St. George and St. Michael Volume III eBook

St. George and St. Michael Volume III by George MacDonald

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

Newbury.

Early the next morning, after Richard had left the cottage for Raglan castle, mistress Rees was awaked by the sound of a heavy blow against her door. When with difficulty she had opened it, Richard or his dead body, she knew not which, fell across her threshold. Like poor Marquis, he had come to her for help and healing.

When he got out of the quarry, he made for the highroad, but missing the way the dog had brought him, had some hard work in reaching it; and long before he arrived—at the cottage, what with his wound, his loss of blood, his double wetting, his sleeplessness after mistress Watson's potion, want of food, disappointment and fatigue, he was in a high fever. The last mile or two he had walked in delirium, but happily with the one dominant idea of getting help from mother Rees. The poor woman was greatly shocked to find that the teeth of the trap had closed upon her favourite and mangled him so terribly. A drop or two of one of her restoratives, however, soon brought him round so far that he was able to crawl to the chair on which he had sat the night before, now ages agone as it seemed, where he now sat shivering and glowing alternately, until with trembling hands the good woman had prepared her own bed for him.

'Thou hast left thy doublet behind thee,' she said, 'and I warrant me the cake I gave thee in the pouch thereof! Hadst thou eaten of that, thou hadst not come to this pass.'

But Richard scarcely heard her voice. His one mental consciousness was the longing desire to lay his aching head on the pillow, and end all effort.

Finding his wound appeared very tolerably dressed, Mrs. Rees would not disturb the bandages. She gave him a cooling draught, and watched by him till he fell asleep. Then she tidied her house, dressed herself, and got everything in order for nursing him. She would have sent at once to Redware to let his father know where and in what condition he was, but not a single person came near the cottage the whole day, and she dared not leave him before the fever had subsided. He raved a good deal, generally in the delusion that he was talking to Dorothy—who sought to kill him, and to whom he kept giving directions, at one time how to guide the knife to reach his heart, at another how to mingle her poison so that it should act with speed and certainty.

At length one fine evening in early autumn, when the red sun shone level through the window of the little room where he lay, and made a red glory on the wall, he came to himself a little.

'Is it blood?' he murmured. 'Did Dorothy do it?—How foolish I am! It is but a blot the sun has left behind him!—Ah! I see! I am dead and lying on the top of my tomb. I am

only marble. This is Redware church. Oh, mother Rees, is it you! I am very glad!
Cover me over a little. The pall there.'

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His eyes closed, and for a few hours he lay in a deep sleep, from which he awoke very weak, but clear-headed. He remembered nothing, however, since leaving the quarry, except what appeared a confused dream of wandering through an interminable night of darkness, weariness, and pain. His first words were,—

'I must get up, mother Rees: my father will be anxious about me. Besides, I promised to set out for Gloucester to-day.'

She sought to quiet him, but in vain, and was at last compelled to inform him that his father, finding he did not return, had armed himself, mounted Oliver, and himself led his little company to join the earl of Essex—who was now on his way, at the head of an army consisting chiefly of the trained bands of London, to raise the siege of Gloucester.

Richard started up, and would have leaped from the bed, but fell back helpless and unconscious. When at length his nurse had succeeded in restoring him, she had much ado to convince him that the best thing in all respects was to lie still and submit to be nursed—so to get well as soon as possible, and join his father.

'Alas, mother, I have no horse,' said Richard, and hid his face on the pillow.

'The Lord will provide what thee wants, my son,' said the old woman with emotion, neither asking nor caring whether the Lord was on the side of the king or of the parliament, but as little doubting that he must be on the side of Richard.

He soon began to eat hopefully, and after a day or two she found pretty nearly employment enough in cooking for him.

At last, weak as he still was, he would be restrained no longer. To Gloucester he must go, and relieve his father. Expostulation was unavailing: go he must, he said, or his soul would tear itself out of his body, and go without it.

'Besides, mother, I shall be getting better all the way,' he continued. '—I must go home at once and see whether there is anything left to go upon.'

He rose the same instant, and, regardless of the good woman's entreaties, crawled out to go to Redware. She followed him at a little distance, and, before he had walked a quarter of a mile, he was ready to accept her offered arm to help him back. But his recovery was now very rapid, and. after a few days he felt able for the journey.

At home he found a note from his father, telling him where to find money, and informing him that he was ready to yield him Oliver the moment he should appear to claim him. Richard put on his armour, and went to the stable. The weather had been fine, and the harvest was wearing gradually to a close; but the few horses that were left were overworked, for the necessities of the war had been severe, and that part of the country

had responded liberally on both sides. Besides, Mr. Heywood had scarce left an animal judged at all fit to carry a man and keep up with the troop.

When Richard reached the stable, there were in it but three, two of which, having brought loads to the barn, were now having their mid-day meal and rest. The first one was ancient in bones, with pits profound above his eyes, and grey hairs all about a face which had once been black.

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’Thou art but fit for old Father Time to lay his scythe across when he is aweary,’ said Richard, and turned to the next.

She was a huge-bodied, short-legged punch, as fat as butter, with lop ears and sleepy eyes. Having finished her corn, she was churning away at a mangerful of grass.

‘Thou wouldst burst thy belly at the first charge,’ said Richard, and was approaching the third, one he did not recognise, when a vicious, straight-out kick informed him that here was temper at least, probably then spirit. But when he came near enough to see into the stall, there stood the ugliest brute he thought that ever ate barley. He was very long-bodied and rather short-legged, with great tufts at his fetlocks, and the general look of a huge rat, in part doubtless from having no hair on his long undocked tail. He was biting vigorously at his manger, and Richard could see the white of one eye glaring at him askance in the gloom.

‘Dunnot go nigh him, sir,’ cried Jacob Fortune, who had come up behind. ’Thou knows not his tricks. His name be his nature, and we call him Beelzebub when master Stopchase be not by. I be right glad to see your honour up again.’

Jacob was too old to go to the wars, and too indifferent to regret it; but he was faithful, and had authority over the few men left.

‘I thank you, Jacob,’ said Richard. ’What brute is this? I know him not.’

’We all knows him too well, master Richard, though verily Stopchase bought him but the day before he rode, thinking belike he might carry an ear or two of wheat. If he be not very good he was not parlous dear; he paid for him but an old song. He was warranted to have work in him if a man but knew how to get it out.’

‘He is ugly.’

’He is the ugliest horse, cart-horse, nag, or courser, on this creation-side,’ said the old man, ’—ugly enough to fright to death where he doth fail in his endeavour to kill. The men are all mortal feared on him, for he do kick and he do bite like the living Satan. He wonnot go in no cart, but there he do stand eating on his head off as fast as he can. An’ the brute were mine, I would slay him; I would, in good sooth.’

‘An’ I had but time to cure him of his evil kicking! I fear I must ever ride the last in the troop,’ said Richard.

’Why for sure, master, thee never will ride such a devil-pig as he to the wars! Will Farrier say he do believe he take his strain from the swine the devils go into in the miracle. All the children would make a mock of thee as thou did ride through the villages. Look at his legs: they do be like stile-posts; and do but look at his tail!’

‘Lead him out, Jacob, and let me see his head.’

’I dare not go nigh him, sir. I be not nimble enough to get out of the way of his hoof. ‘I be too old, master.’

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Richard pulled on his thick buff glove and went straight into his stall. The brute made a grab at him with his teeth, met by a smart blow from Richard's fist, which he did not like, and, rearing, would have struck at him with his near fore-foot; but Richard caught it by the pastern, and with his left hand again struck him on the side of the mouth. The brute then submitted to be led out by the halter. And verily he was ugly to behold. His neck stuck straight out, and so did his tail, but the latter went off in a point, and the former in a hideous knob.

'Here is Jack!' cried the old man. 'He lets Jack ride him to the water. Here, Jack! Get thee upon the hog-back of Beelzebub, and mind the bristles do not flay thee, and let master Richard see what paces he hath.'

The animal tried to take the lad down with his hind foot as he mounted, but scarcely was he seated when he set off at a swinging trot, in which he plied his posts in manner astonishing. Spirit indeed he must have had, and plenty, to wield such clubs in such a fashion. His joints were so loose that the bones seemed to fly about, yet they always came down right.

'He is guilty of "hypocrisy against the devil,"' said Richard: 'he is better than he looks. Anyhow, if he but carry me thither, he will as well "fill a pit" as a handsomer horse. I'll take him. Have you got a saddle for him?'

'An' he had not brought a saddle with him, thou would not find one in Gwent to fit him,' said the old man.

Yet another day Richard found himself compelled to tarry—which he spent in caparisoning Beelzebub to the best of his ability, with the result of making him, if possible, appear still uglier than before.

The eve of the day of his departure, Marquis paid mistress Rees a second visit. He wanted no healing or help this time, seeming to have come only to offer his respects. But the knowledge that here was a messenger, dumb and discreet, ready to go between and make no sign, set Richard longing to use him: what message he did send by him I have already recorded. Although, however, the dog left them that night, he did not reach Raglan till the second morning after, and must have been roaming the country or paying other visits all that night and the next day as well, with the letter about him, which he had allowed no one to touch.

At last Richard was on his way to Gloucester, mounted on Beelzebub, and much stared at by the inhabitants of every village he passed through. Apparently, however, there was something about the centaur-compound which prevented their rudeness from going farther. Beelzebub bore him well, and, though not a comfortable horse to ride, threw the road behind him at a wonderful rate, as often and as long as Richard was able to bear it. But he found himself stronger after every rest, and by the time he began to draw nigh

to Gloucester, he was nearly as well as ever, and in excellent spirits; one painful thought only haunting him—the fear that he might, mounted on Beelzebub, have to encounter some one on his beloved mare. He was consoled, however, to think that the brute was less dangerous to one before than one behind him, heels being worse than teeth.

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He soon became aware that something decisive had taken place: either Gloucester had fallen, or Essex had raised the siege, for army there was none, though the signs of a lately upbroken encampment were visible on all sides. Presently, inquiring at the gate, he learned that, on the near approach of Essex, the besieging army had retired, and that, after a few days' rest, the general had turned again in the direction of London. Richard, therefore, having fed Beelzebub and eaten his own dinner, which in his present condition was more necessary than usual to his being of service, mounted his hideous charger once more, and pushed on to get up with the army.

Essex had not taken the direct road to London, but kept to the southward. That same day he followed him as far as Swindon, and found he was coming up with him rapidly. Having rested a short night, he reached Hungerford the next morning, which he found in great commotion because of the intelligence that at Newbury, some seven miles distant only, Essex had found his way stopped by the king, and that a battle had been raging ever since the early morning.

Having given his horse a good feed of oats and a draught of ale, Richard mounted again and rode hard for Newbury. Nor had he rode long before he heard the straggling reports of carbines, looked to the priming of his pistols, and loosened his sword in its sheath. When he got under the wall of Craven park, the sounds of conflict grew suddenly plainer. He could distinguish the noise of horses' hoofs, and now and then the confused cries and shouts of hand-to-hand conflict. At Spain he was all but in it, for there he met wounded men, retiring slowly or carried by their comrades. These were of his own part, but he did not stop to ask any questions. Beelzebub snuffed at the fumes of the gunpowder, and seemed therefrom to derive fresh vigour.

The lanes and hedges between Spein and Newbury had been the scenes of many a sanguinary tussle that morning, for nowhere had either army found room to deploy. Some of them had been fought over more than once or twice. But just before Richard came up, the tide had ebbed from that part of the way, for Essex's men had had some advantage, and had driven the king's men through the town and over the bridge, so that he found the road clear, save of wounded men and a few horses. As he reached Spinhamland, and turned sharp to the right into the main street of Newbury, a bullet from the pistol of a royalist officer who lay wounded struck Beelzebub on the crest—-what of a crest he had—and without injuring made him so furious that his rider had much ado to keep him from mischief. For, at the very moment, they were met by a rush of parliament pikemen, retreating, as he could see, over their heads, from a few of the kings cavalry, who came at a sharp trot down the main street. The pikemen had got into disorder pursuing some of the enemy who had divided and gone to the right and left up the two diverging streets, and when

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the cavalry appeared at the top of the main street, both parts, seeing themselves in danger of being surrounded, had retreated. They were now putting the Kennet with its narrow bridge between them and the long-feathered cavaliers, in the hope of gaining time and fit ground for forming and presenting a bristled front. In the midst of this confused mass of friends Richard found himself, the maddened Beelzebub every moment lashing out behind him when not rearing or biting.

Before him the bridge rose steep to its crown, contracting as it rose. At its foot, where it widened to the street, stood a single horseman, shouting impatiently to the last of the pikemen, and spurring his horse while holding him. As the last man cleared the bridge, he gave him rein, and with a bound and a scramble reached the apex, and stood—-within half a neck of the foremost of the cavalier troop. A fierce combat instantly began between them. The bridge was wide enough for two to have fought side by side, but the roundhead contrived so to work his antagonist, who was a younger but less capable and less powerful man, that no comrade could get up beside him for the to-and-fro shifting of his horse.

Meantime Richard had been making his slow way through the swarm of hurrying pikemen, doing what he could to keep them off Beelzebub. The moment he was clear, he made a great bolt for the bridge, and the same moment perceived who the brave man was.

‘Hold on, sir,’ he shouted. ’Hold your own, father! Here I am! Here is Richard!’

And as he shouted he sent Beelzebub, like low-flying bolt from cross-bow, up the steep crown of the bridge, and wedged him in between Oliver and the parapet, just as a second cavalier made a dart for the place. At his horse Beelzebub sprang like a fury, rearing, biting, and striking out with his fore-feet in such manner as quite to make up to his rider for the disadvantage of his low stature. The cavalier’s horse recoiled in terror, rearing also, but snorting and backing and wavering, so that, in his endeavours to avoid the fury of Beelzebub, which was frightful to see, for with ears laid back and gleaming teeth he looked more like a beast of prey, he would but for the crowd behind him have fallen backward down the slope. A bullet from one of Richard’s pistols sent his rider over his tail, the horse fell sideways against that of Mr. Heywood’s antagonist, and the path was for a moment barricaded.

‘Well done, good Beelzebub!’ cried Richard, as he reined him back on to the crest of the bridge.

‘Boy!’ said his father sternly, at the same instant dealing his encumbered opponent a blow on the head-piece which tumbled him also from his horse, ’is the sacred hour of

victory a time to sully with profane and foolish jests? I little thought to hear such words at my side—not to say from the mouth of my own son!'

'Pardon me, father; I praised my horse,' said Richard. 'I think not he ever had praise before, but it cannot corrupt him, for he is such an ill-conditioned brute that they that named him did name him Beelzebub: Now that he hath once done well, who knoweth but it may cease to fit him!'

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‘I am glad thy foolish words were so harmless,’ returned Mr. Heywood, smiling. ’In my ears they sounded so evil that I could ill accept their testimony.—Verily the animal is marvellous ill-favoured, but, as thou sayest, he hath done well, and the first return we make him shall be to give him another name. The less man or horse hath to do with Satan the better, for what is he but the arch-foe of the truth?’

While they spoke, they kept a keen watch on the enemy—who could not get near to attack them, save with a few pistol-bullets, mostly wide-shot—for both horses were down, and their riders helpless if not slain.

‘What shall we call him then, father?’ asked Richard.

‘He is amazing like a huge rat!’ said his father. ’Let us henceforth call him Bishop.’

‘Wherefore Bishop and not Beelzebub, sir?’ inquired Richard.

Mr. Heywood laughed, but ere he could reply, a large troop of horsemen appeared at the top of the street. Glancing then behind in some anxiety, they saw to their relief that the pikemen had now formed themselves into a hollow square at the foot of the bridge, prepared to receive cavalry. They turned therefore, and, passing through them, rode to find their regiment.

From that day Bishop, notwithstanding his faults many and grievous, was regarded with respect by both father and son, Richard vowing never to mount another, let laugh who would, so long as the brute lived and he had not recovered Lady.

But they had to give him room for two on the march, and the place behind him was always left vacant, which they said gave no more space than he wanted, seeing he kicked out his leg to twice its walking length. Before long, however, they had got so used to his ways that they almost ceased to regard them as faults, and he began to grow a favourite in the regiment.

CHAPTER XL.

Dorothy and Rowland.

Such was the force of law and custom in Raglan that as soon as any commotion ceased things settled at once. It was so now. The minds of the marquis and lord Charles being at rest both as regarded the gap in the defences of the castle and the character of its inmates, the very next day all was order again. The fate of Amanda was allowed gradually to ooze out, but the greater portion both of domestics and garrison continued firm in the belief that she had been carried off by Satan. Young Delaware, indeed, who had been revelling late—I mean in the chapel with the organ—and who was always the more inclined to believe a thing the stranger it was, asserted that he *saw* devil fly away

with her—a testimony which gained as much in one way as it lost in another by the fact that he could not see at all.

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To Scudamore her absence, however caused, was only a relief. She had ceased to interest him, while Dorothy had become to him like an enchanted castle, the spell of which he flattered himself he was the knight born to break. All his endeavours, however, to attract from her a single look such as indicated intelligence, not to say response, were disappointed. She seemed absolutely unsuspicious of what he sought, neither, having so long pretermitted what claim he might once have established to cousinly relations with her, could he now initiate any intimacy on that ground. Had she become an inmate of Raglan immediately after he first made her acquaintance, that might have ripened to something more hopeful; but when she came she was in sorrow, nor felt that there was any comfort in him, while he was beginning to yield to the tightening bonds mistress Amanda had flung around him. Nor since had he afforded her any ground for altering her first impressions, or favourably modifying a feature of the portrait lady Margaret had presented of him.

Strange to say, however, poorly grounded as was the orignal interest he had taken in her, and little as he was capable of understanding her, he soon began, even while yet confident in his proved advantages of person and mind and power persuasive, to be vaguely wrought upon by the superiority of her nature. With this the establishment of her innocence in the eyes of the household had little to do; indeed, that threatened at first to destroy something of her attraction; a passionate, yielding, even erring nature, had of necessity for such as he far more enchantment than a nature that ruled its own emotions, and would judge such as might be unveiled to it. Neither was it that her cold courtesy and kind indifference roused him to call to the front any of the more valuable endowments of his being; something far better had commenced: unconsciously to himself, the dim element of truth that flitted vaporous about in him had begun to respond to the great pervading and enrounding orb of her verity. He began to respect her, began to feel drawn as if by another spiritual sense than that of which Amanda had laid hold. He found in her an element of authority. The conscious influences to whose triumph he had been so perniciously accustomed, had proved powerless upon her, while those that in her resided unconscious were subduing him. Her star was dominant over his.

At length he began to be aware that this was no light preference, no passing fancy, but something more serious than he had hitherto known—that in fact he was really, though uncomfortably and unsatisfactorily, in love with her. He felt she was not like any other girl he had made his shabby love to, and would have tried to make beter to her, but she kept him at a distance, and that he began to find tormenting. One day, for example, meeting her in the court as she was crossing towards the keep,—

‘I would thou didst take apprentices, cousin,’ he said, ’so I might be one, and learn of thee the mysteries of thy trade.’

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‘Wherefore, cousin?’

‘That I might spare thee something of thy labour.’

’That were no kindness. I am not like thee; I find labour a thing to be courted rather than spared; I am not overwrought.’

Scudamore gazed into her grey eyes, but found there nothing to contradict, nothing to supplement the indifference of her words. There was no lurking sparkle of humour, no acknowledgment of kindness. There was a something, but he could not understand it, for his poor shapeless soul might not read the cosmic mystery embodied in their depths. He stammered—who had never known himself stammer before, broke the joints of an ill-fitted answer, swept the tiles with the long feather in his hat, and found himself parted from her, with the feeling that he had not of himself left her, but had been borne away by some subtle force emanating from her.

Lord Herbert had again left the castle. More soldiers and more must still be raised for the king. Now he would be paying his majesty a visit at Oxford, and inspecting the life-guards he had provided him, now back in South Wales, enlisting men, and straining every power in him to keep the district of which his father was governor in good affection and loyal behaviour.

Winter drew nigh, and stayed somewhat the rushx of events, clogged the wheels of life as they ran towards death, brought a little sleep to the world and coolness to men’s hearts—led in another Christmas, and looked on for a while.

Nor did the many troubles heaped on England, the drained purses, the swollen hearts, the anxious minds, the bereaved houses, the ruptures, the sorrows, and the hatreds, yet reach to dull in any large measure the merriment of the season at Raglan. Customs are like carpets, for ever wearing out whether we mark it or no, but Lord Worcester’s patriarchal prejudices, cleaving to the old and looking askance on the new, caused them to last longer in Raglan than almost anywhere else: the old were the things of his fathers which he had loved from his childhood; the new were the things of his children which he had not proven.

What a fire that was that blazed on the hall-hearth under the great chimney, which, dividing in two, embraced a fine window, then again becoming one, sent the hot blast rushing out far into the waste of wintry air! No one could go within yards of it for the fierce heat of the blazing logs, now and then augmented by huge lumps of coal. And when, on the evenings of special merry-making, the candles were lit, the musicians were playing, and a country dance was filling the length of the great floor, in which the whole household, from the marquis himself, if his gout permitted, to the grooms and kitchen-maids, would take part, a finer outburst of homely splendour, in which was more colour than gilding, more richness than shine, was not to be seen in all the island.

On such an occasion Rowland had more than once attempted nearer approach to Dorothy, but had gained nothing. She neither repelled nor encouraged him, but smiled at his better jokes, looked grave at his silly ones, and altogether treated him like a boy, young—or old—enough to be troublesome if encouraged. He grew desperate, and so one night summoned up courage as they stood together waiting for the next dance.

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‘Why will you never talk to me, cousin Dorothy?’ he said.

’Is it so, Mr. Scudamore? I was not aware. If thou spoke and I answered not, I am sorry.’

‘No, I mean not that,’ returned Scudamore. ’But when I venture to speak, you always make me feel as if I ought not to have spoken. When I call you *cousin Dorothy*, you reply with *Mr*. *Scudamore*.’

’The relation is hardly near enough to justify a less measure of observance.’

‘Our mothers loved each other.’

‘They found each other worthy.’

‘And you do not find me such?’ sighed Scudamore, with a smile meant to be both humble and bewitching.

’N-n-o. Thou hast not made me desire to hold with thee much converse.’

‘Tell me why, cousin, that I may reform that which offends thee.’

’If a man see not his faults with his own eyes, how shall he see them with the eyes of another?’

‘Wilt thou never love me, Dorothy?—not even a little?’

‘Wherefore should I love thee, Rowland?’

‘We are commanded to love even our enemies.’

‘Art thou then mine enemy, cousin?’

‘No, forsooth! I am the most loving friend thou hast.’

‘Then am I sorely to be pitied.’

‘For having my love?’

’Nay; for having none better than thine. But thank God, it is not so.’

‘Must I then be thine enemy indeed before thou wilt love me?’

’No, cousin: cease to be thine own enemy and I will call thee my friend.’

’Marry! wherein then am I mine own enemy? I lead a sober life enough—as thou seest, ever under the eye of my lord.’

‘But what wouldst thou an’ thou wert from under the eye of thy lord? I know thee better than thou thinkest, cousin. I have read thy title-page, if not thy whole book.’

‘Tell me then how runneth my title-page, cousin.’

’The art of being wilfully blind, or The way to see no farther than one would.’

‘Fair preacher,—’ began Rowland, but Dorothy interrupted him.

‘Nay then, an’ thou betake thee to thy jibes, I have done,’ she said.

’Be not angry with me; it is but my nature, which for thy sake I will control. If thou canst not love me, wilt thou not then pity me a little?’

’That I may pity thee, answer me what good thing is there in thee wherefore I should love thee.’

‘Wouldst thou have a man trumpet his own praises?’

’I fear not that of thee who hast but the trumpet—I will tell thee this much: I have never seen in thee that thou didst love save for the pastime thereof. I doubt if thou lovest thy master for more than thy place.’

‘Oh cousin!’

’Be honest with thyself, Rowland. If thou would have me for thy cousin, it must be on the ground of truth.’

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Rowland possessed at least goodnature: few young men would have borne to be so severely handled. But then, while one's good opinion of himself remains untroubled, confesses no touch, gives out no hollow sound, shrinks not self-hurt with the doubt of its own reality, hostile criticism will not go very deep, will not reach to the quick. The thing that hurts is that which sets trembling the ground of self-worship, lays bare the shrunk cracks and wormholes under the golden plates of the idol, shows the ants running about in it, and renders the foolish smile of the thing hateful. But he who will then turn away from his imagined self, and refer his life to the hidden ideal self, the angel that ever beholds the face of the Father, shall therein be made whole and sound, alive and free.

The dance called them, and their talk ceased. When it was over, Dorothy left the hall and sought her chamber. But in the fountain court her cousin overtook her, and had the temerity to resume the conversation. The moth would still at any risk circle the candle. It was a still night, and therefore not very cold, although icicles hung from the mouth of the horse, and here and there from the eaves. They stood by the marble basin, and the dim lights and scarce dimmer shadows from many an upper window passed athwart them as they stood. The chapel was faintly lighted, but the lantern-window on the top of the hall shone like a yellow diamond in the air.

'Thou dost me scant justice, cousin,' said Rowland, 'maintaining that I love but myself or for mine own ends. I know that love thee better than so.'

'For thine own sake, I would, might I but believe it, be glad of the assurance. But—'

Amanda's behaviour to her having at last roused counter observation and speculation on Dorothy's part, she had become suddenly aware that there was an understanding between her and Rowland. It was gradually, however, that the question rose in her mind: could these two have been the nightly intruders on the forbidden ground of the workshop, and afterwards the victims of the watershoot? But the suspicion grew to all but a conviction. Latterly she had observed that their behaviour to each other was changed, also that Amanda's aversion to herself seemed to have gathered force. And one thing she had found remarkable—that Rowland revealed no concern for Amanda's misfortunes, or anxiety about her fate. With all these things potentially present in her mind, she came all at once to the resolution of attempting a bold stroke.

'—But,' Dorothy went on, 'when I think how thou didst bear thee with mistress Amanda —'

'My precious Dorothy!' exclaimed Scudamore, filled with a sudden gush of hope, 'thou wilt never be so unjust to thyself as to be jealous of her! She is to me as nothing—as if she had never been; nor care I forsooth if the devil hath indeed flown away with her bodily, as they will have it in the hall and the guard-room.'

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’Thou didst seem to hold friendly enough converse with her while she was yet one of us.’

’Ye-e-s. But she had no heart like thee, Dorothy, as I soon discovered. She had indeed a pretty wit of her own, but that was all. And then she was spiteful. She hated thee, Dorothy.’

He spoke of her as one dead.

’How knewest thou that? Wast thou then so far in her confidence, and art now able to talk of her thus? Where is thine own heart, Mr. Scudamore?’

‘In thy bosom, lovely Dorothy.’

’Thou mistakest. But mayhap thou dost imagine I picked it up that night thou didst lay it at mistress Amanda’s feet in my lord’s workshop in the keep?’

Dorothy’s hatred of humbug—which was not the less in existence then that they had not the ugly word to express the uglier thing—enabled her to fix her eyes on him as she spoke, and keep them fixed when she had ended. He turned pale—visibly pale through the shadowy night, nor attempted to conceal his confusion. It is strange how self-conviction will wait upon foreign judgment, as if often only the general conscience were powerful enough to wake the individual one.

‘Or perhaps,’ she continued, ’it was torn from thee by the waters that swept thee from the bridge, as thou didst venture with her yet again upon the forbidden ground.’

He hung his head, and stood before her like a chidden child.

‘Think’st thou,’ she went on, ’that my lord would easily pardon such things?’

‘Thou knewest it, and didst not betray me! Oh Dorothy!’ murmured Scudamore. ‘Thou art a very angel of light, Dorothy.’

He seized her hand, and but for the possible eyes upon them, he would have flung himself at her feet.

Dorothy, however, would not yet lay aside the part she had assumed as moral physician—surgeon rather.

’But notwithstanding all this, cousin Rowland, when trouble came upon the young lady, what comfort was there for her in thee? Never hadst thou loved her, although I doubt not thou didst vow and swear thereto an hundred times.’

Rowland was silent. He began to fear her.

’Or what love thou hadst was of such sort that thou didst encourage in her that which was evil, and then let her go like a haggard hawk. Thou marvellest, forsooth, that I should be so careless of thy merits! Tell me, cousin, what is there in thee that I should love? Can there be love for that which is nowise lovely? Thou wilt doubtless say in thy heart, “She is but a girl, and how then should she judge concerning men and their ways?” But I appeal to thine own conscience, Rowland, when I ask thee—is this well? And if a maiden truly loved thee, it were all one. Thou wouldst but carry thyself the same to her—if not to-day, then to-morrow, or a year hence.’

‘Not if she were good, Dorothy, like thee,’ he murmured.

‘Not if thou wert good, Rowland, like Him that made thee.’

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‘Wilt thou not teach me then to be good like thee, Dorothy?’

’Thou must teach thyself to be good like the Rowland thou knowest in thy better heart, when it is soft and lowly.’

’Wouldst thou then love me a little, Dorothy, if I vowed to be thy scholar, and study to be good? Give me some hope to help me in the hard task.’

‘He that is good is good for goodness’ sake, Rowland. Yet who can fail to love that which is good in king or knave?’

’Ah! but do not mock me, Dorothy: such is not the love I would have of thee.’

’It is all thou ever canst have of me, and methinks it is not like thou wilt ever have it, for verily thou art of nature so light that any wind may blow thee into the Dead Sea.’

From a saint it was enough to anger any sinner.

‘I see!’ cried Scudamore. ’For all thy fine reproof, thou too canst spurn a heart at thy feet. I will lay my life thou lovest the round-head, and art but a traitress for all thy goodness.’

’I am indeed traitress enough to love any roundhead gentleman better than a royalist knave,’ said Dorothy; and turning from him she sought the grand staircase.

CHAPTER XLI.

Glamorgan.

The winter passed, with much running to and fro, in foul weather and fair; and still the sounds of war came no nearer to Raglan, which lay like a great lion in a desert that the hunter dared not arouse. The whole of Wales, except a castle or two, remained subject to the king; and this he owed in great measure to the influence and devotion of the Somersets, his obligation to whom he seemed more and more bent on acknowledging.

One day in early summer lady Margaret was sitting in her parlour, busy with her embroidery, and Dorothy was by her side assisting her, when lord Herbert, who had been absent for many days, walked in.

‘How does my lady Glamorgan?’ he said gaily.

‘What mean you, my Herbert?’ returned his wife, looking in his eyes somewhat eagerly.

’Thy Herbert am I no more; neither plume I myself any more in the spare feathers of my father. Thou art, my dove, as thou deservest to be, countess of Glamorgan, in the right of thine own husband, first earl of the same; for such being the will of his majesty, I doubt not thou wilt give thy consent thereto, and play the countess graciously. Come, Dorothy, art not proud to be cousin to an earl?’

‘I am proud that you should call me cousin, my lord,’ answered Dorothy; ’but truly to me it is all one whether you be called Herbert or Glamorgan. So thou remain thou, cousin, and my friend, the king may call thee what he will, and if thou art pleased, so am I.’

It was the first time she had ever thou’d him, and she turned pale at her own daring.

‘St. George! but thou hast well spoken, cousin!’ cried the earl. ‘Hath she not, wife?’

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’So well that if she often saith as well, I shall have much ado not to hate her,’ replied lady Glamorgan. ’When didst thou ever cry “well spoken” to thy mad Irishwoman, Ned?’

’All thou dost is well, my lady. Thou hast all the titles to my praises already in thy pocket. Besides, cousin Dorothy is young and meek, and requireth a little encouragement.’

’Whereas thy wife is old and bold, and cares no more for thy good word, my new lord of Glamorgan?’

Dorothy looked so grave that they both fell a-laughing.

‘I would thou couldst teach her a merry jest or two, Margaret,’ said the earl. ’We are decent people enough in Raglan, but she is much too sober for us. Cheer up, Dorothy! Good times are at hand: that thou mayest not doubt it, listen—but this is only for thy ear, not for thy tongue: the king hath made thy cousin, that is me, Edward Somerset, the husband of this fair lady, generalissimo of his three armies, and admiral of a fleet, and truly I know not what all, for I have yet but run my eye over the patent. And, wife, I verily do believe the king but bides his time to make my father duke of Somerset, and then one day thou wilt be a duchess, Margaret. Think on that!’

Lady Glamorgan burst into tears.

‘I would I might have a kiss of my Molly!’ she cried.

She had never before in Dorothy’s hearing uttered the name of her child since her death. New dignity, strange as it may seem to some, awoke suddenly the thought of the darling to whom titles were but words, and the ice was broken. A pause followed.

‘Yes, Margaret, thou art right,’ said Glamorgan at length; ’it is all but folly; yet as the marks of a king’s favour, such honours are precious.’

As to what a king’s favour itself might be worth, that my lord of Glamorgan lived to learn.

‘It is I who pay for them,’ said his wife.

‘How so, my dove?’

’Do they not cost me thee, Herbert—and cost me very dear? Art not ever from my sight? Wish I not often as I lay awake in the dark, that we were all in heaven and well over with the foolery of it? The angels keep Molly in mind of us!’

‘Yes, my Peggy, it is hard on thee, and hard on me too,’ said the earl tenderly, ’yet not so hard as upon our liege lord, the king, who selleth his plate and jewels.’

‘Pooh! what of that then, Herbert? An’ he would leave me thee, he might have all mine, and welcome; for thou knowest, Ned, I but hold them for thee to sell when thou wilt.’

’I know; and the time may come, though, thank God, it is not yet. What wouldst thou say, countess, if with all thy honours thou did yet come to poverty? Canst be poor and merry, think’st thou?’

’So thou wert with me, Herbert—Glamorgan, I would say, but my lips frame not themselves to the word. I like not the title greatly, but when it means thee to me, then shall I love it.’

’Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!’

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—sang the earl in a mellow tenor voice.

‘My lord, an’ I have leave to speak,’ said Dorothy, ’did you not say the diamond in that ring Richard Heywood sent me was of some worth?’

’I did, cousin. It is a stone of the finest water, and of good weight, though truly I weighed it not.’

‘Then would I cast it in the king’s treasury, an’ if your lordship would condescend to be the bearer of such a small offering.’

‘No, child; the king robs not orphans.’

’Did the King of Kings rob the poor widow that cast in her two mites, then?’

’No; but perhaps the priests did. Still, as I say, the hour may come when all our mites may be wanted, and thine be accepted with the rest, but my father and I have yet much to give, and shall have given it before that hour come. Besides, as to thee, Dorothy, what would that handsome roundhead of thine say, if instead of keeping well the ring he gave thee, thou had turned it to the use he liked the least?’

‘He will never ask me concerning it,’ said Dorothy, with a faint smile.

’Be not over-sure of it, child. My lady asks me many things I never thought to tell her before the priest made us one. Dorothy, I have no right and no wish to spy into thy future, and fright thee with what, if it come at all, will come peacefully as June weather. I have not constructed thy horoscope to cast thy nativity, and therefore I speak as one of the ignorant; but let me tell thee, for I do say it confidently, that if these wars were once over, and the king had his own again, there will be few men in his three kingdoms so worthy of the hand and heart of Dorothy Vaughan as that same roundhead fellow, Richard Heywood. I would to God he were as good a catholic as he is a mistaken puritan! And now, my lady, may I not send thy maiden from us, for I would talk with thee alone of certain matters—not from distrust of Dorothy, but that they are not my own to impart, therefore I pray her absence.’

The parliament having secured the assistance of the Scots, and their forces having, early in the year, entered England, the king on his side was now meditating an attempt to secure the assistance of the Irish catholics, to which the devotion of certain of the old catholic houses at home encouraged him. But it was a game of terrible danger, for if he lost it, he lost everything; and that it should transpire before maturity would be to lose it absolutely; for the Irish catholics had, truly or falsely, been charged with such enormities during the rebellion, that they had become absolutely hateful in the eyes of all English protestants, and any alliance with them must cost him far more in protestants than he could gain by it in catholics. It was necessary therefore that he should go about it with

the utmost caution; and indeed in his whole management of it, the wariness far exceeded the dignity, and was practised at the expense of his best friends. But the poor king was such a believer in his father's pet doctrine of the divine right of his inheritance, that not only would he himself sacrifice everything to the dim shadow of royalty which usurped the throne of his conscience, but would, without great difficulty or compunction, though not always without remorse, accept any sacrifice which a subject might have devotion enough to bring to the altar before which Charles Stuart acted as flamen.

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In this my story of hearts rather than fortunes, it is not necessary to follow the river of public events through many of its windings, although every now and then my track will bring me to a ferry, where the boat bearing my personages will be seized by the force of the current, and carried down the stream while crossing to the other bank.

It must have been, I think, in view of his slowly-maturing intention to employ lord Herbert in a secret mission to Ireland with the object above mentioned, that the king had sought to bind him yet more closely to himself by conferring on him the title of Glamorgan. It was not, however, until the following year, when his affairs seemed on the point of becoming desperate, that he proceeded, possibly with some protestant compunctions, certainly with considerable protestant apprehension, to carry out his design. Towards this had pointed the relaxation of his measures against the catholic rebels for some time previous, and may to some have indicated hopes entertained of them. It must be remembered that while these catholics united to defend the religion of their country, they, like the Scots who had joined the parliament, professed a sincere attachment to their monarch, and in the persons of their own enemies had certainly taken up arms against many of his.

Meantime the Scots had invaded England, and the parliament had largely increased their forces in the hope of a decisive engagement; but the king refused battle and gained time. In the north prince Rupert made some progress, and brought on the battle of Marston Moor, where the victory was gained by Cromwell, after all had been regarded as lost by the other parliamentary generals. On the other hand, the king gained an important advantage in the west country over Essex and his army.

The trial and execution of Laud, who died in the beginning of the following year, obeying the king rather than his rebellious lords, was a terrible sign to the house of Raglan of what the presbyterian party was capable of. But to Dorothy it would have given a yet keener pain, had she not begun to learn that neither must the excesses of individuals be attributed to their party, nor those of his party taken as embodying the mind of every one who belongs to it. At the same time the old insuperable difficulty returned; how could Richard belong to such a party?

CHAPTER XLII.

A *new soldier*.

Moments had scarcely passed after Dorothy left him at the fountain, ere Scudamore grievously repented of having spoken to her in such a manner, and would gladly have offered apology and what amends he might.

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But Dorothy, neither easily moved to wrath, nor yet given to the nourishing of active resentment, was not therefore at all the readier to forget the results of moral difference, or to permit any nearer approach on the part of one such as her cousin had shown himself. As long as he continued so self-serene and unashamed, what satisfaction to her or what good to him could there be in it, even were he to content himself with the cousinly friendship which, as soon as he was capable of it, she was willing to afford him? As it was now, she granted him only distant recognition in company, neither seeking nor avoiding him; and as to all opportunity of private speech, entirely shunning him. For some time, in the vanity of his experience, he never doubted that these were only feminine arts, or that when she judged him sufficiently punished, she would relax the severity of her behaviour and begin to make him amends. But this demeanour of hers endured so long, and continued so uniform, that at length he began to doubt the universality of his experience, and to dread lest the maiden should actually prove what he had never found maiden before, inexorable. He did not reflect that he had given her no ground whatever for altering her judgment or feeling with regard to him. But in truth her thoughts rarely turned to him at all, and while his were haunting her as one who was taking pleasure in the idea that she was making him feel her resentment, she was simply forgetting him, busy perhaps with some self-offered question that demanded an answer, or perhaps brooding a little over the past, in which the form of Richard now came and went at its will.

So long as Rowland imagined the existence of a quarrel, he imagined therein a bond between them; when he became convinced that no quarrel, only indifference, or perhaps despisal, separated them, he began again to despair, and felt himself urged once more to speak. Seizing therefore an opportunity in such manner that she could not escape him without attracting very undesirable attention, he began a talk upon the old basis.

‘Wilt thou then forgive me nevermore, Dorothy?’, he said humbly.

‘For what, Mr. Scuclamore?’

‘I mean for offending thee with rude words.’

‘Truly I have forgotten them.’

‘Then shall we be friends?’

‘Nay, that follows not.’

‘What quarrel then hast thou with me?’

’I have no quarrel with thee; yet is there one thing I cannot forgive thee.’

’And what is that, cousin? Believe me I know not. I need but to know, and I will humble myself.’

’That would serve nothing, for how should I forgive thee for being unworthy? For such thing there is no forgiveness. Cease thou to be unworthy, and then is there nothing to forgive. I were an unfriendly friend, Rowland, did I befriend the man who befriendeth not himself.’

‘I understand thee not, cousin.’

’And I understand not thy not understanding. Therefore can there be no communion between us.’

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So saying Dorothy left him to what consolation he could find in such china-pastoral abuse as the gallants of the day would, with the aid of poetic penny-trumpet, cast upon offending damsels—Daphnes and Chloes, and, in the mood, heathen shepherdesses in general. But, fortunately for himself, how great soever had been the freedom with which he had lost and changed many a foolish liking, he found, let his hopelessness or his offence be what it might, he had not the power to shake himself free from the first worthy passion ever roused in him. It had struck root below the sandy upper stratum of his mind into a clay soil beneath, where at least it was able to hold, and whence it could draw a little slow reluctant nourishment.

During his poetic anger, he wrote no small amount of fair verse, tried by the standard of Cowley, Carew, and Suckling, so like theirs indeed that the best of it might have passed for some of their worst, although there was not in it all a single phrase to remind one of their best. But when the poetic spring began to run dry, he fell once more into a sort of wilful despair, and disrelished everything, except indeed his food and drink, so much so that his master perceiving his altered cheer, one day addressed him to know the cause.

‘What aileth thee, Rowland?’ he said kindly. ’For this se’ennight past, thou lookest like one that oweth the hangman his best suit.’

‘I rust, my lord,’ said Rowland, with a tragic air of discontent.

The notion had arisen in his foolish head that the way to soften the heart of Dorothy would be to ride to the wars, and get himself slain, or, rather severely but not mortally wounded. Then he would be brought back to Raglan, and, thinking he was going to die, Dorothy would nurse him, and then she would be sure to fall in love with him. Yes—he would ride forth on the fellow Heywood’s mare, seek him in the field of battle, and slay him, but be himself thus grievously wounded.

‘I rust, my lord,’ he said briefly.

’Ha! Thou wouldst to the wars! I like thee for that, boy. Truly the king wanteth soldiers, and that more than ever. Thou art a good cupbearer, but I will do my best to savour my claret without thee. Thou shalt to the king, and what poor thing my word may do for thee shall not be wanting.’

Scudamore had expected opposition, and was a little nonplussed. He had judged himself essential to his master’s comfort, and had even hoped he might set Dorothy to use her influence towards reconciling him to remain at home. But although self-indulgent and lazy, Scudamore was constitutionally no coward, and had never had any experience to give him pause: he did not know what an ugly thing a battle is after it is over, and the mind has leisure to attend to the smarting of the wounds.

‘I thank your lordship with all my heart,’ he said, putting on an air of greater satisfaction than he felt, ’and with your lordship’s leave would prefer a further request.’

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’Say on, Rowland. I owe thee something for long and faithful service. An’ I can, I will.’

’Give me the roundhead’s mare that I may the better find her master.’

For Lady was still within the walls. The marquis could not restore her, but neither could he bring himself to use her, cherishing the hope of being one day free to give her back to a reconciled subject. But alas! there were very few horses now in Raglan stalls.

‘No, Rowland,’ he said, ’thou art the last who ought to get any good of her. It were neither law nor justice to hand the stolen goods to the thief.’

He sat silent, and Rowland, not very eager, stood before him in silence also, meaning it to be read as indicating that to the wars except on that mare’s back he would not ride. But the thought of the marquis had now taken another turn.

’Thou shalt have her, my boy. Thou shalt not rust at home for the sake of a gouty old man and his claret. But ere thou go, I will write out certain maxims for thy following both in the field and in quarters. Ere thou ride, look well to thy girths, and as thou ridest say thy prayers, for it pleaseth not God that every man on the right side should live, and thou mayst find the presence in which thou standest change suddenly from that of mortal man to that of living God. I say nothing of orthodoxy, for truly I am not one to think that because a man hath been born a heretic, which lay not in his choice, and hath not been of his parents taught in the truth, that therefore he must howl for ever. Not while blessed Mary is queen of heaven, will all the priests in Christendom persuade me thereof. Only be thou fully persuaded in thine own mind, Rowland; for if thou cared not, that were an evil thing indeed. And of all things, my lad, remember this, that a weak blow were ever better unstruck. Go now to the armourer, and to him deliver my will that he fit thee out as a cuirassier for his majesty’s service. I can give thee no rank, for I have no regiment in the making at present, but it may please his majesty to take care of thee, and give thee a place in my lord Glamorgan’s regiment of body-guards.’

The prospect thus suddenly opened to Scudamore of a wider life and greater liberty, might have dazzled many a nobler nature than his. Lord Worcester saw the light in his eyes, and as he left the room gazed after him with pitiful countenance.

‘Poor lad! poor lad!’ he said to himself; ’I hope I see not the last of thee! God forbid! But here thou didst but rust, and it were a vile thing in an old man to infect a youth with the disease of age.’

Rowland soon found the master of the armoury, and with him crossed to the keep, where it lay, above the workshop. At the foot of the stair he talked loud, in the hope that Dorothy might be with the fire-engine, which he thought he heard at work, and would hear him. Having chosen such pieces as pleased his fancy, and needed but a little of the armourer’s art to render them suitable, he filled his arms with them, and following

the master down, contrived to fall a little behind, so that he should leave the tower before him, when he dropped them all with a huge clatter at the foot of the stair. The noise was sufficient, for it brought out Dorothy. She gazed for a moment as, pretending not to have seen her, he was picking them up with his back towards her.

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‘Do I see thee arming at length, cousin?’ she said. ’I congratulate thee.’

She held out her hand to him. He took it and stared. The reception of his noisy news was different from what he had been vain enough to hope. So little had Dorothy’s behaviour in the capture of Rowland enlightened him as to her character!

‘Thou wouldst have me slain then to be rid of me, Dorothy?’ he gasped.

‘I would have any man slain where men fight,’ returned Dorothy, ‘rather than idling within stone walls!’

’Thou art hard-hearted, Dorothy, and knowest not what love is, else wouldst thou pity me a little.’

‘What! art afraid, cousin?’

‘Afraid! I fear nothing under heaven but thy cruelty, Dorothy.’

‘Then what wouldst thou have me pity thee for?’

‘I would, an’ I had dared, have said—Because I must leave thee. But thou wouldst mock at that, and therefore I say instead—Because I shall never return; for I see well that thou never hast loved me even a little.’

Dorothy smiled.

‘An’ I had loved thee, cousin,’ she rejoined, ’I had never let thee rest, or left soliciting thee, until thou hadst donned thy buff coat and buckled on thy spurs, and departed to be a man among men, and no more a boy among women.’

So saying she returned to her engine, which all the time had been pumping and forcing with fiery inspiration.

Scudamore mounted and rode, followed by one of the grooms. He found the king at Wallingford, presented the marquis’s letter, proffered his services, and was at once placed in attendance on his majesty’s person.

In the eyes of most of his comrades the mare he rode seemed too light for cavalry work, but she made up in spirit and quality of muscle for lack of size, and there was not another about the king to match in beauty the little black Lady. Sweet-tempered and gentle although nervous and quick, and endowed with a rare docility and a faith which supplied courage, it was clear, while nothing was known of her pedigree, both from her form and her nature, that she was of Arab descent. No feeling of unreality in his possession of her intruding to disturb his satisfaction in her, Scudamore became very

fond of her. Having joined the army, however, only after the second battle of Newbury, he had no chance till the following summer of learning how she bore herself in the field.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Lady and Bishop.

In the meantime a succession of events had contributed to enhance the influence of Cromwell in the parliament, and his position and power in the army. He was now, therefore, more able to put in places of trust such men as came nearest his own way of thinking, and amongst the rest Roger Heywood, whom, once brought into the active service for which modesty had made him doubt his own fitness, he would not allow to leave it again, but made colonel of one of his favourite regiments of horse, with his son as major.

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Richard continued to ride Bishop, which became at length famous for courage, as he had become at once for ugliness. Fortunately they found that he had developed friendly feelings towards one of the mares of the troop, never lashing out when she happened to be behind him; so they gave her that place, and were freed from much anxiety. Still the rider on each side of him had to keep his eyes open, for every now and then a sudden fury of biting would seize him, and bring chaos in the regiment for a moment or two. When his master was made an officer, the brute's temptations probably remained the same, but his opportunities of yielding to them became considerably fewer.

It was strange company in which Richard rode. Nearly all were of the independent party in religious polity, all holding, or imagining they held, the same or nearly the same tenets. The opinions of most of them, however, were merely the opinions of the man to whose influences they had been first and principally subjected: to say what their belief was, would be to say what they were, which is deeper judgment than a man can reach. In Roger Heywood and his son dwelt a pure love of liberty; the ardent attachment to liberty which most of the troopers professed, would have prevented few of them indeed from putting a quaker in the stocks, or perhaps whipping him, had such an obnoxious heretic as a quaker been at that time in existence. In some was the devoutest sense of personal obligation, and the strongest religious feeling; in others was nothing but talk, less injurious than some sorts of pseudo-religious talk, in that it was a jargon admitting of much freedom of utterance and reception, mysterious symbols being used in commonest interchange. That they all believed earnestly enough to fight for their convictions, will not go very far in proof of their sincerity even, for to most of them fighting came by nature, and was no doubt a great relief to the much oppressed old Adam not yet by any means dead in them.

At length the king led out his men for another campaign, and was followed by Fairfax and Cromwell into the shires of Leicester and Northampton. Then came the battle at the village of Naseby.

Prince Rupert, whose folly so often lost what his courage had gained, having defeated Ireton and his horse, followed them from the field, while Cromwell with his superior numbers turned Sir Marmaduke Langdale's flank, and thereby turned the scale of victory.

But Sir Marmaduke and his men fought desperately, and while the contest was yet undecided, the king saw that Rupert, returned from the pursuit, was attacking the enemy's artillery, and dispatched Rowland in hot haste to bring him to the aid of Sir Marmaduke.

The straightest line to reach him lay across a large field to the rear of Sir Marmaduke's men. As he went from behind them, Richard caught sight of him and his object together, struck spurs into Bishop's flanks, bored him through a bull-fence, was in the same field with Rowland, and tore at full speed to head him off from the prince.

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Rowland rode for some distance without perceiving that he was followed; if Richard could but get within pistol-shot of him, for alas, he seemed to be mounted on the fleeter animal! Heavens!-could it be? Yes it was! it was his own lost Lady the cavalier rode! For a moment his heart beat so fast that he felt as if he should fall from his horse.

Rowland became aware that he was pursued, but at the first glimpse of the long, low, rat-like animal on which the roundhead came floundering after him, burst into a laugh of derision, and jumping a young hedge found himself in a clayish fallow, which his mare found heavy. Soon Richard jumped the hedge also, and immediately Bishop had the advantage. But now, beyond the tall hedge they were approaching, they heard the sounds of the conflict near: there was no time to lose. Richard breathed deep, and uttered a long, wild, peculiar cry. Lady started, half-stopped, raised her head high, and turned round her ears. Richard cried again. She wheeled, and despite spur, and rein, though the powerful bit with which Rowland rode her seemed to threaten breaking her jaw, bore him, at short deer-like bounds, back towards his pursuer.

Not until the mare refused obedience did Rowland begin to suspect who had followed him. Then a vague recollection of something Richard had said the night he carried him home to Raglan, crossed his mind, and he grew furious. But in vain he struggled with the mare, and all the time Richard kept ploughing on towards him. At length he saw Rowland take a pistol from his holster. Instinctively Richard did the same, and when he saw him raise the butt-end to strike her on the head, firmed—and missed, but saved Lady the blow, and ere Rowland recovered from the start it gave him to hear the bullet whistle past his ear, uttered another equally peculiar but different cry. Lady reared, plunged, threw her heels in the air, emptied her saddle, and came flying to Richard.

But now arose a fresh anxiety:-what if Bishop should, as was most likely, attack the mare? At her master's word, however, she stood, a few yards off, and with arched neck and forward-pricked ears, waited, while Bishop, moved possibly with admiration of the manner in which she had unseated her rider, scanned her with no malign aspect.

By this time Rowland had got upon his feet, and mindful of his duty, hopeful also that Richard would be content with his prize, set off as hard as he could run for a gap he spied in the hedge. But in a moment Bishop, followed by Lady, had headed him.

'Thou wert better cry quarter,' said Richard.

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The reply was a bullet, that struck Bishop below the ear. He stood straight up, gave one yell, and tumbled over. Scudamore ran towards the mare, hoping to catch her and be off ere the roundhead could recover himself. But, although Bishop had fallen on his leg, Richard was unhurt. He lay still and watched. Lady seemed bewildered, and Rowland coming softly up, seized her bridle, and sprung into the saddle. The same moment Richard gave his cry a second time, and again up went Rowland in the air, and Lady came trotting daintily to her master, scared, but obedient. Rowland fell on his back, and before he came to himself, Richard had drawn his leg from under his slain charger, and his sword from its sheath. And now first he perceived who his antagonist was, and a pang went to his heart at the remembrance of his father's words.

'Mr. Scudamore,' he cried, 'I would thou hadst not stolen my mare, so that I might fight with thee in a Christian fashion.'

'Roundhead scoundrel!' gasped Scudamore, wild with wrath. 'Thy unmannerly varlet tricks shall cost thee dear. Thou a soldier? A juggler with a mountebank jade—a vile hackney which thou hast taught to caper! A soldier indeed!'

'A soldier and seatless!' returned Richard. 'A soldier and rail! A soldier and steal my mare, then shoot my horse! Bah! an' the rest were like thee, we might take the field with dog-whips.'

Scudamore drew a pistol from his belt, and glanced towards the mare.

'An' thou lift thine arm, I will kill thee,' cried Richard. 'What! shall a man not teach his horse lest the thief should find him not broke to his taste? Besides, did I not give thee warning while yet I judged thee an honest man, and a thief but in jest? Go thy ways. I shall do my country better service by following braver men than by taking thee. Get thee back to thy master. An' I killed thee, I should do him less hurt than I would. See yonder how thy master's horse do knot and scatter!'

He approached Lady to mount and ride away.

But Rowland, who had now with the help of his anger recovered from the effects of his fall, rushed at Richard with drawn sword. The contest was brief. With one heavy blow that beat down his guard and wounded him severely in the shoulder, dividing his collarbone, for he was but lightly armed, Richard stretched his antagonist on the ground; then seeing prince Rupert's men returning, and sir Marmaduke's in flight and some of them coming his way, he feared being surrounded, and leaping into the saddle, flew as if the wind were under him back to his regiment, reaching it just as in the first heat of pursuit. Cromwell called them back, and turned them upon the rear of the royalist infantry.

This decided the battle. Ere Rupert returned, the affair was so hopeless that not even the entreaties of the king could induce his cavalry to form again and charge.

His majesty retreated to Leicester and Hereford.

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CHAPTER XLIV.

The king.

Some months before the battle of Naseby, which was fought in June early, that is, in the year 1645, the plans of the king having now ripened, he gave a secret commission for Ireland to the earl of Glamorgan, with immense powers, among the rest that of coining money, in order that he might be in a position to make proposals towards certain arrangements with the Irish catholics, which, in view of the prejudices of the king's protestant council, it was of vital importance to keep secret. Glamorgan therefore took a long leave of his wife and family, and in the month of March set out for Dublin. At Caernarvon, they got on board a small barque, laden with corn, but, in rough weather that followed, were cast ashore on the coast of Lancashire. A second attempt failed also, for, pursued by a parliament vessel, they were again compelled to land on the same coast. It was the middle of summer before they reached Dublin.

During this period there was of course great anxiety in Raglan, the chief part of which was lady Glamorgan's. At times she felt that but for the sympathy of Dorothy, often silent but always ministrant, she would have broken down quite under the burden of ignorance and its attendant anxiety.

In the prolonged absence of her husband, and the irregularity of tidings, for they came at uncertain as well as wide intervals, her yearnings after her vanished Molly, which had become more patient, returned with all their early vehemence, and she began to brood on the meeting beyond the grave of which her religion waked her hope. Nor was this all: her religion itself grew more real; for although there is nothing essentially religious in thinking of the future, although there is more of the heart of religion in the taking of strength from the love of God to do the commonest duty, than in all the longing for a blessed hereafter of which the soul is capable, yet the love of a little child is very close to the love of the great Father; and the loss that sets any affection aching and longing, heaves, as on a wave from the very heart of the human ocean, the labouring spirit up towards the source of life and restoration. In like manner, from their common love to the child, and their common sense of loss in her death, the hearts of the two women drew closer to each other, and protestant mistress Dorothy was able to speak words of comfort to catholic lady Glamorgan, which the hearer found would lie on the shelf of her creed none the less quietly that the giver had lifted them from the shelf of hers.

One evening, while yet lady Glamorgan had had no news of her husband's arrival in Ireland, and the bright June weather continued clouded with uncertainty and fear, lady Broughton came panting into her parlour with the tidings that a courier had just arrived at the main entrance, himself pale with fatigue, and his horse white with foam.

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‘Alas! alas!’ cried lady Glamorgan, and fell back in her chair, faint with apprehension, for what might not be the message he bore? Ere Dorothy had succeeded in calming her, the marquis himself came hobbling in, with the news that the king was coming.

‘Is that all?’ said the countess, heaving a deep sigh, while the tears ran down her cheeks.

‘Is that all?’ repeated her father-in-law. ’How, my lady! Is there then nobody in all the world but Glamorgan? Verily I believe thou wouldst turn thy back on the angel Gabriel, if he dared appear before thee without thy Ned under his arm. Bless the Irish heart! I never gave thee *my* Ned that thou shouldst fall down and worship the fellow.’

‘Bear with me, sir,’ she answered faintly. ’It is but the pain here. Thou knowest I cannot tell but he lieth at the bottom of the Irish Sea.’

’If he do lie there, then lieth he in Abraham’s bosom, daughter, where I trust there is room for thee and me also. Thou rememberest how thy Molly said once to thee, ’Madam, thy bosom is not so big as my lord Abraham’s. What a big bosom my lord Abraham must have!’

Lady Glamorgan laughed.

’Come then—“to our work alive!” which is now to receive his majesty,’ said the marquis. ‘My wild Irishwoman—’

‘Alas, my lord! tame enough now,’ sighed the countess.

’Not too tame to understand that she must represent her husband before the king’s majesty,’ said lord Worcester.

Lady Glamorgan rose, kissed her father-in-law, wiped her eyes, and said—

‘Where, my lord, do you purpose lodging his majesty?’

’In the great north room, over the buttery, and next the picture-gallery, which will serve his majesty to walk in, and the windows there have the finest prospect of all. I did think of the great tower, but—Well—the chamber there is indeed statelier, but it is gloomy as a dull twilight, while the one I intend him to lie in is bright as a summer morning. The tower chamber makes me think of all the lords and ladies that have died therein; the north room, of all the babies that have been born there.’

‘Spoken like a man!’ murmured lady Glamorgan. ’Have you given directions, my lord?’

’I have sent for sir Ralph. Come with me, Margaret: you and Mary must keep your old father from blundering. Run, Dorothy, and tell Mr. Delaware and Mr. Andrews that I

desire their presence in my closet. I miss the rogue Scudamore. They tell me he hath done well, and is sorely wounded. He must feel the better for the one already, and I hope he will soon be nothing the worse for the other.'

As he thus talked, they left the room and took their way to the study, where they found the steward waiting them.

The whole castle was presently alive with preparations for the king's visit. That he had been so sorely foiled of late, only roused in all the greater desire to receive him with every possible honour. Hope revived in lady Glamorgan's bosom: she would take the coming of the king as a good omen for the return of her husband.

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Dorothy ran to do the marquis's pleasure. As she ran, it seemed as if some new spring of life had burst forth in her heart. The king! the king actually coming! The God-chosen monarch of England! The head of the church! The type of omnipotence! The wronged, the saintly, the wise! He who fought with bleeding heart for the rights, that he might fulfil the duties to which he was born! She would see him! she would breathe the same air with him! gaze on his gracious countenance unseen until she had imprinted every feature of his divine face upon her heart and memory! The thought was too entrancing. She wept as she ran to find the master of the horse and the master of the fish-ponds.

At length, on the evening of the third of July, a pursuivant, accompanied by an advanced guard of horsemen, announced the king, and presently on the north road appeared the dust of his approach. Nearer they came, all on horseback, a court of officers. Travel-stained and weary, with foam-flecked horses, but flowing plumes, flashing armour, and ringing chains, they arrived at the brick gate, where lord Charles himself threw the two leaves open to admit them, and bent the knee before his king. As they entered the marble gate, they saw the marquis descending the great white stair to meet them, leaning for his lameness on the arm of his brother sir Thomas of Troy, and followed by all the ladies and gentlemen and officers in the castle, who stood on the stair while he approached the king's horse, bent his knee, kissed the royal hand, and, rising with difficulty, for the gout had aged him beyond his years, said:

'Domine, non sum dignus.'

I would I had not to give this brief dialogue; but it stands on record, and may suggest something worth thinking to him who can read it aright.

The king replied:

'My lord, I may very well answer you again: I have not found so great faith in Israel; for no man would trust me with so much money as you have done.'

'I hope your majesty will prove a defender of the faith,' returned the marquis.

The king then dismounted, ascended the marble steps with his host, nearly as stiff as he from his long ride, crossed the moat on the undulating drawbridge, passed the echoing gateway, and entered the stone court.

The marquis turned to the king, and presented the keys of the castle. The king took them and returned them.

'I pray your majesty keep them in so good a hand. I fear that ere it be long I shall be forced to deliver them into the hands of who will spoil the compliment', said the marquis.

'Nay,' rejoined his majesty, 'but keep them till the King of kings demand the account of your stewardship, my lord.'

’I trust your majesty’s name will then be seen where it stands therein,’ said the marquis, ’for so it will fare the better with the steward.’

In the court, the garrison, horse and foot, a goodly show, was drawn up to receive him, with an open lane through, leading to the north-western angle, where was the stair to the king’s apartment. At the draw-well, which lay right in the way, and around which the men stood off in a circle, the king stopped, laid his hand on the wheel, and said gaily:

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‘My lord, is this your lordship’s purse?’

‘For your majesty’s sake, I would it were,’ returned the marquis.

At the foot of the stair, on plea of his gout, he delivered his majesty to the care of lord Charles, sir Ralph Blackstone, and Mr. Delaware, who conducted him to his chamber.

The king supped alone, but after supper, lady Glamorgan and the other ladies of the family, having requested permission to wait upon him, were ushered into his presence. Each of them took with her one of her ladies in attendance, and Dorothy, being the one chosen by her mistress for that honour, not without the rousing of a strong feeling of injustice in the bosoms of the elder ladies, entered trembling behind her mistress, as if the room were a temple wherein no simulacrum but the divinity himself dwelt in visible presence.

His majesty received them courteously, said kind things to several of them, but spoke and behaved at first with a certain long-faced reserve rather than dignity, which, while it jarred a little with Dorothy’s ideal of the graciousness that should be mingled with majesty in the perfect monarch, yet operated only to throw her spirit back into that stage of devotion wherein, to use a figure of the king’s own, the awe overlays the love.

A little later the marquis entered, walking slowly, leaning on the arm of lord Charles, but carrying in his own hands a present of apricots from his brother to the king.

Meantime Dorothy’s love had begun to rise again from beneath her awe; but when the marquis came in, old and stately, reverend and slow, with a silver dish in each hand and a basket on his arm, and she saw him bow three times ere he presented his offering, himself serving whom all served, himself humble whom all revered, then again did awe nearly overcome her. When the king, however, having graciously received the present, chose for each of the ladies one of the apricots, and coming to Dorothy last, picked out and offered the one he said was likest the bloom of her own fair cheek, gratitude again restored the sway of love, and in the greatness of the honour she almost let slip the compliment. She could not reply, but she looked her thanks, and the king doubtless missed nothing.

The next day his majesty rested, but on following days rode to Monmouth, Chepstow, Usk, and other towns in the neighbourhood, whose loyalty, thanks to the marquis, had as yet stood out. After dinner he generally paid the marquis a visit in the oak parlour, then perhaps had a walk in the grounds, or a game on the bowling-green.

But although the marquis was devoted to the king’s cause, he was not therefore either blinded or indifferent to the king’s faults, and as an old man who had long been trying to grow better, he made up his mind to risk a respectful word in the matter of kingly obligation.

One day, therefore, when his majesty entered the oak parlour, he found his host sitting by the table with his Gower lying open before him, as if he had been reading, which doubtless was the case.

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‘What book have you there, my lord?’ asked the king—while some of his courtiers stood near the door, and others gazed from the window on the moat and the swelling, towering mass of the keep. ’I like to know what books my friends read.’

’Sir, it is old master John Gower’s book of verses, entitled Confessio Amantis,’ answered his lordship.

‘It is a book I have never seen before,’ said the king, glancing at its pages.

‘Oh!’ returned the marquis, ’it is a book of books, which if your majesty had been well versed in, it would have made you a king of kings.’

‘Why so, my lord?’ asked the king.

‘Why,’ said the marquis, ’here is set down how Aristotle brought up and instructed Alexander the Great in all his rudiments, and the principles belonging to a prince. Allow me, sir, to read you such a passage as will show your majesty the truth of what I say.’

He opened the book and read:

’Among the vertues one is chefe,
And that is trouthe, which is lefe (dear)
To God and eke to man also.
And for it hath ben ever so,
Taught Aristotle, as he well couth, (knew)
To Alisaundre, how in his youth
He shulde of trouthe thilke grace (that same)
With all his hole herte embrace,
So that his word be trewe and pleine
Toward the world, and so certeine,
That in him be no double speche.
For if men shulde trouthe seche,
And found it nought within a king,
It were an unfittende thing
The worde is token of that within;
There shall a worthy king begin
To kepe his tunge and to be trewe,
So shall his price ben ever newe.’

’And here, sir, is what he saith as to the significance of the kingly crown, if your majesty will allow me to read it.’

‘Read on, my lord; all is good and true,’ said the king.

’The gold betokneth excellence,
That men shuld done him reverence,
As to her lege soveraine. (their liege)
The stones, as the bokes saine,
Commended ben in treble wise.
First, they ben hard, and thilke assise (that attribute)
Betokeneth in a king constaunce,
So that there shall be no variaunce
Be found in his condicion.
And also by description
The vertue, whiche is in the stones,
A verray signe is for the nones
Of that a king shall ben honest,
And holde trewely his behest (promise)
Of thing, which longeth to kinghede.’ (belongeth)

’And so on—for I were loath to weary your majesty—of the colour of the stones, and the circular form of the crown.’

‘Read on, my lord,’ said the king.

Several passages, therefore, did the marquis pick out and read—amongst which probably were certain concerning flatterers—taking care still to speak of Alexander and Aristotle, and by no means of king and marquis, until at length he had ’read the king such a lesson,’ as Dr. Bayly informs us, ’that the bystanders were amazed at his boldness.’

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’My lord, have you got your lesson by heart, or speak you out of the book?’ asked the king, taking the volume.

‘Sir,’ the marquis replied, ’if you could read my heart, it may be you might find it there; or if your majesty please to get it by heart, I will lend you my book.’

‘I would willingly borrow it,’ said the king.

‘Nay,’ said the marquis, ’I will lend it to you upon these conditions: first, that you read it; and, second, that you make use of it.’

Here, glancing round, well knowing the nature of the soil upon which his words fell, he saw ’some of the new-made lords displeased, fretting and biting their thumbs,’ and thus therefore resumed:—

’But, sir, I assure you that no man was so much for the absolute power of the king as Aristotle. If your majesty will allow me the book again, I will show you one remarkable passage to that purpose.’

Having searched the volume for a moment, and found it, he read as follows:—

’Harpaghes first his tale tolde,
And said, how that the strength of kinges
Is mightiest of alle thinges.
For king hath power over man,
And man is he, which reson can,
As he, which is of his nature
The most noble creature
Of alle tho that God hath wrought.
And by that skill it seemeth nought, (for that reason)
He saith that any erthly thing
May be so mighty as a king.
A king may spille, a king may save,
A king may make of lorde a knave,
And of a knave a lord also;
The power of a king stant so
That he the lawes overpasseth.
What he will make lasse, he lasseth;
What he will make more, he moreth;
And as a gentil faucon soreth,
He fleeth, that no man him reclaimeth.
But he alone all other tameth,
And slant him self of lawe fre.’

’There, my liege! So much for Aristotle and the kinghood! But think not he taketh me with him all the way. By our Lady, I go not so far.’

Lifting his head again, he saw, to his wish, that ’divers new-made lords’ had ‘slunk out of the room.’

‘My lord,’ said the king, ’at this rate you will drive away all my nobility.’

‘I protest unto your majesty,’ the marquis replied, ’I am as new a made lord as any of them all, but I was never called knave or rogue so much in all my life as I have been since I received this last honour: and why should they not bear their shares?’

In high good-humour with his success, he told the story the same evening to lady Glamorgan in Dorothy’s presence. It gave her ground for thought: she wondered that the marquis should think the king required such lessoning. She had never dreamed that a man and his office are not only metaphysically distinct, but may be morally separate things; she had hitherto taken the office as the pledge for the man, the show as the pledge for the reality; and now therefore her notion of the king received a rude shock from his best friend.

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The arrival of his majesty had added to her labours, for now again horse must spout every day,—with no Molly to see it and rejoice. Every fountain rushed heavenwards, ‘and all the air’ was ’filled with pleasant noise of waters.’ This required the fire-engine to be kept pretty constantly at work, and Dorothy had to run up and down the stair of the great tower several times a-day. But she lingered on the top as often and as long as she might.

One glorious July afternoon, gazing from the top of the keep, she saw his majesty, the marquis, some of the courtiers, and a Mr. Prichard of the neighbourhood, on the bowling-green, having a game together. It was like looking at a toy-representation of one, for, so far below, everything was wondrously dwarfed and fore-shortened. But certainly it was a pretty sight-the gay garments, the moving figures, the bowls rolling like marbles over the green carpet, while the sun, and the blue sky, and just an air of wind —enough to turn every leaf into a languidly waved fan, enclosed it in loveliness and filled it with life. It was like a picture from a *Camera* OBSCURA dropped right at the foot of the keep, for the surrounding walk, moat, and sunk walk beyond, were, seen from that height, but enough to keep the bowling-green, which came to the edge of the sunk walk, twelve feet below it, from appearing to cling to the foundations of the tower. The circle of arches filled with shell-work and statues of Roman emperors, which formed the face of the escarpment of the sunk walk, looked like a curiously-cut fringe to the carpet.

While Dorothy aloft was thus looking down and watching the game,—

‘What a lovely prospect it is!’ said his majesty below, addressing Mr. Prichard, while the marquis bowled.

Making answer, Mr. Prichard pointed out where his own house lay, half hidden by a grove, and said—’May it please your majesty, I have advised my lord to cut down those trees, so that when he wants a good player at bowls, he may have but to beckon.’

‘Nay,’ returned the king, ’he should plant more trees, that so he might not see thy house at all.’

The marquis, who had bowled, and was coming towards them, heard what the king said, and fancying he aimed at the fault of the greedy buying-up of land—

‘If your majesty hath had enough of the game,’ he said, ’and will climb with me to the top of the tower, I will show you what may do your mind some ease.’

‘I should be sorry to set your Lordship such an arduous task,’ replied the king. ’But I am very desirous of seeing your great tower, and if you will permit me, I will climb the stair without your attendance.’

’Sir, it will pleasure me to think that the last time ever I ascended those stairs, I conducted your majesty. For indeed it shall be the last time. I grow old.’

As the marquis spoke, he led towards the twin-arched bridge over the castle-moat, then through the western gate, and along the side of the court to the Gothic bridge, on their way despatching one of his gentlemen to fetch the keys of the tower.

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‘My lord,’ said the king when the messenger had gone, ’there are some men so unreasonable as to make me believe that your lordship hath good store of gold yet left within the tower; but I, knowing how I have exhausted you, could never have believed it, until now I see you will not trust the keys with any but yourself.’

‘Sir,’ answered the marquis, ’I was so far from giving your majesty any such occasion of thought by this tender of my duty, that I protest unto you that I was once resolved that your majesty should have lain there, but that I was loath to commit your majesty to the Tower.’

’You are more considerate, my lord, than some of my subjects would be if they had me as much in their keeping,’ answered the king sadly. ‘But what are those pipes let into the wall up there?’ he asked, stopping in the middle of the bridge and looking up at the keep.

’Nay, sire, my son Edward must tell you that. He taketh strange liberties with the mighty old hulk. But I will not injure his good grace with your majesty by talking of that I understand not. I trust that one day, when you shall no more require his absence, you will yet again condescend to be my guest, when my son, by your majesty’s favour now my lord Glamorgan, will have things to show you that will delight your eyes to behold.’

‘I have ere now seen something of his performance,’ answered the king; ’but these naughty times give room for nothing in that kind but guns and swords.’

Leaving the workshop unvisited, his lordship took the king up the stair, and unlocking the entrance to the first floor, ushered him into a lofty vaulted chamber, old in the midst of antiquity, dark, vast, and stately.

‘This is where I did think to lodge your majesty,’ he said, ’but—but—your majesty sees it is gloomy, for the windows are narrow, and the walls are ten feet through.’

‘It maketh me very cold,’ said the king, shuddering. ’Good sooth, but I were loath to be a prisoner!’

He turned and left the room hastily. The marquis rejoined him on the stair, and led him, two stories higher, to the armoury, now empty compared to its former condition, but still capable of affording some supply. The next space above was filled with stores, and the highest was now kept clear for defence, for the reservoir so fully occupied the top that there was no room for engines of any sort; and indeed it took up so much of the storey below with its depth that it left only such room as between the decks of a man of war, rendering it hardly fit for any other use.

Reaching the summit at length, the king gazed with silent wonder at the little tarn which lay there as on the crest of a mountain. But the marquis conducted him to the western side, and, pointing with his finger, said—

’Sir, you see that line of trees, stretching across a neck of arable field, where to the right the brook catches the sun?’

‘I see it, my lord,’ answered the king.

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‘And behind it a house and garden, small but dainty?’

‘Yes, my lord.’

’Then I trust your majesty will release me from suspicion of being of those to whom the prophet Isaias saith, “Vae qui conjungitis domum ad domum, et agrum agro copulatis usque ad terminum loci: numquid habitabitis vos soli in medio terrae?” May it please your majesty, I planted those trees to hoodwink mine eyes from such temptations, hiding from them the vineyard of Naboth, lest they should act the Jezebel and tempt me to play the Ahab thereto. If I did thus when those trees and I were young, shall I do worse now that I stand with one foot in the grave, and purgatory itself in the other?’

The king seemed to listen politely, but only listened half and did not perceive his drift. He was looking at Dorothy where she stood at the opposite side of the reservoir, unable, because of the temporary obstruction occasioned by certain alterations and repairs about the cocks now going on, to reach the stair without passing the king and the marquis. The king asked who she was; and the marquis, telling him a little about her, called her. She came, courtesied low to his majesty, and stood with beating heart.

‘I desire,’ said the marquis, ’thou shouldst explain to his majesty that trick of thy cousin Glamorgan, the water-shoot, and let him see it work.’

‘My lord,’ answered Dorothy, trembling betwixt devotion and doubtful duty, ’it was the great desire of my lord Glamorgan that none in the castle should know the trick, as it pleases your lordship to call it.’

’What, cousin! cannot his majesty keep a secret? And doth not all that Glamorgan hath belong to the king?’

‘God forbid I should doubt either, my lord,’ answered Dorothy, turning very pale, and ready to sink, ’but it cannot well be done in the broad day without some one seeing. At night, indeed—’

’Tut, tut! it is but a whim of Glamorgan’s. Thou wilt not do a jot of ill to show the game before his majesty in the sunlight.’

‘My lord, I promised.’

’Here standeth who will absolve thee, child! His majesty is paramount to Glamorgan.’

‘My lord! my lord!’ said Dorothy almost weeping, ’I am bewildered, and cannot well understand. But I am sure that if it be wrong, no one can give me leave to do it, or absolve me beforehand. God himself can but pardon after the thing is done, not give permission to do it. Forgive me, sir, but so master Matthew Herbert hath taught me.’

‘And very good doctrine, too,’ said the marquis emphatically, ’let who will propound it. Think you not so, sir?’

But the king stood with dull imperturbable gaze fixed on the distant horizon, and made no reply. An awkward silence followed. The king requested his host to conduct him to his apartment.

‘I marvel, my lord,’ said his majesty as they went down the stair, seeing how lame his host was, ’that, as they tell me, your lordship drinks claret. All physicians say it is naught for the gout.’

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‘Sir,’ returned the marquis, ’it shall never be said that I forsook my friend to pleasure my enemy.’

The king’s face grew dark, for ever since the lecture for which he had made Gower the textbook, he had been ready to see a double meaning of rebuke in all the marquis said. He made no answer, avoided his attendants who waited for him in the fountain court, expecting him to go by the bell-tower, and, passing through the hall and the stone court, ascended to his room alone, and went into the picture-gallery, where he paced up and down till supper-time.

The marquis rejoined the little company of his own friends who had left the bowling-green after him, and were now in the oak parlour. A little troubled at the king’s carriage towards him, he entered with a merrier bearing than usual.

‘Well, gentlemen, how goes the bias?’ he said gayly.

‘We were but now presuming to say, my lord,’ answered Mr. Prichard, ’that there are who would largely warrant that if you would you might be duke of Somerset.’

‘When I was earl of Worcester,’ returned the marquis, ’I was well to do; since I was marquis, I am worse by a hundred thousand pounds; and if I should be a duke, I should be an arrant beggar. Wherefore I had rather go back to my earldom, than at this rate keep on my pace to the dukedom of Somerset.’

CHAPTER XLV.

The secret interview.

Between the third of July, when he first came, and the fifteenth of September, when he last departed, the king went and came several times. During his last visit a remarkable interview took place between him and his host, the particulars of which are circumstantially given by Dr. Bayly in the little book he calls Certamen Religiosum: to me it falls to recount after him some of the said particulars, because, although Dorothy was brought but one little step within the sphere of the interview, certain results were which bore a large influence upon her history.

‘Though money came from him,’ that is, the marquis, ’like drops of blood,’ says Dr. Bayly, ’yet was he contented that every drop within his body should be let out,’ if only he might be the instrument of bringing his majesty back to the bosom of the catholic church —a bosom which no doubt the marquis found as soft as it was capacious, but which the king regarded as a good deal resembling that of a careless nurse rather than mother—-frized with pins, and here and there a cruel needle. Therefore, expecting every hour that the king would apply to him for more money, the marquis had resolved that, at such time as he should do so, he would make an attempt to lead the stray sheep within the

fold—for the marquis was not one of those who regarded a protestant as necessarily a goat.

But the king shrank from making the request in person, and having learned that the marquis had been at one point in his history under the deepest obligation to Dr. Bayly, who having then preserved both his lordship's life and a large sum of money he carried with him, by 'concealing both for the space that the moon useth to be twice in riding of her circuit,' had thereafter become a member of his family and a sharer in his deepest confidence, greatly desired that the doctor should take the office of mediator between him and the marquis.

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The king's will having been already conveyed to the doctor, in the king's presence colonel Lingen came up to him and said,

'Dr. Bayly, the king, much wishing your aid in this matter, saith he delights not to be a beggar, and yet is constrained thereunto.'

'I am at his majesty's disposal,' returned the doctor, 'although I confess myself somewhat loath to be the beetle-head that must drive this wedge.'

'Nay,' said the colonel, 'they tell me that no man can make a divorce between the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold sooner than thyself, good doctor.'

The end was that he undertook the business, though with reluctance—unwilling to be 'made an instrument to let the same horse bleed whom the king himself had found so free'—and sought the marquis in his study.

'My lord,' he said, 'the thing that I feared is now fallen upon me. I am made the unwelcome messenger of bad news: the king wants money.'

'Hold, sir! that's no news,' interrupted the marquis. 'Go on with your business.'

'My lord,' said the doctor, 'there is one comfort yet, that, as the king is brought low, so are his demands, and, like his army, are come down from thousands to hundreds, and from paying the soldiers of his army to buying bread for himself and his followers. My lord, it is the king's own expression, and his desire is but three hundred pound.'

Lord Worcester remained a long time silent, and Dr. Bayly waited, 'knowing by experience that in such cases it was best leaving him to himself, and to let that nature that was so good work itself into an act of the highest charity, like the diamond which is only polished with its own dust.'

'Come hither—come nearer, my good doctor,' said his lordship at length: 'hath the king himself spoken unto thee concerning any such business?'

'The king himself hath not, my lord, but others did, in the king's hearing.'

'Might I but speak unto him—,' said the marquis. 'But I was never thought worthy to be consulted with, though in matters merely concerning the affairs of my own country!—I would supply his wants, were they never so great, or whatsoever they were.'

'If the king knew as much, my lord, you might quickly speak with him,' remarked the doctor.

'The way to have him know so much is to have somebody to tell him of it,' said the marquis testily.

‘Will your lordship give me leave to be the informer?’ asked the doctor.

‘Truly I spake it to the purpose,’ answered the marquis.

Away ran the little doctor, ambling through the picture-gallery, ‘half going and half running,’ like some short-winged bird—his heart trembling lest the marquis should change his mind and call him back, and so his pride in his successful mediation be mortified—to the king’s chamber, where he told his majesty with diplomatic reserve, and something of diplomatic cunning, enhancing the difficulties, that he had perceived

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his lordship desired some conference with him, and that he believed, if the king granted such conference, he would find a more generous response to his necessities than perhaps he expected. The king readily consenting, the doctor went on to say that his lordship much wished the interview that very night. The king asked how it could be managed, and the doctor told him the marquis had contrived it before his majesty came to the castle, having for that reason appointed the place where they were for his bed-chamber, and not that in the great tower, which the marquis himself liked the best in the castle.

'I know my lord's drift well enough,' said the king, smiling: 'either he means to chide me, or else to convert me to his religion.'

'I doubt not, sire,' returned the doctor, 'but your majesty is temptation-proof as well as correction-free, and will return the same man you go, having made a profitable exchange of gold and silver for words and sleep.'

Upon Dr. Bayly's report of his success, the marquis sent him back to tell the king that at eleven o'clock he would be waiting his majesty in a certain room to which the doctor would conduct him.

This was the room the marquis's father had occupied and in which he died, called therefore 'my lord Privy-seal's chamber.' Since then the marquis had never allowed any one to sleep in it, hardly any one to go into it; whence it came that although all the rest of the castle was crowded, this one room remained empty and fit for their purpose.

To understand the precautions taken to keep their interview a secret, we must remember that, although he had not a better friend in all England, such reason had the king to fear losing his protestant friends from their jealousy of catholic influence, that he had never invited the marquis of Worcester to sit with him in council; and that the marquis on his part was afraid both of injuring the cause of the king, and of being himself impeached for treason. Should any of the king's attendant lords discover that they were closeted together, he dreaded the suspicion and accusation of another Gowry conspiracy even. His lordship therefore instructed Dr. Bayly to go, as the time drew nigh, to the drawing-room, which was next the marquis's chamber, and the dining parlour, through both of which he must pass to reach the appointed place, and clear them of the company which might be in them. The chaplain desiring to know how he was to manage it, so that it should not look strange and arouse suspicion, and what he should do if any were unwilling to go,—

'I will tell you what you shall do,' said the marquis hastily, 'so that you shall not need to fear any such thing. Go unto the yeoman of the wine-cellar, and bid him leave the keys of the wine-cellar with you, and all that you find in your way, invite them down into the

cellar, and show them the keys, and I warrant you, you shall sweep the room of them, if there were a hundred. And when you have done, leave them there.'

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But having thus arranged, the marquis grew anxious again. He remembered that it was not unusual to pass to the hall from the northern side of the fountain court, where were most of the rooms of the ladies' gentlewomen, through the picture-gallery, entering it by a passage and stair which connected the bell-tower with one of its deep window recesses, and leaving it by a door in the middle of the opposite side, admitting to a stair in the thickness of the wall—which led downwards, opening to the minstrels' gallery on the left hand, and a little further below, to the organ loft in the chapel on the right hand. It was not the least likely that any of the ladies or their attendants would be passing that way so late at night, but there was a possibility, and that was enough, the marquis being anxious and nervous, to render him more so.

There was, however, another and more threatening possibility of encounter. He remembered that Mr. Delaware, the master of his horse, had lately removed to that part of the house: and the fear came upon him lest his blind son, who frequently turned night into day in his love for the organ, and was uncertain in his movements between chapel and chamber, the direct way being that just described, should by evil chance appear at the very moment of the king's passing, and alarm him—for through the gallery Dr. Bayly must lead his majesty to reach my lord Privy-seal's chamber. The marquis, therefore, although reluctant to introduce another even to the externals of the plot, felt that the assistance of a second confidant was more than desirable, and turning the matter over, could think of no one whom he could trust so well, and who at the same time would, if seen, be so little liable to the sort of suspicion he dreaded, as Dorothy. He therefore sent for her, told her as much as he thought proper, gave her the key of his private passage to the gallery, leading across the top of the hall-door, the only direct communication from the southern side of the castle, and generally kept closed, and directed her to be in the gallery ten minutes before eleven, to lock the door at the top of the stair leading down into the hall, and take her stand in the window at the foot of the stair from the bell-tower, where the door was without a lock, and see that no one entered by order of the marquis for the king's repose, enjoining upon her that, whatever she saw or heard from any other quarter, she must keep perfectly still, nor let any one discover that she was there. With these instructions, his lordship, considerably relieved, dismissed her, and went to lie down upon his bed, and have a nap if he could. He had already given the chaplain the key of his chamber, the door of which he always locked, that he might enter and wake him when the appointed hour was at hand.

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As soon as he began to feel that eleven o'clock was drawing near, Dr. Bayly proceeded to reconnoitre. The marquis's plan, although he could think of none better, was not altogether satisfactory, and it was to his relief that he found nobody in the dining-room. When he entered the drawing-room, however, there, to his equal annoyance, he saw in the light of one expiring candle the dim figure of a lady; he could not offer *her* the keys of the wine-cellar! What was he to do? What could she be there for? He drew nearer, and, with a positive pang of relief, discovered that it was Dorothy. A word was enough between them. But the good doctor was just a little annoyed that a second should share in the secret of the great ones.

The next room was the antechamber to the marquis's bedroom: timorously on tiptoe he stepped through it, fearful of waking the two young gentlemen—for Scudamore's place had been easily supplied—who waited upon his lordship. Opening the inner door as softly as he could, he crept in, and found the marquis fast asleep. So slowly, so gently did he wake him, that his lordship insisted he had not slept at all; but when he told him that the time was come—

'What time?' he asked.

'For meeting the king,' replied the doctor.

'What king?' rejoined the marquis, in a kind of bewildered horror.

The more he came to himself, the more distressed he seemed, and the more unwilling to keep the appointment he had been so eager to make, so that at length even Dr. Bayly was tempted to doubt something evil in the 'design that carried with it such a conflict within the bosom of the actor.' It soon became evident, however, that it was but the dread of such possible consequences as I have already indicated that thus moved him.

'Fie, fie!' he said; 'I would to God I had let it alone.'

'My lord,' said the doctor, 'you know your own heart best. If there be nothing in your intentions but what is good and justifiable, you need not fear; if otherwise, it is never too late to repent.'

'Ah, doctor!' returned the marquis with troubled look, 'I thought I had been sure of one friend, and that you would never have harboured the least suspicion of me. God knows my heart: I have no other intention towards his majesty than to make him a glorious man here, and a glorified saint hereafter.'

'Then, my lord,' said Dr. Bayly, 'shake off these fears together with the drowsiness that begat them. Honi soit qui mal y pense.'

'Oh, but I am not of that order!' said the marquis; 'but I thank God I wear that motto about my heart, to as much purpose as they who wear it about their arms.'

‘He then,’ reports the doctor, ’began to be a little pleasant, and took a pipe of tobacco, and a little glass full of aqua mirabilis, and said, “Come now, let us go in the name of God,” crossing himself.’

My love for the marquis has led me to recount this curious story with greater minuteness than is necessary to the understanding of Dorothy’s part in what follows, but the worthy doctor’s account is so graphic that even for its own sake, had it been fitting, I would gladly have copied it word for word from the Certamen Religiosum.

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It is indeed a strange story—king and marquis, attended by a doctor of divinity, of the faith of the one, but the trusted friend of the other, meeting—at midnight, although in the house of the marquis—to discuss points of theology—both king and marquis in mortal terror of discovery.

Meantime Dorothy had done as she had been ordered, had felt her way through the darkness to the picture-gallery, had locked the door at the top of the one stair, and taken her stand in the recess at the foot of the other—in pitch darkness, close to the king's bedchamber, for the gallery was but thirteen feet in width, keeping watch over him! The darkness felt like awe around her.

The door of the chamber opened: it gave no sound, but the glimmer of the night-light shone out. By that she saw a figure enter the gallery. The door closed softly and slowly, and all was darkness again. No sound of movement across the floor followed: but she heard a deep sigh, as from a sorely burdened heart. Then, in an agonised whisper, as if wrung by torture from the depths of the spirit, came the words: 'Oh Stafford, thou art avenged! I left thee to thy fate, and God hath left me to mine. Thou didst go for me to the scaffold, but thou wilt not out of my chamber. O God, deliver me from blood-guiltiness.'

Dorothy stood in dismay, a mere vessel containing a tumult of emotions. The king re-entered his chamber, and closed the door. The same instant a light appeared at the further end of the gallery—a long way off, and Dr. Bayly came, like a Will o' the wisp, gliding from afar; till, softly walking up, he stopped within a yard or two of the king's door, and there stood, with his candle in his hand. His round face was pale that should have been red, and his small keen eyes shone in the candle light with mingled importance and anxiety. He saw Dorothy, but the only notice he took of her presence was to turn from her with his face towards the king's door, so that his shadow might shroud the recess where she stood.

A minute or so passed, and the king's door re-opened. He came out, said a few words in a whisper to his guide, and walked with him down the gallery, whispering as he went.

Dorothy hastened to her chamber, threw herself on the bed, and wept. The king was cast from the throne of her conscience, but taken into the hospital of her heart.

What followed between the king and the marquis belongs not to my tale. When, after a long talk, the chaplain had conducted the king to his chamber and returned to lord Worcester, he found him in the dark upon his knees.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Gifts of healing.

Soon after the king's departure, the marquis received from him a letter containing another addressed 'To our Attorney or Solicitor-General for the time being,' in which he commanded the preparation of a bill for his majesty's signature, creating the marquis of Worcester duke of Somerset. The enclosing letter required, however, that it should—'be kept private, until I shall esteem the time convenient.' In the next year we have causes enough for the fact that the king's pleasure never reached any attorney or solicitor-general for the time being.

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About a month after the battle of Naseby, and while yet the king was going and coming as regards Raglan, the wounded Rowland, long before he was fit to be moved from the farm-house where his servant had found him shelter, was brought home to the castle. Shafto, faithful as hare-brained, had come upon him almost accidentally, after long search, and just in time to save his life. Mistress Watson received him with tears, and had him carried to the same turret-chamber whence Richard had escaped, in order that she might be nigh him. The poor fellow was but a shadow of his former self, and looked more likely to vanish than to die in the ordinary way. Hence he required constant attention—which was so far from lacking that the danger, both physical and spiritual, seemed rather to lie in over-service. Hitherto, of the family, it had been the marquis chiefly that spoiled him; but now that he was so sorely wounded for the king, and lay at death's door, all the ladies of the castle were admiring, pitiful, tender, ministrant, paying him such attentions as nobody could be trusted to bear uninjured except a doll or a baby. One might have been tempted to say that they sought his physical welfare at the risk of his moral ruin. But there is that in sickness which leads men back to a kind of babyhood, and while it lasts there is comparatively little danger. It is with returning health that the peril comes. Then self and self-fancied worth awake, and find themselves again, and the risk is then great indeed that all the ministrations of love be taken for homage at the altar of importance. How often has not a mistress found that after nursing a servant through an illness, perhaps an old servant even, she has had to part with her for unendurable arrogance and insubordination? But present sickness is a wonderful antidote to vanity, and nourisher of the gentle primeval simplicities of human nature. So long as a man feels himself a poor creature, not only physically unable, but without the spirit to desire to act, kindness will move gratitude, and not vanity. In Rowland's case happily it lasted until something better was able to get up its head a little. But no one can predict what the first result of suffering will be, not knowing what seeds lie nearest the surface. Rowland's self-satisfaction had been a hard pan beneath which lay thousands of germinal possibilities invaluable; and now the result of its tearing up remained to be seen. If in such case Truth's never-ceasing pull at the heart begins to be felt, allowed, considered; if conscience begin, like a thing weary with very sleep, to rouse itself in motions of pain from the stiffness of its repose, then is there hope of the best.

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He had lost much blood, having lain a long time, as I say, in the fallow-field before Shafto found him. Oft-recurring fever, extreme depression, and intermittent and doubtful progress life-wards followed. Through all the commotion of the king's visits, the coming and going, the clang of hoofs and clanking of armour, the heaving of hearts and clamour of tongues, he lay lapped in ignorance and ministration, hidden from the world and deaf to the gnarring of its wheels, prisoned in a twilight dungeon, to which Richard's sword had been the key. The world went grinding on and on, much the same, without him whom it had forgotten; but the over-world remembered him, and now and then looked in at a window: all dungeons have one window which no gaoler and no tyrant can build up.

The marquis went often to see him, full of pity for the gay youth thus brought low; but he would lie pale and listless, now and then turning his eyes, worn large with the wasting of his face, upon him, but looking as if he only half heard him. His master grew sad about him. The next time his majesty came, he asked him if he remembered the youth, telling him how he had lain wounded ever since the battle at Naseby. The king remembered him well enough, but had never missed him. The marquis then told him how anxious he was about him, for that nothing woke him from the weary heartlessness into which he had fallen.

'I will pay him a visit,' said the king.

'Sir, it is what I would have requested, had I not feared to pain your majesty,' returned the marquis.

'I will go at once,' said the king.

When Rowland saw him his face flushed, the tears rose in his eyes, he kissed the hand the king held out to him, and said feebly:—

'Pardon, sire: if I had rode better, the battle might have been yours. I reached not the prince.'

'It is the will of God,' said the king, remembering for the first time that he had sent him to Rupert. 'Thou didst thy best, and man can do no more.'

'Nay, sire, but an' I had ridden honestly,' returned Rowland; '—I mean had my mare been honestly come by, then had I done your majesty's message.'

'How is that?' asked the king.

'Ha!' said the marquis; 'then it was Heywood met thee, and would have his own again? Told I not thee so? Ah, that mare, Rowland! that mare!'

But Rowland had to summon all his strength to keep from fainting, for the blood had fled again to his heart, and could not reply.

‘Thou didst thy duty like a brave knight and true, I doubt not,’ said the king, kindly wishful to comfort him; ’and that my word may be a true one,’ he added, drawing his sword and laying it across the youth’s chest, ’although I cannot tell thee to rise and walk, I tell thee, when thou dost arise, to rise up sir Rowland Scudamore.’

The blood rushed to sir Rowland’s face, but fled again as fast.

‘I deserve no such honour, sire,’ he murmured.

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But the marquis struck his hands together with pleasure, and cried,

'There, my boy! There is a king to serve! Sir Rowland Scudamore! There is for thee! And thy wife will be *my lady*! Think on that!'

Rowland did think on it, but bitterly. He summoned strength to thank his majesty, but failed to find anything courtier-like to add to the bare thanks. When his visitors left him, he sighed sorely and said to himself,

'Honour without desert! But for the roundhead's taunts, I might have run to Rupert and saved the day.'

The next morning the marquis went again to see him.

'How fares sir Rowland?' he said.

'My lord,' returned Scudamore, in beseeching tone, 'break not my heart with honour unmerited.'

'How! Darest thou, boy, set thy judgment against the king's?' cried the marquis. 'Sir Rowland thou art, and *sir Rowland* will the archangel cry when he calls thee from thy last sleep.'

'To my endless disgrace,' added Scudamore.

'What! hast not done thy duty?'

'I tried, but I failed, my lord.'

'The best as often fail as the worst,' rejoined his lordship.

'I mean not merely that I failed of the end. That, alas! I did. But I mean that it was by my own fault that I failed,' said Rowland.

Then he told the marquis all the story of his encounter with Richard, ending with the words,

'And now, my lord, I care no more for life.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' exclaimed the marquis. 'Thinkest though the roundhead would have let thee run to Rupert? It was not to that end he spared thy life. Thy only chance was to fight him.'

'Does your lordship think so indeed?' asked Rowland, with a glimmer of eagerness.

'On my soul I do. Thou art weak-headed from thy sickness and weariness.'

‘You comfort me, my lord—a little. But the stolen mare, my lord?—’

’Ah! there indeed I can say nothing. That was not well done, and evil came thereof. But comfort thyself that the evil is come and gone; and think not that such chances are left to determine great events. Naseby fight had been lost, spite of a hundred messages to Rupert. Not care for life, boy! Leave that to old men like me. Thou must care for it, for thou hast many years before thee.’

‘But nothing to fill them with, my lord.’

’What meanest thou there, Rowland? The king’s cause will yet prosper, and—’

’Pardon me, my lord; I spoke not of the king’s majesty or his affairs. Hardly do I care even for them. It is a nameless weight, or rather emptiness, that oppresseth me. Wherefore is there such a world? I ask, and why are men born thereinto? Why should I live on and labour on therein? Is it not all vanity and vexation of spirit? I would the roundhead had but struck a little deeper, and reached my heart.’

’I admire at thee, Rowland. Truly my gout causeth me so great grief that I have much ado to keep my unruly member within bounds, but I never yet was aweary of my life, and scarce know what I should say to thee.’

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A pause followed. The marquis did not think what a huge difference there is between having too much blood in the feet and too little in the brain.

'I pray, sir, can you tell me if mistress Dorothy knoweth it was before Heywood I fell?' said Rowland at length.

'I know not; but methinks had she known, I should sooner have heard the thing myself. Who indeed should tell her, for Shafto knew it not? And why should she conceal it?'

'I cannot tell, my lord: she is not like other ladies.'

'She is like all good ladies in this, that she speaketh the truth: why then not ask her?'

'I have had no opportunity, my lord. I have not seen her since I left to join the army.'

'Tut, tut!' said his lordship, and frowned a little. 'I thought not the damsel had been over nice. She might well have favoured a wounded knight with a visit.'

'She is not to blame. It is my own fault,' sighed Rowland.

The marquis looked at him for a moment pitifully, but made no answer, and presently took his leave.

He went straight to Dorothy, and expostulated with her. She answered him no farther or otherwise than was simply duteous, but went at once to see Scudamore.

Mistress Watson was in the room when she entered, but left it immediately: she had never been in spirit reconciled to Dorothy: their relation had in it too much of latent rebuke for her. So Dorothy found herself alone with her cousin.

He was but the ghost of the gay, self-satisfied, good-natured, jolly Rowland. Pale and thin, with drawn face and great eyes, he held out a wasted hand to Dorothy, and looked at her, not pitifully, but despairingly. He was one of those from whom take health and animal spirits, and they feel to themselves as if they had nothing. Nor have they in themselves anything. With those he could have borne what are called hardships fairly well; those gone, his soul sat aghast in an empty house.

'My poor cousin!' said Dorothy, touched with profound compassion at sight of his lost look. But he only gazed at her, and said nothing. She took the hand he did not offer, and held it kindly in hers. He burst into tears, and she gently laid it again on the coverlid.

'I know you despise me, Dorothy,' he sobbed, 'and you are right: I despise myself.'

‘You have been a good soldier to the king, Rowland,’ said Dorothy, ‘and he has acknowledged it fitly.’

’I care nothing for king or kingdom, Dorothy. Nothing is worth caring for. Do not mistake me. I am not going to talk presumptuously. I love not thee now, Dorothy. I never did love thee, and thou dost right to despise me, for I am unworthy. I would I were dead. Even the king’s majesty hath been no whit the better for me, but rather the worse; for another man,—one, I mean, who was not mounted on a stolen mare—would have performed his hest unhindered of foregone fault.’

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’Thou didst not think thou wast doing wrong when thou stolest the mare,’ said Dorothy, seeking to comfort him.

’How know’st thou that, Dorothy? There was a spot in my heart that felt ashamed all the time.’

’He that is sorry is already pardoned, I think, cousin. Then what thou hast done evil is gone and forgotten.’

’Nay, Dorothy. But if it were forgotten, yet would it *be*. If I forgot it myself, yet would I not cease to be the man who had done it. And thou knowest, Dorothy, in how many things I have been false, so false that I counted myself honourable all the time. Tell me wherefore should I not kill myself, and rid the world of me; what withholdeth?’

‘That thou art of consequence to him that made thee.’

’How can that be, when I know myself worthless? Will he be mistaken in me?’

’No, truly. But he may have regard to that thou shalt yet be. For surely he sent thee here to do some fitting work for him.’

More talk followed, but Dorothy did not seem to herself to find the right thing to say, and retired to the top of the Tower with a sense of failure, and oppressed with helpless compassion for the poor youth.

The doctors of divinity and of medicine differed concerning the cause of his sad condition. The doctor of medicine said it arose entirely from a check in the circulation of the animal spirits; the doctor of divinity thought, but did not say, only hinted, that it came of a troubled conscience, and that he would have been well long ago but for certain sins, known only to himself, that bore heavy upon his life. This gave the marquis a good ground of argument for confession, the weight of which argument was by the divine felt and acknowledged. But both doctors were right, and both were wrong. Could his health have been at once restored, a great reaction would have ensued, his interest in life would have reawaked, and most probably he would have become indifferent to that which now oppressed him; but on the slightest weariness or disappointment, the same overpowering sense of desolation would have returned, and indeed at times amidst the warmest glow of health and keenest consciousness of pleasure. On the other hand, if by any argument addressed to his moral or religious nature his mind could have been a little eased, his physical nature would most likely have at once responded in improvement; but he had no individual actions of such heavy guilt as the divine presumed to repent of, nor could any amount or degree of sorrow for the past have sufficed to restore him to peace and health. It was a poet of the time who wrote,

’The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light, through chinks that time has made:’

sickness had done the same thing as time with Rowland, and he saw the misery of his hovel. The cure was a deeper and harder matter than Dr. Bayly yet understood, or than probably Rowland himself would for years attain to, while yet the least glimmer of its approach would be enough to initiate physical recovery.

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CHAPTER XLVII.

The poet-physician.

Time passed, but with little change in the condition of the patient. Winter began to draw on, and both doctors feared a more rapid decline.

Early in the month of November, Dorothy received a letter from Mr. Herbert, informing her that her cousin, Henry Vaughan, one of his late twin pupils, would, on his way from Oxford, be passing near Raglan, and that he had desired him to call upon her. Willing enough to see her relative, she thought little more of the matter, until at length the day was at hand, when she found herself looking for his arrival with some curiosity as to what sort of person he might prove of whom she had heard so often from his master.

When at length he was ushered into lady Glamorgan's parlour, where her mistress had desired her to receive him, both her ladyship and Dorothy were at once prejudiced in his favour. They saw a rather tall young man of five or six and twenty, with a small head, a clear grey eye, and a sober yet changeful countenance. His carriage was dignified yet graceful—self-restraint and no other was evident therein; a certain sadness brooded like a thin mist above his eyes, but his smile now and then broke out like the sun through a grey cloud. Dorothy did not know that he was just getting over the end of a love-story, or that he had a book of verses just printed, and had already begun to repent it.

After the usual greetings, and when Dorothy had heard the last news of Mr. Herbert,—-for Mr. Vaughan had made several journeys of late between Brecknock and Oxford, taking Llangattock Rectory in his way, and could tell her much she did not know concerning her friend,—lady Glamorgan, who was not sorry to see her interested in a young man whose royalist predilections were plain and strong, proposed that Dorothy should take him over the castle.

She led him first to the top of the tower, show him the reservoir and the prospect; but there they fell into such a talk as revealed to Dorothy that here was a man who was her master in everything towards which, especially since her mother's death and her following troubles, she had most aspired, and a great hope arose in her heart for her cousin Scudamore. For in this talk it had come out that Mr. Vaughan had studied medicine, and was now on his way to settle for practice at Brecknock. As soon as Dorothy learned this, she entreated her cousin Vaughan to go and visit her cousin Scudamore. He consented, and Dorothy, scarcely allowing him to pause even under the admirable roof of the great hall as they passed through, led him straight to the turret-chamber, where the sick man was.

They found him sitting by the fire, folded in blankets, listless and sad.

When Dorothy had told him whom she had brought to see him, she would have left them, but Rowland turned on her such beseeching eyes, that she remained, by no means unwillingly, and seated herself to hear what this wonderful young phyisican would say.

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’It is very irksome to be thus prisoned in your chamber, sir Rowland,’ he said.

‘No,’ answered Scudamore, ‘or yes: I care not.’

‘Have you no books about you?’ asked Mr. Vaughan, glancing round the room.

‘Books!’ repeated Scudamore, with a wan contemptuous smile.

‘You do not then love books?’

’Wherefore should I love books? What can books do for me? I love nothing. I long only to die.’

‘And go——?’ suggested, rather than asked, Mr. Vaughan.

’I care not whither—anywhere away from here—if indeed I go anywhere. But I care not.’

’That is hardly what you mean, sir Rowland, I think. Will you allow me to interpret you? Have you not the notion that if you were hence you would leave behind you a certain troublesome attendant who is scarce worth his wages?’

Scudamore looked at him but did not reply; and Mr. Vaughan went on.

’I know well what aileth you, for I am myself but now recovering from a similar sickness, brought upon me by the haunting of the same evil one who torments you.’

‘You think, then, that I am possessed?’ said Rowland, with a faint smile and a glance at Dorothy.

’That verily thou art, and grievously tormented. Shall I tell thee who hath possessed thee?—for the demon hath a name that is known amongst men, though it frighteneth few, and draweth many, alas! His name is Self, and he is the shadow of thy own self. First he made thee love him, which was evil, and now he hath made thee hate him, which is evil also. But if he be cast out and never more enter into thy heart, but remain as a servant in thy hall, then wilt thou recover from this sickness, and be whole and sound, and shall find the varlet serviceable.’

’Art thou not an exorciser, then, Mr. Vaughan, as well as a discerner of spirits? I would thou couldst drive the said demon out of me, for truly I love him not.’

’Through all thy hate thou lovest him more than thou knowest. Thou seest him vile, but instead of casting him out, thou mournest over him with foolish tears. And yet thou dreamest that by dying thou wouldst be rid of him. No, it is back to thy childhood thou must go to be free.’

’That were a strange way to go, sir. I know it not. There seems to be a purpose in what you say, Mr. Vaughan, but you take me not with you. How can I rid me of myself, so long as I am Rowland Scudamore?’

’There is a way, sir Rowland—and but one way. Human words at least, however it may be with some high heavenly language, can never say the best things but by a kind of stumbling, wherein one contradiction keepeth another from falling. No man, as thou sayest, truly, can rid him of himself and live, for that involveth an impossibility. But he can rid himself of that: haunting shadow of his own self, which he hath pampered and fed upon shadowy lies, until it is bloated and black with pride and folly. When that demon king of shades is

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once cast out, and the man's house is possessed of God instead, then first he findeth his true substantial self, which is the servant, nay, the child of God. To rid thee of thyself thou must offer it again to him that made it. Be thou empty that he may fill thee. I never understood this until these latter days. Let me impart to thee certain verses I found but yesterday, for they will tell thee better what I mean. Thou knowest the sacred volume of the blessed George Herbert?'

'I never heard of him or it,' said Scudamore.

'It is no matter as now: these verses are not of his. Prithee, hearken:

'I carry with, me, Lord, a foolish fool,
That still his cap upon my head would place.
I dare not slay him, he will not to school,
And still he shakes his bauble in my face.

'I seize him, Lord, and bring him to thy door;
Bound on thine altar-threshold him I lay.
He weepeth; did I heed, he would implore;
And still he cries *alack* and *well*-A-*day*!

'If thou wouldst take him in and make him wise,
I think he might be taught to serve thee well;
If not, slay him, nor heed his foolish cries,
He's but a fool that mocks and rings a bell.'

Something in the lines appeared to strike Scudamore.

'I thank you, sir,' he said. 'Might I put you to the trouble, I would request that you would write out the verses for me, that I may study their meaning at my leisure.'

Mr. Vaughan promised, and, after a little more conversation, took his leave.

Now, whether it was from anything he had said in particular, or that Scudamore had felt the general influence of the man, Dorothy could not tell, but from that visit she believed Rowland began to think more and to brood less. By and by he began to start questions of right and wrong, suppose cases, and ask Dorothy what she would do in such and such circumstances. With many cloudy relapses there was a suspicion of dawn, although a rainy one most likely, on his far horizon.

'Dost thou really believe, Dorothy,' he asked one day, 'that a man ever did love his enemy? Didst thou ever know one who did?'

‘I cannot say I ever did,’ returned Dorothy. ’I have however seen few that were enemies. But I am sure that had it not been possible, we should never have been commanded thereto.’

’The last time Dr. Bayly came to see me he read those words, and I thought within myself all the time of the only enemy I had, and tried to forgive him, but could not.’

‘Had he then wronged thee so deeply?’

’I know not, indeed, what women call wronged—least of all what thou, who art not like other women, wouldst judge; but this thing seems to me strange—that when I look on thee, Dorothy, one moment it seems as if for thy sake I could forgive him anything—-except that he slew me not outright, and the next that never can I forgive him even that wherein he never did me any wrong.’

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’What! hatest thou then him that struck thee down in fair fight? Sure thou art of meaner soul than I judged thee. What man in battle-field hates his enemy, or thinks it less than enough to do his endeavour to slay him?’

’Know’st thou whom thou wouldst have me forgive? He who struck me down was thy friend, Richard Heywood.’

‘Then he hath his mare again?’ cried Dorothy, eagerly.

Rowland’s face fell, and she knew that she had spoken heartlessly—knew also that, for all his protestations, Rowland yet cherished the love she had so plainly refused. But the same moment she knew something more.

For, by the side of Rowland, in her mind’s eye, stood Henry Vaughan, as wise as Rowland was foolish, as accomplished and learned as Rowland was narrow and ignorant; but between them stood Richard, and she knew a something in her which was neither tenderness nor reverence, and yet included both. She rose in some confusion, and left the chamber.

This good came of it, that from that moment Scudamore was satisfied she loved Heywood, and, with much mortification, tried to accept his position. Slowly his health began to return, and slowly the deeper life that was at length to become his began to inform him.

Heartless and poverty-stricken as he had hitherto shown himself, the good in him was not so deeply buried under refuse as in many a better-seeming man. Sickness had awakened in him a sense of requirement—of need also, and loneliness, and dissatisfaction. He grew ashamed of himself and conscious of defilement. Something new began to rise above and condemn the old. There are who would say that the change was merely the mental condition resulting from and corresponding to physical weakness; that repentance, and the vision of the better which maketh shame, is but a mood, sickly as are the brain and nerves which generate it; but he who undergoes the experience believes he knows better, and denies neither the wild beasts nor the stars, because they roar and shine through the dark.

Mr. Vaughan came to see him again and again, and with the concurrence of Dr. Spott, prescribed for him. As the spring approached he grew able to leave his room. The ladies of the family had him to their parlours to pet and feed, but he was not now so easily to be injured by kindness as when he believed in his own merits.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Honourable disgrace.

January of 1646, according to the division of the year, arrived, and with it the heaviest cloud that had yet overshadowed Raglan.

One day, about the middle of the month. Dorothy, entering lady Glamorgan's parlour, found it deserted. A moan came to her ears from the adjoining chamber, and there she found her mistress on her face on the bed.

'Madam,' said Dorothy in terror, 'what is it? Let me be with you. May I not know it?'

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‘My lord is in prison,’ gasped lady Glamorgan, and bursting into fresh tears, she sobbed and moaned.

’Has my lord been taken in the field, madam, or by cunning of his enemies?’

‘Would to God it were either,’ sighed lady Glamorgan. ’Then were it a small thing to bear.’

‘What can it be, madam? You terrify me,’ said Dorothy.

No words of reply, only a fresh outburst of agonised—could it also be angry?—weeping followed.

’Since you will tell me nothing, madam, I must take comfort that of myself I know one thing.’

‘Prithee, what knowest thou?’ asked the countess, but as if careless of being answered, so listless was her tone, so nearly inarticulate her words.

‘That is but what bringeth him fresh honour, my lady,’ answered Dorothy.

The countess started up, threw her arms about her, drew her down on the bed, kissed her, and held her fast, sobbing worse than ever.

‘Madam! madam!’ murmured Dorothy from her bosom.

‘I thank thee, Dorothy,’ she sighed out at length: ’for thy words and thy thoughts have ever been of a piece.’

’Sure, my lady, no one did ever yet dare think otherwise of my lord,’ returned Dorothy, amazed.

’But many will now, Dorothy. My God! they will have it that he is a traitor. Wouldst thou believe it, child—he is a prisoner in the castle of Dublin!’

‘But is not Dublin in the hands of the king, my lady?’

’Ay! there lies the sting of it! What treacherous friends are these heretics! But how should they be anything else? Having denied their Saviour they may well malign their better brother! My lord marquis of Ormond says frightful things of him.’

‘One thing more I know, my lady,’ said Dorothy, ’—that as long as his wife believes him the true man he is, he will laugh to scorn all that false lips may utter against him.’

’Thou art a good girl, Dorothy, but thou knowest little of an evil world. It is one thing to know thyself innocent, and another to carry thy head high.’

’But, madam, even the guilty do that; wherefore not the innocent then?’

’Because, my child, they *are* innocent, and innocence so hateth the very shadow of guilt that it cannot brook the wearing it. My lord is grievously abused, Dorothy—I say not by whom.’

‘By whom should it be but his enemies, madam?’

’Not certainly by those who are to him friends, but yet, alas! by those to whom he is the truest of friends.’

’Is my lord of Ormond then false? Is he jealous of my lord Glamorgan? Hath he falsely accused him? I would I understood all, madam.’

’I would I understood all myself, child. Certain papers have been found bearing upon my lord’s business in Ireland, all ears are filled with rumours of forgery and treason, coupled with the name of my lord, and he is a prisoner in Dublin castle.’

She forced the sentence from her, as if repeating a hated lesson, then gave a cry, almost a scream of agony.

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‘Weep not, madam,’ said Dorothy, in the very foolishness of sympathetic expostulation.

‘What better cause could I have out of hell!’ returned the countess, angrily.

‘That it were no lie, madam.’

‘It is true, I tell thee.’

‘That my lord is a traitor, madam?’

Lady Glamorgan dashed her from her, and glared at her like a tigress. An evil word was on her lips, but her better angel spoke, and ere Dorothy could recover herself, she had listened and understood.

‘God forbid!’ she said, struggling to be calm. ’But it is true that he is in prison.’

’Then give God thanks, madam, who hath forbidden the one and allowed the other, said Dorothy; and finding her own composure on the point of yielding, she courtesied and left the room. It was a breach of etiquette without leave asked and given, but the face of the countess was again on her pillow, and she did not heed.

For some time things went on as in an evil dream. The marquis was in angry mood, with no gout to lay it upon. The gloom spread over the castle, and awoke all manner of conjecture and report. Soon, after a fashion, the facts were known to everybody, and the gloom deepened. No further enlightenment reached Dorothy. At length one evening, her mistress having sent for her, she found her much excited, with a letter in her hand.

‘Come here, Dorothy: see what I have!’ she cried, holding out the letter with a gesture of triumph, and weeping and laughing alternately.

‘Madam, it must be something precious indeed,’ said Dorothy, ’for I have not heard your ladyship laugh for a weary while. May I not rejoice with you, madam?’

’You shall, my good girl: hearken: I will read:—’My dear Heart,’—Who is it from, think’st thou, Dorothy? Canst guess?—’My dear Heart, I hope these will prevent any news shall come unto you of me since my commitment to the Castle of Dublin, to which I assure thee I went as cheerfully and as willingly as they could wish, whosoever they were by whose means it was procured; and should as unwillingly go forth, were the gates both of the Castle and Town open unto me, until I were cleared: as they are willing to make me unserviceable to the king, and lay me aside, who have procured for me this restraint; when I consider thee a Woman, as I think I know you are, I fear lest you should be apprehensive. But when I reflect that you are of the House of Thomond, and that you were once pleased to say these words unto me, That I should never, in tenderness of you, desist from doing what in honour I was obliged to do, I grow confident, that in this

you will now show your magnanimity, and by it the greatest testimony of affection that you can possibly afford me; and am also confident, that you know me so well, that I need not tell you how clear I am, and void of fear, the only effect of a good conscience; and that I am guilty of nothing that may testify one thought of disloyalty to his Majesty, or of what may stain the honour of the family I come of, or set a brand upon my future posterity.'

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The countess paused, and looked a general illumination at Dorothy.

‘I told you so, madam,’ returned Dorothy, rather stupidly perhaps.

‘Little fool!’ rejoined the countess, half-angered: ’dost suppose the wife of a man like my Ned needs to be told such things by a green goose like thee? Thou wouldst have had me content that the man was honest—me, who had forgotten the word in his tenfold more than honesty! Bah, child! thou knowest not the love of a woman. I could weep salt tears over a hair pulled from his noble head. And thou to talk of *telling me so*, hussy! Marry, forsooth!’

And taking Dorothy to her bosom, she wept like a relenting storm.

One sentence more she read ere she hurried with the letter to her father-in-law. The sentence was this:

’So I pray let not any of my friends that’s there, believe anything, until ye have the perfect relation of it from myself.’

The pleasure of receiving news from his son did but little, however, to disperse the cloud that hung about the marquis. I do not know whether, or how far, he had been advised of the provision made for the king’s clearness by the anticipated self-sacrifice of Glamorgan, but I doubt if a full knowledge thereof gives any ground for disagreement with the judgment of the marquis, which seems, pretty plainly, to have been, that the king’s behaviour in the matter was neither that of a Christian nor a gentleman. As in the case of Strafford, he had accepted the offered sacrifice, and, in view of possible chances, had in Glamorgan’s commission pretermitted the usual authoritative formalities, thus keeping it in his power, with Glamorgan’s connivance, it must be confessed, but at Glamorgan’s expense, to repudiate his agency. This he had now done in a message to the parliament, and this the marquis knew.

His majesty had also written to lord Ormond as follows: ’And albeit I have too just cause, for the clearing of my honour, to prosecute Glamorgan in a legal way, yet I will have you suspend the execution,’ &c. At the same time his secretary wrote thus to Ormond and the council: ‘And since the warrant is not’ ’sealed with the signet,’ &c., &c., ’your lordships cannot but judge it to be at least surreptitiously gotten, if not worse; for his majesty saith he remembers it not;’ and thus again privately to Ormond: ’The king hath commanded me to advertise your lordship that the patent for making the said lord Herbert of Raglan earl of Glamorgan is not passed the great seal here, so as he is no peer of this kingdom; notwithstanding he styles himself, and hath treated with the rebels in Ireland, by the name of earl of Glamorgan, which is as vainly taken upon him as his pretended warrant (if any such be) was surreptitiously gotten.’ The title had, meanwhile, been used by the king himself in many communications with the earl.

These letters never came, I presume, to the marquis's knowledge, but they go far to show that his feeling, even were it a little embittered by the memory of their midnight conference and his hopes therefrom, went no farther than the conduct of his majesty justified. It was no wonder that the straightforward old man, walking erect to ruin for his king, should fret and fume, yea, yield to downright wrath and enforced contempt.

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Of the king's behaviour in the matter, Dorothy, however, knew nothing yet.

One day towards the end of February, a messenger from the king arrived at Raglan, on his way to Ireland to lord Ormond. He had found the roads so beset—for things were by this time, whether from the successes of the parliament only, or from the negligence of disappointment on the part of lord Worcester as well, much altered in Wales and on its borders—that he had been compelled to leave his despatches in hiding, and had reached the castle only with great difficulty and after many adventures. His chief object in making his way thither was to beg of lord Charles a convoy to secure his despatches and protect him on his farther journey. But lord Charles received him by no means cordially, for the whole heart of Raglan was sore. He brought him, however, to his father, who, although indisposed and confined to his chamber, consented to see him. When Mr. Boteler was admitted, lady Glamorgan was in the chamber, and there remained.

Probably the respect to the king's messenger which had influenced the marquis to receive him, would have gone further and modified the expression of his feelings a little when he saw him, but that, like many more men, his lordship, although fairly master of his temper-horses when in health, was apt to let them run away with him upon occasion of even slighter illness than would serve for an excuse.

'Hast thou in thy despatches any letters from his majesty to my son Glamorgan, master Boteler?' he inquired, frowning unconsciously.

'Not that I know of, my lord,' answered Mr. Boteler, 'but there may be such with the lord marquis of Ormond's.'

He then proceeded to give a friendly message from the king concerning the earl. But at this the 'smouldering fire out-brake' from the bosom of the injured father and subject.

'It is the grief of my heart,' cried his lordship, wrath predominating over the regret which was yet plainly enough to be seen in his face and heard in his tone—'It is the grief of my heart that I am enforced to say that the king is wavering and fickle. To be the more his friend, it too plainly appeareth, is but to be the more handled as his enemy.'

'Say not so, my lord,' returned Mr. Boteler. 'His gracious majesty looketh not for such unfriendly judgment from your lips. Have I not brought your lordship a most gracious and comfortable message from him concerning my lord Glamorgan, with his royal thanks for your former loyal expressions?'

'Mr. Boteler, thou knowest nought of the matter. That thou has brought me a budget of fine words, I go not to deny. But words may be but schismatics; deeds alone are certainly of the true faith. Verily the king's majesty setteth his words in the forefront of the battle, but his deeds lag in the rear, and let his words be taken prisoners. When his

majesty was last here, I lent him a book to read in his chamber, the beginning of which I know he read, but if he had ended, it would have showed him what it was to be a fickle prince.'

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’My lord! my lord! surely your lordship knoweth better of his majesty.’

’To know better may be to know worse, master Boteler. Was it not enough to suffer my lord Glamorgan to be unjustly imprisoned by my lord marquis of Ormond for what he had His majesty’s authority for, but that he must in print protest against his proceedings and his own allowance, and not yet recall it? But I will pray for him, and that he may be more constant to his friends, and as soon as my other employments will give leave, you shall have a convoy to fetch securely your despatches.’

Herewith Mr. Boteler was dismissed, lord Charles accompanying him from the room.

‘False as ice!’ muttered the marquis to himself, left as he supposed alone. ’My boy, thou hast built on a quicksand, and thy house goeth down to the deep. I am wroth with myself that ever I dreamed of moving such a bag of chaff to return to the bosom of his honourable mother.’

‘My lord,’ said lady Glamorgan from behind the bed-curtains, ’have you forgotten that I and my long ears are here?’

’Ha! art thou indeed there, my mad Irishwoman! I had verily forgotten thee. But is not this king of ours as the Minotaur, dwelling in the labyrinths of deceit, and devouring the noblest in the land? There was his own Strafford, next his foolish Laud, and now comes my son, worth a host of such!’

’In his letter, my lord of Glamorgan complaineth not of his majesty’s usage,’ said the countess.

’My lord of Glamorgan is patient as Grisel. He would pass through the pains of purgatory with never a grumble. But purgatory is for none such as he. In good sooth I am made of different stuff. My soul doth loath deceit, and worse in a king than a clown. What king is he that will lie for a kingdom!’

Day after day passed, and nothing was done to speed the messenger, who grew more and more anxious to procure his despatches and be gone; but lord Worcester, through the king’s behaviour to his honourable and self-forgetting son, with whom he had never had a difference except on the point of his blind devotion to his majesty’s affairs, had so lost faith in the king himself that he had no heart for his business. It seems also that for his son’s sake he wished to delay Mr. Boteler, in order that a messenger of his own might reach Glamorgan before Ormond should receive the king’s despatches. For a whole fortnight therefore no further steps were taken, and Boteler, wearied out, bethought him of applying to the countess to see whether she would not use her influence in his behalf. I am thus particular about Boteler’s affair, because through it Dorothy came to know what the king’s behaviour had been, and what the marquis thought of it; she was in the room when Mr. Boteler waited on her mistress.

‘May it please your ladyship,’ he said, ’I have sought speech of you that I might beg your aid for the king’s business, remembering you of the hearty affection my master the king beareth towards your lord and all his house.’

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’Indeed you do well to remember me of that, master Boteler, for it goeth so hard with my memory in these troubled times that I had nigh forgotten it,’ said the countess dryly.

’I most certainly know, my lady, that his majesty hath gracious intentions towards your lord.’

‘Intention is but an addled egg,’ said the countess. ’Give me deeds, if I may choose.’

’Alas! the king hath but little in his power, and the less that his business is thus kept waiting.’

’Your haste is more than your matter, master Boteler. Believe me, whatsoever you consider of it, your going so hurriedly is of no great account, for to my knowledge there are others gone already with duplicates of the business.’

‘Madam, you astonish me.’

’I speak not without book. My own cousin, William Winter, is one, and he is my husband’s friend, and hath no relation to my lord marquis of Ormond,’ said lady Glamorgan significantly.

’My lord, madam, is your lord’s very good friend, and I am very much his servant; but if his majesty’s business be done, I care not by whose hand it is. But I thank your honour, for now I know wherefore I am stayed here.’

With these words Boteler withdrew—and withdraws from my story, for his further proceedings are in respect of it of no consequence.

When he was gone, lady Glamorgan, turning a flushed face, and encountering Dorothy’s pale one, gave a hard laugh, and said:

’Why, child! thou lookest like a ghost! Was afeard of the man in my presence?’

’No, madam; but it seemed to me marvellous that his majesty’s messenger should receive such words from my mistress, and in my lord of Worcester’s house.’

‘I’ faith, marvellous it is, Dorothy, that there should be such good cause so to use him!’ returned lady Glamorgan, tears of vexation rising as she spoke. ‘But an’ thou think I used the man roughly, thou shouldst have heard my father speak to him his mind of the king his master.’

‘Hath the king then shown himself unkingly, madam?’ said Dorothy aghast.

Whereupon lady Glamorgan told her all she knew, and all she could remember of what she had heard the marquis say to Boteler.

‘Trust me, child,’ she added, ’my lord Worcester, no less than I am, is cut to the heart by this behaviour of the king’s. That my husband, silly angel, should say nothing, is but like him. He would bear and bear till all was borne.’

‘But,’ said Dorothy, ‘the king is still the king.’

‘Let him be the king then,’ returned her mistress. ’Let him look to his kingdom. Why should I give him my husband to do it for him and be disowned therein? I thank heaven I can do without a king, but I can’t do without my Ned, and there he lies in prison for him who cons him no thanks! Not that I would overmuch heed the prison if the king would but share the blame with him; but for the king to deny him—to say that he did all of his

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own motion and without authority!—why, child, I saw the commission with my own eyes, nor count myself under any farther obligation to hold my peace concerning it! I know my husband will bear all things, even disgrace itself, undeserved, for the king's sake: he is the loveliest of martyrs; but that is no reason why I should bear it. The king hath no heart and no conscience. No, I will not say that; but I will say that he hath little heart and less conscience. My good husband's fair name is gone—blasted by the king, who raiseth the mist of Glamorgan's dishonour that he may hide himself safe behind it. I tell thee, Dorothy Vaughan, I should not have grudged his majesty my lord's life, an' he had been but a right kingly king. I should have wept enough and complained too much, in womanish fashion, doubtless; but I tell thee earl Thomond's daughter would not have grudged it. But my lord's truth and honour are dear to him, and the good report of them is dear to me. I swear I can ill brook carrying the title he hath given me. It is my husband's and not mine, else would I fling it in his face who thus wrongs my Herbert.'

This explosion from the heart of the wild Irishwoman sounded dreadful in the ears of the king-worshipper. But he whom she thus accused the king of wronging, had been scarcely less revered of her, even while the idol with the feet of clay yet stood, and had certainly been loved greatly more, than the king himself. Hence, notwithstanding her struggle to keep her heart to its allegiance, such a rapid change took place in her feelings, that ere long she began to confess to herself that if the puritans could have known what the king was, their conduct would not have been so unintelligible—not that she thought they had an atom of right on their side, or in the least feared she might ever be brought to think in the matter as they did; she confessed only that she could then have understood them.

The whole aspect and atmosphere of Raglan continued changed. The marquis was still very gloomy; lord Charles often frowned and bit his lip; and the flush that so frequently overspread the face of lady Glamorgan as she sat silent at her embroidery, showed that she was thinking in anger of the wrong done to her husband. In this feeling all in the castle shared, for the matter had now come to be a little understood, and as they loved the earl more than the king, they took the earl's part.

Meantime he for whose sake the fortress was troubled, having been released on large bail, was away, with free heart, to Kilkenny, busy as ever on behalf of the king, full of projects, and eager in action. Not a trace of resentment did he manifest—only regret that his majesty's treatment of him, in destroying his credit with the catholics as the king's commissioner, had put it out of his power to be so useful as he might otherwise have been. His brain was ever contriving how to remedy things, but parties were complicated, and none quite trusted him now that he was disowned of his master.

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CHAPTER XLIX.

Siege.

Things began to look threatening. Raglan's brooding disappointment and apprehension was like the electric overcharge of the earth, awaiting and drawing to it the hovering cloud: the lightning and thunder of the war began at length to stoop upon the Yellow Tower of Gwent. When the month of May arrived once more with its moonlight and apple-blossoms, the cloud came with it. The doings of the earl of Glamorgan in Ireland had probably hastened the vengeance of the parliament.

There was no longer any royal army. Most of the king's friends had accepted the terms offered them; and only a few of his garrisons, amongst the rest that of Raglan, held out —no longer, however, in such trim for defence as at first. The walls, it is true, were rather stronger than before, the quantity of provisions was large, and the garrison was sufficient; but their horses were now comparatively few, and, which was worse, the fodder in store was, in prospect of a long siege, scanty. But the worst of all, indeed the only weak and therefore miserable fact, was, that the spirit, I do not mean the courage, of the castle was gone; its enthusiasm had grown sere; its inhabitants no longer loved the king as they had loved him, and even stern-faced general Duty cannot bring up his men to a hand-to-hand conflict with the same elans as queen love.

The rumour of approaching troops kept gathering, and at every fresh report Scudamore's eyes shone.

'Sir Rowland,' said the governor one day, 'hast not had enough of fighting yet for all thy lame shoulder?'

''Tis but my left shoulder, my lord,' answered Scudamore.

'Thou lookest for the siege as an' it were but a tussle and over—a flash and a roar. An' thou had to answer for the place like me—well!'

'Nay, my lord, I would fain show the roundheads what an honest house can do to hold out rogues.'

'Ay, but there's the rub!' returned lord Charles: 'will the house hold out the rogues? Bethink thee, Rowland, there is never a spot in it fit for defence except the keep and the kitchen.'

'We can make sallies, my lord.'

’To be driven in again by ten times our number, and kept in while they knock our walls about our ears! However, we will hold out while we can. Who knows what turn affairs may take?’

It was towards the end of April when the news reached Raglan that the king, desperate at length, had made his escape from beleaguered Oxford, and in the disguise of a serving man, betaken himself to the headquarters of the Scots army, to find himself no king, no guest even, but a prisoner. He sought shelter and found captivity. The marquis dropped his chin on his chest and murmured, ‘All is over.’

But the pang that shot to his heart awoke wounded loyalty: he had been angry with his monarch, and justly, but he would fight for him still.

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‘See to the gates, Charles,’ he cried, almost springing, spite of his unwieldiness, from his chair. ’Tell Casper to keep the powder-mill going night and day. Would to God my boy Ned were here! His majesty hath wronged me, but throned or prisoned he is my king still—the church must come down, Charles. The dead are for the living, and will not cry out.’ For in St. Cadocus’ church lay the tombs of his ancestors.

On deliberation it was resolved, however, that only the tower, which commanded some portions of the castle, should fall. To Dorothy it was like taking down the standard of the Lord. She went with some of the ladies to look a last look at the ancient structure, and saw mass after mass fall silent from the top to clash hideous at the foot amidst the broken tomb-stones. It was sad enough! but the destruction of the cottages around it, that the enemy might not have shelter there, was sadder still. The women wept and wailed; the men growled, and said what was Raglan to them that their houses should be pulled from over their heads. The marquis offered compensation and shelter. All took the money, but few accepted the shelter, for the prospect of a siege was not attractive to any but such as were fond of fighting, of whom some would rather attack than defend.

The next day they heard that sir Trevor Williams was at Usk with a strong body of men. They knew colonel Birch was besieging Gutbridge castle. Two days passed, and then colonel Kirk appeared to the north, and approached within two miles. The ladies began to look pale as often as they saw two persons talking together: there might be fresh news. His father and his wife were not the only persons in the castle who kept sighing for Glamorgan. Every soul in it felt as if, not to say fancied that, his presence would have made it impregnable.

But a strange excitement seized upon Dorothy, which arose from a sense of trust and delegation, outwardly unauthorised. She had not the presumption to give it form in words, even to Caspar, but she felt as if they two were the special servants of the absent power. Ceaselessly therefore she kept open eyes, and saw and spoke and reminded and remedied where she could, so noiselessly, so unobtrusively, that none were offended, and all took heed of the things she brought before them. Indeed what she said came at length to be listened to almost as if it had been a message from Glamorgan. But her chief business was still the fire-engine, whose machinery she anxiously watched—for if anything should happen to Caspar and then to the engine, what would become of them when driven into the tower?

Discipline, which of late had got very drowsy, was stirred up to fresh life. Watch grew strict. The garrison was drilled more regularly and carefully, and the guard and sentinels relieved to the minute. The armoury was entirely overhauled, and every smith set to work to get the poor remainder of its contents into good condition.

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One evening lord Charles came to his father with the news that some score of fresh horses had arrived.

‘Have they brought provender with them, my lord?’ asked the marquis.

‘Alas, no, my lord, only teeth,’ answered the governor.

‘How stands the hay?’

‘At low ebb, my lord. There is plenty of oats, however.’

’We hear to-day nothing of the round-heads: what say you to turning them out and letting them have a last bellyful of sweet grass under the walls?’

’I say ’tis so good a plan, my lord, that I think we had better extend it, and let a few of the rest have a parting nibble.’

The marquis approved.

There was a postern in the outermost wall of the castle on the western side, seldom used, commanded by the guns of the tower, and opening upon a large field of grass, with nothing between but a ditch. It was just wide enough to let one horse through at a time, and by this the governor resolved to turn them out, and as soon as it was nearly dark, ordered a few thick oak planks to be laid across the ditch, one above another, for a bridge. The field was sufficiently fenced to keep them from straying, and with the first signs of dawn they would take them in again.

Dorothy, leaving the tower for the night, had reached the archway, when to her surprise she saw the figure of a huge horse move across the mouth of it, followed by another and another. Except Richard’s mare on that eventful night she had never seen horse-kind there before. One after another, till she had counted some five-and-twenty, she saw pass, then heard them cross the fountain court with heavy foot upon the tiles. At length, dark as it was, she recognised her own little Dick moving athwart the opening. She sprang forward, seized him by the halter, and drew him in beside her. On and on they came, till she had counted eighty, and then the procession ceased.

Presently she heard the voice of lord Charles, as he crossed the hall and came out into the court, saying,

‘How many didst thou count, Shafto?’

‘Seventy-nine, my lord,’ answered the groom, coming from the direction of the gate.

‘I counted eighty at the hall-door as they went in.’

’I am certain no more than seventy-nine went through the gate, my lord.’

’What can have become of the eightieth? He must have gone into the chapel, or up the archway, or he may be still in the hall. Art sure he is not grazing on the turf?’

‘Certain sure, my lord,’ answered Shafto.

‘I am the thief, my lord,’ said Dorothy, coming from the archway behind him, leading her little horse. ’—Good, my lord, let me keep Dick. He is as useful as another—more useful than some.’

‘How, cousin!’ cried lord Charles, ’didst imagine I was sending off thy genet to save the hay? No, no! An’ thou hadst looked well at the other horses, thou wouldst have seen they are such as we want for work—such as may indeed save the hay, but after another fashion. I but mean to do thy Dick a kindness, and give him a bite of grass with the rest.’

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‘Then you are turning them out into the fields, my lord?’

‘Yes—at the little postern.’

‘Is it safe, my lord, with the enemy so near?’

’It is my father’s idea. I do not think there is any danger. There will be no moon to-night.’

‘May not the scouts ride the closer for that,’ my lord?’

‘Yes, but they will not see the better.’

’I hope, my lord, you will not think me presumptuous, but—please let me keep my Dick inside the walls.’

’Do what thou wilt with thine own, cousin. I think thou art over-fearful; but do as thou wilt, I say.’

Dorothy led Dick back to his stable, a little distressed that lord Charles seemed to dislike her caution.

But she had a strong feeling of the risk of the thing, and after she went to bed was so haunted by it that she could not sleep. After a while, however, her thoughts took another direction:—Might not Richard come to the siege? What if they should meet?—-That his party had triumphed, no whit altered the rights of the matter, and she was sure it had not altered her feelings; yet her feelings were altered: she was no longer so fiercely indignant against the puritans as heretofore! Was she turning traitor? or losing the government of herself? or was the right triumphing in her against her will? Was it St. Michael for the truth conquering St. George for the old way of England? Had the king been a tyrant indeed? and had the powers of heaven declared against him, and were they now putting on their instruments to cut down the harvest of wrong? Had not Richard been very sure of being in the right? But what was that shaking—not of the walls, but the foundations? What was that noise as of distant thunder? She sprang from her bed, caught up her night-light, for now she never slept in the dark as heretofore, and hurried to the watch-tower. From its top she saw, by the faint light of the stars, vague forms careering over the fields. There was no cry except an occasional neigh, and the thunder was from the feet of many horses on the turf. The enemy was lifting the castle horses!

She flew to the chamber beneath, where, since the earl’s departure, in the stead of the cross-bow, a small minion gun had been placed by lord Charles, with its muzzle in the round where the lines of the loop-hole crossed. A piece of match lay beside it. She caught it up, lighted it at her candle, and fired the gun. The tower shook with its roar and recoil. She had fired the first gun of the siege: might it be a good omen!

In an instant the castle was alive. Warders came running from the western gate. Dorothy had gone, and they could not tell who had fired the gun, but there were no occasion to ask why it had been fired—for where were the horses? They could hear, but no longer see them. There was mounting in hot haste, and a hurried sally. Lord Charles flung himself on little Dick's bare back, and flew to reconnoitre.

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Fifty of the garrison were ready armed and mounted by the time he came back, having discovered the route they were taking, and off they went at full speed in pursuit. But, encumbered as they were at first with the driven horses, the twenty men who had carried them off had such a start of their pursuers that they reached the high road where they could not stray, and drove them right before them to sir Trevor Williams at Usk.

‘The fodder will last the longer,’ said the marquis, with a sigh sent after his eighty horses.

‘Mistress Dorothy,’ said lord Charles the next day, ’methinks thou art as Cassandra in Troy. I shall tremble after this to do aught against thy judgment.’

‘My lord,’ returned Dorothy, ’I have to ask your pardon for my presumption, but it was borne in upon me, as Tom Fool says, that there was danger in the thing. It was scarcely judgment on my part—rather a womanish dread.’

’Go thou on to speak thy mind like Cassandra, cousin Dorothy, and let us men despise it at our peril. I am humbled before thee,’ said lord Charles, with the generosity of his family.

‘Truly, child,’ said lady Glamorgan, ’the mantle of my husband hath fallen upon thee!’

The next day sir Trevor Williams and his men sat down before the castle with a small battery, and the siege was fairly begun. Dorothy, on the top of the keep, watching them, but not understanding what they were about in particulars, heard the sudden bellow of one of their cannon. Two of the battlements beside her flew into one, and the stones of the parapet between them stormed into the cistern. Had her presence been the attraction to that thunderbolt? Often after this, while she watched the engine below in the workshop, she would hear the dull thud of an iron ball against the body of the tower; but although it knocked the parapet into showers of stones, their artillery could not make the slightest impression upon that.

The same night a sally was prepared. Rowland ran to lord Charles, begging leave to go. But his lordship would not hear of it, telling him to get well, and he should have enough of sallying before the siege was over. The enemy were surprised, and lost a few men, but soon recovered themselves and drove the royalists home, following them to the very gates, whence the guns of the castle sent them back in their turn.

Many such sallies and skirmishes followed. Once and again there was but time for the guard to open the gate, admit their own, and close it, ere the enemy came thundering up—to be received with a volley and gallop off. At first there was great excitement within the walls when a party was out. Eager and anxious eyes followed them from

every point of vision. But at length they got used to it, as to all the ordinary occurrences of siege.

By and by colonel Morgan appeared with additional forces, and made his head-quarters to the south, at Llandenny. In two days more the castle was surrounded, and they began to erect a larger battery on the east of it, also to dig trenches and prepare for mining. The chief point of attack was that side of the stone court which lay between the towers of the kitchen and the library. Here then came the hottest of the siege, and very soon that range of building gave show of affording an easy passage by the time the outer works should be taken.

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After the first ball, whose execution Dorothy had witnessed, there came no more for some time. Sir Trevor waited until the second battery should be begun and captain Hooper arrive, who was to be at the head of the mining operations. Hence most of the inmates of the castle began to imagine that a siege was not such an unpleasant thing after all. They lacked nothing; the apple trees bloomed; the moon shone; the white horse fed the fountain; the pigeons flew about the courts, and the peacock strutted on the grass. But when they began digging their approaches and mounting their guns on the east side, sir Trevor opened his battery on the west, and the guns of the tower replied. The guns also from the kitchen tower, and another between it and the library tower, played upon the trenches, and the noise was tremendous. At first the inhabitants were nearly deafened, and frequently failed to hear what was said; but at length they grew hardened—so much so that they were often unaware of the firing altogether, and began again to think a siege no great matter. But when the guns of the eastern battery opened fire, and at the first discharge a round shot, bringing with it a barrowful of stones, came down the kitchen chimney, knocking the lid through the bottom of the cook's stewpan, and scattering all the fire about the place; when the roof of one of the turrets went clashing over the stones of the paved court; when a spent shot struck the bars of the Great Mogul's cage, and sent him furious, making them think what might happen, and wishing they were sure of the politics of the wild beasts; when the stones and slates flew about like sudden showers of hail; when every now and then a great rumble told of a falling wall, and that side of the court was rapidly turning to a heap of ruins; then were cries and screams, many more however of terror than of injury, to be heard in the castle, and they began to understand that it was not starvation, but something more peremptory still, to which they were doomed to succumb. At times there would fall a lull, perhaps for a few hours, perhaps but for a few moments, to end in a sudden fury of firing on both sides, mingled with shouts, the rattling of bullets, and the falling of stones, when the women would rush to and fro screaming, and all would imagine the storm was in the breach.

But the gloom of the marquis seemed to have vanished with the breaking of the storm, as the outburst of the lightning takes the weight off head and heart that has for days been gathering. True, when his house began to fall, he would look for a moment grave at each successive rumble, but the next he would smile and nod his head, as if all was just as he had expected and would have it. One day when sir Toby Mathews and Dr. Bayly happened both to be with him in his study, an ancient stack of chimneys tumbled with tremendous uproar into the stone court. The two clergymen started visibly, and then looked at each other with pallid faces. But the marquis smiled, kept the silence for an instant, and then, in slow solemn voice, said:

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’Scimus enim quoniam si terrestris domus nomus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo habemus, domum non manufactam, aeternam in coelis.’

The clergymen grasped each other by the hand, then turning bowed together to the marquis, but the conversation was not resumed.

One evening in the drawing-room, after supper, the marquis, in good spirits, and for him in good health, was talking more merrily than usual. Lady Glamorgan stood near him in the window. The captain of the garrison was giving a spirited description of a sally they had made the night before upon colonel Morgan in his quarters at Llandenny, and sir Rowland was vowing that come of it what might, leave or no leave, he would ride the next time, when crash went something in the room, the marquis put his hand to his head, and the countess fled in terror, crying, ‘O Lord! O Lord!’ A bullet had come through the window, knocked a little marble pillar belonging to it in fragments on the floor, and glancing from it, struck the marquis on the side of the head. The countess, finding herself unhurt, ran no farther than the door.

‘I ask your pardon, my lord, for my rudeness,’ she said, with trembling voice, as she came slowly back. ‘But indeed, ladies,’ she added, ’I thought the house was coming down.—You gentlemen, who know not what fear is, I pray you to forgive me, for I was mortally frightened.’

’Daughter, you had reason to run away, when your father was knocked on the head,’ said the marquis.

He put his finger on the flattened bullet where it had fallen on the table, and turning it round and round, was silent for a moment evidently framing aright something he wanted to say. Then with the pretence that the bullet had been flattened upon his head,

‘Gentlemen,’ he remarked, ’those who had a mind to flatter me were wont to tell me that I had a good head in my younger days, but if I don’t flatter myself, I think I have a good head-piece in my old age, or else it would not have been musket-proof.’

But although he took the thing thus quietly and indeed merrily, it revealed to him that their usual apartments were no longer fit for the ladies, and he gave orders therefore that the great rooms in the tower should be prepared for them and the children.

Dorothy’s capacity for work was not easily satisfied, but now for a time she had plenty to do. In the midst of the roar from the batteries, and the answering roar from towers and walls, the ladies betook themselves to their stronger quarters: a thousand necessaries had to be carried with them, and she, as a matter of course, it seemed, had to superintend the removal. With many hands to make light work she soon finished, however, and the family was lodged where no hostile shot could reach them, although the frequent fall of portions of its battlemented summit rendered even a peep beyond its

impenetrable shell hazardous. Dorothy would lie awake at night, where she slept in her mistress's room, and listen—now to the baffled bullet as it fell from the scarce indented wall, now to the roar of the artillery, sounding dull and far away through the ten-foot thickness; and ever and again the words of the ancient psalm would return upon her memory: 'Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.'

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She tended the fire-engine if possible yet more carefully than ever, kept the cistern full, and the water lipping the edge of the moat, but let no fountain flow except that from the mouth of the white horse. Her great fear was lest a shot should fall into the reservoir and injure its bottom, but its contriver had taken care that, even without the protection of its watery armour, it should be indestructible.

The marquis would not leave his own rooms and the supervision they gave him. The domestics were mostly lodged within the kitchen tower, which, although in full exposure to the enemy's fire, had as yet proved able to resist it. But all between that and the library tower was rapidly becoming a chaos of stones and timber. Lord Glamorgan's secret chamber was shot through and through; but Caspar, as soon as the direction and force of the battery were known, had carried off his books and instruments.

CHAPTER L.

A *sally*.

Meantime Mr. Heywood had returned home to look after his affairs, and brought Richard with him. In the hope that peace was come they had laid down their commissions. Hardly had they reached Redware when they heard the news of the active operations at Raglan, and Richard rode off to see how things were going—not a little anxious concerning Dorothy, and full of eagerness to protect her, but entirely without hope of favour either at her hand or her heart. He had no inclination to take part in the siege, and had had enough of fighting for any satisfaction it had brought him. It might be the right thing to do, and so far the only path towards the sunrise, but had he ground for hope that the day of freedom had in himself advanced beyond the dawn? His confidence in Milton and Cromwell, with his father's, continued unshaken, but what could man do to satisfy the hunger for freedom which grew and gnawed within him? Neither political nor religious liberty could content him. He might himself be a slave in a universe of freedom. Still ready, even for the sake of mere outward freedom of action and liberty of worship, to draw the sword, he yet had begun to think he had fought enough.

As he approached Raglan he missed something from the landscape, but only upon reflection discovered that it was the church tower. Entering the village, he found it all but deserted, for the inhabitants had mostly gone, and it was too near the gates and too much exposed to the sudden sallies of the besieged for the occupation of the enemy. That day, however, a large reinforcement, sent from Oxford by Fairfax to strengthen colonel Morgan, having arrived at Llandenny, some of its officers, riding over to inspect captain Hooper's operations, had halted at the White Horse, where they were having a glass of ale when Richard rode up. He found them old acquaintances, and sat down with them. Almost evening when he arrived, it was quite dusk when they rose and called for their horses.

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They had placed a man to keep watch towards Raglan, while the rest of their attendants, who were but few, leaving their horses in the yard, were drinking their ale in the kitchen; but seeing no signs of peril, and growing weary of his own position and envious of that of his neighbours, the fellow had ventured, discipline being neither active nor severe, to rejoin his companions.

The host, being a tenant of the marquis, had decided royalist predilections, but whether what followed was of his contriving I cannot tell; news reached the castle somehow that a few parliamentary officers with their men were drinking at the White Horse.

Rowland was in the chapel, listening to the organ, having in his illness grown fond of hearing Delaware play. The brisker the cannonade, the blind youth always praised the louder, and had the main stops now in full blast; but through it all, Scudamore heard the sound of horses' feet on the stones, and running along the minstrels' gallery and out on the top of the porch, saw over fifty horsemen in the court, all but ready to start. He flew to his chamber, caught up his sword and pistols, and without waiting to put on any armour, hurried to the stables, laid hold of the first horse he came to, which was fortunately saddled and bridled, and was in time to follow the last man out of the court before the gate was closed behind the issuing troop.

The parliamentary officers were just mounting, when their sentinel, who had run again into the road to listen, for it was now too dark to see further than a few yards, came running back with the alarm that he heard the feet of a considerable body of horse in the direction of the castle. Richard, whose mare stood unfastened at the door, was on her back in a moment. Being unarmed, save a brace of pistols in his holsters, he thought he could best serve them by galloping to captain Hooper and bringing help, for the castle party would doubtless outnumber them. Scarcely was he gone, however, and half the troopers were not yet in their saddles, when the place was surrounded by three times their number. Those who were already mounted, escaped and rode after Heywood, a few got into a field, where they hid themselves in the tall corn, and the rest barricaded the inn door and manned the windows. There they held out for some time, frequent pistol-shots being interchanged without much injury to either side. At length, however, the marquis's men had all but succeeded in forcing the door, when they were attacked in the rear by Richard with some thirty horse from the trenches, and the runaways of colonel Morgan's men, who had met them and turned with them. A smart combat ensued, lasting half an hour, in which the parliament men had the advantage. Those who had lost their horses recovered them, and a royalist was taken prisoner. From him Richard took his sword, and rode after the retreating cavaliers.

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One of their number, a little in the rear, supposing Richard to be one of themselves, allowed him to get ahead of him, and, facing about, cut him off from his companions. It was the second time he had headed Scudamore, and again he did not know him, this time because it was dark. Rowland, however, recognised his voice as he called him to surrender, and rushed fiercely at him. But scarcely had they met, when the cavalier, whose little strength had ere this all but given way to the unwonted fatigue, was suddenly overcome with faintness, and dropped from his horse. Richard got down, lifted him, laid him across Lady's shoulders, mounted, raised him into a better position, and, leading the other horse, brought him back to the inn. There first he discovered that he was his prisoner whom he feared he had killed at Naseby.

When Rowland came to himself,

'Are you able to ride a few miles, Mr Scudamore?' asked Richard.

At first Rowland was too much chagrined, finding in whose power he was, to answer.

'I am your prisoner,' he said at length. 'You are my evil genius, I think. I have no choice. Thy star is in the ascendant, and mine has been going down ever since first I met thee, Richard Heywood.'

Richard attempted no reply, but got Rowland's horse, and assisted him to mount.

'I want to do you a good turn, Mr Scudamore,' he said, after they had ridden a mile in silence.

'I look for nothing good at thy hand,' said Scudamore.

'When thou findest what it is, I trust thou wilt change thy thought of me, Mr Scudamore.'

'*Sir Rowland*, an' it please you,' said the prisoner, his boyish vanity roused by misfortune, and passing itself upon him for dignity.

'Mere ignorance must be pardoned, sir Rowland,' returned Richard: 'I was unaware of your dignity. But think you, sir Rowland, you do well to ride on such rough errands, while yet not recovered, as is but too plain to see, from former wounds?'

'It seems not, Mr. Heywood, for I had not else been your prize, I trust. The wound I caught at Naseby has cost the king a soldier, I fear.'

'I hope it will cost no more than is already paid. Men must fight, it seems, but I for one would gladly repair, an' I might, what injuries I had been compelled to cause.'

'I cannot say the like on my part,' returned sir Rowland. 'I would I had slain thee!'

’So would not I concerning thee—in proof whereof do I now lead thee to the best leech I know—one who brought me back from death’s door, when through thee, if not by thy hand, I was sore wounded. With her, as my prisoner, I shall leave thee. Seek not to make thy escape, lest, being a witch, as they saw of her, she chain thee up in alabaster. When thou art restored, go thy way whither thou pleasest. It is no longer as it was with the cause of liberty: a soldier of hers may now afford to release an enemy for whom he has a friendship.’

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‘A friendship!’ exclaimed sir Rowland. ’And wherefore, prithee, Mr Heywood? On what ground?’

But they had reached the cottage, and Richard made no reply. Having helped his prisoner to dismount, led him through the garden, and knocked at the door,

‘Here, mother!’ he said as mistress Rees opened it, ’I have brought thee a king’s-man to cure this time.’

‘Praise God!’ returned mistress Rees—not that a king’s-man was wounded, but that she had him to cure: she was an enthusiast in her art. Just as she had devoted herself to the puritan, she now gave all her care and ministration to the royalist. She got her bed ready for him, asked him a few questions, looked at his shoulder, not even yet quite healed, said it had not been well managed, and prepared a poultice, which smelt so vilely that Rowland turned from it with disgust. But the old woman had a singular power of persuasion, and at length he yielded, and in a few moments was fast asleep.

Calling the next morning, Richard found him very weak—partly from the unwonted fatigue of the previous day, and partly from the old woman’s remedies, which were causing the wound to threaten suppuration. But somehow he had become well satisfied that she knew what she was about, and showed no inclination to rebel.

For a week or so he did not seem to improve. Richard came often, sat by his bedside, and talked with him; but the moment he grew angry, called him names, or abused his party, would rise without a word, mount his mare, and ride home—to return the next morning as if nothing unpleasant had occurred.

After about a week, the patient began to feel the benefit of the wise woman’s treatment. The suppuration carried so much of an old ever-haunting pain with it, that he was now easier than he had ever been since his return to Raglan. But his behaviour to Richard grew very strange, and the roundhead failed to understand it. At one time it was so friendly as to be almost affectionate; at another he seemed bent on doing and saying everything he could to provoke a duel. For another whole week, aware of the benefit he was deriving from the witch, as he never scrupled to call her, nor in the least offended her thereby, apparently also at times fascinated in some sort by the visits of his enemy, as he persisted in calling Richard, he showed no anxiety to be gone.

‘Heywood,’ he said one morning suddenly, with quite a new familiarity, ’dost thou consider I owe thee an apology for carrying off thy mare? Tell me what look the thing beareth to thee.’

‘Put thy case, Scudamore,’ returned Richard.

And sir Rowland did put his case, starting from the rebel state of the owner, advancing to the natural outlawry that resulted, going on to the necessity of the king, &c., and ending thus:

’Now I know thou regardest neither king nor right, therefore I ask thee only to tell me how it seemeth to thee I ought on these grounds to judge myself, since for thy judgment in thy own person and on thy own grounds, or rather no grounds, I care not at all.’

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’Come, then, let it be but a question of casuistry. Yet I fear me it will be difficult to argue without breaking bounds. Would my lord marquis now walk forth of his castle at the king’s command as certainly as he will at the voice of the nation, that is, the cannons of the parliament?’

’The cannons of the cursed parliament are not the voice of the nation? Our side is the nation, not yours.’

‘How provest thou that?’

‘We are the better born, to begin with.’

’Ye have the more titles, I grant ye, but we have the older families. Let it be, however, that I was or am a rebel—then I can only say that in stealing—no, I will not say *stealing*, for thou didst it with a different mind—all I will say is this, sir Rowland, that I should have scorned so to carry off thine or any man’s horse.’

‘Ah, but thou wouldst have no right, being but a rebel!’

‘Bethink thee, thou must judge on my grounds when thou judgest me.’

’True; then am I driven to say thou wast made of the better earth—curse thee! I am ashamed of having taken thy mare—only because it was in a half-friendly passage with thee I learned her worth. But, hang thee! it was not through thee I learned to know my cousin, Dorothy Vaughan.’

The recoiling blood stung Richard’s heart like the blow of a whip, but he manned himself to answer with coolness.

‘What then of her?’ he said. ’Hast thou been wooing her favour, sir Rowland? Thou owest me nothing there, I admit, even had she not sent me from her. Besides, I am scarce one to be content with a mistress whose favour depended on the not coming between of some certain other, known or unknown. This I say not in pride, but because in such case I were not the right man for her, neither she the woman for me.’

’Then thou bearest me no grudge in that I have sought the prize of my cousin’s heart?’

‘None,’ answered Richard, but could not bring himself to ask how he had sped.

’Then will I own to thee that I have gained as little. I will madden myself telling thee whom I hate, and to thy comfort, that she despises me like any Virginia slave.’

’Nay, that I am sure she doth not. She can despise nothing that is honourable.’

‘Dost thou then count me honourable, Heywood?’ said Scudamore, in a voice of surprise, putting forth a thin white hand, and placing it on Richard’s where it lay huge and brown on the coverlid: ’Then honourable I will be.’

‘And, in that resolve, art, sir Rowland.’

‘I will be honourable,’ repeated Scudamore, angrily, with flushing cheek, and hard yet flashing eye, ’because thou thinkest me such, although my hate would, an’ it might, damn thee to lowest hell.’

‘Nay, but thou wilt be honourable for honour’s sake,’ said Richard. ’Bethink thee, when first we met, we were but boys: now are we men, and must put away boyish things.’

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’Dost call it a boyish thing to be madly in love with the fairest and noblest and bravest mistress that ever trod the earth—though she be half a puritan, alack?’

‘She half a puritan!’ exclaimed Heywood. ’She hates the very wind of the word.’

’She may hate the word, but she is the thing. She hath read me such lessons as none but a puritan could.’

’Were they not then good lessons, that thou joinest with them a name hateful to thee?’

’Ay, truly—much too good for mortal like me—or thee either, Heywood. They are but hypocrites that pretend otherwise.’

‘Callest thou thy cousin a hypocrite?’

’No, by heaven! she is not. She is a woman, and it is easy for women to say prayers.’

‘I never rode into a fight but I said my prayer,’ returned Richard.

’None the less art thou a hypocrite. I should scorn to be for ever begging favours as thou. Dost think God heareth such prayers as thine?’

’Not if He be such as thou, sir Rowland, and not if he who prays be such as thou thinkest him. Prithee, what sort of prayer thinkest thou I pray ere I ride into the battle?’

’How should I know? My lord marquis would have had me say my prayers at such a time, but, good sooth! I always forgot. And if I had done it, where would have been the benefit thereof, so long as thou, who wast better used to the work, wast praying against me? I say it is a cowardly thing to go praying into the battle, and not take thy fair chance as other men do.’

’Then will I tell thee to what purpose I pray. But, first of all, I must confess to thee that I have had my doubts, not whether my side were more in the right than thine, but whether it were worth while to raise the sword even in such cause. Now, still when that doubt cometh, ever it taketh from my arm the strength, and going down into the very legs of my mare causeth that she goeth dull, although willing, into the battle. Moreover, I am no saint, and therefore cannot pray like a saint, but only like Richard Heywood, who hath got to do his duty, and is something puzzled. Therefore pray I thus, or to this effect:

’"O God of battles! who, thyself dwelling in peace, beholdest the strife, and workest thy will thereby, what that good and perfect will of thine is I know not clearly, but thou hast sent us to be doing, and thou hatest cowardice. Thou knowest I have sought to choose the best, so far as goeth my poor ken, and to this battle I am pledged. Give me grace to fight like a soldier of thine, without wrath and without fear. Give me to do my duty, but give the victory where thou pleasest. Let me live if so thou wilt; let me die if so thou wilt

—only let me die in honour with thee. Let the truth be victorious, if not now, yet when it shall please thee; and oh! I pray, let no deed of mine delay its coming. Let my work fail, if it be unto evil, but save my soul in truth."

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’And in truth, sir Rowland, it seemeth to me then as if the God of truth heard me. Then say I to my mare, “Come, Lady, all is well now. Let us go. And good will come of it to thee also, for how should the Father think of his sparrows and forget his mares? Doubtless there are of thy kind in heaven, else how should the apostle have seen them there? And if any, surely thou, my Lady!” So ride we to the battle, merry and strong, and calm, as if we were but riding to the rampart of the celestial city.’

Rowland lay gazing at Richard for a few moments, then said:

’By heaven, but it were a pity you should not come together! Surely the same spirit dwelleth in you both! For me, I should show but as the shadow cast from her brightness. But I tell thee, roundhead, I love her better than ever roundhead could.’

’I know not, Scudamore. Nor do I mean to judge thee when I say that no man who loves not the truth can love a woman in the grand way a woman ought to be loved.’

’Tell me not I do not love her, or I will rise and kill thee. I love her even to doing what my soul hateth for her sake. Damned roundhead, she loves *thee*.’

The last words came from him almost in a shriek, and he fell back panting.

Richard sat silent for a few moments, his heart surging and sinking. Then he said quietly:—

’It may be so, sir Rowland. We were boy and girl together—fed rabbits, flew kites, planted weeds to make flowers of them, played at marbles; she may love me a little, roundhead as I am.’

’By heaven, I will try her once more! Who knows the heart of a woman?’ said Rowland through his teeth.

’If thou should gain her, Scudamore, and afterward she should find thee unworthy?’

‘She would love me still.’

’And break her heart for thee, and leave thee young to marry another—while I—’

He laughed a low, strangely musical laugh, and ceased—then resumed:—

’But what if, instead of dying, she should learn to despise thee, finding thou hadst not only deceived her, but deceived thy better self, and should turn from thee with loathing, while thou didst love her still—as well as thy nature could?—what then, sir Rowland?’

‘Then I should kill her.’

’And thou lovest her better than any roundhead could! I will find thee man after man from amongst Ireton’s or Cromwell’s horse—I know not the foot so well:—fanatic enough they are, God knows! and many of them fools enough to boot!—but I will find thee man after man who is fanatic or fool enough, which thou wilt, to love better than thou, thou poor atom of solitary selfishness!’

Rowland half flung himself from the bed, seized Richard by the throat, and with all the strength he could summon did his best to strangle him. For a time Richard allowed him to spend his rage, then removed his grasp as gently as he could, and holding both his wrists in his left hand, rose and stood over him.

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‘Sir Rowland,’ he said, ’I am not angry with thee that thou art weak and passionate. But bethink thee—thou liest in God’s hands a thousandfold more helpless than now thou liest in mine, and like Saul of Tarsus thou wilt find it hard to kick against the pricks. For the maiden, do as thou wilt, for thou canst not do other than the will of God. But I thank thee for what thou hast told me, though I doubt it meaneth little better for me than for thee. Thou hast a kind heart. I almost love thee, and will when I can.’

He let go his hands, and walked from the room.

‘Canting hypocrite!’ cried sir Rowland in the wrath of impotence, but knew while he said the words that they were false.

And with the words the bitterness of life seized his heart, and his despair shrouded the world in the blackness of darkness. There was nothing more to live for, and he turned his face to the wall.

CHAPTER LI.

Under the moat.

It was some time ere they discovered that Scudamore was missing from the castle, but there was the hope that he had been taken prisoner; and things were growing so bad within the walls, that there was little leisure for lamentation over individual misfortunes. Unless some change as entire as unexpected—for there seemed no chance of any except the king should win over the Scots to take his part —should occur, it was evident that the enemy must speedily make the assault, nor could there be a doubt of their carrying the place—an anticipation which, as the inevitable drew nearer, became nothing less than terrible to both household and garrison. True, their conquerors would be of their own people, but battle and bloodshed and victory, and, worst of all, party-spirit, the marquis knew, destroy not nationality merely, but humanity as well, rousing into full possession the feline beast which has his lair in every man—in many, it is true, dwindled to the household cat, but in many others a full-sized, only sleepy tiger. To what was he about to expose his men, not to speak of his ladies and their children!

On the other hand, ever since the balls had been flying about his house, and the stones of it leaving their places to keep them company, the loyalty of the marquis had been rising, and he had thought of his prisoner-king ever with growing tenderness, of his faults with more indulgence, and of the wrongs he had done his family with more magnanimity and forgiveness, so that, for his own part, he would have held out to the very last.

‘And truly were it not better to be well buried under the ruins,’ he would say to himself, looking down with a sigh at his great bulk, which added so much to the dismalness of

the prospect of being, in his seventieth year, a prisoner or a wanderer—the latter a worse fate even than the former. To be no longer the master of his own great house, of many willing servants, of all ready appliances for

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liberty and comfort, while the weight of his clumsy person must still hang about him, and his unfitness to carry the same go on increasing with the bulk to be carried—such a prospect required something more than loyalty to meet it with equanimity. To the young and strong, adventure ought always to be more attractive than ease, but none save those who are themselves within sight of old age can truly imagine what an utter horror the breach of old habits and loss of old comforts is to the aged.

But to the good marquis it was consolation enough to repeat to himself the text from his precious Vulgate: Scimus enim; For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For the ladies, so long as their father-chief was with them, they were at least not too anxious. Whatever was done must be the right thing, and in the midst of tumult and threat they were content. If only their Edward had been with them too!

But surrender, even when the iron shot was driving his stately house into showers of dirt, the marquis found it hard indeed to contemplate. The eastern side of the stone court was now little better than a heap of rubbish, and the hour of assault could not be far off, although as yet there had been no second summons; but he could not forget that, though the castle was his, it was not for himself but for his king he held it garrisoned, and how could he yield it without the approval of his sovereign? The governor shared in the same chivalry with his father, and was equally anxious for a word from the king. But that king was a prisoner in the hands of a hostile nation, and how was he to receive message or return answer? Nay, how were they to send message or receive answer, not even knowing with certainty where his majesty was, and but presuming that he was still at Newcastle? And not to mention difficulties at every step of the way, their house itself was so beset that no one could issue from its gates without risk of being stopped, searched, detained until it should have fallen. For the besiegers knew well enough that lord Glamorgan was still in Ireland, straining his utmost on behalf of the king; and what more likely than that he should, with the men he was still raising in Ireland, make some desperate attempt to turn the scales of war, striking first, it might well be, for the relief of his father’s castle?

These things were all pretty freely spoken of in the family, and Dorothy understood the position of affairs as well as any one. And now at length it seemed to her that the hour had arrived for attempting some return for Raglan’s hospitality. No service she had hitherto stumbled upon had any magnitude in her eyes, but now—to be the bearer of dispatches to the king! It would suffice at least, even if it turned out a failure, to prove her not ungrateful. But she too had her confidant, and in the absence of lord Glamorgan would consult with Caspar.

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Meantime the marquis had made matters worse by sending a request to Colonel Morgan that he would grant safe passage for a messenger to the king, without whose command he was not at liberty to surrender the place. The answer was to the effect that they acknowledged no jurisdiction of the king in the business, and that the marquis might keep his mind easy as far as his supposed duty to his majesty was concerned, for they would so compel a surrender that there could be no reflection upon him for making it.

Caspar, fearful of the dangers she would have to encounter, sought to dissuade Dorothy from her meditated proposal—but feebly, for every one who had anything noble in his nature, and Caspar had more than his share, was influenced by the magnanimity that ruled the place. Indeed he told her one thing which served to clench her resolution—-that there was a secret way out of the castle, provided by his master Glamorgan for communication during siege: more he was not at liberty to disclose. Dorothy went straight to the marquis and laid her plan before him, which was that she should make her escape to Wyfern, and thence, attended by an old servant, set out to seek the king.

‘There is no longer time, alas!’ returned the marquis. ’I look for the final summons every hour.’

’Could you not raise the report, my lord, that you have undermined the castle, and laid a huge quantity of gunpowder, with the determination of blowing it up the moment they enter? That would make them fall back upon blockade, and leave us a little time. Our provisions are not nearly exhausted, and when fodder fails, we can eat the horses first.’

‘Thou art a brave lady, cousin Dorothy,’ said the marquis. ’But if they caught and searched thee, and found papers upon thee, it would go worse with us than before.’

’Please your lordship, my lord Glamorgan once showed me such a comb as a lady might carry in her pocket, but so contrived that the head thereof was hollow and could contain despatches. Methinks Caspar could lay his hand on the comb. If I were but at Wyfern! and thither my little horse would carry me in less than hour, giving all needful time for caution too, my lord.’

‘By George, thou speakest well, cousin!’ said the marquis. ’But who should attend thee?’

’Let me have Tom Fool, my lord, for now have I thought of a betterment of my plan: he will guide me to his mother’s house by byways, and thence can I cross the fields to my own—as easily as the great hall, my lord.’

‘Tom Fool is a mighty coward,’ objected the marquis.

’So much the better, my lord. He will not get me into trouble through displaying his manhood before me. He hath besides a a face long enough for three roundheads, and a tongue that can utter glibly enough what soundeth very like their jargon. Tom is the right fool to attend me, my lord.’

’He can’t ride; he never backed a horse in his life, I believe. No, no, Dorothy. Shafto is the man.’

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’Shafto is much too ready, my lord. He would ride over my hounds. I want Tom no farther than his mother’s, and there will be no need for him to ride.’

‘Well, it is a brave offer, my child, and I will think thereupon,’ said his lordship.

All the rest of the day the marquis and lord Charles, with two or three of the principal officers of house and garrison, were in conference, and letters were written both to his majesty and lord Glamorgan. Before they were finally written out in cipher, Kaltoff was sent for, the comb found, its contents gauged, and the paper cut to suit.

About an hour after midnight, Dorothy, lord Charles, and Caspar stood together in the workshop, waiting for Tom Fool, who had gone to fetch Dick from the stables. Dorothy had the comb in her pocket. She looked pale, but her grey eyes shone with courage and determination. She carried nothing but a whip. A keen little lamp borne by Caspar was all their light.

Presently they heard the sound of Dick’s hoofs on the bridge. A moment more and Tom led him in, both man and horse looking somewhat scared at the strangeness of the midnight proceeding. But Tom was, notwithstanding, glad of the office, and ready to risk a good deal in order to get out of the castle, where he expected nothing milder at last than a general massacre.

Lord Charles himself lifted foot after foot of the little horse to be satisfied that his shoes were sound, then made a sign to Caspar, and gave his hand to Dorothy. Caspar took Dick by the bridle, and led him up to the wall near the door. Lord Charles and Dorothy followed. But Tom, observing that they placed themselves within a chalk-drawn circle, hung back in terror; he fancied Caspar was going to raise the devil. Yet he knew that within the circle was the only safety; a word from Dorothy turned the scale, and he stood trembling by her side. Nor was he greatly consoled to find that, as he now thought, instead of the devil coming to them, they were going to him, as, with the circle upon which they stood, they began to sink, through a stone-faced shaft, slowly into the foundations of the keep. Dick also was frightened, but happily his faith was stronger than his imagination, and a word now and then from his mistress, and an occasional pat from her well-known hand, sufficed to keep him quiet.

At the depth of about thirty feet they stopped, and found themselves facing a ponderous door, studded and barred with iron. Caspar took from his pocket a key about the size of a goose quill, felt about for a moment, and then with a slight movement of finger and thumb threw back a dozen ponderous bolts with a great echoing clang; the door slowly opened, and they entered a narrow vaulted passage of stone. Lord Charles took the lamp from Caspar, and led the way with Dorothy; Tom Fool came next, and Caspar followed with Dick. The lamp showed but a few feet of the walls and roof, and revealed nothing in front until they had gone about a furlong, when it shone upon what seemed

the live rock ending their way. But again Caspar applied the little key somewhere, and immediately a great mass of rock slowly turned on a pivot, and permitted them to pass.

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When they were all on the other side of it, lord Charles turned and held up the light. Dorothy turned also and looked: there was nothing to indicate whence they had come. Before her was the rough rock, seemingly solid, certainly slimy and green, and over its face was flowing a tiny rivulet.

‘See there,’ said lord Charles, pointing up; ’that little stream comes the way thy dog Marquis and the roundhead Heywood came and went. But I challenge anything larger than a rat to go now.’

Dorothy made no answer, and they went on again for some distance in a passage like the former, but soon arrived at the open quarry, whence Tom knew the way across the fields to the high road as well, he said, as the line of life on his own palm. Lord Charles lifted Dorothy to the saddle, said good-luck and good-bye, and stood with Caspar watching as she rode up the steep ascent, until for an instant her form stood out dark against the sky, then vanished, when they turned and re-entered the castle.

CHAPTER LII.

The untoothsome plum.

It was a starry night, with a threatening of moonrise, and Dorothy was anxious to reach the cottage before it grew lighter. But they must not get into the high road at any nearer point than the last practicable, for then they would be more likely to meet soldiers, and Dick’s feet to betray their approach. Over field after field, therefore, they kept on, as fast as Tom, now and then stopping to peer anxiously over the next fence or into a boundary ditch, could lead the way. At last they reached the place by the side of a bridge, where Marquis led Richard off the road, and there they scrambled up.

‘O Lord!’ cried Tom, and waked a sentry dozing on the low parapet.

‘Who goes there?’ he cried, starting up, and catching at his carbine, which leaned against the wall.

‘Oh, master!’ began Tom, in a voice of terrified appeal; but Dorothy interrupted him.

‘I am an honest woman of the neighbourhood,’ she said. ‘An’ thou wilt come home with me, I will afford thee a better bed than thou hast there, and also a better breakfast, I warrant thee, than thou had a supper.’

‘That is, an’ thou be one of the godly,’ supplemented Tom.

‘I thank thee, mistress,’ returned the sentinel, ’but not for the indulgence of carnal appetite will I forsake my post. Who is he goeth with thee?’

’A fellow whose wit is greater than his courage, and yet he goeth with many for a born fool. A parlous coward he is, else might he now be fighting the Amalekites with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. Yet in good sooth he serveth me well for the nonce.’

The sentry glanced at Tom, but could see little of him except a long white oval, and Tom was now collected enough to put in exercise his best wisdom, which consisted in holding his tongue.

’Answer me then, mistress, how, being a godly woman, as I doubt not from thy speech thou art, thee rides thus late with none but a fool to keep thee company? Knowest thou not that the country is full of soldiers, whereof some, though that they be all true-hearted and right-minded men, would not mayhap carry themselves so civil to a woman as corporal Bearbanner? And now, I bethink me, thou comest from the direction of Raglan!’

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Here he drew himself up, summoned a voice from his chest a storey or two deeper, and asked in magisterial tone:

'Whence comest thou, woman? and on what business gaddest thou so late?'

'I am come from visiting at a friend's house, and am now almost on my own farm,' answered Dorothy.

The man turned to Tom, and Dorothy began to regret she had brought him: he was trembling visibly, and his mouth was wide open with terror.

'See,' she said, 'how thy gruff voice terrifieth the innocent! If now he should fall in a fit thou wert to blame.'

As she spoke she put her hand in her pocket, and taking from it her untoothsome plum, popped it into Tom's mouth. Instantly he began to make such strange uncouth noises that the sentinel thought he had indeed terrified him into a fit.

'I must get him straightway home. Good-night, friend,' said Dorothy, and giving Dick the rein, she was off like the wind, heedless of the shouts of the sentinel or the feeble cries of pursuing Tom, who, if he could not fight, could run. Following his mistress at great speed, he was instantly lost in the darkness, and the sentinel, who had picketed his horse in a neighbouring field, sat down again on the parapet of the bridge, and began to examine all that Dorothy had said with a wondrous inclination to discover the strong points in it.

Having galloped a little way, Dorothy drew bridle and halted for Tom. As soon as he came up, she released him, and telling him to lay hold of Dick's mane and run alongside, kept him at a fast trot all the way to his mother's house.

The moon had risen before they reached it, and Dorothy was therefore glad, when she dismounted at the gate, to think she need ride no further. But while Tom went in to rouse his mother, she let Dick have a few bites of the grass before taking him into the kitchen—lest the roundheads should find him. The next moment, however, out came Tom in terror, saying there was a man in his mother's closet, and he feared the roundheads were in possession.

'Then take care of thyself, Tom,' said Dorothy; and mounting instantly, she made Dick scramble up into the fields that lay between the cottage and her own house, and set off at full speed across the grass in the moonlight—an ethereal pleasure which not even an anxious secret could blast.

Through a gap in the hedge she had just popped into the second field, when she heard the click of a flint-lock, and a voice she thought she knew ordering her to stand: within a few yards of her was again a roundhead soldier. If she rode away, he would fire at her;

that mode of escape therefore she would keep for a last chance. The moon by this time was throwing an unclouded light from more than half a disc upon the field.

Keeping a sharp eye upon the man’s movements, she allowed him to come within a pace or two, but the moment he would have taken Dick by the bridle she was three or four yards away.

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‘Fright not my horse, friend,’ she said.—’But how!’ she added, suddenly remembering him, ’is it possible? Master Upstill! Gently, gently, little Dick! Master Upstill is an old friend. What! hast thou too turned soldier? Left thy last and lapstone and turned soldier, master Upstill?’

‘I have left all and followed him, mistress,’ answered Castdown.

‘Art sure he called thee, master Upstill?’

‘I heard him with my own ears.’

‘Called thee to be a shedder of blood, master Upstill?’

‘Called me to be a fisher of men, and thee I catch, mistress—thus,’ returned the man, stepping quickly forward and making another grasp at Dick’s bridle.

It was all Dorothy could do to keep herself from giving him a smart blow across the face with her whip, and riding off. But she gave Dick the cut instead, and sent him yards away.

‘Poor Dick! poor Dick!’ she said, patting his neck; ’be quiet; master Upstill will do thee no wrong. Be quiet, little man.’

As she thus talked to her genet, Upstill again drew near, now more surly than at first.

‘Say what manner of woman art thou?’ he demanded with pompous anger. ‘Whence comes thou, and whither does thee go?’

‘Home,’ answered Dorothy.

‘What place calls thee home?’

’Why! dost not know me, master Upstill? When I was a little one, thou didst make my shoes for me.’

’I trust it will be forgiven me, mistress. Truly I had ne’er made shoe for thee an’ I had foreseen what thee would come to! For I make no farther doubt thou art a consorter with malignants, harlots, and papists.’

Again he clutched at her bridle, and this time, whether it was Dorothy or Dick’s fault, with success. Dorothy dropped the bridle, put her hand in her pocket, struck Dick smartly with her whip, and as he reared in consequence, drew it across Upstill’s eyes, and so found the chance of administering her bolus.

It was thoroughly effective. The fellow left his hold of the bridle, and began a series of efforts to remove it, which rapidly grew wilder and wilder, until at last his gestures were those of a maniac.

‘There!’ she cried, as she bounded from him, ’take thy first lesson in good manners. No one can rid thee of that mouthful, which is as thy evil words returned to choke thee!—-Thou hadst better keep me in sight,’ she added, as she gave Dick his head, ’for no one else can free thee.’

Upstill ceased his futile efforts, caught up his carbine, and fired—not without risk to Dorothy, for he was far too wrathful to take the aim that would have ensured her safety. But she rode on unhurt, meditating how to secure Upstill when she got him to Wyfern, whither she doubted not he would follow her. Her difficulties were not yet past, however, for just as she reached her own ground, she was once again met by the order to stand.

This time it came in a voice which, notwithstanding the anxiety it brought with it, was almost as welcome as well known, and yet made her tremble for the first time that night: it was the voice of Richard Heywood. Dick also seemed to know it, for he stood without a hint from his mistress, while, through the last hedge that parted her from the little yet remaining of the property of her fathers, came the man she loved—an enemy between her and her own.

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The marquis's request to be allowed to communicate with the king had been an unfortunate one. It increased suspicion of all kinds, rendered the various reports of the landing of the Irish army under lord Glamorgan more credible, roused the resolution to render all communication impossible, and led to the drawing of a cordon around the place that not a soul should pass unquestioned. The measure would indeed have been unavailing had the garrison been as able as formerly to make sallies; but ever since colonel Morgan received his reinforcement, the issuing troopers had been invariably met at but a few yards from home, and immediately driven in again by largely superior numbers. Still the cordon required a good many more men than the besieging party could well spare without too much weakening their positions, and they had therefore sought the aid of all the gentlemen of puritian politics in the vicinity, and of course that of Mr. Heywood. With the men his father sent, Richard himself offered his services, in the hope that, at the coming fall of the stronghold, he might have a chance of being useful to Dorothy. They had given the cordon a wide extension, in order that an issuing messenger might not perceive his danger until he was too far from the castle to regain it, and then by capturing him might acquire information. Hence it came that posts could be assigned to Richard and his men within such a distance of Redware as admitted of their being with their own people when off duty.

CHAPTER LIII.

Faithful foes.

Hearing Upstill's shot, and then Dick's hoofs on the sward, Richard fortunately judged well and took the right direction. What was his astonishment and delight when, passing hurriedly through the hedge in the expectation of encountering a cavalier, he saw Dorothy mounted on Dick! What form but hers had been filling soul and brain when he was startled by the shot! And there she was before him! He felt like one who knows the moon is weaving a dream in his brain.

'Dorothy,' he murmured tremblingly, and his voice sounded to him like that of some one speaking far away. He drew nearer, as one might approach a beloved ghost, anxious not to scare her. He laid his hand on Dick's neck, half fearful of finding him but a shadow.

'Richard!' said Dorothy, looking down on him benignant as Diana upon Endymion.

Then suddenly, at her voice and the assurance of her bodily presence, a great wave from the ocean of duty broke thunderous on the shore of his consciousness.

'Dorothy, I am bound to question thee,' he said: 'whence comest thou? and whither art thou bound?'

‘If I should refuse to answer thee, Richard?’ returned Dorothy with a smile.

’Then must I take thee to headquarters. And bethink thee, Dorothy, how that would cut me to the heart.’

The moon shone full upon his face, and Dorothy saw the end of a great scar that came from under his hat down on to his forehead.

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‘Then will I answer thee, Richard,’ she said, with a strange trembling in her voice. ‘—I come from Raglan.’

‘And whither art going, Dorothy?’

‘To Wyfern.’

‘On what business?’

’Were it then so wonderful, Richard, if I should desire to be at home, seeing Wyfern is now safer than Raglan? It was for safety I went thither, thou knowest.’

’It might not be wonderful in another, Dorothy, but in thee it were truly wonderful; for now are they of Raglan thy friends, and thou art a brave woman, and lovest thy friends. I would not believe it of thee even from the mouth of thy mother. Confess—thou bearest about thee that thou wouldst not willingly show me.’

Dorothy, as if in embarrassment, drew from her pocket her handkerchief, and with it a comb, which fell on the ground.

‘Prithee, Richard, pick me up my comb,’ she said; then, answering his question, continued, ’—No, I have nothing about me I would not show thee, Richard: wilt thou take my word for it?’

When she had spoken, she held out her hand, and receiving from him the comb, replaced it in her pocket. But a keen pang of remorse went through her heart.

‘I am a man under authority,’ said Richard, ’and my orders will not allow me. Besides thou knowest, Dorothy, although it involves such questions in casuistry as I cannot meet, men say thou art not bound to tell the truth to thine enemy.’

‘An’ thou be mine enemy, Richard, then must thou satisfy thyself,’ said Dorothy, trying to speak in a tone of offence. But while she sat there looking at him, it seemed as if her heart were floating on the top of a great wave out somewhere in the moonlight. Yet the conscience-dog was awake in his kennel.

Richard stood for a moment in silent perplexity.

‘Wilt thou swear to me, Dorothy,’ he said at length, ’that thou hast no papers about thee, neither art the bearer of news or request or sign to any of the king’s party?’

‘Richard,’ returned Dorothy, ’thou hast thyself taken from my words the credit: I say to thee again, satisfy thyself.’

‘Dorothy, what *am* I to do?’ he cried.

‘Thy duty, Richard,’ she answered.

‘My duty is to search thee,’ he said.

Dorothy was silent. Her heart was beating terribly, but she would see the end of the path she had taken ere she would think of turning. And she *would* trust Richard. Would she then have him fail of his duty? Would she have the straight-going Richard swerve? Even in the face of her maidenly fears, she would encounter anything rather than Richard should for her sake be false. But Richard would not turn aside. Neither would he shame her. He would find some way.

‘Do then thy duty, Richard,’ she said, and sliding from her saddle, she stood before him, one hand grasping Dick’s mane.

There was no defiance in her tone. She was but submitting, assured of deliverance.

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What was Richard to do? Never man was more perplexed. He dared not let her pass. He dared no more touch her than if she had been Luna herself standing there. He would not had he dared, and yet he must. She was silent, seemed to herself cruel, and began bitterly to accuse herself. She saw his hazel eyes slowly darken, then began to glitter—was it with gathering tears? The glitter grew and overflowed. The man was weeping! The tenderness of their common childhood rushed back upon her in a great wave out of the past, ran into the rising billow of present passion, and swelled it up till it towered and broke; she threw her arm round his neck and kissed him. He stood in a dumb ecstasy. Then terror lest he should think she was tempting him to brave his conscience overpowered her.

'Richard, do thy duty. Regard not me,' she cried in anguish.

Richard gave a strange laugh as he answered,

'There was a time when I had doubted the sun in heaven as soon as thy word, Dorothy. This is surely an evil time. Tell me, yea or nay, hast thou missives to the king or any of his people? Palter not with me.'

But such an appeal was what Dorothy would least willingly encounter. The necessity yet difficulty of escaping it stimulated the wits that had been overclouded by feeling. A light appeared. She broke into a real merry laugh.

'What a pair of fools we are, Richard!' she said. 'Is there never an honest woman of thy persuasion near—one who would show me no favour? Let such an one search me, and tell thee the truth.'

'Doubtless,' answered Richard, laughing very differently now at his stupidity, yet immediately committing a blunder: 'there is mother Rees!'

'What a baby thou art, Richard!' rejoined Dorothy. 'She is as good a friend of mine as of thine, and would doubtless favour the wiles of a woman.'

'True, true! Thou wast always the keener of wit, Dorothy—as becometh a woman. What say'st thou then to dame Upstill? She is even now at the farm there, whence she watches over her husband while he watches over Raglan. Will she answer thy turn?'

'She will,' replied Dorothy. 'And that she may show me no favour, here comes her husband, who shall bear a witness against me shall rouse in her all the malice of vengeance for her injured spouse, whom for his evil language, as thou shalt see, I have so silenced as neither thou nor any man can restore him to speech.'

While she spoke, Upstill, who had followed his enemy as the sole hope of deliverance, drew near, in such plight as the dignity of narrative refuses to describe.

‘Upstill,’ said Richard, ’what meaneth this? Wherefore hast thou left thy post? And above all, wherefore hast thou permitted this lady to pass unquestioned?’

Sounds of gurgle and strangulation, with other cognate noises, was all Upstill’s response.

‘Indeed, Mr. Heywood,’ said Dorothy, ’he was so far from neglecting his duty and allowing me to pass unquestioned, that he insulted me grievously, averring that I consorted with malignant rogues and papists, and worse—the which drove me to punish him as thou seest.’

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’Cast-down Upstill, thou hast shamed thy regiment, carrying thyself thus to a gentlewoman,’ said Richard.

‘Then he fired his carbine after me,’ said Dorothy.

‘That may have been but his duty,’ returned Richard.

‘And worst of all,’ continued Dorothy, ’he said that had he known what I should grow to, he would never have made shoes for me when I was an infant. Think on that, master Heywood!’

‘Ask the lady to pardon thee, Upstill. I can do nothing for thee,’ said Richard.

Upstill would have knelt, in lack of other mode of petition strong enough to express the fervour of his desires for release, but Dorothy was content to see him punished, and would not see him degraded.

‘Nay, master Upstill,’ she said, ’I desire not that thou shouldst take the measure of my foot to-night. Prithee, master Heywood, wilt thou venture thy fingers in the godly man’s mouth for me? Here is the key of the toy, a sucket which will pass neither teeth nor throat. I warrant thee it were no evil thing for many a married woman to possess. I will give it thee when thou marriest, master Heywood, though, good sooth, it were hardly fair to my kind!’

So saying she took a ring from her finger, raised from it a key, and directed Richard how to find its hole in the plum.

’There! Follow us now to the farm, and find thy wife, for we need her aid,’ said Richard as he drew by the key the little steel instrument from Upstill’s mouth, and restored him to the general body of the articulate.

Thereupon he took Dick by the bridle, and Dorothy and he walked side by side, as if they had been still boy and girl as of old—for of old it already seemed.

As they went, Richard washed both plum and ring in the dewy grass, and restored them, putting the ring upon her finger.

‘With better light I will one day show thee how the thing worketh,’ she said, thanking him. ’Holding it thus by the ends, thou seest, it will bear to be pressed; but remove thy finger and thumb, and straight upon a touch it shooteth its stings in all directions. And yet another day, when these troubles are over, and honest folk need no longer fight each other, I will give it thee, Richard.’

’Would that day were here, Dorothy! But what can honest people do, while St. George and St. Michael are themselves at odds?’

’Mayhap it but seemeth so, and they but dispute across the Yule-log,’ said Dorothy; ’and men down here, like the dogs about the fire, take it up, and fall a-worrying each other. But the end will crown all.’

‘Discrown some, I fear,’ said Richard to himself.

As they reached the farm-house, it was growing light. Upstill fetched his dame from her bed in the hayloft, and Richard told her, in formal and authoritative manner, what he required of her.

‘I will search her!’ answered the dame from between her closed teeth.

‘Mistress Vaughan,’ said Richard, ’if she offer thee evil words, give her the same lesson thou gavest her husband. If all tales be true, she is not beyond the need of it.—Search her well, mistress Upstill, but show her no rudeness, for she hath the power to avenge it in a parlous manner, having gone to school to my lord Herbert of Raglan. Not the less must thou search her well, else will I look upon thee as no better than one of the malignants.’

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The woman cast a glance of something very like hate, but mingled with fear, upon Dorothy.

‘I like not the business, captain Heywood,’ she said.

’Yet the business must be done, mistress Upstill. And hark’ee, for every paper thou findest upon her, I will give thee its weight in gold. I care not what it is. Bring it hither, and the dame’s butter-scales withal.’

‘I warrant thee, captain!’ she returned. ’—Come with me, mistress, and show what thou hast about thee. But, good sooth, I would the sun were up!’

She led the way to the rick-yard, and round towards the sunrise. It was the month of August, and several new ricks already stood facing the east, yellow, and beginning to glow like a second dawn. Between the two, mistress Upstill began her search, which she made more thorough than agreeable. Dorothy submitted without complaint.

At last, as she was giving up the quest in despair, her eyes or her fingers discovered a little opening inside the prisoner bodice, and there sure enough was a pocket, and in the pocket a slip of paper! She drew it out in triumph.

‘That is nothing,’ said Dorothy: ‘give it me.’ And with flushed face she made a snatch at it.

‘Holy Mary!’ cried dame Upstill, whose protestantism was of doubtful date, and thrust the paper into her own bosom.

‘That paper hath nothing to do with state affairs, I protest,’ expostulated Dorothy. ’I will give thee ten times its weight in gold for it.’

But mistress Upstill had other passions besides avarice, and was not greatly tempted by the offer. She took Dorothy by the arm, and said,

‘An’ thou come not quickly, I will cry that all the parish shall hear me.’

’I tell thee, mistress Upstill, on the oath of a Christian woman, it is but a private letter of mine own, and beareth nothing upon affairs. Prithee read a word or two, and satisfy thyself.’

’Nay, mistress, truly I will pry into no secrets that belong not to me,’ said the searcher, who could read no word of writing or print either. ’This paper is no longer thine, and mine it never was. It belongeth to the high court of parliament, and goeth straight to captain Heywood—whom I will inform concerning the bribe wherewith thou didst seek to corrupt the conscience of a godly woman.’

Dorothy saw there was no help, and yielded to the grasp of the dame, who led her like a culprit, with burning cheek, back to her judge.

When Richard saw them his heart sank within him.

‘What hast thou found?’ he asked gruffly.

’I have found that which young mistress here would have had me cover with a bribe of ten times that your honour promised me for it,’ answered the woman. ’She had it in her bosom, hid in a pocket little bigger than a crown-piece, inside her bodice.’

‘Ha, mistress Dorothy! is this true?’ asked Richard, turning on her a face of distress.

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‘It is true,’ answered Dorothy, with downcast eyes—far more ashamed however, of that which had not been discovered, and which might have justified Richard’s look, than of that which he now held in his hand. ‘Prithee,’ she added, ‘do not read it till I am gone.’

‘That may hardly be,’ returned Richard, almost sullenly. ’Upon this paper it may depend whether thou go at all.’

‘Believe me, Richard, it hath no importance,’ she said, and her blushes deepened. ‘I would thou wouldst believe me.’

But as she said it, her conscience smote her.

Richard returned no answer, neither did he open the paper, but stood with his eyes fixed on the ground.

Dorothy meantime strove to quiet her conscience, saying to herself: ‘It matters not; I must marry him one day—an’ he will now have me. Hath not the woman told him where the silly paper was hid? And when I am married to him, then will I tell him all, and doubtless he will forgive me—Nay, nay, I must tell him first, for he might not then wish to have me. Lord! Lord! what a time of lying it is! Sure for myself I am no better than one of the wicked!’

But now Richard, slowly, reluctantly, with eyes averted, opened the paper, stood for an instant motionless, then suddenly raised it, and looked at it. His face changed at once from midnight to morning, and the sunrise was red. He put the paper to his lips, and thrust it inside his doublet. It was his own letter to her by Marquis! She had not thought to remove it from the place where she had carried it ever since receiving it.

‘And now, master Heywood, I may go where I will?’ said Dorothy, venturing a half-roguish, but wholly shamefaced glance at him.

But Dame Upstill was looking on, and Richard therefore brought as much of the midnight as would obey orders, back over his countenance as he answered:

‘Nay, mistress. An’ we had found aught upon thee of greater consequence it might have made a question. But this hardly accounts for thy mission. Doubtless thou bearest thy message in thy mind.’

’What! thou wilt not let me go to Wyfern, to my own house, master Heywood?’ said Dorothy in a tone of disappointment, for her heart now at length began to fail her.

‘Not until Raglan is ours,’ answered Richard. ’Then shalt thou go where thou wilt. And go where thou wilt, there will I follow thee, Dorothy.’

From the last clause of this speech he diverted mistress Upstill's attention by throwing her a gold noble, an indignity which the woman rightly resented—but stooped for the money!

'Go tell thy husband that I wait him here,' he said.

'Thou shalt follow me nowhither,' said Dorothy, angrily. 'Wherefore should not I go to Wyfern and there abide? Thou canst there watch her whom thou trustest not.'

'Who can tell what manner of person might not creep to Wyfern, to whom there might messages be given, or whom thou mightest send, credenced by secret word or sign?'

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‘Whither, then, am I to go?’ asked Dorothy, with dignity.

‘Alas, Dorothy!’ answered Richard, ’there is no help: I must take thee to Raglan. But comfort thyself—soon shalt thou go where thou wilt.’

Dorothy marvelled at her own resignation the while she rode with Richard back to the castle. Her scheme was a failure, but through no fault, and she could bear anything with composure except blame.

A word from Richard to colonel Morgan was sufficient. A messenger with a flag of truce was sent instantly to the castle, and the firing on both sides ceased. The messenger returned, the gate was opened, and Dorothy re-entered, defeated, but bringing her secrets back with her.

‘Tit for tat,’ said the marquis when she had recounted her adventures. ’Thou and the roundhead are well matched. There is no avoiding of it, cousin! It is your fate, as clear as if your two horoscopes had run into one. Mind thee, hearts are older than crowns, and love outlives all but leasing.’

‘All but leasing!’ repeated Dorothy to herself, and the *but* was bitter.

CHAPTER LIV.

DOMUS DISSOLVITUR.

Scudamore was now much better, partly from the influence of reviving hopes with regard to Dorothy, for his disposition was such that he deceived himself in the direction of what he counted advantage; not like Heywood, who was ever ready to believe what in matters personal told against him. Tom Fool had just been boasting of his exploit in escaping from Raglan, and expressing his conviction that Dorothy, whom he had valiantly protected, was safe at Wyfern, and Rowland was in consequence dressing as fast as he could to pay her a visit, when Tom caught sight of Richard riding towards the cottage, and jumping up, ran into the chimney corner beyond his mother, who was busy with Scudamore’s breakfast. She looked from the window, and spied the cause of his terror.

‘Silly Tom!’ she said, for she still treated him like a child, notwithstanding her boastful belief in his high position and merits, ‘he will not harm thee. There never was hurt in a Heywood.’

‘Treason, flat treason, witch!’ cried the voice of Scudamore from the closet.

‘Thee of all men, sir Rowland, has no cause to say so,’ returned mistress Rees. ’But come and break thy fast while he talks to thee, and save the precious time which runneth so fast away.’

‘I might as well be in my grave for any value it hath to me!’ said Rowland, who was for the moment in a bad mood. His hope and his faith were ever ready to fall out, and a twinge in his shoulder was enough to set them jarring.

‘Here comes master Hey wood, anyhow,’ said the old woman, as Richard, leaving Lady at the gate, came striding up the walk in his great brown boots; ’and I pray you, sir Rowland, to let by-gones be by-gones, for my sake if not for your own, lest thou bring the vengeance of general Fairfax upon my poor house.’

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‘Fairfax!’ cried Scudamore; ‘is that villain come hither?’

’Sir Thomas Fairfax arrived two days agone, answered mistress Rees. ‘Alas, it is but too sure a sign that for Raglan the end is near!’

‘Good morrow, mother Rees,’ said Richard, looking in at the door, radiant as an Apollo. The same moment out came Scudamore from the closet, pale as a dying moon.

‘I want my horse, Heywood!’ he cried, deigning no preliminaries.

’Thy horse is at Redware, Scudamore; I carry him not in my pocket. I saw him yesterday; his flesh hath swallowed a good many of his bones since I looked on him last. What wouldst thou with him?’

‘What is that to thee? Let me have him.’

’Softly, sir Rowland! It is true I promised thee thy liberty, but liberty doth not necessarily include a horse.’

‘Thou wast never better than a shifting fanatic!’ cried sir Rowland.

‘An’ I served thee as befitted, thou shouldst never see thy horse again,’ returned Richard. ’Yet I promise thee that so soon as Raglan hath fallen, he shall again be thine. Nay, I care not. Tell me whither thou goest, and—Ha! art thou there?’ he cried, interrupting himself as he caught sight of Tom in the chimney corner; and pausing, he stood silent for a moment. ’—Wouldst like to hear, thou rascal,’ he resumed presently, ’that mistress Dorothy Vaughan got safe to Wyfern this morning?’

‘God be praised!’ said Tom Fool.

’But thou shalt not hear it. I will tell thee better if less welcome news—that I come from conducting her back to Raglan in safety, and have seen its gates close upon her. Thou shalt have thy horse, sir Rowland, an’ thou can wait for him an hour; but for thy ride to Wyfern, that, thou seest, would not avail thee. Thy cousin rode by here this morning, it is true, but, as I say, she is now within Raglan walls, whence she will not issue again until the soldiers of the parliament enter. It is no treason to tell thee that general Fairfax is about to send his final summons ere he storm the rampart.’

‘Then mayst thou keep the horse, for I will back to Raglan on foot,’ said Scudamore.

’Nay, that wilt thou not, for nought greatly larger than a mouse can any more pass through the lines. Dost think because I sent back thy cousin Dorothy, lest she should work mischief outside the walls, I will therefore send thee back to work mischief within them?’

‘And thou art the man who professeth to love mistress Dorothy!’ cried Scudamore with contempt.

’Hark thee, sir Rowland, and for thy good I will tell thee more. It is but just that as I told thee my doubts, whence thou didst draw hope, I should now tell thee my hopes, whence thou mayst do well to draw a little doubt.’

‘Thou art a mean and treacherous villain!’ cried Scudamore.

’Thou art to blame in speaking that thou dost not believe, sir Rowland. But wilt thou have thy horse or no?’

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‘No; I will remain where I am until I hear the worst.’

’Or come home with me, where thou wilt hear it yet sooner. Thou shalt taste a roundhead’s hospitality.’

‘I scorn thee and thy false friendship,’ cried Rowland, and turning again into the closet, he bolted the door.

That same morning a great iron ball struck the marble horse on his proud head, and flung it in fragments over the court. From his neck the water bubbled up bright and clear, like the life-blood of the wounded whiteness.

‘Poor Molly!’ said the marquis, when he looked from his study-window—then smiled at his pity.

Lord Charles entered: a messenger had come from general Fairfax, demanding a surrender in the name of the parliament.

’If they had but gone on a little longer, Charles, they might have saved us the trouble,’ said his lordship, ’for there would have been nothing left to surrender.—But I will consider the proposal,’ he added. ’Pray tell sir Thomas that whatever I do, I look first to have it approved of the king.’

But there was no longer the shadow of a question as to submission. All that was left was but the arrangement of conditions. The marquis was aware that captain Hooper’s trenches were rapidly approaching the rampart; that six great mortars for throwing shells had been got into position; and that resistance would be the merest folly.

Various meetings, therefore, of commissioners appointed on both sides for the settling of the terms of submission took place; and at last, on the fifteenth of August, they were finally arranged, and the surrender fixed for the seventeenth.

The interval was a sad time. All day long tears were flowing, the ladies doing their best to conceal, the servants to display them. Every one was busy gathering together what personal effects might be carried away. It was especially a sad time for lord Glamorgan’s children, for they were old enough not merely to love the place, but to know that they loved it; and the thought that the sacred things of their home were about to pass into other hands, roused in them wrath and indignation as well as grief; for the sense of property is, in the minds of children who have been born and brought up in the midst of family possessions, perhaps stronger than in the minds of their elders.

As the sun was going down on the evening of the sixteenth, Dorothy, who had been helping now one and now another of the ladies all day long, having, indeed, little of her own to demand her attention, Dick and Marquis being almost her sole valuables, came from the keep, and was crossing the fountain court to her old room on its western side.

Every one was busy indoors, and the place appeared deserted. There was a stillness in the air that *sounded* awful. For so many weeks it had been shattered with roar upon roar, and now the guns had ceased to bellow, leaving a sense of vacancy and doubt, an oppression of silence. The hum that came from the lines outside seemed but to enhance the stillness within. But the sunlight lived on sweet and calm, as if all was well. It seemed to promise that wrath and ruin would pass, and leave no lasting desolation behind them. Yet she could not help heaving a great sigh, and the tears came streaming down her cheeks.

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’Tut, tut, cousin! Wipe thine eyes. The dreary old house is not worth such bright tears.’

Dorothy turned, and saw the marquis seated on the edge of the marble basin, under the headless horse, whose blood seemed still to well from his truncated form. She saw also that, although his words were cheerful, his lip quivered. It was some little time before she could compose herself sufficiently to speak.

‘I marvel your lordship is so calm,’ she said.

‘Come hither, Dorothy,’ he returned kindly, ’and sit thee down by my side. Thou wast right good to my little Molly. Thou hast been a ministering angel to Raglan and its people. I did thee wrong, and thou forgavest me with a whole heart. Thou hast returned me good for evil tenfold, and for all this I love thee; and therefore will I now tell thee what maketh me quiet at heart, for I am as thou seest me, and my heart is as my countenance. I have lived my life, and have now but to die my death. I am thankful to have lived, and I hope to live hereafter. Goodness and mercy went before my birth, and goodness and mercy will follow my death. For the ills of this life, if there was no silence there would be no music. Ignorance is a spur to knowledge. Darkness is a pavilion for the Almighty, a foil to the painter to make his shadows. So are afflictions good for our instruction, and adversities for our amendment. As for the article of death, shall I shun to meet what she who lay in my bosom hath passed through? And look you, fair damsel, thou whose body is sweet, and comely to behold—wherefore should I not rejoice to depart? When I see my house lying in ruins about me, I look down upon this ugly overgrown body of mine, the very foundations whereof crumble from beneath me, and I thank God it is but a tent, and no enduring house even like this house of Raglan, which yet will ere long be a dwelling of owls and foxes. Very soon will Death pull out the tent-pins and let me fly, and therefore am I glad; for, fair damsel Dorothy, although it may be hard for thee, beholding me as I am, to comprehend it, I like to be old and ugly as little as wouldst thou, and my heart, I verily think, is little, older than thine own. One day, please God, I shall yet be clothed upon with a house that is from heaven, nor shall I hobble with gouty feet over the golden pavement—if so be that my sins overpass not mercy. Pray for me, Dorothy, my daughter, for my end is nigh, that I find at length the bosom of father Abraham.’

As he ended, a slow flower of music bloomed out upon the silence from under the fingers of the blind youth hid in the stony shell of the chapel; and, doubtful at first, its fragrance filled at length the whole sunset air. It was the music of a Nunc dimittis of Palestrina. Dorothy knelt and kissed the old man’s hand, then rose and went weeping to her chamber, leaving him still seated by the broken yet flowing fountain.

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Of all who prepared to depart, Caspar Kaltoff was the busiest. What best things of his master's he could carry with him, he took, but a multitude he left to a more convenient opportunity, in the hope of which, alone and unaided, he sunk his precious cabinet, and a chest besides, filled with curious inventions and favourite tools, in the secret shaft. But the most valued of all, the fire-engine, he could not take and would not leave. He stopped the fountain of the white horse, once more set the water-commanding slave to work, and filled the cistern until he heard it roar in the waste-pipe. Then he extinguished the fire and let the furnace cool, and when Dorothy entered the workshop for the last time to take her mournful leave of the place, there lay the bones of the mighty creature scattered over the floor—here a pipe, there a valve, here a piston and there a cock. Nothing stood but the furnace and the great pipes that ran up the grooves in the wall outside, between which there was scarce a hint of connection to be perceived.

'Mistress Dorothy,' he said, 'my master is the greatest man in Christendom, but the world is stupid, and will forget him because it never knew him.'

Amongst her treasures, chief of them all, even before the gifts of her husband, lady Glamorgan carried with her the last garments, from sleeve-ribbons to dainty little shoes and rosettes, worn by her Molly.

Dr. Bayly carried a bag of papers and sermons, with his doctor's gown and hood, and his best suit of clothes.

The marquis with his own hand put up his Vulgate, and left his Gower behind. Ever since the painful proofs of its failure with the king, he had felt if not a dislike yet a painful repugnance to the volume, and had never opened it.

It was a troubled night, the last they spent in the castle. Not many slept. But the lord of it had long understood that what could cease to be his never had been his, and slept like a child. Dr. Bayly, who in his loving anxiety had managed to get hold of his key, crept in at midnight, and found him fast asleep; and again in the morning, and found him not yet waked.

When breakfast was over, proclamation was made that at nine o'clock there would be prayers in the chapel for the last time, and that the marquis desired all to be present. When the hour arrived, he entered leaning on the arm of Dr. Bayly. Dorothy followed with the ladies of the family. Young Delaware was in his place, and 'with organ voice and voice of psalms,' praise and prayer arose for the last time from the house of Raglan. All were in tears save the marquis. A smile played about his lips, and he looked like a child giving away his toy. Sir Toby Mathews tried hard to speak to his flock, but broke down, and had to yield the attempt. When the services were over, the marquis rose and said,

’Master Delaware, once more play thy Nunc dimittis, and so meet me every one in the hall.’

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Thither the marquis himself walked first, and on the dais seated himself in his chair of state, with his family and friends around him, and the officers of his household waiting. On one side of him stood sir Ralph Blackstone, with a bag of gold, and on the other Mr. George Wharton, the clerk of the accounts, with a larger bag of silver. Then each of the servants, in turn according to position, was called before him by name, and with his own hand the marquis, dipping now into one bag, now into the other, gave to each a small present in view of coming necessities: they had the day before received their wages. To each he wished a kind farewell, to some adding a word of advice or comfort. He then handed the bags to the governor, and told him to distribute their contents according to his judgment amongst the garrison. Last, he ordered every one to be ready to follow him from the gates the moment the clock struck the hour of noon, and went to his study.

When lord Charles came to tell him that all were marshalled, and everything ready for departure, he found him kneeling, but he rose with more of agility than he had for a long time been able to show, and followed his son.

With slow pace he crossed, the courts and the hall, which were silent as the grave, bending his steps to the main entrance. The portcullises were up, the gates wide open, the drawbridge down—all silent and deserted. The white stair was also vacant, and in solemn silence the marquis descended, leaning on lord Charles. But beneath was a gallant show, yet, for all its colour and shine, mournful enough. At the foot of the stair stood four carriages, each with six horses in glittering harness, and behind them all the officers of the household and all the guests on horseback. Next came the garrison-music of drums and trumpets, then the men-servants on foot, and the women, some on foot and some in waggons with the children. After them came the waggons loaded with such things as they were permitted to carry with them. These were followed by the principal officers of the garrison, colonels and captains, accompanied by their troops, consisting mostly of squires and gentlemen, to the number of about two hundred, on horseback. Last came the foot-soldiers of the garrison and those who had lost their horses, in all some five hundred, stretching far away, round towards the citadel, beyond the sight. Colours were flying and weapons glittering, and though all was silence except for the pawing of a horse here and there, and the ringing of chain-bridles, everything looked like an ordered march of triumph rather than a surrender and evacuation. Still there was a something in the silence that seemed to tell the true tale.

In the front carriage were lady Glamorgan and the ladies Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary. In the carriages behind came their gentlewomen and their lady visitors, with their immediate attendants. Dorothy, mounted on Dick, with Marquis's chain fastened to the pommel of her saddle, followed the last carriage. Beside her rode young Delaware, and his father, the master of the horse.

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‘Open the white gate,’ said the marquis from the stair as he descended.

The great clock of the castle struck, and with the last stroke of the twelve came the blast of a trumpet from below.

‘Answer, trumpets,’ cried the marquis.

The governor repeated the order, and a tremendous blare followed, in which the drums unbidden joined.

This was the signal to the warders at the brick gate, and they flung its two leaves wide apart.

Another blast from below, and in marched on horseback general Fairfax with his staff, followed by three hundred foot. The latter drew up on each side of the brick gate, while the general and his staff went on to the marble gate.

As soon as they appeared within it, the marquis, who had halted in the midst of his descent, came down to meet them. He bowed to the general, and said:—

’I would it were as a guest I received you, sir Thomas, for then might I honestly bid you welcome. But that I cannot do when you so shake my poor nest that you shake the birds out of it. But though I cannot bid you welcome, I will notwithstanding heartily bid you farewell, sir Thomas, and I thank you for your courtesy to me and mine. This nut of Raglan was, I believe, the last you had to crack. Amen. God’s will be done.’

The general returned civil answer, and the marquis, again bowing graciously, advanced to the foremost carriage, the door of which was held for him by sir Ralph, the steward, while lord Charles stood by to assist his father. The moment he had entered, the two gentlemen mounted the horses held for them one on each side of the carriage, lord Charles gave the word, the trumpets once more uttered a loud cry, the marquis’s moved, the rest followed, and in slow procession lord Worcester and his people, passing through the gates, left for ever the house of Raglan, and in his heart Henry Somerset bade the world good-bye.

General Fairfax and his company ascended the great white stair, crossed the moat on the drawbridge, passed under the double portcullis and through the gates, and so entered the deserted court. All was frightfully still; the windows stared like dead eyes—-the very houses seemed dead; nothing alive was visible except one scared cat: the cannonade had driven away all the pigeons, and a tile had killed the patriarch of the peacocks. They entered the great hall and admired its goodly proportions, while not a few expressions of regret at the destruction of such a magnificent house escaped them; then as soldiers they proceeded to examine the ruins, and distinguish the results wrought by the different batteries.

‘Gentlemen,’ said sir Thomas, ’had the walls been as strong as the towers, we should have been still sitting in yonder field.’

In the meantime the army commissioner, Thomas Herbert by name, was busy securing with the help of his men the papers and valuables, and making an inventory of such goods as he considered worth removing for sale in London.

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Having satisfied his curiosity with a survey of the place, and left a guard to receive orders from Mr. Herbert, the general mounted again and rode to Chepstow, where there was a grand entertainment that evening to celebrate the fall of Raglan, the last of the strongholds of the king.

CHAPTER LV.

R. I. P.

As the sad, shining company of the marquis went from the gates, running at full speed to overtake the rear ere it should have passed through, came Caspar, and mounting a horse led for him, rode near Dorothy.

As they left the brick gate, a horseman joined the procession from outside. Pale and worn, with bent head and sad face, sir Rowland Scudamore fell into the ranks amongst his friends of the garrison, and with them rode in silence.

Many a look did Dorothy cast around her as she rode, but only once, on the crest of a grassy hill that rose abrupt from the highway a few miles from Raglan, did she catch sight of Richard mounted on Lady. All her life after, as often as trouble came, that figure rose against the sky of her inner world, and was to her a type of the sleepless watch of the universe.

Soon, from flank and rear, in this direction and that, each to some haven or home, servants and soldiers began to drop away. Before they reached the forest of Dean, the cortege had greatly dwindled, for many belonged to villages, small towns, and farms on the way, and their orders had been to go home and wait better times. When he reached London, except the chief officers of his household, one of his own pages, and some of his daughters' gentlewomen and menials, the marquis had few attendants left beyond Caspar and Shafto.

It was a long and weary journey for him, occupying a whole week. One evening he was so tired and unwell that they were forced to put up with what quarters they could find in a very poor little town. Early in the morning, however, they were up and away. When they had gone some ten miles—lord Charles was riding beside the coach and chatting with his sisters—a remark was made not complimentary to their accommodation of the previous night.

'True,' said lord Charles; 'it was a very scurvy inn, but we must not forget that the reckoning was cheap.'

While he spoke, one of the household had approached the marquis, who sat on the other side of the carriage, and said something in a low voice.

‘Say’st thou so!’ returned his lordship. ’—Hear’st thou, my lord Charles? Thou talkest of a cheap reckoning! I never paid so dear for a lodging in my life. Here is master Wharton hath just told me that they have left a thousand pound under a bench in the chamber we broke our fast in. Truly they are overpaid for what we had!’

‘We have sent back after it, my lord,’ said Mr. Wharton.

‘You will never see the money again,’ said lord Charles.

‘Oh, peace!’ said the marquis. ’If they will not be known of the money, you shall see it in a brave inn in a short time.’

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Nothing more was said on the matter, and the marquis seemed to have forgotten it. Late at night, at their next halting-place, the messenger rejoined them, having met a drawer, mounted on a sorry horse, riding after them with the bag, but little prospect of overtaking them before they reached London.

‘I thought our hostess seemed an honest woman!’ said lady Anne.

’It is a poor town, indeed, lord Charles, but you see it is an honest one nevertheless!’ said Dr. Bayly.

‘It may be the town never saw so much money before,’ said the marquis, ‘and knew not what to make of it.’

‘Your lordship is severe,’ said the doctor.

‘Only with my tongue, good doctor, only with my tongue,’ said the marquis, laughing.

When they reached London, lord Worcester found himself, to his surprise, in custody of the Black Rod, who, as now for some three years Worcester House in the Strand had been used for a state-paper office, conducted him to a house in Covent Garden, where he lodged him in tolerable comfort and mild imprisonment. Parliament was still jealous of Glamorgan and his Irish doings—as indeed well they might be.

But his confinement was by no means so great a trial to him as his indignant friends supposed; for, long willing to depart, he had at length grown a little tired of life, feeling more and more the oppression of growing years, of gout varied with asthma, and, worst of all to the once active man, of his still increasing corpulence, which last indeed, by his own confession, he found it hard to endure with patience. The journey had been too much for him, and he began to lead the life of an invalid.

There being no sufficient accommodation in the house for his family, they were forced to content themselves with lodging as near him as they could, and in these circumstances Dorothy, notwithstanding lady Glamorgan’s entreaties, would have returned home. But the marquis was very unwilling she should leave him, and for his sake she concluded to remain.

‘I am not long for this world, Dorothy,’ he said. ’Stay with me and see the last of the old man. The wind of death has got inside my tent, and will soon blow it out of sight.’

Lady Glamorgan’s intention from the first had been to go to Ireland to her husband as soon as she could get leave. This however she did not obtain until the first of October —five weeks after her arrival in London. She would gladly have carried Dorothy with her, but she would not leave the marquis, who was now failing visibly. As her ladyship’s pass included thirty of her servants, Dorothy felt at ease about her personal comforts, and her husband would soon supply all else.

The ladies Elizabeth and Mary were in the same house with their father; lady Anne and lord Charles were in the house of a relative at no great distance, and visited him every day. Sir Toby Mathews also, and Dr. Bayly, had found shelter in the neighbourhood, so that his lordship never lacked company. But he was going to have other company soon.

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Gently he sank towards the grave, and as he sank his soul seemed to retire farther within, vanishing on the way to the deeper life. They thought he lost interest in life: it was but that the brightness drew him from the glimmer. Every now and then, however, he would come forth from his inner chamber, and standing in his open door look out upon his friends, and tell them what he had seen.

The winter drew on. But first November came, with its 'saint Martin's summer, halcyon days' and the old man revived a little. He stood one morning and looked from his window on the garden behind the house, all glittering with molten hoar-frost. A few leaves, golden with death, hung here and there on a naked bough. A kind of sigh was in the air. The very light had in it as much of resignation as hope. He had forgotten that Dorothy was in the room.

There was Celtic blood in the marquis, and at times his thoughts took shapes that hardly belonged to the Teuton.

'Cometh my youth hither again?' he murmured. 'As a stranger he cometh whom yet I know so well! Or is it but the face of my old age lighted with a parting smile? Either way, change cometh, and change will be good. Domine, in manus tuas.'

He turned and saw Dorothy.

'Child!' he exclaimed, 'good sooth, I had forgotten thee. Yet I spake no treason. Dorothy, I hold not with them who say that from dust we came and to dust we return. Neither my blessed countess, whom thou knewest not, nor my darling Molly, whom thou knewest so well, were born of the dust. From some better where they came—for, say, can dust beget love? Whither they have gone I follow, in the hope that their prayers have smoothed for me the way. Lord, lay not my sins to my charge. Mary, mother, hear my wife who prayeth for me. Hear my little Molly: she was ever dainty and good.'

Again he had forgotten Dorothy, and was with his dead.

But St. Martin's summer is only the lightening of the year that comes before its death; and November, although it brought not then such evil fogs as it now afflicts London withal, yet brought with it November weather—one of God's hounds, with which he hunts us out of the hollows of our own moods, and teaches us to sit on the arch of the cellar. But though the marquis fought hard and kept it out of his mind, it got into his troubled body. The gout left his feet; he coughed distressingly, breathed with difficulty, and at length betook himself to bed.

For some time his interest in politics, save in so much as affected the king's person, had been gradually ceasing.

‘I trust I have done my part,’ he said once to the two clergymen, as they sat by his bedside. ’Yet I know not. I fear me I clove too fast to my money. Yet would I have parted with all, even to my shirt, to make my lord the king a good catholic. But it may be, sir Toby, we make more of such matters down here than they do in the high countries; and in that case, good doctor, ye are to blame who broke away from your mother, even were she not perfect.’

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He crossed himself and murmured a prayer, in fear lest he had been guilty of laxity of judgment. But neither clergyman said a word.

‘But tell me, gentlemen, ye who understand sacred things,’ he resumed, ’can a man be far out of the way so long as, with full heart and no withholding, he saith, Fiat voluntas tua—and that after no private interpretation, but Sicut in caelo?’

‘That, my lord, I also strive to say with all my heart,’ said Dr. Bayly.

‘Mayhap, doctor,’ returned the marquis, ’when thou art as old as I, and hast learned to see how good it is, how all-good, thou wilt be able to say it without any striving. There was a time in my life when I too had to strive, for the thought that he was a hard master would come, and come again. But now that I have learned a little more of what he meaneth with me, what he would have of me and do for me, how he would make me pure of sin, clean from the very bottom of my heart to the crest of my soul, from spur to plume a stainless knight, verily I am no more content to *submit* to his will: I cry in the night time, “Thy will be done: Lord, let it be done, I entreat thee;” and in the daytime I cry, “Thy kingdom come: Lord, let it come, I pray thee.”’

He lay silent. The clergymen left the room, and lord Charles came in, and sat down by his bedside. The marquis looked at him, and said kindly,

‘Ah, son Charles! art thou there?’

’I came to tell you, my lord, the rumour goeth that the king hath consented to establish the presbyterian heresy in the land,’ said lord Charles.

’Believe it not, my lord. A man ought not to believe ill of another so long as there is space enough for a doubt to perch. Yet, alas! what shall be hoped of him who will yield nothing to prayers, and everything to compulsion? Had his majesty been a true prince, he had ere now set his foot on the neck of his enemies, or else ascended to heaven a blessed martyr. “Protestant,” say’st thou? In good sooth, I force not. What is he now but a football for the sectaries to kick to and fro! But I shall pray for him whither I go, if indeed the prayers of such as I may be heard in that country. God be with his majesty. I can do no more. There are other realms than England, and I go to another king. Yet will I pray for England, for she is dear to my heart. God grant the evil time may pass, arid Englishmen yet again grow humble and obedient!’

He closed his eyes, and his face grew so still that, notwithstanding the labour of his breathing, he would have seemed asleep, but that his lips moved a little now and then, giving a flutter of shape to the eternal prayer within him.

Again he opened his eyes, and saw sir Toby, who had re-entered silent as a ghost, and said, feebly holding out his hand, 'I am dying, sir Toby: where will this swollen hulk of mine be hid?'

'That, my lord,' returned sir Toby, 'hath been already spoken of in parliament, and it hath been wrung from them, heretics and fanatics as they are, that your lordship's mortal remains shall lie in Windsor castle, by the side of earl William, the first of the earls of Worcester.'

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‘God bless us all!’ cried the marquis, almost merrily, for he was pleased, and with the pleasure the old humour came back for a moment: ’they will give me a better castle when I am dead than they took from me when I was alive!’

’Yet is it a small matter to him who inherits such a house as awaiteth my lord—domum non manufactam, in caelis aeternam,’ said sir Toby.

’I thank thee, sir Toby, for recalling me. Truly for a moment I was uplifted somewhat. That I should still play the fool, and the old fool, in the very face of Death! But, thank God, at thy word the world hath again dwindled, and my heavenly house drawn the nearer. Domine, nunc dimittis. Let me, so soon as you judge fit, sir Toby, have the consolations of the dying.’

When the last rites, wherein the church yields all hold save that of prayer, had been administered, and his daughters with Dorothy and lord Charles stood around his bed,

‘Now have I taken my staff to be gone,’ he said cheerfully, ’like a peasant who hath visited his friends, and will now return, and they will see him as far upon the road as they may. I tremble a little, but I bethink me of him that made me and died for me, and now calleth me, and my heart revives within me.’

Then he seemed to fall half asleep, and his soul went wandering in dreams that were not all of sleep—just as it had been with little Molly when her end drew near.

’How sweet is the grass for me to lie in, and for thee to eat! Eat, eat, old Ploughman.’

It was a favourite horse of which he dreamed—one which in old days he had named after Piers Ploughman, the Vision concerning whom, notwithstanding its severity on catholic abuses, he had at one time read much.

After a pause he went on—

’Alack, they have shot off his head! What shall I do without my Ploughman—my body groweth so large and heavy!—Hark, I hear Molly! “Spout, horse,” she crieth. See, it is his life-blood he spouteth! O Lord, what shall I do, for I am heavy, and my body keepeth down my soul. Hark! Who calleth me? It is Molly! No, no! it is the Master. Lord, I cannot rise and come to thee. Here have I lain for ages, and my spirit groaneth. Reach forth thy hand, Lord, and raise me. Thanks, Lord, thanks!’

And with the word he was neither old man nor marquis any more.

The parliament, with wondrous liberality, voted five hundred pounds for his funeral, and Dr. Bayly tells us that he laid him in his grave with his own hands. But let us trust rather that Anne and Molly received him into their arms, and soon made him forget all about castles and chapels and dukedoms and ungrateful princes, in the everlasting youth of

the heavenly kingdom, whose life is the presence of the Father, whose air to breathe is love, and whose corn and wine are truth and graciousness.

There surely, and nowhere else as surely, can the prayer be for a man fulfilled: Requiescat in Pace.

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CHAPTER LVI.

Richard and Caspar.

I have now to recount a small adventure, to which it would scarcely be worth while to afford a place, were it not for the important fact that it opened to Richard a great window not only in Dorothy's history while she lived at the castle, but, which was of far more importance, into the character moulding that history—for character has far more to do with determining history than history has to do with determining character. Without the interview whose circumstances I am about to narrate, Richard could not so soon at least have done justice to a character which had been, if not keeping parallel pace with his own, yet advancing rapidly in the same direction.

The decree of the parliament had gone forth that Raglan should be destroyed. The same hour in which the sad news reached Caspar, he set out to secure, if possible, the treasures he had concealed. He had little fear of their being discovered, but great fear of their being rendered inaccessible from the workshop.

Having reached the neighbourhood, he hired a horse and cart from a small farmer whom he knew, and, taking the precaution to put on the dress of a countryman, got on it and drove to the castle. The huge oaken leaves of the brick gate, bound and riveted with iron, lay torn from their hinges, and he entered unquestioned. But instead of the solitude of desertion, for which he had hoped, he found the whole place swarming with country people, men and women, most of them with baskets and sacks, while the space between the outer defences and the moat of the castle itself was filled with country vehicles of every description, from a wheelbarrow to a great waggon.

When the most valuable of the effects found in the place had been carried to London, a sale for the large remainder had been held on the spot, at which not a few of the neighbouring families had been purchasers. After all, however, a great many things were left unhid for, which were not, from a money point of view—the sole one taken—worth removing; and now the peasantry were, like jackals, admitted to pick the bones of the huge carcase, ere the skeleton itself should be torn asunder. Nor could the invading populace have been disappointed of their expectations: they found numberless things of immense value in their eyes, and great use in their meagre economy. For years, I might say centuries after, pieces of furniture and panels of carved oak, bits of tapestry, antique sconces and candlesticks of brass, ancient horse-furniture, and a thousand things besides of endless interest, were to be found scattered in farm-houses and cottages all over Monmouth and neighbouring shires. I should not wonder if, even now in the third century, and after the rage for the collection of such things has so long prevailed, there were some of them still to be discovered in places where no one has thought of looking.

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When Caspar saw what was going on, he judged it prudent to turn and drive his cart into the quarry, and having there secured it, went back and entered the castle. There was a great divided torrent of humanity rushing and lingering through the various lines of rooms, here meeting in whirlpools, there parted into mere rivulets—man and woman searching for whatever might look valuable in his or her eyes. Things that nowadays would fetch their weight in silver, some of them even in gold, were passed by as worthless, or popped into a bag to be carried home for the amusement of cottage children. The noises of hobnailed shoes on the oak floors, and of unrestrained clownish and churlish voices everywhere, were tremendous. Here a fat cottager might be seen standing on a lovely quilt of patchwork brocade, pulling down, rough in her cupidity, curtains on which the new-born and dying eyes of generations of nobles had rested, henceforth to adorn a miserable cottage, while her husband was taking down the bed, larger perhaps, than the room itself in which they would in vain try to set it up, or cruelly forcing a lid, which, having a spring lock, had closed again after the carved chest had been already rifled by the commissioner or his men. The kitchen was full of squabbling women, and the whole place in the agonies of dissolution. But there was a small group of persons, fortuitously met, but linked together by an old painful memory of the place itself, strongly revived by their present meeting, to whom a fanatical hatred of everything catholic, coupled with a profound sense of personal injury, had prevailed over avarice, causing them to leave the part of acquisition to their wives, and aspire to that of pure destruction. It was the same company, almost to a man, whose misadventures in their search of Raglan for arms, under the misguidance of Tom Fool, I have related in an early chapter. In their hearts they nursed a half-persuasion that Raglan had fallen because of their wrongs within its walls, and the shame that there had been heaped upon the godly.

These men, happening to meet, as I say, in the midst of the surrounding tumult, had fallen into a conversation chiefly occupied with reminiscences of that awful experience, whose terrors now looked like an evil dream, and, in a place thus crowded with men and women, buzzing with voices, and resounding with feet, as little likely to return as a vanished thundercloud. In the course of their conversation, therefore, they grew valiant; grew conscious next of a high calling, and resolved therewith to take to themselves the honour of giving the first sweep of the besom of destruction to Raglan Castle. Satisfying themselves first therefore that their wives were doing their duty for their household,—mistress Upstill was as good as two men at least at appropriation,—they set out, Cast-down taking the lead, master Sycamore, John Croning, and the rest following, armed with crowbars, for the top of the great tower, ambitious to commence the overthrow by attacking the very summit, the high places of wickedness, the crown of pride; and after some devious wandering, at length found the way to the stair.

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When Caspar Kaltoff entered the castle, he made straight for the keep, and to his delight found no one in the lower part. To make certain however that he was alone in the place, ere he secured himself from intrusion, he ran up the stair, gave a glance at the doors as he ran, and reached the top just as Upstill in fierce discrowning pride was heaving the first capstone from between two battlements. Casper was close by the cocks; instantly he turned one, and as the dislodged stone struck the water of the moat, a sudden hollow roaring invaded their ears, and while they stood aghast at the well-remembered sound, and ere yet the marrow had time to freeze in their stupid bones, the very moat itself into which they had cast the insulted stone, storming and spouting, seemed to come rushing up to avenge it upon them were they stood. The moment he turned the cock, Casper shot half-way down the stair, but as quietly as he could, and into a little chamber in the wall, where stood two great vessels through which the pipes of the fire-engine inside had communicated with the pipes in the wall outside. There he waited until the steps which, long before he reached his refuge, he heard come thundering down the stairs after him, had passed in headlong haste, when he sprang up again to save the water for another end, and to attach the drawbridge to the sluice, so that it would raise it to its full height. Then he hurried down to the water trap under the bridge and set it, after which he could hardly help wasting a little of his precious time, lurking in a convenient corner to watch the result.

He had not to wait long. The shrieks of the yokels as they ran, and their looks of horror when they appeared, quickly gathered around them a gaping crowd to hear their tale, the more foolhardy in which, partly doubting their word, for the fountains no longer played, and partly ambitious of showing their superior courage, rushed to the Gothic bridge. Down came the drawbridge with a clang, and with it in sheer descent a torrent of water fit to sweep a regiment away, which shot along the stone bridge and dashed them from it bruised and bleeding, and half drowned with the water which in their terror and surprise found easy way into their bodies. Casper withdrew satisfied, for he now felt sure of all the time he required to get some other things he had thought of saving down into the shaft with the cabinet and chest.

Having effected this, and with much labour and difficulty, aided by rollers, got all into the quarry and then into the cart, he did not resist the temptation to go again amongst the crowd, and enjoy listening to the various remarks and conjectures and terrors to which doubtless his trick had given rise. He therefore got a great armful of trampled corn from the field above, and laid it before his patient horse, then ran round and re-entered the castle by the main gate.

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He had not been in the crowd many minutes, however, when he saw indications of suspicion ripening to conviction. What had given ground for it he could not tell, but at some point he must have been seen on the other side of the tower-moat. All this time Upstill and his party had been recounting with various embellishment their adventures both former and latter, and when Kaltoff was recognised, or at least suspected in the crowd, the rumour presently arose and spread that he was either the devil himself, or an accredited agent of that potentate.

‘Be it then the old Satan himself?’ Caspar heard a man say anxiously to his neighbour, as he tried to get a look at his feet, which was not easy in such a press. Caspar, highly amused, and thinking such evil reputation would rather protect than injure him, showed some anxiety about his feet, and made as if he would fain keep them out of the field of observation. But thereupon he saw the faces and gestures of the younger men begin to grow threatening; evidently anger was succeeding to fear, and some of them, fired with the ambition possibly of thrashing the devil, ventured to give him a rough shove or two from behind. Neither outbreak of sulphurous flashes nor even kick of cloven hoof following, they proceeded with the game, and rapidly advanced to such extremities, expostulation in Caspar’s broken English, for such in excitement it always became, seeming only to act as fresh incitement and justification, that at length he was compelled in self-defence to draw a dagger. This checked them a little, and ere audacity had had time to recover itself, a young man came shoving through the crowd, pushing them all right and left until he reached Caspar, and stood by his side. Now there was that about Richard Heywood to give him influence with a crowd: he was a strong man and a gentleman, and they drew back.

‘De fools dink I was de tuyfel!’ said Caspar.

Richard turned upon them with indignation.

‘You Englishmen!’ he cried, ‘and treat a foreigner thus!’

But there was nothing about him to show that he was a roundhead, and from behind rose the cry: ‘A malignant! A royalist!’ and the fellows near began again to advance threateningly.

‘Mr. Heywood,’ said Caspar hurriedly, for he recognised his helper from the time he had seen him a prisoner, ’let us make for the hall. I know the place and can bring us both off safe.’

It was one of Richard’s greatest virtues that he could place much confidence. He gave one glance at his companion, and said, ’I will do as thou sayest.’

‘Follow me then, sir,’ said Caspar, and turning with brandished dagger, he forced his way to the hall-door, Richard following with fists, his sole weapons, defending their rear.

There were but few in the hall, and although their enemies came raging after them, they were impeded by the crowd, so that there was time as they crossed it for Caspar to say:

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’Follow me over the bridge, but, for God’s sake, put your feet exactly where I put mine as we cross. You will see why in a moment after.’

‘I will,’ said Richard, and, delayed a little by needful care, gained the other side just as the foremost of their pursuers rushed on the bridge, and with a clang and a roar were swept from it by the descending torrent.

They lost no time in explanations. Caspar hurried Richard to the workshop, down the shaft, through the passage, and into the quarry, whence, taking no notice of his cart, he went with him to the White Horse, where Lady was waiting him.

And Richard was well rewarded for the kindness he had shown, for ere they said good bye, the German, whose heart was full of Dorothy, and understood, as indeed every one in the castle did, something of her relation to Richard, had told him all he knew about her life in the castle, and how she had been both before and during the siege a guardian angel, as the marquis himself had said, to Raglan. Nor was the story of her attempted visit to her old playfellow in the turret chamber, or the sufferings she had to endure in consequence, forgotten; and when Caspar and he parted, Richard rode home with fresh strength and light and love in his heart, and Lady shared in them all somehow, for she constantly reflected, or imaged rather, the moods of her master. As much as ever he believed Dorothy mistaken, and yet could have kneeled in reverence before her. He had himself tried to do the truth, and no one but he who tries to do the truth can perceive the grandeur of another who does the same. Alive to his own shortcomings, such a one the better understands the success of his brother or sister: there the truth takes to him shape, and he worships at her shrine. He saw more clearly than before what he had been learning ever since she had renounced him, that it is not correctness of opinion—could he be *sure* that his own opinions were correct?—that constitutes rightness, but that condition of soul which, as a matter of course, causes it to move along the lines of truth and duty—the *life* going forth in motion according to the law of light: this alone places a nature in harmony with the central Truth. It was in the doing of the will of his Father that Jesus was the son of God—yea the eternal son of the eternal Father.

Nor was this to make little of the truth intellectually considered—of the *fact* of things. The greatest fact of all is that we are bound to obey the truth, and that to the full extent of our knowledge thereof, however *little* that may be. This obligation acknowledged and *obeyed*, the road is open to all truth—and the *only* road. The way to know is to do the known.

Then why, thought Richard with himself, should he and Dorothy be parted? Why should Dorothy imagine they should? All depended on their common magnanimity, not the magnanimity that pardons faults, but the magnanimity that recognises virtues. He who gladly kneels with one who thinks largely wide from himself, in so doing draws nearer to the Father of both than he who pours forth his soul in sympathetic torrent only in the

company of those who think like himself. If a man be of the truth, then and only then is he of those who gather with the Lord.

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In forms natural to the age and his individual thought, if not altogether in such as I have here put down, Richard thus fashioned his insights as he sauntered home upon Lady, his head above the clouds, and his heart higher than his head—as it ought to be once or twice a day at least. Poor indeed is any worldly success compared to a moment's breathing in divine air, above the region where the miserable word *success* yet carries a meaning.

CHAPTER LVII.

The skeleton.

The death of the marquis took place in December, long before which time the second marquis of Worcester, ever busy in the king's affairs, and unable to show himself with safety in England, or there be useful, had gone from Ireland to Paris.

As the country was now a good deal quieter, and there was nothing to detain her in London, and much to draw her to Wyfern, Dorothy resolved to go home, and there, if possible, remain. Indeed, there was now nothing else she could well do, except visit Mr. Herbert at Llangattock. But much as she revered and loved the old man, and would have enjoyed his company, she felt now such a longing for activity, that she must go and look after her affairs. What with the words of the good marquis and her own late experiences and conflicts, Dorothy had gained much enlightenment. She had learned that well-being is a condition of inward calm, resting upon yet deeper harmonies of being, and resulting in serene activity, the prevention of which natural result reacts in perturbation and confusion of thought and feeling. But for many sakes the thought of home was in itself precious and enticing to her. It was full of clear memories of her mother, and vague memories of her father, not to mention memories of the childhood Richard and she had spent together, from which the late mists had begun to rise, and reveal them sparkling with dew and sunshine. As soon, therefore, as marquis Henry had gone to countess Anne, Dorothy took her leave, with many kind words between, of the ladies Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary, and set out, attended by her old bailiff and some of the men of her small tenantry, who having fought the king's battle in vain, had gone home again to fight their own.

At Wyfern she found everything in rigid order, almost cataleptic repose. How was it ever to be home again? What new thing could restore the homefulness where the revered over-life had vanished? And how shall the world be warmed and brightened to him who knows no greater or better man than himself therein—no more skilful workman, no diviner thinker, no more godlike doer than himself? And what can the universe have in it of home, of country, nay even of world, to him who cannot believe in a soul of souls, a heart of hearts? I should fall out with the very beating of the heart within my bosom, did I not believe it the pulse of the infinite heart, for how else should it be heart of *mine*? I made it not, and any moment it may *seem* to fail me, yet never, if it be what I think it,

can it betray me. It is no wonder then, that, with only memories of what had been to render it lovely in her eyes, Dorothy should have soon begun to feel the place lonely.

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The very next morning after her rather late arrival, she sent to saddle Dick once more, called Marquis, and with no other attendant, set out to see what they had done to dear old Raglan. Marquis had been chained up almost all the time they were in London, and freedom is blessed even to a dog: Dick was ever joyful under his mistress, and now was merry with the keen invigorating air of a frosty December morning, and frolicsome amidst the early snow, which lay unusually thick on the ground, notwithstanding his hundred and twenty miles' ride, for they had taken nearly a week to do it; so that between them they soon raised Dorothy's spirits also, and she turned to her hopes, and grew cheerful.

This mood made her the less prepared to encounter the change that awaited her. What a change it was! While she approached, what with the trees left, and the towers, the rampart, and the outer shell of the courts—little injured to the distant eye, she had not an idea of the devastation within. But when she rode through one entrance after another with the gates torn from their hinges, crossed the moat by a mound of earth instead of the drawbridge, and rode through the open gateway, where the portcullises were wedged up in their grooves and their chains gone, into the paved court, she beheld a desolation, at sight of which her heart seemed to stand still in her bosom. The rugged horror of the heaps of ruins was indeed softly covered with snow, but what this took from the desolation in harshness, it added in coldness and desertion and hopelessness. She felt like one who looks for the corpse of his friend, and finds but his skeleton.

The broken bones of the house projected gaunt and ragged. Its eyes returned no shine—they did not even stare, for not a pane of glass was left in a window: they were but eye-holes, black and blank with shadow and no-ness. The roofs were gone—all but that of the great hall, which they had not dared to touch. She climbed the grand staircase, open to the wind and slippery with ice, and reached her own room. Snow lay on the floor, which had swollen and burst upwards with November rains. Through room after room she wandered with a sense of loneliness and desolation and desertion such as never before had she known, even in her worst dreams. Yet was there to her, in the midst of her sorrow and loss, a strange fascination in the scene. Such a hive of burning human life now cold and silent! Even Marquis appeared aware of the change, for with tucked-in tail he went about sadly sniffing, and gazing up and down. Once indeed, and only once, he turned his face to the heavens, and gave a strange protesting howl, which made Dorothy weep, and a little relieved her oppressed heart.

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She would go and see the workshop. On the way, she would first visit the turret chamber. But so strangely had destruction altered the look of what it had spared, that it was with difficulty she recognised the doors and ways of the house she had once known so well. Here was a great hole to the shining snow where once had been a dark corner; there a heap of stones where once had been a carpeted corridor. All the human look of indwelling had past away. Where she had been used to go about as if by instinct, she had now to fall back upon memory, and call up again, with an effort sometimes painful in its difficulty, that which had vanished altogether except from the minds of its scattered household.

She found the door of the turret chamber, but that was all she found: the chamber was gone. Nothing was there but the blank gap in the wall, and beyond it, far down, the nearly empty moat of the tower. She turned, frightened and sick at heart, and made her way to the bridge. That still stood, but the drawbridge above was gone.

She crossed the moat and entered the workshop. A single glance took in all that was left of the keep. Not a floor was between her and the sky! The reservoir, great as a little mountain-tarn, had vanished utterly! All was cleared out; and the white wintry clouds were sailing over her head. Nearly a third part of the walls had been brought within a few feet of the ground. The furnace was gone—all but its mason-work. It was like the change of centuries rather than months. The castle had half-melted away. Its idea was blotted out, save from the human spirit. She turned from the workshop, in positive pain of body at the sight, and wandered she hardly knew whither, till she found herself in lady Glamorgan's parlour. There was left a single broken chair: she sat down on it, closed her eyes, and laid back her head.

She opened them with a slight start: there stood Richard a yard or two away.

He had heard of her return, and gone at once to Wyfern. There learning whither she had betaken herself, he had followed, and tracking what of her footsteps he could discover, had at length found her.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Love and no leasing.

Their eyes met in the flashes of a double sunrise. Their hands met, but the hand of each grasped the heart of the other. Two honester purer souls never looked out of their windows with meeting gaze. Had there been no bodies to divide them, they would have mingled in a rapture of faith and high content.

The desolation was gone; the desert bloomed and blossomed as the rose. To Dorothy it was for a moment as if Raglan were rebuilt; the ruin and the winter had vanished before

the creative, therefore prophetic throb of the heart of love; then her eyes fell, not defeated by those of the youth, for Dorothy's faith gave her a boldness that was lovely even against the foil of maidenly reserve, but beaten down by conscience: the words of the marquis shot like an arrow into her memory: 'Love outlives all but leasing,' and her eyes fell before Richard's.

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But Richard imagined that something in his look had displeased her, and was ashamed, for he had ever been, and ever would be, sensitive as a child to rebuke. Even when it was mistaken or unjust he would always find within him some ground whereon it *might* have alighted.

‘Forgive me, Dorothy,’ he said, supposing she had found his look presumptuous.

‘Nay, Richard,’ returned Dorothy, with her eyes fast on the ground, whence it seemed rosy mists came rising through her, ’I know no cause wherefore thou shouldst ask me to forgive thee, but I do know, although thou knowest not, good cause wherefore I should ask thee to forgive me. Richard, I will tell thee the truth, and thou wilt tell me again how I might have shunned doing amiss, and how far my lie was an evil thing.’

‘Lie, Dorothy! Thou hast never lied!’

’Hear me, Richard, first, and then judge. Thou rememberest I did tell thee that night as we talked in the field, that I had about me no missives: the word was true, but its purport was false. When I said that, thou didst hold in thy hand my comb, wherein were concealed certain papers in cipher.’

‘Oh thou cunning one!’ cried Richard, half reproachfully, half humorously, but the amusement overtopped the seriousness.

‘My heart did reproach me; but Richard, what *was* I to do?’

‘Wherefore did thy heart reproach thee, Dorothy?’

‘That I told a falsehood—that I told *thee* a falsehood, Richard.’

‘Then had it been Upstill, thou wouldst not have minded?’

’Upstill! I would never have told Upstill a falsehood. I would have beaten him first.’

’Then thou didst think it better to tell a falsehood to me than to Upstill?’

‘I would rather sin against thee, an’ it were a sin, Richard. Were it wrong to think I would rather be in thy hands, sin or none, or sin and all, than in those of a mean-spirited knave whom I despised? Besides I might one day, somehow or other, make it up to thee—but I could not to him. But was it sin, Richard?—tell me that. I have thought and thought over the matter until my mind is maze. Thou seest it was my lord marquis’s business, not mine, and thou hadst no right in the matter.’

‘Prithee, Dorothy, ask not me to judge.’

’Art thou then so angry with me that thou will not help me to judge myself aright?’

’Not so, Dorothy, but there is one command in the New Testament for the which I am often more thankful than for any other.’

‘What is that, Richard.’

’*Judge not*. Prythee, between whom lieth the quarrel, Dorothy? Bethink thee.’

‘Between thee and me, Richard.’

‘No, verily, Dorothy. I accuse thee not.’

Dorothy was silent for a moment, thinking.

‘I see, Richard,’ she said. ’It lieth between me and my own conscience.’

’Then who am I, Dorothy, that I should dare step betwixt thee and thy conscience? God forbid. That were a presumption deserving indeed the pains of hell.’

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‘But if my conscience and I seek a daysman betwixt us?’

‘Mortal man can never be that daysman, Dorothy. Nay, an’ thou need an umpire, thou must seek to him who brought thee and thy conscience together and told thee to agree. Let God, over all and in all, tell thee whether or no thou wert wrong. For me, I dare not. Believe me, Dorothy, it is sheer presumption for one man to intermeddle with the things that belong to the spirit of another man.’

‘But these are only the things of a woman,’ said Dorothy, in pure childish humility born of love.

‘Sure, Dorothy, thou wouldst not jest in such sober matters.’

’God forbid, Richard! I but spoke that which was in me. I see now it was foolishness.’

‘All a man can do in this matter of judgment,’ said Richard, ’is to lead his fellow man, if so be he can, up to the judgment of God. He must never dare judge him for himself. An’ thou cannot tell whether thou did well or ill in what thou didst, thou shouldst not vex thy soul. God is thy refuge—even from the wrongs of thine own judgment. Pray to him to let thee know the truth, that if needful thou mayst repent. Be patient and not sorrowful until he show thee. Nor fear that he will judge thee harshly because he must judge thee truly. That were to wrong God. Trust in him even when thou fearest wrong in thyself, for he will deliver thee therefrom.’

‘Ah! how good and kind art thou, Richard.’

‘How should I be other to thee, beloved Dorothy?’

‘Thou art not then angry with me that I did deceive thee?’

’If thou didst right, wherefore should I be angry? If thou didst wrong, I am well content to know that thou wilt be sorry therefor as soon as thou seest it, and before that thou canst not, thou must not, be sorry. I am sure that what thou knowest to be right that thou will do, and it seemeth as if God himself were content with that for the time. What the very right thing is, concerning which we may now differ, we must come to see together one day—the same, and not another, to both, and this doing of what we see, is to each of us the path thither. Let God judge us, Dorothy, for his judgment is light in the inward parts, showing the truth and enabling us to judge ourselves. For me to judge thee and thee me, Dorothy, would with it bear no light. Why, Dorothy, knowest thou not—yet how shouldst thou know? that this is the very matter for the which we, my father and his party, contend—that each man, namely, in matters of conscience, shall be left to his God, and remain unjudged of his brother? And if I fight for this on mine own part, unto whom should I accord it if not to thee, Dorothy, who art the highest in soul and purest in mind and bravest in heart of all women I have known? Therefore I love thee

with all the power of a heart that loves that which is true before that which is beautiful, and that which is honest before that which is of good report.’

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What followed I leave to the imagination of such of my readers as are capable of understanding that the truer the nature the deeper must be the passion, and of hoping that the human soul will yet burst into grander blossoms of love than ever poet has dreamed, not to say sung. I leave it also to the hearts of those who understand that love is greater than knowledge. For those who have neither heart nor imagination—-only brains—to them I presume to leave nothing, knowing what self-satisfying resources they possess of their own.

The pair wandered all over the ruins together, and Dorothy had a hundred places to take Richard to, and tell him what they had been and how they had looked in their wholeness and use—amongst the rest her own chamber, whither Marquis had brought her the letter which mistress Upstill had found so badly concealed.

Then Richard's turn came, and he gave Dorothy a sadly vivid account of what he had seen of the destruction of the place; how, as if with whole republics of ants, it had swarmed all over with men paid to destroy it; how in every direction the walls were falling at once; how they dug and drained at fish-ponds and moat in the wild hope of finding hidden treasure, and had found in the former nothing but mud and a bunch of huge old keys, the last of some lost story of ancient days,—and in the latter nothing but a pair of silver-gilt spurs, which he had himself bought of the fellow who found them. He told her what a terrible shell the Tower of towers had been to break—how after throwing its battlemented crown into the moat, they had in vain attacked the walls, might almost as well have sought with pickaxes and crowbars to tear asunder the living rock, and at last—but this was hearsay, he had not seen it—had undermined the wall, propped it up with timber, set the timber on fire, and so succeeded in bringing down a portion of the hard, tough massy defence.

'What became of the wild beasts in the base of the kitchen-tower, dost know, Richard?'

'I saw their cages,' answered Richard, 'but they were empty. I asked what they were, and what had become of the animals, of which all the country had heard, but no one could tell me. I asked them questions until they began to puzzle themselves to answer them, and now I believe all Gwent is divided between two opinions as to their fate—one, that they are roaming the country, the other that lord Herbert, as they still call him, has by his magic conveyed them away to Ireland to assist him in a general massacre of the Protestants.'

Mighty in mutual faith, neither politics, nor morals, nor even theology was any more able to part those whose plain truth had begotten absolute confidence. Strive they might, sin they could not, against each other. They talked, wandering about, a long time, forgetting, I am sorry to say, even their poor shivering horses, which, after trying to console themselves with the renewal of a friendship which a broad white

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line across Lady's face had for a moment, on Dick's part, somewhat impeded, had become very restless. At length an expostulatory whinny from Lady called Richard to his duty, and with compunctions of heart the pair hurried to mount. They rode home together in a bliss that would have been too deep almost for conscious delight but that their animals were eager after motion, and as now the surface of the fields had grown soft, they turned into them, and a tremendous gallop soon brought their gladness to the surface in great fountain throbs of joy.

CHAPTER LIX.

Ave! *Vale*! *Salve*!

And now must I bury my dead out of my sight—bid farewell to the old resplendent, stately, scarred, defiant Raglan, itself the grave of many an old story, and the cradle of the new, and alas! in contrast with the old, not merely the mechanical, but the unpoetic and commonplace, yes vulgar era of our island's history. Little did lord Herbert dream of the age he was initiating—of the irreverence and pride and destruction that were about to follow in his footsteps, wasting, defiling, scarring, obliterating, turning beauty into ashes, and worse! That divine mechanics should thus, through selfishness and avarice, be leagued with filth and squalor and ugliness! When one looks upon Raglan, indignation rises—not at the storm of iron which battered its walls to powder, hardly even at the decree to level them with the dust, but at the later destroyer who could desecrate the beauty yet left by wrath and fear, who with the stones of my lady's chamber would build a kennel, or with the carved stones of chapel or hall a barn or cowhouse! What would the inventor of the water-commanding engine have said to the pollution of our waters, the destruction of the very landmarks of our history, the desecration of ruins that ought to be venerated for their loveliness as well as their story! Would he not have broken it to pieces, that the ruin it must occasion might not be laid to his charge? May all such men as for the sake of money constitute themselves the creators of ugliness, not to speak of far worse evils in the land, live—or die, I care not which—to know in their own selves what a lovely human Psyche lies hid even in the chrysalis of a railway-director, and to loathe their past selves as an abomination—-incredible but that it had been. He who calls such a wish a curse, must undergo it ere his being can be other than a blot.

But this era too will pass, and truth come forth in forms new and more lovely still.

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The living Raglan has gone from me, and before me rise the broken, mouldering walls which are the monument of their own past. My heart swells as I think of them, lonely in the deepening twilight, when the ivy which has flung itself like a garment about the bareness of their looped and windowed raggedness is but as darker streaks of the all prevailing dusk, and the moon is gathering in the east. Fain would the soul forsake the fettersome body for a season, to go flitting hither and thither, alighting and flitting, like a bat or a bird—now drawing itself slow along a moulding to taste its curve and flow, now creeping into a cranny, and brooding and thinking back till the fancy feels the tremble of an ancient kiss yet softly rippling the air, or descries the dim stain which no tempest can wash away. Ah, here is a stair! True there are but three steps, a broken one and a fragment. What said I? See how the phantom-steps continue it, winding up and up to the door of my lady's chamber! See its polished floor, black as night, its walls rich with tapestry, lovelily old, and harmoniously withered, for the ancient time had its ancient times, and its things that had come down from solemn antiquity—see the silver sconces, the tall mirrors, the part-open window, long, low, carved latticed, and filled with lozenge panes of the softest yellow green, in a multitude of shades! There stands my lady herself, leaning from it, looking down into the court! Ah, lovely lady! is not thy heart as the heart of my mother, my wife, my daughters? Thou hast had thy troubles. I trust they are over now, and that thou art satisfied with God for making thee!

The vision fades, and the old walls rise like a broken cenotaph. But the same sky, with its clouds never the same, hangs over them; the same moon will fold them all night in a doubtful radiance, befitting the things that dwell alone, and are all of other times, for she too is but a ghost, a thing of the past, and her light is but the light of memory; into the empty crannies blow the same winds that once refreshed the souls of maiden and man-at-arms, only the yellow flower that grew in its gardens now grows upon its walls. And however the mind, or even the spirit of man may change, the heart remains the same, and an effort to read the hearts of our forefathers will help us to know the heart of our neighbour.

Whoever cares to distinguish the bones of fact from the drapery of invention in the foregone tale, will find them all in the late Mr. Dirck's 'Life of the Marquis of Worcester,' and the 'Certamen Religiosum' and 'Golden Apophthegms' of Dr. Bayly.

The end.