

PRESTON FIGHT OR THE
INSURRECTION

OF 1715

BY

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BOOK I. — THE EARL OF DERWENTWATER

CHAPTER I

Dilston Castle

A **SPLENDID** place was Dilston Castle in Northumberland, the seat of the young Earl of Derwentwater, in the early part of the last century.

Crowning an eminence, overlooking a most picturesque district, approached by a long avenue of chestnut trees, and surrounded by woods, extending to the banks of the Tyne, the mansion formed a conspicuous object from whichever side it might be viewed.

Dilston Castle could not boast antiquity, having only been built some sixty years prior to the date of our story, by Sir James Radclyffe, subsequently created Earl of Derwentwater by James the Second, but it occupied the site of an old Border fortress, called Devilstone—since modified to Dilston—that had often resisted the incursions of the Scots.

Of this stronghold, which dated back to the time of Henry the First, only a single memorial was left, in the shape of a grey stone tower—all the rest having been demolished.

The mansion formed a square, and enclosed a spacious court with a fountain in the centre. The principal entrance, approached by a large perron, was inside the court, and faced a grand gateway, that terminated the chestnut avenue.

Close by, though screened by trees, was a little chapel, wherein the rites of Rome were performed—the Radclyffes being strict adherents to the old religion. Hereabouts, also, stood the grey stone tower, before alluded to, and some chambers within it were still used.

As may be supposed, from its size, the mansion contained some magnificent apartments, and these were sumptuously furnished. Large gardens, laid out in the formal French style, and ornamented with terraces, flights of stone steps, statues, and fountains, added to the attractions of the place.

Beneath the acclivity, whereon stood the castle, was a romantic and beautiful dell, the sides of which were clothed with brushwood. Through the midst of the ravine rushed a stream, called the Devil's Water—bright and clear, despite its name—that hurried on, unless checked by a huge rock, or some other impediment, when it spread out into a pool. In places, the glen had a weird look, and many strange legends were connected with it.

The picturesque beauty of the spot was materially heightened by a lofty bridge flung across the hollow, and leading from the castle to the deer-park.

From this bridge, the stately structure, with the charming and diversified scenery around it, could be contemplated to the greatest advantage.

The park boasted many ancient oaks and ash-trees, and was well stocked with deer; the neighbouring moors abounded with grouse, the smaller streams with trout, and the Tyne with salmon. Better shooting and fishing could not be had than at Dilston.

The noble owner of this proud mansion, and the extensive domains attached to it, had succeeded to the title and estates on the death of his father, the second earl, some five years previously. In addition to Dilston, Langley Castle, and Simonburn in Northumberland, he had large estates in Cumberland, and one side of the lovely lake of Derwentwater, from which he derived his title, belonged to him. Moreover, he had lead mines at Alston Moor that produced a very large revenue.

Notwithstanding his immense wealth and importance in the county, the young earl led a very retired life. As a Roman Catholic, he laboured under disabilities that prevented him from taking part in public affairs. But he maintained a numerous establishment, and was extremely hospitable, and his chaplain and almoner, Father Norman, distributed a tithe of his large income in charity.

Loyal to the sovereign he recognised, firm in the faith he professed, devout, charitable, courteous, courageous—such was the Earl of Derwentwater at twenty- two, when we first meet him.

The young earl's personal appearance was extremely prepossessing. Tall, and well-proportioned, he had finely-formed features, with blue eyes and fair locks. He was fond of all manly exercises, a daring horseman, a master of fence, and

a good shot. Several important alliances had been proposed to him, but he was still unmarried.

Charles Radclyffe, his only brother, and his junior by a year and a half, resided with him at Dilston. There was a great personal resemblance between them. Like his brother, Charles Radclyffe was an enthusiastic Jacobite, and ready to run any risk for the restoration of the Stuarts.

Viscount Radclyffe and Langley, as the Earl of Derwentwater was styled in his father's lifetime, had been brought up at the court of the exiled monarch, James the Second, at Saint Germain, as a companion to the young prince, James Edward, who was about his own age, and to whom he was nearly allied by consanguinity—Lord Radclyffe's mother being a natural daughter of Charles the Second,

Constantly together, and sharing the same studies and the same sports, the cousins, as they were called, became greatly attached to each other, and no change had taken place in their sentiments when James the Second breathed his last, dying, as those in attendance on him avouched, in the odour of sanctity.

By the express desire of Queen Mary of Modena, Lord Radclyffe remained at Saint Germain until after the death of William the Third, and the accession of Anne, mixed up in the various Jacobite plots, of which that court was then the hot-bed, until the decease of his own father, in 1705, compelled him to return to England, in order to take possession of his estates.

On his departure the young earl renewed his professions of loyalty and devotion to the Chevalier de Saint George, as the prince was now designated, and promised to hold himself in constant readiness for a summons to rise. He also took an affectionate leave of the queen, who embraced him like a mother, and gave him her blessing.

Five years flew by, during which an attempt at invasion was made by the Chevalier de Saint George with a squadron under the command of the renowned Forbin, but the prince was unable to disembark, and consequently Lord Derwentwater was not called upon to join him.

Discouraged by this ill-success, and receiving no further support from Louis the Fourteenth, the prince joined the French army under Villars, and fought bravely at Malplaquet.

Ever since his return from Saint Germain Lord Derwentwater had resided at Dilston. He lacked a mother's care, for the countess had long been dead, but he was watched over and counselled by Father Norman, an excellent man, who had been chaplain to the late earl.

In anticipation of a sudden summons, Lord Derwentwater kept a large collection of arms concealed in the old tower previously described. He had plenty of horses in his stables and elsewhere, and with his servants and retainers, and the number of miners in his employ, he could at any time raise two or three hundred men, and arm and equip them.

Until lately, a secret correspondence had been constantly kept up between the earl and the Chevalier de Saint George, but for some months no letter had been received from the prince.

CHAPTER II

The Chevalier de Saint George

ONE morning, at this juncture, the young earl, mounted on his favourite dapple- grey steed, rode out from the castle, and took his way down the chestnut avenue, accompanied by his brother, Charles Radclyffe.

The two young equestrians made a very gallant appearance, being attired in scarlet riding-coats, edged with gold lace, feathered hats, long neck-cloths, laced ruffles, and boots ascending above the knee. The grooms wore green riding- coats laced with gold, and green velvet caps.

The earl, who was riding to Corbridge, which was not very far off, proceeded at a leisurely pace, and occasionally halted to examine some object in the grounds, or listen to an appeal to his charity. In the latter case the applicant was sent on to the castle to state his case to Father Norman.

The morning was bright and clear, and the country looked so charming that the earl determined to extend his ride along the banks of the Tyne as soon as his business at Corbridge was finished; but he had not quitted the avenue when a horseman entered it, who was evidently proceeding to the castle.

This person might be a courier, for he rode a post-horse, and was followed by a post-boy, who carried his portmanteau; and there was nothing in his grey riding-dress to indicate rank. He had pistols in his girdle, and a hanger by his side. But he rode well, though provided only with a sorry hack, and had a military bearing. In age he could not be more than three-and-twenty, if so much. He was rather above the middle height, and slightly built, and his features were handsome and expressive.

On seeing the earl and his brother the stranger immediately slackened his pace, and rode slowly towards them.

Lord Derwentwater gazed at him in astonishment, and as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

At length he turned to his brother and exclaimed:

"By Heaven, 'tis he!"

"He! who?" cried Charles Radclyffe.

"The Chevalier de Saint George," replied the earl, under his breath.

"Impossible!" said the other. "He would never come here in this manner, and without giving us some notice of his design."

"'Tis the prince, I repeat," cried Derwentwater; "I cannot be mistaken. But the greatest caution must be observed, or the post-boy's suspicions may be aroused."

Next moment the stranger came up, and respectfully saluting the earl, told him he was the bearer of an important despatch, whereupon Lord Derwentwater invited him to the castle, and turning round, proceeded in that direction, keeping the supposed courier near him, while Charles Radclyffe, who had now recognised the stranger from his likeness to the portraits of the prince, rode at a little distance behind them.

The meeting was so cleverly managed that the grooms saw nothing extraordinary in it, and the post-boy was completely duped.

"I never had a harder task than to repress my delight at beholding your majesty," said Lord Derwentwater. "You have indeed taken me by surprise."

"Had it been possible I would have given you some intimation of my arrival and intended visit to you," replied the prince, "but I only landed at Sunderland yesterday, and came on betimes this morning. Do not imagine I am come to summon you to arms, though my partisans in Scotland are ready to rise, and would at once join my standard were I to display it. No, cousin, my errand is pacific."

"Pacifical!" exclaimed the earl.

"My purpose is to obtain an interview with my sister, Queen Anne; and if I succeed, I believe no insurrection will be necessary, for I am persuaded she will agree to appoint me her successor. You must accompany me to London, cousin."

"I will do whatever your majesty enjoins," replied Lord Derwentwater, greatly astonished by what he heard. "But it is my duty to tell you that you will run

great risk, while I very much fear you will not accomplish your object. Did you consult the queen, your mother, before setting out on this expedition?"

"I did, cousin, and must frankly own that she endeavoured to dissuade me from the attempt, for, as you are aware, her majesty deems Anne an unnatural daughter, and destitute of all feeling for the brother whose throne she has usurped. It may be so. Yet, cold as she is, Anne cannot be insensible to the king, our father's, dying message, which I propose to deliver to her."

"Nothing will move her, sire, depend upon it," said the earl. "Queen Anne is so strongly opposed to the Roman Catholic religion, that unless your majesty will consent to change your faith she will turn a deaf ear to your entreaties."

"We shall see," replied the Chevalier de Saint George. "At all events, I shall have an answer from her own lips, and shall then know how to act. As I have just told you, the queen, my mother, strove to combat my determination, but, finding I was not to be shaken, she entreated me to take you with me. To this I readily agreed, as I knew I could rely on your devotion. I embarked at Dunkerque without a single attendant, and in this disguise, and landed yesterday at Sunderland."

"And right glad I am to welcome your majesty to Dilston," said the earl. "But let me implore you to change your plans, and instead of supplicating Queen Anne for the crown, that of right belongs to yourself, snatch it from her brow! Should you decide thus—and I believe it will be for the best—I will undertake, within a week, to raise a large force—while thousands will flock to your standard in Scotland. Your majesty will do well to weigh my proposal, ere setting out on a hazardous expedition to London. Here you have a mansion you can call your own—servants you can command—friends at your disposal—and in a few days you will have an army. Be advised by me, my gracious liege, and abandon this wild scheme. Suffer me to get together your adherents. Let me send off messengers without delay to Lord Widdrington, Tom Errington, of Beaufront, John Shaftoe, Swinbourn, Charleton, Clavering, and others in the county, to collect all their retainers."

"But they are unprepared," remarked the prince.

"Pardon me, my liege. The friends I have named are always prepared, and the news that your majesty is here would rouse them all to come at once. I ought to have added to the list Jack Hall of Otterburn, and Tom Forster of

Bamborough. They are High Church Tories, and will bring many others with them."

"No doubt, they would prove an important acquisition," said the prince. "But I will not try to dethrone Anne till I have given her the chance of acting fairly towards me. I am very sanguine as to the result of my interview with her."

"Heaven grant your majesty may not be disappointed!" rejoined Lord Derwentwater. "I will say no more. Whenever it shall please you to set out to London, I shall be ready to attend you."

"I will remain here till to-morrow, cousin," said the prince. "On some future occasion I hope to be your guest for a longer time; but though Dilston is a charming place, and I should like to see all its beauties, it must not detain me now."

They were at the end of the avenue, but, before passing through the gateway, Lord Derwentwater said to the prince:

"Your majesty had best dismount here, and get rid of the post-boy."

On this the prince sprang from his horse, while the gate-porter by the earl's directions paid the post-boy, and took the portmanteau from him.

Having received a handsome gratuity for himself, the man then departed with his horses in tolerably good humour; though, aware of the earl's hospitality, he had hoped to be regaled in the servants' hall.

Meanwhile, Lord Derwentwater and his brother having alighted, the party walked across the great quadrangular court—the prince pausing occasionally to look around, and express his admiration.

"By my faith! cousin, you have a splendid house," he cried. "'Tis quite a palace."

"Why not take possession of it, my liege?" replied Derwentwater.

"You tempt me greatly. But no! I must not be diverted from my purpose."

They then ascended the magnificent flight of stone steps, and entered a spacious hall—the door being thrown open by a butler and several other servants in the earl's rich livery.

"Little did I dream, when I set forth an hour ago, whom I should bring back as my guest," observed Lord Derwentwater.

"You have often told me at Saint Germain's how rejoiced you would be to see me here," rejoined the prince; "and now you perceive I have taken you at your word. But you are very remiss, cousin—pray present your brother to me!"

The presentation then took place, but without any ceremony, on account of the servants, and the prince shook hands very heartily with Charles Radclyffe.

Just then, an elderly personage, with silver locks, that fell over his shoulders, and wearing a priestly garb, entered the hall. It was Father Norman, who had come to see whom the earl had brought with him. The good priest had a kindly and benevolent expression of countenance, and fixed his keen grey eyes inquiringly on the stranger, with whose appearance he was greatly struck.

After a few moments' scrutiny he consulted Lord Derwentwater by a look, and his suspicions being confirmed, he most respectfully returned the reverence made to him by the prince.

Having given some orders to the butler, Lord Derwentwater conducted his guest to the library which opened from the hall, and they were followed by Charles Radclyffe and the priest.

Further disguise was now unnecessary, and no inquisitive observer being present, the prince was treated by all with the respect that was his due.

The impression of the priest and Charles Radclyffe was that he was come to prepare a rising, and when they learnt his real design they could scarcely conceal their disappointment. Neither of them, however, ventured to offer a remonstrance, till Father Norman, being urged by the prince to speak out, said:

"I fear your majesty will find the queen impracticable. Moreover, she has already named the Elector of Hanover her successor."

"But she may change her mind, good father."

"Her ministers will not allow her to do so, my liege. They are resolved upon a Protestant succession—and so is she. Renounce your religion, and you will succeed—not otherwise."

"I have already said as much to his majesty," observed Lord Derwentwater. "But he entertains a better opinion of the queen than I do."

"I am unwilling to believe that she will disregard her father's dying injunctions," said the prince. "Bear in mind that she has never seen me. When we meet the voice of natural affection will make itself heard. She will then become sensible of the great wrong she has done me, and hasten to make atonement. She will feel that by her wicked and unnatural conduct she has incurred Heaven's displeasure. Her own children have been taken from her. Other severe chastisements may follow, if not averted. These are the arguments I shall employ."

"And they will fail in effect, my liege, because her heart is hardened, and she is blind to her sinfulness," said the priest. "She would rather sacrifice her brother than help to re-establish our religion."

"Trust me, my liege, Father Norman has formed a just estimate of the queen's character," said Lord Derwentwater. "'Tis vain to appeal to good feelings, where none exist."

"But I do not believe she is so utterly devoid of natural affection as her conduct would seem to bespeak," said the prince. "You shall judge from what I am about to tell you. I have solicited a private interview with her in Saint James's Palace, and she has granted my request."

"Granted it!" exclaimed Lord Derwentwater in astonishment, that was shared by the others.

"Ay," replied the prince. "My letter was conveyed by a faithful friend, and the answer to it was that her majesty would see me. Nothing more. But that was all I asked. She felt compunction for her ill-doing, or she would have refused my request."

"But how will you obtain admittance to her, my liege?" asked Lord Derwentwater.

"Easily," replied the prince. "The Earl of Mar will usher me into her presence."

"This certainly seems favourable, and alters my view of the matter," said the earl. "Yet it may be a device of Harley to ensnare your majesty. Are you certain that your letter reached the queen?"

"My emissary would not deceive me," replied the prince. "He is as loyal as yourself."

"If I may speak plainly to your majesty," remarked Charles Radclyffe, "I would say that I have still great doubts. The queen may delude you with false hopes, to keep you quiet."

"Nay, she will keep her promise if she makes it. Of that I am convinced," said Father Norman.

At this juncture the butler entered to say that luncheon was served, upon which the earl conducted his guest to the dining-room, where a very substantial repast awaited them.

The Chevalier de Saint George had not breakfasted, and his early morning's ride having given him a good appetite, he did ample justice to the broiled trout from the Devil's Water, and the cutlets of Tyne salmon set before him.

As the servants were present during the repast, he was treated merely as an ordinary visitor, and the conversation between him and the earl was conducted entirely in French.

This circumstance excited the suspicion of Mr. Newbiggin, the butler, who from the first had been struck by the stranger's appearance and manner, and he soon became convinced that Mr. Johnson, as the prince was called, was a very important personage.

On quitting the dining-room, the butler found the earl's chief valet in the entrance-hall, and said to him:

"I can't make out this Mr. Johnson, Thirlwall. I should like to know what you think of him?"

"I'm puzzled, I own," replied the other. "He seems to me like a Frenchman."

"No more a Frenchman than his lordship is, Thirlwall. But I shouldn't wonder," said the butler, knowingly, "if he has been brought up at a French court."

"At the Court of Saint Germain's?" cried Thirlwall.

"Precisely," said the butler.

"Why, you seem to insinuate that it's the Chevalier de Saint George in person, Newbiggin."

"I've my own idea on that point, Thirlwall," said the butler. "If it should turn out as I suspect, we're on the eve of an insurrection. The prince wouldn't come here on a trifling errand. But keep quiet for the present—this is mere conjecture."

The butler then returned to the dining-room, while Mr. Thirlwall hurried to the servants' hall, where he retailed all he had just heard, with some additions of his own.

In less than half an hour it was known among the whole household that his majesty, King James the Third, had arrived, in disguise, at the castle.

CHAPTER III

Nicholas Ribbleton

IF any confirmation were wanted of the suspicions now generally entertained by Mr. Newbiggin and the rest of the servants that a rising was imminent, it was afforded by the earl, who took his guest, as soon as luncheon was over, to see the arms stored in the old tower.

The inspection occupied some time, for three or four chambers had to be visited, each full of muskets, calivers, pistols, cartouche-boxes, powder-horns, shot-bags, belts, swords of various sizes and make, hatchets, pikes, halberts, black leather caps, drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, fifes, and other martial instruments. In a vault beneath the basement floor were bestowed several barrels of gunpowder.

When the examination was finished the prince expressed himself delighted with the preparations made.

"You told me you could arm and equip two or three hundred men, cousin," he said. "And I now perceive you did not exaggerate. But where are the men?"

"I have but to ride to Alston Moor, my liege, to find them, and bring them back with me," said Charles Radclyffe.

"Men and arms are ready," said the earl. "Shall we raise the standard?" he added, lifting up the flag.

At this moment, as if in response to the appeal, shouts were heard outside, and several voices exclaimed:

"Long live King James the Third!"

"Is this premeditated, cousin?" said the prince.

"No, by my faith," replied the earl. "But it seems your majesty's presence has been discovered—how I know not. Shall I send away the troublesome varlets?"

"'Twere needless, since the discovery has been made," said the prince, who did not seem much displeased.

"Your majesty need feel no uneasiness," observed Father Norman, who formed one of the party. "There are no traitors at Dilston. All here are loyal, and would die rather than betray you."

"On that assurance I shall not hesitate to show myself to them," said the prince. "Attend me, I pray you, cousin."

The massive door being thrown open, a singular spectacle was seen.

In front of the tower was collected a large number of the household, with several out-door servants—grooms, game-keepers, huntsmen, gardeners, and their assistants—most of them young and active-looking, though the coachman was old and stout, and there were three or four others, who must have lived in the family for half a century. But these were just as enthusiastic as their comrades.

When the prince appeared another loud shout arose, and would have been renewed had not the earl commanded silence.

"I thank you heartily, my good friends, for this manifestation of your zeal," said the prince. "Do not imagine, because I have come hither in disguise, that I am afraid to trust myself with you, or, in the slightest degree, doubt your fidelity. The Earl of Derwentwater, your master, is my best friend, and dear to me as a brother. No one can live with him without sharing his sentiments. I could not, therefore, have any distrust. But I feared that in the excess of your zeal you might not keep guard upon your tongues, and I am very desirous that my landing in England, and arrival at Dilston, should not be known for the present. Secrecy, as you will easily understand, is essential to the success of my projects."

A murmur of delight arose from the assemblage, but further shouting was checked by Newbiggin, who, stepping forward, made a profound obeisance to the prince, and said:

"Your majesty need fear no indiscretion on our part. I will answer for my fellow-servants. We know the importance of our trust."

"Ay, that we do," cried several voices.

"I am perfectly satisfied," said the prince; "and I shall feel easier now that this explanation has taken place. Again accept my thanks for your manifestation of

sympathy and attachment to me. I cannot speak to you all, but there is one among you to whom I would fain say a word."

And he designated a tall, fine old man, standing at the back of the assemblage.

"That is Nicholas Ribbleton, my liege," said Newbiggin. "He lived with his lordship's grandfather."

"And was much liked by him, and by my father," added the earl. "Nicholas Ribbleton will always have a home at Dilston."

"Bring him to me," said the prince.

Summoned by the butler, old Ribbleton would have thrown himself at the prince's feet, but the latter prevented him, and gave him his hand, which the old man pressed devotedly to his heart.

"I never expected such an honour as this," he said. "Your majesty is too gracious to me. I have always been devoted to your royal house, and shall continue so to the last. It may sound boastful when I say that both King Charles the Second, and your august father, King James, deigned to notice me. Long have I desired to behold your majesty, and now the wish is gratified." Here emotion choked his utterance for a moment, but he added, "If I live to see your majesty on the throne I shall die content. Long have we looked for your coming, but now you are come, don't turn back till you have won the victory. You have right on your side. The crown belongs to your majesty, and not to Queen Anne. If she won't surrender it, take it! Such is the advice that an old man, who has spoken to the king your father, and your royal uncle, dares to give you. Pardon my freedom, sire!"

"I not only pardon it, but am obliged to you for speaking so freely," replied the prince, in a gracious and encouraging tone. "What will you say if Queen Anne should surrender the crown to me?"

"I shall say that a miracle has been worked," said Ribbleton. "But judging by her conduct, it seems very unlikely that she will act justly. Were I your majesty, I wouldn't trust her promises, however fair they may be."

"Thou art too bold, Ribbleton," interposed Lord Derwentwater.

"Nay, I am not offended," said the prince. "There is wisdom in the old man's words. I will have some further talk with you anon, my good friend," he added to Ribbleton, who made an obeisance, and retired highly pleased.

At the same time Newbiggin gave a sign to the rest of the household, and the place was quickly cleared.

CHAPTER IV

The Little Chapel

LORD DERWENTWATER then took his royal guest to the stables, and showed him his fine stud of horses, with which the prince was greatly pleased. After looking over the collection, his highness made choice of a strong hackney for his proposed journey. The earl offered him his own dapple-grey steed, but the prince would not deprive him of his favourite.

No precise orders were given, but two of the grooms were told that they might have to set out for London on the morrow, and must therefore make all needful arrangements. The men asked no questions, but promised that his lordship's injunctions should be attended to.

Father Norman had not accompanied the party to the stables, but proceeded to the little chapel before alluded to, where he was joined by the prince, and received his highness's confession.

Mass was afterwards performed, at which most of the household assisted—several of the female servants being present.

It was a pleasing sight to see the little place of worship on that interesting occasion. Doubtless, many of the persons there assembled thought more of the prince than of their devotions, but their behaviour was extremely decorous.

The chapel was not larger than an ordinary room, and very simply furnished. In a small oaken pew at the upper end, on the right of the altar, sat the Chevalier de Saint George—almost concealed from view. In a similar pew on the left were the Earl of Derwentwater and his brother. On wooden benches behind were collected the servants—the women sitting by themselves on the left. Many a curious eye was fixed on the prince whenever he arose. The solemn service was admirably performed by Father Norman.

Strange thoughts possessed Lord Derwentwater. In the family vault beneath the chapel lay his sire and grandsire, both of whom had been devoted to the Stuarts. Might not their shades be hovering around? Exceedingly superstitious, the earl thought so, and so did Charles Radclyffe.

The congregation had dispersed—long to remember the event.

Before quitting the chapel, the prince said to the earl:

"Are not some of your family buried here, my lord?"

"My father and my grandfather," replied the other. "And if aught could rouse them from their slumbers it would be your majesty's presence."

The prince remained silent for a moment, looking very grave, and then said:

"You will scarce credit me when I tell you that I saw—or fancied I saw—two figures standing between me and the altar. Their mournful looks seemed to convey a warning. I saw them only for a moment. They pointed to you and your brother, and then disappeared. What think you of this? Were they phantoms?"

"I know not what to think," replied the earl. "No such appearances have ever been beheld before, but then no prince of your royal house has ever before knelt within this chapel. We will consult Father Norman anon. Meantime, let me take your majesty to the garden. You must banish these gloomy thoughts."

A stroll through the charming gardens quickly produced the desired effect. As yet the prince had seen nothing of the beauties of the place, and was unacquainted with the commanding position of the castle. The view from the terrace enchanted him, and he remained for some time contemplating the lovely scene in silence, and then broke out into raptures. By his own request he was next taken to the deer-park, and halted on the bridge to look at the castle. It has already been mentioned that this was the best point from which the stately structure could be surveyed, and the prince was of that opinion.

"How well the castle looks as it towers above us," he cried, "and what a striking picture it makes, combined with this deep glen, the rushing stream, and yonder woods, with the Tyne in the distance! You could not have a nobler residence, cousin."

"Undoubtedly, my liege, I ought to be content with it," rejoined the earl; "and so I am. Yet I must own I should prefer the old stronghold that once stood there, and of which you have just seen a relic; and had it not been demolished by my grandfather, Earl Francis, I would have preserved it. Imagine how well the stern old pile must have looked, perched on that height, and how completely it must have harmonised with this ravine, and with the woods. Its position and strength considered, it is not surprising that the Scottish marauders, though

they often came in force, could never take it. The fortress might have stood a siege in our own time."

"Very true," replied the prince, smiling. "And on that account its destruction may be regretted. Otherwise, the modern building is most to my taste. I could desire nothing better."

"I trust, ere long, Windsor Castle may be yours, my liege," said Lord Derwentwater; "and then you will think little of Dilston."

"Dilston cannot vie with Windsor, that is certain, cousin. Nevertheless, it is a splendid place, and you are fortunate in possessing it. The mansion only wants one thing to make it perfect. You can guess what I mean. But I will tell you plainly. A lady ought to grace it."

"I shall wait till your majesty is restored before I take a wife," said the earl.

"Why wait?" said the Chevalier de Saint George. "Has no fair Northumbrian damsel caught your eye? I am told Tom Forster's sister, Dorothy, is marvellously beautiful. She may not be rich, but you do not want a dower."

"Dorothy Forster is a very charming girl, I admit, and has many agreeable qualities, but I never thought seriously of her."

"Strange you should have alluded to her in one of your letters to me."

"Your majesty reminds me that I compared her very advantageously with her brother, who is a mere country squire, and not remarkable for wit, whereas Dorothy is extremely lively and clever, besides being very pretty. But I didn't mean to intimate that I had fallen in love with her."

"You gave me that impression, I confess, cousin," said the Chevalier de Saint George. "I fully expected your next letter would tell me you were engaged to her. Is she very young?"

"About eighteen, I fancy."

"Just the age. And she rides well, I think you said?"

"Admirably. Tom Forster keeps the best pack of hounds in the county, and she goes out with them."

"I only see one objection. Her brother does not belong to our religion."

"But she does," rejoined the earl.

"Then you cannot do better than make choice of her."

"Even if I were to take your majesty's advice, it does not follow I should be accepted."

"Bah! the Earl of Derwentwater is not likely to be refused."

"Dorothy Forster will wed no one she does not love. Nor would I wed her unless certain I had won her heart."

"Have you any doubt upon the point, cousin?"

"Your majesty is pleased to rally me."

"I want an answer to the question."

Just then an interruption to their discourse was offered by Charles Radclyffe, who came hurriedly down to the bridge to announce that some visitors had arrived at the castle.

"Newbiggin couldn't send them away, and was driven to his wit's end, for they would come in," said Charles.

"Who are they?" asked the earl.

"Mr. Forster of Bamborough, and his sister," replied Charles.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the prince. "This is a lucky chance."

"It would have mattered little if they had been alone, my liege," said Charles. "Unluckily, Sir John Webb of Canford, Lady Webb, and their daughter are with them, and the whole party evidently intend to stay here till to-morrow. Sir John and Lady Webb have brought a great coach with them and a pack of servants, but the two girls and Tom Forster came on horseback. Forster wouldn't hear a word from Newbiggin, but told him he was sure his lordship would be glad to see them."

"And so I should, under other circumstances," said the earl.

"Heed me not," cried the prince. "I am pleased at this opportunity of meeting Mr. Forster and Sir John Webb, both of whom I know are my warm partisans."

"Since your majesty does not object, I feel quite easy," said the earl. "Where are the visitors?" he added, to his brother.

"I left them on the lawn," replied Charles. "I told them you had a friend with you—nothing more. Shall I prepare them, my liege?"

"No," replied the prince. "I will choose my own time for the disclosure."

"Haste back, then, and say I will be with them anon," cried the earl.

"And be careful to give them no hint."

"Your majesty may rely on me," replied Charles, as he bowed and departed.

"This is our North Country custom," said the earl. "We visit each other without the slightest ceremony—take friends with us—and stay as long as we please. In coming to me thus, uninvited, and bringing Sir John Webb and his family with him, Tom Forster is only doing what I should not hesitate to do, were I inclined to pay him a visit at Bamborough Castle."

"I am very glad he has come, for it will give me an opportunity of beholding the fair Dorothy," said the prince.

"Your majesty will also behold Anna Webb, who, in my opinion, is far more beautiful than the other."

"Then you have seen her?" cried the prince.

"I saw her only a few days ago at Bamborough, and admired her greatly. She is really very handsome. I think Tom Forster is épris. No doubt Sir John Webb is returning to Dorsetshire with his family, and Tom is escorting them on their journey. I dare say we shall hear of an engagement by-and-bye."

"If she is as handsome as you describe her, Anna Webb ought not to be a rude fox-hunter's wife," said the prince. "But come! let us go and have a look at the two beauties. You have roused my curiosity."

CHAPTER V

Anna Webb and Dorothy Forster

How well the two beauties looked in their gay riding- dresses of scarlet and blue, trimmed with gold and silver lace, and plumed hats! Slight and graceful in figure, and nearly of an age, Anna Webb was a few months older than Dorothy, but she could not be more than nineteen.

Dorothy had cheeks like a blush-rose, tender blue eyes, and flaxen tresses, with features that could not be called regular, but were, nevertheless, excessively pretty; while Anna's locks were of a raven hue, her eyes large, black, and lustrous, and fringed with silken lashes, her tint pale, yet clear, and her face classically faultless in outline.

If the palm of beauty could not be assigned to Dorothy, it must be owned that she had a more agreeable expression than Anna, whose short curling upper lip gave her a somewhat disdainful look.

But they were both lovely creatures, and quite enchanted the Chevalier de Saint George, as he first beheld them standing near a marble fountain at the edge of the large, smooth-shaven lawn near the terrace.

Close beside them was Lady Webb—a fine, stately, middle-aged dame, richly dressed in damask, and having a hoop-petticoat, long stiff bodice, and a lofty head-dress. She had a few patches on her face, and a large fan in her hand. Lady Webb had a haughty manner, and did not forget that she came of a noble family.

Sir John Webb, who paid great deference to his lady, was about sixty, and had a marked countenance, dark eyes, and a large aquiline nose. His bearing was soldierlike, which is not to be wondered at, since he had served under James the Second. But there was nothing military in his attire, which consisted of a square-cut, claret-coloured coat, richly embroidered with lace, and laced waistcoat with long flaps, cream-coloured silk stockings, shoes with high red heels, a long neckcloth bordered with Brussels lace, lace ruffles at his wrist, a sword by his side, and a well-powdered periwig on his head, surmounted by a small three-cornered hat. He carried a gold-headed clouded cane in his hand, and occasionally produced a very handsome gold snuff-box.

The Webbs were strict Roman Catholics, and devoted to the house of Stuart. In fact, Sir John had followed the exiled monarch for a short time to Saint Germain.

Tom Forster, who was talking to him, and pointing out the beauties of the place with his riding-whip, looked exactly like what he was—a country squire, who rode hard, lived well, and drank hard.

In age, he could not be more than seven-and-twenty, and would have been considered very good-looking if the hue of his skin had not been somewhat too florid. Decidedly, he was like his sister, if a rather coarse man can be said to resemble a delicate girl. No one had better horses than Tom Forster—not even Lord Derwentwater—no one had better claret, and you might have plenty of it—perhaps, rather too much.

Tom Forster kept a pack of fox-hounds, and hunted regularly; and as he was hospitable, jovial, and good-humoured, he was exceedingly popular. Dorothy constantly rode to hounds, and was greatly admired for courage and skill, for she often gained the brush. But, as we have endeavoured to show, there was nothing masculine about her—nothing that could be objected to in her liveliness. On the contrary, her presence operated as a restraint upon her brother's guests, and kept them within bounds.

Sir John Webb and his family had been staying for some little time at Bamborough Castle, and had been delighted with the ancient structure, which, whether from its situation on a lofty and almost perpendicular rock, overlooking the Northern Ocean, or from its well-preserved walls and square massive keep, may be justly considered one of the grandest castles in the kingdom. Another opportunity may occur for describing it more fully. Meantime, we may say that Anna Webb, who was of a somewhat romantic turn, had been especially delighted with the place. She remained for hours upon the ramparts gazing upon the sea, there studded with islands, and had even mounted with Dorothy to the summit of the keep, whence Lindisfarne and its ancient churches could be clearly descried. Luckily, no shipwrecks occurred at the time on that dangerous and rock-bound coast, so that she was spared any such dreadful sight, and no half-drowned mariners were brought for shelter to the castle.

Though Bamborough Castle belonged to Mr. Forster, he did not inhabit the ancient structure. His residence, which was comparatively modern, was close

at hand. But several of the old towers were furnished, and in one of these Anna and Dorothy were lodged, at the particular desire of the former, who thus escaped the racket of a great house full of company, as well as the attentions of the host, who had fallen in love with her, but whom she could not tolerate. Every day there was a large party at dinner, and at these entertainments Anna was forced to be present, but she was always glad to get back to the quiet old tower.

One day, an important visitor unexpectedly arrived at the castle. This was the Earl of Derwentwater. Dorothy having described him to her, and painted him in glowing colours, she was prepared for a very distinguished-looking personage. But he was far handsomer than she expected, and she was greatly struck by his manner as well as by his personal appearance. To her surprise and mortification, however, he paid her very little attention, and devoted himself exclusively to Dorothy, next to whom he was placed at dinner. That evening there were cards and music in the drawing-room. Lord Derwentwater begged of Dorothy to sing, and she readily complied, and charmed him with a lively ditty. When she had done Tom Forster came up, and made his sister relinquish her place at the harpsichord to Anna.

Piqued by Lord Derwentwater's indifference, and really possessing a splendid voice, Miss Webb exerted herself to the utmost. Never had she sung or played more brilliantly than on this occasion—never had she looked more lovely: Lord Derwentwater was electrified, and suddenly conscious of her transcendent beauty. Hitherto he had scarcely observed her, but now she riveted his regards. Warmly applauding her performance, he prayed her to repeat it. Instead of doing so, she struck up a little French lay, with which he was familiar, but which he had never before heard sung with such liveliness and spirit.

At Lady Webb's instance, Anna gave some further proofs of her extraordinary vocal power. Her triumph was complete. She felt sure she had captivated the young earl, who remained by her side during the remainder of the evening. Indeed she fully expected a proposal on the morrow—but when the morrow came, Lord Derwentwater was gone. He had set off at an early hour, long before she and Dorothy came from the tower.

Why had he departed so suddenly? No one could tell. Anna was greatly put out; but she was not half so much disappointed as Lady Webb, who thought her daughter had secured a great prize. Good-natured Dorothy had manifested no resentment at being cut out by her friend. Tom Forster had felt rather jealous,

but as he really had received no encouragement from Miss Webb, he could not complain.

The Webbs remained ten days longer at Bamborough Castle, and during this time nothing was heard of Lord Derwentwater.

But Lady Webb was determined not to give him up without another effort. So she told Tom Forster that she should like immensely to see Dilston, and he promised to take them all there, on their return to Dorsetshire.

The plan was carried out, as we have shown. Some on horseback, some in Sir John's great family coach, encumbered by an immense quantity of luggage, attended by a couple of female servants, the party left Bamborough Castle after an early dinner, supped and slept at Morpeth, and set out next morning for Dilston.

CHAPTER VI

Lady Webb

ANNA WEBB, who rode a capital horse, provided for her from the Bamborough stables, and was accompanied by Tom Forster and his sister, was greatly struck by the view of the castle at the end of the vista formed by the long avenue of chestnut trees; and if we may venture to reveal the secrets of her breast, we must state that she ardently desired to become the mistress of that stately mansion. Nor was this desire lessened when she entered the great quadrangular court and gazed around it.

Certain of a hearty welcome, Tom Forster rode in first, and cracked his hunting-whip loudly, as he passed through the gateway, to summon the servants. Newbiggin and three or four footmen rushed down the perron to meet him. He contented himself with announcing to the butler that he had come to dine with his lordship, and pass the night at the castle, and had brought Miss Forster and Sir John Webb and his family with him, and then jumping from the saddle, gave his horse to one of the servants. To his surprise, Newbiggin looked rather embarrassed.

"What!—not at home?" cried the squire.

"Oh, yes, his lordship is at the castle, but he is engaged on rather particular business," replied the butler. "Some one is with him."

"Oh, never mind!" cried the squire. "He'll get his business done before dinner-time. Mr. Charles Radclyffe will take care of us."

As he spoke, Dorothy and Anna rode into the court, and immediately afterwards the great lumbering coach followed.

After a moment's consideration Newbiggin made up his mind to admit them. Aware that Mr. Forster was a Jacobite, and also aware that Sir John Webb was a Roman Catholic and a staunch adherent of the Stuarts, he thought he couldn't be doing wrong.

Accordingly, he flew to the carriage, and helped its occupants to alight, leaving the young ladies to the care of the grooms, and, by the time he had fulfilled his duties, Charles Radclyffe made his appearance with Father Norman, and welcoming the party with great cordiality in his brother's name, led them to the

garden. Having brought them to the lawn, he left them there with Father Norman, and went in search of the earl.

If Anna had been pleased with what she had seen of the castle, she was quite enraptured now.

Never, she declared to Dorothy, had she beheld anything finer than the prospect from the terrace. What charming scenery! what a lovely park! what brown moors! what woods! And how well the Tyne looked in the distance!

She next praised the romantic beauty of the glen, with its trees, and rushing stream, and, above all, the picturesque old bridge.

In short, everything delighted her. And though she said least about it, she was, perhaps, best pleased with the mansion itself. It was larger and more imposing than she expected, and she again thought what a fine thing it would be to be mistress of such a splendid place.

Lady Webb was just as much struck with the castle and its surroundings as her daughter, and fondly hoped that she might soon have a stronger interest in the place. Her ladyship was conversing with Father Norman, and all she heard about the young earl heightened her desire to call him her son-in-law. Father Norman spoke with the greatest warmth of his lordship's goodness of heart, noble qualities, and chivalrous character.

"He is like Bayard himself," he said; "a chevalier without fear and without reproach."

"With such a splendid mansion as this, and with such wealth as his lordship possesses, 'tis a wonder he does, not marry," remarked Lady Webb.

"His lordship will never marry except for love," replied the priest.

"That is perfectly consistent with the noble and disinterested character you have given him," said Lady Webb. "But I should have thought," she added, glancing towards Dorothy, "that a very charming young friend of ours might have touched his heart."

"Apparently not," replied Father Norman. "I myself should have been well pleased if such had been the case. But I do not think Lord Derwentwater will marry till our rightful king is restored."

"Then he may have to wait long," said her ladyship.

At this moment Charles Radclyffe made his appearance.

Seeing him return alone, Lady Webb and her daughter began to have some misgivings, but they were quickly set at rest by Charles, and a few minutes later his lordship himself was seen at the end of the terrace.

Lord Derwentwater was, of course, accompanied by the prince, but he left him at the further end of the lawn, and went quickly on alone to welcome his visitors.

Oh! how Anna's heart fluttered as she beheld him.

His devoirs were first paid to Lady Webb, and then to the younger ladies. Dorothy was quite easy in her manner, and shook hands with him warmly, but Anna courtesied deeply to the formal bow he addressed to her. At the same time, the flush on her cheek betrayed the state of her feelings.

Lord Derwentwater could not fail to perceive this, and we doubt not he was much gratified by the discovery, but he was obliged to turn to the others.

Meanwhile, the prince had come up, and in compliance with the instructions he had received, Lord Derwentwater introduced him as Mr. Johnson—but without another word.

Sir John Webb bowed rather stiffly to the stranger, and Forster was scarcely more polite; indeed, very little notice was taken of him, except by the young ladies, both of whom were struck by his manner, and entered into conversation with him.

They soon found out that he was a person of distinction, and, learning that he had only just come from France, felt sure he must be a messenger from the Chevalier de Saint George, and began to question him about the prince, displaying an interest in the cause, that could not but be agreeable to the hearer.

"I shall probably see the prince ere long," said the Chevalier, "and will not fail to tell him what warm partisans he has among the ladies of Northumberland."

"Tell him that Dorothy Forster, of Bamborough Castle, will do her best to aid him whenever he comes," cried that young lady.

"Tell him that Anna Webb begins to think he never means to come at all, and fears he has forgotten his friends," added the other.

"Both messages shall reach him, I promise you," said the prince. "And when he learns how surpassingly beautiful are the two damsels who sent them he will be doubly gratified."

"We need no compliments," said Anna. "For my part I am out of patience with the prince."

"Why so?"

"Because he neglects so many opportunities. He might be on the throne now, had he chosen."

"The prince has neglected no chance. But you are not aware of the difficulties he has had to encounter."

"I can partly guess them. But they are nothing. Were I in his place I would have made twenty attempts, and either have succeeded or perished."

"I admire your spirit. But to win a kingdom, you must have an army. And the prince has no army."

"He could have one very soon," cried Anna.

"Yes, that is certain," added Dorothy. "A small army could be raised in this county. Lord Derwentwater could bring five hundred men. And my brother, Mr. Forster, could raise a troop."

"Tell this to the prince, when you go back," cried Anna. "Say that the Jacobite ladies of England are dying to behold him."

"That will bring him, if anything will," laughed the prince.

At this moment Lord Derwentwater came up, and said to Anna:

"May I ask what message you are sending to the prince?"

"That we are all tired of waiting for him," she replied. "We have been so often disappointed, that we begin to think he will never come."

"Then let me inform you that I have just received certain intelligence that his majesty is in England at this moment."

Dorothy and Anna uttered exclamations of surprise and delight.

"You hear that, papa?" cried the latter to Sir John Webb. "Lord Derwentwater says that his majesty, King James the Third, is now in England. Is not that good news?"

"Wonderfully good news!" exclaimed Sir John. "Where has he landed?"

"I can't tell you where he has landed," cried Tom Forster, scarcely repressing a joyous shout. "But I can tell you where he is now. Since none of you have discovered him, I'll be first to kiss hands."

And rushing forward, he bent before the prince, who graciously extended his hand towards him.

On this there was a general movement towards the prince, who had now entirely changed his deportment, and received them all with dignified affability.

To Lady Webb he showed marked attention, and to each of the young ladies he had something pleasant to say, and soon relieved any uneasiness they might feel as to the freedom with which they had spoken to him.

This little ceremony over, he took Sir John Webb and Mr. Forster apart, and remained in earnest conversation with them for a few minutes.

He then returned to the ladies, and proposed a walk in the garden, to which they delightedly assented.

CHAPTER VII

The Proposal

THE gardens at Dilston, though somewhat formally laid out, as previously mentioned, were very beautiful, and were just then in perfection. The prince admired them very much, and of course everybody else was enchanted.

After wandering about for some time—now stopping to look at one object, now at another—the prince walked on with Lady Webb, and the party began to disperse, moving about in different directions.

Somehow or other, Lord Derwentwater found himself alone with Anna. He looked about for Dorothy, but she was a long way off with Charles Radclyffe, and no one was near them.

Close to where they stood was a rustic bench, shaded by a tree, and saying she felt a little fatigued, Anna sat down. Lord Derwentwater could not do otherwise than take a place beside her.

We will not say what thoughts agitated her breast, but she felt that the critical moment had arrived, and trembled lest any interruption should occur before the word was uttered that might decide her fate.

She did not look at the lovely parterre of flowers before her—nor listen to the plashing of the fountain—she heard nothing—saw nothing. But the accents she longed for were not breathed, and Lord Derwentwater remained silent. Why did he not speak?

Fearing the moment might pass, she raised her magnificent eyes, which had been thrown upon the ground, and fixed them full upon him.

Though he spoke not, he had been watching her, and the glance he now encountered pierced his breast. How much was conveyed in that long, passionate look! How eloquent was the earl's reply! An instantaneous revelation was made to each of the state of the other's heart. No longer any doubt. He knew she loved him. She felt he was won.

Yet, as if to make assurance doubly sure, he took her hand. She did not withdraw it, and still gazing tenderly at her, he said in a low voice, but which was distinctly audible:

"Can you love me, Anna?"

Her glance became even more passionate, as she answered:

"I can—I do."

"Will you be mine, then?" demanded the earl, passing his arm round her waist, and drawing her towards him.

Her reply must have been in the affirmative, yet it was almost stifled by the kiss imprinted on her lips.

He had only just released her from this fond embrace, when they became conscious that they were not unobserved.

So engrossed were they by each other that they had not hitherto noticed the prince and Lady Webb on the further side of the lawn.

Lord Derwentwater, in a moment, decided on the course he ought to pursue.

"Come with me," he said to Anna.

And taking her hand, he led her towards her mother, whose feelings of pride and satisfaction may be easily imagined when the announcement was made, and her consent asked to their union.

But it was asked in a manner that does not belong to the present age, and her consent was given with equal formality, and accompanied by a blessing.

As they arose from their half-kneeling posture, the prince embraced the earl, and said to him:

"Accept my sincere congratulations, cousin. Lovelier bride you could not have found, and in every other respect she is worthy of you. And you, fair damsel," he added to Anna, who blushed deeply at the high compliments paid her, "you may likewise be heartily congratulated on your good fortune. You have won a husband as noble by nature as he is by birth. All happiness attend you!"

These gracious observations produced a strong effect on the young pair to whom they were addressed.

The prince did not, however, tarry for their thanks, but hastened away, saying he desired to be first to communicate the joyful intelligence to Sir John Webb.

The rest of the party were assembled on the terrace, and when they saw the prince approaching, and noticed the peculiar expression of his countenance, some suspicion of the truth crossed them.

Sir John, therefore, was not surprised, though secretly enchanted, when a sign was given them to come forward, and on obeying it, he learnt from his highness's lips what had occurred. He did not attempt to disguise his satisfaction, and his loud exclamations soon let the rest of the party into the secret.

That the news was perfectly agreeable to all the others cannot be asserted. The hopes of Tom Forster and his charming sister were annihilated. But since the blow had fallen, it must be borne. So they concealed their disappointment with a smile.

We are not quite sure that Charles Radclyffe was anxious that the earl should marry, as his own position in the house might be changed by the event—but at all events, he looked pleased. And Father Norman, who had an almost paternal affection for his noble patron, was certainly pleased, for he believed Lord Derwentwater had taken a wise step.

Sir John Webb, who had been made the happiest of men by the success of his wife's scheme, hurried off to embrace his daughter and the earl, and give them his blessing, and all the others followed to witness the scene.

Again certain painful feelings were stirred in the breasts of Forster and his sister, but these were controlled, and all went off very well.

A proposition was next made by the prince, that met with ready acceptance from all concerned. It was that the earl and his chosen bride should be solemnly contracted together on the morrow.

"Lord Derwentwater and myself were brought up together like brothers," he said. "Long ago, I promised to find him a wife. He has now found one for himself, and I entirely approve his choice. Since I can scarce hope to be present at his lordship's marriage, it will be specially agreeable to me to witness his betrothal."

This intimation was quite sufficient, and it was arranged that the ceremony should be performed by Father Norman, and should take place, next morning, in the little chapel.

CHAPTER VIII

Colonel Oxburgh and his Companions

MEANWHILE, another arrival had taken place at the castle.

A party of horsemen, all well mounted, and well armed, rode into the courtyard, and claimed the earl's hospitality, which could not be refused.

The party consisted of half a dozen Roman Catholic gentlemen—staunch Jacobites—who had banded together, and were in the habit of riding about the country to see how matters stood—sometimes stopping at one house, sometimes at another—and always heartily welcome, wherever they went.

The leader of the party was Colonel Oxburgh, who had fought and distinguished himself under James the Second. His companions were Captain Nicholas Wogan, Charles Wogan, and three other Jacobite gentlemen, named Talbot, Clifton, and Beaumont. They had pistols in their holsters, and swords at the side, and presented a very formidable appearance, as they rode together.

Colonel Oxburgh was an elderly man, but in possession of all his energies, and expected a command, if a rising should take place in favour of James the Third. He was tall and well-built, and though equipped in a plain riding-suit, had an unmistakable military air.

His companions were very much younger, and all of them looked like gentlemen—as indeed they were—the most noticeable being the two Wogans. Both of these young men were very good-looking, and graceful in figure. Captain Wogan had a very interesting countenance. As they had no servants with them, each carried a small valise attached to his saddle.

Colonel Oxburgh was an old friend of Sir John Webb—indeed, they had served together in Ireland—and wishing to see him before he left the North, he was proceeding to Bamborough Castle with that object, when he learnt that Sir John and his family had just taken their departure, but meant to halt at Dilston. Thereupon, the colonel changed his course, and went to the latter place.

On his arrival, his first inquiries were whether Sir John was there, and being quickly satisfied on this point by Newbiggin, he dismounted, and his companions followed his example. The horses were taken to the stables, and

the bags ordered to be brought into the house, as if it had been an inn, and while this was being done, the colonel again addressed Newbiggin, and asked if there was any other company at the castle.

The butler smiled significantly.

"We have a very important person indeed here, colonel," he said. "I need keep no secret from you and your friends, because you are all loyal. What will you say, gentlemen," addressing the whole party, "when I tell you that the Chevalier de Saint George is here?"

"I should say the statement is scarcely likely to be correct, my good friend," rejoined the colonel, dryly. "You are jesting with us."

"'Tis true, I assure you, colonel," said Newbiggin. "His majesty is at Dilston at this moment. You will soon be convinced of the fact."

"I am convinced now," cried Colonel Oxburgh. "But you cannot wonder at my incredulity, and you see it was shared by all my friends. Since such is the case, gentlemen," he added, turning to the others, "we must remain where we are for a few minutes. We must not present ourselves to the king till we learn that it is his majesty's pleasure to receive us."

"I have no doubt upon the point, colonel," said the butler; "and I will venture to take you to his majesty at once, if you will allow me."

The punctilious colonel, however, could not be moved from his position, nor would he enter the house, so Newbiggin was obliged to leave him and his friends in order to make the necessary announcement.

Ere long, Lord Derwentwater appeared, and welcomed them with the utmost cordiality, stating at the same time that his majesty would be delighted to receive them.

His lordship then conducted them to the garden, and presented them to the prince, who accorded them a most gratifying reception, shaking hands with Colonel Oxburgh, and treating him like an old friend.

"I have often heard the king, my father, speak of you, colonel," he said; "and always with regard. He was deeply sensible of your attachment to him."

"The attachment I ever felt towards his majesty is now transferred to his son," replied the colonel, laying his hand upon his heart. "I only hope the time has come when I can prove my loyalty and devotion."

"We will talk of that anon, my dear colonel," replied the prince.

And he then addressed himself to the others, to each of whom he had something agreeable to say. His highness seemed particularly pleased with Captain Wogan.

While this was going on, Colonel Oxburgh exchanged a greeting with Sir John Webb and Forster, nor did he omit to pay his devoirs to Lady Webb and the younger ladies.

CHAPTER IX

Confession

FEELING that their presence might be some restraint upon the meeting, the ladies soon afterwards withdrew, and entered the house, accompanied by Father Norman.

As soon as they were alone together, Lady Webb embraced her daughter with more than her customary warmth, and again congratulated her on her good fortune.

"You are now in the most enviable position in which a girl can be placed," she said. "You have obtained as a husband one of the richest and most powerful nobles in the land, and who, in addition to these recommendations, has youth, good looks, and extreme amiability. Could you desire more?"

"No, dearest mamma," she replied. "I ought to be grateful, and I am grateful. I do not deserve so much. I ought to return thanks to Heaven for its great goodness towards me. I should like to see Father Norman alone."

"I entirely approve of your resolution, my dear child," replied her mother. "Remain here. I will send the holy father to you."

She then left her, and the interval between her departure, and the good priest's appearance, was passed in prayer.

Father Norman found her on her knees before a small image of the Blessed Virgin, which was in the room, and did not interrupt her.

When she arose, he expressed his great satisfaction at finding her thus employed.

"I am now certain his lordship has chosen well," he said.

"I hope he will never regret the step he has taken, father," she rejoined.

"Strive earnestly to make him happy, dear daughter, and you cannot fail," said the priest. "Have you aught to say to me?"

"I desire to disburden my conscience father," she replied. "I have not much upon it, but I shall feel easier when I have spoken."

"You will do well, daughter," he said.

He then sat down, and she knelt beside him, and cleared her breast of all that weighed upon it.

It was not more than many a maiden would have to avow, but the good father was strict, and imposed a slight penance upon her.

"You must debar yourself from the society of him you love till to-morrow," he said.

She uttered an exclamation, but the priest went on:

"For the rest of the day you must remain in the seclusion of this chamber, so that your thoughts may be undisturbed. Part of the night must be passed in vigil and prayer. This will be a fitting preparation for the ceremony you are about to go through."

"What will Lord Derwentwater think, father?" she asked, uneasily.

"I will take care he receives such explanation as may be necessary," he replied. "But I again enjoin solitude and reflection. Later on, I will take you to the chapel, where your vigils must be kept till midnight. Promise me not to quit this room, without my sanction."

"I will obey you, father," she rejoined.

CHAPTER X

A Banquet

A GRAND dinner was given that day in the great banqueting- hall of the castle, at which the prince and all the guests assisted with the exception of her, whom the noble host would have preferred to all the others. Being told by Lady Webb that her daughter was rather overcome by the excitement of the morning, and deemed it best to keep her room, he submitted to the disappointment with the best grace he could.

The dinner was magnificent, though little time had been allowed for its preparation. Still, with the resources at Lord Derwentwater's command, a great deal can be accomplished. The prince sat on the right of the earl, and on his lordship's left was placed Lady Webb. Next to her ladyship was Colonel Oxburgh, and next to the prince, on the right, was Sir John Webb. Then came the Squire of Bamborough. We cannot record how the rest of the company was placed, but we must mention that the fair Dorothy was not very far from Charles Radclyffe, who sat at the foot of the table. Undoubtedly, the party lacked its chief attraction—at least in the eyes of Lord Derwentwater—but he was so much occupied by the prince that he had not much time to think of the fair absentee; and besides, Lady Webb assured him that there was not the slightest cause for uneasiness.

The Chevalier de Saint George was in high spirits. No contretemps of any kind had occurred since his arrival at Dilston. All the guests were devoted to his cause, and some of them were his warmest partisans. Of the attachment of Sir John Webb and Colonel Oxburgh, he had no doubt. Of Forster's loyalty he was not quite so sure, and he therefore paid him particular attention. But he had a gracious word for every one, and not a single person present could complain that the prince had overlooked him. Moreover, his highness took care to make it understood that he desired his presence should be no restraint to the company.

The dinner therefore passed off admirably, and as the wine was not stinted, and bumpers were quaffed according to the good old custom, the enthusiasm of the guests rose to a very high pitch, and could scarcely be repressed. But it soon found vent when the cloth was drawn, and glasses were filled to the brim. The noble host arose, and with him rose every guest—save one—and the hall rang with shouts of "Long live King James the Third."

Lady Webb and Dorothy then disappeared, and all the servants having left the room, except Newbiggin, whose discretion could be relied on, some serious discussion took place.

As yet the prince had not made known his design of seeking an interview with the queen, his sister; and it was now, at his highness's request, disclosed by Lord Derwentwater. A deep silence ensued.

"It appears that you do not approve my plan, gentlemen," remarked the prince, after a short pause.

"My liege," replied Colonel Oxburgh, answering for the others, "we all hoped and believed that you were come to call us to arms, and we cannot conceal our disappointment when we find that, instead of making a determined attempt to recover the throne, which we are persuaded would be successful, your majesty is about to appeal to the queen, who has no sympathy or affection for you, and is hostile to our religion. Rest assured, the attempt will be useless, if it does not lead to other ill consequences. Abandon it, therefore, I pray you. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that an insurrection in your majesty's favour would be attended with success. That we are fully prepared for it, I will not assert. But a very short time will enable us to get ready a sufficient force to march towards London, and we shall gather strength as we go on. None can be better acquainted with the feeling of the country than myself and my friends, who have visited the houses of half the Jacobites and High Church Tories in the North of England, and I can state positively that a rising would be hailed by many influential persons with the greatest enthusiasm. Should your majesty decide on leading the army in person—as I trust you will—thousands will flock to your standard, and you will find yourself resistless as well from the number of your followers as from the justice of your cause. That your majesty is the rightful King of England cannot be denied. Why then allow the crown to be kept from you—even for a day? Do not sue for it, but demand it; and if it be refused, take it!"

The exclamations that arose from the company made it evident that they all agreed with the speaker. But though stirred by the colonel's energetic language, the prince was not to be turned from his purpose.

"I have already explained to Lord Derwentwater my reasons for the course I am about to pursue," he said. "Like yourselves he has endeavoured to dissuade me

from my design—but ineffectually. I propose to set out for London tomorrow, or next day, at the latest—and his lordship will accompany me."

"Without an escort?" cried Colonel Oxburgh. "That must not be. Since your majesty is resolved on this rash step, my friends and myself will attend you. Do I not express your wishes, gentlemen?" he added to the others.

"Most certainly," replied Captain Wogan, answering for the rest. "We shall be proud to escort his majesty, if he will permit us."

"I accept your offer, gentlemen," said the prince. "I did not calculate on such good company."

"We may be of use to your majesty on the journey," remarked Captain Wogan.

"I doubt it not," said the prince. "Will you go with me?" he added to Forster.

"I pray your majesty to excuse me," replied the squire. "I must frankly own I would rather not be engaged in the expedition."

"As you please, sir," said the prince, with affected indifference. "I can do very well without you."

"I see that I have not made myself understood, my liege," said Forster. "I am ready to fight for you, and if need be, die for you, but I will not be instrumental in delivering you to your enemies."

"Ah! I see I have done you an injustice," said the prince.

The conversation then took another turn, and a good deal of curiosity was manifested both by Sir John Webb and Colonel Oxburgh as to the prince's future plans, but his highness displayed considerable reserve on this point, and did not choose to gratify them. Indeed, he soon afterwards retired, and Lord Derwentwater went with him, leaving Charles Radclyffe to attend to the company.

Those were hard-drinking days, and the Jacobites were as fond of good claret, as their predecessors the Cavaliers. We are afraid to say how many magnums were emptied on the occasion, but before the party broke up, which it did not do till a late hour, a general resolution was come to, that a more strenuous effort should be made on the morrow, to induce his majesty to forego his ill-

advised journey to London, and instead of endangering his safety by such a senseless attempt, to set up his standard, and summon all his adherents to join him. Then he might proceed to London, as soon as he pleased.

A loud shout, with which his majesty's name was coupled, concluded a vehement harangue made by Colonel Oxburgh, and the party broke up.

Some of them retired to rest, but Tom Forster and two or three others adjourned to a smaller room not far from the butler's pantry; where a bowl of capital punch was provided for them by Newbiggin.

CHAPTER XI

A Mysterious Occurrence in the Chapel

ANNA WEBB submitted unrepiningly to the penance enjoined by Father Norman. She remained in her own room, and was not distracted by a visit either from her mother, or Dorothy. Some refreshments were brought her by a female servant, but they were untouched. Several hours were thus passed in solitude and prayer, and night had come on. She wondered when the priest would come, according to his promise, to take her to the chapel.

At length, he appeared, and desired her to follow him. Wishing to avoid the servants, who were crowded in the great hall, he led her down a back staircase to a small room on the ground floor, where he obtained a lantern. In another minute, they had crossed the court, and reached the door of the chapel.

The little structure, it has been said, was screened by trees, and the place was so dark, it would have been difficult to find the door, save with the lantern's aid.

A slight shiver ran through Anna's frame as she entered the building, but she attributed the feeling to the damp atmosphere. Meanwhile, Father Norman had lighted a couple of tapers at the altar, and their feeble glimmer enabled her to survey the place.

Its simplicity and diminutive size pleased her, and reassured her. Knowing she would have to remain there alone till midnight, she might have felt some misgivings had the room been large and sombre. Fortunately, she was not aware that there was a vault beneath, in which rested the earl's ancestors. Marble tablets were on the walls, but she did not read them.

After an exhortation, to which she listened devoutly, the priest withdrew. Thus left alone, she knelt down at the altar, and was soon engrossed in prayer.

For awhile she continued thus employed, but at length a feeling of drowsiness came over her, which she found it impossible to resist.

How long she slept she could not tell, but when she awoke the place was buried in darkness.

What had happened while she slumbered? And how came the tapers to be extinguished?

Very much alarmed, she started to her feet, and somehow—though she scarcely knew how—made her way to the door.

It was fastened. Father Norman must have locked it when he went out.

She was thus to be kept in that dreadful place—for dreadful it now seemed to her—till his return at midnight.

She could not guess the hour, but she might have to wait long—very long! Moments seemed ages now. Her terror was insupportable.

Just then she heard the castle clock, and counted the strokes.

Eleven! Another agonising hour had to be borne!—another hour!—when five minutes had been intolerable!

Rendered desperate by terror, she went back to the altar, and kneeling down once more, prayed for deliverance.

Becoming somewhat calmer, she felt ashamed of her weakness, and tried to persuade herself that the tapers might have gone out by accident. The notion gave her momentary courage.

But her fears returned with greater force than before as she heard a deep sigh, seemingly proceeding from some one close beside her, and she fancied she discerned a dusky figure.

"Who is there?" she cried. "Is it you, holy father?"

No answer was returned, but a slight sound was heard, and the figure seemed to retreat.

She heard and saw no more.

Uttering a cry, she fell senseless at the foot of the altar, where she was found shortly afterwards by Father Norman and her mother.

The former having brought the lantern with him, her situation was perceived at once, and the prompt application of a smelling-bottle by Lady Webb quickly restored her to consciousness. She was able to walk back to the mansion, but begged not to be questioned as to the cause of her fright till the morrow, when she should have quite recovered from its effects.

CHAPTER XII

A Letter from the Earl of Mar

NEXT morning she related the mysterious occurrence to them both, but they treated it very lightly, though neither could understand how the tapers had been extinguished. All the rest they regarded as the effect of an over-excited imagination.

"No one could have entered the chapel," remarked the priest. "I locked the door, and took the key with me. However, you must dismiss all these thoughts from your mind, daughter. To-day the chapel will present a very different appearance from what it did last night."

"Yes—it will be the scene of your betrothal," said Lady Webb.

"I would rather the ceremony took place elsewhere," said Anna.

"It cannot be," said Father Norman. "His lordship has arranged the matter. The prince will be present, and it would be a great disappointment to the household to be deprived of the sight."

"It would also be a great disappointment to Sir John and myself," observed Lady Webb. "Besides, there are several guests in the castle who ought not to be excluded. For many reasons, therefore, there must be no change in the plan."

"Don't say a word, mamma," said Anna. "I am quite convinced. My objections were ridiculous. The morning is delightful, and a walk in the garden will set me quite right."

"You will find Lord Derwentwater, his majesty, and almost all the company assembled on the lawn," said Lady Webb. "Come, I will take you thither. Perhaps, Father Norman will accompany us."

"With the greatest pleasure," replied the priest.

On Anna's appearance, Lord Derwentwater, who was standing with the company on the terrace, came forward to meet her; and as he approached, he remarked that she looked very pale. This did not detract from her beauty, but rather gave interest to her countenance—at least, in his eyes. He made some slight allusion to the circumstance, but she laughed it off.

Not much passed between them, for the prince presently came up to offer her his greetings, and by this time her cheek was flushed.

"I have news for you, fair lady," said his highness, "and I desire to be the first to communicate it. I do not mean to rob you of your lover, so you may rest quite easy on that score. My proposed journey to London will not be undertaken. A messenger has just arrived at the castle bringing me a letter from the Earl of Mar, Secretary of State to Queen Anne. His lordship had engaged that I should see the queen, and led me to hope that great results would follow from the interview. These confident expectations are now at an end, and my project must be given up. Lord Mar writes that the queen, forgetful of her promises, refuses to receive me, and that if I should present myself at Saint James's Palace, he will not answer for my safety. Under such circumstances, it would be madness to make the attempt. It is well that I arranged with the Earl of Mar to write to me here, as if I had not heard from him, I should have started on the journey. What might then have befallen me I know not. Perchance, imprisonment in the Tower, in the hope of compelling me to relinquish my pretensions to the crown—but that I never would have done."

"Your majesty need not give us that assurance," cried Anna. "But imprisonment would have been grievous, and might have disheartened your friends."

"From the first I have been opposed to the scheme, as your majesty is aware," said Lord Derwentwater; "and I cannot, therefore, affect to regret its abandonment."

"I do not wonder you are better pleased to remain where you are, cousin," said the prince.

"I shall be far better pleased if your majesty will decide upon summoning all your partisans to arms," said the earl.

"Nothing would rejoice me more than to see ten thousand men assembled at the castle," said Anna with increased enthusiasm, "and eager for their king to lead them on to victory. That is how I should like to see your majesty march to London—and Lord Derwentwater with you."

"Ay, I will never be left behind," cried the earl.

Fire lighted up the prince's eyes as they spoke, but it faded away.

"It cannot be," he said. "It cannot be."

"What cannot be, my liege?" cried Anna, regarding him fixedly. "Not the insurrection? Not the march to London?"

"No," he replied. "The Earl of Mar, in his letter, counsels me to make no immediate movement."

"For what reason?" demanded Lord Derwentwater in surprise.

"He gives no reason," rejoined the prince. "But Lord Mar knows the feeling of the clans, and evidently deems the present juncture unpropitious to a rising."

"I cannot tell what may be the state of the clans," said Lord Derwentwater, scarcely able to repress his impatience, "but I am certain the opportunity is favourable in the North of England—as can soon be shown, if your majesty will give the signal."

"I will not commit myself to any decisive step now, my lord," said the prince, who when thus urged, seemed to shrink from the enterprise. "Nor do I think it will be prudent for me to remain here long."

"What danger does your majesty apprehend?" cried the earl. "All are devoted to you. There are no traitors in the castle."

"But I have many enemies in the country, and the Earl of Mar bids me 'beware,'" said the prince.

"We will defend you against your enemies, my liege," said Lord Derwentwater. "You need not fear them. Immediate preparations shall be made."

"No haste is needful, cousin," said the prince. "I have a strong guard enough," he added, glancing at Colonel Oxburgh and his friends, who were standing at a little distance. "Let the day pass tranquilly—if it will. To-morrow, we will consider what shall be done."

"Heaven grant your majesty may change your mind in the interim!" observed Anna.

"If you exercise your powers of persuasion, fair lady, there is no saying what you may accomplish," said the prince, gallantly.

At this moment a bell was heard, and Newbiggin came forth with two other servants in livery, and respectfully announced breakfast.

The prince offered his hand to Anna and led her to the house, and the rest of the party followed.

CHAPTER XIII

The Betrothal

A PROFUSE breakfast, served in the good old style, awaited them in the dining-room. The sideboard groaned with the weight of huge cold joints, hams, tongues, and pasties; and broiled trout and salmon in abundance appeared on the table. How many good things there were besides in the shape of cutlets and omelettes, we cannot tell, but nothing seemed wanting. Chocolate was handed to the ladies, but claret suited the gentlemen best, though in some instances a flagon of strong ale was preferred.

Breakfast over, the ladies withdrew to prepare for the ceremony appointed to take place in the chapel, while the prince again walked forth on the terrace, in company with Lord Derwentwater and Sir John Webb, and gazed with fresh delight at the prospect.

Colonel Oxburgh and his companions, with Tom Forster, adjourned to the stables. There was a good deal of conjecture among them as to the prince's plans, which now seemed quite undecided; but they came to the conclusion that no rising would take place. At the same time, they all rejoiced that the hazardous—and as they deemed it, useless—journey to London had been abandoned.

"Something ought to be done," cried Forster. "But it puzzles me to say what."

"Have patience," said Colonel Oxburgh. "Depend upon it we shan't remain long idle. His majesty will be forced to make a move of some kind."

Long before the hour appointed for the betrothal, the little chapel was filled. All the household craved permission to witness the ceremony, and none were refused. The guests entered at the same time, and found places where they could. But little room was left, as may be imagined, when all these persons were accommodated. In the large pew were the prince with Charles Radclyffe, Mr. Forster and his sister—the latter looking bright and blooming as usual.

Lord Derwentwater was standing at the door of the little edifice in momentary expectation of the arrival of her to whom he was about to be affianced. She came, leaning on her father's arm, and attended by her mother—not decked in bridal attire—not draped in a bridal veil—for such adornments would have

been unsuitable to the occasion, but arrayed in a charming costume of azure satin and lace.

After salutations had passed, Sir John Webb consigned his lovely daughter to the earl, and followed them with Lady Webb.

An irrepressible murmur of admiration burst forth as the youthful pair moved towards the altar, where they immediately knelt down, and a group was formed behind them of which the prince was the principal figure—his highness having come with the others from the pew.

Not till a prayer was recited could the spectators obtain a glimpse of the scene at the altar, and if this was quickly hidden from their sight they heard the vow pronounced that bound the pair together, and they likewise heard Father Norman's benediction.

Those near the altar saw the earl embrace his affianced bride as they rose together, and some of them remarked that she looked strangely pale. Only for a minute, for her colour quickly returned. The prince, however, noticed the circumstance, and so did Dorothy. But both attributed it to deep emotion.

Nothing whatever marred the ceremony, the sole fault of which, in the opinion of the majority of those present, was that it was too brief.

Several of the household grouped themselves on either side of the path leading to the gate to offer their good wishes to the newly-affianced pair as they passed by. Among these were old Nicholas Ribbleton, and an elderly dame who, like himself, had lived in the family for years.

"Eh! she's a bonnie lass!" cried this old woman, after scrutinising her sharply. "But I doubt if she'll make his lordship happy. He had better have chosen Dorothy Forster."

"Why, what ails her?" said Ribbleton.

"I cannot exactly tell—but there's a look about her I don't like."

"Well, it's too late to change now, Grace," observed Ribbleton. "The troth is plighted."

"Ay, that's the worst of it," rejoined the old woman. "But a time may come, when his lordship will wish what's done were undone."

This was the only discordant note uttered, and it reached no other ear but Ribbleton's, and him it made angry. So he walked off, and left the old prophetess of ill to herself.

CHAPTER XIV

The Spy

THE rest of the day was spent in festivity and amusement.

Lord Derwentwater and his affianced bride did not stray beyond the garden, and seemed so perfectly happy in each other's society that no one went near them.

The prince explored the mysterious glen, and Charles Radclyffe acted as his guide, introducing him to all the beauties of the place, and relating all the legends connected with it. A large party accompanied his highness, including Lady Webb and Dorothy Forster—the latter of whom had often seen the place before, but was quite as much enchanted with it as ever.

The visit to this picturesque dell, which has been previously described, occupied some time, for there was a great deal to be seen. But neither the prince, nor any of those with him, were aware, that while they were tracking the course of the Devil's Water over its rocky channel, or standing near the pool, they were watched by a person concealed amid the brushwood on its banks.

This person was an emissary of Sir William Lorraine of Bywell Park, high sheriff of the county, and a strong supporter of the Government. That very morning, Sir William had received the astounding information that the Pretender had arrived at Dilston Castle, and that a rising in his favour was imminent among the gentlemen of the county; but as the news came from a suspicious source, the high sheriff, though alarmed, did not entirely credit it, and before taking any active measures—such as raising a posse-comitatus

, or calling out the militia—he determined to send a couple of spies to Dilston to ascertain the truth of the report.

One of these emissaries was now concealed, as we have stated, among the trees overhanging the glen. Without betraying himself, he got sufficiently near the party to hear their discourse, and soon learnt enough to convince him that the plainly attired, but distinguished-looking young man, whom he beheld, and to whom so much attention was paid by Charles Radclyffe and the rest, was no other than the Chevalier de Saint George.

As soon as he had clearly ascertained this point, he stole away, mounted his horse, which he had left in a thicket near the moor, and galloped off to convey the important information to Sir William Lorraine.

On reaching Bywell Park, he found the high sheriff anxiously expecting him, and called out:

"I have seen the Pretender, Sir William—seen him with my own eyes."

"You are certain of it, Jesmond?"

"I saw him in the glen by the side of the Devil's Water. He had a large party with him, and I heard several of 'em address him as 'your majesty.'"

"Enough," cried the high sheriff. "You have done your work well, Jesmond. But where have you left Hedgeley?"

"I've seen nothing of him since we got to Dilston, Sir William. He went to the castle, and I went to the grounds. I took the right course it appears, for I soon found the person I was looking for, and without asking any questions, or letting myself be seen."

"I hope Hedgeley has not been seized as a spy," said the high sheriff.

"If he has, he'll tell nothing, Sir William. Don't fear him. If you want to take the place by surprise to-morrow, you can do it. His lordship has taken no precautions. With half a dozen mounted men I could have taken the Pretender prisoner myself, and have carried him off."

"I wish you had done so, Jesmond," laughed the high sheriff. "It would have saved me the trouble of getting a party of men together. I must set about the task without delay. You think all will be safe at Dilston till to-morrow?"

"Not a doubt about it, Sir William. Lord Derwentwater's guests seem to be amusing themselves. I think—from what I overheard—that his lordship has a grand banquet to-day. Certainly, some festivities are taking place at the castle."

"It would be a pity to disturb them," said the high sheriff. "To-morrow I will present myself at the castle with sufficient force to render all resistance useless."

Hedgeley, the emissary to Dilston, had not fared so well as his comrade. Stopped at the gate, and unable to explain his business entirely to the porter's satisfaction, he was locked up in a strong room for the night. This was done by Colonel Oxburgh's order, who chanced to be in the court at the time, and interrogated him. Except detention, the spy had nothing to complain of, for he had plenty to eat and drink.

Jesmond had correctly informed the high sheriff, when he told him that a grand dinner would be given that day at the castle. A vast deal of handsome plate was displayed at the banquet, which was far more agreeable to the noble host than the dinner of the previous day, since it was graced by the presence of his affianced bride, who now sat next to him, and looked more charming than ever, being beautifully dressed, and in high spirits. The prince was likewise in a very lively mood, and contributed to the general gaiety at the upper end of the table.

In the evening there was music in the grand saloon, which was brilliantly lighted up for the occasion. Anna produced a great effect, and her magnificent voice enraptured the prince as much as it had enraptured Lord Derwentwater when he first heard it.

Very different in style, but equally effective in their way, were some simple ditties sung with great taste and feeling by Dorothy Forster.

As we have intimated, the prince was in a very gay humour and seemed to take no thought of the morrow—though that morrow had much in store for him. He talked lightly with Anna and Dorothy, laughed and jested with Sir John Webb, Colonel Oxburgh, and Forster, but he talked seriously with no one.

So passed his last night at Dilston Castle.

CHAPTER XV

A General Departure

A BRIGHT day dawned on Dilston.

Fair looked the garden with its lawn and terrace, inviting those within the mansion to stroll forth and enjoy the freshness of the morn. So calm and still was all around that the rippling of the hidden burn could be distinctly heard in the deep glen. Within the park, beyond the old grey bridge that linked it with the grounds, the deer could be seen couched beneath the oaks. The neighbouring woods, the dark moorland in the distance, over which hung a thin mist, the river glistening here and there through the trees—all completed a picture which was seen by more than one of the earl's guests, and often recalled by them.

The prince was amongst those who brushed the dew from the lawn, and gazed at the charming prospect. He likewise attended matins in the little chapel.

As he was returning from the service with Lord Derwentwater, he met Colonel Oxburgh, and was struck by the grave expression of his countenance.

"Good morrow, colonel," he said, returning the other's military salute. "I fear, from your looks, that you have some bad news to give me."

"What I have to tell your majesty demands instant consideration and decision," replied Oxburgh. "By some means or other, your arrival has been discovered by Sir William Lorraine, the high sheriff of the county, and yesterday afternoon he sent a spy here to make sure that he had not been misinformed. The fellow was suspected and locked up for the night, but it was only this morning that I forced him by threats to confess his errand. It is certain from what he says that the sheriff will come here with a strong party of men to secure your majesty's person."

Lord Derwentwater looked aghast at this startling intelligence, but the prince did not seem much disturbed by it.

"Instant measures must be taken for the defence of the place," said Lord Derwentwater.

"It cannot be defended, my lord," rejoined Colonel Oxburgh. "His majesty must not remain here."

"Do you counsel flight, colonel?" said the prince.

"Not flight—but a retreat, my liege," replied Oxburgh.

"No need to fly," said Lord Derwentwater. "I will undertake to conceal his majesty from any search that can be made for him."

"Better he should seek shelter in some fortified house or castle," observed Oxburgh.

"But where?" demanded the prince. "Where would you have me go?"

"If your majesty will not remain here, and trust yourself to me, I advise you to go to Bamborough Castle," said Lord Derwentwater.

"But is Forster to be relied on?" said the prince. "Is he thoroughly loyal?"

"I'll answer for him with my life," said the earl.

"And so will I, my liege," added Oxburgh.

"Then I'll trust him," said the prince.

"Shall I acquaint him with your majesty's determination?" inquired the earl. "No time must be lost."

"I'll go to him, myself," rejoined the prince.

"Ah! here he comes!" exclaimed Colonel Oxburgh.

As he spoke, Forster was seen descending the steps with Sir John Webb, and immediately obeyed a summons given him by the colonel.

He was as much alarmed as the others when he learnt the prince's jeopardy, and before his highness signified his intention, offered him an asylum at Bamborough.

It was then decided that the prince's departure should take place forthwith, and it was likewise arranged that Lord Derwentwater with Colonel Oxburgh and his troop should escort his highness.

Some further arrangements were subsequently made, but these were sufficient in the meantime, and Colonel Oxburgh and Forster hurried off to the stables to give directions about the horses, while the prince and Lord Derwentwater entered the house.

As soon as the prince's intended departure became known all was bustle and confusion. The news was quickly communicated to the ladies, who very soon came down-stairs, and another consultation was held in the library.

What was to be done? Anna and Dorothy were determined not to be left behind. Since the prince was going to Bamborough, and Lord Derwentwater, and almost everybody else were going with him, they would go too. Both were such perfect equestrians that they could be trusted to keep up with the fugitives, while their spirit was equal to any unforeseen difficulty or danger that might arise. So the proposition was acceded to.

Then came a suggestion from Lady Webb, to the effect that she and Sir John should drive back to Bamborough. This was likewise adopted.

Preparations for a general start were then made at once. Trunks and valises were packed up. Riding-dresses donned, horses brought round, Sir John Webb's carriage got ready, and in less than half an hour the prince and a large party consisting of Lord Derwentwater and his betrothed, Tom Forster and his fair sister, Colonel Oxburgh and his companions, were speeding down the chestnut avenue, with the intent of shaping their course to Bamborough Castle, which they hoped to reach before night.

Some quarter of an hour later, Sir John Webb's great lumbering coach took the same route.

Charles Radclyffe was left in charge of Dilston, and empowered to act as he deemed best, in his brother's absence.

Hedgeley, the spy, was detained for some time after the prince's departure, and then liberated.

BOOK II. — BAMBOROUGH CASTLE

CHAPTER I

The High Sheriff

ABOUT ten o'clock on the same day, the high sheriff, accompanied by a score of well-mounted yeomen, armed with various weapons, arrived at Dilston Castle. The gate was open, and without saying a word to the porter, he rode into the court, followed by Jesmond and a groom, leaving the yeomen on guard outside.

Charles Radclyffe, who was standing at the entrance of the mansion, came down the steps to meet him, and a formal salutation passed between them.

"You will not be surprised at my visit, Mr. Radclyffe," said the sheriff. "I have come here in the execution of a painful duty, and desire to discharge it as lightly as I can. Be pleased to tell your brother, Lord Derwentwater, that a certain important person, whom I am aware is his guest, must be delivered up to me."

"In reply to your demand, Sir William," replied Charles Radclyffe, firmly, "I have to inform you that there are no guests in the castle, and that Lord Derwentwater himself is absent."

The sheriff looked confounded, and consulted Jesmond by a glance.

The latter shook his head to intimate that the assertion ought not to be credited.

"Excuse me, Mr. Radclyffe," said the sheriff, "I can understand that you consider yourself justified in denying that the Pretender is here. But I have proof to the contrary. This man beheld him yesterday."

"I saw him in your company, Mr. Radclyffe," said Jesmond. "I heard you and several others address him as your majesty."

"What have you to say to this, sir?" said the sheriff.

"I might say that the man is mistaken, but I will not," replied Charles. "I will content myself with stating that the person he beheld, and whom he fancied was the Chevalier de Saint George, is gone."

"This will be vexatious, if it should turn out correct," muttered the sheriff.

"Don't believe it, Sir William," cried Jesmond. "Depend upon it, we shall find him."

"I have given you my positive assurance, which ought to be sufficient, Sir William," said Charles Radclyffe. "But if you still entertain any doubts, pray search the house—question the servants—take any steps you think proper."

"I intend to do so, sir," rejoined the sheriff, dismounting, and giving his horse to the groom.

Jesmond likewise dismounted, and followed him.

On the steps the sheriff encountered Newbiggin, and some others of the servants, who corroborated Charles Radclyffe's assertions; and in the entrance hall he found Father Norman, with whom he was acquainted, and whom he respectfully saluted. "Your reverence knows my business," he remarked. "Will you aid me?"

"You cannot expect me to do so, Sir William," replied the priest. "But I will tell you frankly, that no one is concealed here."

"Has the Pretender fled?" demanded the sheriff.

"The Pretender has never been here, Sir William."

"This is mere equivocation, sir," cried the sheriff. "I will not be trifled with. I will search the house from top to bottom, but I will find him. Come with me!" he added to Newbiggin.

Attended by the butler, and assisted by Jesmond, he then went up-stairs, and peered into a great many rooms, but soon gave up the fruitless search.

"I told you how it would be, Sir William," observed the priest, amused by his discomfited air, as he returned to the hall. "This is a large house, and if you

were to search every room in it you would find it a tedious business. Once more, I tell you the person you seek is not here."

"Will you tell me whither he is gone?"

"No; you must find that out for yourself, Sir William. You will act wisely if you abandon the quest altogether."

"No-no! that must not be," cried the sheriff.

"Certainly not, Sir William," said Jesmond. "Leave me to make further investigations. I warrant you I'll discover something."

Receiving permission to do as he pleased, Jesmond proceeded to the stables, and in about ten minutes came back to the sheriff, whom he found in the court-yard. The smile on his countenance betokened success.

"I've found it all out, Sir William," he cried. "You won't be disappointed. A large party on horseback left this morning—but the Pretender was not one of them."

"Then he is here, still?"

"No, Sir William; he went away in Sir John Webb's coach."

"In a coach!—then we may overtake him!"

"Undoubtedly. The carriage is large and heavy, and doesn't travel more than three or four miles an hour. We shall catch him before he gets to Morpeth."

"Is he gone in that direction?"

"He is, Sir William. I told you I'd find out something, and you must own that I've managed to put you on the right scent."

"You have," cried the sheriff, jumping on his horse. "Follow me, gentlemen!—follow me!"—he called out to the yeomen, who had been waiting all this time outside the gate. Next minute they were rattling down the avenue, with the sheriff at their head.

We may be sure Jesmond was not left behind.

CHAPTER II

Pursuit

ON arriving at Corbridge, the sheriff found that the carriage had taken the high road to Newcastle, the cross-road by Whittingham and Stamfordham being impracticable, and accordingly he and his troop galloped off in that direction; but when they reached the extensive moor that skirts the town, they discovered that a deviation from the direct course had been made on the left, and that the travellers had crossed, or attempted to cross the moor to Gosforth.

The road chosen was so bad, that it seemed almost certain the carriage would be found buried up to the axle-tree in a bog, and with that confident expectation the pursuers took the same route.

From appearances on the road, it was sufficiently clear that the heavy vehicle had been more than once partially engulfed, and could only have been extricated with difficulty—but it had reached firm ground at last, and had gone on to Gosforth.

About three miles further on the pursuers descried it slowly rumbling on towards Blagdon Park. Cheered by the sight, they accelerated their pace, and shouting loudly as they went on, soon caused the carriage to stop.

Anxious to make the intended arrest without any appearance of violence, the sheriff ordered a halt of his followers, and rode up to the carriage, attended merely by Jesmond.

Lady Webb and the two women-servants inside had been greatly alarmed by the shouting of the pursuers and sudden stoppage of the vehicle, and Sir John thrust his head out of the window to see what was the matter.

Just then the sheriff came up, and saluting him formally explained his business. Sir John replied rather angrily, and declared in positive terms that there was no one in the carriage beside himself and Lady Webb and their two women-servants.

As the sheriff expressed a doubt, Sir John called to his man-servant to come down and open the door, and immediately got out.

"Now, Sir William—pray satisfy yourself!" he cried.

"I must trouble Lady Webb to alight—and the two women," said the sheriff.

The injunction was obeyed by her ladyship, though not without strong expressions of displeasure.

As soon as they had all come forth, Jesmond got into the carriage, and looked under the seats, but found only trunks and boxes.

As he emerged with a crestfallen look, he was jeered by Sir John and her ladyship. The sheriff, too, blamed him for the blunder he had made.

"I am certain the Pretender is in the carriage, Sir William," he said.

"Then find him," cried the sheriff.

"Ay, find him, fellow, if you can," added Sir John, derisively.

"He is here," cried Jesmond, pointing to the footman, a tall, handsome young man.

An exclamation from Sir John was checked by her ladyship, who made a private sign to the footman to hold his tongue.

"You are not making a second blunder, I trust?" said the sheriff.

"No, no! rest easy, Sir William! All right now! I didn't recognise him at first in his disguise. But now I'll swear to him."

"You will swear that I am the Chevalier de Saint George, whom you call the Pretender?" cried the footman.

"I will," said Jesmond.

Again Sir John would have interfered, if a look from her ladyship had not kept him quiet.

"You need have no hesitation, Sir William," said Jesmond. "I will take all consequences on my own head."

"But your head is nothing," rejoined the sheriff.

After a moment's consideration, he told Sir John Webb he must turn back, and accompany him to Newcastle.

Sir John protested vehemently against the order, and declared it would put him to the greatest inconvenience.

"I cannot help that," said the sheriff. "I own I am somewhat perplexed, but a great responsibility rests with me, and I am afraid of committing an error."

"Then I warn you that you will commit a very great error indeed, if you take me to Newcastle," said Sir John.

"We are wasting time here," cried the sheriff. "Your ladyship will be pleased to re-enter the carriage," he added, in a polite, but authoritative tone to Lady Webb—"and you, Sir John."

The women servants followed, and the footman was about to shut the door, when the sheriff told him he must get in likewise.

Finding Sir John was about to resist the intrusion, Jesmond pushed the young man in, vociferating in a mocking voice:

"Room for his majesty, King James the Third!"

Irritated to the last point, Sir John would certainly have resented the insult if Lady Webb had not held him fast.

She could not, however, prevent him from putting his head from the window, and shouting out to the sheriff:

"Where is this farce to end, Sir William?"

"Most likely at the Tower of London," was the sarcastic reply.

"Make no rejoinder, Sir John," said Lady Webb. "You'll have the laugh against him by-and-bye."

The coach was then turned round, and guarded by the troop of yeomen, proceeded slowly towards Newcastle.

CHAPTER III

Lord Widdrington

VERY different was the progress of the prince and his party from that made by the occupants of the coach. While the latter were crawling along the highway, the others were flying across the country, as if chasing the deer.

Over broad wide moors they speeded—across valley, and through wood—past ancient castles, and along the banks of rushing streams—allowing nothing to stop them—not even the Picts' wall, through a gap in which they dashed—till after traversing many a wild and waste such as only can be seen in Northumberland, they came in sight of the great German Ocean, and the rugged coast that bounds it.

Sixteen miles and upwards had been accomplished in a marvellously short space of time, but then all were well mounted. Throughout this long stretch, Anna, who we have said rode splendidly, kept by the side of Lord Derwentwater, and as he led the way, she shared any risk he might run.

A pretty sight it was to see them together, and drew forth the admiration of those who followed in their course. Somehow or other, they got ahead, and the Prince and Dorothy Forster, who were next behind, made no effort to come up with them. The rest of the party kept well together.

At length a point was reached from which, as we have just mentioned, the broad expanse of the ocean could be surveyed. On the right was Camboise Bay, spreading out with all its rocky headlands as far as Tynemouth and South Shields. On the left was Druridge Bay with Coquet Island in the distance. Behind them a few miles off was Morpeth, with the ruins of its castle, and its old church, and beyond Morpeth lay the wild district they had traversed.

As yet they had made no halt, Lord Derwentwater's intention being to stop at Widdrington Castle, which could now be descried about a mile off, beautifully situated near the coast. It was a picturesque structure, surrounded by fine timber, and though of great antiquity, seemed in excellent repair.

Lord Widdrington was a devoted partisan of the House of Stuart, and it was therefore certain that his castle would be thrown open to the prince, and that his highness might tarry there as long as he pleased if he deemed it as safe as Bamborough.

After contemplating the fine old structure with delight for a few minutes, the prince moved on, and followed by the whole party rode down the eminence, and entered the park.

They had not gone far, when they met the noble owner of the mansion.

Lord Widdrington chanced to be riding about his grounds at the time, and seeing the party enter the lodge-gate, he hastened towards them.

How great was his astonishment when he learnt who was his visitor! He instantly flung himself from his horse to pay homage to him whom he regarded as his king.

But the prince was as quick as himself, and anticipating his design, dismounted and embraced him, expressing the greatest delight at beholding him.

Lord Widdrington had quite the air of a country gentleman. About five-and-thirty, he was well-made, though somewhat robust, with good features, lighted up by grey eyes, and characterised by a frank, manly expression. He wore a blue riding-dress trimmed with silver, a blonde peruke and riding-boots.

By this time Lord Derwentwater had come up, and explanations were quickly given as to the position in which the prince was placed.

Lord Widdrington looked grave, and after a few moments' deliberation said:

"Your majesty must be certain that nothing would gratify me more than to receive you as my guest, but your safety is the first consideration. I am bound, therefore, to state, that in case of pursuit, you would not be as safe here as at Bamborough."

"Such is my own opinion," remarked Lord Derwentwater.

"There are a hundred hiding-places in the old castle," pursued Lord Widdrington; "and besides, a boat can be always in readiness, so that your majesty could be taken to Lindisfarne, where you might be concealed for a month."

"Whatever course you advise, my lord, I will adopt," said the prince. "But I must not be deprived of the power of retreat."

"'Tis therein especially that Bamborough has the advantage over this mansion, my liege," said Forster, who had come up. "I will answer with my life that you shall not fall into the hands of your enemies."

"And I dare not assert as much, since I might not be able to make good my words," said Lord Widdrington.

"That decides me," cried the prince. "I shall take up my quarters at Bamborough."

"I trust your majesty will tarry awhile, and accept such hospitality as I am able to offer you," entreated Lord Widdrington.

"How say you, my lord?" cried the prince, appealing to Lord Derwentwater. "Shall I stay? I am in your hands."

His lordship thought an hour's halt might be risked, so the whole of the party dismounted, and were conducted to a large antique dining-hall, adorned with portraits of the family, commencing with Gerard de Widdrington, who flourished in the time of Edward the Third.

Here a goodly repast was served with remarkable promptitude. Of course, the viands were cold, but those who partook of them were too hungry to care for that—for they had breakfasted but slightly before starting,—and even the two fair damsels had gained a good appetite by the ride.

Claret there was in abundance, and a goblet was devoted to a young pair of whose recent betrothal Lord Widdrington had just heard. The health of King James was drunk at the close of the repast, which was not prolonged beyond an hour. At the expiration of that time the horses were brought round.

After glancing round the entrance-hall, which was panelled with oak, and decked with trophies of the chase and ancient weapons, and admiring the carved oak staircase, the prince went forth, and mounted his steed—Lord Widdrington holding the bridle. With graceful gallantry, his lordship next assisted the two fair equestrians to the saddle. This done, he mounted his own horse, with the purpose of attending the prince to Bamborough. Moreover, he had ordered half a dozen well-armed men to follow at the rear of the troop.

With this additional force the party proceeded on its way—though not at the same rapid pace as heretofore.

CHAPTER IV

Dunstanborough Castle

NO longer feeling any uneasiness, the prince greatly enjoyed the ride along this remarkable coast, which, besides being studded with ancient castles, commands unequalled sea-views.

The day was fine, with a fresh breeze blowing from the North Sea. Many vessels were in sight, giving life to the picture.

Before them lay Warkworth Castle, finely situated on a peninsula, at the mouth of the lovely river Coquet, and the sight of the tall grey towers of this imposing structure so full of historical recollections, greatly moved the prince.

"From that proud castle of the Percys I should like to be proclaimed," he cried aloud.

"Your wish shall be gratified, my liege, that we promise you," rejoined Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster, who overheard the exclamation.

And they fulfilled their promise, but not till a later date.

An ancient stone bridge across the Coquet brought the prince in front of the castle, and he paused for a few minutes to gaze at it. Fain would he have visited the Hermitage, but the wish could not be gratified, and he rode on through the little town. No interference was offered to the party since Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster were at its head.

To Warkworth quickly succeeded a still finer castle—Alnwick; and the prince was again lost in admiration of the second magnificent feudal structure reared on a height above the town, and lording it over the surrounding country.

Guessing his highness's thoughts, Lord Widdrington said:

"Had your majesty these two castles, with Dunstanborough and Bamborough, and all four well garrisoned, you might hold your own till an army could be raised, that should win you your kingdom."

"Bamborough is yours already, my liege," added Forster. "And doubt not the others will be gained."

Several fresh objects interested the prince as he rode on. Amongst them was Howick Tower, now destroyed.

Soon afterwards Dunstanborough Castle could be descried on the right. As the prince advanced, it was easy to perceive that the enormous pile was in ruins, but it still looked strong, and its position on a ridge of rocks overlooking the sea was strikingly grand.

Several towers and a large portion of the walls were left; but that the castle could be rendered capable of defence seemed very doubtful to the prince, though both Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster were of a different opinion.

"If your majesty had time to inspect the stronghold, I would convince you of its importance," said Lord Widdrington. "Ruined as it is, it is so immensely strong that I would undertake to hold it for a month, and with a few large guns it would command the sea."

"There are some extraordinary caverns beneath the castle, where any amount of arms and ammunition sent from France could be stored," observed Forster.

"Obtain possession of the place as soon as you can," remarked the prince. "It ought to belong to us."

"It shall belong to your majesty," said Lord Widdrington.

During the ride along the coast, Lord Derwentwater had not deemed it necessary to pay especial attention to the prince, since Lord Widdrington was better able than himself to furnish any information his highness might require.

The enamoured earl, therefore, felt at liberty to devote himself exclusively to the object of his affections. To enjoy greater freedom, the young pair separated themselves from the troop, and pursued their course along the turf that skirted the road—halting, occasionally, to gaze at the sea.

Attracted by Dunstanborough Castle, they galloped towards the grand old ruin, and after a brief survey of the gateway and towers were hastening back across the plain, when Anna's horse stumbled and fell. Before the earl could dismount and come to her assistance, she had regained her feet, but her horse had sprained his shoulder so badly that he could scarcely move.

Deeming it the best thing that could be done, Lord Derwentwater proposed to ride as quickly as he could after the party, and bring back another horse for her.

"Dare you remain here alone till I return?" he said.

"I am not in the slightest degree afraid," she replied.

"I shall not be away many minutes," he cried, dashing off at full speed.

By this time, the party had disappeared, but he soon overtook them, and in less than five minutes returned with one of Lord Widdrington's grooms.

But Anna was not there. The poor disabled horse had never stirred from the spot. But its mistress was gone.

Lord Derwentwater gazed anxiously in every direction, but could see nothing of her. Thinking she might have gone to the castle, he hurried thither, followed by the groom, dashed through the gateway, and through an inner gate into the court.

Here he gazed distractedly around, but could see no one. Nor was any answer returned to his cries.

CHAPTER V

How the Prince was lodged in the old Fortress

MEANWHILE, the prince and his attendants had proceeded tranquilly on their way to Bamborough Castle, which is not more than an hour's ride from Dunstanborough.

But nearly double that time was consumed on the present occasion, for the prince made several halts, being greatly struck by the imposing aspect and commanding position of the old stronghold.

No uneasiness was felt at the non-appearance of the earl and his betrothed. It was known that an accident had befallen the young lady's horse—and all were aware that a groom had gone back with his lordship to Dunstanborough—but no importance was attached to this circumstance.

On his arrival at Bamborough the prince was ceremoniously received by Mr. Forster who had ridden on in advance with Dorothy. He was first ushered into the hall of the modern mansion which was thronged with servants, who bowed reverently as he appeared, and everything looked so cheerful and comfortable, and so like the abode of a country squire—all the doors were wide open—there were so many dogs about—and such an air of free and easy hospitality pervaded the place—that he would fain have taken up his quarters there, had it been judged prudent.

Mr. Forster would have readily acceded to his highness's wishes, and have assigned him the best rooms in the mansion, but Lord Widdrington and Colonel Oxburgh declared that he must be lodged in the old castle. There he might sleep in security—surrounded by lofty walls, and protected by strong gates. In the daytime there was comparatively little danger.

Quite reconciled to the arrangement, the prince was shortly afterwards conducted by his host to the lower ward of the castle, and thence to one of the towers, the chambers within which were comfortably furnished, and with this accommodation he was very well content.

As a guard to his highness, it was next arranged that Colonel Oxburgh should occupy the lower chamber of the same tower, and that the adjoining fortifications should be tenanted by Captain Wogan and the rest of the troop,

together with some of Mr. Forster's retainers on whose courage and fidelity perfect reliance could be placed.

These arrangements made, the prince walked round the walls of the castle, attended by his host, Lord Widdrington, and Colonel Oxburgh, and was greatly struck by the strength of its position.

Though the sea was tolerably calm, the waves came dashing against the precipitous rock on which the edifice was reared. The Farne Islands looked close at hand, and Holy Island could be seen looming in the distance on the left.

Turning from the sea, the prince contemplated for awhile the square massive keep, and then descended to the court.

Here they were met by the butler, who brought the welcome intelligence that dinner was served. Though it was judged expedient that the prince should lodge within the castle, it was not thought necessary that he should dine there.

"If I am not able to entertain your majesty as well as I could desire," said Mr. Forster, "I trust you will excuse me on the ground that I have had little time for preparation. I cannot give you a banquet such as we partook of yesterday at Dilston."

"Make no apologies," said the prince. "I am no epicure, and care not how plain the fare may be. Apropos of the feast of yesterday! where is Lord Derwentwater?"

Mr. Forster could not answer the question, but the butler being applied to, said that neither his lordship nor the young lady with him had arrived.

"This is strange!" exclaimed the prince.

"Your majesty need not feel uneasy," laughed Forster. "They will be here presently. Is it your pleasure to wait dinner for them?"

His highness did not deem that necessary, but thought some one ought to go in quest of them.

"That will I," cried Lord Widdrington.

And hieing at once to the stable, he called for his horse, and attended by a couple of grooms, set off towards Dunstanborough.

CHAPTER VI

Anna's Adventure in the Cavern

HE had got more than half way thither, when he thought he descried them in the distance, but as night was now coming on, he did not feel quite sure. In another minute, however, all doubts were removed. The persons he beheld were Lord Derwentwater and his betrothed.

Presently, the parties met, and Lord Widdrington exclaimed:

"I am greatly rejoiced to see both of you safe and sound, for we began to fear that something must have happened."

"Something very extraordinary has happened," rejoined Lord Derwentwater.

"Your lordship will scarcely credit me when I tell you that I have been lost in a cavern underneath Dunstanborough Castle," said Anna.

"Lost in a cavern!" exclaimed Lord Widdrington in astonishment. "How came that to pass?"

"You shall hear," she replied. "I was left by myself for a short time near the castle—Lord Derwentwater having ridden off to bring me another horse, my own having got injured by a fall—when I thought I would take a peep at the ruins which were close at hand. Foolishly acting upon the impulse, I flew thither—meaning to get back in a few minutes—and never stopped till I got into the court. After gazing at Queen Margaret's Tower and Lilburne's Tower, I looked round the walls, when my eye fell upon a cavity at a little distance from me. Within the hollow was a flight of steps, leading, as I fancied, to some vault or dungeon, and prompted by curiosity, I hastily descended them. The steps brought me to an arched passage, and still under the influence of curiosity I ventured on, and soon found that other passages branched off on the right and left. Into one of these I turned and advanced a few yards, and inadvertently stepping forward—for I could now see nothing—slipped down a rapid descent, that landed me in what I knew to be a spacious cavern. At first, I was not so much alarmed, because I fancied I could extricate myself from the difficulty. But I could not remount the place down which I had fallen, and being now greatly frightened, I endeavoured to find another exit. But the attempt was fruitless. My outstretched hand only encountered a wall of rock, and I soon

became so perplexed and confused that I could not even find my way back to the spot I had just quitted."

"A terrible position to be placed in!" exclaimed Lord Widdrington. "I wonder you have recovered so soon from the effects of the fright."

"I thought I should have sunk at the time," she rejoined. "But fortunately my spirits supported me. I addressed a prayer to Saint Anna, and then felt easier. But deliverance did not come so soon as I expected, and there was an interval of dreadful suspense. You seemed long—long in coming," she added to Lord Derwentwater. "Ah! when I heard your voice, I knew I was saved."

"And your response gave me new life," he said; "for hope was almost extinct within my breast. That cavern was the last place I searched, for though I had noticed the stone steps, I never thought you would venture down them."

"I can guess all the rest," said Lord Widdrington. "It must have been a joyful meeting."

"The adventure was not an agreeable one," said Anna. "But it has tested his lordship's affection for me. However, I promise to be more careful in future."

"Yes, you have had a pretty good lesson, and will do well to profit by it," said Lord Widdrington.

"My unlucky steed is to blame for it all," she cried. "Had he not stumbled, nothing would have happened."

"You have left him at Dunstanborough, I suppose?" observed Lord Widdrington.

"Yes, in charge of your groom," she replied "Your lordship's horse carries me capitally."

"Then pray use him as long as you will! And now let us on, and relieve the anxiety of our friends."

With this they quickened their pace, and made such good way that dinner was not quite over when they reached Bamborough.

Great rejoicing was manifested on their appearance, and when Anna's adventure became known, the feeling rose to excitement. Dorothy could not

contain herself, but springing from her seat, rushed up to her friend and embraced her.

We need scarcely say that under such unusual circumstances another health was drunk, in addition to the grand toast, which was never omitted.

A great deal of claret was generally drunk at Mr. Forster's dinners, as we have already remarked, and the custom would probably not have been neglected on the present occasion if the prince had not risen early from table, and proceeded to the drawing-room, where there was music and singing.

The prince retired early, and proceeded to his lodgings in the old fortress, attended by his host, Lord Derwentwater, Lord Widdrington, and several others. It chanced to be a fine moonlight night, and the appearance of the massive keep, partly lighted up by the beams, partly in shadow, was so striking, that his highness remained for some time contemplating the massive pile.

He then mounted the walls to gaze at the sea, which was brilliantly illumined—a broad track of light leading across its unruffled surface to the Farne Islands, and producing a truly magical effect.

Scarcely able to tear himself away from this bewitching scene, the prince, at last, bade his attendants good night, and sought his chamber in the tower.

Though no real danger was apprehended, unwonted precautions were taken for his security. The gates were barred, and watch was kept upon the walls throughout the night.

Colonel Oxburgh and his companions were prepared to act on any sudden emergency, and the colonel had arranged his plans with the two nobles, who had likewise decided upon passing the night in the castle.

CHAPTER VII

An Alarm

MORNING came, and nothing had occurred to cause alarm.

The prince slept soundly in the tower, and was up betimes, and on the walls, enjoying the view, and inhaling the fresh sea-breeze. So well pleased was he that the thought that he must speedily quit the castle pained him. But he did not delude himself with the idea, that, strong as was the fortress, it would be possible to maintain it against a regular attack. Flight, therefore, was his only alternative. A vessel must be procured to convey him to France—and this must be accomplished without delay.

Accordingly, when Lord Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington joined him, he made known his wishes to them. They both endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, but finding him resolved, Lord Widdrington undertook to proceed forthwith to Berwick-upon-Tweed, and make all necessary arrangements.

"I have many friends at Berwick—some of them partisans of your majesty," said Lord Widdrington; "and I doubt not I shall be able to hire a small vessel to convey you to Dunkerque, but it may perhaps be necessary for you to embark from Holy Island, or the Farne Islands, but this will depend, in some measure, on the master of the ship. As soon as I have succeeded in making an arrangement I will return, and let your majesty know what I have done."

"I should like to start to-night," said the prince.

"That is allowing very short time for preparation, my liege," replied Lord Widdrington. "But I will do my best to carry out your majesty's wishes,"

"I am sorry to give your lordship so much trouble," said the prince. "But I know you make light of it in your zealous desire to serve me."

"That is perfectly true, my liege," rejoined Lord Widdrington. "I only regret that I cannot give stronger proof of my devotion. I heartily wish your majesty would stay where you are, but since you are determined to leave us, I will do my best to expedite your departure."

As he bent before the prince, the latter passed his arms affectionately round his neck and bade him adieu.

In less than ten minutes the loyal noble, though greatly disliking his mission, was speeding along the road to Berwick-upon-Tweed, followed by a groom.

The early part of the day passed without any incident worth narrating. The prince did not quit the castle, but breakfasted in his tower, and later on, visited the keep attended by Lord Derwentwater and the two young ladies, and thus obtained a more perfect notion than he had hitherto formed of the strength of King Ida's castle.

From the summit of the lofty structure he looked down upon the islands that studded the sea in front of him, and was amazed by the multitude of sea-birds that covered their rocks and precipices, and occasionally rose in clouds, uttering shrieks and cries that could be distinctly heard where he stood.

The sea was calm now, but Anna described its terrific appearance in a storm when tremendous waves were dashed against those rocks, and columns of spray were thrown up through their fissures to a prodigious height.

The islands consisted of two groups, and the more distant of them seemed entirely whitened by sea-birds. The Home Island, as the nearest of the Farne Islands is designated, is not much more than a mile from the mainland, and on that bright, sunshiny day looked close at hand. Dorothy pointed out Prior Castell's Tower, which served as a beacon.

While the prince was examining the little bay almost shut in by rocks that formed an entrance to the Home Island, he observed a boat come forth. It was large and roomy, strongly built and well calculated for a rough sea, and seemed to contain a dozen men armed with muskets or fowling-pieces.

The appearance of this boat and its crew excited some misgiving on the part of those who watched it, especially when they found it was steering direct for the castle.

Lord Derwentwater was preparing to descend to the court and give the alarm, when the boat, which had now got within a quarter of a mile of the shore, suddenly changed its course, and turned off on the left.

Its movements were anxiously watched in the apprehension that the men might be landed, but it went on, and after rounding Beadnell Point was lost to view. The prince then breathed more freely.

"I thought those men were about to attack the castle," he said. "But it seems they had no such design."

"I am not so sure of that, my liege," observed Lord Derwentwater. "They were evidently reconnoitring the place, but something caused them to change their plans, and steer off. Yet a rumour that your majesty is here can scarcely have reached yonder remote island."

"The island is not so remote as your lordship supposes," remarked Dorothy. "Boats are constantly passing to and fro over the Fairway, as the strait is called, and it is highly probable the islanders have heard the news. But I should have thought they were more likely to aid his majesty than to attack him."

"They may be stimulated by the hope of a reward," said the prince. "But be that as it may, I am glad they have given up the attempt."

"We may have another visit from them, so it will be well to be on our guard," observed Lord Derwentwater. "Next time they may approach by land."

"I shall be glad when our carriage arrives," said Anna. "I hope no accident has occurred."

"You need not be uneasy," said Derwentwater. "Sir John and Lady Webb would probably pass the night at Morpeth, and in that case they could not be here till late in the afternoon."

Just then a noise was heard at the entrance to the roof of the keep, and Lord Widdrington made his appearance, accompanied by Mr. Forster and Colonel Oxburgh.

Everybody seemed surprised to see his lordship, and no one more so than the prince.

"What! so soon returned from Berwick?" exclaimed his highness. "Have you succeeded in your errand?"

"Perfectly, my liege," replied Lord Widdrington. "I have hired a sloop now in Berwick harbour, which was to sail this evening for London. But I have induced Captain Hawker of the Saint Abbs, as the sloop is called, to alter his plan. In a word, he has engaged to take your majesty to Dunkerque."

"You have rendered me a great service," said the prince. "But where am I to go on board the sloop?—at Berwick?"

"No, my liege," replied Lord Widdrington. "Since there is almost a certainty of fine weather, Captain Hawker will weigh anchor at nine o'clock, and fire a gun to let you know when he gets off the castle."

The prince signified his approval of the arrangement.

"A boat shall be ready to take you to the sloop, so that your majesty may embark immediately," said Forster.

Again the prince expressed his satisfaction, but he asked Mr. Forster if he had noticed the boat containing the armed men, that had crossed the Fairway, apparently to reconnoitre the castle.

"Those men were only fishermen, my liege," replied the squire. "I felt sure they would move off, and so they did. It is not by those poor fellows that your majesty's departure will be hindered."

CHAPTER VIII

How the Sheriff and his Troop were cared for

EARLY in the morning, Captain Wogan with his brother, and Mr. Talbot and his brother, set forth on horseback to patrol the country, and proceeded towards Dunstanborough stationing themselves at various points commanding the road.

They did not return till late in the afternoon, and then they brought no alarming intelligence. There were no signs whatever of the approach of the enemy. They had seen Sir John Webb's carriage in the distance, but it came on so slowly that they had not waited for it.

Half an hour afterwards the carriage arrived, and then the prince learnt what had happened, and was greatly amused by Sir John's description of the arrest made by the sheriff.

It appeared that the supposed royal prisoner was taken to Newcastle, where the mistake was quickly discovered, and the man set at liberty. Sir John was likewise allowed to proceed on his journey.

"The sheriff was very much mortified by the great blunder he had made," remarked Sir John. "But I don't think he will give up the pursuit, and I fear your majesty may expect a visit from him at Bamborough."

"I hope I shall be gone before he makes his appearance," said the prince. "To-night I set sail for France."

"Since such is the case, I have only to wish your majesty a safe and speedy voyage," said Sir John. "And I sincerely trust nothing may occur to interfere with your departure."

A plan to be adopted in the event of any sudden emergency having been decided upon, the prince agreed to dine at the mansion, and the whole of the party assembled as before, with the addition of Sir John and Lady Webb.

All the servants had received their orders, so no apprehension was entertained of a surprise. The prince was not in very good spirits, and Dorothy, who sat next to him, did her best to cheer him.

The repast was about half over, when a servant hastily entered the room, and informed his master that the sheriff had arrived with a large posse of men.

On this the prince immediately arose, and in pursuance of the plan previously arranged passed through a window into the garden, where a servant was waiting to conduct him by a private entrance to the castle. No one else attended his highness.

The company remained at table; the prince's chair being instantly removed, and the vacancy filled up. All this was the work of a few moments.

Shortly afterwards, the sheriff was ushered into the room, and seemed greatly surprised by the sight of so large a party, for which he was evidently unprepared.

While he was hesitating what to do, Mr. Forster arose, and greeting him in a friendly manner, said:

"I hope you are come to dine with me, Sir William. I shall be very glad of your company, I assure you."

"But I have business of importance, sir," cried the sheriff.

"We will discuss that after dinner," said Forster.

"I am very sorry to interrupt you, sir, but—"

"Nay, I will take no refusal," cried Forster, leading him to the table.

At a sign from Forster a chair was then brought, and placed next his own, and the sheriff was almost forced into it.

Jesmond, who had entered the dining-room at the same time as his superior officer, stationed himself behind the chair, wondering what would happen next, but not venturing to interfere.

"What will you take, Sir William—some venison? There is a fine haunch at the other end of the table."

"You ought to take a prisoner, Sir William," whispered Jesmond.

"So I will presently," replied the sheriff in the same tone. "But I will begin with the venison. Is the Pretender here?"

"I don't see him, Sir William," replied the official, looking round inquisitively at the guests. "But I can't quite distinguish the features of the persons at the bottom of the table. Stay! there is some one rather like him next to Sir John Webb."

"Be quite sure you are right," said the sheriff. "It won't do to make a second mistake."

Meantime, the venison was brought, and proved so good that the sheriff made no objection to a few more slices. At the same time he very readily accepted Mr. Forster's challenge to a glass of claret.

He was now in a much better humour, and partook of several other dishes, and repeatedly emptied the goblet which was constantly replenished by the butler.

The generous wine did its duty, and he almost forgot his errand. He had no one now to remind him of it, for Jesmond had been lured to the sideboard by the butler, and a flask of claret proffered him. He did not decline the attention. Since his chief was enjoying himself, he did not see why he should not follow his example.

But it was not merely Mr. Forster who was attentive in the extreme to his unwelcome guest. Lord Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington, with both of whom Sir William Lorraine was well acquainted, though political and religious differences kept them apart—these two proud nobles, we say, quite unbent, and were excessively complaisant, inviting him to take wine, and conversing very familiarly with him.

Sir John Webb pursued the same course, and as he drank a glass of wine with the sheriff, he gave him a knowing look, just to remind him of the recent adventure. Sir William laughed very good-humouredly.

Thus the dinner went on, and the sheriff became yet more cheerful, as was naturally to be expected, for he had now drunk a good deal of claret.

With the removal of the cloth, the ladies disappeared, for they knew what was likely to occur, and then an immense bowl of punch was placed before the host for the delectation of such as preferred that pleasant beverage to claret.

Unfortunately for himself, Sir William yielded to the seduction. At that precise juncture he meant to have assumed an authoritative air, preparatory to carrying out the business that brought him thither; but a bumper of punch caused him to postpone it to a later moment.

Jesmond was no longer there to watch over him, and incite him by his observations.

That vigilant official had been taken to the butler's pantry, where he, too, had his share—somewhat more than his share of a strong bowl of punch. Punch was his weakness, as well as that of the sheriff, and he found the temptation irresistible.

It must not be supposed that while their leader was thus cared for, the yeomen were neglected. On the contrary they were very well attended to. They were told that the sheriff had ordered them to dismount, and they very readily obeyed. Their horses were accommodated in the squire's roomy stables, and they themselves were conducted to the spacious servants' hall, where all that was left—and it was no slight matter—of the abundant dinner was set before them, together with as much strong ale as they chose to drink. They were not served with punch, like their betters, but they were offered usquebaugh, and we may be sure they did not refuse the stimulating liquor, which nearly resembled whisky, pretty freely.

CHAPTER IX

The Prince's parting Injunctions to Lord Derwentwater and Anna

ON quitting the dining-room before the scene of revelry commenced, the ladies left the mansion to its noisy occupants, and repaired to the castle—gaining admittance in the same manner as the prince. They found his highness in the guard-room alone, pacing to and fro. He questioned them eagerly as to how all was going on.

"The scheme has completely succeeded," said Lady Webb. "In two hours' time—if they go on as they are now doing—the sheriff and his party will be quite incapable of offering any opposition to your majesty's departure. As to their attacking the castle, that is quite out of the question."

"Your majesty may depend that my brother will take good care of your chief enemy," said Dorothy. "The others will be entertained in the servants' hall—so well entertained that they are not likely to stir till your majesty is safe on board the Saint Abbs."

"Excellent!" cried the prince. "Good wine has never been turned to better account than on the present occasion. I own I doubted the success of the scheme, but I did not know the habits of my Northumbrian lieges so well as Mr. Forster. The sheriff appears to have fallen very easily into the snare."

"He was skilfully dealt with," laughed Anna—"caught before he knew what he was about."

After a little further discourse, they came forth into the court, where they continued till such time as it began to grow dark, when they mounted the outer walls, and gazed at the dusky, yet glimmering expanse spread out before them.

The tide was coming in, and they could distinguish the white line formed by the waves, and hear their sound as they broke upon the shore.

As had been anticipated, the night was fine, and the wind favourable for the prince's voyage. Already, the beacon had been lighted on Prior Castell's Tower, so that the position of the rocky islands could be discerned. As far as could be made out, there were no ships or smaller craft in the Fairway.

The boat destined for the prince was lying upon the beach, but could be easily pushed into the sea, and two men were standing near it.

Having made these observations, the prince and the ladies with him returned to the basement court where they found Lord Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington.

The tidings brought by the two nobles were highly satisfactory. No fear now of any interruption from the sheriff. He was discussing a second bowl of punch with Mr. Forster, and when that was finished, a third would be brought in. His followers were equally well employed. So much boisterous merriment was going on in the house, Lord Derwentwater declared, that he was right glad to escape from it.

Under these circumstances, and since no interference could be expected, the prince determined to repair at once to the beach, and there await the signal from the ship.

All his slight preparations for the voyage being completed he had only to bid adieu to his fair companions; for the two nobles, of course, would not quit him till the last moment. But the ladies were equally desirous to attend him, and he could not refuse their request.

So the whole party quitted the castle by the private entrance, and followed by the gate-porter carrying the prince's valise proceeded towards the shore.

The night was dark, as already stated, but the windows of the mansion were lighted up, and the din of merriment resounded from within. The noise was welcome to the prince, as it convinced him that his enemies were occupied.

Lord Widdrington guided the party through the heaps of sand collected at the foot of the lofty rock on which stood the fortress, until they gained the beach.

It was now nearly high water, and only a strip of sand intervened between the sea and the rock. But the boat was still lying where the prince had descried it from above, and the men were close beside it, awaiting orders.

It was then that the prince addressed a few parting words to Lord Derwentwater and his betrothed.

"When I come back, and I mean to come back soon," he said, "I trust I shall find that the contract which I witnessed has been followed by a yet more binding ceremony, and that two persons in whom I take the deepest interest have been for ever united in the silken bonds of matrimony by our Holy Church. Do not delay. When a matter like this has been settled, the sooner it is carried out the better."

"There shall be no delay on my part—that I promise your majesty," said Lord Derwentwater.

"And none on yours, I trust, fair lady?"

"None," she replied, but in accents so low that they were scarce heard above the sound of the waves as they flowed within a few yards of them.

"All then will go well," said the prince. "May our next merry meeting be at Dilston! where the lovely bride, as well as her noble consort, will, I am certain, give me a hearty welcome."

"That I will, my gracious liege, most assuredly, if I am there," she rejoined.

"If you are not there, I won't enter the castle," said the prince. "But find you I shall—or there is no truth in man or woman."

"Nay, my liege, I only meant that you may perchance return before the marriage has been solemnised."

"Have I not said that it must not be delayed?" rejoined the prince. "I now lay my commands upon you both to that effect, and I trust I shall not be disobeyed."

"I will take care that your majesty's injunctions are fulfilled," said Lady Webb.

"With that assurance I shall depart in better humour with myself than I should have done otherwise," said the prince. "My voyage has not been altogether fruitless. If I have not succeeded in my own design I have helped a dear friend to a charming wife—and that is something."

Just then, a flash of light was seen in the Fairway, and next moment the sound of a gun was heard; the loud report being echoed by the rocks behind the party.

CHAPTER X.

The Escape

ALL eyes were turned in the direction whence the sound had come, and a single masted vessel could be imperfectly distinguished, about half a mile off.

"'Tis the sloop!" exclaimed Lord Widdrington.

"Yes, I am summoned, and must go," cried the prince. "Farewell! farewell!"

On hearing the signal, the two men instantly pushed down the boat into the water. All was ready, for the valise had been previously placed inside it by the porter, together with a couple of firelocks.

It had been arranged that the two nobles should accompany the prince to the sloop. Accordingly they entered the boat with him.

As the bark quitted the strand, the prince stood up to wave an adieu to the ladies—but they were soon lost to sight.

Rowed by two strong men, the boat made good way towards the sloop, and it seemed would soon reach her, when an unlooked for interruption occurred.

A dark object was seen lying directly in their course, and as there could be no doubt it was a boat, much larger than their own, they turned aside to avoid it.

As they did so, the larger boat was put in motion, with the evident design of giving chase, while a loud authoritative voice called out to the occupants of the smaller bark to stop.

As may be imagined, the order was entirely disregarded, while Lord Widdrington urged the oarsmen to pull their hardest for the ship, and they made such exertion that they appeared to gain upon their pursuers.

Of the purpose of the latter no doubt could now be entertained. It was certain they were endeavouring to intercept the prince's flight, and effect his capture. How they had obtained information could only be surmised, but they had laid their plans well. The prince's companions were greatly alarmed, but he himself maintained perfect composure.

"'Tis the boat I beheld this morning from the castle walls," he said. "I felt sure it meant mischief, though Mr. Forster thought otherwise. The men within it are armed."

"Luckily, we have arms," said Lord Derwentwater, giving Lord Widdrington one of the muskets and keeping the other himself. "Shall we use them?"

"Certainly," replied the prince. "I will never surrender to those men."

A conflict, indeed, appeared inevitable, if they were overtaken, for a voice called out from the larger boat:

"Stop! or we will fire."

As no notice was taken of the threat, except that the rowers redoubled their efforts, a shot was fired, and a bullet whistled past the prince's head, but without doing any injury.

Exasperated by the audacious act the two nobles discharged their muskets, and with good effect, as was shown by the outcries that followed.

Evidently a couple of men were wounded, and great confusion was caused among the rest.

In consequence of this they lost way, and the distance between the boats was perceptibly increased.

However, they soon recovered, and continued the chase with fresh ardour, again shouting to the fugitives to stop.

"Stand off, villains, or we will fire again!" cried Lord Derwentwater. "What do you mean by molesting us thus?"

"We want the Pretender, and will have him," rejoined the voice that had first spoken. "You had best deliver him up quietly. He shall not escape."

Though very well inclined to answer this insolent speech by a shot, Lord Derwentwater forbore, but the pursuers again fired, and this time one of the rowers was hit in the arm, so that he could not pull at the oars, whereupon Lord Widdrington took his place.

But the change, though quickly effected, caused some little delay, and the pursuers gained upon them.

An encounter now seemed imminent, and since the prince was determined not to yield, it might be fraught with most serious consequences.

To avert these if possible, Lord Derwentwater shouted lustily to attract the attention of the captain of the sloop which was now not more than a furlong off.

Captain Hawker was already on the alert, and prepared to render assistance. The firing had shown him the relative position of the boats, and comprehending exactly how matters stood, he thought it high time to interfere.

Putting a speaking-trumpet, therefore, to his mouth, he roared out:

"Sheer off, or I'll sink you!"

The warning reached the ears for which it was intended, but produced no effect.

The men went on, as boldly as ever, determined not to be baulked of their prey.

However, they were speedily checked, for Captain Hawker turned a swivel-gun upon them, and sent a shot through the bottom of their boat, which began presently to fill, and compelled them to look to their own safety.

Being now disembarassed from his pursuers, the prince got safely on board the sloop, after taking an affectionate leave of his friends.

Their duty being now performed, the two nobles returned to Bamborough Castle without concerning themselves further about their pursuers, whose vociferations proved they were still afloat, and able no doubt, in some way or other, to reach the Home Island.

The sheriff had still to be dealt with, but now the prince was safe they had little fear of him.

Free from all peril, the sloop, with its important burden, passed tranquilly through the Fairway, and entered the open sea.

BOOK III. — THE INSURRECTION IN SCOTLAND

CHAPTER I

The Hunting in Braemar

NOT till the accession of George the First did the general insurrection take place, for which the partisans of the Pretender had been preparing so long.

During the latter years of Anne, who was so much and so deservedly beloved by the people, the Jacobites had remained quiescent, believing that in the political crisis certain to arise on the queen's death, the Chevalier de Saint George would be called to the throne.

Disappointed in this expectation, they determined not to tolerate a rule adverse to the religion of the majority, and hateful to all.

In the year 1715, at which date we shall resume our story, a formidable plot spread throughout England and Scotland, causing the greatest alarm to the Government by the avowed intention of the conspirators to depose the reigning monarch, whom they described as a tyrannous usurper, and restore the ancient sovereignty.

Aware of the designs of his enemies, King George made an appeal to the Nation, in which he said, that after his solemn assurances, and the opportunities he had taken to do everything that might tend to benefit the Church of England, it was unjust and ungrateful to doubt him, and he refused to believe that the people could be so far misled by false representations as to desire to place a Popish Pretender on the throne.

In an address to his majesty by the Lord Mayor, James the Third was denounced as an impostor, who proposed to govern the kingdom by Popish maxims, while the High Church Tories, who were regarded as the Pretender's main supporters in England, and more dangerous than the Roman Catholics themselves, were stigmatised as "Non-resisting rebels, passive-obedience rioters, abjuring Jacobites, and Frenchified Englishmen; monsters, whom no age or country ever produced till now."

The first movements of the Jacobites were checked by the death of Louis the Fourteenth, and the appointment of the Duke of Orleans as Regent; thus precluding any hope of immediate assistance from France, as had been

previously calculated upon, since the Regent, on assuming the government, had at once entered into friendly relations with George the First.

Notwithstanding this unpropitious circumstance, the Chevalier de Saint George, who felt that his position had become critical, sent orders to the Earl of Mar and some others of his adherents that a general rising should take place without delay.

The prince's command was promptly obeyed by the Earl of Mar, who embarked in disguise in a coal-sloop at Gravesend, accompanied by Major General Hamilton and Colonel John Hay, brother of the Earl of Kinnoul. Eventually the earl and his companions reached Braemar Castle in Aberdeenshire in safety.

The forests of Braemar were celebrated for red deer, and under the pretext of a grand hunting-match, the earl invited all the principal Scottish nobles, and chiefs of clans, whom he knew to be opposed to the Union, and attached to the Stuarts. His list of guests included the Marquis of Huntly, eldest son of the Duke of Gordon, the Marquis of Tullibardine, eldest son of the Duke of Athole; the Earls of Nithsdale, Marischal, Traquair, Errol, Southesk, Carnwath, Seaforth, Linlithgow, and Panmure, with nearly a dozen others. Among the chiefs of clans were Glengarry, Campbell of Glendarule, and Mackintosh. They well knew why they were invited, and came attended by numerous followers.

It was a grand sight to see all these nobles and chiefs in full Highland costume, and attended by their vassals and retainers, likewise in Highland dress, and all carrying guns upon the shoulder, assembled in front of the castle, preparatory to setting out on the hunt. With them were several couples of large deer-hounds held in leash by the huntsmen.

No one was better pleased with the sight than the Earl of Mar. Such a goodly attendance augured well for the cause.

Full of glee, and expecting famous sport, the hunting party set out for a defile in the forest into which they knew the deer would be driven. Here the terrified animals were found, and great slaughter was made among them.

The rest of the day was devoted to feasting and carousing. Much venison was eaten—much wine drunk. Nor were the vassals neglected—but fared as well as their lords. As they could not, however, be accommodated in the castle, they found a couch amid the heather.

Early next day, the party again set out for the defile, and a repetition of the previous scene of slaughter took place.

But as soon as the hunt was over, the nobles and chiefs attended by their vassals repaired to a rendezvous agreed upon in the forest, where they found the Earl of Mar with General Hamilton and Colonel Hay.

When the entire party had assembled, the earl mounted upon a fragment of rock, jutting from the turf, and addressed them.

He told them that the honour and independence of Scotland were at stake, and that all true Scotsmen who prized their liberty, must fly to arms to deliver their beloved country from the oppression under which it groaned, and restore their deeply-wronged sovereign to the throne, now occupied by the tyrannous Hanoverian Usurper. The Union—that bane of Scotland—must be abolished. Bitterly did he regret that he had ever countenanced the hateful measure, but he would make amends by helping to effect its dissolution. But they must not stop there. Scotland had many other grievances, all of which would be redressed when their rightful king was restored—and restored he should be soon.

On this, an extraordinary scene ensued. All the nobles and chiefs clustered around the speaker, drew their claymores, and their example being instantly followed by the vassals, more than two hundred broad-swords flashed in the sun.

At the same time shouts were heard of "No Union!" "Down with the Hanoverian Usurper." "Long live King James the Eighth!"

Pausing till the shouting was over, the Earl of Mar then went on.

"Thousands," he said, "in England, as well as in Scotland, are leagued together to accomplish the end we have in view, and only wait the signal to rise, which will now be given them. Material assistance may be expected from France. The Duke of Ormond and Lord Bolingbroke have gone to Paris to induce the Regent to supply us with men and arms, and they hope to return with a French fleet. Furthermore, the Duke of Berwick has engaged to make a descent upon our western coast, with a large force."

"The Duke of Berwick's name would counterbalance that of Marlborough," said the Marquis of Huntly. "But we must not count upon the great Marshal of

France till he has landed. Neither must we depend upon the fleet to be brought by Ormond and Bolingbroke. These are doubtful. But we can confidently rely upon our English allies."

"Have the Northumbrian Jacobites yet risen?" inquired the Marquis of Tullibardine.

"They are on the eve of rising," replied the Earl of Mar. "All the disaffected gentlemen throughout the kingdom are ready for action."

"Lord Derwentwater, I presume, will take the command of the Northumbrian force?" observed the Earl of Nithsdale.

"He is the fittest to do so," replied the Earl of Mar. "But Forster of Bamborough, who is a High Church Tory, will probably be preferred. Forster is very popular with his party, and as the Tories are more influential with the commonalty in England than the Roman Catholics, we must have them heartily with us."

"Lord Derwentwater resembles a Cavalier of Charles the First's time," observed Lord Nithsdale. "I should like to see him at the head of a division."

"And so should I," said the Earl of Mar. "But it cannot be for the reasons I have just mentioned. Neither he nor Lord Widdrington must have a command."

The Marquis of Huntly then addressed the assemblage, and told them that before proceeding further, it would be necessary to appoint a Commander-in-Chief of the Scottish Forces, by which thenceforward the war could be conducted.

"I cannot doubt," he said, "on whom your choice will fall."

"The Earl of Mar," responded a hundred voices; "the Earl of Mar must be our commander-in-chief."

And again the swords were waved.

"I am proud, indeed, to be thus unanimously chosen," said the earl. "I consent to hold the post for the Duke of Berwick, to whom I shall at once relinquish it. What I lack in military skill and experience will be supplied by veteran warriors, one of whom I rejoice to see here."

And as he spoke he directed his glance towards a lofty figure, standing at the outskirts of the assemblage.

So tall was this personage, who like all the others was arrayed in full Highland costume, that he towered almost head and shoulders above those in front of him, and of course could easily be distinguished.

"'Tis Brigadier Mackintosh to whom I specially alluded," said the earl. "He has had sufficient experience, for he has served, and with the greatest distinction, in Holland, Ireland, and France. I shall have a word to say to him anon."

Then addressing the Marquis of Huntly, he said:

"I would not deprive myself of the great satisfaction your lordship has just given me, but I must mention that I had previously received a commission from King James, appointing me his lieutenant-general."

And taking a letter from his breast he placed it in his lordship's hands.

"This confirms our choice," said the marquis, after reading the letter aloud, amid great applause and reiterated expressions of satisfaction from the assemblage.

"My first step," said the earl, when silence was restored, "shall be to set up the standard at Castletown, and proclaim King James. The Fiery Cross shall then be sent round to summon the clans to war. My head-quarters will be fixed at Dunkeld."

"Within a month I will join you there with three thousand men," said the Earl of Seaforth.

"Your arrival will be impatiently expected, my lord," said Mar. "But by that time I hope to be in possession of Perth. How many men will your father, the Duke of Athole, give us, marquis?" he added to Tullibardine.

"Very few, in comparison with Lord Seaforth," replied the other. "But I will bring all I can."

"The duke, I know, is lukewarm in the cause," said Mar. "But since both his sons are pledged, there can be no fear of him."

"None whatever," replied Lord Charles Murray, the Duke of Athole's younger son.

Promises of substantial aid were then given by the Earls of Southesk, Panmure, and other nobles, and by the chiefs Glengarry, and Gordon of Glendarule.

Last of all came Colonel Mackintosh, head of the powerful Clan Chattan. He engaged to raise six or seven hundred well-disciplined Highlanders, but stipulated that his kinsman, Brigadier Mackintosh of Borlum, should have the command of the regiment.

"Be it so, colonel, since you desire it," said Mar. "But I have a more important command for your brave kinsman. Tell Brigadier Mackintosh that I desire to speak to him," he added to Colonel Hay.

On hearing this order, those who were grouped around retired to a little distance, and a vacant space was thus left for the old Highland warrior.

CHAPTER II

Brigadier Mackintosh of Borlum

A VERY remarkable person was Brigadier Mackintosh, Laird of Borlum, and since he is destined to play a conspicuous part in our story, it may be proper to describe him.

The redoubted Laird of Borlum, then, was an old campaigner, having served in Holland years ago, in Ireland under James the Second, where he gained laurels, but little pay, and in France, where he had attained the rank of brigadier, which he still held. Devotedly attached to James the Second, on the death of that monarch, he had transferred all his loyalty to his son. The Chevalier de Saint George had no more zealous adherent than the brave Laird of Borlum.

Brigadier Mackintosh, when we first behold him, standing beside the Earl of Mar, who had quitted his elevated position on the rock to talk to him, could not be far from sixty. Yet despite the hardships he had undergone, he had few traces of age about him. His step was free, his glance piercing, his muscular power prodigious, and he could still run as fleetly, and endure as much fatigue as the youngest of his clan.

His personal appearance was very striking—features strongly marked and prominent, high cheek bones, a very firmly set mouth, and square chin. His eyes were grey and keen, and shaded by black brows, though his locks were blanched. His close-shaven cheeks were marked by many a scar.

The brigadier's expression was cautious, perhaps crafty, and sometimes so grim as to inspire terror. But on occasions his habitual sternness disappeared, and gave way to a winning bonhomie. Though a rigorous disciplinarian, he had always been liked by those who served under him. His enemies said that the brigadier did not object to plunder, and that his maxim was that war should pay its own expenses; but this was a principle pretty generally recognised by the Highlanders of the period.

"Why have you kept aloof, brigadier?" asked the earl.

"Because your lordship has others of mair importance to attend to than an auld trooper, who has only his sword to offer you."

"Hout awa! your sword is worth a thousand men, brigadier, and that ye ken fu' weel. You are the man of all others I must have with me, heart and hand."

"I am a man of few words as your lordship kens—I am ready to do your bidding."

"Aweel then, your kinsman, Colonel Mackintosh, has promised to raise a regiment of six or seven hundred Highland men."

"And so wad I, if I could only find the callants. But they are few and far to seek at Borlum."

"What say you to taking the command of the Clan Chattan?"

"That belongs to our chief, unless—"

"He chooses to resign it to another, and I approve his choice. Will you take it?"

"Gladly," replied the brigadier, his eyes sparkling with satisfaction. "Is this a' your lordship has to say to me, at present?"

"Ye are in a confounded hurry," cried the earl, detaining him. "Hear me to an end."

"My lord, I am all attention."

"When all our forces have assembled, a strong detachment, to consist of five or six regiments, will be sent south to march with the Lowlanders and the Northumbrian insurgents to London. You shall command the detachment. If any man can make a rapid march, you can, brigadier. Long before you reach London, you will have a considerable army, for you are certain to receive large reinforcements in every county through which you pass?especially in Lancashire and Cheshire. You will, therefore, be able to give battle to all the forces the Hanoverian usurper can bring against you. Win that battle and the crown is gained for the prince."

The brigadier drew his broadsword and kissed the hilt.

"I swear to devote myself to this enterprise!" he cried. "Turn back who may, I never will!"

Thereupon, he bowed and retired, looking greatly elated.

CHAPTER III

How the Standard was set up, and King James proclaimed at Castletown

SHORTLY afterwards the whole party proceeded to the castle, where a grand banquet awaited them.

Even more wine was drunk on this occasion than on the previous day, and the company vied with each other in demonstrations of loyalty.

But the crowning act, that was to confound their enemies and confirm their friends, took place on the following day. The whole party assembled after breakfast, but without hounds or huntsmen.

A dozen sturdy bagpipers made the court ring with their shrill strains, announcing that the Earl of Mar was about to proceed to Castletown, which was not more than a mile off, attended by all the nobles and chiefs, and all their vassals and retainers, to set up the standard and proclaim King James.

The principal personages were on horseback?the rest on foot. At the head of the cavalcade was the Earl of Mar, and on his right rode Lord Charles Murray, who carried the standard.

The standard, which made a very splendid appearance, and excited general admiration, was of blue satin, embroidered on one side with the arms of Scotland, in gold. On the other side was a thistle, underneath which were the words, "No Union."

Pendants of white ribbon were attached to the banner: one of them bore the inscription, "For our wronged king and oppressed country:" the other, "For our lives and liberties."

The pipers marched on in advance, playing vigorously.

The morning was fine, but gusty, and Craighdarroch seemed to frown upon them. Several Highlanders joined the party as they marched on, and some old men, bare-legged women, young girls, and children, followed at a distance. But there were few inhabitants in that wild region.

On reaching Castletown, the cavalcade rode into the market-place, where all the townsfolk were assembled, and the pipers, who had marched in first and

taken up a good position, played with redoubled vigour, while the standard was set up on the market-cross.

A loud shout was then raised by the whole concourse, after which silence was authoritatively enjoined, and a trumpet being sounded, the Earl of Mar read the proclamation in a loud clear voice that vibrated through every breast.

"By the decease of the late King James the Seventh, the imperial crown of these realms has lineally descended to his lawful heir and son our sovereign James the Eighth, and we the lords and others do accordingly declare him to be the lawful king over Scotland, England, and Ireland. We are bound by unalienable right to his family and person, and it is to be lamented that our fundamental constitution has been destroyed by factions. The unhappy Union of Scotland and England is also to be deeply lamented—with many other matters, such as the bringing in a foreign prince unacquainted with British manners, customs, and language—the support of his designs by foreign troops—and the contempt with which the military services of British troops are treated. We are determined to resort to the last extremities, in order to remedy these grievances, and have our laws, liberties, and properties secured by the Parliaments of both kingdoms. In conclusion, we hope that undisturbed by a Usurper's interests and council from abroad, or by a restless faction at home, the blessing and aid of Heaven will be extended to the succour of the Royal Family of Stuart and their country from sinking under oppression."

The foregoing manifesto produced a very powerful effect, and the whole assemblage, having listened to it with profound attention, were about to give vent to their feelings, when a circumstance occurred that filled them all with superstitious terror.

By a sudden and violent gust, the silken banner was rent, and the gilded ball blown from the point of the spear, and falling at the feet of Mar's horse, caused the animal to rear.

The greatest consternation was occasioned by this inauspicious occurrence.

Nothing but blanched faces were seen around, and the shouts died away on every lip. Men shook their heads, and said it was ominous of ill, and even Mar himself was not free from uneasiness.

"When King Charles the First's standard was blown down at Nottingham," observed Lord Charles Murray to Brigadier Mackintosh, "it was thought to presage ill. What does this signify?"

The brigadier made no answer, but looked very grave.

The ill-omened incident cast a gloom over the party, from which they did not recover as long as they stayed together.

On quitting Castletown, the nobles and chiefs took leave of their host, and departed each to his respective home, to get together his men, and make all needful preparations for taking the field.

Subsequently, King James was proclaimed at divers other places, and once again by the Earl of Mar at Kirkmichael, near Dumfries.

Meanwhile, the whole of the Highlands were literally in a flame—the Fiery Cross having been sent round in every direction to summon the clans. Such vassals as neglected the mandate of their chief conveyed by this terrible sign—a cross, dipped in blood, and burning—were liable to the penalty of fire and sword. Rarely was the summons disobeyed, and never unpunished, until the passing of the Clan Act by the Government.

Returning slowly from Dumfries, at the head of a thousand men—more than half of whom had joined him on the way—the Earl of Mar found his camp pitched by Colonel Hamilton and Clephane of Carslogie, in a beautiful situation on the side of the Tay.

Soon afterwards, such large reinforcements were brought him by the Earls of Strathern, Southesk, Marischal, and Panmure, that he found himself at the head of twelve thousand fighting men.

A most important achievement performed at this juncture by Colonel Hay gave additional éclat to the insurgents. This gallant officer had often boasted that he would capture Perth, and he now made good his word by surprising the garrison, and enabling Mar to occupy the city. Thenceforward Perth formed the head-quarters of the Scottish commander-in-chief.

Alarmed by the rapid progress of the rebellion, the Government of King George now began to take energetic measures for the repression of the outbreak. The Duke of Argyle hastened to Stirling, where troops were quickly concentrated, in

order to keep the Highlanders in check, and prevent them from crossing the Forth.

All Scottish noblemen or gentlemen, actually in arms, or suspected of favouring the Pretender, were summoned to appear forthwith in Edinburgh, and find bail for their future good conduct. But very few surrendered themselves. Most of them were eager to take the field, and displeased that Mar did not give battle to Argyle, before further succours could reach him at Stirling.

The Scottish commander-in-chief hesitated, though Colonel Hay and others of his advisers remonstrated with him. He had just received a letter from Mr. Forster, praying him to send a couple of regiments to help them to make a rising in Northumberland. This request he was quite willing to grant—indeed, he did more than was asked. He immediately sent off the detachment, which he had prepared to march through England, under the command of Brigadier Mackintosh.

BOOK IV. THE RISING IN NORTHUMBERLAND

CHAPTER I

Dilston revisited

SINCE our last visit to Dilston Castle, the place had acquired a new interest from the marriage of the young Earl of Derwentwater with the beautiful Anna Webb.

The event occurred about three years previously, and was productive of unalloyed happiness to the earl, who made it his entire study to please his lovely wife. In his eyes her charms had improved, and as she was scarcely two-and-twenty, she might not yet have attained the point of perfection.

Mistress of this proud mansion and all belonging to it, adored by the husband who had raised her to this exalted position, the countess ought to have been happy—and to all appearance she was so.

Yet were we to search her breast, we should find a secret sorrow there. She had made every effort to banish the feeling, but without effect. The consciousness that she had a secret from her husband troubled her, but she dared not reveal it to him. Even to Father Norman, she had not entirely laid bare her heart.

One day, when she was at confession in the small chamber, employed for her private devotions, and which was furnished with an altar and a crucifix, the good priest thus addressed her:

"I grieve to find, dear daughter, that you still keep back from the earl, your husband, the secret that has so long weighed upon your breast. This ought not to be. He is entitled to your fullest confidence, and any concealment from him even of a trivial matter is sinful."

"I know it, father," she replied; "and I ardently desire to relieve my breast of its burden by disclosing all to him, and am only deterred by the fear of giving him pain."

"Perhaps you are right, daughter," said the priest, after some reflection. "As no good purpose can be answered by this disclosure, and it is possible it might cause temporary estrangement of the earl's affections, I will not urge you to incur that hazard. But I should be glad to learn that you have at last entirely

dismissed the silly fancy which you have so long allowed to occupy your breast. Give me an assurance to that effect, and I shall be content."

"I am far easier than I was, father," she rejoined, with a sigh. "But I have not entirely subdued the feeling."

"Persevere, daughter, and you will succeed," said the priest. "Fasting and prayer will do much."

"I am willing to undergo any penance you may enjoin, father," she replied; "and, however severe it may be, I shall not complain—provided I obtain relief."

"With these good resolutions you cannot fail, daughter, and you shall have my best assistance."

The good father's injunctions were strictly obeyed by the countess, and after a time she told him her breast was tranquillised.

Meantime, the earl's felicity was entirely undisturbed, except by some misgivings as to the future.

Since his marriage a remarkable change had taken place in his sentiments. At one time he had been chiefly engrossed by the thought of accomplishing the restoration of the Chevalier de Saint George and no peril would have deterred him from making the effort. He now dreaded being engaged in a civil war. He had everything that could contribute to happiness—a lovely wife, to whom he was passionately attached—high rank, great wealth, large possessions, a splendid mansion—all of which would be sacrificed, if the enterprise should fail. The game was too hazardous—the stake too high. Never, since his marriage, had he been separated from his beautiful countess, and the thought of quitting her— even for a brief season—was intolerable. He told her of his fears, and she laughed at them.

"I should not love you half so well as I do," she said, "if I did not believe you would fight for King James—fight for him to the death. Should a rising take place, you must join it—must take a prominent part in it."

"Since I wedded you, dearest Anna, life has acquired such value in my eyes, that I am not disposed to throw it away lightly."

"Do you call it throwing life away lightly to die for your king?"

"'Twould be worse than death to lose you, Anna."

"This is mere weakness. Shut me from your heart. The king's claim is paramount. 'Twould be a crime to desert him. If you wish to preserve my love, you will draw the sword for King James, when called upon."

And she quitted the room.

Much irritated by the scornful tone in which the countess had spoken, the earl walked forth into the wood, and did not return till he had regained his calmness. He found the countess in the garden. She received him with a smile, that dissipated any lingering feelings of anger, and no further allusion was made to the subject at the time. Still, her observations rankled in his breast, and produced the effect she had designed.

He felt that if he did not support King James, he should not retain her love, and that would be a death-blow to his happiness. Whatever course he might take seemed to lead to difficulty and danger.

Fortunately, he was not called upon for an immediate decision. Another year of wedded bliss was allowed him.

Not till the expiration of that term did the storm begin to gather that was destined to burst upon his head.

CHAPTER II

A Warrant issued for the Earl's Arrest

At length, the mandate came.

A letter arrived from the Chevalier de Saint George, enjoining the Earl of Derwentwater to prepare for immediate action.

"So soon as the standard is set up in Scotland by Mar, you must rise," ran the missive.

Aware that the earl had received a despatch from France, the countess flew to his cabinet, and found him pacing to and fro within it, in a state of great perturbation.

"Read that," he said, giving her the letter.

Her cheeks flushed as she scanned it, and she exclaimed almost joyfully,

"You will obey his majesty's orders. There must be no hesitation now. If there is one man in England on whose zeal and fidelity King James ought to be able to count, it is the Earl of Derwentwater, with whom he is connected by birth, and whom he regards as a brother. Would you disappoint all the hopes he has formed of you! Shake off this worse than womanish weakness if you would not have me despise you."

"No more!" cried the earl, almost fiercely. "You have said enough. You have hardened my breast. I care not now what ensues."

"I am glad I have roused you," she cried. "Had you been wanting in the hour of action, you would have been deemed a traitor to your king, and have lost the respect of all honourable men."

Just then Father Norman entered the room.

"I fear I have come at an unlucky moment," he said, perceiving from their looks that some misunderstanding had occurred between them; "and I would at once retire, had I not important news to communicate. I have just received private information from Newcastle that a warrant has been issued for your lordship's arrest on a charge of high treason. The officers will be here tomorrow, and as

they will be accompanied by a party of horse-militia, you must either resist them, or keep out of the way. Since you are not fully prepared for a rising, I would counsel the latter course."

"And I advise resistance," said the countess.

"No—that would precipitate the outbreak," said the earl. "I must concert measures with my friends ere I take up arms."

"You cannot remain in the castle, my lord," said the priest. "A most rigorous search will be made, and if you are discovered, you will be apprehended, and placed in confinement."

"Where shall I find a secure retreat?" said the earl.

"You ought not to be too far off, in case of a sudden emergency," said the countess.

"Your lordship would be perfectly safe in Nathan the woodcutter's hut in the thicket," said the priest. "No one will seek you there—and even if the place should be visited, you can easily escape into the wood."

"Nathan Blacklaw is a trusty fellow," said the earl. "I can perfectly depend upon him. His hut will afford me an excellent hiding-place. When inquiries are made for me, the servants can say that I am gone to visit some Roman Catholic friends in Lancashire. The statement will be credited, since the magistrates must have learnt that Lord Widdrington is now staying with his brother-in-law, Mr. Townley, of Townley, in that county. I will now go and see Nathan Blacklaw, and direct him to prepare for me tomorrow morning."

"Take me with you, I entreat!" said the countess. "I should like to see how you will be lodged in the hut. I wish I could bear you company."

"Alas! that cannot be!" sighed the earl. "Your presence would reconcile me to any inconvenience. But it would infallibly lead to my discovery. Besides, you must be at the castle to see how things go on, and communicate with me."

"I quite understand," she replied.

"When my brother returns from Corbridge, acquaint him with my purpose," said the earl to Father Norman. "I do not think he is in any danger of arrest."

"I have received no caution respecting Mr. Charles Radclyffe," said the priest. "I believe your lordship to be the only person threatened. But I may hear further at night, as I expect a second messenger."

"Long before then, Charles will have returned," said the earl. "And now for the hut," he added to the countess. "I have a melancholy foreboding that when I once quit the castle, I shall never come back to it."

"Dismiss these thoughts, my dear lord," said the priest. "Rest assured that better days are in store for you."

CHAPTER III

The Woodcutter's Hut

PASSING through the garden, the earl and countess took a path that led them along the rocky edge of the ravine, at the bottom of which flowed the Devil's Water.

At length they reached the wood, and entered a sombre alley, arched over by boughs, and designated the "Maiden's Walk."

According to a legend connected with the place, a phantom, wearing the form of a beautiful female, was sometimes seen in the alley, and the appearance of the "Maiden" was thought to bode ill to any member of the Radclyffe family.

Not without some superstitious terror did the earl track this darksome walk. He had often been there, but had never beheld the phantom, but this seemed an occasion, when, if ever, the Maiden might be expected to appear.

At the end of the alley, a narrow path turned off on the left, that brought them, after several windings, to an open space in the heart of the thicket. Here stood the hut; and thus buried, it was not likely that the little habitation would be discovered, unless its situation were pointed out.

As the noble pair drew near the hut, a savage growl was heard, and a large, fierce-looking dog rushed from behind a great stack of wood. The moment, however, the savage animal beheld the earl, he became quiet, and crouched at his feet.

At the same time, the woodcutter made his appearance.

Nathan Blacklaw was strongly built, and had a manly, resolute look. On his shoulder he carried a hatchet, and his costume consisted of a leather jacket, a leather cap, and long leather gaiters, reaching considerably above the knee. He had come forward on hearing his dog bark, and immediately recognising the earl and countess, doffed his cap, and made a rough obeisance.

"Cheviot knows me as well as you do, Nathan," observed the earl, patting the dog's large head.

"Ay, he wad no ha' allowed any one but your lordship and my lady to come nigh the hut," said the woodcutter.

"You must find him a good companion in this solitary spot, Nathan," remarked the countess.

"Deed I do, my lady. I dunna know what I and my dame should do without Cheviot."

"We have come to have a look at the hut, Nathan," said the earl. "Show us inside it, will you?"

Just then a good-looking woman—not more than thirty- five—plainly, yet not unbecomingly dressed, came forth.

Without any hesitation or embarrassment Dame Blacklaw at once ushered the noble pair into the cottage.

Necessarily it was very small, but it looked clean and tidy. It contained only a couple of rooms: in the largest, on which the door opened, the inmates had their meals; it was furnished with a chest of drawers, a small oak table, an arm-chair, a rush-bottomed chair, and a settle.

Besides these there was a clock, and in one corner was a cupboard containing pewter plates, three or four drinking-mugs, certain articles of crockery, and a brace of squat-looking Dutch bottles. Fixed against the wall on the side opposite the cupboard was a crucifix, for Nathan and his wife were Papists. On the hearth burnt a cheerful wood fire, and above it hung a large iron pot. Over the mantelpiece was placed a gun. The inner room, about half the size of the other, held the bed of the worthy couple, who had no family.

"What will you say, dame, when I tell you that I am coming to spend a few days with you?" remarked the earl.

"Your lordship is pleased to jest," she replied, with a smile. "It isn't very likely you will stay here."

"Likely or not, you may expect me to-morrow morning," said the earl.

She held up her hands in astonishment.

"To speak plainly, I don't find it safe at the castle," said the earl. "If I remain there I shall be arrested, so I mean to take refuge in your cottage."

"I thought as much," cried Nathan. "I shall be proud, indeed, to afford your lordship a hiding-place, and I think you will be quite safe here."

"The magistrates are coming with a party of horse-militia to-morrow, and as they won't find me at the castle, they are sure to make a strict search in the neighbourhood."

"Let 'em try. We'll baffle 'em," said the wood-cutter.

"But however shall we accommodate his lordship?" said Dame Blacklaw to the countess. "He won't condescend to occupy our bed."

"Give yourself no trouble about me, dame," interposed the earl. "I can sleep very well in that arm-chair. With Cheviot to watch over me, I shall fear no nocturnal intruder."

"Your lordship will have timely warning should any one come near the place. Of that you may rest assured," said the woodcutter.

Having made all the arrangements he thought necessary, the earl then left with the countess. His parting injunction to the woodcutter and his wife was to look out for him early in the morning, and not to breathe a word to any one that they expected him.

CHAPTER IV

The Maiden's Walk

DESPITE his melancholy forebodings, the earl little dreamed this would be the last night he should ever pass at the castle. He attended mass in the little chapel, and held a long consultation with his brother, Charles Radclyffe, who had now returned from Corbridge, as to the best steps to be taken.

"'Tis unlucky that our friends are scattered at this moment," said the earl. "Had we been able to unite, instead of flying from arrest, we might have attacked Newcastle, and, if we had succeeded in capturing the place, we should have been masters of the county."

"This may yet be accomplished," said Charles Radclyffe.

"Not unless we can get together a sufficient force," said the earl. "Forster and Lord Widdrington may not like to make the attempt, as I know they both deem it very hazardous. We shall hear what Widdrington says on his return from Lancashire."

"Shall I appoint a meeting if I can find means of communicating with them?" asked Charles Radclyffe. "And where shall the place of rendezvous be fixed?"

"At Plainfield or thereabouts," replied the earl. "Ten days hence I will be there, unless I am prevented, and will bring with me all the men I can muster."

"I will find some means of sending this information to Forster," said Charles Radclyffe; "and he will communicate with Widdrington. If the Earl of Mar would send us a Highland regiment it would help us greatly. Shall I write to him in your name?"

"Do so without delay," said the earl. "The rising will never be successful unless our force is materially strengthened."

"All your instructions shall be attended to," said Charles Radclyffe, "and I trust nothing will go wrong to-morrow."

The rest of the evening was spent in affectionate converse by the earl and countess. There were no guests in the house, so they sat together till supper, when they were joined by Charles Radclyffe and Father Norman.

The countess was in excellent spirits, and laughed at the threatened visit of the magistrates. If the earl was not equally free from apprehension he contrived to assume a cheerful aspect.

Next morning, soon after daybreak, Lord Derwentwater arose. The countess was still slumbering, but before he took his departure he stooped down to print a kiss on her brow. Instantly awakened, she flung her arms round his neck, and bade him adieu.

"I have had a very happy dream," she said; "and I hope it may come true. I thought the king was restored, and chiefly by your instrumentality."

"Much has to be done ere that can be accomplished," rejoined the earl. "But I do not despair."

"I wish you could remain here, and resist the officers," she said. "How pleased I should be to see them driven hence!"

"There is no chance of such a result," said the earl. "We must bide our time. In a few days we shall take the field."

Tenderly embracing her, he then quitted the room.

None of the household were astir as Lord Derwentwater went forth. He gave one look at the mansion, heaved a deep sigh, and proceeded towards the wood.

The morning was grey and misty, the trees in the park could scarcely be distinguished, and the brook at the bottom of the glen was hidden by vapour.

Gloomy thoughts likewise possessed him, and as he tracked the sombre alley, he thought he beheld a female figure, arrayed in white, advancing towards him.

Not doubting it was the Maiden, he instantly stopped.

In another moment the phantom stood before him. Its looks were sad and compassionate, but it spoke not, and terror kept him dumb.

After remaining thus transfixed for a few moments, he broke the spell and moved forwards, but the phantom waved him back, and he again halted.

With another warning gesture, accompanied by a look of indescribable pity, the figure vanished.

Not for some minutes after issuing from the alley, did the earl recover from the shock he had received, and he was still leaning for support against a tree, when he was roused by the approach of the woodcutter and his dog.

"I fear your lordship is unwell?" remarked Nathan.

"No," replied the earl, "but I have been much alarmed. I have just seen the Maiden."

"Then I don't wonder your lordship is disturbed," said the woodcutter. "May I venture to ask what occurred?"

"The spirit warned me to turn back," said the earl, "But it is now too late."

The woodcutter made no remark, but seemed to think that the warning ought not to be neglected.

On reaching the hut, Lord Derwentwater threw himself into the arm-chair and presently fell asleep. Nor did he awake for some hours.

During this interval, Dame Blacklaw moved about as noiselessly as she could, so as not to disturb him—Cheviot crouched at his feet—and Nathan went on with his work outside; but he left it, ever and anon, for a short space, while he flew to the skirts of the woods to reconnoitre.

CHAPTER V

How Charles Radclyffe provoked Sir William Lorraine

ABOUT nine o'clock on the same morning, the Newcastle magistrates arrived at the castle. They were attended by certain subordinate officers, armed with sword and pistol, and by a party of horse-militia.

As the gate had been thrown wide open by the porter, they all rode into the court, and the chief persons—three in number—proceeded to the entrance and dismounted.

Among them was Sir William Lorraine, who though he had long ceased to be high sheriff, was still a magistrate. As on the former expedition, Sir William was accompanied by his active agent, Jesmond, who was determined not to be duped on the present occasion. While the magistrates and the others entered the court, Jesmond and his comrade Hedgeley fastened up their horses and proceeded to the garden to look about them.

As may well be supposed, the noise and clatter caused by this large party of horsemen, had brought forth all the servants, and when the magistrates dismounted at the steps, they were met by Newbiggin and two or three others.

In return to their obeisances, Sir William, as the principal magistrate, said in a loud authoritative tone to Newbiggin:

"Conduct us at once to the Earl of Derwentwater. We hold a warrant for his arrest."

"His lordship is not within," replied the butler, with formal politeness.

"Where is he?" demanded Sir William. "We must see him."

"I don't see how that can be managed, Sir William, seeing that his lordship is in Lancashire," rejoined Newbiggin.

"In Lancashire!" exclaimed Sir William. "He must have travelled very quickly. I know he was here yesterday."

"Yes, Sir William, but he intended to ride throughout the night, and I make no doubt he is in Lancashire this morning."

"Then he has fled?"

"Pardon me, Sir William, he has gone on a visit to some of his Roman Catholic friends."

"Harkee, sirrah!" cried Mr. Woodburn, another of the magistrates. "Take care how you attempt to deceive us. You will not go unpunished."

"Perhaps you would like to see her ladyship, gentlemen—or Mr. Charles Radclyffe?" said Mr. Newbiggin.

"It will be necessary to see them both, and to search the house as well," said Mr. Woodburn.

"You will be good enough to state your wishes to her ladyship, sir," rejoined the butler. "I dare say she will make no objection. Be pleased to step this way, gentlemen."

He then conducted them across the hall to the dining-room, where they found Lady Derwentwater, Mr. Charles Radclyffe, and Father Norman at breakfast.

Her ladyship looked very charming in her morning toilette, and seemed in no way discomposed by the entrance of the magistrates. Still holding the cup of chocolate, from which she was sipping, she arose and made them a formal courtesy.

"These gentlemen are Newcastle magistrates, my lady," said the butler, significantly.

"I understand," she replied. "You have explained that his lordship is not at home?"

"Yes, my lady; but they are not content with my assurance."

"Your ladyship must be fully aware," said Sir William, sententiously, "that the Earl of Derwentwater has incurred the suspicion of Government, and will not therefore be surprised to learn that we hold a warrant for his arrest. We cannot depart without him."

"That implies a doubt as to the truth of the statement you have just heard, that his lordship is not at home," observed the countess.

"Where her husband's safety is concerned, a wife may perhaps consider herself justified in duping the authorities," remarked Sir William. "If I seem to doubt your ladyship's word, you must excuse me."

"Then I will say no more, but leave you to take your own course," she rejoined.

"We will put your ladyship to as little inconvenience as we can," said Mr. Woodburn. "But we must search the house."

"Search as much as you please, gentlemen, you will be disappointed" remarked Charles Radclyffe. "I will give you my head if you find Lord Derwentwater here."

"I know you to be a man of honour, sir," said Sir William, "and therefore am inclined to believe you."

"Inclined to believe me, sir!" exclaimed Charles Radclyffe, furiously. "Sdeath, sir, you shall believe me, or render an immediate account of your incredulity."

"If you have a quarrel to arrange, pray step out upon the lawn," remarked Lady Derwentwater.

"At any other time, I should not refuse Mr. Charles Radclyffe's challenge," said Sir William. "But just now I have a duty to perform, and shall not be deterred by an idle threat. I must again express my conviction that Lord Derwentwater is concealed in the house."

"Then make a careful search, Sir William," said the countess. "And if you cannot disprove Mr. Charles Radclyffe's assertion, you are bound to offer him an apology."

Turning to Father Norman, she added, "Your reverence will be good enough to conduct these gentlemen over the house. Go with them, likewise, Newbiggin."

"I shall take leave to make one of the party," said Charles Radclyffe.

Thereupon, they quitted the dining-room, leaving the countess alone.

This was the second time that Sir William Lorraine had made a perquisition of the house, and he was able, therefore, to get through the business with despatch. But he had to brook a great many insolent observations from Charles Radclyffe, who lost no opportunity of provoking him. The search

occupied more than an hour, and when it was concluded, and the magistrates were obliged to confess their failure, Charles burst into a contemptuous laugh, and said:

"This is on a par with your great feat at Bamborough, Sir William, which gained you so much reputation in the county, when you were high sheriff."

"You do well to remind me of the trick played upon me at that time," said Sir William, greatly exasperated. "I have not forgotten it, though Mr. Forster and some others may wish I had. I think, sir, you will be safest at Newcastle, and since I cannot secure Lord Derwentwater, I will take you with me, and hold you as a hostage for your brother."

"Do not imagine I will accompany you, Sir William," said Charles.

"You will have no option," rejoined the other. "You will be taken as a prisoner."

"I scarcely think so," said Charles. "You have no warrant, and I will resist any attempt to arrest me."

This angry colloquy took place in the hall, and was overheard by several of the servants, who were ready to rush to Charles Radclyffe's assistance, should he need them.

Just then, Jesmond and Hedgeley came in, and the magistrates called out to them.

Profiting by this interval, Father Norman urged the rash young man to fly, and he yielded to the counsel.

Drawing his sword, he ran along a passage communicating with the terrace. But he was quickly followed both by the magistrates and the officers, and it seemed that a conflict would take place on the terrace, for the servants were likewise hurrying to the same spot.

The windows of the dining-room, in which the countess was still sitting, commanded the scene of action, and hearing a noise she came forward to see what was taking place.

She beheld Charles Radclyffe standing there, with his drawn sword, threatening any one who approached him. Feeling, however, that if any

catastrophe occurred, the consequences would be disastrous, he formed a different resolution, and at once acted upon it.

Springing to the side of the terrace, that bordered the ravine, he flung his sword into the hollow, and then plunged down the rocky sides of the abyss, certain no one would follow him in this perilous descent.

Those who looked down from the terrace, saw him reach the banks of the Devil's Water in safety, pick up his sword, and then disappear among the bushes.

Jesmond, who had drawn a pistol would have fired at him, but this Sir William Lorraine would not allow.

"Capture him, if you can," he said. "But he must not be wounded—unless he resists."

But it did not appear likely that anything more would be seen of him.

CHAPTER VI

How Charles Radclyffe joined the Earl at the Hut

AFTER slumbering tranquilly for three or four hours in the arm-chair Lord Derwentwater roused himself, and breakfasted with a very good appetite on the simple fare provided for him by Dame Blacklaw.

He next occupied himself in examining some papers which he carried in a small portfolio, and was still thus employed when Cheviot, who had never left him, suddenly raised his head, and gave a low growl.

"He hears something," observed Dame Blacklaw. But there can be no danger, or Nathan would have come to warn your lordship."

After listening for a moment, Cheviot got up and began to whine, and the door being opened, he rushed forth, and a joyous bark was instantly heard outside.

Curious to learn who was there, Lord Derwentwater hastily put up his papers, and went out.

To his great surprise, he found the new-comer was his brother, who told him in a few words what had taken place, and though the earl blamed him for his imprudence, he felt greatly enraged against Sir William Lorraine.

"I should like to drive these magistrates from the castle," he said.

"If you are of that mind, it may still be done," rejoined Charles. "But for your express orders to the contrary, I would have shut the gates, and shown them fight."

"But no preparations had been made," said the earl.

"There you are mistaken," returned Charles. "I was quite ready. All the tenants and retainers are stationed at the farm; all the horses have been taken there; all the arms and ammunition have been removed from the old tower, and deposited in one of the barns; all the grooms and active men-servants are likewise at the farm."

"And you have done all this without consulting me?" cried the earl.

"It was done at the urgent request of the countess," replied Charles. "She said, 'It is not fitting that the Earl of Derwentwater should hide in hovels, when the gentry are in arms for their lawful sovereign. It shall never be said that the officers came to Dilston to arrest him, and were allowed to depart as they came. If no one else will do it, I will drive them hence.' I dissuaded her from this bold step, but I agreed to get all ready with the design of effecting your rescue if you should fall into their hands."

"You have done well, Charles," cried the earl, "and I thank you. Let us to the farm at once, and if the enemy are still at the castle we will soon expel them."

"This resolution is worthy of you, my lord," said Charles. "I fear your flight might have been misconstrued."

Thinking Nathan might be useful, the earl bade him follow, and hastened away with his brother.

CHAPTER VII

How the Magistrates and the Militiamen were forced to quit the Castle

THE farm to which reference has just been made, lay on the other side of the castle, and was distant about half a mile from the woodcutter's hut.

The earl and his companions, however, proceeded so expeditiously that they were soon there, but as they were tracking a lane that led to the farm buildings they encountered a man, who had evidently been reconnoitring the place, and instantly secured him.

This proved to be Jesmond, and though armed, he did not offer any resistance— probably thinking it would be useless. Disarming him, and giving the weapons to Nathan, the earl told the latter to shoot the man if he attempted to fly.

An additional guard was found in Cheviot, who had followed his master, and cut off all chance of the prisoner's escape.

In some respects this was an important capture, and the earl hoped to turn it to account. At any rate, he had ascertained that the party were still at the castle, and felt sure he should take them by surprise.

On entering the farm-yard the earl found between thirty and forty stalwart yeomen collected there.

All of them had got good strong horses, and had pistols in their holsters and swords by the side. With them were half a dozen grooms. The sight of these sturdy fellows sent a thrill through the earl's breast, and he reproached himself with not having confided to them the defence of the castle. They would have set up a shout on his appearance, but he checked them. Very few minutes sufficed to arrange matters. All the yeomen were quickly in the saddle.

Mounted on his favourite dapple-grey steed, which had been brought to the farm- yard, the Earl of Derwentwater put himself at the head of his troop, and bade them follow him to the castle—but ere they arrived there they received an important reinforcement.

Colonel Oxburgh, Captain Wogan, and the rest of that gallant little band, who still held together, were then at Hexham, and having learnt that the

magistrates of Newcastle, attended by a party of horse-militia, designed to arrest Lord Derwentwater, they set off to the earl's assistance, and arrived in the very nick of time.

They were galloping up the chestnut avenue at the very time when the earl brought his troop from the farm. An immediate explanation took place; and on hearing how matters stood, Colonel Oxburgh exclaimed, "I think we can take them prisoners."

They then rode quickly forward, and finding that the whole of the militiamen were in the court, they drew up in front of the gate, so as to prevent the departure of the intruders.

After this successful manoeuvre, which was very quickly executed, Lord Derwentwater and the principal persons with him advanced into the court.

Here all was confusion and dismay. Most of the militiamen had dismounted, and were scattered about the court in a very disorderly manner.

While their leader was shouting to them to mount, Lord Derwentwater dashed up to him, and seizing his bridle, demanded his sword.

The officer held back for a moment, but seeing that the gate was strongly guarded, and retreat impossible, he yielded, and the men did not seem inclined to offer any further opposition.

Hitherto the magistrates had been inside the house, but they now came forth to see what was going on, and no sooner had they done so than the door was shut and barred behind them.

They were contemplating the scene with dismay, when Lord Derwentwater and his friends came up.

"The tables are turned, you perceive, gentlemen," said the earl, in a mocking tone. "You have come here to arrest me, and are made prisoners yourselves."

"But your lordship won't detain us," rejoined Sir William.

"I have no wish to put you to inconvenience, but I shall not let you go, unless you engage to return direct to Newcastle."

After a short consultation with his brother magistrates, Sir William said, "We agree."

"You must also deliver up the warrant, and undertake that no further attempt shall be made to arrest me," said the earl.

"Your lordship must feel that we cannot enter into such an engagement," replied Mr. Woodburn. "We will deliver up the warrant, but we cannot tell what steps may be taken."

"Well, I advise you not to come again on the like errand," said the earl. "One of your officers has fallen into my hands. I shall keep him as a hostage, and if aught happens contrary to our present understanding, I will most assuredly shoot him. Now, gentlemen, you are free to depart as soon as you please."

Thereupon, the magistrates came down from the perron, on the summit of which they had been standing, and mounted their horses.

By this time all the militiamen were in the saddle, and ready for departure. They muttered threats against the Jacobites, but were glad to escape a conflict with them. When Jesmond found he was to be detained, he begged hard to be set free; but his entreaties were disregarded.

The yeomen who had hitherto blocked up the gateway were now removed by Charles Radclyffe, and there was nothing to prevent the departure of the intruders, when a large upper window of the mansion was opened, and the Countess of Derwentwater appeared at it.

In her hand she bore a silken banner, embroidered with the badge of the Chevalier de Saint George. Waving the banner above the assemblage, she called out in a loud clear voice, distinctly heard by all, "Long live King James the Third! and down with the Hanoverian Usurper!"

Deafening shouts arose from the Jacobites, amidst which the magistrates and the militiamen passed through the gateway.

CHAPTER VIII

How the Earl took leave of the Countess

"At length the decisive step is taken," cried Lord Derwentwater. "Now there can be no turning back. I do not think it will be safe to remain longer at Dilston, and I would join Forster if I knew where to find him."

"Two days hence he will be at Rothbury," said Colonel Oxburgh. "I had a letter from him by express this very morning. He is moving about the country, picking up all the recruits he can. He has now, it seems, got forty or fifty gentlemen with him—all High Church Tories, of course—and all well mounted and well armed."

"A good beginning," cried the earl. "I will set out at once for Rothbury, and take all my own men with me. No doubt, we shall largely increase our force, as soon as we take the field."

"That is certain," said Colonel Oxburgh. "But we must get together without delay. Since Forster will not come here, we must go to him. Do not let your resolution cool, my lord. Let us start at once!"

"It shall be so," cried the earl.

The determination was acted upon. The men displayed great loyalty and spirit. On being informed by the earl that he was about to take the field forthwith, they expressed the utmost willingness to follow him, and fight for King James.

As the Earl of Derwentwater was too devout to start on such an expedition as the present, without invoking Divine aid and protection, and as all his tenants and retainers were of the same religion as himself, mass was performed by Father Norman in the little chapel, at which the whole party assisted. The countess likewise was present, and was deeply affected.

It was a touching sight to see all those rude soldiers kneeling there and imploring Heaven's blessing upon their arms. But there were others there, equally earnest in their prayers—Colonel Oxburgh and his brave companions, with Charles Radclyffe. All these were gathered in front of the altar near the earl, and received the priestly benediction.

When the service was over, all immediately left the chapel, except the earl and countess, who remained there for a short time longer.

Their parting was sorrowful, for both felt they might never meet again. The countess was more overcome than she expected. During the visit of the magistrates she had been greatly excited, but a reaction had since taken place, and she was now proportionately depressed. Her beautiful head fell upon the earl's breast, and she wept aloud.

"I do not like to leave you thus, dearest Anna," he said.

"Heed me not!" she rejoined, gazing at him with streaming eyes. "This will soon be past. I would not have you defer your departure for an hour on my account. Come back as soon as you can—but come not back till you have restored the king!"

"Then I may never return," said the earl, gloomily.

"Do not despair!" she cried. "Be of good heart, and you will triumph. Night and morn, I will pray at this altar for success to your arms. And since your cause is just, Heaven will grant my prayer! And now farewell! If you stay too long here, your resolution may waver."

"No fear of that!" cried the earl, again straining her to his breast. "Farewell! farewell!"

He then tore himself away, but when he reached the door of the chapel, he turned to take a last look at her.

She was again kneeling at the altar, and did not see him.

Meanwhile, the yeomen had been taken to the butler's pantry, where they lost no time in discussing the plentiful repast prepared for them, and having washed down the viands with some jugs of strong ale, re-mounted their horses.

Refreshments and wine were likewise served in the entrance-hall, of which the Jacobite gentlemen partook.

Before going forth each drank the king's health in a large goblet of claret, and each drew his sword and devoted it to the king's service.

Soon after this the court was empty, and the various horsemen, who had lately filled it, were seen speeding along the chestnut avenue, with the Earl of Derwentwater at their head, mounted on his dapple-grey steed.

CHAPTER IX

Mad Jack Hall of Otterburn

HALTING at Corbridge, the earl and his companions drew their swords, and proclaimed James the Third.

Here half a dozen gentlemen joined them, and they obtained some further recruits as they went on.

One of the chief partisans of the Stuarts in the county was Mr. Hall, of Otterburn, in Redesdale. A man of ancient family and considerable property, but of eccentric character and ungovernable temper, he was known by the name of "Mad Jack Hall of Otterburn."

Under ordinary circumstances it was difficult to get on with a person so quarrelsome, and he was therefore left out of many Jacobite meetings; but it being now necessary that every friend of the cause should be mustered, Squire Hall was far too important to be omitted. Lord Derwentwater had therefore resolved to visit Otterburn, and see what could be done with the crazy laird. He mentioned his design to Colonel Oxburgh and the others, who entirely approved of it.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, after riding for the most part across the country, they entered a wild district, erstwhile the scene of many a Border foray; and after tracking it for some miles reached the picturesque village of Otterburn, where the famous battle was fought.

Before them rose the still proud pile that had so stoutly resisted the attack of the Scots. Through the valley flowed the now clear Otter, once been dyed red with blood, while its banks were covered with slain.

The approach of the party had evidently been observed, for as they drew near the castle, a tall man sallied forth from the gateway, and greeted them with a loud shout.

Lord Derwentwater and those with him at once recognised the Laird of Otterburn, and were glad to find him at home.

In age, Squire Hall might be forty-five—perhaps not quite so much—but his deep red complexion seemed to indicate that he drank hard, and his

countenance had certainly a wild expression. But his deportment was quite that of a gentleman. He wore a green riding-dress laced with silver, a black riding-wig, and a small three-cornered hat, likewise bound with silver lace, and had a sword by his side.

That he understood what had brought the party to Otterburn was clear, as also, that he was quite ready to join them, for he took off his hat, and shouted at the top of a stentorian voice, "Long live King James!"

The shout was repeated by the new-comers, and so lustily that all the villagers rushed to their doors.

After cordially greeting Lord Derwentwater and those with him, all of whom were friends, the squire led the whole party into the court-yard of the castle, and then told them they must not think of leaving him till the morrow.

"Don't imagine you will incommode me," he said. "There is plenty of room in the old castle. To-day we will drink the king's health. To-morrow we will muster our forces, and prepare to fight his enemies. Forster, I hear, is at Rothbury, and if I hadn't joined your lordship, I should have joined him."

Very well satisfied with their hearty reception, the earl and his friends with the whole troop dismounted, and were shortly afterwards installed in various parts of the castle.

That beds were found for all of them—or even half—we do not pretend to say; but in some way or other they were accommodated.

Later on in the day a substantial dinner was served in the old banqueting-hall.

A great deal of wine was drunk that night, as was generally the case at Otterburn, and it would have been strange indeed if a quarrel had not occurred between the choleric laird and some of his guests.

For a time, Squire Hall appeared in remarkably good humour. He proposed a great number of Jacobite toasts, all of which were drunk with enthusiasm, but at length he propounded a plan for taking Newcastle by surprise, and its absurdity being pointed out to him by Colonel Oxburgh he flew into a violent rage, and told the colonel he was not fit to command a regiment.

The colonel immediately arose to leave the table, and Lord Derwentwater insisted that the squire should at once withdraw the offensive observation. Instead of doing so, the squire sprang from his chair, drew his sword, and dared Colonel Oxburgh to meet him; but while gesticulating fiercely he fell to the ground, and could not get up again. In this state he was carried off to bed, and next morning he had forgotten all about the occurrence.

CHAPTER X

The Race on Simonside

AFTER a capital breakfast, the whole party—now increased by Squire Hall and half a dozen men—rode from Otterburn to Simonside, one of the loftiest and most striking hills in Northumberland. The summit of this remarkable eminence is a complete plateau, and the views commanded from it on all sides are extraordinarily fine, the whole range of the Cheviots being visible on the west, and the German Ocean on the east.

As the party were riding across this wide plain, with the intention of descending the north side, and proceeding to Rothbury, Squire Hall, who had been tolerably quiet during the morning, proposed to ride a race with Charles Radclyffe for twenty guineas.

"We will ride from here to Rothbury," he said; "and whoever gets there first, shall be deemed the winner."

Charles Radclyffe instantly accepted the challenge; but the Earl of Derwentwater very reluctantly allowed the match to take place, and only consented from the fear of causing a fresh quarrel with the squire.

Without loss of time, the two gentlemen were placed together, and started at once by the earl. Both were well mounted—both excellent horsemen—but Charles Radclyffe was much the lighter weight, though undoubtedly the squire had the stronger horse.

It was a very pretty sight, to see them as they scoured over the plain, accompanied by the whole troop. The earl's dapple-grey being fleetier than either of the contending steeds, he could have easily led them, had he thought proper, but he did not make the attempt. Nor did he go beyond the edge of the hill.

On looking down the steep slopes, he called to the others to stop, but neither of them heeded him. Both dashed headlong down the hill, and all the lookers-on thought they would come rolling to the bottom.

If ever Squire Hall merited the epithet applied to his name, it was on that day, and Charles Radclyffe appeared little less crazy—the general impression being that both would break their necks. But somehow, the horses kept their feet.

The squire shouted lustily, as he continued his mad descent, and Charles was equally excited.

To the astonishment of all the beholders they got down in safety, and were soon afterwards seen crossing the bridge; being then so close together, that it was impossible to say who had won the race.

The Earl of Derwentwater and his companions took an easier and more secure route down. As they approached the old bridge over the Coquet leading to the charming little town, they met the two crazy riders coming to meet them, and inquired who had won.

"We can't settle the point, my lord," replied the squire; "it seems to have been a dead-heat. We shall have to ride the race over again."

"Not on Simonside Hill," replied Lord Derwentwater, laughing. "Have you heard where Mr. Forster has fixed his head-quarters? I see nothing of him or his troop."

"His head-quarters are now at Wanny Craggs," replied the squire. "He has gone there to meet some friends."

"Does he return to Rothbury?" demanded the earl.

"That seems doubtful," replied Charles Radclyffe. "No one can answer for his movements. Probably, he will proceed to Warkworth to meet Lord Widdrington."

"Then we must follow him," said the earl.

Fain would Lord Derwentwater have tarried for a day at Rothbury, which offered many attractions to him, but wishing to effect an immediate junction with Forster, he only halted long enough to allow his men to refresh themselves at the comfortable little hostel near the church, where they found good ale.

To reach Wanny Craggs, they had again to cross Simonside, and the deciding race was run on the summit, and won by Squire Hall, who was extraordinarily proud of the achievement.

CHAPTER XI

Wanny Crag

ON descending the south side of the hill the earl and his troop passed through a thick forest, and then entered upon a moor, in the midst of which could be seen a remarkable cluster of rocks. These were Wanny Crag, and on the highest of them floated the king's banner, showing that the insurgents had taken up a position there.

On a nearer approach to this singular station, Forster and his men could be descried, grouped like bandits on the rocks; while a great cleft served as a stable for their horses.

As the earl drew nigh this natural fortress, Forster came down from the lofty point he had occupied and bade him welcome, expressing the greatest satisfaction at beholding him and his friends, and adding, that no doubt now they were come, all would go well.

"You do not mean to pass the night among these rocks, I presume?" said the earl.

"I came hither in the hope of gaining some recruits," replied Forster, "but have been disappointed. If your lordship had not joined me, I should have returned to Rothbury. But now I think it will be best to proceed to Warkworth. The castle is in our hands, and Lord Widdrington will be there to-morrow with a troop of horse. I hope we shall soon be strong enough to besiege Newcastle."

"Nothing can be decided upon till our forces are organised, and we can ascertain what assistance we are likely to receive from Scotland," said Lord Derwentwater. "From what you say, we shall be able to hold a consultation with Lord Widdrington to-morrow, and can be guided by his advice."

Just then, a sentinel stationed on the highest crag, called out that a troop of horse-militia was coming across the moor on the road from Morpeth, and after Charles Radclyffe had examined the party through a spy-glass he declared it was Sir William Lorraine, and the party he had brought with him to Dilston.

"I recognise Sir William perfectly," he said.

"And so do I!" cried Squire Hall, taking the spy-glass from him. "And I am quite certain he is now on his way to Otterburn to arrest me. Leave me to deal with him. Let the men conceal themselves behind the rocks, so that he may not suspect the presence of so large a party."

Since no harm could be done by humouring the eccentric squire, Lord Derwentwater and Mr. Forster complied with his request, and as he rode off they concealed their men as he had suggested.

As soon as Sir William Lorraine—for he it undoubtedly was—came in sight of Wanny Crag, he was made aware by the flag that a party of insurgents must be posted there.

But this discovery did not prevent him from going on, as he had no idea the rebels were in any force, and did not imagine they could muster more than a dozen at the outside.

As Squire Hall advanced, he recognised him, and called out to him to stop, but the injunction being disregarded he repeated it more authoritatively.

"You are my prisoner, sir," he cried. "I hold a warrant for your arrest."

"I don't think you are likely to execute the warrant, Sir William," rejoined the squire, laughing disdainfully.

"I would not advise you to offer resistance, sir," said Sir William. "And since there is no chance of escape you had better surrender at discretion,"

"I surrender!" exclaimed the squire. "I defy you and all your men to arrest me."

So saying, he wheeled round, and galloped back as fast as he could to Wanny Crag.

The magistrate followed with the whole of his troop. He would not allow them to fire, or the career of the fugitive would soon have been checked.

The squire called out loudly as he drew near the crags, and in answer to the cry, forty or fifty armed insurgents suddenly appeared at various points; while an equal number of horsemen, headed by Lord Derwentwater and Mr. Forster, came from behind the rocks.

Confounded by this unexpected sight, and instantly comprehending the snare into which he had fallen, the magistrate would have fled, but before he could stir, his bridle was seized by Squire Hall, who exclaimed:

"You threatened to arrest me, Sir William. Now you are my prisoner."

While the magistrate was hesitating, Lord Derwentwater called out:

"Bid your men lay down their arms instantly, Sir William, or we shall fire upon them."

"Hold! my lord!" exclaimed the squire. "I am very much mistaken if these worthy fellows are not inclined to join us. Save your lives," he added to the militiamen, "and shout for James the Third!"

"Long live King James!" cried the whole of the troop.

"Ah, traitors! ah, rebels! is it thus you support your king?" cried the magistrate.

"Harkee, Sir William!" cried the squire. "I would recommend you a little more prudence. If you try to take our recruits from us we shall make short work with you. Gentlemen," he added, to the others, "you are now on the right side. Let neither threats nor persuasions lure you from it."

"Do you propose to detain me, my lord, if I consent to deliver up my arms?" said the magistrate to Lord Derwentwater.

"No, Sir William," replied the earl. "I am anxious you should take back tidings of your own defeat to Morpeth. You cannot conceal it, since you will not have your militiamen with you."

With a deeply mortified look Sir William then delivered his sword to Squire Hall, by whom it was handed to Lord Derwentwater, after which the magistrate rode off by himself, and returned to Morpeth.

A very curious scene now took place, as the late enemies fraternised, and professed the greatest regard for each other. All the militiamen seemed now to be ardent Jacobites.

Greatly rejoiced at obtaining such an unexpected reinforcement, the two leaders did all in their power to conciliate the new recruits, and were by no means sparing in promises.

The party did not remain much longer at Wanny Crag, but proceeded to a hill called the Waterfalls, from the circumstance of a spring running in two different directions. Here they halted for a couple of hours at a large farmhouse.

Thence they marched to Warkworth, their road lying for the most part along the banks of the beautiful river Coquet.

CHAPTER XII

Warkworth Castle

NEXT day, the two insurgent chiefs, who were lodged with all their followers in Warkworth Castle, were joined by Lord Widdrington with thirty horsemen.

His lordship would have brought double that number of men, but horses and equipments for them were wanting. Plenty of raw undisciplined infantry could be found, but cavalry were required.

On the whole, however, the prospects of the insurgents were very encouraging. They had plenty of friends at Alnwick and Morpeth, and an insurrection would undoubtedly have taken place in Newcastle, had it not been checked by the sudden arrival of Sir Charles Hotham's regiment of foot from Yorkshire.

From accounts received from every quarter it was certain that the whole country was in a most disturbed state, and reinforcements, though on a somewhat small scale, were constantly arriving. The insurgents had not been many hours in Warkworth when their numbers were augmented by a hundred horse.

Immediately on the arrival of Lord Widdrington at Warkworth, the first business of the insurgent leaders was to collect all their forces in the courtyard of the castle, and proclaim King James.

A large concourse likewise assembled, and great enthusiasm prevailed. No locality could have been better chosen for the ceremonial, which produced a very striking effect, and no ill omen attended it. On the contrary, everything appeared auspicious. The day was fine, and the proud old castle looked its best, and seemed to smile upon the scene.

After the proclamation had been made—amid loud flourishes of trumpets and beating of drums, accompanied by the shouts of the assemblage—the royal banner was placed on the Lion Tower.

Later on in the day, a banquet was given in the great baronial hall in the keep, at which all the insurgent officers assisted.

The entertainment was intended to celebrate the appointment of Mr. Forster as General of the Northumbrian forces, which had taken place that day at the

recommendation of the Earl of Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington, the only persons who could have opposed him.

But they both felt that the commander of the English army must not be a Roman Catholic, and therefore withdrew their own claims, and supported the High Tory squire, who was generally very popular in the county, and to whom objections on the score of religion could not be raised. However deficient Mr. Forster might be in military knowledge and skill, it was thought he would be saved from any grave error by Colonel Oxburgh, whom he proposed to have constantly near him.

The banquet passed off very well, and the best feeling towards the new commander was manifested on all hands.

Some little disturbance was made by the Laird of Otterburn, but it was quickly set right, and General Forster put more constraint upon himself than he had been accustomed to do in former days at Bamborough.

Next day, the castle began to assume the appearance of a garrison.

The court-yard was filled with recruits, who were continually arriving, and Colonel Oxburgh and Captain Wogan were entirely occupied in examining them.

As much discipline as possible was observed, but in the present state of things it was very difficult to maintain it.

General Forster rode to Alnwick, accompanied by Lord Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington, and attended by a strong guard, and brought back with him some necessary supplies.

On his return he was welcomed by the arrival of a troop of Scottish cavalry (known as the Merse Troop), under the command of the Honourable James Hume, brother to the Earl of Hume.

This was one of the five troops composing the division of South Country Scots now marching into England, from Moffat in Annandale, and commanded by Lord Kenmure.

The Merse troop, it appeared, had marched from Jedburgh, over a mountainous and marshy country to Rothbury, where Captain Hume heard of

Forster and Lord Derwentwater, and finding they were now posted at Warkworth, came on thither. Behind, but following the same route, were the four other troops, respectively commanded by the Honourable Basil Hamilton of Beldoun, the Earl of Wintoun, Captain James Dalziel, brother of the Earl of Carnwath, and Captain Lockhart.

The chief command of the South Country Scots, as we have said, belonged to Lord Kenmure.

The Merse troop did not remain long at Warkworth, but after conferring with General Forster, Captain Hume moved off with his men to Felton, there to await instructions from his commander.

It was, however, agreed that an early meeting should take place at Rothbury between the Northumbrian insurgents and the battalion of the South Country Scots.

By noon next day, so many reinforcements had arrived that General Forster found himself at the head of nearly five hundred men.

Unfavourable news, however, from Newcastle, caused Forster to postpone his meditated attack on the town.

Extraordinary exertions had been made by Sir William Lorraine and the other magistrates, who had raised train-bands, seized and imprisoned all the Papists, and shut the gates. Furthermore, it was stated that seven hundred of the inhabitants had formed themselves into a company of volunteers, and that the keelmen, most of whom were Presbyterians, and strongly opposed to the Stuarts, had offered an additional body of seven hundred men.

But by far the most alarming piece of intelligence was, that General Carpenter had been sent by Government in pursuit of the rebels, with three regiments of dragoons and Sir Charles Hotham's regiment of foot, and was now within a day's march of Newcastle.

After consultation with his advisers, General Forster did not think it prudent to give battle to Carpenter till he could be certain of the support of Lord Kenmure and Brigadier Mackintosh, and he therefore determined to move to Hexham.

Accordingly, on the following day, he marched with his whole force to Morpeth, and on the common near the town was joined by the Merse troop. Learning that General Carpenter had reached Newcastle, he continued his march to Hexham.

Not without great reluctance was the proposed attack on Newcastle abandoned by the insurgents, for had they gained that important town, they would have been masters of the county.

CHAPTER XIII

Organisation of the Force

LORD DERWENTWATER was close to his own domains, and a messenger having been sent to Dilston to acquaint the countess with the arrival of the insurgent army at Hexham, she immediately rode over thither, accompanied by Dorothy Forster, who was staying with her at the time.

Though rejoiced to see her husband, the countess appeared greatly disappointed that so little had been achieved, and told the earl she would rather have heard from him at Newcastle, than have seen him at Hexham.

Nor did Dorothy Forster show more consideration to her brother, but blamed him severely for quitting Warkworth.

"What could we do there?" cried the general. "We should have been cut off from a junction with our Scottish allies and compelled to surrender."

"Now you have lost the whole of the coast from Bamborough to Newcastle," cried Dorothy.

"One daring deed has been done," said the earl. "The fort on Holy Island has been surprised by Lancelot Errington. But I fear he will not be able to hold it."

"You ought to go to his succour," said Dorothy to her brother.

"You expect impossibilities from us," replied the general.

"Nothing is impossible," rejoined Dorothy. "I shall never be content till you have fought a battle and gained a victory. I do not like a retreat."

"Women know nothing of warfare," said the general, shrugging his shoulders.

Just then an express arrived from Lord Kenmure, saying that he had arrived at Rothbury with the whole of his force, and desired to know whether he should remain there, or advance.

"Bid him advance!" cried Dorothy.

"Methinks I had best resign my command to you," observed the general. "But I must beg you to cease this interference." Then addressing the messenger, he said, "Go back to his lordship, and say I will join him to-morrow at Rothbury."

"Hold, general," cried the countess. "Had you not better give this matter some consideration?"

"It requires none," replied Forster. "Take my message to Lord Kenmure," he added to the messenger, who immediately departed.

After some further conversation, the countess and Dorothy, who had not dismounted, rode back through the woods to the castle.

Meanwhile, Charles Radclyffe and Captain John Shaftoe had set off to Dilston with a dozen men, and after searching the old tower and some other places, brought back all the arms they could find.

A very important matter had now to be settled, which had already been too long deferred. This was the organisation of the force, and in carrying out this necessary measure Colonel Oxburgh was of utmost use.

After some deliberation it was decided that the division commanded by General Forster should consist of five troops, of which that of the Earl of Derwentwater ranked first, and was to be commanded by Charles Radclyffe and Captain John Shaftoe, whom we have just mentioned. The second troop, belonging to Lord Widdrington, was to be commanded by Captain Thomas Errington of Beaufront, who had formerly been in the French service, and was brother of Lancelot Errington, who had just surprised Holy Island.

The third and fourth troops were respectively commanded by Captain John Hunter and Captain Robert Douglas, the first of whom had been a contraband trader of great daring and skill, and the other a Border farmer, who had been employed by Forster in searching for horses and arms, and had been extraordinarily successful.

Some objection was made to these two persons on the score of position, but it was urged by Forster that they would be of great use.

The fifth and last troop was commanded by Captain Wogan.

The first and second troops were composed of gentlemen, who were quite as well mounted and well armed as their leaders. Many of them had thoroughbred horses— much better adapted for speed than endurance—and the rest were provided with hunters. Not being able to procure military saddles, they were obliged to content themselves with those in ordinary use; and their equipments were by no means complete. Still, in spite of these drawbacks, they presented a very gallant appearance when drawn up in the market-place to proclaim King James.

CHAPTER XIV

The Earl's brief Visit to Dilston

AFTER the business of the day was concluded General Forster and the officers sat down to dinner, but Lord Derwentwater excused himself from joining the party as he wished to ride over to Dilston. He did not take a servant with him, and said he should return by midnight.

It was growing dusk as he rode through the woods that skirted his domains, but it was quite light enough to enable him to distinguish the castle. His heart was sad as he gazed at it, for he felt he could not remain there. The place seemed his own no longer.

However, he strove to stifle those painful feelings, and they soon gave way to other emotions.

Still, he could not banish the notion that the place was changed, though in what respect he could scarcely tell, for a groom came to take his horse, and Newbiggin welcomed him at the entrance, and with a manifestation of delight that could not fail to touch his master.

"I hope your lordship is coming to remain with us—at least, for a few days?" said the butler.

"Alas! no," replied the earl. "I must return to Hexham to-night, and to-morrow morning we march to Rothbury."

The butler looked quite cast down.

"I fear Dilston will never again be what it was, my lord," he said. "How I wish your lordship could give up this perilous expedition and return to us."

"That is impossible, Newbiggin," said the earl, scarcely able to repress a sigh. "I must go on now. But where is the countess?"

"She is here," cried a well-known voice.

And next moment she flew towards him, and was clasped in his arms.

It is very questionable whether Lord Derwentwater's brief visit to his mansion was not productive of more pain to him than pleasure.

So many fresh anxieties were aroused that they marred his happiness, and the moments flew by so quickly that they seemed gone ere they could be numbered. How much had he to say to the countess! And yet how little was said. Half the time they sat together they were silent, but it was a silence more eloquent than words. And when the countess spoke it was ever to incite him to brave deeds.

After awhile they were joined by Dorothy Forster and Father Norman, and then the conversation turned chiefly on the incidents of the march. The countess and Dorothy still believed that the insurrection would be successful, but the priest was less hopeful.

"But where and when will the battle be fought that is to give the crown to King James?" inquired Dorothy.

"That I cannot tell you," replied the earl. "But I do not think it will be fought in Scotland, though we shall probably march there to meet our allies. However, a few days may decide. General Carpenter is now at Newcastle, with four regiments of dragoons, and we have yet to learn his plans. Should he not find out we have flown, he may march to attack us at Hexham, and then you will see him here."

Never did the devout Earl of Derwentwater neglect his religious duties. Mass was therefore performed at the little chapel before his departure, and at the conclusion of the service he did not reenter the mansion, but tenderly embracing the countess, bade farewell to her and Dorothy, and mounting his dapple-grey steed took his way alone through the wood to Hexham.

CHAPTER XV

How the Earl was rescued by Nathan the Woodcutter

THE moon was shining brightly, but her beams could not penetrate the depths of the narrow forest road along which he had proceeded for nearly a mile when he heard the sound of horses' feet behind him.

Not for a moment imagining it could be an enemy, but thinking it highly probable a messenger might have been sent after him by the countess, he halted.

"Is your lordship there?" cried a voice.

"Ay," he replied. "What would you with me?"

"You must be pleased to come back with us," rejoined the speaker. "You are wanted at the castle."

"What has happened," cried the earl uneasily.

No immediate answer being returned, his suspicions were aroused—especially as he could hear the two horsemen, who had now come up, talking together in a low tone—and he was just about to gallop off, when one of the men dashed suddenly forward, seized his bridle, and presenting a pistol at his head, told him he was a prisoner.

"Ah! I now know who and what you are, villains," cried the earl.

"We are loyal subjects of King George, my lord," replied the man who held his bridle, "and as such are bound to capture all those who appear in arms against him. We have been very lucky tonight in arresting a rebel leader. Your lordship will not be surprised to learn that we intend to take you as a prisoner to Newcastle."

The earl suppressed the wrathful exclamation that rose to his lips, and said:

"Have any of my household turned traitors?"

"No, my lord," replied the man. "You may set your mind at ease on that score. All your servants are true to you. We are Sir William Lorraine's officers, and

have been employed by him to watch Dilston. We were therefore aware of your visit this evening, and followed you on your return to Hexham, being resolved on your arrest."

"If your lordship is content to go with us quietly," said the other man, "we will show you every attention. But if you attempt to escape, we will shoot you through the head, without hesitation. And now be pleased to deliver up your arms."

"I have no arms except my sword," replied the earl, "and I will part with life rather than with it."

While the man, whose hands were disengaged, was striving to take the weapon from him, the fierce barking of a dog was heard, accompanied by shouts, and the earl at once comprehending from the sounds that Nathan the woodcutter was at hand with Cheviot, called out loudly:

"To the rescue, Nathan; to the rescue!"

"Here I am, my lord," responded the sturdy woodcutter, as he and his hound burst through the trees.

A bullet whistled past his head, as he appeared on the scene, but luckily did him no injury.

Next moment, however, the stout cudgel he grasped was falling heavily upon the earl's captors, while Cheviot's fierce barking terrified their horses so much, that the animals broke away in spite of their riders' efforts to restrain them, and being allowed no rest by the hound who continued to attack their heels, were soon driven off altogether.

"I shall not forget the great service you have just rendered me, Nathan," said Lord Derwentwater. "But for you these villains would have carried me off as a prisoner."

"I am right glad I arrived in time," replied the woodcutter. "Cheviot warned me of your lordship's danger."

"Ah! did he so?" cried the earl.

And when the faithful animal came back from the chase, he warmly praised him and caressed him.

"Now, hie thee to the castle, Nathan," said the earl. "See her ladyship, and tell her from what a peril you have rescued me. She will know how to recompense you."

"I want no recompense, my lord," replied the honest woodcutter. "I only wish I could always be at hand to succour your lordship when in need."

"I wish you could," said the earl.

With this, he galloped off and arrived without further molestation at Hexham; while Nathan proceeded, as bidden, to the castle, and related the earl's adventure in the forest to the countess.

A good supper for each of them was the immediate reward of himself and his hound.

BOOK V. — THE MARCH FROM HEXHAM TO LONGTOWN

CHAPTER I

The Junction with the South Country Scots

Next morning, at a very early hour, the whole of the insurgent troops assembled in the marketplace of the ancient town of Hexham, preparatory to marching to Rothbury.

Here Lord Widdrington took leave of his friends for a time, having, at General Forster's earnest request, undertaken another journey into Lancashire to confer with the Jacobites and High Church Tories in that county, and endeavour to induce them to rise without delay.

The chief command of his troop was therefore temporarily given to Lord Derwentwater.

Precisely as the abbey church clock struck six the insurgents rode out of Hexham. The weather was fine, and the men in good spirits. They met with no misadventure on the road, nor did they hear any tidings of the enemy, but after a long halt at Kirkharle, they reached Rothbury in the evening.

Lord Kenmure, the commander of the South Country Scots, accompanied by the Earl of Nithsdale, the Earl of Wintoun, the Earl of Carnwath, and Lord Nairn rode out to meet them, and the greatest satisfaction was evinced on both sides that a junction of their forces had, at length, been effected. Still, it was the opinion of Lord Kenmure and the other Scottish nobles that they must not venture upon an encounter with the Government troops till they were further strengthened by a junction with Mackintosh and the Highlanders, and they therefore proposed to set out to Wooler next day. This proposition being agreed to by General Forster and his officers, the horses were stabled, and the men quartered as well as circumstances would admit, while their leaders sat down to an excellent supper provided for them by the Scottish nobles at the Blue Star. Capital claret, it appeared, could be had at Rothbury, and a good deal of it was drunk that night. Before they separated, the English and Scottish commanders became boon companions.

Next morning the combined forces proceeded to Wooler, and being greatly fatigued by their march remained there during the whole of the next day, though their quarters were far from satisfactory. At Wooler they were joined by

the Reverend Robert Patten of Allendale, whom General Forster appointed his chaplain, and by Mr. Lancelot Errington, the gallant young gentleman who had succeeded in capturing a fort on Holy Island, as already related. Mr. Errington, however, not receiving any supplies, was attacked, and taken prisoner by the Governor of Berwick, but speedily effected his escape, and procuring a horse, joined his friends at Wooler. His brother, Captain Thomas Errington now commanded Lord Widdrington's troop, so that he was at once appointed one of the officers.

Intelligence was brought by this gentleman that Brigadier Mackintosh and the Highlanders had reached Dunse, and meant to attack Kelso, which was occupied by Sir William Bennet of Grubet, with a strong party of militia and some volunteers. Sir William, it was said, had barricaded the town, and made other preparations for its defence.

On hearing this, Lord Kenmure and General Forster decided upon marching to Kelso to aid Mackintosh in storming the town. Accordingly, they set out next morning, passing by Humbledon Heugh, Akeld, and over the hill ridges near Kirk Newton. As they proceeded, Captain Douglas, who was well acquainted with the country, and accustomed to Border forays, as we have already stated, managed to seize several horses, and likewise captured Mr. Selby of Kilham, a volunteer, who was repairing to Kelso, to Sir William Bennet's assistance.

About mid-day the insurgents came in sight of the beautiful town of Kelso, with its ancient abbey so charmingly situated on the banks of the Tweed, and before proceeding further, halted on a moor to call over the rolls of the men. While the leaders of each troop were thus employed, word was brought by a scout, that Sir William Bennet, alarmed by the report of the advance of the Highlanders, had abandoned the town, whereupon they at once resumed their march, and fording the Tweed, entered the town without opposition—the barricades being already pulled down. But though the inhabitants offered no resistance, they received them with great coldness, and eyed them with sullen looks. No shouts were heard, as the insurgents rode along one of the main streets to the market-place where they drew up.

Brigadier Mackintosh had not yet arrived, but he was known to be close at hand, and Lord Kenmure feeling that the compliment was due to the valiant Highland commander, went to meet him, leaving General Forster and the English division in the town.

Lord Kenmure and the Lowlanders had not ridden further than Ednam Bridge when the shrill notes of the bagpipes announced the approach of the Highlanders, and in another minute Mackintosh and his detachment came in sight.

As soon as the Highlanders understood that the troops in front of them were friends, they set up a great shout, and quickened their pace.

The Lowlanders responded with equal vigour, and the greatest enthusiasm was displayed on both sides.

Nothing could be more cordial than the meeting between the two commanders. Lord Kenmure was loud in his praises of the brigadier's skill and bravery, and told him that he looked upon the crossing of the Firth, under the circumstances, as one of the most remarkable exploits ever performed. His lordship then turned to Lord Charles Murray, Lord Nairn, Major Forbes, Logie Drummond, and others who were standing by, and expressed his admiration of their gallantry.

By this time the Earl of Wintoun, the Earl of Carnwath, Captain Hume, and the other Lowland officers had come up, and salutations were exchanged on all hands.

When these greetings were over, the two detachments, which had now to a certain extent become mixed together, marched to Kelso—the pipers taking the lead, and playing lustily.

CHAPTER II

Mackintosh's Achievements

BEFORE proceeding, it may be necessary briefly to explain what the brigadier had accomplished since he quitted Perth about ten days previously.

At that time, the detachment under his command consisted of six regiments, and with a number of gentlemen volunteers formed a total of two thousand five hundred men.

The brigadier's orders from the Earl of Mar were to get as many men as he could over the Firth, and though the channel was defended by ships of war, smacks, and boats filled with armed men, Mackintosh courageously made the attempt, and despite all the exertions of the cruisers to prevent him, succeeded in reaching the East Lothian coast with fifteen hundred men—the Earl of Strathmore's battalion being forced back and compelled to go on shore on the Isle of May. This was the exploit to which Lord Kenmure had referred in terms of such high admiration.

With the troops he had thus brought across the Firth, the brigadier at once marched to Haddington, where he was invited by the Scottish Jacobites to make an attempt on Edinburgh, and unhesitatingly complied with the request.

He advanced as far as Jock's Lodge, but not meeting with the promised support, he turned to Leith, and took possession of a partly-demolished fort, built by Oliver Cromwell, and proceeded to barricade it.

Next day the Duke of Argyle, who had hastened from Stirling to the protection of Edinburgh, summoned him to surrender. On his refusal, the duke threatened to bombard the fort on the morrow, but in the night Mackintosh withdrew, and conducted his men cautiously along the sands at low water to Seaton House—a castle belonging to Lord Wintoun.

Here he posted himself securely with his force, and laughed at the threats of Lord Torpichen and the Earl of Rothes, who came from Edinburgh to dislodge him with two hundred dragoons and three hundred volunteers.

At Seaton House he remained for a couple of days, and in that short interval stored it with provisions to stand a siege, when he learnt that the South

Country Scots and Northumbrians had risen, and received an express from Forster praying him to meet him at Coldstream or Kelso.

Another express came from the Earl of Mar bidding him march south, and join the English insurgents.

The latter order could not be disobeyed, and he therefore quitted the stronghold he had gained, and marched to Longformacus, harassed in the rear by the Government troops.

But this pursuit did not prevent him from plundering the house of Doctor Sinclair, who had incurred the animosity of the Jacobites by shooting young Hepburn of Keith.

Continuing his march to Dunse, the brigadier rested there for a day, proclaimed James the Third, collected the excise dues, and received the very satisfactory intelligence that Sir William Bennet had abandoned Kelso. No longer troubled by the Government troops, and renovated by the much-needed repose, he marched on next day to Kelso, and was met at Ednam Bridge, as we have related, by the Lowlanders.

Such were the main incidents that had occurred during Mackintosh's memorable march towards the south. He had proved himself a thoroughly good soldier, equal to every emergency, and not to be checked by danger or difficulty, and fully deserved the encomiums passed upon him by Lord Kenmure.

As the Highlanders entered Kelso, with bagpipes playing, colours flying, and drums beating, the inhabitants flocked forth to gaze at them, and were greatly struck by the stalwart appearance and martial bearing of the men.

Brigadier Mackintosh, of whose doings so much had been heard, excited great curiosity, and the tall figure, strongly marked features, and athletic limbs of the veteran warrior would have pointed him out to all beholders, even if he had not marched at the head of his detachment.

Throughout their progress neither the brigadier nor any of his officers had mounted a horse, but marched on foot with the men and crossed all rivers in their Highland garb.

Amongst those who attracted most attention was Lord Charles Murray, who was remarkable for his graceful person and good looks.

Lord Nairn and some of the subaltern officers were also thought very fine men.

Indeed, the Highlanders generally produced a favourable impression on the good folks of Kelso, who gave them a far warmer welcome than they had accorded to their allies.

The junction between the confederate forces formed a curious and interesting scene. When the brigadier first beheld the Northumbrian detachment drawn up in the market-place, he was struck by the handsome show made by both horses and men, but when he began to scrutinise them, he quickly changed his opinion.

"Saul o' my body! this will never do!" he exclaimed to Lord Charles Murray. "Those abalyiements are na fit for war. Saw ye ever before a dragoon with a hunting-saddle on his horse's back, a toasting-fork by his side, or a riding-whip in his hand? I trow not. They should get basket-hilted broad swords like our ain, saddles wi' high pommels and holsters, and as to those riding-whips, I should like to lay them across the shoulders of the bearers."

"The men certainly look better equipped for flight than for attack," replied Lord Charles. "But we must not judge them too harshly. They may fight well in spite of their dress swords, and charge even with race-horses."

"Vera true," replied the brigadier, laughing. "And here comes General Forster."

"By my faith! he looks more like an English fox-hunter than a soldier," remarked Lord Charles, in an undertone. "I wonder how they came to choose him."

"They couldna help it," replied the brigadier. "Lord Derwentwater was the right man, yet being a Papist, he wouldn't do."

Attended by Lord Charles Murray, Lord Nairn, Major Forbes, and Logie Drummond, the brigadier stepped forward to meet General Forster, who was closely followed by Lord Derwentwater and the other Northumbrian officers.

At the same time Lord Kenmure came forward, and presented the two commanders to each other.

The meeting was very friendly, and the brigadier praised Forster's troops, but told him plainly he ought to get different saddles and better swords.

"So we will, as soon as we can procure them," replied Forster. "But they are not to be had."

The English officers were next presented to the brigadier, who seemed best pleased with Lord Derwentwater. From the first moment, the rough old soldier conceived a friendship for the young noble, which he never afterwards lost.

The various troops marched past the three commanders, who remained for some time longer in the market-place, and then proceeded to their quarters.

CHAPTER III

Sunday at Kelso

AFTER the junction of the confederate forces had been effected, it was found that they formed an army of two thousand men, of whom the majority were Highlanders.

Though the force was still small, so much confidence was now felt in Mackintosh, and such strong hopes were entertained that large additions would soon be received, that no misgivings were felt.

On the day of the junction, the commanders and officers dined together, and the best feeling was manifested. All old jealousies, if any had existed, were banished. A warm tribute was paid by Lord Derwentwater to the valour and skill of Brigadier Mackintosh, with which the veteran warrior was much gratified.

Next day, being Sunday, great discretion had to be used by the leaders of an army composed of Presbyterians, High Church Tories, and Roman Catholics.

That such discordant elements could be reconciled—even for a brief season—seemed impossible. Nevertheless, by the judicious management of Lord Kenmure, who retained the command of the confederate force so long as it continued in Scotland, the thing was accomplished.

At this time, three clergymen were attached to the expedition—the Reverend William Irvine, chaplain to the Earl of Carnwath, an Episcopalian and Nonjuror—the Reverend Robert Patten, of Allendale, who belonged to the High Church, and had just been appointed chaplain to General Forster—and the Reverend Mr. Buxton, likewise a Church of England divine, who might be considered chaplain to the entire English force, since there was no Roman Catholic priest.

By Lord Kenmure's orders all the officers and men attended at the Great Kirk, where the Church of England service was performed.

The large congregation thus assembled presented an extraordinary sight, and the behaviour of the men was extremely decorous—that of the Highlanders especially so. They nearly filled the body of the sacred edifice, and listened with

devout attention to the discourse of Mr. Patten, who took for his text, "The right of the first-born is his"—applying it to the cause for which they were fighting.

In the afternoon, an equally large congregation assembled, consisting chiefly of Highlanders, to hear the Reverend William Irvine, the Scottish Nonjuror, who treated them to a sermon he had preached to Lord Dundee before the battle of Killiecrankie.

It was thought that this fiery sermon was given in deference to the wishes of Brigadier Mackintosh; and it would almost seem so, since the old Highlander listened to it with profound attention, and afterwards expressed his satisfaction to the preacher.

A very favourable impression was produced on the Kelso folk by the exemplary conduct of the troops on the Sabbath; but they were not quite so well pleased when Mackintosh next morning, while searching for arms, discovered several barrels of gunpowder concealed in the vaults of the kirk, and swore if he could catch the traitors who had placed them there, he would hang them like dogs.

The brigadier was likewise extraordinarily active in foraging and plundering, and seized all the public revenues without scruple.

Under other circumstances Lord Derwentwater would have enjoyed his visit to Kelso, but his mind was so troubled, that even Roxburgh Castle, Floors, or the charming views of the Tweed and the Teviot afforded him very little pleasure.

His heart was at Dilston.

CHAPTER IV

A Council of War

ON the third day after their arrival at Kelso, one of the scouts sent by Lord Kenmure to watch the movements of the Government troops, brought word that General Carpenter had reached Wooler with a force of nine hundred men, consisting of Hotham's regiment of foot, and three regiments of dragoons, and intended next day to attack Kelso.

On receipt of this important intelligence, a council of war was immediately summoned, which was attended by all the commanders and officers.

The main point to be considered was whether they should await the English general's attack at Kelso, and barricade the town, or cross the Tweed, and meet him.

Lord Derwentwater was decidedly of opinion that the latter course should be adopted, and maintained that their force being double that of Carpenter, the result of an engagement could not be doubtful—although the Government general possessed three regiments of experienced dragoons.

But his advice, though approved by General Forster and the English officers, was opposed by the Earl of Wintoun.

"As Scotsmen," said his lordship, "we are best able to serve the king's cause in our own country, and are therefore most reluctant to cross the Border. Is it not so?" he added, appealing to his compatriots—all of whom assented, except Mackintosh.

"But you have the Earl of Mar's orders to advance," remarked General Forster. "How can you disobey them?"

"The Earl of Mar is not aware of our exact position," replied Lord Wintoun, "or his orders would be countermanded. At present, all communication with him is difficult, and if we enter England it will be entirely cut off. But it may be opened—and this is the plan of operation I would recommend. Falling back to the north-west, attacking Dumfries and Glasgow on our way, we shall be able to join the Western Clans, and, combining with them, can either cross the Firth above Stirling, or proceed as the Earl of Mar may direct."

This proposition was manifestly to the taste of the Scottish leaders, most of whom signified their approval of it.

"But why throw away our present chance?" cried the Earl of Derwentwater. "Why not attack Carpenter when we can do so with every advantage? From the report just received he is greatly our inferior in numbers, and his troops are exhausted. The prestige of a victory would be of immense service to the cause."

"We do not care to cross the Tweed," again objected Lord Wintoun.

"If you won't cross the Tweed, my lord, General Carpenter will," rejoined Lord Derwentwater, contemptuously.

"He will gain little by the movement," retorted Lord Wintoun. "He will find Kelso evacuated, and will not dare follow us."

"Is this the sort of fighting we are to expect?" cried Lord Derwentwater. "Are we always to retreat on the appearance of the foe? We Northumbrians did not come to Scotland to join the Western Clans, but to meet our brave ally Brigadier Mackintosh, who is pledged to march with us to London, and we claim fulfilment of his promise. As to General Carpenter, if our allies won't help us, we will attack him alone. Do I not express your sentiments, general?" he added to Forster.

"My opinion decidedly is, that Carpenter ought to be met by the whole confederate force," said Forster. "My own division is not strong enough to encounter him, and would incur certain defeat."

"Again, I say, the Scots will not cross the Tweed," remarked Lord Wintoun. "If our English allies choose to sacrifice themselves, we may grieve, but we cannot help it."

Restraining himself with difficulty, the Earl of Derwentwater turned to Mackintosh, who had not hitherto spoken, and said:

"Do you mean to desert us, brigadier?"

"No, my lord," was the reply.

"Then let the Lowlanders join the Western Clans if they will," said the earl. "We can do without them."

Lord Wintoun placed his hand upon his sword, and the other Lowland leaders would have fiercely resented the remark, if Lord Kenmure had not interposed.

"We must have no quarrels among ourselves," he said. "When Lord Derwentwater becomes calmer, he will regret having spoken thus hastily. As yet, I am chief in command of the whole insurgent force, and my orders must be obeyed."

"They shall be obeyed by me, my lord," said General Forster. "But I pray you not to take us further into Scotland. My troops will assuredly revolt."

"We will come to a decision at Jedburgh," said Lord Kenmure, somewhat evasively. "Meantime, precise information must be obtained as to the movements of the enemy. You shall go on the errand, Captain Gordon," he added, addressing a tall, exceedingly handsome young man in the Lowland garb.

Captain Gordon, an officer in the Merse troop, commanded by the Honourable Captain Hume, and distinguished for his courage and activity, seemed well pleased at being chosen for the dangerous expedition.

"I will rejoin your lordship at Jedburgh," he said. "But if I find General Carpenter and his force on the move, you will see me sooner."

With this he bowed and quitted the room, and almost before the council had broken up, he was on the other side of the Tweed.

"Brigadier," said General Forster, addressing Mackintosh, after some further discussion had taken place; "before we separate, I must ask you plainly if you mean to march with us to London?"

"I will answer frankly, general," replied Mackintosh. "My men will never enter England, unless they are certain of their pay."

"Is that the only difficulty?" said Lord Derwentwater. "I feared from what has been said, that they might be averse to a campaign in England."

"So they are, my lord," replied the brigadier. "But possibly their aversion may be overcome by the certainty of good pay."

"Make them quite easy on that score," said Lord Derwentwater. "I will provide the money."

"When my men learn your lordship's generous promise," said Mackintosh, "I doubt not they will be very grateful."

"'Tis but a small subsidy to the king," said Lord Derwentwater. "I would give my whole property to set him on the throne."

"Truly, your lordship sets us all a good example, which we ought to follow," said Lord Kenmure. "And now for Jedburgh!"

About an hour later, much to the relief of the inhabitants, who began to fear that a battle would be fought under their walls, the whole insurgent force quitted Kelso, having stayed there three days.

CHAPTER V

Further Dissensions

THE Northumbrians reached their destination first, and as the others did not arrive, they rode back to see what had happened to them, and found the South Country Scots drawn up on the road about two miles from the town, and waiting for the Highlanders, who, in their turn, had halted to receive General Carpenter—believing he was in pursuit. These false alarms caused some delay, but eventually the whole force reached Jedburgh.

Next day, another council of war was held, and the same dissension prevailed as before, threatening to end in a rupture among the chiefs.

Previously to the meeting Lord Wintoun, who had had a private conference with Mackintosh, was persuaded that the brigadier would support him. But he was mistaken—the old warrior would not desert the Northumbrians, though it was evident he himself was unwilling to quit Scotland.

While they were still engaged in angry and fruitless discussion, Captain Gordon returned.

"What news do you bring us, sir?" demanded Lord Kenmure. "Has General Carpenter crossed the Border?"

"He has, my lord," replied Captain Gordon; "and the greater part of his force is quartered at the Yetholms within eight miles of this place. Troops are cantoned at Hounham, Mendrum, Town-Yetholm, Kirk-Yetholm, and Morbattle, as I myself have ascertained. I ventured so near them at Morbattle, that I was discovered, and pursued by a dozen of Churchill's dragoons, within two miles of Jedburgh, when they gave up the chase. No doubt, they believed we were still at Kelso, but they must now have found out their mistake."

"Captain Gordon," said Mackintosh, "so far as you can judge, what is the condition of the enemy?"

"Their horses are jaded, or I should not have escaped," replied Gordon, "and I am certain the foot, of whom there must be five or six hundred, are fatigued with their long march. I therefore feel convinced there will be no general attack today, and I think we might surprise them."

"You hear what Captain Gordon says, my lord?" cried Mackintosh, turning to Lord Kenmure. "From the observations he has just made, he is of opinion we may surprise the enemy."

"General Carpenter himself is at Kirk-Yetholm," remarked Captain Gordon.

"So much the better," said the brigadier. "Having taken up a position there, he will make no further advance to-day. Our whole force is in marching order. Let us make the attack at once. By using the utmost expedition, we shall take him unprepared."

"That is certain," said Captain Gordon; "and I do not for a moment doubt that the attack will be successful."

"I hope the plan meets with your lordship's approval?" said Lord Derwentwater to Kenmure.

The chief commander, however, made no direct answer, but turning to the Northumbrian leader, observed:

"What says General Forster?"

"'Tis a bold step, and requires consideration," replied the other.

"The blow must be struck at once, or not at all," said Mackintosh. "While we are deliberating, the chance will be lost."

"We have not sufficient horse," rejoined Forster.

"We have enow for our purpose," said Lord Derwentwater. "My lord, in the king's name, I ask you to make the attack."

"Ha! this sounds like a command," cried Lord Kenmure, angrily. "Your own general hesitates—if he will go on, I will."

"For Heaven's sake, come to a speedy decision!" said the earl to Forster. "Every minute is precious. There is no risk."

"I don't know that," replied Forster. "I won't run headlong into a danger that can be avoided. We may find General Carpenter better prepared for us than we expect. His dragoons are far more numerous than our cavalry."

"But our horses are fresh, general," observed Captain Gordon. "I repeat my opinion that a prompt attack would be successful."

"I won't hazard it," said Lord Kenmure.

"Then your lordship refuses to lead us to certain victory," said Lord Derwentwater.

Lord Kenmure shrugged his shoulders.

"I have given you my decision, and I shall adhere to it."

Lord Derwentwater could not repress an exclamation of rage.

Mackintosh looked equally angry, but felt it was useless to interfere.

"We shall be better prepared on some future day," observed Forster.

"Never!" exclaimed the brigadier, contemptuously. "Never shall we be better prepared than now! Never shall we have the enemy at greater advantage!"

"At all events, let us stay where we are," said Lord Derwentwater. "General Carpenter will think we are retreating, if we march to Hawick."

"Nor will he be far wide of the truth, if he does think so," said Mackintosh.

But these expressions of disapproval were entirely unheeded, and the march to Hawick took place, greatly to the annoyance of Lord Derwentwater.

Determined to reconnoitre the enemy, his lordship requested Captain Gordon to accompany him, and set off with a small party of horse towards the Yetholms.

Nothing occurred to indicate that the enemy were on the move till he came within a couple of miles of Kirk-Yetholm, when, from the brow of a hill, he distinguished their vanguard, and at once comprehended that a part of the force, if not the whole, must be marching to Kelso.

Satisfied with what he had seen, and beginning to be of opinion that General Carpenter would not have been so easily surprised as he imagined, he turned

back, and riding quickly, overtook the insurgent army before it reached Hawick.

It afterwards appeared that the earl had narrowly escaped capture, and that he and his companions were indebted for their escape to the swiftness of their horses. Had he descended the hill whence he descried the enemy, he must have been taken prisoner.

CHAPTER VI

The Highlanders refuse to cross the Border

NEXT day, symptoms of revolt began to appear among the Highlanders, who had been told by Lord Wintoun that if they went to England they would infallibly be defeated by the superior force brought against them, and would either be cut to pieces, taken prisoners and hanged, or sold as slaves to the plantations.

Assembling on the Moot Hill, at the head of the town, they refused to come down, even at the orders of their chief, and told him if they were led against the enemy they would fight, but that they would not cross the Border.

"Wherefore not?" he cried. "Why the devil are you afraid to fight the Southrons on their ain ground? You are ready to meet them here, but not south of the Solway Firth. Your pay is assured you, and it will be your ain faut if ye dinna double it."

"But they tell us we shall never come back," rejoined the sergeant, who acted as spokesman.

"Who tells you so?" demanded the brigadier.

"One who knows what he says, and wouldn't deceive us," replied the sergeant.

"Zounds, man! do you think I would deceive you?" cried the brigadier. "I tell you that in England you will get plenty to eat and drink—plenty of plunder—whereas in Scotland you have nothing but starvation to expect. Now choose! Will you follow me, who have led you on thus far triumphantly, and will lead you on to further conquest—or desert me, when I most need your services, for one who has neither the will, nor the power to reward you?"

"We will follow you, brigadier," shouted the majority of the men. "Take us where you will."

"I will first take you where each of you can get a mutchkin of whisky to drink the king's health. You will then prepare to march to Langholm, on the road to Longtown!"

After resting for the night at Langholm, where they had some difficulty in finding quarters, the insurgents continued their march next day, uncertain whether they should proceed to Langholm or Ecclefechan, when a decision was unexpectedly brought about.

CHAPTER VII

Lord Widdrington returns from Lancashire

WHILE crossing a wide moor, they perceived a party of horsemen coming towards them, and understood from the shouts of these persons that they must be friends.

On a nearer approach the insurgents discovered that the leader of the party was Lord Widdrington. He had just returned from his visit to Lancashire, and had brought with him a very important document, which he was extremely anxious to show to the leaders of the expedition, as it could not fail to govern their future plans.

Upon this, a general halt was called, and the commanders and officers having assembled, Lord Widdrington read his paper to them.

It was to the effect, that if the combined forces of the Scottish Lowlanders and Highlanders, who had risen for King James the Third, would direct their march to Lancashire, the High Church Tories of Manchester and the neighbourhood, and the whole of the Roman Catholic gentry of Lancashire and Cheshire, would rise in a mass, and join them with an army of twenty thousand men.

"Twenty thousand men!" exclaimed Lord Kenmure. "Are you certain of this, my lord?"

"I am certain that our appearance in Lancashire will be the signal of a general rising," replied Lord Widdrington. "There is a very strong Jacobite feeling throughout the county. But the inhabitants will not rise till we appear."

"Then we must go to Lancashire," said Lord Kenmure.

"In three days we shall be in the heart of the county," said General Forster.

"And surrounded by a host of friends," cried Lord Widdrington. "I have had promises from all quarters. And you will see that this document bears a number of important names. The first signature is that of my brother-in-law, Mr. Townley, of Townley. The second is that of Mr. Ralph Standish, of Standish. Next follows Sir Francis Anderton, of Lostock. Then come Mr. Shuttleworth, of Shuttleworth, Mr. Richard Chorley, of Chorley, Mr. Gabriel

Hesketh, of Whitehall, near St. Michael's-le-Wyre, and Mr. John Leyburne, of Natesby—all men of good family."

"But all Roman Catholics, I suppose?" said Lord Kenmure.

"True, my lord—but they are none the worse for their religion. But there are many other names on the list. Pray look at the document."

"It is not needful," replied Lord Kenmure. Then turning to the others, he added, "I am of opinion that we ought forthwith to quit Scotland and march to Lancashire. How say you, my lords and gentlemen? Shall it be so?"

A hearty response was given in the affirmative, with but one dissentient voice—that of Lord Wintoun.

"I am still as much opposed to the plan as ever," said his lordship. "I have entire faith in Lord Widdrington's representations. I know he is incapable of deceiving us; but I place no reliance on the promises of support he has received. If the Lancashire Jacobites meant to rise, they would not wait for our coming."

"You do not know them as well as I do, my lord," said Lord Widdrington. "I can assure you they are in earnest."

"If you despair of the expedition, my lord, leave it," said Lord Derwentwater. "But do not throw cold water upon it."

"No, it shall never be said that the Earl of Wintoun deserted King James's cause," rejoined the other. "But the day will come when you will bitterly regret that you did not follow my counsel."

"Meantime, we are well content to march to Lancashire," said Lord Derwentwater.

"Ay, to Lancashire! to Lancashire!" cried several voices.

The matter being now settled, orders were given to march to Langholm.

Brigadier Mackintosh, however, had a difficult task to get his men to move. When they understood it was decided that the force should march into

England, a portion of the Highlanders again rebelled, and refused to proceed further.

Once more the brigadier tried the effect of persuasion, and partly by promises— partly by threats—induced the men to follow him.

They went on very reluctantly for three or four miles, till they drew near the Esk, when the mutineers separating themselves from their comrades, ran towards the river, with the intention of crossing it and flying towards Ecclefechan.

But the brigadier was beforehand with them, and plunging into the stream, drew his sword, and swore he would cut down the first who entered the water.

His aspect was so grim and terrible that he held them in check for a few minutes, during which he was able to reassert his authority, and eventually he succeeded in driving a great number of them back to the ranks.

The confederate forces halted at Langholm, but did not rest there for the night, as it was deemed advisable by the Scottish leaders to enter England without delay. Accordingly, they marched on to Longtown, in Cumberland.

On that very day, Brigadier Stanwix, Governor of Carlisle, with sixty militiamen, had ridden over to Longtown, but could obtain no precise information respecting the movements of the rebels. They had been heard of at Hawick, but it was thought they would turn to the west, and crossing the mountains join the Earl of Mar. No suspicion was entertained that they were marching into England. In fact, as we have shown, their own plans were undecided, until they met Lord Widdrington.

General Carpenter likewise was misled by the intelligence he received, and followed the insurgents no further than Jedburgh. Receiving no further tidings, and being in great want of forage for his troops, he then returned to Newcastle.

Thus owing to a variety of circumstances, the rebels gained two days on their enemies. They took every possible precaution to prevent their arrival at Longtown from becoming known, and were marching joyously to Brampton, in Gilsland—a small place near Naworth Castle—before it was even suspected they were in England.

BOOK VI. — THE MARCH FROM PENRITH TO PRESTON

CHAPTER I

The Rout on Penrith Fell

HAVING achieved a great point, as they thought, the insurgents were now in very good spirits.

Even the Highlanders had quite recovered from their superstitious dread of crossing the Border, and gazed with curiosity at the country as they marched along—thinking it very like Scotland. But they abstained from any acts of pillage. The inhabitants regarded them with terror, and fancied they were the first part of a large invading army.

Brampton offered them very poor quarters and a scanty supply of provisions, and they thought of seizing Naworth Castle, which was only a mile and a half distant, but some prudential considerations deterred them.

James the Third having been proclaimed, Mr. Forster opened his commission to act as General of the Confederate Forces in England, and Lord Kenmure resigned the post in his favour.

Next day, the insurgents quitted Brampton betimes, and continued their march along the banks of the Eden. At Kirkoswald they halted in expectation of being joined by Mr. Dacre, a Roman Catholic gentleman, with forty men.

While at Kirkoswald, they received information from Captain Gordon, who had gone on to reconnoitre, that Lord Lonsdale, commander of the militia of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Northumberland, with five or six hundred horse militia, and accompanied by the Bishop of Carlisle, and Sir Christopher Musgrave, high sheriff of the county, with an immense posse-comitatus, consisting probably of eight or ten thousand men, armed with bills and pitchforks and such implements as they could procure, were assembled on Penrith Fell, to dispute their further advance.

Little danger was to be apprehended from this vast but disorderly host, in Captain Gordon's opinion, as, except the militia, which formed only a small proportion of it, the men were entirely undisciplined, and scarcely under control.

Since it was clear from this statement that the hostile force would be as easily dispersed as a mob, strict orders were given that no injury should be done to the common men, except in case of resistance.

All eagerness for the fight—if fight there was to be—the insurgents set forward, Lord Derwentwater commanding the advanced guard, and having with him—besides his brother—Colonel Oxburgh and Captain Gordon.

General Forster commanded the main force, and rode with Lord Widdrington and Lord Kenmure. Neither commanders nor officers had the slightest anxiety as to the result of the engagement, and felt as if they were going to a race, while the Highlanders were in very good spirits, fancying they should obtain some booty.

After passing through a woody district, they came to a common, when they perceived the immense host described by Capain Gordon, drawn up on the side of Penrith Fell—the horse militia being stationed in front.

As soon as the rebels came in sight, the Royalists set up a great shout, and a charge being ordered by Lord Lonsdale, the militia dashed forward, sword in hand, as if meaning to cut down the invaders.

But when they beheld Lord Derwentwater at the head of his troop, galloping to meet them, they suddenly stopped, and despite Lord Lonsdale's remonstrances, fairly turned round, and fled.

Their cowardice saved the rebels the trouble of dispersing the multitude behind them, for no sooner did the militia fly, than the others took to their heels, and throwing down their weapons, hurried off in every direction.

Ere many minutes the whole common was covered with fugitives, crying out piteously for quarter if a Highlander pursued them, and offering all they had—which was not much—if their lives were spared. A great number of prisoners were taken.

Amongst the foremost to save themselves were Lord Lonsdale and the Bishop of Carlisle. Both were greatly afraid of being captured. Sir Christopher Musgrave made a vigorous effort to check the flight of the posse-comitatus, but being utterly unable to do so, he rode off himself.

In less than half an hour the plain was completely cleared of all but the confederate forces and their prisoners. Several horses belonging to the militia were taken, a few swords and pistols, and a vast number of pitchforks.

When the prisoners, who amounted to three or four hundred, were brought before General Forster, he upbraided them—though in a good-humoured manner—with their folly in opposing their friends, saying they—the so-called rebels—were come to deliver them from a tyrannical usurper, and restore their lawful king to the throne.

"To prove that we mean you no harm," he said, "not one of you has been injured— not a single man has been killed in the conflict. Had we caught Lord Lonsdale, or the Bishop of Carlisle, who ought not to have appeared on a field of battle, or Sir Christopher Musgrave, we might have made each of them pay a heavy ransom; but we shall deal differently with you. You are free. Return quietly to your homes. Take back your implements of husbandry, and employ them to a better purpose in future."

This speech produced a very good effect on the countrymen to whom it was addressed. They huzzaed loudly, and shouted:

"God save King James the Third, and prosper his merciful army!"

Their pitchforks were then given back to them, and they departed, rejoicing.

Three parties of horse were next sent off in different directions.

The first was commanded by Colonel Oxburgh, whose orders were to proceed to Lowther Castle, which was not more than three or four miles distant, and search for his lordship, and take him prisoner.

The second party, commanded by Captain Wogan, attended by the Reverend Mr. Patten, who was acquainted with the country, had orders to proceed to Rose Castle, the residence of the Bishop of Carlisle, and arrest him.

The third party was commanded by Captain Gordon, who had displayed extraordinary zeal of late, and had risen greatly in favour with General Forster and Lord Derwentwater. Captain Gordon's orders were to proceed to Edenhall, and make Sir Christopher Musgrave prisoner. He was also to bring away any arms he might find at the hall.

Charged with these orders the three officers in question immediately rode off.

Elated by their success, the insurgents marched on to Penrith, and entered the town with colours flying, drums beating, bagpipes playing.

CHAPTER II

Madam Bellingham

THE news of their victory had preceded them, and disposed the inhabitants—many of whom were Jacobites—to receive them cordially. Even by the leading men of the opposite party the greatest civility was shown them.

In anticipation of the defeat of the rebels, a plentiful supper had been provided at the principal inn for the Bishop of Carlisle, Lord Lonsdale, Sir Christopher Musgrave, and their chief followers.

To this supper General Forster and the whole of the insurgent leaders—except those absent on duty—sat down; and as circumstances gave peculiar zest to the entertainment, they passed the merriest evening they had done for some time.

The party sat late, and had not broken up when Colonel Oxburgh and the two other officers returned. Some arms were brought from Lowther Castle and Edenhall—but no prisoners. Lord Lowther, it appeared, had fled to Yorkshire. What had become of the Bishop of Carlisle and Sir Christopher Musgrave could not be ascertained.

General Forster was greatly disappointed, as he felt that the capture of three such important personages—or even one of them—would have given him great credit. However, he was fain to be content with the success he had achieved.

Next day, the general performed an act that raised him considerably in the estimation of the inhabitants. Having found out that some High Church Tories belonging to his own division intended to pull down, or burn a Presbyterian meeting-house in the town, he peremptorily forbade them, declaring he would punish any who disobeyed his orders.

"I will never sanction religious outrages," he said. "We must show the country that all sects can live tranquilly together. My maxim is toleration. Though I differ with the Presbyterians, I will, on no account, allow them to be molested."

This expression, which was repeated, did him great service.

During their stay in Penrith, the insurgents were very well treated, and made many friends. They expected to be joined by several important Roman

Catholics— Mr. Howard of Corby Castle, Mr. Warwick of Warwick Hall, Mr. Henry Curwen of Workington, and Sir James Graham of Inchbrachy—but learnt to their dismay that they had all been arrested by the Governor of Carlisle, and secured in the castle. Before quitting Penrith, they collected five hundred pounds.

At the charming town of Appleby, always noted for its loyalty, they were very well received, and took possession of the church and castle.

General Forster immediately caused James the Third to be proclaimed, and so much enthusiasm was manifested that it might have been thought that the inhabitants were all devoted to the Stuarts.

Gratified by their reception, and delighted by the beauty of the town, the insurgents passed their time very pleasantly, and were reluctant to proceed on their march.

At Appleby, Mr. Wyburgh, captain of the train-bands, was taken prisoner, and Lord Nairn, a relation of Sir James Graham, wished to effect an exchange, but the Governor of Carlisle would not listen to the proposal.

Several persons, suspected of being spies, were seized and detained, and an impracticable officer was confined in the Moot Hall till he confessed where the excise money was lodged.

Their next march was to Kendal, where General Forster was quartered at the house of Alderman Simpson, in Strickland Gate. It chanced that his godmother, Mrs. Bellingham, was staying there at the time, and hearing this the general desired to pay his respects to her, but she refused to see him. However, as he was going up-stairs to his room, she rushed forth, and met him on the landing. Alarmed by the furious expression of her countenance, Forster would have turned back, but she commanded him to stay.

Thinking to deprecate her wrath, the general expressed his great pleasure at seeing her, and hoped she was quite well.

"Quite well!" she cried. "How can I be well when I'm driven almost out of my senses by your shameful proceedings. Oh! Tom, Tom! never did I think you would serve the Pretender!"

"I serve King James the Third, madam," he replied. "And however disagreeable it may be to you to hear it, I must say that I look upon the Elector of Hanover as a usurper, and I shall do my best to drive him from the kingdom."

"You may try, but you'll never succeed," cried Mrs. Bellingham, becoming still more exasperated. "Now, I'll tell you what you've lost by your folly. I meant to leave you all my fortune; but you shan't have a penny. I'll leave it all to Dorothy."

"I'm sorry to have offended you, madam, but it can't be helped. I scarcely think you can have heard of our great success at Penrith Fells, or you wouldn't speak so disparagingly of us."

"I've heard that you dispersed an army of peasants," she rejoined, contemptuously. "But when you face a regular army, the result will be very different."

"You are mistaken, madam," he rejoined, beginning to feel angry himself, for he saw Lord Derwentwater, Lord Widdrington, and Colonel Oxburgh at the foot of the stairs, and felt sure they must be laughing at him. "Before a month we shall be in London."

"Yes," she replied; "but you will be a prisoner. You and the rebel lords will be safely lodged in the Tower, and if you come out, it will only be to have your heads cut off. And you will richly deserve your fate."

A good word may be said for the Highlanders. It was reported that the muskets of the militia were concealed in the church, and a party of these brave fellows went in search of them. They discovered no arms, but they found the plate in the vestry, and left it untouched.

Next day, being Sunday, the insurgents marched early to Kirkby-Lonsdale. Service was performed at the church in the afternoon by the Reverend Mr. Patten, and as Lord Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington were standing in the churchyard contemplating the beautiful view it commands of the valley of the Lune, they were surprised by the unexpected appearance of Lord Widdrington's brother, who had just returned from Lancaster, whither he had been sent to prepare the inhabitants for the approach of the insurgent force.

Charles Widdrington's report was that there was a strong feeling in their favour, and that they would certainly be joined by many gentlemen of the

county. Moreover, he brought a letter to Lord Widdrington from Mr. Charles Beswicke, of Manchester, in which the writer mentioned that King James the Third had just been proclaimed in that town, and a troop of fifty men raised and armed. Mr. Beswicke hoped to join the insurgent army with some volunteers at Lancaster.

This satisfactory intelligence was immediately communicated to the other chiefs and officers, and greatly raised their spirits.

Before leaving Kirkby-Lonsdale, they were joined by an important Roman Catholic gentleman, Mr. Carus, of Halton Hall, and his two sons, who were appointed officers in Lord Derwentwater's troop.

CHAPTER III

Hornby Castle

WHILE the rest of the force proceeded to Lancaster, shaping their course along the lovely valley of the Lune, and keeping near the banks of the river, Colonel Oxburgh, with a party of horse, composed entirely of gentlemen, went to Hornby Castle for the purpose of arresting its owner, Colonel Charteris, and taking him a prisoner to Lancaster.

Colonel Charteris, condemned to deathless infamy by Hogarth, belonged to a Scotch family, and had rendered himself so odious to his countrymen by his vices, that, if the Highlanders had been allowed to visit Hornby Castle, they would undoubtedly have burnt it to the ground, and have shot its owner if they had caught him.

A profligate debauchee of the worst kind, Colonel Charteris was also one of the meanest of men, and cunning as mean. But he was very rich, and about two years prior to the date of our story, he had purchased Hornby Castle, where he now dwelt, from the Earl of Cardigan, for fifteen thousand pounds. He had made some alterations—but not improvements—in the place, and had disfigured the old keep by rearing a watch-tower on its summit, above which he fixed a great gilt eagle.

From its bold position on a craggy hill, the sides of which were clothed with timber, while its base was washed by the river Wenning, Hornby Castle, before its partial demolition in the Civil Wars, must have presented a very striking appearance.

The ancient part of the structure was now in ruins—all that remained of it being a few picturesque walls overgrown with ivy, and the great square tower, to which allusion has just been made.

Adjoining these ruins, and to a certain degree combined with them, was a large modern stone mansion, in front of which a steep lawn descended, between avenues of timber, to the park at the foot of the hill.

No information respecting Colonel Charteris could be obtained at the pretty little village of Hornby. The inhabitants could not, or would not, tell whether he was at the castle. It was, therefore, in a state of the utmost uncertainty that Colonel Oxburgh and his troop mounted the steep ascent. The probability,

indeed, seemed that a person so cautious as Colonel Charteris would have decamped on hearing that the insurgents were close at hand.

On approaching the castle, which he thought much too good for its unworthy owner, Colonel Oxburgh rode up to the principal entrance and caused the bell to be loudly rung. Hitherto, no servants had appeared from whom inquiries could be made, and it would almost seem that the place was deserted. The summons, however, was promptly answered by a porter, who stated that his master had gone to Lancaster.

"Who is in the castle, then?" demanded Colonel Oxburgh. "Take care you don't deceive me, fellow."

"Only Mr. Bancroft, the steward, and two old women," replied the porter. "Colonel Charteris has taken all the rest of the servants with him to Lancaster. But here comes Mr. Bancroft."

As he spoke, a singular-looking individual made his appearance, and descending the steps respectfully saluted the insurgent leader.

Mr. Bancroft was an elderly man, rather high-shouldered, and clad in an old-fashioned, snuff-coloured suit. He wore what was then called a night-cap wig, and on his large and prominent nose rested a pair of green spectacles, through which he eyed the visitor.

"Colonel Charteris is absent, sir," he said. "He went to Lancaster yesterday."

"So I have just heard," replied the other. "But you must excuse me, Mr. Bancroft, if I decline to take your assurance on that point. My men will search the castle."

"As you please, sir," replied the steward. "But you may depend upon it they won't find him. Won't you please to alight, and come in?"

"Such is my intention," replied the colonel, springing from his horse and giving the bridle to the trooper nearest to him. "Let a dozen men follow me," he added. "The rest will take the horses to the stable—feed them—and then come to the house."

"It shall be done, colonel," said the trooper.

"Excuse me, colonel," said Bancroft. "They'll find the stable doors locked. My master has taken the keys with him."

"Break open the doors," cried Colonel Oxburgh.

"If they do, they'll find no forage inside," said Bancroft. "All the hay and corn has been removed."

"Never was there such a rascal!" cried Colonel Oxburgh, furiously. "Well, do the best you can," he added, to his followers. "Put up the horses, and then come to the house."

"To prevent disappointment," said Bancroft, with a malicious grin, "I had better mention beforehand that they will find no provisions."

"No provisions!" exclaimed the colonel, while the troopers who were within hearing looked aghast.

"The larder's empty, sir, I'm sorry to say," pursued the steward; "and what's worse, there's not a bottle of wine in the cellar."

Murmurs and threats arose from the men.

"If your master acts thus, he must take the consequences," observed Colonel Oxburgh. "He deserves the bad character he has acquired."

The steward did not like the tone in which the remark was made, and looked as if he would be glad to escape, but this being impossible, he asked Colonel Oxburgh into the house.

As he entered the hall with his men, Colonel Oxburgh stopped him, and said:

"A word with you, Mr. Bancroft. You say there are no provisions in the house—no food for the horses in the stables."

"I do, colonel," replied the other.

"I won't dispute the truth of your statement, but I have some orders to give you, which you will be pleased to execute. While I search the house see that a plentiful repast is set out for me and my followers in the dining-room—"

"I cannot accomplish impossibilities, colonel," interrupted the steward.

"I require good wine for myself and my men. No discussion. It must be done. Two of my party will attend upon you, and shoot you through the head if you attempt to escape. The rest will remain with me."

Leaving the steward quite confounded by what he had heard, in charge of a couple of troopers, Colonel Oxburgh made a thorough search of the house, peering into every room, but he did not find the person he sought, and began to think Colonel Charteris had really fled.

On repairing to the dining-room he was agreeably surprised to find a cold collation laid out on a long table.

"Aha! Mr. Bancroft," he exclaimed, "you have performed wonders, I see. Is this the work of magic?"

"It turned out on examination that the larder was better furnished than I imagined, colonel," said the steward.

"I thought as much," rejoined Colonel Oxburgh. "After all, we shall not fare badly."

"Nor will the horses, colonel," observed one of the gentlemen troopers coming up to him. "We have found plenty of fodder in the stable."

The colonel laughed heartily.

"What do you say to this, sir?" he remarked to the steward.

"Simply, that I obeyed my master's orders," he rejoined.

"Your master is a miserable niggard," said the colonel, signing to his followers to sit down, and taking the chair at the head of the table.

They were waited on by a couple of men servants, who had been discovered in the butler's pantry, and were supplied with abundance of claret.

At the conclusion of the repast King James's health was drunk by the whole party with loud cheers. Not only was the steward compelled to join in the toast, but to drink "Success to the insurgent army."

When the moment of departure arrived, and the steward thought he was about to get rid of his unwelcome visitors, Colonel Oxburgh said to him:

"We shan't part company at present, Mr. Bancroft. I shall be compelled to take you with me to Lancaster."

"As a prisoner, colonel?"

"As a prisoner, sir!"

"But what have I done? What crime have I committed?"

"That General Forster will judge. I have his orders to arrest you."

"Your orders, if I mistake not, are to arrest Colonel Charteris."

"Exactly. But in arresting you I don't think I shall be far wrong."

"I can assure you, sir?"

"Nay, 'tis vain to deny it. From the first I suspected you were Colonel Charteris, and my suspicions have since become confirmed. 'Twill be best to accompany me quietly. Resistance will be useless."

"Very well," rejoined the other. "Since you have seen through my disguise, I won't attempt to maintain it longer. I am Colonel Charteris. Allow me to put up a few things, and I will go with you. Don't be alarmed. I give you my word of honour I will return."

"Your word of honour!" exclaimed Colonel Oxburgh, contemptuously, "I place little reliance upon it. A guard must accompany you while you make your preparations."

"You wrong me by this distrust, colonel," said Charteris, as he quitted the room, closely followed by a couple of troopers.

Ascending the great staircase, he proceeded deliberately along a corridor, until he came to a particular bed-chamber, where he stopped, saying to the guard, as he went in, "I won't detain you long."

The troopers remained at the door. But as he did not come forth within a reasonable time, they entered the room, and to their astonishment and dismay found it empty.

They searched about—in the closets, behind the curtains, under the bed, and in every place, likely and unlikely, but failed to find him—nor could they comprehend how he had got off, since there appeared to be no other exit but the door.

On going down-stairs, they found Colonel Oxburgh impatiently awaiting them in the hall. The entrance door was standing wide open, and showed the troop drawn up outside, and ready for instant departure. The colonel was greatly exasperated when he learnt what had happened.

"I ought to have known better," he mentally ejaculated, "than to trust a man without a spark of honour. However, if he falls into my hands again, he shall not escape so easily."

Though despairing of success, Colonel Oxburgh would not leave without making an effort to recapture the fugitive.

On careful examination of the bed-chamber in question, he discovered a secret door, connected with a passage leading to the ruins of the old castle, where no doubt the fugitive had found a safe hiding-place. As it was evident further search would be useless, Colonel Oxburgh departed with his men.

Little did he think as he rode down the hill that Colonel Charteris was watching him from the summit of the keep, and laughing at the clever manner in which he had outwitted his visitor.

CHAPTER IV

Sir Henry Hoghton and the Quaker

AWARE that the rebels were marching towards Lancaster, the Whig inhabitants of the town endeavoured to make some defensive preparations, and were materially aided in their efforts by Sir Henry Hoghton, of Hoghton Tower, member of Parliament for Preston, and Colonel of the Lancashire Militia.

Having ascertained that a ship called the Robert, of five hundred tons burthen, belonging to Mr. Lawson, a wealthy Quaker of Lancaster, was lying at Sunderland—a small sea-port situated at the estuary of the Lune—Sir Henry went to Mr. Lawson to endeavour to negotiate with him for the use of the guns.

"When I tell you, Mr. Lawson," he said, "that those cannon of yours will enable us to keep the rebels out of the town, I am sure you will let us have them."

"Thou shalt have them on one condition, friend," replied the Quaker. "And on one condition only."

"Name it," cried Sir Henry, eagerly.

"Thou shalt give me a bond for ten thousand pounds to insure my ship, the Robert, against any damage she may sustain from the rebels, when they learn I have parted with the cannon to be used against them."

"Zounds! Mr. Lawson," exclaimed Sir Henry, "excuse my swearing—but you are enough to provoke a saint—how the deuce can you expect me to agree to such absurd conditions? I refuse them. Moreover, I tell you as a magistrate, that the cargo on board the Robert shall at once be seized, unless you consent to surrender the cannon. Now, sir, what have you to say to that?"

After a moment's reflection, the Quaker replied, "I have simply to say, friend, that I agree."

"I am glad to hear it," observed Sir Henry. "You will deserve the thanks of your fellow-townsmen."

"But recollect, friend," said the Quaker, "that the cannon will be of no use to thee, unless thou hast sufficient men to cover the town. Thou hast six hundred militiamen at Preston. Thou must bring them forthwith to Lancaster. There is

also, unless I am misinformed, a regiment of dragoons at Preston, commanded by Colonel Stanhope. They would be useful here."

"Colonel Stanhope cannot move his dragoons without an order from General Wills," said Sir Henry. "And as to the militia, I can't bring them here because I should deprive Preston of its main defence."

"That is unfortunate," observed the Quaker. "The best fighting men in Lancaster are Jacobites, and likely to help the rebels. I would not trust them to serve the cannon."

"I begin to think you are a Jacobite yourself, Mr. Lawson," observed Sir Henry. "Since you raise all these difficulties you must order the Robert to leave Sunderland, and move to some other port."

"I can't do it, friend," observed the Quaker. "The rebels would consider the step as an injustice to themselves, and assuredly resent it."

"This truckling to the rebels proves you to be a Jacobite," said Sir Henry, angrily; "but I will consult my brother magistrates, Mr. Rigby and Colonel Charteris, and if they are of my opinion, we will issue a warrant and seize the arms."

"Do as it seems good to thee, in regard to the cannon, friend," rejoined the Quaker. "But counsel thy brother magistrates not to blow up the bridge, as I hear is their intention. They will not thereby hinder the entrance of the rebels, since the river is passable at low water both for horse and foot, and will do great damage to the town."

"There you are right," said Sir Henry. "The bridge shall not be destroyed. Have you any further complaints to make?"

"Yea, verily," replied the Quaker. "I have to complain that a barrel of gunpowder hath been improperly and imprudently wasted by him thou callest Colonel Charteris."

"How so?" demanded Sir Henry.

"Because he hath caused Samuel Satterthwaite to cast it into the town- well."

"Perhaps he thought Sam Satterthwaite might sell it to the rebels."

"Wherefore not use it against them himself? I am a man of peace, and Colonel Charteris is a man of war. Yet methinks, the order to spoil the powder would have come more aptly from me, than from him. Most assuredly, however, I would have given no such direction."

"I can easily believe it, Mr. Lawson," replied Sir Henry. "You know the value of gunpowder, having an armed vessel of your own."

"I know its utility at this moment," rejoined the Quaker, "when an insurrection has to be quelled."

"Or aided," said Sir Henry, significantly. "Well, I won't argue with you further, Mr. Lawson. You shall have due notice when the arms are seized."

"I am not much afraid of that," muttered the Quaker, as Sir Henry took his departure.

CHAPTER V

How the Prisoners in Lancaster Castle were released

FAR from presenting a stern and threatening aspect to the rebels, the old town of Lancaster seemed to smile upon them as they approached it.

The sun shone brightly on the castle hill, giving a cheerful air to the ancient fortress that crowned it, and no cannon were planted at its walls. No militia, no dragoons, were drawn to dispute the passage of the bridge. On the contrary, a great number of ladies and gentlemen were collected there, mingled with the townsfolk—most of whom were in their holiday attire—to give them welcome.

Headed by the Earl of Derwentwater, mounted on his dapple-grey steed which had borne him well throughout the whole of the long march, the insurgents came joyously on, and were received with shouts by the concourse assembled at the foot of the bridge—the ladies waving their kerchiefs enthusiastically.

The good looks and chivalrous appearance of the earl were well calculated to impress the female portion of the beholders, who manifested their admiration in the way we have stated.

Riding with his sword unsheathed, Lord Derwentwater occasionally bowed in acknowledgment of the attention paid him. Close behind him rode his brother, Charles Radclyffe, and Captain Wogan, both of whom were thought handsome men, but nothing compared with the earl, who captivated all the ladies of Lancaster.

Entirely composed of gentlemen of good family, almost all of them young, very well dressed, and extremely well mounted, and of course not having at all the air of common soldiers, the Earl of Derwentwater's regiment caused great excitement.

Flattered by their reception, these young gentlemen bowed to the ladies, and in some instances persuaded themselves that their salutations were returned. Perhaps it might have been so, since it is certain the ladies were not displeased.

General Forster was not so much admired, and the ladies declared he was not fit to have the command of such an army; but they praised Lord Widdrington's

regiment, and wondered how so many fine young men could have been got together.

The Scottish nobles and the Lowland corps delighted them, but they were quite astounded by the Highlanders, with whose picturesque garb they were not familiar.

They could not help contrasting these fierce-looking savages, as they styled them, with the handsome Englishmen, and Brigadier Mackintosh, with his tall, stalwart figure and grim countenance filled them with terror.

After crossing the bridge without any other interruption, except the very agreeable one described, the insurgent army marched to the market-place, followed by an immense concourse. Here the Highlanders formed themselves in a body round the cross, and the whole of the cavalry, having their swords bared, drew up around them. General Forster with the English and Scottish nobles were stationed in the centre of the throng.

King James the Third was then proclaimed amid the hearty cheers of the multitude. This done, the troops moved away, and were billeted and quartered in every part of the town. While the proclamation was being made, Captain Gordon had remarked a person at the open window of a stationer's shop, kept by a certain Christopher Hopkins, evidently engaged in counting the numbers of the insurgents, and entering the particulars with great care in a small memorandum book. Suspecting that the man's design was to afford information to the Government, Captain Gordon went to the shop as soon as the crowd began to disperse, and then found that the individual he had seen preparing the report was Christopher Hopkins himself. Interrogated by Captain Gordon, Hopkins admitted that he had taken down the numbers of the insurgent army, and, moreover, had given the report to his friend Ralph Fairbrother, who was about to take it to General Carpenter at Newcastle.

As Hopkins refused to give any further information, Captain Gordon ordered his immediate arrest, and directed that he should be kept in strict custody till Ralph Fairbrother was found. Fairbrother's residence was discovered, but he had already set out on his errand. A reward of thirty pounds was offered for his capture, but proved ineffectual.

Amongst those who witnessed the entrance of the insurgent army into the town were the prisoners in the castle, who had contrived to get upon the leads of the building, and saluted their deliverers, as they styled them, with loud cheers.

Several of these unlucky individuals had been confined for political offences, and as most of them were Jacobites, they confidently calculated upon liberation.

Amongst them was the celebrated Tom Syddall, a blacksmith of Manchester, who had headed the mob at the time of the Sacheverel riots, and assisted in pulling down the Presbyterian meeting-houses in that town. For these offences the "Mob Captain," as he was styled, was placed in the pillory, and imprisoned in Lancaster Castle.

Tom Syddall, we may mention, had a son quite as ardent a Jacobite as himself, whose exploits during the rebellion of 1745 have been recounted in another work.

A consultation was held by General Forster with Lord Derwentwater and the other leaders as to the propriety of releasing the debtors as well as the Crown prisoners in the castle, when it was decided that the former only should be set free.

Accordingly, Colonel Oxburgh, who by this time had returned from his unsuccessful visit to Hornby Castle, was directed to order their immediate discharge, and for this purpose went up to the castle, without a guard and only accompanied by Mr. Patten, the chaplain of the force.

On entering by the portal of the Gateway Tower, above which was an effigy of John of Gaunt, they were respectfully received by an officer, to whom Colonel Oxburgh gave General Forster's order for the liberation of the Crown prisoners, and while the colonel and the chaplain walked on into the spacious castle-yard, the order was taken to the governor.

Ere many minutes had elapsed, loud shouts, that made the old towers ring, announced that the order had been complied with, and soon afterwards some thirty individuals, most of them very shabbily attired, rushed tumultuously into the court, and gathering round Colonel Oxburgh, shouted "Long live King James the Third!"

Foremost among them was a short, strongly built man, with a plain, honest countenance, marked by a bold determined expression, who looked like what he had been—a blacksmith.

"Are you not Tom Syddall?" inquired Colonel Oxburgh.

The man replied in the affirmative, whereupon the colonel shook hands with him, as did the chaplain, and both expressed their satisfaction at being instrumental in setting him and his fellow-prisoners at liberty.

"You have all been imprisoned for your attachment to your rightful sovereign," said Colonel Oxburgh, "and it is our duty to liberate you. As to you, Syddall," he added, "I know you to be a brave fellow, and I expect you will join us."

"Such is my design, colonel," he replied. "And what is more, I can bring all these my friends with me. Have I said too much?" he added, appealing to them.

"No! no!" they responded unanimously. "We will all join."

"I am right glad to hear it," said the colonel. "Your friends will form a small troop, Syddall, and I make no doubt General Forster will give you the command of it."

All being now arranged, Colonel Oxburgh and the chaplain quitted the castle, and proceeded to the general's quarters, followed by the newly-liberated prisoners. General Forster was very much pleased by this accession of force, and confirmed Colonel Oxburgh's promise by appointing Syddall captain of the little troop.

That night, Brigadier Mackintosh sent a party of Highlanders to search for arms at every house in the town. They took with them Mr. Parkinson, the mayor, a staunch supporter of the Government, and compelled him to assist in the search. Their orders were to plunder the houses of all such persons as refused compliance with their commands.

While the search for arms was still going on, Captain Wogan came to Forster's quarters, and said:

"General, I have just received information of six pieces of cannon on board the ship Robert, now lying at Sunderland, five miles from this town, and propose,

with your sanction, to take a detachment with me to-morrow morning and seize them."

"Do so, by all means," said Forster.

"Sir Henry Hoghton intended to seize these ship guns, and bring them here for the defence of the town," continued Captain Wogan, "and for that purpose had taken off the wheels of some of his carriages. But his design being frustrated by our approach, I have got possession of the carriage-wheels, and mean to use them as he intended for the cannon."

"Capital!" exclaimed Forster, laughing heartily.

"But something must be done to remunerate Mr. Lawson, the owner of the ship, general," said Wogan.

"Let him make his claim, and we will give him our note for the amount to be made payable when our master's concerns are settled," said Forster.

Taking a strong detachment with him, Captain Wogan went, next morning, to Sunderland, where he found the Robert, and demanded the cannon in the name of King James.

Mr. Lawson was on board at the time, and at once surrendered the guns receiving a note of hand for six hundred pounds, as suggested by General Forster, with which he appeared perfectly satisfied.

"But how wilt thou get the guns to Lancaster, friend?" he inquired.

"Very easily," replied Captain Wogan. "I have brought with me the wheels of Sir Henry Hoghton's three carriages."

"Thou hast done well," observed the Quaker, laughing. "That insolent baronet has been rightly served."

"I begin to think you have a friendly feeling towards our party, Mr. Lawson," observed Captain Wogan.

"I am of no party, friend," replied the cautious Quaker. "But I will tell thee one thing—thou hast got the cannon far cheaper than I would have sold them to Sir Henry Hoghton."

CHAPTER VI

Lancashire Witches

NEVER had Lancaster been so gay as during its occupation by the rebels.

Instead of showing themselves hostile, as had been apprehended, the majority of the inhabitants proved exceedingly friendly.

At many houses where the young insurgents were quartered, they were treated like guests. Tea parties were given to which they were invited, and they were thus enabled to make the acquaintance of the female members of the family. As these young troopers could not be distinguished either in manner or attire from their officers, they were frequently questioned as to their actual military rank, and gave something like the following explanation.

"In our regiment there are no common men. We serve as gentlemen, and are treated like gentlemen by our officers. But though we consider ourselves quite equal to our leaders, we unhesitatingly obey them. By us the word of command is never disputed. Though most of us have grooms, each of us attends to his own horse, and you see how well the horses look, in spite of our long march. We are never out of spirits. We take the rough and the smooth, as they come. Hitherto, we have had plenty of rough work, and very little enjoyment. The 'smooth' has come at last. The kindness and courtesy of the gentlemen of Lancaster, and the attentions shown us by the ladies, make ample amends for previous hardships."

Such was the account of themselves given by the handsome young troopers, and listened to with the greatest interest by the ladies, who thought that a regiment composed entirely of gentlemen must be victorious either in love or war.

It happened, singularly enough, at the time of the Jacobite expedition, that Lancaster and Preston abounded in pretty girls. Always famed for the beauty and fascinations of the fair sex—who have been designated the "Lancashire witches"—the whole county was remarkably rich in feminine attraction at that particular juncture.

Of the Preston belles we shall speak hereafter. For the present, we must confine ourselves to the beauties of Lancaster.

If we said there were a hundred really handsome young women in Lancaster at the time of which we speak, we should be under the mark. We believe there were double the number, and they were all as gay and good-humoured as they were beautiful.

Since we cannot describe them all, we shall select three of the most attractive—namely, Dryope Dutton, Nicola Glasson, and Aurelia Heysham.

Had they not been nearly of an age, these three lovely girls might have been taken for sisters, so much were they alike. Each was between nineteen and twenty—each had delicately-formed features, blonde tresses, and blue eyes, capable of the tenderest expression—and each was tall and graceful. All three knew how to set off their charms to advantage by dress.

Dryope Dutton, however, was considered the prettiest girl in Lancaster, and had the greatest number of admirers, all of whom were sent about their business on the arrival of the rebel army, their places being immediately filled by gallant young insurgents. None of her new suitors were discouraged by Dryope, but she appeared to have a decided preference for Captain Shaftoe.

Following Dryope's example, Nicola and Aurelia, dismissed their lovers, and laid themselves out to captivate the new-comers, in which design they were eminently successful.

The rest of the pretty girls did the same thing. None of them would now be seen without a Jacobite admirer.

During their stay at Lancaster nothing was thought of but flirting by the amorous youths, who were completely enthralled by their lady-loves, and had these syrens desired to turn them from their cause, we fear they might have succeeded.

Luckily, all the girls professed themselves ardent Jacobites, and if they fancied their lovers were lukewarm, strenuously urged them to go on.

As we have intimated, the town now presented a very lively appearance. Not only was the terrace near the castle thronged with handsome young troopers and charming girls; but when the promenade was over, the company wandered about the streets, visiting the market-place, the town-hall, the custom-house, the quays and the bridge, and strolling on the banks of the Lune.

On Sunday, Saint Mary's Church was crowded by the same young ladies, who expressed a great desire to hear the Reverend Mr. Paul, who had recently joined the expedition, read prayers, and Mr. Patten preach; but it may be doubted whether they were not still more anxious to meet their admirers.

Be this as it may, when the service was over, the ladies congregated in the churchyard, and each fair girl was escorted home by the trooper she preferred.

Whether all this flirting was approved of by the mammas of the young ladies in question we will not pretend to say. No effort was made to check it. Neither did the officers of the regiments to which the young men belonged interfere— well knowing interference would be useless—so it went on to the last.

At length, the day of parting came, and a very sad day it was both for the enamoured young troopers and their lady-loves.

How many tears were shed! how many tender adieux taken! how many protestations made of undying affection!

"We shall never see you again!" cried the heartbroken girls. "Military men are always inconstant. You will forget us as soon as you arrive at Preston."

The young troopers vowed they were an exception to the rule.

"Have no doubts as to our constancy!" they cried. "We will always remain faithful. Preston may be full of pretty girls—as they say it is—but they will have no attraction for us."

"Don't be surprised if we come to look after you," said Dryope, to Captain Shaftoe; "and if we find you false and forsworn?"

"How can you suppose I could be false to you, sweetest Dryope?" said Shaftoe; stopping her mouth with a kiss. "Think it not. But I fear you won't come to Preston."

"Yes, I will—if I can—that I promise," she rejoined.

"Then I will only bid you adieu for a short time," he said, kissing her once more as he sprang to the saddle.

Many more partings, equally tender, took place. Many a bright eye was dimmed, as the regiments to which the handsome troopers belonged quitted Lancaster, and took the road to Preston.

Full of sadness were the young men as they looked back at the fair creatures they were leaving; and had they been told at the moment that they would soon forget them they would have resented the imputation.

We shall see how they behaved at Preston.

In quitting Lancaster, where he was so well received, and where he was constantly receiving slight accessions to his force, General Forster committed a grave error.

At Lancaster he had a strong castle which might have been garrisoned and provisioned, and could certainly have been held till assistance arrived from Scotland; while not far from the town was a seaport whence succours could be obtained from France.

These advantages were pointed out to him by Lord Derwentwater, but he replied that his object in marching to Preston was to secure Warrington Bridge before the enemy could destroy it.

The possession of this bridge, he thought, would give him both Manchester and Liverpool, and these important towns gained, the whole surrounding country would flock to his standard.

In vain Lord Derwentwater showed him the difficulties he would have to encounter, and explained that the inhabitants of Liverpool were decidedly adverse to the Jacobite cause.

A totally different view was taken by Lord Widdrington, who assured the general he might depend upon receiving the support of the High Church Tories of Manchester, and Mr. Charles Beswicke, who had just arrived from that town, confirmed the idea.

General Forster, therefore, resolved to go on, despite Lord Derwentwater's opposition.

Several important additions, as we have just stated, had been made to the rebel force. Amongst these were five gentlemen belonging to some of the oldest

and most distinguished families in the county, whose adhesion could not fail to be serviceable to the cause. They were Albert Hodgson of Leighton Hall, John Dalton of Thurnham Hall, Edward Tyldesley of the Lodge, Henry Butler of Rawcliffe, and Thomas Walton of Walton Hall. They all brought retainers with them, and each was made a captain. Charles Beswicke, previously mentioned, who likewise joined at Lancaster, was son of the Reverend Charles Beswicke, rector of Radcliffe.

A dull and gloomy morning harmonised with the feelings of the insurgents as they quitted Lancaster, but as they advanced on their march the day improved, and by the time they reached Garstang it had become quite fine.

Here the infantry proposed to halt for the night. They brought with them the six pieces of cannon seized on board the Robert, and likewise some casks of brandy taken from the custom-house.

At Garstang, Brigadier Mackintosh set free Christopher Hopkins, who had been hitherto detained a prisoner, telling him if he again fell into his hands, he would shoot him.

Long before the cavalry reached Preston they came in sight of the town, delightfully situated on a ridge overlooking the flat district they were traversing, and the aspect of the town was so cheerful, that the spirits of the young troopers began to revive.

They had heard much of the beauty of the ladies, and curiosity to behold them was suddenly awakened in their breasts.

Could they compare with the lovely girls they had left behind? That was a question which would very soon be answered.

The young troopers now became impatient to get to Preston, and wondered whether the ladies would come forth to meet them as had been the case at Lancaster.

In this respect they were disappointed.

There were no ladies at the foot of the hill—none on Friargate brow—but in the market-place an agreeable surprise awaited them.

BOOK VII. — THE ATTACK

CHAPTER I

Proud Preston

PROUD Preston—or Priests' Town, as it was originally called from the number of its religious houses—merited the epithet applied to it, albeit somewhat derisively.

Proud were its inhabitants—proud of their town—of its fine situation, its beauty, its salubrity—proud of their wives and daughters, whom they deemed, and not erroneously, the handsomest women in the kingdom.

As a place of fashionable resort, where the best society could be found, Preston, at the period of our story, ranked higher than any other town in the North of England. A great number of gentry resided there—many of them belonging to the oldest Catholic families of the county, and these persons gave an aristocratic character to the place.

But the Preston gentry were not as wealthy as they were proud. High Churchmen as well as Roman Catholics abounded in the town, and the only thing low about the parish church was the steeple. Hence the old rhyme:

Proud Preston, poor people,

High church, and low steeple!

Delightfully situated on the summit of a ridge, rising gradually from the Ribble, which sweeps round it on the south, and commanding extensive and beautiful views in every direction, Preston, from its salubrious climate, and contiguity to the sea, enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most agreeable and healthy towns in England.

In the early part of the eighteenth century Preston was but a small place, and could boast little regularity of construction, but it had a remarkably clean and cheerful aspect.

Attached to many of the houses were good gardens, and these being laid out on the slopes of the eminence on which the town was reared, contributed materially to its beauty.

The best houses were in Church-street and Fishergate, running from east to west on the south side of the hill. A few of the habitations were old, but the greater part were modern. Amongst the latter were two large mansions, standing nearly opposite each other in Church-street, and belonging respectively to Sir Henry Hoghton and Mr. Eyre. Both these mansions possessed large gardens and good stables, and are specially referred to because we shall have to speak of them hereafter.

But there were also some good old houses in Friargate, which led from the Lancaster road on the north side of the hill to the market-place.

In the market-place, which formed a large square, with an obelisk in the midst instead of a cross, there were several good old houses; and here, also, was the town-hall, an extremely picturesque old edifice, four stories high, and each story projecting above the other, painted black and white, and having great gables and large windows.

At the corner of one of the streets communicating with the market-place stood the Mitre, the principal hostel of the town, and noted for its good cheer and good wines. Not far off was the White Bull, another good inn, much frequented by the townsfolk.

The parish church, dedicated in the first instance to Saint Wilfrid, but more recently to Saint John, stood on the south side of Church-street. A fine old structure, it had undergone repairs, not altogether judicious, and was disfigured by a low tower. A large churchyard separated it from the street.

At this time the Reverend Samuel Peploe, a staunch supporter of the reigning family, and greatly opposed to the Jacobites, was vicar of Preston.

On Fishergate brow stood a small Roman Catholic chapel, dedicated to Saint Mary.

At the Grey Friars was the old prison; but a house of correction had been recently erected in the fields on the west side of the town—rather a large building for so small a place.

From the eastern extremity of Church-street, a road leading to Wigan descended the hill, and after passing through some pleasant fields bordered by high hedges, crossed the old bridge over the Ribble near Walton-le-Dale.

Such was Preston when garrisoned by the insurgent forces.

With the exception of the vicar, to whom we have just alluded, all their enemies had disappeared.

Colonel Stanhope had gone with his regiment of dragoons to join General Wills at Warrington; and Sir Henry Hoghton had abandoned his large mansion, and taken the militia to Wigan.

There was nothing, therefore, to prevent the inhabitants from giving them a hearty welcome.

But as the municipal authorities, from prudential reasons, declined to act, the office of receiving them devolved on private individuals.

As General Forster and the other leaders rode into the market-place, they were met by a large party of gentlemen, who welcomed them to the town, and professed their desire to show them every hospitality. General Forster, the noble lords, and all the officers were invited to dine that day at the town-hall, and it was likewise intimated to the general that a grand dinner, to be followed by a ball, would be given at the same place on the following day, by which time it was expected the infantry and Highlanders would have arrived.

In regard to quarters, Mr. Eyre's large house in Church-street was assigned to General Forster and Lord Widdrington, and Sir Henry Hoghton's mansion was offered to Lord Derwentwater. Good quarters, it appeared, had likewise been provided for all the officers.

Greatly pleased by their reception, the rebel leaders repaired to their quarters, with which they were well satisfied. In the mansion assigned to them, General Forster and Lord Widdrington found everything they could desire. Nor was Sir Henry Hoghton's house at all inferior to the other. Indeed, it presented a far handsomer appearance from the street, as it occupied a more elevated position. Nor did the internal accommodation belie the exterior. The house possessed a spacious entrance hall, and several commodious and well furnished rooms on the ground floor. Attached to it were excellent stables, and at the back there was a large garden.

Sir Henry had taken his grooms and coachman with him, but part of the establishment was left behind.

After settling themselves comfortably in their new quarters, the rebel leaders proceeded to the town-hall, where a sumptuous dinner awaited them, and so well pleased was General Forster with the entertainment, with the attentions paid him, and with his quarters, that he resolved to stay as long as he could at Preston.

At the very time when the rebels were taking possession of the town, the vicar, of whose attachment to the House of Brunswick we have spoken, happened to be engaged on his duties in the church, and he seized the opportunity of reading prayers for King George and the royal family. For this display of zeal and courage, he was made Warden of Manchester, and subsequently Bishop of Chester.

No molestation or interruption were offered by the rebels, but when the Reverend Mr. Paul, the new chaplain of the regiment, heard of the circumstance, he begged General Forster to order the troops to attend prayers at the church forthwith.

Within half an hour after Mr. Peploe had quitted it, the church was entirely filled by the rebel soldiers. Captain Wogan, Captain Shaftoe, and most of the officers were present.

While the bell was ringing to summon this second congregation, Mr. Paul took the prayer-book, just used by the vicar, and erased the name of King George, substituting for it the name of King James. And in the prayer for the royal family, he scratched out the name of the Princess Sophia, and introduced that of Queen Mary of Modena.

Habited in a blue coat, wearing a long wig, and having a sword by his side, this stout church militant proceeded to the reading-desk, and in tones quite as fervent as those of the vicar prayed for the Pretender and his mother. Had James the Third come to the throne, no doubt Mr. Paul would have been rewarded with a bishopric.

Most of the young gentlemen troopers found capital quarters in the Fishergate and Friargate, and as a great number of tea-parties were given that evening, to which they were bidden, they had an opportunity of comparing the belles of Preston with those of Lancaster.

Till then they had believed it impossible that lovelier girls could be found than those they had just quitted. Now they confessed their mistake.

That morning the inconstant youths tore themselves away distractedly from their Lancaster loves, but at night an entire change had taken place in their sentiments, and they retired to rest deeply enamoured of the Preston girls.

CHAPTER II

How King James was proclaimed for the last Time

NEXT morning, the town, never dull, presented a gayer appearance than usual.

Fortunately, the weather was propitious, and enabled the ladies to come forth and see the troops paraded.

After this pretty sight, they proceeded to the Lancaster road to witness the entrance of the Highlanders, whom they were very curious to see.

They laughed a great deal at the strange dresses of the men, and stopped their ears to shut out the shrill sound of the bagpipes; but, on the whole, they were pleased.

As was the case wherever he went, Brigadier Mackintosh produced a strong effect upon the beholders. His tall martial figure riveted their regards. On this occasion, the rigid muscles of the grim old warrior's countenance were somewhat relaxed, and he even attempted to smile. Perhaps, he was gratified by the undisguised admiration of the Preston beauties.

However, the fair spectators were best pleased by a party of young recruits who followed the Highlanders.

Raw soldiers they might be, but they were very pretty fellows, and had plenty of spirit. Number, three dozen—not including captain. Height, rather below the average—features delicate and feminine—figures slight, but remarkably well formed.

Never did scarlet coats, laced cocked-hats, flaxen wigs, and all the rest of their accoutrements find more graceful wearers. Red and white cockades showed they were English recruits—the Scots being distinguished by cockades of blue and white.

All carried muskets, except the captain, who alone had a drawn sword in his hand. Perhaps he had been chosen on account of his good looks. Certainly he was the handsomest, as well as the tallest of the party.

The whole troop presented a very animated appearance, and none of them looked fatigued by the march. Highly diverted by the notice they excited, they ogled the ladies very freely, and occasionally paid them a passing compliment.

Scarcely knowing what to think of these singular recruits, a crowd of young damsels followed them, laughing and jesting with them as they marched along.

On arriving at the market-place, where the troops were assembling to proclaim King James, the recruits created quite a sensation—especially among certain young gentlemen in Lord Derwentwater's regiment, who stared at them in astonishment, and could scarcely believe their eyes. Their perplexity afforded the recruits great amusement, but they pretended not to recognise them, and did not return their signs and gestures.

Equally astonished was Captain Shaftoe when he beheld the troop; but quickly recovering himself, he rode up to General Forster and obtained his permission to place the recruits near the cross.

For this service he received the thanks of the handsome young captain, but he did not tarry to talk to him then, or ask for any explanation, for the Highlanders were gathering around.

Nothing could be better than the position thus gained by the recruits, for they were close to General Forster and the English and Scottish nobles, and could see everything. What is more, they themselves could be seen. In fact, they were conspicuous objects in the picture, and really contributed to its effect. Stationed elsewhere, they would have been lost, for the place was entirely filled with the military and the townsfolk.

When the proclamation was made such a shout arose as had never been heard in that place before. Kerchiefs were waved from the windows of the town-hall, which were garnished with fair dames, and a host of gentlemen ranged in front of the building, made their voices heard above the general din. The enthusiasm pervaded all classes, and a more exciting scene cannot be imagined.

This was the last time that such shouts were heard in England. Never again was King James proclaimed by the insurgent forces.

CHAPTER III

The Countess and Dorothy arrive at Preston

GENERAL FORSTER'S utter incapacity as a leader had now become manifest to all. He drank as hard during the march, as he had been accustomed to do at Bamborough, and after these potations his head could not be very clear in the morning. Had it not been for Colonel Oxburgh, who acted for him, many ruinous mistakes must have occurred. Remonstrances, however, were useless. To argue with him only made him more determinately obstinate. Right or wrong, he would have his own way. The only person he would listen to was Lord Widdrington, who knew how to humour him.

This state of things at head-quarters filled Lord Derwentwater with the gravest apprehension, for he foresaw that the general's blundering and obstinacy must expose them to a chance of defeat, whenever an engagement with the enemy should occur.

But Forster's indifference to the danger of his position was quite as remarkable as his stupidity. Although informed on the day after his arrival at Preston, that General Wills was marching to Wigan with several regiments of dragoons, and some regiments of foot, he refused to believe the intelligence, and took no pains to verify it. Neither did he seem willing to credit the report that General Carpenter was marching against him from Newcastle. So delighted was he with Preston, with his quarters, with the hospitality of the inhabitants, and the general attractions of the place, that he was in no hurry to leave. Like the gentlemen troopers he had submitted to feminine fascination, and short as had been his stay, Mrs. Scarisbrick, a charming young widow, already held him in thrall.

It seemed, indeed, to be the design of the Preston belles to captivate all the insurgent leaders, and many a tender glance was thrown at Lord Derwentwater by some of the fairest ladies of the place. But he was proof against all their allurements.

Shortly after the proclamation had taken place, when the crowd dispersed, and the soldiers had returned to their quarters, two ladies, both young, and very handsome, well mounted, habited in elegant riding-dresses, attended by an elderly personage, who almost looked like a priest, and followed by a middle-aged man-servant and a couple of grooms, each having a valise fastened to the

saddle, entered Preston by the avenue connected with the Lancaster road, and proceeded to the market-place, where they halted to make inquiries respecting Lord Derwentwater's quarters, and having ascertained that he occupied Sir Henry Hoghton's house in Church-street, they went thither.

These ladies attracted considerable attention as they rode along, but no one could tell who they were, until they were recognised by some of the gentlemen soldiers, as the Countess of Derwentwater and Miss Forster, the general's sister. It was conjectured that the grave-looking personage who rode beside them might be Father Norman, the earl's chaplain, and the old man-servant Mr. Newbiggin, the butler at Dilston.

When the arrival of the countess and Miss Forster became known it caused a great sensation in the place, and the news soon reached General Forster, who chanced to be walking at the time with Mrs. Scarisbrick in the Fishergate.

The news did not seem altogether agreeable to him, but Mrs. Scarisbrick was delighted, and said she should be enchanted to make the acquaintance of the two ladies; whereupon, the complaisant general offered to introduce her to them forthwith, and begged her to accompany him to Lord Derwentwater's quarters, where it was certain they would be found.

As the countess wished to take her husband by surprise, no announcement of her arrival was made to him. Alone, in a room at the back of the house, and engaged in writing a letter, he did not perceive her entrance; but when he raised his eyes, and beheld her standing beside him, he uttered a cry of delight, and springing up, clasped her to his breast.

"How strange!" he exclaimed, after the first expressions of delight were over. "I was just writing to you to say I wished I had the power to conjure you here, and as if in answer to the summons, you appear."

"You are certainly the enchanter, who has brought me here," she replied, smiling. "But I am not alone," she cried. "Father Norman is with me, and Newbiggin; and I have also brought Dorothy Forster to see her brother."

"Dorothy is much wanted," he replied. "But tell me how you got here? Have you experienced any hindrance or annoyance on the road?"

"None whatever," she replied. "We set out from Dilston two days ago, and got to Lancaster yesterday, just after you had left, but were too tired to follow, so we

rested there, and came on to-day. Do not imagine that I intend to accompany you in your campaign. My sole object in coming here is to see you once more. Left by myself at Dilston I became so unhappy that I thought I should have died. In vain Father Norman offered me all the consolation in his power. I consulted Dorothy—told her how wretched I was—that I was resolved to see you again, cost what it might—and she agreed to accompany me. Finding nothing could turn me from my purpose, Father Norman likewise volunteered to attend me—nor could I leave Newbiggin behind. I hope I have not done wrong in bringing him. There are plenty of faithful servants to take care of the castle during my absence. But what excellent quarters you have got. This is really a charming house."

"Yes, I believe it is the best in the town. It belongs to Sir Henry Hoghton, who commands the Lancashire militia. He is gone to Wigan, where he expects to be joined—if he has not been already joined—by General Wills, with several regiments of dragoons. Our foes you see are close at hand, yet they might be a hundred miles off for aught Forster seems to care. If I had the command of the army, I should have fortified myself at Lancaster, but Forster decided otherwise. Now we may have to stand an assault here. And Wills is not our only enemy. General Carpenter is advancing from Newcastle, and possibly may overtake us, ere we leave Preston."

"What if he does?" said the countess. "You have no reason to fear him."

"With Forster at our head, we shall never win a battle," said the earl.

"You are dispirited, my dear lord," observed the countess; "and I think without reason."

"I wish I could think so," he rejoined, sadly. "But I cannot. With such a general as Forster we shall do no good. But where are Dorothy and Father Norman?"

"I left them in the large room opening from the hall," she replied.

"I must go and bid them welcome," said the earl. "I am rejoiced that Dorothy has come. She has great influence with her brother, and may extricate us from the dreadful dilemma in which we are placed."

"Finding your quarters so good, I have asked her to stay with me here," said the countess. "I don't think she will be in the way."

"Not in the least," replied the earl. "There is room for a dozen more. My brother Charles is the only person in the house with me, and nothing can be more agreeable to him than Dorothy's society. By-the-bye, I must tell you that since his arrival here, the general has fallen desperately in love with a fair widow—Mrs. Scarisbrick. I mention the matter because I have no doubt you will soon see her. She is really very handsome, as are all the Preston women, who have made sad work with most of the young men in my regiment. They are half crazed about them. But come along, sweetheart. We must not remain talking here. I want to see Dorothy and Father Norman."

Newbiggin was standing in the passage as the earl came forth with the countess, and received a very kindly greeting from his lordship.

"I am very glad to see you, Newbiggin," said Lord Derwentwater. "I haven't time to talk to you now, but I shall have a good deal to say to you, when I am more at leisure."

"Has your lordship any orders to give me?" inquired the butler.

"Yes. Select a good room for Miss Forster, and another for Father Norman, and let all be got ready for them without delay."

"It shall be done, my lord," replied the butler. "Your lordship will find them in this room," he added, opening the door of a spacious and well-furnished apartment.

CHAPTER IV

Mrs. Scarisbrick

As the earl entered Father Norman advanced to meet him, and saluting him affectionately, gave him his benediction. This little ceremony over, Lord Derwentwater addressed himself to Dorothy, expressing his delight at seeing her, and thanking her for her kindness in accompanying the countess on the hazardous expedition.

"I only hope you will have no cause to regret your obliging compliance with her wishes," he said. "I hope you will stay with her here, for I really think you will be better off in this house than in the general's quarters."

"Oh! yes, Dorothy will stay with me I'm quite sure," cried the countess. "I can't part with her."

Dorothy gladly assented to the arrangement, which indeed was very agreeable to her, and this matter being settled, the earl again addressed himself to Father Norman, and told him he was happy in being able to offer him such excellent accommodation.

"You shall have as good a room as you have been accustomed to at Dilston," he said.

"I beg your lordship not to trouble yourself on my account," replied the priest. "I care not where I am lodged."

Just then, Newbiggin came in and announced General Forster and Mrs. Scarisbrick, and next moment the general made his appearance with the young widow.

While he presented her to the countess and his sister, the priest retired to the further end of the room.

Both ladies were very much struck by Mrs. Scarisbrick's beauty and liveliness. She did not seem more than five-and-twenty. She was a blonde, with very fine eyes and pretty features, and had a graceful figure, set off by a charming dress.

She appeared exceedingly good-natured, and was certainly very desirous to please. Indeed her manner was so engaging that both ladies were delighted

with her. The only thing that surprised Lady Derwentwater was that she could tolerate such a man as Forster.

"I hope your lordship and Miss Forster will like Preston," she said after her presentation to them by the general. "We will do our best to amuse you. In spite of war's alarms, a good deal is going on. To-night there will be a grand ball at the town-hall. I have no doubt it will be a very gay affair. All the officers will be present."

"And some of the loveliest women you ever beheld," said the general. "I never knew what beauty was till I came to Preston."

"Don't mind what the general says," observed Mrs. Scarisbrick. "He thinks too much of us."

"I can't think too much of you," sighed Forster.

"Ah! you flatter," said the widow. "However, if Lady Derwentwater and Miss Forster will honour the ball with their presence, they will be able to judge for themselves."

"Shall we go to this ball?" said the countess to the earl.

"By all means," he replied. "It will be very numerously attended. In addition to the officers, all my gentlemen soldiers will be there."

"Yes, there will be plenty of military," observed General Forster. "Your ladyship may think I am jesting, but I assure you there is not an officer or a trooper in the Northumbrian regiments, who isn't in love."

"Beginning with the general himself," remarked the countess.

"Yes, I own the soft impeachment," he replied.

Mrs. Scarisbrick affected not to hear the observation, and said to Lady Derwentwater:

"I must congratulate your ladyship on the house you have got. 'Tis the best in the place."

"So I fancied," said the countess. "Sir Henry Hoghton must have been very sorry to quit it."

"He was driven out by General Forster's approach," laughed Mrs. Scarisbrick.

"Do you know him?" inquired the countess.

"Intimately," replied Mrs. Scarisbrick; "and like him very much. But he has one great fault. He is a Whig and a Hanoverian."

"Then I presume you are a Jacobite?" said the countess.

"As ardent a Jacobite as your ladyship," replied Mrs. Scarisbrick.

"I know you are very well informed, Mrs. Scarisbrick," observed Lord Derwentwater. "What think you of the news that General Wills has arrived at Wigan?"

"I don't believe it," she replied. "Had it been the case, I must have heard of it. There are all sorts of disquieting rumours at present—but General Forster needn't trouble himself about them."

"I don't," said Forster, emphatically.

"You may depend upon having early information from me," said Mrs. Scarisbrick. "I have friends at Wigan who will be sure to send me word if anything is to be apprehended. You may therefore rest quite easy."

"Nevertheless, I think you ought to advance to-morrow, general," observed Lord Derwentwater.

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Mrs. Scarisbrick. "I am sure Lady Derwentwater will never consent to that."

"I would if there were any necessity for the step," rejoined the countess.

"But there is none—none whatever!" said Mrs. Scarisbrick.

"You say you are a particular friend of Sir Henry Hoghton, Mrs. Scarisbrick," remarked Lord Derwentwater. "May I ask whether you have heard from him since he left?"

"I had a letter from him this very morning," she replied.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the countess and Dorothy.

"I showed it to General Forster, as he will tell you," pursued Mrs. Scarisbrick. "But Sir Henry doesn't say a word about General Wills."

"Not very likely he would," remarked Dorothy.

"There I differ with you," said the general. "I am certain he would."

"So am I," said Mrs. Scarisbrick. "Besides, I have other correspondents as well as Sir Henry, and I am confident they would have sent me information of so important a circumstance."

"Then you think we may rest easy for the present?" observed Dorothy.

"Perfectly," said Mrs. Scarisbrick. "You shall have timely information of any danger from me."

"No need to send a spy to Wigan to watch the enemy's movements," observed Forster, with a laugh. "I get all the information I require without trouble."

"So it seems," remarked Lord Derwentwater. "But I again counsel an immediate march on Wigan."

"Nay, nay, let us rest quietly here for a day or two, and enjoy ourselves," said Forster. "We can't have better quarters. Preston has a hundred recommendations that no other place possesses. And since the countess has joined us, I shouldn't have thought your lordship would desire to move. What says your ladyship?" he added, appealing to her.

"I should certainly like to remain here for a day or two, if it can be done with safety," she replied.

"It can—I'll answer for it," said Forster; "and since I am responsible for any mistake, you may be sure I shall be careful."

"Trust to me," said Mrs. Scarisbrick. "Depend upon it I will procure information of the enemy's movements."

"Is she to be relied on?" whispered Dorothy to the earl.

"I cannot tell," he replied in the same tone. "But your brother is so bewitched that he will never move. You must look after him."

CHAPTER V

Important Recruits

JUST then a great tumult was heard outside, and the ladies flew to the windows, which looked upon the street, to see what was the matter.

The disturbance was caused by the arrival of some five or six well-mounted gentlemen, each attended by a dozen armed retainers on horseback, so that they formed quite a troop. A shouting crowd followed them, adding to the noise.

General Forster, who had likewise rushed to the window, was greatly delighted by the sight, since it could not be doubted that these gentlemen had come to join his forces. They had stopped at the entrance to his quarters, and were told by one of the sentinels stationed at the gate, that the general was then at Lord Derwentwater's house on the opposite side of the street.

At this juncture, however, Lord Widdrington came forth, and shook hands very heartily with one of the recruits, a very fine-looking man.

"Who is that handsome and distinguished-looking person?" said the countess to her lord, who had followed her to the window.

"That is Mr. Townley, of Townley," replied the earl. "He is Lord Widdrington's brother-in-law, and belongs to one of the oldest families in Lancashire. I am rejoiced to see him here."

"And so am I!" cried Forster, joyfully. "Mr. Townley is a great acquisition. But who is the person next him?"

"I can tell you," replied Mrs. Scarisbrick. "He is Mr. Shuttleworth of Shuttleworth Hall, and belongs to as old a family as Mr. Townley."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Forster.

"The gentleman next him," said Father Norman, who had now come up, "is Sir Francis Anderton, of Lostock Hall—a strict Roman Catholic. I know him well. Next him is another Roman Catholic, Mr. Richard Chorley, of Chorley."

"Who comes next?" inquired Forster.

"Mr. Gabriel Hesketh, of Whitehall, near St. Michael's-le-Wyre," replied Mrs. Scarisbrick. "The young gentleman with him is his son, Mr. Cuthbert Hesketh. Then comes Mr. John Leyburne, of Natesby Hall."

"But one remains—Mr. Ralph Standish, of Standish," said Lord Derwentwater, "He is nearly related to Mr. Townley."

"All these gentlemen belong to the old religion," observed Father Norman.

"It must be owned that the Roman Catholics have proved loyal to King James," said Forster.

"If the High Church Tories support us equally well we cannot fail," said Lord Derwentwater.

"Oh! we are quite sure of them," said Forster. "But I must go and receive our distinguished recruits. I must beg your lordship to come with me," he added to Lord Derwentwater.

They were about to leave the room, when the door was thrown open and Lord Widdrington entered with Mr. Townley, whom he presented to General Forster, stating that he was come to join the insurgent force, and Forster had scarcely welcomed him, when the other gentlemen came in, and were presented in like manner.

This little ceremony gone through, Forster expressed his high gratification at the adherence of such distinguished persons, and said:

"To prove how sensible I am of the importance of your accession, gentlemen, you will understand that you all join with the rank of captain, and I am quite certain you will do credit to the troops you will command."

This courteous act, as judicious as good-natured, gave great satisfaction to the gentlemen, and was suitably acknowledged.

Lord Derwentwater then came forward, and welcomed them in his turn, offering to provide them all with quarters in his large house.

"My servants will show you the rooms I have to spare, gentlemen," he said, "and if you like them, they are quite at your disposal."

Thanks were offered his lordship for the obliging offer, but it was eventually arranged that Mr. Townley and Mr. Standish should be quartered with General Forster, while the others gladly agreed to become Lord Derwentwater's guests.

These matters being arranged, the gentlemen were presented by his lordship to the countess, and by General Forster to his sister and Mrs. Scarisbrick.

Shortly afterwards another arrival took place. This was Mr. Richard Gascoigne, a Roman Catholic gentleman, belonging to an Irish family of some distinction. A person of very refined manners, Mr. Gascoigne was a friend of Colonel Oxburgh, by whom he was presented to General Forster, and like those who had preceded him was complimented with the rank of captain. Mr. Gascoigne was very handsome, and seemed to make a favourable impression upon the ladies—particularly upon Mrs. Scarisbrick. The general offered him quarters, which he very gladly accepted.

Several other important additions were made to the force in the course of the day; but it was remarked that they were all Roman Catholics. Notwithstanding the promises of support from that party, not a single High Church Tory joined.

When questioned as to this strange falling off on the part of his friends, General Forster declared he could not account for it. However it was quite clear that the insurgent army was considerably augmented.

On the second day after their arrival at Preston, the rebels numbered more than four thousand men.

CHAPTER VI

The Ball at the Town-Hall

THOUGH little time had been allowed for its preparation, the ball at the town-hall was really very brilliant. The rooms were large, but crowded to excess, and space could with difficulty be found for the dancers. As the greater part of the male guests were military, their varied costumes added materially to the effect of the scene. The leaders of all the English and Scottish regiments were present, and though Brigadier Mackintosh rarely appeared at such an assembly, his tall figure could be descried amid the gay throng.

As a matter of course, General Forster was there—in fact, he was looked upon as the most important guest, and the greatest attention was paid him by the master of the ceremonies and the stewards, but he seemed entirely engrossed by Mrs. Scarisbrick.

The two ladies who attracted most attention by their beauty and grace were the Countess of Derwentwater and Dorothy Forster. Both looked charming. They had not come prepared for such a ball, but their dresses were very becoming. They were attended by Lord Widdrington, Charles Radclyffe, and several of the Scottish nobles. Lord Derwentwater was not very far off, but he was engaged in converse with Mr. Townley, Mr. Standish, and Sir Francis Anderton.

At this ball all the beauty of Preston was displayed, and no town in the county—perhaps no town in the kingdom—could have made such a display.

The Preston ladies had a witchery about them that very few of the opposite sex could resist. Wherein the charm consisted we cannot say exactly—but since most of them had extremely fine eyes, their glances may have had something to do with it. Be this as it may, the effect of the fascination was manifest. All submitted to the influence—the old campaigner as well as the young recruit. Every damsel appeared to have an admirer—some half a dozen.

Whatever political opinions they had heretofore entertained, the ladies were all now staunch adherents of King James, who could not, they declared, be better represented than by his army, and that army must not be in a hurry to depart. So far from desiring to go, the gallant young troopers declared they should like to remain at Preston for ever.

At the special request of Captain Shaftoe, the handsome young recruits from Lancaster had been invited, and they caused quite as great a sensation as they had done on their arrival at the town. They had no difficulty in obtaining partners, for all the young ladies were anxious to dance with them, and it must be owned that they danced with remarkable spirit and grace. A cotillon in which they figured with some of the prettiest girls in the room, was the great success of the evening.

"Who are those smart young fellows?" inquired Mrs. Scarisbrick, who was looking on at the dance with General Forster.

"I know nothing about them, except that they are recruits from Lancaster," he replied. "They have been introduced by Captain Shaftoe. You must apply to him for information."

"They dance charmingly," observed the lady. "But they look like women."

"They may be women for aught I know," said the general. "But they have joined as troopers—at least, Shaftoe tells me so. He is speaking to their captain now."

"And if the so-called captain is not a woman in disguise, I am very much mistaken," observed Mrs. Scarisbrick.

The music having struck up for another dance the young sparks ought to have surrendered their partners, who were engaged three or four deep, instead of which they stood up with them again—a course of proceeding that gave great umbrage to the claimants; and in a few minutes a disturbance arose that threw the whole room into confusion.

The Lancaster recruits showed great spirit, and refused to give up their partners, defying the claimants to take them. The challenge was accepted, and a struggle ensued, in the midst of which screams arose, and it was found that three of the Lancashire youths had fainted. Their sex could, therefore, no longer be concealed; and it then came out, as Mrs. Scarisbrick had suspected, that they were a party of young damsels, who had followed their lovers from Lancaster.

The occurrence caused much merriment, and Captain Shaftoe had to undergo a good deal of raillery from Mrs. Scarisbrick.

Shortly afterwards, the more distinguished guests were summoned to a magnificent supper, which was served in an adjoining room.

In the course of the evening there were several Highland dances, which from their novelty produced a great effect. One of these was a Highland reel, in which Lady Derwentwater and Dorothy took part. The countess danced with Lord Charles Murray, and Dorothy with Colonel Farquharson of Invercauld, and acquitted themselves admirably. Besides these, two other ladies joined the reel and found partners in the Master of Nairn and Captain Gordon. All danced with great spirit to the stirring accompaniment of the pipes. A Highland fling, executed by Lord Charles Murray and Captain Gordon, was rewarded by the applause of Brigadier Mackintosh.

Owing to the crowded state of the room some inconvenience was experienced by the dancers, and interruptions occasionally occurred; but, on the whole, the ball went off remarkably well, and was long afterwards remembered at Preston. Many ladies, then in their bloom, used to boast to their grand-daughters, that they had danced with the rebels in 1715, and they invariably added, "Never was seen such a fine set of young fellows."

Amid that scene of gaiety and excitement, when all the young men yielded to the soft influence of beauty, few thought that vigorous preparations for attacking them were being made by their foes, and that within three days many of them would be slain, and the rest exiled. Had such thoughts intruded they would have been quickly banished.

But the revellers were not troubled by any such disagreeable reflections. Content with the enjoyment of the moment, they gave themselves no thought of the future. How could it be otherwise, when their general and most of their officers set them such an example!

But there was one person amid that thoughtless crowd who was oppressed with care, and felt the danger in which the invading army stood. He felt that, if this culpable indifference on the part of the general should continue, they were lost.

Of all that large assemblage which boasted the presence of so many Scottish nobles and gentlemen—so many wealthy English gentlemen—there was not one who had so much at stake as he.

As he looked at his lovely wife, who was then calling forth rapturous admiration in the Highland dance, and felt how soon he might lose her, he could scarcely repress the pang that crossed his breast.

But she seemed full of excitement, and when she came back to him with Dorothy, he strove to receive them with a smile.

Dorothy was not allowed much repose after her fatiguing dance. She was carried off by Charles Radclyffe, who since her arrival seemed to have fallen desperately in love with her. He told her that her image had been constantly before him during the march, and earnestly besought her to enter into an engagement with him.

To this Dorothy replied that she would not make any immediate engagement, but if he survived the campaign, and renewed his suit, she would consider the matter. The promise did not altogether satisfy him, but he was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER VII

Ralph Fairbrother

SOMEWHAT late in the evening, Captain Douglas, who, it may be remembered, had the command of one of the Northumbrian regiments, informed General Forster that a spy had been arrested, but the general was so much engrossed by Mrs. Scarisbrick that he paid no attention to the information. Captain Douglas then spoke to Brigadier Mackintosh, who at once went with him to a small room where the man was detained.

Meantime, the spy had been recognised as Ralph Fairbrother, for whose capture a reward had been offered, and who was supposed to have gone to General Carpenter at Newcastle. On being searched a letter was found on him addressed to General Wills, giving particulars of the exact state of the forces, and making some remarks on Forster's incompetency. The letter bore no signature, but was in a female hand. A few lines, traced in pencil, had evidently been added at the ball, and this important postscript recommended an immediate attack of the town, stating that it must be successful, since Forster was unprepared.

After reading this letter, and considering it for a moment, the brigadier handed it to Captain Douglas, who likewise read it carefully.

"Can ye guess by whom it is written?" inquired Mackintosh in a low tone.

"I can," replied the other.

"Hark ye, sirrah!" said Mackintosh to the prisoner, who was looking on anxiously, "if you desire to save your life, you will tell us who wrote this letter, and from whom you received it."

"It was slipped into my hand," replied the spy. "That is all I know about it."

"Were you not engaged by a lady to convey it to General Wills? Answer plainly."

"I betray no confidences," replied Fairbrother, firmly.

"Is General Wills at Wigan?" demanded Captain Douglas. "And how many regiments of infantry, horse, and dragoons, has he got with him?"

"You ask questions I cannot answer, captain," replied Fairbrother. "And I would not answer them, if I could."

"Very well, sir, then you must take the consequences," said Douglas. "In my opinion, brigadier, this man ought to be shot."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mackintosh. "We shall hear what General Forster says."

"I have nothing to fear from General Forster," observed Fairbrother.

"Aha! say you so?" exclaimed the brigadier. "We shall see."

They then left him in custody, and returned to the ball-room. Forster was still at supper with Mrs. Scarisbrick, and declined to have a private consultation with the brigadier.

"I will attend to business in the morning—not now," he said.

"But we have discovered a spy," observed Mackintosh, looking fixedly at Mrs. Scarisbrick; "and have found this letter upon him."

"Give it me," cried Mrs. Scarisbrick, snatching it from him. "I will read it to the general."

"Madam," cried the brigadier, sternly. "I insist that you place that letter in the general's own hands."

"I don't want to see it," observed Forster. "I won't be troubled to-night. To-morrow, will be quite time enough. Keep it for me till then."

"You will never see it," cried Mackintosh. "I desire, madam, that the letter may be at once returned to me. If not, I shall be compelled to take it from you."

"Am I to be exposed to this insult, general?" cried Mrs. Scarisbrick, indignantly.

"Certainly not," replied Forster, rising from his seat—though not without some difficulty. "Brigadier, I must request you to retire."

"I obey," replied Mackintosh. "But understand that I will shoot this spy. I am satisfied of his guilt."

"Do as you please," said Forster. "Shoot half a dozen spies if you find them."

"Nay, for Heaven's sake! don't let him shoot the man," cried Mrs. Scarisbrick.

"Don't be alarmed," said Forster, sitting down again. "The man will only be kept in the guardhouse to night. I'll settle the matter to-morrow. Take some more champagne."

Reassured by this promise, and having got the letter, Mrs. Scarisbrick said no more. But she had nothing to fear from poor Fairbrother.

At break of day, he was taken by a file of Highlanders to the fields near the Wigan-lane, and there shot. The new chaplain of the forces attended him in his last moments. In explanation of this summary act of justice, Brigadier Mackintosh caused it to be announced that the man was a spy.

This act might have been blamed, but circumstances occurred that seemed to justify its severity.

CHAPTER VIII

Apathy of General Forster

ON the same morning, the Earl of Derwentwater, accompanied by the countess and Dorothy, and attended by Charles Radclyffe and Captain Gordon, but without any guard, rode down to the Ribble Bridge.

While the earl was inspecting the bridge, and the ladies were admiring the river, and the view of the town from the spot, their attention was aroused by the sound of horse's footsteps, and immediately afterwards a man galloped up.

He would have ridden on, but Captain Gordon stopped him, and led him to the earl. It appeared that he had left Wigan early in the morning, and brought very important intelligence. General Wills was undoubtedly there, and having been joined by six more regiments of dragoons on the preceding evening, it was certain he would make immediate arrangements to attack the insurgents, so that they must be prepared for him.

On receiving this intelligence, the earl at once returned to the town, and proceeded to General Forster's quarters, but could not see him, as the general had not yet risen, being much fatigued by the ball.

Instigated by the countess and Dorothy, the earl determined to take all the responsibility upon himself, and ordered Charles Radclyffe to take his regiment to defend Ribble Bridge. But before the order could be obeyed, Forster appeared and countermanded it.

"It seems to me," said the general, "that my authority is set at naught. A man has been shot as a spy by Brigadier Mackintosh without consulting me, and now orders are given that a guard shall advance towards Wigan. I suppose the next order will be that the whole army shall get ready to march."

"It ought to be," said Dorothy. "You are loitering here far too long, and will be surprised by the enemy. Are you aware that General Wills has just been joined by several more regiments?"

"I do not believe a word of it," rejoined Forster. "Had such been the case I should certainly have been informed of it."

"But a scout has just returned from Wigan," cried the countess. "We have seen him, and spoken with him. Will you not question him yourself?"

"'Tis needless," said Forster. "The man has been imposed upon."

"Then you will neither march against the enemy, nor take any steps for the defence of the town?" cried the Earl of Derwentwater.

"Not unless I receive accurate intelligence," rejoined Forster. "I am under no apprehension."

"Was there ever such obstinacy?" exclaimed the earl, turning away in disgust. "Nay, 'tis in vain to reason with him," he added to the countess.

"Your lordship will understand," said Forster, "that to-morrow I shall commence the march to Manchester."

"To-morrow we shall not be able to leave Preston," rejoined the earl.

"We shall see," replied Forster, laughing. "Meanwhile, I recommend you to make the most of your time, and enjoy yourself while you can. There is another banquet at the town-hall today."

"For the last time, I ask you if you are resolved not to move?"

"Not till to-morrow," replied Forster, positively. "I am about to give general orders to that effect."

And he quitted the room.

The countess and Dorothy looked aghast.

"What is to be done?" cried the former.

"Nothing," replied the earl. "Nothing can be done. We are doomed."

The announcement that the general did not mean to continue his march south till the morrow was very agreeable to the majority of the army—indeed a great many of the gentlemen troopers hoped that when the morrow came there would be another delay. They were quite as infatuated as the general, and spent the

greater part of the day in the society of the ladies. A large party collected on the Ribble Bridge, but it was with no intention of defending it.

Another banquet was given at the town-hall, to which the leaders and officers were bidden. Amongst the few ladies invited, were the Countess of Derwentwater, Dorothy Forster, and Mrs. Scarisbrick. Since the last-mentioned lady was present, the general was quite happy, and perfectly indifferent to the future.

Besides this festive meeting, there were innumerable tea-parties, where the gentlemen troopers were very agreeably entertained; while the Mitre, the White Bull, and the Windmill were filled to overflowing with guests.

With this pleasant evening passed away the gaieties of Preston. No more flirting—no more carousing. All merriment was over.

The morrow's sun arose on a day of strife and slaughter.

CHAPTER IX

Parson Woods of Chowbent

WHILE the whole insurgent army is feasting and carousing, we shall repair to Wigan, and see what General Wills is about.

Wigan, a very different town from what it is at present, was filled with soldiers. Besides Sir Henry Hoghton's six hundred militiamen, and three regiments of foot, respectively commanded by Captains Sabine, Fane, and Preston, there was a fine regiment of horse, commanded by Colonel Pitt, and five regiments of dragoons, commanded by Major-General Wynn, Colonels Honeywood, Dormer, Munden, and Stanhope.

Whether Wills was an able general may be questioned, but he was an active and very determined man. Strongly built and well made, he had a military bearing, and a stern, inflexible countenance. Obstinate he was, but his obstinacy was very different from that of the incompetent Forster. He could not be turned from his purpose by advice, but his plans were carefully considered. He was in constant communication with General Carpenter, but feeling certain he could defeat the rebels unaided, his great desire was to attack them before Carpenter came up, so that he might gain all the glory of the victory. Therefore, he hurried on his preparations—though not unduly so. Having a secret correspondent in Preston, he knew the exact numbers of the force, and was also aware of the utter incompetency of Forster, but he thought the chief command might be taken, at the last moment, by the Earl of Derwentwater. He had likewise some fears of Mackintosh, with whose valour and skill he was well acquainted. Still, he felt sure of an easy conquest, and was impatient to achieve it.

While General Wills was arranging his plans for the attack, Sir Henry Hoghton came into his room, and said:

"Acting on a suggestion of your own, general, I have begged the Presbyterian ministers in this neighbourhood—many of whom are well known to me—to induce their congregations to assist me in this struggle against Popery, and I am extremely happy to say I have succeeded—at least, in one instance. The Reverend James Woods, Presbyterian minister of Chowbent, has promptly and energetically responded to my appeal. The worthy man has used such exertions that he has already got together a troop of some forty or fifty active young men.

For the most part they are armed with scythes, fixed on straight poles, and bill-hooks, but they are stout active young fellows, and will undoubtedly do good service."

"Are they here?" inquired Wills.

"They are, general," replied Sir Henry. "And so is their pastor, the Reverend James Woods."

"I will see him at once," replied Wills.

He then went forth with Sir Henry, and in front of the old house, where he had fixed his quarters, he found a large party of stalwart-looking young fellows armed with the weapons described. At their head was a sturdy-looking individual, of middle age, clad in a suit of black, and having a well-powdered wig on his head. Notwithstanding his decidedly clerical appearance, he had a brace of pistols in his belt, and a sword girt by his side.

General Wills could not help smiling when he beheld him. Still he perceived at a glance that the parson would prove serviceable, and he therefore gave him a hearty welcome.

"I am very glad to find, Mr. Woods," he said, "that you have come to assist the Government at this crisis. Rest assured your conduct will be appreciated in the right quarter."

"I and a portion of my flock have come to fight for the king, general," replied the minister. "We will uphold him against a Popish Pretender. We are ready to take any part you may be pleased to assign us, and I promise you the rebels shall meet with a stout resistance from us."

"They shall," cried the men, brandishing their scythes and bill-hooks.

"I thankfully accept your offer," said Wills. "I am sure you promise no more than you will perform. To-morrow morning, at an early hour, I shall march to Preston to give battle to the rebels, and you shall go with me, or rather shall march on before me—so that you can take up a position before I come up. Do you know Penwortham—about two miles below the bridge over the Ribble?"

"I know the place well, general," replied Woods. "It is on the south bank of the river, which is there fordable."

"Exactly. It is that ford I wish you to guard. I must tell you that it may become a post of danger, as some of the rebels may attempt to escape that way."

"I don't care for danger," said the valiant pastor; "and I hope I shall take many prisoners."

"If necessary, a party of men shall be sent to support you," said Wills.

"I trust we shall not need support, general," said the pastor, resolutely. "Before the day is over I fancy my followers will have got some better arms than they now possess."

"Decidedly, you ought to have been a soldier, reverend sir," observed Wills. "You would have done credit to the profession. Now, will you remain here for the night, or march on with your men to Chorley, so as to have less to do to-morrow?"

"We will adopt the latter course, general," replied the pastor. "We will halt for the night at a small place called Whittle-in-the-Woods, about six miles from Penwortham. We can take up our post early in the morning. Have you any further orders to give me?"

"None," replied Wills. "But I hope you will take some refreshment before you set out on your march."

"All is ready for you," said Sir Henry Hoghton, advancing. "Come with me and bring your men with you."

Parson Woods willingly complied with the invitation, and saluting the general in military style, accompanied Sir Henry to the mess-room of the militia, where a substantial repast awaited him and his men.

Thoroughly recruited, and in very good spirits, the warlike pastor commenced his march to Whittle-in-the-Woods.

CHAPTER X

General Wills arrives at Preston

HAVING fully arranged his plans, General Wills, summoned the various commanders, and after explaining to them his views, made the following disposition of his forces.

The horse and dragoons were to be formed into three brigades: the first to consist of Wynn's and Honeywood's regiments, under the command of Brigadier Honeywood; the second to comprise Munden's and Stanhope's regiments, under the command of Brigadier Munden; and the third to comprehend Pitt and Dormer's regiments, under the command of Brigadier Dormer.

"We shall set out at break of day," said the general, "and this will be the order of march. In the front will be Preston's foot, with a vanguard of fifty men from the regiment, commanded by Lord Forrester. Then will follow the three brigades I have appointed, while the whole of the militia, under the command of Sir Henry Hoghton, will bring up the rear."

"Am I to cross the bridge, general?" inquired Sir Henry, who was present.

"Most probably the bridge and the approaches to it will be defended," replied Wills. "Post your men at various points on the south bank of the river. Station two parties of horse about a hundred yards apart on the left of the bridge, and place small parties along the bank as far as the ferry-house, extending them, if necessary, in the direction of Penwortham, where Parson Woods will be posted with his men. Thus the whole of the bank will be guarded, and no supplies can be conveyed to the rebels—nor can any of them escape."

"I quite understand, general," said Sir Henry, "and will carefully attend to your instructions."

"One word more, gentlemen, and I have done," said Wills, looking round. "As we shall set out as soon as it is light, you must all be on the alert an hour before daybreak, so as to prevent any chance of delay. This applies particularly to the foot and the advanced guard, who ought to start half an hour before the horse. We shall halt for an hour at Chorley, to breakfast."

In anticipation of the day they had before them, the commanders and officers retired early to rest. But not till he had satisfied himself by personal inspection that all the regiments under his command were in good marching order did General Wills seek his couch.

Fully an hour before daybreak the reveillé was sounded, and it was scarcely light when the vanguard, commanded by Lord Forrester, marched out of Wigan.

After a short interval, the advanced guard was followed by Preston's regiment of foot—known as the Old Cameronians—which could boast some of the finest men in the service. Then followed, after another pause, the three brigades of cavalry; and both men and horses being in excellent condition, these regiments looked remarkably well. General Wills rode with Brigadier Honeywood at the head of the first brigade.

After a long train of baggage wagons came the militia, numbering some six hundred horse and foot, commanded by Sir Henry Houghton. Like the regular soldiers, the militiamen looked exceedingly well, and were loudly cheered by the inhabitants, most of whom—though the hour was so early—had assembled to witness the march forth of the troops.

The spectacle was rendered infinitely more impressive by the circumstance that the men were about to fight a battle. The result, however, of the impending contest seemed scarcely doubtful, and the general opinion was that the rebellion would be effectually crushed.

Confident in their leader, and animated by their officers, who promised them an easy victory over the insurgents, with the plunder of the rich town of Preston, the king's soldiers were in excellent spirits.

Nor did anything occur in the march to disquiet them. The morning being fine and the roads in tolerably good order, the infantry got on very well, and were very little fatigued on reaching Chorley.

During the halt at Chorley, word was brought to General Wills by a scout that the bridge over the Ribble was defended by Colonel John Farquharson of Invercauld, with a hundred picked men belonging to Colonel Mackintosh's battalion.

General Forster had likewise come forth to reconnoitre, and had been seen with a party of horse about two miles south of the bridge, on the Wigan road.

This intelligence did not seem to necessitate any alteration in General Wills's plans, but he ordered Lord Forrester and Captain Preston to halt at Walton-le-Dale till he himself should come up.

After this short halt the march was resumed, and on arriving at Walton-le-Dale, the general learnt that Colonel Farquharson had been strengthened by three hundred men sent to support him by the Earl of Derwentwater.

Under the impression that the bridge would be stoutly defended, Wills prepared to attack it with Honeywood's brigade, but what was his surprise, on arriving at the spot, to find the passage entirely unoccupied!

What had become of Colonel Farquharson and his Highlanders? Where were Lord Derwentwater's three hundred men? Not one of them was to be seen. Though there was nothing to impede his progress, Wills hesitated for a few minutes, suspecting some stratagem might be intended. He then rode boldly across the bridge, and was followed by his whole force, with the exception of the militia, which remained on the south bank of the river, and took up the position assigned.

After crossing the bridge Wills again halted before entering the deep lane that led to the town, and thinking the hedges might be lined, he caused them to be examined, but no skirmishers could be discovered.

Unable, otherwise, to account for such strange neglect of all precautions, he came to the conclusion that the rebels must have abandoned the town, and commenced a retreat to Scotland.

Should this prove to be the case, it would be a great disappointment to him, as well as to his soldiery, since it would deprive him of victory, and the men of the plunder they expected to obtain.

However, his alarm was quickly dispelled. A prisoner had been taken, and was brought before him.

The man had refused to answer the sergeant who first interrogated him, but as Wills threatened to have him shot, he became more compliant.

"Where are the rebels?" demanded the general.

"In the town," replied the man, sullenly.

"Is General Forster there?" continued Wills.

"I suppose so," said the prisoner.

"And Lord Derwentwater?"

"Maybe," replied the man. "But I have not seen him."

"Take care how you answer, fellow!" cried Wills, sternly. "Are you quite sure Brigadier Mackintosh has not set out for Scotland?"

"Quite sure," replied the man. "I saw him not half an hour ago—helping to make a barricade."

"A barricade!" exclaimed Wills, glancing at Brigadier Honeywood. "Now we are coming to it. Where is the barricade formed?" he added to the prisoner.

"In the Churchgate," replied the man.

"Is that the only barrier?"

"No, there are three others. All the entrances to the town are barricaded."

"Then the rebels mean to defend themselves?" said Wills.

"To the last. You needn't expect them to surrender."

"If they don't, I shall cut them to pieces," said Wills, sternly. "Go back to the town and tell them so."

"I won't deliver any such message. It would cost me my life."

"No matter," cried Wills. "Obey me. Recollect what I have said. Not one of the rebels shall escape me—unless their leaders surrender at discretion. Now begone!"

The man was then set free, and driven towards the town, but he did not re-enter it.

General Wills then quitted the lane, which was shut in, as we have said, by high hedges, and led his troops to some fields on the left that commanded a full view of the town.

How peaceful and beautiful it looked! Even the stern Wills, who was about to deliver it up to fire and sword, felt a certain regret at the thought of destroying so pleasant a place.

Very few evidences of preparation on the part of the insurgents were visible, the barriers and intrenchments being all in the interior of the town.

A few soldiers could be descried at the outskirts, but no guard was placed at the extremity of the avenues. Wills quite understood what this meant, and judged correctly that the houses on either side of the streets must be filled with troops ready to pour a murderous fire upon the assailants as they entered the town.

Aware that cavalry could not act within the town, Wills gave orders that two regiments of dragoons should dismount, when the attack was made, in order to support the foot. His first business, however, was to dispose his men so as to prevent the rebels from sallying forth, and cut off their retreat in case they should make the attempt.

This done, he ordered two attacks to be made simultaneously upon the town; one by Brigadier Honeywood from the Wigan road on the south—the other by Brigadiers Dormer and Munden from the Lancaster road on the north.

His directions were thus conveyed to Honeywood:

"You will have with you Preston's regiment of foot to be commanded by Lord Forrester, likewise two hundred and fifty dismounted dragoons, commanded by five captains. These are to support Preston's foot. You will sustain the whole with your regiment."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, general," replied Honeywood.

Wills then gave similar directions to Brigadiers Dormer and Munden, telling them they would have under their joint command three hundred dismounted dragoons for the attack on the Lancaster avenue, which would be sustained by two mounted regiments.

Then addressing the brigadiers he added,

"Obtain possession of the ends of the town as speedily as may be, and set fire to the houses, in order to dislodge the rebels, who no doubt occupy them. Next make lodgments for your own men, so as to prevent the sallying forth of the rebels upon them, and check the escape of the enemy."

"It shall be done, general," said Brigadier Dormer.

"Before commencing hostilities, however, I shall send a summons of surrender to General Forster," said Wills. "But I do not think he will comply with it."

Scarcely were the words spoken, than several shots were fired from a farm-yard near the town, by which an orderly near the general was killed, and another officer wounded.

"Soh!" cried Wills, fiercely. "There will now be no summons to surrender. Let the attack commence forthwith."

Brigadiers Dormer and Munden with the regiments under their command, then rode off to the north side of the town to attack the Lancaster avenue; while Lord Forrester led Preston's foot towards the upper end of the Wigan avenue, followed by the dismounted dragoons, and sustained by Brigadier Honeywood's regiment.

Shortly afterwards, sharp firing announced that the attack had commenced on both sides of the town.

BOOK VIII. — THE DEFENCE

CHAPTER I

The Barricades

RUDELY awakened from his slumbers at a far earlier hour than he usually allowed himself to be disturbed, by the intelligence that Wills was marching to attack him with his whole force, and scarcely able, even then, to credit the unwelcome news, and with an aching head, General Forster attired himself in haste, and, ordering a small troop of horse to attend him, rode forth to reconnoitre.

On reaching the Ribble Bridge, he found a party of Highlanders placed there, and was informed by Colonel Farquharson, who commanded them, that the king's army was certainly approaching.

Still doubting, the general rode on for a few miles further, when he descried the vanguard of the enemy, and quickly turned back.

In the interval the Highlanders had left the bridge, their place being taken by three hundred of Lord Derwentwater's men, under the command of Captain Shaftoe. Angry that this change should have been made without his sanction, Forster ordered Shaftoe to abandon the bridge and return to the town.

The order was very reluctantly obeyed. Captain Shaftoe would fain have proceeded to Penwortham to dislodge Parson Woods, but was not allowed.

Immediately on his return to the town, General Forster summoned a council of war, which was attended by all the English and Scottish leaders. They were quite alive to the danger of their position, and evidently had very little reliance either on the judgment or skill of their commander.

Under these circumstances the advice of Brigadier Mackintosh was urgently requested by Lord Derwentwater and others.

"You have greater military experience than any of us, brigadier," said the earl. "What plan do you suggest?"

"Will you follow out my plan, if I offer it?" said the brigadier.

"We will," replied the earl. "If we waste time in discussion, the enemy will be upon us."

"Aweel, then," said Mackintosh. "It will be useless to defend the bridge, since the river is fordable in many places, nor do I think it would be safe to risk a battle outside the town, because the Highlanders have not yet learned to face cavalry. Nothing frightens them so much as a charge of horse. For this reason I would have the battle take place within the town, where the cavalry, of which the enemy's force chiefly consists, will be least serviceable, and where the Highlanders will fight well. Barricades and intrenchments can be thrown up in different parts of the streets so as to impede the advance of the enemy, and a destructive fire can be poured upon them from the roofs and windows of the houses."

All approved of the plan, except Forster, and he was overruled.

"How many barricades shall we require?—and where do you propose to erect them?" said Lord Widdrington.

"Four will suffice," replied the brigadier. "In fact, we haven't time to form more. The first shall be placed a little below the church, and as it is likely to be the chief object of attack, I will take the command of it myself."

"Why not make it at the extreme end of the street, so as to prevent the entrance of the enemy?" said Forster.

"There are so many lanes and avenues thereabouts that I should require more men than I possess to defend the post," replied the brigadier. "The second barrier will be best placed, in my opinion, at the back of the house now occupied by Lord Derwentwater, and I would have it commanded by Lord Charles Murray."

"I accept the post," replied the gallant young nobleman.

"The third barrier should be in the Fishergate," pursued the brigadier; "and it would be well served by Lord Strathmore's men, under the command of Captain Douglas."

"I am glad you have named me to a post of danger, brigadier," said Captain Douglas. "I'll do my best to maintain it."

"The last battery must be near the windmill in the Lancaster avenue," said the brigadier; "and I will confide it to my kinsman, Colonel Mackintosh, and his men."

"I'll take it," replied the colonel; "and keep it—as long as I can."

"And now let us set to work at once," said the brigadier. "We haven't a minute to lose."

Thereupon they all went forth, and each person, to whom the construction and command of a barricade had been committed, called his men together, and proceeded to the appointed spot.

Such extraordinary exertions were made, and so many hands employed, that in an incredibly short space of time intrenchments were thrown up, and strong barriers formed.

The Earl of Derwentwater and Charles Radclyffe assisted in person in the formation of the Churchgate barrier. Stripping off their coats they worked like pioneers, and were greatly encouraged by the presence of the countess and Dorothy Forster.

As soon as the Churchgate barrier was completed, two of the ship guns brought from Lancaster were placed upon it and entrusted to the management of Tom Syddall and some of his men.

While these defensive preparations were going on, all the houses in Church-street and the Fishergate were filled with Highlanders and dismounted troopers, ready to fire upon the enemy from window, roof, and cellar.

In these two streets were the best houses of the town, and here Brigadier Mackintosh anticipated that the chief attack would be made.

The church, as already mentioned, was surrounded by an extensive churchyard, and here—as the most available place for the purpose—a strong force was collected.

On the north side of the edifice were posted the Lowlanders and Northumbrian gentlemen—the latter being now dismounted—under the command of Colonel Oxburgh and Colonel Brereton, who had lately joined as a volunteer.

On the south side were planted the Borderers, likewise dismounted, under the command of Captains Douglas and Hunter.

In a small street adjoining Sir Henry Hoghton's house a small barrier had been formed by Captain Wogan and his regiment.

All the reserves were posted in the marketplace, and here were kept the horses of the dismounted troopers.

While the barriers were being formed, General Forster, attended by a small party of men, rode from point to point to give directions, which were not always obeyed.

Having finished his survey he entered the town-hall, where a great number of ladies had taken refuge—among whom was Mrs. Scarisbrick—and assured them they had nothing to fear.

"The enemy will never be able to penetrate the centre of the town," he said. "All the fighting will take place at the barricades. We shall soon force them to retreat."

"I am glad to find you are so confident," said Mrs. Scarisbrick. "For my own part I confess I feel very uneasy—though I don't doubt the bravery of our troops."

"My preparations are so well made that we are quite unassailable," said Forster. "The barriers will never be passed. Lady Derwentwater and my sister entertain so little apprehension of the result of the attack that they do not mean to quit Sir Henry Hoghton's house, but will station themselves on the roof to witness the attack on the battery."

"I begin to think I should like to see the commencement of the attack," remarked Mrs. Scarisbrick. "It must be a very curious sight. And since you say there is no danger?"

"I don't say so," interrupted Forster. "On the contrary, there is very great danger. Stay where you are. You are quite safe here."

"No, I will go," she cried. "My curiosity is aroused. You shall take me to Sir Henry Hoghton's house."

"Don't ask me!" he cried. "I won't do it."

The lady, however, being determined, he was obliged to comply.

Ordering a trooper to follow him with his horse, he conducted her to Church-street, which was now full of soldiers, and left her at the entrance to Sir Henry Hoghton's house. She would not allow him to go further, saying, she could easily find her way to the roof.

CHAPTER II

What the Countess and Dorothy beheld from the summit of the Mansion

NO position in the town, except, perhaps, the tower of the church, commanded so good a view of the proceedings as was obtained from the summit of this lofty mansion.

Part of the roof was flat, and protected by a balustrade, and it was here that the countess and Dorothy Forster were stationed.

They had come there, after witnessing the completion of the barricade at which the earl had assisted, and contemplated the scene with extraordinary interest.

From this spot they could clearly distinguish the movements of the enemy. They saw General Wills issue from the Wigan lane with his infantry and cavalry, and draw up in the fields to survey the town, and they could not help contrasting the appearance of the king's soldiers with that of their own undisciplined troops.

After a time, they saw two brigades of horse and dragoons move off towards the other side of the town, and though these troops soon disappeared, the object of the movement was clear.

An attack was about to be made on the Lancaster avenue. Nor could it be doubted that a simultaneous attack would be made on the south by the forces left behind.

This conviction sent a thrill of terror through the breasts of the two lookers-on. But they were reassured when they perceived that both streets were now very strongly guarded—that the trenches were completed and cannon mounted on the barricades—that not only were troops thickly planted at the barriers, but the roofs and windows of all the houses were occupied by Highlanders and other soldiers—that the churchyard, which was almost opposite them, was full of troops—showing that if the enemy was ready to make the attack, their friends were prepared for a gallant defence.

Nor was this all. Looking towards the Broadway at the back of the garden, they could descry the barricade commanded by Lord Charles Murray, and saw that it was guarded by a large party of Highlanders, while the advanced guard of

Northumbrian gentlemen, commanded by Captain Wogan, could likewise be seen posted at the end of a narrow street at the left.

In a word, all the approaches, so far as discernible, seemed well protected. The access to the market-place from Church-street was blocked up by cavalry.

Nor could they entertain any doubt that the preparations on the other side of the town were equally efficient. They felt sure that the Lancaster avenue would be well guarded by Colonel Mackintosh and the Clan Chattan. The spectacle thus presented to their gaze dispelled any misgivings, and filled them with ardour.

At this juncture Lord Derwentwater appeared on the roof, attended by Father Norman and Newbiggin.

"You must quit this place immediately," he said. "The attack is about to commence. Father Norman and Newbiggin will take you to the town-hall, where you will be safe."

"We shall see nothing at the town-hall," said the countess. "I don't think we are in the least danger here."

"You cannot remain," said the earl. "The lower part of the house is occupied by Captain Innes with a party of Highlanders, and when the attack commences, some of them will come to the roof."

"Let us stay till then," entreated Dorothy. "We must see the commencement of the attack."

"I will not stir from the post at present," said the countess.

"I shall never forgive myself if any disaster occurs," said the earl. "I ought not to have consented to your remaining here so long. Why did you not yield to my entreaties? Had you set out yesterday, you would now be far on the road to Dilston."

"You must blame me more than the countess, my lord," said Dorothy. "I besought her to stay, and she yielded to my request."

"Commit no further errors," said Father Norman. "Quit this dangerous position immediately, and repair to the town-hall as suggested by his lordship."

"Must we really go?" said the countess, with an appealing look to the earl. "Do let us stay for a few minutes longer!"

"Well, I consent," he replied. "But only on the condition that you depart when Father Norman deems it prudent to do so. I commit them to your care, father."

"Be sure I will watch over them, my son," replied the priest.

"Newbiggin, I need not give any commands to you," said the earl. "You will attend to your lady and Miss Forster."

"With my life," replied the butler.

Scarcely had the earl taken his departure than Mrs. Scarisbrick made her appearance on the roof, and took up her station by the other ladies.

"I am just in time," she said, after greetings had passed between them. "General Forster says there is no danger here."

"I hope not," replied Dorothy. "But we shall not remain here long."

Meantime, the Earl of Derwentwater had proceeded to the adjacent barrier, and taken up a position with Brigadier Mackintosh, who had likewise been joined by Lord Kenmure and the Earls of Wintoun and Nithsdale.

CHAPTER III

The Commencement of the Assault

A STRANGE and portentous quietude now prevailed, like the awful hush preceding a storm. All the insurgent troops were in position, and in momentary expectation of the attack.

The barricades were manned, the houses occupied with soldiers as we have mentioned, and the churchyard filled with troops. But not a sound proceeded from this vast collection of men.

Never before had Preston beheld such a sight. Except in the market-place, all business was suspended throughout the town, but here the houses were open, and the Mitre and the Bull were thronged.

Terrified to death at the thought of the approaching conflict, almost all the residents in Church-street and Fishergate had quitted their houses, and repaired to the centre of the town. It was the same thing in Friargate, and in many houses in the Lancaster avenue.

Thus in fear and trembling did the inhabitants of Preston await the commencement of the assault.

At length, a murmur arose from those stationed on the roofs of houses, and everywhere were heard the words, "They come."

Then the countess and Dorothy, with hundreds of others who were gazing eagerly towards the Wigan avenue, beheld a body of red-coated foot soldiers issue from the lane, and march towards the street.

These were Preston's foot. Captain Preston was with them himself, but on this occasion the regiment was commanded by Lord Forrester, who rode at their head.

The men looked very well, and presented a very gallant appearance. They were supported by two hundred and fifty dragoons, selected from five different regiments, each party being commanded by a captain, and the whole being commanded by Major Bland and Major Lawson.

Then came two regiments of dragoons under the command of Brigadier Honeywood.

Casting a rapid glance along the street, Lord Forrester instantly saw how matters stood, but ordered his men to attack the barricade, which presented a very formidable appearance with the cannon mounted upon it, and the troops collected behind it.

But the assailants had not advanced far, when such a terrible fire was poured upon them from the barricade, and from the roofs and windows of the houses, that they halted.

By this deadly discharge nearly fifty men were killed, or severely wounded. Loud shouts arose from the defenders of the barricade, and stifled the groans of the wounded.

The fire of the defenders was instantly returned by the assailants, but with comparatively little effect.

Urged on by Lord Forrester and Captain Preston the assailants marched on, but were checked by a second discharge quite as terrible as the first, while the cannon being well directed by Tom Syddall and his men, did great execution.

Thus much did the countess and Dorothy see, but they beheld no more. The spectacle of that street, filled with dying and dead, was too much for them, and they covered their eyes to shut out the dreadful sight.

"Shall I take you hence?" said Father Norman.

"Yes—yes!" cried the countess.

Casting one look at the barricade, and seeing that the earl was safe, she instantly quitted the roof with the priest and Newbiggin. The other ladies followed. The party did not venture into the street, but made their way through the garden at the back of the house. As they were speeding along, another discharge of musketry took place, accompanied by the roar of the cannon.

At the same time distant firing was heard on the north side of the town, showing that the attack had likewise begun in this quarter. A sergeant, despatched by Captain Innes, made way for them through the crowded street to the market-place.

No sooner had they reached the town-hall than the countess and Dorothy withdrew to a private room, with the priest, and spent some time in earnest devotions.

CHAPTER IV

Altercation between Forster and Mackintosh

FINDING it impossible to force his men to attack the barricade in the face of this incessant fire, Lord Forrester did not attempt any further advance for the present, but retiring to the end of the street, where he was sustained by the dismounted dragoons and Honeywood's regiment, directed Captain Preston to lead a party of men through a narrow passage which he had observed to the back of the street, and, if possible, get possession of Sir Henry Hoghton's House.

Captain Preston at once obeyed the order, but on reaching a thoroughfare, called the Broadway, at the back of the houses, he found his advance checked by the small barrier commanded by Captain Wogan. However, he unhesitatingly attacked it, but was repulsed.

While heading a second assault he was struck down by a shot, and would have instantly been cut to pieces if Captain Wogan, at the hazard of his own life, had not dashed to his assistance, and saved him from the swords raised against him.

Having succeeded in bringing off his wounded foe, the generous Wogan consigned him to the care of a surgeon. But all aid was unavailing. Preston, than whom there was not a better or a braver officer in the king's service, was dead.

Hitherto General Forster had taken no part in the defence, but during a cessation of firing he rode up to the Churchgate battery, and called out to Mackintosh in a loud authoritative tone:

"Brigadier! sally out at once with your Highlanders upon the enemy."

"Na, na, general," replied Mackintosh. "Were I to part my foot from the horse, they might be cut off."

"I don't see why that should be," rejoined Forster. "But if you are afraid of the foot, sally out with the horse."

"I cannot obey you, general," replied the brigadier; "and for this reason. In sallying out, as you suggest, the cavalry wad have to pass through the fire of

our ain foot to their great detriment; and if they failed in the attempt, they would be unable to retreat, and thus the Highlanders would be pent up in the town."

"I don't see the reason," cried Forster, angrily; "but I perceive you are resolved not to obey me."

"I won't sacrifice my men, general," rejoined the brigadier.

"Then you will take the consequences, sir," said Forster; "for, by Heaven! if I survive this day, and the king comes to his own, I'll have you tried by a court-martial."

Mackintosh shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

Just then the firing recommenced, and Forster withdrew to vent his anger elsewhere.

Learning that Mackintosh had stationed Captain Innes with a party of Highlanders in Sir Henry Hoghton's house, he immediately removed them, without alleging any reason for the step, and ordered Captain Maclean, with a company of gentlemen volunteers, to take the post.

CHAPTER V

How the two large Houses in Church-street were taken by the Assailants

DURING Forster's altercation with the brigadier, Lord Derwentwater proceeded to the churchyard. He had now no fears respecting the countess and Dorothy, for he knew they had reached the town-hall in safety.

Scarcely had he entered the churchyard, when he perceived Captain Gordon, and calling him, said:

"You are the very man I want. Go instantly to the top of the church-tower, and let me know the movements of the enemy."

Captain Gordon obeyed, and as soon as he reached this exalted position he looked carefully around.

We have already mentioned that the tower in question was singularly low, but from its position it commanded an entire view of the operations.

From this post of observation Captain Gordon could see Brigadier Honeywood with his regiment of dragoons stationed at the end of the street, but he did not concern himself with them, his attention being particularly attracted to the movements of Major Bland, with a large party of dismounted dragoons, attacking the battery commanded by Lord Charles Murray.

Lord Charles was defending himself vigorously and successfully, when another party was seen approaching to attack him in the flank.

Thereupon Captain Gordon gave a signal to the Earl of Derwentwater, who immediately put himself at the head of a hundred of his gentlemen and hastened to Lord Charles's assistance.

Suddenly appearing in the back lane, and flanking the enemy with a close fire, the earl quickly put them to confusion and flight.

But, while retreating, the dragoons burst open the door at the back of Sir Henry Hoghton's garden, drove out Captain Maclean and the volunteers placed there by General Forster, and took possession of the mansion.

Almost at the same time, the large house belonging to Mr. Eyre, on the opposite side of the street, which had served as General Forster's headquarters, fell into the hands of Brigadier Honeywood.

On observing this, Captain Gordon immediately descended from the church-tower, and sought out General Forster, whom he found near the entrance to the market-place, and told him what had happened.

"By the possession of these two houses, general," he said, "the enemy have secured most commanding positions, which will not only afford them shelter from our fire, but enable them to do us great damage. They must be retaken at any cost, but I would recommend as the shortest way that both houses be demolished by our cannon."

"I cannot consent to their destruction, sir," replied Forster. "The body of the town is the security of the army. We must dislodge the enemy—not destroy the houses."

"But do you not perceive, general, that by this course you are affording security to the besiegers," said Captain Gordon. "Reinforcements are sure to arrive, and then we shall never be able to drive out the enemy."

"At all events, the attempt shall be made before I have recourse to cannon," rejoined Forster. "Let both houses be attacked in front and rear—but mind! cannon must not be used."

Scarcely able to control his anger, Captain Gordon went away.

On his return, he found that a vigorous attempt was being made by Lord Derwentwater to dislodge the enemy from Sir Henry Hoghton's house, and a sharp conflict was then going on in the garden.

An attempt was likewise being made to recover Mr. Eyre's house by a large party of dismounted troopers headed by Charles Radclyffe and Captain Shaftoe.

Brigadier Mackintosh would have quickly knocked down both these houses, but on learning that General Forster had positively prohibited the use of cannon, he desisted.

CHAPTER VI

Houses burnt by the Assailants

WITH the exception of the loss sustained by the capture of these two important houses, and which had been entirely caused by Forster's gross mismanagement, the insurgents had not only held their own, but obtained decided advantages over the enemy.

Not one of the three batteries on the south side of the town, though all had been repeatedly and vigorously attacked, had been taken. On the contrary, in every instance, the assailants had been repulsed, and with great loss. Neither by stratagem, nor direct assault, had any portion of the king's forces been able to penetrate into the town. All the damage they had done was at the outskirts.

The church, which constituted the most important position on the south, was entirely in the hands of the insurgents, and so trifling had been the loss sustained by them, that it had not been necessary, as yet, to call upon the reserves stationed in the market-place.

Of course, the brunt of the fight had been borne by Brigadier Mackintosh, who had planned the able defence of the town, and had stood as firm as a rock beside the barrier he had reared, but a most courageous defence of the Fishergate barrier was made by Captain Douglas and Captain Hunter, and their moss-troopers and Borderers.

Individual acts of valour were performed by these hardy fellows worthy of another age. Not content with firing upon the assailants from roof and window, they occasionally sallied forth, and then some most desperate encounters took place between them and Colonel Pitt's dismounted dragoons. Captain Douglas, who was a very powerful man, killed three dragoons with his own hand. In another sally Captain Hunter and half a dozen men with him advanced too far, and being completely surrounded, must have been captured, or slain, had they not been rescued at great personal risk by Captain Douglas.

Some barns and small habitations, at the end of the Fishergate avenue, occupied by the moss-troopers, were set fire to and burnt by Pitt's men, but no real damage was done.

At the same time several much larger houses were set on fire at the end of Church-street by order of Brigadier Honeywood, so as to drive out the

Highlanders who occupied them, and compel them to take refuge in the churchyard. Fortunately, the wind being in the north at the time, the conflagration did not spread far. Had it blown from the opposite quarter, and the wind been strong, the whole town would probably have been destroyed. No efforts being made to extinguish the fires, the houses continued burning for several hours, and long after it became dark.

CHAPTER VII

The Windmill Barricade

WE must now repair to the Windmill barricade, situated at the end of the Lancaster road, and commanded by Colonel Mackintosh, kinsman of the brigadier.

Brigadier Dormer with three hundred dismounted dragoons attempted to approach this barricade by a narrow street or lane called the Back Wynd, but they were thwarted in their design by the vigilant Highlanders, who screened by garden walls, hedges, and ditches, killed nearly half their number, and forced the rest to retreat.

A direct attack was then made on the barricade, but with no better success. The Mackintoshes proved themselves splendid marksmen.

After a third ineffectual attack by a back road, during which he again sustained considerable loss, Brigadier Dormer ordered Sergeant Johnstone and Corporal Marlow, with a score of Stanhope's dragoons, to set on fire all the houses and outbuildings. While seeing the order executed Brigadier Dormer was shot in the leg, the sergeant and corporal were killed, and some of the men wounded, but the work of destruction proceeded—and the houses and cottages were burnt close up to the barricade.

But nothing was gained. The valiant Highland chief and his clansmen laughed at the futile attempts to drive them from their post.

Having thus taken a survey of the defences of the town, it will be seen that they were all intact, and able to hold out. But the besiegers were under the impression that the insurgents would attempt to cut their way out during the night. Accordingly, the Lancaster avenue was very strongly guarded.

An express had been sent by Sir Henry Hoghton to General Carpenter, who had reached Clitheroe, to inform him that hostilities had commenced, and it was therefore certain he would arrive next day. Should this news reach the rebels, it would quicken their desire to escape, and it behoved the besiegers to be doubly vigilant—especially on the north side of the town, where the exit was most likely to be made.

Several hundreds of the king's troops, as we have stated, had been shot down in the ineffectual attacks on the barriers. Among the wounded were Major Bland and Major Lawson, and, as we have just mentioned, Brigadier Dormer was slightly hurt.

Captain Preston expired as he was being conveyed to the White Bull, where all the wounded insurgents were taken. At this place died Colonel Brereton, Mr. Clifton, and two or three others whose names are not recorded.

When Captain Peter Farquharson, of Rochale, whose leg had been badly shattered by a bullet, was brought in by half a dozen Highlanders, and laid down on a bench, he called for brandy for the men, and taking a glass himself, said:

"Come, lads, here's to our master's health! I can fight no longer, but I wish you success."

With mingled feelings was the health drunk.

Alas! this gallant officer died under the operation, which was unskilfully performed.

CHAPTER VIII

How the two large Houses were illuminated

UNTIL it grew dark, platoon-firing constantly took place from the two large houses captured by the besiegers. When night came on, the firing of course ceased, though even then occasional shots were heard.

At all the barriers the men rested on their arms, the strictest watch being kept to prevent surprise. The churchyard was still filled with troops.

A strange and terrible light was afforded by the still burning houses, and as these fires were not confined to one quarter, but could be seen at different points, it appeared as if the whole town was burning. The red reflection of the fire in the adjacent street on the tower and windows of the church produced a very striking effect.

After awhile, Brigadier Honeywood caused the windows of the two large mansions, just mentioned, to be brilliantly lighted up, and the illumination revealed every person in the street, and exposed them to the musketeers; but he soon found this told against himself, for the marksmen were quickly discovered and driven from their position, while the windows were broken by showers of bullets.

In the evening a council of war was held at the Mitre, but nothing was determined upon, except that a vigilant watch should be kept throughout the night, and a determined defence maintained on the morrow.

General Forster took very little part in the discussion, and complained bitterly that Brigadier Mackintosh had disobeyed his orders.

"I suppose it was through my fault, general, that the two large houses in Church-street were lost?" remarked the brigadier.

"Undoubtedly," replied Forster.

"Well, then, I'll repair my fault," said Mackintosh; "for as I'm a living man, I'll demolish them baith, or burn them to the ground to-morrow."

"In defiance of my orders?" cried Forster.

"In defiance of anybody's orders," rejoined Mackintosh.

"Let us have no disputes, I pray," interposed Lord Widdrington. "We have every reason to be satisfied with the result of the day."

"So confident am I of success," said Mackintosh, "that I am about to write to the Earl of Mar that I expect to gain a victory over General Wills tomorrow. A battle is imminent between his lordship and the Duke of Argyle, and may possibly take place to-morrow. If so, and success should attend our arms both at Stirling and Preston, the Jacobite cause must be triumphant."

"Heaven grant it may!" cried several voices.

After a little further discourse, the council broke up, some proceeding to an adjoining room where supper was laid out, and others returning to their posts.

Only three persons were left in the room. These were Lord Derwentwater, General Forster, and Captain Douglas.

The earl had told the others that he wished to confer with them.

"I trust all will go well to-morrow," he said; "indeed, I do not doubt it. Still I feel the greatest anxiety respecting the countess."

"I do not wonder at it, my lord," remarked Forster. "I am just as anxious about my sister. Would we could get them both safely out of the town—but I fear it is impossible to do so now, since all the avenues are guarded."

"I will insure their escape from the Fishergate barrier, of which I have the command," said Captain Douglas. "But the attempt must not be made before midnight. By crossing the ford, they will be able to gain the Liverpool road. Will the ladies be alone?"

"They will be attended by my chaplain, Father Norman, and my butler, Newbiggin," replied Lord Derwentwater. "I shall not send my grooms with them, unless General Forster desires it."

"No, no!" cried Forster. "The fewer the better."

"Of course, the party will be on horseback?" said Douglas. "I will conduct them to the ford—but there I must leave them."

"That will suffice," said the earl. "And I shall be eternally obliged to you for the service."

"And so shall I," said Forster.

"At midnight, then, I should be fully prepared," said Douglas.

With this, he and Forster joined the others at supper in the next room, while Lord Derwentwater proceeded to the town-hall.

When they were informed of the arrangements made for their flight, the countess and Dorothy seemed dissatisfied rather than pleased, but the earl was quite resolved upon their departure.

"There is no telling what the morrow may bring forth," he said. "And if fortune should prove adverse, I should bitterly reproach myself for allowing you to remain. Go you must."

All arrangements having been made, Dorothy retired, and the earl and countess were left alone together.

For some minutes they both remained silent. The earl then spoke:

"I hope we may meet again at Dilston as in former days," he said. "But I have great misgivings. To-morrow will decide. We shall then either be victorious, or utterly defeated, and prisoners, for we are shut up in this town. In the latter event I well know what my fate will be, and I confess that I cannot shake off a dread presentiment that it will happen."

"Do not thus be despondent, my dear lord," said the countess. "To me everything seems to look well."

"Not so," he replied. "We have one great danger. Should General Carpenter arrive before we have beaten Wills, we are lost. Had a victory been gained to-day—as it might and would have been had we not been thwarted by Forster—all would have been well. But now we must trust to chance. I will not say that Forster has betrayed us, but he has been excessively indiscreet in confiding his secrets to Mrs. Scarisbrick."

"Then you think Mrs. Scarisbrick has given secret intelligence to the enemy?"

"I am almost sure of it," replied the earl. "But let us not trouble our parting with gloomy anticipations."

They then endeavoured to talk cheerfully, but the effort was in vain, and it was almost a relief to both of them when Father Norman entered.

He had just heard from Dorothy of their proposed flight, and came to inquire further about it.

"Has your lordship any instructions to give me?" he said.

"None whatever," replied the earl. "I know you will ever watch over the countess during my absence—and if aught happens, console her."

"I will teach her how to bear her affliction," replied the priest. "Perchance this may be your last interview," he added, looking steadily at the countess. "Have you aught to communicate to your husband?"

"We have never had any secrets from each other, good father," said the earl. "Is it not so, sweetheart?"

The countess made no reply.

A slight pause ensued, after which the earl said:

"Am I to understand you have a secret from me?"

Another pause ensued, which was broken by the countess.

"Tell him all, father," she cried. "I cannot."

"What is this?" exclaimed the earl, astonished, and looking at the priest for an explanation. "What have you to tell me?"

"Speak! daughter!" cried Father Norman, imperiously. "The secret must be told,"

"Keep me not in suspense!" cried the earl, looking at her.

"You will think me very deceitful when I tell you that my heart was not wholly yours when I wedded you," she replied.

"Not wholly mine!" he exclaimed in a tone of suppressed fury. "Who then was my rival?"

"The prince," she replied.

"The prince!" he exclaimed, with a sudden burst of rage. "Since he was capable of this perfidy, I renounce him—I throw off my allegiance—I will break the sword I have borne for him—"

"Hear me, my lord," she cried, clinging to him.

"Away!" he exclaimed, casting her from him. "How fondly I have loved you, you well know, but now you are hateful to me. Never let me behold you more!"

"Hold! my lord," interposed Father Norman, in a tone of authority which the earl could not resist. "There must be no misunderstanding between you and the countess. By my counsel she has made this confession to you, because the secret has long weighed upon her heart, and because you may never meet again in this world. Listen to me, my lord. The love conceived by the countess for the prince was simply an ardent feeling of loyalty, carried, perchance, to excess; but in no way culpable. If the prince's image was placed above your own in her breast, you need feel no jealousy. Nor can the prince be blamed, for word of love never passed his lips—nor was he aware of the passion he inspired."

"Is this so?" cried the earl.

"It is so," she replied. "I ought to have told you all this long ago—but hesitated from a silly fear, till my heart had become so burdened that I dared not speak. But now I felt that the confession must not be delayed, or it might never be made. Can you forgive me?"

"Come to my heart!" he cried, straining her to his breast.

CHAPTER IX

The Ford

MIDNIGHT had come.

Very dark was the night, and favourable to the purpose of those who sought to fly from the beleaguered town. The fires in the burning houses were nearly extinguished, but the course of the conflagration could still be traced by a red glow along the street.

The two large houses, now in the hands of the king's forces, were no longer illuminated, but looked sombre and threatening—the approaches to them in front and at the rear being strongly guarded.

The church-tower could be indistinctly seen in the gloom, and a close survey of the churchyard would have shown that it was filled with troops who were resting on their arms, to be ready for action at break of day.

The barrier in this quarter was strongly guarded by the Highlanders, many of whom were lying on their plaids beside the trenches while their comrades kept watch.

Throughout the town it was the same thing.

At the Windmill battery, where Wynn's and Pitt's regiments were posted, so as completely to block up the Lancaster road, and prevent all chance of escape in that direction, the brave Clan Chattan were gathered—most of them lying on the ground, but ready to spring to their feet on the slightest alarm.

The barrier commanded by Lord Charles Murray was likewise strongly guarded, and by a vigilant force—this being a position exposed to much peril.

As to the Fishergate barricade, it was better watched by the defenders than by the enemy.

Strange to say, the outlet connected with this battery, and which led to a lane communicating with a ford over the Ribble, was not blocked up like the other avenues.

Three squadrons of horse belonging to Brigadier Pitt were posted at intervals in the fields on the north side of the river—Pitt's own quarters being fixed at a large farm-house on the rise of the hill—but the lane we have mentioned had been left unguarded.

This unaccountable piece of negligence had been accidentally discovered by Captain Douglas, while reconnoitring the road. Still, he had not ventured more than a quarter of a mile.

Midnight had just tolled, and the besieged town presented the appearance we have endeavoured to describe, when the Countess of Derwentwater embraced her lord, and with his aid mounted the steed that was waiting for her outside the Fishergate barrier.

"Farewell, my best beloved!" cried the earl. "Farewell! it may be for ever! Tomorrow will decide my fate. Should the worst happen, be sure my last thought will be of you."

"Farewell, my dearest lord!" she cried. "I will not say for ever! for I am certain we shall meet again!"

Dorothy was already on horseback, and beside her was Charles Radclyffe, who was resolved to see them safely across the ford.

We have already mentioned that since Dorothy's arrival in Preston, Charles had fallen desperately in love with her; but owing to circumstances, they had been little together, and now they were compelled to part. However, they did not despair of an early meeting.

In attendance on the ladies were Father Norman and Newbiggin, both of whom were well mounted.

As the conductor of the party, Captain Douglas rode a little in advance—but the countess was not far behind him.

Almost instantly the party disappeared in the gloom, and then the earl listened intently for any sounds that might tell how they got on; but nothing to occasion alarm being heard, after waiting for a few minutes, he retired—though with a sad heart.

Meanwhile, the party proceeded in the order described, and in silence. If a word was exchanged by Charles Radclyffe and Dorothy, it reached no other ears but their own.

No interruption was offered as they rode down the narrow lane, and even a gate that led to a field skirting the river seemed left purposely open.

Here Captain Douglas rode alone to reconnoitre, but returned almost immediately to say that the way was clear.

During his brief absence, the countess cast a look back at the hill, and could just distinguish the dark outline of the town. Here and there, it could be seen from the reflection that a house was still burning.

As they advanced, a slight glimmer showed that the river was close at hand.

Before descending the bank, Captain Douglas took hold of the countess's bridle, and then led her horse cautiously into the water.

His example was followed by Charles Radclyffe, and the two ladies were soon crossing the ford.

Evidently the river was not very deep at this point, and there seemed nothing to occasion uneasiness, when the figure of a man armed with a musket could be suddenly descried on the opposite bank.

As will be surmised, this was no other than Parson Woods of Chowbent, who had undertaken to watch the ford.

"Stop!" he shouted in a loud voice, "you cannot pass here. Attempt to advance further, and I shall fire upon you."

"Look to yourself, friend," rejoined Captain Douglas. "Retire at once, or I will send a bullet through your head."

And drawing a pistol he prepared to execute his threat.

"Hold!" said the countess. "He will let us pass, when he knows we are ladies."

"I don't know that," said Parson Woods. "Who are you?"

"Make way for the Countess of Derwentwater and Miss Forster," cried Captain Douglas, thinking to overawe him.

Precisely the contrary effect was produced.

No sooner did Parson Woods hear those important names, than he called to his men who were concealed by the bank behind him:

"Arise, and follow me! Heaven has delivered into our hands the wife and sister of the principal rebels! Come with me, I say, that we may prevent the flight of the Countess of Derwentwater and Miss Forster."

So saying, he dashed into the river, followed by his men, and though Captain Douglas fired at him, he was not harmed, but seized the countess's bridle, and detained her; while Dorothy was captured in like manner by some of his men, despite Charles Radclyffe's resistance.

What might have ensued it is impossible to say, since Captain Douglas and his companion were compelled to beat a hasty retreat by the sudden appearance of a party of Pitt's dragoons.

Father Norman and Newbiggin offered no resistance, and were captured with the ladies.

CHAPTER X

By whom the Countess and Dorothy were liberated

THE leader of the troop seemed an important personage, since he was treated with marked deference by Parson Woods. After putting a few questions in an undertone to the minister, he turned to the ladies, and said:

"Am I to understand that I am addressing Lady Derwentwater and Miss Forster?"

"You are, sir," replied the countess. "And if you are satisfied on the point, I presume we shall not be detained?"

The officer made no direct reply, but said rather bluntly: "Who are these persons with you?"

"One is Lord Derwentwater's chaplain," replied the countess. "The other is a private servant."

"Your ladyship must excuse me if I appear inquisitive, but I am obliged to ask where you are going?" said the officer. "Moreover, I must request a precise answer to the inquiry?"

"It is not my habit to equivocate, sir," replied she. "My destination is Dilston, and if we are allowed to proceed, Miss Forster will accompany me."

"I presume your ladyship thinks Preston unsafe, or you would not quit it in this manner?" remarked the officer.

Lady Derwentwater made no reply.

"That question ought not to have been put," said Dorothy. "We are not called upon to explain the cause of our departure."

"But when General Forster's sister flies, it may be presumed that the place is not likely to hold out long," remarked the officer.

"You may draw any inference you please," rejoined Dorothy. "My own opinion is that General Wills will be driven away to-morrow. He has certainly had the worst of it to-day."

"Then you will have an opportunity of witnessing his defeat," said the officer; "for I propose to send you back to the town. Parson Woods," he added to the minister, "since you have made this important capture, you shall conduct the ladies to the Fishergate avenue. I will send a party of horse to sustain you."

"I don't require support, general," said the minister.

"General!" exclaimed the countess. "Is it possible we are speaking to General Wills?"

"Has your ladyship only just made that discovery?" cried Parson Woods, laughing.

"I suspected it from the first," observed Dorothy.

"You can tell your brother, the general, that you have had a conference with me," said Wills; "and that you told me to my face that I should be defeated on the morrow."

"I told you the truth, general, however disagreeable it may be to hear it," said Dorothy.

"Well, time will show," rejoined Wills; "but I rather think that before to-morrow night General Forster will have surrendered, and in that event the Earl of Derwentwater will be given up as a hostage."

Just then a horseman, who proved to be Sir Henry Hoghton, rode up, having with him a lady on horseback.

"I am glad I have found you, general," said Sir Henry. "This lady has something important to communicate to you."

"Pray come this way, madam," said Wills, taking the lady aside.

Thereupon, a whispered conversation took place between them.

"I know that voice," observed the countess to Dorothy. "But surely it cannot be—"

"It is Mrs. Scarisbrick," was the reply in a low tone. "I always thought she played my brother false. Now we have positive proof of it. She has come to give information respecting the state of the town."

Dorothy was quite right in the conjecture.

When the conference between Wills and Mrs. Scarisbrick was ended, and the lady found that the countess and Dorothy were close at hand, she became very uneasy, and begged General Wills to set them free.

"If they go back, I cannot," she observed. "They will tell General Forster they have seen me here, and what explanation can I give him?"

"It matters little now what explanation is given," replied Wills. "But you shall not be exposed to any annoyance. You must be on the spot. Tomorrow, you are certain to have important information to give me."

"I will not fail," she replied.

General Wills then called to Sir Henry, and after consigning Mrs. Scarisbrick to his care turned to Parson Woods, who was waiting for final orders, and said:

"I have altered my plans, parson. Take Lady Derwentwater and Miss Forster with their attendants across the river, and then set them free."

"It shall be done, general," replied Woods, with a military salute. "Be pleased to follow me, ladies."

He was not quite so civil to Father Norman and Newbiggin.

"I hope we are not liberated at that lady's request;" said the countess. "I would not willingly be under any obligation to her."

"You need not be uneasy," said Wills. "You are under no obligation to any one but me. Goodnight, ladies. I wish you a safe journey to Dilston. When I tell you that General Carpenter will be here with two thousand men to-morrow, you may be glad to be out of the way."

He rode off, while the ladies and their companions were taken across the ford by Parson Woods, and then liberated.

CHAPTER XI

An Unlucky Shot

AFTER their unsuccessful attempt to cross the ford, Charles Radclyffe and Captain Douglas did not return to the town, but concealed themselves among some trees till they had ascertained that the countess and Dorothy were to be liberated. They then went back tolerably well satisfied with the issue of the adventure.

As they were riding slowly up the lane leading to the Fishergate avenue, they caught the sound of horses' feet behind them, and stopped to listen.

It was so dark that nothing could be seen distinctly, but they heard voices, and Captain Douglas drew a pistol and called out, "Who goes there?"

"A friend," replied a voice.

"To whom?" demanded Douglas. "To King James, or King George."

"I am no rebel," replied the person who had spoken. "But it seems you are, and I am therefore bound to make you a prisoner. It will be useless to resist, for I have a dozen men with me."

"I would not yield if you had twice the number," rejoined Douglas. "Advance a step further, and I will shoot you."

"Let him go, Sir Henry," cried a female voice.

"'Tis Sir Henry Hoghton," said Charles Radclyffe.

"So it seems," said Douglas. "Come, Sir Henry," he cried. "'Tis for you to yield—not me."

"This is my answer," replied Sir Henry, firing at him, but without effect.

"And this my rejoinder," cried Douglas, firing in his turn.

A shriek followed.

"What have I done?" cried Douglas.

"Wounded a lady," replied Sir Henry. "Are you much hurt, madam?" he asked.

"Mortally, I fear," she replied, in a faint voice. "Support me, or I shall fall from my horse."

"'Tis Mrs. Scarisbrick!" cried Charles Radclyffe.

"It is," rejoined Sir Henry. "This is a most unlucky accident. But there must be a truce between us," he added, ordering back his men, who were preparing to advance.

"What would you have us do?" asked Charles Radclyffe.

"Bid them take me to the town," said Mrs. Scarisbrick, faintly. "Let me not die here."

She was then placed on the saddle before Captain Douglas, who rode on as fast as he could under such distressing circumstances.

Long ere he reached the barrier Douglas thought his burden felt inanimate, but when she was lifted down, and a light fell upon her pallid face, it was found she was quite dead.

BOOK IX. — THE SURRENDER

CHAPTER I

How a Party of Dragoons was routed by Captain Gordon

As soon as it began to grow light next morning, Captain Gordon mounted the church-tower to survey the town.

All seemed quiet?besiegers and defenders. The Highlanders were still lying stretched on their plaids near the barricade; but the greater part of the troops, who did not possess the hardihood of the Scots, had quitted the churchyard, and sought shelter in some of the adjacent houses.

No signs of movement were visible in the two large houses in possession of the enemy; but the sentinels were at their posts, and no doubt the men could be summoned instantly to arms.

The street presented a ghastly sight—the dead not having been removed, and the ground being covered with blood.

Turning from this painful spectacle he surveyed the fields outside the town, but could not perceive that any change had been made in the disposition of the enemy.

A mist arose from the marshy ground in the neighbourhood of the river, and partially concealed the militia stationed near the bridge, but the two squadrons of Pitt's dragoons could be distinguished in the fields.

Whatever might be the design of the enemy, it seemed to Captain Gordon that no immediate attack was intended.

But while he continued his survey, and carefully reconnoitred the outskirts of the town, he perceived some dismounted dragoons creeping along the Wigan lane towards the town.

Watching them carefully for a few minutes, during which it got lighter, he found their numbers increase, and became convinced that they were the head of a large party.

He therefore quickly descended from the tower, and gave the alarm to Brigadier Mackintosh, whom he found at his post, and who ordered him to proceed at once to the Fishergate barrier—the only outlet not blocked up—and take a troop of horse and attack them.

Captain Gordon instantly obeyed—nor was he detained at the barrier in question.

Fifty stout Borderers, who were sleeping beside their steeds, bridle in hand, were quickly in the saddle. A horse was found for him, and the party sallied forth.

The Wigan lane was about a quarter of a mile off, and to reach it they had to cross the field on the south side of the town. They got there just as the dragoons had quitted the lane, but had not formed, and immediately charged them—throwing them into confusion by the suddenness of the attack.

The conflict only lasted for a few minutes, and ended in the complete rout of the dragoons, several of whom were killed, including the captain. Very little loss was sustained by the insurgents.

Quite surprised with what he had done, and fearing his retreat might be cut off if he attempted pursuit, Captain Gordon galloped back as hard as he could to the Fishergate avenue.

He was only just in time. The encounter had been witnessed by the two squadrons of Pitt's dragoons stationed near the river, and they both endeavoured to intercept him, but he and the Borderers were safe behind the barriers before either could come up.

Captain Gordon gained great credit by this achievement, which was one of the last performed by the insurgents.

CHAPTER II

Meeting of Carpenter and Wills

PREPARATIONS were made by the insurgent leaders at all the barricades for a renewal of hostilities, and Brigadier Mackintosh had just given orders to Tom Syddall to commence the demolition of the two large houses in Church-street, when word was brought that a very large force, consisting of more than two thousand horse, could be seen approaching from the north.

No doubt could be entertained that this force belonged to General Carpenter, who must have made an early march from Clitheroe in order to effect a junction with Wills before the attack was resumed.

All was now consternation among the besieged, who felt that some immediate step must be taken, or they would be shut in.

Colonel Mackintosh proposed to sally forth with his men, and consulted the brigadier, who dissuaded him from the attempt, declaring it impracticable.

As usual, General Forster was completely undecided.

Half an hour later, General Carpenter arrived, and took up a position on the north side of the town. He was accompanied by the Earl of Carlisle and Lord Lumley, and rode at the head of Churchill's, Molesworth's, and Cobham's dragoons.

With these were several regiments of horse, making a total of two thousand five hundred men.

No wonder such an accession of force should have utterly extinguished the hopes of the insurgents.

Immediately on his arrival, General Carpenter rode up an eminence, and was looking at the Windmill barricade, when a shot fired from the cannon planted on that barrier fell very near him, and caused him to shift his position.

While he was giving some directions to Colonel Churchill, General Wills rode up, attended by Colonel Pitt, and expressed his satisfaction at seeing him.

"In resigning the command of the force to you, general," he said, "I hope you will approve of the manner in which I have conducted the operations of the siege. Even if I had not had the advantage of your assistance, I doubt not that I should have been able to conclude the affair to-day. The rebels, I am bound to say, have fought very bravely, and have made a very gallant defence, especially the Highlanders; but I have determined, at any cost, to take the barricade commanded by Brigadier Mackintosh, and then they must surrender."

"You have done very well, general," replied Carpenter. "Nothing could be better. Retain your command. I will not deprive you of the victory you have so nearly achieved."

"I thank you, general, and am proud to receive your commendation," replied Wills. "But I bow to your experience, and any suggestions you may offer shall be immediately adopted. Before the decisive attack is made, I should wish you to survey the town."

"I propose to do so," replied Carpenter.

Having posted six squadrons of dragoons under the command of Colonel Churchill to prevent any attempt at flight from the Windmill barricade, General Carpenter rode down towards the south side of the town with Wills.

They were attended by a strong guard, and accompanied by the two noblemen previously mentioned. On the way they met Sir Henry Hoghton with a party of militia, and while General Carpenter was conversing with Sir Henry, Parson Woods and a dozen of his men came up from the ford, with some fugitive insurgents, whom they had just captured.

Learning from Woods that constant escapes were taking place from the Fishergate avenue, General Carpenter gave orders that the outlet should be effectually blocked up without delay, so as not only to check any further flight, but prevent supplies of provisions from being brought in.

Finding that the entrance to the Churchgate avenue was inconveniently crowded so that the troops could not act, Carpenter made a different disposition of the troops; and deeming it probable that a most determined attempt at escape might be made from the north of the town, he caused this outlet to be still more strongly guarded.

When all these orders had been executed, and every outlet was blocked up, the two generals divided their forces, and completely surrounded the town.

CHAPTER III

General Forster wishes to capitulate

FROM his post on the church-tower, Captain Gordon had witnessed these proceedings and reported them to Brigadier Mackintosh.

Though not disheartened, the brave old Highlander felt that the situation was one of the utmost peril, and could perceive only one way of extricating himself from it, but this he was unwilling to adopt, unless joined by his English allies, and he felt sure that Forster had not resolution enough for such a course of action.

His men, however, could hardly be restrained. No sooner did they discover that they were pent up in the town, than they wished to sally forth, sword in hand, and cut their way through the enemy.

The brigadier told them it was too soon—that they must wait till night— and if nothing happened in the interim, he would lead them forth.

Colonel Mackintosh's men were equally impatient, and though they saw the squadrons of dragoons posted near the Lancaster avenue, they would have attempted to cut a passage through them, if allowed.

Meanwhile a conference took place at the Mitre between General Forster, the Earl of Derwentwater, Lord Widdrington, and Colonel Oxburgh.

As it was now evident that the town was completely blocked up, and could not hold out long, it was necessary that some terms of surrender should immediately be made.

Lord Derwentwater recommended that a council of war should be called at once, at which all the Scottish leaders should assist, but Forster would not accede to the proposition.

"If Mackintosh and the rest are consulted, we shall never be able to make good terms with Carpenter and Wills," said Forster. "Let them treat for themselves."

"But it will not be fair to treat without them," observed the earl.

"Nothing whatever will be done, if Mackintosh is consulted," said Lord Widdrington. "Our estates I fear will be confiscated, but we must make an effort to save our lives."

"I fear the attempt will be useless," said Lord Derwentwater. "And I would die rather than do aught dishonourable."

"There is nothing dishonourable in what I propose," said Forster; "but I feel certain the Scots will never consent to a surrender."

"Yes, they would consider themselves degraded by such submission," said Lord Derwentwater.

"If they choose to throw away their lives they must do so," said Lord Widdrington. "But do not let us act thus rashly."

"I am acquainted with General Wills," said Colonel Oxburgh, "and if you desire it, I will propose a treaty to him. Rest assured, I will assent to no disgraceful terms."

Lord Derwentwater was still very unwilling that the step should be taken without consulting Brigadier Mackintosh, but he yielded at last to the representations of Lord Widdrington and Forster.

CHAPTER IV

Colonel Oxburgh proposes Terms of Surrender to Wills

ABOUT half an hour later, Colonel Oxburgh, preceded by a trumpeter on horseback, rode out of the Fishergate.

He was immediately stopped by the guard, but on explaining his errand, was conducted by a sergeant and two dragoons to Wills's tent, which was about a quarter of a mile off.

General Wills was seated at a small table in the centre of the tent, when Colonel Oxburgh was announced by a sentinel.

Wills raised his head, and looking at him very sternly, demanded his business.

"You will guess it without difficulty, I think, general," replied Oxburgh. "I am come to propose that the insurgent force shall lay down their arms in the confident expectation that you will recommend them for pardon to the king."

"Entertain no such expectation, sir," rejoined Wills, still more sternly. "I will not treat with rebels. Those for whom you plead have killed many of the king's subjects, and deserve death."

"But since they are willing to submit, general, I hope that consideration may be shown them," said Oxburgh.

"Expect none from me, sir," rejoined Wills, harshly. "Clemency is thrown away on rebels. Go back to those who sent you. Tell them, if they lay down their arms, and submit themselves prisoners at discretion, I will prevent my soldiers from cutting them to pieces, and spare their lives till his majesty's pleasure is known. That is all I will promise."

"Do you require an immediate decision, general?"

"I will give you an hour—no more," replied Wills.

"I am greatly disappointed, general," said Colonel Oxburgh. "I expected very different terms from you."

"I have already told you that I will make no terms with rebels such as you," rejoined Wills. "If you are not satisfied, return to the town, and an hour hence—to the minute—I will attack you, and put you to the sword."

"Do you mean me to understand, general," said Oxburgh, looking at him steadfastly, "that King George will show us no mercy?"

"I do not say that," replied Wills. "Nor do I hold out any promise. Your best chance of obtaining mercy is by surrendering yourselves prisoners at discretion."

Finding nothing more could be obtained, Colonel Oxburgh departed.

CHAPTER V

Captain Dalziel has a Conference with Wills

INQUIRING glances were thrown at the envoy as he rode through the Fishergate barricade, but he went on till he was stopped by Brigadier Mackintosh, who said to him in a fierce voice:

"What means this cessation of arms? Why have you quitted the town? You have been sent by Forster to propose a treaty for capitulation—and without privity or concurrence of the Scots."

"General Forster has betrayed us—has sold us!" cried several Highlanders. "We will shoot him."

"No treaty has been agreed upon," cried Oxburgh in a loud voice, so that all might hear. "I have seen General Wills, who demands an unconditional surrender from all—Scotsmen as well as Englishmen. An hour is granted for consideration— but a fourth part of the time has already expired," he added, consulting his watch.

"What say you, my men?" cried Mackintosh. "Will you surrender?"

"Never!" they cried. "We will die sword in hand."

"I warn you that no quarter will be given," said Oxburgh.

"We will neither give nor take quarter," cried the Highlanders. "We will show the Southrons how brave men can die."

"Then I am to understand, brigadier, that you utterly refuse the terms?" said Oxburgh.

"Utterly!" replied Mackintosh.

Just then General Forster was seen coming along on horseback, accompanied by the Earl of Derwentwater and Lord Widdrington.

Fearing some mischief might happen in the present infuriated state of the Highlanders, Oxburgh signed to the general to go back, and the brigadier also

called to his men energetically to keep quiet, but despite the interdiction, several shots were fired.

Fortunately Forster escaped, but he would not expose himself further. Turning round, he galloped back towards the market-place, followed more deliberately by the two noblemen.

Immediately afterwards, the Earl of Nithsdale, the Earl of Wintoun, the Earl of Carnwath, and his brother Captain Dalziel, rode up to the spot, and stopping Colonel Oxburgh, who was about to depart, demanded an explanation.

"We have been betrayed by Forster—that is all that can be told," cried Mackintosh, scornfully.

"General Forster is no traitor, my lords," said Oxburgh, firmly. "I have just seen Wills, who refuses to make any treaty with us, and insists that we shall lay down our arms. Our answer must be given within an hour, and but little of it now remains."

"We have had no time for deliberation," said Lord Carnwath.

"Perchance, if you go to General Wills in person, my lords, you may obtain some further respite," said Oxburgh. "I can obtain nothing."

"Shall I go as representative of the Scottish forces?" said Captain Dalziel.

"Go at once, or it will be too late. You have not many minutes left," said Oxburgh.

"Do you agree to the step, brigadier?" asked Captain Dalziel.

"Act as those desire who have more to lose than I have," said Mackintosh.

"Then go," cried the three Scottish nobles.

Thereupon, Captain Dalziel rode forth, and preceded by the same trumpeter who had attended Colonel Oxburgh, made all haste to General Wills's tent.

A conference was granted him.

"Are you aware of the terms I have offered to Colonel Oxburgh?" said Wills. "They apply to the whole rebel army—English and Scots. I can make no distinction."

"But the Scottish chiefs, whom I represent, request some further time—say till seven o'clock tomorrow morning—to consult as to the best mode of delivering up our forces. It will not be an easy matter."

"If you find it difficult, leave it to me," said Wills, with a stern smile. "I cannot grant the delay you request without consulting General Carpenter—but you shall hear from me."

And with a haughty bow he dismissed him.

CHAPTER VI

How Forster learnt that he had been betrayed

AFTER riding away from the exasperated Highlanders, Forster alighted at the town-hall, and meeting Charles Radclyffe and Captain Shaftoe told them what had happened.

"I believe Brigadier Mackintosh has ordered his Highlanders to shoot me," he said. "My life will not be safe."

"Do not think it, general," rejoined Charles Radclyffe. "The brigadier is incapable of such an act. But you had better not expose yourself while the negotiation for the surrender is going on."

"I shall take care not to do so," he replied. "I shall remain here for an hour. I want to see Mrs. Scarisbrick."

"Mrs. Scarisbrick!" exclaimed Charles Radclyffe. "Have you not heard?"

"Heard what?" exclaimed Forster, looking at him in surprise. "I have heard nothing. I have not seen her this morning. I expected to find her here."

"She is here," said Charles Radclyffe. "But I cannot explain. Come with me, and you shall know all."

Not without a strange misgiving did Forster follow him along a passage on the ground floor, at a door in which an elderly female was stationed.

"Here you will find her," said Charles Radclyffe, in a strangely significant tone.

"Impossible!" cried Forster.

"Yes, general, she is here," remarked the old woman, opening the door. "She has not been disturbed."

The room was darkened, but there was light enough to discern a very startling object.

It was the dead body of a very beautiful woman lying extended upon a couch.

Her habiliments were those in which she had died, and her profuse golden tresses were unbound, and scattered over her bosom where she had received the deadly hurt.

Giving utterance to a cry, Forster rushed forward, and seizing her hand pressed it to his lips.

"This completes my misery," he cried. "In losing her I have lost all that was dear to me, and I care not how soon I follow."

"She deserved her fate," said Charles Radclyffe. "She betrayed you and us to the enemy. She was accidentally shot last night, while returning from a secret visit to General Wills. I brought her here myself. I found letters upon her which prove her guilt. I intended to conceal this catastrophe from you—but it is better you should know it."

"You affirm the truth of what you have just stated?" demanded Forster.

"In every particular," rejoined Charles Radclyffe. "You were completely duped by her."

Forster dropped the hand he had hitherto held, and without a word quitted the room.

CHAPTER VII

Colonel Cotton

IN the afternoon of the same day, General Forster, Lord Derwentwater, Brigadier Mackintosh, and all the rebel lords and leaders were assembled at the Mitre, engaged in a very angry discussion, when a chamade beaten at the door, produced a sudden quietude, and a tall, fine-looking officer in the accoutrements of the king's dragoons came into the room, being announced by the sentinel as Colonel Cotton.

All bowed as he advanced towards the centre of the room, when looking round, he said courteously:

"You will guess my errand, my lords and gentlemen. I am sent by General Wills to receive your positive answer to his proposition."

"We are unable to send a precise answer to General Wills," said the Earl of Derwentwater, "because the Scots are unwilling to capitulate. Brigadier Mackintosh and the Scottish nobles will tell you that this is the case."

"My men absolutely refuse to lay down their arms," said the brigadier, "and it is the same with the Clan Chattan, commanded by my kinsman, Colonel Mackintosh."

"Perhaps, by to-morrow morning, we may bring them to reason," said Lord Kenmure. "Just now, it is impossible."

"I will report what you tell me to General Wills," said Cotton.

As he was about to depart, word was brought that the drummer had been shot while beating a chamade before a house, whence firing had taken place subsequent to the cessation of arms.

This unlucky incident seemed likely to put an end to the negotiation, but it was counterbalanced by another great provocation to the rebels, which they were disposed to resent.

Half a dozen insurgents, led by Cornet Shuttleworth, had managed to reach the ford at Penwortham, when they were attacked, and in consequence of their resistance, put to death.

After these events had been referred to, Colonel Cotton addressed the English and Scottish lords and chiefs, and said, in order to prevent further bloodshed, he would agree—in General Wills's name—to grant the time required, provided they pledged their word that no new works should be thrown up, and no further attempt be made to escape.

Promises to this effect being given, Colonel Cotton departed.

CHAPTER VIII

Hostages required

GENERAL WILLS, however, did not appear satisfied with what had been done.

About an hour later, Colonel Churchill and Colonel Nassau entered the town, and on the part of Generals Carpenter and Wills, declared that an English and a Scottish nobleman must be delivered up as hostages for the due fulfilment of the conditions.

"We require the Earl of Derwentwater on the part of the English, and Lord Kenmure on that of the Scots," said Colonel Churchill.

"Why not take General Forster?" asked Captain Dalziel.

"We prefer Lord Derwentwater or Lord Widdrington," replied Churchill, with a singular smile.

"I must tell you frankly, colonel," said Dalziel, "that in the opinion of the Scots, General Forster has made an arrangement for himself through Colonel Oxburgh with General Wills. It has clearly been ascertained that a lady of great personal beauty, who had extraordinary influence over General Forster, gave secret information to General Wills. Last night she was accidentally shot while returning from a visit—it is supposed—to your camp. Now, when we find that a proposal for surrender is made by General Forster without consulting us— and that when a hostage is required, it is not Forster, but Lord Derwentwater who is selected, can you wonder we believe we are betrayed? Here is a general who refuses to march or fight—who declares the enemy is at a distance when he proves to be close at hand—who has intimate relations with a lady, who acts as a spy—and who proposes to surrender, and makes terms for himself, while we desire to continue the contest—can we doubt that he is a traitor?"

"You do not expect us to sympathise with you because you have an incompetent leader?" said Colonel Churchill.

"Incapacity is one thing—treachery another, colonel," said Captain Dalziel. "We Scots all believe Forster has played us false. I do not think his life is secure. Take him with you. He will be safer with you than with us."

"My orders are explicit," said Churchill. "I must bring either of the English lords I have mentioned, and Lord Kenmure."

"Lord Kenmure will not come out," said Dalziel. "Nor will my brother, Lord Carnwath—or any other Scottish noble."

"Then Brigadier Mackintosh must come with me," said Churchill.

"The brigadier is gone to bed, greatly fatigued," replied Dalziel.

"I regard that as a mere excuse," said Churchill, gravely. "I begin to think the treaty will fall to the ground. For the sake of the garrison, I hope not. If the attack is recommenced, none will be spared."

Just then the Earl of Derwentwater and Colonel Mackintosh alighted at the door of the inn, and were announced by the sentinel. Both saluted Colonel Churchill.

"Colonel Mackintosh and myself are come to offer ourselves as hostages if required," said the earl. "We do not desire that any needless difficulties should be raised, and are therefore ready to accompany you."

"I surrender myself with his lordship," said Colonel Mackintosh.

"I should be sorry if the treaty were sacrificed," said Churchill; "and am therefore obliged to your lordship and Colonel Mackintosh for the humane step you have taken. You have saved the garrison."

"Had not General Forster been our leader, the garrison would never have been in this strait," said Colonel Mackintosh. "We might have been overcome, but we would not have died without inflicting some loss on our assailants."

"'Tis better as it is," said Churchill. "I have to receive the paroles of honour of certain gentlemen that they will perform their promises, and then I will conduct you to General Wills."

"We will ride on to the Fishergate outlet and await you there," said Lord Derwentwater. "We care not to parade ourselves as prisoners."

Colonel Churchill signified his assent, and the party separated.

CHAPTER IX

In what Manner the Hostages were received by General Wills

GENERAL CARPENTER was not present when the Earl of Derwentwater and Colonel Mackintosh were brought as hostages to Wills, but Brigadier Munden, Colonels Pitt, Wynn, and Stanhope were with him at the time.

The severe commander received the hostages very haughtily, and knitted his dark brows as he regarded them.

Lord Derwentwater comported himself with great dignity, but Colonel Mackintosh could scarcely restrain his anger, especially when Wills asked:

"Why have we not a Scotch nobleman? I required Lord Nithsdale or Lord Kenmure."

"They declined to come, general," replied Churchill.

"Methinks, the chief of the Clan Chattan might suffice," said Mackintosh. "Had I refused to surrender not a Highlander would have laid down his arms."

"And not one would have escaped," rejoined Wills. "If you think you can stand against the king's troops go back to the town, and I will immediately attack you."

"If I take you at your word, I presume you will give General Forster a safe-conduct?" rejoined Mackintosh.

Wills looked fiercely at him, but made no response.

"If Colonel Mackintosh returns, I shall return, general," said Lord Derwentwater, "and then the truce will be at an end. Attack us when you please, we shall be prepared for you."

"Is this your decision, my lord," cried Mackintosh, joyfully. "I am glad of it."

"Hold!" exclaimed Wills, who did not desire that matters should take this turn. "Since the arrangement is partly concluded, I will not disturb it. By to-morrow these feelings of irritation will have calmed down, and then you will see that I have granted all I could."

"Nothing has been granted," said Colonel Mackintosh. "We shall be worse off to-morrow than we are to-day. Come with me my lord. Let us die together at Preston."

"You cannot depart," said Wills, authoritatively. "To-morrow you may have an opportunity of proving your bravery. To-night you must remain here. Let them be taken to their quarters, colonel," he added to Churchill. "I am sorry I cannot offer you better accommodation."

"Make no apologies, general," said Lord Derwentwater, haughtily. "We know with whom we have to deal."

They were then taken to a farm-house, where Parson Woods and his men were quartered, and where very inconvenient lodgings were found for them.

CHAPTER X

Brigadier Mackintosh dissuades the Earl of Wintoun from sallying forth

NO sooner did it become known that a capitulation had been agreed on than Lord Wintoun went to Brigadier Mackintosh, who so far from having retired to rest, was greatly on the alert, and entreated him to allow a strong body of his Highlanders to line the hedges on the Lancaster avenue, while he made a determined attempt at escape.

"I shall be accompanied by Major Nairn, Captain Philip Lockhart, Captain Shaftoe, and a dozen others, and we will either effect an escape or sell our lives dearly."

"It is too late," replied the brigadier. "My Highlanders could render you little assistance. The Lancaster avenue is now guarded by six squadrons of dragoons in addition to the former guard, so that you will infallibly be cut to pieces. Besides, hostages have been given, and that alone ought to deter you from making the attempt."

"Then we must remain tamely here?" said Lord Wintoun.

"There is no help for it, my lord," replied the brigadier. "If I had had my own way, things should never have come to this pass. We ought to have cut our way out before the arrival of General Carpenter."

"Have we any chance of escape now, think you?" asked Lord Wintoun.

"Very little, I fear," replied the brigadier. "But we must be prepared to take advantage of any unforeseen circumstances to-morrow. It is not likely that any will occur—but it may be!"

CHAPTER XI

The Terms of the Treaty are accepted

A DISMAL day dawned on Preston.

The inhabitants had heard of the capitulation; but did not feel sure it would be carried out—many of the more timid being apprehensive that the town would still be the scene of a most sanguinary conflict.

In the opinion of these persons the Highlanders would not submit, but would make a most desperate attempt to sally forth, which would end in their extermination.

The English insurgents had made up their minds to surrender, and seemed hardly able to realise the position in which they were placed, for most of them displayed unaccountable indifference.

Perhaps, they persuaded themselves that clemency would be shown them. If so, they were mistaken. The town-hall was crowded with ladies who had passed the night there, and did not mean to quit the asylum till all was settled.

Once more, and for the last time, Captain Gordon ascended the church-tower at break of day, and looked around.

The besiegers had drawn so much nearer to the town, that they seemed now quite close at hand.

The militia had likewise quitted their position on the south bank of the Ribble, and stationed themselves near the upper end of the Wigan road.

In fact, the town was completely invested, and Captain Gordon saw at a glance that it would be impossible to break through such a cordon.

In the Churchgate and Fishergate the barricades were undisturbed, but no preparations were made for the renewal of the fight.

Brigadier Mackintosh was no longer at his post, and most of the Highlanders had retired to the houses, anxious to snatch a few hours' rest, and certain they would be summoned when required.

No sound of bagpipes was heard.

The neglected batteries, deserted streets, and dejected air of such troopers as could be seen, offered a marked contrast to the formidable appearance of the besiegers. Captain Gordon felt that the contest was over, and desired to see no more.

Later on, all the English and Scottish leaders, with the exception of the two who had surrendered themselves as hostages, assembled at the Mitre, when it was finally agreed that the terms of the treaty should be accepted.

"My men are willing to submit," said Mackintosh. "But they look upon themselves as sacrificed. Bitterly do I now reproach myself that I ever brought them to England against their will, and that I did not turn back at Lancaster. They might have helped the Earl of Mar to win a battle. Poor fellows! they will now be transported and sold as slaves. My heart bleeds for them."

"We Scots have all cause to regret that we ever crossed the Border," said Lord Kenmure. "But we have done our best for King James, and if we had been supported, we might have succeeded. We have had a High Tory general, yet not one of the party has joined us."

"No one can have been more disappointed than myself," said Forster. "If we had only reached Manchester—"

"Why did we not reach that town? tell us that," cried Brigadier Mackintosh.

"I admit we ought not to have stayed so long in Preston," said Forster. "But you all seemed unwilling to quit your quarters, and I apprehended no danger."

"'Tis idle to regret the past," said Lord Widdrington; "you have complained of the absence of the High Church Tories, my lord," he added, to Lord Kenmure. "But you cannot say that the Roman Catholics have failed you."

"No, they have proved our staunchest friends," replied Lord Kenmure. "And a braver and a better commander cannot be found than Lord Derwentwater."

"In that we all agree," said Lord Nithsdale and the other Scottish nobles.

"The hour at which the armistice expires is close at hand," said Forster, "and we must therefore prepare to conclude this painful business properly. We will

remain here, but all the officers—English and Scotch—must forthwith assemble within the churchyard to deliver up their arms. Let immediate orders be given to that effect," he added to Charles Radclyffe and Captain Dalziel, who at once departed on the errand.

CHAPTER XII

The Insurgent Officers deliver up their Swords

SHORTLY afterwards, in obedience to Forster's orders, all the officers of the insurgent force assembled in the churchyard, and though they endeavoured to assume a careless air many of them looked very downcast. Among them were all those who had recently joined at Lancaster and Preston, and received the rank of captain—Mr. Townley, of Townley, Sir Francis Anderton, Ralph Standish, Gabriel Hesketh, John Tyldesley, John Dalton, and several others.

They had had but a short campaign, and might now have to pay for their devotion with their lives. However, they bore themselves bravely under the distressing circumstances. The annoyance of the ceremonial was heightened by its publicity.

A large concourse was collected in the churchyard, and among the spectators were a great number of the fair sex who flocked thither to manifest their sympathy with their lovers. They expressed their grief in the liveliest manner. Dryope was there, and Captain Shaftoe had some difficulty in inducing her to stand back. But she remained at a short distance gazing at him through her tears. The appearance of these fair damsels, who formed the foremost rank of the spectators, gave a curious character to the scene.

Precisely at the appointed hour, Lord Forrester, preceded by a trumpet and a drum, and attended by a guard, entered the town, and rode to the churchyard.

Alighting at the gate, and followed by a couple of men, he marched up to the rebel officers.

Lord Forrester was a tall, fine-looking man, well suited to the office, which he performed with courtesy.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing them, "I have a very painful duty to discharge. I have to receive the arms of brave and honourable men, which ought to have been used for their king."

To this Colonel Oxburgh, who stood next him, replied as he delivered up his sword:

"Our arms have been used, my lord, for our rightful sovereign and against a usurper."

Lord Forrester made no remark but consigned the sword to the custody of one of his men, and passed on.

He had received more than twenty swords, when he came to Captain Shaftoe, and as there seemed to be some hesitation on Shaftoe's part, he said:

"Your sword, Sir?"

"Take it," cried Shaftoe.

And plucking the blade from the sheath, he broke it, and flung the pieces at Lord Forrester's feet.

On this there were shouts of applause from the female spectators.

"I suppose it was to win that applause that this foolish act was done, Captain Shaftoe," observed Lord Forrester. "You have broken the treaty, and have rendered yourself liable to the punishment of death."

As these words were uttered, Dryope and three or four of the fair spectators rushed forward, and threw themselves at Lord Forrester's feet exclaiming:

"Spare him! spare him!"

"Rise, ladies!" said Lord Forrester. "I am not about to order Captain Shaftoe's immediate execution. I am sorry so great a favourite of your sex should refuse to submit—but no doubt you can bring him to reason. I leave him in your hands."

With this, he passed on to Sir Francis Anderton and Mr. Townley, who were next, and received their swords.

"Ah! gentlemen," he said, "I am sorry to find you here. Had you remained quiet for a few days you would have escaped this disaster. You should have followed the example of the cautious High Church Tories!"

"We have done what seems right to us, my lord," said Mr. Townley, haughtily, "and are prepared for the consequences."

The last sword received by Lord Forrester was that of Captain Wogan, who said to him:

"Your looks reproach me, my lord, but I do not reproach myself. If I had had fifty swords, they should all have been devoted to King James."

With a military salute to the unfortunate officers, Lord Forrester then quitted the churchyard, followed by his men, bearing two large bundles of swords, and proceeded to the Mitre, there to go through a like ceremony with General Forster and the lords.

CHAPTER XIII

How Brigadier Mackintosh parted with his Claymore

By this time, Lord Derwentwater and Colonel Mackintosh had returned, but were merely spectators of the scene—their swords having been delivered up at the time of their surrender.

The Scottish nobles behaved with great dignity, and were treated with the utmost respect by Lord Forrester, who made no remark calculated to give them pain.

For the first time in his life Brigadier Mackintosh's courage forsook him.

Kissing the hilt of his claymore, as he gave up the weapon, he said in broken accents:

"Farewell, old friend! I never thought to part with you, save with life!"

The ceremony was soon over, for Lord Forrester did not needlessly prolong it. Before departing, he said, addressing the assemblage:

"An hour hence, General Carpenter will enter the town to receive his prisoners. By that time, the entire rebel force must be drawn up in the market- place to surrender arms. None must be absent, on any pretence whatever, and on pain of severe punishment. For the execution of this order, I look to you, General Forster, to you, my Lord Derwentwater, to you, my Lord Widdrington, to you my lords," turning to the Scottish nobles, "to you, brigadier, and to you, Colonel Mackintosh."

"My lord," remonstrated the brigadier, "an hour is but a short time to bring together a number of unruly Highlanders—"

"It must suffice," interrupted Lord Forrester. "You could get them ready for action in that time."

"True, my lord," replied the brigadier. "But a surrender is different. They will have to be driven to the place."

"Colonel Mackintosh, I trust you see no difficulty?" said Lord Forrester, turning to the chief.

"None, my lord," was the reply. "My clansmen will die with me, if I bid them."

"In an hour, then," said Forrester as he quitted the room.

Mounting his horse, and attended by the guard, bearing the arms, he galloped off to General Carpenter's quarters.

"What has been done?" asked Carpenter.

"The business is settled," replied Lord Forrester. "An hour hence the entire rebel force will surrender in the market-place."

CHAPTER XIV

The Two Generals enter the Town

AMID the sound of trumpets and drums, General Carpenter entered the conquered town at the head of two regiments of dragoons. He was accompanied by the Earl of Carlisle and Lord Lumley, and had with him Colonels Churchill and Molesworth, and a brilliant staff of officers.

As he rode slowly along Church-street, by which avenue he made his entrance, he looked with some curiosity at the blackened remains of the houses, and other evidences of the fight. For a few minutes he halted on the spot where the barricade had been reared, and explained what had been done to the noblemen with him, giving Brigadier Mackintosh full credit for his plan of defence.

"The barriers could not have been better placed," he said; "and though the town must have succumbed to Wills, it might have held out for another day—perhaps till now."

With these remarks, with which Churchill and Molesworth entirely concurred, he proceeded towards the market-place, noticing everything as he rode on.

Meanwhile, martial strains resounding at the north side of the town, announced the entrance of General Wills and four regiments of dragoons by the Lancaster avenue.

Wills was attended by Brigadiers Pitt and Dormer, and, like General Carpenter, had a staff of officers with him. He had not the curiosity to look around, and scarcely troubled himself to consider where the Windmill barricade had been situated.

In addition to the dragoons, just mentioned, three regiments of foot, commanded by Lord Forrester, Captain Sabine, and Captain Fane, entered by the Fishergate avenue, and proceeded towards the market-place.

Notwithstanding this imposing military display, very few persons were to be seen in the streets, and but few shouts welcomed the victors.

In the market-place, a very striking, but very sad spectacle was to be seen, and this attracted all the townsfolk who could find access thither.

Here, as enjoined by the conquerors, all the insurgent troops were drawn up preparatory to a general surrender.

Yes! they were all there—with the exception of General Forster. Lord Derwentwater's troop, commanded by Charles Radclyffe and Captain Shaftoe, and comprising all the handsome young gentlemen, of whom so much has been said—Lord Widdrington's troop, commanded by Captain Errington and Captain Gascoigne—the moss-troopers and Borderers, commanded by Captains Douglas and Hunter, and the troop commanded by the brave Wogan.

Here also were the five troops of South Country Scots, respectively commanded by Lord Kenmure, the Honourable James Hume, Lord Wintoun, Lord Carnwath, and Captain Lockhart.

Here, also, were the whole of the Highlanders, with Brigadier Mackintosh, and his kinsman, Colonel Mackintosh, at their head.

We have said that General Forster was absent. He excused himself on the plea that his life was in danger from the Highlanders.

On this very spot, only a few days ago, all these troops had been assembled to proclaim King James. At that time they were confident of success. They felt certain of receiving large reinforcements, and believed they should be able to reach London without interruption. And, perhaps, they might. But the delay at Preston proved fatal. Caught in a snare, they had allowed their enemies to check them—to overtake them.

The most painful reflection that forced itself upon all the insurgent officers and gentlemen was that they were destroyed by their own folly. Oh! that they had not yielded to the allurements of the fair sex, but had marched on resolutely!

As the ladies gazed at their lovers from the windows overlooking the place, they thought them woefully changed. Their gay galliard air was quite gone. Some appeared indifferent, but it was easy to be seen that their levity was assumed.

As soon as the two victorious generals arrived in the market-place, and had satisfied themselves that the whole of the rebel force was assembled, all the men were ordered to pile their arms, and this done the officers and gentlemen volunteers belonging to the Northumbrian force were secured, and removed to commodious houses, where they were strictly guarded, but allowed to see their fair friends, who quickly paid them a visit.

The noblemen and superior officers were taken to the inns and various private houses; but the common soldiers and Highlanders were marched off to the church, which served as their prison during their stay in Preston.

Here they were allowed no better fare than bread and water, supplied to them at the expense of the town, and as they suffered frightfully from the cold, they tore the linings from the pews to afford themselves a scanty covering.

CHAPTER XV

The Town is plundered by the Soldiery

Having seen the prisoners disposed of, and given all necessary orders respecting them, the two generals, accompanied by the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Lumley, Sir Henry Hoghton, Brigadier Honeywood, Colonel Stanhope, and several others, entered the town-hall, where a cold collation was laid out for them.

To this repast Parson Woods, who had been presented to General Carpenter, was invited, and received many compliments on his bravery.

The generals were still at table, when they were informed that a deputation of the inhabitants of the town was without, and prayed for an immediate audience.

Wills guessed their errand, and if left to himself, would have refused to see them. But General Carpenter caused half a dozen of the applicants to be admitted, and then found that their object was to prevent the town from being plundered by the soldiery.

"The pillage has already commenced," said one of the persons, who acted as spokesman, "and unless the men are restrained, all our goods will be carried off. As faithful subjects of his Majesty King George we ought to be protected. We could not prevent the occupation of the town by the rebels, and it will be a great hardship if we suffer for their misdeeds."

"You must address yourselves to General Wills—not to me, gentlemen," said Carpenter. "He has had the conduct of the siege."

"I cannot listen to the appeal," remarked Wills, sternly. "By the rules of war the men are entitled to the plunder of a captured town, and I shall not restrain them. You profess fidelity to the king, but you have afforded every assistance to the rebels, and if you have not actually taken part with them, you have furnished them with provisions and supplies."

"We were forced to do so, general," said the others. "And we earnestly beseech you to spare our property."

Wills, however, refused to listen to them, and they departed.

Thus was the ill-fated town delivered over to pillage.

Fortunately no excesses were committed by the soldiers, all license being forbidden on pain of death.

The plunderers commenced with the shops of the goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewellers, where they expected to find the greatest quantity of valuables.

These shops were all shut up, but were quickly broken open, and stripped of their contents—plate, watches, rings, and chains being carried off.

From this booty alone the soldiers obtained several hundred pounds.

They next entered all the best private houses in Church-street and Fishergate, breaking open closets and chests, and abstracting all the plate and valuables they could find.

While one set of plunderers were thus engaged, others were similarly employed in different parts of the town.

Everywhere the houses were ransacked, and no portable article was left behind.

Not till a late hour in the day, when they had carried off all they could, did the soldiers desist from the work.

Great was the indignation of the inhabitants at this treatment, but they did not dare to resist.

However, there were no cases of intoxication, for the men were prevented by the sergeants and corporals from breaking open the cellars.

But it was a woeful day for Preston, and such as its inhabitants never thought to experience. Wills's severity caused him to be held in universal detestation.

General Carpenter did not remain long in the town. Finding it inconveniently crowded, he set out for Wigan, immediately after the surrender, with the regiments under his command.

None of his men, therefore, shared in the plunder—nor would he have allowed them to share in it.

CHAPTER XVI

Captain Shaftoe is shot

Preston might well be full. Without counting the Government troops, fifteen hundred and fifty prisoners of all ranks were detained within the town.

Some few escapes took place, and amongst those who got off was Tom Syddall. Unfortunately, he was afterwards captured.

After a few days' detention, General Forster, Lord Derwentwater, Lord Widdrington, Brigadier Mackintosh, the Scottish lords and chiefs, with the leading Northumbrian officers, were sent under a strong guard to Wigan on the way to London.

Other less important prisoners were sent to Lancaster, Chester, and Liverpool, and confined in the jails of those towns.

Six insurgent officers were detained at Preston, and subsequently tried by court-martial for desertion and taking up arms against the king.

These were Lord Charles Murray, Captain Dalziel, Major Nairn, Captain Philip Lockhart, Ensign Erskine, and Captain Shaftoe. The lives of the two first were spared, but the others were condemned to be shot next day.

As Captain Shaftoe was a great favourite in Preston, his sentence caused profound grief, and application was made for a reprieve, but General Wills refused to grant it unless Shaftoe would acknowledge that he had been guilty of rebellion, and sue for mercy from King George.

Captain Shaftoe, however, absolutely refused, declaring he had simply done his duty, and would not renounce King James, even if a pardon were offered him.

Next morning, at an early hour, the rebel officers were taken by a party of foot soldiers to a field below the church. Among the spectators, were some young women, whose distressed condition touched the hearts of all who beheld them.

A few moments were spent by the rebel officers in preparation. After they had embraced, and bade each other farewell, Major Nairn came forward, and begged of the officer in command that his eyes might not be bandaged, and that he himself might give the order to the men to fire.

Neither request was accorded.

Not till he had laid Major Nairn in his coffin, with his own hands, would Captain Lockhart submit to his fate, and when all was over, he was cared for as anxiously as his friend.

Only one was left.

As the spectators beheld the tall handsome figure standing erect before them an irrepressible murmur arose.

Looking around, Shaftoe at once discovered the young women, and as his eye settled upon one of them he called out:

"Do not forget."

A white kerchief was waved in reply.

A proud smile lighted up his handsome countenance when his eyes were bound, and his last words, distinctly heard by all were:

"Long live King James the Third."

Half a dozen bullets were instantly lodged in his breast. For a moment he stood erect, and then fell.

Thereupon a very beautiful young woman, whose features were as white as her attire, stepped quickly forward, followed by two others, and motioning back the soldiers, took up Shaftoe's body and placed it in his coffin.

This done, she who had first come forward, and who was no other than Dryope, knelt down, and fixing a look of unalterable affection upon her dead lover, kissed his brow.

Placing a few flowers beside him, she then arose and disappeared with her companions.

Thus died, and thus was mourned, one of the most gallant gentlemen of the rebel army.

BOOK X. — THE DUNGEON

CHAPTER I

The Chief Insurgent Prisoners are taken to London

SORROWFUL was the ride of the Earl of Derwentwater from Preston to Wigan; and his favourite dapple-grey steed that had borne him throughout the campaign, seemed to share his despondency.

Moreover, the weather was gloomy, and in accordance with the earl's sombre thoughts.

And, truly, there was enough to make him sad. All was lost. All his great estates would be confiscated, and the journey he had just commenced would inevitably end in the scaffold.

To add poignancy to his affliction, he could not help reflecting how different the result might have been, but for Forster's deplorable ignorance and obstinacy, and though he acquitted the general of absolute treachery, he could not help feeling that the insurgent army was entirely sacrificed by him.

These thoughts forced themselves upon the earl as he crossed the Ribble Bridge, and did not leave him till he reached Wigan.

Here Lord Derwentwater learnt that Forster had been allowed a carriage, and a seat was offered to him in the same conveyance, but he declined it—preferring to ride.

None of the Scottish lords would travel with Forster, but he found companions in his chaplain, Mr. Patten, Lord Widdrington, and Colonel Oxburgh.

The Earl of Derwentwater performed the whole journey on horseback.

From Wigan the rebel prisoners were conducted to Warrington, where a division took place, and upwards of a hundred were sent on to London, guarded by several detachments of horse. Amongst these prisoners were Sir Francis Anderton, Mr. Townley, Mr. Standish, Mr. Tyldesley, and other Lancashire gentlemen who had joined at Preston.

After a short halt at Warrington, they proceeded by slow stages to Coventry, and Lord Derwentwater in some degree recovered his spirits, being cheered by the society of Sir Francis Anderton and Mr. Townley.

At Coventry, the escort was relieved by another detachment of a hundred troopers commanded by Brigadier Ponton, by whom General Forster was deprived of his carriage.

As an excuse for the indignity thus offered to the late general, it was said that on his arrival at London an attempt would be made to rescue him by a High Church Tory mob.

But Forster fell ill and could not sit his horse, and the carriage became indispensable.

At Highgate Major General Tatton was waiting with two battalions of footguards to take charge of the prisoners who were consigned to him, and without consideration to rank, pinioned.

Each prisoner's horse had a halter placed round his neck, and was led by a grenadier.

In this ignominious manner the prisoners were conducted in four separate divisions to the Tower, Newgate, the Fleet, and the Marshalsea. Lord Derwentwater, Lord Widdrington, and the Scottish nobles were taken to the state prison, while Forster, to his great mortification, was lodged with the others in Newgate.

Drums were beaten loudly as the unfortunate captives were taken through the streets, exposed to the insults and derision of the populace, and in some cases seriously injured by the numerous missiles hurled at them.

Incessant cries resounded on all sides of "No Popish Pretender!" "Down with the rebels!" "Long live King George!" But not a single voice shouted "Long live King James!"

The composure and dignity of the Earl of Derwentwater, combined with his remarkable good looks, could not fail to produce a favourable impression upon the spectators; but quite a sensation was caused by Brigadier Mackintosh, whose gigantic figure and stern looks completely bore out all the descriptions that had been given of him.

The old warrior had been allowed to walk, so that his muscular frame could be fully seen, and though his arms were pinioned, his aspect was so terrible that none dared insult him.

CHAPTER II

The Earl of Derwentwater is imprisoned in the Devereux Tower

THE rebel lords were confined in different prison lodgings in the Tower, but were not treated with any sort of rigour, being allowed by the Lieutenant to visit each other, when accompanied by a guard.

The Earl of Derwentwater had a large chamber on the upper story of the Devereux Tower, with a cell connected with it, wherein he slept, and he passed his time wholly in reading and devotional exercises.

Thus his mind, greatly troubled at first, became gradually tranquillised.

The earl had been imprisoned for nearly a fortnight when the countess, to whom he had written, praying her to come to him, arrived in London.

She was accompanied by Dorothy Forster, who hoped to be useful to her brother, and was likewise attended by Father Norman and Newbiggin.

Without difficulty Lady Derwentwater obtained an order to visit her consort in the Tower, and was furthermore permitted to bring Father Norman with her.

It was a very sad meeting, but the frame of mind attained by the earl enabled him to support it, and to offer the countess consolation.

Though scarcely indulging a hope, Lord Derwentwater was not unwilling that every effort should be made to obtain a pardon for him, for he could not deny, when gazing at the countess, that life was still dear to him.

Father Norman, however, who feared the worst, urged him to wean his heart as much as possible from earth, and fix it upon heaven.

This the earl earnestly strove to do, and he was greatly assisted by the good priest. His life had always been devout, and now he felt the inexpressible comfort derived from religious observances.

Meanwhile, the countess was using all her efforts to procure her husband a pardon, but she was deterred from applying in the highest quarter, being informed that the king was greatly incensed against the rebel lords, and would not listen to her.

Immediately after the meeting of Parliament, General Forster was expelled from the House of Commons, and the English and Scottish noblemen concerned in the rebellion were impeached of high treason.

All pleaded guilty, except the Earl of Wintoun, who petitioned for a delay. They were next conveyed by water from the Tower to Westminster Hall, and being brought into the court, presided over by Lord Chancellor Cowper, as Lord High Steward, received sentence of death.

On this occasion the noble prisoners conducted themselves with great firmness and dignity. Nor did the crowd insult them as they were taken back to the barge.

Many spectators indeed regarded them with sympathy, but did not dare to make any demonstration in their favour.

The Countess of Derwentwater no longer hesitated. Accompanied by the Duchesses of Cleveland and Bolton, and several other ladies of the highest rank, she was introduced by the Dukes of Richmond and St. Albans into the king's bedchamber, and flinging herself at his majesty's feet, addressed him in French, imploring his clemency for her husband.

The king raised her immediately, and said in an inflexible voice:

"What has the Earl of Derwentwater done to merit clemency on my part? He has been guilty of a most heinous treason. He has set up a Popish Pretender. He has raised my subjects in rebellion—has made war against me—and now that he is vanquished, he sues humbly for mercy. I cannot—will not pardon him. I look upon him as the guiltiest of the rebel lords."

"Oh! say not so, my liege!" supplicated the countess. "His nature is loyal and generous."

"He has not proved loyal to me," cried the king. "He is a traitor—a vile traitor—and I will not pardon him. No more, madame! You plead in vain. I pity you—but I cannot help you. The Earl of Derwentwater must die."

As she still continued to clasp his hand, and bathe it with her tears, the king signed to the Duke of Richmond, who raised her and took her away.

This was not the only effort made by the unhappy countess.

She subsequently went to the lobby of the House of Peers, accompanied by the Countess of Nithsdale, Lady Nairn, and many other ladies of distinction, but their petition was refused.

The Countess of Derwentwater was filled with despair when she had to communicate this sad news to the earl, but he bore it firmly.

"I am sorry you knelt to the usurper," he said.

"I am the guiltiest of all the insurgent lords in his eyes, because I am most attached to King James, and because King James is most attached to me. You have promised too much for me, sweetheart. I have never sworn allegiance to the Hanoverian usurper, and never will. I might engage not to conspire against him, but I refuse to serve him."

"What is to be done?" cried the countess, despairingly.

"Nothing," replied the earl. "I forbid you to make any further appeal to the tyrant. My death is resolved on."

"I cannot think otherwise, daughter," observed Father Norman, who was present.

"Perhaps your escape may be accomplished?" cried the countess eagerly.

"That is wholly different," said the earl. "If you can aid in my deliverance, I shall rejoice. But I fear the attempt will not be successful."

"Wherefore not?" said the countess.

"Because I believe that my destiny is otherwise," rejoined the earl.

"Yield not to such fancies, my son," said Father Norman. "Nor let any scruple hinder you from freeing yourself, if you can, from the tyrant's power. Break his bonds I counsel you, and escape from captivity and death. You may still be able to serve King James, and the great services you have rendered him, and the sacrifices you have made for him, may be rewarded."

"Whatever is done, must be done quickly," said the earl. "The time approaches when escape will no longer be possible—unless," he added, with a strange smile, "I could walk, like Saint Denis, with my head off."

Though the earl never quitted the Devereux Tower except for the scaffold, two remarkable escapes occurred from adjoining fortifications, to which we shall refer.

CHAPTER III

The Earl of Nithsdale's Escape

HAVING vainly solicited a pardon for her husband, the Countess of Nithsdale, a woman of great courage, as well as of great personal attractions, resolved to make an attempt to liberate him.

Before putting her project in execution she found a place of refuge, where the earl might remain safely concealed till he could embark for France.

This done, on the last day it was thought he had to live, she drove to the Tower gate in a hackney-coach, and dismissed the vehicle.

She was accompanied by two female attendants, and seemed so utterly prostrated by grief, that she needed their assistance.

Her attendants wore hoods and cloaks, but not in such a manner as to appear like a disguise.

The earl was confined in a distant fortification situated in the north-west angle of the inner ward, and it seemed certain that the countess would never have got there without support.

A sentinel was stationed at the entrance of the prison-lodging, but as the party were preceded by a jailer they passed without question.

When the massive door of his prison-chamber was unlocked, Lord Nithsdale came forth from a small inner room, or cell, and perceiving his wife uttered a cry, and clasped her to his breast.

Shortly afterwards, the jailer who was stationed outside, was summoned by one of the female attendants. She told him her services were no longer required, and after a very slight scrutiny he suffered her to depart.

But this active confidante had stayed long enough to divest herself of an additional dress with which she was provided.

This dress was meant as a disguise for the earl, while it was intended that her fellow-servant should personate the afflicted countess.

The exchanges of attire were quickly made.

The earl, whose slight figure and small stature suited the part he had to play, was transformed into a lady's maid; and the representative of the countess was duly prepared for the part she had to enact.

All was now ready, but it was deemed prudent to wait nearly an hour, and it will be guessed what anxiety was felt in the interval.

At length, the jailer was called.

On unlocking the door, he beheld the earl as he thought, in an attitude of despair, leaning on the table, with his face covered by his hands.

The unhappy countess was overwhelmed by grief, and had to be led forth by her attendant, who was muffled up in her hood to hide her own tears.

The jailer's stony heart was touched by so much grief. He let them out without a word, fastened the door, and following them down the circular stone steps, offered in a kindly tone to conduct them to the gate.

The countess murmured her thanks, and the man marched on before them, and saved them from any interference, receiving a piece of gold for his pains, when he left them at the Bulwark Gate.

"Tell your lady," he said to the attendant, who gave him the gratuity, "that I will do all I can for his lordship to-morrow."

He would have called a coach, but they took a boat, and crossed to the other side of the river.

The first person to enter the prison-chamber after the earl's flight was the Lieutenant of the Tower.

He was filled with consternation on perceiving that its sole occupant was a very handsome woman.

"The Countess of Nithsdale here!" he exclaimed. "The earl then has escaped?"

"Solely by my connivance," she replied. "No one here has been concerned in the flight."

"That remains to be ascertained," rejoined the Lieutenant. "But your ladyship's life will be responsible for that of your husband."

"My husband is safe, and that is enough for me!" cried the countess, joyfully.

"But he may be recaptured," said the Lieutenant.

"I have no uneasiness on that score," she rejoined. "My precautions have been too well taken."

"Well, I must detain your ladyship," said the Lieutenant. "And I know not what course may be pursued; but I will frankly own that I hope you may be able to rejoin your lord."

This good wish was eventually fulfilled.

CHAPTER IV

The Earl of Wintoun's Escape

ANOTHER important escape must be recounted.

In this case the noble fugitive was indebted entirely to his own exertions for deliverance.

The youth of the Earl of Wintoun was passed in a manner that might have given him extraordinary notoriety in our own time; but though he ran away to France, and disappeared for some years, his claim to the title was never disputed.

Incredible as it may seem, during this period of his career, he hired himself to a blacksmith, and served as a mere bellows-blower for some years.

At the same time he acquired considerable mechanical skill, which was subsequently improved, when he abandoned the hammer and the forge, and his talent now stood him in good stead.

He was imprisoned in the upper part of the Hall Tower, formerly, as its name imported, connected with the old palace, and the windows of his rooms looked into the inner and outer wards.

These windows were strongly grated, but Lord Wintoun derided this obstacle to escape.

Carefully concealed about his person, he had a couple of small files, and setting to work with these implements, he so nearly cut through the bars, that he could immediately remove them when needful.

The main difficulty was now overcome, but the windows were at a considerable height from the ground; and, moreover, there were sentinels both at the back and front, who must be eluded before an escape could be effected.

The Earl of Wintoun, however, was confident in his own ability to manage the matter, and did not doubt he should find an opportunity of getting off.

The opportunity occurred.

During the day a fog had prevailed in the City, and of course extended to the Tower. Indeed, it was thicker there than elsewhere.

Towards night the vapour increased in density. Not only was the White Tower completely hidden, but all the surrounding buildings were obscured. The sentinels could scarcely be distinguished on their posts. Links were lighted, but only served to make the darkness more palpable.

When the fog first came on, the Earl of Wintoun resolved to take advantage of the chance thus offered him, but he waited patiently till night.

No extra precaution seemed to be taken by the jailers, except that the entrance to the Hall Tower from the inner ward was fastened, but this mattered little, since the fugitive proposed to descend from the window looking towards the outer ward.

No sooner had the jailer paid his last visit for the night than the earl removed the bars from the window, tied a couple of sheets together and fastened them, and then listened intently for the sound of the sentinel's footsteps, who was pacing to and fro beneath.

So dark was it that Lord Wintoun could not see the man, but he could hear him, and when he judged by the sound that the sentinel was at the greatest distance, he let himself down as quickly and noiselessly as he could.

A sound reached the man's ear, for he suddenly halted, and called out, "Who goes there?"

But receiving no answer, and hearing no further noise, he did not think it needful to give the alarm.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Wintoun, who had remained perfectly quiet at this critical juncture, now stole to the further side of the ward, and crept along the edge of the wall till he got within a short distance of the Gate Tower.

Here fortune favoured him.

At the very moment of his arrival, a warder who had just come from the guard-room was opening the wicket to let out some half-dozen persons.

Without hesitation, the earl mixed with the party, and though a link was brought, he escaped without attracting the warder's attention.

But another portal had still to be passed at the opposite side of the bridge, and as Lord Wintoun was marching towards it with his companions, he felt his arm grasped, while a voice whispered in his ear:

"You are one of the rebel lords. Your life is worth a thousand pounds. I must have that sum, or I will prevent your escape."

"You shall have the money," replied the earl, in the same tone.

"Enough," said the man. "I know you will fulfil your promise. Take that letter. It will tell you who I am."

But for this timely aid the earl might have been stopped by the guard at the Middle Tower.

However, he soon got clear of the fortress, and passing through the Bulwark Gate, plunged into the fog that enveloped Tower Hill.

CHAPTER V

General Forster's Escape from Newgate

A VERY jovial time the prisoners in Newgate had of it.

Supplied with plenty of money by their friends, they could obtain whatever they wanted; and better wine and better punch were drunk in Newgate than at any tavern in town.

The prison, indeed, resembled nothing so much as a large inn, where the numerous guests were feasting and carousing from morning till night.

The majority of the prisoners persuaded themselves that in consequence of their surrender they should be very leniently treated, but come what might, they resolved to make the most of the present moment.

Ordinarily a sort of barrack, called the King's Bench Ward, was occupied by debtors, but in consequence of the excessively crowded state of the jail, this large chamber, which was partitioned off for beds, served as a dormitory for a portion of the rebels, while they dined, supped, drank punch, smoked pipes, played cards, dice, and draughts, in the Debtor's Hall.

Driven from their quarters, the luckless debtors took refuge on the felons' side or in the cellar.

Private bed-chambers, and small private apartments, for which enormous fees were demanded by the governor, Mr. Pitts, were provided for some of the insurgent leaders.

The best bedroom in the prison, which had formerly been occupied by Lord Russell and Count Koningsmark, and more recently by Count Guiscard, was let to General Forster. Charles Radclyffe, and Colonel Oxburgh, were each furnished with a good room, but Brigadier Mackintosh did not care how he was accommodated.

The chief officers had their own mess-table, at which they were very well served, and friends constantly dined with them. The prison, indeed, was as full of visitors as inmates, and the prisoners were just as cheerful as their guests.

A great deal of sympathy was felt for the unfortunate Jacobite gentlemen by the fair sex, who flocked to Newgate to express it.

The prisoners were highly gratified by their attention, and exceedingly delighted to see them, and the lodge was so beset by sedan-chairs and coaches, and so thronged by ladies in fine dresses and lloo-masks that it looked more like the entrance to a masquerade than the approach to a gloomy dungeon.

Notwithstanding his reverses, and though he was severely censured by his own party, General Forster maintained his cheerfulness.

On Dorothy's arrival in town he was constantly visited by her, and it is probable she suggested a plan of escape to him.

It is certain she brought him a large sum of money. How it was employed can only be conjectured, though we do not think we shall be far wrong in asserting that a considerable portion of it found its way into the pockets of Mr. Pitts.

By whatever means he procured them, and, as we have intimated, suspicion attached to the governor, Forster obtained false keys, and they were successfully employed by him immediately after a bill of high treason had been found against him.

The comedy, it must be owned, was well played. On the night of his evasion, Forster invited Sir Francis Anderton, who was likewise a prisoner in Newgate, to sup with him, and they sat together carousing to a late hour.

They were still enjoying themselves when the governor came in to remind them that it was not far from midnight. Forster begged him to sit down, as he wished him to taste some very fine old brandy, and stepped into the adjoining chamber to fetch the bottle.

Apparently he could not find what he sought, for he did not immediately return, and the governor, feigning to become alarmed, went to look after him.

The prisoner was gone, and had evidently made his exit by the door communicating with the passage, which ought to have been locked outside.

Indeed it was locked, as was the door of the other room, for when the governor hurried thither, and tried to get out, he found himself a prisoner.

The consternation into which Mr. Pitts was thrown by this discovery, if not real, was extremely well simulated, and imposed upon Sir Francis Anderton, who, however, laughed very heartily.

The governor knocked against the door, and shouted loudly for assistance, but some minutes elapsed before the turnkey came, and then it was found that a double-lock had been placed outside.

Search was made for the fugitive, but no traces whatever could be found of him.

Every door through which he had to pass had been unlocked and re-fastened, and if their statements were to be credited, not one of the turnkeys had seen him pass out of the prison.

How he got through the lodge—how he passed the usually vigilant porter at the gate—has never been satisfactorily explained!

But it is certain he proceeded to Blackfriars, where he found Dorothy waiting for him.

She had hired a boat for Gravesend, whence her brother embarked before dawn for France. Dorothy, however, did not accompany him in his flight.

A reward of one thousand pounds was immediately offered for Forster's apprehension, but he was safe on the other side of the Channel.

Mr. Pitts was tried for his life at the Old Bailey for conniving at Forster's escape, but was acquitted.

CHAPTER VI

Brigadier Mackintosh's Escape

OWING to his prodigious strength and daring Brigadier Mackintosh was more feared than any other of the rebels confined in Newgate, and it was deemed necessary to place him in irons.

Highly indignant at such treatment, he complained of it in the strongest terms to the governor, but was told it was done by the express order of Lord Townshend.

"His lordship wishes to inflict a disgrace upon me," he said; "but he simply dishonours himself by treating a Highland commander like a common felon. Tell his lordship his contemptible fetters will not prevent my escape."

After Forster's escape, which had caused an extraordinary sensation throughout London, the vigilance of the jailers was doubled, and Brigadier Mackintosh delayed the execution of the daring project he had conceived till the latest moment.

Not till the night before his trial was fixed to take place at Westminster Hall did he make the attempt.

Already he had partly sawn through the hateful fetters, so that he could cast them off in a moment, and they were now rather advantageous to him than otherwise, as they procured him greater freedom.

Colonel Mackintosh, who was likewise a prisoner, Charles Wogan, Robert Hepburn of Keith, with several others, chiefly Scotsmen, were to be partners in the flight, but the entire conduct of the enterprise was left to the brigadier himself.

About eleven o'clock at night, Mackintosh, having freed himself from his irons, cautiously descended the stairs leading from the upper ward to the press-yard, and stationed himself at the door.

His friends remained in the dormitory, but were ready to join him in a moment.

Presently, the door was unlocked as he expected it would be, by the governor's black servant, Caliban, bearing a lantern.

Caliban was a powerful fellow, but no match for the brigadier, who seized him by the throat with a gripe like that of a vice, and hurled him to the ground.

The cries of the half-strangled black brought the governor, and Mr. Ballard, the head turnkey, to the spot.

They were struck with amazement at seeing the brigadier, but did not dare to grapple with him, now that he was free from his irons.

Leaving them to be dealt with by his followers, who were now thronging the press-room, the brigadier hurried on—his object being to disarm the sentinel.

Before the man could raise the musket to his shoulder, Mackintosh sprang upon him like a tiger, and forced the weapon from his grasp, while young Hepburn pinioned the man's arms.

Meantime, Ballard had been deprived of his keys, and he and Mr. Pitts were thrust through the door leading to the staircase from the press-room, and locked out.

The porter in the lodge alone remained—at least, it was thought so by the fugitives—but he chanced to have a watchman with him at the time, and this gossiping guardian of the night, hearing the disturbance, endeavoured to rush out and spring his rattle.

But he was caught and deprived of his coat, lantern, and hat by the brigadier, who thought the disguise might prove serviceable to some of his followers.

In another minute the fugitives were out in the street, which was fortunately quite deserted at the time, and the lodge gate being locked outside, immediate pursuit was impossible.

Bidding each other a hasty farewell, the fugitives then separated, each seeking the asylum which he knew had been provided for him.

Mr. Hepburn was uncertain where to go, when a light in a window at that late hour attracted his attention, and he perceived an antique silver tankard of peculiar shape, which he knew belonged to his family.

Without hesitation he entered the house and found his wife, who had placed the cup in the window, hoping it might catch his eye.

Forster's flight from Newgate was completely eclipsed by that of Brigadier Mackintosh and his companions.

That the first escape had been effected by bribery, very few persons doubted; but this was a bold dashing affair, well calculated to excite public admiration, and nothing else was talked about for a few days.

As previously mentioned, the trial of the rebels was to have taken place in Westminster Hall on the following day. The court and juries met, but—but not till life was extinct, he was drawn and quartered, and his head fixed on the market cross.

Such was the punishment inflicted upon all the rebels of lower rank, who were not transported to the colonies.

BOOK XI. — THE SCAFFOLD

CHAPTER I

The last Parting between the Earl of Derwentwater and the Countess

THE last sad parting between the Earl of Derwentwater and the countess must now be detailed.

The interview took place in the prison-chamber in the Devereux Tower, and on the day before the execution.

After his condemnation, the earl had passed most of his time in prayer, and had so completely succeeded in reconciling himself to his fate, that he forbade the countess to make any further efforts for his deliverance. Indeed, after the escapes that had taken place, any fresh attempt would have been futile.

The unhappy countess was staying at Dagenham Park, an old manorial mansion, near Romford in Essex, belonging to a Roman Catholic family, and she came over every day to the Tower, accompanied by Father Norman, in the hope of seeing her husband.

Latterly, permission had been refused her, but, on the day before the execution, she was allowed to visit him with the priest.

Not having seen him for a few days, she was much struck by the change in his appearance. His countenance had a very serene expression. All trouble had vanished from it, and it was plain from his looks that his thoughts were fixed on high.

"You have no longer any fear of death, I perceive, my son," said Father Norman.

"I have no desire for life, father," he replied. "I am better prepared to die than I might be at a future time, were my days prolonged."

"I shall soon rejoin you, my lord," said the countess.

"No, live!—I would have you live," he cried. "You are young, beautiful— and I trust have many years of happiness before you. I would not have them abridged. But think of me always—think how fondly I have loved you—think how entirely happy I have been in your society. Never for a single moment has

my heart swerved from its devotion to you. Fate has separated us for a time—but it was against my will. My love has been sacrificed to my sense of duty."

"I know it, my dearest lord," she cried, with a look of anguish. "Oh! how bitterly I reproach myself that I urged you to join this fatal expedition. Would I could recall the past! Would we could be at Dilston together as in former days! Never! never should you leave it! But I must not speak of the past."

"Nay, it does not pain me," said the earl, tenderly. "Let us quit this dungeon for a moment in thought, and transport ourselves to Dilston. Let us stand together—as we have so often stood—upon the terrace, and gaze upon the far-spreading prospect. Ah! the scene rises before me, as I speak! We are in the glen, wandering by the side of the stream. We are in the forest, and I enter the Maiden's Walk, and receive a warning."

"What more?" cried the countess.

"Nothing," replied the earl. "The vision has disappeared. Alas! my sweet love, Dilston will be yours no more. The house you have brightened with your presence will be taken from you. I cannot bequeath it to you. Yet I should wish to be laid with my fathers in the vault beneath the little chapel."

"It shall be done, my dearest lord," she cried, earnestly. "Your wishes shall be fulfilled."

"I do not think that resting-place will be denied me," said the earl.

"Have no fear, my lord," said Father Norman. "The malice of your enemies will not extend to that length. All shall be done as you desire. When the tragedy is over, the body shall be conveyed by slow stages—and only by night—to Dilston. During the day it shall rest in some Catholic chapel, and masses shall be said."

"I will accompany it, and see the last sad rites performed," said the countess.

"You give me inexpressible comfort," said the earl. "It was the sole request I had to prefer."

Shortly afterwards the earl retired with Father Norman into the cell adjoining the prison-chamber, where the priest heard his confession, and gave him absolution.

During this interval, the countess knelt down and prayed fervently.

At length, the earl came forth, and she arose, perceiving from his looks that the moment of parting was come.

He extended his arms, and flying towards him, she was clasped to his breast.

Thus they remained for some minutes amid a silence, broken only by her sobs.

He then made a slight effort to loosen her embrace, but she clung to him even more tenaciously.

"We must part, my best beloved," he said, printing a kiss upon her brow.

"Oh! I knew not the anguish of this hour," she cried. "Would my heart would break and relieve me!"

"For your husband's sake, calm yourself, dear daughter, I implore you!" said the priest.

But her grief was too violent to be restrained, and a paroxysm ensued that found vent in a fearful shriek, that burst through the grated windows of the fortification, and almost froze the blood of such as heard it.

She then became insensible.

On regaining consciousness, she no longer beheld her husband. She had parted from him for ever. She had been carefully removed to the Lieutenant's lodgings, where restoratives were applied.

As soon as her strength permitted, she left the Tower with Father Norman, and returned to Dagenham Park; feeling as if her heart were broken.

CHAPTER II

How Lord Widdrington took a last Leave of the Earl of Derwentwater

Gloomy was the morn, and in unison with the sombre deed about to take place.

Already a scaffold, draped in black, on which the Earl of Derwentwater and Lord Kenmure were to pay the forfeit of their lives, had been erected on Tower-hill.

At an early hour three strong detachments of Life Guards marched from Whitehall, and posted themselves round the scaffold.

At the same time, a crowd of curious observers of both sexes began to assemble, and increased so rapidly that within an hour the whole summit of the eminence was densely thronged.

Some sympathy was expressed for the unfortunate lords about to suffer, but it would almost seem that the majority of the spectators were drawn thither by curiosity rather than by any other feeling.

Like all other crowds they exhibited great impatience because they supposed they were kept waiting, and manifested their displeasure by groaning at the Life-Guards, who, however, treated them with supreme contempt.

Not till ten o'clock did the sheriffs make their appearance, and way was cleared for them by their guard through the crowd. They proceeded to the Transport Office—a building at the rear of the scaffold—where rooms were prepared for those about to die.

At the same time, a bell within the Tower began to toll, and almost immediately afterwards, a party of grenadiers issued from the Bulwark Gate, followed by two hackney-coaches in which were the condemned nobles and their chaplains.

With Lord Derwentwater was Father Norman; with Lord Kenmure was the Reverend Mr. Sharp, a Presbyterian minister.

On either side of the coaches marched javelin men to keep off the crowd.

Had not Lord Derwentwater been attended by a Romish priest, his youth and good looks would have excited extraordinary sympathy among the beholders, but the sight of Father Norman irritated them, and they expressed their hatred of Popery by hootings. Lord Derwentwater seemed wholly undisturbed by the clamour.

Lord Kenmure met with a much better reception, and Mr. Sharp contrived to let the mob know that his lordship held Popery in abomination.

In this manner the two lords were conducted to the Transport Office, where they alighted, and were separately conducted to their rooms.

In the room prepared for the Earl of Derwentwater, Lord Widdrington, who had been reprieved, was waiting to take a last leave of his friend, and was so deeply affected that Father Norman deemed it advisable that the interview should not be prolonged.

While bidding farewell to the earl, Lord Widdrington said, in accents of profound emotion:

"Were I to live a thousand years I should never forget you! You will always remain to me an example of fortitude and resignation. Your heroism makes me regret that I have accepted life, since it would be a privilege to die with you. I need not wish you firmness at the last, for I know you will not want it."

With this, he embraced him, and left the room.

CHAPTER III

How the Earl of Derwentwater was beheaded

LORD DERWENTWATER then addressed himself to his devotions, and remained in earnest prayer with Father Norman, till the hour approached, when the good priest thus recommended his soul to heaven.

"When thy soul shall depart from thy body, may thy Redeemer appear to thee, and appoint thee a place amongst those who are to stand before him for ever!"

The earl then arose, and since the priest was not allowed to be with him to the last, he bade him an eternal adieu.

Just then, the door was opened, and Sir John Fryer, one of the sheriffs, came in, and, with a grave salutation, inquired if he was ready.

"Perfectly," replied Lord Derwentwater.

Casting a farewell look at the good priest he then followed the sheriff, who marched before him with his men, through two lines of foot guards to the scaffold.

All was prepared.

The executioner was standing beside the block with the axe in his hand.

Not far from him were two assistants, and near them was the coffin.

A slight murmur arose from the vast concourse as the Earl of Derwentwater appeared on the scaffold, but it was a murmur of admiration—all being struck by his slight, graceful figure, seen to the greatest advantage in his black velvet attire.

"May I say a few words to the assemblage, Sir John?" asked the earl.

"Assuredly, my lord," replied the sheriff.

The earl then advanced towards the rail of the scaffold, and as it was evident he was about to address them, the concourse became instantly silent, and every eye was fixed upon him.

In a clear voice, that was heard afar, and vibrated through the breasts of all near to him, he thus spoke:

"Being in a few minutes about to appear before the tribunal of Heaven, where, though most unworthy, I hope to find mercy which I have not found from men in power, I have endeavoured to make my peace by humbly begging pardon for all the sins of my life.

"I have never had any other sovereign save King James the Third, whom I have served from infancy; and if his religion had been different from mine, I should still have done all I could for him, as my ancestors did for his predecessors. I intended wrong to none, and only to serve my king and country, and if the sacrifice of my life could contribute to that end, I shall consider it well paid.

"I die a Roman Catholic, and in perfect charity with all the world, even with those most instrumental in my destruction, and I hope to be forgiven the trespasses of my youth by the Father of Infinite Mercy, into whose hands I commend my spirit."

Delivered as we have described, this brief address produced a powerful effect upon the multitude, and however much they might differ from the earl, they could not help admiring his constancy.

As he retired, a loud wail arose from the female portion of the spectators.

"My lord," observed Sir John Fryer, "I must beg you now to prepare yourself."

"Grant me a few moments more," said the earl.

And the request being accorded, he knelt down and prayed fervently.

Shortly afterwards, he arose, and stepped towards the executioner, one of whose men would have helped him to take off a portion of his attire, but he refused the assistance.

The executioner then besought his forgiveness.

"With all my heart," replied the earl. "I forgive all my enemies—even the most malicious of them—and I forgive you."

Seeing the man look hard at him, he added:

"Thou wilt find a purse in my pocket. 'Tis thine with its contents."

"I thank your lordship. Will you now try how the block fits you?"

Thereupon the earl made the essay.

Apparently satisfied, he turned to the executioner, and said:

"Is thine axe sharp?"

"So sharp that it will take off a head at a blow. I pray your lordship to feel the edge."

"Nay, I shall feel it soon enough," replied the earl with a slight shudder.

After a momentary pause, he added:

"I would die with the holiest name on my lips. When I have thrice pronounced it, strike!"

"My lord, I will not fail," said the headsman.

Laying himself upon the block, the earl then ejaculated:

"Lord Jesu! receive my spirit! Lord Jesu! be merciful to me! Lord Jesu!— "

At this juncture the axe descended.

Next moment the head was held up to the concourse, while the executioner called out in trumpet tones:

"Behold the head of a traitor! God save King George!"

An irrepressible groan broke from the concourse.

The body was instantly placed in the coffin, and conveyed to a hearse, which was waiting for it at a short distance.

But the head was disposed of differently. Wrapped in black baize by the direction of Sir John Fryer, it was taken to a hackney-coach, stationed near the hearse, and delivered to a lady, habited in deep mourning, and shrouded in a veil. With her was a priest.

No sooner did she receive the terrible bundle than she raised her veil, and pressed her lips to it.

The hearse and the coach then quitted Tower Hill, and were driven slowly to Dagenham Park.

But the headsman had only half finished his task.

When fresh sawdust had been strewn on the gory scaffold, another head—that of Lord Kenmure—was fitted to the block, and the axe again fell.

CHAPTER IV

What happened in the Chapel at Dagenham Park

NOT till the second night after the earl's body had been brought to Dagenham Park did the countess commence her journey to Dilston.

During the interval the coffin was placed upon a catafalque in the chapel attached to the mansion, and tapers were lighted around it—masses being said for the repose of the soul of the departed by Father Norman.

The head had now been replaced by the body, but the countess would not allow the coffin to be closed, and at night she was left alone in the chapel.

After praying for some time she arose and gazing at her dead lord, invoked him either to appear to her, or give her some sign that he was conscious of her presence.

But the pale features retained their fixed expression.

After awhile, she sat down, and despite all her efforts to resist it, sleep stole over her.

Then she dreamed that the earl stood beside her, looking as he had done in life.

After contemplating her for a few minutes with a look that seemed to fascinate her he said in low solemn accents:

"Weep no more for me, Anna! weep no more! my suffering is over. But let my last wishes be fulfilled. Till my body is laid where I have desired my spirit will wander near its earthly tabernacle. Then it will rest."

"Give me some token that I have really beheld you, my lord," she said.

"Look at my right hand, and you will be satisfied," was the reply.

Thereupon the phantom vanished.

Not for some hours could she rouse herself from the heavy slumber into which she had fallen. She then recalled the vision, but thought it must have been a dream.

To convince herself of the truth she went to the coffin, and raised the right hand of the corpse.

On one of the fingers was a ring which she had not observed before. Removing it, she placed it on her own finger.

Reluctant to allude to the mysterious occurrence, she did not even mention it to Father Norman.

Next day she was joined by Dorothy Forster, who desired to accompany her to Dilston.

CHAPTER V

The Journey to Dilston

AT the head of the funeral procession rode the faithful Newbiggin.

Then followed the hearse drawn by four horses, with the coachman and two assistants, and lastly came the countess in a carriage likewise drawn by four horses. With her were Dorothy Forster and Father Norman.

The night was dark on which they set forth, and they tracked many weary miles through country roads, making slow progress, but meeting with no hindrance, till towards dawn, they halted at a large mansion near Chelmsford belonging to a Roman Catholic gentleman, where they halted and remained during the day—the coffin being removed from the hearse, and placed in a small private chapel, where tapers were lighted, and masses said as at Dagenham.

Here the day was passed.

On the second night, they proceeded to Cambridge—and on the third to a mansion near Saint Ives, in Huntingdonshire.

Thence they moved on to Peterborough.

In this manner they pursued the road towards Newcastle, journeying entirely by night, and halting during the day at some Roman Catholic mansion, where hospitality was afforded them, and where religious rites could be performed.

It was a long, long journey. But the countess did not find it wearisome. Rather she grieved to think it must soon be ended.

She derived great solace from the affectionate companionship of Dorothy Forster.

Seven nights had thus been passed in travel, and they were proceeding on the eighth night from Thirsk towards Darlington, when a horseman rode up to the carriage.

At first his appearance caused alarm, but fear quickly gave way to surprise when they found it was Charles Radclyffe. They knew he had escaped from prison, but supposed he was in France.

He entered into no explanation then, but contented himself with saying that he should accompany them to Dilston, and rode on with Newbiggin.

At Darlington he had a private interview with Dorothy, and told her that he could not leave England without seeing her again, and besought her to accompany him in his flight.

"This is not the moment to urge my suit," he said; "but I have no option. Will you fly with me? Will you embrace the fortunes of a ruined man?"

"I cannot decide now," she replied. "You shall have an answer at Dilston."

From her grave manner Charles had very little hope of a favourable response.

The journey occupied two more nights, but on the third morning, they came in sight of Dilston.

Newbiggin had ridden on to prepare the household, and Charles Radclyffe did not think it safe to accompany the procession, though fully intending to be present at the interment.

CHAPTER VI

The Interment

THOUGH it was known that the earl's estates were forfeited, the confiscation had not yet taken place, and, consequently, the household still remained at Dilston.

Ever since the execution they had been filled with superstitious dread.

On the evening of that terrible day, most remarkable Northern Lights were seen, and the reflection of the crimson sky seemed to turn the water of the brook in the haunted glen to blood.

Next day, a violent tempest occurred, accompanied by thunder and lightning.

Several trees were blown down, and the finest oak in the park was struck—the trunk being completely shattered.

All the household was now assembled to watch the funeral procession as it made its way slowly up the avenue.

Groans and lamentations were heard when the hearse arrived at the gate, and the coffin was taken out, and conveyed to the little chapel.

Not till this had been done did the countess and Dorothy enter the mansion.

Completely prostrated, they strove to prepare themselves for the closing ceremonial that was to take place at midnight.

A doleful place was Dilston during that day. Its inmates were bowed down with grief, and moved about like ghosts.

All needful preparations for the interment were made by Newbiggin.

The vault was opened. The coffin was laid upon a bier not far from the altar, and tapers were lighted around it.

Many of the old servants and dependents, among whom were Nicholas Ribbleton and Nathan Blacklaw, went to the chapel to pray beside the body of their lord.

Not till night did Charles Radclyffe appear at the castle.

He sought out Dorothy and said to her:

"I shall quit Dilston immediately after the interment. Will you go with me?"

"I cannot leave Lady Derwentwater," she replied.

Nothing more was said.

At midnight the little chapel was filled with the late earl's retainers.

The countess and Dorothy knelt in front of the altar, and Charles Radclyffe and Newbiggin were stationed near the coffin.

The solemn service was performed by Father Norman, and amid the tears of all present the last Lord of Derwentwater was laid with his ancestors.

Tantum valet Amor Regis et Patriae.

THE END