

THE  
HISTORY

OF THE

King and the Cobler,

IN TWO PARTS



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THE  
HISTORY of the KING and the COBLER.

PART I.

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C H A P. I.

*How King Henry the Eighth used to visit the Watches in the City, and how he became acquainted with a merry jovial Cobler.*

**I**T was the custom of King Henry the Eighth to walk late in the night into the City disguised, to take notice how the Constables and Watches performed their duty, not only in carefully guarding the City gates but also diligently watching the inward parts of the City, that so they might prevent those disturbances and casualties which often heppen in great and populous Citier in the night-time; this he did oftentimes without the least discovery who he was, returning home to Whitehall early in the morning.

Once in his return, coming through the Strand he took notice of a certain Cobler who was constantly up at work, whistling and singing every morning he resolved to see him, and to be acquainted with him. In order to which, he immediately knocks off the heel of his shoe, by striking it against a stone; having done, he burre'd at the Cobler's stall. Who's there cries the Cobler. A friend, said the King. On which the Cobler opened the stall-door, and the king asked him, if he could put on his heel? Yes, that I can says the Cobler; come in, honest fellow, and sit thy  
dov

down by me, and I will do it for you straight.—  
The Cobler scraped his awls and old shoes to one side,  
to make room for the King to sit by him.

The King being hardly able to forbear laughing  
at the kindness of the Cobler, asked him if there was  
a house hard by which sold a cup of ale, and if the  
people were up. Yes, said the Cobler, there is an Inn  
over the way there, I believe the folks are up for  
the carriers go from thence very early in the morning.  
Then the King borrowed an old shoe of the Cobler,  
and went over to the Inn, desiring the Cobler to bring  
his shoe to him so soon as he had put on the heel again,  
which the Cobler promised to do so making what  
haste he could, to put the heel on, he carried it over  
to the King, saying, Honest blade, here is thy shoe  
again, I'll warrant thee it will not come off again in  
haste. Very well, said the King, what must you have  
for your pains? A couple of pence, answered the  
Cobler. Well, said the King, seeing thou art an honest  
merry fellow, here's a Teaster for thee; come sit thee  
down by me, I will drink a full pot with thee; come,  
here is a good health to the King. With all my heart,  
said the cobbler, I will pledge thee were it in water.

So the Cobler sat down by the King, and was very  
merry, and drank off the liquor freely. He also sung  
some of his merry songs and catches, whereat the  
King laughed heartily, and was very pleasant and  
sociund with the Cobler, telling him withal that his  
name was Harry Tudor, and that he belonged to the  
Court; and if he would come and see him there, he  
would make him very welcome, because he was such  
merry company: and charg'd him to be sure to come,  
and not to forget his name; and to ask any one for  
him about the Court, and they would inform him  
where he was to be found; for, said the King, I am  
very well known there.

Now the Cobler little thought that he was the king, which spoke to him much less that the king's name was Harry Tudor; therefore, with a great deal of confidence he stands up and pulls off his hat, and makes two or three scrapes with his foot, and gives the king many thanks, telling him that he was one of the honestest fellows he ever met with in all his lifetime; and though he never had been at Court, yet it should not be long before he would make a holy day to come and see him.

Whereupon the king pating what they had drunk, would have taken his leave of the cobbler, but the cobbler not being willing to part with the king, took him by the hand, and said By my faith you must not go yet you shall first go and see my poor habitation; I have there a tub of good brown ale, that was never tapp'd; you must needs go and taste of it, for you are the honestest blade that I ever met withal; and I love an honest merry companion with all my heart.

CH A P. II.

*How the Cobler entertained the King in his cellar, and of the disturbance they were like to have had by the Cobler's wife, Joan.*

**T**HE Cobler took the King to a cellar which he had adjoining to the stall, which was handsomely and neatly furnished for a man of his profession. There, said he sit down, you are very welcome but I must desire you to speak softly, for fear of wakening my wife Joan, who lies here hard by (she wing the King a close bed made up neatly at one corner of the cellar, much like unto a closet) for if she should wake, she will make your ears ring again. At which the King did

did laugh heartily, and told him he would be mindful to observe his directions.

Whereupon the cobbler kindled the fire, and fetched out a brown loaf from which he cut a lusty toast, which he set a-baking at the fire: then he brought out his Cheshire cheese. Come, said he, will you at some Cheshire-cheese? There is as good fellowship in eating as in drinking. This made the King admire the honest freedom of the Cobbler. So having eaten a bit, the Cobbler began with a health to all true hearts and merry companions, at which the King smiled, saying, Good merry friend, I'll pledge thee.

In this manner they eat together, until it was almost break of day. The Cobbler being very free of his liquor, and delighting the King with several of his old stories, in so much that the king was highly pleased with the manner of the Cobbler's entertainment; when on a sudden the Cobbler's wife, Joan began to awake. What, says the Cobbler, you must be gone, my wife Joan begins to grumble, she will awake presently, and I would not for half the shoes in my shop she should find you here. So taking the King by the hand he led him up stairs, saying, Farewel honest blade, it shall not be long before I make a holiday, and come to see thee at Court.— You shall be kindly welcome, replied the king.

So they parted, the King on his way to Whitehall, and the Cobbler to his cellar, and there putting all things to rights, before his wife Joan got up, began to work again, whistling and singing as merry as he used to do, being much satisfied that he happened on so good and jovial a companion, still caressing himself in his thoughts, how merry he should be when he came to Court.

## C H A P. III.

*How the Cobler prepared himself to go to Court, and how he was dressed out, after the best manner, by his wife Joan.*

**N**OW as soon as the King came home, he sent orders out about the Court, that if any one enquired for him by the name of Harry Tudor, they should immediately bring the person before him, whatever he was, without any further examination of him.

Now, the Cobler thought every day a month, till he should be at Court, to see his new acquaintance; and was much troubled how he should get leave of his wife Joan, for he could not go without her knowledge. by reason he did resolve to make himself as fine as he could, and his wife always kept the key of his holiday cloaths.

Whereupon, in an evening, as they sat at supper, finding her in a very good humour, he began to lay open his mind to her, telling her the whole story of their acquaintance, he repeating it over and over again, that he was the heartiest fellow that ever he had met with. Husband, quoth she, because you have been so ingenious as to tell me the whole truth, I will give thee leave to make a holiday for this once; you shall go to the Court, and I will make you as fine as I can.

So it was agreed that he should go the next day, whereupon Joan rose betimes the next morning, to brush up her husband's holiday cloathes; and to make him as fine as she could, washed and ironed the laced band, and made his shoes shine, that he might see his face in them. Having done this, she made her husband rise and pull off his shirt, then she washed him with warm water from head to foot, putting on him a clean shirt; afterwards she dressed him in his holiday clothes, pinning his laced band in place.

## C H A P. IV.

*The Cobler's reception at Court, with the manner of his behaviour before the King.*

THE Cbler being thus set forth, strutted through the streets like a gentleman, thinking himself as fine as the best of them all, in this manner he came to Court, staring at every one he met. as he walked up and down, and not knowing whom to ask for his good friend Harry Tudor. At last he espied one, as he thought, in habit of a serving man, to whom he made his address, saying. Dost thou hear honest fellow, do you know one Harry Tudor, who belongs to the Court? Yes, said the man, follow me, and I will bring you to him. He immediately took him up into the guard-chamber, and told one of the yeomen of the guard there was one that enquired for Harry Tudor. Replied the yeoman, I know him very well. if you will please to go along with me, I will bring you to him immediately.

So the Cobler followed the yeoman, much admiring the finery of the rooms he went through. He thought within himself that the yeoman was mistaken in the person he enquired after: For, said he, him whom I look for, is a plain, merry, honest fellow, his name is Harry Tudor; we drank two pots together not long since, I suppose he may belong to some lord or other about the Court. I tell you friend, replied the yeoman, I know him very well. do you but follow me; and I shall bring you to him straight.

So going forward, he came to the room where the King was, accompanied with several of the nobles who attended him. When the yeoman had entered, he

spoke

spake aloud, saying, May it please your Majesty, here is one that enquires for Harry Tudor. The Cobler hearing this thought he had committed no less than treason; therefore he took to his heels and ran for it, but not being acquainted with the several turnings and rooms thro' which he came, he was soon overtaken and brought before the King, whom the Cobler little thought to be the person he enquired after, therefore in a trembling condition he fell down upon his knees, saying, May it please your Grace, may it please your Highness, I am a poor cobbler, and enquired for one Harry Tudor, who is a very honest fellow; I mended the heel of his shoe not long since for which he paid me nobly, and gave me two pots to boot, but I took him afterwards to my cellar, where we drank part of a cup of Rappale, and were very merry until my wife Joan began to grumble which put an end to our merriment for that time, but I told him I would come to the Court and see him as soon as conveniently could.

Well said the King, be not troubled, would you know this honest fellow again if you saw him? The Cobler replied, Yes; that I would do from amongst a thousand. Then said the King, Stand up and be not afraid, look well about you, peradventure you may find the fellow in this company.

Whereupon the Cobler arose and looked wistfully upon the King and the rest of his nobles, but to little or no purpose: for though he saw something in the King's face which he thought he had seen before, yet he could not imagine him to be Harry Tudor, the heel of whose shoe he had mended and who had been so merry with him both in the Inn and at his own cellar. He therefore told the King, he did not expect to find Harry Tudor among such fine folks as he saw there; but that the person he looked for was



a plain, honest, and true hearted fellow, adding also, that he was sure that did Harry Tudor, but know that he was come to Court, he would make him very welcome. At which speech of the Cobler the King had much ado to forbear laughing outright, but keeping his countenance as steady as he could, he said to the yeoman of the guard, Take this honest Cobler down into my cellar, and let him drink my health, and I will give orders that Harry Tudor shall come to him presently.

So away they went, the Cobler ready to leap out of his skin for joy, not only that he came so well off, but also that he should find his friend Harry Tudor.

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C H A P. V.

*The Cobler's entertainment in the King's cellar. How he met with his friend Harry Tudor. And how he came to know him to be the King.*

**T**HE Cobler had not been long in the King's cellar, before the King came to him in the same habit he had on when the Cobler mended his shoe; whereupon the Cobler knew him, and ran and kiss'd him, saying, Honest Harry, I have made an holycay on purpose to see you, but I had much ado to get leave of my wife Joan, who was leath that should lose so much time from my work; but I was resolved to see you, I therefore made myself as fine as I could; but I'll tell you Harry, when I came to the Court, I was in a peck o' troubles how to find you out, but at last I met with a man who told me he knew you very well, and that he could bring me to you, but instead of doing so, he brought me before the King, which had almost frighted me out of my seven senses, but my good friend advis'd the Cobler, I am resolved to be merry with you since I have had the good fortune of meeting with you at last.

Ay, that you shall, replied the King, we'll be as merry as princes. With that he called for a large glass of wine, and drank to the Cobler the King's good health. Said the Cobler, Honest Harry, I will pledge thee with all my heart.

Now, after the Cobler had drank about four or five good healths, he began to be merry, and fell a singing his old songs and catches, which pleased the King very much, and made him laugh heartily; when, suddenly, several of the Nobles came into the cellar, extraordinarily rich in their apparel, who uncovered their heads when they came before Harry Tudor; which put the Cobler into great amazement at first, but recovering himself, he looked more wistfully upon Harry Tudor, when presently he knew him to be the king, whom he saw in the presence chamber, though in another habit. He immediately fell upon his knees, saying, "May it please your grace, your highness, I am an honest poor Cobler, and mean no harm. No, no, said the king, nor shall receive none here..

He commanded him therefore to rise up and be as merry as he was before; and though he knew him to be the king, yet he should use the same freedom with him as he did before, when he mended the heel of his shoe. This kind speech of the king's, and three or four glasses of wine more, made the cobbler to be in as good humour as he was before; telling the king several of his pretty stories, and singing some of his best songs, very much to the satisfaction of the king and all his nobles.

*The COBLER'S SONG in the KING'S Cellar;  
To the Tune of JENNY GIN.*

COME let us drink the other pot,  
Our sorrows to confound:  
We'll laugh and sing before the king,  
So let his wealth go round;

For I am as bold as bold can be,  
 No cobler e'er was ruder;  
 Then here good fellow, here's to thee,  
 Remember Harry Tudor.

When I'm at work within my stall,  
 Upon him I shall think;  
 His kindness I to mind will call,  
 Whene'er I eat or drink.

His kindness was to me so great,  
 The like was never known;  
 His kindness I will still repeat,  
 And so shall my wife Joan.

I'll laugh when I sit in my stall,  
 And merrily I will sing,  
 That I with my poor last and an,  
 Am feilow with the king.

But it is more, I must confess,  
 Than I at first did know,  
 But Harry Tudor, ne'er the less  
 Resolves it shall be so.

And now farewell unto Whitehall,  
 I homeward must retire,  
 To sing and whistle in my stall,  
 My Joan will me desire.

I do but think how she shall laugh,  
 When she hears of this thing,  
 How he that drank her nut-brown ale,  
 Was England's royal King.

## C H A P. VI.

*How the Cobler became Courtier.*

**N**OW, the king considering the pleasant humour  
 of the cobbler, now innocently merry he was,  
 and free of any evil design; and that he was one  
 who laboured very hard for his bread, and took a great  
 deal of pains for a small livelihood; was pleased, out  
 of

of his princely grace a d fav ur, to allow him a liberal annuity of forty micks a-year, for the better support of his j lly hum ur, and the maintenance of his wife Joan, and that he should be admitted one of his courtiers and might have freedom of his cellar whenever he pleased: which being so much beyond expectation, did highly exalt the Cobler's humour, much to the satisfaction of the King.

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P A R T II.

C H A P. I.

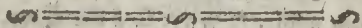
*Of the Cobler's return from Court to his wife Joan, and of the comical discourse that pass between them.*

C Hristopher Crispin, for so was the cobbler named, with whom King Henry the eighth had made himself so exceedingly familiar, this cobbler, I say, having been at Court, where he made much mirth, and was much made of for the mirth that he made, returned home in the evening full fraughted with wine, and likewise wonderful expectations; his heart and head being high, he went capering along, flinging up his cap crying, Long live Harry Tudor long live Harry Tudor, with a hundred boys & his heels hoop'ng and hallowing. His wife, standing at the door and seeing him prancing along in such a posture immediately put on one of her accustomed crabbed looks, crying, sigh, mie, What's come on you now? I'll Harry Tudor you with a vengeance, was it for this that I dress you up in pinnico, in all your best apparel, to have you come home like one just out of bed and? Peace wife quoth the Cobler, for I am up on preferment, I am promised to be made a Courtier that I am. A Courtier! quoth Joan, ad-foot! more likely a cuckold, you drunk a fewndrel.

Nay, quoth the Cobler, you must know, that it is from you I must have that favour, if it be conferred upon me. cease your prattling, quoth Joan, and set you to bed, that you may rise in the morning, and fall to your business, for this course of life will never do.

With these and some-like reprimands, she ended poor Crispin, who for quietness sake forthwith went to bed, where we will leave him to take his rest.

Let us now return to the court, and say something of what pass between the King, Queen, and Nobles, relating to that days comical adventure.



## CH A P. II.

*How the Queen, upon hearing much mirth at Court, came with her Maids of Honour to know the cause thereof; and how Cardinal Woolsey, that proud Prelate, curbed the King, for being too free with a poor Cobler.*

THE Cobler was no sooner gone, than the King with his Nobles began to renew his mirth, by rehearsing the many comical fancies and pleasant pranks, with which the Cobler had entertained them. And that which added the more to their recreation and sport, was a certain lord who put himself into a country habit, and imitated the Cobler so to the life, that the King and his Nobles fell into a hearty fit of laughter, which lasted for a considerable time without any intermission. Whereupon the Queen, with her Maids of Honour, came to enquire the cause of such general mirth.

My liege, said the Queen, I am glad to hear you and your Nobles so merry, and would be glad to know what has been the occasion of so much laughter. — My lady quoth the King, we have had the company of a comical Cobler, the like of whom never came to Court since the Conquest, for his down-right honest  
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simplicity has afforded u much pastime. Then, said the Queen, I wish I had been here to have been a partaker of this mirth. Then the King replied, It may not be too late as yet, for I will contrive with the very first opportunity to give you a sight of him under some disguise, by which we will soon have new proofs of his pleasant pastime.

But then, said the proud prelate, Cardinal Woolsey, How do these frolics agree with your kingly dignity? What will your friends and allies say, when they shall hear how you converse and take pleasure in the company of a poor cobbler? Why, said the King, Woolsey, have you not heard, how the industrious bee extracts honey as well from the meanest flowers as the richest blossoms? And if so, why may not I experience the fidelity of my people by conversing with a poor cobbler, as well as by the crafty policy of a proud Cardinal? This answer of the King stopped the mouth of the Cardinal, and the King, Queen, and Nobles, pursued their mirth to the height of their satisfaction.

### C H A P. III.

*How the Cobbler the next morning was thunder-struck by his wife, and how upon singing a new song, which he had made she once took him to coram nobis; with some other very remarkable things.*

**Y**OU will remember how the Cobbler, on his return home from Court, in a riotous manner, was summoned to his bed by the strict orders of Joan, his commanding wife, where he slept secure till towards the morning; at which time she awakened him with the thunder-clap of, Thou drunken swine, and whimsical woodcock, is it not time to rise? Is this the course of life you intend to lead? At which words the poor Cobbler awakened, and that he might get out of the hearing of this morning lecture, he leapt out of bed, put on his clothes, and his considering cap, and so

posted away to his stall, where he fell to work upon his old shoes and boot, as fierce as a fury, and as dlyth as a bird in the returning spring, pleasing his fancy with a song of his own composing.

## His S O N G.

Tho' now I sit within my stall,  
Old shoes end slippers mending,  
I to the Court shall have a call,  
There is my hope depending.

I do not value crusty Joan,  
Tho' once in tears I woo'd her,  
I have the favour, 'tis well known,  
Of honest Mary Tudor.

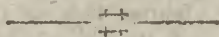
He gives me forty merks a-year,  
Which is a deal of treatate;  
Besides all this there is no fear  
Of having courtly pleasure.

I wish old Joan she would die,  
Tho' once with tears I woo'd her,  
I'd go to court, and there live by  
My dear friend Mary Tudor.

Now, whilst the cobbler was making himself merry with singing this new-made song, Joan suddenly chop'd in upon him, and hearing him mention the name of Tudor, salutes him in this manner. O, you drunken scoundrel, are you got to tudoring it again? I thought you had got enough yesterday.—Come down to breakfast, you blockhead. With that he immediately follows her very patiently, whilst she continued scolding in this manner.

I need noth. quoth she, ask you whether or no you met with your pot-companion, for I think you give me full enough proof that you did, by the drunken condition you came home in; I think you told me he was something of a courtier, but I rather think him to be a carman, or drunken porter. Pray where's

the money that you carried out with you? You had fourpence-halfpenny of me that I let you have out of my own pocket, because I would have you appear like a man; and besides what you took of Johnson, the old joiner and likewise of Simon Soufcerown, the Sadler for two pair of heel-pieces and of the money pray let me see what you have left? Alas! said the Cobler, my friend was so far from letting me spend any thing, that he has given me what may be the making of you and I. Why, husband, quoth Joan, what has he given you? Why, to tell you the truth, my dear wife, he has settled forty merks on you and me and as a sure token of his goodness, has given me these two broad pieces of gold. O me, quoth Joan, did thy friend give thee all this! Well, blessings on his loving heart, he's an honest fellow 'll warrant him. Who do you call false, quoth the Cobler, he that is so particular a friend of mine is no worse person than our gracious King Henry, and was he to know what you have said of him to me, ye might happen to dine upon the fruit of hempseed, by which means I might be rid of a shrew. Dear husband quoth Joan pardon what I have said through my ignorance, and never divulge my unfortunate sayings as you love me, and I will never scold nor call you any ill name for the future during my life. Be sure, quoth the Cobler, you keep your promise, and I than assure you that all will be well.



C H A P. V.

*How the King took to himself the title of a Tanner, and came to the Cobler to sell him a piece of leather; and how the Queen in the disguise of a country maid, pass'd for his kinswoman who wanted service, &c.*

**K**ING Henry, as you have heard, promised the Queen that she should be entertained with some of the Cobler's drolleries. To accomplish this, the King

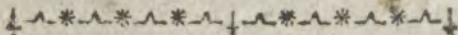


King sends a man and horse down into the country, to buy leather fit for shoemakers; and to send it to London by the carrier, who came to the same inn which was over against the aforesaid Cobler's stall.— This was accordingly done.

The King, in the habit of a plain country man, came to the inn with his Queen, who, in the dress of a country maid, pass'd for his kinswoman; he pass'd for a tanner that was come to receive and sell the leather.

The King having paid the carrier for bringing his parcel, call'd for some of the best liquor the house afford'd; which being brought, he ask'd the Inn-keeper whether or no he could help him to a merchant for his leather? Who answer'd, There is an honest fellow, a cobbler over the way. I'll send for him, he'll either buy it, or help you to a merchant for it, no doubt.— Pray thee send for him, quoth the King. Whereupon the Cobbler was call'd, who came capering and crying, Who wants me? This gentleman, said the Inn-keeper, has a parcel of leather to sell. I'll buy it, quoth the Cobbler if it fit my purpose. Having looked over it, he ask'd the price. The king not knowing what it was worth ask'd him forty shillings. Merry quoth he, I wish you may have come honestly by it, for though I am the buyer, I must needs tell you it is worth much more. That is neither here nor there, quoth the King, I am for selling it off, and when I have done, I don't intend to deal any more in leather: as I wish a place at Court, and my kinsman here is very desirous to wait on some lady. Merry quoth the Cobbler, if it be so perhaps, may do you a piece of service; for as poor as I sit here; though I say it myself I am well acquainted with the King, and as you seem both to have good honest faces, I do protest I will do you all the good I can, that I will, and there's my hand  
on

on the same. Thou sayest well, quoth the King, and if thou dost me any kindness, I do not care altho' I give thee that leather as a reward of thy goodness; and so here's to thee. I thank thee, quoth the cobbler; and by the time he had drunk three or four carouses, his heart grew light, and he told the King he would sing him a Song of his own making. At which the Queen, when she heard it, laughed heartily; for he had many jokes and pleasant songs. He delighted the Queen more than any thing she had seen or met with in her whole life. At length it grew towards noon, and the cobbler was for going with them towards the court, but he must dress himself for he would not appear before the King in his cobbler's cloaths for all the shoes in shop.



## C H A P. V.

*How the King invited the Cobbler and his Wife to dinner,  
and the discourse that pass'd thereupon.*

THE Cobbler being gone, the King returned himself to the Queen, saying, How like you the conversation of this comical Crispin? The Queen said, Right well: besides, I see something of a principle in him which, in my judgment, seems to outshine his poverty: For my liege, when you offered the leather to him at a low price, he let you know it was worth much more, and therefore was loth to meddle with it, fearing you came not honestly by it. And what I observe in him is, that he hath a light heart, brisk and merry, and, for ought I know, enjoys more comfort in his coarse and homely cottage than a colonel or courtier, with all their great accomplishments.

Not too much of that, quoth the King, for I well remember, that when he had me down into his lower cellar drinking a cup of his nappy ale, and to eat some of his bread and cheese, all on a sudden his wife Joan began to rouse from her nights rest, and I found he began to be afraid, for he said, Friend, you must be gone, I would not that Joan my wife should catch you here, no not for all the shoes in my shop; and thereupon rather than the cobbler should be cuckolded by his wife, I got away with as great speed as possible.

My liege said the Queen, you were hard put to it in truth, quoth the King, so I was. Then with a smile her Majesty said, I would willingly see her. She shall be sent for, said the King, and thereupon called the inn-keeper to know what he could let them have for dinner, who told them he had a shoulder of mutton, which would be ready in half an hour.

That will do, said the King, and therefore call the Cobbler and his wife, for I desire they may both dine with me. The inn-keeper having delivered his message, Joan set up a railing, saying, What sort's this that he sent for you now? I shall have you drunk again, that I shall.

Oy, quoth the Cobbler, did you not tell me the other day that you would never scold me again, if I would but keep your counsel, and do you begin already? Go put on your best red petticoat and waiscoat, whilst I dress myself, for I do not know but we may take a walk to Court after dinner, and it will be for your credit to see the King in your best apparel.

Now Joan being afraid for what she had formerly said, doubting that he might tell what had passed between them, she was fain to bridle her unruly tongue, and turn her crabbed frown into sweet and pleasant smiles; and in obedience to her husband, she made herself as fine as a London milk-maid upon a May-day, and Crispin likewise brushed up his beard, and then went over with Joan as pert as a pear-monger.

The King taking the glass, drank to the Cobl-er's wife, who answered, thank you Sir. Then passing it to her husband, he filled up a bumper and drank to the Queen with this compliment, Young woman, you are welcome to London, and I don't question but to be able to help you to a service that may be to your heart's content.

Now by this time the glass had gone round, the roast was ready, and the cobbler craved leave to say the grace, it was short, and when ended, the King carved for the Queen and himself, and bid Cobl-er and his wife do the same. Quoth J an I know my husband is for the cuckold's bit, and so here it is, let him have it. At which saying, the King and Queen smiled, her Majesty being much more pleased with the mirth than the meat, and eat but sparingly; at which the Cobl-er merrily said, Young woman, if you come to dine with servants of a nobleman's family, adfugs, you must lay about you better than you do, or they will soon make you as fat as a hen in the forehead. With this and the like discourse they passed away the time for an hour, and the King and Queen withdrew into another room, there to consult about finishing the comical adventure.

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## C H A P. VIII.

*How the Cobl-er was put in fear of his life but came off with flying colours.*

**T**HE King had told the Secretary of State, that he would send his royal signet to him, wrap'd up, by a messenger, whom he should secure, in order for to give account upon examination how he came by it. Wherefore he presently calls for pen, ink and paper, and

and writes the letter, within he incloses the signet aforesaid and having directed the letter, he desired the Cobler to carry it. Now Joan was resolved to go with him, that she might keep him from getting drunk.

Now they had no sooner gone out, than the King called for the reckoning, and having paid it he and his queen went privately by water to their palace, where they pulled off their disguise, and appeared in their royal apparel, the king with his nobles, and the queen with her maids of honour. Now, by this time the cobbler and his wife delivered the letter to the Secretary, who opening the same, seemed to flangle, and with a frowning countenance said, Behold here is the king's signet, how came you by it? Why, says the cobbler, I had the letter from a tanner and whatever is in it I know not. The Secretary replied, If you do not bring the tanner to me, we shall make an example of you. Why, quoth Joan you will not hang my husband will ye? Quoth the Secretary it will go hard with him if he do not find the tanner. I'll then fetch him presently, quoth Joan. But coming to the Inn, and finding they were gone for Joan fell into a violent fit of the teunterians, tearing of her hair, and wringing of her hands, crying What will become of my poor Cobler, he will be hanged! For what? said the Innkeeper. But Joan had not patience to tell him the cause of her lamentation, but cried O the tanner, O the tanner, O the tanner is gone! And in this condition, raving like a fury, or like a lunatick person broken out of becliam, she ran back again to Westminster, with a multitude of men, women, and children after her, who

who wanted to know the cause; but Joan continued crying, O the tanner is gone! and my poor Crispin, what will become of thee? Which words her husband hearing, just as she was entering the door, cried, Dear Joan have you not brought them with you? With me! quoth Joan, no, no, they are gone, and you are left to suffer. Now it had been better for you to work, than to follow every one that finds for you; now you may see what you have brought yourself to, nothing would serve you it seems the other day but to be a courtier; such was your ambitious fancy, but let me tell you if they shall have a fancy to hang you, then I may say you have made a fine work on't; and I doubt not but it will be a warning to you for the future; I cannot but think how like a courtier you look now in this trying melancholy condition.

Now while she was thus insulting poor Crispin, the king was told of these transactions, and therefore sent that he might be brought before him, which was accordingly done; but, as the cobbler approached the presence of the King, every joint about him trembled, for he expected to find no favour. Now, as he came before the King, he, with an angry countenance, said, Cobler, how came you by my Signet? The poor cobbler falling on his knees with wringing hands cried, May it please your grace, may it please your honour, I had it from a tanner, who sent for me to the Bell in the Strand, to buy a parcel of leather he had brought out of the country; and thereupon he told the King all the whole story, from the beginning of their meeting to the sending him away with the letter. The King replied, This is a pleasant story, and as well compacted together, but it seems you cannot produce this tanner; wherefore I'll leave you to the law, and if you're hang'd according to law, you must take it for your pains.

Joan hearing the king talk of hanging, fell upon her knees, crying, Good Sir King, pray Sir King, don't hang my poor Crispin, I beseech you; he is an honest man, and has but one fault. What fault is that?

What? quoth the king. May it please your grace,  
 not Joan, he will not be ruled by his wife, but is  
 always ready to run away like a monkey after any  
 man who will give him drink. That's neither here  
 or there, said the king, he must die. Nevertheless,  
 as you have begged that he may not be hanged, upon  
 the word of a king I shall not; but I will allow him  
 the favour to chuse his own death.

Why then, quoth the cobbler, let me die the death  
 of my father and great grand-father. How was that,  
 quoth the king? It was on a death-bed and in a  
 good old age. At which choice of the cobbler's the  
 king, queen, and the nobles laughed heartily, and  
 Crispin, with his wife, by the king's command, were  
 locked up in a room half an hour, there to attend  
 the king's further pleasure.

No sooner were they again confined but the cobbler,  
 with a trembling voice said, Sweet wife, I wonder  
 what the king intends to do with us now. Quoth  
 Joan, pray thee be of good comfort, I am persuaded  
 that the king is the tanner, and the queen is the kins-  
 woman. Ad-foot! Have a care of what you say, lest  
 you speak treason, and then we shall be both hanged  
 I'faith after all. Fear not, husband, I can see as far  
 into a millstone as he that picks it; I am sure though  
 they changed their apparel, they could not change  
 their complexion. Whilst they were in this dispute,  
 the king and queen, dressed in their former disguise,  
 entered the room attended by nobles and maids of  
 honour. Then the king said, Crispin, since you could  
 not find the tanner, I have brought him to you.—  
 At which words he fell on his knees and cried,

*Long live our gracious sovereign King and Queen,  
 Wh. did their royal persons so demean,  
 As in familiar sort to joke with us,  
 And I rejoice to find it is no worse.*

Arise, honest cobbler, quoth the king, and merry be  
 that

thy heart. I have tried thy patience, and will prove thy friend, and thy for y merks per annum which I formerly gave thee, shall be much more by my bounty.

*Thou shalt have fifty pounds a year in land,  
Why ly on the south side of the Strand;  
I am the royal giver, thou the taker,  
And I will have it call a the Cobler's Acre.*

Poor Crispin and his wife were transported with joy at this glorious coming off, and the more at the Queen's gift which was a purse of gold. Then they presented the Court with a comical farce called *The Forked Friends*, or *the Fidler and his Wife* with which they finished the day, with great joy to all the beholders — Then they being all dismissed with great applause, the Cobler and his wife Joan returned home, where, in a short time he built a row of houses, calling the place *The Cobler's Acre*, according to the King's desire; which name it retained long after the Cobler's death, but is now become a more magnificent building, and has lost its former name.

*Yet during life the Cobler at the Court  
Was well belov'd and freely entertain'd,  
Where he afforded much delightful sport,  
So long as Harry Tudor liv'd and reign'd.*

*The King died first the Cobler followed after,  
Who has so often fill'd the Court with laughter.*

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F I N I S.

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