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A BOOK OF QUAKER SAINTS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

PILGRIMS IN PALESTINE.

[Out of print.]

THE HAPPY WORLD.

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO 'THE
FELLOWSHIP OF SILENCE.'**
SILENT WORSHIP: THE WAY OF WONDER.
(Swarthmore Lecture, 1919.)



LOIS AND HER NURSE

[ToList](#)

**A BOOK OF
QUAKER SAINTS**

BY
L. V. HODGKIN
(MRS. JOHN HOLDSWORTH)

ILLUSTRATED BY
F. CAYLEY-ROBINSON, A.R.A.

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DEDICATED
TO THE
CHILDREN
OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
AND TO THE
GRANDCHILDREN
OF
THOMAS HODGKIN

PREFACE

The following stories are intended for children of various ages. The introductory chapter, 'A Talk about Saints,' and the stories marked with an asterisk in the Table of Contents, were written first for an eager listener of nine years old. But as the book has grown longer the age of its readers has grown older for two reasons:

First: because it was necessary to take for granted some knowledge of the course of English History at the period of the Civil Wars. To have re-told the story of the contest between King and Parliament, leading up to the execution of Charles the First and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, would have taken up much of the fresh, undivided attention that I was anxious to focus upon the lives and doings of these 'Quaker Saints.' I have therefore presupposed a certain familiarity with the chief actors and parties, and an understanding of such names as Cavalier, Roundhead, Presbyterian, Independent, etc.; but I have tried to explain any obsolete words, or those of which the meaning has altered in the two and a half centuries that have elapsed since the great struggle.

Secondly: because the stories of the persecutions of the Early Friends are too harrowing for younger children. Even a very much softened and milder version was met with the repeated request: 'Do, please, skip this part and make it come happy quickly.' I have preferred, therefore, to write for older boys and girls who will wish for a true account of suffering bravely borne; though without undue insistence on the physical side. For to tell the stories of these lives without the terrible, glorious account of the cruel beatings, imprisonments, and even martyrdom in which they often ended here, is not truly to tell them at all. The tragic darkness in the picture is necessary to enhance its high lights.

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My youngest critic observes that 'it does not matter so much what happens to grown-up people, because I can always skip that bit; but if anything bad is going to happen to children, you had better leave it out of your book altogether.' I have therefore obediently omitted the actual sufferings of children as far as possible, except in one or two stories where they are an essential part of the narrative.

It must be remembered that this is not a History of the Early Quaker Movement, but a book of stories of some Early Quaker Saints. I have based my account on contemporary authorities; but I have not scrupled to supply unrecorded details or explanatory speeches in order to make the scene more vivid to my listeners. In two stories of George Fox's youth, as authentic records are scanty, I have even ventured to look through the eyes of imaginary spectators at 'The Shepherd of Pendle Hill' and 'The Angel of Beverley.' But the deeper I have dug down into the past, the less need there has been to fill in outlines; and the more possible it has been to keep closely to the actual words of George Fox's Journal, and other contemporary documents. The historical notes at the end of the book will indicate where the original authorities for each story are to be found, and they will show what liberties have been taken. The quotations that precede the different chapters are intended mainly for older readers, and to illustrate either the central thought or the history of the times.

Many stories of other Quaker Saints that should have been included in this book have had to be omitted for want of room. The records of William Penn and his companions and friends on both sides of the Atlantic will, it is hoped, eventually find a place in a later volume. The stories in the present book have been selected to show how the Truth of the Inward Light first dawned gradually on one soul, and then spread rapidly, in ever-widening circles, through a neighbourhood, a kingdom, and, finally, all over the world.

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I have to thank many kind friends who have helped me in this delightful task. *The Book of Quaker Saints* owes its existence to my friend Ernest E. Taylor, who first suggested the title and plan, and then, gently but inexorably, persuaded me to write it. Several of the stories and many of the descriptions are due to his intimate knowledge of the lives and homes of the Early Friends; he has, moreover, been my unfailing adviser and helper at every stage of the work.

No one can study this period of Quaker history without being constantly indebted to William Charles Braithwaite, the author of *Beginnings of Quakerism*, and to Norman Penney, the Librarian at Devonshire House, and Editor of the Cambridge Edition of George Fox's Journal with its invaluable notes. But beyond this I owe a personal debt of gratitude to these two Friends, for much wise counsel as to sources, for their kindness in reading my MS. and my proofs, and for the many errors that their accurate scholarship has helped me to avoid, or enabled me to detect.

To Ethel Crawshaw, Assistant at the same Library; to my sister, Ellen S. Bosanquet; and to several other friends who have helped me in various ways, my grateful thanks are also due.

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The stories are intended in the first place for Quaker children, and are written throughout from a Quaker standpoint, though with the wish to be as fair as possible not only to our staunch forefathers, but also to their doughty antagonists. Even when describing the fiercest encounters between them, I have tried to write nothing that might perplex or pain other than Quaker listeners; above all, to be ever mindful of what George Fox himself calls 'the hidden unity in the Eternal Being.'

L. V. HODGKIN.

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A TALK ABOUT SAINTS

ToC

*'What are these that glow from afar,
These that lean over the golden bar,
Strong as the lion, pure as the dove,
With open arms and hearts of love?
They the blessed ones gone before,
They the blessed for evermore.
Out of great tribulation they went
Home to their home of Heaven-content;
Through flood or blood or furnace-fire,
To the rest that fulfils desire.'*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

*St. Patrick's three orders of Saints: 'a
glory on the mountain tops; a gleam on
the sides of the hills: a few faint lights
in the valleys.'*

*'The Lord is King in His Saints, He
guards them, and guides them with
His mighty power, into His kingdom of
glory and eternal rest, where they find
joy, and peace, and rest eternal.'—
GEORGE FOX.*

A TALK ABOUT SAINTS

'What is a Saint? How I do wish I knew!'

A little girl asked herself this question a great many years ago, as she sat looking up at a patch of sunset cloud that went sailing past the bars of her nursery window late one Sunday afternoon; but the window was small and high up, and the cloud sailed by quickly.

As she watched it go, little Lois wished that she was back in her own nursery at home, where the windows were large and low down, and so near the floor that even a small girl could see out of them easily. Moreover, her own windows had wide window-sills that she could sit on, with toy-cupboards underneath.

There were no toy-cupboards in this old-fashioned nursery, where Lois was visiting, and not many toys either. There was a doll's house, that her mother used to play with when she was a little girl; but the dolls in it were all made of wood and looked stiff and stern, and one hundred years older than the dolls of to-day, or than the children either, for that matter. Besides, the doll's house might not be opened on Sundays.

So Lois turned again to the window, and looking up at it, she wished, as she had wished many times before on this visit, that it was rather lower down and much larger, and that the window ledge was a little wider, so that she could lean upon it and see where that rosy cloud had gone. [4]

She ran for a chair, and climbed up, hoping to be able to see out better. Alas! the window was a long way from the ground outside. She still could not look out and see what was happening in the garden below. Even the sun had sunk too far down for her to say good-night to it before it set. But that did not matter, for the rosy cloud had apparently gone to fetch innumerable other rosy cloudlets, and they were all holding hands and dancing across the sky in a wide band, with pale, clear pools of green and blue behind them.

'What lovely rainbow colours!' thought the little girl. And then the rainbow colours reminded her of the question that had been puzzling her when she began to watch the rosy cloud. So she repeated, out loud this time and in rather a weary voice, 'Whatever is a Saint? How I do wish I knew! And why are there no Saints on the windows in Meeting?'

No answer came to her questions. Lois and her nurse were paying a visit all by themselves. They spent most of their days up in this old nursery at the top of the big house. Nurse had gone downstairs a long time ago, saying that she would bring up tea for them both on a tea-tray, before it was time to light the lamps. For there was no gas or electric light in children's nurseries in those days. [5]

If Lois had been at home she would herself have been having tea downstairs in the dining-room at this time with her father and mother. Then she could have asked them what a Saint was, and have found out all about it at once. Father and mother always seemed to know the answers to her questions. At least, very nearly always. For Lois was so fond of asking questions, that sometimes she asked some that had no answer; but those were silly questions, not like this one. Lois felt certain that either her father or her mother would have explained to her quite clearly all about Saints, and would have wanted her to understand about them. Away here there was nobody to ask. Nurse would only say, 'If you ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies.' Somehow whenever she said that, Lois fancied it meant that nurse was not very sure of the answer herself. She had already asked Aunt Isabel in church that same morning, when the puzzle began; and Aunt Isabel's answer about 'a halo' had left the little girl more perplexed than ever.

Lois had heard of people 'going to church' before, but she had never understood what it meant until to-day. At home on Sundays she went to Meeting with father and mother. She liked walking there, in between them, holding a hand of each, skipping and jumping in order not to step on the black lines of the pavement. She liked to see the shops with their eyes all shut tight for Sunday, and to watch for the naughty shops, here and there, who kept a corner of their blinds up, just to show a few toys or goodies underneath. Lois always thought that those shops looked as if they were winking up at her; and she smiled back at them a rather reproving little smile. She enjoyed the walk and was sorry when it came to an end. For, to tell the truth, she did not enjoy the Meeting that followed it at all. [6]

Long before the hour was over she used to grow very tired of the silence and of the quiet room, tired of kicking her blue footstool (gently of course, but still kicking it) and of counting her boot buttons up and down, or else watching the hands of the clock move slowly round its big calm face. 'Church' was a more interesting place than Meeting, certainly; but then 'Church' had disadvantages of its own. Everything there was strange to Lois. It had almost frightened her, this first time. She did not know when she ought to stand up, or when she ought to kneel, and when she might sit down. Then, when the organ played and everybody stood up and sang a hymn, Lois found to her surprise that her throat was beginning to feel tight and choky. For some reason she began to wonder if father and mother were sitting in Meeting alone, and if they had quite forgotten their little girl. Two small tears gathered. In another minute they might have slipped out of the corners of her eyes, and have run down her cheeks. They might even have fallen upon the page of the hymn-book she was carefully holding upside down. And that would have been dreadful! [7]

Happily, just in time, she looked up and saw something so beautiful above her that the two tears ran back to wherever it was they came from, in less time than it takes to tell.

For there, above her head, was a tall, pointed, glass window, high up on the wall. The glass in the window was of wonderful colours, like a rainbow:—deep purple and blue, shining gold, rich, soft red, and glowing crimson, with here and there a green that twinkled like young beech-leaves in the woods in spring. Best of all, there was one bit of purest white, with sunlight streaming through it, that shone like dazzling snow. At first Lois only noticed the colours, and the ugly black lines that separated them. She wondered why the beautiful glass was divided up into such queer shapes. There are no black lines between the colours in a real rainbow.

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Gradually, however, she discovered that all the different colours meant something, that they were all part of a picture on the window, that a tall figure was standing there, looking down upon her—upon her, fidgety little Lois, kicking her scarlet hassock in the pew. But Lois was not kicking her hassock any longer. She was looking up into the grave, kind face above her on the window. 'Whoever was it? Who could it be? Was it a man or a woman? A man,' Lois thought at first, until she saw that he was wearing a robe that fell into glowing folds at his feet. 'Men never wear robes, do they? unless they are dressing-gowns. This certainly was not a dressing-gown. And what was the flat thing like a plate behind his head?' Lois had never seen either a man or a woman wear anything like that before. 'If it was a plate, how could it be fastened on? It would be sure to fall off and break....'

The busy little mind had so much to wonder about, that Lois found it easy to sit still, until the sermon was over, as she watched the sunlight pour through the different colours in turn, making each one more beautiful and full of light as it passed.

At length the organ stopped, and the last long 'AH-MEN' had been sung. 'Church sings "AH-MEN" out loud, and Meeting says "Amen" quite gently; p'raps that's what makes the difference between them,' Lois thought to herself wisely. As soon as the last notes of music had died away, she nestled close to Aunt Isabel's side and said in an eager voice, 'What is that lovely window up there? Who is that beautiful person? I do like his face. And is it a He or a She?'

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'Hush, darling!' her aunt whispered. 'Speak lower. That is a Saint, of course.'

'But what is a Saint and how do you know it is one?' the little girl whispered earnestly, pointing upwards to the tall figure through which the sunshine streamed. Aunt Isabel was busy collecting her books and she only whispered back, 'Don't you see the halo?' 'I don't know what a halo can be, but a Saint is a kind of glass window, I suppose,' thought Lois, as she followed her aunt down the aisle. Afterwards on her way home, and at dinner, and all the afternoon, there had been so many other things to see and to think about, that it was not until the rosy patch of cloud sailed past the nursery window-pane at sunset that she was reminded of the beautiful colours in church, and of the puzzle about Saints and haloes that till then she had forgotten.

'At least, no, I didn't exactly forget', she said to herself, 'but I think p'raps I sort of disremembered—till the sunset colours reminded me. Only I haven't found out what a Saint is yet, or a halo. And why don't we have them on our Sunday windows in Meeting?'

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Just at that moment the door opened, and nurse, who had been enjoying a long talk downstairs in the kitchen, came in with the tea-tray. 'How dark you are up here!' nurse exclaimed in her cheerful voice. 'We shall have to light the lamp after all, or you will never find the way to your mouth.'

So the lamp was lighted. The curtains were drawn. The sunset sky, fast fading now, was hidden. And Lois' questions remained unanswered.

A few days later, the visit came to an end. The next Sunday, Lois was at home again, 'chattering like a little magpie,' as her mother said, about everything she had seen and done. She had so much to think about, that even Meeting did not seem as long as usual, though she thought the walls looked plainer than ever, and the glass windows very empty, till the sight of them reminded her that she could find out more about Saints now. At home in the afternoon she began. Drawing her footstool close to the big arm-chair, she put her elbows on her father's knee and looked up searchingly into his face. 'Father, please tell me, if you possibly can,' pleaded an earnest little voice, 'for I do very badly want to find out. Do you know what a Saint is?' Her father laughed. 'Know what a Saint is? I should think I did! No man better!' he answered. Lois wondered why he glanced across to the other side of the fire where her mother was sitting; and why she glanced back at him and shook her head, meeting his eyes with a happy smile. Then her father jumped up, and from the lowest shelf of one of his book-cases he fetched a fat, square volume, bound in brown leather and gold. This he put carefully on a table, and drawing Lois on to his knee and putting his arm round her, he showed her a number of photographs. Lambs were there, and running fountains, and spangly stars, and peacocks, and doves. But those pages he turned over quickly, until he came to others: photographs of men and women dressed in white, carrying palms and holding crowns in their hands.

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He told Lois that these people were 'Saints,' that they formed a long procession on the walls of a big church at Ravenna, far away in Italy; and that they were made of little pieces of a sort of shining glass called 'mosaic.' 'Saints have something to do with glass then. But these photographs are not a bit like my beautiful window,' Lois thought to herself, rather sadly. 'There are no colours here.' She turned over the photographs without much interest, until her father, exclaiming, 'There, that is the one I want!' showed her one portrait of a little girl standing among all the grown-up people, carrying just as big a palm and crown as any of the others. He told Lois that these crowns and palms were to show that the people who carried them had all been put to

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death or 'martyred,' because they would not worship heathen gods. He made Lois spell out the letters 'SCA. EULALIA' written on the halo around the little girl's head, 'That is Saint Eulalia,' her father explained. 'She was offered her freedom and her life if she would sacrifice to idols just one tiny grain of corn, to show that she renounced her allegiance to Jesus Christ; but when the corn was put into her hands she threw it all back into the Judge's face. After that, there was no escape for her. She was condemned to die, and she did die, Lois, very bravely, though she was only a little girl, not much older than you.' Here Lois hid her face against her father's coat and shivered. 'But after that cruel death, when her little body was lying unburied, a white dove hovered over it, until a fall of snowflakes came and hid it from people's sight. So you see, Lois, though Eulalia was only twelve years old when she was put to death, she has been called Saint Eulalia ever since, though it all happened hundreds of years ago. Children can be Saints as well as grown-up people, if they are brave enough and faithful enough.'

'Saints must be brave, and Saints must be faithful,' Lois repeated, as she shut up the big book and helped to carry it back to its shelf. 'But lots of other children have died since Sancta Eulalia was killed and her body was covered by the snow. Surely some of those children must have been brave and faithful too, even though they are not called Saints? They don't stand on glass windows, or wear those things that father calls haloes, and that I call plates, round their heads, with their names written on them. So Saints really are rather puzzling sort of people still. I do hope I shall find out more about them some day.'

[13]

Thus Lois went on wondering, till, gradually, she came to find out more of the things that make a Saint—not purple robes, or shining garments, or haloes; not even crowns and palms; but other things, quite different, and much more difficult to get.

'It is enough to vex a Saint!' her kind nurse exclaimed when Lois spilled her jam at tea, all down her clean white frock. Or, on other days, 'Oh dear! my patience is not so good as they once were!' and, 'These rheumatics would try the patience of a Saint!' nurse would say, with a weary sigh.

'Then the reason my Nanny isn't a Saint is because she gets vexed when I'm naughty, and because she isn't patient when she has a pain,' reasoned Lois. 'What a number of things it does seem to take to make a Saint! But then it takes eggs and milk and butter and sugar and flour and currants and raisins too to make a cake. Saints must be brave and faithful; never get vexed; have patience always. Mother said patience was the beginning of everything, when I stamped my foot because I broke my cotton. Do Saints have to begin with patience too? If only I could see a real live one with my own eyes and find out!'

[14]

Yet, strange to say, when Lois was told that she was looking at a 'real live Saint' at last, the little girl did not even wish to believe it. This happened one Saturday afternoon. She was walking with her governess to a beautiful wooded Dene, through which a clear stream hurried to join the big black river that flowed past the windows of Lois' home. On the way to the Dene they passed near a broad marsh with stepping-stones across it. Close to the river Lois saw, in the distance, the roofs of some wretched-looking cottages. Evidently on her way to these cottages, balancing herself on the slippery stepping-stones, was a little old lady in a hideous black bonnet with jet ornaments that waggled as she moved, and shiny black gloves screwed up into tight corkscrews at the finger ends. She carried a large basket in one hand, and held up her skirts with the other, showing that she wore boots with elastic sides, which Lois particularly disliked.

[15]

'Look there!' her governess said to Lois, 'actually crossing the marsh to visit that den of fever! Old Miss S ... may not be a beauty, but she certainly is a perfect Saint!'

'Oh no, she's not!' cried Lois with much vehemence. 'At least, I mean I hope she isn't,' she added the next minute. 'You see,' she went on apologetically, 'I have a very special reason for being interested in Saints; I don't at all want any of my Saints to look ugly like that. And, what is more, I don't believe they do!'

Many months passed before the time came, when she was least expecting it, that Lois saw, she actually did see, a 'real live Saint' for herself.

How did she know it was a Saint? Lois could not tell how she knew; but from the very first moment that she found herself looking up into one of the kindest, most loving faces that she had ever seen, she was perfectly sure that she had found a Saint at last. She saw no halo—at least no golden halo; but the white hair that tenderly framed the white face looked almost like a halo of silver, the little girl thought. It was not a beautiful face; at any rate not what Lois would have called beautiful beforehand. It had many wrinkles though the skin was fresh and clear. The eyes looked, somehow, as if they had shed so many tears long ago, that now there were no tears left to shed; nothing remained but smiles. Perhaps that was the reason they were nearly always smiling. As Lois looked up and saw that gentle old face bending over her, it gave her the same sort of mysterious feeling that she had when she gazed up into the cloudless blue sky at noonday, or into a night sky full of stars. She seemed to be looking up, as high as ever she could, into something infinitely far above her; and yet to be looking down into something as well, deep down into an endless depth. Or rather, she felt that she was neither looking up nor down, but that she was looking through....

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'Why, Saints are a sort of window after all,' Lois said to herself, as she gave a jump of joy,—'real windows! Only not the glass kind! I have found out at last what makes a Saint, and what real live Saints look like. It is not being killed only; though I suppose they must always be ready to be killed. It is not being made of all the difficult things inside only; though, of course, they must always be full of them. It certainly isn't wearing ugly clothes or anything horrid. I know now what really and truly, and most especially, makes a Saint, and that is

LETTING THE SUNLIGHT THROUGH!

So Lois had found out something for herself at last, had she not? Those are always the best sort of discoveries; but there are a great many more things to find out about Saints that Lois never thought of, in those days long ago. Most interesting things they are! That is one comfort about Saints—they are always interesting, never dull. Dull is the one thing that real Saints can never be, or they would stop being Saints that very minute. Even when Saints are doing the dullest, dreariest, most difficult tasks, they themselves are always packed full of sunshine inside that cannot help streaming out over the dull part and making it interesting.

[17]

This is one thing to remember about Saints; but there are many other things to discover. See if you can find out some of them in the stories that follow.

Only a few Saint stories are written here. You will read for yourself, by and by, many others: stories of older Saints, and perhaps of brighter Saints, or it may be even of saintlier Saints than these. But in this book are written the stories of some of the Saints who did not know that they were Saints at all: they thought that they were just quite ordinary men and women and little children, and that makes them rather specially comforting to us, who are just quite ordinary people too.

Moreover, these Quaker Saints never have been, never will be put on glass windows, or given birthdays or haloes or emblems of their own, like most of the other Saints. They have never even had their stories told before in a way that it is easy for children to understand.

[18]

That is why these particular stories have been written now, in this particular book

FOR YOU.

[19]

I. 'STIFF AS A TREE, PURE AS A BELL'

ToC

'I am plenteuous in ioie in alloure tribulacione.'—ST. PAUL (Wiclif's Translation).

[20]

'Stand firm like a smitten anvil under the blows of a hammer; be strong as an athlete of God, it is part of a great athlete to receive blows and to conquer.'—IGNATIUS.

'He was valiant for the truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it,

unwearyed in labouring in it, steady in his testimony to it, immoveable as a rock.—T. ELLWOOD about G. FOX.

'George Fox never lost his temper—he left that to his opponents: and he had the most exasperating way of getting the best of an argument. His Journal ... is like a little rusty gate which opens right into the heart of the 17th Century, so that when we go in by it—hey presto! we find ourselves pilgrims with the old Quaker in the strangest kind of England.'—L.M. MACKAY.

'And there was never any persecution that came but we saw it was for good, and we looked upon it to be good as from GOD. And there was never any prisons or sufferings that I was in, but still it was for bringing multitudes more out of prison.'—G. FOX.

[21]

I. 'STIFF AS A TREE, PURE AS A BELL'

When the days are lengthening in the spring, even though the worst of the winter may be over, there is often a sharp tooth in the March wind as it sweeps over the angry sea and bites into the north-eastern coast of England.

Children, warm and snug in cosy rooms, like to watch the gale and the damage it does as it hurries past. It amuses them to see the wind at its tricks, ruffling up the manes of the white horses far out at sea, blowing the ships away from their moorings in the harbour, and playing tricks upon the passers-by, when it comes ashore. Off fly stout old gentlemen's hats, round like windmills go the smart ladies' skirts and ribbons; even the milkman's fingers turn blue with cold. It is all very well for children, safe indoors, to laugh at the antics of the mischievous wind, even on the bleak north-eastern coast nowadays; but in times long ago, that same wind could be a more cruel playfellow still. Come back with me for two hundred and fifty years. Let us watch the tricks the wind is playing on the prisoners in the castle high up on Scarborough cliff in the year of our Lord 1666.

Though the keen, cutting blast is the same, a very different Scarborough lies around us from the Scarborough modern children know. There is a much smaller town close down by the water's edge, and a much larger castle covering nearly the whole of the cliff.

Nowadays, when children go to Scarborough for their holidays in the summer, as they run down the steep paths with their spades and buckets to dig on the beach, they are too busy to pay much attention to the high cliff that juts out against the sky above the steep red roofs of the old town. But if they do look up for a moment they notice a pile of grey stones at the very top of the hill. 'Oh, that is the old ruined castle,' they say to themselves; and then they forget all about it and devote themselves to the important task of digging a new castle of their own that shall not crumble into ruins in its turn, as even sand castles have an uncomfortable way of doing, if they are unskilfully made.

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Those children are only modern children. They have not gone back, as you and I are trying to do, two hundred and fifty long years up the stream of time. If we are really to find out what Scarborough looked like then, we must put on our thinking caps and flap our fancy wings, and, shutting our eyes very tight, not open them again until that long-ago Scarborough is really clear before us. Then, looking up at the castle, what shall we see? The same hill of course, but so covered with stately buildings that we can barely make out its outline. Instead of one old pile of crumbling stones, roofless, doorless, windowless, there is a massive fortress towering over us, ringed round with walls and guarded with battlements and turrets. High above all stands the frowning Norman Keep, of which only some of the thick outer stones remain to-day. Scarborough Castle was a grand place, and a strong place too, in the seventeenth century.

In order to reach it, then as now, it was necessary to climb the long flights of stone steps that stretch up from the lower town near the water's edge to the high, arched gateway upon the

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Castle Hill. We will climb those steps, only of course the stones were newer and cleaner then, and less worn by generations of climbing feet. Up them we mount till we reach the gateway with its threatening portcullis, where the soldiers of King Charles the Second, in their jackboots, are walking up and down on guard, determined to keep out all intruders. Intruders we certainly are, seeing that we belong to another generation and another century. There is no entrance at that gateway for us. Yet except through that gateway there is no way into the castle, and all the windows on this side are high up in the walls, and barred and filled with strong thick glass.

Now let us go round to the far side of the cliff where the castle overlooks the sea. Here the fortress still frowns above us; but lower down, nearer our level, we can see some holes and caves scooped out of the solid rock, through which the wind blows and shrieks eerily. As these caves can only be reached by going through the castle, some of the prisoners are kept here for safety. The windows have no glass. They are merely holes in the rock, open to fog and snow and bitter wind. Another hole in the cliff does duty for a chimney after a fashion, but even if the prisoners are allowed to light a fire they are scarcely any warmer, for the whole cave becomes filled with smoke. And now we must flap our fancy wings still more vigorously, until somehow we stand outside one of those prison holes, scooped out of the cliff, and can look down and see what is to be seen inside it.

There is only one man in this particular prison cave, and what is he doing? Is he moving about to keep himself warm? At first he seems to be, for he walks from side to side without a moment's rest. Every now and then he stretches his arm out of the window, apparently throwing something away. He is certainly ill. His body and legs are badly swollen, and there are great lumps in the places where his joints and knuckles ought to be. Well then, if he is ill, why does he not lie still in bed and rest and get well? For even in this wretched cave-room there is something that looks like a bed in one corner. It has no white sheets or soft blankets, but still it has four legs and a sort of coverlet, and at least the prisoner could rest upon it, which would be better for him than dancing about. Look again! The bed stands under a gaping hole in the roof, and a stream of water is dripping steadily down upon it. The coarse coverings must be soaked through already, and the hard mattress too. It is really less like a bed than a damp and nasty little pond. No wonder the prisoner does not choose to lie there. But then, why not move the bed somewhere else? And what is that round thing like a platter in his hand, and what is he doing with it? Is he playing 'Turn the Trencher' to keep himself warm?

Look again! How could he move the bed? He is in a tiny cave, and all its walls are leaky. The bed must stand in that particular corner because there is nowhere else that it could be placed. Now look down at the floor. Notice how uneven it is, and the big pools of water standing on it, and then you will understand what the prisoner is doing. Indeed he is not playing 'Turn the Trencher'; he is trying to scoop up some of the water in that shallow platter, because he has nothing else in the room that will hold it. If he can do this fast enough, and can manage to pour enough of the water away out of one of the holes in the walls, he may be able to keep himself from being flooded out, and thus he may preserve one little dry patch of floor, dry enough for his swollen feet to stand on, till the storm is over. But it is like trying to bale water out of a very leaky boat; for always faster than he can scoop it up and pour it away, more rain comes pouring in steadily, dripping and drenching. The wind shrieks and whistles and the prisoner is numb with cold.

What a wicked man he must be, to be punished by being put in this dreadful place! Certainly, if he has committed some dreadful crime, he has found a terrible punishment. But does he look wicked? See, at last he is too stiff and weary to move about any longer. In spite of the rain and the wind he sinks down exhausted upon a rickety chair and draws it to the spot where there is the best chance of a little shelter. There he sits in silence for some time. He is soaked to the skin, as well as tired and stiff and hungry. There is a small mug by the door, but it is empty and there is not a sign of food. Some bitter water to drink and a small piece of bread are all the food he has had to-day, and that is all gone now, for it was so very little. In this place a small threepenny loaf of bread has sometimes to last for three weeks. This poor man must be utterly miserable and wretched. But is he? Let us watch him.

Do you think he can be a wicked man after all? Is not the prisoner being punished through some dreadful mistake? He looks kind and good, and, stranger still, he looks happy, even through all his sufferings in this horrible prison. His face has a sort of brightness in it, like the mysterious light there is sometimes to be seen in a dark sky, behind a thunderstorm. A radiance is about him too as if, in spite of all he is enduring, he has some big joy that shines through everything and makes it seem worth while.

He is actually 'letting the sunlight through,' even in this dismal place. Any one who can do that must be a very real and a very big saint indeed. We must just find out all that we can about him. Let us take a good look at him now, while we have the chance. Then we shall know him another time, when we meet him again, having all sorts of adventures in all sorts of places. It is impossible to see his eyes, as he sits by the bed, for they are downcast, but we can see that he has a long, nearly straight nose, and lips tightly pressed together. His hair is parted and hangs down on each side of his head, stiff and lank now, owing to the wet, but in happier days it must have hung in little curls round his neck, just below his ears. He is a tall man, with a big strong-looking body. In spite of the coarse clothes he wears, there is a strange dignity about him. You feel something drawing you to him, making you want to know more about him.

You feel somehow as if you were in the presence of some one who is very big, and that you yourself are very small, smaller perhaps than you ever felt in your life. Yet you feel ready to do anything for him, and, at the same time, you believe that, if only you could make him know that

you are there, he would be ready to do anything for you. Even in this wretched den he carries himself with an air of authority, as if he were accustomed to command. Now, at last he is looking up; and we can see his eyes. Most wonderful eyes they are! Eyes that look as if they could pierce through all sorts of disguises, and read the deepest secrets of a man's heart. They are kind eyes too; and look as if they could be extraordinarily tender at times. They are something like a shepherd's eyes, as if they were accustomed to gazing out far and wide in search of strayed sheep and lost lambs. Yet they are also like the eyes of a Judge; thoroughly well able to distinguish right from wrong. It would be terrible to meet those eyes after doing anything the least bit crooked or shabby or untrue. They look as if they would know at the first glance just how much excuses were worth; and what was the truth. No wonder that once, when those eyes fell on a man who was arguing on the wrong side, he felt ashamed all of a sudden and cried out in terror: 'Do not pierce me so with thine eyes! Keep thine eyes off me!' Another time when this same prisoner was reasoning with a crowd of people, who did not agree with him, they all cried out with one accord: 'Look at his eyes, look at his eyes!' And yet another time when he was riding through an angry mob, in a city where men were ready to take his life, they dared not touch him. 'Oh, oh,' they cried, 'see, he shines! he glisters!'

Then what happened next? We do not want to look at the prisoner in fancy any longer. We want really to know about him: to hear the beginnings and endings of those stories and of many others. And that is exactly what we are going to do. The prisoner is going to tell us his own true story in his own real words. There is no need for our fancy wings any longer. They may shrivel up and drop off unheeded. For that prisoner is GEORGE FOX, and he belongs to English history. He has left the whole story of his life and adventures written in two large folio volumes that may still be seen in London. The pages are so old and the edges have worn so thin in the two hundred and fifty years since they were written, that each page has had to be most carefully framed in strong paper to keep it from getting torn. The ink is faded and brown, and the writing is often crabbed and difficult to read. But it can be read, and it is full of stories. In olden times, probably, the book was bound in a brown leather cover, but now, because it is very old and valuable, it has been clothed with beautiful red leather, on which is stamped in gold letters, the title:

GEORGE FOX'S JOURNAL.

Now let us open it at the right place, and, before any of the other stories, let us hear what the writer says about that dismal prison in Scarborough Castle: how long he stayed there, and how he was at last set free.

'One day the governor of Scarborough castle, Sir Jordan Crosland, came to see me. I desired the governor to go into my room and see what a place I had. I had got a little fire made in it, and it was so filled with smoke that when they were in it they could hardly find their way out again.... I told him I was forced to lay out about fifty shillings to stop out the rain, and keep the room from smoking so much. When I had been at that charge and had made it somewhat tolerable, they removed me into a worse room, where I had neither chimney nor fire hearth.'

(This last is the room in the castle cliff that is still called 'George Fox's prison,' where we have been standing in imagination and looking in upon him. We will listen while he describes it again, so as to get accustomed to his rather old-fashioned English.)

'This being to the sea-side and lying much open, the wind drove in the rain forcibly, so that the water came over my bed, and ran about the room, that I was fain to skim it up with a platter. And when my clothes were wet, I had no fire to dry them; so that my body was benumbed with cold, and my fingers swelled, that one was grown as big as two. Though I was at some charge in this room also, yet I could not keep out the wind and rain.... Afterwards I hired a soldier to fetch me water and bread, and something to make a fire of, when I was in a room where a fire could be made. Commonly a threepenny loaf served me three weeks, and sometimes longer, and most of my drink was water, with wormwood steeped or bruised in it.... As to friends I was as a man buried alive, for though many came far to see me, yet few were suffered to come to me.... The officers often threatened that I should be hanged over the wall. Nay, the deputy governor told me once, that the King, knowing that I had a great interest in the people, had sent me thither, that if there should be any stirring in the nation, they should hang me over the wall to keep the people down. A while after they talked much of hanging me. But I told them that if that was what they desired and it was permitted them, I was ready; for I never feared death nor sufferings in my life, but I was known to be an innocent, peaceable man, free from all stirrings and plottings, and one that sought the good of all men. Afterwards, the Governor growing kinder, I spoke to him when he was going to London, and desired him to speak to Esquire Marsh, Sir Francis Cobb, and some others, and let them know how long I had lain in prison, and for what, and he did so. When he came down again, he told me that Esquire Marsh said he would go a hundred miles barefoot for my liberty, he knew me so well; and several others, he said, spoke well of me. From which time the Governor was very loving to me.

'There were among the prisoners two very bad men, who often sat drinking with the officers and soldiers; and because I would not sit and drink with them, it made them the worse against me. One time when these two prisoners were drunk, one of them (whose name was William Wilkinson, who had been a captain), came in and challenged me to fight with him. I seeing what condition he was in, got out of his way; and next morning, when he was more sober, showed him how unmanly a thing it was in him to challenge a man to fight, whose principle he knew it was not to strike; but if he was stricken on one ear to turn the other. I told him that if he had a mind to fight, he should have challenged some of the soldiers, that could have answered him in his own way. But, however, seeing he had challenged me, I was now come to answer him, with my hands

in my pockets; and, reaching my head towards him, "Here," said I, "here is my hair, here are my cheeks, here is my back." With that, he skipped away from me and went into another room, at which the soldiers fell a-laughing; and one of the officers said, "You are a happy man that can bear such things." Thus he was conquered without a blow.

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'... After I had lain a prisoner above a year in Scarborough Castle, I sent a letter to the King, in which I gave him an account of my imprisonment, and the bad usage I had received in prison; and also I was informed no man could deliver me but he. After this, John Whitehead being at London, and being acquainted with Esquire Marsh, went to visit him, and spoke to him about me; and he undertook, if John Whitehead would get the state of my case drawn up, to deliver it to the master of requests, Sir John Birkenhead, and endeavour to get a release for me. So John Whitehead ... drew up an account of my imprisonment and sufferings and carried it to Marsh; and he went with it to the master of requests, who procured an order from the King for my release. The substance of this order was that the King, being certainly informed, that I was a man principled against plotting and fighting, and had been ready at all times to discover plots, rather than to make any, therefore his royal pleasure was, that I should be discharged from my imprisonment. As soon as this order was obtained, John Whitehead came to Scarborough with it and delivered it to the Governor; who, upon receipt thereof, gathered the officers together, ... and being satisfied that I was a man of peaceable life, he discharged me freely, and gave me the following passport:—

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"Permit the bearer hereof, GEORGE FOX, late a prisoner here, and now discharged by his majesty's order, quietly to pass about his lawful occasions, without any molestation. Given under my hand at Scarborough Castle, this first day of September 1666.—JORDAN CROSLAND, Governor of Scarborough Castle."

'After I was released, I would have made the Governor a present for his civility and kindness he had of late showed me; but he would not receive anything; saying "Whatever good he could for me and my friends, he would do it, and never do them any hurt." ... He continued loving unto me unto his dying day. The officers also and the soldiers were mightily changed, and became very respectful to me; when they had occasion to speak of me they would say, "HE IS AS STIFF AS A TREE, AND AS PURE AS A BELL; FOR WE COULD NEVER BOW HIM."'

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II. 'PURE FOY, MA JOYE'

ToC

'Outwardly there was little resemblance between George Fox and Francis of Assisi, between the young Leicestershire Shepherd of the XVIIth Century and the young Italian merchant of the XIIIth, but they both felt the power of GOD and yielded themselves wholly to it: both left father and mother and home: both defied the opinions of their time: both won their way through bitter opposition to solid success: both cast themselves "upon the infinite love of GOD": both were most truly

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surrendered souls; but Francis submitted himself to established authority, Fox only to the spirit of GOD speaking in the single soul.'

'In solitude and silence Fox found GOD and heard Him. He proclaimed that the Kingdom of GOD is the Kingdom of a living Spirit Who holds converse with His people.'—BISHOP WESTCOTT.

'Some place their religion in books, some in images, some in the pomp and splendour of external worship, but some with illuminated understandings hear what the Holy Spirit speaketh in their hearts'—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

'Lord, when I look upon mine own life it seems Thou hast led me so carefully, so tenderly, Thou canst have attended to none else; but when I see how wonderfully Thou hast led the world and art leading it, I am amazed that Thou hast had time to attend to such as I.'—AUGUSTINE.

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II. 'PURE FOY, MA JOYE'

'He is stiff as a tree and pure as a bell, and we could never bow him.' So spoke the rough soldiers of Scarborough Castle of their prisoner, George Fox, after he had been set at liberty. A splendid thing it was for soldiers to say of a prisoner whom they had held absolutely in their power. But a tree does not grow stiff all at once. It takes many years for a tiny seedling to grow into a sturdy oak. A bell has to undergo many processes before it gains its perfect form and pure ringing note. And a whole lifetime of joys and sorrows had been needed to develop the 'stiffness' (or steadfastness, as we should call it now) and purity of character that astonished the soldiers in their prisoner. There will not be much story in this history of George Fox's early days, but it is the foundation-stone on which most of the later stories will be built.

It was in July 1624, the last year in which James the First, King of England, ruled in his palace at Whitehall, that far away in a quiet Leicestershire village their first baby was born to a weaver and his wife. They lived in a small cottage with a thatched roof and wooden shutters, in a village then known as 'Drayton-in-the-Clay,' because of the desolate waters of the marshlands that lay in winter time close round the walls of the little hamlet. Even though the fens and marshes have now long ago been drained and turned into fertile country, the village is still called 'Fenny Drayton.' The weaver's name was Christopher Fox. His wife's maiden name had been Mary Lago; and the name they gave to their first little son was George.

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Mary Lago came 'of the stock of the martyrs': that is to say, either her parents or her grandparents had been put to death for their faith. They had been burnt at the stake, probably, in one of the persecutions in the reign of Queen Mary. From her 'martyr stock' Mary Lago must have learned, when she was quite a little girl, to worship God in purity of faith. Later on, after she had become the mother of little George, it was no wonder that her baby son sitting on her knee, looking up into her face, or listening to her stories, learned from the very beginning to try to be 'Pure as a Bell.'

Mary Lago's husband, Christopher Fox, did not come 'of the stock of the martyrs,' but evidently he had inherited from his ancestors plenty of tough courage and sturdy sense. Almost the only story remembered about him is that one day he stuck his cane into the ground after listening to a long dispute and exclaimed: 'Now I see that if a man will but stick to the truth it will bear him out.'

When little George grew old enough to scramble down from his mother's knee and to walk with

unsteady steps across the stone-flagged floor of the cottage, there was his weaver father sitting at his loom, making a pleasant rhythmic sound that filled the small house with music. As the boy watched the skilful hands sending the flying shuttle in and out among the threads, he learned from his father, not only the right way to weave good reliable stuff, but also how to weave the many coloured threads of everyday life into a strong character. The village people called his father 'Righteous Christer,' which shows that he too must have been 'stiff as a tree' in following what he knew to be right; for a name like that is not very easily earned where village eyes are sharp and village tongues are shrewd.

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THE BOYHOOD OF GEORGE FOX

ToList

Less than a mile from the weaver's cottage stood the Church and the Manor House side by side. The churchyard had a wall of solid red bricks, overshadowed by a border of solemn old yew-trees. The Manor House was encircled by a moat on which graceful white swans swam to and fro. For centuries the Purefoy family had been Squires of Drayton village. They had inhabited the Manor House while they were alive, and had been buried in the churchyard close by after they were dead. The present Squire was a certain COLONEL GEORGE PUREFOY. It may have been after him that 'Righteous Christer' called his eldest son George, or it may have been after that other George, 'Saint George for Merrie England,' whose image killing the Dragon was to be seen engraved on each rare golden 'noble' that found its way to the weaver's home. Christopher and Mary Fox were both of them possessed of more education than was usual among country people at that time, when reading and writing were still rare accomplishments. 'Righteous Christer' was an important man in the small village. Besides being a weaver, he was also a churchwarden, and was able to sign his own name in bold characters, as may still be seen to-day in the parish registers, where his fellow-churchwarden, being unable to read or write, was only able to sign his name with a cross. Unfortunately this same register, which ought to record the exact day of July 1624 on which little George was baptized here in the old church, no longer mentions him, since, more than a hundred years after his time, the wife of the Sexton of Fenny Drayton, running short of paper to cover her jam-pots, must needs lay hands on the valuable Church records and tear out a few priceless pages just here. So, although several other brothers and sisters followed George and came to live in the weaver's cottage during the next few years, we know none of their ages or birthdays, until we come to the record of the baptism of the youngest sister Sarah. Happily her page came last of all, after the Sexton's jam was finished, and thus Sarah's name escaped being made into the lid of a jam-pot. But we will hope that the weaver and his wife remembered and kept all their children's birthdays on the right days, even though they are forgotten now. However that may have been, George's parents 'endeavoured to train him up, as they did their other children, in the common way of worship—his mother especially being eminent for piety: but even from a child he was seen to be of another frame of mind from his brethren, for he was more religious, retired, still and solid, and was also observing beyond his age. His mother, seeing this extraordinary temper and godliness, which so early did shine through him, so that he would not meddle with childish games, carried herself indulgent towards him.... Meanwhile he learned to read pretty well, and to write as much as would serve to signify his meaning to others.'

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When he saw older people behaving in a rowdy, frivolous way, it distressed him, and the little boy used to say to himself: 'If ever I come to be a man, surely I will not be so wanton.'

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'When I came to eleven years of age,' he says himself in his Journal, 'I knew pureness and righteousness; for while I was a child I was taught how to walk so as to be kept pure, and to be faithful in two ways, both inwardly to God, and outwardly to man, and to keep to Yea and Nay in all things.'

At that time there was a law obliging everybody to attend Church on Sundays, and as the services lasted for several hours at a time, the weaver's children doubtless had time to look about them, and learned to know the stones of the old church well. When the Squire and his family were at home they sat in the Purefoy Chapel in the North Aisle. From this Chapel a door in the wall opened on to a path that led straight over the drawbridge across the moat to the Manor House. It must have been interesting for all the village children to watch for the opening and shutting of that door. But up in the chancel there was, and still is, something even more interesting: the big tomb that a certain Mistress Jocosia or Joyce Purefoy had put up to the memory of her husband, who had died in the days of good Queen Bess.

'PURE FOY, MA JOYE,' the black letters of the family motto, can still be read on a marble scroll. If George in his boyhood ever asked his mother what the French words meant, Mary Fox, who was, we are told, 'accomplished above her degree in the place where she lived,' may have been able to tell him that they mean, in English, 'Pure faith is my Joy'; or that, keeping the rhyme, they might be translated as follows:—

'MY FAITH PURE, MY JOY SURE.'

Then remembering what had happened in her own family, surely she would add, 'And I, who come of martyr stock, know that that is true. Even if you have to suffer for it, my son, even if you have to die for it, keep your Faith pure, and your Joy will be sure in the end.'

Then Righteous Christer would take the little lad up on his shoulder and show him the broken spear above the tomb, the crest of the Purefoys, and tell him its story. Hundreds of years before, one of the Squires of this family had defended his liege lord on the battle-field at the risk of his own life, and even after his weapon, a spear, had been broken in his hand. His lord, out of gratitude for this, had given his faithful follower, not only the right to wear the broken spear in token of his valour ever after as a crest, but also by his name and by his motto to proclaim to all men the PURE FAITH (PUREFOY) that had given him this sure and lasting joy. Ever since, for hundreds of years, the Purefoy family had handed down, by their name, by their motto, and by the broken spear on their crest, this noble tradition of loyalty and allegiance—enshrined like a shining jewel in the centre of the muddy village of Drayton-in-the-Clay.

This was not the only battle story the boy must have known well. A few miles from Fenny Drayton is 'the rising ground of Market Bosworth,' better known as Bosworth Field. As he grew older George loved to wander over the fields that surrounded his birthplace. He 'must have often passed the site of Henry's camp, perhaps may have drunk sometimes at the well at which Richard is said to have quenched his thirst.' But although his home was near this old battlefield, the boy grew up in a peaceful England. Probably no one in Fenny Drayton imagined that in a very few years the smiling English meadows would once more be drenched in blood. George Fox in his country home was brought up to follow country pursuits, and was especially skilful in the management of sheep. He says in his Journal: 'As I grew up, my relations thought to have made me a priest, but others persuaded to the contrary. Whereupon I was put to a man who was a shoemaker by trade, and dealt in wool. He also used grazing and sold cattle; and a great deal went through my hands. While I was with him he was blest, but after I left him, he broke and came to nothing. I never wronged man or woman in all that time.... While I was in that service, I used in my dealings the word "Verily," and it was a common saying among those that knew me, "if George says Verily, there is no altering him." When boys and rude persons would laugh at me, I let them alone, but people generally had a love to me for my innocence and honesty.'

'When I came towards 19 years of age, being upon business at a Fair, one of my cousins, whose name was Bradford, a professor, having another professor with him, asked me to drink part of a jug of beer with them. I, being thirsty, went with them, for I loved any that had a sense of good. When we had drunk a glass apiece, they began to drink healths and called for more drink, agreeing together that he that would not drink should pay for all. I was grieved that they should do so, and putting my hand into my pocket took out a groat and laid it on the table before them, saying, "If it be so, I will leave you." So I went away, and when I had done my business I returned home, but did not go to bed that night, nor could I sleep, but sometimes walked up and down and prayed and cried unto the Lord, who said to me: "Thou must forsake all, young and old, keep out of all and be a stranger to all."

'Then at the command of God, the 9th of the 7th month,^[1] 1643, I left my relations, and broke off all familiarity or fellowship with young or old.'

The old-fashioned English of the 'Journal' makes this story rather puzzling at the first reading, because several words have changed in meaning since it was written. The name 'professors,' did not then mean learned men who teach or lecture in a University, but any men who 'professed' to be particularly religious and good. These 'professionally religious people' are generally known as 'the Puritans,' and it was meeting with these bad specimens among them who 'professed' a religion they did not attempt to practise, that so dismayed George Fox. Here at any rate 'Pure Faith' was not being kept either to God or men. He must find a more solid foundation on which to rest his own soul's loyalty and allegiance. Over the porch of the Church at Fenny Drayton is painted now, not the Purefoy motto, but the words: 'I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God.' It was from this place that George Fox set forth on the long search for a 'Pure Faith' that, when he found it, was to bring both to him and to many thousands of his countrymen a 'Sure Joy.'

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Why Righteous Christer and his wife did not help George more at this time remains a puzzle. They may have been afraid lest he was making a terrible mistake in leaving the worship they knew and followed, or they may have guessed that God was really calling him to do some work for Him bigger than they could understand, and may have felt that they could help their boy best by leaving him free to follow the Voice that spoke to him in the depths of his own heart, even if he had to fight his own battles unaided. Or possibly their thoughts were too full of all the actual battles that were filling the air just then to think any other troubles important. For our Quaker Saints are not legendary people; they are a real part of English History.

All through the years of George's boyhood the struggle between King Charles the First and his Parliament had been getting more tense and embittered. The abolition of the Star Chamber (May 1640), the attempted arrest of the five Members (October 1642), the trial and death, first of Strafford (May 1641) and then of Laud (January 1645)—all these events had been convulsing the great heart of the English nation during the long years while young George had been quietly keeping his master's sheep and cattle in his secluded Leicestershire village.

A year before he left home the long-dreaded Civil War had at last broken out. But the Civil War that broke out in the soul of the young shepherd lad, the struggle between good and evil when he saw his Puritan cousin tempting other people to drink and carouse, was to him a more momentous event than all the outward battles that were raging. His Journal hardly mentions the rival armies of King and Parliament that were marching through the land. Yet in reading of his early struggles in his own spirit, we must always keep in the background of our minds the thought of the great national struggle that was raging at the same time. It was not in the orderly, peaceful, settled England of his earliest years that the boy grew to manhood, but in an England that was being torn asunder by the rival faiths and passions of her sons. Men's minds were filled with the perplexities of great national problems of Church and State, of tyranny and freedom. No wonder that at such a time everyone was too busy to spare much sympathy or many thoughts for the spiritual perplexities of one obscure country lad.

Right into the very middle, then, of this troubled, seething England, George Fox plunged when he left his home at Fenny Drayton. The battle of Marston Moor was fought the following year, July 1644, and Naseby the summer after that. But George was not heeding outward battles. Up and down the country he walked, seeking for help in his spiritual difficulties from all the different kinds of people he came across; and there were a great many different kinds. The England of that day was not only torn by Civil War, it was also split up into innumerable different sects, now that the attempt to force everyone to worship according to one prescribed fashion was at length being abandoned. In one small Yorkshire town it is recorded that there were no less than forty of these sects worshipping in different ways about this time, while new sects were continually arising.

Perhaps it was a generous wish to give the professors another chance and not to judge the whole party from the bad specimens he had met, that made George go back to the Puritans for help. At first they made much of the young enquirer; but, alas! they all had the same defect as those he had met already. Their spoken profession sounded very fine, but they did not carry it out in their lives.

'They sought to be acquainted with me, but I was afraid of them, for I was sensible they did not possess what they professed.' In other words, their faith did not ring true. The professors were certainly not 'Pure as a Bell.'

George Fox's test was always the same, both for his own religion and other people's: 'Is this faith real? Is it true? Can you actually live out what you profess to believe? And do you? Is your faith pure? Is your joy sure?'

Finding that, in the case of the professors, a sorrowful 'No' was the only answer that their lives gave to these questions, George says: 'A strong temptation to despair came over me. I then saw how Christ was tempted, and mighty troubles I was in. Sometimes I kept myself retired in my chamber, and often walked solitary in the Chace to wait upon the Lord.'

It must not be forgotten that part of the Puritan worship consisted in making enormously long prayers in spoken words, and preaching sermons that lasted several hours at a time. George Fox became more and more sure that this was not the worship God wanted from him, as he thought over these matters in solitude under the trees of Barnet Chace.

After a time he went back to his relations in Leicestershire. They saw the youth was unhappy, and very naturally thought it would be far better for him to settle down and have a happy home of his own than to go wandering about the country in distress about the state of his soul.

'Being returned into Leicestershire, my relations would have had me married; but I told them I was but a lad and must get wisdom.' Other people said: 'No, don't marry him yet. Put him into the auxiliary band among the soldiery. Once he gets fighting, that will soon knock the notions out of his head.'

Young George would not consent to this plan either. He had his own battle to fight, his own victory to win, unaided and alone. He did not yet know that it was useless for him to seek for outward help. Being still only a lad of nineteen he thought that surely there must be someone among his elders who could help him, if only he could find out the right person. Having failed with the professors, he determined next to consult the priests and see if they could advise him in his perplexities. 'Priests' is another word that has changed its meaning almost as much as 'professors' has done. By 'priests' George Fox does not mean Anglican or Roman Catholic clergy, but simply men of any denomination who were paid for preaching. At this particular time the English Rectories and Vicarages were mostly occupied by Presbyterians and Independents. It was

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they who preached and who were paid for preaching in the village churches, which is what he means by calling them 'priests' in his Journal.

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In these stories there is no need to think of George Fox as arguing or fighting against real Christianity in any of the churches. He was fighting, rather, against sham religion, formality and hypocrisy wherever he found them. In that great fight all who truly love Truth and God are on the same side, even though they are called by different names. So remember that these old labels that he uses for his opponents have changed their meaning very considerably in the three hundred years that have passed since his birth. Remember too that the world had had at that time nearly three hundred years less in which to learn good manners than it has now. The manners and customs of the day were much rougher than those of modern times. However much we may disagree with people, there is no need for us to tell them so in the same sort of harsh language that was too often used by George Fox and his contemporaries.

To these Presbyterian priests, therefore, George went next to ask for counsel and help. The first he tried was the Reverend Nathaniel Stephens, the priest of his own village of Fenny Drayton. At first Priest Stephens and young George seemed to get on very well together. Another priest was often with Stephens, and the two learned men would often talk and argue with the boy, and be astonished at the wise answers he gave. 'It is a very good, full answer,' Stephens once said to George, 'and such an one as I have not heard.' He applauded the boy and spoke highly of him, and even used the answers he gave in his own sermons on Sundays. This was a compliment, but it cost him George's friendship and respect, because he felt it was a deceitful practice. The Journal says: 'What I said in discourse to him on week-days, he would preach of on first days, which gave me a dislike to him. This priest afterwards became my great persecutor.'

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Priest Stephens' wife was also very much opposed to Fox, and it is said that on one occasion she 'very unseemly plucked and haled him up and down, and scoffed and laughed.' Fox always felt that this priest and his wife were his bitter foes; but other people described Priest Stephens as 'a good scholar and a useful preacher, in his younger days a very hard student, in his old age pleasant and cheerful.' So, as generally happens, there may have been a friendly side to this couple for those who took them the right way.

After this, Fox continues, 'I went to another ancient priest at Mancetter in Warwickshire, and reasoned with him about the ground of despair and temptations; but he was ignorant of my condition; he bade me take tobacco and sing psalms. Tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing; I could not sing. Then he bid me come again and he would tell me many things; but when I came he was angry and pettish; for my former words had displeased him. He told my troubles, sorrows and griefs to his servants so that it got among the milk-lasses. It grieved me that I should have opened my mind to such a one. I saw they were all miserable comforters, and this brought my troubles more upon me. Then I heard of a priest living about Tamworth, which was accounted an experienced man, and I went seven miles to him; but I found him like an empty hollow cask. I heard also of one called Dr. Craddock of Coventry, and went to him. I asked him the ground of temptations and despair, and how troubles came to be wrought in man? He asked me, "Who was Christ's Father and Mother?" I told him Mary was His Mother, and that He was supposed to be the son of Joseph, but He was the Son of God. Now, as we were walking together in his garden, the alley being narrow, I chanced, in turning, to set my foot on the side of a bed, at which the man was in a rage, as if his house had been on fire. Thus all our discourse was lost, and I went away in sorrow, worse than I was when I came. I thought them miserable comforters, and saw they were all as nothing to me; for they could not reach my condition. After this I went to another, one Macham, a priest in high account. He would needs give me some physic, and I was to have been let blood; but they could not get one drop of blood from me, either in arms or head (though they endeavoured to do so), my body being, as it were, dried up with sorrows, grief and troubles, which were so great upon me that I could have wished I had never been born, or that I had been born blind, that I might never have seen wickedness or vanity; and deaf, that I might never have heard vain and wicked words, or the Lord's name blasphemed. When the time called Christmas came, while others were feasting and sporting themselves, I looked out poor widows from house to house, and gave them some money. When I was invited to marriages (as I sometimes was) I went to none at all, but the next day, or soon after, I would go to visit them; and if they were poor, I gave them some money; for I had wherewith both to keep myself from being chargeable to others, and to administer something to the necessities of those who were in need.'

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Three years passed in this way, and then at last the first streaks of light began to dawn in the darkness. They came, not in any sudden or startling way, but little by little his soul was filled with the hope of dawn:

Silently as the morning
Comes on when night is done,
Or the crimson streak, on ocean's cheek,
Grows into the great sun.

He says, 'About the beginning of the year 1646, as I was going into Coventry, a consideration arose in me how it was said, "All Christians are believers, both Protestants and Papists," and the Lord opened to me, that if all were believers, then they were all born of God, and were passed from death unto life, and that none were true believers but such, and though others said they were believers, yet they were not.'

Possibly George Fox was looking up at the 'Three Tall Spires' of Coventry when this thought

came to him, and remembering in how many different ways Christians had worshipped under their shadow: first the Latin Mass, then the order of Common Prayer, and now the Puritan service. 'At another time,' he says, 'as I was walking in a field on a first day morning, the Lord opened to me "That being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ:" and I wondered at it because it was the common belief of people. But I saw it clearly as the Lord had opened it to me, and was satisfied and admired the goodness of the Lord, who had opened the thing to me this morning.... So that which opened in me struck I saw at the priests' ministry. But my relations were much troubled that I would not go with them to hear the priest; for I would go into the orchard or the fields with my Bible by myself.... I saw that to be a true believer was another thing than they looked upon it to be ... so neither them nor any of the dissenting people could I join with.

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'At another time it was opened in me, "That God who made the world did not dwell in temples made with hands." This at the first seemed strange, because both priests and people used to call their temples or churches dreadful places, holy ground and the temples of God. But the Lord showed me clearly that He did not dwell in these temples which men had made, but in people's hearts.'

In this way George Fox had found out for himself three of the foundation truths of a pure faith:

- 1st. That all Christians are believers, Protestants and Papists alike.
- 2nd. That Christ was come to teach His people Himself.
- 3rd. That the Temple in which God wishes to dwell is in the hearts of His children.

Now that George Fox was sure of these three things, it troubled him less if he was with people whose beliefs he could not share.

The first set of people he came among believed that women had no souls, 'no more than a goose has a soul' added one of them in a light, jesting tone. George Fox reproved them and told them it was a wrong thing to say, and added that Mary in her song said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,' so she must have had a soul. George by this time had learned to know his Bible so well in the long quiet hours out of doors, when it had been his only companion, that it was easy to him to find the exact quotation he wanted in an argument. It was said of him, later on, by wise and learned men, that if the Bible itself were ever to be lost it might almost be found again in the mouth of George Fox, so well did he know it.

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The next set of people he came to were great dreamers. They guided their lives in the daytime according to the dreams they had happened to dream during the night. And I should think a fine mess they must have made of things! George helped these dreamers to know more of realities, till, later on, many of them came out of their dream-world and became Friends.

After this at last he came upon a set of people who really did seem to understand him and to care for the same things that he did. They were called 'Shattered Baptists,' because they had broken off from the other Baptists in the neighbourhood who 'did the Lord's work negligently' and did not act up to what they professed. This was the very same fault that had driven George forth from among the professors at the beginning of his long quest. It is easy to imagine that he and these people were happy together. 'With these,' he says, 'I had some meetings and discourses, but my troubles continued and I was often under great temptations. I fasted much, walked abroad in solitary places many days, and often took my Bible and sat in hollow trees and lonesome places till night came on, and frequently in the night walked about by myself.... O the everlasting love of God to my soul, when I was in great distress! when my troubles and torments were great, then was His love exceeding great.... When all my hopes in all men were gone so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, O then, I heard a Voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.'

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This message was like the rising of the sun to George Fox. The long night of darkness was over now, the sun had risen, and though there might be clouds and storms ahead of him still he had come out into the full clear light of day.

'My desires after the Lord grew stronger,' he writes, 'and zeal in the pure knowledge of God and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing.... Then the Lord gently led me along and let me see His love which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state or can get by history and books. That love let me see myself as I was without him.... At another time I saw the great love of God, and was filled with admiration at the infiniteness of it.'

The truths that George Fox is trying to express are difficult to put into words. It is the more difficult for us to understand what he means because his language is not quite the same as ours. Other words besides 'priest' and 'professor' have altered their meanings. When he speaks of having had things 'opened' to him, we should be more likely to say he had had them revealed to him, or had had a revelation. Perhaps these 'openings' and 'seeings' that he describes, though they meant much to him, do not sound to us now like very great discoveries. They are only what we have been accustomed to hear all our lives. But then, whom have we to thank for that? In large measure George Fox himself.

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In the immense bush forests that cover an unexplored country or continent the first man who attempts to make a track through them has the hardest task. He has to guess the right direction,

to cut down the first trees, to 'blaze a trail,' to help every one who follows him to find the way a little more easily. That man is called a Pioneer. George Fox was a pioneer in the spiritual world. He discovered a true path for himself, a path leading right through the thick forest of human selfishness and sin and out into the bright sunshine beyond. In his lonely Quest through those years of struggle he was indeed 'blazing a trail' for us. If the track we tread nowadays is smooth and easy to tread, that is because of the pioneers who have gone before us. Our ease has been gained through their labours and sufferings and steadfastness.

The track was not fully clear even yet to George Fox. He had more to learn before he could make the right path plain to others; more to learn, but chiefly more to suffer. To strengthen him beforehand for those sufferings, he was given an assurance that never afterwards entirely left him. 'I saw the Infinite Love of God. I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.' The Quest was ended. Faith was pure, and Joy was sure at last.

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'Now was I come up in spirit, through the flaming sword, into the Paradise of God. All things were made new, and all the creation gave another smell to me beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up to the image of God by Christ Jesus.... Great things did the Lord lead me into, and wonderful depths were opened to me, beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection by the Spirit of God, and grow up in the Image and Power of the Almighty they may receive the word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being.'

'Thus travelled I in the Lord's service, as He led me.'

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] The 7th month would be September, because the years then began with March.

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III. THE ANGEL OF BEVERLEY

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'To instruct young lasses and maidens in whatever things was useful in the creation.'—R. ABRAHAM.

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'It was the age of long discourses and ecstatic exercises.'—MORLEY'S CROMWELL.

'George Fox's preaching, in those early years, chiefly consisted of some few, but powerful and piercing words, to those whose hearts were already in

some measure prepared to be capable of receiving this doctrine.'—SEWEL'S HISTORY.

'But at the first convincement when friends could not put off their hats to people, nor say you to a particular but thee and thou; and could not bowe nor use the world's fashions nor customs ... people would not trade with them nor trust them ... but afterwards people came to see friends honesty and truthfulness.'—G. FOX.

'The light which shows us our sins is that which heals us.'—G. FOX.

'GOD works slowly.'—BISHOP WESTCOTT.

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III. THE ANGEL OF BEVERLEY

Among all the children of Drayton village who watched eagerly for the door to open into the Purefoy Chapel on Sundays, when the Squire's family were at home, none watched for it more intently than blue-eyed Cecily, the old huntsman's granddaughter. Cecily's parents were both dead, and she lived with her grandfather in one of the twin lodges that guarded the Manor gates. Old Thomas had fought at the Squire's side abroad in years gone by. Now, aged and bent, he, too, watched for that door to open, as he sat in his accustomed place in the church with Cecily by his side. Old Thomas's eyes followed his master lovingly, when Colonel Purefoy entered, heading the little procession,—a tall, erect, soldierly-looking man, though his hair was decidedly grey, and grey too was the pointed beard that he still wore over a small ruff, in the fashion of the preceding reign.

Close behind him came his wife. The village people spoke of her as 'Madam,' since, although English born, and, indeed, possessed of considerable property in her own native county of Yorkshire, she was attached to the Court of Queen Henrietta Maria, and had caught something of the foreign grace of her French mistress.

But it was the two children for whose coming Cecily waited most eagerly, as they followed their parents. Edward Purefoy, the heir, a tall, handsome boy, came in first, leading by the hand his dainty little sister Jocosa, who seemed too fairy-like to support the stately family name, and who was generally known by its shorter form of Joyce.

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Last of all came a portly waiting-maid, carrying a silky-haired spaniel on a cushion under each arm. These petted darlings, King Charles' own special favourites, were all the rage at Court at this time, and accompanied their masters and mistresses everywhere, even to church, where—fortunate beings—they were allowed to slumber peacefully on cushions at their owners' feet throughout the long services, when mere human creatures were obliged at any rate to endeavour to keep awake.

Cecily had no eyes to spare, even for the pet-dogs, on the eventful Sunday when the Squire and his family first appeared again at church after an unusually long absence. For there was little Mistress Jocosa, all clad in white satin, like a princess in a fairy tale, and as pretty as a picture. And so the great Court painter, Sir Anthony Vandyck, must have thought, seeing he had chosen to paint her portrait and make a picture of her himself in this same costume, with its stiff, straight, shining skirt, tight bodice, pointed lace collar, and close-fitting transparent cap that covered, but could not hide, the waves of dark crisp hair. When Cecily discovered that a string of pearls was clasped round the other little girl's neck, she gave a long gasp of delight, a gasp that ended in an irrepressible sigh. For, a moment later, this dazzling vision, with its dancing eyes, delicate features, and glowing cheeks, was lost to sight. All through the remainder of the service it stayed hidden in the depths of the high old family pew, whence nothing could be seen save the top of the Squire's silver head, rising occasionally, like an erratic half moon, over the edge of the dark oak wood.

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Not another glimpse was to be had of the white satin princess; there was no one to look at but the ordinary village folk whom Cecily could see every day of her life: young George Fox, for instance, the Weaver's son, who was staring straight before him as usual, paying not the smallest

heed to the entrance of all these marvellous beings. Fancy staring at the marble tomb erected by a long dead Lady Jocosa, and never even noticing her living namesake of to-day, with all her sparkles and flushes! Truly the Weaver's son was a strange lad, as the whole village knew.

A strange boy indeed, Joyce Purefoy thought in her turn, as, passing close by him on her way out of church, she happened to look up and to meet the steady gaze of the young eyes that were at the same time so piercing and yet so far away. She could not see his features clearly, since the sun, pouring in through a tall lancet window behind him, dazzled her eyes. Yet, even through the blurr of light, she felt the clear look that went straight through and found the real Joyce lying deep down somewhere, though hidden beneath all the finery with which she had hoped to dazzle the village children.

Late that same evening it was no fairy princess but a contrite little girl who approached her mother's side at bed-time.

'Forgive me, mother mine, I did pick just a few cherries from the tree above the moat,' she whispered hesitatingly 'I was hot and they were juicy. Then, when you and my father crossed the bridge on our way to church and asked me had I taken any, I,—no—I did not exactly forget, but I suppose I disremembered, and I said I had not had one.'

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'Jocosa!' exclaimed her mother sternly: 'What! You a Purefoy and my daughter, yet not to be trusted to tell the truth! For the cherries, they are a small matter, I gave you plenty myself later, but to lie about even a trifle, it is that, that I mind.'

The little girl hung her head still lower. 'I know,' she said, 'it was shameful. Yet, in truth, I did confess at length.'

'True,' answered her mother, 'and therefore thou art forgiven, and without a punishment; only remember thy name and take better heed of thy Pure Faith another time. What made thee come and tell me even now?'

'The sight of the broken spear in church,' stammered the little girl. 'That began it, and then I partly remembered....'

She got no further. Even to her indulgent mother (and Madam Purefoy was accounted an unwontedly tender parent in those days), Joyce could not explain how it was, that, as the glance from those grave boyish eyes fell upon her, out of the sunlit window, her 'disremembering' became suddenly a weight too heavy to be borne.

Jocosa Purefoy never forgot that Sunday, or her childish fault.

The visits of the Squire and his family to the old Manor House were few and far between. The estates in Yorkshire that Madam Purefoy had brought to her husband on her marriage were the children's real home. It was several years after this before Cecily saw her fairy princess again. The next glimpse was even more fleeting than their appearance in church, just a mere flash at the lodge gates as Jocosa and her brother cantered past on their way out for a day's hunting. Old Thomas, sitting in his arm-chair in the sun, looked critically and enviously at the man-servant who accompanied them. 'Too young—too young,' he muttered. His own hunting days were long past, but he could not bear, even crippled with rheumatism as he was, that any one but he, who had taught their father to sit a horse, should ride to hounds with his children.

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Cecily had some envious thoughts too. 'I should like very well to wear a scarlet riding-dress and fur tippet, and a long red feather in my hat, and go a-hunting on old Snowball, instead of having to stop at home and take care of grandfather and mind the house.'

After she had closed the heavy iron gates with a clang, she pressed her nose between the bars and looked wistfully along the straight road, carried on its high causeway above the fens, down which the gay riders were swiftly disappearing.

But, in spite of envious looks, the gaiety of the day was short-lived. During the very first run, Snowball put her foot into a rabbit-hole, and almost came down. 'Lamed herself, sure enough,' said the man-servant grimly. No more hunting for Snowball that day. The best that could be hoped was that she might be able to carry her little mistress's light weight safely home, at a walking pace, over the few miles that separated them from Drayton. Joyce could not return alone, and Edward would not desert his sister, though he could not repress a few gloomy remarks on the homeward way.

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'To lose such a splendid dry day at this season! Once the weather breaks and the floods are out, there will be no leaving the Manor House again for weeks, save by the causeway over the fens!'

Thus it was a rather melancholy trio that returned slowly by the same road over which the ponies' feet had scampered gaily an hour or two before.

When the chimneys of Drayton were coming in sight, a loud 'Halloo' made the riders look round. A second fox must have led the hunt back in their direction after all. Sure enough, a speck of ruddy brown was to be seen slinking along beneath a haystack in the distance. Already the hounds were scrambling across the road after him, while, except for the huntsman, not a solitary rider was as yet to be seen anywhere.

The temptation was too strong for Edward. The brush might still be his, if he were quick.

'We are close at home. You will come to no harm now, sister,' he called. Then, raising his whip,

he was off at a gallop, beckoning peremptorily to the groom to follow him. Not without a shade of remorse for deserting his little mistress, the man-servant obediently gave Snowball's bridle to Joyce, and set spurs to his horse. Then, as he galloped away, he salved his conscience with the reflection that 'after all, young Master's neck is in more danger than young Missie's, now home is in sight.'

Joyce, left alone, dismounted, in order to lead Snowball herself on the uneven road across the fens. It was difficult to do this satisfactorily, owing to the pony's lameness, and her long, clinging skirt, over which she was perpetually tripping. Therefore, looking down over the hedgeless country for someone to help her, it was with real relief that she caught sight of a tall youth close at hand, in a pasture where sheep and cattle were grazing. All her life Joyce was accustomed to treat the people she met with the airs of a queen. Therefore, 'Hey! boy,' she called imperiously, 'come and help me! quick!'

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She had to call more than once before the youth looked up, and when he did, at first he made no motion in response. Then, seeing that the pony really was limping badly, and that the little lady was obviously in difficulty, and was, moreover, a very little lady still, in spite of her peremptory tones, he changed his mind. Striding slowly towards her, he rather reluctantly closed the book he had been reading, and placed it in his pocket. Then, without saying a single word, he put out his hand and taking Snowball's bridle from Joyce he proceeded to lead the pony carefully and cleverly over the stones.

The silence remained unbroken for a few minutes: the lad buried in his own thoughts, grave, earnest and preoccupied; the dainty damsel, her skirt held up now, satisfactorily, on both sides, skipping along, with glancing footsteps, as she tried to keep up with her companion's longer paces, and at the same time to remember why this tall, silent boy seemed to her vaguely familiar. She could not see his face, for it was turned towards Snowball, and Joyce herself scarcely came up to her companion's elbow.

They passed a cottage, set back at some distance from the road and half hidden by a cherry-tree with a few late leaves upon it, crimsoned by the first touch of November frost. A cherry-tree! The old memory flashed back in a moment.

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'I know who you are,' exclaimed Joyce, 'even though you don't speak a word. And I know your name. You are Righteous Christer the Weaver's son, and you are called George, like my father. You have grown so big and tall I did not know you at first, but now I do. Where do you live?'

The boy pointed in the direction of the cottage under the cherry-tree. The gentle whirr of the loom stole through the window as they approached.

'And I have seen you before,' Joyce went on, 'a long time ago, the last time we were here, on Sunday. It was in church,' she concluded triumphantly.

'Aye, in yon steeple-house,' answered her companion moodily, and with no show of interest. 'Very like.' His eyes wandered from the thatched roof of the cottage to where, high above the tall old yew-trees, a slender spire pointed heavenward.

Joyce laughed at the unfamiliar word. 'That is a church, not a steeple-house,' she corrected. 'Of course it has a steeple, but wherefore give it such a clumsy name?'

Her companion made no reply. He seemed absorbed in a world of his own, though still leading the pony carefully.

Joyce, piqued at having her presence ignored even by a village lad, determined to arouse him. 'Moreover, I have heard Priest Stephens speak of you to my father,' she went on, with a little pinprick of emphasis on each word, though addressing her remarks apparently to no one in particular, and with her dainty head tilted in the air.

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Her companion turned to her at once. 'What said the Priest?' he enquired quickly.

'The Priest said, "Never was such a plant bred in England before!" What his words meant I know not—unless he was thinking of the proverb of certain plants that grow apace,' she added maliciously, looking up with a gleam of fun at the tall figure beside her. 'And my father said....'

Colonel Purefoy's remark was not destined to be revealed, for they had reached the tall gateway by this time. Old Thomas, seeing his little mistress approaching, accompanied only by the Weaver's son, and with Snowball obviously damaged, had hobbled to meet them in spite of his rheumatics. Close at hand was Cecily, brimful of excitement at the sight of her fairy princess actually stopping at their own cottage door. The tall youth handed the pony's bridle to the old man, and was departing with evident relief, when a clear, imperious voice stopped him—

'Good-bye and good-day to you, Weaver's son, and thanks for your aid,' said Jocosa, like a queen dismissing a subject.

The tall figure looked down upon the patronizing little lady, as if from a remote height. 'Mayest thou verily fare well,' he said, almost with solemnity, and then, without removing his hat or making any gesture of respect, he turned abruptly and was gone.

'A strange boy,' Joyce said to herself a few minutes later as she stood on the stone bridge that crossed the moat in front of the Manor House. 'I did not like him; in fact I rather disliked him—but I should like to see him again and find out what he meant by his "steeple-house" and "verily."'

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Cecily, left behind at the Lodge, very happy because her fairy princess had actually thrown her a smile as she passed, was still following the distant figure on the bridge with wistful eyes, as Joyce busily searched her pockets for a few stray crumbs with which to feed the swans in the

moat. The scarlet riding-dress, glossy tippet, and scarlet feather in the big brown hat were all faithfully reflected in the clear water below, except where the swans interrupted the vivid picture with dazzling snowy curves and orange webbed feet.

More critical eyes than Cecily's were also watching Joyce. High up on the terrace, where a few late roses and asters were still in bloom, two figures were leaning over the stone parapet, looking down over the moat. 'A fair maiden, indeed,' a voice was saying, in low, polished tones. The next moment the sound of her own name made the girl look up. There, coming towards her, at the very top of the flight of shallow stone steps that led from the terrace to the low stone bridge, she saw her father, and with him a stranger, dressed, not like Colonel Purefoy, in a slightly archaic costume, but in the very latest fashion of King Charles's Court at Whitehall.

'My father come home already! and a stranger with him! What an unlucky chance after the misadventure of the morning!'

Throwing her remaining crumbs over the swans in a swift shower, Joyce made haste up the stone steps, to greet the two gentlemen with the reverence always paid by children to their elders in those days. [69]

Somewhat to her surprise, her father bent down and kissed her cheek. Then, taking her hand, he led her towards the stranger, and presented her very gravely. 'My daughter, Jocosia: my good friend, Sir Everard Danvers.' 'Exactly as if I had been a grown-up lady at Court,' thought Joyce, delighted, with the delight of thirteen, at her own unexpected importance. Her father had never paid her so much attention before. Well, at least he should see that she was worthy of it now. And Joyce dropped her lowest, most formal, curtsey, as the stranger bowed low over her hand. To curtsey at the edge of a flight of steps, and in a clinging riding skirt, was an accomplishment of which anyone might be proud. Was the stranger properly impressed? He appeared grave enough, anyhow, and a very splendid figure in his suit of sky-blue satin, short shoulder cape, and pointed lace collar. He was a strikingly handsome man, of a dark-olive complexion, with good features, and jet-black hair; but strangely enough, the sight of him made Joyce turn back to her father, feeling as if she had never understood before the comfort of his quiet, familiar face. Even the old-fashioned ruff gave her a sense of home and security. She would tell him about the morning's disasters now after all. But Colonel Purefoy's questions came first. 'How now, Jocosia, and wherefore alone? My daughter rides with her brother in my absence,' he added, turning to his companion.

'Father,—Snowball,...' began Joyce bravely, her colour rising as she spoke.

'Talk not of snowballs,' interrupted Sir Everard gallantly, 'it may be November by the calendar, but here it is high summer yet, with roses all abloom.' He pointed to her crimsoning cheeks. [70]

They quickly flushed a deeper crimson, evidently to the stranger's amusement. 'Why here comes Maiden's Blush, Queen of all the Roses' he went on, in a teasing voice. Then, turning to Colonel Purefoy, 'By my faith, Purefoy,' he said, 'my scamp of a nephew is a lucky dog.'

Joyce's bewilderment increased. What did it all mean? Was he play-acting? Why did they both treat her so? The stranger's punctilious politeness had flattered her at first, but, since the mocking tone stole into his voice she felt that she hated him, and looked round hoping to escape. Sir Everard was too quick for her. In that instant he had managed to possess himself of her hand, and now he was kissing it with exaggerated homage and deference, yet still with that mocking smile that seemed to say—'Like it, or like it not, little I care.'

Joyce had often seen people kiss her mother's hand, and had thought, as she watched the delightful process, how much she should enjoy it, when her own turn came. She knew better now: it was not a delightful process at all, it was simply hateful. A new Joyce suddenly woke up within her, a frightened, angry Joyce, who wanted to run away and hide. All her new-born dignity vanished in a moment. Scarcely waiting for her father's amused permission: 'There then, maiden, haste to thy mother: she has news for thee'—she flew along the terrace and in at the hall door. As she fled up the oak staircase that led to her mother's withdrawing-room, she vainly tried to shut her ears to the sounds of laughter that floated after her from the terrace below. [71]

Madam Purefoy was seated, half hidden behind her big, upright embroidery frame, in one of the recesses formed by the high, deeply mullioned windows. Thin rays of autumn sunshine filled the tapestried room with pale, clear light. There was no possibility of mistaking the colours of the silks that lay in their varied hues close under her hand. Why, then, had this skilful embroideress deliberately threaded her needle with a shade of brilliant blue silk? Why was she carefully using it to fill in a lady's cheek without noticing, apparently, that anything was wrong? Yet, at the first sound of Joyce's light footfall on the stairs she laid down her needle and listened, and held out her arms, directly her daughter appeared, flushed and agitated, in the doorway, waiting for permission to enter.

Mothers were mothers, it seems, even in the seventeenth century. In another minute Joyce was in her arms, pouring out the whole history of the morning. By this time Snowball's lameness had faded behind the remembrance of the encounter on the terrace.

'Who is that man, mother? A courtier, I know, since he wears such beautiful clothes. But wherefore comes he here? I thought I liked him, until he kissed my hand and laughed at me, and then I detested him. I hope I shall never see him again.' And she hid her face.

Before speaking, Mistress Purefoy left her seat and carefully closed the casement, in order that their voices might not reach the ears of anyone on the terrace below. Then, taking Joyce on her knee as if she had been still a child, she explained to her that the stranger, Sir Everard Danvers, [72]

was a well-known and favourite attendant of the Queen's. 'And it is by her wish that he comes hither for thee, Mignonne.'

'For me?' Joyce grew rosier than ever; 'I am too young yet to be a Maid of Honour as thou wert in thy girlhood. What does her Majesty know about me?' she questioned.

'Only that thou art my daughter, and that she is my very good friend. Her Majesty knows also that, in time, thou wilt inherit some of my Yorkshire estates; and therefore she hath sent Sir Everard to demand thy hand in marriage for his nephew and ward, the young Viscount Danvers, whose property marches with ours. Moreover, seeing that the times are unsettled, her Majesty hath signified her pleasure that not a mere betrothal, but the marriage ceremony itself, shall take place as soon as possible in the Chapel Royal at St. James's, since the young Viscount, thy husband to be, is attached to her suite as a page.'

'But I am not fourteen yet,' faltered Joyce, "'tis full soon to be wed.' A vista of endless court curtseys and endless mocking strangers swam before her eyes, and prevented her being elated with the prospect that would otherwise have appeared so dazzling.

Her mother stifled a sigh. 'Aye truly,' she replied, 'thy father and I have both urged that. But her Majesty hath never forgotten the French fashion of youthful marriages, and is bent on the scheme. She says, with truth, that thou must needs have a year or two's education after thy marriage for the position thou wilt have in future to fill at Court, and 'tis better to have the contract settled first.'

Education! To be married at thirteen might be a glorious thing, but to be sent back, a bride, for a year or two of education thereafter was a dismal prospect. [73]

That night there were tears of excitement and dismay on the pillow of the Viscountess-to-be as she thought of the alarming future. Yet she woke up, laughing, in the morning sunlight, for she had dreamt that she was fastening a coronet over her brown hair.

The wedding festivities a few weeks later left nothing to be desired. Day after day Joyce found herself the caressed centre of a brilliant throng that held but one disappointing figure—her boy bridegroom. 'He has eyes like a weasel, and a nose like a ferret,' was the bride's secret criticism, when the introduction took place. But, after all, the bridegroom was one of the least important parts of the wedding: far less important than the Prince of Wales, who led her out to dance, and whom she much preferred: far less important also than the bridegroom's cousin, Abigail, a bold, black-eyed girl who took country-bred Joyce under her protection at once, and saved her from many a mistake. Abigail was already at the school to which Joyce was to be sent. She herself was betrothed, though not as yet married, to my Lord Darcy, and was therefore able to instruct Joyce herself in many of the needful accomplishments of her new position.

The school days that followed were not unhappy ones, since, far better than their books, both girls loved their embroidery work and other 'curious and ingenious manufactures,' especially the new and fashionable employment of making samplers, which had just been introduced. But when, in a short time, the Civil Wars broke out, their peaceful world collapsed like a house of cards. The 'position' of the young Viscountess and her husband vanished into thin air. One winter at Court the young couple spent together, it is true, when the King and Queen were in Oxford, keeping state that was like a faint echo of Whitehall. [74]

All too soon the fighting began again. In one of the earliest battles young Lord Danvers was severely wounded and sent home maimed for life. His days at Court and camp were over. Summoning his wife to nurse him, he returned to his estate near Beverley in Yorkshire, where the next few years of Joyce's life were spent, to her ill-concealed displeasure.

Her husband's days were evidently numbered, and as he grew weaker, he grew more exacting. Patience had never been one of Joyce's strong points, and, though she did her best, time often dragged, and she mourned the cruel fate that had cast her lot in such an unquiet age. Instead of wearing her coronet at Court, here she was moping and mewed up in a stiff, puritanical countryside.

After the triumph of the Parliamentarians, things grew worse. It would have gone hard with the young couple had not a neighbour of theirs, of much influence with the Protector, one Justice Hotham, made representations as to the young lord's dying state and so ensured their being left unmolested.

Justice Hotham was a fatherly old man with a genius for understanding his neighbours, especially young people. He was a good friend to Joyce, and perpetually urged her to cherish her husband while he remained with her. Judge then of the good Justice's distress, when, one fine day, a note was brought to him from his wilful neighbour to say that she could bear her lot no longer, that her dear friend Abigail, Lady Darcy, was now on her way to join the Queen in France, and had persuaded Joyce to leave her husband and accompany her thither. [75]

The Justice looked up in dismay: a dismay reflected on the face of the waiting-woman to whom Joyce had entrusted her confidential letter. This was a certain blue-eyed Cecily, now a tall and comely maiden, who had followed her mistress from her old home at Drayton-in-the-Clay.

'She must be stopped,' said the good Judge. 'Spending the night with Lady Darcy at the Inn at Beverley is she, sayest thou? And thou art to join her there? Hie thee after her then, and delay her at all costs. Plague on this gouty foot that ties me here! Maiden, I trust in thee to bring her

home.'

Cecily needed no second bidding. 'She will not heed me. No mortal man or woman can hinder my lady, once her mind is made up. Still I will do my best,' was her only answer to the Judge; while 'It would take an angel to stop her! May Heaven find one to do the work and send her home, or ever my lord finds out that she has forsaken him,' she prayed in the depths of her faithful heart.

Was it in answer to her prayer that the rain came down in such torrents that for two days the roads were impassable? Cecily was inclined to think so. Anyhow, Joyce and Abigail, growing tired of the stuffy inn parlour while the torrents descended, and having nothing to do, seeing that the day was the Sabbath, and therefore scrupulously observed without doors in Puritan Beverley, strolled through the Minster, meaning to make sport of the congregation and its ways thereafter. The sermon was long and tedious, but it was nearing its end as they entered. At the close a stranger rose to speak in the body of the Church, a tall stranger, who stood in the rays of the sun that streamed through a lancet window behind him. His first words arrested careless Joyce, though she paid small heed to preaching as a rule.

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More than the words, something vaguely familiar in the tones of the voice and the piercing gaze that fell upon her out of the flood of sunlight, awoke in her the memory of that long ago Sunday of her childhood, of her theft of the cherries, of her 'disremembering,' and then of her mother's words, 'You, a Purefoy, to forget to be worthy of your name.'

Alas! where was her Pure Faith now? The preacher seemed to be speaking to her, to her alone: yet, strangely enough, to almost every heart in that vast congregation the message went home. Did the building itself rock and shake as if filled with power? The real Joyce was reached again: the real Joyce, though hidden now under the weight of years of self-pleasing, a heavier burden than any childish finery. Certainly reached she was, though Lady Darcy preserved through it all her cynical smile, and made sport of her friend's earnestness. Nevertheless Lady Darcy went to France alone. Lady Danvers returned to her husband—too much accustomed to be left alone, poor man, to have been seriously disquieted by her absence. For the remainder of his short life his wife did her best to tend him dutifully. But she did leave him for an hour or two the day after her return, in order to go and throw herself on her knees beside kind old Justice Hotham, and confess to him how nearly she had deserted her post.

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'And then what saved you?' enquired the wise old man, smoothing back the wavy hair from the wilful, lovely face that looked up to him, pleading for forgiveness.

'I think it was an angel,' said Joyce simply—'an angel or a spirit. It rose up in Beverley Minster: it preached to us of the wonderful things of God: words that burned. The whole building shook. Afterwards it passed away.'

Little she guessed that George Fox, the Weaver's son, the Judge's guest, seated in a deep recess of the long, panelled library, was obliged to listen to every word she spoke. Joyce never knew that the angel who had again enabled her to keep her 'Faith pure' was no stranger to her. Neither did it occur to him, whose thoughts were ever full of weightier matters than wilful woman's ways, that he had met this 'great woman of Beverley,' as he calls her, long before.

Only waiting-maid Cecily, who had prayed for an angel; Cecily, who had recognised the Weaver's son the first moment she saw him at the inn door; Cecily who had found in him, also, the messenger sent by God in answer to her prayer—wise Cecily kept silence until the day of her death.

George Fox says in his Journal:

'I was moved of the Lord to go to Beverley steeple-house, which was a place of high profession. Being very wet with rain, I went first to an inn. As soon as I came to the door, a young woman of the house said, "What, is it you? Come in," as if she had known me before, for the Lord's power bowed their hearts. So I refreshed myself and went to bed. In the morning, my clothes being still wet, I got ready, and, having paid for what I had, went up to the steeple-house where was a man preaching. When he had done, I was moved to speak to him and to the people in the mighty power of God, and turned them to their teacher, Christ Jesus. The power of the Lord was so strong that it struck a mighty dread among the people. The Mayor came and spoke a few words to me, but none had power to meddle with me, so I passed out of the town, and the next day went to Justice Hotham's. He was a pretty tender man and had some experience of God's workings in his heart. After some discourse with him of the things of God he took me into his closet, where, sitting together, he told me he had known that principle these ten years, and was glad that the Lord did now send his servants to publish it abroad among the people. While I was there a great woman of Beverley came to Justice Hotham about some business. In discourse she told him that "The last Sabbath day," as she called it, "an Angel or Spirit came into the church at Beverley and spoke the wonderful things of God, to the astonishment of all that were there: and when it had done, it passed away, and they did not know whence it came or whither it went; but it astonished all, priests, professors and magistrates." This relation Justice Hotham gave me afterwards, and then I gave him an account that I had been that day at Beverley steeple-house and had declared truth to the priest and people there.'

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IV. TAMING THE TIGER

'The state of the English law in the 17th century with regard to prisons was worthy of Looking Glass Land. The magistrates' responsibility was defined by ... the justice. "They were to commit them to prison but not to provide prisons for them." This duty devolved upon the gaoler, who was an autocrat and responsible to no authority. It frequently happened that he was a convicted & branded felon, chosen for the position by reason of his strength & brutality. Prisoners were ... required to pay for this enforced hospitality, & their first act must be to make the most favourable terms possible with their gaoler landlord or his wife, for food & lodging.'—M.R. BRAILSFORD.

'You are bidden to fight with your own selves, with your own desires, with your own affections, with your own reason, and with your own will; and therefore if you will find your enemies, never look without.... You must expect to fight a great battle.'—JOHN EVERARD. 1650.

'The real essential battlefield is always in the heart itself. It is the victory over ourselves, over the evil within, which alone enables us to gain any real victory over the evil without.'—E.R. CHARLES.

'They who defend war, must defend the dispositions that lead to war, and these are clean against the gospel.'—ERASMUS.

IV. TAMING THE TIGER

Perhaps some boys and girls have said many times since the War began: 'I wish Friends did not think it wrong to fight for their King and Country. Why did George Fox forbid Quakers to fight for the Right like other brave men? Is it not right to fight for our own dear England?'

But did George Fox ever forbid other people to fight? He was not in the habit of laying down rules for other people, even his own followers. Let us see what he himself did when, as a young man, he was faced with this very same difficulty, or an even more perplexing one, since it was our own dear England itself in those days that was tossed and torn with Civil War.

First of all, listen to the story of a man who tamed a Tiger:—

Far away in India, a savage, hungry Tiger, with stealthy steps and a yellow, striped skin, came padding into a defenceless native village, to seek for prey. In the early morning he had slunk out of the Jungle, with soft, cushioned paws that showed no signs of the fierce nails they concealed. All through the long, hot day he had lain hidden in the thick reeds by the riverside; but at sunset he grew hungry, and sprang, with a great bound, up from his hiding-place. Right into the village itself he came, trampling down the patches of young, green corn that the villagers had sown, and that were just beginning to spring up, fresh and green, around the mud walls of their homes. All the villagers fled away in terror at the first glimpse of the yellow, striped skin. The fathers and mothers snatched up their brown babies, the older children ran in front screaming, 'Tiger! Tiger!' Young and old they all fled away, as fast as ever they could, into the safest hiding-places near at hand.

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One man alone, a Stranger, did not fly. He remained standing right in the middle of the Tiger's path, and fearlessly faced the savage beast. With a howl of rage, the Tiger prepared for a spring. The man showed no sign of fear. He never moved a muscle. Not an eyelash quivered. Such unusual behaviour puzzled the Tiger. What could this strange thing be, that stood quite still in the middle of the path? It could hardly be a man. Men were always terrified of tigers, and fled screaming when they approached. The Tiger actually stopped short in its spring, to gaze upon this perplexing, motionless Being who knew no fear. There he stood, perfectly silent, perfectly calm, gazing back at the Tiger with the look of a conqueror. Several long, heavy minutes passed. At length the villagers, peeping out from their hiding-places, looking between the broad plantain leaves or through the chinks of their wooden huts, beheld a miracle. They saw, to their amazement, the Tiger slink off, sullen and baffled, to the jungle, while the Stranger remained alone and unharmed in possession of the path. At first they scarcely dared to believe their eyes. It was only gradually, as they saw that the Tiger had really departed not to return, that they ventured to creep back, by twos and threes first of all, and then in little timid groups, to where the Stranger stood. Then they fell at his feet and embraced his knees and worshipped him, almost as if he had been a god. 'Tell us your Magic, Sahib,' they cried, 'this mighty magic, whereby you have managed to overcome the Monarch of the Jungle and tame him to your will.'

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'I know no magic,' answered the Stranger, 'I used no spells. I was able to overcome this savage Tiger only because I have already learned how to overcome and tame THE TIGER IN MY OWN HEART.'

That was his secret. That is the story. And now let us return to George Fox.

Think of the England he lived in when he was a young man, the distracted England of the Civil Wars. Think of all the tiger spirits of hatred that had been unloosed and that were trampling the land. The whole country lay torn and bleeding. Some bad men there were on both sides certainly; but the real misery was that many good men on each side were trying to kill and maim one another, in order that the cause they believed to be 'the Right' might triumph.

'Have at you for the King!' cried the Cavaliers, and rushed into the fiercest battle with a smile.

'God with us!' shouted back the deep-voiced Puritans. 'For God and the Liberties of England!' and they too laid down their lives gladly.

Far away from all the hurly-burly, though in the very middle of the clash of arms, George Fox, the unknown Leicestershire shepherd lad, went on his way, unheeded and unheeding. He, too, had to fight; but his was a lonely battle, in the silence of his own heart. It was there that he fought and conquered first of all, there that he tamed his own Tiger at last—more than that, he learned to find God.

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'One day,' he says in his Journal, 'when I had been walking solitarily abroad and was come home, I was taken up into the love of God, and it was opened to me by the eternal light and power, and I therein clearly saw that all was to be done in and by Christ, and how He conquers and destroys the Devil and all his works and is atop of him.' He means that he saw that all the outward fighting was really part of one great battle, and that to be on the right side in that fight is the thing that matters eternally to every man.

Another time he writes: 'I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered and of the greatness and infiniteness of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words, for I had been brought through the very ocean of darkness and death, and through and over the power of Satan by the eternal glorious power of Christ; even through that darkness was I brought which covered over all the world and shut up all in the death.... And I saw the harvest white and the seed of God lying thick in the ground, as ever did wheat that was sown outwardly, and I

mourned that there was none to gather it.'

When George Fox speaks of the 'seed,' he means the tender spot that there must always be in the hearts of all men, however wicked, since they are made in the likeness of God. A tiny, tiny something, the first stirring of life, that God's Spirit can find and work on, however deeply it may be buried (like a seed under heavy clods of earth), if men will only yield to It. In another place he calls this seed 'THAT OF GOD WITHIN YOU.' And it is this tender growing 'seed' that gets trampled down when fierce angry passions are unloosed in people's hearts, just as the tender springing corn in the Indian village was trampled down by the hungry Tiger. George Fox believed that that seed lay hidden in the hearts of all men, because he had found it in his own. Everywhere he longed to set that seed free to grow, and to tame the Tiger spirits that would trample it down and destroy it. Let us watch and see how he did this.

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One day when he was about twenty-five years old, he heard that some people had been put in prison at Coventry for the sake of their religion. He thought that there must be a good crop of seed in the hearts of those people, since they were willing to suffer for their faith, so he determined to go and see them. As he was on his way to the gaol a message came to him from God. He seemed to hear God's own Voice saying to him, 'MY LOVE WAS ALWAYS TO THEE, AND THOU ART IN MY LOVE.' 'Always to thee.' Then that love had always been round him, even in his loneliest struggles, and now that he knew that he was in it, nothing could really hurt him. No wonder that he walked on towards the gaol with a feeling of new joy and strength. But when he came to the dark, frowning prison where numbers of men and women were lying in sin and misery, this joyfulness left him. He says, 'A great power of darkness struck at me.' The prisoners were not the sort of people he had hoped to find them. They were a set of what were then called 'Ranters.' They began to swear and to say wicked things against God. George Fox sat silent among them, still fastening his mind on the thought of God's conquering love; but as they went on to say yet wilder and more wicked things, at last that very love forced him to reprove them. They paid no attention, and at length Fox was obliged to leave them. He says he was 'greatly grieved, yet I admired the goodness of the Lord in appearing so to me, before I went among them.'

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For the time it did seem as if the Tiger spirits had won, and were able to trample down the living seed. But wait! A little while after, one of these same prisoners, named Joseph Salmon, wrote a paper confessing that he was sorry for what he had said and done, whereupon they were all set at liberty.

Meanwhile, George Fox went on his way, and travelled through 'markets, fairs, and divers places, and saw death and darkness everywhere, where the Lord had not shaken them.' In one place he heard that a great man lay dying and that his recovery was despaired of by all the doctors. Some of his friends in the town desired George Fox to visit the sufferer. 'I went up to him in his chamber,' says Fox in his Journal, 'and spake the word of life to him, and was moved to pray by him, and the Lord was entreated and restored him to health. When I was come down the stairs into a lower room and was speaking to the servants, a serving-man of his came raving out of another room, with a naked rapier in his hand, and set it just to my side. I looked steadfastly on him and said "Alack for thee, poor creature! what wilt thou do with thy carnal weapon, it is no more to me than a straw." The standers-by were much troubled, and he went away in a rage; but when news came of it to his master, he turned him out of his service.'

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Although that particular man's Tiger spirit had been foiled in its spring, the man himself had not been really tamed. Perhaps George Fox needed to learn more, and to suffer more himself, before he could really change other men's hearts. If so, he had not long to wait.

Shortly after this, it was his own turn to be imprisoned. He was shut up in Derby Gaol, and given into the charge of a very cruel Gaoler. This man was a strict Puritan, and he hated Fox, and spoke wickedly against him. He even refused him permission to go and preach to the people of the town, which, strangely enough, the prisoners in those days were allowed to do.

One morning, however, Fox was walking up and down in his cell, when he heard a doleful noise. He stopped his walk to listen. Through the wall he could hear the voice of the Gaoler speaking to his wife—'Wife,' he said, 'I have had a dream. I saw the Day of Judgment, and I saw George there!' How the listener must have wondered what was coming! 'I saw George there,' the Gaoler continued, 'and I was afraid of him, because I had done him so much wrong, and spoken so much against him to the ministers and professors, and to the Justices and in taverns and alehouses.' But there the voice stopped, and the prisoner heard no more. When evening came, however, the Gaoler visited the cell, no longer raging and storming at his prisoner, but humbled and still. 'I have been as a lion against you,' he said to Fox, 'but now I come like a lamb, or like the Gaoler that came to Paul and Silas, trembling.' He came to ask as a favour that he might spend the night in the same prison chamber where Fox lay. Fox answered that he was in the Gaoler's power: the keeper of the prison of course could sleep in any place he chose. 'No,' answered the Gaoler, 'I wish to have your permission. I should like to have you always with me, but not as my prisoner.' So the two strange companions spent that night together lying side by side. In the quiet hours of darkness the Gaoler told Fox all that was in his heart. 'I have found that what you said of the true faith and hope is really true, and I want you to know that even before I had that terrible vision, whenever I refused to let you go and preach, I was sorry afterwards when I had treated you roughly, and I had great trouble of mind.'

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There had been a little seed of kindness even in this rough Gaoler's heart. Deeply buried though it was, it had been growing in the darkness all the time, though no one guessed it—the Gaoler himself perhaps least of all until his dream showed him the truth about himself. When the night was over and morning light had come, the Gaoler was determined to do all he could to help

his new friend. He went straight to the Justices and told them that he and all his household had been plagued because of what they had done to George Fox the prisoner.

'Well, we have been plagued too for having him put in prison,' answered one of the Justices, whose name was Justice Bennett. And here we must wait a minute, for it is interesting to know that it was this same Justice Bennett who first gave the name of Quakers to George Fox and his followers as a nickname, to make fun of them. Fox declared in his preaching that 'all men should tremble at the word of the Lord,' whereupon the Justice laughingly said that 'Quakers and Tremblers was the name for such people.' The Justice might have been much surprised if he could have known that centuries after, thousands of people all over the world would still be proud to call themselves by the name he had given in a moment of mockery.

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Neither Justice Bennett nor his prisoner could guess this, however; and therefore, although his Gaoler's heart had been changed, George Fox still lay in Derby Prison. There was more work waiting for him to do there.

One day he heard that a soldier wanted to see him, and in there came a rough trooper, with a story that he was very anxious to tell. 'I was sitting in Church,' he began. 'Thou meanest in the steeple-house,' corrected Fox, who was always very sure that a 'Church' meant a 'Company of Christ's faithful people,' and that the mere outward building where they were gathered should only be called a steeple-house if it had a steeple, or a meeting-house if it had none. 'Sitting in Church, listening to the Priest,' continued the trooper, paying no attention to the interruption, 'I was in an exceeding great trouble, thinking over my sins and wondering what I should do, when a Voice came to me—I believe it was God's own Voice and it said—"Dost thou not know that my servant is in prison? Go thou to him for direction." So I obeyed the Voice,' the man continued, 'and here I have come to you, and now I want you to tell me what I must do to get rid of the burden of these sins of mine.' He was like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, with a load of sins on his back, was he not? And just as Christian's burden rolled away when he came to the Cross, so the trooper's distress vanished when Fox spoke to him, and told him that the same power that had shown him his sins and troubled him for them, would also show him his salvation, for 'That which shows a man his sin is the Same that takes it away!'

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Fox did not speak in vain. The trooper 'began to have great understanding of the Lord's truth and mercyes.' He became a bold man too, and took his new-found happiness straight back to the other soldiers in his quarters, and told them of the truths he had learnt in the prison. He even said that their Colonel—Colonel Barton—was 'as blind as Nebuchadnezzar, to cast such a true servant of God as Fox was, into Gaol.'

Before long this saying came to Colonel Barton's ears, and then there was a fine to do. Naturally he did not like being compared with Nebuchadnezzar. Who would? But it would have been undignified for a Colonel to take any notice then of the soldiers' tittle-tattle; so he said nothing, only bided his time and waited until he could pay back his grudge against the sergeant. A whole year he waited—then his chance came. It was at the Battle of Worcester, when the two armies were lying close together, but before the actual fighting had begun, that two soldiers of the King's Army came out and challenged any two soldiers of the Parliamentary Army to single combat, whereupon Colonel Barton ordered the soldier who had likened him to Nebuchadnezzar to go with one other companion on this dangerous errand. They went; they fought with the two Royalists, and one of the two Parliamentarians was killed; but it was the other one, not Fox's friend. He, left alone, with his comrade lying dead by his side, suddenly found that not even to save his own life could he kill his enemies. So he drove them both before him back to the town, but he did not fire off his pistol at them. Then, as soon as Worcester fight was over, he himself returned and told the whole tale to Fox. He told him 'how the Lord had miraculously preserved him,' and said also that now he had 'seen the deceit and hypocrisy of the officers he had seen also to the end of Fighting.' Whereupon he straightway laid down his arms.

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The trooper left the army. Meanwhile his friend and teacher had suffered for refusing to join it. We must go back a little to the time, some months before the Battle of Worcester, when the original term of Fox's imprisonment in the House of Correction in Derby was drawing to a close.

At this time many new soldiers were being raised for the Parliamentary Army, and among them the authorities were anxious to include their stalwart prisoner, George Fox. Accordingly the Gaoler was asked to bring his charge out to the market-place, and there, before the assembled Commissioners and soldiers, Fox was offered a good position in the army if he would take up arms for the Commonwealth against Charles Stuart. The officers could not understand why George Fox should refuse to regain his liberty on what seemed to them to be such easy terms. 'Surely,' they said, 'a strong, big-boned man like you will be not only willing but eager to take up arms against the oppressor and abuser of the liberties of the people of England!'

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Fox persisted in his refusal. 'I told them,' he writes in his Journal, 'that I knew whence all wars arose, even from men's lusts ... and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars. Yet they courted me to accept their offer, and thought I did but compliment them. But I told them I was come into that covenant of peace which was before wars and strifes were. They said they offered it in love and kindness to me, because for my virtue, and such like flattering words they used. But I told them if that was their love and kindness, I trampled it under my feet. Then their rage got up, and they said, "Take him away, Gaoler, and put him into the prison among the rogues and thieves."'

This prison was a much worse place than the House of Correction where Fox had been confined hitherto. In it he was obliged to remain for a weary half-year longer, knowing all the time that he might have been at liberty, could he have consented to become an officer in the army. His

relations, distressed at his imprisonment, had already offered £100 for his release, but Fox would not accept the pardon this sum might have obtained for him as he said he had done nothing wrong. He was occasionally allowed to leave the horrible, dirty gaol, with its loathsome insects and wicked companions, and walk for a short time in the garden by himself, because his keepers knew that when he had given his word he would not try to escape from their custody.

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As time went on, many dismal people (looking on the gloomy side of things, as dismal people always do) began to shake their heads and say, 'Poor young man, he will spend all his life in gaol. You will see he will never be set free or get his liberty again.' But Fox refused to be cast down. Narrow though his prison was, Hope shared it with him. 'I had faith in God,' his Journal says, 'that I should be delivered from that place in the Lord's time, but not yet, being set there for a work He had for me to do!' Work there was for him in prison truly. A young woman prisoner who had robbed her master was sentenced to be hanged, according to the barbarous law then in force. This shocked Fox so much that he wrote letters to her judges and to the men who were to have been her executioners, expressing his horror at what was going to happen in such strong language that he actually softened their hearts. Although the girl had actually reached the foot of the gallows, and her grave had already been dug, she was reprieved. Then, when she was brought back into prison again after this wonderful escape Fox was able to pour light and life into her soul, which was an even greater thing than saving her body from death. Many other prisoners did Fox help and comfort in Derby Gaol;^[2] but though he could soften the sufferings of others he could not shorten his own. Once again Justice Bennett sent his men to the prison, this time with orders to take the Quaker by force and compel him to join the army, since he would not fight of his own free will.

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'But I told him,' said Fox, "'that I was brought off from outward wars." They came again to give me press money, but I would take none. Afterwards the Constables brought me a second time before the Commissioners, who said I should go for a soldier, but I said I was dead to it. They said I was alive. I told them where envy and hatred is, there is confusion. They offered me money twice, but I refused it. Being disappointed, they were angry, and committed me a close prisoner, till at length they were made to turn me out of Gaol about the beginning of winter 1651, after I had been a prisoner in Derby almost a year; six months in the House of Correction, and six months in the common gaol.'

Thus at length Derby prison was left behind; but the seeds that the prisoner had planted in that dark place sprang up and flourished and bore fruit long after he had left.

Eleven years later, the very same Gaoler, who had been cruel to Fox at the first, and had then had the vision and repented, wrote this letter to his former prisoner. It is a real Gaoler's love-letter, and quite fresh to-day, though it was written nearly 300 years ago.

'DEAR FRIEND,' the letter begins,

'Having such a convenient messenger I could do no less than give thee an account of my present condition; remembering that to the first awakening of me to a sense of life, God was pleased to make use of thee as an instrument. So that sometimes I am taken with admiration that it should come by such means as it did; that is to say that Providence should order thee to be my prisoner to give me my first sight of the truth. It makes me think of the gaoler's conversion by the apostles. Oh! happy George Fox! that first breathed the breath of life within the walls of my habitation! Notwithstanding that my outward losses are since that time such that I am become nothing in the world, yet I hope I shall find that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They have taken all from me; and now instead of keeping a prison, I am waiting rather when I shall become a prisoner myself. Pray for me that my faith fail not, and that I may hold out to the death, that I may receive a crown of life. I earnestly desire to hear from thee and of thy condition, which would very much rejoice me. Not having else at present, but my kind love to thee and all friends, in haste, I rest thine in Christ Jesus.

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'THOMAS SHARMAN.

'Derby, the 22nd of the fourth month, 1662.'

This Gaoler was one of the first people whose Tiger spirits were tamed by George Fox. But he certainly was not the last. Fox himself had told the soldiers in Derby market-place that he could not fight, because he 'lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.' As a friend of his wrote, after his death many years later: 'George Fox was a discerner of other men's spirits, AND VERY MUCH A MASTER OF HIS OWN.'

FOOTNOTES:

- [2] Two men who were executed for small offences he could not save, but 'a little time after they had suffered their spirits appeared to me as I was walking, and I saw the men was well.'

V. 'THE MAN IN LEATHER BREECHES'

'As I was walking I heard old people and work people to say: "he is such a man as never was, he knows people's thoughts" for I turned them to the divine light of Christ and His spirit let them see ... that there was the first step to peace to stand still in the light that showed them their sin and transgression.'—G. FOX.

'Do not look at but keep over all unnaturalness, if any such thing should appear, but keep in that which was and is and will be.'—G. FOX.

'Wait patiently upon the Lord; let every man that loves God, endeavour by the spirit of wisdom, meekness, and love to dry up Euphrates, even this spirit of bitterness that like a great river hath overflowed the earth of mankind.'—GERRARD WINSTANLEY. 1648.

'Blessed is he who loves Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thy sake.'—AUGUSTINE.

'Eternity is just the real world for which we were made, and which we enter through the door of love.'—RUFUS M. JONES.

V. 'THE MAN IN LEATHER BREECHES'

'Rough Moll, the worst-tempered woman in all Yorkshire.' It was thus her neighbours were wont to speak behind her back of Mistress Moll, the keeper of the 'George and Dragon' Inn at Hutton Cranswick near Driffield in the East Riding. Never a good word or a kind deed had she for anyone, since her husband had been called away to serve in King Charles's army. In former days, when mine host was at home, the neighbours had been encouraged to come early and stay late at night gossiping over the home-brewed ale he fetched for them so cheerily; for Moll's husband was an open-hearted, pleasant-mannered man, the very opposite of his shrewish wife. But now, since his departure for the wars, the neighbours got to the bottom of their mugs with as little delay as possible, vowing to themselves in whispers that they would seek refuge elsewhere another night, since Moll's sour looks went near to give a flavour of vinegar even to the ale she brewed. Thus, as speedily as might be, they escaped from the reach of their hostess's sharp tongue.

But the lasses of the inn, who were kept to do the rough work of the house, found it harder to escape from the harsh rule of their mistress. And for little Jan, Moll's four-year-old son, there was still less possibility of escape from the tyrant whom he called by the name of Mother.

Nothing of true mother-love had ever yet been kindled in Rough Moll's heart. From the very beginning she had fiercely resented being burdened with what she called 'the plague of a brat.' Still, so long as his father remained at home, the child's life had not been an unhappy one. As soon as ever he could stand alone he drew himself up by his father's trousers, with an outstretched hand to be grasped in the big fist. As soon as he could toddle, he spent his days wandering round the Inn after his daddy, knowing that directly he grew tired daddy would be ready to stop whatever he might be doing, in order to lift the small boy up in his arms or to give him a ride on his knee.

'Wasting your time over the brat and leaving the Tavern to go to rack and ruin'—Moll would say, with a sneer, as she passed them. But she never interfered; for the husband who had courted her when she was a young girl was the only person for whom she still kept a soft spot in the heart that of late years seemed to have grown so hard.

Truth to tell, tavern-keeping was no easy business in those unsettled times, and Moll had ever been a famous body for worrying over trifles.

"The worry cow
Would have lived till now,
If she had not lost her breath,
But she thought her hay
Would not last the day,
So she mooded herself to death."

'And all the time she had three sacks full! Remember that, Moll, my lass!' Jan's father would say to his wife, when she began to pour out to him her dismal forebodings about the future.

But since this easy-going, jolly daddy had left the Inn and had gone away with the other men and lads of the village to fight with My Lord for the King, little Jan's lot was a hard one, and seemed likely to grow harder day by day.

Rough Moll's own life was not too easy either, at this time, though few folks troubled themselves to speculate upon the reason for her added gruffness. So she concealed her anxieties under an extra harshness of tongue and did her best to make life a burden to everyone she came across. For, naturally, now that the Inn was no longer a pleasant place in mine host's absence, it was no longer a profitable place either. Custom was falling off and quarter day was fast approaching. Moll was at her wits' end to know where she should find money to pay her rent, when, one day, to her unspeakable relief, My Lady in her coach stopped at the door of the Inn. Now Moll had been dairymaid up at the Hall years ago, before her marriage, and My Lady knew of old that Moll's butter was as sweet as her looks were sour. Perhaps she guessed, also, at some of the other woman's anxieties; for was not her own husband, My Lord, away at the wars too? Anyway, when the fine yellow coach stopped at the door of the Inn, it was My Lady's own head with the golden ringlets that leaned out of the window, and My Lady's own soft voice that asked if her old dairymaid could possibly oblige her with no less than thirty pounds of butter for her Yuletide feast to the villagers the following week.

The Moll who came out, smiling and flattered, to the Inn door and stood there curtsying very low to her Ladyship, was a different being from the Rough Moll of every day. She promised, with her very smoothest tongue, she would not fail. She knew where to get the milk, and her Ladyship should have the butter, full weight and the very best, by the following evening, which would leave two full days before Christmas.

'That is settled then, for I have never known you to fail me,' said My Lady, as the coach drove away, leaving Moll curtsying behind her, and vowing again that 'let come what would come,' she would not fail.

It was small wonder, therefore, after this unaccustomed graciousness, that she was shorter-tempered than ever with her unfortunate guests that evening. Was not their presence hindering her from getting on with her task? At length she left the lasses to serve the ale, which, truth to tell, they were nothing loath to do, while Moll herself, in her wooden shoes and with her skirts tucked up all round her, clattered in and out of the dairy where already a goodly row of large basins stood full to the brim with rich yellow milk on which, even now, the cream was fast rising.

Thirty pounds of butter could never all be made in one day; she must begin her task overnight.

True, little Jan was whining to go to bed as he tried vainly to keep awake on his small hard stool by the fire. The brat must wait; she could not attend to him now. He could sleep well enough leaning against the bricks of the chimney-corner. Or, no! the butter-making would take a long time, and Moll was never a methodical woman. Jan should lie down, just as he was, and have a nap in the kitchen until she was ready to attend to him. Roughly, but not unkindly, she pulled him off the stool and laid him down on a rug in a dark corner of the kitchen and told him to be off to sleep as fast as he could, stooping to cover him with an old coat of her husband's that was hanging on the door, as she spoke. Nothing loath, Jan shut his sleepy eyes, and, burying his little nose in the folds of the old coat, he went happily off into dreamland, soothed by the well-remembered out-door smell that always clung around his father's belongings.

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It did not take Moll long to fill the churn and to set it in its place. Just as she was busy shutting down the lid, there came a knock at the door. 'Plague take you, Stranger,' she grumbled, as she opened it, and a gust of snow and wind blew in upon her and the assembled guests in the tavern kitchen. 'You bring in more of the storm than you are likely to pay for your ale.'

'My desire is not for ale,' said the Stranger, speaking slowly, and looking at the woman keenly from underneath his shaggy eyebrows. 'I came but to ask thee for shelter from the storm; and for a little meat, if thou hast any to set before me.'

'To ask *thee* for shelter.' 'If *thou* hast any meat.' The unusual form of address caught Moll's ear. She looked more closely at her visitor. Yes, his lower limbs were not covered with homely Yorkshire frieze; they were encased in odd garments that must surely be made of leather, since the snowflakes lay upon them in crisp wreaths and wrinkles before they melted. She had heard of the strange being who was visiting those parts and she had no desire to make his acquaintance. 'Hey, lasses!' she called to her maids at the far end of the tavern parlour, 'here is the man in leather breeches himself, come to pay us a visit this wild night!'

A shout of laughter went up from the men at their tankards. 'The man in leather breeches!' 'Send him out again into the storm! We'll have none of his company here, the spoil sport!'

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Moll nodded assent, and returning to her unwelcome guest, said shortly, 'Meat there is none for you here,' and moved towards the door, where the Stranger still stood, as if to close it upon him.

But the man was not to be so easily dismissed.

'Hast thou then milk?' he asked.

Moll laughed aloud. A man who did not want ale should not have milk; no money to be made out of that; especially this night of all nights, when every drop would be wanted for her Ladyship's butter.

Lies were part of Moll's regular stock-in-trade. She lied now, with the ease of long habit.

'You will get no shelter here,' she said roughly, 'and as for milk, there is not a drop in the house.'

The Stranger looked at her. He spoke no words for a full minute, but as his eyes pierced her through and through, she knew that he knew that she had lied. The knowledge made her angry. She repeated her words with an oath. The Stranger made as if to turn away; then, almost reluctantly but very tenderly, as if he were being drawn back in spite of himself: 'Hast thou then cream?' he asked. Yet, though his tone was persuasive, his brows were knitted as he stood looking down upon the angry woman.

'Not as if he cared about the cream, but as if he cared about me,' Moll said herself, long after. But at the time: 'No, nor cream either. On my soul, there is not a drop in the house,' she repeated, more fiercely than before.

But, even as she spoke, she saw that the Stranger's eyes were fastened on the churn that stood behind her, the churn evidently full and drawn out for use, with drops of rich yellow cream still standing upon the lid and trickling down the sides.

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Moll turned her square shoulders upon the churn as if to shut out its witness to her falsehood. Her lies came thick and fast; 'I tell you there is not a single drop of cream in the house.'

The next moment, a loud crash made her look round. She had forgotten Jan! The loud angry voice and the cold blast from the open door had awakened him before he had had time to get sound asleep. Hearing his mother vow that she had not a drop of cream in the house, he left his rug and began playing about again. Then, being ever a restless little mortal, he had crept round to the churn to see if it had really become empty in such a short time. He had tried to pull himself up by one of the legs in order to stand on the rim and see if there was really no cream inside; and in attempting this feat, naturally, he had pulled the whole churn over upon him. And not only the churn,—its contents too! Eighteen quarts of Moll's richest yellow cream were streaming all over the kitchen floor. Pools, lakes, rivers, seas of cream were running over the flagstones and dripping through the crevices into the ground.

With a cry of rage Moll turned, and, seeing the damage, she sprang upon little Jan and beat him soundly; and a beating from Moll's heavy hand was no small matter: then with a curse she flung the child away from her towards the hearth.

'Woman!' The Stranger's voice recalled her. 'Woman! Beware! Thou art full of lies and fury and deceit, yet in the name of the Lord I warn thee. Ere three days have gone by, thou shalt know what is in thine heart; and thou shalt learn the power of that which was, and is, and will be!'

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So saying, the unwelcome guest opened the outer door and walked away into the raging storm and darkness,—a less bitter storm it seemed to him now than that created by the violent woman within doors. Some way further on he espied a haystack, under which he lay down, as he had done on many another night before this, and there he slept in the wind and the snow until morning.

Moll, meanwhile, enraged beyond words at the loss of her cream, stalked off for a pail and cloth, and set herself to wash the floor, muttering curses as she did so. Never a glance did she cast at the corner by the fire where little Jan still lay by the hearth-stone, motionless and strangely quiet; he, the restless imp, who was usually so full of life. Never a glance, until, the centre of the floor being at last clean again, Moll, on her knees, came with her pail of soap-suds to the white river that surrounded the corner of the kitchen where Jan lay. A white river? Nay, there was a crimson river that mingled with it; a stream of crimson drops that flowed from the stone under the child's head.

Moll leapt to her feet on the instant. What ailed the boy? She had beaten him, it is true, but then she had beaten him often before this in his father's absence. A beating was nothing new to little Jan. Why had he fallen? What made him lie so still? She turned him over. Ah! it was easy to see the reason. As she flung him from her in her rage, the child in his fall had struck his head against the sharp edge of the hearth-stone, and there he lay now, with the life-blood steadily flowing from his temple. [107]

A feeling that Rough Moll had never been conscious of before gripped her heart at the sight. Was her boy dead? Had she killed him? What would his father say? What would her husband call her? A murderer? Was she that? Was that what the Stranger had meant when he had looked at her with those piercing eyes? He might have called her a liar, at the sight of the churn full of cream, but he had not done so; and little she would have cared if he had. But a murderer! Was murder in her heart?

Lifting Jan as carefully as she could, she carried him upstairs to the small bedroom under the roof, where he usually lay on a tiny pallet by her side. But this night the child's small figure lay in the wide bed, and big Moll, with all her clothes on, hung over him; or if she lay down for a moment or two, it was only on the hard little pallet by his side.

All that night Moll watched. But all that night Jan never moved. All the next day he lay unconscious, while Moll did her clumsy utmost to staunch the wound in his forehead. Long before it was light, she tried to send one of her maids for the doctor; but the storm was now so violent that none could leave or enter the house.

Her Ladyship's order went unheeded. The thirty pounds of butter were never made. But My Lady, who was a mother herself, not only forgave Moll for spoiling her Yuletide festivities, but even told her, when she heard of the disaster, that she need not trouble about the rent until her boy was better. [108]

Until he was better! But would Jan ever be better? Moll had no thought now for either the butter or the rent. The yellow cream might turn sour in every single one of her pans for all she cared, if only she could get rid of this new unbearable pain.

At length, on the evening of the second day, faint with the want of sleep, she fell into an uneasy doze: and still Jan had neither moved nor stirred. Presently a faint sound woke her. Was he calling? No; it was but the Christmas bells ringing across the snow. What were those bells saying? 'MUR-DER-ER' 'MUR-DERER'—was that it? Over and over again. Did even the bells know what she had done and what she had in her heart? For a moment black despair seized her.

The next moment there followed the shuffling sound of many feet padding through the snow. The storm had ceased by this time, and all the world was wrapped in a white silence, broken only by the sound of the distant bells. And now the Christmas waits had followed the bells' music, and were singing carols outside the ale-house door. Fiercely, Moll stuck her fingers in her ears. She would not listen, lest even the waits should sing of her sin, and shew her the blackness of her heart. But the song stole up into the room, and, in spite of herself, something forced Moll to attend to the words:

'Babe Jesus lay in Mary's lap,
The sun shone on his hair—
And that was how she saw, mayhap,
The crown already there.'

That was how good mothers sang to their children. They saw crowns upon their hair. What sort of a crown had Moll given to her child? She looked across and saw the chaplet of white bandages lying on the white pillow. No; she, Moll, had never been a good mother, would never be one now, unless her boy came back to life again. She was a murderer, and her husband when he returned from the wars would tell her so, and little Jan would never know that his mother had a heart after all. [109]

At that moment the carol died away, and the waits' feet, heavy with clinging snow, shuffled off into the darkness; but looking down again at the head with its crown of white bandages upon the white pillow, Moll saw that this time Jan's eyes were open and shining up at her.

'Mother,' he said, in his little weak voice, as he opened his arms and smiled. Moll had seen him smile like that at his father; she had never known before that she wanted to share that smile. She knew it now.

Only three short days had passed since she turned the Stranger from her doors, but little Jan and his mother entered a new world of love and tenderness together that Christmas morning. As Rough Moll gathered her little son up into her arms and held him closely to her breast, she knew for the first time the power of 'that which was, and is, and will be.'

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VI. THE SHEPHERD OF PENDLE HILL

ToC

'On Pendle G.F. saw people as thick as motes in the sun, that should in time be brought home to the Lord, that there might be but one Shepherd and one Sheepfold in all the earth. There his eye was directed Northward beholding a great people that should receive him and his message in those parts.'—W. PENN'S Testimony to George Fox.

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'In Adam, in the fall are all the inward foul weather, storms, tempests, winds, strifes, the whole family of it is in confusion, being all gone from the spirit and witness of God in themselves, and the power and the light, in which power and light and spirit, is the fellowship with God and with one another, through which they come ... into the quickener, who awakens (them) and brings (them) up unto Himself, the way, Christ; and out of and off from the teachers and priests, and shepherds that change and fall, to the PRIEST, SHEPHERD and PROPHET, that never fell or changed, nor ever will fail or change, nor leave the flock in the cold weather nor in the winter, nor in storms or tempests; nor doth the voice of the wolf frighten him from his flock. For the Light, the Power, the Truth, the Righteousness, did it ever leave you in any weather, or in any storms or tempests? And so his sheep know his voice and follow Him, who gives them life eternal abundantly.'—GEORGE FOX.

VI. THE SHEPHERD OF PENDLE HILL

'Ingleborough, Pendle and Pen-y-Ghent Are the highest hills 'twixt Scotland and Trent.' So sing I, the Shepherd of Pendle, to myself, and so have I sung, on summer days, these many years, lying out atop of old Pendle Hill, keeping watch over my flock.

In good sooth, a shepherd's life is a hard one, on our Lancashire fells, for nine months out of the twelve. The nights begin to be sharp with frost towards the back-end of the year, for all the days are sunny and warm at times. Bitter cold it is in winter and worse in spring, albeit the daylight is longer.

'As the day lengthens, so the cold strengthens,' runs the rhyme, and well do men know the truth of it in these parts. Many a time a man must be ready to give his own life for his sheep, aye and do it too, to save them in a snow-drift or from the biting frost. It is an anxious season for the shepherd, until he sees the lambs safely at play and able to stand upon their weak legs and run after their mothers. But it is not until the dams are clipped that a shepherd has an easy mind and can let his thoughts dwell on other things. Then, at last, in the summer, his time runs gently for a while; and I, for one, was always ready to enjoy myself, when once the bitter weather was over.

So there I was, one day many years ago, nigh upon Midsummer, lying out on the grassy slopes atop of old Pendle Hill, and singing to myself—

'Ingleborough, Pendle and Pen-y-Ghent
Are the highest hills 'twixt Scotland and Trent.'

But for all I sang of the hills, my thoughts were in the valleys. I lay there, watching till the sun should catch the steep roof of a certain cot I know. It stands by the side of a stream, so hidden among the bushes that even my eye cannot find it, unless the sunlight finds it first, and flashes back at me from roof and window-pane. That was the cot I had never lived in then, but I hoped to live in it before the summer was over, and to bring the bonniest lass in all yon broad Yorkshire there with me as my bride. That was to be if things went well with me and with the sheep; for my master had promised to give me a full wage (seeing I had now reached man's estate), if so be I came through the spring and early summer without losing a single lamb. Thinking of these things, and dreaming dreams as a lad will, the hours trod swiftly over Pendle Hill that day; for all the sun was going down the sky but slowly, seeing it was Midsummer-tide.

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'DREAMING OF THE COT IN THE VALE'

[ToList](#)

Suddenly, as I lay there looking down over the slope, I saw a strange sight, for travellers are scarce on Pendle Hill even at Midsummer. But it was a traveller surely, or was it a shepherd? At first I could not be sure; for he carried a lamb in his arms and trod warily with it, in the way that shepherds do. Yet I never met a shepherd clad in clothes like his; nor with a face like his either, as I saw it, when he came nearer. Weary he looked, and with a pale countenance, as if he had much ado to come up the hill, and in good sooth 'tis full steep just there; or else, may be, he was

fasting and faint for lack of food. But all this I only thought of later. At the time, I looked not much at him, but only at the lamb he carried in his arms. How came such a man to be carrying a lamb, and carrying it full gently and carefully too, supporting one leg with both hands, although he was encumbered with a staff? Then, when he had come yet nearer, I saw that it was not only a lamb—it was one of my master's lambs, my own lambs that I was set to watch; for there on its wool was the brand carried by our flocks and by none others on all those fells. One of my lambs, lying in a stranger's arms! A careless shepherd I! I must have been asleep or dreaming ... dreaming foolish dreams about that cottage, on which the sun might shine unheeded now, I cared not for it, being full of other thoughts. No sooner did I espy the brand on the lamb than I rose to my feet, and, even as I ran nimbly down the slope towards the stranger, my eyes roamed over the hillside to discover which of my lambs had strayed:—Rosamond, Cowslip, Eglantine and Gillyflower—I could see them all safe with their dams, and many more besides. All the lambs that springtime I had named after the flowers that I hoped to plant another year in the garden of that cot beside the stream. And all the flowers I could see and name were safe beside their dams, as I leapt down the hillside. Nay, Periwinkle was missing! Periwinkle was ever a strayer, and Periwinkle's dam was bleating at the edge of the steep cliff up which the stranger toiled. It was Periwinkle and none other that he was carrying in his arms! Seeing it was Periwinkle, I halloed to him to halt. Hearing my cry, he stopped, and waited till I reached him, all the time holding the lamb carefully, tending it and speaking to it in the tone a shepherd is wont to use.

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'Thanks to you, Good Stranger,' I said, as I came nearer, 'Periwinkle is ever a strayer. Did you see her fall?'

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'Nay,' said the Stranger, giving the lamb tenderly into my arms, and halting upon his staff; speaking warily and weightily as I never heard a man speak before or since. 'Nay; the lambkin must have fallen before I came by. But I heard the mother bleat, and I knew, by the sound, that she was in distress. Therefore I turned towards the crag upon which she stood, and, looking down, I perceived the lamb fallen among the brambles beneath a high ledge.'

'And went down over for her yourself and brought her up again! 'Twas bravely done, Good Stranger,' I answered, and then, thinking to encourage him, I said, 'Better you could not have done it, had you been a shepherd yourself, for I see your hands are torn.'

'It is nothing,' he answered. 'A shepherd expects that.'

'Then are you a shepherd too, Master Stranger?' I asked, but he gave no answer; only fastened his eyes upon me as we climbed together up the hill. Wonderful eyes he had, not like to other men's; with a depth and yet a light in them, as when the June sun shines back reflected from the blackness of a mountain tarn. I saw them then, and still I seem to see them, for when he looked at me, although he said no word, it was as if he knew me apart from everyone else in the world, even as I know every one of my master's sheep. I felt that he knew too how I had been looking at that cot in the vale and dreaming idly, forgetful of my lambs. Therefore, though he said no word of rebuke to me, I felt my cheeks grow hot, and I hung my head and spake not. Only, when we reached the top of the hill, he turned and answered me at last. 'Thou judgest right, friend,' he said, 'I was indeed a shepherd in my young years. I am a shepherd even now, though as yet with full few sheep. But, hereafter, it may be...'

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I did not wait for the end of his sentence. Now that we were come to level ground I was fain to show that I was not a careless, idle shepherd in truth. My mind was set on Periwinkle's leg; broken, I feared, for it hung down limply. I took her,—laid her on the grass beside her dam while I fashioned a rough splint, shepherd-fashion, to keep the leg steady till we reached the fold. Then, seeing the sun was low by this time and nigh to setting over beyond the sea towards Morecambe, I called my sheep and gathered them from all the fells, near and far; and a fairer flock of sheep ye shall never see 'twixt Scotland and Trent, as the song says, though I trow ye may, an ye look carefully, find steeper hills than old Pendle.

When my work was done, I took up Periwinkle in my arms once more, anxious to descend with her ere night fell. Already I was climbing carefully down the slope, when, bless me, I remembered the Stranger, and that I had left him without a word, he having gone clean out of my mind, and I not having given him so much as a 'thank ye' at parting, for all he had saved Periwinkle. But I think I must have gone clean out of his mind too.

When I came back to him once more, there he was, still standing on the very top of the hill, where I had left him. But now his head was raised, the breeze lifted his hair. A kind of glory was on him. It was light from the sunset sky, I thought at first; but it was brighter far than that; for the sunset sky looked dull and dim beside it. His eyes were roaming far and wide over the valleys and hills, even as my eyes had wandered, when I was gathering my sheep. But his eyes wandered further, and further far, till they reached the utmost line of the Irish Sea to westward and covered all the country that lay between. Then he turned himself around to the east again. A strong man he was and a tall, and the glory was still on his face, though now he had the sunset sky at his back. And he opened his mouth and spake. Strange were his words:

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'If but one man,' said he, 'but one man or woman, were raised by the Lord's Power to stand and live in the same Spirit that the Apostles and Prophets were in, he or she should shake all this country for miles round.' Shake all the country! He had uttered a fearsome thing. 'Nay, Master Stranger, bethink ye,' I said, going up to him, 'how may that be? What would happen to me and the sheep were these fells to shake? Even now, though they stand steady, you have seen that wayward lambs like Periwinkle will fall over and do themselves a mischief.' So I spake, being but a witless lad. But my words might have been the wind passing by him, so little he heeded them. I doubt if he even heard or knew that I was there although I stood close at his side. For again his

eyes were resting on the Irish Sea, and on the country that lay shining in the sun towards Furness, and on the wide, glistening sands round Morecambe Bay. And then he turned himself round to the north where lie the high mountains that can at times be seen, or guessed, in the glow of the setting sun. Thus, as he gazed on all that fair land, the Stranger spoke. Again he uttered strange words.

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At first his voice was low and what he said reached me not, save only the words: 'A great people, a great people to be gathered.'

Whereat I, being, as I say, but a lad then, full of my own notions and mighty sure of myself as young lads are, plucked at his sleeve, having heard but the last words, and supposing that he had watched me gathering my flock for the fold.

'Not people, Master Stranger,' I interrupted. 'Tis my business to gather sheep. Sheep and silly, heedless lambs like Periwinkle, 'tis them I must gather for my master's fold.'

He saw and heard me then, full surely.

'Aye,' he said, and his voice, though deep, had music in it, while his eyes pierced me yet again, but more gently this time, so that I made sure he had seen me tending Periwinkle and knew that I had done the best I could. 'Aye, verily thou dost well. Shepherd of Pendle, to gather lambs and silly sheep for their master's fold. I, too....' But there again he broke off and fell once more into silence.

Thus I left him, still standing atop of the hill; but as I turned to go I heard his voice yet again, and though I looked not round, the sound of it was as if a man were speaking to his friend, for all I knew that he stood there, atop of the hill, alone:

'I thank thee, Lord, that Thou hast let me see this day in what places Thou hast a great people, a great people to be gathered.'

Thereat I partly understood, yet turned not back again, nor sought to enquire further of his meaning; for the daylight was fast fading and I had need of all my skill in getting home my sheep.

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VII. THE PEOPLE IN WHITE RAIMENT

ToC

'After a while he (G.F.) travelled up further towards the dales in Yorkshire, as Wensdale, and Sedburgh, and amongst the hills, dales, and mountains he came on and convinced many of the eternal Truth.'—M. FOX'S Testimony to G. FOX.

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'In the mighty power of God, go on, preaching the Gospel to every creature, and discipling them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the name of Christ preach the mighty day of the Lord to all the consciences of them who have long lain in darkness.... In the name of the

Lord Jesus Christ go on, that that of God in all consciences may witness that ye are sent of God and are of God and so according to that speak. Sound, sound the trumpet abroad, ye valiant soldiers of Christ's Kingdom, of which there is no end.... Be famous in his Light and bold in his strength.'—G. FOX.

'Let us in our message offer that which is beyond all creeds,—the evidence in our lives of communion with the Spirit of God.'—J. W. ROWNTREE.

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VII. THE PEOPLE IN WHITE RAIMENT

The summer twilight was fading into night. The moon, hidden at her rising by a bank of clouds, had now climbed high above them, and shone down, a golden lamp from the clear evening sky. It was already dusk when the Shepherd of Pendle disappeared with his flock into the dewy valley. It was already light again, with the pallid light of the moon, when at length George Fox descended old Pendle Hill. Heavily he trod and slowly. Wrapped in thought was he, as a man who has seen things greater and more mysterious than he can express or comprehend. Only as he descended the slope of the hill did he remember that he was bodily weary, having eaten and drunk little for several days. A short distance from the summit, his ear caught the tinkle of falling water; and guided by its gentle music he came to where a tiny spring gushed out of the hillside, and went leaping on its way, gleaming like a thread of silver. Fox knelt down upon the soft turf, and dipping his hand, cup-wise, into the water, he carried with difficulty a few shining drops to his parched lips. The cool freshness of even this scanty draught revived him. He looked round, his glance roaming over the wide landscape that lay, mist-filled and moon-filled, beneath him, but as yet scarce seeing what he saw. Then, rising and quickening his steps, he hastened down the hill to the place where, hours before, his companion, Richard Farnsworth, had promised to await his return.

Even faithful Richard had grown weary, as time passed and the night drew on apace. He had been minded to chide his friend for his forgetfulness and long delay, but as the two men met, something stopped him, or ever he began to speak. Maybe it was the moonlight that fell full upon George Fox's countenance, or maybe there was in truth visible there some faint reflection of the radiance that transfigured the face of Moses, when he too, coming down from a far mightier revelation on a far loftier mountain, 'wist not that the skin of his face shone.'

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At any rate Richard, loyal soul, checked the impatient words of remonstrance that had risen to his lips. Silently putting his hand through his friend's arm, he led him a mile or two further along the road, until they came to the small wayside inn where they intended to spend the night.

No sooner were they within doors than Richard was startled afresh by the pallor of his companion's countenance. The glory had departed now. Nothing but utter weariness remained. In all haste Richard called for food and drink, and placing them before Fox he almost forced him to partake. Fox swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread, and drank a little clear red wine in a glass. Then as he set the glass down, he noticed the inn-keeper who was standing by, watching his guest's every movement with curious eyes.

A rough, plain countryman, he seemed, mine host of the ale-house, to most of those who had dealings with him. But Fox, in spite of his own bodily hunger and physical weariness, discerned that the spirit of the man before him knew the cravings of a yet keener need: was fainting under the weight of a yet heavier load. Instantly he recognised the seeking soul within, even as the Shepherd of Pendle a few hours previously, out on the hillside, had recognised his master's mark on the straying sheep. Forgetting his own weariness, even for the time putting aside the remembrance of the visions he had seen, he set himself to win and satisfy this humble soul at his side.

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'I declared Truth to the man of the house,' so runs his Journal, 'and wrote a paper to the priests and professors declaring "the day of the Lord and that Christ was come to teach His people Himself, by His power and spirit in their hearts, and to bring people off from all the world's ways and teaching, to His own free teaching who had bought them, and was the Saviour of all them that believed in Him." And the man of the house did spread the paper up and down and was mightily affected with Truth!'

The inn-keeper went out full of gladness to 'publish Truth' in his turn. Henceforth he was a new man in the power of the new message that had been entrusted to him. A new life lay before him.

But when the two friends were once more alone together, and the immediate task was done, Richard Farnsworth perceived the strange look that had silenced him at the foot of the mountain returning to his companion's face. Only now the weariness was fading, it was the glory that returned.

Pushing away the table, George Fox rose to his feet, and stretched both his arms out wide. He and Farnsworth were alone in the narrow inn parlour, lighted only by one flickering rushlight. So small was the room that the whitewashed walls pressed close on every side. So low was the ceiling that when Fox arose and drew himself up to his full height the black oak beams were scarce a hand's breadth above his head. [126]

Yet Richard, as he looked up, awed and silent, from his stool by the table, felt as if his friend were still standing far above him on the summit of a high hill, with nothing but the heights of sky beyond his head and with the hills and valleys of the whole world stretching away below his feet.

'I see,' said Fox, and, as he spoke, to Richard too the narrow walls seemed to open and melt away into infinite space on every side: 'I see a people in white raiment, by a riverside—a great people—in white raiment, coming to the Lord.'

The flickering rushlight spluttered and went out. Through the low casement window the white mists could be seen, still rising from every bend and fold of the widespread valleys that lay around them, rising up, up, like an innumerable company of spirit-filled souls, while the moon shone down serenely over all.

II

It was a few days later, and Whitsun Eve. The same traveller who had climbed to the top of old Pendle Hill 'with much ado, it was so steep,' was coming down now on the far side of the Yorkshire dales.

'A lusty strong man of body' but 'of a grave look or countenance,' he 'travelled much on foot through rough and untrodden paths.' 'As he passed through Wensleydale he advised the people as he met or passed through them' 'to fear God,' 'which ... did much alarm the people, it being a time that many people were filled with zeal.'^[3] [127]

At sunset he passed through a village of flax-weavers whose settlements lay in the low flats that bordered the rushing river Rawthey a mile or two outside of Sedbergh Town.

'I came through the Dales,' says George Fox in his Journal, 'and as I was passing along the way, I asked a man which was Richard Robinson's, and he asked me from whence I came, and I told him "From the Lord."'

This must have been a rather unexpected answer from a traveller on the high road. Can you not see the countryman's surprised face as he turns round and stares at the speaker, and wonders whatever he means?

'So when I came to Richard Robinson's I declared the Everlasting Truth to him, and yet a dark jealousy rose up in him after I had gone to bed, that I might be somebody that was come to rob his house, and he locked all his doors fast. And the next day I went to a separate meeting at Justice Benson's where the people generally was convinced, and this was the place that I had seen a people coming forth in white raiment; and a mighty meeting there was and is to this day near Sedbarr which I gathered in the name of Jesus.'

These flax-weavers of Brigflatts were a company of 'Seekers,' unsatisfied souls who had strayed away like lost sheep from all the sects and Churches, and were longing for a spiritual Shepherd to come and find them again and bring them home to the fold. [128]

George Fox was a weaver's son himself. Directly he heard it, the whirr of the looms beside the rushing Rawthey must have been a homelike sound in his ears. But more than that, his spirit was immediately at home among the little colony of weavers of snowy linen; for he recognised at once that these were the riverside people 'in white raiment,' whom he had seen in his vision, and to whom he had been sent.

Not only the flax-weavers, but also some of the 'considerable people' of the neighbourhood accepted the message of the wandering preacher, who came to them over the dales that memorable Whitsuntide. The master of the house where the meeting was held, Colonel Gervase Benson himself, and his good wife Dorothy also, were 'convinced of Truth,' and faithfully did they adhere thereafter to their new faith, through fair weather and foul. In later years, men noted that this same Colonel Benson, following his teacher's love of simplicity, and hatred of high-sounding titles, generally styled himself merely a 'husbandman,' notwithstanding 'the height and glory of the world that he had a great share of.'^[4] seeing that 'he had been a Colonel, a Justice of the Peace, Mayor of Kendal, and Commissary in the Archdeaconry of Richmond before the late domestic wars. Yet, as an humble servant of Christ, he downed those things.'^[5] His wife, Mistress Dorothy, also, was to prove herself a faithful friend to her teacher in after years, when his turn, and her turn too, came to suffer for 'Truth's sake.'

But in these opening summer days of 1652, no shadows fell on the sunrise of enthusiasm and of hope, as, in the good Justice's house beside the rushing Rawthey, the gathering of the 'great people' began. [129]

The day was Whitsunday, the anniversary of that other gathering in the upper room at Jerusalem, when the Apostles being all 'in one place, with one accord, of one mind,' the rushing mighty Wind came and shook all the place where they were sitting, followed by the cloven tongues 'like as of fire, that sat upon each of them.'

The gift given at Pentecost has never been recalled. Throughout the ages the Spirit waits to take possession of human hearts, ready to fill even the humblest lives with Its Own Power of breath and flame.

This was the Truth that had grown dusty and neglected in England in this seventeenth century. The 'still, small Voice' had been drowned in the clash of arms and in the almost worse clamour of a thousand different sects. Now that, after his own long search in loneliness and darkness, George Fox had at length found the Voice speaking to him unmistakably in the depths of his own heart, the whole object of his life was to persuade others to listen also to 'the true Teacher that is within,' and to convince them that He was always waiting to speak not only in their hearts, but also through their lives. 'My message unto them from the Lord was,' he says, 'that they should all come together again and wait to feel the Lord's power and spirit in themselves, to gather them together to Christ, that they might be taught of Him who says "Learn of Me."'

This was the Truth—an actual, living Truth—that not only the flax-weavers of Brigflatts, but many other companies of 'Seekers' scattered through the dales of Yorkshire and Westmorland, as well as in many other places, had been longing to hear proclaimed. 'Thirsty Souls that hunger' was one of the names by which they called themselves. It was to these thirsty, hungering Souls that George Fox had been led at the very moment when he was burning to share with others the vision of the 'wide horizons of the future' that had been unfolded to him on the top of old Pendle Hill.

No wonder that the Seekers welcomed him and flocked round him, drinking in his words as if their thirsty souls could never have enough. No wonder that he welcomed them with equal gladness, rejoicing not only in their joy, but yet more in that he saw his vision's fulfilment beginning. Here in these secluded villages he had been led unmistakably to the 'Great People,' whom he had seen afar off, waiting to be gathered.

Within a fortnight from that assembly on Whit-Sunday at Justice Benson's house George Fox was no longer a solitary, wandering teacher, trying to convince scattered people here and there of the Truths he had discovered. Within a fortnight—a wonderful fortnight truly—he had become the leader of a mighty movement that gathered adherents and grew of itself, spreading with an irresistible impulse until, only a few years later, one Englishman out of every ninety was a member of the SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] First Publishers of Truth.

[4] First Publishers of Truth.

[5] First Publishers of Truth.

VIII. A WONDERFUL FORTNIGHT

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ToC

I look upon Cumberland and Westmorland as the Galilee of Quakerism.—T. HODGKIN.

'They may have failed in their intellectual formulation, but at least they succeeded in finding a living God, warm and tender and near at hand, the Life of their lives, the Day Star in their hearts; and their travail of Soul, their brave endurance, and their loyal obedience to vision have helped to make our modern world.'—RUFUS M. JONES.

'We ceased from the teachings of all men, and their words and their worships, and their temples and all their baptisms and churches, and we ceased from our own words and professions and practices in religion.... We met together often, and waited upon the Lord in pure silence from our own words, and hearkened to the voice of the Lord and felt His word in our hearts.'—E. BURROUGH.

'John Camm, he was my father according to the flesh, so was he also a spiritual father and instructor of me in the way of Truth and Righteousness ... for his tender care was great for the education of me and the rest of his children and family in the Nurture and Fear of the Lord.'—THOMAS CAMM.

'Death cannot separate us, for in the never-failing love of God there is union for evermore.'—J. CAMM.

VIII. A WONDERFUL FORTNIGHT

I

The annual Fair on Whitsun Wednesday is the gayest time of the whole year at Sedbergh. For a few hours the solid grey town under the green fells gives itself up to gaiety and merriment.

The gentry of the neighbourhood as well as the country folk for miles around come flocking to the annual hiring of farm lads and lasses, which is the main business of the Fair. Thoughts of profit and the chance of making a good bargain fill the heads of the older generation. But the youths and maidens come, eager-eyed, looking for romance. At the Fair they seek to guess what Fate may hold in store for them during the long months of labour that will follow hard on their few hours of jollification.

'All manner of finery was to be had' at the Fair; 'there were morris and rapier dances, wrestling and love-making going on,' and plenty of hard drinking too. 'The Fair at Sedbergh' was the emphatic destination of many a prosperous farmer and labourer on a Whitsun Wednesday morning; but it was 'Sebba Fair' he cursed thickly under his breath as he reeled home at night.

In truth seventeenth-century Sedbergh was a busy place, not only in Fair week, but at other times too, with its stately old church and its grammar school; to say nothing of the fact that, in

these days of Oliver's Protectorate, it boasted no less than forty-eight different religious sects among its few hundred inhabitants. Only the sad-eyed Seekers, coming down in little groups from their scattered hamlets, exchanged sorrowful greetings as they met one another amid all the riot and hubbub of the Fair; for they had tried the forty-eight sects in turn for the nourishment their souls needed, and had tried them all in vain.

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Until this miraculous Whitsuntide of June 1652, when, suddenly, in a moment, everything was changed.

The little groups of Seekers stood still and looked at one another in astonishment as they came out from the shadow of the narrow street of grey stone houses into the open square in the centre of the town. For there, opposite the market cross and under the spreading boughs of a gigantic yew-tree, they saw a young man standing on a bench, and preaching as they had never heard anyone preach before. Behind him rose the massive square tower, and the long row of clerestory windows that were, then as now, the glory of Sedbergh Church. The tall green grass of the churchyard was already trampled down by the feet of hundreds of spell-bound listeners.

Who was this unexpected Stranger who dared to interrupt even the noisy business of the Fair with the earnestness and insistence of his appeal? He was a young and handsome man, with regular features and hair that hung in short curls under his hat-brim, contrary to the Puritan fashion; big-boned in body, and of a commanding presence. The boys of the grammar school, determined to make the most of their holiday, thought it good sport at first to mock at the Stranger's garb. As he stood there, lifted up above them on the rough bench, they could see every detail of the queer leather breeches that he wore underneath his long coat. His girdle with its alchemy buttons showed off grandly too, while the fine linen bands he wore at his neck gleamed out with dazzling whiteness against the dark branches of Sedbergh's majestic old yew-tree.

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The preacher's words and tones and his piercing eyes quickly overawed his audience, and made them forget his outlandish appearance. Even the boys could understand what he was saying, for he seemed to be speaking to each one of them, as much as to any of the grown-up people. And what was this he was telling them? With outstretched hand he pointed upwards, insisting that that church, the beautiful building, the pride of Sedbergh, was not a church at all. It was only a steeple-house; they themselves were the true church, their own souls and bodies were the temples chosen by the Spirit of God for His habitation. No wonder the schoolboys, and many older people too, became awed and silent at the bare idea of such a Guest. None of the eight-and-forty sects of Sedbergh town had ever heard doctrine like this before. Possibly there might not have been eight-and-forty of them if they had.

Once during the discourse a Captain got up and interrupted the Stranger: 'Why do you preach out here under the yew-tree? Why do you not go inside the church and preach there?'

'But,' says George Fox, 'I said unto him that I denied their church.'

'Then stood up Francis Howgill, a separate preacher, that had not seen me before, and so he began to dispute with the Captain, but he held his peace. Then said Francis Howgill, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes."

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'And so,' continues George Fox, 'I opened to the people that that ground and house was no holier than another place, and that house was not the Church, but the people which Christ is head of. And so, after a while that I had made a stand among the people, the priests came up to me and I warned them to repent. And one of them said I was mad, and so they turned away. But many people were glad at the hearing of the Truth declared unto them that day, which they received gladly.'

'And there came one Edward Ward, and he said my very eyes pierced through him, and he was convinced of God's everlasting truth and lived and died in it, and many more was convinced there at that time.'

Convinced they were indeed, as they had never been convinced in all their former lives; and now that they had found the teacher they wanted, the hungry, thirsty Seekers were not going to let him go again. Almost overturning the booths of the Fair, these solemn, sad-eyed men jostled each other like children in their endeavours to reach their new friend.

There at the back of the crowd solid John Camm, the prosperous 'statesman' farmer of Cammsgill, near Preston Patrick, could be seen waving his staff like a schoolboy to attract the preacher's attention as soon as the sermon stopped. 'Come home, young Sir! Come home with me,' John Camm called out lustily.

But ruddy-cheeked John Audland, the linen-draper of Crosslands, had been quicker than the elderly farmer. He was a happy bridegroom that summer, and bringing his wife with him for the first time to Sedbergh Fair. She—a Seeker like himself—had been known in her maiden days as gentle Anne Newby of Kendal town: yet the ways of the dalesmen and of the country people were in a measure strange to her, seeing all her girlhood had been spent at her aunt's house in London town, where she had received her education. Possibly she had looked forward not without dread to the rough merry-making of the Fair; but she too had kindled at the Stranger's message. Her shyness fled from her as, with her hand locked fast in her husband's, the two pressed forward. The crowd seemed to melt away at sight of their radiant faces, and almost before the sermon was ended the young couple found themselves face to face with the preacher. The same longing was in both their hearts: the same words rose unbidden to their lips: 'Come back with us to Crosslands, Sir! Come back and be the first guest to bless our home.'

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George Fox smiled as he met the eager gaze of the young folk, and stretched out a friendly

hand. But an old slow man with a long white beard had forestalled even the impetuous rush of the youthful bride and bridegroom.

'Nay; now, good friends,' said Farmer Thomas Blaykling of Drawwell, 'my home is nigh at hand. For the next three days the Stranger is mine. He must stay with me and I will bring him to Firbank Chapel on Sunday. Come ye also thither and hear him again, and bring every seeking man and woman and child in all these dales to hear him too; and thereafter ye shall have him in your turn and entertain him where ye will.'

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II

The first three peaceful days after the Fair were spent by the young preacher at Drawwell Farm, knitting up a friendship with its inmates that neither time nor suffering was able thereafter to unravel.

'The house inhabited by the Blayklings may still be seen. Its thick walls, small windows and rooms, with the clear well behind, must be almost in the same condition as in the week we are remembering.'^[6]

In later days many a 'mighty Meeting' was to be held in the big barn that adjoins the small whitewashed house with its grey flagged roof. Drawwell is situated about two miles away from Sedbergh, on the sunny slope of a hill overlooking the River Lune, that here forms the boundary between the two counties of Westmorland and Yorkshire.

There, under the shadow of the great fells, George Fox had time for many a quiet talk with his hosts, in the days that followed the Whitsuntide Fair. John Blaykling, the farmer's son, was a man of strong character. He was afterwards to become himself a powerful preacher of the Truth and to suffer for it when persecution came. Moreover, 'he was a great supporter of them that were in low circumstances in the world, often assisting them in difficult cases to the exposing of himself to great hazards of loss.'

He had also an especial care for the feelings of others. On the Sunday after the Fair he was anxious to take his guest to Firbank Chapel, where the Seekers' service was to be held, high up on the hill opposite Drawwell. Yet he seems to have had some misgivings that his guest might be too full of his own powerful message to remember to behave courteously to others, who, although in a humbler way, were still trying to declare the Truth as far as they had a knowledge of it. Fox writes in his Journal:

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'And the next First day I came to Firbank Chapel, where Francis Howgill and John Audland were preaching in the morning, and John Blaykling and others came to me and desired me not to reprove them publicly, for they was not parish teachers but pretty sober men, but I would not tell them whether I would or no, though I had little in me to declare publicly against them, but told them they must leave me to the Lord's movings. The chapel was full of people and many could not get in. Francis Howgill (who was preaching) said he thought I looked into the Chapel, but I did not. And he said that I might have killed him with a crab-apple, the Lord's power had so surprised him.

'So they had quickly done with their preaching to the people at that time, and they and the people went to their dinners, but abundance stayed till they came again. And I went to a brook and got me a little water, and so I came and sat me down atop of a rock, (for the word of the Lord came to me that I must go and sit upon the rock in the mountain, even as Christ had done before).

'And in the afternoon the people gathered about me with several separate teachers, where it was judged there was above a thousand people. And all those several separate teachers were convinced of God's everlasting truth that day, amongst whom I declared freely and largely God's everlasting truth and word of life about three hours. And there was many old people went into the chapel and looked out of the windows and thought it a strange thing to see a man to preach on a hill or mountain, and not in their church as they called it. So I was made to open to the people that the steeple-house and the ground whereon it stood was no more holier than that mountain ... but Christ was come who ended the temple and the priests and the tithes, and Christ said, "Learn of me," and God said, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him."

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'For the Lord had sent me with His everlasting gospel to preach, and His word of life so that they all might come to know Christ their Teacher, their Counsellor, their Shepherd to feed them, and their Bishop to oversee them, and their Prophet to open to them, and to know their bodies to be temples of God and Christ for them to dwell in.... And so, turning the people to the Spirit of God, and from the darkness to the light, that they might believe in it and become children of light.'

III

'Now, it is our turn,' insisted ruddy-faced John Audland, 'George Fox must come home with me. My house at Crosslands will be the most convenient resting-place for him, seeing it lies mid-way between here and Preston Patrick; and to Preston Patrick and the General Meeting of our Seeking People he must certainly come, since it is to be held in three days' time. There are many folk, still seeking, on the other side of the dales, who have not yet heard the good news, but who will rejoice mightily when they find him there. Besides, he has promised my wife that he will be

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the first guest to come and bless our home.'

'Yes in truth, he shall return with thee,' echoed Audland's friend, John Camm of Cammsgill, 'since Preston Patrick is too far a step for him to-day. He shall lodge with thee and thy good wife Anne, and bless your home. But on Wednesday, betimes, thou must bring him to me at Cammsgill right early in the day—and I will take him as my guest to Preston Patrick and our Seekers' Meeting.'

John Audland readily assented to this proposal. He and his wife would have the wonderful Stranger all to themselves until Wednesday. As the two men wandered back over the hills in a satisfied silence, his mind was full of all the questions he meant to ask. For had not he himself, though only a youth of twenty-two, been one of the appointed preachers at Firbank Chapel? Truly he had done his best there, as at other times, to feed the people; yet in spite of his words they had seemed ever hungry, until the Stranger came among them, breaking the True Bread of Life for all to share.

John Audland was 'a young man of a comely countenance, and very lovely qualities.'^[7] Never a thought of jealousy or envy crossed his mind; only he was filled with a longing to know more, to learn, to be fed himself, that he, in his turn, might feed others. Still, being but human, it was with slight irritation that he heard himself hailed with a loud 'halloo!' from behind. Looking round, he beheld a long-legged figure ambling after them along the dusty road, and recognised a certain tactless youth, John Story by name, famous throughout the district for his knack of thrusting himself in where he was least wanted. Without so much as a 'by your leave' John Story caught up the other two men and began a lively conversation as they walked along.

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Self-invited, he followed them into John Audland's home; where the young bride, Anne, was too well bred to betray her disappointment at this unexpected visitor. Elbowing his way rudely past the master of the house and the invited guest, John Story stalked ahead into the bridal parlour and sat himself down deliberately in the best chair. 'I'm your first guest now, Mistress Anne,' he said with a chuckle. Then lighting his pipe he threw his head back and made himself comfortable—evidently intending to stay the evening. But his chief care and intention was to patronise George Fox. He had been at Firbank also, and he had remembered enough of the sermon there to repeat some of the preacher's words jestingly to his face. He handed his lighted pipe to George Fox, saying, 'Come, will you take a pipe of tobacco?'—and added, mockingly, seeing his hesitation, 'Come, all is ours!'

'But,' says George Fox, 'I looked upon him to be a forward bold lad; and tobacco I did not take. But it came into my mind that the lad might think I had not unity with the creation: for I saw he had a flashy, empty notion of religion. So I took his pipe and put it to my mouth, and gave it to him again to stop him lest his rude tongue should say I had not unity with the creation.'

And soon after this, let us hope, John Story, with his tobacco and his rude tongue, saw fit to take his leave, and remove his unwelcome presence.

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IV

Two more days of the 'wonderful fortnight' were passed in the linen-draper's home at Crosslands before, on the Wednesday forenoon, John Audland and his guest descended the dales of Westmorland and climbed the steep, wooded glen that leads to Cammsgill Farm. There, at the door, with hands outstretched in welcome, stood good John Camm and his loving wife Mabel. Peeping behind them curiously at the Stranger was their twelve-year-old son, Tom. At the windows of the farm were to be seen the faces of the men-servants and maid-servants, for great was the curiosity to see the Stranger of whom such great tidings had been told. Among the serving-maids were two sisters, Jane and Dorothy Waugh. Little did the eager girls imagine that the Stranger whom they eyed so keenly was to alter the whole course of their lives by his words that day; that, for both of them, the pleasant, easy, farm life at Cammsgill was over, and that they were hereafter to go forth to preach in their turn, to suffer beatings and cruel imprisonments, and even to cross the seas, in order to publish the same Truth that he had come to proclaim.

Tom Camm also, boy as he was, was never to forget that eventful morning. Long years afterwards he remembered every detail of it.

'On the 4th day morning,' he writes, 'John Audland came with George Fox to the house of John Camm at Cammsgill in Preston Patrick, who with his wife and familie gladly received G.F.'

And now, while they are 'gladly receiving' their guest and waiting till it is time to go down the steep hill to Preston Patrick, let us look back at the farm-house of Cammsgill where they are sitting, and learn something of its history and that of its owners.

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It was to Cammsgill that Farmer John Camm had brought home his bride on a late day of summer, thirteen years before the eventful year 1652 of which these stories tell. A wise, prosperous man was good John Camm, one of the most successful 'statesmen' in all the fertile dales round about. So busy had he been developing his farm, and attending to the numerous flocks and herds, that were ever increasing under his skilful management, that time for love-making seemed to have been left out of his life. But at last, when he was well over forty, he found the one woman he had been unconsciously needing through all his prosperous years to make his life round and complete. It was a mellow day of Indian summer when John and Mabel Camm walked up the winding road to Cammsgill for the first time as man and wife. But the golden sunshine that lay on all the burnished riches of the well-filled farm-yard was dim compared with the inward sunshine that gladdened the farmer's heart.

Farmer John had made a wise choice, and he knew it. In his eyes nothing was good enough for his wife, not even the home where he had been born, and where his ancestors for generations had lived and died; so Cammsgill had been entirely rebuilt before that golden September day when John and Mabel Camm came home to begin their new life together. The re-building had been done in such solid fashion that part of the farm-house still stands, well-proportioned and serviceable, after nearly three centuries have passed to test it, showing that he who builds for love builds truly and well.

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Mabel Camm was a proud woman as she stood at the door of her hillside home and watched the autumn sunlight lighting up her husband's face as he walked across his fields in the valley, or strode, almost with the energetic step of a young man, up the crab-apple bordered track to the farm.

Close at his heels followed his collie, looking up into his master's face with adoring affection. Not only every animal on the farm loved the master, the men-servants and maid-servants also would do anything to please him, for was he not ever mindful of their interests as if they had been his own? In those days each labourer had three or four acres of land as of right. This fostered an independent spirit and made their affection a tribute worth the winning.^[8] Later on that same year, when winter came, earlier than its wont, the fells were knee-deep in snow and all the beasts were brought for shelter round the farm to protect them from the snow-drifts and bitter weather on the upland pastures.

Then it was that at nights in the snug farm-house kitchen, after the day's work was done, John Camm and his young wife together carved their initials on the 'brideswain,' a tall oak chest that held the goodly stock of homespun linen and flax brought by Mabel Camm to her new home. John Camm was something of an artist. His was the design of the interlaced initials. All his life he had been a skilful carver with his tools on the winter evenings, and now he took pleasure in showing his bride the right way to use them and how to fashion her strokes aright. Night after night the two heads bent over their task, but to this day it may still be seen at Cammsgill that one of the two artists was less skilful than the other, for Mabel's curves are more angular and without the careless ease of her husband's. What, however, did unskilful fingers matter when the firelight shone upon two happy faces bending over the work close together, aglow with the inner radiance of two thankful hearts?

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There were other uses for the brideswain the following summer. The fair white sheets and pillow-cases were moved to an under-shelf. The upper half of the chest was filled to overflowing with tiny garments fashioned by Mabel's own fingers, skilful indeed at this dainty work. No more woodcarving now, but endless rows of stitchery, tiny tucks and delicate dotting, all ready to welcome the little son who arrived before the summer's close, and completed his parents' joy.

Since that day, a dozen years had slipped away. Now young Thomas Camm was leaving childhood, as he had long left babyhood, behind him. He was a big boy, quick, strong for his age, and bidding fair to be as good a farmer as his father some day.

'Cammsgill was a favourite house with both men and women servants, for Mistress Camm took care that all had their fill of bread, butter, milk, eggs or bacon, and each their three meals. Of the maid-servants, Jane and Dorothy Waugh especially looked on their master as a father, he was so kind and thoughtful of their needs. Indeed no one could walk up the winding gill without meeting with a warm welcome from the owners of the farm-house, and on winter evenings there was many a large "sitting," by aid of the rushlights, in which the neighbours joined, all hands being busy the while with the knitting of caps and jerseys for the Kendal trade.... He and his wife greatly loved to entertain visitors from a distance, especially those who were like-minded with themselves, also looking for "the coming of the day of the Lord,"^[9] for all the household at Cammsgill were of the company of the "Seekers" who met every month at the Chapel of Preston Patrick in the valley below.

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Now at last it is time for the Meeting.

Thomas Camm's account continues: 'And it having been then a common practice among the said seeking and religiously inclined people to raise a General Meeting at Preston Patrick Chapel once a month, upon the fourth day of the week, thither George Fox went, being accompanied with John Audland and John Camm. John Audland would have had George Fox go into the place or pew where usually he and the preacher did sit, but he refused and took a back seat near the door, and John Camm sat down by him, where he sat silent, waiting upon God for about half an hour, in which time of silence Francis Howgill seemed uneasy, and pulled out his Bible and opened it, and stood up several times, sitting down again and closing his book, and dread and fear being on him that he durst not begin to preach. After the said silence and waiting George Fox stood up in the mighty power of God, and in the demonstration thereof was his mouth opened to preach Christ Jesus, the Light of Life, and the way to God, and Saviour of all that believe and obey Him, which was delivered in that power and that authority that most of the auditory, which were several hundreds, were effectually reached to the heart, and convinced of the truth that very day, for it was the day of God's power. A notable day indeed, never to be forgotten by me Thomas Camm.... I, being then present at that Meeting, a school-boy but about twelve years of age, yet, I bless the Lord for His mercy, then religiously inclined, do still remember that blessed and glorious day, in which my soul, by that living testimony then borne in the demonstration of God's power, was effectually opened, reached and convinced, with many more who are seals of that powerful ministry that attended this faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by which we were convinced, and turned from darkness to light and from Satan's power to the power of God. After which Meeting at Preston Chapel, G.F. came to the house of John Camm at Cammsgill.

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Next day travelled to Kendal where he had a meeting, where many were convinced and received his testimony with joy.'

The 'wonderful fortnight' was drawing to a close. The vision on Pendle Hill, when George Fox beheld a people 'as thick as motes in the sun that should in time be brought home to the Lord,' had already begun to form around it a Society of Friends who were pledged to carry it out.

Remember always, it was not the Society that beheld the vision; it was the vision that created and creates the Society.

The vision is the important thing; for it is still unfulfilled.

FOOTNOTES:

[6] Ernest E. Taylor, *A Great People to be gathered*.

[7] Sewel's *History of the Quakers*.

[8] E.E. Taylor, *Faithful Servants of God*.

[9] E.E. Taylor, *Faithful Servants of God*.

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IX. UNDER THE YEW-TREES

ToC

'George Fox was a born leader of souls. The flame of religious ardour which burned in him, and the intense conviction and spiritual power with which he spoke, would in any age have made him great. He was born in a generation of revolutions and upheavals, both political and spiritual. Confusion and unrest, war and reformations, give to great spirits a power which, when life is calmer, they might not attain. Fox drew to himself a multitude of noble souls, attracted to him by that which they shared with him, the sense of spiritual realities, and the consciousness of the guiding Spirit. The age of George Fox thirsted for spiritual reality. He had found it. Men on all sides were ready to find it as he had. The dales of Yorkshire, and the hills of lakeland, not less than the towns of the Midlands, had men in them ready to rejoice in the touch of

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the spiritual, ready to respond to the movement of the Spirit. See him then arriving at some farm-yard in the hills, or may be at a country squire's hall....'—CYRIL HEPHER, 'Fellowship of Silence.'

'The house was no doubt full of music, as were indeed many others, in that most musical of English centuries.'—J. BAILEY, 'Milton.'

Motto on Seal of a letter to M. Fell:

1660
'GOD ABOVE
KEEP US IN HIS LIGHT
AND LOVE.'

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IX. UNDER THE YEW-TREES

Six gay girls sat together, laughing and talking, under the shadow of the ancient yew-trees that guard the eastern corner of Swarthmoor Hall. The interlaced boughs of the gloomy old trees made a cool canopy of shadow above the merry maidens. It was a breathless day of late June, 1652, at the very end of the 'wonderful fortnight.'

There they were, Judge Fell's six fair daughters: Margaret, Bridget, Isabel, Sarah, Mary and little Susanna, who was but three years old, on that hot summer afternoon.

'Tis a pity that there are only six of us,' Sarah was saying with mock melancholy. 'Now, suppose my brother George instead of being a boy had been a girl, then there would have been seven. The Seven Sisters of Swarthmoor Hall! In truth it has a gallant sound like unto a play. Seven Young Sisters and Seven Ancient Yew Trees! Each of us might have a yew-tree then for her very own.' So saying, Sarah leant back against the huge gnarled trunk behind her, her golden curls rippling like sunshine over the wrinkled wood, while her blue eyes peered into the dark-green depths overhead.

'Moreover, in that case,' continued Isabel, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice, 'and supposing the Seventh Sister, who doth not exist, were to have seven more daughters in her turn,—then it might be expected that the Seventh Daughter of that Seventh Daughter would have keener than mortal hearing, and sharper than mortal sight. She would be able to hear the grass growing, and know when the fairies were making their rings, and be able to catch the Brownies at their tasks, so the country people say. Heigh ho! I wish she were here! Or I would that I myself were the Seventh Daughter of a Seventh Daughter, or still better the Seventh Son of a Seventh Son, for they have real true second sight, and can look in magic crystals and foresee things to come.'

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'Now it is my turn,' chimed in Bridget, 'I am the eldest but one, and it is time I talked a little. Then when the Seventh Daughter of the Seventh Daughter walks hand in hand with the Seventh Son of a Seventh Son (neither of whom, allow me to remind you in passing, ever have existed, or, it is to be hoped, ever will exist in a well-connected family like ours), when they walk hand in hand under the shade of the Seven Ancient Yew-trees which, we all know, have guarded Swarthmoor for centuries ... the Seven Ancient Trees will be sure to overhear them whispering honeyed nothings to each other. Then the oldest and wisest of all the Trees (by the bye, it is that one behind you, Isabel!) will say, "Dearly beloved Children, although the words you say are incredibly foolish, yet to me they sound almost wise compared with the still more incredibly foolish conversation carried on beneath my old boughs in the Year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and fifty-two by your ever venerable Great Aunt Isabel and your still more venerable Great Aunt Sarah!'"

'O *Bridget*,' came in aggrieved tones from the two younger girls as they flung themselves upon her and put laughing hands over her mouth, 'that is too bad, that is unkind.'

The eldest sister, Margaret, looked up from the low bench where she was sitting with Mary and Susanna, the two youngest children beside her. Seeing the struggling heap of muslin and ribbons on the grass she resolutely turned the talk into less personal channels. 'I do not at all agree with Sarah,' she said calmly, 'besides it is much too hot to argue. For my part, *I* think Six Sisters are fully enough for any household. If I had more than five younger ones to look after, I don't know

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what I should do. Even for the yew-trees it is better. There is one now for each of us to sit under, and one to spare for my mother when at last she comes home. I wonder what makes her so late? When will she be here?

A ripple of expectation stirred the maidens. Moved by the same impulse, they all looked out under the dark yew branches and over the sunlit orchard, beyond which lay the high road leading up the hill from Ulverston. Nothing as yet was to be seen and no faintest rumble of approaching wheels reached any of the listeners.

Everywhere the hot air quivered in the sunshine. Even the stately Elizabethan Hall with its high stone chimneys and mullioned bay windows looked drowsy and half asleep. A pale wisp of smoke was ascending listlessly in a straight line above the gabled roofs high up into the far still air. Scarcely a sound came from the outbuildings that lay beyond the Hall. Even the pigeons on the roof were too hot to coo. In the herb garden beneath, the flowers drooped in the scorching light. Glare everywhere. Only under the yew-trees was there to be found a pool of grateful shadow. And even that pool had a sunshine of its own radiating from the group of merry maidens, with their bright faces and gay voices raised in perpetual talk, or laughter, or song. For a little while they seemed to be busy practising a madrigal. Then the irrepressible chatter burst out afresh. Cool and fragrant all the maidens looked, in their dresses of clear sprigged muslin, each tied at waist, wrists, and throat with ribbons of a different colour: lilac, lavender, primrose, cherry, emerald, and blue. The garden roses might droop in the hot garden outside, but the roses on the girls' cheeks, instead of fading, flushed and deepened with growing excitement. They all seemed full of suppressed eagerness, evidently waiting for something much desired to happen.

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At length tall Bridget, exclaiming, 'It must be time now!' sprang to her feet, and, stooping under the clinging boughs of the yew-tree temple, drew herself up to her full height outside its shade. Her gaze roamed over the long grass of the orchard and down the broad path, to the high stone arch of the entrance gate through which she could just catch sight of a glimpse of dusty road.

'Nothing yet!' she reported, 'not even a sign of the black horses' ears or heads above the hedge and not a sound upon the road.'

Margaret raised her head to listen. She inherited her mother's placid, Madonna-like beauty, and was at this time the fairest of the whole sisterhood. Sarah, who was hereafter to be considered not only the wit but also the beauty of the family, was at this time a child of ten, and not yet grown into her full inheritance of comeliness. In after years it was said of Sarah that she was 'not only beautiful and lovely to a high degree, but was wonderfully happy in ingeny and memory.' But even at her loveliest it was never said of her, as it was of Margaret, that she was 'glorious, comely, and beautiful in that which never fades away,' 'lovely in the truth, an example of holiness and wisdom.'

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This comely Margaret, seeing and hearing nothing of what she sought, bent her fair face down once more to the little sisters seated on each side of her. To beguile the waiting time she was making for them a chain of the daisies they had gathered as they flitted about, like gay white butterflies, over the grass. Mary was eight years old, and therefore able to pick daisies with discretion; but the stalks of the flowers gathered by little Susanna were all sadly too short and the flowers themselves suffered in her tight hot hand. At this moment Isabel ran to join Bridget and, standing on tiptoe beside her, tried hard to see as much as her taller sister.

'Nothing yet,' she reported, 'not a sign of the black horses nor even the top of the coach.' Sarah, not to be outdone, swung herself up, with a laugh, on to one of the lower boughs of the oldest yew-tree, and standing on it thrust her golden head through the thick canopy overhead. She peered out in her turn looking across the orchard and over the hedge to the road, then, bending down with a laughing face to Margaret and the little ones, 'I'm tallest now,' she exclaimed, 'and I shall be the first to spy the coach when it reaches the top of the hill!'

But agile Isabel, ever ready to follow a sister's lead, had already left Bridget's side and swung herself up, past Sarah, on to a yet higher bough.

'Methinks not, Mistress Sarah,' she called over her head, slowly and demurely, 'for now I can see yet farther, and there are the horses' ears and heads; yea and the chariot also, and now, at last! our mother's face!'

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But the group below had not waited for her tidings. They had heard the rumble of the wheels and the horses' feet on the road. With cries of joy, off they all sped down the path and across the orchard; to see who should be first at the gate to welcome their mother. Only Margaret stayed behind on her bench among the scattered daisies, with a slightly pensive expression on her lovely face.

'All of them flying to greet her!' Margaret thought to herself. 'See, Bridget has caught up even Susanna in her arms, that she shall not be left too far behind; while I, the eldest, whom my mother doth ever call her right hand, am forced to stay here. But my mother knows that my knee prevents me. She will not forget her Margaret. Already she sees me, and is beckoning the others to come this way.'

In truth Mistress Fell had already alighted and was now passing swiftly under the high stone arch of the gateway. Never did she come through that gate without a flash of remembrance of the first time she entered there, leaning on her husband's arm, a bride of seventeen summers, younger than her own fair Margaret now. She entered, this time, leaning on the arm of tall Bridget, walking as if she were a trifle weary, yet stooping to pick up little Susanna and to cover her with kisses as she moved up the path surrounded by her cloud of girls.

'Not the house, maids,' she cried, 'the yew-trees first! I see my Margaret waiting there. Your news, how marvellous soever, must wait until I have greeted my right-hand daughter and learned how she fares.'

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'How art thou, dear Heart?' she enquired, as she stooped down and kissed her eldest daughter, and sat down beside her. 'Hath thy knee pained thee a little less this afternoon?'

'Much less,' answered Margaret gaily, 'in fact I had almost forgotten it, and was about to rise and welcome you with the rest, when a sudden ache reminded me that I must not run yet awhile.'

Mistress Fell shook her head. 'I fear that I shall have to take thee to London and to Wapping for the waters some day. I cannot have my bird unable to fly like the rest of the brood, and obliged to wait behind with a clipped wing.'

'Young Margrett,' as she was called, to distinguish her from her mother, laughed aloud. 'Nay now, sweet mother, 'tis nothing,' she replied. 'Let us think of more cheerful things. In truth we have much to tell you, for we have had an afternoon of visitors and many happenings in thy absence.'

'Visitors?' A slight furrow showed itself in the elder Margaret's smooth forehead. 'Well, that is not strange, since the door of Swarthmoor stands ever open to welcome guests, as all the country knows. Still I would that I had been at home, or thy father. Who were the visitors, daughter?'

It was Bridget who answered.

'My father hath often said that there has been scarce a day without a visitor at Swarthmoor since he first brought you here as its mistress,' she began primly, 'but in all these years, mother, I doubt you have never set eyes on such an one as our guest of to-day. Priest Lampitt said the same.'

'Priest Lampitt? Hath he been here? And I not at home. Truly, it grieves me, children, to have missed our good neighbour. Did he then bring a stranger with him?'

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'No, No, No,' a chorus of dissent broke from the girls, all now seated round their mother on the grass, each eager to be the first to tell the tale, yet at a loss for words. Bridget, as usual, stepped into the gap. She explained that 'the Priest had been amazed to find the Stranger here. They had had much discourse. Till at last, Priest Lampitt, waxing hot and fiery ere he departed, strode down the flagged path slashing all the flowers with his cane and never seemed to know what he was doing, though you know, mother, that he loves our garden.'

A shade of real annoyance crossed Mistress Fell's face. 'The good Priest angered in my house,' she said, with real concern in her voice, 'and I not there, but only a pack of giddy maids, who had not wit enough between them to keep a discourteous stranger in his place and prevent his being rude to an old friend! Nay, now, maidens, speak not all together. Ye are too young and do but babble. Let Bridget continue, or my Margaret. Either of them I can trust.' But 'young Margrett' was bending her head still lower, seemingly over her daisy chain.

'Truly, mother,' she said in a low voice close to her mother's ear, 'there are no words for him. He is so—different; I knew not that earth held a man like him. And he will be coming back shortly to the house—maybe he is already awaiting you!'

Mistress Fell looked up now in undisguised alarm. Who was this nameless Stranger who had invaded her house during her absence, and had apparently stolen the heart of her discreet and dignified Margaret, in one interview, by the mere sight of his charms? Young, handsome, quarrelsome; who could he be? What had brought him to Swarthmoor to destroy its peace?

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She turned to capable Bridget for information. Bridget, never at a loss, understood her mother's fears, or some of them, and immediately answered reassuringly, 'Be not disquieted, sweet mother. Nothing really untoward has happened. It is true the Stranger disputed hotly with Lampitt, but it was the Priest's blame as much as the Stranger's at first, though afterwards, when Lampitt held out his hand and wished to be friendly, the Stranger turned from him and shook him off. Yet, though his actions were harsh there was gentleness in his face and bearing. He is a man of goodly presence, this Stranger, but quite, quite old, thirty or thereabouts by my guessing.'

The elder Margaret smiled. Bridget continued hastily: 'Or may be more. Any way he seemed older from his gravity, and from his outlandish dress. Under his coat could be seen a leather doublet and breeches, and on his head he wore a large, soft, white hat.'

At these words the concern in Mistress Fell's face disappeared in a moment. A quick look of welcome sprang into her eyes.

'A man in a white hat!' she exclaimed. 'Perhaps, then, his coming forbodes good to us after all. It was only the other night that, as I lay a-dreaming, I saw a man in a large white hat coming towards me. I had been seeking for guidance on my knees, for often I fear we are not wholly in the right way, with all our seeking and religious exercises. In answer to my prayer there came towards me, in my dream, a man, and I knew that he was to be the messenger of God to me and to all my household. Tell me more, maidens, of this Stranger, how he came and whence, and why he left and when he will return.'

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This time it was 'young Margrett' who answered. Seeing the sympathy in her Mother's eyes, she found her voice at last, and rejoined quickly:

'He resembleth a Priest somewhat, yet not altogether. He speaketh with more authority than anyone I ever heard. Grave he is too. Grave as my father when he is executing justice. Yet, for all his gravity, as Bridget says, he is wondrous gentle. None of us were affrighted at him, and the

little maids ran to him as they do to my father. Moreover, he showed them a curious seal he carried in his pocket with letters intertwined among roses, a "G" I saw, and an "F." Afterwards he took them on his knees and blessed them and they were wholly at ease. Priest Lampitt, who had been watching through a window, his countenance strangely altered by his rage, now took his departure. Seeing him go, the Stranger put down the children gently, setting Susanna with both her feet squarely on the polished floor, as I have seen a shepherd set down a lamb, as if afear'd that it might slip. Then he turned in sorrow and spoke a few words to his companion. This was the man who brought him hither, one of the Seekers from Wensleydale or thereabouts, I should judge from his language; but truly none of us paid much heed to him. The two of them left the Hall together, and passed down through the herb-garden, and over the stream. Once I noticed the Stranger turn and gaze back at the house, searching each window, as if looking for something he found not there. Also he smiled at sight of the yew-trees, with a greeting as if they were old friends. Bridget declares that she heard the Stranger, our Stranger, say that he would return hither shortly, when he had set his companion a short distance on his homeward way. But that is now more than two hours ago, and as yet he hath not reappeared.'

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'Well then, maids,' replied Mistress Fell briskly, 'let us not linger here. It is high time we went back to the house to welcome our guest, on his return.' So saying, she rose to her feet, and aiding 'young Margrett' with one hand, she drew aside with the other the thick screen of the branches. A ray of sunshine fell upon Margaret Fell, standing there, in the velvety gloom of the old yew-trees, with her six young daughters round her. Sunshine was in her heart too, as she looked down fondly at them for a moment.

Then, lifting up her eyes, she recognised the unknown man she had seen in her dream. In the full blaze of sunlight, coming straight up the flagged path towards her was a Stranger, wearing a white hat. And thus did Mistress Margaret Fell behold for the first time GEORGE FOX.



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X. 'BEWITCHED!'

ToC

'When ye do judge of matters, or when ye do judge of words, or when ye do judge of persons, all these are distinct things. A wise man will not give both his ears to one party but reserve one for the other party, and will hear both, and then judge.'—G. FOX.

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'And after I came to one Captain Sands, which he and his wife if they could have had the world and truth they would have received it. But they was hypocrites and he a very light chaffy man, and the way was too strait for him.'—G. FOX.

'James the First was crazed beyond his English subjects with the witch mania of Scotland and the Continent. No sooner had his first parliament enacted new death laws than the judges and the magistrates, the constable and the mob began to hunt up the oldest and ugliest spinster who lived with her geese on the common, or tottered about the village street. Many pleaded guilty, and described the covenants they had formed with black dogs and "goblins called Tibb"; others were beaten or terrified into fictitious confessions, or perished, denying their guilt to the last. The black business culminated during the Civil Wars when scores of women were put to death.'—G.M. TREVELYAN.

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X. 'BEWITCHED!'

Saint Swithin's feast was passed. It was a sultry, thundery afternoon of mid July, when three horsemen were to be seen carefully picking their way across the wide wet estuary of the River Leven that goes by the name of 'the Sands.' The foremost rider was evidently the most important person of the three. He was an oldish man with a careworn face, and deepset eyes occasionally lighted by a smile, as he urged his weary horse across the sand. This was no less a person than Judge Fell himself, the master of Swarthmoor Hall, attended by his clerk and his groom, and returning to his home after a lengthy absence on circuit. A man of wide learning, of sound knowledge of affairs, and gifted with an excellent judgment was Thomas Fell. He was as popular now, in the autumn of his days among his country neighbours, as he had been in former times in Parliament, and among the Puritan leaders. Thrice had he represented his native county in the House of Commons, and had been a trusted friend of Oliver Cromwell himself. It was only latterly, men said, since Oliver showed a disposition to grasp more and ever more power for himself that the good Judge, unable to prevent that of which he disapproved, had retired from the intricate problems and difficulties of the Capital. He now filled the office of Judge on the Welsh Circuit and later on that of Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. But whether he dwelt in the country or in London town it was all one. Wherever he came, men thought highly of him.^[10] The good thirsted for his approval. The bad trembled to meet his eye. Yet, it was noted, that even when he was obliged to sentence some poor wretch, he seemed to commiserate him, and he ever sought to throw the weight of his influence on the side of mercy, although no man could be sterner at times, especially when he dealt with a case of treachery or cold-blooded cruelty.

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The lines of his countenance were rugged, yet underneath there was always an expression of goodwill, and a kindly light in his eyes that seemed to come from some still quiet fount of happiness within. It was said of the Judge, and truly, that he had the happiest home, the fairest and wisest wife, and the goodliest young family, of any man in the county. That had been a joyful day, indeed, for him, twenty years before, when he brought the golden-haired Margaret Askew, the heiress of Marsh Grange, as his bride to the old grey Hall of Swarthmoor. Sixteen full years younger than her husband was she, yet a wondrous wise-hearted woman, and his companion in all things.

Now that a son and six fair daughters filled the old Hall with music and gay laughter all day long, the Judge might well be no less proud of his 'great family' than even of having been Oliver Cromwell's friend.

He was ever loath to leave that cherished home for his long absences on the Chester and North

Welsh Circuit, and ever joyful when the day came that he might return thither. Even the heavy sand that clogged his horse's feet could hardly make him check his pace. The sands of Morecambe Bay are perilous at times, especially to strangers, for the tide flows in with such swiftness that even a galloping horse may not escape it. But the Judge and his companions knew the dangers well enough to avoid them. Their trained eyes instinctively marked the slight depressions in the sand and the line of brogs, or half-hidden trees, that guide travellers across by what is really the safest route, although it may seem to take unnecessary loops and curves.^[11] At a little distance lay the lonely Chapel Island, surrounded by the sea even at low tide, where in olden days lived a community of monks, who tolled a bell to guide pilgrims across the shifting sands, or said masses for the souls of those who perished.

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As his horse picked its way carefully, the Judge raised his eyes often towards the high plateau on the horizon to which he was steadily drawing nearer with every tedious step. Beloved Swarthmoor! The house itself was hidden, but he could plainly discern the belt of trees in which it stood. He thought of each of the inmates of that hidden home. George, his only son, how straight and tall he was growing, how gallant a rider, and how skilful a sportsman even now, though hasty in temper and over apt to take offence. His gay maidens, were they at this moment singing over some new madrigal prepared to greet him on his return? In an hour or two he should see them all running down the garden path to welcome him, from stately 'young Margrett' to little toddling Susanna. His wife, his own Margaret, well he knew where she would be! watching for him from the lattice of their chamber, where she was ever the first to catch sight of him on his return, as she had been the last to bid him farewell on his departure.

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At this point the good Judge's meditations were suddenly interrupted by his groom, who, spurring his horse on a level with his Master's, pointed respectfully, with upraised whip, towards several moving specks that were hastening across the estuary.

The softest bit of sand was over now, the travellers were reaching firmer ground, where it was possible to go at a quicker pace. Setting spurs to his horse the Judge hastened forward, his face flushing with an anxiety he took no pains to conceal.

In those days, when posts were rare and letters difficult to get or to send, an absence of many weeks always meant the possibility of finding bad news at home on the return from a journey.

'Heaven send they bring me no ill tidings!' Judge Fell said to himself as he cantered anxiously forward. Before long, it was possible to make out that the moving specks were a little company of horsemen galloping towards them over the sands. A few minutes later the Judge was surrounded by a group of breathless riders and panting horses, with bits and bridles flecked with foam.

The Judge's fears increased as he recognised all his most important neighbours. Their excited faces also struck him with dread. 'You bring me bad news?' he had called out, as soon as the cavalcade came within earshot. At the answering shout, 'Aye, the worst,' his heart had sunk like lead. And now here he was actually in their midst, and not one of them could speak. 'Out with it, friends,' he commanded, 'let me know the worst. To whom hath evil happened? To my wife? My son? My daughters?'

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But even he was hardly prepared for the answer, low-breathed and muttering like a roll of thunder: 'To all.'

'To all!' cried the agonised father. 'Impossible! They cannot all be dead!' Again came the ominous rejoinder, 'Worse, far worse,' and then, in a shout from half-a-dozen throats at once, 'Far, far worse. They are all bewitched!' Bewitched! that was indeed a word of ill-omen in those days, a word at which no man, be his position ever so exalted, could afford to smile. Ever since the days of the first Parliament of the first Stuart king, the penalties for the sin of witchcraft had been made increasingly severe. Although the country was now settling down into an uneasy peace, after the turmoil of the Civil Wars, still its witch hunts were even yet too recent a memory for a devoted husband and father to hear the fatal accusation breathed against his family without dismay. Not all a woman's youth and beauty might always save her, if the hunt were keen. The Judge's lips were tightly pressed together, but his unmoved countenance showed little of his inward alarm as he gazed on the faces round him. His courteous neighbours, who had ridden in such haste with the 'ill news' that 'travels fast,' which of them all should enlighten him? His neighbour Captain Sands? a jovial good-humoured man truly;—no, not he, he could not enter into a husband and father's deep anxiety, seeing that he was ever of a mocking disposition inwardly for all that he looked sober and scared enough now. His brother Justice, John Sawrey? Instinctively Judge Fell recoiled from the thought. Sawrey's countenance might be sober enough in good sooth, seeing he was a leader among professing Puritans, but somehow Judge Fell had always mistrusted the pompous little man. Even bad news would be worsened if he had to hear it from those lips. Therefore it was with considerable relief that the good Judge caught sight of a well-known figure riding up more slowly than the others, and now hovering on the outskirts of the group. 'The very man! My honoured neighbour Priest Lampitt! You, the Priest of Ulverston, will surely tell me what has befallen the members of my household, who are likewise members of your flock?'

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But the Priest's face was even gloomier than that of the other gentlemen. In the fewest possible words, but with stinging emphasis, he told the Judge that the news was indeed too true; his wife and young family, yea, and even the household servants had, one and all, been bewitched.

At this the Judge thought his wisest course was to laugh. 'Nay, nay, good friends,' he said, 'that is too much! I know my wife. I trust her good sense utterly. Still it is possible for even the wisest of women to lose her judgment at times. But as for my trusty steward Thomas Salthouse, the

steadiest man I have ever had in my employ, if even old Nick himself has managed to bewitch him, he must be a cleverer devil than I thought.'

Then drawing himself up proudly he added, 'So now, Gentlemen, I will thank you to submit to me your evidence for these incredible and baseless allegations.' Priest Lampitt hastened to explain. He spoke with due respect of Mistress Fell, his 'honoured neighbour,' as he called her. "Tis her well-known kindness of heart that hath led her astray. She hath warmed a snake in her bosom, a wandering Quaker Preacher, who hath beguiled and corrupted both herself and her household.'

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'A wandering, Ranting Quaker entertained in my house, during my absence!' Judge Fell had an even temper, but the rising flush on his forehead betokened the effort with which he kept his anger under control. 'I thank ye, gentles, for your news. My wife and I have ever right gladly given food and lodging to all true servants of the Lord, but I will not have any Quakers or Ranters creeping into my house during my absence and nesting there, to set abroad such tales as ye have hastened to spread before me this day. Even the wisest woman is but a woman still, and the sooner I reach home the better.' So saying he raised his hat, and set spurs to his horse. But little Mr. Justice Sawrey, edging out of the group officiously, set spurs to his own horse and trotted after him. Laying a restraining hand on his fellow Justice's bridle, 'One moment more!' he entreated. "Tis best you should know all ere you return. Not only at Swarthmoor, at Ulverston church also, hath this pestilential fellow caused a disturbance. It was on the Saturday that he arrived at Swarthmoor Hall, and violently brawled with our good Friend Lampitt during Mistress Fell's absence from home.'

A shade of relief crossed the Judge's face, 'My wife absent! I might have sworn to it. The maidens are too young to have sober judgment.' 'Nay, but listen,' continued Sawrey, 'the day after he came to the Hall was not only the Sabbath but also a day of public humiliation. Our good Priest Lampitt, seeing Mistress Fell surrounded by her family in the pew at church, trusted, as did we all, that she had sent the fellow packing speedily about his business. Alack! no such thing, he was but prowling outside. No sooner did the congregation sing a hymn than in he came, and boldly standing on a form, asked leave to speak. Our worthy Priest, the soul of courtesy, consented. Then, oh! the tedious discourse that fell on our ears, how that the hymn we had sung was entirely unsuited to our condition, with much talk of Moses and of John, and I know not what besides, ending up in no less a place than the Paradise of God! Naturally, none of us, gentles, paid much attention. I crossed my legs and tried to sleep until the wearisome business should be ended. When, to my dismay, I was aroused by our honoured neighbour Mistress Fell standing upright on the seat of her pew, shrieking with a loud voice: "We are all thieves, we are all thieves!" This was after the Ranter had finished. While he was yet speaking, she continued to gaze on him, so says my wife, as if she were drinking in every word. But afterwards, having loosed this exclamation about thieves (and she a Justice's wife, forsooth!) she sat down in her pew once more and began to weep bitterly.'

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'Yes,' interrupted Lampitt, who had also come alongside by this time, 'and he continued to pour forth foul speeches, how that God was come to teach His people by His own spirit, and to bring them off from all their old ways and religions and churches and worships, for that they were all out of the life and spirit, that they was in that gave them forth.... And so on, until our good friend here,' indicating Sawrey, 'being a Justice of the Peace, called out to the churchwardens, "Take him away, take the fellow away." Whereat Mistress Fell must needs rise up again and say to the officers, "Why may he not speak as well as any other? Let him alone!" And I, willing to humour her—'

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'Yes, more fool you,' interrupted Sawrey rudely, 'you must needs echo her, and cry, "Let him alone!" else had I safely and securely clapped him into the stocks.'

Judge Fell, who had listened with obviously growing impatience, now broke away from his vociferous companions. Crying once more, 'I thank you, Sirs, for your well-meant courtesy, but now I pray you to excuse me and allow me to hasten to my home,' he broke away from the restraining hands laid upon his bridle and galloped over the sands. His attendants, who had been waiting at a little distance just out of earshot, eagerly joined him, and the three figures gradually grew smaller and then disappeared into the distance.

The other group of riders departed on their different ways homewards, well satisfied with their day's work. Not without a parting shot from fat Captain Sands as they separated. Raising his whip he said mockingly as he pointed at the Judge's figure riding away in urgent haste: 'Let us hope he may not find the Fox too Foxy when he expels him from his earth!'

FOOTNOTES:

[10] 'Being beloved,' the historian says, 'for his justice, wisdom, moderation, and mercy.'

[11] 'The sands are left uncovered at low water to a great extent; and travellers between Lancaster and Furness had formerly to cross from Hest Bank to Ulverston by the route *brogged* out by the guides; the brogs being branches of trees stuck in the sand to mark where the treacherous way was safest; a dreary distance of about 14 miles.'—Richardson, *Furness*, i. 14.

XI. THE JUDGE'S RETURN

'The Cross being minded it makes a separation from all other lovers, and brings to God.'—G. FOX.

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'Give up to be crossed; that is the way to please the Lord and to follow Him in His own will and way, whose way is the best.'—M. FELL.

'Now here was a time of waiting, here is a time of receiving, here is a time of speaking; the Holy Ghost fell upon them, that they spoke the wonderful things of God.'—G. FOX.

'Mind and consider well the spirit of Christ in you, that's he that's lowly in you, that's just and lowly in you: mind this Spirit in you, and then whither will you run, and forsake the Lord of Life? Will you leave Christ the fountain which should spring in you and hunt for yourselves? Should you not abide within, and drink of that which springs freely, and feed on that which is pure, meek and lowly in spirit, that so you might grow spiritual men into the same Spirit, to be as He is, the sheep of His Pasture? For as is your pasture, so are you filled.... And you shall say no more, I am weak and can do nothing, but all things through him who gives you strength.'—JAMES NAYLER.

XI. THE JUDGE'S RETURN

Not one of the six maidens ever remembered a home-coming over-clouded as was Judge Fell's on that thundery afternoon of late July. Sadder, darker days lay before them in the years to follow, but none more filled with unacknowledged dread. Was this sad, stern-looking man, who dismounted wearily from his horse at the high arched gate, really their indulgent father? He scarcely noticed or spoke to them, as he tramped heavily towards the house. 'He did not even raise an eye towards the window where my mother sits, as she hath ever sat, to welcome him,' young Margrett noticed. The thunder rumbled ominously overhead. The first big drops fell from the gloomy clouds that had been gathering for hours; while upstairs, in her panelled chamber, a big tear splashed on the delicate cambric needlework that lay between the elder Margaret's fingers, before she laid it aside and descended the shallow, oaken stairs to greet her husband.

Margaret Fell looked older and sadder than on the afternoon under the yew-trees, only three weeks before. There was a new shade of care on her smooth forehead: yet there was a soft radiance about her that was also new. Even her voice had gentler tones. She looked as if she had reached a haven, like a stately ship that, after long tossing in the waves, now feels itself safely anchored and at rest.

Happily she has left an account of the Judge's return in her own words, words as fresh and vivid as if they had been written but yesterday, instead of more than two hundred and fifty years ago. We will take up her narrative at the point in Ulverston church at which Judge Fell broke away from Mr. Justice Sawrey when he was telling him the same tale from his point of view, on the glistening sands of the estuary of the Leven. [178]

'And there was one John Sawrey,' writes Mistress Fell, 'a Justice of Peace and professor, that bid the church warden take him [George Fox] away, and he laid hands on him several times, and took them off again, and let him alone; and then after awhile he gave over and he [G.F.] came to our house again that night. He spoke in the family amongst the servants, and they were all generally convinced; as William Caton, Thomas Salthouse, Mary Askew, Anne Clayton, and several other servants. And I was struck into such a sadness, I knew not what to do, my husband being from home. I saw it was the truth, and I could not deny it; and I did as the Apostle saith, "I received truth in the love of it;" and it was opened to me so clear, that I had never a tittle in my heart against it; but I desired the Lord that I might be kept in it, and then I desired no greater portion.'

'He went on to Dalton, Aldingham, Dendron and Ramside chapels and steeple-houses, and several places up and down, and the people followed him mightily; and abundance were convinced and saw that that which he spoke was the truth, but the priests were in a rage. And about two weeks after James Nayler and Richard Farnsworth followed him and enquired him out, till they came to Swarthmoor, and there stayed awhile with me at our house, and did me much good; for I was under great heaviness and judgment. But the power of the Lord entered upon me within about two weeks that he came, and about three weeks end my husband came home; and many were in a mighty rage, and a deal of the captains and great ones of the country went to meet my then husband as he was coming home, and informed him "that a great disaster was befallen amongst his family, and that they were witches; and that they had taken us away out of our religion; and that he must either set them away, or all the country would be undone."' [179]

'So my husband came home, greatly offended; and any may think what a condition I was like to be in, that either I must displease my husband or offend God; for he was very much troubled with us all in the house and family, they had so prepossessed him against us. But James Nayler and Richard Farnsworth were both then at our house, and I desired them both to come and speak to him, and so they did very moderately and wisely; but he was at first displeased with them until they told him "they came in love and goodwill to his house." And after that he had heard them speak awhile, he was better satisfied, and they offered as if they would go away; but I desired them to stay and not go away yet, for George Fox will come this evening. And I would have had my husband to have heard them all, and satisfied himself further about them, because they [*i.e.* the neighbours] had so prepossessed him against them of such dangerous fearful things in his first coming home. And then he was pretty moderate and quiet, and his dinner being ready he went to it, and I went in, and sate me down by him. And whilst I was sitting, the power of the Lord seized upon me, and he was struck with amazement, and knew not what to think; but was quiet and still. And the children were all quiet and still, and grown sober, and could not play on their musick that they were learning; and all these things made him quiet and still.' [180]

'At night George Fox came: and after supper my husband was sitting in the parlour, and I asked him, "if George Fox might come in?" And he said, "Yes." So George came in without any compliment, and walked into the room, and began to speak presently; and the family, and James Nayler, and Richard Farnsworth came all in; and he spoke very excellently as ever I heard him, and opened Christ's and the apostles' practices, which they were in, in their day. And he opened the night of apostacy since the apostles' days, and laid open the priests and their practices in the apostacy that if all England had been there, I thought they could not have denied the truth of these things. And so my husband came to see clearly the truth of what he spoke, and was very quiet that night, said no more and went to bed. The next morning came Lampitt, priest of Ulverston, and got my husband in the garden, and spoke much to him there, but my husband had seen so much the night before, that the priest got little entrance upon him.... After awhile the priest went away; this was on the sixth day of the week, about the fifth month (July) 1652. And at

our house divers Friends were speaking to one another, how there were several convinced hereaways and we could not tell where to get a meeting: my husband being also present, he overheard and said of his own accord, "You may meet here, if you will:" and that was the first meeting that we had that he offered of his own accord. And then notice was given that day and the next to Friends, and there was a good large meeting the first day, which was the first meeting that was at Swarthmoor, and so continued there a meeting from 1652 till 1690 [when the present Meeting-house, given by George Fox, was built]. And my husband went that day to the steeple-house, and none with him but his clerk and his groom that rid with him; and the priest and the people were all fearfully troubled; but praised be the Lord, they never got their wills upon us to this day.'

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George Fox in his Journal also records his first eventful interview with Judge Fell as follows:

'I found that the priests and professors and Justice Sawrey had much incensed Judge Fell against the truth with their lies; but when I came to speak with him I answered all his objections, and so thoroughly satisfied him by the scriptures that he was convinced in his judgment. He asked me "if I was that George Fox whom Justice Robinson spoke so much in commendation of among many of the parliament men?" I told him I had been with Justice Robinson and Justice Hotham, in Yorkshire, who were very civil and loving to me. After we had discoursed a pretty while together, Judge Fell himself was satisfied also, and came to see, by the openings of the spirit of God in his heart, over all the priests and teachers of the world, and did not go to hear them for some years before he died. He sometimes wished I was awhile with Judge Bradshaw to discourse with him.'

This was Judge Bradshaw the regicide, and, coming as it did from such a friend of Cromwell's as Judge Fell, the remark was probably a high compliment.

The following year, 1653, George Fox came again to Swarthmoor, where he says he had 'great openings from the Lord, not only of divine and spiritual matters, but also of outward things relating to the civil government. Being one day in Swarthmoor Hall when Judge Fell and Justice Benson were talking of the news in the newsbook, and of the Parliament then sitting, (called the long Parliament) I was moved to tell them, "before that day two weeks the Parliament should be broken up, and the speaker plucked out of his chair"; and that day two weeks Justice Benson told Judge Fell that now he saw that George was a true prophet, for Oliver had broken up the parliament.' Although Judge Fell never actually joined Friends he was their constant protector and helper, and, in the words of Fox, 'A wall to the believers.' If he did not himself attend the meetings in the great Hall at Swarthmoor, he was wont to leave the door open as he sat in his Justice's chair in his little oak-panelled study close at hand, and thus hear all that was said, himself unseen. How entirely his wife had regained his confidence, and how entirely Lampitt and Sawrey had failed to poison his mind against her or her new teacher, is shown by the following letter written about this time, when the Judge was away on one of his frequent absences. It is the only letter to Judge Fell from his wife that has been preserved, but it is ample assurance that no shadow had dimmed the unclouded love of this devoted husband and wife.

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'Dear Husband,' Margaret writes, 'My dear love and tender desires to the Lord run forth for thee. I have received a letter this day from you, and am very glad that the Lord carried you on your journey so prosperously.... Dear Heart, mind the Lord above all, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and who will overturn all powers that stand before Him.... We sent to my dear brother James Nayler and he is kept very close and cannot be suffered to have any fire. He is not free to eat of the jailor's meat, so they eat very little but bread and water. He writ to us that they are plotting again to get more false witnesses to swear against him things that he never spoke. I sent him 2 lb., but he took but 5 [shillings?]. They are mighty violent in Westmorland and all parts everywhere towards us. They bid 5 lb. to any man that will take George anywhere that they can find him within Westmorland.... The children are all in health, praised be the Lord. George is not with us now, but he remembered his dear love to thee....

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'Thy dutiful wife till death,

MARGARET FELL.'

'Swarthmoor, Feb. 18, 1653.'

But whether Margaret Fell ever entirely forgave Justice Sawrey for the part he had played in trying to alienate her husband from her, is, to say the least, doubtful. Anyhow, later on she wrote of him as 'a catterpillar which shall be swept out of the way.' And 'swept out of the way' he eventually was, some years later, when it is recorded that 'he was drowned in a puddle upon the road coming from York.' But he was to have time and opportunity to do much harm to Friends, and especially to George Fox, before that happened, as the next two stories will show.

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XII. 'STRIKE AGAIN!'

'Ulverston consisted of thatched one storied houses, many old shops, gabled buildings standing out towards the street on pillars beneath which neighbours sheltered and gossiped. On market days these projections were filled with goods to tempt gentry and yeomanry to open their purse-strings.'—From *'Home Life in North Lonsdale.'*

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'By the year 1654 "the man with the leather breeches" as he was called, had become a celebrity throughout England, with scattered converts and adherents everywhere, but voted a pest and a terror by the public authorities, the regular steeple-house clergy, whether Presbyterian or Independent, and the appointed preachers of all the old sects.'—D. MASSON.

'For in those days the high and proud professors and persecutors were generally bitterly set against the people called Quakers, when Presbytery and Independency swarmed and floated in possession, and with their long Lectures against us cried out, "These are the Antichrists come in the last times"'—G. WHITEHEAD.

'For in all things he acquitted himself like a man, yea, a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man.'—W. PENN of George Fox.

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XII. 'STRIKE AGAIN!'

'Love, Wisdom, and Patience will overcome all that is not of God.'—G. FOX.

By the side of even a low mountain the tallest tower looks small. The fells that shelter the old market town of Ulverston from northerly winds are not lofty compared with the range of giants that lies behind them in the distance, Coniston Old Man, Sca Fell, Skiddaw, Helvellyn, and their brethren. But the fells are high enough to make the tall old Church tower of Ulverston look small and toy-like as it rises under their shadow above the thatched roofs of the old town.

Swarthmoor Hall stands on a level plateau on the other side of Ulverston; and it was from Swarthmoor Hall, through a wooded glen by the side of the stream, that George Fox came down to Ulverston Church, one 'Lecture Day' at the end of September 1652.

On a 'Lecture Day' a sermon lasting for several hours was delivered by an appointed teacher; and when that was finished, anyone who had listened to it was free to rise and deliver a message in his turn if he wished to do so. In those days, as there were no clocks or watches in churches, the length of the sermon was measured by turning an hour-glass, until all the sand had run out, a certain number of times. Children, and perhaps grown-up people too, must often have watched the sand with longing eyes when a sermon of several hours' length was in process. On this particular day, Priest Lampitt was the appointed preacher. Lampitt had never forgiven Fox for having persuaded so many of his hearers, and especially the important ladies of Swarthmoor, to forsake their Parish Church, and assemble for their own service at home. His feelings may be imagined, therefore, when, his own sermon ended, he saw George Fox get up and begin to preach in his turn.

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George Fox says, 'On a Lecture Day I was moved to go to Ulverston steeple-house, where there was an abundance of professors and priests,^[12] and people. And I went up near to Lampitt who was blustering on in his preaching, and the Lord opened my mouth to speak.'

Now among the 'abundance of people' who were present in the Church was that same Mr. Justice Sawrey, 'the Catterpillar,' of whom the last two stories tell. As soon as George Fox opened his mouth and began to preach, up bustled the Justice to him, with a patronising air, and said, 'Now, my good fellow, you may have my permission to speak in this Church, so long as you speak according to the Scriptures.'

Like lightning, George Fox turned round on the high step where he was standing near to Priest Lampitt, and saw at his elbow the little pompous Justice, his face flushed, full of fussiness about his own dignity and anxious to arrange everything according to his own ideas.

George Fox, who felt he had a message from God to deliver, had no intention of being interrupted by any man in this way.

'I stranged at him,' says Fox, 'for speaking so to me!'

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'Stranged' is an unfamiliar word, no longer used in modern English. It sounds as if it meant something very fierce, and calls up a picture of George Fox glaring at his antagonist or trying to shout him down. In reality it only means that Fox was astonished at his strange behaviour.

'I stranged at him and told him that I would speak according to the Scriptures, and bring the Scriptures to prove what I had to say, for I had something to say to Lampitt and to them.' 'You shall do nothing of the kind,' said Mr. Justice Sawrey, contradicting his own words of the moment before, that Fox might speak so long as he spoke according to the Scriptures.

Fox paid no attention to this injunction, but went on calmly with his sermon. At first the congregation listened quietly. But Fox had made a new enemy and a powerful one. The little Justice would not be ignored in this way. He whispered to one and another in the congregation, 'Don't listen to this fellow. Why should he air his notions in our fine Church? Beat him! Stop his mouth! Duck him in the pond! Teach him that the men of Ulverston are sensible fellows, and not to be led astray by a ranting Quaker!'

These suggestions had their effect. Possibly the congregation agreed with the speaker. Possibly also, they knew that the little Justice, though short of stature, was of long memory and an ill man to offend. Moreover, a magistrate's favour is a useful thing to have at all times. Perhaps if they hunted Mr. Justice Sawrey's quarry for him in the daytime, he would be more likely to turn a blind eye the next moonlight night that they were minded to go out snaring other game, with fur and feathers, in the Justice's own park! Anyhow, faces began to grow threatening as the Quaker's discourse proceeded. Presently loud voices were raised. Still the calm tones flowed on unheeding. At length, clenched fists were raised; and, at the sight, the smile on the Justice's face visibly broadened. Nodding his head emphatically, he seemed to be saying, 'On, men, on!' till at length, like sparks fanned by a bellows, the congregation's ill-humour suddenly burst into a flame of rage. When at length rough hands fell upon the Quaker's shoulders and set all his alchemy buttons a-jingling, Mr. Justice Sawrey leaned against the back of his high wooden pew, crossed his legs complacently, and laughed long and loud at the joke. The crowd took this as a sign that they might do as they chose. They fell upon Fox, knocked him down, and finally trampled upon him, under the Justice's own eyes. The uproar became so great that the quieter members of the congregation were terrified, 'and the people fell over their seats for fear.'

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At length the Justice bethought himself that such behaviour as this in a church was quite illegal, since a man had been sentenced, before now, to lose his hand as a punishment for even striking his neighbour within consecrated walls. He began to feel uneasily that even the excellent sport of Quaker-baiting might be carried too far inside the Church. He came forward, therefore, and without difficulty rescued George Fox from the hands of his tormentors. But he had not finished with the Quaker yet. Leading him outside the Church, he there formally handed him over

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to the constables, saying, 'Take the fellow. Thrash him soundly and turn him out of the town,' adding, perhaps, under his breath, 'and teach him to behave with greater respect hereafter to a Justice of the Peace!'

George Fox describes in his own words what happened next. 'They led me,' says the Journal, 'about a quarter of a mile, some taking hold of my collar, and some by the arms and shoulders, and shook and dragged me, and some got hedge-stakes and holme bushes and other staffs. And many friendly people that was come to the market, and had come into the steeple-house to hear me, many of them they knocked down and broke their heads also, and the blood ran down several people so as I never saw the like in my life, as I looked at them when they were dragging me along. And Judge Fell's son, running after me to see what they would do to me, they threw him into a ditch of water and cried, "Knock the teeth out of his head!"'

Once well away from the town, apparently, the constables were content to let their prisoner go, knowing that they might trust their fellow-townsmen to finish the job with right good will. The mob yelled with joy to find their prey in their hands at last. With one accord they fell upon Fox, and endeavoured to pull him down, much as, at the huntsman's signal, a pack of hounds sets upon his four-footed namesake with a bushy tail. The constables and officers, too, continued to assist. Giving him some final blows with willow-rods they thrust Fox 'amid the rude multitude, and they then fell upon me as aforesaid with their stakes and clubs and beat me on the head and arms and shoulders, until at last,' their victim says, 'they mazed me, and I fell down upon the wet common.'

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The crowd had won! George Fox was down at last! He lay, bruised and fainting, on the wet moss of the common on the far side of the town. Yes, there he lay for a few moments, stunned, bruised, bleeding, beaten nigh to death. Only for a few moments, no longer. Very soon his consciousness returned. Finding himself helpless on the watery common with the savage mob glowering over him, he says, 'I lay a little still without attempting to rise. Then suddenly the power of the Lord sprang through me, and the eternal refreshings revived me, so that I stood up again in the eternal power of God, and stretched out my arms among them all and said with a loud voice: "Strike again! Here are my arms, my head, my cheeks!"'

Whatever would he do next? What sort of a man was this? The rough fellows in the circle around him insensibly drew back a little, and looked in each other's faces with surprise, as they tried to read the riddle of this disconcerting behaviour. The Quaker would not show fight! He was actually giving them leave to set upon him and beat him again! All in a minute, what had hitherto seemed like rare sport began to be rather poor fun.

'There's no sense in thrashing a man who doesn't strike back! Better leave the fellow alone!' some of the more decent-minded whispered to each other in undertones, and then slunk away ashamed. Only one man, a mason, well known as the bully of the town, knew no shame.

'Strike again, sayest thou, Quaker?' he thundered. 'Hast had none but soft blows hitherto? Faith then, I will strike in good earnest this time.' So saying, the mason brought a thick wooden rule that he was carrying down on the outstretched hand before him, with a savage blow that might have felled an ox. After the first shock of agonising pain George Fox lost all feeling from his finger-tips right up to his shoulder. When he tried to draw the wounded hand back to his side he could not do it. The paralysed nerves refused to carry the message of the brain.

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'The mason hath made a good job of it this time,' jeered a mocking voice from the crowd. 'The Quaker hath lost the use of his right hand for ever.' For ever! Terrible words. George Fox was but a young man still. Was he indeed to go through life maimed, without the use of his right hand? The bravest man might have shrunk from such a prospect; but George Fox did not shrink, because he did not happen to be thinking of himself at all. His hand was not his own. Not it alone but his whole body also had been given, long ago, to the service of his Master. They belonged to Him. Therefore if that Master should need the right hand of His servant to be used in His service, His Power could be trusted to make it whole.

Thus Fox trusted, and not in vain; since all the while, no thoughts of vengeance or hatred to those who had injured him were able to find even a moment's lodging in his heart.

'So as the people cried out, "he hath spoiled his hand for ever having any use of it more," I LOOKED AT IT IN THE LOVE OF GOD AND I WAS IN THE LOVE OF GOD TO ALL THEM THAT HAD PERSECUTED ME. AND AFTER A WHILE THE LORD'S POWER SPRANG THROUGH MY HAND AND ARM AND THROUGH ME, THAT IN A MINUTE I RECOVERED MY HAND AND ARM AND STRENGTH IN THE FACE AND SIGHT OF THEM ALL.'

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This miracle, as it seemed to them, overawed the rough mob for a moment. But some of the greedier spirits saw a chance of making a good thing out of the afternoon's work for themselves. They came to Fox and said if he would give them some money they would defend him from the others, and he should go free. But Fox would not hear of such a thing. He 'was moved of the Lord to declare unto them the word of life, and how they were more like Jews and heathens and not like Christians.'

Thus, instead of thankfully slinking away and disappearing up the hill by a by-path to the friendly shelter of Swarthmoor, Fox strode boldly back into the centre of the town of Ulverston with his persecutors, like a crowd of whipped dogs, following him at his heels. Yet still they snarled and showed their teeth at times, as if to say, they would have him yet if they dared. Right into Ulverston market-place he came, and a stranger sight the old grey town, with its thatched roofs and timbered houses, had surely never seen. In the middle of the market-place the one other courageous man in the town came up to him. This was a soldier, carrying a sword.

'Sir,' said this gallant gentleman, as he met the bruised and bleeding Quaker, 'I am ashamed

that you, a stranger, should have been thus ill-treated and abused, FOR YOU ARE A MAN, SIR,' said he. Fox nodded, and a smile like wintry sunshine stole over his worn face. Silently he held out his hand. The soldier grasped it. 'In truth, I am grieved,' he repeated, 'grieved and ashamed that you should have been treated like this at Ulverston. Gladly will I assist you myself as far as I can against these cowards, who are not ashamed to set upon an unarmed man, forty to one, and drag him down.'

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'No matter for that, Friend,' said Fox, 'they have no power to harm me, for the Lord's power is over all.' With these words he turned and crossed the crowded market-place again, on his way to leave the town, and not one of the people dared to touch him.

But, as everyone prefers both to be defended himself and to defend others with those weapons in which he himself puts most trust, the soldier very naturally followed Fox, in case 'the Lord's power' might also need the assistance of his trusty sword.

The mob, seeing Fox well protected, turned, like the cowards they were, and fell upon the other 'friendly people' who were standing defenceless in the market-place and beat them instead. Their meanness enraged the soldier. Leaving Fox, he turned and ran upon the mob in his turn, his naked rapier shining in his hand.

'My trusty sword shall teach these cravens a lesson at last,' he thought. Quick as he was, Fox was quicker. He, too, had turned at the noise, and seeing his defender running at the crowd, and the sunshine dancing down the steel blade as it gleamed in the air, he also ran, and dashed up the soldier's weapon before it had time to descend. Then taking firm hold of the man's right hand, sword and all, 'Thou must put up thy sword, Friend,' he commanded, 'if thou wilt come along with me.' Half sulkily, and wholly disappointed, the soldier, in spite of himself, obeyed. But he insisted on accompanying Fox to the outskirts of the town. 'You will be safe now, Sir,' he said, and sweeping his plumed hat respectfully on the ground, as he bowed low to his new friend, the two parted.

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Nevertheless, not many days thereafter this very gallant gentleman paid for his chivalrous conduct. No less than seven men fell upon him at once, and beat him cruelly 'for daring to take the Quaker's part.' 'For it was the custom of this country to run twenty or forty people upon one man,' adds the Journal, with quiet scorn. 'And they fell so upon Friends in many places, that they could hardly pass the high ways, stoning and beating and breaking their heads.'

But of the punishment in store for his defender, Fox was happily ignorant that hot afternoon of the riot, as he followed the peaceful brook through its sheltered glen, and so came up again at last, after his rough handling, to friendly Swarthmoor, where young George Fell, escaped from his persecutors and the miry ditch, had arrived before him. 'And there they were, dressing the heads and hands of Friends and friendly people that were broken that day by the professors and hearers of Priest Lampitt,' writes Fox.

'And my body and arms were yellow, black and blue with the blows and bruises I received among them that day.'

FOOTNOTES:

- [12] Remember always that by 'priest' George Fox only means a man of any form of religion who was paid for preaching. Lampitt was probably an Independent. 'Professors,' as we have already seen, are the people usually called 'Puritans, who 'professed' or made a great show of being very religious.'

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XIII. MAGNANIMITY

ToC

'Magnanimity ... includes all that belongs to a great soul. A high and mighty Courage, an invincible Patience, an immovable Grandeur; which is above the reach of Injuries; a high and lofty Spirit allayed with the sweetness of Courtesy and Respect: a deep and stable Resolution founded on Humilitie without any Baseness ... a generous confidence, and a great inclination to Heroical deeds; all these conspire to compleat it, with a severe and mighty expectation of Bliss incomprehensible....

'A magnanimous soul is always awake. The whole globe of the Earth is but a nutshell in comparison with its enjoyments. The Sun is its Lamp, the Sea its Fishpond, the Stars its Jewels, Men, Angels, its attendance, and God alone its sovereign delight and supreme complacency.... Nothing is great if compared with a Magnanimous soul but the Sovereign Lord of all the Worlds.'—REV. THOMAS TRAHERNE (A Contemporary of G. Fox).

'They threw stones upon me that were so great, that I did admire they did not kill us; but so mighty was the power of the Lord, that they were as a nut or a bean to my thinking.'—THOMAS BRIGGS, 1685.

XIII. MAGNANIMITY

Beloved Swarthmoor! Dear home, where kind hearts abode, where gentle faces and tender hands were ever ready to welcome and bind up the wounds, both visible and invisible, of any persecuted guest in those troubled times. Surely, after his terrible experiences on the day of the riot at Ulverston, George Fox would yield to the entreaties of his entertainers, and allow himself to be persuaded to rest in peace under the shadow of the Swarthmoor yew-trees, until the bloodthirsty fury against all who bore the name of Quaker, and against himself in particular, should have somewhat lessened in the neighbourhood? Far from it. To 'Flee from Storms' was never this strong man's way.^[13] Gentle reeds and delicate grasses may bow as the storm-wind rushes over them. The sturdy oak-tree, with its tough roots grappling firmly underground, stubbornly faces the blast. George Fox, 'ever Stiff as a Tree,' by the admission even of his enemies, barely waited for his 'yellow, black and blue' bruises to disappear before he came forth again to encounter his foes. Certain priests had however taken advantage of this short enforced absence to 'put about a prophecy' that he had disappeared for good, and 'that within a year all these Quakers would be utterly put down.' Great, therefore, must have been their chagrin to hear, only a short fortnight after the Lecture Day at Ulverston, that the hated 'Man in Leather Breeches' was off once more on his dangerous career.

Fox's companion on this journey was that same James Nayler who had followed him on his first visit to Swarthmoor, a few weeks previously. Nayler was one of the most brilliantly gifted of all those early comrades of George Fox, who were hereafter to earn the name of 'the Valiant Sixty.' Clouds and sorrows were to separate the two friends in years to come, but at this time they were

united in heart and soul, both alike given up to the joyful service of 'Publishing Truth.' The object of their journey was to visit another recent convert, James Lancaster by name, in his home on the Island of Walney that lies off the Furness coast.

On the way thither the travellers spent one night at a small town on the mainland called Cockan. Here, as usual, they held a meeting with the inhabitants of the place, in order to proclaim the message that possessed them. Their words had already convinced one of their hearers, and more converts to the Truth might have followed, when suddenly, at a low window of the hall where they were assembled, a man's figure appeared, threatening the audience with a loaded pistol which he carried in his hand. As this pistol was pointed, first at one and then at another of George Fox's listeners, all the terrified people sprang to their feet and rushed through the doors of the hall as fast as their legs could carry them. Their alarm was natural; probably most, if not all of them, had seen fire-arms used in grim earnest before this, for the period of the Civil Wars was too recent to have faded from anyone's memory.

'I am not after you, ye timid sheep,' shouted the man with the pistol as the scared people fled past him. 'It is that Deceiver who is leading you all astray that I have to do with. Come out and meet me, George Fox,' he shouted, 'if you call yourself a Man.'

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There was no need to ask twice. 'Here I am, Friend,' answered a quiet voice, as the well-known figure, in its wide white hat, long coat, leather breeches and doublet, and girdle with alchemy buttons, appeared standing in the doorway. Then, passing calmly through it, George Fox drew up scarce three paces from his assailant—his body making a large target at close range that it would be impossible to miss. The frightened people paused in their flight to watch. Were they going to see the Quaker slain? The stranger raised his pistol; he aimed carefully. Not a muscle of Fox's countenance quivered. Not an eyelash moved. The trigger snapped....

Nothing happened! The pistol did not go off. As if by a miracle the Quaker was saved.

Seeing this wonderful escape of their leader, some of the other men's courage returned. They rushed back to assist him. They threw themselves upon his assailant and wrenched the pistol from his hand, vowing he should do no further mischief. Fox, seeing in his adversary, not an enemy who had just sought his life, but a fellow-man with a 'Seed of God' hidden somewhere within him and therefore a possible soul to be won, was 'moved in the Lord's power to speak to him; and he was struck with the Lord's power' (small wonder!) 'so that he went and hid himself in a cellar and trembled for fear.

'And so the Lord's power came over them all, though there was a great rage in the country.'

The Journal continues (but it was written many years later, remember, when the account of what had happened could not bring anyone into trouble): 'And ye next morning I went over in a boat to James Lancaster's, and as soon as I came to land there rushed out about forty men, with staffs, clubs, and fishing-poles, and fell upon me with them, beating, punching, and thrust me backwards into the sea. And when they had thrust me almost into the sea, I stood up and went into the middle of them again, but they all laid on me again and knocked me down and mazed me. And when I was down and came to myself, I looked up and saw James Lancaster's wife throwing stones at my face, and her husband lying over me, to keep the stones and blows off me. For the people had persuaded James's wife that I had bewitched her husband, and had promised her that if she would let them know when I came hither they would be my death.

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'So at last I got up in the power of God over them all, and they beat me down into the boat. And so James Lancaster came into the boat to me and so he set me over the water.

'And James Nayler we saw afterwards that they were beating of him. For while they were beating of me, he walked up into a field, and they never minded him till I was gone, and then they fell upon him, and all their cry was "Kill him!" "Kill him!" When I was come over to the town again, on the other side of the water, the townsmen rose up with pitchforks, flails, and staves to keep me out of the town, crying, "Kill him! knock him on the head! bring the cart and carry him to the churchyard." And so they abused me and guarded me with all those weapons a pretty way out of the town, and there at last, the Lord's power being over them all, they left me. Then James Lancaster went back again to look for James Nayler. So I was alone and came to a ditch of water and washed me, for they had all dirted me, and wet and mired my clothes, my hands and my face.

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'I walked a matter of three miles to Thomas Hutton's, where Thomas Lawson the priest lodged, who was convinced. And I could hardly speak to them when I came in I was so bruised. And so I told them where I had left James Nayler, and they went and took each of them a horse, and brought him thither that night. And I went to bed, but I was so weak with bruises that I was not able to turn me. And the next day, they hearing of it at Swarthmoor, they sent a horse for me. And as I was riding the horse knocked his foot against a stone and stumbled, so that it shook me so and pained me, as it seemed worse to me than all the blows, my body was so tortured. So I came to Swarthmoor, and my body was exceedingly bruised.'

Even within the sheltering walls of Swarthmoor, this time persecution followed. Justice Sawrey had not yet forgiven the Quaker for his behaviour on the day of the riot. He must have further punishment. So right up to Swarthmoor itself came constables with a warrant signed by two Justices (Sawrey of course being one of them), that a certain man named George Fox was to be apprehended as a disturber of the peace. And clapped into gaol George Fox would have been, wounded and bruised as he was, in spite of all that his gentle hostesses could do to prevent it, had it not happened that, just as the constables arrived to execute this order, the master of the house, good Judge Fell himself, must needs return once more, in the very nick of time, home to Swarthmoor. His mere presence was a defence.

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He had been away again on circuit all this time that George Fox had been so cruelly treated in the neighbourhood, and had therefore known nothing of the rioting during his absence. Now that he was back at home again, straightway everything went well. The roof seemed to grow all at once more sheltering, the walls of the old hall to become thicker and more able to protect its inmates, when once the master of the house was safely at home once more.

The six girls ran up and down stairs more lightly, smiling with relief whenever they met each other in the rooms and passages. Long afterwards, in the troubled years that were to follow, when there was no indulgent father to protect them and their mother and their friends from the bitter blast of persecution, many a time did the maidens of Swarthmoor recall that day. They remembered how, weeping, they had run down to the high arched gate of the orchard to meet their father, and to tell him what was a-doing up at the Hall. Thus they drew near the house, the Judge's dark figure half hidden among his muslined maidens, even as the dark old yews are hidden in spring by the snowy-blossomed apple-trees. When they saw the Judge himself coming towards them, the constables drawn up in the courtyard began to look mighty foolish. They approached with gestures of respect, giving a short account of what had happened at Walney, and holding out the warrant, signed by two justices, as an apology for their presence at Judge Fell's own Hall during his absence.

All their excuses availed them little. Judge Fell could look stern enough when he chose, and now his eyes flashed at this invasion of his home. [205]

'What brings you here, men? A warrant for the apprehension of George Fox, *MY GUEST*? Are my brother Justices not aware then that I am a Justice too, and Vice-Chancellor of the county to boot? Under this roof a man is safe, were he fifty times a Quaker. But, since ye are here' (this with a nod and a wink, as the constables followed the Judge up the flagged path and by a side door into his oak-panelled study), 'since ye are here, men, I will give you other warrants a-plenty to execute instead. Those riotous folk at Walney Island are well known to me of old. It is high time they were punished. Take this, and see that the ringleaders who assaulted my guest are themselves clapped into Lancaster Gaol forthwith.'

Well pleased to get off with nothing but a reprimand, the constables departed, and carried out their new mission with right good will. The rioters were apprehended, and some of them were forced to flee from the country. In time James Lancaster's wife came to understand better the nature of the 'witchcraft' that George Fox had used upon her husband. She too was 'convinced of Truth.' Later on, after she had herself become a Friend, she must often have looked back with remorse to the sad day when her husband had been forced to defend his loved and revered teacher with his own body from her blows and stones.

Meanwhile at Swarthmoor there had been great rejoicing over the discomfiture of the constables. No sooner had they departed down the flagged path than back flitted the bevy of girls again into the study, until the small room was full to overflowing. It was like seeing a company of fat bumble-bees, their portly bodies resplendent in black and gold, buzz heavily out of a room, and a gay flight of pale-blue and lemon butterflies flit back in their places. All the daughters fell upon their father, Margaret, Bridget, Isabel, Sarah, Mary, and Susanna; there they all were! tugging off his heavy riding-boots and gaiters, putting away the whip on the whip-rack, while little Mary perched herself proudly on his knee and put up her face for a kiss; and, all the time, such a talk went on as never was about Friend George Fox and the sufferings he had undergone, each girl telling the story over and over again. [206]

'Now, now, maids!' said the kind father at last, 'I have heard enough of your chatter. It is time for you to depart and send Mr. Fox hither to me himself. 'Tis a stirring tale, even told by maidens' lips; I would fain hear it at greater length from the man himself. He shall tell me, in his own words, all that he hath suffered, and the vile usage he hath met with at the hands of his enemies.'

A few minutes later, a steady step was heard crossing the hall and ascending the two shallow stairs that led to the Justice's private sanctum. As George Fox entered the room Judge Fell rose from his seat at the writing-table to receive his guest, and clasped his hand with a hearty greeting.

The study at Swarthmoor is only a small room; but when those two strong men were both in it together, facing each other with level brows and glances of unclouded trust, the small room seemed suddenly to grow larger and more spacious. It was swept through by the wide free airs of heaven, where full-grown spirits can meet and recognise one another unhindered. They disagreed often, these two determined, powerful men. They owned different loyalties and held different opinions; but from the day they first met to the day they parted they respected and trusted one another wholly, and for this each man in his heart gave thanks to God. [207]

George Fox began by asking his host how his affairs had prospered; but when, these enquiries answered, the Judge in his turn questioned his guest of the rough usage he had met with both at Ulverston and in the Island of Walney, to his surprise no details were forthcoming. Had the Judge not had full particulars from his daughters as well as from the constables, he would have thought that nothing of much moment had occurred. George Fox apparently took no interest in the subject; the most he would say, in answer to his host's repeated enquiries, was that 'the people could do no other, in the spirit in which they were. They did but show the fruits of their priest's ministry and their profession and religion to be wrong.'

'I faith, Margaret, thy friend is a right generous man,' the good Judge remarked to his wife, that same night, a few hours later, when they were at length alone together in their chamber. The festoons of interlaced roses and lilies, carved in high relief on the high black oak fireplace,

shone out clearly in the glow of two tall candles above their heads.

'In truth, dear Heart,' he continued, taking his wife's hand in his, and drawing her fondly to him, 'in truth, though I said not so to him, the Quaker doth manifest the fruits of his religion to be right, by his behaviour to his foes. All stiff and bruised though he was, he made nothing of his injuries. When I would have enquired after his hurts, he would only say the Power of the Lord had surely healed him. FOR THE REST, HE MADE NOTHING OF IT, AND SPOKE AS A MAN WHO HAD NOT BEEN CONCERNED.'

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FOOTNOTES:

[13] 'Flee from Storms' is a motto in the note-book of Leonardo da Vinci.

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XIV. MILES HALHEAD AND THE HAUGHTY LADY

ToC

'Many a notable occurrence Miles Halhead had in his life.... But his going thus often from home was a great cross to his wife, who in the first year of his change, not being of his persuasion, was often much troubled in her mind, and would often say from discontent, "Would to God I had married a drunkard, then I might have found him at the alehouse; but now I cannot tell where to find my husband."—SEWEL.

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To Friends—To take care of such as suffer for owning the Truth.

'And that if any friends be oppressed any manner of way, others may take care to help them: and that all may be as one family, building up one another and helping one another.'

'And, friends, go not into the aggravating part to strive with it, lest you do hurt to your souls, and run into the same nature; for PATIENCE MUST GET THE VICTORY, and it answers to that of God in everyone and will bring everyone from the contrary. So let

*your temperance and moderation and
patience be known to all.*—GEORGE
FOX.

*'Non tristabit justum quidquid si
accederit.'*
*'Whatever happens to the righteous
man it shall not heavy him.'*—RICHARD
ROLLE. 1349.

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XIV. MILES HALHEAD AND THE HAUGHTY LADY

A Plain, simple man was Miles Halhead, the husbandman of Mountjoy. Ten years older than Fox was he, and wise withal, so that men wondered to see him forsake his home and leave wife and child at the call of the Quaker's preaching, and go forth instead to become a preacher of the Gospel.

Yet, truth to tell, the change was natural and easily explained. All his life Miles had had to do with seeds buried in the ground. Therefore when he heard George Fox preach at his home near Underbarrow in Westmorland, telling all men to consider 'that as the fallow ground in their fields must be ploughed up before it would bear seed to them, so must the fallow ground of their hearts be ploughed up before they could bear seed to God,' Miles' own past experience as a husbandman bore witness to the truth of this doctrine. His whole nature sprang forward to receive it; and thus, in a short while, he was mightily convinced.

Now at that time there were, as we know, many companies of Seekers scattered up and down the pleasant Westmorland dales. Miles himself had been one of such a group, but now, having found that which he had aforesaid been a-seeking, nought was of any value to him, but that his old companions should likewise cease to be Seekers, and become also in their turn Finders. Yet Miles wondered often how such an one as he should be able to convince them. For he was neither skilful nor ready of tongue, nor of a commanding presence like Friend George Fox, but only a simple husbandman. Still he was wary in his discourse, from his long watching of the faces of Earth and Sky—full also he was of a most convincing silence; and, though as yet he had proved it not, staunch to suffer for his faith. It was said of him that 'his Testimony was plaine and powerful, he being a plain simple man.'

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Thus Miles Halhead began to preach the Gospel, at first only in the hamlets and valleys round his home at Underbarrow near to Kendal. But one day when the daffodils were all abloom, and blowing their golden trumpets silently beside the sheltered streams, it came to him that he must take a further journey, and must follow the golden paths of the daffodils over hill and vale, until at the end of this street of gold he should come to Swarthmoor Hall; that there he might assist his friends at their Meeting, and with them be strengthened and have his soul refreshed.

A walk of seventeen miles or so lay before him, and an easy journey it should prove in this gay springtime, though in winter, when the snow lay drifted on the uplands, it would have been another matter. He could have travelled by the sheltered road that runs through the valley. It being springtime, however, and a sunny day when Miles set out from his home, he chose for pure pleasure to go by the fells. First, he travelled across the Westmorland country till he came to the lower end of Lake Winandermere, where the hills lie gently round like giants' children, being not yet full grown into giants themselves with brows that touch the sky, as they are at the upper end of that same shining lake. Then, leaving Winandermere, across the Furness fells he came, keeping ever on his right hand the Old Man of Coniston, who, with his head for the most part wrapped in clouds, standeth yet, as he hath stood for ages, the Guardian of all that region.

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Thus at length, as Miles journeyed, he came within sight of the promontory of Furness, that lies encircled by the sea, even as a babe's head lies in the crook of a woman's elbow. Seeing this, Miles' heart rejoiced, for he knew that his journey's end was in sight, and he tramped along blithely and without fear.

Suddenly, on the path at some distance ahead of him, he saw a patch of brilliant green and purple coming towards him—a gay figure more likely to be met with in the streets of London than on those lonely fells. Miles thought to himself as it drew nearer, "Tis a woman!" then, 'Nay, it is surely a great Thistle coming towards me; no woman would wear garments such as those in this lonely place.' As he shaded his eyes the better to see what might be approaching, his mind ran back to the first sermon he had ever heard George Fox preach, on his first visit to Underbarrow, when he said, 'That all people in the Fall were gone from the image of God, righteousness and holiness, and were degenerated into the nature of beasts, of serpents, of tall cedars, of oaks, of

bulls and of heifers.' ... 'Some were in the nature of dogs and swine, biting and rending; some in the nature of briars, thistles and thorns; some like the owls and dragons in the night; some like the wild asses and horses snuffing up the wind; and some like the mountains and rocks, and crooked and rough ways.' 'I was not certain of his meaning when I first heard him utter these words,' simple Miles thought to himself, 'but now that I see this fine Thistle coming towards me, I begin to understand him. Haply it is but a Thistle in outer seeming, and carries within the nature of a Lily or a Rose.'

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Even as he thought of this, the Thistle came yet nearer, and when he could see it more plainly he feared that neither Lily nor Rose was there, but a Thistle full of prickles in very truth. It was indeed a woman, but clad in more gorgeous raiment than Miles had ever seen. Green satin was her robe, slashed with pale yellow silk, marvellous to behold. But it was the hat that drew Miles' gaze, for though newly come to be a Quaker preacher, he had been a husbandman long enough to be swift to notice the garb of all growing, living things, whether they were flowers or dames. Truly the hat was marvellous, of a bright purple satin, and crowned with such a tuft of tall feathers that the wearer's face could scarcely be seen beneath its shade. Dressed all in gaudy style was this fine Madam; and, as she passed Miles, she tilted up her head and drew her skirts disdainfully together, lest they should be soiled by his approach. Although the lady appeared to see him not, but to be gazing at the sky, she was in truth well aware of his presence, and awaited even hungrily a lowly obeisance from him, that should assure her in her own sight of her own importance. For of no high-born lineage was this flaunting dame, no earl's or duke's daughter, else perhaps she had been too well aware of her own dignity and worth to insist upon others acknowledging it. She was but the young wife of the old Justice, Thomas Preston, and a plain Mistress, like Miles' own simple wife at home, in spite of her gay garments and flaunting airs. But the fact that she had newly come to live at Holker Hall, the finest mansion in all that countryside, had uplifted her in her own sight, and puffed her out with pride, sending her forth at all hours into unseasonable places to show off her fine new London clothes.

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Therefore she paused a little as she passed Miles, waiting for him to doff his hat and bend his knee, and declare himself in all lowliness her servant. But Miles had never a thought of doing this. Though he was but newly turned Quaker, right well he remembered hearing George Fox say —

'Moreover, when the Lord sent me forth into the world, He forbade me to put off my hat to any —high or low—and I was required to "thee" and "thou" all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small. And as I travelled up and down, I was not to bid people "Good-morrow," or "Good-evening," neither might I bow or scrape with the leg to anyone, and this made the sects and the professors to rage.'

Miles, too, having learnt this lesson and made it his own, passed by the lady in all soberness and quietness, taking no more notice of her than if she had been one of those dames painted on canvas by the late King's painter, Sir Anthony Van Dyck, which, truth to tell, she mightily resembled. The haughty fair one seeing this, as soon as he had fully passed and she could no longer delude herself with the hope that the longed-for salute was coming, was vastly and mightily incensed. It was not her hat alone that was thistle colour then: her face, her forehead, her neck all blazed and burned in one purple flush of rage. Only her cheeks stayed a changeless crimson, and that for a very excellent reason, easy to guess. Violently she turned herself to a serving-man who was following in her train, following so humbly, and being so much hidden by Madam's fallals and furbelows, that until that moment Miles had not even seen that he was there.

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'Back, sirrah!' she said in a loud, angry voice, speaking to the man as if he had been a dog or a horse, 'back with thy staff and beat that unmannerly knave till thou hast taught him 'twere well he should learn to salute his betters.'

The servant was tired of following his lady like a lap-dog, and attending to all her whims and whimsies. Scenting sport more nearly to his liking, he obeyed, nothing loath. He fell upon Miles and beat him lustily and stoutly, expecting every moment that he would resist or beg for mercy.

Mistress Preston meanwhile, having turned full round, watched the thwacking blows, and counted each one as it fell, with a smile of pleasure. But her smile speedily became an angry frown, for Miles, well knowing to whom his chastisement was due, paid no heed to the serving-man, let him lay on never so soundly, but turned himself round under the blows, and cried out in a loud voice to her: 'Oh, thou Jezebel, thou proud Jezebel, canst thou not permit and suffer the servant of the Lord to pass by thee quietly?'

Now at that word 'Jezebel,' Mistress Preston's anger was yet more mightily inflamed against Miles, for she knew that he had discovered the reason why her cheeks had remained pink, and flushed not thistle purple like the rest of her countenance. Even the serving-man smiled to himself, a mocking smile, and hummed in a low voice, as he continued to lay the blows thickly on Miles, a ditty having this refrain—

'Jezebel, the proud Queen,
Painted her face,'

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He did not suppose that his mistress would recognise the tune; but recognise it she did, and it increased her anger yet more, if that were possible. She flung out both hands in a fury, as if she would herself have struck at Miles, then, thinking him not fit for her touch, she changed her mind, and spat full in his face. Oh, what a savage Thistle was that woman, and worse far than any Thistle in her behaviour! Loudly, too, she exclaimed, 'I scorn to fall down at thy words!' Her meaning in saying this is not fully clear, but it may be, as Miles had called her Jezebel, she meant

that no one should ever cast her down from her high estate, as Jezebel was cast down from the window in the Palace, whence she mocked at Jehu. This made Miles testify yet once more—'Thou proud Jezebel,' said he, 'thou that hardenest thine heart and brazenest thy face against the Lord and His servant, the Lord will plead with thee in His own time and set in order before thee the things thou hast this day done to His servant.'

By this time the lady's lackey had at length stopped his beating, not out of mercy to Miles, but simply because his arm was weary. Yet he still kept humming under his breath another verse of the same ditty, ending—

'Jezebel, the proud Queen,
'Tired her hair!'

Miles, therefore, being loosed from his hands, parted from both mistress and man, and left them standing without more words and himself passed on, bruised and buffeted, to continue his journey in sore discomfort of body until he came to Swarthmoor. [218]

Arrived at that gracious home, his friends comforted him and bound up his aching limbs, as indeed they were well accustomed to do in those days, when the guests who arrived at Swarthmoor had too often been sorely mishandled. Even to this day, in all the lanes around, may be seen the walls composed of sharp, grey, jagged stones, over which is creeping a covering of soft golden moss. So in those old days of which I write, men, aye and women too, often came to Swarthmoor torn and bleeding, perhaps sometimes with anger in their hearts (though Miles Halhead was not of these), and all alike found their inward and outward wounds staunch and assuaged by the never-failing sympathy of kindly hearts, and hands more soft than the softest golden moss.

Thus Miles Halhead was comforted of his friends at Swarthmoor, and inwardly refreshed. Yet the matter of his encounter with the haughty lady, and of her prickly thistle nature, rested on his mind, and he could not be content without giving her yet one more chance to doff her prickles and become a sweet and fragrant flower in the garden of the Lord. Therefore, three months later, being continually urged thereunto by 'the true Teacher which is within,' he determined to take yet another journey and come himself to Holker Hall, and ask to speak with its mistress and endeavour to bring her to a better mind. Thither then in due course he came. Now a mansion surpassing grand is Holker Hall, the goodliest in all that country-side. And a plain man and a simple, as has been said, was Miles Halhead the husbandman of Mountjoy, even among the Quakers—who were none of them gay gallants. Nevertheless, being full of a great courage though small in stature, all weary and travel-stained as he was, to Holker Hall Miles Halhead came. He would not go to any back door or side door, seeing that his errand was to the mistress of the stately building. He walked therefore right up the broad avenue till he came to the front entrance, with its grand portico, where a king had been welcomed before now. [219]

As luck would have it, the door stood open as the Quaker approached, and the mistress of Holker Hall herself happened to be passing through the hall behind. She paused a moment to look through the open door, intending most likely to mock at the odd figure she saw approaching. But on that instant she recognised Miles as the man who had called her Jezebel. Now Miles at first sight did not recognise her, and was doubtful if this could be the haughty Thistle lady he sought, or if it were not a Lily in very truth. For Mistress Preston was clad this hot day in a lily-like frock of white clear muslin, all open at the neck and short enough to show her ankles and little feet, and tied with a blue ribbon round the waist, a garb most innocent to look upon, and more suited to a girl in her teens than to the Justice's wife, the buxom mistress of Holker Hall.

Therefore Miles, not recognising her, did ask her if she were in truth the woman of the house. To which she, seeing his uncertainty, answered lyingly: 'No, that I am not, but if you would speak with Mistress Preston, I will entreat her to come to you.'

Even as the words left her lips, Miles was sensible that she was speaking falsely, seeing how, even under the paint, her cheeks took on a deeper hue. And she, ever mindful that it was that same man who had called her Jezebel, went into the house and returning presently with another woman, declared that here was Mistress Preston, and demanded what was his will with her. No sooner had she spoken a second time than it was manifested to Miles with perfect clearness that she herself and none other was the woman he sought. Wherefore, in spite of her different dress and girlish mien, he said to her, 'Woman, how darest thou lie before the Lord and His servant?' [220]

And she, being silent, not speaking a word, he proceeded, 'Woman, hear thou what the Lord's servant hath to say unto thee,—O woman, harden not thy heart against the Lord, for if thou dost, He will cut thee off in His sore displeasure; therefore take warning in time, and fear the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, that thou mayest end thy days in peace.' Having thus spoken he went his way; she, how proud soever, not seeking to stay him nor doing him any harm, but standing there silent and dumb under the tall pillars of the door, being withheld and stilled by something, she knew not what.

Yet her thistle nature was not changed, though, for that time, her prickles were blunted. It chanced that several years later, when George Fox was a prisoner at Lancaster, this same gay madam came to him and 'belched out many railing words,' saying among the rest that 'his tongue should be cut off, and he be hanged.' Instead of which, it was she herself that was cut off and died not long after in a miserable condition.

Thus did Mistress Preston of Holker Hall refuse to bow her haughty spirit, yet the matter betwixt her and Miles ended not altogether there. For it happened that another April day, some [221]

three springs after Miles Halhead had encountered her the first time, as he was again riding from Swarthmoor towards his home near Underbarrow, and again being come near to Holker Hall, he met a man unknown to him by sight. This person, as Miles was crossing a meadow full of daffodils that grew beside a stream, would not let him pass, as he intended, but stopped and accosted him. 'Friend,' said he to Miles, 'I have something to say to you which hath lain upon me this long time. I am the man that about three years ago, at the command of my mistress, did beat you very sore; for which I have been very troubled, more than for anything which ever I did in all my life: for truly night and day it hath been in my heart that I did not well in beating an innocent man that never did me any hurt or harm. I pray you forgive me and desire the Lord to forgive me, that I may be at peace and rest in my mind.'

To whom Miles answered, 'Truly, friend, from that time to this day I have never had anything in my heart towards either thee or thy mistress but love. May God forgive you both. As for me, I desire that it may not be laid to your charge, for you knew not what you did.' Here Miles stopped and gave the man his hand and forthwith went on his way; and the serving-man went on his way; both of them with a glow of brotherhood and fellowship within their hearts. While the daffodils beside the stream looked up with sunlit faces to the sun, as they blew on their golden trumpets a blast of silent music, for joy that ancient injury was ended, and that in its stead goodwill had come.

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XV. SCATTERING THE SEED

ToC

'As early as 1654 sixty-three ministers, with their headquarters at Swarthmoor, and undoubtedly under central control, were travelling the country upon "Truth's ponies"—JOHN WILHELM ROWNTREE.

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'It is interesting to note and profitable to remember, how large a part these sturdy shepherds and husbandmen, from under the shade of the great mountains, had in preaching the doctrines of the Inward Light and of God's revelation of Himself to every seeking soul, in the softer and more settled countries of the South.'—THOMAS HODGKIN.

'Some speak to the conscience; some plough and break the clods; some weed out, and some sow; some wait that fowls devour not the seed. But wait all for the gathering of the simple-hearted ones.' ... 1651.

'Friends, spread yourselves abroad,

that you may be serviceable for the Lord and His Truth.' 1654.

'Love the Truth more than all, and go on in the mighty power of God, as good soldiers of Christ, well-fixed in His glorious gospel, and in His word and power; that you may know Him, the life and salvation and bring up others into it.'—G. FOX.

'Go! Set the whole world on fire and in flames!'—IGNATIUS LOYOLA. (To one whom he sent on a distant mission.)

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XV. SCATTERING THE SEED

In Springtime the South of England is a Primrose Country. Gay carpets of primroses are spread in the woods; shy primroses peep out like stars in sheltered hedgerows; vain primroses are stooping down to look at their own faces in pools and streams, there are primroses, primroses everywhere. But in the North of England their 'paly gold' used to be a much rarer treasure. True, there were always a few primroses to be found in fortunate spots, if you knew exactly where to look for them; but they were not scattered broadcast over the country as they are further South.

Therefore, North Country children never took primroses as a matter of course, they did not tear them up roughly, just for the fun of gathering them, drop them heedlessly the next minute and leave them on the road to die. North Country children used their precious holiday time to seek out their favourite flowers in their rare hiding-places.

'I've found one!' 'So have I!' 'There they are; two, three, four,—lots!' 'I see them!' The air would be full of delighted exclamations as the children scampered off, short legs racing, rosy cheeks flushing, bright eyes glowing with eagerness, to see who could take home the largest bunch.

The further north a traveller went, the rarer did primroses become, till in Northumberland, the most northerly county of all, primroses used to be very scarce indeed. Until, only a few years ago, a wonderful thing happened. There were days and weeks and months of warm sunny weather all through the spring and summer in that particular year. Old people smiled and nodded to one another as they said: 'None of us ever remembers a spring like this before!'

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The tender leaves and buds and flowers undid their wrappings in a hurry to be first to catch sight of the sun, whose warm fingers had awakened them, long before their usual time, from their winter sleep. All over England the spring flowers had a splendid time of it that year.

Even the few scattered primroses living in what Southerners call 'the cold grey North' were obviously enjoying themselves. Their smooth, pale-yellow faces opened wider, and grew larger and more golden, day by day: while new, soft, pointed buds came poking up through their downy green blankets in unexpected places. Moreover, the warm weather lasted right through the summer. Not only did far more primroses flower than usual, but also, after they had faded, there was plenty of warmth to ripen the precious seed packet that each one had carried at its heart. No wonder the children clapped their hands, that joyous spring, when their treasures were so plentiful; but they feared that they would never have such good luck again, even if they lived to be as old as the old people who had 'never seen such a spring before.'

It was not until a year later that the delighted children discovered that the long spell of sunshine and the Enchanter Wind had worked a lasting magic. The ripened seed had been scattered far and wide. The primroses had come to the North to stay; and new Paradises were springing up everywhere.

Now this is a primrose parable of many things, and worth remembering. Among other things it is an illustration of the change that was wrought all over England by the preaching of George Fox.

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Think once again of the long bleak years of his youth, when he was struggling in a dark world into which it seemed as if no ray of light could pierce; when he and everyone else seemed to be frozen up in a wintry religion, without life or warmth. Then think how at length he felt the sap rising in his own soul, turning his whole being to the Light, as he found 'there is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.' This discovery taught him that in all other men's hearts too, if they only knew, there was 'that of God.' Henceforward, to proclaim that Light to others and the seed within their own hearts that responds to the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, was the

service to which George Fox devoted his whole life. As his own being blossomed in the spiritual sunshine of his great discovery, he was able to persuade hundreds and thousands of other frozen hearts to yield themselves and turn to the Light, and open and blossom also in that same sunshine. A greater wonder followed. Those other lives, as they yielded themselves, began to ripen too, in different ways, but silently and surely, until they in their turn were ready to scatter the new seed, or, in the language of their day, to 'Publish Truth' up and down all over the country, until the whole face of England was changed.

By the time of George Fox's death, more than one out of every hundred among all the people of England was a Friend. But the Friends never regarded themselves as a Sect, although Sects were flourishing at that time. In 1640 it is said that twenty new kinds of Sects blossomed out in the course of one week. George Fox and his followers believed that the discovery they had made was meant for everybody, as much as sunshine is. Other people nicknamed them 'Quakers,' but they always spoke of themselves by names that the whole world was welcome to share: 'Children of the Light,' 'Friends of the Truth,' or simply 'Friends.' There was nothing exclusive about such names as these. There was no such thing as membership in a society then or for more than fifty years afterwards. Anyone who was convinced by what he had heard, and lived in the spirit of what he professed, became 'Truth's Friend' in his turn.

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Neither was there anything exclusive in George Fox's message. 'Keep yourselves in an universal spirit' was what he both preached and practised. It was in 'an universal spirit' that he and his followers scattered all over the country. No wonder they earned the name of 'the Valiant Sixty,' that little band of comrades who in 1654 started out from the North Country on their mission of convincing all England of 'the Truth.'

They were nearly all young men, their leader Fox himself still only thirty at this time. Francis Howgill and John Camm were two of the very few elders in the company. They usually travelled in couples, dear friends naturally going together; for is not the best work always done with the right companion? George Fox, who was leader, not by any outward signs of authority but by fervour of inward power and zeal, occasionally travelled alone. More often he took with him a comrade, such as Richard Farnsworth (of whom we have heard at Pendle), or James Nayler, or Leonard Fell, or many another, of whom there are other stories yet to tell.

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Never was George Fox happier than when he was sowing the seed in a new place. All over England there are memories of him, even as far away as the Land's End.

When, in 1656, he reached the rocky peninsula of granite at the extreme south-west of England, he wrote in his journal: 'At Land's End we had a precious meeting. Here was a fisherman, Nicholas Jose, convinced, that became a faithful minister. He spoke in meetings and declared truth to the people, so that I told Friends he was "like Peter." I was glad the Lord raised up His standard in those dark parts of the nation, where since there is a fine meeting of honest-hearted Friends, and a great people the Lord will have in that country.'

Unluckily, some of the other Cornish fisherfolk were not at all 'like Peter.' They were wreckers, and used to entice ships on to the rocks by means of false lights in order to enrich themselves with the spoils washed up on their coasts. This is why George Fox spoke of them as a 'dark people,' and was moved to put forth a paper 'warning them against such wicked practices.'

There are memories of him also in the town which was then called Smethwick, and is now called Falmouth, as well as at grim old Pendennis Castle: one of the twin castles that had been built by King Henry the Eighth to guard the mouth of Falmouth harbour. Here George Fox was confined. From hence he was carried to Launceston, where he lay for many weeks in prison in the awful den of Doomsdale, under conditions so dreadful that it is impossible to describe them here. When, at length, he was set at liberty he found a refuge at the hospitable farmhouse of Tregangeeves near St. Austell—the Swarthmoor of the West of England—with its warm-hearted mistress, Loveday Hambley. At Exeter he stayed at an inn, at the foot of the bridge, named 'the Seven Stars.' In our own day some of his followers have found another 'Inn of Shining Stars' at Exeter also, when their turn has come to be lodged within the grim walls of the Gaol for conscience sake.

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Now let us borrow the Giant's Seven-Leagued boots, and fancy ourselves in the far North of England, in 1657, just leaving Cumberland and crossing the Scottish border. Again the same square-set figure in the plain, soft, wide hat is riding ahead. But on this journey George Fox has several others with him: one is our old acquaintance, James Lancaster: Alexander Parker is the name of another of his companions: the third, Robert Widders, Fox himself described as 'a thundering man.' With them rides a certain Colonel William Osborne, 'one of the earliest Quaker preachers north of the Tweed, who came into Cumberland at this time on purpose to guide the party.'^[14] Colonel Osborne, who had been present with the other travellers at a meeting at Pardshaw Crag shortly before, 'said that he never saw such a glorious meeting in his life.'

'Fox says that as soon as his horse set foot across the Border, the infinite sparks of life sparkled about him, and as he rode along he saw that the seed of the seedsman Christ was sown, but abundance of clods of foul and filthy earth was above it.'^[15]

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A high-born Scottish lady, named Lady Margaret Hamilton, was convinced on this journey. She afterwards went in her turn to warn Oliver Cromwell of the Day of the Lord that was coming upon him. Various other distinguished people seem also to have been convinced at this time. The names of Fox's new disciples sound unusually imposing: 'Judge Swinton of Swinton; Sir Gideon

Scott of Highchester; Walter Scott of Raeburn, Sir Gideon's brother; Charles Ormiston, merchant, Kelso; Anthony Haig of Bemersyde and William his brother'; but Quakerism never took firm root in the Northern Kingdom, as it did among the dalesmen and townfolk farther South.

Fox journeyed on, right into the Highlands, but he got no welcome there. 'We went among the clans,' he says, 'and they were devilish, and like to have spoiled us and our horses, and run with pitchforks at us, but through the Lord's power we escaped them.' At Perth, the Baptists were very bitter, and persuaded the Governor to drive the party from the town, whereupon James Lancaster was moved to sound and sing in the power of God, and I was moved to sound the Day of the Lord, the glorious everlasting Gospel; and all the streets were up and filled with people: and the soldiers were so ashamed that they cried, and said they had rather have gone to Jamaica^[16] than to guard us so, and then they set us in a boat and set us over the water.'

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At Leith many officers of the army and their wives came to see Fox. Among these latter was a certain Mrs. Billing, who lived alone, having quarrelled with her husband. She brought a handful of coral ornaments with her, and threw them on the table ostentatiously, in order to see if Fox would preach a sermon against such gewgaws, since the Quakers were well known to disapprove of jewellery and other vanities.

'I took no notice of it,' says Fox, 'but declared Truth to her, and she was reached.' What a picture it makes! The fine lady, with her chains and brooches and rings of smooth, rose-coloured coral heaped up on the table before her, her eyes cast down as she pretended to let the pretty trifles slip idly through her fingers, yet glancing up now and then, under her eyelashes, to see if she had managed to attract the great preacher's attention; and Fox, noticing the baubles well enough, but paying no attention to them. Fixing his piercing eyes not on the coral but on its owner, he spoke to Mrs. Billing with such power that her whole life was changed. Once more Fox had found 'that of God' within this seemingly frivolous woman.

Before he left Scotland he had the happiness of persuading Mrs. Billing to send for her husband, and of helping to make up the quarrel between them. They agreed eventually to live in unity together once more as man and wife.

Fox journeyed on, in this way, year after year, always sowing the seed wherever he went, and sometimes having the joy of seeing it spring up above the clods and bring forth fruit an hundredfold. Even during the long weary intervals of captivity this service still continued. 'Indeed, Fox and his fellow-sufferers never looked upon prison as an interruption in their life service, but used the new surroundings in a fresh campaign.'^[17] Thus, the historian tells us: 'Though George Fox found good entertainment, yet he did not settle there but kept in a continual motion, going from one place to another, to beget souls unto God.'^[18]

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The rest of the 'Valiant Sixty,' meanwhile, were likewise busy, going up and down the country, working in different places and with different methods, but all intent on the one enterprise of 'Publishing Truth.' 'And so when the churches were settled in the North,' says the Journal, 'and the Lord had raised up many and sent forth many into His Vineyard to preach His everlasting Gospel, as Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough to London, John Camm and John Audland to Bristol through the countries, Richard Hubberthorne and George Whitehead towards Norwich, and Thomas Holme unto Wales, that a matter of sixty ministers did the Lord raise up and send abroad out of the North Countries.'

There were far fewer big towns in England in those days than there are now. Probably at least two-thirds of the people lived in the country, and only the remaining third were townfolk: nowadays the proportions are more than reversed. There was then no thickly populated 'Black Country'; there were then no humming mills in the woollen districts of Yorkshire, no iron and steel works soiling the pure rivers of Tees and Wear and Tyne. Most of the chief towns and industries at that time were in the South.

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'London had a population of half a million. Bristol, the principal seaport, had about thirty thousand; Norwich, with a similar number of inhabitants, was still the largest manufacturing city. The publishers of Truth would now make these three places their chief fields of service, showing something of the same concentration of effort at strategic centres which marked the extension of Christianity through the Roman Empire, under the leadership of Paul.'^[19]

A certain impetuous lad named James Parnell, already a noted Minister though still in his teens, was hard at work in the counties of East Anglia. In the next story we shall hear how Howgill and Burrough fared in their mission 'to conquer London.'

Splendid tidings came from the two Johns, John Audland and John Camm, of their progress in Bristol and the West: 'The mighty power of God is that way; that is a precious city and a gallant people: their net is like to break with fishes, they have caught so much there and all the coast thereabout.' The memory of the enthusiasm of those early days lingered long in the West, in the memory of those who had shared in them. 'Ah! those great meetings in the Orchard at Bristol I may not forget,' wrote John Audland many years later, 'I would so gladly have spread my net over all and have gathered all, that I forgot myself, never considering the inability of my body,—but it's well, my reward is with me, and I am content to give up and be with the Lord, for that my soul values above all things.'

Women also were among the first Publishers of Truth and helped to spread the message. Even before Burrough and Howgill reached London, two women had been there, gently scattering the new seed. It is recorded that one of them, named Isabella Buttery, 'sometimes spoke a few words in this small meeting.'

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Two Quaker girls from Kendal, Elizabeth Leavens and 'little Elizabeth Fletcher,' were the first

to preach in Oxford, and a terrible time they had of it. 'Little Elizabeth Fletcher' was then only seventeen, 'a modest, grave, young woman.' Jane Waugh, one of the 'convinced' serving-maids at Cammsgill, was a friend of hers; but Jane Waugh's turn for suffering had not yet come. She was still in the North when the two Elizabeths reached Oxford. This is the account of what befell them there: 'The 20th day of the 4th month [June] 1654 came to this city two maids, who went through the streets and into the Colleges, steeple and tower houses, preaching repentance and declaring the word of the Lord to the people.... On the 25th day of the same month they were moved to go to Martin's Mass House (*alias*) Carefox, where one of those maids, after the priest had done, spake something in answer to what the priest had before spoken in exhortation to the people, and presently were by two Justices sent to prison.' The Mayor of Oxford seems to have been pleased with the behaviour of the two girls and caused them to be set at liberty again. But the Vice-Chancellor and the Justices would not agree to this, and 'earnestly enquired from whence they came, and their business to Oxford. They answered, "they were commanded of the Lord to come"; and it being demanded "what to do," they answered, to "declare against Sin and Ungodliness, which they lived in." And at this answer the Vice-Chancellor and the Justices ordered their punishment, to be whipped out of town, and demanding of the Mayor to agree to the same, and for refusing, said they would do it of themselves, and signing a paper, the contents whereof was this: To be severely whipped, and sent out of Town as Vagrants. And forthwith, because of the tumult, they were put into the Cage, a place common for the worst of people; and accordingly the next morning, they were whipped, and sent away, and on the backside of the City, meeting some scholars, they were moved to speak to them, who fell on them very violently, and drew them into John's College, where they tied them back to back and pumped water on them, until they were almost stifled; and they being met at another time as they passed through a Graveyard, where a corpse was to be buried, Elizabeth Holme spake something to the Priest and people, and one Ann Andrews thrust her over a grave stone, which hurt she felt near to her dying day.'

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Two other women, Elizabeth Williams and a certain Mary Fisher (who was hereafter to go on a Mission to no less a person than the Grand Turk), were also cruelly flogged at Cambridge for daring to 'publish Truth' there. 'The Mayor ... issued his warrant to the Constable to whip them at the Market Cross till the blood ran down their bodies; and ordered three of his sergeants to see that sentence, equally cruel and lawless, severely executed. The poor women kneeling down, in Christian meekness besought the Lord to forgive him, for that he knew not what he did: so they were led to the Market Cross, calling upon God to strengthen their Faith. The Executioner commanded them to put off their clothes, which they refused. Then he stripped them naked to the waist, put their arms into the whipping-post, and executed the Mayor's warrant far more cruelly than is usually done to the worst of malefactors, so that their flesh was miserably cut and torn. The constancy and patience which they expressed under this barbarous usage was astonishing to the beholders, for they endured the cruel torture without the least change of countenance or appearance of uneasiness, and in the midst of their punishment sang and rejoiced, saying, "The Lord be blessed, the Lord be praised, who hath thus honoured us and strengthened us to suffer for his Name's sake." ... As they were led back into the town they exhorted the people to fear God, not man, telling them "this was but the beginning of the sufferings of the people of God."' [20]

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These two women were the first Friends to be publicly whipped in England. But their prophecy that 'this was but the beginning' was only too literally fulfilled.

Not only had bodily sufferings to be undergone by these brave 'First Publishers.' Malicious reports were also spread against them, which must have been almost harder to bear.

William Prynne, the same William Prynne who had had his own ears cropped in earlier days by order of the Star Chamber, but who had not, apparently, learned charity to others through his own sufferings, published a pamphlet that was spread abroad throughout England. It was called 'The Quakers unmasked, and clearly detected to be but the Spawn of Romish Frogs, Jesuits and Franciscan Friars, sent from Rome to seduce the intoxicated giddy-headed English Nation.' George Fox called the pamphlet in which he answered this charge by an almost equally uncharitable title: 'The Unmasking and Discovery of Antichrist, with all the false Prophets, by the true Light which comes from Christ Jesus.'

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The seventeenth century has truly been called 'a very ill-mannered century.' Certainly these were not pretty names for pamphlets that were so widely read that, to quote the graphic expression of an earlier writer, 'they walked up and down England at deer rates.'

Yet, still, in spite of bodily ill-usage and imprisonment, through good report and through evil report, through fair weather and foul, the work of scattering the seed continued steadily, day after day, month after month, year after year. The messengers went on, undaunted; the Message spread and took root throughout the land; the trials of the work were swallowed up in the triumphant joy of service and of 'Publishing Truth.'

FOOTNOTES:

[14] W.C. Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*.

[15] W.C. Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*.

- [16] Jamaica, with its deadly climate, had lately been taken by England from Spain, and was at this time proving the grave of hundreds of English soldiers.
- [17] *Cameos from the Life of George Fox*, by E.E. Taylor.
- [18] Sewel's *History of the Quakers*.
- [19] W.C. Braithwaite, *Beginnings of Quakerism*.
- [20] Besse, *Sufferings of the Quakers*.

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XVI. WRESTLING FOR GOD

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'Being but a boy, Edward Burrough had the spirit of a man. Reviling, slandering, buffeting and caning were oft his lot. Nothing could make this hero shrink.'—SEWEL.

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'His natural disposition was bold and manly, what he took in hand he did with his might; loving, courteous, merciful and easy to be entreated; he delighted in conference and reading of the holy scriptures.'—*Piety Promoted.*

'Dear Brother, mind the Lord and stand in His will and counsel. And dwell in the pure measure of God in thee, and there thou wilt see the Lord God present with thee. For the bringing forth many out of prison art thou there set; behold the word of the Lord cannot be bound. The Lord God of Power give thee wisdom, courage, manhood, and boldness, to thresh down all deceit. Dear Heart, be valiant, and mind the pure Spirit of God in thee, to guide thee up into God, to thunder down all deceit within and without. So farewell, and God Almighty keep you.'—GEORGE FOX, to a friend in the ministry.

'So, all dear and tender hearts, abide in the counsel of God, and let not the world overcome your minds but wait for a daily victory over it.'—E. BURROUGH.

XVI. WRESTLING FOR GOD

'A brisk young man with a ready tongue' was the verdict passed upon Edward Burrough, the hero of this story, by a certain Mr. Thomas Ellwood when he met him first in the year 1659.

Ellwood himself, who thus described his new acquaintance, was a young man too at that time, of good education and scholarly tastes. He became later the friend of a certain Mr. John Milton, who thought sufficiently well of his judgment to allow him to read his poetry before it was published, and to ask him what he thought of it; even, occasionally, to act upon his suggestions. Ellwood, therefore, was clearly the possessor of a sober judgment, and not a likely person to be carried away by the glib words of a wandering preacher. Yet that 'brisk young man,' Edward Burrough, did not only 'reach him' with his 'ready tongue,' he also completely 'convinced' him, and altered his whole life: Ellwood returned to his family ready to suffer hardship if need be on behalf of his newly-found faith.

Ellwood's own adventures, however, do not concern us here, but those of the young man who convinced him.

Edward Burrough was one of the best loved and most valiant of all those 'Valiant Sixty' ministers who went forth throughout the length and breadth of England, in 1654, on their new, wonderful enterprise of 'Publishing Truth.' If Edward Burrough was still 'young and brisk' when Ellwood first came across him, he must have been yet younger and brisker on that summer's day, five years earlier, when he left his home in Westmorland in order to 'conquer London.' This was an ambitious undertaking truly for any man, however brisk and ready of tongue.

It is true that the London of those long-ago days of the Commonwealth, before the Great Fire, was a much more compact city than the gigantic, overgrown London of to-day. Instead of 'sprawling over five or six counties,'^[21] and containing six or seven million inhabitants, London was then a comparatively small place, its population, though rapidly increasing, did not yet number one million.

'An old map of the year 1610 shows us that London and Westminster were then two neighbouring cities surrounded by meadows. "Totten Court" was an outlying country village. Oxford Street is marked on this map as "The way to Uxbridge," and runs between meadows and pastures. The Tower, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Church, ... and some other landmarks are indeed there, but it is curious to read the accounts given by the chronicles of the day of its narrow and dirty streets, in which carts and coaches jostled one another, and foot passengers found it difficult to get along at all.... When the King went to Parliament, faggots were thrown into the ruts in the streets through which he passed, to make it easier for his state coach to drive over the uneven roads!'^[22]

Nevertheless this gay little countrified town of timbered houses, surrounded by meadows and orchards, and overlooked by the green heights of 'Hamsted' and Primrose Hill, was then as now the Capital City of England. And England under Oliver Cromwell was one of the most powerful of the States of Europe.

Therefore if a young man barely out of his teens were to succeed in 'conquering London,' and bending it to his will, he would certainly need all his briskness and readiness of tongue.

Edward Burrough probably entered London alone and on foot, after a journey extending over several weeks. He had left his native Westmorland in company with good John Camm, the 'statesman' farmer of Cammsgill. The first stages of their journey were made on horseback. Many a quiet talk the two men must have had together as they rode through the green lanes of England,—that long-ago England of the Commonwealth, its clear skies unstained by any tall chimneys or factory smoke. There were but few hedgerows then, 'a single hedge is a marked feature in the contemporary maps.'^[23] The cornfields stretched away in a broad, unbroken expanse as they do to-day on the Continent of Europe and in the lands of the New World.

As they rode, Camm would tell Burrough, doubtless, of his first sight of George Fox, preaching in Sedbergh Churchyard, under the ancient yew-tree opposite the market cross, on that never-to-be-forgotten day of the Whitsuntide Fair. The story of the 'Wonderful Fortnight' would be sure to follow; of the 'Mighty Meeting' on the Fell outside Firbank Chapel; of the gathering of the Seekers at Preston Patrick; and of yet another open-air meeting, when hundreds of people assembled one memorable First Day near his own hillside farm at Cammsgill.

Then it would be the younger man's turn to tell his tale.

'He was born in the barony of Kendal ... of parents who for their honest and virtuous life were in good repute; he was well educated, and trained up in such learning as that country did afford.... By his parents he was trained up in the episcopal worship,'[24] but for a long time, he says that the only religion that he practised was 'going to church one day in seven to hear a man preach, to read, and sing, and rabble over a prayer.' (It is easy to smile at the old-fashioned word; but let us try to remember it when we ourselves are tempted to get up too late in the morning and 'rabble over' our own prayers.)

Gradually the unseen world grew more real. A beautiful and comforting message was given to him in his heart, 'Whom God once loves, he loves for ever.' Now he grew weary of hearing any of the priests, for he saw they did not possess what they spoke of to others, and sometimes he began to question his own experiences.

Nevertheless he felt it a grievous trial to give up all his prospects of earthly advancement and become a Quaker. Yet from the day he listened to George Fox preaching at Underbarrow there was no other course open to him; though his own parents were much incensed with him for daring to join this despised people. They even refused to acknowledge him any longer as a member of their family. Being rejected as a son, therefore, he begged to be allowed to stay on in his home and work as a servant, but this, too, was refused. Thus being, as he says, 'separated from all the glory of the world, and from all his acquaintance and kindred,' he betook himself to the company of 'a poor, despised people called Quakers.'

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It must have been a comfort to him, after being cast off by his own family, to find himself adopted by a still larger family of friends, and to become one of the 'Valiant Sixty' entrusted with the great adventure of Publishing Truth.

Riding along with good John Camm, with talk to beguile the way, was pleasant travelling; but this happy companionship was not to last very long. For as they journeyed and came near the 'Middle Kingdom,' or Midlands, they fell in with another of 'Truth's Publishers.'

This was none other than their Westmorland neighbour, John Audland, 'the ruddy-faced linen-draper of Crosslands,' John Camm's own especial comrade and pair among the 'Sixty.'

It may have been a prearranged plan that they should meet here; anyway Camm turned aside with Audland and went on with him to Bristol, where he had already begun to scatter the seed in the west of England, while Edward Burrough pursued his journey in solitude towards London.[25] But his days of loneliness were not to last for long. Either just before or just after his arrival in the great city, two other Publishers also reached the metropolis, one of whom, Francis Howgill, was to be his own especial comrade and pair in the task of 'conquering London.' This was that same Francis Howgill, a considerably older man than Burrough, and formerly a leader among the Seekers, who had been preaching that memorable day at Firbank when he thought George Fox looked into the Chapel and was so much struck that 'you could have killed him with a crab-apple.' Now that they had come together, however, it would have taken more than many crab-apples to deter him and Burrough from their Mission. Together the two friends laid their plans for the capture of London, and together they proceeded to carry them out. The success they met with was astonishing. 'By the arm of the Lord,' writes Howgill, 'all falls before us, according to the word of the Lord before I came to this City, that all should be as a plain.'

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Amidst their engrossing labours in the capital the two London 'Publishers' did not forget to send news of their work to Friends in the North. Many letters written at this time remain. Those to Margaret Fell, especially, give a vivid picture of their progress. These letters are signed sometimes by Howgill, sometimes by Burrough, sometimes by both together. But, whatever the signature, the pronouns 'I' and 'we' are used indiscriminately, as if to show that the writers were not only united in the service of Truth but were also one in heart.

'We two,' they say in one letter, 'are constrained to stay in this city; but we are not alone, for the power of our Father is with us, and it is daily made manifest through weakness, even to the stopping of the mouths of lions and to the confounding of the serpent's wisdom; eternal praises to Him for evermore. In this city, iniquity is grown to the height. We have three meetings or more every week, very large, more than any place will contain, and which we can conveniently meet in. Many of all sorts come to us and many of all sorts are convinced, yea, hundreds do believe....'

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Again: 'We get Friends together on the First Days to meet together out of the rude multitude; and we two go to the great meeting place which we have, which will hold a thousand people, which is always nearly filled, there to thresh among the world; and we stay till twelve or one o'clock and then pass away, the one to the one place and the other to another place where Friends are met in private; and stay till four or five o'clock.'

Only a month later yet another 'great place' had to be taken for a 'threshing-floor,' or hall where public meetings could be held. To these meetings anyone might come and listen to the preachers' message, which 'threshed them like grain, and sifted the wheat from the "light chaffy minds" among the hearers.'

How 'chaffy' and frivolous this gay world of London appeared to these first Publishers, consumed with the burning eagerness of their mission, the following description shows. It occurs in a letter from George Fox himself when he, too, came to the metropolis, a few months later.

'What a world this is,' he writes ... 'altogether carried with fooleries and vanities both men and women ... putting on gold, gay apparel, plaiting the hair, men and women they are powdering it, making their backs as if they were bags of meal, and they look so strange that they cannot look at

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one another. Pride hath puffed up every one, they are out of the fear of God, men and women, young and old, one puffs up another, they are not in the fashion of the world else, they are not in esteem else, they shall not be respected else, if they have not gold and silver upon their backs, or his hair be not powdered. If he have a company of ribbons hung about his waist, red or white, or black or yellow, and about his knees, and gets a Company in his hat, and powders his hair, then he is a brave man, then he is accepted, then he is no Quaker.... Likewise the women having their gold, their spots on their faces, noses, cheeks, foreheads, having their rings on their fingers, wearing gold, having their cuffs doubled under and about like a butcher with white sleeves' (how pretty they must have been!), 'having their ribbons tied about their hands, and three or four gold laces about their clothes, "this is no Quaker," say they.... Now are not all these that have got these ribbons hung about their arms, backs, waists, knees, hats, hands, like unto fiddlers' boys, and shew that you are gotten into the basest contemptible life as be in the fashion of the fiddlers' boys and stage-players, and quite out of the paths and steeps of solid men.... And further to get a pair of breeches like a coat and hang them about with points up almost to the middle, and a pair of double cuffs upon his hands, and a feather in his cap, and to say, "Here's a gentleman, bow before him, put off your hats, bow, get a company of fiddlers, a set of music and women to dance, this is a brave fellow, up in the chamber without and up in the chamber within," are these your fine Christians? "Yea," say they. "Yea but," say the serious people, "they are not of Christ's life." And to see such a company as are in the fashions of the world ... get a couple of bowls in their hands or tables [dice] or shovel-board, or a horse with a Company of ribbons on his head as he hath on his own, and a ring in his ear; and so go to horse-racing to spoil the creature. Oh these are gentlemen, these are bred up gentlemen! these are brave fellows and they must have their recreation, and pleasures are lawful. These are bad Christians and shew that they are gluttoned with the creature and then the flesh rejoiceth!'

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No wonder that Edward Burrough wrote to Margaret Fell that 'in this city iniquity is grown to the height,' and again, in a later letter: 'There are hundreds convinced, but not many great or noble do receive our testimony ... we are much refreshed, we receive letters from all quarters, the work goes on fast everywhere.... Richard Hubberthorne is yet in prison and James Parnell at Cambridge.... Our dear brethren John Audland and John Camm we hear from, and we write to one another twice in the week. They are near us, they are precious and the work of the Lord is great in Bristol.'

Margaret Fell writes back in answer, like a true mother in Israel, 'You are all dear unto me, and all are present with me, and are all met together in my heart.'

And now, having heard what the 'Valiant Sixty' thought of London, what did London think of the 'Valiant Sixty'? Many years later a certain William Spurry wrote of these early days: 'I being in London at the time of the first Publication of Truth, there was a report spread in the City that there was a sort of people come there that went by the name of plain North Country plow men, who did differ in judgment to all other people in that City, who I was very desirous to see and converse with. And upon strict enquiry I was informed that they did meet at one Widow Matthews in White Cross Street, in her garden, where I repaired, where was our dear friends Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, who declared the Lord's everlasting Truth in the demonstration of the Spirit of Life, where myself and many more were convinced. A little time after there was a silent meeting appointed and kept at Sarah Sawyer's in Rainbow Alley.'

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Very rural and unlike London these places sound: but meetings were not only held in secluded spots, such as the garden in White Cross Street, and the house in Rainbow Alley, they were also held in the tumultuous centres of Vanity Fair.

'Edward Burrough,' says Sewel the historian, 'though he was a very young man when he first came forth, yet grew in wisdom and valour so that he feared not the face of man.' 'At London there is a custom in summer time, when the evening approaches and tradesmen leave off working, that many lusty fellows meet in the fields, to try their skill and strength at wrestling, where generally a multitude of people stand gazing in a round. Now it so fell out, that Edward Burrough passed by the place where they were wrestling, and standing still among the spectators, saw how a strong and dexterous fellow had already thrown three others, and was now waiting for a fourth champion, if any durst venture to enter the lists. At length none being bold enough to try, E. Burrough stepped into the ring (commonly made up of all sorts of people), and having looked upon the wrestler with a serious countenance, the man was not a little surprised, instead of an airy antagonist, to meet with a grave and awful young man; and all stood amazed at this sight, eagerly expecting what would be the issue of this combat. But it was quite another fight Edward Burrough aimed at. For having already fought against spiritual wickedness, that had once prevailed in him and having overcome it in measure, by the grace of God, he now endeavoured also to fight against it in others, and to turn them from the evil of their ways. With this intention he began very seriously to speak to the standers by, and that with such a heart-piercing power, that he was heard by this mixed multitude with no less attention than admiration; for his speech tended to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.'

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'Thus he preached zealously; and though many might look upon this as a novelty, yet it was of such effect that many were convinced of the truth.... And indeed he was one of those valiants, whose bow never turned back ... nay he was such an excellent instrument in the hand of God that even some mighty and eminent men were touched to the heart by the power of the word of life which he preached' ... 'using few words but preaching after a new fashion so that he was called a "son of thunder and also of consolation."'

'Now I come also to the glorious exit of E. Burrough, that valiant hero. For several years he had been very much in London, and had there preached the gospel with piercing and powerful

declarations. And that city was so near to him, that oftentimes, when persecution grew hot, he said to Francis Howgill, his bosom friend, "I can go freely to the city of London, and lay down my life for a testimony of that truth, which I have declared through the power and spirit of God." Being in this year [1662] at Bristol, and thereabouts, and moved to return to London, he said to many of his friends, when he took leave of them, that he did not know he should see their faces any more; and therefore he exhorted them to faithfulness and steadfastness, in that wherein they had found rest for their souls. And to some he said, "I am now going up to the city of London again, to lay down my life for the gospel, and suffer among friends in that place."^[26]

Thus it befell that Edward Burrough was called to a more deadly wrestling match than any in the pleasant London fields. He was thrown into prison, and there he had to face a mortal foe in the gaol-fever that was then raging in that noisome den. This was to wrestle in grim earnest, with Death himself for an adversary; and in this wrestling match Death was the conqueror.

Charles the Second was now on the throne. He knew and respected Edward Burrough, and did his best to rescue him. Knowing the pestilential and overcrowded state of Newgate at that time, the Merry Monarch, to his lasting credit, sent a royal warrant for the release of Edward Burrough and some of the other prisoners, when he heard of the danger they were in from the foul state of the prison. But this order a certain cruel and persecuting Alderman, named Richard Brown, and some magistrates of the City of London contrived to thwart. The prisoners remained in the gaol. Edward Burrough caught the fever, and grew rapidly worse. On his death-bed he said, 'Lord, forgive Richard Brown, who imprisoned me, if he may be forgiven.' Later on he said, 'I have served my God in my generation, and that Spirit, which has lived and ruled in me shall yet break forth in thousands.' 'The morning before he departed his life ... he said, "Now my soul and spirit is centred into its own being with God; and this form of person must return from whence it was taken..."' A few moments later, in crowded Newgate, he peacefully fell asleep. 'This was the exit of E. Burrough, who in his flourishing youth, about the age of eight and twenty, in an unmarried state, changed this mortal life for an incorruptible, and whose youthful summer flower was cut down in the winter season, after he had very zealously preached the gospel about ten years.'^[27]

Francis Howgill, now left desolate and alone, poured forth a touching lament for his vanished 'yoke-fellow.'

'It was my lot,' he writes, 'to be his companion and fellow-labourer in the work of the gospel where-unto we were called, for many years together. And oh! when I consider, my heart is broken; how sweetly we walked together for many months and years in which we had perfect knowledge of one another's hearts and perfect unity of spirit. Not so much as one cross word or one hard thought of discontent ever rose (I believe) in either of our hearts for ten years together.'

George Fox, no mean fighter himself, adds this comment: 'Edward Burrough never turned his back on the Truth, nor his back from any out of the Truth. A valiant warrior, more than a conqueror, who hath got the crown through death and sufferings; who is dead, but yet liveth amongst us, and amongst us is alive.'

But it is from Francis Howgill, who knew him best and loved him most of all, that we learn the inmost secret of the life of this mighty wrestler, when he says:

'HIS VERY STRENGTH WAS BENDED AFTER GOD.'



FOOTNOTES:

[21] *Story of Quakerism*, E.B. Emmott.

[22] *Story of Quakerism*, E.B. Emmott.

[23] *England under the Stuarts*, G.M. Trevelyan.

[24] Sewel's *History of the Quakers*.

[25] I have followed Thomas Camm's account of his father's journey with Edward Burrough, and of their meeting with John Audland in the Midlands, as given in his book, *The Memory of the Righteous Revived*. W.C. Braithwaite, however, in his *Beginnings of Quakerism*, thinks it more probable that Francis Howgill was E. Burrough's companion from the North, and that the two friends reached London together.

[26] Sewel's *History of the Quakers*.

[27] Sewel's *History of the Quakers*.

XVII. LITTLE JAMES AND HIS JOURNEYS

O, how beautiful is the spring in a barren field, where barrenness and deadness fly away. As the spring comes on, the winter casts her coat and the summer is nigh. O, wait to see and read these things within. You that have been as barren and dead and dry without sap; unto you the Sun of Righteousness is risen with healing in his wings and begins to shine in your coasts.... O, mind the secret sprigs and tender plants. Now you are called to dress the garden. Let not the weeds and wild plants remain. Peevishness is a weed; anger is a weed; self-love and self-will are weeds; pride is a wild plant; covetousness is a wild plant; lightness and vanity are wild plants, and lust is the root of all. And these things have had a room in your gardens, and have been tall and strong; and truth, innocence, and equity have been left out, and could not be found, until the Sun of Righteousness arose and searched out that which was lost. Therefore, stand not idle, but come into the vineyard and work. Your work shall be to watch and keep out the fowls, unclean beasts, wild bears and subtle foxes. And he that is the Husbandman will pluck up the wild plants and weeds, and make defence about the vines. He will tell you what to do. He who is Father of the vineyard will be nigh you. And what is not clear to you, wait for the fulfilling.—JAMES PARNELL. (Epistle to Friends from prison.)

XVII. LITTLE JAMES AND HIS JOURNEYS

'Be willing that Self shall suffer for the
Truth, and not the Truth for Self.'

JAMES PARNELL.

Tramping! Tramping! Tramping! An endless journey along the white, dusty highroad it seemed to little James. Indeed the one hundred and fifty miles that separate Retford in Nottinghamshire from Carlisle in far-off Cumberland would have been a long distance even for a full-grown man to travel on foot in those far-off, railroad-less days of 1652. Whereas little James, who had undertaken this journey right across England, was but a boy of sixteen, delicate and small for his age.

'Ye will never get there, James,' the neighbours cried when he unfolded his plans. 'To go afoot to Carlisle! Did any one ever hear the like? It would be a wild-goose chase, even if a man hoped to come to speak with a King in his palace at the end of it; but for *thee* to go such a journey in order to speak but for a few moments with a man thou dost not know, and in prison, it is nothing but a daft notion! What ails thee, boy?'

The only answer James gave was to knit his brows more firmly together, and to mutter resolutely to himself, as he gathered his few belongings into a bundle, 'I must and I will see George Fox!'

George Fox! The secret was out. That was the explanation of this fantastic journey. George Fox, after gathering a 'great people' up in the North, was now himself kept a close prisoner in Carlisle Gaol: yet he was the magnet attracting this lad, frail of body but determined of will, to travel right across England for the hope of speaking with him in his prison cell. [258]

Let us look back a little and see how this befell.

In the stately old church of Saint Swithin at East Retford a record shows that 'James, son of Thomas Parnell and Sarah his wife, was baptized there on the sixth day of September 1636.' James' parents were pious church people. It must have been a proud and thankful day for them when they took their baby son to be christened in the beautiful old font in that church, where their elder daughter, Sarah, had received her name a few years before. On the font may still be seen the figure of Saint Swithin himself, the patron Saint of the church. This gentle saint, whose dying wish had been that he might be buried in no stately building of stone but 'where his grave might be trod by human feet and watered with the raindrops of heaven,' was the guardian the parents chose for their little lad. All through his short life the boy seems to have shared this love of Nature and of the open air.

James' parents were well-to-do people, and wisely determined to give their only son a good education. They sent him, therefore, as soon as he was old enough, to the Retford Grammar School, to be 'trained up in the Schools of Literature.' James tells us that he was 'as wild as others during the time he was at school, and that he was perfect in sin and iniquity as any in the town where he lived, yea and exceeded many in the wickedness of his life,' until something or other happened to sober the wild boy. He does not say what it was. Perhaps it may have been the news that reached Retford during his school days, that the King of England had been executed at Whitehall, one cold January morning. Or it may have been something quite different. Anyhow, before he left school, he was already anxious and troubled about his soul. [259]

School days finished, he sought for help in his difficulties from 'priests and professors.' But, like George Fox, a few years earlier, James Parnell got small help from them. Some of the priests told him that he was deluded. Others, whose words sounded better, did not practise what they preached. He says, they 'preached down with their tongues what they upheld in their lives.' Therefore he decided, out of his scanty experience, that they all were 'hollow Professors,' and could be of no use to him. A very hasty judgment! But little James was tremendously sure of himself at this time, quite certain that he knew more than most of the people he met, feeling entirely able to set his neighbours to rights, and yet with a real wish to learn, if only he could find a true teacher.

He says, 'I was the first in all that town of Retford which the Lord was pleased to make known His power in, and turn my heart towards Him and truly to seek Him, so that I became a wonder to the world and an astonishment to the heathen round about.'

He adds that, at this time or a little later, even 'his own relations became his enemies.' This is not surprising. A young man of fifteen who described his neighbours and friends as 'the heathen round about' must have been a distinctly trying companion to the aforesaid 'heathen.' [260]

Possibly there was more than one sigh of relief heaved in East Retford when the first of little James's journeys began. It was to be only a short one, to 'a people with whom I found union a few miles out of the town where I lived. The Lord was a-gathering them out of the dark world to sit down together and to wait upon His name.'

These people were either a little group of Friends already gathered at Balby, or they may have been 'Seekers' meeting together here in Nottinghamshire, as they did in the North, at Sedbergh

and Preston Patrick and many another place, 'not celebrating Baptism or the Holy Communion,' but 'waiting together in silence to be instruments in the hand of the Lord.' Truly helpful 'instruments' they proved to little James, for they sent him straight on to Nottingham, where a company of 'Children of Light' was already gathered, to worship God. 'Children of Light' is the first, and the most beautiful, name given to the Society of Friends in England.

When these Nottingham Friends saw the vehement, impulsive boy, his thin frame trembling, his eyes glowing, as he poured forth his difficulties, naturally their thoughts went back to the other lad who had also passed through severe soul struggles in this same neighbourhood, some ten or twelve years earlier.

They all said to him, one after the other, 'James Parnell, thou must see George Fox.'

'George Fox!' cried little James eagerly, 'I have never even heard his name. Who is he? Where is he? I will go and find him this very moment, if he can help me.'

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At these words, all the Nottingham Friends shook their heads very solemnly and sadly and said, 'That is impossible, James, for our Friend languisheth in Carlisle Gaol. But we can tell thee of him.'

Then one after another they recounted the well-known story of George Fox's boyhood, of his difficulties, of his seeking, of his finding, and lastly of his preaching, when the Power of God shone through him as he spoke, and melted men's hearts till they became as wax.

James, drinking in every word, exclaimed breathlessly as soon as the story was finished, 'That is the man for me. I will set out for Carlisle this very minute to find him!'

Of course all the Friends were aghast at the effect of their words. They declared that he really couldn't and really shouldn't, that it was out of the question, and that he must do nothing of the kind! They did their very best to stop him. But little James (who, as we know, was not in the habit of paying over-much attention to other people's opinions at any time) treated all these remonstrances as if they had been thistledown. He swung his small bundle at the end of a short stick over his shoulder, tightened his belt, tore himself from their restraining hands, and exclaiming, 'Farewell, Friends, I go to find George Fox,' off he set on the long, long journey to Carlisle.

His spirit was aflame with desire to meet his unknown friend. The miles seemed few and short that separated him from his goal. But doubtless some of the women among the 'Children of Light' wiped their eyes as they watched the fiery little figure disappear along the dusty road, and said, 'Truly that lad hath a valiant heart!'

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Thus, in a burning fury of desire, the journey began. After many weary days of travel the flame still burned unquenchably, although the boy's figure looked yet leaner and more under-sized than when he left his home.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, on and ever on, till at last the long-desired day came, when, over the crest of a low hill, he made out for the first time the distant spire and towers of the fair Border city. The river Eden in the meadows below lay gleaming in the sunshine like a silver bow.

Threadbare and very dusty were his clothes, his feet swollen and sore, but his chin was pressed well forward, and the light in his eyes was that of a conqueror, when at last, tramp, tramp, tramp, his tired feet came pattering up the stones of the steep old bridge that spans the Eden and leads to Carlisle Town.

'Which is the prison?' James asked himself, as his eyes scanned a bewildering maze of towers and roofs. The tall leaden spire of the Cathedral was unmistakable, 'no prisoners there.' Next he made out the big square fortress of sandstone, red as Red William the Norman who built it long ago, on its central mound frowning over the town.

His unknown friend might very possibly be within those walls. James quickened his tired steps at the thought, and then stopped short, for the gates of the bridge were shut. Drovers of sheep and oxen on their way to market filled the entry, and all foot passengers must wait. James threw himself down, full length, on one of the broad stone parapets of the bridge to rest his tired limbs until the way should be clear again. Two men were seated in a stone recess below him, also waiting to pass. At first James noticed only the dress they wore; their tall hats and sombre clothes marked them out as Baptists; the younger man a deacon probably, and the elder a pastor.

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Presently James began to listen to their conversation.

'It is well he is safe in the Castle,' said the younger man, 'most pernicious Quaker doctrine did he deliver that Sabbath day in answer to our questions in the Abbey.'

'Pernicious Quaker doctrine!' James pricked up his ears at the words. He settled himself comfortably to listen, without any scruples, seeing that the speakers were in a public place, and besides, the entrance to the bridge was by this time so packed with people that he could hardly have moved off the parapet had he wished.

The older man shook his head. 'I thought I had hewed him in pieces before the Lord,' he said in a low voice, 'for no sooner was he silent than I asked him if he knew what he spake, and what it was should be damned at the last day. Whereat he did but fix his eyes upon me and said that "it was that which spoke in me which should be damned." Even as he spoke my old notions of religion glittered and fell off me, for I knew that through him whom I despised as a wandering Quaker I was listening to the Voice of God. He went on to upbraid me as a flashy notionist and yet, even so, I was constrained to listen to him in silence.'

The pastor's voice had sunk very low: James could hardly catch the last words.

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'Aye, no wonder,' rejoined the younger man, 'with those eyes he seemeth to pierce the fleshly veil and to read the secrets of a man's inmost heart. I, too, experienced this, the following market day, he being then come to the market cross "a-publishing of truth" as he and his followers term it, in their quaking jargon. The magistrates, godly men, had sent the sergeants commanding them to stop his mouth. Moreover, they had sent their wives as well, and even the sergeants were less bitter against him than the women. For they declared that if the Quaker dared to defile the noble market cross of Carlisle city by preaching there, they themselves would pluck off the hair from his head, while the sergeants should clap him into gaol. Nevertheless the Quaker would not be stopped. Preach he did, standing forth boldly on the high step of the cross.'

'And what said he?' enquired the older man.

'Right forcibly he declared judgment on all the market folk for their deceitful ways. He spoke to the merchants as if he were a merchant himself, beseeching them to lay aside their false weights and measures and deceitful merchandize, with all cozening and cheating, and to speak truth only to one another. Ever as he spoke, the people flocked closer around him, hanging on his words as if he were reading their secret hearts, so that the sergeants could not come nigh him for the press to lead him away. Thus only when he had finished he stepped down from the cross and would have passed gently away, but I and some of the brethren, thinking that now our turn had come, followed after him. The contention between us was sharp. Yet his words struck into me like knives, and scarce knowing what I did, I cried out aloud, for a strange power was over me. Thereat he fixed his eyes upon me and spake sharply to me, as if he knew that I was resisting the Spirit of the Lord. I know not why, but I was forced to cry out again, "Do not pierce me so with thine eyes. Keep thine eyes off me."' [265]

'Well,' questioned the elder man, 'and what followed? Did his eyes leave thee?'

'They have never left me,' replied the other. 'Wherever I go those eyes burn me yet, although the man himself lies fast in gaol among the thieves and murderers, in the worst and most loathsome of the dungeons. Thither I go every day to assure myself that he is fast caged behind thick walls, and to rejoice my eyes with the sight of the gibbet nailed high over-head upon the castle wall. Men say he shall swing there soon, but of that I know not. Wilt thou come with me now, for see, the bridge is free?'

'Not I,' returned the pastor, moodily, as he shuffled away, like a man ill at ease with himself.

Little James, from his perch on the parapet, had drunk in greedily every word of this conversation. Directly the bridge was clear he crept down and followed the deacon like a shadow. They passed over the silver Eden and up the main street of the city, paved with rough, uneven stones, and with an open sewer flowing through the centre of it. Right across the busy market-place they passed, before the deacon halted beneath the castle walls.

Full of noise and hubbub was Carlisle city that day; yet, as the two entered the courtyard of the castle, James was aware of another sound, rising clear above the tumult of the town—strains of music, surely, that came from a fiddle. As they stepped under the inner gateway and approached the Norman Keep, the fiddler himself came in sight playing with might and main, under a barred window about six feet from the ground. By the fiddler's side, urging him on, was a huge, burly man with a red face. Whenever the fiddler showed signs of weariness the man beside him raising a large tankard of ale to his lips would force him to drink of it, saying, 'Play up, man! Play up!'

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The thin, clear strains of the fiddle rose up steadily towards the barred window, but, above them, James caught another sound that floated yet more steadily out through the bars: the firm, full tones of a deep bass voice within, singing loud and strong.

Though he could not see the singer, something in the song thrilled James through and through. Forgetting his weariness he knew that he was near his journey's end at last. As he listened, he noticed a handful of people, listening also, under the barred window.

Loud jeers arose: 'Play up, Fiddler!' 'Sing on, Quaker!' or even, 'Ply him with more ale, Gaoler: the prisoner is the better musician!'

At these cries the fat man's countenance grew ever more enraged. He looked savage and huge, 'like a bear-ward,' a man more accustomed to deal with bears than with human beings. Finally, in his wrath, he turned the now empty tankard upon the crowd and bespattered them with the last drops of the ale, and then called lustily for more, with which he plied the fiddler anew. So the contest continued, but at last, the ale perhaps taking effect, the fiddler's head dropped, his bow swept the strings more wearily, while the strong notes inside the dungeon grew ever more firm and loud. The gaoler seeing, or rather hearing, himself worsted, caught the bow from the fiddler's hand and cracked it over his skull. The fiddler, seizing this chance to escape, leapt to his feet and dashed across the courtyard, followed by the gaoler and the populace in full chase. Even the sombre Baptist deacon gathered up the skirts of his long coat and bestirred his lean legs. The singing ceased. A face appeared at the window: only for an instant: but one glance was enough for James.

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Timidly he approached the window, but he had only taken two steps towards it when he found himself firmly elbowed off the pavement and pushed into the gutter. Someone else also had been watching for the crowd to disperse, in order to have a chance of speaking with the prisoner. The new-comer was a portly lady in a satin gown, a much grander person than James had expected to find in the near neighbourhood of a dungeon. She carried a large, covered basket, and, as soon as the way was clear, she set it down on the pavement and began to take out the contents carefully:

bread and salt, beef and elecampane ale. Without looking up from her work she called to the unseen figure at the window above her head: 'So thou hast stopped their vain sounds at length with thy singing?'

'Aye,' answered the deep voice from within. 'Thou mayest safely approach the window now, for the gaoler hath departed. After he had beaten thee and the other Friends with his great cudgel, next he was moved to beat me also, through the window, did I but come near to it to get my meat. And as he struck me I was moved to sing in the Lord's power, and that made him rage the more, whereat he fetched the fiddler, saying he would soon drown my noise if I would not cease.'

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'Eat now, Dear Heart,' the woman interrupted, 'whilst thou hast the chance.' So saying, she handed some of the dishes up to the prisoner, standing herself on tiptoe beneath the prison window in order to reach his hand stretched out through the bars.

Here James saw his chance.

'Madam,' he cried, 'let me hand the meat up to you.'

The lady looked down and saw the worn, thin face. Perhaps she thought the boy looked hungry enough to need the food himself, but something in his eager glance touched her, and when he added, 'For I have come one hundred and fifty miles to see GEORGE FOX,' her kind heart was won.

'Nay, then, thou hast a better right to help him even than I,' she said, 'though I am his very good friend and Colonel Benson's wife. Thou shall hand up the dishes to me, and when our friend is satisfied, thou and I will finish what remains, for in the Lord's power I am moved to eat no meat at my own house, but to share all my sustenance with His faithful servant who lies within this noisome gaol.'

'Madam,' said the boy, speaking with the concentrated intensity of weeks of suppressed longing, 'for the food, it is no matter, though I am much beholden to you. I hunger after but one thing. Bring me within the gaol where I may speak with him face to face. There is that, that I have come afoot a hundred miles to ask him.'

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'Bring me to him, speedily I pray you, for, though even unseen I love him,

'I MUST SEE GEORGE FOX.'

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XVIII. THE FIRST QUAKER MARTYR

(From another point of view.)

Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin, Vicar of Earls Colne, Essex.

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1655.—'Preacht at Gaines Coln, the Quakers' nest, but no disturbance. God hath raised up my heart not to fear but willing to bear and to make opposition to their ways, in defence of truth.'

Ap. 11, 1656.—'Heard this morning that James Parnell, the father of the Quakers in these parts, having undertaken to fast forty days and forty

*nights was in the morning found dead.
He was by jury found guilty of his own
death and buried in the Castle yard.'*

*'Heard and true that Turner's
daughter was distract in the Quaking
business.'*

*'Sad are the fits at Coxall, like the
pow-wowing among the Indians.'*

*1660.—'The Quakers, after a stop and
a silence, seem to be swarming and
increased, and why, Lord thou only
knowest!'*

*'So there is no obtaining of Life but
through Death, nor no obtaining the
Crown but through the Cross.'—JAMES
PARNELL.*

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XVIII. THE FIRST QUAKER MARTYR

How Mrs. Benson managed it, there is no record. Perhaps she hardly knew herself! But she was not a woman to be easily turned aside from her purpose, and her husband, Colonel Gervase Benson, had been one of the 'considerable people' in the County before he had turned Quaker and 'downed those things.' Even after the change, it may be that prison doors were more easily unlocked by certain little golden and silver keys in those days, than they are in our own.

Anyway, somehow or other, the interview was arranged. 'Little James' found his desire fulfilled at last. When he passed into the stifling, crowded prison den, where human beings were herded together like beasts, he never heeded the horrible stench or the crawling vermin that abounded everywhere. Rather, he felt as if he were entering the palace of a king. He paid no attention to the crowd of savage figures all around him. He saw nothing, knew nothing, felt nothing, until at last he found that his hand was lying in the grasp of a stronger, firmer hand, that held it, and would not let it go. Then, indeed, for the first time he looked up, and knew that his long journey was ended, as he met the penetrating gaze of George Fox.

'Keep thine eyes off me, they pierce me,' the Baptist Deacon had cried, a few weeks before, in that same city. As James looked up, he too felt for the first time the piercing power of those eyes, but to him it brought no terror, only joy, as he yielded himself wholly to his teacher's scrutiny. In silence the two stood, reading each the other's soul. James felt, instinctively, that his new friend knew and understood everything that had happened to him, all his life long; that there was no need to tell him anything, or to explain anything.

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Of an older friendship between two men it was written, 'Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.' Thus it proved once more in that crowded dungeon. No details remain of the interview; no record of what James said, or what George said. No one else could have reported what passed between them, and, though each of them has left a mention of their first meeting, the silence remains unbroken.

The Journal says merely: 'While I was in ye dungeon at Carlisle, a little boy, one James Parnell, about fifteen years old, came to me, and he was convinced and came to be a very fine minister and turned many to Christ.'

The boy's own account is shorter still. He does not even mention George Fox by name. 'I was called for,' he says, 'to visit some friends in the North part of England, with whom I had union before I saw their faces, and afterwards I returned to my outward dwelling-place.'

His 'outward dwelling-place': the lad's frail body might tramp back along the weary miles to Retford; his spirit remained in the North, freely imprisoned with his friend.

'George' and 'James' were brothers in heart, ever after that short interview in Carlisle Gaol: united in one inseparable purpose. While George was confined, James, the free brother, must carry forward George's work. Triumphantly he did it. By the following year he had earned his place right well among the 'Valiant Sixty' who were then sent forth, 'East and West and South and North,' to 'Publish Truth.'

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The Eastern Counties, hitherto almost unbroken ground, fell to James's share. Assisted by two other 'Valiants,' Richard Hubberthorne and George Whitehead, the seed was scattered

throughout the length and breadth of East Anglia. Within three short years 'gallant Meetings' were already gathered and settled everywhere.

James Parnell was the first Quaker preacher to enter the city of Colchester, which was soon to rank third among the strongholds of Quakerism. This boy of eighteen, still so small and delicate in appearance that his enemies taunted him with the name of 'little Quaking lad,' has left an account of one of his first crowded days of work in that city. In the morning, he says, he received any of the townspeople who were minded to come and ask him questions at his lodgings. He was a guest, at the time, of a weaver named Thomas Shortland, who, with his wife Ann, had been convinced shortly before, by their guest's ministry. In adversity also they were soon to prove themselves tried and faithful friends.

Later, that same Sunday morning (4th July 1655), James went down the High Street to Saint Nicholas' Church, and, when the sermon was ended, preached to the people in his turn.

In the afternoon 'he addressed a very great meeting of about a thousand people, in John Furly's yard, he being mounted above the crowd and speaking out of a hay-chamber window.' Still later, that same day, he not only carried on a discussion with 'the town-lecturer and another priest,' he, the boy of eighteen, but also 'appeared in the evening at a previously advertised meeting held in the schoolroom for the children of the French and Flemish weaver refugees in Colchester, who were being at this time hospitably entertained in John Furly's house.'^[276]

George Fox says, 'many hundreds of people were convinced by the words and labours of this young minister.' But, far better than preaching to other people, he had by this time learned to rule his own spirit. Once, as he was coming out of the 'Steeple-house of Colchester, called Nicholas,' one person in particular struck him with a great staff and said to him, 'Take that for Jesus Christ's sake,' to whom James Parnell meekly replied, 'Friend, I do receive it for Jesus Christ's sake.'

The journey his soul had travelled from the time, only three short years before, when he had described his neighbours as 'the heathen round about,' until the day that he could give such an answer was perhaps a longer one really than all the weary miles he had traversed between Retford and far Carlisle.

The two friends, George and James, had one short happy time of service together, both of them free. After that they parted. Then, all too soon it was George's turn to visit James, now himself in prison at Colchester Castle, an even more terrible prison than Carlisle, where only death could open the doors and set the weary prisoner free. George's record of his visit to his friend is short and grim. 'As I went through Colchester,' he says, 'I went to visit James Parnell in prison, but the cruel gaoler would hardly let us come in or stay with him, and there the gaoler's wife threatened to have his blood, and there they did destroy him.'^[277]

An account, written by his Colchester friends, expands the terrible, glorious tale of his sufferings.

'The first Messenger of the Lord that appeared in this town to sound the everlasting Gospel was that eminent Minister and Labourer, James Parnell, whose first coming to ye town was in ye fourth month (June) in the year 1655.... Great were the sufferings which this faithful minister of the Lord underwent, being beat and abused by many.

'As touching the cause of his sufferings in this his last imprisonment unto death, which was the fruits of a fast kept at Great Coggeshall against error (as they said), the 12th day of the fifth month 1655, where he spoke some words when the priests had done speaking; and when he was gone out of the high place one followed him, called Justice Wakering, and clapt him on the back and said he arrested him. And so, by the means of divers Independent priests and others, he was committed to this prison at Colchester. And in that prison he was kept close up, and his friends and acquaintance denied to come at him. Then at the Assizes he was carried to Chelmsford, about eighteen miles through the country, as a sport or gazing-stock, locked on a chain with five accused for felony and murder, and he with three others remained on the chain day and night. But when he appeared at the Bar, he was taken off the chain, only had irons on his hands, where he appeared before Judge Hill ... the first time. But seeing some cried out against this cruelty, and what shame it would be to let the irons be seen on him, the next day they took them off, and he appeared without, where the priests and justices were the accusers. And the judge gathered what he could out of what they said, to make what he could against the prisoner to the jury, and urged them to find him guilty, lest it fall upon their own heads.... And when he would have spoken truth for himself to inform the jury, the judge would not permit him thereto. So the judge fined him about twice twenty marks, or forty pounds, and said the Lord Protector had charged him to see to punish such persons as should contemn either Magistracy or Ministry. So he committed him close prisoner till payment, and gave the jailor charge to let no giddy-headed people come at him; for his friends and those that would have done him good were called "giddy-headed people," and so kept out; and such as would abuse him by scorning or beating, those they let in and set them on. And the jailor's wife would set her man to beat him, who threatened to knock him down and make him shake his heels, yea, the jailor's wife did beat him divers times, and swore she would have his blood, or he should have hers. To which he answered, "Woman, I would not have thine."^[278]

One of James' own letters remains written about this time: 'The day I came in from the Assize,' he says, 'there was a friend or two with me in the jaylor's house, and the jaylor's wife sent her man to call me from them and to put me into a yard, and would not suffer my friends to come at me. And one friend brought me water, and they would not suffer her to come to me, but made her'^[279]

carry it back again.'

The name of this woman Friend is not given in this letter, but I daresay we shall not be far wrong if we fill it in for ourselves here, and think of her as the same Anne Langley, who would not be kept out of the prison later on. Other people mention her by name. It is only in little James' own account that her name does not appear. Perhaps the tie that bound them was something more than friendship, and he did not wish her to suffer for her love and faith.

James' letter continues: 'At night they locked me up into a hole with a condemned man ... and the same day a friend desired the jaylor's wife that she would let her come and speak with me, and the jaylor's wife answered her and the other friends who were with her, calling them "Rogues, witches ... and the devil's dish washers" ... and other names, and saying "that they had skipped out of hell when the devil was asleep!" and much more of the same unchristian-like speeches which is too tedious to relate.... And thus they make a prey upon the innocent; and when they do let any come to me they would not let them stay but very little,' (Poor James! the visits were all too short, and the lonely hours alone all too long for the prisoner) 'and the jaylor's wife would threaten to pull them down the stairs.... And swore that she would have my blood several times, and told my friends so, and that she would mark my face, calling me witch and rogue, shake hell ... and the like; and because I did reprove her for her wickedness, the jaylor hath given order that none shall come to me at any occasion, but only one or two that brings my food.'

Even this small mercy was not to be allowed much longer. The account of the Colchester Friend continues: 'And sometimes they would stop any from bringing him victuals, and set the prisoners to take his victuals from him; and when he would have had a trundle bed to have kept him off the stones, they would not suffer friends to bring him one, but forced him to lie on the stones, which sometimes would run down with water in a wet season. And when he was in a room for which he paid 4d. a night, he was threatened, if he did but walk to and fro in it, by the jaylor's wife. Then they put him in a hole in the wall, very high, where the ladder was too short by about six foot, and when friends would have given him a cord and basket to have taken up his victuals, he was denied thereof and could not be suffered to have it, though it was much desired, but he must either come up and down by that rope, or else famish in the hole, which he did a long time, before God suffered them to see their desires in which time much means was used about it, but their wills were unalterably set in cruelty towards him. But after long suffering in this hole, where there was nought but misery as to the outward man, being no hole either for air or for smoke, being much benumbed in the naturals, as he was climbing up the ladder with his victuals in one hand, and coming to the top of the ladder, catching at the rope with the other hand, missed the rope, and fell a very great height upon stones, by which fall he was exceedingly wounded in the head and arms, and his body much bruised, and taken up for dead, but did recover again that time.

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'Then they put him in a low hole called the oven, and much like an oven, and some have said who have been in it that they have seen a baker's oven much bigger, except for the height of the roof, without the least airhole or window for smoke and air, nor would they suffer him to have a little charcoal brought in by friends to prevent the noisome smoke. Nor would they suffer him, after he was a little recovered, to take a little air upon the castle wall, which was but once desired by the prisoner, feeling himself spent for want of breath. All which he bore with much patience and still kept his suffering much from friends there, seeing they was much sorrowful to see it. Yea, others who were no friends were wounded at the sight of his usage in many other particulars, which we forbear here to mention.

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'And divers came to see him, who heard of his usage from far, not being friends, had liberty to see him, who was astonished at his usage, and some of them would say "IF THIS BE THE USAGE OF THE PROTECTOR'S PRISONERS IT WERE BETTER TO BE ANYBODY'S PRISONERS THAN HIS," as Justice Barrington's daughter said, who saw their cruelty to him. And many who came to see him were moved with pity to the creature, for his sufferings were great.'

'And although some did offer of their bond of forty pounds [to pay the fine and so set him at liberty] and one to lie body for body, that he might come to their house till he was a little recovered, yet they would not permit it, and it being desired that he might but walk in the yard, it was answered he should not walk so much as to the castle door. And the door being once opened, he did but take the freedom to walk forth in a close, stinking yard before the door, and the gaoler came in a rage and locked up the hole where he lay, and shut him out in the yard all night in the coldest time of the winter. So, finding that nothing but his blood would satisfy them, great application was made to them in a superior authority but to no purpose. Thus he having endured about ten months' imprisonment, and having passed through many trials and exercises, which the Lord enabled him to bear with courage and faithfulness, he laid down his head in peace and died a prisoner and faithful Martyr for the sake of the Truth, under the hands of a persecuting generation in the year 1656.'^[30]

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It was his former host, Thomas Shortland the weaver, who had offered to lie 'body for body' in prison, if only James might be allowed to return to his house and be nursed back to health again there. After the boy's death this kind man wrote as follows:

'Dear Friend—In answer to thine, is this, James Parnell being dead, the Coroner sent an officer for me, and one Anne Langley, a friend, who both of us watched with him that night that he departed. And coming to him [the Coroner] he said, "that it was usual when any died in prison, to have a jury got on them," and James being dead, and he hearing we two watched with him, he sent for us to hear what we could say concerning his death, whether he died on his fair death [*i.e.*

a natural death] or whether he were guilty of his own death.... He asked whether he had his senses and how he behaved himself late-ward toward his departure. I answered that he had his senses and that he spake sensibly, and to as good understanding as he used to do. He then enquired what words he spoke. To which Anne Langley answered that she heard him say, "HERE I DIE INNOCENTLY," and she said that she had been at the departing of many, but never was where was such sweet departing; and at his departing his last words were, "NOW I MUST GO," and turned his head to me and said, "THOMAS, THIS DEATH I MUST DIE," and further said, "O THOMAS, I HAVE SEEN GREAT THINGS," and bade me that I should not hold him, but let him go, and said it over again, "WILL YOU NOT HOLD ME?" And then said Anne, "Dear Heart, we will not hold thee." And he said, "NOW I GO," and stretched out himself, and fell into a sweet sleep and slept about an hour (as he often said, that one hour's sleep would cure him of all), and so drew breath no more.'

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Little James was free at last. He had left his frail, weary body behind and had departed on the longest, shortest journey of all. A journey this, ending in no noisome den in Carlisle Castle, as when he first saw the earthly teacher he had loved so long, but leading straight and swift to the heavenly abiding-places: to the welcome of his unseen yet Everlasting Friend.

'How know I that it looms lovely, that land I have
never seen,
With morning-glory and heartsease, and
unexampled green?
All souls singing, seeing, rejoicing everywhere,
Yea, much more than this I know, for I know that
Christ is there.'^[31]

FOOTNOTES:

[28] *James Parnell*, by C. Fell Smith.

[29] 'Lamb's Defence against Lyes.'

[30] *First Publishers of Truth*.

[31] Christina Rossetti.

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XIX. THE CHILDREN OF READING MEETING

ToC

*'And all must be meeke, sober and
jentell and quiet and loving, and not
give one another bad word noe time in
the skouell, nor out of it ... all is to
mind their lessons and be digelent in
their rightings, and to lay up their*

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boukes when they go from the skouell and ther pens and inkonerns and to keep them sow, else they must be louk'd upon as carles and slovenes; and soe you must keep all things clean, suet and neat and hanson.'—G. FOX. Advice to Schoolmasters.

'Dear and tender little Babes, as well as strong men, ... let not anything straiten you, when God moves: And thou, faithful Babe, though thou stutter and stammer forth a few words in the dread of the Lord, they are accepted, and all that are strong, serve the weak in strengthening them and wait in wisdom to give place to the motion of the Spirit in them, that it may have time to bring forth what God hath given ... that ... you maybe a well spring of Life to one another in the power of the endless love of God.'—W. DEWSBURY.

'When the Justices threatened Friend John Boulton and told him that he and other Reading Friends should be sent to prison, he replied: "That's the weakest thing thou canst do. If thou canst convince me of anything that is evil, I will hear thee and let the prisons alone."'—W.C. BRAITHWAITE.

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XIX. THE CHILDREN OF READING MEETING

It was a most uncomfortable First Day morning. The children looked at each other and wondered what would happen next, as they stood in the small bedroom under the thatched roof. Dorcas, the eldest, already half dressed, held Baby Stephen in her arms; but the twins, Tryphena and Tryphosa, were running about the floor with bare feet and only their petticoats on, strings and tapes all flying loose. Baby was crying, whilst the Twins shouted with mischievous glee. Something must be done. So Dorcas seated herself in a big chair and tried to dress Baby. But Baby was hungry. He wanted his breakfast and he did not at all want to be dressed! Oh, if only Mother was here! Where was Mother all this long time? Had she and Father really been taken to prison? Dorcas felt heart-sick at the thought. Happily the Twins and Baby were too little to understand. She herself was nearly ten and therefore almost grown up. She understood now all about it quite well. This was what Mother had meant when she bent down to kiss her little girl in bed last night, saying that she was going out to a Meeting at Friend Curtis' house, hoping to be back in an hour or two. 'But if not'—here Dorcas remembered that Mother's eyes had filled with tears. She had left the sentence unfinished, adding only: 'Anyway, I know I can trust thee, Dorcas, to be a little mother to the little ones while I am away.' 'But if not....' Dorcas had been too sleepy last night to think what the words meant, or to keep awake until Mother's return. It seemed as if she had only just closed her eyes for a minute or two; and yet, when she opened them again, the bright morning sunlight was filling the room.

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'But if not....' After all, there had been no need for Mother to finish the sentence. Now that Dorcas was wide awake she could complete it for herself only too well. For Dorcas knew that at any moment a Meeting of five or more persons who met to practise a form of worship not authorized by law might be rudely interrupted by the constables, and all the Friends who were sitting in silence together dragged off to prison for disobeying the Quaker Act. Since that Act had been passed in this same month of May 1662, Quaker children understood that this might happen at any moment, but of course each child hoped that it would not happen just yet, or at least not to his own Father and Mother. But now apparently it had happened here in peaceful Reading beside the broad Thames.

Last night's Meeting had been fixed at an unusually late hour. For, as the late Spring evenings were lengthening, the Reading Quakers had wished to take advantage of the long May twilight to gather together and meet with a Friend, one of the Valiant Sixty, who had come in for a few hours unexpectedly on his way to London. So the children had fallen asleep as usual, fully expecting to find their parents beside them when they woke. But now the empty places and the unslept-in beds told their own tale.

'Be a mother to the little ones, Dorcas,' Mother had said. Well, Dorcas was trying her very best, but it was not easy. Baby had many strings to tie and many buttons to fasten, and just as she was getting the very last button safely into its button-hole the Twins came running up to say that they had got into each other's clothes by mistake and could not get out of them again. This was serious; for though Phenie's frock was only a little too big for Phosie, Phosie's frock was much too small for Phenie. [289]

Dorcas was obliged to put Baby down to attend to them; but this reminded Baby that he had still not been provided with his much-desired breakfast, whereupon he began to howl, till Dorcas took him up in her arms again, and dandled him as Mother did. This made him crow for happiness, just as he did when Mother took him, so for a few minutes Dorcas was happy too, till she saw that the Twins were now beginning to squabble again, and to tear out each other's hair with the comb. At that unlucky moment up came brother Peter's big voice calling from below, 'Dorcas, Dorcas, what are you all doing up there? Why is not breakfast ready? I have milked the cow for you. You must come down this very minute; I am starving!'

It was an uncomfortable morning; and the worst of it was that it was First Day morning too. Dorcas had not known before that a First Day morning could be uncomfortable. Usually First Day was the happiest day in the whole week. Mother's hands were so gentle that, though the children had been taught to help themselves as soon as they were old enough, still Mother always seemed to know just when there was an unruly button that needed a little coaxing to help it to find its hole, or a string that wanted to get into a knot that ought to be persuaded to tie itself into a bow. [290]

Then breakfast was always a pleasant meal, with the big blue bowls full of milk, warm from the cow, set out on the wooden table, and Father sitting at one end raising his hand as he said a silent Grace. Father never said any words at these times. But he bent his head as if he were thanking Someone he loved very much, Someone close beside him, for giving him the milk and bread to give to the children and for making him very happy. So the children felt happy too. Dorcas thought that the brown bread always tasted especially good on First Day morning, because Father was at the head of the table to cut it and hand it to them himself. On other, week-day, mornings he had to go off much earlier, ploughing, or reaping, or gathering in the ripe corn from the harvest-fields behind the farm. Also, Peter never teased the little ones when Father was there. But to-day if there were no breakfast, (and where was breakfast to come from?) Peter would be dreadfully cross. Yet how could Dorcas go and get breakfast for Peter when the three little ones were all wanting her help at once?

'I'm coming, Peter, as fast as ever I can,' she called back, in answer to a second yet more peremptory summons. But, oh! how glad she was to hear a gentle knock at the door of the thatched cottage a minute or two later.

'Come in! come in!' she heard Peter saying joyfully as he opened the door, and then came the sound of light footsteps on the wooden stairs. Another minute, and the bedroom door opened gently, and a sunshiny face looked into the children's untidy room.

'Why, it is thee, Hester!' Dorcas exclaimed, with a cry of joy. 'Oh, I am glad to see thee! And how glad Mother would be to know thou wert here.' [291]

The girl who entered was both taller and older than Dorcas. She was a well-loved playfellow evidently, for Tryphena and Tryphosa toddled towards her across the room at once, to be caught up in her arms and kissed.

'Of course, it is I, Dorcas,' she answered promptly. 'Who else should it be? Prudence and I determined that we would come over and try to help thee as soon as we could. We brought a basket of provisions too, in case you were short. Prudence is helping Peter to set out breakfast in the kitchen now, so we must hasten.'

Life often becomes easy when you are two, however difficult it may have been when you were only one! With Hester to help, the dressing was finished at lightning speed. Yet, when the children came down to the kitchen, Prudence and Peter already had the fire blazing away merrily; the warm milk was foaming in the bowls. The hungry children thought, as they drank it up, that never before had breakfast tasted so good.

'Hester, what made thee think of coming?' Dorcas asked a little later, when, Baby's imperious needs being satisfied, she was able to begin her own breakfast, while he drummed an accompaniment on the back of her hand with a wooden spoon. 'How did the news reach thee? Or have they taken thy Father and Mother away too? Have all the Friends gone to gaol this time?' [292]

Hester nodded. Her bright face clouded for a moment or two. Then she resolutely brushed the cloud away.

'Yea, in truth, Dorcas,' she answered. 'I fear much that only we children are left. Anyhow, thy parents and mine are taken, and the others as well most like. My Father had warning from a trusty source that he and other Friends had best not meet in Thomas Curtis' house last night. But he is never one to be turned aside from his purpose, thou knows. So he took me between his knees and said, "Hester, dear maid, thy mother and I must go. 'Tis none of our choosing. If we

are taken, fear not for us, nor for thyself and Prue. Only seek to nourish and care for the tender babes in the other houses, whence Friends are likely to be taken also." Therefore I hastened hither to help thee, Dorcas, bringing Prudence with me, partly because I love thee, and thou art mine own dear friend, but also because it was my Father's command. If I can be of service to thee, perhaps he will pat my head when he returns out of gaol and say, as he doth sometimes, "I knew I could trust thee, my Hester."

'Will they be long in prison, dost thou think?' asked Dorcas, with a tremor in her voice. She was always an anxious-minded little girl, and inclined to look on the gloomy side of things, whereas Hester was sunshine itself.

'Who can say?' answered Hester, and again even her bright face clouded. 'The Justices are sure to tender to them the oath, but since they follow Him who commanded, "Swear not at all," how can they take it?'

'Then, if they refuse, they will be said to be out of the King's protection, and the Justices and the gaolers may do with them as they will,' added Peter doggedly. [293]

At these words Hester, seeing that Dorcas looked very sorrowful and almost ready to cry, checked Peter suddenly, and said, 'At any rate, we can but hope for the best. And now we must hasten, or we shall be late for Meeting.'

'Meeting?' Dorcas looked up in surprise. 'I thought thou saidst that all the Friends had been taken.'

'All the men and women, yes,' answered Hester; 'but we children are left. We know what our Fathers and Mothers would have us do.'

Here Peter broke in, 'Yes, of course, Dorcas, we must go to show them that Friends are not cowards, and that we will keep up our Meetings come what may. Dost thou not mind what friend Thomas Curtis' wife, Mistress Nan, has often told us of her father, the Sheriff of Bristol? How he was hung before his own door, because men said he was endeavouring to betray the city to Prince Rupert, and thus serve his king in banishment. Shall we be less loyal than he?'

'Loyal to our King, Dorcas,' added Hester gently.

Dorcas hesitated no longer.

'Thou art right, Hester,' she answered, 'and Peter, thou art right too. We will go all together. I had forgotten. Of course children as well as grown-up people can wait upon God.'

The children arrived at the Friends' usual meeting place, only to find it locked and strongly guarded. They went on, undismayed, to Friend Lamboll's orchard, but, there also, two heavy padlocks, sealed with the King's seal, were upon the green gate. An old goody from a cottage hard by waved them away. 'Be off, children! Here is no place for you,' she said; adding not unkindly, 'your parents were taken near here yester eve, and the officers of the law are still prowling round. This orchard is sure to be one of the first places they will visit.' [294]

Then seeing the tired look on Dorcas' face, as she turned to go, with heavy Stephen in her arms: 'Here, give the babe to me,' she said, 'I'll care for him this forenoon. Thy mother managed to get a word with me last night as the officers dragged her away, and I promised her I would do what I could to help you, though you be Quakers and I hold to the Church. See, he'll be safe in this cradle while you go and play, though it is forty years and more since it held a babe of my own.'

Very thankfully Dorcas laid Stephen, now sleeping peacefully, down in the oaken cradle in the old woman's flagged kitchen. Then she ran off to join the others assembled at a little distance from the orchard gate. By this time a few more children had joined them: two or three girls, and four or five older boys.

Where were they to meet? The sight of the closed house, and the sealed gate, even the mention of the officers of the law, far from frightening the children, had only made them more than ever clear that, somewhere or other, the Meeting must be held.

At length one of the elder boys suggested 'My father's granary?' The very place!—they all agreed: so thither the little flock of children trooped. The granary was a large building of grey stone lighted only by two mullioned windows high up in the walls. In Queen Elizabeth's days these windows had lighted the small rooms of an upper storey, but now the dividing floor had been removed to make more room for the grain which lay piled up as high as the roof over more than half the building. But, at one end, there was an empty space on the floor, and here the children seated themselves on scattered bundles of hay. [295]

Quietly Meeting began. At first some of the children peeped up at one another anxiously under their eyelids. It felt very strange somehow to be gathering together in silence alone without any grown-up people. Were they really doing right? Dorcas' heart began to beat rather nervously, and a hot flush dyed her cheek, until she looked across at Hester sitting opposite, and was calmed by the peaceful expression of the elder girl's face. Hester's hood had fallen back upon her shoulders. Her fair hair, slightly ruffled, shone like a halo of pale gold against the grey stone wall of the granary. Her blue eyes were looking up, up at the blue sky, far away beyond the high window.

'Hester looks happy, almost as if she were listening to something,' Dorcas said to herself, 'something that comforts her although we are all sad.' Then, settling herself cosily down into the

hay, 'Now I will try to listen for comfort too.'

A few moments later the silence was broken by a half-whispered prayer from a dark corner of the granary, 'Our dear, dear parents! help them to be brave and faithful, and make us all brave and faithful too.'

None of the boys and girls looked round to see who had spoken, for the words seemed to come from the deepest place in their own hearts. [296]

Swiftly and speedily the children's prayer was answered. Help was given to them, but they needed every scrap of their courage and faith during the next half-hour. Almost before the last words of the prayer died away, a loud noise was heard and the tramp of heavy feet coming round the granary wall. The officers of the law were upon them: 'What, yet another conventicle of these pestilential heretics to be broken up?' shouted a wrathful voice. The next moment the door was roughly burst open, and in the doorway appeared a much dreaded figure, no less a person than Sir William Armorer himself, Justice of the Peace and Equerry to the King. None of the children had any very clear idea as to the meaning of that word 'equerry'; therefore it always filled them with a vague terror of unknown possibilities. In after years, whenever they heard it they saw again an angry man with a florid face, dressed in a suit of apple-green satin slashed with gold, standing in a doorway and wrathfully shaking a loaded cane over their heads.

'Yet more of ye itching to be laid by the ears in gaol!' shouted this apparition as he entered and slammed the heavy wooden door behind him. But an expression of amazement followed when he was once inside the room.

'Brats! By my life! Quaker brats! and none beside them!' he exclaimed astonished, as he looked round the band of children. 'Quaker brats holding a conventicle of their own, as if they were grown men and women! Having stopped the earth and gaoled the fox, must we now deal with the litter? Look you here, do you want a closer acquaintance with this?' [297]

With these words, he pointed his loaded stick at each of the children in turn and drew out a sharp iron point concealed in one end of it, and began to slash the air. Then, changing his mind again, he went back to the door and called out to his followers in the passage outside, 'Here, men, we will let the maidens go, but you must teach these lads what it is to disobey the law, or I'm no Justice of His Majesty's Peace.'

Even in that moment of terror the children wondered not only at the loud angry voice but at the unfamiliar scent that filled the room. The air, which had been pure and fragrant with the smell of hay, was now heavy and loaded with essences and perfumes. Well it might be, for though the children knew it not, the flowing lovelocks of the curly wig that descended to the Justice's shoulders had been scented that very morning with odours of ambergris, musk, and violet, orris root, orange flowers, and jessamine, as well as others besides. The stronger scents of kennel and stable, and even of ale and beer, that filled the room as the constables trooped into it were almost a relief to the children, because they at least were familiar, and unlike the other strange, sickly fragrance.

The constables seized the boys, turned them out into the road, and there punched and beat them with their own staffs and the Justice's loaded stick until they were black in the face. The girls were driven in a frightened bunch down the lane. Only Hester sat on in her place, still and unmoved, sheltering the Twins in her bosom and holding her hands over their eyes. Up to her came the angry Justice in a fine rage, until it seemed as if the perfumed wig must almost touch her smooth plaits of hair. Then, at last, Hester moved, but not in time to prevent the Justice seizing her by the shoulder and flinging her down the road after the others. Her frightened charges, torn from her arms, still clung to her skirts, while the full-grown men strode along after them, threatening to duck them all in the pond if they made the slightest resistance, and did not at once disperse to their homes. [298]

It certainly was neither a comfortable thing nor a pleasant thing to be a Quaker child in those stormy days.

Nevertheless, pleasant or unpleasant, comfortable or uncomfortable, made no difference. It was thanks to the courage of this handful of boys and girls that, in spite of the worst that Mr. Justice Armorer could do, in spite of the dread of him and his constables, in spite of his angry face, of his scented wig and loaded cane, in spite of all these things,—still, Sunday after Sunday, through many a long anxious month, God was worshipped in freedom and simplicity in the town by silver Thames. Reading Meeting was held.

Meantime, throughout these same long months, within the prison walls the fathers and mothers prayed for their absent children. Although apart from one another, the two companies were not really separated; for both were listening to the same Shepherd's voice. Until, at last, the happy day came when the gaol-doors were opened and the prisoners released. Then, oh the kissing and the hugging! the crying and the blessing! as the parents heard of all the children had undergone in order to keep faithful and true! That was indeed the most joyful meeting of all!

Thankfulness and joy last freshly through the centuries, as an old letter, written at that time by one of the fathers to George Fox still proves to us to-day: 'Our little children kept the meetings up, when we were all in prison, notwithstanding that wicked Justice when he came and found them there, with a staff that had a spear in it would pull them out of the Meeting, and punch them in the back till some of them were black in the face ... his fellow is not, I believe, to be found in all England a Justice of the Peace.' [299]

'For they might as well think to hinder the Sun from shining, or the tide from flowing, as to think to hinder the Lord's people from meeting to wait upon Him.'

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XX. THE SADDEST STORY OF ALL

'Take heed of forward minds, and of running out before your guide, for that leads out into looseness; and such plead for liberty, and run out in their wills and bring dishonour to the Lord.'...

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'And take heed if under a pretence of Liberty you do not ... set up that both in yourselves and on others that will be hard to get down again.'—G. FOX.

'The Truth in this city spreads and flourisheth; many large meetings we have, and great ones of the world come to them, and are much tendered. James is fitted for this great place, and a great love is begotten towards him'—A. Parker to M. Fell, 1655 (from London, before Nayler's fall).

'His forbearing in due time to testify against the folly of those his followers (who magnified him) was his great weakness and loss of judgment, and brought the greatest suffering upon him, Poor Man! Though when he was delivered out of the snare, he did condemn all their wild and mad actions towards him and judged himself also. Howbeit our adversaries and persecutors unjustly took occasion thereupon, to triumph and insult, and to reproach and roar against Quakers, though as a People (they were) wholly unconcerned and clear from those offences.'—G. Whitehead.

'And so His will is my peace.'—JAMES NAYLER.

XX. THE SADDEST STORY OF ALL

BUT IT HAS A HAPPY END

Children—come close. Let us hold hands and gather round the fire. This story must be told in the twilight, while the room is all dark except for the dim glow of the coals. Then, if a few tears do run down our cheeks—no one will see them. And presently the lamp will come in, the darkness will vanish, and the story will end happily—as most stories do if we could only carry them on far enough. What makes the sadness to us, often, is that we only see such a little bit of the way.

This is the story of a man who made terrible mistakes, and suffered a terrible punishment. But, through his sufferings, and perhaps even through the great mistakes he made, he learned some lessons that he might never have learned in any other way. His name was James Nayler. He was born in 1616, and was the son of a well-to-do farmer in Yorkshire. He was 'educated in good English,' and learned to write and speak well. His early life seems to have been uneventful. At the age of 22 he married, and settled near Wakefield with his young wife, Anne. After a few years of happy married life, the long dispute between King Charles and his Parliament finally broke out into Civil War. The old peaceful life of the countryside was at an end. Everywhere men were called upon to take sides and to arm. James Nayler was one of the first to answer that call. He enlisted in the Parliamentary Army under Lord Fairfax, and spent the next nine or ten years as a soldier. Under General Lambert he rose to be quartermaster, and the prospect of attaining still higher military rank was before him when his health broke down and he was obliged to return home.

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A little later he made a friend. One eventful Sunday in 1652 'the Man in Leather Breeches' visited Wakefield, and came to the 'Steeple-house' where Nayler had been accustomed to worship with his family. Directly the sermon was finished, all the people in the church pointed at the Stranger, and called him to come up to the priest. Fox rose, as his custom was, and began to 'declare the word of life.' He went on to say that he thought the priest who had been preaching had been deceiving his hearers in some parts of his sermon. Naturally the priest who had spoken did not like this, and although some of the congregation agreed with Fox, and felt that 'they could have listened to him for ever,' most of the people hated the Stranger for his words. They rushed at Fox, punching and beating him; then, crying, 'Let us have him in the stocks!' they thrust him out of the door of the church. Once in the cool fresh air, however, the crowd became less violent. Their mood changed. Instead of hustling their unresisting visitor through the town and clapping him into the stocks, they loosed their hold of him and suffered him to go quietly away.

As he departed, George Fox came upon another group of people assembled at a little distance. These were the men and women who had listened to him gladly in church, who now wished to hear more of the new truths he had been declaring. Among them was James Nayler, a man older than Fox, who had been convinced by him a year earlier. This second visit, however, clinched Nayler's allegiance to his new friend. Possibly, having been a soldier himself, he began by admiring Fox's courage. Here was a man who refused to strike a single blow in self-defence. He was apparently quite ready to let the angry mob do what they would, and yet in the end he managed to quell their rage by the force of his own spiritual power. The Journal simply says that a great many people were convinced that day of the truth of the Quaker preaching, and that 'they were directed to the Lord's teaching *in themselves*.'

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Hereupon the priest of the church became very angry. He spread abroad many untrue stories about Fox, saying that he 'carried bottles with him, and made people drink of them and so made them follow him and become Quakers.'

At Wakefield, also, in those days, as well as farther North, 'enchantment' was the first and simplest explanation of anything unusual. This same priest also said that Fox rode upon a great black horse, and was seen riding upon it in one county at a certain time, and was also seen on the same horse and at the very same time in another county sixty miles away.

'With these lies,' says Fox, 'he fed his people, to make them think evil of the truth which I had declared amongst them. But by those lies he preached many of his hearers away from him, for I was travelling on foot and had no horse; which the people generally knew.'

James Nayler at any rate decided to become one of Fox's followers, and let the priest do his worst. It may have been at his house that George Fox lodged that night, thankful for its shelter, having slept under a hedge the night before. When Fox left, Nayler did not go with him, but remained quietly at home. Having been a farmer's son before he became a soldier, he quietly returned to his farming when he left the army. One day in early spring, a few months after Fox's visit, as James Nayler was driving the plough and thinking of the things of God, he heard a Voice

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calling to him through the silence, telling him to leave his home and his relations, for God would be with him. At first James Nayler rejoiced exceedingly because he had heard the Voice of God, but when he considered how much he would have to give up if he left home, he tried to put the command aside. Nothing that he undertook prospered with him after this; he fell ill and nearly died, till at last he was made willing to surrender his own will utterly and go out, ready to do God's will, day by day and hour by hour, as it should be revealed to him. 'And so he continued, not knowing one day what he was to do the next; and the promise of God that He would be with him, he found made good to him every day.' These are his own words. His inward guidance led him into the west of England, and there he found George Fox.

After this Nayler and Fox were often together. Sometimes Nayler would take a long journey to see Fox when he was staying with his dear friends at Swarthmoor. Sometimes they wrote beautiful letters to each other. Here is one from Nayler to Fox that might have been written to us to-day:

'Dear hearts, you make your own troubles by being unwilling and disobedient to that which would lead you safe. There is no way but to go hand in hand with Him in all things, running after Him without fear or considering, leaving the whole work only to Him. If He seem to smile, follow Him in fear and love, and if He seem to frown, follow Him and fall into His will, and you shall see He is yours still,—for He will prove His own.'

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'THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE'

ToList

Nayler's adventurous journey with Fox to Walney Island must have drawn their friendship closer than ever. In spite of hardships these were happy days as they went about the country together on God's errands. But these days came to an end.

You see, Nayler had not found his faith after a long struggle as George Fox had done. Perhaps he had accepted it a little too easily, and too confidently, in his own strength. He was a splendid, brilliant preacher, and he loved arguing for his new belief in public. Once, in Derbyshire, in an argument with some ministers, he got so much the best of it that the crowd was delighted and cried out, 'A Nailer, a Nailer hath confuted them all.'

Another time, when he was attending a meeting at a Friend's house, he says that 'hundreds of vain people continued all the while throwing great stones in at the window, but we were kept in great peace within.' It would be rather difficult to sit quite still and 'think meeting thoughts' with large stones flying through the windows, would it not?

Once, when I was at a service on board ship, a few years ago, a tremendous wave broke through the port-hole and splashed the kneeling men and women on that side of the saloon. They were so startled that nearly all of them jumped, and one called out quite loudly, 'Oh, what's that?' But the clergyman went on quietly reading the service, and very soon everything became still and quiet again.

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James Nayler also continued to give his message of stillness and calm, and the gathered people, listening to him intently, forgot to think about the stones. He must have had a great deal of that strange quality that we call magnetism. Just as a magnet attracts bits of iron to it, so some people have the power of attracting others to listen to them and love them. Fox was the most powerful magnet of all the Quaker preachers. He attracted people in thousands all over the country. But Nayler seems to have had a great deal of magnetism too, though it was of a different kind. For one thing he was handsomer to look at than Fox. He is described as 'of ruddy complexion and medium height, with long, low hanging brown hair, oval face, and nose that rose a little in the middle: he wore a small band close to his collar, but no band strings, and a hat that hung over his brows.'

But it would have been happier for him if he had not been so good-looking, as you will see presently. He must have had much charm of manner, too. A court lady, Abigail, Lady Darcy, invited him to her house to preach, and there, beside all the people who had assembled to hear him, many other much grander listeners were also present although unseen, 'lords, ladies, officers, and ministers.'

These great people, not wishing it to be known that they came to listen to the Quaker preacher, were hidden away behind a ceiling. Nayler himself must have known of their presence, since he mentions it in a letter, though he does not explain how a ceiling could be a hiding-place. He spoke to them afterwards of the Voice that had called him as he was ploughing in the fields at home. These fine lords and ladies could not understand what he meant. 'A Voice, a Voice?' they asked him, 'but did you really hear it?' 'Aye, verily, I did hear it,' he replied in such solemn tones that they wondered more than ever what he meant; and perhaps they began to listen too for the Inner Voice. [309]

The discovery that he, a humble Quaker preacher, could attract all this attention did James Nayler harm. Instead of remembering only the thankfulness and joy of being entrusted with his Master's message, he allowed small, lower feelings to creep into his heart: 'What a good messenger I am! Don't I preach well? Far grander people throng to hear me than to any other Quaker minister's sermons!'

Another temptation came to him through his good looks. He was evidently getting to think altogether too much about himself. It was James Nayler this and James Nayler that, far too much about James Nayler. Also, some of his friends were foolish, and did not help him. The interesting thing about James Nayler is that his chief temptations always came to him through his good qualities. If he had been a little duller, or a little uglier, or a little stupider, if he had even made fewer friends, he might have walked safely all his life. As it was, instead of listening only to the Voice of God, he allowed himself to listen to one of the most dangerous suggestions of the Tempter. Nayler began to think that he might imitate Jesus Christ not only in inner ways, not only by trying to be meek and loving and gentle and self-sacrificing, as He was to all the people around Him. That is the way we may all try to be like Him. Nayler also tried to imitate Him in outer ways. He found a portrait of the Saviour and noticed how He was supposed to have worn His hair and beard; and then he arranged his own hair and beard in the same way. He even attempted to work miracles like those in the Gospel story. He tried to fast as Christ had done, 'He ate no bread but one little bit for a whole month, and there was about a fortnight ... he took no manner of food, but some days a pint of white wine, and some days a gill mingled with water.' This was when he was imprisoned in Exeter Gaol with many other Quakers. One woman among them fainted and became unconscious, and she believed she had been brought back to life by Nayler's laying his hand on her head and saying, 'Dorcas, arise.' [310]

Some of his friends and the other women in the prison were foolish and silly. Instead of helping Nayler to serve God in lowliness and humility, they flattered his vanity, and encouraged him to become yet more vain and presumptuous. They even knelt before him in the prison, bowing and singing, 'Holy, holy, holy.' Some one wrote him a wicked letter saying, 'Thy name shall be no more James Nayler, but Jesus!'

Nayler confessed afterwards that 'a fear struck him' when he received that letter. He put it in his pocket, meaning that no one should see it. But though Nayler did not himself encourage his friends in their wicked folly, still he did not check them as he should have done. He thought that he was meant to be a 'sign of Christ' for the world. He was weak in health at the time, and had suffered much from imprisonment and long fasting; so it can be said in excuse that his mind may have been clouded, and that perhaps he did not altogether understand what was being done. [311]

The real sadness of this story is that we cannot excuse him altogether. Some of the blame for the silly and foolish and wicked things that were done around him does, and must, belong to him too. He ought to have known and to have forbidden it all from the beginning. George Fox and the other steady Friends of course did not approve of these wild doings of James Nayler and his friends. George Fox came to see James Nayler in prison at Exeter, and reproved him for his errors. James Nayler was proud and would not listen to rebukes, though he offered to kiss George Fox at parting. But Fox, who was 'stiff as a tree and pure as a bell,' would not kiss any man, however much he loved him, who persisted in such wrong notions. The two friends parted very sorrowfully, and with a sad heart Fox returned to the inn on Exeter Bridge. Not all the 'Seven Stars' on its signboard could shine through this cloud.

After this, things grew worse. Nayler persisted in his idea that he was meant, in his own life, and in his own body, to imitate Jesus Christ outwardly, and the women persisted in their wild acting round him. When Nayler and his admirers came to Bristol, in October 1656, they arranged a sort of play scene, to make it like the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. One man, bareheaded, led Nayler's horse, and the women spread scarves and handkerchiefs in the way before him, as they had no palms. They even shouted 'Hosanna!' and other songs and hymns that they had no business to sing except in the worship of God. [312]

They meant it to be all very brilliant and triumphant. But it was really a miserable sort of affair, for the rain came down heavily, and the roads were muddy and dirty, which made the whole company wet and draggled. Still it was not the rain that mattered,—what mattered most was that none of them can have had the sunshine of peace in their hearts, for they must have known that they were doing wrong.

Anyhow the magistrates of the city of Bristol had no manner of doubt about that. As soon as the foolish, dishevelled, excited company reached the city they were all clapped into gaol, which was

perhaps the best place to sober their excited spirits. The officers of the law were thoroughly well pleased. They had said from the first that George Fox was a most dangerous man, and that the Quakers were a misguided people to follow him. Now the folly and wickedness of Nayler and his company gave them just the excuse they were wanting to prove that they had been right all along.

James Nayler was taken to London, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to savage punishments. He was examined at length by a Committee of Parliament. Just before his sentence was pronounced he said that he 'did not know his offence,' which looks as if his mind really had been clouded over when some of the things he was accused of were done. But this was not allowed to be any excuse. 'You shall know your offence by your punishment' was the only answer he received. The members of Oliver Cromwell's second Parliament who dealt with Nayler's case were not likely to be lenient to any man, who, like Nayler, had done wrong and allowed himself to be led astray. His Commonwealth judges showed him no mercy indeed. When Nayler heard his terrible sentence, he listened calmly, and said, 'God has given me a body: God will, I hope, give me a spirit to endure it. I pray God He may not lay it to your charge.' This shows that he had learned really to share his Master's Spirit, which is the only true way of imitating Him. [313]

The punishments were cruel and vindictive. They lasted through many weeks. Half way through, many 'persons of note' signed a petition to ask that he might be allowed to miss the rest of the penalties, owing to his enfeebled condition. In spite of this, the whole barbarous sentence was carried out. James Nayler bore it unflinchingly. I am only going to tell you one or two of the cruel things that were done to him—and those not the worst. He was sentenced to have the letter 'B' burned on his forehead with a hot iron. 'B' stands for 'Blasphemer,' and it was to show everybody who saw him, wherever he came, that he had been found guilty of saying wicked things about God. The worst part of this punishment must have been knowing in his heart that the accusation was, more or less, true.

There he stood before the Old Exchange in London, on a bitter December day, in the presence of thousands of spectators. He bore not only the branding with a red-hot iron on the forehead until smoke arose from the burning flesh, but also other worse tortures with 'a wonderful patience.' The crowd, who always assembled on such occasions, were touched by his demeanour. Instead of jeering and mocking, as they were accustomed to do to criminals, all these thousands of people lifted their hats in token of respect, and remained standing bareheaded as they watched him in his agony. It is said that 'he shrunk a little when the iron came upon his forehead,' yet on being unbound he embraced his executioner. One faithful friend, Robert Rich, who had done his utmost to save Nayler from this terrible punishment, stood with him on the pillory and held his hand all through the burning, and afterwards licked the wounds with his tongue to allay the pain. 'I am the dog that licked Lazarus' sores,' Robert Rich used to say, alluding to that terrible day. Long years after, when he was an old man with a long white beard, he used to walk up and down in Meeting in a long velvet gown, still repeating the story of his friend's sufferings and of his patience. [314]

After this punishment Nayler was sent down to Bristol to undergo the rest of his sentence there. He was made to enter the city again in deepest humiliation, no longer with excited followers shouting 'Hosanna!' before him, but seated on a horse *facing to the tail*, with the big 'B' burned on his forehead for all men to see—and then he was publicly whipped.

Yet in spite of all the pain and shame he must have been happier in one way during that sorrowful return to Bristol than at his former entrance to the city, for he must have had more true peace in his heart.

Now, at last, comes the happy end of this sad story. There is no need to sit over the fire in the darkness any longer. We can dry our eyes and light the lamps—for it is not sorrowful really. James Nayler's mistakes and sufferings had not been wasted. They had made him more really like his Master, and his worst troubles were now over. [315]

He still lay in prison for two years more, but he was allowed ink and paper, and he wrote many beautiful letters acknowledging that he had done wrong, confessing his sin, and praising God even for the sufferings which had shown him his error. He says in one place, 'the provocation of that time of temptation was exceeding great against the pure love of God; yet He left me not; for after I had given myself under that power, and darkness was above, my adversary so prevailed, that all things were turned and so perverted against my right seeing, hearing, or understanding; only a secret hope and faith I had in my God whom I had served, that He would bring me through it, and to the end of it, and that I should again see the day of my redemption from under it all; and this quieted my soul in my greatest tribulation.'

And again, 'Dear brethren—My heart is broken this day for the offence that I have occasioned to God's truth and people....'

'And concerning you, the tender plants of my Father, who have suffered through me, or with me, in what the Lord hath suffered to be done with me, in this time of great trial and temptation; the Almighty God of love, Who hath numbered every sigh, and put every tear in His bottle, reward it a thousandfold into your bosoms, in the day of your need, when you shall come to be tried and tempted; and in the meantime fulfil your joy with His love, which you seek after. The Lord knows, it was never in my heart to cause you to mourn, whose suffering is my greatest sorrow that ever yet came upon me, for you are innocent herein.' After this, at last he was set [316]

free. The first thing he did was to try to return home to his wife and children. It is said that 'he was a man of great self-denial, and very jealous of himself ever after his fall and recovery. At last, departing from the city of London, about the latter end of October 1660, towards the north, intending to go home to his wife and children at Wakefield in Yorkshire, he was seen by a Friend of Hertford (sitting by the wayside in a very awful, weighty frame of mind), who invited him to his house, but he refused, signifying his mind to pass forward, and so went on foot as far as Huntingdon, and was observed by a Friend as he passed through the town, in such an awful frame, as if he had been redeemed from the earth, and a stranger on it, seeking a better country and inheritance. But going some miles beyond Huntingdon, he was taken ill (being as 'tis said) robbed by the way, and left bound: whether he received any personal injury is not certainly known, but being found in a field by a countryman toward evening, was had, or went to a Friend's house at Holm, not far from King's Ripton, where Thomas Parnell, a doctor of physic, dwelt, who came to visit him; and being asked, if any Friends at London should be sent for to come and see him; he said, "Nay," expressing his care and love to them. Being shifted, he said, "You have refreshed my body, the Lord refresh your souls"; and not long after departed this life in peace with the Lord, about the ninth month, 1660, and the forty-fourth year of his age, and was buried in Thomas Parnell's burying-ground at King's Ripton aforesaid.'

'I don't call that a happy ending. I call it a very sad ending indeed! What could be worse? To sit all alone by the roadside, and then perhaps to be robbed and bound, or if not that, at any rate to be taken ill and carried to a stranger's house to die. That is only a sorrowful ending to a most sorrowful life.'

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Is this what anyone is thinking?

Ah, but listen! That is not the real end. It is said that 'about two hours before his death he spoke in the presence of several witnesses' these words:

'There is a spirit which I feel, that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end: its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations: as it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other: if it be betrayed it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God: its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with entreaty, and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind: in God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life: it is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression: it can never rejoice but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered: I found it alone, being forsaken; I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens, and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life.'

That is why this story has a happy ending. A made-up story might have left James Nayler at home with his wife and children. But, after all he had suffered, he may have been too tired to bear much joy on earth. Besides, how could he have borne for those dear ones to see the condemning 'B' burned on his forehead? and the other scars and signs of his terrible punishments, how could they have borne to see them?

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Was it not better that the end came as it did by the roadside near Huntingdon?

Only remember always, that what we call the end is itself only the beginning.

Think how thankful James Nayler must have been to lay down the tired, scarred body in which he had sinned and suffered, while his spirit, strengthened, purified, and cleansed by all he had endured, was set free to serve in the larger, fuller life beyond. James Nayler's difficult school-days were over at last on this little earth, where we are set to learn our lessons. Like the other prodigal son he had gone to receive his own welcome from the Father's heart in the Father's Home.

Why have I told you this story—'the saddest story of all'? A parable will explain it best. Imagine that ever since the beginning of Time there has been a great big looking-glass with the sun shining down upon it. Then imagine that that looking-glass has been broken up into innumerable fragments, and that one bit is given to each human soul, when it is born on earth, to keep and to hold at the right angle, so that it can still reflect the sun's beams. That is something like the truth that George Fox discovered for himself and preached all over England. He called it the doctrine of 'The Inner Light.' To all the hungry, thirsting, sinful, ignorant men and women in England he gave the same message: 'There is that of God within you, that can reflect Him. You can hear His Voice speaking in your hearts'; or, to continue the parable, 'If you hold your own little bit of looking-glass in the sunlight it will, it must, reflect the Sun.'

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James Nayler listened to this message, accepted it, and rejoiced in it. He did truly turn to the Light. But he forgot one thing that must never be forgotten. He looked too much at his own tiny bit of looking-glass and too little at the Sun. In this way the mirror of his soul grew soiled and stained and dim. It could no longer reflect the Light faithfully. Then, it had to be cleansed by suffering. But all this time, and always, the Sun of God's unchanging love was steadily shining, waiting for him to turn to it again. Let us too look up towards that Sun of Love. Let us open our hearts wide to receive its light. Then we shall find that we have not only a mirror in our hearts but also something alive and growing; what George Fox would call the 'Seed.' Sometimes he calls it the 'Seed,' and sometimes the 'Light,' because it is too wonderful for any picture or parable to

express it wholly. But we each have 'that of God within' that can reflect and respond to Him, if we will only let it. Let us try then to open our hearts wide, wide, to receive, and not to think of ourselves. If we do this, sooner or later we shall learn to live and grow in the sunshine of God's love, as easily and naturally as the daisies do, when they spread their white and golden hearts wide open in the earthly sunshine on a summer's day.

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James Nayler did learn that lesson at last, and therefore even this, 'the saddest story of all,' really and truly has a happy end.

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XXI. PALE WIND FLOWERS: OR THE LITTLE PRISON MAID

[ToC](#)

'Let not anything straiten you when God moves.'—W. DEWSBURY, *Epistle from York Tower, 1660.*

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'All friends and brethren everywhere, that are imprisoned for the Truth, give yourselves up in it, and it will make you free, and the power of the Lord will carry you over all the persecutors. Be faithful in the life and power of the Lord God and be valiant for the Truth on the earth; and look not at your sufferings, but at the power of God; and that will bring some good out of all your sufferings; and your imprisonments will reach to the prisoned that the persecutor prisons in himself... So be faithful in that which overcomes and gives victory.'—G. FOX.

'Bread and Wine were the Supper of the Lord in the dispensation of Time, ... a figure of His death, which were fulfilled when He had suffered and rose again, and now He is known to stand at the door and knock, "If any man hear my Voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me," saith Christ. And we being many are one Bread and one Body and know the Wine renewed in our Father's Kingdom. Christ the

XXI. PALE WIND FLOWERS: OR THE LITTLE PRISON MAID

I

'Dear grandfather will be wearying for me! We must not linger.' There was a wistful ring in the child's voice as she spoke. Little Mary Samm looked longingly towards a clump of wood anemones dancing in the sunshine, as she followed her aunt, Joan Dewsbury, through a coppice of beech-trees on the outskirts of the city of Warwick. It was a bright windy day of early spring in the year 1680. Mary was twelve years old, but so small and slight that she looked and seemed much younger. And now she wanted badly to gather some wood anemones. But would Aunt Joan approve? Would it be selfish to leave 'dear grandfather' longer alone?

Happily the older woman, who preceded little Mary on the narrow woodland pathway, possessed a kind heart underneath her severe, grey, Quaker bodice and stiff manner. She caught the wistful tone in the little girl's voice, and, turning round, noticed the wood anemones. Indeed, the wood anemones insisted on being noticed. Joan Dewsbury walked on a few steps further in silence; then, setting the heavy basket down on the trunk of a felled tree, 'No, Mary,' she said, 'in truth we must not linger; but we may rest a few moments. Also thou knowest thy grandfather's love of a posy in his prison. If I see aright, there are some pale windflowers blowing yonder, beside that old tree, though it is full early for them still. Here, give me thy basket, and hie thee to gather them. I will sit down and wait for thy return; and, if we hasten our steps hereafter, we shall not be much delayed.'

Little Mary Samm glanced up with a joyful smile. She had espied the few, first, faint windflowers as soon as she entered the wood; but, without her aunt's permission, it would never have entered her head to suggest that she might gather them. For Mary was a carefully trained (not to say primly brought up) little maiden of the seventeenth century, when children followed their elders' injunctions in all things, without daring to dwell on their own wishes. If Joan Dewsbury had been an artist she would have enjoyed watching the child's slim little upright figure stepping daintily over the rustling brown beech leaves, between the rounded trunks of the grey trees. The air was full of the promise of early spring. A cold blue sky showed through the lattice work of twigs and branches; but, as yet, no fluttering leaf had crept out of its sheath to soften, with a hint of tender green, the virginal stiffness and straightness of the stems. Grey among the grey tree-trunks little Mary flitted about, gathering her precious windflowers. She was clad in the demure Puritan dress worn by young and old alike in the early days of the Society of Friends. A frock of grey duffel hung in straight lines around her slight figure; a cape of the same material was drawn closely round her shoulders, while a grey bonnet framed the pensive face. A strange unchildlike face it was, small and pinched, with a high, narrow forehead and sharply pointed chin. There were no childish roses in the pale cheeks. A very faint flush of pink, caused by fresh air and unwonted exercise, could not disguise the curious yellow tinge of the skin, like old parchment that has been kept too long from the light of day. Only the tips of a few locks of light brown hair, cut very short and straight round the ears, were visible under the close, tightly-fitting bonnet.



PALE WINDFLOWERS

ToList

'An ugly little girl, in perfectly hideous clothes,' modern children might have said if they had seen Mary Samm for the first time, looking down at her windflowers, though even then there was a hint of beauty in the long, curved, black eyelashes that lay quietly on the pale cheeks, and a very sweet expression hovered round the corners of the firm, delicate, little mouth. But no one who could have seen little Mary running back to her aunt with her precious flowers in her hand would have called her 'ugly' or even 'plain' any longer. The radiant light in her eyes transfigured the small, pinched face of the demure little being in its old-fashioned garments. Even critical modern children would have forgotten everything else, and would have exclaimed, 'She has the most beautiful eyes!'

What colour were her eyes? They were not blue, or black, or grey, or brown, or hazel, or green, or yellow. Perhaps they were in truth more yellow than anything else. They were full not only of sparkling lights but also of deep velvety shadows that made it difficult to tell their exact colour. Who can say the colour of a mountain stream that runs over a pebbled bed? Every stone can be seen through the clear, transparent water, but there are mysterious, shadowy darknesses in it also, reflected from the overhanging banks. Little Mary Samm's eyes were both clear and mysterious as such a mountain stream; while her voice,—but hush! she is speaking again, her rather shrill, high tones breaking the crisp silence of the March afternoon.

'Here is the posy, Aunt; will not dear grandfather love his pale windflowers, come like stars to visit him in his prison? Only these flower stars will not pass away quickly out of sight as do the real stars we watch together through the bars every evening.'

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Joan Dewsbury took the bunch of anemones from her niece's cold fingers, laid it down carefully in Mary's rush basket and covered it with a corner of the cloth. Had she been a 'nowadays aunt' she might have thought that Mary was not unlike a windflower herself. The girl's small white face was flushed faintly, like the ethereal white sepals; there was a delicate, fragile fragrance about her as if a breath might blow her away, yet there was an unconquerable air of determination also in her every movement and gesture. But Joan Dewsbury was not a 'nowadays aunt'; she was a 'thenadays aunt,' and that was an entirely different kind. She never thought of comparing a little girl, who had come to take care of her grandfather in his prison, with the white, starry flowers that came out in the wood so early, holding on tight to the roots of the old tree, and blooming gallantly through all the gales of spring. Joan Dewsbury's thoughts were full of different and, to her, far more important matters than her niece's appearance. She rose, and, after handing Mary her small rush basket and settling her own larger one comfortably on her arm, the two started off once more with quickened steps through the wood. Neither the older woman nor the girl was much of a talker, and the winding woodland pathways were too narrow for two people to walk abreast. But when they came out on the broad grassy way that wandered across the meadows by the side of the smooth Avon towards the city walls, they did seem to have a few things to say to one another. They spoke of the farm they had visited, of the milk, eggs, and cheese they carried in their baskets. But most often they mentioned 'the prison.' Little Mary still seemed to be in a great hurry to get back to be with 'dear grandfather,' while her companion was apparently anxious to detain her long enough to learn something more of her life in the gaol.

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'I could envy thee, Mary, were it not a sin,' she said once. 'Thou art a real comfort to my dear father. Since my mother died, gladly would I have been his companion, and have sought to ease his captivity, but the Governor of the gaol would not allow it.'

'Ay, I know,' replied Mary, in her clear, high-pitched voice. 'My mother told me that day at my home in Bedfordshire, that no one but a child like me could be allowed to serve him, and to live in the prison as his little maid.'

'Didst thou want to come, Mary?' her aunt enquired.

Mary's face clouded for a moment. Then she looked full at her aunt. The candid eyes that had nothing to hide, reflected shadows as well as light at that moment.

'No, Aunt,' she said, firmly and clearly, 'at the first I did not want to come. There was my home, thou seest; I love Hutton Conquest, and my mother, and the maids, my sisters. Also I had many friends in our village with whom I was wont to have rare frolics and games. When first my mother told me of the Governor's permission, I did not want to leave the pleasant Bedfordshire meadows that lie around our dear farm, and go to live cooped up behind bolts and bars. Besides, I had heard that Warwick Gaol was a fearsome place. I was affrighted at the thought of being shut up among the thieves and murderers. And—' She hesitated.

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'Poor maid,' said her aunt, 'still thou didst come in the end?'

'In the end it was made clear to me that my place was with dear grandfather,' said the child in her crisp, old-fashioned way. 'My mother said she could not force me; for she feared the gaol fever for me. I feared it too. And it is worse even than I feared. At nights I hear the prisoners screaming with it often. Nearly every day some of them die. They say it is worse for the young, and I know my grandfather dreads that I may take it. He looks at me often very sadly, or he did when I first came. Always then at nightfall he grew sad. But, latterly, we have been so comfortable together that I think he hath forgot his fears. When the evenings darken, and he can no longer read or write, we sit and watch the stars. Then if I can persuade him to tell me stories of what he hath undergone, that doth turn his thoughts, and afterwards he will fall asleep, and sleep well the whole night through.'

'Thou art a comfort to him, sure enough,' her aunt answered. 'It is wonderful how much brighter he hath been since he had thee, though he hath never smiled since my mother's death. But thou thyself must surely grow tired of the prison and its bare stone walls? Thou must long to be back at play with thy sisters in the Bedfordshire meadows?'

'That do I no longer,' little Mary Samm made answer firmly. 'I love my sisters dearly, dearly,' she raised her voice unconsciously as she spoke, and a chaffinch on a branch overhead filled in the pause with an answering chirp, 'I love my mother too. Didst thou really say thou wert expecting her to visit thee right soon? My dear, dear mother! But I love my dear grandfather best of all, for he hath nobody but me to care for him. At least, of course, he hath thee, Aunt Joan,' she added hastily, noticing a slight shade pass over her aunt's face. 'And what should we do without thee to bake bread for us, and go to the farm to fetch him fresh eggs, and butter, and cheese, and sweet, new milk? He would soon starve on the filthy prison fare. See, I have the milk bottle safe hidden under my flowers.'

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'Aye, thou wast ever a careful maid,' answered her aunt; 'but, tell me, hath the Governor indeed grown gentler of late, and hath he given my father more liberty, and a better room?'

'That he hath indeed. He patted my head this very morn, and said I might have permission to come out and walk with thee for the first time,' Mary answered. 'He saith, too, that the gaol is no place for a child like me, and that thou shalt come and see us in a se'nnight from now; then haply thou wilt bring my mother with thee! The room my grandfather hath now is small in truth, but he can lie down at length, and I have a little cupboard within the wall where I can also lie and hear if he needs me. Doth he but stir or call "Mary" at nights, ever so gently, in a moment I am by his side.'

'And canst thou ease him?' her aunt enquired.

'That I can,' answered Mary proudly. 'Often I can ease him, or warm his poor cold hands, or soothe him till he sleeps again, for he grows weaker after this long imprisonment.'

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'Small wonder,' replied her aunt. 'If thou hadst seen the dungeon where they set him first—foul, beneath the floor, with no window, only a grating overhead to give him air. There were a dozen or more felons and murderers packed in it too, along with him, so that he had not enough room even to lie down. But there—it is not fit for a child like thee to know the half of all he hath undergone in the cause of Truth.'

'Dear, dear grandfather,' said Mary wistfully, 'yet he never complains. He says always that he "doth esteem the locks and bolts as jewels," since he doth endure them for his Master's sake.'

'Ay, and what was his crime for which he suffered at first in that foul place? Nothing but his giving of thanks one night after supper at an inn. His accusers must needs affirm this to be "preaching at a conventicle." Hist! we had better be silent now we have reached the town. I must leave thee at the gate of the gaol, and go on my way, while thou goest thine. Be sure and say to my dear father that I and thy mother will visit him as soon as ever the Governor shall permit.'

A few minutes later they stopped; Joan Dewsbury took the basket from her arm and gave it to her niece. 'Farewell, dear child,' she said cheerily, as the porter opened the tall portal of the prison; but her eyes grew dim as she watched the small figure disappear behind the heavy bolts and bars.

'She is a good maid, and a brave one,' she said to herself as she passed down the street between the timbered houses to her home. 'Yet she is not as other children are. For all the comfort she is to my dear father, I would fain think of her safe once more at home with her sisters. Right glad I am that her mother hath sent me word by a sure hand to say she cometh speedily to see of her condition for herself. The Governor is right, the gaol is no place for a child, nor is it the life for her either. She liveth too much in her own thoughts. This morn on our walk to the farm when I asked her wherefore she seemed sorrowful, she replied that she was "troubled in her conscience, that she thought she would not live long and wanted satisfaction from the Lord as to whither her soul would go if she were to die." Yet she sprang after those flowers as gaily as her sisters, and she saith always that she is well. If only she may keep as she is until her mother shall come.'

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Shaking her head, and full of anxious thoughts, the kind woman pursued her homeward way. Over the cobble-stones and between the timbered houses with their steep gables and high-thatched roofs, she passed through the city until she came to her own small dwelling, William Dewsbury's home, where his daughter lived alone, and awaited his return.

II

Have you ever seen a ray of golden sunshine steal in through the thick blinds, heavy shutters and close curtains that try to shut it out? People may pull down the blinds and shut the shutters and draw the curtains, and do their very best to keep the sunshine away. Yet, sooner or later, a ray always manages to get in somehow. It dances through a chink here or a hole there, or steals along the floor, till at last it arrives, a radiant messenger, in the darkened room to say that a whole world of light is waiting outside.

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In spite of her sombre garments, Mary Samm was like such a ray of sunshine as she stole into Warwick prison. No doors, bolts or bars could keep her out; and the gaoler seemed to know it, as he preceded her down the damp, dark, stone passages: the walls and floor oozing moisture, and the ceiling blackened by the smoke of many candles. The prisons of England were all foul, ill-smelling, fever-haunted places at that time; and hardly any of them was worse than Warwick gaol.

William Dewsbury had earned the esteem of his keepers during his successive imprisonments which lasted altogether for nearly nineteen years. He was privileged now to lie away from the other criminals, who were herded together in the main building. He had been given a small apartment that looked towards the river on the far side of a courtyard, called the sergeants' ward. There was even a pump in the centre of this courtyard from whence his granddaughter might fetch him water daily, and the old man and the child were now privileged to take exercise together in the fresh air;—a great solace in the weary monotony of prison life. The gaoler unlocked the door of this sergeants' ward, and then, putting into Mary's hand the key of her grandfather's apartment, he retraced his steps to the outer gate. Mary sped across the cobblestones of the courtyard with joyful haste, unlocked the door, set down her baskets carefully, the big one first, the little one after it, and then, 'Grandfather, dear Grandfather,' she exclaimed, 'tell me, am I late? Hast thou missed thy little prison maid?'

The white-haired man, who was writing at a rough oak table, lifted his head as she entered. His face was worn and haggard; his eyes were sunken, but the smile that overspread his countenance, as he saw who had entered, was as bright as little Mary's own. Laying down his pen and pushing the papers from him, he held out his arms, and in another minute his granddaughter was clasped in his embrace.

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It would be hard to say which of the two was the happier as she placed the precious windflowers in his thin, blue-veined hand and told him all she had seen and done. Joan's messages were given; and then, 'But what hast thou been doing, dear Grandfather?' Mary asked in her turn. 'Hast thou been writing yet another Epistle to Friends to encourage them to stand firm? I see thy name very clear and bold at the foot: "William Dewsbury." I love thy name, Grandfather! It reminds me of our summer flowers and berries at home in Bedfordshire and of the heavy dews that fall on them. Thy name is as good as a garden, Grandfather, in itself.'

'It is thou who shouldst be in a garden thyself, my little Mary,' William Dewsbury answered sorrowfully. 'It is sad to bring thee back within these gloomy walls, a maid like thee.'

'Nay, Grandfather, it is not sad! Thou promised me that thou wouldst never say that again! My work was shewn me plainly; that I was to come and care for thee, and fetch thee thy provisions. It is full early yet for supper, although the light is fading; canst thou not tell me a little tale while I sit on thy knee? Afterwards we will eat our meal, and then thou wilt tell me more stories yet, more and more, to shorten the dark hours till the stars are shining brightly and it is time to go to rest.'

'Thou hast heard most of my tales so often, dear Granddaughter, as we sit here these dark evenings, that thou dost almost know them better than I myself,' the old man replied.

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'Yea, truly, I know them well,' answered Mary. 'Yet I am never weary of hearing of thy own life long ago. Tell me once more how thou wast brought off from being a soldier, and established in the path of peace.'

'Thou must have that tale well nigh by heart already, dear lamb,' the old man answered. 'Many a time I have told thee of my early days among the flocks, how I was a shepherd lad until I came to thine own age of twelve years. Thereafter, when I was thirteen years old, I was bound an

apprentice to a clothmaker in a town called Holdbeck, near Leeds. He was a godly man and strict, but sharp of tongue. I might have continued in that town to this day. But when I was fully come to man's estate the Civil War between King and Parliament broke out all over the land. Loath was I to take up arms, having been ever of a peaceable disposition, but when wise men, whom I revered, called upon me to fight for the civil and religious freedom of my native land, it seemed to me, in my dark ignorance of soul, that no other course remained honourably open to me. I feared if I did not join the Army of the Parliament that had sworn to curb the tyranny of Charles Stuart, then upon my head would rest the curse of Meroz, "who went not to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Thus I became a soldier, thinking that by so doing I was fighting for the Gospel—and forgetting that my Master was One who was called the Prince of Peace.

'Small peace, in truth, did I find in the ranks of the army of the Parliament—or indeed in any other place, until in the fulness of time it was made clear to me that I was but seeking the living amongst the dead, and looking without for that which was only to be found within.

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'Then my mind was turned within, by the power of the Lord, to wait on His counsel, the Light in my own conscience, to hear what the Lord would say: and the word of the Lord came unto me, and said, "Put up thy sword into thy scabbard.... Knowest thou not that if I need I could have twelve legions of Angels from my Father": which Word enlightened my heart, and discovered the mystery of iniquity, and that the Kingdom of Christ was within, and was spiritual, and my weapons against them must be spiritual, the Power of God.

'It was on this wise that I came to join the Army of the Lamb, and of His peaceful servants who follow Him whithersoever He goeth.'

'But, Grandfather, explain to me, how couldst thou leave the Parliamentary army thou wert pledged to serve?'

'A hard struggle I had truly to get free. Yet I did leave it, for I was yet more deeply pledged to Him Who had said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." At length my way was made more plain before me. I left the army and resumed my weaving. Thus I passed through deep baptizings of the Holy Ghost and of fire,—baptisms too deep for a child like thee to understand how they affected my soul.'

Mary nodded her head gently and said to herself, 'Perhaps I can understand already, better than my grandfather thinks. Have I not twice already in my young years been brought nigh to death? Even now death seemeth to me often not far away.'

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'Wouldst thou then fear to die, Grandfather?' she added aloud.

'No more than a bird would fear to leave its cage and fly, were once the door but open,' the old man answered. 'But the door is still securely fastened for me, it seems; and since I had thee, my little bird, to share my captivity I am no longer anxious to leave my cage. I was younger by four years than thou art now, my child, when I lost my fear of the grave. It was on this wise. I was but a little lad of eight years old, mourning and weeping for the loss of my dear father, who had been taken from us. As the tears streamed down my cheeks, methought I heard a Voice saying: "Weep for thyself; thy father is well." Never since that day, Mary child, have I doubted for one moment that for those who go hence in peace, it is well indeed.'

'Dear Grandfather, there is a sad sound in thy voice,' said little Mary. 'It is too dark by this time to see thy face, but I cannot let thee be sad. How shall I cheer thee? Ah! I know! how could I have forgotten? My aunt charged me to say she hath news by a sure hand that my dear mother may be coming hither to visit thee and me before many days are over.'

'My daughter Mary is ever welcome,' said the old man dreamily, 'and in the darkness thy voice is so like to hers, I could almost deem she herself was sitting by my side. Already the young moon has disappeared behind the battlements of the castle. Yet I need not her silver light to tell me that thy hair is softer and straighter than thy mother's, and without the golden lights and twining curls that hers had when she was thy age.'

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'The moon truly has left us, Grandfather,' Mary interrupted, springing from his knee. 'Yet what matters the darkness while we are close together? I can still see to get thy supper ready for thee. Thou must eat first, and then we will talk further, until it is time to go to rest.'

Deftly the little prison maid moved about the bare cell, drawing her grandfather's chair to the rough oak table. On this she arranged the loaf of bread and bottle of milk from her basket, setting them and the earthenware mugs and platters out on the white cloth, to look as home-like as possible. The anemones in the centre still glimmered faintly as if shining by their own light. The simple meal was a very happy one. When it was finished and the remains had been cleared away and carefully replaced in the basket for to-morrow's needs, the stars were looking in through the prison bars.

'Now, one more story, Grandfather,' said Mary firmly, 'just one, before we go to rest.'

'I love to see thy small white face shining up at me through the gloom,' the old man answered. 'I will tell thee of my first meeting with George Fox. Hast thou ever heard that story?'

The little prison maid was far too wary to reply directly.

'Tell it to me now, Grandfather,' she replied evasively, and then, to turn the old man's thoughts in the right direction, 'thou hadst already left the army by that time?' she hazarded.

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'Ay, that I had,' answered Dewsbury. 'I had left it for several years, and a measure of Truth I had found for myself. Greatly I longed to proclaim it and to share my new-found happiness with

others. But the inward Voice spoke to me clearly and said: "Keep thee silent for six full years, until the year 1652 shall have come. Then shalt thou find more hungering and thirsting among the people than at the present time." So "I kept silence even from good words, though it was pain and grief to me." Thou knowest, Mary, even while I was yet in the army, many and deep exercisings had I had in my spirit, and such were still my portion at times. About this time, by the providence of God, I chanced to hear of a young woman living in the city of York, who was going through a like season of sorrow and anguish regarding her immortal soul. After due deliberation, I found it in my heart to pay her a visit. I did this and went on foot to York. When I came into her presence, at once we were made aware of each other's conditions. No sooner did we begin to converse than we found ourselves joined together in deep unity of spirit. Her spiritual exercises answered unto mine own, as in water face answereth to face. Dost thou understand, child, of what I am speaking?'

'I follow not thy language always with entire comprehension, dear Grandfather,' answered Mary with her usual precise honesty of speech, 'but it appears to me thy meaning is clear. I think that this young woman must likely have been my grandmother?'

William Dewsbury smiled. 'Thou art right,' he said, 'it was to be even so, in the fulness of time; that, however, was long after. Almost at once we became man and wife. There seemed no need to settle that between us. It had been settled for us by Him who brought us together. We knew it from the first moment that we saw each the other's face. Thy grandmother had in a measure joined herself unto the Anabaptists, therefore 'twas at one of their meetings that we were wed. The power of the Spirit was an astonishment unto them, and I have heard it said that never hath the Divine Presence been more felt in any assembly than it was that day. Thy grandmother resembled thee, my Mary, as thou wilt be when thou art a woman grown—when thou shalt be taller and rounder, and less slim and spare. Her eyes were darker than thine, and she had the same soft brown hair as thine, but with thy mother's golden threads in it, my Ann! Before she became my wife, she had been blessed with a plenty of this world's goods, but no sooner were we wed than her brother unjustly deprived her of her property. For myself, I cared not. Now that she was safely mine own, he was welcome to the land that should have been hers by right. Yet for her sake I strove to get it back, but in vain. Then did the enemy of souls reproach me for having brought her, whom I tenderly loved, into a state of poverty. In humiliation and lowliness of mind before the Lord, without yielding to the tempter, I desired Him to make me content to be what He would have me to be; and, in a moment, I was so filled with the presence of the Lord, that I was not able to bear the weight of the glory that was upon me. I desired the Lord, if He had any service for me to do, to withdraw, for I could not live; then I heard as it were a Voice say to me, "Thou art Mine, all in heaven and earth is Mine, and it is thine in Me; what I see good I will give unto thee, and unto thy wife and children."' [339]

'Poor Grandfather, that was a hard pass for thee,' murmured Mary, smoothing the old man's coat sleeve. 'But did not a great joy follow close upon thy trouble?' she prompted, 'a great joy on a moonshine night, not a dark one like this?' [340]

William Dewsbury's countenance kindled with fresh life and vigour. 'Yea, my child,' he answered, 'light did indeed illuminate us on that same moonshine night of which thou speakest, when we went, my Ann and I, to Lieutenant Roper's house to hear the Stranger preach. All our lives we had both been seeking, but now by the Power of the Lord, the time was come for us to find. We went to hear a Stranger. But no stranger was George Fox. Rather did we recognise him, from the first moment of that meeting, as the own brother of our souls. Up and down the length and breadth of the land I had journeyed, seeking for deliverance and for truth. Now, in my own county of Yorkshire, my deliverer was found. It was not alone the words he spake, though they were forcible and convincing, much more it was the irresistible Power of the Lord breathing through him that brought us to our knees. All men could see as they looked upon his goodly form, not then marred by cruel imprisonments and sufferings, that he was a man among ten thousand. But to me he was also a chosen vessel of the Lord; for power spoke through him, yea, to my very heart. I have told thee, Mary, of my long searchings after truth, and of those of my dear wife. There was no need to mention one of them to George. With the first words he spake it was clear to me that he knew them all, he could read our necessities like an open book. Well hath it been said of him that "he was a man of God endued with a clear and wonderful depth; a discernor of other men's spirits, and very much a master of his own." Our hearts clave unto him at once. We could scarcely restrain ourselves until the meeting should be at an end, to disclose our inmost souls unto him. Then at last, when all the multitude had departed, we watched Friend George set out on his homeward way. We followed him in all haste, my Ann and I, until we came up with him in a lonely field. The moon shone full on his face and on our seeking faces, revealing us to each other. At first he gazed on us as if we were strangers. For all we had longed ardently to tell him, we found no words. Only a long time we stood together silently, we three, with the dumb kine slumbering around us in the dewy meadows; we three, revealed to one another in the full light. Then at last we confessed to the Truth before him, and from him we received Truth again. There is no Scripture to warrant the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the face of a child and calling that Baptism; but there is a Scripture for being baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. That true essential Baptism did our spirits receive in very deed that night from God's own minister of His Everlasting Gospel. [341]

'Thus, then and there, were we three knit together in soul; and the Lord's Power was over all.'

The old man's voice died away into silence. His thoughts were far off in the past. The loneliness of the prison was forgotten, little Mary knew that her evening's task was done. Very gently she flitted from his side, arranged his bed for the night, and then slipped, noiselessly as a shadow, [342]

into her little inner cell, scarcely larger than a cupboard. Here she undressed in the darkness and laid herself down on her little straw pallet on the floor. But she had brought the precious windflowers with her. 'They are so white, they will be like company through the dark night hours,' she said to herself, placing the glass close to her bed. Presently, through a tiny slit of window high up in the prison wall, one sentinel star looked down into the narrow cell. It peeped in upon a small white figure straight and slim amid the surrounding blackness of the cell, with 'dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane'; but Mary's eyes were wide open, her ears were listening intently for her grandfather's softest call.

Gradually the ray of starlight crept up the prison wall and disappeared; soon other stars one by one looked in at the narrow window and passed upwards also on their high steep pathways; gradually the eyelids closed, and the long dark lashes lay upon the white cheeks. Drowsily little Mary thought to herself, 'I am glad my mother will soon be here, but it hath been a very happy evening. Truly I am glad I came to help dear grandfather, and to be his little prison maid.'

Only one starry white windflower, clasped tight in her fingers through the long night hours, gradually drooped and died.

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XXII. AN UNDISTURBED MEETING

ToC

'It was impossible to ignore the Quaker because he would not be ignored. If you close his meeting-house he holds it in the street; if you stone him out of the city in the evening, he is there in the morning with his bleeding wounds still upon him.... You may break the earthen vessel, but the spirit is invincible and that you cannot kill.'—
JOHN WILHELM ROWNTREE.

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'Interior calmness means interior and exterior strength.'—J. RENDEL HARRIS.

'Be nothing terrified at their threats of banishment, for they cannot banish you from the coasts and sanctuary of the Living God.'—MARGARET FOX.

'Grant us grace to rest from all sinful deeds and thoughts, to surrender ourselves wholly unto Thee, to keep our souls still before Thee like a still lake; that so the beams of Thy love may be mirrored therein, and may kindle in our hearts the beams of faith, and love, and prayer. May we, through such stillness and hope, find strength

*and gladness in Thee O God, now, and
for evermore.*—*JOACHIM EMBDEN, 1595.*

*'For the soul that is close to GOD
In the folded wings of prayer,
Passion no more can vex,
Infinite peace is there.'*
EDWIN HATCH.

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XXII. AN UNDISTURBED MEETING

Quiet and lonely now stands the small old farmhouse of Drawwell, on the sunny slope of a hill, under the shadow of the great fells. To this day the old draw-well behind the house, which gives its name to the homestead, continues to yield its refreshing draught of pure cold water. 'It is generally full, even in times of drought, and never overflows.'^[32] To this day, also, the 'living water,' drawn in many a 'mighty Meeting' held around that well in the early years of Quakerism, continues to refresh thirsty souls.

It was to Drawwell Farm that George Fox came with his hosts Thomas and John Blaykling, on Whitsun Wednesday evening in June 1652, at the end of Sedbergh Fair. From Drawwell he accompanied them to Firbank Chapel, the following Sunday forenoon. There, high up on the opposite fell, he was moved, as he says in his Journal, to 'sit down upon the rock on the mountain' and 'discourse to over a thousand people, amongst whom I declared God's everlasting Truth and word of life freely and largely, for about the space of three hours, whereby many were convinced.'

More than once in after days, George Fox returned again thankfully to Drawwell, seeking and finding rest and refreshment for soul and body under its hospitable, low, stone roof, as he went up and down on those endless journeys of his, throughout the length and breadth of England, whereby he 'kept himself in a perpetual motion, begetting souls unto God.'

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Many hallowed memories cling about Drawwell Farm,—as closely as the silvery mist clings to every nook and cranny of its walls in damp weather,—but none more vivid than that of the Undisturbed Meeting of 1665.

George Fox was not present that day. His open-air wanderings, and his visits to the home under the great fells were alike at an end for a time, while in the narrow prison cells of Lancaster and Scarborough he was bearing witness, after a different fashion, to the freedom of the Spirit of the Lord. George Fox was not among the guests at Drawwell. No 'mighty Meeting,' as often at other times, was gathered there that day. There was only a company of humble men and women seated on forms and chairs under the black oak rafters of the big barn that adjoins the house, since the living-room was not spacious enough to hold them all with ease, although their numbers were not much above a score.

The Master and Mistress of Drawwell were present of course. Good Farmer Blaykling, with his ever ready courtesy and kindness, looked older now than on the day, thirteen years before, when he and his father had brought the young preacher back with them from the Fair. He himself had known latterly what it was to suffer 'for Truth's sake,' as some extra furrows on his brow had testified plainly since the day when 'Priest John Burton of Sedbergh beat John Blaykling and pulled him by the hair off his seat in his high place.' Happily that outbreak had passed over, and all seemed quiet this Sunday morning, as he took his place in the big barn. His wife sat by his side; around them were their children (none of them young), the farm lads and lasses, and several families of neighbouring Friends. But it chanced that the youngest person present, one of the farm lasses, was well into her teens.

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'Surely it was the loving-kindness of the Lord' (motherly Mistress Blaykling was wont to testify in after years) 'that brought the ordeal only upon us, grown men and women, and not upon any tender babes.' The Meeting began, much like any other Meeting in that peaceful country, where Friends ever loved to gather under the shadow of the hills and the yet mightier overshadowing of the Spirit of God. The Dove of Peace brooded over the company. Even as the unseen water bubbled in the dark depths of the old draw-well close by, so, in the deep stillness, already some hearts were becoming conscious of—

'The bubbling of the hidden springs,
That feed the world.'

Soon, out of the living Silence would have been born the fresh gift of living speech....

When suddenly, into all this peace, there came the clattering of horses' hoofs along the stony road that leads to the farm, followed by loud voices and a pistol shot, as a body of troopers trotted right up to the homestead. Finding that deserted and receiving no answers to their shouts, they proceeded to the barn itself in search of the assembled Friends. The officer in charge was a young Ensign, Lawrence Hodgson, a very gay gentleman indeed, a gentleman of the Restoration, when not only courtiers but soldiers too, knew well what it was to be courtly.

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He came from Dent, 'with other officers of the militia and soldiers.' Now Dent was a place of importance, in those days, and looked down on even Sedbergh as a mere village. Wherefore to be sent off to a small farm in the outskirts of Sedbergh in search of a nest of Quakers was a paltry job at best for these fine gentlemen from Dent. Naturally, they set about it, cursing and swearing with a will, to shew what brave fellows they were. For here were all these Quakers whom they had been sent to harry, brazening out their crime in the full light of day. By Act of Parliament it had been declared, not so long ago either, that any Quakers who 'assembled to the number of five or more persons at any one time, and in any one place, under pretence of joining in a religious worship not authorised by law, were, on conviction, to suffer merely fines or imprisonment for their first and second offences, but for the third, they were to be liable to be transported to any of His Majesty's plantations beyond seas.' A serious penalty this, in those days second only to death itself, and a terror to the most hardened of the soldiery; but here was a handful of humble farmfolk, deliberately daring such a punishment unafraid.

'Stiff-necked Quakers—you shall answer for this,' shouted Ensign Hodgson as he entered 'cursing and swearing' (so says the old account) 'and threatening that if Friends would not depart and disperse he would kill them and slay and what not.' 'You look like hardened offenders, all of you, and I doubt this is not a first offence.' So saying, the Ensign set spurs to his horse and rode up and down the barn, overturning forms and chairs, slashing at the women Friends with the flat of his sword, while some of the roughest of his followers poked the sharp points of their blades through the coats of the men, 'just to remind you, Quaker dogs, of what we could do, an' we chose.'

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Amid all this noise and hurly-burly, the men and women Friends sat on in stillness as long as possible. Only when their seats were actually overturned, they rose to their feet and stood upright in their places. They were ready to be beaten or trampled upon, if necessary; but they would not, of their own will, quit their ground. Strangely enough, the wives did not rush to their husbands or cling to them; the men did not seek to protect the women-folk. They all remained, even the lads and lasses, self-poised as it were, one company still; resting, as long as they could, quietly, in the inward citadel of peace. In spite of all the hubbub, the true spirit of worship was not disturbed.

At last the soldiers, determined not to be baffled, came to yet closer quarters and drove their unresisting victims, willy nilly, before them from under the sheltering rafters of the barn. The Friends were roughly hustled down the steep hillside and driven hither and thither, but still the meeting was not interrupted, for their hearts could not be driven out from the overshadowing presence of God.

So the great fells looked down upon a strange scene a few minutes later,—a strange scene, yet one all too common in those days. A cavalcade of glittering horsemen with their flowing perukes, ruffles, gay coats, plumed hats, and all the extravagances of the costume of even the fighting man of 'good King Charles's golden days.' In the centre of this gay throng, a little company of Friends in their plain garments of homespun and duffel, moving along, with sober faces and downcast eyes, speaking never a word as their captors prepared to force them to their destination—the Justice's house at Ingmire Hall near Sedbergh.

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Now from Drawwell Farm to Ingmire is some little distance. The way is hilly, and the roads are narrow and rough. Bad going it is on those roads even to-day, and far worse in the times of which I write. Therefore the troopers quickly grew weary of their task, weary of trying to rein in their mettlesome horses to keep pace with the slow steps of their prisoners, weary, too, of even the sport of pricking at these last with their swords, to try to make them go faster.

They had barely reached the bottom of the slope when Ensign Hodgson, ever a restless youth, lost patience. As soon as he found his horse on a bit of level road, he called to his men, 'Halloo! here's our chance for a canter!—We'll leave the Lambs to follow us to the slaughter-house at their own sweet will.' Then, seeing mingled relief and consternation on the men's faces, he slapped his thighs with a loud laugh and said: 'Ye silly fellows, have no fear! No Quaker ever yet tried to escape from gaol, nor ever will. We can trust them to follow us in our absence as well as if we were here to drive them. Quakers haven't the wit to seek after their own safety.'

The audacity of the plan tickled the troopers. Following Hodgson's example, they, one and all, raised their plumed hats and, rising high in their stirrups, bowed with mock courtesy, as they took leave of their prisoners.

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'Farewell, sweet Lambkins,' called out the Ensign, 'hasten your Quaker pace and meet us at the slaughter-house at Ingmire Hall as fast as you can, OR' ... he cocked his pistol at them, and then, dashing it up, fired a shot into the air. With wild shouting and laughter the whole troop disappeared round a turn of the road. 'To Sedbergh,' they cried, 'to Sedbergh first! Plenty of time for a carouse, and yet to arrive at Ingmire Hall as soon as the Lambs!'

Arriving in Sedbergh at a canter they slackened rein at a tavern and refreshed themselves with a draught of ale and an hour's carouse, before setting off to meet their prisoners at the Justice's

house.

When they arrived at Ingmire Hall, to their dismay, not a Quaker was in sight. Sending his men off to scour the roads, Ensign Hodgson himself dismounted with an oath on Justice Otway's doorstep, and went within to inquire if the Quakers from Drawwell had yet arrived.

'The Quakers, WHOM YOU WERE SENT TO FETCH from Drawwell and for whose non-appearance you are yourself wholly responsible, HAVE NOT ARRIVED,' answered the Justice tartly, raising his eyebrows as if to emphasise his words. All men knew that good Sir John Otway was no friend to persecution; and gay Lawrence Hodgson was no favourite of his.

With a louder oath than that with which he had entered the house, the Ensign flung out of it again, and rode off at the head of his men—all of them discomfited by their vain search, for not a Quaker was to be seen in the neighbourhood. The 'Lambs' were less docile than had been supposed. After all, they had successfully managed to avoid the 'slaughter-house'; they must have retreated to Drawwell, if they had not even seized the opportunity to escape. [352]

Back again along the road to Drawwell, therefore, the whole sulky company of horsemen were obliged to return, much out of humour. Cursing their leader's carelessness, as he doubtless cursed his own folly, they trotted along, gloomily enough, till they came to the bend of the road where the homestead comes in sight, and where they had taken leave of their prisoners. There, as they turned the corner, suddenly they all stopped, thunderstruck, pulling their horses back on to their haunches in their amazement.

The Lambs had not escaped! Though they had not followed meekly to the slaughter-house, at least they had made no endeavours to flee, or even to return to the sheepfold on the hillside above them. All the time that the soldiers had been carousing in the alehouse, or searching the lanes, the little company of Friends had remained in the very same spot where the soldiers had left them nearly two hours before.

And there they were still, every one of them;—sitting on the green, grassy bank by the wayside. There they were, quietly going on with their uninterrupted worship. Yes; out there, under the shadow of the everlasting hills, untroubled by the shadow of even a passing cloud of fear, the Friends calmly continued to wait upon God.

FOOTNOTES:

[32] This paragraph is taken from E.E. Taylor's description of Drawwell.

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XXIII. BUTTERFLIES IN THE FELLS

ToC

*'My concern for God and His holy,
eternal truth was then in the North,
where God had placed and set me.'*—
MARGARET FOX.

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'I should be glad if thou would incline to come home, that thou might get a little Rest, methinks its the most comfortable when one has a home to be there, but the Lord give us patience to bear all things'—M. FOX to G. Fox, 1681.

'I did not stir much abroad during the time I now stayed in the North; but when Friends were not with me spent pretty much time in writing books and papers for Truth's service.'—G. FOX.

'All dear Friends press forward in the straight way.'—JOHN AUDLAND.

'Is not liberty of conscience in religion a fundamental?... Liberty of conscience is a natural right, and he that would have it, ought to give it, having liberty to settle what he likes for the public.... This I say is fundamental: it ought to be so. It is for us and the generations to come.'—OLIVER CROMWELL.

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XXIII. BUTTERFLIES IN THE FELLS

Above all other Saints in the Calendar, the good people of Newcastle-upon-Tyne do hold in highest honour Saint Nicholas, since to him is dedicated the stately Church that is the pride and glory of their town. Everyone who dwells in the bonnie North Countrie knows well that shrine of Saint Nicholas, set on high on the steep northern bank of the River Tyne. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole North, is St. Nicholas. Therefore, in olden times, one Roger Thornton, a wealthy merchant of the town, saw fit to embellish it yet further with a window at the Eastern end, of glass stained with colours marvellous to behold. Men said indeed that Merchant Roger clearly owed that window to the Saint, seeing that when he first entered the town scarce a dozen years before, he came but as a poor pedlar, possessed of naught but 'a hap, a halfpenny, and a lambskin,' whereas these few years spent under the shadow of the Saint's protection had made him already a man of great estate.

Roger Thornton it was who gave the Eastern window to the Church, but none know now, for certain, who first embellished the shrine with its crowning gift, the tall steeple that gathers to itself not only the affection of all those who dwell beneath its shadow, but also their glory and their pride. Some believe it was built by King David of Scotland: others by one Robert de Rede, since his name may still be seen carven upon the stone by him who has skill to look. But in truth the architect hath carried both his name and his secret with him, and the craftsmen of many another larger and more famous city have sought in vain to build such another tower. By London Bridge and again at Edinburgh, in the capitals of two fair kingdoms, may indeed be seen a steeple built in like fashion, but far less fair. One man alone, he whose very name hath been forgotten, hath known how to swing with perfect grace a pinnaced Crown, formed of stone yet delicate as lacework, aloft in highest air. Therefore to this day doth the Lantern Tower of St. Nicholas remain without a peer.

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A Lantern Tower the learned call it, and indeed the semblance of an open lantern doth rise, supported by pinnacles, in the centre of the Tower; but to most men it resembles less a lantern than an Imperial crown swung high in air, under a canopy of dazzling blue. It is a golden crown in the daytime, as it shines on high above the hum of the city streets in the clear mid-day light. It becomes a fiery crown when the sun sets, for then the golden fleurs-de-lys on each of the eight golden vanes atop of the pinnacles gleam and glow like sparks of flame, climbing higher and ever higher into the steep and burnished air. But it is a jewelled crown that shines by night over the slumbering town beneath; for then the turrets and pinnacles are gemmed with glittering stars.

That Tower, to those who have been born under it, is one of the dearest things upon this earth. Judge then of the dismay that was caused to every man, woman, and child, when Newcastle was

being besieged by the Scottish army during the Civil Wars, at the message that came from the general of the beleaguering army, that were the town not surrendered to him without delay, he would train his guns on the Tower of St. Nicholas itself, and lay that first in ruins. Happily Sir John Marley, the English Commander, who was likewise Mayor of the Town, was more than a match for the canny Scot. And this was the answer that the gallant Sir John sent back from the beleaguered town: that General Leslie might train his guns on the Tower and welcome, if such were his pleasure, but if he did so, before he brought down one single stone of it, he would be obliged to take the lives of his own Scottish prisoners, whom the guns would find as their first target there.

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Sir John was as good as his word. The Scottish prisoners were strung out in companies along the Tower ledges, and kept there day after day, till the Scottish Army had retreated, baffled for that time, and St. Nicholas was saved. Therefore, thanks to Sir John Marley and his nimble wit, the pinnacled Crown still soars up aloft into the sky, keeping guard over the city of Newcastle to-day, as it hath done throughout the centuries.

Little did the Friends, who came to Newcastle a few years after the Scotsmen had departed, regard the beauty of St. Nicholas or its Tower. They came also desiring to besiege the town, though with only spiritual weapons. The Church to them was but a 'steeple-house,' and the Tower akin to an idol. Thus slowly do men learn that 'the ways unto God are as the number of the souls of the children of men,' and that wherever a man truly seeketh God in whatsoever fashion, so he do but seek honestly and with his whole heart, God will consent to be found of him.

Yet though the Friends who came to Newcastle came truly to besiege the town for love's sake, not with love did the town receive them. 'Ruddy-faced John Audland' was the first to come, he who had been one of the preachers that memorable Sunday at Firbank Chapel, and who, having yielded place to George Fox, had been in his turn mightily convinced of Truth. 'A man beloved of God, and of all good men,' was John Audland, 'of an exceedingly sweet disposition, unspeakably loving and tenderly affectionate, always ready to lend a helping hand to the weak and needy, open-hearted, free and near to his friends, deep in the understanding of the heavenly mysteries.' Yet little all this availed him. In Newcastle as elsewhere he preached the Truth, 'full of dread and shining brightness on his countenance.' Certain of the townfolk gathered themselves unto him and became Friends, but the authorities would have none of the new doctrine, and straightway clapped him into gaol. There he lay for a time, till at last he was set free and went his way.

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After him came George Fox, when some thirteen years had gone by since Sir John Marley saved the Tower, and General Leslie had returned discomfited to Edinburgh. From Edinburgh, too, George Fox had come on his homeward way after that eventful journey to the Northern Kingdom, when 'the infinite sparks of life sparkled about him as soon as his horse set foot across the Border.' Weary he was of riding when he reached the gates of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Yet 'gladdened' in his heart was he, for as he had passed by Berwick-upon-Tweed, the Governor there had 'shewn himself loving towards Friends,' and, though only a little Meeting had been gathered, 'the Lord's power had been over all.' As Fox and his companion rode through the woods and beside the yellow brown streams and over the heathery moors of Northumberland, they found and visited many scattered Friends whose welcome had made George Fox's heart rejoice. But no sooner had he entered the town than all his gladness left him, at the grievous tale the faithful Friends of Newcastle had to tell. Ever since John Audland's preaching had stirred the souls of the townfolk, the priests and professors had done their best to prevent 'this pernicious poison from spreading.' Five Newcastle priests had written a book, entitled 'the Perfect Pharisee under Monkish Holiness,' in which they blamed Friends for many things, but above all for their custom of preaching in the streets and open places. 'It is a pestilent heresy at best,' they said (though they used not these very words), 'yet did they keep it to themselves 'twere no great harm, but we find no place hears so much of Friends' religion as streets and market-places.'

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Yet even so their witness agreed not together. For while the priests accused Friends of too much preaching in public, a certain Alderman of the city, Thomas Ledger by name, put forth three other books against them. And his main charge was this—'THAT THE QUAKERS WOULD NOT COME INTO ANY GREAT TOWNS, BUT LIVED IN THE FELLS LIKE BUTTERFLIES.'

George Fox, hearing these things from the Friends assembled to greet him at the entrance to the town, was tried in his spirit, and determined that the matter should be dealt with, without more ado. The Journal saith: 'The Newcastle priests wrote many books against us, and one Ledger, an Alderman of the town, was very envious of truth and friends. He and the priests had said, "the Quakers would not come into great towns, but lived in the fells like butterflies." I took Anthony Pearson with me and went to this Ledger, and several others of the Aldermen, desiring to have a meeting among them, seeing they had written so many things against us: for we were now come, I told them, into their great town. But they would not yield we should have a meeting, neither would they be spoke with, save only this Ledger and one other. I queried: "Had they not called Friends Butterflies, and said we would not come into any great towns? And now they would not come at us, though they had printed books against us; WHO ARE THE BUTTERFLIES NOW?"

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'As we could not have a public meeting amongst them we got a little meeting amongst friends and friendly people at the Gate-side. As I was passing by the market-side, the power of the Lord rose in me, to warn them of the day of the Lord that was coming upon them. And not long after all the priests were turned out of their profession, when the King came in.'

Thus did those same envious priests, who had accused Friends of living like butterflies in the fells, become themselves as butterflies, being chased out of the great town, and forced to flit to and fro in the open country. The Friends, meanwhile, increased on both sides of the river Tyne. In 1657 George Whitehead visited Newcastle, and was kindly received in the house of one John Dove, who had been a Lieutenant in the army before he became a Friend.

Whitehead, himself one of the 'Valiant Sixty,' writes:—'The Mayor of the town (influenced by the priests), would not suffer us to keep any meeting within the Liberty of the Town, though in Gate-side (being out of the Mayor's Liberty), our Friends had settled a meeting at our beloved Friend Richard Ubank's house.... The first meeting we then endeavoured to have within the town of Newcastle was in a large room taken on purpose by some Friends.... The meeting was not fully gathered when the Mayor of the Town and his Officers came, and by force turned us out of the meeting; and not only so, but out of the Town also; for the Mayor and his Company commanded us and went along with us as far as the Bridge over the river Tyne that parts Newcastle and Gates-head, upon which Bridge there is a Blew Stone to which the Mayor's Liberty extends; when we came to the stone, the Mayor gave his charge to each of us in these words: "I charge and command you in the name of His Highness the Lord Protector. That you come no more into Newcastle to have any more meetings there at your peril."' [361]

The Friends, therefore, continued to meet at the place that is called Gateside (though some say that Goat's head was the name of it at first), and there they remained till, after divers persecutions, they were at length suffered to assemble within the walls of Newcastle itself, upon the north side of the 'Blew Stone' above the River Tyne. Here, in 1698, they bought a plot of ground, within a stone's-throw of St. Nicholas, facing towards the street that the townsmen call Pilgrim Street, since thither in olden days did many weary pilgrims wend their way, seeking to come unto the Mound of Jesu on the outskirts of the town. And that same Mound of Jesu is now called by men, Jesu Mond, or shorter, Jesmond, and no longer is it the resort of pilgrims, but rather of merchants and pleasure seekers. Yet still beside the Pilgrim Street stands the Meeting-House built by those other pilgrim souls, those Quakers, whom the men of the town in scorn called 'butterflies.' And there, so far from flitting over the fells, they have continued to hold their Meetings and worship God after their own fashion within those walls for more than two hundred years. [362]

Before ever this had come to pass, and while the Quakers of Newcastle were still without an assembling place on their own side of the river, it happened that a certain man among them, named Robert Jeckel, being nigh unto death (though as yet he knew it not), was seized with a vehement desire to behold George Fox yet once more in the flesh, since full sixteen years had gone by since his visit to the town.

Wherefore this same Robert Jeckel, hearing that his beloved friend was now again to be found at Swarthmoor, dwelling there in much seclusion, seeking to regain the strength that had been sorely wasted in long and terrible imprisonments,—this man, Robert Jeckel, would no longer be persuaded or gainsaid, but set out at once with several others, who were like-minded and desirous to come as speedily as might be to Swarthmoor.

In good heart they set forth, but that same day, and before they had come even as far as unto Hexham, Robert Jeckel was seized with a sore sickness, whereat his friends entreated him to return the way he came to his own home and tender wife. But he refused to be dissuaded and would still press forward. At many other places by the way he was ill and suffering, yet he would not be satisfied to turn back or to stop until he should arrive at Swarthmoor. And thither after many days of sore travel he came. [363]

The Mistress of Swarthmoor was now no longer Margaret Fell but Margaret Fox. Eight full years after the death of her honoured husband, Judge Fell, and after long waiting to be sure that the thing was from the Lord, she had been united in marriage with her beloved friend, George Fox, unto whom she was ever a most loving and dutiful wife. Therefore, when Robert Jeckel arrived with his friends before the high arched stone gateway that led into the avenue that approacheth Swarthmoor Hall, it was Mistress Fox, who, with her husband, came to meet their guests. Close behind followed her youngest daughter, Rachel Fell, the Seventh Sister of Swarthmoor Hall. She, the Judge's pet and plaything in her childhood, was now a woman grown. Seeing by Robert Jeckel's countenance that he was sorely stricken, Mistress Fox led him straight to the fair guest chamber of Swarthmoor, where she and her daughter nursed him with their wonted tenderness and skill, hoping thus, if it might be, to restore him to his home in peace. But it had been otherwise ordained, for Robert Jeckel, arriving at Swarthmoor on the second day of the fifth month that men call July, lay sick there but for nine days and then he died.

During his illness many and good words did he say, among others these: 'Though I was persuaded to stay by the way (being indisposed), before I came to this place, yet this was the place where I would have been, and the place where I should be, whether I live or die.' [364]

George Fox, being himself, as I say, weakened by his long suffering in Worcester Gaol, was yet able to visit Robert Jeckel as he lay a-dying, and exhorted him to offer up his soul and spirit to the Lord, who gives life and breath to all and takes it again. Whereupon Robert Jeckel lifted up his hands and said, 'The Lord is worthy of it, and I have done it.' George Fox then asked him if he could say, 'Thy will, oh God, be done on earth as it is in heaven,' and he, lifting up his hands again, and looking upwards with his eyes, answered cheerfully, 'he did it.'

Then, he in his turn, exhorting those about him, said: 'Dear Friends, dwell in love and unity together, and keep out of jars, strife, and contentions, and be sure to continue faithful to the end.' And speaking of his wife, he said, 'As to my wife, I give her up freely to the Lord; for she loveth the Lord and He will love her. I have often told my dear wife, as to what we have of outward things, it was the Lord's first before it was ours; and in that I desire she may serve the truth to the end of her days.'

'In much patience the Lord did keep him, and he was in perfect sense and memory all the time of his weakness, often saying, "Dear Friends, give me up and weep not for me, for I am content with the Lord's doings." And often said that he had no pain, but gradually declined, often lifting up his hands while he had strength, praising the Lord, and made a comfortable end on the 11th day of the fifth month, 1676.'

Thus did the joyful spirit of this dear friend at last take flight for the Heavenly Country, when, as he said himself in his sickness, 'Soul separated from body, the Spirit returning to God that gave it, and the body to the earth from whence it came.'

Yea, verily; his soul took flight for the Heavenly Country, happier in its escape from the worn chrysalis of his weak and weary body than any glad-winged butterfly that flitteth over the fells of his own beloved Northumberland.

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XXIV. THE VICTORY OF AMOR STODDART

'From the heart of the Puritan sects sprang the religion of the Quakers, in which many a war-worn soldier of the Commonwealth closed his visionary eyes.'—G.M. TREVELYAN.

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'To be a man of war means to live no longer than the life of the world, which is perishing; but to be a man of the Holy Spirit, a man born of God, a man that wars not after the flesh, a man of the Kingdom of God, as well as of England—that means to live beyond time and age and men and the world, to be gathered into that life which is Eternal.'—JOHN SALTMARSH, 1647.

'Keep out of all jangling, for all that are in the transgression are out from the law of love; but all that are in the law of love come to the Lamb's power.'—G. FOX.

'He changed his weapons, warfare, and Captain ... when he 'listed himself under the banner of Christ.'—W. PENN,

A prayer for the soldier spirit.

'Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest: to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will: through Jesus Christ our Lord.'—IGNATIUS LOYOLA.

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XXIV. THE VICTORY OF AMOR STODDART

'Christ disarmed Peter, and in so doing
He unbuckled the sword of every
soldier.'

TERTULLIAN.

A dauntless fighter in his day was Captain Amor Stoddart, seeing he had served in the Parliamentary Army throughout the Civil Wars. In truth, it was no child's play to command a body of men as tough as Oliver's famous Ironsides. Therefore Captain Stoddart had doubtless come through many a bloody struggle, and fought in many a hardly fought contest during those long wars, before the final victory was won.

But now, not a single memory remains of his small individual share in those

'Old unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago.'

His story has come down to us as a staunch comrade and a valiant fighter, in a different kind of warfare. His victory was won in a struggle in which all the visible weapons were on the other side; when, through long years, he had only the armour of meekness and of love wherewith to oppose hardship and violence and wrong.

Wherefore, of this fight and of this victory, his own name remains as a symbol and a sign. Not in vain was he called at his birth 'Amor,' which, in the Latin tongue signifies 'Love,' as all men know.

The first meeting between Captain Amor Stoddart and him who was to be thereafter his spirit's earthly captain in the new strange warfare that lay before him, happened on this wise.

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In the year 1648, when the long Civil Wars were at last nearing their close, George Fox visited Mansfield in Nottinghamshire and held a meeting with the professors (that is to say the Puritans) there. It was in that same year of 1648, when every day the shadow was drawing nearer of the fatal scaffold that should be erected within the Palace at Whitehall the following January. But although that shadow crept daily nearer, men, for the most part, as yet perceived it not. Fox himself was at this time still young, as years are counted, being only twenty-four years of age. Four other summers were yet to pass before that memorable day when he should climb to the summit of old Pendle Hill, and, after seeing there the vision of a 'great people to be gathered,' should begin himself to gather them at Firbank and Swarthmoor and many another place.

George, though still young in years, was already possessed not only of a strange and wonderful presence, but also of a gift to perceive and to draw the souls of other men, and to knit them to his own.

'I went again to Mansfield,' he says in his Journal, 'where was a Great Meeting of professors and people, where I was moved to pray; and the Lord's power was so great that the house seemed to be shaken. When I had done, one of the professors said, "It was now as in the days of the Apostles, when the house was shaken where they were."'

After Fox had finished praying, with this vehemence that seemed to shake the house, one of the professors began to pray in his turn, but in such a dead and formal way that even the other professors were grieved thereat and rebuked him. Whereupon this praying professor came in all humility to Fox, beseeching him that he would pray again. 'But,' says Fox, 'I could not pray in any man's will.' Still, though he could not make a prayer to order, he agreed to meet with these same professors another day.

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This second meeting was another 'Great Meeting.' From far and wide the professors and people gathered to see the man who had learnt to pray. But the professors did not truly seem to care to learn the secret. They went on talking and arguing together. They were 'jangling,' as Fox calls it (that is to say, using endless strings of words to talk about sacred things, without really feeling the truth of them in their hearts), jangling all together, when suddenly the door opened and a grave young officer walked in. "'Tis Captain Amor Stoddart, of Noll's Army,' the professors said one to another, as, hardly stopping for a moment at the stranger's entrance, they continued to 'jangle' among themselves. They went on, speaking of the most holy things, talking even about the blood of Christ, without any feeling of solemnity, till Fox could bear it no longer.

'As they were discoursing of it,' he says, 'I saw through the immediate opening of the invisible Spirit, the blood of Christ; and cried out among them saying, "Do you not see the blood of Christ? See it in your hearts, to sprinkle your hearts and consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" For I saw the blood of the New Covenant how it came into the heart. This startled the professors who would have the blood only without them, and not in them. But Captain Stoddart was reached, and said, "Let the youth speak, hear the youth speak," when he saw that they endeavoured to bear me down with many words.'

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'Captain Stoddart was reached.' He, the soldier, accustomed to the terrible realities of a battlefield, knew the sight of blood for himself only too well. George Fox's words may seem perhaps mysterious to us now, but they came home to Amor and made him able to see something of the same vision that Fox saw. We may not be able to see that vision ourselves, but at least we can feel the difference between having the Blood of Christ, that is the Life of Christ, within our hearts, and only talking and 'jangling' about it, as the professors were doing. 'Captain Stoddart was reached.' Having been 'reached,' having seen, if only for one moment, something of what the Cross had meant to Christ, and having felt His Life within, Amor became a different man. To take the lives of his fellowmen, to shed their blood for whom that Blood had been shed, was henceforth for him impossible. He unbuckled his sword, and resigning his captaincy in Oliver's conquering army, just when victory was at hand after the stern struggle, he followed his despised Quaker teacher into obscurity.

For seven long years we hear nothing more of him. Then he appears again at George Fox's side, no longer Captain Stoddart the Officer, but plain Amor Stoddart, a comrade and helper of the first Publishers of Truth.

In the year 1655, Fox's Journal records: 'On the sixth day I had a large meeting near Colchester^[33] to which many professors and the Independent teachers came. After I had done speaking and was stepped down from the place on which I stood, one of the Independent teachers began to make a "jangling" [it seems they still went on jangling, even after seven long years!], which Amor Stoddart perceiving said, "Stand up again, George!" for I was going away and did not at the first hear them.'

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If Amor Stoddart had unbuckled his sword, evidently he had not lost the power of grappling with difficulties, of swiftly seeing the right thing to do, and of giving his orders with soldier-like precision.

'Stand up again, George!'—a quick, military command, in the fewest possible words. George Fox was more in the habit of commanding other people than of being commanded himself; but he knew his comrade and obeyed without a word.

'I stood up again,' he says, 'when I heard the Independent [the man who had been jangling], and after a while the Lord's power came over him and all his company, who were confounded, and the Lord's truth was over all. A great flock of sheep hath the Lord in that country that feed in His pastures of life.'

Nevertheless, without Amor Stoddart the sheep would have gone away hungry, and would not have been fed at that meeting.

Again we hear of Amor a little later in the same year, still at George Fox's side, but this time not as a passive spectator, nor even merely as a resourceful comrade. He was now himself to be a sufferer for the Truth. He still lives for us through his share in a strange but wonderful scene of George Fox's life. A few months after the meeting at Colchester, the two friends visited Cambridge, and 'there,' says Fox in his Journal, 'the scholars, hearing of me, were up and were exceeding rude. I kept on my horse's back and rode through them in the Lord's power. "Oh," said they, "HE SHINES, HE GLISTERS," but they unhorsed Amor Stoddart before we could get to the inn. When we were in the inn they were so rude in the courts and the streets, so that the miners, colliers, and carters could never be ruder. And the people of the inn asked us 'what we would have for supper' as is the way of inns. "Supper," said I, "were it not that the Lord's power is over them, these rude scholars look as if they would pluck us in pieces and make a supper of us!"'

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After this treatment, the two friends might have been expected to keep away from Cambridge in the future; but that was not their way. Where the fight was hottest, there these two faithful soldiers of the Cross were sure to be found. The very next year saw Fox back in Cambridgeshire once more; and again Amor Stoddart was with him, standing by his side and sharing all dangers like a valiant and faithful friend.

'I passed into Cambridgeshire,' the Journal continues, 'and into the fen country, where I had many meetings, and the Lord's truth spread. Robert Craven, who had been Sheriff of Lincoln, was with me [it would be interesting to know more about Robert Craven, and where and how he was "reached"], and Amor Stoddart and Alexander Parker. We went to Crowland, a very rude place; for the townspeople were got together at the inn we went to, and were half drunk, both priest

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and people. I reprov'd them for their drunkenness and warn'd them of the day of the Lord that was coming upon all the wicked; exhorting them to leave their wickedness and to turn to the Lord in time. While I was thus speaking to them the priest and the clerk broke out into a rage, and got up the tongs and fire-shovel at us, so that had not the Lord's power preserved us we might have been murdered amongst them. Yet, for all their rudeness and violence, some received the truth then, and have stood in it ever since.'

George Fox was not the only man to find a faithful and staunch supporter in Amor Stoddart. There is another glimpse of him, again standing at a comrade's side in time of danger, but the comrade in this case is not Fox but 'dear William Dewsbury,' one of the best loved of all the early Friends.

Amor Stoddart was Dewsbury's companion that sore day at Bristol when the tidings came from New England overseas, that the first two Quaker Martyrs, William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson, had been hanged for their faith on Boston Common. Heavy at heart were the Bristol Friends at the news, and not they only, for assembled with them were some New England Friends who had been banished from their families and from their homes, under pain of the same death that the martyrs had suffered.

'We were bowed down unto our God,' Dewsbury writes, 'and prayer was made unto Him when there came a knocking at the door. It came upon my spirit that it was the rude people, and the life of God did mightily arise, and they had no power to come in until we were clear before our God. Then they came in, setting the house about with muskets and lighted matches. So after a season of this they came into the room, where I was and Amor Stoddart with me. I looked upon them when they came into the room, and they cried as fast as they could well speak, "We will be civil! We will be civil!"

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'I spoke these words, "See that you be so." They ran forth out of the room and came no more into it, but ran up and down in the house with their weapons in their hands, and the Lord God caused their hearts to fail and they passed away, and not any harm done to any of us.'

Eleven years after this pass in almost complete silence, as far as Amor is concerned. Occasionally we hear the bare mention of his name among the London Friends. One short entry in Fox's Journal speaks of him as having 'buried his wife.' Then the veil lifts again and shows one more glimpse of him. It is the last.

In 1670, twenty-two years after that first meeting at Mansfield, when Captain Stoddart came into the room, and said, 'Let the youth speak,' George Fox, now a man worn with his sufferings and service, came into another room to bid farewell to his old comrade as he lay a-dying. Fox himself had been brought near to death not long before, but he knew that his work was not yet wholly finished, he was not yet 'fully clear' in his Master's sight.

'Under great sufferings, sorrows, and oppressions I lay several weeks,' he writes in his Journal, 'whereby I was brought so low that few thought I could live. When those about me had given me up to die, I spoke to them to get me a coach to carry me to Gerard Roberts, about twelve miles off, for I found it was my place to go thither. So I went down a pair of stairs to the coach, and when I came to the coach I was like to have fallen down, I was so weak and feeble, but I got up into the coach, and some friends with me. When I came to Gerard's, after I had stayed about three weeks there, it was with me to go to Enfield. Friends were afraid of my removing, but I told them that I might safely go. When I had taken my leave of Gerard and had come to Enfield, I went first to visit Amor Stoddart, who lay very weak and almost speechless. I was moved to tell him "that he had been faithful as a man and faithful to God, and the immortal Seed of Life was his crown." Many more words I was moved to speak to him, though I was then so weak, I could scarcely stand, and within a few days after, Amor died.'

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That is all. Very simply he passes out of sight, having heard his comrade's 'well done':—this valiant soldier who renounced his sword.

His name, AMOR, still holds the secret of his power, his silent patience, and of his victory, for

'OMNIA VINCIT AMOR.'

FOOTNOTES:

- [33] It was on this visit to Colchester that George Fox had his farewell interview with James Parnell, imprisoned in the Castle.

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XXV. THE MARVELLOUS VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP 'WOODHOUSE'

'In the 17th Century England was peculiarly rich, if not in great mystics, at any rate in mystically minded men. Mysticism, it seems, was in the air; broke out under many disguises and affected many forms of life.'—E. UNDERHILL, 'Mysticism.'

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'He who says "Yes," responds, obeys, co-operates, and allows this resident seed of God, or Christ Light, to have full sway in him, becomes transformed thereby and recreated into likeness to Christ by whom the inner seed was planted, and of whose nature it is.'—RUFUS M. JONES.

'Through winds and tides, one compass guides.'—A.H. CLOUGH.

'Have mercy upon me, O God, for Thine ocean is so great, and my little bark is so small.'—Breton Fisherman's Prayer.

'Be faithful and still, till the winds cease and the storm be over.' ... 'Friends' fellowship must be in the Spirit, and all Friends must know one another in the Spirit and power of God.'—G. FOX.

'Christopher Holder and I are going ... in obedience to the will of our God, whose will is our joy.'—JOHN COPELAND. 1657.

'The log of the little "Woodhouse" has become a sacred classic.'—WILLIAM LITTLEBOY, Swarthmoor Lecture, 1917.

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OF THE GOOD SHIP 'WOODHOUSE'

Master Robert Fowler of Burlington was a well-known figure in all the fishing towns and villages along the Yorkshire coast in the year of grace 1657. A man of substance was he, a master mariner, well skilled in his craft; building his own ships and sailing them withal, and never to be turned back from an adventurous voyage. Many fine vessels he had, sailing over the broad waters, taking the Yorkshire cargoes of wool and hides to distant lands, and bringing back foreign goods in exchange, to be sold again at a profit on his return to old England's shores. Thus up and down the Yorkshire coast men spoke and thought highly of Master Robert Fowler's judgment in all matters pertaining to the sea. On land, too, he seemed prudent and skilful, though some folks looked at him askance of late years, since he had joined himself to that strange and perverse people known as the Quakers.

Yet, in spite of what his neighbours considered his new-fangled religion, Master Robert Fowler was prospering in all his worldly affairs. Even now on the sunny day when our story opens, he was hard at work putting the last touches to a new boat of graceful proportions and gallant curves, that bade fair to be a yet more notable seafarer than any of her distant sisters.

Why then did Master Robert Fowler pause more than once in his work to heave a deep sigh, and throw down his tools almost pettishly? Why did he suddenly put his fingers in his ears as if to shut out an unwelcome sound, resuming his work thereafter with double speed? No one was speaking to him. The mid-day air was very still. The haze that often broods over the north-east coast veiled the horizon. Sea and sky melted into one another till it was impossible to say where earth ended and heaven began. An unwonted silence reigned even on Burlington Quay. No sound was to be heard save for the tap, tap, tap of Master Robert Fowler's hammer. [382]

Again he dropped his tools. Again he looked up to the sky, as if he were listening to an unseen voice.

Someone was truly speaking to him, though no faintest sound vibrated on the air. His inward ear heard clearly these words—

'THOU HAST HER NOT FOR NOTHING.'

His eyes travelled proudly over the nearly completed vessel. Every one of her swelling curves he knew by heart; had learned to know and love through long months of toil. How still she lay, the beauty, still as a bird, poising on the sea. Ah! but the day was coming when she would spread her wings and skim over the ocean, buoyant and dainty as one of the terns, those sea-swallows that with their sharp white wings even now were hovering round her. Built for use she was too, not merely to take the eye. Although small of size more bales of goods could be stowed away under her shapely decks than in many another larger clumsier vessel. Who should know this better than Robert, her maker, who had planned it all?

For what had he planned her? [383]

Was it for the voyage to the Eastern Mediterranean that had been the desire of his heart for many years? How well he knew it, that voyage he had never made! Down the Channel he would go, past Ushant and safely across the Bay. Then, when Finisterre had dropped to leeward, it would be but a few days' sail along the pleasant coasts of Portugal till Gibraltar was reached. And then, heigh ho! for a fair voyage in the summer season, week after week over a calm blue sea to the land-locked harbour where flat-roofed, white-walled houses, stately palm-trees, rosy domes and minarets, mirrored in the still water, gazed down at their own reflections.

Was the *Woodhouse* for this?

He had planned her for this dream voyage.

Why then came that other Voice in his heart directly he began to build: 'FASHION THEE A SHIP FOR THE SERVICE OF TRUTH!' And now that she was nearly completed, why did the Voice grow daily more insistent, giving ever clearer directions?

What a bird she was! His own bird of the sea, his beautiful *Woodhouse*! So thought Master Robert Fowler. But then again came the insistent Voice within, speaking yet more clearly and distinctly than ever before: 'THOU HAST HER NOT FOR NOTHING.'

The vision of his sea-swallow, her white wings gleaming in the sun as she dropped anchor in that still harbour; the vision of the white and rose-coloured city stretched like an encircling arm around the turquoise waters, these dreams faded relentlessly from his sight. Instead he saw the *Woodhouse* beating up wearily against a bleak and rugged shore on which grey waves were breaking. Angry, white teeth those giant breakers showed; teeth that would grind a dainty boat to pieces with no more compunction than a dog who snaps at a fly. Must he take her there? A vision of that inhospitable shore was constantly with him as he worked. 'New England was presented before him.' Day after day he drove the thought from him. Night after night it returned. [384]

'Thou hast her not for nothing. She is needed for the service of Truth.' Master Robert Fowler grew lean and wan with inward struggle, but yield his will he could not, yet disobey the Voice he did not dare. When his wife and children asked what ailed him he answered not, or gave a surly reply. Truth to tell, he avoided their company all he could,—and yet a look was in his eyes when they did not notice as if he had never before felt them half so dear. At length the long-expected

day arrived when the completed vessel sailed gracefully out to sea. But there was no gaiety on board, as there had been when her sister ships had departed. No cargo had she. No farewells were said. Master Robert Fowler stole aboard when all beside were sleeping. The *Woodhouse* slipped from the grey harbour into the grey sea, noiselessly as a bird. None of the crew knew what ailed the master, nor why his door was locked for long hours thereafter, until the Yorkshire coast first drew dim, and then faded from the horizon. He would not even tell them whither the vessel was bound. 'Keep a straight course; come back at four bells, and then I will direct you,' was all his answer, when the mate knocked at his door for orders.

But within the cabin a man was wrestling with himself upon his knees; till at last in agony he cried: 'E'en take the boat, Lord, an so Thou wilt, for I have no power to give her Thee. Yet truly she is Thine.'

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At that same hour in London an anxious little company was gathered in a house at the back side of Thomas Apostles Church, over the door of which swung the well-known sign of the Fleur-de-luce.

The master of the house, Friend Gerard Roberts, a merchant of Watling Street, sat at the top of the table in a small upper room. The anxiety on his countenance was reflected in the faces round his board. Seven men and four women were there, all soberly clad as befitted ministering Friends. They were not eating or drinking, but solemnly seeking for guidance.

'Can no ship then be found to carry us to the other side? For truly the Lord's word is as a fire and hammer in me, though in the outward appearance there is no likelihood of getting passage,' one Friend was saying.

'Ships in plenty there are bound for New England, but ne'er a one that is willing to carry even one Quaker, let alone eleven,' Friend Roberts answered. 'The colonists' new laws are strict, and their punishments are savage. I know, Friends, ye are all ready, aye and willing, to suffer in the service of Truth. It is not merely the threatened cropping of the ears of every Quaker who sets foot ashore that is the difficulty. It is the one hundred pounds fine for every Quaker landed, not levied on the Friends themselves, mind you—that were simple—but on the owner of the boat in which they shall have voyaged. This it is that hinders your departure. It were not fair to ask a man to run such risk. It is not fair. Yet already I have asked many in vain. Way doth not open. We must needs leave it, and see if the concern abides.'

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Clear as a bell rose the silvery tones of a young woman Friend, one who had been formerly a serving-maid at Cammsgill Farm: 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Shall not He who setteth a bound to the sea that it shall not pass over, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing—shall not He be trusted to find a ship for His servants who trust in Him, to enable them to perform His will?' As the clear bell-like tones died away the little company, impelled by a united instinct, sank into a silence in which time passed unnoticed. Suddenly, at the same moment, a weight seemed to be removed from the hearts of all. They clasped hands and separated. And at that very moment, although they knew it not, far away on the broad seas, a man, wrestling on his knees in the cabin of his vessel, was saying with bitter tears, 'E'en take, Lord, an so Thou wilt, though I have no power to give her to Thee. Yet truly she is Thine.' When four bells were sounded on the good ship *Woodhouse*, and a knock came to the door of the cabin as the mate asked for directions, it was in a steady voice that Master Robert Fowler replied from within, 'Mark a straight course for London; and after—whithersoever the Lord may direct.'

Blithely and gaily henceforward the *Woodhouse* skimmed her way to the mouth of the Thames and dropped anchor at the port of London. But as yet Master Robert Fowler knew nothing of the anxious group of Friends waiting to be taken to New England on the service of Truth (five of them having already been deported thence for the offence of being Quakers, yet anxious to return and take six others with them). Neither did these Friends know anything of Master Robert Fowler, nor of his good ship *Woodhouse*.

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Yet, though unknown to each other, he and they alike were well known to One Heart, were guided by One Hand, were listening to the directions of One Voice. Therefore, though it may seem a strange chance, it was not wonderful really that within a few hours of the arrival of the *Woodhouse* in the Thames Master Robert Fowler and Friend Gerard Roberts met each other face to face in London City. Nor was it strange that the ship's captain should be moved to tell the merchant of the exercise of his spirit about his ship. In truth all Friends who visited London in those days were wont to unburden themselves of their perplexities to the master of that hospitable house over whose doorway swung the sign of the Fleur-de-luce. Lightly he told it—almost as a jest—the folly of the notion that a vessel of such small tonnage could be needed to face the terrors of the terrible Atlantic. Surely a prudent merchant like Friend Roberts would tell him to pay no heed to visions and inner voices, and such like idle notions? But Gerard Roberts did not scoff. He listened silently. A look almost of awe stole over his face. The first words he uttered were, 'It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes.' And at these words Master Robert Fowler's heart sank down, down like lead.

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Long afterwards, describing the scene, he says: 'Also when (the vessel) was finished and freighted, and made to sea, contrary to my will, was brought to London, where, speaking touching this matter to Gerard Roberts and others, they confirmed the matter in behalf of the Lord, that it must be so.'

'It must be so.' This is the secret of Guidance from that day to this. The Inner Voice alone is not always enough for action; the outer need or claim of service alone is not necessarily a call. But when the Inner Voice and the outer need come together, then truly the will of the Lord is plain, and 'It must be so.'

Master Robert Fowler was not yet willing or ready to sacrifice his own wishes. A decisive victory is not to be won in one battle, however severe, but only throughout the stress of a long campaign. The struggle in his cabin, when he allowed the ship's head to be turned towards London, must needs be fought out again. The unreasonableness of such a voyage in such a vessel, the risk, the thought of the dangers and misery it would bring, took possession of his mind once more, as he himself confesses: 'Yet entering into reasoning and letting in temptation and hardships, and the loss of my life, wife, and children, with the enjoyment of all earthly things, it brought me as low as the grave, and laid me as one dead to the things of God.'

'Let the sacrifice be made, if it must be made,' he said to himself, 'but it is too much to expect any man to make it willingly.' For days he went about, in his own words, 'as one dead.'

The eagerness of the Friends to depart, their plans for the voyage, their happy cares, only loaded his spirit the more. It was a dark, sad, miserable time; and a dark, sad, miserable man was the owner of the *Woodhouse*. [389]

Till on a certain day, the Friends coming as usual to visit his ship brought another with them, a Stranger; taller, stronger, sturdier than them all; a man with a long drooping nose and piercing eyes—yes, and leather breeches! It was, it could be no other than George Fox!

What did he say to Robert Fowler? What words did he use? Did he argue or command? That was unnecessary. The mere presence of the strong faithful servant of the Lord drew out a like faithfulness in the other more timid soul.

Robert Fowler's narrative continues:

'But by His instrument, George Fox, was I refreshed and raised up again, which before was much contrary to myself that I could have as willingly have died as gone; but by the strength of God I was now made willing to do His will; yea even the customs and fashions of the customs house could not stop me.'

'Made willing to do His will.' There is the secret of this 'wonderful voyage.' For it was absurdly dangerous to think of sailing across the Atlantic in such a vessel as the *Woodhouse*: or it would have been, had it been a mere human plan. But if the all-powerful, almighty Will of God really commanded them to go, then it was no longer dangerous but the only safe thing they could do.

'Our trembling hands held in Thy strong and loving grasp, what shall even the weakest of us fear?'

Perhaps Master Robert expected when once he was ready to obey cheerfully, that all his difficulties would vanish. Instead, fresh difficulties arose; and the next difficulty was truly a great one. The press-gang came by, and took Robert Fowler's servants off by force to help to man the British fleet that was being fitted out to fight in the Baltic; took them, whether they would or no, as Richard Sellar was to be captured in the same way, seven years later. [390]

So now the long voyage to America must be undertaken not only in too small a boat, but with too few sailors to work her. Besides Robert Fowler, only two men and three boys were left on board to sail the ship on this long, difficult voyage.

Presently the Friends began to come on board; and if the captain's heart sank anew as he saw the long string of passengers making for his tiny boat—who shall wonder or blame him? It was a very solemn procession of weighty Friends.

In front came the five, who had been in America before, and who were going back to face persecution, knowing what it meant. Their names were: first that 'ancient and venerable man' William Brend; then young Christopher Holder of Winterbourne in Gloucestershire, a well-educated man of good estate; John Copeland of Holderness in Yorkshire; Mary Weatherhead of Bristol; and Dorothy^[34] Waugh, the serving-maid of Preston Patrick, who had been 'convinced and called to the ministry' as she went about her daily work in the family of Friend John Camm, at Cammsgill.

After them followed the other five who had not crossed the Atlantic before, but who were no less eager to face unknown difficulties and dangers. Their names were: William Robinson the London merchant; Robert Hodgson; Humphrey Norton (remember Humphrey Norton, he will be heard of again); Richard Doudney, 'an innocent man who served the Lord in sincerity'; and Mary Clark, the wife of John Clark, a London Friend, who, like most of the others, had already undergone much suffering for her faith. On board the *Woodhouse* they all came, stepping on deck one after the other solemnly and sedately, while the anxious captain watched them and wondered how many more were to come, and where they were all to be lodged. Once they were on board, however, things changed and felt quite different. It was as if an Unseen Passenger had come with them. [391]

This is Robert Fowler's own account: 'Upon the 1st day of Fourth Month called June received I the Lord's servants aboard, Who came with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm with them; so that with courage we set sail and came to the Downs the second day, where our dearly beloved William Dewsbury with Michael Thompson came aboard, and in them we were much refreshed; and, recommending us to the grace of God, we launched forth.'

After this his narrative has a different ring: Master Fowler was no longer going about his ship

with eyes cast down and hanging head and a heart full of fear. He had straightened his back and was a stalwart mariner again. Perhaps this was partly owing to the great pleasure that came to him before they actually set sail, when, as he tells, William Dewsbury came on board to visit the travellers. 'Dear William Dewsbury' was the one Friend of all others Robert Fowler must have wished to see once more before leaving England, for it was William Dewsbury's preaching that had 'convinced' Robert Fowler and made him become a Friend a few years before. It was William Dewsbury's teaching about the blessedness of following the inner Voice, the inner guidance, that had led him to offer himself and the *Woodhouse* for the service of Truth.

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Perhaps he said, half in joke, half in earnest, 'O William Dewsbury! O William Dewsbury! thou hast much to answer for! If I had never met thee I should never have undertaken this voyage in my little boat!' If he said this, I think a very tender, thankful light came into William Dewsbury's face, as he answered, 'Let us give thanks then together, brother, that the message did reach thee through me; since without this voyage thou could'st not fully have known the power and the wonder of the Lord.'

Quakers do not have priests to baptize them, or bishops to confirm or ordain them, as Church people do. Yet God's actual presence in the heart is often revealed first through the message of one of His messengers. Therefore there is a special bond of tender fellowship and friendship between those who are truly fathers and children in God, even in a Society where all are friends. In this relation William Dewsbury stood to Robert Fowler.

Reason and fear raised their heads once again, even after William Dewsbury's visit. Robert Fowler thought of going to the Admiral in the Downs to complain of the loss of his servants, and to ask that a convoy might be sent with them. But he did not go, because, as he says, 'From which thing I was withholden by that Hand which was my Helper.'

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The south wind began to blow, and they were obliged to put in at Portsmouth, and there there were plenty of men waiting to be engaged, but when they heard that this tiny vessel was actually venturing to cross the Atlantic, not one would sail in her, and this happened again at South Yarmouth, where they put in a few days later.

At Portsmouth, however, the Friends were not idle. They went ashore and held a meeting, or, as Robert Fowler puts it, 'They went forth and gathered sticks and kindled a fire, and left it burning.' Not real sticks for a real fire, of course, but a fire of love and service in people's hearts, that would help to keep the cold world warm in after days.

This was their last task in England. A few hours later they had quitted her shores. The coastline that followed them faithfully at first, dropped behind gradually, growing fainter and paler, then resting like a thought upon the sea, till it finally disappeared. Only a vast expanse of heaving waters surrounded the travellers.

At first it seemed as if their courage was not to be too severely tested. 'Three pretty large ships which were for the Newfoundland' appeared, and bore the *Woodhouse* company for some fifty leagues. In their vicinity the smaller vessel might have made the voyage, perilous at best, with a certain amount of confidence. But the Dutch warships were known to be not far distant, and in order to escape them the three 'pretty large ships made off to the northward, and left us without hope or help as to the outward.'

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The manner of the departure of the ships was on this wise. Early in the morning it was shown to Humphrey Norton—who seems to have been especially sensitive to messages from the invisible world—that those were nigh unto us who sought our lives.' He called Robert Fowler, and gave him this warning, and added, 'Thus saith the Lord, ye shall be carried away as in a mist.' 'Presently,' says Robert Fowler, 'we espied a great ship making up to us, and the three great ships were much afraid, and tacked about with what speed they could; in the very interim the Lord fulfilled His promise, and struck our enemies in the face with a contrary wind, wonderfully to our refreshment. Then upon our parting from these three ships we were brought to ask counsel of the Lord, and the word was from Him, "Cut through and steer your straight course and mind nothing but Me."

'Cut through and steer your straight course, and mind nothing but Me!' Alone upon the broad Atlantic in this cockle-shell of a boat! Only a cockle-shell truly, yet it held a bit of heaven within it—the heaven of obedience. Every day the little company of Friends met in that ship's hold together, and 'He Himself met with us and manifested himself largely unto us,' words that have been proved true by many another company of the Master's servants afloat upon the broad waters from that day to this. There they sat on the wooden benches, with spray breaking over them, the faithful men and women who were daring all for the Truth. Only three times in the whole voyage was the weather so bad that storms prevented their assembling together. Much of the actual navigation of the vessel seems to have been left to the strange passengers to determine. The Captain's narrative continues: 'Thus it was all the voyage with the faithful, who were carried far above storms and tempests, that when the ship went either to the right hand or to the left, their hands joined all as one, and did direct her way; so that we have seen and said, "We see the Lord leading our vessel even as it were a man leading a horse by the head; we regarding neither latitude nor longitude, but kept to our line, which was and is our Leader, Guide, and Rule."

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Besides the guidance vouchsafed to the Friends as a group, some of them had special intimations given to them.

'The sea was my figure,' says Robert Fowler, 'for if anything got up within, the sea without rose up against me, and then the floods clapped their hands, of which in time I took notice and told

Humphrey Norton.'^[35]

In this account Humphrey Norton always seems to hear voices directing their course, while Robert Fowler generally 'sees figures'—sights that teach him what to do. Guidance may come in different ways to different people, but it does come surely to those who seek for it.

The inward Voice spoke to Robert Fowler also when they were in mid Atlantic after they had been at sea some two weeks:

'We saw another great ship making up to us which did appear far off to be a frigate, and made her sign for us to come to them, which was to me a great cross, we being to windward of them; and it was said "GO SPEAK TO HIM, THE CROSS IS SURE; DID I EVER FAIL THEE THEREIN?" And unto others there appeared no danger in it, so that we did, and it proved a tradesman of London, by whom we writ back.'

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The hardest test of their faith came some three weeks later, when after five weeks at sea they had still accomplished only 300 leagues, scarcely a third part of their voyage, and their destination still seemed hopelessly distant. The strong faith of Humphrey Norton carried them all over this trial. 'He (Humphrey Norton) falling into communion with God, told me that he had received a comfortable answer, and also that about such a day we should land in America, which was even so fulfilled. Upon the last day of the fifth month (July) 1657, we made land.'

This land turned out to be the very part to which the Friends had most desired to come. The pilot^[36] had expected to reach quite a different point, but the invisible guidance of his strange passengers was clear and unwavering. 'Our drawing had been all the passage to keep to the southward, until the evening before we made land, and then the word was, "There is a lion in the way"; unto which we gave obedience, and said, "Let them steer northwards until the day following."^[37]

That must have been an anxious day on board the *Woodhouse*. Think of the two different clues that were being followed within that one small boat: the Friends with their clasped hands, seeking and finding guidance; up on deck the pilot, with his nautical knowledge, scoffing very likely at any other method of progress than the reckoning to which he was accustomed. As the slow hours passed, and no land appeared to break the changeless circle of the sea, the Friends felt a 'drawing' to meet together long before their usual time. 'And it was said that we may look abroad in the evening; and as we sat waiting upon the Lord, we discovered the land, and our mouths were opened in prayer and thanksgiving.'

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The words are simple as any words could be. But in spite of the 260 years that separate that day from this, its gladness is still fresh. All voyagers know the thrill caused by the first sight of land, even in these days of steamships, when all arrangements can be made and carried out with almost clock-like precision. But in the old time of sailing ships, when a contrary wind or a sudden calm might upset the reckoning for days together, and when there was the added danger that food or water might give out, to see the longed-for land in sight at last must have been even more of an event.

To all the Friends on board the *Woodhouse* this first sight of America meant a yet deeper blessedness. It was the outer assurance that the invisible guidance they were following was reliable. The Friends rejoiced and were wholly at rest and thankful. But the pilot, instead of being, as might have been expected, convinced at last that there was a wisdom wiser than his own, still resisted. Where some people see life with a thread of guidance running through it unmistakably, others are always to be found who will say these things are nothing but chance and what is called 'coincidence.'

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Such an one was the pilot of the *Woodhouse*. As the land drew nearer, a creek was seen to open out in it. The Friends were sure that their vessel was meant to enter there, but again the pilot resisted. By this time the Friends had learned to expect objections from him, and had learned, too, that it was best not to argue with him, but to leave him to find out for himself that their guidance was right. So they told him to do as he chose, that 'both sides were safe, but going that way would be more trouble to him.' When morning dawned 'he saw, after he had laid by all the night, the thing fulfilled.'

Into the creek, therefore, in the bright morning sunlight the *Woodhouse* came gaily sailing; not knowing where she was, nor whither the creek would lead. 'Now to lay before you the largeness of the wisdom, will, and power of God, this creek led us in between the Dutch Plantation and Long Island:'—the very place that some of the Friends had felt that they ought to visit, but which it would have been most difficult to reach had they landed in any other spot. Thus 'the Lord God that moved them brought them to the place appointed, and led us into our way according to the word which came unto Christopher Holder: "You are in the road to Rhode Island." In that creek came a shallop to guide us, taking us to be strangers, we making our way with our boat, and they spoke English, and informed us, and guided us along. The power of the Lord fell much upon us, and an irresistible word came unto us, that the seed in America shall be as the sand of the sea; it was published in the ears of the brethren, which caused tears to break forth with fulness of joy; so that presently for these places some prepared themselves, who were Robert Hodgson, Richard Doudney, Sarah Gibbons, Mary Weatherhead, and Dorothy Waugh, who the next day were put safely ashore into the Dutch plantation, called New Amsterdam.'

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'New Amsterdam, on an unnamed creek in the Dutch Plantation,' sounds an unfamiliar place to modern ears. Yet when that same Dutch Plantation changed hands and became English territory its new masters altered the name of its chief town. New Amsterdam was re-christened in honour of the king's brother, James, Duke of York, and became known as New York, the largest city of

the future United States of America.

As to the unnamed 'creek' into which the *Woodhouse* was led, that was probably the estuary of the mighty river Hudson. 'Here,' continues Robert Fowler, 'we came, and it being the First Day of the week several came aboard to us and we began our work. I was caused to go to the Governor, and Robert Hodgson with me—he (the Governor) was moderate both in words and actions.'

This moderation on the Governor's part must have been no small comfort to the new arrivals. Also the laws of the New Netherland Colonies, where they had unexpectedly landed, were much more tolerant than those of New England, whither they were bound. Even yet the perils of the gallant *Woodhouse* were not over. The remaining Friends had now to be taken on to hospitable Rhode Island, the home of religious liberty, from whence they could pursue their mission to the persecuting Colonists on the mainland. [400]

A few days before their arrival at New Amsterdam, the two Roberts (Robert Hodgson and Robert Fowler) had both had a vision in which they had seen the *Woodhouse* in great danger. The day following their interview with the Governor, when they were once more on the sea, 'it was fulfilled, there being a passage between the two lands which is called by the name of Hell-Gate; we lay very conveniently for a pilot, and into that place we came, and into it were forced, and over it were carried, which I never heard of any before that were; there were rocks many on both sides of us, so that I believe one yard's length would have endangered both vessel and goods.'

Here for the last time the little group of Friends gathered to give thanks for their safe arrival after their most wonderful voyage. If any of them were tempted to think they owed any of their protection and guidance to their own merits and faithfulness, a last vision that came to Robert Fowler must have chased this thought out of their minds once for all.

'There was a shoal of fish,' he says, 'which pursued our vessel and followed her strangely, and along close by our rudder.' The master mariner's eye had evidently been following the movements of the fish throughout the day, as he asked himself: 'What are those fish? I never saw fish act in that way before. Why do they follow the vessel so steadily?' Then, in the time of silent waiting upon God, light streamed upon this puzzle in his mind. [401]

'In our meeting it was shewn to me, these fish are to thee a figure. "Thus doth the prayers of the churches proceed to the Lord for thee and the rest."' That was the explanation of the wonderful voyage. The *Woodhouse* and her little company had not been solitary and unprotected, even when the three 'pretty great ships' drew off for fear of the Dutch men of war and left them alone.

The prayers of their friends in England were following them across the vast Atlantic, though unseen by human eyes, even as those hosts of shining fish, which surrounded the vessel as she drove her prow through the clear water, would be unseen to a spectator above its surface. George Fox was praying for the travellers. William Dewsbury was sure to be praying for them. Friend Gerard Roberts would be also much in prayer, since the responsibility of the voyage was largely on his shoulders. Besides these, there were the husbands, wives, and little children of some of the Friends, the brothers and sisters of others, all longing for them to arrive safely and do their Master's work. Now here came the fish to assure Robert Fowler that the faith he believed was true. Real as the things we can see or touch or feel seem to us to be, the unseen things are more real still. Ever after, to those who had crossed the Atlantic in the good ship *Woodhouse*, the assurance of God's clear guidance and the answered prayers of His people must have been the most real of all.

Robert Fowler's story of the marvellous voyage ends with these words: 'Surely in our meeting did the thing run through me as oil and bid me much rejoice.'

FOOTNOTES:

- [34] She sometimes spelled her name Dorithy, which is not the way to spell Dorothy now, but spelling was much less fixed in those days.
- [35] The meaning seems to be that whenever fear or misgiving came to Fowler's heart, the sea also became stormy; while his spirit remained trustful, the sea was likewise calm.
- [36] As the navigating officer of the ship was then called.
- [37] It is not quite easy at this distance of time to understand why 'a lion in the way' should mean 'go north,' unless it was because the 'drawing' had been strongly south hitherto, and now that path was blocked.

'To resort to force is to lose faith in the inner light. War only results from men taking counsel with their passions instead of waiting upon God. If one believes, as Fox did, that the most powerful element in human nature is that something of God which speaks in the conscience, then to coerce men is clearly wrong. The only true line of approach is by patience to reach down to that divine seed, to appeal to what is best, because it is what is strongest in man. The Quaker testimony against war is no isolated outwork of their position: it forms part of their citadel.'—H.G. WOOD.

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'The following narrative we have thought proper to insert in the very words of the sufferer, as taken from his own mouth. The candid Reader will easily excuse the simplicity of its style, and the Plainness of its Expressions. It is the more like the man, and carries the greater evidence of the Honesty and Integrity of the Relator, viz. "An Account of the Sufferings of Richard Seller of Keinsey, a Fisherman, who was prest in Scarborough-Piers, in the time of the two last engagements between the Dutch and English, in the year 1665." These are (says the writer) the very words that proceeded from him, who sat before me weeping.'—BESSE, 'Sufferings of the Quakers.'

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XXVI. RICHARD SELLAR AND THE 'MERCIFUL MAN'

Away to the Yorkshire coast we must go, and once more find ourselves looking up at the bold headland of Scarborough Cliff, as it juts out into the North Sea. Away again in time, too, to the year 1665, when George Fox still lay in prison up at the Castle, with his room full of smoke on stormy days when the wind 'drove in the rain forcibly,' while 'the water came all over his bed and

ran about the room till he was forced to skim it up with a platter.'

Happily there is no storm raging this time. Our story begins on a still, warm afternoon late in the summer, when even the prisoner up at the Castle can hardly help taking some pleasure in the cloudless blue sky and shining sea spread out above and around him.

But it is not to the Castle we are bound to-day. We need not climb again the steep, worn steps that lead to the top of the hill. Instead, we must descend an equally narrow flight that leads down, down, down with queer twists and turns, till we find ourselves close to the water's edge. Even in the fiercest gales there is shelter here for the red-roofed fishing village that surrounds the harbour, while on a warm afternoon the air is almost oppressively hot. The brown sails of the fishing smacks and the red roofs of the houses are faithfully reflected in the clear water beneath them as in a looking-glass.

Outside the door of one of the houses a rough fisherman is seated on a bench, his back against the house wall, mending his nets. At first sight he looks almost like an old man, for his hair is grey, though his body is still strong and active. His hands are twisted and bear the marks of cruel scars upon them, but his face is peaceful, though worn and rugged. He handles the nets lovingly, as if he were glad to feel them slipping through his fingers again. Evidently the nets have not been used for some time, for there are many holes in them, and the mending is a slow business. As he works the fisherman sings in a low voice, not loud enough for the neighbours to hear but just humming to himself.

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Every now and then the door of the house half opens, and a little girl looks out and asks, 'Thou art really there, Father? truly safe back again?' The man looks up, smiling, as he calls back, 'Ay, ay, my maid. Get on with thy work, Margery, and I'll get on with mine.'

'Art thou sure thou art safe, Father?'

He does not answer this question in words, but he raises his voice and sings the next verse of his song a little more loudly and clearly—

'Because on Me his love is set,
Deliver him I will,
And safely bring him higher yet
Upon My holy hil.'

Later on, when the nets are mended and the sun is sinking above the Castle Cliff in a fiery glow, Margery comes out and sits on her father's knee; the lads, home from school, gather round and say, 'Now then, Master Sellar, tell us once more the story of thy absence from us, and about how thou wast pressed and taken on board the *Royal Prince*. Tell us about the capstan and the lashings; about how they beat thee; what the carpenter and the boatswain's mate did, and how the gunner went down three times on his bare knees on the deck to beg thy life. Let us hear it all again.' 'Yes, please do, Father dear,' chimes in Margery, 'only leave out some of the beatings and the dreadful part, and hurry on very quickly to the end of the story about all the sailors throwing up their caps and huzzaing for Sir Edward, the merciful man.'

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The fisherman smiles and nods. He puts his arm more tenderly than ever round his small daughter as he says, 'Ay, ay, dear heart, never thou fear.' Then, drawing Margery closer to him, he begins his tale. It is a long story. The sun has set; the crescent moon has disappeared; and the stars are stealing out, one by one, before he has finished. I wish you and I could listen to that story, don't you? Well, we can! Someone who heard it from the fisherman's own lips has written it all down for us. He is telling it to us in his own words to-day, as he told it to those children in Scarborough village long ago.

Now and then we must interrupt him to explain some of the words he uses, or even alter the form of the sentences slightly, in order fully to understand what it is he is talking about.

But he is telling his own story.

'My name,' begins the fisherman, 'is Richard Sellar. It was during the war between the Dutch and English that I was pressed at Scarborough in 1665.'

'Pressed' means that he was forced to go and fight against his will. When the country is in danger men are obliged to leave their peaceful employments and learn to be soldiers and sailors, in order, as they think, to defend their own nation by trying to kill their enemies. It is something like what people now call 'conscription' that Richard Sellar is talking of when he speaks of 'being pressed.' He means that a number of men, called a 'press-crew,' forced him to go with them to fight in the king's navy, for, as the proverb said, 'A king's ship and the gallows refuse nobody.'

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'I was pressed,' Richard continues, 'within Scarborough Piers, and refusing to go on board the ketch [or boat] they beat me very sore, and I still refusing, they hoisted me in with a tackle on board, and they bunched me with their feet, that I fell backward into a tub, and was so maimed that they were forced to swaddle me up with clothes.'

Richard Sellar could not help himself. Bound, bruised, and beaten he was carried off in the boat to be taken to a big fighting ship called the *Royal Prince*, that was waiting for them off the mouth of the Thames and needing more sailors to man her for the war.

The press-crew however had not captured enough men at Scarborough, so they put in at another Yorkshire port, spelled Burlington then but Bridlington now. It was that same Burlington or Bridlington from which Master Robert Fowler had sailed years before. Was he at home again now, I wonder, working in his shipyard and remembering the wonderful experiences of the good

ship *Woodhouse*? Surely he must have been away on a voyage at this time or he would if possible have visited Richard Sellar in his confinement on the ketch. Happily at Bridlington there also lived two kind women, who, hearing that the ketch had a 'pressed Quaker' on board, sent Richard Sellar a present of food—green stuff and eatables that would keep well on a voyage: these provisions saved his life later on. After this stay in port the ketch sailed on again to the Nore, a big sand-bank lying near the mouth of the Thames.

'And there,' Richard goes on to say, 'they haled me in at a gunport, on board of the ship called the *Royal Prince*. The first day of the third month, they commanded me to go to work at the capstan. I refused; then they commanded me to call of the steward for my victuals; which I refused, and told them that as I was not free to do the king's work, I would not live at his charge for victuals. Then the boatswain's mate beat me sore, and thrust me about with the capstan until he was weary; then the Captain sent for me on the quarter-deck, and asked me why I refused to fight for the king, and why I refused to eat of his victuals? I told him I was afraid to offend God, for my warfare was spiritual, and therefore I durst not fight with carnal weapons. Then the Captain fell upon me, and beat me first with his small cane, then called for his great cane, and beat me sore, and felled me down to the deck three or four times, and beat me as long as his strength continued. Then came one, Thomas Horner (which was brought up at Easington), and said, "I pray you, noble Captain, be merciful, for I know him to be an honest and a good man." Then said the captain, "He is a Quaker; I will beat his brains out." Then falling on me again, he beat me until he was weary, and then called some to help him; "for" said he, "I am not able to beat him enough to make him willing to do the king's service."' [410]

There Richard lay, bruised and beaten, on the deck. Neither the sailors nor the Captain knew what to do with him. Presently up came the Commander's jester or clown, a man whose business it was to make the officers laugh. 'What,' said he, 'can't you make that Quaker work? Do you want him to draw ropes for you and he won't? Why you are going the wrong way to work, you fool!'

No one else in the whole ship would have dared to call the Captain 'You fool!' No one else could have done so without being put in chains. But the jester might do as he liked. His business was to make the Captain laugh; and at these words he did laugh. 'Show me the right way to make him work, then,' said he. 'That I will gladly,' answered the jester, 'we will have a bet. I will give you one golden guinea if I cannot make him draw ropes, if you will give me another if I do compel him to do so.'

'Marry that I will,' answered the Captain, and forthwith the two guineas were thrown down on the deck, rattling gaily, while all the ship's company stood around to watch what should befall.

'Then the jester called for two seamen and made them make two ropes fast to the wrists of my arms, and reeved the ropes through two blocks in the mizen shrouds on the starboard side, and hoisted me up aloft, and made the ropes fast to the gunwale of the ship, and I hung some time. Then the jester called the ship's company to behold, and bear him witness, that he made the Quaker hale the king's ropes; so veering the ropes they lowered me half-way down, then made me fast again. "Now," said the jester, "noble Captain, you and the company see that the Quaker haleth the king's ropes"; and with that he commanded them to let fly the ropes loose, when I fell on the deck. "Now," said the jester, "noble Captain, the wager is won. He haled the ropes to the deck, and you can hale them no further, nor any man else.'" [411]

Not a very good joke, was it? It seems to have pleased the rough sailors since it set them laughing. But it was no laughing matter for Richard Sellar to be set swinging in the air strung up by the wrists, and then to be bumped down upon deck again, fast bound and unable to move. The Captain did not laugh either. The thought of his lost money made him feel savage. In a loud, angry voice he called to the boatswain's mate and bade him, 'Take the quakerly dog away, and put him to the capstan and make him work.'

Only the jester laughed, and chuckled to himself, as he gathered up the golden guineas from the deck, and slapped his thighs for pleasure as he slipped them into his pockets.

Meantime the boatswain's mate was having fine sport with the 'Quaker dog,' as he carried out the Captain's orders. Calling the roughest members of the crew to help him, they beat poor Richard cruelly, and abused him as they dragged him down into the darkness below deck.

'Then he went,' says Richard, 'and sat him down upon a chest lid, and I went and sat down upon another beside him; then he fell upon me and beat me again; then called his boy to bring him two lashings and he lashed my arms to the capstan's bars and caused the men to heave the capstan about; and in three or four times passing about the lashings were loosed, no man knew how, nor when, nor could they ever be found, although they sought them with lighted candles.' [412]

The sailors had tied their prisoner with ropes to the heavy iron wheel in the stern of the boat called a capstan; so that as he moved he would be obliged to drag it round and thus help to work the ship. They had made their prisoner as fast as ever they could. Yet, somehow, here he was free again, and his bonds had disappeared! The boatswain's mate couldn't understand it, but he was determined to solve the mystery. He sent for a Bible and made the sailors swear upon it in turn, in that dark, ill-smelling den, that not one of them had loosed Richard. They all swore willingly, but even that did not content the mate. He thought they were lying, and would not let them go till he had turned out all their pockets, and found that not one of them contained the missing lashings that had mysteriously disappeared. Then, at last, even the rough mate felt afraid. Richard seemed to be in his power and defenceless: was he really protected by Something or Someone stronger than any cruel men, the mate wondered?

So he called the sailors round him again, and spoke to them as follows: 'Hear what I shall say

unto you; you see this is a wonderful thing, which is done by an invisible hand, which loosed him, for none of you could see his hands loosed, that were so near him. I suppose this man' (said he) 'is called a Quaker, and for conscience' sake refuseth to act, therefore I am afflicted, and do promise before God and man that I will never beat, nor cause to be beaten, either Quaker or any other man that doth refuse, for conscience' sake, to fight for the king. And if I do, I wish I may lose my right hand.' That was the promise of the boatswain's mate.

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Three days later the Admiral of the whole fleet, Sir Edward Spragg, came on board the *Royal Prince*. He was a very fine gentleman indeed. At once every one began to tell him the same story: how they had pressed a Quaker up at Scarborough in the North; how the Quaker had refused to work, and had been given over to the boatswain's mate to be flogged; how the boatswain's mate had fallen upon him and had beaten him furiously, but now refused to lay a finger upon him, saying that he would no longer beat a Quaker or any other man for conscience' sake.

'Send that boatswain's mate to me that he may answer for himself,' said the Admiral. 'Why would you not beat the Quaker?' he demanded in a terrible voice, when the boatswain's mate was brought before him. 'I have beat him very sore,' the mate answered, 'I seized his arms to the capstan bars, and forced them to heave him about, and beat him, and then sat down; and in three or four times of the capstan's going about, the lashings were loosed, and he came and sat down by me; then I called the men from the capstan, and took them sworn, but they all denied that they had loosed him, or knew how he was loosed; neither could the lashings ever be found; therefore I did and do believe that it was an invisible power which set him at liberty, and I did promise before God and the company, that I would never beat a Quaker again, nor any man else for conscience' sake.' The Admiral told the mate that he must lose both his cane of office and his place. He willingly yielded them both. He was also threatened with the loss of his right hand. He held it out and said, 'Take it from me if you please.' His cane was taken from him and he was displaced; but mercifully his right hand was not cut off: that was only a threat.

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The Commander had now to find some one else to beat Richard Sellar. So he gave orders to seven strong sailors (called yeomen) to beat Richard whenever they met him, and to make him work. Beat him they did, till they were tired; but they could not make him work or go against his conscience, which forbade him in any way to help in fighting. Then an eighth yeoman was called, the strongest of all. The same order was given to him: 'Beat that Quaker as much as you like whenever you meet him, only see that you make him work.' The eighth yeoman promised gladly in his turn, and said, 'I'll make him!' He too beat Richard for a whole day and a night, till he too grew weary and asked to be excused. Then another wonderful thing happened, stranger even than the disappearance of the lashings. After all these cruel beatings the Commander ordered Richard's clothes to be taken off that he might see the marks of the blows on his body. 'He caused my clothes to be stript off,' Richard says, 'shirt and all, from my head to my waist downward; then he took a view of my body to see what wounds and bruises I had, but he could find none,—no, not so much as a blue spot on my skin. Then the Commander was angry with them, for not beating me enough. Then the Captain answered him and said, "I have beat him myself as much as would kill an ox." The jester said he had hung me a great while by the arms aloft in the shrouds. The men said they also had beaten me very sore, but they might as well have beaten the main mast. Then said the Commander, "I will cause irons to be laid upon him during the king's pleasure and mine."'

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A marvellous story! After all these beatings, not a bruise or a mark to be seen! Probably it is not possible now to explain how it happened. Of course we might believe that Richard was telling lies all the time, and that either the sailors did not beat him or that the bruises did show. But why invent anything so unlikely? It is easier to believe that he was trying to tell the truth as far as he could, even though we cannot understand it. Perhaps his heart was so happy at being allowed to suffer for what he thought right, that his body really did not feel the cruel beatings, as it would have done if he had been doing wrong and had deserved them. Or perhaps there are wonderful ways, unknown to us until we experience them for ourselves, in which God will, and can, and does protect His own true servants who are trying to obey Him. That is the most comforting explanation. If ever some one much bigger and stronger than we are tries to bully us into doing wrong, let us remember that God does not save us *from* pain and suffering always; but He can save us *through* the very worst pain, if only we are true to Him.

Anyhow, though Richard's beatings were over for the time, other troubles began. He was 'put in irons,' heavily loaded with chains, a punishment usually kept for the worst criminals, such as thieves and murderers. All the crew were forbidden to bring him food and drink even though he was beginning to be ill with a fever—the result of all the sufferings he had undergone. Happily there was one kind, brave man among the crew, the carpenter's mate. Although Sir Edward Spragg had said that any one giving food to Richard would have to share his punishment, this good man was not afraid, and did give the prisoner both food and drink. All this time, Richard had been living on the provisions that the two kind Friends, Thomasin Smales and Mary Stringer, had sent him at Bridlington, having refused to eat the king's food, as he could not do the king's work.

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Thankful indeed he must have felt when this kind carpenter's mate came and squeezed up against him among a crowd of sailors, and managed to pass some meat and drink out of his own pocket and into Richard's. His new friend did this so cleverly that nobody noticed. Pleased with his success, he whispered to Richard, 'I'll bring you some more every day while you need food.'

You needn't mind taking things from me, for they are all bought out of my own money, not the king's.'

'What makes thee so good to me?' whispered back Richard. He was weakened by fever and all unused to kindness on board the *Royal Prince*. Very likely the tears came into his eyes and his voice trembled as he spoke, though he had borne all his beatings unmoved.

The carpenter's mate told him in reply that before he came on board, both his wife and his mother had made him promise that if any Quakers should be on the ship he would be kind to them. Also, that quite lately he had had a letter from them asking him 'to remember his promise, and be kind to Quakers, if any were on board.' How much we should like to know what put it into the two women's hearts to think of such a thing! Were they Quakers themselves, or had they Quaker friends? Once more there is no answer but: 'God will, and can, and does protect His own.'

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Unfortunately this kind man was sent away from the ship to do work elsewhere, and for three days and nights Richard lay in his heavy irons, with nothing either to eat or drink. Some sailors who had been quarrelling in a drunken brawl on deck were thrown into prison and chained up beside Richard. They were sorry for him and did their best to help him. They even gave him something to drink when they were alone, though for his sake they had to pretend that they were trying to hurt and kill him when any of the officers were present. These rough sailors pretended so well that one lieutenant, who had been specially cruel to Richard before, now grew alarmed, and thought the other prisoners really would kill the Quaker.

He went up to Sir Edward's cabin and knocked at the door. 'Who is there?' asked the cabin-boy.

'I,' said the lieutenant, 'I want to speak to Sir Edward.' When he was admitted he said, 'If it please your highness to remember that there is a poor Quaker in irons yet, that was laid in two weeks since, and the other prisoners will kill him for us.'

'We will have a Court Martial,' thought Sir Edward, 'and settle this Quaker's job once for all.'

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He told the lieutenant to go for the keys and let Richard out, and to put a flag at the mizenmast's head, and call a council of war, and make all the captains come from all the other ships to try the Quaker.

It was not yet eight o'clock on a Sunday morning. At the signal, all the captains of all the other ships came hurrying on board the *Royal Prince*, the Admiral's flag-ship. Richard was fetched up from his prison and brought before this council of war—or Court Martial as it would be called now. The Admiral sat in the middle, very grand indeed; beside him sat the judge of the Court Martial, 'who,' says Richard, 'was a papist, being Governor of Dover Castle, who went to sea on pleasure.' He probably looked grander still. Around these two sat the other naval captains from the other ships. Opposite all these great people was Quaker Richard, so weakened by fever and lame from his heavy fetters that he could not stand, and had to be allowed to sit. The Commander, to give Richard one more chance, asked him if he would go aboard another ship, a tender with six guns. Richard's conscience was still clear that he could have nothing to do with guns or fighting. He said he would rather stay where he was and abide his punishment.

What punishment do you think the judge thought would be suitable for a man who had committed only the crime of refusing to fight, or to work to help those who were fighting?

'The judge said I should be put into a barrel or cask *driven full of nails with their points inward and so rolled to death*; but the council of war taking it into consideration, thought it too terrible a death and too much unchristianlike; so they agreed to hang me.'

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'Too much unchristianlike' indeed! The mere thought of such a punishment makes us shiver. The Governor of Dover Castle, who suggested it, was himself a Roman Catholic. History tells how fiercely the Roman Catholics persecuted the Protestants in Queen Mary's reign, when Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and many others were burnt at the stake for their religion. Since then times had changed, and when the Protestants were in power they too had often persecuted the Roman Catholics in their turn. Perhaps someone whom this 'papist' judge had loved very much had been cruelly put to death, and perhaps that was the reason he suggested this savage punishment for Quaker Richard. We do not know how that may be. But we do know that cruelty makes cruelty, on and on without end. The only real way to stop it, is to turn right round and follow the other law, the blessed law, whereby love makes love.

Richard Sellar was only a rough, ignorant fisherman, but he had begun to learn this lesson out of Christ's lesson book: and how difficult a lesson it is, nobody knows who has not tried to carry it out.

Richard heard his sentence pronounced, that he was to be hanged. When he heard that he was being wrongfully accused of various crimes that he had not committed, he longed to rise and justify himself, but he could only sit or kneel because he was too weak to stand. In vain he tried to rise, and tried to speak. He could neither move nor say a word. He could not even say: 'I am innocent.' He could not even pray to God to help him in his difficulty. Again he tried to rise, and then suddenly in his utter weakness he felt God's power holding him, and a Voice said quite distinctly, three times over, in his heart: 'BE STILL—BE STILL—BE STILL.'

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'Which Voice,' says Richard, 'I obeyed and was comforted. Then I believed God would arise. And when they had done speaking, then God did arise, and I was filled with the power of God; and my spirit lifted up above all earthly things; and wonderful strength was given me to my limbs, and my heart was full of the power and wisdom of God; and with glad tidings my mouth was opened, to declare to the people the things God had made manifest to me. With sweat running down, and tears trickling from my eyes, I told them, "The hearts of kings were in the

hand of the Lord; and so are both yours and mine; and I do not value what you can do to this body, for I am at peace with God and all men, and with you my adversaries. For if I might live an hundred and thirty years longer, I can never die in a better condition: for the Lord hath satisfied me, that He hath forgiven me all things in this world; and I am glad through His mercy, that He hath made me willing to suffer for His name's sake, and not only so, but I am heartily glad, and do really rejoice, and with a seal in my heart to the same." Then there came a man and laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said, "Where are all thy accusers?" Then my eyes were opened, and I looked about me, and they were all gone.'

The Court Martial was over. Every one of the captains had disappeared. His accusers were gone; but Richard's sentence remained, and was still to be carried out on the following morning. One officer, the same lieutenant who had been cruel to him before, was still unkind to him and called him 'a hypocrite Quaker,' but many others on board ship did their best to save him. [421]

First of all there came up an ancient soldier to the Admiral on the quarter-deck. He 'loosed down his knee-strings, and put down his stockings, and put his cap under his knees, and begged Sir Edward's pardon three times' (this seems to have been the correct behaviour when addressing the Admiral), and the ancient soldier said, 'Noble Sir Edward, you know that I have served His Majesty under you many years, both in this nation and other nations, by the sea, and you were always a merciful man; therefore I do entreat you, in all kindness, to be merciful to this poor man, who is condemned to die to-morrow; and only for denying your order for fear of offending God, and for conscience' sake; and we have but one man on board, out of nine hundred and fifty—only one which doth refuse for conscience' sake; and shall we take his life away? Nay, God forbid! For he hath already declared that, if we take his life away there shall a judgment appear upon some on board, within eight and forty hours; and to me it hath appeared; therefore I am forced to come upon quarter-deck before you; and my spirit is one with his; therefore I desire you, in all kindness, to give me the liberty, when you take his life away, to go off on board, for I shall not be willing to serve His Majesty any longer on board of ship; so I do entreat you once more to be merciful to this poor man—so God bless you, Sir Edward. I have no more to say to you.'

Next came up the chief gunner—a more important man, for he had been himself a captain—but he too 'loosed down his knee-strings, and did beg the Admiral's pardon three times, being on his bare knees before Sir Edward.' [422]

Then Sir Edward said, 'Arise up, gunner, and speak.'

Whereupon the chief gunner answered, 'If it please your worship, Sir Edward, we know you are a merciful man, and therefore I entreat you, in all kindness, to be merciful to this poor man, in whom there remains something more than flesh and blood; therefore I entreat you, let us not destroy that which is alive; neither endeavour to do it; and so God bless you, Sir Edward. I have no more to say to you.' Then he too went away.

It was all of no use. Richard had been sentenced by the Court Martial to be hanged next morning, and hanged he must be.

Only Sir Edward—pleased perhaps at being told so often that he was a merciful man, and willing to show that he had some small idea of what mercy meant—'gave orders that any that had a mind to give me victuals might; and that I might eat and drink with whom I pleased; and that none should molest me that day. Then came the lieutenant and sat down by me, whilst they were at their worship; and he would have given me brandy, but I refused. Then the dinner came up to be served, and several gave me victuals to eat, and I did eat freely, and was kindly entertained that day. Night being come, a man kindly proffered me his hammock to lie in that night, because I had lain long in irons; and I accepted of his kindness, and laid me down, and I slept well that night.' [423]

'The next morning being come, it being the second day of the week, on which I was to be executed, about eight o'clock in the morning, the rope being reeved on the mizen-yard's arm; and the boy ready to turn me off; and boats being come on board with captains from other ships, that were of the council of war, who came on purpose to see me executed; I was therefore called to come to be executed. Then, I coming to the execution place, the Commander asked the council how their judgment did stand now? So most of them did consent; and some were silent. Then he desired me freely to speak my mind, if I had anything to say, before I was executed. I told him I had little at present to speak. So there came a man, and bid me to go forward to be executed. So I stepped upon the gunwale, to go towards the rope. The Commander bid me stop there, if I had anything to say. Then spake the judge and said, "Sir Edward is a merciful man, that puts that heretic to no worse death than hanging."'

The judge, the Governor of Dover Castle, was, as we have heard, a Roman Catholic. To him Sir Edward and Richard Sellar were both alike heretics, one not much worse than the other, since both were outside what he believed to be the only true Church.^[38] Sir Edward knew this. Therefore on hearing the word 'heretic' he turned sharp round to the judge, 'What sayest thou?' Apparently the judge felt that he had been unwise to speak his candid thoughts, for he repeated the sentence, leaving out the irritating word 'heretic': 'I say you are a merciful man that puts him to no worse death than hanging.' Sir Edward knew that he had not been mistaken in the word his sharp ears had caught. 'But,' said he, 'what is the other word that thou saidst?' 'That heretic,' repeated the judge. 'I say,' said the Commander, 'he is more like a Christian than thyself; for I do believe thou wouldst hang me if it were in thy power.'

'Then said the Commander to me,' continues Richard, "'Come down again, for I will not hurt an

hair of thy head; for I cannot make one hair grow." Then he cried, "Silence all men," and proclaimed it three times over, that if any man or men on board of the ship would come and give evidence that I had done anything that I deserved death for, I should have it, provided they were credible persons. But no man came, neither a mouth opened against me then. So he cried again, "Silence all men, and hear me speak." Then he proclaimed that the Quaker was as free a man as any on board of the ship was. So the men heaved up their hats, and with a loud voice cried, "God bless Sir Edward, he is a merciful man!" The shrouds and tops and decks being full of men, several of their hats flew overboard and were lost.'

We will say good-bye to Richard there, with all the sailors huzzaing round him, throwing up their caps, and Sir Edward standing by with a pleased smile, more pleased than ever now, since it was impossible for any one to deny that he was a merciful, a most merciful man. The change for Richard himself, from being a condemned criminal loaded with chains to being a universal favourite, must have been startling indeed, though his troubles were not over yet. Difficulties surrounded him again when the actual battles with the Dutch began. But, though he could not fight, and was therefore in perpetual danger, he could and did help and heal.

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His story tells us how he was able to save the whole ship's company from destruction more than once, and had more marvellous adventures than there is time here to relate. He tells also how the persecuting lieutenant became his fast friend, and eventually helped him to get his freedom.

For he did regain his liberty in the end, and was given a written permission to go home and earn his living as a fisherman. With this writing in his hand no press-crew would dare to kidnap him again. So back he came to Scarborough, to the red-roofed cottage by the water's edge, to his unmended nets, and to the little daughter with whom we saw him first. Most likely at this time George Fox was still a prisoner in the Castle. If so, one of the very first things Richard did, we may be sure, was to climb the many stone steps up to the Castle and seek his friend in his cheerless prison. The fire smoke and the rain would be forgotten by both men as they talked together, and George Fox's face would light up as he heard the story of the lashings that disappeared and the beatings that left no bruise. He was not a man who laughed easily, but doubtless he laughed once, at any rate, as he listened to Richard's story, when he heard of the huzzaing sailors whose hats fell off into the water because they were so energetically sure that 'Sir Edward was a very merciful man.'

FOOTNOTES:

- [38] The Roman Catholic gentry used sometimes to alarm their Protestant neighbours with blood-curdling announcements that the good times of Queen Mary were coming back, and 'faggotts should be deere yet' (G.M. Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 87).

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XXVII. TWO ROBBER STORIES. WEST AND EAST

ToC

'They were changed men themselves,

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before they went out to change others'—W. PENN, Testimony to George Fox.

'But when He comes to reign, whose right it is, then peace and goodwill is unto all men, and no hurt in all the holy mountain of the Lord is seen.'—G. FOX.

*'Wouldst thou love one who never died for thee,
Or ever die for one who had not died for thee?
And if God dieth not for Man and giveth not Himself
Eternally for Man, Man could not exist, for Man is
Love
As God is Love. Every kindness to another is a little
death
In the Divine Image, nor can man exist but by
brotherhood.'*

W. BLAKE, 'Jerusalem.'

*'England is as a family of prophets
which must spread over all nations, as
a garden of plants, and the place
where the pearl is found which must
enrich all nations with the heavenly
treasure, out of which shall the waters
of life flow, and water all the thirsty
ground, and out of which nation and
dominion must go the spiritually
weaponed and armed men, to fight
and conquer all nations and bring
them to the nation of God.'—Epistle of
Skipton General Meeting, 1660.*

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XXVII. TWO ROBBER STORIES. WEST AND EAST

I

LEONARD FELL AND THE HIGHWAYMAN

In that same memorable summer of 1652 when George Fox first visited Swarthmoor Hall and 'bewitched' the household there, he also met and 'bewitched' another member of the Fell family. This was one Leonard Fell, a connection of the Judge, whose home was at Baycliff in the same county of Lancashire. Thither George Fox came on his travels shortly after his first visit to Swarthmoor, when only Margaret Fell and her children were at home, and before his later visit after Judge Fell's return.

'I went to Becliff,' says the Journal, 'where Leonard Fell was convinced, and became a minister of the everlasting Gospel. Several others were convinced there and came into obedience to truth. Here the people said they could not dispute, and would fain have put some others to hold talk with me, but I bid them, "Fear the Lord and not in a light way hold a talk of the Lord's words, but put the things in practice."'

Leonard Fell did indeed put his new faith 'in practice.' He left his home and followed his teacher, sharing with him many of the perils and dangers of his journeys in the Service of Truth. Up and down and across the length and breadth of England the two men travelled side by side along the hedgeless English roads. At first as they went along, Leonard Fell watched George Fox with sharp eyes, in his dealings with the different people they met on their journeys, in order to discover how his teacher would 'put into practice' the central truth he proclaimed: that in every man, however degraded, there remains some hidden spark of the Divine. But put it in practice George Fox did, till at length Leonard Fell, too, learned to look for 'that of God within' every one

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he met, learned to depend upon finding it, and to be able to draw it out in his turn.

One day, Leonard was travelling in the 'Service of Truth,' not in George Fox's company but alone, when, as he crossed a desolate moor on horseback, he heard the thunderous sound of horses' hoofs coming after him down the road. Looking round, he beheld a masked and bearded highwayman, his figure enveloped in a long flowing cloak, rapidly approaching on a far swifter horse than his own 'Truth's pony.' A moment later, a pistol was drawn from the newcomer's belt and pointed full at Leonard's head.

'Another step and you are a dead man! Your money or your life, and be quick about it!' said the highwayman, as he suddenly pulled the curb and checked his foam-covered horse. At this challenge, Leonard obediently pulled up his own steed with his left hand, while, with his right, he drew out his purse and handed it over to the robber without a word.

The pistol still remained at full cock, pointed straight at his head. 'Your horse next,' demanded the stranger. 'It is a good beast. Though not as swift as mine I can find a use for it in my profession. Dismount; or I fire.'

In perfect silence Leonard dismounted, making no objection, and gave his horse's bridle into the highwayman's outstretched hand. Then at last, the threatened pistol was lowered, and replaced in the robber's belt. Throwing the folds of his long cloak over one shoulder, and carefully adjusting his mask, that not a glimpse of either face or figure should betray his identity, he prepared to depart, leaving his victim penniless and afoot on the wide, desolate moor. But, though the highwayman had now finished with the Quaker, the Quaker had by no means finished with the highwayman. [431]

It was now Leonard's turn to be aggressive. Standing there on the bleak road, alone and unarmed, Leonard Fell raised a warning hand, and solemnly rebuked his assailant for his evil deeds. At the same time he admonished him that it was not yet too late for him to repent and lead a righteous life, before his hour for repentance should be forever passed.

This was a most surprising turn of events for the highwayman. At first he listened silently, too much astonished to speak. Leonard however did not mince matters, and before he had finished his exhortation the other man was in a furious rage. Never before had any of his victims treated him in this fashion. Curses, tears, despair, those were all to be expected in his 'profession'; but this extraordinary man was neither beseeching him for money nor swearing at him in anger. His victim was merely giving a solemn, yet almost friendly warning to the robber of his horse and of his gold.

'You, you cowardly dog!' blustered Leonard's assailant. 'You let me rob you of your purse and of your steed like a craven! You could not even pluck up courage to defend yourself. Yet now, you actually dare to stand and preach at ME, in the middle of the King's highway?' [432]

The pistol was out again with a flourish. This time Leonard faced it calmly, making no movement to defend himself.

'I would not risk my life to defend either my money or my horse,' he answered, looking up straight at the muzzle with a steady eye, 'but I will lay it down gladly, if by so doing I can save thy soul.'

This unexpected answer was altogether too much for the highwayman. Though his finger was already on the trigger of the pistol, that trigger was never pulled. He sat motionless on his horse, staring through the holes in his mask, down into the eyes of his intended victim, as if he would read his inmost soul.

This astonishing man, whom he had taken for a coward, was calmly ready and was apparently quite willing to give his life—his life!—in order to save his enemy's soul. The robber had almost forgotten that he had a soul. His manhood was black and stained now by numberless deeds of violence, by crimes, too many remembered and far more forgotten. Yet he had once known what it was to feel tender and white and innocent. He had certainly possessed a soul long ago. Did it still exist? Apparently the stranger was convinced that it must, since he was actually prepared to stake his own life upon its eternal welfare. Surprising man! He really cared what became of a robber's soul. It was impossible to wish to murder or even to steal from such an one. There could not be another like him, the wide world over. He had best be allowed to continue on his unique adventure of discovering souls, a much more dangerous career it seemed to be than any mere everyday highwayman's 'profession.' [433]

As these thoughts passed through the robber's mind, his hand sought the folds of his cloak, and then drawing Leonard's purse forth from a deep convenient pocket, he returned it to its owner, stooping over him, as he did so, with a low and courtly bow. Next, putting the horse's bridle also back into Leonard's hand, 'If you are such a man as that,' the highwayman said, 'I will take neither your money nor your horse!'

A moment later, as if already ashamed of his impulsive generosity, he set spurs to his horse and disappeared as swiftly as he had come.

Leonard, meanwhile, remounting, pursued his way in safety, with both his horse and his money once more restored to him. But more precious, by far, than either, was the knowledge that his friend's teaching had again been proved to be true. In his own experience he had discovered that there really and truly is an Inward Light that does shine still, even in the hearts of wicked men. Thus was Leonard Fell in his turn enabled to 'put these things in practice.'

ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

A few years later, on another desolate road, crossing another lonely plain, another traveller met with a very similar adventure thousands of miles away from England. Only this traveller's experiences were much worse than Leonard Fell's. He was not only attacked by three robbers instead of one alone, but this happened amid many other far worse dangers and narrower escapes. Possibly he even looked back, in after days, to his encounter with the robbers as one of the pleasanter parts of his journey!

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This traveller's name was George Robinson, and he was an English Quaker and a London youth. He has left the record of his experiences in a few closely printed pages at the end of a very small book.

'In the year 1657,' he writes, 'about the beginning of the seventh month [September], as I was waiting upon the Lord in singleness of heart, His blessed presence filled me and by the power of His Spirit did command me to go unto Jerusalem, and further said to me, "Thy sufferings shall be great, but I will bear thee over them all."'

This was no easy journey for anyone in those days, least of all for a poor man such as George Robinson. However, he set out obediently, and went by ship to Leghorn in Italy. There he waited a fortnight until he could get a passage in another ship bound for St. Jean d'Acre, on the coast of Palestine, where centuries before Richard C[oe]ur de Lion had disembarked with his Crusaders. Innumerable other pilgrims had landed there, since Richard's time, on their way to see the Holy Places at Jerusalem. George Robinson refused to call himself a pilgrim, but he had a true pilgrim's heart that no difficulties could turn back or dismay.

After staying for eight days in the house of a French merchant at Acre, he set sail in yet a third ship that was bound for Joppa (or Jaffa, as it is called now). 'But the wind rising against us,' Robinson says in his narrative, 'we came to an anchor and the next morning divers Turks came aboard, and demanded tribute of those called Christians in the vessel, which they paid for fear of sufferings but very unwillingly, their demands being very unreasonable, and in like manner demanded of me, but I refusing to pay as according to their demands, they threatened to beat the soles of my feet with a stick, and one of them would have put his hand into my pocket, but the chiefest of them rebuked him. Soon after they began to take me out of the vessel to effect their work, but one of the Turks belonging to the vessel speaking to them as they were taking me ashore, they let me alone, wherein I saw the good Hand of God preserving me.... After this, about three or four days we came to Joppa.'

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And there at Joppa (or Jaffa), where Jonah long ago had embarked for Tarshish, and where Peter on the house-top had had his vision of the great white sheet, our traveller landed. He proceeded straightway on what he hoped would have been the last stage of his long journey to Jerusalem.

Alas! he was mistaken. A few pleasant hours of travel he had, as he passed through the palm-groves that encircle the city of Jaffa, and over the first few miles of dusty road that cross the famous Plain of Sharon. Ever as he journeyed he could see the tall tower of Ramleh, built by the Crusaders hundreds of years before, growing taller as he approached, rising in the sunset like a rosy finger to beckon him across the Plains. When he reached it, in the shadow of the tall Tower enemies were lurking. Certain friars up at Jerusalem, in the hilly country that borders the plain, had heard from their brethren at Acre that a heretic stranger from England was coming on foot to visit the Holy City. Now these friars, although they called themselves Franciscans, were no true followers of St. Francis, the 'little poor man of God,' that gentlest saint and truest lover of holy poverty and holy peace. These Jerusalem friars had forgotten his teaching, and lived on the gains they made off pilgrims; therefore, hearing that the heretic stranger from heretic England was travelling independently and not on a pilgrimage, they feared that he might spoil their business at the Holy Shrines. Accordingly they sent word to their brethren, the friars of Ramleh in the plain, to waylay him and turn him back as soon as he had reached the first stage of his journey from Jaffa on the coast.

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'The friars of Jerusalem,' says Robinson, 'hearing of my coming, gave orders unto some there [at Ramleh] to stay me, which accordingly was done; for I was taken and locked up in a room for one night and part of the day following, and then had liberty to go into the yard, but as a prisoner; in which time the Turks showed friendship unto me, one ancient man especially, of great repute, who desired that I might come to his house, which thing being granted, he courteously entertained me.'

Four or five days later there came down an Irish friar from Jerusalem to see the prisoner. At first he spoke kindly to him, and greeted him as a fellow-countryman, seeing that they both came from the distant Isles of Britain, set in their silver seas. Presently it appeared, however, that he had not come out of friendship, but as a messenger from the friars at Jerusalem, to insist that the Englishman must make five solemn promises before he could be allowed to proceed on his journey. He must promise:

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1. That he would visit the Holy Places [so the friar called them] as other pilgrims did.
2. And give such sums of money as is the usual manner of pilgrims.
3. Wear such a sort of habit as is the manner of pilgrims.

4. Speak nothing against the Turks' laws.

5. And when he came to Jerusalem not to speak anything about religion.'

George Robinson had no intention of promising any one of these things—much less all five. 'I stand in the will of God, and shall do as He bids me,' was the only answer he would make, which did not satisfy the Irish friar. Determined that his journey should not have been in vain, and persuasion having proved useless, he sought to accomplish his object by force. Taking his prisoner, therefore, he set him on horseback, and surrounding him with a number of armed guards, both horsemen and footmen, whom he had brought down from Jerusalem for the purpose, he himself escorted George Robinson back for the second time to Jaffa. There, that very day, he put him aboard a vessel on the point of sailing for Acre. Then, clattering back with his guards across the plain of Sharon, the Irish friar probably assured the Ramleh friars that they had nothing more to fear from that heretic.

Nothing could turn George Robinson from his purpose. He was still quite sure that his Master had work for His servant to do in His Own City of Jerusalem; and, therefore, to Jerusalem that servant must go. He was obliged to stay for three weeks at Acre before he could find a ship to carry him southwards again. He lodged at this time at the house of a kind French merchant called by the curious name of Surrubi.

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'A man,' Robinson says, 'that I had never seen before (that I knew of), who friendly took me into his house as I was passing along, where I remained about twenty days.'

Surrubi was a most courteous host to his Quaker visitor. He used to say that he was sure God had sent him to his house as an honoured guest. 'For,' he continued, 'when my own countrymen come to me, they are little to me, but thee I can willingly receive.' 'The old man would admire the Lord's doing in this thing, and he did love me exceedingly much,' his visitor records gratefully. 'But the friars had so far prevailed with the Consul that in twenty days I could not be received into a vessel for to go to Jerusalem, so that I knew not but to have gone by land; yet it was several days' journey, and I knew not the way, not so much as out of the city, besides the great difficulty there is in going through the country beyond my expression; yet I, not looking at the hardships but at the heavenly will of our Lord, I was made to cry in my heart, "Lord, Thy will be done and not mine." And so being prepared to go, and taking leave of the tender old man, he cried, "I should be destroyed if I went by land," and would not let me go.'

The friars had told the Consul that Robinson had refused to accept their conditions, 'He will turn Turk,' they said, 'and be a devil.' But, thanks to Surrubi's kindness and help, after much trouble Robinson was at length set aboard another ship bound for the south. And thus after bidding a grateful farewell to his host, he made a quick passage and came for the second time to Jaffa. Again he set forth on his last perilous journey. Only a few miles of fertile plain to cross, only a few hours of climbing up the dim blue hills that were already in view on the horizon, and then at last he should reach his goal, the Holy City.

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Even yet it was not to be! This time his troubles began before ever he came within sight of the tall Tower of Ramleh, under whose shadow his enemies, the friars, were still lying in wait for him. He says that having 'left the ship and paid his passage, and having met with many people on the way, they peacefully passed him by until he had gone about six miles out of Jaffa.' But on the long straight road that runs like a dusty white ribbon across the wide parched Plain of Sharon, he beheld three other figures coming towards him. Two of them rode on the stately white asses used by travellers of the East. The third, a person of less consequence, followed on foot. As they came nearer, our traveller noticed that they all carried guns as well as fierce-looking daggers stuck in their swathed girdles. However, arms are no unusual accompaniments for a journey in that country, so Robinson still hoped to be allowed to pass with a peaceable salutation. Instead of bowing themselves in return, according to the beautiful Oriental custom, with the threefold gesture that signifies 'My head, my lips, and my heart are all at your service,' and the spoken wish that his day might be blessed, the three men rushed at the English wayfarer and threw themselves upon him, demanding money. One man held a gun with its muzzle touching Robinson's breast, another searched his pockets and took out everything that he could find, while the third held the asses. 'I, not resisting them,' is their victim's simple account, 'stood in the fear of the Lord, who preserved me, for they passed away, and he that took my things forth of my pockets put them up again, taking nothing from me, nor did me the least harm. But one of them took me by the hand and led me on my way in a friendly manner, and so left me.... So I, passing through like dangers through the great love of God, which caused me to magnify His holy name, came, though in much weakness of body, to Ramleh.'

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At Ramleh worse dangers even than he had met with on his former visit were awaiting him. Many more perils and hairbreadth escapes had yet to be surmounted before he could say that his feet—his tired feet—had stood 'within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' Throughout these later hardships his faith must have been strengthened by the memory of his encounter with the robbers, and the victory won by the everlasting power of meekness.

East or West, the Master's command can always be followed: the command not to fight evil with evil, but to overcome evil with good.

Leonard Fell was given his opportunity of 'putting in practice the things he had learned' as he travelled in England. Our later pilgrim had the honour of being tested in the Holy Land itself:

'In those holy fields,
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which [nineteen] hundred years ago were nailed

**XXVIII. SILVER SLIPPERS:
OR A QUAKERESS AMONG THE TURKS**

'If romance, like laughter, is the child of sudden glory, the figure of Mary Fisher is the most romantic in the early Quaker annals.'—MABEL BRAILSFORD.

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'Truly Mary Fisher is a precious heart, and hath been very serviceable here.'—HENRY FELL to Margt. Fell. (Barbadoes, 1656.)

'My dear Father ... Let me not be forgotten of thee, but let thy prayers be for me that I may continue faithful to the end. If any of your Friends be free to come over, they may be serviceable; here are many convinced, and many desire to know the way, so I rest.'—MARY FISHER to George Fox. (Barbadoes, 1655.)

'This English maiden would not be at rest before she went in purpose to the great Emperor of the Turks, and informed him concerning the errors of his religion and the truth of hers.'—GERARD CROESE.

'Henceforth, my daughter, do manfully and without hesitation those things which by the ordering of providence will be put into thy hands; for being now armed with the fortitude of the faith, thou wilt happily overcome all thy adversaries.'—CATHERINE OF SIENA.

XXVIII. SILVER SLIPPERS: OR A QUAKERESS AMONG THE TURKS

I

The Grand Turk had removed his Court from Constantinople. His beautiful capital city by the Golden Horn was in disgrace, on account of the growing disaffection of its populace and the frequent mutinies of its garrison. For the wars of Sultan Mahomet against the Republic of Venice were increasingly unpopular in his capital, whose treasuries were being drained to furnish constant relays of fresh troops for further campaigns. Therefore, before its citizens became even more bankrupt in their allegiance than they already were in their purses, the ancient Grand Vizier advised his young master to withdraw, for a while, the radiance of his imperial countenance from the now sullen city beside the Golden Horn. Thus it came about that in the late autumn of 1657, Sultan Mahomet, accompanied by his aged minister, suddenly departed with his whole Court, and took up his residence close outside the still loyal city of Adrianople. His state entry into that town was of surpassing splendour, since both the Sultan and his Minister were desirous to impress the citizens, in order to persuade them to open their purse-strings and reveal their hidden hoards. Moreover, they were ever more wishful to dazzle and overawe the Venetian Ambassador, Ballerino, who was still kept by them, unrighteously, a prisoner in the said town.

A full hour or more was the long cavalcade in passing over the narrow stone bridge that spans the turbid Maritza outside the walls of Adrianople. In at the great gate, and down the one, long, meandering street of the city, the imperial procession wound, moving steadily and easily along, since, an hour or two previously, hundreds of slaves had filled up the cavernous holes in the roadway with innumerable barrel loads of sawdust, in honour of the Sultan's arrival. Surrounded by multitudes of welcoming citizens, the procession wound its way at length out on the far side of the city. There, amid a semicircle of low hills, clothed with chestnut woods, the imperial encampment of hundreds and thousands of silken tents shone glistening in the sun.[39]

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In one of the most splendid apartments of the Sultan's own most magnificent pavilion, the two chief personages who presided over this marvellous silken city might have been seen, deep in conversation, one sultry evening in June 1658, a few months after the Court had taken up its residence outside the walls of Adrianople. They formed a strange contrast: the boy Sultan and his aged Grand Vizier, Kuprülü the Albanian. Sultan Mahomet, the 'Grand Seignior' of the whole Turkish Empire, was no strong, powerful man, but a mere stripling who had been scarred and branded for life, some say even deformed, by an attack made upon him in earliest infancy by his own unnatural father, the Sultan Ibrahim. This cruel maniac (whose only excuse was that he was not in possession of more than half his wits at the time) had been seized with a fit of ungovernable rage against the ladies of his harem, and in his fury had done his best to slay his own son and heir. Happily he had not succeeded in doing more than maim the child, and, before long, imprisonment and the bow-string put an end to his dangerous career. But though the boy Sultan had escaped with his life, and had now reached the age of sixteen years, he never attained to an imposing presence. He has been described as 'a monster of a man, deformed in body and mind, stupid, logger-headed, cruel, fierce as to his visage,' though this would seem to be an exaggeration, since another account speaks of him as 'young and active, addicted wholly to the delight of hunting and to follow the chase of fearful and flying beasts.' In order to have more leisure for these sports he was wont to depute all the business of government to his Grand Vizier, the aged Albanian chieftain Kuprülü, who now, bending low before his young master, so that the hairs of his white beard almost swept the ground, was having one of his farewell audiences before departing for the battlefield. Kuprülü, though over eighty years of age, was about to face danger for the sake of the boy ruler, who lounged luxuriously on his cushions, glittering with jewels, scented and effeminate, with sidelong, cunning glances and cruel lips. Yet even Sultan Mahomet, touched by his aged Minister's devotion, had been fired with unwonted generosity: 'Ask what you will and you shall have it, even unto the half of my kingdom,' he was exclaiming with true Oriental fervour.

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The Grand Vizier again swept the ground with his long white beard, protesting that he was but a humble dead dog in his master's sight, and that one beam from the imperial eyes was a far more precious reward than the gold and jewels of the whole universe. Nevertheless, the Sultan detected a shade of hesitation in spite of the magniloquence of this refusal. There was something the Grand Vizier wished to ask. He must be yet further encouraged.

'Thou hast a boon at heart; I read it in thy countenance,' the Sultan continued, 'ask and fear not. Be it my fairest province for thy revenues, my fleetest Arab for thy stable, my whitest Circassian beauty for thine own, thou canst demand it at this moment without fear.' So saying, as if to prove his words, he waved away with one hand the Court Executioner who stood ever at his side when he gave audience, ready to avenge the smallest slip in etiquette.

The Grand Vizier looked on the ground, still hesitating and troubled, 'The Joy of the flourishing tree and the Lord of all Magnificence is my Lord,' he answered slowly, 'the gift I crave is unworthy of his bountiful goodness. How shall one small speck of dust be noticed in the full blaze of the noonday sun? Yet, in truth, I have promised this mere speck of dust, this white stranger

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woman, by the mouth of my interpreter, that I would mention to my lord's sublimity her desire to bask in the sunshine of his rays and——'

'A white, stranger woman,' interrupted the Sultan eagerly, 'desiring to see me? Nay, then, the boon is of thy giving, not of mine. Tell me more! Yet it matters not. Were she beauteous as the crescent at even, or ill-favoured as a bird of prey, she shall yet be welcome for thy sake, O faithful Servant, be she a slave or a queen. Tell me only her name and whence she comes.'

Again the Grand Vizier made obeisance. 'Neither foul nor fair, neither young nor old, neither slave nor queen,' he replied. 'She is in truth a marvel, like to none other these eyes have seen in all their fourscore years and more. Tender as the dewdrop is her glance; yet cold as snow is her behaviour. Weak as water in her outward seeming; yet firm and strong as ice is she in strength of inward purpose.'

'Of what nation is this Wonder?' enquired the Sultan. 'She can scarcely be a follower of the Prophet, on whom be peace, since thou appearest to have gazed upon her unveiled countenance?'

'Nay, herein is the greatest marvel,' returned the Minister, 'it is an Englishwoman, come hither in unheard fashion over untrodden ways, with a tale to tickle the ears. She tells my interpreter (who alone, as yet, hath spoken with her) that her home is in the cold grey isle of Britain. That there she dwelt many years in lowly estate, being indeed but a serving-maid in a town called Yorkshire; or so my interpreter understands. She saith that there she heard the voice of Allah Himself, calling her to be His Minister and Messenger, heard and straightway obeyed. Sayeth, moreover, that she hath already travelled in His service beyond the utmost western sea, even to the new land discovered by that same Cristoforo of Genoa, whose fellow citizens are at this hour dwelling in our city yonder. Sayeth that in that far western land she hath been beaten and imprisoned. Yet, nevertheless, she was forbidden to rest at home until she had carried her message "as far to the East as to the West," or some such words. That having thus already visited the land where sleeps the setting sun of western skies, she craveth now an audience with the splendid morning Sun, the light of the whole East; even the Grand Seignior, who is as the Shade of God Himself.'

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'For what purpose doth she desire an audience?' enquired the Sultan moodily.

'Being a mere woman and therefore without skill, she can use only simple words,' answered the Grand Vizier. "'Tell the Sultan I have something to declare unto him from the Most High God," such is her message; but who heedeth what a woman saith? "Never give ear to the counsels and advices of woman" is the chiefest word inscribed upon the heart of a wise king, as I have counselled ever. Yet, this once, seeing that this maiden is wholly unlike all other women, it might be well to let her bask in the rays of glory rather than turn her unsatisfied away——.' The Vizier paused expectantly. The Sultan remained looking down, toying with the pearl and turquoise sheath of the dagger stuck in his girdle. 'A strange tale,' he said at last, 'it interests me not, although I feel an unknown Power that forces me to listen to thy words. Her name?' he suddenly demanded, lifting his eyes once more to his Minister's face.

'She gives it not,' returned the other, 'speaketh of herself as but a Messenger, repeating ever, "Not I, but His Word." Yet my interpreter, having caused enquiries to be made, findeth that those with whom she lodgeth in the city do speak of her as Maree. Also, some peasants who found her wandering on the mountains when the moon was full, and brought her hither, speak of her by the name of Miriam. Marvelling at the whiteness of her skin, they deem she is a witch or Moon Maiden come hither by enchantment. Yet must she on no account be hurt or disregarded, they say, since she is wholly guileless of evil spells, and under the special protection of Issa Ben Miriam, seeing that she beareth his mother's name.'

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The Sultan was growing impatient. 'A fit tale for ignorant peasants,' he declared. 'Me it doth not deceive. This is but another English vagabond sent hither by that old jackal Sir Thomas Bendish, their Ambassador at Constantinople, to dog my footsteps even here, and report my doings to him. I will not see her, were she ten times a witch, since she is of his nation and surely comes at his behest.'

'Let my lord slay his servant with his own hands rather than with his distrust,' returned the Grand Vizier. 'Had she come from Sir Thomas Bendish, or by his orders, straightway to him she should have returned. She hath never even seen him, nor so much as set eyes on our sacred city beside the Golden Horn. Had she gazed even from a distance upon the most holy Mosque of the Sacred Wisdom at Constantinople, she had surely been less utterly astonished at the sight of even our noble Sultan Selim in this city.' So saying, the Grand Vizier turned to the entrance of the pavilion, and gazed towards the town of Adrianople lying in the plain beneath, beyond the poplar-bordered stream of the Maritza. High above all other buildings rose the great Mosque of Sultan Selim, with its majestic dome surrounded by slender sky-piercing minarets. Its 999 windows shone glorious in the rays of the setting sun:—Sultan Selim, the glory of Adrianople, the ruin of the architect who schemed its wondrous beauty; since he, poor wretch, was executed on the completion of the marvel, for this crime only, that he had placed 999 windows within its walls, and had missed, though but by one, the miracle of a full thousand.

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The Vizier continued: 'The woman declares she hath come hither on foot, alone and unattended. Her tale is that she came by the sea from the Isles of Britain with several companions (filled all of them with the same desire to behold the face of the Sublime Magnificence) so far as Smyrna; where, declaring their wish unto the English Consul there, he, like a wise-hearted man, advised her and her companions "by all means to forbear."

'They not heeding and still urgently beseeching him to bring them further on their journey, the

Consul dissembled and used guile. Therefore, while he pretended all friendliness and promised to help forward their enterprise, he in truth set them instead on board a ship bound for Venice and no wise for Constantinople, hoping thereby to thwart their purpose, and to force them to return to their native land. Some of the company, discovering this after the ship had set sail, though lamenting, did resign themselves to their fate. Only this maid, strong in soul, would not be turned from her purpose, but declared constantly that Allah, who had commanded her to come, would surely bring her there where He would have her, even to the presence of the Grand Seignior himself. And lo! even as she spoke, a violent storm arose, the ship was driven out of her course and cast upon the Island of Zante with its rugged peaks; and there, speaking to the ship-master, she persuaded him to put her ashore on the opposite coast of the mainland, even at the place known as the Black Mountain; and thence she hath made her way hither on foot, alone, and hath met with nothing but lovingkindness from young and old, so she saith, as the Messenger of the Great King.'

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The Sultan's interest was aroused at last: 'Afoot—from the Black Mountain!—incredible! A woman, and alone! It is a journey of many hundreds of miles, and through wild, mountainous country. What proof hast thou that she speaketh truly?'

'My interpreter hath questioned her closely as to her travels. His home is in that region, and he is convinced that she has indeed seen the places she describes. Also, she carries ever in her breast a small sprig of fadeless sea-lavender that groweth only on the Black Mountain slopes, and sayeth that the sea captain plucked it as he set her ashore, telling her that it was even as her courage, seeing that it would never fade.'

But the Sultan's patience was exhausted: 'I must see this woman and judge for myself, not merely hear of her from aged lips,' he exclaimed. 'Witch or woman—moonbeam or maiden—she shall declare herself in my presence. Only, since she doth dare to call herself the messenger of the Most High God, let her be accorded the honours of an Ambassador, that all men may know that the Sultan duly regardeth the message of Allah.'

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II

On a divan of silken cushions in the guest chamber of a house in the city of Adrianople, a woman lay, still and straight. Midnight was long past. Outside, the hot wind could be heard every now and then, listlessly flapping the carved wooden lattice-work shutters of an overhanging balcony built out on timber props over the river Maritza, whose turbid waters surged beneath with steady plash. Inside, the striped silken curtains were closely drawn. The atmosphere was stuffy and airless, filled with languorous aromatic spices.

Mary Fisher could not sleep: she lay motionless as the slow hours passed; gazing into the darkness with wide, unseeing eyes, while she thought of all that the coming day would bring. The end of her incredible journey was at hand. The Grand Vizier's word was pledged. The Grand Turk himself would grant her an audience before the hour of noon, to receive her Message from the Great King.

Her Message. Through all the difficulties and dangers of her journey, that Message had sustained her. As she had tramped over steep mountain ranges, or won a perilous footing in the water-courses of dry hillside torrents, more like staircases than roads, thoughts and words had often rushed unbidden to her mind and even to her lips. No difficulties could daunt her with that Message still undelivered. Many an evening as she lay down beneath the gnarled trees of an olive grove, or cooled her aching feet in the waters of some clear stream, far beyond any bodily refreshment the intense peace of the Message she was sent to deliver had quieted the heart of the weary messenger. Only now that her goal was almost reached, all power of speech or thought seemed to be taken from her. But, though a candle may burn low, may even for a time be extinguished, it still carries securely within it the possibility of flame. Even so the Messenger of the Great King lay, hour after hour, in the hot night silence; not sleeping, yet smiling; physically exhausted, yet spiritually unafraid.

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The heat within the chamber became at length unbearably oppressive to one accustomed, as Mary Fisher had been for weeks past, to sleeping under the open sky. Stretching up a thin white arm through the scented darkness, she managed to unfasten the silken cords and buttons of the curtain above her, and to let in a rush of warm night air. It was still too early for the reviving breeze to spring up that would herald the approach of dawn: too early for even the earliest of the orange hawks, that haunted the city in the daytime, to be awake. Cuddled close in cosy nests under the wide eaves, their slumbers were disturbed for a moment as Mary, half sitting up, shook the pierced lattice-work of the shutters that formed the sides of her apartment. Peering through the interstices of fragrant wood, she caught sight of a wan crescent moon, just appearing behind a group of chestnut-trees on the opposite hill above the river.

The crescent moon! Her guide over sea and land! Had she not come half round the world to proclaim to the followers of that same Crescent, a people truly sitting in gross darkness, the message of the One true Light?

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However long the midnight hours, dawn surely must be nigh at hand. Before long, that waning Crescent must set and disappear, and the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.

There lay the slumbering flame of her wondrous Message. The right words wherewith to kindle that flame in the hearts of others would surely be given when the right hour came, however unworthy the Messenger.

'As far as the East is from the West,' the weary woman thought to herself, while the scenes of her wondrous journey across two hemispheres rushed back unbidden to her mind—'even so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.'

At that moment, the eagerly awaited breeze of dawn passed over her hot temples, soothing her like a friend. Refreshed and strengthened, she lay down once more, still and straight; her smooth hair braided round her head; her hands crossed calmly on her breast; in a repose as quiet and austere, even upon those yielding Oriental cushions, as when she lay upon her hard, narrow pallet bed at home.

Before the first apricot flush of dawn crept up the eastern sky, Mary Fisher had sunk into a tranquil sleep.

III

It was broad daylight, though still early, when she awoke. Outside, the garden behind the house was now a rippling sea of rose and scarlet poppies, above which the orange hawks swooped or dived like copper anchors, in the crisp morning air. Within doors, a slave girl stood beside the divan in the guest chamber, clapping her hands gently together to cause the white stranger to awake. But the chamber seemed full of moonlight, although it was broad day. Had the waning crescent retraced her footsteps, or left behind some of her chill beams? Mary Fisher rubbed her eyes. She must surely be dreaming still! Then, waking fully, she saw that the moon-like radiance came from a heap of silvery gauze draperies, reflected in the emerald green tiles of the floor and in the tall narrow mirrors that separated the lattice-work shutters.

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A flowing robe of silver tissue was spread out over an ottoman in the centre of the floor. The slave girl at her side was holding up a long veil of shimmering silver, drawing it through her henna-stained finger-tips, with low, gurgling cries of delight; then, stretching out her arms wide, she spread the veil easily to their fullest extent. A moment later, drawing a tiny ring from her finger, she had pressed the veil as easily through the small golden circlet, so fine were the silken folds. Then with significant gestures she explained that all these treasures were for the stranger to wear instead of her own apparel. With scornful glances from her dark almond-shaped eyes she pointed disdainfully to Mary Fisher's own simple garments, which, at her entrance, she had tossed contemptuously into a heap on the floor.

The plain, grey, Quakeress's dress did indeed look simpler than ever amid all the shining Oriental splendour. Worn too it was, and travel-stained in places, though newly washed, carefully mended and all ready for use.

Mary Fisher had been a woman for many years before she became a Quakeress. Nay more, she was a woman still. It is possible that, for about the space of half a minute, she may have looked almost regretfully at the silver tissue draperies and the gauze veil.

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Half a minute. Not longer! For her, a Messenger of the Great King, to clothe herself in garments worn by Turkish women, unbelievers, followers of the False Prophet, was impossible, not to be contemplated for an instant. With the gentleness of complete decision she dismissed the slave girl, who departed reluctantly towards the women's apartments. In spite of the froth of shining, billowy folds with which her arms were full, she turned round as she parted the striped, silken hangings of the doorway and drew her dusky orange finger-tips in a significant gesture across her slender brown throat. It was obvious that the slave girl considered this refusal a very serious breach of etiquette indeed!

Left alone, Mary Fisher clothed herself, proudly and yet humbly, in her own simple garments. Her body bore even yet the marks where cruel scourgings in her youth had furrowed deep scars from head to waist. Years ago thus had English Christians received her, when she and her companion had been whipped until the blood ran down their backs beneath the market cross at Cambridge. The two young girls were the first of any of the Friends to be thus publicly scourged. 'This is but the beginning of the sufferings of the people of God,' Mary had exclaimed prophetically, as the first stroke of the lash fell on her shoulders, while the assembled multitudes listened in amazement as the two suffering women went on to pray for mercy on their persecutors.

While here, in Adrianople, under the Crescent, the Infidel Turk, to whom she had come in the power of the very same Message for which she had suffered in Christian countries, was receiving her with kindness and respect, offering to clothe her body in sumptuous apparel, instead of with bloody scars....

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Mary Fisher sighed with irrepressible pain at the thought. Looking down, the marks left by the stocks were also plainly visible under the sunburn round her ankles, as she stood, bare-footed, on the crimson rug. She gladly covered up those tell-tale tokens under her white stockings. But where were her shoes? They seemed to have disappeared. Although the few strips of worn leather that she had put off the night before had been scarcely worthy of the name of shoes, their disappearance might be a grave difficulty. Had they been taken away in order to force her to appear bare-footed before the Sultan?

Ah!—here the slave girl was reappearing. Kneeling down, with a triumphant smile she forced the Englishwoman's small, delicate feet—hardened, it is true, by many hundreds of miles of rough travelling, but shapely still—into a little pair of embroidered silver slippers. Turkish slippers! glistening with silver thread and crystal beads, turned up at the pointed toes, and finished by two silver tufted tassels, that peeped out incongruously from under the straight folds of the simple

grey frock.

This time Mary Fisher yielded submissively and made not the slightest resistance. It did not matter to her in the least how her feet were shod, so long as they were shod in some way, and she was saved from having to pay a mark of homage to the Infidel. As she sat with folded hands on the divan, awaiting the summons of the Grand Vizier, her deep eyes showed that her thoughts were far, far away from any Silver Slippers. [458]

IV

'Mahomet, sone of the Emperour, sone of God, thrice heavenly and thrice known as the renowned Emperour of the Turks, King of Greece, Macedonia and Moldavia, King of Samaria and Hungary, King of Greater and Lesser Egypt, King of all the inhabitants of the Earth and the Earthly Paradise, Guardian of the Sepulchre of thy God, Lord of the Tree of Life, Lord of all the Emperours of the World from the East even to the West, Grand Persecutor of the Christians and of all the wicked, the Joy of the flourishing Tree' ... and so forth and so on.

The owner of all these high-sounding titles was hunched up on his cushions in the State Pavilion. 'On State occasions, among which it is evident that he included this Quaker audience, he delighted to deck his unpleasing person in a vest of cloth of gold, lined with sable of the richest contrasting blackness. Around him were ranged the servants of the Seraglio—the highest rank of lacqueys standing nearest the royal person, the "Paicks" in their embroidered coats and caps of beaten gold, and the "Solacks," adorned with feathers, and armed with bows and arrows. Behind them were grouped great numbers of eunuchs and the Court pages, carrying lances. These wore the peculiar coiffure permitted only to those of the royal chamber, and above their tresses hung long caps embroidered with gold.

'Mary Fisher was ushered into this brilliant scene with all the honours usually accorded to an Ambassador: the Sultan's dragomans accompanied her and stood waiting to interpret at the interview. She was at this time about thirty-five years of age, "a maid ... whose intellectual faculties were greatly adorned by the gravity of her deportment." ... She must have stood in her simple grey frock, amidst that riot of gold and scarlet, like a lily in a garden of tulips, her quiet face shining in that cruel and lustful place with the joy of a task accomplished, and the sense of the presence of God.' [40] [459]

Thus she stood, at the goal of her journey at last, in the presence of the Grand Turk, she the Messenger of the Great King. There was the Grand Turk, resplendent in his sable and cloth of gold. Opposite to him stood the gentle Quakeress, in her plain garment of grey Yorkshire frieze with its spotless deep collar and close-fitting cap of snowy lawn. Only the Message was wanting now.

At first no Message came.

The Sultan, thinking that the woman before him was naturally alarmed by such unwonted magnificence, spoke to her graciously. 'He asked by his interpreters (whereof there were three with him) whether it was true what had been told him that she had something to say to him from the Lord God. She answered, "Yea." Then he bade her speak on: and she not being forward, weightily pondering what she might say. "Should he dismiss his attendants and let her speak with him in the presence of fewer listeners?" the Grand Turk asked her kindly.' Again came an uncourtly monosyllabic 'No,' followed by another baffling silence. [460]

The executioner, a hook-nosed Kurd with eyes like a bird of prey, stationed, as always, at the Sultan's right hand, began to look at the slight woman in grey with a professional interest. He felt the edge of his blade with a skilful thumb and fore-finger, and turned keen eyes from the slender throat of the Quakeress, rising above the folds of snowy lawn, to the aged neck of the Grand Vizier half hidden by his long white beard. There might be a double failure in etiquette to avenge, should the Sultan's pleasure change and this unprecedented interview prove a failure! The executioner smacked his cruel lips with pleasure at the thought, looking, in his azalea-coloured garment, like an orange hawk himself, all ready to pounce on his victims.

Still Silence reigned:—a keen silence more piercing than the sharpest Damascene blade. It was piercing its way into one heart already. Not into the heart of the aged Grand Vizier. The Grand Vizier was frankly bored, and was, moreover, beginning to be strangely uneasy at his *protégée's* unaccountable behaviour. He turned to his interpreter with an enquiring frown. The interpreter looked yet more uncomfortable—even terrified. Approaching his master, he began to whisper profound apologies into his ear, how that he ought to have warned him that this might happen; the woman had in truth confessed that she could not tell when the Message would be sent, nor could she give it a moment before it came: 'Sayeth indeed that her Teacher in this strange faith hath been known to keep an assembly of over 1000 people waiting for a matter of three hours, in order to "famish them from words," not daring to open his lips without command.' [461]

'Thou shouldest indeed have mentioned this before! Allah grant that this maiden keepeth us not here so long,' retorted the Grand Vizier, with a scowl of natural impatience, seeing that he was to set forth on his journey to the battle-field that very day, and that moments were growing precious, even in the timeless East. Then, turning to the Sultan, he in his turn began to pour out profuse explanations and apologies. The uncouth, misshapen figure on the central divan, however, paid scant heed to his Minister. Right into the fierce, cruel, passionate heart of Sultan Mahomet that strange silence was piercing: piercing as no words could have done, through the crust formed by years of self-seeking and sin, piercing, until it found, until it quickened, 'That of

God within.'

What happened next must be told in the historian Sewel's own words, since he doubtless heard the tale from the only person who could tell it, Mary Fisher herself.

'The Grand Turk then bade her speak the word of the Lord to them and not to fear, for they had good hearts and could hear it. He also charged her to speak the word she had to say from the Lord, neither more nor less, for they were willing to hear it, be it what it would. *Then she spoke what was upon her mind.*'

She never says what it was. The Message, once delivered, could never be repeated.

'The Turks hearkened to her with much attention and gravity until she had done; and then, the Sultan asking her whether she had anything more to say? she asked him whether he understood what she had said? He answered, "Yes, every word," and further said that what she had spoken was truth. Then he desired her to stay in that country, saying that they could not but respect such an one, as should take so much pains to come to them so far as from England with a message from the Lord God. He also proffered her a guard to bring her into Constantinople, whither she intended. But she, not accepting this offer, he told her it was dangerous travelling, especially for such an one as she: and wondered that she had passed safe so far as she had, saying also that it was in respect for her, and kindness, that he proffered it, and that he would not for anything she should come to the least hurt in his dominions. She having no more to say, the Turks asked her what she thought of their prophet Mahomet? She answered warily that she knew him not, but Christ the true prophet, the Son of God, who was the Light of the World, and enlightened every man coming into the world, Him she knew. And concerning Mahomet, she said that they might judge of him to be true or false according to the words and prophecies he spoke; saying further, "If the word of a prophet shall come to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord hath sent that prophet: but if it come not to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord never sent him." The Turks confessed this to be true, and Mary, having performed her message, departed from the camp to Constantinople without a guard, whither she came without the least hurt or scoff....'

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V

Thus Mary returned safe to England, where, if not romance, at any rate solid happiness awaited her in the shape of a certain William Bayly. He, a Quaker preacher and master mariner, having been himself a great traveller and having endured repeated imprisonments in distant countries, could appreciate the courage and success of her unprecedented journey. At any rate, as the historian quaintly tells us, he 'thought her worthy to make him a second wife.'

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A few months after her return to England, but while she was still unmarried, Mary Fisher wrote the following account of her travels to some of the friends in whose company she had suffered imprisonment in former days before her great journey.

'My dear love salutes you all in one, you have been often in my remembrance since I departed from you, and being now returned into England and many trials, such as I was never tried with before, yet have borne my testimony for the Lord before the King unto whom I was sent, and he was very noble unto me, and so were all they that were about him: he and all that were about him received the word of truth without contradiction. They do dread the name of God, many of them, and eyes His messengers. There is a royal seed amongst them which in time God will raise. They are more near truth than many Nations, there is a love begot in me towards them which is endless, but this is my hope concerning them, that He who hath raised me to love them more than many others will also raise His seed in them unto which my love is. Nevertheless, though they be called Turks, the seed of them is near unto God, and their kindness hath in some measure been shewn towards His servants. After the word of the Lord was declared unto them, they would willingly have me to stay in the country, and when they could not prevail with me, they proffered me a man and a horse to go five days' journey that was to Constantinople, but I refused and came safe from them. The English are more bad, most of them, yet hath a good word gone through them, and some have received it, but they are few: so I rest with my dear love to you all—Your dear sister, MARY FISHER.'

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VI

Forty years later, in 1697, an aged woman was yet alive at Charlestown in America, who was still remembered as the heroine of the famous journey so many years before. Although twice widowed since then, and now with children and grandchildren around her, she was spoken of to the end by her maiden name. A shipwrecked visitor from the other side of the Atlantic describes her in his letters home as 'one whose name you have heard of, Mary Fisher, she that spoke to the Grand Turk.'

In the dwelling of that ancient widow, however old she grew, however many other relics she kept—remembrances of her two husbands, of children and grandchildren—between the pages of her well-worn Bible was there not always one pressed sprig of the fadeless sea-lavender that grows on the rocky shores of the Black Mountain? And, somewhere or other, in the drawer of an inlaid cabinet or work-table there must have been also one precious packet, carefully tied up with ribbon and silver paper, in which some favourite grandchild, allowed for a treat to open it, would find, to her indescribable delight, a little tasselled pair of Turkish

FOOTNOTES:

- [39] A certain Englishman, Paul Rycout by name, has left a description of this encampment as he saw it on his visit a short time afterwards. 'The tents were raised on a small hill, and about 2000 in number, ranged at that time without order, only the Grand Signior's seemed to be in the midst to overtop all the rest, well worthy observation, costing (as was reported) 180,000 dollars, richly embroidered in the inside with gold. Within the walls of this tent (as I may so call them) were all sorts of offices belonging to the Seraglio, apartments for the pages, chiosks or summer-houses for pleasure, and though I could not get admittance to view the innermost rooms and chambers, yet by the outward and more common places of resort I could make a guess at the richness of the rest, being sumptuous beyond comparison of any in use among Christian princes. On the right hereof was pitched the Grand Vizier's tent, exceeding rich and lofty, and had I not seen that of the Sultan before it, I should have judged it the best that mine eyes had seen. The ostentation and richness of this empire being evidenced in nothing more than the richness of their pavilions, sumptuous beyond the fixed palaces of princes, erected with marble and mortar.'
- [40] *Quaker Women*, by Mabel R. Brailsford.

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XXIX. FIERCE FEATHERS

ToC

'We who were once slayers of one another do not now fight against our enemies.'—JUSTIN MARTYR. A.D. 140.

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'Victory that is gotten by the sword is a victory slaves get one over the other; but victory contained by love is a victory for a king.'—GERRARD WINSTANLEY. 1649.

'Here you will come to love God above all, and your neighbours as yourselves. Nothing hurts, nothing harms, nothing makes afraid on this holy mountain.'—G. FOX.

'My friends that are gone or are going over to plant and make outward plantations in America, keep your own plantations in your hearts with the spirit and power of God, that your own vines and lilies be not hurt.'—G. FOX.

'Take heed of many words, what reaches to the life settles in the life. That which cometh from the life and is received from God, reaches to the life and settles others in the life.'—G. FOX.

'An old Indian named Papunehang appreciated the spirit and atmosphere of a Friends' meeting, even if he did not comprehend the words, telling the interpreter afterwards, "I love to feel where words come from."'—A.M. GUMMERE (from John Woolman's Journal).

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XXIX. FIERCE FEATHERS

The sunlight lay in patches on the steep roof of the Meeting-house of Easton Township, in the County of Saratoga, in the State of New York. It was a bright summer morning in the year 1775. The children of Easton Township liked their wooden house, although it was made only of rough-hewn logs, nailed hastily together in order to provide some sort of shelter for the worshipping Friends. They would not, if they could, have exchanged it for one of the more stately Meeting-houses at home in England, on the other side of the Atlantic. There, the windows were generally high up in the walls. English children could see nothing through the panes but a peep of sky, or the topmost branches of a tall tree. When they grew tired of looking in the branches of the tree for an invisible nest that was not there, there was nothing more to be hoped for, out of those windows. The children's eyes came back inside the room again, as they watched the slow shadows creep along the white-washed walls, or tried to count the flies upon the ceiling. But out here in America there was no need for that. The new Meeting-house of Easton had nearly as many possibilities as the new world outside. To begin with, its logs did not fit quite close together. If a boy or girl happened to be sitting in the corner seat, he or she could often see, through a chink, right out into the woods. For the untamed wilderness still stretched away on all sides round the newly-cleared settlement of Easton.

Moreover, there were no glass windows in the log house as yet, only open spaces provided with wooden shutters that could be closed, if necessary, during a summer storm. Another larger, open space at one end of the building would be closed by a door when the next cold weather came. At present the summer air met no hindrance as it blew in softly, laden with the fragrant scents of the flowers and pine-trees, stirring the children's hair as it lightly passed. Every now and then a drowsy bee would come blundering in by mistake, and after buzzing about for some time among the assembled Friends, he would make his perilous way out again through one of the chinks between the logs. The children, as they sat in Meeting, always hoped that a butterfly might also find its way in, some fine day—before the winter came, and before the window spaces of the new Meeting-house had to be filled with glass, and a door fastened at the end of the room to keep out the cold. Especially on a mid-week Meeting like to-day, they often found it difficult to 'think Meeting thoughts' in the silence, or even to attend to what was being said, so busy were they, watching for the entrance of that long desired butterfly.

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For children thought about very much the same kind of things, and had very much the same kind of difficulties in Meeting, then as now; even though the place was far away, and it is more than a hundred years since that sunny morning in Easton Township, when the sunlight lay in patches on the roof.

It was not only the children who found silent worship difficult that still summer morning. There were traces of anxiety on the faces of many Friends and even on the placid countenances of the Elders in their raised seats in the gallery. There, at the head of the Meeting, sat Friend Zebulon Hoxie, the grandfather of most of the children who were present. Below him sat his two sons. Opposite them, their wives and families, and a sprinkling of other Friends. The children had never seen before one of the stranger Friends who sat in the gallery that day, by their grandfather's side. They had heard that his name was Robert Nisbet, and that he had just arrived, after having walked for two days, thirty miles through the wilderness country to sit with Friends at New Easton at their mid-week Meeting. The children had no idea why he had come, so they fixed their eyes intently on the stranger and stirred gently in their seats with relief when at last he rose to speak. They had liked his kind, open face as soon as they saw it. They liked still better the sound of the rich, clear voice that made it easy for even children to listen. But they

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liked the words of his text best of all: 'The Belovéd of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him. He shall cover them all the day long.'

Robert Nisbet lingered over the first words of his message as if they were dear to him. His voice was full and mellow, and the words seemed as if they were part of the rich tide of summer life that flowed around. He paused a moment, and then went on, 'And now, how shall the Belovéd of the Lord be thus in safety covered? Even as saith the Psalmist, "He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust."' Then, changing his tones a little and speaking more lightly, though gravely still, he continued: 'You have done well, dear Friends, to stay on valiantly in your homes, when all your neighbours have fled; and therefore are these messages sent to you by me. These promises of covering and of shelter are truly meant for you. Make them your own and you shall not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.'

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Here the boys and girls on the low benches under the gallery looked at one another. Now they knew what had brought the stranger! He had come because he had heard of the danger that threatened the little clearing of settlers in the woods. For though New Easton and East Hoosack lay thirty miles apart they were both links in the long chain of Quaker Settlements that had been formed to separate the territory belonging to the Dutch Traders (who dwelt near the Hudson River) from the English Settlements along the valley of the Connecticut. In former days disputes between the Dutch and English Colonists had been both frequent and fierce, until at length the Government had conceived the brilliant idea of establishing a belt of neutral ground between the disputants, and peopling it with unwarlike Quakers. The plan worked well. The Friends, in their settlements strung out over a long, narrow strip of territory, were on friendly terms with their Dutch and English neighbours on either side. Raids went out of fashion. Peace reigned, and for a time the authorities were well content.

A fiercer contest was now brewing, no longer between two handfuls of Colonists but between the inhabitants of two great Continents. For it was just before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War of 1775. The part of the country in which Easton Township was situated was already distressed by visits of scouting parties from both British and American armies, and the American Government, unable to protect the inhabitants, had issued a proclamation directing them to leave the country. This was the reason that all the scattered houses in the neighbourhood were deserted, save only the few tenanted by the handful of Friends.

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'You did well, Friends,' the speaker continued, 'well to ask to be permitted to exercise your own judgment without blame to the authorities, well to say to them in all courtesy and charity, "You are clear of us in that you have warned us"—and to stay on in your dwellings and to carry out your accustomed work. The report of this your courage and faith hath reached us in our abiding place at East Hoosack, and the Lord hath charged me to come on foot through the wilderness country these thirty miles, to meet with you to-day, and to bear to you these two messages from Him, "The Belovéd of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him," and "He shall cover thee with His feathers all the day long."'

The visitor sat down again in his seat. The furrowed line of anxiety in old Zebulon Hoxie's high forehead smoothed itself away; the eyes of one or two of the younger women Friends filled with tears. As the speaker's voice ceased, little Susannah Hoxie's head, which had been drooping lower and lower, finally found a resting-place, and was encircled by her mother's arm. Young Mrs. Hoxie drew off her small daughter's shady hat, and put it on the seat beside her, while she very gently stroked back the golden curls from the child's high forehead. In doing this she caught a rebuking glance from her elder daughter, Dinah.

'Naughty, naughty Susie, to go to sleep in Meeting,' Dinah was thinking; 'it is very hot, and I am sleepy too, but I don't go to sleep. I do wish a butterfly would come in at the window just for once—or a bird, a little bird with blue, and red, and pink, and yellow feathers. I liked what that stranger Friend said about being 'covered with feathers all the day long.' I wish I was all covered with feathers like a little bird. I wish there were feathers in Meeting, or anywhere close outside.' She turned in her corner seat and looked through the slit in the wall—why there were feathers close outside the wall of the house, red, and yellow, and blue, and pink! What could they be? Very gently Dinah moved her head, so that her eye came closer to the slit. But, when she looked again, the feathers had mysteriously disappeared—nothing was to be seen now but a slight trembling of the tree branches in the wilderness woods at a little distance.

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In the mean while her brother, Benjamin Hoxie, on the other low seat opposite the window, was also thinking of the stranger's sermon. 'He said it was a valiant thing to do, to stop on here when all the neighbours have left. I didn't know Friends could do valiant things. I thought only soldiers were valiant. But if a scouting party really did come—if those English scouts suddenly appeared, then even a Quaker boy might have a chance to show that he is not necessarily a coward because he does not fight.' Benjamin's eyes strayed also out of the open window. It was very hot and still in the Meeting-house. Yet the bushes certainly were trembling. How strange that there should be a breeze there and not here! 'Thou shall not be afraid for the arrow that flieth by day,' he thought to himself. 'Well, there are no arrows in this part of the country any longer, now that they say all the Indians have left. I wonder, if I saw an English gun pointing at me out of those bushes, should I be afraid?'

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But it was gentle Mrs. Hoxie, with her arm still round her baby daughter, who kept the stranger's words longest in her heart. 'Shall dwell in safety by Him,—the Belovéd of the Lord,' she repeated to herself over and over again, 'yet my husband hath feared for me, and we have both been very fearful for the children. Truly, we have known the terror by night these last weeks in these unsettled times, even though our duty was plainly to stay here. Why were we so fearful?'

we of little faith. "The Belovéd of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him. He shall cover him with His feathers all the day long."

And then, in her turn, Mrs. Hoxie looked up, as her little daughter had done, and saw the same three tall feathers creeping above the sill of the open Meeting-house window frame. For just one moment her heart, that usually beat so calmly under her grey Quaker robe, seemed to stand absolutely still. She went white to the lips. Then 'shall dwell in safety by Him,' the words flashed back to her mind. She looked across to where her husband sat—an urgent look. He met her eyes, read them, and followed the direction in which she gazed. Then he, too, saw the feathers—three, five, seven, nine, sticking up in a row. Another instant, and a dark-skinned face, an evil face, appeared beneath them, looking over the sill. The moment most to be dreaded in the lives of all American settlers—more terrible than any visit from civilised soldiers—had come suddenly upon the little company of Friends alone here in the wilderness. An Indian Chief was staring in at their Meeting-house window, showing his teeth in a cruel grin. In his hand he held a sheaf of arrows, poisoned arrows, only too ready to fly, and kill, by day.

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All the assembled Friends were aware of his presence by this time, and were watching the window now, though not one of them moved. Mrs. Hoxie glanced towards her other little daughter, and saw to her great relief that Dinah too had fallen asleep, her head against the wooden wall. Dinah and Susie were the two youngest children in Meeting that morning. The others were mostly older even than Benjamin, who was twelve. They were, therefore, far too well-trained in Quaker stillness to move, for any Indians, until the Friends at the head of the Meeting should have shaken hands and given the signal to disperse. Nevertheless, the hearts of even the elder girls were beating very fast. Benjamin's lips were tightly shut, and with eyes that were unusually bright he followed every movement of the Indian Chief, who, as it seemed in one bound and without making the slightest noise, had moved round to the open doorway.

There he stood, the naked brown figure, in full war-paint and feathers, looking with piercing eyes at each man Friend in turn, as if one of them must have the weapons that he sought. But the Friends were entirely unarmed. There was not a gun, or a rifle, or a sword to be found in any of their dwelling-houses, so there could not be any in their peaceful Meeting.

A minute later, a dozen other Redskins, equally terrible, stood beside the Chief, and the bushes in the distance were quite still. The bushes trembled no longer. It was Benjamin who found it hard not to tremble now, as he saw thirteen sharp arrows taken from their quivers by thirteen skinny brown hands, and their notches held taut to thirteen bow-strings, all ready to shoot. Yet still the Friends sat on, without stirring, in complete silence.

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FIERCE FEATHERS

ToList

Only Benjamin, turning his head to look at his grandfather, saw Zebulon Hoxie, the patriarch of the Meeting, gazing full at the Chief, who had first approached. The Indian's flashing eyes, under the matted black eyebrows, gazed back fiercely beneath his narrow red forehead into the Quaker's calm blue eyes beneath the high white brow and snowy hair. No word was spoken, but in silence two powers were measured against one another—the power of hate, and the power of love. For steady friendliness to his strange visitors was written in every line of Zebulon Hoxie's face.

The children never knew how long that steadfast gaze lasted. But at length, to Benjamin's utter astonishment, for some unknown reason the Indian's eyes fell. His head, that he had carried high and haughtily, sank towards his breast. He glanced round the Meeting-house three times with a scrutiny that nothing could escape. Then, signing to his followers, the thirteen arrows were noiselessly replaced in thirteen quivers, the thirteen bows were laid down and rested against the wall; many footsteps, lighter than falling snow, crossed the floor; the Indian Chief, unarmed, sat himself down in the nearest seat, with his followers in all their war-paint, but also unarmed, close round him.

The Meeting did not stop. The Meeting continued—one of the strangest Friends' Meetings, surely, that ever was held. The Meeting not only continued, it increased in solemnity and in power. [476]

Never, while they lived, did any of those present that day forget that silent Meeting, or the brooding Presence, that, closer, clearer than the sunlight, filled the bright room.

'Cover thee with His feathers all the day long.'

The Friends sat in their accustomed stillness. But the Indians sat more still than any of them. They seemed strangely at home in the silence, these wild men of the woods. Motionless they sat, as a group of trees on a windless day, or as a tranquil pool unstirred by the smallest breeze; silent, as if they were themselves a part of Nature's own silence rather than of the family of her unquiet, human children.

The slow minutes slipped past. The peace brooded, and grew, and deepened. 'Am I dreaming?' Mrs. Hoxie thought to herself more than once, and then, raising her eyes, she saw the Indians still in the same place, and knew it was no dream. She saw, too, that Benjamin's eyes were riveted to some objects hanging from the strangers' waists, that none of the other Friends appeared to see.

At last, when the accustomed hour of worship was ended, the two Friends at the head of the Meeting shook hands solemnly. Then, and not till then, did old Zebulon Hoxie advance to the Indian Chief, and with signs he invited him and his followers to come to his house close at hand. With signs they accepted. The strange procession crossed the sunlit path. Susie and Dinah, wide awake now, but kept silent in obedience to their mother's whispers, were watching the feathers with clear, untroubled eyes that knew no fear. Only Benjamin shivered as if he were cold. [477]

When the company had arrived at the house, Zebulon put bread and cheese on the table, and invited his unwonted guests to help themselves. They did so, thanking him with signs, as they knew little or no English. Robert Nisbet, the visiting Friend, who could speak and understand French, had a conversation with one of the Indians in that language, and this was what he said: 'We surrounded your house, meaning to destroy every living person within it. But when we saw you sitting with your door open, and *without weapons of defence*, we had no wish any longer to hurt you. Now, we would fight for you, and defend you ourselves from all who wish you ill.' Meanwhile the Chief who had entered first was speaking in broken English to old Zebulon Hoxie, gesticulating to make his meaning clear.

'Indian come White Man House,' he said, pointing with his finger towards the Settlement, 'Indian want kill white man, one, two, three, six, all!' and he clutched the tomahawk at his belt with a gruesome gesture. 'Indian come, see White Man sit in house; no gun, no arrow, no knife; all quiet, all still, worshipping Great Spirit. Great Spirit inside Indian too;' he pointed to his breast; 'then Great Spirit say: "Indian! No kill them!"' With these words, the Chief took a white feather from one of his arrows, and stuck it firmly over the centre of the roof in a peculiar way. 'With that white feather above your house,' the French-speaking Indian said to Robert Nisbet, 'your settlement is safe. We Indians are your friends henceforward, and you are ours.'

A moment later and the strange guests had all disappeared as noiselessly as they had come. But, when the bushes had ceased to tremble, Benjamin stole to his mother's side. 'Mother, did you *see*, did you *see*?' he whispered. 'They were *not* friendly Indians. They were the very most savage kind. Did you,' he shuddered, 'did you, and father, and grandfather, and the others not notice what those things were, hanging from their waists? They were *scalps*—scalps of men and women that those Indians had killed,' and again he shuddered. [478]

His mother stooped and kissed him. 'Yea, my son,' she answered, 'I did see. In truth we all saw, too well, save only the tender maids, thy sisters, who know naught of terror or wrong. But thou, my son, when thou dost remember those human scalps, pray for the slayers and for the slain. Only for thyself and for us, have no fear. Remember, rather, the blessing of that other Benjamin, for whom I named thee. "The Belovéd of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him. He shall cover him all the day long."' [479]

'In the House of Love men do not curse nor swear; they do not destroy nor kill any. They use no outward swords or spears. They seek to destroy no flesh of man; but it is a fight of the cross and patience to the subduing of sin.'—HENRY NICHOLAS (circa 1540).

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'We have to keep in mind the thought of Christ. To us it seems most important to stop the evil act, hold it down by force, or push off its consequences on to someone else: anything, so long as we get rid of them from ourselves. Christ's thought was to change the evil mind, whatever physical consequences action, directed to this end, might involve.... This is the essence of "turning the other cheek," it is the attitude most likely to convert the sinner who injures us, whether it actually does so or not,—we cannot force him to be converted.' ... 'Those who try this method of love for the sake of the evildoer must be prepared to go down, if necessary, as the front ranks storming a strong position go down, paying the price of victory for those who come after them. This method is not certain to conquer the evil mind: it is the most likely way to do it, and it is that that matters most.'—A. NEAVE BRAYSHAW.

XXX. THE THIEF IN THE TANYARD

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Knock! knock! knock!

The tremulous sound, three times repeated, disturbed the stillness of an empty street of small wooden houses. The night was very dark, but the square mass of the tanner's house could just be discerned, black and solid against the sky. The rays of a solitary oil lamp straggled faintly across the roadway, and showed a man with a large bundle on his back standing on the doorstep of that house, knocking as if he were afraid of the noise he made.

Knock! knock! knock! He tried once more, but with growing timidity and hesitation. Evidently the inmates of the house were busy, or too far off to hear the feeble summons. No one answered.

The man's small stock of courage seemed exhausted. Giving his heavy bundle a hitch back on to his shoulder, he slunk off down the road, to where at a little distance the small oil lamp high up on the wall beckoned faintly in the darkness. The all-pervading smell of a tannery close by filled the air.

When he came directly under the lamp, the man stopped. The light, falling directly upon the package he carried, showed it to be a bundle of hides all ready for tanning. Here he stopped, and drew out a piece of crumpled newspaper from his pocket. Smoothing out the creases as carefully as he could, he held it up towards the lamp, and read once more the strange words that he already knew almost by heart.

This notice was printed in large letters in the advertisement column: 'WHOEVER stole a lot of hides on the fifth day of the present month is HEREBY informed that their owner has a sincere wish to be his friend. If poverty tempted him to this false step the owner will keep the whole transaction secret, and will gladly put him in the way of obtaining money by means more likely to bring him peace of mind.'

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'If poverty tempted him to this false step,' the man repeated to himself half aloud. 'Tanner Savery wraps up his meaning in fine words, but their sense is plain enough. If it was being poor that drove a man to become a thief and to steal these hides from the shadow of that dark archway down by the river last Sunday night,—suppose it was poverty, well what then? Friend Savery "will gladly put him in the way of obtaining money by means more likely to bring him peace of mind." Will he indeed? Can I trust him? Is it a hoax? I would rather do without the money now, if only I could get rid of these hides, and of their smell, that sticks to a man's nostrils even as sin does to his memory. But the tanner promises to give me back peace of mind, does he? Well, that's a fair offer and worth some risk. I'll knock once more at his door and see what happens.'

Stuffing the newspaper into his pocket he walked quickly up the road again, back to the square house, and up the sanded steps. Again he lifted the brass knocker, and again 'knock! knock! knock!' rang out on the night air. But this time the knocking was less tremulous, and as it happened the inmates of the house were crossing the hall on their way to bed and heard the sound at once. In less than a minute the door opened, and a square brass candlestick, held high up, threw its light out into the street. The candlestick was held by a tall man with greyish white hair, whom all the town knew as Tanner Savery. Peeping behind his shoulder appeared his wife's gentle face, surmounted by the clear muslin of a Quakeress's cap. The man on the doorstep never lifted up his eyes to the couple. 'I've brought them back, Mr. Savery,' he mumbled, too much ashamed even to explain what he meant by 'them.' But William Savery needed no explanation. Ever since the hides had mysteriously disappeared from his tanyard a few days before, he had felt sure that this quarrelsome neighbour of his must have taken them.

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What was that neighbour's real name? That, nobody knows, or ever will know now. We only know that whatever it may have been it certainly was not John Smith, because when, in after years, Tanner Savery occasionally told this story he always called the stealer of his hides 'John Smith' in order to disguise his identity; so we will speak of John Smith too. 'A ne'er-do-well' was the character people gave him. They spoke of him as a man who was his own worst enemy, sadly too fond of his glass, and always quarrelling with his neighbours. Only William Savery refused to believe that any man could be altogether evil, and he kept a ray of hope in his heart for John Smith, even when his valuable bundle of hides mysteriously disappeared. It was that ray of hope that had made him put the advertisement in the paper, though he knew it would set the town laughing over 'those Quakers and their queer soft ways.' This evening the ray of hope was shining more brightly than ever. More brightly even than the candlelight shone in the darkness of the night, the hope in his heart shone through the brightness of the Tanner's eyes and smile. Yet he only answered cheerily, 'All right, friend, wait till I can light a lantern and go to the barn to take them back with thee.'

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There was no trace of surprise in his voice. Those matter-of-fact tones sounded as if it were the most natural thing in the world to go out to the tanyard at 10 o'clock at night instead of going upstairs to bed.

'After we have done that,' he continued, 'perhaps thou wilt come in and tell me how this happened; we will see what can be done for thee.'

A lantern, hanging on its hook in the hall, was soon lighted. The two men picked their way down the sanded steps again, then passing under a high creeper-covered gateway they followed a narrow, flagged path to the tanyard.

All this time William Savery had not said one word to his wife—but the ring of happiness in his voice had made her happy too, and had told her what he would like her to do during his absence from the house. Lifting up the bedroom candlestick from the oak chest on which her husband had set it down, she hastened to the larder, then to the kitchen, where she poked up the fire into a bright glow, put a kettle on, and then went back again through the hall to the parlour, to and fro several times. When the two men returned to the house a quarter of an hour later, the fragrance of hot coffee greeted them. Solid pies and meat were spread out on the dark oak table. Mrs. Savery's pies were famous throughout the town. But besides pies there were cakes, buns, bread, and fruit,—a meal, indeed, to tempt any hungry man.

'I thought some hot supper would be good for thee, neighbour Smith,' said Mrs. Savery in her gentle voice, as she handed him some coffee in one of her favourite blue willow-pattern cups. But John Smith did not take the cup from her. Instead, he turned his back abruptly, went over to the high carved fireplace, and leaning down looking into the glowing coals, said in a choked voice, 'It

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is the first time I ever stole anything, and I can tell you I have felt very bad about it ever since. I don't know how it is. I am sure I didn't think once that I should ever come to be a thief. First I took to drinking and then to quarrelling. Since I began to go downhill everybody gives me a kick; you are the first people who have offered me a helping hand. My wife is sickly and my children are starving. You have sent them many a meal, God bless you! Yet I stole the hides from you, meaning to sell them the first chance I could get. But I tell you the truth when I say, drunkard as I am, it is the first time I was ever a thief.'

'Let it be the last time, my friend,' replied William Savery, 'and the secret shall remain between ourselves. Thou art still young, and it is within thy power to make up for lost time. Promise me that thou wilt not take any strong drink for a year, and I will employ thee myself in the tanyard at good wages. Perhaps we may find some employment for thy family also. The little boy can, at least, pick up stones. But eat a bit now, and drink some hot coffee; perhaps it will keep thee from craving anything stronger tonight.'

So saying, William Savery advanced, and taking his guest by the arm, gently forced him into a chair. Mrs. Savery pushed the cup towards him, and heaped his plate with her excellent meatpies. The stranger took up the cup to drink, but his hand trembled so much that he could not put it to his lips. He tried to swallow a small mouthful of bread, but the effort nearly choked him. William Savery, seeing his guest's excited state, went on talking in his grave kind voice, to give him time, and help him to grow calm.

'Doubtless thou wilt find it hard to abstain from drink at first,' he continued, 'but keep up a brave heart for the sake of thy wife and children, and it will soon become easy. Whenever thou hast need of coffee tell my wife, Mary, and she will give it thee.'

Mary Savery's blue eyes shone as she nodded her head; she did not say a word, for she saw that her guest was nearly at an end of his composure. Gently she laid her hand on his rough sleeve as if to try to calm and reassure him. But even her light touch was more than he could bear at that moment. Pushing the food and drink away from him untasted, he laid both his arms on the table, and burying his head, he wept like a child.

The husband and wife looked at each other. 'Can I do anything to help him?' Mary's eyes asked her husband in silence. 'Leave him alone for a little; he will be better when this fit of tears is over,' his wise glance answered back.

William Savery was right. The burst of weeping relieved John Smith's over-wrought feelings. Besides, he really was almost faint with hunger. In a few moments, when the coffee was actually held to his lips, he found he could drink it—right down to the bottom of the cup. As if by magic, the cup was filled up again, and then, very quickly, the meatpies too began to disappear.

At each mouthful the man grew calmer. It was an entirely different John Smith who took leave of his kind friends an hour later. Again they followed him to the door. 'Try to do well, John, and thou wilt always find a friend in me,' William Savery said, as they parted. Mary Savery added no words—she was never a woman given to much talk. Only she slipped her fingers into her guest's hand with a touch that said silently, 'Fare thee well, *friend*.'

The next day John Smith entered the tanyard, not this time slinking in as a thief in the darkness, but introduced by the master himself as an engaged workman. For many years he remained with his employer, a sober, honest, and faithful servant, respected by others and respecting himself. The secret of the first visit was kept. William and Mary Savery never alluded to it, and John Smith certainly did not, though the memory of it never left him and altered all the rest of his life.

Long years after John Smith was dead, William Savery, in telling the story, always omitted the man's name. That is why he has to be called John Smith, because no one knows now, no one ever will know, what his real name may have been. 'But,' as William Savery used to say when he was prevailed on to tell the story, 'the thing to know and remember is that it is possible to overcome Evil with Good.'

XXXI. HOW A FRENCH NOBLE BECAME A FRIEND

*Sentences from 'No Cross, No Crown,'
by WILLIAM PENN.*

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*'Come, Reader, hearken to me awhile;
I seek thy salvation; that is my plot;
thou wilt forgive me.'*

*'Thou, like the inn of old, hast been full
of guests; thy affections have
entertained other lovers; there has
been no room for thy Saviour in thy
soul ... but his love is after thee still, &
his holy invitation continues to save
thee.'*

*'Receive his leaven, & it will change
thee; his medicine and it will cure
thee; he is as infallible as free; without
money and with certainty.... Yield up
the body, soul & spirit to Him that
maketh all things new: new heavens &
new earth, new love, new joy, new
peace, new works, a new life &
conversation....'*

*'The inward, steady righteousness of
Jesus is another thing than all the
contrived devotion of poor
superstitious man.... True worship is
an inward work; the soul must be
touched and raised in its heavenly
desires by the heavenly Spirit.... So
that souls of true worshippers see
God: and this they wait, they pant,
they thirst for.'*

*'Worship is the supreme act of man's
life.'*

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XXXI. HOW A FRENCH NOBLE BECAME A FRIEND

Now we come to a Saint who had a life so full of adventures that a book twice as big as this one would be needed to contain the stories that might be told about him alone.

Unlike any of the other 'Quaker Saints' in this book, he was by birth a Frenchman and came of noble family. His name was Etienne de Grellet. He was born nearly a century after the death of George Fox; but he probably did not know that such a person had ever existed, never even heard Fox's name, until long after he was grown up. If Etienne de Grellet, the gay young nobleman of the French court, had been told that his story would ever be written in a book of 'Quaker Saints' he would, most likely, have raised his dark eyebrows and have looked extremely surprised.

'Quakère? Qu'est-ce que c'est alors, Quakère? Quel drôle de mot! Je ne suis pas Quakère, moi! he might have answered, with a disdainful shrug of his high, narrow, aristocratic French shoulders. Yet here he is after all!

Etienne de Grellet was born at Limoges in France, in the year 1773. His childhood was passed

in the stormy years when the cloud was gathering that was to burst a little later in the full fury of the French Revolution. His father, Gabriel de Grellet, a wealthy merchant of Limoges, was a great friend and counsellor of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. As a reward for having introduced into the country the manufacture of finer porcelain than had ever before been made in France he was ennobled by the king, whom he often used to attend in his private chapel. Limoges china is still celebrated all over the world; and at that time the most celebrated of its china-makers was M. de Grellet, the king's friend.

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Naturally the sons of this successful merchant and nobleman were brought up in great luxury. Etienne and his brothers were not sent to a school, but had expensive tutors to teach them at home. Their parents wanted their children to be well educated, honourable, straightforward, generous, and kind; to possess not only accomplishments but good qualities. Yet Etienne felt, when he looked back in later days, that something had been left out in their education that was, perhaps, the most important thing of all.

When he was quite a little boy he was taken to visit one of his aunts who was a nun in a convent near Limoges. The rules of this convent were so strict that the nuns might not even see their relations who came to visit them. They might only speak to them from the other side of two iron gratings, between the bars of which a thick curtain was hung. The little boy thought it very strange to be taken from his beautiful home, full of costly furniture, pictures, and hangings, and to be brought into the bare convent cell. Then he looked up and saw an iron grating, and heard a voice coming through the folds of a thick curtain that hung behind it. He could hear the voice, but he might never see the face of the aunt who spoke to him. At night at home, as he lay in his comfortable bed, he used to think of his aunt and the other nuns 'rising three times in the night for prayer in the church, from the hard boards which formed their couch, even the luxury of a straw pallet being denied them.' 'Which is the real life,' he used to ask himself, 'the easy comfortable life that goes on round me every day, or that other, difficult life hidden behind the folds of the thick curtain?'

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Child though he was, Etienne felt that his aunt loved him, although he had never seen her. This helped him to feel that, although unseen, God was loving him too. As he grew older he wondered: 'Perhaps everything we see here is like the bars of a grating, or a thick curtain. Perhaps there is some one on the other side who is speaking to us too.'

Etienne was only about five or six years old when he made the great discovery that GOD IS THERE, hidden behind the screen of visible things all round us. After this, he longed to be able to speak to God and to listen to God's voice, as he was able to listen to his unseen aunt's voice speaking to him from behind the curtain in the convent.

No one ever taught him to pray; but presently he discovered that too for himself. One day, when he was only six years old, his tutor gave him a Latin lesson to learn that was much too difficult for him. Etienne took the book up to his bedroom, and there, all alone, he read it over and over and did his very best to learn it. But the unfamiliar Latin words would not stay in his memory. At last he closed the book in despair and went to his bedroom window and looked out. He gazed over the high roofs of the city, away over the wide plain in which Limoges lay, to the distant mountain, blue against the sky. Everything looked fair and peaceful. As he gazed, the thought came to him, 'God made the plain and the river and the mountains. God made this whole beautiful world in which I live. If God can create all these things, surely He can give me memory also.' He knelt down at the foot of his bed and prayed, for the first time in his life, that his Unseen Friend would help him to master the difficult lesson. Taking up the book again, he read the hard Latin words once more, very attentively. This time the words stayed in his memory and did not fade away. Often afterwards, he found that if he prayed all his lessons became easier. He could not, of course, learn them without effort, but after he had really prayed earnestly, he found he could remember things better. Then one day he learned the Lord's prayer. Long years after, when he was an old man, he could still recall the exact spot in his beautiful home where, as a little boy, he had first learned to say, 'Our Father.' Etienne and his family belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. On Sundays they went to the great cathedral of Limoges; but the service there always seemed strange and far away to Etienne.^[41] The music, the chanting, the Latin words that were said and sung by bishops and priests in their gorgeous robes, did not seem to him to have anything to do with the quiet Voice that spoke to the boy in the silence of his own heart.

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When Etienne and his brothers were old enough they were sent to several different colleges and schools. Their last place of instruction was the celebrated College of the Oratorians at Lyons. Among other things, the students of this College were taught to move so quietly that fifty or a hundred boys went up or down the stone steps of the College all together, without their feet making the least noise.

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Etienne tells us in his diary: 'as we were educated by Roman Catholics and in their principles we were required to confess once a month,' that is, to tell a priest whatever they had done that was wrong, and receive the assurance of God's forgiveness from him.

The priest to whom Etienne regularly made his confession was 'a pious, conscientious man,' who treated him with fatherly care. When the boy told him of his puzzles, and asked how it could be necessary to confess to any man, since God alone could forgive sins, he received a kind, helpful answer. 'Yet,' he says, 'my reasoning faculties brought me to the root of the matter; from created objects to the Creator—from time to eternity.' After he was confirmed at College he hoped that his heart would be changed and made different; but he found that he was still much the same as before. Before leaving the College he and the other students who were also departing received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Mass. This was to Etienne a very

solemn time. But, he says, as soon as he was out in the world again, the remembrance of it faded away. He settled that he had no use for religion in his life, and determined to live for pleasure and happiness alone. 'I sought after happiness,' his diary says, 'in the world's delights. I went in pursuit of it from one party of pleasure to another; but I did *not* find it, and I wondered that the name of pleasure could be given to anything of that kind.'

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In his dissipated life after leaving College, he gave up saying his prayers, and gradually he lost his belief that GOD WAS THERE. He read unbelieving books, which said that God did not exist, and that the Unseen world was only a delusion and a dream. For a time Etienne gave himself up to doubt and denial as well as to dissipation. He was in this restless state when the French Revolution broke out and caught him, like a butterfly in a thunderstorm. New questions surged over him. 'If there is a God after all, why should He allow these horrors to happen?' But no answer came. Or perhaps he had forgotten how to listen.

'Towards the close of 1791,' he writes, 'I left my dear Father's house, and bade him, as it proved, a lasting farewell, having never seen him since.' At this time, Etienne accompanied his brothers and many other nobles into Germany, to join the French Princes who were endeavouring to bring about a counter-revolution and restore the king, Louis XVI.

On this dangerous journey the young men met with many narrow escapes. Courage came naturally to Etienne. 'I was not the least moved,' he writes in his diary, 'when surrounded by people and soldiers, who lavished their abuses upon us, and threatened to hang me to the lamp-post. I coolly stood by, my hands in my pockets, being provided with three pairs of pistols, two of which were double-barrelled. I concluded to wait to see what they would do, and resolved, after destroying as many of them as I could, to take my own life with the last.'

Happily the necessity for extreme courses did not arise. He was, he says, 'mercifully preserved,' and no violent hands were laid upon him, though he and his companions suffered a short detention, after which they succeeded in safely joining the French Princes and their adherents at the city of Coblenz on the Rhine. Here Etienne spent the following winter and spring surrounded, he tells us, by many temptations.

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'I was fond of solitude,' continues the diary, 'and had many retired walks through the woods and over the hills. I delighted to visit the deserted hermitages, which formerly abounded on the Rhine. I envied the situation of such hermits, retired from the world, and sheltered from its many temptations; for I thought it impossible for me to live a life of purity while continuing among my associates. I looked forward wishfully to the time when I could thus retire; but I saw also that, unless I could leave behind me my earthly-mindedness, my pride, vanity, and every carnal propensity, an outward solitude could afford me no shelter.'

'Our army entered into France the forepart of the summer of 1792, accompanied by the Austrians and Prussians. I was in the King's Horse Guards, which consisted mostly of the nobility. We endured great hardships, for many weeks sleeping on the bare ground, in the open air, and were sometimes in want of provisions. But that word *honour* so inflamed us, that I marvel how contentedly we bore our privations.'

Towards the approach of winter, owing to various political changes, the Princes' army was obliged to retire from France, and soon after was disbanded. 'Etienne had been present at several engagements; he had seen many falling about him, stricken by the shafts of death; he had stood in battle array, facing the enemy ready for the conflict; but, being in a reserve corps, he was preserved from actually shedding blood, having never fought with the sword, or fired a gun.'

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In after years, he was thankful to remember that although he had been perfectly willing to take life, he had never actually done so in his soldier days. After the retreat of the French army, he and his brothers set out for Amsterdam. On the way, however, they were made prisoners of war, and condemned to be shot. 'The execution of the sentence was each moment expected, when some sudden commotion in the hostile army gave them an opportunity to make their escape.' Their lives thus having been spared a second time they reached Holland in safety.

The young men were puzzled what to do next. They could not bear to leave their beloved parents at distant Limoges, and yet it was impossible to reach them or to help them in any way. France was a dangerous place for people with a 'de' in their names in those days, and for young men of military age most dangerous of all. Finally, Etienne and his brother Joseph settled to go to South America. 'Through the kind assistance of a republican General, a friend of the family, they obtained a passage on board a ship bound for Demerara, where they arrived in the First month of 1793, after a voyage of about forty days.'

Unfortunately this long voyage had not taken them away from scenes of violence. The Revolution in France was terrible, but the horrors of slavery in South America were, if possible, even worse. The New World seemed no less full of tragedy than the Old. Etienne saw there husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters torn apart, most cruelly beaten, often sold like cattle to tyrannical masters, never to see each other's faces again.

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Amid such scenes Etienne grew more than ever full of despairing thoughts, more than ever inclined to believe that there could not be a God ruling a world where these evils were allowed to go unpunished.

'Such was the impression made upon Etienne by the scenes of cruelty and anguish he witnessed, that, many years after, the sound of a whip in the street would chill his blood, in the remembrance of the agony of the poor slaves; and he felt convinced that there was no excess of wickedness and malice which a slave-holder, or driver, might not be guilty of.'

Etienne and Joseph stayed in Demerara for more than two years. In the spring of 1795 they left South America and settled in Long Island near New York. There, they made friends with a certain Colonel Corsa, a man who had served in the British army, and who had a daughter who spoke French. As the two brothers at this time knew no English it was a great cheer to them in their loneliness to be able to visit at this hospitable house. One day Colonel Corsa happened to speak of William Penn. Etienne had already heard of the Quaker statesman, George Fox's friend, and when the young girl said she possessed Penn's writings Etienne asked to borrow them. He took back to his lodgings with him a large folio book, intending, with the help of a dictionary, to translate it in order to improve his English. Great was his disappointment when he found that the book contained nothing about politics or statesmanship. It was about religion; and at this time Etienne thought that religion was all a humbug and delusion. Therefore he shut up the book and put it away, though he did not return it to its owner. One evening, about this time, as he was walking in the fields alone, suddenly the Voice he had heard in his childhood spoke to him once more, close by and terribly clear: 'ETERNITY, ETERNITY, ETERNITY.' These three words, he says, 'reached my very soul,—my whole man shook,—it brought me, like Saul, to the ground.' The sinfulness and carelessness of his last few years passed before him. He cried out, 'If there is no God, doubtless there is a hell.'

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His soul was almost in hell already, for hell is despair, and Etienne was very nearly despairing at that moment. Only one way out remained, the way of prayer, the little mossy pathway that he used to tread when he was a child, but that he had not trodden, now, for many years. Tangled, mossy, and overgrown that path was now, but it still led out from the dark wood of life where Etienne had almost lost his way and his hope.

Etienne took that way. With his whole heart he prayed for mercy and for deliverance from the sin and horror that oppressed him. When no answer came at once he did not stop praying, but continued day and night, praying, praying for mercy. Perhaps he scarcely knew to whom his prayer was addressed; but it was none the less a real prayer.

He expected that the answer to it would come in some startling form that he could recognise the first minute and say: 'There! Now God is answering my prayer!'

Instead, the answer came far more simply than he had expected. God often seems to choose to answer prayers in such a gentle, natural fashion, that His children need to watch very carefully lest they take His most radiant messengers, His most wonderful messages, almost as a matter of course. Only if they recognise God's Love in all that comes, planning how things shall happen, they can see His hand arranging even the tiniest details of their lives, fitting them all in, and making things work out right. Then they understand how truly wonderful His answers are.

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The answer to Etienne's prayer came through nothing more extraordinary than that same old folio book which he had borrowed from his friend Miss Corsa, and had put away, thinking it too dull to translate. He took it out again, and opened upon a part called 'No Cross, No Crown.' 'I proceeded,' he says, 'to read it with the help of my dictionary, having to look for the meaning of nearly every word.'

When he had finished, he read it straight through again. 'I had never met with anything of the kind before,' and all the time he was reading the Voice inside his heart kept on saying, 'Yes, Yes, Yes, that is true!'

'I now withdrew from company, and spent most of my time in retirement, and in silent waiting upon God. I began to read the Bible, with the aid of my dictionary, for I had none then in French. I was much of a stranger to the inspired records. I had not even seen them before that I remember; what I had heard of any part of their contents, was only detached portions in Prayer Books.

'Whilst the fallow ground of my heart was thus preparing, my brother and myself, being one day at Colonel Corsa's, heard that a Meeting was appointed to be held next day in the Friends' Meeting-house, by two Englishwomen, to which we were invited. The Friends were Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young. The sight of them brought solemn feelings over me; but I soon forgot all things around me; for, in an inward silent frame of mind, seeking for the Divine presence, I was favoured to find *in* me, what I had so long, and with so many tears, sought for *without* me. My brother, who sat beside me, and to whom the silence, in which the forepart of the meeting was held, was irksome, repeatedly whispered to me, "Let us go away." But I felt the Lord's power in such a manner, that a secret joy filled me, in that I had found Him after whom my soul had longed. I was as one nailed to my seat. Shortly after, one or two men Friends in the ministry spoke, but I could understand very little of what they said. After them Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young spoke also; but I was so gathered in the temple of my heart before God, that I was wholly absorbed with what was passing there. Thus had the Lord opened my heart to seek Him where He is to be found.

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'My brother and myself were invited to dine in the company of these Friends, at Colonel Corsa's. There was a religious opportunity after dinner, in which several communications were made. I could hardly understand a word of what was said, but, as Deborah Darby began to address my brother and myself, it seemed as if the Lord opened my outward ear, and my heart. She seemed like one reading the pages of my heart, with clearness describing how it had been, and how it was with me. O what sweetness did I then feel! It was indeed a memorable day. I was like one introduced into a new world; the creation, and all things around me, bore a different aspect, my heart glowed with love to all.... O how can the extent of the Lord's love, mercy, pity, and tender compassion be fathomed!'

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After the visit of the two Friends had made this change in his life Etienne decided to give up his French name and title, and to be no longer Etienne de Grellet, the French nobleman, but plain Stephen Grellet, the teacher of languages. Later on, he was to become Stephen Grellet the Quaker preacher; but the time for that had not yet come. After Deborah Darby's visit he went regularly to the Friends' Meetings in Long Island, but they were held for the most part in complete silence, and sad to say not one of the Friends ever spoke to him afterwards. He missed their friendliness all the more because the people he was lodging with could not bear his attending Quaker Meetings, and tried to make him give up going to such unfashionable assemblies. His brother, Joseph, also could not understand what had come to him, and both Joseph and the lodging-house people teased poor Stephen about his Quaker leanings, till he, who had been brave enough when his life was in danger, was a coward before their mockery. He did not want to give up going to his dear Meeting, but he hated to be ridiculed. At first he tried to give up Meeting, but this disobedience gave him, he says, 'a feeling of misery.' When the next Sunday came he tried another plan. He went to the Meeting-house by roundabout ways 'through fields and over fences, ashamed to be seen by any one on the road.' When he reached the Meeting-house by these by-lanes, the door was closed. No Meeting was to be held there that day. The Friends happened to have gone to another place. Stephen, therefore, sat down, 'in a retired place and in a very tried state,' to think the whole question over again, with much humility. He decided that henceforth, come what might, he would not be a coward; and he kept his resolution. The next Sunday he went to Meeting 'though it rained hard and I had about three miles to walk.' Henceforward he attended Meeting regularly, and at last his brother ceased reproaching him for his Quakerism, and one Sunday he actually came to Meeting too. This time Joseph also enjoyed the silence and followed the worship. 'From that time he attended meetings diligently, and was a great comfort to me. But, during all that period,' Stephen continues, 'we had no intercourse with any of the members of the religious Society of Friends.' These Friends still took no notice of the two strangers. They seem to have been Friends only in name.

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About this time bad news came from France. 'My dear mother wrote to me that the granaries we had at our country seat had been secured by the revolutionary party, as well as every article of food in our town house. My mother and my younger brother were only allowed the scanty pittance of a peck of mouldy horse-beans per week. My dear father was shut up in prison, with an equally scanty allowance. But it was before I was acquainted with the sufferings of my beloved parents, that the consideration of the general scarcity prevailing in the country led me to think how wrong it was for me to wear powder on my head, the ground of which I knew to be pride.' He gave up powder from this time. It would not be much of a sacrifice nowadays, but it was a very real one then, when powder was supposed to be the distinguishing mark of a gentleman. The two brothers were now obliged to learn to support themselves. All their estates in France had been seized. 'Our means began to be low, and yet our feelings for the sufferings in which our beloved parents might be involved, caused us to forget ourselves, strangers in a strange country, and to forward them a few hundred dollars we had yet left.'

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It was no easy matter to find employment. The brothers went on to New York, and there at last the Friends were kind: Friends in deed and not in name only. They found a situation for Joseph in New York itself, and arranged for Stephen to go to Philadelphia, where he was more likely to find work.

And at Philadelphia the Friends were, if possible, even kinder to him than the Friends at New York. They were spiritual fathers and mothers to him, he says, and seemed to know exactly what he was feeling. 'They had but little to say in words, but I often felt that my spirit was refreshed and strengthened in their company.' At Philadelphia, he had many offers of tempting employment, but he decided to continue as a teacher of languages in a school. He gave his whole mind to his school work while he was at it, and out of school hours wandered about entirely care free. But although he was a teacher of languages and although the English of his Journals is scrupulously careful, it has often a slight foreign stiffness and formality. He was often afraid in his early years of making mistakes and not speaking quite correctly. There is a story that long afterwards, when he was in England and was taking his leave of some schoolgirls, he wished to say to them that he hoped they might be preserved safely. But in the agitation of his departure he chose the wrong words. His parting injunction, therefore, never faded from the girls' memory: 'My dear young Friends, may the Lord *pickle* you, His dear little *muttons*.'

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If, even as an old man, Stephen was liable to fall into such pitfalls as this, it is easy to understand that in his earlier years the fear of making mistakes must have been a real terror to him, especially when he thought of speaking in Meeting. Very soon after he became a Friend he felt, with great dread, that the beautiful, comforting messages that refreshed his own soul were meant to be shared with others. Months, if not years, of struggle followed, before he could rise in his place in Meeting and obey this inward prompting. But directly he did so, his fears of making a mistake, or being laughed at, vanished utterly away. After agony, came joy. 'The Lord shewed me how He is mouth, wisdom and utterance to His true and faithful ministers; that it is from Him alone that they are to communicate to the people, and also the *when* and the *how*.' At that first Meeting, after Stephen had given his message and sat down again, several Friends, whose blessing he specially valued, also spoke and said how thankful they were for his words. Among those present that day was that same William Savery, who, in the last story, had a bundle of valuable hides stolen from his tanyard, and punished the thief, when he came to return the hides, by loading him with kindness and giving him a good situation.

Certainly William Savery would not tell the story of 'the man who was not John Smith' to Stephen Grellet on that particular day; for Stephen was so filled with the thankful wonder that

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follows obedience, that he had no thought for outside things. 'For some days after this act of dedication,' he says, 'my peace flowed as a river.' In the autumn of this year (1796), Stephen Grellet, the French nobleman, became a Friend. About two years later, he was acknowledged as a Minister by the Society.

'In those days,' he writes, 'my mind dwelt much on the nature of the hope of redemption through Jesus Christ.... I felt that the best testimony I could bear was to evince by my life what He had actually done for me.'

Henceforth Stephen's life was spent in trying to make known to others the joy that had overflowed his own soul. He did indeed 'put the things that he had learned in practice,' as he journeyed over both Europe and America, time after time, visiting high and low. His life is one long record of adventures, of perils surmounted, of hairbreadth escapes, of constant toil and of much plodding, humdrum service too. His message brought him into the strangest situations, as he gave it fearlessly. He sought an interview with the Pope at Rome in order to remonstrate with him about the state of the prisons in the Papal States. Stephen gave his message with perfect candour, and afterwards entered into conversation with the Pope. Finally, he says, 'As I felt the love of Christ flowing in my heart towards him, I particularly addressed him.... The Pope ... kept his head inclined and appeared tender, while I thus addressed him; then rising from his seat, in a kind and respectful manner, he expressed his desire that "the Lord would bless and protect me wherever I went," on which I left him.'

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Not satisfied with that, though it seems wonderful enough, Stephen another time induced the Czar of all the Russias, Alexander I., to attend Westminster Meeting. Both these stories are well worth telling. But there is one story about Stephen, better worth telling still, and that is how the Voice that guided him all over the world sent him one day 'preaching to nobody' in a lonely forest clearing in the far backwoods of America.

FOOTNOTES:

- [41] 'From my earliest days,' he writes, 'there was that in me that would not allow me implicitly to believe the various doctrines I was taught.'

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XXXII. PREACHING TO NOBODY

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'All the artillery in the world, were they all discharged together at one clap, could not more deaf the ears of our bodies than the clamourings of desires in the soul deaf its ears, so you see a man must go into silence or else he cannot hear God speak.'—JOHN EVERARD. 1650.

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'God forces none, for love cannot

compel, and God's service is therefore a thing of complete freedom.... The thing which hinders and has always hindered is that our wills are different from God's will. God never seeks Himself, in His willing—we do. There is no other way to blessedness than to lose one's self will'—HANS DENCK. 1526.

'The inward command is never wanting in the due season to any duty.'—R. BARCLAY. 1678.

'I think I can reverently say that I very much doubt whether, since the Lord by His grace brought me into the faith of His dear Son, I have ever broken bread or drunk wine, even in the ordinary course of life, without the remembrance of, and some devout feeling regarding the broken body and the blood-shedding of my dear Lord and Saviour.'—STEPHEN GRELLET.

'One loving spirit sets another on fire.'—AUGUSTINE.

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XXXII. PREACHING TO NOBODY

Stephen Grellet, after much waiting on the Lord to shew him His will, was directed by the Spirit to take a long journey into the backwoods of America, and preach the Gospel to some woodcutters who were felling forest timber.^[42]

At first Stephen did not know which was the wood he was meant to visit, having travelled through hundreds of miles of forests on his journey. So he waited very quietly, his heart as still as a clear lake, ready to reflect anything God might show him.

Suddenly a picture came. He remembered a lonely forest clearing, far away. Workmen's huts were dotted about here and there, and a big wooden building rose in the midst of the clearing. All around were woodcutters, some busy sawing timber, some marking the tall forest trees, others carting huge logs and piling them at a little distance. Stephen now remembered the place well. He remembered, too, the workmen's rough faces, and the wild shouts that filled the air as he had passed by on horseback. He had noticed a faint film of blue smoke curling up from the large building, and he had supposed that that must be the dining-shanty where the workmen's food was prepared and where they had their meals. He remembered having thought to himself, 'A lonely life and a wild one!' But the place had not made a deep impression on his mind, and he had forgotten it as he journeyed, in the joy of getting nearer home. Now, suddenly, that forest clearing, with the huts and the dining-shanty and the busy woodmen all round, came back to him as vividly as a picture in a magic-lantern view, while a Voice said, distinctly but very gently in his own heart, so that only he could hear, 'GO BACK THERE AND PREACH TO THOSE LONELY MEN.'

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Stephen knew quite well Whose Voice it was that was speaking to him, for he had loved and followed that Voice for many years. Obedience was easy now. He said at once, 'Yes, I will go;' and saying good-bye to his wife, he left his home, and set forth again into the forest. As he journeyed, a flood of happiness came over his soul. The long ride through the lonely woods, day after day, no longer seemed tedious. He was absolutely alone, but he never felt the least bit lonely. It was as if Someone were journeying with him all the way, the invisible Friend whose Voice he knew and loved and obeyed.

When at length he drew near the clearing in the forest, he both trembled and rejoiced, at the thought of soon being able to deliver his message to the woodmen. Coming yet nearer, however, he no longer saw any blue smoke curling up in a thin spiral between the straight stems of the forest trees. Neither did he hear any sound of saws sawing timber, or the men shouting to their horses. The whole place was silent and deserted. When he reached the clearing, nobody was there. Even the huts had gone. He would have thought he had mistaken the place if the dining-

shanty had not been there, by the edge of a little trickling stream, just as he remembered it.

Nowhere was there a living soul to be seen. Evidently all the woodmen had gone away deeper into the forest to find fresh timber, for the clearing was much larger and many more trees had been cut down than on Stephen's first visit. The neglected look of the one big wooden hut that remained showed that the men had not used it for many days. Weeks might pass before any of the woodcutters returned. [513]

What was Stephen to do? He had no idea in which direction the woodmen had departed. It was hopeless to think of tracking them further through the lonely forest glades. Had the Voice made a mistake? Could he have misunderstood the command? Was the whole expedition a failure? Must he return home with his message still undelivered? His heart burned within him at the thought, and he said, half aloud, 'No, no, no!'

There was only one way out of the difficulty, the same way that had helped him to learn his Latin lesson years ago when he was a little boy. But it was no tiny mossy track now, it was a broad, well-marked road travelled daily, hourly, through long years,—this Prayer way that led his soul to God. Tying up his horse to the nearest tree, Stephen knelt down on the carpet of red-brown pine-needles, and put up a wordless prayer for guidance and help. Then he began to listen.

Through the windless silence of the forest spaces the Voice came again more clearly than ever, saying: 'GIVE YOUR MESSAGE. IT IS NOT YOURS BUT MINE.' Stephen hesitated no longer. He went straight into the dining-shanty. He strode past the bare empty tables, under which the long grass and flowers were already growing thick and tall. He went straight up to the end of the room, and there, standing on a form, as if the place had been filled with one or two hundred eager listeners, although no single human being was to be seen, he PREACHED, as he had never yet preached in his life. The Love of God, the 'Love that will not let us go,' seemed to him the most real thing in the whole world. All his life he had longed to find an anchor for his soul. Now that he had found it, he must help others to find it too. Why doesn't everyone find it? Ah! there he began to speak of sin; how sin builds up a wall between our hearts and God; how, in Jesus Christ, that wall has been thrown down once for all, and now there is nothing to keep us apart except our own blindness and pride; and how if we will only turn round and open our hearts to Him, He is longing to come in and dwell with us. [514]

As Stephen went on, he pleaded yet more earnestly. He thought of the absent woodcutters. He felt that he loved every single one of those wild, rough men; and if he loved them, he, a stranger, how much more dear must they be to their heavenly Father. 'Grant me to win each single soul for Thee, O Lord,' he pleaded, 'each single soul for Thee.'

Where were they all now, these men to whom he had come to speak? He could not find them. But God could. God was their shepherd. Even if His messenger failed, the Good Shepherd would seek on until He found each single wandering soul that He loved. 'And when the shepherd findeth the lost sheep, after leaving the ninety and nine in the wilderness, how does he bring it home? Does he whip it? Does he threaten it? No such thing! he carries it on his shoulder and deals most tenderly with the poor, weary, wandering one.'

While he was speaking he thought of the absent woodcutters with an evergrowing desire to help them. He thought of the hard lives they were forced to lead, of the temptations they must meet with daily, and of the lack of all outward help towards a better life. As he repeated the words again, 'Grant me, O Lord, to win these lost sheep of Thine back to Thee and to Thy service; help me to win each single soul for Thee,' he felt as if, somehow, his voice, his prayer, must reach the men he sought, even though hundreds of miles of desolate forest lay between. Towards the end of his sermon, the tears ran down his cheeks. At last, utterly exhausted by the strength of his desire he sat down once more, and, throwing his arms on the rough board before him, he hid his face in his hands. [515]

A long time passed; the silence grew ever more intense. At last Stephen lifted his head. He felt as tired as if he had gone a long journey since he entered the wooden building. Yet it was all exactly the same as when he had come in an hour before,—the rows of empty forms and the bare tables, with grass and flowers growing up between them. Stephen's eyes wandered out through the open door. He noticed a thick mug of earthenware lying beside the path outside, evidently left behind by the woodcutters as not worth taking with them. A common earthenware mug it was, of coarse material and ugly shape; and cracked. As Stephen's eyes fell upon it, he felt as if he hated that mug more than he had ever before hated anything in his life. It seemed to have been left behind there, on purpose to mock him. Here he was with only an earthenware mug in sight, he who might have been surrounded by the exquisite and delicate porcelain that he remembered in his father's factory at Limoges. All that beauty and luxury belonged to him by right; they might still have been his, if only he had not listened for years to the Voice. And now the Voice had led him on this fool's errand. Here he was, preaching to nobody, and looking at a cracked mug. Was his whole life a mistake? a delusion? 'Am I a fool after all?' he asked himself bitterly. [516]

He was in the sad, bitter mood that is called 'Reaction.' Strangely enough, it often seizes people just when they have done some particularly difficult piece of work for their Master. Perhaps it comes to keep them from thinking that they can finish anything in their own strength alone.

Stephen was in the grip of this mood now. Happily he had wrestled with the same sort of temptation many times before. He knew it of old; he knew, too, that the best way to meet it is to face this giant Reaction boldly, as Christian faced Apollyon, to wrestle with it and so to overcome. He went straight out of the door to where the mug was lying, and took up that mug, that cracked

mug, in his hands, more reverently than if it had been a vase of the most precious and fragile porcelain. He took it up, and accepted it, this thing he hated worst of all. If life had led him only to a cracked mug, at least he would accept that mug and use it as best he could. Carrying it in his hands, he walked to the little stream whose gentle murmur came through the tall grasses close at hand. There he knelt down, cleansed the mug carefully, filled it with water, and putting it to his lips, he drank a long refreshing draught. In his pocket he found a crust of bread. He took it out, broke it in two pieces, and then drank again. Only a piece of dry bread! Only a drink of cold water in a cracked cup! No meal could be simpler. Yet Stephen ate and drank with a kind of awe, enfolded in a sustaining, life-giving Presence. He knew that he was not alone; he knew that Another was with him, feeding and refreshing his inmost soul, as he drank of the clear, cold water and ate the broken bread.

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A wonderful peace and gladness fell upon his spirit as he knelt in the sunny air. The silence of the great forest was itself a song of praise. He rode homewards like a man in a dream. Day after day as he journeyed, the brooding peace grew and deepened. Even the forest pathways looked different as he travelled through them on his homeward way. They had been full of trustful obedience before. They were filled with thankfulness now. But the deepest thankfulness was in Stephen's own heart.

Is that the end of the story? For many years that was the end. Stephen never forgot his mysterious journey into the backwoods. He often wondered why the Voice had sent him there. Nevertheless he knew, for certain and past all doubting, that he had done right to go. Perhaps gradually the memory faded a little and became dim....

Anyway nothing was further from his thoughts than the lonely backwoods of America one afternoon, years after, when on one of his journeys in Europe his business led him across London Bridge. The Bridge was crowded with traffic. Everyone was bustling to and fro, intent on his own business or pleasure. Not many people had leisure to notice one slight figure distinguished by a foreign air of courtliness and grace, in spite of the stiff, severe lines of its Quaker hat and coat. Not many people, even if they had noticed the earnest face under the broad-brimmed hat, would have stopped to gaze a second time upon it that busy afternoon. Not many people. But one man did.

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As Stephen was hastening across the crowded Bridge, suddenly he felt himself seized roughly by the shoulders, and he heard a gruff voice exclaiming: 'There you are! I have found you at last, have I?'

Deep down inside Stephen Grellet, the Quaker preacher, there still remained a few traces of the fastidious French noble, Etienne de Grellet. The traces had been buried deep down by this time, but there they still were. They leapt suddenly to light, that busy afternoon on London Bridge. Neither French nobleman nor Quaker preacher liked to be seized in such unceremonious fashion. 'Friend,' he remonstrated, drawing himself gently away, 'I think that thou art mistaken.'

'No, I am not,' rejoined the other, his grip tighter than ever. 'When you have sought a man over the face of the globe year after year, you don't make a mistake when you find him at last. Not you! Not me either! I'm not mistaken, and I don't let you go now I've found you after all these years, with your same little dapper, black, cut-away coat, that I thought so queer; and your broad-brimmed hat that I well remember. Never heard a man preach with his hat on before!'

'Hast thou heard me preach, Friend? Why then didst thou not speak to me afterwards if thou wished?'

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'But I didn't wish!' answered the stranger, 'nothing I wished for less!'

'Where was it?' enquired Stephen.

'Why, I heard you preaching to nobody, years and years ago,' the man returned. 'At least you supposed you were preaching to nobody. Really, you were preaching to me. Cut me to the heart you did too, I can tell you.'

A dawning light of comprehension came into Stephen's face as the other went on: 'Didn't you preach in a deserted dining-shanty in the backwoods of America near——' (and he named the place), 'on such a day and in such a year?'

He asked these questions in a loud voice, regardless of the astonished looks of the passers-by, still holding tight to the edge of Stephen's coat with one hand, and shaking the forefinger of the other in Stephen's face as he spoke, to emphasize each word.

By this time all traces of Etienne, the fastidious French nobleman, had utterly disappeared. Stephen Grellet, the minister of Christ, was alive now to the tips of his fingers. His whole soul was in his eyes as he gazed at his questioner. Was that old, old riddle going to find its answer at last?

'Wast thou there?' he enquired breathlessly. 'Impossible! I must have seen thee!'

'I was there, right enough,' answered the man. 'But you did not see me, because I took very good care that you should not. At first I thought you were a lunatic, preaching to a lot of forms and tables like that, and better left alone. Then, afterwards, I wouldn't let you see me, for fear

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you should see also that your words had gone in deeper than I cared to show. I was the ganger of the woodmen,' he continued, taking Stephen's arm in his and compelling the little Quaker to walk beside him as he talked. 'It all happened in this way. We had moved forth into the forest, and were putting up more shanties to live in, when I discovered that I had left my lever at the old settlement. So, after setting my men to work, I came back alone for my instrument. As I approached the old place, I heard a voice. Trembling and agitated, I drew near, I saw you through the chinks of the timber walls of our dining-shanty, I listened to you; and as I listened, your words went through a chink in my heart too, though its walls were thicker than those of any dining-shanty. I was determined you should not see me. I crept away and went back to my men. The arrow stuck fast. I was miserable for many weeks. I had no Bible, no book of any kind, not a creature to ask about better things.'

'Poor sheep! Poor lost sheep!' Stephen murmured gently; 'I knew it; I knew it! The Good Shepherd knew it too!'

'We were a rough lot in those days,' continued the other, 'worse than rough, bad; worse than bad, wicked. There wasn't much about sin that we didn't know among us, didn't enjoy too, after a fashion. That was why your sermon made me so miserable. Seemed to know just all about the lot of us, you did. After it, for weeks I went on getting more and more wretched. There seemed nothing to do, me not being able to find you, but to try and get hold of the book that had put you up to it. None of us had such a thing, of course. It was a long time before I could lay hands on one. Me and a Bible! How the men laughed! But they stopped laughing before I had done with them. I read and read till I found what you had said about the Good Shepherd and the lost sheep —'and God so loved the world,' and at last—eternal life. And then I wasn't going to keep that to myself. It's share and share alike out in the backwoods, I can tell you. I told my men all about it, just like you. I never let 'em alone, I gave them no peace till they were one and all brought home to God—every single one! I heard you asking Him: "Every single soul for Thy service, every single soul for Thee, O Lord." That was what you asked Him for,—that, and more than that, He gave. It's always the way! When the Lord begins to answer, He does answer! Every single one of those men was brought home to Him. But it didn't stop there. Three of them became missionaries, to go and bring others back to the fold in their turn. I tell you the solemn truth. Already one thousand lost sheep, if not more, have been brought home to the Good Shepherd through that sermon of yours, that day in the backwoods, when you thought you were

PREACHING TO NOBODY!'

FOOTNOTES:

[42] *The American Friend*, 28th November 1895.

COME-TO-GOOD

'Flowers are the little faces of God.'—
(A saying of some little children.)

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'To the soul that feeds on the bread of life the outward conventions of religion are no longer needful. Hid with Christ in God there is for him small place for outward rites, for all experience is a holy baptism, a perpetual supper with the Lord, and all life a sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God.

'This hidden life, this inward vision, this immediate and intimate union between the soul and God, this, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is the basis of the Quaker faith.'—J.W. ROWNTREE.

'Here the pure mind is known, and the pure God is waited upon for wisdom from above; and the peace, which hath no end, is enjoyed.... And the Light of God that calls your minds out of the creatures, turns them to God, to an endless being, joy and peace: here is a seeing God always present.... So fare you well! And God Almighty bless, guide and keep you all in His wisdom.'—GEORGE FOX.

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COME-TO-GOOD

One more Meeting-house to visit; the last and the smallest of all. A Meeting-house with no story, except the story in its name. "Come-to-Good!" boys and girls from other counties will exclaim perhaps, 'whoever heard of such a place? Why did people not call it "Come-to-Harm," or "Ne'er-do-Weel," while they were about it?'

Cornish boys and girls know better. They will explain that in their far Western corner of England there has always been an idea, and a very good idea it is, that a name should really describe the place to which it belongs, and should tell the hearer something about its character. Thus it comes to pass that on one tidal river a certain creek, covered with salt sea-water at high tide, but showing only an expanse of muddy flats at low water, is called 'Cockles' Peep Out.' Another creek, near by, is known as 'Frenchman's Pill,' because some French prisoners were sent there for safety during the Napoleonic Wars. Then, too, a busy sea-port was once called 'Penny Come Quick,' with good reason; and another out-of-the-way place 'Hard to Come By,' which explains itself. Most romantic of all, the valley where King Charles's army lost a battle long ago is still known as 'Fine and Brave.' There, the country people say, headless ghosts of defeated Cavaliers may still be seen on moonlight nights riding up and down, carrying their own plumed-hatted heads under their arms. All over the county these story places are to be found. The more odd a Cornish name sounds at the first hearing, the more apt it will often prove, when the reason for it is understood.

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Thus it is not strange that a lonely, shut-in valley, folded away between two steep hills, should be known as 'Come-to-Good,' since, for more than two centuries, men and women, and little children also, have 'Come to Good' in that remote and hidden place. There, surrounded by sheltering trees, stands the little old Meeting-house. Its high thatched roof projects, like a bushy eyebrow, over the low white walls and thick white buttresses, shading the three narrow casement windows of pale-green glass with their diamond lattice panes. The windows are almost hidden by the roof; the roof is almost hidden by the trees; and the trees are almost hidden by the hills that rise above them. Therefore the pilgrim always comes upon the Meeting-house with a certain sense of surprise, so carefully is it concealed;—like a most secret and precious thought.

The bare Cornish uplands and wide moors have a trick of hiding away these rich, fertile valleys, that have given rise to the proverb: 'Cornwall is a lady, whose beauty is seen in her wrinkles.' Yet, hidden away as it is, 'Come-to-Good' has drawn people to it for centuries. In all the country round, for generations past, one Sunday in August has been known as 'Come-to-Good Sunday,' because, on that day, the Friends assemble from three or four distant towns to hold their meeting there. And not the Friends only. No bell has ever broken the stillness of that peaceful valley, yet

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for miles round, on a 'Meeting Sunday,' the lanes are full of small groups of people: parents and children; farm lads and lasses; thoughtful-faced men, who admit that 'they never go anywhere else'; shy lovers lingering behind, or whole families walking together. All are to be seen on their way to refresh their souls with the hour of quiet worship in the snowy white Meeting-house under its thatched roof.

Many years ago, little Lois (whom you read about at the beginning of this book) was taken to Come-to-Good for the first time on such a Sunday, by her Grandmother. Even now, whenever she goes there, she still seems to see that dear Grandmother's tall, erect figure, in its flowing black silk mantle and Quaker bonnet, walking with stately steps up the path in front; or stooping for once—she who never stooped!—to enter the little low door. People who did not know her well, and even some who did, occasionally felt Lois' 'dear Grandmamma' rather a formidable old lady. They said she was 'severe' and 'alarmingly dignified,' and 'she says straight out just exactly what she thinks.' Certainly, she was not one of the spoiling, indulgent, eiderdown-silk-cushion kind of Grannies that some children have now; but Lois loved her with all her heart and was never really afraid of her. What stories she could tell! What wonderful stockings full of treasures Santa Claus brought down her chimneys on Christmas Eve to the happy grandchild staying with her! Lois loved to sit beside her 'dear Grandmamma,' and to watch her in her corner by the fire, upright as ever, knitting. Even on the long drive to Come-to-Good, the feeling of her smooth, calm hand had soothed the restless little fingers held in it so firmly and gently. The drive over, Lois wondered what would happen to her in the strange Meeting-house when she might not sit by that dear Grandmother's side any longer, since she, of course, would have to be up in the Ministers' gallery, with all the other 'Weighty Friends.' But, at Come-to-Good, things always turn out right. Lois found, to her delight, that she and the other boys and girls were to be allowed to creep, very quietly, up the twisty wooden stairs at the far end of the Meeting-house, and to make their way up into the 'loft' where four or five low forms had been specially placed for them. Lois loved to find herself sitting there. She felt like a little white pigeon, high up on a perch, able to see over the heads of all the people below, and able even to look down on the grave faces of the Ministers opposite. The row of broad-brimmed hats and coal-scuttle bonnets looked entirely different and much more attractive, seen from above, than when she looked up at them in Meeting at home. Then, when some one rose to speak, Lois liked to watch the ripple that passed over the heads beneath her, as all the faces turned towards the speaker. Or when everybody, moved by the same impulse, stood up during a prayer or sat down at its close, it was as fascinating to watch them gently rise and gently sit down again as it was to watch the wind sweep over the sea, curling it up into waves or wavelets, or the breeze rippling over a broad field of blue-green June barley. Lois never remembered the time when she was too small to enjoy those two sights. 'I do like watching something I can't see, moving something I can!' she used to think. To watch a Meeting, from the loft at Come-to-Good, was rather like that, she felt; though years had to pass before she found out the reason why.

Out of doors, when the quiet hour of worship was over, other delights were waiting. The small old white Meeting-house is surrounded by a yet older, small green burial-ground, where long grasses, and flowers innumerable, cover the gentle slopes. The soft mounds cluster closely around the walls; as if those who were laid there had wished that their bodies might rest as near as possible to the house of peace where their spirits had rested while on earth.

Further off the mounds are fewer; the grassy spaces between them grow wider; till it becomes difficult to tell which are graves and which are just grassy hillocks. Further still, the old burial-ground dips down, and loses itself entirely, and becomes first a wood, then frankly an orchard that fills up the bottom of the valley, through which a clear brown stream goes wandering.

Yet, midway on the hilly slope above, half hidden gravestones can still be discerned, among the grass and flowers; shining through them, like a smile that was once a sorrow. Small, grey, perfectly plain stones they are, all exactly alike, as is the custom in Friends' graveyards, where to be allowed a headstone at all, was, at one time, considered 'rather gay!' Each stone bears nothing but a name upon it and sometimes a date. 'Honor Magor' is the name carved on one of the oldest stooping stones, and under it a date nearly 100 years old. That is all. Lois used to wonder who Honor Magor was,—an old woman? a young one? or possibly even a little girl? Where did she live when she was alive? how did she come to be buried there? But there are no answers to any of these questions; and there is no need to know more than that the tired body of Honor Magor has been resting peacefully for nearly a century, hidden under the tangle of waving grasses and ever-changing flowers at Come-to-Good.

Ever-changing flowers? Yes; because the changing of the seasons is more marked there than at other places. For Come-to-Good lies so many miles from any town, the tide of life has ebbed away so far from this quiet pool, that, for a long time past, Meetings have only been held here four times in the year. Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring,—each season brings its own Sunday. Then, and for a week or two beforehand, the topmost bar of every wooden gate in the neighbourhood bears a modest piece of white paper announcing that 'a Friends' Meeting will be held at Come-to-Good on the following First Day morning, at eleven o'clock, when the company of any who are inclined to attend will be acceptable.'

August Sunday brings deep, red roses tossing themselves up, like a crimson fountain, against the grey thatched roof. November Sunday has its own treasures: sweet, late blackberries, crimson and golden leaves, perhaps even a few late hazel nuts and acorns still hiding down in the

wood. In February, the first gummy stars of the celandine are to be seen peeping out from under the hedge, while a demure little procession of white and green snowdrops walks primly up the narrow path to Meeting. The 'Fair Maids of February' seem to have an especial love for this quiet spot.

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But in May—ah! May is the best Sunday of all. In May not only is the whole valley knee-deep in grass and ferns and flowers and bluebells. There is something still better! In May the burial-ground is all singing and tinkling silently with fairy spires of columbines. Garden flowers in most other places, they are quite wild here. Purple and deep-blue and pale-pink columbines are growing up everywhere; each flower with its own little pairs of twin turtle-doves hidden away inside. Even white columbine, rarest of all, has been found in that magic valley. I am afraid Lois thought longingly, all through the silence on a May Sunday, of the nosegay of columbines she meant to gather afterwards. Directly Meeting was over, the children pelted down very fast from the loft. Numbers of little feet flew across the sunlit grass, while the elder Friends were walking sedately down the path to the gate.

'O Columbine, open your folded wrapper,
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell,'

chanted the children as they frolicked about, forgetting that they had been stiff with sitting so long in Meeting, as they gathered handfuls of their treasures.

All too soon they would hear the call: 'Come, children! it is time to be going.' And then they would scamper back, their hands full of their dear dove flowers. No wonder they felt that in leaving this sunny spot they were leaving one of the happiest places on earth. If only they could stay there! If only some one could be enjoying it always! What a pity that on the forty-eight other Sundays of the year it should all be deserted, shut up and forsaken! There might be numbers of other wonderful flowers that nobody ever saw. There the old Meeting-house stays all by itself the whole year round, except on those four Sundays, even as a lonely pool of clear water remains high up on the rocks, showing that the great sea itself did come there once, long ago, flowing in mightily, filling up all the bare chinks and crannies.

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Will such a high tide ever come back again to Come-to-Good? Is that tide perhaps beginning to flow in, noiselessly and steadily, even now?

Some things look rather as if it might be; for new Friends' Meeting-houses are being built in crowded cities to-day where even the high tide of long ago never came. But then, in lonely country places like Come-to-Good, scattered up and down all over England, there are many of these deserted Meeting-houses, where hardly anybody comes now or only comes out of curiosity. Yet the high tide did fill them all once long ago, full to overflowing, when people met within their walls constantly, seeking and finding God.

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The stories in this book about our 'Quaker Saints' show at what a cost these deserted places were won for us by our brave forefathers. They, with their health and their lives gladly given in those terrible prisons of long ago, gained for us our liberty to meet together 'in numbers five or more,' to practise a 'form of worship not authorised by law'; that is to say, without any prayer-book or set form of service being used.

Is our simple Quaker way of worship really worth the price they paid for it? Or is it merely a quaint and interesting relic of a by-gone age, something like the 'Friend's bonnet' that Lois' Grandmother wore as a matter of course, which now is never used, but lies in a drawer, carefully covered with tissue paper and fragrant with lavender?

Is our Quaker faith like that? Is it something antiquated and interesting, but of no real use to us or to anybody to-day? Or did these 'Quaker Saints' of whom we have heard, did they, and many other brave men and women, whose stories are not written here, really and truly make a big discovery? Did they, by their living and by their dying, remind the world of a truth that it had been in danger of forgetting? a truth that may still be in danger of being forgotten if quite ordinary, everyday people are not faithful now in their turn?

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A FRIENDS' MEETING

ToList

Is it really and truly true, that where two or three humble human souls are gathered together in His Name, in the simplest possible fashion, without any priest, or altar, or visible signs to help them, yet our Lord is there? Can He be indeed among them still to-day? and will He be forever, as He promised? feeding them Himself with the true Bread of Life, satisfying their thirst with Living Water, baptizing their souls with Power and with Peace?—

Children dear, you must answer these questions for yourselves, fearlessly and honestly. No one else can answer them for you. The answers may seem long in coming, but do not be in a hurry. They will come in time, if you seek steadfastly and humbly. Only remember one thing, as you think over these questions. Even if this is our way, the right way for us, this very simple Quaker way that our forefathers won for us at such a cost, still that does not necessarily make it the right way for all other people too. God's world and God's plans are much bigger than that. He brings His children home by numbers of different paths, but for each child of His, God's straight way for that child is the very best.

The wise old Persians had a proverb, 'The ways unto God are as the number of the souls of the children of men.' Let us remember this, if we ever want to try to force other people to think about things exactly as we do. Let us remember, too, that rivalry and pride, that saying, or even thinking, 'My way is the only right way, and a much better way than your way,' is the only really antiquated kind of worship. The sooner we all learn to lay that aside, not in lavender and tissue paper, but to cast it away utterly and forget that it ever existed,—the better.

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It is not a bit of an excuse for us when we are inclined to judge other people critically, to read in these stories that some of the early Friends did and said harsh and intolerant things. They lived in a much harsher, more intolerant age than ours. The seventeenth century, as we know, has been called 'a dreadfully ill-mannered century.' Let us do our very best not to give any one an excuse for saying the same of this twentieth century in which we live. Thus, in reading of these Quaker Saints, let us try to copy, not their harshness or their intolerance, but their unflinching courage, their firm steadfastness, their burning hope for every man; above all, their unconquerable love.

Remember the old lesson of the daisies. Each flower must open itself as wide as ever it can, in order to receive all that the Sun wants to give to it. But, while each daisy receives its own ray of sunshine thankfully and gladly, it must rejoice that other very different rays, at very different angles, can reach other flowers. Yet the Sun Heart from which they all come is One and the Same. All the different ways of worship are One too, when they meet in the Centre.

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Therefore it is not strange that at little secluded Come-to-Good, where the blue doves of the columbines keep watch over the quiet graves, I should remember a message that came to me in another, very different, House of God—a magnificent Cathedral far away in South Italy. There, high up, above the lights and pictures and flowers and ornaments of the altar, half hidden at times by the clouds of ascending incense, I caught the shining of great golden letters. Gradually, as I watched, they formed themselves into these three words of old Latin:

DEUS ABSCONDITUS HEIC.

And the golden message meant:

'GOD IS HIDDEN HERE.'

That is the secret all these different ways of worship are meant to teach us, if we will only

learn. Let us not judge one another, not ever dream of judging one another any more. Only, wherever our own way of worship leads us, let us seek to follow it diligently, dutifully, humbly, and to the end. Then, not only when we are worshipping with our brothers and sisters around us, in church, chapel, great cathedral, or quiet meeting-house, but also (perhaps nearest and closest of all) in the silence of our own hearts, we shall surely find in truth and with thankfulness that

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GOD IS HIDDEN HERE.

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HISTORICAL NOTES

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HISTORICAL NOTES

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NOTE.—The References throughout are to the Cambridge Edition of George Fox's Journal, except where otherwise stated. The spelling has been modernised and the extracts occasionally abridged.

'STIFF AS A TREE, PURE AS A BELL.'

Historical; described as closely as possible from George Fox's own words in his Journal, vol. ii. pp. 94, 100-104.

'PURE FOY, MA JOYE.'

Historical. See George Fox's Journal (Ellwood Edition), pp. 1-17. See also Sewel's 'History of the Quakers,' and 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' by W.C. Braithwaite. See 'George Fox,' by Thomas Hodgkin (Leaders of Religion Series), for description of Fenny Drayton village, manor house, church, and neighbourhood.

See also W. Penn's Preface to George Fox's Journal (Ellwood Edition), pp. xxiv and xxv, for details of parentage, childhood, and youth.

'THE ANGEL OF BEVERLEY.'

This is a purely imaginary story, written for a ten-year-old listener who begged for 'more of a story about him when he was young.' The connection of a member of the Purefoy family with the 'Great Lady of Beverley' has no foundation in fact. On visiting Fenny Drayton, since writing the story, I find, however, that there were a brother and sister Edward and Joyce Purefoy, who lived a few years earlier than the date of this tale. They may still be seen in marble on a tomb in the North Aisle with their father, the Colonel Purefoy of that day, who does wear a ruff as described in the story. It is not impossible that the Colonel Purefoy of George Fox's Journal may also have had a son and daughter of the same names as described in my account, but I have no warrant for supposing this and am anxious that this imaginary tale should not be supposed to possess the same kind of authenticity as most of the other stories. Priest Stephens' remark about George Fox, and the scenes in Beverley Minster and at Justice Hotham's house, are, however, historical.

'TAMING THE TIGER.'

Historical. See George Fox's Journal (Ellwood Edition), pp. 27, 28, 31-48, 335, for the different incidents.

'THE MAN IN LEATHER BREECHES.'

Expanded, with imaginary incidents and consequences, from a few paragraphs in George Fox's Journal, i. 20.

'THE SHEPHERD OF PENDLE HILL.'

Expanded from George Fox's Journal, i. 40.

N.B.—The Shepherd, who is the speaker, is a wholly imaginary person.

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'THE PEOPLE IN WHITE RAIMENT' and 'A WONDERFUL FORTNIGHT.'

Historical. Taken from various sources, chiefly George Fox's Journal, vol. i. pp. 40-44, and two unpublished papers by Ernest E. Taylor, describing the lives and homes of the Westmorland Seekers: 'A Great People to be Gathered' and 'Faithful Servants of God.' See also his 'Cameos from the Life of George Fox,' Sewel's 'History of the Quakers,' and 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' by W.C. Braithwaite.

'UNDER THE YEW-TREES.'

Expanded from George Fox's Journal, i. 47, 48, 52. The conversation among the girls is of course imaginary, but many details are taken from 'Margaret Fox of Swarthmoor Hall,' by Helen G. Crosfield, a most helpful book that has been constantly used in all these stories about Swarthmoor.

'BEWITCHED!'

Historical. See Sewel's History, i. 106. George Fox's Journal, i. 51. 'Testimony of Margaret Fox' (Ellwood Edition of above, p. xlv). 'Margaret Fox of Swarthmoor Hall,' p. 15. Also 'England under the Stuarts,' by G.M. Trevelyan (for Witchcraft).

'THE JUDGE'S RETURN.'

Historical. See 'Testimony of Margaret Fox' (Ellwood Edition of G. Fox's Journal), p. xlv. Sewel's History, i. 106.

'STRIKE AGAIN!'

Historical. See George Fox's Journal, i. 57-59. Sewel's History, i. 111-112.

'MAGNANIMITY.'

Historical. See George Fox's Journal, i. 59-61. Sewel's History, i. 113-114.

'MILES HALHEAD AND THE HAUGHTY LADY.'

Historical. See Sewel's History, i. 129-131, and George Fox's Journal, i. 53, 56, for George Fox's sermon.

'SCATTERING THE SEED.'

Historical. Details taken from George Fox's Journal, i. 141, 209, 347; 292, 297; 11, 337. See also Chapter viii. 'The Mission to the South,' in 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' by W.C. Braithwaite. Also 'First Publishers of Truth,' for accounts of the work in the different counties mentioned.

'WRESTLING FOR GOD.'

Historical. See 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' Chapter viii. Also 'Letters from the Early Friends,' by A.R. Barclay. 'Piety Promoted,' i. 35-38. 'Story of Quakerism,' by E.B. Emmott, for description of old London. See also 'Memorials of the Righteous Revived,' by C. Marshall and Thomas Camm, and note that I have followed T. Camm's account in this book of his father's journey south with E. Burrough. W.C. Braithwaite in 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' following 'First Publishers of Truth,' thinks it, however, more probable that F. Howgill was E. Burrough's companion throughout the journey, and that the two Friends reached London together.

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'LITTLE JAMES AND HIS JOURNEYS' and 'THE FIRST QUAKER MARTYR.'

Mainly historical. Details taken largely from 'Life of James Parnell,' by C. Fell Smith. See also 'James Parnell,' by Thomas Hodgkin, in 'The Trial of our Faith.' Also 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' Chapter ix. and Sewel's History. The discourse of the two Baptists on Carlisle Bridge and James's association with them is imaginary, but they are themselves historical characters, and the incidents they describe are narrated in George Fox's Journal, i. 114, 115, 124-126; 153, 186. For 'The First Quaker Martyr,' see 'The Lamb's Defence against Lyes, a true Testimony concerning the sufferings and death of James Parnell. 1656.'

'THE CHILDREN OF READING MEETING.'

See Emmott's 'Story of Quakerism,' p. 83. Also 'Letters of the Early Friends.' A very graphic but fictitious account of this incident is given in 'The Children's Meeting,' by M.E. England, now out of print. See also 'Lessons from Early Quakerism in Reading,' by W.C. Braithwaite. My account is founded on history, but I have described imaginary children. The list of scents used on Sir William Armorer's wig is borrowed from a genuine one of a slightly later period.

'THE SADDEST STORY OF ALL.'

Historical. See Sewel's History, i. 80, 255-293, 382-397, 408, 438. Also 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' Chapter xi. 'Nayler's Fall.' Also James Nayler's collected Books and Papers, published in 1716.

'PALE WINDFLOWERS.'

See account of Dewsbury in 'Beginnings of Quakerism.' Also 'The faithful Testimony of that Antient Servant of the Lord, and Minister of the Everlasting Gospel, William Dewsbury.' Also 'Testimony to Mary Samm,' p. 348, same volume. The details given are as far as possible historical, but the setting, the walk, and the windflowers are imaginary. The prison scene is as far as possible historical. The Testimony to little Mary tells the sequel to her 'happy evening,' and a few paragraphs from it are given here.

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TESTIMONY TO MARY SAMM, 1680.

The first day of the second month, 1680, it pleased the Lord to afflict her with a violent fever, that brought her very low in a little time, and great was her exercise of spirit, as to her condition and state with God, many times weeping when she was alone.... She said, 'If this distemper do not abate, I must die, but my soul shall go to Eternal Joy, Eternal, Eternal and Everlasting Life and Peace with my God for ever: Oh! praises, praises to Thy Majesty, Oh, my God! who helpeth me to go through with patience, what I am to endure.' Then after some time she said. 'Friends, we must all go hence one after another, and they that live the longest know and endure the greatest sorrow: therefore, O Lord, if it be Thy will, take me to Thyself, that my soul may rest in peace with Thee, and not any one to see me here any more. Oh! praises, praises be unto Thy holy Name for ever in Thy will being done with me, to take me to Thyself, where I shall be in heavenly joy, yea, in heavenly joy for ever and for evermore.'...

And many times would she be praying to the Lord day and night, 'O Lord, lay no more upon me, than Thou givest me strength to bear, and go through with patience, that Thy will may be done, that Thy will may be done' (many times together). 'Oh! help me, help me, O my God! that I may praise Thy holy Name for ever.'

And so continued, very often praising the Name of the Lord with joyful sounds, and singing high praises to His holy Name for ever and for evermore; she being much spent with lifting up her voice in high praises to God, through fervency of spirit, and her body being weak, her Grandfather went into the room, and desired her to be as still as possibly she could, and keep her mind inward, and stayed upon the Lord, and see if she could have a little rest and sleep: she answered, 'Dear Grandfather, I shall die, and I cannot but praise the Name of the Lord whilst I have a being; I do not know what to do to praise His Name enough whilst I live; but whilst there is life there is hope; but I do believe it is better for me to die than live.'

And so continued speaking of the goodness of the Lord from day to day; which caused many tears to fall from the eyes of them that heard her. Her Grandfather coming to her, asked her how she did? She said to him and to her Mother, 'I have had no rest this night nor to-day; I did not know but I should have died this night, but very hardly I tugged through it; but I shall die to-day, and a grave shall be made, and my body put into a hole, and my soul shall go to heavenly joy, yea, heavenly joy and everlasting peace for evermore.'

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Then she said, 'Dear Grandfather, I do believe thou wilt not stay long behind me, when I am gone.'

He answered, 'Dear Granddaughter, I shall come as fast as the Lord orders my way.'

Then she praised the Name of the Lord with high praises and joyful sounds for a season, and then desired her Mother to let her be taken up a little time; saying, 'It may be it will give me some ease.' Then they sent for her Grandfather, who said to her, 'If this be thy last day, and thereon thou art to die, it is not safe for thee to be taken forth

of thy bed: dear Mary, thou shalt have all attendance that is convenient, as to set thee up in thy bed, and to lay thee down again; but "to take thee up" we are not willing to do it.'

She answered, 'Well, Grandfather, what thou seest best for me, I am willing to have it so.'

Then her Mother and Aunt set her up in her bed; she said it did refresh her and give her some ease: and as they were ordering what was to be done about her bed, she said, 'Oh! what a great deal of do is here in ordering the bed for one that is upon their death-bed.'

Her Aunt, Joan Dewsbury, said, 'Mary, dost thou think thou art upon thy death-bed?'

She answered, 'Yea, yea, I am upon my death-bed, I shall die to-day, and I am very willing to die, because I know it is better for me to die than live.'

Her Aunt replied, 'I do believe it is better for thee to die than live.'

She said, 'Yea, it is well for me to die.'...

'And, dear Mother, I would have thee remember my love to my dear sisters, relations, and friends; and now I have nothing to do, I have nothing to do.'

A friend answered, 'Nothing, Mary, but to die.'

Then she said to her Mother, 'I desire thee to give me a little clear posset drink, then I will see if I can have a little rest and sleep before I die.'

When the posset drink came to her, she took a little.... Then she said to her Mother, 'I have a swelling behind my ear, but I would not have anything done to it, nor to my sore throat nor mouth, for all will be well enough when I am in my grave.'

Then she asked what time of day it was? it being the latter part of the day, her Grandfather said, 'The chimes are going four;' she said, 'I thought it had been more; I will see if I can have a little rest and sleep before I die.'

And so she lay still, and had a sweet rest and sleep; and then she awaked without any complaint, and in a quiet peaceable frame of spirit laid down her head in peace, when the clock struck the fifth hour of the 9th day of the 2nd month, 1680.

We whose names are under-written were eye and ear witnesses of what is before expressed, as near as could be taken, and does not much vary from what she declared, as the substance (though much more sweet and comfortable expressions passed from her, but for brevity sake are willing this only to publish) who stood by her when she drew her last breath.

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William Dewsbury, her Grandfather.
Mary Samm, her Mother.
Joan Dewsbury, her Aunt.
Hannah Whitthead, a Friend.

'AN UNDISTURBED MEETING.'

I first heard this story graphically told by Ernest E. Taylor. His intimate knowledge of the neighbourhood, and minute historical researches into the lives of the Early Friends in this district, made the whole scene vivid to his listener. In writing down my own account from memory, some months later, I find I have unintentionally altered some of the details, and have in particular allowed too long a time for the soldiers' carouse, and have substituted a troop of horse for militia. For these lapses from strict historical accuracy I alone am responsible; but it has seemed better to leave the story as it was written and to append the following note from the ancient MS. account of the sufferings at Sedbergh, to show exactly what did occur:

'1665. Friends being met at John Blayking's at Draw-well, Lawrence Hodgson of Dent, an Ensign to the Militia, came into the meeting with other Militia men, cursing and swearing that if Friends would not depart and disperse, he would kill them and slay and what not. Then as Friends did not disperse they pulled them out of doors and so broke up the meeting. The Ensign thereupon went off, expecting Friends to have followed him, but they sat down and stood together at the house end [? and] on the hill-side. So the Ensign came back and with his drawn sword struck at several Friends and cut some in the hat and some in the clothes, and so forced and drove them to Sedbergh town, where after some chief men of the parish had been spoken with, Friends were let go home in peace.'—*Sedbergh MSS. Sufferings*.

It was of course the gathering together 'in numbers more than five' and 'refusing to disperse' that was at this time illegal and made the Friends liable to severe punishment. There is still a tradition in the neighbourhood that the Quakers were to be taken not to Ingmire Hall, but to the house of another Justice at Thorns.

'BUTTERFLIES IN THE FELLS.'

See 'Bygone Northumberland,' by W. Andrews. 'Piety Promoted,' i. 88-90. W.C. Braithwaite's 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' p. 373. 'The Society of Friends in Newcastle,' by J.W. Steel.

See George Fox's Journal, i. 185, 190, 261, 431; ii. 167. Sewel's History, i. 29. 'Beginnings of Quakerism,' p. 365.

'THE MARVELLOUS VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP "WOODHOUSE."'

Taken from Robert Fowler's own account: 'A true Relation of the Voyage undertaken by me Robert Fowler with my small vessel called the "Woodhouse" but performed by the Lord like as he did Noah's ark, wherein he shut up a few righteous persons and landed them safe, even at the Hill Ararat,' published in the 'History of the Society of Friends in America.'

The scenes on Bridlington Quay and in London are not strictly historical, but may be inferred from the above account.

'RICHARD SELLAR AND THE "MERCIFUL MAN."'

Taken from Richard Sellar's own narrative: 'An account of the sufferings of Richard Seller of Keinsey, a Fisherman who was prest in Scarborough Piers, in the time of the two last engagements between the Dutch and English, in the year 1665,' published in Besse's 'Sufferings of the Quakers,' vol. ii. pp. 112-120.

'TWO ROBBER STORIES—WEST AND EAST.'

(1) Leonard Fell and the Highwayman, taken from 'The Fells of Swarthmoor Hall,' by M. Webb, p. 353.

(2) On the Road to Jerusalem. Taken from George Robinson's own account, published in 'A Brief History of the Voyage of Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers.' pp. 207 ad fin.

'SILVER SLIPPERS.'

Mainly historical. See Sewel's History, i. 294, 473; ii. 343. See also 'History of the Quakers,' by G. Croese, for some additional particulars. The best account of Mary Fisher and her adventurous journey is given in 'Quaker Women,' by Mabel R. Brailsford, Chapters v. and vi., entitled 'Mary Fisher' and 'An Ambassador to the Grand Turk.' I am indebted to Miss Brailsford for permission to draw freely from her most interesting narrative, and also to quote from her extracts from Paul Rycout's History.

The only historical foundation for the 'Silver Slippers' is the statement by one historian that before Mary Fisher's interview with the Sultan she was allowed twenty-four hours to rest and to 'arrange her dress.' H.M. Wallis has kindly supplied me with some local colouring and information about Adrianople.

'FIERCE FEATHERS.'

A historical incident, with some imaginary actors. The outlines of this story are given in 'Historical Anecdotes' by Pike. Several additional particulars and the copy of a painting of the Indians at Meeting are to be found in the Friends' Reference Library at Devonshire House. For some helpful notes about the locality I am indebted to H.P. Morris of Philadelphia, U.S.A.

'THE THIEF IN THE TANYARD.'

Historical. The facts and the words of the speakers are taken almost verbatim from Pike's 'Historical Anecdotes.' I have only supplied the setting for the story.

'HOW A FRENCH NOBLE BECAME A FRIEND.'

Entirely historical. All the facts are taken from the Autobiography of Stephen Grellet.

'PREACHING TO NOBODY.'

This story is not to be found in Stephen Grellet's Autobiography. It appeared in 'The American Friend,' November 1895, and is now included in the penny 'Life of Stephen Grellet' in the Friends Ancient and Modern Series. The actual words of Stephen Grellet's sermon have not been recorded. Those in the text are expanded from a sentence in another discourse of his, given here in quotation marks. The incident of the cracked mug is not historical.

Typographical errors corrected in text:

Page 22: thinkng replaced with thinking
Page 148: twelye replaced with twelve
Page 275: thouthout replaced with throughout

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A BOOK OF QUAKER SAINTS ***

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