

other, melted him almost to tears. Yet apprehensive that his forbearance to obey would be more alarming; he repeated in a faltering and low voice the following lines:

Where'er a casque that suits this sword is found,
With perils is thy daughter compals'd round:
Alfonso's blood alone can save the maid,
And quiet a long-restless prince's shade.

What is there in these lines, said Theodore impatiently, that affects these princesses? Why were they to be shocked by a mysterious delicacy, that has so little foundation? Your words are rude, young man, said the marquis; and though fortune has favoured you once—My honoured lord, said Isabella, who resented Theodore's warmth, which she perceived was dictated by his sentiments for Matilda, discompose not yourself for the glozing of a peasant's son: he forgets the reverence he owes you; but he is not accustom'd—Hippolita, concerned at the heat that had arisen, checked Theodore for his boldness, but with an air acknowledging his zeal; and, changing the conversation, demanded of Frederic where he had left her lord? As the marquis was going to reply, they heard a noise without; and rising to enquire the cause, Manfred, Jerome, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumour of what had happened, entered the chamber. Manfred advanced hastily towards Frederic's bed to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumstances of the combat; when starting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried, Ha! what art thou, thou dreadful spectre! Is my hour come?—My dearest, gracious lord, cried Hippolita, clasping him in her arms, what is it you see? Why do you fix your eye-balls thus?—What! cried Manfred breathless—dost thou see nothing, Hippolita? Is this ghastly phantom sent to me alone—to me, who did not—For mercy's sweetest self, my lord, said Hippolita, resume your soul, command your reason. There is none here but we, your friends.—What, is not that Alfonso? cried Manfred: dost thou not see him? Can it be my brain's delirium?—This! my lord, said Hippolita; this is Theodore, the youth who has been so unfortunate—Theodore! said Manfred mournfully, and striking his forehead—Theodore, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of Manfred.—But how comes he here? and how comes he in armour? I believe he went in search

of Isabella, said Hippolita. Of Isabella? said Manfred, relapsing into rage—Yes, yes, that is not doubtful—But how did he escape from durance in which I left him? Was it Isabella, or this hypocritical old friar, that procured his enlargement?—And would a parent be criminal, my lord, said Theodore, if he meditated the deliverance of his child? Jerome, amazed to hear himself in a manner accused by his son, and without foundation, knew not what to think. He could not comprehend how Theodore had escaped, how he came to be armed, and to encounter Frederic. Still he would not venture to ask any questions that might tend to inflame Manfred's wrath against his son. Jerome's silence convinced Manfred that he had contrived Theodore's release.—And is it thus, thou ungrateful old man, said the prince, addressing himself to the friar, that thou repayest mine and Hippolita's bounties? And not content with traversing my heart's nearest wishes, thou armeest thy bastard, and bringest him into my own castle to insult me!—My lord, said Theodore, you wrong my father: nor he nor I is capable of harbouring a thought against your peace. Is it insolence thus to surrender myself to your highness's pleasure? added he, laying his sword respectfully at Manfred's feet. Behold my bosom; strike, my lord, if you suspect that a disloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a sentiment engraven on my heart, that does not venerate you and yours. The grace and favour with which Theodore uttered these words, interested every person present in his favour. Even Manfred was touched—yet still possessed with his resemblance to Alfonso, his admiration was dashed with secret horror. Rise, said he; thy life is not my present purpose.—But tell me thy history, and how thou camest connected with this old traitor here. My lord! said Jerome eagerly.—Peace, impostor! said Manfred; I will not have him prompted. My lord, said Theodore, I want no assistance; my story is very brief. I was carried at five years of age to Algiers with my mother, who had been taken by corsairs from the coast of Sicily. She died of grief in less than a twelvemonth.—The tears gushed from Jerome's eyes, on whose countenance a thousand anxious passions stood expressed. Before she died, continued Theodore, she bound a writing about my arm under my garments, which told me I was the son of the count Falconara.—It is most true, said Jerome; I am that wretched father.—Again I enjoin thee silence, said Manfred: proceed. I remained in slavery, said Theodore, until within these two years, when attending on my master in his cruizes, I was delivered by a christian vessel, which overpowered the pirate; and discovering myself
to

to the captain, he generously put me on shore in Sicily. But alas! instead of finding a father, I learned that his estate, which was situated on the coast, had during his absence been laid waste by the rover who had carried my mother and me into captivity: that his castle had been burnt to the ground; and that my father on his return had sold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of Naples, but where, no man could inform me. Destitute and friendless, hopeless almost of attaining the transport of a parent's embrace, I took the first opportunity of setting sail for Naples; from whence within these six days I wandered into this province, still supporting myself by the labour of my hands; nor till yester-morn did I believe that heaven had reserved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. This, my lord, is Theodore's story. I am blessed beyond my hope in finding a father; I am unfortunate beyond my desert in having incurred your highness's displeasure. He ceased. A murmur of approbation gently arose from the audience. This is not all, said Frederic; I am bound in honour to add what he suppresses. Though he is modest, I must be generous—he is one of the bravest youths on christian ground. He is warm too; and from the short knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myself for his veracity: if what he reports of himself were not true, he would not utter it—and for me, youth, I honour a frankness which becomes thy birth. But now, and thou didst offend me; yet the noble blood which flows in thy veins may well be allowed to boil out, when it has so recently traced itself to its source. Come, my lord, [turning to Manfred] if I can pardon him, surely you may: it is not the youth's fault, if you took him for a spectre. This bitter taunt galled the soul of Manfred. If beings from another world, replied he haughtily, have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do; nor could a stripling's arm—My lord, interrupted Hippolita, your guest has occasion for repose; shall we not leave him to his rest? Saying this, and taking Manfred by the hand, she took leave of Frederic, and led the company forth. The prince, not sorry to quit a conversation which recalled to mind the discovery he had made of his most secret sensations, suffered himself to be conducted to his own apartment, after permitting Theodore, though under engagement to return to the castle on the morrow, [a condition the young man gladly accepted] to retire with his father to the convent. Matilda and Isabella were too much occupied with their own reflections, and too little content with each other, to wish for farther converse that night. They

separated each to her chamber, with more expressions of ceremony, and fewer of affection, than had passed between them since their childhood.

If they parted with small cordiality, they did but meet with greater impatience as soon as the sun was risen. Their minds were in a situation that excluded sleep, and each recollected a thousand questions which she wished she had put to the other overnight. Matilda reflected that Isabella had been twice delivered by Theodore in very critical situations, which she could not believe accidental. His eyes, it was true, had been fixed on her in Frederic's chamber; but that might have been to disguise his passion for Isabella from the fathers of both. It were better to clear this up. She wished to know the truth, lest she should wrong her friend by entertaining a passion for Isabella's lover. Thus jealousy prompted, and at the same time borrowed an excuse from friendship to justify its curiosity.

Isabella, not less restless, had better foundation for her suspicions. Both Theodore's tongue and eyes had told her his heart was engaged, it was true—yet perhaps Matilda might not correspond to his passion—She had ever appeared insensible to love; all her thoughts were set on heaven—Why did I dissuade her? said Isabella to herself; I am punished for my generosity—But when did they meet? where?—It cannot be; I have deceived myself—Perhaps last night was the first time they ever beheld each other—it must be some other object that has prepossessed his affections—If it is, I am not so unhappy as I thought; if it is not my friend Matilda—How! can I stoop to wish for the affection of a man, who rudely and unnecessarily acquainted me with his indifference? and that at the very moment in which common courtesy demanded at least expressions of civility. I will go to my dear Matilda, who will confirm me in this becoming pride—Man is false—I will advise with her on taking the veil: she will rejoice to find me in this disposition; and I will acquaint her that I no longer oppose her inclination for the cloister. In this frame of mind, and determined to open her heart entirely to Matilda, she went to that princess's chamber, whom she found already dressed, and leaning pensively on her arm. This attitude, so correspondent to what she felt herself, revived Isabella's suspicions, and destroyed the confidence she had purposed to place in her friend. They blushed at meeting, and were too much novices to disguise their sensations with address. After some

some unmeaning questions and replies, Matilda demanded of Isabella the cause of her flight. The latter, who had almost forgotten Manfred's passion, so entirely was she occupied by her own, concluding that Matilda referred to her last escape from the convent, which had occasioned the events of the preceding evening, replied, Martelli brought word to the convent that your mother was dead.—Oh! said Matilda interrupting her, Bianca has explained that mistake to me: on seeing me faint, she cried out, The prince is dead! and Martelli, who had come for the usual dole to the castle—And what made you faint? said Isabella, indifferent to the rest. Matilda blushed, and stammered—My father—he was sitting in judgment on a criminal.—What criminal? said Isabella eagerly.—A young man, said Matilda—I believe—I think it was that young man that—What, Theodore? said Isabella. Yes, answered she; I never saw him before; I do not know how he had offended my father—but, as he has been of service to you, I am glad my lord has pardoned him. Served me? replied Isabella: do you term it serving me, to wound my father, and almost occasion his death? Though it is but since yesterday that I am blessed with knowing a parent, I hope Matilda does not think I am such a stranger to filial tenderness as not to resent the boldness of that audacious youth, and that it is impossible for me ever to feel any affection for one who dared to lift his arm against the author of my being. No, Matilda, my heart abhors him; and if you still retain the friendship for me that you have vowed from your infancy, you will detest a man who has been on the point of making me miserable for ever. Matilda held down her head, and replied, I hope my dearest Isabella does not doubt her Matilda's friendship: I never beheld that youth until yesterday; he is almost a stranger to me: but as the surgeons have pronounced your father out of danger, you ought not to harbour uncharitable resentment against one who I am persuaded did not know the marquis was related to you. You plead his cause very pathetically, said Isabella, considering he is so much a stranger to you! I am mistaken, or he returns your charity. What mean you? said Matilda. Nothing, said Isabella; repenting that she had given Matilda a hint of Theodore's inclination for her. Then changing the discourse, she asked Matilda what occasioned Manfred to take Theodore for a spectre? Bless me, said Matilda, did not you observe his extreme resemblance to the portrait of Alfonso in the gallery? I took notice of it to Bianca even before I saw him in armour; but with the helmet on, he is the very image of that picture. I do not much observe

observe pictures, said Isabella; much less have I examined this young man so attentively as you seem to have done.—Ah! Matilda, your heart is in danger—but let me warn you as a friend—He has owned to me that he is in love: it cannot be with you, for yesterday was the first time you ever met—was it not? Certainly, replied Matilda. But, why does my dearest Isabella conclude from any thing I have said, that—She paused—then continuing, He saw you first, and I am far from having the vanity to think that my little portion of charms could engage a heart devoted to you. May you be happy, Isabella, whatever is the fate of Matilda!—My lovely friend, said Isabella, whose heart was too honest to resist a kind expression, it is you that Theodore admires; I saw it; I am persuaded of it; nor shall a thought of my own happiness suffer me to interfere with yours. This frankness drew tears from the gentle Matilda; and jealousy, that for a moment had raised a coolness between these amiable maidens, soon gave way to the natural sincerity and candour of their souls. Each confessed to the other the impression that Theodore had made on her; and this confidence was followed by a struggle of generosity, each insisting on yielding her claim to her friend. At length, the dignity of Isabella's virtue reminding her of the preference which Theodore had almost declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her passion, and cede the beloved object to her friend.

During this contest of amity, Hippolita entered her daughter's chamber. Madam, said she to Isabella, you have so much tenderness for Matilda, and interest yourself so kindly in whatever affects our wretched house, that I can have no secrets with my child, which are not proper for you to hear. The princesses were all attention and anxiety. Know then, madam, continued Hippolita, and you, my dearest Matilda, that being convinced by all the events of these two last ominous days, that heaven purposes the sceptre of Otranto should pass from Manfred's hands into those of the marquis Frederic, I have been perhaps inspired with the thought of averting our total destruction by the union of our rival houses. With this view I have been proposing to Manfred my lord to tender this dear dear child to Frederic your father—Me to lord Frederic! cried Matilda. Good heavens! my gracious mother—and have you named it to my father? I have, said Hippolita: he listened benignly to my proposal, and is gone to break it to the marquis. Ah! wretched princess! cried Isabella, what hast thou done? What ruin has thy
inadvertent

inadvertent goodness been preparing for thyself, for me, and for Matilda! Ruin from me to you and to my child! said Hippolita: What can this mean? Alas! said Isabella, the purity of your own heart prevents your seeing the depravity of others. Manfred, your lord, that impious man—I hold, said Hippolita; you must not in my presence, young lady, mention Manfred with disrespect: he is my lord and husband, and—Will not be long so, said Isabella, if his wicked purposes can be carried into execution. This language amazes me, said Hippolita. Your feeling, Isabella, is warm; but until this hour I never knew it betray you into intemperance. What deed of Manfred authorizes you to treat him as a murderer, an assassin? Thou virtuous and too credulous princess! replied Isabella; it is not thy life he aims at—it is to separate himself from thee! to divorce thee! To—to divorce me! To divorce my mother! cried Hippolita and Matilda at once.—Yes, said Isabella; and to complete his crime, he meditates—I cannot speak it! What can surpass what thou hast already uttered? said Matilda. Hippolita was silent. Grief choked her speech: and the recollection of Manfred's late ambiguous discourses confirmed what she heard. Excellent, dear lady! madam! mother! cried Isabella, flinging herself at Hippolita's feet in a transport of passion; trust me, believe me, I will die a thousand deaths sooner than consent to injure you, than yield to so odious—oh!—This is too much! cried Hippolita: what crimes does one crime suggest! Rise, dear Isabella; I do not doubt your virtue. Oh! Matilda, this stroke is too heavy for thee! Weep not, my child; and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is *thy* father still.—But you are my mother too, said Matilda fervently; and *you* are virtuous, *you* are guiltless!—Oh! must not I, must not I complain? You must not, said Hippolita—Come, all will yet be well. Manfred, in the agony for the loss of thy brother, knew not what he said: perhaps Isabella misunderstood him: his heart is good—and, my child, thou knowest not all. There is a destiny hangs over us; the hand of Providence is stretched out—Oh! could I but save thee from the wreck!—Yes, continued she in a firmer tone, perhaps the sacrifice of myself may atone for all—I will go and offer myself to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighbouring monastery, and waste the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child and—the prince! Thou art as much too good for this world, said Isabella, as Manfred is execrable—But think not, lady, that thy weakness shall determine for me. I swear—hear me, all ye angels—Stop, I

adjure

adjure thee, cried Hippolita; remember, thou dost not depend on thyself; thou hast a father.—My father is too pious, too noble, interrupted Isabella, to command an impious deed. But should he command it, can a father enjoin a cursed act? I was contracted to the son; can I wed the father?—No, madam, no; force should not drag me to Manfred's hated bed. I loathe him, I abhor him: divine and human laws forbid.—And my friend, my dearest Matilda! would I wound her tender soul by injuring her adored mother? my own mother—I never have known another.—Oh! she is the mother of both! cried Matilda. Can we, can we, Isabella, adore her too much? My lovely children, said the touched Hippolita, your tenderness overpowers me—but I must not give way to it. It is not ours to make election for ourselves; heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us. Have patience until you hear what Manfred and Frédéric have determined. If the marquis accepts Matilda's hand, I know she will readily obey. Heaven may interpose and prevent the rest. What means my child? continued she, seeing Matilda fall at her feet with a flood of speechless tears—But no; answer me not, my daughter; I must not hear a word against the pleasure of thy father. Oh! doubt not my obedience, my dreadful obedience to him and to you! said Matilda. But can I, most respected of women, can I experience all this tenderness, this world of goodness, and conceal a thought from the best of mothers? What art thou going to utter? said Isabella trembling. Recollect thyself, Matilda. No, Isabella, said the princess, I should not deserve this incomparable parent, if the inmost recesses of my soul harboured a thought without her permission—Nay, I have offended her; I have suffered a passion to enter my heart without her avowal—But here I disclaim it; here I vow to heaven and her—My child! my child! said Hippolita, what words are these? What new calamities has fate in store for us? Thou a passion! thou, in this hour of destruction—Oh! I see all my guilt! said Matilda. I abhor myself, if I cost my mother a pang. She is the dearest thing I have on earth—Oh! I will never, never behold him more! Isabella, said Hippolita, thou art conscious to this unhappy secret, whatever it is. Speak—What! cried Matilda, have I so forfeited my mother's love that she will not permit me even to speak my own guilt? Oh! wretched, wretched Matilda!—Thou art too cruel, said Isabella to Hippolita: canst thou behold this anguish of a virtuous mind, and not commiserate it? Not pity my child! said Hippolita, catching Matilda in her arms—Oh! I know she is good, she

is all virtue, all tenderness, and duty. I do forgive thee, my excellent, my only hope! The princesses then revealed to Hippolita their mutual inclination for Theodore, and the purpose of Isabella to resign him to Matilda. Hippolita blamed their imprudence, and shewed them the improbability that either father would consent to bestow his heiress on so poor a man, though nobly born. Some comfort it gave her to find their passion of so recent a date, and that Theodore had but little cause to suspect it in either. She strictly enjoined them to avoid all correspondence with him. This Matilda fervently promised; but Isabella, who flattered herself that she meant no more than to promote his union with her friend, could not determine to avoid him; and made no reply. I will go to the convent, said Hippolita, and order new masses to be said for a deliverance from these calamities.—Oh! my mother, said Matilda, you mean to quit us: you mean to take sanctuary, and to give my father an opportunity of pursuing his fatal intention. Alas! on my knees I supplicate you to forbear—Will you leave me a prey to Frederic? I will follow you to the convent.—Be at peace, my child, said Hippolita: I will return instantly. I will never abandon thee, until I know it is the will of heaven, and for thy benefit. Do not deceive me, said Matilda. I will not marry Frederic until thou commandest it. Alas! what will become of me?—Why that exclamation? said Hippolita. I have promised thee to return.—Ah! my mother, replied Matilda, stay and save me from myself. A frown from thee can do more than all my father's severity. I have given away my heart, and you alone can make me recall it. No more, said Hippolita: thou must not relapse, Matilda. I can quit Theodore, said she, but must I wed another? Let me attend thee to the altar, and shut myself from the world forever. Thy fate depends on thy father, said Hippolita: I have ill bestowed my tenderness, if it has taught thee to revere aught beyond him. Adieu, my child! I go to pray for thee.

Hippolita's real purpose was to demand of Jerome, whether in conscience she might not consent to the divorce. She had oft urged Manfred to resign the principality, which the delicacy of her conscience rendered an hourly burthen to her. These scruples concurred to make the separation from her husband appear less dreadful to her than it would have seemed in any other situation.

Jerome, at quitting the castle overnight, had questioned Theodore severely why he had accused him to Manfred of being privy to his escape. Theodore owned it had been with design to prevent Manfred's suspicion from alighting on Matilda; and added, the holiness of Jerome's life and character secured him from the tyrant's wrath. Jerome was heartily grieved to discover his son's inclination for that princess; and, leaving him to his rest, promised in the morning to acquaint him with important reasons for conquering his passion. Theodore, like Isabella, was too recently acquainted with parental authority to submit to its decisions against the impulse of his heart. He had little curiosity to learn the friar's reasons, and less disposition to obey them. The lovely Matilda had made stronger impressions on him than filial affection. All night he pleased himself with visions of love; and it was not till late after the morning-office, that he recollected the friar's commands to attend him at Alfonso's tomb.

Young man, said Jerome, when he saw him, this tardiness does not please me. Have a father's commands already so little weight? Theodore made awkward excuses, and attributed his delay to having overslept himself. And on whom were thy dreams employed? said the friar sternly. His son blushed. Come, come, resumed the friar, inconsiderate youth, this must not be; eradicate this guilty passion from thy breast.—Guilty passion! cried Theodore: can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modesty? It is sinful, replied the friar, to cherish those whom heaven has doomed to destruction. A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation. Will heaven visit the innocent for the crimes of the guilty? said Theodore. The fair Matilda has virtues enough.—To undo thee, interrupted Jerome. Hast thou so soon forgotten that twice the savage Manfred has pronounced thy sentence? Nor have I forgotten, sir, said Theodore, that the charity of his daughter delivered me from his power. I can forget injuries, but never benefits. The injuries thou hast received from Manfred's race, said the friar, are beyond what thou canst conceive.—Reply not, but view this holy image! Beneath this marble monument rest the ashes of the good Alfonso; a prince adorned with every virtue: the father of his people! the delight of mankind! Kneel, head-strong boy, and list, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every sentiment from thy soul, but
sensations

sensations of sacred vengeance.—Alfonso! much-injured prince! let thy unsatisfied shade sit awful on the troubled air, while these trembling lips—Ha! who comes there?—The most wretched of women, said Hippolita, entering the choir. Good father, art thou at leisure?—But why this kneeling youth? what means the horror imprinted on each countenance? why at this venerable tomb—Alas! hast thou seen aught? We were pouring forth our orisons to heaven, replied the friar with some confusion, to put an end to the woes of this deplorable province. Join with us, lady! thy spotless soul may obtain an exemption from the judgments which the portents of these days but too speakingly denounce against thy house. I pray fervently to heaven to divert them, said the pious princess. Thou knowest it has been the occupation of my life to wrest a blessing for my lord and my harmless children—One, alas! is taken from me! Would heaven but hear me for my poor Matilda! Father, intercede for her!—Every heart will bless her, cried Theodore with rapture.—Be dumb, rash youth! said Jerome. And thou, fond princess, contend not with the powers above! The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: bless his holy name, and submit to his decrees. I do most devoutly, said Hippolita: but will he not spare my only comfort? must Matilda perish too?—Ah! father, I came—But dismiss thy son. No ear but thine must hear what I have to utter. May heaven grant thy every wish, most excellent princess! said Theodore retiring. Jerome frowned.

Hippolita then acquainted the friar with the proposal she had suggested to Manfred, his approbation of it, and the tender of Matilda that he was gone to make to Frederic. Jerome could not conceal his dislike of the motion, which he covered under pretence of the improbability that Frederic, the nearest of blood to Alfonso, and who was come to claim his succession, would yield to an alliance with the usurper of his right. But nothing could equal the perplexity of the friar, when Hippolita confessed her readiness not to oppose the separation, and demanded his opinion on the legality of her acquiescence. The friar caught eagerly at her request of his advice, and without explaining his aversion to the proposed marriage of Manfred and Isabella, he painted to Hippolita in the most alarming colours the sinfulness of her consent, denounced judgments against her if she complied, and enjoined her in the severest terms to treat any such proposition with every mark of indignation and refusal.

Manfred, in the mean time, had broken his purpose to Frederic, and proposed the double marriage. That weak prince, who had been struck with the charms of Matilda, listened but too eagerly to the offer. He forgot his enmity to Manfred, whom he saw but little hope of dispossessing by force; and flattering himself that no issue might succeed from the union of his daughter with the tyrant, he looked upon his own succession to the principality as facilitated by wedding Matilda. He made faint opposition to the proposal; affecting, for form only, not to acquiesce unless Hippolita should consent to the divorce. Manfred took that upon himself. Transported with his success, and impatient to see himself in a situation to expect sons, he hastened to his wife's apartment, determined to extort her compliance. He learned with indignation that she was absent at the convent. His guilt suggested to him that she had probably been informed by Isabella of his purpose. He doubted whether her retirement to the convent did not import an intention of remaining there, until she could raise obstacles to their divorce; and the suspicions he had already entertained of Jerome, made him apprehend that the friar would not only traverse his views, but might have inspired Hippolita with the resolution of taking sanctuary. Impatient to unravel this clue, and to defeat its success, Manfred hastened to the convent, and arrived there as the friar was earnestly exhorting the princess never to yield to the divorce.

—Madam, said Manfred, what business drew you hither? Why did not you await my return from the marquis? I came to implore a blessing on your councils, replied Hippolita. My councils do not need a friar's intervention, said Manfred—and of all men living is that hoary traitor the only one whom you delight to confer with? Profane prince! said Jerome: is it at the altar that thou choolest to insult the servants of the altar?—But, Manfred, thy impious schemes are known. Heaven and this virtuous lady know them. Nay, frown not, prince. The church despises thy menaces. Her thunders will be heard above thy wrath. Dare to proceed in thy curst purpose of a divorce, until her sentence be known, and here I lance her anathema at thy head. Audacious rebel! said Manfred, endeavouring to conceal the awe with which the friar's words inspired him; dost thou presume to threaten thy lawful prince? Thou art no lawful prince, said Jerome; thou art no prince—Go, discuss

discuss thy claim with Frederic; and when that is done—It is done, replied Manfred: Frederic accepts Matilda's hand, and is content to wave his claim, unless I have no male issue.—As he spoke those words three drops of blood fell from the nose of Alfonso's statue. Manfred turned pale, and the princess sunk on her knees. Behold! said the friar: mark this miraculous indication that the blood of Alfonso will never mix with that of Manfred! My gracious lord, said Hippolita, let us submit ourselves to heaven. Think not thy ever obedient wife rebels against thy authority. I have no will but that of my lord and the church. To that revered tribunal let us appeal. It does not depend on us to burst the bonds that unite us. If the church shall approve the dissolution of our marriage, be it so—I have but few years, and those of sorrow, to pass. Where can they be worn away so well as at the foot of this altar, in prayers for thine and Matilda's safety?—But thou shalt not remain here until then, said Manfred. Repair with me to the castle, and there I will advise on the proper measures for a divorce.—But this meddling friar comes not thither; my hospitable roof shall never more harbour a traitor—and for thy reverence's offspring, continued he, I banish him from my dominions. He, I ween, is no sacred personage, nor under the protection of the church. Whoever weds Isabella, it shall not be father Falconara's started-up son. They start up, said the friar, who are suddenly beheld in the seat of lawful princes; but they wither away like the grass, and their place knows them no more. Manfred, casting a look of scorn at the friar, led Hippolita forth; but at the door of the church whispered one of his attendants to remain concealed about the convent, and bring him instant notice, if any one from the castle should repair thither.

C H A P. V.

EVERY reflection which Manfred made on the friar's behaviour, conspired to persuade him that Jerome was privy to an amour between Isabella and Theodore. But Jerome's new presumption, so dissonant from his former meekness, suggested still deeper apprehensions. The prince even suspected that the friar depended on some secret support from Frederic, whose arrival coinciding

coinciding with the novel appearance of Theodore seemed to bespeak a correspondence. Still more was he troubled with the resemblance of Theodore to Alfonso's portrait. The latter he knew had unquestionably died without issue. Frederic had consented to bestow Isabella on him. These contradictions agitated his mind with numberless pangs. He saw but two methods of extricating himself from his difficulties. The one was to resign his dominions to the marquis.—Pride, ambition, and his reliance on ancient prophecies, which had pointed out a possibility of his preserving them to his posterity, combated that thought. The other was to press his marriage with Isabella. After long ruminating on these anxious thoughts, as he marched silently with Hippolita to the castle, he at last discoursed with that princess on the subject of his disquiet, and used every insinuating and plausible argument to extract her consent to, even her promise of promoting, the divorce. Hippolita needed little persuasion to bend her to his pleasure. She endeavoured to win him over to the measure of resigning his dominions; but finding her exhortations fruitless, she assured him, that as far as her conscience would allow, she would raise no opposition to a separation, though, without better founded scruples than what he yet alleged, she would not engage to be active in demanding it.

This compliance, though inadequate, was sufficient to raise Manfred's hopes. He trusted that his power and wealth would easily advance his suit at the court of Rome, whither he resolved to engage Frederic to take a journey on purpose. That prince had discovered so much passion for Matilda, that Manfred hoped to obtain all he wished by holding out or withdrawing his daughter's charms, according as the marquis should appear more or less disposed to co-operate in his views. Even the absence of Frederic would be a material point gained, until he could take farther measures for his security.

Dismissing Hippolita to her apartment, he repaired to that of the marquis; but crossing the great hall through which he was to pass, he met Bianca. That damsel he knew was in the confidence of both the young ladies. It immediately occurred to him to visit her on the subject of Isabella and Theodore. Calling her aside into the recess of the oriel window of the hall, and soothing her with many fair words and promises, he demanded of her whether she knew aught of the state of Isabella's affections. I! my lord? No,
my

my lord—Yes, my lord—Poor lady! she is wonderfully alarmed about her father's wounds; but I tell her he will do well; don't your highness think so? I do not ask you, replied Manfred, what she thinks about her father; but you are in her secrets: come, be a good girl and tell me, is there any young man—ha?—you understand me. Lord bless me! understand your highness? No, not I: I told her a few vulnerary herbs and repose—I am not talking, replied the prince impatiently, about her father: I know he will do well. Bless me, I rejoice to hear your highness say so; for though I thought it right not to let my young lady despond, methought his greatness had a wan look, and a something—I remember when young Ferdinand was wounded by the Venetian. Thou answerest from the point, interrupted Manfred; but here, take this jewel, perhaps that may fix thy attention—Nay, no reverences; my favour shall not stop here—Come, tell me truly; how stands Isabella's heart? Well, your highness has such a way, said Bianca—to be sure—but can your highness keep a secret? If it should ever come out of your lips—it shall not, it shall not, cried Manfred. Nay, but swear, your highness—by my halidame, if it should ever be known that I said it—Why, truth is truth, I do not think my lady Isabella ever much affectioned my young lord, your son: yet he was a sweet youth as one should see. I am sure if I had been a princess—But bless me! I must attend my lady Matilda; she will marvel what is become of me.—Stay, cried Manfred, thou hast not satisfied my question. Hast thou ever carried any message, any letter?—I! Good gracious! cried Bianca: I carry a letter? I would not to be a queen. I hope your highness thinks, though I am poor, I am honest. Did your highness never hear what count Marsigli offered me, when he came a-wooing to my lady Matilda?—I have not leisure, said Manfred, to listen to thy tales. I do not question thy honesty; but it is thy duty to conceal nothing from me. How long has Isabella been acquainted with Theodore?—Nay, there is nothing can escape your highness, said Bianca—not that I know any thing of the matter. Theodore, to be sure, is a proper young man, and, as my lady Matilda says, the very image of good Alfonso: Has not your highness remarked it? Yes, yes—No—thou torturest me, said Manfred: Where did they meet? when?—Who, my lady Matilda? said Bianca. No, no, not Matilda; Isabella: When did Isabella first become acquainted with this Theodore?—Virgin Mary! said Bianca, how should I know? Thou dost know, said Manfred; and I must know; I will.—Lord! your highness is not jealous of young Theodore? said Bianca.—Jealous! No, no: why should I be jealous?—Per-

haps I mean to unite them—if I was sure Isabella would have no repugnance, —Repugnance! No, I'll warrant her, said Bianca: he is as comely a youth as ever trod on christian ground: we are all in love with him: there is not a soul in the castle but would be rejoiced to paye him for our prince—I mean, when it shall please heaven to call your highness to itself.—Indeed! said Manfred: has it gone so far? Oh! this cursed friar!—But I must not lose time.—Go, Bianca; attend Isabella; but I charge thee, not a word of what has passed. Find out how she is affected towards Theodore; bring me good news, and that ring has a companion. Wait at the foot of the winding staircase: I am going to visit the marquis, and will talk farther with thee at my return.

Manfred, after some general conversation, desired Frederic to dismiss the two knights his companions, having to talk with him on urgent affairs. As soon as they were alone, he began in artful guise to sound the marquis on the subject of Matilda; and finding him disposed to his wish, he let drop hints on the difficulties that would attend the celebration of their marriage, unless— At that instant Bianca burst into the room, with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror. Oh! my lord, my lord! cried she, we are all undone! It is come again! it is come again!—What is come again? cried Manfred amazed.—Oh! the hand! the giant! the hand!—Support me! I am terrified out of my senses, cried Bianca: I will not sleep in the castle to-night. Where shall I go? My things may come after me to-morrow.—Would I had been content to wed Francesco! This comes of ambition!—What has terrified thee thus, young woman? said the marquis: thou art safe here; be not alarmed. Oh! your greatness is wonderfully good, said Bianca, but I dare not—No, pray let me go—I had rather leave every thing behind me, than stay another hour under this roof. Go to, thou hast lost thy senses, said Manfred. Interrupt us not; we were communing on important matters.—My lord, this wench is subject to fits—Come with me, Bianca.—Oh! the saints! No, said Bianca—for certain it comes to warn your highness; why should it appear to me else? I say my prayers morning and evening—Oh! if your highness had believed Diego! 'Tis the same hand that he saw the foot to in the gallery-chamber—Father Jerome has often told us the prophecy would be out one of these days—Bianca, said he, mark my words.—Thou ravest, said Manfred in a rage: Begone, and keep these fooleries to frighten thy companions.—What! my lord, cried Bianca, do you think

think I have seen nothing? Go to the foot of the great stairs yourself—As I live I saw it. Saw what? Tell us, fair maid, what thou hast seen, said Frederic. Can your highness listen, said Manfred, to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them? This is more than fancy, said the marquis; her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus. Yes, my lord, thank your greatness, said Bianca—I believe I look very pale; I shall be better when I have recovered myself.—I was going to my lady Isabella's chamber by his highness's order—We do not want the circumstances, interrupted Manfred: since his highness will have it so, proceed; but be brief.—Lord, your highness thwarts one so! replied Bianca—I fear my hair—I am sure I never in my life—Well! as I was telling your greatness, I was going by his highness's order to my lady Isabella's chamber: she lies in the watchet-coloured chamber, on the right hand, one pair of stairs: so when I came to the great stairs—I was looking on his highness's present here. Grant me patience! said Manfred, will this wench never come to the point? What imports it to the marquis, that I gave thee a bawble for thy faithful attendance on my daughter? We want to know what thou sawest. I was going to tell your highness, said Bianca, if you would permit me.—So, as I was rubbing the ring—I am sure I had not gone up three steps, but I heard the rattling of armour; for all the world such a clatter, as Diego says he heard when the giant turned him about in the gallery-chamber.—What does she mean, my lord? said the marquis. Is your castle haunted by giants and goblins?—Lord, what, has not your greatness heard the story of the giant in the gallery-chamber? cried Bianca. I marvel his highness has not told you—mayhap you do not know there is a prophecy—This trifling is intolerable, interrupted Manfred. Let us dismiss this silly wench, my lord: we have more important affairs to discuss. By your favour, said Frederic, these are no trifles: the enormous fabre I was directed to in the wood; yon casque, its fellow—are these visions of this poor maiden's brain?—So Jaquez thinks, may it please your greatness, said Bianca. He says this moon will not be out without our seeing some strange revolution. For my part, I should not be surprised if it was to happen to-morrow; for, as I was saying, when I heard the clattering of armour, I was all in a cold sweat—I looked up, and, if your greatness will believe me, I saw upon the uppermost banister of the great stairs a hand in armour as big, as big—I thought I should have swooned—I never stopped until I came hither—Would I were well out of

this castle! My lady Matilda told me but yesterday-morning that her highness Hippolita knows something—Thou art an insolent! cried Manfred—Lord marquis, it much misgives me that this scene is concerted to affront me. Are my own domestics suborned to spread tales injurious to my honour? Pursue your claim by manly daring; or let us bury our feuds, as was proposed, by the intermarriage of our children: but trust me, it ill becomes a prince of your bearing to practise on mercenary wenches.—I scorn your imputation, said Frederic; until this hour I never set eyes on this damsel: I have given her no jewel!—My lord, my lord, your conscience, your guilt accuses you, and would throw the suspicion on me—But keep your daughter, and think no more of Isabella: the judgments already fallen on your house forbid me matching into it.

Manfred, alarmed at the resolute tone in which Frederic delivered these words, endeavoured to pacify him. Dismissing Bianca, he made such submissions to the marquis, and threw in such artful encomiums on Matilda, that Frederic was once more staggered. However, as his passion was of so recent a date, it could not at once surmount the scruples he had conceived. He had gathered enough from Bianca's discourse to persuade him that heaven declared itself against Manfred. The proposed marriages too removed his claim to a distance: and the principality of Otranto was a stronger temptation, than the contingent reversion of it with Matilda. Still he would not absolutely recede from his engagements; but purposing to gain time, he demanded of Manfred if it was true in fact that Hippolita consented to the divorce. The prince, transported to find no other obstacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, assured the marquis it was so, and that he might satisfy himself of the truth from her own mouth.

As they were thus discoursing, word was brought that the banquet was prepared. Manfred conducted Frederic to the great hall, where they were received by Hippolita and the young princesses. Manfred placed the marquis next to Matilda, and seated himself between his wife and Isabella. Hippolita comported herself with an easy gravity; but the young ladies were silent and melancholy. Manfred, who was determined to pursue his point with the marquis in the remainder of the evening, pushed on the feast until it waxed late; affecting unrestrained gaiety, and plying Frederic with repeated goblets of wine. The latter, more upon his guard than Manfred wished, declined

declined his frequent challenges, on pretence of his late loss of blood; while the prince, to raise his own disordered spirits, and to counterfeit unconcern, indulged himself in plentiful draughts, though not to the intoxication of his senses.

The evening being far advanced, the banquet concluded. Manfred would have withdrawn with Frederic; but the latter, pleading weakness and want of repose, retired to his chamber, gallantly telling the prince, that his daughter should amuse his highness until himself could attend him. Manfred accepted the party; and, to the no small grief of Isabella, accompanied her to her apartment. Matilda waited on her mother, to enjoy the freshness of the evening on the ramparts of the castle.

Soon as the company was dispersed their several ways, Frederic, quitting his chamber, enquired if Hippolita was alone; and was told by one of her attendants, who had not noticed her going forth, that at that hour she generally withdrew to her oratory, where he probably would find her. The marquis during the repast had beheld Matilda with increase of passion. He now wished to find Hippolita in the disposition her lord had promised. The portents that had alarmed him were forgotten in his desires. Stealing softly and unobserved to the apartment of Hippolita, he entered it with a resolution to encourage her acquiescence to the divorce, having perceived that Manfred was resolved to make the possession of Isabella an unalterable condition, before he would grant Matilda to his wishes.

The marquis was not surpris'd at the silence that reigned in the princess's apartment. Concluding her, as he had been advertis'd, in her oratory, he pass'd on. The door was a-jar; the evening gloomy and overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seem'd not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whose back was towards him. The person seem'd absorb'd in prayer. The marquis was about to return, when the figure rising, stood some moments fixed in meditation, without regarding him. The marquis, expecting the holy person to come forth, and meaning to excuse his uncivil interruption, said, Reverend father, I sought the lady Hippolita.—Hippolita! replied a hollow voice: camest thou to this castle to seek Hippolita?—And then the figure, turning slowly round, discover'd to Frederic the fleshless jaws and

empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl. Angels of grace, protect me! cried Frederic recoiling. Deserve their protection, said the spectre. Frederic, falling on his knees, adjured the phantom to take pity on him. Dost thou not remember me? said the apparition. Remember the wood of Joppa! Art thou that holy hermit? cried Frederic trembling—can I do aught for thy eternal peace?—Wast thou delivered from bondage, said the spectre, to pursue carnal delights? Hast thou forgotten the buried sabre, and the behest of heaven engraven on it?—I have not, I have not, said Frederic. —But say, blest spirit, what is thy errand to me? what remains to be done? To forget Matilda! said the apparition—and vanished.

Frederic's blood froze in his veins. For some minutes he remained motionless. Then falling prostrate on his face before the altar, he besought the intercession of every saint for pardon. A flood of tears succeeded to this transport; and the image of the beauteous Matilda rushing in spite of him on his thoughts, he lay on the ground in a conflict of penitence and passion. Ere he could recover from this agony of his spirits, the princess Hippolita, with a taper in her hand, entered the oratory alone. Seeing a man without motion on the floor, she gave a shriek, concluding him dead. Her fright brought Frederic to himself. Rising suddenly, his face bedewed with tears, he would have rushed from her presence; but Hippolita, stopping him, conjured him in the most plaintive accents to explain the cause of his disorder, and by what strange chance she had found him there in that posture. Ah! virtuous princess! said the marquis, penetrated with grief—and stopped. For the love of heaven, my lord, said Hippolita, disclose the cause of this transport! What mean these doleful sounds, this alarming exclamation on my name? What woes has heaven still in store for the wretched Hippolita?—Yet silent?—By every pitying angel, I adjure thee, noble prince, continued she, falling at his feet, to disclose the purport of what lies at thy heart—I see thou feelest for me; thou feelest the sharp pangs that thou inflictest—Speak, for pity!—Dost aught thou knowest concern my child?—I cannot speak, cried Frederic, bursting from her—Oh! Matilda!

Quitting the princess thus abruptly, he hastened to his own apartment. At the door of it he was accosted by Manfred, who, flushed by wine and love, had come to seek him, and to propose to waste some hours of the night in music and revelling. Frederic, offended at an invitation so dissonant from the mood

mood of his soul, pushed him rudely aside, and, entering his chamber, flung the door intemperately against Manfred, and bolted it inwards. The haughty prince, enraged at this unaccountable behaviour, withdrew in a frame of mind capable of the most fatal excesses. As he crossed the court, he was met by the domestic whom he had planted at the convent as a spy on Jerome and Theodore. This man, almost breathless with the haste he had made, informed his lord, that Theodore and some lady from the castle were at that instant in private conference at the tomb of Alfonso in St. Nicholas's church. He had dogged Theodore thither, but the gloominess of the night had prevented his discovering who the woman was.

Manfred, whose spirits were inflamed, and whom Isabella had driven from her on his urging his passion with too little reserve, did not doubt but the inquietude she had expressed had been occasioned by her impatience to meet Theodore. Provoked by this conjecture, and enraged at her father, he hastened secretly to the great church. Gliding softly between the aisles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows, he stole towards the tomb of Alfonso, to which he was directed by indistinct whispers of the persons he sought. The first sounds he could distinguish were—Does it, alas, depend on me? Manfred will never permit our union.—No, this shall prevent it! cried the tyrant, drawing his dagger, and plunging it over her shoulder into the bosom of the person that spoke—Ah me, I am slain! cried Matilda sinking: Good heaven, receive my soul!—Savage, inhuman monster! what hast thou done? cried Theodore, rushing on him, and wrenching his dagger from him.—Stop, stop thy impious hand, cried Matilda; it is my father!—Manfred, waking as from a trance, beat his breast, twisted his hands in his locks, and endeavoured to recover his dagger from Theodore to dispatch himself. Theodore, scarce less distracted, and only mastering the transports of his grief to assist Matilda, had now by his cries drawn some of the monks to his aid. While part of them endeavoured in concert with the afflicted Theodore to stop the blood of the dying princess, the rest prevented Manfred from laying violent hands on himself.

Matilda, resigning herself patiently to her fate, acknowledged with looks of grateful love the zeal of Theodore. Yet oft as her faintness would permit her speech its way, she begged the assistants to comfort her father. Jerome—

by

by this time had learnt the fatal news; and reached the church. His looks seemed to reproach Theodore; but turning to Manfred, he said, Now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of Alfonso cried to heaven for vengeance; and heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by assassination, that thou mightest shed thy own blood at the foot of that prince's sepulchre!—Cruel man! cried Matilda, to aggravate the woes of a parent! May heaven bless my father, and forgive him as I do! My lord, my gracious sire, dost thou forgive thy child? Indeed I came not hither to meet Theodore! I found him praying at this tomb, whither my mother sent me to intercede for thee, for her—Dearest father, bless your child, and say you forgive her.—Forgive thee! Murderous monster! cried Manfred—can assassins forgive? I took thee for Isabella; but heaven directed my bloody hand to the heart of my child!—Oh! Matilda—I cannot utter it—canst thou forgive the blindness of my rage?—I can, I do, and may heaven confirm it! said Matilda—But while I have life to ask it—oh, my mother! what will she feel!—Will you comfort her, my lord? Will you not put her away? Indeed she loves you—Oh, I am faint! bear me to the castle—can I live to have her close my eyes?

Theodore and the monks besought her earnestly to suffer herself to be borne into the convent; but her instances were so pressing to be carried to the castle, that, placing her on a litter, they conveyed her thither as she requested. Theodore supporting her head with his arm, and hanging over her in an agony of despairing love, still endeavoured to inspire her with hopes of life. Jerome on the other side comforted her with discourses of heaven, and holding a crucifix before her, which she bathed with innocent tears, prepared her for her passage to immortality. Manfred, plunged in the deepest affliction, followed the litter in despair.

Ere they reached the castle, Hippolita, informed of the dreadful catastrophe, had flown to meet her murdered child; but when she saw the afflicted procession, the mightiness of her grief deprived her of her senses, and she fell lifeless to the earth in a swoon. Isabella and Frederic, who attended her, were overwhelmed in almost equal sorrow. Matilda alone seemed insensible to her own situation: every thought was lost in tenderness for her mother. Ordering the litter to stop, as soon as Hippolita was brought to herself, she asked for her father. He approached, unable to speak. Matilda, seizing his hand

hand and her mother's, locked them in her own, and then clasped them to her heart. Manfred could not support this act of pathetic piety. He dashed himself on the ground, and cursed the day he was born. Isabella, apprehensive that these struggles of passion were more than Matilda could support, took upon herself to order Manfred to be borne to his apartment, while she caused Matilda to be conveyed to the nearest chamber. Hippolita, scarce more alive than her daughter, was regardless of every thing but her: but when the tender Isabella's care would have likewise removed her, while the surgeons examined Matilda's wound, she cried, Remove me? Never! never! I lived but in her, and will expire with her. Matilda raised her eyes at her mother's voice, but closed them again without speaking. Her sinking pulse, and the damp coldness of her hand, soon dispelled all hopes of recovery. Theodore followed the surgeons into the outer chamber, and heard them pronounce the fatal sentence with a transport equal to phrensy—Since she cannot live mine, cried he, at least she shall be mine in death!—Father! Jerome! will you not join our hands? cried he to the friar, who with the marquis had accompanied the surgeons. What means thy distracted rashness? said Jerome: is this an hour for marriage? It is, it is, cried Theodore: alas, there is no other! Young man, thou art too unadvised, said Frederic. dost thou think we are to listen to thy fond transports in this hour of fate? What pretensions hast thou to the princess? Those of a prince, said Theodore; of the sovereign of Otranto. This reverend man, my father, has informed me who I am. Thou ravest, said the marquis: there is no prince of Otranto but myself, now Manfred by murder, by sacrilegious murder, has forfeited all pretensions. My lord, said Jerome, assuming an air of command, he tells you true. It was not my purpose the secret should have been divulged so soon; but fate presses onward to its work. What his hot-headed passion has revealed, my tongue confirms. Know, prince, that when Alfonso set sail for the Holy Land—Is this a season for explanations? cried Theodore. Father, come and unite me to the princess: she shall be mine—in every other thing I will dutifully obey you. My life! my adored Matilda! continued Theodore, rushing back into the inner chamber, will you not be mine? will you not bless your—Isabella made signs to him to be silent, apprehending the princess was near her end. What, is she dead? cried Theodore: is it possible? The violence of his exclamations brought Matilda to herself. Lifting up her eyes she looked round for her mother—Life of my soul! I am here, cried Hippolita: think not I will quit thee!—Oh! you are too good, said Matilda.

Matilda—but weep not for me, my mother! I am going where sorrow never dwells.—Isabella, thou hast loved me; wot thou not supply my fondness to this dear, dear woman? Indeed I am faint!—Oh! my child! my child! said Hippolita in a flood of tears, can I not withhold thee a moment?—It will not be, said Matilda—Commend me to heaven—Where is my father? Forgive him, dearest mother—forgive him my death; it was an error—Oh! I had forgotten—Dearest mother, I vowed never to see Theodore more—Perhaps that has drawn down this calamity—but it was not intentional—can you pardon me?—Oh! wound not my agonizing soul! said Hippolita; thou never couldst offend me.—Alas, she faints! Help! help!—I would say something more, said Matilda struggling, but it wonnot be.—Isabella—Theodore—for my sake—oh!—She expired. Isabella and her women tore Hippolita from the corse; but Theodore threatened destruction to all who attempted to remove him from it. He printed a thousand kisses on her clay-cold hands, and uttered every expression that despairing love could dictate.

Isabella, in the mean time, was accompanying the afflicted Hippolita to her apartment; but in the middle of the court they were met by Manfred, who, distracted with his own thoughts, and anxious once more to behold his daughter, was advancing to the chamber where she lay. As the moon was now at its height, he read in the countenances of this unhappy company the event he dreaded. What! is she dead? cried he in wild confusion—A clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. Frederic and Jerome thought the last day was at hand. The latter, forcing Theodore along with them, rushed into the court. The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins. Behold in Theodore, the true heir of Alfonso! said the vision: and having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of saint Nicholas was seen; and receiving Alfonso's shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.

The beholders fell prostrate on their faces, acknowledging the divine will. The first that broke silence was Hippolita. My lord, said she to the desponding Manfred, behold the vanity of human greatness! Conrad is gone! Ma-

tilda

Matilda is no more! in Theodore we view the true prince of Otranto. By what miracle he is so, I know not—I owe it to us, our doom is pronounced! Shall we not, can we but dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of heaven? Heaven ejects us—whither can we fly, but to yon holy cells that yet offer us a retreat?—Thou guiltless but unhappy woman! unhappy by my crimes! replied Manfred, my heart at last is open to thy devout admonitions. Oh! could—but it cannot be—ye are left in wonder—let me at last do justice on myself! To heap shame on my own head is all the satisfaction I have left to offer to offended heaven. My story has drawn down these judgments: let my confession atone—But ah! what can atone for usurpation and a murdered child? a child murdered in a consecrated place!—List, sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!

Alfonso, ye all know, died in the Holy Land—Ye would interrupt me; ye would say he came not fairly to his end—It is most true—why else this bitter cup which Manfred must drink to the dregs? Ricardo, my grandfather, was his chamberlain—I would draw a veil over my ancestor's crimes—but it is in vain: Alfonso died by poison. A fictitious will declared Ricardo his heir. His crimes pursued him—yet he lost no Conrad, no Matilda! I pay the price of usurpation for all! A storm overtook him. Haunted by his guilt, he vowed to saint Nicholas to found a church and two convents if he lived to reach Otranto. The sacrifice was accepted: the saint appeared to him in a dream, and promised that Ricardo's posterity should reign in Otranto until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle, and as long as issue-male from Ricardo's loins should remain to enjoy it.—Alas! alas! nor male nor female, except myself, remains of all his wretched race!—I have done—the woes of these three days speak the rest. How this young man can be Alfonso's heir, I know not—yet I do not doubt it. His are these dominions; I resign them—yet I knew not Alfonso had an heir—I question not the will of heaven—poverty and prayer must fill up the woeful space, until Manfred shall be summoned to Ricardo.

What remains is my part to declare, said Jerome. When Alfonso set sail for the Holy Land, he was driven by a storm on the coast of Sicily. The other vessel, which bore Ricardo and his train, as your *lordship* must have heard, was separated from him. It is most true, said Manfred; and the title

you give me is more than an out-cast can claim—Well, be it so—proceed. Jerome blushed, and continued. For three months lord Alfonso was wind-bound in Sicily. There he became enamoured of a fair virgin named Victoria. He was too pious to tempt her to forbidden pleasures. They were married. Yet deeming this amour incongruous with the holy vow of arms by which he was bound, he was determined to conceal their nuptials until his return from the crusado, when he purposed to seek and acknowledge her for his lawful wife. He left her pregnant. During his absence she was delivered of a daughter: but scarce had she felt a mother's pangs, ere she heard the fatal rumour of her lord's death, and the succession of Ricardo. What could a friendless, helpless woman do? would her testimony avail?—Yet, my lord, I have an authentic writing.—It needs not, said Manfred; the horrors of these days, the vision we have but now seen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thousand parchments. Matilda's death and my expulsion—Be composed, my lord, said Hippolita; this holy man did not mean to recall your griefs. Jerome proceeded.

I shall not dwell on what is needless. The daughter of which Victoria was delivered, was at her maturity bestowed in marriage on me. Victoria died; and the secret remained locked in my breast. Theodore's narrative has told the rest.

The friar ceased. The disconsolate company retired to the remaining part of the castle. In the morning Manfred signed his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of Hippolita, and each took on them the habit of religion in the neighbouring convents. Frederic offered his daughter to the new prince, which Hippolita's tenderness for Isabella concurred to promote; but Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not till after frequent discourses with Isabella, of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could forever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.

AN
ACCOUNT

OF THE

GIANTS.

LATELY DISCOVERED:

In a Letter to a Friend in the Country.

First Printed in the Year 1766.

A. N.

A C C O U N T
OF THE
G I A N T S
L A T E L Y D I S C O V E R E D.

DEAR WILL.

THOUGH people in the country are enough disposed to believe wonders, yet are they prudently apt to suspend giving credit to all that are sent from London, except of a political cast. You good folks still believe in an uninterrupted generation of patriots; and though they seldom come to years of maturity, you trust in them as fast as they are produced in saint Stephen's chapel. For other monstrous births, you are fonder of them, the farther they come. Ghosts and witches are entirely of your own growth. Excepting the famous ghost of a sound in Cock-lane, from which the Methodists expected such a rich harvest (for what might not a rising church promise itself from such well-imagined nonsense as the apparition of a noise?) I think many, many years have elapsed, since the capital could boast of having regenerated a spirit. Your sagacity will therefore incline you to doubt the marvellous account I am going to give you of a new-discovered race of giants.

Perhaps —

Perhaps you will take the relation for some political allegory, or think it a new-ramped edition of Swift's Brobdingnags. My good friend, it is neither the one nor the other; though I must own a political mystery, and a wonderful one too, for it is really kept a secret.—The very crew of the ship, who saw five hundred of these lofty personages, did not utter a word of the matter for a whole year; and even now, that a general idea has taken wind, can scarce be brought to give any particulars to their most intimate friends.

All that the public can yet learn is, that captain Byron and his men have seen on the coast of Patagonia five hundred giants on horseback. Giants! you will cry; what do you call giants? Why, my friend, not men of fifty or an hundred feet high, yet still very personable giants, and much taller than any individual ever exhibited at Charing-cross. Come, what do you think of nine or ten feet high? and what do you think of five hundred such? Will Mrs. — cry, "Pish! that is no giant, it is only a well-made man."

I am told, for I am no reader of travels, that this gigantic nation was known to exist as early as the discovery of that continent: that sir John Narborough mentions them; and of late years Maupertuis. The Spaniards assert that they have long been acquainted with their existence—so *they*, you see, can keep a secret too. But the reasons given why we know so little of the matter are, that few ships ever touch on that coast, standing more out to sea in order to double the Cape; and that these giants are a roving nation, and seldom come down to the coast; and then I suppose only *to bob for whales*.

You will be eager to know a great deal more than I can tell you; but thus much I think is allowed: That captain Byron, being on that coast, saw a body of men at a distance on very small horses: as he approached, he perceived that the horses were common-sized horses; but that the riders were enormously tall, though I do not hear that their legs trailed much on the ground. This was fine game for a man sent on discoveries. The captain and part of his crew immediately landed, on which messieurs the giants as quickly retreated. Whether this timidity was owing to the terror which the English arms have struck into all parts of the known and, I conclude, unknown world; whether they took captain Byron for Mr. Pitt; whether they took

took our men for Spaniards, whose name must be an horror to all Americans; or whether they had any apprehensions of fire-arms; I cannot tell. Be that as it may, the more the captain and his men advanced, the faster the giants kept trotting off. Seeing this, the captain took a bold and sensible resolution: he ordered his men to lay down their arms and remain stock still, himself alone advancing. I doubt much whether Homer would have cared to venture his Jupiter alone against five hundred Titans.

Captain Byron's Titans had more of the *savoir vivre*, and, seeing him advance alone, stopped. He came up with them, and addressed them in all the languages he knew, and that they did not. They replied in the giant-tongue, which I am told a very reverend critic, upon the strength of one syllable which the captain remembered, affirms is plainly Phœnician. The captain, not being master of that exceedingly useful and obsolete language, had the misfortune of not comprehending a word they said. Had he been a deep scholar, he would undoubtedly have had recourse to hieroglyphics, which the Learned tell us was the first way of conveying instruction: but I must beg leave to observe, that it was very lucky the captain had not so much erudition. I do not know whether he can draw or not, but most probably, if he can, he had not his implements with him; at most, perhaps, a black-lead pencil, or a pen and ink, and the cover of a letter. He could not with such tools have asked many questions; and as the giants are probably not better painters than the Egyptians, he would have understood their answers as little as the Learned do the figures on obelisks. Thus he would have lost his time, and got no information; or, what is worse, to every man but a critic, have made a thousand absurd guesses. The captain having a great deal more sense, and the savages some, they naturally fell into that *succedaneum* to language, signs. Yet I do not hear that either side gained much information.

The first thing, or rather first sign, he said to them in this dilemma was, *Sit down*; which he explained by sitting down on the ground himself. The poor good giants understood him, dismounted and sat down too. It is said, but far be it from me to affirm it, that, when the captain (who I am told is upwards of six feet) rose again, the nearest giant to him, though sitting, was taller than he.

An hour or two was spent in fruitlessly endeavouring to understand one another: all I hear the captain comprehended was, that the giants invited him very civilly to go with them into the woods, where I suppose Gigantopolis stands, and their king resides, who, no doubt, is at least two feet taller than the tallest of his grenadiers. The captain declined the offer; at which these polite savages expressed much concern, but never once, as any still more polite people would have done, attempted to force him.

When he took his leave, they remained motionless, and continued so, as he observed by his glasses, till the ship was out of their sight.

Very few other particulars are come to my knowledge, except that they were clothed in skins of beasts, and had their eyes painted of different colours; that they had no weapons, but spears pointed with fish-bones; that they devour fish raw, and that they showed great repugnance to taste any liquids offered to them by the captain; and that though they were too polite absolutely to refuse his toast, they spit the liquor out of their mouths again; whether from apprehension of intoxication or poison, is not certain: however, it looks as if they had some notion of such European arts. What is more remarkable; the weather being very severe at that season, the whole colossal troop seemed as sensible of the cold, and shivered like us little delicate mortals of six feet high. They had a few giantesses with them; but as the captain did not survey them with the small end of his spying-glass, I do not hear that he was much struck with their charms.

This, my dear friend, is all the satisfaction I can give you. However, I am proud to be the first who has communicated this important discovery to Europe.

The speculations it has already occasioned, and will occasion, are infinite. The wolf of the Gevaudan, that terror of the French monarchy, is already forgotten. Naturalists, politicians, divines, and writers of romance, have a new field opened to them. The scale of being ascends; we mount from the pigmies of Lapland, to the giants of Patagonia.

You will ask, but I cannot answer you, Whether the scale of the country is in proportion to such inhabitants? Whether their oaks are half as lofty again as the British? And such is your zeal for England, you will already figure a fleet built of their timber. How large is the grain of their corn? Of what size their sheep, cows, and poultry? Do not go and compute by Gulliver's measures, and tell me, that a populous nation of such dimensions would devour the products of such a country as Great Tartary in half a year. Giants there are; but what proportionable food they have, except elephants and leviathans, is more than I can tell. They probably do not live upon Bantam-chickens.

As you are still more of a politician than a naturalist, you will be impatient to know if captain Byron took possession of the country for the crown of England, and to have his majesty's style run, George the third, by the grace of God, king of Great-Britain, France, Ireland, and the Giants! You will ask why some of their women were not brought away to mend our breed, which all good patriots assert has been dwindling for some hundreds of years; and whether there is any gold or diamonds in the country? Mr. Whitfield wants to know the same thing, and it is said intends a visit for the conversion of these poor blinded savages.

As soon as they are properly civilized, that is, enslaved, due care will undoubtedly be taken to specify in their charter, that these giants shall be subject to the parliament of Great-Britain, and shall not wear a sheep's skin that is not legally **stamped*. A riot of giants would be very unpleasant to an infant colony. But experience, I hope, will teach us, that the invaluable liberties of Englishmen are not to be wantonly scattered all over the globe. Let us enjoy them ourselves, but they are too sacred to be communicated. If giants once get an idea of freedom, they will soon be our masters instead of our slaves. But what pretensions can they have to freedom? They are as distinct from the common species as blacks, and, by being larger, may be more useful. I would advise our prudent merchants to employ them in the sugar-trade: they are capable of more labour; but even then they must be worse treated, if possible, than our black slaves: they must be lamed and maimed, and have their spirits well broken, or they may become dangerous. This

* This was written during the contests on the famous stamp-act.

too will give a little respite to Africa, where we have half exhausted the human, I mean the black breed, by that wise maxim of our planters, that if a slave lives four years he has earned his purchase-money, consequently you may afford to work him to death in that time.

The mother-country is not only the first, but ought to be the sole object of our political considerations. If we once begin to extend the idea of the love of our country, it will embrace the universe, and consequently annihilate all notion of our country. The Romans, so much the object of modern admiration, were with difficulty persuaded to admit even the rest of Italy to be their countrymen. The true patriots never regarded any thing without the walls of Rome, except their own villas, as their country. Every thing was done for immortal Rome, and it was immortal Rome that did every thing. Conquered nations, which to them answered to discovered nations with us, for they conquered as fast as they discovered, were always treated accordingly; and it is remarkable, that two men equally famous for their eloquence have been the only two that ever had the weakness to think that conquered countries were entitled to all the blessings of the mother-country. Cicero treated Sicily and Cilicia as tenderly as the district of Arpinum, and I doubt it was the folly of that example that misled his too exact * imitator on a late occasion. However, the giants must be impressed with other ideas: Bless us! if, like that pigmy old Oliver, they should come to think the Speaker's mace a bawble!

What have we to do with America, but to conquer, enslave, and make it tend to the advantage of our commerce? Shall the noblest rivers in the world roll for savages? Shall mines teem with gold for the natives of the soil? And shall the world produce any thing but for England, France, and Spain? It is enough that the overflowings of riches in those three countries are every ten years wasted in Germany.

Still, my political friend, I am not for occupying Patagonia, as we did Virginia, Carolina, &c. Such might be the politics of queen Elizabeth's days: but modern improvements are wiser. If the giants in question are masters of a rich and flourishing empire, I think they ought to be put under their majesties, a West-Indian company; the directors of which may retail

* Alluding to Mr. Pitt's speeches against the stamp-act.

out a small portion of their imperial revenues to the proprietors, under the name of a dividend. This is an excellent scheme of government, totally unknown to the ancients. I can but think how poor Livy or Tacitus would have been hampered in giving an account of such an *imperium in imperio*. * Cassimirus Alius Caunus (for they latinized every proper name, instead of delivering it as uncouthly pronounced by their soldiers and sailors) would have sounded well enough: but dividends, discounts, India bonds, &c. were not made for the majesty of history. But I am wandering from my subject; thought, while I am talking of the stocks and funds, I could chalk out a very pretty new South-sea scheme, *à propos* to the Patagonians. It would not ruin above half the nation, and would make the fortunes of such industrious gentlemen, as during the want of a war in Germany cannot turn commissaries.

Command is the object of every man's ambition; but by the impolitic assent of ages and nations to hereditary monarchy, you must be begotten on a queen, or are for ever excluded from wearing a diadem; except in a very few instances; as in Poland, where the throne is elective; in Corsica, where they will not acknowledge hereditary right in the republic of Genoa; in † Russia, where a soldier's trull succeeded her husband the czar, and where there are other ways of succeeding a husband; in Peru, where they are tired of exchanging their gold for tyrants; and in Paraguay, where the ‡ outcasts of the earth, and the inventors of the oath of obedience, have thrown off all submission to their prince, and, having mounted the throne, will probably renounce the oath of chastity too. But it is to England that persons of the lowest birth are indebted for the invention and facility of wielding at least part of a sceptre. Buy but an India bond, and you have a property in the kingdom of Bengal. Rise to be a director, and the Mogul has not more power of appointing and displacing nabobs. Indian sovereigns may now be born in Threadneedle-street.

What the government means by pocketing a whole nation of giants, is not to be conceived. It ought again to draw down the vengeance of their antagonists on the present § ministers. I am sure they have done nothing worse.

* Cassimirus Alius Caunus.

† Alluding to the czarinas, Catherine 1st and 2d.

‡ The jesuits.

§ This was written before the change of the ministry in July.

Who knows but at this instant they may be preparing to pour in forty or fifty thousand giants upon us? Their love of liberty, their tenderness of the constitution, their lenity, mildness, and disinterestedness, their attention to the merchants, in short, all their virtues may be affected, and only calculated to lull us asleep until the fatal blow is struck. I own my apprehensions are gloomy; yet, thank God, we have a pretty tall *opposition, who will not suffer us to be enslaved by any thing higher than themselves.

* In the mean time, till we know something of the matter, it is to be hoped that all speculative authors, who are so kind as to govern and reform the world through the channel of the newspapers, will turn their thoughts to plans for settling this new-acquired country. I call it new-acquired, because whoever finds a country, though nobody has lost it, is from that instant entitled to take possession of it for himself, or his sovereign. Europe has no other title to America, except force and murder, which are rather the executive parts of government than a right. Though Spain pretends a knowledge of our giants, she has forfeited all pretensions to their allegiance, by concealing the discovery; as is plain from the decision of the canon law, *tit. De novis regionibus non abscondendis*.

The first thought that will occur to every good christian is, that this race of giants ought to be exterminated, and their country colonized; but I have already mentioned the great utility that may be drawn from them in the light of slaves. I have also said, that a moderate importation might be tolerated for the sake of mending our breed; but I would by no means come into a project I have heard dropped, and in which propagation would not be concerned: I mean the scheme of bringing over a number of giants for second husbands to dowagers. Ireland is already kept in a state of humiliation. We check their trade, and do not allow them to avail themselves of the best situated harbours in the world. Matrimony is their only branch of commerce unrefracted, and it would be a most crying injustice to clog that too.

In truth, we are not sufficiently acquainted with these Goliaths to decide peremptorily on their properties. No account of them has been yet transmitted to the Royal Society: but it would be exceedingly advisable, that a jury of matrons should be sent in the next embarkation to make a report;

* The Grenvilles.

and

and old women for old women, I would trust to the analysis of the matrons in preference to that of the philosophers.

I will now, my friend, drop the political part of this discussion, and inform you what effect this phenomenon has had on another set of men. It has started an obvious and very perplexing question, viz. whether these giants are aborigines; if they are not, from which of the sons of Noah they are descended, and in that case how we shall account for this extraordinary increase of stature?

The modern philosophers are peremptory that these giants are aborigines; that is, that their country has been inhabited by giants from the creation of the world. The scriptures, say those gentlemen, mention giants, but never posterior to the flood; whence we ought to believe that they perished in the general deluge. Neither, add they, are we told that any son of Noah was of stature supereminent to his brethren. Yet we will suppose, say they, that some of their descendants might have shot up to an extraordinary height, without notice being taken of it in sacred writ. Nay, they allow that this increase of stature might not have appeared till after the date of holy writ. Yet, is it credible, say they, that a race of giants should have been formed, and remain unknown to all ages, all nations, all history? Did these monsters pass unobserved from the most eastern part of the continent (the supposed communication by which America was peopled) to the northern parts of the other world; and migrate down that whole continent to the most southern point of it, without leaving any trace, even by tradition, in the memory of mankind? Or are we to believe, that tribes of giants sailed from Africa to America? What vessels waited them? Was navigation so perfected in the infant ages of the world, that fleets enormously larger than any now existing were constructed for a race of Polyphemes? Or, to come to the third point, is it the climate that has ripened them, as Jamaica swells oranges to shadocks, to this stupendous volume? But north and south of them are men of the ordinary size; nor have the same latitudes produced any thing similar. Natural philosophers cannot account for it, therefore divines certainly can; and when this people shall be better known, I do not doubt but the mystery will be cleared up; for, as these giants have indubitably remained unmixed longer than any other people, we shall probably discover stronger traces of their Jewish origin. Their cult is in all likelihood less corrupted from that
of

of the sons of Noah, than is to be found elsewhere; their language possibly the genuine Hebrew, not Phœnician; and, if I might hazard a conjecture, these giants are probably the descendants of the ten tribes so long lost, and so fruitlessly sought by the learned; and having deviated less from the true religion of their forefathers, may have been restored to, or preserved in, their primitive stature and vigour. I offer this opinion with much modesty, though I think it more reasonable than any *hypothesis* I have yet heard on the subject.

Whatever their religion shall appear to be, it will be matter of great curiosity. We scarce know of any people, except the Hottentots, or the heroes who lived in the days of Fingal, among whom no traces of any religious notions or worship have been discovered.

If they are not Jews, but idolaters, the statues of their divinities, their sacrificing instruments, or whatever are the trinkets of their devotion, will be great rarities, and worthy of a place in any museum.

Their poetry will be another object of enquiry, and, if their minds are at all in proportion to their bodies, must abound in the most lofty images, in the true sublime. Oh! if we could come at an heroic poem penned by a giant! We should see other images than our puny writers of romance have conceived; and a little different from the cold * tale of a late notable author, who did not know better what to do with his giant than to make him grow till he shook his own castle about his own ears.

In short, my good friend, here is ample room for speculation: but I hope we shall go calmly and systematically to work: that we shall not exterminate these poor monsters till we are fully acquainted with their history, laws, opinions, police, &c. that we shall not convert them to christianity, only to cut their throats afterwards; that nobody will beg a million of acres of giant-land, till we have determined what to do with the present occupiers; and that we shall not throw away fifteen or twenty thousand men in conquering their country, as we did at the Havannah, only to restore it to the Spaniards.

July 1, 1766.

Yours,

S. T.

* The Castle of Otranto.



HISTORIC DOUBTS

ON THE

LIFE AND REIGN

OF

KING RICHARD the THIRD.

L'Histoire n'est fondée que sur le témoignage des auteurs qui nous l'ont transmise. Il importe donc extrêmement, pour la sçavoir, de bien connoître quels étoient ces auteurs. Rien n'est à négliger en ce point ; le tems où ils ont vécu, leur naissance, leur patrie, la part qu'ils ont eue aux affaires, les moyens par lesquels ils ont été instruits, et l'intérêt qu'ils y pouvoient prendre, sont des circonstances essentielles qu'il n'est pas permis d'ignorer : cela dépend le plus ou le moins d'autorité qu'ils doivent avoir : et sans cette connoissance, on courra risque très souvent de prendre pour guide un historien de mauvaise foi, ou du moins mal informé.

Hist. de l'Acad. des Inscript. Vol. X.

P · R · E · F · A · C · E.

SO incompetent has the generality of historians been for the province they have undertaken, that it is almost a question, whether, if the dead of past ages could revive, they would be able to reconnoitre the events of their own times, as transmitted to us by ignorance and misrepresentation. All very ancient history, except that of the illuminated Jews, is a perfect fable. It was written by priests, or collected from their reports; and calculated solely to raise lofty ideas of the origin of each nation. Gods and demi-gods were the principal actors; and truth is seldom to be expected where the personages are supernatural. The Greek historians have no advantage over the Peruvian, but in the beauty of their language, or from that language being more familiar to us. Mango Capac, the son of the sun, is as authentic a founder of a royal race, as the progenitor of the Heraclidæ. What truth indeed could be expected, when even the identity of person is uncertain? The actions of one were ascribed to many, and of many to one. It is not known whether there was a single Hercules or twenty.

As nations grew polished, history became better authenticated. Greece itself learned to speak a little truth. Rome, at the hour of its fall, had the consolation of seeing the crimes of its usurpers published. The vanquished inflicted eternal wounds on their conquerors—but who knows, if Pompey had succeeded, whether Julius Cæsar would not have been decorated as a martyr to public liberty? At some periods the suffering criminal captivates all hearts; at others, the triumphant tyrant. Augustus, drenched in the blood of his fellow-citizens, and Charles Stuart, falling in his own blood, are held up to admiration. Truth is left out of the discussion; and odes and anniversary sermons give the law to history and credulity.

— But if the crimes of Rome are authenticated, the case is not the same with its virtues. An able critic has shown that nothing is more problematic than
VOL. II. P the

the history of the three or four first ages of that city. As the confusions of the state increased, so do the confusions in its story. The empire had masters, whose names are only known from medals. It is uncertain of what princes several empresses were the wives. If the jealousy of two antiquaries intervenes, the point becomes inexplicable. Oriuna, on the medals of Carausius, used to pass for the moon : of late years it is become a doubt whether she was not his consort. It is of little importance whether she was moon or empress : but how little must we know of those times, when those land-marks to certainty, royal names, do not serve even that purpose ! In the cabinet of the king of France are several coins of sovereigns, whose country cannot now be guessed at.

The want of records, of letters, of printing, of critics ; wars, revolutions, factions, and other causes, occasioned these defects in ancient history. Chronology and astronomy are forced to tinker up and reconcile, as well as they can, those uncertainties. This satisfies the learned—but what should we think of the reign of George the second to be calculated two thousand years hence by eclipses, lest the conquest of Canada should be ascribed to James the first ?

At the very moment that the Roman empire was resettled, nay, when a new metropolis was erected, in an age of science and arts, while letters still held up their heads in Greece ; consequently, when the great outlines of truth, I mean events, might be expected to be established ; at that very period a new deluge of error burst upon the world. Christian monks and saints laid truth waste ; and a mock sun rose at Rome, when the Roman sun sunk at Constantinople. Virtues and vices were rated by the standard of bigotry ; and the militia of the church became the only historians. The best princes were represented as monsters ; the worst, at least the most useless, were deified, according as they depressed or exalted turbulent and enthusiastic prelates and friars. Nay, these men were so destitute of temper and common sense, that they dared to suppose that common sense would never revisit the earth ; and accordingly wrote with so little judgment, and committed such palpable forgeries, that, if we cannot discover what really happened in those ages, we can at least be very sure what did not. How many general persecutions does the church record, of which there is not the smallest trace !

What

What donations and charters were forged, for which those holy persons would lose their ears, if they were in this age to present them in the most common court of judicature! Yet how long were those impostors the only persons who attempted to write history!

But let us lay aside their interested lies, and consider how far they were qualified in other respects to transmit faithful memorials to posterity. In the ages I speak of, the barbarous monkish ages, the shadow of learning that existed was confined to the clergy: they generally wrote in Latin, or in verse, and their compositions in both were truly barbarous. The difficulties of rhyme, and the want of correspondent terms in Latin, were no small impediments to the severe march of truth. But there were worse obstacles to encounter. Europe was in a continual state of warfare. Little princes and great lords were constantly skirmishing and scrambling for trifling additions of territory, or wasting each others borders. Geography was very imperfect; no police existed; roads, such as they were, were dangerous; and posts were not established. Events were only known by rumour, from pilgrims, or by letters carried by couriers to the parties interested: the public did not enjoy even those fallible vehicles of intelligence, news-papers. In this situation did monks, at twenty, fifty, an hundred, nay a thousand miles distance, (and under the circumstances I have mentioned even twenty miles were considerable) undertake to write history—and they wrote it accordingly.

If we take a survey of our own history, and examine it with any attention, what an unsatisfactory picture does it present to us! How dry, how superficial, how void of information! How little is recorded besides battles, plagues, and religious foundations! That this should be the case, before the conquest, is not surprising. Our empire was but forming itself, or recollecting its divided members into one mass, which, from the desertion of the Romans, had split into petty kingdoms. The invasions of nations as barbarous as ourselves, interfered with every plan of policy and order that might have been formed to settle the emerging state; and swarms of foreign monks were turned loose upon us with their new faith and mysteries, to bewilder and confound the plain good sense of our ancestors. It was too much to have Danes, Saxons, and popes to combat at once!

Our language suffered as much as our government; and, not having acquired much from our Roman masters, was miserably disfigured by the subsequent invaders. The unconquered parts of the island retained some purity and some precision. The Welsh and Erse tongues wanted not harmony; but never did exist a more barbarous jargon than the dialect still venerated by antiquaries, and called *Saxon*. It was so uncouth, so inflexible to all composition, that the monks, retaining the idiom, were reduced to write in what they took or meant for Latin.

The Norman tyranny succeeded, and gave this Babel of savage sounds a wrench towards their own language. Such a mixture necessarily required ages to bring it to some standard: and, consequently, whatever compositions were formed during its progress, were sure of growing obsolete. However, the authors of those days were not likely to make these obvious reflections; and indeed seemed to have aimed at no one perfection. From the conquest to the reign of Henry the eighth it is difficult to discover any one beauty in our writers, but their simplicity. They told their tale like story-tellers; that is, they related without art or ornament: and they related whatever they heard. No councils of princes, no motives of conduct, no remoter springs of action, did they investigate or learn. We have even little light into the characters of the actors. A king or an archbishop of Canterbury are the only persons with whom we are made much acquainted. The barons are all represented as brave patriots; but we have not the satisfaction of knowing which of them were really so; nor whether they were not all turbulent and ambitious. The probability is, that both kings and nobles wished to encroach on each other: and if any sparks of liberty were struck out, in all likelihood it was contrary to the intention of either the flint or the steel.

Hence it has been thought necessary to give a new dress to English history. Recourse has been had to records, and they are far from corroborating the testimonies of our historians. Want of authentic materials has obliged our later writers to leave the mass pretty much as they found it. Perhaps all the requisite attention that might have been bestowed, has not been bestowed. It demands great industry and patience to wade into such abstruse stores as records and charters: and they being jejune and narrow in themselves, very
acute

acute criticism is necessary to strike light from their assistance. If they solemnly contradict historians in material facts, we may lose our history; but it is impossible to adhere to our historians. Partiality man cannot entirely divest himself of; it is so natural, that the bent of a writer to one side or the other of a question is almost always discoverable. But there is a wide difference between favouring and lying—and yet I doubt whether the whole stream of our historians, misled by their originals, have not falsified one reign in our annals in the grossest manner. The moderns are only guilty of taking on trust what they ought to have examined more scrupulously, as the authors whom they copied were all ranked on one side in a flagrant season of party. But no excuse can be made for the original authors, who, I doubt, have violated all rules of truth.

The confusions which attended the civil war between the houses of York and Lancaster, threw an obscurity over that part of our annals, which it is almost impossible to dispel. We have scarce any authentic monuments of the reign of Edward the fourth; and ought to read his history with much distrust, from the boundless partiality of the succeeding writers to the opposite cause. That diffidence should increase as we proceed to the reign of his brother.

It occurred to me some years ago, that the picture of Richard the third, as drawn by historians, was a character formed by prejudice and invention. I did not take Shakespeare's tragedy for a genuine representation, but I did take the story of that reign for a tragedy of imagination. Many of the crimes imputed to Richard seemed improbable; and, what was stronger, contrary to his interest. A few incidental circumstances corroborated my opinion; an original and important instrument was pointed out to me last winter, which gave rise to the following sheets; and as it was easy to perceive, under all the glare of encomiums which historians have heaped on the wisdom of Henry the seventh, that he was a mean and unfeeling tyrant, I suspected that they had blackened his rival, till Henry, by the contrast, should appear in a kind of amiable light. The more I examined their story, the more I was confirmed in my opinion:—and with regard to Henry, one consequence I could not help drawing; that we have either no authentic memorials of Richard's crimes, or, at most, no account of them but from Lancastrian historians;

whereas

whereas the vices and injustice of Henry are, though palliated, avowed by the concurrent testimony of his panegyrists. Suspitions and calumny were fastened on Richard as so many assassinations. The murders committed by Henry were indeed executions—and executions pass for prudence with prudent historians; for when a successful king is chief-justice, historians become a voluntary jury.

If I do not flatter myself, I have unravelled a considerable part of that dark period. Whether satisfactorily or not, my readers must decide. Nor is it of any importance whether I have or not. The attempt was mere matter of curiosity and speculation. If any man, as idle as myself, should take the trouble to review and canvass my arguments, I am ready to yield so indifferent a point to better reasons. Should declamation alone be used to contradict me, I shall not think I am less in the right.

Nov. 28th, 1767.



HISTORIC DOUBTS

ON THE

Life and Reign of King RICHARD III.

THERE is a kind of literary superstition which men are apt to contract from habit, and which makes them look on any attempt towards shaking their belief in any established characters, no matter whether good or bad, as a sort of profanation. They are determined to adhere to their first impressions, and are equally offended at any innovation, whether the person, whose character is to be raised or depressed, were patriot or tyrant, saint or sinner. No indulgence is granted to those who would ascertain the truth. The more the testimonies on either side have been multiplied, the stronger is the conviction; though it generally happens that the original evidence is wondrous slender, and that the number of writers have but copied one another; or, what is worse, have only added to the original, without any new authority. Attachment so groundless is not to be regarded; and in mere matters of curiosity, it were ridiculous to pay any deference to it. If time brings new materials to light, if facts and dates confute historians, what does it signify that we have been for two or three hundred years under an error? Does antiquity consecrate darkness? Does a lie become venerable from its age?

Historic

Historic justice is due to all characters. Who would not vindicate Henry the eighth or Charles the second, if found to be falsely traduced? Why then not Richard the third? Of what importance is it to any man living, whether or not he was as bad as he is represented? No one noble family is sprung from him.

However, not to disturb too much the erudition of those who have read the dismal story of his cruelties, and settled their ideas of his tyranny and usurpation, I declare I am not going to write a vindication of him. All I mean to show is, that though he may have been as execrable as we are told he was, we have little or no reason to believe so. If the propensity of habit should still incline a single man to *suppose* that all he has read of Richard is true, I beg no more, than that that person would be so impartial as to own that he has little or no foundation for supposing so.

I will state the list of the crimes charged on Richard; I will specify the authorities on which he was accused; I will give a faithful account of the historians by whom he was accused; and will then examine the circumstances of each crime and each evidence; and, lastly, show that some of the crimes were contrary to Richard's interest, and almost all inconsistent with probability or with dates, and some of them involved in material contradictions.

Supposed crimes of Richard the third.

- 1st. His murder of Edward prince of Wales, son of Henry the sixth.
- 2d. His murder of Henry the sixth.
- 3d. The murder of his brother George duke of Clarence.
- 4th. The execution of Rivers, Gray, and Vaughan.
- 5th. The execution of lord Hastings.
- 6th. The murder of Edward the fifth and his brother.
- 7th. The murder of his own queen.

To which may be added, as they are thrown into the list to blacken him, his intended match with his own niece Elizabeth, the penance of Jane Shore, and his own personal deformities.

I. Of the murder of Edward prince of Wales, son of Henry the sixth.

Edward the fourth had indubitably the hereditary right to the crown; which he pursued with singular bravery and address, and with all the arts of a politician and the cruelty of a conqueror. Indeed on neither side do there seem to have been any scruples: Yorkists and Lancastrians, Edward and Margaret of Anjou, entered into any engagements, took any oaths, violated them, and indulged their revenge, as often as they were depressed or victorious. After the battle of Tewksbury, in which Margaret and her son were made prisoners, young Edward was brought to the presence of Edward the fourth; "But after the king," says Fabian, the oldest historian of those times, "had questioned with the said sir Edward, and he had answered unto him contrary his pleasure, he then strake him with his gauntlet upon the face; after which stroke, so by him received, he was by the kynges servants incontinently slaine." The Chronicle of Croyland of the same date says, the prince was slain "ultricius quorundam manibus;" but names nobody.

Hall, who closes his work with the reign of Henry the eighth, says, that "The prince beyinge bold of stomache and of a good courage, answered the king's question (of how he durst so presumptuously enter into his realme with banner displayed) saynge, To recover my father's kingdome and enheritance, &c. at which wordes kyng Edward said nothing, but with his hand thrust him from him, or, as some say, stroke him with his gauntlet, whome incontinent, they that stode about, which were George duke of Clarence, Richard duke of Gloucester, Thomas marques Dorset (son of queen Elizabeth Widville) and William lord Hastynge, sodainly murdered and pitiously manquelled." Thus much had the story gained from the time of Fabian to that of Hall.

Hollingshed repeats these very words, consequently is a transcriber and no new authority.

John Stowe reverts to Fabian's account, as the only one not grounded on hearsay, and affirms no more, than that the king cruelly smote the young prince on the face with his gauntlet, and after his servants slew him.

Of modern historians, Rapin and Carte, the only two who seem not to have swallowed implicitly all the vulgar tales propagated by the Lancastrians to blacken the house of York, warn us to read with allowance the exaggerated relations of those times. The latter suspects, that at the dissolution of the monasteries all evidences were suppressed that tended to weaken the right of the prince on the throne; but as Henry the eighth concentrated in himself both the claim of Edward the Fourth and that ridiculous one of Henry the seventh, he seems to have had less occasion to be anxious lest the truth should come out; and indeed his father had involved that truth in so much darkness, that it was little likely to force its way. Nor was it necessary then to load the memory of Richard the third, who had left no offspring. Henry the eighth had no competitor to fear but the descendants of Clarence, of whom he seems to have had sufficient apprehension, as appeared by his murder of the old countess of Salisbury, daughter of Clarence, and his endeavours to root out her posterity. This jealousy accounts for Hall charging the duke of Clarence, as well as the duke of Gloucester, with the murder of prince Edward. But in accusations of so deep a dye, it is not sufficient ground for our belief, that an historian reports them with such a frivolous palliative as that phrase, *as some say*. A cotemporary names the king's *servants* as perpetrators of the murder: is not that more probable, than that the king's own brothers should have dipped their hands in so foul an assassination? Richard, in particular, is allowed on all hands to have been a brave and martial prince: he had great share in the victory at Tewksbury: some years afterwards he commanded his brother's troops in Scotland, and made himself master of Edinburgh. • At the battle of Bosworth, where he fell, his courage was heroic: he fought Richmond, and endeavoured to decide their quarrel by a personal combat, slaying sir William Brandon, his rival's standard-bearer, with his own hand, and felling to the ground sir John Cheney, who endeavoured to oppose his fury. Such men may be carried by ambition to command the execution of those who stand in their way; but are not likely to lend their hand, in cold blood, to a base, and, to themselves, useless assassination. How did it import Richard in what manner the young prince was put to death? If he had so early planned the ambitious designs ascribed to him, he might have trusted to his brother Edward, so much more immediately concerned, that the young prince would not be spared. If those views did not, as is probable, take root in his heart till long afterwards, what interest had Richard to murder an unhappy young prince?

This

This crime therefore was so unnecessary, and is so far from being established by any authority, that he deserves to be entirely acquitted of it.

II. The murder of Henry the sixth.

This charge, no better supported than the preceding, is still more improbable. "Of the death of this prince, Henry the sixth," says Fabian, "divers tales wer told. But the most common fame went, that he was sticken with a dagger by the handes of the duke of Glocester."

The author of the Continuation of the Chronicle of Croyland says only, that the body of king Henry was found lifeless (exanime) in the Tower. "Parcat Deus," adds he, "& spatium pœnitentiæ ei donet, *quicumque* sacrilegas manus in christum Domini ausus est immittere. Unde et agens tyranni, patiensque gloriosi martyris titulum mereatur." The prayer for the murderer, that he may live to repent, proves that the passage was written immediately after the murder was committed. That the assassin deserved the appellation of tyrant, evinces that the historian's suspicions went high; but as he calls him *quicumque*, and as we are uncertain whether he wrote before the death of Edward the fourth, or between his death and that of Richard the third, we cannot ascertain which of the brothers he meant. In strict construction he should mean Edward, because, as he is speaking of Henry's death, Richard, then only duke of Gloucester, could not properly be called a tyrant. But as monks were not good grammatical critics, I shall lay no stress on this objection. I do think he alluded to Richard; having treated him severely in the subsequent part of his history, and having a true monkish partiality to Edward, whose cruelty and vices he slightly noticed, in favour to that monarch's severity to heretics and ecclesiastic expiations. "Is princeps, licet diebus suis cupiditatibus & luxui nimis intemperanter indulgisse credatur, in fide tamen catholicus summè, hereticorum severissimus hostis, sapientium & doctorum hominum clericorumque promotor amantissimus, sacramentorum ecclesiæ devotissimus venerator, peccatorumque suorum omnium pœnitentissimus fuit." That monster Philip the second possessed just the same virtues. Still, I say, let the monk suspect whom he would, if Henry was found dead, the monk was not likely to know who murdered him—and if he did, he has not told us.

Hall says, "Poore kyng Henry the sixte, a little before deprived of hys realme and imperial crowne, was now in the Tower of London spoyled of his life and all worldly felicity by Richard duke of Gloucester (as the constant fame ranne) which, to thintent that king Edward his brother should be clere out of al secret suspicyon of sudden invasion, murdered the said king with a dagger." Whatever Richard was, it seems he was a most excellent and kind-hearted brother, and scrupled not on any occasion to be the Jack Ketch of the times. We shall see him soon (if the evidence were to be believed) perform the same friendly office for Edward on their brother Clarence. And we must admire that he, whose dagger was so fleshed in murder for the service of another, should be so put to it to find the means of making away with his nephews, whose deaths were considerably more essential to him. But can this accusation be allowed gravely? If Richard aspired to the crown, whose whose conduct during Edward's reign was a scene, as we are told, of plausibility and decorum, would he officiously and unnecessarily have taken on himself the odium of slaying a saint-like monarch, adored by the people? Was it his interest to save Edward's character at the expence of his own? Did Henry stand in *his* way, deposed, imprisoned, and now *childless*? The blind and indiscriminate zeal with which every crime committed in that bloody age was placed to Richard's account, makes it greatly probable, that interest of party had more hand than truth in drawing his picture. Other cruelties, which I shall mention, and to which we know his motives, he certainly commanded; nor am I desirous to purge him where I find him guilty; but mob-stories or Lancastrian forgeries ought to be rejected from sober history; nor can they be repeated, without exposing the writer to the imputation of weakness and vulgar credulity.

III. The murder of his brother Clarence.

In the examination of this article, I shall set aside our historians (whose gossiping narratives, as we have seen, deserve little regard) because we have better authority to direct our enquiries: and this is, the attainder of the duke of Clarence, as it is set forth in the Parliamentary History (copied indeed from Habington's Life of Edward the fourth), and by the editors of that history justly supposed to be taken from Stowe, who had seen the original bill

of attainder. The crimes and conspiracy of Clarence are there particularly enumerated, and even his dealing with conjurers and necromancers; a charge, however absurd, yet often made use of in that age. Eleanor Cobham, wife of Humphrey duke of Gloucester, had been condemned on a parallel accusation. In France it was a common charge; and I think, so late as the reign of Henry the eighth, Edward duke of Buckingham was said to have consulted astrologers and such like cattle, on the succession of the crown. Whether Clarence was guilty we cannot easily tell; for in those times neither the public nor the prisoner were often favoured with knowing the evidence on which sentence was passed. Nor was much information of that sort given to or asked by parliament itself, previous to bills of attainder. The duke of Clarence appears to have been at once a weak, volatile, injudicious, and ambitious man. He had abandoned his brother Edward, had espoused the daughter of Warwick, the great enemy of their house, and had even been declared successor to Henry the sixth and his son prince Edward. Conduct so absurd must have left lasting impressions on Edward's mind, not to be effaced by Clarence's subsequent treachery to Henry and Warwick. The Chronicle of Croyland mentions the ill-humour and discontents of Clarence; and all our authors agree, that he kept no terms with the queen and her relations*. Habington adds, that these discontents were secretly fomented by the duke

* That Chronicle, which now and then, tho' seldom, is circumstantial, gives a curious account of the marriage of Richard duke of Gloucester and Anne Nevil, which I have found in no other author; and which seems to tax the envy and rapaciousness of Clarence as the causes of the disension between the brothers. This account, and from a cotemporary, is the more remarkable, as the lady Anne is positively said to have been only betrothed to Edward prince of Wales, son of Henry the sixth, and not his widow, as she is carelessly called by all our historians, and represented in Shakespeare's matterly scene. "Postquam filius regis Henrici, cui domina Anna, minor filia comitis Warwici, *desponsata* fuit, in prefato bello de Tewksbury occubuit." Richard duke of Gloucester desired her for his wife. Clarence, who had married the eldest sister, was unwilling to share so rich an inheritance with his brother, and concealed the young

lady. Gloucester was too alert for him, and discovered the lady Anne in the dress of a cookmaid in London, and removed her to the sanctuary of saint Martin. The brothers pleaded each his cause in person before their elder brother in council; and every man, says the author, admired the strength of their respective arguments. The king composed their differences, bestowed the maiden on Gloucester, and parted the estate between him and Clarence; the countess of Warwick, mother of the heiresses, and who had brought that vast wealth to the house of Nevil, remaining the only sufferer, being reduced to a state of absolute necessity, as appears from Dugdale. In such times, under such despotic dispensations, the greatest crimes were only consequences of the oeconomy of government.—Note, that sir Richard Baker is so absurd as to make Richard espouse the lady Anne after his accession, though he had a son by her ten years old at that time.

of

of Gloucester. Perhaps they were: Gloucester certainly kept fair with the queen, and profited largely by the forfeiture of his brother. But where jealousies are secretly fomented in a court, they seldom come to the knowledge of an historian; and though he may have guessed right from collateral circumstances, these insinuations are mere *gratis dicta*, and can only be treated as surmises *. Hall, Hollingshed, and Stowe, say not a word of Richard being the person who put the sentence in execution; but, on the contrary, they all say he openly resisted the murder of Clarence: all too record another circumstance, which is perfectly ridiculous, that Clarence was drowned in a barrel or butt of malmsey. Whoever can believe that a butt of wine was the engine of his death, may believe that Richard helped him into it, and kept him down till he was suffocated. But the strong evidence on which Richard must be acquitted, and indeed even of having contributed to his death, was the testimony of Edward himself. Being some time afterward solicited to pardon a notorious criminal, the king's conscience broke forth: "Unhappy brother!" cried he, "for whom no man would interceed—yet ye can all be intercessors for a villain!" If Richard had been instigator or executioner, it is not likely that the king would have assumed the whole merciless criminality to himself, without bestowing a due share on his brother Gloucester. Is it possible to renew the charge, and not recollect this acquittal!

The three preceding accusations are evidently uncertain and improbable. What follows is more obscure; and it is on the ensuing transactions that I venture to pronounce that we have little or no authority on which to form positive conclusions. I speak more particularly of the deaths of Edward the fifth and his brother. It will, I think, appear very problematic whether they were murdered or not: and even if they were murdered, it is impossible to believe the account as fabricated and divulged by Henry the seventh, on whose testimony the murder must rest at last; for they who speak most positively, revert to the story which he was pleased to publish eleven years after their supposed

* The Chronicle above quoted asserts, that the speaker of the house of commons demanded the execution of Clarence. Is it credible that on a proceeding so public and so solemn for that age, the brother of the offended monarch and of the royal criminal should have been deputed, or would have stooped to so vile an office? On such

occasions do arbitrary princes want tools? Was Edward's court so virtuous or so humane, that it could furnish no assassin but the first prince of the blood? When the house of commons undertook to colour the king's resentment, was every member of it too scrupulous to lend his hand to the deed?

deaths,

deaths, and which is so absurd, so incoherent, and so repugnant to dates and other facts, that, as it is no longer necessary to pay court to his majesty, it is no longer necessary not to treat his assertions as an impudent fiction. I come directly to this point, because the intervening articles of the execution of Rivers, Gray, Vaughan, and Hastings, will naturally find their place in that disquisition.

And here it will be important to examine those historians on whose relation the story first depends. Previous to this I must ascertain one or two dates, for they are stubborn evidence and cannot be rejected: they exist every where, and cannot be proscribed even from a court calendar.

Edward the fourth died April 9th, 1483.

Edward, his eldest son, was then thirteen years of age.

Richard, duke of York, his second son, was then about nine.

We have but two cotemporary historians, the author of the Chronicle of Croyland, and John Fabian. The first, who wrote in his convent, and only mentioned incidentally affairs of state, is very barren and concise: he appears indeed not to have been ill informed, and sometimes even in a situation of personally knowing the transactions of the times; for in one place we are told in a marginal note, that the doctor of the canon law, and one of the king's counsellors, who was sent to Calais, was the author of the Continuation. Whenever therefore his assertions are positive, and not merely flying reports, he ought to be admitted as fair evidence, since we have no better. And yet a monk who busies himself in recording the insignificant events of his own order or monastery, and who was at most occasionally made use of, was not likely to know the most important and most mysterious secrets of state; I mean, as he was not employed in those iniquitous transactions—If he had been, we should learn or might expect still less truth from him.

John Fabian was a merchant, and had been sheriff of London, and died in 1512: he consequently lived on the spot at that very interesting period. Yet no sheriff was ever less qualified to write a history of England. His narrative is dry, uncircumstantial, and unimportant: he mentions the deaths of princes and revolutions of government, with the same phlegm and brevity as he would

would speak of the appointment of churchwardens. I say not this from any partiality, or to decry the simple man as crossing my opinion; for Fabian's testimony is far from bearing hard against Richard, even though he wrote under Henry the seventh, who would have suffered no apology for his rival, and whose reign was employed not only in extirpating the house of York, but in forging the most atrocious calumnies to blacken their memories, and invalidate their just claim.

But the great source from whence all later historians have taken their materials for the reign of Richard the third, is sir Thomas More. Grafton, the next in order, has copied him verbatim: so does Hollingshed—and we are told by the former in a marginal note, that sir Thomas was under-sheriff of London when he composed his work. It is in truth a composition, and a very beautiful one. He was then in the vigour of his fancy, and fresh from the study of the Greek and Roman historians, whose manner he has imitated in divers imaginary orations. They serve to lengthen an unknown history of little more than two months into a pretty sizeable volume; but are no more to be received as genuine, than the facts they are adduced to countenance. An under-sheriff of London, aged but twenty-eight, and recently marked with the displeasure of the crown, was not likely to be furnished with materials from any high authority, and could not receive them from the best authority, I mean the adverse party, who were proscribed, and all their chiefs banished or put to death. Let us again recur to dates*. Sir Thomas More was born in 1480: he was appointed under-sheriff in 1508, and three years before had offended Henry the seventh in the tender point of opposing a subsidy. Buck, the apologist of Richard the third, ascribes the authorities of sir Thomas to the information of archbishop Morton; and it is true that he had been brought up under that prelate; but Morton died in 1500, when sir Thomas was but twenty years old, and when he had scarce thought of writing history. What materials he had gathered from his master were probably nothing more than a general narrative of the preceding times in discourse at dinner or in a winter's evening, if so raw a youth can be supposed to have been admitted to familiarity with a prelate of that rank and prime minister. But granting that such pregnant parts as More's had leaped the barrier of dignity, and insinuated himself into the archbishop's favour; could

* Vide Biog. Britannica, p. 3159.

he have drawn from a more corrupted source? Morton had not only violated his allegiance to Richard, but had been the chief engine to dethrone him and to plant a bastard scion on the throne. Of all men living there could not be more suspicious testimony than the prelate's, except the king's: and had the archbishop selected More for the historian of those dark scenes; who had so much interest to blacken Richard, as the man who had risen to be prime minister to his rival? Take it therefore either way, that the archbishop did or did not pitch on a young man of twenty to write that history, his authority was as suspicious as could be.

It may be said, on the other hand, that sir Thomas, who had smarted for his boldness (for his father, a judge of the king's bench, had been imprisoned and fined for his son's offence), had had little inducement to flatter the Lancastrian cause. It is very true; nor am I inclined to impute adulation to one of the honestest statesmen and brightest names in our annals. He who scorned to save his life by bending to the will of the son, was not likely to canvass the favour of the father, by prostituting his pen to the humour of the court. I take the truth to be, that sir Thomas wrote his *Reign of Edward the fifth* as he wrote his *Utopia*; to amuse his leisure and exercise his fancy. He took up a paltry canvas, and embroidered it with a flowing design as his imagination suggested the colours. I should deal more severely with his respected memory on any other hypothesis. He has been guilty of such palpable and material falsehoods, as, while they destroy his credit as an historian, would reproach his veracity as a man, if we could impute them to premeditated perversion of truth, and not to youthful levity and inaccuracy. Standing as they do, the sole ground-work of that reign's history, I am authorized to pronounce the work, invention and romance.

Polidore Virgil, a foreigner, and author of a light Latin history, was here during the reigns of Henry the seventh and eighth. I may quote him now-and-then, and the *Chronicle of Croyland*; but neither furnishes us with much light.

There was another foreign writer in that age of far greater authority, whose negligent simplicity and veracity are unquestionable; who had great opportunities of knowing our story, and whose testimony is corroborated by

our records : I mean Philip de Comines. He and Buck agree with one another, and with the rolls of parliament ; fir Thomas More with none of them.

Buck, so long exploded as a lover of paradoxes, and as an advocate for a monster, gains new credit the deeper this dark scene is fathomed. Undoubtedly Buck has gone too far ; nor are his style and method to be admired. With every intention of vindicating Richard, he does but authenticate his crimes, by searching in other story for parallel instances of what he calls policy. No doubt politicians will acquit Richard, if confession of his crimes be pleaded in defence of them. Policy will justify his taking off opponents. Policy will maintain him in removing those who would have barred his obtaining the crown, whether he thought he had a right to it, or was determined to obtain it. Morality, especially in the latter case, cannot take his part. I shall speak more to this immediately. Rapin conceived doubts ; but, instead of pursuing them, wandered after judgments ; and they will lead a man wherever he has a mind to be led. Carte, with more manly shrewdness, has sifted many parts of Richard's story, and guessed happily. My part has less penetration ; but the Parliamentary History, the comparison of dates, and the authentic monument lately come to light, and from which I shall give extracts, have convinced me, that if Buck is too favourable, all our other historians are blind guides, and have not made out a twentieth part of their assertions.

The story of Edward the fifth is thus related by fir Thomas More, and copied from him by all our historians.

When the king his father died, the prince kept his court at Ludlow, under the tuition of his maternal uncle Anthony earl Rivers. Richard duke of Gloucester was in the north, returning from his successful expedition against the Scots. The queen wrote instantly to her brother to bring up the young king to London, with a train of two thousand horse : a fact allowed by historians, and which, whether a prudent caution or not, was the first overt-act of the new reign ; and likely to strike, as it did strike, the duke of Gloucester and the ancient nobility with a jealousy, that the queen intended to exclude them from the administration, and to govern in concert with her own family. It is not improper to observe, that no precedent authorized her to assume such power. Joan, princess dowager of Wales, and widow of the
black

black prince, had no share in the government during the minority of her son Richard the second. Catharine of Valois, widow of Henry the fifth, was alike excluded from the regency, though her son was but a year old. And if Isabella governed on the deposition of Edward the second, it was by an usurped power, by the same power that had contributed to dethrone her husband; a power sanctified by no title, and confirmed by no act of parliament*. The first step to a female regency† enacted, though it never took place, was many years afterwards, in the reign of Henry the eighth.

Edward, on his death-bed, had patched up a reconciliation between his wife's kindred and the great lords of the court; particularly between the marquis Dorset, the queen's son, and the lord chamberlain Hastings. Yet whether the disgusted lords had only seemed to yield, to satisfy the dying king, or whether the steps taken by the queen gave them new cause of umbrage, it appears that the duke of Buckingham was the first to communicate his suspicions to Gloucester, and to dedicate himself to his service. Lord Hastings was scarce less forward to join in like measures: and all three, it is pretended, were so alert, that they contrived to have it insinuated to the queen, that it would give much offence if the young king should be brought to London with so great a force as she had ordered; on which suggestions she wrote to lord Rivers to countermand her first directions.

It is difficult not to suspect, that our historians have imagined more plotting in this transaction than could easily be compassed in so short a period, and in an age when no communication could be carried on but by special messengers, in bad roads, and with no relays of post-horses.

Edward the fourth died April 9th, and his son made his entrance into London‡ May 4th. It is not probable that the queen communicated her directions for bringing up her son with an armed force to the lords of the council, and her newly reconciled enemies. But she might be betrayed. Still it required some time for Buckingham to send his servant Percival

* Twelve guardians were appointed by parliament, and the earl of Lancaster entrusted with the care of the king's person. The latter being excluded from exercising his charge by the queen and Mortimer, gave that as a reason for not obeying a summons to parliament. *Vide Parliam. Hist.* vol. 1, p. 208, 215.
 † Vide the act of succession in *Parliam. Hist.* vol. 3, p. 127.
 ‡ Fabian.

(though sir Thomas More vaunts his expedition) to York, where the duke of Gloucester then lay *; for Percival's return (it must be observed too that the duke of Buckingham was in Wales, consequently did not learn the queen's orders upon the spot, but either received the account from London, or learnt it from Ludlow); for the two dukes to send instructions to their confederates in London; for the impression to be made on the queen, and for her dispatching her counter-orders; for Percival to post back and meet Gloucester at Nottingham, and for returning thence and bringing his master Buckingham to meet Richard at Northampton, at the very time of the king's arrival there. All this might happen, undoubtedly; and yet who will believe, that such mysterious and rapid negotiations came to the knowledge of sir Thomas More twenty-five years afterwards, when, as it will appear, he knew nothing of very material and public facts that happened at the same period?

But whether the circumstances are true, or whether artfully imagined, it is certain that the king with a small force arrived at Northampton, and thence proceeded to Stony Stratford. Earl Rivers remained at Northampton, where he was cajoled by the two dukes till the time of rest, when the gates of the inn were suddenly locked, and the earl made prisoner. Early in the morning the two dukes hastened to Stony Stratford, where in the king's presence they picked a quarrel with his other half-brother the lord Richard Grey, accusing him, the marquis Dorset, and their uncle Rivers, of ambitious and hostile designs, to which end the marquis had entered the Tower, taken treasure thence, and sent a force to sea.

"These things, says sir Thomas, the dukes knew were done for good and necessary purposes, and by appointment of the council; but somewhat they must say." As sir Thomas has not been pleased to specify those purposes, and as in those times at least privy councillors were exceedingly complaisant to the ruling powers, he must allow us to doubt whether the purposes of the queen's

* It should be remarked too, that the duke of Gloucester is positively said to be celebrating his brother's obsequies there. It not only strikes off part of the term by allowing the necessary time for the news of king Edward's death to reach York, and for the preparations to be made there to solemnize a funeral for him; but this very circumstance takes off from the probability of Richard having as yet laid any plan for dispossessing his nephew. Would he have loitered at York at such a crisis, if he had intended to step into the throne?

relations

relations were quite so innocent as he would make us believe; and whether the princes of the blood and the ancient nobility had not some reason to be jealous that the queen was usurping more power than the laws had given her. The catastrophe of her whole family so truly deserves commiseration, that we are apt to shut our eyes to all her weakness and ill-judged policy; and yet at every step we find how much she contributed to draw ruin on their heads and her own, by the confession even of her apologists. The duke of Gloucester was the first prince of the blood: the constitution pointed him out as regent: no will, no disposition of the late king was even alleged to bar his pretensions: he had served the state with bravery, success and fidelity; and the queen herself, who had been insulted by Clarence, had had no cause to complain of Gloucester. Yet all her conduct intimated designs of governing by force in the name of her son*. If these facts are impartially stated, and grounded on the confession of those who inveigh most bitterly against Richard's memory, let us allow that at least *thus far* he acted as most princes would have done in his situation, in a lawless and barbarous age; and rather instigated by others, than from any before-conceived ambition and system. If the journies of Percival are true, Buckingham was the devil that tempted Richard; and if Richard still wanted instigation, then it must follow, that he had not murdered Henry the sixth, his son, and Clarence, to pave his own way to the crown. If this fine story of Buckingham and Percival is not true, what becomes of sir Thomas More's credit, on which the whole fabric leans?

Lord Richard, sir Thomas Vaughan, and sir Richard Hawte, were arrested, and, with lord Rivers, sent prisoners to Pomfret, while the dukes conducted the king by easy stages to London.

The queen, hearing what had happened, took sanctuary at Westminster,

* Grafton says, "and in effect every one as he was neereſt of kinne unto the queene, ſo was he planted nere about the prince." p. 761: and again, p. 762, "the duke of Glouceſter underſtanding that the lordes, which were about the king, intended to bring him up to his coronation, accompanied with ſuch power of their friendes, that it ſhould be hard for him, to bring his purpoſe to paſſe, without gathering and aſſemble of people, and in manner of open war," &c. In

the ſame place it appears, that the argument uſed to diſſuade the queen from employing force was, that it would be a breach of the accommodation made by the late king between her relations and the great lords: and ſo undoubtedly it was: and though they are accuſed of violating the peace, it is plain that the queen's ſincerity had been at leaſt equal to theirs, and that the infringement of the reconciliation commenced on her ſide.

with her other son the duke of York, and the princesses her daughters. Rotheram, archbishop of York and lord-chancellor, repaired to her with the great seal, and endeavoured to comfort her dismay with a friendly message he had received from Hastings, who was with the confederate lords on the road. "A woe worth him!" quoth the queen, "for *it is he* that goeth about to destroy me and my blood!" Not a word is said of her suspecting the duke of Gloucester. The archbishop seems to have been the first who entertained any suspicion; and yet, if all that our historian says of him is true, Rotheram was far from being a shrewd man: witness the indiscreet answer which he is said to have made on this occasion. "Madam," quoth he, "be of good comfort, and assure you, if they crown any other king than your son whom they now have, we shall on the morrow crown his brother whom you have here with you." Did the silly prelate think that it would be much consolation to a mother, whose eldest son might be murdered, that her younger son would be crowned in prison? Or was she to be satisfied with seeing one son entitled to the crown, and the other enjoying it nominally?

He then delivered the seal to the queen, and as lightly sent for it back immediately after.

The dukes continued their march, declaring they were bringing the king to his coronation. Hastings, who seems to have preceded them, endeavoured to pacify the apprehensions which had been raised in the people, acquainting them that the arrested lords had been imprisoned for plotting against the dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham. As both those princes were of the blood royal *, this accusation was not ill founded, it having evidently been

* Henry duke of Buckingham was the immediate descendant and heir of Thomas of Woodstock duke of Gloucester, the youngest son of Edward the third, as will appear by this table:

Thomas duke of Gloucester.	
Anne	Edmund earl of Stafford.
sole dr. and heiress.	Humphrey duke of Bucks.
Humphrey lord Stafford.	
Henry duke of Bucks.	

It is plain that Buckingham was influenced by this nearness to the crown; for it made him overlook his own alliance with the queen, whose sister he had married. Henry the eighth did not overlook the proximity of blood, when he afterwards put to death the son of this duke.

the intention, as I have shown, to bar them from any share in the administration, to which, by the custom of the realm, they were entitled. So much depends on this foundation, that I shall be excused from enforcing it. The queen's party were the aggressors; and though that alone would not justify all the following excesses, yet we must not judge of those times by the present. Neither the crown nor the great men were restrained by sober established forms and proceedings as they are at present; and from the death of Edward the third, force alone had dictated. Henry the fourth had stepped into the throne contrary to all justice. A title so defective had opened a door to attempts as violent; and the various innovations introduced in the latter years of Henry the sixth had annihilated all ideas of order. Richard duke of York had been declared successor to the crown during the life of Henry and of his son prince Edward, and, as appears by the Parliamentary History, though not noticed by our careless historians, was even appointed prince of Wales. The duke of Clarence had received much such another declaration in his favour during the short restoration of Henry. What temptations were these precedents to an affronted prince! We shall see soon what encouragement they gave him to examine closely into his nephew's pretensions; and how imprudent it was in the queen to provoke Gloucester, when her very existence as queen was liable to strong objections. Nor ought the subsequent executions of lord Rivers, lord Richard Grey, and of lord Hastings himself, to be considered in so very strong a light, as they would appear in if acted in modern times. During the wars of York and Lancaster, no forms of trial had been observed. Not only peers taken in battle had been put to death without process, but whoever, though not in arms, was made prisoner by the victorious party, underwent the same fate; as was the case of Tiptoft earl of Worcester, who had fled and was taken in disguise. Trials had never been used with any degree of strictness, as at present; and though Richard was pursued and killed as an usurper, the Solomon that succeeded him was not a jot less a tyrant. Henry the eighth was still less of a temper to give greater latitude to the laws. In fact, little ceremony or judicial proceeding was observed on trials, till the reign of Elizabeth, who, though decried of late for her despotism, in order to give some shadow of countenance to the tyranny of the Stuarts, was the first of our princes under whom any gravity or equity was allowed in cases of treason. To judge impartially therefore, we ought to recall the temper and manners of the times we read of. It is shocking to eat our enemies; but it is not so shocking in an Iroquois, as it would

would be in the king of Prussia. And this is all I contend for, that the crimes of Richard, which he really committed, at least which we have reason to believe he committed, were more the crimes of the age than of the man; and except those executions of Rivers, Grey, and Hastings, I defy any body to prove one other of those charged to his account, from any good authority.

It is alleged that the partisans of Gloucester strictly guarded the sanctuary, to prevent farther resort thither; but Sir Thomas confesses too, that *divers lords, knights, and gentlemen, either for favour of the queen, or for fear of themselves, assembled companies, and went flocking together in harness*. Let us strip this paragraph of its historic buskins, and it is plain that *the queen's party took up arms**. This is no indifferent circumstance. She had plotted to keep possession of the king, and to govern in his name by force, but had been outwitted, and her family had been imprisoned for the attempt. Conscious that she was discovered, perhaps reasonably alarmed at Gloucester's designs, she had secured herself and her younger children in sanctuary. Necessity rather than law justified her proceedings: But what excuse can be made for her faction having recourse to arms? Who was authorized, by the tenour of former reigns, to guard the king's person till parliament should declare a regency, but his uncle and the princes of the blood? Endeavouring to establish the queen's authority by force, was rebellion against the laws. I state this minutely, because the fact has never been attended to; and later historians pass it over, as if Richard had hurried on the deposition of his nephews without any colour of decency, and without the least provocation to any of his proceedings. Hastings is even said to have warned the citizens that matters were likely *to come to a field* (to a battle) from the opposition of the adverse party, though as yet no symptom had appeared of designs against the king, whom the two dukes were bringing to his coronation. Nay, it is not probable that Gloucester had as yet meditated more than securing the regency; for, had he had designs on the crown, would he have weakened his own claim by assuming the protectorate, which he could not accept but by acknowledging the title of his nephew? This in truth seems to me to have been the case. The ambition of the queen and her family alarmed the princes and the nobility: Gloucester, Buckingham, Hastings, and many more had

* This is confirmed by the Chronicle of Croyland, p. 566.

checked those attempts. The next step was to secure the regency: but none of these acts could be done without grievous provocation to the queen. As soon as her son should come of age, she might regain her power and the means of revenge. Self-security prompted the princes and lords to guard against this reverse; and what was equally dangerous to the queen, the depression of her fortune called forth and revived all the hatred of her enemies. Her marriage had given universal offence to the nobility, and been the source of all the late disturbances and bloodshed. The great earl of Warwick, provoked at the contempt shewn to him by king Edward while negotiating a match for him in France, had abandoned him for Henry the sixth, whom he had again set on the throne. These calamities were still fresh in every mind, and no doubt contributed to raise Gloucester to the throne, which he could not have attained without almost general concurrence: yet if we are to believe historians, he, Buckingham, the mayor of London, and one Dr. Shaw, operated this revolution by a sermon and a speech to the people, though the people would not even give a huzza to the proposal. The change of government in *The Rehearsal* is not effected more easily by the physician and gentleman usher,

Do you take this, and I'll seize t'other chair.

In what manner Richard assumed or was invested with the protectorate does not appear. Sir Thomas More, speaking of him by that title, says, "the protector which always you must take for the duke of Gloucester." Fabian, after mentioning the solemn * arrival of the king in London, adds, "Than provisyon was made for the kinge's coronation; in which pastime (interval) the duke being admitted for lord protectour." As the parliament was not sitting, this dignity was no doubt conferred on him by the assent of the lords and privy-council; and as we hear of no opposition, none was probably made. He was the only person to whom that rank was due; his right could not and does not seem to have been questioned. The *Chronicle of Croyland* corroborates my opinion, saying, "Accepitque dictus Ricardus dux Glocestriæ illum

* He was probably eye-witness of that ceremony; for he says, "The king was of the maior and his citizens met at Harnesey park, the maior and his brethren being clothed in scarlet, and the

citizens in violet, to the number of V. C. horses, and than from thence conveyed unto the citie, the king beyng in blewe velvet, and all his lords and servauntes in blacke cloth." p. 513.