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Bernhard Severin Ingemann**

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KING ERIC

AND

THE OUTLAWS.

VOL. III.

LONDON: Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE, New-Street-Square.

KING ERIC

AND

THE OUTLAWS;

OR,

THE THRONE, THE CHURCH, AND THE PEOPLE,

IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

INGEMANN

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH BY

JANE FRANCES CHAPMAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1843.

CHAPTER I.

As soon as they reached the quay, Sir Helmer put his head out of the hatchway, and beheld a man jump on shore in great haste from the fore-castle. Helmer had only seen his back; he was clad like a German grocer's apprentice; but he felt pretty certain it was the outlawed Kaggé. The mantle of the order of the Holy Ghost lay under the foremost rowing bench. With his drawn sword in his hand. Sir Helmer now sprang upon deck, together with the Drost's squire, whose left hand was wrapped in his mantle. Their attire was somewhat rent and blood-stained, yet they appeared to have found time to bind up each other's wounds, and even to arrange their dress. Without saying a word, they passed the armed crew of the vessel, with a salutation of defiance to Henrik Gullandsfar, and a jeering smile at the heavy and wrathful Rostocker, whose broad visage glowed with anger. Helmer and the squire sheathed their swords on the quay, and those who saw them come up from thence, without noticing the spots of blood upon their clothes, took them for fellow-travellers, who, in all peacefulness, had arrived in the Rostock vessel.

"The 'prentice! mark him, Canute!" whispered Sir Helmer to the squire as they both left the quay with hasty steps, and looked around them on all sides. "What hath become of him? There!--no--that is another--ha, there!--no, another again!"

At every turn they fancied they saw the disguised outlaw, but were frequently deceived by a similar dress and figure. The German grocer's apprentices thronged in busy crowds on the quay, and near the vessels in the haven, where they were in constant occupation, and had a number of porters at work.

These foreign mercantile agents were usually elderly single men, most frequently with sour, unpleasant countenances, and maintaining much spruce neatness in their dress, and preciseness in their deportment. As pepper was the chief article sold in their grocers' booths, they were usually called pepper 'prentices^[1], not without a design to jeer at their peevishness and irritability. They made themselves conspicuous by large silver buttons on their long-skirted coats of German cloth; a woollen cap from Garderige^[2], and a long Spanish gold-headed cane, which served them at the same time for an ell measure, formed part of their finery; and they were so remarkable for the sameness of their appearance and deportment, the effect of their living apart from others, and pursuing a uniform occupation, that they were often exposed to the jibes and jeers of the people, especially on account of their celibacy, which was enjoined them by their Hanseatic masters, and was a necessary consequence of their position as traders in a foreign city, where they were not privileged to become residents with families.

Sir Helmer stared attentively at every German grocer's apprentice he met, and became at last so wroth at his frequent mistakes that he was ready to insult those personages, who in their busy vocation frequently jostled him in the crowd, "Those accursed pepper-'prentices, they drive me mad!" he exclaimed at length, and stamped on the ground. "I will break the neck of the first that brushes against my arm!"

"That is just and reasonable, noble Sir," said the squire; "my fingers itch every time I see such a fellow. If they will be monks, they should not be running here and staring every maiden in the face in broad day light. They are as soon enamoured as any shaven crown--I had well nigh said--St. Antony forgive me my wicked thought! Look! here we have one again I saw ye how he twisted his eyes in his head to goggle at that pretty kitchen maid with the cabbage basket? Shall I buffet him down to the Catsound, noble Sir?"

"No, surely not, crack-brains!" answered Sir Helmer, sharply; "let us behave reasonably. Do thou stay here in the ale-house near the haven, and keep an eye on the outlaw, that he slinks not back to the vessel; if there is law and justice in the town, he 'scapes us not. Thou dost surely know him well?"

"Yes, assuredly! Kaggé with the scar; him from whom they scalded off his knightly honour on the scaffold. I should know him among a thousand scoundrels, and his black horse to boot. 'Tis a sin such a handsome beast---"

"Perhaps it was a God's Providence we came here against our will," interrupted Helmer. "The red hat from Rome wants to negotiate a treaty here betwixt the king and the run-away bishop from Hammershuus; they are now at the castle, and have got the little bishop Johan in their clutches. It will doubtless end in nothing; but comes the king hither where the Roskild bishop rules, he may chance to need both our eyes and our swords. But, what in all the world is the matter here? Look, how the people flock together!"

Sir Helmer now, for the first time, remarked a singular stir and disturbance among the inhabitants of the town; there were far greater numbers of persons in the street than were usually to be seen in the most populous towns. He went onward, still looking around in search of the outlawed fugitive; he now heard loud talk among the burghers and mechanics who passed him, and expressions of wild wrath against the Lord Bishop Johan and his ecclesiastical guests at Axelhuus. The people assembled in groups in the streets, and only dispersed, grumbling and murmuring on the appearance of a troop of men-at-arms. "The provost's people! The bishop's men!" they muttered one to another, by way of warning. "Aside! make way, comrades! as yet it is not time. Down to the old strand!"

"What means this?" said Helmer to the squire, who still followed him on the quay, alongside the ships in the harbour, staring around with surprise and curiosity. "It looks like sedition and mutiny."

"Who are ye who bear arms in the bishop's town? Know ye not the rights and town-law of Copenhagen?" said a powerful voice behind them. They turned round and saw a man who from his attire seemed to be a burgher, but who wore a kind of herald's mantle over his long coat, and held a white staff in his hand, on which were painted the arms of the Bishop of Roskild. He was accompanied by a crowd of the bishop's retainers.

"I am the king's knight and halberdier, as you see well enough," answered Helmer. "What hath your bishop and his town-law to do with me?"

"Ho! ho, my bold sir!--stick your finger in the ground, and smell where ye are! You surely come from worldly towns and castles where neither order nor discipline are kept. What's your name, Sir Halberdier?"

"Helmer Blaa," answered the knight, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword. "You have perhaps heard that name before?--or shall I teach you to know it?"

"By your favour, noble sir!" answered the herald in a lowered tone, and looking at him with surprise; "are you the renowned knight, Helmer, who beat all the six brothers at once, and of whom the whole town sings the ballad--

"He rides in the saddle so free."

"That I will never deny," answered Helmer, with a nod of satisfaction; "he that made that ballad about me hath not lied. I will not pride myself on that account," he added, "it concerned but my own life and fortune. You brave Copenhageners have won full as much honour in Marsk Stig's feud, and we shall soon come to an understanding I think."

"I think so too, by my troth, Sir Helmer," said the burgher herald with cheerfulness, frankly giving him his hand at the same time. "I would just as little insult you as your master, our excellent young king. As free as you ride in the saddle by his side, so frank and free for aught I would hinder it, may you walk here; but the service is strict at this time. Here's mutiny as you see against our lord, the bishop. I must in the council's name summon every man bearing arms to the lay court, and to the council in 'Endaboth.' With the king's knights, especially with a man like you, I think, however, the lord bishop would make a difference."

"If the bishop wills to keep his beard, he will doubtless allow the knight to keep his sword," said Helmer. "If he hath appointed you to hinder misdeed and crime then help me rather to seize an outlawed criminal who has been set on shore here from yonder Rostocker. He hath crept into a German pepper-'prentice coat; he seeks after the king's life--he is easy to know, it is Kaggé with the scar. If you catch him dead or alive, I will laud you as a true Danish man, and brave subject of the king."

"That are we all here at heart, noble Sir," answered the herald, lowering his voice, and looking cautiously around him while he made a signal to his armed followers to fall back. "Our loyalty to the king we have, as you say yourself, shewn right honestly in Marsk Stig's feud; the king also hath recompensed us for that; he hath honourably helped us with the fortifications of our good town, and with the new palisade. Every honest man in Copenhagen would rather obey him than the priestly rulers; but if we would speak out aloud of any other master here than the bishop, we must give all our chattels to his treasury, and wander houseless out of the town. Go in peace, Sir Helmer; but hide your sword under your mantle! If I light upon the evil doer ye seek, I shall assuredly seize him and summon him in your name to the council. Where may you be found yourself?"

"Here, in the inn, close to St. Clement's church--you are an honest man I perceive--tell me frankly, countryman! would it avail were I to speak to the provost, or to your bishop touching your miscreant? He is one of those impudent regicides. I have my eye also on that braggart Rostocker; he brings false coin into the country, and hath threatened the king. What I know further about him I have promised not to speak of--but wherever I meet him--I am his man!"

"You will surely get no justice here on the king's enemies, Sir Knight!" whispered the herald. "If ye will take my advice ye will keep as far off from our bishop and his provost as possible! The king's friends are not exactly theirs, and must not, either, seem to be ours. Had I not a good dame and children, you would hardly have seen me with this staff in hand. If you would catch hold of the pepper 'prentices," he added, shutting one eye, "you must seek them at the dice boards in the ale-house! What may chance there, none need do penance for--but in the harbour and on the quay none dare touch them. On, fellows! The stranger knight hath given account of himself like an honourable man," cried the herald, with a voice of authority, and proceeded onwards with his armed train.

Helmer looked after him, and nodded to the squire. "Brisk fellows, these Copenhageners!" said he. "It is shameful they are forced to be under the bishop's thumb! That counsel about the

taverns and draught-boards suits not my humour either. We will seek the foe in the straight path. First, however, let us thank St. George and St. Clement for our deliverance, and then we can with a good conscience despatch the rascals wherever we light on them." He approached St. Clement's church, but found the church door locked, and marked with a large black cross. "What means this?" he exclaimed. "Is there pestilence in God's house?"

"Prohibition, interdict, son! according to the enactment 'cum ecclesiâ Dacianâ,'" answered an old Dominican monk, who was kneeling before a stone crucifix without the closed church door, and now arose slowly. "The sins of the high-born are about to be visited upon those of low degree; our most pious bishop hath no longer dared to withhold the great national punishment which the holy Father hath commanded on account of the presumptuous imprisonment of the archbishop, contrary to the constitution of all holy laws. Virgo amata! ora pro nobis!" he muttered, and folded his hands.

"The devil take those Latin laws, with reverence be it spoken, venerable father!" answered the knight. "The archbishop is at liberty; and is it now the time to punish a nation and country for that old sin of the king's, if it really was a sin?"

"Assuredly it was a heavy sin and injustice," answered the monk; "but the chastisement is too hard--that is the truth--and it falls on the souls of the innocent--the people are only made ungodly and uproarious by it; as we have proofs daily. If the king is not come hither to bethink himself, and do penance, the prospect may be a drear one for us all."

"Is he come?" asked Helmer hastily.

"Not here to the town--but to the royal castle at Sorretslóv; his plenipotentiaries are already at Axelhuus. Alas! yes! it is high time he should give in, ere the interdict drives the whole nation to rebellion and destruction.--Ora pro nobis!" he muttered again, and turned towards the crucifix.

"Believe ye he hath come hither to humble himself, and crouch at the bishop's feet? venerable father?" answered the knight; "then you will find your belief to fail you in this matter, as I observe this tumult concerns not the king, but your own little bishop and his overbearing guests. Against this stupid church-shutting, a remedy will surely be found at home. The nation is pitiful indeed which would let itself be shut out from God's house while there are sturdy axes and iron crows in the country."

"Alas, ye children of the world! ye worldly lords! ye will ever forward with might and violence,-ye would at last storm heaven's gates if ye were able," groaned the monk; "from the great and mighty doth all that defiance and scandal proceed; and the poor, deluded people! *they* listen but too willingly to such wild and ungodly counsel. Look! yonder comes another flock of erring sheep, who have turned into wolves! There they come, with spears and staves, like those who followed Judas, that child of wrath. Hear how they bluster and storm. God be merciful! They are surely rushing hither; they will assuredly open the church by force."

The dismayed Dominican was preparing to fly, but the insurgents placed themselves in his way. "Tarry a little, pious father!" shouted the ringleader of the troop, a tall carpenter, with a large axe in his hand. "Thou shalt read us the Holy Scripture before St. Clement's altar; we have heard neither vespers nor mass for three days. Force the church door, comrades!"

"Are ye distraught?" cried the monk; "will ye do violence to the house of God!"

"No chattering! Force the door, countrymen!" shouted the leader. "Neither St. Peter nor our Lady have taken it amiss of us. Mass goes on cheerily in all the churches. We will hear our vespers at St. Nicholas. Well done my lads! Look! now is the interdict ended! The church door gave way before the ponderous strokes; the insurgents poured into the church with a wild shout of victory, dragging the Dominican along with them.

"That will be but a disturbed worship, noble sir," said the squire; "we had better reserve our piety for another time. Look, yonder comes a fresh troop! Nay, look! They have balista and cross-bows with them; they will now surely assault Axelhuus."

"That hits my fancy!" exclaimed Sir Helmer, joyfully. "This prelatical tyranny should not be tolerated by any Danish man. I come at the right time; there may be something to take a hand in here. If they will besiege the bishop's nest, I will teach them at least to do it briskly. Stay thou on the quay, and watch the pepper 'prentices, Canute! I must set the honest burghers a little to rights with the balista." So saying Sir Helmer hastened with rapid strides down to the old strand, where the restless crowds of insurgents flocked together in wild tumult.

The inmates of Axelhuus appeared to feel sufficiently secure to despise these disturbances which had commenced, though in a less degree, some days before.

The bishop's well-fortified castle was situated on an island, the ferry-boats that usually plied there lay, during these commotions, in the harbour, under the high walls of the castle, by which means all communication between the town and the castle Island was cut off. The distance from the town, however, was not so great, but that Axelhuus might be reached from the strand by arrows, and especially by balista, when these dangerous engines of war were worked with proper skill. In the upper hall at Axelhuus, sat the spiritual and temporal ruler of the town, the little authoritative bishop Johan of Roskild, in solemn council, between his guests Archbishop Grand and Cardinal Isarnus. At the archbishop's right hand sat his faithful friend, the haughty abbot from the forest monastery. Grand's agent, the canon Nicholas from Roskild, was also present, as well as the canon Hans Rodis, who had assisted his flight from Sjöberg. At the great hall table sat also the cardinal's famulus and his secretary, with two Italian ecclesiastics belonging to his train. For the convenience of the foreign cardinal, the conversation was chiefly carried on in Latin. The lord of the castle, the little bishop Johan, seemed to have assumed a determined and authoritative deportment in imitation of the archbishop, by whose side, however, he appeared wholly insignificant, although he now acted as the protector both of the powerful Grand, and of the cardinal. He now and then cast an observant glance out of the window towards the town and the increasing crowd on the strand, yet without betraying fear or uneasiness. Archbishop Grand had not yet overcome the consequences of his severe imprisonment. He rested his swollen feet on a soft stuffed foot-stool. There was a look of gloomy asperity on his pale, emaciated countenance. Every movement appeared to cost him an effort, while all his vital energy seemed as if concentrated in his large flashing eye. He sat lost in reverie, gazing before him in silence, while the cardinal, with a lurking smile in his small crafty eye, perused a document which his secretary had just drawn up.

"Trust him not, venerable brother," whispered the abbot from the forest monastery in the archbishop's ear; "he secretly sides with the king; I know it; he aims at your archbishopric."

Grand changed colour and clenched his hands convulsively, but was silent, and cast a searching look at the papal nuncio.

"In the name and on the behalf of the holy father!" commenced the cardinal, in Latin, ridding himself of the red cap which covered his tonsure; "ere the royal ambassadors come into our presence, I once more counsel my aggrieved brother to submission and a wise resignation. In this treaty which I have here caused to be cursorily drawn up, and the contents of which you already know Archbishop Grand! I have at your own request, according to the strict principles of ecclesiastical law, enjoined the King of Denmark to make such a considerable compensation for towns, villages, castles, and temporal offices, that I see beforehand he will reject the negociation."

"I now reject it also, even on these conditions," answered the Archbishop impetuously, "That in which King Eric hath sinned against me and my holy office, he can never fully atone for, even with the loss of his--crown!"

"You surely would not, however, strain the bow still tighter, venerable brother! and at last insist on your king being punished by loss of honour, life, and possessions, like a criminal by temporal justice?" asked the cardinal, with a crafty smile on his unruffled countenance, "in the matter of soul and salvation, you have dealt as hardly with him as possible. Forget not, my venerable brother! That your opponent is a crowned and anointed monarch, at the head of a brave and loyal people, and with many mighty princes for his friends! Every spiritual decree to which a temporal potentate will not *voluntarily* submit out of christian piety and humility, will be ineffectual, and become the scoff of the children of this world, especially here in the north, where even the holy lightnings, as I perceive, fall somewhat cooled and weakened. The king's charges against my venerable brother in Christ are, besides, very grave and heavy, and," added the Cardinal with a thoughtful look, "if the royal advocate in Rome can but prove the half of what is alleged, you will assuredly act most wisely in lowering your demands somewhat, and will even desire yourself that the whole unhappy affair should be hushed up. This, at all events, is my brotherly counsel, and if you could master yourself so far as to follow it, an honourable treaty will doubtless be possible. It is my heartfelt wish, as well for your peace as that of the church, and to prevent all scandal and dissension for the future--that you, with consent of the holy father, should exchange the archbishopric of Lund for another (perhaps of more importance, and more worthy of your merits) without these northern lands, where your personal misunderstanding with temporal authorities will hardly ever be wholly removed. I say this with kindly concern for my excellent brother's peace and safety. Even at this moment we are both, in some sort, in the power of the temporal ruler, of whose impetuosity you have had such sensible proofs."

"Ay indeed, your eminence!" exclaimed Grand in the greatest exasperation, as he kicked the footstool from him, and rose, "Speak ye now to me in this tone? Was it for this you summoned me from my secure Hammershuus, and bade me trust to the passport of my deadly foe? You think, perhaps, to have trapped me into a snare I cannot escape from! You imagine, perhaps, that my pious colleague, our mutual and venerable host, who here sways town and castle, will, out of base and cowardly fear, betray his friend and guest, and lawful archbishop, to flatter the temporal tyrant, who already, as I perceive, hath rendered a papal nuncio his spiritual slave? No, lord Cardinal! In that case, you know neither me, nor the meritorious servant of the Lord here, at our

side. If he hath already for my sake, and that of the church, with courageous energy exposed himself to the tyrant's wrath, and even to tumult and sedition in his own town, he will surely not now stoop to degrade himself by an act of treachery which would brand him as a dastardly traitor. My safety and freedom are provided for; any moment I please I can embark, and neither the king nor the seditious burgher-pack shall forbid me to wend free from hence, and seek justice before St. Peter's judgment seat. Here I dare speak out freely that which I deem of you, as well as of that presumptuous and ungodly king. You have not fulfilled your duty here as papal nuncio.-- Instead of confirming ban and interdict with the holy Father's authority----"

"That is my own affair, my brother!" interrupted Isarnus, with cool calmness, "Since your own counsellors have enforced the interdict according to the constitution of Veilé no confirmation was needed. We speak now only of the king, and whether you will be reconciled to him and recall the ban."

"No, never! To all eternity!" cried Grand, impetuously; "and I laugh at his accusations: that which I once spoke of his father's murder, and which he now makes the plea for his tyrannical conduct, I dare repeat here, and before the highest judgment seat. If the king's murder was *destined* to take place, it was unfortunate that it did *not* take place sixteen years before, then that wretched monarch would have left no posterity behind him, and the descendants of Eric Glipping would never have dishonoured Denmark's throne. Yes! I made that intrepid speech, and I repeat it now; but I deny all share in the tyrant's murder, and all connection with Duke Valdemar and the outlaws. It matters not to me, henceforth, who reigns in Denmark, be it Duke Valdemar or a Jew, a Saracen or a heathen, or--the devil himself, if only King Eric and his wretched brother may never be obeyed here as kings and lieges."

"Will you also defend what you *now* say, before the highest judgment seat? venerable brother!" asked Isarnus, with unruffled calmness, and with an almost imperceptible smile. "Your bodily weakness is, however, reasonable excuse for your not being always master of your mind and tongue. Now I have heard your declaration, despite the exaggeration of feeling it betrays, it still in some sort agrees, both with the will of the Holy Father and of the king. Your cause immediately depends upon the papal see; nevertheless, let the king's ambassadors appear, my worthy brother!" he said to Bishop Johan, who instantly rose and left the hall.

There was a silence of a few moments. Grand had resumed his seat; he rested his long chin upon his clenched hand, and seemed angry, both at his own vehemence, and the calmness of the cardinal. Shortly afterwards Bishop Johan entered, accompanied by two ecclesiastics. They were the king's ambassadors; the provincial prior of the Dominicans, the venerable Master Olaus, with his handsome snow-white head, and Esger Iuul, the canon of Ribé--a young priest, well versed in law, and of a bold, intelligent countenance. They had been waiting for admission some hours in an antechamber. They now greeted the prelates with reverence, and the cardinal half rose from his seat to return their salutation; but the Archbishop remained seated in gloomy reverie. Bishop Johan requested the king's plenipotentiaries to seat themselves. The provincial prior sat down, but the canon remained standing, and began, "Pardon me, your eminence! and you, most learned lord archbishop! and all ye reverend ecclesiastics! if I am here necessitated to say what displeases you I stand forth here, not as the church's, but as the king's, my temporal master's, servant and spokesman. What he hath ordered me to propound, I must utter, even though I may not dare to attribute to myself the thoughts and opinions which I have taken on myself to expound."

"Speak boldly, brother Canonicus! I have been advised of your authority," interrupted the cardinal, with a gracious nod, and the canon continued, "My lord and king hath three hours ago arrived at his royal castle here in the village of Sorretslóv, without the town of Copenhagen, in order personally to confirm and sign what may be here, with his consent, agreed upon; and, in case of need, with his royal power and authority to hinder the breach of the public peace, with which state and kingdom are threatened by the presence of Bishop Grand, and the enforcement of the interdict. He desires not to see *that* man in his presence whom he considers as an accomplice in the murder of his royal father of blessed memory, and who hath also dared to pronounce the church's ban on his own royal head; but the peace and safe conduct he hath promised his opponent, he will honourably and chivalrously observe. The King hath expressly enjoined me to declare, that he comes hither in no wise to excuse and defend that, which, compelled by necessity, he hath been forced to enact against canonical law and the constitution of Veilé, by the personal imprisonment of Archbishop Grand. This affair he confidently trusts to justify before the highest tribunal in Christendom; but he comes hither as lord of the land, for the restoration of public peace, and as the accuser of the fugitive archbishop before his eminence the papal nuncio. All reconciliation in this kingdom with this prelate, charged as he is with treason, my liege, the king, decidedly rejects; but he promises him free and safe departure for Rome, whither he hath already expedited his ambassadors, and whence he awaits a righteous sentence upon the accused. Till this sentence is awarded, he demands to be freed from the unlawful ban pronounced upon him by a prisoned traitor. (These are not my words, but the king's.) He demands likewise that the kingdom be freed from the interdict, which the councils of Veilé, Roskild, and Lund, have announced to his loyal and innocent people. Against the right of the councils and bishops therein assisting, to take this step without consent of their chapter and the rest of the clergy, the chapter of the cathedral of Roskild hath solemnly protested--and the provincial prior of the Dominicans, the venerable Master Olaus, is here present in person to confirm the protest."

The aged provincial prior now rose--"In the name of my holy order, and that of the chapter of Roskild cathedral, I declare the conduct of the councils in this matter to be unlawful and invalid," he said in a clear and calm voice, "I consider not the chapters and the Danish clergy to be under the necessity of giving up the performance of divine worship, and I require you, Bishop Johan of Roskild! as speedily as possible to recall the unhappy church interdict, which hath already caused such great disturbance here in the town, where you, yourself, meanwhile, bear rule. If God's service is to cease, Satan's service will soon commence, with all manner of dissoluteness and profligacy; of discord and variance between the shepherd and his flock; spiritual, as well as all temporal peace and security will be at an end, and no priest will be sure of his life. Enthusiasts and sectarians, atheists and Leccar brothers, will inundate the land, and mislead the people; laymen and drunken guild-brethren will preside in the congregation, as they have already begun to do here. Neither the church nor the holy father can desire that we, to maintain the stern and impracticable constitution of Veilé, should overthrow all order and fear of God in Denmark, and suffer the people to fall into barbarism, and into the greatest errors--ay, even into heathenism and devil-worship. In the name of the Danish clergy, I solemnly protest against the interdict; but in thus protesting against it, I consider that I in nowise encroach on the churches freedom, or attack you, most learned archbishop!--or any other spiritual authority. The church but uses its freedom and power in such wise, that we, its servants, should not corrupt and destroy the souls entrusted to us, instead of leading them to the peace of God and eternal salvation! Dixi et liberavi animam. Now act as you can answer to God and your conscience, venerable sirs! but you will be responsible in this world and the next for the consequences! They might prove bloody and terrible."

He hardly finished speaking, ere a shower of stones and arrows struck against the wall with great noise, forced in the windows, and poured into the midst of the hall, among the dismayed ecclesiastics, who started from their seats, and sought safety between the massive window pillars, and behind the thick walls of the hall; the cardinal also quitted his seat, but the archbishop remained seated with an air of defiance.

"Doth he break his promise of safe conduct? the godless king of Belial!" cried Grand. "Shall I and my faithful friends be stoned here like prophets and martyrs, that our blood may cry to Heaven and call down the lightnings of eternal damnation upon his head?"

"I witness before the Lord and our Holy Lady! The king hath no share in this attack," resumed the provincial prior, who remained standing. "When he hears of it, he will assuredly highly disapprove this unlawful and presumptuous breach of peace: but here, venerable sirs! you already see the consequences of the interdict; the whole town is in uproar; the mob was storming against the closed churches of St. Peter and Our Lady, as we were on our way hither, and threatened with fire and sword. If you do not now yield to necessity. Bishop Johan! Axelhuus will be perhaps taken by storm, or laid in ashes ere midnight."

A fresh shower of stones and arrows interrupted the provincial prior's speech; he crossed himself and retreated. A large stone from a balista fell just before the archbishop's face, and split the table. Grand arose, with a look which flashed fire, and quitted his dangerous position.

"Follow me, my guests!" said the little Bishop Johan in a squeaking voice, and hastily opening a door,--"Could we but pass unharmed through the north corridor to the tower, no arrow or balista stone shall reach us. The castle can stand both siege and storm. I will show you that I suffer not myself to be thus mastered by my rebellious flock; but we must hasten--here we are still exposed to the greatest danger." So saying, he himself quitted the hall in great trepidation; all followed him through a long corridor to a more secure retreat. Meanwhile, the attack upon the castle increased in vigour every moment, and the whole northern wing, which looked upon the town, was everywhere exposed to arrows and showers of stones. Some exclaimed that they were wounded--they rushed forward headlong, and jostled each other without ceremony. Care for personal safety had nearly chased away all regard to rank and position and decorum--most of the ecclesiastics ran past the archbishop and the cardinal. The papal nuncio, however, passed hastily and unharmed through the corridor, accompanied by the provincial prior and Esger Iuul. Grand's slow and laboured step was alone supported by the abbot from the forest monastery, whose heavy-built person permitted him not to haste. The long corridor, through the whole length of which they were forced to pass, had, on the one side, open gothic arches over a walled parapet. Here at every moment poured in a number of arrows and stones, which forced the fugitive prelates to pursue their way, stooping, and almost creeping under the parapet.

"God's judgment upon the presumptuous, and upon their traitorous king!" panted forth the archbishop. "It is his creatures who stir up the people. Now he rejoices over our distress, and would make use of it for our humiliation."

"St. Bent and St. Peter assist us! Stoop your head!" cried the heavy Abbot, creeping under the parapet. "Yonder comes another balista stone! Merciful heaven, what a swarm of people!" he continued, looking out cautiously towards the town. "Hear how they bluster! They utter your name, venerable brother, with ungodly oaths; they are busy with boats--they are dragging more balista forward. I see one of the king's halberdiers among them."

"Mark! *he* is the ring-leader, the faithless despot!" cried the archbishop, "from him comes all our tribulation, and the country's misery! Send forth thy destroying angel, righteous Lord! root out the perjurer! Pluck him up by the roots!"

"This way, venerable sirs! and ye are safe!" said a hollow voice from the end of the corridor, and a tall manly form with a wild pallid countenance, appeared at the door; he was clad like a German pepper 'prentice, and had a large red scar on his forehead.

"My guest of the sanctuary! your persecuted friend and avenger!" whispered the abbot from the forest monastery. "St. Peter and St. Bent be thanked--the All-righteous hath heard your prayer, the destroying angel is come."

The tall form in the door-way laid his finger on his lips, and disappeared with the two prelates, while the door of the corridor closed after them.

CHAP. III.

The attack upon Axelhuus had thrown the whole town into the greatest agitation. Even the most quiet and peaceable burghers could not conceal their satisfaction on the occasion, and many of them took an open share in the insurrection. The wild shouts of exultation which were heard each time a shower of stones poured into the castle, sufficiently showed the general feeling of indignation, not alone against prelatical rule but chiefly against the archbishop, for whose sake, and by whose powerful influence, the exasperating interdict had been enforced. Grand's name was the watchword on the commencement of every fresh attack. The provost, with his armed attendants, vainly strove to restore order and quietness; wherever he appeared with the bishop's men-at-arms, he was instantly driven back by the enraged populace. The report of the king's arrival at Sorretslóv, and the uneasy terms he was on with the inmates of Axelhuus, had given a new and loyal impulse to the insurrection; as the mob now believed that, by their attack on the ecclesiastical dignitaries, they were making common cause with the king, against his and the kingdom's arrogant foes. The provost had ordered all the gates of the town to be locked, but the insurgents had forced them, and a great number of people, among whom were some of the richest and most peaceable inhabitants, hastened out of the north gate of Sorretslóv to see the king and intreat his support. Another crowd flocked to the tower of St. Mary's church, and rang the alarm bell. "Away with the holy wolves at the castle!" was the cry throughout the streets. Without the well-lighted council-house, where the council was assembled, and whither several captive insurgents had been brought, there was a fearful uproar. The mob demanded the liberation of the prisoners and threatened to fire the council-house. There was a great tumult also at the Catsound:--"Out with all the boats!" was the cry of the mob, "Throw the grocer-wares overboard! Drive the pepper 'prentices to the devil! Let's fire the castle! Let no soul escape! Death to the foes of king and country!"

Meanwhile there were more cries and shouts than deeds in most places, and the wild alarmists were in motion in the most opposite directions, but, on the old strand, a person was seen who had brought order and plan into the attack; it was Sir Helmer Blaa, who, with warlike eagerness, posted the balista on the strand, and instructed the burghers how to use these engines with force and effect. For some hours he stood unwearied at this his favourite occupation, and where he led the attack the castle sustained considerable damage.

The captive insurgents meanwhile had been liberated at the council-house. A great number of the council had joined the insurgents' party, and taken up arms against the bishop. The rest of the counsellors had escaped at the imminent peril of their lives, and some of them had succeeded in getting out amongst the crowd through the north gate, and reaching the king's castle at Sorretslóv, where they found the king already on horseback, at the head of his knights and spearmen, in readiness to enter the town himself and quell the insurrection.

The evening was closing in. The insurrection had already risen to such a height that most of the burghers had become alarmed at their own undertaking, and every resident inhabitant began to fear for the safety of his property and family; while the unbridled mob considered themselves freed from all laws of decency and order. The king now galloped in through the north gate, by Count Henrik's side, at the head of his troop of knights, and followed by the tall, handsome, lance-bearers who formed his body guard.

At St. Peter's church, close to the northern gate of the town, and at St. Mary's, his progress was almost hindered by the thronging crowds. At both places the insurgents had forced the church doors and compelled the priests to perform mass. The pious chaunts from the churches sounded strange and mournful, amid the wild shouts of the mutineers.

"That devotion doubtless proceeds more from defiance than piety," said the king to Count Henrik, "yet assuredly, none shall hinder them from God's worship, provided it be conducted with decency and order." He ordered a guard to be stationed by both churches to check all disturbances, and rode on. Wherever he appeared he was received with the most devoted homage, and with joyous acclamations; which were, however, somewhat subdued in those who

were most obstreperous, on seeing the provost and two of the council among the king's nearest followers. An uneasy murmur was heard, here and there, and the people gradually began to comprehend that the king came not hither to take part with the insurgents against their rulers, but to maintain the lawful government of the town, and restore public tranquillity.

"Silence, good people! Let every one go to his home! Lay down your arms!" said the king, in a grave but kindly tone, as he returned the greetings of the people and stopped his horse.

A silence ensued and the crowd thronged around him with attention to hear what he said. "I come as your protector, and the upholder of law and justice in my kingdom," he continued. "That which you can reasonably demand of the bishop he shall grant you. The shutting of the churches shall be at an end--the church-doors shall be thrown open--that I promise you. As to the rest, you must obey your rulers," he added sternly. "What hath happened here shall be narrowly inquired into. There shall be peace and order in the town; he who from this hour takes the law into his own hands, shall lose his life and reap the reward of his deeds." An instant stillness prevailed wherever these words were heard. The insurgents, and all who bore arms, decamped; but a great crowd of unarmed burghers followed the king with loud acclamations through the streets.

At the old strand the bombardment of Axelhuus was still carried on with great zeal. The castle island was surrounded by boats filled with bowmen and torch-bearers. Preparations were already begun for storming and firing Axelhuus, The fight was now maintained on both sides, and arrows and stones from balista were shot from the towers and battlements of the castle.

"The king!--the king! with the provost and council," was re-echoed from mouth to mouth, and it seemed as if a stroke of lightning had lamed every arm. "Long live the king!" shouted the insurgents, and many threw down their weapons. "No more war!--the king will judge between us and the bishop!" The clattering of the horses' hoofs was already heard; the crowd gave way on all sides to make room for the king and his knights. The people shouted and made signals to the bowmen and brandmen in the numerous boats which surrounded the castle island; in an instant nearly all the brands and torches were extinguished in the water, and the assailants rowed hastily back from the besieged castle. The shooting, however, still continued from a battery of balista on the shore: it was here Sir Helmer had stationed himself. His whole attention was so engrossed in the working of the balista, that he was unconscious of what was passing around him; he thought the bowmen and torch-throwers had been put to flight, but observed not the general cessation of the attack, nor the arrival of the king. "Go on, go on, countrymen!" he shouted. "Cheerily! brave Danish men! Will you let yourselves be worsted by the bishop's slaves? Down with their towers and walls!" He was still issuing the word of command to the balista slingers, when, to his dismay, he heard the king's voice over head.

"What see I? Sir Helmer! you here! and in the midst of rebels? Is this accompanying the Drost to Stockholm? Is it thus you serve and obey your king? He is your prisoner, Count Henrik!"

"My liege and sovereign!" exclaimed Sir Helmer, stretching out his arms towards the king, who halted before him on his tall white charger, with a look of stern menace. "Hear me, I conjure you!"

"Not a word!" interrupted the king, with vehemence; "would you make me a faithless perjurer? In the castle you are besieging I have promised peace and safety to my deadly foe. I break not my word, even were it pledged to the devil. If a hair of his head hath been injured it shall cost you dear. Take my halberdier with you, Count Henrik--put him under knightly arrest at the castle! To-morrow he shall be judged for his lawless conduct. Take my greeting and assurance of peace to the bishop and cardinal," he added in a lower tone. "Take to Grand my last behest and warning! You are responsible for the observance of our passport!"

"Your will shall be obeyed, my liege!" answered Count Henrik, springing from his horse. "Follow me quietly, Sir Helmer," he whispered to the restless and impetuous captain of the balista slingers, "to-morrow you can justify yourself--now you must be silent and obey."

Helmer bit his lip in wrath as he gave up his sword to Henrik, and followed him in silence. Count Henrik, with a considerable train of knights and squires, took instant possession of a barge which the insurgents had just deserted. He caused a white flag to be hoisted, and made preparations for crossing over to the castle island, while the king furthermore enjoined peace and quietness in the town, and rode with the rest of his train the whole length of the strand, amid the vast concourse of people, who partly from curiosity, partly from attachment, continued to accompany him. The balista were instantly dragged off the shore, from whence the armed insurgents had also decamped, awed apparently by the king's severity towards one of his favourite knights.

By the church of St. Nicolas, opposite the little island called "The Skipper's Ground," the king was again stopped by a numerous and unruly mob, in which there were many armed men of a gloomy and wild appearance, who were muttering prayers and psalms, interlarded with imprecations and threats against all priests and bishops. On the king's appearance the uproar was hushed, and most of the weapons disappeared at his command. The church doors were also forced here; all the ecclesiastics and their attendants had fled. The people themselves had rung the bell for vespers, and had dragged a monk into the church in order to compel him to sing the *Avé*, despite the interdict of bishop and pope.

The king instantly dismounted and entered the church. Half dead with terror, and as it were with his life in his hands, an aged Dominican stood before the altar with rent garments, and strove in vain to chaunt the customary evening prayers with calmness and dignity, while the turbulent crowd surrounded him with looks of wild menace, and with torches, axes, and glittering swords in their hands. A group of butchers and half-drunken mechanics, headed by a tall carpenter, stood nearest the altar, and frequently interrupted the monk with scoffs and threats.

"Peace here, in the Lord's house!" said the king in a loud voice, as he entered the church. "Bend the knee, all of ye, and pray the merciful God to pardon you! Go in peace, pious father!--if thou darest not to pray for our souls.--God hears us, however, despite the ban, if we are but sincere. The All-righteous be gracious to us all, and pardon us our sins!" So saying, the king bent his knee before the altar, and all fell, as if struck by lightning, on the floor. A deathlike silence prevailed for a moment.

It now appeared as if the aged Dominican was suddenly inspired by a feeling of lofty and intrepid enthusiasm. In a solemn voice he chaunted a "Gloria," and afterwards an "Ave," in which he was followed by the king and the whole congregation. The king then arose, and calm and silent quitted the church. He mounted his horse and rode onwards. "Holy Virgin, pray for us!" still resounded with calm solemnity from the kneeling congregation in St. Nicolas church; and when the king again returned through the strand street opposite Axelhuus, to repair to his castle at Sorretslów, tranquillity appeared to be fully restored. Lights gleamed in the calm spring eve in most of the windows; at Axelhuus also, all now seemed tranquil. Count Henrik had sent the provost and two counsellors on before him in a small boat to announce his coming to the bishop, while the Count himself with his train in the great barge approached the castle island with tardy strokes of the oar. Sir Helmer stood silent and thoughtful, as a disarmed captive, in the barge by Count Henrik's side, indignant at being now carried to imprisonment in that castle which he had recently, as a conquering general, assisted the burghers to besiege. He now, indeed, perceived that he had acted rashly in taking a part in the insurrection; but he thought, nevertheless, that the king's conduct towards him was much too severe; his looks and glowing cheek betrayed that his pride was deeply wounded. As he revolved these thoughts a boat from the castle island rowed rapidly towards them, and glided close past the barge. "Ha! the pepper 'prentice!" exclaimed Sir Helmer, suddenly springing like a madman into the boat. Count Henrik saw with surprise that his captive commenced wrestling on the gunwale with a German pepper 'prentice, and plunged with his antagonist into the deep stream, while the boat disappeared with the speed of an arrow in the twilight.

"Save him, save him!" shouted Count Henrik, and stopped the rowers. Sir Helmer's plumed hat floated on the water at some distance; it was taken up; but neither himself nor his unknown adversary were to be seen. The rapid current appeared to have instantly borne them away, and all search after them with oars and boat-hooks proved fruitless.

"The Lord have mercy on his soul!" said Count Henrik with a sigh. "He was the boldest knight I ever knew--but a thoughtless madcap he ever was. He hath escaped captivity though, and perhaps a stern sentence to-morrow; but the king hath lost a true friend. On, fellows! We find him not--perhaps he hath helped himself; he was a good swimmer."

In the boat which shot past, and which had been nearly upset by the sudden and violent struggle, two persons attired as ecclesiastics had been seen, and the rowers thought they recognised in one of them the archbishop's crafty friend Johan Rodis.

In the harbour of Axelhuus lay the royal vessel "Waldemar the Victorious," on board of which the archbishop, through the mediation of the cardinal, had been brought from Hammershuus, under royal convoy. According to the tenor of the passport, the captain with all his crew had been sworn by the archbishop, and had bound themselves to convey him from Axelhuus at a moment's warning, in case he should not believe himself safe, and also to bring him and the papal nuncio to whatever foreign port they chose. Just as Count Henrik was about to land on the castle island a large rowing boat approached the royal vessel.

"Our lord bishop, with the archbishop, and the red hat!" said the boatmen; "they are making for the Waldemar."

"Then row after them with all your might!" ordered Count Henrik; "there is no time to lose; haste!" Ere they reached the ship, the cardinal and the archbishop were already on board, and the sails were about to be hoisted. In the boat stood Bishop Johan with a number of clerks, and was wishing his exalted guests a safe and fortunate passage.

"I bring you the same good wishes from my liege and sovereign, most venerable sirs!" cried Count Henrik, taking off his hat. "Your safe departure hath been cared for. As soon as the king learnt your distress, and the insurrection of the mob, he hastened hither in person to your protection. I have commands to escort you out of the harbour, and see you safe from all possible danger."

"Bring the King of Denmark my farewell, and my thanks for his support," answered the cardinal, through his interpreter. "I have been myself a witness to it, and I must see justice done to his generosity towards his foe, as well as to his kingly temper, and his strict keeping of promise. I now quit the country without having succeeded in establishing here the peace I

desired; but I trust once again to see King Eric and Denmark under happier auspices."

"When you come with peace and blessing, your eminence will be welcome!" answered Count Henrik; "but you have already seen solemn proofs of the temper with which the Danish people put up with ban and interdict. My liege the king prays your eminence to bring the holy father tidings of this, together with his humble and filial greeting; he places with confidence his own and his people's just cause before the judgment seat of his holiness; but whatever the sentence may prove to be, according to ecclesiastical and canonical law, my liege, King Eric of Denmark, as the temporal ruler of this land and the protector of public peace, is necessitated in the most peremptory manner to declare Archbishop Grand of Lund for ever banished from these kingdoms and lands."

"Banished!" repeated a hollow voice from the vessel, and the tall Archbishop Grand appeared at the gangway. "Who dares pronounce that sentence upon an anointed prince of the church? For this no king on earth hath power. That king's servant who hath dared to bring me such a message, I declare to be under the ban of the church."

Count Henrik started, but still stood calm and courteous with hat in hand waiting to hear what the bishop had further to say.

"Whether I again set foot on Danish ground," continued Grand, "depends upon myself and the holy father. I now shake off the dust from my martyred feet, and quit my ungrateful father-land; but ere the fullest compensation hath been made me for all I have here suffered contrary to the laws of God and man, there shall no blessing come upon state and country, and upon Denmark's excommunicated king--that I swear by the Almighty and all the saints! Tell the tyrant who sent you--from me, the church's primate in the north--should King Eric Eriesson now dare, without dispensation and consent of the church, to complete his ungodly espousals in forbidden consanguinity, it shall surely be to the eternal damnation of himself and kingdom. Amen!"

At these words Count Henrik stamped in the barge, without however vouchsafing an answer to the incensed prelate. "Captain!" he called to the commander of the ship, who stood with his hat in his hand at the fore-castle; "you will convey Archbishop Grand, in the king's name and under his convoy, safe on shore wherever he chooses, excepting only the king's states and kingdom. Whoever should dare to bring back this disturber of the peace to Denmark shall be judged as a traitor and rebel."

At Count Henrik's signal, the sails were hoisted, and the vessel sailed out of port with the dangerous prelate, whose last words to his native land were those of the so oft-repeated ban.

Count Henrik now greeted the lord of the castle of Axelhuus, the little bishop Johan, and delivered the king's message of peace and protection; under conditions, however, which he was invited to consider in an interview with the king at his castle of Sorretslóv. Count Henrik then gave a parting salutation to this friend and unsuccessful imitator of the archbishop, who seemed to meditate a haughty and impressive reply; but without awaiting it, Henrik made a signal to his boatmen to row forward, and followed the departing vessel at some distance, until it was seen to be fairly out of port and in open sea. The count then returned with his train to the town, where he instantly mounted his horse, and rode in silent and serious thought, but with cheerful looks and at a brisk trot through the town, and from thence on the road to Sorretslóv.

CHAP. IV.

At night there were great rejoicings in Copenhagen. The king's presence seemed to secure the peaceable part of the community against further disturbance of the public tranquillity.

The occurrences of the day had given satisfaction, and there was a general feeling of enthusiasm respecting the fortunate issue of the insurrection. That which had been aimed at was attained. The shutting of the churches was at an end, and the stern prelatical government of the town had been cowed. After this violent outbreak of the people's wrath, it was now hoped that no interdict would ever be carried into effect in Denmark. The report that the archbishop and the cardinal had quitted Axelhuus, and that the archbishop was banished for life, was spread throughout the whole town, ere midnight, and increased the general rejoicing. Where the lights had been extinguished in the windows after the king's departure, they were now re-lighted. The archbishop's flight and banishment were thus celebrated throughout the town as an important victory over ecclesiastical tyranny, and as a happy consequence of the public spirit of the burghers, and of the king's high courage. In the tavern near the Catsound, in the vicinity of St. Clement's church, sat the Drost's squire Canute, late at night, merrily carousing with a number of young Copenhageners, who had eagerly taken part in the besieging of Axelhuus. In the midst of the group sat an elderly burgher, with a full cup of mead in his hand drinking with them, amid

songs and bold scoffs, at the strict law which prohibited late tavern keeping and nightly intemperance, which they now regarded as a dead letter. It was the same personage who at noon had peregrinated the town as an official authority, and who, as the summoning herald of the council, had forbidden every one to bear arms in the streets. His herald's mantle, and the white staff bearing the bishop's arms, had been thrown under the drinking table; he now appeared in the usual burgher's dress, and had himself a warlike sword at his side. From his talk it could be gathered that he had also joined in the siege of Axelhuus.

The carousers spoke openly and boldly against prelatical government, to which they believed they had given a good fillip. They lauded the king and the brisk Sir Helmer, and opined that the king had only feignedly, and for the sake of appearances, caused that brave knight to be placed under arrest. They unanimously agreed, also, that the king's stern words to the balista slingers, and those who were storming the castle, could not have come much further than from between his teeth, since, after all, it was but his worst foe they had attacked.

There were bursts of exultation at the flight and exile of the archbishop, which had been related to them by two newly-arrived guests, and the party took credit to themselves for having stoned Master Grand out of the country.

"Ay, laud us Copenhageners!" said the herald, with a self-satisfied nod; "we have helped the king before at a pinch."

"What can the pope and all the world's bishops do to him *now*?" said the squire, draining his cup. "The game is won, comrades, provided all we Danes from this day forward act like you, brave Copenhageners of this town. Against those Latin curses we have arrows, swords, and balista, and good Danish granite stone; and if they lock us up the church doors again, we have, the Lord be thanked, iron crows and axes, and men who can lift a church door as easy as a barrel of wheat. Now is my master the Drost over in Sweden to fetch the king's betrothed," he continued; "had I been with him there the arrogant Hanse would not have pounced on me. Matters may go hard enough with the king's marriage; they say these priests would fain put a spoke in the wheel, and shut all Heaven's gates on us; but what shall we wager, comrades, that the king snaps his fingers at them, touching the dispensation, or whatever it is called, and keeps his bridal, when the Lord and he himself pleases? Then will there be sport and jollity over all the country. Long live the king's true love!"

"But she is a Swede," objected one of the young fellows.

"Pah! hereafter will Swede and Dane be good and boon companions," continued Canute, with a jolly flourish of his cup. "When our kings give each other their sisters we will dance with the Swedish maidens, and their young fellows again with ours, and no one shall look sour on the other, because we have tried our strength before in another sort of game. The Swedish princess, they say, is the fairest king's daughter in the world, as fair and straight as a lily, and as pious and mild as the blessed Queen Dagmar. Long life to her, by my soul and honour, and to our excellent young king besides, and to all frank and free men, and all pretty maidens, both here and in Sweden's land! Hurra for the king and his true love! He is a scoundrel who drinks not with me."

All the jolly carousers joined in the toast; but the merriment in the tavern-room was now interrupted by the noise of an eager scuffle in the chamber above, where several guests of higher rank were playing at draughts. The squire and his comrades crowded inquisitively to the door, and looked into the chamber. "Ay, indeed! my fat Rostocker here!" exclaimed Canute; "would he tweak the Copenhageners by the nose also? I should think he would come badly off at that game." He now related to his companions what had happened at Skanör fair--how the arrogant traders, who were now in the fray, had brought the false coin of the outlaws into the country--and how the Rostocker, with his crafty comrade, had dared to threaten the king at Sjöborg.

"Let's have at him!" shouted all with one accord, and rushed into the chamber, where Berner Kopmand and Henrik Gullandsfar, with a crowd of foreign merchants and agents, were engaged in fierce dispute with two of the richest burghers of the town, who accused them of dishonest play, and of cheating with false money. The squire and his young comrades took the part of the Copenhageners, and a wild and bloody fray, with pitchers and cans, sticks and clenched fists, soon commenced. The Rostocker and Henrik Gullandsfar first drew their swords; they laid about them with courage and valour. The pepper 'prentices cried and shouted desperately, but were unable to defend themselves with their long ell measures; at last they all took to flight, with Henrik Gullandsfar at their head. Berner Kopmand would have followed them, but the incensed squire placed himself in his way, and forced him into a desperate encounter. "Out of the way, comrades!" he shouted; "leave me to deal alone with this fellow; I have a little reckoning to settle with him!"

All gave way, and formed a ring round the combatants; the heavy-built hot-headed Rostocker laid frantically about him, but was wounded every moment by the man-at-arms, who, though far less in stature, was his superior in swordsmanship. "Take that for thy false money, good fellow, and that for thy false play, and that for thy shameless arrogance!" shouted the squire at every wound he gave his antagonist; "that because thou wouldest hang Sir Helmer and me, and that because thou hast threatened our king, thou grocer hero!" This last thrust ended the fight. The merchant fell mortally wounded to the ground, among the overturned wine-flasks and draught-boards. Meanwhile the routed pepper 'prentices had given the alarm in the streets, and, with a

fearful cry of murder, assembled the night-watch, and as many of the provost's men, who, as yet, had sufficient courage to maintain order in the town. The bishop's famulus had arrived with some men-at-arms, on the part of the provost, and when Berner Kopmand fell the tavern of St. Clement's was already surrounded by a guard. The famulus made his way into the tavern with his men, and surrounded the squire, who stood in silence with the bloody sword in his hand, gazing on the dying Rostocker.

"Seize him! Shackle him! The godless murderer, in the name of the bishop and council!" cried the famulus, in a screeching voice, springing up on a bench to bring himself into notice. He was a little man, clad in a short black cloak over a blue lay brother's dress, with a roll of parchment in his hand, which he flourished like a commander's staff. All the jolly revellers had retreated, and the Drost's squire stood alone by the Rostocker's body in the faint light of the oil-lamp, which was suspended from the roof. He menacingly brandished his bloody sword, and no one dared to approach him.

"Let him go; he is guiltless!" cried a powerful but stuttering voice, and the burgher herald stepped forward half intoxicated, with glowing cheeks and reeling steps, from a corner of the apartment. He had again attired himself in his herald's mantle, and brandished the white staff with the bishop's arms in his hand. He elbowed his way through the crowd, and placed himself, with solemn, official mien, between the squire and the provost's men, directly opposite the little famulus on the bench. "Let none touch this fellow; he is guiltless!" he continued: "the other drunken guest hath got his deserts; he has fallen, as was meet and fit in a regular tavern brawl, and at the dice-board; that *I* can witness--he is to get no chastisement, according to the law and right of our good city, that you must know full as well as I, Master Famulus."

"Believe him not, he is drunk!" cried the bishop's famulus with eagerness; "the ale speaks through him; he exercises his office, and expounds law and justice like a toper and partizan. The law he prates about concerns but fisty-cuffs and pulling of hair; but a murder hath been committed within the town paling; it should at least be punished with perpetual imprisonment, according to the town law. Seize the murderer instantly, say I!"

"Touch him not, say I," resumed the herald, "he hath slain a cheat, a false player, a shameless scoundrel, who had defied the king; it was done in honourable fight; it was in self-defence,--that I saw myself; the fat Rostocker struck the first blow with a sharp weapon, although he got the first cuff, but from an wholly unarmed fist; *that* I can take my oath of, let me be ever so drunk. He is a knave and a sorry Christian who gets not honestly drunk to-night, now that we have forced the shut gate of heaven. This brave young fellow is, besides, the Drost's squire, and my good friend. We have no right to imprison him, I will stand security for him, with all my substance!"

"But what are ye thinking of?" bawled the famulus, stamping on the bench, "he hath certainly slain a man here."

"Even so! naught else! Know ye not better our pious Lord Bishop's orders! Master Famulus!" shouted the burgher herald in an overpowering voice, as he leaned on his staff of office. "*This* is a worldly tavern and place of entertainment--*here*, where gaming, pastime, and toping have full swing from morning to night--none hath a right to require safety for life and limb, it is all in due order; and a very wise and reasonable regulation; mad cats get torn skins, and where one sets aside the law, every one must take the damage as wages. The scoundrel who lies there fell at the forbidden draught-board; if there is law and justice in the town, he shall never be laid in christian ground. That I will uphold, as surely as I bear this sacred staff." As he, at the conclusion of his speech, was about again to brandish the herald's staff over his head, he had nearly lost his balance; but his authoritative conduct, and stern official deportment, seemed, however, not without its effect upon the provost's men, especially as the bishop's famulus was forced to allow the justice of his protest against the burial of the slain in christian ground.

While they were yet disputing, whether they had or had not the right of imprisoning the murderer, the squire rushed out of the door, with his drawn sword in his hand, and none dared to stop him.

As soon as he found himself in the open air, he concealed his sword under his mantle, slouched his hat over his brow, and mingled in the throng which surrounded the house, and had thrust the guard aside. It appeared, even to him, somewhat doubtful and improbable that persons might thus be slain with perfect impunity at the gaming table; what he had heard respecting perpetual imprisonment in the bishop's city, still sounded very unpleasantly in his ear, and he thought it most advisable to decamp as soon as possible; but in order not to excite suspicion, he walked on quietly, and whistled a blithe drinking song. "There's desperate work in the house between the pepper 'prentices and the king's men," he said aloud, "the devil take me if I stand here gaping any longer." As soon as he was fairly out of the crowd, he quickened his steps and hastened down past the Catsound towards the old strand. He went onward without knowing whither, and often looked behind to see whether any one pursued him. He saw lights in all the houses on the strand--mirth and song resounded, contrary to usage, in many quarters of the generally quiet town, in defiance of the strict regulations of the bishop and archbishop; but all was gloomy and still at Axelhuus. He pursued his way along the level shore, and approached the church of St. Nicholas. In the churchyard he saw a crowd of people assembled. A strange, half devout, half seditious murmur, was heard in the crowd, and a solemn council appeared to be held. He hastened past the sullen muttering assemblage, and reached the ferry opposite Bremen-

island. Here all the great warehouses were desolate and deserted; he sat down quite breathless on the quay to recover himself, and think of the means of escape. It was past midnight. The moon shone upon the broad stream and the tall warehouses on Bremen island. He felt oppressed by the death-like stillness around him. The wild scene of the murder in the alehouse was now solemnly and fearfully present to his imagination--he heard his heart beat; he wiped the blood from off his sword, and put it into the sheath. He perceived spots of blood upon his clothes, and was about to go down to the water to wash them out, but he now heard a sound near him like the gasping of a dying man; he looked around him with uneasiness, but no human being was to be seen. The singular sound still fell on his ear, and mingled with his vivid recollection of the death-rattle of the slain Rostocker. He had felt no dread of the living adversary,--now he shuddered at the thought of the dead. The hair of the fugitive squire stood on end; he hastily started off from the quay, and would have fled further; but he now distinctly heard that the sound which terrified him proceeded from the sea-shore. The faint ray of the moon now lit up the beach, on which he beheld a man lying stretched at full length. "The pepper 'prentice! What became of him?"--he heard the voice gasp forth, and recognised its tones. "Our Lady be merciful to us! Sir Helmer! what hath happened you?" exclaimed Canute, aghast, and hasted down to the half-expiring knight, who was utterly exhausted by fighting and swimming, and whom, with much difficulty, he raised on his legs, and in some degree restored to consciousness. His drenched clothes were rent and bloody; his long brown locks clung to his swollen cheeks, and in his left hand, which was convulsively clenched, he held a thick tuft of reddish hair. "Look! look!" he said, "it was all I got hold of, the rest the devil hath taken. He twined round me like a water-snake. He bit and tore like the devil. The stream put an end to our embrace, it had well nigh put an end to my life, I perceive."

"Our Lady and St. George help you, noble sir!" said the squire, crossing himself, as he reached him a small flask. "Take something to strengthen your heart after that joust! If you have fought with the evil one at the bottom of the sea you have surely had to stand a hard encounter."

"I hope it was the right one," said Helmer, and drained the flask, "Thanks, countryman! it hath helped me! Now I have got my strength again. I ail nothing in reality; my limbs are sound; I am but a little bruised, and dizzy in my head."

"But what in all the world have you been about? Have you been seeking the pepper 'prentice, or Satan himself, at the bottom of the sea, and know not rightly yourself whether you found him?"

"I was hard pressed for time, thou must know. The king rode quietly past the beach. I was somewhat wrath with him, I must needs confess. I was on the way to the bishop's dungeon, on account of my having taken the balista a little in hand; but then I caught a sight of that devil of a pepper 'prentice; he stood not a yard from me in a boat, and would have pushed past us; it seemed to me that he stared after the king, and fumbled with his hand in his breast, as if after a dagger. Whether it was the right rascal or not, there was not time to discover. The fellow looked confoundedly suspicious, and one pepper 'prentice, more or less, of what consequence was it, when the king's life was in question? so I jumped into the boat. Ere I wast fully sensible of it I had the fellow by the throat, and had tumbled blithely with him into the stream."

"Have you sent the pepper 'prentice down to his home, noble sir?" said Canute with restored cheerfulness, and somewhat proudly,--"then I have sent a bottle-nosed Hanse grocer to hell, from an ale tavern. None can say we have been idle here in Copenhagen. We serve the king as well as we can--although we may have come a little out of the way he sent us. If you only have but hit on the right man! your exploit was far more daring and dangerous than mine, noble sir! But in two particulars I have been more lucky, however; I *know* I hit on the right person, and know also I mastered the rascal to some purpose. It was he who would have hung us in the morning, and who would have taken the king's life, had he had power and courage to do so."

"The Rostocker! Berner Kopmand?"

"The same! He now lies dead as a herring, in the ale-house; he will never be laid in Christian ground, if my honest friend the herald is in the right. But come, sir!--if you can bestir yourself, let's get out of the bishop's town, and the sooner the better! If the provost or the bishop's men pounce on us, we shall not 'scape from their dungeons all our life-time."

With some difficulty the wounded knight followed the squire, and they soon reached the east gate at the end of East Street. The gate was shut, but its lock and bolts had been forced in the insurrection. The fugitives opened it without difficulty, and entered into the large grass-grown marketplace, where the Halland vegetable vendors especially had their landing-places and stalls. Meanwhile, Sir Helmer felt weaker at every step. With the help of the squire he dragged himself with difficulty to the chapel by St. Anna's bridge; here he sank down powerless before the chapel door;--all grew dark before his eyes, and he was near falling into a swoon.

"The Lord and St. Anna assist us!" said the squire, hastily seizing a wooden bowl which stood near the chapel; he sprang with it to the running stream under the bridge, and soon returned with the bowl full of clear, pure water.

"Drink, sir! drink in St. Anna's blessed name!" he said, eagerly, "and then I will bathe you on the head, and on every part where you feel pain. If St. Anna's stream hath the wondrous healing power it is said to have you will assuredly soon feel yourself strengthened, provided you are a

good Christian, as I surely hope."

The knight drank, and washed the blood from his face, which, as well as his neck, was scratched and lacerated; he was besides bruised all over his body, and exhausted to a great degree. The cold water refreshed and strengthened him, as he fancied, in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner. Around the chapel lay a number of crutches and rags, cast aside by the sick and paralytic who had here been healed. Inspired with sudden enthusiasm by his regained strength, and by the miracle he believed he had here experienced, Sir Helmer sprang up and knelt before the image of St. Anna over the chapel door. "Thanks and honour, holy Anna!" he exclaimed in a lowered voice, and with clasped hands, "it was nobly done of thee; it was doubtless for the sake of my fair young wife--for the sake of my Anna's pious prayers! When we meet again in health, we will assuredly not forget the wax lights and purple velvet for thine altar." He then arose, and exulting in his strength, flapped his arms around him, as if to certify himself of the fact of this restoration; he embraced the squire, and then flung him off to some distance on the grass, with as much ease as he would have flung his glove. "Look, there lies my crutch also, to thy thanks and honour, holy Anna!" he exclaimed in a loud voice, "he is a rascal who doubts of thy wondrous power; thou hast given me strength and vigour again."

"Ay, indeed! thanks and honour be to St. Anna for it!" panted the squire, as he rose half in alarm. "You are now, by my troth, in full vigour. Sir Helmer! as I can testify; but you are somewhat strange and violent in your devotion; you must excuse my not continuing to lie here among the other crutches!"

Helmer bounded blithely on the green sward, to try whether his legs also stood him in good stead; he seemed again preparing to wrestle with the squire, but Canute sprang aside. "Keep your devotion within bounds, noble sir! and listen to a word of sense!" he said, seizing the intractable knight by the arm. "A boat lies unmoored here, let's take possession of it, and row up the great canal!--then perhaps we may slip whole-skinned out of the town, and get to Sorretslóv. If there is any reasonableness whatever in the king, he will not cause us to be hanged, because we have chastised his enemies and persecutors; but if they get hold of us here he will find it hard, despite all his power, to save us."

"Had I but my good sword!"--said Helmer. "Lend me thine, brisk countryman! Do thou row the boat! and I will defend us both."

"Yes, if you will be mannerly, Sir Knight, and not try your sword on me, in honour of St. Anna!"

Helmer laughed, and clapped him on the shoulder. They were soon both seated in the boat, and pondering how best to provide for their safety. Helmer sat sword in hand at the rudder, and the squire, despite the pain of his lacerated hand, rowed with powerful strokes of the oar up the stream which enclosed the town on the north-east. They stopped not until they reached the fishermen's houses at Pustervig. Here the northern boundary of the town was protected by a new fortification of palisades. While the squire rested his wearied arms, they consulted together whether they should now row to the left, through the canal, to get out through the north gate, where, however, it was uncertain whether they would not be stopped and seized,--or whether they might not with greater safety, although with more difficulty, pursue their flight up the stream to Sorretslóv lake. This last plan they considered to be the most expedient. Helmer now seized the one oar, and they began to row briskly forward. The night was calm, and during the whole passage from St. Anna's bridge they had not seen a single human being. But an arrow from a cross-bow now suddenly whistled over the heads of the fugitives; they heard a splashing of oars behind them, and saw two boats push off from the beach at Pustervig.

"The murderer! stop him, shoot him! a hundred silver crowns to the man who seizes him!" called a loud voice from one of the boats.

Helmer and the squire recognised the voice of Henrik Gullandsfar, and kept on rowing. The one boat lay to behind them to stop the way in case they should retreat. The other, which was manned with the provost's men, and was steered by Henrik Gullandsfar himself, pursued them with four oars up the river. In the bow stood two cross-bowmen, who constantly aimed and shot, but as it appeared without real skill in the management of this dangerous weapon, with which the strongest armour might be pierced, and people wounded almost without perceiving it.

"You shoot badly, knaves!" shouted Helmer. "Is that the way to hold a cross-bow? Come but nearer, and I will teach ye to handle it!" he continued, letting go the oar and brandishing his sword over his uncovered head, as he stood in the stern of the boat. "As surely as St. Anna hath given me my strength again, it shall not fare a hair better with ye than with my departed brothers-in-law." Another cross-bow bolt whistled over his head, but without injuring a hair of it--another split the gunwale and broke the tiller. Helmer seized the harmless bolt, and just as he was about to be overtaken, flung it back with all his might whence it came. It whistled past both the cross-bowmen, but hit Henrik Gullandsfar on the forehead, and the merchant fell backwards without life sufficient to utter a cry.

"Death and misfortune! 'Twas Helmer Blaa who threw!" cried one of the provost's men. "The devil a bit will I fight with *him*.--Let's be off!"

The provost's men and the cross-bow shooters now took to flight down the stream with the

body of Gullandsfar. Sir Helmer again seized the one oar, and the two bold fugitives rowed unmolested up to Sorretslóv lake. Here they sprang ashore on the green sward, leaving the boat to float back with the current.

"We have got thus far on dry land," said Helmer, looking around him; "we are without the town paling, and are scarce a hundred paces distant from the king's castle. When the king hears of our exploits, perhaps he will say, it was bravely done, but will cause us to be bound and thrown into the tower, according to strict law, and there we may be suffered to lie until his council and the bishops are agreed whether we are to be punished with death or only with imprisonment for life."

"Would you scare me, Sir Helmer?" exclaimed Canute, in dismay. "As soon as we reach the king's castle yonder, we surely stand under the king's protection."

"But here he is on the bishop's preserve as well as we. We have forgotten that in our hurry," observed Helmer; "the sixteen villages in this neighbourhood belong to the little Roskild bishop. Bishop law and church law are valid here; and this I know beforehand, the king will not swerve a hair's-breadth from what is lawful for *our* sake, even though we were his best friends, and had saved his life an hundred times over."

"Death and confusion! What shall we do then? In that case we were mad should we take refuge with him here?"

"So I think, countryman! But help us he *shall*, whether he will it or no. Knowest thou the two white horses here in the meadow? Look! how they dance in the tether and snort towards the dawn."

"The king's tournament prancers!--the very apple of his eye! Every knights' squire knows *them*. You have surely not lost your wits, Sir Helmer! What would you be at?"

"Thou shalt soon see," said Helmer, approaching the starting and rearing steeds. "So! ho! old fellows! stand still!--if we have risked our lives for the king, he can doubtless lend us a pair of horses. Had I my good Arab it should fly with us both faster than the wind. The pepper 'prentice I answer for," he continued, still enticing the horses. "I have soused and pumelled him so soundly, that he will do no mischief again in a hurry, if there is life in him yet--and I dare wager my head it was the right one. If thou hast made an end of Berner Kopmand, countryman, I answer for Henrik Gullandsfar, and the archbishop hath gone to the devil; there is now no great danger astir, and the king needs us no longer here. I am no great lover of trial and imprisonment, seest thou? and if the king does not need my life, I know of one who will give me a kiss for saving it.--So ho, there! That's right, my lad!--a noble animal, by my soul! I desert not from the service to run home to my young wife,--that none shall say of me. Do thou like me, countryman! I will now ride on the king's prancer as his bridesman to Sweden, to perform what I have neglected. If thou wilt come with me, come then!" Meanwhile Helmer had caught one of the spirited steeds. In an instant he was upon its back, and galloped away over hedge and ditch with the swiftness of a deer. The Drost's squire did not long hesitate; he was soon seated on the back of the other, and followed Sir Helmer at a brisk gallop.

CHAP. V.

When the sun rose over the Sound, signs of cheerful animation and active stir were already perceptible in the village of Sorretslóv, while the bishop's town still lay shrouded in fog, ensconced behind its trenches and palisades, and seemed to slumber after the wild revels of the preceding night. Peasants were seen removing cattle on the pastures, between the village and the northern gate of the town. The grooms of the king's household were riding the horses to water from the farms and meadows of the royal castle, at the large pool in the midst of the village; but around the pasture near Sorretslóv lake, where the king's trained tournament-steeds had grazed, two grooms were running in despair, vainly seeking the fine horses which were entrusted to their charge.

"Help us, St. Alban! and all saints!" cried the younger groom. "If the Marsk comes home he will slay us, at the least."

"And the king!" groaned the other--"the king will be wrath; and that is even far worse. We must find them though we should have to run to the world's end. Come!--They sprang away over hedge and ditch, where they saw the dew brushed off from the grass, and fresh traces of galloping horses' feet on the meadow; at last they recognised the well-known trained step of the steeds on the road between the two lakes, and were soon far away.

It was a fine spring morning;--the king was, as usual, stirring at an early hour. Accompanied by Count Henrik, he had mounted the flat-roofed tower of the castle, from whence there was an extensive and noble prospect over the whole adjacent country. Count Henrik had been required, circumstantially to repeat his account of the flight of the cardinal and the archbishop, and the very different greeting of the prelates. The king was grave, but in good spirits; even the last threat of the archbishop had not discouraged him.

"With God's blessing," he said with emphasis, "I await my chief happiness from the hand of the Almighty, and the heart of my pious Ingeborg, but neither from the mercy of the pope nor the archbishop. Were my hope and success in love really sin and ungodliness, no dispensation could ever sanctify it before Heaven and to myself."--He paused, and gazed with a calm and enthusiastic look on the rising sun, and a heartfelt prayer seemed as it were to beam from his bright eye. "My deadly foe went hence alive," he continued;--"well! I have now performed my promise to him. I let him 'scape hence alive. More none can ask of a frail mortal; but it is the last time I promise peace and respite of life to the enemy of my soul. So long as the Lord grants me life and crown the presence of Grand shall never more infect the air I breathe."

"This insurrection was quite opportune for us, my liege," observed Count Henrik, with a confidential smile--"the foe you came hither to banish hath been as good as stoned out of this country by the brisk men of Copenhagen, on their own responsibility."

"That *I* asked them not to do," answered the king, with proud eagerness; "had I willed to use temporal power, against my ecclesiastical foes here, I should not have needed the help of a mutinous mob. The town hath suffered wrong; but mutiny is, and ever will be, mutiny; and, *as such*, deserving of punishment, whether it happens to suit my convenience or not. I consider the conduct of the bishop and council to be arbitrary and illegal," he continued. "I hate ban and interdict as I do the plague, as is well known; but it shall not therefore be believed I favour revolt and rebellion against any lawful authority. It was well done to force the locked churches. No Roskild bishop shall place bars and bulwarks between us and our Lord; but it was not for the Lord's sake they besieged the bishop's castle: their devotion was also very moderate; it was more like howling wolves singing 'credo,' than christianly-baptized people. Had you seen, with me, the riots yesterday evening, in St. Nicholas church. Count Henrik! you would hardly take on yourself the defence of these insurgents."

"I rode past St. Nicholas church-yard in the night, my liege!" answered Count Henrik. "What was doing there pleased me but little, it is true. It seemed as though a crowd of spirits moved among the graves, in the moonshine: there was a strange muttering. I heard shouts and prayers, which sounded to me like curses. It was St. Erik's Guild brethren, who were chanting prayers, it was said, and taking counsel against the bishop. Those good people I will no longer defend; there must be wild fanatics and turbulent spirits among them. But chastise them not too hardly, in your wrath, my liege!--even though you should now be forced to lend a helping hand to prelatival government. When the Lord's servants shut the Lord's house themselves, and hinder all orderly worship, it is surely no wonder that the plain man seeks to edify himself as well as he can in his own way: a mixture of defiance and ferocious fanaticism with this species of devotion is inevitable, but whose is the blame, your grace? Where God's word is silent, the evil one instantly sends forth his priests among the people, and drives them mad."

"Ay indeed! those are true words. Count! It is usually the fault of the shepherd when the flock strays. Spiritual government is a matter I dare not much intermeddle with, but this I have promised, and I shall honestly keep my promise: every church door in the country which they would hereafter shut, I will cause myself without further ado to be forced with the staff of the spear; and every priest or bishop who hinders my, or my people's lawful and orderly devotion, I banish from state and country, as I have banished Archbishop Grand--let the pope excommunicate me a thousand times over for it! Look! in this I am agreed with my brave and loyal people, and with these rather too brisk Copenhageners. What I here tell you, I cannot give any one under sign and seal," he added, "but I will whisper it in confidence into the ear of every Danish bishop and future archbishop; none shall say, however, I side with rebels. If authority is to be used, that is my affair; but there *shall* be peace and order here. I will uphold the rights of every lawful authority, whether it be spiritual or temporal, our highest rights, as God's children, and the rights and authority of the crown, unimpaired."

The king was silent--his cheek glowed, and an expression of fervid energy beamed in his countenance, as he turned from the fair spectacle of the rising sun, and looked out upon the fog-enveloped town, the church towers of which glittered in the dawn of morning. He now opened a letter and a small packet, which a skipper from Skanör had brought him from Drost Aagé. He read the letter with attention. It contained an account of the Drost's meeting with the Hanseatic merchants and Thrand Fistlier at Kjöge, and at Skanör fair, as well as of the disturbance which had been caused by this mountebank, and the Hanseatic forgers; and also how the Drost, partly to save the artist's life, had been under the necessity of sending him prisoner to Helsingborg. In the packet was one of Master Thrand's optic tubes, and some polished glasses, which Aagé had bought at Skanör fair, and which he now presented to the king as extraordinary rarities. In the letter, Aagé had not been able to conceal his suspicion of the wonderful mountebank, and the singular uneasiness which this man's operations and expressions had caused him.

Count Henrik also, had lately received and read a secret epistle from the Drost, in which Aagé conjured him to caution the king respecting the captive Icelander, and above all to keep a

watchful eye on whoever approached him. "Trust not the junker!" Aagé wrote, "God forgive me if I do him injustice! Kaggé is alive and under convoy of the foreign merchants, who threatened the king at Sjöborg; Helmer and my bravest squire are in their power. The revenge of the outlaws is unwearied. Stir not from the king's side! watch over his life, while I care for his happiness."

"Truly! my good Drost Aagé is a strange visionary," said the King, shaking his head with a smile, as he tried the glasses with a feeling of wonder at the power of these instruments; "my much-loved Aagé is ready to side with the ignorant mob, and regard the fruits of the noble arts and sciences as the work of the evil one."

"How! my liege!" asked Count Henrik, in surprise.

"That good friend of mine is still somewhat weak both in mind and body;" continued the king, "he is afraid our whole fair world will perish, because here and there people get their eyes opened, and learn to see things better and more justly in nature. The Lord knows what new danger he can now be dreaming of from this artist. Just look here. Count!" The king reached Henrik the optic tube. "It is one of the discoveries of the great Roger Bacon, the wise English monk we have heard so much of--a skilful Icelander hath arrived here in the country, who hath known him, and learned the art from him. These kind of things he brings with him; he is said to understand many wonderful arts, and knows secrets in nature which may be of importance, as well in war as in the general advancement of the country; Aagé, I suppose, means only we should be cautious and not trust him over much. I will see and know that man; he certainly doth honour to our northern lands, and he shall not have visited me in vain;--now what say you, Count? Such glass eyes may be useful, I think, both for a king and a general, when he should take a wide survey!"

"Noble! astonishing!" exclaimed Count Henrik, "the town, the river, the whole of Solbjerg, seem as near as if close at hand."

"And a skilful coiner, and a rare judge of metals, is this Icelander besides," resumed the king with satisfaction, as he glanced over the letter, "he is just the man we need, now that the land is inundated with the false coin of the outlaws; if he were in league with my foes, as Aagé fears, he would hardly venture into my sight; as yet no enemy hath faced me, unpunished. He is reported to hold many erring opinions in matters of faith; but what is that to me? If he be a heretic, so much the worse for himself; in what concerns temporal things he is apt, I must confess."

"If he be a Leccar brother, as Drost Aagé thinks, then beware of him, my liege!" observed Count Henrik. "I thought that sect was banished in all Christian lands, and in Denmark also, on account of their dangerous opinions."

"On account of opinions, I have never banished any living soul," said the king: "for ought I care, every man may think and believe what he will, provided he obeys but the laws of the land, and seduces not the people to insurrection and ungodliness. One description of madmen I once banished, however--it is true," he added, recollecting himself: "what they called themselves I have now forgot; but the madness I remember well enough--they were self-appointed priests, without a consecrated church or true doctrine. They scoured the country round, and preached both to high and low, and would, in short, have made us all heathens. They denied both our Lord and our blessed Lady, and all the saints and martyrs besides; they would have nought to do either with church or pope; and in fact, just as little with kings and princes, or any temporal government; they zealously affirmed that we should obey our Lord only--but when it came to the point, their Lord was but their own ignorant and perverted will. From such mad doctrine we may well pray our Lord to preserve us and all Christian lands."

"But that is exactly, as far as I know, the creed of the Leccar brethren," observed Count Henrik. "We have chased the sect from Mecklenborg also, and the pope hath doomed them to fire and faggot."

"You are right, they are called Leccarii in Latin," answered the king: "the holy father's caring for their *souls*, by burning their *bodies*, suits me just as little as his excommunicating, and giving us over to the devil. That mistakes may be made in Rome we are all agreed. If the learned Icelander belongs to yon sect, he must doubtless decamp," he added, "and that I should be sorry for; but I must hear it from himself, ere I will believe it; it is inconceivable to me how madness and learning can dwell together in one brain."

"Look once again, my liege!" said Count Henrik, handing the optic tube to the king. "Yonder comes a boat up the canal towards St. George's hospital; if I am not mistaken it is steered by a couple of clerks; perhaps the bishop would now vouchsafe us tidings, and put up with your protection."

From St. George's lake flowed a broad rivulet, which bounded the pasture ground of Sorretslöv and divided it from the meadows of the village of Solbjerg. This rivulet, which widened into a canal, flowed down under the west gate of the town, and ended its course in the Catsound. Between the stream and the town of Sorretslöv lay St. George's Hospital. A large boat came slowly up the river, in which the forms of two men, attired in black, were discernible. They rowed with unsteady strokes of the oar, and with great exertion, against the stream. The boat put ashore at the pasture ground opposite St. George's hospital. The sable-clad personages sprang

out of the boat and drew it on land. The king and Count Henrik thought they recognised the archbishop's confidential friends, Hans Rodis and the canon Nicolaus, and paid close attention to their proceedings. A large loose sail was taken from the boat, from under which four ecclesiastics rose up, one after another, and stepped on shore. They looked around on all sides with caution, and proceeded along a by-path, with slow and uncertain steps towards the royal castle. They were all four soon recognised. It was the domineering little Bishop Johan, with the haughty abbot from the forest monastery, accompanied by the provincial prior, and the inspector of the Copenhagen chapter. They seemed to have secretly taken flight from Axelhuus in the morning fog, to place themselves under the king's protection, and perhaps to demand the help of arms against the mutinous town.

When the king recognised them he became grave, and fell into a reverie. He reached the optic tube to Count Henrik, and seated himself in silence on a bench on the southern side of the tower, whence he had a view of the town and the north gate. Count Henrik remarked that the two suspicious-looking canons had yet another person in the boat, whom they carried on shore; he appeared to be either sick or dead, and was closely shrouded in a mantle. The canons looked around on all sides, and bore, seemingly with doubtful and anxious steps, the sick or dead man up to St. George's Hospital, where they were instantly admitted. Count Henrik considered their conduct most suspicious; he determined, however, not to name it to the king; and resolved to examine himself into the affair, and to inspect the hospital that very day.

The town was by no means so tranquil as was supposed. The nocturnal assemblage in the churchyard of St. Nicholas had not dispersed until near daybreak. The bishop's men had heard wild threats of fire and murder, and taunting speeches against their master. A new and bloody outbreak of the insurrection was feared whereupon the bishop had not deemed it advisable to await the dawn of day at Axelhuus, although it was probable that he most unwillingly took refuge with the king, who he knew was incensed at the enforcement of the interdict.

The bishop's stern protest against the demi-ecclesiastical assemblies of the guild-brethren of St. Canute, had rendered that fraternity his bitterest and most dangerous foes. During the shutting of the churches, the devotion of the guild-brethren, which was almost always blended with fanaticism and intemperance, had assumed a wild and desperate character. They were charged with the most licentious impiety, it was believed there were atheists and Leccar brethren among them, who sought to sever them from the church and from Christendom, as well as from burgher-rule and obedience. A secret dread of the extravagancies and gloomy deportment of these persons prevailed among the best-informed and better class of burghers, who, however, had themselves, on account of the shutting of the churches, made common cause with the guild-brethren, and deemed a general revolt against prelatiic tyranny to be necessary.

Ere the sun had dispersed the thick morning mist which lay over the town, the burghers of Copenhagen thronged in crowds to the council-house, where they assembled a council, though it was not the usual day of meeting.

Meanwhile, mattins were performed in all the churches in the town, and no priest dared any longer to observe the interdict. All the churches were unusually crowded, but no disturbances took place. It was only from the stone-built houses, where St. Canute's and St. Eric's guild-brethren had rung their bells ere daylight, and were now performing their morning's devotions, before full goblets and with locked doors, that wild cries and sounds of tumult proceeded. As soon as early mass was ended, a great procession passed through North Street and through the north gate. It was the deputies of the town and council, who had drawn up at the council-house a long list of complaints against the bishop, and as long a justification of the recently-suppressed insurrection. This document they now intended to present to the king, as they were willing to enter into any treaty with the spiritual Lord of the town, which their sovereign might consider just and reasonable. A continually increasing crowd accompanied this procession. None of the guild-brethren were to be seen among the deputies of the town; but a number of these gloomy agitators soon joined themselves to the train, and sought to excite suspicion in the populace respecting this negotiation of peace. The guild-brethren, meanwhile, seemed at variance among themselves; the king's presence had struck terror into many, and their wild plans of overthrowing all spiritual and temporal rule lacked concert and counsel. Hardly had they quitted their guild houses ere the provost's men and the bishop's retainers, assisted even by the burghers, took possession of these buildings, and stationed guards before them. The dispersion of this degenerate and dangerous fraternity was now become one of the most earnest wishes of the council and burghers.

The king had not left the tower of Sorretslóv when the throng hastened forward towards the village and his unfortified castle, in the direction of the southern gate; while the bishop and the three prelates, with their slow and dubious pace, had not as yet reached the approach from the by-path to the western castle gate. Count Henrik's attention had been wholly engrossed in watching the tardy and undecided movements of the ecclesiastics, and the king had been so lost in thought that he did not observe the crowd until the distant murmur of many thousand voices reached his ear. He rose hastily, with a quick glance on both sides, and appeared wroth, but undecided only for a moment. "The gate shall be barred. Count! the black snails shall be brought up here!" he exclaimed impetuously in a loud voice to Count Henrik, pointing to the ecclesiastics below, who again paused on the by-path, and seemed to hesitate. "Let them be brought to my private chamber instantly, even though it should be by force. They are my prisoners."

Count Henrik started.

"Look!" continued the king, pointing towards the village and the road. "They flock out hither by thousands; but, by all the holy men! whoever disturbs the peace of the royal castle shall be chastised as he deserves. Ride to meet the throng. Count! announce my will to them--say their bishop is in my power. Every fitting proposition I will listen to; but every agitator shall instantly be banished; whoever obeys not shall be punished as a rebel."

"Now I understand you, my liege," said Count Henrik, and instantly departed.

The king's command was immediately put into execution. With great fear and dismay, the bishop and his three ecclesiastical companions beheld a troop of horsemen gallop out of the castle towards them, while a willow hedge hid the main road and the concourse of people from their sight, and they still stood close to the meadow gate, debating whether they had not acted with precipitation, and were not about to encounter a still greater danger here than that from which they had fled.

"Treachery!" cried the bishop, drawing back. "I feared it would be so. Fools that we are to trust to the generosity of an excommunicated tyrant! Now we may all fare as did Grand, and may come to rot alive in his dungeons."

"I will answer for the king's justice, even should he imprison us," said the general superior of the chapter.

"Ha! you betray me! you side with the tyrant! *you* counselled me to this step."

"Look, my brother!" cried the abbot of the forest monastery, pointing in dismay to the right, where but a single-fenced meadow separated them from the road and the concourse of people which now came in view. "The whole town is flocking hither. They have spied us--hear how they howl and bluster! They are springing over hedge and ditch towards us. Let us thank God and our guardian saint for the king's horsemen; it is better after all to fall into the hands of one tyrant than into those of a thousand."

At this moment the king's horsemen surrounded them, and saluted them with courtesy. "Follow us, venerable sirs," said their leader, a brisk young halberdier. "We have orders to bring you to the king's castle."

"In the name of the Lord and all the saints we accept the king's convoy!" said the bishop, looking around with uneasiness, while his cheeks glowed, and he seemed but half to trust to this unexpected safe conduct.

"The bishop! the bishop! Seize him! stone him!" shouted a whole crowd of the excited rabble, who, headed by some guild-brethren, had quitted the burgher procession, and ran, with weapons and stones in their hands, over the meadow towards the ecclesiastics.

"Back, countrymen!" shouted the leader of the horsemen, brandishing his sword. "We lead him captive to the king."

"Captive! the bishop captive!" exclaimed the insurgents with joyous shouts. "That's right!--long live the king!--to the dungeon with Grand's friends and all king-priests!"

"Captive!" repeated the bishop, clasping his hands; "ha, the presumptuous traitors!"

"Compose yourselves, venerable sirs," said the young halberdier, in a lowered tone. "I obey the commands of my sovereign; if you refuse to comply I shall be compelled to use force; but whether you are the king's guests or his prisoners you will assuredly be treated as beseems your rank and condition."

The ecclesiastics were soon within the gates of the king's castle, and looked doubtfully at each other, as one door after another was with much deference shut behind them, and they stood at last in anxious expectation in a vaulted chamber, which, with its high windows and the little iron-cased door, which was also secured behind them, bore a greater resemblance to a prison than an apartment destined for the reception of guests. There was no want, however, of furniture or comfort; there were writing materials as well as both edifying and entertaining books. It was the king's private chamber.

The deputies of the burghers and counsel started almost in as great dismay as the bishop and his clerical companions, when they beheld themselves surrounded on a sudden by royal halberdiers and horsemen before the castle gate. The captain of halberdiers dismissed the half-armed mob, who had followed the procession with shouts and threats against the bishop, and with frequent acclamations for the king, on occasion of his having (according to report) thrown the bishop into prison.

"In the name of my liege and sovereign!" called Count Henrik, on horseback, as he waved his hat, "the castle is open to the deputies of the loyal burghers; but every one who bears arms here, or combines to cause riot and uproar disturbs the peace of the king's castle, and is guilty of treason. Your lord bishop is at this moment in the king's power, but he is also his guest and under

his protection. Every insult to the bishop here is an insult to the ruler of the land. The king will judge justly, and negotiate a peace between you and your lord. Ere the sun goes down the result of his mediation shall be made known. Now, back! all here who would not pass for rebels!"

The restless crowd returned silent and downcast to the town. The arrogant bravado of the insurgents that they had the king on their side, had been suddenly put down. Their confidence in his presumed wrath against the bishop, and his partiality to the burghers of Copenhagen, appeared to have given way to a reasonable apprehension of his justice and known severity. It even seemed to them no good sign that the bishop, in his distress, had sought shelter at the royal castle--and the guild-brethren muttered that when it came to the push, the powerful and the great ever sided together after all; even though they were deadly foes at heart, and that every thing was visited upon those of low degree whether they were guilty or not.

CHAP. VI.

During the whole day an anxious stillness prevailed in the town. The crowds indeed still continued to pour like a tide through the streets, but with order, and in silent expectation. The sun was about to set, and, as yet, no tidings had been received of the issue of the royal negociation. Meanwhile, an unusual procession attracted the attention of the restless and fickle populace. A funeral train proceeded past St. Clement's church down to the old Strand, but without chaunting and ringing of bells, and without being accompanied by any choristers or ecclesiastics. This procession consisted of a great number of foreign merchants and skippers, and all the pepper 'prentices, who (several hundreds in number, and clad in precise and rich mourning attire) followed two large coffins covered with costly palls of black velvet. The coffins were borne by Hanseatic seamen; over them waved the Rostock and Visbye flags. The train halted at the church of St. Nicholas. They would have pursued their way across the church-yard, and requested to have a mass chaunted over the dead in the church; but this was denied. The bishop's servants shut the gates of the church-yard and forbade the corpse-bearers to approach the church, or tread on consecrated ground, as one of the coffins they carried contained the body of a man who had been slain in the ale-house at the draught board. Amid wrathful muttering against the hard-hearted prelatical government, the procession proceeded past the outside of the church-yard wall to the quay on Bremen Island, where a number of boats with rowers, clad in white, received the coffins and the whole troop of mourners. They landed on the island, and here, where the Hanseatic merchants alone governed, the train burst forth into a solemn German funeral hymn, while the bodies of Berner Kopmand and Henrik Gullandsfar were carried on board two Hanseatic vessels, which were to convey them to Christian burial in Rostock and Visbye. As soon as the ships were under weigh the funeral train was received in a large warehouse, where three ale-barrels and two keys over a cross were carved in stone over the door. Here the whole party of seamen and trading agents were served out of huge barrels of the famous Embden ale, the intoxicating properties of which soon changed the funeral feast into a wild and mirthful carouse. There was no lack either of wine or mead, and the large dish of salted meat, which was constantly replenished, increased the thirst of the funeral guests. The rabble who had followed the train through the streets, long remained standing on the beach and the quay to hear and watch the intoxicated pepper 'prentices, who here, with none but countrymen and boon companions beside them, seemed determined to indemnify themselves for the restraint to which they were subjected in the foreign town. Some wept, while they reeled, and held moving discourses on the mournful fate of the rich Berner Kopmand and Henrik Gullandsfar, and on the mutability of all power and wealth in this world; while others sung drinking songs and piping love-ditties by way of accompaniment to the pathetic funeral speeches.

At last, attention was withdrawn from these riotous revels by the cry of "The herald! The herald!" and the people thronged in dense crowds down towards the north gate. A herald with a large sheet of parchment and a white staff in his hand, rode, accompanied by a halberdier and a numerous troop of horsemen, through the gate. The train halted at the corners of all the streets, and at all the public squares; two trumpeters on white horses made a signal for silence, whereupon the herald read aloud a treaty between the lord of the town, Bishop Johan, and the council and congregation of Copenhagen. The burghers admitted in this treaty that they had, as well in deed as in word, grossly misbehaved towards their spiritual and temporal lord the bishop, and that they had been implicated in an unlawful and criminal insurrection, the circumstances of which were enumerated. Meanwhile the bishop pardoned them these trespasses at the king's intercession, in return for which the deputies of the council and congregation promised, on the part of the town and of the burghers, that each burgher should instantly return to his duty, and obey all the laws and regulations which the bishop, "*with consent of the chapter,*" had given or hereafter might give them, which they would publicly and solemnly swear to do at the council-house, with laying on of hands on the holy Gospels. No one dared to protest against the validity of this treaty; as the herald displayed the round seal of the town with the three towers, which was suspended to the document by a green silken string, together with the seal of the Copenhagen

chapter.

As soon as the inhabitants of the town were informed of this treaty, and it was understood what had thereby been tacitly conceded to them, and with how much leniency this untoward affair had been adjusted, alarm and anxiety were succeeded by still greater and more general satisfaction; but the guild-brethren were displeased and murmured.

At the market-place without the east gate, where the herald had read the treaty for the last time, the numbers of the mob which had followed the procession through the town were considerably augmented, chiefly by day-labourers and ale-house frequenters, who felt that the treaty was an obstacle to the disorder and licentious liberty for which the revolt had given them opportunity. Here discontent was openly manifested; and it was muttered aloud that the bishop after all had got justice in everything, and that the burghers had suffered injustice. But a man now stepped forward who was held in high esteem among these people; he was a remarkably fat and sturdy ale-house keeper, with a large red nose and a pair of hands like bears paws; he was known as the greatest toper and brawler in the town, and his tavern was the resort of the wildest and most turbulent revellers. He mounted upon the great ale barrel which stood before his door, and which served the house for a sign.

"It is altogether right and reasonable, my excellent friends and customers!--my honest and highly esteemed fellow burghers!" he shouted, with his powerful well-known voice, and a round oath. "The bishop hath but got justice for appearance sake; he is, besides, the lord of our good town, and hath a right to require that one should drink one's ale in peace, and pay every man that which is his. When he will grant us what we need both for soul and body, we have surely nought to complain of. When he lets priests sing mass for you, and me tap good ale for you from morn till even, and somewhat past at times--then he is, by my soul! as excellent a bishop and lord as we can ask for, and I will pay without grumbling my yearly tax. For soul and salvation ye need not hereafter to fear, comrades! That matter the king hath taken upon himself, like an honest man. Heard ye not what he promised us yesterday, and what there stood in the treaty? *Without consent of the chapter the bishop* can command us nothing, and praised be the chapter! They are a wise set: they will just as little deny you absolution every day, for your little bosom sins, as I would deny you what you may stand in need of and can pay for on opportunity! Let rascals and guild-brothers grumble as they may!" he continued, as he clenched his broad fist, "we will keep those fellows in check;--I will wager a drinking match to-day, with every honest man, to the king's and the bishop's prosperity; but those who would stir up strife and wrangling between us peaceable people shall feel our fists. Come in now, comrades! and get something to keep up your hearts! Long live the king! and our lord the bishop besides!"

"Long live the king and the bishop!" cried a great number of the influential tavern-keeper's friends and customers; and the malcontents slunk off.

"They come! they come! The king and bishop are here!" was now echoed from mouth to mouth,--and the crowd again poured in through East Street, towards the quarter where all the butchers of the place had their dwellings, and where some murmurs against the treaty had also been heard. Every burst of dissatisfaction was meanwhile kept down by the opposite feeling which prevailed among the town's most influential burghers, and yet more by the spectacle of the king's entry, and of the crushed pride and dejected deportment of the little bishop Johan. With downcast eyes and manifest signs of fear, this prelate rode, with his ecclesiastical train, at the king's right hand, through his own town, guarded by Count Henrik of Mecklenborg, and the knight-halberdiers. The king met everywhere with a favourable reception; the bishop was received with no demonstrations of welcome, but there was order and peace;--no agitator dared to scoff at him by the king's side, and no voice of discontent was heard. The procession stopped at the council-house, where the treaty was solemnly ratified.

The public tranquillity was thus restored. The dignity of the prelatical government was upheld, and the arrogance of the insurgents subdued. The turbulent guild-brethren had dispersed, and there was no reason to apprehend a fresh outbreak of the revolt, as the burghers themselves, with the permission of the bishop, had agreed with the provost's men and the bishop's retainers to observe the treaty and prevent all disturbances. Despite this apparent victory, the bishop was notwithstanding extremely pensive and taciturn. The king's generous protection appeared to have confounded him, and he seemed to experience a feeling of painful humiliation, by the side of his temporal protector. The revolt, and the danger which had menaced his life, had taught him to know his own powerlessness. The king had indeed treated him, while at Sorretslöv castle, as a distinguished guest, but with cold courtesy, without even giving vent to his displeasure by a single word; it was those words only in the treaty relating to the bishop's dependence on the assent of the chapter, which the king had ordered to be inserted, in an emphatic tone (with the approval of the general-superior there present), and in a voice of command, which admitted of no contradiction. The bishop of Roskild, lately so confident and haughty, who a few days since sat between a cardinal and an archbishop in his fortified castle, and had, for the first time, issued the exasperating church interdict in his own town, was now forced to acknowledge, in silent anger, that since, the cardinal's departure, the banishment of the archbishop, and his having himself been subjected to the scoffs of the lowest rabble, he would be able to maintain the authority of the church in Denmark only so far as the Danish clergy considered it expedient, and as the king himself would support ecclesiastical government.

During the whole of the transaction at the council-house, the bishop was quiet and dejected.

The king treated him here also with cold courtesy. His looks were stern and grave; another important and serious matter seemed to have weighed on his heart since he heard the last words of the archbishop to Count Henrik.

From the council-house the whole procession rode to St. Mary's church, where, besides the customary *Avé*, a *Te Deum* was sung on occasion of the treaty. The king then immediately rode back to Sorretslów, from whence he purposed to set out on his journey the following morning. The bishop, with the abbot of the Forest Monastery, and the other ecclesiastics, accompanied him (in compliance with customary courtesy), besides the deputies of the town and the burghers.

The bishop desired not to return to Axelhuus ere every trace of hostile attack on the castle was effaced, and the humiliating insurrection forgotten. He purposed to accompany the king, the following day, to Roskild, where some disturbances had taken place on the occasion of their rulers' attempt to enforce the interdict.

The bishop was thus, in some sort, houseless on this evening, and accepted, as an attention which was his due, the king's invitation to him and his train to take up their quarters for the night at his castle, where all who had accompanied the king were also invited to a festive supper.

The sun had just set as the train reached Sorretslów, and Count Henrik proposed to the king that they should now, ere it grew dark, inspect the bishop's charitable institution at St. George's hospital, for lepers and those who were sick of pestilential disorders, since it lay but a stone's throw from the castle. At this proposal the bishop, and the abbot of the Forest Monastery, became evidently uneasy; but this was remarked by no one except Count Henrik, who watched them closely, and had on their account proposed aloud this plan, which he readily conjectured the king would reject.

"It is too late. Count! and I have guests besides," answered the king. "If you desire it, inspect the hospital yourself, and describe the establishment to me! I know it doth honour to the bishop's philanthropy!--although I should have deemed it more fitting had that lazaretto been erected elsewhere. That there is no one sick of the plague there at the present moment I know," Count Henrik bowed in silence, and instantly rode, with a couple of young knights, across Sorretslów meadow, towards the hospital.

"Permit me to accompany you. Sir knights! I desire also to see this pious institution," said the abbot of the Forest Monastery, endeavouring to overtake them on his palfrey; but they heard him not, and ere the abbot reached St. George's hospital. Count Henrik stood already in the chamber of the sick, gazing with a look of sharp scrutiny on a man who seemed to sleep, but whose head was so closely muffled that he might be considered as masked. On the upper part of the sick man's forehead the beginning of a large scar was visible. "What is the name of this man?" inquired Count Henrik, in a stern tone, of the alarmed and embarrassed brethren of St. George.

"No one knows him, gracious sir!" answered the guardian; "he was brought bruised and wounded hither yesterday, by two stranger canons from the town; they had found him half dead on the beach: we were forced instantly to lay a plaster over his whole face and we cannot now remove it without endangering his life."

"As I live! it is the outlawed Kaggé," said Count Henrik, and all gave way in consternation. "You have housed and healed a regicide," continued the count; "they who brought him hither were traitors: all are such who hide an outlaw."

"Outlaw or not, here he hath peace to die or recover, if it be the will of the Lord and St. George;--that shall not be denied him by any king or king's servant," said an authoritative voice behind them, and the tall abbot of the Forest Monastery stood in the door-way of the chamber. "No tyrant's hand reaches unto this sanctuary of compassion," continued the prelate. "I command you, brother-guardian, and every charitable brother who here serves St. George, I command ye, in the name of the bishop, and our heavenly Lord, to cherish this sick man as your redeemed brother, without fear of man, and without asking of his name and calling in the world! Perhaps he now suffers for his sins; but of that the All-righteous must judge: if he hath fallen by the hand of Divine chastisement he will indeed soon stand before his Judge; in such case, pray for his soul, and give him Christian burial! but if he is healed by the help and prayers of man, or by the merits and miracles of any saint, then let him wander forth free in St. George's name, whether he goes to friend or foe--whether he goes to life and happiness in the world, or to ignominy and death on the scaffold--ye are set here to heal and comfort;--to wound and vex the wretched, there are tyrants enough in the world."

Count Henrik looked in astonishment at the dignified prelate, who spoke with authoritative firmness, and really seemed actuated by pious zeal and compassion; a transient flush passed over the countenance of the proud warrior; it seemed as though he blushed at having persecuted this miserable being, who appeared unable to move a limb, and looked more dead than alive. "In the name of the Lord and St. George," he said, stepping back, "fulfil your duty to the criminal as unto my saint, and the saint of all knights! I require not you nor any one to be merciless; but this I will say once again, you shelter an outlawed and dishonoured traitor. You must yourselves be answerable for the consequences." He cast another glance at the object of his suspicions, who lay immovable, and without any discernible expression in his frightful and shrouded countenance. The count then quitted the hospital, and allowed the abbot to precede him. On the way back to

the king's castle he exchanged not a word with the ecclesiastic, who, haughty and silent, gazed on him with a triumphant mien. Count Henrik said nothing of his discovery to the king; he was not, indeed, perfectly certain that he had not been mistaken; but during the whole evening he was in an unusually silent and thoughtful mood. The unhappy criminal now appeared to him so wretched and insignificant that he began to regard all dread of such a foe as contemptible. At the evening repast the king principally conversed with the deputies of the council and the burghers of Copenhagen. It was the first time they sat at the table with the king and their ruler the bishop, and at the commencement of the repast appeared somewhat abashed by this unwonted honour. The king repeated his commendation of the loyalty and bravery of the Copenhageners in Marsk Stig's feud, and the war with Norway; he promised them compensation for every loss they might sustain hereafter for his and the kingdom's sake, so long as the outlaws disquieted the country, and soon contrived to induce the plain, straight-forward citizens to express themselves freely and frankly respecting the advantages and disadvantages of their town in regard to its trade and commerce. They thanked the bishop and the king for their wise town-laws, and for the many liberties and privileges which the town already enjoyed; but they hesitated not to mention how important it might be for the public revenue if the monopolies of the towns could be curtailed, and the burghers allowed at least the same privileges as those granted to foreigners.

"Truly! I have long thought of that," said the king; "this matter deserves to be thought upon. I shall await further proposals and consideration of the subject from your Lord the bishop and your assembled council."

Great joy was manifest in the countenances of the burghers at this speech; but the bishop appeared little pleased with the king's zealous interest in the town and its concerns. The conversation between the ecclesiastics from Axelhuus was reserved and laconic. The king himself was often silent and abstracted; at times he appeared striving to repress the expression of his wrath against the bishop, and the abbot, who he knew, was one of the most devoted friends of Grand. After the repast the burghers took a cheerful and hearty farewell of the king, whom they once more thanked for the rescue and peace of their good town; after which they returned to Copenhagen, with high panegyrics on the king's mildness and favour. Count Henrik and the knights repaired to the chess-table in the upper hall, and Eric remained almost alone among the ecclesiastics. With an air of mysterious confidence the abbot and the provincial prior drew closer to the bishop, whose authority and drooping courage they strove to sustain in the king's presence.

The two ecclesiastics who had principally conducted the treaty, and had impartially defended the rights of the bishop, as well as the liberties of the people, kept nearest the king, and strove furthermore to prevent every outbreak of his anger against the friends of the banished archbishop: they were the provincial prior of the Dominicans, Master Olans (who, as the king's counsellor in this important affair, had accompanied him from Wordingborg), and the general-superior of the Copenhagen chapter, who belonged to the bishop's train, but was secretly devoted to the king, and had even dared to protest against the interdict. To these personages the king, shortly before retiring to rest, addressed a question which had been weighing on his heart the whole day, and which he seemed desirous should be answered in the presence of the bishop, ere he retired to rest.

"Tell me, venerable sirs," said Eric, "how far the canonical law reasonably extends with regard to marriage within the ties of consanguinity, and how far the dispensation of the church can really be consisted as necessary, according to the law of God, when the relationship is so distant that it is hardly remembered?"

"It is a prolix and difficult question, your grace," answered the general-superior of the chapter, evasively, with a dubious side-glance at the bishop and the abbot of the Forest Monastery. "I must crave some time for reflection in order to answer it rightly."

"If the prevailing senseless law is followed," said the aged provincial prior in a firm tone, and with an undaunted glance at the attentive prelates, "almost every computable degree of relationship may be an impediment, and may call for an indulgence; but when this is carried out too far I believe the church's holy father will agree with me that such an extreme doth but uselessly burden the conscience, just as it also may lightly become a subject for scoffing and scandal, instead of being a means of edification to Christian and reasonable persons. If one were to be consistent in these matters, no marriage would at last take place in Christendom without dispensation from the papal see, seeing that all persons are kindred in the flesh, inasmuch as they all descend from old Adam and Eve."

"That is precisely my own opinion," said the king, with a smile of satisfaction; "it would take a tolerably long reckoning.--What is *your* opinion of this, pious Bishop Johan?"

The bishop appeared confused, at the half-jesting tone with which the king asked his opinion; he was not prepared for this, and seemed to wish just as little to tread on the heels of papal authority, as to dare at this moment to rouse the anger of the king--he stammered out a few words, and strove to evade a decided declaration.

"Permit me, venerable brother! To answer this question," began the abbot, with a proud and collected deportment:--"an example will best explain the case," he continued, addressing himself to the king; "no case is more in point than that of your grace's relationship to your young

kinswoman, Princess Ingeborg of Sweden."

"Truly!" exclaimed the king, with a start, "you use no circumlocution, Sir Abbot! you go straight to the point. It suits me best, however. Let us keep to that example! I am more, every way, interested in it than in any other!"

"Ere the church can bless your meditated marriage union with this your high-born relative," continued the abbot, with calm coldness, "the holy father's dispensation and indulgence are altogether necessary, and this on a two-fold account; pro primo,--because of the tie of relationship by marriage; and pro secundo,--because of the taint of relationship by blood. As regards the first point, royal sir! the aforesaid Princess Ingeborg's uncle, Count Gerhard of Holstein, is, as is well known, by his marriage with your most royal mother, the dowager Queen Agnes, your grace's present step-father. Count Gerhard's fatherly relationship, as well to that noble princess, as to your Grace! causes an almost brotherly and sisterly connection between you and the young princess;--and marriage between brother and sister, or between those who may be considered as such, is sternly forbidden by every law of God and man----"

"You have made us out brother and sister in a trice; it is a singular way of bringing people into near relationship," interrupted the king, "yet pass but over the relationship by marriage, with my stepfather's niece, venerable sir!--there is not a single drop of the same blood therein. Nought but a near and actual blood relationship do I acknowledge to be so real a hindrance that it can only be removed by God's vicegerent upon earth."

"Your grace is right in some respects," answered the abbot, "inasmuch as it *is* the tie of blood, which in this instance constitutes the sin, and makes every marriage union between relations, which hath not been sanctified by the indulgence of the church, an unholy act, a deadly sin, and a damnable connection."

"Ha! do you rave?" cried the king: his brow flushed; anger glowed in his cheek and on his lofty brow, but he subdued his rising ire. "If terrible words, without truth or reason, had power to slay the soul, I should long since have been spiritually murdered," he continued in a lower tone. "Now, say on, Sir Abbot!--how near reckon you, then, the blood relationship, which, according to your bold assertion, may plunge me into deadly sin, and into a gulf of horror and ignominy, if I await not a permit from Rome to perpetrate such crime?"

"It is easy to reckon up the degrees of forbidden affinity," answered the abbot, with imperturbable coolness. "The high-born Princess Ingeborg is, as is known, a legitimate daughter of King Magnus, who was a legitimate son of the high-born Birger Jarl, whose consort, the lady Ingeborg, was a legitimate daughter of King Eric the tenth, whose Queen Regizé was, lastly, a legitimate daughter of your grace's departed royal father's--father's--father's father;--ergo, the princess is a great-great grandchild of your grace's grandfather's departed royal father, Waldemar the Great, of blessed memory!"

"Perfectly right, grand-children's grand-children's children then, of my great-great grandfather--a near relationship, doubtless!" said the king, bursting into a laugh. "I now wish you a good and quiet night, venerable and most learned sirs!" he added, apparently with a lightened heart, and with a cheerful and determined look: "I never rightly considered the matter before; now it is perfectly clear to me; I can sleep as quietly as in Abraham's bosom, when I think on the sin which I, with mature deliberation and full resolve, purpose to perpetrate as soon as possible. I could wish no one among you may ever have a heavier sin on his conscience." So saying, he bowed with a smile, and departed.

The king's eager talk with the ecclesiastics had attracted the attention of Count Henrik and his companions, who had approached, and heard the subject of the conversation. On the king's laughingly repeating the abbot's calculation, some of the young knights had laughed right heartily also. The abbot was crimson with rage. "It is the mark of eye-servants," he said aloud, "to vie with each other in laughing at what their gracious lords consider to be absurd, even though such merriment doth but disgrace them and their short-sighted masters. This scoffing and contempt shall be avenged, my brother," he whispered in the bishop's ear, with a significant look. The bishop started, and looked anxiously around; he winked at his incensed colleague, and observed aloud, that it was high time to retire to rest, and bid good-night to all discord and worldly thoughts. The master of the household now appeared with a number of torch-bearers, and the knights, as well as the ecclesiastics, repaired to the chambers assigned to them, in the knights' story in the western wing of the castle.

CHAP. VII.

Towards midnight, Count Henrik stood in his apartment, next the king's chamber, in the upper

story of the castle. He had extinguished his light, in order to retire to rest, but remained standing half-undressed, at the high arched-window, which looked towards the east, and from which he gazed out in the moonlight upon the Sound, watching the distant vessels gliding away over the glittering mirror of the waters. Since his visit to St. George's hospital, he had been silent and pensive. At the evening repast he had constantly drained his cup, for the purpose of raising his spirits. His pulse beat hard; recollections of the past, and hopes for the future, passed rapidly through his mind, in fair and vivid imagery. At the sight of the ocean and the distant prospect, he gave himself up to visionary longings after his distant fatherland, and a beloved form seemed to flit before him, as he pressed the blue shoulder-scarf to his lips, and hung it carefully over a high-backed chair. He took a gold chain, which the king had lately given him, from his breast, and laid his sword aside. "Deeds, achievements, honour, first!" he said to himself, "and then love will surely also twine me a wreath. Now that *his* life and happiness are at stake, he shall not have called me his friend in vain. Let him become a Waldemar the Victorious! and Henrik of Mecklenborg's name shall be famed like that of Albert of Orlamund[oe]. But another sort of fellow, and a right merry one, will *I* be." He now heard the weapons of the bodyguard clashing in the antechamber, where a young halberdier kept guard, with twelve spearmen. It was not, however, usual for the king to be surrounded by a guard, when he made a progress through the country, and passed the night at any of the royal mansions; but here, where the banished archbishop and the outlaws still had their numerous friends, and where the ecclesiastical rulers of the town were on doubtful terms with the king, Count Henrik had counselled this precaution as in some degree necessary, after so recent an insurrection, and where the king's mediation had not been able to satisfy all the discontented. While Count Henrik was undressing himself, the Drost's letter dropped from his vest, and he pondered thoughtfully over the solemn warnings it contained. "Hum! The junker," he said to himself "his own brother--and yet surely a traitor--never shall I forget his countenance that night at Kallundborg--the blood of the unhappy commandant was surely upon his head--*he* will be no joyous wedding guest--he would assuredly rather stand by the bridegroom's grave;--then might a crown yet fall upon his raven's head. Hum! They are murky, these Danish royal castles," he continued, looking around the dark gothic chamber, with its arched roof and walls, a fathom thick, "Is he safe here among his guests? The little spying bishop was Grand's good friend. I like him not; the haughty, gloomy abbot still less--they are dangerous people, those holy men of God, when they will have a finger in state affairs. Here he sleeps under the same roof with his enemies to-night; and yonder, in the hospital, lies a disguised regicide; perhaps he was only deadly sick for appearance sake, and my compassion was ill bestowed." As Count Henrik was revolving these thoughts, and delayed retiring to rest, there was a low knocking at the door. It opened, and an ecclesiastic entered; he was a quiet, serious old man. The moonlight fell on a pale and somewhat melancholy face, and the Count recognised the general-superior of the Copenhagen chapter. "A word in confidence, noble knight," he whispered mysteriously; "I come like Nicodemus; yet it is not spiritual things, but temporal, which have disturbed my night's rest. Your liege the king hath this day generously saved my life and the lives of my colleagues, although he does not regard us all as his friends, and with some reason: perhaps I may now be able to requite him."

"How?" exclaimed Count Henrik: "say on, venerable sir! What have you to confide to me?"

"When we fled from Axelhuus at break of day," continued the ecclesiastic, "I was well nigh sick of fear and alarm, and gave but little heed to what passed around me. A half-dead man had been found on the beach, and out of compassion taken into the boat. I saw not his face, and his voice was strange to me; of that I can take my oath. He was afterwards carried to St. George's Hospital here, close by the king's meadows. While we lay hidden under the thwarts in the boat, for fear of the insurgents, the sick man had come to himself: and exchanged many strange, enigmatical words with my colleague, the abbot of the Forest Monastery. What it was I heard but half, and cannot remember; but there must be some mystery about that person which makes me apprehensive; deadly sick he seemed to me in no wise to be, and appeared least of all prepared for his *own* departure from this world. My lord, the bishop seemed neither to know him nor his dark projects; but as I said, the abbot knew him, and had assuredly before administered to him the most holy Sacrament. More have I not to say; but I felt compelled to seek you out, however late it was: I could not sleep for disquiet thoughts. The guard without, here, I found in a deep slumber, I know not whether it is with your knowledge."

"How? Impossible!" exclaimed Count Henrik, in great consternation, hastily stepping into the antechamber, where he found all the twelve spearmen lying asleep on the floor. On the table stood an empty wine flask and some goblets. The young halberdier, who had the command of the guard, sat likewise asleep in a corner. Count Henrik shook them; but they were all in a deep sleep. "Treachery!" he exclaimed, in dismay, and hastily snatched a lance from one of the sleeping guards. "Haste to the knights' story, venerable sir! Wake all the king's men, and call them instantly hither! I cannot now myself quit the king's door. I will fasten the door after you: knock three soft strokes when you return! For the Lord's sake, haste!"

The ecclesiastic nodded in silence, and departed. Count Henrik locked the door of the upper story after him, and barricadoed it with tables and benches--he strove again to waken the sleeping guards, but it was in vain: they seemed not intoxicated by ordinary wine; their sleep rather resembled that caused by a soporific draught.

Count Henrik stood alone among the sleepers, and waited long in a state of painful anxiety; there was a deathlike stillness around him: he heard but the deep-drawn breathings of the

sleepers; but the king's men from the knights' story did not arrive, and the ecclesiastic returned not either. He stood for full an hour, listening with lance in hand. All was still. At last he thought he heard a noise, as if some one was scraping the wall, or creeping to the window over the projecting battlements near the staircase of the upper story. He cast a hasty glance at the window, and saw a horrible and deadly pale face, which he could not recognise, pressed flat to one of the window panes. He rushed forward with raised lance, but when he reached the window the face had disappeared. Count Henrik stepped back, thrilled by a feeling of horror which he had never before experienced. It seemed as if the prostrate warriors around him mocked his growing uneasiness by the profound indifference of their slumbers. He felt as if secret doors were about to open in all the old panels, and the outlawed regicides of Finnerup were ready to rush forth masked from every corner to renew the bloody scenes of St. Cecilia's eve, and avenge Marsk Stig and their slain kinsmen. He kept his lance in the one hand and held his knight's sword unsheathed in the other. Thus armed, he stationed himself without the king's door, and just before the open door between his own chamber and the landing of the upper story, every moment expecting an attack from the foe, who were probably many in number. It was useless to give an alarm; the wing containing the knights' story, where all the king's men slept, was at too great a distance for his voice to reach thither, and if the traitors were nigh, a shout of distress might embolden them. He thought of waking the king; but all as yet was quiet, and he was ashamed of showing fear in Eric's presence, where there was no enemy either to be seen or heard. To the king's sleeping chamber there was no other entrance than through the antechamber of the upper story and the count's apartment. The windows of the king's chamber were furnished with iron bars: but in the antechamber the high arched windows were without any defence, and they looked out on the other side to the open field. From this quarter he expected the attack would be made, and he feared, with reason, that some mishap must have chanced to the ecclesiastic on the way to the knights' story. The longer he pondered over his situation, the more alarming it appeared. An idea now suddenly struck him, which he instantly hastened to put into execution. After he had once more unsuccessfully attempted to arouse the slumbering men-at-arms he raised them up one by one from the floor and bound them tight by their shoulder-scarfs, in an almost upright position, to the strong iron hooks in the window pillars, which were used for hanging weapons upon. In this attitude they turned their backs towards the windows looking upon the fields, and would, therefore, appear to those without to be awake and at their posts. Hardly had he completed this laborious task ere he heard whispering voices, and a low clashing of arms under the windows. He sprang suddenly forward with raised lance and sword, to that window, which was most strongly lighted up by the moonshine, and shouted in a loud triumphant voice, "Now's the time, guard! Here we have them in the field."

"Fly! fly! We are betrayed!--they are all on their legs!" said a hoarse voice without; and Count Henrik saw in the clear moonshine a whole troop of masked persons, in the mantles of Dominican monks, take flight over the meadow. "St. George be praised!" he exclaimed, once more breathing freely. "I should hardly have been able to master so many."

The spearmen and the young halberdier still slept soundly in their hanging position. Count Henrik bound them yet faster, and left them in this attitude. When the king stepped forth from his chamber at sun-rise, he beheld, to his surprise, Count Henrik pacing up and down, half-dressed, on the landing, with weapons in both hands, while the guard hung snoring in their shoulder-scarfs among the untenanted suits of armour on the window pillars. At this sight he burst into a hearty laugh, and on hearing the strange adventure shook his head and smiled. "You have dreamed, my good Count Henrik; or, to speak plainly, you have had a goblet of wine too much in your head," he said, gaily. "I noticed that last night, indeed; but compared with these fellows you have assuredly been sober: you have made rare game of them in your merriment."

"As I live, my liege, it was no joke," began Count Henrik eagerly; but the lancers now began, one after another, to gape and to stretch themselves. When they found, however, how they were bound to the armour-hooks, and beheld the king with Count Henrik just opposite them, they demeaned themselves most strangely, betwixt fear and bashfulness. The king turned away to repress his laughter, as he was now compelled to be stern; but Count Henrik was indignant at his incredulity and gay humour.

"Throw the whole of that dormouse guard into the tower," commanded the king; "they can sleep themselves sober, and so be better able to keep their eyes open another time. You yourself shall get off by putting up with my laughter," he added, and went with the count into another apartment. "Henceforth I can believe neither what you nor my dear Drost Aagé see and hear in the moonshine. Out of pure love to me you spy traitors in every corner, and vie with each other in playing mad pranks. Hath any one ever known the like of the halberdier guard!" When the door of the guard-room was shut, the king gave vent to his laughter; his opinion of the real state of the case was strengthened by observing that Count Henrik was only half-dressed, and by his disturbed looks.

"You wound me by your doubts, my liege," resumed Count Henrik, with subdued vehemence, and casting his mantle around him; "but so long as you can make laughing-stocks of your true servants; thank God, it is a proof at least that you are of good cheer, my liege, and that should vex no loyal subject. You can witness, fellows," he continued eagerly, again opening the door of the guard-chamber upon the dismayed spearmen. "No! That is true; you saw nothing of it, ye drowsy pates!" he cried in wrath. "To the tower with you instantly! and you besides, vigilant Sir halberdier! You never more deserve to be trusted with the guarding of the king's person."

The young halberdier, who had awoke in fear and dismay, and had now extricated himself from his humiliating position, related in his excuse how he had lost his consciousness in an unaccountable manner, after having only drunk a single cup of the evening draught which had been brought to them. They had all fared in the same manner. The king at last became serious, and caused the matter to be strictly inquired into. It could not be discovered who had brought the soporific draught. None of the king's attendants knew any thing of it. No one had been roused in the knights' story. The old general-superior must have been carried off by the traitors: he was nowhere to be found. When the bishop and the abbot of the Forest Monastery heard what had been done they appeared to be in the greatest consternation. The bishop loudly expressed it as his opinion that it must have been the discontented guild-brethren from the town, and that the attack, in all probability, had concerned him. Since his last conversation with these ecclesiastical dignitaries the king had altered the plan of his journey, and determined instantly to repair to Helsingborg, there to expedite his marriage, and prepare every thing for the reception of his bride.

He excused himself with cold courtesy from all further companionship with bishop Johan and the abbot, who, silent and thoughtful, set out on the road to Roskild; but the aged provincial prior Olaus accompanied the king, by his desire, to supply the place of the absent chancellor, in conducting correspondence and matters of a similar nature.

When the king, a few hours after sunrise, was about to leave Sorretslöv, and traversed the ante-chamber where Count Henrik had kept his singular night-watch, he took the count's hand and pressed it with warmth, "If you have been able to put my enemies to flight, here, with snoring fellows on hooks, you must be able to crush them with waking men in coats of mail. From this hour you are my Marsk, Count Henrik of Mecklenborg, with the same authority in peace and war as Marsk Olufsen," So saying, the king handed him a roll of parchment, with sign and seal of this high dignity. "When I laugh another time at your heroic deeds, brave count, and call them dreams and visions, you may call me an unbelieving Thomas," he continued. "From my childhood upwards I have had as many deadly foes as my father had murderers," he added, solemnly, and with a tremulous voice; "yet truly, I thank the Lord and our holy Lady for my foes; they teach me almost daily to know my true friends."

Count Henrik's eyes beamed with joy; he heartily thanked the king, and followed him down the staircase to the court of the castle, where Eric's numerous train already awaited his coming, on horseback. Count Henrik sprang gaily into the saddle, with his new commission in his hand, and instantly issued, as Marsk, the necessary orders for pursuing and tracking the traitors.

As they rode out of the court-yard, the king missed his two favourite tournament steeds, and became highly displeased. "Truly this is worse than all the rest," he said, looking around him with so stern a glance and so clouded a countenance that the young knights looked at each other in surprise; and a word of soothing or admonition seemed to hover on the lips of the aged provincial prior.

"The handsome, spirited prancers, they should have danced before Princess Ingeborg's car on our bridal day," continued the king, turning to Master Olaus. "This is no good omen for me. They might sooner have burned the castle over my head than robbed me of those noble animals."

It was now discovered that the horses were already missing in the morning of the day preceding, together with both the grooms who had the charge of them, and that they had been sought for everywhere in vain.

"They shall and must be found; I will answer for that," said Count Henrik, and instantly despatched a couple of his own grooms to look for them. The party rode on; but the king's good humour was disturbed for some time. "I shall never be able to find such another pair," he said at last, in a milder tone, looking out across the Sound on the picturesque road to Elsinore, while the larks carolled gaily above his head, and his long fair locks floated on the spring breeze. "I always fancied them dancing before her car every time I thought on her bridal day; eager wishes may make us superstitious and childish, I believe. Had we but the bride in the car we should assuredly get it drawn to church."

"You would have twice as many hands to draw it as there are hearts in Denmark's kingdom," said Count Henrik, placing a green sprig of beech in his hat. "We bring summer with us to Helsingborg, my sovereign--Look! Denmark's forests already arch themselves into a vast Gothic church and bridal hall."

"*That* church and bridal hall they shall at any rate leave wide open to me," exclaimed the king, with some bitterness, as he raised his glance above the woods to the clear heavens. "Yon eternal church of God, besides," he continued, "however matters may stand with her image here in the dust. Is it not so, Master Olaus?"

"The true temple of God's spirit is a pious and loving heart, my liege," answered the mild, calm, provincial prior. "Where there is love and living faith, with the Lord's help, there will be no lack of blessing."

The king nodded kindly to them both, and they now rode briskly forward on the road to Elsinore.

CHAP. VIII.

While in Sweden as in Denmark, in the loveliest season of the year, the old favourite national songs, with the burden,—"The woods are decked in leafy green," and "The birds are warbling now their song," were sung as well in castles as behind the plough, and the court rejoiced with the minnesingers over "the very green and lovely May," and "the mighty power of love," couriers were constantly passing between the Swedish and Danish courts at Stockholm and Helsingborg; and a feeling of joyous expectation pervaded all Denmark. Drost Aagé in conjunction with the learned and eloquent Master Petrus de Dacia, had succeeded in overcoming the immediate scruples of the Swedish state council, respecting the marriage of the Danish King with Princess Ingeborg. Without in the least betraying with what ardent impetuosity their chivalrous young king seemed willing to stake life and crown to win his bride, and without the most distant allusion to the possibility of a breach of peace being caused by the failure of a negociation, which had for its object the most peaceable relations, and the most loving ties, these faithful servants of the king, had, by adducing wise and politic reasons, first brought the wise Regent Thorkild Knudsen over to their side, and, despite all the hindrances which the malicious Drost Bruncké placed in their way, at last carried their point so far as to divest the idea of the excommunication at Sjöborg, and the enforcement of the interdict at Copenhagen, of its paralysing and terrifying influence, at the Swedish court. From the showing of the learned Master Petrus, and the king's own letters, and clear explanation of the matter, the want of dispensation from the papal court, came at last to be regarded as the omission of an insignificant formality, afterwards to be remedied through negotiation. The flight and formal banishment of Archbishop Grand from Denmark, as well as the insurrection caused by the execution of the interdict in Copenhagen, had rejoiced every brave and free-minded man, as well in Sweden, as in Denmark, and considerably diminished the dread entertained by the Swedish court and council of the consequences of a possible breach with the papal see. A new and overawing proof had been displayed of the courage of the young Danish king, and of the unanimity with which his loyal people joined him in opposing the usurpation of the hierarchy. Daring politicians were even found who hoped the time might not be far distant when the free national spirit of the north would render people, and princes, independent of the interference of the papal see in state matters, and the rights of citizenship. Many bold and manly speeches were uttered in the Swedish state-council on this occasion, which did honour to Thorkild Knudsen and his countrymen, but which were reprobated, by the opposite party, as open heresy and ungodliness, which would be visited upon Sweden as well as Denmark with heavy chastisement.

Drost Bruncké, and his adherents, despised no means which might tend to stop or protract the negotiations; he had many able prelates on his side, but the majority of voices were against him, and he sought in vain, by reviving the remembrance of the wrongs and animosities of the two nations, to rekindle the ancient national hate, which now seemed forgot, and which it was hoped a mutual alliance between the royal houses, would entirely eradicate.

The eager opposition party in the Swedish council, which was headed by Drost Bruncké, and in which many were disposed to think that Prince Christopher took a secret but important part, was calculated rather to forward than hinder the final decision of the affair. Sweden's greatest statesman, Marsk Thorkild Knudsen, was on this occasion called on to display his mental superiority. He disdained having recourse to his authority as regent, and to his influence as the guardian of King Birger, and the darling of the Swedish nation. The opinion which he declared from full conviction, he wished to see prevail by its own weight, and by its accordance with the mutual feeling of both nations. Thorkild Knudsen now stood forth in council with an address which appealed as well to the hearts as to the sober judgment of his countrymen.

After a clear and calm representation of the political relations of Sweden and Denmark, and the original affinity of the Scandinavian people, besides what they could and might effect by alliance and friendship for their mutual security, and the development of their powers. Thorkild also portrayed, with enthusiastic and glowing eloquence, the greatness and devotion of love's triumph over petty scruples and national prejudices. He gave an equally true and favourable portraiture of the constant and loveable character of the young Danish king, as well as of the charms of the noble Princess Ingeborg, and the mutual attachment that had subsisted between the betrothed pair from their childhood. He finally contrived, with as much sagacity as eloquence, to put down the objections of the opposite party, and bring the negotiation of the Danish ambassadors to the happiest issue; the greater number of his opponents being at last animated by a warm feeling of enthusiasm for the royal pair, which was mingled by the soul-enlarging feeling of the union of two nations in that of their fairest and noblest representatives.

The espousals were, therefore, according to the ardent wish of King Eric and with the consent of the princess, fixed for the first of June, which was already near at hand; and a courier from Drost Aagé was instantly despatched with the glad tidings to Eric. The whole of the Swedish

royal family were to accompany the princess to Helsingborg, where splendid preparations were making for the marriage, and the chivalrous King Eric now only awaited the dawning of that happy day to set out at the head of the chivalry of Denmark, with all the courtly state suited to the occasion, to meet his beautiful bride and her royal relatives.

Towards the close of May, Helsingborg castle, together with the town and its vicinity became daily the resort of all who were most distinguished in Denmark and Sweden. The fair gothic castle, with its circular walls, its bastions, and high towers, rose proudly over the town on the summit of the steep rock or hill above. The castle was surrounded by deep moats, and was considered to be an impregnable fortress; but at this time the drawbridge was let down, and the great iron-cased castle-gate, on the southern side, stood open to admit the coming guests. The old town, which dated its origin from the days of King Frode^[3], and was so pleasantly and advantageously situated on the narrowest part of the Sound, owed its present prosperity to its considerable trade, and great horse and cattle fairs. It was tolerably extensive, but was, however, by no means, capable of accommodating so great a concourse of strangers. The great market-place, close to the council-house, and the handsome church of St. Mary's (the central point of the town where many streets met), were now daily as much thronged with people as on the great fair-days. Besides the king's nearest relatives, and the wedding guests invited by the Marsk, from the lordly manors and knightly castles of both kingdoms; a great crowd of curious and sympathising persons of all ranks flocked to Helsingborg, even from the most distant provinces, to witness the intended festival, and partake of the public amusements, which, on this occasion, were to render this celebration of royal nuptials a national festival for both Denmark and Sweden.

The king had already held his court, for some weeks, at Helsingborg. Marsk Oluffsen had returned from Jutland, where he had been fortunate enough to put an end to all disturbances by capturing the daring partizans, Niels Brock and Johan Papæ, with some other friends of the archbishop's and the outlaws. The insurgents were led to the prison-tower at Flynderborg, but the stern Marsk Oluffsen was personally so incensed at these state prisoners, who had long plagued and defied him, that he thought no punishment was adequate to their deserts. At the present moment nothing was thought of at court but joy and festivity. The king's stepfather, Count Gerhard, had arrived from Nykiöping with his consort, the dowager queen Agnes. Next to the king himself no one seemed more to rejoice at his marriage than his politic and dignified mother. In her first unhappy marriage, Agnes, as Denmark's queen, had held that wedded happiness, among royal personages, was only the dream of visionaries. After the death of her unhappy consort she had sacrificed the title of queen, and changed this dream into truth and reality, in her own lot, under a humbler name. Amid her own happiness she had often thought, with uneasiness and regret, on having made a treaty, involving the future destiny of her children by their betrothal in early childhood, and now saw, with thankfulness, that a union, projected from motives of state policy, had grown into the natural tie of kindred hearts.

It appeared that the brave Duke of Langeland had forgotten all former disputes with the king, at the treaty of Wordingborg, but his brother, Duke Valdemar of Slesvig, who had also been invited out of courtesy, had excused himself on plea of illness.

Three days before that fixed for the bridal, Junker Christopher arrived with a numerous train from Kallundborg. The king received him with his wonted courtesy on the quay of Helsingborg, whither he had gone to meet him with his new Marsk, Count Henrik, and his halberdiers; but there was a painful expression of suppressed anger in the king's generally joyous and kindly countenance as he gave his hand to his sullen brother in token of welcome. It was pretty openly said that the junker lately, by means of secret cabals, had placed obstacles in the way of the marriage, and it was believed the king had painful conjectures on the subject, although no proofs of this presumable treachery were forthcoming. The junker himself had appeared latterly to suffer from a corroding melancholy, which was often succeeded by bursts of wild merriment,—since the storming of Kallundborg castle especially, and the execution of his unhappy commandant, the restless and gloomy disposition of the prince had assumed this fierce character; even those few of his courtiers who were really devoted to him, and regarded his gloomy reserved deportment as an effect of the wrestlings of a great spirit with its destiny often complained of his caprices; and though they still adhered to him, it was, however, with a species of fear, mixed with an undefined hope of one day arriving with him at honours and fortune.

The mutual greeting of the brothers on Helsingborg quay was strikingly cold, although the junker seemed desirous by his congratulations and expressions of courtesy to do away with all appearance of misunderstanding. To this Count Henrik in particular paid special attention. In the king's train were seen the German professors of minstrelsy, who had abandoned their researches at Wordingborg castle to enliven the festival by their lays. The papers and documents which Junker Christopher had removed from the sacristy chest at Lund, on the archbishop's imprisonment, and brought, as it was said, to the state archives at Wordingborg castle, had been sought for in vain by the learned friends of the king. These documents might even yet become of great importance to the king in the suit against the banished archbishop; but they had disappeared at the time when matters had come to an open breach with the junker, and the king suspected his brother of having destroyed them, or even of having returned them to the archbishop.

The king's train had been also joined by the young Iceland bard, the priest of St. Olaf, Master

Laurentius of Nidaros, who had now exchanged his layman's red mantle for the more reputable black dress of a canon; and beside the king walked the little deformed Master Thrand Fistlier, with a consequential deportment, and displaying on his finger a large diamond ring, which the king had presented to him in acknowledgement of his superior learning. On the king's arrival at Helsingborg the scientific mountebank had been set at liberty. He instantly contrived to arrest the attention of the king (eager as he was in the pursuit of knowledge), after he had with dexterity and keen ability repelled every charge against himself, as well of the Leccar heresy as of witchcraft. This last accusation, which had drawn upon him the persecution and peril he underwent at Skänör, he alluded to with exultation, as a striking testimony to his own astonishing arts, and a ludicrous proof of the dulness of the age and the absurdities of popular ignorance. The king now presented him to his brother as a rare scholar and an extraordinary artist. The significant look with which Junker Christopher greeted this far-travelled adventurer seemed to betray an earlier acquaintanceship, which, however, was acknowledged by neither. Count Henrik placed but little reliance on Prince Christopher's congratulations and measured courtesy. He narrowly watched the junker, as well as the foreign mountebank, about whom Aagé had expressed himself so dubiously. He thought he more and more perceived a secret understanding between the prince and the mysterious scholar, and resolved to be at his post. He ventured not, however, to grieve the king by disclosing it, or increasing his suspicion of his brother, which evidently pained him, and which he seemed desirous to exert himself to the utmost to shake off. Neither on this nor the two following days was there any nearer approach to confidence between the brothers. Courteous phrases and stiff court etiquette were resorted to, by way of compensation for the want of cordiality. It was only when Junker Christopher was at the chase, or seated at the draught-board or the drinking-table, that the king was seen to converse joyously with his mother and Count Gerhard, or jest merrily with Count Henrik and his knights: the German professors of minstrelsy and the learned Icelanders exerted all their powers to while away the evenings preceding his marriage-day, when his ardent and impatient spirit was not engrossed by important affairs of state. But when he seemed at times in the happiest mood he often grew suddenly silent and thoughtful at the mere sound of his brother's voice, or on observing his wild uncertain glance from under his dark and knitted brow.

The evening before the impatiently expected first of June the king sat in the upper hall of Helsingborg castle, at the chess-table, where he was usually the victor. On this occasion, however, he had found an almost invincible opponent in the learned Iceland philosopher, who appeared able beforehand to calculate the plans of his adversary, and only to need a single move in order to frustrate them. Notwithstanding Master Thrand's decided superiority, the king had, however, won every game; but he seemed to regard this with indifference; he was absent, and often forgot to make his moves. At the opposite end of the hall he heard his brother talking of hunting and horses, with Count Gerhard; his mother was listening to the poems of the German minstrels and Master Laurentius; while the young knights discoursed with animation of the next day's festivities and tournament.

"Tell me, Master Thrand," said the king to his learned antagonist, with a thoughtful glance out of the window at the star-lit heavens, "what is your opinion of omens, and of the wondrous art of astrology, to which so many learned men are devoted in our time. Believe you the life and actions of men and the changeable fortunes of this world can be so considerable and important in the eyes of the Almighty that higher powers should care for them, or intermeddle with them?--and think ye the position and movements of the heavenly bodies stand in any real relation to our life and destiny?"

"That is almost more than science can be said as yet to have fathomed with certainty, most gracious king!" answered the artist, with a subtle, satirical smile on his lips, while his head almost disappeared between his shoulders; "but if any science is to bring clearness and demonstration into the speculations of the learned and the mysteries of astrology, it must be that exalted science of sciences whose poor worshipper I am. Assuredly, your grace, nothing happens in the world but what is natural, that is to say, a necessary consequence of foregoing causes; but it is precisely the great problem of the mysterious and hidden causes of these things and events which it is the province of human wisdom to solve. *Beatas qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*' hath been said already by the wise heathen. Theologians and poets indeed picture to themselves a nearer and safer road by which to reach the same goal as ourselves, or even a far higher one," he continued, with a scornful self-satisfied smile; "but they deceive themselves in their simplicity and enthusiasm by looking for a kind of supernatural influence of the Divine wisdom which in fact is the life and soul of nature, yet which but partially discloses itself to us in its workings, according as these by degrees unfold themselves to us in their essences through the sacred optic tubes of science and research."

"Now you mix up too many things together for me, Master Thrand!" said the king, shaking his head. "You seem to me almost to confound the great living God and Lord with his creation, or what you call nature. With all my respect for human wisdom--for all wise and useful learning which man may attain by the examination of earthly things, I think, nevertheless, that the spirit of truth and beauty, commonly called 'genius' by our scholars and the poets of olden times, as also 'the prophetic vision,' soar far above the ken of human intellect; and for what is of paramount importance for us to see, we have most assuredly the holiest and noblest optic tube in God's own revealed word." The king paused a moment and gazed on the strange deportment of the little philosopher, with a sharp and scrutinising look, "You smile as if you pitied me for this my sincere opinion. I am a layman, but all the pious and learned men I have known agreed with

me; nor can I perceive that our theologians err in considering the spirit of God as a surer guide to true knowledge of divine things than all human subtlety and wisdom."

"Far be it from me to contradict my most gracious Lord, or the pious scholars of our time on this point," resumed Master Thrand, looking around him with a repressed smile, and a cunning, cautious glance, "but of this I would rather talk with your grace in your private chamber! I doubt not that with your clear and unprejudiced views, (soaring as your mind does above the ignorance of our age) you will understand me rightly. I dare almost unconditionally subscribe to all that the holy church, it is said, considers needful for him who would be called a true believer, provided I may be allowed to interpret the words of ancient writings and symbols according to their true and reasonable signification;--meanwhile there is, however, much in our science which must as yet be a mystery to the great majority, and even to the scholars of our time, who are too but much inclined to discern heresy and ungodliness in every free thought. Noble King!" he added, in a low, mysterious tone, "I read no longer with the learned in the small written volumes (out of which, as you yourself have experienced, curses are as often quoted as blessings) but I read much more in the great book that was not writ by the hand of man, and whose words sound forth eternal wisdom in the din of the storm and the roaring of the ocean, in the course of the stars above the thunder clouds, and in voices of flame from the depths of the abyss. Mark well, my deep-thinking king!--you the young Solomon of our north!--the holy Spirit of God, of which so many and so foolish words are spoken, is precisely that mainspring of forces we seek for in the great workshop of nature's sanctuary, in the depths of our own souls, and in the philosopher's stone, which we call the quintessence of creation. To him who but catches a glimpse of it, (of which, however, we can but boast in certain great moments) to him, the deepest and highest things are revealed; the future as the past is clear before him; he is the master and lord of nature, and of eternal power--for him life hath only limits in his will."

The king looked in grave silence on the singular little man's visage, every muscle of which quivered with emotion, while sparks seemed to flash as it were from his small deep-set eyes. "Follow me afterwards to my private chamber," said the king rising. Meanwhile Count Henrik had approached and heard part of this conversation; he thought he observed a kind of triumphant smile in Master Thrand's self-satisfied countenance; but he sought in vain for an opportunity of cautioning the king, who quitted Thrand in a very thoughtful mood, and went to join his mother and the three stranger bards.

Master Laurentius had related to the Countess Agnes much of the grandeur of Norway and Iceland, and of the remarkable bards and Saga writers of his fatherland; he made special mention of the great Snorro^[4] and his learned nephews, who had given such a preponderance to Saga literature, as almost to throw poetry entirely into the shade. In order, however, to prove to Countess Agnes and the German minstrels that poetic inspiration in his fatherland had not altogether died away, as they believed, with heathenism and the gifted Skalds of the Edda, he had recited several poems and heroic lays, to which they could not refuse their approbation.

When the king joined them, Laurentius was reciting some strophes of Einar Skulesen's famous epic poem, "Geisli," or "The Ray," in honor of St. Olaf. The king stopped and listened. In this poem St. Olaf was called, "A ray of light from God's kingdom, a beam or glimmer of the glorious Son of Grace;" and Christ was described as the light of the world, and the Lord of Heaven, who, as "a ray from a bright star (the Virgin Mary) manifested himself on earth for our ineffable good." The king nodded with satisfaction; he seemed to find a consoling counterpoise in the pious lay to what had disturbed and alarmed him in the discourse of the wise Master Thrand. "Go on!" he said encouragingly, to Master Laurentius. The young priest of St. Olaf, who had been inspired with lively enthusiasm by the praises in honor of his saint, repeated in his musical and declamatory tones some more strophes of the beginning of the poem, touching the glory of the Saviour and of his kingdom. From this he passed on to the praise of St. Olaf, "as the saint confirmed by miracles;" but when he came to that passage in the poem where the bard exclaims, that "Deceit and treachery caused King Olaf's fall at Stiklestad^[5]..." the king suddenly interrupted the enthusiastic Master Laurentius. "Thanks!" he said, "the poem is beautiful and edifying; but deceit and treachery I will hear nought of the day before my bridal. Norway's sovereign and Duke Haco have defended a bad cause against me," he continued, "but I highly esteem the brave Northmen, notwithstanding; they deserved a king and guardian saint like St. Olaf; he hath well merited to be called a ray from heaven in the north; the circumstances of his downfall I will not now think on. Sing rather of constancy and of beauty, and of that which is the ornament and honour of our age."

"Permit me a poor attempt to dilate upon that theme, my most gracious lord and patron!" began Master Rumelant, hastily, and instantly commenced a German lay in honour of the beauty and constancy of the northern fair, in which he forgot not the praises of the still youthful and beautiful Countess Agnes, and still less of the king's absent bride; but the lay also included a secret defence of Marsk Stig's daughters, whose beauty and unhappy fate had made a deep impression on both the minstrels. Master Poppé chimed in also, and did not lose this opportunity of putting in his good word for the captive maidens. They could especially not sufficiently praise the piety and amiability of the meek Margaretha in her captivity.

The king's countenance grew dark. He had referred the cause of the captives to the law and justice of the land; he would hear nothing of it himself: he knew they had accused themselves before their judges of being privy to the treasonable sojourn of Kaggé at Wordingborg. He was

silent; but it was evident that the thought of Marsk Stig and of his father's death was again fearfully present to Eric's mind, and disposed him but little to favour the race of the regicide or any friend of the outlaws;--the minstrels looked doubtfully at each other, and no one dared to say a word more on this subject.

CHAP. IX.

It was late, and every one retired to rest. The king repaired to his private chamber. Count Henrik saw with uneasiness that Master Thrand followed him. The king's chamber was immediately adjoining the library, to which Count Henrik had access. He hesitated a moment; it seemed to him degrading, without the king's knowledge and consent, to become a concealed witness to his conversation with the mysterious scholar; but his anxiety and care for the king's safety at last overcame every scruple. He took a light with him and went to the library. The light went out in the passage, which he deemed fortunate, as his presence might otherwise be easily betrayed if there was the least chink in the door between the library and the private chamber. He stepped softly into the vaulted and flagged apartment, where a pair of bookshelves with wire grating, together with some chairs and a reading table, were the only furniture. The moon shone brightly through the small bow window; he seated himself at the table close by the door of the private chamber, fixed his eyes on an open manuscript, and listened.

"Here we are now alone, and wholly undisturbed," he heard the king say, and the chivalrous Count Henrik felt he blushed for himself; he made a movement to depart, but put a constraint on his feelings and kept his seat on hearing Master Thrand's whispering voice, but in so low and mysterious a tone that he could not understand a word.

"I know it all," continued the king, "and it is useless for you to deny it, learned Master Thrand! You are what is called a heretic and Leccar brother; as such you are doomed to fire and faggot, by the pope, with your whole sect, and proscribed by all Christian kings; according to my decree, and at the requirement of the papal court you are banished from my state and country also. Yet if you can prove to me you have found the philosopher's stone, as you seem yourself to imagine, and that there exists a higher truth and wisdom than the revealed Word, I will acquit you, and in defiance of pope and clergy will recal the decree of banishment against your sect."

"Most mighty sovereign!" now said the mountebank, distinctly, though in a hesitating tone;--"what you know of me I have myself confided to you; had I not known your generosity and reverence for the laws of hospitality, and had I not known you were elevated far above this ignorant and narrow-minded age, such a confidence in a ruler would have stamped me as the most contemptible of fools. You have spoken truth, great sovereign!" he continued, as it seemed with assumed firmness. "*I am* a heretic and Leccar brother; but, to be such I esteem a higher honour (even should I at last die at the stake for it) than if all blinded, gulled Christendom were to worship me as the greatest and most admirable of saints."

"Truly!" answered the king, sternly, "that is a bold speech, Master Thrand; if it contain not loftier wisdom than hath yet been known to the best and wisest scholars during the space of thirteen centuries, I must regard it as the most mad and presumptuous declaration that hath ever passed the lips of man. I stand myself, as you know, in dangerous and daring strife with that power which in the church's name would rule princes as well as people, and enslave our souls. I defy every decree of man which would drive us to despair and ungodliness, and give over our souls to the destroyer; but notwithstanding, I deem the church and the divine Word on which it is founded not the less sure and stedfast, and I would fain see that philosopher--or fool, who would cause me to swerve a hair's breath from this belief."

"As soon as your grace understands me fully," answered Master Thrand, with calmness, "you will see that is nowise my aim: the real church of truth is the invisible one which I also worship in spirit, and the true eternal Word of God is that which hath never been wholly revealed, but to which I hearken with reverence, and appropriate through the medium of science, by searching into yon great book of revelation, which can only be unlocked by the wakened power of divinity within us. Hear ye not yourself, noble king! the mighty voice of divinity in the thunders of heaven? See ye not the finger of the Almighty in the destructive lightning? And must you not confess that he who is ruler over those mighty forces of nature, is the only true powerful God whom we must worship and adore?"

"Well! that is a matter of course, but what of that?" asked the king, in an impatient tone.

"If I now could show you," continued Master Thrand, with rising zeal, "that the same power lies in *my* hand and in *my* will--that *I* by a nod can force the voice of Omnipotence to speak and announce in shouts of thunder, that *I* am the Lord and master of those godlike powers--will you then deny my right to publish the divine word, which speaks through my will as it does through

nature? Will you then any longer doubt my having found and possessed myself of the essence of things,--the source of power,--which shall hereafter change the form of the world and throw down the idol temples of prejudice, and the fortified castles of tyrants? Will you then believe I have found the key to the great mystery of life; and that the voice of deity, which speaks through *my* will and *my* works, is able to say--*Live!* when time, sickness, and age,--when sword and poison,--when war, pestilence, and hunger,--when stake and executioners,--when popes and tyrants, and all the foes of life, shout--*Die!*"

There was a moment's silence in the private chamber, and Count Henrik drew breath with difficulty. "Strange!" said the king's voice again; "but no--it is impossible. I will defer forming an opinion of your wisdom, Master Thrand, until I have seen the marvellous things you speak of. As far as I understand you, you seem to consider yourself not only as the lord and master of nature, but of Deity itself: such discourse sounds to me like the greatest and most presumptuous madness."

"Madness and wisdom, lying and truth, evil and good, darkness and light, border closely on each other, noble king," again whispered the well-oiled tongue of Thrand. "This must especially be the case in all transitions from night to day, from error to truth, from one age to another. That which I have here dared to whisper to you in this private chamber, in reliance on the strength of your royal mind, will one day be openly announced from the lowest seat of learning, and seem but as the pastime of children to the mature in spirit. How each one of us will picture to himself the divinity is in fact his own affair; that will depend on his own individual mental vision; and will be a necessity like all other things. What is divine is, and must ever partly remain, a mystery to the majority; but we can all attain clear views of time and its mutable concerns: this lies within the sphere of our common vision, and so far I flatter myself I shall be able to open your penetrating eyes, great king, that no part of time shall be wholly hidden from you, and that you may be able to look as clearly into the future as back upon the past perishable world of things and actions."

"Well then," said the king, impatiently, "teach me to see more clearly with the mind's eye, if you are able. I have all reverence for your bodily glass eyes, and you have certainly opened to me a wider view of the outer world. One mirror of the past I know already in the study of our chronicles; if there is also a natural mirror of the future, show it me."

"There are *two*, gracious king!" answered Master Thrand, with emphasis; "we call them providence and divination: we can possess ourselves of both by keen wisdom, and awakened inner sense. With the first you can see much; with the second more; with both almost every thing. Of the highly-important step you are about to take to-morrow your grace can only judge by means of such a twofold insight."

"What!" exclaimed the king, with vehemence; "think ye I am now about to use my understanding for the first time, and consider the step which, with well-advised purpose and with the help of God, I have already taken, and which is my highest happiness? Be the consequences what they may, and whatever the Almighty Ruler of the world hath ordained for me and my kingdom, on this point the clearest insight into futurity cannot change my will or extinguish the fairest hope of my life."

"But look, great sovereign!" continued Master Thrand, with eagerness; "cast an unprejudiced and dispassionate glance into those person's souls which you would link with yours. Three royal brothers--your future brothers-in-law--stand yonder beside a throne; the weakest, the least gifted, hath been chosen to fill it; but the superior mind and power and courage of his brothers increase mightily. The nobler spirit can never bow before its inferior; the fermenting forces must develop themselves; opposing ones must separate; those of close affinity must combine; what hath been arbitrarily joined must be forcibly severed; and he who plunges into the wild tumultuous stream must be swept along with it and perish."

"Silence! With thy presumptuous talk," interrupted the king, in a loud voice, and stamping hard on the ground; "no contemptible calculation and dread of the future shall stop my progress, or disquiet my soul. Whatever may be working in the minds of those princes, crowns are not left to be the sport of wild passions; justice and the highest power are not subject to the will and authority of man, but to that of the Almighty. A royal sceptre may repose secure in the hand of a child when God is with him, even though that child stands surrounded by traitors and murderers. This I have myself experienced."

"But, your royal grace, when the minor, as yonder, never attains to majority in mind," objected Thrand, "when the power proceeding from the will of a free and powerful nation is, through foolish superstition and misconception, linked to the phantom which theologians call God's grace--an idea which only hath meaning and significance when we see that grace revealed in the great and noble, though mutable, will of the people, to which all connection with the weaker unapt spirit is destruction----"

"By all the holy men, the highest might and authority comes from above!" interrupted the king, with vehemence, "In man's will only, not in the Lord's, is there vacillation and change; he who justly wears a crown hath a power in the will of God, which no mortal shall defy unpunished. But enough of this. I called you not hither to consult with you on state affairs. Knew I not you were a philosopher who takes but little interest in worldly government, I should be tempted to believe

you were a wily emissary from my foes, and those who secretly strive to undermine my happiness."

"Heaven forefend! your grace," exclaimed Master Thrand, in dismay.

"I called you hither to warn you--not to receive warnings," continued the king, with stern vehemence. "I have perceived that your opinions on spiritual things are dangerous and misleading. Keep them to yourself, or I shall be necessitated to banish you from the country. I have all due respect for your knowledge in worldly matters," he added; "it may prove useful to me. My master of the mint, however, you cannot be at present, and my spiritual adviser still less. If the wise Roger Bacon was your teacher and master I would willingly know what he hath taught you that is good and reasonable; but I will not hear a word more of the philosopher's stone. I ask not to look into futurity; if you understand that art, keep it to yourself. I regard it, if not as witchcraft, as equally sinful and unwise. Such faculty hath as yet never made any human being happy.

"If you can (which, however, I much doubt) protract human life beyond its natural limits, keep such knowledge to yourself also: it seems to me not less presumptuous and irrational. I desire not to live an hour longer in this world than the Almighty hath ordained; but if you can, by natural means and without sin unveil to me the secrets of nature--if you can imitate the thunders of heaven as you assume--then show me and our philosophers the art, and explain it to us, at whatever price you deem fitting; but how far soever your mastery over the powers of nature may extend, imagine not you have usurped the power from Him, in comparison of whom the wisest and mightiest man on earth is but a miserable impotent worm. Go hence and pray our Lord and the holy Virgin to pardon you the presumptuous words you have here uttered. Would that you might one day gain a better insight into what is of higher importance to soul and salvation than all your temporal learning!"

Count Henrik could not hear what answer was made by Master Thrand to this severe reproof; the words "to-morrow, noble king!" were all he thought he understood, besides some commonplace and obsequious expressions of respect, and it seemed to him that the artist's voice sounded hollow and hardly audible. The door of the private door opened and shut again; Count Henrik perceived that the king was alone, and heard him open the door to his sleeping chamber. The Count stepped softly out of the library; he heard footsteps before him in the dark passage. It was Master Thrand coming from the king's private chamber. Count Henrik stood still on remarking that the little juggler often paused in the passage, as if in secret deliberation; he muttered to himself, and was busied with something in the dark; his whimsical gait and figure was now suddenly lit up by a bright light, which instantly vanished again; Master Thrand at last stopped at a private door which led to Junker Christopher's apartments, but to which none had access beside. The door opened and closed again, and Thrand disappeared.

"What was that?" said Count Henrik to himself, with a start, "a spirit of darkness lurks between the royal brothers!" He left not the passage ere he had seen the pyrotechnic artist steal back from the junker's apartments, and repair to the knights' story in the opposite wing of the castle, where all the stranger guests were assigned their quarters for the night. Count Henrik did not betake himself to rest, but watched this night as captain of the halberdiers, without the door of the king's sleeping apartment.

CHAP. X.

By the first peep of dawn, all was joyous commotion at Helsingborg Castle. Every Danish courtier and knight knew the punctuality and impetuosity of the young king, when it was necessary to be stirring at an early hour, even only on occasion of a hunting expedition. Every knight and squire who had not foot in stirrup, when the king was in the saddle, might expect a stern glance or a serious rebuke. On this solemn and important day, to which the attention of both kingdoms was turned, and which had been so ardently desired by Eric, it seemed as if the sun alone dared to put his patience to the proof. Ere day-break, the king's handsome horses, with their silken coverings and caparisons, stood already saddled in the court-yard of the castle; the richly-attired knights, clad in silk or plush, thronged gaily together, and hardly had the sunbeams of the first day of June shone upon the glittering bridal train, before Eric, leading his royal mother by the hand, stepped forth on the staircase of the upper story, and bowed courteously on all sides. He followed Countess Agnes to the ladies' car, with his head uncovered, and then vaulted into the saddle. His handsome and youthful countenance beamed with hope and heartfelt joy, and he seemed to have slept off every gloomy and disquieting thought. Arrayed in his most splendid knight's attire, with a rose-coloured shoulder-scarf over his shoulder, and with white ostrich feathers in his hat, he rode a spirited milk-white palfrey. His blithe stepfather, Count Gerhard, rode at his right hand, and Junker Christopher at his left. Even the junker seemed in a

gay mood, but became grave, and coloured when the king waved his hand and greeted him with a cordiality of look and gesture which appeared to surprise and humble him. The gilded car, drawn by six iron-grey Andalusian horses, in which sat the king's dignified mother, with her ladies, rolled over the castle bridge at the head of the train, but the king soon rode impatiently past it, with a courteous apology, which was gladly received. Count Henrik accompanied him with the half of the knightly train, while the ladies' car and the rest of the numerous cavalcade found it difficult to keep up with the hastening bridegroom. All the pathways and banks on the road to Stockholm were crowded with a countless concourse of people, who shouted with joy at the splendid procession, and greeted the king with sympathising homage.

While the king thus rode to meet his bride, the most magnificent preparations were made at Helsingborg for the reception of the royal bridal pair. St. Mary's church was decorated with garlands and carpeted with flowers; the provincial prior of the Dominicans already officiated at early mass, as well as the venerable bishop of Aarhus and Ribé, who with calm courage had supported the king in his bold strife with the archbishop and the papal court. They had been standing at the high altar since daybreak, in readiness to preside over the sacred ceremonial of the day, and were accompanied by a great number of monks, canons, and priests from all the parishes of the kingdom, who intended by their united prayers and benedictions to consecrate this day as an auspicious festival for two nations and two royal houses.

On the greensward below the castle hill, lists and galleries were erected for the tournament, and tents were pitched with refreshments for the spectators. The whole household of the castle was in full activity; tables were spread in the lofty halls, and barrels with mead, ale, and wine were hoisted from the cellars. The cooks were busily employed in the kitchen. A number of musicians tuned and tried their instruments; pipers, lute-players, fiddlers and trumpeters, were stationed upon the balcony of the upper story, from whence they were to greet the bridal guests, and enliven the thronging crowds. In the spacious gardens on the rocky steep overlooking the Sound, the trees of the long avenues had been hung at an early hour with coloured lamps, for the evening festivity. In a separate part of the gardens preparations were making for exhibiting the hitherto unknown art of fire-works, with which the mysterious Thrand Fistlier purposed to surprise the king and court, and with which he himself and his amanuensis, the youthful Master Laurentius, were zealously busied; while Master Rumelant and Master Poppé wandered among the tall yew-hedges, and practised their festal lays. The concourse of curious guests and spectators was constantly increasing. All the ships in the harbour were hung with wreaths and flags, and the Sound was almost hidden by the fleet of ships arriving from Zealand and the isles. On the quay, in the town, and on the road to Stockholm, crowds of knights, priests, and town's-people, mingled with fishermen and Scanian peasants with their families--there were national costumes to be seen from the farthest Danish isles, and from many Swedish provinces. The streets were strewn with flowers. All the windows were hung with garlands and silken carpets, and occupied by gaily-dressed ladies. There was a continued murmur from the many thousand voices, and a general gaze of expectation towards that quarter from whence the bridal procession was expected. At last it was echoed from mouth to mouth, "The procession! The procession! now they are come! There they are!" The multitude moved onward in one vast wave, and the provost with his men found it difficult to keep a space clear for the entrance of the train.

Upon a large kerb stone, in the vicinity of the drawbridge beside the southern gate of the castle, stood a strongly-built man, in a coarse pilgrim's cloak, with muscle shells on the cape over his broad shoulders, and with his broad-brimmed hat, half slouched over a pair of round sun-burnt cheeks. At his side stood an old fisherman, and a pretty little fisher maiden in a north Zealand costume, from the district of Gilleleie. The pilgrim was Morten the cook, who, with his betrothed and her father, had just landed from a fishing yawl, on a remote spot under the sandstone cliff. The day preceding, Morten had been set on shore at Gilleleie, from a foreign vessel, with a red sail, which had suffered damage at sea, and had been compelled to put in under the Kohl for repairs; of which he talked in a mysterious manner. Although, as a party to the archbishop's flight from Sjöborg, he had been outlawed by the king, he had not only succeeded in quieting the fears of old Jeppé, the fisherman, and his daughter, at his re-appearance in the country, but had even prevailed on them to accompany him hither, where he meant to show them, he said, that, by his pilgrimage, he had obtained peace both with God and man, and that he now, with a brand new and clean conscience, could dare to face the king on his bridal day.

"Come hither. Father Jeppé! Come little Karen! let me lift thee up here!" said Morten, jumping down from the stone--"now ye can see all the finery and splendour. I shall do most wisely in keeping within my pilgrim's skin at first, on account of my bit of a head and neck."

"Alack, yes! for the Lord's sake, dearest Morten!" whispered the fisher maiden, anxiously, patting his cheek while she suffered his strong arm to lift her, like a puppet, upon the kerb stone; "hide thyself behind my back and my father's! I shall die of fear, if the king sees thee!"

"Trouble not thyself about anything, and look cheerfully at the fine doings, little sweetheart," whispered the blithe pilgrim; "he hath but seen me once in his life and hardly knows me; to-day he hath also something else to think of than of hanging his dear faithful subjects."

"He is a scoundrel who says he hath ever done *that!*" exclaimed old Jeppé, the fisherman, with repressed vehemence. "Should he cause *thee* now to be hanged, thou knave! thou hast, doubtless, honestly deserved it. If thou canst not speak and clear thyself like an honest fellow and as thou gavest me hand and word thou wouldst ere thou left the country, then didst thou journey

to Rome like a fool, and art come home like a simpleton."

"Come, come, Father Jeppé!" continued Morten, "let's see the finery in peace! Whether I am to be hanged or no can be settled time enough to-morrow; there is no need to hurry the matter."

"Thou art a desperate rogue, Morten!" growled the old man--"hast thou 'ticed us hither that we might have the sorrow to see thee dangle? Then thou shalt never have my daughter--I had well nigh said--but that follows of itself, I trow. What hath got the great lords who were to help thee? 'Tis all chatter and bragging, we shall find, and thou art as yet but an impudent madcap, as thou ever wast."

"Hush, Father Jeppé! Look! yonder come great lords and knights enow; who knows whether one of them will not break a lance with the king in honour of Morten the cook?--And look--there he comes himself."

"Out of the way, madcap! *him* thou art not worthy to look on," said the fisherman, pushing back the outlawed pilgrim with violence, while he carefully concealed him. "I dare, the Lord be thanked and praised for it, look our noble king in the face without creeping to hide behind an honest fellow's back."

All eyes were now turned only upon the procession, and the air rang with loyal acclamations for the king and his beautiful bride.

However high expectation had been raised, and however greatly report had exalted the beauty and loveable deportment of the noble Princess Ingeborg, all who now beheld her seemed to be struck with her appearance, even in a greater degree than they had anticipated. She sat between her own mother, Queen Helvig, and the king's mother, Countess Agnes, in the large, open ladies' car; she was as yet only attired in a simple but tasteful travelling dress; no showy pomp and splendour heightened her beauty; but none inquired who was the bride.

By the side of the two elder ladies (who both, however, inspired respect, and attracted the attention of the people, by their dignified mien), youthful beauty still maintained its supremacy, and awakened an admiration, which, associated with the idea of her being the king's bride, and of her becoming, this day, Denmark's queen, asked not for a more majestic presence. By the side of her mother, the sister of the noble Count Gerhard, it might be seen from whom she had inherited the innocent, good-natured smile, and the engaging expression of heartfelt kindness which was the very essence of her nature; and those who had seen her renowned father, King Magnus Ladislaus, could account for the dignity and ingenuous frankness which was combined with so much mildness and condescension in the countenance of the lovely princess. Opposite the princess and the two royal mothers sat two younger ladies, belonging to the train of the princess and the Swedish queen dowager; the younger was the fair lady Christiné, Thorkild Knudsen's daughter, who had lately been betrothed to King Birger's younger brother, Duke Valdemar of Finland; the elder was the instructress of the princess's childhood, and her faithful friend, the Lady Ingé. This noble lady, next to the pious, benevolent Queen Helvig, had exercised a real influence on the formation of the princess's character, and early awakened in her heart a warm affection for Denmark. She had made the future queen of the Danes acquainted with the spirit and usages of the nation; with its past achievements, its national ballads, and noble traditions; and she had seen, with pleasure and enthusiasm, how the spirit of a whole nation seemed to breathe forth from the innocent and pious mind of Princess Ingeborg, in the tenderest affection for the young Danish king.

The Lady Ingé was still a young and very attractive woman, with much determination and energy in her look and deportment; she was known and appreciated by the people, but now seemed to rejoice at being eclipsed by the radiance of that youthful beauty, which justly rendered Princess Ingeborg the queen of the day and the festival.

The princess returned the greeting and enthusiastic acclamations of the people with the kindest expression in her countenance and deportment. Each time she turned her joyous glance to the right from the car it met the king's; he rode by the side of the ladies' car on his white steed, with his plumed hat in his hand, and, almost overwhelmed with joy, appeared to divide his affection between his loyal people and his bride, while his whole soul's happiness seemed to beam forth from his eye, whether it rested on the car or on the acclaiming crowds. Yet even in this happy mood it was not possible for him to repress a fleeting sigh, and a cloud seemed as it were to pass over the clear heaven in his face whenever he heard his brother's hollow voice from the opposite side of the ladies' car, and discerned a manifest expression of rancour and wounded pride in the restless look and passionate glow of Junker Christopher's countenance. Christopher rode between the brothers of the Swedish King Birger, the brave, chivalrous Duke Eric of Sudermania, and Duke Valdemar of Finland, who both attracted much attention by their manly beauty, their courteous bearing, and splendid attire. Each time Christopher heard them addressed by the title of duke, and himself only as the "high-born junker," he apparently strove, but in vain, to hide, by a bitter smile, how deeply he felt himself aggrieved and neglected by his brother, who had not raised him in rank and title, although he stood in the same relative position to the King of Denmark as the Swedish dukes^[6] to the King of Sweden.

The young King Birger himself, who could as little vie with his chivalrous brothers in presence and dignity as in mind and bodily strength, followed the queen's car in an easy travelling vehicle,

in which he sat, in his costly purple mantle, by a young lady's side. It was his betrothed bride, Princess Mereté of Denmark, King Eric's sister, who, according to the early contract of betrothal, had, while yet a child, been received into the royal family of Sweden as Queen Helvig's foster-daughter, and had not seen her mother or brothers since the marriage of Queen Agnes with Count Gerhard. The Danish princess now spoke the Swedish language like her mother tongue, and appeared already conscious of her dignity as Sweden's future queen; she possessed, however, neither the beauty nor the attractive mildness of Princess Ingeborg, and it was remarked she bore a greater resemblance to the junker and her unhappy father than to King Eric and the fair Queen Agnes.

The Swedish regent, Marsk Thorkild Knudsen, accompanied his sovereign on horseback with almost regal splendour. He rode between Drost Aagé and Count Henrik of Mecklenborg, who often nodded gaily to each other; and the festive rejoicing of the fair summer's day was not less evident among the gallant train of knights which followed the Swedish monarch.

At the head of the Danish chivalry rode the powerful, but little popular, Marsk Oluffsen. With his rough austere visage and blunt bearing he formed a striking contrast to the agile, slender knight Helmer Blaa, who gaily bestrode his favourite re-found Arabian, and often unconsciously nodded assent, by way of confirmation, when he heard the populace laud him or his horse; occasionally, however, he glanced rather doubtfully towards the king, as if he desired not as yet to be noticed by him, and occasionally gave Drost Aagé a monitory look. Beside him rode a quiet ecclesiastic on a palfrey; it was the king's confessor, Master Petrus de Dacia; his eye often dwelt on the cloudless summer heaven, and he seemed, in his calm satisfaction, to think more of heavenly and godly things, and of a distant unseen beauty, than of the worldly pomp by which he was surrounded.

Helsingborg castle could hardly accommodate the numerous trains and wedding guests. A couple of hours after the entrance of the procession the bridal train was seen to proceed with still greater splendour to the church. Before the six white horses of the princess's gilded car pranced the two white tournament steeds which the king had been so displeased at missing from Sorretslöv castle. The two stable boys who had unweariedly tracked the steps of the horses down to Stockholm, now skipped joyously by the side of the noble animals. When the king beheld the two well-known palfreys perform their trained step before the bride's car, he was heartily pleased and surprised. Drost Aagé instantly informed him, in a few words, of Sir Helmer's bold adventure in Copenhagen, and that he was here among his bridegroom's-men. The king looked back, and recognised his briskest knight. "In the saddle he rides so free," he said, with a menacing gesture, to Sir Helmer, but with a gay smile and a nod of approbation.

In the church the marriage was solemnised, with all the rites of the Romish church, by the Bishops of Aarhus and Ribé, while the provincial prior Olaus, together with the assembled monks, chaunted with their deep-toned voices in full chorus a "Gloria in excelsis." While the one bishop joined the hands of the royal pair, and pronounced upon them the church's benediction, the other placed the queenly crown of Denmark on the light, beautiful tresses of the bride, and now a mighty tide of trumpet sound poured into the choral song, and the people joined in the solemn chorus. A fairer sight had never been beheld by Danish or Swedish man than when the royal pair, with tears of devotion and joy in their eyes, and hand in hand, sank down, kneeling on the bridal stool before the high and brilliantly-lighted altar, and nearly the whole bridal train, together with the enthusiastic crowd of spectators, knelt down, as if moved by one common impulse, in audible prayer and devotion.

The trumpets ceased and there was a breathless silence, while the bridal pair, in clear and distinct tones, pronounced the vow of unalterable love and constancy to the end of their lives. The deep amen of the aged provincial prior was re-echoed by the monks and by many among the people. A "Te Deum," with an accompaniment of bassoons and trumpets, concluded the church's festival.

After the blessing, the deeply affected pair were embraced by their nearest relatives in the high choir. At last Prince Christopher also approached his royal brother, and seemed preparing for a cold and forced salutation; but at this moment it seemed as if the spirit of darkness which had so long threatened the brothers from afar had suddenly come between them, and shot up into a giant. They gazed in silence, almost in dismay, upon each other, and let their arms sink; it seemed as though the gentle tear in the king's eye congealed and froze at his brother's frightful coldness.

"No falsehood in this holy hour, Christopher, if thy soul and thy salvation are dear to thee!" he whispered in a tone of stern admonition; "brothers now in the sight of God! or--may God forgive me!--enemies to death!"

Christopher bowed in silence, and turned pale; his lips appeared to move, but no sound issued from them. The king turned from him with a flashing glance; but it seemed as if a glimpse in the open heaven suddenly extinguished the fearful gleam of rising wrath and grief in the king's expressive countenance as he turned round and beheld his gently agitated bride tenderly stretch out her arms towards him; he pressed her eagerly to his heart, and the mild tear again glistened in his eye. "This heart, however, thou hast given me, all-merciful Creator!" he whispered, "and I have a brother at thy right hand who hates me not."

"My Eric! what is this?" asked the bride in astonishment, and gazing into his eyes; but she observed his uplifted eye resting in confidence on the crucifix over the door of the choir, and proceeded in silence and in tranquil joy through the aisle of the church, leaning on Eric's arm at the head of the bridal train. The king was afterwards calm and cheerful, but unusually pensive. No one, however, appeared to have remarked the painful feeling which had disturbed his happiness.

CHAP. XI.

The attention of the people, was now turned to the tournament, which was to commence a few hours after the ceremonies of the church were ended. The spacious lists were surrounded by a countless crowd, and the whole castle-hill was equally thronged with spectators. The raised benches placed in the form of stairs around the lists were occupied with gaily-attired ladies, rejoicing in eager anticipation of the spectacle. At last the clang of trumpets announced the arrival of the royal party. All the royal ladies, with their distinguished train, took their seats in the gallery, which was hung with scarlet. There the queen of the feast, the lovely and royal bride, again appeared, with the diadem encircling her fair tresses; she took her place on the seat of honour, between her mother and Queen Helvig, amid the joyous acclamations of the people. King Birger sat at his mother's side beside Princess Méré-té; he was present only as a spectator of the tournament, in which he purposed not to take a part. Thorkild Knudsen and a number of elderly Swedish courtiers stood near him, with Count Gerhard, who no longer partook in this diversion; but the young Danish sovereign, with the Swedish dukes and other princely guests, remained on horseback without the lists among the knights of the tournament. On a raised seat under the royal gallery sat the judges of the combat, who were all old and experienced knights; and within the lists walked the heralds and pursuivants in their festal attire, with white staves in their hands, to watch over the observance of order and usage. A large band of trumpeters and horn-players opened the chivalrous diversion with the music of the national tournament song.

Amid the chorus in which the people joined,

"When the Danish knights ride o'er the ground,
Their horses tramp with a thund'ring sound."

all the knights galloped briskly into the lists, and ranged themselves for the encounter. The tournament then commenced. Many lances were broken amid the shouts of the bystanders. Dangerous accidents seldom occurred in this combat with blunt lances, although a knight might easily indeed sprain an arm or a leg by a too headlong fall from the saddle. Many knights displayed great agility and dexterity in the management of horse and lance; but Marsk Oluffsen, Count Henrik of Mecklenborg, and Sir Helmer Blaa, bore off every prize. A veiled lady often waved encouragement and approbation to Sir Helmer; she threw gloves, kerchiefs, and silk ribands down to him from the ladies' gallery. He bowed courteously. His shield bore the motto, "For St. Anna and St. Eric," the guardian saints of his beloved wife and his sovereign, in whose honour he wielded his lance on this occasion. In his last career he unhorsed the Marsk;--the lady now threw her veil down to him. It was his young and beautiful wife, the Lady Anna, who, by her unlooked-for presence here, surprised and delighted him beyond expression; as soon as he recognised her he flung up his lance high in the air in a transport of joy. He forgot to receive the prize he had won, but rushed like the stormer of a castle up into the gallery to embrace her, to the great amusement of the spectators, and even of the grave judges of the tournament, who readily forgave him this little deviation from due order and usage.

Among the Swedish nobles and knights who took a part in the tournament, Duke Eric of Sudermania was pre-eminent; no knight could keep his seat before his lance; and his sister, the young queen of the festival, rejoiced greatly at the honour won here by her best-loved and most chivalrous brother. Duke Valdemar of Finland also shone in this diversion, and especially sought to display his boldness and daring when the fears of Thorkild Knudsen's fair daughter were excited for him. Each time a combatant fell on the sand the trumpets sounded in honour of the victor, and the people shouted, while the vanquished knight hastened to salute his conqueror with a courteous bow, without complaining or showing any sign of vexation. Drost Aagé, who was wont to be a victor at all these sports of arms, had not as yet sufficiently recovered his strength, after his dangerous fall at Kallundborg, to be able to take a share in this day's tournament; he was besides, even amid his joy, at the king's successful love, in an unusually pensive mood; he had now renounced all hope of seeing Marsk Stig's unfortunate daughters released from their state imprisonment. The king appeared also remarkably thoughtful, although deep and heart-felt joy beamed in his countenance each time his eye met Queen Ingeborg's loving glance from the gallery. His thoughts seemed often to wander from the scene before him, and he looked not with his customary eagerness and interest on this his favourite diversion, at which he this day, as

bridegroom and awardee of the prizes, only purposed to be a spectator. Duke Eric of Langeland, who was celebrated as one of the most invincible tournament knights, appeared not to have found any opponent among the younger lords and knights against whom he cared to enter the lists since Duke Eric of Sudermania had quitted them, having already broken the full number of lances necessary for gaining the highest prize. Junker Christopher looked, with gloomy disdain, on a spectacle which he regarded as the worn-out pastime of childish vanity. He knew himself how to wield his lance with power and skill, but seemed to consider it beneath his dignity to contend for a tournament prize, which was to be awarded by his brother, or to measure himself with any one below the rank of king. By degrees King Eric's youthful countenance became animated as he looked on the encounters. His white steed curvetted under him; and as soon as the last prize was awarded he briskly seized a gilded lance, and cleared the lists by a daring leap, to the great delight of the admiring spectators. "Shall we venture a tilt together in honour of our ladies, sir cousin?" he called gaily to Duke Eric of Langeland. The gigantic Duke of Langeland bowed courteously, and rode into the lists.

"Zounds! Longshanks! Longshanks!" was re-echoed from one to the other, among the curious bystanders, and all stood in breathless expectation. The king caused his helmet and cuirass to be brought; a rose-coloured silk riband fluttered down to him from the queen's gallery; he fastened it to his helmet, gaily waved his hand to his young queen, and galloped to his station. The Duke fastened a knot of blue riband on his helmet. With great dexterity and martial skill the two royal combatants now rushed towards each other, lance in rest, at full gallop. The king wielded his lance adroitly and parried his adversary's thrust. The Duke's lance flew from his hand, and was driven far forward on the course; but the king's lance broke against the duke's breastplate, without shaking his seat in the saddle.

The duke's as well as the king's skill and dexterity were greatly admired; but many expressions of the people's partiality for their chivalrous young monarch were distinctly heard. "Had but the king's lance stood the shock," said one young fellow, "we should surely have seen Longshanks bite the dust."

"No wonder yon fellow kept his seat," growled a seaman, "he can well-nigh anchor in the sand with his long shanks."

The trumpets sounded, the combatants saluted each other with courtesy, and the diversion now seemed to be ended; but the music continued, amid general acclamation and a hum of voices.

"See whether the junker dares risk his jerkin! No, *he* does wisest in looking on," said a bold, loud-tongued voice close behind Junker Christopher.

"*He* Would sooner let his true men break their necks in earnest, than venture his own in jest," muttered another.

Junker Christopher appeared to have heard these speeches, for his face flushed crimson. While the trumpets were still sounding, and the king was about to quit the lists, the junker suddenly set spurs to his heavy horse, and rode towards him, with lance in hand.

"If I see aright, my brother would also try a tilt with me," said the king starting, "Well then, strike up the tournament song, herald!--a new lance, pursuivant!--but not of glass like the first!"

The horn-players struck up the ancient, well-known strain. The pursuivant presented the king a lance with a broad piece of board at the end. Attention was again anxiously excited, and the young queen appeared somewhat uneasy. The king had taken his place; his countenance was not so placid and cheerful as before; his white steed snorted and pranced impatiently. The junker had retired to some distance, and seemed not as yet to have completed his preparations.

"Now haste, Christopher!" called the king; "let us be brisk, as beseems our festival!" They now quitted their respective stations. The king rode forward in a stately ambling pace, apparently that he might not avail himself of his superiority and greater experience; but the junker dashed his spurs into his horse's side, and rushed forward with wild impetuosity. The king stood almost still, on perceiving with astonishment that his brother's lance was couched directly against his uncovered face. "Where would'st thou strike? against the breast! between the four limbs!" he shouted, but it seemed as though the junker neither heard nor saw; he continued to rush forward in the same direction, with flushed cheek and staring eye. But it was now remarked that the king became greatly incensed.--"Down then!" cried Eric, and at the same moment Christopher's lance was dashed aside, and the junker himself fell backwards out of the saddle. The king instantly sprang from his horse, and assisted him to rise, while the trumpets sounded and the air re-echoed with the shouts of the exulting spectators--"Thou art not bruised?" asked the king. "In what fashion dost thou couch thy lance?"

"Ill against you my mighty liege and vanquisher!" muttered Christopher, "but that is all in due order--hear how the people screech for joy at the fair spectacle you have afforded them," he added with bitterness and in a lowered tone, "had I broken my neck the festivity would have been complete."

"Let not this little mischance vex thee," said the king, "such may happen to the best of us--"

another time I may have a worse fate."

"That is very possible, your grace!" answered the junker in a deep and almost choking voice, greeting the king with measured courtesy, as he retreated and retired. He instantly vaulted upon his horse, and rode off through the noisy crowds, who laughed loudly, and made merry over the ridiculous position in which the junker had thrown his legs in the air, on receiving the thrust of the king's lance.

Thus ended the tournament; but the acclamations with which the king was followed to the castle bridge, appeared this time to please him but little. He thought he had seen a fire in his brother's eye which filled him with horror.

CHAP. XII.

After the tournament, the king bestowed in the knights' hall, with the usual ceremonies, the honour of knighthood on some squires, who had distinguished themselves in Marsk Stig's feud, and the Norwegian war. Palfreys, splendid arms, and other honourable gifts, were also distributed to the princely wedding guests, and some of the Swedish nobles who had accompanied Princess Ingeborg from Stockholm. The king was particularly desirous on this occasion to give Marsk Thorkild Knudsen a proof of his special regard, and presented him with the knightly sword of state, which he had this day worn himself. "Wear this at your country's high festivals, noble Sir Marsk," he said, "but should I ever--which the Almighty forbid!--forget the compact and the friendship with the noble Swedish nation and its king, of which this day hath given me and Denmark the fairest pledge! then turn it against me, as you turned your own good sword against the heathen Kareles." Thorkild^[7] acknowledged this mark of royal favour, in an animated and enthusiastic speech; he congratulated Denmark, as well as Sweden, on a new and happy era, when the swords of their princes and knights should only be drawn on each other in the honourable rivalry of the tilt and tournay, but when required, flash like the northern lights and flaming comets, against the common foes of the north.

At last, the king produced a document, to which, by a green silken string, was attached the great royal seal in wax impression, with the three crowned leopards in the shield, on one side, and the king's image on the throne and in royal robes, on the other. Without turning to that side of the throne which was Junker Christopher's station, and towards which Eric, during the whole ceremony, had not once glanced, he said in a loud voice, and apparently with effort, "Junker Christopher Ericson of Denmark! step forth and receive a commemorative gift from my hand, on this the happiest day of my life! I have, out of sincere brotherly love and good-will, and with the assent of my council, three weeks since, signed and sealed this document, which is now for the first time made public, and which nominates thee, Duke of Estland, with all feudal rights and privileges. May the Lord grant his blessing on it!" After he had pronounced these words in a clear and audible voice, it seemed as though an oppressive weight had been removed from his spirits, and he looked calmly and cheerfully to the side from whence he expected to see his brother step forward; but the junker's place was vacant, none of those present had seen him since the tournament. The junker's master of the household, therefore, stepped forth on the part of his lord, and received the royal investiture, while he bent his knee before the king; he then rose, bowed low, and departed to seek the prince.

Prince Christopher did not appear at the marriage feast. Some reported they had seen him ride like a madman, at full gallop, through the chase, immediately after the tournament.

The prince had not returned as yet on the commencement of the evening festivities. The castle resounded with music and mirth. The doors of the knights' hall and the great antechamber were thrown open to admit persons of all ranks to the dance and masque. The amusements here, as at the merry carnival, consisted in whimsical mummings, and scenic representations, in which the spectators beheld, without displeasure, the most grotesque mixture of sacred, and profane, subjects. Even a number of disguised ecclesiastics took part in this diversion, and enacted what was called "a mystery," or a biblical farce; in which a German harlequin constantly cracked his jests, while the fight between David and Goliath was represented, to the great delight of the populace, who thought to discern, in King David, an allusion to the king, and in the gigantic Goliath recognized a resemblance, now to Duke Longshanks, now to the Junker; but as soon as the Drost noticed the unlucky interpretation of the farce, he ordered these masks away. When Eric stepped forth among the dancers in the antechamber, the young maidens sang the ballad, with which he was usually greeted, and which had now become a kind of a national song. With a feeling of enthusiasm for their youthful sovereign, and allusion to one of the most romantic adventures which had occurred in his childhood--they sang gaily:

"O'er Ribé's bridge the dance is led,

The castle it is won!
In broidered shoe the knights they tread,
For young Eric this feat is done!"^[8]

The king listened with pleasure to the lay, and talked with Aagé of his beloved Drost Peter Hessel, of whom this song always reminded him; and when Count Gerhard heard the ballad of Ribéhuus, he tramped gaily into the ranks of the dancers, in joyous remembrance of that event, at which he had himself been present.

The king's mother and Queen Helvig now entered the antechamber, with the young and lovely bride, and the joy of the people was uttered yet more loudly. The ballad-singers instantly began the ballad of Queen Dagmar's bridal; all the maidens joined in it, and the dancers moved to the tune. The king stepped forward, with his bride, at the head of the troop of dancers. At last the maidens sang:

"Great joy there was o'er Denmark's land,
When Dagmar stepped upon the strand;
Both burgher and peasant then lived in peace,
From tax and ploughpenny-yoke had ease,
From Bohmerland^[9] the lady crossed the seas!"

But as they were going to sing the last verse, the ballad-singers took up the lay and sang:

"Again there's joy o'er Denmark's land,
Fair Ingeborg comes unto our strand!
Like Waldemar Seier, King Eric hath found
A Dagmar to bring us on Danish ground;
From Sweden's land so far renowned!"

This verse was repeated amid loud and joyous acclamations.

"Thanks, good people! thanks!" said the king, with pleased emotion; "if it please the Lord, and our blessed Lady, Valdemar's and Dagmar's days shall return."

The young queen feelingly greeted the many loyal persons who surrounded her.

Amid the general rejoicing and festive stir, there was no one beside Drost Aagé who saw anything suspicious in the continuance of the mask; but among the great number of maskers, he had especially noticed two, who frequently made their way nearly up to the king, and disappeared again. They were dressed up according to the ideas which the lower classes entertained of mermen; their painted faces were hidden by green silken hair, and they wore coats of glittering silver scales. Their restless deportment appeared suspicious to Aagé, who paid close attention to every movement of these masks--but his suspicion soon vanished; a pretty little fishermaid came to meet the second mask and the pair soon danced so lovingly together, that Aagé conjectured a little love affair was in progress. "Why cannot I thus dance here with *her*?" he sighed, and his thoughts travelled to the maiden's tower at Wordinborg. He looked with interest on the fair fisher-maiden, who with her long hair, and her joyous sparkling eyes, bore a faint resemblance to the Lady Margaretha's capricious sister Ulrica. "Alas, no! poor maidens!" sighed the Drost, stepping out into the hall balcony--"they are now in the gloomy tower over yonder; *they* hear and see nought of these rejoicings--and yet they are innocent--it is injustice; crying injustice--in this matter he is stern and unyielding. To-night, however, he is mild, and joyous, and happy--who knows----." It seemed as if Aagé was suddenly inspired by a bold hope; he returned into the antechamber, and approached the king, who took greater pleasure in being a spectator of the merriment of the lower orders in the antechamber than in looking on the more graceful and skilful dancing in the knights' hall. But the Drost presently once more beheld one of the frightful mermen figures near the king; his suspicions of this mask were again awakened, and he observed the glittering handle of a dagger between the silver scales on the merman's breast, on which his hand often rested when he approached Eric. Aagé placed himself between the king and the intrusive mask, and asked, "Who art thou?"

"Rosmer^[10]," said a strange, unknown voice--"ho, ho, ho!"--and the merman now sang in a hoarse tone:

"Home came Rosmer from the sea,
To curse he did begin:
My right hand's scent it warneth me
A christian man's within."

He then once more seized the hand of the fisher-maiden, and joined in the dance. The Drost looked after him with suspicion; he thought of the outlaws, and of the dishonoured Knight Kaggé. The idea of this dangerous and audacious miscreant became so vivid in his imagination, that he seemed to recognise him in the merman, and almost in every mask. He made a signal to some

halberdiers to keep an eye on the mask, and followed the king into the knights' hall. Here he also gave Count Henrik a hint of what he dreaded, and a numerous troop of halberdiers was soon stationed near the king; but neither he nor any of his guests observed that this was done with any special design. The Drost's scrutinising looks and the precautions which had been taken, did not, however, seem to have escaped all the guests. Shortly afterwards the well-known ballad of the "Merman and Agneté" was heard in the antechamber, and a dance was performed to it, in which the merman mask and the fisher-maiden were the principal performers. The merman only chimed in with the burden of the song, and repeated, in a wild, hoarse voice,

"Ho! ho! ho!
To the depths of the sea then lead her did he."

At last this masker and his partner departed: they danced out of the door, and down the great staircase into the court-yard of the castle, amid a crowd of disguised personages, who belonged to their party, and represented all kinds of sea-monsters. No one knew what had become of them: another dance began, and none concerned themselves any longer about these unsocial maskers; but the report afterwards spread among the people, that the masker was a real merman, who had carried off a maiden. Some even would have it that they had seen the glittering merman swim off with the maiden in his arms, in the clear moonlight.

CHAP. XIII.

It was a beautiful, calm summer evening. The dance and the mask were confined to the antechamber and the knights' hall. The national festival was celebrated with bonfires and torch-lights, with music and feasting, in the court-yard of the castle and the orchard, in the chase and on the tournament ground. The king showed himself wherever there was a joyous group assembled, most frequently conducting his lovely bride by the hand, and accompanied by his princely guests and several courtiers. They were everywhere welcomed with festive songs and acclamations. In the castle garden they were greeted by Master Rumelant and Master Poppé the strong, who, with solemn pathos, recited an elaborate and carefully-composed poem, in which they praised by turns the royal bridegroom and his bride, with the royal relatives of both, and all the nobles there present. The king thanked them with kindness for this well-meant homage, although the exaggerated praise and trite compliments did not suit his taste. But they were now surprised by a new and splendid spectacle--the bridal pair, and a number of children with wings fastened to their shoulders, who were to represent genii or angels, were led through the illuminated avenues to a remote part of the garden, from whence there was the most beautiful prospect over the Sound; here many hundred vessels burst on the sight, hung with lights in the form of crowns upon the masts. All that had excited so much astonishment at Skänor fair, and had been regarded by the people as the work of witchcraft and sorcery, was also to be seen here, but exhibited with far more dazzling effect. Superstitious fear was banished by the report of the innocence of these artists, and all were prepared to view the spectacle as a display worthy of the festival. A number of rockets of different and beautiful colours were let off from boats and floating rafts; the air glittered with artificial suns, stars, and flaming wheels, which were mirrored in the calm expanse of the sea.

It was a new and wonder-stirring sight, and afforded great delight to the spectators. All ceremony and court etiquette were forgotten; each one eagerly sought that place from whence he could best behold the dazzling pageant.

Eric had retired with his bride to a shady spot in the garden, where the fair aerial spectacle appeared to the greatest advantage. The number of guests he had to entertain, as well as the festivities, had hitherto prevented him from exchanging a single word with her without witnesses, and it was more than a year since they had last met. He now found himself for a moment alone with her, under the mild and lovely summer sky, in which the flaming stars seemed to dance round them in the air, while the festive din was hushed, and nothing was heard but the deep solemn notes of the horn-players, floating over the Sound from a distant hill. A torrent of thought and feeling seemed ready to gush from the king's heart. "My Ingeborg! my soul's beloved!" he exclaimed, embracing her, "now hath the merciful Lord heard my inmost prayer; he hath himself united us with an inviolable sacrament; no power in heaven or earth can part us now. I am indeed the happiest of human beings; were I omnipotent I would this hour make every soul around me happy."

"Eric! my beloved Eric!" answered Ingeborg, throwing her arms around his neck, "I have this day seen with thee into the Lord's clear heaven; the troth I plighted thee at the altar I shall repeat in my dying hour; my angel shall wake me with it at the last day----"

"Think not now of death," interrupted Eric, tenderly: "our life begins but now."

"One moment may contain a thousand lives," she continued, with heartfelt emotion; "even were one of yon flying stars to crush me in thine arms I still should deem myself happy; thou wouldest still be mine, although mine eyes should close upon all the glories of this world."

They thus talked confidentially together, and poured out their inmost souls to each other, undisturbed by their princely guests, whose whole attention was turned upon the aerial spectacle. The happy bridal pair sank, with deep emotion, into each other's arms, and appeared to forget themselves and the whole world in a silent embrace. They were suddenly aroused by a loud explosion and a hissing sound in the air; they raised their eyes and saw with astonishment the mild beams of the star-light dimmed by the brightness of a large ball of fire, which ascended hissing in the air as though it would reach the heavens. It shone clear and bright above their heads; but as they were looking at it with admiration it exploded, and dispersed into many thousand small stars, which gradually waned and disappeared.

"Noble! beautiful!" said the king. "What cannot human wisdom and art effect! The learned artist who hath prepared us this show is certainly right in some things; the deep insight into human nature, which the great Pater Roger hath attained unto in our time, will probably in after times actually change the aspect of the world, and all which we now deem great and noble will perhaps seem but as dreaming and child's play to posterity: but how mutable all things are, my Ingeborg!" he added, almost with melancholy; "even the surpassing splendour of this evening will soon fade and vanish like yon dazzling aerial vision."

"But what there hath been of life and truth and soul, my Eric," answered Ingeborg, looking tenderly into his eyes; "is it not so, my heart's beloved? All which love hath brightened will surely never seem but as an idle dream. The world will surely never be so changed that all which is sacred and divine shall fade away like an airy vision."

"No assuredly, by all the holy men, no sound wisdom can ever lead to *that!*" said the king eagerly, and gazed awhile in thoughtful reverie on the serene and unchanging heaven. "Tell me, my beloved Ingeborg," he resumed again with tenderness, as he looked with calm delight on his lovely bride, and pressed her hand to his lips, "wilt thou not miss thy mother and thy brothers sadly here?"

"My mother and my brother Eric, most---," answered Ingeborg, with a gentle sigh; "but I am still with thee and my dear faithful Ingé. My mother and brothers will often visit us, and we them--Shall we not? and thou wilt aid me and my mother in preserving love and peace between the brothers?"

"Truly! This I know," said the king, pressing her hand warmly; "love and peace between brothers are precious jewels, my Ingeborg; no crown outweighs their loss." He paused suddenly, as though he would not grieve his bride by uttering what clouded his happiness, even in this moment of bliss.

"Thou wouldest this day make every one happy if thou couldst," continued Ingeborg; "grant, then, in this fair hour, the first boon I would ask of thy heart!"

"Name it, my Ingeborg, and it is granted," said the king. "What couldest *thou* ask of me which I could deny thee? What is thy wish?--say on!"

"Freedom for every sorrowing captive in thy kingdom who at this hour repent their crime, or suffer while innocent."

"Innocent!" repeated the king hastily; "none who are innocent suffer in chains and in prison here--that I know. What can inspire thee with such thoughts?"

"Guilty or guiltless!" answered Ingeborg, taking his hand. "In the sight of the All-righteous no one is wholly guiltless, and yet he pardons us all for his dear Son's sake, and for the sake of his eternal mercy. Pardon thy foes, my Eric--pardon them for the sake of God's infinite love! Give the unhappy captives freedom for the sake of eternal freedom! Give peace to the outlaws for the sake of everlasting peace in God's kingdom!"

There was a crimson flush on the king's cheek--his eyes flashed--his breast heaved violently--he abruptly dropped the hand of his bride, and clenched his own, almost convulsively, against his breast. "I swore an oath, by my father's bloody head, in Viborg church," he said, in a deep, low tone, "that oath I must keep, or perish eternally; my father's murderers I can never pardon--to none of *them* can I grant peace while mine eyes behold the light of day!"

"Not even their kindred and children, who have had no share in their crime?" asked Ingeborg, anxiously. "Be not severe! be not unmerciful! Liberate Marsk Stig's daughters from the prison at Wordingborg, for my prayers' sake!"

"Thou hast named a name which stirs up my inmost soul, from whomsoever I may hear it," said the king gloomily, with his eyes fixed on the ground; "the offspring of that traitor are my deadly foes as he was my father's; yet," he continued, and raised his head, "for my *own* sake I will not hate and persecute any one; for thy prayers' sake, I can show mercy to those who do but hate

and conspire against *me*; but, by all that is holy! those who laid bloody hands on my father, yon dark St. Cecilia's night, may God forgive if it be possible--*I never can!*"

Ingeborg stood almost dismayed at his vehemence, and scarcely dared to look at him.

"Have I frightened thee, my Ingeborg!" continued Eric, with more calmness, again taking her hand. "Forgive me! There is one chord in my soul which sounds terrible when struck, wake it not again! Marsk Stig's daughters shall be liberated tomorrow, at thy entreaty; but Denmark they must leave.--Come, let us join the others!"

"Thanks, thanks! Thou dear, impetuous Eric!" exclaimed Ingeborg, joyfully, once more throwing her arms tenderly and confidently around his neck; "they may then wend free out of thy kingdom? They look not for aught beside. More no one can reasonably demand. Thou dost not only gladden me by this on my bridal day; but a noble and faithful soul besides, whom thou truly lovest."

"Who?"

"The Drost, the quiet, melancholy Aagé!"

"Did he entreat thee to ask that boon?"

"Yes!--but he entreated me not *exactly* to tell thee he had."

"Hum! Aagé! should he?--yet no! in love he can scarcely be--he dreams more of heavenly angels than earthly ones--and truly! for *that* description of angels he is too good. Come, my Ingeborg! They will have missed us!"

They returned to the company, who were still admiring the beautiful illumination on board the vessels, and the fireworks, which became more and more brilliant.

While the king and his guests repaired to the gardens of the castle, Drost Aagé stood on Helsingborg quay, and beheld three large boats, filled with maskers in the most grotesque costumes, row off with all possible speed towards a foreign ship which lay in the harbour, and which soon hoisted sail and disappeared in the moonlight with the adventurous wedding guests. When the Drost afterwards joined the company in the castle garden, he missed the king and his bride, and searched for them in great uneasiness, in the dusky avenues. Near to the spot where Eric stood with the princess, he saw one of the two suspicious merman maskers lurking among the trees, with a cross-bow in his hand. At the same moment, in which the great ball of fire had exploded in the air, the Drost saw this mysterious personage station himself with his cross-bow behind a tree, and take aim. In one and the same instant, Aagé had discovered the object of the assassin's aim, and cleft his head with his sword. The dangerous bow was still drawn, when the miscreant fell dead on the spot without uttering a sound. Aagé took the mask from his face, and recognised the notorious deserter--the one-eyed Johan Kysté, who was known to have assisted the archbishop in his flight from Sjöberg. "God mend his soul!" said Aagé, turning away with horror from the fearful sight; and on seeing Eric still standing on the same spot in confidential converse with his bride, he discreetly withdrew.

When the king returned to the company, Aagé also stepped forth from a dark avenue. The anxiety he had undergone, and the fatal deed which he had secretly been forced to commit in self-defence, had chased the blood from his cheeks. He now stood in the light of the fireworks pale as death, yet looking on the king with loving sympathy.

"Aagé! what ails thee? Art thou ill?" asked the king, laying his hand on his shoulder.

"I ail nothing on my sovereign's happiest day," answered Aagé; "those strange blue lights yonder, make us all look somewhat pale."

"If thou art well, I will encumber thee with a journey," continued the king; "thou shalt announce to Marsk Stig's daughters that they are free."

"My liege and sovereign!" exclaimed Aagé, with heartfelt delight, and the blood suddenly rushed back to his cheek. "Thanks! heartfelt thanks for those words! Let me hasten even this very hour!"

"When thou wilt," continued the king, and a stern gravity was again perceptible in his looks and deportment. "Thou wilt announce their freedom to them, not from me, but from my queen, though with my approbation; but within three days they must be out of my state and kingdom. Thou may'st escort them out of the land, my Drost! I give thee leave of absence, with full salary, as long as thou wilt, yes--even though it should be for thy whole lifetime," he added, in a lower tone; "but by all the holy men! ere I see thee again, Marsk Stig's race must be beyond Denmark's boundaries."

Aagé gazed on the king with a strange expression of countenance; a whole world and a whole life seemed to pass in review before his eyes; while a desperate struggle agitated his inmost soul. "I haste, my liege!" he said, at last, as if starting from a dream. "I follow *her*. I follow the defenceless sisters out of the country," he paused again, and his voice seemed almost choked,

"and--I soon return to your service," he added, with regained firmness. "May the Lord keep his hand over you so long!"

The king extended his hand to Aagé; he pressed it with deep emotion to his lips. "Thanks! heartfelt thanks for your clemency to the unfortunate," he whispered, with a faltering voice, and rushed away.

"What is this?" said the king to himself, as he observed a tear on his hand; "who claims this precious gem? my Aagé!--hum! poor visionary, what thought'st thou of!--yet--his choice is free, I cannot act otherwise, and you, Marsk Oluffsen!" he continued aloud, turning to his warrior-like Marsk, "the rebels you have lately captured and thrown into prison, Niels Brock and Johan Papæ---"

"Will you grant me a pleasure on your bridal day, my liege?" interrupted the Marsk, in his rough voice, and rubbing his large hands. "Then permit me, with my own hand, to give those fellows their quietus."

"What! Do you rave, Marsk!" exclaimed the king, greatly incensed; "are you my knight and Marsk, and would you turn executioner? You will lead the captive rebels in chains out of the country, and declare them outlawed in my name! You will not yourself appear in our sight until, by noble deed of knighthood, you have washed out the blot which you have cast on yourself, and on our chivalry, by your blood-thirsty wish."

The Marsk was thunderstruck; he stood in the greatest astonishment, with wide open eyes. "Now, by all the martyrs!" he muttered to himself; but he saw by the king's stern look this was no fitting time to speak: he bowed in silence, and retired.

CHAP. XIV.

The fireworks were now ended, and much admiration was expressed by the spectators. The king roused himself from the mood into which he had been thrown by the faithful Aagé's farewell, and the Marsk's sternness.

"Where is the master of that fair pageant?" he said aloud; "where is the learned Thrand Fistlier?"

"Here, most gracious sovereign!" said a discordant self-satisfied voice, close beside the king; and Master Thrand stepped forth from the dark avenue, with his amanuensis, the youthful Master Laurentius, by his side--

"If my poor skill hath pleased the royal and lordly company, I esteem it a high pleasure and honour."

"You have surprised us in the most agreeable manner;" said the king, "but what I have seen will please me still more, if you will explain to us the ways and means by which such beautiful results are produced."

"The whole is insignificant, in comparison with what I yet purpose, according to promise, to show your grace!" answered the artist, bowing humbly; "it is a masterpiece that requires but a moment's time. The ways and means by which I produce it belong partly to one of my great Master Bacon's most important discoveries, which he hath indeed named in his writings, but hath not clearly and minutely explained. It is a discovery which may easily be abused, and therefore can only be entrusted to the initiated. I am the only one of his pupils who fully comprehend it. I have myself considerably extended and substantiated what was to my master rather a profound conjecture, than an actual discovery, and I trust I shall not be deemed vain, if I expect, even in preference to my great master, to be immortalised by it in the history of science----"

"Well, well!" interrupted the king, "what is it?"

"The only person to whom I have imparted something of this important secret," continued Master Thrand, with a proud look, without suffering himself to be abashed, "is my pupil Master Laurentius; but I have not as yet been able to initiate him in the deepest mysteries of an art which will perhaps require centuries ere it be fully revealed to the prejudiced human race. With you wise king! and with these enlightened nobles and scholars, I make honourable exception, in showing you what I have not even as yet shown my pupil, and what I now, for the first time, and in an altogether novel manner, am about to reduce from theory to a decisive practical result. If this marvellous art is not to die with me----"

"You expect to become immortal, no doubt. Master Thrand!" interrupted the king again,

somewhat impatiently, "and if I understand you aright, even in the proper signification of the word; if your art enables you to set even death at defiance, your important invention can never be in danger of perishing from the world. Let us now see what you laud so highly, and keep not our expectation longer on the stretch! You diminish by it even the surprise you have perhaps intended us."

"Instantly! most mighty king!" answered the artist in a lowered tone, and produced a calf-skin, which he rolled up and placed on the ground. He then took out of his pocket a small, unknown substance, of some few inches thickness, which he placed under it, and commenced several other preparations, seemingly just as simple and trivial. "Now place yourself there, your grace!" he resumed, "and give close heed! Quit not your place until you see me withdraw. Let the ladies step aside, it might perhaps alarm those who are weakly, although there is no danger whatever. As soon as I light this torch and bring it into contact with this simple apparatus, you will hear a voice like that which nature's great spirit sends forth from the clouds of heaven, to announce his sovereignty over all the earth, as lord of life and death; but *this* voice obeys *my* bidding and *my* will--now mark!" The ladies stepped aside and looked inquisitively towards the artist. Some of the noble guests drew nearer; others drew back with suspicion. The king stood silent and attentive, on the spot assigned him. The learned Master Petrus de Dacia stood nearest him; his eyes were raised towards the clear bright stars, and he appeared occasionally to look on the little mountebank and his whole proceedings, with a kind of contemptuous pity. Count Henrik was not present; at the Drost's suggestion he had employed himself in securing the castle against every possible attack of the outlaws, some of whom were supposed to have been recognised among the masked wedding guests who, however, had already escaped.

The expectation of the whole assemblage was now turned towards the exhibition of art, which had been so pompously announced. The mysterious artist was still busied with his preparations, and appeared himself somewhat thoughtful and hesitating. He lighted a torch at some distance, and took a book out of his pocket, which he appeared to consult. He had placed a pair of large spectacles before his eyes, and as he thus stood in the torch-light, with his deformed figure and fiery red mantle, he resembled a goblin or a fire-gnome, rather than a human being. He presently replaced the book in his pocket, and lighted another torch.

"Stop your ears with this, your grace!" whispered the considerate Master Laurentius, handing a couple of wax-balls to the king, "from what I know of this specimen of art, it may have a stunning and injurious effect on the hearing." The king nodded and followed his advice. The artist now held the lighted torch in his hand; the red flame lit up his face--it was expressive of a fearful degree of agitation--every muscle was horribly, almost convulsively, distorted--He approached slowly with the torch towards the mysterious apparatus, and most of the spectators drew back with apprehension. The king stood calm and attentive in his place, by the side of Master Petrus de Dacia, with his foot on the rolled-up hide.

"Hence! back! life is at stake!" said a voice behind him in a frantic tone. The king felt himself forcibly grasped by a powerful hand, and at the same moment a fearful explosion, resembling a clap of thunder, was heard, with a flash as of a thousand combined lightnings; many persons fell to the ground with a cry of horror. The ladies swooned--a cloud of smoke encompassed them, with a suffocating sulphureous vapour. The terrible artist himself lay mangled and lifeless on the grass, with the extinguished torch in his hand. Master Laurentius threw himself upon the body in grief; there was a fearful panic and confusion.

The king stood unscathed a few steps from the corpse of the wretched Thrand, and now first perceived who had dragged him from his dangerous position. It was his own brother Christopher, who, with his Duke's diploma crumpled in his left hand, and with his right still convulsively grasping the king's arm, stood pale as death gazing on the lifeless philosopher. "The judgment of God!" he said in a deep and scarcely audible voice. He quitted his hold of his brother's arm, and then, as if pursued by evil spirits, rushed into the dark avenue, and disappeared.

"Christopher! What is this?" said the king in a low voice, as he looked after him, with a horrible conjecture, but he quickly recovered himself, and hastened to attend his bride and the terrified ladies. "The danger is over," he said with calmness, "but this specimen of art hath cost the artist his life. If he hath spoken truth, his dangerous art hath perished with him, and the whole world is lapsed into barbarism and ignorance. He was a wise and learned man," he added, as he saw most of the company tranquillised, but heard the suspicion of treachery loudly expressed--"Let us not judge his intentions! perhaps he hath sacrificed life as a martyr to his science--'twas pity, however, he would personate our Lord; the Almighty lets himself not be mocked."

None were injured but the hapless artist, and the company soon returned composed and thoughtful to the illuminated avenues in the garden. Ingeborg's fears were calmed and she clung tenderly to her bridegroom's arm. It appeared to her and to all, as if an inconceivable miracle had saved the king's life and crushed his treacherous foes. The report of the king's peril had interrupted the bridal festivities; but wherever he showed himself the music and merriment again commenced, and the royal bridal pair were followed back to the castle, with almost deafening acclamations.

While the bridesmaids conducted the bride to the bridal chamber the king repaired to his private apartment. He went in silence to his prie-dieu, bent his knee before the holy crucifix, and

became absorbed in silent prayer. He had shut the door after him, and believed he was alone with God on this spot, to which none beside himself and his confessors had access; but he presently heard some one moving behind him, and he arose. Junker Christopher stood before him, with his wild countenance bathed in tears. "My brother!" he exclaimed, with outstretched arms, "I have sinned against the Lord and against thee; I am not worthy to be called thy brother. Canst *thou* forgive me what *I* cannot name? Canst thou forgive me for the sake of our murdered father's soul, and for the sake of the All-merciful, who blots out every transgression?"

"Christopher!" said the king, in a tone of the greatest consternation, gazing fixedly on him with a piercing look, "thou wouldest--thou knewest--"

"Say not what I willed--say not what I knew!" interrupted the junker, in a choking voice, and covering his face with both his hands; "but give me thy hand, if thou canst, and say--'I am reconciled,' and by the Almighty, who hath struck me with horror, thou shalt see this face no more ere I can say, 'Brother! now hath the great and terrible God forgiven me, as thou hast forgiven me!'"

"Christopher! brother! my father's son!" exclaimed Eric; the tears gushed from his eyes, and he hastened towards his humbled brother with open arms. "Come to my heart! may the merciful Lord forgive thee as I have forgiven thee!" and the brothers sank in each other's arms. "Amen!" said a friendly voice beside them. The king's confessor, the pious Master Petrus de Dacia, who had led the despairing Christopher hither, stepped forth from a niche in the chamber, and laid his hand on their heads in token of blessing.

"This day hath now become the happiest of my life," said Eric, and went arm-in-arm with the junker out of the private chamber.

CONCLUSION.

Among the crowd of knights and courtiers who waited the next morning in the antechamber of Helsingborg castle to offer their congratulations to the king and the young queen, were present two influential and well known persons, who had recently landed on the quay. The one was an aged personage of short stature, with an extraordinary degree of energy and determination in his stern yet animated countenance; he was the renowned statesman John Little, who had made so long a sojourn at the Romish court. A tall powerful man stood at his side, in a splendid knight's dress, with a roll of documents in his hand. He was the king's former master in arms, Drost Peter Hessel. They had both arrived from Rome, with important tidings for the king. They were instantly admitted, and those without heard that they were most joyously welcomed. Among the glad voices in the king's chamber were recognised those of the queen and the Drost's noble consort, the Lady Ingé.

Close to the door of the antechamber stood Morten the cook, in his pilgrim's dress, with old Jeppé the fisherman and his daughter at his side. He was regarded with curiosity. At first he appeared somewhat uneasy and dejected; but when the king was heard to speak with animation, and in a tone of satisfaction, Morten drew himself up fearlessly, and paced up and down with an air of importance among the distinguished assemblage.

The papers which Drost Hessel had under his arm contained proofs of Archbishop Grand's treachery and connection with the outlaws; they were copies of the same important documents which Junker Christopher, at the time of the archbishop's imprisonment, had removed from the sacristy chest of Lund and brought to Wordingborg. There the dexterous cook had contrived to possess himself of them shortly before he abetted the archbishop's flight from Sjöborg. His object had been to restore them to Grand; but as the archbishop had broken the promise he had made to his deliverer while on the rope-ladder of freeing the king and country from ban and interdict, Morten determined to retain these documents, and while on his pilgrimage to bring them to Chancellor Martinus and the Danish embassy at Rome, where they mainly contributed to justify, or at least excuse the king's conduct towards Grand, and ultimately to depose him from the Archbishopric of Lund.

Morten was soon summoned to the king. When he returned he gaily threw aside his pilgrim's mantle, seized the pretty fishermaid with the one hand and Jeppé with the other, and skipped with them down the hall staircase, as a free and wealthy man, to celebrate his wedding at Gilléleie.

Notwithstanding that the suit against Archbishop Grand, and the dangerous differences with the Romish see, were not adjusted until after the lapse of several years, and at the cost of considerable sacrifices, King Eric succeeded at length in obtaining the deposition of Grand, and the instalment of another and more peaceable prelate in the archiepiscopal chair of Lund; in the

person of the formerly dreaded Isarnus, who had now, however, learned from the fate of his predecessor how to use his spiritual authority with moderation, and wisely refrained from all interference with state affairs. By the final treaty with the papal court the wanting dispensation of kindred was granted to the king, and his marriage with the noble Princess Ingeborg of Sweden declared to be perfectly valid.

Three weeks after the king's nuptials, the faithful Drost Aagé was again seen at his side; but he was unalterably grave and pensive. It was not until some years afterwards that he was freed from the ban, together with the king. He never alluded to his journey with Marsk Stig's daughters. Some affirmed that he had only found the elder sister in the prison-tower of Wordingborg, but that the younger had fled. Others insisted they had seen her among the masquers at Helsingborg castle, on the evening of the king's bridal. It was also rumoured that she had been carried off by a merman. A ballad, relating this supposed adventure, has been preserved among the people. The merman was affirmed by some to have been the outlawed Kaggé, who was shortly afterwards seized and slain by the burghers at Viborg. Meanwhile the beautiful and pathetic ballad, which still preserves the memory of these sisters, bears witness to their having traversed Sweden as fugitives, and having found protection, for the first time, at the court of Norway. According to this ballad the youngest of these exiled sisters was afterwards married to a Norwegian prince; probably an illegitimate son of King Haco.

This popular ballad, as well as many obscure traditions, and what the chronicles record of the latter part of the thirteenth century, bear striking testimony to that troublous time, in which the unhappy consequences of the last regicide in Denmark, hovered, like restless demons, over throne and country, and cast so deep a shade even over the happiest days of the upright King Eric Ericson.

FOOTNOTES

[Footnote 1](#): Pebersvend (literally pepper 'prentice) is the term still jocosely applied to elderly bachelors in Denmark.

[Footnote 2](#): The name of a part of Russia in the middle ages.

[Footnote 3](#): Frodé according to the Icelandic historians, the third king of Denmark, surnamed "The Peaceful," although he seems rather to have deserved the title of "The Victorious," as he is said to have brought Sweden, Hungary, England, and Ireland under his sway. The history of Frodé as related by the marvel-loving Saxo Grammaticus, contains, as might be expected from the writer and the age, no slight mixture of fable.--*Translator*.

[Footnote 4](#): Snorro Sturlesen, born 1178, died 1241, the author of the "Heims Kringla," or the history of the Norwegian kings, and the compiler of the Younger Edda, also called "Snorro's Edda." The Elder Edda is the compilation of Sæmund Frodé, or "the learned," who was born in Iceland, 1054, and died a priest at Oddé, in his 78th year. Both the Eddas are collections of religious and mythic poems, and the chief sources whence the knowledge of the northern mythology is derived. The Elder Edda was first known in the middle of the 17th century. It has been translated into Danish by Professor Finn Magnussen.--*Translator*.

[Footnote 5](#): Snorro Sturlesen, the Norwegian historian, thus portrays the character of this monarch.--"King Olaf was a noble prince, possessed of shining virtues and great piety. When driven by Knud (Canute the Great) from Norway, and compelled to take refuge with Jarislaf of Moscow, he bore his exile with patience, and spent his time in prayer and acts of devotion. While in this situation his peace of mind was only disturbed by the apprehension lest the Christian faith, which he had so carefully implanted in Norway, should suffer from the kingdom having passed into the hands of other rulers, and it was chiefly on this account that he made an attempt to regain his crown, and with that purpose once more repaired to Norway, where he was received by many good and true men who desired his return, and were ready to sacrifice their lives in his service. The armies of Canute and Olaf met at Sticklestad in the year 1030. Ere the engagement began, Olaf addressed his troops in a pious and touching discourse. He ordered them to make use of one common watchword, and shout when they attacked the enemy, 'On! Christian men! Chosen men! Kings men!' The battle was fought with equal bravery and obstinacy on both sides, but at last Olaf was slain by one of his own traitorous subjects, who had deserted to Canute's army. Vide *Holberg's Hist. of Denmark*, vol. i.--*Translator*.

[Footnote 6](#): An old Danish ballad entitled "King Birger and his brothers," records the crimes of the former, and the melancholy fate of the Swedish dukes. After years of strife between the brothers, Sweden was at last partitioned off into three kingdoms, and possessed three sovereigns and three distinct courts. In 1317, King Birger invited his brothers to visit him at the castle of Nykioping, on the plea of renewing the fraternal intercourse which had been so

unhappily interrupted, and the dukes unsuspectingly accepted the king's invitation. On the evening of their arrival, however, after being received with the greatest cordiality by the king, and sumptuously entertained, they were seized by his order, bound hand and foot, and thrown into the dungeon of the castle. This act of treachery soon became known, and the king, fearing the interference of the people in behalf of the dukes, fled from the castle, having first thrown the keys of the dungeon into the deepest part of the river, and given orders that the doors of the dungeon should not be opened until he returned. On his departure Nykioping was instantly besieged, and crowds flocked thither from all quarters, but ere the castle was taken the dukes had expired. Eric died on the third day of his captivity, from the wounds he had received in defending himself against his captors; but Valdemar lived till the twelfth day without food.--
Translator.

[Footnote 7](#): Holberg thus relates the fate of this able and upright statesman:--"After a long period of civil war and discord, the feud between King Birger and his brothers was at last accommodated, through the mediation of their mutual counsellors; but on the conclusion of the treaty, the Swedish dukes did their utmost to bring Thorkild Knudsen into discredit with the king, to whom he was represented by them as having been the instigator of the disturbances which had prevailed throughout the country, as well as having stirred up strife among the members of the royal family, and as having abused the confidence of the crown. King Birger, who was glad of any pretext for escaping the blame he himself deserved, turned his back upon his faithful servant, and permitted him to be brought to trial. Thorkild ably defended his rightful cause, but his innocence and eloquence were of no avail. He had been marked out as a victim, was doomed to death as a traitor, and beheaded at Stockholm in the year 1306. It was not without difficulty that his friends obtained permission to inter the body in consecrated ground. Thorkild's treacherous foe, Drost Johan Brunké, continued his career of political intrigue until the year 1318, when he and his partizans were seized in the king's absence, by the opposite faction, and put to death. Brunké's body was exposed on the wheel on a hill without the city, which since that time has borne the name of Brunké's Hill." Vide *Holberg's Hist. of Denmark*, vol. i.--*Trans.*

[Footnote 8](#): The subject of the ballad of Ribéhuus is the taking of the castle of Ribé, which had fallen into the hands of the outlaws during the minority of Eric, by a party of fifty loyal knights, headed by Count Gerhard and Drost Hessel. In the middle ages it was not unusual for the knights to join in the public festivities of the burghers. At one of these, the king's knights took the opportunity of joining a dance by torch lights to be led according to usage through the streets up to the castle. The ballad describes the long row of dancers, as being kept in a straight file by a chain of wreathed green leaves and roses. Each knight held a lady in his left hand and a lighted torch in the right, their drawn swords being carefully concealed under their scarlet mantles. The castle bridge was lowered and the gates thrown open to admit the dancers by permission of the commandant, who in a few minutes found himself a prisoner, and the castle (which was wholly unprepared for the attack) in the hands of King Eric's adherents. The ballad concludes as follows;--

"Thus danced we into the castle hall,
With unsheathed sword 'neath scarlet pall,
The castle it is won!
Ne'er saw I before a castle by chance,
Won by rose-wreaths and the knightly dance,
For young Eric the feat was done!"--*Translator.*

[Footnote 9](#): Bohemia.

[Footnote 10](#): Rosmer. An allusion to an old Danish ballad, the hero of which is called "Rosmer the Merman."--*Translator.*

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK KING ERIC AND THE OUTLAWS, VOL. 3 ***

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