

THE

No 12

ERRY AND ENTERTAINING

HISTORY

OF THE

KING

AND THE

COBLER

IN TWO PARTS.

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THE
H I S T O R Y

OF THE

KING AND THE COBLER.

It was the custom of King Henry VIII. to walk late in the night into the city, disguised, to observe and take notice how the constables and watchmen performed their duty, not only in guarding the city gates, but also in diligently watching the inward parts of the city, so that they might, in a great measure, prevent those disturbances and casualties which too often happen in great and populous cities in the night; and this he did oftentimes without the least discovery who he was, returning home to Whitehall in the morning.

Now, in his return home through the Strand, he took notice of a certain cobbler who was constantly up at work whistling and singing every morning. The King was resolved to see him and be acquainted with him: In order to which, he immediately knocks off the heel of his shoe by sitting it against a stone; and having done so, he bounded at 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 set on the heel on one of his shoes.

Yes, that I can, says the cobbler. Come in, honest fellow, and set thee down by me, and I will do it for thee straight; the cobbler scraping his awls and old shoes on one side, to make room for the King to sit down by him.

The King being hardly able to forbear laughing at the

kindness of the cobbler, asked him if there was an house hard by that sold a cup of good ale, and the people were up.

Yes, said the cobbler, there is an Inn over the way, where I believe the folks are up, for the carriers go from thence very early in the morning.

When the King borrowed an old shoe of the cobbler, and went over to the inn, desiring the cobbler would bring his shoe to him thither, so soon as he had put the heel on again. The cobbler promised he would; so making what haste he could to put on the heel, he carries it to the King, saying,

Honest blade, here is thy shoe again; and I warrant thee it will not come off again in haste.

Very well, said the King, what mark thou have for thy pain?

A couple of pence, replied the cobbler.

Well, said the King, seeing thou art an honest merry fellow, here is a taster for thee. Come, sit 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'll pledge thee were it in water.

So the cobbler sat down by the King, and was very merry, and drank of his liquor very freely, and likewise sung some of his merry songs and catches, whereat the King laughed heartily, and was very jocund and pleasant with the cobbler, telling him withal that his name was Harry Tudor: that he belonged to the court, and if he would come and see him there he would be very welcome, because he was a merry companion, and charged him not to forget his name, and to ask any one for him about the court, and they would soon bring him to him; for, said the King, I am very well known there.

Now the cobbler little dreamed 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, makes two or three scrapes with his foot, and gives the King many thanks; also telling him, that he was one of the honestest men he ever met with in all his lifetime; and, although he had never been at court, yet it should not be long before he would make a holliday to oome and see him.

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

C H A P. II.

SO the cobbler took the King with him over the way, where he had his 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, (showing the King a close bed made up at one corner of the cellar much like a closet,) for if she should awake, she would make our ears ring again.

At which speech of the cobbler's the King laughed, and told the cobbler he would be mindful to follow his directions.

Whereupon the cobbler kindled up a 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; some, said he, will you eat any of my Cheshire cheese? There is as good fellowship in eating as there is in drinking; which 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 smiled, saying, 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 with his liquor, and delighted the King with several of his old stories, insomuch that he was highly pleased with the manner of his entertainment; when, on a sudden, the cobbler's wife Joan began to wake. I'faith, says the cobbler, you must be gone; my wife Joan begins to grumble, she'll awake presently, and I would not for half the shoes in my shop she should find you here.

CAAP. III

NOW as soon as the King came home he sent out orders about the court, that if any 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.

The cobbler thought every day a month, till he had been at court, to see his new acquaintance, and was troubled how he should get leave of his wife Joan, for he could not get without her knowledge, by reason he did resolve to make himself as fine as he could, for his wife always kept the keys of his holliday clothes. Whereupon, one 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, repeating it over and over again, that he was the honestest fellow he ever met withal. Husband, quoth she, because you have been so ingenuous as to tell me the whole truth, I will give you leave to make a holliday for this once; you shall all go to court, and I will make you as fine as I can

So it was agreed that he should go to court next day ; whereupon Joan rose betimes next morning, to brush up her husband's holiday clothes, and make him as snug as she could. She washed and ironed the lace band, and made his shoes shine that he might see his face in them. Having done this she made him rise, and pull of 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 lace-band in the prim.

CHAP. IV.

THE cobbler being thus set forth, he strutted through the streets like a crow in a gutter, thinking himself the best of them all.

In this manner he came to court, staring at this body and that body, as he walked up and down, and not knowing who to ask for Harry Tudor. At last he espied one, as he thought, in the 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 this court.

Yes, said the man, follow me and I will bring you to him.

With that he had him presently up into the guard chamber, telling one of the yeomen of the guards there was one who enquired for Harry Tudor.

I know him very well, replied the yeoman : if you please to go along with me, I'll bring you to him immediately.

So the cobbler followed the yeoman, admiring very much the prodigious finery of the rooms which he carried him through. He thought within himself that the yeoman was mistaken in the person whom he enquired for ; for, said he, he whom I look for is a plain merry fel-

low; his name is Harry Tudor, we drank two pots together not long since; I suppose he may belong to some Lord or another about the court.

I tell you friend, said 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 his nobles who attended him.

As soon as the yeoman had put by the arras, he spoke aloud, 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 through which he came, he was soon overtaken, and brought before the King, whom the cobbler little thought to be the person whom he enquired for: Therefore in a trembling condition he fell down on his knees, saying,

May it please your grace, may it please your highness, I am a poor cobbler, and enquires 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 had him afterwards go to my cellar, where we drank a cup of nappy ale and were very merry, till my wife Joan began to grumble, which put an end to our merriment for that time; but I told him I would come to court and see him, as soon as I conveniently could.

Well, said the King, don't be troubled; do you know this honest fellow again if you saw him.

The cobbler replied, yes, that I do from a thousand.

Then, said the King stand up, and be not afraid but look well about you, peradventure you may find the fellow in this company

Whereupon the cobbler rose up, and looked wishfully upon the King, and the rest of the nobles, but it was 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 never imagine him to be Harry Tudor, whose heel of his shoe he had mended, and who had been so merry with him at 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 unheated fellow: Adding withal that he was sure that did Harry Tudor but know that he was at court, he could make him very welcome; for says the cobbler, when he parted, he charged me to come to court and see him, which I promised I would, and accordingly have made an holiday on purpose to come and see him.

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 before the cobbler, he spake to the yeoman of the guards.

Here said he, take the honest cobbler down into my cellar; and let him drink my good health; I will give orders that Harry Tudor shall come to him presently.

So away they went, the cobbler being fit to leap out of his skin for joy, not only because he had come so well off, but that he should see his good friend Harry Tudor.

C H A P. V.

THE cobbler had not been long in the King's cellar, before the King came to him, in the same habit that he had on when he mended his shoe, whereupon the cobbler knew him immediately, and ran and kissed him, saying,

Honest Harry, I have made a holiday on purpose to see you; but I had much ado to get leave of my wife

loan, who was soath that I should lose so much time from my work; but I was resolved to see you, and therefore I made myself as fine as I could. But I'll tell thee, Harry, when I came to court, I was in a peck of troubles how to find you out; but at last I met with a man who told me he knew you very well, and he would bring me to you; but instead of so doing, he brought me before the King, which had almost frightened me out of my seven senses: But in good faith, added the cobbler, I am resolved to be merry with you, since I have had the good fortune to meet with you at last.

Ay, that you shall, replied the King; we shall be as merry as princes.

With that he called for a large glass of wine, and drank to the cobbler, the King's good health.

Good a mercy, said the cobbler, honest Harry, I'll pledge that health with all my heart.

Now, after the cobbler 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, on a sudden, several of the nobles came into the cellar, extraordinary rich in apparel, who all stood uncovered before Harry Tudor, which put the cobbler into an amazement at first; but presently recovering himself, he looked more wilfully upon Harry Tudor, and soon knowing him to be the King, whom he knew in the presence chamber, though in another habit, he immediately fell on his knees, saying,

'May it please your Grace, may it please your Highness, I am an honest poor cobbler, and means no harm.'

No, no, said the King, and shall receive none here, I assure you.

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 had done before, when he mended the heel of his shoe.

This kind speech of the King's, and three or four glasses of wine, 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.

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 am as bold as bold can be,
 No cobbler e'er was ruder ;
 Then here, good fellow, here's to thee,
 Rememb'ring Harry Tudor.
 When I'm at work within my stall,
 Upon him I shall think ;
 His kindness I to mind shall call,
 Whene'er I eat or drink :
 His kindness was to me so great,
 And so shall my wife Joan,
 I'll laugh when I sit in my stall,
 And merrily will sing,
 That I, with poor last and awl,
 Am fellow to the King,
 And it is more, I must confess,
 Than I at first did know ;
 But Harry Tudor, ne'ertheless,
 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 wonder that how she will laugh,
 When she hears of this thing,
 That he who drank her nut-brown ale,
 Was England's royal King.

C H A P I V.

NOW the King considering the pleasant humour of the cobbler, how innocently merry he was, and free from any designs; that he was a person who laboured very hard, and took a great deal of pains for a small livelihood, was pleased, out of his princely grace and favour, to allow him a liberal annuity of forty merks a year, for the better support of his jolly humour, and the maintenance of his wife Joan; and that he should be admitted one of his courtiers, and that he might have the liberty of his cellar whenever he pleased; which being so far beyond expectation, did highly exalt the cobbler's humour, much to the satisfaction of the King.

So, after a great many bows and scrapes, he returned home to his wife Joan, with the joyful news of his reception at court, which so well pleased her, that she did not think much of the great pains she had taken in decking him up for the journey.

P A R T II.

C H A P. I.

CH RISTOPHER CRISPIN, for so was the cobbler called, with whom King Henry VIII. had made himself so exceedingly familiar; the cobbler, I say, having been at court, where he made much mirth and was much made of for the mirth and merriment which he made, returning home in the afternoon, full freighted with wine, and likewise wonderful expectations; his heart and head being light, he went capering along, flinging up

his cap, crying, long live Harry Tudor, long live Harry Tudor, with a hundred boys at his heels, whooping and halooing. His wife standing at the door, and seeing him pranceing along in such a hair-braided posture, she immediately put on one of her accustomed crabbed looks, crying out, hoity toity, what's come of you now? I'll Harry Tudor you, with a vengeance! Was it for this I dressed you up in plimlico, 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 my preferment; I am promised to be made a courtier, that I am.

A courtier! quoth Joan; Adsfoot! more like a cuckold, drunken scoundrel.

Nay, you best know that, 'tis from you 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 course of life will never do. With these, and the like reprimands, she conquers poor Crispin, who for quietness sake, forthwith went to bed, where we will leave him to take his rest. Let us now return to court, and say something of what passed between the King, Queen, and Nobles, relating that day's comical adventure.

C H A P. II.

NOW it is to be noted, that the cobbler was no sooner gone, but the King with his Nobles, began to renew their mirth, upon their rehearsing the many comical fancies and pleasant pranks with which the cobbler 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 cobbler so to the life, that the King and the rest of the nobles fell into a hearty fit of laughter, which lasted a considerable

time, without intermission, whereupon the Queen, with her maids of honour, came to enquire the cause of such general mirth.

My 'eige, said the Queen, I am glad to hear you and your Nobles so merry, and would be 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 I think never came here to court since the conquest; for his downright honest simplicity has afforded us 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 shall contrive, the very first opportunity, to give you a sight of him under some disguise, by which we will have new proofs of the of the 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 cobbler? Why, said the King, Woolsey, have you not heard, how the industrious bee extracted honey as well from the meanest flowers as the richest blossoms? And, if so, why may I not experience the felicity of my people, by conversing with a poor cobbler, as well as I may from the crafty policy of a proud cardinal.

This choke-pear stoped the mouth of cardinal Woolsey, while the King, Queen, and Nobles pursued their mirth, to the height of their satisfaction.

C H A P. III.

YOU may remember how the cobbler, at his return home from the court, in a frolicksome manner, was summoned to bed by the strict order of old Joan, his sommanding wife, where he slept secure till towards

morning, at which time she awakened him with a thunder clap. 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 jumps out of bed, puts on his clothes and his considering cap, and so passed away to his stall, where he fell to work upon his shoes and boots, as fierce as fury, and as blythe as a bird in the returning spring, pleasing his fancy with a song (of his own making), as follows:

THE COBLER'S SONG IN HIS STALL.

TH'O now I sit within my stall,
 Old shoes and slippers mending,
 I to the court shall have a call,
 There is my hope depending.
 I do not value truly Joan,
 Tho' once in tears I woo'd her;
 I have the favour 'tis well known,
 Of honest Harry Tudor.

He gave me forty marks in gold,
 Which is a deal of treasure;
 Besides all this there is no fear
 Of having courtly pleasure.
 I wish old Joan she would die,
 Tho' once in tears I woo'd her,
 I'd go to court, and there live by
 My honest Harry Tudor.

Now whilst the cobbler was making himself merry with singing his new made song, Joan suddenly chopped upon him, and hearing him mention the name of Tudor, salutes him in this manner:

Out you drunken scoundrel, what! are you going to doring it again? I thought you had got enough of

that yesterday; come into breakfast, you blockhead. With that he immediately follows her, like a patient man, while she continued scolding in this manner I need not, quoth she, ask you whether or not you met with your pot companion; for I think you gave me a full 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 some carman or porter. Pray where is the money that you carried out with you? You had fourpence halfpenny of me: that I let you have out of my pocket, because I would have you appear like a man; and besides what you took of Jobson, the old joiner, and likewise of Simon Saucecrown the sadler, for two pair of heel-pieces; and of this money, pray let me see what you have left?

Alas! 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 you and I.

Why, Husband, quoth Joan, what has he given you?

Why, to tell you the truth, my sweet wife, he has settled forty merks a-year upon me; and, as a sure token of his goodness, he has given me these two broad pieces of gold.

Oh me! quoth Joan, did your friend give you all this? Well, God's blessing on his loving heart, he is an honest fellow, I'll warrant him.

Who do you call fellow? quoth her husband, 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 and me, you may happen to dine on the fruit of your hempseed; by which means 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 scold, nor call thou names for the future, during life.

Be sure, quoth he, to keep your promise, and I shall
 be sure you that all shall be well.

C H A P. IV.

KING HENRY, as you have heard, having promised
 the Queen that she should be accommodated with some
 of the cobbler's segaries, now his care was how to perform
 and make good his promise; that is to say, how he might
 bring himself into the cobbler's company without the cob-
 ler knowing who he was. Many thoughts came into his
 head, but among the rest, one he resolves upon, which
 is this: The King sends man and horse down into the
 country, there to buy leather fit for shoe-makers, and to
 send it to London with the carrier, who came to the same
 inn that was over against the aforesaid cobbler.

This being accordingly done, the King, in the habit of
 a plain countryman, came to the inn with the Queen, who
 in the dress of an innocent country maiden, passed for his
 mistress: he passed for the tanner that had come to re-
 ceive and sell the leather. The King having paid the
 carrier for bringing the parcel, calls for a room and some
 of the best liquor the house afforded which being brought,
 he asked the keeper, whether or no he could help him
 to a chapman for his leather: who answered, here
 is an honest fellow, a cobbler over the way, I'll send for
 him; he'll either buy it; or help you to a customer
 for it.

Prishee send for him, said the King.

Whereupon the cobbler was called, who came capering
 like a Morrice dancer, saying who wants me.

A gentleman said the inn keeper, has a parcel of leather
 for sell.

I'll buy it, quoth the cobbler, if it be for my turn. Now
 being looked over it, he asked the price, the King, not
 knowing what it was worth, asked him forty shillings.

Marry, quoth the cobbler, I wish that you may have com-
honestly by it; for though I be the buyer, I must need
tell you it is worth much more.

That's neither here nor there, quoth the King, I am
for selling off: which, when I have done, I dont think to
deal in leather for the future; I am for a place at court,
and this young maid, my kinswoman, is likewise desirous
to wait on some lady.

Marry, quoth the cobbler, if it be so, perhaps I may do
you a piece of service, for as simple as I sit here; though
I say so myself, I am very well acquainted with the King
and, as you seem both to have good honest faces, I protest
I will do you all the good I can, that I will, and there
my hand on the same.

Thou sayest well, quoth the King, and if thou dost me
a kindness, I do not matter if I give thee the leather:
a reward for thy goodness; and so here's to thee.

I thank thee, quoth the cobbler; and by the time he
had drank three or four carouses, his heart grew light and
he told the King he would sing him a song of his cow
making; at which the Queen, when she heard it, laugh'd
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 drew 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.

C H A P. V.

THE cobbler being gone, the King turned himself to
the Queen saying, how do you like the conversation
of this comical Crispin?

The Queen said, right well; besides I see there is some-
thing of principle in him, which, in my judgement, seem

to outshine his poverty: for, my leige, when you offered the leather to him at a low price, he let you know it was worth much more, and therefore was loath to meddle with it, fearing you came not honestly by it. And what I observe more in him is, that he has a light heart, brisk, and merry; and, for ought I know, he enjoys more comfort in his coarse and homely cottage, than a colonel or courtier, with all their accomplishments.

Not so much of that, replied the King; I very well remember, that when he had me down in his lower cellar, to drink a cup of his nappy ale, and eat some of his bread and cheese, all on a sudden his wife Joan began to rouse out of her night's rest, and I found he began to be afraid of her, for he said, friend, you must begone; 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, I got away with all the speed I could.

My liege, quoth 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 willingly see her.

She shall be sent for, said the King; and thereupon he called for the inn-keeper, to know what he could let them have for dinner, who told him, they had a shoulder of mutton, which would be ready in half an hour.

That will do, said the King; and therefore, pray call the cobbler and his wife, for I desire they may both dine with me.

The inn-keeper having delivered his message, Joan set railing, saying, what sot is this that hath 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 at me again, if I would but keep your counsel; and do you begin already! go

put on your best red petticoat and waistcoat, whilst I dress myself, for I do not know but we may take a walk to court after dinner, and it would be for your credit to appear before the King in your best apparel. Now Joan having a sort of fear upon her for what she had formerly said, doubting that he might out with all, poor creature she was fain to bridle her unruly tongue, and turn her crabbed frowns into sweet and pleasant smiles; and 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 pear-monger.

The King, taking his glass, drank to the cobbler's wife; who simpering like a firmity kettle, said, I thank you, sir.

Then passing the glass 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 I may help you to a service that may be to your heart's content.

Now by the time the glass had gone round, the roast was ready and set before them; the cobbler craved leave to say the grace, which was short, and when ended, the King carved for himself and the Queen, and bid 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, so let him have it.

At which saying, the King and Queen smiled: His Majesty being much more pleased with the mirth than the meat, fed but sparingly, at which the cobbler merrily said, young woman, if you come to dine with the 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 then the King and Queen withdrew

into another room, there to consult about finishing the comical adventure.

C H A P. VI.

NOW it is to be noted that the King had told the Secretary of state, that he would send his royal signet to him wrapped up, by a messenger whom he should secure in order for him to give an account, upon examination, how he came by it. Wherefore he presently calls for pen, ink and paper, and writes the letter, within which he inclosed the signet aforesaid, and having directed the letter, he desired the cobbler to carry it, who was very ready to serve him. Now Joan was resolved to go with him, and did, because she would keep him from being drunk. Now they were no sooner gone, but the King called for the reckoning and paid for 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 upon opening the same, seeming 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 what was in it I know not, only I had it from a tanner.

The secretary replied, if you do not find the tanner out, take my word for it, we shall make an example of you.

Why quoth Joan, you won't hang my husband, will you?

Quoth the secretary, it will go hard with him, if he don't find the tanner.

I'll go fetch him, quoth Joan.

But coming to the Inn and finding the tanner gone,

poor Joan fell into a violent fit of tantrims, tearing her hair, wringing her hands, crying, what will become of my poor cobbler? he will be hang'd.

For what? said the inn-keeper.

But Joan had not patience to tell him her lamentation, crying, 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 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 hapened to hear, just as she entered the door, and cried, dear Joan, have you brought them with you?

With me, quoth Joan, no, no, they are gone, and you are left alone to sulk. Now had it not been better to 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 ambition: but let me tell you, if they have a fancy to hang you, then I may say, you have made a fine piece of work on't; I can't but think how like a courtier you are now. But while she was insulting over poor Crispin, the King was informed of all their transactions, and therefore sent that they might be brought before him, which was done accordingly; but as the cobbler approached in the presence of the King, every joint about him trembled, for he expected to find no favour. The King, with an angry countenance, said, 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. The King replied, this is a

pleasant and well connected story; but if you don't produce this tanner, I'll leave you to the law, and if you be hanged by the law, you must take it for your pains, Joan hearing the King talk of hanging cried, good fir, King, don't hang my poor Crispin; he is an honest man, and has but one fault. What is that? quoth the King; he will not be ruled by his wife, quoth Joan. He shall die, said the King, but I will allow him to chuse his own death. Why, quoth the cobbler, let me die the death of my grandfather and grandmother. How was that? quoth the King. It was on a death bed, replied the cobbler. At which choice of the cobbler's, the King, Queen, and nobles laughed heartily, and Crispin and his wife were locked up in a room, to wait the King's pleasure. No sooner were they a second time confined but the cobbler said with a trembling voice, sweet wife, I wonder what the King intends to do with us now? quoth Joan, prithee be of good comfort, for I am persuaded that the King and Queen, are the tanner and his kinswoman.

Ad'sfoot. quoth the cobbler, have a care of what you say, I shall have you speak treason and then we shall be both hang'd, 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. The King and Queen said, Crispin since you could not find the tanner, I have brought him to you. At which words he fell upon his knees, and cried.

Long live our royal King and Queen,
 Who did their royal persons so demean,
 And in familiar sort did joke with us
 And I rejoice it is no worse.

Arise, honest cobler said the King, and joyful be thy heart; I have tried thy patience, and will prove thy friend. The forty merks per annum which I formerly gave thee, shall be 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 called the Cobler's Acre.

Poor Crispin and his wife were so transported at this 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, and were dismissed with great applause. He and Joan went home; and in a short time built a row of houses, calling the place Cobler's Acre, according to the King's request, which name continued after the cobbler's death. At this time it is turned into a more magnificent 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 follow'd after,
Who had so often fill'd the court with laughter.

F I N I S.