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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CLARE AVERY: A STORY OF THE SPANISH ARMADA ***

Emily Sarah Holt

"Clare Avery"

Chapter One.

Little Clare's first home.

"The mossy marbles rest
On the lips he hath pressed
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb."

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

"Cold!" said the carrier, blowing on his fingers to keep them warm.

"Cold, bully Penmore!" ejaculated Hal Dockett,—farrier, horse-leech, and cow-doctor in ordinary to the town of Bodmin and its neighbourhood... "Lack-a-daisy! thou that hast been carrier these thirty years, and thy father afore thee, and his father afore him, ever sith 'old Dick Boar' days, shouldst be as hard as a milestone by this time. 'Tis the end of March, fellow!"

Be it known that "old Dick Boar" was Mr Dockett's extremely irreverent style of allusion to His Majesty King Richard the Third.

"'Tis the end of as bitter a March as hath been in Cornwall these hundred years," said the carrier. "Whither away now, lad?"

"Truly, unto Bradmond, whither I am bidden to see unto the black cow."

"Is it sooth, lad, that the master is failing yonder?"

"Folk saith so," replied Hal, his jocund face clouding over. "It shall be an evil day for Bodmin, *that!*"

"Ay so!" echoed the carrier. "Well! we must all be laid in earth one day. God be wi' thee, lad!"

And with a crack of his whip, the waggon lumbered slowly forward upon the Truro road, while Dockett went on his way towards a house standing a little distance on the left, in a few acres of garden, with a paddock behind.

About the cold there was no question. The ground, which had been white with snow for many days, was now a mixture of black and white, under the influence of a thaw; while a bitterly cold wind, which made everybody shiver, rose now and then to a wild whirl, slammed the doors, and groaned through the wood-work. A fragment of cloud, rather less dim and gloomy than the rest of the heavy grey sky, was as much as could be seen of the sun.

Nor was the political atmosphere much more cheerful than the physical. All over England,—and it might be said, all over Europe,—men's hearts were failing them for fear,—by no means for the first time in that century. In Holland the Spaniards, vanquished not by men, but by winds and waves from God, had abandoned the siege of Leyden; and the sovereignty of the Netherlands had been offered to Elizabeth of England, but after some consideration was refused. In France, the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, nearly three years before, had been followed by the siege of La Rochelle, the death of the miserable Charles the Ninth, and the alliance in favour of Popery, which styled itself the Holy League. At home, gardeners were busy introducing the wallflower, the hollyhock, basil, and sweet marjoram; the first licence for public plays was granted to Burbage and his company, among whom was a young man from

Warwickshire, a butcher's son, with a turn for making verses, whose name was William Shakspeare; the Queen had issued a decree forbidding costly apparel (not including her own); and the last trace of feudal serfdom had just disappeared, by the abolition of "villinage" upon the Crown manors. As concerned other countries, except when active hostilities were going on, Englishmen were not generally much interested, unless it were in that far-off New World which Columbus had discovered not a hundred years before,—or in that unknown land, far away also, beyond the white North Cape, whither adventurers every now and then set out with the hope of discovering a north-west passage to China,—the north-west passage which, though sought now with a different object, no one has discovered yet.

It may be as well to recall the state of knowledge in English society at this period. The time had gone by when the burning of coal was prohibited, as prejudicial to health; but the limits of London, beyond which building might not extend, were soon after this fixed at three miles from the city gates; the introduction of private carriages was long opposed, lest it should lead to luxury; (Note 1) and sumptuary laws, regulating, according to rank, the materials for dress and the details of trimmings, were issued every few years. Needles were treasures beyond reach of the poor; yeast, starch, glass bottles, woven stockings, fans, muffs, tulips, marigolds,—had all been invented or introduced within thirty years: the peach and the potato were alike luxuries known to few: forks, sedan or Bath chairs, coffee, tea, gas, telescopes, newspapers, shawls, muslin,—not to include railways and telegraphs,—were ideas that had not yet occurred to any one. Nobody had ever heard of the circulation of the blood. A doctor was a *rara avis*: medical advice was mainly given in the towns by apothecaries, and in the country by herbalists and "wise women." There were no Dissenters—except the few who remained Romanists; and perhaps there were not likely to be many, when the fine for non-attendance at the parish church was twenty pounds per month. Parochial relief was unknown, and any old woman obnoxious to her neighbours was likely to be drowned as a witch. Lastly, by the Bull of excommunication of Pope Pius the Fifth, issued in April, 1569, Queen Elizabeth had been solemnly "cut off from the unity of Christ's Body," and "deprived of her pretended right to the Crown of England," while all who obeyed or upheld her were placed under a terrible curse. (Note 2.)

Nineteen years had passed since that triumphant 17th of November which had seen all England in a frenzy of joy on the accession of Elizabeth Tudor. They were at most very young men and women who could not remember the terrible days of Mary, and the glad welcome given to her sister. Still warm at the heart of England lay the memory of the Marian martyrs; still deep and strong in her was hatred of every shadow of Popery. The petition had not yet been erased from the Litany—why should it ever have been?—"From the Bishop of Rome and all his enormities, good Lord, deliver us!"

On the particular afternoon whereon the story opens, one of the dreariest points of the landscape was the house towards which Hal Dockett's steps were bent. It was of moderate size, and might have been very comfortable if somebody had taken pains to make it so. But it looked as if the pains had not been taken. Half the windows were covered by shutters; the wainscot was sadly in want of a fresh coat of paint; the woodbine, which should have been trained up beside the porch, hung wearily down, as if it were tired of trying to climb when nobody helped it; the very ivy was ragged and dusty. The doors shut with that hollow sound peculiar to empty uncurtained rooms, and groaned, as they opened, over the scarcity of oil. And if the spectator had passed inside, he would have seen that out of the whole house, only four rooms were inhabited beside the kitchen and its dependencies. In all the rest, the dusty furniture was falling to pieces from long neglect, and the spiders carried on their factories at their own pleasure.

One of these four rooms, a long, narrow chamber, on the upper floor, gave signs of having been inhabited very recently. On the square table lay a quantity of coarse needlework, which somebody seemed to have bundled together and left hastily; and on one of the hard, straight-backed chairs was a sorely-disabled wooden doll, of the earliest Dutch order, with mere rudiments, of arms and legs, and deprived by accidents of a great portion of these. The needlework said plainly that there must be a woman in the dreary house, and the doll, staring at the ceiling with black expressionless eyes, spoke as distinctly for the existence of a child.

Suddenly the door of this room opened with a plaintive creak, and a little woman, on the elderly side of middle life, put in her head.

A bright, energetic, active little woman she seemed,—not the sort of person who might be expected to put up meekly with dim windows and dusty floors.

"Marry La'kin!" (a corruption of "Mary, little Lady!") she said aloud. "Of a truth, what a charge be these childre!"

The cause of this remark was hardly apparent, since no child was to be seen; but the little woman came further into the room, her gestures soon showing that she was looking for a child who ought to have been visible.

"Well! I've searched every chamber in this house save the Master's closet. Where can yon little popinjay (parrot) have hid her? Marry La'kin!"

This expletive was certainly not appreciated by her who used it. Nothing could much more have astonished or shocked Barbara Polwhele (a fictitious person)—than whom no more uncompromising Protestant breathed between John o' Groat's and the Land's End—than to discover that since she came into the room, she had twice invoked the assistance of Saint Mary the Virgin.

Barbara's search soon brought her to the conclusion that the child she sought was not in that quarter. She shut the door, and came out into a narrow gallery, from one side of which a wooden staircase ran down into the hall. It was a wide hall of vaulted stone, hung with faded tapestry, old and wanting repair, like everything else in its vicinity. Across the hall Barbara trotted with short, quick steps, and opening a door at the further end, went into the one pleasant room in all the house. This was a very small turret-chamber, hexagonal in shape, three of its six sides being filled with a large bay-window, in the middle compartment of which were several coats of arms in stained glass. A table, which groaned under a mass of books and papers, nearly filled the room; and writing at it sat a venerable-looking,

white-haired man, who, seeing Barbara, laid down his pen, wiped his spectacles, and placidly inquired what she wanted. He will be an old friend to some readers: for he was John Avery of Bradmond.

"Master, an't like you, have you seen Mrs Clare of late?"

"How late, Barbara?"

"Marry, not the fourth part of an hour gone, I left the child in the nursery a-playing with her puppet, when I went down to let in Hal Dockett, and carry him to see what ailed the black cow; and now I be back, no sign of the child is any whither. I have been in every chamber, and looked in the nursery thrice."

"Where should she be?" quietly demanded Mr Avery.

"Marry, where but in the nursery, without you had fetched her away."

"And where should she not be?"

"Why, any other whither but here and there,—more specially in the garden."

"Nay, then, reach me my staff, Barbara, and we will go look in the garden. If that be whither our little maid should specially not be, 'tis there we be bound to find her."

"Marry, but that is sooth!" said Barbara heartily, bringing the walking-stick. "Never in all my life saw I child that gat into more mischievousness, nor gave more trouble to them that had her in charge."

"Thy memory is something short, Barbara," returned her master with a dry smile, "'Tis but little over a score of years sithence thou wert used to say the very same of her father."

"Eh, Master!—nay, not Master Walter!" said Barbara, deprecatingly.

"Well, trouble and sorrow be ever biggest in the present tense," answered he. "And I wot well thou hast a great charge on thine hands."

"I reckon you should think so, an' you had the doing of it," said Barbara complacently. "Up ere the lark, and abed after the nightingale! What with scouring, and washing, and dressing meat, and making the beds, and baking, and brewing, and sewing, and mending, and Mrs Clare and you atop of it all—"

"Nay, prithee, let me drop off the top, so thou lame me not, for the rest is enough for one woman's shoulders."

"In good sooth, Master, but you lack as much looking after, in your way, as Mrs Clare doth; for verily your head is so lapped in your books and your learning, that I do think, an' I tended you not, you should break your fast toward eventide, and bethink you but to-morrow at noon that you had not supped overnight."

"Very like, Barbara,—very like!" answered the old man with a meek smile. "Thou hast been a right true maid unto me and mine,—as saith Solomon of the wise woman, thou hast done us good and not evil, all the days of thy life. The Lord apay thee for it!—Now go thou forward, and search for our little maid, and I will abide hither until thou bring her. If I mistake not much, thou shalt find her within a stone's throw of the fishpond."

"The fishpond?—eh, Master!"

And Barbara quickened her steps to a run, while John Avery sat down slowly upon a stone seat on the terrace, leaning both hands on his staff, as if he could go no farther. Was he very tired? No. He was only very, very near Home.

Close to the fishpond, peering intently into it between the gaps of the stone balustrade, Barbara at length found what she sought, in the shape of a little girl of six years old. The child was spoiling her frock to the best of her ability, by lying on the snow-sprinkled grass; but she was so intent upon something which she saw, or wanted to see, that her captor's approach was unheard, and Barbara pounced on her in triumph without any attempt at flight.

"Now, Mrs Clare, (a fictitious character) come you hither with me!" said Barbara, seizing the culprit. "Is this to be a good child, think you, when you were bidden abide in the nursery?"

"O Bab!" said the child, half sobbingly. "I wanted to see the fishes."

"You have seen enough of the fishes for one morrow," returned Barbara relentlessly; "and if the fishes could see you, they should cry shame upon you for ruining of your raiment by the damp grass."

"But the fishes be damp, Bab!" remonstrated Clare. Barbara professed not to hear the last remark, and lifting the small student of natural history, bore her, pouting and reluctant, to her grandfather on the terrace.

"So here comes my little maid," said he, pleasantly. "Why didst not abide in the nursery, as thou wert bid, little Clare?"

"I wanted to see the fishes," returned Clare, still pouting.

"We cannot alway have what we want," answered he.

"You can!" objected Clare.

"Nay, my child, I cannot," gravely replied her grandfather. "An' I could, I would have alway a good, obedient little

grand-daughter."

Clare played with Mr Avery's stick, and was silent.

"Leave her with me, good Barbara, and go look after thy mighty charges," said her master, smiling. "I will bring her within ere long."

Barbara trotted off, and Clare, relieved from the fear of her duenna, went back to her previous subject.

"Gaffer, what do the fishes?"

"What do they? Why, swim about in the water, and shake their tails, and catch flies for their dinner."

"What think they on, Gaffer?"

"Nay, thou art beyond me there. I never was a fish. How can I tell thee?"

"Would they bite me?" demanded Clare solemnly.

"Nay, I reckon not."

"What, not a wild fish?" said Clare, opening her dark blue eyes.

Mr Avery laughed, and shook his head.

"But I would fain know—And, O Gaffer!" exclaimed the child, suddenly interrupting herself, "do tell me, why did Tom kill the pig?"

"Kill the pig? Why, for that my Clare should have somewhat to eat at her dinner and her supper."

"Killed him to eat him?" wonderingly asked Clare, who had never associated live pigs with roast pork.

"For sure," replied her grandfather.

"Then he had not done somewhat naughty?"

"Nay, not he."

"I would, Gaffer," said Clare, very gravely, "that Tom had not smothered the pig ere he began to lay eggs. (The genuine speech of a child of Clare's age.) I would so have liked a *little* pig!"

The suggestion of pig's eggs was too much for Mr Avery's gravity. "And what hadst done with a little pig, my maid."

"I would have washed it, and donned it, and put it abed," said Clare.

"Methinks he should soon have marred his raiment. And maybe he should have loved cold water not more dearly than a certain little maid that I could put a name to."

Clare adroitly turned from this perilous topic, with an unreasoning dread of being washed there and then; though in truth it was not cleanliness to which she objected, but wet chills and rough friction.

"Gaffer, may I go with Bab to four-hours unto Mistress Pendexter?"

"An' thou wilt, my little floweret."

Mr Avery rose slowly, and taking Clare by the hand, went back to the house. He returned to his turret-study, but Clare scampered upstairs, possessed herself of her doll, and ran in and out of the inhabited rooms until she discovered Barbara in the kitchen, beating up eggs for a pudding.

"Bab, I may go with thee!"

"Go with me?" repeated Barbara, looking up with some surprise. "Marry, Mrs Clare, I hope you may."

"To Mistress Pendexter!" shouted Clare ecstatically.

"Oh ay!" assented Barbara. "Saith the master so?"

Clare nodded. "And, Bab, shall I take Doll?"

This contraction for Dorothy must have been the favourite name with the little ladies of the time for the plaything on which it is now inalienably fixed.

"I will sew up yon hole in her gown, then, first," said Barbara, taking the doll by its head in what Clare thought a very disrespectful manner. "Mrs Clare, this little gown is cruel ragged; if I could but see time, I had need make you another."

"Oh, do, Bab!" cried Clare in high delight.

"Well, some day," replied Barbara discreetly.

A few hours later, Barbara and Clare were standing at the door of a small, neat cottage in a country lane, where dwelt Barbara's sister, Marian Pendexter, (a fictitious person) widow of the village schoolmaster. The door was opened by Marian herself, a woman some five years the senior of her sister, to whom she bore a good deal of likeness, but Marian was the quieter mannered and the more silent of the two.

"Marry, little Mistress Clare!" was her smiling welcome. "Come in, prithee, little Mistress, and thou shalt have a buttered cake to thy four-hours. Give thee good even, Bab."

A snowy white cloth covered the little round table in the cottage, and on it were laid a loaf of bread a piece of butter, and a jug of milk. In honour of her guests, Marian went to her cupboard, and brought out a mould of damson cheese, a bowl of syllabub, and a round tea-cake, which she set before the fire to toast.

"And how fareth good Master Avery?" asked Marian, as she closed the cupboard door, and came back.

Barbara shook her head ominously.

"But ill, forsooth?" pursued her sister.

"Marry, an' you ask at him, he is alway well; but—I carry mine eyes, Marian."

Barbara's theory of educating children was to keep them entirely ignorant of the affairs of their elders. To secure this end, she adopted a vague, misty style of language, of which she fondly imagined that Clare did not understand a word. The result was unfortunate, as it usually is. Clare understood detached bits of her nurse's conversation, over which she brooded silently in her own little mind, until she evolved a whole story—a long way off the truth. It would have done much less harm to tell her the whole truth at once; for the fact of a mystery being made provoked her curiosity, and her imaginations were far more extreme than the facts.

"Ah, he feeleth the lack of my mistress his wife, I reckon," said Marian pityingly. "She must be soothly a sad miss every whither."

"Thou mayest well say so," assented Barbara. "Dear heart! 'tis nigh upon five good years now, and I have not grown used to the lack of her even yet. Thou seest, moreover, he hath had sorrow upon sorrow. 'Twas but the year afore that Master Walter (a fictitious person) and Mistress Frances did depart (die); and then, two years gone, Mistress Kate, (a fictitious person). Ah, well-a-day! we be all mortal."

"Thank we God therefore, good Bab," said Marian quietly. "For we shall see them again the sooner. But if so be, Bab, that aught befel the Master, what should come of yonder rosebud?"

And Marian cast a significant look at Clare, who sat apparently engrossed with a mug full of syllabub.

"Humph! an' I had the reins, I had driven my nag down another road," returned Barbara. "Who but Master Robin (a fictitious person) and Mistress Thekla (a fictitious person) were meetest, trow? But lo! you! what doth Mistress Walter but indite a letter unto the Master, to note that whereas she hath never set eyes on the jewel—and whose fault was that, prithee?—so, an' it liked Him above to do the thing thou wottest, she must needs have the floweret sent thither. And a cruel deal of fair words, how she loved and pined to see her, and more foolery belike. Marry La'kin! ere I had given her her will, I had seen her alongside of King Pharaoh at bottom o' the Red Sea. But the Master, what did he, but write back and say that it should be even as she would. Happy woman be her dole, say I!"

And Barbara set down the milk-jug with a rough determinate air that must have hurt its feelings, had it possessed any.

"Mistress Walter! that is, the Lady—" (Note 3.)

"Ay—she," said Barbara hastily, before the name could follow.

"Well, Bab, after all, methinks 'tis but like she should ask it. And if Master Robin be parson of that very same parish wherein she dwelleth, of a surety ye could never send the little one to him, away from her own mother?"

"Poor little soul! she is well mothered!" said Barbara ironically. "Never to set eyes on the child for six long years; and then, when Mistress Avery, dear heart! writ unto her how sweet and *debonnaire* (pretty, pleasing) the lily-bud grew, to mewl forth that it was so great a way, and her health so pitiful, that she must needs endure to bereave her of the happiness to come and see the same. Marry La'kin! call you a mother!"

"But it is a great way, Bab."

"Wherefore went she so far off, then?" returned Barbara quickly enough. "And lo! you! she can journey thence all the way to York or Chester when she would get her the new fashions,—over land, too!—yet cannot she take boat to Bideford, which were less travail by half. An' yonder jewel had been mine, Marian, I would not have left it lie in the case for six years, trow!"

"Maybe not, Bab," answered Marian in her quiet way. "Yet 'tis ill judging of our neighbour. And if the lady's health be in very deed so pitiful—"

"Neighbour! she is no neighbour of mine, dwelling up by Marton Moss!" interrupted Barbara, as satirically as before. "And in regard to her pitiful health—why, Marian, I have dwelt in the same house with her for a year and a half, and I never knew yet her evil health let (hinder) her from a junketing. Good lack! it stood alway in the road when somewhat was in hand the which misliked her. Go to church in the rain,—nay, by 'r Lady!—and 'twas too cold in the winter to help string the apples, and too hot in the summer to help conserve the fruits: to be sure! But let there be an

even's revelling at Sir Christopher Marres his house, and she bidden,—why, it might rain enough to drench you, but her cloak was thick then, and her boots were strong enough, and her cough was not to any hurt—bless her!"

The tone of Barbara's exclamation somewhat belied the words.

"Have a care, Bab, lest—" and Marian's glance at Clare explained her meaning.

"Not she!" returned Barbara, looking in her turn at the child, whose attention was apparently concentrated on one of Marian's kittens, which she was stroking on her lap, while the mother cat walked uneasily round and round her chair. "I have always a care to speak above yon head."

"Is there not a little sister?" asked Marian in a low tone.

"Ay," said Barbara, dropping her voice. "Blanche, the babe's name is (a fictitious character.) Like Mrs Walter—never content with plain Nell and Nan. Her children must have names like so many queens. And I dare say the maid shall be bred up like one."

The conversation gradually passed to other topics, and the subject was not again touched upon by either sister.

How much of it had Clare heard, and how much of that did she understand?

A good deal more of either than Barbara imagined. She knew that Walter had been her father's name, and she was well aware that "Mistress Walter" from Barbara's lips, indicated her mother. She knew that her mother had married again, and that she lived a long way off. She knew also that this mother of hers was no favourite with Barbara. And from this conversation she gathered, that in the event of something happening—but what that was she did not realise—she was to go and live with her mother. Clare was an imaginative child, and the topic of all her dreams was this mysterious mother whom she had never seen. Many a time, when Barbara only saw that she was quietly dressing or hushing her doll, Clare's mind was at work, puzzling over the incomprehensible reason of Barbara's evident dislike to her absent mother. What shocking thing could she have done, thought Clare, to make Bab angry with her? Had she poisoned her sister, or drowned the cat, or stolen the big crown off the Queen's head? For the romance of a little child is always incongruous and sensational.

In truth, there was nothing sensational, and little that was not commonplace, about the character and history of little Clare's mother, whose maiden name was Orige Williams. She had been the spoilt child of a wealthy old Cornish gentleman,—the pretty pet on whom he lavished all his love and bounty, never crossing her will from the cradle. And she repaid him, as children thus trained often do, by crossing his will in the only matter concerning which he much cared. He had set his heart on her marrying a rich knight whose estate lay contiguous to his own: while she, entirely self-centred, chose to make a runaway match with young Lieutenant Avery, whose whole year's income was about equal to one week of her father's rent-roll. Bitterly disappointed, Mr Williams declared that "As she had made her bed, so she should lie on it;" for not one penny would he ever bestow on her while he lived, and he would bequeath the bulk of his property to his nephew. In consequence of this threat, which reached, her ears, Orige, romantic and high-flown, fancied herself at once a heroine and a martyr, when there was not in her the capacity for either. In the sort of language in which she delighted, she spoke of herself as a friendless orphan, a sacrifice to love, truth, and honour. It never seemed to occur to her that in deceiving her father—for she had led him to believe until the last moment that she intended to conform to his wishes—she had acted both untruthfully and dishonourably; while as to love, she was callous to every shape of it except love of self.

For about eighteen months Walter and Orige Avery lived at Bradmond, during which time Clare was born. She was only a few weeks old when the summons came for her father to rejoin his ship. He had been gone two months, when news reached Bradmond of a naval skirmish with the Spaniards off the Scilly Isles, in which great havoc had been made among the Queen's forces, and in the list of the dead was Lieutenant Walter Avery.

Now Orige's romance took a new turn. She pictured herself as a widowed nightingale, love-lorn and desolate, leaning her bleeding breast upon a thorn, and moaning forth her melancholy lay. As others have done since, she fancied herself poetical when she was only silly. And Barbara took grim notice that her handkerchief was perpetually going up to tearless eyes, and that she was not a whit less particular than usual to know what there was for supper.

For six whole months this state of things lasted. Orige arrayed herself in the deepest sables; she spoke of herself as a wretched widow who could never taste hope again; and of her baby as a poor hapless orphan, as yet unwitting of its misery. She declined to see any visitors, and persisted in being miserable and disconsolate, and in taking lonely walks to brood over her wretchedness. And at the end of that time she electrified her husband's family—all but one—by the announcement that she was about to marry again. Not for love this time, of course; no, indeed!—but she thought it was her duty. Sir Thomas Enville—a widower with three children—had been very kind; and he would make such a good father for Clare. He had a beautiful estate in the North. It would be a thousand pities to let the opportunity slip. Once for all, she thought it her duty; and she begged that no one would worry her with opposition, as everything was already settled.

Kate Avery, Walter's elder and only surviving sister, was exceedingly indignant. Her gentle, unsuspecting mother was astonished and puzzled. But Mr Avery, after a momentary look of surprise, only smiled.

"Nay, but this passeth!" (surpasses belief) cried Kate.

"Even as I looked for it," quietly said her father. "I did but think it should maybe have been somewhat later of coming."

"Her duty!" broke out indignant Kate. "Her duty to whom?"

"To herself, I take it," said he. "To Clare, as she counteth. Methinks she is one of those deceivers that do begin with deceiving of themselves."

"To Clare!" repeated Kate. "But, Father, she riddeth her of Clare. The babe is to 'bide here until such time as it may please my good Lady to send for her."

"So much the better for Clare," quietly returned Mr Avery.

And thus it happened that Clare was six years old, and her mother was still an utter stranger to her.

The family at Bradmond, however, were not without tidings of Lady Enville. It so happened that Mr Avery's adopted son, Robert Tremayne, was Rector of the very parish in which Sir Thomas Enville lived; and a close correspondence—for Elizabethan days—was kept up between Bradmond and the Rectory. In this manner they came to know, as time went on, that Clare had a little sister, whose name was Blanche; that Lady Enville was apparently quite happy; that Sir Thomas was very kind to her, after his fashion, though that was not the devoted fashion of Walter Avery. Sir Thomas liked to adorn his pretty plaything with fine dresses and rich jewellery; he surrounded her with every comfort; he allowed her to go to every party within ten miles, and to spend as much money as she pleased. And this was precisely Orige's beau ideal of happiness. Her small cup seemed full—but evidently Clare was no necessary ingredient in the compound.

If any one had taken the trouble to weigh, sort, and label the prejudices of Barbara Polwhele, it would have been found that the heaviest of all had for its object "Papistry,"—the second, dirt,—and the third, "Mistress Walter." Lieutenant Avery had been Barbara's darling from his cradle, and she considered that his widow had outraged his memory, by marrying again so short a time after his death. For this, above all her other provocations, Barbara never heartily forgave her. And a great struggle it was to her to keep her own feelings as much as possible in the background, from the conscientious motive that she ought not to instil into Clare's baby mind the faintest feeling of aversion towards her mother. The idea of the child being permanently sent to Enville Court was intensely distasteful to her. Yet wherever Clare went, Barbara must go also.

She had promised Mrs Avery, Clare's grandmother, on her dying bed, never to leave the child by her own free will so long as her childhood lasted, and rather than break her word, she would have gone to Siberia—or to Enville Court. In Barbara's eyes, there would have been very little choice between the two places. Enville Court lay on the sea-coast, and Barbara abhorred the sea, on which her only brother and Walter Avery had died: it was in Lancashire, which she looked upon as a den of witches, and an arid desert bare of all the comforts of life; it was a long way from any large town, and Barbara had been used to live within an easy walk of one; she felt, in short, as though she were being sent into banishment.

And there was no help for it. Within the last few weeks, a letter had come from Lady Enville,—not very considerably worded—requesting that if what she had heard was true, that Mr Avery's health was feeble, and he was not likely to live long—in the event of his death, Clare should be sent to her.

In fact, there was nowhere else to send her. Walter's two sisters, Kate and Frances, were both dead,—Kate unmarried, Frances van Barnevelt leaving a daughter, but far away in Holland. The only other person who could reasonably have claimed the child was Mr Tremayne; and with what show of justice could he do so, when his house lay only a stone's throw from the park gates of Enville Court? Fate seemed to determine that Clare should go to her mother. But while John Avery lived, there was to be a respite.

It was a respite shorter than any one anticipated—except, perhaps, the old man himself. There came an evening three weeks after these events, when Barbara noticed that her master, contrary to his usual custom, instead of returning to his turret-chamber after supper, sat still by the hall fire, shading his eyes from the lamp, and almost entirely silent. When Clare's bed-time came, and she lifted her little face for a good-night kiss, John Avery, after giving it, laid his hands upon her head and blessed her.

"The God that fed me all my life long, the Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the maid! The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep thy heart and mind, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—be upon thee, and remain with thee always!"

So he "let her depart with this blessing." Let her depart—to walk the thorny path of which he had reached the end, to climb the painful steeps of which he stood at the summit, to labour along the weary road which he would tread no more. Let her depart! The God who had fed him had manna in store for her,—the Angel who had redeemed him was strong, enough, and tender enough, to carry this lamb in His bosom.

Barbara noted that his step was slower even than had been usual with him of late. It struck her, too, that his hair was whiter than she had ever noticed it before.

"Be you aweary this even, Master?"

"Something, good maid," he answered with a smile. "Even as a traveller may well be that hath but another furlong of his journey."

Another furlong! Was it more than another step? Barbara went upstairs with him, to relieve him of the light burden of the candle.

"Good night, Master! Metrusteth your sleep shall give you good refreshing."

"Good night, my maid," said he. "I wish thee the like. There shall be good rest up yonder."

Her eyes filled with tears as she turned away. Was it selfish that her wish was half a prayer,—that he might be kept a little longer from *that* rest?

She waited longer than usual before she tapped at his door the next morning. It was seven o'clock—a very late hour for rising in the sixteenth century—when, receiving no answer, Barbara went softly into the room and unfastened the shutters as quietly as she could. No need for the care and the silence! There was good rest up yonder.

The shutters were drawn back, and the April sunlight streamed brightly in upon a still, dead face.

Deep indeed was the mourning: but it was for themselves, not for him. He was safe in the Golden Land, with his children and his Isoult—all gone before him to that good rest. What cause could there be for grief that the battle was won, and that the tired soldier had laid aside his armour?

But there was need enough for grief as concerned the two survivors,—for Barbara and little Clare, left alone in the cold, wide world, with nothing before them but a mournful and wearisome journey, and Enville Court the dreaded end of it.

Note 1. So lately as 1601, an Act of Parliament forbade men to ride in coaches, as an effeminate practice.

Note 2. This was "His Holiness' sentence," of which the Armada was "in execution." See note, p.

Note 3. The names, and date of marriage, of Walter Avery and Orige Williams, are taken from the Bodmin Register. In every other respect they are fictitious characters.

Chapter Two.

On the Border of Marton Mere.

"Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way
Thorny, and bitter, and cold, and grey."

Miss Muloch.

It was drawing towards the dusk of a bright day early in May. The landscape was not attractive, at least to a tired traveller. It was a dreary waste of sandhills, diversified by patches of rough grass, and a few stunted bushes, all leaning away from the sea, as though they wanted to get as far from it as their small opportunities allowed; on one side foamed the said grey-green expanse of sea; on the other lay a little lakelet, shining in the setting sun: in front, at some distance, a rivulet ran from the lake to the sea. On the nearer side of the brook lay a little village; while on the further bank was a large, well-kept park, in which stood a grey quadrangular mansion. Beyond the park, nearly as far as the eye could reach, stretched a wide, dreary swamp, bounded only by the sea on the one hand and the lake on the other. The only pretty or pleasant features in the landscape were the village and park; and little could be seen of those for intervening sandhills.

The lake was Marton Mere; the swamp was Marton Moss; and the district was the Fylde of Lancashire. The County Palatine was renowned, at that time, in the eyes of the Londoners, for its air, which was "subtile and piercing," without any "gross vapours nor foggie mists;" for the abundance and excellence of its cattle, which were sent even then to the metropolis; for the plentiful variety of its provisions; for its magnificent woods, "preserved by gentlemen for beauty," to such an extent that no wood was used for fuel, and its place was supplied by "sea-coal" and turf; for its numerous churches, "in no part of the land more in proportion to the inhabitants." But the good qualities of the County Palatine were not likely to be appreciated by our weary travellers.

The travellers were three in number:—a short, thick-set man, in a coat of frieze as rough as his surroundings; a woman, and a child; lastly came a pack-horse, bearing a quantity of luggage.

"Eh me!" ejaculated Barbara Polwhele, with a weary sigh. "Master, doth any man live hereaway?"

"Eh?" queried the man, not looking back.

Barbara repeated her question.

"Ay," said he in a rough voice.

"By 'r Lady!" exclaimed Barbara, pityingly. "What manner of folk be they, I marvel?"

"Me an' th' rest," said the man.

"Eh? what, you never—Be we anear Enville Court now?"

"O'er yon," replied the man, pointing straight forward with his whip, and then giving it a sharp crack, as a reminder to the galloways.

"What, in the midst of yonder marsh?" cried poor Barbara.

Dick gave a hoarse chuckle, but made no other reply. Barbara's sensations were coming very near despair.

"What call men your name, Master?" she demanded, after some minutes' gloomy meditation.

"Name?" echoed the stolid individual before her.

"Ay," said she.

"Dick o' Will's o' Mally's o' Robin's o' Joan's o' owd Dick's," responded he, in a breath.

"Marry La'kin!" exclaimed Barbara, relieving her feelings by recourse to her favourite epithet. She took the whole pedigree to be a polysyllabic name. "Dear heart, to think of a country where the folk have names as long as a cart-ropes!"

"Bab, I am aweary!" said little Clare, rousing up from a nap which she had taken leaning against Barbara.

"And well thou mayest, poor chick!" returned Barbara compassionately; adding in an undertone,—*"Could she ne'er have come so far as Kirkham!"*

They toiled wearily on after this, until presently Dick o' Will's—I drop the rest of the genealogy—drew bridle, and looking back, pointed with his whip to the village which now lay close before them.

"See thee!" said he. "Yon's th' fold."

"Yon's what?" demanded Barbara.

The word was unintelligible to her, as Dick pronounced it "fowd;" but had she understood it, she would have been little wiser. Fold meant to her a place to pen sheep in, while it signified to Dick an enclosure surrounded by houses.

"What is 't?" responded Dick. "Why, it's th' fowd."

"But what is 'fowd'?" asked bewildered Barbara.

"Open thy een, wilt thou?" answered Dick cynically.

Barbara resigned the attempt to comprehend him, and, unwittingly obeying, looked at the landscape.

Just the village itself was pretty enough. It was surrounded with trees, through which white houses peeped out, clustered together on the bank of the little brook. The spire of the village church towered up through the foliage, close to the narrow footbridge; and beside it stood the parsonage,—a long, low, stone house, embowered in ivy.

"Is yonder Enville Court?" asked Barbara, referring to the house in the park.

"Ay," said Dick.

"And where dwelleth Master Tremayne?"

"Eh?"

"Master Tremayne—the parson—where dwelleth he?"

"Th' parson? Why, i' th' parsonage, for sure," said Dick, conclusively. "Where else would thou have him?"

"Ay, in sooth, but which is the parsonage?"

"Close by th' church—where would thou have it?"

"What, yonder green house, all o'er ivy?"

"For sure."

They slowly filed into the village, rode past the church and parsonage,—at which latter Barbara looked lovingly, as to a haven of comfort—forded the brook, and turned in at the gates of Enville Court. When they came up to the house, and saw it free of hindering foliage, she found that it was a stately quadrangle of grey stone, with a stone terrace round three sides of it, a garden laid out in grim, Dutch square order, away from the sea; and two or three cottages, with farm-buildings and stables, grouped behind. The horses drew up at a side door.

"Now!" lethargically said Dick, lumbering off his horse. "Con ye get off by yoursen?"

"I'll try," grunted the rather indignant Barbara, who considered that her precious charge, Clare, was being very neglectfully received. She sprang down more readily than Dick, and standing on the horse-block, lifted down little Clare.

"Hallo!" said Dick, by way of ringing the bell.

A slight stir was heard through the open door, and a young woman appeared, fresh-looking and smiling-faced.

"Mistress Polwhele, I reckon?" she asked. "An' is this t' little lass? Eh, God bless thee, little lass! Come in—thou'rt bound to be aweary."

Clare looked up into the girl's pleasant face, and sliding her hand confidingly into hers, said demurely,—*"I'll come."*

"Dick 'll see to th' gear, Mistress," said the girl.

"Thou'd better call Sim, Dick.—I reckon you'd best come wi' me."

"What is your name?" asked Barbara, following her guide.

"Jennet," said the smiling girl.

"Well, Jennet, you are the best thing I have yet seen up hither," announced Barbara cynically.

"Eh, you've none seen nought yet!" said Jennet, laughing. "There's better things here nor me, I'se warrant you."

"Humph!" returned Barbara meditatively. She doubted it very much.

Jennet paused at a door, and rapped. There was no answer; perhaps her appeal was not heard by those within. She pushed the door a little open, saying to Barbara, "There! you'd best go in, happen."

So Barbara, putting little Clare before her, went in.

It was a large, square, low room, sweet with the perfume of dried roses. There were four occupants,—two ladies, and two girls. One of the ladies sat with her back to the door, trying to catch the last ray of daylight for her work; the other had dropped asleep. Evidently neither had heard Jennet's knock.

It was rather an awkward state of things. Little Clare went a few feet into the room, stopped, and looked up at Barbara for direction. At the same moment the elder girl turned her head and saw them.

"Madam!" said Barbara stiffly.

"Aunt Rachel!" (Note 1) said the girl.

The lady who sat by the window looked round, and rose. She was young—certainly under thirty; but rather stiff and prim, very upright, and not free from angularity. She gave the impression that she must have been born just as she was, in her black satin skirt, dark blue serge kirtle, unbending buckram cap, whitest and most unruffled of starched frills,—and have been kept ever since under a glass case.

"You are Barbara Polwhele?" she said.

Barbara dropped a courtesy, and replied affirmatively.

"Sister!" said Mistress Rachel, appealing to the sleeper.

No greater difference between two young women could well be imagined, than that which existed in this instance. Lady Enville—for she was the taker of the siesta—was as free from any appearance of angularity or primness as possible. Everything about her was soft, delicate, and graceful. She was fair in complexion, and very pretty. She had been engaged in fancy-work, and it lay upon her lap, held lightly by one hand, just as it had dropped when she fell asleep.

"Sister!" said Rachel again.

Lady Enville stirred, sighed, and half opened her eyes.

"Here is thy little maid, Sister."

Lady Enville opened her blue eyes fully, dropped her work on the floor, and springing up, caught Clare to her bosom with the most exalted expressions of delight.

"Fragrance of my heart! My rose of spring! My gem of beauty! Art thou come to me at last, my soul's darling?"

Barbara looked on with a grim smile. Clare sat in perfect silence on her mother's knee, suffering her caresses, but making no response.

"She is not like thee, Sister," observed Rachel.

"No, she is like her father," replied Lady Enville, stroking the child's hair, and kissing her again. "Medoubteth if she will ever be as lovesome as I. I was much better favoured at her years.—Art thou weary, sweeting?"

At last Clare spoke; but only in an affirmative monosyllable. Clare's thoughts were mixed ones. It was rather nice to sit on that soft velvet lap, and be petted: but "Bab didn't like her." And why did not Bab like her?

"Thou hast not called me Mother, my floweret."

Clare was too shy for that. The suggestion distressed her. To move the house seemed as near possibility as to frame her lips to say that short word. Fortunately for her, Lady Enville's mind never dwelt on a subject for many seconds at once. She turned to Barbara.

"And how goes it with thee, Barbara?"

"Well, and I thank you, Mistress—my Lady, I would say."

"Ah!" said Lady Enville, laughing softly. "I shall always be Mistress Walter with thee, I am well assured. So my father Avery is dead, I count, or ye had not come?"

The question was put in a tone as light and airy as possible. Clare listened in surprised vexation. What did "she" mean by talking of "Gaffer," in that strange way?—was she not sorry that he was gone away? Bab was—thought Clare.

Barbara's answer was in a very constrained tone.

"Ah, well, 'tis to no good fretting," returned Lady Enville, gently smoothing Clare's hair. "I cannot abide doole (mourning) and gloomy faces. I would have all about me fresh and bright while I am so."

This was rather above Clare's comprehension; but looking up at Barbara, the child saw tears in her eyes. Her little heart revolted in a moment from the caressing lady in velvet. What did she mean by making Bab cry?

It was rather a misfortune that at this moment it pleased Lady Enville to kiss Clare's forehead, and to say—

"Art thou ready to love us all, darling? Thou must know thy sisters, and ye can play you together, when their tasks be adone.—Margaret!"

"Ay, Madam."

The elder girl laid down her work, and came to Lady Enville's side.

"And thou too, Lucrece.—These be they, sweeting. Kiss them. Thou shalt see Blanche ere it be long."

But then Clare's stored-up anger broke out. The limit of her endurance had been reached, and shyness was extinguished by vexation.

"Get away!" she said, as Margaret bent down to kiss her. "You are not my sisters! I won't kiss you! I won't call you sisters. Blanche is my sister, but not you. Get away, both of you!"

Lady Enville's eyes opened—for her—extremely wide.

"Why, what can the child mean?" she exclaimed. "I can never govern childre. Rachel, do—"

Barbara was astonished and terrified. She laid a correcting hand upon Clare's shoulder.

"Mrs Clare, I'm ashamed of you! Cruel 'shamed, I am! The ladies will account that I ne'er learned you behaviour. Kiss the young damsels presently (immediately), like a sweet little maid, as you use to be, and not like a wild blackamoor that ne'er saw governance!"

But the matter was taken out of Barbara's hands, as Mistress Rachel responded to the appeal made to her—not in words, but in solid deed. She quietly grasped Clare, lifted her from her mother's knee, and, carrying her to a large closet at one end of the room, shut her inside, and sat down again with judicial imperturbability.

"There you 'bide, child," announced Rachel, from her chair, "until such time as you shall be sorry for your fault, and desire pardon.—Meg and Lucrece, come and fold your sewing. 'Tis too dark to make an end thereof this even."

"Good Mistress," entreated poor Barbara in deep dismay, "I beseech you, leave my little maid come out thence. She was never thus dealt withal in all her life afore!"

"No was she, (was she not), good wife?" returned Rachel unconcernedly. "Then the sooner she makes beginning thereof, the better for her. Ease your mind; I will keep her in yonder no longer than shall stand with her good. Is she oft-times thus trying?"

"Never afore knew I no such a thing!" said Barbara emphatically.

"Only a little waywardness then, maybe," answered Rachel. "So much the better."

"Marry, sweet Mistress, the child is hungered and aweary. Pray you, forgive her this once!"

"Good lack!" plaintively exclaimed Lady Enville. "I hate discords around me. Call Jennet, and bid her take Barbara into the hall, for it must be nigh rear-supper."

Go and sit down comfortably to supper, with her darling shut in a dark closet! Barbara would as soon have thought of flying.

"Leave her come forth, Rachel," said the child's mother.

"I love peace as well as thou, Sister; but I love right better," answered Rachel unmovedly. But she rose and went to the closet. "Child! art thou yet penitent?"

"Am I what?" demanded Clare from within, in a voice which was not promising for much penitence.

"Art thou sorry for thy fault?"

"No."

"Wilt thou ask pardon?"

"No," said Clare sturdily.

"Thou seest, Sister, I cannot let her out," decided Rachel, looking back.

In utter despair Barbara appealed to Lady Enville.

"Mistress Walter, sure you have never the heart to keep the little maid shut up in yon hole? She is cruel weary, the sweeting!—and an-hungered to boot. Cause her to come forth, I pray you of your gentleness!"

Ah, Barbara! Appearances were illusive. There was no heart under the soft exterior of the one woman, and there was a very tender one, covered by a crust of rule and propriety, latent in the breast of the other.

"Gramercy, Barbara!" said Lady Enville pettishly, with a shrug of her shoulders. "I never can deal with childre."

"Leave her come forth, and I will deal withal," retorted Barbara bluntly.

"Dear heart! Rachel, couldst thou not leave her come? Never mind waiting till she is sorry. I shall have never any peace."

Rachel laid her hand doubtfully on the latch of the closet door, and stood considering the matter.

Just then another door was softly pushed open, and a little child of three years old came into the room:—a much prettier child than Clare, having sky-blue eyes, shining fair hair, a complexion of exquisite delicacy, pretty regular features, and eyebrows of the surprised type. She ran up straight to Rachel, and grasped the blue serge kirtle in her small chubby hand.

"Come see my sis'er," was the abrupt announcement.

That this little bit of prettiness was queen at Enville Court, might be seen in Rachel's complacent smile. She opened the closet door about an inch.

"Art thou yet sorry?"

"No," said Clare stubbornly.

There was a little pull at the blue kirtle.

"Want see my sis'er!" pleaded the baby voice, in tones of some impatience.

"Wilt be a good maid if thou come forth?" demanded Rachel of the culprit within.

"That is as may be," returned Clare insubordinately.

"If I leave thee come forth, 'tis not for any thy goodness, but I would not be hard on thee in the first minute of thy home-coming, and I make allowance for thy coldness and weariness, that may cause thee to be pettish."

Another little pull warned Rachel to cut short her lecture.

"Now, be a good maid! Come forth, then. Here is Blanche awaiting thee."

Out came Clare, looking very far from penitent. But when Blanche toddled up, put her fat arms round her sister as far as they would go, and pouted up her little lips for a kiss,—to the astonishment of every one, Clare burst into tears. Nobody quite knew why, and perhaps Clare could hardly have said herself. Barbara interposed, by coming forward and taking possession of her, with the apologetic remark—

"Fair cruel worn-out she is, poor heart!"

And Rachel condoned the affair, with—"Give her her supper, good wife, and put her abed. Jennet will show thee all needful."

So Clare signalled her first entrance into her new home by rebellion and penalty.

The next morning rose brightly. Barbara and Jennet came to dress the four little girls, who all slept in one room; and took them out at once into the garden. Clare seemed to have forgotten the episode of the previous evening, and no one cared to remind her of it. Margaret had brought a ball with her, and the children set to work at play, with an amount of activity and interest which they would scarcely have bestowed upon work. Barbara and Jennet sat down on a wooden seat which ran round the trunk of a large ash-tree, and Jennet, pulling from her pocket a pair of knitting-needles and a ball of worsted, began to ply the former too quickly for the eye to follow.

"Of a truth, I would I had some matter of work likewise," observed Barbara; "I have been used to work hard, early and late, nor it liketh me not to sit with mine hands idle. Needs must that I pray my Lady of some task belike."

"Do but say the like unto Mistress Rachel," said Jennet, laughing, "and I warrant thee thou'lt have work enough."

"Mistress Rachel o'erseeth the maids work?"

"There's nought here but hoo (she) does o'ersee," replied Jennet.

"She keepeth house, marry, by my Lady's direction?"

"Hoo does not get much direction, I reckon," said Jennet.

"What, my Lady neither makes nor meddles?"

Jennet laughed. "I ne'er saw her make yet so much as an apple turno'er. As for tapestry work, and such, hoo makes belike. But I'll just tell thee:—Sir Thomas is our master, see thou. Well, his wife's his mistress. And Mistress Rachel's her mistress. And Mistress Blanche is Mistress Rachel's mistress. Now then, thou knowest somewhat thou didn't afore."

"And who is Mistress Blanche's mistress or master belike?" demanded Barbara, laughing in her turn.

"Nay, I've gotten to th' top," said Jennet. "I can go no fur'."

"There'll be a master some of these days, I cast no doubt," observed Barbara, drily.

"Happen," returned Jennet. "But 'tis a bit too soon yet, I reckon.—Mrs Meg, yon's the breakfast bell."

Margaret caught the ball from Clare, and pocketed it, and the whole party went into the hall for breakfast. Here the entire family assembled, down to the meanest scullion-lad. Jennet took Clare's hand, and led her up to the high table, at which Mistress Rachel had already taken her seat, while Sir Thomas and Lady Enville were just entering from the door behind it.

"Ha! who cometh here?" asked Sir Thomas, cheerily. "My new daughter, I warrant. Come hither, little maid!"

Clare obeyed rather shyly. Her step-father set her on his knee, kissed her, stroked her hair with a rather heavy hand, and bade her "be a good lass and serve God well, and he would be good father to her." Clare was not sorry when the ordeal was over, and she found herself seated between Margaret and Barbara. Sir Thomas glanced round the table, where an empty place was left on the form, just opposite Clare.

"Where is Jack?" he inquired.

"Truly, I know not," said Lady Enville languidly.

"I bade him arise at four of the clock," observed Rachel briskly.

"And saw him do it?" asked Sir Thomas, with an amused expression.

"Nay, in very deed,—I had other fish to fry."

"Then, if Jack be not yet abed, I am no prophet."

"Thou art no prophet, brother Tom, whether or no," declared Rachel. "I pray thee of some of that herring."

While Rachel was being helped to the herring, a slight noise was audible at the door behind, and the next minute, tumbling into his place with a somersault, a boy of eleven suddenly appeared in the hitherto vacant space between Rachel and Lucrece.

"Ah Jack, Jack!" reprimanded Sir Thomas.

"Salt, Sir?" suggested Jack, demurely.

"What hour of the clock did thine Aunt bid thee rise, Jack?"

"Well, Sir," responded Jack, screwing up one eye, as if the effort of memory were painful, "as near as I may remember, 'twas about one hundred and eighty minutes to seven of the clock."

"Thou wilt come to ill, Jack, as sure as sure," denounced Aunt Rachel, solemnly.

"I am come to breakfast, Aunt, and I shall come to dinner," remarked Jack: "that is as sure as sure."

Sir Thomas leaned back in his chair and laughed heartily, bidding Jack help himself; while Rachel shook her head ominously over Jack's future. Jack stood up, surveyed the table, and proceeded to make a wide gash in an enormous pie. Just as he was laying down knife and spoon, and retiring with his spoils, he caught a glimpse of Clare, who sat studying him in some trepidation and much curiosity.

"Hallo! who are you?" was Jack's unceremonious greeting.

"Wilt thou ne'er learn to behave thyself, lad?" corrected Rachel.

"You see, Aunt, none never learned me yet," returned Jack coolly; looking at Clare in a manner which said, "I await your answer."

Sir Thomas good-naturedly replied for her.

"'Tis thy new sister, my lad,—little Clare Avery. Play none of thy tricks on her, Jack."

"My tricks, Sir?" demanded Jack with an air of innocent astonishment.

"I know thee, lad!" said Sir Thomas shortly, but good humouredly.

Jack proceeded to make short work of the pie, but kept his eyes on Clare.

"Now, little maids," said Rachel, when they rose from the table, "I will hear, you your tasks in an hour hence. Till the clock strike, ye may go into the garden."

"May we have some cakes with us, Aunt Rachel?" inquired Jack demurely.

"Cake!" echoed Blanche, clapping her little fat hands.

"Thou!" said Rachel. "Art thou a maid? I have nought to do with thy tasks. Be they ready for Master Tremayne?"

Jack turned up the whites of his eyes, and turned down the corners of his mouth, in a style which exhibited a very emphatic No.

"Go and study them, then, this minute," said his Aunt.

The party separated, Jack putting on a look which was the embodiment of despair; but Sir Thomas, calling Margaret back, put into her hands the plate of small cakes; bidding her take them to the garden and divide them among the children.

"Brother, Brother!" remonstrated Rachel.

"Tut! the cakes will do them no harm," said he carelessly. "There are but a dozen or the like."

Margaret went first towards the garden, carrying the plate, Clare and Blanche following. As they reached the terrace, Lucrece overtook them, going on about a yard in advance of Margaret. When the latter turned her head to call Blanche to "come on," Clare, to her utter amazement, saw Lucrece stop, and, as Margaret passed her, silently and deftly dip her hand into the plate, and transfer two of the little cakes to her pocket. The action was so promptly and delicately performed, leaving Margaret entirely unconscious of it, that in all probability it was not the first of its kind.

Clare was intensely shocked. Was Lucrece a thief?

Margaret sat down on a grassy bank, and counted out the cakes. There were eleven.

"How is this?" she asked, looking perplexed. "There were thirteen of these, I am well assured, for I counted them o'er as I came out of hall. Who has taken two?"

"Not I," said Clare shortly.

Blanche shook her curly head; Lucrece, silently but calmly, held out empty hands. So, thought Clare, she is a liar as well, as a thief.

"They must be some whither," said Margaret, quietly; "and I know where it is like: Lucrece, I do verily believe they are in thy pocket."

"Dost thou count me a thief, Meg?" retorted Lucrece.

"By no manner of means, without thou hast the chance," answered Margaret satirically, but still quietly. "Very well,—thou hast chosen thy share,—take it. Three for each of us three, and two over. Shall we give them to Jack? What say ye?"

"Jack!" cried Blanche, dancing about on the grass.

Clare assented shyly, and she and Blanche received their three cakes each.

"Must I have none, Meg?" demanded Lucrece in an injured tone.

"Oh ay! keep what thou hast," said Margaret, calmly munching the first of her own three cakes.

"Who said I had any?"

"I said it. I know thee, as Father saith to Jack. Thou hast made thy bed,—go lie thereon."

Lucrece marched slowly away, looking highly indignant; but before she was quite out of sight, the others saw her slip her hand into her pocket, bring out one of the little cakes, and bite it in two. Margaret laughed when she saw Clare's look of shocked solemnity.

"I said she had them,—the sly-boots!" was her only comment.

Clare finished her cakes, and ran off to Barbara, who, seated under the ash-tree, had witnessed the whole scene.

"Bab, I will not play me with yonder Lucrece. She tells lies, and is a thief."

"Marry La'kin, my poor lamb!" sighed Barbara. "My mind sorely misgiveth me that I have brought thee into a den of thieves. Eh me, if the good Master had but lived a while longer! Of a truth, the Lord's ways be passing strange."

Clare had run off again to Margaret, and the last sentence was not spoken to her. But it was answered by somebody.

"Which of the Lord's ways, Barbara Polwhele?"

"Sir?" exclaimed Barbara, looking up surprisedly into the grave, though kindly face of a tall, dark-haired man in

clerical garb. "I was but—eh, but yon eyes! 'Tis never Master Robin?"

Mr Tremayne's smile replied sufficiently that it was.

"And is yonder little Clare Avery?" he asked, with a tender inflection in his voice. "Walter's child,—my brother Walter!"

"Ay, Master Robin, yon is Mistress Clare; and you being shepherd of this flock hereaway, I do adjure you, look well to this little lamb, for I am sore afeard she is here fallen amongst wolves."

"I am not the Shepherd, good friend,—only one of the Shepherd's herd-lads. But I will look to the lamb as He shall speed me. And which of the Lord's ways is so strange unto thee, Barbara?"

"Why, to think that our dear, good Master should die but now, and leave the little lamb to be cast in all this peril."

"Then—'Some of the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth'—doth the verse run thus in thy Bible, Barbara?"

"Nay, not so: but can you understand the same Master Robin?"

"By no means. Wherefore should I?"

Barbara made no answer beyond an appealing look.

"'He knoweth the way that I take.' If I know not so much as one step thereof, what matter? I shall have light to see the next step ere I must set down my foot. That is enough, Barbara, for 'such as keep His covenant,' and I have ever counted thee amongst them."

"Eh, Master Robin, but 'twere easier done to walk in darkness one's self, than to see yon little pet lamb—"

And Barbara's voice faltered.

"Hath somewhat troubled thee specially at this time?"

In answer, she told him what she had just seen.

"And I do trust, Master Robin, I have not ill done to say this unto you, but of a truth I am diseased (uneasy, anxious) touching my jewel, lest she fall into the like evil courses, being to dwell here."

"Thou hast not ill done, friend; nor will I neglect the warning, trust me."

"I thank you much, Master. And how doth good Mistress Thekla? Verily I am but evil-mannered to be thus long ere I ask it."

"She is well, and desiring much to see thee."

"And your childre, Master Robin,—have you not?"

"I have five childre, Barbara, two sons and three daughters; but of them Christ hath housen four in His garner, and hath left but one in my sight. And that seemed unto us a very strange way; yet was it mercy and truth."

"Eh, but I could ne'er repine at a babe's dying!" said Barbara, shaking her head. "Do but think what they 'scape of this weary world's troubles, Master Robin."

"Ah, Barbara, 'tis plain thou never hadst a child," said Mr Tremayne, sighing. "I grant all thou hast said. And yet, when it cometh to the pass, the most I can do is to lift mine head and hold my peace, 'because God did it.' God witteth best how to try us all."

"Nay, if He would but not try yon little lambkin!"

"An unhappy prayer, Barbara; for, that granted, she should never come forth as gold.—But I must be on my way to give Jack his Latin lesson. When thou canst find thy way to my dwelling, all we shall be full fain to see thee. Good morrow."

When Clare was undergoing her ordeal in the schoolroom, an hour later, Barbara set out on her visit to the parsonage. But she missed her way through the park, and instead of coming out of the great gates, near the foot-bridge, she found herself at a little gate, opening on the road, from which neither church nor village could be seen as landmarks. There was no cottage in sight at which to ask the road to the parsonage. While Barbara stood and looked round her, considering the matter, she perceived a boy of about twelve years old slowly approaching her from the right hand,—evidently a gentleman's son, from his dress, which, though very simple, was of materials indicative of good birth. He had long dark brown hair, which curled over his shoulders, and almost hid his face, bent down over a large book, for he was reading as he walked. Barbara waited until he came up to her.

"Give you good morrow, Master! I be loth to come betwixt you and your studies, but my need presseth me to pray of you the way unto Master Tremayne's house the parson?"

The lad started on hearing a voice, hastily closed his book, and lifted a pair of large, dreamy brown eyes to Barbara's face. But he seemed quite at a loss to recall what he had been asked to do.

"You would know?"—he said inquiringly.

"I would know, young Master," returned Barbara boldly, "if your name be not Tremayne?"

"Ay so," assented the boy, with a rather surprised look. "My name is Arthur Tremayne." (A fictitious person.)

"And you be son unto Master Tremayne the parson?"

"Truly."

"Verily I guessed so much, for his eyes be in your head," said Barbara quaintly. "But your mouth and nose be Mrs Thekla's. Eh, dear heart, what changes life bringeth! Why, it seemeth me but yestre'en that your father was no bigger than you. And every whit as much given to his book, I warrant you. Pray you, is my mistress your mother at home?"

"Ay, you shall find her there now," said the boy, as he tucked the big book under his arm, and began to walk on in Barbara's company. "I count you be our old friend, Barbara Polwhele, that is come with little Mistress Clare? My mother will be fain to see you."

Barbara was highly gratified to find that Arthur Tremayne had heard of her already. The two trudged onwards together, and in a few minutes reached the ivy-covered parsonage, standing in its pretty flower-garden. Arthur preceded Barbara into the house, laid down his book on the hall window-seat, and opening a door which led to the back part of the house, appealed to an unseen person within.

"Mother! here is Mistress Barbara Polwhele."

"Barbara Polwhele!" said a voice in reply,—a voice which Barbara had not heard for nineteen years, yet which time had so little altered that she recognised at once the Thekla Rose of old. And in another moment Mrs Tremayne stood before her.

Her aspect was more changed than her voice. The five terrible years of the Marian persecution had swept over her head in early youth, and their bitter anxieties and forebodings left her, at the age of nineteen, a white, wan, slender, delicate girl. But now a like number of years, spent in calm, happy work, had left their traces also, and Mrs Tremayne looked what she was, a gentle, contented woman of thirty-eight, with more bloom on her cheek than she had ever worn in youth, and the piteous expression of distressed suspense entirely gone from her eyes.

"Eh, Mistress Thekla!" was Barbara's greeting.

"I be cruel glad to see you. Methinks you be gone so many years younger as you must needs be elder."

"Nay, truly, for I were then but a babe in the cradle," was the laughing answer. "Thou art a losenger (flatterer), Barbara."

"In very deed," returned Barbara inconsistently, "I could have known you any whither."

"And me also?" demanded another voice, as a little lively old lady trotted out of the room which Mrs Tremayne had just left. "Shouldst thou have known me any whither, Barbara Polwhele?"

"Marry La'kin! if 'tis not Mistress Rose!" (Name fact, character fictitious.)

"Who but myself? I dwell with Thekla since I am widow. And I make the cakes, as Arthur knows," added Mrs Rose, cheerily, patting her grandson's head; "but if I should go hence, there should be a famine, *ma fo!*"

"A famine of *pain d'épices*" assented Mrs Tremayne, smiling. "Ah, Mother dear, thou spoilest the lad."

"Who ever knew a grandame to do other?" observed Barbara. "More specially the only one."

"The only one!" echoed his mother, softly, stroking his long hair. "There be four other, Barbara,—not lost, but waiting."

"Now, Barbara, come in hither," said Mrs Rose, bustling back into the room, apparently desirous of checking any sad thoughts on the part of her daughter; "sit thou down, and tell us all about the little Clare, and the dear Master Avery, and all. I listen and mix my cake, all one."

Barbara followed her, and found herself in the kitchen. She had not done wondering at the change—not in Mrs Tremayne, but in her mother. Nineteen years before, Barbara had known Marguerite Rose, a crushed, suffering woman, with no shadow of mirth about her. It seemed unnatural and improper to hear her laugh. But Mrs Rose's nature was that of a child,—simple and versatile: she lived in the present, whether for joy or pain.

Mrs Rose finished gathering her materials, and proceeded to mix her *pain d'épices*, or Flemish gingerbread, while Mrs Tremayne made Barbara sit down in a large chair furnished with soft cushions. Arthur came too, having picked up his big book, and seated himself in the window-seat with it, his long hair falling over his face as he bent down over it but whether he were reading or listening was known only to himself.

The full account of John Avery's end was given to these his dearest friends, and there was a good deal of conversation about other members of the family: and Barbara heard, to her surprise, that a cousin of Clare, a child rather older than herself, was shortly coming to live at the parsonage. Lysken van Barnevelt (a fictitious person), like Clare, was an only child and an orphan; and Mr Tremayne purposed to pay his debt to the Averys by the adoption of Frances Avery's child. But Barbara was rather dismayed when she heard that Lysken would not at first be able to talk to her cousin, since her English was of the most fragmentary description.

"She will soon learn," said Mrs Tremayne.

"And until she shall learn, I only can talk to her," added Mrs Rose, laughing. "*Ay de mi!* I must pull up my Flemish out of my brains. It is so deep down, I do wonder if it will come. It is—let me see!—forty, fifty—*ma foi!* 'tis nigh sixty years since I talk Flemish with my father!"

"And now, tell us, what manner of child is Clare?" asked Mrs Tremayne.

"The sweetest little maid in all the world, and of full good conditions (disposition), saving only that she lacketh breeding (education) somewhat."

"The which Mistress Rachel shall well furnish her withal. She is a thoroughly good teacher. But I will go and see the sweeting, so soon as I may."

"Now, Mrs Thekla, of your goodness, do me to wit what manner of folk be these that we be fallen in withal? It were easier for me to govern both Mrs Clare and mine own self, if I might but, know somewhat thereof aforetime."

"Truly, good friend, they be nowise ill folk," said Mrs Tremayne, with a quiet smile. "Sir Thomas is like to be a good father unto the child, for he hath a kindly nature. Only, for godliness, I fear I may not say over much. But he is an upright man, and a worthy, as men go in this world. And for my Lady his wife, you know her as well as I."

"Marry La'kin, and if you do love her no better!—"

"She is but young," said Mrs Tremayne, excusingly.

"What heard I?" inquired Mrs Rose, looking up from her cookery. "I did think thou hadst been a Christian woman, Barbara Polwhele."

"Nay, verily, Mistress Rose!—what mean you?" demanded the astonished Barbara.

"*Bon!*—Is it not the second part of the duty of a Christian woman to love her neighbour as herself?"

"Good lack! 'tis not in human nature," said Barbara, bluntly. "If we be no Christians short of that, there be right few Christians in all the world, Mistress mine."

"So there be," was the reply. "Is it not?"

"Truly, good friend, this is not in nature," said Mrs Tremayne, gently. "It is only in grace."

"Then in case it so be, is there no grace?" asked Barbara in a slightly annoyed tone.

"Who am I, that I should judge?" was the meek answer. "Yet methinks there must be less grace than nature."

"Well!—and of Mistress Rachel, what say you?"

"Have you a care that you judge her not too harshly. She is, I know, somewhat forbidding on the outside, yet she hath a soft heart, Barbara."

"I am thankful to hear the same, for I had not so judged," was Barbara's somewhat acrid answer.

"Ah, she showeth the worst on the outside."

"And for the childre? I love not yon Lucrece.—Now, Mistress Rose, have a care your cakes be well mingled, and snub not me."

"Ah! there spake the conscience," said Mrs Rose, laughing.

"I never did rightly understand Lucrece," answered her daughter. "For Margaret, she is plain and open enough; a straightforward, truthful maiden, that men may trust. But for Lucrece—I never felt as though I knew her. There is that in her—be it pride, be it shamefacedness, call it as you will—that is as a wall in the way."

"I call it deceitfulness, Thekla," said her mother decidedly.

"I trust not so, Mother! yet I have feared—"

"Time will show," said Mrs Rose, filling her moulds with the compound which was to turn out *pain d'épices*.

"Mistress Blanche, belike, showeth not what her conditions shall be," remarked Barbara.

"She is a lovesome little maid as yet," said Mrs Tremayne. "Mefeareth she shall be spoiled as she groweth toward womanhood, both with praising of her beauty and too much indulging of her fantasies."

"And now, what say you to Master Jack?" demanded Barbara in some trepidation. "Is he like to play ugsome (ugly, disagreeable) tricks on Mrs Clare, think you?"

"Jack—ah, poor Jack!" replied Mrs Tremayne.

Barbara looked up in some surprise. Jack seemed to her a most unlikely subject for the compassionate ejaculation.

"And dost thou marvel that I say, 'Poor Jack'? It is because I have known men of his conditions aforetime, and I have

ever noted that either they do go fast to wrack, or else they be set in the hottest furnace of God's disciplining. I know not which shall be the way with Jack. But how so,—poor Jack!"

"But what deem you his conditions, in very deed?"

"Why, there is not a soul in all the village that loveth not Jack, and I might well-nigh say, not one that hath not holpen him at some pinch, whereto his reckless ways have brought him. If the lacings of satin ribbon be gone from Mistress Rachel's best gown, and the cat be found with them tied all delicately around her paws and neck, and her very tail,—'tis Jack hath done it. If Margaret go about with a paper pinned to the tail of her gown, importing that she is a thief and a traitor to the Queen's Highness,—'tis Jack hath pinned it on when she saw him not. If some rare book from Sir Thomas his library be found all open on the garden walk, wet and ruined,—'tis Jack. If Mistress Rachel be a-stepping into her bed, and find the sheets and blankets all awry, so that she cannot compass it till all is pulled in pieces and turned aright, she hath no doubt to say, 'tis Jack. And yet once I say, Poor Jack! If he be to come unto good, mefeareth the furnace must needs be heated fiercely. Yet after all, what am I, that I should say it? God hath a thousand ways to fetch His lost sheep home."

"But is he verily ill-natured?"

"Nay, in no wise. He hath as tender a heart as any lad ever I saw. I have known him to weep bitterly over aught that hath touched his heart. Trust me, while I cast no doubt he shall play many a trick on little Clare, yet no sooner shall he see her truly sorrowful thereat, than Jack shall turn comforter, nor go not an inch further."

Barbara was beginning another question, of which she had plenty more to ask, when she saw that the clock pointed to a quarter to eleven, which was dinner-time at Enville Court. There was barely time to reach the house, and she took leave hastily, declining Mrs Tremayne's invitation to stay and dine at the parsonage.

When she entered the hall, she found the household already assembled, and the sewers bringing in a smoking baron of beef. At the upper end Lady Enville was delicately arranging the folds of her crimson satin dress; the little girls were already seated; and Mistress Rachel, with brown holland apron and cuffs, stood with a formidable carving-knife in her hand, ready to begin an attack upon the beef. The carving was properly Lady Enville's prerogative; but as with all things which gave her trouble, she preferred to delegate it to her sister-in-law.

Sir Thomas came in late, and said grace hastily. The Elizabethan grace was not limited to half-a-dozen words. It took about as long as family prayers usually do now. Jack, in his usual style, came scampering in just when grace was finished.

"Good sooth! I have had such discourse with Master Tremayne," said Sir Thomas. "He hath the strangest fantasies. Only look you—"

"A shive of beef, Sister?" interpolated Rachel, who had no notion of allowing the theoretical to take precedence of the practical.

Lady Enville languidly declined anything so gross as beef. She would take a little—very little—of the venison pasty.

"I'll have beef, Aunt!" put in unseasonable Jack.

"Wilt thou have manners?" severely returned Rachel.

"Where shall I find them, Aunt?" coolly inquired Jack, letting his eyes rove about among the dishes. "May I help you likewise?"

"Behave thyself, Jack!" said his father, laughing.

The rebuke was neutralised by the laughter. Rachel went on carving in dignified silence.

"Would you think it?" resumed Sir Thomas, when everybody was helped, and conversation free to flow. "Master Tremayne doth conceive that we Christian folk be meant to learn somewhat from those ancient Jews that did wander about with Moses in the wilderness. Ne'er heard I no such a fantasy. To conceive that we can win knowledge from the rotten old observances of those Jew rascals! Verily, this passeth!"

"Beats the Dutch, Sir!" said incorrigible Jack.

Note 1. All members of the Enville family and household are fictitious persons.

Chapter Three.

Breakers Ahead.

"Our treasures moth and rust corrupt:
Or thieves break through and steal; or they
Make themselves wings and fly away.
One man made merry as he supped,
Nor guessed how, when that night grew dim,
His soul should be required of him."

Eleven years had passed away since the events of the previous chapters, and in the room where we first saw her, Rachel Enville sat with the four girls around her. Little girls no longer,—young ladies now; for the youngest, Blanche, was not far from her fifteenth birthday. Margaret—now a young woman of four-and-twenty, and only not married because her betrothed was serving with the army of occupation in the Netherlands—was very busily spinning; Lucrece—a graceful maiden of twenty-two, not strictly handsome, but possessed of an indescribable fascination which charmed all who saw her—sat with her eyes bent down on her embroidery; Clare—seventeen, gentle, and unobtrusive—was engaged in plain sewing; and Blanche,—well, what was Blanche doing? She sat in the deep window-seat, her lap full of spring flowers, idly taking up now one, and now another,—weaving a few together as if she meant to make a wreath,—then suddenly abandoning the idea and gathering them into a nosegay,—then throwing that aside and dreamily plunging both hands into the fragrant mass. Blanche had developed into a very pretty picture,—lovelier than Lady Enville, whom she resembled in feature.

“Blanche!” said her aunt suddenly.

Blanche looked up as if startled. Rachel had changed little. Time had stiffened, not softened, both her program and her prejudices.

“What dost thou?” she demanded.

“Oh! I—well—I know not what I did, Aunt Rachel. I was thinking, I reckon.”

“And where were thy thoughts?” was the next searching query.

Blanche smelt at her flowers, coloured, laughed, and ended by saying lightly, “I scantily know, Aunt.”

“Then the sooner thou callest them to order, the better. She must needs be an idle jade that wits not whereof she thinketh.”

“Well, if you must needs know, Aunt Rachel,” said Blanche, laughing again, and just a trifle saucily, “I thought about —being wed.”

“Fie for shame!” was the prompt comment on this confession. “What hast thou to do withal, till thy father and mother bid thee?”

“Why, that is even what I thought, Aunt Rachel,” said Blanche coolly, “and I would I had more to do withal. I would fain choose mine own servant.” (Suitor.)

“Thou!—Poor babe!” was the contemptuous rejoinder.

“Well, Aunt Rachel, you wot a woman must be wed.”

“That’s a man’s notion!” said Rachel in her severest manner. “Blanche, I do marvel greatly that thou hast not more womanfulness than so. A woman must be wed, quotha! Who saith it? Some selfish man, I warrant, that thought women were create into the world for none other cause but to be his serving-maids!”

“I am sure I know not wherefore we were create,” muttered Blanche, loud enough for her sisters to hear but not her Aunt.

Rachel stopped her carding. She saw a first-rate opening for a lecture, and on her own special pet topic.

“Maidens, I would fain have you all list me heedfully. Prithee, take not up, none of you, with men’s notions. To wit, that a woman must needs be wed, and that otherwise she is but half a woman, and the like foolery. Nay, verily; for when she is wed she is no more at all a woman, but only the half of a man, and is shorn of all her glory. Wit ye all what marriage truly meaneth? It is to be a slave, and serve a man at his beck, all the days of thy life. A maid is her own queen, and may do as it like her—”

“Would I might!” said Blanche under her breath.

“But a wife must needs search out her lord’s pleasure.”

“Or make him search out hers,” boldly interposed Blanche.

“Child, lay thou down forthwith that foolish fantasy,” returned Rachel with great solemnity. “So long time as that thing man is not sure of thee, he is the meekest mannered beast under the sun. He will promise thee all thy desire whatsoever. But once give leave unto thy finger to be rounded by that golden ring the which he holdeth out to thee, and where be all his promises? Marry, thou mayest whistle for them,—ay, and weep.”

Rachel surely had no intention of bringing her lecture to a close so early; but at this point it was unfortunately—or, as Blanche thought, fortunately—interrupted. A girl of nineteen came noiselessly into the room, carrying a small basket of early cherries. She made no attempt to announce herself; she was too much at home at Enville Court to stand on ceremony. Coming up to Rachel, she stooped down and kissed her, setting the basket on a small table by her side.

“Ah, Lysken Barnevelt! Thou art welcome. What hast brought yonder, child?”

“Only cherries, Mistress Rachel:—our early white-hearts, which my Lady loveth, and Aunt Thekla sent me hither with the first ripe.”

"Wherefore many thanks and hearty, to her and thee. Sit thee down, Lysken: thou art in good time for four-hours. Hast brought thy work?"

Lysken pulled out of her pocket a little roll of brown holland, which, when unrolled, proved to be a child's pinafore, destined for the help of some poverty-stricken mother; and in another minute she was seated at work like the rest. And while Lysken works, let us look at her.

A calm, still-faced girl is this, with smooth brown hair, dark eyes, a complexion nearly colourless, a voice low, clear, but seldom heard, and small delicate hands, at once quick and quiet. A girl that has nothing to say for herself,—is the verdict of most surface observers who see her: a girl who has nothing in her,—say a few who consider themselves penetrating judges of character. Nearly all think that the Reverend Robert Tremayne's partiality has outrun his judgment, for he says that his adopted daughter thinks more than is physically good for her. A girl who can never forget the siege of Leyden: never forget the dead mother, whose latest act was to push the last fragment of malt-cake towards her starving child; never forget the martyr-father burnt at Ghent by the Regent Alva, who boasted to his master, Philip of Spain, that during his short regency he had executed eighteen thousand persons,—of course, heretics. Quiet, thoughtful, silent,—how could Lysken Barnevelt be anything else?

A rap came at the door.

"Mistress Rachel, here's old Lot's wife. You'll happen come and see her?" inquired Jennet, putting only her head in at the door.

"I will come to the hall, Jennet."

Jennet's head nodded and retreated. Rachel followed her.

"How doth Aunt Rachel snub us maids!" said Blanche lazily, clasping her hands behind her head. "She never had no man to make suit unto her, so she accounteth we may pass us (do without) belike."

"Who told thee so much?" asked Margaret bluntly.

"I lacked no telling," rejoined Blanche. "But I say, maids!—whom were ye all fainest to wed?—What manner of man, I mean."

"I am bounden already," said Margaret calmly. "An' mine husband leave me but plenty of work to do, he may order him otherwise according to his liking."

"Work! thou art alway for work!" remonstrated ease-loving Blanche.

"For sure. What were men and women made for, if not work?"

"Nay, that Aunt Rachel asked of me, and I have not yet solute (solved) the same.—Clare, what for thee?"

"I have no thought thereanent, Blanche. God will dispose of me."

"Why, so might a nun say.—Lysken, and thou?"

Lysken showed rather surprised eyes when she lifted her head. "What questions dost thou ask, Blanche! How wit I if I shall ever marry? I rather account nay."

"Ye be a pair of nuns, both of you!" said Blanche, laughing, yet in a slightly annoyed tone. "Now, Lucrece, thou art of the world, I am well assured. Answer me roundly,—not after the manner of these holy sisters,—whom wert thou fainest to wed?"

"A gentleman of high degree," returned Lucrece, readily.

"Say a king, while thou goest about it," suggested her eldest sister.

"Well, so much the better," was Lucrece's cool admission.

"So much the worse, to my thinking," said Margaret. "Would I by my good-will be a queen, and sit all day with my hands in my lap, a-toying with the virginals, and fluttering of my fan,—and my heaviest concernment whether I will wear on the morrow my white velvet gown guarded with sables, or my black satin furred with minever? By my troth, nay!"

"Is that thy fantasy of a queen, Meg?" asked Clare, laughing. "Truly, I had thought the poor lady should have heavier concernments than so."

"Well!" said Blanche, in a confidential whisper, "I am never like to be a queen; but I will show you one thing,—I would right dearly love to be presented in the Queen's Majesty's Court."

"Dear heart!—Presented, quotha!" exclaimed Margaret. "Prithee, take not me withal."

"Nay, I will take these holy sisters," said Blanche, merrily. "What say ye, Clare and Lysken?"

"I have no care to be in the Court, I thank thee," quietly replied Clare.

"I shall be, some day," observed Lysken, calmly, without lifting her head.

"Thou!—presented in the Court!" cried Blanche.

For of all the five, girls, Lysken was much the most unlikely ever to attain that eminence.

"Even so," she said, unmoved.

"Hast thou had promise thereof?"

"I have had promise thereof," repeated Lysken, in a tone which was lost upon Blanche, but Clare thought she began to understand her.

"Who hath promised thee?" asked Blanche, intensely interested.

"The King!" replied Lysken, with deep feeling. "And I shall be the King's daughter!"

"Lysken Barnevelt!" cried Blanche, dropping many of her flowers in her excitement, "art thou gone clean wood (mad), or what meanest thou?"

Lysken looked up with a smile full of meaning.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,—to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty.'—Do but think,—faultless! and, before His glory!"

Lysken's eyes were alight in a manner very rare with her. She was less shy with her friends at Enville Court than with most people.

"So that is what thou wert thinking on!" said Blanche, in a most deprecatory manner.

Lysken did not reply; but Clare whispered to her, "I would we might all be presented there, Lysken."

While the young ladies were thus engaged in debate, and Rachel was listening to the complaints of old Lot's wife from the village, and gravely considering whether the said Lot's rheumatism would be the better for a basin of viper broth,—Sir Thomas Enville, who was strolling in the garden, perceived two riders coming up to the house. They were evidently a gentleman and his attendant serving-man, and as soon as they approached near enough for recognition, Sir Thomas hurried quickly to meet them. The Lord Strange, heir of Lathom and Knowsley, must not be kept waiting.

Only about thirty years had passed over the head of Ferdinand Stanley, Lord Strange, yet his handsome features wore an expression of the deepest melancholy. People who were given to signs and auguries said that it presaged an early and violent death. And when, eight years later, after only one year's tenancy of the earldom of Derby, he died of a rapid, terrible, and mysterious disease, strange to all the physicians who saw him, the augurs, though a little disappointed that he was not beheaded, found their consolation in the conviction that he had been undoubtedly bewitched. His father, Earl Henry, seems to have been a cool, crafty time-server, who had helped to do the Duke of Somerset to death, more than thirty years before, and one of whose few good actions was his intercession with Bishop Bonner in favour of his kinsman, the martyr Roger Holland. His mother was the great heiress Margaret Clifford, who had inherited, before she was fifteen years of age, one-third of the estates of Duke Charles of Suffolk, the wealthiest man in England.

"Save you, my good Lord!" was Sir Thomas's greeting. "You be right heartily welcome unto my poor house."

"I have seen poorer," replied Lord Strange with a smile.

"Pray your Lordship, go within."

After a few more amenities, in the rather ponderous style of the sixteenth century, Sir Thomas ceremoniously conducted his guest to Lady Enville's boudoir. She sat, resplendent in blue satin slashed with yellow, turning over some ribbons which Barbara Polwhele was displaying for her inspection. The ribbons were at once dismissed when the noble visitor appeared, and Barbara was desired to "do the thing she wot of in the little chamber."

The little chamber was a large, light closet, opening out of the boudoir, with a window looking on the garden; and the doorway between the rooms was filled by a green curtain. Barbara's work was to make up into shoulder-knots certain lengths of ribbon already put aside for that purpose. While the speakers, therefore, were to her invisible, their conversation was as audible as if she had been in the boudoir.

"And what news abroad, my good Lord?" asked Sir Thomas, when the usual formal civilities were over.

"Very ill news," said Lord Strange, sadly.

"Pray your Lordship, what so? We hear none here, lying so far from the Queen's highway."

"What heard you the last?"

"Well, methinks it were some strange matter touching the Scottish Queen, as though she should be set to trial on charge of some matter of knowledge of Babington's treason."

Sir Thomas's latest news, therefore, was about seven months old. There were no daily papers and Reuter's telegrams in his day.

"Good Sir Thomas, you have much to hear," replied his guest. "For the Scottish Queen, she is dead and buried,—

beheaden at Fotheringay Castle, in Yorkshire, these three months gone."

"Gramercy!"

"'Tis very true, I do ensure you. And would God that were the worst news I could tell you!"

"Pray your Lordship, speak quickly."

"There be afloat strange things of private import:—to wit, of my kinsman the Earl of Arundel, who, as 'tis rumoured, shall this next month be tried by the Star Chamber, and, as is thought, if he 'scape with life, shall be heavily charged in goods (Note 1): or the Black Assize at Exeter this last year, whereby, through certain Portugals that were prisoners on trial, the ill smells did so infect the Court, (Note 2) that many died thereof—of the common people very many, and divers men of worship,—among other Sir John Chichester of Raleigh, that you and I were wont to know, and Sir Arthur Basset of Umberleigh—"

Barbara Polwhele heard no more for a while. The name that had been last mentioned meant, to Lord Strange and Sir Thomas, the head of a county family of Devonshire, a gentleman of first-class blood. But to her it meant not only the great-grandson of Edward the Fourth, and the heir of the ruined House of Lisle,—but the bright-faced boy who, twenty-seven years before, used to flash in and out of John Avery's house in the Minories,—bringing "Aunt Philippa's loving commendations," or news that "Aunt Bridget looketh this next week to be in the town, and will be rare fain to see Mistress Avery:"—the boy who had first seen the light at Calais, on the very threshold of the family woe—and who, to the Averys, and to Barbara, as their retainer, was the breathing representative of all the dead Plantagenets. As to the Tudors,—the Queen's Grace, of course, was all that was right and proper, a brave lady and true Protestant; and long might God send her to rule over England!—but the Tudors, apart from Elizabeth personally, were— Hush! in 1587 it was perilous to say all one thought. So for some minutes Lord Strange's further news was unheard in the little chamber. A pathetic vision filled it, of a night in which there would be dole at Umberleigh, when the coffin of Sir Arthur Basset was borne to the sepulchre of his fathers in Atherington Church. (Note 3.) He was not yet forty-six. "God save and comfort Mistress Philippa!"

For, eldest-born and last-surviving of her generation, in a green old age, Philippa Basset was living still. Time had swept away all the gallant brothers and fair sisters who had once been her companions at Umberleigh: the last to die, seven years before, being the eloquent orator, George. Yet Philippa lived on,—an old maiden lady, with heart as warm, and it must be confessed, with tongue as sharp, as in the days of her girlhood. Time had mellowed her slightly, but had changed nothing in her but one—for many years had passed now since Philippa was heard to sneer at Protestantism. She never confessed to any alteration in her views; perhaps she was hardly conscious of it, so gradually had it grown upon her. Only those perceived it who saw her seldom: and the signs were very minute. A passing admission that "may-be folk need not all be Catholics to get safe up yonder"—meaning, of course, to Heaven; an absence of the set lips and knitted brows which had formerly attended the reading of the English Scriptures in church; a courteous reception of the Protestant Rector; a capability of praying morning and evening without crucifix or rosary; a quiet dropping of crossings and holy water, oaths by our Lady's merits and Saint Peter's hosen: a general calm acquiescence in the new order of things. But how much did it mean? Only that her eyes were becoming accustomed to the light?—or that age had weakened her prejudices?—or that God had touched her heart?

Some such thoughts were passing through Barbara's mind, when Lord Strange's voice reached her understanding again.

"I ensure you 'tis said in the Court that his grief for the beheading of the Scots Queen is but a blind, (Note 4) and that these two years gone and more hath King Philip been making ready his galleons for to invade the Queen's Majesty's dominions. And now they say that we may look for his setting forth this next year. Sir Francis Drake is gone by Her Highness' command to the Spanish main, there to keep watch and bring word; and he saith he will singe the Don's whiskers ere he turn again. Yet he may come, for all belike."

The singeing of the Don's whiskers was effected soon after, by the burning of a hundred ships of war in the harbour of Cadiz.

"Why, not a man in England but would turn out to defend the Queen and country!" exclaimed Sir Thomas.

"Here is one that so will, Sir, by your leave," said another voice.

We may peep behind the green curtain, though Barbara did not. That elegant young man with such finished manners—surely he can never be our old and irrepressible friend Jack? Ay, Jack and no other; more courtly, but as irrepressible as ever.

"We'll be ready for him!" said Sir Thomas grimly.

"Amen!" was Jack's contribution, precisely in the treble tones of the parish clerk. The imitation was so perfect that even the grave Lord Strange could not suppress a smile.

"Shall I get thee a company, Jack Enville?"

"Pray do so, my good Lord. I thank your Lordship heartily."

"Arthur Tremayne is set on going, if it come to hot water—as seemeth like enough."

"Arthur Tremayne is a milksop, my Lord! I marvel what he means to do. His brains are but addled eggs—all stuffed with Latin and Greek."

Jack, of course, like the average country gentleman of his time, was a profound ignoramus. What knowledge had

been drilled into him in boyhood, he had since taken pains to forget. He was familiar with the punctilio of duelling, the code of regulations for fencing, the rules of athletic sports, and the intricacies of the gaming-table; but anything which he dubbed contemptuously "book-learning," he considered as far beneath him as it really was above.

"He will be as good for the Spaniards to shoot at as any other," jocularly observed Sir Thomas.

"Then pray you, let Lysken Barnevelt go!" said Jack soberly. "I warrant you she'll stand fire, and never so much as ruffle her hair."

"Well, I heard say Dame Mary Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, that an' the men beat not back the Spaniards, the women should fight them with their bodkins; wherewith Her Highness was so well pleased that she dubbed the dame a knight then and there. My wife saith, an' it come to that, she will be colonel of a company of archers of Lancashire. We will have Mistress Barnevelt a lieutenant in her company."

"My sister Margaret would make a good lieutenant, my Lord," suggested Jack. "We'll send Aunt Rachel to the front, with a major's commission, and Clare shall be her adjutant. As for Blanche, she may stand behind the baggage and screech. She is good for nought else, but she'll do that right well."

"For shame, lad!" said Sir Thomas, laughing.

"I heard her yesterday, Sir,—the occasion, a spider but half the size of a pin head."

"What place hast thou for me?" inquired Lady Enville, delicately applying a scented handkerchief to her fastidious nose.

"My dear Madam!" said Jack, bowing low, "you shall be the trumpeter sent to give challenge unto the Spanish commandant. If he strike not his colours in hot haste upon sight of you, then is he no gentleman."

Lady Enville sat fanning herself in smiling complacency, No flattery could be too transparent to please her.

"I pray your Lordship, is any news come touching Sir Richard Grenville, and the plantation which he strave to make in the Queen's Highness' country of Virginia?" asked Sir Thomas.

Barbara listened again with interest. Sir Richard Grenville was a Devonshire knight, and a kinsman of Sir Arthur Basset.

"Ay,—Roanoke, he called it, after the Indian name. Why, it did well but for a time, and then went to wrack. But I do hear that he purposeth for to go forth yet again, trusting this time to speed better."

"What good in making plantations in Virginia?" demanded Jack, loftily. "A wild waste, undwelt in save by savages, and many weeks' voyage from this country,—what gentleman would ever go to dwell there?"

"May-be," said Lord Strange thoughtfully, "when the husbandmen that shall go first have made it somewhat less rough, gentlemen may be found to go and dwell there."

"Why, Jack, lad! This country is not all the world," observed his father.

"'Tis all of it worth anything, Sir," returned insular Jack.

"Thy broom sweepeth clean, Jack," responded Lord Strange. "What, is nought worth in France, nor in Holland,—let be the Emperor's dominions, and Spain, and Italy?"

"They be all foreigners, my Lord. And what better are foreigners than savages? They be all Papists, to boot."

"Not in Almayne, Jack,—nor in Holland."

"Well, they speak no English," said prejudiced Jack.

"That is a woeful lack," gravely replied Lord Strange. "Specially when you do consider that English was the tongue that Noah spake afore the flood, and the confusion of tongues at Babel."

Jack knew just enough to have a dim perception that Lord Strange was laughing at him. He got out of the difficulty by turning the conversation.

"Well, thus much say I: let the King of Spain come when he will, and where, at every point of the coast there shall be an Englishman awaiting—and we will drive him home thrice faster than he came at the first."

Note 1. He was fined 10,000 pounds for contempt of court. What his real offences were remains doubtful, beyond the fact that he was a Papist, and had married against the will of the Queen.

Note 2. The state of the gaols at this time, and for long afterwards, until John Howard effected his reformation of them, was simply horrible. The Black Assize at Exeter was by no means the only instance of its land.

Note 3. I stated in *Robin Tremayne* that I had not been able to discover the burial-place of Honor Viscountess Lisle. Since that time, owing to the kindness of correspondents, personally unknown to me, I have ascertained that she was probably buried at Atherington, with her first husband, Sir John Basset. In that church his brass still remains—a knight between two ladies—the coats of arms plainly showing that the latter are Anne Dennis of Oxleigh and Honor Granville of Stow. But the Register contains no entry of burial previous to 1570.

Note 4. In the custody of the (Popish) Bishop of Southwark is a quarto volume, containing, under date of Rome, April 28, 1588,—“An admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland, concerning the present warres made *for the execution of His Holiness’ sentence*, by the highe and mightie King Catholicke of Spaine: by the Cardinal of England.” (Cardinal Allen.)—(Third Report of Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts, page 233).

Chapter Four.

The Invincible Armada.

“His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain Baptised her fleet Invincible in vain; Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resigned To every pang that racks an anxious mind, Asked of the waves that broke upon his coast, ‘What tidings?’—and the surge replied,—‘All lost!’”

Cowper.

King Philip of Spain was coming at last. Every Englishman—ay, and every woman and child in England—knew that now.

When Drake returned home from “singeing the Don’s whiskers,” he told his royal mistress that he believed the Spaniards would attempt serious invasion ere long. But Elizabeth then laughed the idea to scorn.

“They are not so ill-advised. But if they do come”—and Her Majesty added her favourite oath—“I and my people will send them packing!”

The Queen took measures to prepare her subjects accordingly, whether she thought the invasion likely or not. All the clergy in the kingdom were ordered to “manifest unto their congregations the furious purpose of the Spanish King.” There was abundant tinder ready for this match: for the commonalty were wider awake to the danger than either Queen or Council. The danger is equal now, and more insidious—from Rome, though not from Spain—but alas! the commonalty are sleeping.

Lord Henry Seymour was sent off to guard the seas, and to intercept intercourse between Spain and her Flemish ports. The Earl of Leicester was appointed honorary commander-in-chief, with an army of 23,000 foot and 2352 horse, for the defence of the royal person: Lord Hunsdon, with 11,000 foot more, and 15,000 horse, was sent to keep guard over the metropolis; and Charles Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England, was appointed to conduct the naval defence.

It is the popular belief that Lord Howard was a Papist. He certainly was a Protestant at a later period of his life; and though it is doubtful whether positive evidence can be found to show his religious views at the time of the invasion, yet there is reason to believe that the popular idea is supported only by tradition. (See Appendix.)

Tilbury, on the Thames, was chosen as the rendezvous for the land forces. The Queen removed to Havering, which lay midway between her two armies. It was almost, if not quite, the last time that an English sovereign ever inhabited the old Saxon palace of Havering-atte-Bower.

The ground around Tilbury was surveyed, trenches cut, Gravesend fortified, and (taking pattern from Antwerp) a bridge of boats was laid across the Thames, to stop the passage of the river. Calculations were made as to the amount requisite to meet the Armada, and five thousand men, with fifteen ships, were demanded from the city of London. The Lord Mayor asked two days for consideration, and then requested that the Queen would accept ten thousand men and thirty ships. The Dutch came into the Thames with sixty sail—generous friends, who forgot in England’s hour of need that she had, only sixteen years before, refused even bread and shelter in her harbours to their “Beggars of the Sea.” Noblemen joined the army and navy as volunteers, and in the ranks there were no pressed men. There was one heart in all the land, from Berwick to the Lizard.

Lastly, a prayer was issued, to be used in all churches throughout the kingdom, every Wednesday and Friday. But ecclesiastical dignitaries were not called upon to write it. The Defender of the Faith herself drew up the form, in a plain, decided style, which shows that she could write lucidly when she liked it. This was Elizabeth’s prayer.

“We do instantly beseech Thee of Thy gracious goodness to be merciful to the Church militant here upon earth, and at this time compassed about with most strong and subtle adversaries. Oh let Thine enemies know that Thou hast received England, which they most of all for Thy Gospel’s sake do malign, into Thine own protection. Set a wall about it, O Lord, and evermore mightily defend it. Let it be a comfort to the afflicted, a help to the oppressed, and a defence to Thy Church and people, persecuted abroad. And forasmuch as this cause is new in hand, direct and go before our armies both by sea and land. Bless them, and prosper them, and grant unto them Thine honourable success and victory. Thou art our help and shield. Oh give good and prosperous success to all those that fight this battle against the enemies of Thy Gospel.” (Strype.)

So England was ready.

But Philip was ready too. He also, in his fashion, had been preparing his subjects for work. Still maintaining an outward appearance of friendship with Elizabeth, he quietly spread among his own people copies of his pedigree, wherein he represented himself as the true heir to the crown of England, by descent from his ancestresses Philippa and Katherine of Lancaster: ignoring the facts—that, though the heir general of Katherine, he was not so of her elder sister Philippa; and that if he had been, the law which would have made these two sisters heiresses presumptive had been altered while they were children. Beyond this piece of subtlety, Philip allied himself with the Duke of Parma in Italy, and the Duke of Guise (Note 1) in France; the plot being that the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Commander-in-chief

of the Armada, was to sail first for Flanders, and take his orders from Parma: Guise was to land in the west of England: some other leader, with 12,000 men, in Yorkshire: while Philip himself, under shelter of the Armada, was to effect his landing in Kent or Essex. Ireland was looked upon as certain to revolt and assist. Parma harangued the troops destined to join the invading force from Flanders, informing them that the current coin in England was gold, only the very poorest using silver; the houses were full of money, plate, jewellery, and wealth in all shapes.

It is well to remember that England was no strange, unexplored land, at least to the higher officers of the Armada. Philip himself had been King of England for four years: the courtiers in his suite had lived there for months together. Their exclamation on first journeying from the coast to Winchester, twenty-three years before, had been that "the poor of this land dwelt in hovels, and fared like princes!" They had not forgotten it now.

Lord Howard took up his station at Plymouth, whence he purposed to intercept the Armada as it came; Sir Francis Drake was sent to the west with sixty-five vessels. But time passed on, and no Armada came. The English grew secure and careless. Many ships left the fleet, some making for the Irish coast, some harbouring in Wales. The Queen herself, annoyed at the needless cost, sent word to Lord Howard to disband four of the largest vessels of the royal navy. The Admiral disobeyed, and paid the expenses out of his own purse. England ought to bless the memory of Charles Howard of Effingham.

It was almost a shock when—suddenly, at last—Philip's ultimatum came. Spain demanded three points from England: and if her demands were not complied with, there was no resource but war.

1. The Queen must promise to withdraw all aid from the Protestants in the Netherlands.
2. She must give back the treasure seized, by Drake the year before.
3. She must restore the Roman Catholic religion throughout England, as it had been before the Reformation.

The first and second clauses would have been of little import in Elizabeth's eye's, except as they implied her yielding to dictation; the real sting lay in the last. And the last was the one which Philip would be most loth to yield. With a touch of grim humour, His Catholic Majesty sent his ultimatum in Latin verse.

The royal lioness of England rose from her throne to return her answer, with a fiery Plantagenet flash in her eyes. She could play at Latin verse quite as well as Philip; rather better, indeed,—for his question required some dozen lines, and one was sufficient for her answer.

"Ad Graecas, (Note 2) bone Rex, fient mandata kalendas!" was the prompt reply of England's Elizabeth.

Which may be rendered—preserving the fun—

"Great King, thy command shall be done right soon,
On the thirty-first day of the coming June."

Some knowledge of the terrible magnitude of Philip's preparations is necessary, in order to see what it was which England escaped in 1588. The Armada consisted of 134 ships, and, reckoning soldiers, sailors, and galley-slaves, carried about 32,000 men. (The exact figures are much disputed, hardly two accounts being alike.) The cost of sustenance per day was thirty thousand ducats. The cannon and field-pieces were unnumbered: the halberts were ten thousand, the muskets seven thousand. Bread, biscuits, and wine, were laid in for six months, with twelve thousand pipes of fresh water. The cargo—among many other items—consisted of whips and knives, for the conversion of the English; and doubtless Don Martin Alorcon, Vicar-General of the Inquisition, with one hundred monks and Jesuits in his train may be classed under the same head. Heresy was to be destroyed throughout England: Sir Francis Drake was singled out for special vengeance. The Queen was to be taken alive, at all costs: she was to be sent prisoner over the Alps to Rome, there to make her humble petition to the Pope, barefoot and prostrate, that England might be re-admitted to communion with the Holy See. Did Philip imagine that any amount of humiliation or coercion would have wrung such words as these from the lips of Elizabeth Tudor?

On the 19th of May, the Invincible Armada, as the Spaniards proudly termed it, sailed from Lisbon for Corufia.

The English Fleet lay in the harbour at Plymouth. The Admiral's ship was the "Ark Royal;" Drake commanded the "Revenge;" the other principal vessels were named the "Lion," the "Bear," the "Elizabeth Jonas," the "Galleon Leicester," and the "Victory." They lay still in port waiting for the first north wind, which did not come until the eighth of July. Then Lord Howard set sail and went southwards for some distance; but the wind changed to the south, the fleet was composed entirely of sailing vessels, and the Admiral was afraid to go too far, lest the Armada should slip past him in the night, between England and her wooden walls. So he put back to Plymouth.

If he had only known the state of affairs, he would not have done so. He had been almost within sight of the Armada, which was at that moment broken and scattered, having met with a terrific storm in the Bay of Biscay. Eight ships were driven to a distance, three galleys cast away on the French coast; where the galley-slaves rebelled, headed by a Welsh prisoner named David Gwyn. Medina regained Coruña with some difficulty, gathered his shattered vessels, repaired damages, and put to sea again on the eleventh of July. They made haste this time. Eight days' hard rowing brought them within sight of England.

A blazing sun, and a strong south-west gale, inaugurated the morning of the nineteenth of July. The fleet lay peacefully moored in Plymouth Sound, all unconscious and unprophetic of what the day was to bring forth: some of the officers engaged in calculating chances of future battle, some eagerly debating home politics, some idly playing cards or backgammon. These last averred that they had nothing to do. They were not destined to make that complaint much longer.

At one end of the quarter-deck of Drake's ship, the "Revenge," was a group of three young officers, of whom two at least were not much more profitably employed than those who were playing cards in the "Ark Royal." They were all volunteers, and the eldest of the three was but two-and-twenty. One was seated on the deck, leaning back and apparently dozing; the second stood, less sleepily, but quite as idly, beside him: the last, with folded arms, was gazing out to sea, yet discerning nothing, for his thoughts were evidently elsewhere. The second of the trio appeared to be in a musical humour, for snatches of different songs kept coming from his lips.

"We be three poor mariners,
Newly come fro' th' seas:
We spend our lives in jeopardy,
Whilst others live at ease."

"Be we?" laughed the youth who was seated on the deck, half-opening his eyes. "How much of thy life hast spent in jeopardy, Jack Enville?"

"How much? Did not I once fall into the sea from a rock?—and was well-nigh drowned ere I could be fished out. More of my life than thine, Master Robert Basset."

In something like the sense of Thekla Tremayne's "Poor Jack!" I pause to say, Poor Robert Basset! He was the eldest son of the deceased Sir Arthur. He had inherited the impulsive, generous heart, and the sensitive, nervous temperament, of his ancestor Lord Lisle, unchecked by the accompanying good sense and sober judgment which had balanced those qualities in the latter. Hot-headed, warm-hearted, liberal to extravagance, fervent to fanaticism, unable to say No to any whom he loved, loving and detesting with passionate intensity, constantly betrayed into rash acts which he regretted bitterly the next hour, possibly the next minute—this was Robert Basset. Not the same character as Jack Enville, but one just as likely to go to wreck early,—to dash itself wildly on the breakers, and be broken.

"Thou art alive enough now," said Basset. "But how knowest that I never fell from a rock into the sea?"

Jack answered by a graceful flourish of his hands, and a stave of another song.

"There's never a maid in all this town
But she knows that malt's come down, -
Malt's come down,—malt's come down,
From an old angel to a French crown."

"I would it were," said Basset, folding his arms beneath his head. "I am as dry as a hornblower."

"That is with blowing of thine own trumpet," responded Jack. "I say, Tremayne! Give us thy thoughts for a silver penny."

"Give me the penny first," answered the meditative officer.

"Haven't an obolus," (halfpenny) confessed Jack.

"The cramp is in my purse full sore,
No money will bide therein—"

"Another time," observed Arthur Tremayne, "chaffer (deal in trade) not till thou hast wherewith to pay for the goods."

"I am a gentleman, not a chapman," (a retail tradesman) said Jack, superciliously.

"Could a man not be both?"

"Tis not possible," returned Jack, with an astonished look. "How should a chapman bear coat armour?"

"I reckon, though, he had fathers afore him," said Basset, with his eyes shut.

"Nought but common men," said Jack, with sovereign contempt.

"And ours were uncommon men—there is all the difference," retorted Basset.

"Yours were, in very deed," said Jack obsequiously.

This was, in truth, the entire cause of Jack's desire for Basset's friendship. The latter, poor fellow! imagined that he was influenced by personal regard.

"Didst think I had forgot it?" replied Basset, smiling.

"Ah! if I had but thy lineage!" answered Jack.

"Thine own is good enough, I cast no doubt. And I dare say Tremayne's is worth something, if we could but win him to open his mouth thereon."

Jack's look was one of complete incredulity.

Arthur neither moved nor spoke.

"Hold thou thy peace, Jack Enville," said Basset, answering the look, for Jack had not uttered a word. "What should a

Lancashire lad know of the Tremaynes of Tremayne? I know somewhat thereanent.—Are you not of that line?" he asked, turning his head towards Arthur.

"Ay, the last of the line," said the latter quietly.

"I thought so much. Then you must be somewhat akin unto Sir Richard Grenville of Stow?"

"Somewhat—not over near," answered Arthur, modestly.

"Forty-seventh cousin," suggested Jack, not over civilly.

"And to Courtenay of Powderham,—what?"

"Courtenay!" broke in Jack. "What! he that, but for the attainder, should be Earl of Devon?"

"He," responded Basset, a little mischievously, "that cometh in a right line from the Kings of France, and (through women) from the Emperors of Constantinople."

"What kin art thou to him?" demanded Jack, surveying his old playmate from head to foot, with a sensation of respect which he had never felt for him before.

"My father's mother and his mother were sisters, I take it," said Arthur.

"Arthur Tremayne, how cometh it I never heard this afore?"

"I cannot tell, Jack: thou didst never set me on recounting of my pedigree, as I remember."

"But wherefore not tell the same?"

"What matter?" quietly responded Arthur.

"'What matter'—whether I looked on thee as a mere parson's son, with nought in thine head better than Greek and Latin, or as near kinsman of one with very purple blood in him,—one that should be well-nigh Premier Earl of England, but for an attainder?"

Arthur passed by the slight offered alike to his father's profession and to the classics, merely replying with a smile,—"I am glad if it give thee pleasure to know it."

"But tell me, prithee, with such alliance, what on earth caused Master Tremayne to take to parsonry?"

The contempt in which the clergy were held, for more than a hundred years after this date, was due in all probability to two causes. The first was the natural reaction from the overweening reverence anciently felt for the sacerdotal order: when the *sacerdos* was found to be but a presbyter, his charm was gone. But the second was the disgrace which had been brought upon their profession at large, by the evil lives of the old priests.

"I believe," said Arthur, gravely, "it was because he accounted the household service of God higher preferment than the nobility of men."

"Yet surely he knew how men would account of him?"

"I misdoubt if he cared for that, any more than I do, Jack Enville."

"Nor is thy mother any more than a parson's daughter."

"My father, and my mother's father," said Arthur, his eyes flashing, "were all but martyrs; for it was only the death of Queen Mary that saved either from the martyr's stake. That is my lineage, Jack Enville,—higher than Courtenay of Powderham."

"Thou must be clean wood, Arthur!" said Jack, laughing. "Why, there were poor chapmen and sely (simple) serving-maids among them that were burnt in Queen Mary's days; weavers, bricklayers, and all manner of common folk. There were rare few of any sort." (Of any consequence.)

"They be kings now, whatso they were," answered Arthur.

"There was a bishop or twain, Jack, if I mistake not," put in Basset, yawning; "and a Primate of all England, without I dreamed it."

"Go to, Jack!" pursued Arthur. "I can tell thee of divers craftsmen that were very common folk—one Peter, a fisherman, and one Paul, a tent-maker, and an handful belike—whose names shall ring down all the ages, long after men have forgotten that there ever were Courtenays or Envilles. I set the matter on thine own ground to say this."

"Stand and deliver, Jack Enville! That last word hath worsted thee," said Basset.

"I am not an orator," returned Jack, loftily. "I am a gentleman."

"Well, so am I, as I suppose, but I make not such ado thereof as thou," answered Basset.

The last word had only just escaped his lips, when Arthur Tremayne stepped suddenly to the side of the vessel.

"The Don ahead?" inquired Basset, with sleepy sarcasm.

"I cannot tell what is ahead yet," said Arthur, concentrating his gaze in an easterly direction. "But there is somewhat approaching us."

"A sea-gull," was the suggestion of Basset, with shut eyes.

"Scantly," said Arthur good-humouredly.

Half idly, half curiously, Jack brought his powers to bear on the approaching object. Basset was not sufficiently interested to move.

The object ere long revealed itself as a small vessel, rowing in all haste, and evidently anxious to reach the fleet without losing an hour. The "Revenge" stood out furthest of all the ships to eastward, and was therefore likely to receive the little vessel's news before any other. Almost before she came within speaking distance, at Arthur's request, Jack hailed her—that young gentleman being in possession of more stentorian lungs than his friend.

The captain, who replied, was gifted with vocal powers of an equally amazing order. He announced his vessel as the "Falcon," (Note 3) himself as Thomas Fleming; and his news—enough to make every ear in the fleet tingle—that "the Spaniard" had been sighted that morning off the Lizard. Arthur darted away that instant in search of Drake: Jack and Basset (both wide awake now) stayed to hear the details,—the latter excited, the former sceptical.

"'Tis all but deceiving!" sneered the incredulous Jack. "Thomas Fleming! why, who wist not that Thomas Fleming is more pirate than sea-captain, and that the 'Falcon' is well enough known for no honest craft?"

"'Fair and soft go far in a day,'" returned Basset. "What if he be a pirate? He is an Englishman. Even a known liar may speak truth."

"As if the like of him should sight the Spaniard!" retorted Jack magnificently, "when the whole fleet have scoured the seas in vain!"

"The whole fleet were not scouring the seas at three of the clock this morrow!" cried Basset, impatiently. "Hold thine idle tongue, and leave us hear the news." And he shouted with all the power of his lungs,— "What strength is he of?"

"The strength of the very devil!" Fleming roared back. "Great wooden castles, the Lord wot how many, and coming as fast as a bird flieth."

"Pish!" said Jack.

Basset was on the point of shouting another question, when Sir Francis Drake's voice came, clear and sonorous, from no great distance.

"What time shall the Don be hither?"

"By to-morrow breaketh, as like as not," was Fleming's answer.

"Now, my lads, we have work afore us," said Sir Francis, addressing his young friends. "Lieutenant Enville, see that all hands know at once,—every man to his post! Tremayne, you shall have the honour to bear the news to the Lord Admiral: and Basset, you shall fight by my side. I would fain promote you all, an' I have the chance; allgates, I give you the means to win honour, an' you wot how to use them."

All the young men expressed their acknowledgment—Jack rather fulsomely, Basset and Tremayne in a few quiet words. It was a decided advantage to Jack and Arthur to have the chance of distinguishing themselves by "a fair field and no favour." But was it any special preferment for the great-grandson of Edward the Fourth? What glory would be added to his name by "honourable mention" in Lord Howard's despatches, or maybe an additional grade in naval rank?

Did Robert Basset fail to see that?

By no means. But he was biding his time. The chivalrous generosity, which was one of the legacies of his Plantagenet forefathers, imposed silence on him for a season.

Elizabeth Tudor had shown much kindness to her kinsman, Sir Arthur Basset, and while Elizabeth lived, no Basset of Umberleigh would lift a hand against her. But no such halo surrounded her successor—whoever that yet doubtful individual might prove to be. So Robert Basset waited, and bore his humiliation calmly—all the more calmly for the very pride of blood that was in him: for no slight, no oppression, no lack of recognition, could make him other than the heir of the Plantagenets. He would be ready when the hour struck. But meanwhile he was waiting.

Fleming's news had taken everybody by surprise except one person. But that one was the Lord High Admiral.

Lord Howard quickly gathered his fleet together, and inquired into its condition. Many of the ships were poorly victualled; munition ran very short; not a vessel was to be compared for size with the "great wooden castles" which Fleming had described. The wind was south-west, and blowing hard; the very wind most favourable to the invaders.

Sir Edward Hoby, brother-in-law of the Admiral, was sent off to the Queen with urgent letters, begging that she would send more aid to the fleet, and put her land forces in immediate readiness, for "the Spaniard" was coming at last, and as fast as the wind could bring him.

Sir Edward reached Tilbury on the very day chosen by Elizabeth to review her land forces. He left the fleet making signals of distress; he found the army in triumphant excitement.

The Queen rode in from Havering on a stately charger—tradition says a white one—bearing a marshal's staff in her hand, and attired in a costume which was a singular mixture of warrior and woman,—a corslet of polished steel over an enormous farthingale. As she came near the outskirts of her army, she commanded all her retinue to fall back, only excepting Lord Ormonde, who bore the sword of state before her, and the solitary page who carried her white-plumed helmet. Coming forward to the front of Leicester's tent—the Earl himself leading her horse, bare-headed—the Queen took up her position, and, with a wave of her white-gloved hand for silence, she harangued her army.

"My loving people,"—thus spoke England's Elizabeth,—“we have been persuaded, by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourself to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I do assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself, that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects: and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live or die amongst you all,—to lay down, for my God, and for my kingdoms, and for my people, mine honour and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a King of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm: to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms,—I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already for your forwardness ye have deserved rewards and crowns: and we do assure you, on the word of a prince, they shall, be duly paid you. For the meantime, my Lieutenant General (Leicester) shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble nor worthy subject. Not doubting but, by your obedience to my General, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God, and of my kingdoms, and of my people.”

We are told that the soldiers responded unanimously—

"Is it possible that any Englishman can abandon such a glorious cause, or refuse to lay down his life in defence of this heroic Princess?"

The sentiment may be authentic, but the expression of it is modern.

The speech over, Leicester reverently held the gilt stirrup, and Elizabeth alighted from her white charger, and went into his pavilion to dinner.

Before the repast was over, Sir Edward Hoby arrived from Lord Howard. He was taken at once to the tent, that the first freshness of his news might be for the Queen's own ears. It had taken him three weeks to reach Tilbury from Plymouth. Kneeling before the Queen, he reported that he had been sent in all haste to entreat for "more aid sent to the sea," for Medina was known to be coming, and that quickly.

"Let him come!" was the general cry of the troops outside.

"*Buenas horas, Señor!*" said the royal lady within, wishing good speed to her adversary in his own tongue.

And both meant the same thing,—“We are ready.”

It was England against the world. She had no ally, except the sixty Dutch ships. And except, too, One who was invisible, but whom the winds and the sea obeyed.

The aid required by Lord Howard came: not from Elizabeth, but from England. Volunteers poured in from every shire,—men in velvet gowns and gold chains, men in frieze jackets and leather jerkins. The “delicate-handed, dilettante” Earl of Oxford; the “Wizard” Earl of Northumberland, just come to his title; the eccentric Earl George of Cumberland; Sir Thomas Cecil, elder son of the Lord High Treasurer Burleigh,—weak-headed, but true-hearted; Sir Robert Cecil, his younger brother,—strong-headed and false-hearted; and lastly, a host in himself, Sir Walter Raleigh, whose fine head and great heart few of his contemporaries appreciated at their true value,—and perhaps least of all the royal lady whom he served. These men came in one by one.

But the leather jerkins flocked in by hundreds; the men who were of no account, whose names nobody cared to preserve, whose deeds nobody thought of recording; yet who, after all, were England, and without whom their betters would have made very poor head against the Armada. They came, leaving their farms untilled, their forges cold, their axes and hammers still. All that could wait till afterwards. Just now, England must be saved.

From all the coast around, provisions were sent in, both of food and munition: here a stand of arms from the squire's armoury, there a batch of new bread from the yeoman's farm: those who could send but a chicken or a cabbage did not hold them back; there were some who had nothing to give but themselves—and that they gave. Every atom was accepted: they all counted for something in the little isle's struggle to keep free.

It is the little things, after all, of which great things are made. Not only the men who lined the decks of the “Ark Royal,” but the women ashore who baked their bread, and the children who gathered wood in the forest for the ovens, were helping to save England.

Even some Recusants—which meant Romanists—came in with offerings of food, arms, and service: men who, in being Romanists, had not forgotten that they were Englishmen.

About noon on the twentieth of July, the Armada was first sighted from Plymouth. She was supposed at first to be making direct, for that town. But she passed it, and bore on eastward. It was evident now that she meant to make for

the Channel,—probably meant to use as a basis of operations, Calais—England’s own Calais, for the loss of which her heart was sore yet.

Lord Howard followed as closely as was consistent with policy. And now appeared the disadvantage of the immense vessels which formed the bulk of the Armada. The English ships, being smaller, were quicker; they could glide in and out with ease, where the “great wooden castles” found bare standing-room. Before the Armada could reach Calais Roads, early on the 21st of July, Lord Howard was upon her.

When she saw her pursuers, she spread forth in a crescent form, in which she was seven miles in length. Trumpets were sounded, drums beaten—everything was done to strike terror into the little English fleet.

“*Santiago de Compostella!*” was the cry from the Armada.

“God and Saint George for merry England!” came back from the “Ark Royal.”

Both navies struggled hard to get to windward. But the Spanish ships were too slow and heavy. The English won the coveted position. The “Revenge” was posted as light-bearer, for night was coming on, and the “Ark Royal,” followed by the rest of the fleet, dashed into the midst of the Armada.

Sir Francis Drake made a terrible blunder. Instead of keeping to the simple duty allotted to him, he went off after five large vessels, which he saw standing apart, and gave them chase for some distance. Finding them innocent Easterlings, or merchantmen of the Hanse Towns, he ran hastily back, to discover that in his absence Lord Howard had most narrowly escaped capture, having mistaken the Spanish light for the English.

“’Tis beyond any living patience!” cried Robert Basset fierily to Arthur Tremayne. “Here all we might have hit some good hard blows at the Spaniard, and to be set to chase a covey of miserable Easterlings!”

“’Twas a misfortunate blunder,” responded Arthur more quietly.

After two hours’ hard fighting, the Admiral, finding his vessels too much scattered, called them together, tacked, and lay at anchor until morning. It certainly was enough to disappoint men who were longing for “good hard blows,” when the “Revenge” rejoined the fleet only just in time to hear the order for retreat. Fresh reinforcements came in during the night. When day broke on the 22nd, Lord Howard divided his fleet into four squadrons. He himself commanded the first, Drake the second, Hawkins the third, and Frobisher the fourth. The wind was now north.

The Armada went slowly forward; and except for the capture of one large Venetian ship, nothing was done until the 25th. Then came a calm, favourable to the Spaniards, who were rowing, while the English trusted to their sails. When the Armada came opposite the Isle of Wight, Lord Howard again gave battle.

This time the “Revenge” was engaged, and in the van. While the battle went on, none knew who might be falling: but when the fleet was at last called to anchor—after a terrible encounter—Basset and Tremayne met and clasped hands in congratulation.

“Where is Enville?” asked the former.

Arthur had seen nothing of him. Had he fallen?

The day passed on—account was taken of the officers and crew—but nothing was to be heard of Jack Enville.

About half an hour later, Arthur, who had considerably distinguished himself in the engagement, was resting on deck, looking rather sadly out to sea, and thinking of Jack, when Basset came up to him, evidently struggling to suppress laughter.

“Prithee, Tremayne, come below with me one minute.”

Arthur complied, and Basset led him to the little cabin which the three young officers occupied together.

“Behold!” said Basset grandiloquently, with a flourish of his hand towards the berths. “Behold, I beseech you, him that hath alone routed the Spaniard, swept the seas, saved England, and covered him with glory! He it is whose name shall live in the chronicles of the time! He shall have a statue—of gingerbread—in the court of Her Majesty’s Palace of Westminster, and his name shall be set up—wrought in white goose feathers—on the forefront of Paul’s! Hail to the valiant and unconquerable Jack Enville, the deliverer of England from Pope and Spaniard!”

To the great astonishment of Arthur, there lay the valiant Jack, rolled in a blanket, apparently very much at his ease: but when Basset’s peroration was drawing to a close, he unrolled himself, looking rather red in the face, and returned to ordinary life by standing on the floor in full uniform.

“Hold thy blatant tongue for an ass as thou art!” was his civil reply to Basset’s lyric on his valour. “If I did meet a wound in the first flush of the fray, and came down hither to tend the same, what blame lieth therein?”

“Wert thou wounded, Jack?” asked Arthur.

“Too modest belike to show it,” observed Basset. “Where is it, trow? Is thy boot-toe abraded, or hast had five hairs o’ thine head carried away?”

“’Tis in my left wrist,” said Jack, replying to Arthur, not Basset.

“Prithee, allow us to feast our eyes on so glorious a sign of thy valiantness!” said Basset.

Jack was extremely reluctant to show his boasted wound; but being pressed to do so by both his friends (from different motives) he exhibited something which looked like a severe scratch from a cat.

"Why, 'tis not much!" said Arthur, who could have shown several worse indications of battle on himself, which he had not thought worth notice.

"Oh, is it not?" muttered Jack morosely. "I can tell thee, 'tis as sore—"

"Nay, now, wound not yet again the great soul of the hero!" put in Basset with grim irony. "If he lie abed i' th' day for a wound to his wrist, what shall he do for a stab to his feelings? You shall drive him to drown him in salt water; and that were cruelty unheard-of, for it should make his eyes smart. I tell thee what, Jack Enville—there is *one* ass aboard the fleet, and his name is neither Arthur Tremayne nor—saving your presence—Robin Basset. Farewell! I go to win a laurel crown from Sir Francis by bearing news unto him of thy heroical deeds."

And away marched Basset, much to the relief of Jack.

The encounter of that day had been fearful. But when Lord Howard drew off to recruit himself, the Armada gathered her forces together, went forward, and cast anchor on the 27th in Calais Roads.

Here fresh orders reached her from Parma. Instead of skirmishing in the Channel, she was to assume the offensive at once. Within three days Medina must land in England. King Philip appears to have resigned his original intention of making the attack in person.

The Armada prepared for the final struggle. The young gentlemen on board meantime amused themselves by shouting sundry derisive songs, one of which was specially chosen when the "Revenge" was sufficiently near to be aggrieved by it: and Arthur, who had learned enough Spanish from his mother to act as translator, rendered the ditty into plain English prose for the benefit of Jack and Basset. The former received it with lofty scorn,—the latter with fiery vaticinations concerning his intentions when the ships should meet: and looking at the figure-head of the nearest vessel whence the song was shouted, he singled out "La Dolorida" for his special vengeance. A translation of the lyric in question is appended. (Note 4.) The speaker, it will be seen, is supposed to be a young Spanish lady.

"My brother Don John
To England is gone,
To kill the Drake,
And the Queen to take,
And the heretics all to destroy;
And he has promised
To bring to me
A Lutheran boy
With a chain round his neck:
And Grandmamma
From his share shall have
A Lutheran maid
To be her slave."

The prospect was agreeable. One thing was plain—that "the Don" had acquired a wholesome fear of "the Drake."

Sunday was the 28th: and on that morning it became evident that Medina meant mischief. The seven-mile crescent was slowly, but surely, closing in round Dover. The Spaniard was about to land. Lord Howard called a council of war: and a hasty resolution was taken. Eight gunboats were cleared out; their holds filled with combustible matter; they were set on fire, and sent into the advancing Armada. The terror of the Spaniards was immense. They fancied it Greek fire, such as had wrought fearful havoc among them at the siege of Antwerp. With shrieks of "The fire of Antwerp!—The fire of Antwerp!"—the Armada fell into disorder, and the vessels dispersed on all sides in the wildest confusion. Lord Howard followed in chase of Medina.

Even yet the Armada might have rallied and renewed the attack. But now the wind began to blow violently from the south. The galleys could make no head against it. Row as they would, they were hurried northward, the English giving chase hotly. The Spanish ships were driven hither and thither, pursued alike by the winds and the foe. One of the largest galleons ran ashore at Calais—from which the spoil taken was fifty thousand ducats—one at Ostend, several in different parts of Holland. Don Antonio de Matigues escaped from the one which ran aground at Calais, and carried back to Philip, like the messengers of Job, the news that he only had escaped to tell the total loss of the Invincible Armada. But the loss was not quite so complete. Medina was still driving northward before the gale, with many of his vessels, chased by the "Ark Royal" and her subordinates. He tried hard to cast anchor at Gravelines; but Lord Howard forced him away. Past Dunquerque ran the shattered Armada, with her foe in hot pursuit. There was one danger left, and until that peril was past, Lord Howard would not turn back. If Medina had succeeded in landing in Scotland,—which the Admiral fully expected him to attempt—the numerous Romanists left in that country, and the "Queensmen," the partisans of the beheaded Queen, would have received him with open arms. This would have rendered the young King's (James the Sixth, of Scotland) tenure of power very uncertain, and might not improbably have ended in an invasion of the border by a Scoto-Spanish army. But Lord Howard did not know that no thought of victory now animated Medina. The one faint hope within him was to reach home.

Internal dissensions were now added to the outward troubles of the Spaniards. Seven hundred English prisoners banded themselves under command of Sir William Stanley, and turned upon their gaolers. The Armada spread her sails, and let herself drive faster still. Northwards, ever northwards! It was the only way left open to Spain.

For four days the "Ark Royal" kept chase of the miserable relics of this once-grand Armada. When the Orkneys were safely passed, Lord Howard drew off, leaving scouts to follow Medina, and report where he went. If he had gone on

for two days longer, he would not have had a charge of powder left.

Five thousand Spaniards had been killed; a much larger number lay wounded or ill; twelve of the most important ships were lost; provisions failed them; the fresh water was nearly all spent. One of the galleons ran aground at Fair Isle, in the Shetlands, where relics are still kept, and the dark complexions of the natives show traces of Spanish blood. The "Florida" was wrecked on the coast of Morven—where her shattered hulk lies yet. Medina made his way between the Faroe Isles and Iceland, fled out to the high seas, and toiled past Ireland home. The rest of the fleet tried to reach Cape Clear. Forty-one were lost off the coast of Ireland: many driven by the strong west wind into the English Channel, where they were taken, some by the English, some by the Rochellois: a few gained Neubourg in Normandy. Out of 134 ships, above eighty were total wrecks.

So ended the Invincible Armada.

England fought well. But it was not England who was the conqueror, (Note 5) but the south wind and the west wind of God.

Note 1. This was the same Duke of Guise who took an active part in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. He was assassinated at Blois, December 23, 1588—less than six months after the invasion of the Armada.

Note 2. The Greeks did not reckon by kalends. The Romans, who did, when they meant to refuse a request good-humouredly, said jokingly that it should be granted "in the Greek kalends."

Note 3. The name of Fleming's vessel does not appear.

Note 4. I am not responsible for this translation, nor have I met with the original.

Note 5. No one was more thoroughly persuaded of this than Elizabeth herself. Thirteen years afterwards, at the opening of her last Parliament, the Speaker thought proper to remark that England had been defended from all dangers that had attacked her by "the mighty arm of our dread and sacred Queen." An unexpected voice from the throne rebuked him. "No, Mr Speaker: by the mighty hand of God."

Chapter Five.

The Wreck of the "Dolorida."

"And therefore unto this poor child of Eve
The thing forbidden was the one thing wanting,
Without which all the rest were dust and ashes."

"Heardst ever the like of the gale this night, Barbara?" asked Blanche, as she stood twisting up her hair before the mirror, one morning towards the close of August.

"'Twas a cruel rough night, in sooth," was the answer. "Yet the wind is westerly. God help the poor souls that were on the sea this night! They must have lacked the same."

"'Twas ill for the Spaniard, I reckon," said Blanche lightly.

"'Twas ill for life, Mistress Blanche," returned Barbara, gravely. "There be English on the wild waters, beside Spaniards. The Lord avert evil from them!"

"Nay, I go not about to pray that ill be avoided from those companions," retorted Blanche in scorn. "They may drown, every man of them, for aught I care."

"They be some woman's childre, every man," was Barbara's reply.

"O Blanche!" interposed Clare, reproachfully. "Do but think of their childre at home: and the poor mothers that are watching in the villages of Spain for their lads to come back to them! How canst thou wish them hurt?"

"How touching a picture!" said Blanche in the same tone.

"In very deed, I would not by my good-will do them none ill," responded Barbara; "I would but pray and endeavour myself that they should do none ill to me."

"How should they do thee ill, an' they were drowned?" laughed Blanche.

The girl was not speaking her real sentiments. She was neither cruel nor flinty-hearted, but was arguing and opposing, as she often did, sheerly from a spirit of contradiction, and a desire to astonish her little world; Blanche's vanity was of the Erostratus character. While she longed to be liked and admired, she would have preferred that people should think her disagreeable, rather than not think of her at all.

"But, Blanche," deprecated Clare, who did not enter into this peculiarity of her sister, "do but fancy, if one of these very men did seek thy gate, all wet and weary and hungered, and it might be maimed in the storm, without so much as one penny in his pocket for to buy him fire and meat—thou wouldst not shut the door in his face?"

"Nay, truly, for I would take a stout cudgel and drive him thence."

"O Blanche!"

"O Clare!" said Blanche mockingly.

"I could never do no such a thing," added Clare, in a low tone.

"What, thou wouldst lodge and feed him?"

"Most surely."

"Then shouldst thou harbour the Queen's enemy."

"I should harbour mine own enemy," said Clare. "And thou wist who bade us, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him.'"

"Our Lord said that to His disciples."

"And are not we His disciples?"

"Gramercy, maiden! Peter, and John, and Andrew, and the like. 'Twas never meant for folk in these days?"

"Marry La'kin! What say you, Mistress Blanche?—that God's Word was not meant for folk now o' days?"

"Oh ay,—some portion thereof."

"Well-a-day! what will this world come to? I was used to hear say, in Queen Mary's days, that the great Council to London were busy undoing what had been done in King Harry's and King Edward's time: but I ne'er heard that the Lord had ta'en His Word in pieces, and laid up an handful thereof as done withal."

"Barbara, thou hast the strangest sayings!"

"I cry you mercy, Mistress mine,—'tis you that speak strangely."

"Come hither, and help me set this edge of pearl. Prithee, let such gear a-be. We be no doctors of the schools, thou nor I."

"We have souls to be saved, Mistress Blanche."

"Very well: and we have heads to be dressed likewise. Tell me if this cap sit well behind; I am but ill pleased withal."

Heavy rapid steps came down the corridor, and with a hasty knock, Jennet put her head in at the door.

"Mrs Blanche! Mrs Clare! If you 'll none miss th' biggest sight ever you saw, make haste and busk (dress) you, and come down to hall. There's th' biggest ship ever were i' these parts drove ashore o' Penny Bank. Th' Master, and Dick, and Sim, and Abel 's all gone down to th' shore, long sin'."

"What manner of ship, Jennet?" asked both the girls at once.

"I'm none fur learnt i' ships," said Jennet, shaking her head. "Sim said 'twere a Spaniard, and Dick said 'twere an Englishman; and Abel bade 'em both hold their peace for a pair o' gaumless (stupid) noodles."

"But what saith my father?" cried excited Blanche, who had forgotten all about the fit of her cap.

"Eh, bless you!—he's no noodle: Why, he said he'd see 't afore he told anybody what 't were."

"Barbara, be quick, dear heart, an' thou lovest me. Let the cap be; only set my ruff.—Jennet! can we see it hence?"

"You'll see 't off th' end o' th' terrace, right plain afore ye," said Jennet, and summarily departed.

There was no loitering after that. In a very few minutes the two girls were dressed, Blanche's ruff being satisfactory in a shorter time than Barbara could ever remember it before. Clare stayed for her prayers, but Blanche dashed off without them, and made her way to the end of the terrace, where her sister presently joined her.

"She is a Spaniard!" cried Blanche, in high excitement. "Do but look on her build, Clare. She is not English-built, as sure as this is Venice ribbon."

Clare disclaimed, with a clear conscience, all acquaintance with shipbuilding, and declined even to hazard a guess as to the nationality of the ill-fated vessel. But Blanche was one of those who must be (or seem to be; either will do) conversant with every subject under discussion. So she chattered on, making as many blunders as assertions, until at last, just at the close of a particularly absurd mistake, she heard a loud laugh behind her.

"Well done, Blanche!" said her father's voice. "I will get thee a ship, my lass. Thou art as fit to be a sea-captain, and come through a storm in the Bay of Biscay, as—thy popinjay." (Parrot.)

"O Father, be there men aboard yonder ship?" said Clare, earnestly.

"Ay, my lass," he replied, more gravely. "An hundred and seventy souls—there were, last night, Clare."

"And what?"—Clare's face finished the question.

"There be nine come ashore," he added in the same tone.

"And the rest, Father?" asked Clare piteously.

"Drowned, my lass, every soul, in last night's storm."

"O Father, Father!" cried Clare's tender heart.

"Good lack!" said Blanche. "Is she English, Father?"

"The Dolorida, of Cales, (Cadiz) my maid."

"Spanish!" exclaimed Blanche, her excitement returning. "And what be these nine men, Father?"

"There be two of them poor galley-slaves; two sailors; and four soldiers, of the common sort. No officers; but one young gentleman, of a good house in Spain, that was come abroad for his diversion, and to see the sight."

"Who is this gentleman, Father?—What manner of man is he?"

Sir Thomas was a little amused by the eagerness of his daughter's questions.

"His name is Don John de Las Rojas, (a fictitious person) Mistress Blanche,—of a great house and ancient, as he saith, in Andalusia: and as to what manner of man,—why, he hath two ears, and two eyes, and one nose, and I wis not how many teeth—"

"Now prithee, Father, mock me not! Where is her—"

"What shouldst say, were I to answer, In a chamber of Enville Court?"

"Here, Father?—verily, here? Shall I see him?"

"That hangeth on whether thine eyes be shut or open. Thou must tarry till he is at ease."

"At ease!—what aileth him?"

Sir Thomas laughed. "Dost think coming through a storm at sea as small matter as coming through a gate on land? He hath 'scaped rarely well; there is little ails him save a broken arm, and a dozen or so of hard bruises; but I reckon a day or twain will pass ere it shall be to his conveniency to appear in thy royal presence, my Lady Blanche."

"But what chamber hath he?—and who is with him?—Do tell me all thereabout."

"Verily, curiosity is great part of Eve's legacy to her daughters. Well, an' thou must needs know, he is in the blue chamber; and thine aunt and Jennet be with him; and I have sent Abel to Bispham after the leech. (Doctor.) What more, an't like the Lady Blanche?"

"Oh, what like is he?—and how old?—and is he well-favoured?—and—"

"Nay, let me have them by threes at the most. He is like a young man with black hair and a right wan face.—How old? Well, I would guess, an' he were English, something over twenty years; but being Spanish, belike he is younger than so.—Well-favoured? That a man should look well-favoured, my Lady Blanche, but now come off a shipwreck, and his arm brake, and after fasting some forty hours,—methinks he should be a rare goodly one. Maybe a week's dieting and good rest shall better his beauty."

"Hath he any English?"

"But a little, and that somewhat droll: yet enough to make one conceive his wants. His father and mother both, he told me, were of the Court when King Philip dwelt here, and they have learned him some English for this his journey."

"Doth his father live?"

"Woe worth the day! I asked him not. I knew not your Grace should desire to wit it."

"And his mother? Hath he sisters?"

"Good lack! ask at him when thou seest him. Alack, poor lad!—his work is cut out, I see."

"But you have not told me what shall come of them."

"I told thee not! I have been answering thy questions thicker than any blackberries. My tongue fair acheth; I spake not so much this week past."

"How do you mock me, Father!"

"I will be sad as a dumpling, my lass. I reckon, Mistress, all they shall be sent up to London unto the Council, without there come command that the justices shall deal with them."

"And what shall be done to them?"

"Marry, an' I had my way, they should be well whipped all round, and packed off to Spain. Only the galley-slaves, poor lads!—they could not help themselves."

"Here 's the leech come, Master," said Jennet, behind them.

Sir Thomas hastened back into the house, and the two sisters followed more slowly.

“Oh, behold Aunt Rachel!” said Blanche. “She will tell us somewhat.”

Now, only on the previous evening, Rachel had been asserting, in her strongest and sternest manner, that nothing,—no, nothing on earth!—should ever make her harbour a Spaniard. They were one and all “evil companions;” they were wicked Papists; they were perturbators of the peace of our Sovereign Lady the Queen; hanging was a luxury beyond their deserts. It might therefore have been reasonably expected that Rachel, when called upon to serve one of these very obnoxious persons, would scornfully refuse assistance, and retire to her own chamber in the capacity of an outraged Briton. But Rachel, when she spoke in this way, spoke in the abstract, with a want of realisation. When the objectionable specimen of the obnoxious mass lifted a pair of suffering human eyes to her face, the ice thawed in a surprisingly sudden manner from the surface of her flinty heart, and the set lips relaxed into an astonishingly pitying expression.

Blanche, outwardly decorous, but with her eyes full of mischief, walked up to Rachel, and desired to know how it fared with the Spanish gentleman.

“Poor lad! he is in woeful case!” answered the representative of the enraged British Lion. “What with soul and body, he must have borne well-nigh the pangs of martyrdom this night. ’Tis enough to make one’s heart bleed but to look on him. And to hear him moan to himself of his mother, poor heart! when he thinks him alone—at least thus I take his words: I would, rather than forty shillings, she were nigh to tend him.”

From which speech it will be seen that when Rachel did “turn coat,” she turned it inside out entirely.

“Good lack, Aunt Rachel! what is he but an evil companion?” demanded irreverent Blanche, with her usual want of respect for the opinions of her elders.

“If he were the worstest companion on earth, child, yet the lad may lack his wounds dressed,” said Rachel, indignantly.

“And a Papist!”

“So much the rather should we show him the betterness of our Protestant faith, by Christian-wise tending of him.”

“And an enemy!” pursued Blanche, proceeding with the list.

“Hold thy peace, maid! Be we not bidden in God’s Word to do good unto our enemies?”

“And a perturbator of the Queen’s peace, Aunt Rachel!”

“This young lad hath not much perturbed the Queen’s peace, I warrant,” said Rachel, uneasily,—a dim apprehension of her niece’s intentions crossing her mind at last.

“Nay, but hanging is far too good for him!” argued Blanche, quoting the final item.

“Thou idle prating hussy!” cried Rachel, turning hastily round to face her,—vexed, and yet laughing. “And if I have said such things in mine heat, what call hast thou to throw them about mine ears? Go get thee about thy business.”

“I have no business, at this present, Aunt Rachel.”

“Lack-a-daisy! that a cousin (then used in the general sense of relative) of mine should say such a word! No business, when a barrelful of wool waiteth the carding, and there is many a yard of flax, to be spun, and cordial waters to distil, and a full set of shirts to make for thy father, and Jack’s gown to guard (trim) anew with lace, and thy mother’s new stomacher—”

“Oh, mercy, Aunt Rachel!” cried lazy Blanche, putting her hands over her ears.

But Mistress Rachel was merciless—towards Blanche.

“No business, quotha!” resumed that astonished lady. “And Margaret’s winter’s gown should, have been cut down ere now into a kirtle, and Lucrece lacketh both a hood and a napron, and thine own partlets have not yet so much as the first stitch set in them. No business! Prithee, stand out of my way, Madam Idlesse, for I have no time to spend in twirling of my thumbs. And when thou find thy partlets rags, burden not me withal. No business, by my troth!”

Muttering which, Rachel stalked away, while Blanche, instead of fetching needle and thread, and setting to work on her new ruffs, fled into the garden, and ensconcing herself at the foot of the ash-tree, gazed up at the windows of the blue chamber, and erected magnificent castles in the air. Meanwhile, Clare, who had heard Rachel’s list of things waiting to be done, and had just finished setting the lace upon Jack’s gown, quietly possessed herself of a piece of fine lawn, measured off the proper length, and was far advanced in one of Blanche’s neglected ruffs before that young lady sauntered in, when summoned by the breakfast-bell.

The leech thought well of the young Spaniard’s case. The broken arm was not a severe fracture—“right easy to heal,” said he in a rather disappointed manner; the bruises were nothing but what would disappear with time and one of Rachel’s herbal lotions. In a few weeks, the young man might expect to be fully recovered. And until that happened, said Sir Thomas, he should remain at Enville Court.

But the other survivors of the shipwreck did not come off so easily. On the day after it, one of the soldiers and one of the galley-slaves died. The remaining galley-slave, a Moorish prisoner, very grave and silent, and speaking little

Spanish; the two sailors, of whom one was an Italian; and one of the soldiers, were quartered in the glebe barn—the rest in one of Sir Thomas Enville's barns. Two of the soldiers were Pyrenees men, and spoke French. All of them, except the Moor and the Italian, were possessed by abject terror, expecting to be immediately killed, if not eaten. The Italian, who was no stranger to English people, and into whose versatile mind nothing sank deep, was the only blithe and cheerful man in the group. The Moor kept his feelings and opinions to himself. But the others could utter nothing but lamentations, "*Ay de mí!*" (alas for me) and "*Soy muerto!*" (literally, "I am dead"—a common lamentation in Spain.) with mournful vaticinations that their last hour was at hand, and that they would never see Spain again. Sir Thomas Enville could just manage to make himself understood by the Italian, and Mr Tremayne by the two Pyreneans. No one else at Enville Court spoke any language but English. But Mrs Rose, a Spanish lady's daughter, who had been accustomed to speak Spanish for the first twenty years of her life; and Mrs Tremayne, who had learned it from her; and Lysken Barnevelt, who had spoken it in her childhood, and had kept herself in practice with Mrs Rose's help—these three went in and out among the prisoners, interpreted for the doctor, dressed the wounds, cheered the down-hearted men, and at last persuaded them that Englishmen were not cannibals, and that it was not certain they would all be hung immediately.

There was one person at Enville Court who would have given much to be a fourth in the band of helpers. Clare was strongly disposed to envy her friend Lysken, and to chafe against the bonds of conventionalism which bound her own actions. She longed to be of some use in the world; to till some corner of the vineyard marked out specially for her; to find some one for whom, or something for which she was really wanted. Of course, making and mending, carding and spinning, distilling and preserving, were all of use: somebody must do them. But somebody, in this case, meant anybody. It was not Clare who was necessary. And Lysken, thought Clare, had deeper and higher work. She had to deal with human hearts, while Clare dealt only with woollen and linen. Was there no possibility that some other person could see to the woollen and linen, and that Clare might be permitted to work with Lysken, and help the human hearts as well?

But Clare forgot one essential point—that a special training is needed for work of this kind. Cut a piece of cambric wrongly, and after all you do but lose the cambric: but deal wrongly with a human heart, and terrible mischief may ensue. And this special training Lysken had received, and Clare had never had. Early privation and sorrow had been Lysken's lesson-book.

Clare found no sympathy in her aspirations. She had once timidly ventured a few words, and discovered quickly that she would meet with no help at home. Lady Enville was shocked at such notions; they were both unmaidenly and communistic: had Clare no sense of what was becoming in a knight's step-daughter? Of course Lysken Barnevelt was nobody; it did not matter what she did. Rachel bade her be thankful that she was so well guarded from this evil world, which was full of men, and that was another term for wild beasts and venomous serpents. Margaret could not imagine what Clare wanted; was there not enough to do at home? Lucrece was demurely thankful to Providence that she was content with her station and circumstances. Blanche was half amused, and half disgusted, at the idea of having anything to do with those dirty stupid people.

So Clare quietly locked up her little day-dream in her own heart, and wished vainly that she had been a clergyman's daughter. Before her eyes there rose a sunny vision of imaginary life at the parsonage, with Mr and Mrs Tremayne for her parents, Arthur and Lysken for her brother and sister, and the whole village for her family. The story never got far enough for any of them to marry; in fact, that would have spoilt it. Beyond the one change of place, there were to be no further changes. No going away; no growing old; "no cares to break the still repose," except those of the villagers, who were to be petted and soothed and helped into being all good and happy. Beyond that point, Clare's dream did not go.

Let her dream on a little longer,—poor Clare! She was destined to be rudely awakened before long.

Chapter Six.

Cositas De España.

"On earth no word is said, I ween,
But's registered in Heaven:
What's here a jest, is there a sin
Which may never be forgiven."

Blanche Enville sat on the terrace, on a warm September afternoon, with a half-finished square of wool-work in her hand, into which she was putting a few stitches every now and then. She chose to imagine herself hard at work; but it would have fatigued nobody to count the number of rows which she had accomplished since she came upon the terrace. The work which Blanche was really attending to was the staple occupation of her life,—building castles in the air. At various times she had played all manner of parts, from a captive queen, a persecuted princess, or a duchess in disguise, down to a fisherman's daughter saving a vessel in danger by the light in her cottage window. No one who knows how to erect the elegant edifices above referred to, will require to be told that whatever might be her temporary position, Blanche always acquitted herself to perfection: and that any of the airy *dramatis personae* who failed to detect her consummate superiority was either compassionately undeceived, or summarily crushed, at the close of the drama.

Are not these fantasies one of the many indications that all along life's pathway, the old serpent is ever whispering to us his first lie,—“Ye shall be as gods?”

At the close of a particularly sensational scene, when Blanche had just succeeded in escaping from a convent prison wherein the wicked Queen her sister had confined her, the idea suddenly flashed upon the oppressed Princess that

Aunt Rachel would hardly be satisfied with the state of the kettle-holder; and coming down in an instant from air to earth, she determinately and compunctiously set to work again. The second row of stitches was growing under her hands when, by that subtle psychological process which makes us aware of the presence of another person, though we may have heard and seen nothing, Blanche became conscious that she was no longer alone. She looked up quickly, into the face of a stranger; but no great penetration was needed to guess that the young man before her was the shipwrecked Spaniard.

Blanche's first idea on seeing him, was a feeling of wonder that her father should have thought him otherwise than "well-favoured." He was handsome enough, she thought, to be the hero of any number of dramas.

The worthy Knight's ideas as to beauty by no means coincided with those of his daughter. Sir Thomas thought that to look well, a man must not be—to use his own phrase—"lass-like and finnickin'." It was all very well for a woman to have a soft voice, a pretty face, or a graceful mien: but let a man be tall, stout, well-developed, and tolerably rough. So that the finely arched eyebrows, the languishing liquid eyes, the soft delicate features, and the black silky moustache, which were the characteristics of Don Juan's face, found no favour with Sir Thomas, but were absolute perfection in the captivated eyes of Blanche. When those dark eyes looked admiringly at her, she could see no fault in them; and when a voice addressed her in flattering terms, she could readily enough overlook wrong accents and foreign idioms.

"Most beautiful lady!" said Don Juan, addressing himself to Blanche, and translating literally into English the usual style of his native land.

The epithet gave Blanche a little thrill of delight. No one—except the mythical inhabitants of the airy castles—had ever spoken to her in this manner before. And undoubtedly there was a zest in the living voice of another human being, which was unfortunately lacking in the denizens of Fairy Land. Blanche had never sunk so low in her own opinion as she did when she tried to frame an answer. She was utterly at a loss for words. Instead of the exquisitely appropriate language which would have risen to her lips at once if she had not addressed a human being, she could only manage to stammer out, in most prosaic fashion, a hope that he was better. But her consciousness of inferiority deepened, when Don Juan replied promptly, with a low bow, and the application of his left hand to the place where his heart was supposed to be, that the sight of her face had effected a full and immediate cure of all his ills.

Oh, for knowledge what to say to him, with due grace and effect! Why was she not born a Spanish lady? And what would he think of her, with such plebeian work as this in her hand! "How he must despise me!" thought silly Blanche. "Why, I have not even a fan to flutter."

Don Juan was quite at his ease. Shyness and timidity were evidently not in the list of his failings.

"I think me fortunate, fair lady," sighed he, with another bow, "that this the misfortune me has made acquainted with your Grace. In my country, we say to the ladies; Grant me the soles of your foots. But here the gentlemen humble not themselves so low. I beseech your Grace, therefore, the favour to kiss you the hand."

Blanche wondered if all Spanish ladies were addressed as "your Grace." (Note 1.) How delightful! She held out her hand like a queen, and Don Juan paid his homage.

"Your Grace see me much happinessed. When I am again in my Andalusia, I count it the gloriousest hour of my life that I see your sweet country and the beautifullest of his ladies."

How far either Don Juan or Blanche might ultimately have gone in making themselves ridiculous cannot be stated, because at this moment Margaret—prosaic, literal Margaret—appeared on the terrace.

"Blanche! Aunt Rachel seeketh thee.—Your servant, Master! I trust you are now well amended?"

Don Juan was a very quick reader of character. He instantly realised the difference between the sisters, and replied to Margaret's inquiry in a calm matter-of-fact style. Blanche moved slowly away. She felt as if she were leaving the sunshine behind her.

"Well, of all the lazy jades!" was Rachel's deserved greeting. "Three rows and an half, betwixt twelve of the clock and four! Why, 'tis not a full row for the hour! Child, art thou 'shamed of thyself?"

"Well, just middling, Aunt Rachel," said Blanche, pouting a little.

"Blanche," returned her Aunt very gravely, "I do sorely pity thine husband—when such a silly thing may win one—without he spend an hundred pound by the day, and keep a pack of serving-maids a-louting at thy heels."

"I hope he may, Aunt Rachel," said Blanche coolly.

"Eh, child, child!" And Rachel's head was ominously shaken.

From that time Don Juan joined the family circle at meals. Of course he was a prisoner, but a prisoner on parole, very generously treated, and with little fear for the future. He was merely a spectator, having taken no part in the war; there were old friends of his parents among the English nobility: no great harm was likely to come to him. So he felt free to divert himself; and here was a toy ready to his hand.

The family circle were amused with the names which he gave them. Sir Thomas became "Don Tomas;" Lady Enville was "the grand Señora." Margaret and Lucrece gave him some trouble; they were not Spanish names. He took refuge in "Doña Mariquita" (really a diminutive of Maria), and "Doña Lucia." But there was no difficulty about "Doña Clara" and "Doña Blanca," which dropped from his lips (thought Blanche) like music. Rachel's name, however, proved impracticable. He contented himself with "*Señora mia*" when he spoke to her, and, "Your Lady Aunt" when he spoke

of her.

He was ready enough to give some account of himself. His father, Don Gonsalvo, Marquis de Las Rojas, was a grandee of the first class, and a Lord in Waiting to King Philip; his mother, Doña Leonor de Torrejano, had been in attendance on Queen Mary. He had two sisters, whose names were Antonia and Florela; and a younger brother, Don Hernando. (All fictitious persons.)

It flattered Blanche all the more that in the presence of others he was distantly ceremonious; but whenever they were alone, he was continually, though very delicately, hinting his admiration of her, and pouring soft speeches into her entranced ears. So Blanche, poor silly child I played the part of the moth, and got her wings well singed in the candle.

Whatever Blanche was, Don Juan himself was perfectly heart-whole. Of course no grandee of Spain could ever descend so low as really to contemplate marriage with a mere *caballero's* daughter, and of a heretic country; that was out of the question. Moreover, there was a family understanding that, a dispensation being obtained, he was to marry his third cousin, Doña Lisarda de Villena, (A fictitious person) a lady of moderate beauty and fabulous fortune. This arrangement had been made while both were little children, nor had Don Juan the least intention of rendering it void. He was merely amusing himself.

It often happens that such amusements destroy another's happiness. And it sometimes happens that they lead to the destruction of another's soul.

Don Juan won golden opinions from Sir Thomas and Lady Enville. He was not wanting in sense, said the former (to whom the sensible side of him had been shown); and, he was right well-favoured, and so courtly! said Lady Enville—who had seen the courtly aspect.

"Well-favoured!" laughed Sir Thomas. "Calleth a woman yonder lad well-favoured? Why, his face is the worst part of him: 'tis all satin and simpers!"

Rachel had not the heart to speak ill of the invalid whom she had nursed, while she admitted frankly that there were points about him which she did not like: but these, no doubt, arose mainly from his being a foreigner and a Papist. Margaret said little, but in her heart she despised him. And presently Jack came home, when the volunteers were disbanded, and, after a passage of arms, became the sworn brother of the young prisoner. He was such a gentleman! said Master Jack. So there was not much likelihood of Blanche's speedy disenchantment.

"Marry, what think you of the lad, Mistress Thekla?" demanded Barbara one day, when she was at "four-hours" at the parsonage.

"He is very young," answered Mrs Tremayne, who always excused everybody as long as it was possible. "He will amend with time, we may well hope."

"Which is to say, I admire him not," suggested Mrs Rose, now a very old woman, on whom time had brought few bodily infirmities, and no, mental ones.

"Who doth admire him, Barbara, at the Court?" asked Mr Tremayne.

"Marry La'kin! every soul, as methinks, save Mistress Meg, and Sim, and Jennet. Mistress Meg—I misdoubt if she doth; and Sim says he is a nincompoop; (silly fellow) and Jennet saith, he is as like as two peas to the old fox that they nailed up on the barn door when she was a little maid. But Sir Thomas, and my Lady, and Master Jack, be mighty taken with him; and Mistress Rachel but little less: and as to Mistress Blanche, she hath eyes for nought else."

"Poor Blanche!" said Thekla.

"Blanche shall be a mouse in a trap, if she have not a care," said Mrs Rose, with a wise shake of her head.

"Good lack, Mistress! she is in the trap already, but she wot it not."

"When we wot us to be in a trap, we be near the outcoming," remarked the Rector.

"Of a truth I cannot tell," thoughtfully resumed Barbara, "whether this young gentleman be rare deep, or rare shallow. He is well-nigh as ill to fathom as Mistress Lucrece herself. Lo' you, o' Sunday morrow, Sir Thomas told him that the law of the land was for every man and woman in the Queen's dominions to attend the parish church twice of the Sunday, under twenty pound charge by the month if they tarried at home, not being let by sickness: and I had heard him say himself that he looked Don John should kick thereat. But what doth Don John but to take up his hat, and walk off to the church, handing of Mistress Rachel, as smiling as any man; and who as devote as he when he was there?—Spake the Amen, and sang in the Psalm, and all the rest belike. Good lack! I had thought the Papists counted it sinful for to join in a Protestant service."

"Not alway," said Mr Tremayne. "Maybe he hath the priest's licence in his pocket."

"I wis not what he hath," responded Barbara, sturdily, "save and except my good will; and that he hath not, nor is not like to have,—in especial with Mistress Blanche, poor sely young maiden! that wot not what she doth."

"He may have it, then, in regard to Clare?" suggested Mrs Rose mischievously.

"Marry La'kin!" retorted Barbara in her fiercest manner. "But if I thought yon fox was in any manner of fashion of way a-making up to my jewel,—I could find it in my heart to put rats-bane in his pottage!"

Sir Thomas transmitted to London the news of the wreck of the *Dolorida*, requesting orders concerning the seven survivors: at the same time kindly writing to two or three persons in high places, old acquaintances of the young man's parents, to ask their intercession on behalf of Don Juan. But the weeks passed away, and as yet no answer came. The Queen and Council were too busy to give their attention to a small knot of prisoners.

On the fourth of September in the Armada year, 1588, died Robert Dudley, the famous Earl of Leicester, who had commanded the army of defence at Tilbury. This one man—and there was only one such—Elizabeth had never ceased to honour. He retained her favour unimpaired for thirty years, through good report—of which there was very little; and evil report—of which there was a great deal. He saw rival after rival rise and flourish and fall: but to the end of his life, he stood alone as the one whose brilliant day was unmarred by storm,—the King of England, because the King of her Queen. What was the occult power of this man, the last of the Dudleys of Northumberland, over the proud spirit of Elizabeth? It was not that she had any affection for him: she showed that plainly enough at his death, when her whole demeanour was not that of mourning, but of release. He was a man of extremely bad character,—a fact patent to all the world: yet Elizabeth kept him at her side, and admitted him to her closest friendship,—though she knew well that the rumours which blackened his name did not spare her own. He never cleared himself of the suspected murder of his first wife; he never tried to clear himself of the attempted murder of the second, whom he alternately asserted and denied to be his lawful wife, until no one knew which story to believe. But the third proved his match. There was strong cause for suspicion that twelve years before, Robert Earl of Leicester had given a lesson in poisoning to Lettice Countess of Essex: and now the same Lettice, Countess of Leicester, had not forgotten her lesson. Leicester was tired of her; perhaps, too, he was a little afraid of what she knew. The deft and practised poisoner administered a dose to his wife. But Lettice survived, and poisoned him in return. And so the last of the Dudleys passed to his awful account.

His death made no difference in the public rejoicing for the defeat of the Armada. Two days afterwards, the Spanish banners were exhibited from Paul's Cross, and the next morning were hung on London Bridge. The nineteenth of November was a holiday throughout the kingdom. On Sunday the 24th, the Queen made her famous thanksgiving progress to Saint Paul's, seated in a chariot built in the form of a throne, with four pillars, and a crowned canopy overhead. The Privy Council and the House of Lords attended her. Bishop Pierce of Salisbury preached the sermon, from the very appropriate text, afterwards engraved on the memorial medals,—“He blew with His wind, and they were scattered.”

All this time no word came to decide the fate of Don Juan. It was not expected now before spring. A winter journey from Lancashire to London was then a very serious matter.

“So you count it not ill to attend our Protestant churches, Master?” asked Blanche of Don Juan, as she sat in the window-seat, needlework in hand. It was a silk purse, not a kettle-holder, this time.

“How could I think aught ill, Doña Blanca, which I see your Grace do?” was the courtly reply of Don Juan.

“But what should your confessor say, did he hear thereof?” asked Blanche, provokingly.

“Is a confessor a monster in your eyes, fair lady?” said Don Juan, with that smile which Blanche held in deep though secret admiration.

“I thought they were rarely severe,” she said, bending her eyes on her work.

“Ah, Señora, our faith differs from yours much less than you think. What is a confessor, but a priest—a minister? The Señor Tremayne is a confessor, when one of his people shall wish his advice. Where lieth the difference?”

Blanche was too ignorant to know where it lay.

“I accounted there to be mighty difference,” she said, hesitatingly.

“*Valgame los santos!* (The saints defend me!)—but a shade or two of colour. Hold we not the same creeds as you? Your Book of Common Prayer—what is it but the translation of ours? We worship the same God; we honour the same persons, as you. Where, then, is the difference? Our priests wed not; yours may. We receive the Holy Eucharist in one kind; you, in both. We are absolved in private, and make confession thus; you, in public. Be these such mighty differences?”

If Don Juan had thrown a little less dust in her eyes, perhaps Blanche might have had sense enough to ask him where the Church of Rome had found her authority for her half of these differences, since it certainly was not in Holy Scripture: and also, whether that communion held such men as Cranmer, Latimer, Calvin, and Luther, in very high esteem? But the dust was much too thick to allow any stronger reply from Blanche than a feeble inquiry whether these really were all the points of difference.

“What other matter offendeth your Grace? Doubtless I can expound the same.”

“Why, I have heard,” said Blanche faintly, selecting one of the smaller charges first, “that the Papists do hold Mary, the blessed Virgin, to have been without sin.”

“Some Catholics have that fantasy,” replied Don Juan lightly. “It is only a few. The Church binds it not on the conscience of any. You take it—you leave it—as you will.”

“Likewise you hold obedience due to the Bishop of Rome, instead of only unto your own Prince, as with us,” objected Blanche, growing a shade bolder.

“That, again, is but in matters ecclesiastical. In secular matters, I do assure your Grace, the Pope interfereth not.”

Blanche, who had no answers to these subtle explainings away of the facts, felt as if all her outworks were being taken, one by one.

“Yet,” she said, bringing her artillery to bear on a new point, “you have images in your churches, Don John, and do worship unto them?”

The word worship has changed its meaning since the days of Queen Elizabeth. To do worship, and to do honour, were then interchangeable terms.

Don Juan smiled. “Have you no pictures in your books, Doña Blanca? These images are but as pictures for the teaching of the vulgar, that cannot read. How else should we learn them? If some of the ignorant make blunder, and bestow to these images better honour than the Church did mean them, the mistake is theirs. No man really doth worship unto these, only the vulgar.”

“But do not you pray unto the saints?”

“We entreat the saints to pray for us; that is all.”

“Then, in the Lord’s Supper—the mass, you call it,”—said Blanche, bringing up at last her strongest battering-ram, “you do hold, as I have been taught, Don John, that the bread and wine be changed into the very self body and blood of our Saviour Christ, that it is no more bread and wine at all. Now how can you believe a matter so plainly confuted by your very senses?”

“Ah, if I had but your learning and wisdom, Señora!” sighed Don Juan, apparently from the bottom of his heart.

Blanche felt flattered; but she was not thrown off the scent, as her admirer intended her to be. She still looked up for the answer; and Don Juan saw that he must give it.

“Sweetest lady! I am no doctor of the schools, nor have I studied for the priesthood, that I should be able to expound all matters unto one of your Grace’s marvellous judgment and learning. Yet, not to leave so fair a questioner without answer—suffer that I ask, your gracious leave accorded—did not our Lord say thus unto the holy Apostles,—‘*Hoc est corpus mens,*’ to wit, ‘This is My Body?’”

Blanche assented.

“In what manner, then, was it thus?”

“Only as a memorial or representation thereof, we do hold, Don John.”

“Good: as the child doth present (represent) the father, being of the like substance, no less than appearance,—as saith the blessed Saint Augustine, and also the blessed Jeronymo, and others of the holy Fathers of the Church, right from the time of our Lord and His Apostles.”

Don Juan had never read a line of the works of Jerome or Augustine. Fortunately for him, neither had Blanche,—a chance on which he safely calculated. Blanche was completely puzzled. She sat looking out of the window, and thinking with little power, and to small purpose. She had not an idea when Augustine lived, nor whether he read the service in his own tongue in a surplice, or celebrated the Latin mass in full pontificals. And if it were true that all the Fathers, down from the Apostles, had held the Roman view—for poor ignorant Blanche had not the least idea whether it were true or false—it was a very awkward thing. Don Juan stood and watched her face for an instant. His diplomatic instinct told him that the subject had better be dropped. All that was needed to effect this end was a few well-turned compliments, which his ingenuity readily suggested. In five minutes more the theological discussion was forgotten, at least by Blanche, as Don Juan was assuring her that in all Andalusia there were not eyes comparable to hers.

Mr Tremayne and Arthur came in to supper that evening. The former quietly watched the state of affairs without appearing to notice anything. He saw that Don Juan, who sat by Lucrece, paid her the most courteous attention; that Lucrece received it with a thinly-veiled air of triumph; that Blanche’s eyes constantly followed, the young Spaniard: and he came to the conclusion that the affair was more complicated than he had originally supposed.

He waited, however, till Arthur and Lysken were both away, until he said anything at home. When those young persons were safely despatched to bed, Mr and Mrs Tremayne and Mrs Rose drew together before the fire, and discussed the state of affairs at Enville Court.

“Now, what thinkest, Robin?” inquired Mrs Rose. “Is Blanche, *la pauvrete!* as fully taken with Don Juan as Barbara did suppose?”

“I am afeared, fully.”

“And Don Juan?”

“If I mistake not, is likewise taken with Blanche: but I doubt somewhat if he be therein as wholehearted as she.”

“And what say the elders?” asked Mrs Tremayne.

“Look on with *eyes* which see nought. But, nathless, there be one pair of eyes that see; and Blanche’s path is not like to run o’er smooth.”

“What, Mistress Rachel?”

"Nay, she is blind as the rest. I mean Lucrece."

"Lucrece! Thinkest she will ope the eyes of the other?"

"I think she casteth about to turn Don Juan's her way."

"Alack, poor Blanche!" said Mrs Tremayne. "Howso the matter shall go, mefeareth she shall not 'scape suffering."

"She is no match for Lucrece," observed Mrs Rose.

"Truth: but I am in no wise assured Don Juan is not," answered Mr Tremayne with a slightly amused look. "As for Blanche, she is like to suffer; and I had well-nigh added, she demeriteth the same: but it will do her good, Thekla. At the least, if the Lord bless it unto her—be assured I meant not to leave out that."

"The furnace purifieth the gold," said Mrs Tremayne sadly: "yet the heat is none the less fierce for that, Robin."

"Dear heart, whether wouldst thou miss the suffering rather, and the purifying, or take both together?"

"It is soon over, Thekla," said her mother, quietly.

During the fierce heat of the Marian persecution, those words had once been said to Marguerite Rose. She had failed to realise them then. The lesson was learned now—thirty-five years later.

"Soon over, to look back, dear Mother," replied Mrs Tremayne. "Yet it never seems short to them that be in the furnace."

Mrs Rose turned rather suddenly to her son-in-law.

"Robin, tell me, if thou couldst have seen thy life laid out before thee on a map, and it had been put to thy choice to bear the Little Ease, or to leave go,—tell me what thou hadst chosen?"

For Mr Tremayne had spent several months in that horrible funnel-shaped prison, aptly termed Little Ease, and had but just escaped from it with life. He paused a moment, and his face grew very thoughtful.

"I think, Mother," he said at length, "that I had chosen to go through with it. I learned lessons in Little Ease that, if I had lacked now, I had been sorely wanting to my people; and—speaking as a man—that perchance I could have learned nowhere else."

"Childre," responded the aged mother, "it seemeth me, that of all matter we have need to learn, the last and hardest is to give God leave to choose for us. At least, thus it hath been with me; it may be I mistake to say it is for all. Yet I am sure he is the happy man that learneth it soon. It hath taken me well-nigh eighty years. Thou art better, Robin, to have learned it in fifty."

"I count, Mother, we learn not all lessons in the same order," said the Rector, smiling, "though there be many lessons we must all learn. 'Tis not like to be my last,—without I should die to-morrow—if I have learned it thoroughly now. And 'tis easier to leave in God's hands, some choices than other."

Mrs Rose did not ask of what he was thinking, but she could guess pretty well. It would be harder to lose his Thekla now, than if he had come out of Little Ease and had found her dead: harder to lose Arthur in his early manhood, than to have seen him coffined with his baby brother and sisters, years ago. Mrs Tremayne drew a long sigh, as if she had guessed it too.

"It would be easier to leave all things to God's choice," she said, "if only we dwelt nearer God."

Note 1. "Vuesa merced," the epithet of ordinary courtesy, is literally "Your Grace."

Chapter Seven.

A Spoke in the Wheel.

"All the foolish work
Of fancy, and the bitter close of all."

Tennyson.

A few weeks after that conversation, Lucrece Enville sat alone in the bedroom which she shared with her sister Margaret. She was not shedding tears—it was not her way to weep: but her mortification was bitter enough for any amount of weeping.

Lucrece was as selfish as her step-mother, or rather a shade more so. Lady Enville's selfishness was pure love of ease; there was no deliberate malice in it. Any person who stood in her way might be ruthlessly swept out of it; but those who did not interfere with her pleasure, were free to pursue their own.

The selfishness of Lucrece lay deeper. She not only sought her own enjoyment and aggrandisement; but she could not bear to see anything—even if she did not want it—in the possession of some one else. That was sufficient to make Lucrece long for it and plot to acquire it, though she had no liking for the article in itself, and would not know

what to do with it when she got it.

But in this particular instance she had wanted the article: and she had missed it. True, the value which she set upon it was rather for its adjuncts than for itself; but whatever its value, one thought was uppermost, and was bitterest—she had missed it.

The article was Don Juan. His charm was twofold: first, he would one day be a rich man and a noble; and secondly, Blanche was in possession. Lucrece tried her utmost efforts to detach him from her sister, and to attach him to herself. And Don Juan proved himself to be her match, both in perseverance and in strategy.

Blanche had not the faintest suspicion that anything of the sort had been going on. Don Juan himself had very quickly perceived the counterplot, and had found it a most amusing episode in the little drama with which he was beguiling the time during his forced stay in England.

But nobody else saw either plot or counterplot, until one morning, when a low soft voice arrested Sir Thomas as he was passing out of the garden door.

“Father, may I have a minute’s speech of you?”

“Ay so, Lucrece? I was about to take a turn or twain in the garden; come with me, lass.”

“So better, Father, for that I must say lacketh no other ears.”

“What now?” demanded Sir Thomas, laughing. “Wouldst have money for a new chain, or leave to go to a merry-making? Thou art welcome to either, my lass.”

“I thank you, Father,” said Lucrece gravely, as they paced slowly down one of the straight, trim garden walks: “but not so,—my words are of sadder import.”

Sir Thomas turned and looked at her. Never until this moment, in all her four-and-twenty years, had his second daughter given him an iota of her confidence.

“Nay, what now?” he said, in a perplexed tone.

“I pray you, Father, be not wroth with me, for my reasons be strong, if I am so bold as to ask at you if you have yet received any order from the Queen’s Majesty’s Council, touching the disposing of Don John?”

“Art thou turning states-woman, my lass? Nay, not I—not so much as a line.”

“Might I take on me, saving your presence, Father, to say so much as—I would you would yet again desire the same?”

“Why, my lass, hath Don John offended thee, that thou wouldst fain be rid of him? I would like him to tarry a while longer. What aileth thee?”

“Would you like him to marry Blanche, Father?”

“Blanche!—marry Blanche! What is come over thee, child? Marry Blanche!”

Sir Thomas’s tone was totally incredulous. He almost laughed in his contemptuous unbelief.

“You crede it not, Father,” said Lucrece’s voice—always even, and soft, and low. “Yet it may be true, for all that.”

“In good sooth, my lass: so it may. But what cause hast, that thou shouldst harbour such a thought?”

“Nought more than words overheard, Father,—and divers gifts seen—and—”

“Gifts! The child showed us none.”

“She would scantly show *you*, Father, a pair of beads of coral, with a cross of enamel thereto—”

“Lucrece, dost thou *know* this?”

Her father’s tone was very grave and stern now.

“I do know it, of a surety. And if you suffer me, Father, to post you in a certain place that I wot of, behind the tapestry, you shall ere long know it too.”

Lucrece’s triumphant malice had carried her a step too far. Her father’s open, upright, honest mind was shocked at this suggestion.

“God forbid, girl!” he replied, hastily. “I will not play the eavesdropper on my own child. Hast thou done this, Lucrece?”

Lucrece saw that she must make her retreat from that position, and she did so “in excellent order.”

“Oh no, Father! how could I so? One day, I sat in the arbour yonder, and they two walked by, discoursing: and another day, when I sat in a window-seat in the hall, they came in a-talking, and saw me not. I could never do such a thing as listen unknown, Father!”

"Right, my lass: but it troubled me to hear thee name it."

Sir Thomas walked on, lost in deep thought. Lucrece was silent until he resumed the conversation.

"Beads, and a cross!" He spoke to himself.

"I could tell you of other gear, Father," said the low voice of the avenger. "As, a little image of Mary and John, which she keepeth in her jewel-closet; and a book wherein be prayers unto the angels and the saints. These he hath given her."

Lucrece was making the worst of a matter in which Don Juan was undoubtedly to blame, but Blanche was much more innocent than her sister chose to represent her. On the rosary Blanche looked as a long necklace, such as were in fashion at the time; and while the elaborate enamelled pendant certainly was a cross, it had never appeared to her otherwise than a mere pendant. The little image was so extremely small, that she kept it in her jewel-closet lest it should be lost. The book, Don Juan's private breviary, was in Latin, in which language studious Lucrece was a proficient, whilst idle Blanche could not have declined a single noun. The giver had informed her that he bestowed this breviary on her, his best beloved, because he held it dearest of all his treasures; and Blanche valued it on that account. Lucrece knew all this: for she had come upon Blanche in an unguarded moment, with the book in her hand and the rosary round her neck, and had to some extent forced her confidence—the more readily given, since Blanche never suspected treachery.

"I can ensure you, Father," pursued the traitress, with an assumption of the utmost meekness, "it hath cost me much sorrow ere I set me to speak unto you."

"Hast spoken to Blanche aforetime?"

"Not much, Father," replied Lucrece, in a voice of apparent trouble. "I counted it fitter to refer the same unto your better wisdom; nor, I think, was she like to list me."

"God have mercy!" moaned the distressed father, thoroughly awake now to the gravity of the case.

"Maybe, Father, you shall think I have left it pass too far," pursued Lucrece, with well-simulated grief: "yet can you guess that I would not by my goodwill seem to carry complaint of Blanche?"

"Thou hast well done, dear heart, and I thank thee," answered her deceived father. "But leave me now, my lass; I must think all this gear over. My poor darling!"

Lucrece glided away as softly as the serpent which she resembled in her heart.

In half-an-hour Sir Thomas came back into the house, and sent Jennet to tell his sister that he wished to speak with her in the library. It was characteristic, not of himself, but of his wife, that in his sorrows and perplexities he turned instinctively to Rachel, not to her. When Lucrece's intelligence was laid before Rachel, though perhaps she grieved less, she was even more shocked than her brother. That Blanche should think of quitting the happy and honourable estate of maidenhood, for the slavery of marriage, was in itself a misdemeanour of the first magnitude: but that she should have made her own choice, have received secret gifts, and held clandestine interviews—this was an awful instance of what human depravity could reach.

"Now, what is to be done?" asked Sir Thomas wearily. "First with Don John, and next with Blanche."

"Him?—the viper! Pack him out of the house, bag and baggage!" cried the wrathful spinster. "The crocodile, to conspire against the peace of the house which hath received him in his need! Yet what better might you look for in a man and a Papist?"

"Nay, Rachel; I cannot pack him out: he is my prisoner, think thou. I am set in charge of him until released by the Queen's Majesty's mandate. All the greater need is there to keep him and Blanche apart. In good sooth, I wis not what to do for the best—with Blanche, most of all."

"Blanche hath had too much leisure time allowed her, and too much of her own way," said Rachel oracularly. "Hand her o'er to me—I will set her a-work. She shall not have an idle hour. 'Tis the only means to keep silly heads in order."

"Maybe, Rachel,—maybe," said Sir Thomas with a sigh. "Yet I fear sorely that we must have Blanche hence. It were constant temptation, were she and Don John left in the same house; and though she might not break charge—would not, I trust—yet he might. I can rest no faith on him well! I must first speak to Blanche, methinks, and then—"

"Speak to her!—whip her well! By my troth, but I would mark her!" cried Rachel, in a passion.

"Nay, Rachel, that wouldst thou not," answered her brother, smiling sadly. "Did the child but whimper, thy fingers would leave go the rod. Thy bark is right fearful, good Sister; but some men's sweet words be no softer than thy bite."

"There is charity in all things, of course," said Rachel, cooling down.

"There is a deal in thee," returned Sir Thomas, "for them that know where to seek it. Well, come with me to Orige; she must be told, I reckon: and then we will send for Blanche."

Rachel opened her lips, but suddenly shut them without speaking, and kept them drawn close. Perhaps, had she not thought better of it, what might have been spoken was not altogether complimentary to Lady Enville.

That very comfortable dame sat in her cushioned chair in the boudoir—there were no easy-chairs then, except as rendered so by cushions; and plenty of soft thick cushions were a very necessary part of the furniture of a good house. Her Ladyship was dressed in the pink of the fashion, so far as it had reached her tailor at Kirkham; and she was turning over the leaves of a new play, entitled “The Comedie of Errour”—one of the earliest productions of the young Warwickshire actor, William Shakspeare by name. She put her book down with a yawn when her husband and his sister came in.

“How much colder ‘tis grown this last hour or twain!” said she. “Prithee, Sir Thomas, call for more wood.”

Sir Thomas shouted as desired—the quickest way of settling matters—and when Jennet had come and gone with the fuel, he glanced into the little chamber to see if it were vacant. Finding no one there, he drew the bolt and sat down.

“Gramercy, Sir Thomas! be we all prisoners?” demanded his wife with a little laugh.

“Orige,” replied Sir Thomas, “Rachel and I have a thing to show thee.”

“I thought you looked both mighty sad,” remarked the lady calmly.

“Dost know where is Blanche?”

“Good lack, no! I never wis where Blanche is.”

“Orige, wouldst like to have Blanche wed?”

“Blanche!—to whom?”

“To Don John de Las Rojas.”

“Gramercy! Sir Thomas, you never mean it?”

“He and Blanche mean it, whate’er I may.”

“Good lack, how fortunate! Why, he will be a Marquis one day—and hath great store of goods and money. I never looked for such luck. Have you struck hands with him, Sir Thomas?”

Sir Thomas pressed his lips together, and glanced at his sister with an air of helpless vexation. Had it just occurred to him that the pretty doll whom he had chosen to be the partner of his life was a little wanting in the departments of head and heart?

“What, Orige—an enemy?” he said.

“Don John is not an enemy,” returned Lady Enville, with a musical little laugh. “We have all made a friend of him.”

“Ay—and have been fools, perchance, to do it. ‘Tis ill toying with a snake. But yet once—a Papist?”

“Good lack! some Papists will get to Heaven, trow.”

“May God grant it!” replied Sir Thomas seriously. “But surely, Orige, surely thou wouldst never have our own child a Papist?”

“I trust Blanche has too much good sense for such foolery, Sir Thomas,” said the lady. “But if no—well, ‘tis an old religion, at the least, and a splendrous. You would never let such a chance slip through your fingers, for the sake of Papistry?”

“No, Sister—for the sake of the Gospel,” said Rachel grimly.

“Thou wist my meaning, Rachel,” pursued Lady Enville. “Well, in very deed, Sir Thomas, I do think it were ill done to let such a chance go by us. ‘Tis like throwing back the gifts of Providence. Do but see, how marvellously this young man was brought hither! And now, if he hath made suit for Blanche, I pray you, never say him nay! I would call it wicked to do the same. Really wicked, Sir Thomas!”

Lady Enville pinched the top cushion into a different position, with what was energy for her. There was silence for a minute. Rachel sat looking grimly into the fire, the personification of determined immobility. Sir Thomas was shading his eyes with his hand. He was drinking just then a very bitter cup: and it was none the sweeter for the recollection that he had mixed it himself. His favourite child—for Blanche was that—seemed to be going headlong to her ruin: and her mother not only refused to aid in saving her, but was incapable of seeing any need that she should be saved.

“Well, Orige,” he said at last, “thou takest it other than I looked for. I had meant for to bid thee speak with Blanche. Her own mother surely were the fittest to do the same. But since this is so, I see no help but that we have her here, before us three. It shall be harder for the child, and I would fain have spared her. But if it must be,—why, it must.”

“She demeriteth (merits) no sparing,” said Rachel sternly.

“Truly, Sir Thomas,” responded his wife, “if I am to speak my mind, I shall bid Blanche God speed therein. So, if you desire to let (hinder) the same—but I think it pity a thousand-fold you should—you were better to see her without me.”

“Nay, Orige! Shall I tell the child to her face that her father and her mother cannot agree touching her disposal?”

"She will see it if she come hither," was the answer.

"But cannot we persuade thee, Orige?"

"Certes, nay!" replied she, with the obstinacy of feeble minds. "Truly, I blame not Rachel, for she alway opposeth her to marriage, howso it come. She stood out against Meg her trothing. But for you, Sir Thomas,—I am verily astonied that you would deny Blanche such good fortune."

"I would deny the maid nought that were for her good, Orige," said the father, sadly.

"'Good,' in sweet sooth!—as though it should be ill for her to wear a coronet on her head, and carry her pocket brimful of ducats! Where be your eyes, Sir Thomas?"

"Thine be dazed, methinks, with the ducats and the coronet, Sister," put in Rachel.

"Well, have your way," said Lady Enville, spreading out her hands, as if she were letting Blanche's good fortune drop from them: "have your way! You will have it, I count, as whatso I may say. I pray God the poor child be not heart-broken. Howbeit, / had better loved her than to do thus."

Sir Thomas was silent, not because he did not feel the taunt, but because he did feel it too bitterly to trust himself with speech. But Rachel rose from her chair, deeply stung, and spoke very plain words indeed.

"Orige Enville," she said, "thou art a born fool!"

"Gramercy, Rachel!" ejaculated her sister-in-law, as much moved out of her graceful ease of manner as it lay in her torpid nature to be.

"You can deal with the maid betwixt you two," pursued the spinster. "I will not bear a hand in the child's undoing."

And she marched out of the room, and slammed the door behind her.

"Good lack!" was Lady Enville's comment.

Without resuming the subject, Sir Thomas walked to the other door and opened it.

"Blanche!" he said, in that hard, constrained tone which denotes not want of feeling, but the endeavour to hide it.

"Blanche is in the garden, Father," said Margaret, coming out of the hall. "Shall I seek her for you?"

"Ay, bid her come, my lass," said he quietly.

Margaret looked up inquiringly, in consequence of her father's unusual tone; but he gave her no explanation, and she went to call Blanche.

That young lady was engaged at the moment in a deeply interesting conversation with Don Juan upon the terrace. They had been exchanging locks of hair, and vows of eternal fidelity. Margaret's approaching step was heard just in time to resume an appearance of courteous composure; and Don Juan, who was possessed of remarkable versatility, observed as she came up to them—

"The clouds be a-gathering, Doña Blanca. Methinks there shall be rain ere it be long."

"How now, Meg?—whither away?" asked Blanche, with as much calmness as she could assume; but she was by no means so clever an actor as her companion.

"Father calleth thee, Blanche, from Mother's bower."

"How provoking!" said Blanche to herself. Aloud she answered, "Good; I thank thee, Meg."



"I cannot say nay, Father, and tell truth."

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Blanche sauntered slowly into the boudoir. Lady Enville reclined in her chair, engaged again with her comedy, as though she had said all that could be said on the subject under discussion. Sir Thomas stood leaning against the jamb of the chimney-piece, gazing sadly into the fire.

"Meg saith you seek me, Father."

"I do, my child."

His grave tone chilled Blanche's highly-wrought feelings with a vague anticipation of coming evil. He set a chair for her, with a courtesy which he always showed to a woman, not excluding his daughters.

"Sit, Blanche: we desire to know somewhat of thee."

The leaves of the play in Lady Enville's hand fluttered; but she had just sense enough not to speak.

"Blanche, look me in the face, and answer truly:—Hath there been any passage of love betwixt Don John and thee?"

Blanche's heart gave a great leap into her throat,—not perhaps anatomically, but so far as her sensations were concerned. She played for a minute with her gold chain in silence. But the way in which the question was put roused all her better feelings; and when the first unpleasant thrill was past, her eyes looked up honestly into his.

"I cannot say nay, Father, and tell truth."

"Well said, my lass, and bravely. How far hath it gone, Blanche?"

Blanche's chain came into requisition again. She was silent.

"Hath he spoken plainly of wedding thee?"

"I think so," said Blanche faintly.

"Didst give him any encouragement thereto?" was the next question—gravely, but not angrily asked.

If Blanche had spoken the simple truth, she would have said "Plenty." But she dared not. She looked intently at the floor, and murmured something about "perhaps" and "a little."

Her father sighed. Her mother appeared engrossed with the play.

"And yet once tell me, Blanche—hath he at all endeavoured himself to persuade thee to accordance with his religion? Hath he given thee any gifts, such as a cross, or a relic-case, or the like?"

Blanche would have given a good deal to run away. But there was no chance of it. She must stand her ground; and not only that, but she must reply to this exceedingly awkward question.

Don Juan had given her one or two little things, she faltered, leaving the more important points untouched. Was her father annoyed at her accepting them? She had no intention of vexing him.

"Thou hast not vexed me, my child," he said kindly. "But I am troubled—grievously troubled and sorrowful. And the heavier part of my question, Blanche, thou hast not dealt withal."

"Which part, Father?"

She knew well enough. She only wanted to gain time.

"Hath this young man tampered with thy faith?"

"He hath once and again spoken thereof," she allowed.

"Spoken what, my maid?"

Blanche's words, it was evident, came very unwillingly.

"He hath shown me divers matters wherein the difference is but little," she contrived to say.

Sir Thomas groaned audibly.

"God help and pardon me, to have left my lamb thus unguarded!" he murmured to himself. "O Blanche, Blanche!"

"What is it, Father?" she said, looking up in some trepidation.

"Tell me, my daughter,—should it give thee very great sorrow, if thou wert never to see this young man again?"

"What, Father?—O Father!"

"My poor child!" he sighed. "My poor, straying, unguarded child!"

Blanche was almost frightened. Her father seemed to her to be coming out in entirely a new character. At this juncture Lady Enville laid down the comedy, and thought proper to interpose.

"Doth Don John love thee, Blanche?"

Blanche felt quite sure of that, and she intimated as much, but in a very low voice.

"And thou lovest him?"

With a good many knots and twists of the gold chain, Blanche confessed this also.

"Now really, Sir Thomas, what would you?" suggested his wife, re-opening the discussion. "Could there be a better establishing for the maiden than so? 'Twere easy to lay down rule, and win his promise, that he should not seek to disturb her faith in no wise. Many have done the like—"

"And suffered bitterly by reason thereof."

"Nay, now!—why so? You see the child's heart is set thereon. Be ruled by me, I pray you, and leave your fantastical objections, and go seek Don John. Make him to grant you oath, on the honour of a Spanish gentleman, that Blanche shall be allowed the free using of her own faith—and what more would you?"

"If thou send me to seek him, Orige, I shall measure swords with him."

Blanche uttered a little scream. Lady Enville laughed her soft, musical laugh—the first thing which had originally attracted her husband's fancy to her, eighteen years before.

"I marvel wherefore!" she said, laying down the play, and taking up her pomander—a ball of scented drugs, enclosed in a golden network, which hung from her girdle by a gold chain.

"Wherefore?" repeated Sir Thomas more warmly. "For plucking my fairest flower, when I had granted unto him but shelter in my garden-house!"

"He has not plucked it yet," said Lady Enville, handling the pomander delicately, so that too much scent should not escape at once.

"He hath done as ill," replied Sir Thomas shortly.

Lady Enville calmly inhaled the fragrance, as if nothing more serious than itself were on her mind. Blanche sat still, playing with her chain, but looking troubled and afraid, and casting furtive glances at her father, who was pacing slowly up and down the room.

"Orige," he said suddenly, "can Blanche make her ready to leave home?—and how soon?"

Blanche looked up fearfully.

"What wis I, Sir Thomas?" languidly answered the lady. "I reckon she could be ready in a month or so. Where would you have her go?"

"A month! I mean to-night."

"To-night, Sir Thomas! 'Tis not possible. Why, she hath scanty a gown fit to show."

"She must go, nathless, Orige. And it shall be to the parsonage. They will do it, I know. And Clare must go with her."

"The parsonage!" said Lady Enville contemptuously. "Oh ay, she can go there any hour. They should scanty know whether she wear satin or program. Call for Clare, if you so desire it—she must see to the gear."

"Canst not thou, Orige?"

"I, Sir Thomas!—with my feeble health!"

And Lady Enville looked doubly languid as she let her head sink back among the cushions. Sir Thomas looked at her for a minute, sighed again, and then, opening the door, called out two or three names. Barbara answered, and he bade her "Send hither Mistress Clare."

Clare was rather startled when she presented herself at the boudoir door. Blanche, she saw, was in trouble of some kind; Lady Enville looked annoyed, after her languid fashion; and the grave, sad look of Sir Thomas was an expression as new to Clare as it had been to the others.

"Clare," said her step-father, "I am about to entrust thee with a weighty matter. Are thy shoulders strong enough to bear such burden?"

"I will do my best, Father," answered Clare, whose eyes bespoke both sympathy and readiness for service.

"I think thou wilt, my good lass. Go to, then:—choose thou, out of thine own and Blanche's gear, such matter as ye may need for a month or so. Have Barbara to aid thee. I would fain ye were hence ere supper-time, so haste all thou canst. I will go and speak with Master Tremayne, but I am well assured he shall receive you."

A month at the parsonage! How delightful!—thought Clare. Yet something by no means delightful had evidently led to it.

"Clare!" her mother called to her as she was leaving the room,—*"Clare! have a care thou put up Blanche's blue kersey. I would not have her in rags, even yonder; and that brown woolsey shall not be well for another month. And, —Blanche, child, go thou with Clare; see thou have ruffs enow; and take thy pearl chain withal."*

Blanche was relieved by being told to accompany her sister. She had been afraid that she was about to be put in the dark closet like a naughty child, with no permission to exercise her own will about anything. And just now, the parsonage looked to her a dark closet indeed.

But Sir Thomas turned quickly on hearing this, with—*"Orige, I desire Blanche to abide here. If there be aught she would have withal, she can tell Clare of it."*

And, closing the door, he left the three together.

"Oh!—very well," said Lady Enville, rather crossly. Blanche sat down again.

"What shall I put for thee, Blanche?" asked Clare gently.

"What thou wilt," muttered Blanche sulkily.

"I will lay out what I think shall like thee best," was her sister's kind reply.

"I would like my green sleeves, (Note 1) and my tawny kirtle," said Blanche in a slightly mollified tone.

"Very well," replied Clare, and hastened away to execute her commission, calling Barbara as she went.

"What ado doth Sir Thomas make of this matter!" said Lady Enville, applying again to the pomander. "If he would have been ruled by me—Blanche, child, hast any other edge of pearl?" (Note 2.)

"Ay, Mother," said Blanche absently.

"Metrusteth 'tis not so narrow as that thou wearest. It becometh thee not. And the guarding of that gown is ill done—who set it on?"

Blanche did not remember—and, just then, she did not care.

"Whoso it were, she hath need be ashamed thereof. Come hither, child."

Blanche obeyed, and while her mother gave a pull here, and smoothed down a fold there, she stood patiently enough in show, but most unquietly in heart.

"Nought would amend it, save to pick it off and set it on again," said Lady Enville, resigning her endeavours. "Now, Blanche, if thou art to abide at the parsonage, where I cannot have an eye upon thee, I pray thee remember thyself, who thou art, and take no fantasies in thine head touching Arthur Tremayne."

Arthur Tremayne! What did Blanche care for Arthur Tremayne?

"I am sore afeard, Blanche, lest thou shouldst forget thee. It will not matter for Clare. If he be a parson's son, yet is he a Tremayne of Tremayne,—quite good enough for Clare, if no better hap should chance unto her. But thou art of better degree by thy father's side, and we look to have thee well matched, according thereto. Thy father will not hear of Don John, because he is a Papist, and a Spaniard to boot: elsewise I had seen no reason to gainsay thee, poor child! But of course he must have his way. Only have a care, Blanche, and take not up with none too mean for thy degree,—specially now, while thou art out of our wardship."

There was no answer from Blanche.

"Mistress Tremayne will have a care of thee, maybe," pursued her mother, unfurling her fan—merely as a plaything, for the weather did not by any means require it. "Yet 'tis but nature she should work to have Arthur well matched,

and she wot, of course, that thou shouldst be a rare catch for him. So do thou have a care, Blanche."

And Lady Enville, leaning back among her cushions, furled and unfurled her handsome fan, alike unconscious and uncaring that she had been guilty of the greatest injustice to poor Thekla Tremayne.

There was a rap at the door, and enter Rachel, looking as if she had imbibed an additional pound of starch since leaving the room.

"Sister, would you have Blanche's tartaryn gown withal, or no?"

"The crimson? Let me see," said Lady Enville reflectively. "Ay, Rachel,—she may as well have it. I would not have thee wear it but for Sundays and holy days, Blanche. For common days, *there*, thy blue kersey is full good enough."

Without any answer, and deliberately ignoring the presence of Blanche, Rachel stalked away.

It was a weary interval until Sir Thomas, returned. Now and then Clare flitted in and out, to ask her mother's wishes concerning different things: Jennet came in with fresh wood for the fire; Lady Enville continued to give cautions and charges, as they occurred to her, now regarding conduct and now costume: but a miserable time Blanche found it. She felt herself, and she fancied every one else considered her, in dire disgrace. Yet beneath all the mortification, the humiliation, and the grief over which she was brooding, there was a conviction in the depth of Blanche's heart, resist it as she might, that the father who was crossing her will was a wiser and truer friend to her than the mother who would have granted it.

Sir Thomas came at last. He wore a very tired look, and seemed as if he had grown several years older in that day.

"Well, all is at a point, Orige," he said. "Master Tremayne hath right kindly given consent to receive both the maids into his house, for so long a time as we may desire it; but Mistress Tremayne would have Barbara come withal, if it may stand with thy conveniency. She hath but one serving-maid, as thou wist; and it should be more comfortable to the childre to have her, beside the saving of some pain (trouble, labour) unto Mistress Tremayne."

"They can have her well enough, trow," answered Lady Enville. "I seldom make use of her. Jennet doth all my matters."

"But how for Meg and Lucrece?"

Barbara's position in the household was what we should term the young ladies' maid; but maids in those days were on very familiar and confidential terms with their ladies.

"Oh, they will serve them some other way," said Lady Enville carelessly.

The convenience of other people was of very slight account in her Ladyship's eyes, so long as there was no interference with her own.

"Cannot Kate or Doll serve?" asked Sir Thomas—referring to the two chambermaids.

"Of course they can, if they must," returned their nominal mistress. "Good lack, Sir Thomas!—ask Rachel; I wis nought about the house gear."

Sir Thomas walked off, and said no more.

With great difficulty and much hurrying, the two girls contrived to leave the house just before supper. Sir Thomas was determined that there should be no further interview between Blanche and Don Juan. Nor would he have one himself, until he had time to consider his course more fully. He supped in his own chamber. Lady Enville presented herself in the hall, and was particularly gracious; Rachel uncommonly stiff; Margaret still and meditative; Lucrece outwardly demure, secretly triumphant.

Supper at the parsonage was deferred for an hour that evening, until the guests should arrive. Mrs Tremayne received both with a motherly kiss. Foolish as she thought Blanche, she looked upon her as being almost as much a victim of others' folly as a sufferer for her own: and Thekla Tremayne knew well that the knowledge that we have ourselves to thank for our suffering does not lessen the pain, but increases it.

The kindness with which Blanche was received—rather as an honoured guest than as a naughty child sent to Coventry—was soothing to her ruffled feelings. Still she had a great deal to bear. She was deeply grieved to be suddenly and completely parted from Don Juan; and she imagined that he would be as much distressed as herself. But the idea of rebelling against her father's decree never entered her head; neither did the least suspicion of Lucrece's share in the matter.

Blanche was rather curious to ascertain how much Clare knew of her proceedings, and what she thought of them. Now it so happened that in the haste of the departure, Clare had been told next to nothing. The reason of this hasty flight to the parsonage was all darkness to her, except for the impression which she gathered from various items that the step thus taken had reference not to herself, but to Blanche. What her sister had done, was doing, or was expected to do, which required such summary stoppage, Clare could not even guess. Barbara was quite as ignorant. The interviews between Blanche and Don Juan had been so secret, and so little suspected, that the idea of connecting him with the affair did not occur to either.

One precious relic Blanche had brought with her—the lock of hair received from Don Juan on that afternoon which was so short a time back, and felt so terribly long—past and gone, part of another epoch altogether. Indeed, she had not had any opportunity of parting with it, except by yielding it to her father; and for this she saw no necessity, since

he had laid no orders on her concerning Don Juan's gifts. While Clare knelt at her prayers, and Barbara was out of the room, Blanche took the opportunity to indulge in another look at her treasure. It was silky black, smooth and glossy; tied with a fragment of blue ribbon, which Don Juan had assured her was the colour of truth.

"Is he looking at the ringlet of fair hair which I gave him?" thought she fondly. "He will be true to me. Whate'er betide, I know he will be true!"

Poor little Blanche!

Note 1. Sleeves were then separate from the dress, and were fastened into it when put on, according to the fancy of the wearer.

Note 2. Apparently the plaited border worn under the French cap.

Chapter Eight.

Thekla comes to the Rescue.

"It were a well-spent journey,
Though seven deaths lay between."

A.R. Cousins.

"Lysken, didst thou ever love any one very much?"

Blanche spoke dreamily, as she stood leaning against the side of the window in the parsonage parlour, and with busy idleness tied knots in her gold chain, which at once untied themselves by their own weight.

"Most truly," said Lysken, looking up with an expression of surprise. "I love all here—very much."

"Ah! but—not here?"

"Certes. I loved Mayken Floriszoon, who died at Leyden, the day after help came. And I loved Aunt Jacobine; and Vrouw Van Vliet, who took care of me before I came hither. And I loved—O Blanche, how dearly!—my father and my mother."

Blanche's ideas were running in one grove, and Lysken's in quite a different one.

"Ay, but I mean, Lysken—another sort of love."

"Another sort!" said Lysken, looking up again from the stocking which she was darning. "Is there any sort but one?"

"Oh ay!" responded Blanche, feeling her experience immeasurably past that of Lysken.

"Thou art out of my depth, Blanche, methinks," said Lysken, re-threading her needle in a practical unromantic way. "Love is love, for me. It differeth, of course, in degree; we love not all alike. But, methinks, even a man's love for God, though it be needs deeper and higher far, must yet be the same manner of love that he hath for his father, or his childre, or his friends. I see not how it can be otherwise."

Blanche was shocked at the business-like style in which Lysken darned while she talked. Had such a question been asked of herself, the stocking would have stood still till it was settled. She doubted whether to pursue the subject. What was the use of talking upon thrilling topics to a girl who could darn stockings while she calmly analysed love? Still, she wanted somebody's opinion; and she had an instinctive suspicion that Clare would be no improvement upon her cousin.

"Well, but," she said hesitatingly, "there is another fashion of love, Lysken. The sort that a woman hath toward her husband."

"That is deeper, I guess, than she hath for her father and mother, else would she not leave them to go with him," said Lysken quietly; "but I see not wherein it should be another sort."

"'Tis plain thou didst never feel the same, Lysken," returned Blanche sentimentally.

"How could I, when I never had an husband?" answered Lysken, darning away tranquilly.

"But didst thou never come across any that—that thou shouldst fain—"

"Shouldst fain—what?" said Lysken, as Blanche paused.

"Shouldst have liked to wed," said Blanche, plunging into the matter.

"Gramercy, nay!" replied Lysken, turning the stocking to look at the other side. "And I should have thought shame if I had."

Blanche felt this speech a reflection on herself.

"Lysken!" she cried pettishly.

Lysken put down the stocking, and looked at Blanche.

"What meanest thou?" she inquired, in a plain matter-of-fact style which was extremely aggravating to that young lady.

"Oh, 'tis to no good to tell thee," returned Blanche loftily. "Thou wist nought at all thereabout."

"*What* about?" demanded Lysken, to whom Blanche was unintelligible.

"About nought. Let be!"

"I cannot tell wherefore thou art vexed, Blanche," said Lysken, resuming her darning, in that calm style which is eminently provoking to any one in a passion.

"Thou seest not every matter in the world," retorted Blanche, with an air of superiority. "And touching this matter, 'tis plain thou wist nothing. Verily, thou hast gain therein; for he that hath bettered knowledge—as saith Solomon—hath but increased sorrow."

"Blanche, I do not know whereof thou art talking! Did I put thee out by saying I had thought shame to have cared to wed with any, or what was it? Why, wouldst not thou?"

This final affront was as the last straw to the camel. Deigning no answer, which she felt would be an angry one, Blanche marched away like an offended queen, and sat down on a chair in the hall as if she were enthroning herself upon a pedestal. Mrs Tremayne was in the hall, and the door into the parlour being open, she had heard the conversation. She made no allusion to it at the time, but tried to turn the girl's thoughts to another topic. Gathering from it, however, the tone of Blanche's mind, she resolved to give her a lesson which should not eject her roughly from her imaginary pedestal—but make her come down from it of her own accord.

"Poor foolish child!" said Mrs Tremayne to herself. "She has mistaken a rushlight for the sun, and she thinks her horizon wider than that of any one else. She is despising Lysken, at this moment, as a shallow, prosaic character, who cannot enter into the depth of her feelings, and has not attained the height of her experience. And there are heights and depths in Lysken that Blanche will never reach."

Mrs Tremayne found her opportunity the next evening. She was alone with Blanche in the parlour; and knowing pretty well what every one was doing, she anticipated a quiet half-hour.

Of all the persons to whom Blanche was known, there was not one so well fitted to deal with her in this crisis as the friend in whose hands she had been placed for safety. Thirty years before, Thekla Tremayne had experienced a very dark trial,—had become miserably familiar with the heart-sickness of hope deferred,—during four years when the best beloved of Robin Tremayne had known no certainty whether he was living or dead, but had every reason rather to fear the latter. Compared with a deep, long-trying love like hers, this sentimental fancy over which Blanche was making herself cross and unhappy was almost trivial. But Mrs Tremayne knew that trouble is trouble, if it be based on folly; she thought that she recognised in Blanche, silly though she was in some points, a nobler nature than that of the vain, selfish, indolent mother from whom the daughter derived many of the surface features of her character: and she longed to see that nobler nature rouse itself to work, and sweep away the outward vanity and giddiness. It might be that even this would show her the real hollowness of the gilded world; that this one hour's journey over the weary land would help to drive her for shelter to the shadow of the great Rock.

Blanche sat on a low stool at Mrs Tremayne's feet, gazing earnestly into the fire. Neither had spoken for some time, during which the only sounds were the slight movements of Mrs Tremayne as she sat at work, and now and then a heavy sigh from Blanche. When the fifth of these was drawn, the lady gently laid her hand on the girl's head.

"Apothecaries say, Blanche, that sighing shorteneth life."

Blanche looked up. "I reckon you count me but a fool, Mistress Tremayne, as do all other."

"Blanche," said her friend, "I will tell thee a story, and after that thou shall judge for thyself what account I make of thee."

Blanche looked interested, and altered her position so as to watch Mrs Tremayne's face while she was speaking.

"Once upon a time, Blanche,—in the days of Queen Mary,—there was a priest that had a daughter of thine own age—sixteen years. In those days, as I cast no doubt thou hast heard, all wedded priests were laid under ban, and at the last a day was set whereon all they must needs part from their wives. Though my story take root ere this, yet I pray thee bear it in mind, for we shall come thereto anon. Well, this damsel, with assent of her father, was troth-plight unto a young man whom she loved very dearly; but seeing her youth, their wedding was yet some way off. In good sooth, her father had given assent under bond that they should not wed for three years; and the three years should be run out in June, 1553."

"Three years!" said Blanche, under her breath.

"This young man was endeavouring himself for the priesthood. During the time of King Edward, thou wist, there was no displeasure taken at married priests; and so far as all they might see when the three years began to run, all was like to go smooth enough. But when they were run out, all England was trembling with fear, and men took much thought (felt much anxiety) for the future. King Edward lay on his dying bed; and there was good reason—ah! more reason than any man then knew!—to fear that the fair estate of such as loved the Gospel should die with him. For a

maid then to wed a priest, or for a wedded man to receive orders, was like to a man casting him among wild beasts: there was but a chance that he might not be devoured. So it stood, that if this young man would save his life, he must give up one of two things,—either the service which for many months back he had in his own heart offered to God, or the maiden whom, for a time well-nigh as long, he had hoped should be his wife. What, thinkest thou, should he have done, Blanche?”

“I wis not, in very deed, Mistress Tremayne,” said Blanche, shaking her head. “I guess he should have given up rather her,—but I know not. Methinks it had been sore hard to give up either. And they were troth-plaint.”

“Well,—I will tell thee what they did. They did appoint a set time, at the end whereof, should he not then have received orders (it being not possible, all the Protestant Bishops being prisoners), he should then resign the hope thereof, and they twain be wed. The three years, thou wist, were then gone. They fixed the time two years more beyond,—to run out in August, 1555—which should make five years’ waiting in all.”

“And were they wed then?” said Blanche, drawing a long breath.

“When the two further years were run out, Blanche—”

Blanche was a little startled to hear how Mrs Tremayne’s voice trembled. She was evidently telling “an owre true tale.”

“The maid’s father, and he that should have been her husband, were taken in one day. When those two years were run out, her father lay hidden away, having ’scaped from prison, until he might safely be holpen out of the country over seas: and the young man was a captive in Exeter Castle, and in daily expectation of death.”

“Good lack!”

“And two years thereafter, the young man was had away from Exeter unto Woburn, and there set in the dread prison called Little Ease, shaped like to a funnel, wherein a man might neither stand, nor sit, nor lie, nor kneel.”

“O Mistress Tremayne! Heard any ever the like! And what came of the maiden, poor soul?”

The needlework in Mrs Tremayne’s hand was still now; and if any one had been present who had known her thirty years before, he would have said that a shadow of her old look at that terrible time had come back to her deep sweet eyes.

“My child, God allowed her to be brought very low. At the first, she was upheld mightily by His consolations: and they that saw her said how well she bare it. But ’tis not alway the first blush of a sorrow that trieth the heart most sorely. And there came after this a time—when it was an old tale to them that knew her, and their comforting was given over,—a day came when all failed her. Nay, I should have said rather, all seemed to fail her. God failed her not; but her eyes were holden, and she saw Him not beside her. It was darkness, an horror of great darkness, that fell upon her. The Devil came close enough; he was very busy with her. Was there any hope? quoth he. Nay, none, or but very little. Then of what worth were God’s promises to hear and deliver? He had passed His word, and He kept it not. Was God able to help?—was He true to His promise?—go to, was there any God in Heaven at all? And so, Blanche, she was tossed to and fro on the swelling billows, now up, seeing a faint ray of light, now down, in the depth of the darkness: yet, through all, with an half-palsied grasp, so to speak, upon the hem of Christ’s garment, a groping after Him with numb hands that scarce felt whether they held or no. O Blanche, it was like the plague in the land of Egypt—it was darkness that might be felt!”

Blanche listened in awed interest.

“Dear heart, the Lord hath passed word to help His people in their need; but He saith not any where that He will alway help them right as they would have it. We be prone to think there is but one fashion of help, and that if we be not holpen after our own manner, we be not holpen at all. Yet, if thou take a penny from a poor beggar, and give him in the stead thereof an angel (half-sovereign), thou hast given him alms, though he have lost the penny. Alas, for us poor beggars! we fall to weeping o’er our penny till our eyes be too dim with tears to see the gold of God’s alms. Dear Blanche, I would not have thee miss the gold.”

“I scantly conceive your meaning, dear Mistress.”

“We will come back to that anon. I will first tell thee what befel her of whom I spake.”

“Ay, I would fain hear the rest.”

“Well, there were nigh four years of that fearful darkness. She well-nigh forgat that God might have some better thing in store for her, to the which He was leading her all the time, along this weary road. She thought He dealt hardly with her. At times, when the darkness was at the thickest, she fancied that all might be a delusion: that there was no God at all, or none that had any compassion upon men. But it was not His meaning, to leave one of His own in that black pit of despair. He lifted one end of the dark veil. When the four years were over,—that is, when Queen Elizabeth, that now is, happily succeeded to her evil sister,—God gave the maiden back her father safe.”

Blanche uttered a glad “Oh!”

“And He gave her more than that, Blanche. He sent her therewith a message direct from Himself. Thou lookest on me somewhat doubtfully, dear heart, as though thou shouldst say, Angels bring no wolds from Heaven now o’ days. Well, in very sooth, I wis not whether they do or no. We see them not: can we speak more boldly than to say this? Yet one thing I know, Blanche: God can send messages to His chidre in their hearts, howso they may come. And what was this word? say thine eyes. Well, sweeting, it was the softest of all the chidings that we hear Him to have laid on His

disciples,—‘O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?’ As though He should say,—‘Thou mightest have doubted of the fulfilling of thy special hope; yet wherefore doubt *Me*? Would I have taken pleasure in bereaving thee of aught that was not hurtful? Could I not have given thee much more than this? Because I made thine heart void, that I might fill it with Myself,—child, did I love thee less, or more?’”

Mrs Tremayne paused so long, that Blanche asked timidly—“And did he come again at last, or no?”

A slight, sudden movement of her friend’s head showed that her thoughts were far away, and that she came back to the present with something like an effort.

“Methinks, dear heart,” Mrs Tremayne said lovingly, “there was a special point whereto God did desire to bring this maiden;—a point whereto He oft-times aimeth in the training of His childre. It is, to be satisfied with His will. Not only to submit thereto. Thou mayest submit unto all outward seeming, and yet be sore dissatisfied.”

Was not this Blanche’s position at that moment?

“But to be satisfied with His ordering—to receive it as the best thing, dearer unto thee than thine own will and way; as the one thing which thou wouldst have done, at the cost, if need be, of all other:—ah, Blanche, ’tis no light nor easy thing, this! And unto this God led her of whom I have been telling thee. He led her, till she could look up to Him, and say, with a true, honest heart—‘Father, lead where Thou wilt. If in the dark, well: so Thou hold me, I am content I am Thine, body, and soul, and spirit: it shall be well and blessed for me, if but Thy will be done.’ And then, Blanche,—when she could look up and say this in sincerity—then He laid down His rod, and gave all back into her bosom.”

Blanche drew a deep sigh,—partly of relief, but not altogether.

“You knew this maiden your own self, Mrs Tremayne?”

“Wouldst thou fain know whom the maid were, Blanche? Her name was—Thekla Rose.”

“Mistress Tremayne!—yourself?”

“Myself, dear heart. And I should not have gone back over this story now, but that I thought it might serve thee to hear it. I love not to look back to that time, though it were to mine own good. ’Tis like an ill wound which is healed, and thou hast no further suffering thereof: yet the scar is there for evermore. And yet, dear Blanche, if it were given me to choose, now, whether I would have that dark and weary time part of my life, or no—reckoning what I should have lost without it—I would say once again, Ay. They that know the sweetness of close walking with God will rather grope, step by step, at His side through the darkness, than walk smoothly in the full glare of the sun without Him: and very sweet was my walk, when I had won back the felt holding of His hand.”

“But is He not with them in the sunlight?” asked Blanche shyly.

“He is alway with them, dear heart: but we see his light clearest when other lights are out. And we be so prone to walk further off in the daylight!—we see so many things beside Him. We would fain be running off after birds and butterflies; fain be filling our hands with bright flowers by the way: and we picture not rightly to ourselves that these things are but to cheer us on as we step bravely forward, for there will be flowers enough when we reach Home.”

Blanche looked earnestly into the red embers, and was silent.

“Seest thou now, Blanche, what I meant in saying, I would not have thee miss the gold?”

“I reckon you mean that God hath somewhat to give, better than what He taketh away.”

“Right, dear heart. Ah, how much better! Yet misconceive me not, my child. We do not buy Heaven with afflictions; never think that, Blanche. There be many that have made that blunder. Nay! the beggar buyeth not thy gold with his penny piece. Christ hath bought Heaven for His chosen: it is the purchase of His blood; and nothing else in all the world could have paid for it. But they that shall see His glory yonder, must be fitted for it here below; and oft-times God employeth sorrows and cares to this end.—And now, Blanche, canst answer thine own question, and tell me what I think of thee?”

Blanche blushed scarlet.

“I am afeared,” she said, hanging down her head, “you must think me but a right silly child.”

Mrs Tremayne stroked Blanche’s hair, with a little laugh.

“I think nothing very ill of thee, dear child. But I do think thou hast made a blunder or twain.”

“What be they?” Blanche wished to know, more humbly than she would have done that morning.

“Well, dear Blanche—firstly, I think thou hast mistaken fancy for love. There be many that so do. Many think they love another, when in truth all they do love is themselves and their own pleasures, or the flattering of their own vain conceits. Ask thine own heart what thou lovest in thy lover: is it him, or his liking for thyself? If it be but the latter, that is not love, Blanche. ’Tis but fancy, which is to love as the waxen image to the living man. Love would have him it loveth bettered at her own cost: it would fain see him higher and nobler—I mean not higher in men’s eyes, but nearer Heaven and God—whatever were the price to herself. True love will go with us into Heaven, Blanche: it can never die, nor be forgotten. Remember the word of John the Apostle, that ‘he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.’ And wouldst thou dare to apply that holy and heavenly name unto some vain fancy that shall be as though it had never been six months thereafter? My child, we men and women be verily guilty concerning this

matter. We take the name of that which is the very essence of God, and set it lightly on a thing of earth and time, the which shall perish in the using. Well, and there is another mistake, sweet, which I fear thou mayest have made. It may be thou art thinking wrongfully of thine earthly father, as I did of my heavenly One. He dealeth with thee hardly, countest thou? Well, it may be so; yet it is to save thee from that which should be much harder. Think no ill of the father who loveth thee and would fain save thee. And, O Blanche! howsoever He may deal with thee, never, never do thou think hardly of that heavenly Father, who loveth thee far dearer than he, and would save thee from far bitterer woe."

Blanche had looked very awe-struck when Mrs Tremayne spoke so solemnly of the real nature of love; and now she raised tearful eyes to her friend's face.

"I thought none ill of my father, Mistress Tremayne. I wis well he loveth me."

"That is well, dear heart. I am fain it should be so."

And there the subject dropped rather abruptly, as first Clare, and then Arthur, came into the room.

Don Juan did not appear to miss Blanche, after the first day. When he found that she and her father and sister were absent from the supper-table, he looked round with some surprise and a little perplexity; but he asked no question, and no one volunteered an explanation. He very soon found a new diversion, in the shape of Lucrece, to whom he proceeded to address his flowery language with even less sincerity than he had done to Blanche. But no sooner did Sir Thomas perceive this turn of affairs than he took the earliest opportunity of sternly demanding of his troublesome prisoner "what he meant?"

Don Juan professed entire ignorance of the purport of this question. Sir Thomas angrily explained.

"Nay, Señor, what would you?" inquired the young Spaniard, with an air of injured innocence. "An Andalusian gentleman, wheresoever he may be, and in what conditions, must always show respect to the ladies."

"Respect!" cried the enraged squire. "Do Spanish gentlemen call such manner of talk showing respect? Thank Heaven that I was born in England! Sir, when an English gentleman carries himself toward a young maiden as you have done, he either designs to win her in honourable wedlock, or he is a villain. Which are you?"

"If we were in Spain, Señor," answered Don Juan, fire flashing from his dark eyes, "you would answer those words with your sword. But since I am your prisoner, and have no such remedy, I must be content with a reply in speech. The customs of your land are different from ours. I will even condescend to say that I am, and for divers years have so been, affianced to a lady of mine own country. Towards the *señoritas* your daughters, I have shown but common courtesy, as it is understood in Spain."

In saying which, Don Juan stated what was delicately termed by Swift's Houynhnms, "the thing which is not." Of what consequence was it in his eyes, when the Council of Constance had definitively decreed that "no faith was to be kept with heretics"?

Sir Thomas Enville was less given to the use of profane language than most gentlemen of his day, but in answer to this speech he swore roundly, and—though a staunch Protestant—thanked all the saints and angels that he never was in Spain, and, the Queen's Highness' commands excepted, never would be. As to his daughters, he would prefer turning them all into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace to allowing one of them to set foot on the soil of that highly objectionable country. These sentiments were couched in the most peppery language of which the Squire's lips were well capable; and having thus delivered himself, he turned on his heel and left Don Juan to his own meditations.

That *caballero* speedily discovered that he had addressed his last compliment to any of the young ladies at Enville Court. Henceforward he only saw them at meals, and then he found himself, much to his discomfiture, placed between Jack and Mistress Rachel. To pay delicate attentions to the latter was sheer waste of frankincense: yet it was so much in his nature, when speaking to a woman, that he began to tell her that she talked like an angel. Mistress Rachel looked him full in the face.

"Don John," said she, in the most unmoved manner, "if I believed you true, I should call on my brother to put you forth of the hall. As I believe you false, I do it not."

After that day, Don Juan directed all his conversation to Jack.

He was not very sorry to leave Enville Court, which had become no longer an amusing, but an uncomfortable place. In his eyes, it was perfectly monstrous that any man should object to his daughters being honoured by the condescending notice of an Andalusian gentleman, who would one day be a grandee of the first class; utterly preposterous! But since this unreasonable man was so absurd as to object to the distinction, conferred upon his house, it was as well that an Andalusian gentleman should be out of his sphere. So Don Juan went willingly to London. Friends of his parents made suit for him, and Elizabeth herself remembered his mother, as one who had done her several little kindnesses, such as a Lady-in-Waiting on the Queen could do for a Princess under a cloud; and Don Juan received a free pardon, and leave to return home when and as he would. He only broke one more heart while he remained in England; and that was beneath any regret on his part, being only a poor, insignificant grocer's daughter. And then he sailed for Spain; and then he married Doña Lisarda; and then he became a Lord-in-Waiting; and then he lived a wealthy, gorgeous, prosperous life; and then all men spoke well of him, seeing how much good he had done to himself; and then he grew old,—a highly respected, highly self-satisfied man.

And then his soul was required of him. Did God say to him,—"Thou fool"?

Chapter Nine.

Too abstruse for Blanche.

"Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies!
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;
And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast."

Cowper.

"I did conceive, Mistress Blanche," said Mr Tremayne one morning, as the party rose from the breakfast-table, "that you would with a good will see the picture of Clare's grandsire, the which hangeth in my study-chamber?"

"Oh ay, an' it like you," responded Blanche eagerly.

Clare had seen the portrait, but not Blanche. Mr Tremayne led the way to his study, allowed her to examine the likeness at her leisure, and answered all her questions about John Avery. Entrapped Blanche did not realise that he was catching her with the same sort of guile which Saint Paul used towards the Corinthians. (2 Corinthians 12, 16) Mrs Tremayne came in, and sat down quietly with her work, before the inspection was over. When her curiosity was at length satisfied, Blanche thanked Mr Tremayne, and would have left the room with a courtesy: but such was by no means the intention of her pastor.

"I have heard, say, Mistress Blanche," said he quietly, "that your mind hath been somewhat unsettled touching the difference, or the lack of difference, betwixt us and the Papists. If so be, pray you sit down, and give us leave to talk the same over."

Blanche felt caught at last. It must be Sir Thomas, of course, who had told the Rector, for there was no one else who could have done it. And it may be added, though Blanche did not know it, that her father had specially begged Mr Tremayne to examine into the matter, and to set Blanche right on any points whereon she might have gone wrong.

Thus brought to a stand and forced to action, it was Blanche's nature to behave after the manner of a mule in the same predicament, and to affect stronger contrary convictions than she really felt. It was true, she said rather bluntly: she did think there was very little, if any, difference between many doctrines held by the rival Churches.

"There is all the difference that is betwixt Heaven and earth," answered Mr Tremayne. "Nay, I had well-nigh said, betwixt Heaven and Hell: for I do believe the Devil to have been the perverter of truth with those corruptions that are in Papistry. But I pray you, of your gentleness, to tell me of one matter wherein, as you account, no difference lieth?"

With what power of intellect she had—which was not much—Blanche mentally ran over the list, and selected the item on which she thought Mr Tremayne would find least to say.

"It seemeth me you be too rude (harsh, severe) to charge the Papists with idolatry," she said. "They be no more idolaters than we."

"No be they? How so, I pray you?"

"Why, the images in their churches be but for the teaching of such as cannot read, nor do they any worship unto the image, but only unto him that is signified thereby. Moreover, they pray not unto the saints, as you would have it; they do but ask the saints' prayers for them. Surely I may ask my father to pray for me, and you would not say that I prayed unto him!"

"I pray you, pull bridle there, Mistress Blanche," said Mr Tremayne, smiling; "for you have raised already four weighty points, the which may not be expounded in a moment. I take them, an' it like you, not justly in your order, but rather in the order wherein they do affect each other. And first, under your good pleasure,—what is prayer?"

Blanche was about to reply at once, when it struck her that the question involved more than she supposed. She would have answered,—*"Why, saying my prayers:"* but the idea came to her, *Was* that prayer? And she felt instinctively that, necessarily, it was not. She thought a moment, and then answered slowly;—

"I would say that it is to ask somewhat with full desire to obtain the same."

"Is that all?" replied Mr Tremayne.

Blanche thought so.

"Methinks there is more therein than so. For it implieth, beyond this, full belief that he whom you shall ask,—firstly, can hear you; secondly, is able to grant you; thirdly, is willing to grant you."

"Surely the saints be willing to pray for us!"

"How know you they can hear us?"

Blanche thought, and thought, and could find no reason for supposing it.

"Again, how know you they can grant us?"

"But they pray!"

"They praise, and they hold communion: I know not whether they offer petitions or no."

Blanche sat meditating.

"You see, therefore, there is no certainty on the first and most weighty of all these points. We know not that any saint can hear us. But pass that—grant, for our talk's sake, that they have knowledge of what passeth on earth, and can hear when we do speak to them. How then? Here is Saint Mary, our Lord's mother, sitting in Heaven; and upon earth there be petitions a-coming up unto her, at one time, from Loretto in Italy, and from Nuremburg in Germany, and from Seville in Spain, and from Bruges in Flanders, and from Paris in France, and from Bideford in Devon, and from Kirkham in Lancashire. Mistress Blanche, if she can hear and make distinction betwixt all these at the self-same moment, then is she no woman like to you. Your brain should be mazed with the din, and spent with the labour. Invocation declareth omnipotency. And there is none almighty save One,—that is, God."

"But," urged Blanche, "the body may be one whither, and the spirit another. And Saint Mary is a spirit."

"Truly so. Yet the spirit can scantily be in ten places at one time—how much less a thousand?"

Blanche was silent.

"The next thing, I take it, is that they pray not unto the saints, but do ask the saints only to pray for them. If the saints hear them not, the one is as futile as the other. But I deny that they do not pray unto the saints."

Mr Tremayne went to his bookcase, and came back with a volume in his hand.

"Listen here, I pray you—'Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and after Him mine only hope, pray for me, and guard me during this night'—'Give me power to fight against thine enemies'—'Great God, who by the resurrection of Thy Son Jesus Christ hast rejoiced the world, we pray Thee, grant that by His blessed mother the Virgin Mary we may obtain the bliss of eternal life'—'Make mine heart to burn with love for Jesus Christ,—make me to feel the death of Jesus Christ in mine heart,—cause to be given unto us the joys of Paradise—O Jesu! O Mary! cause me to be truly troubled for my sins.' These, Mistress Blanche, be from the book that is the Common Prayer of the Papistical Church: and all these words be spoken unto Mary. As you well see, I cast no doubt, they do ascribe unto her divinity. For none can effectually work upon man's heart—save the Holy Ghost only. None other can cause his heart to be 'truly troubled for sin;' none other can make his heart to burn. Now what think you of this, Mistress Blanche? Is it praying unto the saints, or no?"

What Blanche thought, she did not say; but if it could be guessed from the expression of her face, she was both shocked and astonished.

"Now come we to the third point: to wit, that images be as pictures for the teaching of such as have no learning. Methinks, Mistress Blanche, that God is like to be wiser than all men. There must needs have been many Israelites in the wilderness that had no learning: yet His command unto them, as unto us, is, 'Ye shall not make unto you *any* graven image.' I take it that the small good that might thereby be done (supposing any such to be) should be utterly overborne of the accompanying evil. Moreover, when you do learn the vulgar, you would, I hope, learn them that which is true. Is it true, I pray you, that Mary was borne into Heaven of angels, like as Christ did Himself ascend?—or that being thus carried thither, she was crowned of God, as a queen? Dear maid, we have the Master's word touching all such, pourtrayments. 'The graven images of *their* gods shall ye burn with fire.—Thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.'" (Deuteronomy twelve, verses 25, 26.)

"O Mr Tremayne!" said Blanche, with a horrified look. "You would surely ne'er call a picture or an image of our Lord's own mother a thing accursed?"

"But I would, my maid," he answered very gravely, "that instant moment that there should be given thereunto the honour and worship and glory that be only due to Him. 'My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.' Nay, I would call an image of Christ Himself a thing accursed, if it stood in His place in the hearts of men. Mark you, King Hezekiah utterly destroyed the serpent of brass that was God's own appointed likeness of Christ, that moment that the children of Israel did begin to burn incense unto it, thereby making it an idol."

"But in the Papistical Church they be no idols, Master Tremayne!" interposed Blanche eagerly. "Therein lieth the difference betwixt Popery and Paganism."

"What should you say, Mistress Blanche, if you wist that therein lieth *no* difference betwixt Popery and Paganism? The old Pagans were wont to say the same thing. (Note 1.) They should have laughed in your face if you had charged them with worshipping wood and stone, and have answered that they worshipped only the thing signified. So much is it thus, that amongst some Pagan nations, they do hold that their god cometh down in his proper person into the image for a season (like as the Papists into the wafer of the sacrament), and when they account him gone, they cast the image away as no more worth. Yet hark you how God Himself accounteth of this their worship. 'He maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto IT, and worshippeth IT, and prayeth unto IT, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god.' And list also how He expoundeth the same:—'A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?' (Isaiah 44, verses 17, 20.) There should be little idolatry in this world if there were no deceived hearts."

Blanche twisted her handkerchief about, in the manner of a person who is determined not to be convinced, yet can find nothing to say in answer.

"Tell me, Mistress Blanche,—for I think too well of your good sense to doubt the same,—you cannot believe that Christ Himself is in a piece of bread?"

In her inmost heart she certainly believed no such thing. But it would never do to retreat from her position. In Blanche's eyes, disgrace lay not in being mistaken, but in being shown the mistake.

"Wherefore may it not be so?" she murmured. "'Tis matter of faith, in like manner as is our Lord's resurrection."

"In like manner? I cry you mercy. You believe the resurrection on the witness of them that knew it—that saw the sepulchre void; that saw Christ, and spake with Him, and did eat and drink with Him, and knew Him to be the very same Jesus that had died. You can bear no witness either way, for you were not there. But in this matter of the bread, here are you; and you see it for yourself not to be as you be told. Your eyes tell you that they behold bread; your hands tell you that they handle bread; your tongue tells you that it tasteth bread. The witness of your senses is in question: and these three do agree that the matter is bread only."

"The senses may be deceived, I reckon?"

"The senses may be deceived; and, as meseemeth, after two fashions: firstly, when the senses themselves be not in full healthfulness and vigour. Thus, if a man have some malady in his eyes, that he know himself to see things mistakenly, from the relation of other around him, then may he doubt what his eyes see with regard to this matter. Secondly, a man must not lean on his senses touching matters that come not within the discerning of sense. Now in regard to this bread, the Papists do overreach themselves. Did they but tell us that the change made was mystical and of faith,—not within the discernment of sense—we might then find it harder work to deal withal, and we must seek unto the Word of God only, and not unto our sense in any wise. But they go farther: they tell us the change is such, that there is *no more the substance of bread left at all*. (Note 2.) This therefore is matter within the discerning of sense. If it be thus, then this change is needs one that I can see, can taste, can handle. I know, at my own table, whether I eat flesh or bread; how then should I be unable to know the same at the table of the Lord? Make it matter of sense, and I must needs submit it to the judgment of my senses. But now to take the other matter,—to wit, of faith. Christ said unto the Jews, 'The bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' They took Him right as the Papists do. They 'strave among themselves, saying, How shall this man give us his flesh to eat?' Now mark you our Lord's answer. Doth He say, 'Ye do ill to question this matter; 'tis a mystery of the Church; try it not by sense, but believe?' Nay, He openeth the door somewhat wider, and letteth in another ray of light upon the signification of His words. He saith to them,—'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have *no life* in you.' I pray you, what manner of life? Surely not the common life of nature, for that may be sustained by other food. The life, then, is a spiritual life; and how shall spiritual life be sustained by natural meat? The meat must be spiritual, if the life be so. Again He saith,—'He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.' Now, if the eating be after a literal manner, so also must be the dwelling. Our bodies, therefore, must be withinside the body of Christ in Heaven, and His body must be withinside every one of ours on earth. That this is impossible and ridiculous alike, I need not to tell you. Mistress Blanche, faith is not to believe whatsoever any shall tell you. It is less to believe a thing than to trust a man. And I can only trust a man on due testimony that he is worthy trust."

"But this is to trust Christ our Lord," said Blanche.

"Ay so, my maid? Or is it rather to trust our own fantasy of what Christ would say?"

Blanche was silent for a moment; then she answered,—“But He did say, 'This is My body.'”

"Will you go further, an' it like you?"

"How, Master Tremayne?"

"'This is My body, which is broken for you.' Was the bread that He held in His hand the body that was broken? Did that morsel of bread take away the sin of the world? Look you, right in so far as the bread was the body, in so far also was the breaking of that bread the death of that body,—and no further. Now, Mistress Blanche, was the breaking of the bread the death of the body? Think thereon, and answer me."

"It was an emblem or representation thereof, no doubt," she said slowly.

"Good. Then, inasmuch as the breaking did set forth the death, in so much did the bread set forth the body. If the one be an emblem, so must be the other."

"That may be, perchance," said Blanche, sheering off from the subject, as she found it passing beyond her, and requiring the troublesome effort of thought: "but, Master Tremayne, there is one other matter whereon the speech of you Gospellers verily offendeth me no little."

"Pray you, tell me what it is, Mistress Blanche."

"It is the little honour, or I might well say the dishonour, that you do put upon Saint Mary the blessed Virgin. Surely, of all that He knew and loved on this earth, she must have been the dearest unto our Lord. Why then thus scrimp and scant the reverence due unto her? Verily, in this matter, the Papists do more meetly than you."

"'More meetly'—wherewith, Mistress Blanche? With the truth of Holy Scripture, or with the fantasies of human nature?"

"I would say," repeated Blanche rather warmly, "that her honour must be very dear to her blessed Son."

"There is one honour ten thousand-fold dearer unto His heart, my maid, and that is the honour of God His eternal Father. All honour, that toucheth not this, I am ready to pay to her. But tell me wherefore you think she must be His dearest?"

"Because it must needs be thus," replied illogical Blanche.

"I would ask you to remember, Mistress Blanche, that He hath told us the clean contrary."

Blanche looked up with an astonished expression.

"'Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' Equally honourable, equally dear, with that mother of His flesh whom you would fain upraise above all other women. And I am likewise disposed to think that word of Paul,—'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more'—I say, I am disposed to think this may have his reverse side. Though He hath known us after the flesh, yet thus, now that He is exalted to the right hand of God, He knoweth us no more. And if so, then Mary is now unto Him but one of a multitude of saved souls, all equally fair and dear and precious in the eyes of Him that died for them."

"O Master Tremayne!"

"What would you say, Mistress Blanche?"

"That is truly—it sounds so cold!" said Blanche, disparagingly.

"Doth it so?" asked the Rector, smiling. "Cold, that all should be beloved of His heart? Dear maid, 'tis not that He loveth her the less, but that He loveth the other more."

As Blanche made no response, Mr Tremayne went on.

"There is another side to this matter, Mistress Blanche, that I daresay you have ne'er looked upon: and it toucheth at once the matter of images, and the reverence due unto Saint Mary. Know you that great part of the images held in worship for her by the Papists, be no images of her at all? All the most ancient—and many be very ancient—were ne'er made for Mary. The marvel-working black Virgins—our Lady of Einsiedeln, our Lady of Loretto, and all such—be in very truth old idols, of a certain Tuscan or Etruscan goddess, elder than the days of the Romans. (Note 3.) Again, all they that are of fair complexion—such as have grey eyes (blue eyes were then called grey) and yellow hair—these be not Mary the Jewess. We can cast no doubt she was dark. Whence then come all these fair-complexioned pictures? We might take it, in all likelihood, from the fancy of the painters, that did account a fair woman to be of better favour than a dark. But search you into past history, and you shall find it not thus. These fair-favoured pictures be all of another than Mary; to wit, of that ancient goddess, in her original of the Babylonians, that was worshipped under divers names all over the world,—in Egypt as Isis; in Greece, as Athene, Artemis, and Aphrodite; in Rome as Juno, Diana, and Venus: truly, every goddess was but a diversity of this one. (Note 4.) These, then, be no pictures of the Maid of Nazareth. And 'tis the like of other images,—they be christened idols. The famed Saint Peter, in his church at Rome is but a christened Jupiter. Wit you how Paganism was got rid of? It was by receiving of it into the very bosom of the Roman Church. The ceremonies of the Pagans were but turned,—from Ceres, Cybele, Isis, or Aphrodite, unto Mary—from Apollo, Bacchus, Osiris, Tammuz, unto Christ. Thus, when these Pagans found that they did in very deed worship the same god, and with the same observances, as of old—for the change was in nothing save the name only—they became Christians by handfuls;—yea, by cityfuls. What marvel, I pray you? But how shall we call this Church of Rome, that thus bewrayed her trust, and sold her Lord again like Judas? An idolatrous Christianity—nay, rather a baptised idolatry! God hath writ her name, Mistress Blanche, on the last page of His Word; and it is, Babylon, Mother of all Abominations."

"I do marvel, Master Tremayne," said Blanche a little indignantly, though in a constrained voice, "how you dare bring such ill charges against the Papistical Church. Do they not set great store by holiness, I pray you? Yea, have they not monks and nuns, and a celibate priesthood, consecrate to greater holiness than other? How can you charge them with wickedness and abomination?"

"Poor child!" murmured the Rector, as if to himself,—"she little wist what manner of life idolaters term holiness! Mistress Blanche, yonder cloak of professed holiness hideth worsere matter than you can so much as think on. 'Tis not I that set that name on the Papistical Church. It was God Himself. Will you tell me, moreover, an' it like you,—What is holiness?"

"Goodness—right-doing."

"Those be unclear words, methinks. They may mean well-nigh aught. For me, I would say, Holiness is walking with God, and according to the will of God."

"Well! Is not God pleased with the doing of good?"

"God is pleased with nothing but Christ. He is not pleased with you because of your deeds. He must first accept *you*, and that not for any your deserving, but for the sake of the alone merits of His Son; and then He shall be pleased with your deeds, since they shall be such as His Spirit shall work in you. But nothing can please God except that which cometh from God. Your works, apart from Him, be dead works. And you cannot serve the living God with dead works."

Blanche's half-unconscious shrug of the shoulders conveyed the information that this doctrine was not agreeable to her.

"Surely God will be pleased with us if we do out best!" she muttered.

"By no means," said Mr Tremayne quietly. "Your best is not good enough for God. He likeneth that best of yours to filthy rags. What should you say to one that brought you a present of filthy rags, so foul that you could not so much

as touch them?"

Blanche, who was extremely dainty as to what she touched, quite appreciated this simile. She found an answer, nevertheless.

"God is merciful, Mr Tremayne. You picture Him as hard and unpitiful."

"Verily, Mistress Blanche, God is merciful: more than you nor I may conceive. But God hath no mercies outside of Christ. Come to Him bringing aught in your hand save Christ, and He hath nought to say to you. And be you ware that you cannot come and bring nothing. If you bring not Christ, assuredly you shall bring somewhat else,—your own works, or your own sufferings, or in some manner your own deservings. And for him that cometh with his own demerits in hand, God hath nought saving the one thing he hath indeed demerited,—which is—Hell."

Mr Tremayne spoke so solemnly that Blanche felt awed. But she did not relish the doctrine which he preached any better on that account.

"How have I demerited that?" she asked.

"God Himself shall answer you. 'He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.' 'He that believeth not is condemned already.'"

"But I do believe—all Christians believe!" urged Blanche.

"What believe you?"

"I believe unfeignedly all that the creed saith touching our Lord."

"And I believe as unfeignedly all that the Commentaries of Caesar say touching that same Julius Caesar."

"What mean you, Master Tremayne?"

"What did Julius Caesar for me, Mistress Blanche?"

"Marry, nought at all," said Blanche, laughing, "without his invading of England should have procured unto us some civility which else we had lacked."

Civility, at that time, meant civilisation. When, according to the wondrous dreamer of Bedford Gaol, Mr Worldly Wiseman referred Christian, if he should not find Mr Legality at home, to the pretty young man called Civility, whom he had to his son, and who could take off a burden as well as the old gentleman himself,—he meant, not what we call civility, but what we call civilisation. That pretty young man is at present the most popular physician of the day; and he still goes to the town of Morality to church. The road to his house is crowded more than ever, though the warning has been standing for two hundred years, that "notwithstanding his simpering looks, he is but a hypocrite,"—as well as another warning far older,—"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." (Job twenty-eight verse 28.)

"But now," said the Rector, with an answering smile, "tell me, what did Jesus Christ for me?"

"He is the Saviour," she said in a low voice.

"Of whom, dear maid?"

Blanche felt rather vague on that point, and the feeling was combined with a conviction that she ought not to be so. She tried to give an answer which could not be contradicted.

"Of them that believe."

"Certes," said Mr Tremayne, suppressing a smile, for he saw both Blanche's difficulty and her attempt to evade it. "But that, look you, landeth us on the self place where we were at aforetime: who be they that believe?"

Blanche wisely determined to commit herself no further.

"Would it please you to tell me, Sir?"

"Dear child, if you heard me to say, touching some man that we both were acquaint withal,—'I believe in John'—what should you conceive that I did signify?"

"I would account," said Blanche readily, thinking this question easy to answer, "that you did mean, 'I account of him as a true man; I trust him; I hold him well worthy of affiance.'"

"Good. And if, after thus saying, you should see me loth to trust an half-angel into his hands to spend for me,—should you think that mine act did go with my words, or no?"

"Assuredly, nay."

"Then look you, Mistress Blanche, that it is greater matter than you maybe made account, when a man shall say, 'I believe in Jesus Christ.' For it signifieth not only that I believe He was born, and lived, and suffered, and arose, and ascended. Nay, but it is, I account of Him as a true man; I trust Him, with body and soul, with friends and goods: I hold Him worthy of all affiance, and I will hold back nothing, neither myself nor my having, from His keeping and disposing. (Ah, my maid! which of us can say so much as this, at all times, and of all matters?) But above all, in the relation whereof we have spoken, it is to say, I trust Christ with my soul. I lean it wholly upon Him. I have no hope in

myself; He is mine hope. I have no righteousness of myself; He is my righteousness. I have no standing before God,—I demerit nought but hell; but Christ standeth before God for me: His blood hath washed me clean from all sin, and His pleading with God availeth to hold me up in His ways. And unless or until you can from your heart thus speak I pray you say not again that you believe in Jesus Christ.”

“But, Master, every man cannot thus believe.”

“No man can thus believe until God have taught him.”

Blanche thought, but was not bold enough to say, that she did not see why anybody should believe such disagreeable things about himself. She did not feel this low opinion of her own merits. Hers was the natural religion of professing Christians—that she must do the best she could, and Christ would make up the remainder. Mr Tremayne knew what was passing in her mind as well as if she had spoken it.

“You think that is hard?” said he.

“/ think it—Mr Tremayne, I could not thus account of myself.”

“You could not, dear maid. I am assured of that.”

“Then wherein lieth my fault?” demanded Blanche.

“In that you will not.”

Blanche felt stung; and she spoke out now, with one of those bursts of confidence which came from her now and then.

“That is sooth, Master. I will not. I have not committed such sins as have many men and women. I ne’er stole, nor murdered, nor used profane swearing, nor worshipped idols, nor did many another ill matter: and I cannot believe but that God shall be more merciful to such than to the evil fawtors (factors, doers) that be in the world. Where were His justice, if no?”

“Mistress Blanche, you wit neither what is God, neither what is sin. The pure and holy law of God is like to a golden ring. You account, that because you have not broken it on this side, nor on that side, you have not broken it at all. But if you break it on any side, it is broken; and you it is that have broken it.”

“Wherein have I broken it?” she asked defiantly.

“‘All unrighteousness is sin.’ Have you alway done rightly, all your life long? If not, then you are a sinner.”

“Oh, of course, we be all sinners,” said Blanche, as if that were a very slight admission.

“Good. And a sinner is a condemned criminal. He is not come into this world to see if he may perchance do well, and stand: he is already fallen; he is already under condemnation of law.”

“Then ’tis even as I said,—there is no fault in any of us,” maintained Blanche, sturdily clinging to her point.

“‘This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’”

“Nay, Master Tremayne, you be now too hard on me. I love not darkness rather than light.”

“God saith you so do, dear maid. And He knoweth—ay, better than yourself. But look not only on that side of the matter. If a man believe that and no more, ’tis fit to drive him unto desperation. Look up unto the writing which is over the gate into God’s narrow way—the gate and the way likewise being His Son Jesus Christ—and read His message of peace sent unto these sinners. ‘Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’ It is God’s ordering, that whosoever *will*, he can.”

“You said but this last Sunday, Master Tremayne, that ’twas not possible for any man to come to Christ without God did draw him thereto.”

“/ said, my maid? My Master it was which said that. Well—what so?”

“Then we can have nought to answer for; for without God do draw us, we cannot come.”

“And without we be willing to be thus drawn, God will not do it.”

“Nay, but you said, moreover, that the very will must come from God.”

“Therein I spake truth.”

Blanche thought she had now driven her pastor into a corner.

“Then you do allow,” she asked triumphantly, “that if I should not will the same, I am clean of all fault, sith the very will must needs come from God?”

Mr Tremayne understood the drift of his catechumen.

“An’ it like you, Mistress Blanche, we will leave a moment to make inquiry into that point, till we shall have settled

another, of more import to you and me.”

“What is it, Master?”

“Are you willing?”

“Willing that I should be saved eternally? Most assuredly.”

“Then—willing that all the will of God shall be done, in you and by you?”

“The one followeth not the other.”

“I cry you mercy. The King of kings, like other princes, dealeth with His rebels on his own terms.”

Blanche was silent, and, very uncomfortable.

“’Tis time for me to be about my duties. When you shall have fully settled that point of your willingness, Mistress Blanche, and shall have determined that you are thus willing—which God grant!—then, an’ it like you, we will go into the other matter.”

And Mr Tremayne left the room with a bow, very well knowing that as soon as the first point was satisfactorily settled, the second would be left quiescent.

Mrs Tremayne had never opened her lips; and leaving her in the study, Blanche wandered into the parlour, where Clare and Lysken were seated at work.

“I marvel what Master Tremayne would have!” said Blanche, sitting down in the window, and idly pulling the dead leaves from the plant which stood there. “He saith ’tis our own fault that we will not to be saved, and yet in the self breath he addeth that the will so to be must needs be given us of God.”

Lysken looked up.

“Methinks we are all willing enow to be saved from punishment,” she said. “What we be unwilling to be saved from is sin.”

“Sin’—alway sin!” muttered Blanche. “Ye be both of a story. Sin is wickedness. I am not wicked.”

“Sin is the disobeying of God,” replied Lysken. “And saving thy presence, Blanche, thou art wicked.”

“Then so art thou!” retorted Blanche.

“So I am,” said Lysken. “But I am willing to be saved therefrom.”

“Prithee, Mistress Elizabeth Barnevelt, from what sin am I not willing to be saved?”

“Dost truly wish to know?” asked Lysken in her coolest manner.

“Certes!”

“Then—pride.”

“Pride is no sin!”

“I love not gainsaying, Blanche. But I dare in no wise gainsay the Lord. And He saith of pride, that it is an abomination unto Him, and He hateth it.” (Proverbs six, verse 16; and sixteen verse 5.)

“But that is ill and sinful pride,” urged Blanche. “There is proper pride.”

“It seemeth to my poor wits,” said Lysken, “that a thing which the Lord hateth must be all of it improper.”

“Why, Lysken! Thus saying, thou shouldst condemn all high spirit and noble bearing!”

“‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’ There was no pride in Christ, Blanche. And thou wilt scarce say that He bare Him not nobly.”

“Why, then, we might as well all be peasants!”

“I suppose we might, if we were,” said Lysken.

“Lysken, it should be a right strange world, where thou hadst the governance!”

“Very like,” was Lysken’s calm rejoinder, as she set the pin a little further in her seam.

“What good is it, prithee, to set thee up against all men’s opinion? (What are now termed ‘views’ were then called ‘opinions.’) Thou shalt but win scorn for thine.”

“Were it only mine, Blanche, it should be to no good. But when it is God’s command wherewith mine opinion runneth, —why then, the good shall be to hear Christ say, ‘Well done, faithful servant.’ The scorn I bare here shall be light weight then.”

“But wherefore not go smoothly through the world?”

“Because it should cost too much.”

“Nay, what now?” remonstrated Blanche.

“I have two lives, Blanche: and I cannot have my best things in both. The one is short and passing; the other is unchangeable, and shall stand for ever. Now then, I would like my treasures for the second of these two lives: and if I miss any good thing in the first, it shall be no great matter.”

“Thou art a right Puritan!” said Blanche disgustedly.

“Call not names, Blanche,” gently interposed Clare.

“Dear Clare, it makes he difference,” said Lysken. “If any call me a Papist, ’twill not make me one.”

“Lysken Barnevelt, is there aught in this world would move thee?”

“‘In this world?’ Well, but little, methinks. But—there will be some things in the other.”

“What things?” bluntly demanded Blanche.

“To see His Face!” said Lysken, the light breaking over her own. “And to hear Him say, ‘Come!’ And to sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb,—with the outer door closed for ever, and the woes, and the wolves, and the winter, all left on the outside. If none of these earthly things move me, Blanche, it is because those heavenly things will.”

And after that, Blanche was silent.

Note 1. The Gentiles (saith Saint Augustine), which seem to be of the purer religion, say, We worship not the images, but by the corporal image we do behold the signs of the things which we ought to worship. And Lactantius saith, The Gentiles say, We fear not the images, but them after whose likeness the images be made, and to whose names they be consecrated. And Clemens saith, That serpent the Devil uttereth these words by the mouth of certain men: We, to the honour of the invisible God, worship visible images.—(Third Part of the Homily on Peril of Idolatry: references in margin to Augustine Ps. 135; Lactantius l. 2. Inst.; Clem., L. S ad Jacob.) Here are the “Fathers” condemning as Pagan the reasoning of modern Papists.

Note 2. “Credit et defendit que in eucharistia sive altaris sacramento verum et naturalem Christi corpus ac verus et naturalis Christi sanguis sub speciebus panis et vini vere non est; et quod *ibi est materialis panis et materiale vinum* tantum absque veritati et presentia corporis et sanguinis Christi.”—Indictment of Reverend Lawrence Saunders, January 30, 1555; Harl. MS. 421, folio 44.

“Tenes et defendes in prout quod in eucharistia sive sacramento altaris verum naturalem et realem Christi corpus ac verus naturalis et realis Christi sanguis sub speciebus panis et vini vere non est, sed *post consecratione remanet substantia panis et vini.*”—Indictment of Reverend Thomas Rose, May 31, 1555; Harl. MS. 421, folio 188.

Note 3. There is the initial M on the pedestal of one or more of these black Virgins, which of course the priests interpret as Mary. This is certainly not the case. It has been suggested that it stands for Maia, a name of the Tuscan goddess. May it not be the initial of Mylitta, “the Mediatrix,” one of the favourite names of the great original goddess?

Note 4. See Hislop’s *Two Babylons*, pages 22, 122, 491, et aliis; and Shephard’s *Traditions of Eden*, page 117, note (where many references are given), and page 188.

Chapter Ten.

Counsel’s Opinion.

“A cross of gold, of silver, or of wood,
Or of mean straw, hid in each shape of life;
Some trial working for eternal good,
Found in our outward state or inward strife.”

“Bab! Art thou yonder?”

“Is it Jennet?”

“Ay. There’s a gentlewoman i’ th’ bower to see thee.”

“Nay,—a gentlewoman! Who can it be?”

“I’ve told thee all I know. Hoo (she) wanted Mistress Clare; and I said hoo were down at th’ parsonage; then hoo said, ‘Is Barbara Polwhele here?’ And I said, ‘Ay, hoo’s come o’er to fot (fetch) somewhat for th’ young mistresses.’ So hoo said, ‘Then I’ll speak wi’ her.’ So I took her to my Lady, for I see hoo were a gentlewoman; and hoo’s i’ th’ bower.”

“I wis nought of her,” said Barbara. “I never looked to see none here that I know.”

“Well, thou’d best go to her,” decided Jennet Barbara hurried down, and found an old silver-haired lady sitting with

Lady Enville, and addressed by her with marked deference.

"Well, Bab!" said the old lady, who was brisk enough for her years; "thou dost not seem no younger since I saw thee in Cornwall, and the mirror yonder saith neither am I."

"Marry La'kin! but if I thought it metely possible, I would say it were surely Mistress Philippa Basset!"

"I will not confute thee, Bab, though it be but metely possible," said the lively old lady, laughing. "I came to see the child Clare; but hearing she was hence, I then demanded thee. I will go down to the parsonage anon. I would like well to see Robin, and Thekla likewise."

"Eh, Mistress Philippa! but there be great and sore changes sithence you were used to come unto the Lamb to see Mistress Avery!"

"Go to, Barbara! Hast dwelt sixty years, more or less, in this world, and but now found out that all things therein be changeable? What be thy changes to mine? Child, there is not a soul that I loved in those days when Isoult dwelt in the Minories, that is not now with God in Heaven. Not a soul! Fifty years gone, brethren and sisters, there were seven of us. All gone, save me!—a dry old bough, that sticketh yet upon the tree whence all the fair green shoots have been lopped away. And I the eldest of all! The ways of God's Providence be strange."

"I said so much once unto Master Robin," responded Barbara with a smile; "but he answered, 'twas no matter we apprehended not the same, for the Lord knew all, and ordered the end from the beginning."

"He hath ordered me a lonely journey, and a long," said Philippa sadly. "Well! even a Devon lane hath its turning."

"And what brought you thus far north, Mistress Philippa, an' I make not too bold?"

"Why, I came to see Bridget's childre. I have bidden these four months gone with Jack Carden. And being so nigh ye all, I thought I would never turn home without seeing you."

Lady Bridget Carden was the daughter of Philippa Basset's step-father. They were not really related; but they had been brought up as sisters from their girlhood.

"Nigh, Mistress Philippa!" exclaimed Barbara in surprise. "What, from Cheshire hither!"

Philippa laughed merrily. "Marry come up, Bab! thou hast not dwelt seven years in Calais, as I have, and every yard of lawn for thy partlets to be fetched from London, and every stone of thy meat to boot. Why, thou earnest thine own self as far as from Cornwall."

"Eh, marry La'kin! Never came I that way but once, and if God be served, (if it be His will) I never look to turn again."

Philippa turned to Lady Enville, who had sat, or rather reclined, playing with a hand-screen, while she listened to the preceding conversation. "And how goeth it with the child, tell me, Orige? She is not yet wed, trow?"

"Not yet," replied Lady Enville, with her soft smile. "I shall ne'er be astonied if she wed with Arthur Tremayne. 'Twere a very fair match, and he is good enough for Clare."

"A good stock, and an old; and a good lad, I trust. Thou must have a care, Orige, not to cast the child away on one that will not deal well and truly by her."

"Oh, Arthur would deal well," said Lady Enville carelessly. "He is a mighty sobersides, and so is Clare. They were cut out for one another."

"Poor child!" said Philippa.

"'Poor child'—and wherefore, Mrs Basset, say you so?"

"Because, Orige, it seemeth me she hath no mother."

"Nay, Mistress Basset, what signify you?"

"No mother, Orige—or as good as none. An' Clare had been my child, I had never handed her o'er, to Arthur Tremayne nor any other, with no more heed than a napron-full of sticks."

"Well, in very deed, I do take the better care of the twain for Blanche to be well matched. Lo' you, Mistress Basset, Blanche is of good lineage; and she is rare lovesome—well-nigh as fair as I was at her years—so that I would not have her to cast herself away, in no wise: but for Clare—which hath small beauty, and is of little sort—it maketh not much matter whom she may wed."

"Good lack, Orige Enville, is a maid's heart no matter?—is a maid's life no matter? Why, woman! thou lackest stirring up with a poker! I marvel if I were sent hither to do it."

"Gramercy, Mistress Basset!" cried Lady Enville in horror. "That stirring up is it which I can in no wise abide."

"The which shows how much thou lackest it. But I am afeard thou art too far gone for any good. Well, I will look after the child; and I will set Thekla on to do it. And if I find Arthur to be a good man and true, and Clare reasonable well affected unto him,—trust me, I will not interfere. But if not,—Orige, I will not see Walter's child cast away, if thou wilt."

"Nay, good lack, Mrs Basset, what would you do?"

Lady Enville knew the energy and determination of the old lady's character, and that if she set her mind upon a course of action, she was pretty sure to carry it through, and to make other people do as she wished.

"I will do *that*" said Philippa decidedly. "I will judge whether the lot thou hast chalked out for Clare be fit for her."

"But in case you judge it not so, what then?"

"Then I will have the child away."

"I could ne'er allow that, Mistress Basset," said Lady Enville with unusual decision.

"I shall ne'er ask thee, Orige," returned Philippa, with a slightly contemptuous stress upon the pronoun. "I will talk with thine husband; I trust he will hear reason, though thou mayest not. And I could find good places enow for Clare; I have many friends in the Court. My Lady Dowager of Kent (Susan Bertie, the only daughter of Katherine Duchess of Suffolk) would work, I know, for Isoult Barry's granddaughter; and so would Beatrice Vivian (a fictitious person), Isoult's old comrade, that hath a daughter and a niece to boot in the Queen's chamber. And I dare say my Lady Scrope (Note 1) would do somewhat for me. Any way, I would assay it."

"What, to have Clare in the Queen's Majesty's Court?" demanded Lady Enville, her eyes sparkling with interest and pleasure. "O Mistress Basset, could you not compass the same for Blanche?"

"In the Court! By my troth, nay!" said Philippa heartily. "I would never set maid that I cared a pin for in Queen Bess's Court. Soothly, there *be* good women there, but— And as for Blanche,—I will see her, Orige, ere I say aught. Blanche hath stole all thine heart, methinks—so much as there was to steal."

"But what meant you touching Clare, Mistress Basset?"

"What meant I? Why, to have her with some worthy and well-conditioned dame of good degree, that should see her well bestowed. I would trust my Lady Dowager of Kent, forsooth, or my Lady Scrope—she is a good woman and a pleasant—or maybe—"

"And my Lady Scrope is herself in the Court, I take it," said Lady Enville, pursuing her own train of thought, independent of that of Philippa.

"Ay, and were therefore the less fitting," said Philippa coolly. "Take no thought thereabout, Orige; I will do nought till I have seen the maidens."

"But, Mistress Basset! you would ne'er count that mine husband's word, that is not in very deed her father, should weigh against mine, that am her true and natural mother?" urged Lady Enville in an injured tone.

"Thou art her natural mother, Orige, 'tis sooth," was the uncompromising answer: "but whether true or no, that will I not say. I rather think nay than yea. And if thine husband be better father unto the child than thou mother, he is the fitter to say what shall come of the maid. And I can always reason with a man easilier than a woman. Women be geese, mostly!"

With which reasonably plain indication of her sentiments, the old lady rose and took her leave. She would have no escort to the parsonage. She would come back and be introduced to Sir Thomas when she had seen the girls. And away she trudged, leaving Lady Enville in the undesirable situation of one who feels that a stronger will than his own is moulding his fate, and running counter to his inclinations.

Open doors were kept at the parsonage, as was generally the case in Elizabethan days. It was therefore no surprise to Mrs Tremayne, who was occupied in the kitchen, with her one servant Alison acting under her orders, to hear a smart rap on the door which shut off the kitchen from the hall.

"Come within!" she called in answer, expecting some parishioner in want of advice or alms.

But in marched an upright, brisk old lady, with silver hair, and a stout staff in her hand.

"I am come to see Thekla Rose," said she.

Mrs Tremayne was surprised now. It was thirty years since that name had belonged to her.

"And Thekla Rose has forgot me," added the visitor.

"There is a difference betwixt forgetting and not knowing," replied Mrs Tremayne with a smile.

"There is so," returned the old lady. "Therefore to make me known, which I see I am not,—my name is Philippa Basset."

The exclamation of delighted recognition which broke from the Rector's wife must have shown Philippa that she was by no means forgotten. Mrs Tremayne took her visitor into the parlour, just then unoccupied,—seated her in a comfortable cushioned chair, and, leaving Alison to bake or burn the cakes and pie in the oven as she found it convenient, had thenceforward no eyes and ears but for Philippa Basset. Certainly the latter had no cause to doubt herself welcome.

"I spake truth, Thekla, child, when I said I was come to see thee. Yet it was but the half of truth, for I am come likewise to see Robin: and I would fain acquaint me with yonder childre. Be they now within doors?"

"They be not all forth, or I mistake," said Mrs Tremayne; and she went to the door and called them—all four in turn. Blanche answered from the head of the stairs, but avowed herself ignorant of the whereabouts of any one else; and Mrs Tremayne begged her to look for and bring such as she could find to the parlour, to see an old friend of Clare's family.

In a few minutes Blanche and Lysken presented themselves. Arthur and Clare were not to be found. Philippa's keen, quick eyes surveyed the two girls as they entered, and mentally took stock of both.

"A vain, giddy goose!" was her rapid estimate of Blanche; wherein, if she did Blanche a little injustice, there was some element of truth. "Calm and deep, like a river," she said to herself of Lysken: and there she judged rightly enough.

Before any conversation beyond the mere introductions could occur, in trotted Mrs Rose.

"Mistress Philippa, you be the fairest ointment for the eyen that I have seen these many days!" said the lively little Flemish lady. "*Ma fo!* I do feel myself run back, the half of my life, but to look on you. I am a young woman once again."

"Old friend, we be both of us aged women," said Philippa.

"And it is true!" said Mrs Rose. "That will say, the joints be stiff, and the legs be weakened, and the fatigue is more and quicker: but I find not that thing within me, that men call my soul, to grow stiff nor weak. I laugh, I weep, I am astonished,—just all same as fifty years since. See you?"

"Ah! you have kept much of the childly heart," answered Philippa smiling. "But for me, the main thing with me that is not stiff nor weak in me is anger and grief. Men be such flat fools—and women worsen, if worse can be."

Blanche opened her eyes in amazement Lysken looked amused.

"Ah, good Mistress Philippa, I am one of the fools," said Mrs Rose with great simplicity. "I always have so been."

"Nay, *flog* me with a discipline if you are!" returned Philippa heartily. "I meant not you, old friend. You are not by one-tenth part so much as—" Her eye fell on Blanche. "Come, I name none.—And thou art Frank Avery's daughter?" she added, turning suddenly to Lysken. "Come hither, Frances, and leave me look on thee."

"My name is not Frances, good Mistress," replied Lysken, coming forward with a smile.

"Isoult, then? It should be one or the other."

"Nay—it is Elizabeth," said Lysken, with a shake of her head.

"More shame for thee," retorted Philippa jokingly. "What business had any to call thee Elizabeth?"

"My father's mother was Lysken Klaas."

"Good.—Well, Thekla, I have looked this face o'er, and I can read no Avery therein."

"'Tis all deep down in the heart," said Mrs Tremayne.

"The best place for it," replied Philippa. "Thou wilt do, child, as methinks. I would say it were easier to break thy heart than to beguile thy conscience. A right good thing—for the conscience. Is this Clare?" she asked, breaking off suddenly as Clare came in, with a tone which showed that she felt most interest in her of the three. She took both Clare's hands and studied her face intently.

"Walter's eyes," she said. "Isoult Barry's eyes! The maid could have none better. And John Avery's mouth. Truth and love in the eyes; honour and good learning on the lips. Thou wilt do, child, and that rarely well."

"Mistress Philippa Basset is a right old friend of thy dear grandame, Clare," said Mrs Tremayne in explanation. "Thou canst not remember her, but this worthy gentlewoman doth well so, and can tell thee much of her when they were young maids together, and thy grandmother was gentlewoman unto Mistress Philippa her mother, my sometime Lady Viscountess Lisle."

Clare looked interested, but she did not say much.

Mr Tremayne and Arthur came in together, only just in time for four-hours.

"God save thee, Robin dear!" was Philippa's greeting. "Art rested from Little Ease? I saw thee but slightly sithence, mind thou, and never had no good talk with thee."

Mr Tremayne laughed more merrily than was usual with him.

"Good Mistress Philippa, if thirty years were not enough to rest a man, in very deed he were sore awayed."

"Now, Arthur," said Philippa, turning to him bluntly, "come and let me look thee o'er."

Arthur obeyed, with grave lips, but amused eyes.

"Robin's eyes—Thekla's mouth—Father Rose's brow—Custance Tremayne's chin," she said, enumerating them

rapidly. "If the inward answer the outward, lad, thou shouldst be a rare good one."

"Then I fear it doth not so," said Arthur soberly, "Humbleness will do thee no hurt, lad.—Now, Thekla, let us have our four-hours. I could eat a baken brick wall. Ay me! dost mind thee of the junkets, in old days, at the Lamb?"

"Thekla, I told thee afore, and I do it yet again,—women be flat fools. The biggest I know is Orige Enville. And in good sooth, that is much to say! She is past old Doll, at Crowe, that threw her kerchief over the candle to put it out. Blanche may be a step the better; methinks she is. But for all that, she is Orige Enville's daughter. I would as soon fetch my bodkin and pierce that child to the heart, as I would send her to the Court, where her blind bat of a mother would fain have her. 'Twere the kindlier deed of the twain. Lack-a-daisy! she would make shipwreck of life and soul in a month. Well, for Clare, then—I give thee to wit, Thekla, thou art that child's mother. Orige is not. She never was worth her salt. And she never will be. So the sooner thou win the maid hither, the better for her."

"She doth abide hither, Mistress Philippa, even now."

"Tush, child! I mean the sooner she weds with Arthur."

"Weds with Arthur!"

It was manifest that the idea had never entered Mrs Tremayne's head until Philippa put it there.

"Prithee, wherefore no?" demanded the old lady coolly. "Orige means it. Mercy on us, Thekla Rose! art thou gone wood?"

"Mrs Philippa! Who e'er told you my Lady Enville meant any such thing?"

"The goose told me herself," said Philippa bluntly, with a short laugh. "'Twas not in a civil fashion, Thekla. She said Arthur was good enough for Clare; it recked not whom Clare wedded withal. Marry come up! if I had not let mine head govern mine hands, I had fetched her a good crack on the crown with my staff. It could ne'er have hurt her brain—she has none. What were such women born for, do all the saints wit?—without it were to learn other folk patience."

Thekla Tremayne was a woman, and a mother. She would have been more than human if she had not felt hurt for this insult to her boy. Was Clare, or anything else in the world, too good for her one darling?

"Come,—swallow it, Thekla, and have done," said Philippa. "And by way of a morsel of sugar at after the wormwood, I will tell thee I do not think Clare hates him. I studied her face."

"Mistress Philippa, you read faces so rarely, I would you could read Lucrece Enville. Margaret, which is eldest of the three, is plain reading; I conceive her conditions (understand her disposition) well. But Lucrece hath posed me ever since I knew her."

"I will lay thee a broad shilling, child, I read her off like thou shouldst a hornbook when I see her. Ay, I have some skill touching faces: I have been seventy years at the work."

That evening, just before supper, the indefatigable old lady marched into the hall at Enville Court. Lady Enville introduced her to Sir Thomas and Mistress Rachel, and presented her step-daughters and Jack. Philippa made her private comments on each.

"A worthy, honest man—not too sharp-sighted," she said of Sir Thomas to herself. "And a good, sound-hearted woman"—of Mistress Rachel. "There is a pickie, or I mistake," greeted Jack. "This is Margaret, is it? Clear as crystal: not deep, but clear. But this face"—as Lucrece came before her—"is deep enough. Not deep like a river, but like a snake. I could do well enough with your plain, honest sister; but I love you not, Mistress Lucrece. Enville. Your graceful ways do not captivate me. Ah! it takes a woman to know a woman. And the men, poor silly things! fancy they know us better than we do each other."

If Philippa had spoken that last sentiment audibly, she would have won the fee-simple of Rachel Enville's heart.

"Sir Thomas," said Philippa, when they rose from supper, "when it may stand with your conveniency, I would fain have an half-hour's talk with you."

Sir Thomas was ready enough to confer with the old lady, whom he liked, and he led her courteously to his wife's boudoir. Lady Enville sat down in her cushioned chair, and made a screen of her fan.

"Sir Thomas," began Philippa bluntly, "I would fain wit what you and Orige mean to do with Clare? Forgive my asking; I love the child for her grandame's sake."

"Good Mistress, you be full welcome to ask the same. But for me, I know not how to answer, for I never took any thought thereupon. Hadst thou thought thereon, Orige?"

"I counted her most like to wed with Arthur Tremayne," said Lady Enville carelessly.

"I ne'er thought of him," remarked Sir Thomas.

"If it be so, good," said Philippa. "I have looked the lad o'er, and I am satisfied with him. And now, I pray you, take one more word from an old woman, of your gentleness. What do you with Blanche?"

In answer to this question—for Philippa was well known to Sir Thomas by repute, and he was prepared to trust her

thoroughly—the whole story of Don Juan came out. Philippa sat for a minute, looking thoughtfully into the fire.

“Have a care of yonder maid,” she said.

“But what fashion of care, Mistress Basset? An’ you grant it me, I would value your thought thereupon.”

Philippa turned to Sir Thomas.

“Have you not,” she said, “made somewhat too much of this matter? Not that it was other than grave, in good sooth; yet methinks it had been better had you not let Blanche see that you counted it of so much import. I fear she shall now go about to count herself of mighty importance. Childre do, when you make much of their deeds; and Blanche is but a child yet, and will so be for another year or twain. Now this young man is safe hence, I would say, Fetch her home. And let none ever name the matter afore her again; let bygones be bygones. Only give her to see that you account of her as a silly child for the past, but yet that you have hope she shall be wiser in the future.”

“Well, herein I see not with you,” said Lady Enville. “I had thought it rare good fortune for Blanche to wed with Don John.”

Sir Thomas moved uneasily, but did not answer. Philippa turned and looked at the speaker.

“That was like,” she said quietly. But neither of her hearers knew how much meaning lay beneath the words.

“And what think you touching Lucrece?” asked Mrs Tremayne the next day, when Philippa was again at the parsonage.

“I ne’er had a fancy for snakes, Thekla.”

“Then you count her deceitful? That is it which I have feared.”

“Have a care,” said Philippa. “But what is to fear? A care of what?”

“Nay, what feareth any from a snake? That he should sting, I take it. He may do it while you be looking. But he is far more like to do it when you be not.”

The evening before the two sisters were to return to Enville Court, Mrs Tremayne and Clare were sitting alone in the parlour. Clare had manoeuvred to this end, for she wanted to ask her friend a question; and she knew there was a particular period of the evening when Mr Tremayne and Arthur were generally out, and Lysken was occupied elsewhere. Mrs Rose and Blanche remained to be disposed of; but the former relieved Clare’s mind by trotting away with a little basket of creature comforts to see a sick woman in the village; and it was easy to ask Blanche to leave her private packing until that period. But now that Clare had got Mrs Tremayne to herself, she was rather shy in beginning her inquiries. She framed her first question in a dozen different ways, rejected all for various reasons, and finally—feeling that her opportunity was sliding away—came out with that one which she had most frequently cast aside.

“Mistress Tremayne, account you it alway sinful to harbour discontent?”

“I could much better answer thee, dear maid, if I knew the fountain whence thy question springeth.”

This was just the point which Clare was most shy of revealing. But she really wanted Mrs Tremayne’s opinion; and with an effort she conquered her shyness.

“Well,—suppose it had pleased God to cast my lot some whither, that the daily work I had to do was mighty dislikeful to me; and some other maiden that I knew, had that to do withal which I would have loved dearly:—were it ill for me to wish that my business had been like hers?”

“Whom enviest thou, my child?” asked Mrs Tremayne very gently.

Clare blushed, and laughed.

“Well, I had not meant to say the same; but in very deed I do envy Lysken.”

“And wherefore, dear heart?”

“Because her work is so much higher and better than mine.”

Mrs Tremayne did not answer for a moment. Then she said,—“Tell me, Clare,—suppose thy father’s serving-men and maids should begin to dispute amongst themselves,—if Sim were to say, ‘I will no longer serve in the hall, because ’tis nobler work to ride my master’s horses:’ or Kate were to say, ‘I will no longer sweep the chambers, sith ’tis higher matter to dress my master’s meat:’ and Nell,—‘I will no longer dress the meat, sith it were a greater thing to wait upon my mistress in her chamber,’—tell me, should the work of the house be done better, or worser?”

“Worser, no doubt.”

“Well, dear heart, and if so, why should God’s servants grudge to do the differing works of their Master? If thou art of them, thy Master, hath set thee thy work. He saw what thou wert fit to do, and what was fit to be done of thee; and the like of Lysken. He hath set thee where thou art; and such work as thou hast to do there is His work for thee. Always remembering,—if thou art His servant.”

Clare did not quite like that recurring conjunction. It sounded as if Mrs Tremayne doubted the fact.

"You think me not so?" she asked in a low voice.

"I hope thou art, dear Clare. But thou shouldst know," was the searching answer.

There was silence after that, till Clare said, with a sigh, "Then you reckon I ought not to wish for different work?"

"I think not, my maid, that wishing and discontent be alway one and the same. I may carry a burden right willingly and cheerfully, and yet feel it press hard, and be glad to lay it down. Surely there is no ill that thou shouldst say to thy Father, 'If it be Thy will, Father, I would fain have this or that.' Only be content with His ordering, if He should answer, 'Child, thou hast asked an evil thing.'"

There was another pause, during which Clare was thinking.

"Am I the first to whom thou hast opened thine heart hereon, dear Clare?"

"Well, I did let fall a word or twain at home," said Clare smiling; "but I found no like feeling in response thereto."

"Not even from Margaret?"

"Meg thought there was work enough at home," replied Clare laughing, "and bade me go look in the mending-chest and see how much lacked doing."

"Nor Mistress Rachel?"

"Nay, Aunt Rachel said I might well be thankful that I was safe guarded at home, and had not need to go about this wicked world."

"Well, there is reason in that. It is a wicked world."

"Yet, surely, we need try to make it better, Mistress Tremayne: and—any woman could stitch and cut as well as I."

Clare spoke earnestly. Mrs Tremayne considered a little before she answered.

"Well, dear heart, it may be the Lord doth design thee to be a worker in His vineyard. I cannot say it is not thus. But if so, Clare, it seemeth me that in this very cutting and stitching, which thou so much misliketh, He is setting thee to school to be made ready. Ere we be fit for such work as thou wouldst have, we need learn much: and one lesson we have to learn is patience. It may be that even now, if the Lord mean to use thee thus, He is giving thee thy lesson of patience. 'Let patience have her perfect work.' 'Tis an ill messenger that is so eager to be about his errand, that he will needs run ere he be sent. The great Teacher will set thee the right lessons; see thou that they be well learned: and leave it to Him to call thee to work when He seeth thee ripe for it."

"I thank you," said Clare meekly; "maybe I am too impatient."

"'Tis a rare grace, dear heart,—true patience: but mind thou, that is not idleness nor backwardness. Some make that blunder, and think they be patiently waiting for work when work waiteth for them, and they be too lazy to put hand thereto. We need have a care on both sides."

But though Mrs Tremayne gave this caution, in her own mind she thought it much more likely that Blanche would need it than Clare.

"And why should I press back her eagerness, if the Lord hath need of her? Truly"—and Thekla Tremayne sighed as she said this to herself—"the labourers are few."

Note 1. Philadelphia Carey, a kinswoman of Queen Elizabeth through her mother, Anne Boleyn.

Chapter Eleven.

Catching Moths.

"For my soul's sake, Maid Marjorie,
And yet for my soul's sake, -
I know no wrong I've done to thee,
Nor why thy heart should break."

Rather late on the same evening, Sir Thomas walked into the parsonage, and rapped with his silver-hilted staff at the parlour door. Clare had gone up-stairs, and Mrs Tremayne was at that moment alone. She offered to send for her young guests, but he declined; he wished first to speak with her apart. He told her that Don Juan had gone to London; and that before leaving him, that estimable young gentleman had frankly communicated the interesting fact that he was bound by an engagement to a lady of his own country.

"Now what think you? Were it better, or worsen, that Blanche should know the same?"

"Better far—by all manner of means," said the Rector's wife decidedly.

"I thought even so," replied Sir Thomas. "I had come sooner, but my wife was contrary thereto."

Mrs Tremayne could not feel astonished to hear of any amount of unwisdom on the part of Lady Enville, but she merely repeated that she thought it much better that Blanche should know.

"It should help to open her eyes. Though in sooth I do think they be scantily so close shut as at the first."

"Then you will tell the child, good Mistress?"

"If you so desire, assuredly: but wherefore not give her to wit yourself?"

Sir Thomas evidently shrank from the idea.

"For Blanche's sake, I do think it should be better, Sir Thomas. You speak as he that hath heard this right from Don Juan himself; for me, I have but heard it from you."

"Well, if needs must—for Blanche's sake, then," said her father, sighing. "Pray you, send the child hither."

In another minute Blanche came in, with a warm welcome for her father in eyes and voice.

"So thou comest home to-morrow, my skylark!" he said. "Art thou glad, or sorry, Blanche?"

"Oh, glad, Father!"

"And all we be glad likewise.—Blanche, Don John is gone to London."

"Yes, I guessed so much," she answered, in a rather constrained tone.

"And ere he went, my darling, he said somewhat unto me which I reckon it best thou shouldst hear likewise."

Blanche looked up, surprised and expectant,—perhaps with a shade of fear. Sir Thomas passed his arm round her, and drew her close to him. He anticipated a burst of tears, and was ready to console her.

"He told me, dear heart, that he is, and for divers years hath so been, troth-plight unto a maiden of his own land, with whom he shall wed when he is gone home."

There was no light in the room but from the fire, and Blanche's head was bent low, so that her father could not see her face. But no tears answered him. No answer came at all. Sir Thomas was astonished.

"Doth it grieve thee, my Blanche?" he asked tenderly, when he had waited a moment.

He waited still another. Then the reply came.

"I suppose it was better I should know it," she said in a cold, hard voice.

"So thou seest, dear child, he meant not his fair words."

"No," she said, in the same tone. "He meant it not."

Sir Thomas let her go. He thought she bore it uncommonly well. She did not care much about it, thank Heaven! He was one of those numerous surface observers who think that a woman cannot be startled if she does not scream, nor be unhappy if she does not weep.

Blanche went quietly enough out of the room, saying that she would send Clare. Her father did not see that in the middle of the stairs she paused, with a tight grasp on the banister, till the deadly faintness should pass off which seemed to make the staircase go spinning round her. Clare noticed nothing peculiar when Blanche came into their bedroom, and told her that Sir Thomas was below. But as soon as her sister was gone, Blanche knelt down by the bed, and buried her face in the counterpane.

This, then, was the end. The shrine was not only deserted—it was destroyed: the idol was not only dethroned—it was broken, and shown to be nothing but stone. Don Juan was not true. Nay, worse—he never had been true. His vow of eternal fidelity was empty breath; his reiterated protestations of single and unalterable love were worth just nothing. He had only been amusing himself. He had known all the while, that in exchange for the solid gold of her young heart, he was offering her the veriest pinchbeck.

Blanche had been half awake before, and she was wide awake now. Yet the awakening, for all that, was very bitter. Naturally enough, her first thought was that all men were of this stamp, and that there was no truth in any of them. Aunt Rachel was right:—they were a miserable, false, deceiving race, created for the delusion and suffering of woman: she would never believe another of them as long as she lived. There might be here and there an exception to the rule, such as her father or Mr Tremayne; she could not believe such evil of them: but that was the rule. And Blanche, being not quite seventeen, declared to herself that after this vast and varied experience of the world, she would never—not if she lived to be a hundred—*never* trust man again.

She slipped quietly down-stairs, and caught Sir Thomas just as he was leaving the house.

"Father!" she whispered, sliding into his hand the little packet of Don Juan's hair, "maybe I ought to have given you this aforetime. Allgates now take it; it is nought to me any more—sith he is hot."

Sir Thomas transferred the little parcel to his pocket.

"Give thee good night, my jewel! We shall all be fain to have thee home again to-morrow."

Blanche returned the greeting, but glided away again, and was seen very little that night. But Mrs Tremayne guessed the state of the girl's mind more truly than Sir Thomas had done.

The next day they went home.

"Bless thee, my precious Blanche!" was Lady Enville's greeting. "And thee too, Clare. Good lack, how faded is yon camlet! 'Tis well ye were but at the parsonage, for it should have shamed thee any other whither."

"Well, child!" said Aunt Rachel. "I trust thou hast come home to work like a decent lass, and not sit moaning with thine hands afore thee like a cushat dove. What man ever trod middle earth that was worth a moan?"

"I will essay to give you content, Aunt Rachel," said Blanche quietly.

"Clare, my good lass, I have lacked thee sorely. I scarce wis what to do without thee."

Clare looked pleased. "Well, Aunt Rachel, I am come to work, and that with a will," she answered cheerily.

"I am thankful to hear it. Now, if Heaven's will it be, all things shall go on as usual once again."

But nothing was to go on as usual any more.

Not for Margaret, for Harry Travis had returned from the Netherlands, and her marriage was to be that day six weeks. Not for Lucrece, who was elated with what she considered her triumph over Blanche, and was on the look-out for fresh laurels. Not for Blanche, as the reader knows: nor for Clare, as he soon will know: nor even for Rachel herself—

"Though only the sorrow of others
Threw its shadow over her."

There was but one person to whom matters went on at all as usual, and that was Lady Enville. As usual, to her, meant a handsome dress, a cushioned chair, a good dinner, and an occasional junketing: and since recent events had not interfered with any of these, Lady Enville went on much as usual. Yet even she never ceased to regret Blanche's lost coronet, which no revelation of Don Juan's duplicity would ever persuade her had not been lying at her daughter's feet, ready to be taken up and worn. She was one of those persons who will not believe anything which they do not wish to be true; and on them vouchers and verifications are always thrown away.

The first point different from usual was that Arthur Tremayne began to drop in continually at Enville Court. Lady Enville was gratified, for she thought her neat little arrangement was taking effect; and it would be a comfort, she said to herself, to have Clare off her hands. She said this one day to Rachel: but though, she knew that worthy spinster's opinion of matrimony, yet she was hardly prepared for the diatribe which she received in answer. Rachel had lately, and with much annoyance, began to perceive—what she had never seen so clearly before—that Lady Enville cared very little for her elder daughter. And of all the four girls, Clare was Rachel's darling. She was prepared to do battle in her cause to a greater extent than she herself knew. So, having received this hint, Rachel set herself to watch Arthur, and see that he behaved properly.

It was not easy to guess Arthur's motive in coming. He usually sat between Clare and Blanche when he was present at supper; and just now that was pretty often. But either of the two might be the attraction. In other respects, his courtesies were evenly divided among the four, and were not pointed to any.

Meanwhile, Clare was honestly trying to do the work set her well, and to be contented with it. She often carried her troubles to Mrs Tremayne, and sought advice or cheering at her hands: nor was she ever sent away unsatisfied. Rachel was delighted with Clare's steady and cheerful help, and complacently thought that the parsonage had done her good.

So the summer drew on, and Margaret was married to Harry Travis, and went to live in another part of the county.

On a late afternoon in autumn, Clare stood in the arbour, tying up bouquets. An old friend of Sir Thomas was expected on a visit, and was likely to arrive that evening. This was Sir Piers Feversham, (fictitious person) a Norfolk knight, of Lancashire extraction on his mother's side, who had not seen Sir Thomas Enville since both had been young squires together in the household of the Earl of Derby. His nephew and heir presumptive, John Feversham, (fictitious person) was coming with him. There was little presumption, to all appearance, about the heirship, for Sir Piers bore the character of a confirmed old bachelor, and was now upwards of sixty.

Clare's bouquets were nearly all tied up, and ready to be carried to the hall, which was to be decorated in honour of the guests. She was tying the last but one, when she heard slow footsteps and low voices passing on the outside of the arbour. Not too low, however, for two sentences to be audible inside,—words which blanched Clare's cheek, and made her trembling fingers loose their hold, till the gathered flowers slid away one by one, and lay a fragrant mass on the ground at her feet.

The remarks which she overheard were limited to a fervent appeal and a low reply. The appeal—which was a declaration of love—was uttered in the familiar accents of Arthur Tremayne; and the answer—a vague disclaimer of merit which sounded like a shy affirmative—came in the low, soft voice of Lucrece Enville.

Clare was totally ignorant of the fate which her mother had designed for her; nor had she ever realised until that evening that she cared more for Arthur than she did for Jack. They were both like brothers to her: but now she suddenly felt that if it had been Jack whose voice she had heard uttering similar words, it would have mattered little or nothing to her.

The hardest thought of all was that of resigning him to Lucrece. Fourteen years had elapsed since that day of their

childhood on which Clare had witnessed the first instance of Lucrece's duplicity; but she had never been able to forget it, and it had infused a sort of vague discomfort and constraint into all their intercourse.

"Oh, if it had been Lysken!" said Clare to her own heart. "I could have borne it better."

And it had to be borne, and in utter silence. *This* trouble could not be carried to Mrs Tremayne; and the idea of betraying Lucrece, as that young lady had herself betrayed Blanche, would have seemed black treachery to Clare. No, things must take their course: and let them take it, so long as that would make Arthur happy, and would be for his good. In her inmost heart Clare was sorely doubtful about both items. Well, she could ask God to grant them.

It was half an hour later than she had expected when Clare carried her nosegays into the hall. She went on mechanically putting them in order, and finding, when she had finished, that there was one more than was needed, she carried it to her mother's boudoir.

"How late thou art, Clare!" said Lady Enville, looking up from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, which she was lazily reading. "Sir Piers may come now at any minute. Hast made an end in the hall?"

"Ay, Madam."

"Hast one posy left o'er? Set it here, by my chair, child. Dost know where is Blanche?"

"No, Madam."

"And Lucrece?"

"No, Madam."

Clare's conscience smote her as soon as she had given this answer. Certainly she did not know where Lucrece was; but she could very well guess.

"I would thou wert not fully thus bashful, Clare; hast nought but 'Ay' and 'No'?—I would fain have thee seek Lucrece: I desire speech of her."

Clare did not reply at all this time. She had disposed of her flowers, and she left the room.

Seek Lucrece! Clare had never had a harder task. If the same burden had been laid on them, Lucrece would have left the commission unfulfilled, and Blanche would have sent somebody else. But such alternatives did not even suggest themselves to Clare's conscientious mind. She went through the hall towards the garden door in search of Lucrece.

"Child, what aileth thee?" asked a voice suddenly, as Clare was opening the garden door.

"I?" said Clare absently. "Lucrece—my mother would have me seek her."

"Sit thee down, and I will send her to thy mother," said Rachel.

Away she went; and Clare sat down by the fire, feeling just then as if she could do little else. Lucrece glided through the hall with her smooth, silent step, but did not appear to see Clare; and Rachel followed in a minute.

"I have sent Lucrece to thy mother," she said. "Now, child, what aileth thee?"

"Oh—nothing, Aunt Rachel."

"When I was a small maid, Clare, my mother told me that 'twas not well to lie."

"I did not—Aunt Rachel, I cry you mercy—I meant not—"

"Thou meantest not to tell me what ailed thee. I know that. But I mean to hear it, Clare."

"'Tis nought, in very deed, Aunt—of any moment."

"Nought of any moment to thee?"

"Nay, to— Oh, pray you, ask me not, Aunt Rachel! It makes no matter."

"Ha! When a maid saith that,—a maid of thy years, Clare,—I know metely well what she signifieth. Thou art a good child. Get thee up-stairs and pin on thy carnation knots."

Clare went up the wide hall staircase with a slow, tired step, and without making any answer beyond a faint attempt at a smile.

"Ha!" said Rachel again, to herself. "Providence doth provide all things. Methinks, though, at times, 'tis by the means of men and women, the which He maketh into little providences. I could find it in mine heart to fall to yonder game but now. Only I will bide quiet, methinks, till to-morrow. Well-a-day! if yon grandmother Eve of ours had ne'er ate yon apple! Yet Master Tremayne will have it that I did eat it mine own self. Had I so done, Adam might have whistled for a quarter. The blind, stumbling moles men are! Set a pearl and a pebble afore them, and my new shoes to an old shoeing-horn, but they shall pick up the pebble, and courtesy unto you for your grace. And set your mind on a lad that you do count to have more sense than the rest, and beshrew me if he show you not in fair colours ere the week be out that he is as great a dunce as any. I reckon Jack shall be the next. Well, well!—let the world wag. 'Twill all be o'er an hundred years hence. They shall be doing it o'er again by then. Howbeit, 'tis ill work to weep o'er spilt milk."

Sir Piers Feversham and his nephew arrived late that evening. The former was a little older than Sir Thomas Enville, and had mixed more in general society;—a talkative, good-natured man, full of anecdote; and Blanche at least found him very entertaining.

John Feversham, the nephew, was almost the antipodes of his uncle. He was not handsome, but there was an open, honest look in his grey eyes which bore the impress of sincerity. All his movements were slow and deliberate, his manners very quiet and calm, his speech grave and sedate. Nothing in the shape of repartee could be expected from him; and with him Blanche was fairly disgusted.

“As sober as a judge, and as heavy as a leaden seal!” said that young lady,—who had been his next neighbour at the supper-table,—when she was giving in her report to Clare while they were undressing. “He hath but an owl’s eye for beauty, of whatever fashion. Thou mindest how fair was the sunset this even? Lo’ thou, he could see nought but a deal of water in the sea, and divers coloured clouds in the sky. Stupid old companion!”

“And prithee, Mistress Blanche, who ever did see aught in the sea saving a cruel great parcel of water?”

“Good lack, Bab!—thou art as ill as he. Clare, what seest thou in the sea?”

Clare tried to bring her thoughts down to the subject.

“I scantily know, Blanche. ’Tis rarely beautiful, in some ways. Yet it soundeth to me always very sorrowful.”

“Ay so, Mistress Clare!” returned Barbara. “It may belike to thee, poor sweet heart, whose father was killed thereon,—and to me, that had a brother which died far away on the Spanish main.”

“I suppose,” answered Clare sighing, “matters sound unto us according as we are disposed.”

“Marry, and if so, some folks’ voices should sound mighty discordant,” retorted Barbara.

Blanche was soon asleep; but there was little sleep for Clare that night. Nor was there much for Rachel. Since Margaret’s marriage, Lucrece had shared her aunt’s chamber; for it would have been thought preposterous in the Elizabethan era to give a young girl a bedroom to herself. Rachel watched her niece narrowly; but Lucrece neither said nor did anything from which the least information could be gleaned. She was neither elated nor depressed, but just as usual,—demure, slippery, and unaccountable.

Rachel kept her eye also, like an amateur detective, upon Arthur. He came frequently, and generally managed to get a walk with Lucrece in the garden. On two occasions the detective, seated at her own window, which overlooked the garden, saw that Arthur was entreating or urging something, to which Lucrece would not consent.

The month of Sir Piers Feversham’s stay was drawing to a close, and still Rachel had not spoken to her brother about Lucrece. She felt considerably puzzled as to what it would be either right or wise to do. Lucrece was no foolish, romantic, inexperienced child like Blanche, but a woman of considerable worldly wisdom and strong self-reliance. It was no treachery to interfere with her, in her aunt’s eyes, since Lucrece herself had been the traitor; and for Clare’s sake Rachel longed to rescue Arthur, whom she considered infatuated and misled.

Before Rachel had been able to make up her mind on this point, one Saturday afternoon Sir Thomas sought her, and asked her to come to the library.

“Rachel,” he said, “I would fain have thy counsel. Sir Piers Feversham—much to mine amazing—hath made me offer of service (courtship) for Lucrece. What thinkest thereon?”

“Brother, leave her go!”

“He is by three years elder than I, Rachel.”

“Ne’er mind thou.”

“Methinks he should make the maid a good husband?” remarked Sir Thomas interrogatively.

“Better than she shall make him a wife,” said Rachel grimly.

“Rachel!”

“Brother, I have ne’er said this to thee aforetime; but my true conviction is that Lucrece is a mischief-maker, and until she be hence, there is like to be little peace for any. I saw not all things at the first; but I can tell thee now that she hath won Arthur Tremayne into her toils, and methinks she tried hard to compass Don Juan. If she will wed with Sir Piers (and he dare venture on her!) let it be so: he is old enough to have a care of himself; and she is less like to wreck his life than she should be with a younger man. In good sooth, there is all the less of it to wreck.”

“Yet, Rachel, if the maid be entangled with Arthur—”

“Make thy mind easy, Tom. ’Tis Arthur is entangled, not she. Trust her for that! She hath good enough scissors for the cutting of a like knot.”

“Arthur ne’er spake word to me,” said Sir Thomas, with a perplexed, meditative air.

“That is it which I would know, Tom. Ne’er spake word, quotha? So much the better. Well! I reckon thou shalt be like to tell Orige; but leave her not persuade thee to the contrary course. Yet I think she is scarce like. A knighthood and Feversham Hall shall go down very sweetly with her.”

"But there is yet another matter, Rachel. Sir Piers maketh offer to set Jack in good place about the Court, for the which he saith he hath power. What sayest to that, trow?"

"I say that Jack is safe to go to wrack some whither, and may be 'twere as well hence as hither."

"It shall be mighty chargeable, I fear," said Sir Thomas thoughtfully.

"Jack shall be that any whither."

"Wouldst have me, then, say Ay to both offers?"

"Nay, think well touching Jack first. I meant not that. Good sooth! I sorely misdoubt—"

"Well, I will see what saith Orige unto both, and Jack and Lucrece to either."

"If I be a prophet," answered Rachel, "one and all shall say, Ay."

If that were the criterion, Rachel proved a prophet One and all did say ay. Lady Enville was enchanted with both schemes. Jack averred that life at home was a very humdrum kind of thing, and life might be worth having in London, and at Court. And Lucrece, in her demure style, softly declared that she was thankful for Sir Piers' goodness, and would gladly accept his offer, though she felt that her merits were not equal to the kind estimate which he had formed of her.

"But, Lucrece," said her father gravely, "one told me that Arthur Tremayne had made suit unto thee."

If he expected the mask to drop for an instant from the soft, regular features of Lucrece, he was sadly disappointed. Not a look, nor a gesture, showed that she felt either surprised or disconcerted.

"'Tis true, Father. The poor lad did say some like words unto me. But I gave him no encouragement to seek you."

"Thou wouldst have me to conceive, then, that thou art wholly free from any plight whatsoever unto Arthur?"

"Wholly free, Father. I ne'er gave him to wit otherwise."

Sir Thomas believed her; Rachel did not. The next thing, in the squire's honest eyes, was to let Arthur know that Lucrece was about to marry Sir Piers,—not directly, since Arthur himself had made no open declaration; but he proposed to go down to the parsonage, and mention the fact, as if incidentally, in Arthur's presence. He found Lucrece rather averse to this scheme.

"It should but trouble the poor lad," she said. "Why not leave him discover the same as matters shall unfold them?"

"Tom!" said Rachel to her brother apart, "go thou down, and tell Arthur the news. I am afeared Lucrece hath some cause, not over good, for wishing silence kept."

"Good lack!" cried the worried Squire. "Wellnigh would I that every one of my childre had been a lad! These maidens be such changeable and chargeable gear, I verily wis not what to do withal."

"Bide a while, Tom, till Jack hath been in the Court a year or twain; maybe then I shall hear thee to wish that all had been maids."

Down to the parsonage trudged the puzzled and unhappy man, and found that Arthur was at home. He chatted for a short time with the family in general, and then told the ladies, as a piece of news which he expected to interest them, that his daughter Lucrece was about to be married. Had he not intentionally kept his eyes from Arthur while he spoke, he would have seen that the young man went white to the lips.

"Eh, *ma foi!*" said Mrs Rose.

"With whom shall she wed?" asked Mrs Tremayne.

"Sir Thomas, is that true?" was the last remark—in hoarse accents, from Arthur.

"It is true, my lad. Have I heard truly, that you would not have it so?"

Mrs Tremayne looked at her son in a mixture of astonishment and dismay. It had never occurred to her guileless, unsuspecting mind that the object of his frequent visits to Enville Court could be any one but Clare.

"Sir, I cry you mercy," said Arthur with some dignity. "I do readily acknowledge that I ought not to have left you in the dark. But to speak truth, it was she, not I, that would not you should be told."

"That would not have me told what, Arthur?"

"That I loved her," said Arthur, his voice slightly tremulous. "And—she *said* she loved me."

"She told me that she had given thee no encouragement to speak to me."

"To speak with you—truth. Whene'er I did approach that matter, she alway deterred me from the same. But if she hath told you, Sir, that she gave me no encouragement to love and serve her, nor no hope of wedding with her in due time,—why, then, she hath played you false as well as me."

It was manifest that Arthur was not only much distressed, but also very angry.

"And thou never spakest word to me, my son!" came in gentle tones of rebuke from his mother.

"Ah, the young folks make not the confessor of the father nor the mother," said Mrs Rose smiling, and shaking her head. "It were the better that they did it, Arthur."

"Mother, it was not my fault," pleaded Arthur earnestly. "I would have spoken both to you and to Sir Thomas here, if she had suffered me. Only the very last time I urged it on her—and that no further back than this last week—she threatened me to have no further dealing with me, an' I spake to either of you."

"Often-times," observed Mrs Rose thoughtfully, "the maidens love not like the mothers, *mon chéri*."

"God have mercy!" groaned poor Sir Thomas, who was not least to be pitied of the group. "I am afeared Rachel hath the right. Lucrece hath not been true in this matter."

"There is no truth in her!" cried Arthur bitterly. "And for the matter of that, there is none in woman!"

"*Le beau compliment!*" said his grandmother, laughing.

His mother looked reproachfully at him, but did not speak.

"And Rachel saith there is none in man," returned Sir Thomas with grim humour. "Well-a-day! what will the world come to?"

These little pebbles in her path did not seem to trouble the easy smoothness of Lucrece's way. She prepared her trousseau with her customary placidity; debated measures and trimmings with her aunt as if entirely deaf to that lady's frequent interpolations of wrath; consulted Blanche on the style of her jewellery, and Clare on the embroidery of her ruffs, as calmly as if there were not a shadow on her conscience nor her heart. Perhaps there was not.

Sir Piers took Jack down to London, and settled him in his post of deputy gentleman usher to the Queen; and at the end of six months, he returned to Enville Court for his marriage. Everything went off with the most absolute propriety. Lucrece's costume was irreproachable; her manners, ditto. The festivities were prolonged over a week, and on their close, Sir Piers and Lady Feversham set out, for their home in Norfolk. No sign of annoyance was shown from the parsonage, except that Arthur was not at home when the wedding took place; and that Lysken, whom Lucrece graciously requested to be one of her bridesmaids, declined, with a quiet keenness of manner which any one but Lucrece would have felt.

"If it should like thee to have me for thy bridesmaid, Lucrece," she said, looking her calmly in the face, "it should not like me." (In modern phraseology,—I should not like it.)

The bride accepted the rebuke with unruffled suavity.

Of course there were the ceremonies then usual at weddings, and a shower of old slippers greeted bride and bridegroom as they rode away.

"Aunt Rachel, you hit her on the head!" cried Blanche, looking astonished.

"I took metely good aim," assented Rachel, with grim satisfaction. "A good riddance of— Blanche, child, if thou wouldst have those flowers to live, thou wert best put them in water."

Chapter Twelve.

A Glimpse of the Hot Gospeller.

"In service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me;
My secret heart has learned the truth
Which makes Thy children free:
A life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty."

Anna L. Waring.

"I hold not with you there, Parson!"

The suddenness of this appeal would have startled any one less calm and self-controlled than the Reverend Robert Tremayne, who was taking off his surplice in the vestry after morning prayers one Wednesday, when this unexpected announcement reached him through the partially open door. But it was not the Rector's habit to show much emotion of any kind, whatever he might feel.

"Pray you, come forward," he said quietly, in answer to the challenge.

The door, pushed wide open by the person without, revealed a handsome old man, lithe and upright still,—whose hair was pure white, and his brown eyes quick and radiant. He marched in and seated himself upon the settle, grasping a stout oaken stick in both hands, and gazing up into the Rector's face. His dress, no less than his manners, showed

that notwithstanding the blunt and eccentric nature of his greeting, he was by birth a gentleman.

"And wherein hold you not with me, Sir, I pray you?" inquired Mr Tremayne with some amusement.

"In your tolerating of evil opinion."

"I cry you mercy. What evil opinion have I tolerated?"

"If you will tolerate men which hold evil opinions, you must needs tolerate evil opinion."

"I scantily see that."

"Maybe you see this?" demanded the stranger, pulling a well-worn Bible from a capacious pocket.

"My sight is sharp enough for so much," returned Mr Tremayne good-naturedly.

"Well, and I tell you," said the stranger, poising the open Bible between his hands, "there is no such word as toleration betwixt the two backs of this book!"

The two backs of the book were brought together, by way of emphasising the assertion, with a bang which might almost have been heard to the parsonage.

"There is no such *word*, I grant you."

"No, Sir!—and there is no such thing."

"That hangeth, I take it, on what the word is held to signify."

"Shall I tell you what it signifieth?"

"Pray you, so do."

"Faint-heartedness, Sir!—weakness—recreancy—cowardliness—shamedness of the truth!"

"An ill-sounding list of names," said Mr Tremayne quietly. "And one of none whereof I would by my good-will be guilty.—Pray you, whom have I the honour to discourse withal?"

"A very pestilent heretic, that Queen Mary should have burned, and forgot."

"She did not that with many," was the significant answer.

"She did rare like to it with a lad that I knew in King Edward's days, whose name was Robin Tremayne."

"Master Underhill, my dear old friend!" cried the Rector, grasping his visitor's hand warmly. "I began these two minutes back to think I should know those brown eyes, but I might not set a name thereto all at once."

"Ha! the 'pestilent heretic' helped thee to it, I reckon!" replied the guest laughing. "Ay, Robin, this is he thou knewest of old time. We will fight out our duello another time, lad. I am rare glad to see thee so well-looking."

"From what star dropped you, Master Underhill? or what fair wind blew you hither?"

"I am dropped out of Warwickshire, lad, if that be a star; and I came hither of a galloway's back (but if he were the wind, 'twas on the stillest night of the year!) And how goes it with Mrs Thekla? I saw her last in her bride's gear."

"She will be rarely glad to see you, old friend; and so, I warrant you, will our mother, Mistress Rose. Will you take the pain to go with me to mine house?—where I will ensure you of a good bed and a rare welcome."

"Wilt thou ensure me of twain, lad?" asked the old man, with a comic twinkle in his eyes.

"Twain! What, which of all my small ancient friends be with you?—Ay, and that as hearty as to yourself.—Is it Hal or Ned?"

"Thou art an ill guesser, Robin: 'tis neither Ned nor Hal. Thy *small* friends, old lad, be every man and woman of them higher than their father. Come, let us seek the child. I left her a-poring and posing over one of the tombs in the church.—What, Eunice!—I might as well have left my staff behind as leave her."

It was plainly to be perceived, by the loud call which resounded through the sacred edifice, that Mr Underhill was not fettered by any superstitious reverence for places. A comely woman answered the call,—in years about thirty-seven, in face particularly bright and pleasant. The last time that Mr Tremayne had seen her, Eunice Underhill was about as high as the table.

"And doth Mistress Rose yet live?" said her father, as they went towards the parsonage. "She must be a mighty old grandame now. And all else be gone, as I have heard, that were of old time in the Lamb?"

"All else, saving Barbara Polwhele,—you mind Barbara, the chamber—maiden?—and Walter's daughter, Clare, which is now a maid of twenty years."

"Ah, I would fain see yon lass of little Walter's. What manner of wife did the lad wed?"

"See her—ask not me," said the Rector smiling.

"Now, how read I that? Which of the Seven Sciences hath she lost her way in?"

"In no one of them all."

"Come, I will ask Mrs Thekla."

Mr Tremayne laughed.

"You were best see her for yourself, as I cast no doubt you soon will. How long time may we hope to keep you?"

"Shall you weary of us under a month?"

Mr Underhill was warmly enough assured that there was no fear of any such calamity.

Most prominent of his party—which was Puritan of the Puritans—was Edward Underhill of Honyngham, the Hot Gospeller. His history was a singular one. Left an heir and an orphan at a very early age, he had begun life as a riotous reveller. Soon after he reached manhood, God touched his heart—by what agency is not recorded. Then he "fell to reading the Scriptures and following the preachers,"—throwing his whole soul into the service of Christ, as he had done before into that of Satan. Had any person acquainted with the religious world of that day been asked, on the outbreak of Queen Mary's persecution, to name the first ten men who would suffer, it is not improbable that Edward Underhill's name would have been found somewhere on the list. But, to the astonishment of all who knew his decided views, and equally decided character, he had survived the persecution, with no worse suffering than a month spent in Newgate, and a tedious illness as the result. Nor was this because he had either hidden his colours, or had struck them. Rather he kept his standard flying to the breeze, and defied the foe. No reason can be given for his safety, save that still the God of Daniel could send His angel and shut the lions' mouths, that they should do His prophets no hurt.

On the accession of Elizabeth, Underhill returned for a short time to his London home in Wood Street, Cheapside; but die soon went back to the family seat in Warwickshire, where he had since lived as a country squire. (Note 1.)

"Yet these last few months gone have I spent in London," said he, "for my Hal (name true, character imaginary) would needs have me. Now, Robin, do thou guess what yon lad hath gat in his head. I will give thee ten shots."

"No easy task, seeing I ne'er had the good fortune to behold him. What manner of lad is he?"

"Eunice?" said her father, referring the question to her.

Eunice laughed. "Hal is mighty like his father, Master Tremayne. He hath a stout will of his own, nor should you quickly turn him thence."

"Lo you, now, what conditions doth this jade give me!" laughed Underhill. "A stubborn old brute, that will hear no reason!"

"Hal will not hear o'ermuch, when he is set on aught," said Eunice.

"Well," said Mr Tremayne thoughtfully, "so being, I would guess that he had set his heart, to be Archbishop of Canterbury, or else Lord Privy Seal."

"*Ma fo!*" interposed Mrs Rose, "but I would guess that no son of Mr Underhill should tarry short of a king. Mind you not, *hermano*, that I did once hear you to say that you would not trust your own self, had you the chance to make your Annette a queen?"

"Dear heart, Mistress Rose! I would the lad had stayed him at nought worsen. Nay, he is not for going up the ladder, but down. Conceive you, nought will serve him but a journey o'er seas, and to set him up a home in the Queen's Majesty's country of Virginia—yea, away in the plantations, amongst all the savages and wild beasts, and men worse than either, that have been of late carried thither from this land, for to be rid of them. 'Come, lad,' said I to him, 'content thee with eating of batatas (the Spanish word of which *potato* is a corruption) and drinking of tobacco (smoking tobacco was originally termed *drinking it*), and leave alone this mad fantasy.' But not he, in good sooth! Verily, for to go thither as a preacher and teacher, with hope to reform the ill men,—that had been matter of sore peril, and well to be thought on; yet would I not have said him nay, had the Lord called him to it;—but to make his *home!*"

And Mr Underhill stopped short, as if words were too weak adequately to convey his feelings.

"Maybe the Lord hath called him to that, old friend," said the Rector. "His eyes be on Virginia, no less than England."

"God forbid I should deny it! Yet there is such gear as tempting the Lord. For my part,—but la! I am an old man, and the old be less venturesome than the young,—yet for me, I see not what should move a man to dwell any whither out of his own country, without he must needs fly to save his life."

"Had all men been of your mind," observed Mr Tremayne with a smile, "there had ne'er been any country inhabited save one, until men were fairly pushed thence by lack of room."

"Well!—and wherefore should any quit home until he be pushed out?"

"Ask at Hal," said the Rector laughing.

"No have I so? Yea, twenty times twice told: but all I may win from the young ne'er-do-well is wise saws that the

world must be peopled (why so, I marvel?),—and that there is pleasure in aventure (a deal more, I reckon, in keeping of one's carcass safe and sound!)—and that some men must needs dwell in strange lands, and the like. Well-a-day! wherefore should they so? Tell me that, Robin Tremayne."

"I will, old friend, when mine amaze is o'er at hearing of such words from one Ned Underhill."

"Amaze!—what need, trow?"

"But little need, when one doth call to mind that the most uncommon of all things is consistency. Only when one hath been used for forty years and more to see a man (I name him not) ever foremost in all perilous aventure, and thrusting him forward into whatsoever danger there were as into a bath of rosewater, 'tis some little surprise that taketh one to hear from the self-same party that 'tis never so much sweeter to keep safe and sound at home."

Mr Underhill threw his head back, and indulged in a hearty peal of laughter.

"On my word, Robin, thou ticklest me sore! But what, lad!—may a man not grow prudent in his old age?"

"By all manner of means, or in his youth no less; but this will I say, that the last prudent man I looked to set eyes on should bear the name of Underhill."

"Well-a-day! Here is Eunice made up of prudence."

"She taketh after her mother, trow," replied the Rector dryly.

"Come, I'll give o'er, while I have some bones left whole.—And what thinkest, lad, of the outlook of matters public at this time?"

"Nay, what think you, that have been of late in London?"

"Robin," said Mr Underhill gravely, "dost mind, long years gone, when King Edward his reign was well-nigh o'er, the ferment men's minds gat in touching the succession?"

"*Eh, la belle journée!*" said Mrs Rose waggishly. "I do well mind the ferment *you* were in, Mr Underhill, and how you did push your Queen Mary down all the throats of your friends: likewise how sweetly she did repay you, bidding you for a month's visit to her palace of Newgate! Pray you, shall it be the same again, *hermano?*"

"Dear heart! What a memory have you, Mistress Rose!" said Mr Underhill, with another hearty laugh. "It shall scantily be Newgate again, metrusteth: the rather, since there is no Queen Mary to thrust adown your throats—thank the Lord for that and all other His mercies. He that we may speak of is no Papist, whatso else; but I mistake greatly, Robin, if somewhat the same matter shall not come o'er again, should it please God to do a certain thing."

Mr Underhill spoke thus vaguely, having no wish to finish his days on the gallows; as men had done ere now, for little more than a hint that the reigning Sovereign might not live for ever.

"And when the ferment come, under what flag must we look for you, Mr Underhill?" asked Mrs Tremayne.

"Well," said he, "Harry Eighth left a lad and two lasses, and we have had them all. But Harry Seventh left likewise a lad and two lasses; and we have had the lad, but ne'er a one of the lasses."

"Both these lasses be dead," responded the Rector.

"They be so. But the first left a lad and a lass; and that lad left a lass, and that lass left a lad—which is alive and jolly."

This meant, that Queen Margaret of Scotland, elder sister of Henry the Eighth, had issue King James the Fifth, whose daughter was Mary Queen of Scots, and her son was James the Sixth, then living.

"You count the right lieth there?" queried Mr Tremayne.

Mr Underhill nodded his head decidedly.

"And is—yonder party—well or ill affected unto the Gospellers?—how hear you?"

"Lutheran to the back-bone—with no love for Puritans, as men do now begin to call us Hot Gospellers."

"Thus is the Queen, mecounteth: and we have thriven well under her, and have full good cause to thank God for her."

"Fifty years gone, Robin—when she was but a smatchet (a very young person)—I said that lass would do well. There is a touch of old Hal in her—not too much, but enough to put life and will into her."

"There shall scantily be that in him."

"Nay, I'll not say so much. Meg had a touch of Hal, too. 'Twas ill turning her down one road an' she took the bit betwixt her teeth, and had a mind to go the other. There was less of it in Mall, I grant you. And as to yon poor luckless loon, Mall's heir,—if he wit his own mind, I reckon 'tis as much as a man may bargain for. England ne'er loveth such at her helm—mark you that, Robin. She may bear with them, but she layeth no affiance in them."

Mr Underhill's hearers knew that by the poor luckless loon, he meant Edward Seymour, Lord Beauchamp, the representative of the Princess Mary, younger sister of Henry the Eighth. He was heir of England under Henry's will,

and might, if he had chosen it, have been a very formidable opponent of King James.

"There was trial made, in King Harry's days," said the Rector thoughtfully, "to join the two Crowns of England and Scotland, by marrying of King Edward, that then was Prince, with their young Queen Mary."

"Well-a-day!—what changes had been, had that matter come to perfection!"

"It were a mighty great book, friend, that should be writ, were all set down that might have happened if things had run other than they have done. But I pray you, what outlook is now for the Gospellers—or Puritans, if they be so called—these next few years? Apart from the Court—be they in good odour in London, or how?"

"Be they in good odour in Heaven, you were better to ask. What is any great town but a sink of wickedness? And when did ill men hold good men in esteem?"

"Ah, Mr Underhill, but there is difficulty beside that," said Mrs Rose, shaking her head. "Wherefore, will you tell me, cannot the good men be content to think all the same thing, and not go quarrel, quarrel, like the little boys at play?"

"So they should, Mistress Rose!—so they should!" said Mr Underhill uncompromisingly. "What with these fantasies and sectaries and follies—well-a-day! were I at the helm, there should be ne'er an opinion save one."

"That is the very thing Queen Mary thought," said Mr Tremayne, looking amused.

"Dear heart! what will the lad say next?" demanded Mr Underhill in a surprised tone.

"'Tis truth, old friend. See you not that to keep men of one opinion, the only way is to slay them that be of the contrary? Living men must differ. Only the dead ne'er wrangle touching aught."

"Eh, Robin, man! 'Live peaceably with all men.'"

"'As much as lieth in you.' Paul was wiser than you, saving your presence."

"But, Robin, my son," said Mrs Rose, "I would not say only, for such matters as men may differ in good reason. They cannot agree on the greater things, *mon chéri*,—nay, nor on the little, littles no more.—Look you, Mr Underhill, we have in this parish a man that call himself a Brownist—I count he think the brown the only colour that is right; if he had made the world, all the flowers should be brown, and the leaves black: eh, *ma fo!* what of a beautiful world to live in!—*Bien!* this last May Day, Sir Thomas Enville set up the maypole on the green. 'Come, Master,' he said to the Brownist, 'you dance round the maypole?'—'Nay, nay,' saith he, 'it savoureth of Popery.' 'Well,' quoth he, 'then you come to prayer in the church! There is nothing against that, I trow?'—'Good lack, nay!' saith he, "'tis an idle form. I cannot pray without the Spirit aid me; and the Spirit will not be bounden down unto dead forms.' And so, Mr Underhill, they fall to wrangling. Now, is it not sad? Not only they will not take their pleasure together, but they will not say their prayers together no more. Yet they all look to meet in Heaven. They will not wrangle and quarrel there, I trow? Then why can they not be at peace these few days the sooner?"

This was a long speech for Mrs Rose.

"Well, to speak truth," said Mr Underhill, "I could find in mine heart to cry 'Hail, fellow!' to your Brownist over the maypole: though I see not wherein it savoureth of Popery, but rather of Paganism. Howbeit, as I well know, Popery and Paganism be sisters, and dwell but over the way the one from the other. But as to the Common Prayer being but a form, and that dead,—why, I pray you, what maketh it a dead form save the dead heart of him that useth the same? The very Word of God is but a dead thing, if the soul of him that readeth it be dead."

A certain section of the laity are earnestly petitioning the clergy for "a hearty service." Could they make a more absurd request? The heart is in the worshipper, not in the service. And who can bring his heart to it but himself?

"*Ma fo!*" said Mrs Rose, with a comical little grimace, "but indeed I did think, when we were set at rest from the Queen Mary and her burnings, that we could have lived at peace the ones with the others."

"Then which counted you to be rid of, Mistress Rose—the childre of God or the childre of the devil?. So long as both be in the world, I reckon there'll not be o'er much peace," bluntly replied Underhill.

"Mind you what my dear father was used to say," asked Mr Tremayne,—"'Afore the kingdom must come the King'? Ah, dear friends, we have all too little of Christ. 'We shall be satisfied,' and we shall be of one mind in all things, only when we wake up 'after His likeness.'"

Clare Avery and Eunice Underhill struck up a warm friendship. Eunice (name and dates true, character imaginary) was one of the few women who keep "the dew of their youth," and in freshness, innocence, and ignorance of this evil world, she was younger than many girls not half her age. Her simplicity put Clare at ease, while her experience of life awoke respect. Clare seized her opportunity one day, while taking a long walk with Eunice, to obtain the opinion of the latter on the point which still interested her, and compare it with that of Mrs Tremayne. Why it was easier to talk to Eunice than to those at home, Clare could not decide. Perhaps, had she discovered the reason, she might not have found it very flattering to her self-love.

"Mistress Eunice, think you it easy to be content with small gear?"

"You would say with lack of goods?" asked Eunice.

"Nay; but with the having to deal with petty, passing matter, in the stead of some noble deed that should be worthy

the doing.”

“I take you now, Mistress Clare. And I can feel for your perplexity, seeing I have known the same myself.”

“Oh, you have so?” responded Clare eagerly.

“Ay, I have felt as though the work set me to do were sheer waste of such power and knowledge as God had given unto me; and have marvelled (I would speak it with reverence) what the Lord would be at, that He thus dealt with me. Petty things—mean things—little passing matter, as you said, that none shall be the better for to-morrow; wherefore must I do these? I have made a pudding, maybe; I have shaken up a bed; I have cut an old gown into a kirtle. And to-morrow the pudding shall be eaten, and the bed shall lack fresh straw, and ere long the gown shall be worn to rags. But I shall live for ever. Wherefore should a soul be set to such work which shall live for ever?”

“Ay,—you know!” said Clare, drawing a deep breath of satisfaction. “Now tell me, Mistress Eunice, what answer find you to this question? Shall it be with you, as with other, that these be my tasks at school?”

“That is verily sooth, Mistress Clare; yet there is another light wherein I love the better to look thereat. And it is this: that in this world be no little things.”

“What would you say, Mistress Eunice? In good sooth, it seemeth me the rather, there be few great.”

“I cry you mercy,” said Eunice, with her bright smile. “Lo’ you,—’tis after this fashion. The pudding I have made a man shall eat, and thereby be kept alive. This man shall drop a word to another, which one passing by shall o’erhear, —on the goodness and desirableness of learning, I will say. Well, this last shall turn it o’er in his mind, and shall determine to send his lad to school, and have him well learned. Time being gone, this lad shall write a book, or shall preach a sermon, whereby, through the working of God’s Spirit, many men’s hearts shall be touched, and led to consider the things that belong unto their peace. Look you, here is a chain; and in this great chain one little link is the pudding which I made, twenty years gone.”

“But the man could have eaten somewhat else.”

“Soothly; but he did not, you see.”

“Or another than you could have made the pudding.”

“Soothly, again: but I was to make it.”

Clare considered this view of the case.

“All things in this world, Mistress Clare, be links in some chain. In Dutchland (Germany), many years gone now, a young man that studied in an university there was caught in an heavy thunderstorm. He grew sore affrighted; all his sins came to his mind: and he prayed Saint Anne to dispel the storm, promising that he would straightway become a monk. The storm rolled away, and he suffered no harm. But he was mindful of his vow, and he became a monk. Well, some time after, having a spare half-hour, he went to the library to get him a book. As God would have it, he reached down a Latin Bible, the like whereof he had ne’er seen aforetime. Through the reading of this book—for I am well assured you know that I speak of Luther—came about the full Reformation of religion which, thanks be to God! is now spread abroad. And all this cometh—to speak after the manner of men—in that one Martin was at one time affrighted with the thunder; and, at another time, reached him down a book. Nay, Mistress Clare—in God’s world be no little things!”

“Mistress Eunice, in so saying, you make life to look a mighty terrible thing, and full of care.”

“And is life not a most terrible thing to them that use it not aright? But for them that do trust them unto God’s guidance, and search His Word to see what He would have them do, and seek alway and above all things but to do His will,—it may be life is matter for meditation, yea, and watchfulness; but methinks none for care. God will see to the chain: ’tis He, not we, that is weaver thereof. We need but to be careful, each of his little link.”

“My links be wearyful ones!” said Clare with a little sigh. “’Tis to cut, and snip, and fit, and sew, and guard, and mend. My cousin Lysken dealeth with men and women, I with linen and woollen. Think you it strange that her work should seem to me not only the nobler, but the sweeter belike?”

“Methinks I have seen Mistress Lysken to deal pretty closely with linen and woollen, sithence Father and I came hither,” said Eunice smiling. “But in very deed, Mistress Clare, ’tis but nature that it so should seem unto you. Yet did it ever come into your mind, I pray you, that we be poor judges of that which is high and noble? I marvel if any save Christ and Gabriel e’er called John Baptist a great man. Yet he was great in the sight of the Lord. Yea, that word, ‘more than a prophet’ was the very accolade of the King of the whole world. You know, Mistress Clare, that if the Queen’s Majesty should call a man ‘Sir Robert,’ though it were but a mistake, and he no knight, that very word from her should make him one. And the King of Heaven can make no mistake; His great men be great men indeed. Now whether would you rather, to be great with men, or with God?”

“Oh, with God, undoubtedly!” said Clare shyly.

“It seemeth me,” said Eunice, knitting her brows a little, “there be three questions the which your heart may ask himself touching your work. *Wherefore* do I this? You will very like say, Because you be bidden. Good. But then—*How* do I this?—is it in the most excellent way I can? And yet again, *For whom* do I this? That last lieth deepest of all.”

“Why, I do it for my mother and Aunt Rachel,” said Clare innocently.

“Good. But wherefore not, henceforward, do it for God?”

“For God, Mistress Eunice!”

“’Tis the true touchstone of greatness. Nought can be little that a man doth for God; like as nought can be great that a man doth but for himself.”

“Lysken can work for God,” said Clare thoughtfully; “but I, who do but draw needles in and out—”

“Cannot draw them for God? Nay, but Paul thought not so. He biddeth you ‘whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do *all* to the glory of God.’ But mind you, only the very best work is to His glory: that is to say, only *your* very best. He measures not Mall’s work by Jane’s, but he looketh at the power of both, and judgeth if they have wrought their best or no. Jane may have finished the better piece of work, but if Mall have wrought to her utmost, and Jane not so, then Mall’s work shall take first rank, and Jane’s must fall behind.”

“That is a new thought unto me, Mistress Eunice—that I can do such work for God. I did indeed account that I could be patient under the same, for to please Him: and I could have thought that the saving of a child from drowning, or the leading of a ship to battle, and so forth, might be done as unto God: but to cut and sew and measure!”

“I would ’twere not a new thought to many another,” answered Eunice. “But I guess we can sew well or ill; and we can cut carefully or carelessly; and we can measure truly or untruly. Truth is no little matter, Mistress Clare; neither is diligence; nor yet a real, honest, hearty endeavouring of one’s self to please the Lord, who hath given us our work, in every little thing. Moreover, give me leave to tell you,—you may be set a great work, and you may fail to see the greatness thereof. I mind me, when I was something younger than you be, and my brother Hal was but a little child, he fell into sore danger, and should belike have been killed, had none stretched out hand to save him. Well, as the Lord in His mercy would have it, I saw his peril, and I ran and snatched up the child in the very nick of time. There was but an half-minute to do it. And at afterward, men praised me, and said I had done a great thing. But think you it bare the face of a great thing to me, as I was in the doing thereof? Never a whit. I ne’er tarried to think if it were a great thing or a small: I thought neither of me nor of my doing, but alonely of our Hal, and how to set him in safety. They said it was a great matter, sith I had risked mine own life. But, dear heart! I knew not that I risked aught—I ne’er thought once thereon. Had I known it, I would have done the same, God helping me: but I knew it not. Now, whether was this a great thing or a small?”

“I have no doubt to say, a great.”

“Maybe, Mistress Clare, when you and I shall stand—as I pray God we may!—among the sheep at the right hand of Christ our Saviour,—when the books be opened, and the dead judged according to that which is written of them,—He may pick out some little petty deed (to our eyes), and may say thereof, This was a great thing in My sight. And it may be, too, that the deeds we counted great He shall pass by without any mention. Dear heart, let us do the small deeds to our utmost, and the great are sure to follow. ‘He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.’ And you know what He saith touching that poor cup of cold water, which assuredly is but a right small thing to give. Think you, if the Queen’s Highness were passing here but now, and should drop her glove, and you picked up the same and offered it to Her Grace,—should you e’er forget it? I trow not. Yet what a petty matter—to pick up a dropped glove! ‘Ah, but,’ say you, ‘It was the Queen’s glove—that wrought the difference.’ Verily so. Then set the like gilding upon your petty deeds. It is the King’s work. You have wrought for the King. Your guerdon is His smile—is it not enough?—and your home shall be within His house for ever.”

“Ay!” said Clare, drawing a long sigh—not of care: “it is enough, Mistress Eunice.”

“And He hath no lack of our work,” added Eunice softly. “It is *given* to us to do, like as it was given unto Peter and John to suffer. Methinks he were neither a good child nor a thankful, that should refuse to stretch forth hand for his Father’s gift.”

Note 1. I have not been able to ascertain the true date of Underhill’s death, but he was living on the 6th of March 1568. (Rot. Pat., 10 Elizabeth, Part Two.)

Chapter Thirteen.

Gentleman Jack.

“He is transformed, And grown a gallant of the last edition.”

Massinger.

Jack’s letters from London were exuberant. He was delighted with his new phase of existence. He had made some most advantageous friendships, and was in hopes of obtaining a monopoly, which would bring him in about a hundred a year. In the meantime, he begged that his father would remember that life at Court was a very costly affair; and perhaps he would be so good as to send him a little more money. Half-a-dozen letters of this description passed, and Jack was liberally supplied with such an amount as his father anticipated that he might reasonably want. But at the end of about two years came a much more urgent epistle. Jack was sorry to say that he had been unavoidably compelled to go into debt. No blame was to be attached to him in the matter. He had not incurred the obligation of a penny for anything beyond the barest necessities; he hoped his father would not imagine that he had been living extravagantly. But he wished Sir Thomas to understand that he really had not a suspicion of the inevitable expenses of Court life. The sums which he had been so good as to remit were a mere drop in the ocean of

Jack's necessities.

Sir Thomas replied, without any expression of displeasure, that if his son could get leave of absence sufficient to pay a visit to Lancashire, he would be glad to see him at home, and he desired that he would bring all his bills with him.

The answer to this letter was Jack himself, who came home on an autumn evening, most elaborately attired, and brimful of news.

A fresh punishment had been devised for felony—transportation to the colonies among the savages. The Spaniards were finally and completely expelled from the Dutch provinces. A Dutchman had made the extraordinary discovery that by an ingenious arrangement of pieces of glass, of certain shapes, at particular distances, objects far off could be made to seem nearer and larger. The Queen was about to send out a commercial expedition to India—the first—from which great things were expected. There was a new proclamation against Jesuits and “seminary priests.” All these matters naturally enough, with Jack's personal adventures, occupied the first evening.

The next morning, Sir Thomas asked to see the bills. Jack brought out a tolerably large package of documents, which he presented to his father with a graceful reverence.

“I do ensure you, Sir, that I have involved me for nought beyond the barest necessities of a gentleman.”

His father opened and perused the first bill.

“‘One dozen of shirts at four pound the piece.’ Be those, my lad, among the barest necessities?”

“Of a gentleman, Sir,” said Jack.

“Four pound, Brother! Thou must mean four shillings,” cried Rachel.

“‘Tis writ four pound,” calmly returned Sir Thomas.

“Good lack Jack!” said Rachel, turning to her nephew. “Were there angels for buttons all the way down?”

“The broidery, Aunt—the broidery!” returned Jack. “Four pound is a reasonable charge enough. Marry, I do ensure you, my sometime Lord of Leicester was wont to pay ten pound the piece for his shirts.”

“I would I had been his shirt-maker!” said Rachel. “‘Twould have built up my fortune.”

“What wist thou touching broidery, Jack?” demanded Lady Enville, with her silvery laugh.

“Go to!” said Sir Thomas, taking up the next bill. “‘Five score of silk stockings, broidered, with golden clocks (Note 1), twenty-six and eight-pence the pair.’—Those be necessaries, belike, Jack?”

“Assuredly, Sir. White, look you—a pair the day, or maybe two.”

“Ha!” said his father. “‘Item, one short coat, guarded with budge (lambskin), and broidered in gold thread, 45 pounds.—Item, one long gown of tawny velvet, furred with pampilion (an unknown species of fur), and guarded with white lace, 66 pounds, 13 shillings, 4 pence.’—Necessaries, Jack?”

“Mercy preserve us!” ejaculated Rachel.

“Good lack, Sir Thomas!—the lad must have gear!” urged his step-mother.

Sir Thomas laid down the bills.

“Be so good, Jack, as to tell me the full figures of these counts?”

“Good sooth, Sir! I have not added them,” replied Jack in a contemptuous tone. “A gentleman is ne'er good at reckoning.”

“He seems to be reasonable good at spending,” said his father. “But how much, Jack, dost guess they may all come to?”

“Really, Sir, I cannot say.”

“Go to—give a guess.”

“Marry—somewhere about five thousand pound, it may be.”

According to the equivalent value of money in the present day, Jack's debts amounted to about seventy-five thousand pounds. His father's yearly income was equal to about six thousand.

“How lookest thou to pay this money, Jack?” asked Sir Thomas, in a tone of preternatural calmness which argued rather despair than lack of annoyance.

“Well, Sir, there be two or three fashions of payment,” returned Jack, airily. “If you cannot find the money—”

“I cannot, in very deed, lad.”

“Good,” answered Jack quite complacently. “Then—if I win not the monopoly—”

"The monopoly would not pay thy debts under fifty years, Jack; not if thou gavest every penny thereof thereto, and hadst none fresh to pay. How about that, lad?"

"Of course I must live like a gentleman, Sir," said Jack loftily. "Then the next way is to win the grant of a wardship."

This way of acquiring money is so entirely obsolete that it needs explanation. The grant of a wardship meant that some orphan heir of a large inheritance was placed in the care of the grantee, who was obliged to defray out of the heir's estate the necessary expenses of his sustenance and education, but was free to apply all the surplus to his own use until the heir was of age. When the inheritance was large, therefore, the grant was a considerable boon to the guardian.

"And supposing that fail thee?"

"Well, then—if the worst come to the worst—I can but wed an heir," remarked Jack with serenity.

"Wed an estate, thou meanest, Jack."

"Of course, Sir. The woman must come with it, I reckon. That I cannot help."

"Marry come up!" exclaimed Rachel. "Thou art a very man. Those be right the man's ways. 'The woman must come with it,' forsooth! Jack, my fingers be itching to thrash thee."

"Such matters be done every day, Aunt," observed Jack, smiling graciously,—not with reference to the suggested reward of his misdeeds.

"Black sin is done every day, lad. I wis that without thy telling. But that is no cause why thou shouldst be the doer of it."

"Nay, Aunt Rachel!" retorted Jack, in the same manner. "'Tis no sin to wed an heir."

"It was a sin, when I was a child, to tell lies. Maybe that is altered now," said Rachel dryly.

"What lies, Aunt Rachel?" asked Jack laughing.

"Is it no lie, Jack, to lead a woman into believing that thou lovest *her*, when, if she plucked her purse out of her pocket and gave it thee, thou wert fully content, and shouldst ask no more?"

"You have old-fashioned notions, Aunt Rachel," said Jack, still laughing.

"Jack! I do trust thou wilt not wed with any but one of good degree. Let her be a knight's daughter, at the least—a lord's were all the better," said his step-mother.

"But touching these debts, Jack," resumed his father. "Suppose thou shouldst fail to wed thine heir,—how then?"

"Then, Sir, I shall trust to redeem the money at play."

Every man of substance—not a Puritan—was at that time a gamester.

"And how, if that fail?"

"They can't all fail, Sir!" said Jack lightly.

"My lad!" replied His father earnestly, "I did an ill deed when I sent thee to London."

"Dear heart, Sir!" exclaimed Jack, just suppressing a much stronger ejaculation, "I do ensure you, you never did a wiser thing."

"Then my life hath been one of sore folly," answered his father.

"I always told thee thou shouldst come to wrack," added his aunt.

"Nay, now, what wrack have I come to?" returned Jack with a graceful flourish of his hands. "Call you it wrack to have a good post in the Queen's Majesty's house, with hope of a better, maybe, when it please God?—or, to be well (stand well, be on good terms) with many honourable gentlemen, and heirs of good houses, throughout all England?—or, to have the pick of their sisters and cousins, when it liketh me to wed?"

"They shall have a jolly picking that pick out thee!" growled Aunt Rachel.

"Or to have open door of full many honourable houses,—and good credit, that there is not a craftsman in London that should not count it honour to serve me with such goods as I might choose?" pursued Jack.

"A mighty barren honour, Jack, on thine own showing."

"Jack!" interposed Sir Thomas, who had seemed deep in thought for a minute, "tell me honestly,—of this five thousand pound, if so be, how much was lost at the dice?"

"Why, Sir!—you did not count I should reckon my debts of honour?"

Sir Thomas groaned within himself.

"Debts of honour!" cried Rachel. "What, be there a parcel more?"

"These be trade-debts, Aunt!" said Jack, with an injured air,—“debts that I can defray or leave, as it may stand with conveniency. My debts of honour must be paid, of course!—I looked to your bounty, Sir, for that. They be not much—but a light thousand or twelve hundred pound, I take it.”

That is to say, about 15,000 pounds to 18,000 pounds.

"Jack!" said his father, "dost remember thou hast two sisters yet unwed?"

"One, Sir, under your good pleasure," replied Jack suavely.

"Two," gravely repeated Sir Thomas. "I will set no difference betwixt Blanche and Clare. And they be to portion, lad; and we have all to live. I cannot pay thy debts of honour and see to these likewise. And, Jack, the trade-debts, as thou callest them, must come first."

"Sir!" exclaimed Jack aghast.

"I say, the trade-debts must stand first," repeated his father firmly.

"A gentleman never puts his trade-debts before his debts of honour, Sir!" cried Jack in a tone of intense disgust mixed with amazement.

"I know not what you gentlemen of the Court may account honour nor honesty, Sir," replied Sir Thomas, now sternly; "but I am a plain honest man, that knows nought of Court fashions, for the which His good providence I thank God. And if it be honest to heap up debt that thou hast no means of paying to thy certain knowledge, then I know not the signification of honesty."

"But I must play, Sir!" replied Jack—in the tone with which he might have said, "I must breathe."

"Then thou must pay," said Sir Thomas shortly.

"Must play, quotha!" interjected Rachel. "Thou must be a decent lad,—that is all the must I see."

"Come, be not too hard on the lad!" pleaded Lady Enville, fanning herself elegantly. "Of course he must live as other young men."

"That is it, Madam!" responded Jack eagerly, turning to his welcome ally. "I cannot affect singularity—'tis not possible."

"Of course not," said Lady Enville, who quite agreed with Jack's sentiments, as women of her type generally do.

"Thou canst affect honesty, trow," retorted Rachel.

"Sir," said Jack, earnestly addressing his father, "I do entreat you, look on this matter in a reasonable fashion."

"That is it which I would fain do, Jack."

"Well, Sir,—were I to put my trade-debts before my debts of honour, all whom I know should stamp me as no gentleman. They should reckon me some craftsman's son that had crept in amongst them peradventure."

"Good lack!" said his step-mother and aunt together,—the former in dismay, the latter in satire.

"I am willing that any should count me no gentleman, if he find me not one," answered his father; "but one thing will I never do, and that is, give cause to any man to reckon me a knave."

"But, Sir, these be nought save a parcel of beggarly craftsmen."

"Which thou shouldst have been, had it so pleased God," put in Aunt Rachel.

"Aunt," said Jack loftily, "I was born a gentleman; and under your good leaves, a gentleman I do mean to live and die."

"Thou hast my full good leave to live and die a gentleman, my lad," said his father; "and that is, a man of honour, truth, and probity."

"And 'tis no true man, nor an honourable, that payeth not his just debts," added Rachel.

"I cry thee mercy, Rachel; a gentleman never troubleth him touching debts," observed Lady Enville.

"In especial unto such like low companions as these," echoed Jack.

"Well!—honesty is gone out of fashion, I reckon," said Rachel.

"Only this will I say, Sir," resumed Jack with an air of settling matters: "that if you will needs have my trade-debts defrayed before my debts of honour, you must, an't like you, take them on yourself. I will be no party to such base infringement of the laws of honour."

"Good lack, lad! Thou talkest as though thy father had run into debt, and was looking unto thee to defray the

charges! 'Tis tother way about, Jack. Call thy wits together!" exclaimed his aunt.

"Well, Aunt Rachel, you seem determined to use me hardly," said Jack, with an air of reluctant martyrdom; "but you will find I harbour no malice for your evil conception of mine intents."

To see this Jack, who had done all the mischief and made everybody uncomfortable, mount on his pedestal and magnanimously forgive them, was too much for Rachel's equanimity.

"Of all the born fools that e'er gat me in a passion, Jack, thou art very king and captain! I would give my best gown this minute thou wert six in the stead of six-and-twenty—my word, but I would leather thee! I would whip thee till I was dog-weary, whatever thou shouldst be. The born patch (fool)!—the dolt (dunce)!—the lither loon (idle, good-for-nothing fellow)!—that shall harbour no malice against me because—he is both a fool and a knave! If thou e'er hadst any sense, Jack (the which I doubt), thou forgattest to pack it up when thou earnest from London. Of all the long-eared asses ever I saw—"

Mistress Rachel's diatribe came to a sudden close, certainly not from the exhaustion of her feelings, but from the want of suitable words wherein to express them.

"Aunt!" said Jack, still in an injured tone, "would you have me to govern myself by rule and measure, like a craftsman?"

"Words be cast away on thee, Jack: I will hold my peace. When thy brains be come home from the journey they be now gone, thou canst give me to wit, an' it like thee."

"I marvel," murmured Sir Thomas absently, "what Master Tremayne should say to all this."

"He!" returned Jack with sovereign scorn. "He is a Puritan!"

"He is a good man, Jack. And I doubt—so he keep out of ill company—whether Arthur shall give him the like care," said his father sighing.

"Arthur! A sely milksop, Sir, that cannot look a goose in the face!"

"Good lack! how shall he ever win through this world, that is choke-full of geese?" asked Rachel cuttingly.

"Suffer me to say, Sir, that Puritans be of no account in the Court."

"Of earth, or Heaven?" dryly inquired Sir Thomas.

"The Court of England, I mean, Sir. They be universally derided and held of low esteem. All these Sectaries—Puritans, Gospellers, Anabaptists, and what not—no gentleman would be seen in their company."

"Dear heart!" growled the still acetic Rachel. "The angels must be mighty busy a-building chambers for the gentry, that they mix not in Heaven with the poor common saints."

"'Tis the general thought, Aunt, among men of account.—and doth commend itself for truth,—that 't will take more ill-doing to damn a gentleman than a common man." (Note 2.)

"Good lack! I had thought it should be the other way about," said Rachel satirically.

"No doubt," echoed Lady Enville—in approbation of Jack's sentiment, not Rachel's.

"Why, Aunt!—think you no account is taken of birth and blood in Heaven?"

"Nay, I'll e'en let it be," said Rachel, rising and opening the door. "Only look thou, Jack,—there is another place than Heaven; and I don't reckon there be separate chambers there. Do but think what it were, if it *should* chance to a gentleman to be shut up yonder along with the poor sinners of the peasantry!"

And leaving this Parthian dart, Rachel went her way.

"I will talk with thee again, Jack: in the mean while, I will, keep these," said his father, taking up the bills.

"As it like you, Sir," responded Jack airily. "I care not though I never see them again."

"What ado is here!" said Lady Enville, as her husband departed. "I am sore afeared thou wilt have some trouble hereabout, Jack. Both thy father and aunt be of such ancient notions."

Jack bent low, with a courtier's grace, to kiss his step-mother's hand.

"Trouble, Madam," he said—and spoke truly—"trouble bideth no longer on me than water on a duck's back."

"And now tell me, Tremayne, what shall I do with this lad?"

"I am afeared, Sir Thomas, you shall find it hard matter to deal with him."

"Good lack, these lads and lasses!" groaned poor Sir Thomas. "They do wear a man's purse—ay, and his heart. Marry, but I do trust I gave no such thought and sorrow to my father! Yet in very deed my care for the future passeth it for the past. If Jack go on thus, what shall the end be?"

Mr Tremayne shook his head.

“Can you help me to any argument that shall touch the lad’s heart?”

“Argument ne’er touched a man’s heart yet,” said the Rector. “That is but for the head. There is but one thing that will touch the heart to any lasting purpose; and that is, the quickening grace of God the Holy Ghost.”

“Nay, all they seem to drift further away from Him,” sighed the father sadly.

“My good friend, it may seem so to you, mainly because yourself are coming nearer.”

Sir Thomas shook his head sorrowfully.

“Nay, for I ne’er saw me to be such a sinner as of late I have. You call not that coming nearer God?”

“Ay, but it is!” said Mr Tremayne. “Think you, friend; you *were* such a sinner all your life long, though it be only now that, thanks to God, you see it. And I do in very deed hope and trust that you have this true sight of yourself because the Lord hath touched your eyes with the ointment of His grace. Maybe you are somewhat like as yet unto him whose eye Christ touched, that at first he could not tell betwixt men and trees. The Lord is not like to leave His miracle but half wrought. He will perfect that which He hath begun.”

“God grant it!” said Sir Thomas feelingly. “But tell me, what can I do for Jack? I would I had listed you and Rachel, and had not sent him to London. Sir Piers, and Orige, and the lad himself, o’er-persuaded me. I rue it bitterly; but howbeit, what is done is done. The matter is, what to do now?”

“The better way, methinks, should be that you left him to smart for it himself, an’ you so could.”

“Jack will ne’er smart for aught,” said his father. “Were I to stay his allowance, he should but run into further debt, ne’er doubting to pay the same somewhen and somehow. The way and the time he should leave to chance. I see nought but ruin before the lad. He hath learned over ill lessons in the Court,—of honour which is clean contrary to common honesty, and courtesy which standeth not with plain truth.”

“Ay, the Devil can well glose,” (flatter, deceive) said Mr Tremayne sadly.

“The lad hath no conscience!” added Sir Thomas. “With all this, he laugheth and singeth as though nought were on his mind. Good lack! but if I had done as he, I had been miserable thereafter. I conceive not such conditions.”

“I conceive them, for I have seen them aforetime. But I would not have such a conscience for the worth of the Queen’s Mint.”

Indeed, Jack did seem perfectly happy. His appetite, sleep, and spirits, were totally unaffected by his circumstances. Clare, to whom this anomaly seemed preposterous, one day asked him if he were happy.

“Happy?” repeated Jack. “For sure! Wherefore no?”

Clare did not tell him.

One evening in the week of Jack’s return, to the surprise of all, in walked Mr John Feversham. He did not seem to have much to say, except that Uncle Piers and Aunt Lucrece were well. In fact, he never had much to say. Nor did he think it necessary to state what had brought him to Lancashire. He was asked to remain, of course, to which he assented, and slipped into his place with a quiet ponderosity which seemed to belong to him.

“An oaken yule-log had as much sense, and were quicker!” (livelier) said Jack aside to Blanche.

“Nay, he wanteth not for sense, I take it,” returned his sister, “but of a truth he is solid matter.”

“I marvel if he ever gat into debt,” observed Clare quietly from the other side of Jack.

“He!” sneered that young gentleman. “He is the fashion of man that should pay all his trade-debts and ne’er ask for a rebate.”

“Well! methinks that were no very ill deed,” said Clare.

“A deed whereof no gentleman of spirit should be guilty!”

“There be divers sorts of spirits, Jack.”

“There is but one manner of spirit,” returned Jack sharply, “and I ne’er saw a spark thereof in yon bale of woollen goods labelled Jack Feversham.”

“May be thou wilt, some day,” answered Clare.

“That will be when the Ribble runneth up instead of down. He is a coward,—mine head to yon apple thereon.”

“Be not so sure thereof.”

“But I am sure thereof—as sure as a culverin shot.”

Clare dropped the subject.

Rather late on the following evening, with his usual quiet, business-like air, John Feversham asked for a few words with Sir Thomas. Then—to the astonishment of that gentleman—the purport of his visit came out. He wanted Blanche.

Sir Thomas was quite taken by surprise. It had never occurred to him that silent John Feversham had the faintest design upon any one. And what could this calm, undemonstrative man have seen in the butterfly Blanche, which had captivated him, of all people? He promised an answer the next day; and, feeling as if another straw had been added to his burden, he went to consult the ladies.

Lady Enville disapproved of the proposal. So unlike Don Juan!—so totally inferior, in every respect! And would it not be desirable to wait and see whether John were really likely to succeed to his uncle's inheritance within any reasonable time? she calmly urged. Sir Piers might live twenty years yet, or he might have a family of his own, and then where would John Feversham be? In present circumstances, concluded her Ladyship, enjoying the scent of her pomander, she thought this a most undesirable match for Blanche, who could not do much worse, and might do much better.

Rachel, as might be expected, took the contrary view. Unlike Don Juan!—yes, she hoped so, indeed! This was a sensible young man, who, it might be trusted, would keep Blanche in order, which she was likely enough to need as long as she lived. How should the girl do better? By all means take advantage of the offer.

“Well, should Blanche know? That is, before acceptance.”

“Oh, ay!” said Lady Enville.

“Oh, no!” said Rachel.

In Rachel's eyes, the new-fangled plan of giving the young lady a voice in the question was fraught with danger. But Lady Enville prevailed. Blanche was summoned, and asked what she thought of John Feversham.

It did not appear that Blanche had thought much about him at all. She was rather inclined to laugh at and despise him.

Well, had she any disposition to marry him?

Blanche's shrinking—“Oh no, an' it liked you, Father!”—decided the matter.

To all outward appearance, John Feversham took his rejection very quietly. Sir Thomas couched it in language as kind as possible. John said little in answer, and exhibited no sign of vexation. But Rachel, who was still pursuing her career of amateur detective, thought that he felt more distress than he showed.

Note 1. The embroidery about the heel and ankle, which showed above the low shoes then fashionable.

Note 2. Lest the reader should think this idea too preposterous to have been seriously entertained, I refer him to words actually uttered (and approved by the hearers) on the death of Philippe, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis the Fourteenth:—“I can assure you, God thinks twice before He damns a person of the Prince's quality.”—(*Mémoires de Dangeau*).

Chapter Fourteen.

Which was the Coward?

“Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point
d'autre crainte.”

Racine.

“There shall be a bull baited to-morrow at Rosso Hall,” (now Rossall) said Jack one evening at rear-supper. “I shall be there, without fail; who goeth withal?”

Lady Enville was doubtful of the weather, but she expressed no compassion for the bull. Clare declined without giving her reason. Blanche looked as if she did not know whether or not to ask permission to accompany her brother. Sir Thomas said he had too much to think about; and if not, it was an amusement for which he had no fancy.

“And thou, Feversham?”

“No! I thank you.”

“No!—and wherefore?”

“Because I count it not right.”

“Puritan!” cried Jack in accents of the deepest scorn. Feversham continued his supper with great unconcern.

“Art thou no Puritan?”

"What is a Puritan?" calmly returned John.

"One that reckoneth a laugh sin."

"Then, if so be, I am no Puritan."

"Jack!" reproved his father.

"Sir, of all things in this world, there is nought I do loathe and despise like to a Puritan!"

"There is a worse thing than reckoning a laugh to be sin, Jack," said Sir Thomas gravely; "and that is, reckoning sin a thing to laugh at."

"And wherefore dost loathe a Puritan, quotha?" demanded Rachel. "Be they so much better than thou?"

"There be no gentlemen amongst them, Aunt Rachel," suggested Blanche mischievously.

"They set them up for having overmuch goodness," answered Jack in a disgusted tone.

"Prithee, Jack, how much goodness is that?" his Aunt Rachel wished to know.

"Over Jack's goodness," whispered Blanche.

"There is not one that is not a coward," resumed Jack, ignoring the query. "As for Feversham yonder, I can tell why he would not go."

"Why?" said Feversham, looking up.

"Because," returned Jack with lofty scorn, "thou art afeared lest the bull should break loose."

Blanche was curious to hear what John Feversham would say to this accusation—one which to her mind was a most insulting one. Surely this would rouse him, if anything could.

"That is not all I am afeared of," said John quietly.

"Art thou base enough to confess fear?" cried Jack, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

John Feversham looked him steadily in the face.

"Ay, Jack Enville," he said, unmoved by the taunt. "I am afeared of God."

"Well said, my brave lad!" muttered Sir Thomas.

Jack turned, and left the hall without answering. But after that evening, his whole conduct towards Feversham evinced the uttermost contempt. He rarely spoke to him, but was continually speaking at him, in terms which classed him with "ancient wives" and "coward loons"—insinuations so worded that it was impossible to reply, and yet no one could doubt what was meant by them. Unless Feversham were extremely careless of the opinion of his fellows, he must have found this very galling; but he showed no indication of annoyance, beyond an occasional flush and quiver of the lip. Sir Thomas had at once exhibited his displeasure when he heard this, so that Jack restricted his manifestations to times when his father was absent; but the amusement sometimes visible in Blanche's face was not likely to be pleasant to the man whom Blanche had refused to marry.

"Well, Sir?" queried Jack one Saturday evening, as the family sat round the hall fire after rear-supper. "My leave, an' I remember rightly, shall end this week next but one. I must look shortly to be on my way to London. What say you touching these little matters?"

"What little matters, Jack?" inquired his father.

"These bills, Sir."

"I cry thee mercy," said Sir Thomas dryly. "I counted those great matters."

"Forsooth, no, Sir! There be few gentlemen in the Court that do owe so little as I."

"The Court must be a rare ill place, belike."

"My good Sir!" said Jack condescendingly, "suffer me to say that you, dwelling hereaway in the country, really can form no fantasy of the manner of dwellers in the town. Of course, aught should serve here that were decent and comely. But in the Court 'tis right needful that fashion be observed. Go to!—these chairs we sit on, I dare say, have been here these fifty years or more?"

"As long as I mind, Jack," said his father; "and that is somewhat over fifty years."

"Truly, Sir. Now, no such a thing could not be done in the Court. A chair that is ten years old is there fit for nought; a glass of five years may not be set on board; and a gown you have worn one year must be cast aside, whether it be done or no. The fashion choppeth and changeth all one with the moon; nor can a gentleman wear aught that is not the newest of his sort. Sir, the Queen's Highness carrieth ne'er a gown two seasons, nor never rippeth—all hang by the walls."

It was the custom at that time to pull handsome dresses in pieces, and use the materials for something else; but if a dress were not worth the unpicking, it was hung up and left to its fate. Queen Elizabeth kept all hers "by the walls;" she never gave a dress, and never took one in pieces.

"Gentility, son—at least thy gentility—is costly matter," remarked Sir Thomas.

"Good lack, Sir! You speak as though I had been an ill husband!" (an extravagant man) cried Jack in an injured tone. "Look you, a gentleman must have his raiment decent—"

"Three cloth suits, six shirts, and six pair of stockings should serve for that, Jack, nor cost above twenty pound the year, and that free reckoned," (a very handsome allowance) put in Aunt Rachel.

"Six shirts, my dear Aunt!—and six pair of stockings!" laughed Jack. "Why, 'twere not one the day."

"Two a-week is enow for any man—without he be a chimney-sweep," said Aunt Rachel oracularly.

This idea evidently amused Jack greatly.

"'Tis in very deed as I said but now: you have no fantasy hereaway of the necessities of a man that is in the Court. He must needs have his broidered shirts, his Italian ruff, well-set, broidered, and starched; his long-breasted French doublet, well bombasted (padded); his hose,—either French, Gally, or Venetian; his corked Flemish shoes of white leather; his paned (slashed and puffed with another colour or material) velvet breeches, guarded with golden lace; his satin cloak, well broidered and laced; his coats of fine cloth, some forty shillings the yard; his long, furred gown of Lukes' (Lucca) velvet; his muff, Spanish hat, Toledo rapier; his golden and jewelled ear-rings; his stays—"

A few ejaculations, such as "Good lack!" and "Well-a-day!" had been audible from Aunt Rachel as the list proceeded; but Sir Thomas kept silence until the mention of this last article, which was in his eyes a purely feminine item of apparel.

"Nay, Jack, nay, now! Be the men turning women in the Court?"

"And the women turning men, belike," added Rachel. "The twain do oft-times go together."

"My good Sir!" returned Jack, with amused condescension. "How shall a gentleman go about a sorry figure, more than a gentlewoman?"

"Marry come up!" interposed Rachel. "If the gentleman thou hast scarce finished busking be not a sorry figure, I ne'er did see the like."

"Stays, ear-rings, muffs!" repeated Sir Thomas under his breath. "Belike a fan, too, Jack?—and a pomander?—and masks?—and gloves?"

"Gloves, without doubt, sir; and they of fair white Spanish leather, wrought with silk. Masks, but rarely; nor neither fans nor pomanders."

"Not yet, I reckon. Dear heart! what will the idle young gallants be a-running after the next? We shall have them twisting rats' tails in their hair, or riding in coaches."

"I ensure you, Sir, many gentlemen do even now ride in coaches. 'Tis said the Queen somewhat misliketh the same."

"Dear heart!" said Sir Thomas again.

"And now, Sir, you can well see all these must needs be had—"

"Beshrew me, Jack, if I see aught of the sort!"

"All I see," retorted Rachel, "is, if they be had, they must be paid for."

"Nay, worry not the lad thus!" was softly breathed from Lady Enville's corner. "If other gentlemen wear such gear, Jack must needs have the same also. You would not have him mean and sorry?" (shabby.)

"Thou wouldst have him a scarlet and yellow popinjay!" said Rachel.

"I would not have him mean, Orige," replied Sir Thomas significantly.

"Well, Sir,—all said, we come to this," resumed Jack in his airy manner. "If these bills must needs be paid—and so seem you to say—how shall it be? Must I essay for the monopoly?—or for a wardship?—or for an heir?—or shall I rather trust to my luck at the dice?"

"Buy aught but a living woman!" said Rachel, with much disgust.

"The woman is nought, Aunt. 'Tis her fortune."

"Very good. I reckon she will say, 'The man is naught.' And she'll speak truth."

Rachel was playing, as many did in her day, on the similarity of sound between "nought," nothing, and "naught," good-for-nothing.

"Like enough," said Jack placidly.

"I will spare thee what money I can, Jack," said his father sighing. "But I do thee to wit that 'twill not pay thy debt—no, or the half thereof. For the rest, I must leave thee to find thine own means: but, Jack!—let them be such means that an honest man and true need not be 'shamed thereof."

"Oh!—of course, sir," said Jack lightly.

"Jack Feversham!" asked Sir Thomas, turning suddenly to his young visitor, "supposing this debt were thine, how shouldst thou pay it?"

"God forbid it were!" answered Feversham gravely. "But an' it were, sir, I would pay the same."

"At the dice?" grimly inquired Rachel.

"I never game, my mistress."

"A monopoly?" pursued she.

"I am little like to win one," said Feversham laughingly.

"Or by wedding of an heir?"

"For the sake of her money? Nay, I would think I did her lesser ill of the twain to put my hand in her pocket and steal it."

"Then, whereby?" asked Sir Thomas, anxious to draw John out.

"By honest work, Sir, whatso I might win: yea, though it were the meanest that is, and should take my life to the work."

"Making of bricks?" sneered Jack.

"I would not choose that," replied Feversham quietly. "But if I could earn money in no daintier fashion, I would do it."

"I despise mean-spirited loons!" muttered Jack, addressing himself to the fire.

"So doth not God, my son," said his father quietly.

Blanche felt uncertain whether she did or not. In fact, the state of Blanche's mind just then was chaos. She thought sometimes there must be two of her, each intent upon pursuing a direction opposite to that of the other. Blanche was in the state termed in the Hebrew Old Testament, "an heart and an heart." She wished to serve God, but she also wanted to please herself. She was under the impression—(how many share it with her!)—that religion meant just two things—giving up everything that one liked, and doing everything that one disliked. She did not realise that what it really does mean is a change in the liking. But at present she was ready to accept Christ's salvation from punishment, if only she might dispense with the good works which God had prepared for her to walk in.

And when the heart is thus divided between God and self, it will be found as a rule that, in all perplexities which have to be decided, self carries the day.

The only result of the struggle in Blanche's mind which was apparent to those around her was that she was very cross and disagreeable. He who is dissatisfied with himself can never be pleased with other people.

Ah, how little we all know—how little we can know, as regards one another—of the working of that internal kingdom which is in every man's breast! A woman's heart may be crushed to death within her, and those who habitually talk and eat and dwell with her may only suppose that she has a headache.

And those around Blanche entirely misunderstood her. Lady Enville thought she was fretting over her crossed love, and lavished endless pity and petting upon her. Clare only saw, in a vague kind of way, that something was the matter with her sister which she could not understand, and let her alone. Her Aunt Rachel treated her to divers acidulated lectures upon the ingratitude of her behaviour, and the intensity with which she ought to be ashamed of herself. None of these courses of treatment was exactly what Blanche needed; but perhaps the nipping north wind of Aunt Rachel was better than the dead calm of Clare, and far superior to the soft summer breeze of Lady Enville.

It was a bright, crisp, winter day. The pond in the grounds at Enville Court was frozen over, and Jack, declaring that no consideration should baulk him of a slide, had gone down to it for that purpose. John Feversham followed more deliberately; and a little later, Clare and Blanche sauntered down in the same direction. They found the two Johns sliding on the pond, and old Abel, the head gardener, earnestly adjuring Master Jack to keep off the south end of it.

"Th' ice is good enough at this end; but 'tis a deal too thin o'er yon. You'd best have a care, of you'll be in ere you know aught about it."

"Thou go learn thy gra'mmer!" (teach thy grandmother) said Jack scornfully. "Hallo, maids! Come on the ice—'tis as jolly as a play."

Clare smilingly declined, but Blanche stepped on the ice, aided by Jack's hand, and was soon sliding away as lithely and merrily as himself.

"Ay me! yonder goeth the dinner bell," said Blanche at last. "Help me back on the bank, Jack; I must away."

"Butter the dinner bell!" responded Jack. "Once more—one grand slide, Snowdrop."

This had been Jack's pet name for his youngest sister in childhood, and he used it now when he was in a particularly good temper.

"Master! Master! yo're comin' too near th' thin!" shouted old Abel.

Jack and Blanche, executing their final and most superb slide, heard or cared not. They came flying along the pond,—when all at once there was a shriek of horror, and Jack—who was not able to stop himself—finished the slide alone. Blanche had disappeared. Near the south end of the great pond was a round jagged hole in the ice, showing where she had gone down.

"Hold her up, Master, quick!" cried old Abel. "Dunnot let her be sucked under, as what happens! Creep along to th' edge, and lay you down; and when hoo comes to th' top, catch her by her gown, or her hure (hair), or aught as 'll hold. I'll get ye help as soon as I can;" and as fast as his limbs would carry him, Abel hurried away.

Jack did not move.

"I shall be drowned! I can't swim!" he murmured, with white lips, "I would sure go in likewise."

Neither he nor Clare saw in the first moment of shocked excitement that somebody else had been quicker and braver than they.

"I have her!" said John Feversham's voice, just a little less calm than usual. "I think I can keep her head above water till help cometh. Jack Enville, fetch a rope or a plank—quick!"

They saw then that Feversham was lying on his face on the ice, and holding firmly to Blanche by her fair hair, thus bringing her face above the water.

"O Jack, Jack!" cried Clare in an agony. "Where is a rope or plank?"

Even in that moment, Jack was pre-eminently a gentleman—in his own sense of the term.

"How should I know? I am no serving-man."

Clare dashed off towards the house without another word. She met Sir Thomas at the garden gate, hastening out to ascertain the meaning of the screams which had been heard.

"Father!—a rope—a plank!" she panted breathlessly. "Oh, help! Blanche is drowning!"

Before Clare's sentence was gasped out, Sim and Dick ran past, the one with a plank, the other with a coil of rope, sent by Abel to the rescue. Sir Thomas followed them at his utmost speed.

The sight which met his eyes at the pond, had it been less serious, would have been ludicrous. Feversham still lay on the ice, grasping Blanche, who was white and motionless; while Jack, standing in perfect safety on the bank, was favouring the hero with sundry scraps of cheap advice.

"Hasten!" said Feversham in a low, constrained voice, when he heard help coming. "I am wellnigh spent."

Sir Thomas was really angry with his son. A few words of withering scorn made that young gentleman—afraid of his father for the first time—assist with his own courtly hands in pushing the plank across the ice.

The relief reached those endangered just in time.

Blanche was carried home in her father's arms, and delivered to Rachel to be nursed; while Feversham, the moment that he recognised himself to be no longer responsible for her safety, fainted where he lay. He was borne to the house by Sim and Dick—Master Jack following in a leisurely manner, with his gentlemanly hands in his pockets.

When all was safely over, Sir Thomas put his hand on Jack's shoulder. For the first time that the father could remember, the son looked slightly abashed.

"Jack, which was the coward?"

And Jack failed to answer.

John Feversham joined the party again at supper. He looked very pale, but otherwise maintained his usual imperturbable demeanour, though scarcely seeming to like the expressions of admiration which were showered upon him.

"Metrusteth, Jack," said Rachel cuttingly to her nephew, "next time thou wilt do thy best not to mistake a hero for a coward. I should not marvel, trow, if the child's going on yon ice were some mischievous work of thine."

"'Twas a gallant deed, in very sooth, Master Feversham,—without you can swim," said Lady Enville faintly. She had gone into hysterics on hearing of the accident, and considered herself deserving of the deepest commiseration for her sufferings. "I am thankful Blanche wear but her camlet."

"Canst thou swim, lad?" asked Sir Thomas of John.

"No," he answered quietly.

"Were you not afeared, Master Feversham?" said Rachel.

"Ay, a little—lest I should be full spent ere help could come. But for that I trusted God. For aught else—nay: it was no time to think thereof."

"Methinks, Jack Feversham," said Sir Thomas affectionately, "none shall call thee a coward any more."

Feversham smiled back in answer.

"Sir Thomas," he said, "I fear God, and I love her. This was God's work, and her great peril. How could I have held back?"

Sir Thomas glanced at his son; but Jack was twirling his moustache, and intently contemplating one of the stags' heads which decorated the hall.

After that day, there was a great change in Blanche Enville. She had come so near death, and that so suddenly, that she was sobered and softened. God in His mercy opened her eyes, and she began to ask herself,—What is the world worth? What, after all, is anything worth, except to please God, and win His blessing, and inherit His glory?

Her opinion was changed, too, as it respected John Feversham. There was no possibility of mistaking him for a coward any longer. And whatever he had been, she could scarcely have failed to cherish some kindly feeling towards the man who had risked his life for hers.

The two Johns left Enville Court together on the following Tuesday. And after reaching London, Jack began to write letters home pretty regularly, for that time,—always gay, airy, and sanguine.

Jack's first letter conveyed the information that he was absolutely certain of obtaining the monopoly. Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Raleigh had both promised their interest, and any thought of failure after that was quite out of the question.

The second letter brought the news that Sir Christopher was very ill—in fact, he was dying—and that, by some unfortunate mistake (with Jack, any want of capacity to see his immense value, was always a mistake), the monopoly had been granted to young Philip Hoby. But there was no reason for disappointment. Jack had had an unusual run of good luck that week at the gaming-table. It was quite Providential. For Jack, like some other gentlemen of his day, dealt largely in religious phrases, and did not trouble himself about religion in any other way.

The third letter stated that Jack had not been able to obtain the grant of a wardship. That was another unfortunate mistake. But his good luck as a gamester still kept up, and my Lord of 'Bergavenny was his very good lord. These items, also, were most Providential.

The fourth letter informed his father that all his difficulties were at last surmounted. Providence had rewarded his merits as they deserved. He was on the eve of marriage.

"To whom?" asked Lady Enville, with languid curiosity.

"To seven thousand pounds," said Sir Thomas dryly; "that is as much as I can make out of the lad's letter."

The fifth epistle condescended to rather mere detail. Jack's *fiancée* was the daughter of an Earl, and the niece by marriage of a Viscount. She had a fortune of seven thousand pounds—that was the cream and chorus of the whole. But still it did not apparently occur to Jack that his friends at home might be interested to know the name of his beloved.

"What must we call her?" asked Blanche. "We know not her name."

"And we cannot say 'Mistress Jack,' sith she hath a title," added Sir Thomas.

"'My Lady Jack,'" laughingly suggested Rachel.

And "Lady Jack" the bride was dubbed from that day forth.

The sixth letter was longer in coming. But when it came it was short and sweet. Jack's nuptials were to be solemnised on the following day, and he and his bride would start three days later for Enville Court. There was a general flutter through the family.

"Dear heart! how was Jack donned? I would give a broad shilling to know!" said Rachel satirically. "In white satin, trow, at the very least, with a mighty great F on his back, wrought in rubies."

"F, Aunt Rachel!" repeated Blanche innocently. "You mean E, surely. What should F spell?"

"Thou canst spell aught thou wilt therewith, child," said Rachel coolly, as she left the room.

"Sir Thomas, I pray you of money," said Lady Enville, rousing up. "We have nought fit to show."

Sir Thomas glanced at his wife's flowing satin dress, trimmed with costly lace, and, like an unreasonable man, opined that it was quite good enough for anything; "This!" exclaimed Lady Enville. "Surely you cannot mean it, Sir Thomas. This gown is all rags, and hath been made these four years."

Sir Thomas contemplated the dress again, with a rather puzzled face.

"I see not a patch thereon, Orige. Prithee, be all thy gowns rags?—and be Clare and Blanche in rags likewise?"

"Of course—not fit to show," said the lady.

"It seemeth me, Orige, thou shouldst have had money aforetime. Yet I cannot wholly conceive it,—we went not to church in rags this last Sunday, without somewhat ail mine eyes. If we be going thus the next, prithee lay out in time to avoid the same."

"Gramercy, Sir Thomas!—how do you talk!"

"Rachel," said her brother, as she entered, "how many new gowns dost thou need to show my Lady Jack?"

"I lack no new gowns, I thank thee, Tom. I set a new dowlas lining in my camlet but this last week. I would be glad of an hood, 'tis true, for mine is well worn; but that is all I need, and a mark (13 shillings and 4 pence) shall serve me."

"Then thy charges be less than Orige, for she ensureth me that all her gowns be but rags, and so be Clare's, and the like by Blanche."

"Lack-a-daisy!" cried Rachel. "Call me an Anabaptist, if she hath not in her coffers two velvet gowns, and a satin, and a kersey, and three camlets—to say nought of velvet kirtles and other habiliments!"

"My dear Rachel!—not one made this year!"

"My satin gown was made six years gone, Orige; and this that I bear seven; and my camlet—well-a-day!—it may be ten."

"They be not fit to sweep the house in."

"Marry come up!—Prithee, Tom, set Orige up in tinsel. But for Clare and Blanche, leave me see to them. Clare hath one gown was made this year—"

"A beggarly say!" (a coarse kind of silk, often used for curtains and covering furniture) put in Lady Enville.

"And Blanche hath one a-making."

"A sorry kersey of twenty pence the yard!"

"Orige, prithee talk no liker a fool than thou canst help. Our gowns be right and—decent, according to our degree. We be but common folks, woman! For me, I go not about to prink (make smart and showy) me in cloth of gold,—not though Jack should wed all the countesses in England. If she love not me by reason of my gowns, she may hold me off with the andirons. I can do without her."

And away marched Rachel in high dudgeon. "It is too bad of Rachel!" moaned Lady Enville, lifting her handkerchief to tearless eyes. "I would have nought but to be decent and fit for our degree, and not to shame us in the eyes of her that hath been in the Court. I was ne'er one to cast money right and left. If I had but a new velvet gown, and a fair kirtle of laced satin, and a good kersey for every day, and an hood, and a partlet or twain of broidered work, and two or three other small matters, I would ask no more. Rachel would fain don us all like scullery-maids!"

Sir Thomas hated to see a woman weep; and above all, his wife—whom he still loved, though he could no longer esteem her.

"Come, Orige,—dry thine eyes," he said pityingly.

He did not know, poor victim! that they required no drying.

"Thou shalt have what thou wouldst. Tell me the sum thou lackest, and I will spare it, though I cut timber therefor."

Which was equivalent, in his eyes, to the very last and worst of all honest resources for raising money.

Lady Enville made a rapid calculation (with her handkerchief still at her eyes), which ran much in this fashion:—

Velvet dress—at least 40; say	45 0 0
Satin kirtle—about	20 0 0
Kersey dress	3 10 0
Hood, best	1 6 8
Hood, second-rate	13 4
Frontlet	4 4
Lawn for ruffs (embroidered at home) say	2 6
Gloves, one dozen pairs, best quality	2 6
Ribbon, 40 yards, various colours	13 4
Miscellaneous items, a good margin, say	9 7 4
Which makes a total of	80 0 0

Without removing the signal of distress, her Ladyship announced that the small sum of 80 pounds would satisfy her need: a sum equivalent to about 1200 pounds in our day. Sir Thomas held his breath. But he knew that unless he had

courage authoritatively to deny the fair petitioner, argument and entreaty would alike be thrown away upon her. And that courage he was conscious he had not.

"Very well, Orige," he said quietly; "thou shalt have it."

But he ordered four fine oaks to be felled that evening.

"Clare, what lackest thou in the matter of raiment?" he asked when he met her alone.

"If it liked your goodness to bestow on me a crown-piece, Father, I would be very thankful," said Clare, blushing as if she thought herself extravagant. "I do lack gloves and kerchiefs."

"And what for thee, Blanche?" he asked in similar circumstances.

Before Blanche's eyes for a moment floated the vision of a new satin dress and velvet hood. The old Blanche would have asked for them without scruple. But the new Blanche glanced at her father's face, and saw that he looked grave and worried.

"I thank you much, Father," she said. "There is nought I do really lack, without it were three yards of blue ribbon for a girdle."

This would cost about a shilling. Sir Thomas smiled, blessed her, and put a crown-piece in her hand; and Blanche danced down-stairs in her delight,—evoked less by the crown-piece than by the little victory over herself. It was to her that for which a despot is recorded to have longed in vain—a new pleasure.

Chapter Fifteen.

After All.

"For perhaps the dreaded future
Has less bitter than I think;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before I stoop to drink;
Or if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand beside the brink."

All was ready for the reception of the newcomers. The hall at Enville Court was gay with spring flowers, and fresh rushes were strewn over the floor. Sir Thomas and Dick had gone so far as Kirkham to meet the visitors. Lady Enville, attired in her new kersey, which had cost the extravagant price of five shillings per yard, (Note 1) sat by the hall fire. Rachel, in the objectionable camlet, which had been declared too shabby to sweep the house in, stood near the door; while Clare and Blanche, dressed in their Sunday costume, were moving about the hall, giving little finishing touches to things as they saw them needed.

"There be the horses!" said Blanche excitedly.

She was very curious to see her new sister.

In about ten minutes Sir Thomas entered, leading a masked lady by the hand. Jack came lounging behind, his hands in his pockets, after his usual fashion.

"Our new daughter,—the Lady Gertrude Enville." (A fictitious person.)

One glance, and Lady Enville almost fainted from pique. Lady Gertrude's travelling costume was grander than her own very best new velvet. Violet velvet, of the finest quality, slashed in all directions, and the slashes filled with puffings of rich pale buff satin; yards upon yards of the costliest white lace, literally strewn upon the dress: rich embroidery upon the most delicate lawn, edged with deep lace, forming the ruff; a hood of black velvet, decorated with pearls and gold passementerie; white leather shoes, wrought with gold; long worked gloves of thick white kid,—muff, fan, mask—all complete. As the bride came up the hall, she removed her mask, and showed a long pale face, with an unpleasant expression. Her apparent age was about thirty.

"Give you good even, Madam!" she said, in a high shrill voice—not one of those which are proverbially "an excellent thing in woman."

"These be your waiting gentlewomen?"

"These are my daughters," said Lady Enville—stiffly, for her; the mistake had decidedly annoyed her.

"Ah!" And the bride kissed them. Then turning to Rachel,— "This, I account, is the lady mistress?"

("That camlet!" said Lady Enville to herself, deeply vexed.)

Sir Thomas introduced her gravely,— "My sister."

Lady Gertrude's bold dark eyes scanned Rachel with an air of contempt. Rachel, on her part, quite reciprocated the feeling.

"You see, Niece, we keep our velvets for Sundays hereaway," she said in her dry way.

The bride answered by an affected little laugh, a kiss, and a declaration that travelling ruined everything, and that she was not fit to be seen. At a glance from Lady Enville, Clare offered to show Gertrude to her chamber, and they went up-stairs together. Jack strolled out towards the stable.

"Not fit to be seen!" gasped poor Lady Enville. "Sir Thomas, what can we do? In the stead of eighty pound, I should have laid out eight hundred, to match her!"

"Bear it, I reckon, my dear," said he quietly.

"Make thy mind easy, Orige," scornfully answered Rachel. "I will lay my new hood that her father made his fortune in some manner of craft, and hath not been an Earl above these two years. Very ladies should not deal as she doth."

Meanwhile, above their heads, the bride was putting Clare through her catechism.

"One of you maidens is not in very deed Sir John's sister. Which is it?"

"*Sir John?*" repeated Clare in surprise.

"Of course. Think you I would have wedded a plain Master? I caused my father to knight him first.—Which is it?"

"That am I," said Clare.

"Oh, you? Well, you be not o'er like him. But you look all like unto common country folk that had never been in good company."

Though Clare might be a common country girl, yet she was shocked by Gertrude's rudeness. She had been brought up by Rachel to believe that the quality of her dress was of less consequence than that of her manners. Clare thought that if Gertrude were a fair sample of "good company," she did not wish to mix in it.

"I have been alway bred up in the Court," Gertrude went on, removing her hood. "I never was away thence afore. Of course I do conceive that I am descended to a lower point than heretofore—you have no coach, I dare wager? yet I looked not to find my new kin donned in sorry camlet and mean dowlas. Have you any waiting-maid?—or is that piece of civility (civilisation) not yet crept up into this far corner of the world?"

Clare summoned Jennet, and took her own seat in the further window. The vulgar, purse-proud tone of Gertrude's remarks disgusted her exceedingly. She did not enter into all of them. Simple Clare could not see what keeping a carriage had to do with gentlemanliness.

Jennet came in, and dropped a "lout" to the bride, whom she was disposed to regard with great reverence as a real lady. At that time, "lady" was restricted to women of title, the general designation being "gentlewoman."

"Here, woman!" was Gertrude's peremptory order. "Untwist my hair, and dress it o'er again."

Jennet quickly untwisted the hair, which was elaborately curled and frizzed; and when it was reduced to smoothness, asked,—"*What mun (must) I do wi' 't?*"

"Eh?" said Gertrude.

"I'm ill set (I find it difficult) to make thore twirls and twists," explained Jennet. "Mun I curl 't, or ye'll ha' 't bred?" (Braided, plaited.)

"What means the jade?" demanded Gertrude with an oath.

Clare was horrified. She had heard men swear when they were in a passion, and one or two when they were not; but that a woman should deliberately preface her words with oaths was something new and shocking to her. Lady Enville's strongest adjurations were mild little asseverations "by this fair daylight," or words no nearer profanity. However, startled as she was, Clare came out of her corner to mediate.

"How should it like you dressed?"

"Oh! with the crisping-pins. 'Twill take as short time as any way."

"*Wi' whatten a thingcum?*" (with what sort of a thing) stared Jennet.

"I am afeared, Sister, we have no crisping-pins," said Clare.

"No crisping-pins!" cried Gertrude, with another oath. "Verily, I might have come to Barbary! Are you well assured?"

"Be there any manner of irons, Jennet, for crisping or curling the hair?"

"Nay, Mistress Clare, we're Christians here," said Jennet in her coolest manner, which was very cool indeed. "We known nought about French ways, nor foreigners nother. (In Lancashire, strangers to the locality, if only from the next county, are termed foreigners.) There's been no such gear i' this house sin' I come—and that's eighteen year come Lady Day."

"Good sonties! (Little saints!) do't as thou wilt," sneered Gertrude. "I would I had brought all my gear withal. Whate'er possessed yon jade Audrey to fall sick, that I was like to leave her behind at Chester!—Truly, I knew not what idiots I was coming amongst—very savages, that wist not the usages of decent folk!"

"Bi' th' mass!" (not yet obsolete) cried Jennet in burning wrath, resorting to her strongest language, "but I'm no more an idiot nor thee, my well-spoken dame,—nay, nor a savage nother. And afore I set up to dress thy hure again, thou may ask me o' thy bended knees—nor I'll none do't then, I warrant thee!"

And setting down the brush with no light hand, away stalked Miss Jennet, bristling with indignation. Gertrude called her back angrily in vain, looked after her for a moment with parted lips, and then broke forth into a torrent of mingled wrath and profanity. She averred that if one of her fathers servants had thus spoken, she would have had her horsewhipped within an inch of her life. Clare let her run on until she cooled down a little, and then quietly answered that in that part of the world the people were very independent; but if Gertrude would allow her, she would try to dress her hair as well as she could. That it would be of no use to ask Jennet again, Clare well knew; and she shrank from exposing her dear old Barbara to the insolent vulgarity of Gertrude.

"You may as well," said Gertrude coolly, and without a word of thanks. "You be meet for little else, I dare say."

And reseating herself before the mirror, she submitted her hair to Clare's inexperienced handling. For a first attempt, however, the result was tolerably satisfactory, though Clare had never before dressed any hair but her own; and Gertrude showed her gratitude by merely asserting, without anger or swearing, that she was right thankful no ladies nor gentlemen should behold her thus disfigured, as she would not for all the treasures of the Indies that they should. With this delicate compliment to her new relatives, she rustled down into the hall, Clare following meekly. Gertrude had not changed her dress; perhaps she did not think it worth while to honour people who dressed in say and camlet. Sir Thomas received her with scrupulous deference, set her on his right hand, and paid all kindly attention to her comfort. For some time, however, it appeared doubtful whether anything on the supper-table was good enough for the exacting young lady. Those around her came at last to the conclusion that Gertrude's protestations required considerable discount; since, after declaring that she "had no stomach," and "could not pick a lark's bones," she finished by eating more than Clare and Blanche put together. Jack, meanwhile, was attending to his own personal wants, and took no notice of his bride, beyond a cynical remark now and then, to which Gertrude returned a sharp answer. It was evident that no love was lost between them.

As soon as supper was over, the bride went up to her own room, declaring as she went that "if yon savage creature had the handling of her gowns"—by which epithet Clare guessed that she meant Jennet—"there would not be a rag left meet to put on"—and commanding, rather than requesting, that Clare and Blanche would come and help her. Sir Thomas looked surprised.

"Be these the manners of the great?" said he, too low for Jack to hear.

"Oh ay!" responded his wife, who was prepared to fall down at the feet of her daughter-in-law, because she was *Lady* Gertrude. "So commanding is she!—as a very queen, I do protest. She hath no doubt been used to great store of serving-maidens."

"That maketh not our daughters serving-maids," said Sir Thomas in an annoyed tone.

"I would have thought her mother should have kept her in order," said Rachel with acerbity. "If that woman were my daughter, she had need look out."

Rachel did not know that Gertrude had no mother, and had been allowed to do just as she pleased ever since she was ten years old.

Meanwhile, up-stairs, from trunk after trunk, under Gertrude's directions—she did not help personally—Clare and Blanche were lifting dresses in such quantities that Blanche wondered what they could have cost, and innocent Clare imagined that their owner must have brought all she expected to want for the term of her natural life.

"There!" said Gertrude, when the last trunk which held dresses was emptied. "How many be they? Count. Seventeen—only seventeen? What hath yon lither hilding (wicked girl) Audrey been about? There should be nineteen; twenty, counting that I bear. I would I might be hanged if she hath not left out, my cramoisie! (crimson velvet!) the fairest gown I have! And"—with an oath—"if she hath put in my blue taffata, broidered with seed-pearl, I would I might serve as a kitchener!"

Rachel walked in while Gertrude was speaking.

"Surely you lack no more!" said Blanche. "Here be seven velvet gowns, and four of satin!"

"Enow for you, belike!" answered Gertrude, with a sneer.

"Enow for any Christian woman, Niece, and at the least ten too many," said Rachel severely.

"Lack-a-daisy!—you have dwelt so long hereaway in this wilderness, you wit not what lacketh for decency in apparel," returned Gertrude irreverently, greatly scandalising both her sisters-in-law by her disrespect to Aunt Rachel. "How should I make seventeen gowns serve for a month?"

"If you don a new every second day," said Rachel, "there shall be two left over at the end thereof."

Gertrude stared at her for a moment, then broke into loud laughter.

"Good heart, if she think not they be all of a sort! Why, look you here—this is a riding gown, and this a junketing gown, and this a night-gown (evening dress). Two left over, quotha!"

"I would fain, Niece," said Rachel gravely, "you had paid as much note unto the adorning of your soul as you have to that of your body. You know 'tis writ—but may be 'tis not the fashion to read God's Word now o' days?"

"In church, of course," replied Gertrude. "Only Puritans read it out of church."

"You be no Puritan, trow?"

"Gramercy! God defend me therefrom!"

"Good lack! 'tis the first time I heard ever a woman—without she were a black Papist—pray God defend her from reading of His Word. Well, Niece, may be He will hear you. Howbeit, 'tis writ yonder that a meek spirit and a quiet is of much worth in His sight. I count you left that behind at Chester, with Audrey and the two gowns that lack?" (That are wanting.)

"I would you did not call me Niece!" responded Gertrude in a querulous tone. "'Tis too-too (exceedingly) ancient. No parties of any sort do now call as of old (Note 2),—'Sister,' or 'Daughter,' or 'Niece'."

"Dear heart! Pray you, what would your Ladyship by your good-will be called?"

"Oh, Gertrude, for sure. 'Tis a decent name—not an ugsome (ugly) old-fashioned, such as be Margaret, or Cicely, or Anne."

"'Tis not old-fashioned, in good sooth," said Rachel satirically; "I ne'er heard it afore, nor know I from what tongue it cometh. Then—as I pick out of your talk—decent things be new-fangled?"

"I want no mouldy old stuff!—There! Put the yellow silk on the lowest shelf."

"'Tis old-fashioned, I warrant you, to say to your sister, 'An' it please you?'"

"And the murrey right above.—Oh, stuff!"

The first half of the sentence was for Clare; the second for Rachel.

"'Tis not ill stuff, Niece," said the latter coolly, as she left the room.

"And what thinkest of Gertrude?" inquired Sir Thomas of his sister, when she rejoined him and Lady Enville.

"Marry!" said Rachel in her driest manner, "I think the goods be mighty dear at the price."

"I count," returned her brother, "that when Gertrude's gowns be paid for, there shall not be much left over for Jack's debts."

"Dear heart! you should have thought so, had you been above but now. To see her Grace (for she carrieth her like a queen) a-counting of her gowns, and a-cursing of her poor maid Audrey that two were left behind, when seventeen be yet in her coffers!"

"Seventeen!" repeated the Squire, in whose eyes that number was enough to stock any reasonable woman for at least half her life.

"Go to—seventeen!" echoed Rachel.

"Well-a-day! What can the lass do with them all?" wondered Sir Thomas.

"Dear hearts! Ye would not see an earl's daughter low and mean?" interposed Lady Enville.

"If this Gertrude be not so, Orige,—at the least in her heart,—then is Jennet a false speaker, and mine ears have bewrayed me, belike. Methinks a woman of good breeding might leave swearing and foul talk to the men, and be none the worse for the same: nor see I good cause wherefore she should order her sisters like so many Barbary slaves."

"Ay so!—that marketh her high degree," said Lady Enville.

"I wis not, Orige, how Gertrude gat her degree, nor her father afore her," answered Rachel: "but this I will tell thee—that if one of the 'beggarly craftsmen' that Jack loveth to snort at, should allow him, before me, in such talk as I have heard of her, I would call on Sim to put him forth with no more ado. Take my word for it, she cometh of no old nor honourable stock, but is of low degree in very truth, if the truth were known."

Rachel's instinct was right. Lady Gertrude's father was a *parvenu*, of very mean extraction. Her great-uncle had made the family fortune, partly in trade, but mostly by petty peculations; and her father, who had attracted the Queen's eye when a young lawyer, had been rapidly promoted through the minor grades of nobility, until he had reached his present standing. Gertrude was not noble in respect of anything but her title.

Lady Enville, with a smile which was half amusement and half contempt, rose and retired to her boudoir. Sir Thomas and Rachel sat still by the hall fire, both deeply meditating: the former with his head thrown back, gazing—without seeing them—at the shields painted on the ceiling; while the latter leaned forward towards the fire, resting her chin on both hands.

"What saidst, Tom?" asked Rachel in a dreamy voice.

"I spake not to know it, good Sister: but have what I said, an' thou so wilt. I was thinking on that word of Paul—'Not many noble are called.' I thought, Rachel, how far it were better to be amongst the called of God, than to be of the noble."

"'Tis not the first, time that I have thanked the Lord I am not noble," said Rachel without changing her attitude. "'Tis some comfort to know me not so high up that any shall be like to take thought to cut my head off. And if Gertrude be noble—not to say"—Rachel's voice died away. "Tom," she said in a moment later, "we have made some blunders in our lives, thou and I."

"I have, dear Rachel," said Sir Thomas sighing: "what thine may be I wis not."

"God knoweth!" she replied in a low voice. "And I know of one—the grandest of all blunders. Thou settedst out for Heaven these few months gone, Tom. May be thou shalt find more company on the road than thou wert looking for."

"Dear Rachel!"

"Clare must be metely well on by this time," she continued in the dry tone with which she often veiled her deepest feelings, "and Blanche is tripping in at the gate, or I mistake. I would not by my goodwill have thee lonely in the road, Tom: and I suppose—there shall be room for more than two a-breast, no' will?" (Will there not?)

During all this time, the once close intercourse between the Court and the parsonage had been somewhat broken off. Arthur had never been in the Squire's house since the day when Lucrece jilted him; and Clare was shy of showing herself in his vicinity. Blanche visited Mrs Tremayne occasionally, and sometimes Lysken paid a return visit; but very much less was seen of all than in old times. When, therefore, it became known at Enville Court that Arthur had received holy orders at the Bishop's last ordination, the whole family as it were woke with a start to the recollection that Arthur had almost passed out of their sphere. He was to be his father's curate for the present—the future was doubtful; but in an age when there were more livings than clergy to fill them, no difficulty need be expected in the way of obtaining promotion.

Just after Jack and Gertrude had returned to London (to the great relief of every one, themselves not excepted), in his usual unannounced style, Mr John Feversham made his appearance at Enville Court. Blanche greeted him with a deep blush, for she felt ashamed of her former unworthy estimate of his character. John brought one interesting piece of news—that his uncle and aunt were well, and Lucrece was now the mother of a little boy.

Lady Enville looked up quickly. Then John was no longer the heir of Feversham Hall. It might therefore be necessary—if he yet had any foolish hopes—to put an extinguisher upon him. She rapidly decided that she must issue private instructions to Sir Thomas. That gentleman, she said to herself, really was so foolish—particularly of late, since he had fallen into the pit of Puritanism—that if she did not look sharply after him, he might actually dream of resigning his last and fairest daughter to a penniless and prospectless suitor. If any such idea existed in the mind of Sir Thomas, of John Feversham, or of Blanche,—and since John had saved Blanche's life, it was not at all unlikely,—it must be nipped in the bud.

Accordingly, on the first opportunity, Lady Enville began.

"Of course you see now, Sir Thomas, how ill a match Master John Feversham should have been for Blanche."

"Wherefore?" was the short answer.

"Sith he is no longer the heir." (Sith and since are both contractions of sithence.)

"Oh!—ah!" said Sir Thomas, as unpromisingly as before.

"Why, surely you would ne'er dream of so monstrous a thing?"

Sir Thomas, who had been looking out of the window, came across to the fire, and took up the master's position before it—standing just in the middle of the hearth with his back to the fire.

"Better wait, Orige, and see whereof John and Blanche be dreaming," said he calmly.

"What reckoneth he to do now, meet for livelihood?"

It would be difficult to estimate the number of degrees by which poor John had fallen in her Ladyship's thermometer, since he had ceased to be the expected heir of Feversham Hall.

"He looketh," said Sir Thomas absently, as if he were thinking of something else, "to receive—if God's good pleasure be—holy orders."

"A parson!" shrieked Lady Enville, in her languid style.

"A parson, Orige. Hast aught against the same?"

"Oh no!—so he come not anear Blanche."

"Wilt hold him off with the fire-fork?"

"Sir Thomas, I do beseech you, consider this matter in sober sadness. Only think, if Blanche were to take in hand any fantasy for him, after his saving of her!"

"Well, Orige—what if so?"

"I cannot bring you to a right mind, Sir Thomas!" said his wife pettishly. "Blanche,—our fairest bud and last!—to be cast away on a poor parson—she who might wed with a prince, and do him no disgrace! It were horrible!"

"Were it?" was the dry response.

"I tell you," said Lady Enville, sitting up in her chair—always with her a mark of agitation—"I would as soon see the child in her coffin!"

"Hush, Orige, hush thee!" replied her husband, very seriously now.

"It were as little grief, Sir Thomas! I would not for the world—nay, not for the whole world—that Blanche should be thus lost. Why, she might as well wed a fisherman at once!"

"Well, the first Christian parsons were fishermen; and I dare be bound they made not ill husbands. Yet methinks, Orige, if thou keptest thy grief until the matter came to pass, it were less waste of power than so."

"'Forewarned is forearmed,' Sir Thomas. And I am marvellous afeared lest you should be a fool."

"Marry guep!" (probably a corruption of *go up*) ejaculated Rachel, coming in. "'Satan rebuketh sin,' I have heard say, but I ne'er listed him do it afore."

After all, Lady Enville proved a true prophet. Mr John Feversham was so obtuse, so unreasonable, so unpardonably preposterous, as to imagine it possible that Blanche Enville might yet marry him, though he had the prospect of a curacy, and had not the prospect of Feversham Hall.

"I told you, Sir Thomas!" said the prophetess, in the tone with which she might have greeted an earthquake. "Oh that you had listed me, and gat him away hence ere more mischief were done!"

"I see no mischief done, Orige," replied her husband quietly. "We will call the child, and see what she saith."

"I do beseech you, Sir Thomas, commit not this folly! Give your own answer, and let it be, Nay. Why, Blanche may be no wiser than to say him ay."

"She no may," (she may not) said Sir Thomas dryly.

But he was determined to tell her, despite the earnest protestations of his wife, who dimly suspected that Blanche's opinion of John was not what it had been, and was afraid that she would be so wanting in worldly wisdom as to accept his offer. Lady Enville took her usual resource—an injured tone and a handkerchief—while Sir Thomas sent for Blanche.

Blanche, put on her trial, faltered—coloured—and, to her mother's deep disgust, pleaded guilty of loving John Feversham at last. Lady Enville shed some real tears over the demoralisation of her daughter's taste.

"There is no manner of likeness, Blanche, betwixt this creature and Don John," she urged.

"Ay, mother, there is *no* likeness," said Blanche calmly.

"I thank Heaven for that mercy!" muttered Rachel.

"Likeness!" repeated Sir Thomas. "Jack Feversham is worth fifty Don Johns."

"Dear heart! how is the child changed for the worser!" sobbed her disappointed mother, who saw the coronet and fortune, on which she had long set her heart for Blanche, fading away like a dissolving view.

"Orige, be not a fool!" growled Rachel suddenly. "But, dear heart! I am a fool to ask thee."

There was a family tempest. But at last the minority succumbed; and Blanche became the betrothed of John Feversham.

From the day of Jack's departure from Enville Court with Gertrude, Sir Thomas never heard another word of his debts. Whether Jack paid them, or compounded for them, or let them alone, or how the matter was settled, remained unknown at Enville Court. They only heard the most flourishing accounts of everything connected with Jack and Gertrude. They were always well; Jack was always prospering, and on the point of promotion to a higher step of the social ladder. Sir Thomas declared drily, that his only wonder was that Jack was not a duke by this time, considering how many steps he must have advanced. But Lady Gertrude never paid another visit to Enville Court; and nobody regretted it except Jack's step-mother. Jack's own visits were few, and made at long intervals. His language was always magniloquent and sanguine: but he grew more and more reserved about his private affairs, he aged fast, and his hair was grey at a time of life when his father's had been without a silver thread. Sir Thomas was by no means satisfied with his son's career: but Jack suavely evaded all inquiries, and he came to the sorrowful conclusion that nothing could be done except to pray for him.

It was late in the autumn, and the evening of Blanche's departure from home after her marriage. John Feversham's clerical labours were to lie in the north of Cheshire, so Blanche would not be far away, and might be expected to visit at the Court more frequently than Lucrece or Jack. By the bride's especial request, the whole family from the parsonage were present at the ceremony, and Lysken was one of the bridesmaids.

The guests had been dancing in the hall; they were now resting, standing or sitting in small groups, and conversing,—when Clare stole out of the garden-door, and made her way to the arbour.

She could not exactly tell why she felt so sad. Of course, she was sorry to lose Blanche. Such an occasion did not seem to Clare at all proper for mirth and feasting: on the contrary, it felt the thing next saddest to a funeral. They

would see Blanche now and then, no doubt; but she was lost to them on the whole: she would never again be, what she had always been till now, one of themselves, an integral part of the home. And they were growing fewer; only four left now, where there had once been a household of eight. And Clare felt a little of the sadness—felt much more deeply by some than others—of being, though loved by several, yet first with none. Well, God had fixed her lot: and it was a good one, she whispered to herself, as if to repel the sadness gathering at her heart—it was a good one. She would always live at home; she would grow old, ministering to father and mother and aunt—wanted and looked for by all three; not useless—far from it. And that was a great deal. What if the Lord had not thought her meet for work in His outer vineyard?—was not this little home-corner in His vineyard still?—She was not a foundation-stone, not a cornice, not a pillar, in the Church of God. Nay, she thought herself not even one of the stones in the wall: only a bit of mortar, filling up a crevice. But the bit of mortar was wanted, and was in its right place, because the Builder had put it there. That was a great deal—oh yes, it was everything.

“And yet,” said Clare’s heart,—“and yet!—”

For this was not an unlabelled sorrow. Arthur Tremayne’s name was written all over it. And Clare had to keep her heart stayed on two passages of Scripture, which she took as specially for her and those in her position. It is true, they were written of men: but did not the grammar say that the masculine included the feminine? If so, what right had any one to suppose (as Lady Enville had once said flippantly) that “there were no promises in the Bible to old maids?”

Were there not these glorious two?—the one promise of the Old Covenant, the one promise of the New.

“Even unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.” (Isaiah sixteen verse 5.)

“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Revelations fourteen verses 4, 5.)

So Clare was content. Yet it was a sorrowful sort of content, after all—for Clare was human, too.

She was absently pulling off some dead leaves from the arbour, and the sudden jump which she gave showed how much she was startled.

“May I come in, Clare?” asked a voice at the entrance.

“Oh, ay—come in,” said Clare, in a flutter, and trembling all over.

“I did not mean to fright you,” said Arthur, with a smile, as he came inside and sat down. “I desired speech of you, on a matter whereof I could not well touch save in private. Clare,—may I speak,—dear Clare?”

But of course, dear reader, you know all about it.

So Clare was first with somebody, after all.

Note 1. A price which, about sixty years before, a vice-queen had thought sufficient in presenting a new year’s gift to Queen Anne Boleyn. John Husee writes to his mistress, Honour Viscountess Lisle, in 1534, that he has obtained the kersey for her gift to the Queen, eleven and a quarter yards at 5 shillings the yard, “very fine and very white.” (Lisle Papers, twelve 90.) A few weeks later he writes, “The Queen’s grace liketh your kersey specially well.” (Lisle Papers, eleven 112.)

Note 2. The disuse of this custom in England really dates from a rather later period. ‘Sister’ has somewhat resumed its position, but ‘Daughter’ and ‘Niece,’ in the vocative, are never heard amongst us now.

Chapter Sixteen.

“Dieu La Voulu.”

“Over himself and his own heart’s complaining
Victorious still.”

The bells were pealing merrily for the marriage of Clare Avery—I beg her pardon—of Clare Tremayne; and the wedding party were seated at breakfast in the great hall at Enville Court.

“The bridesmaids be well-looking,” said Lady Enville, behind her fan, to Sir Piers Feversham, who was her next neighbour,—for Sir Piers and Lucrece had come to the wedding—“and I do hear Mistress Penelope Travis—she of them that is nearest—is like to be the next bride of our vicinage.”

“Say you so?” responded Sir Piers. “I do desire all happiness be with her. But there is one of yonder maids for whom in very deed I feel compassion, and it is Mistress Lysken Barnevelt. Her May is well-nigh over, and no bells be ringing for her. Poor maiden!”

“Go to, now, what dolts be men!” quoth Mistress Rachel Enville, addressing herself, to all appearance, to the dish of flummery which stood before her. “They think, poor misconceiving companions! that we be all a-dying for them. That’s a man’s notion. Moreover, they take it that ‘tis the one end and aim of every woman in the world to be wed.

That's a man's notion, again. And belike they fancy, poor patches! that when she striketh thirty years on the bell, any woman will wed any man that will but take compassion to ask her. That caps all their notions. (Thou shalt right seldom hear a woman to make no such a blunder. They know better.) Poor blockheads!—as if we could not be useful nor happy without *them*! Lysken Barnevelt and Rachel Enville, at the least, be not fools enough to think it."

"Neither is the Queen's Majesty, my mistress," observed Sir Piers, greatly amused.

"Who e'er said the Queen's Majesty were a fool?" demanded Rachel bluntly. "She is a woman, and no man—Heaven be praised for all His mercies!"

"Yet if no man were," pursued Sir Piers, "methinks you gentlewomen should be but ill bestead."

"Oh, should we so?" retorted Rachel. "Look you, women make no wars, nor serve therein: nor women be no lawyers, to set folk by the ears: nor women write not great tomes of controversy, wherein they curse the one the other because Nell loveth a white gown, and Bess would have a black. Is the Devil a woman? Answer me that, I pray you."

"Do women make no wars?" laughed Sir Piers. "What! with Helen of Troy, and—"

"Good lack, my master!—and what ill had Helen's fair face wrought in all this world, had there been no dolts of men to be beguilen thereby?" was Rachel's instant response.

Sir Piers made a hasty retreat from that part of the field.

"But, my mistress, though the Devil be no woman, yet was the woman the first to be deceived by him."

"Like enough!" snapped Rachel. "She sinned not open-eyed, as did Adam. She trusted a man-devil, like too many of her daughters sithence, and she and they alike have found bitter cause to rue the day they did it."

Sir Piers prudently discovered that Lady Enville was asking him a question, and let Rachel alone thereafter.

Ay, Lysken Barnevelt adopted from choice the life to which Clare had been only willing to resign herself because she thought it was the Father's will. It amused Lysken to hear people pity her as one who had failed to win the woman's aim in life. To have failed to obtain what she had never sought, and did not want, was in Lysken's eyes an easily endurable affliction. The world was her home, while she passed through it on her journey to the better Home: and all God's family were her brethren or her children. The two sisters from Enville Court were both happy and useful in their corners of the great harvest-field; but she was the happiest, and the best loved, and when God called her the most missed of all—this solitary Lysken. Distinguished by no unusual habit, fettered by no unnatural vow, she went her quiet, peaceful, blessed way—a nun of the Order of Providence, for ever.

And what was the fate of Lady Enville?

Just what is generally the fate of women of her type. They pass through life making themselves vastly comfortable, and those around them vastly uncomfortable, and then "depart without being desired." They are never missed—otherwise than as a piece of furniture might be missed. To such women the whole world is but a platform for the exhibition and glorification of the Great Me: and the persons in it are units with whom the Great Me deigns—or does not deign—to associate. Happy are those few of them who awake, on this side of the dread tribunal, to the knowledge that in reality this Great Me is a very little me indeed, yet a soul that can be saved, and that may be lost.

And Rachel?—Ah, Rachel was missed when she went on the inevitable journey. The house was not the same without her. She had been like a fresh breeze blowing through it,—perhaps a little sharp at times, but always wholesome. Those among whom she had dwelt never realised all she had been to them, nor all the love they had borne to her, until they could tell her of it no more.

The winter of 1602 had come, and on the ground in Devonshire the snow lay deep. The trees, thickly planted all round Umberleigh, drooped with the white weight; and a keen North wind groaned among the branches. All was gloomy and chill outside.

And inside, all was gloomy and mournful too, for a soul was in departing. The ripe fruit that had tarried so late on the old tree, was shaken down at last. Softly and tenderly, the Lady Elizabeth, the young wife of Sir Robert Basset, was ministering to the last earthly needs of Philippa the aged, the sister of her husband's grandfather. (Note 1.)

"'Tis high time, Bess, child!" whispered the dying woman, true to her character to the last. "I must have been due on the roll of Death these thirty years. I began to marvel if he had forgot me. And I am going Home, child. Thank God, I am going Home!"

"They are all safe yonder, Bess—Arthur, and Nell (Wife of Sir Arthur Basset), and little Honor, and thy little lad (Arthur, who died in infancy), and Jack, and Frances—my darling sister!—and George, and Kate, and Nan. I am assured of them, all. There be James and Mall,—well, I am not so sure of them. Would God I were! He knoweth.

"But I do hope I shall see my mother. And, O Bess! I shall see him—my blessed, beloved father—I *shall* see him!"

"And they'll be glad, child. They'll all be glad when they see poor blundering old Philippa come stumbling in at the gate. I misdoubt if they look for it. They'll be glad!"

"Bess, I do hope thou wilt ne'er turn thy back upon God so many years as I have done. And I had never turned to Him at last, if He had not stooped and turned me.

"Tell Robin, with my blessing, to be a whole man for God. A whole man and a true! He is too rash—and yet not bold

(true) enough. He cares too much what other folk think. (Thank God, I ne'er fell in that trap! 'Tis an ill one to find the way out.) Do thou keep him steadfast, Bess. He'll ask some keeping. There's work afore thee yet, child; 'tis work worthy an angel—to keep one man steadfast for God. Thou must walk close to God thyself to do it. And after all, 'twill be none of thy doing, but of His that wrought by thee.—

“And God bless the childre! I count there's the making of a true man in little Arthur. Thou mayest oft-times tell what a child is like to be when he is but four years old. God bless him, and make him another Arthur! (Nay, I stay me not at Robin's father, as thou dost. Another Arthur,—like that dear father of ours, whom we so loved! He is *the* Arthur for me.) I can give the lad no better blessing.

“Wilt draw the curtain, Bess? I feel as though I might sleep. Bless thee, dear heart, for all thy tender ministering. And if I wake not again, but go to God in sleep,—farewell, and Christ be with thee!”

So she slept—and woke not again.

Three months after the death of Philippa Basset, came another death—like hers, of an old woman full of years. The last of the Tudors passed away from earth. Sir Robert Basset was free. To Stuart, or Seymour, or Clifford, he “owed no subscription.” King of England he would be *de facto*, as *de jure* he believed himself in his heart.

And but for two obstacles in his way, it might have been Robert Basset who seated himself on the seat of England's Elizabeth. For England was much exercised as to who had really the right to her vacant throne.

It was no longer a question of Salic law—a dispute whether a woman could reign. That point, long undetermined, had been finally settled fifty years before.

Nor was it any longer a doubtful matter concerning the old law of non-representation,—to which through centuries the English clung tenaciously,—the law which asserted that if a son of the sovereign predeceased his father, leaving issue, that issue was barred from the succession, because the link which bound them to the throne was lost. This had been “the custom of England” for at least three hundred years. But, originally altered by the mere will of Edward the Third, the change had now been confirmed by inevitable necessity, for when the Wars of the Roses closed, links were lost in *all* directions, and the custom of England could no longer be upheld.

The two obstacles in Robert Basset's way were the apathy of the majority, and the strong contrary determination of the few who took an interest in the question.

The long reign of Elizabeth, and her personal popularity, had combined to produce that apathy. Those who even dimly remembered the Wars of the Roses, and whose sympathies were fervid for White or Red, had been long dead when Elizabeth was gathered to her fathers. And to the new generation, White and Red were alike; the popular interest in the question was dead and buried also.

But there was a little knot of men and women whose interest was alive, and whose energies were awake. And all these sided with one candidate. Sir Robert Cecil, the clever, wily son of the sagacious Burleigh,—Lord Rich and his wife Penelope sister of the beheaded Earl of Essex,—Robert Carey, a distant cousin of Queen Elizabeth through her mother,—his sister, Lady Scrope, one of the Queen's suite—and a few more, were all active in the interest of James the Sixth of Scotland, who was undoubtedly the true heir, if that true heir were not Sir Robert Basset.

In their way, too, there was an obstacle. And they were all intent on getting rid of it.

King Henry the Eighth had introduced into the complicated question of the succession one further complication, which several of his predecessors had tried to introduce in vain. The success of all, before him, had been at best only temporary. It took a Tudor will to do the deed, and it took an obsequious Tudor age to accept it.

This new element was the pure will of the sovereign. Richard the First had willed his crown to a nephew shut out by the law of non-representation, and the attempt had failed to change the order of succession. Edward the Third had in his life demanded the consent of his nobility to a scheme exactly similar on behalf of his grandson, and his plan had taken effect for twenty-three years, mainly on account of the fact that the dispossessed heir, a protesting party in the first case, had been a consenting party in the second. But one great element in the success of Henry the Fourth was the return of the succession to the old and beloved order.

The principle on which Henry the Eighth had governed for nearly forty years was his own despotic will. And it would appear that England liked his strong hand upon the rein. He had little claim beyond his strong hand and (so much as he had of) his “Right Divine.” Having become accustomed to obey this man's will for thirty-eight years, when that will altered the order of succession after the deaths of his own children, England placidly submitted to the prospective change.

His son, Edward the Sixth, followed his father's example, and again tried to alter the succession by will. But he had inherited only a portion of his father's prestige. The party which would have followed him was just the party which was not likely to struggle for its rights. The order set up by Henry the Eighth prevailed over the change made by Edward the Sixth.

But when Elizabeth came to die, the prestige of Henry the Eighth had faded, and it was to her personal decision that England looked for the settlement of the long-vexed question. The little knot of persons who wished to secure the King of Scots' accession, therefore, were intensely anxious to obtain her assent to their project.

The Delphic oracle remained obstinately silent. Neither grave representations of necessity, nor coaxing, could induce her to open her lips upon the subject; and as no living creature had ever taken Elizabeth off her guard, there was no hope in that direction. The old woman remembered too well the winter day, forty-five years before, when the time-

servicing courtiers left the dying sister at Westminster, to pay court to the living sister at Hatfield; and with the mixture of weakness and shrewdness which characterised her, she refused to run the risk of its repetition by any choice of a successor from the candidates for the throne.

There were five living persons who could set up a reasonable claim, of whom four were descendants of Henry the Seventh. They were all a long way from the starting-point.

The first was the King of Scotland, son of Mary Queen of Scots, daughter of James the Fifth, son of Princess Margaret of England, eldest daughter of Henry the Seventh.

The second was the Lady Arbella Stuart, the only child of Lord Charles Stuart, son of Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of the same Princess Margaret.

The third was Edward Seymour, son of Lady Katherine Grey, daughter of Lady Frances Brandon, eldest daughter of Princess Mary, youngest daughter of Henry the Seventh.

The fourth was Lady Anne Stanley, eldest daughter of Ferdinand Earl of Derby, son of Lady Margaret Clifford, only daughter of Lady Eleanor Brandon, second daughter of the same Princess Mary.

And the fifth was Sir Robert Basset of Umberleigh, son of Sir Arthur Basset, son of Lady Frances Plantagenet, eldest daughter of Arthur Lord Lisle, son of Edward the Fourth.

Of these five, the one who would have inherited the Crown, under the will of Henry the Eighth, was unquestionably Edward Seymour; and, Mary and Elizabeth being both now dead, the reversion fell to him also under that of Edward the Sixth. But, strange to say, he was not a formidable opponent of James of Scotland. Queen Elizabeth had been so deeply offended with his mother (Lady Katherine Grey, sister of the beheaded Lady Jane) for making a love-match without her royal licence, that she had immured both bride and bridegroom in the Tower for years. Perhaps the prestige of Elizabeth's will remained potent, even after Elizabeth was dead; perhaps Edward Seymour had no wish to occupy such a thorny seat as the throne of England. Neither he nor Lady Anne Stanley set up the faintest claim to the succession; though Seymour, at least, might have done so with a decided show of justice, as the law of succession then stood. By the two royal wills, King James of Scotland, and his cousin, Lady Arbella Stuart, were entirely dispossessed; their claim had to be made under the law as it had stood unaltered by the will of Henry the Eighth.

But there was one prior question, which, had it been settled in the affirmative, would have finally disposed of all these four claims at once. If the contract between Edward the Fourth and Elizabeth Lucy were to be regarded as a legal marriage, then there could be no doubt who was the true heir. Better than any claim of Stuart or Tudor, of Seymour or Stanley, was then that of the Devonshire knight, Sir Robert Basset. For fifteen hundred years, a contract had been held as legal marriage. The vast estates of the Plantagenets of Kent had passed to the Holands on the validity of a contract no better, and perhaps worse, than that of Elizabeth Lucy. (Note 2.) Why was this contract to be set aside?

Had England at large been less apathetic, or had the little knot of agitators been less politic, a civil war might have been reasonably anticipated. But the intriguers were determined that James of Scotland should succeed; and James himself, aware of the flaw in his title, was busily working with them to the same end. Cecil, Lady Rich, Lady Scrope, and Carey, were all pledged to let him know the exact moment of the Queen's, decease, that he might set out for England at once.

All was gloom and suspense in the chamber of Richmond Palace, where the great Queen of England lay dying. Her ladies and courtiers urged her to take more nourishment,—she refused. They urged her to go to bed,—she refused. She would be a queen to her last breath. No failure of bodily strength could chill or tame the lion heart of Elizabeth.

At last, very delicately, Cecil attempted to sound the dying Queen on that subject of the succession, always hitherto forbidden. Her throat was painful, and she spoke with difficulty: Cecil, as spokesman for her Council, asked her to declare "whom she would have for King," offering to name sundry persons, and requesting that. Her Majesty would hold up her finger when he came to the name which satisfied her. To test the vigour of her mind, he first named the King of France.

Elizabeth did not stir.

"The King's Majesty of Scotland?"

There was no sign still.

"My Lord Beauchamp?"—Edward Seymour, the heir according to the wills of her father and brother.

Then the royal lioness was roused.

"I tell you," she said angrily, "I will have no rascal's son in my seat, but a king's son."

There was no king's son among the candidates but one, and that was James of Scotland.

Once more, when she was past speech, Elizabeth was asked if she wished James to succeed her. She indicated her pleasure in a manner which some modern writers have questioned, but which was well understood in her own day. Lifting her clasped hands to her head, the dying Elizabeth made them assume the form of a crown; and once more those around her knew that she desired her successor to be a king.

Tradition says that as soon as Elizabeth was dead, Lady Scrope dropped a sapphire ring from the window—a preconcerted signal—to her brother, Robert Carey, who was waiting below. Carey states that he was told in a more

matter-of-fact way—by a sentinel, whom he had previously requested to bring him the news.

That hour Carey set out: and except for one night's rest at Carlisle, he spurred night and day till he stood before King James. There was a sudden intimation—a hurried action taken—and the Stuarts were Kings of England.

The claims of the Lady Arabella were disposed of by making her a companion to the new Queen, until she had the presumption to marry, and, of all people, to marry the heir under King Henry the Eighth's will. This was too much. She was imprisoned for life, and she died in her prison, simply because she was her father's daughter and her husband's wife.

The claims of Lord Beauchamp and Lady Anne Stanley needed no disposal, since they had both remained perfectly quiescent, and had put forth no claim.

But Robert Basset was not so easily managed. James knew that he was capable of making the throne a very uncomfortable seat. And Basset, with his usual rashness, had on the Queen's death dashed into the arena and boldly asserted his right as the heir of Edward the Fourth. The only way to dispose of him was by making him realise that the crown was beyond his grasp; and that if he persevered, he would find the scaffold and the axe within it. This was accordingly done so effectually that weak, impulsive Basset quailed before the storm, and fled to France to save his own life. He survived the accession of James the First for seventeen years at least (Note 3); but no more was heard of his right to the throne of England.

Forty years after the death of Elizabeth, the son of James of Scotland was struggling for his crown, with half England against him. Five years later, there was a scaffold set up at Whitehall, and the blood royal was poured out. There were comparatively few who stood by King Charles to the last. But there was one—who had headed charges at Marston Moor "for God, and King, and Country"—who had bled under his banner at Edgehill—who lived to welcome back his most unworthy son and successor, and to see the monarchy re-established in the Stuart line. His name was Arthur Basset. (He died January 7, 1672. See Prince's Worthies of Devon.)

Ay, there had been "the making of a true man" in Colonel Arthur Basset. The fit representative of that earlier Arthur, he had adopted in his life the motto which, a hundred and fifty years before, the son of Edward the Fourth had embroidered on his banner—"Dieu l'a voulu."

God had not written the name of Arthur Basset on the roll of the Kings of England. And Arthur Basset bowed his noble head to the decree, and fell back to the ranks like a hero—no king, but a true man.

Note 1. The date is fictitious. The Atherington register has been vainly searched for the burial of Philippa Basset, and the Heanton register is marked in the return "illegible."

Note 2. The evidence in the earlier case (of Joan Plantagenet) seems to have rested entirely on the oaths of husband and wife; in the latter (of Elizabeth Lucy) the contract was known to the entire family of the bridegroom.

Note 3. Prince states that "in consequence of his pretensions to the Crown, and of his extravagance," Sir Robert was obliged to sell Heanton and Whitechapel, which last was the old seat of his family. If he did sell Heanton, his son must have bought it back; for it was the family residence in the year after Colonel Basset's death. Umberleigh had been deserted for Heanton on account of the low, damp situation of the former, and the thick trees which crowded round the house.

Appendix.

The Armada.

The strength of the Spanish fleet is differently represented by various writers, whose accounts disagree to the wide extent of—ships, from 128 to 176; men, from fourteen to twenty-nine thousand. I append the tabulated statement given by Speed, which is neither the highest nor the lowest, and is the carefully-prepared account of a generally accurate compiler.

Vessels:—Galliasses and gallions, 72; ships and hulkes, 47; pinnases and carviles, 11:—130.

Men:—Soldiers, 18,658; sailors, 8094; galley-slaves, 2088:—28,840.

Munition:—Great ordnance, 2843; bullets, 220,000; powder, 4200 quintals, each one hundredweight; lead for bullets, 1000 quintals, ditto; matches, 1200 quintals; muskets and calivers, 7000; partizans and halberts, 10,000; cannon and field pieces unnumbered.

Provision:—Bread, biscuit, and wine laid in for six months; bacon, 6500 quintals; cheese, 3000 quintals; fresh water, 12,000 pipes; flesh, rice, beans, peas, oil, and vinegar, unestimated.

General items:—Torches, lanterns, lamps, canvas, hides, lead to stop leaks, whips, and knives.

Army 32,000 strong, and cost 30,000 ducats every day; 124 noblemen on board as volunteers.

Speed's Chronicle, page 885.

Basset of Umberleigh.

I think the following account of the Basset family will be more convenient for reference than a number of explanatory notes interspersed throughout the narrative, and will also avoid frequent repetition. Owing to further research, it will be found fuller and more accurate than the corresponding notes in *Isoult Barry* and *Robin Tremayne*.

Sir John Basset of UMBERLEIGH, son of Sir John Basset and Joan Beaumont, died January 31, 1528 (Inq. 20 Henry Eight 20). The "Heralds' Visitations" appear to be mistaken in giving Sir John four wives. Jane Beaumont, whom they call his second wife, was his mother: while Elizabeth, the third wife, seems to be an imaginary person altogether. He married:—

A. Anne, daughter of John Dennis of Oxleigh and Eleanor Giffard; widow of Patrick Bellewe of Aldervescot; buried with husband in Atherington Church, Devon.

B. Honor, daughter of Sir Thomas Grenville of Stow and Isabel Gilbert; born about 1498, married about 1515, died probably about 1548. Buried in Atherington Church. (The burial register of this church previous to 1570 has perished.) She married, secondly, Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, son of Edward the Fourth and Elizabeth Lucy.

Issue of Sir John Basset

(A) by Anne Dennis:—

1. A son, whose only memorial is on the sepulchral brass of his parents at Atherington probably died young.
2. Anne, married Sir James Courtenay of Powderham. (Issue,—James, and John.)
3. Margery, (Harl. Ms. 1149, folio 13, b.) married Edward Marrays of Marrays, Cornwall. (Issue,—Margaret, married George Rolle, Lady Lisle's solicitor.)
4. Jane, born about 1505; apparently died unmarried.
5. Thomasine, born about 1512, died unmarried, March 19, 1535—(Lisle Papers, Three 1.)

(B) By Honor Grenville:—

6. Philippa, born about 1516; probably died unmarried.
7. Katherine, born about 1518; married, after 1542, Sir Henry Ashley of Ashley and Wimborne Saint Giles (Shaftesbury family); date of death not known. (Issue,—Henry, and Edward, who probably died young.—Harl. Ms. 888, folio 40, b.)
8. John, born October 26, 1519 (Inq. 20 Henry Eight 20); died Apr. 3, 1545 (Inq. 2 Philip and Mary, 10). Married Frances, eldest daughter of Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, by his first wife Elizabeth Grey; married at Calais, February 17 to 22, 1538 (Lisle Papers, Eleven 40, 41); died about 1560. She married, secondly, Thomas Monke of Potheridge, county Devon.
9. Anne, born about 1520; Maid of Honour from 1537 (Lisle Papers, Eleven 110) to 1554 (Tallies Roll, 2-3 Philip and Mary); married, probably between July 7 and October 27, 1555, Sir Walter Hungerford of Farleigh Castle, son of the last Lord Hungerford of Heytesbury; died childless, probably in 1558-9. (Hungerford family papers).
10. George, born about 1522, died in London, 1579. (Harl. Mss., 757, folio 214; 760, folio 322.) Married Jaquit, daughter and heir of John Coffyn of Portledge, county Devon. She married, secondly, Henry Jones.
11. Mary, born about 1525, married at Atherington, June 9, 1557 (Register), John Wollacombe of Combe, county Devon. (Issue,—John, Thomas, and Honor.—Harl. Ms. 3288, folio 49.)
12. James, born 1527 (Foxe's Acts and Monuments, Pratt's Townsend's ed., Six 231), proctor of Bishop Gardiner, 1543 to 1555; Gentleman of Chamber to Queen Mary, about 1556-8; died November 1558; buried Black Friars' Church, London. ("Machyn's Diary," page 179.) Married Mary, daughter of William Roper and Margaret his wife, daughter of Sir Thomas More.

Issue of John Basset and Frances Plantagenet:—

1. Honor, born at Calais, about May 10, 1539 (Lisle Papers, One 72; Eleven 97; Twelve 85), probably died young.
2. Sir Arthur, born 1540 (Inq. 1 March—2 Philip and Mary, 10), probably at Calais; died of gaol fever, caught at the Black Assize, Exeter (Stow's "Chronicle," page 719), April 2, 1586 (Epitaph); buried at Atherington, April 7 (Register). Married Eleanor, daughter of John Chichester of Raleigh, county Devon, and Gertrude Courtenay of Powderham; buried at Atherington, July 8, 1585 (Register).

Issue of Sir Arthur Basset and Eleanor Chichester:—

1. Sir Robert, born 1574 (Matriculation Books, Queen's College, Oxford); living 1620 (Anderson's. "Royal Genealogies," page 745). Claimed the Crown on death of Queen Elizabeth, as legal descendant of Edward the Fourth. He married Elizabeth, daughter and coh. of Sir William Periam, Judge of the King's Bench; married November 21, 1591 (Register of Saint Dunstan in the West, London); died 1633.
2. Anne, married after 1585 Sir John Chichester of Hall, county Devon; died 1665; buried at Marwood. (Left issue.)
3. Margaret, under ten years old in 1585 (Will of Sir A. Basset).

4. Arthur, under fourteen years old in 1585 (Will of Sir A. Basset).
5. William, born 1583 (Matriculation Books, University College, Oxford).
6. Francis, baptised at Atherington, May 8, 1584 (Register).
7. John, baptised at Atherington June 1, 1585 (Register).

Issue of Sir Robert Basset and Elizabeth Feriam:—

1. Arthur, baptised June 6, 1593 (Register of Saint Dunstan in the West, London); buried February 3, 1595 (Register of Saint Bartholemew the Less, London).
2. Anne, baptised October 16, 1594 (Register of Saint Bartholemew the Less, London); married Jonathan Rashley of Fox (Harl. Mss. 1091, folio 122; 1538, folio 280).
3. Ellen, married George Yeo of Hushe (Harl. Mss. 1091, folio 122; 1538, folio 280).
4. Arthur, born at Heanton (Prince's "Worthies of Devon," page 113), 1598 (ibidem, Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 343, b.); Colonel in King Charles's army; died January 7, 1672; buried at Heanton (Prince, page 116). Married Anne, daughter of William Leigh of Burrow, county Devon.
5. Eleanor (Harl. Ms. 1091, folio 122).
6. Mary (Harl. Ms. 1091, folio 122).
7. William, born March 28, 1602-3 (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 343, b.; Matriculation Books, Exeter College, Oxford).

Issue of Colonel Basset and Anne:—

1. John, of Heanton, living (?) 1673. Married Susannah, daughter of (unknown).
2. Arthur, entered at Oriel College, Oxford, 1652, (Matriculation Books.)
3. Francis, entered at Oriel College, Oxford, 1652 (Matriculation Books.)

Issue of John Basset and Susannah:—

1. John, born February 26, 1653 (Atherington Register).
2. Arthur, born 1656 (Matriculation Books, Exeter College, Oxford).
3. Francis, born April 13, 1657 (Atherington Register). Married (unknown), daughter of (unknown).

Issue of Francis Basset and (unknown):—

John, born 1688 (Matriculation Books, Exeter College, Oxford).

The male line of the Basset family died out with Francis Basset, Esquire, in 1802; but the family estates remain in the hands of the descendants of his eldest sister Eustachia, who married (Unknown) Davie of Orleigh, and her posterity bear the name of Davie-Bassett.

The Younger Branches of the Family:—

Issue of George Basset and Jaquit Coffyn:—

1. Mary, baptised December 11, 1558 (Atherington Register); probably died young.
2. John, baptised February 8, 1559 (Atherington Register), probably died young.
3. Katherine, baptised January 11, 1560 (Atherington Register).
4. Blanche (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).
5. James (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344). Married Jane, daughter of Sir Francis Godolphin and Margaret Killigrew (ibidem).

Issue of James Basset and Jane Godolphin:—

1. Thomas (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).
2. Sir Francis, of Tehiddy, Cornwall; born 1594 (Matriculation Books, Exeter College, Oxford); knighted 1620 (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344). Married Anne, daughter of Jonathan Trelawney of Trelawney.
3. Arthur (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).
4. Nicholas (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).
5. James, born 1602 (Matriculation Books, Exeter College, Oxford).
6. Margery (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).

7. Jane, married William Courtenay (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).

8. Grace (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).

9. Margaret (Harl. Ms. 1080, folio 344).

Issue of James Basset and Mary Roper:—

Philip, appointed Receiver of Revenues in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, October 1, 1584 (Rot. Pat. 25 Elizabeth, Part 7). Married (unknown), daughter of (unknown) Verney (Harl. Ms. 1091, folio 122).

Issue:—

Two daughters, names and alliances unknown (Harl Ms. 1080, folio 344).

I owe especial thanks to various persons who have most kindly helped me in the elucidation of the above pedigree: in particular to Colonel Chester, the Reverend G. Whitehead of Atherington, and Charles Chichester, Esquire, of Hall.

Howard of Effingham, Charles, Lord High Admiral.

The extracts which follow will show the reasons for the belief that Lord Howard was a Protestant, possibly at the time of the Armada, and certainly at a later period.

1559. December 17.—He was an invited guest at the consecration of Matthew Parker at Lambeth, as Archbishop of Canterbury, “and many years after, by his testimony, confuted those lewd and loud lies which the Papists tell of the Nag’s Head in Cheapside.”—(Fuller’s “Worthies,” quoted in Notes and Queries, 1st S. Three, 244.)

1604. February.—He was “at the head of a commission to discover and expel all Catholic priests.”—(Memorials of the Howard Family, quoted *ibidem*, Three 309.—The quoter adds that Howard “was certainly a Protestant in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.”)

1604. May (?) “Only we forewarn you that in the performance of these ceremonies (ratification by King of Spain of treaty of peace with England), which is likely to be done in the King’s Chapel, you have especial care that it be not done in the forenoon, in the time of Mass, to the scandal of our religion, but rather in the afternoon, at what time their service is more free from note of superstition.”—(King James the First to Lord Howard, then Earl of Nottingham and Ambassador to Spain. Biographies Brit, page 2679; quoted in Notes and Queries, 1st S., Three 244.)

1604. “On Friday, the last of this Month, His Catholick Majesty ratified the Peace upon Oath in a great chamber of the Palace... It was pretended that the Clergy would not suffer this to be done in a Church or Chapel where neglect of reverence of the Holy Sacrament should give scandal.”—(Collins’ Peerage, Four 272, quoted *ibidem*.)

(It may be urged that Lord Howard, as Ambassador of a Protestant King, would feel himself obliged to act on behalf of his master, showing no more nor less reverence than James would have done himself. But is it at all likely that, had such been his wish, James would have selected for this office a man who could not act according to the belief of his master without committing sacrilege according to his own? The want of reverence must have been expected from Lord Nottingham or his suite, for there was no one else present who was not a devout Romanist.)

1605. When Lord Monteagle delivered the anonymous letter which revealed the Gunpowder Plot to Lord Salisbury, the second person to whom the latter confided the transaction was Lord Nottingham.—(Baker’s “Chronicle,” page 508.)

1605. He sat as one of the Commissioners for the trial of Garnet and other conspirators, after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot—(Archaeologia, volume fifteen.)

1613. He stood sponsor for the Countess of Salisbury’s daughter. (Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1611-1618, page 170; quoted in Notes and Queries, 2nd S., Seven 364.)

1623. May 20.—“John, son of Sir William Monson, is a dangerous Papist; neither Garnet, Constable, nor Tobie Mathew is comparable to him. He asserts openly that the King is a Papist at heart ... and delights in striving to pervert people... Thinks it his duty, as Lieutenant of the Shire, to inform against him.”—(Lord Nottingham to Archbishop of Canterbury, Calend. State Papers, Domestic, James the First; quoted *ibidem*, Seven 405.)

He married two Protestants; the first, a daughter of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon; the second, of the “Bonnie” Earl of Moray.

The End.

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