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# The Satraps

RETOLD FROM THE FRENCH OF NICOLAS DE CAEN

BY JAMES BRANCH CABELL

HERE we have to do with the sixth tale of the *Dizain of Queens*. I abridge, as heretofore, at discretion, and somewhat rearrange the progress of the narrative; the result is that to the Norman cleric appertains whatever the tale may have of merit, whereas what you find distasteful in it you must impute to my delinquencies in skill rather than in volition.

In the year of grace 1381 (Nicolas begins) was Dame Anne magnificently fetched from remote Bohemia, and at Westminster married to Sire Richard, the second monarch of that name to reign in England. The Queen had presently noted a certain priest who went forbiddingly about her court, where he was accorded a provisional courtesy, and more forbiddingly into many hovels, where day by day a pitiful wreckage of humanity both blessed and hoodwinked him, as he morosely knew, and adored him, as he never knew at all.

Queen Anne made inquiries. This young cleric was amanuensis to the Duke of Gloucester, she was informed, and notoriously a by-blow of the Duke's brother, the dead Lionel of Clarence. She sent for this Edward Maudelain; when he came her first perception was, "How wonderful his likeness to the King!" while the thought's commentary ran, unacknowledged, "Ay, as an eagle resembles a falcon!" For here, to the observant eye, was a far older person, already passion-wasted, and ineffably a more dictatorial and stiff-necked being than the lazy and amiable King; also, this Maudelain's face and nose were somewhat too long and high; and the priest was, in a word, the less comely of the pair by a very little, and by an infinity the more majestic.

"You are my cousin now, messire," she told him, and innocently offered to his lips her own.

He never moved; but their glances crossed, and for that instant she saw the face of a man who has just stepped into a quicksand. She trembled, without knowing why. Then he spoke, composedly, and of trivial matters.

Thus began the Queen's acquaintanceship with Edward Maudelain. She was by this time the loneliest woman in the island: her husband granted her a bright and fresh perfection of form and color, but desiderated any appetizing tang, and lamented, in his phrase, a certain kinship to the impeccable loveliness of some female saint in a jaunty tapestry; bright as ice in sunshine, just so her beauty chilled you, he complained: and moreover, the woman had been fetched into England, chiefly, to breed him children, and this she had never done. Undoubtedly he had made a bad bargain—he was too easy-going, people presumed upon it. His barons snatched their cue and esteemed Dame Anne to be negligible; whereas the clergy, finding that she obstinately read the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, under the irrelevant plea of not comprehending Latin, denounced her from their pulpits as a heretic and as the evil woman prophesied by Ezekiel.

It was the nature of this desolate child to crave affection, as a necessity almost, and pitifully she tried to purchase it through almsgiving. In the attempt she could have found no coadjutor more ready than Edward Maudelain; giving was with these downright two a sort of obsession, though always he gave in a half scorn but half concealed; and presently they could have marshalled an army of adherents, all in rags, who would cheerfully have been hacked to pieces for either of the twain, and have praised God at the final gasp for the privilege. It was perhaps the tragedy of the man's life that he never suspected this.



*Painting by Howard Pyle*

THE QUEEN READ THE SCRIPTURES IN THE VULGAR TONGUE

Now in and about the Queen's unfrequented rooms the lonely woman and the priest met daily to discuss this or that comminuted point of theology, or (to cite a single instance) Gammer Tudway's obstinate sciatica. Considerate persons found something of the pathetic in their preoccupation with these trifles while, so clamantly, the dissension between the young King and his uncles gathered to a head: the air was thick with portents; and was this, then, an appropriate time, the judicious demanded of high Heaven, for the Queen of fearful England to concern herself about a peasant's toothache?

Long afterward was Edward Maudelain to remember this brief and tranquil period of his life, and to wonder over the man that he had been, through this short while. Embittered and suspicious she had found him, noted for the carping tongue he lacked both power and inclination to bridle; and she had, against his nature, made Maudelain see that every person is at bottom lovable, and all vices but the stains of a traveller midway in a dusty journey; and had led the priest no longer to do good for his own soul's health, but simply for his fellow's benefit.

And in place of that monstrous passion which had at first view of her possessed him, now, like a sheltered taper, glowed an adoration which yearned, in mockery of common sense, to suffer somehow for this beautiful and gracious comrade; though very often a sudden pity for her loneliness and the knowledge that she dared trust no one save himself would throttle him like two assassins and move the hot-blooded young man to an exquisite agony of self-contempt and exultation.

Now Maudelain made excellent songs, it was a matter of common report; and yet but once in their close friendship had the Queen commanded him to make a song for her. This had been at Dover, about vespers, in the starved and tiny garden overlooking the English Channel, upon which her apartments faced; and the priest had fingered his lute for an appreciable while before he sang, a thought more harshly than was his custom.

Sang Maudelain:

"*Ave Maria!* now cry we so,  
That see night wake and daylight go.

"Mother and Maid, in nothing incomplete,  
This night that gathers is more light and  
fleet

Than twilight trod alway with stumbling  
feet,

*Agentes uno animo.*

"Ever we touch the prize we dare not take!  
Ever we know that thirst we dare not  
slake!

Ever toward a dreamed-of goal we make—

*Est cœli in palatio!*

"Yet long the road, and very frail are we  
That may not lightly curb mortality,  
Nor lightly tread together silently,

*Et carmen unum facio:—*

"*Mater, ora filium,  
Ut post hoc exilium  
Nobis donet gaudium  
Beatorum omnium!*"

Dame Anne had risen. She said nothing. She stayed in this posture for a lengthy while, reeling, one hand yet clasping either breast. More lately she laughed, and began to speak of Long Simon's recent fever. Was there no method of establishing him in another cottage? No, the priest said, the villeins like the cattle were by ordinary deeded with the land.

One day, about the hour of prime, in that season of the year when fields smell of young grass, the Duke of Gloucester sent for Edward Maudelain. The court was then at Windsor. The priest came quickly to his patron. He found the Duke in company with Edmund of York and bland Harry of Derby, John of Gaunt's oldest son. Each was a proud and handsome man. To-day Gloucester was gnawing at his finger nails, big York seemed half asleep, and the Earl of Derby patiently to await something as yet ineffably remote.

"Sit down!" snarled Gloucester. His lean and evil countenance was that of a tired devil. The priest obeyed, wondering that so high an honor be accorded him in the view of three great noblemen. Then Gloucester said, in his sharp way: "Edward, you know, as England knows, the King's intention toward us three and our adherents. It has come to our demolishment or his. I confess a preference in the matter. I have consulted with the Pope concerning the advisability of taking the crown into my own hands.

Edmund here does not want it, and John is already achieving one in Spain. Eh, in imagination I was already King of England, and I had dreamed— Well! to-day the prosaic courier arrived. Urban—that Neapolitan swine!—dares give me no assistance. It is decreed I shall never reign in these islands. And I had dreamed— Meanwhile, De Vere and De la Pole are at the King day and night urging revolt. Within the week the three heads of us will embellish Temple Bar. You, of course, they will only hang.”

“We must avoid England, then, my noble patron,” the priest considered.

Angrily the Duke struck a clenched fist upon the table. “By the Cross! we remain in England, you and I and all of us. Others avoid. The Pope and the Emperor will have none of me. They plead for the Black Prince’s heir, for the legitimate heir. Dompnedex! they shall have him!”

Maudelain recoiled, for he thought this twitching man insane.

“Besides, the King intends to take from me my fief at Sudbury,” said the Duke of York, “in order he may give it to De Vere. That is absurd and monstrous and abominable.”

Openly Gloucester sneered. “Listen!” he rapped out toward Maudelain; “when they were drawing up the Great Peace at Brétigny, it happened, as is notorious, that the Black Prince, my brother, wooed in this town the Demoiselle Alixe Riczi, whom in the outcome he abducted. It is not as generally known, however, that, finding the fair Lyonnaise a girl of obdurate virtue, he had prefaced the action by marriage.”

“And what have I to do with all this?” said Edward Maudelain.

Gloucester retorted: “More than you think. For she was conveyed to Chertsey, here in England, where at the year’s end she died in childbirth. A little before this time had Sir Thomas Holland seen his last day—the husband of that Jehane of Kent whom throughout his life my brother loved most marvellously. The disposition of the late Queen Mother is tolerably well known. I make no comment save that to her moulding my brother was as so much wax. In fine, the two lovers were presently married, and their son reigns to-day in England.

The abandoned son of Alixe Riczi was reared by the Cistercians at Chertsey, where some years ago I found you—sire.”

He spoke with a stifled voice, and wrenching forth each sentence; and now with a stiff forefinger flipped a paper across the table. “*In extremis* my brother did far more than confess. He signed—your Grace,” said Gloucester. The Duke on a sudden flung out his hands, like a wizard whose necromancy fails, and the palms were bloodied where his nails had torn the flesh.

“Moreover, my daughter was born at Sudbury,” said the Duke of York.

And of Maudelain’s face I cannot tell you. He made pretence to read the paper carefully, but ever his eyes roved, and he knew that he stood among wolves. The room was oddly shaped, with eight equal sides; the ceiling was of a light and brilliant blue, powdered with many golden stars, and the walls were hung with tapestries which commemorated the exploits of Theseus. “King,” he said, aloud, “of France and England, and Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine! I perceive that Heaven loves a jest.” He wheeled upon Gloucester and spoke with singular irrelevance: “And the titular Queen?”

Again the Duke shrugged. “I had not thought of the dumb wench. We have many convents.”

And now Maudelain twisted the paper between his long fingers and appeared to meditate.

“It would be advisable, your Grace,” observed the Earl of Derby, suavely, and breaking his silence for the first time, “that yourself should wed Dame Anne, once the Holy Father has granted the necessary dispensation. Treading too close upon the impendent death of our nominal lord the so-called King, the foreign war perhaps necessitated by her exile would be highly inconvenient.”

Then these three princes rose and knelt before the priest; in long bright garments they were clad, and they shone with gold and many jewels, what while he standing among them shuddered in his sombre robe. “Hail, King of England!” cried these three.

“Hail, ye that are my kinsmen!” he answered; “hail, ye that spring of an accursed race, as I! And woe to Eng-

land for that fearful hour wherein Foulques the Querulous held traffic with a devil and on her begot the first of us Plantagenets! Of ice and of lust and of hell-fire are all we sprung; old records attest it; and fickle and cold and ravenous and without shame are we Plantagenets until the end. Of your brother's dishonor ye make merchandise to-day, and to-day fratricide whispers me, and leers, and, Heaven help me! I attend. O God of Gods! wilt Thou dare bid a man live stainless, having aforetime filled his veins with such a venom? Then will I cry from Thy deepest hell. . . . Nay, now let Lucifer rejoice for that his descendants know of what wood to make a crutch! You are very wise, my kinsmen. Take your measures, then, messieurs that are my kinsmen! Though were I any other than a Plantagenet, with what expedition would I now kill you that recognize the strength to do it! then would I slay you! without any animosity, would I slay you then, and just as I would kill as many splendid snakes!"

He went away, laughing horribly. Gloucester drummed upon the table, his brows contracted. But the lean Duke said nothing; big York seemed to sleep; and Henry of Derby smiled as he sounded a gong for that scribe who would draw up the necessary letters. His time was not yet come, but it was nearing.

In the antechamber the priest encountered two men-at-arms dragging a dead body from the castle. The Duke of Kent, Maudelain was informed, had taken a fancy to a peasant girl, and in remonstrance her misguided father had actually tugged at his Grace's sleeve.

Maudelain went first into the park of Windsor, where he walked for a long while alone. It was a fine day in the middle spring; and now he seemed to understand for the first time how fair his England was. For entire England was his splendid fief, held in vassalage to God and to no man alive, his heart now sang; allwhither his empire spread, opulent in grain and metal and every revenue of the earth, and in stalwart men, his chattels, and in strong orderly cities, where the windows would be adorned with scarlet hangings, and women with golden hair and red lax lips would presently admire as King Edward rode slowly

by at the head of a resplendent retinue. And always the King would bow, graciously and without haste, to his shouting people. . . . He laughed to find himself already at rehearsal of the gesture.

It was strange, though, that in this glorious fief of his so many persons should as yet live day by day as cattle live, suspicious of all other moving things, with reason, and roused from their incurious and filthy apathy only when some glittering baron, like a resistless eagle, swept uncomfortably near on some by-errand of the more bright and windy upper world. East and north they had gone yearly, for so many centuries, these dumb peasants, like herded sheep, so that in the outcome their carcasses might manure the soil of France yonder or of more barren Scotland. Give these serfs a king, now, who, being absolute, might dare to deal in perfect equity with rich and poor, who with his advent would bring Peace into England as his bride, as Trygæus did very anciently in Athens—"And then," the priest paraphrased, "may England recover all the blessings she has lost, and everywhere the glitter of active steel will cease." For everywhere men would crack a rustic jest or two, unhurriedly. The vivid fields would blacken under their sluggish ploughs, and they would find that with practice it was almost as easy to chuckle as it was to cringe.

Meanwhile on every side the nobles tyrannized in their degree, well clothed and nourished, but at bottom equally comfortless in condition. As illuminate by lightning Maudelain saw the many factions of his barons squabbling for gross pleasures, like wolves over a corpse, and blindly dealing death to one another to secure at least one more delicious gulp before that inevitable mangling by the teeth of some yet stronger comrade. The complete misery of England showed before him like a winter landscape. The thing was questionless. He must tread henceforward without fear among many frightened beasts and to their ultimate welfare. On a sudden Maudelain knew himself to be strong and admirable throughout, and doubt went quite away from him.

True, Richard, poor fool, must die. Squarely the priest faced that stark and hideous circumstance; to spare Richard

was beyond his power, and the boy was his brother; yes, this oncoming King would be in effect a fratricide, and after death irrevocably damned. To burn, and eternally to burn, and, worst of all, to know that the torment was eternal! ay, it would be hard; but, at the cost of one ignoble life and one inconsiderable soul, to win so many men to manhood bedazzled his every faculty, in anticipation of the exploit.

The tale tells that Maudelain went now toward the little garden he knew so well which adjoined Dame Anne's apartments. He found the Queen there alone, as nowadays she was for the most part, and he paused to wonder at her bright and singular beauty. How vaguely odd it was, he reflected, too, how alien in its effect to that of any other woman in sturdy England, and how associable it was, somehow, with every wild and gracious denizen of the woods that blossomed yonder.

In this place the world was all sunlight, temperate but undiluted. They had met in a wide unshaded plot of grass, too short to ripple, which everywhere glowed steadily, like a gem. Right and left birds sang as in a contest. The sky was cloudless, a faint and radiant blue throughout, save where the sun stayed as yet in the zenith, so that the Queen's brows cast honey-colored shadows upon either cheek. The priest was greatly troubled by the proud and heatless brilliancies, the shrill joys, of every object within the radius of his senses.

She was splendidly clothed, in a kirtle of very bright green, tinted like the verdancy of young ferns in the sunlight, and over all a gown of white, cut open on either side as far as the hips. This garment was embroidered with golden leopards and trimmed with ermine. About her yellow hair was a chaplet of gold, wherein emeralds glowed; her blue eyes were as large and bright and changeable (he thought) as two oceans in midsummer; and Maudelain stood motionless and seemed to himself but to revere, as the Earl Ixion did, some bright and never stable wisp of cloud, while somehow all elation departed from him as water does from a wetted sponge compressed. He laughed discordantly, but within the moment his sunlit face was still and glorious like that of an image.

"Wait—! O my only friend—!" said Maudelain. Then in a level voice he told her all, unhurriedly and without any sensible emotion.

She had breathed once, with a profound inhalation. She had screened her countenance from his gaze what while you might have counted fifty. More lately the lithe body of Dame Anne was alert as one suddenly aroused from dreaming. "This means more war, for De Vere and Tressilian and De la Pole and Bramber, and others of the barons know that the King's fall signifies their ruin. Many thousands die to-morrow."

He answered, "It means a brief and cruel war."

"In that war the nobles will ride abroad with banners and gay surcoats, and kill and ravish in the pauses of their songs; while daily in that war the naked peasants will kill, the one the other, without knowing why."

His thought had forerun hers. "Many would die, but in the end I would be King, and the general happiness would rest at my disposal. The adventure of this world is wonderful, and it goes otherwise than under the strict tutelage of reason."

"Not yours, but Gloucester's and his barons'. Friend, they would set you on the throne to be their puppet and to move only as they pulled the strings. Thwart them and they will fling you aside, as the barons have dealt aforetime with every king that dared oppose them. Nay, they desire to live pleasantly, to have good fish o' Fridays, and white bread and the finest wine the whole year through, and there is not enough for all, say they. Can you alone contend against them? and conquer them?—then only do I bid you reign."

The sun had grown too bright, too merciless, but as always she drew the truth from him, even to his agony. "I cannot. I would not endure a fortnight. Heaven help us, nor you nor I nor any one may transform of any personal force this bitter time, this piercing, cruel day of frost and sun. Charity and Truth are excommunicate, and the King is only an adorned and fearful person who leads wolves toward their quarry, lest, lacking it, they turn and devour him. Everywhere the powerful labor to put one an-

other out of worship, and each to stand the higher with the other's corpse as his pedestal; and always Lechery and Hatred sway these proud and inconsiderate fools as winds blow at will the gay leaves of autumn. We but fight with gaudy shadows, we but aspire to overpass a mountain of unstable sand! We two alone of all the scuffling world! Oh, it is horrible, and I think that Satan plans the jest! We dream a while of refashioning this bleak universe, and we know that we alone can do it, and we are as demigods, you and I, in those gallant dreams, and at the end we can but poultice some dirty rascal!"

The Queen answered sadly: "Once did God tread the tangible world, for a very little while, and, look you, to what trivial matters He devoted that brief space! Only to chat with fishermen, and to reason with lost women, and habitually to consort with rascals, till at last He might die between two cut-purses, ignominiously! Were the considerate persons of His day moved at all by the death of this fanatic? I bid you now enumerate through what long halls did the sleek heralds proclaim His crucifixion! and the armament of great-jowled emperors that were distraught by it?"

He answered: "It is true. Of anise even and of cumin the Master estimates His tithe—" Maudelain broke off with a yapping laugh. "Puf! He is wiser than we. I am King of England. It is my heritage."

"It means war. Many will die, many thousands will die, and to no betterment of affairs."

"I am King of England. I am Heaven's satrap here, and answerable to Heaven alone. It is my heritage." And now his large and cruel eyes flamed as he regarded her.

And visibly beneath their glare the woman changed. "My friend, must I not love you any longer? You would be content with happiness? I am jealous of that happiness! for you are the one friend that I have had, and so dear to me—look you!" she said, with a light, wistful laugh, "there have been times when I was afraid of everything you touched, and I hated everything you looked at. I would not have you stained; I desired but to pass my whole life between the four walls of some dingy and eternal gaol,

forever alone with you, lest you become as other men. I would in that period have been the very bread you eat, the least perfume that delights you, the clod you touch in crushing it, and always I loathed what pleasure I derive from life because I might not transfer it to you undiminished. For I wanted somehow to make you happy to my own anguish. . . It was wicked, I suppose, for the imagining of it made me happy, too." Throughout she spoke as simply as a child.

And beside him Maudelain's hands had fallen like so much lead, and remembering his own nature, he longed for annihilation only, before she had appraised his vileness.

"With reason Augustine crieth out against the lust of the eyes. 'For pleasure seeketh objects beautiful, melodious, fragrant, savory, and soft; but this disease those contrary as well, not for the sake of suffering annoyance, but out of the lust of making trial of them!' Ah, ah! too curiously I planned my own damnation, too presumptuously I had esteemed my soul a worthy scapegoat, and I had gilded my enormity with many lies. Yet indeed, indeed, I had believed brave things, I had planned a not ignoble bargain—! Ey, say, is it not laughable, Madame?—as my birthright Heaven accords me a penny, and with that only penny I must anon be seeking to bribe Heaven."

Presently he said: "Yet are we indeed God's satraps, as but now I cried in my vainglory, and we hold within our palms the destiny of many peoples. *Depardieux!* He is wiser than we are, it may be! And as always Satan offers no unhandsome bribes—bribes that are tangible and sure."

They stood like effigies, lit by the broad, unsparing splendor of the morning, but again their kindling eyes had met, and again the man shuddered visibly, convulsed by a monstrous and repulsive joy. "Decide! oh, decide very quickly, my only friend!" he wailed, "for throughout I am all filth!"

Closer she drew to him and without hesitancy laid one hand on either shoulder. "O my only friend!" she breathed, with red lax lips which were very near to his, "throughout so many years I have ranked your friendship as the chief of all



my honors! and I pray God with an entire heart that I may die so soon as I have done what I must do to-day!"

Almost did Edward Maudelain smile, but now his stiffening mouth could not complete the brave attempt. "God save King Richard!" said the priest. "For by the cowardice and greed and ignorance of little men were Salomon himself confounded, and by them is Hercules lightly unhorsed. Were I Leviathan, whose bones were long ago picked clean by pismires, I could perform nothing. Therefore do you pronounce my doom."

"O King," then said Dame Anne, "I bid you go forever from the court and live forever a landless man, and friendless, and without even name. I bid you dare to cast aside all happiness and wealth and comfort and each common tie that even a pickpocket may boast, like tawdry and unworthy garments. In fine, I bid you dare be King and absolute, yet not of England, but of your own being, alike in motion and in thought and even in wish. This doom I dare adjudge and to pronounce, since we are royal and God's satraps, you and I."

Twice or thrice his dry lips moved before he spoke. He was aware of innumerable birds that carolled with a piercing and intolerable sweetness. "O Queen!" he hoarsely said, "O fellow satrap! Heaven has many fiefs. A fair province is wasted and accords no revenue. Therein waste beauty and a shrewd wit and an illimitable charity that of their pride go in fetters and achieve no increase. To-day the young King junkets with his flatterers, and but rarely thinks of England. You have that beauty in desire of which many and many a man would blithely enter hell, and the mere sight of which may well cause a man's voice to tremble as my voice trembles now, and in desire of which— But I tread afield! Of that beauty you have made no profit. I bid you now gird either loin for an unlovely traffic. Old Legion must be fought with fire. True that the age is sick, that we may not cure, we can but salve the hurt—" Now had his hand torn open his sombre gown, and the man's bared breast shone in the sunlight, for everywhere were tiny beads of sweat. Twice he cried the Queen's name aloud, without prefix. In a while he said:

"I bid you weave incessantly such snares of brain and body as may lure King Richard to be swayed by you, until against his will you daily guide this shallow-hearted fool to some commendable action. I bid you live as other folk do hereabout. Coax! beg! cheat! wheedle! lie!" he barked, like a teased dog, "till you achieve in part the task which is denied me. This doom I dare adjudge and to pronounce, since we are royal and God's satraps, you and I."

She answered with a tiny, wordless sound. He prayed for even horror as he appraised his handiwork. But presently, "I take my doom," the Queen proudly said. "I shall be lonely now, my only friend, and yet—it does not matter," the Queen said, with a little shiver. "No, nothing will ever greatly matter now, I think."

Her eyes had filled with tears, she was unhappy, and as always this knowledge roused in Maudelain a sort of frenzied pity and a hatred, quite illogical, of all other things existent. She was unhappy, that only he realized; and half-way he had strained a soft and groping hand toward his lips when he relinquished it. "Nay, not even that," said Edward Maudelain, very proudly, too, and now at last he smiled; "since we are God's satraps, you and I." Afterward he stood thus for an appreciable silence, with ravenous eyes, motionless save that behind his back his fingers were bruising one another. Everywhere was this or that bright color and an incessant melody. It was unbearable. Then it was over: the ordered progress of all happenings was apparent, simple, and natural; and contentment came into his heart like a flight of linnets over level fields at dawn. He left her, and as he went he sang:

"Christ save us all, as well He can,  
*A solis ortus cardine!*  
 For He is both God and man,  
*Qui natus est de virgine,*  
 And we but part of His wide plan  
 That sing, and heartily sing we,  
*Gloria Tibi, Domine!*

"Between a heifer and an ass  
*Enixa est puerpera;*  
 In ragged woollen clad He was  
*Qui regnat super æthera,*  
 And patiently may we then pass  
 That sing, and heartily sing we,  
*Gloria Tibi, Domine!*"

The Queen shivered in the glad sunlight. "I am, it must be, pitiably weak," she said at last, "because I cannot sing as he does. And, since I am not very wise, were he to return even now—but he will not return. He will never return," the Queen repeated, carefully, and over and over again. "It is strange I cannot comprehend that he will never return! Ah, Mother of God!" she cried, with a steadier voice, "grant that I may weep! nay, of Thy infinite mercy let me presently find the heart to weep!" And about her many birds sang joyously.

Next day the English barons held a council, and in the midst of it King Richard demanded to be told his age.

"Your Grace is in your twenty-second year," said the uneasy Gloucester, and now with reason troubled, since he had been seeking all night long for the vanished Maudelain.

"Then have I been under tutors and governors longer than any other ward in my dominion. My lords, I thank you for your past services, but I need them no more." They had no check handy, and Gloucester in particular fore-read his death-warrant, but of necessity he shouted with the others, "Hail, King of England!"

That afternoon the King's assumption of all royal responsibility was commemorated by a tournament, over which Dame Anne presided. Sixty of her ladies led as many knights by silver chains into the tilting-ground at Smithfield, and it was remarked that the Queen appeared unusually mirthful. The King was in high good humor, already a pattern of conjugal devotion; and the royal pair retired at dusk to the Bishop of London's palace at St. Paul's, where was held a merry banquet, with dancing both before and after supper.

## Gray Erin

BY CHARLES BUXTON GOING

THERE'S no bloom on the heather,  
 There's no flower on the furze;  
 They're whispering and crying together  
 Whenever the wet wind stirs.

The fire on the hearth is failing  
 And night is a fearsome thing,  
 For the wind creeps through it, wailing,  
 And there's none to bid it sing.

There's dun mist on the moor  
 And gray mist on the sea—  
 There's darkness in my door,  
 For ye cannot come to me!