

CHAPTER XXI

Upon the Moor

Throughout the festivities which followed each other, day by day, my Lady Dunstanwolde was queen of every revel. 'Twas she who led the adventurous party who visited the gipsy encampment in the glen by moonlight, and so won the heart of the old gipsy queen that she took her to her tent and instructed her in the mysteries of spells and potions. She walked among them as though she had been bred and born one of their tribe, and came forth from one tent carrying in her arms a brown infant, and showed it to the company, laughing like a girl and making pretty sounds at the child when it stared at her with great black eyes like her own, and shook at it all her rings, which she stripped from her fingers, holding them in the closed palm of her hand to make a rattle of. She stirred the stew hanging to cook over the camp-fire, and begged a plate of it for each of the company, and ate her own with such gay appetite as recalled to Osmonde the day he had watched her on the moor; and the gipsy women stood by showing their white teeth in their pleasure, and the gipsy men hung about with black shining eyes fixed on her in stealthy admiration. She stood by the fire in the light of the flame, having fantastically wound a scarlet scarf about her head, and 'twas as though she might have been a gipsy queen herself.

"And indeed," she said, as they rode home, "I have often enough thought I should like to be one of them; and when I was a child, and was in a passion, more than once planned to stain my face and run away to the nearest camp I could come upon. Indeed, I think I was always a rebel and loved wild, lawless ways."

When she said it my lord Duke, who was riding near, looked straight before him, with face which had belied his laugh, had any seen it. He was thinking that he could well imagine what a life a man might lead with her, wandering about the thick green woods and white roads and purple moors, tramping, side by side, in the sweet wind and bright sunshine, and even the soft falling rain, each owner of a splendid body which defied the weather and laughed at fatigue. To carry their simple meal with them and stop to eat it joyously together under a hedge, to lie under the shade of a broad branched tree to rest when the sun was hot and hear the skylarks singing in the blue sky, and then at night-time to sit at the door of a tent and watch the stars and tell each other fanciful stories of them, while the red camp-fire danced and glowed in the dark. Of no other woman could he have had such a wild fancy--the others were too frail and delicate to be a man's comrades out of doors; but she, who stood so straight and strong, who moved like a young deer, who could swing along across the moors for a day without fatigue, who had the eye of a hawk and a spirit so gay and untiring--a man might range the world with her and know joy every moment. 'Twas ordained that all she did or said should seem a call to him and should

bring visions to him, and there was many an hour when he thanked Heaven she seemed so free from fault, since if she had had one he could not have seen it, or if he had seen, might have loved it for her sake. But she had none, it seemed, and despite all her strange past was surely more noble than any other woman. She was so true--he told himself--so loyal and so high in her honour of the old man who loved her. Had she even been innocently light in her bearing among the men who flocked about her, she might have given her lord many a bitter hour, and seemed regardless of his dignity; but she could rule and restrain all, howsoever near they were to the brink of folly. As for himself, Osmonde thought, all his days he had striven to be master of himself, and felt he must remain so or die; but he could have worshipped her upon his knees in gratitude that no woman's vanity tempted her to use her powers and loveliness to shake him in his hard won calmness and lure him to her feet. He was but man and human, and vaunted himself upon being no more.

There had been for some months much talk in town of the rapid downfall of the whilom favourite of Fashion, Sir John Oxon. But a few weeks before the coming happiness of the old Earl of Dunstanwolde was made known to the world, there had been a flurry of gossip over a rumour that Sir John, whose fortunes were in a precarious condition, was about to retrieve them by a rich marriage. A certain Mistress Isabel Beaton, a young Scotch lady, had been for a year counted the greatest fortune in the market, and besieged by every spendthrift or money-seeker the

town knew. Not only was she heiress to fine estates in Scotland, but to wealth-yielding sugar plantations in the West Indies. She was but twenty and had some good looks and an amiable temper, though with her fortune, had she been ugly as Hecate, she would have had more suitors than she could manage with ease. But she was not easily pleased, or of a susceptible nature, and 'twas known she had refused suitor after suitor, among them men of quality and rank, the elegant and decorous Viscount Wilford, among others, having knelt at her feet, and--having proffered her the boon of his lofty manner and high accomplishments --having been obliged to rise a discarded man, to his amazement and discomfort. The world she lived in was of the better and more respectable order, and Jack Oxon had seen little of it, finding it not gay and loose enough for his tastes, but suddenly, for reasons best known to himself and to his anxious mother, he began to appear at its decorous feasts. 'Twas said of him he "had a way" with women and could make them believe anything until they found him out, either through lucky chance or because he had done with them. He could act the part of tender, honest worshipper, of engaging penitent, of impassioned and romantic lover until a woman old and wise enough to be his mother might be entrapped by him, aided as he was by his beauty, his large blue eyes, his merry wit, and the sweetest voice in the world. So it seemed that Mistress Beaton, who was young and had lived among better men, took him for one and found her fancy touched by him. His finest allurements he used, verses he writ, songs he made and sang, poetic homilies on disinterested passion he preached, while the world looked on and his boon companions laid wagers. At last those who had wagered

on him won their money, those who had laid against him lost, for 'twas made known publicly that he had won the young lady's heart, and her hand and fortune were to be given to him.

This had happened but a week or two before he had appeared at the ball which celebrated young Colin's coming of age, and also by chance the announcement of the fine match to be made of Mistress Clorinda Wildairs. 'Twas but like him, those who knew him said, that though he himself was on the point of making a marriage, he should burn with fury and jealous rage, because the beauty he had dangled about had found a husband and a fortune. Some said he had loved Mistress Clorinda with such passion that he would have wed her penniless if she would have taken him, others were sure he would have married no woman without fortune, whatsoever his love for her, and that he had but laid dishonest siege to Mistress Clo and been played with and flouted by her. But howsoever this might have been, he watched her that night, black with rage, and went back to town in an evil temper. Perhaps 'twas this temper undid him, and being in such mood he showed the cloven foot, for two weeks later all knew the match was broken off, Mistress Beaton went back to her estates in Scotland, his creditors descended upon him in hordes, such of his properties as could be seized were sold, and in a month his poor, distraught mother died of a fever brought on by her disappointment and shame.

Another story was told in solution of the sudden breaking off the match, and 'twas an ugly one and much believed.

A wild young cousin of the lady's, one given to all the adventures of a man about town, had gone to Tyburn, as was much the elegant fashion, to see a hanging. The victim was a girl of sixteen, to suffer for the murder of her infant, and as she went to the gallows she screamed aloud in frenzy the name of the child's father. The young scapegrace looking on, 'twas said, turned pale on hearing her and went into the crowd, asking questions. Two hours later he appeared at his cousin's house and, calling for her guardian, held excited speech with him.

"Mistress Isabel fell like a stone after ten minutes' talk with them," 'twas told, "and looked like one when she got into her travelling-coach to drive away next day. Sir John and his mother had both raged and wept at her door to be let in, but she would see or speak to neither of them."

From that time it seemed that all was over for Sir John. He was far worse than poor and in debt, he was out of fashion, and for a man like himself this meant not only humiliation, but impotent rage. Ladies no longer ogled him and commanded the stopping of their chairs that they might call him to them with coquettish reproaches that he neither came to their assemblies nor bowed and waved hands to them as he sate on the stage at the playhouse; beaux no longer joined him in the coffee-house or on the Mall to ask his opinion of this new beauty or that, and admire the cut of his coat, or the lace on his steenkirk; the new beauty's successes would not be advanced by his opinion--a man whom

tradespeople dun from morn till night has few additions to his wardrobe and wears few novelties in lace. Profligacy and defiance of all rules of healthful living had marred his beauty and degraded his youth; his gay wit and spirit had deserted him and left him suspicious and bitter. He had been forced to put down his equipages and change his fashionable lodgings for cheaper ones; when he lounged in the park his old acquaintances failed to see him; when he gambled he lost. Downhill he was going, and there was naught to stop him. For one man in England he had, even in his most flourishing days, cherished a distaste--the man who was five inches taller than himself, who was incomparably handsomer, and whose rank was such, that to approach him as an equal would have savoured of presumption. This man, who was indeed my Lord Duke of Osmonde, had irked him from the first, and all the more when he began to realise that for some reason, howsoever often they chanced to be in the same place, it invariably happened that they did not come in contact with each other, Sir John on no occasion being presented to my lord Duke, his Grace on no occasion seeming to observe his presence near him. At the outset this appeared mere accident, but after a few such encounters ending in nothing, Sir John began to guess that 'twas the result of more than mere chancing, and in time to mark that, though he was not clumsily avoided, or in such manner as would leave any room for complaint, my lord Duke forebore to enter into any conversation in which he took part, or to approach any quarter where he was stationed. Once Sir John had even tried the experiment of addressing an acquaintance who stood near his Grace, meaning to lead up to a meeting, but though the Duke did not move from the place where he stood, in a

few moments he had, with ease and naturalness, gathered about him a circle which 'twould have been difficult indeed to enter. Sir John went away livid, and hated and sneered at him from that hour, all the more bitterly, because no hatred was a weapon against him, no sneer could do more than glance from him, leaving no scratch. 'Twas plain enough, the gossips said, that Sir John's passion for her ladyship of Dunstanwolde had not been a dead thing when he paid his court to the heiress; if for a little space he had smothered it from necessity's sake, it had begun to glow again as soon as he had been left a free man, and when my lady came to town and Court, surrounded by the halo of rank and wealth and beauty, the glow had become a flame he could not hide, for 'twas burning in his eyes and his every look spoke of it as if with bitterness.

It scarcely seemed a flame of love; 'twas to be seen so often when he looked fierce and resentful.

"'Tis more than half envy of her," said one wise lady, who had passed through a long life of varied experiences. "'Tis more hate than love. His star having set, it galls him that hers so rises. And as for her, she scarce will deign to see him."

And this was very true, for she had a way of passing him by as if he did not live. And none but herself knew that sometimes, when he stood near, he spoke low to her words she disdained to answer. There were many bitter things she held in mind which were secret from all others

upon earth, she thought, but from himself and her who had been Clo Wildairs in days gone by, when, as it now seemed to her, she had been another woman living in another world. There were things she understood which the world did not, and she understood full well the meaning of his presence when she, with the ducal party, came face to face with him at the great ball given in the county town when the guests were gathered at Camylott.

The night was a festal one for the county, the ball being given in honour of a great party movement, his Grace and his visitors driving from Camylott to add to the brilliance of the festivities. The Mayor and his party received them with ceremony, the smaller gentry, who had come attired in their richest, gathered in groups gazing, half admiring, half envious of the more stately splendour of the Court mantua-makers and jewellers. The officers from the garrison assumed a martial air of ease as the cortége advanced up the ballroom, and every man's eyes were drawn towards one tall goddess with a shining circlet set on raven-black braids of hair coiled high, yet twisted tight, as if their length and thickness could only be massed close enough by deftest skill.

"'Tis said 'tis near six feet long," whispered one matron to another; "and a rake at Court waghered he would show a lock of it in town some day, but he came back without it."

Sir John Oxon had come with a young officer, and stood near him as the

ducal party approached. The Countess of Dunstanwolde was on his Grace's arm, and Sir John made a step forward. Her ladyship turned her eyes slowly, attracted by the movement of a figure so near her; she did not start nor smile, but let her glance rest quiet on his face and curtsied calmly; my lord Duke bowed low with courtly gravity, and they passed on.

When the ball was at an end, and the party set out on its return to Camylott, the Duke did not set out with the rest, he being at the last moment unexpectedly detained. This he explained with courtly excuses, saying that he would not be long held, and would mount and follow in an hour.

He stood upon the threshold to watch the last chariot leave the courtyard, and then he made his way to a certain supper-room, where a lingering party of officers and guests were drinking. These being of the young and riotous sort, there was much loud talk and laughter and toasting of ladies, sometimes far from respectfully, and Sir John Oxon, who was flushed with wine, was the central figure, and toasted her ladyship of Dunstanwolde with an impudent air.

"'Tis not my lady I drink to," he cried, "but Clo Wildairs--Clo astride a hunter and with her black hair looped under her hat. Clo! Clo!" And with a shout the company drank to the toast.

"There was a lock of that black hair clipt from her head once when she knew it not," Sir John cried next. "'Twas lost, by God, but 'twill be found again. Drink to its finding."

Then my lord Duke stepped forward and, passing the open door, went through the house and out beyond the entrance of the court and waited in a place where any who came forth must pass. He had but gone within to see that Sir John had not yet taken his departure.

There be deeps in the nature of human beings which in some are never stirred, possibilities of heroism, savagery, passion, or crime, and when the hour comes which searches these far secret caverns and brings their best and worst to light, strange things may be seen. On the night, at Dunstanwolde, when he had fought his battle alone, my lord Duke had realised the upheaval in his being of frenzies and lawlessness which were strange indeed to him, and which he had afterwards pondered deeply upon, tracing the germs of them to men whose blood had come down to him through centuries, and who had been untamed, ruthless savages in the days when a man carried his life in his hand and staked it recklessly for any fury or desire.

Now as he stood and waited, his face was white except that on one cheek was a spot almost like a scarlet stain of blood; his eyes seemed changed to blue-black, and in each there was a light which flickered like a point of flame and made him seem not himself, but some new relentless being, for far deeps of him had been shaken and searched

once more.

"I wait here like a brigand," he said to himself with a harsh laugh,
"or a highwayman--but he shall not pass."

Then Sir John crossed the courtyard and came forward humming, and his
Grace of Osmonde advanced and met him.

"Sir John Oxon," he said, and stood still and made a grave bow.

John Oxon started and then stood still also, staring at him, his face
flushed and malignant. His Grace of Osmonde was it who had gazed above
his head throughout the evening, when all the country world might see!

"Your Grace deigns to address me at last," he said.

"Hitherto there has been no need that either should address the other,"
answers my lord Duke in a steady voice. "At this moment the necessity
arises. Within there"--with a gesture--"I heard you use a lady's name
impudently. Earlier in the evening I also chanced to hear you so use
it; I was in the ball-room. So I remained behind and waited to have
speech with you. Do not speak it again in like manner."

"Must I not!" said Sir John, his blue eyes glaring. "On Clo Wildairs's
name was set no embargo, God knows. Is there a reason why a man should
be squeamish of a sudden over my Lady Dunstanwolde's? 'Tis but the

difference of a title and an old husband."

"And of a man made her kinsman by marriage," said my lord Duke, "who can use a sword."

"Let him use it, by God!" cried Sir John, and insensate with rage he laid his hand upon his own as if he would draw it.

"He will use it and is prepared to do so, or he would not be here," the Duke answered. "We are not two Mohocks brawling in the streets, but two gentlemen, one of whom must give a lesson to the other. Would you have witnesses?"

"Curse it, I care for none!" flamed Sir John. "Let the best man give his lesson now. 'Tis not this night alone I would be even for."

The Duke measured him from head to foot, in every inch of sinew.

"I am the better man," he said; "I tell you beforehand."

Sir John flung out a jeering laugh.

"Prove it," he cried. "Prove it. Now is your time."

"There is open moor a short distance away," says his Grace. "Shall we go there?"

So they set out, walking side by side, neither speaking a word. The night was still and splendid, and just upon its turn; the rich dark-blue of the Heavens was still hung with the spangles of the stars, but soon they would begin to dim, and the deepness of the blue to pale for dawn. A scented freshness was in the air, and was just stirring with that light faint wind which so often first foretells the coming of the morning. When, in but a few minutes, the two men stood stript of their upper garments to their shirts, the open purple heath about them, the jewelled sky above, this first fresh scent of day was in their lungs and nostrils. That which stirred John Oxon to fury and at the same time shook his nerve, though he owned it not to himself, and would have died rather, was the singular composure of the man who was his opponent. Every feature, every muscle, every fibre of him seemed embodied stillness, and 'twas not that the mere physical members of him were still, but that the power which was himself, his will, his thought, his motion was in utter quiet, and of a quiet which was deadly in its significance and purpose. 'Twas that still strength which knows its power and will use it, and ever by its presence fills its enemy with impotent rage.

With such rage it filled John Oxon as he beheld it, and sneered. He had heard rumours of the wonders of his Grace's sword-play, that from boyhood he had excelled and delighted in it, that in the army he had won renown, through mere experiments of his skill, that he was as certain of his weapon as an acrobat of his least feat--but 'twas not

this which maddened the other man but the look in his steady eye.

"You are the bigger man of the two," he jeered, impudently, "but give me your lesson and shut my mouth on Clo Wildairs--if you can."

"I am the better man," says my lord Duke, "and I will shut it. But I will not kill you."

Then they engaged, and such a fight began as has not been often seen, for such a battle is more of spirit than body, and is more like to be fought alone between two enemies whose antagonism is part of being itself, than to be fought in the presence of others whose nearness would but serve to disturb it.

John Oxon had fought duels before, through women who were but his despised playthings, through braggadocio, through drunken folly, through vanity and spite--but never as he fought this night on the broad heath, below the paling stars. This man he hated, this man he would have killed by any thrust he knew, if the devil had helped him. There is no hatred, to a mind like his, such as is wakened by the sight of another's gifts and triumphs--all the more horrible is it if they are borne with nobleness. To have lost all--to see another possess with dignity that thing one has squandered! And for this frenzy there was more than one cause. Clo Wildairs! He could have cursed aloud. My Lady Dunstanwolde! He could have raved like a madman. She! And a Duke here--this Duke would shut his mouth and give him a lesson. He lunged

forward and struck wildly; my lord Duke parried his point as if he played with the toy of a child, and in the clear starlight his face looked a beautiful mask, and did not change howsoever furious his opponent's onslaught, or howsoever wondrous his own play. For wondrous it was, and before they had been engaged five minutes John Oxon was a maddened creature, driven so, not only by his own fury, but by seeing a certain thing--which was that this man could kill him if he would, but would not. When he had lost his wits and made his senseless lunge, his Grace had but parried when he might have driven his point home; he did this again and again while their swords clashed and darted. The stamp of their feet sounded dull and heavy on the moor, and John Oxon's breath came short and hissing. As he grew more wild the other grew more cool and steady, and made a play which Sir John could have shrieked out at seeing. What was the man doing? 'Twas as if he would show him where he could strike and did not deign to. He felt his devil's touch in a dozen places, and not one scratch. There he might have laid open his face from brow to chin! Why did he touch him here, there, at one point and another, and deal no wound? Gods! 'twas fighting not with a human thing but with a devil! 'Twas like fighting in a Roman arena, to be played with as a sport until human strength could bear no more; 'twas as men used to fight together hundreds of years ago. His breath grew short, his panting fiercer, the sweat poured down him, his throat was dry, and he could feel no more the fresh stirring of the air of the dawning. He would not stop to breathe, he had reached the point in his insensate fury when he could have flung himself upon the rapier's point and felt it cleave his breastbone and start through his back with the

joy of hell, if he could have struck the other man deep but once. The thought made him start afresh; he fought like a thousand devils, his point leaping and flashing, and coming down with a crash; he stamped and gasped and shouted.

"Curse you," he cried; "come on!"

"Do I stand back?" said my lord Duke, and gave him such play as made him see the air red as blood, and think he tasted the salt of blood in his dry mouth; his muscles were wrenched with his violence, and this giant devil moved as swift as if he had but just begun. Good God! he was beaten! Good God! by this enemy who would not kill him or be killed. He uttered a sound which was a choking shriek and hurled himself forward. 'Twas his last stroke and he knew it, and my lord Duke struck his point aside and it flew in the air, and Sir John fell backwards broken, conquered, exhausted, but an unwounded man. And he fell full length and lay upon the heather, its purple blooms crushed against his cheek; and the sky was of a sweet pallor just about to glow, and the first bird of morning sprang up in it to sing.

"Damn you!" he gasped. "Damn you," and lay there, his blue eyes glaring, his chest heaving as though 'twould burst, his nostrils dilated with his laboured, tortured puffs of breath. Thereupon, as he lay prostrate, for he was too undone a man to rise, he saw in his Grace of Osmonde's eyes the two points of light which were like ruthless flames and yet burned so still.

And his Grace, standing near him, leaned upon his sword, looking down.

"Do you understand?" he said.

"That you are the better sword--Yes!" shrieked Sir John, and added curses it were useless to repeat.

"That I will have you refrain from speaking that lady's name?"

"Force me to it, if you can," Sir John raved at him. "You can but kill me!"

"I will not kill you," said the Duke, leaning a little nearer and the awful light in his eyes growing intenser--for awful it was and made his pale face deadly. "How I can force you to it I have shown you--and brought you here to prove. For that, I meant that we should fight alone. Myself, I knew, I could hold from killing you, howsoever my blood might tempt me. You, I knew, I could keep from killing me, which I knew you would have done if you could, by foul means if not fair. I would not have it said I was forced to fight to shield that lady's name--so I would have no witness if it could be helped. And you will keep the encounter secret, for I command you."

Sir John started up, leaning upon his elbow, catching his breath, and his wicked face a white flame.

"Curse you!" he shrieked again, blaspheming at a thing he had not dreamed of, and which came upon him like a thunderbolt. "Curse your soul--you love her!"

The deadly light danced--he saw it--in his Grace's eyes, but his countenance was a marble mask with no human quiver of flesh in any muscle of it.

"I command you," he went on; "having proved I can enforce. I have the blood of savage devils in me, come down to me through many hundred years. All my life I have kept them at bay. Until late I did not know how savage they were and what they could make me feel. I could do to you, as you lie there, things a man who is of this century, and sane, cannot do. You know I can strike where I will. If you slight that lady's name again I will not kill"--he raised himself from his sword and stood his full height, the earliest gold of the sun shining about him--"I will not kill you, but--so help me God!--I will fight with you once more, and I will leave you so maimed and so disfigured that you can woo no woman to ruin again and jest at her shame and agony with no man--for none can bear to look at you without a shudder--and you will lie and writhe to be given the coup de grace." He lifted the hilt of his sword and kissed it. "That I swear," he said, "by this first dawning of God's sun."

When later my lord Duke returned to the town and got his horse and rode across the moors the shortest road to Camylott, he felt suddenly that his body was slightly trembling. He looked down at his hands and saw they were unsteady, and a strange look--as of a man slowly awakening from a dream--- came over his face. 'Twas this he felt--as if the last two hours he had lived in a dream or had been another man than himself, perhaps some bloody de Mertoun, who had for ages been dry, light dust. The devils which had been awake in him had been devils so awful as he well knew--not devils to possess and tear a man in the days of good Queen Anne, but such as, in times long past, possessed those who slew, and hacked, and tortured, and felt an enemy a prey to be put to peine forte et dure. He drew his glove across his brow and found it damp. This dream had taken hold upon him three hours before, when, standing by chance near a group about John Oxon, he had heard him sneer as the old Earl went by with his lady upon his arm. From that moment his brain had held but one thought--this man should not go away until he had taught him a thing. He would teach him, proving to him that there was a power which he might well fear, and which would show no mercy, not even the mercy mere death would show, but would hold over his vile soul a greater awfulness. But he had danced his minuets and gavottes with my Lady Dunstanwolde as well as with other fair ones, and the country gentry had looked on and applauded him in their talk, telling each other of his fortunes, and of how he had had a wound at Blenheim, distinguished himself elsewhere, and set the world wondering because after his home-coming he took no Duchess instead of choosing one, as all expected. While they had so talked and he had danced he had made

his plan, and his devils had roused themselves and risen. And then he had made his excuses to his party and watched the coaches drive away, and had gone back to seek John Oxon. Now he rode back over the moorland, and the day was awake and he was awake too. He rode swiftly through the gorse and heather, scattering the dewdrops as he went, thousands of dewdrops there were, myriads of pinkish purple heath-bells, and some pure white ones, and yellow gorse blossoms which smelt of honey, and birds that trilled, and such a morning fragrance in the air as made his heart ache for vague longing. Ah, if all had been but as it might have been, for there were the fair grey towers of Camylott rising before him, and he was riding homeward--and, oh, God, if he had been riding home to the arms of the most heaven-sweet woman in the world--heaven-sweet not for her mere loveliness' sake, but because she was to him as Eve had been to Adam--the one woman God had made.

His heart swelled and throbbed with thinking it as he rode up the avenue, and its throbbing almost stopped when he approached the garden and saw a tall white figure standing alone by a fountain and looking down. He sprang from his horse and turned it loose to reach its stable, and went forward feeling as if a dream had begun again, but this time a strange, sweet one.

Her long white draperies hung loose about her, so that she looked like some statue; her hands were crossed on her chest and her chin fell upon them, while her eyes looked straight before into the water. She was

pale as he had never seen her look before, her lip had a weary curve and droop, and under her eyes were shadows. How young she was--what a girl, for all her height and bearing! and though he knew her years so well he had never thought on her youth before. Would God he might have swept her to his breast, crushing her in his arms and plunging into her eyes, for as she turned and raised them to him he saw tears.

"Your ladyship," he exclaimed.

"My lord has been ill," she said. "He asked for you, and when he fell asleep I came to get the morning air, hoping your Grace might come. I must go back to him. Come, your Grace, with me."