesby. "You may destroy yourself, but not your associates."

"True—true," replied Fawkes, distractedly,— "I do remember it. I am sold to perdition."

"Anger not Heaven by these idle lamentations,—and at a time, too, when all is so prosperous," rejoined Catesby.

"What!" cried Fawkes, fiercely, "would you have me calm, when she who called me father, and was dear to me as a child, is taken from me by these remorseless butchers,—subjected to their terrible examinations,—plunged in a dismal dungeon,—and stretched upon the rack,—and all for me—for me! I shall go mad if I think upon it!"

"You must not think upon it," returned Catesby,— "at least, not here. We shall be observed. Let us return to the house; and perhaps—though I scarcely dare indulge the hope—some plan may be devised for her liberation."

With this, he dragged Fawkes, who was almost frenzied with anguish, forcibly along, and they returned to the house.

Nothing more was said that night. Catesby judged it prudent to let the first violence of his friend's emotion expend itself before he attempted to soothe him; and when he

communicated the sad event to Garnet, the latter strongly approved the plan. Garnet was greatly distressed at the intelligence, and his affliction was shared by the other conspirators. No fears were entertained by any of them that Viviana would reveal aught of the plot, but this circumstance only added to their regrets.

“I will stake my life for her constancy,” said Catesby.

“And so will I,” returned Garnet. “She will die a martyr for us.”

He then proposed that they should pray for her deliverance. And all instantly assenting, they knelt down, while Garnet poured forth the most earnest supplications to the Virgin in her behalf.

The next morning, Guy Fawkes set forth, and ascertained that Humphrey Chetham's statement was correct, and that Viviana was indeed a prisoner in the Tower. He repaired thither, and tried to ascertain in what part of the fortress she was confined, in the hope of gaining admittance to her. But as he could obtain no information and his inquiries excited suspicion, he was compelled to return without accomplishing his object.

Crossing Tower Hill on his way back, he turned to glance at the stern pile he had just quitted, and which was fraught with the most fearful interest to him, when he perceived Chetham issue from the Bulwark Gate. He would have made up to him; but the young merchant, who had evidently seen him, though he looked sedulously another way, set off in the direction of the river, and was quickly lost to view. Filled with the gloomiest thoughts, Guy Fawkes proceeded to Westminster, where he arrived without further adventure of any kind.

In the latter part of the same day, as the conspirators were conferring together, they were alarmed by a knocking at the outer gate; and sending Bates to reconnoitre, he instantly returned with the intelligence that it was Lord Mounteagle. At the mention of this name, Tresham, who was one of the party, turned pale as death, and trembled so violently that he could scarcely support himself. Having been allowed to go forth on that day, the visit of Lord Mounteagle at this juncture, coupled with the agitation it occasioned him, seemed to proclaim him guilty of treachery for the second time.

“You have betrayed us, villain!” cried Catesby, drawing his dagger; “but you shall not escape. I will poniard you on the spot.”

“As you hope for mercy, do not strike!” cried Tresham. “On my soul, I have not seen Lord Mounteagle, and know not, any more than yourselves, what brings him hither. Put

it to the proof. Let him come in. Conceal yourselves, and you will hear what passes between us."

"Let it be so," interposed Fawkes. "I will step within this closet, the door of which shall remain ajar. From it I can watch him without being observed, and if aught occurs to confirm our suspicions, he dies."

"Bates shall station himself in the passage, and stab him if he attempts to fly," added Catesby. "Your sword, sir."

"It is here," replied Tresham, delivering it to Catesby, who handed it to Bates. "Are you satisfied?"

"Is Lord Mounteagle alone?" inquired Catesby, without noticing the question.

"He appears to be so," replied Bates.

"Admit him, then," rejoined Catesby.

Entering the closet with Keyes, he was followed by Fawkes, who drew his dagger, and kept the door slightly ajar, while Garnet and the rest retired to other hiding-places. A few moments afterwards, Bates returned with Lord Mounteagle, and, having ushered him into the room, took his station in the passage, as directed by Catesby. The room was very dark, the shutters being closed, and light only finding its way through the chinks in them; and it appeared totally so to Lord Mounteagle, who, groping his way, stumbled forward, and exclaimed in accents of some alarm,

"Where am I? Where is Mr. Tresham?"

"I am here," replied Tresham, advancing towards him. "How did your lordship find me out?" he added, after the customary salutations were exchanged.

"My servant saw you enter this house," replied Mounteagle, "and, knowing I was anxious to see you, waited for some hours without, in the expectation of your coming forth. But as this did not occur, he mentioned the circumstance to me on his return, and I immediately came in quest of you. When I knocked at the gate, I scarcely knew what to think of the place, and began to fear you must have fallen into the hands of cut-throats; and, now that I have gained admittance, my wonder—and I may add my uneasiness—is not diminished. Why do you hide yourself in this wretched place?"

“Be seated,” replied Tresham, placing a chair for Lord Mounteagle, with his back to the closet, while he took one opposite him, and near a table, on which some papers were laid. “Your lordship may remember,” he continued, scarcely knowing what answer to make to the question, “that I wrote to you some time ago, to say that a conspiracy was hatching among certain of our party against the State.”

“I have reason to remember it,” replied Mounteagle. “The letter was laid before the Earl of Salisbury, and inquiries instituted in consequence. But, owing to your disappearance, nothing could be elicited. What plot had you discovered?”

At this moment, Tresham, who kept his eye fixed on the closet, perceived the door noiselessly open, and behind it the figure of Guy Fawkes, with the dagger in his hand.

“I was misinformed as to the nature of the plot,” he stammered.

“Was it against the King's life?” demanded Mounteagle.

“No,” rejoined Tresham; “as far as I could learn, it was an insurrection.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mounteagle, sceptically. “My information, then, differed from yours. Who were the parties you suspected?”

“As I wrongfully suspected them,” replied Tresham, evasively, “your lordship must excuse my naming them.”

“Was Catesby—or Winter—or Wright—or Rookwood—or Sir Everard Digby concerned in it?” demanded Mounteagle.

“Not one of them,” asseverated Tresham.

“They are the persons I suspect,” replied Mounteagle; “and they are suspected by the Earl of Salisbury. But you have not told me what you are doing in this strange habitation. Are you ferreting out a plot, or contriving one?”

“Both,” replied Tresham.

“How?” cried Mounteagle.

“I am plotting for myself, and counterplotting the designs of others,” replied Tresham, mysteriously.

“Is this place, then, the rendezvous of a band of conspirators?” asked Mounteagle, uneasily.

Tresham nodded in the affirmative.

“Who are they?” continued Mounteagle. “There is no need of concealment with me.”

As this was said, Tresham raised his eyes, and saw that Guy Fawkes had stepped silently forward, and placed himself behind Mounteagle's chair. His hand grasped his dagger, and his gaze never moved from the object of his suspicion.

“Who are they?” repeated Mounteagle. “Is Guy Fawkes one of them?”

“Assuredly not,” replied Tresham. “Why should you name him? I never mentioned him to your lordship.”

“I think you did,” replied Mounteagle. “But I am certain you spoke of Catesby.”

And Tresham's regards involuntarily wandered to the closet, when he beheld the stern glance of the person alluded to fixed upon him.

“You have heard of Viviana Radcliffe's imprisonment, I suppose?” pursued Mounteagle, unconscious of what was passing.

Guy Fawkes keeping watch upon Tresham and Lord Mounteagle.

Viviana examined by the Earl of Salisbury, and the Privy Council in the Star Chamber
“I have,” replied Tresham.

“The Earl of Salisbury expected he would be able to wring all from her, but he has failed,” observed Mounteagle.

“I am glad of it,” observed Tresham.

“I thought you were disposed to serve him?” remarked Mounteagle.

“So I am,” replied Tresham. “But, if secrets are to be revealed, I had rather be the bearer of them than any one else. I am sorry for Viviana.”

“I could procure her liberation, if I chose,” observed Mounteagle.

“Say you so?” cried Fawkes, clapping him on the shoulder; “then you stir not hence till you have procured it!”

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CHAPTER VII.

THE STAR-CHAMBER.

Viviana, as has already been intimated, after her capture at the house at Lambeth, was conveyed to the Star-Chamber. Here she was detained until a late hour on the following day, when she underwent a long and rigorous examination by certain members of the Privy Council, who were summoned for that purpose by the Earl of Salisbury. Throughout this arduous trial she maintained the utmost composure, and never for a single moment lost her firmness. On all occasions, her matchless beauty and dignity produced the strongest impression on the beholders; but on no occasion had they ever produced so strong an effect as the present. Her features were totally destitute of bloom, but their very paleness, contrasted as it was with her large dark eyes, which blazed with unwonted brilliancy, as well as with her jet-black hair, so far from detracting from her loveliness, appeared to add to it.

As she was brought before the Council, who were seated round a table, and remained standing at a short distance from them, guarded by Topcliffe and two halberdiers, a murmur of admiration pervaded the group,—nor was this feeling lessened as the examination proceeded. Once, when the Earl of Salisbury adverted to the unworthy position in which she, the daughter of the proud and loyal Sir William Radcliffe, had placed herself, a shade passed over her brow, and a slight convulsion agitated her frame. But the next moment she recovered herself, and said,

“However circumstances may appear against me, and whatever opinion your lordships may entertain of my conduct, the King has not a more loyal subject than myself, nor have any of you made greater efforts to avert the danger by which he is threatened.”

“Then you admit that his Majesty is in danger?” cried the Earl of Salisbury, eagerly.

“I admit nothing,” replied Viviana. “But I affirm that I am his true and loyal subject.”

“You cannot expect us to believe your assertion,” replied the Earl; “unless you approve it by declaring all you know touching this conspiracy.”

“I have already told you, my lord,” she returned, “that my lips are sealed on that subject.”

“You disclaim, then, all knowledge of a plot against the King's life, and against his government?” pursued Salisbury.

Viviana shook her head.

“You refuse to give up the names of your companions, or to reveal their intentions?” continued the Earl.

“I do,” she answered, firmly.

“Your obstinacy will not save them,” rejoined the Earl, in a severe tone, and after a brief pause. “Their names and their atrocious designs are known to us.”

“If such be the case,” replied Viviana, “why interrogate me on the subject?”

“Because—but it is needless to give a reason for the course which justice requires me to pursue,” returned the Earl. “You are implicated in this plot, and nothing can save you from condign punishment but a frank and full confession.

“Nothing can save me then, my lord,” replied Viviana; “but Heaven knows I shall perish unjustly.”

A consultation was then held by the lords of the council, who whispered together for a few minutes. Viviana regarded them anxiously, but suffered no expression of uneasiness to escape her. As they again turned towards her, she saw from their looks, some of which exhibited great commiseration for her, that they had come to a decision (she could not doubt what) respecting her fate. Her heart stopped beating, and she could scarcely support herself. Such, however, was the control she exercised over herself that, though filled with terror, her demeanour remained unaltered. She was not long kept in suspense. Fixing his searching gaze upon her, the Earl of Salisbury observed in a severe tone,

“Viviana Radcliffe, I ask you for the last time whether you will avow the truth?”

No answer was returned.

“I will not disguise from you,” continued the Earl, “that your youth, your beauty, your constancy, and, above all, your apparent innocence, have deeply interested me, as well as the other noble persons here assembled to interrogate you, and who would willingly save you from the sufferings you will necessarily undergo, from a mistaken fidelity to the

heinous traitors with whom you are so unhappily leagued. I would give you time to reflect did I think the delay would answer any good purpose. I would remind you that no oath of secresy, however solemn, can be binding in an unrighteous cause. I would tell you that your first duty is to your prince and governor, and that it is as great a crime, as unpardonable in the eyes of God as of man, to withhold the revelation of a conspiracy against the State, should it come to your knowledge, as to conspire against it yourself. I would lay all this before you. I would show you the magnitude of your offence, the danger in which you stand, and the utter impossibility of screening your companions, who, ere long, will be confronted with you,—did I think it would avail. But, as you continue obstinate, justice must take its course.”

“I am prepared for the worst, my lord,” replied Viviana, humbly. “I thank your lordship for your consideration: but I take you all to witness that I profess the utmost loyalty and devotion for my sovereign, and that, whatever may be my fate, those feelings will remain unchanged to the last.”

“Your manner and your words are so sincere, that, were not your conduct at variance with them, they might convince us,” returned the Earl. “As it is, even if we could credit your innocence, we are bound to act as if you were guilty. You will be committed to the Tower till his Majesty's pleasure is known. And I grieve to add, if you still continue obstinate, the severest measures will be resorted to, to extract the truth from you.”

As he concluded, he attached his signature to a warrant which was lying on the table before him, and traced a few lines to Sir William Waad, lieutenant of the Tower.

This done, he handed the papers to Topcliffe, and waving his hand, Viviana was removed to the chamber in which she had been previously confined, and where she was detained under a strict guard, until Topcliffe, who had left her, returned to say that all was in readiness, and bidding her follow him, led the way to the river-side, where a wherry, manned by six rowers, was waiting for them.

The night was profoundly dark, and, as none of the guard carried torches, their course was steered in perfect obscurity. But the rowers were too familiar with the river to require the guidance of light. Shooting the bridge in safety, and pausing only for a moment to give the signal of their approach to the sentinels on the ramparts, they passed swiftly under the low-browed arch of Traitor's Gate.

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER VIII. THE JAILER'S DAUGHTER.

As Viviana set foot on those fatal stairs, which so many have trod, and none without feeling that they took their first step towards the scaffold, she involuntarily shrank backward. But it was now too late to retreat; and she surrendered her hand to Topcliffe, who assisted her up the steps. Half-a-dozen men-at-arms, with a like number of warders bearing torches, were present; and as it was necessary that Topcliffe should deliver his warrant into Sir William Waad's own hands, he committed his prisoner to the warders, with instructions to them to take her to the guard-room near the By-ward Tower, while he proceeded to the lieutenant's lodgings.

It was the first time Viviana had beheld the terrible pile in which she was immured, though she was well acquainted with its history, and with the persecutions which many of the professors of her faith had endured within it during the recent reign of Elizabeth; and as the light of the torches flashed upon the grey walls of the Bloody Tower, and upon the adjoining ramparts, all the dreadful tales she had heard rushed to her recollection. But having recovered the first shock, the succeeding impressions were powerless in comparison, and she accompanied the warders to the guard-room without expressing any outward emotion. Here a seat was offered her, and as the men considerately withdrew, she was able to pursue her reflections unmolested. They were sad enough, and it required all her firmness to support her.

When considering what was likely to befall her in consequence of her adherence to the fortunes of Fawkes and his companions, she had often pictured some dreadful situation like the present, but the reality far exceeded her worst anticipations. She had deemed herself equal to any emergency, but as she thought upon the dark menaces of the Earl of Salisbury, she felt it would require greater fortitude than she had hitherto displayed to bear her through her trial. Nor were her meditations entirely confined to herself. While trembling for the perilous situation of Guy Fawkes, she reproached herself that she could not requite even in thought the passionate devotion of Humphrey Chetham.

“What matters it now,” she thought, “that I cannot love him? I shall soon be nothing to him, or to any one. And yet I feel I have done him wrong, and that I should be happier if I could requite his attachment. But the die is cast. It is too late to repent, or to retreat.

My heart acquits me of having been influenced by any unworthy motive, and I will strive to endure the keenest pang without a murmur.”

Shortly after this, Topcliffe returned with Sir William Waad. On their entrance, Viviana arose, and the lieutenant eyed her with some curiosity. He was a middle-aged man, tall, stoutly-built, and having harsh features, stamped with an expression of mingled cunning and ferocity. His eyes had a fierce and bloodthirsty look, and were overshadowed by thick and scowling brows. Saluting the captive with affected courtesy, he observed,

“So you refuse to answer the interrogations of the Privy Council, madam, I understand. I am not sorry for it, because I would have the merit of wringing the truth from you. Those who have been most stubborn outside these walls, have been the most yielding within them.”

“That will not be my case,” replied Viviana, coldly.

“We shall see,” returned the lieutenant, with a significant glance at Topcliffe.

Ordering her to follow him, he then proceeded along the ward in the direction of the Bloody Tower, and passing beneath its arched gateway, ascended the steps on the left, and led her to his lodgings. Entering the habitation, he mounted to the upper story, and tracking a long gallery, brought her to a small circular chamber in the Bell Tower. Its sole furniture were a chair, a table, and a couch.

“Here you will remain for the present,” observed the lieutenant, smiling grimly, and placing a lamp on the table. “It will depend upon yourself whether your accommodations are better hereafter.”

With this, he quitted the cell with his attendants, and barred the door outside.

Left alone, Viviana, who had hitherto restrained her anguish, suffered it to find vent in tears. Never had she felt so utterly forlorn and desolate. All before her was threatening and terrible, full of dangers, real and imaginary; nor could she look back upon her past career without something like remorse.

“Oh, that Heaven would take me to itself!” she murmured, clasping her hands in an agony of distress, “for I feel unequal to my trials. Oh, that I had perished with my dear father! For what dreadful fate am I reserved?—Torture,—I will bear it, if I can. But death by the hands of the public executioner,—it is too horrible to think of! Is there no way to escape that?”

As this hideous thought occurred to her, she uttered a loud and prolonged scream, and fell senseless on the floor. When she recovered it was daylight; and, weak and exhausted, she crept to the couch, and throwing herself upon it, endeavoured to forget her misery in sleep. But, as is usually the case with the afflicted, it fled her eyelids, and she passed several hours in the severest mental torture, unrelieved by a single cheering thought.

About the middle of the day, the door of the cell was opened by an old woman with a morose and forbidding countenance, attended by a younger female, who resembled her in all but the expression of her features (her look was gentle and compassionate), and who appeared to be her daughter.

Without paying any attention to Viviana, the old woman took a small loaf of bread and other provisions from a basket she had brought with her, and placed them on the table. This done, she was about to depart, when her daughter, who had glanced uneasily at the couch, observed in a kindly tone,

“Shall we not inquire whether we can be of service to the poor young lady, mother?”

“Why should we concern ourselves about her, Ruth?” returned the old woman, sharply. “If she wants anything, she has a tongue, and can speak. If she desires further comforts,” she added, in a significant tone, “they must be paid for.”

“I desire nothing but death,” groaned Viviana.

“The poor soul is dying, I believe,” cried Ruth, rushing to the couch. “Have you no cordial-water about you, mother?”

“Truly have I,” returned the old woman; “and I have other things besides. But I must be paid for them.”

As she spoke she drew from her pocket a small, square, Dutch-shaped bottle.

“Give it me,” cried Ruth, snatching it from her. “I am sure the young lady will pay for it.”

“You are very kind,” said Viviana, faintly. “But I have no means of doing so.”

“I knew it,” cried the old woman, fiercely. “I knew it. Give me back the flask, Ruth. She shall not taste a drop. Do you not hear, she has no money, wench? Give it me, I say.”

“Nay, mother, for pity's sake,” implored Ruth.

“Pity, forsooth!” exclaimed the old woman, derisively. “If I, and thy father, Jasper Ipgreve, had any such feeling, it would be high time for him to give up his post of jailer in the Tower of London. Pity for a poor prisoner! Thou a jailer's daughter, and talk so. I am ashamed of thee, wench. But I thought this was a rich Catholic heiress, and had powerful and wealthy friends.”

“So she is,” replied Ruth; “and though she may have no money with her now, she can command any amount she pleases. I heard Master Topcliffe tell young Nicholas Hardesty, the warder, so. She is the daughter of the late Sir William Radcliffe, of Ordsall Hall, in Lancashire, and sole heiress of his vast estates.”

“Is this so, sweet lady?” inquired the old woman, stepping towards the couch. “Are you truly Sir William Radcliffe's daughter?”

“I am,” replied Viviana. “But I have said I require nothing from you. Leave me.”

“No—no, dear young lady,” rejoined Dame Ipgreve, in a whining tone, which was infinitely more disagreeable to Viviana than her previous harshness, “I cannot leave you in this state. Raise her head, Ruth, while I pour a few drops of the cordial down her throat.”

“I will not taste it,” replied Viviana, putting the flask aside.

“You would find it a sovereign restorative,” replied Dame Ipgreve, with a mortified look; “but as you please. I will not urge you against your inclination. The provisions I have been obliged to bring you are too coarse for a daintily-nurtured maiden like you,—but you shall have others presently.”

“It is needless,” rejoined Viviana. “Pray leave me.”

“Well, well, I am going,” rejoined Dame Ipgreve, hesitating. “Do you want to write to any one? I can find means of conveying a letter secretly out of the Tower.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Viviana, raising herself. “And yet no—no—I dare not trust you.”

“You may,” replied the avaricious old woman,—“provided you pay me well.”

“I will think of it,” returned Viviana. “But I have not strength to write now.”

“You must not give way thus,—indeed, you must not, dear lady,” said Ruth, in a voice of great kindness. “It will not be safe to leave you. Suffer me to remain with you.”

“Willingly,” replied Viviana; “most willingly.”

“Stay with her, then, child,” said Dame Ipgreve. “I will go and prepare a nourishing broth for her. Take heed and make a shrewd bargain with her for thy attendance,” she added in a hasty whisper, as she retired.

Greatly relieved by the old woman's departure, Viviana turned to Ruth, and thanked her in the warmest terms for her kindness. A few minutes sufficed to convert the sympathy which these two young persons evidently felt towards each other into affectionate regard, and the jailer's daughter assured Viviana, that so long as she should be detained, she would devote herself to her.

By this time the old woman had returned with a mess of hot broth, which she carried with an air of great mystery beneath her cloak. Viviana was prevailed upon by the solicitations of Ruth to taste it, and found herself much revived in consequence. Her slight meal ended, Dame Ipgreve departed, with a promise to return in the evening with such viands as she could manage to introduce unobserved, and with a flask of wine.

“You will need it, sweet lady, I fear,” she said; “for my husband tells me you are in peril of the torture. Oh! it is a sad thing, that such as you should be so cruelly dealt with! But we will take all the care of you we can. You will not forget to requite us. You must give me an order on your steward, or on some rich Catholic friend. I am half a Papist myself,—that is, I like one religion as well as the other,—and I like those best, whatever their creed may be, who pay best. That is my maxim: and it is the same with my husband. We do all we can to scrape together a penny for our child.”

“No more of this, good mother,” interrupted Ruth. “It distresses the lady! I will take care she wants nothing.”

“Right, child, right,” returned Dame Ipgreve;—“do not forget what I told you,” she added in a whisper.

And she quitted the cell.

Ruth remained with Viviana during the rest of the day, and it was a great consolation to the latter to find that her companion was of the same faith as herself,—having been converted by Father Poole, a Romish priest who was confined in the Tower during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, and whose sufferings and constancy for his religion had

made a powerful impression on the jailer's daughter. As soon as Viviana ascertained this, she made Ruth, so far as she thought prudent, a confidante in her misfortunes, and after beguiling some hours in conversation, they both knelt down and offered up fervent prayers to the Virgin. Ruth then departed, promising to return in the evening with her mother.

Soon after it became dark, Dame Ipgreve and her daughter reappeared, the former carrying a lamp, and the latter a basket of provisions. Ruth's countenance was so troubled, that Viviana was certain that some fresh calamity was at hand.

"What is the matter?" she hastily demanded.

"Make your meal first, dear young lady," replied Dame Ipgreve. "Our news might take away your appetite, and you will have to pay for your supper, whether you eat it or not."

"You alarm me greatly," cried Viviana, anxiously. "What ill news do you bring?"

"I will not keep you longer in suspense, madam," said Ruth. "You are to be examined to-night by the lieutenant and certain members of the Privy Council, and if you refuse to answer their questions, I lament to say you will be put to the torture."

"Heaven give me strength to endure it!" ejaculated Viviana, in a despairing tone.

"Eat, madam, eat," cried Dame Ipgreve, pressing the viands upon her. "You will never be able to go through with the examination, if you starve yourself in this way."

"Are you sure," inquired Viviana, appealing to Ruth, "that it will take place so soon?"

"Quite sure," replied Ruth. "My father has orders to attend the lieutenant at midnight."

"Let me advise you to conceal nothing," insinuated the old woman. "They are determined to wring the truth from you,—and they will do so."

"You are mistaken, good woman," replied Viviana, firmly. "I will die before I utter a word."

"You think so now," returned Dame Ipgreve, maliciously. "But the sight of the rack and the thumbscrews will alter your tone. At all events, support nature."

"No," replied Viviana; "as I do not desire to live, I will use no effort to sustain myself. They may kill me if they please."

“Misfortune has turned her brain,” muttered the old woman. “I must take care and secure my dues. Well, madam, if you will not eat the supper I have provided, it cannot be helped. I must find some one who will. You must pay for it all the same. My husband, Jasper Ipgreve, will be present at your interrogation, and I am sure, for my sake, he will use you as lightly as he can. Come, Ruth, you must not remain here longer.”

“Oh, let her stay with me,” implored Viviana. “I will make it well worth your while to grant me the indulgence.”

“What will you give?” cried the old woman, eagerly. “But no—no—I dare not leave her. The lieutenant may visit you, and find her, and then I should lose my place. Come along, Ruth. She shall attend you after the interrogation, madam. I shall be there myself.”

“Farewell, madam,” sobbed Ruth, who was almost drowned in tears. “Heaven grant you constancy to endure your trial!”

“Be ruled by me,” said the old woman. “Speak out, and secure your own safety.”

She would have continued in the same strain, but Ruth dragged her away. And casting a commiserating glance at Viviana, she closed the door.

The dreadful interval between their departure and midnight was passed by Viviana in fervent prayer. As she heard through the barred embrasure of her dungeon the deep strokes of the clock toll out the hour of twelve, the door opened, and a tall, gaunt personage, habited in a suit of rusty black, and with a large bunch of keys at his girdle, entered the cell.

“You are Jasper Ipgreve?” said Viviana, rising.

“Right,” replied the jailer. “I am come to take you before the lieutenant and the council. Are you ready?”

Viviana replied in the affirmative, and Ipgreve quitting the cell, outside which two other officials in sable habiliments were stationed, led the way down a short spiral staircase, which brought them to a narrow vaulted passage. Pursuing it for some time, the jailer halted before a strong door, cased with iron, and opening it, admitted the captive into a square chamber, the roof of which was supported by a heavy stone pillar, while its walls were garnished with implements of torture. At a table on the left sat the lieutenant and three other grave-looking personages. Across the lower end of the chamber a thick black curtain was stretched, hiding a deep recess; and behind it, as was evident from the

glimmer that escaped from its folds, there was a light. Certain indistinct, but ominous sounds, issuing from the recess, proved that there were persons within it, and Viviana's quaking heart told her what was the nature of their proceedings.

She had ample time to survey this dismal apartment and its occupants, for several minutes elapsed before a word was addressed to her by her interrogators, who continued to confer together in an under tone, as if unconscious of her presence. During this pause, broken only by the ominous sounds before mentioned, Viviana scanned the countenances of the group at the table, in the hope of discerning in them some glimpses of compassion; but they were inscrutable and inexorable, and scarcely less dreadful to look upon than the hideous implements on the walls.

Viviana wished the earth would open and swallow her, that she might escape from them. Anything was better than to be left at the mercy of such men. At certain times, and not unfrequently at the most awful moments, a double current of thought will flow through the brain, and at this frightful juncture it was so with Viviana. While shuddering at all she saw around her, nay, dwelling upon it, another and distinct train of thought led her back to former scenes of happiness, when she was undisturbed by any but remote apprehensions of danger. She thought of her tranquil residence at Ordsall,—of the flowers she had tended in the garden,—of her father, and of his affection for her,—of Humphrey Chetham, and of her early and scarce-acknowledged attachment to him,—and of his generosity and devotion, and how she had requited it. And then, like a sullen cloud darkening the fair prospect, arose the figure of Guy Fawkes—the sombre enthusiast—who had unwittingly exercised such a baneful influence upon her fortunes.

“Had he not crossed my path,” she mentally ejaculated, “I might have been happy—might have loved Humphrey Chetham—might, perhaps, have wedded him!”

These reflections were suddenly dispersed by the lieutenant, who, in a stern tone, commenced his interrogations.

As upon her previous examination, Viviana observed the utmost caution, and either refused to speak, or answered such questions only as affected herself. At first, in spite of all her efforts, she trembled violently, and her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. But after a while, she recovered her courage, and regarded the lieutenant with a look as determined as his own.

“It is useless to urge me farther,” she concluded. “I have said all I will say.”

“Is it your pleasure, my lords,” observed Sir William Waad to the others, “to prolong the examination?”

His companions replied in the negative, and the one nearest him remarked, "Is she aware what will follow?"

"I am," replied Viviana, resolutely, "and I am not to be intimidated."

Sir William Waad then made a sign to Ipgreve, who immediately stepped forward and seized her arm. "You will be taken to that recess," said the lieutenant, "where the question will be put to you. But, as we shall remain here, you have only to utter a cry if you are willing to avow the truth, and the torture shall be stayed. And it is our merciful hope that this may be the case."

Summoning up all her resolution, and walking with a firm footstep, Viviana passed with Ipgreve behind the curtain. She there beheld two men and a woman—the latter was the jailer's wife, who instantly advanced to her, and besought her to confess.

"There is no help for it, if you refuse," she urged; "not all your wealth can save you."

"Mind your own business, dame," interposed Ipgreve, angrily, "and assist her to unrobe."

Saying this, he stepped aside with the two men, one of whom was the surgeon, and the other the tormentor, while Dame Ipgreve helped to take off Viviana's gown. She then tied a scarf over her shoulders, and informed her husband she was ready.

The recess was about twelve feet high, and ten wide. It was crossed near the roof, which was arched and vaulted, by a heavy beam, with pulleys and ropes at either extremity. But what chiefly attracted the unfortunate captive's attention was a couple of iron gauntlets attached to it, about a yard apart. Upon the ground under the beam, and immediately beneath that part of it where the gauntlets were fixed, were laid three pieces of wood, of a few inches in thickness, and piled one upon another.

"What must I do?" inquired Viviana, in a hollow voice, but with unaltered resolution, of the old woman.

"Step upon those pieces of wood," replied Dame Ipgreve, leading her towards them.

Viviana obeyed, and as soon as she had set foot upon the pile, the tormentor placed a joint-stool beside her, and mounting it, desired her to place her right hand in one of the gauntlets. She did so, and the tormentor then turned a screw, which compressed the

iron glove so tightly as to give her excruciating pain. He then got down, and Ipgreve demanded if he should proceed.

A short pause ensued; but, notwithstanding her agony, Viviana made no answer. The tormentor then placed the stool on the left side, and fastened the hand which was still at liberty within the other gauntlet. The torture was dreadful—and the fingers appeared crushed by the pressure. Still Viviana uttered no cry. After another short pause, Ipgreve said,

“You had better let us stop here. This is mere child's play compared with what is to come.”

No answer being returned, the tormentor took a mallet and struck one of the pieces of wood from under Viviana's feet. The shock was dreadful, and seemed to dislocate her wrists, while the pressure on the hands was increased in a tenfold degree. The poor sufferer, who was resting on the points of her feet, felt that the removal of the next piece of wood would occasion almost intolerable torture. Her constancy, however, did not desert her, and, after the question had been repeated by Ipgreve, the second block was struck away. She was now suspended by her hands, and the pain was so exquisite, that nature gave way, and uttering a piercing scream, she fainted.

On recovering, she found herself stretched upon a miserable pallet, with Ruth watching beside her. A glance round the chamber, which was of solid stone masonry, with a deep embrasure on one side, convinced her that she had been removed to some other prison.

“Where am I?” she asked, in a faint voice.

“In the Well Tower, madam,” replied Ruth: “one of the fortifications near the moat, and now used as a prison-lodging. My father dwells within it, and you are under his custody.”

“Your father,” cried Viviana, shuddering as she recalled the sufferings she had recently undergone. “Will he torture me again?”

“Not if I can prevent it, dear lady,” replied Ruth. “But hush! here comes my mother. Not a word before her.”

As Ruth spoke, Dame Ipgreve, who had been lingering at the door, entered the room. She affected the greatest solicitude for Viviana—felt her pulse—looked at the bandages fastened round her swollen and crippled fingers, and concluded by counselling her not to persist in refusing to speak.

“I dare not tell you what tortures are in store for you,” she said, “if you continue thus obstinate. But they will be a thousand times worse than what you endured last night.”

“When will my next interrogation take place?” inquired Viviana.

“A week hence, it may be,—or it may be sooner,” returned the old woman. “It depends upon the state you are in—and somewhat upon the fees you give my husband, for he has a voice with the lieutenant.”

“I would give him all I possess, if he could save me from further torture,” cried Viviana.

“Alas! alas!” replied Dame Ipgreve, “you ask more than can be done. He would save you if he could. But you will not let him. However, we will do all we can to mitigate your sufferings—all we can—provided you pay us. Stay with her, child,” she added, with a significant gesture to her daughter, as she quitted the room, “stay with her.”

“My heart bleeds for you, madam,” said Ruth, in accents of the deepest commiseration, as soon as they were alone. “You may depend upon my fidelity. If I can contrive your escape, I will,—at any risk to myself.”

“On no account,” replied Viviana. “Do not concern yourself about me more. My earthly sufferings, I feel, will have terminated before further cruelty can be practised upon me.”

“Oh! say not so, madam,” returned Ruth. “I hope—nay, I am sure you will live long and happily.”

Viviana shook her head, and Ruth, finding her very feeble, thought it better not to continue the conversation. She accordingly applied such restoratives as were at hand, and observing that the eyes of the sufferer closed as if in slumber, glided noiselessly out of the chamber, and left her.

In this way a week passed. At the expiration of that time, the surgeon pronounced her in so precarious a state, that if the torture were repeated he would not answer for her life. The interrogation, therefore, was postponed for a few days, during which the surgeon constantly visited her, and by his care, and the restoratives she was compelled to take, she rapidly regained her strength.

One day, after the surgeon had departed, Ruth cautiously closed the door, and observed to her,

"You are now so far recovered, madam, as to be able to make an attempt to escape. I have devised a plan, which I will communicate to you to-morrow. It must not be delayed, or you will have to encounter a second and more dreadful examination."

"I will not attempt it if you are exposed to risk," replied Viviana.

"Heed me not," returned Ruth. "One of your friends has found out your place of confinement, and has spoken to me about you."

"What friend?" exclaimed Viviana, starting. "Guy Fawkes?—I mean——" And she hesitated, while her pale cheeks were suffused with blushes.

"He is named Humphrey Chetham," returned Ruth. "Like myself, he would risk his life to preserve you."

"Tell him he must not do so," cried Viviana, eagerly. "He has done enough—too much for me already. I will not expose him to further hazard. Tell him so, and entreat him to abandon the attempt."

"But I shall not see him, dear lady," replied Ruth. "Besides, if I read him rightly, he is not likely to be turned aside by any selfish consideration."

"You are right, he is not," groaned Viviana. "But this only adds to my affliction. Oh! if you should see him, dear Ruth, try to dissuade him from his purpose."

"I will obey you, madam," replied the jailer's daughter. "But I am well assured it will be of no avail."

After some further conversation, Ruth retired, and Viviana was left alone for the night. Except the slumber procured by soporific potions, she had known no repose since she had been confined within the Tower; and this night she felt more than usually restless. After ineffectually endeavouring to compose herself, she arose, and hastily robing herself—a task she performed with no little difficulty, her fingers being almost useless—continued to pace her narrow chamber.

It has been mentioned that on one side of the cell there was a deep embrasure. It was terminated by a narrow and strongly-grated loophole, looking upon the moat. Pausing before it, Viviana gazed forth. The night was pitchy dark, and not even a solitary star could be discerned; but as she had no light in her chamber, the gloom outside was less profound than that within.

While standing thus, buried in thought, and longing for daybreak, Viviana fancied she heard a slight sound as of some one swimming across the moat. Thinking she might be deceived, she listened more intently, and as the sound continued, she felt sure she was right in her conjecture. All at once the thought of Humphrey Chetham flashed upon her, and she had no doubt it must be him. Nor was she wrong. The next moment, a noise was heard as of some one clambering up the wall; a hand grasped the bars of the loophole, which was only two or three feet above the level of the water; and a low voice, which she instantly recognised, pronounced her name.

“Is it Humphrey Chetham?” she asked, advancing as near as she could to the loophole.

“It is,” was the reply. “Do not despair. I will accomplish your liberation. I have passed three days within the Tower, and only ascertained your place of confinement a few hours ago. I have contrived a plan for your escape, with the jailer's daughter, which she will make known to you to-morrow.”

“I cannot thank you sufficiently for your devotion,” replied Viviana, in accents of the deepest gratitude. “But I implore you to leave me to my fate. I am wretched enough now, Heaven knows, but if aught should happen to you, I shall be infinitely more so. If I possess any power over you,—and that I do so, I well know,—I entreat, nay, I command, you to desist from this attempt.”

“I have never yet disobeyed you, Viviana,” replied the young merchant, passionately—“nor will I do so now. But if you bid me abandon you, I will plunge into this moat, never to rise again.”

His manner, notwithstanding the low tone in which he spoke, was so determined, that Viviana felt certain he would carry his threat into execution; she therefore rejoined in a mournful tone,

“Well, be it as you will. It is in vain to resist our fate, I am destined to bring misfortune to you.”

“Not so,” replied Chetham. “If I can save you, I would rather die than live. The jailer's daughter will explain her plan to you to-morrow. Promise me to accede to it.”

Viviana reluctantly assented.

“I shall quit the Tower at daybreak,” pursued Chetham; “and when you are once out of it, hasten to the stairs beyond the wharf at Petty Wales. I will be there with a boat. Farewell!”

As he spoke, he let himself drop into the water, but his foot slipping, the plunge was louder than he intended, and attracted the attention of a sentinel on the ramparts, who immediately called out to know what was the matter, and not receiving any answer, discharged his caliver in the direction of the sound.

Viviana, who heard the challenge and the shot, uttered a loud scream, and the next moment Ipgreve and his wife appeared. The jailer glanced suspiciously round the room; but after satisfying himself that all was right, and putting some questions to the captive, which she refused to answer, he departed with his wife, and carefully barred the door.

It is impossible to imagine greater misery than Viviana endured the whole of the night. The uncertainty in which she was kept as to Chetham's fate was almost insupportable, and the bodily pain she had recently endured appeared light when compared with her present mental torture. Day at length dawned; but it brought with it no Ruth. Instead of this faithful friend, Dame Ipgreve entered the chamber with the morning meal, and her looks were so morose and distrustful, that Viviana feared she must have discovered her daughter's design. She did not, however, venture to make a remark, but suffered the old woman to depart in silence.

Giving up all for lost, and concluding that Humphrey Chetham had either perished, or was, like herself, a prisoner, Viviana bitterly bewailed his fate, and reproached herself with being unintentionally the cause of it. Later in the day, Ruth entered the cell. To Viviana's eager inquiries she replied, that Humphrey Chetham had escaped. Owing to the darkness, the sentinel had missed his aim, and although the most rigorous search was instituted throughout the fortress, he had contrived to elude observation.

“Our attempt,” pursued Ruth, “must be made this evening. The lieutenant has informed my father that you are to be interrogated at midnight, the chirurgeon having declared that you are sufficiently recovered to undergo the torture (if needful) a second time. Now listen to me. The occurrence of last night has made my mother suspicious, and she watches my proceedings with a jealous eye. She is at this moment with a female prisoner in the Beauchamp Tower, or I should not be able to visit you. She has consented, however, to let me bring in your supper. You must then change dresses with me. Being about my height, you may easily pass for me, and I will take care there is no light below, so that your features will not be distinguished.”

Viviana would have checked her, but the other would not be interrupted.

“As soon as you are ready,” she continued, “you must lock the door upon me. You must then descend the short flight of steps before you, and pass as quickly as you can through

the room where you will see my father and mother. As soon as you are out of the door, turn to the left, and go straight forward to the By-ward Tower. Show this pass to the warders. It is made out in my name, and they will suffer you to go forth. Do the same with the warders at the next gate,—the Middle Tower,—and again at the Bulwark Gate. That passed, you are free.”

“And what will become of you?” asked Viviana, with a bewildered look.

“Never mind me,” rejoined Ruth: “I shall be sufficiently rewarded if I save you. And now, farewell. Be ready at the time appointed.”

“I cannot consent,” returned Viviana.

“You have no choice,” replied Ruth, breaking from her, and hurrying out of the room.

Time, as it ever does, when expectation is on the rack, appeared to pass with unusual slowness. But as the hour at length drew near, Viviana wished it farther off. It was with the utmost trepidation that she heard the key turn in the lock, and beheld Ruth enter the cell with the evening meal.

Closing the door, and setting down the provisions, the jailer's daughter hastily divested herself of her dress, which was of brown serge, as well as of her coif and kerchief, while Viviana imitated her example. Without pausing to attire herself in the other's garments, Ruth then assisted Viviana to put on the dress she had just laid aside, and arranged her hair and the head-gear so skilfully, that the disguise was complete.

Hastily whispering some further instructions to her, and explaining certain peculiarities in her gait and deportment, she then pressed her to her bosom, and led her to the door. Viviana would have remonstrated, but Ruth pushed her through it, and closed it.

There was now no help, so Viviana, though with great pain to herself, contrived to turn the key in the lock. Descending the steps, she found herself in a small circular chamber, in which Ipgreve and his wife were seated at a table, discussing their evening meal. The sole light was afforded by a few dying embers on the hearth.

“What! has she done, already?” demanded the old woman, as Viviana appeared. “Why hast thou not brought the jelly with thee, if she has not eaten it all, and those cates, which Master Pilchard, the chirurgeon, ordered her? Go and fetch them directly. They will finish our repast daintily; and there are other matters too, which I dare say she has not touched. She will pay for them, and that will make them the sweeter. Go back, I say. What dost thou stand there for, as if thou wert thunderstruck? Dost hear me, or not?”

“Let the wench alone, dame,” growled Ipgreve. “You frighten her.”

“So I mean to do,” replied the old woman; “she deserves to be frightened. Hark thee, girl, we must get an order from her on some wealthy Catholic family without delay—for I don't think she will stand the trial to-night.”

“Nor I,” added Ipgreve, “especially as she is to be placed on the rack.”

“She has a chain of gold round her throat, I have observed,” said the old woman; “we must get that.”

“I have it,” said Viviana, in a low tone, and imitating as well as she could the accents of Ruth. “Here it is.”

“Did she give it thee?” cried the old woman, getting up, and grasping Viviana's lacerated fingers with such force, that she had difficulty in repressing a scream. “Did she give it thee, I say?”

“She gave it me for you,” gasped Viviana. “Take it.”

While the old woman held the chain to the fire, and called to her husband to light a lamp, that she might feast her greedy eyes upon it, Viviana flew to the door.

Just as she reached it, the shrill voice of Dame Ipgreve arrested her.

“Come back!” cried the dame. “Whither art thou going at this time of night? I will not have thee stir forth. Come back, I say.”

“Pshaw! let her go,” interposed Ipgreve. “I dare say she hath an appointment on the Green with young Nicholas Hardesty, the warder. Go, wench. Be careful of thyself, and return within the hour.”

“If she does not, she will rue it,” added the dame. “Go, then, and I will see the prisoner.”

Viviana required no further permission. Starting off as she had been directed on the left, she ran as fast as her feet could carry her; and, passing between two arched gateways, soon reached the By-ward Tower. Showing the pass to the warder, he chuckled her under the chin, and, drawing an immense bolt, opened the wicket, and gallantly helped her to pass through it. The like good success attended her at the Middle Tower, and at the Bulwark Gate. Scarcely able to credit her senses, and doubting whether she was indeed

free, she hurried on till she came to the opening leading to the stairs at Petty Wales. As she hesitated, uncertain what to do, a man advanced towards and addressed her by name. It was Humphrey Chetham. Overcome by emotion, Viviana sank into his arms, and in another moment she was placed in a wherry, which was ordered to be rowed towards Westminster.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE COUNTERPLOT.

Startled, but not dismayed—for he was a man of great courage—by the sudden address and appearance of Guy Fawkes, Lord Mouteagle instantly sprang to his feet, and drawing his sword, put himself into a posture of defence.

“You have betrayed me,” he cried, seizing Tresham with his left hand; “but if I fall, you shall fall with me.”

“You have betrayed yourself, my lord,” rejoined Guy Fawkes; “or rather, Heaven has placed you in our hands as an instrument for the liberation of Viviana Radcliffe. You must take an oath of secrecy—a binding oath,—such as, being a good Catholic, you cannot break,—not to divulge what has come to your knowledge. Nay, you must join me and my confederates, or you quit not this spot with life.”

“I refuse your terms,” replied Mouteagle, resolutely; “I will never conspire against the monarch to whom I have sworn allegiance. I will not join you. I will not aid you in procuring Viviana Radcliffe's release. Nor will I take the oath you propose. On the contrary, I arrest you as a traitor, and I command you, Tresham, in the King's name, to assist me in his capture.”

But suddenly extricating himself from the grasp imposed upon him, and placing Guy Fawkes between him and the Earl, Tresham rejoined,—

“It is time to throw off the mask, my good lord and brother. I can render you no assistance. I am sworn to this league, and must support it. Unless you assent to the conditions proposed,—and which for your own sake I would counsel you to do,—I must, despite our near relationship, take part against you,—even,” he added, significantly, “if your destruction should be resolved upon.”

“I will sell my life dearly, as you shall find,” replied Mouteagle. “And, but for the sake of my dear lady, your sister, I would stab you where you stand.”

“Your lordship will find resistance in vain,” replied Guy Fawkes, keeping his eye steadily fixed upon him. “We seek not your life, but your co-operation. You are a prisoner.”

“A prisoner!” echoed Mounteagle, derisively. “You have not secured me yet.”

And as he spoke, he rushed towards the door, but his departure was checked by Bates, who presented himself at the entrance of the passage with a drawn sword in his hand. At the same moment, Catesby and Keyes issued from the closet, while Garnet and the other conspirators likewise emerged from their hiding-places. Hearing the noise behind him, Lord Mounteagle turned, and beholding the group, uttered an exclamation of surprise and rage.

“I am fairly entrapped,” he said, sheathing his sword, and advancing towards them. “Fool that I was, to venture hither!”

“These regrets are too late, my lord,” replied Catesby. “You came hither of your own accord. But being here, nothing, except compliance with our demands, can ensure your departure.”

“Yes, one thing else,” thought Mounteagle,—“cunning. It shall go hard if I cannot outwit you. Tresham will act with me. I know his treacherous nature too well to doubt which way he will incline. Interest, as well as relationship, binds him to me. He will acquaint me with their plans. I need not, therefore, compromise myself by joining them. If I take the oath of secrecy, it will suffice—and I will find means of eluding the obligation. I may thus make my own bargain with Salisbury. But I must proceed cautiously. Too sudden a compliance might awaken their suspicions.”

“My lord,” said Catesby, who had watched his countenance narrowly, and distrusted its expression, “we must have no double-dealing. Any attempt to play us false will prove fatal to you.”

“I have not yet consented to your terms, Mr. Catesby,” replied Mounteagle, “and I demand a few moments' reflection before I do so.”

“What say you, gentlemen?” said Catesby. “Do you agree to his lordship's request?”

There was a general answer in the affirmative.

“I would also confer for a moment alone with my brother Tresham,” said Mounteagle.

“That cannot be, my lord,” rejoined Garnet, peremptorily. “And take heed you meditate no treachery towards us, or you will destroy yourself here and hereafter.”

“I have no desire to speak with him, father,” observed Tresham. “Let him declare what he has to say before you all.”

Mounteagle looked hard at him, but he made no remark.

“In my opinion, we ought not to trust him,” observed Keyes. “It is plain he is decidedly opposed to us. And if the oath is proposed to him, he may take it with some mental reservation.”

“I will guard against that,” replied Garnet.

“If I take the oath, I will keep it, father,” rejoined Mounteagle. “But I have not yet decided.”

“You must do so, then, quickly, my lord,” returned Catesby. “You shall have five minutes for reflection. But first, you must deliver up your sword.”

The Earl started.

“We mean you no treachery, my lord,” observed Keyes, “and expect to be dealt with with equal fairness.”

Surrendering his sword to Catesby, Mounteagle then walked to the farther end of the room, and leaning against the wall, with his back to the conspirators, appeared buried in thought.

“Take Tresham aside,” whispered Catesby to Wright. “I do not wish him to overhear our conference. Watch him narrowly, and see that no signal passes between him and Lord Mounteagle.”

Wright obeyed; and the others gathering closely together, began to converse in a low tone.

“It will not do to put him to death,” observed Garnet. “From what he stated to Tresham, it appears that his servant was aware of his coming hither. If he disappears, therefore, search will be immediately made, and all will be discovered. We must either instantly secure ourselves by flight, and give up the enterprise, or trust him.”

“You are right, father,” replied Rookwood. “The danger is imminent.”

“We are safe at present,” observed Percy, “and may escape to France or Flanders before information can be given against us. Nay, we may carry off Mouteagle with us, for that matter. But I am loth to trust him.”

“So am I,” rejoined Catesby. “I do not like his looks.”

“There is no help,” said Fawkes. “We must trust him, or give up the enterprise. He may materially aid us, and has himself asserted that he can procure Viviana's liberation from the Tower.”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Catesby, impatiently. “What has that to do with the all-important question we are now considering?”

“Much,” returned Fawkes. “And I will not move further in the matter unless that point is insisted on.”

“You have become strangely interested in Viviana of late,” observed Catesby, sarcastically. “Could I suspect you of so light a passion, I should say you loved her.”

A deep flush dyed Fawkes's swarthy cheeks, but he answered in a voice of constrained calmness,

“I do love her,—as a daughter.”

“Humph!” exclaimed the other, drily.

“Catesby,” rejoined Fawkes, sternly, “you know me well—too well, to suppose I would resort to any paltry subterfuge. I am willing to let what you have said pass. But I counsel you not to jest thus in future.”

“Jest!” exclaimed Catesby. “I was never more serious in my life.”

“Then you do me wrong,” retorted Fawkes, fiercely; “and you will repeat the insinuation at your peril.”

“My sons—my sons,” interposed Garnet, “what means this sudden—this needless quarrel, at a moment when we require the utmost calmness to meet the danger that assails us? Guy Fawkes is right. Viviana must be saved. If we desert her, our cause will

never prosper. But let us proceed step by step, and first decide upon what is to be done with Lord Mounteagle.”

“I am filled with perplexity,” replied Catesby.

“Then I will decide for you,” replied Percy. “Our project must be abandoned.”

“Never,” replied Fawkes, energetically. “Fly, and secure your own safety. I will stay and accomplish it alone.”

“A brave resolution!” exclaimed Catesby, tendering him his hand, which the other cordially grasped. “I will stand by you to the last. No—we have advanced too far to retreat.”

“Additional caution will be needful,” observed Keyes. “Can we not make it a condition with Lord Mounteagle to retire, till the blow is struck, to his mansion at Hoxton?”

“That would be of no avail,” replied Garnet. “We must trust him wholly, or not at all.”

“There I agree with you, father,” said Percy. “Let us propose the oath of secrecy to him, and detain him here until we have found some secure retreat, utterly unknown to him, or to Tresham, whence we can correspond with our friends. A few days will show whether he has betrayed us or not. We need not visit this place again till the moment for action arrives.”

“You need not visit it again at all,” rejoined Fawkes. “Everything is prepared, and I will undertake to fire the train. Prepare for what is to follow the explosion, and leave the management of that to me.”

“I cannot consent to such a course, my son,” said Garnet. “The whole risk will thus be yours.”

“The whole glory will be mine, also, father,” rejoined Fawkes, enthusiastically. “I pray you, let me have my own way.”

“Well, be it as you will, my son,” returned Garnet, with affected reluctance. “I will not oppose the hand of Heaven, which clearly points you out as the chief agent in this mighty enterprise. In reference to what Percy has said about a retreat till Lord Mounteagle's trust-worthiness can be ascertained,” he added to Catesby, “I have just bethought me of a large retired house on the borders of Enfield Chase, called White

Webbs. It has been recently taken by Mrs. Brooksby, and her sister, Anne Vaux, and will afford us a safe asylum.”

“An excellent plan, father,” cried Catesby. “Since Guy Fawkes is willing to undertake the risk, we will leave Lord Mounteagle in his charge, and go there at once.”

“What must be done with Tresham?” asked Percy. “We cannot take him with us, nor must he know of our retreat.”

“Leave him with me,” said Fawkes.

“You will be at a disadvantage,” observed Catesby, “should he take part, as there is reason to fear he may do, with Lord Mounteagle.”

“They are both unarmed,” returned Fawkes; “but were it otherwise, I would answer with my head for their detention.”

“All good saints guard you, my son!” exclaimed Garnet. “Henceforth, we resign the custody of the powder to you.”

“It will be in safe keeping,” replied Fawkes.

The party then advanced towards Lord Mounteagle, who, hearing their approach, instantly faced them.

“Your decision, my lord?” demanded Catesby.

“You shall have it in a word, sir,” replied Mounteagle, firmly.

“I will not join you, but I will take the required oath of secrecy.”

“Is this your final resolve, my lord?” rejoined Catesby.

“It is,” replied the Earl.

“It must content us,” observed Garnet; “though we hoped you would have lent your active services to further a cause, having for its sole object the restoration of the church to which you belong.”

"I know not the means whereby you propose to restore it, father," replied Mounteagle, "and I do not desire to know them. But I guess that they are dark and bloody, and as such I can take no part in them."

"And you refuse to give us any counsel or assistance?" pursued Garnet.

"I will not betray you," replied Mounteagle. "I can say nothing further."

"I would rather he promised too little, than too much," whispered Catesby to Garnet. "I begin to think him sincere."

"I am of the same opinion, my son," returned Garnet.

"One thing you shall do, before I consent to set you free, on any terms, my lord," observed Guy Fawkes. "You shall engage to procure the liberation of Viviana Radcliffe from the Tower. You told Tresham you could easily accomplish it."

"I scarcely knew what I said," replied Mounteagle, with a look of embarrassment.

"You spoke confidently, my lord," rejoined Fawkes.

"Because I had no idea I should be compelled to make good my words," returned the Earl. "But as a Catholic, and related by marriage to Tresham, who is a suspected person, any active exertions in her behalf on my part might place me in jeopardy."

"This excuse shall not avail you, my lord," replied Fawkes. "You must weigh your own safety against hers. You stir not hence till you have sworn to free her."

"I must perforce assent, since you will have no refusal," replied Mounteagle. "But I almost despair of success. If I can effect her deliverance, I swear to do so."

"Enough," replied Fawkes.

"And now, gentlemen," said Catesby, appealing to the others, "are you willing to let Lord Mounteagle depart upon the proposed terms?"

"We are," they replied.

"I will administer the oath at once," said Garnet; "and you will bear in mind, my son," he added, in a stern tone to the Earl, "that it will be one which cannot be violated without perdition to your soul."

“I am willing to take it,” replied Mouteagle.

Producing a primer, and motioning the Earl to kneel before him, Garnet then proposed an oath of the most solemn and binding description. The other repeated it after him, and at its conclusion placed the book to his lips.

“Are you satisfied?” he asked, rising.

“I am,” replied Garnet.

“And so am I,” thought Tresham, who stood in the rear, “—that he will perjure himself.”

“Am I now at liberty to depart?” inquired the Earl.

“Not yet, my lord,” replied Catesby. “You must remain here till midnight.”

Lord Mouteagle looked uneasy, but seeing remonstrance would be useless, he preserved a sullen silence.

“You need have no fear, my lord,” said Catesby. “But we must take such precautions as will ensure our safety, in case you intend us any treachery.”

“You cannot doubt me, sir, after the oath I have taken,” replied Mouteagle, haughtily. “But since you constitute yourself my jailer, I must abide your pleasure.”

“If I am your jailer, my lord,” rejoined Catesby, “I will prove to you that I am not neglectful of my office. Will it please you to follow me?”

The Earl bowed in acquiescence; and Catesby, marching before him to a small room, the windows of which were carefully barred, pointed to a chair, and instantly retiring, locked the door upon him. He then returned to the others, and taking Guy Fawkes aside, observed in a low tone,

“We shall set out instantly for White Webbs. You will remain on guard with Tresham, whom you will, of course, keep in ignorance of our proceedings. After you have set the Earl at liberty, you can follow us if you choose. But take heed you are not observed.”

“Fear nothing,” replied Fawkes.

Soon after this, Catesby, and the rest of the conspirators, with the exception of Guy Fawkes and Tresham, quitted the room, and the former concluded they were about to leave the house. He made no remark, however, to his companion; but getting between him and the door, folded his arms upon his breast, and continued to pace backwards and forwards before it.

“Am I a prisoner, as well as Lord Mounteagle?” asked Tresham, after a pause.

“You must remain with me here till midnight,” replied Fawkes. “We shall not be disturbed.”

“What! are the others gone?” cried Tresham.

“They are,” was the reply.

Tresham's countenance fell, and he appeared to be meditating some project, which he could not muster courage to execute.

“Be warned by the past, Tresham,” said Fawkes, who had regarded him fixedly for some minutes. “If I find reason to doubt you, I will put it out of your power to betray us a second time.”

“You have no reason to doubt me,” replied Tresham, with apparent candour. “I only wondered that our friends should leave me without any intimation of their purpose. It is for me, not you, to apprehend some ill design. Am I not to act with you further?”

“That depends upon yourself, and on the proofs you give of your sincerity,” replied Fawkes. “Answer me frankly. Do you think Lord Mounteagle will keep his oath?”

“I will stake my life upon it,” replied Tresham.

The conversation then dropped, and no attempt was made on either side to renew it. In this way several hours passed, when at length the silence was broken by Tresham, who requested permission to go in search of some refreshment; and Guy Fawkes assenting, they descended to the lower room, and partook of a slight repast.

Nothing further worthy of note occurred. On the arrival of the appointed hour, Guy Fawkes signified to his companion that he might liberate Lord Mounteagle; and immediately availing himself of the permission, Tresham repaired to the chamber, and threw open the door. The Earl immediately came forth, and they returned together to the room in which Guy Fawkes remained on guard.

“You are now at liberty to depart, my lord,” said the latter; “and Tresham can accompany you, if he thinks proper. Remember that you have sworn to procure Viviana's liberation.”

“I do,” replied the Earl.

And he then quitted the house with Tresham.

“You have had a narrow escape, my lord,” remarked the latter as they approached Whitehall, and paused for a moment under the postern of the great western gate.

“True,” replied the Earl; “but I do not regret the risk I have run. They are now wholly in my power.”

“You forget your oath, my lord,” said Tresham.

“If I do,” replied the Earl, “I but follow your example. You have broken one equally solemn, equally binding, and would break a thousand more were they imposed upon you. But I will overthrow this conspiracy, and yet not violate mine.”

“I see not how that can be, my lord,” replied Tresham.

“You shall learn in due season,” replied the Earl. “I have had plenty of leisure for reflection in that dark hole, and have hit upon a plan which, I think, cannot fail.”

“I hope I am no party to it, my lord,” rejoined Tresham. “I dare not hazard myself among them further.”

“I cannot do without you,” replied Mounteagle; “but I will ensure you against all danger. It will be necessary for you, however, to act with the utmost discretion, and keep a constant guard upon every look and movement, as well as upon your words. You must fully regain the confidence of these men, and lull them into security.”

“I see your lordship's drift,” replied Tresham. “You wish them to proceed to the last point, to enhance the value of the discovery.”

“Right,” replied the Earl. “The plot must not be discovered till just before its outbreak, when its magnitude and danger will be the more apparent. The reward will then be proportionate. Now, you understand me, Tresham.”

“Fully,” replied the other.

“Return to your own house,” rejoined Mounteagle. “We need hold no further communication together till the time for action arrives.”

“And that will not be before the meeting of Parliament,” replied Tresham; “for they intend to overwhelm the King and all his nobles in one common destruction.”

“By Heaven! a brave design!” cried Mounteagle. “It is a pity to mar it. I knew it was a desperate and daring project, but should never have conceived aught like this. Its discovery will indeed occasion universal consternation.”

“It may benefit you and me to divulge it, my lord,” said Tresham; “but the disclosure will deeply and lastingly injure the Church of Rome.”

“It would injure it more deeply if the plot succeeded,” replied Mounteagle, “because all loyal Catholics must disapprove so horrible and sanguinary a design. But we will not discuss the question further, though what you have said confirms my purpose, and removes any misgiving I might have felt as to the betrayal. Farewell, Tresham. Keep a watchful eye upon the conspirators, and communicate with me should any change take place in their plans. We may not meet for some time. Parliament, though summoned for the third of October, will, in all probability, be prorogued till November.”

“In that case,” replied Tresham, “you will postpone your disclosure likewise till November?”

“Assuredly,” replied Mounteagle. “The King must be convinced of his danger. If it were found out now, he would think lightly of it. But if he has actually set foot upon the mine which a single spark might kindle to his destruction, he will duly appreciate the service rendered him. Farewell! and do not neglect my counsel.”

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CHAPTER X.

WHITE WEBBS.

Tarrying for a short time within the house after the departure of the others, Guy Fawkes lighted a lantern, and concealing it beneath his cloak, proceeded to the cellar, to ascertain that the magazine of powder was safe. Satisfied of this, he made all secure, and was about to return to the house, when he perceived a figure approaching him. Standing aside, but keeping on his guard for fear of a surprise, he would have allowed the person to pass, but the other halted, and after a moment's scrutiny addressed him by name in the tones of Humphrey Chetham.

"You seem to haunt this spot, young sir," said Fawkes, in answer to the address. "This is the third time we have met hereabouts."

"On the last occasion," replied Chetham, "I told you Viviana was a prisoner in the Tower. I have now better news for you. She is free."

"Free!" exclaimed Fawkes, joyfully. "By Lord Mounteagle's instrumentality?—But I forget. He has only just left me."

"She has been freed by my instrumentality," replied the young merchant. "She escaped from the Tower a few hours ago."

"Where is she?" demanded Guy Fawkes, eagerly.

"In a boat at the stairs near the Parliament House," replied Chetham.

"Heaven and Our Lady be praised!" exclaimed Fawkes. "This is more than I hoped for. Your news is so good, young sir, that I can scarce credit it."

"Come with me to the boat, and you shall soon be satisfied of the truth of my statement," rejoined Chetham.

And followed by Guy Fawkes, he hurried to the river side, where a wherry was moored. Within it sat Viviana, covered by the tilt.

Assisting her to land, and finding she was too much exhausted to walk, Guy Fawkes took her in his arms, and carried her to the house he had just quitted.

Humphrey Chetham followed as soon as he had dismissed the waterman. Placing his lovely burthen in a seat, Guy Fawkes instantly went in search of such restoratives as the place afforded. Viviana was extremely faint, but after she had swallowed a glass of wine, she revived, and, looking around her, inquired where she was.

“Do not ask,” replied Fawkes; “let it suffice you are in safety. And now,” he added, “perhaps, Humphrey Chetham will inform me in what manner he contrived your escape. I am impatient to know.”

The young merchant then gave the required information, and Viviana added such particulars as were necessary to the full understanding of the story. Guy Fawkes could scarcely control himself when she related the tortures she had endured, nor was Chetham less indignant.

“You rescued me just in time,” said Viviana. “I should have sunk under the next application.”

“Thank Heaven! you have escaped it,” exclaimed Fawkes. “You owe much to Humphrey Chetham, Viviana.”

“I do, indeed,” she replied.

“And can you not requite it?” he returned. “Can you not make him happy?—Can you not make me happy?”

Viviana's pale cheek was instantly suffused with blushes, but she made no answer.

“Oh, Viviana!” cried Humphrey Chetham, “you hear what is said. If you could doubt my love before, you must be convinced of it now. A hope will make me happy. Have I that?”

“Alas! no,” she answered. “It would be the height of cruelty, after your kindness, to deceive you. You have not.”

The young merchant turned aside to hide his emotion.

“Not even a hope!” exclaimed Guy Fawkes, “after what he has done. Viviana, I cannot understand you. Does gratitude form no part of your nature?”

“I hope so,” she replied, “nay, I am sure so,—for I feel the deepest gratitude towards Humphrey Chetham. But gratitude is not love, and must not be mistaken for it.”

“I understand the distinction too well,” returned the young merchant, sadly.

“It is more than I do,” rejoined Guy Fawkes; “and I will frankly confess that I think the important services Humphrey Chetham has rendered you entitle him to your hand. It is seldom—whatever poets may feign,—that love is so strongly proved as his has been; and it ought to be adequately requited.”

“Say no more about it, I entreat,” interposed Chetham.

“But I will deliver my opinion,” rejoined Guy Fawkes, “because I am sure what I advise is for Viviana's happiness. No one can love her better than you. No one is more worthy of her. Nor is there any one to whom I so much desire to see her united.”

“Oh, Heaven!” exclaimed Viviana. “This is worse than the torture.”

“What mean you?” exclaimed Fawkes, in astonishment.

“She means,” interposed Chetham, “that this is not the fitting season to urge the subject—that she will never marry.”

“True—true,” replied Viviana. “If I ever did marry—I ought to select you.”

“You ought,” replied Fawkes. “And I know nothing of the female heart, if it can be insensible to youth, devotion, and manly appearance like that of Humphrey Chetham.”

“You do know nothing of it,” rejoined Chetham, bitterly. “Women's fancies are unaccountable.”

“Such is the received opinion,” replied Fawkes; “but as I am ignorant of the sex, I can only judge from report. You are the person I should imagine she would love—nay, to be frank, whom I thought she did love.”

“No more,” said Humphrey Chetham. “It is painful both to Viviana and to me.”

“This is not a time for delicacy,” rejoined Guy Fawkes. “Viviana has given me the privilege of a father with her. And where her happiness is so much concerned as in the present case, I should imperfectly discharge my duty if I did not speak out. It would sincerely rejoice me, and I am sure contribute materially to her own happiness, if she would unite herself to you.”

“I cannot—I cannot,” she rejoined. “I will never marry.”

“You hear what she says,” remarked Chetham. “Do not urge the matter further.”

“I admire maiden delicacy and reserve,” replied Fawkes; “but when a man has acted as you have done, he deserves to be treated with frankness. I am sure Viviana loves you. Let her tell you so.”

“You are mistaken,” replied Chetham; “and it is time you should be undeceived. She loves another.”

“Is this so?” cried Fawkes, in astonishment.

She made no answer.

“Whom do you love?” he asked.

Still, no answer.

“I will tell you whom she loves—and let her contradict me if I am wrong,” said Chetham.

“Oh, no!—no!—in pity spare me!” cried Viviana.

“Speak!”—thundered Fawkes. “Who is it?”

“Yourself,” replied Chetham.

“What!” exclaimed Fawkes, recoiling,—“love me! I will not believe it. She loves me as a father—but nothing more—nothing more. But you were right. Let us change the subject. A more fitting season may arrive for its discussion.”

After some further conversation, it was agreed that Viviana should be taken to White Webbs; and leaving her in charge of Humphrey Chetham, Guy Fawkes went in search of a conveyance to Enfield.

Traversing the Strand,—every hostel in which was closed,—he turned up Wych-street, immediately on the right of which there was a large inn (still in existence), and entering the yard, discovered a knot of carriers moving about with lanterns in their hands. To his inquiries respecting a conveyance to Enfield, one of them answered, that he was about to return thither with his waggon at four o'clock,—it was then two,—and should be glad to take him and his friends. Overjoyed at the intelligence, and at once agreeing to the man's terms, Guy Fawkes hurried back to his companions, and, with the assistance of Humphrey Chetham, contrived to carry Viviana (for she was utterly unable to support herself) to the inn-yard, where she was immediately placed in the waggon, on a heap of fresh straw.

About an hour after this, but long before daybreak, the carrier attached his horses to the waggon, and set out. Guy Fawkes and Humphrey Chetham were seated near Viviana, but little was said during the journey, which occupied about three hours. By this time it was broad daylight; and as the carrier stopped at the door of a small inn, Guy Fawkes alighted, and inquired the distance to White Webbs.

“It is about a mile and a half off,” replied the man. “If you pursue that lane, it will bring you to a small village about half a mile from this, where you are sure to find some one who will gladly guide you to the house, which is a little out of the road, on the borders of the forest.”

He then assisted Viviana to alight, and Humphrey Chetham descending at the same time, the party took the road indicated—a winding country lane with high hedges, broken by beautiful timber—and proceeding at a slow pace, they arrived in about half an hour at a little cluster of cottages, which Guy Fawkes guessed to be the village alluded to by the carrier. As they approached it, a rustic leaped a hedge, and was about to cross to another field, when Guy Fawkes calling to him, inquired the way to White Webbs.

“I am going in that direction,” replied the man. “If you desire it, I will show you the road.”

“I shall feel much indebted to you, friend,” returned Fawkes, “and will reward you for your trouble.”

“I want no reward,” returned the countryman, trudging forward.

Following their guide, after a few minutes' brisk walking they reached the borders of the forest, and took their way along a patch of greensward that skirted it. In some places their track was impeded by gigantic thorns and brushwood, while at others avenues opened upon them, affording them peeps into the heart of the wood. It was a beautiful

sylvan scene. And as at length they arrived at the head of a long glade, at the farther end of which a herd of deer were seen, with their branching antlers mingling with the overhanging boughs, Viviana could not help pausing to admire it.

“King James often hunts within the forest,” observed the countryman. “Indeed, I heard one of the rangers say it was not unlikely he might be here to-day. He is at Theobald's Palace now.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Fawkes. “Let us proceed. We lose time. Are we far from the house?”

“Not above a quarter of a mile,” was the answer. “You will see it at the next turn of the road.”

As the countryman had intimated, they speedily perceived the roof and tall chimneys of an ancient house above the trees, and as it was now impossible to mistake the road, Guy Fawkes thanked their guide for his trouble, and would have rewarded him, but he refused the gratuity, and leaping a hedge, disappeared.

Pursuing the road, they shortly afterwards arrived at a gate leading to the house—a large building, erected probably at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign—and entering it, they passed under an avenue of trees. On approaching the mansion, they observed that many of the windows were closed, and the whole appearance of the place was melancholy and deserted. The garden was overgrown with weeds, and the door looked as if it was rarely opened.

Not discouraged by these appearances, but rather satisfied by them of the security of the asylum, Guy Fawkes proceeded to the back of the house, and entering a court, the flags and stones of which were covered with moss, while the interstices were filled with long grass, Guy Fawkes knocked against a small door, and, after repeating the summons, it was answered by an old woman-servant, who popped her head out of an upper window, and demanded his business.

Guy Fawkes was about to inquire for Mrs. Brooksby, when another head, which proved to be that of Catesby, appeared at the window. On seeing Fawkes and his companions, Catesby instantly descended, and unfastened the door. The house proved far more comfortable within than its exterior promised; and the old female domestic having taken word to Anne Vaux that Viviana was below, the former lady, who had not yet risen, sent for her to her chamber, and provided everything for her comfort.

Guy Fawkes and Humphrey Chetham, neither of whom had rested during the night, were glad to obtain a few hours' repose on the floor of the first room into which they

were shown, and they were not disturbed until the day had considerably advanced, when Catesby thought fit to rouse them from their slumbers.

Explanations were then given on both sides. Chetham detailed the manner of Viviana's escape from the Tower, and Catesby in his turn acquainted them that Father Oldcorne was in the house, having found his way thither after his escape from the dwelling at Lambeth. Guy Fawkes was greatly rejoiced at the intelligence, and shortly afterwards had the satisfaction of meeting with the priest. At noon, the whole party assembled, with the exception of Viviana, who, by the advice of Anne Vaux, kept her chamber, to recruit herself after the sufferings she had undergone.

Humphrey Chetham, of whom no suspicions were now entertained, and of whom Catesby no longer felt any jealousy, was invited to stay in the house; and he was easily induced to pass his time near Viviana, although he might not be able to see her. Long and frequent consultations were held by the conspirators, and letters were despatched by Catesby to the elder Winter at his seat, Huddington, in Worcestershire, entreating him to make every preparation for the crisis, as well as to Sir Everard Digby, to desire him to assemble as many friends as he could muster against the meeting of Parliament, at Dunchurch, in Warwickshire, under the plea of a grand hunting-party.

Arrangements were next made as to the steps to be taken by the different parties after the explosion. Catesby undertook, with a sufficient force, to seize the Princess Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of James the First, who was then at the residence of the Earl of Harrington, near Coventry, and to proclaim her queen, in case the others should fail in securing the princes. It was supposed that Henry, Prince of Wales, (who, it need scarcely be mentioned, died in his youth,) would be present with the King, his father, in the Parliament House, and would perish with him; and in this case, as Charles, Duke of York, (afterwards Charles the First,) would become successor to the throne, it was resolved that he should be seized by Percy, and instantly proclaimed. Other resolutions were decided upon, and the whole time of the conspirators was spent in maturing their projects.

And thus weeks, and even months, stole on. Viviana had completely regained her strength, and passed a life of perfect seclusion, seldom, if ever, mixing with the others. She, however, took a kindly farewell of Humphrey Chetham, before his departure for Manchester (for which place he set out about a fortnight after his arrival at White Webbs, having first sought out his servant, Martin Heydocke); but though strongly urged by Guy Fawkes, she would hold out no hopes of a change in her sentiments towards the young merchant. Meetings were occasionally held by the conspirators elsewhere, and Catesby and Fawkes had more than one interview with Tresham—but never, except in places where they were secure from a surprise.

The latter end of September had now arrived, and the meeting of Parliament was still fixed for the third of October. On the last day of the month, Guy Fawkes prepared to start for town; but before doing so he desired to see Viviana. They had not met for some weeks; nor, indeed, since Fawkes had discovered the secret of her heart, (and perhaps of his own,) had they ever met with the same freedom as heretofore. As she entered the room, in which he awaited her coming, a tremor agitated his frame, but he had nerved himself for the interview, and speedily subdued the feeling.

“I am starting for London, Viviana,” he said, in a voice of forced calmness. “You may guess for what purpose. But as I may never behold you again, I would not part with you without a confession of my weakness. I will not deny that what Humphrey Chetham stated, and which you have never contradicted—namely, that you loved me, for I must speak out—has produced a strong effect upon me. I have endeavoured to conquer it, but it will return. Till I knew you I never loved, Viviana.”

“Indeed!” she exclaimed.

“Never,” he replied. “The fairest had not power to move me. But I grieve to say—nevertheless my struggles—I do not continue equally insensible.”

“Ah!” she ejaculated, becoming as pale as death.

“Why should I hesitate to declare my feelings? Why should I not tell you that—though blinded to it so long—I have discovered that I do love you? Why should I hesitate to tell you that I regret this, and lament that we ever met?”

“What mean you?” cried Viviana, with a terrified look.

“I will tell you,” replied Fawkes. “Till I saw you, my thoughts were removed from earth, and fixed on one object. Till I saw you, I asked not to live, but to die the death of a martyr.”

“Die so still,” rejoined Viviana. “Forget me—oh! forget me.”

“I cannot,” replied Fawkes. “I have striven against it. But your image is perpetually before me. Nay, at this very moment, when I am about to set out on the enterprise, you alone detain me.”

“I am glad of it,” exclaimed Viviana, fervently. “Oh that I could prevent you—could save you!”

“Save me!” echoed Fawkes, bitterly. “You destroy me.”

“How?” she asked.

“Because I am sworn to this project,” he rejoined; “and if I were turned from it, I would perish by my own hand.”

“Oh! say not so,” replied Viviana, “but listen to me. Abandon it, and I will devote myself to you.”

Guy Fawkes gazed at her for a moment passionately, and then, covering his face with his hands, appeared torn by conflicting emotions.

Viviana approached him, and pressing his arm, asked in an entreating voice, “Are you still determined to pursue your dreadful project?”

“I am,” replied Fawkes, uncovering his face, and gazing at her; “but, if I remain here a moment longer, I shall not be able to do so.”

“I will detain you, then,” she rejoined, “and exercise the power I possess over you for your benefit.”

“No!” he replied, vehemently. “It must not be. Farewell, for ever!”

And breaking from her, he rushed out of the room.

As he gained the passage, he encountered Catesby, who looked abashed at seeing him.

“I have overheard what has passed,” said the latter, “and applaud your resolution. Few men, similarly circumstanced, would have acted as you have done.”

“You would not,” said Fawkes, coldly.

“Perhaps not,” rejoined Catesby. “But that does not lessen my admiration of your conduct.”

“I am devoted to one object,” replied Fawkes, “and nothing shall turn me from it.”

“Remove yourself instantly from temptation, then,” replied Catesby. “I will meet you at the cellar beneath the Parliament House to-morrow night.”

With this, he accompanied Guy Fawkes to the door; and the latter, without hazarding a look behind him, set out for London, where he arrived at nightfall.

On the following night, Fawkes examined the cellar, and found it in all respects as he had left it; and, apprehensive lest some difficulty might arise, he resolved to make every preparation. He, accordingly, pierced the sides of several of the barrels piled against the walls with a gimlet, and inserted in the holes small pieces of slow-burning match. Not content with this, he staved in the tops of the uppermost tier, and scattered powder among them to secure their instantaneous ignition.

This done, he took a powder-horn, with which he was provided, and kneeling down, and holding his lantern so as to throw a light upon the floor, laid a train to one of the lower barrels, and brought it within a few inches of the door, intending to fire it from that point. His arrangements completed, he arose, and muttered,

“A vessel is provided for my escape in the river, and my companions advise me to use a slow match, which will allow me to get out of harm's way. But I will see the deed done, and if the train fails, will hold a torch to the barrels myself.”

At this juncture, a slight tap was heard without.

Guy Fawkes instantly masked his lantern, and cautiously opening the door, beheld Catesby.

“I am come to tell you that Parliament is prorogued,” said the latter. “The House does not meet till the fifth of November. We have another month to wait.”

“I am sorry for it,” rejoined Fawkes. “I have just laid the train. The lucky moment will pass.”

And, locking the door, he proceeded with Catesby to the adjoining house.

They had scarcely been gone more than a second, when two figures muffled in cloaks emerged from behind a wall.

“The train is laid,” observed the foremost, “and they are gone to the house. You might seize them now without danger.”

“That will not answer my purpose,” replied the other. “I will give them another month.”

“Another month!” replied the first speaker. “Who knows what may happen in that time? They may abandon their project.”

“There is no fear of that,” replied the other. “But you had better go and join them.”

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARRIAGE IN THE FOREST.

Tresham, for it will have been conjectured that he was one of the speakers mentioned in the preceding chapter, on separating from Lord Mounteagle, took the same direction as the conspirators. He hesitated for some time before venturing to knock at the garden-gate; and when he had done so, felt half-disposed to take to his heels. But shame restrained him; and hearing footsteps approach, he gave the customary signal, and was instantly admitted by Guy Fawkes.

“What brings you here?” demanded the latter, as they entered the house, and made fast the door behind them.

“I have just heard that Parliament is prorogued to the fifth of November,” replied Tresham, “and came to tell you so.”

“I already know it,” returned Fawkes, gloomily; “and for the first time feel some misgiving as to the issue of our enterprise.”

“Why so?” inquired Tresham.

“November is unlucky to me,” rejoined Fawkes, “and I cannot recollect a year in my life in which some ill has not befallen me during that month, especially on the fifth day. On the last fifth of November, I nearly died of a fever at Madrid. It is a strange and unfortunate coincidence that the meeting of the Parliament should be appointed for that particular day.”

“Shall I tell you what I think it portends?” hesitated Tresham.

“Do so,” replied Fawkes, “and speak boldly. I am no child to be frightened at shadows.”

“You have more than once declared your intention of perishing with our foes,” rejoined Tresham. “The design, though prosperous in itself, may be fatal to you.”

“You are right,” replied Fawkes. “I have little doubt I shall perish on that day. You are both aware of my superstitious nature, and are not ignorant that many mysterious

occurrences have combined to strengthen the feeling,—such as the dying words of the prophetess, Elizabeth Orton,—her warning speech when she was raised from the dead by Doctor Dee,—and lastly, the vision at St. Winifred's Well. What if I tell you the saint has again appeared to me?”

“In a dream?” inquired Catesby, in a slightly sceptical tone.

“Ay, in a dream,” returned Fawkes. “But I saw her as plainly as if I had been awake. It was the same vapoury figure—the same transparent robes, the same benign countenance, only far more pitying than before—that I beheld at Holywell. I heard no sound issue from her lips, but I felt that she warned me to desist.”

“Do you accept the warning?” asked Tresham, eagerly.

“It is needless to answer,” replied Fawkes. “I have laid the train to-night.”

“You have infected me with your misgivings,” observed Tresham. “Would the enterprise had never been undertaken!”

“But being undertaken, it must be gone through with,” rejoined Catesby, sternly. “Hark'e, Tresham. You promised us two thousand pounds in aid of the project, but have constantly deferred payment of the sum on some plea or other.”

“Because I have not been able to raise it,” replied Tresham, sullenly. “I have tried in vain to sell part of my estates at Rushton, in Northamptonshire. I cannot effect impossibilities.”

“Tush!” cried Catesby, fiercely. “You well know I ask no impossibility. I will no longer be trifled with. The money must be forthcoming by the tenth of October, or you shall pay the penalty with your life.”

“This is the language of a cut-throat, Mr. Catesby,” replied Tresham.

“It is the only language I will hold towards you,” rejoined Catesby, contemptuously. “Look you disappoint me not, or take the consequences.”

“I must leave for Northamptonshire at once, then,” said Tresham.

“Do as you please,” returned Catesby. “Play the cut-throat yourself, and ease some rich miser of his store, if you think fit. Bring us the money, and we will not ask how you came by it.”

“Before we separate,” said Tresham, disregarding these sneers, “I wish to be resolved on one point. Who are to be saved from destruction?”

“Why do you ask?” inquired Fawkes.

“Because I must stipulate for the lives of my brothers-in-law, the Lords Mouteagle and Stourton.”

“If anything detains them from the meeting, well and good,” replied Catesby. “But no warning must be given them. That would infallibly lead to a discovery of the plot.”

“Some means might surely be adopted to put them on their guard without danger to ourselves?” urged Tresham.

“I know of none,” replied Catesby.

“Nor I,” added Fawkes. “If I did, I would warn Lord Montague, and some others whom I shall grieve to destroy.”

“We are all similarly circumstanced,” replied Catesby. “Keyes is anxious for the preservation of his patron and friend, Lord Mordaunt,—Percy, for the Earl of Northumberland. I, myself, would gladly save the young Earl of Arundel. But we must sacrifice our private feeling for the general good.”

“We must,” acquiesced Fawkes.

“We shall not meet again till the night of the tenth of October,” said Catesby, “when take care you are in readiness with the money.”

Upon this, the conversation dropped, and soon afterwards Tresham departed.

When he found himself alone, he suffered his rage to find vent in words. “Perdition seize them!” he cried, “I shall now lose two thousand pounds, in addition to what I have already advanced; and, as Mouteagle will not have the disclosure made till the beginning of November, there is no way of avoiding payment. They would not fall into the snare I laid to throw the blame of the discovery, when it takes place, upon their own indiscretion. But I must devise some other plan. The warning shall proceed from an unknown quarter. A letter, written in a feigned hand, and giving some obscure intimation of danger, shall be delivered with an air of mystery to Mouteagle. This will

serve as a plea for its divulgement to the Earl of Salisbury. Well, well, they shall have the money; but they shall pay me back in other coin."

Early on the following day, Catesby and Fawkes proceeded to White Webbs. Garnet was greatly surprised to see them, and could not conceal his disappointment at the cause of their return.

"This delay bodes no good," he observed. "Parliament has been so often prorogued, that I begin to think some suspicion is entertained of our design."

"Make your mind easy, then," replied Catesby. "I have made due inquiries, and find the meeting is postponed to suit the King's convenience, who wishes to prolong his stay at Royston. He may probably have some secret motive for the delay, but I am sure it in no way concerns us."

Everything being now fully arranged, the conspirators had only to wait patiently for the arrival of the expected fifth of November. Most of them decided upon passing the interval in the country. Ambrose Rookwood departed for Clopton, near Stratford-upon-Avon,—a seat belonging to Lord Carew, where his family were staying. Keyes went to visit Lord Mordaunt at Turvey, in Bedfordshire; and Percy and the two Wrights set out for Gothurst, in Buckinghamshire, to desire Sir Everard Digby to postpone the grand hunting-party which he was to hold at Dunsmore Heath, as an excuse for mustering a strong party of Catholics, to the beginning of November. The two Winters repaired to their family mansion, Huddington, in Worcestershire; while Fawkes and Catesby, together with the two priests, remained at White Webbs. The three latter held daily conferences together, but were seldom joined by Fawkes, who passed his time in the adjoining forest, selecting its densest and most intricate parts for his rambles.

It was now the beginning of October, and, as is generally the case in the early part of this month, the weather was fine, and the air pure and bracing. The forest could scarcely have been seen to greater advantage. The leaves had assumed their gorgeous autumnal tints, and the masses of timber, variegated in colour, presented an inexpressibly beautiful appearance. Guy Fawkes spent hours in the depths of the wood. His sole companions were the lordly stag and the timid hare, that occasionally started across his path. Since his return, he had sedulously avoided Viviana, and they had met only twice, and then no speech had passed between them. One day, when he had plunged even deeper than usual into the forest, and had seated himself on the stump of a decayed tree, with his eyes fixed on a small clear rivulet welling at his feet, he saw the reflection of a female figure in the water; and, filled with the idea of the vision of Saint Winifred, at first imagined he was about to receive another warning. But a voice that thrilled to his

heart's core, soon undeceived him, and, turning, he beheld Viviana. She was habited in a riding-dress, and appeared prepared to set out upon a journey.

“So you have tracked me to my solitude,” he observed, in a tone of forced coldness. “I thought I was secure from interruption here.”

“You will forgive me, I am sure, when you know my errand,” she replied. “It is to take an eternal farewell of you.”

“Indeed!” he exclaimed. “Are you about to quit White Webbs?”

“I am,” she mournfully rejoined. “I am about to set out with Father Oldcorne for Gothurst, where I shall remain till all is over.”

“I entirely approve your determination,” returned Fawkes, after a short pause.

“I knew you would do so, or I should have consulted you upon it,” she rejoined. “And as you appear to avoid me, I would fain have departed without taking leave of you, but found it impossible to do so.”

“You well know my motive for avoiding you, Viviana,” rejoined Fawkes. “We are no longer what we were to each other. A fearful struggle has taken place within me, though I have preserved an unmoved exterior, between passion and the sense of my high calling. I have told you I never loved before, and fancied my heart immoveable as adamant. But I now find out my error. It is a prey to a raging and constant flame. I have shunned you,” he continued, with increased excitement, “because the sight of you shakes my firmness,—because I feel it sinful to think of you in preference to holier objects,—and because, after I have quitted you, your image alone engrosses my thoughts. Here, in the depths of this wood, by the side of this brook, I can commune with my soul,—can abstract myself from the world and the thoughts of the world—from you—yes, you, who are all the world to me now,—and prepare to meet my end.”

“Then you are resolved to die?” she cried.

“I shall abide the explosion, and nothing but a miracle can save me,” returned Fawkes.

“And think not it will be exerted in your behalf,” she replied. “Heaven does not approve your design, and you will assuredly incur its vengeance by your criminal conduct.”

“Viviana,” replied Guy Fawkes, rising, “man cannot read my heart, but Heaven can; and the sincerity of my purpose will be recognised above. What I am about to do is for the

regeneration of our holy religion; and if the welfare of that religion is dear to the Supreme Being, our cause must prosper. If the contrary, it deserves to fail, and will fail. I have ever told you that I care not what becomes of myself. I am now more than ever indifferent to life,—or rather,” he added, in a sombre tone, “I am anxious to die.”

“Your dreadful wish, I fear, will be accomplished,” replied Viviana, sadly. “I have been constantly haunted by frightful apprehensions respecting you, and my dead father has appeared to me in my dreams. His spirit, if such it were, seemed to gaze upon me with a mournful look, and, as I thought, pronounced your name in piteous accents.”

“These forebodings chime with my own,” muttered Fawkes, repressing a shudder; “but nothing shall shake me. It will inflict a bitter pang upon me to part with you, Viviana,—the bitterest I can ever feel,—and I shall be glad when it is over.”

“I echo your own wish,” she returned, “and deeply lament that we ever met. But the fate that brought us together must for ever unite us.”

“What mean you?” he inquired, gazing fixedly at her.

“There is one sad consolation which you can afford me, and which you owe me for the deep and lasting misery I shall endure on your account,” replied Viviana;—“a consolation that will enable me to bear your loss with fortitude, and to devote myself wholly to Heaven.”

“Whatever I can do that will not interfere with my purpose, you may command,” he rejoined.

“What I have to propose will not interfere with it,” she answered. “Now, hear me, and put the sole construction I deserve on my conduct. Father Garnet is at a short distance from us, behind those trees, waiting my summons. I have informed him of my design, and he approves of it. It is to unite us in marriage—solemnly unite us—that though I may never live with you as a wife, I may mourn you as a widow. Do you consent?”

Guy Fawkes returned an affirmative, in a voice broken by emotion.

“The moment the ceremony is over,” pursued Viviana, “I shall start with Father Oldcorne for Gothurst. We shall never meet again in this world.”

“Unless I succeed,” said Fawkes.

“You will not succeed,” replied Viviana. “If I thought so, I should not take this step. I look upon it as an espousal with the dead.”

So saying, she hurried away, and disappearing beneath the covert, returned in a few seconds with Garnet.

“I have a strange duty to perform for you, my son,” said Garnet to Fawkes, who remained motionless and stupified; “but I am right willing to perform it, because I think it will lead to your future happiness with the fair creature who has bestowed her affections on you.”

“Do not speculate on the future, father,” cried Viviana. “You know why I asked you to perform this ceremony. You know, also, that I have made preparations for instant departure; and that I indulge no hope of seeing Guy Fawkes again.”

“All this I know, dear daughter,” returned Garnet; “but, in spite of your anticipations of ill, I still hope that your union may prove auspicious.”

“I take you to witness, father,” said Viviana, “that in bestowing my hand upon Guy Fawkes, I bestow at the same time all my possessions upon him. He is free to use them as he thinks proper,—even in the furtherance of his design against the state, which, though I cannot approve it, seems good to him.”

“This must not be,” cried Fawkes.

“It shall be,” rejoined Viviana. “Proceed with the ceremony, father.”

“Let her have her own way, my son,” observed Garnet, in a low tone. “Under any circumstances, her estates must now be necessarily yours.”

He then took a breviary from his vest, and placing them near each other, began to read aloud the marriage-service appointed by the Romish Church. And there, in that secluded spot, and under such extraordinary circumstances, with no other witnesses than the ancient trees around them, and the brook rippling at their feet, were Guy Fawkes and Viviana united. The ceremony over, Guy Fawkes pressed his bride to his breast, and imprinted a kiss upon her lips.

“I have broken my faith to Heaven, to which I was first espoused,” he cried.

“No,” she returned; “you will now return to your first and holiest choice. Think of me only as I shall think of you,—as of the dead.”

With this, the party slowly and silently returned to the house, where they found a couple of steeds, with luggage strapped to the saddles, at the door.

Father Oldcorne was already mounted, and in a few minutes Viviana was by his side. Before her departure, she bade Guy Fawkes a tender farewell; and at this trying juncture her firmness nearly deserted her. But rousing herself, she sprang upon her horse, and urging the animal into a quick pace, and followed by Oldcorne, she speedily disappeared from view. Guy Fawkes watched her out of sight, and shunning the regards of Catesby, who formed one of the group, struck into the forest, and was not seen again till the following day.

The tenth of October having arrived, Guy Fawkes and Catesby repaired to the place of rendezvous. But the night passed, and Tresham did not appear. Catesby was angry and disappointed, and could not conceal his apprehensions of treachery. Fawkes took a different view of the matter, and thought it not improbable that their confederate's absence might be occasioned by the difficulty he found in complying with their demands; and this opinion was confirmed the next morning by the arrival of a letter from Tresham, stating that he had been utterly unable to effect the sales he contemplated, and could not, therefore, procure the money till the end of the month.

"I will immediately go down to Rushton," said Catesby, "and if I find him disposed to palter with us, I will call him to instant account. But Garnet informs me that Viviana has bestowed all her wealth upon you. Are you willing to devote it to the good cause?"

"No!" replied Fawkes, in a tone so decisive that his companion felt it would be useless to urge the matter further. "I give my life to the cause,—that must suffice."

The subject was never renewed. At night, Catesby, having procured a powerful steed, set out upon his journey to Northamptonshire, while Fawkes returned to White Webbs.

About a fortnight passed unmarked by any event of importance. Despatches were received from Catesby, stating that he had received the money from Tresham, and had expended it in procuring horses and arms. He also added that he had raised numerous recruits on various pretences. This letter was dated from Ashby St. Leger's, the seat of his mother, Lady Catesby, but he expressed his intention of proceeding to Coughton Hall, near Alcester, in Warwickshire, the residence of Mr. Thomas Throckmorton (a wealthy Catholic gentleman), whither Sir Everard Digby had removed with his family, to be in readiness for the grand hunting-party to be held on the fifth of November on Dunsmore Heath. Here he expected to be joined by the two Wrights, the Winters,

Rookwood, Keyes, and the rest of the conspirators, and undertook to bring them all up to White Webbs on Saturday the twenty-sixth of October.

By this time, Guy Fawkes had in a great degree recovered his equanimity, and left alone with Garnet, held long and frequent religious conferences with him; it being evidently his desire to prepare himself for his expected fate. He spent the greater part of the nights in solitary vigils—fasted even more rigorously than he was enjoined to do—and prayed with such fervour and frequency, that, fearing an ill effect upon his health, and almost upon his mind, which had become exalted to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, Garnet thought it necessary to check him. The priest did not fail to note that Viviana's name never passed his lips, and that in all their walks in the forest he carefully shunned the scene of his espousals.

And thus time flew by. On the evening of the twenty-sixth of October, in accordance with Catesby's intimation, the conspirators arrived. They were all assembled at supper, and were relating the different arrangements which had been made in anticipation of the important event, when Garnet observed with a look of sudden uneasiness to Catesby, "You said in one of your letters that you would bring Tresham with you, my son. Why do I not see him?"

"He sent a message to Coughton to state, that having been attacked by a sudden illness, he was unable to join us," replied Catesby, "but as soon as he could leave his bed, he would hasten to London. This may be a subterfuge, but I shall speedily ascertain the truth, for I have sent my servant Bates to Rushton, to investigate the matter. I ought to tell you," he added, "that he has given substantial proof of his devotion to the cause by sending another thousand pounds, to be expended in the purchase of arms and horses."

"I hope it is not dust thrown into our eyes," returned Garnet. "I have always feared Tresham would deceive us at the last."

"This sudden illness looks suspicious, I must own," said Catesby. "Has aught been heard of Lord Mounteagle?"

"Guy Fawkes heard that he was at his residence at Southwark yesterday," returned Garnet.

"So far, good," replied Catesby. "Did you visit the cellar where the powder is deposited?" he added, turning to Fawkes.

“I did,” replied the other, “and found all secure. The powder is in excellent preservation. Before quitting the spot, I placed certain private marks against the door, by which I can tell whether it is opened during our absence.”

“A wise precaution,” returned Catesby. “And now, gentlemen,” he added, filling a goblet with wine, “success to our enterprise! Everything is prepared,” he continued, as the pledge was enthusiastically drunk; “I have got together a company of above two hundred men, all well armed and appointed, who will follow me wherever I choose to lead them. They will be stationed near Dunsmore Heath on the fifth of next month, and as soon as the event of the explosion is known, I shall ride thither as fast as I can, and, hurrying with my troops to Coventry, seize the Princess Elizabeth. Percy and Keyes will secure the person of the Duke of York, and proclaim him King; while upon the rest will devolve the arduous duty of rousing our Catholic brethren in London to rise to arms.”

“Trust to us to rouse them,” shouted several voices.

“Let each man swear not to swerve from the fulfilment of his task,” cried Catesby; “swear it upon this cup of wine, in which we will all mix our blood.”

And as he spoke, he pricked his arm with the point of his sword, and suffered a few drops of blood to fall into the goblet, while the others, roused to a state of frenzied enthusiasm, imitated his example, and afterwards raised the horrible mixture to their lips, pronouncing at the same time the oath.

Guy Fawkes was the last to take the pledge, and crying in a loud voice, “I swear not to quit my post till the explosion is over,” he drained the cup.

After this, they adjourned to a room in another wing of the house, fitted up as a chapel, where mass was performed by Garnet, and the sacrament administered to the whole assemblage. They were about to retire for the night, when a sudden knocking was heard at the door. Reconnoitring the intruder through an upper window, overlooking the court, Catesby perceived it was Bates, who was holding a smoking and mud-bespattered steed by the bridle.

“Well, what news do you bring?” cried Catesby, as he admitted him. “Have you seen Tresham?”

“No,” replied Bates. “His illness was a mere pretence. He has left Rushton secretly for London.”

“I knew it,” cried Garnet. “He has again betrayed us.”

“He shall die,” said Catesby.

And the determination was echoed by all the other conspirators.

Instead of retiring to rest, they passed the night in anxious deliberation, and it was at last proposed that Guy Fawkes should proceed without loss of time to Southwark, to keep watch near the house of Lord Mouteagle, and if possible ascertain whether Tresham had visited it.

To this he readily agreed. But before setting out, he took Catesby aside for a moment, and asked, “Did you see Viviana at Coughton?”

“Only for a moment, and that just before I left the place,” was the answer. “She desired to be remembered to you, and said you were never absent from her thoughts or prayers.”

Guy Fawkes turned away to hide his emotion, and mounting one of the horses brought by the conspirators, rode off towards London.

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER.

On the same day as the occurrences last related, Lord Mounteagle, who was then staying at Southwark, suddenly intimated his intention of passing the night at his country mansion at Hoxton; a change of place which, trivial as it seemed at the moment, afterwards assumed an importance, from the circumstances that arose out of it. At the latter part of the day, he accordingly proceeded to Hoxton, accompanied by his customary attendants, and all appeared to pass on as usual, until, just as supper was over, one of his pages arrived from town, and desired to see his lordship immediately.

Affecting to treat the matter with indifference, Lord Mounteagle carelessly ordered the youth to be ushered into his presence; and when he appeared, he demanded his business. The page replied, that he brought a letter for his lordship, which had been delivered under circumstances of great mystery.

“I had left the house just as it grew dusk,” he said, “on an errand of little importance, when a man, muffled in a cloak, suddenly issued from behind a corner, and demanded whether I was one of your lordship's servants? On my replying in the affirmative, he produced this letter, and enjoined me, as I valued my life and your lordship's safety, to deliver it into your own hands without delay.”

So saying, he delivered the letter to his lord, who, gazing at its address, which was, “To the Right Honourable the Lord Mounteagle,” observed, “There is nothing very formidable in its appearance. What can it mean?”

Without even breaking the seal, which was secured with a silken thread, he gave it to one of his gentlemen, named Ward, who was standing near him.

“Read it aloud, sir,” said the Earl, with a slight smile. “I have no doubt it is some vapouring effusion, which will afford us occasion for laughter. Before I hear what the writer has to say, I can promise him he shall not intimidate me.”

Thus exhorted, Ward broken open the letter, and read as follows:—

“My lord, out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care of your preservation. Therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift from your attendance at this Parliament, for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. Think not slightly of this advice, but retire into the country, where you may expect the event in safety; for, though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament, and yet they shall not know who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned. It may do you good, and can do you no harm, for the danger is passed as soon as you have burned the letter. God, I hope, will give you grace to make good use of it, to whose holy protection I commend you.”

“A singular letter!” exclaimed Mounteagle, as soon as Ward had finished. “What is your opinion of it?”

“I think it hints at some dangerous plot, my lord,” replied Ward, who had received his instructions, “some treason against the state. With submission, I would advise your lordship instantly to take it to the Earl of Salisbury.”

“I see nothing in it,” replied the Earl. “What is your opinion, Mervyn?” he added, turning to another of his gentlemen, to whom he had likewise given his lesson.

“I am of the same mind as Ward,” replied the attendant.

“Your lordship will hardly hold yourself excused, if you neglect to give due warning, should aught occur hereafter.”

“Say you so, sirs?” cried Lord Mounteagle. “Let me hear it once more.”

The letter was accordingly read again by Ward, and the Earl feigned to weigh over each passage.

“I am advised not to attend the Parliament,” he said, “‘for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time.’ That is too vague to be regarded. Then I am urged to retire into the country. The recommendation must proceed from some discontented Catholic, who does not wish me to be present at the opening of the house. This is not the first time I have been so adjured. ‘They shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament, and yet shall not know who hurts them.’ That is mysterious enough, but it may mean nothing,—any more than what follows, namely, ‘the danger is passed as soon as you have burnt the letter.’”

“I do not think so, my lord,” replied Ward; “and though I cannot explain the riddle, I am sure it means mischief.”

“Well,” said Lord Mounteagle, “since you are of this mind, I must lose no time in communicating the letter to the Secretary of State. It is better to err on the safe side.”

Accordingly, after some further consultation, he set out at that late hour for Whitehall, where he roused the Earl of Salisbury, and showed him the letter. It is almost needless to state that the whole was a preconcerted scheme between these two crafty statesmen; but as the interview took place in the presence of their attendants, the utmost caution was observed.

Salisbury pretended to be greatly alarmed at the communication, and coupling it, he said, with previous intelligence which he had received, he could not help fearing, to adopt the words of the writer of the mysterious letter, that the Parliament was indeed threatened with some “terrible blow.” Acting, apparently, upon this supposition, he caused such of the lords of the Privy Council as lodged at Whitehall to be summoned, and submitting the letter to them, they all concurred in the opinion that it referred to some dangerous plot, though none could give a guess at its precise nature.

“It is clearly some Popish project,” said Salisbury, “or Lord Mounteagle would not have been the party warned. We must keep a look-out upon the disaffected of his faith.”

“As I have been the means of revealing the plot to your lordship—if plot it be—I must pray you to deal gently with them,” rejoined Mounteagle.

“I will be as lenient as I can,” returned Salisbury; “but in a matter of this kind little favour can be shown. If your lordship will enable me to discover the principal actors in this affair, I will take care that no innocent party suffers.”

“You ask an impossibility,” replied Mounteagle. “I know nothing beyond what can be gathered from that letter. But I pray your lordship not to make it a means of exercising unnecessary severity towards the members of my religion.”

“On that you may rely,” returned the Earl. “His Majesty will not return from the hunting expedition on which he is engaged at Royston till Thursday next, the th. I think it scarcely worth while (considering his naturally timid nature, with which your lordships are well acquainted) to inform him of the threatened danger, until his arrival at the palace. It will then be time enough to take any needful steps, as Parliament will not meet for four or five days afterwards.”

In the policy of this course the Privy Councillors agreed, and it was arranged that the matter should be kept perfectly secret until the King's opinion had been taken upon the letter. The assemblage then broke up, it being previously arranged that, for fear of some attempt upon his life, Lord Mounteagle should remain within the palace till full inquiries had been instituted into the affair.

When the two confederate nobles were left alone, Salisbury observed, with a slight laugh, to his companion,

“Thus far we have proceeded well, and without suspicion, and, rely upon it, none shall fall on you. As soon as all is over, the most important post the King has to bestow shall be yours.”

“But what of Tresham?” asked Mounteagle. “He was the deliverer of this letter, and I have little faith in him.”

“Hum!” said Salisbury, after a moment's reflection, “if you think it desirable, we can remove him to the Tower, where he can be easily silenced.”

“It will be better so,” replied Mounteagle. “He may else babble hereafter. I gave him a thousand pounds to send in his own name to the conspirators the other day to lure them into our nets.”

“It shall be repaid you a hundred-fold,” replied Salisbury. “But we are observed, and must therefore separate.”

So saying, he withdrew to his own chamber, while Lord Mounteagle was ushered to the apartments allotted to him.

To return to Guy Fawkes. Arriving at Southwark, he stationed himself near Lord Mounteagle's residence. But he observed nothing to awaken his suspicions, until early in the morning he perceived a page approaching the mansion, whom, from his livery, he knew to be one of Lord Mounteagle's household, (it was, in fact, the very youth who had delivered the mysterious letter,) and from him he ascertained all that had occurred. Filled with alarm, and scarcely knowing what to do, he crossed the river, and proceeding to the cellar, examined the marks at the door, and finding all precisely as he had left it, felt certain, that whatever discovery had been made, the magazine had not been visited.

He next repaired to the house, of which he possessed the key, and was satisfied that no one had been there. Somewhat relieved by this, he yet determined to keep watch during the day, and concealing himself near the cellar, remained on the look-out till night. But

no one came; nor did anything occur to excite his suspicions. He would not, however, quit his post till about six o'clock on the following evening, when, thinking further delay might be attended with danger, he set out to White Webbs, to give his companions intelligence of the letter.

His news was received by all with the greatest alarm, and not one, except Catesby, who strove to put a bold face upon the matter, though he was full of inward misgiving, but confessed that he thought all chance of success was at an end. While deliberating upon what should be done in this fearful emergency, they were greatly alarmed by a sudden knocking without. All the conspirators concealed themselves, except Guy Fawkes, who opening the door, found, to his infinite surprise, that the summons proceeded from Tresham. He said nothing till the other had entered the house, and then suddenly drawing his dagger, held it to his throat.

“Make your shrift quickly, traitor,” he cried in a furious tone, “for your last hour is arrived. What ho!” he shouted to the others, who instantly issued from their hiding-places, “the fox has ventured into the lion's den.”

“You distrust me wrongfully,” rejoined Tresham, with more confidence than he usually exhibited in time of danger; “I am come to warn you, not betray you. Is this the return you make me for the service?”

“Villain!” cried Catesby, rushing up to him, and holding his drawn sword to his breast. “You have conveyed the letter to Lord Mounteagle.”

“It is false,” replied Tresham; “I have only just heard of it; and, in spite of the risk I knew I should run from your suspicions, I came to tell you what had happened.”

“Why did you feign illness, and depart secretly for town, instead of joining us at Coughton?” demanded Catesby.

“I will instantly explain my motive, which, though it may not be satisfactory to you on one point, will be so on another,” replied Tresham unhesitatingly, and with apparent frankness. “I was fearful you would make a further tool of me, and resolved not to join you again till a few days before the outbreak of the plot. To this determination I should have adhered, had I not learnt to-night that a letter had been transmitted by some one to Lord Mounteagle, which he had conveyed to the Earl of Salisbury. It may not convey any notion of the plot, but it is certain to occasion alarm, and I thought it my duty, in spite of every personal consideration, to give you warning. If you design to escape, there is yet time. A vessel lies in the river, in which we can all embark for Flanders.”

“Can he be innocent?” said Catesby in a whisper to Garnet.

“If I had betrayed you,” continued Tresham, “I should not have come hither. And I have no motive for such baseness, for I am in equal danger with yourselves. But though the alarm has been given, I do not think any discovery will be made. They are evidently on the wrong scent.”

“I hope so,” replied Catesby; “but I fear the contrary.”

“Shall I put him to death?” demanded Fawkes of Garnet.

“Do not sully your hands with his blood, my son,” returned Garnet. “If he has betrayed us, he will reap the traitor's reward here and hereafter. If he has not, it would be to take away a life unjustly. Let him depart. We shall feel more secure without him.”

“Will it be safe to set him free, father?” cried Fawkes.

“I think so,” replied Garnet. “We will not admit him to our further conferences; but let us act mercifully.”

The major part of the conspirators concurring in this opinion, though Fawkes and Catesby were opposed to it, Tresham was suffered to depart. As soon as he was gone, Garnet avowed that the further prosecution of the design appeared so hazardous, that it ought to be abandoned, and that, in his opinion, each of the conspirators had better consult his own safety by flight. He added, that at some future period the design might be resumed, or another planned, which might be more securely carried out.

After much discussion, all seemed disposed to acquiesce in the proposal, except Fawkes, who adhered doggedly to his purpose, and treated the danger so slightly, that he gradually brought the others round to his views. At length, it was resolved that Garnet should set out immediately for Coughton Hall, and place himself under the protection of Sir Everard Digby, and there await the result of the attempt, while the other conspirators decided upon remaining in town, in some secure places of concealment, until the event was known. Unmoved as ever, Guy Fawkes declared his intention of watching over the magazine of powder.

“If anything happens to me,” he said, “you will take care of yourselves. You well know nothing will be wrung from me.”

Catesby and the others, aware of his resolute nature, affected to remonstrate with him, but they willingly suffered him to take his own course. Attended by Bates, Garnet then

set out for Warwickshire, and the rest of the conspirators proceeded to London, where they dispersed, after appointing Lincoln's Inn Walks as their place of midnight rendezvous. Each then made preparations for sudden flight, in case it should be necessary, and Rookwood provided relays of horses all the way to Dunchurch.

Guy Fawkes alone remained at his post. He took up his abode in the cellar, resolved to blow up himself together with his foes, in case of a surprise.

On Thursday, the 1st of October, the King returned to Whitehall, and the mysterious letter was laid before him in the presence of the Privy Council by the Earl of Salisbury. James perused it carefully, but could scarcely hide his perplexity.

"Your Majesty will not fail to remark the expressions, 'a terrible blow' to the Parliament, and 'that the danger will be past as soon as you have burnt the letter,' evidently referring to combustion," observed the Earl.

"You are right, Salisbury," said James, snatching at the suggestion. "I should not wonder if these mischievous Papists mean to blow us all up with gunpowder."

"Your Majesty has received a divine illumination," returned the Earl. "Such an idea never occurred to me; but it must be as you intimate."

"Undoubtedly—undoubtedly," replied the monarch, pleased with the compliment to his sagacity, though alarmed by the danger; "but what desperate traitors they must be to imagine such a deed! Blow us up! God's mercy, that were a dreadful death! And yet that must evidently be the meaning of the passage. How else can it be construed, except by reference to the suddenness of the act, which might be as quickly performed as that paper would take to be consumed in the fire?"

"Your Majesty's penetration has discovered the truth," replied Salisbury, "and by the help of your wisdom, I will fully develop this dark design. Where, think you, the powder may lie hidden?"

"Are there any vaults beneath the Parliament House?" demanded James, trembling. "Heaven save us! We have often walked there—perhaps, over a secret mine."

"There are," replied Salisbury; "and I am again indebted to your Majesty for a most important suggestion. Not a corner in the vaults shall be left unsearched. But, perhaps you will think with me, that, in order to catch these traitors in their own trap, it will be well to defer the search till the very night before the meeting of Parliament."

“I was about to recommend such a course myself, Salisbury,” replied James.

“I was sure you would think so,” returned the Earl; “and now I must entreat you to dismiss the subject from your thoughts, and to sleep securely; for you may rely upon it (after your Majesty's discovery) that the plot shall be fully unravelled.”

The significant tone in which the Earl uttered the latter part of this speech, convinced the King that he knew more of the matter than he cared to confess; and he contented himself with saying, “Well, let it be so. I trust all to you. But I at once divined their purpose,—I at once divined it.”

The Council then broke up, and James laughed and chuckled to himself at the discernment he had displayed. Nor was he less pleased with his minister for the credit given him in the affair. But he took care not to enter the Parliament House.

On the afternoon of Monday, the th of November, the Lord Chamberlain, accompanied by the Lords Salisbury and Mouteagle, visited the cellars and vaults beneath the Parliament House. For some time, they discovered nothing to excite suspicion. At length, probably at the suggestion of Lord Mouteagle, who, as will be recollected, was acquainted with the situation of the magazine, they proceeded to the cellar, where they found the store of powder; but not meeting with any of the conspirators, as they expected, they disturbed nothing, and went away, reporting the result of their search to the King.

By the recommendation of the Earl of Salisbury, James advised that a guard should be placed near the cellar during the whole of the night, consisting of Topcliffe and a certain number of attendants, and headed by Sir Thomas Knevet, a magistrate of Westminster, upon whose courage and discretion full reliance could be placed. Lord Mouteagle also requested permission to keep guard with them to witness the result of the affair. To this the King assented, and as soon as it grew dark, the party secretly took up their position at a point commanding the entrance of the magazine.

Fawkes, who chanced to be absent at the time the search was made, returned a few minutes afterwards, and remained within the cellar, seated upon a barrel of gunpowder, the head of which he had staved in, with a lantern in one hand, and petronel in the other, till past midnight.

The fifth of November was now at hand, and the clock of the adjoining abbey had scarcely ceased tolling the hour that proclaimed its arrival, when Fawkes, somewhat wearied with his solitary watching, determined to repair, for a short space, to the

adjoining house. He accordingly quitted the cellar, leaving his lantern lighted within it in one corner.

Opening the door, he gazed cautiously around, but perceiving nothing, after waiting a few seconds, he proceeded to lock the door. While thus employed, he thought he heard a noise behind him, and turning suddenly, he beheld through the gloom several persons rushing towards him, evidently with hostile intent. His first impulse was to draw a petronel, and grasp his sword: but before he could effect his purpose, his arms were pinioned by a powerful grasp from behind, while the light of a lantern thrown full in his face revealed the barrel of a petronel levelled at his head, and an authoritative voice commanded him in the King's name to surrender.

Guy Fawkes arrested by Sir Thomas Knevet and Topcliffe

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FLIGHT OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

On the same night, and at the same hour that Guy Fawkes was captured, the other conspirators held their rendezvous in Lincoln's Inn Walks. A presentiment of the fate awaiting them filled the breasts of all, and even Catesby shared in the general depression. Plan after plan was proposed, and, as soon as proposed, rejected; and they seemed influenced only by alarm and irresolution. Feeling at length that nothing could be done, and that they were only increasing their risk by remaining together longer, they agreed to separate, appointing to meet at the same place on the following night, if their project should not, in the interim, be discovered.

“Before daybreak,” said Catesby, “I will proceed to the cellar under the Parliament House, and ascertain whether anything has happened to Guy Fawkes. My heart misgives me about him, and I reproach myself that I have allowed him to incur this peril alone.”

“Guy Fawkes is arrested,” said a voice near them, “and is at this moment under examination before the King.”

“It is Tresham who speaks,” cried Catesby; “secure him!”

The injunction was instantly obeyed. Tresham was seized, and several weapons pointed against his breast. He did not, however, appear to be dismayed, but, so far as could be discerned in the obscurity, seemed to maintain great boldness of demeanour.

“I have again ventured among you, at the hazard of my life,” he said, in a firm tone, “to give you this most important intelligence; and am requited, as I have ever been of late, with menaces and violence. Stab me, and see whether my death will avail you in this extremity. I am in equal danger with yourselves; and whether I perish by your hands, or by those of the executioner, is of little moment.”

“Let me question him before we avenge ourselves upon him,” said Catesby to Rookwood. “How do you know that Guy Fawkes is a prisoner?”

“I saw him taken,” replied Tresham, “and esteem myself singularly fortunate that I escaped the same fate. Though excluded from further share in the project, I could not divest myself of a strong desire to know how matters were going on, and I resolved to visit the cellar secretly at midnight. As I stealthily approached it, I remarked several armed figures beneath a gateway, and conjecturing their purpose, instantly concealed myself behind a projection of the wall. I had not been in this situation many minutes, when the cellar door opened, and Guy Fawkes issued from it.”

“Well!” cried Catesby, breathlessly.

“The party I had noticed immediately rushed forward, and secured him before he could offer any resistance,” continued Tresham. “After a brief struggle, certain of their number dragged him into the cellar, while others kept watch without. I should now have flown, but my limbs refused their office, and I was therefore compelled, however reluctantly, to see the end of it. In a short time Guy Fawkes was brought forth again, and I heard some one in authority give directions that he should be instantly taken to Whitehall, to be interrogated before the King and the Privy Council. He was then led away, and a guard placed at the door of the cellar. Feeling certain I should be discovered, I continued for some time in an agony of apprehension, not daring to stir. But, at length, summoning up sufficient resolution, I crept cautiously along the side of the wall, and got off unperceived. My first object was to warn you.”

“How did you become acquainted with our place of rendezvous?” demanded the elder Wright.

“I overheard you, at our last interview at White Webbs, appoint a midnight meeting in this place,” replied Tresham, “and I hurried hither in the hope of finding you, and have not been disappointed.”

“When I give the word, plunge your swords into his breast,” said Catesby, in a low tone.

“Hold!” cried Percy, taking him aside. “If we put him to death in this spot, his body will be found, and his slaughter may awaken suspicions against us. Guy Fawkes will reveal nothing.”

“Of that I am well assured,” said Catesby. “Shall we take the traitor with us to some secure retreat, where we can detain him till we learn what takes place at the palace, and if we find he has betrayed us, despatch him?”

“That would answer no good purpose,” returned Percy “The sooner we are rid of him the better. We can then deliberate as to what is best to be done.”

“You are right,” rejoined Catesby. “If he has betrayed us, life will be a burthen to him, and the greatest kindness we could render him would be to rid him of it. Let him go. Tresham,” he added, in a loud voice, “you are free. But we meet no more.”

“We have not parted yet,” cried the traitor, springing backwards, and uttering a loud cry. “I arrest you all in the King’s name.”

The signal was answered by a band of soldiers, who emerged from behind the trees where they had hitherto been concealed, and instantly surrounded the conspirators.

“It is now my turn to threaten,” laughed Tresham.

Catesby replied by drawing a petronel, and firing it in the supposed direction of the speaker. But he missed his mark. The ball lodged in the brain of a soldier who was standing beside him, and the ill-fated wretch fell to the ground.

A desperate conflict now ensued. Topcliffe, who commanded the assailing party, ordered his followers to take the conspirators alive, and it was mainly owing to this injunction that the latter were indebted for their safety. Whispering his directions to his companions, Catesby gave the word, and making a simultaneous rush forward, they broke through the opposing ranks, and instantly dispersing, and favoured by the gloom, they baffled pursuit.

“We have failed in this part of our scheme,” said Tresham to Topcliffe, as they met half an hour afterwards. “What is to be done?”

“We must take the Earl of Salisbury’s advice upon it,” returned Topcliffe. “I shall now hasten to Whitehall to see how Guy Fawkes’s interrogation proceeds, and will communicate with his lordship.”

Upon this, they separated.

None of the conspirators met again that night. Each fled in a different direction, and, ignorant of what had happened to the rest, sought some secure retreat. Catesby ran towards Chancery-lane, and passing through a narrow alley, entered the large gardens which then lay between this thoroughfare and Fetter-lane. Listening to hear whether he was pursued, and finding nothing to alarm him, he threw himself on the sod beneath a tree, and was lost in painful reflection.

“All my fair schemes are marred by that traitor, Tresham,” he muttered. “I could forgive myself for being duped by him, if I had slain him when he was in my power. But that he should escape to exult in our ruin, and reap the reward of his perfidy, afflicts me even more than failure.”

Tortured by thoughts like these, and in vain endeavouring to snatch such brief repose as would fit him for the fatigue he might have to endure on the morrow, he did not quit his position till late in the morning of a dull November day—it was, as will be recollected, the memorable Fifth—had arrived.

He then arose, and slouching his hat, and wrapping his cloak around him, shaped his course towards Fleet-street. From the knots of persons gathered together at different corners,—from their muttered discourse and mysterious looks, as well as from the general excitement that prevailed,—he felt sure that some rumour of the plot had gone abroad. Shunning observation as much as he could, he entered a small tavern near Fleet Bridge, and called for a flask of wine and some food. While discussing these, he was attracted by the discourse of the landlord, who was conversing with his guests about the conspiracy.

“I hear that all the Papists are to be hanged, drawn, and quartered,” cried the host; “and if it be true, as I have heard, that this plot is their contrivance, they deserve it. I hope I have no believer in that faith—no recusant in my house.”

“Don't insult us by any such suspicion,” cried one of the guests. “We are all loyal men—all good Protestants.”

“Do you know whether the conspirators have been discovered, sir?” asked the host of Catesby.

“I do not even know of the plot,” replied the other. “What was its object?”

“What was its object!” cried the host. “You will scarcely credit me when I tell you. I tremble to speak of it. Its object was to blow up the Parliament House, and the King and all the nobles and prelates of the land along with it.”

“Horrible!” exclaimed the guests.

“But how do you know it is a scheme of the Papists?” asked Catesby.

“Because I have been told so,” rejoined the host. “But who else could devise such a monstrous plan? It would never enter into the head or heart of a Protestant to conceive

so detestable an action. We love our King too well for that, and would shed the last drop of our blood rather than a hair of his head should be injured. But these priest-ridden Papists think otherwise. They regard him as a usurper; and having received a dispensation from the Pope to that effect, fancy it would be a pious act to remove him. There will be no tranquillity in the kingdom while one of them is left alive; and I hope his Majesty will take advantage of the present ferment to order a general massacre of them, like that of the poor Protestants on Saint Bartholomew's day in Paris."

"Ay,—massacre them," cried the guests; "that's the way. Burn their houses and cut their throats. Will it be lawful to do so without further authority, mine host? If so, we will set about it immediately."

"I cannot resolve you on that point," replied the landlord. "You had better wait a short time. I dare say their slaughter will be publicly commanded."

"Heaven grant it may be so!" cried one of the guests. "I will bear my part in the business."

Catesby arose, paid his reckoning, and strode out of the tavern.

"Do you know, mine host," said the guest who had last spoken, "I half suspect that tall fellow, who has just left us, is a Papist."

"Perhaps a conspirator," said another.

"Let us watch him," cried a third.

"Stay," cried the host, "he has paid me double my reckoning. I believe him to be an honest man and a good Protestant."

"What you say confirms my suspicions," rejoined the first speaker. "We will follow him."

On reaching Temple Bar, Catesby found the gates closed, and a guard stationed at them,—no one being allowed to pass through without examination. Not willing to expose himself to this scrutiny, Catesby turned away, and in doing so, perceived three of the persons he had just left in the tavern. The expression of their countenances satisfied him they were dogging him; but affecting not to perceive it, he retraced his steps, gradually quickening his pace until he reached a narrow street leading into Whitefriars, down which he darted. The moment his pursuers saw this, they hurried after him, shouting, "A Papist—a Papist!—a conspirator!"

But Catesby was now safe. Claiming the protection of certain Alsatians who were lounging at the door of a tavern, and offering to reward them, they instantly drew their swords, and drove the others away, while Catesby, tossing a few pieces of money to his preservers, passed through a small doorway into the Temple, and making the best of his way to the stairs, leaped into a boat, and ordered the waterman to row to Westminster. The man obeyed, and plying his oars, soon gained the middle of the stream. Little way, however, had been made, when Catesby descried a large wherry, manned by several rowers, swiftly approaching them, and instinctively comprehending whom it contained, ordered the man to rest on his oars till it had passed.

In a few moments the wherry approached them. It was filled with serjeants of the guard and halberdiers, in the midst of whom sat Guy Fawkes. Catesby could not resist the impulse that prompted him to rise, and the movement attracted the attention of the prisoner. The momentary glance they exchanged convinced Catesby that Fawkes perceived him, though his motionless features gave no token of recognition, and he immediately afterwards fixed his eyes towards heaven, as if to intimate,—at least Catesby so construed the gesture,—that his earthly career was well-nigh ended. Heaving a deep sigh, Catesby watched the wherry sweep on towards the Tower,—its fatal destination,—until it was lost to view.

“All is over, I fear, with the bravest of our band,” he thought, as he tracked its course; “but some effort must be made to save him. At all events, we will die sword in hand, and like soldiers, and not as common malefactors.”

Abandoning his intention of proceeding to Westminster, he desired the man to pull ashore, and landing at Arundel Stairs, hastened to the Strand. Here he found large crowds collected, the shops closed, and business completely at a stand. Nothing was talked of but the conspiracy, and the most exaggerated and extraordinary accounts of it were circulated and believed. Some would have it that the Parliament House was already blown up, and that the city of London itself had been set fire to in several places by the Papists. It was also stated that numerous arrests had taken place, and it was certain that the houses of several Catholic nobles and wealthy gentlemen had been searched. To such a height was the popular indignation raised, that it required the utmost efforts of the soldiery to prevent the mob from breaking into these houses, and using violence towards their inmates.

Every gate and avenue to the palace was strictly guarded, and troops of horse were continually scouring the streets. Sentinels were placed before suspected houses, and no one was suffered to enter them, or to go forth without special permission. Detachments of soldiery were also stationed at the end of all the main thoroughfares. Bars were

thrown across the smaller streets and outlets, and proclamation was made that no one was to quit the city, however urgent his business, for three days.

On hearing this announcement, Catesby saw at once that if he did not effect his escape immediately, it would be impracticable. Accordingly, he hurried towards Charing-cross, and turning up St. Martin's-lane, at the back of the King's Mews, contrived to elude the vigilance of the guard, and speeded along the lane,—for it was then literally so, and surrounded on either side by high hedges,—until he came to St. Giles's,—at this time nothing more than a few scattered houses, intermixed with trees. Here he encountered a man mounted on a powerful steed, and seeing this person look hard at him, would have drawn out of the way, if the other had not addressed him by name. He then regarded the equestrian more narrowly, and found it was Martin Heydocke.

“I have heard what has happened, Mr. Catesby,” said Martin, “and can imagine the desperate strait in which you must be placed. Take my horse,—it may aid your flight. I was sent to London by my master, Mr. Humphrey Chetham, to bring him intelligence of the result of your attempt, and I am sure I am acting in accordance with his wishes in rendering you such a service. At all events, I will risk it. Mount, sir,—mount, and make the best of your way hence.”

Catesby needed no further exhortation, but, springing into the saddle, hastily murmured his thanks, and striking into a lane on the right, rode off at a swift pace towards Highgate.

On reaching the brow of this beautiful hill, he drew in the bridle for a moment, and gazed towards the city he had just quitted. Dark and bitter were his thoughts as he fixed his eye upon Westminster Abbey, and fancied he could discern the neighbouring pile, whose destruction he had meditated. Remembering that from this very spot, when he had last approached the capital, in company with Guy Fawkes and Viviana Radcliffe, he had looked in the same direction, he could not help contrasting his present sensations with those he had then experienced. At that time he was full of ardour, and confident of success. Now, all was lost to him, and he was anxious for little more than self-preservation. Involuntarily, his eye wandered along the great city, until passing over the mighty fabric of Saint Paul's, it settled upon the Tower,—upon the place of Guy Fawkes's captivity.

“And can nothing be done for his deliverance?” sighed Catesby, as he turned away, his eyes filling with moisture “must that brave soldier die the death of a felon—must he be subjected to the torture—horror! If he had died defending himself, I should scarcely have pitied him. And if he had destroyed himself, together with his foes, as he resolved to do, I should have envied him. But the idea of what he will have to suffer in that

dreadful place—nay, what he is now, perhaps, suffering—makes the life-blood curdle in my veins. I will never fall alive into their hands.”

With this resolve, he struck spurs into his steed, and, urging him to a swift pace, dashed rapidly forward. He had ridden more than a mile, when hearing shouts behind him, he perceived two troopers galloping after him as fast as their horses could carry them. They shouted to him to stay, and as they were better mounted than he was, it was evident they would soon come up with him. Determined, however, to adhere to the resolution he had just formed, and not to yield himself with life, he prepared for a conflict, and suddenly halting, he concealed a petronel beneath his cloak, and waited till his foes drew near.

“I command you, in the King's name, to surrender,” said the foremost trooper, riding up. “You are a rebel and a traitor.”

“Be this my answer,” replied Catesby, aiming at the man, and firing with such certainty, that he fell from his horse mortally wounded. Unsheathing his sword, he then prepared to attack the other trooper. But, terrified at the fate of his comrade, the man turned his horse's head, and rode off.

Without bestowing a thought on the dying man who lay groaning in the mire, Catesby caught hold of the bridle of his horse, and satisfied that the animal was better than his own, mounted him, and proceeded at the same headlong pace as before.

In a short time he reached Finchley, where several persons rushed from their dwellings to inquire whether he brought any intelligence of the plot, rumours of which had already reached them. Without stopping, Catesby replied that most important discoveries had been made, and that he was carrying despatches from the King to Northampton. No opposition was therefore offered him, and he soon left all traces of habitation behind him. Urging his horse to its utmost, he arrived, in less than a quarter of an hour, at Chipping Barnet. Here the same inquiries were made as at Finchley, and returning the same answer—for he never relaxed his speed for a moment—he pursued his course.

In less than three quarters of an hour after this, he arrived at Saint Albans, and proceeding direct to the post-house, asked for a horse. But instead of complying with the request, the landlord of the Rose and Crown—such was the name of the hostel—instantly withdrew, and returned the next moment with an officer, who desired to speak with Catesby before he proceeded further. The latter, however, took no notice of the demand, but rode off.

The clatter of horses' hoofs behind him soon convinced him he was again pursued, and he was just beginning to consider in what way he should make a second defence, when

he observed two horsemen cross a lane on the left, and make for the main road. His situation now appeared highly perilous, especially as his pursuers, who had noticed the other horsemen at the same time as himself, shouted to them. But he was speedily relieved. These persons, instead of stopping, accelerated their pace, and appeared as anxious as he was to avoid those behind him.

They were now within a short distance of Dunstable, and were ascending the lovely downs which lie on the London side of this ancient town, when one of the horsemen in front chancing to turn round, Catesby perceived it was Rookwood. Overjoyed at the discovery, he shouted to him at the top of his voice, and the other, who it presently appeared was accompanied by Keyes, instantly stopped. In a few seconds Catesby was by their side, and a rapid explanation taking place, they all three drew up in order of battle.

By this time their pursuers had arrived within a hundred yards of them, and seeing how matters stood, and not willing to hazard an engagement, after a brief consultation, retired. The three friends then pursued their route, passed through Dunstable, and without pausing a moment on the road, soon neared Fenny Stratford. Just before they arrived at this place, Catesby's horse fell from exhaustion. Instantly extricating himself from the fallen animal, he ran by the side of his companions till they got to the town, where Rookwood, who had placed relays on the road, changed his horse, and the others were fortunate enough to procure fresh steeds.

Proceeding with unabated impetuosity, they soon cleared a few more miles, and had just left Stony Stratford behind them, when they overtook a solitary horseman, who proved to be John Wright, and a little further on they came up with Percy, and Christopher Wright.

Though their numbers were thus increased, they did not consider themselves secure, but flinging their cloaks away to enable them to proceed with greater expedition, hurried on to Towcester. Here Keyes quitted his companions, and shaped his course into Warwickshire, where he was afterwards taken, while the others, having procured fresh horses, made the best of their way to Ashby Saint Leger's.

About six o'clock, Catesby and his companions arrived at his old family seat, which he had expected to approach in triumph, but which he now approached with feelings of the deepest mortification and disappointment. They found the house filled with guests—among whom was Robert Winter—who were just sitting down to supper. Catesby rushed into the room in which these persons were assembled, covered with mud and dirt, his haggard looks and dejected appearance proclaiming that his project had failed. His friends followed, and their appearance confirmed the impression that he had produced.

Lady Catesby hastened to her son, and strove to comfort him; but he rudely repulsed her.

“What is the matter?” she anxiously inquired.

“What is the matter!” cried Catesby, in a furious tone, and stamping his foot to the ground. “All is lost! our scheme is discovered; Guy Fawkes is a prisoner, and ere long we shall all be led to the block. Yes, all!” he repeated, gazing sternly around.

“I will never be led thither with life,” said Robert Winter.

“Nor I,” added a young Catholic gentleman, named Acton of Ribbesford, who had lately joined the conspiracy. “Though the great design has failed, we are yet free, and have swords to draw, and arms to wield them.”

“Ay,” exclaimed Robert Winter, “all our friends are assembled at Dunchurch. Let us join them instantly, and we may yet stir up a rebellion which may accomplish all we can desire. I, myself, accompanied Humphrey Littleton to Dunchurch this morning, and know we shall find everything in readiness.”

“Do not despair,” cried Lady Catesby; “all will yet be well. Every member of our faith will join you, and you will soon muster a formidable army.”

“We must not yield without a blow,” cried Percy, pouring out a bumper of wine, and swallowing it at a draught.

“You are right,” said Rookwood, imitating his example. “We will sell our lives dearly.”

“If you will adhere to this resolution, gentlemen,” rejoined Catesby, “we may yet retrieve our loss. With five hundred staunch followers, who will stand by me to the last, I will engage to raise such a rebellion in England as shall not be checked, except by the acknowledgment of our rights, or the dethronement of the king.”

“We will all stand by you,” cried the others.

“Swear it,” cried Catesby, raising the glass to his lips.

“We do,” was the reply.

“Wearied as we are,” cried Catesby, “we must at once proceed to Dunchurch, and urge our friends to rise in arms with us.”

“Agreed,” cried the others.

Summoning all his household, and arming them, Catesby then set out with the rest for Dunchurch, which lay about five miles from Ashby Saint Leger's. They arrived there in about three quarters of an hour, and found the mansion crowded with Catholic gentlemen and their servants. Entering the banquet hall, they found Sir Everard Digby at the head of the board, with Garnet on his right hand. Upwards of sixty persons were seated at the table. Their arrival was greeted with loud shouts, and several of the guests drew their swords and flourished them over their heads.

“What news?” cried Sir Everard Digby. “Is the blow struck?”

“No,” replied Catesby; “we have been betrayed.”

A deep silence prevailed. A change came over the countenances of the guests. Significant glances were exchanged, and it was evident that general uneasiness prevailed.

“What is to be done?” cried Sir Everard Digby, after a pause.

“Our course is clear,” returned Catesby. “We must stand by each other. In that case, we have nothing to fear, and shall accomplish our purpose, though not in the way originally intended.”

“I will have nothing further to do with the matter,” said Sir Robert Digby of Coleshill, Sir Everard's uncle. And rising, he quitted the room with several of his followers, while his example was imitated by Humphrey Littleton and others.

“All chance for the restoration of our faith in England is over,” observed Garnet, in a tone of despondency.

“Not so, father,” replied Catesby, “if we are true to each other. My friends,” he cried, stopping those who were about to depart, “in the name of our holy religion I beseech you to pause. Much is against us now. But let us hold together, and all will speedily be righted. Every Catholic in this county, in Cheshire, in Lancashire, and Wales, must flock to our standard when it is once displayed—do not desert us—do not desert yourselves—for our cause is your cause. I have a large force at my command; so has Sir Everard Digby, and together we can muster nearly five hundred adherents. With these, we can offer such a stand as will enable us to make conditions with our opponents, or even to engage with them with a reasonable prospect of success. I am well assured, moreover, if

we lose no time, but proceed to the houses of our friends, we shall have a large army with us. Do not fall off, then. On you depends our success.”

This address was followed by loud acclamations; and all who heard it agreed to stand by the cause in which they had embarked to the last.

As Catesby left the banqueting-hall with Sir Everard, to make preparations for their departure, they met Viviana and a female attendant.

“I hear the enterprise has failed,” she cried, in a voice suffocated by emotion. “What has happened to my husband? Is he safe? Is he with you?”

“Alas! no,” replied Catesby; “he is a prisoner.”

Viviana uttered a cry of anguish, and fell senseless into the arms of the attendant.

Guy Fawkes Volume II by William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXAMINATION.

Disarmed by Sir Thomas Knevet and his followers, who found upon his person a packet of slow matches and touchwood, and bound hand and foot, Guy Fawkes was dragged into the cellar by his captors, who instantly commenced their search. In a corner behind the door they discovered a dark lantern, with a light burning within it; and moving with the utmost caution—for they were afraid of bringing sudden destruction upon themselves—they soon perceived the barrels of gunpowder ranged against the wall. Carefully removing the planks, billets, and iron bars with which they were covered, they remarked that two of the casks were staved in, while the hoops from a third were taken off, and the powder scattered around it. They also noticed that several trains were laid along the floor,—everything, in short, betokening that the preparations for the desperate deed were fully completed.

While they were making this investigation, Guy Fawkes, who, seeing that further resistance was useless, had remained perfectly motionless up to this moment, suddenly made a struggle to free himself; and so desperate was the effort, that he burst the leathern thong that bound his hands, and seizing the soldier nearest to him, bore him to the ground. He then grasped the lower limbs of another, who held a lantern, and strove to overthrow him, and wrest the lantern from his grasp, evidently intending to apply the light to the powder. And he would unquestionably have executed his terrible design, if three of the most powerful of the soldiers had not thrown themselves upon him, and overpowered him. All this was the work of a moment; but it was so startling, that Sir Thomas Knevet and Topcliffe, though both courageous men, and used to scenes of danger—especially the latter—rushed towards the door, expecting some dreadful catastrophe would take place.

“Do him no harm,” cried Knevet, as he returned to the soldiers, who were still struggling with Fawkes,—“do him no harm. It is not here he must die.”

“A moment more, and I had blown you all to perdition,” cried Fawkes. “But Heaven ordained it otherwise.”

“Heaven will never assist such damnable designs as yours,” rejoined Knevet. “Thrust him into that corner,” he added to his men, who instantly obeyed his injunctions, and held down the prisoner so firmly that he could not move a limb. “Keep him there. I will question him presently.”

“You may question me,” replied Fawkes, sternly; “but you will obtain no answer.”

“We shall see,” returned Knevet.

Pursuing the search with Topcliffe, he counted thirty-six hogsheads and casks of various sizes, all of which were afterwards found to be filled with powder. Though prepared for this discovery, Knevet could not repress his horror at it, and gave vent to execrations against the prisoner, to which the other replied by a disdainful laugh. They then looked about, in the hope of finding some document or fragment of a letter, which might serve as a clue to the other parties connected with the fell design, but without success. Nothing was found except a pile of arms; but though they examined them, no name or cipher could be traced on any of the weapons.

“We will now examine the prisoner more narrowly,” said Knevet.

This was accordingly done. On removing Guy Fawkes's doublet, a horse-hair shirt appeared, and underneath it, next his heart, suspended by a silken cord from his neck, was a small silver cross. When this was taken from him, Guy Fawkes could not repress a deep sigh.

“There is some secret attached to that cross,” whispered Topcliffe, plucking Knevet's sleeve.

Upon this, the other held it to the light, while Topcliffe kept his eye fixed upon the prisoner, and observed that, in spite of all his efforts to preserve an unmoved demeanour, he was slightly agitated.

“Do you perceive anything?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied Knevet, “there is a name. But the character is so small I cannot decipher it.”

“Let me look at it,” said Topcliffe. “This is most important,” he added, after gazing at it for a moment; “the words inscribed on it are, 'Viviana Radcliffe, Ordsall Hall' You may remember that this young lady was examined a short time ago, on suspicion of being connected with some Popish plot against the state, and committed to the Tower, whence

she escaped in a very extraordinary manner. This cross, found upon the prisoner, proves her connexion with the present plot. Every effort must be used to discover her retreat."

Another deep sigh involuntarily broke from the breast of Guy Fawkes.

"You hear how deeply interested he is in the matter," observed Topcliffe, in a low tone. "This trinket will be of infinite service to us in future examinations, and may do more for us with this stubborn subject even than the rack itself."

"You are right," returned Knevet. "I will now convey him to Whitehall, and acquaint the Earl of Salisbury with his capture."

"Do so," replied Topcliffe. "I have a further duty to perform. Before morning I hope to net the whole of this wolfish pack."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Knevet. "Have you any knowledge of the others?"

Topcliffe smiled significantly.

"Time will show," he said. "But if you do not require me further, I will leave you."

With this, he quitted the cellar, and joined the Earl of Mounteagle and Tresham, who were waiting for him outside at a little distance from the cellar. After a brief conference, it was arranged, in compliance with the Earl of Salisbury's wishes, that if they failed in entrapping the conspirators, nothing should be said about the matter. He then departed with Tresham. Their subsequent proceedings have already been related.

By Sir Thomas Knevet's directions, Guy Fawkes was now raised by two of the soldiers, and led out of the cellar. As he passed through the door, he uttered a deep groan.

"You groan for what you have done, villain," said one of the soldiers.

"On the contrary," rejoined Fawkes, sternly, "I groan for what I have not done."

He was then hurried along by his conductors, and conveyed through the great western gate, into the palace of Whitehall, where he was placed in a small room, the windows of which were strongly grated.

Before quitting him, Sir Thomas Knevet put several questions to him, but he maintained a stern and obstinate silence. Committing him to the custody of an officer of the guard,

whom he enjoined to keep strict guard over him, as he valued his life, Knevet then went in search of the Earl of Salisbury.

The Secretary, who had not retired to rest, and was anxiously awaiting his arrival, was delighted with the success of the scheme. They were presently joined by Lord Mounteagle; and after a brief conference it was resolved to summon the Privy Council immediately, to rouse the King, and acquaint him with what had occurred, and to interrogate the prisoner in his presence.

“Nothing will be obtained from him, I fear,” said Knevet. “He is one of the most resolute and determined fellows I ever encountered.”

And he then related the desperate attempt made by Fawkes in the vault to blow them all up.

“Whether he will speak or not, the King must see him,” said Salisbury. As soon as Knevet was gone, the Earl observed to Mounteagle, “You had now better leave the palace. You must not appear further in this matter, except as we have arranged. Before morning, I trust we shall have the whole of the conspirators in our power, with damning proofs of their guilt.”

“By this time, my lord, they are in Tresham's hands,” replied Mounteagle.

“If he fails, not a word must be said,” observed Salisbury. “It must not be supposed we have moved in the matter. All great statesmen have contrived treasons, that they might afterwards discover them; and though I have not contrived this plot, I have known of its existence from the first, and could at any time have crushed it had I been so minded. But that would not have answered my purpose. And I shall now use it as a pretext to crush the whole Catholic party, except those on whom, like yourself, I can confidently rely.”

“Your lordship must admit that I have well seconded your efforts,” observed Mounteagle.

“I do so,” replied Salisbury, “and you will not find me ungrateful. Farewell! I hope soon to hear of our further success.”

Mounteagle then took his departure, and Salisbury immediately caused all such members of the Privy Council as lodged in the palace to be aroused, desiring they might be informed that a terrible plot had been discovered, and a conspirator arrested. In a short time, the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Marr, Lord Hume, the Earl of Southampton,

Lord Henry Howard, Lord Mountjoy, Sir George Hume, and others, were assembled; and all eagerly inquired into the occasion of the sudden alarm.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Salisbury had himself repaired to the King's bedchamber, and acquainted him with what had happened. James immediately roused himself, and desired the chamberlain, who accompanied the Earl, to quit the presence.

“Will it be safe to interrogate the prisoner here?” he asked.

“I will take care your Majesty shall receive no injury,” replied Salisbury; “and it is absolutely necessary you should examine him before he is committed to the Tower.”

“Let him be brought before me, then, directly,” said the King. “I am impatient to behold a wretch who has conceived so atrocious—so infernal a design against me, and against my children. Hark 'e, Salisbury, one caution I wish to observe. Let a captain of the guard, with his drawn sword in hand, place himself between me and the prisoner, and let two halberdiers stand beside him, and if the villain moves a step, bid them strike him dead. You understand?”

Guy Fawkes interrogated by King James the First

“Perfectly,” replied Salisbury, bowing.

“In that case, you may take off his bonds—that is, if you think it prudent to do so—not otherwise,” continued James. “I would not have the knave suppose he can awe me.”

“Your Majesty's commands shall be fulfilled to the letter,” returned the Earl.

“Lose no time, Salisbury,” cried James, springing out of bed, and beginning to dress himself without the assistance of his chamberlain.

The Earl hastily retired, and ordered the attendants to repair to their royal master. He next proceeded to the chamber where Guy Fawkes was detained, and ordered him to be unbound, and brought before the King. When the prisoner heard this mandate, a slight smile crossed his countenance, but he instantly resumed his former stern composure. The smile, however, did not escape the notice of Salisbury, and he commanded the halberdiers to keep near to the prisoner, and if he made the slightest movement in the King's presence, instantly to despatch him.

Giving some further directions, the Earl then led the way across a court, and entering another wing of the palace, ascended a flight of steps, and traversed a magnificent corridor. Guy Fawkes followed, attended by the guard. They had now reached the

antechamber leading to the royal sleeping apartment, and “Salisbury ascertained from the officers in attendance that all was in readiness. Motioning the guard to remain where they were, he entered the inner room alone, and found James seated on a chair of state near the bed, surrounded by his council;—the Earl of Marr standing on his right hand, and the Duke of Lennox on his left, all anxiously awaiting his arrival. Behind the King were stationed half a dozen halberdiers.

“The prisoner is without,” said Salisbury. “Is it your Majesty's pleasure that he be admitted?”

“Ay, let him come in forthwith,” replied James. “Stand by me, my lords. And do you, varlets, keep a wary eye upon him. There is no saying what he may attempt.”

Salisbury then waved his hand. The door was thrown open, and an officer entered the room, followed by Guy Fawkes, who marched between two halberdiers. When within a couple of yards of the King, the officer halted, and withdrew a little on the right, so as to allow full view of the prisoner, while he extended his sword between him and the King. Nothing could be more undaunted than the looks and demeanour of Fawkes. He strode firmly into the room, and without making any reverence, folded his arms upon his breast, and looked sternly at James.

“A bold villain!” cried the King, as he regarded him with curiosity not unmixed with alarm. “Who, and what are you, traitor?”

“A conspirator,” replied Fawkes.

“That I know,” rejoined James, sharply. “But how are you called?”

“John Johnson,” answered Fawkes. “I am servant to Mr. Thomas Percy.”

“That is false,” cried Salisbury. “Take heed that you speak the truth, traitor, or the rack shall force it from you.”

“The rack will force nothing from me,” replied Fawkes, sternly; “neither will I answer any question asked by your lordship.”

“Leave him to me, Salisbury,—leave him to me,” interposed James. “And it was your hellish design to blow us all up with gunpowder?” he demanded.

“It was,” replied Fawkes.

“And how could you resolve to destroy so many persons, none of whom have injured you?” pursued James.

“Dangerous diseases require desperate remedies,” replied Fawkes. “Milder means have been tried, but without effect. It was God's pleasure that this scheme, which was for the benefit of his holy religion, should not prosper, and therefore I do not repine at the result.”

“And are you so blinded as to suppose that Heaven can approve the actions of him who raises his hand against the King—against the Lord's anointed?” cried James.

“He is no king who is excommunicated by the apostolic see,” replied Fawkes.

“This to our face!” cried James, angrily. “Have you no remorse—no compunction for what you have done?”

“My sole regret is that I have failed,” replied Fawkes.

“You will not speak thus confidently on the rack,” said James.

“Try me,” replied Fawkes.

“What purpose did you hope to accomplish by this atrocious design?” demanded the Earl of Marr.

“My main purpose was to blow back the beggarly Scots to their native mountains,” returned Fawkes.

“This audacity surpasses belief,” said James. “Mutius Scævola, when in the presence of Porsenna, was not more resolute. Hark 'e, villain, if I give you your life, will you disclose the names of your associates?”

“No,” replied Fawkes.

“They shall be wrung from you,” cried Salisbury.

Fawkes smiled contemptuously. “You know me not,” he said.

“It is idle to interrogate him further,” said James. “Let him be removed to the Tower.”

“Be it so,” returned Salisbury; “and when next your Majesty questions him, I trust it will be in the presence of his confederates.”

“Despite the villain's horrible intent, I cannot help admiring his courage,” observed James, in a low tone; “and were he as loyal as he is brave, he should always be near our person.”

With this, he waved his hand, and Guy Fawkes was led forth. He was detained by the Earl of Salisbury's orders till the morning,—it being anticipated that before that time the other conspirators would be arrested. But as this was not the case, he was placed in a wherry, and conveyed, as before related, to the Tower.

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