

## HISTORY

OF THE

## King and the Cobbler.

IN TWO PARTS.

*PART I. Shows how King Henry VIII. used to visit the Watches in the City; his acquaintance with a merry Cobbler; how he was entertained in the Cobbler's Cellar, and what had like to have befallen them; how upon parting the King invited him to Court, and what befel him there.*

*PART II. Informs what passed between the Cobbler and his wife Joan on his return from Court; also how the Queen, hearing of their mirth which the Cobbler made, was desirous of seeing him; upon which the King disguised himself as a Tanner and went to sell the Cobbler some leather, and took the Queen with him as a young country maid: how the King invited the Cobbler and his Wife to dine with them at an Inn, and what passed there: and lastly, how the Cobbler was put in fear of his life, and came off with flying colours.*

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## HISTORY

OF THE

## KING and the COBBLER.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

*How King Henry VIII. used to visit the watch  
in the City, and how he became acquainted with  
a merry jolly Cobbler.*

**I**T was the custom of King HENRY VIII. late in the night, to walk the streets in disguise, to take notice how the constables and watch performed their duty in guarding the gates, and watching the inward parts of the city, to prevent those disturbances and casualties, which often happen by night, in great and populous cities. This he did often without the least discovery; always returning home to Whitehall early in the morning. Once on his return, coming through the Strand, he took notice of a certain cobbler, who was constantly up at work, whistling and singing every morning. He resolved to see him, and be acquainted with him, in order to which, he immediately knocked off the heel of his shoe, by striking it against a stone; and having so done, he bounced into the cobbler's stall.

Who's there? cries the cobbler.

Here's one, said the King.

With that the cobbler opened the stall door, and the king asked him, if he could put on his heel.

'Yes, that I can,' says the cobbler; 'come in, honest fellow, and sit thee down by me, and I will do it for thee straight.' The cobbler scraped his old shoes to one side with his awl, to make room for the king to sit by him.

The king being hardly able to forbear laughing at the kindness of the cobbler, asked him if there was not a house hard by which sold a cup of good ale and if the people were up?

‘Yes,’ said the cobbler, ‘there is an inn over the way there, I believe the folk are up for the carriers go from thence very early in the morning.’

With that the king borrowed an old shoe of the cobblers, & went over to the inn desiring the cobbler to bring his shoe thither to him, as soon as he had put on his heel again: the cobbler promised he would; 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.’ 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 cobbler.

‘Well,’ said the king, ‘seeing thou art an honest merry fellow, here’s a tester for thee; come sit thee down by me, I will drink a full pot with thee; come here’s a good health to the king.’

‘With all my heart,’ said the cobbler, ‘I will pledge thee were it in water.’

So the cobbler sat down by the king & 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 jocund with the cobbler, telling him withal that his name was *Henry Tudor*, and that he belonged to the court; and that if he would come and see him there, he would make him very welcome, because he was such a merry fellow, and charged him to be there and not to forget his name, and to ask any one about the court for him, and they would bring him to him: For, said the king, I am very well known there.

Now the cobbler little dreamed that he was the king who spoke to him, much less that the king's deal of confidence, he stands up and pulls off his hat, and makes two or three scraps 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 life time; and though he had never been at court yet it would not be long before he would make a holiday to come and see him.

Whereupon the king discharged the house for what they had drank 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.'

#### CHAP II.

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

SO the cobbler took the king with him over the way, where he had a cellar adjoining to the stall, which was handsomely and neatly furnished for a man of his profession; into this cellar he had the king; 'There, said he, sit down you are very welcome, but I must desire you to speak softly for fear of awakening my wife Joan, who lies here hard by,' shewing the king a close bed made up neatly at the corner of the cellar, much like unto a closet, 'for if she should wake, she will make your ears ring again.'

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At which speech of the cobbler the king laughed, 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 eat some Cheshire cheese; there is as good fellowship in eating as drinking.'

This made the king admire the honest freedom of the cobbler, so having eaten a bit, the cobbler began a health to all true hearts and merry companions; at which the king smiling, said, 'Good merry friend, I'll pledge thee.'

In this manner they ate and drank together till it was almost break of day. The cobbler being very free of his liquor, and delighting the king with several of his old stories, intomuch 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: 'I'faith, 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 would find you here.'

So taking the king by the hand, he led him up stairs, saying, 'Farewell, honest blade, it shall not be long before I make a holiday and come to see the 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 having put all things to rights before his wife Joan got up, he fell to work again, whistling and singing as merry as he used to do, being much satisfied that he had happened on so good and jovial a companion, and still caressing in his thoughts how merry he should be when he came to court.

*How the Cobbler prepared himself to go to court, and how he was set 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 cobbler thought every day a month till he had been 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, because he resolved to make himself as fine as he could, and the wife always kept the key of his holiday clothes.

Whereupon, one evening as they sat at supper, finding her in a very good humour, he began to open his mind to her, telling her the whole story of their acquaintance.

She answered, and repeating over and over again, that 'He was the honestest fellow that ever I met with.' 'Husband, quoth she, because you have been so ingenious as to tell me the whole truth, I will give you leave to make a holiday for this once; you shall go to 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 clothes, and to make him as snug 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 put 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, putting his laced band on prime.

## CHAP. IV.

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

THE cobbler being thus set forth, strutted thro' the streets like a crow in a gutter, thinking himself as free as the best of them all: in this manner he came to court, staring on this body and that body as he walked up and down; and knowing no body to ask for Harry Tudor: at last he espied one, as he thought, in the habit of a servant man; to him 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.'

With that he had him presently up to the guard-chamber, telling one of the yeomen of the guard, there was one who 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 cobbler followed the yeoman, much admiring the finery of the rooms he went through; and thinking within himself that the yeoman was mistaken in the person he enquired after.

'For, said he, the man 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.

As soon as the yeoman had put by the array he

spoke aloud saying, 'May it please your Majesty,  
 ' Here is one who enquires for Harry Tudor.' The  
 cobbler hearing this, thought he had committed no  
 less than treason; therefore he up with 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 cobbler 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  
 11. 10. 0. and gave me two pots to boot, but I had  
 ' him over afterwards to my cellar, where we drank  
 ' part of a cup of nappy ale, 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 I conveniently could.'

' Well, said the king, Be not troubled; would  
 ' you know this honest fellow again if you saw  
 ' him? The cobbler replied, Yes, that I would  
 ' from a thousand.' Then said the king, ' Stand up,  
 ' and be not afraid, look well about you, peradven-  
 ' ture you may find the fellow in this company.'

Whereupon the cobbler arose and looked wish-  
 fully upon the king and the rest of the nobles; but  
 to little or no purpose, for though he saw some-  
 thing in the king's face which he thought he had  
 seen before, yet he could not imagine him to be  
 Harry Tudor, whose heel of his 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



plain, honest, and true-hearted fellow, withal that he was sure did Harry Tudor but know that he was come to court, he would make him very welcome.' At which speech of the cobbler's 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, 'Here take this honest cobbler 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 cobbler 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.

CHAP. V.

*The Cobbler's entertainment in the King's Cellar; how he met with his new friend Harry Tudor, and how he came to know him to be the King.*

THE cobbler had not been long in the king's cellar, before the king came to him in the same dress and habit he had on when the cobbler mended his shoe, whereupon the cobbler knew him and ran and kissed him, saying, 'Honest Harry, I have made a holiday to see you, but I had much ado to get leave of my wife, who was loth that I 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 of trouble how to find you out, but at last I met with a man who told me he knew you very well, and that he would bring me to you, but instead of doing so, he brought me before the king, which affrighted me out of my seven senses; but, good friend, added he, 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 p'rrces.' With that he called for a large glass of wine and drank to the cobbler and the king's good health; said the cobbler, 'Honest Harry, I will pledge thee with all my heart. Now after the cobbler drank 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 on a suddae several of the nobles came into the cellar, extraordinary rich in apparell, who stood bare at Harry Tudor, which put the cobbler into a great amazement at first, but recovering himself, he looked more wishfully upon Harry Tudor, when presently he knew him to be the king whom he saw in the presence chamber, then in another habit. He immediately fell upon his knees, saying, 'May it please your Grace, Highness, I am an honest poor cobbler, and mean no harm.'

No, no, said the king, nor shall you receive any harm here. He commanded him therefore to rise up, and be as merry as before, and that 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 more wine, made the cobbler to be in as good humour as he was before; telling the king several of his pretious stories, and singing some of his best songs, very much to the satisfaction of the king and his nobles.

#### THE COBBLER'S SONG IN THE KING'S CELLAR.

Tune—JENNY GIN.

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

For, I'm as bold as bold can be,  
 No cobbler e'er was rader:  
 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 awl,  
 Am fellow with a king.  
 But it is more I must confess,  
 Than I at first did know,  
 But Harry Tudor ne'ertheless,  
 Resolv'd it should be so.  
 And farewell unto Whitehall,  
 I homeward must retire,  
 To sing and whistle in my stall,  
 My wife will me desire.  
 I do but think how she will laugh,  
 When she hears of this thing,  
 How he who drank her nut-brown ale  
 Was England's royal King.

#### CHAP. VI.

*How the Cobbler became a Courtier.*

**N**OW the king considering the pleasant humour  
 of the cobbler, how innocently merry he was,  
 and free from any designs: that he was a per-  
 son that laboured very hard, and took a great deal  
 of pains for a small livelihood, was pleased, otu

of his prince's grace and favour, to allow him a liberal annuity of forty marks a-year, for better support of his jolly humour, 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 cobbler's humour, much to the satisfaction of the king.

## PART II.

### CHAP. I.

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

CHRISTOPHER CRISPIN, for so was the cobbler named, with whom King Henry VIII. had made himself so exceeding familiar; this cobbler, I say, having been at court, where he made much mirth, and was made much of on account of that mirth, returned home in the afternoon full fraughted with wine and wonderful expectations; his heart and head being light, he went capering along, flaging up his cap, crying, 'Long live Harry Tudor, long live Harry Tudor,' with a hundred boys at his heels hooping 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, 'High, tittie, what's come to you now? I'll Harry Tudor you with a vengeance? was it for this that I dress you up in pimlico, in all your best apparel, to have you come home like one just out of Bedlam?' 'Peace, wife, quoth the cobbler, for I am upon preferment, I am promised to be made a courtier, that I am.' 'A courtier, quoth Joan, ad-foot, more likely a cuckold, you drunken scoundrel.'

‘ Nay, quoth the cobbler, you must know that it is from you that I must have that favour, if it be conferred upon me. ‘ Cease your prating, quoth Joan, ‘ and get you to bed, that you may rise in the morning, and fall to your business, for ‘ this wicked course of life will never do.’ With these and other like reprimands, she conquered poor Crispia, 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’d between the king, queen, and nobles, relating to that day’s comical adventure.

CHAP. II.

*How the Queen upon hearing much mirth at Court, came with her maids of honour to know the cause thereof, and how cardinal Wolsey, the proud prelate, curbed the King for being, as he said, too free with a poor Cobbler.*

NOW it is to be noticed, that the cobbler was no sooner gone, but the king with his nobles began to renew their mirth, by rehearsing the many comical fancies and pleasant pranks with which the cobbler entertained them; and what added the more to their recreation and sport, was a certain lord, who put himself into a country habit, and imitated the cobbler so to the life, that the king & the rest of the nobles fell into a fit of laughter, which lasted for a considerable time without any intermission; whereupon the queen with her maids of honour, came to enquire into the cause of such general mirth.

‘ My liege, said the queen, I’m glad to hear you and your nobles so merry; and would be as glad to know what fancies have been the occasion of so much laughter.’ ‘ My lady, quoth the king, we have had the company of a comical cobbler, the like of whom never came to court since

‘the conquest, for his downright honest simplicity  
 ‘has afforded us much pastime.’ Then said the  
 queen, ‘I wish I had been there to have been par-  
 ‘taker 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 Wol-  
 sey, ‘How do these frolics agree with your king-  
 ly dignity? what will your friends and allies say,  
 when they will hear how you converse and take  
 pleasure in the company of a poor cobbler?’ Why,  
 said the king, ‘Wolsey, have you not heard of the  
 industrious bee, that 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 I may  
 by the crafty policy of a proud cardinal.’

This choak pear stopped the mouth of cardinal  
 Wolsey, whilst the king, queen, and nobles, pursued  
 their mirth to the height of their satisfaction.

#### CHAP. III.

*How the Cobbler the next morning was thunderstruck  
 by his wife, and how upon singing a new song  
 which he had made, she once took him to cor. m. no-  
 bis. With many other things very remarkable.*

**Y**OU may remember how the cobbler at his fro-  
 lic some return home from court was summon-  
 ed to bed by the strict orders of Joan his com-  
 manding wife, where he slept secure till towards the  
 morning, when she suddenly made him start with a  
 thunder clap of ‘Thou drunken swine and whim-  
 ‘sical 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 certain lecture, he leap’d

out of bed, put on his cloathes and his considering-cap; so polling away to his stall, he fell to work upon his old shoes and boots, as fierce as a fury, and as blithe as a bird in the returning spring, easing his fancy with a song of his own making.

## HIS SONG.

THOUGH now I sit within my stall,  
 Old shoes and slippers mending,  
 I to the court shall have a call,  
 There's hope depending.  
 I do not value crusty Joan,  
 Though once in tears I woo'd her,  
 I have the favour, 'tis well known,  
 Of honest Harry Tudor;  
 He gives me forty merks a year,  
 Which is a deal of treasure:  
 Besides all this, there is no fear  
 Of having courtly pleasure.  
 I wish old Joan she would die,  
 Though once with tears I woo'd her:  
 I'd go to court and there live by  
 My dear friend Harry Tudor.

Now whilst the cobbler was making himself merry with singing this new made song, Joan suddenly chopp'd upon him and hearing him mention the name of Tudor, salutes him in this manner, 'Out you drunken scoundrel, are ye going taudoring it again, I thought ye had got enough yesterday. Come down to breakfast, you block-head.' With that he immediately follows her like a patient man, whilst she continued scolding in this manner, 'I need not ask you whether or not you met with your pot companion, for I think you gave me full enough proof that you did by the drunken condition ycn came home in; I think you told me he was something of a courtier, but I rather take him to be a charman or a drunken porter, pray where's

' the money 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  
 ' Sousecrown the saddler, for two pair of heel pieces,  
 ' & now come let me see what you have left.' ' A-  
 ' las, said the cobbler, ' My friend was so far from  
 ' letting me spend any thing, that he has given me  
 ' what may be the making of us both.' ' Why,  
 ' husband, quoth Joan, what has he given you?  
 ' Why, to tell you the truth, my sweet wife, he has  
 ' settled forty merks on you and me, and as a sure  
 ' token of his goodness, he has given me these two  
 ' broad pieces of gold.' ' O me! quoth Joan, did  
 ' thy friend give thee all this? wel, God's blessing  
 ' on his loving heart, he's an honest fellow I'll war-  
 ' rant him. ' Who do you call fellow! quoth her  
 ' husband, he that is so particular a friend of mine  
 ' is no worse a person than our gracious King Hen-  
 ' ry, and were he to know what you have said of  
 ' him to me, you might happen to dine upon the  
 ' fruit of hemp seed, by which I might be rid of a  
 ' shrew.' ' Sweet 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 call you ill names for the future  
 ' during my life.' ' Be sure, quoth he, you keep your  
 ' promise, and I will assure you that all will be well.

#### CHAP. IV.

*How the King took to himself the title of a tanner,  
 and came to the Cobbler to sell him a piece of lea-  
 ther, and how the Queen in the disguise of a coun-  
 try maid, passed for his kinswoman who wanted  
 service, with other passages of very much mirth.*

**K**ING Henry, as you have heard, promised the  
 Queen that she should be accommodated with



some of the cobbler's figaries, now his care was how to make good his promise, that is to say, how he might bring himself into the cobbler's company without the honest cobbler knowing who he was. Many thoughts came into his head, and amongst the rest, one he resolves upon, which is this, the king sends a man and a horse down into the country, there 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 foresaid cobbler. 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 an innocent country maiden, past for his kinswoman, he passing for a tanner that was come to receive and sell the leather; the king having paid the carrier for bringing his parcel, calls for some of the best liquor the house afforded, which being brought, he asked the innkeeper whether or not he could help him to a chapman for his leather, who answered, 'There is an honest fellow of a cobbler over the way, 'll send for him, 'he'll either buy it or help you to a chapman for it no doubt.' Then the king said, 'Pray thee send for him.' Whereupon the cobbler was called, who came capering like a morrice dancer, saying, 'Who wants me?' 'This gentleman, said the inn-keeper, 'he has a parcel of leather to sell.' 'I'll buy it,' said the cobbler, if it be for my sum.' Now having looked over it, he asked the price; the king not knowing what it was worth, asked him forty shillings.' 'Harry! quoth he, I wish you may have come honestly by it, for though I am the buyer, I must tell you it is worth a great deal more.' 'That is neither here nor there, said the king, I'll sell it off, which when I have done, I don't think to deal in leather for the future any more, for I am for a place at the court, and this young maid my kinswoman, is likewise desirous

'to wait on some lady.' 'Mary, quoth the cob-  
 bler, if it be so, perhaps I may do you a piece of  
 'service, for as simple as I sit here: though I say  
 'it myself, I am well acquainted with the king;  
 'and as you seem to have both good honest faces,  
 'I do protest I will do you all the good I can, that  
 'I will; & there's my hand on the same.' 'Thou  
 'sayest well, quoth the king, and if thou do me  
 'any kindness, I do not matter if 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 caroufes,  
 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 life. At length it grew towards noon,  
 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 clothes for  
 all the shoes in his shop.

#### CHAP. V.

*How the King invited the Cobbler and his wife to  
 dinner, and the discourse that passed thereupon.*

**T**HE cobbler being gone, the king turned 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 prin-  
 'ciple in him, which in my judgment seems to out-  
 'shine 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 observed in him is, that he is  
 'a light heart, brisk and merry; and for ought I  
 'know, enjoys more happiness in his cottage and

'homely cottage, than a courtier or a colonel,  
 'Not too much of that,' quoth the king, 'for  
 'I well remember that when he had me down in-  
 'to his lower cellar, to drink a cup of nappy ale,  
 'and ate some of his bread and cheefe, all on a  
 'sudden his wife Joan began to rouse from her  
 'night's 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 cudgelled by his  
 'wife, got away with as great speed as might be.'  
 'My liege,' said the queen, 'you were hard put  
 'to it.' In troth, quoth the king, 'so I was.'  
 Then with a smile her majesty said, 'I would  
 'lingly see her.' 'She shall be sent for,' said the  
 king, and thereupon called the innkeeper to let  
 them know what he would let them have for din-  
 ner? who told them he had a moulder of matton,  
 which should 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 innkeeper having de-  
 livered his message, Joan set up a railing, saying,  
 'What sot is this that has sent for you now? I  
 'shall have you drunk again, that I shall.'

'Why, 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 pet-  
 'ticoat and waistcoat whilst I dress myself, for I  
 'do not know but we may take a walk to court af-  
 'ter dinner; and it will be for your credit to see  
 'the king in your best apparel.' Now Joan having  
 a fear for what she had formerly said, doubting that  
 he might out with all, poor creature, she was faine  
 to bridle her unruly tongue, and turn her crabbed

frown into a sweet and pleasant smile; all with 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 pearmonger. The king taking the glass, drank to the cobbler's wife, who simpering like a firmity kettle, said, I 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 help you to a service that may be to your heart's content.'

Now by the time the glass had gone round dinner was ready, the cobbler craved leave to say the grace, it was short, and when ended, the king carved for the queen and himself, and bade the cobbler and his wife do the like. Quoth Joan, '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, sed sparingly; at which the cobbler merrily said, 'Young woman, if you come to dine with the servants of a nobleman's family, adfaks, you must lay about you better than you do, or they will 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.

## CHAP. VI.

*How the Cobbler was put in fear of his life, and how he came off with flying colours.*

**N**OW the king had formerly told the secretary of state, that he would send his royal signet to him, by a messenger whom he should secure in order to give an account, upon examination, how

he came by it. Wherefore he presently  
 took pen, ink and paper, and writes the letter, wherein  
 he incloses the signet aforesaid; and having direct-  
 ed the letter, he desired the cobbler to carry it,  
 who was ready to serve him. Now Joan resolved  
 to go with him, and did so, because she would keep  
 him from being drunk.

They had no sooner gone out, but the king call-  
 ed 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. By this  
 time the cobbler and his wife delivered the letter  
 to the secretary, who opened the same, seemed to  
 startle, 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, and  
 ' whatever was in it, I know not, only I had the  
 ' letter from a tanner.' The secretary replied,  
 'If you do not bring the tanner to me, take my  
 ' word for it, we shall make an example of you.'  
 'Why,' quoth Joan, 'you will not hang my hus-  
 ' band, will ye?' quoth the secretary, 'it will  
 ' go hard with him if he do not find the tan-  
 ' ner.' 'I'll fetch him presently,' quoth Joan. But  
 coming to the inn, and finding they were gone,  
 poor Joan fell into a violent fit of the tanterians,  
 tearing her hair and wringing her hands, crying,  
 'What will become of my poor cobbler, he will  
 ' be hanged.' 'For what?' said the inn-keeper;  
 but Joan had not the patience to tell him her la-  
 mentation, crying, 'O the tanner O the tanner,  
 ' O the tanner is gone!' and in this condition  
 raving like a fury, or like a lunatic person broken  
 out of Bedlam, she ran back again to Westminster  
 with a multitude of men, women and children after

her, 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 heard just as she was entering the door; he cried, 'Dear Joan, have you 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 mind your work, than to follow every one that sends 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 I had have a fancy to hang you, that I may say you have made 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 melanchely condition.'

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 of him trembled for he expected to find no favour. Now he came before the king, who, with an angry countenance, said, 'cobbler, how came you by my signet?' The poor cobbler falling on his knees, and wringing his 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 whereupon he told her king the whole story, from the beginning of their meeting till his sending him away with the letter. The king replied, 'This is a pleasant story, and well compacted together; but it seems you cannot produce this tanner, wherefore I'll leave y

to the king, and if you are hanged according to law, you must take it for your pains.' v

Joan, hearing the 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?' quoth the king. 'May it please your grace,' quoth Joan, 'he will not be ruled by his wife, but is always ready to run away like a monkey after any man that will give him drink.' 'That's neither here nor there, said the king, he must die: nevertheless, as you have begged that he may not be hanged, upon the word of a king he shall not, but I will allow him the favour to choose his own death.

'Why then,' quoth the cobbler, 'let me die the death of my father and great grandfather.' '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, & the nobles laughed very heartily, and Crispin and 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 comfort, I am persuaded that the king is the tanner, and the queen is the kinswoman.' 'Adsfoot, have a care of what you say, I shall have you speak treason, and then we shall both be hanged i'faith after all.' 'Fear not husband, I can see as far into a millstone as he that picks it, I am sure tho' they changed their apparel, they would 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; at which 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,  
 Who 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 thy heart; I have tried thy patience,  
 ‘ and will prove thy friend; and thy forty merks  
 ‘ *per annum* which I formerly gave thee, shall be  
 ‘ much more by my bounty.’

Thou shalt have fifty pounds a year in land,  
 Which lies upon the south side of the Strand;  
 I am the royal giver, thou the taker,  
 And I will have it call'd the cobbler'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. They then  
 presented the court with a comical farce, called,  
*The Forked Friends, or the Fiddler and his Wife,*  
 wherewith they finished the day, to the great joy  
 of all the beholders. Being dismissed with great ap-  
 plause, the cobbler and Joan returned home, where  
 in a short time he built a row of houses, calling the  
 place, *The Cobbler's Acre*; according to the king's  
 request, which name continued after the cobbler's  
 death, but at this time it is turned a more magni-  
 ficent building, and has lost its former name.

Yet during life the cobbler 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 cobbler followed after,  
 But not till he had often fill'd the court with laughter.