

CHAPTER LVI

A Scene In Tee Land Of Warwicks, Or King-Makers

Wending our way from the temple, we were accompanied by a fluent, obstreperous wight, one Znobbi, a runaway native of Porpheero, but now an enthusiastic inhabitant of Vivenza.

"Here comes our great chief!" he cried. "Behold him! It was I that had a hand in making him what he is!"

And so saying, he pointed out a personage, no way distinguished, except by the tattooing on his forehead--stars, thirty in number; and an uncommonly long spear in his hand. Freely he mingled with the crowd.

"Behold, how familiar I am with him!" cried Znobbi, approaching, and pitcher-wise taking him by the handle of his face.

"Friend," said the dignitary, "thy salute is peculiar, but welcome. I reverence the enlightened people of this land."

"Mean-spirited hound!" muttered Media, "were I him, I had impaled that audacious plebeian."

"There's a Head-Chief for you, now, my fine fellow!" cried Znobbi.

"Hurrah! Three cheers! Ay, ay! All kings here--all equal. Every thing's in common."

Here, a bystander, feeling something grazing his side, looked down; and perceived Znobbi's hand in clandestine vicinity to the pouch at his girdle-end.

Whereupon the crowd shouted, "A thief! a thief!" And with a loud voice the starred chief cried--"Seize him, people, and tie him to yonder tree."

And they seized, and tied him on the spot.

"Ah," said Media, "this chief has something to say, after all; he pinions a king at a word, though a plebeian takes him by the nose. Beshrew me, I doubt not, that spear of his, though without a tassel, is longer and sharper than mine."

"There's not so much freedom here as these freemen think," said Babbalanja, turning; "I laugh and admire."