

Richard Carvel — Volume 04 eBook

Richard Carvel — Volume 04 by Winston Churchill

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A MAN OF DESTINY

I was picked up and thrown into the brigantine's long-boat with a head and stomach full of salt water, and a heart as light as spray with the joy of it all. A big, red-bearded man lifted my heels to drain me.

"The mon's deid," said he.

"Dead!" cried I, from the bottom-board. "No more dead than you!"

I turned over so lustily that he dropped my feet, and I sat up, something to his consternation. And they had scarce hooked the ship's side when I sprang up the sea-ladder, to the great gaping of the boat's crew, and stood with the water running off me in rivulets before the captain himself. I shall never forget the look of his face as he regarded my sorry figure.

"Now by Saint Andrew," exclaimed he, "are ye kelpie or pirate?"

"Neither, captain," I replied, smiling as the comical end of it came up to me, "but a young gentleman in misfortune."

"Hoots!" says he, frowning at the grinning half-circle about us, "it's daft ye are—"

But there he paused, and took of me a second sizing. How he got at my birth behind my tangled mat of hair and wringing linsey-woolsey I know not to this day. But he dropped his Scotch and merchant-captain's manner, and was suddenly a French courtier, making me a bow that had done credit to a Richelieu.

"Your servant, Mr.—"

"Richard Carvel, of Carvel Hall, in his Majesty's province of Maryland."

He seemed sufficiently impressed.

"Your very humble servant, Mr. Carvel. 'Tis in faith a privilege to be able to serve a gentleman."

He bowed me toward his cabin, and then in sharp, quick tones he gave an order to his mate to get under way, and I saw the men turning to the braces with wonder in their eyes. My own astonishment was as great. And so, with my clothes sucking to my body and a trail of water behind me like that of a wet walrus, I accompanied the captain aft. His quarters were indeed a contrast to those of Griggs, being so neat that I paused at the door for fear of profaning them; but was so courteously bid to enter that I came on again. He summoned a boy from the round house.



“William,” said he, “a bottle of my French brandy. And my compliments to Mr. MacMuir, and ask him for a suit of clothes. You are a larger man than I, Mr. Carvel,” he said to me, “or I would fit you out according to your station.”

I was too overwhelmed to speak. He poured out a liberal three fingers of brandy, and pledged me as handsomely as I had been an admiral come thither in mine own barge, instead of a ragged lad picked off a piratical slaver, with nothing save my bare word and address. 'Twas then I had space to note him more particularly. His skin was the rich colour of a well-seasoned ship's bell, and he was of the middle height, owned a slight, graceful figure, tapering down at the waist like a top, which

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had set off a silk coat to perfection and soured the beaus with envy. His movements, however, had all the decision of a man of action and of force. But his eye it was took possession of me—an unfathomable, dark eye, which bore more toward melancholy than sternness, and yet had something of both. He wore a clean, ruffled shirt, an exceeding neat coat and breeches of blue broadcloth, with plate burnished buttons, and white cotton stockings. Truly, this was a person to make one look twice, and think oftener. Then, as I went to pledge him, I, too, was caught for his name.

“Paul,” said he; “John Paul, of the brigantine John, of Kirkcudbright, in the West India trade.”

“Captain Paul—” I began. But my gratitude stuck fast in my throat and flowed out of my eyes. For the thought of the horrors from which he had saved me for the first time swept over me; his own kind treatment overcame me, and I blubbered like a child. With that he turned his back.

“Hoots,” says he, again, “dinna ye thank me. ’Tis naething to scuttle a nest of vermin, but the duty of ilka man who sails the seas.” By this, having got the better of his emotion, he added: “And if it has been my good fortune to save a gentleman, Mr. Carvel, I thank God for it, as you must.”

Save for a slackness inside the leg and in the hips, Macbluir’s clothes fitted me well enough, and presently I reappeared in the captain’s cabin rigged out in the mate’s shore suit of purplish drab, and brass-buckled shoes that came high over the instep, with my hair combed clear and tied with a ribbon behind. I felt at last that I might lay some claim to respectability. And what was my surprise to find Captain Paul buried to his middle in a great chest, and the place strewn about with laced and broidered coats and waistcoats, frocks and Newmarkets, like any tailor’s shop in Church Street. So strange they looked in those tropical seas that he was near to catching me in a laugh as he straightened up. ’Twas then I noted that he was a younger man than I had taken him for.

“You gentlemen from the southern colonies are too well nourished, by far,” says he; “you are apt to be large of chest and limb. ’Odds bods, Mr. Carvel, it grieves me to see you appavelled like a barber surgeon. If the good Lord had but made you smaller, now,” and he sighed, “how well this skyblue frock had set you off.”

“Indeed, I am content, and more, captain,” I replied with a smile, “and thankful to be safe amongst friends. Never, I assure you, have I had less desire for finery.”



“Ay,” said he, “you may well say that, you who have worn silk all your life, and will the rest of it, and we get safe to port. But believe me, sir, the pleasure of seeing one of your face and figure in such a coat as that would not be a small one.”

And disregarding my blushes and protests, he held up the watchet blue frock against me, and it was near fitting me but for my breadth,—the skirts being prodigiously long. I wondered mightily what tailor had thrust this garment upon him; its fashion was of the old king’s time, the cuffs slashed like a sea-officer’s uniform, and the shoulders made carefully round. But other thoughts were running within me then.



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“Captain,” I cut in, “you are sailing eastward.”

“Yes, yes,” he answered absently, fingering some Point d’Espagne.

“There is no chance of touching in the colonies?” I persisted.

“Colonies! No,” said he, in the same abstraction; “I am making for the Solway, being long overdue. But what think you of this, Mr. Carvel?”

And he held up a wondrous vellum-hole waistcoat of a gone-by vintage, and I saw how futile it were to attempt to lead him, while in that state of absorption, to topics which touched my affair. Of a sudden the significance of what he had said crept over me, the word Solway repeating itself in my mind. That firth bordered England itself, and Dorothy was in London! I became reconciled. I had no particle of objection to the Solway save the uneasiness my grandfather would come through, which was beyond helping. Fate had ordered things well.

Then I fell to applauding, while the captain tried on (for he was not content with holding up) another frock of white drab, which, cuffs and pockets, I’ll take my oath mounted no less than twenty-four: another plain one of pink cut-velvet; tail-coats of silk, heavily broidered with flowers, and satin waistcoats with narrow lace. He took an inconceivable enjoyment out of this parade, discoursing the while, like a nobleman with nothing but dress in his head, or, perhaps, like a mastercutter, about the turn of this or that lapel, the length from armpit to fold, and the number of button-holes that was proper. And finally he exhibited with evident pride a pair of doeskins that buttoned over the calf to be worn with high shoes, which I make sure he would have tried on likewise had he been offered the slightest encouragement. So he exploited the whole of his wardrobe, such an unlucky assortment of finery as I never wish to see again; all of which, however, became him marvellously, though I think he had looked well in anything. I hope I may be forgiven the perjury I did that day. I wondered greatly that such a foible should crop out in a man of otherwise sound sense and plain ability.

At length, when the last chest was shut again and locked, and I had exhausted my ingenuity at commendation, and my patience also, he turned to me as a man come out of a trance.

“Od’s fish, Mr. Carvel,” he cried, “you will be starved. I had forgot your state.”

I owned that hunger had nigh overcome me, whereupon he became very solicitous, bade the boy bring in supper at once, and in a short time we sat down together to the best meal I had seen for a month. It seemed like a year. Porridge, and bacon nicely done, and duff and ale, with the sea rushing past the cabin windows as we ate, touched into colour by the setting sun. Captain Paul did not mess with his mates, not he, and he gave me to understand that I was to share his cabin, apologizing profusely for what he

was pleased to call poor fare. He would have it that he, and not I, were receiving favour.



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“My dear sir,” he said once, “you cannot know what a bit of finery is to me, who has so little chance for the wearing of it. To discuss with a gentleman, a connoisseur (I know a bit of French, Mr. Carvel), is a pleasure I do not often come at.”

His simplicity in this touched me; it was pathetic.

“How know you I am a gentleman, Captain Paul?” I asked curiously.

“I should lack discernment, sir,” he retorted, with some heat, “if I could not see as much. Breeding shines through sack-cloth, sir. Besides,” he continued, in a milder tone, “the look of you is candour itself. Though I have not greatly the advantage of you in age, I have seen many men, and I know that such a face as yours cannot lie.”

Here Mr. Lowrie, the second mate, came in with a report; and I remarked that he stood up hat in hand whilst making it, very much as if Captain Paul commanded a frigate. The captain went to a locker and brought forth some mellow Madeira, and after the mate had taken a glass of it standing, he withdrew. Then we lighted pipes and sat very cosy with a lanthorn swung between us, and Captain Paul expressed a wish to hear my story.

I gave him my early history briefly, dwelling but casually upon the position enjoyed in Maryland by my family; but I spoke of my grandfather, now turning seventy, gray-haired in the service of King and province. The captain was indeed a most sympathetic listener, now throwing in a question showing keen Scotch penetration, and anon making a most ludicrous inquiry as to the dress livery our footmen wore, and whether Mr. Carvel used outriders when he travelled abroad. This was the other side of the man. As the wine warmed and the pipe soothed, I spoke at length of Grafton and the rector; and when I came to the wretched contrivance by which they got me aboard the Black Moll, he was stalking hither and thither about the cabin, his fists clenched and his voice thick, breaking into Scotch again and vowing that hell were too good for such as they.

His indignation, which seemed real and generous, transformed him into another man. He showered question after question upon me concerning my uncle and Mr. Allen; declared that he had known many villains, but had yet to hear of their equals; and finally, cooling a little, gave it as his judgment that the crime could never be brought home to them. This was my own opinion. He advised me, before we turned in, to “gie the parson a Grunt” as soon as ever I could lay hands upon him.

The John made a good voyage for that season, with fair winds and clear skies for the most part. 'Twas a stout ship and a steady, with generous breadth of beam, and kept by the master as clean and bright as his porringer. He was Emperor aboard her. He spelt Command with a large C, and when he inspected, his jacks stood to attention like man-o'-war's men. The John mounting only four guns, and but two of them ninepounders, I expressed my astonishment that he had dared attack a pirate craft like the Black Moll, without knowing her condition and armament.



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“Richard,” says he, impressively, for we had become very friendly, “I would close with a thirty-two and she flew that flag. Why, sir, a bold front is half the battle, using circumspection, of a course. A pretty woman, whatever her airs and quality, is to be carried the same way, and a man ought never to be frightened by appearances.”

Sometimes, at our meals, we discussed politics. But he seemed lukewarm upon this subject. He had told me that he had a brother William in Virginia, who was a hot Patriot. The American quarrel seemed to interest him very little. I should like to underscore this last sentence, my dears, in view of what comes after. What he said on the topic leaned perhaps to the King’s side, tho’ he was careful to say nothing that would give me offence. I was not surprised, for I had made a fair guess of his ambitions. It is only honest to declare that in my soberer moments my estimate of his character suffered. But he was a strange man,—a genius, as I soon discovered, to rouse the most sluggish nature to enthusiasm.

The joy of sailing is born into some men, and those who are marked for the sea go down thither like the very streams, to be salted. Whatever the sign, old Stanwix was not far wrong when he read it upon me, and ’twas no great while before I was part and parcel of the ship beneath my feet, breathing deep with her every motion. What feeling can compare with that I tasted when the brigantine lay on her side, the silver spray hurling over the bulwarks and stinging me to life! Or, in the watches, to hear the sea lashing along her strakes in never ending music! I gave MacMuir his shore suit again, and hugely delighted and astonished Captain Paul by donning a jacket of Scotch wool and a pair of seaman’s boots, and so became a sailor myself. I had no mind to sit idle the passage, and the love of it, as I have said, was in me. In a fortnight I went aloft with the best of the watch to reef topsails, and trod a foot-rope without losing head or balance, bent an easing, and could lay hand on any lift, brace, sheet, or haulyards in the racks. John Paul himself taught me to tack and wear ship, and MacMuir to stow a headsail. The craft came to me, as it were, in a hand-gallop.

At first I could make nothing of the crew, not being able to understand a word of their Scotch; but I remarked, from the first, that they were sour and sulky, and given to gathering in knots when the captain or MacMuir had not the deck. For Mr. Lowrie, poor man, they had little respect. But they plainly feared the first mate, and John Paul most of all. Of me their suspicion knew no bounds, and they would give me gruff answers, or none, when I spoke to them. These things roused both curiosity and foreboding within me.

Many a watch I paced thro’ with MacMuir, big and red and kindly, and I was not long in letting him know of the interest which Captain Paul had inspired within me. His own feeling for him was little short of idolatry. I had surmised much as to the rank of life from which the captain had sprung, but my astonishment was great when I was told that John Paul was the son of a poor gardener.



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“A gardener’s son, Mr. MacMuir!” I repeated.

“Just that,” said he, solemnly, “a guid man an’ haly’ was auld Paul. Unco puir, by reason o’ seven bairns. I kennt the daddie weel. I mak sma’ doubt the captain’ll tak ye hame wi’ him, syne the mither an’ sisters still be i’ the cot i’ Mr. Craik’s croft.”

“Tell me, MacMuir,” said I, “is not the captain in some trouble?”

For I knew that something, whatever it was, hung heavy on John Paul’s mind as we drew nearer Scotland. At times his brow would cloud and he would fall silent in the midst of a jest. And that night, with the stars jumping and the air biting cold (for we were up in the 40’s), and the John wish-washing through the seas at three leagues the hour, MacMuir told me the story of Mungo Maxwell. You may read it for yourselves, my dears, in the life of John Paul Jones.

“Wae’s me!” he said, with a heave of his big chest, “I reca’ as yestreen the night Maxwell cam aboard. The sun gaed loon a’ bluidy, an’ belyve the morn rose unco mirk an’ dreary, wi’ bullers (rollers) frae the west like muckle sowthers (soldiers) wi’ white plumes. I tauld the captain ‘twas a’ the faut o’ Maxwell. I ne’er cad bide the blellum. Dour an’ din he was, wi’ ae girn like th’ auld hornie. But the captain wadna hark to my rede when I tauld him naught but dool wad cooin o’ taking Mungo.”

It seemed that John Paul, contrary to MacMuir’s advice, had shipped as carpenter on the voyage out—near seven months since—a man by the name of Mungo Maxwell. The captain’s motive had nothing in it but kindness, and a laudable desire to do a good turn to a playmate of his boyhood. As MacMuir said, “they had gaed barefit thegither among the braes.” The man hailed from Kirkbean, John Paul’s own parish. But he had within him little of the milk of kindness, being in truth a sour and mutinous devil; and instead of the gratitude he might have shown, he cursed the fate that had placed him under the gardener’s son, whom he deemed no better than himself. The John had scarce cleared the Solway before Maxwell showed signs of impudence and rebellion.

The crew was three-fourths made of Kirkcudbright men who had known the master from childhood, many of them, indeed, being older than he; they were mostly jealous of Paul, envious of the command he had attained to over them, and impatient under the discipline he was ever ready to inflict. ’Tis no light task to enforce obedience from those with whom one has birdnested. But, having more than once felt the weight of his hand, they feared him.

Dissatisfaction among such spreads apace, if a leader is but given; and Maxwell was such a one. His hatred for John Paul knew no bounds, and, having once tasted of his displeasure, he lay awake o’ nights scheming to ruin him. And this was the plot: when the Azores should be in the wake, Captain Paul was to be murdered as he paced his quarterdeck in the morning, the two mates clapt into irons, and so brought to



submission. And Maxwell, who had no more notion of navigation than a carpenter should, was to take the John to God knows where,—the Guinea coast, most probably. He would have no more navy regulations on a merchant brigantine, he promised them, nor banyan days, for the matter o' that.



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Happily, MacMuir himself discovered the affair on the eve of its perpetration, overhearing two men talking in the breadroom, and he ran to the cabin with the sweat standing out on his forehead. But the captain would have none of the precautions he urged; declared he would walk the deck as usual, and vowed he could cope single-handed with a dozen cowards like Maxwell. Sure enough, at crowdie-time, the men were seen coming aft, with Maxwell in the van carrying a bowl, on the pretext of a complaint against the cook.

“John Paul,” said MacMuir, with admiration in his voice and gesture, “John Paul wasna feart a pickle, but gaed to the mast, whyles I stannt chittering i’ my claes, fearfu’ for his life. He teuk the horns from Mungo, priet (tasted) a soup o’ the crowdie, an’ wi’ that he seiz’t haut o’ the man by baith shouthers ere the blastie (scoundrel) raught for ’s knife. My aith upo’t, sir, the lave (rest) o’ the batch cowert frae his e’e for a’ the wand like thumpit tykes.”

So ended that mutiny, by the brave act of a brave man. The carpenter was clapt into irons himself, and given no less of the cat-o’-nine-tails than was good for him, and properly discharged at Tobago with such as had supported him. But he brought Captain Paul before the vice-admiralty court of that place, charging him with gross cruelty, and this proceeding had delayed the brigantine six months from her homeward voyage, to the great loss of her owners. And tho’ at length the captain was handsomely acquitted, his character suffered unjustly, for there lacked not those who put their own interpretation upon the affair. He would most probably lose the brigantine. “He expected as much,” said MacMuir.

“There be mony aboard,” he concluded, with a sigh, “as’ll muckle gash (gossip) when we win to Kirkcudbright.”

CHAPTER XX

A SAD HOME-COMING

Mr. Lowrie and Auchterlonnie, the Dumfries bo’sun, both of whom would have died for the captain, assured me of the truth of MacMuir’s story, and shook their heads gravely as to the probable outcome. The peculiar water-mark of greatness that is woven into some men is often enough to set their own community bitter against them. Sandie, the plodding peasant, finds it a hard matter to forgive Jamie, who is taken from the plough next to his, and ends in Parliament. The affair of Mungo Maxwell, altered to suit, had already made its way on more than one vessel to Scotland. For according to Lowrie, there was scarce a man or woman in Kirkcudbrightshire who did not know that John Paul was master of the John, and (in their hearts) that he would be master of more in days to come. Human nature is such that they resented it, and cried out aloud against his cruelty.

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On the voyage I had many sober thoughts of my own to occupy me of the terrible fate, from which, by Divine inter position, I had been rescued; of the home I had left behind. I was all that remained to Mr. Carvel in the world, and I was sure that he had given me up for dead. How had he sustained the shock? I saw him heavily mounting the stairs upon Scipicks arm when first the news was brought to him. Next Grafton would come hurrying in from Kent to Marlboro Street, disavowing all knowledge of the messenger from New York, and intent only upon comforting his father. And when I pictured my uncle soothing him to his face, and grinning behind his bed-curtains, my anger would scald me, and the realization of my helplessness bring tears of very bitterness.

What would I not have given then for one word with that honest and faithful friend of our family, Captain Daniel! I knew that he suspected Grafton: he had told me as much that night at the Coffee House. Perhaps the greatest of my fears was that my uncle would deny him access to Mr. Carvel when he returned from the North.

In the evening, when the sun settled red upon the horizon, I would think of Patty and my friends in Gloucester Street. For I knew they missed me sadly of a Sunday at the supper-table. But it has ever been my nature to turn forward instead of back, and to accept the twists and flings of fortune with hope rather than with discouragement. And so, as we left league after league of the blue ocean behind us, I would set my face to the fore-castle. For Dorothy was in England.

On a dazzling morning in March, with the brigantine running like a beagle in full cry before a heaping sea that swayed her body,—so I beheld for the first time the misty green of the high shores of Ireland. Ah! of what heroes' deeds was I capable as I watched the lines come out in bold relief from a wonderland of cloud! With what eternal life I seemed to tingle! 'Twas as though I, Richard Carvel, had discovered all this colour; and when a tiny white speck of a cottage came out on the edge of the cliff, I thought irresistibly of the joy to live there the year round with Dorothy, with the wind whistling about our gables, and the sea thundering on the rocks far below. Youth is in truth a mystery.

How long I was gazing at the shifting coast I know not, for a strange wildness was within me that made me forget all else, until suddenly I became conscious of a presence at my side, and turned to behold the captain.

“’Tis a braw sight, Richard,” said he, “but no sae bonnie as auld Scotland. An’ the wind hands, we shall see her shores the morn.”

His voice broke, and I looked again to see two great tears rolling upon his cheeks.

“Ah, Scotland!” he pressed on, heedless of them, “God aboon kens what she is to me! But she hasna’ been ower guid to me, laddie.” And he walked to the taffrail, and stood

looking astern that two men who had come aft to splice a haulyard might not perceive his disorder. I followed him, emboldened to speak at last what was in me.



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“Captain Paul,” said I, “MacMuir has told me of your trouble. My grandfather is rich, and not lacking in gratitude,”—here I paused for suitable words, as I could not solve his expression,—“you, sir, whose bravery and charity will have restored me to him, shall not want for friends and money.”

He heard me through.

“Mr. Carvel,” he replied with an impressiveness that took me aback, “reward is a thing that should not be spoken of between gentlemen.”

And thus he left me, upbraiding myself that I should have mentioned money. And yet, I reflected secondly, why not? He was no more nor less than a master of a merchantman, and surely nothing was out of the common in such a one accepting what he had honestly come by. Had my affection for him been less sincere, had I not been racked with sympathy, I had laughed over his notions of gentility. I resolved, however, that when I had reached London and seen Mr. Dix, Mr. Carvel’s agent, he should be rewarded despite his scruples. And if he lost his ship, he should have one of my grandfather’s.

But at dinner he had plainly forgot any offence, and I had more cause than ever to be puzzled over his odd mixture of confidence and aloofness. He talked gayly on a score of subjects,—on dress, of which he was never tired, and described ports in the Indies and South America, in a fashion that betrayed prodigious powers of acute observation; nor did he lack for wit when he spoke of the rich planters who had wined him, and had me much in laughter. We fell into a merry mood, in Booth, jingling the glasses in many toasts, for he had a list of healths to make me gasp, near as long as the brigantine’s articles,—Inez in Havana and Maraquita in Cartagena, and Clotilde, the Creole, of Martinico, each had her separate charm. Then there was Bess, in Kingston, the relict of a customs official, Captain Paul relating with ingenuous gusto a midnight brush with a lieutenant of his Majesty, in which the fair widow figured, and showed her preference, too. But his adoration for the ladies of the more northern colonies, he would have me to understand, was unbounded. For example, Miss Arabella Pope of Norfolk, in Virginia,—and did I know her? No, I had not that pleasure, though I assured him the Popes of Virginia were famed. Miss Pope danced divinely as any sylph, and the very memory of her tripping at the Norfolk Assembly roused the captain to such a pitch of enthusiasm as I had never seen in him. Marvellous to say, his own words failed him, and he had recourse to the poets:

“Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light;
But, oh, she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter-day
Is half so fine a sight.”

The lines, he told me, were Sir John Suckling's; and he gave them standing, in excellent voice and elegant gesture.

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He was in particular partial to the poets, could quote at will from Gay and Thomson and Goldsmith and Gray, and even from Shakespeare, much to my own astonishment and humiliation. Saving only Dr. Courtenay of Annapolis I had never met his equal for versatility of speech and command of fine language; and, having heard that he had been at sea since the age of twelve, I made bold to ask him at what school he had got his knowledge.

“At none, Richard,” he answered with pride, “saving the rudiments at the Parish School at Kirkbean. Why, sir, I hold it to be within every man’s province to make himself what he will, and I early recognized in Learning the only guide for such as me. I may say that I married her for the furtherance of my fortunes, and have come to love her for her own sake. Many and many the ’tween-watch have I passed in a coil of rope in the tops, a volume of the classics in my hand. And ’my happiest days, when not at sea, have been spent in my brother William’s little library. He hath a modest estate near Fredericksburg, in Virginia, and none holds higher than he the worth of an education. Ah, Richard,” he added, with a certain sadness, “I fear you little know the value of that which hath been so lavishly bestowed upon you. There is no creation in the world to equal your fine gentleman!”

It struck me indeed as strange that a man of his powers should set store by such trumpery, and, too, that these notions had not impaired his ability as a seaman. I did not reply. He gave no heed, however, but drew from a case a number of odes and compositions, which he told me were his own. They were addressed to various of his enamouritas, abounded in orrery, and were all, I make no doubt, incredibly fine, tho’ not so much as one sticks in my mind. To speak truth I listened with a very ill grace, longing the while to be on deck, for we were about to sight the Isle of Man. The wine and the air of the cabin had made my eyes heavy. But presently, when he had run through with some dozen or more, he put them by, and with a quick motion got from his chair, a light coming into his dark eyes that startled me to attention. And I forgot the merchant captain, and seemed to be looking forward into the years.

“Mark you, Richard,” said he, “mark well when I say that my time will come, and a day when the best of them will bow to me. And every ell of that triumph shall be mine, sir,- ay, every inch!”

Such was his force, which sprang from some hidden fire within him, that I believed his words as firmly as they had been writ down in the Book of Isaiah. Brimming over with enthusiasm, I pledged his coming greatness in a reaming glass of Malaga.

“Alack,” he cried, “an’ they all had your faith, laddie, a fig for the prophecy! Ya maun ken th’ incentive’s the maist o’ the battle.”

There was more of wisdom in this than I dreamed of then. Here lay hid the very keynote of that ambitious character: he stooped to nothing less than greatness for a triumph over his slanderers.



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I rose betimes the next morning to find the sun peeping above the wavy line of the Scottish hills far up the. Solway, and the brigantine sliding smoothly along in the lee of the Galloway Rhinns. And, though the month was March, the slopes of Burrow Head were green as the lawn of Carvel Hall in May, and the slanting rays danced on the ruffed water. By eight of the clock we had crept into Kirkcudbright Bay and anchored off St. Mary's Isle, the tide running ebb, and leaving a wide brown belt of sand behind it.

St. Mary's Isle! As we looked upon it that day, John Paul and I, and it lay low against the bright water with its bare oaks and chestnuts against the dark pines, 'twas perhaps as well that the future was sealed to us.

Captain Paul had conned the brigantine hither with a master's hand; but now that the anchor was on the ground, he became palpably nervous. I had donned again good MacMuir's shore suit, and was standing by the gangway when the captain approached me.

"What'll ye be doing now, Dickie lad?" he asked kindly.

What indeed! I was without money in a foreign port, still dependent upon my benefactor. And since he had declared his unwillingness to accept any return I was of no mind to go farther into his debt. I thanked him again for his goodness in what sincere terms I could choose, and told him I should be obliged if he would put me in the way of working my passage to London upon some coasting vessel. But my voice was thick, my affection for him having grown-past my understanding.

"Hoots!" he replied, moved in his turn, "whyles I hae siller ye shallna lack. Ye maun gae post-chaise to London, as befits yere station."

And scouting my expostulations, he commanded the longboat, bidding me be ready to go ashore with him. I had nothing to do but to say farewell to MacMuir and Lowrie and Auchterlonnie, which was hard enough. For the honest first mate I had a great liking, and was touched beyond speech when he enjoined me to keep his shore suit as long as I had want of it.

"But you will be needing it, MacMuir," I said, suspecting he had no other.

"Haith! I am but a plain man, Mr. Carvel, and ye can sen' back the claw frae London, wi' this geordie."

He slipped a guinea into my hand, but this I positively refused to take; and to hide my feelings I climbed quickly over the side and into the stern of the boat, beside the captain, and was rowed away through the little fleet of cobbles gathering about the ship. Twisting my neck for a parting look at the John, I caught a glimpse of MacMuir's

ungainly shoulders over the fokesle rail, and I was near to tears as he shouted a hearty “God speed” after me.

As we drew near the town of Kirkcudbright, which lies very low at the mouth of the river Dee, I made out a group of men and women on the wharves. The captain was silent, regarding them. When we had got within twenty feet or so of the landing, a dame in a red woollen kerchief called out:



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“What hae ye done wi’ Mungo, John Paul?”

“*Captain* John Paul, Mither Birkie,” spoke up a coarse fellow with a rough beard. And a laugh went round.

“Ay, captain! I’ll captain him!” screamed the carlin, pushing to the front as the oars were tossed, “I’ll tak aith Mr. Currie’ll be captaining him for his towmond voyage o’ piratin’. He be leukin’ for ye noo, John Paul.” With that some of the men on the thwarts, perceiving that matters were likely to go ill with the captain, began to chaff with their friends above. The respect with which he had inspired them, however, prevented any overt insult on their part. As for me, my temper had flared up like the burning of a loose charge of powder, and by instinct my right hand sought the handle of the mate’s hanger. The beldame saw the motion.

“An’ hae ye murder’t MacMuir, John Paul, an’ gien’s claw to a Buckskin gowk?”

The knot stirred with an angry murmur: in truth they meant violence, —nothing less. But they had counted without their man, for Paul was born to ride greater crises. With his lips set in a line he stepped lightly out of the boat into their very midst, and they looked into his eyes to forget time and place. MacMuir had told me how those eyes could conquer mutiny, but I had not believed had I trot been thereto see the pack of them give back in sullen wonder. And so we walked through and on to the little street beyond, and never a word from the captain until we came opposite the sign of the Hurcheon.”

“Do you await me here, Richard,” he said quite calmly; “I mast seek Mr. Currie, and make my report.”

I have still the remembrance of that pitiful day in the clean little village. I went into the inn and sat down upon an oak settle in a corner of the bar, under the high lattice, and thought of the bitterness of this home-coming. If I was amongst strangers, he was amongst worse: verily, to have one’s own people set against one is heaviness of heart to a man whose love of Scotland was great as John Paul’s. After a while the place began to fill, Willie and Robbie and Jamie arriving to discuss Paul’s return over their nappy. The little I could make of their talk was not to my liking, but for the captain’s sake I kept my anger under as best I could, for I had the sense to know that brawling with a lot of alehouse frequenters would not advance his cause. At length, however, came in the same sneering fellow I had marked on the wharf, calling loudly for swats. “Ay, Captain Paul was noo at Mr. Curries, syne banie Alan seed him gang forbye the kirk.” The speaker’s name, I learned, was Davie, and he had been talking with each and every man in the long-boat. Yes, Mungo Maxwell had been cat-o’-nintailed within an inch of his life; and that was the truth; for a trifling offence, too; and cruelly discharged at some outlandish port because, forsooth, he would not accept the gospel of the divinity of Captain Paul. He would as soon sign papers with the devil.

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This Davie was gifted with a dangerous kind of humour which I have heard called innuendo, and he soon had the bar packed with listeners who laughed and cursed turn about, filling the room to a closeness scarce supportable. And what between the foul air and my resentment, and apprehension lest John Paul would come hither after me, I was in prodigious discomfort of body and mind. But there was no pushing my way through them unnoticed, wedged as I was in a far corner; so I sat still until unfortunately, or fortunately, the eye of Davie chanced to fall upon me, and immediately his yellow face lighted malignantly.

“Oh! here be the gentleman the captain’s brocht hame!” he cried, emphasizing the two words; “as braw a gentleman as eer taen frae pirates, an’ nae doubt sin to ae bien Buckskin bonnet-laird.”

I saw through his game of getting satisfaction out of John Paul thro’ goading me, and determined he should have his fill of it. For, all in all, he had me mad enough to fight three times over.

“Set aside the gentleman,” said I, standing up and taking off MacMuir’s coat, “and call me a lubberly clout like yourself, and we will see which is the better clout.” I put off the longsleeved jacket, and faced him with my fists doubled, crying: “I’ll teach you, you spawn of a dunghill, to speak ill of a good man!”

A clamour of “Fecht! fecht!” arose, and some of them applauded me, calling me a “swankie,” which I believe is a compliment. A certain sense of fairness is often to be found where least expected. They capsized the fat, protesting browsterwife over her own stool, and were pulling Jamie’s coat from his back, when I began to suspect that a fight was not to the sniveller’s liking. Indeed, the very look of him made me laugh out—’twas now as mild as a summer’s morn.

“Wow,” says Jamie, “ye maun fecht wi’ a man o’ yere ain size.”

“I’ll lay a guinea that we weigh even,” said I; and suddenly remembered that I had not so much as tuppence to bless me.

Happily he did not accept the wager. In huge disgust they hustled him from the inn and put forward the blacksmith, who was standing at the door in his leather apron. Now I had not bargained with the smith, who seemed a well-natured enough man, and grinned broadly at the prospect. But they made a ring on the floor, I going over it at one end, and he at the other, when a cry came from the street, those about the entrance parted, and in walked John Paul himself. At sight of him my new adversary, who was preparing to deal me out a blow to fell an ox, dropped his arms in surprise, and held out his big hand.



“Haith! John Paul,” he shouted heartily, forgetting me, “’tis blythe I am to see yere bonnie face ance mair!

“An’ wha are ye, Jamie Darrell,” said the captain, “to be bangin’ yere betters? Dinna ye ken gentry when ye see’t?”

A puzzled look spread over the smith’s grimy face.

“Gentry!” says he; “nae gentry that I ken, John Paul. Th’ fecht be but a bit o’ fun, an’ nane o’ my seekin’.”



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“What quarrel is this, Richard?” says John Paul to me.

“In truth I have no quarrel with this honest man,” I replied; “I desired but the pleasure of beating a certain evil-tongued Davie, who seems to have no stomach for blows, and hath taken his lies elsewhere.”

So quiet was the place that the tinkle of the guidwife’s needle, which she had dropped to the flags, sounded clear to all. John Paul stood in the middle of the ring, erect, like a man inspired, and the same strange sense of prophecy that had stirred my blood crept over him and awed the rest, as tho’ ’twere suddenly given to see him, not as he was, but as he would be. Then he spoke.

“You, who are my countrymen, who should be my oldest and best friends, are become my enemies. You who were companions of my childhood are revilers of my manhood; you have robbed me of my good name and my honour, of my ship, of my very means of livelihood, and you are not content; you would rob me of my country, which I hold dearer than all. And I have never done you evil, nor spoken aught against you. As for the man Maxwell, whose part you take, his child is starving in your very midst, and you have not lifted your hands. ’Twas for her sake I shipped him, and none other. May God forgive you! He alone sees the bitterness in my heart this day. He alone knows my love for Scotland, and what it costs me to renounce her.”

He had said so much with an infinite sadness, and I read a response in the eyes of more than one of his listeners, the guidwife weeping aloud. But now his voice rose, and he ended with a fiery vigour.

“Renounce her I do,” he cried, “now and forevermore! Henceforth I am no countryman of yours. And if a day of repentance should come for this evil, remember well what I have said to you.”

They stood for a moment when he had finished, shifting uneasily, their tongues gone, like lads caught in a lie. I think they felt his greatness then, and had any one of them possessed the nobility to come forward with an honest word, John Paul might yet have been saved to Scotland. As it was, they slunk away in twos and threes, leaving at last only the good smith with us. He was not a man of talk, and the tears had washed the soot from his face in two white furrows.

“Ye’ll hae a waught wi’ me afore ye gang, John,” he said clumsily, “for th’ morns we’ve paddl’ t’ thegither i’ th’ Nith.”

The ale was brought by the guidwife, who paused, as she put it down, to wipe her eyes with her apron. She gave John Paul one furtive glance and betook herself again to her knitting with a sigh, speech having failed her likewise. The captain grasped up his mug.



“May God bless you, Jamie,” he said.

“Ye’ll be gaen noo to see the mither,” said Jamie, after a long space.

“Ay, for the last time. An’, Jamie, ye’ll see that nae harm cams to her when I’m far awa’?”

The smith promised, and also agreed to have John Paul’s chests sent by wagon, that very day, to Dumfries. And we left him at his forge, his honest breast torn with emotion, looking after us.



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CHAPTER XXI

THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE

So we walked out of the village, with many a head craned after us and many an eye peeping from behind a shutter, and on into the open highway. The day was heavenly bright, the wind humming around us and playing mad pranks with the white cotton clouds, and I forgot awhile the pity within me to wonder at the orderly look of the country, the hedges with never a stone out of place, and the bars always up. The ground was parcelled off in such bits as to make me smile when I remembered our own wide tracts in the New World. Here waste was sin: with us part and parcel of a creed. I marvelled, too, at the primness and solidity of the houses along the road, and remarked how their lines belonged rather to the landscape than to themselves. But I was conscious ever of a strange wish to expand, for I felt as tho' I were in the land of the Lilliputians, and the thought of a gallop of forty miles or so over these honeycombed fields brought me to a laugh. But I was yet to see some estates of the gentry.

I had it on my tongue's tip to ask the captain whither he was taking me, yet dared not intrude on the sorrow that still gripped him. Time and time we met people plodding along, some of them nodding uncertainly, others abruptly taking the far side of the pike, and every encounter drove the poison deeper into his soul. But after we had travelled some way, up hill and down dale, he vouchsafed the intelligence that we were making for Arbigland, Mr. Craik's seat near Dumfries, which lies on the Nith twenty miles or so up the Solway from Kirkcudbright. On that estate stood the cottage where John Paul was born, and where his mother and sisters still dwelt.

"I'll juist be saying guidbye, Richard," he said; "and leave them a bit siller I hae saved, an' syne we'll be aff to London thegither, for Scotland's no but a cauld kintra."

"You are going to London with me?" I cried.

"Ay," answered he; "this is hame nae mair for John Paul."

I made bold to ask how the John's owners had treated him.

"I have naught to complain of, laddie," he answered; "both Mr. Beck and Mr. Currie bore the matter of the admiralty court and the delay like the gentlemen they are. They well know that I am hard driven when I resort to the lash. They were both sore at losing me, and says Mr. Beck: 'I We'll not soon get another to keep the brigantine like a man-o'-war, as did you, John Paul.' I thanked him, and told him I had sworn never to take another merchantman out of the Solway. And I will keep that oath."

He sighed, and added that he never hoped for better owners. In token of which he drew a certificate of service from his pocket, signed by Messrs. Currie and Beck, proclaiming

him the best master and supercargo they had ever had in their service. I perceived that talk lightened him, and led him on. I inquired how he had got the 'John'.



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"I took passage on her from Kingston, laddie. On the trip both Captain Macadam and the chief mate died of the fever. And it was I, the passenger, who sailed her into Kirkcudbright, tho' I had never been more than a chief mate before. That is scarce three years gone, when I was just turned one and twenty. And old Mr. Currie, who had known my father, was so pleased that he gave me the ship. I had been chief mate of the 'Two Friends', a slaver out of Kingston."

"And so you were in that trade!" I exclaimed.

He seemed to hesitate.

"Yes," he replied, "and sorry I am to say it. But a man must live. It was no place for a gentleman, and I left of my own accord. Before that, I was on a slaver out of Whitehaven."

"You must know Whitehaven, then."

I said it only to keep the talk going, but I remembered the remark long after.

"I do," said he. "'Tis a fair sample of an English coast town. And I have often thought, in the event of war with France, how easy 'twould be for Louis's cruisers to harry the place, and an hundred like it, and raise such a terror as to keep the British navy at home."

I did not know at the time that this was the inspiration of an admiral and of a genius. The subject waned. And as familiar scenes jogged his memory, he launched into Scotch and reminiscence. Every barn he knew, and cairn and croft and steeple recalled stories of his boyhood.

We had long been in sight of Criffel, towering ahead of us, whose summit had beckoned for cycles to Helvellyn and Saddleback looming up to the southward, marking the wonderland of the English lakes. And at length, after some five hours of stiff walking, we saw the brown Nith below us going down to meet the Solway, and so came to the entrance of Mr. Craik's place. The old porter recognized Paul by a mere shake of the head and the words, "Yere back, are ye?" and a lowering of his bushy white eyebrows. We took a by-way to avoid the manor-house, which stood on the rising ground twixt us and the mountain, I walking close to John Paul's shoulder and feeling for him at every step. Presently, at a turn of the path, we were brought face to face with an elderly gentleman in black, and John Paul stopped.

"Mr. Craik!" he said, removing his hat.

But the gentleman only whistled to his dogs and went on.



“My God, even he!” exclaimed the captain, bitterly; “even he, who thought so highly of my father!”

A hundred yards more and we came to the little cottage nigh hid among the trees. John Paul paused a moment, his hand upon the latch of the gate, his eyes drinking in the familiar picture. The light of day was dying behind Criffel, and the tiny panes of the cottage windows pulsed with the rosy flame on the hearth within, now flaring, and again deepening. He sighed. He walked with unsteady step to the door and pushed it open. I followed, scarce knowing what I did, halted at the threshold and drew back, for I had been upon holy ground.



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John Paul was kneeling upon the flags by the ingleside, his face buried on the open Bible in his mother's lap. Her snowy-white head was bent upon his, her tears running fast, and her lips moving in silent prayer to Him who giveth and taketh away. Verily, here in this humble place dwelt a love that defied the hard usage of a hard world!

After a space he came to the door and called, and took me by the hand, and I went in with him. Though his eyes were wet, he bore himself like a cavalier.

"Mother, this is Mr. Richard Carvell heir to Carvel Hall in Maryland,—a young gentleman whom I have had the honour to rescue from a slaver."

I bowed low, such was my respect for Dame Paul, and she rose and curtsied. She wore a widow's cap and a black gown, and I saw in her deep-lined face a resemblance to her son.

"Madam," I said, the title coming naturally, "I owe Captain Paul a debt I can never repay."

"An' him but a laddie!" she cried. "I'm thankful, John, I'm thankful for his mither that ye saved him."

"I have no mother, Madam Paul," said I, "and my father was killed in the French war. But I have a grandfather who loves me dearly as I love him."

Some impulse brought her forward, and she took both my hands in her own.

"Ye'll forgive an auld woman, sir," she said, with a dignity that matched her son's, "but ye're sae young, an' ye hae sic a leuk in yere bonny gray e'e that I ken yell aye be a true friend o' John's. He's been a guid sin to me, an' ye maunna reek what they say o' him."

When now I think of the triumph John Paul has achieved, of the scoffing world he has brought to his feet, I cannot but recall that sorrowful evening in the gardener's cottage, when a son was restored but to be torn away. The sisters came in from their day's work,—both well-favoured lasses, with John's eyes and hair,—and cooked the simple meal of broth and porridge, and the fowl they had kept so long against the captain's home-coming. He carved with many a light word that cost him dear. Did Janet reca' the simmer nights they had supped here, wi' the bumclocks bizzin' ower the candles? And was Nancy, the cow, still i' the byre? And did the bees still give the same bonnie hiney, and were the red apples still in the far orchard? Ay, Meg had thocht o' him that autumn, and ran to fetch them with her apron to her face, to come back smiling through her tears. So it went; and often a lump would rise in my throat that I could not eat, famished as I was, and the mother and sisters scarce touched a morsel of the feast.



The one never failing test of a son, my dears, lies in his treatment of his mother, and from that hour forth I had not a doubt of John Paul. He was a man who had seen the world and become, in more than one meaning of the word, a gentleman. Whatever foibles he may have had, he brought no conscious airs and graces to this lowly place, but was again the humble gardener's boy.



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But time pressed, as it ever does. The hour came for us to leave, John Paul firmly refusing to remain the night in a house that belonged to Mr. Craik. Of the tenderness, nay, of the pity and cruelty of that parting, I have no power to write. We knelt with bowed heads while the mother prayed for the son, expatriated, whom she never hoped to see again on this earth. She gave us bannocks of her own baking, and her last words were to implore me always to be a friend to John Paul.

Then we went out into the night and walked all the way to Dumfries in silence.

We lay that night at the sign of the "Twa Naigs," where Bonnie Prince Charlie had rested in the Mars year(1715). Before I went to bed I called for pen and paper, and by the light of a tallow dip sat down to compose a letter to my grandfather, telling him that I was alive and well, and recounting as much of my adventures as I could. I said that I was going to London, where I would see Mr. Dix, and would take passage thence for America. I prayed that he had been able to bear up against the ordeal of my disappearance. I dwelt upon the obligations I was under to John Paul, relating the misfortunes of that worthy seaman (which he so little deserved!). And said that it was my purpose to bring him to Maryland with me, where I knew Mr. Carvel would reward him with one of his ships, explaining that he would accept no money. But when it came to accusing Grafton and the rector, I thought twice, and bit the end of the feather. The chances were so great that my grandfather would be in bed and under the guardianship of my uncle that I forbore, and resolved instead to write it to Captain Daniel at my first opportunity.

I arose early to discover a morning gray and drear, with a mist falling to chill the bones. News travels apace the world over, and that of John Paul's home-coming and of his public renunciation of Scotland at the "Hurcheon" had reached Dumfries in good time, substantiated by the arrival of the teamster with the chests the night before. I descended into the courtyard in time to catch the captain in his watchet-blue frock haggling with the landlord for a chaise, the two of them surrounded by a muttering crowd anxious for a glimpse of Mr. Craik's gardener's son, for he had become a nine-day sensation to the country round about. But John Paul minded them not so much as a swarm of flies, and the teamster's account of the happenings at Kirkcudbright had given them so wholesome a fear of his speech and presence as to cause them to misdoubt their own wit, which is saying a deal of Scotchmen. But when the bargain had been struck and John Paul gone with the 'ostler to see to his chests, mine host thought it a pity not to have a fall out of me.

"So ye be the Buckskin laud," he said, with a wink at a leering group of farmers; "ye hae braw gentles in America."

He was a man of sixty or thereabout, with a shrewd but not unkindly face that had something familiar in it.



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“You have discernment indeed to recognize a gentleman in Scotch clothes,” I replied, turning the laugh on him.

“Dinna raise ae Buckskin, Mr. Rawlinson,” said a man in corduroy.

“Rawlinson!” I exclaimed at random, “there is one of your name in the colonies who knows his station better.”

“Trowkt!” cried mine host, “ye ken Ivie o’ Maryland, Ivie my brither?”

“He is my grandfather’s miller at Carvel Hall,” I said.

“Syne ye maun be nane ither than Mr. Richard Carvel. Yere servan’, Mr. Carvel,” and he made me a low bow, to the great dropping of jaws round about, and led me into the inn. With trembling hands he took a packet from his cabinet and showed me the letters, twenty-three in all, which Ivie had written home since he had gone out as the King’s passenger in ’45. The sight of them brought tears to my eyes and carried me out of the Scotch mist back to dear old Maryland. I had no trouble in convincing mine host that I was the lad eulogized in the scrawls, and he put hand on the very sheet which announced my birth, nineteen years since,—the fourth generation of Carvels Ivie had known.

So it came that the captain and I got the best chaise and pair in place of the worst, and sat down to a breakfast such as was prepared only for my Lord Selkirk when he passed that way, while I told the landlord of his brother; and as I talked I remembered the day I had caught the arm of the mill and gone the round, to find that Ivie had written of that, too!

After that our landlord would not hear of a reckoning. I might stay a month, a year, at the “Twa Naigs” if I wished. As for John Paul, who seemed my friend, he would say nothing, only to advise me privately that the man was queer company, shaking his head when I defended him. He came to me with ten guineas, which he pressed me to take for Ivies sake, and repay when occasion offered. I thanked him, but was of no mind to accept money from one who thought ill of my benefactor.

The refusal of these recalled the chaise, and I took the trouble to expostulate with the captain on that score, pointing out as delicately as I might that, as he had brought me to Scotland, I held it within my right to incur the expense of the trip to London, and that I intended to reimburse him when I saw Mr. Dix. For I knew that his wallet was not over full, since he had left the half of his savings with his mother. Much to my secret delight, he agreed to this as within the compass of a gentleman’s acceptance. Had he not, I had the full intention of leaving him to post it alone, and of offering myself to the master of the first schooner.



Despite the rain, and the painful scenes gone through but yesterday, and the sour-looking ring of men and women gathered to see the start, I was in high spirits as we went spinning down the Carlisle road, with my heart leaping to the crack of the postilion's whip.

I was going to London and to Dorothy!



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CHAPTER XXII

ON THE ROAD

Many were the ludicrous incidents we encountered on our journey to London. As long as I live, I shall never forget John Paul's alighting upon the bridge of the Sark to rid himself of a mighty farewell address to Scotland he had been composing upon the road. And this he delivered with such appalling voice and gesture as to frighten to a standstill a chaise on the English side of the stream, containing a young gentleman in a scarlet coat and a laced hat, and a young lady who sobbed as we passed them. They were, no doubt, running to Gretna Green to be married.

Captain Paul, as I have said, was a man of moods, and strangely affected by ridicule. And this we had in plenty upon the road. Landlords, grooms, and ostlers, and even our own post-boys, laughed and jested coarsely at his sky-blue frock, and their sallies angered him beyond all reason, while they afforded me so great an amusement that more than once I was on the edge of a serious falling-out with him as a consequence of my merriment. Usually, when we alighted from our vehicle, the expression of mine host would sour, and his sir would shift to a master; while his servants would go trooping in again, with many a coarse fling that they would get no vails from such as we. And once we were invited into the kitchen. He would be soar for half a day at a spell after a piece of insolence out of the common, and then deliver me a solemn lecture upon the advantages of birth in a manor. Then his natural buoyancy would lift him again, and he would be in childish ecstasies at the prospect of getting to London, and seeing the great world; and I began to think that he secretly cherished the hope of meeting some of its votaries. For I had told him, casually as possible, that I had friends in Arlington Street, where I remembered the Manners were established.

"Arlington Street!" he repeated, rolling the words over his tongue; "it has a fine sound, laddie, a fine sound. That street must be the very acme of fashion."

I laughed, and replied that I did not know. And at the ordinary of the next inn we came to, he took occasion to mention to me, in a louder voice than was necessary, that I would do well to call in Arlington Street as we went into town. So far as I could see, the remark did not compel any increase of respect from our fellow-diners.

Upon more than one point I was worried. Often and often I reflected that some hitch might occur to prevent my getting money promptly from Mr. Dix. Days would perchance elapse before I could find the man in such a great city as London; he might be out of town at this season, Easter being less than a se'nnight away. For I had heard my grandfather say that the elder Mr. Dix had a house in some merchant's suburb, and loved to play at being a squire before he died. Again (my heart stood at the thought), the Manners might be gone back to America. I cursed the stubborn pride which had led



the captain to hire a post-chaise, when the wagon had served us so much better, and besides relieved him of the fusillade of ridicule he got travelling as a gentleman. But such reflections always ended in my upbraiding myself for blaming him whose generosity had rescued me from perhaps a life-long misery.



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But, on the whole, we rolled southward happily, between high walls and hedges, past trim gardens and fields and meadows, and I marvelled at the regular, park-like look of the country, as though stamped from one design continually recurring, like our butter at Carvel Hall. The roads were sometimes good, and sometimes as execrable as a colonial byway in winter, with mud up to the axles. And yet, my heart went out to this country, the home of my ancestors. Spring was at hand; the ploughboys whistled between the furrows, the larks circled overhead, and the lilacs were cautiously pushing forth their noses. The air was heavy with the perfume of living things.

The welcome we got at our various stopping-places was often scanty indeed, and more than once we were told to go farther down the street, that the inn was full. And I may as well confess that my mind was troubled about John Paul. Despite all I could say, he would go to the best hotels in the larger towns, declaring that there we should meet the people of fashion. Nor was his eagerness damped when he discovered that such people never came to the ordinary, but were served in their own rooms by their own servants.

“I shall know them yet,” he would vow, as we started off of a morning, after having seen no more of my Lord than his liveries below stairs. “Am I not a gentleman in all but birth, Richard? And that is a difficulty many before me have overcome. I have the classics, and the history, and the poets. And the French language, though I have never made the grand tour. I flatter myself that my tone might be worse. By the help of your friends, I shall have a title or two for acquaintances before I leave London; and when my money is gone, there is a shipowner I know of who will give me employment, if I have not obtained preferment.”

The desire to meet persons of birth was near to a mania with him. And I had not the courage to dampen his hopes. But, inexperienced as I was, I knew the kind better than he, and understood that it was easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle, than for John Paul to cross the thresholds of the great houses of London. The way of adventurers is hard, and he could scarce lay claim then to a better name.

“We shall go to Maryland together, Captain Paul,” I said, “and waste no time upon London save to see Vauxhall, and the opera, and St. James’s and the Queen’s House and the Tower, and Parliament, and perchance his Majesty himself,” I added, attempting merriment, for the notion of seeing Dolly only to leave her gave me a pang. And the captain knew nothing of Dolly.

“So, Richard, you fear I shall disgrace you,” he said reproachfully. “Know, sir, that I have pride enough and to spare. That I can make friends without going to Arlington Street.”

I was ready to cry with vexation at this childish speech.

“And a time will come when they shall know me,” he went on. “If they insult me now they shall pay dearly for it.”



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“My dear captain,” I cried; “nobody will insult you, and least of all my friends, the Manners.” I had my misgivings about little Mr. Marmaduke. “But we are, neither of us, equipped for a London season. I am but an unknown provincial, and you—” I paused for words.

For a sudden realization had come upon me that our positions were now reversed. It seemed strange that I should be interpreting the world to this man of power.

“And I?” he repeated bitterly.

“You have first to become an admiral,” I replied, with inspiration; “Drake was once a common seaman.”

He did not answer. But that evening as we came into Windsor, I perceived that he had not abandoned his intentions. The long light flashed on the peaceful Thames, and the great, grim castle was gilded all over its western side.

The captain leaned out of the window.

“Postilion,” he called, “which inn here is most favoured by gentlemen?”

“The Castle,” said the boy, turning in his saddle to grin at me. “But if I might be so bold as to advise your honour, the ‘Swan’ is a comfortable house, and well attended.”

“Know your place, sirrah,” shouted the captain, angrily, “and drive us to the ‘Castle.’”

The boy snapped his whip disdainfully, and presently pulled us up at the inn, our chaise covered with the mud of three particular showers we had run through that day. And, as usual, the landlord, thinking he was about to receive quality, came scraping to the chaise door, only to turn with a gesture of disgust when he perceived John Paul’s sea-boxes tied on behind, and the costume of that hero, as well as my own.

The captain demanded a room. But mine host had turned his back, when suddenly a thought must have struck him, for he wheeled again.

“Stay,” he cried, glancing suspiciously at the sky-blue frock; “if you are Mr. Dyson’s courier, I have reserved a suite.”

This same John Paul, who was like iron with mob and mutiny, was pitifully helpless before such a prop of the aristocracy. He flew into a rage, and rated the landlord in Scotch and English, and I was fain to put my tongue in my cheek and turn my back that my laughter might not anger him the more.

And so I came face to face with another smile, behind a spying-glass,—a smile so cynical and unpleasant withal that my own was smothered. A tall and thin gentleman,



who had come out of the inn without a hat, was surveying the dispute with a keen delight. He was past the middle age. His clothes bore that mark which distinguishes his world from the other, but his features were so striking as to hold my attention unwittingly.

After a while he withdrew his glass, cast one look at me which might have meant anything, and spoke up.

“Pray, my good Goble, why all this fol-de-rol about admitting a gentleman to your house?”

I scarce know which was the more astonished, the landlord, John Paul, or I. Goble bowed at the speaker.



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“A gentleman, your honour!” he gasped. “Your honour is joking again. Surely this trumpery Scotchman in Jews’ finery is no gentleman, nor the longshore lout he has got with him. They may go to the ‘Swan.’”

“Jews’ finery!” shouted the captain, with his fingers on his sword.

But the stranger held up a hand deprecatingly.

“Pon my oath, Goble, I gave you credit for more penetration,” he drawled; “you may be right about the Scotchman, but your longshore lout has had both birth and breeding, or I know nothing.”

John Paul, who was in the act of bowing to the speaker, remained petrified with his hand upon his heart, entirely discomfited. The landlord forsook him instantly for me, then stole a glance at his guest to test his seriousness, and looked at my face to see how greatly it were at variance with my clothes. The temptation to lay hands on the cringing little toadeater grew too strong for me, and I picked him up by the scruff of the collar,—he was all skin and bones,—and spun him round like a corpse upon a gibbet, while he cried mercy in a voice to wake the dead. The slim gentleman under the sign laughed until he held his sides, with a heartiness that jarred upon me. It did not seem to fit him.

“By Hercules and Vulcan,” he cried, when at last I had set the landlord down, “what an arm and back the lad has! He must have the best in the house, Goble, and sup with me.”

Goble pulled himself together.

“And he is your honour’s friend,” he began, with a scowl.

“Ay, he is my friend, I tell you,” retorted the important personage, impatiently.

The innkeeper, sulky, half-satisfied, yet fearing to offend, welcomed us with what grace he could muster, and we were shown to “The Fox and the Grapes,” a large room in the rear of the house.

John Paul had not spoken since the slim gentleman had drawn the distinction between us, and I knew that the affront was rankling in his breast. He cast himself into a chair with such an air of dejection as made me pity him from my heart. But I had no consolation to offer. His first words, far from being the torrent of protest I looked for, almost startled me into laughter.

“He can be nothing less than a duke,” said the captain. “Ah, Richard, see what it is to be a gentleman!”



“Fiddlesticks! I had rather own your powers than the best title in England,” I retorted sharply.

He shook his head sorrowfully, which made me wonder the more that a man of his ability should be unhappy without this one bauble attainment.

“I shall begin to believe the philosophers have the right of it,” he remarked presently. “Have you ever read anything of Monsieur Rousseau’s, Richard?”

The words were scarce out of his mouth when we heard a loud rap on the door, which I opened to discover a Swiss fellow in a private livery, come to say that his master begged the young gentleman would sup with him. The man stood immovable while he delivered this message, and put an impudent emphasis upon the gentleman.

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“Say to your master, whoever he may be,” I replied, in some heat at the man’s sneer, “that I am travelling with Captain Paul. That any invitation to me must include him.”

The lackey stood astounded at my answer, as though he had not heard aright. Then he retired with less assurance than he had come, and John Paul sprang to his feet and laid his hands upon my shoulders, as was his wont when affected. He reproached himself for having misjudged me, and added a deal more that I have forgotten.

“And to think,” he cried, “that you have forgone supping with a nobleman on my account!”

“Pish, captain, ’tis no great denial. His Lordship—if Lordship he is—is stranded in an inn, overcome with ennui, and must be amused. That is all.”

Nevertheless I think the good captain was distinctly disappointed, not alone because I gave up what in his opinion was a great advantage, but likewise because I could have regaled him on my return with an account of the meal. For it must be borne in mind, my dears, that those days are not these, nor that country this one. And in judging Captain Paul it must be remembered that rank inspired a vast respect when King George came to the throne. It can never be said of John Paul that he lacked either independence or spirit. But a nobleman was a nobleman then.

So when presently the gentleman himself appeared smiling at our door, which his servant had left open, we both of us rose up in astonishment and bowed very respectfully, and my face burned at the thought of the message I had sent him. For, after all, the captain was but twenty-one and I nineteen, and the distinguished unknown at least fifty. He took a pinch of snuff and brushed his waistcoat before he spoke.

“Egad,” said he, with good nature, looking up at me, “Mohammed was a philosopher, and so am I, and come to the mountain. ’Tis worth crossing an inn in these times to see a young man whose strength has not been wasted upon foppery. May I ask your name, sir?”

“Richard Carvel,” I answered, much put aback.

“Ah, Carvel,” he repeated; “I know three or four of that name. Perhaps you are Robert Carvel’s son, of Yorkshire. But what the devil do you do in such clothes? I was resolved to have you though I am forced to take a dozen watchet-blue mountebanks in the bargain.”

“Sir, I warn you not to insult my friend,” I cried, in a temper again.

“There, there, not so loud, I beg you,” said he, with a gesture. “Hot as pounded pepper,—but all things are the better for a touch of it. I had no intention of insulting the worthy man, I give my word. I must have my joke, sir. No harm meant.” And he nodded at



John Paul, who looked as if he would sink through the floor. “Robert Carvel is as testy as the devil with the gout, and you are not unlike him in feature.”

“He is no relation of mine,” I replied, undecided whether to laugh or be angry. And then I added, for I was very young, “I am an American, and heir to Carvel Hall in Maryland.”



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“Lord, lord, I might have known,” exclaimed he. “Once I had the honour of dining with your Dr. Franklin, from Pennsylvania. He dresses for all the world like you, only worse, and wears a hat I would not be caught under at Bagnigge Wells, were I so imprudent as to go there.”

“Dr. Franklin has weightier matters than hats to occupy him, sir,” I retorted. For I was determined to hold my own.

He made a French gesture, a shrug of his thin shoulders, which caused me to suspect he was not always so good-natured.

“Dr. Franklin would better have stuck to his newspaper, my young friend,” said he. “But I like your appearance too well to quarrel with you, and we’ll have no politics before eating. Come, gentlemen, come! Let us see what Goble has left after his shaking.”

He struck off with something of a painful gait, which he explained was from the gout. And presently we arrived at his parlour, where supper was set out for us. I had not tasted its equal since I left Maryland. We sat down to a capon stuffed with eggs, and dainty sausages, and hot rolls, such as we had at home; and a wine which had cobwebbed and mellowed under the Castle Inn for better than twenty years. The personage did not drink wine. He sent his servant to quarrel with Goble because he had not been given iced water. While he was tapping on the table I took occasion to observe him. His was a physiognomy to strike the stranger, not by reason of its nobility, but because of its oddity. He had a prodigious length of face, the nose long in proportion, but not prominent. The eyes were dark, very bright, and wide apart, with little eyebrows dabbed over them at a slanting angle. The thin-lipped mouth rather pursed up, which made his smile the contradiction it was. In short, my dears, while I do not lay claim to the reading of character, it required no great astuteness to perceive the scholar, the man of the world, and the ascetic—and all affected. His conversation bore out the summary. It astonished us. It encircled the earth, embraced history and letters since the world began. And added to all this, he had a thousand anecdotes on his tongue’s tip. His words he chose with too great a nicety; his sentences were of a foreign formation, twisted around; and his stories were illustrated with French gesticulations. He threw in quotations galore, in Latin, and French, and English, until the captain began casting me odd, uncomfortable looks, as though he wished himself well out of the entertainment. Indeed, poor John Paul’s perturbation amused me more than the gentleman’s anecdotes. To be ill at ease is discouraging to any one, but it was peculiarly fatal with the captain. This arch-aristocrat dazzled him. When he attempted to follow in the same vein he would get lost. And his really considerable learning counted for nothing. He reached the height of his mortification when the slim gentleman dropped his eyelids and began to yawn. I was wickedly delighted. He could not have been better met. Another such encounter, and I would warrant the captain’s illusions concerning the gentry to go up in smoke. Then he might come to some notion of his

own true powers. As for me, I enjoyed the supper which our host had insisted upon our partaking, drank his wine, and paid him very little attention.



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“May I make so bold as to ask, sir, whether you are a patron of literature?” said the captain, at length.

“A very poor patron, my dear man,” was the answer. “Merely a humble worshipper at the shrine. And I might say that I partake of its benefits as much as a gentleman may. And yet,” he added, with a laugh and a cough, “those silly newspapers and magazines insist on calling me a literary man.”

“And now that you have indulged in a question, and the claret is coming on,” said he, “perhaps you will tell me something of yourself, Mr. Carvel, and of your friend, Captain Paul. And how you come to be so far from home.” And he settled himself comfortably to listen, as a man who has bought his right to an opera box.

Here was my chance. And I resolved that if I did not further enlighten John Paul, it would be no fault of mine.

“Sir,” I replied, in as dry a monotone as I could assume, “I was kidnapped by the connivance of some unscrupulous persons in my colony, who had designs upon my grandfather’s fortune. I was taken abroad in a slaver and carried down to the Caribbean seas, when I soon discovered that the captain and his crew were nothing less than pirates. For one day all hands got into a beastly state of drunkenness, and the captain raised the skull and cross-bones, which he had handy in his chest. I was forced to climb the main rigging in order to escape being hacked to pieces.”

He sat bolt upright, those little eyebrows of his gone up full half an inch, and he raised his thin hands with an air of incredulity. John Paul was no less astonished at my little ruse.

“Holy Saint Clement!” exclaimed our host; “pirates! This begins to have a flavour indeed. And yet you do not seem to be a lad with an imagination. Egad, Mr. Carvel, I had put you down for one who might say, with Alceste: ‘Etre franc et sincere est mon plus grand talent.’ But pray go on, sir. You have but to call for pen and ink to rival Mr. Fielding.”

With that I pushed back my chair, got up from the table, and made him a bow. And the captain, at last seeing my drift, did the same.

“I am not used at home to have my word doubted, sir,” I said. “Sir, your humble servant. I wish you a very good evening.” He rose precipitately, crying out from his gout, and laid a hand upon my arm.

“Pray, Mr. Carvel, pray, sir, be seated,” he said, in some agitation. “Remember that the story is unusual, and that I have never clapped eyes on you until to-night. Are all young



gentlemen from Maryland so fiery? But I should have known from your face that you are incapable of deceit. Pray be seated, captain.”

I was persuaded to go on, not a little delighted that I had scored my point, and broken down his mask of affectation and careless cynicism. I told my story, leaving out the family history involved, and he listened with every mark of attention and interest. Indeed, to my surprise, he began to show some enthusiasm, of which sensation I had not believed him capable.



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“What a find! what a find!” he continued to exclaim, when I had finished. “And true. You say it is true, Mr. Carvel?”

“Sir!” I replied, “I thought we had thrashed that out.”

“Yes, yes, to be sure. I beg pardon,” said he. And then to his servant: “Colomb, is my writing-tablet unpacked?”

I was more mystified than ever as to his identity. Was he going to put the story in a magazine?

After that he seemed plainly anxious to be rid of us. I bade him good night, and he grasped my hand warmly enough. Then he turned to the captain in his most condescending manner. But a great change had come over John Paul. He was ever quick to see and to learn, and I rejoiced to remark that he did not bow over the hand, as he might have done two hours since. He was again Captain Paul, the man, who fought his way on his own merits. He held himself as tho' he was once more pacing the deck of the John.

The slim gentleman poured the width of a finger of claret in his glass, soused it with water, and held it up.

“Here’s to your future, my good captain,” he said, “and to Mr. Carvel’s safe arrival home again. When you get to town, Mr. Carvel, don’t fail to go to Davenport, who makes clothes for most of us at Almack’s, and let him remodel you. I wish to God he might get hold of your doctor. And put up at the Star and Garter in Pall Mall: I take it that you have friends in London.”

I replied that I had. But he did not push the inquiry.

“You should write out this history for your grandchildren, Mr. Carvel,” he added, as he bade his Swiss light us to our room. “A strange yarn indeed, captain.”

“And therefore,” said the captain, coolly, “as a stranger give it welcome.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

Had a meteor struck at the gentleman’s feet, he could not have been more taken aback.

“What! What’s this?” he cried. “You quote Hamlet! And who the devil are you, sir, that you know my name?”

“Your name, sir!” exclaims the captain, in astonishment.



“Well, well,” he said, stepping back and eying us closely, “’tis no matter. Good night, gentlemen, good night.”

And we went to bed with many a laugh over the incident.

“His name must be Horatio. We’ll discover it in the morning,” said John Paul.

CHAPTER XXIII

LONDON TOWN

But he had not risen when we set out, nor would the illnated landlord reveal his name. It mattered little to me, since I desired to forget him as quickly as possible. For here was one of my own people of quality, a gentleman who professed to believe what I told him, and yet would do no more for me than recommend me an inn and a tailor; while a poor sea-captain, driven from his employment and his home, with no better reason to put faith in my story, was sharing with me his last penny. Goble, in truth, had made us pay dearly for our fun with him, and the hum of the vast unknown fell upon our ears with the question of lodging still unsettled. The captain was for going to the Star and Garter, the inn the gentleman had mentioned. I was in favour of seeking a more modest and less fashionable hostelry.



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“Remember that you must keep up your condition, Richard,” said John Paul.

“And if all English gentlemen are like our late friend,” I said, “I would rather stay in a city coffee-house. Remember that you have only two guineas left after paying for the chaise, and that Mr. Dix may be out of town.”

“And your friends in Arlington Street?” said he.

“May be back in Maryland,” said I; and added inwardly,

“God forbid!”

“We shall have twice the chance at the Star and Garter. They will want a show of gold at a humbler place, and at the Star we may carry matters with a high hand. Pick out the biggest frigate,” he cried, for the tenth time, at least, “or the most beautiful lady, and it will surprise you, my lad, to find out how many times you will win.”

I know of no feeling of awe to equal that of a stranger approaching for the first time a huge city. The thought of a human multitude is ever appalling as that of infinity itself, a human multitude with its infinity of despairs and joys, disgraces and honours, each small unit with all the world in its own brain, and all the world out of it! Each intent upon his own business or pleasure, and striving the while by hook or crook to keep the ground from slipping beneath his feet. For, if he falls, God help him!

Yes, here was London, great and pitiless, and the fear of it was upon our souls as we rode into it that day.

Holland House with its shaded gardens, Kensington Palace with the broad green acres of parks in front of it stitched by the silver Serpentine, and Buckingham House, which lay to the south over the hill,—all were one to us in wonder as they loomed through the glittering mist that softened all. We met with a stream of countless wagons that spoke of a trade beyond knowledge, sprinkled with the equipages of the gentry floating upon it; coach and chaise, cabriolet and chariot, gorgeously bedecked with heraldry and wreaths; their numbers astonished me, for to my mind the best of them were no better than we could boast in Annapolis. One matter, which brings a laugh as I recall it, was the oddity to me of seeing white coachmen and footmen.

We clattered down St. James’s Street, of which I had often heard my grandfather speak, and at length we drew up before the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, over against the palace. The servants came hurrying out, headed by a chamberlain clad in magnificent livery, a functionary we had not before encountered. John Paul alighted to face this personage, who, the moment he perceived us, shifted his welcoming look to one of such withering scorn as would have daunted a more timid man than the captain. Without the formality of a sir he demanded our business, which started the inn people



and our own boy to snickering, and made the passers-by pause and stare. Dandies who were taking the air stopped to ogle us with their spying-glasses and to offer quips, and behind them



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gathered the flunkies and chairmen awaiting their masters at the clubs and coffee-houses near by. What was my astonishment, therefore, to see a change in the captain's demeanour. Truly for quick learning and the application of it I have never known his equal. His air became the one of careless ease habitual to the little gentleman we had met at Windsor, and he drew from his pocket one of his guineas, which he tossed in the man's palm.

"Here, my man," said he, snapping his fingers; "an apartment at once, or you shall pay for this nonsense, I promise you." And walked in with his chin in the air, so grandly as to dissolve ridicule into speculation.

For an instant the chamberlain wavered, and I trembled, for I dreaded a disgrace in Pall Mall, where the Manners might hear of it. Then fear, or hope of gain, or something else got the better of him, for he led us to a snug, well-furnished suite of a parlour and bedroom on the first floor, and stood bowing in the doorway for his honour's further commands. They were of a sort to bring the sweat to my forehead.

"Have a fellow run to bid Davenport, the tailor, come hither as fast as his legs will carry him. And you may make it known that this young gentleman desires a servant, a good man, mind you, with references, who knows a gentleman's wants. He will be well paid."

That name of Davenport was a charm,—the mention of a servant was its finishing touch. The chamberlain bent almost double, and retired, closing the door softly behind him. And so great had been my surprise over these last acquirements of the captain that until now I had had no breath to expostulate.

"I must have my fling, Richard," he answered, laughing; "I shall not be a gentleman long. I must know how it feels to take your ease, and stroke your velvet, and order lackeys about. And when my money is gone I shall be content to go to sea again, and think about it o' stormy nights."

This feeling was so far beyond my intelligence that I made no comment. And I could not for the life of me chide him, but prayed that all would come right in the end.

In less than an hour Davenport himself arrived, bristling with importance, followed by his man carrying such a variety of silks and satins, flowered and plain, and broadcloths and velvets, to fill the furniture. And close behind the tailor came a tall haberdasher from Bond Street, who had got wind of a customer, with a bewildering lot of ruffles and handkerchiefs and neckerchiefs, and bows of lawn and lace which (so he informed us) gentlemen now wore in the place of solitaires. Then came a hosier and a bootmaker and a hatter; nay, I was forgetting a jeweller from Temple Bar. And so imposing a front did the captain wear as he picked this and recommended the other that he got credit for



me for all he chose, and might have had more besides. For himself he ordered merely a modest street suit of purple, the sword to be thrust through the pocket, Davenport promising it with mine for the next afternoon. For so much discredit had been cast upon his taste on the road to London that he was resolved to remain indoors until he could appear with decency. He learned quickly, as I have said.



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By the time we had done with these matters, which I wished to perdition, some score of applicants was in waiting for me. And out of them I hired one who had been valet to the young Lord Rereby, and whose recommendation was excellent. His name was Banks, his face open and ingenuous, his stature a little above the ordinary, and his manner respectful. I had Davenport measure him at once for a suit of the Carvel livery, and bade him report on the morrow.

All this while, my dears, I was aching to be off to Arlington Street, but a foolish pride held me back. I had heard so much of the fashion in which the Manners moved that I feared to bring ridicule upon them in poor MacMuir's clothes. But presently the desire to see Dolly took such hold upon me that I set out before dinner, fought my way past the chairmen and chaisemen at the door, and asked my way of the first civil person I encountered. 'Twas only a little rise up the steps of St. James's Street, Arlington Street being but a small pocket of Piccadilly, but it seemed a dull English mile; and my heart thumped when I reached the corner, and the houses danced before my eyes. I steadied myself by a post and looked again. At last, after a thousand leagues of wandering, I was near her! But how to choose between fifty severe and imposing mansions? I walked on toward that endless race of affairs and fashion, Piccadilly, scanning every door, nay, every window, in the hope that I might behold my lady's face framed therein. Here a chair was set down, there a chariot or a coach pulled up, and a clocked flunky bowing a lady in. But no Dorothy. Finally, when I had near made the round of each side, I summoned courage and asked a butcher's lad, whistling as he passed me, whether he could point out the residence of Mr. Manners.

"Ay," he replied, looking me over out of the corner of his eye, "that I can. But y'ell not get a glimpse o' the beauty this day, for she's but just off to Kensington with a coachful o' quality."

And he led me, all in a tremble over his answer, to a large stone dwelling with arched windows, and pillared portico with lanthorns and link extinguishers, an area and railing beside it. The flavour of generations of aristocracy hung about the place, and the big knocker on the carved door seemed to regard with such a forbidding frown my shabby clothes that I took but the one glance (enough to fix it forever in my memory), and hurried on. Alas, what hope had I of Dorothy now!

"What cheer, Richard?" cried the captain when I returned; "have you seen your friends?"

I told him that I had feared to disgrace them, and so refrained from knocking—a decision which he commended as the very essence of wisdom. Though a desire to meet and talk with quality pushed him hard, he would not go a step to the ordinary, and gave orders to be served in our room, thus fostering the mystery which had enveloped us since our arrival. Dinner at the Star and Garter being at the fashionable hour of half after four, I was forced to give over for that day the task of finding Mr. Dix.



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That evening—shall I confess it?—I spent between the Green Park and Arlington Street, hoping for a glimpse of Miss Dolly returning from Kensington.

The next morning I proclaimed my intention of going to Mr. Dix.

“Send for him,” said the captain. “Gentlemen never seek their men of affairs.”

“No,” I cried; “I can contain myself in this place no longer. I must be moving.”

“As you will, Richard,” he replied, and giving me a queer, puzzled look he settled himself between the Morning Post and the Chronicle.

As I passed the servants in the lower hall, I could not but remark an altered treatment. My friend the chamberlain, more pompous than ever, stood erect in the door with a stony stare, which melted the moment he perceived a young gentleman who descended behind me. I heard him cry out “A chaise for his Lordship!” at which command two of his assistants ran out together. Suspicion had plainly gripped his soul overnight, and this, added to mortified vanity at having been duped, was sufficient for him to allow me to leave the inn unattended. Nor could I greatly blame him, for you must know, my dears, that at that time London was filled with adventurers of all types.

I felt a deal like an impostor, in truth, as I stepped into the street, disdaining to inquire of any of the people of the Star and Garter where an American agent might be found. The day was gray and cheerless, the colour of my own spirits as I walked toward the east, knowing that the city lay that way. But I soon found plenty to distract me.

To a lad such as I, bred in a quiet tho' prosperous colonial town, a walk through London was a revelation. Here in the Pall Mall the day was not yet begun, tho' for some scarce ended. I had not gone fifty paces from the hotel before I came upon a stout gentleman with twelve hours of claret inside him, brought out of a coffee-house and put with vast difficulty into his chair; and I stopped to watch the men stagger off with their load to St. James's Street. Next I met a squad of redcoated guards going to the palace, and after them a grand coach and six rattled over the Scotch granite, swaying to a degree that threatened to shake off the footmen clinging behind. Within, a man with an eagle nose sat impassive, and I set him down for one of the king's ministers.

Presently I came out into a wide space, which I knew to be Charing Cross by the statue of Charles the First which stood in the centre of it, and the throat of a street which was just in front of me must be the Strand. Here all was life and bustle. On one hand was Golden's Hotel, and a crowded mail-coach was dashing out from the arch beneath it, the horn blowing merrily; on the other hand, so I was told by a friendly man in brown, was Northumberland House, the gloomy grandeur whereof held my eyes for a time. And I made bold to ask in what district were those who had dealings with the colonies. He scanned me with a puzzling look of commiseration.



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“Ye’re not a-going to sell yereself for seven year, my lad?” said he. “I was near that myself when I was young, and I thank God’ to this day that I talked first to an honest man, even as you are doing. They’ll give ye a pretty tale,—the factors,—of a land of milk and honey, when it’s naught but stripes and curses yell get.”

And he was about to rebuke me hotly, when I told him I had come from Maryland, where I was born.

“Why, ye speak like a gentleman!” he exclaimed. “I was informed that all talk like naygurs over there. And is it not so of your redemptioners?”

I said that depended upon the master they got.

“Then I take it ye are looking for the lawyers, who mostly represent the planters. And ye’ll find them at the Temple or Lincoln’s Inn.”

I replied that he I sought was not an attorney, but a man of business. Whereupon he said that I should find all those in a batch about the North and South American Coffee House, in Threadneedle Street. And he pointed me into the Strand, adding that I had but to follow my nose to St. Paul’s, and there inquire.

I would I might give you some notion of the great artery of London in those days, for it has changed much since I went down it that heavy morning in April, 1770, fighting my way. Ay, truly, fighting my way, for the street then was no place for the weak and timid, when bullocks ran through it in droves on the way to market, when it was often jammed from wall to wall with wagons, and carmen and truckmen and coachmen swung their whips and cursed one another to the extent of their lungs. Near St. Clement Danes I was packed in a crowd for ten minutes while two of these fellows formed a ring and fought for the right of way, stopping the traffic as far as I could see. Dustmen, and sweeps, and even beggars, jostled you on the corners, bullies tried to push you against the posts or into the kennels; and once, in Butchers’ Row, I was stopped by a flashy, soft-tongued fellow who would have lured me into a tavern near by.

The noises were bedlam ten times over. Shopmen stood at their doors and cried, “Rally up, rally up, buy, buy, buy!” venders shouted saloop and barley, furmity, Shrewsbury cakes and hot peascods, rosemary and lavender, small coal and sealing-wax, and others bawled “Pots to solder!” and “Knives to grind!” Then there was the incessant roar of the heavy wheels over the rough stones, and the rasp and shriek of the brewers’ sledges as they moved clumsily along. As for the odours, from that of the roasted coffee and food of the taverns, to the stale fish on the stalls, and worse, I can say nothing. They surpassed imagination.



At length, upon emerging from Butchers' Row, I came upon some stocks standing in the street, and beheld ahead of me a great gateway stretching across the Strand from house to house.

Its stone was stained with age, and the stern front of it seemed to mock the unseemly and impetuous haste of the tide rushing through its arches. I stood and gazed, nor needed one to tell me that those two grinning skulls above it, swinging to the wind on the pikes, were rebel heads. Bare and bleached now, and exposed to a cruel view, but once caressed by loving hands, was the last of those whose devotion to the house of Stuart had brought from their homes to Temple Bar.

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I halted by the Fleet Market, nor could I resist the desire to go into St. Paul's, to feel like a pebble in a bell under its mighty dome; and it lacked but half an hour of noon when I had come out at the Poultry and finished gaping at the Mansion House. I missed Threadneedle Street and went down Cornhill, in my ignorance mistaking the Royal Exchange, with its long piazza and high tower, for the coffeehouse I sought: in the great hall I begged a gentleman to direct me to Mr. Dix, if he knew such a person. He shrugged his shoulders, which mystified me somewhat, but answered with a ready good-nature that he was likely to be found at that time at Tom's Coffee House, in Birchin Lane near by, whither I went with him. He climbed the stairs ahead of me and directed me, puffing, to the news room, which I found filled with men, some writing, some talking eagerly, and others turning over newspapers. The servant there looked me over with no great favour, but on telling him my business he went off, and returned with a young man of a pink and white complexion, in a green riding-frock, leather breeches, and top boots, who said:

"Well, my man, I am Mr. Dix."

There was a look about him, added to his tone and manner, set me strong against him. I knew his father had not been of this stamp.

"And I am Mr. Richard Carvel, grandson to Mr. Lionel Carvel, of Carvel Hall, in Maryland," I replied, much in the same way.

He thrust his hands into his breeches and stared very hard.

"You?" he said finally, with something very near a laugh.

"Sir, a gentleman's word usually suffices!" I cried.

He changed his tone a little.

"Your pardon, Mr. Carvel," he said, "but we men of business have need to be careful. Let us sit, and I will examine your letters. Your determination must have been suddenly taken," he added, "for I have nothing from Mr. Carvel on the subject of your coming."

"Letters! You have heard nothing!" I gasped, and there stopped short and clinched the table. "Has not my grandfather written of my disappearance?"

Immediately his expression went back to the one he had met me with. "Pardon me," he said again.

I composed myself as best I could in the face of his incredulity, swallowing with an effort the aversion I felt to giving him my story.



“I think it strange he has not informed you,” I said; “I was kidnapped near Annapolis last Christmas-time, and put on board of a slaver, from which I was rescued by great good fortune, and brought to Scotland. And I have but just made my way to London.”

“The thing is not likely, Mr.—, Mr.—,” he said, drumming impatiently on the board.

Then I lost control of myself.

“As sure as I am heir to Carvel Hall, Mr. Dix,” I cried, rising, “you shall pay for your insolence by forfeiting your agency!”

Now the roan was a natural coward, with a sneer for some and a smirk for others. He went to the smirk.

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"I am but looking to Mr. Carvel's interests the best I know how," he replied; "and if indeed you be Mr. Richard Carvel, then you must applaud my caution, sir, in seeking proofs."

"Proofs I have none," I cried; "the very clothes on my back are borrowed from a Scotch seaman. My God, Mr. Dix, do I look like a rogue?"

"Were I to advance money upon appearances, sir, I should be insolvent in a fortnight. But stay," he cried uneasily, as I flung back my chair, "stay, sir. Is there no one of your province in the town to attest your identity?"

"Ay, that there is," I said bitterly; "you shall hear from Mr. Manners soon, I promise you."

"Pray, Mr. Carvel," he said, overtaking me on the stairs, "you will surely allow the situation to be—extraordinary, you will surely commend my discretion. Permit me, sir, to go with you to Arlington Street." And he sent a lad in haste to the Exchange for a hackney-chaise, which was soon brought around.

I got in, somewhat mollified, and ashamed of my heat: still disliking the man, but acknowledging he had the better right on his side. True to his kind he gave me every mark of politeness now, asked particularly after Mr. Carvel's health, and encouraged me to give him as much of my adventure as I thought proper. But what with the rattle of the carriage and the street noises and my disgust, I did not care to talk, and presently told him as much very curtly. He persisted, however, in pointing out the sights, the Fleet prison, and where the Ludgate stood six years gone; and the Devil's Tavern, of old Ben Jonson's time, and the Mitre and the Cheshire Cheese and the Cock, where Dr. Johnson might be found near the end of the week at his dinner. He showed me the King's Mews above Charing Cross, and the famous theatre in the Haymarket, and we had but turned the corner into Piccadilly when he cried excitedly at a passing chariot:

"There, Mr. Carvel, there go my Lord North and Mr. Rigby!"

"The devil take them, Mr. Dix!" I exclaimed.

He was silent after that, glancing at me covertly from while to while until we swung into Arlington Street. Before I knew we were stopped in front of the house, but as I set foot on the step I found myself confronted by a footman in the Manners livery, who cried out angrily to our man: "Make way, make way for his Grace of Chartersea!" Turning, I saw a coach behind, the horses dancing at the rear wheels of the chaise. We alighted hastily, and I stood motionless, my heart jumping quick and hard in the hope and fear that Dorothy was within, my eye fixed on the coach door. But when the footman pulled it open and lowered the step, out lolled a very broad man with a bloated face and little, beady eyes without a spark of meaning, and something very like a hump was on the top



of his back. He wore a yellow top-coat, and red-heeled shoes of the latest fashion, and I settled at once he was the Duke of Chartersea.



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Next came little Mr. Manners, stepping daintily as ever; and then, as the door closed with a bang, I remembered my errand. They had got halfway to the portico.

“Mr. Manners!” I cried.

He faced about, and his Grace also, and both stared in wellbred surprise. As I live, Mr. Manners looked into my face, into my very eyes, and gave no sign of recognition. And what between astonishment and anger, and a contempt that arose within me, I could not speak.

“Give the man a shilling, Manners,” said his Grace; “we can’t stay here forever.”

“Ay, give the man a shilling,” lisped Mr. Manners to the footman. And they passed into the house, and the door was shut.

Then I heard Mr. Dix at my elbow, saying in a soft voice: “Now, my fine gentleman, is there any good reason why you should not ride to Bow Street with me?”

“As there is a God in heaven. Mr. Dix,” I answered, very low, “if you attempt to lay hands on me, you shall answer for it! And you shall hear from me yet, at the Star and Garter hotel.”

I spun on my heel and left him, nor did he follow; and a great lump was in my throat and tears welling in my eyes.

What would John Paul say?

CHAPTER XXIV

CASTLE YARD

But I did not go direct to the Star and Garter. No, I lacked the courage to say to John Paul: “You have trusted me, and this is how I have rewarded your faith.” And the thought that Dorothy’s father, of all men, had served me thus, after what I had gone through, filled me with a bitterness I had never before conceived. And when my brain became clearer I reflected that Mr. Manners had had ample time to learn of my disappearance from Maryland, and that his action had been one of design, and of cold blood. But I gave to Dorothy or her mother no part in it. Mr. Manners never had had cause to hate me, and the only reason I could assign was connected with his Grace of Chartersea, which I dismissed as absurd.

A few drops of rain warned me to seek shelter. I knew not where I was, nor how long I had been walking the streets at a furious pace. But a huckster told me I was in Chelsea; and kindly directed me back to Pall Mall. The usual bunch of chairmen was



around the hotel entrance, but I noticed a couple of men at the door, of sharp features and unkempt dress, and heard a laugh as I went in. My head swam as I stumbled up the stairs and fumbled at the knob, when I heard voices raised inside, and the door was suddenly and violently thrown open. Across the sill stood a big, rough-looking man with his hands on his hips.

“Oho! Here be the other fine bird a-homing, I’ll warrant,” he cried.

The place was full. I caught sight of Davenport, the tailor, with a wry face, talking against the noise; of Banks, the man I had hired, resplendent in my livery. One of the hotel servants was in the corner perspiring over John Paul’s chests, and beside him stood a man disdainfully turning over with his foot the contents, as they were thrown on the floor. I saw him kick the precious vellum-hole waistcoat across the room in wrath and disgust, and heard him shout above the rest: “The lot of them would not bring a guinea from any Jew in St. Martin’s Lane!”



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In the other corner, by the writing-desk, stood the hatter and the haberdasher with their heads together. And in the very centre of the confusion was the captain himself. He was drest in his new clothes Davenport had brought, and surprised me by his changed appearance, and looked as fine a gentleman as any I have ever seen. His face lighted with relief at sight of me.

“Now may I tell these rogues begone, Richard?” he cried. And turning to the man confronting me, he added, “This gentleman will settle their beggarly accounts.”

Then I knew we had to do with bailiffs, and my heart failed me.

“Likely,” laughed the big man; “I’ll stake my oath he has not a groat to pay their beggarly accounts, as year honour is pleased to call them.”

They ceased jabbering and straightened to attention, awaiting my reply. But I forgot them all, and thought only of the captain, and of the trouble I had brought him. He began to show some consternation as I went up to him.

“My dear friend,” I said, vainly trying to steady my voice, “I beg, I pray that you will not lose faith in me,—that you will not think any deceit of mine has brought you to these straits. Mr. Dix did not know me, and has had no word from my grandfather of my disappearance. And Mr. Manners, whom I thought my friend, spurned me in the street before the Duke of Chartersea.”

And no longer master of myself, I sat down at the table and hid my face, shaken by great sobs, to think that this was my return for his kindness.

“What,” I heard him cry, “Mr. Manners spurned you, Richard! By all the law in Coke and Littleton, he shall answer for it to me. Your fairweather fowl shall have the chance to run me through!”

I sat up in bewilderment, doubting my senses.

“You believe me, captain,” I said, overcome by the man’s faith; “you believe me when I tell you that one I have known from childhood refused to recognize me to-day?”

He raised me in his arms as tenderly as a woman might.

“And the whole world denied you, lad, I would not. I believe you—” and he repeated it again and again, unable to get farther.

And if his words brought tears to my eyes, my strength came with them.

“Then I care not,” I replied; “I only to live to reward you.”



“Mr. Manners shall answer for it to me!” cried John Paul again, and made a pace toward the door.

“Not so fast, not so fast, captain, or admiral, or whatever you are,” said the bailiff, stepping in his way, for he was used to such scenes; “as God reigns, the owners of all these fierce titles be fire-eaters, who would spit you if you spilt snuff upon ’em. Come, come, gentlemen, your swords, and we shall see the sights o’ London.”



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This was the signal for another uproar, the tailor shrieking that John Paul must take off the suit, and Banks the livery; asking the man in the corner by the sea-chests (who proved to be the landlord) who was to pay him for his work and his lost cloth. And the landlord shook his fist at us and shouted back, who was to pay him his four pounds odd, which included two ten-shilling dinners and a flask of his best wine? The other tradesmen seized what was theirs and made off with remarks appropriate to the occasion. And when John Paul and my man were divested of their plumes, we were marched downstairs and out through a jeering line of people to a hackney coach.

“Now, sirs, whereaway?” said the bailiff when we were got in beside one of his men, and burning with the shame of it; “to the prison? Or I has a very pleasant hotel for gentlemen in Castle Yard.”

The frightful stories my dear grandfather had told me of the Fleet came flooding into my head, and I shuddered and turned sick. I glanced at John Paul.

“A guinea will not go far in a sponging-house,” said he, and the bailiff’s man laughed.

The bailiff gave a direction we did not hear, and we drove off. He proved a bluff fellow with a bloat yet not unkindly humour, and despite his calling seemed to have something that was human in him. He passed many a joke on that pitiful journey in an attempt to break our despondency, urging us not to be downcast, and reminding us that the last gentleman he had taken from Pall Mall was in over a thousand pounds, and that our amount was a bagatelle. And when we had gone through Temple Bar, instead of keeping on down Fleet Street, we jolted into Chancery Lane. This roused me.

“My friend has warned you that he has no money,” I said, “and no more have I.”

The bailiff regarded me shrewdly.

“Ay,” he replied, “I know. But I has seen many stripes o’ men in my time, my masters, and I know them to trust, and them whose silver I must feel or send to the Fleet.”

I told him unreservedly my case, and that he must take his chance of being paid; that I could not hear from America for three months at least. He listened without much show of attention, shaking his head from side to side.

“If you ever cheated a man, or the admiral here either, then I begin over again,” he broke in with decision; “it is the fine sparks from the clubs I has to watch. You’ll not worry, sir, about me. Take my oath I’ll get interest out of you on my money.”

Unwilling as we both were to be beholden to a bailiff, the alternative of the Fleet was too terrible to be thought of. And so we alighted after him with a shiver at the sight of the ugly, grimy face of the house, and the dirty windows all barred with double iron. In answer to a knock we were presently admitted by a turnkey to a vestibule as black as a

tomb, and the heavy outer door was locked behind us. Then, as the man cursed and groped for the keyhole of the inner door, despair laid hold of me.



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Once inside, in the half light of a narrow hallway, a variety of noises greeted our ears,—laughter from above and below, interspersed with oaths; the click of billiard balls, and the occasional hammering of a pack of cards on a bare table before the shuffle. The air was close almost to suffocation, and out of the coffee room, into which I glanced, came a heavy cloud of tobacco smoke.

“Why, my masters, why so glum?” said the bailiff; “my inn is not such a bad place, and you’ll find ample good company here, I promise you.”

And he led us into a dingy antechamber littered with papers, on every one of which, I daresay, was written a tragedy. Then he inscribed our names, ages, descriptions, and the like in a great book, when we followed him up three flights to a low room under the eaves, having but one small window, and bare of furniture save two narrow cots for beds, a broken chair, and a cracked mirror. He explained that cash boarders got better, and added that we might be happy we were not in the Fleet.

“We dine at two here, gentlemen, and sup at eight. This is not the Star and Garter,” said he as he left us.

It was the captain who spoke first, though he swallowed twice before the words came out.

“Come, Richard, come, laddie,” he said, “’tis no so bad it nicht-na be waur. We’ll mak the maist o’ it.”

“I care not for myself, Captain Paul,” I replied, marvelling the more at him, “but to think that I have landed you here, that this is my return for your sacrifice.”

“Hoots! How was ye to foresee Mr. Manners was a blellum?” And he broke into threats which, if Mr. Marmaduke had heard and comprehended, would have driven him into the seventh state of fear. “Have you no other friends in London?” he asked, regaining his English.

I shook my head. Then came—a question I dreaded.

“And Mr. Manners’s family?”

“I would rather remain here for life,” I said, “than to them now.”

For pride is often selfish, my dears, and I did not reflect that if I remained, the captain would remain likewise.

“Are they all like Mr. Manners?”



“That they are not,” I returned with more heat than was necessary; “his wife is goodness itself, and his daughter—” Words failed me, and I reddened.

“Ah, he has a daughter, you say,” said the captain, casting a significant look at me and beginning to pace the little room. He was keener than I thought, this John Paul.

If it were not so painful a task, my dears, I would give you here some notion of what a London sponging-house was in the last century. Comyn has heard me tell of it, and I have seen Bess cry over the story. Gaming was the king-vice of that age, and it filled these places to overflowing. Heaven help a man who came into the world with that propensity in the early days of King George the Third. Many, alas, acquired it before they were come to years of discretion.



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Next me, at the long table where we were all thrown in together,—all who could not pay for private meals, —sat a poor fellow who had flung away a patrimony of three thousand a year. Another had even mortgaged to a Jew his prospects on the death of his mother, and had been seized by the bailiffs outside of St. James's palace, coming to Castle Yard direct from his Majesty's levee. Yet another, with such a look of dead hope in his eyes as haunts me yet, would talk to us by the hour of the Devonshire house where he was born, of the green valley and the peaceful stream, and of the old tower-room, caressed by trees, where Queen Bess had once lain under the carved oak rafters. Here he had taken his young wife, and they used to sit together, so he said, in the sunny oriel over the water, and he had sworn to give up the cards. That was but three years since, and then all had gone across the green cloth in one mad night in St. James's Street. Their friends had deserted them, and the poor little woman was lodged in Holborn near by, and came every morning with some little dainty to the bailiff's, for her liege lord who had so used her. He pressed me to share a fowl with him one day, but it would have choked me. God knows where she got the money to buy it. I saw her once hanging on his neck in the hall, he trying to shield her from the impudent gaze of his fellow-lodgers.

But some of them lived like lords in luxury, with never a seeming regret; and had apartments on the first floor, and had their tea and paper in bed, and lounged out the morning in a flowered nightgown, and the rest of the day in a laced coat. These drank the bailiff's best port and champagne, and had nothing better than a frown or haughty look for us, when we passed them at the landing. Whence the piper was paid I knew not, and the bailiff cared not. But the bulk of the poor gentlemen were a merry crew withal, and had their wit and their wine at table, and knew each other's histories (and soon enough ours) by heart. They betted away the week at billiards or whist or picquet or loo, and sometimes measured swords for diversion, tho' this pastime the bailiff was greatly set against; as calculated to deprive him of a lodger.

Although we had no money for gaming, and little for wine or tobacco, the captain and I were received very heartily into the fraternity. After one afternoon of despondency we both voted it the worst of bad policy to remain aloof and nurse our misfortune, and spent our first evening in making acquaintances over a deal of very thin "debtor's claret." I tossed long that night on the hard cot, listening to the scurrying rats among the roof-timbers. They ran like the thoughts in my brain. And before I slept I prayed again and again that God would put it in my power to reward him whom charity for a friendless foundling had brought to a debtor's prison.

Not so much as a single complaint or reproach had passed his lips!

CHAPTER XXV



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THE RESCUE

Perchance, my dears, if John Paul and I had not been cast by accident in a debtor's prison, this great man might never have bestowed upon our country those glorious services which contributed so largely to its liberty. And I might never have comprehended that the American Revolution was brought on and fought by a headstrong king, backed by unscrupulous followers who held wealth above patriotism. It is often difficult to lay finger upon the causes which change the drift of a man's opinions, and so I never wholly knew why John Paul abandoned his deep-rooted purpose to obtain advancement in London by grace of the accomplishments he had laboured so hard to attain. But I believe the beginning was at the meeting at Windsor with the slim and cynical gentleman who had treated him to something between patronage and contempt. Then my experience with Mr. Manners had so embedded itself in his mind that he could never speak of it but with impatience and disgust. And, lastly, the bailiff's hotel contained many born gentlemen who had been left here to rot out the rest of their dreary lives by friends who were still in power and opulence. More than once when I climbed to our garret I found the captain seated on the three-legged chair, with his head between his hands, sunk in reflection.

"You were right, Richard," said he; "your great world is a hard world for those in the shadow of it. I see now that it must not be entered from below, but from the cabin window. A man may climb around it, lad, and when he is above may scourge it."

"And you will scourge it, captain!" I had no doubt of his ability one day to do it.

"Ay, and snap my fingers at it. 'Tis a pretty organization, this society, which kicks the man who falls to the dogs. None of your fine gentlemen for me!"

And he would descend to talk politics with our fellow-guests. We should have been unhappy indeed had it not been for this pastime. It seems to me strange that these debtors took such a keen interest in outside affairs, even tho' it was a time of great agitation. We read with eagerness the cast-off newspapers of the first-floor gentlemen. One poor devil who had waddled (failed) in Change Alley had collected under his mattress the letters of Junius, then selling the Public Advertiser as few publications had ever sold before. John Paul devoured these attacks upon his Majesty and his ministry in a single afternoon, and ere long he had on the tip of his tongue the name and value of every man in Parliament and out of it. He learned, almost by heart, the history of the astonishing fight made by Mr. Wilkes for the liberties of England, and speedily was as good a Whig and a better than the member from Middlesex himself.



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The most of our companions were Tories, for, odd as it may appear, they retained their principles even in Castle Yard. And in those days to be a Tory was to be the friend of the King, and to be the friend of the King was to have some hope of advancement and reward at his hand. They had none. The captain joined forces with the speculator from the Alley, who had hitherto contended against mighty odds, and together they bore down upon the enemy—ay, and rooted him, too. For John Paul had an air about him and a natural gift of oratory to command attention, and shortly the dining room after dinner became the scene of such contests as to call up in the minds of the old stagers a field night in the good days of Mr. Pitt and the second George. The bailiff often sat by the door, an interested spectator, and the macaroni lodgers condescended to come downstairs and listen. The captain attained to fame in our little world from his maiden address, in which he very shrewdly separated the political character of Mr. Wilkes from his character as a private gentleman, and so refuted a charge of profligacy against the people's champion.

Altho' I never had sufficient confidence in my powers to join in these discussions, I followed them zealously, especially when they touched American questions, as they frequently did. This subject of the wrongs of the colonies was the only one I could ever be got to study at King William's School, and I believe that my intimate knowledge of it gave the captain a surprise. He fell into the habit of seating himself on the edge of my bed after we had retired for the night, and would hold me talking until the small hours upon the injustice of taxing a people without their consent, and upon the multitude of measures of coercion which the King had pressed upon us to punish our resistance. He declaimed so loudly against the tyranny of quartering troops upon a peaceable state that our exhausted neighbours were driven to pounding their walls and ceilings for peace. The news of the Boston massacre had not then reached England.

I was not, therefore, wholly taken by surprise when he said to me one night:

"I am resolved to try my fortune in America, lad. That is the land for such as I, where a man may stand upon his own merits."

"Indeed, we shall go together, captain," I answered heartily, "if we are ever free of this cursed house. And you shall taste of our hospitality at Carvel Hall, and choose that career which pleases you. Faith, I could point you a dozen examples in Annapolis of men who have made their way without influence. But you shall have influence," I cried, glowing at the notion of rewarding him; "you shall experience Mr. Carvel's gratitude and mine. You shall have the best of our ships, and you will."

He was a man to take fire easily, and embraced me. And, strange to say, neither he nor I saw the humour, nor the pity, of the situation. How many another would long before have become sceptical of my promises! And justly. For I had led him to London, spent all his savings, and then got him into a miserable prison, and yet he had faith remaining, and to spare!



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It occurred to me to notify Mr. Dix of my residence in Castle Yard, not from any hope that he would turn his hand to my rescue, but that he might know where to find me if he heard from Maryland. And I penned another letter to Mr. Carvel, but a feeling I took no pains to define compelled me to withhold an account of Mr. Manners's conduct. And I refrained from telling him that I was in a debtor's prison. For I believe the thought of a Carvel in a debtor's prison would have killed him. I said only that we were comfortably lodged in a modest part of London; that the Manners were inaccessible (for I could not bring myself to write that they were out of town). Just then a thought struck me with such force that I got up with a cheer and hit the astonished captain between the shoulders.

"How now!" he cried, ruefully rubbing himself. "If these are thy amenities, Richard, Heaven spare me thy blows."

"Why, I have been a fool, and worse," I shouted. "My grandfather's ship, the Sprightly Bess, is overhauling this winter in the Severn. And unless she has sailed, which I think unlikely, I have but to despatch a line to Bristol to summon Captain Bell, the master, to London. I think he will bring the worthy Mr. Dix to terms."

"Whether he will or no," said John Paul, hope lighting his face, "Bell must have command of the twenty pounds to free us, and will take us back to America. For I must own, Richard, that I have no great love for London."

No more had I. I composed this letter to Bell in such haste that my hand shook, and sent it off with a shilling to the bailiff's servant, that it might catch the post. And that afternoon we had a two-shilling bottle of port for dinner, which we shared with a broken-down parson who had been chaplain in ordinary to my Lord Wortley, and who had preached us an Easter sermon the day before. For it was Easter Monday. Our talk was broken into by the bailiff, who informed me that a man awaited me in the passage, and my heart leaped into my throat.

There was Banks. Thinking he had come to reproach me; I asked him rather sharply what he wanted. He shifted his hat from one hand to the other and looked sheepish.

"Your pardon, sir," said he, "but your honour must be very ill-served here."

"Better than I should be, Banks, for I have no money," I said, wondering if he thought me a first-floor lodger.

He made no immediate reply to that, either, but seemed more uneasy still. And I took occasion to note his appearance. He was exceeding neat in a livery of his old master, which he had stripped of the trimmings. Then, before I had guessed at his drift, he thrust his hand inside his coat and drew forth a pile of carefully folded bank notes.

“I be a single man, sir, and has small need of this. And and I knows your honour will pay me when your letter comes from America.”

And he handed me five Bank of England notes of ten pounds apiece. I took them mechanically, without knowing what I did. The generosity of the act benumbed my senses, and for the instant I was inclined to accept the offer upon the impulse of it.



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“How do you know you would get your money again, Banks?” I asked curiously.

“No fear, sir,” he replied promptly, actually brightening at the prospect. “I knows gentlemen, sir, them that are such, sir. And I will go to America with you, and you say the word, sir.”

I was more touched than I cared to show over his offer, which I scarce knew how to refuse. In truth it was a difficult task, for he pressed me again and again, and when he saw me firm, turned away to wipe his eyes upon his sleeve. Then he begged me to let him remain and serve me in the sponginghouse, saying that he would pay his own way. The very thought of a servant in the bailiff’s garret made me laugh, and so I put him off, first getting his address, and promising him employment on the day of my release.

On Wednesday we looked for a reply from Bristol, if not for the appearance of Bell himself, and when neither came apprehension seized us lest he had already sailed for Maryland. The slender bag of Thursday’s letters contained none for me. Nevertheless, we both did our best to keep in humour, forbearing to mention to one another the hope that had gone. Friday seemed the beginning of eternity; the day dragged through I know not how, and toward evening we climbed back to our little room, not daring to speak of what we knew in our hearts to be so,—that the Sprightly Bess had sailed. We sat silently looking out over the dreary stretch of roofs and down into a dingy court of Bernard’s Inn below, when suddenly there arose a commotion on the stairs, as of a man mounting hastily. The door was almost flung from its hinges, some one caught me by the shoulders, gazed eagerly into my face, and drew back. For a space I thought myself dreaming. I searched my memory, and the name came. Had it been Dorothy, or Mr. Carvel himself, I could not have been more astonished, and my knees weakened under me.

“Jack!” I exclaimed; “Lord Comyn!”

He seized my hand. “Yes; Jack, whose life you saved, and no other,” he cried, with a sailor’s impetuosity. “My God, Richard! it was true, then; and you have been in this place for three weeks!”

“For three weeks,” I repeated.

He looked at me, at John Paul, who was standing by in bewilderment, and then about the grimy, cobwebbed walls of the dark garret, and then turned his back to hide his emotion, and so met the bailiff, who was coming in.

“For how much are these gentlemen in your books?” he demanded hotly.

“A small matter, your Lordship,—a mere trifle,” said the man, bowing.

“How much, I say?”



“Twenty-two guineas, five shillings, and eight pence, my Lord, counting debts, and board,—and interest,” the bailiff glibly replied; for he had no doubt taken off the account when he spied his Lordship’s coach. “And I was very good to Mr. Carvel and the captain, as your Lordship will discover—”

“D—n your goodness!” said my Lord, cutting him short.



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And he pulled out a wallet and threw some pieces at the bailiff, bidding him get change with all haste. "And now, Richard," he added, with a glance of disgust about him, "pack up, and we'll out of this cursed hole!"

"I have nothing to pack, my Lord," I said.

"My Lord! Jack, I have told you, or I leave you here."

"Well, then, Jack, and you will," said I, overflowing with thankfulness to God for the friends He had bestowed upon me. "But before we go a step, Jack, you must know the man but for whose bravery I should long ago have been dead of fever and ill-treatment in the Indies, and whose generosity has brought him hither. My Lord Comyn, this is Captain John Paul."

The captain, who had been quite overwhelmed by this sudden arrival of a real lord to our rescue at the very moment when we had sunk to despair, and no less astonished by the intimacy that seemed to exist between the newcomer and myself, had the presence of mind to bend his head, and that was all. Comyn shook his hand heartily.

"You shall not lack reward for this, captain, I promise you," cried he. "What you have done for Mr. Carvel, you have done for me. Captain, I thank you. You shall have my interest."

I flushed, seeing John Paul draw his lips together. But how was his Lordship to know that he was dealing with no common sea-captain?

"I have sought no reward, my Lord," said he. "What I have done was out of friendship for Mr. Carvel, solely."

Comyn was completely taken by surprise by these words, and by the haughty tone in which they were spoken. He had not looked for a gentleman, and no wonder. He took a quizzical sizing of the sky-blue coat. Such a man in such a station was out of his experience.

"Egad, I believe you, captain," he answered, in a voice which said plainly that he did not. "But he shall be rewarded nevertheless, eh, Richard? I'll see Charles Fox in this matter to-morrow. Come, come," he added impatiently, "the bailiff must have his change by now. Come, Richard!" and he led the way down the winding stairs.

"You must not take offence at his ways," I whispered to the captain. For I well knew that a year before I should have taken the same tone with one not of my class. "His Lordship is all kindness."

"I have learned a bit since I came into England, Richard," was his sober reply.



“Twas a pitiful sight to see gathered on the landings the poor fellows we had come to know in Castle Yard, whose horizons were then as gray as ours was bright. But they each had a cheery word of congratulation for us as we passed, and the unhappy gentleman from Devonshire pressed my hand and begged that I would sometime think of him when I was out under the sky. I promised even more, and am happy to be able to say, my dears, that I saw both him and his wife off for America before I left London. Our eyes were wet when we reached the lower hall, and I was making for the door in an agony to leave the place, when the bailiff came out of his little office.



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“One moment, sir,” he said, getting in front of me; “there is a little form yet to be gone through. The haste of gentlemen to leave us is not flattering.”

He glanced slyly at Comyn, and his Lordship laughed a little. I stepped unsuspectingly into the office.

“Richard!”

I stopped across the threshold as tho’ I had been struck. The late sunlight filtering through the dirt of the window fell upon the tall figure of a girl and lighted an upturned face, and I saw tears glistening on the long lashes.

It was Dorothy. Her hands were stretched out in welcome, and then I had them pressed in my own. And I could only look and look again, for I was dumb with joy.

“Thank God you are alive!” she cried; “alive and well, when we feared you dead. Oh, Richard, we have been miserable indeed since we had news of your disappearance.”

“This is worth it all, Dolly,” I said, only brokenly.

She dropped her eyes, which had searched me through in wonder and pity, —those eyes I had so often likened to the deep blue of the sea,—and her breast rose and fell quickly with I knew not what emotions. How the mind runs, and the heart runs, at such a time! Here was the same Dorothy I had known in Maryland, and yet not the same. For she was a woman now, who had seen the great world, who had refused both titles and estates, —and perchance accepted them. She drew her hands from mine.

“And how came you in such a place?” she asked, turning with a shudder. “Did you not know you had friends in London, sir?”

Not for so much again would I have told her of Mr. Manners’s conduct. So I stood confused, casting about for a reply with truth in it, when Comyn broke in upon us.

“I’ll warrant you did not look for her here, Richard. Faith, but you are a lucky dog,” said my Lord, shaking his head in mock dolefulness; “for there is no man in London, in the world, for whom she would descend a flight of steps, save you. And now she has driven the length of the town when she heard you were in a sponging-house, nor all the dowagers in Mayfair could stop her.”

“Fie, Comyn,” said my lady, blushing and gathering up her skirts; “that tongue of yours had hung you long since had it not been for your peer’s privilege. Richard and I were brought up as brother and sister, and you know you were full as keen for his rescue as I.”

His Lordship pinched me playfully.



“I vow I would pass a year in the Fleet to have her do as much for me,” said he.

“But where is the gallant seaman who saved you, Richard?” asked Dolly, stamping her foot.

“What,” I exclaimed; “you know the story?”

“Never mind,” said she; “bring him here.”

My conscience smote me, for I had not so much as thought of John Paul since I came into that room. I found him waiting in the passage, and took him by the hand.

“A lady wishes to know you, captain,” I said.



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"A lady!" he cried. "Here? Impossible!" And he looked at his clothes.

"Who cares more for your heart than your appearance," I answered gayly, and led him into the office.

At sight of Dorothy he stopped abruptly, confounded, as a man who sees a diamond in a dust-heap. And a glow came over me as I said:

"Miss Manners, here is Captain Paul, to whose courage and unselfishness I owe everything."

"Captain," said Dorothy, graciously extending her hand, "Richard has many friends. You have put us all in your debt, and none deeper than his old playmate."

The captain fairly devoured her with his eyes as she made him a curtsy. But he was never lacking in gallantry, and was as brave on such occasions as when all the dangers of the deep threatened him. With an elaborate movement he took Miss Manners's fingers and kissed them, and then swept the floor with a bow.

"To have such a divinity in my debt, madam, is too much happiness for one man," he said. "I have done nothing to merit it. A lifetime were all too short to pay for such a favour."

I had almost forgotten Miss Dolly the wayward, the mischievous. But she was before me now, her eyes sparkling, and biting her lips to keep down her laughter. Comyn turned to fleck the window with his handkerchief, while I was not a little put out at their mirth. But if John Paul observed it, he gave no sign.

"Captain, I vow your manners are worthy of a Frenchman," said my Lord; "and yet I am given to understand you are a Scotchman."

A shadow crossed the captain's face.

"I was, sir," he said.

"You were!" exclaimed Comyn, astonished; "and pray, what are you now, sir?"

"Henceforth, my Lord," John Paul replied with vast ceremony: "I am an American, the compatriot of the beautiful Miss Manners!"

"One thing I'll warrant, captain," said his Lordship, "that you are a wit."