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From The Month.

CONSTANCE SHERWOOD.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

BY LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON.

CHAPTER I.

I had not thought to write the story of my life; but the wishes of those who have at all times more right to command than occasion to entreat aught at my hands, have in a manner compelled me thereunto. The divers trials and the unlooked-for comforts which have come to my lot during the years that I have been tossed to and fro on this uneasy sea—the world—have wrought in my soul an exceeding sense of the goodness of God, and an insight into the meaning of the sentence in Holy Writ which saith, "His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts like unto our thoughts." And this puts me in mind that there are sayings which are in every one's mouth, and therefore not to be lightly gainsayed, which nevertheless do not approve themselves to my conscience as wholly just and true. Of these is the common adage, "That misfortunes come not alone." For my own part, I have found that when a cross has been laid on me, it has mostly been a single one, and that other sorrows were oftentimes removed, as if to make room for it. And it has been my wont, when one trial has been passing away, to look out for the next, even as on a stormy day, when the clouds have rolled away in one direction and sunshine is breaking overhead, we see others rising in the distance. There has been no portion of my life free from some measure of grief or fear sufficient to recall the words that "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;" and none so reft of consolation that, in the midst of suffering, I did not yet cry out, "The Lord is my shepherd; his rod and his staff comfort me."

I was born in the year 1557, in a very fair part of England, at Sherwood Hall, in the county of Stafford. For its comely aspect, commodious chambers, sunny gardens, and the sweet walks in its vicinity, it was as commendable a residence for persons of moderate fortune and contented minds as can well be thought of. Within and without this my paternal home nothing was wanting which might please the eye, or minister to tranquillity of mind and healthful recreation. I reckon it amongst the many favors I have received from a gracious Providence, that the earlier years of my life were spent amidst such fair scenes, and in the society of parents who ever took occasion from earthly things to lead my thoughts to such as are imperishable, and so to stir up in me a love of the Creator, who has stamped his image on this

visible world in characters of so great beauty; whilst in the tenderness of those dear parents unto myself I saw, as it were, a type and representation of his paternal love and goodness.

My father was of an ancient family, and allied to such as were of greater note and more wealthy than his own. He had not, as is the manner with many squires of our days, left off residing on his own estate in order to seek after the shows and diversions of London; but had united to a great humility of mind and a singular affection for learning a contentedness of spirit which inclined him to dwell in the place assigned to him by Providence. He had married at an early age, and had ever conformed to the habits of his neighbors in all lawful and kindly ways, and sought no other labors but such as were incidental to the care of his estates, and no recreations but those of study, joined to a moderate pursuit of field-sports and such social diversions as the neighborhood afforded. His outward appearance was rather simple than showy, and his manners grave and composed. When I call to mind the singular modesty of his disposition, and the retiredness of his manners, I often marvel how the force of circumstances and the urging of conscience should have forced one so little by nature inclined to an unsettled mode of life into one which, albeit peaceful in its aims, proved so full of danger and disquiet.

My mother's love I enjoyed but for a brief season. Not that it waxed cold toward me, as happens with some parents, who look with fondness on the child and less tenderly on the maiden; but it pleased Almighty God to take her unto himself when I was but ten years of age. Her face is as present to me now as any time of my life. No limner's hand ever drew a more faithful picture than the one I have of her even now engraved on the tablet of my heart. She had so fair and delicate a complexion that I can only liken it to the leaf of a white rose with the lightest tinge of pink in it. Her hair was streaked with gray too early for her years; but this matched well with the sweet melancholy of her eyes, which were of a deep violet color. Her eyelids were a trifle thick, and so were her lips; but there was a pleasantness in her smile and the dimples about her mouth such as I have not noticed in any one else. She had a sweet womanly and loving heart, and the noblest spirit imaginable; a great zeal in the service of God, tempered with so much sweetness and cordiality that she gave not easily offence to any one, of howsoever different a way of thinking from herself; and either won them over to her faith through the suavity of her temper and the wisdom of her discourse, or else worked in them a personal liking which made them patient with her, albeit fierce with others. When I was about seven years of age I noticed that she waxed thin and pale, and that we seldom went abroad, and walked only in our own garden and orchard. She seemed glad to sit on a bench on the sunny side of the house even in summer, and on days when by reason of the heat I liked to lie down in the shade. My parents forbade me from going into the village; and, through the perverseness common to too many young people, on account of that very prohibition I longed for liberty to do so, and wearied oftentimes of the solitude we lived in. At a later period I learnt how kind had been their intent in keeping me during the early years of childhood from a knowledge of the woeful divisions which the late changes in religion had wrought in our country; which I might easily have heard from young companions, and maybe in such sort as to awaken angry feelings, and shed a drop of bitter in the crystal cup of childhood's pure faith. If we did walk abroad, it was to visit some sick persons, and carry them food or clothing or medicines, which my mother prepared with her own hands. But as she grew weaker, we went less often outside the gates, and the poor came themselves to fetch away what in her bounty she stored up for them. I did not notice that our neighbors looked unkindly on us when we were seen in the village. Children would cry out sometimes, but half in play, "Down with the Papists!" but I witnessed that their elders checked them, especially those of the poorer sort; and "God bless you, Mrs. Sherwood!" and "God save you, madam!" was often in their mouths, as she whom I loved with so great and reverent an affection passed alongside of them, or stopped to take breath, leaning against their cottage-palings.

Many childish heartaches I can even now remember when I was not suffered to join in the merry sports of the 1st of May; for then, as the poet Chaucer sings, the youths and maidens go

"To fetch the flowers fresh and branch and bloom,
And these, rejoicing in their great delight,
Eke each at other throw the blossoms bright."

I watched the merry wights as they passed our door on their way to the groves and meadows, singing mirthful carols, and bent on pleasant pastimes; and tears stood in my eyes as the sound of their voices died away in the distance. My father found me thus weeping one May-day, and carried me with him to a sweet spot in a wood, where wild-flowers grew like living jewels out of the green carpet of moss on which we sat; and there, as the birds sang from every bough, and the insects hovered and hummed over every blossom, he entertained me with such quaint and pleasant tales, and moved me to merry laughter by his witty devices; so that I set down that day in my book of memory as one of the joyfulest in all my childhood. At Easter, when the village children rolled pasch eggs down the smooth sides of the green hills, my mother would paint me some herself, and adorned them with such bright colors and rare sentences that I feared to break them with rude handling, and kept them by me throughout the year, rather as pictures to be gazed on than toys to be played with in a wanton fashion.

On the morning of the Resurrection, when others went to the top of Cannock Chase to hail the rising sun, as is the custom of those parts, she would sing so sweetly the psalm which speaketh of the heavens rejoicing and of the earth being glad, that it grieved me not to stay at home; albeit I sometimes marvelled that we saw so little company, and mixed not more freely with our neighbors.

When I had reached my ninth birthday, whether it was that I took better heed of words spoken in my hearing, or else that my parents thought it was time that I should learn somewhat of the conditions of the times, and so talked more freely in my presence, it so happened that I heard of the jeopardy in which many who held the Catholic faith were, and of the laws which were being made to prohibit in our country the practice of the ancient religion. When Protestants came to our house—and it was sometimes hard in those days to tell who were such at heart, or only in outward semblance out of conformity to the queen's pleasure—I was strictly charged not to speak in their hearing of aught that had to do with Catholic faith and worship; and I could see at such times on my mother's face an uneasy expression, as if she was ever fearing the next words that any one might utter.

In the autumn of that year we had visitors whose company was so great an honor to my parents, and the occasion of so

much delight to myself, that I can call to mind every little circumstance of their brief sojourn under our roof, even as if it had taken place but yesterday. This visit proved the first step toward an intimacy which greatly affected the tenor of my life, and prepared the way for the direction it was hereafter to take.

These truly honorable and well-beloved guests were my Lady Mounteagle and her son Mr. James Labourn, who were journeying at that time from London, where she had been residing at her son-in-law the Duke of Norfolk's house, to her seat in the country; whither she was carrying the three children of her daughter, the Duchess of Norfolk, and of that lady's first husband, the Lord Dacre of the North. The eldest of these young ladies was of about my own age, and the others younger.

The day on which her ladyship was expected, I could not sit with patience at my tambour-frame, or con my lessons, or play on the virginals; but watched the hours and the minutes in my great desire to see these noble wenches. I had not hitherto consorted with young companions, save with Edmund and John Genings, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, who were then my playmates, as at a ripper age friends. I thought, in the quaint way in which children couple one idea with another in their fantastic imaginations, that my Lady Mounteagle's three daughters would be like the three angels, in my mother's missal, who visited Abraham in his tent.

I had craved from my mother a holiday, which she granted on the score that I should help her that forenoon in the making of the pasties and jellies, which, as far as her strength allowed, she failed not to lend a hand to; and also she charged me to set the bed-chambers in fair order, and to gather fresh flowers wherewith to adorn the parlor. These tasks had in them a pleasantness which whiled away the time, and I alternated from the parlor to the store-room, and the kitchen to the orchard, and the poultry-yard to the pleasure-ground, running as swiftly from one to the other, and as merrily, as if my feet were keeping time with the glad beatings of my heart. As I passed along the avenue, which was bordered on each side by tall trees, ever and anon, as the wind shook their branches, there fell on my head showers of red and gold-colored leaves, which made me laugh; so easy is it for the young to find occasion of mirth in the least trifle when their spirits are lightsome, as mine were that day. I sat down on a stone bench on which the western sun was shining, to bind together the posies I had made; the robins twittered around me; and the air felt soft and fresh. It was the eve of Martinmas-day—Hallowtide Summer, as our country folk call it. As the sun was sinking behind the hills, the tread of horses' feet was heard in the distance, and I sprang up on the bench, shading my eyes with my hand to see the approach of that goodly travelling-party, which was soon to reach our gates. My parents came out of the front door, and beckoned me to their side. I held my posies in my apron, and forgot to set them down; for the first sight of my Lady Mounteagle, as she rode up the avenue with her son at her side, and her three grand-daughters with their attendants, and many richly-attired serving-men beside, filled me with awe. I wondered if her majesty had looked more grand on the day that she rode into London to be proclaimed queen. The good lady sat on her palfry in so erect and stately a manner, as if age had no dominion over her limbs and her spirits; and there was something so piercing and commanding in her eye, that it at once compelled reverence and submission. Her son had somewhat of the same nobility of mien, and was tall and graceful in his movements; but behind her, on her pillion, sat a small counterpart of herself, inasmuch as childhood can resemble old age, and youthful loveliness matronly dignity. This was the eldest of her ladyship's grand-daughters, my sweet Mistress Ann Dacre. This was my first sight of her who was hereafter to hold so great a place in my heart and in my life. As she was lifted from the saddle, and stood in her riding-habit and plumed hat at our door, making a graceful and modest obeisance to my parents, one step retired behind her grandam, with a lovely color tinging her cheeks, and her long lashes veiling her sweet eyes, I thought I had never seen so fair a creature as this high-born maiden of my own age; and even now that time, as it has gone by, has shown me all that a court can display to charm the eyes and enrapture the fancy, I do not gainsay that same childish thought of mine. Her sisters, pretty prattlers then, four and six years of age, were led into the house by their governess. But ere our guests were seated, my mother bade me kiss my Lady Mounteagle's hand and commend myself to her goodness, praying her to be a good lady to me, and overlook, out of her great indulgence, my many defects. At which she patted me on the cheek, and said, she doubted not but that I was as good a child as such good parents deserved to have; and indeed, if I was as like my mother in temper as in face, I must needs be such as her hopes and wishes would have me. And then she commanded Mistress Ann to salute me; and I felt my cheeks flush and my heart beat with joy as the sweet little lady put her arms round my neck, and pressed her lips on my cheek.

Presently we all withdrew to our chambers until such time as supper was served, at which meal the young ladies were present; and I marvelled to see how becomingly even the youngest of them, who was but a chit, knew how to behave herself, never asking for anything, or forgetting to give thanks in a pretty manner when she was helped. For the which my mother greatly commended their good manners; and her ladyship said, "In truth, good Mistress Sherwood, I carry a strict hand over them, never suffering their faults to go unchastised, nor permitting such liberties as many do to the ruin of their children." I was straightway seized with a great confusion and fear that this was meant as a rebuke to me, who, not being much used to company, and something overindulged by my father, by whose side I was seated, had spoken to him more than once that day at table, and had also left on my plate some victuals not to my liking; which, as I learnt at another time from Mistress Ann, was an offence for which her grandmother would have sharply reprehended her. I ventured not again to speak in her presence, and scarcely to raise my eyes toward her.

The young ladies withdrew early to bed that night, and I had but little speech with them. Before they left the parlor, Mistress Ann took her sisters by the hand, and all of them, kneeling at their grandmother's feet, craved her blessing. I could see a tear in her eye as she blessed them; and when she laid her hand on the head of the eldest of her grand-daughters, it lingered there as if to call down upon her a special benison. The next day my Lady Mounteagle gave permission for Mistress Ann to go with me into the garden, where I showed her my flowers and the young rabbits that Edmund Genings and his brother, my only two playmates, were so fond of; and she told me how well pleased she was to remove from London unto her grandmother's seat, where she would have a garden and such pleasant pastimes as are enjoyed in the country.

"Prithee, Mistress Ann," I said, with the unmannerly boldness with which children are wont to question one another, "have you not a mother, that you live with your grandam?"

"I thank God that I have," she answered; "and a good mother she is to me; but by reason of her having lately married

the Duke of Norfolk, my grandmother has at the present time the charge of us."

"And do you greatly love my Lady Mounteagle?" I asked, misdoubting in my folly that a lady of so grave aspect and stately carriage should be loved by children.

"As greatly as heart can love," was her pretty answer.

"And do you likewise love the Duke of Norfolk, Mistress Ann?" I asked again.

"He is my very good lord and father," she answered; "but my knowledge of his grace has been so short, I have scarce had time to love him yet."

"But I have loved you in no time," I cried, and threw my arms round her neck. "Directly I saw you, I loved you, Mistress Ann."

"Mayhap, Mistress Constance," she said, "it is easier to love a little girl than a great duke."

"And who do you affection beside her grace your mother, and my lady your grandam, Mistress Ann?" I said, again returning to the charge; to which she quickly replied:

"My brother Francis, my sweet Lord Dacre."

"Is he a child?" I asked.

"In truth, Mistress Constance," she answered, "he would not be well pleased to be called so; and yet methinks he is but a child, being not older, but rather one year younger than myself, and my dear playmate and gossip."

"I wish I had a brother or a sister to play with me," I said; at which Mistress Ann kissed me and said she was sorry I should lack so great a comfort, but that I must consider I had a good father of my own, whereas her own was dead; and that a father was more than a brother.

In this manner we held discourse all the morning, and, like a rude imp, I questioned the gracious young lady as to her pastimes and her studies and the tasks she was set to; and from her innocent conversation I discovered, as children do, without at the time taking much heed, but yet so as to remember it afterward, what especial care had been taken by her grandmother—that religious and discreet lady—to instill into her virtue and piety, and in using her, beside saying her prayers, to bestow alms with her own hands on prisoners and poor people; and in particular to apply herself to the cure of diseases and wounds, wherein she herself had ever excelled. Mistress Ann, in her childish but withal thoughtful way, chide me that in my own garden were only seen flowers which pleased the senses by their bright colors and perfume, and none of the herbs which tend to the assuagement of pain and healing of wounds; and she made me promise to grow some against the time of her next visit. As we went through the kitchen-garden, she plucked some rosemary and lavender and rue, and many other odoriferous herbs; and sitting down on a bench, she invited me to her side, and discoursed on their several virtues and properties with a pretty sort of learning which was marvellous in one of her years. She showed me which were good for promoting sleep, and which for cuts and bruises, and of a third she said it eased the heart.

"Nay, Mistress Ann," I cried, "but that must be a heartsease;" at which she smiled, and answered:

"My grandam says the best medicines for uneasy hearts are the bitter herb confession and the sweet flower absolution."

"Have you yet made your first communion, Mistress Ann?" I asked in a low voice, at which question a bright color came into her cheek, and she replied:

"Not yet; but soon I may. I was confirmed not long ago by the good Bishop of Durham; and at my grandmother's seat I am to be instructed by a Catholic priest who lives there."

"Then you do not go to Protestant service?" I said.

"We did," she answered, "for a short time, whilst we stayed at the Charterhouse; but my grandam has understood that it is not lawful for Catholics, and she will not be present at it herself, or suffer us any more to attend it, neither in her own house nor at his grace's."

While we were thus talking, the two little ladies, her sisters, came from the house, having craved leave from the governess to run out into the garden. Mistress Mary was a pale delicate child, with soft loving blue eyes; and Mistress Bess, the youngest, a merry imp, whose rosy cheeks and dimpling smiles were full of glee and merriment.

"What ugly sober flowers are these, Nan, that thou art playing with?" she cried, and snatched at the herbs in her sister's lap. "When I marry my Lord William Howard, I'll wear a posy of roses and carnations."

"When I am married," said little Mistress Mary, "I will wear nothing but lilies."

"And what shall be thy posy, Nan?" said the little saucy one again, "when thou dost wed my Lord Surrey?"

"Hush, hush, madcaps!" cried Mistress Ann. "If your grandam was to hear you, I doubt not but the rod would be called for."

Mistress Mary looked round affrighted, but little Mistress Bess said in a funny manner, "Prithee, Nan, do rods then travel?"

"Ay; by that same token, Bess, that I heard my lady bid thy nurse take care to carry one with her."

"It was nurse told me I was to marry my Lord William, and Madge my Lord Thomas, and thee, Nan, my Lord Surrey, and brother pretty Meg Howard," said the little lady, pouting; "but I won't tell grandam of it an it would be like to make her angry."

"I would be a nun!" Mistress Mary cried.

"Hush!" her elder sister said; "that is foolish talking, Madge; my grandmother told me so when I said the same thing to her a year ago. Children do not know what Almighty God intends them to do. And now methinks I see Uncle Labourn making as if he would call us to the house, and there are the horses coming to the door. We must needs obey the summons. Prithee, Mistress Constance, do not forget me."

Forget her! No. From that day to this years have passed over our heads and left deep scars on our hearts. Divers periods of our lives have been signalized by many a strange passage; we have rejoiced, and, oftener still, wept together; we have met in trembling, and parted in anguish; but through sorrow and through joy, through evil report and good report, in riches and in poverty, in youth and in age, I have blessed the day when first I met thee, sweet Ann Dacre, the fairest, purest flower which ever grew on a noble stem.

CHAPTER II.

A year elapsed betwixt the period of the so brief, but to me so memorable, visit of the welcomest guests our house ever received—to wit, my Lady Mounteagle and her grand-daughters—and that in which I met with an accident, which compelled my parents to carry me to Lichfield for chirurgical advice. Four times in the course of that year I was honored with letters writ by the hand of Mistress Ann Dacre; partly, as the gracious young lady said, by reason of her grandmother's desire that the bud acquaintanceship which had sprouted in the short-lived season of the aforesaid visit should, by such intercourse as may be carried on by means of letters, blossom into a flower of true friendship; and also that that worthy lady and my good mother willed such a correspondence betwixt us as would serve to the sharpening of our wits, and the using our pens to be good servants to our thoughts. In the course of this history I will set down at intervals some of the letters I received at divers times from this noble lady; so that those who read these innocent pictures of herself, portrayed by her own hand, may trace the beginnings of those virtuous inclinations which at an early age were already working in her soul, and ever after appeared in her.

On the 15th day of January of the next year to that in which my eyes had feasted on this creature so embellished with rare endowments and accomplished gracefulness, the first letter I had from her came to my hand; the first link of a chain which knit together her heart and mine through long seasons of absence and sore troubles, to the great comforting, as she was often pleased to say, of herself, who was so far above me in rank, whom she chose to call her friend, and of the poor friend and servant whom she thus honored beyond her deserts. In as pretty a handwriting as can well be thought of, she thus wrote:

"MY SWEET MISTRESS CONSTANCE,

—Though I enjoyed your company but for the too brief time during which we rested under your honored parents' roof, I retain so great a sense of the contentment I received therefrom, and so lively a remembrance of the converse we held in the grounds adjacent to Sherwood Hall, that I am better pleased than I can well express that my grandmother bids me sit down and write to one whom to see and to converse with once more would be to me one of the chiefest pleasures in life. And the more welcome is this command by reason of the hope it raises in me to receive in return a letter from my well-beloved Mistress Constance, which will do my heart more good than anything else that can happen to me. 'Tis said that marriages are made in heaven. When I asked my grandam if it were so, she said, 'I am of opinion, Nan, they are made in many more places than one; and I would to God none were made but such as are agreed upon in so good a place.' But methinks some friendships are likewise made in heaven; and if it be so, I doubt not but that when we met, and out of that brief meeting there arose so great and sudden a liking in my heart for you, Mistress Constance,—which, I thank God, you were not slow to reciprocate,—that our angels had met where we hope one day to be, and agreed together touching that matter.

"It suits ill a bad pen like mine to describe the fair seat we reside in at this present time—the house of Mr. James Labourn, which he has lent unto my grandmother. 'Tis most commodious and pleasant, and after long sojourn in London, even in winter, a terrestrial paradise. But, like the garden of Eden, not without dangers; for the too much delight I took in out-of-doors pastimes— and most of all on the lake when it was frozen, and we had merry sports upon it, to the neglect of my lessons, not heeding the lapse of time in the pursuit of pleasure—brought me into trouble and sore disgrace. My grandmother ordered me into confinement for three days in my own chamber, and I saw her not nor received her blessing all that time; at the end of which she sharply reprov'd me for my fault, and bade me hold in mind that 'twas when loitering in a garden Eve met the tempter, and threatened further and severe punishment if I applied not diligently to my studies. When I had knelt down and begged pardon, promising amendment, she drew me to her and kissed me, which it was not her wont often to do. 'Nan,' she said, 'I would have thee use thy natural parts, and improve thyself in virtue and learning; for such is the extremity of the times, that ere long it may be that many first shall be last and many last shall be first in this realm of England. But virtue and learning are properties which no man can steal from another; and I would fain see thee endowed with a goodly store of both. That great man and true confessor, Sir Thomas More, had nothing so much at heart as his daughter's instruction; and Mistress Margaret Roper, once my sweet friend, though some years older than my poor self, who still laments her loss, had such fine things said of her by the greatest men of this age, as would astonish thee to hear; but they were what she had a right to and very well deserved. And the strengthening of her mind through study and religious discipline served her well at the time of her great trouble; for where other women would have lacked sense and courage how to act, she kept her wits about her, and ministered such

comfort to her father, remaining near him at the last, and taking note of his wishes, and finding means to bury him in a Christian manner, which none other durst attempt, that she had occasion to thank God who gave her a head as well as a heart. And who knows, Nan, what may befall thee, and what need thou mayst have of the like advantages?'

"My grandmother looked so kindly on me then, that, albeit abashed at the remembrance of my fault, I sought to move her to further discourse; and knowing what great pleasure she had in speaking of Sir Thomas More, at whose house in Chelsea she had oftentimes been a visitor in her youth, I enticed her to it by cunning questions touching the customs he observed in his family.

"Ah, Nan!' she said, that house was a school and exercise of the Christian religion. There was neither man nor woman in it who was not employed in liberal discipline and fruitful reading, although the principal study was religion. There was no quarrelling, not so much as a peevish word to be heard; nor was any one seen idle; all were in their several employs: nor was there wanting sober mirth. And so well-managed a government Sir Thomas did not maintain by severity and chiding, but by gentleness and kindness.'

"Methought as she said this, that my dear grandam in that matter of chiding had not taken a leaf out of Sir Thomas's book; and there was no doubt a transparency in my face which revealed to her this thought of mine; for she straightly looked at me and said, 'Nan, a penny for thy thoughts!' at the which I felt myself blushing, but knew nothing would serve her but the truth; so I said, in as humble a manner as I could think of, 'An if you will excuse me, grandam, I thought if Sir Thomas managed so well without chiding, that you manage well with it.' At the which she gave me a light nip on the forehead, and said, 'Go to, child; dost think that any but saints can rule a household without chiding, or train children without whipping? Go thy ways, and mend them too, if thou wouldst escape chastisement; and take with thee, Nan, the words of one whom we shall never again see the like of in this poor country, which he used to his wife or any of his children if they were diseased or troubled, "We must not look at our pleasures to go to heaven in feather-beds, or to be carried up thither even by the chins." And so she dismissed me; and I have here set down my fault, and the singular goodness showed me by my grandmother when it was pardoned, not thinking I can write anything better worth notice than the virtuous talk with which she then favored me.

"There is in this house a chapel very neat and rich, and an ancient Catholic priest is here, who says mass most days; at the which we, with my grandmother, assist, and such of her servants as have not conformed to the times; and this good father instructs us in the principles of Catholic religion. On the eve of the feast of the Nativity of Christ, my lady stayed in the chapel from eight at night till two in the morning; but sent us to bed at nine, after the litanies were said, until eleven, when there was a sermon, and at twelve o'clock three masses said, which being ended we broke our fast with a mince-pie, and went again to bed. And all the Christmas-time we were allowed two hours after each meal for recreation, instead of one. At other times, we play not at any game for money; but then we had a shilling a-piece to make us merry; which my grandmother says is fitting in this time of mirth and joy for his birth who is the sole origin and spring of true comfort. And now, sweet Mistress Constance, I must bid you farewell; for the greatest of joys has befallen me, and a whole holiday to enjoy it. My sweet Lord Dacre is come to pay his duty to my lady and tarry some days here, on his way to Thetford, the Duke of Norfolk's seat, where his grace and the duchess my good mother have removed. He is a beauty, Mistress Constance; and nature has so profusely conferred on him privileges, that when her majesty the queen saw him a short time back on horseback, in the park at Richmond, she called him to her carriage-door and honored him with a kiss, and the motto of the finest boy she ever beheld. But I may not run on in this fashion, letting my pen outstrip modesty, like a foolish creature, making my brother a looking-glass and continual object for my eyes; but learn to love him, as my grandam says, in God, of whom he is only borrowed, and not so as to set my heart wholly on him. So beseeching God bless you and yours, good Mistress Constance, I ever remain, your loving friend and humble servant,

"ANN DACRE."

Oh, how soon were my Lady Mouteagle's words exalted in the event! and what a sad brief note was penned by that affectionate sister not one month after she writ those lines, so full of hope and pleasure in the prospect of her brother's sweet company! For the fair boy that was the continual object of her eyes and the dear comfort of her heart was accidentally slain by the fall of a vaulting horse upon him at the duke's house at Thetford.

"MY GOOD MISTRESS CONSTANCE"

(she wrote, a few days after his lamentable death),—"The lovingest brother a sister ever had, and the most gracious creature ever born, is dead; and if it pleased God I wish I were dead too, for my heart is well-nigh broken. But I hope in God his soul is now in heaven, for that he was so young and innocent; and when here, a short time ago, my grandmother procured that he should for the first, and as it has pleased God also for the only and the last, time, confess and be absolved by a Catholic priest, in the which the hand of Providence is visible to our great comfort, and reasonable hope of his salvation. Commending him and your poor friend, who has great need of them, to your good prayers, I remain your affectionate and humble servant,

"ANN DACRE."

In that year died also, in childbirth, her grace the Duchess of Norfolk, Mistress Ann's mother; and she then wrote in a less passionate, but withal less comfortable, grief than at her brother's loss, and, as I have heard since, my Lady Mouteagle had her death-blow at that time, and never lifted up her head again as heretofore. It was noticed that ever after she spent more time in prayer and gave greater alms. Her daughter, the duchess, who at the instance of her husband had conformed to the times, desired to have been reconciled on her deathbed by a priest, who for that end was conducted into the garden, yet could not have access unto her by reason of the duke's vigilance to hinder it, or at least of his continual presence in her chamber at the time. And soon after, his grace, whose wards they were, sent for his

three step-daughters to the Charterhouse; the parting with which, and the fears she entertained that he would have them carried to services and sermons in the public churches, and hinder them in the exercise of Catholic faith and worship, drove the sword yet deeper through my Lady Mounteagle's heart, and brought down her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, notwithstanding that the duke greatly esteemed and respected her, and was a very moral nobleman, of exceeding good temper and moderate disposition. But of this more anon, as 'tis my own history I am writing, and it is meet I should relate in the order of time what events came under my notice whilst in Lichfield, whither my mother carried me, as has been aforesaid, to be treated by a famous physician for a severe hurt I had received. It was deemed convenient that I should tarry some time under his care; and Mr. Genings, a kinsman of her own, who with his wife and children resided in that town, one of the chiefest in the county, offered to keep me in their house as long as was convenient thereunto a kindness which my parents the more readily accepted at his hands from their having often shown the like unto his children when the air of the country was desired for them.

Mr. and Mrs. Genings were of the religion by law established. He was thought to be Catholic at heart; albeit he was often heard to speak very bitterly against all who obeyed not the queen in conforming to the new mode of worship, with the exception, indeed, of my mother, for whom he had always a truly great affection. This gentleman's house was in the close of the cathedral, and had a garden to it well stored with fair shrubs and flowers of various sorts. As I lay on a low settle near the window, being forbid to walk for the space of three weeks, my eyes were ever straying from my sampler to the shade and sunshine out of doors. Instead of plying at my needle, I watched the bees at their sweet labor midst the honeysuckles of the porch, or the swallows darting in and out of the eaves of the cathedral, or the butterflies at their idle sports over the beds of mignonette and heliotrope under the low wall, covered with ivy, betwixt the garden and the close. Mr. Genings had two sons, the eldest of which was some years older and the other younger than myself. The first, whose name was Edmund, had been weakly when a child, and by reason of this a frequent sojourner at Sherwood Hall, where he was carried for change of air after the many illnesses incident to early age. My mother, who was some years married before she had a child of her own, conceived a truly maternal affection for this young kinsman, and took much pains with him both as to the care of his body and the training of his mind. He was an apt pupil, and she had so happy a manner of imparting knowledge, that he learnt more, as he has since said, in those brief sojourns in her house than at school from more austere masters. After I came into the world, he took delight to rock me in my cradle, or play with me as I sat on my mother's knee; and when I first began to walk, he would lead me by the hand into the garden, and laugh to see me clutch marigolds or cry for a sunflower.

"I warrant thou hast an eye to gold, Con," he would say; "for 'tis the yellow flowers that please thee best."

There is an old hollow tree on the lawn at Sherwood Hall where I often hid from him in sport, and he would make pretence to seek me elsewhere, till a laugh revealed me to him, and a chase ensued down the approach or round the maze. He never tired of my petulance, or spoke rude words, as boys are wont to do; and had a more serious and contemplative spirit than is often seen in young people, and likewise a singular fancy for gazing at the sky when glowing with sunset hues or darkened by storms, and most of all when studded at night with stars. On a calm clear night I have noticed him for a length of time, forgetting all things else, fix his eyes on the heavens, as if reading the glory of the Lord therein revealed.

My parents did not speak to him of Catholic faith and worship, because Mr. Genings, before he suffered his sons to stay in their house, had made them promise that no talk of religion should be ministered to them in their childhood. It was a sore trial to my mother to refrain, as the Psalmist saith, from good words, which were ever rising from her heart to her lips, as pure water from a deep spring. But she instructed him in many things which belong to gentle learning, and in French, which she knew well; and taught him music, in which he made great progress. And this wrought with his father to the furtherance of these his visits to us. I doubt not but that, when she told him the names of the heavenly luminaries, she inwardly prayed he might one day shine as a star in the kingdom of God; or when she discoursed of flowers and their properties, that he should blossom as a rose in the wilderness of this faithless world; or whilst guiding his hands to play on the clavichord, that he might one day join in the glorious harmony of the celestial choirs. Her face itself was a preachment, and the tones of her voice, and the tremulous sighs she breathed when she kissed him or gave him her blessing, had, I ween, a privilege to reach his heart, the goodness of which was readable in his countenance. Dear Edmund Genings, thou wert indeed a brother to me in kind care and companionship whilst I stayed in Lichfield that never-to-be-forgotten year! How gently didst thou minister to the sick child, for the first time tasting the cup of suffering; now easing her head with a soft pillow, now strewing her couch with fresh-gathered flowers, or feeding her with fruit which had the bloom on it, or taking her hand and holding it in thine own to cheer her to endurance! Thou wert so patient and so loving, both with her who was a great trouble to thee and oftentimes fretful with pain, and likewise with thine own little brother, an angel in beauty and wit, but withal of so petulant and froward a disposition that none in the house durst contradict him, child as he was; for his parents were indeed weak in their fondness for him. In no place and at no time have I seen a boy so indulged and so caressed as this John Genings. He had a pretty wilfulness and such playful ways that his very faults found favor with those who should have corrected them, and he got praise where others would have met with chastisement. Edmund's love for this fair urchin was such as is seldom seen in any save in a parent for a child. It was laughable to see the lovely imp governing one who should have been his master, but through much love was his slave, and in a thousand cunning ways, and by fanciful tricks, constraining him to do his bidding. Never was a more wayward spirit enclosed in a more winsome form than in John Genings. Never did childish gracefulness rule more absolutely over superior age, or love reverse the conditions of ordinary supremacy, than in the persons of these two brothers.

A strange thing occurred at that time, which I witnessed not myself, and on which I can give no opinion, but as a fact will here set it down, and let such as read this story deem of it as they please. One night that, by reason of the unwonted chilliness of the evening, such as sometimes occurs in our climate even in summer, a fire had been lit in the parlor, and the family were gathered round it, Edmund came of a sudden into the room, and every one took notice that his face was very pale. He seemed in a great fear, and whispered to his mother, who said aloud—"Thou must have been asleep, and art still dreaming, child." Upon which he was very urgent for her to go into the garden, and used many entreaties thereunto. Upon which, at last, she rose and followed him. In another moment she called for her husband, who went out, and with him three or four other persons that were in the room, and I remained alone for the space of ten

or fifteen minutes. When they returned, I heard them speaking with great fear and amazement of what they had seen; and Edmund Genings has often since described to me what he first, and afterward all the others, had beheld in the sky. He was gazing at the heavens, as was his wont, when a strange spectacle appeared to him in the air. As it were, a number of armed men with weapons, killing and murdering others that were disarmed, and great store of blood running everywhere about them. His parents and those with them witnessed the same thing, and a great fear fell upon them all. I noticed that all that evening they seemed scared, and could not speak of this appearance in the sky without shuddering. But one that was more bold than the rest took heart, and cried, "God send it does not forbode that the Papists will murder us all in our beds!" And Mistress Genings, whose mother was a French Huguenot, said, "Amen!" I marked that her husband and one or two more of the company groaned, and one made, as if unwittingly, the sign of the cross. There were some I know in that town, nay and in that house, that were at heart of the old religion, albeit, by reason of the times, they did not give over attending Protestants' worship.

A few days later I was sitting alone, and had a long fit of musing over the many new thoughts that were crowding into my mind, as yet too childish to master them, when Edmund came in, and I saw he had been weeping. He said nothing at first, and made believe he was reading; but I could see tears trickling down through his fingers as he covered his face with his hands. Presently he looked up and cried out,

"Cousin Constance, Jack is going away from us."

"And if it please God, not for a long time," I answered; for it grieved me to see him sad.

"Nay, but he is going for many years, I fear," Edmund said. "My uncle, Jean de Luc, has asked for him to be brought up in his house at La Rochelle. He is his godfather, and has a great store of money, which he says he will leave to Jack. Alack! cousin Constance, I would that there was no such thing in the world as money, and no such country as France. I wish we were all dead." And then he fell to weeping again very bitterly.

I told him in a childish manner what my mother was wont to say to me when any little trouble fell to my lot—that we should be patient, and offer up our sufferings to God.

"But I can do nothing now for Jack," he cried. "It was my first thought at waking and my last at night, how to please the dear urchin; but now 'tis all over."

"Oh, but Edmund," I cried, "an if you were to be as good as the blessed saints in heaven, you could do a great deal for Jack."

"How so, cousin Constance?" he asked, not comprehending my meaning; and thereupon I answered:

"When once I said to my sweet mother, 'It grieves me, dear heart, that I can give thee nothing, who gives me so much,' she bade me take heed that every prayer we say, every good work we do, howsoever imperfect, and every pain we suffer, may be offered up for those we love; and so out of poverty, and weakness, and sorrow, we have wherewith to make precious and costly and cheerful gifts."

I spoke as a child, repeating what I had heard; but he listened not as a child. A sudden light came into his eyes, and methinks his good angel showed him in that hour more than my poor lips could utter.

"If it be as your sweet mother says," he joyfully cried, "we are rich indeed; and, even though we be sinners and not saints, we have somewhat to give, I ween, if it be only our heartaches, cousin Constance, so they be seasoned with prayers."

The thought which in my simplicity I had set before him took root, as it were, in his mind. His love for a little child had prepared the way for it; and the great brotherly affection which had so long dwelt in his heart proved a harbinger of the more perfect gift of charity; so that a heavenly message was perchance conveyed to him that day by one who likewise was a child, even as the word of the Lord came to the prophet through the lips of the infant Samuel. From that time forward he bore up bravely against his grief; which was the sharper inasmuch that he who was the cause of it showed none in return, but rather joy in the expectancy of the change which was to part them. He would still be a-prattling on it, and telling all who came in his way that he was going to France to a good uncle; nor ever intended to return, for his mother was to carry him to La Rochelle, and she should stay there with him, he said, and not come back to ugly Lichfield.

"And art thou not sorry, Jack," I asked him one day, "to leave poor Edmund, who loves thee so well?"

The little madcap was coursing round the room, and cried, as he ran past me, for he had more wit and spirit than sense or manners:

"Edmund must seek after me, and take pains to find me, if so be he would have me."

These words, which the boy said in his play, have often come back to my mind since the two brothers have attained unto a happy though dissimilar end.

When the time had arrived for Mistress Genings and her youngest son to go beyond seas, as I was now improved in health and able to walk, my father fetched me home, and prevailed on Mr. Genings to let Edmund go back with us, with the intent to divert his mind from his grief at his brother's departure.

I found my parents greatly disturbed at the news they had had touching the imprisonment of thirteen priests on account of religion, and of Mr. Orton being likewise arrested, who was a gentleman very dear to them for his great virtues and the steadfast friendship he had ever shown to them.

My mother questioned Edmund as to the sign he had seen in the heavens a short time back, of which the report had

reached them; and he confirming the truth thereof, she clasped her hands and cried:

"Then I fear me much this forebodes the death of these blessed confessors, Father Weston and the rest."

Upon which Edmund said, in a humble manner:

"Good Mistress Sherwood, my dear mother thought it signified that those of your religion would murder in their beds such as are of the queen's religion; so maybe in both cases there is naught to apprehend."

"My good child," my mother answered, "in regard of those now in durance for their faith, the danger is so manifest, that if it please not the Almighty to work a miracle for their deliverance, I see not how they may escape."

After that we sat awhile in silence; my father reading, my mother and I working, and Edmund at the window intent as usual upon the stars, which were shining one by one in the deep azure of the darkening sky. As one of greater brightness than the rest shone through the branches of the old tree, where I used to hide some years before, he pointed to it, and said to me, who was sitting nearest to him at the window:

"Cousin Constance, think you the Star of Bethlehem showed fairer in the skies than yon bright star that has just risen behind your favorite oak? What and if that star had a message for us!"

My father heard him, and smiled. "I was even then," he said, "reading the words of one who was led to the true religion by the contemplation of the starry skies. In a Southern clime, where those fair luminaries shine with more splendor than in our Northern heavens, St. Augustine wrote thus;" and then he read a few sentences in Latin from the book in his hand,—*"Raising ourselves up, we passed by degrees through all things bodily, even the very heavens, whence sun and moon and stars shine upon the earth. Yea, we soared yet higher by inward musing and discourse and admiring of God's works, and we came to our own minds and went beyond them, so as to arrive at that region of never-failing plenty where thou feedest Israel for ever with the food of truth."* These words had a sweet and solemn force in them which struck on the ear like a strain of unearthly music, such as the wind-harp wakes in the silence of the night. In a low voice, so low that it was like the breathing of a sigh, I heard Edmund say, "What is truth?" But when he had uttered those words, straightway turning toward me as if to divert his thoughts from that too pithy question, he cried: "Prithee, cousin Constance, hast thou ended reading, I warrant for the hundredth time, that letter in thine hand? and hast thou not a mind to impart to thy poor kinsman the sweet conceits I doubt not are therein contained?" I could not choose but smile at his speech; for I had indeed feasted my eyes on the handwriting of my dear friend, now no longer Mistress Dacre, and learnt off, as it were by heart, its contents. And albeit I refused at first to comply with his request, which I had secretly a mind to; no sooner did he give over the urging of it than I stole to his side, and, though I would by no means let it out of my hand, and folded down one side of the sheet to hide what was private in it, I offered to read such parts aloud as treated of matters which might be spoken of without hindrance.

With a smiling countenance, then, he set himself to listen, and I to be the mouthpiece of the dear writer, whose wit was so far in advance of her years, as I have since had reason to observe, never having met at any time with one in whom wisdom put forth such early shoots.

"DEAR MISTRESS CONSTANCE"

(thus the sweet lady wrote),—"Wherefore this long silence and neglect of your poor friend? An if it be true, which pains me much to hear, that the good limb which, together with its fellow, like two trusty footmen, carried you so well and nimbly along the alleys of your garden this time last year, has, like an arrant knave, played fast and loose, and failed in its good service,—wherein, I am told, you have suffered much inconvenience,—is it just that that other servant, your hand, should prove rebellious too, refuse to perform its office, and write no more letters at your bidding? For I'll warrant 'tis the hand is the culprit, not the will; which nevertheless should be master, and compel it to obedience. So, an you love me, chide roundly that contumacious hand, which fails in its duty, which should not be troublesome, if you but had for me one-half of the affection I have for you. And indeed, Mistress Constance, a letter from you would be to me, at this time, the welcomest thing I can think of; for since we left my grandmother's seat, and came to the Charterhouse, I have new friends, and many more and greater than I deserve or ever thought to have; but, by reason of difference of age or of religion, they are not such as I can well open my mind to, as I might to you, if it pleased God we should meet again. The Duke of Norfolk is a very good lord and father to me; but when there are more ways of thinking than one in a house, 'tis no easy matter to please all which have a right to be considered; and, in the matter of religion, 'tis very hard to avoid giving offence. But no more of this at present; only I would to God Mr. Fox were beyond seas, and my lady of Westmoreland at her home in the North; and that we had no worse company in this house than Mr. Martin, my Lord Surrey's tutor, who is a gentleman of great learning and knowledge, as every one says, and of extraordinary modesty in his behavior. My Lord Surrey has a truly great regard for him, and profits much in his learning by his means. I notice he is Catholic in his judgment and affections; and my lord says he will not stay with him, if his grace his father procures ministers to preach to his household and family, and obliges all therein to frequent Protestant service. I wish my grandmother was in London; for I am sometimes sore troubled in my mind touching Catholic religion and conforming to the times, of which an abundance of talk is ministered unto us, to my exceeding great discomfort, by my Lady Westmoreland, his grace's sister, and others also. An if I say aught thereon to Mistress Fawcett (a grave and ancient gentlewoman, who had the care of my Lord Surrey during his infancy, and is now set over us his grace's wards), and of misliking the duke's ministers and that pestilent Mr. Fox—(I fear me, Mistress Constance, I should not have writ that unbeseeeming word, and I will e'en draw a line across it, but still as you may read it for indeed 'tis what he is; but 'tis from himself I learnt it, who in his sermons calls Catholic religion a pestilent idolatry, and Catholic priests pestilent teachers and servants of Antichrist, and the holy Pope at Rome the man of sin) she grows uneasy, and bids me be a good child to her, and not to bring her into trouble with his grace, who is indeed a very good lord to us in all matters but that one of compelling us to hear sermons and the like. My Lord Surrey mislikes all kinds of sermons, and loves Mr. Martin so well, that he stops his ears when Mr. Fox preaches on the dark midnight of papacy and the dawn of the gospel's restored light. And it angers him, as well it should, to hear him call his majesty King Philip of Spain, who is his own godfather, from whom he received

his name, a wicked popish tyrant and a son of Antichrist. My Lady Margaret, his sister, who is a year younger than himself, and has a most admirable beauty and excellent good nature, is vastly taken with what she hears from me of Catholic religion; but methinks this is partly by reason of her misliking Mr. Fulk and Mr. Clarke's long preachments, which we are compelled to hearken to; and their fashion of spending Sunday, which they do call the Sabbath-day, wherein we must needs keep silence, and when not in church sit still at home, which to one of her lively disposition is heavy penance. Methinks when Sunday comes we be all in disgrace; 'tis so like a day of correction. My Lord Surrey has more liberty; for Mr. Martin carries him and his brothers after service into the pleasant fields about Westminster Abbey and the village of Charing Cross, and suffers them to play at ball under the trees, so they do not quarrel amongst themselves. My Lord Henry Howard, his grace's brother, always maintains and defends the Catholic religion against his sister of Westmoreland; and he spoke to my uncles Leonard, Edward, and Francis, and likewise to my aunt Lady Montague, that they should write unto my grandmother touching his grace bringing us up as Protestants. But the Duke of Norfolk, Mrs. Fawcett says, is our guardian, and she apprehends he is resolved that we shall conform to the times, and that no liberty be allowed us for the exercise of Catholic religion."

At this part of the letter I stopped reading; and Edmund, turning to my father, who, though he before had perused it, was also listening, said: "And if this be liberty of conscience, which Protestants speak of, I see no great liberty and no great conscience in the matter."

His cheek flushed as he spoke, and there was a hoarseness in his voice which betokened the working of strong feelings within him. My father smiled with a sort of pitiful sadness, and answered:

"My good boy, when thou art somewhat further advanced in years, thou wilt learn that the two words thou art speaking of are such as men have abused the meaning of more than any others that can be thought of; and I pray to God they do not continue to do so as long as the world lasts. It seems to me that they mostly mean by 'liberty' a freedom to compel others to think and to act as they have themselves a mind to; and by 'conscience' the promptings of their own judgments moved by their own passions."

"But 'tis hard," Edmund said, "'tis at times very hard, Mr. Sherwood, to know whereunto conscience points, in the midst of so many inward clamors as are raised in the soul by conflicting passions of dutiful affection and filial reverence struggling for the mastery. Ay, and no visible token of God's will to make that darkness light. 'Tis that," he cried, more moved as he went on, "that makes me so often gaze upward. Would to God I might see a sign in the skies! for there are no sign-posts on life's path to guide us on our way to the heavenly Jerusalem, which our ministers speak of."

"If thou diligently seekest for sign-posts, my good boy," my father answered, "fear not but that he who said, 'Seek, and you shall find,' will furnish thee with them. He has not left himself without witnesses, or his religion to be groped after in hopeless darkness, so that men may not discern, even in these troublous times, where the truth lies, so they be in earnest in their search after it. But I will not urge thee by the cogency of arguments, or be drawn out of the reserve I have hitherto observed in these matters, which be nevertheless the mightiest that can be thought of as regards the soul's health."

And so, breaking off this discourse, he walked out upon the terrace; and I withdrew to the table, where my mother was sitting, and once more conned over the last pages of *my lady's* letter, which, when the reader hath read, he will perceive the writer's rank and her right to be thus titled.

"And now, Mistress Constance, I must needs inform you of a matter I would not leave you ignorant of, so that you should learn from strangers what so nearly concerns one whom you have a friendship to—and that is my betrothal with my Lord Surrey. The ceremony was public, inasmuch as was needful for the solemnising of a contract which is binding for life—'until death us do part,' as the marriage service hath it. How great a change this has wrought in my thoughts, none knows but myself; for though I be but twelve years of age (for his grace would have the ceremony to take place on my birthday), one year older than yourself, and so lately a child that not a very long time ago my grandmother would chastise me with her own hands for my faults, I now am wedded to my young lord, and by his grace and all the household titled Countess of Surrey! And I thank God to be no worse mated; for my lord, who is a few months younger than me, and a very child for frolicksome spirits and wild mirth, has, notwithstanding, so great a pleasantness of manners and so forward a wit, that one must needs have pleasure in his company; and I only wish I had more of it. Whilst we were only friends and playmates, I used to chide and withstand him, as one older and one more staid and discreet than himself; but, ah me! since we have been wedded, 'tis grand to hear him discourse on the duty of wives, and quote the Bible to show they must obey their husbands. He carries it in a very lordly fashion; and if I comply not at once with his commands, he cries out what he has heard at the play-house:

'Such duty as the subject owes the prince
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
And when she's froward, peevish sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?
I am ashamed that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace;
Or seek for rule, supremacy, or sway,
Where they are bound to serve, love, and obey.'

He has a most excellent memory. If he has but once heard out of any English or Latin book so much read as is contained in a leaf, he will forthwith perfectly repeat it. My Lord Henry, his uncle, for a trial, invented twenty long and difficult words a few days back, which he had never seen or heard before; yet did he recite them readily, every one in the same order as they were written, having only once read them over. But, touching that matter of

obedience, which I care not to gainsay, 'tis not easy at present to obey my lord my husband, and his grace his father, and Mistress Fawcett, too, who holds as strict a hand over the Countess of Surrey as over Mistress Ann Dacre; for the commands of these my rulers do not at all times accord: but I pray to God I may do my duty, and be a good wife to my lord; and I wish, as I said before, my grandmother had been here, and that I had been favored with her good counsel, and had had the benefit of shrift and spiritual advice ere I entered on this stage of my life, which is so new to me, who was but a child a few weeks ago, and am yet treated as such in more respects than one.

"My lord has told me a secret which Higford, his father's servant, let out to him; and 'tis something so weighty and of so great import, that since he left me my thoughts have been truants from my books, and Monsieur Sebastian, who comes to practice us on the lute, stopped his ears, and cried out that the Signora Contessa had no mercy on him, so to murder his compositions. 'Tis not the part of a true wife to reveal her husband's secrets, or else I would tell you, Mistress Constance, this great news, which I can with trouble keep to myself; and I shall not be easy till I have seen my lord again, which should be when we walk in the garden this evening; but I pray to God he may not be off instead to the Mall, to play at kittlepins; for then I have small chance to get speech with him to-day. Mr. Martin is my very good friend, and reminds the earl of his duty to his lady; but if my lord comes at his bidding, when he would be elsewhere than in my company, 'tis little contentment I have in his visits.

"'Tis yesterday I writ thus much, and now 'tis the day to send this letter; and I saw not my lord last night by reason of his grandfather my Lord Arundel sending to fetch me unto his house in the Strand. His goodness to me is so great, that nothing more can be desired; and his daughter my Lady Lumley is the greatest comfort I have in the world. She showed me a fair picture of my lord's mother, who died the day he was born, not then full seventeen years of age. She was of so amiable a disposition, so prudent, virtuous, and religious, that all who knew her could not but love and esteem her. And I read a letter which this sweet lady had written in Latin to her father on his birthday, to his great contentment, who had procured her to be well instructed in that language, as well as in her own and in all commendable learning. Then I played at primero with my Lord Arundel and my Lady Lumley and my uncle Francis. The knave of hearts was fixed upon for the quinola, and I won the flush. My uncle Francis cried the winning card should be titled Dudley. 'Not so,' quoth the earl; 'the knave that would match with the queen in the suit of hearts should never win the game.' And further talk ensued; from which I learnt that my Lord Arundel and the Duke of Norfolk mislike my Lord Leicester, and would not he should marry the queen; and my uncle laughed, and said, 'My lord, no good Englishman is there but must be of your lordship's mind, though none have so good reason as yourself to hinder so base a contract; for if my Lord of Leicester should climb unto her majesty's throne, beshrew me if he will not remember the box on the ear your lordship ministered to him some time since;' at which the earl laughed, too; but my Lady Lumley cried, 'I would to God my brother of Norfolk were rid of my Lord Leicester's friendship, which has, I much fear me, more danger in it than his enmity. God send he does not lead his grace into troubles greater than can well be thought of!' Alack, Mistress Constance, what uneasy times are these which we have fallen on! for methinks 'troubles' is the word in every one's mouth. As I was about to step into the chair at the hall-door at Arundel House, I heard one of my lord's guard say to another, 'I trust the white horse will be in quiet, and so we shall be out of trouble.' I have asked Mr. Martin what these words should mean; whereupon he told me the white horse, which indeed I might have known, was the Earl of Arundel's cognisance; and that the times were very troublesome, and plots were spoken of in the North anent the Queen of Scots, her majesty the queen's cousin, who is at Chatesworth; and when he said that, all of a sudden I grew red, and my cheeks burned like two hot coals; but he took no heed, and said, 'A true servant might well wish his master out of trouble, when troubles were so rife.' And now shame take me for taking up so much of your time, which should be spent in more profitable ways than the reading of my poor letters; and I must needs beg you to write soon, and hold me as long as I have held you, and love me, sweet one, as I love you. My Lady Margaret, who is in a sense twice my sister, says she is jealous of Mistress Constance Sherwood, and would steal away my heart from her; but, though she is a winsome and cunning thief in such matters, I warrant you she shall fail therein. And so, commending myself to your good prayers, I remain

"Your true friend and loving servant,
"ANN SURREY."

As I finished and was folding up my letter the clock struck nine. It was waning darker without by reason of a cloud which had obscured the moon. I heard my father still pacing up and down the gravel-walk, and ever and anon staying his footsteps awhile, as if watching. After a short space the moon shone out again, and I saw the shadows of two persons against the wall of the kitchen garden. Presently the hall-door was fastened and bolted, as I knew by the rattling of the chain which hung across it. Then my father looked in at the door and said, "'Tis time, goodwife, for young folks to be abed." Upon which my mother rose and made as if she was about to withdraw to her bed-chamber. Edmund followed us up stairs, and, wishing us both good-night, went into the closet where he slept. Then my mother, taking me by the hand, led me into my father's study.

CHAPTER III.

As I entered the library, which my father used for purposes of business as well as of study, I saw a gentleman who had often been at our house before, and whom I knew to be a priest, though he was dressed as a working-man of the better sort and had on a riding coat of coarse materials. He beckoned me to him, and I, kneeling, received his blessing.

"What, up yet, little one?" he said; "and yet thou must bestir thyself betimes to-morrow for prayers. These are not days in which priests may play the sluggard and be found abed when the sun rises."

"At what hour must you be on foot, reverend father?" my mother asked, as sitting down at a table by his side she filled his plate with whatever might tempt him to eat, the which he seemed little inclined to.

"Before dawn, good Mrs. Sherwood," he answered; "and across the fields into the forest before ever the laboring men are astir; and you know best when that is."

"An if it be so, which I fear it must," my father said, "we must e'en have the chapel ready by two o'clock. And, goodwife, you should presently get that wench to bed."

"Nay, good mother," I cried, and threw my arms round her waist, "prithee let me sit up to-night; I can lie abed all to-morrow." So wistfully and urgently did I plead, that she, who had grown of late somewhat loth to deny any request of mine, yielded to my entreaties, and only willed that I should lie down on a settle betwixt her chair and the chimney, in which a fagot was blazing, though it was summer-time, but the weather was chilly. I gazed by turns on my mother's pale face and my father's, which was thoughtful, and on the good priest's, who was in an easy-chair, wherein they had compelled him to sit, opposite to me on the other side of the chimney. He looked, as I remember him then, as if in body and in mind he had suffered more than he could almost bear.

After some discourse had been ministered betwixt him and my father of the journey he had been taking, and the friends he had seen since last he had visited our house, my mother said, in a tremulous voice, "And now, good Mr. Mush, an if it would not pain you too sorely, tell us if it be true that your dear daughter in Christ, Mrs. Clitherow, as indeed won the martyr's crown, as some letters from York reported to us a short time back?"

Upon this Mr. Mush raised his head, which had sunk on his breast, and said, "She that was my spiritual daughter in times past, and now, as I humbly hope, my glorious mother in heaven, the gracious martyr Mrs. Clitherow, has overcome all her enemies, and passed from this mortal life with rare and marvellous triumph into the peaceable city of God, there to receive a worthy crown of endless immortality and joy." His eye, that had been before heavy and dim, now shone with sudden light, and it seemed as if the cord about his heart was loosed, and his spirit found vent at last in words after a long and painful silence. More eloquent still was his countenance than his words as he exclaimed, "Torments overcame her not, nor the sweetness of life, nor her vehement affection for husband and children, nor the flattering allurements and deceitful promises of the persecutors. Finally, the world, the flesh, and the devil overcame her not. She, a woman, with invincible courage entered combat against them all, to defend the ancient faith, wherein both she and her enemies were baptized and gave their promise to God to keep the same until death. O sacred martyr!" and, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, the good father went on, "remember me, I beseech thee humbly, in thy perfect charity, whom thou hast left miserable behind thee, in time past thy unworthy father and now most unworthy servant, made ever joyful by thy virtuous life, and now lamenting thy death and thy absence, and yet rejoicing in thy glory."

A sob burst from my mother's breast, and she hid her face against my father's shoulder. There was a brief silence, during which many quickly-rising thoughts passed through my mind. Of Daniel in the lions' den, and the Machabees and the early Christians; and of the great store of blood which had been shed of late in this our country, and of which amongst the slain were truly martyrs, and which were not; of the vision in the sky which had been seen at Lichfield; and chiefly of that blessed woman Mrs. Clitherow, whose virtue and good works I had often before heard of, such as serving the poor and harboring priests, and loving God's Church with a wonderful affection greater than can be thought of. Then I heard my father say, "How was it at the last, good Mr. Mush?" I oped my eyes, and hung on the lips of the good priest even as if to devour his words as he gave utterance to them.

"She refused to be tried by the country," he answered, in a tremulous voice; "and so they murdered her."

"How so?" my mother asked, shading her eyes with her hand, as if to exclude the mental sight of that which she yet sought to know.

"They pressed her to death," he slowly uttered; "and the last words she was heard to say were 'Jesu, Jesu, Jesu! have mercy on me!' She was in dying about a quarter of an hour, and then her blessed spirit was released and took its flight to heaven. May we die the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like hers!"

Again my mother hid her face in my father's bosom, and methought she said not "Amen" to that prayer; but turning to Mr. Mush with a flushed cheek and troubled eye, she asked, "And why did the blessed Mrs. Clitherow refuse to be tried by the country, reverend father, and thereby subject herself to that lingering death?"

"These were her words when questioned and urged on that point," he answered, "which sufficiently clear her from all accusation of obstinacy or desperation, and combine the rare discretion and charity which were in her at all times: 'Alas!' quoth she, 'if I should have put myself on the country, evidence must needs have come against me touching my harboring of priests and the holy sacrifice of the mass in my house, which I know none could give but only my children and servants; and it would have been to me more grievous than a thousand deaths if I should have seen any of them brought forth before me, to give evidence against me in so good a cause and be guilty of my blood; and, secondly,' quoth she, 'I know well the country must needs have found me guilty to please the council, who so earnestly seek my blood, and then all they had been accessory to my death and damnably offended God. I therefore think, in the way of charity, for my part to hinder the country from such a sin; and seeing it must needs be done, to cause as few to do it as might be; and that was the judge himself.' So she thought, and thereupon she acted, with that single view to God's glory and the good of men's souls that was ever the passion of her fervent spirit."

"Her children?" my mother murmured in a faint voice, still hiding her face from him. "That little Agnes you used to tell us of, that was so dear to her poor mother, how has it fared with her?"

Mr. Mush answered, "Her *happy* mother sent her hose and shoes to her daughter at the last, signifying that she should serve God and follow her steps of virtue. She was committed to ward because she would not betray her mother, and there whipped and extremely used for that she would not go to the church and hear a sermon. When her mother was

murdered, the heretics came to her and said that unless she would go to the church, her mother should be put to death. The child, thinking to save the life of her who had given her birth, went to a sermon, and thus they deceived her."

"God forgive them!" my father ejaculated; and I, creeping to my mother's side, threw my arms about her neck, upon which she, caressing me, said:

"Now thou wilt be up to their deceits, Conny, if they should practice the same arts on thee."

"Mother," I cried, clinging to her, "I will go with thee to prison and to death; but to their church I will not go who love not our Blessed Lady."

"So help thee God!" my father cried, and laid his hand on my head.

"Take heart, good Mrs. Sherwood," Mr. Mush said to my mother, who was weeping; "God may spare you such trials as those which that sweet saint rejoiced in, or he can give you a like strength to hers. We have need in these times to bear in mind that comfortable saying of holy writ, 'As your day shall your strength be.'"

"'Tis strange," my father observed, "how these present troubles seem to awake the readiness, nay the wish, to suffer for truth's sake. It is like a new sense in a soul heretofore but too prone to eschew suffering of any sort: 'tis even as the keen breezes of our own Cannock Chase stimulate the frame to exertions which it would shrink from in the duller air of the Trent Valley."

"Ah! and is it even so with you, my friend?" exclaimed Mr. Mush. "From my heart I rejoice at it: such thoughts are oftentimes forerunners of God's call to a soul marked out for his special service."

My mother, against whom I was leaning since mention had been made of Mrs. Clitherow's daughter, began to tremble; and rising said she would go to the chapel to prepare for confession. Taking me by the hand, she mounted the stairs to the room which was used as such since the ancient faith had been proscribed. One by one that night we knelt at the feet of the good shepherd, who, like his Lord, was ready to lay down his life for his sheep, and were shriven. Then, at two of the clock, mass was said, and my parents and most of our servants received, and likewise some neighbors to whom notice had been sent in secret of Mr. Mush's coming. When my mother returned from the altar to her seat, I marvelled at the change in her countenance. She who had been so troubled before the coming of the Heavenly Guest into her breast, wore now so serene and joyful an aspect, that the looking upon her at that time wrought in me a new and comfortable sense of the greatness of that divine sacrament. I found not the thought of death frighten me then; for albeit on that night I for the first time fully arrived at the knowledge of the peril and jeopardy in which the Catholics of this land do live; nevertheless this knowledge awoke in me more exultation than fear. I had seen precautions used, and reserves maintained, of which I now perceived the cause. For some time past my parents had prepared the way for this no-longer-to-be-deferred enlightenment. The small account they had taught me to make of the wealth and comforts of this perishable world, and the histories they had recounted to me of the sufferings of Christians in the early times of the Church, had been directed unto this end. They had, as it were, laid the wood on the altar of my heart, which they prayed might one day burn into a flame. And now when, by reason of the discourse I had heard touching Mrs. Clitherow's blessed but painful end for harboring of priests in her house, and the presence of one under our roof, I took heed that the danger had come nigh unto our own doors, my heart seemed to beat with a singular joy. Childhood sets no great store on life: the passage from this world to the next is not terrible to such as have had no shadows cast on their paths by their own or others' sins. Heaven is not a far-off region to the pure in heart; but rather a home, where God, as St. Thomas sings,

"Vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria."

But, ah me! how transient are the lights and shades which flit across the childish mind! and how mutable the temper of youth, never long impressed by any event, however grave! Not many days after Mr. Mush's visit to our house, another letter from the Countess of Surrey came into my hand, and drove from my thoughts for the time all but the matters therein disclosed.

"SWEET MISTRESS CONSTANCE"

(my lady wrote),—"In my last letter I made mention, in an obscure fashion, of a secret which my lord had told me touching a matter of great weight which Higford, his grace's steward, had let out to him; and now that the whole world is speaking of what was then in hand, and that troubles have come of it, I must needs relieve my mind by writing thereof to her who is the best friend I have in the world, if I may judge by the virtuous counsel and loving words her letters do contain. 'Tis like you have heard somewhat of that same matter, Mistress Constance; for much talk has been ministered anent it since I wrote, amongst people of all sorts, and with various intents to the hindering or the promoting thereof. I mean touching the marriage of his grace the Duke of Norfolk with the Queen of Scots, which is much desired by some, and very little wished for by others. My lord, as is reasonable in one of his years and of so noble a spirit, and his sister, who is in all things the counterpart of her brother, have set their hearts thereon since the first inkling they had of it; for this queen had so noted a fame for her excellent beauty and sweet disposition that it has wrought in them an extraordinary passionate desire to title her mother, and to see their father so nobly mated, though not more than he deserves; for, as my lord says, his grace's estate in England is worth little less than the whole realm of Scotland, in the ill state to which the wars have reduced it; and when he is in his own tennis-court at Norwich, he thinks himself as great as a king.

"As a good wife, I should wish as my lord does; and indeed this marriage, Mistress Constance, would please me well; for the Queen of Scots is Catholic, and methinks if his grace were to wed her, there might arise some good out of it to such as are dependent on his grace touching matters of religion; and since Mr. Martin has gone beyond seas, 'tis very little I hear in this house but what is contrary to the teaching I had at my grandmother's. My lord saith this queen's troubles will be ended if she doth marry his grace, for so Higford has told him; but

when I spoke thereof to my Lady Lumley, she prayed God his grace's might not then begin, but charged me to be silent thereon before my Lord Arundel, who has greatly set his heart on this match. She said words were in every one's mouth concerning this marriage which should never have been spoken of but amongst a few. 'Nan,' quoth she, 'if Phil and thou do let your children's tongues wag anent a matter which may well be one of life and death, more harm may come of it than can well be thought of.' So pritheee, Mistress Constance, do you be silent as the grave on what I have herein written, if so be you have not heard of it but from me. My lord had a quarrel with my Lord Essex, who is about his own age, anent the Queen of Scots, a few days since, when he came to spend his birthday with him; for my lord was twelve years old last week, and I gave him a fair jewel to set in his cap, for a love-token and for remembrance. My lord said that the Queen of Scots was a lady of so great virtue and beauty that none else could be compared with her; upon which my lord of Essex cried it was high treason to the queen's majesty to say so, and that if her grace held so long a time in prison one who was her near kinswoman, it was by reason of her having murdered her husband and fomented rebellion in this kingdom of England, for the which she did deserve to be extremely used. My lord was very wroth at this, and swore he was no traitor, and that the Queen of Scots was no murderess, and he would lay down his head on the block rather than suffer any should style her such; upon which my lord of Essex asked, 'Prithee, my Lord Surrey, were you at Thornham last week when the queen's majesty was on a visit to your grandfather, my Lord Arundel?' 'No,' cried my lord, 'your lordship being there yourself in my Lord Leicester's suite, must needs have noticed I was absent; for if I had been present, methinks 'tis I and not your lordship would have waited behind her majesty's chair at table and held a napkin to her.' 'And if you had, my lord,' quoth my Lord Essex, waxing hot in his speech, 'you would have noticed how her grace's majesty gave a nip to his grace your father, who was sitting by her side, and said she would have him take heed on what pillow he rested his head.' 'And I would have you take heed,' cries my lord, 'how you suffer your tongue to wag in an unseemly manner anent her grace's majesty and his grace my father and the Queen of Scots, who is kinswoman to both, and even now a prisoner, which should make men careful how they speak of her who cannot speak in her own cause; for it is a very inhuman part, my lord, to tread on such as misfortune has cast down.' There was a nobleness in these words such as I have often taken note of in my lord, though so young, and which his playmate yielded to; so that nothing more was said at that time anent those matters, which indeed do seem too weighty to be discoursed upon by young folks. But I have thought since on the lines which 'tis said the queen's majesty wrote when she was herself a prisoner, which begin,

'O Fortune! how thy restless, wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit;
Witness this present prison, whither fate
Could bear me, and the joys I quit!—

and wondered she should have no greater pity on those in the same plight, as so many be at this time. Ah me! I would not keep a bird in a cage an I could help it, and 'tis sad men are not more tender of such as are of a like nature with themselves!

"My lord was away some days after this at Oxford, whither he had been carried to be present at the queen's visit, and at the play of *Palamon and Arcite*, which her majesty heard in the common hall of Christ's Church. One evening, as my lady Margaret and I (like two twin cherries on one stalk, my lord would say, for he is mightily taken with the stage-plays he doth hear, and hath a trick of framing his speech from them) were sitting at the window near unto the garden practising our lutes and singing madrigals, he surprised us with his sweet company, in which I find an ever increasing content, and cried out as he approached, 'Ladies, I hold this sentence of the poet as a canon of my creed, that whom God loveth not, they love not music.' And then he said that albeit Italian was a very harmonious and sweet language which pleasantly tickleth the ear, he for his part loved English best, even in singing. Upon which, finding him in the humor for discreet and sensible conversation, which, albeit he hath good parts and a ready wit, is not always the case, by reason of his being, as boys mostly are, prone to wagging, I took occasion to relate what I had heard my Lord of Arundel say touching his visit to the court of Brussels, when the Duchess of Parma invited him to a banquet to meet the Prince of Orange and most of the chief courtiers. The discourse was carried on in French; but my lord, albeit he could speak well in that language, nevertheless made use of an interpreter. At the which the Prince of Orange expressed his surprise to Sir John Wilson, who was present, that an English nobleman of so great birth and breeding should be ignorant of the French tongue, which the earl presently hearing, said, 'Tell the prince that I like to speak in that language in which I can best utter my mind and not mistake.' And I perceive, my lord,' I said, 'that you are of a like mind with his lordship, and no lover of new-fangled and curious terms.'

"Upon which my dear earl laughed, and related unto us how the queen had been pleased to take notice of him at Oxford, and spoke merrily to him of his marriage. 'And pritheee, Phil, what were her highness's words?' quoth his prying sister, like a true daughter of Eve. At which my lord stroked his chin, as if to smooth his beard which is still to come, and said her majesty had cried, 'God's pity, child, thou wilt tire of thy wife afore you have both left the nursery.' 'Alack,' cried Meg, 'if any but her highness had said it, thy hand would have been on thy sword, brother, and I'll warrant thou didst turn as red as a turkey-cock, when her majesty thus titled thee a baby. Nay, do not frown, but be a good lord to us, and tell Nan and me if the queen said aught else.' Then my lord cleared his brow, and related how in the hunting scene in the play, when the cry of the hounds was heard outside the stage, which was excellently well imitated, some scholars who were seated near him, and he must confess himself also, did shout, 'There, there—he's caught, he's caught!' upon which her grace's majesty laughed, and merrily cried out from her box, 'Those boys in very troth are ready to leap out of the windows!' 'And had you such pleasant sports each day, brother?' quoth our Meg. 'No, by my troth,' my lord answered; 'the more's the pity; for the next day there was a disputation held in physic and divinity from two to seven; and Dr. Westphaling held forth at so great length that her majesty sent word to him to end his discourse without delay, to the great relief and comfort of all present. But he would not give over, lest, having committed all to memory, he should forget the rest if he omitted any part of it, and be brought to shame before the university and the court.' 'What said her highness when she saw he heeded not her commands?' Meg asked. 'She was angered at first,' quoth my lord, 'that he durst go on with his discourse when she had sent him word presently to stop, whereby she had herself been prevented from

speaking, which the Spanish Ambassador had asked her to do; but when she heard the reason it moved her to laughter, and she titled him a parrot.'

"And spoke not her majesty at all?" I asked; and my lord said, 'She would not have been a woman, Nan, an she had held her tongue after being once resolved to use it. She made the next day an oration in Latin, and stopped in the midst to bid my Lord Burleigh be seated, and not to stand painfully on his gouty feet. Beshrew me, but I think she did it to show the poor dean how much better her memory served her than his had done, for she looked round to where he was standing ere she resumed her discourse. And now, Meg, clear thy throat and tune thy pipe, for not another word will I speak till thou hast sung that ditty good Mr. Martin set to music for thee.' I have set it down here, Mistress Constance, with the notes as she sung it, that you may sing it also; and not like it the less that my quaint fancy pictures the maiden the poet sings of, in her 'frock of frolic green,' like unto my sweet friend who dwells not far from one of the fair rivers therein named.

A knight, as antique stories tell,
A daughter had named Dawsabel,
A maiden fair and free;
She wore a frock of frolic green,
Might well become a maiden queen,
Which seemly was to see.

The silk well could she twist and twine,
And make the fine March pine,
And with the needle work;
And she could help the priest to say
His matins on a holy day,
And sing a psalm in kirk.

Her features all as fresh above
As is the grass that grows by Dove,
And lythe as lass of Kent;
Her skin as soft as Leinster wool,
And white as snow on Penhisk Hull,
Or swan that swims on Trent.

This maiden on a morn betime
Goes forth when May is in its prime,
To get sweet setywall,
The honeysuckle, the hurlock,
The lily and the lady-smock,
To deck her father's hall.

"Ah," cried my lord, when Meg had ended her song, beshrew me, if Monsieur Sebastian's madrigals are one-half so dainty as this English piece of harmony.' And then,—for his lordship's head is at present running on pageants such as he witnessed at Nonsuch and at Oxford,—he would have me call into the garden Madge and Bess, whilst he fetched his brothers to take part in a May game, not indeed in season now, but which, he says, is too good sport not to be followed all the year round. So he must needs dress himself as Robin Hood, with a wreath on his head and a sheaf of arrows in his girdle, and me as Maid Marian; and Meg, for that she is taller by an inch than any of us, though younger than him and me, he said should play Little John, and Bess Friar Tuck, for that she looks so gleesome and has a face so red and round. 'And Tom,' he cried, 'thou needst not be at pains to change thy name, for we will dub thee Tom the piper.' 'And what is Will to be?' asked my Lady Bess, who, since I be titled Countess of Surrey, must needs be styled My Lady William Howard.' 'Why, there's only the fool left,' quoth my lord, 'for thy sweetheart to play, Bess.' At the which her ladyship and his lordship too began to stamp and cry, and would have sobbed outright, but sweet Madge, whose face waxes so white and her eyes so large and blue that methinks she is more like to an angel than a child, put out her little thin hands with a pretty gesture, and said, 'I'll be the fool, brother Surrey, and Will shall be the dragon, and Bess ride the hobby-horse, an it will please her.' 'Nay, but she is Friar Tuck,' quoth my lord, 'and should not ride.' 'And pritheer wherefore no?' cried the forward imp, who, now she no more fears her grandam's rod, has grown very saucy and bold; 'why should not the good friar ride, an it doth pleasure him?'

"At the which we laughed and fell to acting our parts with no little merriment and noise, and sundry reprehensions from my lord when we mistook our postures or the lines he would have us to recite. And at the end he set up a pole on the grass-plat for the Maying, and we danced and sung around it to a merry tune, which set our feet flying in time with the music:

Now in the month of maying,
When the merry lads are playing,
Fa, la, la.

Each with his bonny lasse,
Upon the greeny grasse,
Fa, la, la.

Madge was not strong enough to dance, but she stole away to gather white and blue violets, and made a fair garland to set on my head, to my lord's great content, and would have me unloose my hair on my shoulders, which fell nearly to my feet, and waved in the wind in a wild fashion; which he said was beseeming for a bold outlaw's

bride, and what he had seen in the Maid Marian, who had played in the pageant at Nonsuch. Mrs. Fawcett misdoubted that this sport of ours should be approved by Mr. Charke, who calls all stage-playing Satan's recreations, and a sure road unto hell; and that we shall hear on it in his next preachment; for he has held forth to her at length on that same point, and upbraided her for that she did suffer such foolish and profane pastimes to be carried on in his grace's house. Ah me! I see no harm in it; and if, when my lord visits me, I play not with him as he chooses, 'tis not a thing to be expected that he will come only to sing psalms or play chess, which Mr. Charke holds to be the only game it befits Christians to entertain themselves with. 'Tis hard to know what is right and wrong when persons be of such different minds, and no ghostly adviser to be had, such as I was used to at my grandmother's house.

"All, Mistress Constance! when I last wrote unto you I said troubles was the word in every one's mouth, and ere I had finished this letter—which I was then writing, and have kept by me ever since—what, think you, has befallen us? 'Tis anent the marriage of his grace with the Queen of Scots; which I now do wish it had pleased God none had ever thought of. Some weeks since my lord had told me, with great glee, that the Spanish ambassador was about to petition her majesty the queen for the release of her highness's cousin; and Higford and Bannister, and the rest of his grace's household—whom, since Mr. Martin went beyond seas, my lord spends much of his time with, and more of it methinks than is beseeming or to the profit of his manners and advancement of his behavior—have told him that this would prepare the way for the greatly-to-be-desired end of his grace's marriage with that queen; and my lord was reckoning up all the fine sports and pageants and noble entertainments would be enacted at Kenninghall and Thetford when that right princely wedding should take place; and how he should himself carry the train of the queen-duchess when she went into church; who was the fairest woman, he said, in the whole world, and none ever seen to be compared with her since the days of Grecian Helen. But when, some days ago, I questioned my lord touching the success of the ambassador's suits, and the queen's answer thereto, he said: 'By my troth, Nan, I understand that her highness sent away the gooseman, for so she entitled Senor Guzman, with a flea in his ear; for she said he had come on a fool's errand, and gave him for her answer that she would advise the Queen of Scots to bear her condition with less impatience, or she might chance to find some of those on whom she relied shorter by a head.' Oh, my lord, I cried; 'my dear Phil! God send she was not speaking of his grace your father!' 'Nan,' quoth he, 'she looked at his grace the next day with looks of so great anger and disdain, that my lord of Leicester—that false and villainous knave—gave signs of so great triumph as if his grace was even on his way to the Tower. Beshrew me, if I would not run my rapier through his body if I could!' 'And where is his grace at present?' I asked. 'He came to town night,' quoth my lord, 'with my Arundel, and this morning went Kenninghall.' After this for some days I heard no more, for a new tutor came to my lord, who suffers him not to stay in the waiting-room with his grace's gentlemen, and keeps so strict a hand over him touching his studies, that in his brief hours of recreation he would rather play at quoits, and other active pastimes, than converse with his lady. Alack! I wish he were a few years older, and I should have more comfort of him than now, when I must needs put up with his humors, which be as changeful, by reason of his great youth, as the lights and shades on the grass 'neath an aspen-tree. I must be throwing a ball for hours, or learning a stage-part, when I would fain speak of the weighty matters which be on hand, such as I have told you of. Howsoever, as good luck would have it, my Lady Lumley sent for me to spend the day with her; and from her ladyship I learnt that his grace had written to the queen that he had withdrawn from the court because of the pain he felt at her displeasure, and his mortification at the treatment he had been subjected to by the insolence of his foes, by whom he has been made a common table talk; and that her majesty had laid upon him her commands straightway to return to court. That was all was known that day; but at the very time that I was writing the first of these woeful tidings to you, Mistress Constance, his grace—whom I now know that I do love dearly, and with a true daughter's heart, by the dreadful fear and pain I am in—was arrested at Burnham, where he had stopped on his road to Windsor, and committed to the Tower. Alack! alack! what will follow? I will leave this my letter open until I have further news to send.

"His grace was examined this day before my Lord-keeper Bacon, and my Lords Northampton, Sadler, Bedford, and Cecil; and they have reported to her majesty that the duke had not put himself under penalty of the law by any overt act of treason, and that it would be difficult to convict him without this. My Lord of Arundel, at whose house I was when these tidings came, said her majesty was so angered at this judgment, that she cried out in a passion, 'Away! what the law fails to do my authority shall effect;' and straightway fell into a fit, her passion was so great; and they were forced to apply vinegar to restore her. I had a wicked thought come into my mind, Mistress Constance, that I should not have been concerned if the queen's majesty had died in that fit, which I befear me was high treason, and a mortal sin, to wish for one to die in a state of sin. But, alack! since I have left going to shrift I find it hard to fight against bad thoughts and naughty tempers; and when I say my prayers, and the old words come to my lips, which the preachments I hear do contradict, I am sometimes well-nigh tempted to give over praying at all. But I pray to God I may never be so wicked; and though I may not have my beads (which were taken from me), that the good Bishop of Durham gave me when I was confirmed, I use my fingers in their stead; and whilst his grace was at the Tower I did say as many 'Hail Maries' in one day as I ever did in my life before; and promised him, who is God's own dear Son and hers, if his grace came out of prison, never to be a day of my life without saying a prayer, or giving an alms, or doing a good turn to those which be in the same case, near at hand or throughout the world; and I ween there are many such of all sorts at this time.

"Your loving servant to command, whose heart is at present heavier than her pen,
"ANN SURREY."

"P. S. My Lord of Westmoreland has left London, and his lady is in a sad plight. I hear such things said on all sides touching Papists as I can scarce credit, and I pray to God they be not true. But an if they be so bad as some do say, why does his grace run his head into danger for the sake of the Popish queen, as men do style her? They have arrested Higford and Bannister last night, and they are to taste of the rack to-day, to satisfy the queen, who is so urgent on it. My lord is greatly concerned thereat, and cried when he spoke of it, albeit he tried to hide his tears. I asked him to show me what sort of pain it was; whereupon he twisted my arm till I cried out and bade him desist. God help me! I could not have endured the pain an instant longer; and if they have naught to tell anent

these plots and against his grace, they needs must speak what is false when under the rack. Oh, 'tis terrible to think what men do suffer and cause others to suffer!"

This letter came into my hand on a day when my father had gone into Lichfield touching some business; and he brought with it the news of a rising in the north, and that his Grace of Northumberland and my Lord of Westmoreland had taken arms on hearing of the Duke of Norfolk's arrest; and the Catholics, under Mr. Richard Norton and Lord Latimer, had joined their standard, and were bearing the cross before the insurgents. My father was sore cast down at these tidings; for he looked for no good from what was rebellion against a lawful sovereign, and a consorting with troublesome spirits, swayed by no love of our holy religion but rather contrary to it, as my Lord of Westmoreland and some others of those leading lords. And he hence foreboded fresh trials to all such as were of the ancient faith all over England; which was not long in accruing even in our own case; for a short time after, we were for the first time visited by pursuivants, on a day and in such a manner as I will now briefly relate.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Sunday morning which followed the day on which the news had reached us of the rising in Northumberland, I went, as was my wont, into my mother's dressing-room, to crave her blessing, and I asked of her if the priest who came to say mass for us most Sundays had arrived. She said he had been, and had gone away again, and that she greatly feared we should have no prayers that day, saving such as we might offer up for ourselves; "together," she added after a pause, "with a bitter sacrifice of tears and of such sufferings as we have heard of, but as yet not known the taste of ourselves."

Again I felt in my heart a throbbing feeling, which had in it an admixture of pain and joy—made up, I ween, of conflicting passions—such as curiosity feeding on the presentment of an approaching change; of the motions of grace in a soul which faintly discerns the happiness of suffering for conscience sake; and the fear of suffering natural to the human heart.

"Why are we to have no mass, sweet mother?" I asked, encircling her waist in my arms; "and wherefore has good Mr. Bryan gone away?"

"We received advice late last evening," she answered, "that the queen's pursuivants have orders to search this day the houses of the most noted recusants in this neighborhood; and 'tis likely they may begin with us, who have never made a secret of our faith, and never will."

"And will they kill us if they come?" I asked, with that same trembling eagerness I have so often known since when danger was at hand.

"Not now, not to-day, Conny," she answered; "but I pray to God they do not carry us away to prison; for since this rising in the north, to be a Catholic and a traitor is one and the same in their eyes who have to judge us. We must needs hide our books and church furniture; so give me thy beads, sweet one, and the cross from thy neck."

I waxed red when my mother bade me unloose the string, and tightly clasped the cross in both my hands "Let them kill me, mother," I cried; "but take not off my cross."

"Maybe," she said, "the queen's officers would trample on it, and injure their own souls in dishonoring a holy symbol." And as she spoke she took it from me, and hid it in a recess behind the chimney; which no sooner was done, than we heard a sound of horses' feet in the approach; and going to the window, I cried out, "Here is a store of armed men on horseback!" Ere I had uttered the words, one of them had dismounted and loudly knocked at the door with his truncheon; upon which my mother, taking me by the hand, went down stairs into the parlor where my father was. It seemed as if those knocks had struck on her heart, so great a trembling came over her. My father bade the servants throw open the door; and the sheriff came in, with two pursuivants and some more men with him, and produced a warrant to search the house; which my father having read, he bowed his head, and gave orders not to hinder them in their duty. He stood himself the while in the hall, his face as white as a smock, and his teeth almost running through his lips.

One of the men came into the library, and pulling down the books, scattered them on the floor, and cried:

"Look ye here, sirs, what Popish stuff is this, fit for the hangman's burning!" At the which another answered:

"By my troth, Sam, I misdoubt that thou canst read. Methinks thou dost hunt Popery as dogs do game, by the scent. Prithee spell me the title of this volume."

"I will have none of thy gibing, Master Sevenoaks," returned the other. "Whether I be a scholar or not, I'll warrant no honest gospeller wrote on those yellow musty leaves, which be two hundred years old, if they be a day."

"And I'll warrant thee in that credence, Master Samuel, by the same token that the volume in thy hand is a treatise on field-sports, writ in the days of Master Caxton; a code of the laws to be observed in the hunting and killing of deer, which I take to be no Popish sport, for our most gracious queen—God save her majesty!—slew a fat buck not long ago in Windsor Forest with her own hand, and remembered his grace of Canterbury with half her prey;" and so saying, he drew his comrade from the room; I ween with the intent to save the books from his rough handling, for he seemed of a more gentle nature than the rest and of a more moderate disposition.

When they had ransacked all the rooms below, they went upstairs, and my father followed. Breaking from my mother's

side, who sat pale and still as a statue, unable to move from her seat, I ran after him, and on the landing-place I heard the sheriff say somewhat touching the harboring of priests; to the which he made answer that he was ready to swear there was no priest in the house. "Nor has been?" quoth the sheriff; upon which my father said:

"Good sir, this house was built in the days of Her majesty's grandfather, King Henry VII.; and on one occasion his majesty was pleased to rest under my grandfather's roof, and to hear mass in that room," he said, pointing to what was now the chapel, "the church being too distant for his majesty's convenience: so priests have been within these walls many times ere I was born."

The sheriff said no more at that time, but went into the room, where there were only a few chairs, for that in the night the altar and all that appertained to it had been removed. He and his men were going out again, when a loud knocking was heard against the wall on one side of the chamber; at the sound of which my father's face, which was white before, became of an ashy paleness.

"Ah!" cried one of the pursuivants, "the lying Papist! The egregious Roman! an oath is in his mouth that he has no priest in his house, and here is one hidden in his cupboard."

"Mr. Sherwood!" the sheriff shouted, greatly moved, "lead the way to the hiding-place wherein a traitor is concealed, or I order the house to be pulled down about your ears."

My father was standing like one stunned by a sudden blow, and I heard him murmur, "'Tis the devil's own doing, or else I am stark, staring mad."

The men ran to the wall, and knocked against it with their sticks, crying out in an outrageous manner to the priest to come out of his hole. "We'll unearth the Jesuit fox," cried one; "we'll give him a better lodging in Lichfield gaol," shouted another; and the sheriff kept threatening to set fire to the house. Still the knocking from within went on, as if answering that outside, and then a voice cried out, "I cannot open: I am shut in."

"'Tis Edmund!" I exclaimed; "'tis Edmund is in the hiding-place." And then the words were distinctly heard, "'Tis I; 'tis Edmund Genings. For God's sake, open; I am shut in." Upon which my father drew a deep breath, and hastening forward, pressed his finger on a place in the wall, the panel slipped, and Edmund came out of the recess, looking scared and confused. The pursuivants seized him; but the sheriff cried out, surprised, "God's death, sirs! but 'tis the son of the worshipful Mr. Genings, whose lady is a mother in Israel, and M. Jean de Luc's first cousin! And how came ye, Mr. Edmund, to be concealed in this Popish den? Have these recusants imprisoned you with some foul intent, or perverted you by their vile cunning?" Edmund was addressing my father in an agitated voice.

"I fear me, sir," he cried, clasping his hands, "I befeare me much I have affrighted you, and I have been myself sorely affrighted. I was passing through this room, which I have never before seen, and the door of which was open this morn. By chance I drew my hand along the wall, where there was no apparent mark, when the panel slipped and disclosed this recess, into which I stepped, and straightway the opening closed and I remained in darkness. I was afraid no one might hear me, and I should die of hunger."

My father tried to smile, but could not. "Thank God," he said, "'tis no worse;" and sinking down on a chair he remained silent, whilst the sheriff and the pursuivants examined the recess, which was deep and narrow, and in which they brandished their swords in all directions. Then they went round the room, feeling the walls; but though there was another recess with a similar mode of aperture, they hit not on it, doubtless through God's mercy; for in it were concealed the altar furniture and our books, with many other things besides, which they would have seized on.

Before going away, the sheriff questioned Edmund concerning his faith, and for what reason he abode in a Popish house and consorted with recusants. Edmund answered he was no Papist, but a kinsman of Mrs. Sherwood, unto whose house his father had oftentimes sent him. Upon which he was counselled to take heed unto himself and to eschew evil company, which leads to horrible defections, and into the straight road to perdition. Whereupon they departed; and the officer who had enticed his companion from the library smiled as he passed me, and said:

"And wherefore not at prayers, little mistress, on the Lord's day, as all Christian folks should be?"

I woen he was curious to see how I should answer, albeit not moved thereunto by any malicious intent. But at the time I did not bethink myself that he spoke of Protestant service; and being angered at what passed, I said:

"Because we be kept from prayers by the least welcome visit ever made to Christian folks on a Lord's morning." He laughed and cried:

"Thou hast a ready tongue, young mistress; and when tried for recusancy I warrant thou'lt give the judge a piece of thy mind."

"And if I ever be in such a presence, and for such a cause," I answered, "I pray to God I may say to my lord on the bench what the blessed apostle St. Peter spoke to his judges: 'If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye.'" At which he cried:

"Why, here is a marvel indeed—a Papist to quote Scripture!" And laughing again, he went his way; and the house was for that time rid of these troublesome guests.

Then Edmund again sued for pardon to my father, that through his rash conduct he had been the occasion of so great fear and trouble to him.

"I warrant thee, my good boy," quoth my father, "thou didst cause me the most keen anguish, and the most sudden relief from it, which can well be thought of; and so no more need be said thereon. And as thou must needs be going to

the public church, 'tis time that thou bestir thyself; for 'tis a long walk there and back, and the sun waxing hot."

When Edmund was gone, and I alone with him, my father clasped me in his arms, and cried:

"God send, my wench, thou mayest justify thy sponsors who gave thee thy name in baptism; for 'tis a rare constancy these times do call for, and such as is not often seen, saving in such as be of a noble and religious spirit; which I pray to God may be the case with thee."

My mother did not speak, but went away with her hand pressed against her heart; which was what of late I had often seen her to do, as if the pain was more than she could bear.

One hour later, as I was crossing the court, a man met me suited as a farmer; who, when I passed him, laid his hand on my shoulder; at the which I started, and turning round saw it was Father Bryan; who, smiling as I caught his hand, cried out:

"Dost know the shepherd in his wolf's clothing, little mistress?" and hastening on to the chapel he said mass, at the which only a few assisted, as my parents durst not send to the Catholics so late in the day. As soon as mass was over, Mr. Bryan said he must leave, for there was a warrant issued for his apprehension; and our house famed for recusancy, so as he might not stay in it but with great peril to himself and to its owners. We stood at the door as he was mounting his horse, and my father said, patting its neck:

"'Tis a faithful servant this, reverend father; many a mile he has carried thee to the homes of the sick and dying since our troubles began."

"Ah! good Mr. Sherwood," Mr. Bryan replied, as he gathered up the bridle, "thou hast indeed warrant to style the poor beast faithful. If I were to shut my eyes and let him go, no doubt but he would find his way to the doors of such as cleave to the ancient faith, in city or in hamlet, across moor or through thick wood. If a pursuivant bestrode him, he might discover through his means who be recusants a hundred miles around. But I bethink me he would not budge with such a burthen on his back; and that he who made the prophet's ass to speak, would, give the good beast more sense than to turn informer, and to carry the wolf to the folds of the lambs. And prithee, Mistress Constance," said the good priest, turning to me, "canst keep a secret and be silent, when men's lives are in jeopardy?"

"Aye," cried my father quickly, "'tis as much as worthy Mr. Bryan's life is worth that none should know he was here to-day."

"More than my poor life is worth," he rejoined; "that were little to think of, my good friends. For five years I have made it my prayer that the day may soon come—and I care not how soon—when I may lay it down for his sake who gave it. But we must e'en have a care for those who are so rash as to harbor priests in these evil times. So Mistress Constance must e'en study the virtue of silence, and con the meaning of the proverb which teacheth discretion to be the best part of valor."

"If Edmund Genings asketh me, reverend father, if I have heard mass to-day, what must I answer?"

"Say the queen's majesty has forbidden mass to be said in this her kingdom; and if he presseth thee more closely thereon, why then tell him the last news from the poultry-yard, and that the hares have eat thy mignonette; which they be doing even now, if my eyes deceive me not," said the good father, pointing with his whip to the flower-garden.

So, smiling, he gave us a last blessing, and rode on toward the Chase, and I went to drive the hares away from the flower-beds, and then to set the chapel in fair order. And ever and anon, that day and the next, I took out of my pocket my sweet Lady Surrey's last letter, and pictured to myself all the scenes therein related; so that I seemed to live one-half of my life with her in thought, so greatly was my fancy set upon her, and my heart concerned in her troubles.

CHAPTER V.

Not many days after the sheriff and the pursuivants had been at our house, and Mr. Bryan, by reason of the bloody laws which had been enacted against Papists and such as harbor priests, had left us,— though intending to return at such times as might serve our commodity, and yet not affect our safety,—I was one morning assisting my mother in the store-room, wherein she was setting aside such provisions as were to be distributed to the poor that week, together with salves, medicines, and the like, which she also gave out of charity, when a spasm came over her, so vehement and painful, that for the moment she lost the use of speech, and made signs to me to call for help. I ran affrighted into the library for my father, and brought him to her, upon which, in a little time, she did somewhat recover, but desired he would assist her to her own chamber, whither she went leaning on his arm. When laid on her bed she seemed easier; and smiling, bade me leave them for awhile, for that she desired to have speech with my father alone.

For the space of an hour I walked in the garden, with so oppressive a grief at my heart as I had never before experienced. Methinks the great stillness in the air added thereunto some sort of physical disorder; for the weather was very close and heavy; and if a leaf did but stir, I started as if danger was at hand; and the noise of the chattering pies over my head worked in me an apprehensive melancholy, foreboding, I doubt not, what was to follow. At about eleven o'clock, hearing the sound of a horse's feet in the avenue, I turned round, and saw Edmund riding from the house; upon which I ran across the grass to a turning of the road where he would pass, and called to him to stop, which he did; and told me he was going to Lichfield for his father, whom my mother desired presently to see. "Then thou shouldst not tarry," I said; and he pushed on and left me standing where I was; but the bell then ringing for dinner, I went back to the house, and, in so doing, took notice of a bay-tree on the lawn which was withered and dried-up, though the gardener

had been at pains to preserve it by sundry appliances and frequent watering of it. Then it came to my remembrance what my nurse used to say, that the dying of that sort of tree is a sure omen of a death in a family; which thought sorely disturbed me at that time. I sat down with my father to a brief and silent meal; and soon after the physician he had sent for came, whom he conducted to my mother's chamber, whereunto I did follow, and slipped in unperceived. Sitting on one side of the bed, behind the curtains, I heard her say, in a voice which sounded hollow and weak, "Good Master Lawrenson, my dear husband was fain to send for you, and I cared not to withstand him, albeit persuaded that I am hastening to my journey's end, and that naught that you or any other man may prescribe may stay what is God's will. And if this be visible to you as it is to me, I pray you keep it not from me, for it will be to my much comfort to be assured of it."

When she had done speaking, he did feel her pulse; and the while my heart beat so quick and, as it seemed to me, so loud as if it must needs impede my hearing; but in a moment I heard him say: "God defend, good madam, I should deceive you. While there is life, there is hope. Greater comfort I dare not urge. If there be any temporal matter on your mind, 'twere better settled now, and likewise of your soul's health, by such pious exercises as are used by those of your way of thinking."

At the hearing of these his words, my father fetched a deep sigh; but she, as one greatly relieved, clasped her hands together, and cried, "My God, I thank thee!"

Then, stealing from behind the curtain, I laid my head on the pillow nigh unto hers, and whispered, "Sweet mother, prithee do not die, or else take me with thee."

But she, as one not heeding, exclaimed, with her hands uplifted, "O faithless heart! O selfish heart! to be so glad of death!"

The physician was directing the maids what they should do for her relief when the pain came on, and he himself stood compounding some medicine for her to take. My father asked of him when he next would come; and he answered, "On the morrow;" but methinks 'twas even then his belief that there would be no morrow for her who was dying before her time, like the bay-tree in our garden. She bade him farewell in a kindly fashion; and when we were alone, I lying on the bed by her side, and my father sitting at its head, she said, in a low voice, "How wonderful be God's dealings with us, and how fatherly his care; in that he takes the weak unto himself, and leaves behind the strong to fight the battle now at hand! My dear master, I had a dream yesternight which had somewhat of horror in it, but more methinks of comfort." My father breaking out then in sighs and tears as if his heart would break, she said, "Oh, but thou must hear and acknowledge, my loved master, how gracious is God's providence to thy poor wife. When thou knowest what I have suffered—not in body, though that has been sharp too, but in my soul—it will reconcile thine own to a parting which has in it so much of mercy. Thou dost remember the night when Mr. Mush was here, and what his discourse did run on?"

"Surely do I, sweet wife," he answered; "for it was such as the mind doth not easily lose the memory of; the sufferings and glorious end of the blessed martyr Mrs. Clitherow. I perceived what sorrowful heed thou didst lend to his recital; but has it painfully dwelt in thy mind since?"

"By day and by night it hath not left me; ever recurring to my thoughts, ever haunting my dreams, and working in me a fearful apprehension lest in a like trial I should be found wanting, and prove a traitor to God and his Church, and a disgrace and heartbreak to thee who hast so truly loved me far beyond my deserts. I have bragged of the dangers of the times, even as cowards are wont to speak loud in the dark to still by the sound of their own voices the terrors they do feel. I have had before my eyes the picture of that cruel death, and of the children extremely used for answering as their mother had taught them, till cold drops of sweat have stood on my brow, and I have knelt in my chamber wringing my hands and praying to be spared a like trial. And then, maybe an hour later, sitting at the table, I spake merrily of the gallows, mocking my own fears, as when Mr. Bryan was last here; and I said that priests should be more welcome to me than ever they were, now that virtue and the Catholic cause were made felony; and the same would be in God's sight more meritorious than ever before: upon which, 'Then you must prepare your neck for the rope,' quoth he, in a pleasant but withal serious manner; at the which a cold chill overcame me, and I very well-nigh faulted, though constraining my tongue to say, 'God's will be done; but I am far unworthy of so great an honor.' The cowardly heart belied the confident tongue, and fear of my own weakness affrighted me, by the which I must needs have offended God, who helps such as trust in him. But I hope to be forgiven, inasmuch as it has ever been the wont of my poor thoughts to picture evils beforehand in such a form as to scare the soul, which, when it came to meet with them, was not shaken from its constancy. When Conny was an infant I have stood nigh unto a window with her in my arms, and of a sudden a terror would seize me lest I should let her fall out of my hands, which yet clasped her; and methinks 'twas somewhat of alike feeling which worked in me touching the denying of my faith, which, God is my witness, is dearer to me than aught upon earth."

"'Tis even so, sweet wife," quoth my father; "the edge of a too keen conscience and a sensitive apprehension of defects visible to thine own eyes and God's—never to mine, who was ever made happy by thy love and virtue—have worn out the frame which enclosed them, and will rob me of the dearest comfort of my life, if I must lose thee."

She looked upon him with so much sweetness, as if the approach of death had brought her greater peace and joy than life had ever done, and she replied: "Death comes to me as a compassionate angel, and I fain would have thee welcome with me the kindly messenger who brings so great relief to the poor heart thou hast so long cherished. Now, thou art called to another task; and when the bruised, broken reed is removed from thy side, thou wilt follow the summons which even now sounds in thine ears."

"Ah," cried my father, clasping her hand, "art thou then already a saint, sweet wife, that thou hast read the vow slowly registered as yet in the depths of a riven heart?" Then his eyes turned on me; and she, who seemed to know his thoughts, that sweet soul who had been so silent in life, but was now spending her last breath in never-to-be-forgotten words, answered the question contained in that glance as if it had been framed in a set speech.

"Fear not for her," she said, laying her cheek close unto mine. "As her days, so shall her strength be. Methinks Almighty God has given her a spirit meet for the age in which her lot is cast. The early training thou hast had, my wench; the lack of such memories as make the present twofold bitter; the familiar mention round thy cradle of such trials as do beset Catholics in these days, have nurtured thee a stoutness of heart which will stand thee in good stead amidst the rough waves of this troublesome world. The iron will not enter into thy soul as it hath done into mine." Upon which she fell back exhausted and for a while no sound was heard in or about the house save the barking of our great dog.

My father had sent a messenger to a house where we had had notice days before Father Ford was staying but with no certain knowledge he still there, or any other priest in neighborhood, which occasioned him no small disquietude, for my mother's strength seemed to be visibly sinking which was what the doctor's words had led him to expect. The man he sent returned not till the evening; in the afternoon Mr. Genings and son came from Lichfield, which, when my mother heard, she said God was gracious to permit her once more to see John, which was Mr. Genings' name. They had been reared in the same house; and a kindness had always continued betwixt them. For some time past he had conformed to the times; and since his marriage with the daughter of a French Huguenot who lived in London, and who was a lady of very commendable character and manners, and strenuous in her own way of thinking, he had left off practising his own religion in secret, which for a while he used to do. When he came in, and saw death plainly writ in his cousin's face, he was greatly moved, and knelt down by her side with a very sorrowful countenance; upon which she straightly looked at him, and said: "Cousin John, my breath is very short, as my time is also like to be. But one word I would fain say to thee before I die. I was always well pleased with my religion, which was once thine and that of all Christian people one hundred years ago; but I have never been so well pleased with it as now, when I be about to meet my Judge."

Mr. Genings' features worked with a strange passion, in which was more of grief than displeasure, and grasping his son's shoulder, who was likewise kneeling and weeping, he said: "You have wrought with this boy, cousin, to make him a Catholic."

"As heaven is my witness," she answered, "not otherwise but by my prayers."

"Hast thou seen a priest, cousin Constance?" he then asked: upon which my mother not answering, the poor man burst into tears, and cried: "Oh, cousin—cousin Constance, dost count me a spy, and at thy death-bed?"

He seemed cut to the heart; whereupon she gave him her hand, and said she hoped God would send her such ghostly assistance as she stood in need of; and praying God to bless him and his wife and children, and make them his faithful servants, so she might meet them all in perpetual happiness, she spoke with such good cheer, and then bade him and Edmund farewell with so pleasant a smile, as deceived them into thinking her end not so near. And so, after a while, they took their leave; upon which she composed herself for a while in silence, occupying her thoughts in prayer; and toward evening, through God's mercy, albeit the messenger had returned with the heavy news that Father Ford had left the county some days back, it happened that Mr. Watson, a secular priest who had lately arrived in England, and was on his way to Chester, stopped at our house, whereunto Mr. Orton, whom he had seen in prison at London, had directed him for his own convenience on the road, and likewise our commodity, albeit little thinking how great our need would be at that time of so opportune a guest, through whose means that dear departing soul had the benefit of the last sacraments with none to trouble or molest her, and such ghostly aid as served to smooth her passage to what has proved, I doubt not, the beginning of a happy eternity, if we may judge by such tokens as the fervent acts of contrition she made both before and after shrift, such as might have served to wash away ten thousand sins through his blood who cleansed her, and her great and peaceable joy at receiving him into her heart whom she soon trusted to behold. Her last words were expressions of wonder and gratitude at God's singular mercy shown unto her in the quiet manner of her death in the midst of such troublesome times. And methinks, when the silver cord was loosed, and naught was left of her on earth save the fair corpse which retained in death the semblance it had had in life, that together with the natural grief which found vent in tears, there remained in the hearts of such as loved her a comfortable sense of the Divine goodness manifested in this her peaceable removal.

How great the change which that day wrought in me may be judged of by such who, at the age I had then reached to, have met with a like affliction, coupled with a sense of duties to be fulfilled, such as then fell to my lot, both as touching household cares, and in respect to the cheering of my father in his solitary hours during the time we did yet continue at Sherwood Hall, which was about a year. It waxed very hard then for priests to make their way to the houses of Catholics, as many now found it to their interest to inform against them and such as harbored them; and mostly in our neighborhood, wherein there were at that time no recusants of so great rank and note that the sheriff would not be lief to meddle with them. We had oftentimes had secret advices to beware of such and such of our servants who might betray our hidden conveyances of safety; and my father scarcely durst be sharp with them when they offended by slacking their duties, lest they might bring us into danger if they revealed, upon any displeasure, priests having abided with us. Edmund we saw no more since my mother's death; and after a while the news did reach us that Mr. Genings had died of the small-pox, and left his wife in so distressed a condition, against all expectation, owing to debts he had incurred, that she had been constrained to sell her house and furniture, and was living in a small lodging near unto the school where Edmund continued his studies.

I noticed, as time went by, how heavily it weighed on my father's heart to see so many Catholics die without the sacraments, or fall away from their faith, for lack of priests to instruct them, like so many sheep without a shepherd; and I guessed by words he let fall on divers occasions, that the intent obscurely shadowed forth in his discourse to my mother on her deathbed was ripening to a settled purpose, and tending to a change in his state of life, which only his love and care for me caused him to defer. What I did apprehend must one day needs occur, was hastened about this time by a warning he did receive that on an approaching day he would be apprehended and carried by the sheriff before the council at Lichfield, to be examined touching recusancy and harboring of priests; which was what he had long expected. This message was, as it were, the signal he had been waiting for, and an indication of God's will in his regard. He made instant provision for the placing of his estate in the hands of a friend of such singular honesty and so faithful a friendship toward himself, though a Protestant, that he could wholly trust him. And next he set himself to dispose of her whom he did term his most dear earthly treasure, and his sole tie to this perishable world, which he resolved to do by

straightway sending her to London, unto his sister Mistress Congleton, who had oftentimes offered, since his wife's death, to take charge of this daughter, and to whom he now despatched a messenger with a letter, wherein he wrote that the times were now so troublesome, he must needs leave his home, and take advantage of the sisterly favor she had willed to show him in the care of his sole child, whom he now would forthwith send to London, commending her to her good keeping, touching her safety and religious and virtuous training, and that he should be more beholden to her than ever brother was to sister, and, as long as he lived, as he was bound to do, pray for her and her good husband. When this letter was gone, and order had been taken for my journey, which was to be on horseback, and in the charge of a maiden gentlewoman who had been staying some months in our neighborhood, and was now about in two days to travel to London, it seemed to me as if that which I had long expected and pictured unto myself had now come upon me of a sudden, and in such wise as for the first time to taste its bitterness. For I saw, without a doubt, that this parting was but the forerunner of a change in my father's condition as great and weighty as could well be thought of. But of this howbeit our thoughts were full of it, no talk was ministered between us. He said I should hear from him in London; and that he should now travel into Lancashire and Cheshire, changing his name, and often shifting his quarters whilst the present danger lasted. The day which was to be the last to see us in the house wherein himself and his fathers for many centuries back, and I his unworthy child, had been born, was spent in such fashion as becometh those who suffer for conscience sake, and that is with so much sorrow as must needs be felt by a loving father and a dutiful child in a first and doubtful parting, with so much regret as is natural in the abandonment of a peaceful earthly home, wherein God had been served in a Catholic manner for many generations and up to that time without discontinuance, only of late years as it were by night and stealth, which was linked in their memories with sundry innocent joys and pleasures, and such griefs as do hallow and endear the visible scenes wherewith they be connected, but withal with a stoutness of heart in him, and a youthful steadiness in her whom he had infected with a like courage unto his own, which wrought in them so as to be of good cheer and shed no more tears on so moving an occasion than the debility of her nature and the tenderness of his paternal care extorted from their eyes when he placed her on her horse, and the bridle in the hand of the servant who was to accompany her to London. Their last parting was a brief one, and such as I care not to be minute in describing; for thinking upon it even now 'tis like to make me weep; which I would not do whilst writing this history, in the recital of which there should be more of constancy and thankful rejoicing in God's great mercies, than of womanish softness in looking back to past trials. So I will even break off at this point; and in the next chapter relate the course of the journey which was begun on that day.

CHAPTER VI.

I was to travel, as had been ordered for our mutual convenience and protection, with Mistress Ward, a gentlewoman who resided some months in our vicinity, and had heard mass in our chapel on such rare occasions as of late had occurred, when a priest was at our house, and we had commodity to give notice thereof to such as were Catholic in the adjacent villages. We had with us on the journey two serving-men and a waiting-woman, who had been my mother's chambermaid; and so accompanied, we set out on our way, singing as we went, for greater safety, the litanies of our Lady; to whom we did commend ourselves, as my father had willed us to do, with many fervent prayers. The gentlewoman to whose charge I was committed was a lady of singular zeal and discretion, as well as great virtue; albeit, where religion was not concerned, of an exceeding timid disposition; which, to my no small diversion then, and great shame since, I took particular notice of on this journey. Much talk had been ministered in the county touching the number of rogues and vagabonds which infested the public roads, of which sundry had been taken up and whipped during the last months, in Lichfield, Stafford, and other places. I did perceive that good Mistress Ward glanced uneasily as we rode along at every foot-passenger or horseman that came in sight. Albeit my heart was heavy, and may be also that when the affections are inclined to tears they be likewise prone to laughter, I scarce could restrain from smiling at these her fears and the manner of her showing them.

"Mistress Constance," she said at last, as we came to the foot of a steep ascent, "methinks you have a great heart concerning the dangers which may befall us on the road, and that the sight of a robber would move you not one whit more than that of an honest pedler or hawker, such as I take those men to be who are mounting the hill in advance of us. Doth it not seem to you that the box which they do carry betokens them to be such worthy persons as I wish them to prove?"

"Now surely," I answered, "good Mistress Ward, 'tis my opinion that they be not such honest knaves as you do suppose. I perceive somewhat I mislike in the shape of that box. What an if it be framed to entice travellers to their ruin by such displays and shows of rare ribbons and gewgaws as may prove the means of detaining them on the road, and a-robbing of them in the end?"

Mistress Ward laughed, and commended my jesting, but was yet ill at ease; and, as a mischievous and thoughtless creature, I did somewhat excite and maintain her fears, in order to set her on asking questions of our attendants touching the perils of the road, which led them to relate such fearful stories of what they had seen of this sort as served to increase her apprehensions, and greatly to divert me, who had not the like fears; but rather entertained myself with hers, in a manner such as I have been since ashamed to think of, who should have kissed the ground on which she had trodden.

The fairness of the sky, the beauty of the fields and hedges, the motion of the horse, stirred up my spirits; albeit my heart was at moments so brimful of sorrow that I hated my tongue for its wantonness, my eyes for their curious gazing, and my fancy for its eager thoughts anent London and the new scenes I should behold there. What mostly dwelt in them was the hope to see my Lady Surrey, of whom I had had of late but brief and scanty tidings. The last letter I had from her was writ at the time when the Duke of Norfolk was for the second time thrown in the Tower, which she said was the greatest sorrow that had befallen her since the death of my Lady Mounteagle, which had happened at his grace's house a few months back, with all the assistance she desired touching her religion. She had been urged, my Lady Surrey said, by the duke some time before to do something contrary to her faith; but though she much esteemed and respected him,

her answer was so round and resolute that he never mentioned the like to her any more. Since then I had no more tidings of her, who was dearer to me than our brief acquaintance and the slender tie of such correspondence as had taken place between us might in most cases warrant; but whether owing to some congeniality of mind, or to a presentiment of future friendship, 'tis most certain my heart was bound to her in an extraordinary manner; so that she was the continual theme of my thoughts and mirror of my fancy.

The first night of our journey we lay at a small inn, which was held by persons Mistress Ward was acquainted with, and by whom we were entertained in a decent chamber, looking on unto a little garden, and with as much comfort as the fashion of the place might afford, and greater cleanliness than is often to be found in larger hostelries. After supper, being somewhat weary with travel, but not yet inclined for bed, and the evening fine, we sat out of doors in a bower of eglantine near to some bee-hives, of which our hostess had a great store; and methinks she took example from them, for we could see her through the window as busy in the kitchen amongst her maids as the queen-bee amidst her subjects. Mistress Ward took occasion to observe, as we watched one of these little commonwealths of nature, that she admired how they do live, laboring and swarming, and gathering honey together so neat and finely, that they abhor nothing so much as uncleanness, drinking pure and clear water, even the dew-drops on the leaves and flowers, and delighting in sweet music, which if they hear but once out of tune they fly out of sight.

"They live," she said, "under a law, and use great reverence to their elders. Every one hath his office; some trimming the honey, another framing hives, another the combs. When they go forth to work, they mark the wind and the clouds, and whatsoever doth threaten their ruin; and having gathered, out of every flower, honey, they return loaded in their mouths and on their wings, whom they that tarried at home receive readily, easing their backs of their great burthens with as great care as can be thought of."

"Methinks," I answered, "that if it be as you say, Mistress Ward, the bees be wiser than men."

At the which she smiled; but withal, sighing, made reply:

"One might have wished of late years rather to be a bee than such as we see men sometimes to be. But, Mistress Constance, if they are indeed so wise and so happy, 'tis that they are fixed in a condition in which they must needs do the will of him who created them; and the like wisdom and happiness in a far higher state we may ourselves enjoy, if we do but choose of our free will to live by the same rule."

Then, after some further discourse on the habits of these little citizens, I inquired of Mistress Ward if she were acquainted with mine aunt, Mistress Congleton; at the which question she seemed surprised, and said,

"Methought, my dear, you had known my condition in your aunt's family, having been governess for many years to her three daughters, and only by reason of my sister's sickness having stayed away from them for some time."

At the which intelligence I greatly rejoiced; for the few hours we had rode together, and our discourse that evening, had wrought in me a liking for this lady as great as could arise in so short a period. But I minded me then of my jests at her fears anent robbers, and also of having been less dutiful in my manners than I should have been toward one who was like to be set over me; and I likewise bethought me this might be the cause that she had spoken of the bees having a reverence for their elders, and doubted if I should crave her pardon for my want of it. But, like many good thoughts which we give not entertainment to by reason that they be irksome, I changed that intent for one which had in it more of pleasantness, though less of virtue. Kissing her, I said it was the best news I had heard for a long time that I should live in the same house with her, and, as I hoped, under her care and good government. And she answered, that she was well pleased with it too, and would be a good friend to me as long as she lived. Then I asked her touching my cousins, and of their sundry looks and qualities. She answered, that the eldest, Kate, was very fair, and said nothing further concerning her. Polly, she told me, was marvellous witty and very pleasant, and could give a quick answer, full of entertaining conceits.

"And is she, then, not fair?" I asked.

"Neither fair nor foul," was her reply; "but well favored enough, and has an excellent head."

"Then," I cried, letting my words exceed good behavior, "I shall like her better than the pretty fool her sister." For the which speech I received the first, but not the last, chiding I ever had from Mistress Ward for foolish talking and pert behavior, which was what I very well deserved. When she had done speaking, I put my arm round her neck—for it put me in mind of my mother to be so gravely yet so sweetly corrected—and said, "Forgive me, dear Mistress Ward, for my saucy words, and tell me somewhat I beseech you touching my youngest cousin, who must be nearest to mine own age."

"She is no pearl to hang at one's ear," quoth she, "yet so gifted with a well-disposed mind that in her grace seems almost to supersede nature. Muriel is deformed in body, and slow in speech; but in behavior so honest, in prayer so devout, so noble in all her dealings, that I never heard her speak anything that either concerned not good instruction or godly mirth."

"And doth she not care to be ugly?" I asked.

"So little doth she value beauty," quoth Mistress Ward, "save in the admiring of it in others, that I have known her to look into a glass and smiling cry out, 'This face were fair if it were turned and every feature the opposite to what it is;' and so jest pleasantly at her own deformities, and would have others do so too. Oh, she is a rare treasure of goodness and piety, and a true comfort to her friends!"

With suchlike pleasant discourse we whiled away the time until going to rest; and next day were on horseback betimes on our way to Coventry, where we were to lie that night at the house of Mr. Page, a Catholic, albeit not openly, by reason of the times. This gentleman is for his hospitality so much haunted, that no news stirs but comes to his ears, and no gentlefolks pass his door but have a cheerful welcome to his house; and 'tis said no music is so sweet to his ears as

deserved thanks. He vouchsafed much favor to us, and by his merry speeches procured us much entertainment, provoking me to laughter thereby more than I desired. He took us to see St. Mary's Hall, which is a building which has not its equal for magnificence in any town I have seen, no, not even in London. As we walked through the streets he showed us a window in which was an inscription, set up in the reign of King Richard the Second, which did run thus:

"I, Luriche, for the love of thee
Do make Coventry toll free."

And further on, the figure of Peeping Tom of Coventry, that false knave I was so angry with when my father (ah, me! how sharp and sudden was the pain which went through my heart as I called to mind the hours I was wont to sit on his knee hearkening to the like tales) told me the story of the Lady Godiva, who won mercy for her townfolk by a ride which none had dared to take but one so holy as herself. And, as I said before, being then in a humor as prone to tears at one moment as laughter at another, I fell to weeping for the noble lady who had been in so sore a strait that she must needs have chosen between complying with her savage lord's conditions or the misery of her poor clients. When Mr. Page noticed my tears, which flowed partly for myself and partly for one who had been long dead, but yet lived in the hearts of these citizens, he sought to cheer me by the recital of the fair and rare pageant which doth take place every year in Coventry, and is of the most admirable beauty, and such as is not witnessed in any other city in the world. He said I should not weep if I were to see it, which he very much desired I should; and he hoped he might be then alive, and ride by my side in the procession as my esquire; at the which I smiled, for the good gentleman had a face and figure such as would not grace a pageant, and methought I might be ashamed some years hence to have him for my knight; and I said, "Good Mr. Page, be the shutters closed on those days as when the Lady Godiva rode?" at the which he laughed, and answered,

"No; and that for one Tom who then peeped, there were a thousand eyes to gaze on the show as it passed."

"Then if it please you, sir, when the time comes," I said, "I would like to look on and not to ride;" and he replied, it should be as I pleased; and with such merry discourse we spent the time till supper was ready. And afterward that good gentleman slackened not his efforts in entertaining us; but related so many laughable stories, and took so great notice of me, that I was moved to answer him sometimes in a manner too forward for my years. He told us of the queen's visit to that city, and that the mayor, who had heard her grace's majesty considered poets, and herself wrote verses, thought to commend himself to her favor by such rare rhymes as these, wherewith he did greet her at her entrance into the town:

"We, the men of Coventry,
Be pleased to see your majesty,
Good Lord! how fair you be!"

at the which her highness made but an instant's pause, and then straightway replied,

"It pleaseth well her majesty
To see the men of Coventry.
Good Lord! what fools you be!"

"But," quoth Mr. Page, "the good man was so well pleased that the Queen had answered his compliment, that 'tis said he has had her majesty's speech framed, and hung up in his parlor."

"Pity 'tis not in the town-hall," I cried; and he laughing commended me for sharpness; but Mistress Ward said:

"A sharp tongue in a woman's head was always a stinging weapon; but in a queen's she prayed God it might never prove a murtherous one." Which words somewhat checked our merriment, for that they savored of rebuke to me for forward speech, and I ween awoke in Mr. Page thoughts of a graver sort.

When we rode through the town next day, he went with us for the space of some miles, and then bade us farewell with singular courtesy, and professions of good will and proffered service if we should do him the good at any time to remember his poor house; which we told him he had given us sufficient reason not to forget. Toward evening, when the sun was setting, we did see the towers of Warwick Castle; and I would fain have discerned the one which doth bear the name of the great earl who in a poor pilgrim's garb slew the giant Colbrand, and the cave 'neath Guy's Cliff where he spent his last years in prayer. But the light was declining as we rode into Leamington, where we lay that night, and darkness hid from us that fair country, which methought was a meet abode for such as would lead a hermit's life.

The next day we had the longest ride and the hottest sun we had yet met with; and at noon we halted to rest in a thicket on the roadside, which we made our pavilion, and from which our eyes did feast themselves on a delightful prospect. There were heights on one side garnished with stately oaks, and a meadow betwixt the road and the hill enamelled with all sorts of pleasing flowers, and stored with sheep, which were feeding in sober security. Mistress Ward, who was greatly tired with the journey, fell asleep with her head on her hand, and I pulled from my pocket a volume with which Mr. Page had gifted me at parting, and which contained sundry tales anent Amadis de Gaul, Huon de Bordeaux, Palmerin of England, and suchlike famous knights, which he said, as I knew how to read, for which he greatly commended my parents' care, I should entertain myself with on the road. So, one-half sitting, one-half lying on the grass, I reclined in an easy posture, with my head resting against the trunk of a tree, pleasing my fancy with the writers' conceits; but ever and anon lifting my eyes to the blue sky above my head, seen through the green branches, or fixed them on the quaint patterns the quivering light drew on the grass, or else on the valley refreshed with a silver river, and the fair hills beyond it. And as I read of knights and ladies, and the many perils which befel them, and passages of love betwixt them, which was new to me, and what I had not met with in any of the books I had yet read, I fell into a fit of musing, wondering if in London the folks I should see would discourse in the same fashion, and the gentlemen have so much bravery and the ladies so great beauty as those my book treated of. And as I noticed it was chiefly on the high-roads they did come into such dangerous adventures, I gazed as far as I could discern on the one I

had in view before me with a foolish kind of desire for some robbers to come and assail us, and then a great nobleman or gallant esquire to ride up and fall on them, and to deliver us from a great peril, and may be to be wounded in the encounter, and I to bind up those wounds as from my mother's teaching I knew how to do, and then give thanks to the noble gentleman in such courteous and well-picked words as I could think of. But for all my gazing I could naught perceive save a wain slowly ascending the hill loaden with corn, midst clouds of dust, and some poorer sort of people, who had been gleaning, and were carrying sheaves on their heads. After an hour Mistress Ward awoke from her nap; and methinks I had been dozing also, for when she called to me, and said it was time to eat somewhat, and then get to horse, I cried out, "Good sir, I wait your pleasure;" and rubbed my eyes to see her standing before me in her riding-habit, and not the gentleman whose wounds I had been tending.

That night we slept at Northampton, at Mistress Engerfield's house. She was a cousin of Mr. Congleton's, and a lady whose sweet affability and gravity would have extorted reverence from those that least loved her. She was then very aged, and had been a nun in King Henry's reign; and, since her convent had been despoiled, and the religious driven out of it, having a large fortune of her own, which she inherited about that time, she made her house a secret monastery, wherein God was served in a religious manner by such persons as the circumstances of the time, and not their own desires, had forced back into the world, and who as yet had found no commodity for passing beyond seas into countries where that manner of life is allowed. They dressed in sober black, and kept stated hours of prayer, and went not abroad unless necessity compelled them thereunto. When we went into the dining-room, which I noticed Mistress Engerfield called the refectory, grace was said in Latin; and whilst we did eat one lady read out loud out of a book, which methinks was the life of a saint; but the fatigue of the journey, and the darkness of the room, which was wainscotted with oak-wood, so overpowered my senses with drowsiness, that before the meal was ended I had fallen asleep, which was discovered, to my great confusion, when the company rose from table. But that good lady, in whose face was so great a kindness that I never saw one to be compared with it in that respect before or since, took me by the hand and said, "Young eyes wax heavy for lack of rest, and travellers should have repose. Come to thy chamber, sweet one, and, after commending thyself by a brief prayer to him who sleepeth not nor slumbereth, and to her who is the Mother of the motherless, get thee to bed and take thy fill of the sleep thou hast so great need of, and good angels will watch near thee."

Oh, how I did weep then, partly from fatigue, and partly from the dear comfort her words did yield me, and, kneeling, asked her blessing, as I had been wont to do of my dear parents. And she, whose countenance was full of majesty, and withal of most attractive gentleness, which made me deem her to be more than an ordinary woman, and a great servant of God, as indeed she was, raised me from the ground, and herself assisted to get me to bed, having first said my prayers by her side, whose inflamed devotion, visible in her face, awakened in me a greater fervor than I had hitherto experienced when performing this duty. After I had slept heavily for the space of two or three hours I awoke, as is the wont of those who be over-fatigued, and could not get to sleep again, so that I heard the clock of a church strike twelve; and as the last stroke fell on my ear, it was followed by a sound of chanting, as if close unto my chamber, which resembled what on rare occasions I had heard performed by two or three persons in our chapel; but here, with so full a concord of voices, and so great melody and sweetness, that methought, being at that time of night and every one abed, it must be the angels that were singing. But the next day, questioning Mrs. Ward thereupon as of a strange thing which had happened to me, she said, the ladies in that house rose always at midnight, as they had been used to do in their several convents, to sing God's praises and give him thanks, which was what they did vow to do when they became religious. Before we departed, Mistress Engerfield took me into her own room, which was small and plainly furnished, with no other furniture in it but a bed, table, and kneeling-stool, and against the wall a large crucifix, and she bestowed upon me a small book in French, titled "The Spiritual Combat," which she said was a treasury of pious riches, which she counselled me by frequent study to make my own; and with many prayers and blessings she then bade us God-speed, and took leave of us. Our last day's lodging on the road was at Bedford; and there being no Catholics of note in that town wont to entertain travellers, we halted at a quiet hostelry, which was kept by very decent people, who showed us much civility; and the landlady, after we had supped, the evening being rainy (for else she said we might have walked through her means into the fair grounds of the Abbey of Woburn, which she thanked God was not now a hive for drones, as it had once been, but the seat of a worthy nobleman; which did more credit to the town, and drew customers to the inn), brought us for our entertainment a huge book, which she said had as much godliness in each of its pages as might serve to convert as many Papists—God save the mark!—as there were leaves in the volume. My cheeks glowed like fire when she thus spoke, and I looked at Mistress Ward, wondering what she would say. But she only bowed her head, and made pretence to open the book, which, when the good woman was gone,

"Mistress Constance," quoth she, "this is a book writ by Mr. Fox, the Duke of Norfolk's old schoolmaster, touching those he doth call martyrs, who suffered for treason and for heresy in the days of Queen Mary,—God rest her soul!—and if it ever did convert a Papist, I do not say on his deathbed, but at any time of his life, except it was greatly for his own interest, I be ready ..."

"To be a martyr yourself, Mistress Ward," I cried, with my ever too great proneness to let my tongue loose from restraint. The color rose in her cheek, which was usually pale, and she said:

"Child, I was about to say, that in the case I have named, I be ready to forego the hope of that which I thank God I be wise enough to desire, though unworthy to obtain; but for which I do pray each day that I live."

"Then would you not be afraid to die on a scaffold," I asked, "or to be hanged, Mistress Ward?"

"Not in a good cause," she said.

But before the words were out of her mouth our landlady knocked at the door, and said a gentleman was in the house with his two sons, who asked to pay their compliments to Mistress Ward and the young lady under her care. The name of this gentleman was Rookwood, of Rookwood Hall in Suffolk, and Mistress Ward desired the landlady presently to bring them in, for she had often met them at my aunt's house, as she afterward told me, and had great contentment we should have such good company under the same roof with us; whom when they came in she very pleasantly received, and informed Mr. Rookwood of my name and relationship to Mistress Congleton; which when he heard, he asked if I

was Mr. Henry Sherwood's daughter; which being certified of, he saluted me, and said my father was at one time, when both were at college, the closest friend that ever he had, and his esteem for him was so great that he would be better pleased with the news that he should see him but once again, than if any one was to give him a thousand pounds. I told him my father often spake of him with singular affection, and that the letter I should write to him from London would be more welcome than anything else could make it, by the mention of the honor I had had of his notice. Mistress Ward then asked him what was the news in London, from whence he had come that morning. He answered that the news was not so good as he would wish it to be; for that the queen's marriage with monsieur was broke off, and the King of France greatly incensed at the favor M. de Montgomeri had experienced at her hands; and that when he had demanded he should be given up, she had answered that she did not see why she should be the King of France's hangman; which was what his father had replied to her sister, when she had made the like request anent some of her traitors who had fled to France.

"Her majesty," he said, "was greatly incensed against the Bishop of Ross, and had determined to put him to death; but that she was dissuaded from it by her council; and that he prayed God Catholics should not fare worse now that Ridolfi's plot had been discovered to declare her highness illegitimate, and place the Queen of Scots on the throne, which had moved her to greater anger than even the rising in the north.

"And touching the Duke of Norfolk," Mistress Ward did ask, "what is like to befall him?"

Mr. Rookwood said, "His grace had been removed from the Tower to his own house on account of the plague; but it is reported the queen is more urgent against him than ever, and will have his head in the end."

"If her majesty will not marry monsieur," Mistress Ward said, "it will fare worse with recusants."

Upon which one of the young gentlemen cried out, "'Tis not her majesty will not have him; but monsieur will not have her. My Lord of Oxford, who is to marry my Lord Burleigh's daughter, said yesterday at the tennis court, that that matter of monsieur is grievously taken on her grace's part; but that my lord is of opinion that where amity is so needful, her majesty should stomach it; and so she doth pretend to break it off herself by reason of her religious scruples."

At the which both brothers did laugh, but Mr. Rookwood bade them have a care how they did suffer their tongues to wag anent her grace and such matters as her grace's marriage; which although in the present company might be without danger, was an ill habit, which in these times was like to bring divers persons into troubles.

"Hang it!" cried the eldest of his sons, who was of a well-pleasing favor and exceeding goodly figure; "recusants be always in trouble, whatsoever they do; both taxed for silence and checked for speech, as the play hath it. For good Mr. Weston was racked for silence last week till he fainted, for that he would not reveal what he had heard in confession from one concerned in Ridolfi's plot; and as to my Lord Morley, he hath been examined before the council, touching his having said he would go abroad poorly and would return in glory, which he did speak concerning his health; but they would have it meant treason."

"Methinks, Master Basil," said his father, "thou art not like to be taxed for silence; unless indeed on the rack, which the freedom of thy speech may yet bring thee to, an thou hast not more care of thy words. See now, thy brother keeps his lips closed in modest silence."

"Ay, as if butter would not melt in his mouth," cried Basil, laughing.

And I then noticed the countenance of the younger brother, who was fairer and shorter by a head than Basil, and had the most beautiful eyes imaginable, and a high forehead betokening thoughtfulness. Mr. Rookwood drew his chair further from the table, and conversed in a low voice with Mrs. Ward, touching matters which I ween were of too great import to be lightly treated of. I heard the name of Mr. Felton mentioned in their discourse, and somewhat about the Pope's Bull, in the affixing of which at the Bishop of London's gate he had lent a hand; but my ears were not free to listen to them, for the young gentlemen began to entertain me with divers accounts of the shows in London; which, as they were some years older than myself, who was then no better than a child, though tall of mine age, I took as a great favor, and answered them in the best way I could. Basil spoke mostly of the sights he had seen, and a fight between a lion and three dogs, in which the dogs were victorious; and Hubert of books, which he said, for his part, he had always a care to keep handsome and well bound.

"Ay," quoth his brother, "gilding them and stringing them like the prayer-books of girls and gallants, which are carried to church but for their outsides. I do hate a book with clasps, 'tis a trouble to open them."

"A trouble thou dost seldom take," quoth Hubert. "Thou art ready enough to unclasp the book of thy inward soul to whosoever will read in it, and thy purse to whosoever begs or borrows of thee; but with such clasps as shut in the various stores of thought which have issued forth from men's minds thou dost not often meddle."

"Beshrew me if I do! The best prayer-book I take to be a pair of beads; and the most entertaining reading, the 'Rules for the Hunting of Deer;' which, by what I have heard from Sir Roger Ashlon, my Lord Stafford hath grievously transgressed by assaulting Lord Lyttleton's keepers in Teddesley Haye."

"What have you here?" Hubert asked, glancing at Mr. Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, and another which the landlady had left on the table; *A profitable New Year's Gift to all England*.

"They are not mine," I answered, "nor such as I do care to read; but this," I said, holding out Mr. Page's gift, which I had in my pocket, "is a rare fund of entertainment and very full of pleasant tales."

"But," quoth he, "you should read the *Morte d'Arthur* and the *Seven Champions of Christendom*."

Which I said I should be glad to do when I had the good chance to meet with them. He said, "My cousin Polly had a store of such pleasant volumes, and would, no doubt, lend them to me. She has such a sharp wit," he added, "that she is ever exercising it on herself or on others; on herself by the bettering of her mind through reading; and on others by such applications, of what she thus acquires as leaves them no chance in discoursing with her but to yield to her superior knowledge."

"Methinks," I said, "if that be her aim in reading, may be she will not lend to others the means of sharpening their wits to encounter hers."

At the which both of them laughed, and Basil said he hoped I might prove a match for Mistress Polly, who carried herself too high, and despised such as were slower of speech and less witty than herself. "For my part," he cried, "I am of opinion that too much reading doth lead to too much thinking, and too much thinking doth consume the spirits; and often it falls out that while one thinks too much of his doing, he leaves to do the effect of his thinking."

At the which Hubert smiled, and I bethought myself that if Basil was no book-worm neither was he a fool. With such like discourse the evening sped away, and Mr. Rookwood and his sons took their leave with many civilities and pleasant speeches, such as gentlemen are wont to address to ladies, and hopes expressed to meet again in London, and good wishes for the safe ending of our journey thither.

Ah, me! 'tis passing strange to sit here and write in this little chamber, after so many years, of that first meeting with those brothers, Basil and Hubert; to call to mind how they did look and speak, and of the pretty kind of natural affection there was betwixt them in their manner to each other. Ah, me! the old trick of sighing is coming over me again, which I had well-nigh corrected myself of, who have more reason to give thanks than to complain. Good Lord, what fools you be! sighing heart and watering eyes! As great fools, I ween, as the Mayor of Coventry, whose foolish rhymes do keep running in my head.

The day following we came to London, which being, as it were, the beginning of a new life to me, I will defer to speak of until I find myself, after a night's rest and special prayers unto that end, less heavy of heart than at present.

CHAPTER VII.

Upon a sultry evening which did follow an exceeding hot day, with no clouds in the sky, and a great store of dust on the road, we entered London, that great fair of the whole world, as some have titled it. When for many years we do think of a place we have not seen, a picture forms itself in the mind as distinct as if the eye had taken cognizance thereof, and a singular curiosity attends the actual vision of what the imagination hath so oft portrayed. On this occasion my eyes were slow servants to my desires, which longed to embrace in the compass of one glance the various objects they craved to behold. Albeit the sky was cloudless above our heads, I feared it would rain in London, by reason of a dark vapor which did hang over it; but Mistress Ward informed me that this appearance was owing to the smoke of sea-coal, of which so great a store is used in the houses that the air is filled with it. "And do those in London always live in that smoke?" I inquired, not greatly contented to think it should be so; but she said Mr. Congleton's house was not in the city, but in a very pleasant suburb outside of it, close unto Holborn Hill and Ely Place, the bishop's palace, in whose garden the roses were so plentiful that in June the air is perfumed with their odor. I troubled her not with further questions at that time, being soon wholly taken up with the new sights which then did meet us at every step. So great a number of gay horsemen, and litters carried by footmen with fine liveries, and coaches drawn by horses richly caparisoned and men running alongside of them, and withal so many carts, that I was constrained to give over the guiding of mine own horse by reason of the confusion which the noise of wheels and men's cries and the rapid motion of so many vehicles did cause in me, who had never rode before in so great a crowd.

At about six o'clock of the afternoon we did reach Ely Place, and passing by the bishop's palace stopped at the gate of Mr. Congleton's house, which doth stand somewhat retired from the high-road, and the first sight of which did greatly content me. It is built of fair and strong stone, not affecting fineness, but honorably representing a firm stateliness, for it was handsome without curiosity, and homely without negligence. At the front of it was a well-arranged ground cunningly set with trees, through which we rode to the foot of the stairs, where we were met by a gentleman dressed in a coat of black satin and a quilted waistcoat, with a white beaver in his hand, whom I guessed to be my good uncle. He shook Mistress Ward by the hand, saluted me on both cheeks, and vowed I was the precise counterpart of my mother, who at my age, he said, was the prettiest Lancashire witch that ever he had looked upon. He seemed to me not so old as I did suppose him to be, lean of body and something low of stature, with a long visage and a little sharp beard upon the chin of a brown color; a countenance not very grave, and, for his age, wanting the authority of gray hairs. He conducted me to mine aunt's chamber, who was seated in an easy-chair near unto the window, with a cat upon her knees and a tambour-frame before her. She oped her arms and kissed me with great affection, and I, sliding down, knelt at her feet and prayed her to be a good mother to me, which was what my father had charged me to do when I should come into her presence. She raised me with her hand and made me sit on a stool beside her, and stroking my face gently, gazed upon it, and said it put her in mind of both of my parents, for that I had my father's brow and eyes, and my mother's mouth and dimpling smiles.

"Mr. Congleton," she cried, "you do hear what this wench saith. I pray you to bear it in mind, and how near in blood she is to me, so that you may show her favor when I am gone, which may be sooner than you think for."

I looked up into her face greatly concerned that she was like so soon to die. Methought she had the semblance of one in good health and a reasonable good color in her cheeks, and I perceived Mr. Congleton did smile as he answered:

"I will show favor to thy pretty niece, good Moll, I promise thee, be thou alive or be thou dead; but if the leeches are to be credited, who do affirm thou hast the best strength and stomach of the twain, thou art more like to bury me than I thee."

Upon which the good lady did sigh deeply and cast up her eyes and lifted up her hands as one grievously injured, and he cried:

"Prithee, sweetheart, take it not amiss, for beshrew me if I be not willing to grant thee to be as diseased as will pleasure thee, so that thou wilt continue to eat and sleep as well as thou dost at the present and so keep thyself from dying."

Upon which she said that she did admire how a man could have so much cruelty as to jest and jeer at her ill-health, but that she would spend no more of her breath upon him; and turning toward me she asked a store of questions anent my father, whom for many years she had not seen, and touching the manner of my mother's death, at the mention of which my tears flowed afresh, which caused her also to weep; and calling for her women she bade one of them bring her some hartshorn, for that sorrow, she said, would occasion the vapors to rise in her head, and the other she sent for to fetch her case of trinkets, for that she would wear the ring her brother had presented her with some years back, in which was a stone which doth cure melancholy. When the case was brought she displayed before my eyes its rich contents, and gifted me with a brooch set with turquoises, the wearing of which, she said, doth often keep persons from falling into divers sorts of peril. Then presently kissing me she said she felt fatigued, and would send for her daughters to take charge of me; who, when they came, embraced me with exceeding great affection, and carried me to what had been their schoolroom and was now Mrs. Ward's chamber, who no longer was their governess, they said, but as a friend abode in the house for to go abroad with them, their mother being of so delicate a constitution that she seldom left her room. Next to this chamber was a closet, wherein Kate said I should lie, and as it is one I inhabited for a long space of time, and the remembrance of which doth connect itself with very many events which, as they did take place, I therein mused on, and prayed or wept, or sometimes laughed over in solitude, I will here set down what it was like when first I saw it.

The bed was in an alcove, closed in the day by fair curtains of taffety; and the walls, which were in wood, had carvings above the door and over the chimney of very dainty workmanship. The floor was strewn with dried neatly-cut rushes, and in the projecting space where the window was, a table was set, and two chairs with backs and seats cunningly furnished with tapestry. In another recess betwixt the alcove and the chimney stood a praying stool and a desk with a cushion for a book to lie on. Ah, me! how often has my head rested on that cushion and my knees on that stool when my heart has been too full to utter other prayers than a "God ha' mercy on me!" which at such times broke as a cry from an overcharged breast. But, oh! what a vain pleasure I did take on that first day in the bravery of this little chamber, which Kate said was to be mine own! With what great contentment I viewed each part of it, and looked out of the window on the beds of flowers which did form a mosaical floor in the garden around the house, in the midst of which was a fair pond whose shaking crystal mirrored the shrubs which grew about it, and a thicket beyond, which did appear to me a place for pleasantness and not unfit to flatter solitariness, albeit so close unto the city. Beyond were the bishop's grounds, and I could smell the scent of roses coming thence as the wind blew. I could have stood there many hours gazing on this new scene, but that my cousins brought me down to sup with them in the garden, which was not fairer in natural ornaments than in artificial inventions. The table was set in a small banqueting-house among certain pleasant trees near to a pretty water-work; and now I had leisure to scan my cousins' faces and compare what I did notice in them with what Mistress Ward had said the first night of our journey.

Kate, the eldest of the three, was in sooth a very fair creature, proportioned without any fault, and by nature endowed with the most delightful colors; but there was a made countenance about her mouth, between simpering and smiling, and somewhat in her bowed-down head which seemed to languish with over-much idleness, and an inviting look in her eyes as if they would over-persuade those she spoke to, which betokened a lack of those nobler powers of the mind which are the highest gifts of womanhood. Polly's face fault-finding wits might scoff at as too little for the rest of the body, her features as not so well proportioned as Kate's, and her skin somewhat browner than doth consist with beauty; but in her eyes there was a cheerfulness as if nature smiled in them, in her mouth so pretty a demureness, and in her countenance such a spark of wit that, if it struck not with admiration, filled with delight. No indifferent soul there was which, if it resisted making her its princess, would not long to have such a playfellow. Muriel, the youngest of these sisters, was deformed in shape, sallow in hue, in speech, as Mistress Ward had said, slow; but withal in her eyes, which were deep-set, there was lacking neither the fire which betokens intelligence, nor the sweetness which commands affection, and somewhat in her plain face which, though it may not be called beauty, had some of its qualities. Methought it savored more of heaven than earth. The ill-shaped body seemed but a case for a soul the fairness of which did shine through the foul lineaments which enclosed it. Albeit her lips opened but seldom that evening, only twice or thrice, and they were common words she uttered and fraught with hesitation, my heart did more incline toward her than to the pretty Kate or the lively Polly.

An hour before we retired to rest, Mr. Congleton came into the garden, and brought with him Mr. Swithin Wells and Mr. Bryan Lacy, two gentlemen who lived also in Holborn; the latter of which, Polly whispered in mine ear, was her sister Kate's suitor. Talk was ministered among them touching the queen's marriage with Monsieur; which, as Mr. Rookwood had said, was broken off; but that day they had heard that M. de la Motte had proposed to her majesty the Due d'Alençon, who would be more complying, he promised, touching religion than his brother. She inquired of the prince's age, and of his height; to the which he did answer, "About your majesty's own height." But her highness would not be so put off, and willed the ambassador to write for the precise measurement of the prince's stature.

"She will never marry," quoth Mr. Wells, "but only amuse the French court and her council with further negotiations touching this new suitor, as heretofore anent the archduke and Monsieur. But I would to God her majesty were well married, and to a Catholic prince; which would do us more good than anything else which can be thought of."

"What news did you hear, sir, of Mr. Felton?" Mistress Ward asked. Upon which their countenances fell; and one of them answered that that gentleman had been racked the day before, but steadily refused, though in the extremity of torture, to name his accomplices; and would give her majesty no title but that of the Pretender; which they said was greatly to be regretted, and what no other Catholic had done. But when his sentence was read to him, for that he was to die on Friday, he drew from his finger a ring, which had diamonds in it, and was worth four hundred pounds, and requested the Earl of Sussex to give it to the queen, in token that he bore her no ill-will or malice, but rather the contrary.

Mr. Wells said he was a gentleman of very great heart and noble disposition, but for his part he would as lief this ring had been sold, and the money bestowed on the poorer sort of prisoners in Newgate, than see it grace her majesty's finger; who would thus play the hangman's part, who inherits the spoils of such as he doth put to death. But the others affirmed it was done in a Christian manner, and so greatly to be commended; and that Mr. Felton, albeit he was somewhat rash in his actions, and by some titled Don Magnifico, by reason of a certain bravery in his style of dress and fashion of speaking, which smacked of Monsieur Traveller, was a right worthy gentleman, and his death a blow to his friends, amongst whom there were some, nevertheless, to be found who did blame him for the act which had brought him into trouble. Mistress Ward cried, that such as fell into trouble, be the cause ever so good, did always find those who would blame them. Mr. Lacy said, one should not cast himself into danger wilfully, but when occasion offered take it with patience. Polly replied, that some were so prudent, occasions never came to them. And then those two fell to disputing, in a merry but withal sharp fashion. As he did pick his words, and used new-fangled terms, and she spoke roundly and to the point, methinks she was the nimblest in this encounter of wit.

Meanwhile Mr. Wells asked Mr. Congleton if he had had news from the north, where much blood was spilt since the rising; and he apprehended that his kinsmen in Richmondshire should suffer under the last orders sent to Sir George Bowes by my Lord Sussex. But Mr. Congleton did minister to him this comfort, that if they were noted wealthy, and had freeholds, it was the queen's special commandment they should not be executed, but two hundred of the commoner sort to lose their lives in each town; which was about one to each five.

"But none of note?" quoth Mr. Wells.

"None which can pay the worth of their heads," Mr. Congleton replied.

"And who, then, doth price them?" asked Kate, in a languishing voice.

"Nay, sister," quoth Polly, "I warrant thee they do price themselves; for he that will not pay well for his head must needs opine he hath a worthless one."

Upon which Mr. Lacy said to Kate, "One hundred angels would not pay for thine, sweet Kate."

"Then she must needs be an archangel, sir," quoth Polly, "if she be of greater worth than one hundred angels."

"Ah, me!" cried Kate, very earnestly, "I would I had but half one hundred gold-pieces to buy me a gown with!"

"Hast thou not gowns enough, wench?" asked her father. "Methought thou wert indifferently well provided in that respect."

"Ah, but I would have, sir, such a velvet suit as I did see some weeks back at the Italian house in Cheapside, where the ladies of the court do buy their vestures. It had a border the daintiest I ever beheld, all powdered with gold and pearls. Ruffiano said it was the rarest suit he had ever made; and he is the Queen of France's tailor, which Sir Nicholas Throgmorton did secretly entice away, by the queen's desire, from that court to her own."

"And what fair nymph owns this rare suit, sweetest Kate?" Mr. Lacy asked. "I'll warrant none so fair that it should become her, or rather that she should become it, more than her who doth covet it."

"I know not if she be fair or foul," quoth Kate, "but she is the Lady Mary Howard, one of the maids of honor of her majesty, and so may wear what pleaseth her."

"By that token of the gold and pearls," cried Mr. Wells, "I doubt not but 'tis the very suit anent which the court have been wagging their tongues for the last week; and if it be so, indeed, Mistress Kate, you have no need to envy the poor lady that doth own it."

Kate protested she had not envied her, and taxed Mr. Wells with unkindness that he did charge her with it; and for all he could say would not be pacified, but kept casting up her eyes, and the tears streaming down her lovely cheeks. Upon which Mr. Lacy cried:

"Sweet one, thou hast indeed no cause to envy her or any one else, howsoever rare or dainty their suits may be; for thy teeth are more beauteous than pearls, and thine hair more bright than the purest gold, and thine eyes more black and soft than the finest velvet, which nature so made that we might bear their wonderful shining, which else had dazzled us:" and so went on till her weeping was stayed, and then Mr. Wells said:

"The lady who owned that rich suit, which I did falsely and feloniously advance Mistress Kate did envy, had not great or long comfort in its possession; for it is very well known at court, and hence bruited in the city, what passed at Richmond last week concerning this rare vesture. It pleased not the queen, who thought it did exceed her own. And one day her majesty did send privately for it, and put it on herself, and came forth into the chamber among the ladies. The kirtle and border was far too short for her majesty's height, and she asked every one how they liked her new fancied suit. At length she asked the owner herself if it was not made too short and ill-becoming; which the poor lady did presently consent to. Upon which her highness cried: 'Why, then, if it become me not as being too short, I am minded it shall never become thee as being too fine, so it fitteth neither well.' This sharp rebuke so abashed the poor lady that she never adorned her herewith any more."

"Ah," cried Mr. Congleton, laughing, "her majesty's bishops do come by reproofs as well as her maids. Have you heard how one Sunday, last April, my Lord of London preached to the queen's majesty, and seemed to touch on the vanity of decking the body too finely. Her grace told the ladies after the sermon, that if the bishop held more discourse on such matters she would fit him for heaven, but he should walk thither without a staff and leave his mantle behind him."

"Nay," quoth Mr. Wells, "but if she makes such as be Catholics taste of the sharpness of the rack, and the edge of the

axe, she doth then treat those of her own way of thinking with the edge of her wit and the sharpness of her tongue. 'Tis reported, Mr. Congleton, I know not with what truth, that a near neighbor of yours has been served with a letter, by which a new sheep is let into his pastures."

"What," cried Polly, "is Pecora Campi to roam amidst the roses, and go in and out at his pleasure through the bishop's gate? The 'sweet lids' have then danced away a large slice of the Church's acres. But what, I pray you, sir, did her majesty write?"

"Even this," quoth her father, "I had it from Sir Robert Arundell: 'Proud Prelate! you know what you were before I made you, and what you are now. If you do not immediately comply with my request, I will unfrock you, by God!—ELIZABETH R.'"

"Our good neighbor," saith Polly, "must show a like patience with Job, and cry out touching his bishopric, 'The queen did give it; the queen doth take it away; the will of the queen be done.'"

"He is like to be encroached upon yet further by yon cunning Sir Christopher," Mr. Wells said; "I'll warrant Ely Place will soon be Hatton Garden."

"Well, for a neighbor," answered Polly, "I'd as soon have the queen's lids as her hedge-bishop, and her sheep as her shepherd. 'Tis not all for love of her sweet dancer her majesty doth despoil him. She never, 'tis said, hath forgiven him that he did remonstrate with her for keeping a crucifix and lighted tapers in her own chapel, and that her fool, set on by such as were of the same mind with him, did one day put them out."

In suchlike talk the time was spent; and when the gentlemen had taken leave, we retired to rest; and being greatly tired, I slept heavily, and had many quaint dreams, in which past scenes and present objects were curiously blended with the tales I had read on the journey, and the discourse I had heard that evening. When I awoke in the morning, my thoughts first flew to my father, of whom I had a very passionate desire to receive tidings. When my waiting-woman entered, with a letter in her hand, I foolishly did fancy it came from him, which could scarcely be, so soon after our coming to town; but I quickly discerned, by the rose-colored string which it was bounden with, and then the handwriting, that it was not from him, but from her whom, next to him, I most desired to hear from, to wit, the Countess of Surrey. That sweet lady wrote that she had an exceeding great desire to see me, and would be more beholden to my aunt than she could well express, if she would confer on her so great a benefit as to permit me to spend the day with her at the Charter House, and she would send her coach for to convey me there, which should never have done her so much good pleasure before as in that service. And more to that effect, with many kind and gracious words touching our previous meeting and correspondence.

When I was dressed, I took her ladyship's letter to Mrs. Ward, who was pleased to say she would herself ask permission for me to wait upon that noble lady; but that her ladyship might not be at the charge of sending for me, she would herself, if my aunt gave her license, carry me to the Charter House, for that she was to spend some hours that day with friends in the city, and "it would greatly content her," she added, "to further the expressed wish of the young countess, whose grandmother, Lady Mounteagle, and so many of her kinsfolk, were Catholics, or at the least, good friends to such as were so." My aunt did give leave for me to go, as she mostly did to whatsoever Mrs. Ward proposed, whom she trusted entirely, with a singular great affection, only bidding her to pray that she might not die in her absence, for that she feared some peaches she had eaten the day before had disordered her, and that she had heard of one who had died of the plague some weeks before in the Tower. Mrs. Ward exhorted her to be of good cheer, and to comfort herself both ways, for that the air of Holborn was so good, the plague was not likely to come into it, and that the kernels of peaches being medicinal, would rather prove an antidote to pestilence than an occasion to it; and left her better satisfied, insomuch that she sent for another dish of peaches for to secure the benefit. Before I left, Kate bade me note the fashion of the suit my Lady Surrey did wear, and if she had on her own hair, and if she dyed it, and if she covered her bosom, or wore plaits, and if her stomacher was straight and broad, or formed a long waist, extending downward, and many more points touching her attire, which I cannot now call to mind. As I went through the hall to the steps where Mistress Ward was already standing, Muriel came hurrying toward me, with a faint color coming and going in her sallow cheek, and twice she tried to speak and failed. But when I kissed her she put her lips close to my ear and whispered,

"Sweet little cousin, there be in London prisoners in a very bad plight, in filthy dungeons, because of their religion. The noble young Lady Surrey hath a tender heart toward such if she do but hear of them. Prithee, sweet coz, move her to send them relief in food, money, or clothing."

Then Mistress Ward called to me to hasten, and I ran away, but Muriel stood at the window, and as we passed she kissed her hand, in which was a gold angel, which my father had gifted me with at parting.

"Mrs. Ward," I said, as we went along, "my cousin Muriel is not fair, and yet her face doth commend itself to my fancy more than many fair ones I have seen; it is so kindly."

"I have even from her infancy loved her," she answered, "and thus much I will say of her, that many have been titled saints who had not, methinks, more virtue than I have noticed in Muriel."

"Doth she herself visit the prisoners she spoke of?"

"She and I do visit them and carry them relief when we can by any means prevail with the gaolers from compassion or through bribing of them to admit us. But it is not always convenient to let this be known, not even at home, but I ween, Constance, as thou wilt have me to call thee so, that Muriel saw in thee—for she has a wonderful penetrative spirit—that thou dost know when to speak and when to keep silence."

"And may I go with you to the prisons?" I asked with a hot feeling in my heart, which I had not felt since I had left home.

"Thou art far too young," she answered. "But I will tell thee what thou canst do. Thou mayst work and beg for these good men, and not be ashamed of so doing. None may visit them who have not made up their minds to die, if they should be denounced for their charity."

"But Muriel is young," I answered. "Hath she so resolved?"

"Muriel is young," was the reply; "but she is one in whom wisdom and holiness have forestalled age. For two years that she hath been my companion on such occasions, she has each day prepared for martyrdom by such devout exercises as strengthen the soul at the approach of death."

"And Kate and Polly," I asked, "are they privy to the dangers that you do run, and have they no like ambition?"

"Rather the contrary," she answered; "but neither they nor any one else in the house is fully acquainted with these secret errands save Mr. Congleton, and he did for a long time refuse his daughter license to go with me, until at last, by prayers and tears, she won him over to suffer it. But he will never permit thee to do the like, for that thy father hath intrusted thee to his care for greater safety in these troublesome times."

"Pish!" I cried pettishly, "safety has a dull mean sound in it which I mislike. I would I were mine own mistress."

"Wish no such thing, Constance Sherwood," was her grave answer. "Wilfulness was never nurse to virtue, but rather her foe; nor ever did a rebellious spirit prove the herald of true greatness. And now, mark my words. Almighty God hath given thee a friend far above thee in rank, and I doubt not in merit also, but whose faith, if report saith true, doth run great dangers, and with few to advise her in these evil days in which we live. Peradventure he hath appointed thee a work in a palace as weighty as that of others in a dungeon. Set thyself to it with thy whole heart, and such prayers as draw down blessings from above. There be great need in these times to bear in remembrance what the Lord says, that he will be ashamed in heaven before his angels of such as be ashamed of him on earth. And many there are, I greatly fear, who though they be Catholics, do assist the heretics by their cowardice to suppress the true religion in this land; and I pray to God this may never be our case. Yet I would not have thee to be rash in speech, using harsh words, or needlessly rebuking others, which would not become thy age, or be fitting and modest in one of inferior rank, but only where faith and conscience be in question not to be afraid to speak. And now God bless thee, who should be an Esther in this house, wherein so many true confessors of Christ some years ago surrendered their lives in great misery and torments, rather than yield up their faith."

This she said as we stopped at the gate of the Charter House, where one of the serving-men of the Countess of Surrey was waiting to conduct me to her lodgings, having had orders to that effect. She left me in his charge, and I followed him across the square, and through the cloisters and passages which led to the gallery, where my lady's chamber was situated. My heart fluttered like a frightened caged bird during that walk, for there was a solemnity about the place such as I had not been used to, and which filled me with apprehension lest I should be wanting in due respect where so much state was carried on. But when the door was opened at one end of the gallery, and my sweet lady ran out to meet me with a cry of joy, the silly heart, like a caught bird, nestled in her embrace, and my lips joined themselves to hers in a fond manner, as if not willing to part again, but by fervent kisses supplying the place of words, which were lacking, to express the great mutual joy of that meeting, until at last my lady raised her head, and still holding my hands, cried out as she gazed on my face:

"You are more welcome, sweet one, than my poor words can say. I pray you, doff your hat and mantle, and come and sit by me, for 'tis a weary while since we have met, and those are gone from us who loved us then, and for their sakes we must needs love one another dearly, if our hearts did not of themselves move us unto it, which indeed they do, if I may judge of yours, Mistress Constance, by mine own."

Then we kissed again, and she passed her arm around my neck with so many graceful endearments, in which were blended girlish simplicity and a youthful yet matronly dignity, that I felt that day the love which, methinks, up to that time had had its seat mostly in the fancy, take such root in mine heart, that it never lost its hold on it.

At the first our tongues were somewhat tied by joy and lack of knowledge how to begin to converse on the many subjects whereon both desired to hear the other speak, and the disuse of such intercourse as maketh it easy to discourse on what the heart is full of. Howsoever, Lady Surrey questioned me touching my father, and what had befallen us since my mother's death. I told her that he had left his home, and sent me to London by reason of the present troubles; but without mention of what I did apprehend to be his further intent. And she then said that the concern she was in anent her good father the Duke of Norfolk did cause her to pity those who were also in trouble.

"But his grace," I answered, "is, I hope, in safety at present, and in his own house?"

"In this house, indeed," she did reply, "but a strait prisoner in Sir Henry Neville's custody, and not suffered to see his friends without her majesty's especial permission. He did send for his son and me last evening, having obtained leave for to see us, which he had not done since the day my lord and I were married again, by his order, from the Tower, out of fear lest our first marriage, being made before Phil was quite twelve years old, it should have been annulled by order of the queen, or by some other means. It grieved me much to notice how gray his hair had grown, and that his eyes lacked their wonted fire. When we entered he was sitting in a chair, leaning backward, with his head almost over the back of it, looking at a candle which burnt before him, and a letter in his hand. He smiled when he saw us, and said the greatest comfort he had in the world was that we were now so joined together that nothing could ever part us. You see, Mistress Constance," she said, with a pretty blush and smile, "I now do wear my wedding-ring below the middle joint."

"And do you live alone with my lord now in these grand chambers?" I said, looking round at the walls, which were hung with rare tapestry and fine pictures.

"Bess is with me," she answered, "and so will remain I hope until she is fourteen, when she will be married to my Lord William, my lord's brother. Our Moll is likewise here, and was to have wedded my Lord Thomas when she did grow up;

but she is not like to live, the physicians do say."

The sweet lady's eyes filled with tears, but, as if unwilling to entertain me with her griefs, she quickly changed discourse, and spoke of my coming unto London, and inquired if my aunt's house were a pleasant one, and if she was like to prove a good kinswoman to me. I told her how comfortable had been the manner of my reception, and of my cousins' goodness to me; at the which she did express great contentment, and would not be satisfied until I had described each of them in turn, and what good looks or what good qualities they had; which I could the more easily do that the first could be discerned even at first sight, and touching the last, I had warrant from Mrs. Ward's commendations, which had more weight than my own speerings, even if I had been a year and not solely a day in their company. She was vastly taken with what I related to her of Muriel, and that she did visit and relieve poor persons and prisoners, and wished she had liberty to do the like; and with a lovely blush and a modest confusion, as of one who doth not willingly disclose her good deeds, she told me all the time she could spare she did employ in making clothes for such as she could hear of, and also salves and cordials (such as she had learnt to compound from her dear grandmother), and privately sent them by her waiting-maid, who was a young gentlewoman of good family, who had lost her parents, and was most excellently endowed with virtue and piety.

"Come to my closet, Miss Constance," she said, "and I doubt not but we shall find Milicent at work, if so be she has not gone abroad to-day on some such errand of charity." Upon which she led the way through a second chamber, still more richly fitted up than the first, into a smaller one, wherein, when she opened the door, I saw a pretty living picture of two girls at a table, busily engaged with a store of bottles and herbs and ointments, which were strewn upon it in great abundance. One of them was a young maid, who was measuring drops into a phial, with a look so attentive upon it as if that little bottle had been the circle of her thoughts. She was very fair and slim, and had a delicate appearance, which minded me of a snow-drop; and indeed, by what my lady said, she was a floweret which had blossomed amidst the frosts and cold winds of adversity. By her side was the most gleesome wench, of not more than eight years, I ever did set eyes on; of a fatness that at her age was comely, and a face so full of waggery and saucy mirth, that but to look upon it drove away melancholy. She was compounding in a cup a store of various liquids, which she said did cure shrewishness, and said she would pour some into her nurse's night-draught, to mend her of that disorder.

"Ah, Nan," she cried, as we entered, "I'll help thee to a taste of this rare medicine, for methinks thou art somewhat shrewish also and not so conformable to thy husband's will, my lady, as a good wife should be. By that same token that my lord willed to take me behind him on his horse a gay ride round the square, and, forsooth, because I had not learnt my lesson, thou didst shut me up to die of melancholy. Ah, me! My mother had a maid called Barbara—

'Sing willow, willow, willow.'

That is one of Phil's favorite songs. Milicent, methinks I will call thee Barbara, and thou shalt sing with me—

'The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,—
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom,'—

There, put thy hand in that fashion—

'her head on her knee,'—

Nay, prithe, thou must bend thy head lower—

'Sing willow, willow, willow.'"

"My lady," said the gentlewoman, smiling, "I promise you I dare not take upon me to fulfil my tasks with credit to myself or your ladyship, if Mistress Bess hath the run of this room, and doth prepare cordials after her fashion from your ladyship's stores."

"Ah, Bess!" quoth my lady, shaking her finger at the saucy one; "I'll deliver thee up to Mrs. Fawcett, who will give thee a taste of the place of correction; and Phil is not here to-day to beg thee off. And now, good Milicent, prithe make a bundle of such clothes as we have in hand, and such comforts as be suitable to such as are sick and in prison, for this sweet young lady hath need of them for some who be in that sad plight."

"And, my lady," quoth the gentlewoman, "I would fain learn how to dress wounds when the flesh is galled; for I do sometimes meet with poor men who do suffer in that way, and would relieve them if I could."

"I know," I cried, "of a rare ointment my mother used to make for that sort of hurt; and if my Lady Surrey gives me license, I will remember you, mistress, with the receipt of it."

My lady, with a kindly smile and expressed thanks, assented; and when we left the closet, I greatly commending the young gentlewoman's beauty, she said that beauty in her was the worst half of her merit.

"But, Mistress Constance," she said, when we had returned to the saloon, "I may not send her to such poor men, and above all, priests, who be in prison for their faith, as I hear, to my great sorrow, there be so many at this time, and who suffer great hardships, more than can be easily believed, for she is Protestant, and not through conforming to the times, but so settled in her way of thinking, and earnest therein, having been brought up to it, that she would not so much as open a Catholic book or listen to a word in defence of papists."

"But how, then, doth she serve a Catholic lady?" I asked, with a beating heart; and oh, with what a sad one did hear her answer, for it was as follows:

"Dear Constance, I must needs obey those who have a right to command me, such as his grace my good father and my

husband; and they are both very urgent and resolved that by all means I shall conform to the times. So I do go to Protestant service; but I use at home my prayers, as my grandmother did teach me; and Phil says them too, when I can get him to say any."

"Then you do not hear mass," I said, sorrowfully, "or confess your sins to a priest?"

"No," she answered, in a sad manner; "I once asked my Lady Lumley, who is a good Catholic, if she could procure I should see a priest with that intent at Arundel House; but she turned pale as a sheet, and said that to get any one to be reconciled who had once conformed to the Protestant religion, was to run danger of death; and albeit for her own part she would not refuse to die for so good a cause, she dared not bring her father's gray hairs to the block."

As we were holding this discourse—and she so intent in speaking, and I in listening, that we had not heard the door open—Lord Surrey suddenly stood before us. His height made him more than a boy, and his face would not allow him a man; for the rest, he was well-proportioned, and did all things with so notable a grace, that nature had stamped him with the mark of true nobility. He made a slight obeisance to me, and I noticed that his cheek was flushed, and that he grasped the handle of his sword with an anger which took not away the sweetness of his countenance, but gave it an amiable sort of fierceness. Then, as if unable to restrain himself, he burst forth,

"Nan, an order is come for his grace to be forthwith removed to the Tower, and I'll warrant that was the cause he was suffered to see us yesterday. God send it prove not a final parting!"

"Is his grace gone?" cried the countess, starting to her feet, and clasping her hands with a sorrowful gesture.

"He goes even now," answered the earl; and both went to the window, whence they could see the coach in which the duke was for the third time carried from his home to the last lodging he was to have on this earth. Oh, what a sorrowful sight it was for those young eyes which gazed on the sad removal of the sole parent both had left! How her tears did flow silently like a stream from a deep fount, and his with wild bursts of grief, like the gushings of a torrent over rocks! His head fell on her shoulder, and as she threw her arms round him, her tears wetted his hair. Methought then that in the pensive tenderness of her downcast face there was somewhat of motherly as well as of wifely affection. She put her arm in his, and led him from the room; and I remained alone for a short time entertaining myself with sad thoughts anent these two young noble creatures, who at so early an age had become acquainted with so much sorrow, and hoping that the darkness which did beset the morning of their lives might prove but as the clouds which at times deface the sky before a brilliant sunshine doth take possession of it, and dislodge these deceitful harbingers, which do but heighten in the end by contrast the resplendency they did threaten to obscure.

CHAPTER VIII.

After I had been musing a little while, Mistress Bess ran into the room, and cried to some one behind her:

"Nan's friend is here, and she is mine too, for we all played in a garden with her when I was little. Prithee, come and see her." Then turning to me, but yet holding the handle of the door, she said: "Will is so unmannerly, I be ashamed of him. He will not so much as show himself."

"Then, prithee, come alone," I answered. Upon which she came and sat on my knee, with her arm round my neck, and whispered in mine ear:

"Moll is very sick to-day; will you not see her, Mistress Sherwood?"

"Yea, if so be I have license," I answered; and she, taking me by the hand, offered to lead me up the stairs to the room where she lay. I, following her, came to the door of the chamber, but would not enter till Bess fetched the nurse, who was the same had been at Sherwood Hall, and who, knowing my name, was glad to see me, and with a curtsy invited me in. White as a lily was the little face resting on a pillow, with its blue eyes half shut, and a store of golden hair about it, which minded me of the glories round angels' heads in my mother's missal.

"Sweet lamb!" quoth the nurse, as I stooped to kiss the pale forehead. "She be too good for this world. Ofttimes she doth babble in her sleep of heaven, and angels, and saints, and a wreath of white roses wherewith a bright lady will crown her."

"Kiss my lips," the sick child softly whispered, as I bent over her bed. Which when I did, she asked, "What is your name? I mind your face." When I answered, "Constance Sherwood," she smiled, as if remembering where we had met. "I heard my grandam calling me last night," she said; "I be going to her soon." Then a fit of pain came on, and I had to leave her. She did go from this world a few days after; and the nurse then told me her last words had been "Jesu! Mary!"

That day I did converse again alone with my Lady Surrey after dinner, and walked in the garden; and when we came in, before I left, she gave me a purse with some gold pieces in it, which the earl her husband willed to bestow on Catholics in prison for their faith. For she said he had so tender and compassionate a spirit, that if he did but hear of one in distress he would never rest until he had relieved him; and out of the affection he had for Mr. Martin, who was one while his tutor, he was favorably inclined toward Catholics, albeit himself resolved to conform to the queen's religion. When Mistress Ward came for me, the countess would have her shown into her chamber, and would not be contented without she ordered her coach to carry us back to Holborn, that we might take with us the clothes and cordials which she did bestow upon us for our poor clients. She begged Mrs. Ward's prayers for his grace, that he might soon be set at liberty; for she said in a pretty manner, "It must needs be that Almighty God takes most heed of the prayers of such as visit him in his affliction in the person of poor prisoners; and she hoped one day to be free to do so herself." Then she

questioned of the wants of those Mistress Ward had at that time knowledge of; and when she heard in what sore plight they stood, it did move her to so great compassion, that she declared it would be now one of her chiefest cares and pleasures in life to provide conveniences for them. And she besought Mistress Ward to be a good friend to her with mine aunt, and procure her to permit of my frequent visits to Howard House, as the Charter House is now often called: which would be the greatest good she could do her; and that she would be most glad also if she herself would likewise favor her sometimes with her company; which, "if it be not for mine own sake, Mistress Ward," she sweetly said, "let it be for his sake who, in the person of his afflicted priests, doth need assistance."

When we reached home, we hid what we had brought under our mantles, and then in Mistress Ward's chamber, where Muriel followed us. When the door was shut we displayed these jewelled stores before her pleased eyes, which did beam with joy at the sight.

"Ah, Muriel," cried Mistress Ward, "we have found an Esther in a palace; and I pray to God there may be other such in this town we ken not of, who in secret do yet bear affection to the ancient faith."

Muriel said in her slow way: "We must needs go to the Clink to-morrow; for there is there a priest whose flesh has fallen off his feet by reason of his long stay in a pestered and infected dungeon. Mr. Roper told my father of him, and he says the gaoler will let us in if he be reasonably dealt with."

"We will essay your ointment, Mistress Sherwood," said Mistress Ward, "if so be you can make it in time."

"I care not if I sit up all night," I cried, "if any one will buy me the herbs I have need of for the compounding thereof." Which Muriel said she would prevail on one of the servants to do.

The bell did then ring for supper; and when we were all seated, Kate was urgent with me for to tell her how my Lady Surrey was dressed; which I declared to her as follows: "She had on a brown *juste au corps* embroidered, with puffed sleeves, and petticoat braided of a deeper nuance; and on her head a lace cap, and a lace handkerchief on her bosom."

"And, prithee, what jewels had she on, sweet coz?"

"A long double chain of gold and a brooch of pearls," I answered.

"And his grace of Norfolk is once more removed to the Tower," said Mr. Congleton sorrowfully. "'Tis like to kill him soon, and so save her majesty's ministers the pains to bring him to the block. His physician, Dr. Rhuenbeck, says he is afflicted with the dropsy."

Polly said she had been to visit the Countess of Northumberland, who was so grievously afflicted at her husband's death, that it was feared she would fall sick of grief if she had not company to divert her from her sad thoughts.

"Which I warrant none could effect so well as thee, wench," her father said; "for, beshrew me, if thou wouldst not make a man laugh on his way to the scaffold with thy mad talk. And was the poor lady of better cheer for thy company?"

"Yea, for mine," Polly answered; "or else for M. de la Motte's, who came in to pay his *devoirs* to her, for the first time, I take it, since her lord's death. And after his first speech, which caused her to weep a little, he did carry on so brisk a discourse as I never noticed any but a Frenchman able to do. And she was not the worst pleased with it that the cunning gentleman did interweave it with anecdotes of the queen's majesty; which, albeit he related them with gravity, did carry somewhat of ridicule in them. Such as of her grace's dancing on Sunday before last at Lord Northampton's wedding, and calling him to witness her paces, so that he might let monsieur know how high and disposedly she danced; so that he would not have had cause to complain, in case he had married her, that she was a *boiteuse*, as had been maliciously reported of her by the friends of the Queen of Scots. And also how, some days since, she had flamed out in great choler when he went to visit her at Hampton Court; and told him, so loud that all her ladies and officers could hear her discourse, that Lord North had let her know the queen-mother and the Duke of Guise had dressed up a buffoon in an English fashion, and called him a *Milor du Nord*; and that two female dwarfs had been likewise dressed up in that queen's chamber, and invited to mimic her, the queen of England, with great derision and mockery. 'I did assure her,' M. de la Motte said, 'with my hand on my heart, and such an aggrieved visage, that she must needs have accepted my words as true, that Milor North had mistaken the whole intent of what he had witnessed, from his great ignorance of the French tongue, which did render him a bad interpreter between princes; for that the queen-mother did never cease to praise her English majesty's beauty to her son, and all her good qualities, which greatly appeased her grace, who desired to be excused if she, likewise out of ignorance of the French language, had said aught unbecoming touching the queen-mother.' 'Tis a rare dish of fun, fit to set before a king, to hear this Monsieur Ambassador speak of the queen when none are present but such as make an idol of her, as some do."

"For my part," said her father, when she paused in her speech, "I mislike men with double visages and double tongues; and methinks this monseer hath both, and withal a rare art for what courtiers do call diplomacy, and plain men lying. His speeches to her majesty be so fulsome in her praise, as I have heard some say who are at court, and his flattery so palpable, that they have been ashamed to hear it; but behind her back he doth disclose her failings with an admirable slyness."

"If he be sly," answered Polly, "I'll warrant he finds his match in her majesty."

"Yea," cried Kate, "even as poor Madge Arundell experienced to her cost."

"Ay," quoth Polly, "she catcheth many poor fish, who little know what snare is laid for them."

"And how did her highness catch Mistress Arundell?" I asked.

"In this way, coz," quoth Polly: "she doth often ask the ladies round her chamber, 'If they love to think of marriage?' and

the wise ones do conceal well their liking thereunto, knowing the queen's judgment in the matter. But pretty, simple Madge Arundell, not knowing so deeply as her fellows, was asked one day hereof, and said, 'She had thought much about marriage, if her father did consent to the man she loved.' 'You seem honest, i' fait said the queen; 'I will sue for you your father.' At which the dam was well pleased; and when father, Sir Robert Arundell, came court, the queen questioned him his daughter's marriage, and pressed him to give consent if the match were discreet. Sir Robert, much astonished, said, 'He never had heard his daughter had liking to any man; but he would give his free consent to what was most pleasing to her highness's will and consent.' Then I will do the rest,' saith the queen. Poor Madge was called in, and told by the queen that her father had given his free consent. 'Then,' replied the simple one, 'I shall be happy, an' it please your grace.' 'So thou shalt; but not to be a fool and marry,' said the queen. 'I have his consent given to me, and I vow thou shalt never get it in thy possession. So go-to about thy business. I see thou art a bold one to own thy foolishness so readily.'"

"Ah me!" cried Kate, "I be glad not to be a maid to her majesty; for I would not know how to answer her grace if she should ask me a like question; for if it be bold to say one hath a reasonable desire to be married, I must needs be bold then, for I would not for two thousand pounds break Mr. Lacy's heart; and he saith he will die if I do not marry him. But, Polly, thou wouldst never be at a loss to answer her majesty."

"No more than Pace her fool," quoth Polly, "who, when she said, as he entered the room, 'Now we shall hear of our faults,' cried out, 'Where is the use of speaking of what all the town doth talk of?'"

"The fool should have been whipped," Mistress Ward said.

"For his wisdom, or for his folly, good Mistress Ward?" asked Polly. "If for wisdom, 'tis hard to beat a man for being wise. If for folly, to whip a fool for that he doth follow his calling, and as I be the licensed fool in this house—which I do take to be the highest exercise of wit in these days, when all is turned upside down—I do wish you all good-night, and to be no wiser than is good for your healths, and no more foolish than suffices to lighten the heart;" and so laughing she ran away, and Kate said in a lamentable voice,

"I would I were foolish, if it lightens the heart."

"Content thee, good Kate," I said; but in so low a voice none did hear. And she went on,

"Mr. Lacy is gone to Yorkshire for three weeks, which doth make me more sad than can be thought of."

I smiled; but Muriel, who had not yet oped her lips whilst the others were talking, rising, kissed her sister, and said, "Thou wilt have, sweet one, so great a contentment in his letters as will give thee patience to bear the loss of his good company."

At the which Kate brightened a little. To live with Muriel was a preachment, as I have often had occasion since to find.

On the first Sunday I was at London, we heard mass at the Portuguese ambassador's house, whither many Catholics of his acquaintance resorted for that purpose from our side of the city. In the afternoon a gentleman, who had travelled day and night from Staffordshire on some urgent business, brought me a letter from my father, writ only four days before it came to hand, and about a week after my departure from home. It was as follows:

"MINE OWN DEAR CHILD,—The bearer of this letter hath promised to do me the good service to deliver it to thee as soon as he shall reach London; which, as he did intend to travel day and night, I compute will be no later than the end of this week, or on Sunday at the furthest. And for this his civility I do stand greatly indebted to him; for in these straitened times 'tis no easy matter to get letters conveyed from one part of the kingdom to another without danger of discovering that which for the present should rather be concealed. I received notice two days ago from Mistress Ward's sister of your good journey and arrival at London; and I thank God, my very good child, that he has had thee in his holy keeping and bestowed thee under the roof of my good sister and brother; so that, with a mind at ease in respect to thee, my dear sole earthly treasure, I may be free to follow whatever course his providence may appoint to me, who, albeit unworthy, do aspire to leave all things to follow him. And indeed he hath already, at the outset of my wanderings, sweetly disposed events in such wise that chance hath proved, as it were, the servant of his providence; and, when I did least look for it, by a divine ordination furnished me, who so short a time back parted from a dear child, with the company of one who doth stand to me in lieu of her who, by reason of her tender sex and age, I am compelled to send from me. For being necessitated, for the preservation of my life, to make seldom any long stay in one place, I had need of a youth to ride with me on those frequent journeys, and keep me company in such places as I may withdraw unto for quietness and study. So being in Stafford some few days back, I inquired of the master of the inn where I did lay for one night, if it were not possible to get in that city a youth to serve me as a page, whom I said I would maintain as a gentleman if he had learning, nurture, and behavior becoming such a person. He said his son, who was a schoolmaster, had a youth for a pupil who carried virtue in his very countenance; but that he was the child of a widow, who, he much feared, would not easily be persuaded to part from him. Thereupon I expressed a great desire to have a sight of this youth and charged him to deal with his master so that he should be sent to my lodgings; which, when he came there, lo and behold, I perceived with no small amazement that he was no other than Edmund Genings, who straightway ran into my arms, and with much ado restrained himself from weeping, so greatly was he moved with conflicting passions of present joy and recollected sorrow at this our unlooked-for meeting; and truly mine own contentment therein was in no wise less than his. He told me that his mother's poverty increasing, she had moved from Lichfield, where it was more bitter to her, by reason of the affluence in which she had before lived in that city, to Stafford, where none did know them; and she dwelt in a mean lodging in a poor sort of manner. And whereas he had desired to accept the offer of a stranger, with a view to relieve his mother from the burden of his support, and maybe yield her some assistance in her straits, he now passionately coveted to throw his fortune with mine, and to be entered as a page in my service. But though she had been willing before, from necessity, albeit averse by inclination, to part with him, when she knew me it seemed awhile impossible to gain her consent. Methinks she

was privy to Edmund's secret good opinion of Catholic religion, and feared, if he should live with me, the effect thereof would follow. But her necessities were so sharp, and likewise her regrets that he should lack opportunities for his further advance in learning, which she herself was unable to supply, that at length by long entreaty he prevailed on her to give him license for that which his heart did prompt him to desire for his own sake and hers. And when she had given this consent, but not before, lest it should appear I did seek to bribe her by such offers to so much condescension as she then evinced, I proposed to assist her in any way she wished to the bettering of her fortunes, and said I would do as much whether she suffered her son to abide with me or no: which did greatly work with her to conceive a more favorable opinion of me than she had heretofore held, and to be contented he should remain in my service, as he himself so greatly desired. After some further discourse, it was resolved that I should furnish her with so much money as would pay her debts and carry her to La Rochelle, where her youngest son was with her brother, who albeit he had met with great losses, would nevertheless, she felt assured, assist her in her need. Thus has Edmund become to me less a page than a pupil, less a servant than a son. I will keep a watchful eye over his actions, whom I already perceive to be tractable, capable, willing to learn, and altogether such as his early years did promise he should be. I thank God, who has given me so great a comfort in the midst of so great trials, and to this youth in me a father rather than a master, who will ever deal with him in an honorable and loving manner, both in respect to his own deserts and to her merits, whose prayers have, I doubt not, procured this admirable result of what was in no wise designed, but by God's providence fell out of the asking a simple question in an inn and of a stranger.

"And now, mine only and very dear child, I commend thee to God's holy keeping; and I beseech thee to be as mindful of thy duty to him as thou hast been (and most especially of late) of thine to me; and imprint in thy heart those words of holy writ, 'Not to fear those that kill the body, but cannot destroy the soul;' but withal, in whatever is just and reasonable, and not clearly against Catholic religion, to observe a most exact obedience to such as stand to thee at present in place of thy unworthy father, and who, moreover, are of such virtue and piety as I doubt not would move them rather to give thee an example how to suffer the loss of all things for Christ his sake than to offend him by a contrary disposition. I do write to my good brother by the same convenience to yield him and my sister humble thanks for their great kindness to me in thee, and send this written in haste; for I fear I shall not often have means hereafter. Therefore I desire Almighty God to protect, bless, and establish thee. So in haste, and *in visceribus Christi*, adieu."

The lively joy I received from this letter was greater than I can rehearse, for I had now no longer before my eyes the sorrowful vision of my dear father with none to tend and comfort him in his wanderings; and no less was my contentment that Edmund, my dearly-loved playmate, was now within reach of his good instructions, and free to follow that which I was persuaded his conscience had been prompting him to seek since he had attained the age of reason.

I note not down in this history the many visits I paid to the Charter House that autumn, except to notice the growing care Lady Surrey did take to supply the needs of prisoners and poor people, and how this brought her into frequent occasions of discourse with Mistress Ward and Muriel, who nevertheless, as I also had care to observe, kept these interviews secret, which might have caused suspicion in those who, albeit Catholic, were ill-disposed to adventure the loss of worldly advantages by the profession of what Protestants do term perverse and open papistry. Kate and Polly were of this way of thinking—prudence was ever the word with them when talk of religion was ministered in their presence; and they would not keep as much as a prayer-book in their chambers for fear of evil results. They were sometimes very urgent with their father for to suffer them to attend Protestant service, which they said would not hinder them from hearing mass at convenient times, and saying such prayers as they listed; and Polly the more so that a young gentleman of good birth and high breeding, who conformed to the times, had become a suitor for her hand, and was very strenuous with her on the necessity of such compliance, which nevertheless her father would not allow of. Much company came to the house, both Protestant and Catholic; for my aunt, who was sick at other times, did greatly mend toward the evening. When I was first in London for some weeks, she kept me with her at such times in the parlor, and encouraged me to discourse with the visitors; for she said I had a forwardness and vivacity of speech which, if practised in conversation, would in time obtain for me as great a reputation of wit as Polly ever enjoyed. I was nothing loth to study in this new school, and not slow to improve in it. At the same time I gave myself greatly to the reading of such books as I found in my cousins' chambers; amongst which were some M. de la Motte had lent to Polly, marvellous witty and entertaining, such as *Les Nouvelles de la Reine de Navarre* and the *Cents Histoires tragiques*; and others done in English out of French by Mr. Thomas Fortescue; and a poem, writ by one Mr. Edmund Spenser, very beautiful, and which did so much bewitch me, that I was wont to rise in the night to read it by the light of the moon at my casement window; and the *Morte d' Arthur*, which Mr. Hubert Rookwood had willed me to read, whom I met at Bedford, and which so filled my head with fantastic images and imagined scenes, that I did, as it were, fall in love with Sir Launcelot, and would blush if his name were but mentioned, and wax as angry if his fame were questioned as if he had been a living man, and I in a foolish manner fond of him.

This continued for some little time, and methinks, had it proceeded further, I should have received much damage from a mode of life with so little of discipline in it, and so great incitements to faults and follies which my nature was prone to, but which my conscience secretly reprov'd. And among the many reasons I have to be thankful to Mistress "Ward, that never-to-be-forgotten friend, whose care restrained me in these dangerous courses, partly by compulsion through means of her influence with my aunt and her husband, and partly by such admonitions and counsel as she favored me with, I reckon amongst the greatest that, at an age when the will is weak, albeit the impulses be good, she lent a helping hand to the superior part of my soul to surmount the evil tendencies which bad example on the one hand, and weak indulgence on the other, fostered in me, whose virtuous inclinations had been, up to that time, hedged in by the strong safeguards of parental watchfulness. She procured that I should not tarry, save for brief and scanty spaces of time, in my aunt's parlor when she had visitors, and so contrived that it should be when she herself was present, who, by wholesome checks and studied separation from the rest of the company, reduced my forwardness with just restraints such as became my age. And when she discovered what books I read, oh, with what fervent and strenuous speech she drove into my soul the edge of a salutary remorse; with what tearful eyes and pleading voice she brought before me the memory of my mother's care and my father's love, which had ever kept me from drinking such empoisoned draughts from the well-springs of corruption which in our days books of entertainment too often prove, and if not altogether bad,

yet be such as vitiate the palate and destroy the appetite for higher and purer kinds of mental sustenance. Sharp was her correction, but withal so seasoned with tenderness, and a grief the keenness of which I could discern was heightened by the thought that my two elder cousins (one time her pupils) should be so drawn aside by the world and its pleasures as to forget their pious habits, and minister to others the means of such injury as their own souls had sustained, that every word she uttered seemed to sink into my heart as if writ with a pen of fire; and mostly when she thus concluded her discourse:

"There hath been times, Constance, when men, yea and women also, might play the fool for a while, without so great danger as now, and dally with idle folly like children who do sport on a smooth lawn nigh to a running stream, under their parents' eyes, who, if their feet do but slip, are prompt to retrieve them. But such days are gone by for the Catholics of this land. I would have thee to bear in mind that 'tis no common virtue—no convenient religion—faces the rack, the dungeon, and the rope; that wanton tales and light verses are no *viaticum* for a journey beset with such perils. And thou—thou least of all—whose gentle mother, as thou well knowest, died of a broken heart from the fear to betray her faith—thou, whose father doth even now gird himself for a fight, where to win is to die on a scaffold—shouldst scorn to omit such preparation as may befit thee to live, if it so please God, or to die, if such be his will, a true member of his holy Catholic Church. O Constance, it doth grieve me to the heart that thou shouldst so much as once have risen from thy bed at night to feed thy mind with the vain words of profane writers, in place of nurturing thy soul by such reasonable exercises and means as God, through the teaching of his Church, doth provide for the spiritual growth of his children, and by prayer and penance make ready for coming conflicts. Bethink thee of the many holy priests, yea and laymen also, who be in uneasy dungeons at this time, lying on filthy straw, with chains on their bruised limbs, but lately racked and tormented for their religion, whilst thou didst offend God by such wanton conduct. Count up the times thou hast thus offended; and so many times rise in the night, my good child, and say the psalm 'Miserere,' through which we do especially entreat forgiveness for our sins."

I cast myself in her arms, and with many bitter tears lamented my folly; and did promise her then, and, I thank God, ever after did keep that promise, whilst I abode under the same roof with her, to read no books but such as she should warrant me to peruse. Some days after she procured Mr. Congleton's consent, who also went with us, to carry me to the Marshalsea, whither she had free access at that time by reason of her acquaintanceship with the gaoler's wife, who, when a maid, had been a servant in her family, and who, having been once Catholic, did willingly assist such prisoners as came there for their religion. There we saw Mr. Hart, who hath been this long while confined in a dark cell, with nothing but boards to lie on till Mistress Ward gave him a counterpane, which she concealed under her shawl, and the gaoler was prevailed on by his wife not to take from him. He was cruelly tortured some time since, and condemned to die on the same day as Mr. Luke Kirby and some others on a like charge, that he did deny the queen's supremacy in spiritual matters; but he was taken off the sledge and returned to prison. He did take it very quietly and patiently; and when Mr. Congleton expressed a hope he might soon be released from prison, he smiled and said:

"My good friend, my crosses are light and easy; and the being deprived of all earthly comfort affords a heavenly joy, which maketh my prison happy, my confinement merciful, my solitude full of blessings. To God, therefore, be all praise, honor, and glory, for so unspeakable a benefit bestowed upon his poor, wretched, and unworthy servant."

So did he comfort those who were more grieved for him than he for himself; and each in turn we did confess; and after I had disburdened my conscience in such wise that he perceived the temper of my mind, and where to apply remedies to the dangers the nature of which his clear-sightedness did foresee, he thus addressed me:

"The world, my dear daughter, soon begins to seem insipid, and all its pleasures grow bitter as gall; all the fine shows and delights it affords appear empty and good for nothing to such as have tasted the happiness of conversing with Christ, though it be amidst torments and tribulations, yea and in the near approach of death itself. This joy so penetrates the soul, so elevates the spirit, so changes the affections, that a prison seems not a prison but a paradise, death a goal long time desired, and the torments which do accompany it jewels of great price. Take with thee these words, which be the greatest treasure and the rarest lesson for these times: 'He that loveth his life in this world shall lose it, and he that hateth it shall find it;' and remember the devil is always upon the watch. Be you also watchful. Pray you for me. I have a great confidence that we shall see one another in heaven, if you keep inviolable the word you have given to God to be true to his Catholic Church and obedient to its precepts, and he gives me the grace to attain unto that same blessed end."

These words, like the sower's seed, fell into a field where thorns oftentimes threatened to choke their effect; but persecution, when it arose, consumed the thorns as with fire, and the plant, which would have withered in stony ground, bore fruit in a prepared soil.

As we left the prison, it did happen that, passing by the gaoler's lodge, I saw him sitting at a table drinking ale with one whose back was to the door. A suspicion came over me, the most unlikely in the world, for it was against all credibility, and I had not seen so much as that person's face; but in the shape of his head and the manner of his sitting, but for a moment observed, there was a resemblance to Edmund Genings, the thought of which I could not shake off. When we were walking home, Mr. Congleton said Mr. Hart had told him that a short time back a gentleman had been seized, and committed to close confinement, whom he believed, though he had not attained to the certainty thereof, to be Mr. Willisden; and if it were so, that much trouble might ensue to many recusants, by reason of that gentleman having dealt in matters of great importance to such persons touching lands and other affairs whereby their fortunes and maybe their lives might be compromised. On hearing of this, I straightway conceived a sudden fear lest it should be my father and not Mr. Willisden was confined in that prison; and the impression I had received touching the youth who was at table with the gaoler grew so strong in consequence, that all sorts of fears founded thereon ran through my mind, for I had often heard how persons did deceive recusants by feigning themselves to be their friends, and then did denounce them to the council, and procured their arrest and oftentimes their condemnation by distorting and false swearing touching the speech they held with them. One Eliot in particular, who was a man of great modesty and ingenuity of countenance, so as to defy suspicion (but a very wicked man in more ways than one, as has been since proved), who pretended to be Catholic, and when he did suspect any to be a Jesuit, or a seminary priest, or only a recusant, he would straightway enter into discourse with him, and in an artful manner cause him to betray himself; whereupon he was not slow to

throw off the mask, whereby several had been already brought to the rope. And albeit I would not credit that Edmund should be such a one, the evil of the times was so great that my heart did misgive me concerning him, if indeed he was the youth whom I had espied on such familiar terms with that ruffianly gaoler. I had no rest for some days, lacking the means to discover the truth of that suspicion; for Mrs. Ward, to whom I did impart it, dared not adventure again that week to the Marshalsea, by reason of the gaoler's wife having charged her not to come frequently, for that her husband had suddenly suspected her to be a recusant, and would by no means allow of her visits to the prisoners; but that when he was drunk she could sometimes herself get his keys and let her in, but not too often. Mr. Congleton would have it the prisoner must be Mr. Willisden and no other, and took no heed of my fears, which he said had no reasonable grounds, as I had not so much as seen the features of the youth I took to be my father's page. But I could by no means be satisfied, and wept very much; and I mind me how, in the midst of my tears that evening, my eyes fell on the frontispiece of a volume of the *Morte d' Arthur* which had been loosened when the book was in my chamber, and in which was picture of Sir Launcelot, the present mirror of my fancy. I had pinned it to my curtain, and jewelled it as a treasure and fund of foolish musings, even after yielding up, with promise to read no more therein, the book which had once held it. And thus were kept alive the fantastic imaginings wherewith I clothed a creature conceived in a writer's brain, whose nobility was the offspring of his thoughts and the continual entertainment of mine own. But, oh, how just did I now find the words of a virtuous friend, and how childish my folly, when the true sharp edge of present fear dispersed these vapory clouds, even as the keen blast of a north wind doth drive away a noxious mist! The sight of the dismal dungeon that day visited, the pallid features of that true confessor therein immured, his soul-piercing words, and the apprehensions which were wringing my heart—banished of a sudden an idle dream engendered by vain readings and vainer musings, and Sir Launcelot held henceforward no higher, or not so high, a place in my esteem as the good Sir Guy of Warwick, or the brave Hector de Valence.

A day or two after, my Lady Surrey sent her coach for me; and I found her in her dressing-room seated on a couch with her waiting-women and Mistress Milicent around her, who were displaying a great store of rich suits and jewels and such-like gear drawn from wardrobes and closets, the doors of which were thrown open, and little Mistress Bess was on tiptoe on a stool afore a mirror with a diamond necklace on, ribbons flaring about her head, and a fan of ostrich-feathers in her hand.

"Ah, sweet one," said my lady, when I came in, "thou must needs be surpris'd at this show of bravery, which ill consorts with the mourning of our present garb or the grief of our hearts; but, i' faith, Constance, strange things do come to pass, and such as I would fain hinder if I could."

"Make ready thine ears for great news, good Constance," cried Bess, running toward me encumbered with her finery, and tumbling over sundry pieces of head-gear in her way, to the waiting-woman's no small discomfiture. "The queen's majesty doth visit upon next Sunday the Earl and Countess of Surrey; and as her highness cannot endure the sight of dool, they and their household must needs put it off and array themselves in their costliest suits; and Nan is to put on her choicest jewels, and my Lady Bess must be grand too, to salute the queen."

"Hush, Bessy," said my lady; and leading me into the adjoining chamber, "'tis hard," quoth she, holding my hand in hers, —"'tis hard when his grace is in the Tower and in disgrace with her majesty, and only six weeks since our Moll died, that she must needs visit this house, where there be none to entertain her highness but his grace's poor children; 'tis hard, Constance, to be constrained to kiss the hand which threatens his life who gave my lord his, and mostly to smile at the queen's jesting, which my Lord Arundel saith we must of all things take heed to observe, for that she as little can endure dool in the face as in the dress."

A few tears fell from those sweet eyes upon my hand, which she still held, and I said, "Comfort you, my sweet lady. It must needs be that her majesty doth intend favor to his grace through this visit. Her highness would never be minded to do so much honor to the children if she did not purpose mercy to the father."

"I would fain believe it were so," said the countess, thoughtfully; "but my Lord Arundel and my Lady Lumley hold not, I fear, the same opinion. And I do hear from them that his grace is much troubled thereat, and hath written to the Earl of Leicester and my Lord Burleigh to lament the queen's determination to visit his son, who is not of age to receive her." [Footnote 1]

[Footnote 1: Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1547 to 1580: "Duke of Norfolk to the Earl of Leicester and Lord Burleigh; laments the queen's determination to visit his son's house, who is not of age to receive her."]

"And doth my Lord of Surrey take the matter to heart?"

"My lord's disposition doth incline him to conceive hope where others see reason to fear," she replied. "He saith he is glad her majesty should come to this house, and that he will take occasion to petition her grace to release his father from the Tower; and he hath drawn up an address to that effect, which is marvellous well expressed; and, since 'tis written, he makes no more doubt that her majesty will accede to it than if the upshot was not yet to come, but already past. And he hath set himself with a skill beyond his years, and altogether wonderful in one so young, to prepare all things for the queen's reception; so that when his grandfather did depute my Lord Berkeley and my Lady Lumley to assist us (he himself being too sick to go out of his house) in the ordering of the collation in the banqueting-room, and the music wherewith to greet her highness on her arrival, as well as the ceremonial to be observed during her visit, they did find that my lord had so disposedly and with so great taste ordained the rules to be observed, and the proper setting forth of all things, that little remained for them to do. And he will have me to be richly dressed, and to put on the jewels which were his mother's, which, since her death, have not been worn by the two Duchesses of Norfolk which did succeed her. Ah me, Mistress Constance, I often wish my lord and I had been born far from the court, in some quiet country place, where there are no queens to entertain, and no plots which do bring nobles into so great dangers."

"Alack," I cried, "dear lady, 'tis not the highest in the land that be alone to suffer. Their troubles do stand forth in men's eyes; and when a noble head is imperilled all the world doth know of it; but blood is spilt in this land, and torments

endured, which no pen doth chronicle, and of which scant mention is made in palaces."

"There is a passion in thy speech," my lady said, "which betrayeth a secret uneasiness of heart. Hast thou had ill news, my Constance?"

"No news," I answered, "but that which my fears do invent and whisper;" and then I related to her the cause of my disturbance, which she sought to allay by kind words, which nevertheless failed to comfort me.

Before I left she did propose I should come to the Charter House on the morning of the queen's visit, and bring Mistress Ward and my cousins also, as it would pleasure them to stand in the gallery and witness the entertainment, and albeit my heart was heavy, methought it was an occasion not to be overpast to feast my eyes with the sight of majesty, and to behold that great queen who doth hold in her hands her subjects' lives, and who, if she do but nod, like the god of the heathen which books do speak of, such terrible effects ensue, greater than can be thought of; and so I gave my lady mine humble thanks, and also for that she did gift me with a dainty hat and a well-embroidered suit to wear on that day; which, when Kate saw, she fell into a wonderful admiration of the pattern, and did set about to get it copied afore the day of the royal visit to Howard House. As I returned to Holborn in my lady's coach there was a great crowd in the Cornhill, and the passage for a while arrested by the number of persons on their way to what is now called the Royal Exchange, which her majesty was to visit in the evening. I sat very quietly with mine eyes fixed on the foot-passengers, not so much looking at their faces as watching their passage, which, like the running of a river, did seem endless. But at last it somewhat slackened, and the coach moved on, when, at the corner of a street, nigh unto a lamp over a shop, which did throw a light on his face, I beheld Edmund Genings. Oh, how my heart did beat, and with what a loud cry I did call to the running footmen to stop! But the noise of the street was so great they did not hear me, and I saw him turn and pursue his way down another street toward the river. My good uncle, when he heard I had verily seen my father's new page in the city, gave more heed to my suspicions, and did promise to go himself unto the Marshalsea on the next day, and seek to verify the name of the prisoner Mr. Hart had made mention of.

CHAPTER IX.

On the next morning Mr. Congleton called me into the library from the garden, where I was gathering for Muriel a few of such hardy flowers as had survived the early frost. She was wont to carry them with her to the prisons; for it was one of her kindly apprehensions of the sufferings of others to divide the comfort wherewith things seemingly indifferent do affect those that be shut out of all kinds of enjoyments; and where a less tender nature should have been content to provide necessaries, she, through a more delicate acquaintanceship and light touch, as it were, on the strings of the human heart, ever bethought herself when it was possible to minister if but one minute's pleasure to those who had often well-nigh forgotten the very taste of it. And she hath told me touching that point of flowers, how it had once happened that the scent of some violets she had concealed in her bosom with a like intent did move to tears an aged man, who for many years past had not seen, no not so much as one green leaf in his prison; which tears, he said, did him more good than anything else which could have happened to him.

I threw down on a bench the chrysanthemums and other bold blossoms I had gathered, and running into the house, opened the door of the library, where, lo and behold, to my no small agitation and amaze, I discovered Edmund Genings, who cried out as I entered:

"O my dear master's daughter and well-remembered playmate, I do greet you with all mine heart; and I thank God that I see you in so good a condition, as I may with infinite gladness make report of to your good father, who through me doth impart to you his paternal blessing and most affectionate commendations."

"Edmund," I cried, scarce able to speak for haste, "is he in London? is he in prison?"

"No, forsooth," quoth Mr. Congleton.

"No, verily," quoth Edmund; both at the same time.

"Thy fears, silly wench," added the first, "have run away with thy wits, and I do counsel thee another time to be at more pains to restrain them; for when there be so many occasions to be afraid of veritable evils, 'tis but sorry waste to spend fears on present fancies."

By which I did conjecture my uncle not to be greatly pleased with Edmund's coming to his house, and noticed that he did fidget in his chair and ever and anon glanced at the windows which opened on the garden in an uneasy manner.

"And wherefore art thou then in London?" I asked of Edmund; who thus answered:

"Because Mr. James Fenn, who is also called Williesden, was taken and committed close prisoner to the Marshalsea a short time back; which, when my dear master did hear of, he was greatly disturbed and turmoiled thereby, by reason of weighty matters having passed betwixt him and that gentleman touching lands belonging to recusants, and that extraordinary damage was likely to ensue to several persons of great merit, if he could not advertise him in time how to answer to those accusations which would be laid against him; and did seek if by any means he could have access to him; but could find no hope thereof without imminent danger not to himself only, but to many beside, if he had come to London and been recognized."

"Wherein he did judge rightly," quoth my uncle; and then Edmund—

"So, seeing my master and others of a like faith with him in so great straits touching their property and their lives also,

I did most earnestly crave his licence, being unknown and of no account in the world, and so least to be suspected, to undertake this enterprise, which he could not himself perform; which at last he did grant me, albeit not without reluctance. And thus resolved I came to town."

"And has your hope been frustrated?" Mr. Congleton asked. To whom Edmund—"I thank God, the end hath answered my expectations. I committed the cause to him to whom nothing is impossible, and determined, like a trusty servant, to do all that in me did lie thereunto. And thinking on no other means, I took up my abode near to the prison, hoping in time to get acquainted with the keeper; for which purpose I had to drink with him each day, standing the cost, beside paying him well, which I was furnished with the means to do. At last I did, by his means, procure to see Mr. Fenn, and not only come to speak to him, but to have access to his cell three or four times with pen and ink and paper to write his mind. So I have furnished him with the information he had need of, and likewise brought away with me such answers to my master's questions as should solve his doubts how to proceed in the aforesaid matters."

"God reward thee, my good youth," Mr. Congleton said, "for this thing which thou hast done; for verily, under the laws lately set forth, recusants be in such condition that, if not death, beggary doth stare them in the face, and no remedy thereunto except by such assistance as well-disposed Protestants be willing to yield to them."

"And where doth my father stay at this present time?" I asked; and Edmund answered:

"Not so much as to you, Mistress Constance, am I free to reply to that question; for when I left, 'Edmund,' quoth my master, 'it is a part of prudence in these days to guard those that be dear to us from dangers ensuing on what men do call our perversity; and as these new laws enact that he which knoweth any one which doth hear mass, be it ever so privately, or suffers a priest to absolve him, or performs any other action appertaining to Catholic religion, and doth not discover him before some public magistrate within the space of twenty days next following, shall suffer the punishment of high treason, than which nothing can be more horrible; and that neither sex nor age be a cause of exemption from the like penalties, so that father must accuse son, and sister brother, and children their parents;—it is, I say, a merciful part to hide from our friends where we do conceal ourselves, whose consciences do charge us with these novel crimes, lest theirs be also burdened with the choice either to denounce us if called upon to testify thereon, or else to speak falsely. Therefore I do charge thee, my son Edmund' (for thus indeed doth my master term me, his unworthy servant), 'that thou keep from my good child, and my dear sister, and her no less dear husband, the knowledge of my present, but indeed ever-shifting, abode; and solely inform them, by word of mouth, that I am in good health, and in very good heart also, and do most earnestly pray for them, that their strength and patience be such as the times do require.'"

"And art thou reconciled, Edmund?" I asked, ever speaking hastily and beforehand with prudence. Mr. Congleton checked me sharply; whereupon, with great confusion, I interrupted my speech; but Edmund, albeit not in words yet by signs, answered my question so as I should be certified it was even as I hoped. He then asked if I should not be glad to write a letter to my father,—which he would carry to him, so that it was neither signed nor addressed,—which letter I did sit down to compose in a hurried manner, my heart prompting my pen to utter what it listed, rather than weighing the words in which those affectionate sentiments were expressed. Mr. Congleton likewise did write to him, whilst Edmund took some food, which he greatly needed; for he had scarce eaten so much as one comfortable meal since he had been in London, and was to ride day and night till he reached his master. I wept very bitterly when he went away; for the sight of him recalled the dear mother I had lost, the sole parent whose company I was likewise reft of, and the home I was never like to see again. But when those tears were stayed, that which at the time did cause sadness ministered comfort in the retrospect, and relief from worse fears made the present separation from my father more tolerable. And on the next Sunday, when I went to the Charter House, with my cousins and Mistress Ward, I was in such good cheer that Polly commended my prating; which she said for some days had been so stayed that she had greatly feared I had caught the infectious plague of melancholy from Kate, whom she vowed did half kill her with the sound of her doleful sighing since Mr. Lacy was gone, which she said was a dismal music brought into fashion by love-sick ladies, and such as she never did intend to practise; "for," quoth she, "I hold care to be the worst enemy in life; and to be in love very dull sport, if it serve not to make one merry." This she said turning to Sir Ralph Ingoldby, the afore-mentioned suitor for her hand, who went with us, and thereupon cried out, "Mercy on us, fair mistress, if we must be merry when we be sad, and by merriment win a lady's love, the lack of which doth so take away merriment that we must needs be sad, and so lose that which should cure sadness;" and much more he in that style, and she answering and making sport of his discourse, as was her wont with all gentlemen.

When we reached the house, Mrs. Milicent was awaiting us at the door of the gallery for to conduct us to the best place wherein we could see her majesty's entrance. There were some seats there and other persons present, some of which were of Polly's acquaintance, with whom she did keep up a brisk conversation, in which I had occasion to notice the sharpness of her wit, in which she did surpass any woman I have since known, for she was never at a loss for an answer; as when one said to her—

"Truly, you have no mean opinion of yourself, fair mistress."

"As one shall prize himself," quoth she, "so let him look to be valued by others."

And another: "You think yourself to be Minerva."

Whereupon she: "No, sir, not when I be at your elbow;" meaning he was no Ulysses.

And when one gentleman asked her of a book, if she had read it:

"The epistle," she said, "and no more."

"And wherefore no more," quoth he, "since that hath wit in it?"

"Because," she answered, "an author who sets all his wit in his epistle is like to make his book resemble a bankrupt's doublet."

"How so?" asked the gentleman.

"In this wise," saith she, "that he sets the velvet before, though the back be but of buckram."

"For my part," quoth a foppish young man, "I have thoughts in my mind should fill many volumes."

"Alack, good sir," cries she, "is there no type good enough to set them in?"

He, somewhat nettled, declares that she reads no books but of one sort, and doats on *Sir Bevis and Owlglass*, or *Fashion's Mirror*, and such like idle stuff, wherein he himself had never found so much as one word of profitable use or reasonable entertainment.

"I have read a fable," she said, "which speaks of a pasture in which oxen find fodder, hounds, hares, storks, lizards, and some animals nothing."

"To deliver you my opinion," said a lady who sat next to Polly's disputant, "I have no great esteem for letters in gentlewomen. The greatest readers be oft the worst doers."

"Letters!" cries Polly; "why, surely they be the most weighty things in creation; for so much as the difference of one letter mistaken in the order in which it should stand in a short sentence doth alter the expression of a man's resolve in a matter of life and death."

"How prove you that, madam?" quoth the lady.

"By the same token," answered Polly, "that I once did hear a gentleman say, 'I must go die a beggar,' who willed to say, 'I must go buy a dagger.'"

They all did laugh, and then some one said, "There was a witty book of emblems made on all the cardinals at Rome, in which these scarlet princes were very roughly handled. Bellarmine, for instance, as a tiger fast chained to a post, and a scroll proceeding from the beast's mouth—'Give me my liberty; you shall see what I am.' I wish," quoth the speaker, "he were let loose in this island. The queen's judges would soon constrain him to eat his words."

"Peradventure," answered Polly, "his own words should be too good food for a recusant in her majesty's prisons."

"Maybe, madam, you have tasted of that food," quoth the aforesaid lady, "that you be so well acquainted with its qualities."

Then I perceived that Mistress Ward did nudge Polly for to stay her from carrying on a further encounter of words on this subject; for, as she did remind us afterward, many persons had been thrown into prison for only so much as a word lightly spoken in conversation which should be supposed even in a remote manner to infer a favorable opinion of Catholic religion; as, for instance, a bookseller in Oxford, for a jest touching the queen's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, had been a short time before arrested, pilloried, whipped, and his ears nailed to a counter, which with a knife he had himself to cut through to free himself; which maybe had not been taken much notice of, as nothing singular in these days, the man being a Catholic and of no great note, but that much talk had been ministered concerning a terrible disease which broke out immediately after the passing of that sentence, by which the judge which had pronounced it, the jury, and many other persons concerned in it, had died raving mad; to the no small affright of the whole city. I ween, howsoever, no nudging should have stopped Polly from talking, which indeed was a passion with her, but that a burst of music at that time did announce the queen's approach, and we did all stand up on the tiptoe of expectation to see her majesty enter.

My heart did beat as fast as the pendulum of a clock when the cries outside resounded, "Long live Queen Elizabeth!" and her majesty's voice was distinctly heard answering, "I thank you, my good people;" and the ushers crying out, "La Royne!" as the great door was thrown open; through which we did see her majesty alight from her coach, followed by many nobles and lords, and amongst them one of her bishops, and my Lord and my Lady Surrey, kneeling to receive her on the steps, with a goodly company of kinsfolks and friends around them. Oh, how I did note every lineament of that royal lady, of so great power and majesty, that it should seem as if she were not made of the same mould as those of whom the Scriptures do say, that dust they are, and to dust must they return. Very majestic did she appear; her stature neither tall nor low, but her air exceedingly stately. Her eyes small and black, her face fair, her nose a little hooked, and her lips narrow. Upon her head she had a small crown, her bosom was uncovered; she wore an oblong collar of gold and jewels, and on her neck an exceeding fine necklace. She was dressed in white silk bordered with pearls, and over it a mantle of black silk shot with silver threads; her train, which was borne by her ladies, was very long. When my lord knelt, she pulled off her glove, and gave him her right hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels; but when my lady, in as sweet and modest a manner as can be thought of, advanced to pay her the same homage, she did withdraw it hastily and moved on. I can even now, at this distance of time, call to mind the look of that sweet lady's face as she rose to follow her majesty, who leant on my lord's arm with a show of singular favor, addressing herself to him in a mild, playful, and obliging manner. How the young countess's cheek did glow with a burning blush, as if doubting if she had offended in the manner of her behavior, or had anyways merited the repulse she had met with! How she stood for one moment irresolute, seeking to catch my lord's eye, so as to be directed by him; and failing to do so, with a pretty smile, but with what I, who loved her, fancied to be a quivering lip, addressed herself to the ladies of the queen, and conducted them through the cloisters to the garden, whither her highness and my lord had gone.

In a brief time Mistress Milicent came to fetch us to a window which looked on the square, where a great open tent was set for a collation, and seats all round it for the concert which was to follow. As we went along, I took occasion to ask of her the name of a waiting-gentleman, who ordered about the servants with no small alacrity, and met her majesty with many bows and quirks and a long compliment in verse.

"Tis Mr. Churchyard," she said; "a retainer of his grace's, and a poet withal."

"Not a *grave* one, I hope," said Polly.

"Nay," answered the simple gentlewoman, "but one well versed in pageants and tournaments and suchlike devices, as well as in writing of verses and epigrams very fine and witty. Her majesty doth sometimes send for him when any pageant is on hand."

"Ah, then, I doubt not," quoth Polly, "he doth take himself to be no mean personage in the state, and so behaves accordingly."

Pretty Milicent left us to seek for Mistress Bess, whom she had charge of that day; and now our eyes were so intent on watching the spectacle before us that even Polly for a while was silent. The queen did sit at table with a store of noblemen waiting on her; and a more goodly sight and a rarer one is not to be seen than a store of men famed for so much bravery and wit and arts of state, that none have been found to surpass them in any age, who be so loyal to a queen and so reverent to a woman as these to this lady, who doth wear the crown of so great a kingdom, so that all the world doth hold it in respect, and her hand sought by so many great princes. But all this time I could not perceive that she so much as once did look toward my Lady Surrey, or spoke one single word to her or to my Lady Lumley, or little Bess, and took very scanty notice also of my Lady Berkeley, his grace's sister, who was a lady of so great and haughty a stomach, and of speech so eloquent and ready, that I have heard the queen did say, that albeit Lady Berkeley bent her knee when she made obeisance to her, she could very well see she bent not her will to love or serve her, and that she liked not such as have a man's heart in a woman's body. 'Tis said that parity breedeth not affection, or affinity respect, of which saying this opinion of the queen's should seem a notable example. But to see my Lady Surrey so treated in her own husband's father's house worked in me such effects of choler, mingled with sadness, that I could scarce restrain my tears. Methought there was a greater nobleness and a more true queenly greatness in her meek and withal dignified endurance of these slights who was the subject, than in the sovereign who did so insult one who least of all did deserve it. What the queen did, others took pattern from; and neither my Lord Burleigh, nor my Lord Leicester, or Sir Christopher Hatton, or young Lord Essex (albeit my lord's own friend), or little Sir John Harrington, her majesty's godson, did so much as speak one civil word or show her the least attention; but she did bear herself with so much sweetness, and, though I knew her heart was full almost to bursting, kept up so brave an appearance that none should see it except such as had their own hearts wounded through hers, that some were present that day who since have told me that, for promise of future distinction and true nobility of aspect and behavior, they had not in their whole lives known one to be compared with the young Countess of Surrey.

Polly did point out to us the aforesaid noblemen and gentlemen, and also Dr. Cheney, the bishop of Gloucester, who had accompanied her majesty, and M. de la Motte, the French ambassador, whom she did seem greatly to favor; but none that day so much as my Lord Surrey, on whom she let fall many gracious smiles, and used playful fashions with him, such as nipping him once or twice on the forehead, and shaking her fan, as if to reprove him for his answers to her questions, which nevertheless, if her countenance might be judged of, did greatly content her; albeit I once observed her to frown (and methought, then, what a terror doth lie in a sovereign's frown) and speak sharply to him; at the which a high color came into his cheek, and rose up even to his temples, which her majesty perceiving, she did again use the same blandishments as before; and when the collation was ended, and the concert began, which had been provided for her grace's entertainment, she would have him sit at her feet, and gave him so many tokens of good-will, that I heard Sir Ralph Ingoldby, who was standing behind me, say to another gentleman:

"If that young nobleman's father is like to be shorter by the head, his father's son is like to have his own raised higher than ever his father's was, so he doth keep clear of papistry and overmuch fondness for his wife, which be the two things her majesty doth most abhor in her courtiers."

My heart moving me to curiosity, I could not forbear to ask:

"I pray you, sir, wherefore doth not her majesty like her courtiers to love their wives?"

At the which question he laughed, and said:

"By reason, Mistress Constance, that when they be in that case they do become stayers at home, and wait not on her majesty with a like diligence as when they are unmarried, or leastways love not their ladies. The Bible saith a man cannot serve God and mammon. Now her grace doth opine men cannot serve the queen and their wives also."

"Then," I warmly cried, "I hope my Lord Surrey shall never serve the queen!"

"I' faith, say it not so loud, young Mistress Papist," said Sir Ralph, laughing, "or we shall have you committed for high treason. Some are in the Tower, I warrant you, for no worse offence than the uttering of such like rash words. How should you fancy to have your pretty ears bored with a rougher instrument than Master Anselm's the jeweller?"

And so he; but Polly, who methinks was not well pleased that he should notice mine ears, which were little and well-shaped, whereas hers were somewhat larger than did accord with her small face, did stop his further speech with me by asking him if he were an enemy to papists; for if so, she would have naught to say to him, and he might become a courtier to the queen, or any one else's husband, for anything she did care, yea, if she were to lose her ears for it.

And he answered, he did very much love some papists, albeit he hated papistry when it proved not conformable to reason and the laws of the country.

And so they fell to whispering and suchlike discourses as lovers hold together; and I, being seated betwixt this enamored gentleman and the wall on the other side, had no one then to talk with. But if my tongue and mine ears also, save for the music below, were idle, not so mine eyes; for they did stray from one point to another of the fair spectacle which the garden did then present, now resting on the queen and those near unto her, and anon on my Lady Surrey, who sat on a couch to the left of her majesty's raised canopy, together with Lady Southwell, Lady Arundell (Sir Robert's wife), and other ladies of the queen, and on one side of her the bishop of Gloucester, whom, by reason of his assiduous

talking with her, I took more special note of than I should otherwise have done; albeit he was a man which did attract the eye, even at the first sight, by a most amiable suavity of countenance, and a sweet and dignified behavior both in speech and action such as I have seldom observed greater in any one. His manners were free and unconstrained; and only to look at him converse, it was easy to perceive he had a most ready wit tempered with benevolence. He seemed vastly taken with my Lady Surrey; and either had not noticed how others kept aloof from her, or was rather moved thereby to show her civility; for they soon did fall into such eager, and in some sort familiar, discourse, as it should seem to run on some subject of like interest to both. Her color went and came as the conversation advanced; and when she spoke, he listened with such grave suavity, and, when she stayed her speech, answered in so obliging a manner, and seemed so loth to break off, that I could not but admire how two persons, hitherto strangers to each other, and of such various ages and standing, should be so companionable on a first acquaintanceship.

When the queen rose to depart, in the same order in which she came, every one kneeling as she passed, I did keenly watch to see what visage she would show to my Lady Surrey, whom she did indeed this time salute; but in no gracious manner, as one who looks without looking, notices without heeding, and in tendering of thanks thanketh not. As my lord walked by her majesty's side through the cloisters to the door, he suddenly dropped on one knee, and drawing a paper from his bosom, did present it to her highness, who started as if surprised, and shook her head in a playful manner—(oh, what a cruel playfulness methought it was, who knew, as her majesty must needs also have done, what that paper did contain)—as if she would not be at that time troubled with such grave matters, and did hand it to my Lord Burleigh; then gave again her hand to my lord to kiss, who did kneel with a like reverence as before; but with a shade of melancholy in his fair young face, which methought became it better than the smiles it had worn that day.

After the queen had left, and all the guests were gone save such few as my lord had willed to stay to supper in his private apartments, I went unto my lady's chamber, where I found Mistress Milicent, who said she was with my lord, and prayed me to await her return; for that she was urgent I should not depart without speaking with her, which was also what I greatly desired. So I took a book and read for the space of an hour or more, whilst she tarried with my lord. When she came in, I could see she had been weeping. But her women being present, and likewise Mistress Bess, she tried to smile, and pressed my hand, bidding me to stay till she was rid of her trappings, as she did term them; and, sitting down before her mirror,—though I ween she never looked at her own face, which that evening had in it more of the whiteness of a lily than the color of the rose,—she desired her women to unbraid her hair, and remove from her head the diamond circlet, and from her neck the heavy gold chain with a pearl cross, which had belonged to her husband's mother. Then stepping out of her robe, she put on a silk wrapper, and so dismissed them, and likewise little Bess, who before she went whispered in her ear:

"Nan, methinks the queen is foul and red-haired, and I should not care to kiss her hand for all the fine jewels she doth wear."

And so hugged her round the neck and stopped her mouth with kisses. When they were gone,

"Constance," quoth she, "we be full young, I ween, for the burden laid upon us, my lord and me."

"Ay, sweet one," I cried; "and God defend thou shouldst have to carry it alone;" for my heart was sore that she had had so little favor shown to her and my lord so much. A faint color tinged her cheek as she replied:

"God knows I should be well content that Phil should stand so well in her majesty's good graces as should be convenient to his honor and the furtherance of his fortunes, if so be his father was out of prison; and 'tis little I should reckon of such slights as her highness should choose to put upon me, if I saw him not so covetous of her favor that he shall think less well of his poor Nan hereafter by reason of the lack of her majesty's good opinion of her, which was so plainly showed to-day. For, good Constance, bethink thee what a galling thing it is to a young nobleman to see his wife so meanly entreated; and for her majesty to ask him, as she did, if the pale-faced chit by his side, when she arrived, was his sister or his cousin. And when he said it was his wife who had knelt with him to greet her majesty"—"Wife!" quoth the queen; "i' faith, I had forgotten thou wast married—if indeed that is to be called a marriage which children do contract before they come to the age of reason; and said she would take measures for that a law should be passed which should make such foolish marriages unlawful. And when my lord tried to tell her we had been married a second time a few months since, she pretended not to hear, and asked M. de la Motte if, in his country, children were made to marry in their infancy. To which he gave answer, that the like practice did sometimes take place in France; and that he had himself been present at a wedding where the bridegroom was whipped because he did refuse to open the ball with the bride. At the which her majesty very much laughed, and said she hoped my lord had not been so used on his wedding-day. I promise you Phil was very angry; but the wound these jests made was so salved over with compliments, which pleasantly tickle the ears when uttered by so great a queen, and marks of favor more numerous than can be thought of, in the matter of inviting him to hunt with her in Marylebone and Greenwich park, and telling him he deserved better treatment than he had, as to his household and setting forward in the world, that methinks the scar was not long in healing; albeit in the relating of these passages the pain somewhat revived. But what doth afflict me the most is the refusal her highness made to read my lord's letter, lamenting the unhappy position of the duke his father, and hoping the queen, by his means and those of other friends, should mitigate her anger. I would have had Phil not only go down on his knees as he did, but lie on the threshold of the door, so that she should have walked over the son's body if she refused to show mercy to the father; but he yet doth greatly hope from the favor showed him that he may sue her majesty with better effect some other time; and I pray God he may be right."

Here did the dear lady break off her speech, and, hiding her face in her hands, remained silent for a short space; and I, seeing her so deeply moved, with the intent to draw away her thoughts from painful musings, inquired of her if the good entertainment she had found in conversing with the bishop had been attributable to his witty discourse, or to the subjects therein treated of.

"Ah, good Constance," she answered, "our talk was of one whom you have often heard me speak of—Mr. Martin's friend, Master Campion, [Footnote 2] who is now beyond seas at Douay, and whom this bishop once did hold to be more dear to him than the apple of his eye. He says his qualifications were so excellent, and he so beloved by all persons in and

outside of his college at Oxford, that none more so; and that he did himself see in him so great a present merit and promise of future excellence, that it had caused him more grief than anything else which had happened to him, and been the occasion of his shedding more tears than he had ever thought to have done, when he who had received from him deacon's orders, and whom he had hoped should have been an honor and a prop to the Church of England, did forsake it and fly in the face of his queen and his country: first, by going into Ireland; and then, as he understood, beyond seas, to serve the bishop of Rome, against the laws of God and man. But that he did yet so dearly affection him that, understanding we had sometimes tidings of Mr. Martin, by whose means he had mostly been moved to this lamentable defection, he should be contented to hear somewhat of his whilom son, still dear to him, albeit estranged. I told him we did often see Master Campion when Mr. Martin was here; and that, from what I had heard, both were like to be at Douay, but that no letters passed between Mr. Martin and ourselves; for that his grace did not allow of such correspondence since he had been reconciled and gone beyond seas. Which the bishop said was a commendable prudence in his grace, and the part of a careful father; and added, that then maybe he knew more of what had befallen Master Campion than I did; for that he had a long epistle from him, so full of moving arguments and pithy remonstrances as might have shaken one not well grounded and settled in his religion, and which also contained a recital of his near arrest in Dublin, where the queen's officers would have arrested him, if a friend had not privately warned him of his danger. And I do know, good Constance, who that friend was; for albeit I would not tell the bishop we had seen Master Campion since he was reconciled, he, in truth, was here some months ago: my lord met him in the street, disguised as a common travelling man, and brought him into the garden, whither he also called me; and we heard then from him how he would have been taken in Ireland, if the viceroy himself, Sir Henry Sydney, who did greatly favor him,—as indeed all who know him incline to do, for his great parts, and nobleness of mind and heart, and withal most attractive manners,—had not sent him a message, in the middle of the night, to the effect that he should instantly leave the city, and take measures for to escape abroad. So, under the name of Patrick, and wearing the livery of the Earl of Kildare, he travelled to a port twenty miles from Dublin, and there embarked for England. The queen's officers, coming on board the ship whereon he had taken his passage, before it sailed, searched it all over; but through God's mercy, he said, and St. Patrick's prayers, whose name he had taken, no one did recognize him, and he passed to London; and the day after, my lord sent him over to Flanders. So much as the bishop did know thereon, he related unto me, and stinted not in his praise of his great merits, and lamentations for what he called his perversion; and hence he took occasion to speak of religion. And when I said I had been brought up in the Catholic religion, albeit I now conformed to the times, he said he would show me the way to be Catholic and still obey the laws, and that I might yet believe for the most part what I had learnt from my teachers, so be I renounced the Pope, and commended my saying the prayers I had been used to; which, he doubted not, were more pleasing to God than such as some ministers do recite out of their own heads, whom he did grieve to hear frequented our house, and were no better than heretics, such as Mr. Fox and Mr. Fulke and Mr. Charke, and the like of them. But what did much content me was, that he mislikes the cruel usage recusants do meet with; and he said, not as if boasting of it, but to declare his mind thereon, that he had often sent them alms who suffered for their conscience' sake, as many do at this time. But that I was to remember many Protestants were burnt in the late queen's time, and that if Papists were not kept under by strict laws, the like might happen again."

[Footnote 2: State Papers.]

"You should have told him," I cried, who had been silent longer than I liked, "that Protestants are burnt also in this reign, by the same token that some Anabaptists did so suffer a short time back, to your Mr. Fox's no small disgust, who should will none but Catholics to be put to death."

"Content thee, good Constance," my lady answered; "I be not so furnished with arguments as thou in a like case wouldst be. So I only said, I would to God none were burnt, or hanged, or tortured any more in this country, or in the world at all, for religion; and my lord of Gloucester declared he was of the same mind, and would have none so dealt with, if he could mend it, here or abroad. Then the queen rising to go, our discourse came to an end; but this good bishop says he will visit me when he next doth come to London, and make that matter plain to me how I can remain Catholic, and obey the queen, and content his grace."

"Then he will show you," I cried, "how to serve God and the world, which the gospel saith is a thing not to be thought of, and full of peril to the soul."

My Lady Surrey burst into tears, and I was angered with myself that I had spoken peradventure over sharply to her who had too much trouble already; but it did make me mad to see her so beset that the faith which had been once so rooted in her, and should be her sure and only stay in the dangerous path she had entered on, should be in such wise shaken as her words did indicate. But she was not angered, the sweet soul; and drawing me to herself, laid her head on my bosom, and said:

"Thou art a true friend, though a bold one; and I pray God I may never lack the benefit of such friendship as thine, for he knoweth I have great need thereof."

And so we parted with many tender embraces, and our hearts more strictly linked together than heretofore.

CHAPTER X.

In the month of November of the same year in which the queen did visit Lord and Lady Surrey at the Charter House, a person, who mentioned not his name, delivered into the porter's hands at our gate a letter for me, which I found to be from my good father, and which I do here transcribe, as a memorial of his great piety toward God, and tender love for me his unworthy child.

"MY DEARLY BELOVED DAUGHTER (so he),—Your comfortable letter has not a little cheered me; and the more so that this present one is like to be the last I shall be able to write on this side of the sea, if it so happen that it shall please God to prosper my intent, which is to pass over into Flanders at the first convenient opportunity: for the stress of the times, and mine own earnest desire to live within the compass of a religious life, have moved me to forsake for a while this realm, and betake myself to a place which shall afford opportunity and a sufficiency of leisure for the prosecution of my design. The comfortable report Edmund made of thy health, increased height, and good condition, as also of thy exceeding pleasant and affectionate behavior to him, as deputed from thy poor father to convey to thee his paternal blessing, together with such tokens as a third person may exhibit of that most natural and tender affection which he bears to thee, his sole child, whom next to God he doth most entirely value and love,—of which charge this good youth assured me he did acquit himself as my true son in Christ, which indeed he now is,—and my good brother's letter and thine, which both do give proof of the exceeding great favor shown toward thee in his house, wherein he doth reckon my Constance not so much a niece (for such be his words) as a most cherished daughter, whose good qualities and lively parts have so endeared her to his family, that the greatest sorrow which could befall them should be to lose her company; which I do not here recite for to awaken in thee motions of pride or a vain conceit of thine own deserts, but rather gratitude to those whose goodness is so great as to overlook thy defects and magnify thy merits;—Edmund's report, I say, coupled with these letters, have yielded me all the contentment I desire at this time, when I am about to embark on a perilous voyage, of which none can foresee the course or the end; one in which I take the cross of Christ as my only staff; his words, "Follow me," for my motto; and his promise to all such as do confess him before men, as the assured anchor of my hope.

"Our ingenuous youth informed thee (albeit I doubt not in such wise as to conceal, if it had been possible, his own ability, which, with his devotedness, do exceed praise) how he acquitted both me and others of much trouble and imminent danger by his fortunate despatch with that close prisoner. I had determined to place him with some of my acquaintance, lest perhaps he should return, not without some danger of his soul, to his own friends; but when he understood my resolution, he cried out with like words to those of St. Lawrence, 'Whither goeth my master without his servant? Whither goeth my father without his son?' and with tears distilling from his eyes, he humbly entreated he might go together with me, saying, as it were with St. Peter, 'Master, I am ready to go with you to prison, yea to death;' but, forecasting his future ability, as also to try his spirit a little further, I made him answer it was impossible; to which our Edmund replied, 'Alas! and is it impossible? Shall my native soil restrain free will? or home-made laws alter devout resolutions? Am I not young? Can I not study? May I not in time get what you now have got—learning for a scholar? yea, virtue for a priest, perhaps; and so at length obtain that for which you now are ready? Direct me the way, I beseech you; and let me, if you please, be your precursor. Tell me what I shall do, or whither I must go; and for the rest, God, who knows my desire, will provide and supply the want. Can it be possible that he who clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds the fowls of the air, will forsake him who forsakes all to fulfil his divine precept, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all other things shall be given to you?"' Finally, he ended, to my no small admiration, by reciting the words of our Saviour, 'Whosoever shall forsake home, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, for my sake and the gospel's, shall receive a hundredfold and possess life everlasting.'

"By these impulses, often repeated with great fervor of spirit, I perceived God Almighty's calling in him, and therefore at last condescended to let him take his adventures, procuring him commendations to such friends beyond seas as should assist him in his purpose, and furnishing him with money sufficient for such a journey; not judging it to be prudent to keep him with me, who have not ability to warrant mine own passage; and so noted a recusant, that I run a greater risk to be arrested in any port where I embark. And so, in all love and affection, we did part; and I have since had intelligence, for the which I do return most humble and hearty thanks to God, that he hath safely crossed the seas, and has now reached a sure harbor, where his religious desires may take effect. And now, daughter Constance, mine own good child, fare thee well! Pray for thy poor father, who would fain give thee the blessing of the elder as of the younger son—Jacob's portion and Esau's also. But methinks the blessings of this world be not at the present time for the Catholics of this land; and so we must needs be content, for our children as for ourselves (and a covetous man he is which should not therewith be satisfied), with the blessings our Lord did utter on the mountain, and mostly with that in which he doth say, 'Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you, and revile you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake; for great is your reward in heaven.'

"Your loving father in natural affection and ten thousand times more in the love of Christ, H. S."

Oh, what a gulf of tenfold separation did those words "beyond seas" suggest betwixt that sole parent and his poor child! Thoughts travel not with ease beyond the limits which nature hath set to this isle; and what lies beyond the watery waste wherewith Providence hath engirdled our shores offers no apt images to the mind picturing the invisible from the visible, as it is wont to do with home-scenes, where one city or one landscape beareth a close resemblance to another. And if, in the forsaking of this realm, so much danger did lie, yea, in the very ports whence he might sail, so that I, who should otherwise have prayed that the winds might detain him, and the waves force him back on his native soil, was constrained to supplicate that they should assist him to abandon it,—how much greater, methought, should be the perils of his return, when, as he indeed hoped, a mark should be set on him which in our country dooms men to a cruel death! Many natural tears I shed at this parting, which until then had not seemed so desperate and final; and for a while would not listen to the consolations which were offered by the good friends who were so tender to me, but continued to wander about in a disconsolate manner in the garden, or passionately to weep in my own chamber, until Muriel, the sovereign mistress of comfort to others, albeit ever ailing in her body, and contemned by such as dived not through exterior deformity into the interior excellences of her soul, with sweet compulsion and authoritative arguments drawn from her admirable faith and simple devotion, rekindled in mine the more noble sentiments sorrow had obscured, not so much through diverting, as by elevating and sweetening, my thoughts to a greater sense of the goodness of God in calling my father, and peradventure Edmund also, to so great an honor as the priesthood, and never more honorable than in these days, wherein it oftentimes doth prove the road to martyrdom.

In December of that year my Lord and my Lady Surrey, by the Duke of Norfolk's desire, removed for some weeks to Kenninghall for change of air, and also Lady Lumley, his grace judging them to be as yet too young to keep house alone. My lord's brothers and Mistress Bess, with her governess, were likewise carried there. Lady Surrey wrote from that seat, that, were it not for the duke's imprisonment and constant fears touching his life, she should have had great contentment in that retirement, and been most glad to have tarried there, if it had pleased God, so long as she lived, my lord taking so much pleasure in field-sports, and otherwise so companionable, that he often offered to ride with her; and in the evenings they did entertain themselves with books, chiefly poetry, and sometimes played at cards. They had but few visitors, by reason of the disgrace and trouble his grace was in at that time; only such of their neighbors as did hunt and shoot with the earl her husband; mostly Sir Henry Stafford and Mr. Rookwood's two sons, whom she commended; the one for his good qualities and honest carriage, and the other for wit and learning; as also Sir Hammond l'Estrange, a gentleman who stayed no longer away from Kenninghall, she observed, than thereunto compelled by lack of an excuse for tarrying if present, or returning when absent. He often procured to be invited by my lord, who used to meet him out of doors, and frequently carried him back with him to dine or to sup, and often both.

"And albeit" (so my lady wrote) "I doubt not but he doth set a reasonable value on my lord's society,—who, although young enough to be his son, is exceedingly conversable and pleasant, as every one who knows him doth testify,—and mislikes not, I ween, the good cheer, or the wine from his grace's cellar; yet I warrant thee, good Constance, 'tis not for the sake only of our poor company or hospitable table that this good knight doth haunt us, but rather from the passion I plainly see he hath conceived for our Milicent since a day when he hurt his arm by a fall not far from hence, and I procured she should dress it with that rare ointment of thine, which verily doth prove of great efficacy in cases where the skin is rubbed off. Methinks the wound in his arm was then transplanted into his heart, and the good man so bewitched with the blue eyes and dove-like countenance of his chirurgeon, that he has fallen head-over-ears in love, and is, as I hope, minded to address her in a lawful manner. His wound did take an exceeding long time in healing, to the no small discredit of thy ointment; for he came several days to have it dressed, and I could not choose but smile when at last our sweet practitioner did ask him, in an innocent manner, if the wound did yet smart, for indeed she could see no appearance in it but what betokened it to be healed. He answered, 'There be wounds, Mistress Milicent, which smart, albeit no outward marks of such suffering do show themselves.' 'Ay,' quoth Milicent, 'but for such I be of opinion further dressing is needless; and with my lady's licence, I will furnish you, sir, with a liquid which shall strengthen the skin, and so relieve the aching, if so you be careful to apply it night and morning to the injured part, and to cork the bottle after using it.' 'My memory is so bad, fair physician,' quoth the knight, 'that I am like to forget the prescription.' She answered, he should stand the bottle so as it should meet his eyes when he rose, and then he must needs remember it.

"And so broke off the discourse. But when he is here I notice how his eyes do follow her when she sets the table for primero, or works at the tambour-frame, or plays with Bess, to whom he often talks as she sits on *her* knees, who, if I mistake not, shall be, one of these days, Lady l'Estrange, and is as worthy to be so well married as any girl in the kingdom, both as touching her birth and her exceeding great virtue and good disposition. He is an extreme Protestant, and very bitter against Catholics; but as she, albeit mild in temper, is as firmly settled in the new religion as he is, no difference will exist between them on a point in which 'tis most of all to be desired husbands and wives should be agreed. Thou mayst think that I have been over apt to note the signs of this good knight's passion, and to draw deductions from such tokens as have appeared of it, visible maybe to no other eyes than mine; but, trust me, Constance, those who do themselves know what 'tis to love with an engrossing affection are quick to mark the same effects in others. When Phil is in the room, I find it a hard matter at times to restrain mine eyes from gazing on that dear husband, whom I do so entirely love that I have no other pleasure in life but in his company. And not to seem to him or to others too fond, which is not a beseeming thing even in a wife, I study to conceal my constant thinking on him by such devices as cunningly to provoke others to speak of my lord, and so appear only to follow whereunto my own desire doth point, or to propose questions,—a pastime wherein he doth excel,—and so minister to mine own pride in him without direct flattery, or in an unbecoming manner setting forth his praise. And thus I do grow learned in the tricks of true affection, and to perceive in such as are in love what mine own heart doth teach me to be the signals of that passion."

So far my lady; and not long after, on the first day of February, I had a note from her, written in great distraction of mind at the Charter House, where she and all his grace's children had returned in a sudden manner on the hearing that the queen had issued a warrant for the duke's execution on the next Monday. Preparations were made with the expectation of all London, and a concourse of many thousands to witness it, the tread of whose feet was heard at night, like to the roll of muffled drums, along the streets; but on the Sunday, late in the night, the queen's majesty entered into a great misliking that the duke should die the next day, and sent an order to the sheriffs to forbear until they should hear further. His grace's mother, the dowager countess, and my Lady Berkeley his sister (now indeed lowering her pride to most humble supplication), and my Lord Arundel from his sick-bed, and the French ambassador, together with many others, sued with singular earnestness to her majesty for his life, who, albeit she had stayed the execution of his sentence, would by no means recall it. I hasted to the Charter House, Mistress Ward going with me, and both were admitted into her ladyship's chamber, with whom did sit that day the fairest picture of grief I ever beheld—the Lady Margaret Howard, who for some months had resided with the Countess of Sussex, who was a very good lady to her and all these afflicted children. Albeit Lady Surrey had often greatly commended this young lady, and styled her so rare a piece of perfection that no one could know and not admire her, the loveliness of her face, nobility of her figure, and attractiveness of her manners exceeded my expectations. The sight of these sisters minded me then of what Lady Surrey had written when they were yet children, touching my Lord Surrey, styling them "two twin cherries on one stalk;" and methought, now that the lovely pair had ripened into early maturity, their likeness in beauty (though differing in complexion) justified the saying. Lady Margaret greeted us as though we had not been strangers, and in the midst of her great and natural sorrow showed a grateful sense of the share we did take in a grief which methinks was deeper in her than in any other of these mourners.

Oh, what a period of anxious suspense did follow that first reprieve! what alternations of hope and fear! what affectionate letters were exchanged between that loving father and good master and his sorrowful children and servants; now writing to Mr. Dyx, his faithful steward:

"Farewell, good Dyx! your service hath been so faithful unto me, as I am sorry that I cannot make proof of my good-will to recompense it. I trust my death shall make no change in you toward mine, but that you will faithfully perform the trust that I have reposed in you. Forget me, and remember me in mine. Forget not to counsel and advise Philip and Nan's unexperienced years; the rest of their brothers' and sisters' well-doing resteth much upon their virtuous and considerate dealings. God grant them his grace, which is able to work better in them than my natural well-meaning heart can wish unto them. Amen. And so, hoping of your honesty and faithfulness when I am dead, I bid you this my last farewell. T. H."

Now to another trusty friend and honest dependent:

"Good friend George, farewell. I have no other tokens to send my friends but my books; and I know how sorrowful you are, amongst the rest, for my hard hap, whereof I thank God; because I hope his merciful chastisement will prepare me for a better world. Look well throughout this book, and you shall find the name of duke very unhappy. I pray God it may end with me, and that others may speed better hereafter. But if I might have my wish, and were in as good a state as ever you knew me, yet I would wish for a lower degree. Be a friend, I pray you, to mine; and do my hearty commendations to your good wife and to gentle Mr. Denny. I die in the faith that you have ever known me to be of. Farewell, good friend.

"Yours dying, as he was living,

"NORFOLK."

These letters and some others did pass from hand to hand in that afflicted house; and sometimes hope and sometimes despair prevailed in the hearts of the great store of relatives and friends which often assembled there to confer on the means of softening the queen's anger and moving her to mercy; one time through letters from the king of France and other princes, which was an ill shot, for to be so entreated by foreign potentates did but inflame her majesty's anger against the duke; at others, by my Lord Sussex and my Lord Arundel, or such persons in her court as nearly approached her highness and could deal with her when she was merry and chose to condescend to their discourse. But the wind shifts not oftener than did the queen's mind at that time, so diverse were her dispositions toward this nobleman, and always opposed to such as appeared in those who spoke on this topic, whether as pressing for his execution, or suing for mercy to be extended to him. I heard much talk at that time touching his grace's good qualities: how noble had been his spirit; how moderate his disposition; how plain his attire; how bountiful his alms.

As the fates of many do in these days hang on the doom of one, much eagerness was shown amongst those who haunted my uncle's house to learn the news afloat concerning the issue of the duke's affair. Some Catholics of note were lying in prison at that time in Norwich, most of them friends of these gentlemen; of which four were condemned to death at that time, and one to perpetual imprisonment and loss of all his property for reconciliation; but whilst the Duke of Norfolk was yet alive, they held the hope he should, if once out of prison, recover the queen's favor and drive from their seats his and their mortal enemies, my Lords Burleigh and Leicester. And verily the axe was held suspended on the head of that duke for four months and more, to the unspeakable anguish of many; and, amongst others, his aged and afflicted mother, the Dowager Countess of Surrey, who came to London from the country to be near her son in this extremity. Three times did the queen issue a warrant for his death and then recalled it; so that those trembling relatives and well-wishers in and out of his house did look each day to hear the fatal issue had been compassed. In the month of March, when her majesty was sick with a severe inflammation and agonizing pain, occasioned, some said, by poison administered by papists, but by her own physicians declared to arise from her contempt of their prescriptions, there was a strange turmoil, I ween, in some men's breasts, albeit silent as a storm brewing on a sultry day. Under their breath, and with faces shaped to conceal the wish which bred the inquiry, they asked of the queen's health; whilst others tore their hair and beat their breasts with no affected grief, and the most part of the people lamented her danger. Oh, what five days were those when the shadow of death did hover over that royal couch, and men's hearts failed them for fear, or else wildly whispered hopes such as they durst not utter aloud,—not so much as to a close friend,—lest the walls should have ears, or the pavement open under their feet! My God, in thy hands lie the issues of life and death. Thou dost assign to each one his space of existence, his length of days. Thy ways are not as our ways, nor thy thoughts as our thoughts. She lived who was yet to doom so many princely heads to the block, so many saintly forms to the dungeon and the rack. She lived whose first act was to stretch forth a hand yet weakened by sickness to sign, a fourth time, a warrant for a kinsman's death, and once again recalled it. Each day some one should come in with various reports touching the queen's dispositions. Sometimes she had been heard to opine that her dangers from her enemies were so great that justice must be done. At others she vehemently spoke of the nearness of blood to herself, of the superiority in honor of this duke; and once she wrote to Lord Burleigh (a copy of this letter Lord Surrey saw in Lord Oxford's hands), "that she was more beholden to the hinder part of her head than she dared trust the forward part of the same;" and expressed great fear lest an irrevocable deed should be committed. But she would not see Lord Surrey, or suffer him to plead in person for his father's life. Yet there were good hopes amongst his friends he should yet be released, till one day—I mind it well, for I was sitting with Lady Surrey, reading out loud to her, as I was often used to do—my Lord Berkeley burst into the chamber, and cried, throwing his gloves on the table and swearing a terrible oath:

"That woman has undone us!"

"What, the queen?" said my lady, white as a smock.

"Verily a queen," he answered gloomily. "I warrant you the Queen of Scots hath ended as she did begin, and dragged his grace into a pit from whence I promise you he will never now rise. A letter writ in her cipher to the Duke of Alva hath been intercepted, in which that luckless royal wight, ever fatal to her friends as to herself, doth say, 'that she hath a strong party in England, and lords who favor her cause; some of whom, albeit prisoners, so powerful, that the Queen of England should not dare to touch their lives.' Alack! those words, 'should not dare,' shall prove the death-warrant of my noble brother. Cursed be the day when he did get entangled in that popish siren's plots!"

"Speak not harshly of her, good my lord," quoth Lady Surrey, in her gentle voice. "Her sorrows do bear too great a

semblance to our own not to bespeak from us patience in this mishap."

"Nan," said Lord Berkeley, "thou art of too mild a disposition. 'Tis the only fault I do find with thee. Beshrew me, if my wife and thee could not make exchange of some portion of her spirit and thy meekness to the advantage of both. I warrant thee Phil's wife should hold a tight hand over him."

"I read not that precept in the Bible, my lord," quoth she, smiling. "It speaketh roundly of the duty of wives to obey, but not so much as one word of their ruling."

"Thou hadst best preach thy theology to my Lady Berkeley," he answered; "and then she—"

"But I pray you, my lord, is it indeed your opinion that the queen will have his grace's life?"

"I should not give so much as a brass pin, Nan, for his present chance of mercy at her hands," he replied sadly. And his words were justified in the event.

Those relentless enemies of the duke, my Lords Burleigh and Leicester, —who, at the time of the queen's illness, had stood three days and three nights without stirring from her bedside in so great terror lest she should die and he should compass the throne through a marriage with the Queen of Scots, that they vowed to have his blood at any cost if her majesty did recover,—so dealt with parliament as to move it to send a petition praying that, for the safety of her highness and the quieting of her realm, he should be forthwith executed. And from that day to the mournful one of his death, albeit from the great reluctance her majesty had evinced to have him despatched, his friends, yea unto the last moment, lived in expectancy of a reprieve; he himself made up his mind to die with extraordinary fortitude, not choosing to entertain so much as the least hope of life.

One day at that time I saw my Lady Margaret mending some hose, and at each stitch she made with her needle tears fell from her eyes. I offered to assist her ladyship; but she said, pressing the hose to her heart, "I thank thee, good Constance; but no other hands than mine shall put a stitch in these hose, for they be my father's, who hath worn them with these holes for many months, till poor Master Dyx bethought himself to bring them here to be patched and mended, which task I would have none perform but myself. My father would not suffer him to procure a new pair, lest it should be misconstrued as a sign of his hope or desire of a longer life, and with the same intent he refuseth to eat flesh as often as the physicians do order; 'for,' quoth he, 'why should I care to nourish a body doomed to such near decay?'" Then, after a pause, she said, "He will not wear clothes which have any velvet on them, being, he saith, a condemned person."

Lady Surrey took one of the hose in her hand, but Lady Margeret, with a filial jealousy, sadly smiling, shook her head: "Nay, Nan," quoth she, "not even to thee, sweet one, will I yield one jot or tittle of this mean, but, in relation to him who doth own these poor hose, exalted labor." Then she asked her sister if she had heard of the duke's request that Mr. Fox, his old schoolmaster, should attend on him in the Tower, to whom he desired to profess that faith he did first ground him in.

And my Lady Surrey answered yea, that my lord had informed her of it, and many other proofs beside that his grace sought to prepare for death in the best manner he could think of.

"Some ill-disposed persons have said," quoth Lady Margaret, "that it is with the intent to propitiate the queen that my father doth show himself to be so settled in his religion, and that he is not what he seems; but tis a slander on his grace, who hath been of this way of thinking since he attained to the age of reason, and was never at any time reconciled, as some have put forth."

This was the last time I did see these afflicted daughters until long after their father's death, who was beheaded in the chapel of the Tower shortly afterward. When the blow fell which, striking at him, struck a no less fatal blow to the peace and well-doing of his children, they all left the Charter House, and removed for a time into the country, to the houses of divers relatives, in such wise as before his death the duke had desired. A letter which I received from Lady Surrey a few weeks after she left London doth best serve to show the manner of this disposal, and the temper of the writer's mind at that melancholy time.

"My OWN DEAR CONSTANCE,—It may like you to hear that your afflicted friend is improved in bodily health, and somewhat recovered from the great suffering of mind which the duke, their good father's death, has caused to all his poor children—mostly to Megg and Phil and me; for their brothers and my sister are too young greatly to grieve. My Lord Arundel is sorely afflicted, I hear, and hath writ a very lamentable letter to our good Lady Sussex concerning this sad mishap. My Lady Berkeley and my Lady Westmoreland are almost distracted with grief for the death of a brother they did singularly love. That poor lady (of Westmoreland) is much to be pitied, for that she is parted from her husband, maybe for ever, and has lost two fair daughters in one year.

"My lord hath shown much affection for his father, and natural sorrow in this sad loss; and when his last letters written a short time before he suffered, and addressed "To my loving children," specially the one to Philip and Nan, reached his hands, he wept so long and bitterly that it seemed as if his tears should never cease. My lord is forthwith to make his chief abode at Cambridge for a year or two; and Meg and I, with Lady Sussex, and I do hope Bess also—albeit his grace doth appear in his letter to be otherwise minded. But methinks he apprehended to lay too heavy a charge on her, who is indeed a good lady to us all in this our unhappy condition, and was loth Megg should be out of my company.

"The parting with my lord is a sore trial, and what I had not looked to; but God's will be done; and if it be for the advantage of his soul, as well as the advancement of his learning, he should reside at the university, it should ill befit me to repine. And now methinks I will transcribe, if my tears do not hinder me, his grace's letters, which will inform thee of his last wishes better than I could explain them; for I would have thee know how tender and

forecasting was his love for us, and the good counsel he hath left unto his son, who, I pray to God, may always follow it. And I would have thee likewise note one point of his advice, which indeed I should have been better contented he had not touched upon, forasmuch as his having done so must needs hinder that which thy fond love for my poor self, and resolved adherence to what he calls 'blind papistry,' doth so greatly prompt thee to desire; for if on his blessing he doth charge us to beware of it, and then I should move my lord to so much neglect of his last wishes as at any time to be reconciled, bethink thee with what an ill grace I should urge on him, in other respects, obedience to his commands, which indeed are such as do commend themselves to any Christian soul as most wise and profitable. And now, breaking off mine own discourse to transcribe his words—a far more noble and worthy employment of my pen—and praying God to bless thee, I remain thy tender and loving friend,
"ANN SURREY."

"The Duke of Norfolk's letters to his children:

"DEAR CHILDREN,—This is the last letter that ever I think to write to you; and therefore, if you loved me, or that you will seem grateful to me for the special love that I have ever borne unto you, then remember and follow these my last lessons. Oh, Philip, serve and fear God, above all things. I find the fault in myself, that I have (God forgive me!) been too negligent in this point. Love and make much of your wife; for therein, considering the great adversity you are now in, by reason of my fall, is your greatest present comfort and relief, beside your happiness in having a wife which is endued with so great towardness in virtue and good qualities, and in person comparable with the best sort. Follow these two lessons, and God will bless you; and without these, as you may see by divers examples out of the Scripture, and also by ordinary worldly proof, where God is not feared, all goeth to wreck; and where love is not between the husband and wife, there God doth not prosper. My third lesson is, that you show yourself loving and natural to your brothers and sister and sister-in-law. Though you be very young in years, yet you must strive with consideration to become a man; for it is your own presence and good government of yourself that must get friends; and if you take that course, then have I been so careful a father unto you, as I have taken such order as you, by God's grace, shall be well able, beside your wife's lands, to maintain yourself like a gentleman. Marry! the world is greedy and covetous; and if the show of the well government of yourself do not fear and restrain their greedy appetite, it is like that, by undirect means, they will either put you from that which law layeth upon you, or else drive you to much trouble in trying and holding your right. When my grandfather died, I was not much above a year elder than you are now; and yet, I thank God, I took such order with myself, as you shall reap the commodity of my so long passed travel, if you do now imitate the like. Help to strengthen your young and raw years with good counsel. I send you herewith a brief schedule, whom I wish you to make account of as friends, and whom as servants; and I charge you, as a father may do, to follow my direction therein; my experience can better tell what is fit for you than your young years can judge of. I would wish you for the present to make your chief abode at Cambridge, which is the place fittest for you to promote your learning in; and beside, it is not very far hence, whereby you may, within a day's warning, be here to follow your own causes, as occasion serveth. If, after a year or two, you spend some time in a house of the law, there is nothing that will prove more to your commodity, considering how for the time you shall have continual business about your own law affairs; and thereby also, if you spend your time well, you shall be ever after better able to judge in your own causes. I too late repent that I followed not this course that now I wish to you; for if I had, then my case perchance had not been in so ill state as now it is.

"When God shall send you to those years as that it shall be fit for you to keep house with your wife (which I had rather were sooner, than that you should fall into ill company), then I would wish you to withdraw yourself into some private dwelling of your own. And if your hap may be so good as you may so live without being called to higher degree, oh, Philip, Philip, then shall you enjoy that blessed life which your woful father would fain have done, and never could be so happy. Beware of high degree. To a vain-glorious, proud stomach it seemeth at the first sweet. Look into all chronicles, and you shall find that in the end it brings heaps of cares, toils in the state, and most commonly in the end utter overthrow. Look into the whole state of the nobility in times past, and into their state now, and then judge whether my lessons be true or no. Assure yourself, as you may see by the book of my accounts, and you shall find that my living did hardly maintain my expenses; for all the help that I had by Tom's lands, and somewhat by your wife's and sister's-in-law, I was ever a beggar. You may, by the grace of God, be a great deal richer and quieter in your low degree, wherein I once again wish you to continue. They may, that shall wish you the contrary, have a good meaning; but believe your father, who of love wishes you best, and with the mind that he is at this present fully armed to God, who sees both states, both high and low, as it were even before his eyes. Beware of the court, except it be to do your prince service, and that, as near as you can, in the lowest degree, for that place hath no certainty; either a man, by following thereof, hath too much of worldly pomp, which, in the end, throws him down headlong, or else he liveth there unsatisfied; either that he cannot attain for himself that he would, or else that he cannot do for his friends as his heart desireth. Remember these notes, and follow them; and then you, by God's help, shall reap the commodity of them in your old years.

"If your brothers may be suffered to remain in your company, I would be most glad thereof, because continuing together should still increase love between you. But the world is so catching of everything that falls, that Tom being, as I believe, after my death, the queen's majesty's ward, shall be begged by one or another. But yet you are sure to have your brother William left still with you, because, poor boy, he hath nothing to feed cormorants withal; to whom you will as well be a father as a brother; for upon my blessing I commit him to your charge to provide for, if that which I have assured him by law shall not be so sufficient as I mean it. If law may take place, your sister-in-law will be surely enough conveyed to his behoof, and then I should wish her to be brought up with some friend of mine; as for the present I allow best of Sir Christopher Heydon, if he will so much befriend you as to receive her to sojourn with him; if not there in some other place, as your friends shall best allow of. And touching the bestowing of your wife and Megg, who I would be loth should be out of your wife's company; for as she should be a good companion for Nan, so I commit Megg of especial trust to her. I think good, till you keep house together, if my Lady of Sussex might be entreated to take them to her as sojourners, there were no place so fit considering her kindred unto you, and the assured friend that I hope you shall find of her; beside she is a good lady. If it will not be so brought to pass, then, by the advice of your friends, take some other order; but in no case

I would wish you to keep any house except it be together with your wife.

"Thus I have advised you as my troubled memory can at present suffer me. Beware of pride, stubbornness, taunting, and sullenness, which vices nature doth somewhat kindle in you; and therefore you must with reason and discretion make a new nature in yourself. Give not your mind too much and too greedily to gaming; make a pastime of it, and no toil. And lastly, delight to spend some time in reading of the Scriptures; for therein is the whole comfort of man's life; all other things are vain and transitory; and if you be diligent in reading of them, they will remain with you continually, to your profit and commodity in this world, and to your comfort and salvation in the world to come, whither, in grace of God, I am now with joy and consolation preparing myself. And, upon my blessing, beware of blind papistry, which brings nothing but bondage to men's consciences. Mix your prayers with fasting, not thinking thereby to merit; for there is nothing that we ourselves can do that is good,—we are but unprofitable servants; but fast, I say, thereby to tame the wicked affection of the mind, and trust only to be saved by Christ's precious blood; for without a perfect faith therein, there is no salvation. Let works follow your faith; thereby to show to the world that you do not only say you have faith, but that you give testimony thereof to the full satisfaction of the godly. I write somewhat the more herein, because perchance you have heretofore heard, or perchance may hereafter hear, false bruits that I was a papist; [Footnote 3] but trust unto it, I never, since I knew what religion meant (I thank God) was of other mind than now you shall hear that I die in; although (I cry God mercy) I have not given fruits and testimony of my faith as I ought to have done; the which is the thing that I do now chiefliest repent.

[Footnote 3: There would seem to be no doubt that the Duke of Norfolk was a sincere Protestant.

The strenuous advice to his children to beware of Popery affords evidence of it. Greatly, however, as it would have tended to their worldly prosperity to have followed their father's last injunctions in this respect, all but one of those he thus counselled were subsequently reconciled to the Catholic Church.

The Duke's letters in this chapter are all authentic. See the Rev. M. Tierney's History of Arundel, and the Appendix to Nott's edition of Lord Surrey's poems.]

"When I am gone, forget my condemning, and forgive, I charge you, my false accusers, as I protest to God I do; but have nothing to do with them if they live. Surely, Bannister dealt no way but honestly and truly. Hickford did not hurt me in my conscience, willingly; nor did not charge me with any great matter that was of weight otherways than truly. But the Bishop of Ross, and specially Barber, did falsely accuse me, and laid their own treasons upon my back. God forgive them, and I do, and once again I will you to do; bear no malice in your mind. And now, dear Philip, farewell. Read this my letter sometimes over; it may chance make you remember yourself the better; and by the same, when your father is dead and rotten, you may see what counsel I would give you if I were alive. If you follow these admonitions, there is no doubt but God will bless you; and I, your earthly father, do give you God's blessing and mine, with my humble prayers to Almighty God that it will please him to bless you and your good Nan; that you may both, if it be his will, see your children's children, to the comfort of you both; and afterward that you may be partakers of the heavenly kingdom. Amen, amen. Written by the hand of your loving father. T. H."

"And to Tom his grace did write:

"Tom, out of this that I have written to your brother, you may learn such lessons as are fit for you. That I write to one, that I write to all, except it be somewhat which particularly touches any of you. To fear and serve God is generally to you all; and, on my blessing, take greatest care thereof, for it is the foundation of all goodness. You have, even from your infancy, been given to be stubborn. Beware of that vice, Tom, and bridle nature with wisdom. Though you be her majesty's ward, yet if you use yourself well to my Lord Burleigh, he will, I hope, help you to buy your own wardship. Follow your elder brother's advice, who, I hope, will take such a course as may be to all your comforts. God send him grace so to do, and to you too! I give you God's blessing and mine, and I hope he will prosper you."

"And to Will he saith (whom methinks his heart did incline to, as Jacob's did to Benjamin):

"Will, though you be now young, yet I hope, if it shall please God to send you life, that you will then consider of the precepts heretofore written to your brethren. I have committed the charge of your bringing-up to your elder brother; and therefore I charge you to be obedient to him, as you would have been to me if I had been living. If you shall have a liking to my daughter-in-law, Bess Dacres, I hope you shall have it in your own choice to marry her. I will not advise you otherways than yourself, when you are of fit years, shall think good; but this assure yourself, it will be a good augmentation to your small living, considering how chargeable the world groweth to be. As you are youngest, so the more you ought to be obedient to your elders. God send you a good younger brother's fortune in this world, and his grace, that you may ever be his, both in this world and in the world to come."

"To me, his unworthy daughter, were these lines written, which I be ashamed to transcribe, but that his goodness doth appear in his good opinion of me rather than my so poor merits:

"Well-beloved Nan, that hath been as dear to me as if you had been my own daughter, although, considering this ill hap that has now chanced, you might have had a greater marriage than now your husband shall be; yet I hope that you will remember that, when you were married, the case was far otherways; and therefore I hope your dutiful dealings shall be so to your husband, and your sisterly love to your brothers-in-law and sister-in-law, as my friends that shall see it may think that my great affection to you was well bestowed. Thanks be to God, you have hitherto taken a good course; whereby all that wish you well take great hope rather of your going forward therein than backward—which God forbid! I will request no more at your hands, now that I am gone, in recompense of my former love to you, but that you will observe my three lessons: to fear and serve God, flying idleness; to love faithfully your husband; and to be kind to your brothers and sisters—specially committing to your care mine only

daughter Megg, hoping that you will not be a sister-in-law to her, but rather a natural sister, yea even a very mother; and that as I took care for the well bestowing of you, so you will take care for the well bestowing of her, and be a continual caller on your husband for the same. If this mishap had not chanced, you and your husband might have been awhile still young, and I would, by God's help, have supplied your wants. But now the case is changed, and you must, at your years of fifteen, attain to the consideration and discretion of twenty; or else, if God send you to live in your age, you shall have cause to repent your folly in youth, beside the endangering the casting away of those who do wholly depend upon your two well-doings. I do not mistrust that you will be mindful of my last requests; and so doing God bless you, and send you to be old parents to virtuous children, which is likeliest to be if you give them good example. Farewell! for this is the last that you shall ever receive from your loving father. Farewell, my dear Nan!"

"And to his own sweet Megg he subjoined in the same letter these words:

"Megg, I have, as you see, committed you to your loving sister. I charge you therefore, upon my blessing, that you obey her in all things, as you would do me or your own mother, if we were living; and then I doubt not but by her good means you shall be in fit time bestowed to your own comfort and contentment. Be good; no babbler, and ever be busied and doing of somewhat; and give your mind to reading in the Bible and such other good books, whereby you may learn to fear God; and so you shall prove, by his help, hereafter the better wife, and a virtuous woman in all other respects. If you follow these my lessons, then God's blessing and mine I give you, and pray that you may both live and die his servant. Amen."

When I read these letters, and my Lady Surrey's comments upon them, what pangs seized my heart! Her messenger was awaiting an answer, which he said must be brief, for he had to ride to Bermondsey with a message for my Lord Sussex, and had been long delayed in the city. I seized a pen, and hastily wrote:

"Oh, my dear and honored lady, what grief, what pain, your letter hath caused me! Forgive me if, having but brief time in which to write a few lines by your messenger, I dwell not on the sorrow which doth oppress you, nor on the many excellences apparent in those farewell letters, which give token of so great virtue and wisdom in the writer, that one should be prompted to exclaim he did lack but one thing to be perfect, that being a true faith,—but rather direct my answer to that passage in yours which doth work in me such regret, yea such anguish of heart, as my poor words can ill express. For verily there can be no greater danger to a soul than to be lured from the profession of a true Catholic faith, once firmly received and yet inwardly held, by deceptive arguments, whereby it doth conceal its own weakness under the garb of respect for the dead and duty to the living. For, I pray you, mine own dear lady, what respect and what duty is owing to men which be not rather due to him who reads the heart, and will ask a strict account of such as, having known his will, yet have not done it? Believe me, 'tis a perilous thing to do evil that good may come. Is it possible you should resolve never to profess that religion which, in your conscience, you do believe to be true, nor to move your lord thereunto, for any human respect, however dear and sacred? I hope other feelings may return, and God's hand will support, uphold, and never fail you in your need. I beseech him to guard and keep you in the right way.

"Your humble servant and truly loving poor friend,

"CONSTANCE SHERWOOD."

CHAPTER XI.

During the two years which followed the Duke of Norfolk's death I did only see my Lady Surrey once, which was when she came to Arundel House, on a visit to her lord's grandfather; and her letters for a while were both scanty and brief. She made no mention of religion, and but little of her husband; and chiefly touched on such themes as Lady Margaret's nuptials with Mr. Sackville (Lord Dorset's heir) and Mistress Milicent's with Sir Hammond l'Estrange. She had great contentment, she wrote, to see them both so well married according to their degree; but that for herself she did very much miss her good sister's company and her gentlewoman's affectionate services, who would now reside all the year at her husband's seat in Norfolk; but she looked when my lord and herself should be at Kenninghall, when he left the university, that they might yet, being neighbors, spend some happy days together, if it so pleased God. Once she wrote in exceeding great joy, so that she said she hardly knew how to contain herself, for that my lord was coming in a few days to spend the long vacation at Lord Sussex's house at Bermondsey. But when she wrote again, methought—albeit her letter was cheerful, and she did jest in it somewhat more than was her wont—that there was a silence touching her husband, and her own contentment in his society, which betokened a reserve such as I had not noticed in her before. About that time it was bruited in London that my Lord Surrey had received no small detriment by the bad example he had at Cambridge, and the liberty permitted him.

And now, forsaking for a while the theme of that noble pair, whose mishaps and felicities have ever saddened and rejoiced mine heart almost equally with mine own good or evil fortune, I here purpose to set down such occurrences as should be worthy of note in the more obscure sphere in which my lot was cast.

When I was about sixteen, my cousin Kate was married to Mr. Lacy; first in a secret manner, in the night, by Mr. Plasden, a priest, in her father's library, and the next day at the parish church at Holborn. Methinks a fairer bride never rode to church than our Kate. Her mother went with her, which was the first time she had been out of doors for a long space of time, for she feared to catch cold if the wind did blow from the north or the east; and if from the south she feared it should bring noxious vapors from the river; and the west, infection from the city, and so stayed at home for greater safety. But on Kate's wedding day we did all protest the wind blew not at all, so that from no quarter of the sky should mischief arise; and in a closed litter, which she reckoned to be safer than a coach, she consented to go to

church.

"Marry, good wife," cried Mr. Congleton, when she had been magnifying all the dangers she mostly feared, "thou dost forget the greatest of all in these days, which doth hold us all by the neck, as it were. For hearing mass, as we did in this room last night, we do all run the risk of being hanged, which should be a greater peril methinks than a breath of foul air."

She, being in a merry mood, replied: "Twittle twattle, Mr. Congleton; the one may be avoided, the other not. 'Tis no reason I should get a cold to-day because I be like to be hanged to-morrow."

"I' faith," cried Polly, "my mother hath well parried your thrust, sir; and methinks the holy Bishop of Rochester was of the same mind with her."

"How so, Polly?" quoth her father; and she, "There happened a false rumor to rise suddenly among the people when he was in the prison, so I have heard Mr. Roper relate, that he should be brought to execution on a certain day; wherefore his cook, that was wont to dress his dinner and carry it daily unto him, hearing of his execution, dressed him no dinner at all that day. Wherefore, at the cook's next repair unto him, he demanded the cause why he brought him not his dinner. 'Sir,' said the cook, 'it was commonly talked all over the town that you should have died to-day, and therefore I thought it but vain to dress anything for you.' 'Well,' quoth the bishop merrily, 'for all that report, thou seest me yet alive; and therefore, whatsoever news thou shalt hear of me hereafter, prithee let me no more lack my dinner, but make it ready; and if thou see me dead when thou comest, then eat it thyself. But I promise thee, if I be alive, by God's grace, to eat never a bit the less.'"

"And on the day he was verily executed," said Mistress Ward, "when the lieutenant came to fetch him, he said to his man, 'Reach me my furred tippet, to put about my neck.' 'O my lord!' said the lieutenant, 'what need you be so careful of your health for this little time, being not much above in hour?' 'I think no otherwise,' said this blessed father; 'but yet, in he mean time, I will keep myself as well as I can; for I tell you truth, though I have, I thank our Lord, a very good desire and a willing mind to die at this present, and so I trust of his infinite mercy and goodness he will continue it, yet I will not willingly hinder my health one minute of an hour, but still prolong the same as long as I can by such reasonable ways as Almighty God hath provided for me.'" Upon which my good aunt fastened her veil about her head, and said the holy bishop was the most wise saint and reasonablest martyr she had yet heard of.

Kate was dressed in a kirtle of white silk, her head attired with an habiliment of gold, and her hair, brighter itself than gold, woven about her face in cunningly wrought tresses. She was led to church between two gentlemen—Mr. Tresham and Mr. Hogdson—friends of the bridegroom, who had bride-laces and rosemary tied about their silken sleeves. There was a fair cup of silver gilt carried before her, wherein was a goodly branch of rosemary, gilded very fair, and hung about with silken ribbons of all colors. Musicians came next; then a group of maidens bearing garlands finely gilded; and thus we passed on to the church. The common people at the door cheered the bride, whose fair face was a passport to their favor; but as Muriel crept along, leaning on my arm, I caught sound of murmured blessings.

"Sweet saint," quoth an aged man, leaning on his staff, near the porch, "I ween thine espousals be not of earth." A woman, with a child in her arms, whispered to her as she past, "He thou knowest of is dead, and died praying for thee." A man, whose eyes had watched her painfully ascending the steps, called her an angel; whereupon a beggar with a crutch cried out, "Marry, a lame angel!" A sweet smile was on her face as she turned toward him; and drawing a piece of silver from her pocket, she bestowed it on him, with some such words as these—that she prayed they might both be so happy, albeit lame, as to hobble to heaven, and get there in good time, if it should please God. Then he fell to blessing her so loud, that she hurried me into the church, not content to be thanked in so public a manner.

After the ceremony, we returned in the same order to Ely Place. The banquet which followed, and the sports succeeding it, were conducted in a private and somewhat quiet fashion, and not many guests invited, by reason of the times, and Mr. Congleton misliking to draw notice to his house, which had hitherto been but little molested, partly for that Sir Francis Walsingham had a friendship for him, and also for his sister, Lady Egerton of Ridley, which procured for them greater favor, in the way of toleration, than is extended to others; and likewise the Portuguese ambassador was his very good friend, and his chapel open to us at all times; so that priests did not need to come to his house for the performance of any religious actions, except that one of the marriage, which had taken place the night before in his library. Howsoever, he was very well known to be a recusant, for that neither himself, nor any belonging to him, attended Protestant worship; and Sir Francis sometimes told him that the clemency with which he was treated was shown toward him with the hope that, by mild courses, he might be soon brought to some better conformity.

Mr. Lacy's house was in Gray's Inn Lane, a few doors from Mr. Swithin Wells's; and through this proximity an intimate acquaintanceship did arise between that worthy gentleman and his wife and Kate's friends. He was very good-natured, pleasant in conversation, courteous, and generous; and Mrs. Wells a most virtuous gentlewoman. Although he (Mr. Swithin) much delighted in hawking, hunting, and other suchlike diversions, yet he so soberly governed his affections therein, as to be content to deprive himself of a good part of those pleasures, and retire to a more profitable employment of training up young gentlemen in virtue and learning; and with such success that his house has been, as it were, a fruitful seminary to many worthy members of the Catholic Church. Among the young gentlemen who resided with him at that time was Mr. Hubert Rookwood, the youngest of the two sons of Mr. Rookwood, of Euston, whom I had seen at the inn at Bedford, when I was journeying to London. We did speedily enter into a somewhat close acquaintanceship, founded on a similarity of tastes and agreeable interchange of civilities, touching the lending of books and likewise pieces of music, which I did make fair copies of for him, and which we sometimes practiced in the evening; for he had a pleasant voice and an aptness to catch the trick of a song, albeit unlearned in the art, wherein he styled me proficient; and I, nothing loth to impart my knowledge, became his instructor, and did teach him both to sing and play the lute. He was not much taller than when I had seen him before; but his figure was changed, and his visage had grown pale, and his hair thick and flowing, especially toward the back of the head, discovering in front a high and thoughtful forehead. There was a great deal of good young company at that time in Mr. Wells's house; for some Catholics tabled there beside those that were his pupils, and others resorted to it by reason of the pleasant

entertainment they found in the society of ingenuous persons, well qualified, and of their own religion. I had most days opportunities of conversing with Hubert, though we were never alone; and, by reason of the friendship which had existed between his father and mine, I allowed him a kindness I did not commonly afford to others.

Mr. Lacy had had his training in that house, and, albeit his natural parts did not title him to the praise of an eminent scholar, he had thence derived a great esteem for learning, a taste for books, of the which he did possess a great store (many hundred volumes), and a discreet manner of talking, though something tinctured with affectation, inasmuch as he should seem to be rather enamored of the words he uttered, than careful of the substance. Hubert was wont to say that his speech was like to the drawing of a leaden sword out of a gilded sheath. He was a very virtuous young man; and his wife had never but one complaint to set forth, which was that his books took up so much of his time that she was almost as jealous of them as if they had been her rivals. She would have it he did kill himself with study; and, in a particular manner, with the writing of the life of one Thomas à Kempis, which was a work he had had a long time on hand. One day she comes into his library, and salutes him thus: "Mr. Lacy, I would I were a book; and then methinks you would a little more respect me." Polly, who was by, cried out, "Madam, you must then be an almanac, that he might change every year;" whereat she was not a little displeased. And another time, when her husband was sick, she said, if Mr. Lacy died, she would burn Thomas a Kempis for the killing of her husband. I, hearing this, answered that to do so were a great pity; to whom she replied, "Why, who was Thomas a Kempis?" to which I answered, "One of the saintliest men of the age wherein he lived." Wherewith she was so satisfied, that she said, then she would not do it for all the world.

Methinks I read more in that one year than in all the rest of my life beside. Mine aunt was more sick than usual, and Mistress Ward so taken up with the nursing of her, that she did not often leave her room. Polly was married in the winter to Sir Ralph Ingoldby, and went to reside for some months in the country. Muriel prevailed on her father to visit the prison with her, in Mistress Ward's stead, so that sometimes they were abroad the whole of the day; by reason of which, I was oftener in Gray's Inn Lane than at home, sometimes at Kate's house, and sometimes at Mistress Wells's mansion, where I became infected with a zeal for learning, which Hubert's example and conversation did greatly invite me to. He had the most winning tongue, and the aptest spirit in the world to divine the natural inclinations of those he consorted with. The books he advised me to read were mostly such as Mistress Ward, to whom I did faithfully recite their titles, accounted to be not otherwise than good and profitable, having learned so much from good men she consulted thereon, for she was herself no scholar; but they bred in me a great thirst for knowledge, a craving to converse with those who had more learning than myself, and withal so keen a relish for Hubert's society, that I had no contentment so welcome as to listen to his discourse, which was seasoned with a rare kind of eloquence and a discursive fancy, to which, also, the perfection of his carriage, his pronunciation of speech, and the deportment of his body lent no mean lustre. Naught arrogant or affected disfigured his conversation, in which did lie so efficacious a power of persuasion, and at times, when the occasion called for it, so great a vehemency of passion, as enforced admiration of his great parts, if not approval of his arguments. I made him at that time judge of the new thoughts which books, like so many keys opening secret chambers in the mind, did unlock in mine; and I mind me how eagerly I looked for his answers—how I hung on his lips when he was speaking, not from any singular affection toward his person, but by reason of the extraordinary fascination of his speech, and the interest of the themes we discoursed upon; one time touching on the histories of great men of past ages, at another on the changes wrought in our own by the new art of printing books, which had produced such great changes in the world, and yet greater to be expected. And as he was well skilled in the Italian as well as the French language, I came by his means to be acquainted with many great writers of those nations. He translated for me sundry passages from the divine play of Signor Dante Alighieri, in which hell and purgatory and heaven are depicted, as it were by an eye-witness, with so much pregnancy of meaning and force of genius, that it should almost appear as if some special revelation had been vouchsafed to the poet beyond his natural thoughts, to disclose to him the secrets of other spheres. He also made me read a portion of that most fine and sweet poem on the delivery of the holy city Jerusalem, composed by Signor Torquato Tasso, a gentleman who resided at that time at the court of the Duke of Ferrara, and which one Mr. Fairfax has since done into English verse. The first four cantos thereof were given to Mr. Wells by a young gentleman, who had for a while studied at the University of Padua. This fair poem, and mostly the second book thereof, hath remained imprinted in my memory with a singular fixity, by reason that it proved the occasion of my discerning for the first time a special inclination on Hubert's side toward myself, who thought nothing of love, but was only glad to have acquired a friend endowed with so much wit and superior knowledge, and willing to impart it. This book, I say, did contain a narration which bred in me so great a resentment of the author's merits, and so quick a sympathy with the feigned subjects of his muse, that never before or since methinks has a fiction so moved me as the story of Olindo and Sophronisba.

Methinks this was partly ascribable to a certain likeness between the scenes described by the poet and some which take place at this time in our country. In the maiden of high and noble thoughts, fair, but heedless of her beauty, who stood in the presence of the soldan, once a Christian, then a renegade, taking on herself the sole guilt,—O virtuous guilt! O worthy crime!—of which all the Christians were accused, to wit, of rescuing sacred Mary's image from the hands of the infidels who did curse and blaspheme it, and, when all were to die for the act of one unknown, offered herself a ransom for all, and with a shamefaced courage, such as became a maid, and a bold modesty befitting a saint—a bosom moved indeed, but not dismayed, a fair but not pallid cheek—was content to perish for that the rest should live;—in her, I say, I saw a likeness in spirit to those who suffer nowadays for a like faith with hers, not at the hands of infidels, but of such whose parents did for the most part hold that same belief which they do now make out to be treason.

Hubert, observing me to be thus moved, smiled, and asked if, in the like case, I should have willed to die as Sophronisba.

"Yes," I answered, "if God did give me grace;" and then, as I uttered the words, I thought it should not be lawful to tell a lie, not for to save all the lives in the world; which doubt I imparted to him, who laughed and said he was of the poet's mind, who doth exclaim, touching this lie, "O noble deceit! worthier than truth itself!" and that he thought a soul should not suffer long in purgatory for such a sin. "Maybe not," I answered; "yet, I ween, there should be more faith in a sole commitment to God of the events than in doing the least evil so that good should come of it."

He said, "I marvel, Mistress Constance, what should be your thoughts thereon if the life of a priest was in your hands,

and you able to save him by a lie."

"Verily," I answered, "I know not, Master Rookwood; but I have so much trust in Almighty God that he would, in such a case, put words into my mouth which should be true, and yet mislead evil-purposed men, or that he shall keep me from such fearful straits, or forgive me if, in the stress of a great peril, I unwittingly should err."

"And I pray you," Hubert then said, as if not greatly caring to pursue the theme, "what be your thought concerning the unhappy youth Olindo, who did so dote on this maiden that, fearful of offending there where above all he desired to please, had, greatly as he loved, little hoped, nothing asked, and not so much as revealed his passion until a common fate bound both to an equal death?"

"I thought not at all on him," I answered; "but only on Sophronisba."

At which he sighed and read further: "That all wept for her who, albeit doomed to a cruel death, wept not for herself, but in this wise secretly reproved the fond youth's weeping: 'Friend,' quoth she, 'other thoughts, other tears, other sighs, do beseech this hour. Think of thy sins, and God's great recompense for the good. Suffer for his sole sake, and torment shall be sweet. See how fair the heavens do show, the sun how bright, as it were to cheer and lure us onward!'"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "shame on him who did need to be so exhorted, who should have been the most valiant, being a man!" To the which he quickly replied:

"He willed to die of his own free will rather than to live without her whom he jewelled more than life: but in the matter of grieving love doth make cowards of those who should else have been brave."

"Me thinks, rather," I answered, "that in noble hearts love's effects should be noble."

"Bethink you, Mistress Constance," he then asked, "that Sophronisba did act commendably, insomuch that when an unlooked-for deliverance came, she refused not to be united in life to him that had willed to be united to her in death."

"You may think me ungrateful, sir," answered; "but other merits methinks than fondness for herself should have won so great a heart."

"You be hard to content, Mistress Constance," he answered somewhat resentfully. "To satisfy you, I perceive one should have a hard as well as a great heart."

"Nay," I cried, "I praise not hardness, but love not softness either. You that be so learned, I pray you find the word which doth express what pleaseth me in a man."

"I know not the word," he answered; "I would I knew the substance of your liking, that I might furnish myself with it."

Whereupon our discourse ended that day; but it ministered food to my thoughts, and I fear me also to a vain content that one so gifted with learning and great promise of future greatness should evince something of regard beyond a mutual friendship for one as ignorant and young as I then was.

Some months after Kate's marriage, matters became very troublesome, by reason of the killing of a great store, as was reported, of French Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's day, and afterward in many cities of France, which did consternate the English Catholics for more reasons than one, and awoke so much rage in the breasts of Protestants, that the French ambassador told Lady Tregony, a friend, of Mistress Wells, that he did scarce venture to show his face; and none, save only the queen herself, who is always his very good friend, would speak to him. I was one evening at the house of Lady Ingoldby, Polly's mother-in-law, some time after this dismal news had been bruited, and the company there assembled did for the most part discourse on these events, not only as deploring what had taken place, and condemning the authors thereof,—which, indeed, was what all good persons must needs have done,—but took occasion thence to use such vile terms and opprobrious language touching Catholic religion, and the cruelty and wickedness of such as did profess it, without so much as a thought of the miseries inflicted on them in England, that—albeit I had been schooled in the hard lesson of silence—so strong a passion overcame me then, that I had well nigh, as the Psalmist saith, spoken with my tongue, yea, young as I was, uttered words rising hot from my heart, in the midst of that adverse company, which I did know, them to be, if one had not at that moment lifted up his voice, whose presence I had already noted, though not acquainted with his name; a man of reverent and exceedingly benevolent aspect; aged, but with an eye so bright, and silvery hair crowning a noble forehead, that so much excellence and dignity is seldom to be observed in any one as was apparent in this gentleman.

"Good friends," he said, and at the sound of his voice the speakers hushed their eager discoursing, "God defend I should in any way differ with you touching the massacres in France; for verily it has been a lamentable and horrible thing that so many persons should be killed, and religion to be the pretence for it; but to hear some speak of it, one should think none did suffer in this country for their faith, and bloody laws did not exist, whereby Papists are put to death in a legal, cold-blooded fashion, more terrible, if possible, than the sudden bursts of wild passions and civil strife, which revenge for late cruelties committed by the Huguenots, wherein many thousand Catholics had perished, the destruction of churches, havoc of fierce soldiery, and apprehension of the like attempts in Paris, had stirred up to fury; so that when the word went forth to fall on the leaders of the party, the savage work once begun, even as a fire in a city built of wood, raged as a madness for one while, and men in a panic struck at foes, whose gripe they did think to feel about their throats."

Here the speaker paused an instant. This so bold opening of his speech did seem to take all present by surprise, and almost robbed me of my breath; for it is well known that nowadays a word, yea a piece of a word, or a nod of the head, whereby any suspicion may arise of a favorable disposition toward Catholics, is often-times a sufficient cause for a man to be accused and cast into prison; and I waited his next words (which every one, peradventure from curiosity, did likewise seem inclined to hear) with downcast eyes, which dared not to glance at any one's face, and cheeks which

burned like hot coals.

"It is well known," quoth he, "that the sufferings which be endured by recusants at this time in our country are such, that many should prefer to die at once than to be subjected to so constant a fear and terror as doth beset them. I speak not now of the truth or the falsity of their religion, which, if it be ever so damnable and wicked, is no new invention of their own, but what all Christian people did agree in, one hundred years ago; so that the aged do but abide by what they were taught by undoubted authority in their youth, and the young have received from their parents as true. But I do solely aver that Papists are subjected to a thousand vexations, both of bonds, imprisonments, and torments worse than death, yea and oftentimes to death itself; and that so dreadful, that to be slain by the sword, or drowned, yea even burned at the stake, is not so terrible; for they do hang a man and then cut him down yet alive, and butcher him in such ways—plucking out his heart and tearing his limbs asunder—that nothing more horrible can be thought of."

"They be traitors who are so used," cried one gentleman, somewhat recovering from the surprise which these bold words had caused.

"If to be of a different religion from the sovereign of the country be a proof of treason," continued the venerable speaker, "then were the Huguenots, which have perished in France, a whole mass and nest of traitors."

A gentleman seated behind me, who had a trick of sleeping in his chair, woke up and cried out, "Not half a one, sirs; not so much as half a one is allowed," meaning the mass, which he did suppose to have been spoken of.

"And if so, deserved all to die," continued the speaker.

"Ay, and so they do, sir," quoth the sleeper. "I pray you let them all be hanged." Upon which every one laughed, and the aged gentleman also; and then he said,

"Good my friends, I ween 'tis a rash thing to speak in favor of recusants nowadays, and what few could dare to do but such as cannot be suspected of disloyalty to the queen and the country, and who, having drunk of the cup of affliction in their youth, even to the dregs, and held life for a long time as a burden which hath need to be borne day by day, until the wished for hour of release doth come—and the sooner, the more welcome—have no enemies to fear, and no object to attain. And if so be that you will bear with me for a few moments, yea, if ye procure me to be hanged to-morrow" (this he said with a pleasant smile; and, "Marry, fear not, Mr. Roper," and "I' faith, speak on, sir," was bruited round him by his astonished auditors), "I will recite to you some small part of the miseries which have been endured of late years by such as cannot be charged with the least thought of treason, or so much as the least offence against the laws, except in what touches the secret practice of their religion. Women have, to my certain knowledge, been hung up by the hands in prisons (which do overflow with recusants, so that at this time there remaineth no room for common malefactors), and cruelly scourged, for that they would not confess by which priest they had been reconciled or absolved, or where they had heard mass. Priests are often tortured to force them to declare what they hear in confession, who harbor priests and Papists, where such and such recusants are to be found, and the like questions; and in so strenuous a manner, that needles have been thrust under their nails, and one man, not long since, died of his racking. O sirs and gentle ladies, I have seen with mine own eyes a youth, the son of one of my friends—young Mark Typper, born of honest and rich parents, skilful in human learning, having left his study for a time, and going home to see his friends—whipped through the streets of London, and burnt in the ear, because, forsooth, a forward judge, to whom he had been accused as a Papist, and finding no proof thereof, condemned him as a vagabond. And what think you, good people, of the death of Sir Robert Tyrwit's son, who was accused for hearing of a mass at the marriage of his sister, and albeit at the time of his arrest in a grievous fever, was pulled out of the house and thrust into prison, even as he then was, feeble, faint, and grievously sick? His afflicted parents entreat, make intercession, and use all the means they can to move the justices to have consideration of the sick; not to heap sorrow upon sorrow, nor affliction on the afflicted; not to take away the life of so comely a young gentleman, whom the physicians come and affirm will certainly die if he should be removed. All this is nothing regarded. They lay hold on the sick man, pull him away, shut him up in prison, and within two days next after he dies. They bury him, and make no scruple or regard at all. O sirs, bethink you what these parents do feel when they hear Englishmen speak of the murders of Protestants in France as an unheard of crime. If, in these days, one in a family of recusants doth covet the inheritance of an elder brother—yea, of a father—he hath but to conform to the now established religion (I leave you to think with how much of piety and conscience), and denounce his parent as a Papist, and straightway he doth procure him to be despoiled, and his lands given up to him. Thus the seeds of strife and bitter enmity have been sown broadcast through the land, the bands of love in families destroyed, the foundations of honor and beneficence blown up, the veins and sinews of the common society of men cut asunder, and a fiendly force of violence and a deadly poison of suspicion used against such as are accused of no other crime than their religion, which they yet adhere to; albeit their fortunes be ruined by fines and their lives in constant jeopardy from strenuous laws made yet more urgent by private malice. My friends, I would that not one hair of the head of so much as one Huguenot had been touched in France; that not one Protestant had perished in the flames in the late queen's reign, or in that of her present majesty; and also that the persecution now framed in this country against Papists, and so handled as to blind men's eyes and work in them a strange hypocrisy, yea and in some an innocent belief that freedom of men's souls be the offspring of Protestant religion, should pass away from this land. I care not how soon (as mine honored father-in-law, and in God too, I verily might add, was wont to say),—I care not how soon I be sewn up in a bag and cast into the Thames, if so be I might first see religious differences at an end, and men of one mind touching God's truth."

Here this noble and courageous speaker ceased, and various murmurs rose among the company. One lady remarked to her neighbor: "A marvellous preacher that of seditious doctrines, methinks."

And one gentleman said that if such talk were suffered to pass unpunished in her majesty's subjects, he should look to see massing and Popery to rear again their heads in the land.

And many loudly affirmed none could be Papists, or wish them well, and be friends to the queen's government, and so it did stand to reason that Papists were traitors.

And another said that, for his part, he should desire to see them less mercifully dealt with; and that the great clemency shown to such as did refuse to come to church, by only laying fines on them, and not dealing so roundly as should compel them to obedience, did but maintain them in their obstinacy; and he himself would as lief shoot down a seminary priest as a wolf, or any other evil beast.

I noticed this last speaker to be one of those who had spoken with most abhorrence of the massacres in France.

One lady called out in a loud voice that Papists, and such as take their part, among which she did lament to see Mr. Roper, should be ashamed so much as to speak of persecution; and began to relate the cruelties practised upon Protestants twenty years back, and the burning at Oxford of those excellent godly men, the bishops of London and Worcester.

Mr. Roper listened to her with an attentive countenance, and then said:

"I' faith, madam, I cannot choose but think Dr. Latimer, if it be he you speak of, did somewhat approve of such a method of dealing with persons obstinate touching religion, when others than himself and those of his own way of thinking were the subjects of it, if we judge by a letter he wrote in 1538 to his singular good friend the Lord Privy Seal Cromwell, at the time he was appointed to preach at the burning at Smithfield of Friar Forest of Greenwich, a learned divine I often did converse with in my young years."

"What wrote the good bishop?" two or three persons asked; and the lady who had spoken before said she should warrant it to be something pious, for a more virtuous Protestant never did live than this holy martyr.

Whereupon Mr. Roper: "This holy bishop did open his discourse right merrily, for in a pleasant manner he thus begins his letter: 'And, sir, if it be your pleasure, as it is, that I shall play the fool in my customable manner when Forest shall suffer, I would wish my stage stood near unto Forest; for I would endeavor myself so to content the people that therewith I might also convert Forest, God so helping.' And further on he doth greatly lament that the White Friars of Doncaster had access to the prisoner, and through the fault of the sheriff or jailers, or both, he should be allowed to hear mass and receive the sacrament, by which he is rather comforted in his way than discouraged. And **such is his foolishness**, this good doth humbly say, that if Forest would abjure his religion, he should yet (for all his past obstinacy) wish him pardoned. O sirs, think you that when at Oxford this aged man, seventeen years after, did see the flames gather round himself, that he did not call to mind what time he preached, playing the fool, as he saith, before a man in like agonies, and never urged so much as one word against his sentence?"

"Marry, if he did not," said one, whom I take to have been Sir Christopher Wray, who had been a silent listener until then, "if his conscience pricked him not thereon, it must needs have been by the same rule as the lawyer used to the countryman, who did put to him this question: 'Sir, if my cow should stray into your field and feed there one whole day, what should be the law touching compensation therefor?' 'Marry, friend, assuredly to pay the damage to the full, which thou art bounden at once to do.' 'Ay,' quoth the countryman; 'but 'tis your cow hath strayed into my field.' Upon which, 'Go to, go to,' cries the lawyer; 'for I warrant thee that doth altogether alter the law.'"

Some smiled, and others murmured at this story; and meanwhile one of the company, who from his dress I perceived to be a minister, and moreover to hold some dignity in the Protestant Church, rose from his place, and crossing the room, came up to Mr. Roper (for that bold speaker was no other than Sir Thomas More's son-in-law, whose great charity and goodness I had often heard of), and, shaking hands with him, said: "I be of the same mind with you, friend Roper, in every word you have uttered tonight. And I pray to God my soul may be with yours after this life, and our end in heaven, albeit I should not sail there in the same boat with thou."

"Good Mr. Dean," quoth Mr. Roper, "I do say amen to your prayer." and then he added somewhat in a low voice, and methinks it was that there is but one ship chartered for safety in such a voyage.

At the which the other shook his head and waved his hand, and then calling to him a youth not more than twelve or thirteen years old, his son, he did present him to Mr. Roper. I had observed this young gentleman to listen, with an eagerness betokening more keenness for information than is usually to be found in youths of his years, to the discourses held that evening. His father told Mr. Roper that this his son's parts and quick apprehension in learning did lead him to hope he should be one day, if it pleased God, an ornament to the church. Mr. Roper smiled as he saluted the youth, and said a few words to him, which he answered very readily. I never saw again that father or that son. The one was Dr. Mathews, whom the queen made Bishop of Durham; and the other, Toby Mathews, his son, who was reconciled some years ago, and, as I have heard from some, is now a Jesuit.

The venerable aspect of the good Mr. Roper so engaged my thoughts, that I asked Lady Tregony, by whose side I was sitting, if she was acquainted with him, and if his virtue was as great as his appearance was noble. She smiled, and answered that his appearance, albeit honorable and comely, was not one half so honorable as his life had been, or so comely as his mind. That he had been the husband of Sir Thomas More's never-to-be-forgotten daughter, Margaret, whose memory he so reverently did cherish that he had never so much as thought of a second marriage; and of late years, since he had resigned the office of sub-notary in the Queen's Bench to his son, he did give his whole substance and his time to the service of the poor, and especially to prisoners, by reason of which he was called the staff of the sorrowful, and sure refuge of the afflicted. Now, then, I looked on the face of this good aged man with a deeper reverence than heretofore. Now I longed to be favored with so much of his notice as one passing word. Now I watched for an opportunity to compass my desire, and I thank God not without effect; for I do count it as a chief blessing to have been honored, during the remaining years of this virtuous gentleman's life, with so much of his condescending goodness, that if the word friendship may be used in regard to such affectionate feelings as can exist between one verging on four-score years of age and of such exalted merit, and a foolish creature yet in her teens, whom he honored with his notice, it should be so in this instance; wherein on the one side a singular reverence and humble great affection did arise almost on first acquaintance, and on the other so much benignity and goodness shown in the pains taken to cultivate such good dispositions as had been implanted in this young person's heart by careful parents, and to guard her

mind against the evils of the times, that nothing could be greater.

Mr. Roper chancing to come near us, Lady Tregony said somewhat, which caused him to address me in this wise:

"And are there, then, maidens in these days not averse to the sight of gray hairs, and who mislike not to converse with aged men?"

This was said with so kindly a smile that timidity vanished, and confidence took its place.

"Oh, sir," I cried, "when I was not so much as five years old, my good father showed me a picture of Sir Thomas More, and told me he was a man of such angelic wit as England never had the like before, nor is ever like to have again, and of a most famous and holy memory; and methinks, sir, that you, being his son-in-law, who knew his doings and his mind so well, and lived so long in his house, must needs in many things resemble him."

"As to his doings and his mind," Mr. Roper replied, "no man living knoweth them so well, and if my mean wit, memory, and knowledge could serve me now, could declare so much thereof. But touching resemblance, alas! there was but one in all the world that represented the likeness of his virtues and perfections; one whom he loved in a particular manner, and who was worthiest of that love more than any creature God has made."

Here the good man's voice faltered a little, and he made a stop in his discourse; but in a little while said that he had thought it behoved him to set down in writing such matters concerning Sir Thomas's life as he could then call to remembrance, and that he would lend me the manuscript to read, which I did esteem an exceeding great favor, and one I could not sufficiently thank him for. Then he spoke somewhat of the times, which were waxing every day more troublesome, and told me he often called to mind a conversation he once had with Sir Thomas, walking along the side of the Thames at Chelsea, which he related in these words:

"Now would to God, my son Roper,' quoth Sir Thomas, 'I were put in a sack, and presently cast into the Thames, upon condition that three things were well established throughout Christendom.' 'And what mighty things are those, sir?' I asked. Whereupon he: 'Wouldst thou know, son Roper, what they be?' 'Yea, marry, sir, with a good will, if it please you,' quoth I. 'I' faith, son, they be these,' he said: 'The first is that, whereas the most part of Christian princes are at mortal wars, they were all at peace; the second that, whereas the church of Christ is at present sorely afflicted with so many heresies, it were settled in perfect uniformity of religion; the third that, where the matter of the king's marriage is now come in question, it were, to the glory of God and the quietness of all parties, brought to a good conclusion.' 'Ay, sir,' quoth I, 'those were indeed three things greatly to be desired; but'—I continued with a certain joy—'where shall one see a happier state than in this realm, that has so Catholic a prince that no heretic durst show his face; so virtuous and learned a clergy; so grave and sound a nobility; and so loving, obedient subjects, all in one faith agreeing together?' 'Truth it is indeed, son Roper,' quoth he; and in all degrees and estates of the same went far beyond me in commendation thereof. 'And yet, son Roper, I pray God,' said he, 'that some of us, as high as we seem to sit on the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, live not the day that we would gladly be at league and composition with them, to let them have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be contented to let us have ours quietly to ourselves.' After I had told him many considerations why he had no cause to say so: 'Well,' said he, 'I pray God, son Roper, some of us will live not to see that day.' To whom I replied: 'By my troth, sir, it is very desperately spoken.' These vile terms, I cry God mercy, did I give him, who, perceiving me to be in a passion, said merrily unto me, 'It shall not be so; it shall not be so.' In sixteen years and more, being in the house conversing with him, I could not perceive him to be so much as once out of temper."

This was the first of many conversations I held, during the years I lived in Holborn, with this worthy gentleman, who was not more pleased to relate, than I to hear, sundry anecdotes concerning Sir Thomas More, his house, and his family.

Before he left me that day, I did make bold to ask him if he feared not ill consequences from the courageous words he had used in a mixed, yea rather, with few exceptions, wholly adverse, company.

"Not much," he answered. "Mine age; the knowledge that there are those who would not willingly see me roughly handled, and have power to prevent it; and withal no great concern, if it should be so, to have my liberty constrained, yea, my life shortened by a few years, or rather days,—doth move me to a greater freedom of speech than may generally be used, and a notable indifference to the results of such freedom."

Having whispered the like fears I had expressed to him to Lady Tregony, she did assure me his confidence was well based, and that he had connexions which would by no means suffer him to be thrown into prison, which should be the fate of any one else in that room who had spoken but one half, yea one tenth part, as boldly as he had ventured on.

CHAPTER XII.

It was some time before I could restore myself to my countenance, after so much moving discourse, so as to join with spirit in the sports and the dancing which did ensue among the young people that evening. But sober thoughts and painful themes after a while gave place to merriment; and the sound of music, gay tattle, and cheerful steps lured me to such enjoyment as youth is wont to take in these kinds of pastimes. It was too much my wont to pursue with eagerness the present humor, and drink deeply of innocent pleasure wherein no harm should exist if enjoyed with moderation. But like in a horse on whose neck the bridle is cast, what began in a gentle ambling ends in wild galloping; so lawful merriment, if unrestrained, often ends in what is unbeseeming, and in some sort blameable. So this time, when dancing tired, a ring was formed for conversation, and the choice of the night's pastime yielded to my discretion; alack, rather to my imprudence and folly, methinks I might style it. I chose that arguments should be held by two persons of the company, turn by turn, and that a judge should be named to allot a reward to the worthiest, and a penance to the worst. This liked them all exceedingly, and by one consent they appointed me to be judge, and to summon such as should

dispute. There were there two young gentlemen which haunted our house, and Lady Ingoldby's also. One was Martin Tregony, Lady Tregony's nephew, an ill-favored young man, with manners worse than his face, and so apish and foppish in his dress and behavior, that no young woman could abide him, much less would receive his addresses, or if she did entertain him in conversation, it was to make sport of his so great conceit. He had an ill-natured kind of wit, more sharp than keen, more biting than sarcastic. He studied the art of giving pain, and oftentimes did cause shamefaced merit to blush. The other was Mr. Thomas Sherwood, who, albeit not very near in blood to my father, was, howsoever, of the same family as ourselves. He had been to the English College in Douay, and had brought me tidings a short time back of my father and Edmund Genings' safe arrival thither, and afterward came often to see us, and much frequented Lady Tregony's house. He had exceedingly good parts, but was somewhat diffident and bashful. Martin Tregony was wont to make him a mark, as it were, of his ill-natured wit, and did fancy himself to be greatly his superior in sharpness, partly because Mr. Sherwood's disposition was retiring, and partly that he had too much goodness and sense to bandy words with so ill-mannered a young man. I pray you who read this, could aught be more indiscreet than, in a thoughtless manner, to have summoned these two to dispute? which nevertheless I did, thinking some sport should arise out of it, to see Master Martin foisted in argument by one he despised, and also from his extravagant gestures and affected countenances. So I said:

"Master Tregony, your task shall be to dispute with Master Sherwood; and this the theme of your argument, 'The Art of Tormenting.' He who shall describe the nicest instances of such skill, when exercised by a master toward his servant, a parent to his child, a husband to his wife, a wife to her husband, a lover to his mistress, or a friend to his friend, shall be proclaimed victorious; and his adversary submit to such penance as the court shall inflict."

Master Sherwood shook his head for to decline to enter these lists; but all the young gentlemen and ladies cried, he should not be suffered to show contempt of the court, and forced him to stand up.

Master Martin was nothing loth, and in his ill-favored countenance there appeared a made smile, which did indicate an assurance of victory; so he began:

"The more wit a man hath, the better able he shall be at times to torment another; so I do premise, and at the outset of this argument declare, that to blame a man for the exercise of a talent he doth possess is downright impiety, and that to wound another by the pungency of home-thrusts in conversation is as just a liberty in an ingenious man, as the use of his sword in a battle is to a soldier."

Mr. Sherwood upon this replied, that he did allow a public disputation, appointed by meet judges, to come under the name of a fair battle; but even in a battle (he said) generous combatants aim not so much at wounding their adversaries, as to the disarming of them; and that he who in private conversation doth make a weapon of his tongue is like unto the man who provokes another to a single combat, which for Christians is not lawful, and pierces him easily who has less skill in wielding the sword than himself.

"Marry, sir," quoth Master Martin, "if you do bring piety into your discourse, methinks the rules of just debate be not observed; for it is an unfair thing for to overrule a man with arguments he doth not dare to reply to under pain of spiritual censures."

"I cry you mercy, Master Martin," quoth the other; "you did bring in *impiety*, and so methought piety should not be excluded." At the which we all applauded, and Martin began to perceive his adversary to be less contemptible than he had supposed.

"Now to the point," I cried; "for exordiums be tedious. I pray you, gentlemen, begin, and point out some notable fashion wherewith a master might torment his servant."

Upon which quoth Martin: "If a man hath a sick servant, and doth note his fancy to be set on some indulgence not of strict necessity, and should therefore deny it to him, methinks that should be a rare opportunity to exercise his talent."

"Nay," cried Master Sherwood, "a nicer one, and ever at hand afterward, should be to show kindness once to a dependent when sick, and to use him ten times the worse for it when he is well, upbraiding him for such past favors, as if one should say: 'Alack, be as kind as you will, see what return you do meet with!'"

This last piece of ingenuity was allowed by the court to surpass the first. "Now," I cried, "what should be the greatest torment a parent could inflict on a child?"

Martin answered: "If it should be fond of public diversion, to confine it in-doors. If retirement suits its temper, to compel it abroad. If it should delight in the theatre, to take it to see a good play, and at the moment when the plot shall wax most moving, to say it must be tired, and procure to send it home. Or, in more weighty matters,—a daughter's marriage, for instance,—to detect if the wench hath set her heart on one lover, and if so, to keep from her the knowledge of this gentleman's addresses; and when she hath accepted another, to let her know the first had sued for her hand, and been dismissed."

Here all the young gentlewomen did exclaim that Master Sherwood could by no means think of a more skilful torment than this should prove. He thought for an instant, and then said:

"It should be a finer and more delicate torment to stir up in a young gentlewoman's mind suspicions of one she loved, and so work on her natural passions of jealousy and pride, that she should herself, in a hasty mood, discard her lover; and ever after, when the act was not recallable, remind her she herself had wrought her own unhappiness, and wounded one she loved."

"Yea, that should be worse than the first torment," all but one young lady cried out; who, for her part, could better endure, she said, to have injured herself than to be deceived, as in the first case.

"Then do come husbands," quoth Mr. Martin; "and I vow," he cried, "I know not how to credit there be such vile wretches in the world as should wish to torment their wives; but if such there be, methinks the surest method they may practise is, to loving wives to show indifferency; to such as be jealous, secrecy; to such as be pious, profaneness; and the like in all the points whereon their affections are set."

"Alack!" cried Mistress Frances Bellamy, "what a study the man hath made of this fine art! Gentlewomen should needs beware of such a one for a husband. What doth Master Sherwood say?"

Whereupon he: "Methinks the greatest torment a husband might inflict on a worthy wife should be to dishonor her love by his baseness; or if he had injured her, to doubt her proneness to forgive."

"And wives," quoth Mistress Southwell,— "what of their skill therein, gentlemen?"

"It be such," cried Martin, "as should exceed men's ability thereof to speak. The greatest instance of talent of this sort I have witnessed is in a young married lady, whose husband is very willing to stay in his house or go abroad, or reside in town, or at his seat in the country, as should most please her, so she would let him know her wishes. But she is so artful in concealing them, that the poor man can never learn so much as should cause him to guess what they may be; but with a meek voice she doth reply to his asking, 'An it please you, sir, let it be as you choose, for you very well know I never do oppose your will.' Then if he resolve to leave town, she maketh not much ado till they have rode twenty or thirty miles out of London. Then she doth begin to sigh and weep, for that she should be a most ill-used creature, and her heart almost broken for to leave her friends, and be shut up for six months in a swamp, for such she doth term his estate; and if she should not have left London that same day, she should have been at the Lord Mayor's banquet, and seen the French princes, which, above all things, she had desired. But some husbands be so hard-hearted, if they can hunt and hawk, 'tis little count they make of their wives' pleasures. Then when she hath almost provoked the good man to swear, she hangeth down her head and saith, 'Content you, sir—content you; 'tis your good fortune to have an obedient wife.' And so mopes all the time of the journey."

Whilst Martin was speaking, I noted a young gentlewoman who did deeply blush whilst he spoke, and tears came into her eyes. I heard afterward she had been lately married, and that he counterfeited her voice in so precise a manner, so that all such as knew her must needs believe her to be the wife he spoke of; and that there was so much of truth in the picture he had drawn, as to make it seem a likeness, albeit most unjust toward one who, though apt to boast of her obedience, and to utter sundry trifling complaints, was a fond wife and toward lady to her dear husband; and that this malice in Mr. Tregony, over and above his wonted spite, was due to her rejection of his hand some short time before her marriage. Master Sherwood, seeing the ungracious gentleman's ill-nature and the lady's confusion, stood up the more speedily to reply, and so cut him short. "I will relate," he said, "a yet more ingenious practice of tormenting, which should seem the highest proof of skill in a wife, albeit also practised by husbands, only not so aptly, or peradventure so often. And this is when one hath offered to another a notable insult or affront, so to turn the tables, even as a conjuror the cards he doth handle, that straightway the offended party shall seem to be the offender, and be obliged to sue forgiveness for that wherein he himself is hurt. I pray you, gentlemen and ladies, can anything more ingenious than this practice be thought on?"

All did admit it to be a rare example of ability in tormenting; but some objected it was not solely exercised by wives and husbands, but that friends, lovers, and all sorts of persons might use it. Then one gentleman called for some special instance of the art in lovers. But another said it was a natural instinct, and not an art, in such to torment one another, and likewise their own selves, and proposed the behavior of friends in that respect as a more new and admirable theme.

"Ah," quoth Master Martin, with an affected wave of his hand, "first show me an instance of a true friendship betwixt ladies, or a sincere affection betwixt gentlemen; and then it will be time for to describe the arts whereby they do plague and torment each other."

Mr. Sherwood answered, "A French gentleman said, a short time since, that it should be a piece of commendable prudence to live with your friend as looking that he should one day be your enemy. Now we be warranted, by Master Tregony's speech, to conclude his friendships to be enmities in fair disguise; and the practices wherewith friends torment each other no doubt should apply to this case also; and so his exceptions need in no wise alter the theme of our argument. I pray you, sir, begin, and name some notable instance in which, without any apparent breach of friendship, the appearance of which is in both instances supposed, one may best wound his friend, or, as Mr. Tregony hath it, the disguised object of his hatred."

I noticed that Master Martin glanced maliciously at his adversary, and then answered, "The highest exercise of such ability should be, methinks, to get possession of a secret which your friend, *or disguised enemy*, has been at great pains to conceal, and to let him know, by such means as shall hold him in perpetual fear, but never in full assurance of the same, that you have it in your power to accuse him at any time of that which should procure him to be thrown into prison, or maybe hanged on a gibbet."

A paleness spread over Master Sherwood's face, not caused, I ween, by fear so much as by anger at the meanness of one who, from envy and spite, even in the freedom of social hours, should hint at secrets so weighty as would touch the liberty, yea, the life, of one he called his friend; and standing up, he answered, whilst I, now too late discerning mine own folly in the proposing of a dangerous pastime, trembled in every limb.

"I know," quoth he,— "I know a yet more ingenious instance of the skill of a malicious heart. To hang a sword over a friend's head, and cause him to apprehend its fall, must needs be a well-practised device; but if it be done in so skilful a manner that the weapon shall threaten not himself alone, but make him, as it were, the instrument of ruin to others dearer to him than his own life,—if, by the appearance of friendship, the reality of which such a heart knoweth not, he hath been to such confidence as shall be the means of sorrow to those who have befriended him in another manner than this false friend, this true foe,—the triumph is then complete. Malice and hatred can devise naught beyond it."

Martin's eyes glared so fearfully, and his voice sounded so hoarse, as he hesitated in answering, that, in a sort of desperation, I stood up, and cried, "Long enough have these two gentlemen had the talk to themselves. Verily, methinks there be no conqueror, but a drawn game in this instance."

But a murmur rose among the company that Master Sherwood was victorious, and Master Tregony should do penance.

"What shall it be?" was asked; and all with one voice did opine Master Sherwood should name it, for he was as much beloved as Master Tregony was disliked. He (Sherwood), albeit somewhat inwardly moved, I ween, had restrained his indignation, and cried out merrily, "Marry, so will I! Look me in the face, Martin, and give me thy hand. This shall be thy penance."

The other did so; but a fiendly look of resentment was in his eyes; and methinks Thomas Sherwood must needs have remembered the grasp of his hand to forgive it, I doubt not, even at the foot of the scaffold.

From that day Martin Tregony conceived an implacable hatred for Master Sherwood, whom he had feigned a great friendship for on his first arrival in London, because he hoped, by his means and influence with his aunt, to procure her to pay his debts. But after he had thrown off the mask, he only waited for an opportunity to denounce him, being privy to his having brought a priest to Lady Tregony's house, who had also said mass in her chapel. So one day meeting him in the streets, he cried out, "Stop the traitor! stop the traitor!" and so causing him to be apprehended, had him before the next justice of the peace; where, when they were come, he could allege nothing against him, but that he suspected him to be a Papist. Upon which he was examined concerning his religion, and, refusing to admit the queen's church-headship, he was cast into a dungeon in the Tower. His lodgings were plundered, and £25, which he had amassed, as I knew, who had assisted him to procure it, for the use of his aged and sick father, who had been lately cast into prison in Lancaster, was carried off with the rest. He was cruelly racked, we heard, for that he would not reveal where he had heard mass; and kept in a dark filthy hole, where he endured very much from hunger, stench, and cold. No one being allowed to visit him—for the Tower was not like some other prisons where Mistress Ward and others could sometimes penetrate—or afford him any comfort, Mr. Roper had, by means of another prisoner, conveyed to his keeper some money for his use; but the keeper returned it the next day, because the lieutenant of the Tower would not suffer him to have the benefit of it. All he could be prevailed upon to do was to lay out one poor sixpence for a little fresh straw for him to lie on. About six months after, he was brought to trial, and condemned to die, for denying the queen's supremacy, and was executed at Tyburn, according to sentence, being cut down whilst he was yet alive, dismembered, bowelled, and quartered.

Poor Lady Tregony's heart did almost break at this his end and her kinsman's part in it; and during those six months—for she would not leave London whilst Thomas Sherwood was yet alive—I did constantly visit her, almost every day, and betwixt us there did exist a sort of fellowship in our sorrow for this worthy young man's sufferings; for that she did reproach herself for lack of prudence in not sufficient distrust of her own nephew, whom now she refused to see, at least, she said, until he had repented of his sin, which he, glorying in, had told her, the only time they had met, he should serve her in the same manner, and if he could ever find out she heard mass, should get her a lodging in the Tower, and for himself her estate in Norfolk, whither she was then purposing to retire, and did do so after Master Sherwood's execution. For mine own part, as once before my father's apprehended danger had diverted my mind from childish folly, so did the tragical result of an entertainment, wherein I had been carried away by thoughtless mirth, somewhat sicken me of company and sports. I went abroad not much the next year; only was often at Mr. Wells's house, and in Hubert's society, which had become so habitual to me that I was almost persuaded the pleasure I took therein proceeded from a mutual inclination, and I could observe with what jealousy he watched any whom I did seem to speak with or allow of any civility at their hands. Even Master Sherwood he would jalouse, if he found me weeping over his fate; and said he was happier in prison, for whom such tears did flow, than he at liberty, for whom I showed no like regard. "Oh," I would answer, "he is happy because, Master Rookwood, his sufferings are for his God and his conscience' sake, and not such as arise from a poor human love. Envy him his faith, his patience, his hope, which make him cry out, as I know he doth, 'O my Lord Jesu! I am not worthy that I should suffer these things for thee;' and not the compassionate tears of a paltry wench that in some sort was the means to plunge him in these straits."

In the spring of the year which did follow, I heard from my father, who had been ordained at the English College at Rheims, and was on the watch, he advertised me, for an opportunity to return to England, for to exercise the sacred ministry amongst his poor Catholic brethren. But at which port he should land, or whither direct his steps, if he effected a safe landing, he dared not for to commit to paper. He said Edmund Genings had fallen into a most dangerous consumption, partly by the extraordinary pains he took in his studies, and partly in his spiritual exercises, insomuch that the physicians had almost despaired of his recovery, and that the president had in consequence resolved to send him into England, to try change of air. That he had left Rheims with great regret, and went on his journey, as far as Havre de Grace, and, after a fortnight's stay in that place, having prayed to God very heartily for the recovery of his health, so that he might return, and, without further delay, continue his studies for the priesthood, he felt himself very much better, almost as well as ever he was in his life; upon which he returned to his college, and took up again, with exceeding great fervor, his former manner of life; "and," my father added, "his common expression, as often as talk is ministered of England and martyrdom there, is this: *'Vivamus in spe! Vivamus in spe!'*"

This letter did throw me into an exceeding great apprehension that my father might fall into the hands of the queen's officers at any time he should land, and the first news I should hear of him to be that he was cast into prison. And as I knew no Catholic priest could dwell in England with out he did assume a feigned name, and mostly so one of his station, and at one time well noted as a gentleman and a recusant, I now never heard of any priest arrested in any part of England but I feared it should be him.

Hubert Rookwood was now more than ever at Mr. Lacy's house, and in his library, for they did both affection the same pursuits, albeit with very different abilities; and I was used to transcribe for them divers passages from manuscripts and books, taking greater pleasure, so to spend time, than to embroider in Kate's room, the compass of whose thoughts became each day more narrow, and her manner of talk more tasteless. Hubert seemed not well pleased when I told him my father had been ordained abroad. I gathered this from a troubled look in his eyes, and an increasing paleness, which

betokened, to my now observant eyes, emotions which he gave not vent to in words at all, or leastways in any that should express strong resentment. His silence always frightened me more than anger in others. He had acquired a great influence over me, and, albeit I was often ill at ease in his company, I ill brooked his absence. He was a zealous Catholic, and did adduce arguments and proofs in behalf of his religion with rare ability. Some of his writings which I copied at that time had a cogency and clearness in their reasons and style, which in my poor judgment betokened a singular sharp understanding and ingenuity of learning; but in his conversation, and writings also, was lacking the fervency of spirit, the warmth of devout aims, the indifferency to worldly regards, which should belong to a truly Christian soul, or else the nobleness and freedom of speech which some do possess from natural temper. But his attainments were far superior to those of the young men I used to see at Mr. Wells's, and such as gave him an extraordinary reputation amongst the persons I was wont to associate with, which contributed not a little to the value I did set on his preference, of which no proofs were wanting, save an open paying of his addresses to me, which by reason of his young age and mine, and the poorness of his prospects, being but a younger son of a country gentleman, was easy of account. He had a great desire for wealth and for all kind of greatness, and used to speak of learning as a road to it.

In the spring of that year, my Lord Surrey left Cambridge, and came to live at Howard House with his lady. They were then both in their eighteenth years, and a more comely pair could not be seen. The years that had passed since she had left London had greatly matured her beauty. She was taller of stature than the common sort, and very fair and graceful. The earl was likewise tall, very straight, long-visaged, but of a pleasant and noble countenance. I could not choose but admire her perfect carriage, toward her lord, her relatives, and her servants; the good order she established in her house; the care she took of her sister's education, who in two years was to be married to Lord William Howard; and her great charity to the poor, which she then began to visit herself, and to relieve in all sorts of ways, and was wont to say the angels of that old house where God had been served by so many prayers and alms must needs assist her in her care for those in trouble. My lord appeared exceedingly fond of her then. One day when I was visiting her ladyship, he asked me if I had read the life of that sweet holy Queen Elizabeth of Hungary; and as I said I had not met with it, he gifted me with a copy fairly printed and well ornamented, which Mr. Martin had left behind him when he went beyond seas, and said:

"Mistress Sherwood, see if in this book you find not the likeness of a lady which you mislike not any more than I do. Beshrew me, but I fear I may find some day strange guests in mine house if she do copy the pattern herein set down; and so I will e'en send the book out of the house, for my lady is too good for me already, and I be no fitting husband for a saint, which a very little more of virtue should make her."

And so he laughing, and she prettily checking his wanton speech, and such sweet loving looks and playful words passing between them as gladdened my heart to see.

Some time after, I found one day my Lady Surrey looking somewhat grave and thoughtful. She greeted me with an affectionate kiss, and said,

"Ah, sweet Constance, I be glad thou art come; for methinks we shall soon leave London."

"So soon?" I answered.

"Not *too* soon, dear Constance," she said somewhat sadly.

I did look wistfully in her sweet face. Methought there was trouble in it, and doubt if she should further speak or not; for she rested her head on her hand, and her dark eyes did fix themselves wistfully on mine, as if asking somewhat of me, but what I knew not. "Constance," she said at last, "I have no mother, no sister of mine own age, no brother, no ghostly father, to speak my mind to. Methinks it should not be wrong to unbosom my cares to thee, who, albeit young, hast a thoughtful spirit, and, as I have often observed, an aptness to give good counsel. And then thou art of that way of thinking wherein I was brought up, and though in outward show we now do differ, I am not greatly changed therein, as thou well knowest."

"Alack!" I cried, "too well I do know it, dear lady; and, albeit my tongue is silent thereon, my heart doth grieve to see you comfortless of that which is the sole source of true comfort."

"Tis not that troubles me," she answered, a little impatiently. "Thou art unreasonable, Constance. My duty to my lord shapes my outward behavior; but I have weighty cares, nevertheless. Dost thou mind that passage in the late duke our father's letter to his son and me?—that we should live in a lower degree, and out of London and from the court. Methinks a prophetic spirit did move him thus to write. My lord has a great heart and a generous temper, and loves to spend money in all sorts of ways, profitable and unprofitable, as I too well observe since we have been in London. And the queen sent him a store of messages by my Lord Essex, and others of his friends, that she was surprised not to see him at court; and that it was her highness's pleasure he should wait upon her, and she shall show him so much favor as he deserves, and such like inducements."

"And hath my lord been to court?" I asked.

"Yea, he hath been," she answered, sighing deeply. "He hath been forced to kiss the hand which signed his father's death-warrant. Constance, it is this which doth so pain me, that her majesty should think he hath in his heart no resentment of that mishap. She said to my Lady Berkeley some days since, when she sued for some favor at her hands, 'No, no, my Lady Berkeley; you love us not, and never will. You cannot forgive us your brother's death.' Why should her grace think a son hath less resentment of a father's loss than a sister?"

Willing to minister comfort to her touching that on which I did, nevertheless, but too much consent to her thinking, I said, "In my lord's case, he must have needs appeared to dislike the queen and her government if he stayed away from court, and his duty to his sovereign compelleth him to render her so much homage as is due to her majesty."

"Yea," cried my lady, "I be of the same mind with thee, that if my lord do live in London he is in a manner forced to swim with the tide, and God only knoweth into what a flood of troubles he may thus be led. But I have prevailed on him to go to Kenninghall, and there to enjoy that retired life his father passionately wished him to be contented with. So I do look, if it please God, to happy days when we leave this great city, where so many and great dangers beset us."

"Have you been to court likewise, dear lady?" I asked; and she answered,

"No; her majesty doth deny me that privilege which the wife of a nobleman should enjoy without so much as the asking for it. My Lord Arundel and my Lord Sussex are mad thereon, and swear 'tis the gipsy's doing, as they do always title Lord Leicester, and a sign of his hatred to my lord. But I be not of their mind; for methinks he doth but aid my lord to win the queen's favor by the slights which are put on his wife, which, if he doth take patiently, must needs secure for him such favor as my Lord Leicester should wish, if report speaks truly, none should enjoy but himself."

"But surely," I cried, "my lord's spirit is too noble to stomach so mean a treatment of his lady?"

A burning blush spread over the countess's face, and she answered,

"Constance, nobility of soul is shaped into action by divers motives and influences. And, I pray thee, since his father's death and the loss of his first tutor, who hath my lord had to fashion the aims of his eager spirit to a worthy ambition, and teach him virtuous contentment with a meaner rank and lower fortunes than his birth do entitle him to? He chafes to be degraded, and would fain rise to the heights his ancestors occupied; and, alas! the ladder which those who beset him—for that they would climb after him—do ever set before his eyes is the queen's majesty's favor. 'Tis the breath of their nostrils, the perpetual theme of their discourse. Mine ears sometimes ache with the sound of their oft-repeated words."

Then she broke off her speech for an instant, but soon asked me if to consult fortune-tellers was not a sin.

"Yea," I answered, "the Church doth hold it to be unlawful."

"Ah!" she replied, "I would to God my lord had never resorted to a person of that sort, which hath filled his mind with an apprehension which will work us great evil, if I do mistake not."

"Alas!" I said, "hath my lord been so deluded?"

"Thou hast heard, I ween," my lady continued, "of one Dr. Dee, whom the queen doth greatly favor, and often charge him to cast her horoscope. Some time ago my lord was riding with her majesty and the most part of her court near unto this learned gentleman's house at Mortlake, which her highness, taking notice of, she must needs propose to visit him with all her retinue, in order, she said, to examine his library and hold conference with him. But learning that his wife had been buried only four hours, her majesty would not enter, but desired my Lord Leicester to take her down from her horse at the church-wall at Mortlake and to fetch the doctor unto her, who did bring out for her grace's inspection his magic-glass, of which she and all those with her did see some of the properties. Several of the noblemen thereunto present were greatly contented and delighted with this cunning witchery, and did agree to visit again, in a private manner, this learned man, for to have their nativities calculated; and my lord, I grieve to say, went with them. And this cheat or wizard, for methinks one or other of those names must needs belong to him, predicted to my lord that he should be in great danger to be overthrown by a woman. And, I ween, good Constance, there was a craft in this most deep and deceptive, for doth it not tend, whichever way it be understood, to draw and urge onward my lord to a careful seeking to avoid this danger by a diligent serving and waiting on her majesty, if she be the woman like to undo him, or else to move him to the thought that his marriage—as I doubt not many endeavor to insinuate into his mind—should be an obstacle to her favor such as must needs mar his fortunes? Not that my lord hath breathed so much as one such painful word in my hearing, or abated in his kind behavior; but there are others who be not slow to hint so much to myself; and, I pray you, shall they not then deal with him in the same manner, albeit he is too noble and gentle to let me hear of it? But since that day he is often thoughtful when we are alone, and his mind ever running on means to propitiate her majesty, and doth send her many presents, the value of which should rather mark them as gifts from one royal person to another than from a subject to his prince. O Constance, I would Kenninghall were a thousand miles from London, and a wild sea to run between it and the court, such as could with difficulty be crossed; but 'tis vain wishing; and I thank God my lord should be willing to remove there, and so we shall be in quiet."

"God send it!" I answered; "and that you, my sweet lady, may find there all manner of contentment." Then I asked her ladyship if she had tidings of my Lady l'Estrange.

"Yea," she answered; "excellent good tidings, for that she was a contented wife to a loving husband. Sir Hammond," she said, "hath a most imperious temper, and, as I hear, doth not brook the least contradiction; so that a woman less mild and affectionate than Milicent should not, I ween, live at peace with him. But her sweet temper doth move her to such strict condescension to his humors, that she doth style herself most fortunate in marriage and a singular happy wife. Dost mind Master Chaucer's tale of the patient Grizzel, which Phil read to me some years back, soon after our first marriage, for to give me a lesson on wifely duty, and which I did then write to thee the story of?"

"Yea, well," I cried; "and that I was so angered at her patience, which methought was foolish, yea, wicked in its excess, that it did throw me into a passion."

My lady laughed and said, indeed she thought so too; but Milicent, in her behavior and the style of her letters, did mind her so much of that singular obedient wife, that she did sometimes call her Grizzel to her face. "She is now gone to reside with her husband," she said, "at a seat of his not very far from Lynn. 'Tis a poor and wild district; and the people, I hear, do resort to her in great numbers for assistance in the way of medicine and surgery, and for much help of various sorts. She is greatly contented that her husband doth in nowise impede her in these charitable duties, but rather the contrary. She is a creature of such natural good impulses and compassionate spirit that must needs show kindness to all who do come in her way."

Then my lady questioned me touching Muriel and Mistress Ward, and Kate and Polly, who were now both married; and I told her Kate had a fair son and Polly a little daughter, like to prove as sharp as her mother if her infant vivacity did not belie her. As to Muriel and her guide and friend, I told her ladyship that few were like to have speech with them, save such as were in so destitute a condition that nothing could exceed it. Now that my two elder cousins had left home, mine uncle's house was become a sort of refuge for the poor, and an hospital for distressed Catholics.

"And thou, Constance," my lady said, "dost thou not think on marriage?"

I smiled and answered I did sometimes; but had not yet met with any one altogether conformable to my liking.

"Not Mr. Hubert Rookwood?" she said smiling; "I have been told he haunts Mrs. Lacy's house, and would fain be admitted as Mistress Sherwood's suitor."

"I will not deny," I answered, "but that he doth testify a vast regard for me, or that he is a gentleman of such great parts and exceedingly winning speech that a gentlewoman should be flattered to be addressed by him; but, dear lady," I continued, opening my heart to her, "albeit I relish greatly his society, mine heart doth not altogether incline to his suit; and Mr. Congleton hath lately warned me to be less free in allowing of his attentions than hath hitherto been my wont; for, he said, his means be so scanty, that it behoveth him not to think of marriage until his fortunes do improve; and that his father would not be competent to make such settlements as should be needful in such a case, or without which he should suffer us to marry. As Hubert had never opened to me himself thereon in so pointed a fashion as to demand an answer from me, I was somewhat surprised at mine uncle's speech; but I found he had often ministered talk of his passion for me—for so he termed it—to Kate and her husband."

"And did it work in thee, sweet one, no regrets," my lady asked, "that the course of this poor gentleman's true love should be marred by his lack of wealth?"

"In truth no, dear lady," I replied; "except that I did notice, with so much of pain as a good heart must needs feel in the sufferings of another, that he was both sad and wroth at the change in my manner. And indeed I had always seen—and methinks this was the reason that my heart inclined not warmly toward his suit—that his affection was of that sort that doth readily breed anger; and that if he had occasion to misdoubt a return from me of such-like regard as he professed, his looks of love sometimes changed into a scowl, or something nearly resembling one. Yet I had a kindness toward him, yea, more than a kindness, an attachment, which methinks should have led me to correspond to his affection so far as to be willing to marry him, if mine uncle had not forbade me to think on it; but since he hath laid his commands upon me on that point, methinks I have experienced a freedom of soul and a greater peace than I had known for some time past."

"'Tis well then as it is," my lady said; and after some further discourse we parted that day.

It had been with me even as I had said to her. My mind had been more at ease since the contending would and would not, the desire to please Hubert and the fear to be false in so doing, had been stayed,—and mostly since he had urged me to entertain him as a friend, albeit defended to receive him as a lover. And that peace lasted until a day—ay, a day which began like other days with no perceptible presentiment of joy or sorrow, the sun shining as brightly, and no more, at its rise than on any other morning in June; and the thunder-clouds toward noon overshadowing its glory not more darkly than a storm is wont to do the clear sky it doth invade; nor yet evening smiling again more brightly and peacefully than is usually seen when nature's commotion is hushed, and the brilliant orb of day doth sink to rest in a bed of purple glory; and yet that day did herald the greatest joys, presage the greatest anguish, mark the most mighty beginnings of most varied endings that can be thought of in the life of a creature not altogether untried by sorrow, but on the brink of deeper waters than she had yet sounded, on the verge of such passages as to have looked forward to had caused her to tremble with a two-fold resentment of hope and of fear, and to look back to doth constrain her to lay down her pen awhile for to crave strength to recount the same.

CHAPTER XIII.

One day there was a great deal of company at Mistress Wells's house, which was the only one I then haunted, being as afore said, somewhat sickened of society and diversions. The conversation which was mostly ministered amongst such as visited there related to public affairs and foreign countries, and not so much as in some other houses to private scandals and the tattle of the town. The uncertainty I was in concerning my father's present abode and his known intent soon to cross over the sea from France worked in me a constant craving for news from abroad, and also an apprehensive curiosity touching reports of the landing of seminary priests at any of the English ports. Some would often tarry at Mr. Wells's house for a night who had lately come from Rheims or Paris, and even Rome, or leastways received letters from such as resided in those distant parts. And others I met there were persons who had friends at court; and they often related anecdotes of the queen and the ministers, and the lords and ladies of her household, which it also greatly concerned me to hear of, by reason of my dearest friend having embarked her whole freight of happiness in a frail vessel launched on that stormy sea of the court, so full of shoals and quicksands, whereby many a fair ship was daily chanced to be therein wrecked.

Nothing notable of this kind had been mentioned on the day I speak of, which, howsoever, proved a very notable one to me. For after I had been in the house a short time there came there one not known, and yet it should seem not wholly unknown to me; for that I did discover in his shape and countenance something not unfamiliar, albeit I could not call to mind that I had ever seen this gentleman before. I asked his name of a young lady who sat near to me, and she said she thought he should be the elder brother of Mr. Hubert Rookwood, who was lodging in the house, and that she heard he tabled there also since he had come to town, and that he was a very commendable person, above the common sort, albeit not one of such great parts as his brother. Then I did instantly take note of the likeness between the brothers

which had made the elder's face not strange to me, as also perhaps that one sight of him I had at Bedford some years before. Their visages were very like; but their figures and mostly their countenances different. I cannot say wherein that great differency did lie; but methinks every one must have seen, or rather felt it. Basil was the tallest and the handsomest of the twain. I will not be so great a prodigal of time as to bestow it on commendations of his outward appearance whose inward excellences were his chiefest merit. Howsoever, I be minded to set down in this place somewhat touching his appearance; as it may so happen that some who read this history, and who have known and loved Basil in his old years, should take as much pleasure in reading as I do in writing the description of his person, and limning as it were the resemblance of him at a period in this history wherein the hitherto separate currents of his life and mine do meet, like a noble river and a poor stream, for to flow onward in the same channel.

Basil Rookwood was of a tall stature, and well-proportioned shape in all parts. His hair of light brown, very thickly set, and of a sunny hue, curled with a graceful wave. His head had many becoming motions. His mouth was well-made, and his lips ruddy. His forehead not very high, in which was a notable dissemblance from his brother. His nose raised and somewhat sharply cut. His complexion clear and rosy; his smile so full of cheer and kindness that it infected others with mirthfulness. He was very nimble and active in all his movements, and well skilled in riding, fencing, and dancing. I pray you who have known him in his late years, can you in aught, save in a never-altered sweetness mixing with the dignity of age, trace in this picture a likeness to Basil, your Basil and mine? I care not, in writing this plain showing of mine own life, to use such disguises as are observed in love-stories, whereby the reader is kept ignorant of that which is to follow until in due time the course of the tale doth unfold it. No, I may not write Basil's name as that of a stranger. Not for the space of one page; nay, not with so much as one stroke of my pen can I dissemble the love which had its dawn on the day I have noted. It was sudden in its beginnings, yet steady in its progress. It deepened and widened with the course of years, even as a rivulet doth start with a lively force from its source, and, gathering strength as it flows, grows into a broad and noble river. It was ardent but not idolatrous; sudden, as I have said, in its rise, but not unconsidered. It was founded on high esteem on the one side, on the other an inexpressible tenderness and kindness. Religion, honor, and duty were the cements of this love. No blind dotage; but a deathless bond of true sympathy, making that equal which in itself was unequal; for, if a vain world should have deemed that on the one side there did appear some greater brilliancy of parts than showed in the other, all who could judge of true merit and sound wisdom must needs have allowed that in true merit Basil was as greatly her superior whom he honored with his love, as is a pure diamond to the showy setting which encases it.

Hubert presented to me his brother, who, when he heard my name mentioned, would not be contented till he had got speech of me; and straightway, after the first civilities had passed between us, began to relate to me that he had been staying for a few days before coming to town at Mr. Roper's house at Richmond, where I had often visited in the summer. It so befel that I had left in the chamber where I slept some of my books, on the margins of which were written such notes as I was wont to make whilst reading, for so Hubert had advised me, and his counsel in this I found very profitable; for this method teaches one to reflect on what he reads, and to hold converse as it were with authors whose friendship and company he thus enjoys, which is a source of contentment more sufficient and lasting than most other pleasures in this world.

Basil chanced to inhabit this room, and discovered on an odd by-shelf these volumes so disfigured, or, as he said, so adorned; and took such delight in the reading of them, but mostly in the poor reflections an unknown pen had affixed to these pages, that he rested not until he had learnt from Mr. Roper the name of the writer. When he found she was the young girl he had once seen at Bedford, he marvelled at the strong impulse he had toward her, and pressed the venerable gentleman with so many questions relating to her that he feared he should have wearied him but his inquiries met with such gracious answers that he perceived Mr. Roper to be as well pleased with the theme of his discourse as himself, and as glad to set forth her excellences (I be ashamed to write the words which should indeed imply the speaker to have been in his dotage, but for the excuse of a too great kindness to an unworthy creature) as he had to listen to them. And here I must needs interrupt my narrative to admire that one who was no scholar, yea, no great reader at any time, albeit endowed with excellent good sense and needful information, should by means of books have been drawn to the first thoughts of her who was to enjoy his love which never was given to any other creature but herself. But I pray you, doth it not happen most often, though it is scarce to be credited, that dissemblance in certain matters doth attract in the way of love more than resemblance? That short men do choose tall wives; lovers of music women who have no ear to discern one tune from another; scholars witless housewives; retired men ambitious helpmates; and gay ladies grave husbands? This should seem to be the rule, otherways the exception; and a notable instance of the same I find in the first motions which did incline Basil to a good opinion of my poor self.

But to return. "Mistress Sherwood," quoth Basil, "Mr. Roper did not wholly praise you; he recited your faults as well as your virtues."

I answered, it did very much content me he should have done so, for that then more credit should be given to his words in that wherein he did commend me, since he was so true a friend as to note my defects.

"But what," quoth he, archly smiling, "if the faults he named are such as pleased me as well as virtues?"

"Then," I replied, "methinks, sir, the fault should be rather in you than in her who doth commit them, for she may be ignorant, or else subject to some infirmity of temper; but to commend faults should be a very dangerous error."

"But will you hear," quoth he, "your faults as Mr. Roper recited them?"

"Yea, willingly," I answered, "and mend them also if I can."

"Oh, I pray you mend them not," he cried.

At which I laughed, and said he should be ashamed to give such wanton advice. And then he:

"Mr. Roper declares you have so much inability to conceal your thoughts that albeit your lips should be forcibly closed,

your eyes would speak them so clearly that any one who listed should read them."

"Methinks," I said, willing to excuse myself like the lawyer in the gospel, "that should not be my fault, who made not mine own eyes."

"Then he also says, that you have so sharp an apprehension of wrongs done to others, that if you hear of an injustice committed, or some cruel treatment of any one, you are so moved and troubled, that he has known you on such occasions to shed tears, which do not flow with a like ease for your own griefs. Do you cry mercy to this accusation, Mistress Sherwood?"

"Indeed," I answered, "God knoweth I do, and my ghostly father also. For the strong passions of resentment touching the evil usage our Catholics do meet with work in me so mightfully, that I often am in doubt if I have sinned therein. And concerning mine own griefs, they have been but few as yet, so that 'tis little praise I deserve for not overmuch resentment in instances wherein, if others are afflicted, I have much ado to restrain wrath."

"Ah," he said, "methinks if you answer in so true and grave a manner my rude catechizing. Mistress Sherwood, I be not bold enough to continue the inventory of your faults."

"I pray you do," I answered; for I felt in my soul an unusual liking for his conversation, and the more so when, leaving off jesting, he said, "The last fault Mr. Roper did charge you with was lack of prudence in matters wherein prudence is most needed in these days."

"Alas!" I exclaimed; "for that also do I cry mercy; but indeed, Master Rookwood, there is in these days so much cowardice and time-serving which doth style itself prudence, that methinks it might sometimes happen that a right boldness should be called rashness."

Raising my eyes to his, I thought I saw them clouded by a misty dew; and he replied, "Yea, Mistress Constance, and if it is so, I had sooner that myself and such as I have a friendship for should have to cry mercy on their death-beds for too much rashness in stemming the tide, than for too much ease in yielding to it. And now," he added, "shall I repeat what Mr. Roper related of your virtues?"

"No," I answered, smiling. "For if the faults he doth charge me with be so much smaller than the reality, what hope have I that he should speak the truth in regard to my poor merits?"

Then some persons moving nearer to where we were sitting, some general conversation ensued, in which several took part; and none so much to my liking as Basil, albeit others might possess more ready tongues and a more sparkling wit. In all the years since I had left my home, I had not found so much contentment in any one's society. His mind and mine were like two instruments with various chords, but one key-note, which maintained them in admirable harmony. The measure of our agreement stood rather in the drift of our desires and the scope of our approval, than in any parity of tastes or resemblance of disposition. Acquaintanceship soon gave way to intimacy, which bred a mutual friendship that in its turn was not slow to change into a warmer feeling. We met very often. It seemed so natural to him to affection me, and to me to reciprocate his affection, that if our love began not, which methinks it did, on that first day of meeting, I know not when it had birth. But if it be difficult precisely to note the earliest buddings of the sweet flower love, it was easy to discern the moment when the bitter root of jealousy sprang up in Hubert's heart. He who had been suspicious of every person whose civilities I allowed of, did not for some time appear to dislike the intimacy which had arisen betwixt his brother and me. I ween from what he once said, when on a later occasion anger loosened his tongue, that he held him in some sort of contempt, even as a fox would despise a nobler animal than himself. His subtle wit disdained his plainness of speech. His confiding temper he derided; and he had methinks no apprehension that a she-wit, as he was wont to call me, should prove herself so witless as to prefer to one of his brilliant parts a man notable for his indifferency to book learning, and to his smooth tongue and fine genius the honest words and unvarnished merits of his brother.

Howsoever, one day he either did himself notice some sort of particular kindness to exist between us, or he was advertised thereof by some of the company we frequented, and I saw him fix his eyes on us with so arrested a persistency, and his frame waxed so rigid, that methought Lot's wife must have so gazed when she turned toward the doomed city. I was more frightened at the dull lack of expression in his face than at a thousand frowns or even scowls. His eyes were reft of their wonted fire; the color had flown from his lips; his always pale cheek was of a ghastly whiteness; and his hand, which was thrust in his bosom, and his feet, which seemed rooted to the ground, were as motionless as those of a statue. A shudder ran through me as he stood in this guise, neither moving nor speaking, at a small distance from me. I rose and went away, for his looks froze me. But the next time I met him this strangeness of behavior had vanished, and I almost misdoubted the truth of what I had seen. He was a daily witness, for several succeeding weeks, of what neither Basil nor I cared much to conceal—the mutual confidence and increasing tenderness of affection, which was visible in all our words and actions at that time, which was one of greater contentment than can be expressed. That summer was a rare one for fineness of the weather and its great store of sun-shiny days. We had often pleasant diversions in the neighborhood of London, than which no city is more famous for the beauty of its near scenery. One while we ascended the noble river Thames as far as Richmond, England's Arcadia, whose smooth waters, smiling meads, and hills clad in richest verdure, do equal whatsoever poets have ever sung or painters pictured. Another time we disported ourselves in the gardens of Hampton, where, in the season of roses, the insects weary their wings over the flower-beds—the thrifty bees with the weight of gathered honey—and the gay butterflies, idlers as ourselves, with perfume and pleasure. Or we went to Greenwich Park, and underneath the spreading trees, with England's pride of shipping in sight, and barges passing to and fro on the broad stream as on a watery highway, we whiled away the time in many joyous pastimes.

On an occasion of this sort it happened that both brothers went with us, and we forecasted to spend the day at a house in the village of Paddington, about two miles from London, where Mr. Congleton's sister, a lady of fortune, resided. It stood in a very fair garden, the gate of which opened on the high road; and after dinner we sat with some other

company which had been invited to meet us under the large cedar trees which lined a broad gravel-walk leading from the house to the gate. The day was very hot, but now a cooling air had risen, and the young people there assembled played at pastimes, in which I was somewhat loth to join; for jesting disputations and framing of questions and answers, an amusement then greatly in fashion, minded one of that fatal encounter betwixt Martin Tregony and Thomas Sherwood, the end of which had been the death of the one and a fatal injury to the soul of the other. Hubert was urgent with me to join in the arguments proposed; but I refused, partly for the aforesaid reason, and methinks, also, because I doubted that Basil should acquit himself so admirably as his brother in these exercises of wit, wherein the latter did indeed excel, and I cared not to shine in a sport wherein he took no part. So I set myself to listen to the disputants, albeit with an absent mind; for I had grown to be somewhat thoughtful of late, and to forecast the future with such an admixture of hope and fear touching the issue of those passages of love I was engaged in, that the trifles which entertained a disengaged mind lacked ability to divert me. I ween Polly, if she had been then in London, should have laughed at me for the symptoms I exhibited of what she styled the sighing malady.

A little while after the contest had begun, a sound was heard at a distance as of a trampling on the road, but not discernible as yet whether of men or horses' feet. There was mixed with it cries of hooting and shouts, which increased as this sort of procession (for so it should seem to be) approached. All who were in the garden ran to the iron railing for to discover the cause. From the houses on both sides the road persons came out and joined in the clamor. As the crowd neared the gate where we stood, the words, "Papists—seditious priests—traitors," were discernible, mixed with oaths, curses, and such opprobrious epithets as my pen dares not write. At the hearing of them the blood rushed to my head, and my heart began to beat as if it should burst from the violence with which it throbbed; for now the mob was close at hand, and we could see the occasion of their yells and shoutings. About a dozen persons were riding without bridle or spur or other furniture, on lean and bare horses, which were fastened one to the other's tails, marching slowly in a long row, each man's feet tied under his horse's belly and his arms bound hard and fast behind him. A pursuivant rode in front and cried aloud that those coming behind him were certain papists, foes to the gospel and enemies to the commonwealth, for that they had been seized in the act of saying and hearing mass in disobedience to the laws. And as he made this proclamation, the rabble yelled and took up stones and mud to cast at the prisoners. One man cried out, "Four of them be vile priests." O ye who read this, have you taken heed how, at some times in your lives, in a less space than the wink of an eye, thought has outrun sight? So did mine with lightning speed apprehend lest my father should be one of these. I scanned the faces of the prisoners as they passed, but he was not amongst them; however I recognized, with a sharp pain, the known countenance of the priest who had shriven my mother on her death-bed. He looked pale and worn to a shadow, and hardly able to sit on his horse. I sunk down on my knees, with my head against the railings, feeling very sick. Then the gate opened, and with a strange joy and trembling fear I saw Basil push through the mob till he stood close to the horse's feet where the crowd had made a stoppage. He knelt and took off his hat, and the lips of the priests moved, as they passed, for to bless him. Murmurs rose from the rabble, but he took no heed of them. Till the last horseman had gone by he stood with his head uncovered, and then slowly returned, none daring to touch him. "Basil, dear Basil!" I cried, and, weeping, gave him my hand. It was the first time I had called him by his name. Methinks in that moment as secure a troth-plight was passed between us as if ten thousand bonds had sealed it. When, some time afterward, we moved toward the house, I saw Hubert standing at the door with the same stony rigid look which had frightened me once before. He said not one word as I passed him. I have since heard that a lady, endowed with more sharpness than prudence or kindness, had thus addressed him on this occasion: "Methinks, Master Hubert Rookwood, that you did perform your part excellently well in that ingenious pastime which procured us so much good entertainment awhile ago; but beshrew me if your brother did not exceed you in the scene we have just witnessed, and if Mistress Sherwood's looks do not belie her, she thought so too. I ween his tragedy hath outdone your comedy." Then he (well-nigh biting his lips through, as the person who related it to me observed) made answer: "If this young gentlewoman's taste be set on tragedy, then will I promise her so much of it another day as should needs satisfy her."

This malicious lady disliked Hubert, by reason of his having denied her the praise of wit, which had been reported to her by a third person. She was minded to be revenged on him, and so the shaft contained in her piercing jest had likewise hit those she willed not to injure. It is not to be credited how many persons have been ruined in fortune, driven into banishment, yea, delivered over to death, by careless words uttered without so much as a thought of the evil which should ensue from them.

And now upon the next day Basil was to leave London. Before he went he said he hoped not to be long absent, and that Mr. Congleton should receive a letter, if it pleased God, from his father; which, if it should be favorably received, and I willed it not to be otherwise, should cause our next meeting to be one of greater contentment than could be thought of.

I answered, "I should never wish otherwise than that we should meet with contentment, or will anything that should hinder it." Which he said did greatly please him to hear, and gave him a comfortable hope of a happy return.

He conversed also with Mistress Ward touching the prisoners we had seen the day before, and left some money with her in case she should find means to see and assist them, which she strove to do with the diligence used by her in all such managements. In a few days she discovered Mr. Watson to be in Bridewell, also one Mr. Richardson in the Marshalsea, and three laymen in the Clink. Mr. Watson had a sister who was a Protestant, and by her means she succeeded in relieving his wants, and dealt with the gaolers at the other prisons so as to convey some assistance to the poor men therein confined, whose names she had found out.

One morning when I was at Kate's house Hubert came there; and she, the whole compass of whose thoughts was now circled in her nursery, not minding the signs I made she should not leave us alone, rose and said she must needs go and see if her babe was awake, for Hubert must see him, and he should not go away without first he had beheld him walk with his new leading-strings, which were the tastefullest in the world and fit for a king's son; and that she doubted not we could find good enough entertainment in each other's company, or in Mr. Lacy's books, which must be the wittiest ever written, if she judged by her husband's fondness for them. As soon as the door was shut on her, Hubert began to speak of his brother, and to insinuate that my behavior to himself was changed since Basil had come to London, which I warmly denied.

"If," I said, "I have changed—"

"If," he repeated, stopping my speaking with an ironical and disdainful smile, and throwing into that one little word as he uttered it more of meaning than it would seem possible it should express.

"Yes!" I continued, angered at his defiant looks. "Yes, if my behavior to you has changed, which, I must confess, in some respects it has, the cause did lie in my uncle's commands, laid on me before your brother's coming to London. You know it, Master Rookwood, by the same token that you charged me with unkindness for not allowing of your visits, and refusing to read Italian with you, some weeks before ever he arrived."

"You have a very obedient disposition, madam," he answered in a scornful manner, "and I doubt not have attended with a like readiness to the behest to favor the *elder* brother's suit as to that which forbade the receiving of the younger brother's addresses."

"I did not look upon you as a suitor," I replied.

"No!" he exclaimed, "and not as on a lover? Not as on one whose lips, borrowing words from enamored poets twenty times in a day, did avow his passion, and was entertained on your side with so much good-nature and apparent contentment with this mode of disguised worship, as should lead him to hope for a return of his affection? But why question of that wherein my belief is unshaken? I know you love me, Constance Sherwood, albeit you peradventure love more dearly my brother's heirship of Euston and its wide acres. Your eyes deceived not, nor did your flushing cheek dissemble, when we read together those sweet tales and noble poems, wherein are set forth the dear pains and tormenting joys of a mutual love. No, not if you did take your oath on it will I believe you love my brother!"

"What warrant have you, sir," I answered with burning cheek, "to minister such talk to one who, from the moment she found you thought of marriage, did plainly discountenance your suit?"

"You were content, then, madam, to be worshipped as an idol," he bitterly replied, "if only not sued for in marriage by a poor man."

My sin found me out then, and the hard taunt awoke dormant pangs in my conscience for the pleasure I had taken and doubtless showed in the disguised professions of an undisguised admiration; but anger yet prevailed, and I cried, "Think you to advance your interest in my friendship, sir, by such language and reproaches as these?"

"Do you love my brother?" he said again, with an implied contempt which made me mad.

"Sir," I answered, "I entertain for your brother so great a respect and esteem as one must needs feel toward one of so much virtue and goodness. No contract exists between us; nor has he made me the tender of his hand. More than that it behoves you not to ask, or me to answer."

"Ah! the offer of marriage is then the condition of your regard, and love is to follow, not precede, the settlements, I' faith, ladies are very prudent in these days; and virtue and goodness the new names for fortune and lands. Beshrew me, if I had not deemed you to be made of other metal than the common herd. But whatever be the composition of your heart, Constance Sherwood, be it hard as the gold you set so much store on, or, like wax, apt to receive each day some new impress, I will have it; yea, and keep it for my own. No rich fool shall steal it from me."

"Hubert Rookwood," I cried in anger, "dare not so to speak of one whose merit is as superior to thine as the sun outshines a torchlight."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, turning pale with rage, "if I thought thou didst love him!" and clenched his hand with a terrible gesture, and ground his teeth. "But 'tis impossible," he added bitterly smiling. "As soon would I believe Titania verily to doat on the ass's head as for thee to love Basil!"

"Oh!" I indignantly replied, "you do almost constrain me to avow that which no maiden should, unasked, confess. Do you think, sir, that learning and scholarship, and the poor show of wit that lies in a ready tongue, should outweigh honor, courage, and kindness of heart? Think you that more respect should be paid to one who can speak, and write also, if you will, fair sounding words, than to him who in his daily doings shows forth such nobleness as others only inculcate, and God only knoweth if ever they practise it?"

"Lady!" he exclaimed, "I have served you long; sustained torments in your presence; endured griefs in your absence; pining thoughts in the day, and anguished dreams in the night; jealousies often in times past, and now—"

He drew in his breath; and then not so much speaking the word "despair" as with a smothered vehemence uttering it, he concluded his vehement address.

I was so shaken by his speech that I remained silent: for if I had spoken I must needs have wept. Holding my head with both hands, and so shielding my eyes from the sight of his pale convulsed face, I sat like one transfixed. Then he again: "These be not times, Mistress Sherwood, for women to act as you have done; to lift a man's heart one while to an earthly heaven, and then, without so much as a thought, to cast him into a hellish sea of woes. These be the dealings which drive men to desperation; to attempt things contrary to their own minds, to religion, and to honesty; to courses once abhorred—"

His violence wrung my heart then with so keen a remorse that I cried out, "I cry you mercy, Master Rookwood, if I have dealt thus with you; indeed I thought not to do it. I pray you forgive me, if unwittingly, albeit peradventure in a heedless manner, I have done you so much wrong as your words do charge me with." And then tears I could not stay began to flow; and for awhile no talk ensued. But after a little time he spoke in a voice so changed and dissimilar in manner, that I looked up wholly amazed.

"Sweet Constance," he said, "I have played the fool in my customable fashion, and by such pretended slanders of one I

should rather incline to commend beyond his deserts, if that were possible, than to give him vile terms, have sought—I cry you mercy for it—to discover your sentiments, and feigned a resentment and a passion which indeed has proved an excellent piece of acting, if I judge by your tears. I pray you pardon and forget my brotherly device. If you love Basil—as I misdoubt not he loves you—where shall a more suitable match be found, or one which every one must needs so much approve? Marry, sweet lady; I will be his best man when he doth ride to church with you, and cry 'Amen' more loudly than the clerk. So now dart no more vengeful lightnings from thine eyes, sweet one; and wipe away the pearly drops my unmannerly jesting hath caused to flow. I would not Basil had wedded a lady in love with his pelf, not with himself."

"I detest tricks," I cried, "and such feigning as you do confess to. I would I had not answered one word of your false discourse."

Now I wept for vexation to have been so circumvented and befooled as to own some sort of love for a man who had not yet openly addressed me. And albeit reassured in some wise, touching what my conscience had charged me with when I heard Hubert's vehement reproaches, I misdoubted his present sincerity. He searched my face with a keen investigation, for to detect, I ween, if I was most contented or displeased with his late words. I resolved, if he was false, I would be true, and leave not so much as a suspicion in his mind that I did or ever had cared for him. But Kate, who should not have left us alone, now returned, when her absence would have been most profitable. She had her babe in her arms, and must needs call on Hubert to praise its beauty and list to its sweet crowing. In truth, a more winsome, gracious creature could not be seen; and albeit I had made an impatient gesture when she entered, my arms soon eased hers of their fair burthen, and I set to playing with the boy, and Hubert talking and laughing in such good cheer, that I began to credit his passion had been feigning, and his indifference to be true, which contented me not a little.

A few days afterward Mr. Congleton received a letter, in the evening, when we were sitting in my aunt's room, and a sudden fluttering in my heart whispered it should be from Basil's father. Mine eyes affixed themselves on the cover, which had fallen on the ground, and then travelled to my uncle's face, wherein was a smile which seemed to say, "This is no other than what I did expect." He put it down on the table, and his hand over it. My aunt said he should tell us the news he had received, to make us merry; for that the fog had given her the vapors, and she had need of some good entertainment.

"News!" quoth he. "What news do you look for, good wife?"

"It would not be news, sir," she answered, "if I expected it."

"That is more sharp than true," he replied. "There must needs come news of the queen of France's lying-in; but I pray you how will it be? Shall she live and do well? Shall it be a prince or a princess?"

"Prithee, no disputings, Mr. Congleton," she said. "We be not playing at questions and answers."

"Nay, but thou dost mistake," he cried out, laughing. "Methinks we have here in hand some game of that sort if I judge by this letter."

Then my heart leapt, I knew not how high or how tumultuously; for I doubted not now but he had received the tidings I hoped for.

"Constance," he said, "hast a mind to marry?"

"If it should please you, sir," I answered; "for my father charged me to obey you."

"Good," quoth he. "I see thou art an obedient wench. And thou wilt marry who I please?"

"Nay, sir; I said not that."

"Oh, oh!" quoth he. "Thou wilt marry so as to please me, and yet—"

"Not so as to displease myself, sir," I answered.

"Come," he said, "another question. Here is a gentleman of fortune and birth, and excellent good character, somewhat advanced in years indeed, but the more like to make an indulgent husband, and to be prudent in the management of his affairs, hath heard so good a report from two young gentlemen, his sons, of thy abilities and proper behavior, that he is minded to make thee a tender of marriage, with so good a settlement on his estate in Suffolk as must needs content any reasonable woman. Wilt have him, Conny?"

"Who, sir?" I asked, waxing, I ween, as red as a field-poppy.

"Mr. Rookwood, wench—Basil and Hubert's father."

Albeit I knew my uncle's trick of jesting, my folly was so great just then, hope and fear working in me, that I was seized with fright, and from crimson turned so white, that he cried out:

"Content thee, child! content thee! 'Tis that tall strapping fellow Basil must needs make thee an offer of his hand; and by my troth, wench, I warrant thee thou wouldst go further and fare worse; for the gentleman is honorably descended, heir-apparent to an estate worth yearly, to my knowledge, three thousand pounds sterling, well disposed in religion, and of a personage without exception. Mr. Rookwood declares he is more contented with his son's choice than if he married Mistress Spencer, or any other heiress; and beshrew me, if I be not contented also."

Then he bent his head close to mine ear, and whispered, "And so art thou, methinks, if those tell-tale eyes of thine should be credited. Yea, yea, hang down thy head, and stammer 'As you please, sir!' And never so much as a *Deo gratias* for thy good fortune! What thankless creatures women be!" I laughed and ran out of the room before mine aunt

or Mistress Ward had disclosed their lips; for I did long to be in mine own chamber alone, and, from the depths of a heart over full of, yea overflowing with, such joy as doth incline the knees to bend and the eyes to raise themselves to the Giver of all good—he whom all other goodness doth only mirror and shadow forth—pour out a hymn of praise for the noble blessing I had received. For, I pray you, after the gift of faith and grace for to know and love God, is there aught on earth to be jewelled by a woman like to the affection of a good man; or a more secure haven for her to anchor in amid the present billows of life, except that of religion, to which all be not called, than an honorable contract of marriage, wherein reason, passion, and duty do bind the soul in a triple cord of love?

And oh! with what a painful tenderness I thought in that moving hour on mine own dear parents—my mother, now so many years dead; my father, so parted from his poor child, that in the most weighty concernment of her life—the disposal of her in marriage—his consent had to be presumed; his authority, for so he had with forecasting care ordained, being left in other hands. But albeit a shade of melancholy from such a retrospect as the mind is wont to take of the past, when coming events do cast, as it should seem, a new light on what has preceded them, I could not choose but see, in this good which had happened to me, a reward to him who had forsaken all things—lands, home, kindred, yea his only child, for Christ's dear sake. It minded me of my mother's words concerning me, when she lay dying, "Fear not for her."

I was somewhat loth to return to mine aunt's chamber, and to appear in the presence of Kate and Polly, who had come to visit their mother, and, by their saucy looks when I entered, showed they were privy to the treaty in hand. Mine aunt said she had been thinking that she would not go to church when I was married, but give me her blessing at home; for she had never recovered from the chilling she had when Kate was married, and had laid abed on Polly' wedding-day, which she liked better. Mistress Ward had great contentment, she said, that I should have so good an husband. Kate was glad Basil was not too fond of books, for that scholars be not as conversable as agreeable husbands should be. Polly said, for her part, she thought the less wit a man had, the better for his wife, for she would then be the more like to have her own way. But that being her opinion, she did not wholly wish me joy; for she had noticed Basil to be a good thinker, and a man of so much sense, that he would not be ruled by a wife more than should be reasonable. I was greatly pleased that she thus commended him, who was not easily pleased, and rather given to despise gentlemen than to praise them. I kissed her, and said I had always thought her the most sensible woman in the world. She laughed, and cried, "That was small commendation, for that women were the foolishest creatures in the world, and mostly such as were in love."

Ah me! The days which followed were full of sweet waiting and pleasant pining for the effects of the letter mine uncle wrote to Mr. Rookwood, and looking for one Basil should write himself, when licence for to address me had been yielded to him. When it came, how unforeseen, how sad were the contents! Albeit love was expressed in every line, sorrow did so cover its utterance, that my heart overflowed through mine eyes, and I could only sigh and weep that the beginning of so fair a day of joy should have set in clouds of so much grief. Basil's father was dead. The day after he wrote that letter, the cause of all our joy, he fell sick and never bettered any more, but the contrary: time was allowed him to prepare his soul for death, by all holy rites and ghostly comforts. One of his sons was on each side of his bed when he died; and Basil closed his eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

Basil came to London after the funeral, and methought his sadness then did become him as much as his joyfulness heretofore. His grief was answerable to the affection he had borne unto his father, and to that gentlemen's most excellent deserts. He informed Mr. Congleton that in somewhat less than one year he should be of age, and until then his wardship was committed to Sir Henry Stafford. It was agreed betwixt them, that in respect of his deep mourning and the greater commodity his being of age would afford for the drawing up of settlements, our marriage should be deferred until he returned from the continent in a year's time. Sir Henry was exceeding urgent he should travel abroad for the bettering as he affirmed of his knowledge of foreign languages, and acquirement of such useful information as should hereafter greatly benefit him; but methinks, from what Basil said, it was chiefly with the end that he should not be himself troubled during his term of guardianship with proceedings touching his ward's recusancy, which was so open and manifest, no persuasions dissuading him from it, that he apprehended therefrom to meet with difficulties.

So with heavy hearts and some tears on both sides, a short time after Mr. Rookwood's death, we did part, but withal with so comfortable a hope of a happy future, and so great a security of mutual affection, that the pangs of separation were softened, and a not unpleasing melancholy ensued. We forecasted to hold converse by means of letters, of which he made me promise I should leastways write two for his one; for he argued, as I always had a pen in my hand, it should be no trouble to me to write down my thoughts as they arose, but as for himself, it would cost him much time and labor for to compose such a letter as it would content me to receive. But herein he was too modest; for, indeed, in everything he wrote, albeit short and mostly devoid of such flowers of the fancy as some are wont to scatter over their letters, I was always excellently well pleased with his favors of this kind.

Hubert remained in London for to commence his studies in a house of the law; but when my engagement with his brother became known, he left off haunting Mr. Lacy's house, and even Mr. Wells's, as heretofore. His behavior was very mutable; at one time exceedingly obliging, and at another more strange and distant than it had yet been; so that I did dread to meet him, not knowing how to shape mine own conduct in his regard; for if on the one hand I misliked to appear estranged from Basil's brother, yet if I dealt graciously toward him I feared to confirm his apprehension of some sort of unusual liking on my part toward himself.

One month, or thereabouts, after Basil had gone to France, Lady Surrey did invite me to stay with her at Kenninghall, which greatly delighted me, for it was a very long time then since I had seen her. The reports I heard of her lord's being a continual waiter on her majesty, and always at court, whereas she did not come to London so much as once in the

year, worked in me a very uneasy apprehension that she should not be as happy in her retirement as I should wish. I long had desired to visit this dear lady, but durst not be the first to speak of it. Also to one bred in the country from her infancy, the long while I had spent in a city, far from any sights or scents of nature, had created in me a great desire for pure air and green fields, of which the neighborhood of London had afforded only such scanty glimpses as served to whet, not satisfy, the taste for such-like pleasures. So with much contentment I began my journey into Norfolk, which was the first I had taken since that long one from Sherwood Hall to London some years before. A coach of my Lord Surrey's, with two new pairs of horses, was going from the Charter-house to Kenninghall, and a chamber-woman of my lady's to be conveyed therein; so for conveniency I travelled with her. We slept two nights on the road (for the horses were to rest often), in very comfortable lodgings; and about the middle of the third day we did arrive at Kenninghall, which is a place of so great magnitude and magnificence, that to my surprised eyes it showed more like unto a palace, yea, a cluster of palaces, than the residence of a private though illustrious nobleman. The gardens which we passed along-side of, the terraces adorned with majestic trees, the woods at the back of the building, which then wore a gaudy dress of crimson and golden hues,—made my heart leap for joy to be once more in the country. But when we passed through the gateway, and into one court and then another, methought we left the country behind, and entered some sort of city, the buildings did so close around us on every side. At last we stopped at a great door, and many footmen stood about me, and one led me through long galleries and a store of empty chambers; I forecasting in my mind the while how far it should be to the gardens I had seen, and if the birds could be heard to sing in this great house, in which was so much fine tapestry, and pictures in high-gilt frames, that the eye was dazzled with their splendor. A little pebbly brook or a tuft of daisies would then have pleased me more than these fine hangings, and the grass than the smooth carpets in some of the rooms, the like of which I had never yet seen. But these discontented thoughts vanished quickly when my Lady Surrey appeared; and I had nothing more to desire when I received her affectionate embrace, and saw how joyful was her welcome. Methought, too, when she led me into the chamber wherein she said her time was chiefly spent, that its rich adornment became her, who had verily a queenly beauty, and a presence so sweetly majestic that it alone was sufficient to call for a reverent respect from others even in her young years. There was an admirable simplicity in her dress; so that I likened her in my mind, as she sat in that gilded room, to a pure fair diamond enchased in a rich setting. In the next chamber her gentlewoman and chambermaids were at work—some at frames, and others making of clothes, or else spinning; and another door opened into her bed-chamber, which was very large, like unto a hall, and the canopy of the bed so high and richly adorned that it should have beseemed a throne. The tapestry on the wall, bedight with fruits and flowers, very daintily wrought, so that nature itself hath not more fair hues than therein were to be seen.

"When my lord is not at home, I mislike this grand chamber, and do lie here," she said, and showed me an inner closet; which I perceived to be plainly furnished, and in one corner of it, which pleased me most for to see, a crucifix hung against the wall, over above a kneeling-stool. Seeing my eyes did rest on it, she colored a little, and said it had belonged to Lady Mounteagle, who had gifted her with it on her death-bed; upon which account she did greatly treasure the possession thereof.

I answered, it did very much content me that she should set store on what had been her grandmother's, for verily she was greatly indebted to that good lady for the care she had taken of her young years; "but methinks," I added, "the likeness of your Saviour which died for you should not need any other excuse for the prizing of it than what arises from its being what it is, his own dear image."

She said she thought so too; but that in the eyes of Protestants she must needs allege some other reason for the keeping of a crucifix in her room than that good one, which nevertheless in her own thinking she allowed of.

Then she showed me mine own chamber, which was very commodious and pleasantly situated, not far from hers. From the window was to be seen the town of Norwich, and an extensive plain intersected with trees; and underneath the wall of the house a terrace lined with many fair shrubs and strips of flower-beds, very pleasing to the eye, but too far off for a more familiar enjoyment than the eyesight could afford.

When we had dined, and I was sitting with my lady in her dainty sitting-room, she at her tambour-frame, and I with a piece of patch-work on my knees which I had brought from London, she began forthwith to question me touching my intended marriage, Mr. Rookwood's death, and Basil's going abroad, concerning which she had heard many reports. I satisfied her thereon; upon which she expressed great contentment that my prospects of happiness were so good; for all which knew Basil thought well on him, she said; and mostly his neighbors, which have the chiefest occasions for to judge of a man's disposition. And Euston, she thought, should prove a very commendable residence, albeit the house was small for so good an estate; but capable, she doubted not, of improvements, which my fine taste would bestow on it; not indeed by spending large sums on outward show, but by small adornments and delicate beautifying of a house and gardens, such as women only do excel in; the which kind of care Mr. Rookwood's seat had lacked for many years. She also said it pleased her much to think that Basil and I should agree touching religion, for there was little happiness to be had in marriage where consent doth not exist in so important a matter. I answered, that I was of that way of thinking also. But then this consent must be veritable, not extorted; for in so weighty a point the least shadow of compulsion on the one side, and feigning on the other, do end by destroying happiness, and virtue also, which is more urgent. She made no answer; and I then asked her if she liked Kenninghall more than London, and had found in a retired life the contentment she had hoped for. She bent down her head over her work-frame, so as partly to conceal her face; but how beautiful what was to be seen of it appeared, as she thus hid the rest, her snowy neck supporting her small head, and the shape of her oval cheek just visible beneath the dark tresses of jet-black hair! When she raised that noble head methought it wore a look of becoming, not unchristian, pride, or somewhat better than should be titled pride; and her voice betokened more emotion than her visage betrayed when she said, "I am more contented, Constance, to inhabit this my husband's chiefest house than to dwell in London or anywhere else. Where should a wife abide with so much pleasure as in a place where she may be sometimes visited by her lord, even though she should not always be so happy as to enjoy his company? My Lord Arundel hath often urged me to reside with him in London, and pleaded the comfort my Lady Lumley and himself, in his declining years, should find in my filial care; but God helping me—and I think in so doing I fulfill his will—naught shall tempt me to leave my husband's house till he doth himself compel me to it; nor by resentment of his absence lose one day of his dear company I may yet enjoy."

"O my dear lady," I exclaimed, "and is it indeed thus with you? Doth my lord so forget your love and his duty as to forsake one he should cherish as his most dear treasure?"

"Nay, nay," she hastily replied; "Philip doth not forsake me; a little neglectful he is" (this she said with a forced smile), "as all the queen's courtiers must needs be of their wives; for she is so exacting, that such as stand in her good graces cannot be stayers at home, but ever waiters on her pleasure. If Philip doth only leave London or Richmond for three or four days, she doth suspect the cause of his absence; her smiles are turned to frowns, and his enemies immediately do take advantage of it. I tried to stay in London one while this year, after Bess was married; but he suffered so much in consequence from the loss of her good graces when she heard I was at the Charter-house, that I was compelled to return here."

"And hath my lord been to see you since?" I eagerly asked.

"Once," she answered; "for three short days. O Constance, it was a brief, and, from its briefness, an almost painful joy, to see him in his own princely home, and at the head of his table, which he doth grace so nobly; and when he went abroad saluted by every one with so much reverence, that he should be taken to be a king when he is here; and himself so contented with this show of love and homage, that his face beamed with pleasant smiles; and when he observed what my poor skill had effected in the management of his estates, which do greatly suffer from the prodigalities of the court, he commended me with so great kindness as to say he was not worthy of so good a wife."

I could not choose but say amen in mine own soul to this lord's true estimation of himself, and of her, one hair of whose head did, in my thinking, outweigh in merit his whole frame; but composed my face lest she should too plainly read my resentment that the like of her should be so used by an ungrateful husband.

"Alas," she continued, "this joy should be my constant portion if an enemy robbed me not of my just rights. 'Tis very hard to be hated by a queen, and she so great and powerful that none in the compass of her realm can dare to resent her ill treatment. I had a letter from my lord last week, in which he says if it be possible he will soon visit me again; but he doth add that he has so much confidence in my affection, that he is sure I would not will him to risk that which may undo him, if the queen should hear of it. 'For, Nan,' he writes, 'I resemble a man scrambling up unto a slippery rock, who, if he gaineth not the topmost points, must needs fall backward into a precipice; for if I lose but an inch of her majesty's favor, I am like to fall as my fathers have done, and yet lower. So be patient, good Nan, and bide the time when I shall have so far ascended as to be in less danger of a rapid descent, in which thine own fortunes would be involved.'"

She folded this letter, which she had taken out of her bosom, with a deep sigh, and I doubt not with the same thought which was in mine own mind, that the higher the ascent, the greater doth prove the peril of an overthrow, albeit to the climber's own view the further point doth seem the most secured. She then said she would not often speak with me touching her troubles; but we should try to forget absent husbands and lovers, and enjoy so much pleasure in our mutual good company as was possible, and go hawking also and riding on fine days, and be as merry as the days were long. And, verily, at times youthful spirits assumed the lead, and like two wanton children we laughed sometimes with hearty cheer at some pleasantry in which my little wit but fanciful humor did evince itself for her amusement. But the fair sky of these sunshiny hours was often overcast by sudden clouds; and weighty thoughts, ill assorting with soaring jylity, wrought sad endings to merry beginnings. I restrained the expression of mine own sorrow at my father's uncertain fate and Basil's absence, not to add to her heaviness; but sometimes, whilst playing in some sort the fool to make her smile, which smiles so well became her, a sharp aching of the heart caused me to fail in the effort; which when she perceived, her arm was straightway thrown round my neck, and she would speak in this wise:

"O sweet jester! poor dissembler! the heart will have its say, albeit not aided by the utterance of the tongue. Believe me, good Constance, I am not unmindful of thy griefs, albeit somewhat silent concerning them, as also mine own; for that I eschew melancholy themes, having a well-spring of sorrow in my bosom which doth too readily overflow if the sluices be once opened."

Thus spake this sweet lady; but her unconscious tongue, following the current of her thoughts more frequently than she did credit, dwelt on the theme of her absent husband; and on whichever subject talk was ministered between us, she was ingenious to procure it should end with some reference to this worshipped object. But verily, I never perceived her to express, in speaking of that then unworthy husband, but what, if he had been present, must needs have moved him to regret his negligent usage of an incomparable, loving, and virtuous wife, than to any resentment of her complaints, which were rather of others who diverted his affections from her than of him, the prime cause of her grief. One day that we walked in the pleasance, she led the way to a seat which she said during her lord's last visit he had commended for the fair prospect it did command, and said it should be called "My Lady's Arbor."

"He sent for the head-gardener," quoth she, "and charged him to plant about it so many sweet flowers and gay shrubs as should make it in time a most dainty bower fit for a queen. These last words did, I ween, unwittingly escape his lips, and, I fear me, I was too shrewish; for I exclaimed, 'O no, my lord; I pray you let it rather be *unfitted* for a queen, if so be you would have me to enjoy it!' He made no answer, and his countenance was overcast and sad when he returned to the house. I misdoubted my hasty speech had angered him; but when his horse came to the door for to carry him away to London and the court, he said very kindly, as he embraced me, 'Farewell, dear heart! mine own good Nan!' and in a letter he since wrote he inquired if his orders had been obeyed touching his sweet countess's pleasure-house."

I always noticed Lady Surrey to be very eager for the coming of the messenger which brought letters from London mostly twice in the week, and that in the untying of the strings which bound them her hand trembled so much that she often said, "Prithee, Constance, cut this knot. My fingers be so cold I have not so much patience as should serve to the undoing thereof."

One morning I perceived she was more sad than usual after the coming of this messenger. The cloud on her countenance chased away the joy I had at a letter from Basil, which was written from Paris, and wherein he said he had

sent to Rheims for to inquire if my father was yet there, for in that case he should not so much fail in his duty as to omit seeking to see him; and so get at once, he trusted, a father and a priest's blessing."

"What ails you, sweet lady?" I asked, seeing her lips quiver and her eyes to fill with tears.

"Nothing should ail me," she answered more bitterly than was her wont. "It should be, methinks, the part of a wife to rejoice in her husband's good fortune; and here is one that doth write to me that my lord's favor with the queen is so great that nothing greater can be thought of: so that some do say, if he was not married he would be like to mount, not only to the steps, but on to the throne itself. Here should be grand news for to rejoice the heart of the Countess of Surrey. Prithee, good wench, why dost thou not wish thy poor friend joy?"

I felt so much choler that any one should write to my lady in this fashion, barbing with cruel malice, or leastways careless lack of thought, this wanton arrow, that I exclaimed in a passion it should be a villain had thus written. She smiled in a sad manner and answered:

"Alas, an innocent villain I warrant the writer to be, for the letter is from my Bess, who has heard others speak of that which she doth unwittingly repeat, thinking it should be an honor to my lord, and to me also, that he should be spoken of in this wise. But content thee; 'tis no great matter to hear that said again which I have had hints of before, and am like to hear more of it, maybe."

Then hastily rising, she prepared to go abroad; and we went to a lodge in the park, wherein she harbored a great store of poor children which lacked their parents; and then to a barn she had fitted up for to afford a night's lodging to travellers; and to tend sick people—albeit, saving herself, she had no one in her household at that time one half so skilful in this way as my Lady l'Estrange. I ween this was the sole place wherein her thoughts were so much occupied that she did for a while forget her own troubles in curing those of others. A woman had stopped there the past night, who, when we went in, craved assistance from her for to carry her to her native village, which was some fifteen miles north of Norwich. She was afraid, she said, for to go into the town; for nowadays to be poor was to be a wicked person in men's eyes; and a traveller without money was like to be whipt and put into the stocks for a vagabond, which she should die of if it should happen to her, who had been in the service of a countess, and had not thought to see herself in such straits, which she should never have been reduced to if her good lady had not been foully dealt with. Lady Surrey, wishing, I ween, by some sort of examination, to detect the truth of her words, inquired in whose service she had lived.

"Madam," she answered, "I was kitchen maid in the Countess of Leicester's house, and never left her service till she was murdered some years back by a black villain in her household, moved by a villain yet more black than himself."

"Murdered!" my lady exclaimed. "It was bruited at the time that lady had died of a fall."

"Ay, marry," quoth the beggar, shaking her head, "I warrant you, ladies, that fall was compassed by more hands than two, and more minds than one. But it be not safe for to say so; as Mark Hewitt could witness if he was not dead, who was my sweetheart and a scullion at Cumnor Place, and was poisoned in prison for that he offered to give evidence touching his lady's death which would have hanged some which deserved it better than he did—albeit he had helped to rob a coach in Wales after he had been discharged, as we all were, from the old place. Oh, if folks dared to tell all they do know, some which ride at the queen's side should swing on a gibbet before this day twelvemonth."

Lady Surrey sat down by this woman; and albeit I pulled her by the sleeve and whispered in her ear to come away—for methought her talk was not fitting for her to hear, whose mind ran too much already on melancholy themes—she would not go, and questioned this person very much touching the manner of Lady Leicester's life, and what was reported concerning her death. This recital was given in a homely but withal moving manner, which lent a greater horror to it than more studied language should have done. She said her lady had been ill some time and never left her room; but that one day, when one of her lord's gentlemen had come from London, and had been examining of the house with the steward for to order some repairing of the old walls and staircases, and the mason had been sent for also late in the evening, a so horrible shriek was heard from the part of the house wherein the countess's chamber was, that it frightened every person in the place, so that they did almost lose their senses; but that she herself had run to the passage on which the lady's bed-chamber did open, and saw some planking removed, and many feet below the body of the countess lying quite still, and by the appearance of her face perceived her to be gone. And when the steward came to look also (this the woman said, lowering her voice, with her hollow eyes fixed on Lady Surrey's countenance, which did express fear and sorrow), "I'll warrant you, my lady, he did wear a murderer's visage, and I noticed that the corpse bled at his approach. But methinketh if that earl which rides by the queen's side, and treads the world under his feet, had then been nigh, the mangled form should have raised itself and the cold dead lips cried out, 'Thou art the man!' Marry, when poor folks do steal a horse, or a sheep, or shoot the fallow-deer in a nobleman's park, they straightway do suffer and lose their life; but if a lord which is a courtier shall one day choose to put his wife out of his way for the bettering of his fortunes, even though it be by a foul murder, no more ado is made than if he had shot a pigeon in his woods."

Then changing her theme, she asked Lady Surrey to dress a wound in her leg, for that she did hear from some in that place that she often did use such kindness toward poor people. Without such assistance, she said, to walk the next day would be very painful. My lady straightway began to loosen the bandages which covered the sore, and inquired how long a time it should be since it had been dressed.

"Four days ago," the beggar answered, "Lady l'Estrange had done her so much good as to salve the wound with a rare ointment which had greatly assuaged the pain, until much walking had inflamed it anew."

We both did smile; and my lady said she feared to show herself less skilful than her old pupil; but if the beggar should be credited, she did acquit herself indifferently well of her charitable task; and the bounty she bestowed upon her afterward, I doubt not, did increase her patient's esteem of her ability. But I did often wish that evening my lady had not heard this woman's tale, for I perceived her to harp upon it with a very notable persistency; and when I urged no credit should attach itself to her report, and it was most like to be untrue, she affirmed that some similar surmises had been

spoken of at the time of Lady Leicester's death; and that Lord Sussex and Lord Arundel had once mentioned, in her hearing, that the gypsy was infamed for his wife's death, albeit never openly accused thereof. She had not taken much heed of their discourse at the time, she said; but now it came back into her mind with a singular distinctness, and it was passing strange she should have heard from an eye-witness the details of this tragedy. She should, she thought, write to her husband what the woman had related; and then she changed her mind, and said she would not.

All my pleadings to her that she should think no more thereon were vain. She endeavored to speak of other subjects, but still this one was uppermost in her thoughts. Once, in the midst of an argument touching the uses of pageants, which she maintained to be folly and idle waste, but which I defended, for that they sometimes served to exercise the wit and memory of such as contrive them, carrying on the dispute in a lively fashion, hoping thus to divert her mind, she broke forth in these exclamations: "Oh, what baneful influences do exist in courts, when men, themselves honorable, abhor not to company with such as be accused of foul crimes never disproved, and if they will only stretch forth their blood-stained hands to help them to rise, disdain not to clasp them!"

Then later, when I had persuaded her to play on the guitar, which she did excellently well, she stopped before the air was ended to ask if I did know if Lady Leicester was a fair woman, and if her husband was at any time enamored of her. And when I was unable to resolve these questions, she must needs begin to argue if it should be worse never to be loved, or else to lose a husband's affection; and then asked me, if Basil should alter in his liking of me, which she did not hold to be possible, except that men be so wayward and inconstant that the best do sometimes change, if I should still be glad he had once loved me.

"If he did so much alter," I answered, "as no longer to care for me, methinks I should at once cast him out of my heart; for then it would not have been Basil, but a fancied being coined by mine own imaginings, I should have doted on."

"Tut, tut!" she cried; "thou art too proud. If thou dost speak truly, I misdoubt that to be love which could so easily discard its object."

"For my part," I replied, somewhat nettled, "I think the highest sort of passion should be above suspecting change in him which doth inspire it, or resenting a change which should procure it freedom from an unworthy thrall."

"I ween," she answered, "we do somewhat misconceive each one the other's meaning; and moreover, no parallel can exist between a wife's affection and a maiden's liking." Then she said she hoped the poor woman would stay another day, so that she might speak with her again; for she would fain learn from her what was Lady Leicester's behavior during her sorrowful years, and the temper of her mind before her so sudden death.

"Indeed, dear lady," I urged, "what likelihood should there be that a serving-wench in her kitchen should be acquainted with a noble lady's thoughts?"

"I pray God," my lady said, "our meanest servants do not read in our countenance, yea in the manner of our common and indifferent actions, the motions of our souls when we be in such trouble as should only be known to God and one true friend."

Lady Surrey sent in the morning for to inquire if the beggar was gone. To my no small content she had departed before break of day. Some days afterward a messenger from London brought to my lady, from Arundel House, a letter from my Lady Lumley, wherein she urged her to repair instantly to London, for that the earl, her grandfather, was very grievously sick, and desired for to see her. My lady resolved to go that very day, and straightway gave orders touching the manner of her journey, and desired her coach to be made ready. She proposed that the while she was absent I should pay a visit to Lady l'Estrange, which I had promised for to do before I left Norfolkshire; "and then," quoth my lady, "if my good Lord Arundel doth improve in his health, so that nothing shall detain me at London, I will return to my banishment, wherein my best comfort shall ever be thy company, good Constance. But if peradventure my lord should will me to stay with him" (oh, how her eyes did brighten! and the fluttering of her heart could be perceived in her quick speech and the heaving of her bosom as she said these words), "I will then send one of my gentlewomen to fetch thee from Lynn Court to London; and if that should happen, why methinks our meeting may prove more merry than our parting."

She then dispatched a messenger on horseback to Sir Hammond l'Estrange's house, which did return in some hours with a very obliging answer; for his lady did write that she almost hoped my Lady Surrey would be detained in London, if so be it would not discontent her, and so she should herself have the pleasure of my company for a longer time, which was what she greatly desired.

For some miles, when she started, I rode with my lady in her coach, and then mounted on a horse she had provided for my commodity, and, accompanied by two persons of her household, went to Sir Hammond l'Estrange's seat. It stood in a bleak country without scarce so much as one tree in its neighborhood, but a store of purple heath, then in flower, surrounding it on all sides. As we approached unto it, I for the first time beheld the sea. The heath had minded me of Cannock Chase and my childhood. I ween not what the sea caused me to think of; only I know that the waves which I heard break on the shore had, to my thinking, a wonderful music, so exceeding sweet and pleasant to mine ears that one only sound of it were able to bring, so it did seem to me, all the hearts of this world asleep. Yet although I listed thereunto with a quiet joy, and mine eyes rested on those vasty depths with so much contentment, as if perceiving therein some image of the eternity which doth await us, the words which rose in my mind, and which methinks my lips also framed, were these of Holy Writ: "Great as the sea is thy destruction." If it be not that some good angel whispered them in mine ear for to temper, by a sort of forecasting of what was soon to follow, present gladness, I know not what should have caused so great a dissimilarity between my then thinking and the words I did unwittingly utter.

Lady l'Estrange met me on the steps of her house, which was small, but such as became a gentleman of good fortune, and lacking none of the commodities habitual to such country habitations. The garden at the back of it was a true labyrinth of sweets; and an orchard on one side of it, and a wood of fir-trees beyond the wall, shielded the shrubs which

grew therein from the wild sea-blasts. Milicent was delighted for to show me every part of this her home. The bettering of her fortunes had not wrought any change in the gentle humility of this young lady. The attractive sweetness of her manner was the same, albeit mistress of a house of her own. She set no greater store on herself than she had done at the Charter-house, and paid her husband as much respect and timid obedience as she had ever done her mistress. Verily, in his presence I soon perceived she scarce held her soul to be her own; but studied his looks with so much diligence, and framed each word she uttered to his liking with so much ingenuity, that I marvelled at the wit she showed therein, which was not very apparent in other ways. He was a tall man, of haughty carriage and well-proportioned features. His eyes were large and gray; his nose of a hawkish shape; his lips very thin. I never in any face did notice the signs of so set a purpose or such unyielding lineaments as in this gentleman. Milicent told me he was pious, liberal, an active magistrate, and an exceeding obliging and indulgent husband; but methought her testimony on this score carried no great weight with it, for that her meekness would read the most ordinary kindnesses as rare instances of goodness. She seemed very contented with her lot; and I heard from Lady Surrey's waiting-maid (which she had sent with me from Kenninghall) that all the servants in her house esteemed her to be a most virtuous and patient lady; and so charitable, that all who knew her experience her bounty. On the next day she showed me her garden, her dairy, poultry-yard, and store-room; and also the closet where she kept the salves and ointments for the dressing of wounds, which she said she was every morning employed in for several hours. I said, if she would permit me, I would try to learn this art under her direction, for that nothing could be thought of more useful for such as lived in the country, where such assistance was often needed. Then she asked me if I was like to live in the country, which, from my words, she hoped should be the case; and I told her, if it pleased God, in one year I would be married to Mr. Rookwood, of Euston Hall; which she was greatly rejoiced to learn.

Then, as we walked under the trees, talk ensued between us touching former days at the Charter-house; and when the sun was setting amidst gold and purple clouds, and the wind blew freshly from the sea, whilst the barking of Sir Hammond's dogs, and the report of his gun as he discharged it behind the house, minded me more than ever of old country scenes in past time, my thoughts drew also future pictures of what mine own home should be, and the joy with which I should meet Basil, when he returned from the field-sports in which he did so much delight. And a year seemed a long time to wait for so much happiness as I foresaw should be ours when we were once married. "If Lady l'Estrange is so contented," I thought, "whose husband is somewhat churlish and stem, if his countenance and the reports of his neighbors are to be credited, how much enjoyment in her home shall be the portion of my dear Basil's wife! than which a more sweet-tempered gentleman cannot be seen, nor one endued with more admirable qualities of all sorts, not to speak of youth and beauty, which are perishable advantages, but not without attractiveness."

Mrs. l'Estrange, an unmarried sister of Sir Hammond, lived in the house, and some neighbors which had been shooting with him came to supper. The table was set with an abundance of good cheer; and Milicent sat at the head of it, and used a sweet cordiality toward all her guests, so that every one should seem welcome to her hospitality; but I detected looks of apprehension in her face, coupled with hasty glances toward her husband, if any one did bring forward subjects of discourse which Sir Hammond had not first broached, or did appear in any way to differ with him in what he himself advanced. Once when Lord Burleigh was mentioned, one of the gentleman said somewhat in disparagement of this nobleman, as if he should have been to blame in some of his dealings with the parliament, which brought a dark cloud on Sir Hammond's brow. Upon which Milicent, the color coming into her cheeks, and her voice trembling a little, as she seemed to cast about her for some subject which should turn the current of this talk, began to tell what a store of patients she had seen that day, and to describe them, as if seeking to stop the mouths of the disputants. "One," quoth she, "hath been three times to me this week to have his hands dressed, and I be verily in doubt what his station should be. He hath a notable appearance of good breeding, albeit but poorly apparelled, and his behavior and discourse should show him to be a gentleman. The wounds of his hands were so grievously galled for want of proper dressing, when he first came, I feared they should mortify, and the curing of them to exceed my poor skill. The skin was rubbed off the whole palms, as if scraped off by handling of ropes. A more courageous patient could not be met with. Methought the dressing should have been very painful, but he never so much as once did wince under it. He is somewhat reserved in giving an account of the manner in which he came by those wounds, and answered jestingly when I inquired thereof. But to-morrow I will hear more on it, for I charged him to come for one more dressing of his poor hands."

"Where doth this fellow lodge?" Sir Hammond asked across the table in a quick eager manner.

"At Master Rugeley's house, I have heard," quoth his wife.

Then his fist fell on the table so that it shook.

"A lewd recusant, by God!" he cried. "I'll be sworn this is the popish priest escaped out of Wisbeach, for whom I have this day received orders to make diligent search. Ah, ah! my lady hath trapped the Jesuit fox."

I looked at Milicent, and she at me. O my God, what looks those were!

CHAPTER XV.

Then methought was witnessed (I speak of the time when Sir Hammond l'Estrange made the savage speech which caused his lady and me to exchange affrighted looks) a rare instance of the true womanly courage which doth sometimes lie at the core of a timid heart. The meek wife, which dared not so much as to lift up her eyes to her lord if he did only frown, or to oppose his will in any trifling matter; whose color I had seen fly from her cheek if he raised his voice, albeit not in anger against herself, now in the presence of those at table, with a face as pale as ashes, but a steady voice, and eyes fixed on him, thus addressed her husband:

"Sir, since we married I have never opposed your will, or in anything I wot of offended you, or ever would if I could help

it. Do not, therefore, displeasure me so much, I beseech you, in this grave instance, as to make me an instrument in the capture. And God knoweth what should follow of one which came to me for help, and to whom the service I rendered him would prove the means of his ruin if you persist therein."

"Go to, madam, go to," cries Sir Hammond; "your business doth lie with poor people, mine with criminals. Go your way, and intrude not yourself in weightier matters than belong to your sex."

"Sir," she answers, braving his frowning looks, albeit her limbs began to tremble, "I humbly crave your patience; but I will not leave you, neither desist from my suit, except thereunto compelled by force. I would to God my tongue had been plucked out rather than that it should utter words which should betray to prison, yea, perhaps to death, the poor man whose wounds I tended."

The cloud on Sir Hammond's brow waxed darker as she spoke. He glanced at me, and methinks perceived my countenance to be as much disturbed as his lady's. A sudden thought, I ween, then passed through his mind; and with a terrible oath he swore that he misliked this strenuous urging in favor of a vile popish priest, and yet more the manner of this intercession.

"Heaven shield, madam," he cried, "you have not companied with recusants so as to become infected with a lack of zeal for the Protestant religion!"

The color returned for a moment to Lady l'Estrange's cheeks as she answered:

"Sir, I have never, from the time my mother did teach me my prayers, been of any other way of thinking than that wherein she then instructed me, or so much as allowed myself one thought contrary to true Protestant religion; or ever lent an ear, and with God's help never will, to what papists do advance; but nevertheless, if this priest do fall into any grievous trouble through my speeches, I shall be a most unhappy woman all my life."

And then the poor soul, rising from her seat, went round to her husband's side, and, kneeling, sought to take his hands, beseeching him in such moving and piteous terms to change his purpose as I could see did visibly affect some present. But I also noticed in Sir Hammond's face so resolved an intent as if nothing in earth or heaven should alter it. A drowning wretch would as soon have moved a rock to advance toward him as she succeeded in swerving his will by her entreaties.

A sudden thought inspired me to approach her where she had sunk down on her knees at her husband's feet, he seeking angrily to push her away. I took her by the hand and said:

"I pray you, dear lady, come with me. These be indeed matters wherein, as Sir Hammond saith, women's words do not avail."

Both looked at me surprised; and she, loosing her hold of him, suffered me to lead her away. We went into the parlor, Mrs. l'Estrange following us. But as I did try to whisper in her ear that I desired to speak with her alone, the bell in the dining-room began to ring violently; upon which she shuddered and cried out:

"Let me go back to him, Mistress Sherwood. I'll warrant you he is about to send for the constables; but beshrew me if I die not first at his feet; for if this man should be hung, peace will be a stranger to me all my life."

Mistress l'Estrange essayed to comfort her; but failing therein, said she was very foolish to be so discomposed at what was no fault of hers, and she should think no more thereon, for in her condition to fret should be dangerous; and if people would be priests and papists none could help if they should suffer for it. And then she left the parlor somewhat ruffled, like good people sometimes feel when they perceive their words to have no effect. When we were alone, "Lady l'Estrange," I said, "where is Master Rugeley's house?"

"One mile, or thereabouts, across the heath," she answered.

"And the way to it direct?" I asked.

"Yea, by the footpath," she replied; "but much longer by the high road."

I went to the window and opened the shutter and the lattice also. The moon was shining very brightly.

"Is it that cottage near to the wood?" I inquired, pointing to a thatched roof nigh unto the darksome line of trees against the sky.

"Yea," she answered, "how near it doth seem seen in this light! Constance, what think you to do?" she exclaimed, when I went to her cupboard and took out the keys she had showed me that morning opened the doors of the kitchen garden and the orchard.

"Did you not say," I answered, "that the gentleman now in so great peril did lodge with Master Rugeley?"

"Would you go there?" she said, looking aghast. "Not alone; you durst not do it!"

"Twenty times over," I answered, "for to save a man's life, and he—he a—" But there I stopped; for it was her fellow-creature she desired to save. Her heart bled not like mine for the flock which should be left without a shepherd; and albeit our fears were the same, we felt not alike. I went into the hall, and she pursued me—one-half striving to stay me from my purpose, one-half urging me to fulfil it; yet retracting her words as soon as uttered.

"When I issue from the door of the orchard unto the heath," I said, the while wrapping round me a cloak with a hood to it, "and pursue the path in front, by what token may I find Master Rugeley's house if the moon should be obscured?"

"Where two roads do meet," she said, "at the edge of the heath, a tall oak doth stand near to a gate; a few steps to the right should then lead to it. But verily, Mistress Constance, I be frightened to let you go; and oh, I do fear my husband's anger."

"Would you, then, have a man die by your means?" I asked, thinking for to cure one terror by another, as indeed it did; for she cried,

"Nay, I will speed you on your way, good Constance; and show so brave a face during your absence as God shall help me to do; yea, and open the door for you myself, if my husband should kill me for it!"

Then she took the keys in her hand, and glided like unto a pale ghost before me through the passage into the hall, so noiselessly that I should have doubted if aught of flesh and blood could have moved so lightly, and undid the bars of the back door without so much as a sound. Then she would fetch some thick shoes for me to wear, which I did entreat her not to stay me for; but nothing else would content the poor soul, and, as she had the keys in her hand, I was forced to wait her return with so much impatience as may be guessed. I heard the voices of the gentlemen still carousing after supper; and then a servant's below in the hall, who said the constables had been sent for, and a warrant issued for the apprehension of a black papist at Master Rugeley's. Then Milicent returned, and whilst I put on the shoes she had brought, and she was tying with trembling fingers the hood of my cloak, the rustling of Mrs. l'Estrange's silk gown was heard on the stair above our heads, from whence we were like to be seen; and, fear awakening contrivance, I said aloud,

"Oh, what a rare pastime it should be to dress as a ghost, and frighten the good lady your sister-in-law! I pray you get me some white powder to pale my face. Methinks we need some kind of sport to drive away too much thinking on that dismal business in hand."

The steps over our head sounded more hurried, and we heard the door of the parlor close with a bang, and the lattice also violently shut.

"Now," I whispered, "give me the keys, good Lady l'Estrange, and go to your sister yourself. Say I was ashamed to have been overheard to plan so rank a piece of folly (and verily you will be speaking no other than the truth), and that you expect I shall not so much as show my face in the parlor this evening; and lock also my chamber-door, that none may for a surety know me for to be absent."

"Yea," answered the poor lady, with so deep a sigh as seemed to rend her heart; "but, God forgive me, I never did think to hide anything from my husband! And who shall tell me if I be doing right or wrong?"

I could not stay, though I grieved for her; and the sound of her voice haunted me as I went through the garden, and then the orchard, unto the common, locking the doors behind me. When this was done, I did breathe somewhat more freely, and began to run along the straight path amidst the heath. I wot not if my speed was great—the time seemed long; yet methinks I did not slacken my pace once, but rather increased it, till, perceiving the oak, and near it the gate Lady l'Estrange had mentioned, I stopped to consider where to turn; and after I had walked a little to the right I saw a cottage and a light gleaming inside. Then my heart beat very fast; and when I knocked at the door I felt scarce able to stand. I did so three times, and no answer came. Then I cried as loudly as I could, "Master Rugeley, I beseech you open the door." I heard some one stirring within, but no one came. Then I again cried out, "Oh, for our Blessed Lady's sake, some one come." At last the lattice opened, and a man's head appeared.

"Who are you?" he said, in a low voice.

"A friend," I answered, in a whisper; "a Catholic. Are yon Master Rugeley?"

"Yea," he answered.

"Oh, then, if Mr. Tunstall is here, hide him quickly, or send him away. I am a friend of Lady l'Estrange's and staying in her house. Sir Hammond hath received tidings that a priest is in this neighborhood, and a warrant is issued for to apprehend him. His lady unwittingly, and sorely troubled she is thereat, showed by her speeches touching your guest, that he is like to be Mr. Tunstall; and the constables will soon be here."

"Thank you," he replied whom I was addressing; "but Mr. Tunstall is not the name of my friend."

Then I feared he did take me for a spy, and I cried out, greatly moved, "As I do hope to go to heaven one day, and not to hell, Master Rugeley, I speak the truth, and my warning is an urgent one."

Then I heard some one within the house, who said, "Open the door, Master Rugeley. I should know that voice. Let the speaker in."

Methought I, too, knew the voice of the person who thus spoke. The door was opened, and I entered a room dimly lighted by one candle.

"Oh, for God's sake," I cried, "if a priest is here, hide him forthwith."

"Are you a Catholic, my child?"

I looked up to the person who put this question to me, and gave a sudden cry, I know not whether of terror or joy; for great as was the change which the lapse of years, and great inward and outward changes, had wrought in his aspect, I saw it was my father.

"I am Constance," I cried; "Constance Sherwood! Oh, my dear father!" and then fell at his feet weeping.

After an instant's, astonishment and fixed gazing on my face, he recognized me, who was, I doubt not, more changed than himself, and received me with a great paternal kindness and the tenderest greeting imaginable, yet tempered with reserve and so much of restraint as should befit one who, for Christ's sake, had dissevered himself from the joys, albeit not from the affections, of the natural heart.

"Oh, my good child, my own dear Constance," he said; "hath God in his bounty given thy poor father a miraculous sight of thee before his death, or art thou come verily in flesh and blood to warn him of his danger?"

"My dear and honored father," I replied, "time presses; peril is indeed at hand, if you and Mr. Tunstall are the same person."

"The wounds in my hands," he answered, "must prove me such, albeit now healed by the care of that good Samaritan, Lady l'Estrange. But prithee, my good child, whence comest thou?"

"Alas!" I said; "and yet not alas, if God should be so good to me as by my means to save you, I am Sir Hammond's guest, being a friend of his lady's. I came there yesterday."

"Oh, my good child, I thought not to have seen thee in these thy grown-up years. Master Rugeley," he added, turning to his host, "this is the little girl I forsook four years ago, for to obtain the hundredfold our Lord doth promise."

"My very dear father," I said, "joy is swallowed up in fear. God help me, I came to warn a stranger (if so be any priest in these times should be a stranger to a Catholic), and I find you."

"Oh, but I am mightfully pleased," quoth he, "to see thee, my child, even in this wise, and to hear thee speak like a true daughter of Holy Church. And Lady l'Estrange is then thy friend?"

"Yea, my dear father; but for God and our lady's sake hide yourself. I warrant yon the constables may soon be here. Master Rugeley, where can he be concealed, or whither fly, and I with him?"

"Nay, prithee not so fast," quoth he. "Flight would be useless; and in the matter of hiding, one should be more easily concealed than two; beside that, the hollow of a tree, which Master Rugeley will, I ween, appoint me for a bed-chamber to-night, should hardly lodge us both with comfort."

"Oh, sir," said Rugeley, "do not tarry."

"For thy sake, no; not for more than one minute, Thomas; but ere I part from this wench, two questions I must needs ask her."

Then he drew me aside and inquired what facilities I continued to have in London for the exercise of Catholic religion, and if I was punctual in the discharge of my spiritual duties. When I had satisfied him thereon, he asked if the report was true which he heard from a prisoner for recusancy in Wisbeach Castle, concerning my troth-pledge with Mr. Rookwood.

"Yea," I said, "it is true, if so be you now do add your consent to it."

He answered he should do so with all his heart, for he knew him to be a good Catholic and a virtuous gentleman; and as we might lack the opportunity to receive his blessing later, he should now give it unto me for both his most dear children. Which he did, laying his hand on my head with many fervent benisons, couched in such words as these, that he prayed for us to be stayed up with the shore of God's grace in this world; and after this transitory life should end, to ascend to him, and appear pure and unspotted before his glorious seat. Then he asked me if it was Lady l'Estrange who had detected him; whereupon I briefly related to him what had occurred, and how sore her grief was therein.

"God bless her," he answered; "and tell her I do thank her and pray for her with all mine heart."

And more he would have added, but Master Rugeley opened the door impatiently. So, after kissing once more my father's hand, I went away, compelled thereunto by fears for his safety, if he should not at once conceal himself.

Looking back, I saw him and his guide disappear in the thicket, and then, as I walked on toward Lynn Court, it did almost seem to me as if the whole of that brief but pregnant interview should have been a dream; nor could I verily persuade myself that it was not a half habitant of another world I had seen and spoken with rather than mine own father; and in first thinking on it I scarcely did fully apprehend the danger he was in, so as to feel as much pain as I did later, when the joy and astonishment of that unexpected meeting had given way to terrifying thoughts. Ever and anon I turned round to gaze on the dark wood wherein his hopes of safety did lie, and once I knelt down on the roadside to pray that the night should be also dark and shield his escape. But still the sense of fear was dulled, and woke not until the sound of horses' feet on the road struck on my ear, and I saw a party of men riding across the common. The light in the cottage was extinguished, but the cruel moon shone out then more brightly than heretofore. Now I felt so sick and faint that I feared to sink down on the path, and hurried through the orchard-door and the garden to the house. When I had unlocked the back door and stood in the hall where a lately kindled fire made a ruddy light to glow, I tried again to think I had been dreaming, like one in a nightmare strives to shake off an oppressive fancy. I could not remain alone, and composed my countenance for to enter the parlor, when the door thereof opened and Mrs. l'Estrange came out, who, when she perceived me standing before her, gave a start, but recovering herself, said, good-naturedly:

"Marry, if this be not the ghost we have been looking for; now ashamed, I ween, to show itself. I hope, Mistress Sherwood, you do not haunt quiet folks in their beds at night; for I do, I warn you, mislike living ghosts, and should be disposed to throw a jug of water at the head of such a one." And laughing, she took my hand in a kind manner, which when she did, almost a cry broke from her: "How now, Milicent! she is as cold as a stone figure. Where has she been chilling herself?"

Milicent pressed forward and led me to my chamber, wherein a fire had been lighted, and would make me drink a hot posset. But when I thought of the cold hollow of a tree wherein my father was enclosed, if it pleased God no worse mishap had befallen him, little of it could I force myself to swallow, for now tears had come to my relief, and concealing my face in the pillow of the bed whereon for weariness I had stretched myself, I wept very bitterly.

"Is that poor man gone from Rugeley's house?" Milicent whispered.

Alas! she knew not who that poor man was to me, nor with what anguish I answered: "He is not in the cottage, I hope; but God only knoweth if his pursuers shall not discover him." The thought of what would then follow overcame me, and I hid my face with mine hands.

"Oh, Constance," she exclaimed, "was this poor man known to thee, that thy grief is so great, whose conscience doth not reproach thee as mine doeth?"

I held out my hand to her without unshading my face with the other, and said: "Dear Milicent! thou shouldst not sorrow so much for thine own part in this sore trial. It was not thy fault. He said so. He blest thee, and prays for thee."

Uncomforted by my words, she cried again, what she had so often exclaimed that night, "If this man should die, my happiness is over."

Then once more she asked me if I know this priest, and I was froward with her (God forgive me, for the suspense and fear overthrew better feelings for a moment), and I cried, angrily, "Who saith he is a priest? Who can prove it?"

"Think you so?" she said joyfully; "then all should be right."

And once more, with some misdoubting, I ween, that I concealed somewhat from her, she inquired touching my knowledge of this stranger. Then I spoke harshly, and bade her leave me, for I had sorrow enough without her intermeddling with it; but then grieving for her, and also afraid to be left alone, I denied my words, and prayed her to stay, which she did, but did not speak much again. The silence of the night seemed so deep as if the rustling of a leaf could be noticed; only now and then the voices of the gentlemen below, and some loud talking and laughter from some of them was discernible through the closed doors. Once Lady l'Estrange said: "They be sitting up very late; I suppose till the constables return. Oh, when will that be?"

The great clock in the hall then struck twelve; and soon after, starting up, I cried, "What should be that noise?"

"I do hear nothing," she answered, trembling as a leaf.

"Hush," I replied, and going to the window, opened the lattice. The sound in the road on the other side of the house was now plain. On that we looked on naught was to be seen save trees and grass, with the ghastly moonlight shining on them. A loud opening and shutting of doors and much stir now took place within the house, and, moved by the same impulse, we both went out into the passage and half way down the stairs. Milicent was first. Suddenly she turned round, and falling down on her knees, with a stifled exclamation, she hid her face against me, whisperings "He is taken!"

We seemed both turned to stone. O ye which have gone through a like trial, judge ye; and you who have never been in such straits, imagine what a daughter should feel who, after long years' absence, beholdeth a beloved father for one instant, and in the next, under the same roof where she is a guest, sees him brought in a prisoner and in jeopardy of his life. Every word which was uttered we could hear where we sat crouching, fearful to advance—she not daring to look on the man she had ruined, and I on the countenance of a dear parent, lest the sight of me should distract him from his defence, if that could be called such which he was called on to make. They asked him touching his name, if it was Tunstall. He answered he was known by that name. Then followed the murtherous question, if he was a Romish priest? To which he at once assented. Then said Sir Hammond:

"How did you presume, sir, to return into England contrary to the laws?"

"Sir," he answered, "as I was lawfully ordained a priest by a Catholic bishop, by authority derived from the see of Rome" (one person here exclaimed, "Oh, audacious papist! his tongue should be cat out;" but Sir Hammond imposed silence), "so likewise," he continued, "am I lawfully sent to preach the word of God, and to administer the sacraments to my Catholic countrymen. As the mission of priests lawfully ordained is from Christ, who did send his apostles even as his Father sent him, I do humbly conceive no human laws can justly hinder my return to England, or make it criminal; for this should be to prefer the ordinances of man to the commands of the supreme legislator, which is Christ himself."

Loud murmurs were here raised by some present, which Sir Hammond again silencing, he then inquired if he would take the oath of allegiance to the queen? He answered (my straining ears taking note of every word he uttered) that he would gladly pay most willing obedience to her majesty in all civil matters; but the oath of allegiance, as it was worded, he could not take, or hold her majesty to possess any supremacy in spiritual matters. He was beginning to state the reasons thereof, but was not suffered to proceed, for Sir Hammond, interrupting him, said he was an escaped prisoner, and by his own confession condemned, so he should straightway commit him to the gaol in Norwich. Then I lost my senses almost, and seizing Lady l'Estrange's arm, I cried, "Save him! he is mine own father, Mr. Sherwood!" She uttered a sort of cry, and said, "Oh, I have feared this, since I saw his face!" and running forward, I following her, affrighted at what should happen, she called out, "It shall not be! He shall not do it!" and with a face as white as any smock, runs to her husband, and perceiving the constables to be putting chains on my father's hands and feet, which I likewise beheld with what feelings you who read this may think, she falls on her knees and gasps out these words in such a mournful tone, that I shuddered to hear her, "Oh, sir! if this man leaves this house a chained prisoner, I shall never be the like of my-self again. There shall be no more joy for me in life." And then faints right away, and Sir Hammond carries her in his arms out of the hall. Mine eyes the while met my father's; who smiled on me with kind cheer, but signed for me to keep away. I stretched my arms toward him, and with his chained hand he contrived yet once more for to bless me; then was hurried out of my sight. Far more time than I ever did perceive or could remember

the length of I remained in that now deserted hall, motionless, alone, near to the dying embers, the darkness still increasing, too much confused to recall at once the comforts which sacred thoughts do yield in such mishaps, only able to clasp my hand and utter broken sentences of prayer, such as "God, ha' mercy on us," and the like; till about the middle of the night, Sir Hammond comes down the stairs, with a lamp in his hand, and a strange look in his face.

"Mistress Sherwood," he says, "come to my lady. She is very ill, and hath been in labor for some time. She doth nothing but call for you, and rave about that accursed priest she will have it she hath murdered. Come and feign to her he hath escaped."

"O God!" I cried, "my words may fall on her ear, Sir Hammond, but my face cannot deceive her."

He looked at me amazed and angry. "What meaneth this passion of grief? What is this old man to you, that his misfortune should thus disorder you?" And as I could not stay my weeping, he asked in a scornful manner, "Do papists so dote on their priests as to die of sorrow when they get their deserts?" This insulting speech did so goad me, that, unable to restrain myself, I exclaimed, "Sir Hammond, he whom you have sent to a dungeon, and perhaps to death also (God pardon you for it!), is my true father!—the best parent and the noblest gentleman that ever breathed, which for many years I had not seen; and here under your roof, myself your guest, I have beheld him loaded with chains, and dared not to speak for fear to injure him yet further, which I pray God I have not now done, moved thereunto by your cruel scoffs."

"Your father!" he said amazed; "Mr. Sherwood! These cursed feignings do work strange mishaps. But he did own himself a priest."

Before I had time to answer, a serving woman ran into the hall, crying out, "Oh, sir, I pray you come to my lady. She is much worse; and the nurse says, if her mind is not eased she is like to die before the child is born."

"Oh, Milicent! sweet Milicent!" I cried, wringing my hands; and when I looked at that unhappy husband's face, anger vanished and pity took its place. He turned to me with an imploring countenance as if he should wish to say, "None but you can save her." I prayed to Our Lady, who stood and fainted not beneath the Rood, to get me strength for to do my part in that sick chamber whither I signed to him to lead the way. "God will help me," I whispered in his ear, "to comfort her."

"God bless you!" he answered in a hoarse voice, and opened the door of the room in which his sweet lady was sitting in her bed, with a wild look in her pale blue eyes, which seemed to start out of her head.

"Sir," I heard her say, as he approached, "what hath befallen the poor man you would not dismiss?"

I took a light in my hand, so that she should see my face, and smiled on her with such good cheer, as God in his mercy gave me strength to do even amidst the two-fold anguish of that moment. Then she threw her arms convulsively round my neck, and her pale lips gasped the same question as before. I bent over her, and said, "Trouble yourself no longer, dear lady, touching this prisoner. He is safe (in God's keeping, I added, internally). He is where he is carefully tended (by God's angels, I mentally subjoined); he hath no occasion to be afraid (for God is his strength), and I warrant you is as peaceful as his nearest friends should wish him to be."

"Is this the truth?" she murmured in my ear.

"Yea," I said, "the truth, the very truth," and kissed her flushed cheek. Then feeling like to faint, I went away, Sir Hammond leading me to my chamber, for I could scarce stand.

"God bless you!" he again said, when he left me, and I think he was weeping.

I fell into a heavy, albeit troubled, sleep, and when I awoke it was broad daylight. When the waiting-maid came in, she told me Lady l'Estrange had been delivered of a dead child and Sir Hammond was almost beside himself with grief. My lady's mind had wandered ever since; but she was more tranquil than in the night. Soon after he sent to ask if he could see me, and I went down to him into the parlor. A more changed man, in a few hours, I ween, could not be seen, than this poor gentleman. He spoke not of his lady; but briefly told me he had sent in the night a messenger on horseback to Norwich, with a letter to the governor of the gaol, praying him to show as much consideration, and allow so much liberty as should consist with prudence, to the prisoner in his custody, sent by him a few hours before, for that he had discovered him not to be one of the common sort, nor a lewd person, albeit by his own confession amenable to the laws, and escaped from another prison. Then he added, that if I wished to go to Norwich, and visit this prisoner, he would give me a letter to the governor, and one to a lady, who would conveniently harbor me for a while in that city, and his coach should take me there, or he would lend me a horse and a servant to attend me. I answered, I should be glad to go, and then said somewhat of his lady, hoping she should now do well. He made no reply for a moment, and then only said,

"God knoweth! she is not like herself at the present."

The words she had so mournfully spoken the day before came into my mind, "I shall never be like myself again, and there shall be no more joy in this house." And, methinks, they did haunt him also.

I sat for some time by her bedside that day. She seemed not ill at ease, but there was something changed in her aspect, and her words when she spoke had no sense or connection. And here I will set down, before I relate the events which followed my brief sojourn under their roof, what I have heard touching the sequel of Sir Hammond and his wife's lives.

In that perilous and sorely troubled childbirth understanding was alienated, and the art of the best physicians in England could never restore it. She was not frantic; but had such a pretty delirium, that in her ravings there was oftentimes more attractiveness than in many sane persons' conversation. They mostly ran on pious themes, and she was wont to sing psalms, and talk of heaven, and that she hoped to see God there; and in many things she showed her old

ability, such as fine embroidery and the making of preserves. One day her waiting-woman asked her to dress a person's wounds, which did greatly need it, and she set herself to do it in her accustomed manner; but at the sight of the wounds, she was seized with convulsions, and became violently delirious, so that Sir Hammond sharply reprehended the imprudent attendant, and forbade the like to be ever proposed to her again. He gave himself up to live retired with her, and ceased to be a magistrate, nor ever, that I could hear of, took any part again in the persecution of Catholics. The distemper which had estranged her mind in all things else, had left her love and obedience entire to her husband; and he entertained a more visible fondness, and evinced a greater respect for her after she was distempered than he had ever done in the early days of their marriage. Methinks, the gentleness of her heart, and delicacy of her conscience, which till that misfortune had never, I ween, been burdened by any, even the least, self-reproach, and the lack of strength in her mind to endure an unusual stress, made the stroke of that accidental harm done to another through her means too heavy for her sufferance, and, as the poet saith, unsettled reason on her throne. For mine own part, but let others consider of it as they list, I think that had she been a Catholic by early training and distinct belief, as verily I hope she was in rightful intention, albeit unconsciously to herself (as I make no doubt many are in these days, wherein persons are growing up with no knowledge of religion except what Protestant parents do instill into them), that she would have had a greater courage for to bear this singular trial; which to a feeling natural heart did prove unbearable, but which to one accustomed to look on suffering as not the greatest of evils, and to hold such as are borne for conscience sake as great and glorious, would not have been so overwhelming. But herein I write, methinks, mine own condemnation, for that in the anguish of filial grief I failed to point out to her during those cruel moments of suspense that which in retrospection I do so clearly see. And so, may God accept the blighting of her young life, and the many sufferings of mine which I have still to record, as pawns of his intended mercies to both her and to me in his everlasting kingdom!

When I was about to set out for Norwich, late in the afternoon of that same day, Sir Hammond's messenger returned from thence with a letter from the governor of the gaol; wherein he wrote that the prisoner he had sent the night before was to proceed to London in a few hours with some other priests and recusants which the government had ordered to be conveyed thither and committed to divers prisons. He added, that he had complied with Sir Hammond's request, and shown so much favor to Mr. Tunstall as to transfer him, as soon as he received his letter, from the common dungeon to a private cell, and to allow him to speak with another Catholic prisoner who had desired to see him. Upon this I prayed Sir Hammond to forward me on my journey to London, as now I desired nothing so much as to go there forthwith; which he did with no small alacrity and good disposition. Then, with so much speed as was possible, and so much suffering from the lapse of each hour that it seemed to me the journey should never end, I proceeded to what was now the object of my most impatient pinings—the place where I should bear tidings of my father, and, if it should be possible, minister assistance to him in his great straits. At last I reached Holborn; and, to the no small amazement of my uncle, Mrs. Ward, and Muriel, revealed to them who Mr. Tunstall was, whose arrival at the prison of Bridewell Mrs. Ward had had notice of that morning, when she had been to visit Mr. Watson, which she had contrived to do for some time past in the manner I will soon relate.

CHAPTER XVI.

One of the first persons I saw in London was Hubert Rookwood, who, when he heard (for being Basil's brother I would not conceal it from him) that my father was in prison at Bridewell, expressed so much concern therein and resentment of my grief, that I was thereby moved to more kindly feelings toward him than I had of late entertained. He said that in the houses of the law which he frequented he had made friends which he hoped would intercede in his behalf, and therein obtain, if not his release, yet so much alleviation of the hardships of a common prison as should render his condition more tolerable, and that he would lose no time in seeking to move them thereunto; but that our chief hope would lie in Sir Francis Walsingham, who, albeit much opposed to papists, had always showed himself willing to assist his friends of that way of thinking, and often procured for them some relief, which indeed none had more experienced than Mr. Congleton himself. Hubert commended the secrecy which had been observed touching my father's real name; for if he should be publicly known to be possessed of lands and related to noble families, it should be harder for any one to get him released than an obscure person; but nevertheless he craved license to intimate so much of the truth to Sir Francis as should appear convenient, for he had always observed that gentlemen are more compassionate to those of their own rank than to others of meaner birth. Mr. Congleton prayed him to use his own discretion therein, and said he should acquaint no one himself of it except his very good friend the Portuguese ambassador, who, if all other resources failed, might yet obtain of the queen herself some mitigation of his sentence. Thereupon followed some days of weary watching and waiting, in which my only comfort was Mistress Ward, who, by means of the gaoler's wife, who had obliged her in the like manner before, did get access from time to time to Mr. Watson, and brought him necessaries. From him she discovered that the prisoner in the nearest cell to his own was the so-called Mr. Tunstall, and that by knocks against the wall, ingeniously numbered so as to express the letters of the alphabet, as one for *a*, two for *b*, and so to the end thereof, they did communicate. So she straightway began to practice this management; but time allowed not of many speeches to pass between them. Yet in this way he sent me his blessing, and that he was of very good cheer; but that none should try for to visit him, for he had only one fear, which was to bring others into trouble; and, for himself, he was much beholden to her majesty, which had provided him with a quiet lodging and time to look to his soul's welfare; which evidence of his cheerful and pious spirit comforted me not a little. Then that dear friend which had brought me this good comfort spoke of Mr. Watson, and said she desired to procure his escape from prison more than that of any other person in the same plight, not excepting my father. "For, good Constance," quoth she, "when a man is blest with a stout heart and cheerful mind, except it be for the sake of others, I pray you what kind of service do you think we render him by delaying the victory he is about to gain, and peradventure depriving him of the long-desired crown of martyrdom? But this good Mr. Watson, who as you well know was a zealous priest and pious missionary, nevertheless, some time after his apprehension and confinement in Bridewell, by force of torments and other miseries of that place, was prevailed upon to deny his faith so far as to go once to the Protestant service—not dragged there by force as some have been, but compelled thereunto by fear of intolerable sufferings, and was then set at liberty. But the

poor man did not thus better his condition; for the torments of his mind, looking on himself as an apostate and traitor to the Church, he found to be more insupportable than any sufferings his gaolers put upon him. So, after some miserable weeks, he went to one of the prisons where some other priests were confined for to seek comfort and counsel from them; and, having confessed his fault with great and sincere sorrow, he received absolution, and straightway repaired to that church in Bridewell wherein he had in a manner denied his faith, and before all the people at that time therein assembled, declared himself a Catholic, and willing to go to prison and to death sooner than to join again in Protestant worship. Whereupon he was laid hold of, dragged to prison, and thrown into a dungeon so low and so straight that he could neither stand up in it nor lay himself down at his full length to sleep. They loaded him with irons, and kept him one whole month on bread and water; nor would suffer any one to come near him to comfort or speak with him."

"Alas!" I cried, "and is this, then, the place where my father is confined?"

"No," she answered; "after the space of a month Mr. Watson was translated to a lodging at the top of the house, wherein the prisoners are leastways able to stretch their limbs and to see the light; but he having been before prevailed on to yield against his conscience touching that point of going to Protestant worship, no peace is left to him by his persecutors, which never cease to urge on him some sort of conformity to their religion. And, Constance, when a man hath once been weak, what security can there be, albeit I deny not hope, that he shall always after stand firm?"

"But by what means," I eagerly asked, "do you forecast to procure his escape?"

"I have permission," she answered, "to bring him necessaries, which I do in a basket, on condition that I be searched at going in and coming out, for to make sure I convey not any letter unto him or from him; and this was so strictly observed the first month that they must needs break open the loaves or pies I take to him lest any paper should be conveyed inside. But they begin now to weary of this strict search, and do not care at ways to hearken when I speak with him; so he could tell me the last time I did visit him that he had found a way by which if he had but a cord long enough for his purpose, he could let himself down from the top of the house, and so make his escape in the night."

"Oh," I cried, "dear Mistress Ward, but this is a perilous venture, to aid a prisoner's escape. One which a daughter might run for her father, oh, how willingly, but for a stranger—"

"A stranger!" she answered. "Is he a stranger for whom Christ died, and whose precious soul is in danger, even if not a priest; and being so, is he not entitled to more than common reverence, chiefly in these days when God's servants minister to us in the midst of such great straits to both soul and body?"

"I cry God mercy," I said; "I did term him a stranger who gave ghostly comfort to my dear mother on her death-bed; but oh, dear Mistress Ward, I thought on your peril, who, he knoweth, hath been as a mother to me for these many years. And then-if you are resolved to run this danger, should it not be possible to save my father also by the same means? Two cords should not be more difficult to convey, methinks, than one, and the peril not greater."

"If I could speak with him," she replied, "it would not be impossible. I will tell Muriel to make two instead of one of these cords, which she doth twine in some way she learnt from a Frenchman, so strong as, albeit slight, to have the strength of a cable. But without we do procure two men with a boat for to fetch the prisoners when they descend, 'tis little use to make the attempt. And it be easier, I warrant thee, Constance, to run one's self into a manifest danger than to entice others to the like."

"Should it be safe," I asked, "to speak thereon to Hubert Rookwood? He did exhibit this morning much zeal in my father's behalf, and promised to move Sir Francis Walsingham to procure his release."

"How is he disposed touching religion? she asked, in a doubtful manner.

"Alas!" I answered, "there is a secrecy in his nature which in more ways than one doth prove uninvestigable, leastways to me; but when he comes this evening I will sound him thereon. Would his brother were in London! Then we should not lack counsel and aid in this matter."

"We do sorely need both," she answered; "for your good uncle, than which a better man never lived, wanes feeble in body, and hence easily overcome by the fears such enterprises involve. Mr. Wells is not in London at this tune, or he should have been a very palladium of strength in this necessity. Hubert Rookwood hath, I think, a good head."

"What we do want is a brave heart," I replied, thinking on Basil.

"But wits also," she said.

"Basil hath them too," I answered, forgetting that only in mine own thinking had he been named.

"Yea," she cried, "who doth doubt it? but, alas! he is not here."

Then I prayed her not to be too rash in the prosecution of her design. "Touching my father," I said, "I have yet some hope of his release; and as long as any remaineth, flight should be methinks a too desperate attempt to be thought of."

"Yea," she answered, "in most cases it would be so." But Mr. Watson's disposition she perceived to be such as would meet a present danger and death itself, she thought, with courage, but not of that stamp which could endure prolonged fears or infliction of torments.

Since my coming to London I had been too much engaged in these weighty cares to go abroad; but on that day I resolved, if it were possible, to see my Lady Surrey. A report had reached me that the breach between her and her husband had so much deepened that a separation had ensued, which if true, I, which knew her as well almost as mine own self, could judge what her grief must be. I was also moved to this endeavor by the hope that if my Lord Arundel was not too sick to be spoken with, she should perhaps obtain some help through his means for that dear prisoner

whose captivity did weigh so heavily on my heart.

So, with a servant to attend on me, I went through the city to the Chapter-house, and with a misgiving mind heard from the porter that Lady Surrey lodged not there, but at Arundel House, whither she had removed soon after her coming to London. Methought that in the telling of it this man exhibited a sorrowful countenance; but not choosing to question one of his sort on so weighty a matter, I went on to Arundel House, where, after some delay, I succeeded in gaining admittance to Lady Surrey's chamber, whose manner, when she first saw me, lacked the warmth which I was used to in her greetings. There seemed some fear in her lest I should speak unadvisedly that which she would be loth to hear; and her strangeness and reserve methinks arose from reluctance to have the wound in her heart probed,—too sore a one, I ween, even for the tender handling of a friend. I inquired of her if my Lord Arundel's health had improved. She said he was better, and like soon to be as well as could be hoped for now-a-days, when his infirmities had much increased.

"Then you will return to Kenninghall?" I said, letting my speech outrun discretion.

"No," she replied; "I purpose never more to leave my Lord Arundel or my Lady Lumley as long as they do live, which I pray God may be many years."

And then she sat without speaking, biting her lips and wringing the kerchief she held in her hands, as if to keep her grief from outbursting. I dared not to comment on her resolve, for I foresaw that the least word which should express some partaking of her sorrow, or any question relating to it, would let loose a torrent weakly stayed by a mightful effort, not like to be of long avail. So I spoke of mine own troubles, and the events which had occasioned my sudden departure from Lynn Court. She had heard of Lady l'Estrange's mishap, and that the following day I had journeyed to London; but naught of the causes thereof, or of the apprehension of any priest by Sir Hammond's orders. Which, when she learnt the manner of this misfortune, and the poor lady's share therein, and that it was my father she had thus unwittingly discovered, her countenance softened, and throwing her arms round my neck, she bitterly wept, which at that moment methinks did her more good than anything else.

"Oh, mine own good Constance," she said, "I doubt not nature riseth many passionate workings in your soul at this time; but, my dear wench, when good men are in trouble our grief for them should be as noble as their virtues. Bethink thee what a worst sorrow it should be to have a vile father, one that thou must needs love,—for who can tear out of his heart affection strong as life?—and he should then prove unworthy. Believe me, Constance, God gives to each, even in this world, a portion of their deserts. Such griefs as thy present one I take to be rare instances of his favor. Other sorts of trials are meet for cowardly souls which refuse to set their lips to a chalice of suffering, and presently find themselves submerged in a sea of woes. But can I help thee, sweet one? Is there aught I can do to lighten thy affliction? Hast thou license for to see thy father?"

"No, dear lady," I answered; "and his name being concealed, I may not petition as his daughter for this permission; but if my Lord Arundel should be so good a lord to me as to obtain leave for me to visit this prisoner, without revealing his name and condition, he should do me the greatest benefit in the world."

"I will move him thereunto," my lady said. "But he who had formerly no equal in the queen's favor, and to whom she doth partly owe her crown, is now in his sickness and old age of so little account in her eyes, that trifling favors are often denied him to whom she would once have said: 'Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it unto thee.' But what my poor endeavors can effect through him or others shall not be lacking in this thy need. But I am not in that condition I was once like to have enjoyed." Then with her eyes cast on the ground she seemed for to doubt if she should speak plainly, or still shut up her grief in silence. As I sat painfully expecting her next words, the door opened, and two ladies were announced, which she whispered in mine ear she would fain not have admitted at that time, but that Lord Arundel's desire did oblige her to entertain them. One was Mistress Bellamy, and the other her daughter, Mistress Frances, a young gentlewoman of great beauty and very lively parts, which I had once before seen at Lady Ingoldsby's house. She was her parents' sole daughter, and so idolized by them that they seemed to live only to minister to her fancies. Lord Arundel was much bounden to this family by ancient ties of friendship, which made him urgent with his granddaughter that she should admit them to her privacy. I admired in this instance how suddenly those which have been used to exercise such self-command as high breeding doth teach can school their exterior to seem at ease, and even of good cheer, when most ill at ease interiorly, and with hearts very heavy. Lady Surrey greeted these visitors with as much courtesy, and listened to their discourse with as much civility and smiles when called for, as if no burthensome thoughts did then oppress her.

Many and various themes were touched upon in the random talk which ensued. First, that wonted one of the queen's marriage, which some opined should verily now take place with Monsieur d'Alençon; for that since his stealthy visits to England, she did wear in her bosom a brooch of jewels in a frog's shape.

"Ay," quoth Mistress Frances, "that stolen visit which awoke the ire of the poor soul Stubbs, who styled it 'an unmanlike, unprincelike, French kind of wooing,' and endeth his book of 'The Gaping Gulph' in a loyal rage: 'Here is, therefore, an imp of the crown of France, to marry the crowned nymph of England,'—a nymph indeed well stricken in years. My brother was standing by when Stubbs' hand was cut off; for nothing else would content that sweet royal nymph, albeit the lawyers stoutly contended the statute under which he suffered to be null and void. As soon as his right hand is off, the man takes his hat off with the left, and cries 'God bless the queen!'"

"Here is a wonder," I exclaimed; "I pray you, what is the art this queen doth possess by which she holdeth the hearts of her subjects in so great thrall, albeit so cruel to them which do offend her?"

"Lady Harrington hath told me her majesty's own opinion thereon," said Mrs. Bellamy; "for one day she did ask her in a merry sort, 'How she kept her husband's good-will and love?' To which she made reply that she persuaded her husband of her affection, and in so doing did command his. Upon which the queen cries out, 'Go to, go to, Mistress Moll! you are wisely bent, I find. After such sort do I keep the good wills of all my husbands, my good people; for if they did not rest assured of some special love toward them, they would not readily yield me such good obedience.'"

"Tut, tut!" cried Mistress Frances; "all be not such fools as John Stubbs; and she knoweth how to take rebukes from such as she doth not dare to offend. By the same token that Sir Philip Sydney hath written to dissuade her from this French match, and likewise Sir Francis Walsingham, which last did hint at her advancing years; and her highness never so much as thought of striking off their hands. But I warrant you a rebellion shall arise if this queen doth issue such prohibitions as she hath lately done."

"Of what sort?" asked Lady Surrey.

"First, to forbid," Mrs. Bellamy said, "any new building to be raised within three thousand paces of the gates of London on pain of imprisonment, and sundry other penalties; or for more than one family to inhabit in one house. For her majesty holds it should be an impossible thing to govern or maintain order in a city larger than this London at the present time."

Mistress Frances declared this law to be more tolerable than the one against the size of ladies' ruffs, which were forsooth not to exceed a certain measure; and officers appointed for to stand at the comers of streets and to clip such as overpassed the permitted dimensions, which sooner than submit to she should die.

Lady Surrey smiled, and said she should have judged so from the size of her fine ruff.

"But her majesty is impartial," quoth Mrs. Bellamy; "for the gentlemen's rapiers are served in the same manner. And verily this law hath nearly procured a war with France; for in Smithfield Lane some clownish constables stayed M. de Castelnau, and laid hands on his sword for to shorten it to the required length. I leave you to judge. Lady Surrey, of this ambassador's fury. Sir Henry Seymour, who was tidying the air in Smithfield at the time, perceived him standing with the drawn weapon in his hand, threatening to kill whosoever should approach him, and destruction on this realm of England if the officers should dare to touch his sword again; and this with such frenzy of speech in French mixed with English none could understand, that God knoweth what should have ensued if Sir Henry had not interfered. Her majesty was forced to make an apology to this mounseer for that her officers had ignorantly attempted to clip the sword of her good brother's envoy."

"Why doth she not clip," Mistress Frances said, "if such be her present humor, the orange manes of her gray Dutch horses, which are the frightfullest things in the world?"

"Tis said," quoth Mrs. Bellamy, "that a new French embassy is soon expected, with the dauphin of Auvergne at its head."

"Yea," cried her daughter, "and four handsome English noblemen to meet them at the Tower stairs, and conduct them to the new banqueting-house at Westminster,—my Lord Surrey, Lord Windsor, Sir Philip Sydney, and Sir Fulke Greville. Methinks this should be a very fine sight, if rain doth not fall to spoil it."

I saw my Lady Surrey's countenance change when her husband was mentioned; and Mrs. Bellamy looked at her daughter forasmuch as to check her thoughtless speeches, which caused this young lady to glance round the room, seeking, as it seemed, for some other topic of conversation.

Methinks I should not have preserved so lively a recollection of the circumstances of this visit if some dismal tidings which reached me afterward touching this gentlewoman, then so thoughtless and innocent, had not revived in me the memory of her gay prattle, bright unabashed eyes, and audacious dealing with subjects so weighty and dangerous, that any one less bold should have feared to handle them. After the pause which ensued on the mention of Lord Surrey's name, she took for her text what had been said touching the prohibitions lately issued concerning ruffs and rapiers, and began to mock at her majesty's favorites; yea, and to mimic her majesty herself with so much humor that her well-acted satire must have needs constrained any one to laugh. Then, not contented with these dangerous jests, she talked such direct treason against her highness as to say she hoped to see her dethroned, and a fair Catholic sovereign to reign in her stead, who would be less shrewish to young and handsome ladies. Then her mother cried her, for mercy's sake, to restrain her mad speech, which would serve one day to bring them all into trouble, for all she meant it in jest.

"Marry, good mother," she answered, "not in jest at all; for I do verily hold myself bound to no allegiance to this queen, and would gladly see her get her deserts."

Then Lady Surrey prayed her not to speak so rashly; but methought in her heart, and somewhat I could perceive of this in her eyes, she misliked not wholly this young lady's words, who then spoke of religion; and oh, how zealous therein she did appear, how boldly affirmed (craving Lady Surrey's pardon, albeit she would warrant, she said, there was no need to do so, her ladyship she had heard being half a papist herself) that she had as lief be racked twenty times over and die also, or her face to be so disfigured that none should call her ever after anything but a fright—which martyrdom she held would exceed any yet thought of—than so much as hold her tongue concerning her faith, or stay from telling her majesty to her face, if she should have the chance to get speech with her, that she was a foul heretic, and some other truths beside, which but once to utter in her presence, come of it what would, should be a delicious pleasure. Then she railed at the Catholics which blessed the queen before they suffered for their religion, proving them wrong with ingenious reasons and fallacious arguments mixed with pleasantries not wholly becoming such grave themes. But it should have seemed as reasonable to be angry with a child babbling at random of life and death in the midst of its play, as with this creature, the lightest of heart, the fairest in face, the most winsome in manner, and most careless of danger, that ever did set sail on life's stream.

Oh, how all this rose before me again, when I heard, two years afterward, that for her bold recusancy—alas! more bold, as the sequel proved, than deep, more passionate than fervent—this only cherished daughter, this innocent maiden, the mirror of whose fame no breath had sullied, and on whose name no shadow had rested, was torn by the pursuivants from her parents' home, and cast into a prison with companions at the very aspect of which virtue did shudder. And the unvaliant courage, the weak bravery, of this indulged and wayward young lady had no strength wherewith to resist the surging tides of adversity. No voice of parent, friend, or ghostly father reached her in that abode of despair. No visible

angel visited her, but a fiend in human form haunted her dungeon. Liberty and pleasure he offered in exchange for virtue, honor, and faith. She fell; sudden and great was that fall.

There is a man the name of which hath blenched the cheeks and riven the hearts of Catholics, one who hath caused many amongst them to lose their lands and to part from their homes, to die on gibbets and their limbs to be torn asunder—one Richard Topcliffe. But, methinks, of all the voices which shall be raised for to accuse him at Christ's judgment-seat, the loudest will be Frances Bellamy's. Her ruin was his work; one of those works which, when a man is dead, do follow him; whither, God knoweth!

Oh, you who saw her, as I did, in her young and innocent years, can you read this without shuddering? Can you think on it without weeping? As her fall was sudden, so was the change it wrought. With it vanished affections, hopes, womanly feelings, memory of the past; nay, methinks therein I err. Memory did yet abide, but linked with hatred; Satan's memory of heaven. From depths to depths she hath sunk, and is now wedded to a mean wretch, the gaoler of her old prison. So rank a hatred hath grown in her against recusants and mostly priests, that it rages like a madness in her soul, which thirsts for their blood. Some months back, about the time I did begin to write this history, news reached me that she had sold the life of that meek saint, that sweet poet, Father Southwell, of which even an enemy, Lord Mountjoy, did say, when he had seen him suffer, "I pray God, where that man's soul now is, mine may one day be." Her father had concealed him in that house where she had dwelt in her innocent days. None but the family knew the secret of its hiding-place. She did reveal it, and took gold for her wages! What shall be that woman's death-bed? What trace doth remain on her soul of what was once a share in the divine nature? May one of God's ministers be nigh unto her in that hour for to bid her not despair! If Judas had repented, Jesus would have pardoned him. Peradventure, misery without hope of relief overthrew her brain. I do pray for her always. 'Tis a vain thought perhaps, but I sometimes wish I might, though I see not how to compass it, yet once speak with her before she or I die. Methinks I could say such words as should touch some old chord in her dead heart. God knoweth! That day I write of, little did I ween what her end would be. But yet it feared me to hear one so young and of so frail an aspect speak so boastfully; and it seemed even then to my inexperienced mind, that my Lady Surrey, who had so humbly erewhile accused herself of cowardice and lamented her weakness, should be in a safer plight, albeit as yet unreconciled.

The visit I have described had lasted some time, when a servant came with a message to her ladyship from Mr. Hubert Rookwood, who craved to be admitted on an urgent matter. She glanced at me somewhat surprised, upon which I made her a sign that she should condescend to his request; for I supposed he had seen Sir Francis Walsingham, and was in haste to confer with me touching that interview; and she ordered him to be admitted. Mrs. Bellamy and her daughter rose to go soon after his entrance; and whilst Lady Surrey conducted them to the door he asked me if her ladyship was privy to the matter in hand. When I had satisfied him thereof, he related what had passed in an interview he had with Sir Francis, whom he found ill-disposed at first to stir in the matter, for he said his frequent remonstrances in favor of recusants had been like to bring him into odium with some of the more zealous Protestants, and that he must needs, in every case of that sort, prove it to be his sole object to bring such persons more surely, albeit slowly, by means of toleration, to a rightful conformity; and that with regard to priests he was very loth to interfere.

"I was compelled," quoth Hubert, "to use such arguments as fell in with the scope of his discourse, and to flatter him with the hope of good results in that which he most desired, if he would procure Mr. Sherwood's release, which I doubt not he hath power to effect. And in the end he consented to lend his aid therein, on condition he should prove on his side so far conformable as to suffer a minister to visit and confer with him touching religion, which would then be a pretext for his release, as if it were supposed he was well disposed toward Protestant religion, and a man more like to embrace the truth when at liberty than if driven to it by stress of confinement. Then he would procure," he added, "an order for his passage to France, if he promised not to return, except he should be willing to obey the laws."

"I fear me much," I answered, "my father will not accept these terms which Sir Francis doth offer. Methinks he will consider they do involve some lack of the open profession of his faith."

"It would be madness for one in his plight to refuse them," Hubert exclaimed, and appealed thereon to Lady Surrey, who said she did indeed think as he did, for it was not like any better could be obtained.

It pained me he should refer to her, who from conformity to the times could not well conceive how tender a Catholic conscience should feel at the least approach to dissembling on this point.

"Wherein," he continued, "is the harm for to confer with a minister, or how can it be construed into a denial of a man's faith to listen to his arguments, unless, indeed, he feels himself to be in danger of being shaken by them?"

"You very well know," I exclaimed with some warmth, "that not to be my meaning, or what I suppose his should be. Our priests do constantly crave for public disputations touching religion, albeit they eschew secret ones, which their adversaries make a pretext of to spread reports of their inability to defend their faith, or willingness to abandon it. But heaven forbid I should anyways prejudice this question; and if with a safe conscience—and with no other I am assured will he do it—my father doth subscribe to this condition, then God be praised for it!"

"But you will move him to it, Mistress Constance?" he said.

"If I am so happy," I answered, "as to get speech with him, verily I will entreat him not to throw away his life, so precious to others, if so be he can save it without detriment to his conscience."

"Conscience!" Hubert exclaimed, "methinks that word is often misapplied in these days."

"How so?" I asked, investigating his countenance, for I misdoubted his meaning. Lady Surrey likewise seemed desirous to hear what he should say on that matter.

"Conscience," he answered, "should make persons, and mostly women, careful how they injure others, and cause heedless suffering, by a too great stiffness in refusing conformity to the outward practices which the laws of the country

enforce, when it affects not the weightier points of faith, which God forbid any Catholic should deny. There is often as much of pride as of virtue in such rash obstinacy touching small yieldings as doth involve the ruin of a family, separation of parents and children, and more evils than can be thought of."

"Hubert," I said, fixing mine eyes on him with a searching look he cared not, I ween, to meet, for he cast his on a paper he had in his hand, and raised them not while I spoke, "'tis by such reasonings first, and then by such small yieldings as you commend, that some have been led two or three times in their lives, yea, oftener perhaps, to profess different religions, and to take such contradictory oaths as have been by turns prescribed to them under different sovereigns, and God each time called on to witness their perjuries, whereby truth and falsehood in matters of faith shall come in time to be words without any meaning."

Then he: "You do misapprehend me, Mistress Constance, if you think I would counsel a man to utter a falsehood, or feign to believe that which in his heart he thinketh to be false. But, in heaven's name, I pray you, what harm will your father do if he listens to a minister's discourse, and suffers it to be set forth he doth ponder thereon, and in the meantime escapes to France? whereas, if he refuses the loophole now offered to him, he causeth not to himself alone, but to you and his other friends, more pain and sorrow than can be thought of, and deprives the Church of one of her servants, when her need of them is greatest."

I made no reply to this last speech; for albeit I thought my father would not accede to these terms, I did not so far trust mine own judgment thereon as to predict with certainty what his answer should be. And then Hubert said he had an order from Sir Francis that would admit me on the morrow to see my father; and he offered to go with me, and Mistress Ward too, if I listed, to present it, albeit I alone should enter his cell. I thanked him, and fixed the time of our going.

When he had left us, Lady Surrey commended his zeal, and also his moderate spirit, which did charitably allow, she said, for such as conformed to the times for the sake of others which their reconciliation would very much injure.

Before I could reply she changed this discourse, and, putting her hands on my shoulders and kissing my forehead, said,

"My Lady Lumley hath heard so much from her poor niece of one Mistress Constance Sherwood, that she doth greatly wish to see this young gentlewoman and very resolved papist." And then taking me by the arm she led me to that lady's chamber, where I had as kind a welcome as ever I received from any one from her ladyship, who said "her dear Nan's friends should be always as dear to her as her own," and added many fine commendations greatly exceeding my deserts.

CHAPTER XVII.

When I had been a short time in my Lady Lumley's chamber, my Lord Arundel sent for his granddaughter, who was wont, she told me, at that hour to write letters for him; and I stayed alone with her ladyship, who, as soon as Lady Surrey left us, thus broke forth in her praise:

"Hath any one, think you. Mistress Sherwood, ever pictured or imagined a creature more noble, more toward in disposition, more virtuous in all her actions, of greater courage in adversity or patience under ill-usage than this one, which God hath sent to this house to cheer two lonely hearts, whilst her own is well-nigh broken?"

"Oh, my Lady Lumley!" I exclaimed, "I fear some new misfortune hath befallen this dear lady, who is indeed so rare a piece of goodness that none can exceed in describing her deserts. Hitherto she hath condescended to impart her sorrows to her poor friend; but to-day she shut up her griefs in her own bosom, albeit I could read unspoken suffering in every lineament of her sweet countenance."

"God forgive me," her ladyship replied, "if in speaking of her wrongs I should entertain over-resentful feelings toward her ungracious husband, whom once I did love as a mother, and very loth hath my heart been to condemn him; but now, if it were not that I myself received him in my arms what time he was born, whose life was the cause of my sweet young sister's death, I should doubt he could be her son."

"What fresh injury," I timidly asked, "hath driven Lady Surrey from her house?"

"**Her** house no longer," quoth Lady Lumley. "She hath no house, no home, no husband worthy of the name, and only an old man nigh unto the grave, alas! and a poor feeble woman such as I am to raise a voice in her behalf, who is spurned by one who should have loved and cherished her, as twice before God's altar he vowed to do. Oh," cried the poor lady, weeping, "she hath borne all things else with a sweet fortitude which angels looking down on her must needs have wondered at. She would ever be excusing this faithless husband with many pretty wiles and loving subterfuges, making, sweet sophist, the worst appear the better reason. 'Men must needs be pardoned,' she would say, when my good father waxed wroth at his ill-usage of her, 'for such outward neglect as many practice in these days toward their wives, for that it was the fashion at the court to appear unhusbandly; but if women would be patient, she would warrant them their love should be requited at last.' And when news came that Phil had sold an estate for to purchase—God save the mark!—a circlet of black pearls for the queen; and Lord Arundel swore he should leave him none of his lands but what by act of parliament he was compelled to do, she smiled winsomely, and said: 'Yea, my lord, I pray you, let my dear Phil be a poor man as his father wished him to be, and then, if it please God, we may live in a cottage and be happy.' And so turned away his anger by soft words, for he laughed and answered: 'Heaven help thee. Nan! but I fear that cottage must needs be Arundel Castle, for my hands are so tied therein that thy knavish husband cannot fail to inherit it. And beshrew me if I would either rob thee of it, mine own good Nan, or its old walls of thy sweet presence when I shall be dead.' And so she always pleaded for him, and never lost heart until . . . Oh, Mistress Sherwood, I shall never forget the day when her uncle, Francis Dacre—wisely or unwisely I know not, but surely meaning well—gave her to read in this

house, where she was spending a day, a letter which had fallen into his hands, I wot not how, in the which Philip—God forgive him!—expressed some kind of doubt if he was truly married to her or not. Some wily wretch had, I ween, whispered to him, in an evil hour, this accursed thought. When she saw this misdoubt written in his hand she straightway fell down in a swoon, which recovering from, the first thing she did was to ask for her cloak and hat, and would have walked alone to her house if I had not stayed her almost by force, until Lord Arundel's coach could be got ready for her. In less than two hours she returned with so wan and death-like a countenance that it frightened me to see her, and for some time she would not speak of what had passed between her lord and herself; only she asked for to stay always in this house, if it should please her grandfather, and not to part from us any more. At the which speech I could but kiss her, and with many tears protest that this should be the joyfullest news in the world to Lord Arundel and to me, and what he would most desire, if it were not for her grief, which, like an ill wind, yet did blow us this good. 'Yea,' she answered, with the deepest sigh which can be thought of, 'a cold, withering blast which driveth me from the shelter which should be mine! I have heard it said that when Cardinal Wolsey lay a-dying he cried, "It were well with me now if I had served my God with the like zeal with which I have served my king," or some words of that sort. Oh, my Lady Lumley!' the poor child exclaimed, 'if I had not loved Philip more than God and his Church, methinks I should not thus be cast off!' 'Cast off,' I cried; 'and has my graceless nephew, then, been so wicked?' 'Oh, he is changed,' she answered—'he is changed. In his eyes, in his voice, I found not Philip's looks, nor Philip's tones. Nought but harshness and impatience to dismiss me. The queen, he said, was coming to rest at his house on her way to the city, and he lacked leisure to listen to my complaints. Then I felt grief and anger rise in my breast with such vehemency that I charged him, maybe too suddenly, with the doubt he had expressed in his letter to my Lord Oxford. His face flushed deeply; but drawing up haughtily, as one aggrieved, he said the manner of our marrying had been so unusual that there were some, and those persons well qualified to judge, who misdoubted if there did not exist a flaw in its validity. That he should himself be loth to think so, but that to seek at that moment to prove the contrary, when his fortunes hung on a thread, would be to ruin him.'

"There she paused, and clasped her hands together as if scarce able to proceed; but soon raising her head, she related in a passionate manner how her heart had then swelled well-nigh to bursting, pride and tenderness restraining the utterance of such resentful thoughts as rose in her when she remembered his father's last letter, wherein he said his chief prop and stay in his fallen estate should be the wife he had bestowed on him; of her own lands sold for the supply of his prodigal courtiership; of her long patience and pleading for him to others; and this his present treatment of her, which no wife could brook, even if of mean birth and virtue, much loss one his equal in condition, as well dowered as any in the land, and as faithful and tender to him as he did prove untoward to her. But none of these reproaches passed her lips; for it was an impossible thing to her, she said, to urge her own deserts, or so much as mention the fortune she had brought him. Only twice she repeated, 'Ruin your fortunes, my lord! ruin your fortunes! God help me, I had thought rather to mend them!' And then, when he tried to answer her in some sort of evading fashion, as if unsaying, and yet not wholly denying his former speech, she broke forth (and in the relation of this scene the passion of her grief renewed itself) in vehement adjurations, which seemed somewhat to move him, not to be so unjust to her or to himself as to leave that in uncertainty which so nearly touched both their honors; and if the thought of a mutual love once existing between them, and a firm bond of marriage relied on with unshaken security, and his father's dying blessing on it, and the humble duty she had shown him from the time she had borne his name, sufficed not to resolve him thereunto, yet for the sake of justice to one fatherless and brotherless as herself, she charged him without delay to make that clear which, left uncertain, concerned her more nearly than fortune or state, and without which no, not one day, would she abide in his house. Then the sweet soul said she hoped, from his not ungracious silence and the working of his features, which visibly revealed an inward struggle, that his next words should have been of comfort to her; but when she had drawn nigh to him, and, taking his hand, called him by his name with so much of reproachful endearment as could be expressed in the utterance of it, a gentleman broke into the room crying out: 'My lord, my lord, the trumpets do sound! The queen's coach is in sight.' Upon which, she said that, with a muttered oath, he started up and almost thrust her from him, saying, 'For God's sake, be gone!' And by a back-door,' she added, 'I went out of mine own house into the street, where I had left my Lord Arundel's coach, and crept into it, very faint and giddy, the while the queen's coach did enter the court with gay banners waving, and striking-up of music, and the people crying out, "God bless the queen!" I cry God mercy for it,' she said, 'but I could not say amen.' Now she is resolved," my Lady Lumley continued, "never to set her foot again in any of her husband's houses, except he doth himself entreat her to it, and makes that matter clear touching his belief in the validity of their marriage; and methinks she is right therein. My Lord Arundel hath written to remonstrate with his grandson touching his ill-usage of his lady, and hath also addressed her majesty thereupon. But all the comment she did make on his letter, I have been told, was this: 'That she had heard my Lord Arundel was in his dotage; and verily she did now hold it to be so, for that she had never received a more foolish letter; and she did pity the old white horse, which was now only fit to be turned out to grass;' and other biting jests, which, when a sovereign doth utter them, carry with them a rare poignancy."

Then my Lady Lumley wiped her eyes, and bade me to be of good cheer, and not to grieve overmuch for Lady Surrey's troubles (but all the while her own tears continued to flow), for that she had so noble and religious a disposition, with germs of so much virtue in it, that she thought her to be one of those souls whom Almighty God draws to himself by means of such trials as would sink common natures; and that she had already marked how, in much prayer, ever-increasing good works, and reading of books which treat of wholesome doctrine and instruction, she presently recalled the teachings of her childhood, and took occasion, when any Catholics came to the house, to converse with them touching religion. Then, with many kind expressions, she dismissed me; and on the stairs, as I went out, I met Lady Surrey, who noticed mine eyes to be red with weeping, and, embracing me, said:

"I ween Lady Lumley hath been no hider of my griefs, good Constance, and, i' faith, I am obliged to her if she hath told thee that which I would fain not speak of, even to thee, dear wench. There are sorrows best borne in silence; and since the last days we talked together mine have grown to be of that sort. And so farewell for to-day, and may God comfort thee in thy nobler troubles, and send his angels to thine aid."

When I returned to Holborn, Mistress Ward met me with the news that she had been to the prison, and heard that Mr. Watson was to be strenuously examined on an approaching day—and it is well known what that doth signify—touching the names of the persons which had harbored him since his coming to England. And albeit he was now purposed

steadily to endure extreme torments sooner than to deny his faith or injure others, she did so much apprehend the weakness of nature should betray him, that her resolve was taken to attempt the next day, or rather on the following night, to further his escape. But how, she asked, could my father be dealt with in time touching that matter? I told her I was to see him on the morrow, by means of an order from Sir Francis Walsingham, and should then lay before him the issues offered unto his election. She said she was very much contented to hear it; and added, she must now secure boatmen to assist in the escape who should be reliable Catholic men; and if in this she did succeed, she feared not to fail in her design.

At the hour I had fixed upon with Hubert, on the next day, he came to carry me to the prison at Bridewell. Mistress Ward prevailed on Mr. Congleton to go thither with us, for she was loth to be seen there in company with known persons, and added privily in mine ear, "The more so at a time when it may happen I should get into trouble touching the matter I have in hand." When we reached the place, Hubert presented to the gaoler Sir Francis's letter, which was also signed by the governor, and I was forthwith conducted to my father's cell. When I entered it, and advanced toward that dear prisoner, I dared not in the man's presence to show either the joy or grief I felt at that meeting, but stood by his side like one deprived of the power of speech, and only struggling to restrain my tears. I feared we should not have been left alone, and then this interview should have proved of little use or comfort; but after setting for me a chair, which he had sent for—for there was only one small bench in the cell—this officer withdrew, and locked the door on me and that dear parent, whose face was very white and wan, but who spoke in as cheerful and kind a manner as can be thought of, albeit taxing me with wilfulness for that I had not complied with his behest that none should come to visit him. I would not have the chair which had been sent for me—for I did hold it to be an unbecoming thing for a daughter to sit down in her father's presence (and he a priest), who had only a poor bench to rest his limbs on—but placed myself on the ground at his feet; which at first he disliked, but afterward said it should be as I pleased. Then, after some affectionate speeches, wherein his great goodness toward me was shown, and my answers to them, which disburthened my heart of some of the weight which oppressed it, as did likewise the shedding of a few tears on his hand, which was clasped in mine, I spoke, in case time should press, of Sir Francis's offer, and the condition thereunto attached, which I did with a trembling voice, and yet such indifferent tones as I could affect, as if showing no leaning to one way of thinking or the other, touching his acceptance of these terms. In the brief time which did elapse between my speaking and his reply, methinks I had an equal fear lest he should assent or dissent therein—filial love mightfully prompting me to desire his acceptance of this means of deliverance, yet coupled with an apprehension that in that case he should stand one degree less high in the favor of God and the eyes of men. But I was angered with myself that I should have mine own thoughts therein, or in any way form a judgment forestalling his, which peradventure would see no evil in this concession; and forecasting also the consequences which should ensue if he refused, I resolved to move him thereunto by some such words as these: "My dearly beloved father, if it be possible, I pray you yield this small matter to those that seek to save your life. Let the minister come to satisfy Sir Francis, and all shall be well, yea, without your speaking one word, or by so much as one look assenting to his arguments."

I dared not to meet his eyes, which he fixed on me, but kept kissing his hand whilst he said: "Daughter Constance, labor not to move me in this matter; for far above all other things I may have to suffer, nothing would touch me so near, or be so grievous to me, as to see you, my well-beloved child, try to persuade me unto that which in respect of my soul I will never consent to. For, I pray you, first as regards religion, can I suffer any to think, albeit I should give no cause for it but silence, that my faith is in any wise shaken, which peradventure would prove a stumbling-block to others? or, touching truth and honesty, shall I accept life and freedom on some such supposition as that I am like to change my religion, when I should as soon think to cast myself into hell of mine own free will as to deny one point of Catholic belief? No, no, mine own good child; 'tis a narrow path which doth lead to heaven, and maybe it shall prove exceeding narrow for me ere I reach its end, and not over easy to the feet or pleasant to the eye; but God defend I should by so much as one hair's-breadth overpass a narrowness which tendeth to so good a conclusion; and verily, to be short, my good child, tender my thanks to Sir Francis Walsingham—who I doubt not meaneth excellently well by me—and to young Master Rookwood, who hath dealt with him therein; but tell them I am very well pleased with my present abode as long as it shall please God to keep me in this world; and when he willeth me to leave it, believe me, daughter Constance, the quickest road to heaven shall be the most pleasing to me."

His manner was so resolved that I urged him no further, and only heaved a deep sigh. Then he said, kindly: "Come, mine own good child, give me so much comfort as to let me hear that thou art of the same way of thinking in this matter as thy unworthy but very resolved father."

"My dear father," I replied, "methinks I never loved you so well, or honored you one half so much as now, when you have cast off all human consolation, yea, and a certain hope of deliverance, rather than give occasion to the enemies of our faith to boast they had prevailed on you, in ever so small a matter, to falter in the open profession thereof; and I pray God, if ever I should be in a like plight, I may not prove myself to be otherwise than your true child in spirit as in nature. As to what shall now follow your refusal, it lieth in God's hands, and I know he can deliver you, if he doth will it, from this great peril you are in."

"There's my brave wench," quoth he then, laying his scarred hand on my head; "thy mother had a prophetic spirit, I ween, when she said of thee when yet a puling girl, 'As her days, so shall her strength be.' Verily God is very good, who hath granted us these moments of peaceful converse in a place where we had once little thought for to meet."

As I looked upon him, sitting on a poor bench in that comfortless cell, his noble fair visage oldened by hardships and toils rather than years, his eyes so full of peace, yea of contentment, that joy seemed to beam in them, I thought of the words of Holy Writ, which do foretell which shall be said hereafter of the just by such as have afflicted them and taken away their labors: "There are they whom we had some time in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor. Behold, how they are numbered with the children of God, and their lot amongst the saints."

At that time a knock against the wall was heard, and my father set his ear against it, counting the number of such knocks; for it was Mr. Watson, he said, beginning to converse with him in their wonted fashion. "I will tell him I am engaged," quoth he, in his turn tapping in the same manner. "But peradventure he hath somewhat to communicate," I

said.

"No," he answered, "for in that case he would have knocked three times at first, for on this signal we have agreed." Smiling, he added, "We do confess to each other in this way. 'Tis somewhat tedious, I do admit; but thanks be to God we lack not leisure here for such duties."

Then I briefly told him of Mistress Ward's intent to procure Mr. Watson's escape.

"Ay," he said, "I am privy to it, and I do pray God it may succeed. It should be to me the greatest joy in the world to hear that good man was set free, or made free by any good means."

"Then," I added, "will you not join in the attempt, if so be she can convey to you a cord? and the same boat should carry you both off."

"Nay," he replied; "for more reasons than one I am resolved against that in mine own case which in Mr. Watson's I do commend. This enterprise must needs bring that good woman, Mrs. Ward, into some sort of danger, which she doth well to run for his sake, and which he doth not wrong to consent unto, she being of a willing mind to encounter it. For if the extremity of torture should extort the admissions they do seek from him, many should then grievously suffer, and mostly his own soul. But I have that trust in God, who hath given me in all my late perils what nature had verily not furnished me with, an undaunted spirit to meet sufferings with somewhat more than fortitude, with a very great joy such as his grace can only bestow, that he will continue to do so, whatever straits I do find myself in; and being so minded, I am resolved not again by mine own doing to put mine own and others' lives in jeopardy; but to take what he shall send in the ordinary course of things, throwing all my care on him, without whose knowledge and will not so much as one hair of our heads doth fall to the ground. But I am glad to be privy to the matter in hand for Mr. Watson, so as to pray for him this day and night, and also for that noble soul who doth show herself so true a Christian in her care for his weal and salvation."

Then, changing to other themes, he inquired of me at some length touching the passages of my life since he had parted with me, and my dispositions touching the state of life I was about to embrace, concerning which he gave me the most profitable instructions which can be thought of, and rules of virtue, which, albeit imperfectly observed, have proved of so great and wholesome guidance to my inexperienced years that I do stand more indebted to him for this fine advice, there given me, than for all other benefits besides. He then spoke of Edmund Genings, who, by a special dispensation of the Pope, had lately been ordained priest, being but twenty-three years of age, and said the preparation he had made for receiving this holy order was very great, and the impression the greatness of the charge made upon his mind so strong, that it produced a wonderful effect in his very body, affecting for a time his health. He was infirmarian at Rheims, and labored among the sick students, a very model of piety and humility; but *vivamus in spe* was still, as heretofore, his motto, and that hope in which he lived was to be sent upon the English mission. These, my father said, were the last tidings he had heard of him. His mother he did believe was dead, and his younger brother had left La Rochelle and was in Paris, leading a more gay life than was desirable. "And now I pray you, mine own dear honored father," I said, "favor me, I beseech you, with a recital of your own haps since you landed in England, and I ceased to receive letters from you." He condescended to my request, in the words which do follow:

"Well, my good child, I arrived in this country one year and five months back, having by earnest suit and no small difficulty obtained from my superiors to be sent on the English mission; for by reason of the weakness of my health, and some use I was of in the college, owing to my acquaintanceship with the French and the English languages, Dr. Allen was loth to permit my departure. I crossed the seas in a small merchant-vessel, and landed at Lynn. The port-officers searched me to the skin, and found nothing on me; but one Sledd, an informer, which had met me in an inn at Honfleur, where I had lodged for some days before sailing for England, had taken my marks very precisely; and arriving in London some time before I landed in Norfolk, having been stayed by contrary winds in my longer passage, he there presented my name and marks; upon which the queen's council sent to the searchers of the ports. These found the said marks very apparent in me; but for the avoiding of charges, the mayor of the place, one Mr. Alcock, and Rawlins the searcher, requested a gentleman which had landed at the same time with me, and who called himself Haward, to carry me as a prisoner to the lord-lieutenant of the county. He agreed very easily thereunto; but as soon as we were out of the town, 'I cannot,' says this gentleman, 'in conscience, nor will not, being myself a Catholic, deliver you, a Catholic priest, prisoner to the lord-lieutenant. But we will go straight to Norwich, and when we come there, shift for yourself, as I will do for myself.'

"Coming to Norwich, I went immediately to one of the gaols, and conferred with a Catholic, a friend of mine, which by chance I found out to be there imprisoned for recusancy. I recounted to him the order of my apprehension and escape; and he told me that in conscience I could not make that escape, and persuaded me I ought to yield myself prisoner; whereupon I went to my friend Haward, whom, through the aforesaid Catholic prisoner, I found to be no other than Dr. Ely, a professor of canon and civil law at Douay. I requested him to deliver to me the mayor's letter to the lord-lieutenant. 'Why, what will you do with it?' said he. 'I will go,' I said, 'and carry it to him, and yield myself a prisoner; for I am not satisfied I can make this escape in conscience, having had a contrary opinion thereon.' And I told him what that prisoner I had just seen had urged. 'Why,' said Haward, 'this counsel which hath been given you proceedeth, I confess, from a zealous mind; but I doubt whether it carrieth with it the weight of knowledge. You shall not have the letter, nor you may not in conscience yield yourself to the persecutors, having so good means offered to escape their cruelty.' But as I still persisted in my demand, 'Well,' said Mr. Haward, 'seeing you will not be turned by me from this opinion, let us go first and consult with such a man,' and he named one newly come over, who was concealed at the house of a Catholic not very far off. This was a man of singular wit and learning, and of such rare virtues that I honored and revered him greatly, which Mr. Haward perceiving, he said, with a smile, 'If he be of your opinion, you shall have the letter, and go in God's name!' When we came to him, he utterly disliked of my intention, and dissuaded me from what he said was a fond cogitation. So being assuaged, I went quietly about my business, and travelled for the space of more than a year from one Catholic house to another in Norfolk and Suffolk, ministering the sacraments to recusants, and reconciling many to the Church, which, from fear or lack of instruction or spiritual counsel, or only indifferency, had conformed to the times. Methinks, daughter Constance, for one such year a man should be willing to

lay down a thousand lives, albeit, or rather because, as St. Paul saith, he be 'in journeyings often, in perils from his own nation, in perils from false brethren' (oh, how true and applicable do these words prove to the Catholics of this land!), 'in perils in the city, in perils of the wilderness, in perils of the sea.' And if it pleases God now to send me labors of another sort, so that I may be in prisons frequently, in stripes above measure, and, finally, in death itself, his true servant,—oh, believe me, my good child, the right fair house I once had, with its library and garden and orchard, and everything so handsome about us, and the company of thy sweet mother, and thy winsome childish looks of love, never gave me so much heartfelt joy and comfort as the new similitude I experience, and greater I hope to come, to my loved and only Master's sufferings and death!"

At this time of his recital my tears flowed abundantly; but with an imparted sweetness, which, like a reflected light, shone from his soul on mine. But to stay my weeping he changed his tone, and said with good cheer:

"Come now, my wench, I will presently make thee merry by the recital of a strait in which I once found myself, and which maketh me to laugh to think on it, albeit at the time, I warrant thee, it was like to prove no laughable matter. It happened that year I speak of that I was once secretly sent for by a courtlike gentleman of good wealth that had lived in much bravery, and was then sick and lying in great pain. He had fallen into a vehement agitation and deep study of the life to come; and thereupon called for a priest—for in mind and opinion he was Catholic—that he might learn from him to die well. According to the custom of the Church, I did admonish him, among other things, that if he had any way hurt or injured any man, or unjustly possessed other men's goods, he should go about by-and-by to make restitution according to his ability. He agreed to do so, and called to mind that he had taken away something from a certain Calvinist, under pretence of law indeed, but not under any good assurance for a Catholic conscience to trust to. Therefore, he took order for restitution to be made, and died. The widow, his wife, was very anxious to accomplish her husband's will; but being afraid to commit the matter to any one, her perplexed mind was entangled in briers of doubtfulness. She one day declared her grief unto me, and beseeched me, for God's sake, to help her with my counsel and travail. So, seeing her distress, I proffered to put myself in any peril that might befall in the doing of this thing; but, indeed, persuaded myself that no man would be so perverse as of a benefit to desire revenge. Therefore committing the matter to God, I mounted on horseback, and away I went on my journey. When I came to the town where the man did dwell to whom the money was to be delivered, I set up my horse in the next inn, that I might be readier at hand to scape immediately after my business was despatched. I then went to the creditor's house, and called the man forth alone, taking him by the hand and leading him aside from the company of others. Then I declared to him that I had money for him, which I would deliver into his hands with this condition, that he inquired no further either who sent or who brought it unto him, or what the cause and matter was, but only receive the money and use it as his own. The old fellow promised fair, and with a good will gave his word faithfully so to do, and with many thanks sent me away. With all the speed I was able to make, I hastened to mine host's house, for to catch hold of my horse and fly away. But forthwith the deceitful old fellow betrayed me, and sent men after to apprehend me, not supposing me this time to be a priest, but making the surmise against me that forsooth I was not a man but a devil, which had brought money of mine own making to bewitch him. All the people of the town, when they heard the rumor, confirmed the argument, with this proof among others, that I had a black horse, and gave orders for to watch the animal diligently, whether he did eat hay as other horses, or no. As for me, they put a horse-lock about my leg, shut me up close in a strong chamber, and appointed a fellow to be with me continually, night and day, which should watch if I did put off my boots at any time, and if my feet were like horses' feet, or that I was cloven-footed, or had feet slit and forked as beasts have; for this they affirmed to be a special mark whereby to know the devil when he lieth lurking under the shape and likeness of a man. Then the people assembled about the house in great numbers, and proffered money largely that they might see this monster with their own eyes; for by this time they were persuaded that I was indeed an ill spirit, or the very devil. 'For what man was ever heard of,' said they, 'which, if he had the mind, understanding, and sense of a man, would, of his own voluntary will, and without any respect or consideration at all, give or proffer such a sum of money to a man utterly unknown?' God knoweth what should have ensued if some hours later it had not chanced that Sir Henry Stafford did ride into the town, and, seeing a great concourse of people at the door of the inn, he stopped to inquire into the cause; which when it was related to him, he said he was a magistrate, and should himself examine, face to face, this limb of Satan. So I was taken before him into the parlor; and being alone with him, and knowing him to be well-disposed in religion, albeit conforming to the times, I explained in a general manner what sort of an errand had brought me to that place. Methinks he guessed me to be a priest, although he said nothing thereon, but only licensed me to depart and go away whither I would, himself letting me out of the house through a back-door. I have heard since that he harangued the people from the balcony, and told them, that whilst he was examining me a strong smell of sulphur had come into the chamber, and a pack of devils carried me off through the window into the air; and he doubted not I had by that time returned to mine own lodging in hell. Which he did, I knew, for to prevent their pursuing me and using such violence as he might not have had means to hinder."

"It was not, then," I asked, "on this occasion you were apprehended and taken to Wisbeach?"

"No," he answered; "nor indeed can I be said to have been apprehended at all, for it happened in this wise that I became a prisoner. I was one day in Norwich, whither I had gone to baptize a child, and, as Providence would have it, met with Haward, by whose means I had been set at liberty one year before. After ordinary salutations, he said to me, 'Mr. Tunstall' (for by that name only he knew me), 'the host of the inn where you were taken last year says I have undone him, by suffering the prisoner I had promised to deliver to escape; for he having been my surety with the mayor, he is threatened with eight months' imprisonment, or the payment of a large fine. He hath come to this town for to seek me, and hath seized upon me on this charge; so that I be only at liberty for six hours, for I promised that I would bring you to him by four o'clock (a Catholic merchant yielding him security thereof), or else that I should deliver him my body again. 'I am content,' he said, 'so that I have one of you two.' So either you, Mr. Tunstall, or I, must needs go to prison. You know my state and condition, and may guess how I shall be treated, if once I appear under my right name before them. You know, also, your own state. Now, it is in your choice whether of us shall go; for one must go; there is no remedy; and to force you I will not, for I had rather sustain any punishment whatsoever.' 'Now God be blessed,' I cried, 'that he hath thrown me in your way at this time, for I should never while I lived have been without scruple if you had gone to prison in my stead. Nothing grieveth me in this but that I have not finished off some business I had in this town touching a person in some distress of mind.' 'Why,' said Haward, 'it is but ten o'clock yet; you may despatch your

business by four of the clock, and then you may go to the sign of the Star and inquire for one Mr. Andrews, the lord-lieutenant's deputy, and to him you may surrender yourself.' 'So I will,' I said; and so we parted. At four of the clock I surrendered myself, and was straightway despatched to Wisbeach Castle, where I remained for three months. A message reached me there that a Catholic which had led a very wicked life, and was lying on his death-bed, was almost beside himself for that he could get no priest to come to him. The person which delivered this advertisement left some ropes with me, by which means I escaped out of the window into the moat with such damage to my hands that I was like to lose the use of them, and perhaps of my life, if these wounds had mortified before good Lady l'Estrange dressed them. But I reached the poor sinner, which had proved the occasion of my escaping, in time for to give him absolution, and from Mr. Rugeley's house visited many Catholics in that neighborhood. The rest is well known to thee, my good child. . . ."

As he was speaking these words the door of the cell opened, and the gaoler advertised me I could tarry no longer; so, with many blessings, my dear father dismissed me, and I went home with Mr. Congleton and Hubert, who anxiously inquired what his answer had been to the proposal I had carried to him.

"A most resolved denial of the conditions attached to it," I said, "joined to many grateful acknowledgments to Sir Francis and to you also for your efforts in his favor."

"'Tis madness!" he exclaimed.

"Yea," I answered, "such madness as the heathen governor did charge St. Paul with."

And so no more passed between us whilst we rode back to Holborn. Mr. Congleton put questions to me touching my father's health and his looks,—if he seemed of good cheer, and spoke merrily as he used to do; and then we all continued silent. When we arrived at Ely Place, Hubert refused to come into the house, but detained me on the outward steps, as if desirous to converse with me alone. Thinking I had spoken to him in the coach in an abrupt manner which savored of ingratitude, I said more gently, "I am very much beholden to you, Hubert, for your well-meaning toward my father."

"I would fain continue to help you," he answered in an agitated voice. "Constance," he exclaimed, after a pause, "your father is in a very dangerous plight."

"I know it," said I, quickly; "but I know, too, he is resolved and content to die rather than swerve an inch from his duty to God and his Church."

"But," quoth he then, "do you wish to save him?"

I looked at him amazed. "Wish it! God knoweth that to see him in safety I would have my hand cut off,—yea, and my head also."

"What, and rob him of his expectant crown—the martyr's palm, and all the rest of it?" he said, with a perceptible sneer.

"Hubert!" I passionately exclaimed, "you are investigable to me; you chill my soul with your half-uttered sentences and uncertain meanings! Once, I remember, you could speak nobly,—yea, and feel so too, as much as any one. Heaven shield you be not wholly changed!"

"Changed!" quoth he, in a low voice, "I am changed;" and then abruptly altering his manner, and leaving me in doubt as to the change he did intend to speak of, he pressed me to take no measures touching my father's release till he had spoken with me again; for he said if his real name became known, or others dealt in the matter, all hope on Sir Francis's side should be at an end. He then asked me if I had heard of Basil lately. I told him of the letter I had had from him at Kenninghall some weeks back. He said a report had reached him that he had landed at Dover and was coming to London; but he hoped it was not true, for that Sir Henry Stafford was very urgent he should continue abroad till the expiration of his wardship.

I said, "If he was returned, it must surely be for some sufficient cause, but that I had heard nothing thereof, and had no reason to expect it."

"But you would know it, I presume, if he was in London?" he urged. I disliked his manner, which always put me in mind of one in the dark, which feeleth his way as he advances, and goeth not straight to the point.

"*Is* Basil in England?" I inquired, fixing mine eyes on him, and with a flutter at my heart from the thought that it should be possible.

"I heard he was," he answered in a careless tone; "but I think it not to be true. If he should come whilst this matter is in hand, I do conjure you, Constance, if you value your father's existence and Basil's also, let him not into this secret."

"Wherefore not?" I quickly answered. "Why should one meet to be trusted, and by me above all other persons in the world, be kept ignorant of what so nearly doth touch me?"

"Because," he said, "there is a rashness in his nature which will assuredly cause him to run headlong into danger if not forcibly withheld from the occasions of it."

"I have seen no tokens of such rashness as you speak of in him," I replied; "only of a boldness such as well becomes a Christian and a gentleman."

"Constance Sherwood!" Hubert exclaimed, and seized hold of my hand with a vehemency which caused me to start, "I do entreat you, yea, on my bended knees, if needs be, I will beseech you to beware of that indomitable and resolved spirit which sets at defiance restraint, prudence, pity even; which leads you to brave your friends, spurn wholesome

counsel, rush headlong into perils which I forewarn you do hang thickly about your path. If I can conjure them, I care not by what means, I will do so; but for the sake of all you do hold dear, curb your natural impetuosity, which may prove the undoing of those you most desire to serve."

There was a plausibility in this speech, and in mine own knowledge of myself some sort of a confirmation of what he did charge me with, which inclined me somewhat to diffide of mine own judgment in this matter, and not to turn a wholly deaf ear to his advertisement. He had the most persuasive tongue in the world, and a rare art at representing things under whatever aspect he chose. He dealt so cunningly therein with me that day, and used so many ingenious arguments, that I said I should be very careful how I disclosed anything to Basil or any one else touching my father's imprisonment, who Mr. Tunstall was, and my near concern in his fate; but would give no promise thereupon: so he was forced to content himself with as much as he could obtain, and withdrew himself for that day, he said; but promised to return on the morrow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When at last I entered the house I sought Mistress Ward; for I desired to hear what assistance she had procured for the escape of the prisoners, and to inform her of my father's resolved purpose not himself to attempt this flight, albeit commending her for moving Mr. Watson to it and assisting him therein. Not finding her in the parlor, nor in her bed-chamber, I opened the door of my aunt's room, who was now very weak, and yet more so in mind than in body. She was lying with her eyes shut, and Mistress Ward standing by her bedside. I marked her intent gaze on the aged, placid face of the poor lady, and one tear I saw roll down her cheek. Then she stooped to kiss her forehead. A noise I made with the handle of the door caused her to turn round, and hastening toward me, she took me by the hand and led me to her chamber, where Muriel was folding some biscuits and cakes in paper and stowing them in a basket. The thought came to me of the first day I had arrived in London, and the comfort I had found in this room, when all except her were strangers to me in that house. She sat down betwixt Muriel and me, and smiling, said: "Now, mine own dear children, for such my heart holds you both to be, and ever will whilst I live, I am come here for to tell you that I purpose not to return to this house to-night, nor can I foresee when, if ever, I shall be free to do so."

"O, what dismal news!" I exclaimed, "and more sad than I did expect."

Muriel said nothing, but lifting her hand to her lips kissed it.

"You both know," she continued, "that in order to save one in cruel risk and temptation of apostasy, and others perhaps, also, whom his possible speaking should imperil, I be about to put myself in some kind of danger, who of all persons in the world possess the best right to do so, as having neither parents, or husband, or children, or any on earth who depend on my care. Yea, it is true," she added, fixing her eyes on Muriel's composed, but oh how sorrowful, countenance, "none dependent on my care, albeit some very dear to me, and which hang on me, and I on them, in the way of fond affection. God knoweth my heart, and that it is very closely and tenderly entwined about each one in this house. Good Mr. Congleton and your dear mother, who hath clung to me so long, though I thank God not so much of late by reason of the weakening of her mind, which hath ceased greatly to notice changes about her, and you, Constance, my good child, since your coming hither a little lass commended to my keeping. . . ." There she stopped; and I felt she could not name Muriel, or then so much as look on her; for if ever two souls were bound together by an unperishable bond of affection, begun on earth to last in heaven, theirs were so united. I ween Muriel was already acquainted with her purpose, for she asked no questions thereon; whereas I exclaimed, "I do very well know, good Mistress Ward, what perils you do run in this charitable enterprise; but wherefore, I pray you, this final manner of parting? God's providence may shield you from harm in this passage, and, indeed, human probability should lead us to hope for your safety if becoming precautions be observed. Then why, I say, this certain farewell?"

"Because," she answered, "whatever comes of this night's enterprise, I return not to this house."

"And wherefore not?" I cried; "this is indeed a cruel resolve, a hard misfortune."

"Heretofore," she answered, "I had noways offended against the laws of the country, except in respect of recusancy, wherein all here are alike involved; but by mine act tonight I do expose myself to so serious a charge (conscience obliging me to prefer the law of divine charity to that of human authority), that I may at any time and without the least hope of mercy be exposed to detection and apprehension; and so am resolved not to draw down sorrow and obloquy on the gray hairs of my closest friends and on your young years such perils as I do willingly in mine own person incur, but would not have others to be involved in. Therefore I will lodge, leastwise for a time, with one who feareth not any more than I do persecution, who hath no ties and little or nothing on earth to lose, and if she had would willingly yield it a thousand times over for to save a soul for whom Christ died. Nor will I have you privy, my dear children, to the place of mine abode, that if questioned on it you may with truth aver yourselves to be ignorant thereof. And now," she said, turning to me, "is Mr. Sherwood willing for to try to escape by the same means as Mr. Watson? for methinks I have found a way to convey to him a cord, and, by means of the management he knoweth of instructions how to use it."

"Nay," I answered, "he will not himself avail himself of this means, albeit he is much rejoiced you have it in hand for Mr. Watson's deliverance from his tormentors; and he doth pray fervently for it to succeed."

"Everything promiseth well," she replied. "I dealt this day with an honest Catholic boatman, a servant of Mr. Hodgson, who is willing to assist in it. Two men are needed for to row the boat with so much speed as shall be necessary to carry it quickly beyond reach of pursuers. He knoweth none of his own craft which should be reliable or else disposed to risk the enterprise; but he says at a house of resort for Catholics which he doth frequent, he chanced to fall in with a young gentleman, lately landed from France, whom he doth make sure will lend his aid in it. As dextrous a man," he saith, "to

handle an oar, and of as courageous a spirit, as can be found in England."

As soon as she had uttered these words, I thought of what Hubert had said touching a report of Basil being in London and of his rashness in plunging into dangers; a cold shiver ran through me. "Did he tell you this gentleman's name?" I asked.

"No," she answered, "he would not mention it; but only that he was one who could be trusted with the lives of ten thousand persons, and so zealous a Catholic he would any day risk his life to do some good service to a priest."

"And hath this boatman promised," I inquired, "to wait for Mr. Watson and convey him away?"

"Yea, most strictly," she answered, "at twelve o'clock of the night he and his companion shall approach a boat to the side of some scaffolding which lieth under the wall of the prison; and when the clock of the tower striketh, Mr. Watson shall open his window, the bars of which he hath found it possible to remove, and by means of the cord, which is of the length he measured should be necessary, he will let himself down on the planks, whence he can step into the boat, and be carried to a place of concealment in a close part of the city till it shall be convenient for him to cross the sea to France."

"Must you go?" I said, seeing her rise, and feeling a dull hard heaviness at my heart which did well-nigh impede my utterance. I was not willing to let her know the fear I had conceived; "of what use should it be," I inwardly argued, "to disturb her in the discharge of her perilous task by a surmise which might prove groundless; and, indeed, were it certainly true, could she, nay, would she, alter her intent, or could I so much as ask her to do it?" Whilst, with Muriel's assistance, she concluded the packing of her basket, wherein the weighty cord was concealed in an ingenious manner, I stood by watching the doing of it, fearing to see her depart, yet unable to think of any means by which to delay that which I could not, even if I had willed it, prevent. When the last contents were placed in the basket, and Muriel was pressing down the lid, I said: "Do you, peradventure, know the name of the inn where you said that gentleman doth tarry which the boatman spake of?"

"No," she replied; "nor so much as where the good boatman himself lodgeth. I met with him at Mr. Hodgson's house, and there made this agreement."

"But if," I said, "it should happen by any reason that Mr. Watson changed his mind, how should you, then, inform him of it?"

"In that case," she answered, "he would hang a white kerchief outside his window, by which they should be advertised to withdraw themselves. And now," she added, "I have always been of the way of thinking that farewells should be brief; and 'God speed you,' and 'God bless you,' enough for those which do hope, if it shall please God, on earth, but for a surety in heaven, to meet again."

So, kissing us both somewhat hurriedly, she took up her basket on her arm, and said she should send a messenger on the morrow for her clothes; at which Muriel, for the first time, shed some tears, which was an instance of what I have often noticed, that grief, howsoever heavy, doth not always overflow in the eyes unless some familiar words or homely circumstance doth substantiate the verity of a sorrow known indeed, but not wholly apparent till its common effects be seen. Then we two sat awhile alone in that empty chamber—empty of her which for so long years had tenanted it to our no small comfort and benefit. When the light waned, Muriel lit a candle, and said she must go for to attend on her mother, for that duty did now devolve chiefly on her; and I could see in her sad but composed face the conquering peace which doth exceed all human consolation.

For mine own part, I was so unhinged by doubtful suspense that I lacked ability to employ my mind in reading or my fingers in stitch-work; and so descended for relief into the garden, where I wandered to and fro like an uneasy ghost, seeking rest but finding none. The dried shaking leaves made a light noise in falling, which caused me each time to think I heard a footstep behind me. And despite the increasing darkness, after I had paced up and down for near unto an hour, some one verily did come walking along the alley where I was, seeking to overtake me. Turning round I perceived it to be mine own dear aged friend, Mr. Roper. Oh, what great comfort I experienced in the sight of this good man! How eager was my greeting of him! How full my heart as I poured into his ear the narrative of the passages which had befallen me since we had met! Of the most weighty he knew somewhat; but nothing of the last haunting fear I had lest my dear Basil should be in London, and this very night engaged in the perilous attempt to carry off Mr. Watson. When I told him of it, he started and exclaimed:

"God defend it!" but quickly corrected himself and cried, "God's mercy, that my first feeling should have led me to think rather of Basil's safety than of the fine spirit he showed in all instances where a good action had to be done, or a service rendered to those in affliction."

"Indeed, Mr. Roper," I said, as he led me back to the house and into the solitary parlor (where my uncle now seldom came, but remained sitting alone in his library, chiefly engaged in praying and reading), "I do condemn mine own weakness in this, and pray God to give me strength for what may come upon us; but I do promise you 'tis no easy matter to carry always so high a heart that it shall not sink with human fears and griefs in such passages as these."

"My dear," the good man answered, "God knoweth 'tis no easy matter to attain to the courage you speak of. I have myself seen the sweetest, the loveliest, and the most brave creature which ever did breathe give marks of extraordinary sorrow when her father, that generous martyr of Christ, was to die."

"I pray you tell me," I answered, "what her behavior was like in that trial; for to converse on such themes doth allay somewhat the torment of suspense, and I may learn lessons from her example, who, you say, joined to natural weakness so courageous a spirit in like straits."

Upon which he, willing to divert and yet not violently change the current of my thoughts, spake as followeth:

"On the day when Sir Thomas More came from Westminster to the Tower-ward, my wife, desirous to see her father, whom she thought she should never see in this world after, and also to have his final blessing, gave attendance about the wharf where she knew he should pass before he could enter into the Tower. As soon as she saw him, after his blessing upon her knees reverently received, hastening toward him without care or consideration of herself, passing in amongst the throng and company of the guard, she ran to him and took him about the neck and kissed him; who, well liking her most natural and dear daughterly affection toward him, gave her his fatherly blessing and godly words of comfort beside; from whom, after she was departed, not satisfied with the former sight of him, and like one that had forgotten herself, being all ravished with the entire love of her father, suddenly turned back again, ran to him as before, took him about the neck, and divers times kissed him lovingly, till at last, with a full and heavy heart, she was fain to depart from him; the beholding thereof was to many that were present so lamentable, and mostly so to me, that for very sorrow we could not forbear to weep with her. The wife of John Harris, Sir Thomas's secretary, was moved to such a transport of grief, that she suddenly flew to his neck and kissed him, as he had reclined his head on his daughter's shoulder; and he who, in the midst of the greatest straits, had ever a merry manner of speaking, cried, "This is kind, albeit rather unpolitely done."

"And the day he suffered," I asked, "what was this good daughter's behavior?"

"She went," quoth he, "to the different churches, and distributed abundant alms to the poor. When she had given all her money away, she withdrew to pray in a certain church, where she on a sudden did remember she had no linen in which to wrap up her father's body. She had heard that the remains of the Bishop of Rochester had been thrown into the ground, without priest, cross, lights, or shroud, for the dread of the king had prevented his relations from attempting to bury him. But Margaret resolved her father's body should not meet with such unchristian treatment. Her maid advised her to buy some linen in the next shop, albeit having given away all her money to the poor, there was no likelihood she should get credit from strangers. She ventured, howsoever, and having agreed about the price, she put her hand in her pocket, which she knew was empty, to show she forgot the money, and ask credit under that pretence. But to her surprise, she found in her purse the exact price of the linen, neither more or less; and so buried the martyr of Christ with honor, nor was there any one so inhuman found as to hinder her."

"Mr. Roper," I said, when he had ended his recital, "methinks this angelic lady's trial was most hard: but how much harder should it yet have been if you, her husband, had been in a like peril at that time as her father?"

A half kind of melancholy, half smiling look came into the good old man's face as he answered:

"Her father was Sir Thomas More, and he so worthy of a daughter's passionate love, and the affection betwixt them so entire and absolute, compounded of filial love on her part, unmitigated reverence, and unrestrained confidence, that there was left in her heart no great space for wifely doating. But to be moderately affectioned by such a woman, and to stand next in her esteem to her incomparable father, was of greater honor and worth to her unworthy husband, than should have been the undivided, yea idolatrous, love of one not so perfect as herself."

After a pause, during which his thoughts, I ween, reverted to the past, and mine investigated mine own soul, I said to Mr. Roper:

"Think you, sir, that love to be idolatrous which is indeed so absolute that it should be no difficulty to die for him who doth inspire it; which would prefer a prison in his company, howsoever dark and loathsome (yea consider it a very paradise), to the beautifullest palace in the world, which without him would seem nothing but a vile dungeon; which should with a good-will suffer all the torments in the world for to see the object of its affection enjoy good men's esteem on earth, and a noble place in heaven; but which should be, nevertheless, founded and so wholly built up on a high estimate of his virtues; on the quality he holdeth of God's servant; on the likeness of Christ stamped on his soul, and each day exemplified in his manner of living, that albeit to lose his love or his company in this world should be like the uprooting of all happiness and turning the brightness of noonday to the darkness of the night, it should a thousand times rather endure this mishap than that the least shade or approach of a stain should alter the unsullied opinion till then held of his perfections?"

Mr. Roper smiled, and said that was a too weighty question to answer at once; for he should be loth to condemn or yet altogether to absolve from some degree of overweeningness such an affection as I described, which did seem indeed to savor somewhat of excess; but yet if noble in its uses and held in subjection to the higher claims of the Creator, whose perfections the creature doth at best only imperfectly mirror, it might be commendable and a means of attaining ourselves to the like virtues we doated on in another.

As he did utter these words a servant came into the parlor, and whispered in mine ear:

"Master Basil Rookwood is outside the door, and craves—"

I suffered him not to finish his speech, but bounded into the hall, where Basil was indeed standing with a traveller's cloak on him, and a slouched hat over his face. After such a greeting as may be conceived (alas, all greetings then did seem to combine strange admixtures of joy and pain!), I led him into the parlor, where Mr. Roper in his turn received him with fatherly words of kindness mixed with amazement at his return.

"And whence," he exclaimed, "so sudden a coming, my good Basil? Verily, you do appear to have descended from the skies!"

Basil looked at me and replied: "I heard in Paris, Mr. Roper, that a gentleman in whom I do take a very lively interest, one Mr. Tunstall, was in prison at London; and I bethought me I could be of some service to him by coming over at this time."

"O Basil," I cried, "do you then know he is my father?"

"Yea," he joyfully answered, "and I am right glad you do know it also, for then there is no occasion for any feigning, which, albeit I deny it not to be sometimes useful and necessary, doth so ill agree with my bluntness, that it keepeth me in constant fear of stumbling in my speech. I was in a manner forced to come over secretly; because if Sir Henry Stafford, who willeth me to remain abroad till I have got out of my wardship, should hear of my being in London, and gain scent of the object of my coming, he should have dealt in all sorts of ways to send me out of it. But, prithee, dearest love, is Mrs. Ward in this house?"

"Alas!" I said, "she is gone hence. Her mind is set on a very dangerous enterprise."

"I know it," he saith (at which word my heart began to sink); "but, verily, I see not much danger to be in it; and methinks if we do succeed in carrying off your good father and that other priest to-night in the ingenious manner she hath devised, it will be the best night's work done by good heads, good arms, and good oars which can be thought of."

"Oh, then," I exclaimed, "it is even as I feared, and you, Basil, have engaged in this rash enterprise. O woe the day you came to London, and met with that boatman!"

"Constance," he said reproachfully, "should it be a woful day to thee the one on which, even at some great risk, which I deny doth exist in this instance, I should aid in thy father's rescue?"

"Oh, but, my dear Basil," I cried, "he doth altogether refuse to stir in this matter. I have had speech with him to-day, and he will by no means attempt to escape again from prison. He hath done it once for the sake of a soul in jeopardy; but only to save his life, he is resolved not to involve others in peril of theirs. And oh, how confirmed he would be in his purpose if he knew who it was who doth throw himself into so great a risk! I' faith, I cannot and will not suffer it!" I exclaimed impetuously, for the sudden joy of his presence, the sight of his beloved countenance, lighted up with an inexpressible look of love and kindness, more beautiful than my poor words can describe, worked in me a rebellion against the thought of more suffering, further parting, greater fears than I had hitherto sustained.

He said, "He could wish my father had been otherwise disposed, for to have aided in his escape should have been to him the greatest joy he could think of; but that having promised likewise to assist in Mr. Watson's flight, he would never fail to do so, if he was to die for it."

"'Tis very easy," I cried, "to speak of dying, Basil, nor do I doubt that to one of your courage and faith the doing of it should have nothing very terrible in it. But I pray you remember that that life, which you make so little account of, is not now yours alone to dispose of as you list. Mine, dear Basil, is wrapped up with it; for if I lose you, I care not to live, or what becomes of me, any more."

Mr. Roper said he should think on it well before he made this venture; for, as I had truly urged, I had a right over him now, and he should not dispose of himself as one wholly free might do.

"Dear sir," quoth he in answer, "my sweet Constance and you also might perhaps have prevailed with me some hours ago to forego this intention, before I had given a promise to Mr. Hodgson's boatman, and through him to Mistress Ward and Mr. Watson; I should then have been free to refuse my assistance if I had listed; and albeit methinks in so doing I should have played a pitiful part, none could justly have condemned me. But I am assured neither her great heart nor your honorable spirit would desire me so much as to place in doubt the fulfilment of a promise wherein the safety of a man, and he one of God's priests, is concerned. I pray thee, sweetheart, say thou wouldst not have me do it."

Alas! this was the second time that day my poor heart had been called upon to raise itself higher than nature can afford to reach. But the present struggle was harder than the first. My father had long been to me as a distant angel, severed from my daily life and any future hope in this world. His was an expectant martyrdom, an exile from his true home, a daily dying on earth, tending but to one desired end. Nature could be more easily reconciled in the one case than in the other to thoughts of parting. Basil was my all, my second self, my sole treasure,—the prop on which rested youth's hopes, earth's joys, life's sole comfort; and chance (as it seemed, and men would have called it), not a determined seeking, had thrust on him this danger, and I must needs see him plunged into it, and not so much as say a word to stay him or prevent it. . . . I was striving to constrain my lips to utter the words my rebelling heart disavowed, and he kneeling before me, with his dear eyes fixed on mine, awaiting my consent, when a loud noise of laughter in the hall caused us both to start up, and then the door was thrown open, and Kate and Polly ran into the room so gaily attired, the one in a yellow and the other in a crimson gown bedecked with lace and jewels, that nothing finer could be seen.

"Lackaday!" Polly cried, when she perceived Basil; "who have we here? I scarce can credit mine eyes! Why, Sir Lover, methought you were in France. By what magic come you here? Mr. Roper, your humble servant. 'Tis like you did not expect so much good company to-night, Con, for you have but one poor candle or two to light up this dingy room, and I fear there will not be light enough for these gentlemen to see our fine dresses, which we do wear for the first time at Mrs. Yates's house this evening."

"I thought you were both in the country," I said, striving to disguise how much their coming did discompose me.

"Methinks," answered Polly, laughing, "your wish was father to that thought, Con, and that you desired to have the company of this fine gentleman to yourself alone, and Mr. Roper's also, and no one else for to disturb you. But, in good sooth, we were both at Mr. Benham's seat in Berkshire when we heard of this good entertainment at so great a friend's house, and so prevailed on our lords and governors for to hire a coach and bring us to London for one night. We lie at Kate's house, and she and I have supped on a cold capon and a veal pie we brought with us, and Sir Ralph and Mr. Lacy do sup at a tavern in the Strand, and shall fetch us here when it shall be convenient to them to carry us to this grand ball, which I would not have missed, no, not for all the world. So I pray you let us be merry till they do come, and pass the time pleasantly."

"Ay," said Kate, in a lamentable voice, "you would force me to dress and go abroad, when I would sooner be at home; for John's stomach is disordered, and baby doth cut her teeth, and he pulled at my ribbons and said I should not leave

him; and beshrew me if I would have done so, but for your overpersuading me. But you are always so absolute! I wonder you love not more to stay at home, Polly."

Basil smiled with a better heart than I could do, and said he would promise her John should sleep never the less well for her absence, and she should find baby's tooth through on the morrow; and sitting down by her side, talked to her of her children with a kindliness which never did forsake him. Mr. Roper set himself to converse with Polly; I ween for to shield me from the torrent of her words, which, as I sat between them, seemed to buzz in mine ear without any meaning; and yet I must needs have heard them, for to this day I remember what they talked of;—that Polly said, "Have you seen the ingenious poesy which the queen's saucy godson, the merry wit Harrington, left behind her cushion on Wednesday, and now 'tis in every one's hands?"

"Not in mine," quoth Mr. Roper; "so, if your memory doth serve you, Lady Ingoldsby, will you rehearse it?" which she did as follows; and albeit I only did hear those lines that once, they still remain in my mind:

"For ever dear, for ever dreaded prince,
You read a verse of mine a little since,
And so pronounced each word and every letter,
Your gracious reading graced my verse the better;
Sith then your highness doth by gift exceeding
Make what you read the better for your reading,
Let my poor muse your pains thus far importune,
Like as you read my verse—so read my fortune!"

"'Tis an artful and witty petition," Mr. Roper observed; "but I have been told her majesty mislikes the poet's satirical writings, and chiefly the metamorphosis of Ajax."

"She signified," Polly answered, "some outward displeasure at it, but Robert Markham affirms she likes well the marrow of the book, and is minded to take the author to her favor, but sweareth she believes he will make epigrams on her and all her court. Howsoever, I do allow she conceived much disquiet on being told he had aimed a shaft at Leicester. By the way, but you, cousin Constance, should best know the truth thereon" (this she said turning to me), "'tis said that Lord Arundel is exceeding sick again, and like to die very soon. Indeed his physicians are of opinion, so report speaketh, that he will not last many days now, for as often as he hath rallied before."

"Yesterday," I said, "when I saw Lady Surrey, he was no worse than usual."

"Oh, have you heard," Polly cried, running from one theme to another, as was her wont, "that Leicester is about to marry Lettice Knollys, my Lady Essex?"

"'Tis impossible," Basil exclaimed, who was now listening to her speeches, for Kate had finished her discourse touching her Johnny's disease in his stomach. The cause thereof, she said, both herself thought, and all in Mr. Benham's house did judge to have been, the taking in the morning a confection of barley sodden with water and sugar, and made exceeding thick with bread. This breakfast lost him both his dinner and supper, and surely the better half of his sleep; but God be thanked, she hoped now the worst was past, and that the dear urchin would shortly be as merry and well-disposed as afore he left London. Basil said he hoped so too; and in a pause which ensued, he heard Polly speak of Lord Leicester's intended marriage, which seemed to move him to some sort of indignation, the cause of which I only learnt many years later; for that when Lady Douglas Howard's cause came before the Star-Chamber, in his present majesty's reign, he told me he had been privy, through information received in France, of her secret marriage with that lord.

"'Tis not impossible," Polly retorted, "by the same token that the new favorite, young Robert Devereux, maketh no concealment of it, and calleth my Lord Leicester his father elect. But I pray you, what is impossible in these days? Oh, I think they are the most whimsical, entertaining days which the world hath ever known; and the merriest, if people have a will to make them so."

"Oh, Polly," I cried, unable to restrain myself, "I pray God you may never find cause to change your mind thereon."

"Yea, amen to that prayer," quoth she; "I'll promise you, my grave little coz, that I have no mind to be sad till I grow old—and there be yet some years to come before that shall befall me. When Mistress Helen Ingoldsby shall reach to the height of my shoulder, then, methinks, I may begin to take heed unto my ways. What think you the little wench said to me yesterday? 'What times is it we do conform to, mother? dinner-times or bed-times?'" "She should have been answered, 'The devil's times,'" Basil muttered; and Kate told Polly she should be ashamed to speak in her father's house of the conformity she practised when others were suffering for their religion. And, methought, albeit I had scarcely endured the jesting which had preceded it, I could less bear any talk of religion, least-ways of that kind, just then. But, in sooth, the constraint I suffered almost overpassed my strength. There appeared no hope of their going, and they fell into an eager discourse concerning the bear-baiting they had been to see in Berkshire, and a great sort of ban-dogs, which had been tied in an outer court, let loose on thirteen bears that were baited in the inner; and my dear Basil, who doth delight in all kinds of sports, listened eagerly to the description they gave of this diversion. Oh, how I counted the minutes! what a pressure weighted my heart! how the sound of their voices pained mine ears! how long an hour seemed! and yet too short for my desires, for I feared the time must soon come when Basil should go, and lamented that these unthinking women's tarrying should rob me of all possibility to talk with him alone. Howsoever, when Mr. Roper rose to depart, I followed him into the hall and waited near the door for Basil, who was bidding farewell to Kate and Polly. I heard him beseech them to do him so much favor as not to mention they had seen him; for that he had not informed Sir Henry Stafford of his coming over from France, which if he heard of it otherwise than from himself, it should peradventure offend him. They laughed, and promised to be as silent as graves thereon; and Polly said he had learnt French fashions she perceived, and taken lessons in wooing from mounseer; but she hoped his stealthy visit should in the end prove more conformable to his desires than mounseer's had done. At last they let him go; and Mr. Roper, who had waited for him, wrung his hand, and the manner of his doing it made my eyes overflow. I turned my

face away, but Basil caught both my hands in his and said, "Be of good cheer, sweetheart. I have not words wherewith to express how much I love thee, but God knoweth it is very dearly."

"O Basil! mine own dear Basil," I murmured, laying my forehead on his coat-sleeve, and could not then utter another word. Ere I lifted it again, the hall-door opened, and who, I pray you, should I then see (with more affright, I confess, than was reasonable) but Hubert? My voice shook as he said to Basil, whose back was turned from the door, "Here is your brother."

"Ah, Hubert!" he exclaimed; "I be glad to see thee!" and held out his hand to him with a frank smile, which the other took, but in the doing of it a deadly paleness spread over his face.

"I have no leisure to tarry so much as one minute," Basil said; "but this sweet lady will tell thee what weighty reasons I have for presently remaining concealed; and so farewell, my dear love, and farewell, my good brother. Be, I pray you, my bedes-woman this night, Constance; and you too, Hubert,—if you do yet say your prayers like a good Christian, which I pray God you do,—mind you say an ave for me before you sleep."

When the door closed on him I sunk down on a chair, and hid my face with my hands.

"You have not told him anything?" Hubert whispered; and I, "God help you, Hubert! he hath come to London for this very matter, and hath already, I fear, albeit not in any way that shall advantage my father, yet in seeking to assist him, run himself into danger of death, or leastways banishment."

As I said this mine eyes raised themselves toward him; and I would they had not, for I saw in his visage an expression I have tried these many years to forget, but which sometimes even now comes back to me painfully.

"I told you so," he answered. "He hath an invariable aptness to miss his aim, and to hurt himself by the shafts he looseth. What plan hath he now formed, and what shall come of it?"

But, somewhat recovered from my surprise, I bethought myself it should not be prudent, albeit I grieved to think so, to let him know what sort of enterprise it was Basil had in hand; so I did evade his question, which indeed he did not show himself very careful to have answered. He said he was yet dealing with Sir Francis Walsingham, and had hopes of success touching my father's liberation, and so prayed me not to yield to despondency; but it would take time to bring matters to a successful issue, and patience was greatly needed, and likewise prudence toward that end. He requested me very urgently to take no other steps for the present in his behalf, which might ruin all. And above all things not to suffer Basil to come forward in it, for that he had made himself obnoxious to Sir Francis by speeches which he had used, and which some one had reported to him, touching Lady Ridley's compliance with his (Sir Francis's) request that she should have a minister in her house for to read Protestant prayers to her household, albeit herself, being bedridden, did not attend; and if he should now stir in this matter, all hope would be at an end. So he left me, and I returned to the parlor, and Kate and Polly declared my behavior to them not to be over and above civil; but they supposed when folks were in love, they had a warrant to treat their friends as they pleased. Then finding me very dull and heavy, I ween, they bethought themselves at the last of going to visit their mother in her bed, and paying their respects to their father, whom they found asleep in his chair, his prayer-book, with which he was engaged most of the day, lying open by his side. Polly kissed his forehead, and then the picture of our Blessed Lady in the first page of this much-used volume; which sudden acts of hers comforted me not a little.

Muriel came out of her mother's chamber to greet them, but would not suffer them to see her at this unexpected time, for that the least change in her customable habits disordered her; and then whispered to me that she had often asked for Mistress Ward, and complained of her absence.

At the last Sir Ralph came, but not Mr. Lacy, who he said was tired with his long ride, and had gone home to bed. Thereupon Kate began to weep; for she said she would not go without him to this fine ball, for it was an unbecoming thing for a woman to be seen abroad when her husband was at home, and a thing she had not yet done, nor did intend to do. But that it was a very hard thing she should have been at the pains to dress herself so handsomely, and not so much as one person to see her in this fine suit; and she wished she had not been so foolish as to be persuaded to it, and that Polly was very much to blame therein. At the which, "I' faith, I think so too," Polly exclaimed; "and I wish you had stayed in the country, my dear."

Kate's pitiful visage and whineful complaint moved me, in my then apprehensive humor, to an unmerry but not to be resisted fit of laughter, which she did very much resent; but I must have laughed or died, and yet it made me angry to hear her utter such lamentations who had no true cause for displeasure.

When they were gone,—she, still shedding tears, in a chair Sir Ralph sent for to convey her to Gray's Inn Lane, and he and Polly in their coach to Mrs. Yates's,—the relief I had from their absence proved so great that at first it did seem to ease my heart. I went slowly up to mine own chamber, and stood there a while at the casement looking at the quiet sky above and the unquiet city beneath it, and chiefly in the distant direction where I knew the prison to be, picturing to myself my father in his bare cell. Mistress Ward regaining her obscure lodging, Mr. Watson's dangerous descent, and mostly the boat which Basil was to row,—that boat freighted with so perilous a burthen. These scenes seemed to rise before mine eyes as I remained motionless, straining their sight to pierce the darkness of the night and of the fog which hung over the town. When the clock struck twelve, a shiver ran through me, for I thought of the like striking at Lynn Court, and what had followed. Upon which I betook myself to my prayers, and thinking on Basil, said, "Speak for him, O Blessed Virgin Mary! Entreat for him, O ye apostles! Make intercession for him, all ye martyrs! Pray for him, all ye confessors and all ye company of heaven, that my prayers for him may take effect before our Lord Jesus Christ!" Then my head waxed heavy with sleep, and I sank on the cushion of my kneeling-stool. I wot not for how many hours I slumbered in this wise; but I know I had some terrible dreams.

When I awoke it was daylight. A load knocking at the door of the house had aroused me. Before I had well bethought me where I was, Muriel's white face appeared at my door. The pursuivants, she said, were come to seek for Mistress Ward.

CHAPTER XIX.

My first thought, when Muriel had announced to me the coming of the pursuivants in search of Mistress Ward, was to thank God she was beyond their reach, and with so much prudence had left us in ignorance of her abode. Then making haste to dress—for I apprehended these officers should visit every chamber in the house—I quickly repaired to my aunt's room, who was persuaded by Muriel that they had sent for to take an inventory of the furniture, which she said was a very commendable thing to do, but she wished they had waited until such time as she had had her breakfast. By an especial mercy, it so happened that these officers—or, leastways, two out of three of them—were quiet, well-disposed men, who exercised their office with as much mildness as could be hoped for, and rather diminished by their behavior than in any way increased the hardships of this invasion of domestic privacy. We were all in turns questioned touching Mistress Ward's abode except my aunt, whose mental infirmity was pleaded for to exempt her from this ordeal. The one officer who was churlish said, "If the lady's mind be unsound, 'tis most like she will let the cat out of the bag," and would have forced questions on her; but the others forcibly restrained him from it, and likewise from openly insulting us, when we denied all knowledge of the place she had resorted to. Howsoever, he vented his displeasure in scornful looks and cutting speeches. They carried away sundry prayer-books, and notably the "Spiritual Combat," which Mrs. Engerfield had gifted me with, when I slept at her house at Northampton, the loss of which grieved me not a little, but yet not so much as it would have done at another time, for my thoughts were then wholly set on discovering who had betrayed Mistress Ward's intervention, and what had been Mr. Watson's fate, and if Basil also had been implicated. I addressed myself to the most seemly of the three men, and asked him what her offence had been.

"She assisted," he answered, "in the escape of a prisoner from Bridewell."

"In what manner?" I said, with so much of indifferency as I could assume.

"By the smuggling of a rope into his cell," he answered, "which was found yet hanging unto his window, and which none other than that pestilent woman could have furnished him with."

Alas! this was what I feared would happen, when she first formed this project; but she had assured us Mr. Watson would let himself down, holding the two ends of the cord in his hands, and so would be enabled to carry it away with him after he had got down, and so it would never be discovered by what means he had made his escape.

"And this prisoner hath then escaped?" I said, in a careless manner.

"Marry, out of one cage," he answered; "but I'll warrant you he is by this time lodged in a more safe dungeon, and with such bracelets on his hands and feet as shall not suffer him again to cheat the gallows."

I dared not question him further; and finding nothing more to their purpose, the pursuivants retired.

When Mr. Congleton, Muriel, and I afterward met in the parlor, none of us seemed disposed to speak. There be times when grief is loquacious, but others when the weight of apprehension doth check speech. At last I broke this silence by such words as "What should now be done?" and "How can we learn what hath occurred?"

Then Mr. Congleton turned toward me, and with much gravity and unusual vehemency,

"Constance," quoth he, "when Margaret Ward resolved on this bold action, which in the eyes of some savored of rashness, I warned her to count the cost before undertaking it, for that it was replete with many dangers, and none should embark in it which was not prepared to meet with a terrible death. She told me thereupon that for many past years her chief desire had been to end her life by such a death, if it should be for the sake of religion, and that the day she should be sentenced to it would prove the joyfullest she had yet known. This she said in an inflamed manner, and I question not but it was her true thinking. I do not gainsay the merit of this pining, though I could wish her virtue had been of a commoner sort. But such being her aim, her choice, and desire, I am not of opinion that I should now disturb the peace of my wife's helpless days or mine own either (who have not, I cry God mercy for it, the same wish to suffer the pains reserved to recusants, albeit I hope in him he would give me strength, to do so if conscience required it), not to speak of you and Muriel and my other daughters, for the sake of unavailing efforts in her so desperate case, who hath made her own bed (and I deny it not to be a glorious one) and, as she hath made it, must lie on it. So I will betake myself to prayer for her, which she said was the whole scope of the favor she desired from her friends, if she fell into trouble, and dreaded nothing so much as any other dealings in her behalf; and if Mr. Roper, or Brian Lacy, or young Rookwood, have any means by which to send her money for her convenience in prison, I will give it; but other measures I will not take, nor by any open show of interest in her fate draw down suspicions on us as parties and abettors in her so-called treason."

Neither of us replied to this speech; and after that our short meal was ended, Muriel went to her mother's chamber, and I set myself to consider what I should do; for to sit and wait in this terrible ignorance of what had happened seemed an impossible thing. So taking my maid with me, albeit it rained a little, I walked to Kate's house, and found she and her husband had left it an hour before for to return to Mr. Benham's seat. Polly and Sir Ralph, who slept there also, were yet abed, and had given orders, the servant said, not to be disturbed. So I turned sorrowfully from the door, doubting whither to apply myself; for Mr. Roper lived at Richmond, and Mr. and Mrs. Wells were abroad. I thought to go to Mr. Hodgson, whose boatman had drawn Basil into this enterprise, and was standing forecasting which way to turn, when all of a sudden who should I see but Basil himself coming down the lane toward me! I tried to go for to meet him, but my legs failed me, and I was forced to lean against my maid till he came up to us and drew my arm in his. Then I felt strong again, and bidding her to go home, walked a little way with him. The first words he said were:

"Mr. Watson is safe, but hath broke his leg and his arm. Know you aught of Mistress Ward?"

"There is a warrant out against her," I answered, and told him of the pursuivants coming to seek for her at our house.

"God shield," he said, "she be not apprehended! for sentence of death would then be certainly passed upon her."

"Oh, Basil," I exclaimed, "why was the cord left?"

"Ah, the devil would have it," he began; but chiding himself, lifted off his hat, and said, "Almighty God did so permit it to happen that this mishap occurred. But I see," he subjoined, "you are not fit to walk or stand, sweetheart. Come into Mr. Wells's house. Albeit they are not at home, we may go and sit in the parlor; and it may be more prudent I should not be seen abroad to-day. I pray God Mr. Watson and I will sail to-night for Calais."

So we rang the bell at the door of Mr. Wells's house; and his housekeeper, who opened it, smiled when she saw Basil, for he was a great favorite with her, as, indeed, methinks he always was with all kinds of people. She showed us into Mr. Wells's study, which she said was the most comfortable room and best aired in the house, for that, for the sake of the books, she did often light a fire in it; and nothing would serve her but she must do so now. And then she asked if we had breakfasted, and Basil said i' faith he had not, and should be very glad of somewhat to eat, if she would fetch it for him. So when the fire was kindled—and methought it never would burn, the wood was so damp—she went away for a little while, and he then told me the haps of the past night.

"Tom Price (Hodgson's boatman) and I," he said, "rowed his boat close onto the shore, near to the prison, and laid there under the cover of some penthouses which stood betwixt the river and the prison's wall. When the clock struck twelve, I promise you my heart began to beat as any girl's, I was so frightened lest Mr. Watson should not have received the cord, or that his courage should fail. Howsoever, in less than one minute I thought I perceived something moving about one of the windows, and then a body appeared sitting at first on the ledge, but afterward it turned itself round, and, facing the wall, sank down slowly, hanging on by a cord."

"Oh, Basil!" I exclaimed, "could you keep on looking?"

"Yea," he answered; "as if mine eyes should start out of my head. He came down slowly, helping himself, I ween, with his feet against the wall; but when he got to about twenty or thirty feet, I guess it to have been, from the roof of the shed, he stopped of a sudden, and hung motionless. 'He is out of breath,' I said to Tom. 'Or the rope proves too short,' quoth he. We watched him for a moment. He swung to and fro, then rested again, his feet against the wall. 'Beshrew me, but I will climb on to that roof myself, and get nigh to him,' I whispered to Tom, and was springing out of the boat, when we heard a noise more loud than can be thought of. 'I'll warrant you he hath fallen on the planks,' quoth Tom. 'Marry, but we will pick him up then,' quoth I; and found myself soon on the edge of the roof, which was broken in at one place, and, looking down, I thought I saw him lying on the ground. I cried as loud as I durst, 'Mr. Watson, be you there? Hist! Are you hurt? Speak if you can.' Methinks he was stunned by the fall, for he did not answer; so there remained nothing left to do but to leap myself through the opening into the shed, where I found him with his eyes shut, and moaning. But when I spake to him he came to himself, 'and tried to rise, but could not stand, one of his legs being much hurt. 'Climb on to my back, reverend sir,' I said 'and with God's help we shall get out.' Howsoever, the way out did not appear manifest, and mostly with another beside one's self to carry. But glancing round the inside of the shed, I perceived a door, the fastening of which, when I shook it, roughly enough I promise you, gave way; and the boat lay, God be praised, close to it outside. I gave one look up to the prison, and saw lights flashing in some of the windows. 'They be astir,' I said to Tom. 'Hist! lend a hand, man, and take the reverend gentleman from off my back and into the boat.' Mr. Watson uttered a groan. He most have suffered cruel pain; for, as we since found, his leg and also his arm were broken, and he looked more dead than alive.

"We began to row as fast as we could; but now he, coming to himself, feels in his coat, and cries out:

"'Oh, kind sirs—the cord, the cord! Stop, I pray you; stop, turn back.'

"'Not for the world,' I cried, 'reverend sir.'

"Then he, in a lamentable voice:

"'Oh, if you turn not back and bring away the cord, the poor gentlewoman which did give it unto me must needs fall into sore trouble. Oh, for God's sake, turn back!'

"I gave a hasty glance at the prison, where increasing stir of lights was visible, and resolved that to return should be certain ruin to ourselves and to him for whom Mistress Ward had risked her life, and little or no hope in it for her, as it was not possible there should be time to get the cord and then escape, which with best speed now could with difficulty be effected. So I turned a deaf ear to Mr. Watson's pleadings, with an assured conscience she should have wished no otherwise herself; and by God's mercy we made such way before they could put out a boat, landing unseen beyond the next bridge, that we could secretly convey him to the house of a Catholic not far from the river on the other side, where he doth lie concealed. I promise you, sweetheart, we did row hard. Albeit I strove very much last year when I won the boat-match at Richmond, by my troth it was but child's play to last night's racing. Poor Mr. Watson fainted before we landed, and neither of us dared venture to stop from pulling for to assist him. But, God be praised, he is now in a good bed; and I fetched for him at daybreak a leech I know in the Borough, who hath set his broken limbs; and to-night if the weather be not foul, when it gets dark, we will convey him in a boat to a vessel at the river's mouth, which I have retained for to take us to Calais. But I would Mistress Ward was on board of it also."

"Oh, Basil," I exclaimed, "if we can discover where she doth lodge, it would not then be impossible. If we had forecasted this yesterday, she would be saved. Yet she had perhaps refused to tell us."

"Most like she would," he answered; "but if you do hit by any means upon her abode to-day, forthwith despatch a trusty messenger unto me at Mr. Hodgson's, and I promise you, sweetheart, she shall, will she nill she, if I have to use force for it, be carried away to France, and stowed with a good madame I know at Calais."

The housekeeper then came in with bread and meat and beer, which my dear Basil did very gladly partake of, for he had eat nothing since the day before, and was greatly in want of food. I waited on him, forestalling housewifely duties, with so great a contentment in this quiet hour spent in his company that nothing could surpass it. The fire now burned brightly; and whilst he ate, we talked of the time when we should be married and live at Euston, so retired from the busy world without as should be most safe and peaceful in these troublesome times, even as in that silent house we were for a short time shut out from the noisy city, the sounds of which reached without disturbing us. Oh how welcome was that little interval of peace which we then enjoyed! I ween we were both very tired; and when the good housekeeper came in for to fetch away his plate he had fallen asleep, with his head resting on his hands; and I was likewise dozing in a high-backed chair opposite to him. The noise she made awoke me, but not him, who slept most soundly. She smiled, and in a motherly manner moved him to a more comfortable position, and said she would lay a wager on it he had not been abed at all that night.

"Well, I'll warrant you to be a good guesser, Mistress Mason," I answered. "And if you did but know what a hard and a good work he hath been engaged in, methinks you would never tarry in his praise."

"Ah, Mistress Sherwood," she replied, "I have known Master Basil these many years; and a more noble, kindly, generous heart never, I ween, did beat in a man's bosom. He very often came here with his father and his brother when both were striplings; and Master Hubert was the sharpest and some said the most well-behaved of the twain. But beshrew me if I liked not better Master Basil, albeit he was sometimes very troublesome, but not techey or rude as some boys be. I remember it well how I laughed one day when these young masters—methinks this one was no more than five years and the other four—were at play together in this room, and Basil had a new jerkin on, and colored hose for the first time. Hubert wore a kirtle, which displeased him, for he said folks should take him to be a wench. So he comes to me, half-crying, and says, 'Why hath Baz that fine new suit and me not the same?' 'Because, little sir, he is the eldest,' I said. 'Ah,' quoth the shrewd imp, 'the next time I be born methinketh I will push Baz aside and be the eldest.' If I should live one hundred years I shall never forget it, the little urchin looked so resolved and spiteful."

I smiled somewhat sadly, I ween, but with better cheer when she related how tender a heart Basil had from his infant years toward the poor, taking off his clothes for to give them to the beggars he met, and one day, she said, praying very hard Mrs. Wells for to harbor a strolling man which had complained he had no lodging.

"'Mistress,' quoth he, 'you have many chambers in your house, and he hath not so much as a bed to lie in tonight;' and would not be contented till she had charged a servant to get the fellow a lodging. And me he once abused very roundly in his older years for the same cause. There was one Jack Morris, an old man which worked sometimes in Mr. Wells's stable, but did lie at a cottage out of the town. And one day in winter, when it snowed, Master Basil would have me make this fellow sleep in the house, because he was sick, he said, and he would give him his own bed and lie himself on straw in the stable; and went into so great a passion when I said he should not do so, for that he was a mean person and could not lie in a gentleman's chamber, that my young master cries out, 'Have a care. Mistress Mason, I do not come in the night and shake you out of your own bed, for to give you a taste of the cold floor, which yet is not, I promise you, so cold as the street into which you would turn this poor diseased man.' And then he fell to coaxing of me till I consented for to send a mattress and a warm rug to the stable for this pestilent old man, who I warrant you was not so sick as he did assume to be, but had sufficient cunning for to cozen Master Basil out of his money. Lord bless the lad! I have seen him run out with his dinner in his hand, if he did but see a ragged urchin in the streets, and gift him with it; and then would slug lustily about the house—methinks I do hear him now—

'Dinner, O dinner's a rare good thing
Alike for a beggar, alike for a king.'

Basil opened then his eyes and stared about him.

"Why, Mistress Mason," he cried, "beshrew me if you are not rehearsing a rare piece of poesy!—the only one I ever did indite." At the which speech we all laughed; but our merriment was short; for time had sped faster than we thought, and Basil said he must needs return to the Borough to forecast with Mr. Hodgson and Tom Price means to convey Mr. Watson to the ship, which was out at sea nigh unto the shore, and a boat must be had to carry them there, and withal such appliances procured as should ease his broken limbs.

"Is there not danger" I asked, "in moving him so soon?"

"Yea," he said, "but a less fearful danger than in long tarrying in this country."

This was too true to be gainsayed; and so thanking the good housekeeper we left the house, which had seemed for those few hours like onto a harbor from a stormy sea, wherein both our barks, shattered by the waves, had refitted in peace.

"Farewell, Basil," I mournfully said; "God knoweth for how long."

"Not for very long," he answered. "In three months I shall have crept out of my wardship. Then, if it please God, I will return, and so deal with your good uncle that we shall soon after that be married."

"Yea," I answered, "if so be that my father is then in safety."

He said he meant not otherwise, but that he had great confidence it should then be so. When at last we parted he went down Holborn Hill very fast, and I slowly to Ely Place, many times stopping for to catch one more sight of him in the crowd, which howsoever soon hid him from me.

When I arrived at home I found Muriel in great affliction, for news had reached her that Mistress Ward had been apprehended and thrown into prison. Methinks we had both looked for no other issue than this, which she had herself most desired; but nevertheless, when the certainty thereof was confirmed to us, it should almost have seemed as if we

were but ill-prepared for it. The hope I had conceived a short time before that she should escape in the same vessel with Basil and Mr. Watson, made me less resigned to this mishap than I should have been had no means of safety been at hand, and the sword, as it were, hanging over her head from day to day. The messenger which had brought this evil news being warranted reliable by a letter from Mr. Hodgson, I intrusted him with a few lines to Basil, in which I informed him not to stay his departure on her account, who was now within the walls of the prison which Mr. Watson had escaped from, and that her best comfort now should be to know he was beyond reach of his pursuers. The rest of the day was spent in great heaviness of spirit. Mr. Congleton sent a servant to Mr. Roper for to request him to come to London, and wrote likewise to Mr. Lacy for to return to his house in town, and confer with some Catholics touching Mistress Ward's imprisonment. Muriel's eyes thanked him, but I ween she had no hope therein and did resign herself to await the worst tidings. Her mother's unceasing asking for her, whose plight she dared not so much as hint at in her presence, did greatly aggravate her sufferings. I have often thought Muriel did then undergo a martyrdom of the heart as sharp in its kind as that which Mistress Ward endured in prison, if the reports which did reach us were true. But more of that anon. The eventful day, which had opened with so much of fear and sorrow, had yet in store other haps, which I must now relate.

About four of the clock Hubert came to Ely Place, and found me alone in the parlor, my fingers busied with some stitching, my thoughts having wandered far away, where I pictured to myself the mouth of the river, the receding tide, the little vessel which was to carry Basil away once more to a foreign land, with its sails flapping in the wind; and boats passing to and fro, plying on the fair bosom of the broad river, and not leaving so much as a trace of their passage. And his boat with its freight more precious than gold—the rescued life bought at a great price—methought I saw it glide in the dark amidst those hundred other boats unobserved (so I hoped), unstayed on its course. Methought that so little bark should be a type of some lives which carry with them, unwatched, undiscerned, a purpose, which doth freight them on their way to eternity—somewhat hidden, somewhat close to their hearts, somewhat engaging their whole strength; and all the while they seem to be doing the like of what others do; and God only knoweth how different shall be the end!

"Ah, Hubert," I exclaimed when the door opened, "is it you? Methinks in these days I see no one come into this house but a fear or a hope doth seize me. What bringeth you? or hath nothing occurred?"

"Something may occur this day," he answered, "if you do but will it to be so, Constance."

"What?" I asked eagerly; "what may occur?"

"Your father's deliverance," he said.

"Oh, Hubert," I cried, "it is not possible!"

"Go to!" he said in a resolved manner. "Don your most becoming suit, and follow my directions in all ways. Lady Ingoldsby, I thank God, hath not left London, and will be here anon to carry you to Sir Francis Walsingham's house, where her familiar friend, Lady Sydney, doth now abide during Sir Philip's absence. You shall thus get speech with Sir Francis; and if you do behave with diffidency, and beware of the violence of your nature and exorbitancy of your tongue, checking needless speeches, and answering his questions with as many words as courtesy doth command, and as few as civility doth permit, I doubt not but you may obtain your father's release in the form of a sentence of banishment; for he is not ill-disposed thereunto, having received notice that his health is sinking under the hardships of his confinement, and his strength so impaired that, once beyond seas, he is not like to adventure himself again in this country."

"Alas!" I cried, "mine eyes had discerned in his shrunken form and hollow cheeks tokens of such a decay as you speak of; and I pray God Mr. Secretary may deal mercifully with him before it shall be too late."

"I'll warrant you," he replied, "that if you do rightly deal with him, he will sign an order which shall release this very night your father from prison, and send him safe beyond seas before the week is ended."

"Think you so?" I said, my heart beating with an uncertain kind of hope mixed with doubting.

"I am assured of it," Hubert confidently replied.

"I must ask my uncle's advice," doubtfully said, "before I go with Polly."

A contemptuous smile curled his lip. "Yea," he said, "Be directed in these weighty matters, I do advise you, by your aunt also, and the saintly Muriel, and twenty hundred others beside, if you list; and the while this last chance shall escape, and your father be doomed to death. I have done my part, God knoweth. If he perish, his blood will not be on my head; but mark my words, if he be not presently released, he will appear before the council in two days, and the oath be tendered to him, which you best know if he will take, and his refusal without fail will send him to the scaffold."

"God defend," I exclaimed, greatly moved, "I should delay to do that which may yet save him. I will go, Hubert. But I pray you, who are familiar with Sir Francis, what means should be best for to move him to compassion? Is there a soft corner in his heart which a woman's tears can touch? I will kneel to him if needful, yea, kiss his feet—mind him of his own fair daughter. Lady Sydney, which, if he was in prison, and my father held his fate in his hands, would doubtless sue to him with the like ardor, yea, the like agony of spirit, for mercy. Oh, tell me, Hubert, what to say which shall drive the edge of pity into his soul."

"Silence will take effect in this case sooner than the most moving speeches," he answered. "Steel your soul to it, whatever he may say. Your tears, your eyes, will, I warrant you, plead more mightfully than your words. He is as obliging to the softer but predominant parts of the world as he is serviceable to the more severe. To him men's faces speak as much as their tongues, and their countenances are indexes of their hearts. Judge if yours, the liveliest piece of eloquence which ever displayed itself in a fair visage, shall fail to express that which passionate words, missing their aim, would of a surety ill convey. And mind you, Mistress Constance, this man is of extreme ability in the school of policy, and albeit inclined to recusants with the view of winning them over by means of kindness, yet an extreme hater

of the Pope and Church of Rome, and moreover very jealous to be considered as such; so if he do intend to show you favor in this matter, make your reckoning that he will urge you to conformity with many strenuous exhortations, which, if you remain silent, no harm shall ensue to yourself or others."

"And not to mine own soul, Hubert?" I mournfully cried. "Methinks my father and Basil would not counsel silence in such a case."

"God in heaven give me patience!" he exclaimed. "Is it a woman's calling, I pray you, to preach? When the apostles were dismissed by the judges, and charged no longer to teach the Christian faith, went they not forth in silence, restraining their tongues then, albeit not their actions when once at liberty? Methinks modesty alone should forbid one of your years from dangerous retorts, which, like a two-edged sword, wound alike friend and foe."

I had no courage left to withstand the promptings of mine own heart and his urgency.

"God forgive me," I cried, "if I fail in aught wherein truth or honesty are concerned. He knoweth I would do right, and yet save my father's life."

Then falling on my knees, unmindful of his presence, I prayed with an intense vehemency, which overcame all restraint, that my tongue might be guided aright when I should be in his presence who under God did hold my father's life in his hands. But hearing Polly's voice in the hall, I started up, and noticed Hubert leaning his head on his hand, seemingly more pitifully moved than was his wont. When she came in, he met her, and said:

"Lady Ingoldsby, I pray you see that Mistress Constance doth so attire herself as shall heighten her natural attractions; for, beshrew me, if grave Mr. Secretary hath not, as well as other men, more pity for a fair face than a plain one; and albeit hers is always fair, nature doth nevertheless borrow additional charms from art."

"Tut, tut," quoth Polly. "She is a perfect fright in that hat, and her ruff hideth all her neck, than which no swan hath a whiter; and I pray you what a farthingale is that! Methinks it savors of the fashions of the late queen's reign. Come, Con, cheer up, and let us to thy chamber. I'll warrant you, Master Rookwood, she will be twice as winsome when I have exercised my skill on her attire."

So she led me away, and I suffered her to dress mine hair herself and choose such ornaments as she did deem most becoming. Albeit she laughed and jested all the while, methinks the kindness of her heart showed through this apparent gaiety; and when her task was done, and she kissed my forehead, I threw my arms round her neck and wept.

"Nay, nay!" she cried; "no tears, coz—they do serve but to swell the eyelids and paint the nose of a reddish hue;" and shaping her own visage into a counterfeit of mine, she set me laughing against my will, and drew me by the hand down the stairs and into the parlor.

"How now, sir?" she cried to Hubert "Think you I have indifferently well performed the task you set me?"

"Most excellently well," he answered, and handed us to her coach, which was to carry us to Seething Lane. When we were seated in it, she told me Hubert had disclosed to her the secret of my father's plight, and that she was more concerned than she could well express at so great a mishap, but nevertheless entertained a comfortable hope this day should presently see the end of our troubles. Howsoever, she did know but half of the trouble I was in, weighty as was the part she was privy to. Hubert, she told me, had dealt with a marvellous great zeal and ability in this matter, and proved himself so good a negotiator that she doubted not Sir Francis himself must needs have appreciated his ingenuity.

"That young gentleman," she added, "will never spoil his own market by lack of timely boldness or opportune bashfulness. My Lady Arundel related to me last night at Mrs. Yates's what passed on Monday at the banquet-hall at Whitehall. Hath he told you his hap on that occasion?"

"No," I answered. "I pray you, Polly, what befel him there?"

"Well, her majesty was at dinner, and Master Hubert comes there to see the fashion of the court. His handsome features and well-set shape attract the queen's notice. With a kind of an affected frown she asks Lady Arundel what he is. She answers she knows him not. Howsoever, an inquiry is made from one to another who the youth should be, till at length it is told the queen he is young Rookwood of Euston, in Suffolk, and a ward of Sir Henry Stafford's."

"Mistaking him then for Basil?" I said.

Then she: "I think so; but howsoever this inquisition with the eye of her majesty fixed upon him (as she is wont to fix it, and thereby to daunt such as she doth make the mark of her gazing), stirred the blood of our young gentleman, Lady Arundel said, insomuch that a deep color rose in his pale cheek and straightway left it again; which the queen observing, she called him unto her, and gave him her hand to kiss, encouraging him with gracious words and looks; and then diverting her speech to the lords and ladies, said that she no sooner observed him than she did note there was in him good blood, and she ventured to affirm good brains also; and then said to him, 'Fail not to come to court, sir, and I will bethink myself to do you good.' Now I warrant you, coz, this piece of a scholar lacked not the wit to use this his hap in the furtherance of his and your suit to Sir Francis, whom he adores as his saint, and courts as his Maecenas."

This recital of Polly's worked a tumultuous conflict in my soul; for verily it strengthened hope touching my father's release; but methinks any other channel of such hope should have been more welcome. A jealousy, an unsubstantial fear, an uneasy misdoubt oppressed this rising hope. I feared for Hubert the dawn of such favor as was shown to him by her whose regal hand doth hold a magnet which hath oftentimes caused Catholics to make shipwreck of their souls. And then truth doth compel me to confess my weakness. Albeit God knoweth I desired not for my true and noble sweetheart her majesty's gracious smiles, or a higher fortune than Providence hath by inheritance bestowed on him, a vain humane

feeling worked in me some sort of displeasure that his younger brother should stand in the queen's presence as the supposed head of the house of Rookwood, and no more mention made of him than if he had been outlawed or dead. Not that I had then reason to lay this error to Hubert's door, for verily naught in Polly's words did warrant such a suspicion; but my heart was sore, and my spirits chafed with apprehensions. God forgive me if I then did unjustly accuse him, and, in the retrospect of this passage in his life, do suffer subsequent events to cast backward shadows on it, whereby I may wrong him who did render to me (I write it with a softened—yea, God is my witness—a truly loving, albeit sorrowing, heart) a great service in a needful time. Oh, Hubert, Hubert! my heart acheth for thee. Methinks God will show thee great mercy yet, but, I fear me, by such means only as I do tremble to think of.

CHAPTER XX.

When we reached Seething Lane, Polly bade me be of good heart, for that Lady Sydney was a very affable and debonnaire lady, and Sir Francis a person of toward and gentle manners, and exceedingly polite to women. We were conducted to a neat parlor, where my Lady Sydney was awaiting us. A more fair and accomplished lady is not, I ween, to be found in England or any other country, than this daughter of a great statesman, and wife at that time of Sir Philip Sydney, as she hath since been of my Lords Essex and St. Albans. Methinks the matchless gentleman, noble knight, and sweet writer, her first husband, who did marry her portionless, not like as is the fashion with so many in our days carrying his love in his purse, must have needs drawn from the fair model in his own house the lovely pictures of beauteous women he did portray in his "Arcadia." She greeted us with so much heartfelt politeness, and so tempered gay discoursing with sundry marks of delicate feeling, indicative, albeit not expressive, of a sense of my then trouble, that, albeit a stranger, methinks her reserved compassion and ingenious encouragements served to tranquillize my discomposed mind more than Polly's efforts toward the same end. She told us Lord Arundel had died that morning; which tidings turned my thoughts awhile to Lady Surrey, with many cogitations as to the issue of this event in her regard.

After a short space of time, a step neared the door, and Lady Sydney smiled and said, "Here is my father." I had two or three times seen Sir Francis Walsingham in public assemblies, but his features were nevertheless not familiar to me. Now, after he had saluted Polly and me, and made inquiry touching our relatives, while he conversed with her on indifferent topics, I scanned his face with such careful industry as if in it I should read the issue of my dear father's fate. Methinks I never beheld so unreadable a countenance, or one which bore the impress of so refined a penetration, so piercing an inquisitiveness, so keen a research into others' thoughts, with so close a concealment of his own. I have since heard what his son-in-law did write of him, that he impoverished himself by the purchase of dear intelligence; that, as if master of some invisible spring, all the secrets of Christendom met in his closet, and he had even a key to unlock the Pope's cabinet. His mottoes are said to be *video et taceo*, and that knowledge can never be bought at too high a price. And verily methinks they were writ in his face, in his quick-turning eyes, his thin, compressed lips, and his soft but resolved accents, minding one of steel cased in velvet. 'Tis reported he can read any letter without breaking the seal. For mine own part, I am of opinion he can see through parchment, yea, peradventure, through stone walls, when bent on some discovery. After a few minutes he turned to me with a gracious smile, and said he was very glad to hear that I was a young gentlewoman of great prudence, and well disposed in all respects, and that he doubted not that, if her majesty should by his means show me any favor, I should requite it with such gratitude as should appear in all my future conduct.

"God knoweth," I stammered, mine eyes filling with tears, "I would be grateful to you, sir, if it should please you to move her majesty to grant my prayer, and to her highness for the doing of it."

"And how would you show such gratitude, fair Mistress Constance?" he said, smiling in an encouraging manner.

"By such humble duty," I answered, "as a poor obscure creature can pay to her betters."

"And I hope, also," he said, "that such dutifulness will involve no unpleasing effort, no painful constraint on your inclinations; for I am assured her majesty will never desire from you anything but what will well accord with your advantage in this world and in the next."

These words caused me some kind of uneasiness; but as they called for no answer, I took refuge in silence; only methinks my face, which he did seem carefully to study, betrayed anxiety.

"Providence," Sir Francis then said, "doth oftentimes marvellously dispose events. What a rare instance of its gracious workings should be seen in your case, Mistress Constance, if what your heart doth secretly incline to should become a part of that dutifulness which you do intend to practice in future!"

Before I had clearly apprehended the sense of his words, Lady Sydney said to Polly:

"My father hath greatly commended to Sir Philip and me a young gentleman which I understand. Lady Ingoldsby, to be a friend of yours, Mr. Hubert Rookwood, of Euston. He says the gracefulness of his person, his excellent parts, his strong and subtle capacity, do excellently fit him to learn the discipline and garb of the times and court."

"Ay," then quoth Sir Francis, "he hath as large a portion of gifts and endowments as I have ever noticed in one of his age, and I'll warrant he proves no mere vegetable of the court, springing up at night and sinking at noon."

Polly did warmly assent to these praises of Hubert, for whom she had always entertained a great liking; but she merrily said he was not gay enough for her, which abhorred melancholy as cats do water.

"Oh, fair lady," quoth Sir Francis, "God defend we should be melancholy; verily 'tis fitting we should be sometimes

serious, for while we laugh all things are serious round about us. The whole creation is serious in serving God and us. The holy Scriptures bring to our ears the most serious things in the world. All that are in heaven and hell are serious. Then how should we be always gay?"

Polly said—for when had she not, I pray you, somewhat to say?—that certain things in nature had a propensity to gaiety which naught could quell, and instanced birds and streamlets, which never cease to sing and babble as long as they do live or flow. And to be serious, she thought, would kill her. The while this talk was ministered between them, my Lady Sydney, on a sign from her father, I ween, took my hand in hers, and offered to show me the garden; for the heat of the room, she said, was like to give me the headache. Upon which I rose, and followed her into a court planted with trees, and then on to an alley of planes strewed with gravel. As we entered it I perceived several persons walking toward us. When the first thought came into my mind who should be the tall personage in the centre, of hair and complexion fair, and of so stately and majestic deportment, I marvel my limbs gave not way, but my head swam and a mist obscured mine eyes. Methinks, as one dreaming, I heard Lady Sydney say, "The queen, Mistress Sherwood; kneel down, and kiss her majesty's hand." Oh, in the brief moment of time when my lips pressed that thin, white, jewelled hand, what multiplied thoughts, resentful memories, trembling awe, and instinctive, homage to royal greatness, met in my soul, and worked confusion in my brain!

"Ah, mine own good Sydney," I heard her majesty exclaim; "is this the young gentlewoman your wise father did speak of at Greenwich yesterday? The daughter of one Sherwood now in prison for popish contumacy?"

"Even so," said Lady Sydney; "and your sacred majesty hath it now in her power to show

"The quality of mercy is not strained—"

"But droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath,"

interrupted the queen, taking the words out of her mouth. "We be not ignorant of those lines. Will Shakespeare hath it,

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.'

And if faith we differ not from him, for verily mercy is our habit and the propension of our soul; but, by God, the malice and ingratitude of recusant traitors doth so increase, with manifold dangers to our person and state, that mercy to them doth turn into treason against ourselves, injury to religion, and an offence to God. Rise," her majesty then said to me; and as I stood before her, the color, I ween, deepening in my cheeks, "Thou hast a fair face, wench," she cried; "and if I remember aright good Mr. Secretary's words, hast used it to such purpose that a young gentleman we have of late taken into our favor is somewhat excessive in his dotting on it. Go to, go to; thou couldst go further and fare worse. We ourselves are averse to marriage; but if a woman must needs have a husband (and that deep blushing betokeneth methinks thy bent thereon), she should set her heart wisely, and govern it discreetly."

"Alas, madam!" I cried, "'tis not of marriage I now do think; but, on my knees" (and falling again at her feet, I clasped them, with tears), "of my father's release; I do crave your majesty's mercy."

"Content thee, wench; content thee. Mr. Secretary hath obtained from us the order for that foolish man's banishment from our realm."

"Oh, madam!" I cried, "God bless you!"

Then my heart did smite me I should with so great vehemency bless her who, albeit in this nearest instance pitiful to me, did so relentlessly deal with others; and I bethought me of Mistress Ward, and the ill-usage she was like to meet with. And her words touching Hubert, and silence concerning Basil, weighed like lead on my soul; yet I taxed myself with folly therein, for verily at this time the less he was thought of the greater should be his safety. Sir Francis had now approached the queen, and I did hear her commend to him his garden, which she said was very neat and trim, and the pattern of it most quaint and fanciful. Polly did also kiss her hand, and Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton, which accompanied her majesty, whilst she talked with Sir Francis, conversed with Lady Sydney. I ween my Lord Leicester and many other noblemen and gentlemen were also in her train, but mine eyes took scant note of what passed before them; the queen herself was the only object I could contemplate, so marvellous did it seem I should thus have approached her, and had so much of her notice as she did bestow on me that day. And here I cannot choose but marvel how strangely our hearts are made. How favors to ourselves do alter the current of our feelings; how a near approach to those which at a distance we do think of with unmitigated enmity, doth soften even just resentments; and what a singular fascination doth lie in royalty for to win unto itself a reverence which doth obliterate memories which in common instances should never lose their sting.

The queen's barge, which had moored at the river-side of Sir Francis's garden, was soon filled again with the goodly party it had set down; and as it went up the stream, and I stood gazing on it, methought the whole scene had been a dream.

Lady Sydney and Polly moved Sir Francis to repeat the assurance her majesty had given me touching the commutation of my father's imprisonment into an order of banishment. He satisfied me thereon, and did promise to procure for me permission to see him once more before his departure; which interview did take place on the next day; and when I observed the increased paleness of his face and feebleness of his gait, the pain of bidding that dear parent farewell equalled not the joy I felt in the hope that liberty and the care of those good friends to whose society he would now return, should prolong and cheer the remaining days of his life. Methinks there was some sadness in him that the issue he had so resolutely prepared for, and confidently looked to, should be changed to one so different, and that only by means of death would he have desired to leave the English mission; but he meekly bowed his will to that of God, and said in an humble manner he was not worthy of so exalted an end as he had hoped for, and he refused not to live if so

be he might yet serve God in obscure and unnoticed ways.

When I returned home after this comfortable, albeit very sad, parting, I was too weary in body and in mind for to do aught but lie down for a while on a settle, and revolve in my mind the changes which had taken place around me. Hubert came for a brief time that evening; and methinks he had heard from Polly the haps at Seething Lane. He strove for to move me to speak of the queen, and to tell him the very words she had uttered. The eager sparkling of his eyes, the ill-repressed smilingness of his countenance, the manner of his questioning, worked in me a secret anger, which caused the thanks I gave him for his successful dealings in my father's behalf to come more coldly from mine heart than they should otherwise have done, albeit I strove to frame them in such kind terms as were befitting the great service he had rendered us. But to disguise my thoughts my tongue at last refused, and I burst forth:

"But, for all that I do thank you, Hubert, yea, and am for ever indebted to you, which you will never have reason, from my conduct and exceedingly kind sisterly love, to doubt: bear with me, I pray you, when I say (albeit you may think me a very foolish creature) that I wish you not joy, but rather for your sake do lament, the new favor you do stand in with the queen. O Hubert, bethink you, ere you set your foot on the first step of that slippery ladder, court favor, that no man can serve two masters."

"Marry," he answered in a light manner, "by that same token or text, papists can then not serve the queen and also the Pope!"

There be nothing which so chilleth or else cutteth the heart as a jesting retort to a fervent speech.

I hid my face on my arm to hide some tears.

"Constance," he softly said, seeing me moved, "do you weep for me?"

"Yea," I murmured; "God knoweth what these new friendships and this dangerous favor shall work in you contrary to conscience, truth, and virtue. Oh! heaven shield Basil's brother should be a favorite of the queen!"

"Talk not of Basil," he fiercely cried, "I warrant you the day may be at hand when his fate shall hang on my favor with those who can make and mar a man, or ruin and mend his fortunes, as they will, by one stroke of a pen!"

"Yea," I replied; "I doubt not his fortune is at their mercy. His soul, God be praised, their arts cannot reach."

"Constance," he then said, fixedly gazing on me, "if you only love me, there is no ambition too noble, no heights of virtue too exalted, no sacrifices too entire, but I will aim at, aspire to, resolve on, at your bidding."

"Love **you!**" I said, raising mine eyes to his, somewhat scornfully I fear, albeit not meaning it, if I judge by his sudden passion.

"God defend," he cried, "I do not arrive at hating you with as great fervency as I have, yea, as even yet I do love you! O Constance, if I should one day be what I do yet abhor to think of, the guilt thereof shall lie with you if there be justice on Earth or in heaven!"

I shook my head, and laying my hand on his, sadly answered:

"I choose not to bandy words with you, Hubert, or charge you with what, if I spoke the truth, would be too keen and resentful reproaches for your unbrotherly manner of dealing with Basil and me; for it would ill become the close of this day, on which I do owe you, under God, my dear father's life, to upbraid where I would fain only from my heart yield thanks. I pray you, let us part in peace. My strength is well-nigh spent and my head acheth sorely."

He knelt down by my side, and whispered, "One word more before I go. You do hold in your keeping Basil's fate and mine. I will not forsake the hope that alone keepeth me from desperation. Hush! say not the word which would change me from a friend to a foe, from a Catholic to an apostate, from a man to a fiend. I have gone well-nigh into the gate of hell; a slender thread yet holds me back; snap it not in twain."

I spoke not, for verily my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and a fainting sensation of a sudden came over me. I felt his lips pressed on my hand, and then he left me; and that night I felt very ill, and for nigh unto a fortnight could by no means leave my bed.

One morning, being somewhat easier, I sat up in a high-backed chair, in what had once been our school-room; and when Muriel, who had been a most diligent nurse to me in that sickness, came to visit me, I pressed her for to tell me truly if she had heard aught of Basil or of Mistress Ward; for every day when I had questioned her thereon she had denied all knowledge of their haps, which now began to work in me a suspicion she did conceal from me some misfortune, which doubt, I told her, was more grievous to me than to be informed what had befallen them; and so constrained her to admit that, albeit of Basil she had in truth no tidings, which she judged to be favorable to our hopes, of Mistress Ward she had heard, in the first instance, a report, eight or ten days before, that she had been hung up by the hands and cruelly scourged; which torments she was said by the jailors, which Mr. Lacy had spoken with, to have borne with exceeding great courage, saying they were the preludes of martyrdom, with which, by the grace of God, she hoped she should be honored. Then Mr. Roper and Mr. Wells, who was now returned to London, had brought tidings the evening before that on the preceding day she had been brought to the bar, where, being asked by the judges if she was guilty of that treachery to the queen and to the laws of the realm of furnishing the means by which a traitor of a priest had escaped from justice, she answered with a cheerful countenance in the affirmative; and that she never in her life had done anything of which she less repented than of the delivering that innocent lamb from the wolves which should have devoured him.

"Oh, Muriel," I cried, "cannot you see her dear resolved face and the lighting up of her eyes, and the quick fashion of

her speech, when she said this?"

"I do picture her to myself," Muriel answered in a low voice, "at all hours of the day, and marvel at mine own quietness therein. But I doubt not her prayers do win for me the grace of resignation. They sought to oblige her to confess where Mr. Watson was, but in vain; and therefore they proceeded to pronounce sentence upon her. But withal telling her that the queen was merciful, and that if she would ask pardon of her majesty, and would promise to go to church, she should be set at liberty; otherwise that she must look for nothing but certain death."

I drew a deep breath then, and said, "The issue is, then, not doubtful."

"She answered," Muriel said, "that as to the queen, she had never offended her majesty; that as to what she had done in favoring Mr. Watson's escape, she believed the queen herself, if she had the bowels of a woman, would have done as much if she had known the ill-treatment he underwent; and as to going to church, she had for many years been convinced that it was not lawful for her so to do, and that she found no reason now for to change her mind, and would not act against her conscience; and therefore they might proceed to the execution of the sentence pronounced against her; for that death for such a cause would be very welcome, and that she was willing to lay down not one life only, but many, if she had them, rather than act against her religion."

"And she is then condemned to death without any hope?" I said.

Muriel remained silent.

"Oh, Muriel!" I cried; "it is not done? it is not over?"

She wiped one tear that trickled down her cheek, and said, "Yesterday she suffered at Tyburn with a wonderful constancy and alacrity."

I hid my face in my hands; for the sight of the familiar room, of the chair in which she was sitting what time she took leave of us, of a little picture pinned to the wall, which she had gifted me with, moved me too much. But when I closed mine eyes, there arose remembrances of my journeying with her; of my foolish speeches touching robbers; of her motherly reproofs of my so great confidence, and comfort in her guidance; and I was fain to seek comfort from her who should have needed it rather than me, but who indeed had it straight from heaven, and thereby could impart some share of it to others.

"Muriel," I said, resting my tired head on her bosom, "the day you say she suffered, I now mind me, I was most ill, and you tended me as cheerfully as if you had no grief."

"Oh, 'tis no common grief," she answered, "no casting-down sorrow, her end doth cause me; rather some kind of holy jealousy, some over-eager pining to follow her."

A waiting-woman then came in, and I saw her give a letter to Muriel, who I noticed did strive to hide it from me. But I detected it in her hand, and cried, "'Tis from Basil; how hath it come?" and took it from her; but trembling so much, my fingers could scarce untie the strings, for I was yet very unwell from my sickness.

"Mr. Hodgson hath sent it," quoth Muriel; "God yield it be good news!"

Then my eyes fell on the loved writing, and read what doth follow:

"DEAR HEART AND SWEET WIFE

soon to be—God be praised, we are now safe in port at Calais, but have not lacked dangers in our voyage. But all is well, I ween, that doth end well; and I do begin my letter with the tokens of that good ending that mine own sweet love should have no fears, only much thankfulness to God, whilst she doth read of the perils we have escaped. We carried Mr. Watson—Tom and I and two others—into the boat, on the evening of the day when I last saw you, and made for the Dutch vessel out at sea near the river's mouth. The light was waning, but not yet so far gone but that objects were discernible; and we had not rowed a very long time before we heard a splashing of oars behind us, and turning round what should we see but one of the Queen's barges, and by the floating pennon at the stem discerned her majesty to be on board! We hastily turned our boat, and I my back toward the bank; threw a cloak over Mr. Watson, who, by reason of his broken limbs, was lying on a mattress at the bottom of it; and Tom and the others feigned to be fishing. When the royal barge passed by, some one did shout, railing at us for that we did fish in the dark, and a storm coming up the river; and verily it did of a sudden begin to blow very strong. Sundry small craft were coming from the sea into the river for shelter; and as they did meet us, expressed marvel we should adventure forth, jeering us for our thinking to catch fish and a storm menacing. None of us, albeit good rowers, were much skilled in the mariner's art; but we commended ourselves to God and went onward all the night; and when the morning was breaking, to our unspeakable comfort, we discovered the Dutch vessel but a few strokes distant at anchor, when, as we bethought ourselves nearly in safety, a huge rolling wave (for now the weather had waxed exceedingly rough) upset our boat."

"O Muriel," I exclaimed, "that night I tossed about in a high fever, and saw Basil come dripping wet at the foot of my bed: I warrant you 'twas second sight."

"Read on, read on," Muriel said; "nor delude yourself touching visions."

"Tom, the other boatman, and I, being good swimmers, soon regained the boat, the which floated keel upwards, whereon we climbed, but well-nigh demented were we to find Mr. Watson could nowhere be seen. In desperation I plunged again into the sea, swimming at hazard, with difficulty buffeting the waves; when nearly spent I descried the good priest, and seized him in a most unmannerly fashion by the collar, and dragging him along, made shift to regain the floating keel; and Tom, climbing to the top, waved high his kerchief, hoping to be seen by

the Dutchman, who by good hap did espy our signal. Soon had we the joy to see a boat lowered and advance toward us. With much difficulty it neared us, by reason of the fury of the waves; but, God be thanked, it did at last reach us; and Mr. Watson, insensible and motionless, was hoisted therein, and soon in safety conveyed on board the vessel. I much feared for his life; for, I pray you, was such a cold, long bath, succeeding to a painful exposed night, meet medicine for broken limbs, and the fever which doth accompany such hurts? I wot not; but yet, God be praised, he is now in the hospital of a monastery in this town, well tended and cared for, and the leeches do assure me like to do well. Thou mayest think, sweetheart, that after seeing him safely stowed in that good lodgment, I waited not for to change my clothes or break my fast, before I went to the church; and on my knees blessed the Almighty for his protection, and hung a thank-offering on to our Lady's image; for I warrant you, when I was fishing for Mr. Watson in that raging sea, I missed not to put up Hail Marys as fast as I could think them, for beshrew me if I had breath to spare for to utter. I do now pen this letter at my good friend Mr. Wells's brother's, and Tom will take it with him to London, and Mr. Hodgson convey it to thee. Thy affectionate and humble obedient (albeit intending to lord it over thee some coming day) servant and lover, BASIL ROOKWOOD.

"Oh, how the days do creep till I be out of my wardship! Methinks I do feel somewhat like Mrs. Helen Ingoldsby, who doth hate patience, she saith, by reason that it doth always keep her waiting. I would not be patient, sweet one, I fear, if impatience would carry me quicker to thy dear side."

"Well," said Muriel, sweetly smiling when I had finished reading this comfortable letter, "the twain which we have accompanied this past fortnight with our thoughts and prayers have both, God be praised, escaped from a raging sea into a safe harbor, albeit not of the same sort—the one earthly, the other heavenly. Oh, but I am very glad, dear Constance, thou art spared a greater trial than hath yet touched thee!" and so pure a joy beamed in her eyes, that methought no one more truly fulfilled that bidding, "to rejoice with such as rejoice, as well as to weep with such as weep."

This letter of my dear Basil hastened my recovery; and three days later, having received an invitation thereunto, I went to visit the Countess of Surrey, now also of Arundel, at Arundel House. The trouble she was in by reason of her grandfather's death, and of my Lady Lumley's, who had preceded her father to the grave, exceeded anything she had yet endured. The earl her husband continued the same hard usage toward her, and never so much as came to visit her at that time of her affliction, but remained in Norfolk, attending to his sports of hunting and the like. Howsoever, as he had satisfied her uncles, Mr. Francis and Mr. Leonard Dacre, Mr. James Labourn, and also Lord Montague, and his own sister Lady Margaret Sackville, and likewise Lord Thomas and Lord William Howard, his brothers, that he put not in any doubt, albeit words to that effect had once escaped him, the validity of his marriage, she, with great wisdom and patience, and prudence very commendable in one of her years, being destitute of any fitting place to dwell in, resolved to return to his house in London. At the which at first he seemed not a little displeased, but yet took no measures for to drive her from it. And in the ordering of the household and care of his property manifested the same zeal, and obtained the same good results, as she had procured whilst she lived at Kenninghall. Methought she had waxed older by some years, not weeks, since I had seen her, so staid and composed had become the fashion of her speech and of her carriage. She conversed with me on mine own troubles and comforts, and the various and opposite haps which had befallen me; which I told her served to strengthen in me my early thinking, that sorrows are oftentimes so intermixed with joys that our lives do more resemble variable April days than the cloudless skies of June, or the dark climate of winter.

Whilst we did thus discourse, mine eyes fell on a quaint piece of work in silk and silver, which was lying on a table, as if lately unfolded. Lady Arundel smiled in a somewhat sad fashion, and said:

"I warrant thou art curious, Constance, to examine that piece of embroidery; and verily as regards the hands which hath worked it, and the kind intent with which it was wrought, a more notable one should not easily be found. Look at it, and see if thou canst read the ingenious meaning of it."

This was the design therein executed with exceeding great neatness and beauty: there was a tree framed, whereon two turtle-doves sat, on either side one, with this difference, that by that on the right hand there were two or three green leaves remaining, by the other none at all—the tree on that side being wholly bare. Over the top of the tree were these words, wrought in silver: "Amoris sorte pares." At the bottom of the tree, on the side where the first turtle-dove did sit by the green leaves, these words were also embroidered: "Haec ademptum," with an anchor under them. On the other side, under the other dove, were these words, in like manner wrought: "Illa peremptum," with pieces of broken board underneath.

"See you what this doth mean?" the countess asked.

"Nay," I answered; "my wit is herein at fault."

"You will," she said, "when you know whence this gift comes to me. Methought, save by a few near to me in blood, or by marriage connected, and one or two friends—thou, my Constance, being the chiefest—I was unknown to all the world; but a sad royal heart having had notice, in the midst of its own sore griefs, how the earl my husband doth, through evil counsel, absent and estrange himself from me, partly to comfort, and partly to show her love to one she once thought should be her daughter-in-law, for a token thereof she sent me this gift, contrived by her own thinking, and wrought with her own hands. Those two doves do represent herself and me. On my side an anchor and a few green leaves (symbols of hope), show I may yet flourish, because my lord is alive; though, by reason of his absence and unkindness, I mourn as a lone turtle-dove. But the bare boughs and broken boards on her side signify that her hopes are wholly wrecked by the death of the duke, for whom she doth mourn without hope of comfort or redress."

The pathetic manner in which Lady Arundel made this speech moved me almost to tears.

"If Philip," she said, "doth visit me again at any time, I will hang up this ingenious conceit where he should see it. Methinks it will recall to him the past, and move him to show me kindness. Help me, Constance," she said after a pause,

"for to compose such an answer as my needle can express, which shall convey to this royal prisoner both thanks, and somewhat of hope also, albeit not of the sort she doth disclaim."

I mused for a while, and then with a pencil drew a pattern of a like tree to that of the Scottish queen's design; and the dove which did typify the Countess of Arundel I did represent fastened to the branch, whereon she sat and mourned, by many strings wound round her heart, and tied to the anchor of an earthly hope, whereas the one which was the symbol of the forlorn royal captive did spread her wings toward the sky, unfettered by the shattered relics strewn at her feet. Lady Arundel put her arm round my neck, and said she liked well this design; and bade me for to pray for her, that the invisible strings, which verily did restrain in her heavenward motions, should not always keep her from soaring thither where only true joys are to be found.

During some succeeding weeks I often visited her, and we wrought together at the same frame in the working of this design, which she had set on hand by a cunning artificer from the rough pattern I had drawn. Much talk the while was ministered between us touching religion, which did more and more engage her thoughts; Mr. Bayley, a Catholic gentleman who belonged to the earl her husband, and whom she did at that time employ to carry relief to sick and poor persons, helping her greatly therein, being well instructed himself, and haunting such priests as did reside secretly in London at that time.

About the period when Basil was expected to return, my health was again much affected, not so sharply as before, but a weakness and fading of strength did show the effects of such sufferings as I had endured. Hubert's behavior did tend at that time for to keep me in great uneasiness. When he came to the house, albeit he spake but seldom to me, if we ever were alone he gave sundry hints of a persistent hope and a possible desperation, mingled with vague threats, which disturbed me more than can be thought of. Methinks Kate, Polly, and Muriel held council touching my health; and thence arose a very welcome proposal, from my Lady Tregony, that I should visit her at her seat in Norfolk, close on the borders of Suffolk, whither she had retired since Thomas Sherwood's death. Polly, who had a good head and a good heart albeit too light a mind, forecasted the comfort it should be to Basil and me, when he returned, to be so near neighbors until we were married (which could not be before some months after he came of age), that we could meet every day; Lady Tregony's seat being only three miles distant from Euston. They wrote to him thereon; and when his answer came, the joy he expressed was such that nothing could be greater. And on a fair day in the spring, when the blossoms of the pear and apple-trees were showing on the bare branches, even as my hopes of coming joys did bud afresh after long pangs of separation, I rode from London, by slow journeys, to Banham Hall, and amidst the sweet silence of rural scenes, quiet fields, and a small but convenient house, where I was greeted with maternal kindness by one in whom age retained the warmth of heart of youth, I did regain so much strength and good looks, that when, one day, a horseman, when I least thought of it, rode to the door, and I turned white and red in turns, speechless with delight, perceiving it to be Basil, he took me by both hands, looked into my face and cried:

"Hang the leeches! Suffolk air was all thou didst need, for all they did so fright me."

"Norfolk air, I pray you," quoth my Lady Tregony, smiling.

"Nay, nay," quoth Basil. "It doth blow over the border from Suffolk."

"Happiness, leastways, bloweth thence," I whispered.

"Yea," he answered; for he was not one for to make long speeches.

But, ah me! the sight of him was a cure to all mine ailments.

CHAPTER XXI.

It is not to be credited with how great an admixture of pleasure and pain I do set myself to my daily task of writing, for the thought of those spring and summer months spent in Lady Tregony's house doth stir up old feelings, the sweetness of which hath yet some bitterness in it, which I would fain separate from the memories of that happy time.

Basil had taken up his abode at Euston, whither I so often went and whence he so often came, that methinks we could both have told (for mine own part I can yet do it, even after the lapse of so many years) the shape of each tree, the rising of each bank, the every winding of the fair river Ouse betwixt one house and the other. Yea, when I now sit down on the shore, gazing on the far-off sea, bethinking myself it doth break on the coast of England, I sometimes newly draw on memory's tablet that old large house, the biggest in all Suffolk, albeit homely in its exterior and interior plainness, which sitteth in a green hollow between two graceful swelling hills. Its opposite meadows starred in the spring-tide with so many daisies and buttercups that the grass scantily showeth amidst these gay intruders; the ascending walk, a mile in length, with four rows of ash-trees on each side, the tender green of which in those early April days mocked the sober tints of the darksome tufts of fir; and the noble deer underneath the old oaks, carrying in a stately manner their horned heads, and darting along the glades with so swift a course that the eye could scarce follow them. But mostly the little wooden bridge where, when Basil did fish, I was wont to sit and watch the sport, I said, but verily him, of whose sight I was somewhat covetous after his long absence. And I mind me that one day when we were thus seated, he on the margin of the stream and I leaning against the bridge, we held an argument touching country diversions, which began in this wise:

"Methinks," I said, "of all disports fishing hath this advantage, that if one faileth in the success he looketh for, he hath at least a wholesome walk, a sweet air, a fragrant savor of the mead flowers. He seeth the young swans, herons, ducks, and many other fowls with their broods, which is surely better than the noise of hounds, the blast of horns, and the cries the hunters make. And if it be in part used for the increasing of the body's health and the solace of the mind, it can also

be advantageously employed for the health of the soul, for it is not needful in this diversion to have a great many persons with you, and this solitude doth favor thought and the serving of God by sometimes repeating devout prayers."

To this Basil replied: "That as there be many men, there be also many minds; and, for his part, when the woods and fields and skies seemed in all one loud cry and confusion with the barking of the hounds, the galloping of the horses, the hallowing of the huntsmen, and the excellent echo resounding from the hills and valleys, he did not think there could be a more delectable pastime or a more tuneable sound by any degree than this, and specially in that place which is formed so meet for the purpose. And if he should wish anything, it would be that it had been the time of year for it, and for me to ride by his side on a sweet misty mornings to hear this goodly music and to be recreated with this excellent diversion. And for the matter of prayers," he added, smiling, "I warrant thee, sweet preacher, that as wholesome cogitations touching Almighty God and his goodness, and brief inward thanking of him for good limbs and an easy heart, have come into my mind on a horse's back with a brave westerly wind blowing about my head, as in the quiet sitting by a stream listening to the fowls singing."

"Oh, but Basil," I rejoined, "there are more virtues to be practised by an angler than by a hunter."

"How prove you that, sweetheart?" he asked.

Then I: "Well, he must be of a well-settled and constant belief to enjoy the benefit of his expectation. He must be full of love to his neighbor, that he neither give offence in any particular, nor be guilty of any general destruction; then he must be exceeding patient, not chafing in losing the prey when it is almost in hand, or in breaking his tools, but with pleased sufferance, as I have witnessed in thyself, amend errors and think mischances instructions to better carefulness. He must be also full of humble thoughts, not disdainful to kneel, lie down, or wet his fingers when occasion commands. Then must he be prudent, apprehending the reasons why the fish will not bite; and of a thankful nature, showing a large gratefulness for the least satisfaction."

"Tut, tut," Basil replied, laughing; "thinkest thou no patience be needful when the dogs do lose the scent, or your horse refuseth to take a gate; no prudence to forecast which way to turn when the issue be doubtful; no humility to brook a fall with twenty fellows passing by a-jeering of you; no thankfulness your head be not broken; no love of your neighbor for to abstain in the heat of the chase from treading down his corn, or for to make amends when it be done? Go to, go to, sweetheart; thou art a dextrous pleader, but hast failed to prove thy point. Methinks there doth exist greater temptations for to swear or to quarrel in hunting than in fishing, and, if resisted, more excellent virtues then observed. One day last year, when I was in Cheshire, Sir Peter Lee of Lime did invite me to hunt the stag, and there being a great stag in chase and many gentlemen hot in the pursuit, the stag took soil, and divers, whereof I was one, alighted and stood with sword drawn to have a cut at him."

"Oh, the poor stag!" I cried; "I do always sorely grieve for him."

"Well," he continued, "the stags there be wonderfully fierce and dangerous, which made us youths more eager to be at him. But he escaped us all; and it was my misfortune to be hindered in my coming near him, the way being slippery, by a fall which gave occasion to some which did not know me to speak as if I had failed for fear; which being told me, I followed the gentleman who first spoke it, intending for to pick a quarrel with him, and, peradventure, measure my sword with his, so be his denial and repentance did not appear. But, I thank God, afore I reached him my purpose had changed, and in its stead I turned back to pursue the stag, and happened to be the only horseman in when the dogs set him up at bay; and approaching near him, he broke through the dogs and ran at me, and took my horse's side with his horns. Then I quitted my horse, and of a sudden getting behind him, got on his back and cut his throat with my sword."

"Alack!" I cried, "I do mislike these bloody pastimes, and love not to think of the violent death of any living creature."

"Well, dear heart," he answered, "I will not make thee sad again by the mention of the killing of so much as a rat, if it displeaseth thee. But truly I mislike not to think of that day, for I warrant thee, in turning back from the pursuit of that injurious gentleman, somewhat more of virtue did exist than it hath been my hap often to practice. For, look you, sweet one, to some it doth cause no pain to forgive an injury which toucheth not their honor, or to plunge into the sea to fish out a drowning man; but to be stiled a coward, and yet to act as a Christian man should do, not seeking for to be revenged, why, methinks, there should be a little merit in it."

"Yea," I said, "much in every way; but truly, sir, if your thinking is just that easy virtue is little or no virtue, I shall be the least virtuous wife in the world."

Upon this he laughed so loud that I told him he would fright all the fishes away.

"I' faith, let them go if they list," he cried, and cast away his rod. Then coming to where I was sitting, he invited me to walk with him alongside the stream, and then asked me for to explain my last speech.

"Why, Basil," I said, "what, I pray you, should be the duty of a virtuous wife but to love her husband?"

So then he, catching my meaning, smiled and replied,

"If that duty shall prove easy to thy affectionate heart, I doubt not but others will arise which shall call for the exercise of more difficult virtue."

When we came to a sweet nook, where the shade made it too dark for grass to grow, and only moss yielded a soil carpet for the feet, we sat down on a shelving slope of broken stones, and I exclaimed,

"Oh, Basil, methinks we shall be too happy in this fair place; and I do tax myself presently with hardness of heart, that in thy company, and the forecasting of a blissful time to come, I lose the sense of recent sorrows."

"God doth yield thee this comfort," he answered, "for to refresh thy body and strengthen thy soul, which have both been verily sorely afflicted of late. I ween he doth send us breathing-times with this merciful intent."

By such discourses as these we entertained ourselves at sundry times; but some of the sweetest hours we spent were occupied in planning the future manner of our lives, the good we should strive to do amongst our poor neighbors, and the sweet exercise of Catholic religion we should observe.

Foreseeing the frequent concealing of priests in his house, Basil sent one day for a young carpenter, one Master Owen, who hath since been so noted for the contriving of hiding-places in all the recusants' houses in England; and verily what I noticed in him during the days he was at work at Euston did agree with the great repute of sanctity he hath since obtained. His so small stature, his trick of silence, his exceeding recollected and composed manner filled me with admiration; and Basil told me nothing would serve him, the morning he arrived, when he found a priest was in the house, but to go to shrift and holy communion, which was his practice, before ever he set to work at his good business. I took much pleasure in watching his progress. He scooped out a cell in the walls of the gallery, contriving a door such as I remembered at Sherwood Hall, which none could see to open unless they did know of the spring. All the time he was laboring thereat, I could discern him to be praying; and when he wot not any to be near him, sang hymns in a loud and exceeding sweet voice. I have never observed in any one a more religious behavior than in this youth, who, by his subtle and ingenious art, hath saved the lives of many priests, and procured mass to be said in houses where none should have durst for to say or hear it if a refuge of this kind did not exist, wherein a man may lie ensconced for years, and none can find him, if he come not forth himself.

When he was gone, other sort of workmen were called in, for to make more habitable and convenient a portion of this large house. For in this the entire consenting of our minds did appear, that neither of us desired for to spend money on showy improvements, or to inhabit ten chambers when five should suffice. What one proposed, the other always liked well; and if in tastes we did sometimes differ, yet no disagreement ensued. For, albeit Basil cared not as much as I did for the good ordering of the library, his indulgent kindness did nevertheless incline him to favor me with a promise that one hundred fair, commendable books should be added to those his good father had collected. He said that Hubert should aid us to choose these goodly volumes, holy treatises, and histories in French and English, if it liked me, and poetry also. One pleasant chamber he did laughingly appoint for to be the scholar's room, in the which he should never so much as show his face, but Hubert and I read and write, if we listed, our very heads off. The ancient chapel was now a hall; and, save some carving on the walls which could not be recovered, no traces did remain of its old use. But at the top-most part of the house, at the head of a narrow staircase, was a chamber wherein mass was sometimes said; and since Basil's return, he had procured that each Saturday a priest should come and spend the night with him, for the convenience of all the neighboring Catholics who resorted there for to go to their duty. Lady Tregony and her household—which were mostly Catholic, but had not the same commodities in her house, where to conceal any one was more hard, for that it stood almost in the village of Fakenham, and all comers and goers proved visible to the inhabitants—did repair on Sundays, at break of day, to Euston. How sweet were those rides in the fair morning light, the dew bespangling every herb and tree, and the wild flowers filling the air with their fresh fragrance! The pale primroses, the azure harebell, the wood-anemone, and the dark-blue hyacinth—what dainty nosegays they furnished us with for our Blessed Lady's altar! of which the fairest image I ever beheld stood in the little secret chapel at Euston. Basil did much affection this image of Blessed Mary; for as far back as he could remember he had been used to say his prayers before it; and when his mother died, he being only seven years of age, he knelt before this so lively representation of God's Mother, beseeching of her to be a mother to him also; which prayer methinks verily did take effect, his life having been marked by singular tokens of her maternal care.

In the Holy Week, which fell that year in the second week of April, he procured the aid of three priests, and had all the ceremonies performed which do appertain to that sacred season. On Wednesday, toward evening began *Tenebrae*, with the mysterious candlestick of fifteen lights, fourteen of them representing, by the extinguishing of them, the disciples which forsook Christ; the fifteenth on the top, which was not put out, his dear Mother, who from the crib to the cross, was not severed from him. On Thursday we decked the sepulchre wherein the Blessed Sacrament reposed with flowers and all such jewels as we possessed, and namely with a very fair diamond cross which Basil had gifted me with, and reverently attended it day and night. "God defend," I said to Basil, when the sepulchre was removed, "I should retain for vain uses what was lent to our Lord yester eve!" and straightway hung on the cross to our Lady's neck. On Friday we all crept to the crucifix, and kissing, bathed it with our tears. On Saturday every fire was extinguished in the house, and kindled again with hallowed fire. Then ensued the benediction of the paschal candle, and the rest of the divine ceremonies, till mass. At mass, as soon as the priest pronounced "Gloria in excelsis," a cloth, contrived by Lady Tregony and me, and which veiled the altar, made resplendent with lights and flowers, was suddenly snatched away, and many little bells we had prepared for that purpose rung, in imitation of what was done in England in Catholic times, and now in foreign countries. On Easter Sunday, after mass, a benediction was given to divers sorts of meat, and, in remembrance of the Lamb sacrificed two days before, a great proportion of lamb. Nigh one hundred recusants had repaired to Euston that day for their paschal communion. Basil did invite them all to break Lent's neck with us, in honor of Christ's joyful resurrection; and many blessings were showered that day, I ween, on Master Rookwood, and for his sake, I ween, on Mistress Sherwood also. The sun did shine that Easter morning with more than usual brightness. The common people do say it danceth for joy at this glorious tide. For my part, methought it had a rare youthful brilliancy, more cheering than hot, more lightsome than dazzling. All nature seemed to rejoice that Christ was risen; and pastoral art had devised arches of flowers and gay wreaths hanging from pole to pole and gladdening every thicket.

Verily, if the sun danced in the sky, my poor heart danced in my bosom. At Basil's wishing, anticipating future duties, I went to the kitchen for to order the tansy-cakes which were to be prizes at the hand-ball playing on the next day. Like a foolish creature, I was ready to smile at every jest, howsoever trifling; and when Basil put in his head at the door and cried, "Prithee, let each one that eateth of tansy-cake to-morrow, which signifieth bitter herbs, take also of bacon, to show he is no Jew," the wenches and I did laugh till the tears ran down our cheeks. Ah me! when the heart doth overflow with joy 'tis marvellous how the least word maketh merriment.

One day late in April I rode with Basil for to see some hawking, which verily is a pleasure for high and mounting spirits;

howsoever, I wore not the dress which the ladies in this country do use on such occasions, for I have always thought it an unbecoming thing for women to array themselves in male attire, or ride in fashion like a man, and Basil is of my thinking thereon. It was a dear, calm, sun-shiny evening, about an hour before the sun doth usually mask himself, that we went to the river. There we dismounted and, for the first time, I did behold this noble pastime. For is it not rare to consider how a wild bird should be so brought to hand and so well managed as to make us such pleasure in the air; but most of all to forego her native liberty and feeding, and return to her servitude and diet? And what a lesson do they read to us when our wanton wills and thoughts take no heed of reason and conscience's voices luring us back to duty's perch.

When we had stood a brief time watching for a mallard, Basil perceived one and whistled off his falcon. She flew from him as if she would never have turned her head again, yet upon a shout came in. Then by degrees, little by little, flying about and about, she mounted so high as if she had made the moon the place of her flight, but presently came down like a stone at the sound of his lure. I waxed very eager in the noticing of these haps, and was well content to be an eye-witness of this sport. Methought it should be a very pleasant thing to be Basil's companion in it, and wear a dainty glove and a gentle tassel on my fist which should never cast off but at my bidding, and when I let it fly would return at my call. And this thought minded me of a faithful love never diverted from its resting-place save by heavenward aspirations alternating betwixt earthly duties and ghostly soarings. But oh, what a tragedy was enacted in the air when Basil, having detected by a little white feather in its tail a cock in a brake, cast off a tassel gentle, who never ceased his circular motion till he had recovered his place. Then suddenly upon the flushing of the cock he came down, and missing of it in that down-come, lo what working there was on both sides! The cock mounting as if he would have pierced the skies; the hawk flying a contrary way until he had made the wind his friend; what speed the cock made to save himself! What hasty pursuit the hawk made of the fugitive! after long flying killing of it, but alack in killing of it killing himself!

"Ah, a fatal ending to a fatal strife!" exclaimed a known voice close unto mine ear, a melodious one, albeit now harsh to my hearing. Mine eyes were dazzled with gazing upward, and I confusedly discerned two gentlemen standing near me, one of which I knew to be Hubert. I gave him my hand, and then Basil turning round and beholding him and his companion, came up to them with a joyful greeting:

"Oh, Sir Henry," he exclaimed, "I be truly glad to see you; and you, Hubert, what a welcome surprise is this!"

Then he introduced me to Sir Henry Jemingham; for he it was who, bowing in a courteous fashion, addressed to me such compliments as gentlemen are wont to pay to ladies at the outset of their acquaintanceship.

These visitors had left their horses a few paces off, and then Sir Henry explained that Hubert had been abiding with him at his seat for a few days, and that certain law-business in which Basil was concerned as well as his brother, and himself also, as having been for one year his guardian, did necessitate a meeting wherein these matters should be brought to a close.

"So," quoth he then, "Master Basil, I proposed we should invade your solitude in place of withdrawing you from it, which methought of the two evils should be the least, seeing what attractions do detain you at Euston at this time."

I foolishly dared not look at Hubert when Sir Henry made this speech, and Basil with hearty cheer thanked him for his obliging conduct and the great honor he did him for to visit him in this amicable manner. Then he craved his permission for to accompany me to Lady Tregony's house, trusting, he said, to Hubert to conduct him to Euston, and to perform there all hospitable duties during the short time he should be absent himself.

"Nay, nay," quoth Sir Henry, "but, with your license, Master Basil, we will ride with you and this lady to Banham Hall. Methinks, seeing you are such near neighbors, that Mistress Sherwood lacketh not opportunities to enjoy your company, and that you should not deprive me of the pleasure of a short conversation with her whilst Hubert and you entertain yourselves for the nonce in the best way you can."

Basil smiled, and said it contented him very much that Sir Henry should enjoy my conversation, which he hoped in future should make amends to his friends for his own deficiencies. So we all mounted our horses, and Sir Henry rode alongside of me, and Basil and Hubert behind us; for only two could hold abreast in the narrow lane which led to Fakenham. A chill had fallen on my heart since Hubert's arrival, which I can only liken to the sudden overcasting of a bright sun-shiny day by a dark, cold cloud.

At first Sir Henry entered into discourse with me touching hawking, which he talked of in a merry fashion, drawing many similitudes betwixt falconers and lovers, which he said were the likeliest people in the world.

"For, I pray you," said he "are not hawks to the one what his mistress is to the other? the objects of his care, admiration, labor, and all. They be indeed his idols. To them he consecrates his amorous ditties, and courts each one in a peculiar dialect. Oh, believe me, Mistress Sherwood, that lady may style herself fortunate in love who shall meet with so much thought, affection, and solicitude from a lover or a husband as his birds do from a good ostringer."

Then diverting his speech to other topics, he told me it was bruited that the queen did intend to make a progress in the eastern counties that summer, and that her majesty should be entertained in a very splendid manner at Kenninghall by my Lord Arundel and also at his house in Norwich.

"It doth much grieve me to hear it," I answered.

Then he: "Wherefore, Mistress Sherwood?"

"Because," I said, "Lord Arundel hath already greatly impaired his fortune and spent larger sums than can be thought of in the like prodigal courtly expenses, and also lost a good part of the lands which his grandfather and my Lady Lumley would have bequeathed to him if he had not turned spendthrift and so greatly displeased them."

"But and if it be so," quoth he again, "wherefore doth this young nobleman's imprudence displeasure you, Mistress Sherwood?"

I answered, "By reason of the pain which his follies do cause to his sweet lady, which for many years hath been more of a friend to my poor self, than unequal rank and, if possible, still more unequal merit should warrant."

"Then I marvel not," replied Sir Henry, "at your resentment of her husband's folly, for by all I have ever seen or heard of this lady she doth show herself to be the pattern of a wife, the model of high-born ladies; and 'tis said that albeit so young, there doth exist in her so much merit and dignity that some noblemen confess that when they come into her presence they dare not swear, as at other times they are wont to do before the best of the kingdom. But I have heard, and am verily inclined to believe it, that he is much changed in his dispositions toward his lady; though pride, it may be, or shame at his ill-usage of her, or fear that it should seem that, now his favor with the queen doth visibly decline, he should turn to her whom, when fortune smiled upon him, he did keep aloof from, seeking her only when clouds gather round him, do hinder him from showing these new inclinations."

"How much he would err," I exclaimed, "and wrong his noble wife if he misdoubted her heart in such a case! Methinks most women would be ready to forgive one they loved when misfortune threatened them, but she beyond all others, who never at any time allowed jealousy or natural resentments to draw away her love from him to whom she hath vowed it. But is Lord Arundel then indeed in less favor with her majesty? And how doth this surmise agree with the report of her visit to Kenninghall?"

"Ah, Mistress Sherwood," he answered, "declines in the human body often do call for desperate remedies, and the like are often required when they occur in court favor. 'Tis a dangerous expedient to spend two or three thousands of pounds in one or two days for the entertainment of the queen and the court; but if, on the report of her intended progress, one of such high rank as Lord Arundel had failed to place his house at her disposal, his own disgrace and his enemies' triumph should have speedily ensued. I pray God my Lord Burleigh do not think on Cottessy! Egad, I would as lief pay down at once one year's income as to be so uncertainly mulcted. I warrant you Lord Arundel shall have need to sell an estate to pay for the honor her majesty will do him. He hath a spirit will not stop half-way in anything he doth pursue."

"Then think you, sir," I said, "he will be one day as noted for his virtues as now for his faults?"

Sir Henry smiled as he answered, "If Philip Howard doth set himself one day to serve God, I promise you his zeal therein will far exceed what he hath shown in the devil's service."

"I pray you prove a true prophet, sir," I said; and, as we now had reached the door of Lady Tregony's house, I took leave of this courteous gentlemen, and hastily turned toward Basil—with an uneasy desire to set him on his guard to use some reserve in his speeches with Hubert, but withal at a loss how to frame a brief warning, or to speak without being overheard. Howsoever, I drew him a little aside, and whispered, "Prithee, be silent touching Owen's work, even to Hubert."

He looked at me so much astonished, and methought with so great a look of pain, that my heart smote me. We exchanged a brief farewell; and when they had all ridden away, I felt sad. Our partings were wont to be more protracted; for he would most times ask me to walk back with him to the gate, and then made it an excuse that it should be unmannerly not to see me home, and so three or four times we used to walk to and fro, till at last I did laughingly shut the door on him, and refused to open it again. But, ah me! that evening the chill I spoke of had fallen on our simple joys like a blight on a fair landscape.

On the next day two missives came to me from Euston, sent by private hand, but not by the same messenger. I leave the reader to judge what I felt in reading these proofs of the dispositions of two brothers, so alike in features, so different in soul. This was Basil's letter:

"MINE OWN DEAR HEART—

The business which hath brought Sir Henry and Hubert here will, I be frightened, hold me engaged all to-morrow. But, before I sleep, I must needs write thee (poor penman as I be) how much it misliketh me to see in thee an ill opinion of mine only and dear brother, and such suspicion as verily no one should entertain of a friend, but much less of one so near in blood. I do yield thee that he is not as zealous as I could wish in devout practices, and something too fond of worldly pleasures; but God is my witness, I should as soon think of doubting mine own existence as his fidelity to his religion, or his kindness to myself. So, prithee, dear love, pain me not again by the utterance of such injurious words to Hubert as that I should not trust him with any secrets howsoever weighty, or should observe any manner of restraint in communicating with him touching common dangers and interests. Methinks he is very sad at this time, and that the sight of his paternal home hath made him melancholy. Verily, his lot hath in it none of the brightness which doth attend mine, and I would we could anyways make him a partaker in the happiness we do enjoy. I pray God he may help me to effect this, by the forwarding of any wish he hath at heart; but he was always of a very reserved habit of mind, and not prone to speak of his own concerns. Forgive, sweetheart, this loving reproof, from thy most loving friend and servant,"
"BASIL ROOKWOOD."

Hubert's was as followeth:

"MADAM—

My presumption toward you hath doubtless been a sin calling for severe punishment; but I pray you leave not the cause of it unremembered. The doubtful mind you once showed in my regard, and of which the last time I saw you some marks methought did yet appear, should be my excuse if I have erred in a persistency of love, which most women would less deserve indeed, but would more appreciate than you have done. If this day no token doth reach me of your changed mind, be it so. I depart hence as changed as you do remain unchanged. It may be for mine

own weal, albeit passion deems of it otherwise, if you finally reject me whom once you did look upon with so great favor, that the very thought of it works in me a revived tenderness as should be mine own undoing if it prevailed, for this country hath laws which are not broken in vain, and faithful loyal service is differently requited than traitorous and obstinate malignity. I shall be the greater for lacking your love, proud lady; but to have it I would forego all a sovereign can bestow—all that ambition can desire. These, then, are my last words. If we meet not to-day, God knoweth with what sentiments we shall one day meet, when justice hath overtaken you, and love in me hath turned to hatred!"

"HUBERT ROOKWOOD."

"Ay," I bitterly exclaimed, laying the two letters side by side before me, "one endeth with love, the other with hate. The one showeth the noble fruits of true affection, the other the bitter end of selfish passion." Then I mused if I should send Basil, or show him later Hubert's letter, clearing myself of any injustice toward him, but destroying likewise for ever his virtuous confidence his brother's honor. A short struggle with myself ensued, but I soon resolved, for the present at least, on silence. If danger did seem to threaten Basil, which his knowledge of his brother's baseness could avert, then I must needs speak; but God defend I should without constraint pour a poisoned drop into the dear fount of his undoubting soul. Passion may die away, hatred may cease, repentance arise; but the evil done by the revealing of another's sin worketh endless wrong to the doer and the hearer.

The day on which I received these two letters did seem the longest I had ever known. On the next Basil came to Banham Hall, and told me his guests were gone. A load seemed lifted from my heart. But, albeit we resumed our wonted manner of life, and the same mutual kindness and accustomed duties and pleasures filled our days, I felt less secure in my happiness, less thoughtless of the world without, more subject to sudden sinkings of heart in the midst of greatest merriment, than before Hubert's visit.

In the early part of June, Mr. Congleton wrote in answer to Basil's eager pressings that he would fix the day of our marriage, that he was of opinion a better one could not be found than that of our Lady's Visitation, on the 2d of July, and that, if it pleased God, he should then take the first journey he had made for five-and-twenty years; for nothing would serve Lady Tregony but that the wedding should take place in her house, where a priest would marry us in secret at break of day, and then we should ride to the parish church at Euston for the public ceremony. He should, he added, carry Muriel with him, howsoever reluctant she should be to leave London; but he promised us this should be a welcome piece of constraint, for that she longed to see me again more than can be told.

Verily, pleasant letters reached me that week; for my father wrote he was in better health, and in great peace and contentment of mind at Rheims, albeit somewhat sad, when he saw younger and more fortunate men (for so he styled them) depart for the English mission; and by a cypher we had agreed on he gave me to understand Edmund Genings was of that number. And Lady Arundel, to whom I had reported the conversation I had with Sir Henry Jemingham, sent me an answer which I will here transcribe:

"MY WELL-BELOVED CONSTANCE

—You do rightly read my heart, and the hope you express in my regard, with so tender a friendship and solicitous desire for my happiness, hath indeed a better foundation than idle surmises. It hath truly pleased God that Philip's disposition toward me should change; and albeit this change is not as yet openly manifested, he nevertheless doth oftentimes visit me, and testifies much regret for his past neglect of one whom he doth now confess to be his truest friend, his greatest lover, and best comfort. O mine own dear friend! my life has known many strange accidents, but none greater or more strange than this, that my so long indifferent husband should turn into a secret lover who doth haunt me by stealth, and looking on me with new eyes, appears to conceive so much admiration for my worthless beauty, and to find such pleasure in my poor company, that it would seem as if a new face and person had been given to me wherewith to inspire him with this love for her to whom he doth owe it. Oh, I promise thee this husbandly wooing liketh me well, and methinks I would not at once disclose to the world this new kindness he doth show me and revival of conjugal affection, but rather hug it and cherish it like a secret treasure until it doth take such deep root that nothing can again separate his heart from me. His fears touching the queen's ill-conception of him increase, and his enemies do wax more powerful each day. The world hath become full of uneasiness to him. Methinks he would gladly break with it; but like to one who walketh on a narrow plank, with a precipice on each side of him, his safety lieth only in advancing. The report is true—I would it were false—of the queen's progress, and her intended visit to Kenninghall. I fear another fair estate in the north must needs pay the cost thereof; but avoidance is impossible. I am about to remove from London to Arundel Castle, where my lord doth will me for the present to reside. The sea-breezes on that coast, and the mild air of Sussex, he thinks should improve my health, which doth at this time require care. Touching religion, I have two or three times let fall words which implied an increased inclination to Catholic religion. Each time his countenance did very much alter, and assumed a painful expression. I fear he is as greatly opposed to it as heretofore. But if once resolved on what conscience doth prescribe, with God's help, I hope that neither new-found joys nor future fears shall stay me from obeying its voice.

"And so thou art to be married come the early days of July! I' faith thy Basil and thou have, like a pair of doves, cooed long enough, I ween, amidst the tall trees of Euston; which, if you are to be believed, should be the most delectable place in the whole world. And yet some have told me it is but a huge plain building, and the country about it, except for its luxuriant trees, of no notable beauty. The sunshine of thine own heart sheddeth, I ween, a radiancy on the plain walls and the unadorned gardens greater than nature or art can bestow. I cry thee mercy for this malicious surmise, and give thee license, when I shall write in the same strain touching my lord's castle at Arundel to flout me in a like manner. Some do disdainfully style it a huge old fortress; others a very grand and noble pile. If that good befalleth me that he doth visit me there, then I doubt not but it will be to me the cheerfullest place in existence. Thy loving servant to command,

"ANN ARUNDEL AND SURREY."

This letter came to my hand at Whitsuntide, when the village folks were enacting a pastoral, the only merit of which did lie in the innocent glee of the performers. The sheep-shearing feast, a very pretty festival, ensued a few days later. A fat lamb was provided, and the maidens of the town permitted to run after it, and she which took hold of it declared the lady of the lamb. 'Tis then the custom to kill and carry it on a long pole before the lady and her companions to the green, attended with music and morisco dances. But this year I ransomed the lamb, and had it crowned with blue corn-flowers and poppies, and led to a small paddock, where for some time I visited and fed it every day. Poor little lamb! like me, it had one short happy time that summer.

In the evening I went with the lasses to the banks of the Ouse, and scattered on the dimpling stream, as is their wont at the lamb-ale, a thousand odorous flowers—new-born roses, the fleur-de-luce, sweet-williams, and yellow coxcombs, the small-flowered lady's-slipper, the prince's-feather and the clustered bell-flower, the sweet-basil (the saucy wenches smiled when they furnished me with a bunch thereof), and a great store of midsummer daisies. When, with due observance, I threw on the water a handful of these golden-tufted and silver-crowned flowerets, I thought of Master Chaucer's lines:

"Above all the flowers in the mead
These love I most—these flowers white and red.
And in French called *la belle Marguerite*.
O commendable flower, and most in mind!
O flower and gracious excellence!
O amiable Marguerite."

The great store of winsome and graciously-named flowers used that day set me to plan a fair garden, wherein each month should yield in its turn to the altar of our secret chapel a pure incense of nature's own furnishing. Basil was helping me thereto, and my Lady Tregony smiling at my quaint devices, when Mr. Cobham, a cousin of her ladyship, arrived, bringing with him news of the queen's progress, which quickly diverted us from other thoughts, and caused my pencil to stand idle in mine hand.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Ah, ladies," exclaimed Mr. Cobham—pleased, I ween, to see how eagerly we looked for his news—"I promise you the eastern counties do exhibit their loyalty in a very commendable fashion, and so report saith her majesty doth think. The gallant appearance and brave array of the Suffolk esquires hath drawn from her highness sundry marks of her approval. What think you, my Lady Tregony, of two hundred bachelors, all gaily clad in white-velvet coats, and those of graver years in black-velvet coats and fair gold chains, with fifteen hundred men all mounted on horseback, and Sir William le Spring of Lavenham at their head. I warrant you a more comely troop and a nobler sight should not often be seen. Then, in Norfolk, what great sums of money have been spent! Notably at Kenninghall, where for divers days not only the queen herself was lodged and feasted, with all her household, council, courtiers, and all their company, but all the gentlemen also, and people of the country who came thither upon the occasion, in such plentiful, bountiful, and splendid manner, as the like had never been seen before in these counties. Every night she hath slept at some gentleman's seat. At Holdstead Hall I had the honor to be presented to her highness, and to see her dance a minuet. But an unlucky accident did occur that evening."

"No lives were lost, I hope?" Lady Tregony said.

"No lives," Master Cobham answered; "but a very precious fan which her majesty let drop into the moat—one of white and red feathers, which Sir Francis Drake had gifted her with on New Year's day. It was enamelled with a half-moon of mother-o'-pearl and had her majesty's picture within it."

"And at Norwich, sir?" I asked. "Methinks, by some reports we heard, the pageants there must have proved exceeding grand."

"Rare indeed," he replied. "On the 16th she did enter the town at Harford Bridge. The mayor received her with a long Latin oration, very tedious; and, moreover, presented her with a fair cup of silver, saying, 'Here is one hundred pounds pure gold.' To my thinking, the cup was to her liking more than the speech, and the gold most of all; for when one of her footmen advanced for to take the cup, she said sharply, 'Look to it: there is one hundred pounds.' Lord! what a number of pageants were enacted that day and those which followed! Deborah, Judith, Esther at one gate; Queen Martia at another; on the heights near Blanche-flower Castle, King Gurgunt and his men. Then all the heathen deities in turn: Mercury driving full speed through the city in a fantastic car; Jupiter presenting her with a riding-rod, and Venus with a white dove. But the rarest of all had been designed by Master Churchyard. Where her majesty was to take her barge, at the back-door of my Lord Arundel's town-house, he had prepared a goodly masque of water-nymphs concealed in a deep hole, and covered with green canvas, which suddenly opening as if the ground gaped, first one nymph was intended to pop up and make a speech to the queen, and then another; and a very complete concert to sound secretly and strangely out of the earth. But when the queen passed in her coach, a thunder-shower came down like a water-spout, and great claps of thunder silenced the concert; which some did presage to be an evil omen of the young lord's fortunes."

"I' faith," cried Basil, "I be sorry for the young nobleman, and yet more for the poor artificer of this ingenious pageant, to whom his nymphs turned into drowned rats must needs have been a distressing sight."

"He was heard to lament over it," Master Cobham said, "in very pathetic terms: 'What shall I say' (were his words) 'of the loss of velvets, silks, and cloths of gold? Well, nothing but the old adage—Man doth purpose, but God dispose.' Well, the mayor hath been knighted; and her majesty said she should never forget his city. On her journey she looked back,

and, with water in her eyes, shook her riding whip, and cried, 'Farewell Norwich!' Yesterday she was to sleep at Sir Henry Jerningham's at Cottessy, and hunt in his park to-day."

"Oh, poor Sir Henry!" I said laughing. "Then he hath not escaped this dear honor?"

"Notice of it was sent to him but two days before, from Norwich," Master Cobham rejoined; "and I ween he should have been glad for to be excused."

Lady Tregony then reminded us that supper was ready, and we removed to the dining-hall; but neither did this good gentleman weary of relating nor we of listening to the various haps of the royal progress, which he continued to describe whilst we sat at meat.

He was yet talking when the sound of a horse galloping under the windows surprised us, and we had scarce time to turn our heads before Basil's steward came tumbling into the room head foremost, like one demented.

"Sir, sir!" he cried, almost beside himself; "in God's name, what do you here, and the queen coming for to sleep at your house to-morrow?"

Methinks a thunder-clap in the midst of the stilly clear evening should not have startled us so much. Basil's face flushed very deeply; Lady Tregony looked ready to faint; my heart beat as if it should burst; Master Cobham threw his hat into the air, and cried, "Long live Queen Elizabeth, and the old house of Rookwood!"

"Who hath brought these tidings?" Basil asked of the steward.

"Marry," replied the man, "one of her majesty's gentlemen and two footmen have arrived from Cottessy, and brought this letter from Lord Burleigh for your honor."

Basil broke the seal, read the missive, and then quietly looking up, said, "It is true; and I must lose no time to prepare my poor house for her majesty's abode in it."

He looked not now red, but somewhat pale. Methinks he was thinking of the chapel, and what it held; and the queen's servants now in the house. I would not stay him; but, taking my hand whilst he spoke, he said to Lady Tregony,

"Dear lady, I shall lack yours and Constance's aid to-morrow. Will you do me so much good as to come with her to Euston as early before dinner as you can?"

"Yea, we will be with you, my good Basil," she answered, "before ten of the clock."

"'Tis not," he said, "that I intend to cast about for fine silks and cloths of gold, or contrive pageants—God defend it!—or ransack the country for rare and costly meats; but such honorable cheer and so much of comfort as a plain gentleman's house can afford, I be bound to provide for my sovereign when she deigneth to use mine house."

"Master Cobham, I do crave the honor of your company also," he added, turning to that gentleman, who, with many acknowledgments of his courtesy, excused himself on the plea that he must needs be at his own seat the next day.

Then Basil, mounting his horse which the steward had brought with him, rode away so fast that the old man could scarce keep up with him.

Not once that night did mine eyes close themselves. Either I sat bolt upright in my bed counting each time the clock struck the number of chimes, or else, unable to lie still, paced up and down my chamber. The hours seemed to pass so slowly, more than in times of deep grief. It seemed so strange a hap that the queen should come to Euston, I almost fancied at moments the whole thing to be a dream, so fantastic did it appear. Then a fear would seize me lest the chapel should have been discovered before Basil could arrive. Minor cares likewise troubled me; such as the scantiness and bad state of the furniture, the lack of household conveniences, the difficulty that might arise to procure sufficient food at a brief notice for so great a number of persons. Oh, how my head did work all night with these various thinkings! and it seemed as if the morning would never come, and when it did that Lady Tregony would never ring her bell. Then I bethought myself of the want of proper dresses for her and myself to appear in before her majesty, if so be we were admitted to her presence. Howsoever, I found she was indifferently well provided in that respect, for her old good gowns stood in a closet where dust could not reach them, and she bethought herself I could wear my wedding-dress, which had come from the seamstress a few days before; and so we should not be ashamed to be seen. I must needs confess that, though many doubts and apprehensions filled me touching this day, I did feel some contentment in the thought of the honor conferred on Basil. If there was pride in this, I do cry God mercy for it. As we rode to Euston, the fresh air, the eager looks of the people on the road—for now the report had spread of the queen's coming—the stir which it caused, the puttings up of flags, and buildings of green arches, strengthened this gladness. Basil was awaiting us with much impatience, and immediately drew me aside.

"I have locked," he said, "all the books and church furniture, and our Blessed Lady's image, in Owen's hiding place; so methinks we be quite secure. Beds and food I have sent for, and they keep coming in. Prithee, dear love, look well thyself to her majesty's chamber, for to make it as handsome and befitting as is possible with such poor means thereunto. I pray God the lodging may be to her contentation for one night."

So I hasted to the state-chamber—for so it was called, albeit except for size it had but small signs of state about it. Howsoever, with the maids' help, I gathered into it whatsoever furniture in the house was most handsome, and the wenches made wreaths of ivy and laurel, which we hung round the bare walls. Thence I went to the kitchen, and found her majesty's cook was arrived, with as many scullions as should have served a whole army; so, except speaking to him civilly, and inquiring what provisions he wanted, I had not much to do there. Then we went round the house with Mr. Bowyer, the gentleman-usher, for to assign the chambers to the queen's ladies, and the lords and gentlemen and the

waiting-women. There was no lack of room, but much of proper furniture; albeit chairs and tables were borrowed on all sides from the neighboring cottages, and Lady Tregony sent for a store from her house. Mr. Bowyer held in his hand a list of the persons of the court now journeying with the queen; Lord Burleigh, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Walter Raleigh, and many other famous courtiers were foremost in it. When their lodgings were fixed, he glanced down the paper, and, mine eyes following his, I perceived among the minor gentlemen there set down Hubert's name, which moved me very much; for we did not of a surety know at that time he did belong to the court, and I would fain he had not been present on this occasion, and new uneasy thoughts touching what had passed at Sir Francis Walsingham's house, and the words the queen had let fall concerning him and me, crossed my mind in consequence. But in that same list I soon saw another name which caused me so vehement an emotion that Basil, noticing it, pulled me by the hand into another room for to ask me the cause of that sudden passion.

"Basil," I whispered, "mine heart will break if that murdering Richard Topcliffe must sleep under your roof."

"God defend it!" he exclaimed. But pausing in his speech leant his arm against the chimney and his head on it for a brief space. Then raising it, said, in an altered tone, "Mine own love, be patient. We must needs drink this chalice to the dregs" (which showed me his thoughts touching this visit had been from the first less hopeful than mine). Taking my pencil out of mine hand, he walked straight to the door before which Mr. Bowyer was standing, awaiting us, and wrote thereon Master Topcliffe's name. Methought his hand shook a little in the doing of it. I then whispered again in his ear:

"Know you that Hubert is in the queen's retinue?"

"No, indeed!" he exclaimed; and then with his bright winning smile, "Prithee now, show him kindness for my sake. He had best sleep in my chamber to-night. It will make room, and mind us of our boyish days."

The day was waning and long shadows falling on the grass when tidings came that her majesty had been hunting that morning, and would not arrive till late. About dusk warning was given of her approach. She rode up on horseback to the house amidst the loud cheering of the crowd, with all her train very richly attired. But it had waxed so dark their countenances could not be seen. Her master of the horse lifted her from the saddle, and she went straight to her own apartments, being exceeding tired, it was said, with her day's sport and long riding. Notice was given that her highness would admit none to her presence that evening. Howsoever, she sent for Basil, and, giving him her hand to kiss, thanked him in the customary manner for the use of his house. It had not been intended that Lady Tregony and I should sleep at Euston, where the room did scarcely suffice for the queen's suite. So when it was signified her majesty should not leave her chamber that night, but, after a slight refection, immediately retire to rest, and her ladies likewise, who were almost dead with fatigue, she ordered our horses to be brought to the back-door. Basil stole away from the hall where the lords and gentlemen were assembled for to bid us good-night. After he had lifted me on the saddle, he threw his arm round the horse's neck as if for to detain him, and addressing me very fondly, called me his own love, his sole comfort, his best treasure, with many other endearing expressions.

Then I, loth to leave him alone amidst false friends and secret enemies, felt tenderness overcome me, and I gave him in return some very tender and passionate assurances of affection; upon which he kissed mine hands over and over again, and our hearts, overcharged with various emotions, found relief in this interchange of loving looks and words. But, alas! this brief interview had an unthought of witness more than good Lady Tregony, who said once or twice, "Come, children, bestir yourselves," or "Tut, tut, we should be off;" but still lingered herself for to pleasure us. I chanced to look up, whilst Basil was fastening my horse's bit, and by the light of a lamp projecting from the wall, I saw Hubert at an open window right over above our heads. I doubt not but that he had seen the manner of our parting, and heard the significant expressions therein used; for a livid hue, and the old terrible look which I had noticed in him before, disfigured his countenance. I am of opinion that until that time he had not believed with certainty that my natural, unbiassed inclination did prompt me to marry Basil, or that I loved him with other than a convenient and moderate regard, which, if circumstances reversed their positions, should not be a hindrance to his own suit. Basil having finished his management with my bridle stepped back with a smile and last good-night, all unconscious of that menacing visage which my terrified eyes were now averted from, but which I still seemed pursued by. It made me weep to think that these two brothers should lie in the same chamber that coming night; the one so confiding and guileless of heart, the other so full of envy and enmity.

I was so tired when I reached home that I fell heavily asleep for some hours. But, awaking between five and six of the clock, and not able to rest in my chamber, dressed myself and went into the garden. Not far from the house there was an arbor, with a seat in it. Passing alongside of it, I perceived, with no small terror, a man lying asleep on this bench. And then, with increased affright, but not believing mine own eyes, but rather thinking it to be a vision, saw Basil, as it seemed to me, in the same dress he wore the day before, but with his face much paler. A cry burst from me, for methought perhaps he should be dead. But he awoke at my scream, looked somewhat wildly about him for a minute, rubbed his eyes, and then with a kind of smile, albeit an exceeding sad one, said,

"Is it you, my good angel?"

"O Basil," I cried, sitting down by his side, and taking hold of his chilled hand, "what hath happened? Why are you here?"

He covered his face with his hands. Methinks he was praying. Then he raised his pale, noble visage and said:

"About one hour after your departure, supper being just ended, I was talking with Sir Walter Raleigh and some other gentlemen, when a message was brought unto me from Lord Burleigh, who had retired to his chamber, desiring for to speak with me. I thought it should be somewhat anent the queen's pleasure for the ordering of the next day, and waited at once on his lordship. When I came in, he looked at me with a very severe and harsh countenance. 'Sir,' he said in an abrupt manner, 'I am informed that you are excommunicated for papistry. How durst you then attempt the royal presence, and to kiss her majesty's hand? You—unfit to company with any Christian person—you are fitter for a pair of stocks, and are forthwith commanded not to appear again in her sight, but to hold yourself ready to attend her council's

pleasure.' Constance, God only knoweth what I felt; and oh, may he forgive me that for one moment I did yield to a burning resentment, and forgot the prayers I have so often put up, that when persecution fell on me I might meet it, as the early Christians did, with blessings, not with curses. But look you, love, a judicial sentence, torture, death methinks, should be easier to bear than this insulting, crushing, brutal tone, which is now used toward Catholics. Yet if Christ was for us struck by a slave and bore it, we should also be able for to endure their insolent scorn. Bitter words escaped me, I think, albeit I know not very well what I said; but his lordship turned his back on the man he had insulted, and left the room without listening to me. I be glad of it now. What doth it avail to remonstrate against injuries done under pretence of law, or bandy words with a judge which can compel you to silence?"

"Basil," I cried, "you may forgive that man; I cannot'."

"Yea, but if you love me, you shall forgive him," he cried. "God defend mine injuries should work in thee an unchristian resentment! Nay, nay, love, weep not; think for what cause I am ill-used, and thou wilt presently rejoice thereat rather than grieve."

"But what happened when that lord had left you?" I asked, not yet able to speak composedly.

Then he: "I stood stock-still for a while in a kind of bewilderment, hearing loud laughter in the hall below, and seeing, as it did happen, a man the worse for liquor staggering about the court. To my heated brain it did seem as if hell had been turned loose in my house, where some hours before—" Then he stopped, and again sinking his head on his hands, paused a little, and then continued without looking up: "Well, I came down the stairs and walked straight out at the front door. As I passed the hall I heard some one ask, 'Which is the master of this huge house?' and another, whom by his voice I knew to be Topcliffe, answered, 'Rookwood, a papist, newly crept out of his wardship. As to his house, 'tis most fit for the blackguard, but not for her gracious majesty to lodge in. But I hope she will serve God with great and comfortable examples, and have all such notorious papists presently committed to prison.' This man's speech seemed to restore me to myself, and a firmer spirit came over me. I resolved not to sleep under mine own roof, where, in the queen's name, such ignominious treatment had been awarded me,' and went out of my house, reciting those verses of the Psalms, 'O God, save me in thy name, and in thy strength judge me. Because strangers have risen up against me, and the strong have sought my soul.' I came here almost unwittingly, and not choosing to disturb any one in the midst of the night, lay down in this place, and, I thank God, soon fell asleep."

"You did not see Hubert?" I timidly inquired.

"No," he said, "neither before nor after my interview with Lord Burleigh. I hope no one hath accused him of papistry, and so this time he may escape."

"And who did accuse you?" I asked.

"I know not," he answered; "we are never safe for one hour. A discontented groom or covetous neighbor may ruin us when they list."

"But are you not in danger of being called before the council?" I said.

"Yea, more than in danger," he answered. "But I should hope a heavy fine shall this time satisfy the judges; which, albeit we can ill afford it, may yet be endured."

Then I drew him into the house, and we continued to converse till good Lady Tregony joined us. When I briefly related to her what Basil had told me, the color rose in her pale, aged cheek; but she only clasped her hands and said,

"God's holy will be done."

"Constance," Basil exclaimed, whilst he was eating some breakfast we had set before him, "prithee get me paper and ink for to write to Hubert."

I looked at him inquiringly as I gave him what he asked for.

"I am banished from mine own house," he said; "but as long as it is mine the queen should not lack anything I can supply for her comfort. She is my guest, albeit I am deemed unworthy to come into her presence; I must needs charge Hubert to act the host in my place, and see to all hospitable duties."

My heart swelled at this speech. Methought, though I dared not utter my thinking for more reasons than one, that Hubert had most like not waited for his brother's licence to assume the mastership of his house. The messenger was despatched, and then a long silence ensued, Basil walking to and fro before the house, and I embroidering, with mine eyes often raised from my work to look toward him. When nine o'clock struck I joined him, and we strolled outside the gate, and without forecasting to do so walked along the well-known path leading to Euston. When we reached a turn of the road whence the house is to be seen, we stopped and sat down on a bank under a sycamore tree. We could discern from thence persons going in and out of the doors, and the country-folk crowding about the windows for to catch a glimpse of the queen, the guard ever and anon pushing them back with their halberds. The numbers of them continually increased, and deputations began to arrive with processions and flags. It was passing strange for to be sitting there gazing as strangers on this turmoil, and folks crowding about that house the master of which was banished from it. At last we noticed an increased agitation amongst the people which seemed to presage the queen's coming out. Sounds of shouting proceeded from inside the building, and then a number of men issued from the front door, and pushing back the crowd advanced to the centre of the green plot in front and made a circle there with ropes.

"What sport are they making ready for?" I said, turning to Basil.

"God knoweth," he answered in a despondent tone. Then came others carrying a great armed-chair, which they placed

on one side of the circle and other chairs beside it, and some country people brought in their arms loads of fagots, which they piled up in the midst of the green space. A painful suspicion crossed my mind, and I stole a glance at Basil for to see if the same thought had come to him. He was looking another way. I cast about if it should be possible on some pretence to draw him off from that spot, whence it misgave me a sorrowful sight should meet his eyes. But at that moment both of us were aroused by loud cries of "God save the queen!" "Long live Queen Elizabeth!" and we beheld her issue from the house bowing to the crowd, which filled the air with their cries and vociferous cheering. She seated herself in the armed-chair, her ladies and the chief persons of her train on each side of her. On the edge of this half-circle I discerned Hubert. The straining of mine eyes was very painful; they seemed to burn in their sockets. Basil had been watching the forth-coming of the queen, but his sight was not so quick as mine, and as yet no fear such as I entertained had struck him.

"What be they about?" he said to me with a good-natured smile. Before I could answer—"Good God!" he exclaimed in an altered voice; "what sound is that?" for suddenly yells and hooting noises arose, such as a mob do salute criminals with, and a kind of procession issued from the front door. "What, what is it?" cried Basil, seizing my hand with a convulsive grasp; "what do they carry?—not Blessed Mary's image?"

"Yea," I said, "I see Topcliffe walking in front of them. They will burn it. There, there—they do lift it in the air in mockery. Oh, some people do avoid and turn away; now they lay it down and light the fagots." Then I put my hand over his eyes for that he should not see a sort of dance which was performed around the fire, mixed with yells and insulting gestures, and the queen sitting and looking on. He forced my hand away; and when I said, "Oh, prithee, Basil, stay not here—come with me," he exclaimed.

"Let me go, Constance! let me go! Shall I stand aloof when at mine own door the Blessed Mother of God is outraged? Am I a Jew or a heretic that I should endure this sight and not smite this queen of earth, which dareth to insult the Queen of Saints? Yea, if I should be torn to pieces, I will not suffer them to proceed."

I clung to him affrighted, and cried out, "Basil, you shall not go. Our Blessed Lady forbids it; your passion doth blind you. You will offend God and lose your soul if you do. Basil, dearest Basil, 'tis human anger, not godly sorrow only, moves you now." Then he cast himself down with his face on the ground and wept bitterly; which did comfort me, for his inflamed countenance had been terrible, and these tears came as a relief.

Meantime this disgusting scene ended, and the queen withdrew; after which the crowd slowly dispersed, smouldering ashes alone remaining in the midst of the burnt-up grass. Then Basil rose, folded his arms, and gazed on the scene in silence. At last he said:

"Constance, this house shall no longer be mine. God knoweth I have loved it well since my infancy. More dearly still since we forecasted together to serve God in it. But this scene would never pass away from my mind. This outrage hath stained the home of my fathers. This people, whose yells do yet ring in mine ears, can no longer be to me neighbors as heretofore, or this queen my queen. God forgive me if I do err in this. I do not curse her. No, God defend it! I pray that on her sad deathbed—for surely a sad one it must be—she shall cry for mercy and obtain it; but her subject I will not remain. I will compound my estate for a sum of money, and will go beyond seas, where God is served in a Catholic manner and his Holy Mother not dishonored. Wilt thou follow me there, Constance?"

I leant my head on his shoulder, weeping. "O, Basil," I cried, "I can answer only in the words of Ruth: 'Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go; and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.'"

He drew my arm in his, and we walked slowly away toward Fakenham. Wishing to prepare his mind for a possible misfortune, I said: "We be a thousand times happier than those which shall possess thy lands."

"What say you?" he quickly answered; "who shall possess them?"

"God knoweth," I replied, afraid to speak further.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed: "a dreadful thought cometh to me; where was Hubert this morning?"

I remained silent.

"Speak, speak! O Constance, God defend he was there!"

His grief and horror were so great I durst not reveal the truth, but made some kind of evasive answer. To this day methinks he is ignorant on that point.

The queen and the court departed from Euston soon after two of the clock; not before, as I since heard, the church furniture and books had been all destroyed, and a malicious report set about that a piece of her majesty's plate was missing, as an excuse for to misuse the poor servants which had showed grief at the destruction carried on before their eyes. When notice of their departure reached Banham Hall, whither we had returned, Basil immediately went back to Euston. I much lamented he should be alone that evening, in the midst of so many sad sights and thoughts as his house now should afford him, little forecasting the event which, by a greater mishap, surmounted minor subjects of grief.

About six of the clock, Sir Francis Walsingham, attended by an esquire and two grooms, arrived at Lady Tregony's seat, and was received by her with the courtesy she was wont to observe with every one. After some brief discoursing with her on indifferent matters, he said his business was with young Mistress Sherwood, and he desired to see her alone. Thereupon I was fetched to him, and straightway he began to speak of the queen's good opinion of me, and that her highness had been well contented with my behavior when I had been admitted into her presence at his house; and that it should well please her majesty I should marry a faithful subject of her majesty's, whom she had taken into her favor, and then she would do us both good.

I looked in a doubtful manner at Sir Francis, feigning to misapprehend his meaning, albeit too clear did it appear to me. Seeing I did not speak, he went on:

"It is her majesty's gracious desire, Mistress Sherwood, that you should marry young Rookwood, her newly appointed servant, and from this time possessor of Euston House, and all lands appertaining unto it, which have devolved upon him in virtue of his brother's recusancy and his own recent conformity."

"Sir," I answered, "my troth is plighted to his brother, a good man and an honorable gentleman, up to this time master of Euston and its lands; and whatever shall betide him or his possessions, none but him shall be my husband, if ten thousand queens as great as this one should proffer me another."

"Madam," said Sir Francis, "be not too rash in your pledges. I should be loth to think one so well trained in virtue and loyalty should persist in maintaining a troth-plight with a convicted recusant, an exceeding malignant papist, who is at this moment in the hands of the pursuivants, and by order of her majesty's council committed to Norwich gaol. If he should (which is doubtful) escape such a sentence as should ordain him to a lasting imprisonment or perpetual banishment from this realm, his poverty must needs constrain him to relinquish all pretensions to your hand: for his brother, a most learned, well-disposed, commendable young gentleman, with such good parts as fit him to aspire to some high advancement in the state and at court, having conformed some days ago to the established religion and given many proofs of his zeal and sincerity therein, his brother's estates, as is most just, have devolved on him, and a more worthy and, I may add, from long and constant devotion and fervent humble passion long since entertained for yourself, more desirable candidate for your hand could not easily be found."

I looked fixedly at Sir Francis, and then said, subduing my voice as much as possible, and restraining all gestures:

"Sir, you have, I ween, a more deep knowledge of men's hearts and a more piercing insight into their thoughts than any other person in the world. You are wiser than any other statesman, and your wit and sagacity are spoken of all over Christendom. But methinketh, sir, there are two things which, wise and learned as you are, you are yet ignorant of, and these are a woman's heart and a Catholic's faith. I would as soon wed the meanest clown which yelled this day at Blessed Mary's image, as the future possessor of Euston, the apostate Hubert Rookwood. Now, sir, I pray you, send for the pursuivants, and let me be committed to gaol for the same crime as my betrothed husband, God knoweth I will bless you for it."

"Madam," Sir Francis coldly answered, "the law taketh no heed of persons out of their senses. A frantic passion and an immoderate fanaticism have distracted your reason. Time and reflection will, I doubt not, recall you to better and more comfortable sentiments; in which case I pray you to have recourse to my good offices, which shall ever be at your service."

Then bowing, he left me; and when he was gone, and the tumult of my soul had subsided, I lamented my vehemency, for methought if I had been more cunning in my speech, I could have done Basil some good; but now it was too late, and verily, if again exposed to the same temptation, I doubt if I could have dissembled the indignant feelings which Sir Francis's advocacy of Hubert's suit worked in me.

Lady Tregony, pitying my unhappy plight, proposed to travel with me to London, where I was now desirous to return, for there I thought some steps might be taken to procure Basil's release, with more hope of success than if I tarried in the scene of our late happiness. She did me also the good to go with me in the first place to Norwich, where, by means of that same governor to whom Sir Hammond l'Estrange had once written in my father's behalf, we obtained for to see Basil for a few minutes. His brother's apostasy, and the painful suspicion that it was by his means the secret of Owen's cell at Euston had been betrayed, gave him infinite concern; but his own imprisonment and losses he bore with very great cheerfulness; and we entertained ourselves with the thought of a small cottage beyond seas, which henceforward became the theme of such imaginings as lovers must needs cherish to keep alive the flame of hope. Two days afterward I reached London, having travelled very fast, and only slept one night on the road.

It sometimes happens that certain misfortunes do overtake us which, had we foreseen, we should well-nigh have despaired, and misdoubted with what strength we should meet them; but God is very merciful, and fitteth the back to the burthen. If at the time that Basil left me at four of the clock to return to Euston, without any doubt on our minds to meet the next day, I should have known how long a parting was at hand, methinks all courage would have failed me. But hope worketh patience, and patience in return breedeth hope, and the while the soul is learning lessons of resignation, which at first would have seemed too hard. At the outset of this trouble, I expected he should have soon been set at liberty on the payment of a fine; but I had forgot he was now a poor man, well-nigh beggared by the loss of his inheritance. Mr. Swithin Wells, one of the best friends he and myself had—for, alas! good Mr. Roper had died during my absence—told me that, when Hubert heard of his brother's arrest, he fell into a great anguish of mind, and dealt earnestly with his new patrons to procure his release, but with no effect. Then, in a letter which he sent him, he offered to remit unto him whatever moneys he desired out of his estates; but Basil steadfastly refused to receive from him so much as one penny, and to this day has persisted in this resolve. I have since seen the letter which he wrote to him on this occasion, in which this resolution was expressed, but in no angry or contumelious terms, freely yielding him his entire forgiveness for his offence against him, if indeed any did exist, but such as was next to nothing in comparison of the offence toward God committed in the abandonment of his faith; and with all earnestness beseeching him to think seriously upon his present state, and to consider if the course he had taken, contrary to the breeding and education he had received, should tend to his true honor, reputation, contentment of mind, and eternal salvation. This he said he did plainly, for the discharge of his own conscience, and the declaration of an abiding love for him.

For the space of a year and two months he remained in prison at Norwich, Mr. Wells and Mr. Lacy furnishing him with assistance, without which he should have lacked the necessaries of life; leastways such conveniences as made his sufferings tolerable. At the end of that time, it may be by Hubert's or some other friend's efforts, a sentence of banishment was passed upon him, and he went beyond seas. I would fain have then joined him, but it pleased not God it should be at that time possible. Some moneys which were owing to him by a well-disposed debtor he looked for to

recover, but till that happened he had not means for his own subsistence, much less wherewith to support a wife in howsoever humble a fashion. Dr. Allen (now cardinal) invited him to Rheims, and received him there with open arms. My father, during the last years of his life, found in him a most dutiful and affectionate son, who closed his eyes with a true filial reverence. Our love waxed not for this long separation less ardent or less tender; only more patient, more exalted, more inwardly binding, now so much the more outwardly impeded. The greatest excellency I found in myself was the power of apprehending and the virtue of loving his. If his name appear not so frequently in this my writing as it hath hitherto done, even as his visible presence was lacking in that portion of my life which followed his departure, the thought of him never leaves me. If I speak of virtue in any one else, my mind turns to him, the most perfect exemplar I have met with of self-forgetting goodness; if of love, my heart recalls the perfect exchange of affection which doth link his soul with mine; if of joy, the memory of that pure happiness I found in his society; if of sorrow, of the perpetual grief his absence did cause me; if of hope, the abiding anchor whereon I rested mine during the weary years of separation. Yea, when I do write the words faith, honor, nobility, firmness, tenderness, then I think I am writing my dear Basil's name.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The year which followed Basil's arrest, and during which he was in the prison at Norwich, I wholly spent in London; not with any success touching the procuring of his release, as I had expected, but with a constant hope thereof which had its fulfilment later, albeit not by any of the means I had looked to. I shared the while with Muriel the care of her now aged and very infirm parents, taking her place at home when she went abroad on her charitable errands, or employed by her in the like good works when my ability would serve. A time cometh in most persons' lives, when maturity doth supplant youthfulness. I say most persons, because I have noticed that there are some who never do seem to attain unto any maturity of mind, and do live and die with the same childish spirit they had in youth. To others this change, albeit real, is scarcely perceptible, so gradual are its effects; but some again, either from a natural thoughtfulness, or by the influence of circumstances tending to sober in them the exuberance of spirits which appertaineth to early age, do wax mature in disposition before they grow old in years; and this befel me at that time. The eager temper, the intent desire and pursuit of enjoyment (of a good and innocent sort, I thank God) which had belonged to me till then, did so much and visibly abate, that it caused me some astonishment to see myself so changed. Joyful hours I have since known, happy days wherein mine heart hath been raised in adoring thankfulness to the Giver of all good; but the color of my mind hath no more resembled that of former years, than the hues of the evening sky can be likened to the roseate flush of early morning. The joys have been tasted, the happiness relished, but not with the same keenness as heretofore. Mine own troubles, the crowning one of Basil's misfortune, and what I continued then to witness in others of mine own faith, wrought in me these effects. The life of a Catholic in England in these days must needs, I think, produce one of two frames of mind. Either he will harbor angry passions, which religion reproves, which change a natural indignation into an unchristian temper of hatred, and lead him into plots and treasons; or else he becomes detached from the world, very quiet, given to prayer, ready to take at God's hands, and as from him at men's also, sufferings of all kinds; and even those as yet removed from so great perfection learn to be still, and to bethink themselves rather of the next world than of the present one, more than even good people did in old tunes.

The only friends I haunted at that time were Mr. and Mrs. Swithin Wells. In the summer of that year I heard one day, when in their company, that Father Edmund Campion was soon to arrive in London. Father Parsons was then lodging at Master George Gilbert's house, and much talk was ministered touching this other priest's landing, and how he should be conducted thither in safety. Bryan Lacy, Thomas James, and many others, took it by turns to watch at the landing-place where he was expected to disembark. Each evening Mr. Wells's friends came for to hear news thereof. One day, when no tidings of it had yet transpired, and the company was leaving, Mr. James comes in, and having shut the door, and glanced round the room before speaking, says, with a smile,

"What think you, sirs and ladies?"

"Master Campion is arrived," cries Mistress Wells.

"God be praised!" cries her husband, and all giving signs of joy do gather round Mr. James for to hear the manner of his landing.

"Well," quoth he, "I had been pacing up and down the quay for well-nigh five hours, when I discerned a boat, which (God only knoweth wherefore) I straightway apprehended to be the one should bring Master Campion. And when it reached the landing-place, beshrew me if I did not at once see a man dressed in some kind of a merchant suit, which, from the marks I had of his features from Master Parsons, I made sure was the reverend father. So when he steps out of the boat I stand close to him, and in an audible voice, 'Good morrow, Edmund,' says I, which he hearing, turns round and looks me in the face. We both smile and shake hands, and I lead him at once to Master Gilbert's house. Oh, I promise you, it was with no small comfort to myself I brought that work to a safe ending. But now, sir," he continued, turning to Mr. Wells, "what think you of this? Nothing will serve Master Campion but a place must be immediately hired, and a spacious one also, for him to begin at once to preach, for he saith he is here but for that purpose, and that he would not the pursuivants should catch him before he hath opened his lips in England; albeit, if God will grant him for the space of one year to exercise his ministry in this realm, he is most content to lay down his life afterward. And methinks he considers Almighty God doth accept this bargain, and is in haste for to begin."

"Hath Master Gilbert called his friends together for to consider of it?" asked Mr. Wells.

"Yea," answered Mr. James. "Tomorrow, at ten of the clock, a meeting will be held, not at his house, for greater security, but at Master Brown's shop in Southwark, for this purpose, and he prayeth you to attend it, sir, and you, and you, and you," he continued, turning to Bryan Lacy, William Gresham, Godfrey Fuljambe, Gervase Pierpoint, and Philip

and Charles Bassett, which were all present.

The next day I heard from Mrs. Wells that my Lord Paget, at the instigation of his friends which met at Mr. Brown's, had hired, in his own name, Noel House, in the which one very large chamber should serve as a chapel, and that on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, which fell on the coming Sunday, Father Campion would say mass there, and for the first time preach. She said the chief Catholics in London had combined for to send there, in the night, some vestments, some ornaments for the altar, books, and all that should be needful for divine worship. And the young noblemen and gentlemen which had been at her house the night before, and many others also, such as Lord Vaux, William and Richard Griffith, Arthur Cresswell, Charles Tilvey, Stephen Berkeley, James Hill, Thomas de Salisbury, Thomas Fitzherbert, Jerom Bellamy, Thomas Pound, Richard Stanyhurst, Thomas Abington, and Charles Arundel (this was one of the Queen's pages, but withal a zealous Catholic), had joined themselves in a company, for to act, some as sacristans of this secret chapel, some as messengers, to go round and give notice of the preachments, and some as porters, which would be a very weighty office, for one unreliable person admitted into that oratory should be the ruin of all concerned.

Muriel and I, with Mr. Wells, went at an early hour on the Sunday to Noel House. Master Philip Bassett was at the door. He smiled when he saw us, and said he supposed he needed not to ask us for the password. The chamber into which we went was so large, and the altar so richly adorned, that the like, I ween, had not been seen since the queen had changed the religion of the country.

Mass was said by Father Campion, and that noble company of devout gentlemen aforementioned almost all communicated thereat, and many others beside, an ladies not a few. When mass was ended, and Father Campion stood up for to begin his sermon, so deep a silence reigned in that crowded assembly—for the chamber was more full than it could well hold—that a pin should have been heard to drop. Some thirsting for to hear Catholic preaching, so rare in these days, some eager to listen to the words of a man famous for his learning and parts, both before and after his conversion, beyond any other in this country. For mine own part, methought his very countenance was a preachment. When his eyes addressed themselves to heaven, it seemed as if they did verily see God, so piercing, so awed, so reverent was their gaze. He took for his text the words, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." My whole soul was fastened on his words; and albeit I have had but scant occasion to compare one preacher with another, I do not think it should be possible for a more pathetic and stirring eloquence to flow from human lips than his who that day gave God's message to a suffering and persecuted people. I had not taken mine eyes off his pale and glowing face not for so much as one instant, until, near the close of his discourse, I chanced to turn them to a place almost hidden by the curtain of an altar, where some gentlemen were standing, concealing themselves from sight. Alas! in one instant the fervent glowing of my heart, the staid, rapt intentness with which I had listened, the heavenward lifting up of my soul, vanished as if a vision of death had risen before me. I had seen Hubert Rookwood's face, that face so like—oh, what anguish was that likeness to me then!—to my Basil's. No one but me could perceive him, he was so hid by the curtain; but where I sat it opened a little, and disclosed the stern, melancholy, beautiful visage of the apostate, the betrayer of his own brother, the author of our ruin, the destroyer of our happiness. I thank God that I first beheld him again in that holy place, by the side of the altar whereon Jesus had lately descended, whilst the words of his servant were in mine ears, speaking of love and patience. It was not hatred, God knoweth it, I then felt for Basil's brother, but only terror for all present, and for him also, if peradventure he was there with an evil intent. Mine eyes were fixed as by a spell on his pale face, the while Father Campion's closing words were uttered, which spoke of St. Peter, of his crime and of his penance, of his bitter tears and his burning love. "If," he cried, "there be one here present on whose soul doth lie the guilt of a like sin; one peradventure yet more guilty than Peter; one like Judas in his crime; one like Judas in his despair—to him I say, There is mercy for thee; there is hope for thee, there is heaven for thee, if thou wilt have it. Doom not thyself, and God will never doom thee." These or the like words (for memory doth ill serve me to recall the fervent adjurations of that apostolical man) he used; and, lo, I beheld tears running down like rain from Hubert's eyes—an unchecked, vehement torrent which seemed to defy all restraint. How I blessed those tears! what a yearning pity seized me for him who did shed them! How I longed to clasp his hand and to weep with him! I lost sight of him when the sermon was finished; but in the street, when we departed—which was done slowly and by degrees, for to avoid notice, four or five only going out at a time—I saw him on the other side of the pavement. Our eyes met; he stopped in a hesitating manner, and I also doubted what to do, for I thought Mistress Wells and Muriel would be averse to speak to him. Then he rapidly crossed over, and said, in a whisper:

"Will you see me, Constance, if I come to you this evening?"

I pondered; I feared to quench, it might be, a good resolve, or precipitate an evil one by a refusal; and building hopes of the former on the tears I had seen him shed, I said:

"Yea, if you come as Basil's brother and mine."

He turned and walked hastily away.

Mistress Wells and Muriel asked me with some affright if it was Hubert who had spoken to me, for they had scarce seen his face, although from his figure they had judged it was him; and when I told them he had been at Noel House, "Then we are undone!" the one exclaimed; and Muriel said, "We must straightway apprise Mr. Wells thereof; but there should be hopes, I think, he came there in some good disposition."

"I think so too," I answered, and told them of the emotion which I had noticed in him at the close of the sermon, which comforted them not a little. But he came not that evening; and Mr. Wells discovered the next day that it was Thomas Fitzherbert, who had lately arrived in London, and was not privy to his late conformity, which had invited him to come to Noel House. Father Campion continued to preach once a day at the least, often twice, and sometimes thrice, and very marvellous effects ensued. Each day greater crowds did seek admittance for to hear him, and Noel House was as openly frequented as if it had been a public church. Numbers of well-disposed Protestants came for to hear him, and it was bruited at the time that Lord Arundel had been amongst them. He converted many of the best sort, beside young gentlemen students, and others of all conditions, which by day, and some by night, sought to confer with him. I went to the preachments as often as possible. We could scarce credit our eyes and ears, so singular did it appear that one

should dare to preach, and so many to listen to Catholic doctrine, and to seek to be reconciled in the midst of so great dangers, and under the pressure of tyrannic laws. Every day some newcomer was to be seen at Noel House, sometimes their faces concealed under great hats, sometimes stationed behind curtains or open doors for to escape observation.

After some weeks had thus passed, when I ceased to expect Hubert should come, he one day asked to see me, and having sent for Kate, who was then in the house, I did receive him. Her presence appeared greatly to displease him, but he began to speak to me in Italian; and first he complained of Basil's pride, which would not suffer him to receive any assistance from him who should be so willing to give it.

"Would you—" I said, and was about to add some cutting speech, but I resolved to restrain myself and by no indiscreet words to harden his soul against remorse, or perhaps endanger others. Then, after some other talking, he told me in a cunning manner, making his meaning clear, but not couching it in direct terms, that if I would conform to the Protestant religion and marry him, Basil should be, he could warrant it, set at liberty, and he would make over to him more than one-half of the income of his estates yearly, which, being done in secret, the law could not then touch him. I made no answer thereunto, but fixing mine eyes on him, said, in English:

"Hubert, what should be your opinion of the sermon on St. Peter and St. Paul's Day?" He changed color. "Was it not," I said, "a moving one?" Biting his lip, he replied:

"I deny not the preacher's talent."

"O Hubert," I exclaimed, "fence not yourself with evasive answers. I know you believe as a Catholic."

"The devils believe," he answered.

"Hubert," I then said, with all the energy of my soul, "if you would not miserably perish—if you would not lose your soul—promise me this night to retrace your steps; to seek Father Campion and be reconciled." His lip quivered; methought I could almost see his good angel on one side of him and a tempting fiend on the other. But the last prevailed, for with a bitter sneer he said:

"Yea, willingly, fair saint, if you will marry me."

Kate, who till then had not much understood what had passed, cried out, "Fie, Hubert, fie on thee to tempt her to abandon Basil, and he a prisoner."

"Madam," he said, turning to her, "recusants should not be so bold in their language. The laws of the land are transgressed in a very daring manner now-a-days, and those who obey them taunted for the performance of their duty to the queen and the country."

Oh, what a hard struggle it proved to be patient; to repress the vehement reproaches which hovered on my lips. Kate looked at me affrighted. I trembled from head to foot. Father Campion's life and the fate of many others, it might be, were in the hands of this man, this traitor, this spy. To upbraid him I dared not, but wringing my hands, exclaimed:

"O Hubert, Hubert! for thy mother's sake, who looks down on us from heaven, listen to me. There be no crimes which may not be forgiven; but some there be which if one doth commit them he forgiveth not himself, and is likely to perish miserably."

"Think you I know this not?" he fiercely cried; "think you not that I suffer even now the torment you speak of, and envy the beggar in the street his stupid apathy?" He drew a paper from his bosom and unfolded it. A terrible gleam shot through his eyes. "I could compel you to be my wife."

"No," I said, looking him in the face, "neither man nor fiends can give you that power. God alone can do it, and he will not."

"Do you see this paper?" he asked. "Here are the names of all the recusants who have been reconciled by the Pope's champion. I have but to speak the word, and to-morrow they are lodged in the Marshalsea or the Tower, and the priest first and foremost."

"But you will not do it," I said, with a singular calmness. "No, Hubert; as God Almighty liveth, you will not. You cannot commit this crime, this foul murder."

"If it should come to that," he fiercely cried, "if blood should be shed, on your head it will fall. You can save them if you list."

"Would you compel me by a bloody threat to utter a false vow?" I said. "O Hubert, Hubert! that you, you should threaten to betray a priest, to denounce Catholics! There was a day—have you forgot it?—when at the chapel at Euston, your father at your side, you knelt, an innocent child, at the altar's rail, and a priest came to you and said, '*Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam ad vitam aeternam.*' If any one had then told you"—

"Oh, for God's sake speak not of it!" he wildly cried; "that way madness doth lie."

"No, no," I cried; "not madness, but hope and return."

A change came over his face; he thrust the paper in my hand. "Destroy it," he cried; "destroy it, Constance!" And then bursting into tears, "God knoweth I never meant to do it."

"O Hubert, you have been mad, dear brother, more mad than guilty. Pray, and God will bless you."

"Call me not brother, Constance Would to God I had been *only* mad! But it is too late now to think on it."

"Nay, nay," I cried, "it never is too late."

"Pray for me then," he said, and went to the door: but, turning suddenly, whispered in a scarce audible manner, "Ask Father Campion to pray for me," and then rushed out.

Kate had now half-fainted, and would have it we were all going to be killed. I pacified and sent her home, lest she should fright her parents with her rambling speeches.

Albeit Hubert's last words had seemed to be sincere, I could not but call to mind how, after he had been apparently cut to the heart and moved even to tears by Father Campion's preaching, he had soon uttered threats which, howsoever recalled, left me in doubt if it should be safe to rely on his silence; so I privately informed Mr. Wells, and he Master George Gilbert and Father Parsons, of what had passed between us. At the same time, I have never known whether by Hubert's means, or in any other way, her majesty's council got wind of the matter, and gave out that great confederacies were made by the Pope and foreign princes for the invasion of this country, and that Jesuits and seminary priests were sent to prepare their ways. Exquisite diligence was used for the apprehension of all such, but more particularly the Pope's champion, as Master Campion was called. So in the certainty that Hubert was privy to the existence of the chapel at Noel House, and that many Protestants were also acquainted with it, and likewise with his lodging at Master Elliot's, where not a few resorted to him in the night, he was constrained by Father Parsons to leave London, to the no small regret of Catholics and others also which greatly admired his learning and eloquence, the like of which was not to be found in any other person at that time. None of those which had attended the preachments at Noel House were accused, nor the place wherein they had met disclosed, which inclineth me to think Hubert did not reveal to her majesty's government his knowledge thereof.

About two months afterward Basil's release and banishment happened. I would fain have seen him on his way to the coast; but the order for his departure was so sudden and peremptory, the queen's officers not losing sight of him until he was embarked on a vessel going to France, that I was deprived of that happiness. That he was no longer a prisoner I rejoiced; but it seemed as if a second and more grievous separation had ensued, now that the sea did divide me from the dear object of my love.

Lady Arundel, whose affectionate heart resented with the most tender pity the abrupt interruption of our happiness, had often written to me during this year to urge my coming to Arundel Castle; "for," said she, "methinks, my dear Constance, a third turtle-dove might now be added to the two on the Queen of Scotland's design; and on thy tree, sweet one, the leaves are, I warrant thee, very green yet, and future joys shall blossom on its wholesome branches, which are pruned but not destroyed, injured but not withered." She spoke with no small contentment of her then residence, that noble castle, her husband's worthiest possession (as she styled it), and the grandest jewel of his earldom. For albeit (thus she wrote) "Kenninghall is larger in the extent it doth cover and embrace, and far more rich in its decorations and adornments, I hold it not to be comparable in true dignity to this castle, which, for the strength of its walls, the massive grandeur of its keep, the vast forests which do encircle it, the river which bathes its feet, the sea in its vicinity and to be seen from its tower, the stately trees about it, and the clinging ivy which softens with abundant verdure the stern, frowning walls, hath not its like in all England." But a letter I had from this dear lady a few months after this one contained the most joyful news I could receive, as will be seen by those who read it:

"My good Constance" (her ladyship wrote), "I would I had you a prisoner in this fortress, to hold and detain at my pleasure. Methinks I will present thee as a recusant, and sue for the privilege of thy custody. Verily, I should keep good watch over thee. There be dungeons enough, I warrant you, in the keep, wherein to imprison runaway friends. Master Bayley doth take great pains to explain to me the names and old uses of the towers, chapels, and buildings within and without the castle, which do testify to the zeal and piety of past generations: the Chapel of St. Martin, in the keep, which was the oratory of the garrison; the old collegiate buildings of the College of the Holy Trinity; the b Maison-Dieu, designed by Richard, Earl of Arundel, and built by his son on the right bank of the river, for the harboring of twenty aged and poor men, either unmarried or widowers, which, from infirmity, were unable to provide for their own support; the Priory of the Friars Preachers, with the rising gardens behind it; the Chapel of Blessed Mary, over the gate; that of St. James ad Leprosos, which was attached to the Leper's Hospital; and St. Lawrence's, which standeth on the hill above the tower; and in the valley below, the Priory of St. Bartholomew, built by Queen Adeliza for the monks of St. Austin. Verily the poor were well cared for when all these monasteries and hospitals did exist; and it doth grieve me to think that the moneys which were designed by so many pious men of past ages for the good of religion should now be paid to my lord, and spent in worldly and profane uses. Howsoever, I have better hopes than heretofore that he will one day serve God in a Christian manner. And now, methinks, after much doubting if I should dare for to commit so weighty a secret unto paper, that I must needs tell thee, as this time I send my letter by a trusty messenger, what, if I judge rightly, will prove so great a comfort to thee, my dear Constance, that thine own griefs shall seem the lighter for it. Thou dost well know how long I have been well-affected to Catholic religion, increasing therein daily more and more, but yet not wholly resolved to embrace and profess it. But by reading a book treating of the danger of schism, soon after my coming here, I was so efficaciously moved, that I made a firm purpose to become a member of the Catholic and only true Church of God. I charged Mr. Bayley to seek out a grave and ancient priest, and to bring him here privately; for I desired very much that my reconciliation, and meeting with this priest to that intent, should be kept as secret as was possible, for the times are more troublesome than ever, and I would fain have none to know of it until I can disclose it myself to my lord in a prudent manner. I have, as thou knoweth, no Catholic women about me, nor any one whom I durst acquaint with this business; so I was forced to go alone at an unseasonable hour from mine own lodging in the castle, by certain dark ways and obscure passages, to the chamber where this priest (whose name, for greater prudence, I mention not here) was lodged, there to make my confession—it being thought, both by Mr. Bayley and myself, that otherwise it could not possibly be done without discovery, or at least great danger thereof. Oh, mine own dear Constance, when I returned by the same way I had gone, lightened of a burthen so many years endured, cheered by the thought of a reconcilment so long desired, strengthened and raised, leasts ways for a while, above all worldly fears, darkness appeared light, rough paths smooth; the moon,

shining through the chinks of the secret passage, which I thought had shed before a ghastly light on the uneven walls, now seemed to yield a mild and pleasant brightness, like unto that of God's grace in a heart at peace. And this exceeding contentment and steadfastness of spirit have not—praise him for it—since left me; albeit I have much cause for apprehension in more ways than one; for what in these days is so secret it becometh not known? But whatever now shall befall me—public dangers or private sorrows—my feet do rest on a rock, not on the shifting sands of human thinkings, and I am not afraid of what man can do unto me. Yea, Philip's displeasure I can now endure, which of all things in the world I have heretofore most apprehended."

The infinite contentment this letter gave me distracted me somewhat from the anxious thoughts that filled my mind at the time it reached me, which was soon after Hubert's visit. A few days afterward Lady Arundel wrote again:

"My lord has been here, but stayed only a brief time. I found him very affectionate in his behavior, but his spirits so much depressed that I feared something had disordered him. Conversation seemed a burthen to him, and he often shut himself up in his own chamber or walked into the park with only his dog. When I spoke to him he would smile with much kindness, uttering such words as 'sweet wife,' or 'dearest Nan,' and then fall to musing again, as if his mind had been too oppressed with thinking to allow of speech. The day before he left I was sorting flowers at one end of the gallery in a place which the wall projecting doth partly conceal. I saw him come from the hall up the stairs into it, and walk to and fro in an agitated manner, his countenance very much troubled, and his gestures like unto those of a person in great perplexity of mind. I did not dare so much as to stir from where I stood, but watched him for a long space of time with incredible anxiety. Sometimes he stopped and raised his hand to his forehead. Another while he went to the window and looked intently, now at the tower and the valley beyond it, now up to the sky, on which the last rays of the setting sun were throwing a deep red hue, as if the world had been on fire. Then turning back, he joined his hands together and anon sundered them again, pacing up and down the while more rapidly than before, as if an inward conflict urged this unwitting speed. At last I saw him stand still, lift up his hands and eyes to heaven, and move his lips as if in prayer. What passed in his mind then, God only knoweth. He is the most reluctant person in the world to disclose his thoughts.

"When an hour afterward we met in the library his spirits seemed somewhat improved. He spoke of his dear sister Meg with much affection, and asked me if I had heard from Bess. Lord William, he said, was the best brother a man ever had; and that it should like him well to spend his life in any corner of the world God should appoint for him, so that he had to keep him company Will and Meg and his dear Nan, 'which I have so long ill-treated,' he added, 'that as long as I live I shall not cease to repent of it; and God he knoweth I deserve not so good a wife;' with many other like speeches which I wish he would not use, for it grieveth me he should disquiet himself for what is past, when his present kindness doth so amply recompense former neglect. Mine own Constance, I pray you keep your courage alive in your afflictions. There be no lane so long but it hath a turning, the proverb saith. My sorrows seemed at one time without an issue. Now light breaketh through the yet darksome clouds which do environ us. So will it be with thee. Burn this letter, seeing it doth contain what may endanger the lives of more persons than one.—Thy loving, faithful friend,
"ANN, ARUNDEL AND SURREY."

A more agitated letter followed this one, written at different times, and detained for some days for lack of a safe messenger to convey it.

"What I much fear," so it began, "is the displeasure of my lord when he comes to know of my reconciliation, for it cannot, I think, be long concealed from him. This my fear, dear Constance, hath been much increased by the coming down from London of one of his chaplains, who affirms he was sent on purpose by the earl to read prayers and to preach to me and my family; and on last Sunday he came into the great chamber of the castle, expecting and desiring to know my pleasure therein. I thought best for to send for him to my chamber, and I desired him not to trouble himself nor me in that matter, for I would satisfy the earl therein. But oh, albeit I spoke very composedly, my apprehensions are very great. For see, my dear friend, Philip hath been but lately reconciled to me, and his fortunes are in a very desperate condition, so that he may think I have given the last blow to them by this act, which his enemies will surely brave at. Think not I do repent of it. God knoweth I should as soon repent of my baptism as of my return to his true Church; but though the spirit is steadfast, the flesh is weak, and the heart also. What will he say to me when he cometh? He did once repulse me, but hath never upbraided me. How shall I bear new frowns after recent caresses?—peradventure an eternal parting after a late reunion? O Constance, pray for me. But I remember I have no means for to send this letter. But God be praised, I have now friends in heaven which I may adjure to pray for me who have at hand no earthly ones."

Four or five days later, her ladyship thus finished her letter:

"God is very merciful; oh, let his holy name be praised and magnified for ever! Now the weight of a mountain is off my heart. Now I care not for what man may do unto me. Phil has been here, and I promise thee, dear Constance, when his horse stopped at the castle-door, my heart almost stopped its beating, so great was my apprehension of his anger. But, to my great joy and admiration, he kissed me very tenderly, and did not speak the least word of the chaplain's errand. And when we did walk out in the evening, and, mounting to the top of the keep, stood there looking on the fine trees and the sun sinking into the sea, my dear lord, who had been some time silent, turned to me and said, 'Meg has become Catholic.' Joy and surprise almost robbed me of my breath; for next to his reconciliation his sister's was what I most desired in the world, and also I knew what a particular love he had ever shown for her, as being his only sister, by reason whereof he would not seem to be displeased with her change, and consequently he could not in reason be much offended with myself for being what she was; so when he said, 'Meg has become Catholic,' I leant my face against his shoulder, and whispered, 'So hath Nan.' He spoke not nor moved for some minutes. Methinks he could have heard the beatings of my heart. I was comforted that, albeit he uttered not so much as one word, he made no motion for to withdraw himself from me, whose head still rested against his bosom. Suddenly he threw his arms about me, and strained me to his breast. So tender an embrace I had never before had from him, and I felt his tears falling on my head. But speech there was none touching my change. Howsoever, before he left me I said to him 'My dear Phil, Holy Scripture doth

advise those who enter into the service of Almighty God to prepare themselves for temptation. As soon as I resolved to become Catholic, I did deeply imprint this in my mind; for the times are such that I must expect to suffer for that cause.' 'Yea, dearest Nan,' he answered, with great kindness, 'I doubt not thou hast taken the course which will save thy soul from the danger of shipwreck, although it doth subject thy body to the peril of misfortune.' Then waxing bolder, I said, 'And thou, Phil—' and there stopped short, looking what I would speak. He seemed to struggle for a while with some inward difficulty of speaking his mind, but at last he began, 'Nan, I will not become Catholic before I can resolve to live as a Catholic, and I defer the former until I have an intent and resolute purpose to perform the latter. O Nan, when I think of my vile usage of thee, whom I should have so much loved and esteemed for thy virtue and discretion; of my wholly neglecting, in a manner, my duty to the earl my grandfather, and my aunt Lady Lumley; of my wasting, by profuse expenses, of great sums of money in the following of the courts, the estate which was left me, and a good quantity of thine own lands also; but far more than all, my total forgetting of my duty to Almighty God—for, carried away with company, youthful entertainments, pleasures, and delights, my mind being wholly possessed with them, I did scarce so much as think of God, or of anything concerning religion or the salvation of my soul—I do feel myself unworthy of pardon, and utterly to be contemned.'

"So much goodness, humility, and virtuous intent was apparent in this speech, and such comfortable hopes of future excellence, that I could not forbear from exclaiming, 'My dear Phil, I ween thou wilt be one of those who shall love God much, forasmuch as he will have forgiven thee much.' And then I asked him how long it was since this change in his thinking, albeit not yet acted upon, had come to him? He said, it so happened that he was present, the year before, at a disputation held in the Tower of London, between Mr. Sherwin and some other priests on the one part, Charles Fulk, Whittakers, and some other Protestant ministers on the other; and, by what he heard and saw there, he had perceived, he thought, on which side the truth and true religion was, though at the time he neither did intend to embrace or follow it. But, he added, what had moved him of late most powerfully thereunto was a sermon of Father Campion's, which he had heard at Noel House, whither Charles Arundel had carried him, some days before his last visit to me. 'The whole of those days,' he said, 'my mind was so oppressed with remorse and doubt, that I knew no peace, until one evening, by a special grace of God, when I was walking alone in the gallery, I firmly resolved—albeit I knew not how or when to accomplish this purpose—to become a member of his Church, and to frame my life according to it; but I would not acquaint thee, or any other person living, with this intention, until I had conferred thereof with my brother William. Thou knowest, Nan, the very special love I bear him, and which he hath ever shown to me. Well, a few days after I returned to London, I met him accidentally in the street, he having come from Cumberland touching some matter of Bess's lands; and taking him home with me, I discovered to him my determination, somewhat covertly at first; and after I lent him a book to read, which was written not long ago by Dr. Allen, and have dealt with him so efficaciously that he has also resolved to become Catholic. He is to meet me again next week, for further conference touching the means of putting this intent into execution, which verily I see not how to effect, being so watched by servants and so-called friends, which besiege my doors and haunt mine house in London on all occasions.'

"This difficulty, dear Constance, I sought to remedy by acquainting my lord that his secretary, Mr. Mumford, was Catholic, and he could, therefore, disclose his thought with safety to him. And I also advised him to seek occasion to know Mr. Wells and some other zealous persons, which would confirm him in his present resolution and aid him in the execution thereof. It may be, therefore, you will soon see him, and fervently do I commend him to thy prayers and whatever service in the one thing needful should be in thy power to procure for him. My heart is so transported with joy that I never remember the like emotions to have filled it. My most hope for this present time at least had been he should show no dislike to my being Catholic; and lo, I find him to be one in heart, and soon to be so in effect; and the great gap between us, which so long hath been a yawning chasm of despair, now filled up with a renewed love, and yet more by a parity of thinking touching what it most behoveth us to be united in. *Deo gratias!*"

Here this portion of my lady's manuscript ended, but these few hasty lines were written below, visibly by a trembling hand, and the whole closed, I ween, abruptly. Methinks it was left for me at Mr. Wells's, where I found it, by Mr. Mumford, or some other Catholic in the earl's household:

"The inhabitants of Arundel have presented me for a recusant, and Mr. Bayley has been committed and accused before the Bishop of Chichester as a seminary priest. He hath, of course, easily cleared himself of this; but because he will not take the oath of supremacy, he is forced to quit the country. He hath passed into Flanders."

And then for many weeks I had no tidings of the dear writer, until one day it was told us that when the queen had notice of her reconciliation she disliked of it to such a degree that presently she ordered her, being then with child, to be taken from her own house and carried to Wiston, Sir Thomas Shirley's dwelling-place, there to be kept prisoner till further orders. Alas! all the time she remained there I received not so much as one line from her ladyship, nor did her husband either, as I afterward found. So straitly was she confined and watched that none could serve or have access to her but the knight and his lady, and such as were approved by them. Truly, as she since told me, they courteously used her; but special care was taken that none that was suspected for a priest should come within sight of the house, which was no small addition to her sufferings. Lady Margaret Sackville was at that time also thrown into prison.

CHAPTER XXIV.

During the whole year of Lady Arundel's imprisonment, neither her husband, nor her sister, nor her most close friends, such as my poor unworthy self, had tidings from her, in the shape of any letter or even message, so sharply was she watched and hindered from communicating with any one. Only Sir Thomas Shirley wrote to the earl her husband to inform him of his lady's safe delivery, and the birth of a daughter, which, much against her will, was baptized according

to the Protestant manner. My Lord Arundel, mindful of her words in the last interview he had with her before her arrest, began to haunt Mr. Wells's house in a private way, and there I did often meet with him, who being resolved, I ween, to follow his lady's example in all things, began to honor me with so much of his confidence that I had occasion to discern how true had been Sir Henry Jerningham's forecasting, that this young nobleman, when once turned to the ways of virtue and piety, should prove himself by so much the more eminent in goodness as he had heretofore been distinguished for his reckless conduct. One day that he came to Holborn, none others being present but Mr. and Mrs. Wells and myself, he told us that he and his brother Lord William, having determined to become Catholics, and apprehending great danger in declaring themselves as such within the kingdom, had resolved secretly to leave the land, to pass into Flanders, and there to remain till more quiet times.

"What steps," Mr. Wells asked, "hath your lordship disposed for to effect this departure?"

"In all my present doings," quoth the earl, "the mind of my dear wife doth seem to guide me. The last time I was with her she informed me that my secretary, John Mumford, is a Catholic, and I have since greatly benefited by this knowledge. He is gone to Hull, in Yorkshire, for to take order for our passage to Flanders, and I do wait tidings from him before I leave London."

Then, turning to me, he inquired in a very earnest manner if my thinking agreed with his, that his sweet lady should be contented he should forsake the realm, for the sake of the religious interests which moved him thereunto, joined with the hope that when he should be abroad and his lands confiscated, which he doubted not would follow, she would be presently set at liberty, and with her little wench join him in Flanders. I assented thereunto, and made a promise to him that as soon as her ladyship should be released I would hasten to her, and feast her ears with the many assurances of tender affection he had uttered in her regard, and aid her departure; which did also Mr. Wells. Then, drawing me aside, he spoke for some time, with tears in his eyes, of his own good wife, as he called her.

"Mistress Sherwood," he said, "I do trust in God that she shall find me henceforward as good a husband, to my poor ability, by his grace, as she has found me bad heretofore. No sin grieves me anything so much as my offences against her. What is past is a nail in my conscience. My will is to make satisfaction; but though I should live never so long, I can never do so further than by a good desire to do it, which, while I have any spark of breath, shall never be wanting."

And many words like these, which he uttered in so heartfelt a manner that I could scarce refrain from weeping at the hearing of them. And so we parted that day; he with a confident hope soon to leave the realm; I with some misgivings thereon, which were soon justified by the event. For a few days afterward Mr. Lacy brought us tidings he had met Mr. Mumford in the street, who had told him—when he expressed surprise at his return—that before he could reach Hull he had been apprehended and carried before the Earl of Huntingdon, president of York, and examined by him, without any evil result at that time, having no papers or auspicious things about him; but being now watched, he ventured not to proceed to the coast, but straightway came to London, greatly fearing Lord Arundel should have left it.

"He hath not done so?" I anxiously inquired.

"Nay," answered Mr. Lacy, "so far from it, that I pray you to guess how the noble earl—much against his will, I ween—is presently employed."

"He is not in prison?" I cried.

"God defend it!" he replied. "No; he is preparing for to receive the queen at Arundel House; upon notice given him that her majesty doth intend on Thursday next to come hither for her recreation."

"Alack!" I cried, "her visits to such as be of his way of thinking bode no good to them. She visited him and his wife at the Charterhouse at the time when his father was doomed to death, and now when she is a prisoner her highness doth come to Arundel House. When she set her foot in Euston, the whole fabric of my happiness fell to the ground. Heaven shield the like doth not happen in this instance; but I do greatly apprehend the issue of this sudden honor conferred on him."

On the day fixed for the great and sumptuous banquet which was prepared for the queen at Arundel House, I went thither, having been invited by Mrs. Fawcett to spend the day with her on this occasion, which minded me of the time when I went with my cousins and mine own good Mistress Ward for to see her majesty's entertainment at the Charterhouse, wherein had been sowed the seeds of a bitter harvest, since reaped by his sweet lady and himself. Then pageants had charms in mine eyes; now, none—but rather the contrary. Howsoever, I was glad to be near at hand on that day, so as to hear such reports as reached us from time to time of her majesty's behavior to the earl. From all I could find, she seemed very well contented; and Mr. Mumford, with whom I was acquainted, came to Mrs. Fawcett's chamber, hearing I was there, and reported that her highness had given his lordship many thanks for her entertainment, and showed herself exceeding merry all the time she was at table, asking him many questions, and relating anecdotes which she had learnt from Sir Fulke Greville, whom the maids-of-honor were wont to say brought her all the tales she heard; at which Mrs. Fawcett said that gentleman had once declared that he was like Robin Goodfellow; for that when the dairy-maids upset the milk-pans, or made a romping and racket, they laid it all on Robin, and so, whatever gossip-tales the queen's ladies told her, they laid it all upon him, if he was ever so innocent of it.

"Sir," I said to Mr. Mumford, "think you her majesty hath said aught to my lord touching his lady or his lately-born little daughter?"

"Once," he answered, "when she told of the noble trick she hath played Sir John Spencer touching his grandson, whom he would not see because his daughter did decamp from his house in a baker's basket for to marry Sir Henry Compton, and her majesty invited him to be her gossip at the christening of a fair boy to whom she did intend to stand godmother, for that he was the first-born child of a young couple who had married for love and lived happily; and so the old knight said, as he had no heir, he should adopt this boy, for he had disinherited his daughter. So then, at the font, the queen names him Spencer, and when she leaves the church, straightway reveals to Sir John that his godson is his grandson,

and deals so cunningly with him that a reconciliation doth ensue. Well, when she related this event, my lord said in a low voice, 'Oh madame, would it might please your majesty for to place another child, now at its mother's breast, a first-born one also, in its father's arms! and as by your gracious dealing your highness wrought a reconciliation between a father and a daughter, so likewise now to reunite a parted husband from a wife which hath too long languished under your royal displeasure.'

"What answered her grace?" I asked.

"A few words, the sense of which I could not catch," Mr. Mumford answered; "being placed so as to hear my lord's speaking more conveniently than her replies. He said again, 'The displeasure of a prince is a heavy burden to bear.' And then, methinks, some other talk was ministered of a lighter sort. But be of good heart. Mistress Sherwood; I cannot but think our dear lady shall soon be set at liberty."

Mr. Mumford's words were justified in a few days; for, to my unspeakable joy, I heard Lady Arundel had been released by order of the queen, and had returned to Arundel Castle. It was her lord himself who brought me the good tidings, and said he should travel thither in three days, when his absence from court should be less noted, as then her majesty would be at Richmond. He showed me a letter he had received from his lady, the first she had been able to write to him for a whole year. She did therein express her contentment, greater, she said, than her pen could describe, at the sight of the gray ivied walls, the noble keep, her own chamber and its familiar furniture, and mostly at the thought of his soon coming; and that little Bess had so much sense already, that when she heard his name, nothing would serve her but to be carried to the window, "whence, methinks," the sweet lady said, "she doth see me always looking toward the entrance-gate, through which all my joy will speedily come to me. When, for to cheat myself and her, I cry, 'Hark to my lord's horse crossing the bridge,' she coos, so much as to say she is glad also, and stretcheth her arms out, the pretty fool, as if to welcome her unseen father, who, methinks, when he doth come, will be no stranger to her, so often doth she kiss the picture which hangeth about her mother's neck."

But, alas! before the queen went to Richmond, she sent a command that my Lord Arundel should not go anywhither out of his house (so Mr. Mumford informed me), but remain there a prisoner; and my Lord Hunsdon, who had been in former times his father's page, and now was his great enemy, was given commission to examine him about his religion, and also touching Dr. Allen and the Queen of Scots. Now was all the joy of Lady Arundel's release at an end. Now the sweet cooings of her babe moved her to bitter tears. "In vain," she wrote to me then, "do we now look for him to come! in vain listen for the sound of his horse's tread, or watch the gateway which shall not open to admit him! I sigh for to be once more a prisoner, and he, my sweet life, at liberty. Alas! what kind of a destiny does this prove, if one is free only when the other is shut up, and the word 'parting' is written on each page of our lives?"

About a month afterward, Mr. Mumford was sent for by Sir Christopher Hatton, who asked him divers dangerous questions concerning the earl, the countess, and Lord William Howard, and also himself—such as, if he was a priest or no; which indeed I did not wonder at, so staid and reverend was his appearance. But he answered he never knew or ever heard any harm of these honorable persons, and that he himself was not a priest, nor worthy of so great a dignity. He hath since told me that on the third day of his examination the queen, the Earl of Leicester, and divers others of the council came into the house for to understand what he had confessed. Sir Christopher told them what answers he had made; but they, not resting satisfied therewith, caused him, after many threats of racking and other tortures, to be sent prisoner to the Gate-house, where he was kept for some months so close that none might speak or come to him. But by the steadfastness of his answers he at last so cleared himself, and declared the innocency of the earl, and his wife and brother, that they were set at liberty.

Soon after her lord's release, I received this brief letter from Lady Arundel:

"MINE OWN GOOD CONSTANCE,—I have seen my lord, who came here the day after he was set free. He very earnestly desires to put into execution his reconciliation to the Church now that his troubles are a little overpast. I have bethought myself that, since Father Campion hath left London, diligence might be used for to procure him a meeting with Father Edmonds, whom I have heard commended for a very virtuous and religious priest, much esteemed both in this and other countries. Prithee, ask Mr. Wells if in his thinking this should be possible, and let my lord know of the means and opportunities thereunto. I shall never be so much indebted, nor he either, to any one in this world, my dear Constance, as to thee and thy good friends, if this interview shall be brought to pass, and the desired effect ensue.

"My Bess doth begin to walk alone, and hath learned to make the sign of the cross; but I warrant thee I am sometimes frightened that I did teach her to bless herself, until such time as she can understand not to display her piety so openly as she now doeth. For when many lords and gentlemen were here last week for to consider the course her majesty's progress should take through Kent and Sussex, and she, sitting on my knee, was noticed by some of them for her pretty ways, the clock did strike twelve; upon which, what doth she do but straightway makes the sign of the cross before I could catch her little hand? Lord Cobham frowned, and my Lord Burleigh shook his head; but the Bishop of Chichester stroked her head, and said, with a smile, '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*;' for which I pray God to bless him. Oh, but what fears we do daily live in! I would sometimes we were beyond seas. But if my lord is once reconciled, methinks I can endure all that may befall us. Thy true and loving friend,

"ANN, ARUNDEL AND SURREY."

I straightway repaired to Mr. Wells, and found him to be privy to Father Edmonds's abode. At my request, he acquainted Lord Arundel with this secret, who speedily availed himself thereof, and after a few visits to this good man's garret, wherein he was concealed, was by him reconciled, as I soon learnt by a letter from his lady. She wrote in such perfect contentment and joy thereunto, that nothing could exceed it. She said her dear lord had received so much comfort in his soul as he had never felt before in all his life, and such directions from Father Edmonds for the amending and ordering of it as did greatly help and further him therein. Ever after that time, from mine own hearing and observation, his lady's letters, and the report of such as haunted him, I learnt that he lived in such a manner that he

seemed to be changed into another man, having great care and vigilance over all his actions, and addicting himself much to piety and devotion. He procured to have a priest ever with him in his own house, by whom he might frequently receive the holy sacrament, and daily have the comfort to be present at the holy sacrifice, whereto, with great humility and reverence, he himself in person many times would serve. His visits to his wife were, during the next years, as frequent as he could make them and as his duties at the court and the queen's emergencies would allow of; who, albeit she looked not on him with favor as heretofore, did nevertheless exact an unremitting attendance on his part on all public occasions, and jealously noted every absence he made from London. Each interview between this now loving husband and wife was a brief space of perfect contentment to both, and a respite from the many cares and troubles which did continually increase upon him; for the great change in his manner of life had bred suspicion in the minds of some courtiers and potent men, who therefore began to think him what he was indeed, but of which no proof could be alleged.

During the year which followed these haps mine aunt died, and Mr. Congleton sold his house in Ely Place, and took a small one in Gray's Inn Lane, near to Mr. Wells's and Mr. Lacy's. It had no garden, nor the many conveniences the other did afford; but neither Muriel nor myself did lament the change, for the vicinity of these good friends did supply the place of other advantages; and it also liked me more, whilst Basil lived in poverty abroad, to inhabit a less sumptuous abode than heretofore, and dispense with accustomed luxuries. Of Hubert I could hear but scanty tidings at that time—only that he had either lost or resigned his place at court? Mr. Hodgson was told by one who had been his servant that he had been reconciled; others said he did lead a very disordered life, and haunted bad persons. The truth or falsity of these statements I could not then discern; but methinks, from what I have since learnt, both might be partly true; for he became subject to fits of gloom, and so discomfortable a remorse as almost unsettled his reason; and then, at other times, plunged into worldly excesses for to drown thoughts of the past. He was frightened, I ween, or leastways distrustful of the society of good men, but consorted with Catholics of somewhat desperate character and fortunes, and such as dealt in plots and treasonable schemes.

Father Campion's arrest for a very different cause—albeit his enemies did seek to attach to him the name traitor—occurred this year at Mrs. Yates's house in Worcestershire, and consternated the hearts of all recusants; but when he came to London, and speech was had of him by many amongst them which gained access to him in prison, and reported to others his great courage and joyfulness in the midst of suffering, then, methinks, a contagious spirit spread amongst Catholics, and conversions followed which changed despondency into rejoicing. But I will not here set down the manner of his trial, nor the wonderful marks of patience and constancy which he showed under torments and rackings, nor his interview with her majesty at my lord Leicester's house, nor the heroic patience of his death; for others with better knowledge thereof, and pens more able for to do it, have written this martyr's life and glorious end. But I will rather relate such events as took place, as it were, under mine own eye, and which are not, I ween, so extensively known. And first, I will speak of a conversation I held at that time with a person then a stranger, and therefore of no great significance when it occurred, but which later did assume a sudden importance, when it became linked with succeeding events.

One day that I was visiting at Lady Ingoldsby's, where Polly and her husband had come for to spend a few weeks, and much company was going in and out, the faces and names of which were new to me, some gentlemen came there whose dress attracted notice from the French fashion thereof. One of them was a young man of very comely appearance and pleasant manners, albeit critical persons might have judged somewhat of the bravado belonged to his attitudes and speeches, but withal tempered with so much gentleness and courtesy, that no sooner had the eye and mind taken note of the defect than the judgment was repented of. What in one of less attractive face and behavior should have displeased, in this youth did not offend. It was my hap to sit beside him at supper, which lasted a long time; and as his behavior was very polite, I freely conversed with him, and found him to be English, though from long residence abroad his tongue had acquired a foreign trick. When I told him I had thought he was a Frenchman, he laughed, and said if the French did ever try to land in England, they should find him to be a very Englishman for to fight against them; but in the matter of dinners and beds, and the liking of a dear sunny sky over above a dim cloudy one, he did confess himself to be so much of a traitor as to prefer France to England, and he could not abide the smoke of coal fires which are used in this country.

"And what say you, sir," I answered, "to the new form of smoke which Sir Walter Raleigh hath introduced since his return from the late discovered land of Virginia?"

He said he had learnt the use of it in France, and must needs confess he found it to be very pleasant. Monsieur Nicot had brought some seeds of tobacco into France, and so much liking did her majesty Queen Catharine conceive for this practice of smoking, that the new plant went by the name of the queen's herb. "It is not gentlemen alone who do use a pipe in France," he said, "but ladies also. What doth the fair sex in England think on it?"

"I have heard," I answered, "that her majesty herself did try for to smoke, but presently gave it up, for that it made her sick. Her highness is also reported to have lost a wager concerning that same smoking of tobacco."

"What did her grace bet?" the gentleman asked.

"Why, she was one day," I replied, "inquiring very exactly of the various virtues of this herb, and Sir Walter did assure her that no one understood them better than himself, for he was so well acquainted with all its qualities, that he could even tell her majesty the weight of the smoke of every pipeful he consumed. Her highness upon this said, 'Monsieur Traveller, you do go too far in putting on me the license which is allowed to such as return from foreign parts;' and she laid a wager of many pieces of gold he should not be able to prove his words. So he weighed in her presence the tobacco before he put it into his pipe, and the ashes after he had consumed it, and convinced her majesty that the deficiency did proceed from the evaporation thereof. So then she paid the bet, and merrily told him 'that she knew of many persons who had turned their gold into smoke, but he was the first who had turned smoke into gold.'"

The young gentleman being amused at this story, I likewise told him of Sir Walter's hap when he first returned to England, and was staying in a friend's house: how a servant coming into his chamber with a tankard of ale and nutmeg

toast, and seeing him for the first time with a lighted pipe in his mouth puffing forth clouds of smoke, flung the ale in his face for to extinguish the internal conflagration, and then running down the stairs alarmed the family with dismal cries that the good knight was on fire, and would be burnt into ashes before they could come to his aid.

My unknown companion laughed, and said he had once on his travels been taken for a sorcerer, so readily doth ignorance imagine wonders. "Near unto Metz, in France," quoth he, "I fell among thieves. My money I had quilted within my doublet, which they took from me, howsoever leaving me the rest of my apparel, wherein I do acknowledge their courtesy, since thieves give all they take not; but twenty-five French crowns, for the worst event, I had lapped in cloth, and whereupon did wind divers-colored threads, wherein I sticked needles, as if I had been so good a husband as to mend mine own clothes. Messieurs the thieves were not so frugal to take my ball to mend their hose, but did tread it under their feet. I picked it up with some spark of joy, and I and my guide (he very sad, because he despaired of my ability to pay him his hire) went forward to Chalons, where he brought me to a poor ale-house, and when I expostulated, he replied that stately inns were not for men who had never a penny in their purses; but I told him that I looked for comfort in that case more from gentlemen than clowns; whereupon he, sighing, obeyed me, and with a dejected and fearful countenance brought me to the chief inn, where he ceased not to bewail my misery as if it had been the burning of Troy; till the host, despairing of my ability to pay him, began to look disdainfully on me. The next morning, when, he being to return home, I paid him his hire, which he neither asked nor expected, and likewise mine host for lodgings and supper, he began to talk like one mad for joy, and professed I could not have had one penny except I were an alchemist or had a familiar spirit."

I thanked the young gentleman for this entertaining anecdote, and asked him if France was not a very disquieted country, and nothing in it but wars and fighting.

"Yea," he answered; "but men fight there so merrily, that it appears more a pastime than aught else. Not always so, howsoever. When Frenchman meets Frenchman in the fair fields of Provence, and those of the League and those of the Religion—God confound the first and bless the last!—engage in battle, such encounters ensue as have not their match for fierceness in the world. By my troth, the sight of dead bodies doth not ordinarily move me; but the valley of Allemagne on the day of the great Huguenot victory was a sight the like of which I would not choose to look on again, an I could help it."

"Were you, then, present at that combat, sir?" I asked.

"Yea," he replied; "I was at that time with Lesdiguières, the Protestant general, whom I had known at La Rochelle, and beshrew me if a more valiant soldier doth live, or a worthier soul in a stalwart frame. I was standing by his side when Tourves the butcher came for to urge him, with his three hundred men, to ride over the field and slay the wounded papists. 'No, sir,' quoth the general, 'I fight men, but hunt them not down.' The dead were heaped many feet thick on the plain, and the horses of the Huguenots waded to their haunches in blood. Those of the Religion were mad at the death of the Baron of Allemagne, the general of their southern churches, brave castellane, who, when the fight was done, took off his helmet for to cool his burning forehead; and lo, a shot sent him straight into eternity."

"The Catholics were then wholly routed?" I asked.

"Yea," he answered; "mowed down like grass in the hay-harvest. De Vins, however, escaped. He thought to have had a cheap victory over those of the Religion; but the saints in heaven, to whom he trusted, never told him that Lesdiguières on the one side and d'Allemagne on the other were hastening to the rescue, nor that his Italian horsemen should fail him in his need. So, albeit the papists fought like devils, as they are, his pride got a fall, which well-nigh killed him. He was riding frantically back into the fray for to get himself slain, when St. Cannat seized his bridle, and called him a coward, so I have heard, to dare for to die when his scattered troops had need of him; and so carried him off the field. D'Oraison, Janson, Pontmez, hotly pursued them, but in vain; and all the Protestant leaders, except Lesdiguières, returned that night to the castle of Allemagne for to bury the baron."

A sort of shiver passed through the young gentleman's frame as he uttered these last words.

"A sad burial you then witnessed?" I said.

"I pray God," he answered, "never to witness another such."

"What was the horror of it?" I asked.

"Would you hear it?" he inquired.

"Yea," I said, "most willingly; for methinks I see what you describe."

Then he: "If it be so, peradventure you may not thank me for this describing; for I warrant you it was a fearful sight. I had lost mine horse, and so was forced to spend the night at the castle. When it grew dark I followed the officers, which, with a great store of the men, also descended into the vault, which was garnished all round with white and warlike sculptured forms on tombstones, most grim in their aspect; and amidst those stone imager, grim and motionless, the soldiers ranged themselves, still covered with blood and dust, and leaning on their halberds. In the midst was the uncovered coffin of the baron, his livid visage exposed to view—menacing even in death. Torches threw a fitful, red-colored light over the scene. A minister which accompanied the army stood and preached at the coffin's head, and when he had ended his sermon, sang in a loud voice, in French verse, the psalm which doth begin,

'Du fond de ma pensée,
Du fond de tous ennuis,
A toi s'est adressé
Ma clameur jour et nuit.'

When this singing began two soldiers led up to the tomb a man with bound hands and ghastly pale face, and, when the verse ended, shot him through the head. The corpse fell upon the ground, and the singing began anew. Twelve times this did happen, till my head waxed giddy and I became faint. I was led out of that vault with the horrible singing pursuing me, as if I should never cease to hear it."

"Oh, 'tis fearful," I exclaimed, "that men can do such deeds, and the while have God's name on their lips."

"The massacre of St. Bartholomew," he answered, "hath driven those of the Religion mad against the papists."

"But, sir," I asked, "is it not true that six thousand Catholics in Languedoc had been murdered in cold blood, and a store of them in other places, before that massacre?"

"May I be so," he answered in a careless tone. "The shedding of blood, except in a battle or lawful duel, I abhor; but verily I do hate papists with as great a hate as any Huguenot in France, and most of all those in this country—a set of knavish traitors, which would dethrone the queen and sell the realm to the Spaniards."

I could not but sigh at these words, for in this young man's countenance a quality of goodness did appear which made me grieve that he should utter these unkind words touching Catholics. But I dared not for to utter my thinking or disprove his accusations, for, being ignorant of his name, I had a reasonable fear of being ensnared into some talk which should show me to be a papist, and he should prove to be a spy. But patience failed me when, after speaking of the clear light of the gospel which England enjoyed, and to lament that in Ireland none are found of the natives to have cast off the Roman religion, he said:

"I ween this doth not proceed from their constancy in religion, but rather from the lenity of Protestants, which think that the conscience must not be forced, and seek rather to touch and persuade than to oblige by fire and sword, like those of the south, who persecute their own subjects differing from them in religion."

"Sir," I exclaimed, "this is a strange thing indeed, that Protestants do lay a claim to so great mildness in their dealings with recusants, and yet such strenuous laws against such are framed that they do live in fear of their lives, and are daily fined and tormented for their profession."

"How so?" he said, quickly. "No papist hath been burnt in this country."

"No, sir," I answered; "but a store of them have been hanged and cut to pieces whilst yet alive."

"Nay, nay," he cried, "not for their religion, but for their many treason."

"Sir," I answered, "their religion is made treason by unjust laws, and then punished with the penalties of treason; and they die for no other cause than their faith, by the same token that each of those which have perished on the scaffold had his life offered to him if so he would torn Protestant."

In the heat of this argument I had forgot prudence; and some unkindly ears and eyes were attending to my speech, which this young stranger perceiving, he changed the subject of discourse—I ween with a charitable intent—and merrily exclaimed, "Now I have this day transgressed a wise resolve."

"What resolve?" I said, glad also to retreat from dangerous subjects.

"This," he answered: "that after my return I would sparingly, and not without entreaty, relate my journeys and observations."

"Then, sir," I replied, "methinks you have contrariwise observed it, for your observations have been short and pithy, and withal uttered at mine entreaty."

"Nothing," he said, "I so much fear as to resemble men—and many such I have myself known—who have scarce seen the lions of the Tower and the bears of Parish Garden, but they must engross all a table in talking of their adventures, as if they had passed the Pillars of Hercules. Nothing could be asked which they could not resolve of their own knowledge."

"Find you, sir," I said, "much variety in the manners of French people and those you see in this country?"

He smiled, and answered, "We must not be too nice observers of men and manners, and too easily praise foreign customs and despise our own—not so much that we may not offend others, as that we may not be ourselves offended by others. I will yield you an example. A Frenchman, being a curious observer of ceremonious compliments, when he hath saluted one, and began to entertain him with speech, if he chance to espy another man, with whom he hath very great business, yet will he not leave the first man without a solemn excuse. But an Englishman discoursing with any man—I mean in a house or chamber of presence, not merely in the street—if he spy another man with whom he hath occasion to speak, will suddenly, without any excuse, turn from the first man and go and converse with the other, and with like negligence will leave and take new men for discourse; which a Frenchman would take in ill part, as an argument of disrespect. This fashion, and many other like niceties and curiosities in use in one country, we must forget when we do pass into another. For lack of this prudence I have seen men on their return home tied to these foreign manners themselves, and finding that others observe not the like toward them, take everything for an injury, as if they were disrespected, and so are often enraged."

"What think you of the dress our ladies do wear?" I inquired of this young traveller.

He smiled, and answered:

"I like our young gentlewomen's gowns, and their aprons of fine linen, and their little hats of beaver; but why have they left wearing the French sleeves, borne out with hoops of whalebone, and the French hood of velvet, set with a border of

gold buttons and pearls? Methinks English ladies are too fond of jewels and diamond rings. They scorn plain gold rings, I find, and chains of gold."

"Yea," I said, "ladies of rank wear only rich chains of pearl, and all their jewels must needs be oriental and precious. If any one doth choose to use a simple chain or a plain-set brooch, she is marked for wearing old-fashioned gear."

"This remindeth me," he said, "of a pleasant fable, that Jupiter sent a shower, wherein whosoever was wet became a fool, and that all the people were wet in this shower, excepting one philosopher, who kept his study; but in the evening coming forth into the market-place, and finding that all the people marked him as a fool, who was only wise, he was forced to pray for another shower, that he might become a fool, and so live quietly among fools rather than bear the envy of his wisdom."

With this pleasant story our conversation ended, for supper was over, and the young gentleman soon went away. I asked of many persons who he should be, but none could tell me. Polly, the next day, said he was a youth lately returned from France (which was only what I knew before), and that Sir Nicholas Throckmorton had written a letter to Lady Ingoldsby concerning him, but his name she had forgot. O what strange haps, more strange than any in books, do at times form the thread of a true history! what presentiments in some cases, what ignorance in others, beset us touching coming events!

The next pages will show the ground of these reflections.

CHAPTER XXV.

One day that Mrs. Wells was somewhat disordered, and keeping her room, and I was sitting with her, her husband came to fetch me into the parlor to an old acquaintance, he said, who was very desirous for to see me. "Who is it?" I asked; but he would not tell me, only smiled; my foolish thinking supposed for one instant that it might be Basil he spoke of, but the first glance showed me a slight figure and pale countenance, very different to his whom my witless hopes had expected for to see, albeit without the least shadow of reason. I stood looking at this stranger in a hesitating manner, who perceiving I did not know him, held out his hand, and said,

"Has Mistress Constance forgotten her old playfellow?"

"Edmund Genings!" I exclaimed, suddenly guessing it to be him.

"Yea," he said, "your old friend Edmund."

"Mr. Ironmonger is this reverend gentleman's name now-a-days," Mr. Wells said; and then we all three sat down, and by degrees in Edmund's present face I discerned the one I remembered in former years. The same kind and reflective aspect, the pallid hue, the upward-raised eye, now with less of searching in its gaze, but more, I ween, of yearning for an unearthly home.

"O dear and reverend sir," I said, "strange it doth seem indeed thus to address you, but God knoweth I thank him for the honor he hath done my old playmate in the calling of him unto his service in these perilous times."

"Yea," he answered, with emotion, "I do owe him much, which life itself should not be sufficient to repay."

"My good father," I said, "some time before his death gave me a token in a letter that you were in England. Where have you been all this time?"

"Tell us the manner of your landing," quoth Mr. Wells; "for this is the great ordeal which, once overpassed, lets you into the vineyard, for to work for one hour only sometimes, or else to bear many years the noontide heat and nipping frosts which laborers like unto yourself have to endure."

"Well," said Edmund, "ten months ago we took shipping at Honfleur, and, wind and weather being propitious, sailed along the coast of England, meaning to have landed in Essex; but for our sakes the master of the bark lingered, when we came in sight of land, until two hours within night, and being come near unto Scarborough, what should happen but that a boat with pirates or rovers in it comes out to surprise us, and shoots at us divers times with muskets! But we came by no harm; for the wind being then contrary, the master turned his ship and sailed back into the main sea, where in very foul weather we remained three days, and verily I thought to have then died of sea-sickness; which ailment should teach a man humility, if anything in this world can do it, stripping him as it does of all boastfulness of his own courage and strength, so that he would cry mercy if any should offer only to move him."

"Ah!" cried Mr. Wells, laughing, "Topcliffe should bethink himself of this new torment for papists, for to leave a man in this plight until he acknowledged the queen's supremacy should be an artful device of the devil."

"At last," quoth Mr. Genings, "we landed, with great peril to our lives, on the side of a high cliff near Whitby, in Yorkshire, and reached that town in the evening. Going into an inn to refresh ourselves, which I promise you we sorely needed, who should we meet with there but one Radcliff?"

"Ah! a noted pursuivant," cried Mr. Wells, "albeit not so topping a one as his chief."

"Ah!" I cried, "good Mr. Wells, that is but a poor pun, I promise you. A better one you must frame before night, or you will lose your reputation. The queen's last effort hath more merit in it than yours, who, when she was angry with her envoy to Spain, said, 'If her royal brother had sent her a goose-man, [Footnote 4] she had sent him in return a man-

goose."

[Footnote 4: Guzman.]

Mr. Genings smiled, and said:

"Well, this same Radcliff took an exact survey of us all, questioned us about our arrival in that place, whence we came, and whither we were going. We told him we were driven thither by the tempest, and at last, by evasive answers, satisfied him. Then we all went to the house of a Catholic gentleman in the neighborhood, which was within two or three miles of Whitby, and by him were directed some to one place, some to another, according to our own desires. Mr. Plasden and I kept together; but, for fear of suspicion, we determined at last to separate also, and singly to commit ourselves to the protection of God and his good angels. Soon after we had thus resolved, we came to two fair beaten was, the one leading north-east, the other south-east, and even then and there, it being in the night, we stopped and both fell down on our knees and made a short prayer together that God of his infinite mercy would vouchsafe to direct us, and send us both a peaceable passage into the thickest of his vineyard."

Here Mr. Genings paused, a little moved by the remembrance of that parting, but in a few minutes exclaimed:

"I have not seen that dear friend since, rising from our knees, we embraced each other with tears trickling down our cheeks; but the words he said to me then I shall never, methinks, forget. 'Seeing,' quoth he, 'we must now part through fear of our enemies, and for greater security, farewell, sweet brother in Christ and most loving companion. God grant that, as we have been friends in one college and companions in one wearisome and dangerous journey, so we may have one merry meeting once again in this world, to our great comfort, if it shall please him, even amongst our greatest adversaries; and that as we undertake, for his love and holy name's sake, this course of life together, so he will of his infinite goodness and clemency make us partakers of one hope, one sentence, one death, and one reward. And also as we began, so may we end together in Christ Jesus.' So he; and then not being able to speak one word more for grief and tears, we departed in mutual silence; he directing his journey to London, where he was born, and I northward."

"Then you have not been into Staffordshire?" I said.

"Yea," he answered, "later I went to Lichfield, in order to try if I should peradventure find there any of mine old friends and kinsfolks."

"And did you succeed therein?" I inquired.

"The only friends I found," he answered, with a melancholy smile, "were the gray cloisters, the old cathedral walls, the trees of the close; the only familiar voices which did greet me were the chimes of the tower, the cawing of the rooks over mine head as I sat in the shade of the tall elms near unto the wall where our garden once stood."

"Oh, doth that house and that garden no more exist?" I cried.

"No, it hath been pulled down, and the lawn thereof thrown into the close."

"Then," I said, "the poor bees and butterflies must needs fare badly. The bold rooks, I ween, are too exalted to suffer from these changes. Of Sherwood Hall did you hear aught, Mr. Genings?"

"Mr. Ironmonger," Mr. Wells said, correcting me.

"Alas!" Edmund replied, "I dared not so much as to approach unto it, albeit I passed along the high road not very far from the gate thereof. But the present inhabitants are famed for their hatred unto recusants, and like to deal rigorously with any which should come in their way."

I sighed, and then asked him how long he had been in London.

"About one month," he replied. "As I have told you. Mistress Constance, all my kinsfolk that I wot of are now dead, except my young brother John, whom I doubt not you yet do bear in mind—that fair, winsome, mischievous urchin, who was carried to La Rochelle about one year before your sweet mother died."

"Yea," I said, "I can see him yet galloping on a stick round the parlor at Lichfield."

"'Tis to look for him," Edmund said, "I am come to London. Albeit I fear much inquiry on my part touching this youth should breed suspicion, I cannot refrain, brotherly love soliciting me thereunto, from seeking him whom report saith careth but little for his soul, and who hath no other relative in the world than myself. I have warrant for to suppose he should be in London; but these four weeks, with useless diligence, I have made search for him, leaving no place unsought where I could suspect him to abide; and as I see no hopes of success, I am resolved to leave the city for a season."

Then Mr. Wells proposed to carry Edmund to Kate's house, where some friends were awaiting him; and for some days I saw him not again. But on the next Sunday evening he came to our house, and I noticed a paleness in him I had not before perceived. I asked him if anything had disordered him.

"Nothing," he answered; "only methinks my old shaking malady doth again threaten me; for this morning, walking forth of mine inn to visit a friend on the other side of the city, and passing by St. Paul's church, when I was on the east side thereof, I felt suddenly a strange sensation in my body, so much that my face glowed, and it seemed to me as if mine hair stood on end; all my joints trembled, and my whole body was bathed in a cold sweat. I feared some evil was threatening me, or danger of being taken up, and I looked back to see if I could perceive any one to be pursuing me; but I saw nobody near, only a youth in a brown-colored cloak; and so, concluding that some affection of my head or liver had seized me, I thought no more on it, but went forward to my intended place to say mass."

A strange thinking came into mine head at that moment, and I doubted if I should impart to him my sudden fancy.

"Mr. Edmund," I said, unable to refrain myself, "suppose that youth in the brown cloak should have been your brother!"

He started, but shaking of his head said:

"Nay, nay, why should it have been him rather than a thousand others I do see every day?"

"Might not that strange effect in yourself betoken the presence of a kinsman?"

"Tut, tut, Mistress Constance," he cried, half kindly, half reprovably; "this should be a wild fancy lacking ground in reason."

Thus checked, I held my peace, but could not wholly discard this thought. Not long after—on the very morning before Mr. Genings proposed to depart out of town—I chanced to be walking homeward with him and some others from a house whither we had gone to hear his mass. As we were returning along Ludgate Hill, what should he feel but the same sensations he had done before, and which were indeed visible in him, for his limbs trembled and his face turned as white as ashes!

"You are sick," I said, for I was walking alongside of him.

"Only affected as that other day," he answered, leaning against a post for to recover himself.

I had hastily looked back, and, lo and behold I a youth in a brown cloak was walking some paces behind us. I whispered in Mr. Genings's ear:

"Look, Edmund; is this the youth you saw before?"

"O my good Lord!" he cried, turning yet more pale, "this is strange indeed! After all, it may be my brother. Go on," he said quickly; "I must get speech with him alone to discover if it should be so."

We all walked on, and he tarried behind. Looking back, I saw him accost the stranger in the brown cloak. And in the afternoon he came to tell us that this was verily John Genings, as I had with so little show of reason guessed.

"What passed between you?" I asked.

He said:

"I courteously saluted the young man, and inquired what countryman he was; and hearing that he was a Staffordshireman, I began to conceive hopes it should be my brother; so I civilly demanded his name. Methought I should have betrayed myself at once when he answered Genings; but as quietly as I could, I told him I was his kinsman, and was called Ironmonger, and asked him what had become of his brother Edmund. He then, not suspecting aught, told me he had heard that he was gone to Rome to the Pope, and was become a notable papist and a traitor both to God and his country, and that if he did return he should infallibly be hanged. I smiled, and told him I knew his brother, and that he was an honest man, and loved both the queen and his country, and God above all. 'But tell me,' I added, 'good cousin John, should you not know him if you saw him?' He then looked hard at me, and led the way into a tavern not far off, and when we were seated at a table, with no one nigh enough to overhear us, he said: 'I greatly fear I have a brother that is a priest, and that you are the man,' and then began to swear that if it was so, I should discredit myself and all my friends, and protested that in this he would never follow me; albeit in other matters he might respect me. I promise you that whilst these harsh words passed his lips I longed to throw my arms round his neck. I saw my mother's face in his, and his once childish loveliness only changed into manly beauty. His young years and mine rose before me, and I could have wept over this new-found brother as Joseph over his dear Benjamin. I could no longer conceal myself, but told him truly I was his brother indeed, and for his love had taken great pains to seek him, and begged of him to keep secret the knowledge of my arrival; to which he answered: 'He would not for the world disclose my return, but that he desired me to come no more unto him, for that he feared greatly the danger of the law, and to incur the penalty of the statute for concealing of it.' I saw this was no place or time convenient to talk of religion; but we had much conversation about divers things, by which I perceived him to be far from any good affection toward Catholic religion, and persistent in Protestantism, without any hope of a present recovery. Therefore I declared unto him my intended departure out of town, and took my leave, assuring him that within a month or little more I should return and see him again, and confer with him more at large touching some necessary affairs which concerned him very much. I inquired of him where a letter should find him. He showed some reluctance for to give me any address, but at last said if one was left for him at Lady Ingoldsby's, in Queen street, Holborn, he should be like to get it."

After Mr. Genings had left, I considered of this direction his brother had given him, which showed him to be acquainted with Polly's mother-in-law, and then remembering the young gentleman I had met at her house, I suspected him to be no other than John Genings. And called back to mind all his speeches for to compare them with this suspicion, wherein they did all tally; and some days afterward, when I was walking on the Mall with Sir Ralph and Polly, who should accost them but this youth, which they presently introduced to me, and Polly added, she believed we had played at hide-and-seek together when we were young. He looked somewhat surprised, and as if casting about for to call to mind old recollections; then spoke of our meeting at Lady Ingoldsby's; and she cried out,

"Oh, then, you do know one another?"

"By sight," I said, "not by name."

Some other company joining us, he came alongside of me, and began for to pay me compliments in the French manner.

"Mr. John Genings," I said, "do you remember Lichfield and the close, and a little; girl, Constance Sherwood, who used

to play with you, before you went to La Rochelle?"

"Like in a dream," he answered, his comely face lighting up with a smile.

"But your brother," I said, "was my chiefest companion then; for at that age we do always aspire to the notice of such as be older than condescend to such as be younger than ourselves."

When I named his brother a cloud darkened his face, and he abruptly turned away. He talked to Polly and some other ladies in a gay, jesting manner, but I could see that ever and anon he glanced toward me, as if to scan my features, and, I ween, compare them with what memory depicted; but he kept aloof from me, as if fearing I should speak again of one he would fain forget.

On the 7th of November, Edmund returned to London, and came in the evening to Kate's house. He had been laboring in the country, exhorting, instructing, and exercising his priestly functions amongst Catholics with all diligence. It so happened that his friend, Mr. Plasden, a very virtuous priest, which had landed with him at Whitby, and parted with him soon afterward, was there also; and several other persons likewise which did usually meet at Mr. Wells's house; but, owing to that gentleman's absence, who had gone into the country for some business, and his wife's indisposition, had agreed for to spend the evening at Mr. Lacy's. Before the company there assembled parted, the two priests treated with him where they should say mass the following day, which was the Octave of All Saints. They agreed to say their matins together, and, by Bryan's advice, to celebrate it at the house of Mr. Wells, notwithstanding his absence; for that Mistress Wells, who could not conveniently go abroad, would be exceeding glad for to hear mass in her own lodging. I told Edmund of my meeting with his brother on the Mall, and the long talk ministered between us some weeks ago, when neither did know the other's name. Methought in his countenance and conversation that night there appeared an unwonted consolation, a sober joy, which filled me almost with awe. When he wished me good-night, he added, "I pray you, my dear child, to lift up your soul to heaven ere yon sleep and when you wake, and recommend to heaven our good purpose, and then come and attend at the holy sacrifice with the crowd of angels and saints which do always assist thereat." When the light faintly dawned in the dull sky, Muriel and I stole from our beds, quietly dressed ourselves, and slipping out unseen, repaired as fast as we could, for the ground was wet and slippery, to Mr. Wells's house. We found assembled in one room Mr. Genings, Mr. Plasden, another priest, Mr. White, Mr. Lacy, Mistress Wells, Sydney Hodgson, Mr. Mason, and many others. Edmund Genings proceeded to say mass. There was so great a stillness in the room a pin should have been heard to drop. Albeit he said the prayers in a very low voice, each word was audible. Mine ears, which are very quick were stretched to the utmost. Each sound in the street caused me an inward flutter. Methought, when he was reading the gospel I discerned a sound as of the hall-door opening, and of steps. Then nothing more for a little while; but just at the moment of the consecration there was a loud rush up the stairs, and the door of the chamber burst open. The gentlemen present rose from their knees. Mistress Wells and I contrariwise sunk on the ground. I dared not for to look, or move, or breathe, but kept inwardly calling on God, then present, for to save us. I heard the words behind me: "Topcliffe! keep him back!" "Hurl him down the stairs!" and then a sound of scuffling, falling, and rolling, followed by a moment's silence.

The while the mass went forward, ever and anon noises rose without; but the gentlemen held the door shut by main force all the time. They kept the foe at bay, these brave men, each word uttered at the altar resounding, I ween, in their breasts. O my God, what a store of suffering was heaped into a brief space of time! What a viaticum was that communion then received by thy doomed priest! "*Domine, non sum dignus*," he thrice said, and then his Lord rested in his soul. "*Deo gratias*" None could now profane the sacred mysteries; none could snatch his Lord from him. "*Ita missa est*." The mass was said, the hour come, death at hand. All resistance then ceased. I saw Topcliffe hastening in with a broken head, and threatening to raise the whole street. Mr. Plasden told him that, now the mass was ended, we would all yield ourselves prisoners, which we did; upon which he took Mr. Genings as he was, in his vestments, and all of us, men and women, in coaches he called for, to Newgate. Muriel and I kept close together, and, with Mistress Wells, were thrust into one cell. Methinks we should all have borne with courage this misfortune but for the thinking of those without—Muriel of her aged and infirm father; Mistress Wells of her husband's return that day to his sacked house, robbed of all its church furniture, books, and her the partner of his whole life. And I thought of Basil, and what he should feel if he knew of me in this fearful Newgate, near to so many thieves and wicked persons; and a trembling came over me lest I should be parted from my companions. I had much to do to recall the courageous spirit I had heretofore nurtured in foreseeing such a hap as this. If I had had to die at once, I think I should have been more brave; but terrible forebodings of examinations—perchance tortures, long solitary hours in a loathsome place—caused me inward shudderings; and albeit I said with my lips over and over again, "Thy will be done, my God," I passionately prayed this chalice might pass from me which often before in my presumption—I cry mercy for it—I had almost desired to drink. Oh, often have I thought since of what is said in David's Psalms, "It is good for me that thou hast humbled me." From my young years a hot glowing feeling had inflamed my breast at the mention of suffering for conscience sake, and the words "to die" had been very familiar ones to my lips; "rather to die," "gladly to die," "proudly to die;" alas, how often had I uttered them! O my God, when the foul smells, the faint light of that dreadful place, struck on my senses, I waxed very weak. The coarse looks of the jailers, the disgusting food set before us, the filthy pallets, awoke in me a loathing I could not repress. And then a fear also, which the sense of my former presumption did awaken. "Let he that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," kept running in mine head. I had said, like St. Peter, that I was ready for to go to prison and to death; and now, peradventure, I should betray my Lord if too great pain overtook me. Muriel saw me wringing mine hands; and, sitting down by my side on the rude mattress, she tried for to comfort me. Then, in that hour of bitter anguish, I learnt that creature's full worth. Who should have thought, who did not then hear her, what stores of superhuman strength, of heavenly knowledge, of divine comfort, should have flowed from her lips? Then I perceived the value of a wholly detached heart, surrendered to God alone. Young as she was, her soul was as calm in this trial as that of the aged resigned woman which shared it with us. Mine was tempest-tossed for a while. I could but lie mine head on Muriel's knee and murmur, "Basil, O Basil!" or else, "If, after all, I should prove an apostate, which hath so despised others for it!"

"'Tis good to fear," she whispered, "but withal to trust. Is it not written, mine own Constance, 'My strength is sufficient for thee?' and who saith this but the Author of all strength—he on whom the whole world doth rest? He permitteth this

fear in thee for humility's sake, which lesson thou hast need to learn. When that of courage is needed, be not affrighted; he will give it thee. He bestoweth not graces before they be needed."

Then she minded me of little St. Agnes, and related passages of her life; but mostly spoke of the cross and the passion of Christ, in such piercing and moving tones, as if visibly beholding the scene on Calvary, that the storm seemed to subside in my breast as she went on.

"Pray," she gently said, "that, if it be God's will, the extremity of human suffering should fall on thee, so that thy love for him should increase. Pray that no human joy may visit thee again, so that heaven may open its gates to thee and thy loved ones. Pray for Hubert, for the queen, for Topcliffe, for every human soul which thou hast ever been tempted to hate; and I promise thee that a great peace shall steal over thy soul, and a great strength shall lift thee up."

I did what she desired, and her words were prophetic. Peace came before long, and joy too, of a strange unearthly sort. A brief foretaste of heaven was showed forth in the consolations then poured into mine heart. When since I have desired for to rekindle fervor and awaken devotion, I recall the hours which followed that great anguish in the cell at Newgate.

Late in the evening an order came for to release Muriel and me, but not Mrs. Wells. When this dear friend understood what had occurred, she raised her hands in fervent gratitude to God, and dismissed us with many blessings.

The events which, followed I will briefly relate. When we reached home Mr. Congleton was very sick; and then began the illness which ended his life. Kate was almost wild with grief at her husband's danger, and we fetched her and her children to her father's house for to watch over them. On the next day all the prisoners which had been taken at Mr. Wells's house (we only having been released by the dealings of friends with the chief secretary) were examined by Justice Young, and returned to prison to take their trials the next session. Mr. Wells, at his return finding his house ransacked and his wife carried away to prison, had been forthwith to Mr. Justice Young for to expostulate with him, and to demand his wife and the key of his lodgings; but the justice sent him to bear the rest company, with a pair of iron bolts on his legs. The next day he examined him in Newgate; and upon Mr. Wells saying he was not privy to the mass being said that day in his house, but wished he had been present, thinking his name highly honored by having so divine a sacrifice offered in it, the justice told him "that though he was not at the feast, he should taste of the same."

The evening I returned home from the prison a great lassitude overcame me, and for a few days increased so much, joined with pains in the head and in the limbs, that I could scarcely think, or so much as stand. At last it was discerned that I was sickening with the small-pox, caught, methinks, in the prison; and this was no small increase to Muriel's trouble, who had to go to and fro from my chamber to her father's, and was forced to send Kate and her children to the country to Sir Ralph Ingoldsby's house; but methinks in the end this proved for the best, for when Mr. Lacy was, with the other prisoners, found guilty, and condemned to death on the 4th of December, some for having said, and the others for having heard, mass at Mr. Wells's house, Kate came to London but for a few hours, to take leave of him, and Polly's care of her afterward cheered the one sister in her great but not very lasting affliction, and sobered the other's spirits in a beneficial manner, for since she hath been a stay at home, and very careful of her children and Kate's also, and, albeit very secretly, doth I hear practise her religion. Mr. Congleton never heard of his son-in-law and his friend Mr. Wells's danger, the palsy which affected him having numbed his senses so that he slowly sunk in his grave without suffering of body or mind. From Muriel I heard the course of the trial. How many bitter words and scoffs were used by the judges and others upon the bench, particularly to Edmund Genings, because of his youth, and that he angered them with his arguments! The more to make him a scoff to the people, they vested him in a ridiculous fool's coat which they had found in Mr. Wells's house, and would have it to be a vestment. It was appointed they should all die at Tyburn, except Mr. Genings and Mr. Wells, who were to be executed before Mr. Wells's own door in Gray's Inn Fields, within three doors of our own lodging. The judges, we were told, after pronouncing sentence, began to persuade them to conform to the Protestant religion, assuring them that by so doing they should obtain mercy, but otherwise they must certainly expect to die. But they all answered "that they would live and die in the true Roman and Catholic faith, which they and all antiquity had ever professed, and that they would by no means go to the Protestant churches, or for one moment think that the queen could be head of the Church in spirituals." They dealt most urgently with Edmund Genings in this matter of conformity, giving him hopes not only of his life, but also of a good living, if he would renounce his faith; but he remained, God be praised, constant and resolute; upon which he was thrust into a dark hole within the prison, where he remained in prayer, without food or sustenance, till the hour of his death. Some letters we received from him and Mr. Wells, which have become revered treasures and almost relics in our eyes. One did write (this was Edmund): "The comforts which captivity bringeth are so manifold that I have rather cause to thank God highly for his fatherly dealings with me than to complain of any worldly misery whatsoever. Custom hath caused that it is no grief to me to be debarred from company, desiring nothing more than solitude. When I pray, I talk with God—when I read, he talketh with me; so that I am never alone." And much more in that strain. Mr. Wells ended his letter thus: "I am bound with gyves, yet I am unbound toward God, and far better I account it to have the body bound than the soul to be in bondage. I am threatened hard with danger of death; but if it be no worse, I will not wish it to be better. God send me his grace, and then I weigh not what flesh and blood can do unto me. I have answered to many curious and dangerous questions, but I trust with good advisements, not offending my conscience. What will come of it God only knoweth. Through prison and chains to glory. Thine till death." This letter was addressed to Basil, with a desire expressed we should read it before it was sent to him.

On the day before the one of the execution, Kate came to take leave of her husband. She could not speak for her tears; but he, with his usual composure, bade her be of good comfort, and that death was no more to him than to drink off the caudle which stood there ready on his table. And methinks this indifferency was a joint effect of nature and of grace, for none had ever seen him hurried or agitated in his life with any matter whatsoever. And when he rolled Topcliffe down the stairs and fell with him—for it was he which did this desperate action—his face was as composed when he rose up again, one of the servants who had seen the scuffle said, as if he had never so much as stirred from his study; and in his last speeches before his death it was noticed that his utterance was as slow and deliberate, and his words as carefully picked, as at any other time of his life. Ah me! what days were those when, hardly recovered from my sickness, only enough for to sit up in an armed-chair and be carried from one chamber to another, all the talk ministered about me was of the danger and coming death of these dear friends. I had a trouble of mine own, which I be truly ashamed to

speaking of; but in this narrative I have resolved above all things to be truthful; and if I have ever had occasion, on the one hand, to relate what should seem to be to mine own credit, on the other also I desire to acknowledge my weaknesses and imperfections, of which what I am about to relate is a notable instance. The small-pox made me at that time the most deformed person that could be seen, even after I was recovered; and the first time I beheld my face in a glass, the horror which it gave me was so great that I resolved Basil should never be the husband of one whom every person which saw her must needs be affrighted to look on; but, forecasting he would never give me up for this reason, howsoever his inclination should rebel against the kindness of his heart and his true affection for me, I hastily sent him a letter, in which I said I could give him no cause for the change which had happened in me, but that I was resolved not to marry him, acting in my old hasty manner, without thought or prudence. No sooner had I done so than I grew very uneasy thereat, too late reflecting on what his suspicions should be of my inconstancy, and what should to him appear faithless breach of promise.

It grieved me, in the midst of such grave events and noble sufferings, to be so concerned for mine own trouble; and on the day before the execution I was sitting musing painfully on the tragedy which was to be enacted at our own doors as it were, weeping for the dear friends which were to suffer, and ever and anon chewing the cud of my wilful undoing of mine own, and it might prove of Basil's, future peace by my rash letter to him, and yet more rash concealment of my motives. Whilst I was thus plunged in grief and uneasiness, the door of my chamber of a sudden opened, and the servant announced Mr. Hubert Rookwood. I hid my face hastily with a veil, which I now did generally use, except when alone with Muriel. He came in, and methought a change had happened in his appearance. He looked somewhat wild and disordered, and his face flushed as one used to drinking.

"Constance," he said abruptly, "tidings have reached me which would not suffer me to put off this visit. A man coming from France hath brought me a letter from Basil, and one directed to you, which he charged me to deliver into your hands. If it tallies with that which he doth write to me—and I doubt not it must be so, for his dealings are always open and honorable, albeit often rash—I must needs hope for so much happiness from it as I can scarce credit to be possible after so much suffering."

I stretched out mine hand for Basil's letter. Oh, how the tears gushed from mine eyes on the reading of it! He had received mine, and having heard some time before from a friend he did not name of his brother's passion for me, he never misdoubted but that I had at last yielded to his solicitations, and given him the love which I withdrew from him.

Never was the nobleness of his nature more evinced than in this letter; never grief more heartfelt, combined with a more patient endurance of the overthrow of his sole earthly happiness; never a greater or more forgiving kindness toward a faithless creature, as he deemed her, with a lingering care for her weal, whom he must needs have thought so ill deserving of his love. So much sorrow without repining, such strict charges not to marry Hubert if he was not a good Catholic and truly reconciled to the Church. But if he was indeed changed in this respect, an assent given to this marriage which had cost him, he said, many tears and many prayers for to write, more than if with his own heart's blood he had traced the words; but which, nevertheless, he freely gave, and prayed God to bless us both, if with a good conscience we could be wedded; and God forbid he should hinder it, if I had ceased for to love him, and had given to Hubert—who had already got his birthright—also a more precious treasure, the heart once his own.

"What doth your brother write to you?" I coldly said; and then Hubert gave me his letter to read.

Methinks he imagined I concealed my face from some sort of shame; and God knoweth, had I acted the part he supposed, I might well have blushed deeper than can be thought of.

This letter was like unto the other—the most touching proof of love a man could give for a woman. Forgetting himself, my dearest Basil's only care was my happiness; and firm remonstrances were blended with touching injunctions to his brother to treasure every hair of the head of one who was dearer to him than all the world beside, and to do his duty to God and to her, which if he observed, he should, mindless of all else, for ever bless him.

When I returned the missive to him, Hubert said, in a faltering voice, "Now you are free—free to be mine—free before God and man."

"Yea," I answered; "free as the dead, for I am henceforward dead to all earthly things."

"What!" he cried, startled; "your thinking is not, God shield it, to be a nun abroad?"

"Nay," I answered; and then, laying my hand on Basil's letter, I said, "If I had thought to marry you, Hubert; if at this hour I should say I could love you, I ween you would leave the house affrighted, and never return to it again."

"Is your brain turned?" he impatiently cried.

"No," I answered quietly, lifting my veil, "my face only is changed."

I had a sort of bitter pleasure in the sight of his surprise. He turned as pale as any smock.

"Oh, fear not," I said; "my heart hath not changed with my face. I am not in so merry a mood, God knoweth, as to torment you with any such apprehensions. My love for Basil is the same; yea, rather at this hour, after these noble proofs of his love, more great than ever. Now you can discern why I should write to him I would never marry him."

Hiding his face in his hands, Hubert said, "Would I had not come here to embitter your pain?"

"You have not added to my sorrow," I answered; "the chalice is indeed full, but these letters have rather lightened than increased my sufferings."

Then concealing again my face, I went on, "O Hubert, will you come here to-morrow morning? Know you the sight

which from that window shall be seen? Hark to that noise! Look out, I pray you, and tell me what it is."

He did as I bade him, and I marked the shudder he gave. His face, pale before, had now turned of an ashy hue.

"Is it possible?" he said; "a scaffold in front of that house where we were wont to meet those old friends! O Constance, are they there to die?—that brave joyous old man, that kind pious soul his wife?"

"Yea," I answered; "and likewise the friend of my young years, good holy Edmund Genings, who never did hurt a fly, much less a human creature. And at Tyburn, Bryan Lacy, my cousin, once your friend, and Sydney Hodgson, and good Mr. Mason, are to suffer."

Hubert clenched his hands, ground his teeth, and a terrible look shot through his eyes. I felt affrighted at the passion my words had awakened.

"Cursed," he cried, in a hoarse voice,— "cursed be the bloody queen which reigneth in this land! Thrice accursed be the tyrants which hunt us to death! Tenfold accursed such as lure us to damnation by the foul baits they do offer to tempt a man to lie to God and to others, to ruin those he loves, to become loathsome to himself by his mean crimes! But if one hath been cheated of his soul, robbed of the hope of heaven, debarred from his religion, thrust into the company of devils, let them fear him, yea, let them fear him, I say. Revenge is not impossible. What shall stay the hand of such a man? What shall guard those impious tempters if many such should one day league for to sweep them from earth's face? If one be desperate of this world's life, he becomes terrible. How should he be to be dreaded who doth despair of heaven!"

With these wild words, he left me. He was gone ere I could speak.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On the night before the 10th of December neither Muriel nor I retired to rest. We sat together by the rush-light, at one time saying prayers, at another speaking together in a low voice. Ever and anon she went to listen at her father's door, for to make sure he slept, and then returned to me. The hours seemed to pass slowly; and yet we should have wished to stay their course, so much we dreaded the first rays of light presaging the tragedy of the coming day. Before the first token of it did show, at about five in the morning, the door-bell rung in a gentle manner.

"Who can be ringing?" I said to Muriel.

"I will go and see," she answered.

But I restrained her, and went, to call one of the servants, who were beginning to bestir themselves. The man went down, and returned, bringing me a paper, on which these words were written:

"MY DEAR CONSTANCE—My lord and myself have secretly come to join our prayers with yours, and, if it should be possible, to receive the blessing of the holy priest who is about to die, as he passeth by your house, toward which, I doubt not, his eyes will of a surety turn. I pray you, therefore, admit us."

I hurried down the stairs, and found Lord and Lady Arundel standing in the hall; she in a cloak and hood, and he with a slouching hat hiding his face. Leading them both into the parlor, which looketh on the street, I had a fire hastily kindled; and for a space her ladyship and myself could only sit holding each other's hands, our hearts being too full to speak. After a while I asked her when she had come to London. She said she had done so very secretly, not to increase the queen's displeasure against her husband; her majesty's misliking of herself continuing as great as ever.

"When she visited my lord last year, before his arrest," quoth she, "on a pane of glass in the dining-room her grace perceived a distich, writ by me in bygone days with a diamond, and which expressed hopes of better fortunes."

"I mind it well," I replied. "Did it not run thus?"

'Not seldom doth the sun sink down
In brightest light
Which rose at early dawn disfigured quite outright;
So shall my fortunes, wrapt so long in darkest night,
Revive, and show ere long an aspect clear and bright.'

"Yea," she answered. "And now listen to what her majesty, calling for a like instrument, wrote beneath:

'Not seldom do vain hopes deceive a silly heart
Let all each witless dreams now vanish and depart;
For fortune shall ne'er shine, I promise thee, on one
Whose folly hath for aye all hopes thereof undone.'

"We do live," she added, "with a sword hanging over our heads; and it is meet we should come here this day to learn a lesson how to die when a like fate shall overtake us. But thou hast been like to die by another means, my good Constance," her ladyship said, looking with kindness but no astonishment on my swollen and disfigured face, which I had not remembered to conceal; grave thoughts, then uppermost, having caused me to forget it.

"My life," I answered, "God hath mercifully spared; but I have lost the semblance of my former self."

"Tut, tut!" she replied, "only for a time."

And then we both drew near unto the fire, for we were shivering with cold. Lord Arundel leant against the chimney, and watched the timepiece.

"Mistress Wells," he said, "is like, I hear, to be relieved at the last moment."

"Alas!" I cried, "nature therein finds relief; yet I know not how much to rejoice or yet to grieve thereat. For surely she will desire to die with her husband. And of what good will life be to her if, like some others, she doth linger for years in prison?"

"Of much good, if God wills her there to spend those years," Muriel gently said; which words, I ween, were called to mind long afterward by one who then heard them.

As the hour appointed for the execution approached, we became silent again, and kneeling down betook ourselves to prayer. At eight o'clock a crowd began to assemble in the street; and the sound of their feet as they passed under the window, hurrying toward the scaffold, which was hung with black cloth, became audible. About an hour afterward notice was given to us by one of the servants that the sledge which carried the prisoners was in sight. We rose from our knees and went to the window. Mr. Wells's stout form and Mr. Genings's slight figure were then discernible, as they sat bound, with their hands tied behind their backs. I observed that Mr. Wells smiled and nodded to some one who was standing amidst the crowd. This person, who was a friend of his, hath since told me that as he passed he saluted him with these words: "Farewell, dear companion! farewell, all hunting and hawking and old pastimes! I am now going a better way." Mistress Wells not being with them, we perceived that to be true which Lord Arundel had heard. At that moment I turned round, and missed Muriel, who had been standing close behind me. I supposed she could not endure this sight; but, lo and behold, looking again into the street, I saw her threading her way amongst the crowd as swiftly, lame though she was, as if an angel had guided her. When she reached the foot of the scaffold, and took her stand there, her aspect was so composed, serene, and resolved, that she seemed like an inhabitant of another world suddenly descended amidst the coarse and brutal mob. She was resolved, I afterward found, to take note of every act, gesture, and word there spoken; and by her means I can here set down what mine own ears heard not, but much of which mine own eyes beheld. As the sledge passed our door, Mr. Genings, as Lady Arundel had foreseen, turned his head toward us; and seeing me at the window, gave us, I doubt not, his blessing; for, albeit he could not raise his chained hand, we saw his fingers and his lips move. On reaching the gibbet Muriel heard him cry out with holy Andrew, "O good gibbet, long desired and now prepared for me, much hath my heart desired thee; and now, joyful and secure, I come to thee. Receive me, I beseech thee, as the disciple of him that suffered on the cross!" Being put upon the ladder, many questions were asked him by some standersby, to which he made clear and distinct answers. Then Mr. Topcliffe cried out with a loud voice,

"Genings, Genings, confess thy fault, thy papist treason; and the queen, no doubt, will grant thee pardon!"

To which he mildly answered, "I know not, Mr. Topcliffe, in what I have offended my dear anointed princess; if I have offended her or any other person in anything, I would willingly ask her and all the world forgiveness. If she be offended with me without a cause, for professing my faith and religion, or because I am a priest, or because I will not turn minister against my conscience, I shall be, I trust, excused and innocent before God. 'We must obey God,' saith St. Peter, 'rather than men;' and I must not in this case acknowledge a fault where there is none. If to return to England a priest, or to say mass, is popish treason, I here do confess I am a traitor. But I think not so; and therefore I acknowledge myself guilty of these things not with repentance and sorrow of heart, but with an open protestation of inward joy that I have done so good deeds, which, if they were to do again, I would, by the permission and assistance of God, accomplish the same, though with the hazard of a thousand lives."

Mr. Topcliffe was very angry at this speech, and hardly gave him time to say an "Our Father" before he ordered the hangman to turn the ladder. From that moment I could not so much as once again look toward the scaffold. Lady Arundel and I drew back into the room, and clasping each other's hands, kept repeating, "Lord, help him! Lord, assist him! Have mercy on him, O Lord!" and the like prayers.

We heard Lord Arundel exclaim, "Good God! the wretch doth order the rope to be cut!" Then avoiding the sight, he also drew back and silently prayed. What followeth I learnt from Muriel, who never lost her senses, though she endured, methinks, at that scaffold's foot as much as any sufferer upon it. Scarcely or not at all stunned, Mr. Genings stood on his feet with his eyes raised to heaven, till the hangman threw him down on the block where he was to be quartered. After he was dismembered, she heard him utter with a loud voice, "Oh, it smarts!" and Mr. Wells exclaim, "Alas! sweet soul, thy pain is great indeed, but almost past. Pray for me now that mine may come." Then when his heart was being plucked out, a faint dying whisper reached her ear, "Sancte Gregori, ora pro me!" and then the voice of the hangman crying, "See, his heart is in mine hand, and yet Gregory in his mouth! O egregious papist!"

I marvel how she lived through it; but she assured us she was never even near unto fainting, but stood immovable, hearing every sound, listening to each word and groan, printing them on the tablet of her heart, wherein they have ever remained as sacred memories.

Mr. Wells, so far from being terrified by the sight of his friend's death, expressed a desire to have his own hastened; and, like unto Sir Thomas More, was merry to the last; for he cried, "Despatch, despatch, Mr. Topcliffe! Be you not ashamed to suffer an old man to stand here so long in his shirt in the cold? I pray God make you of a Saul a Paul, of a persecutor a Catholic." A murmur, hoarse and loud, from the crowd apprised us when all was over.

"Where is Muriel?" I cried, going to the window. Thence I beheld a sight which my pen refuseth to describe—the sledge which was carrying away the mangled remains of those dear friends which so short a time before we had looked upon alive! Like in a dream I saw this spectacle; for the moment afterward I fainted. Many persons were running after the cart, and Muriel keeping pace with what to others would have been a sight full of horror, but to her were only relics of

the saintly dead. She followed, heedless of the mob, unmindful of their jeers, intent on one aim—to procure some portion of those sacred remains, which she at last achieved in an incredible manner; one finger of Edmund Genings's hand, which she laid hold of, remaining in hers. This secured, she hastened home, bearing away this her treasure.

When I recovered from a long swoon, she was standing on one side of me and Lady Arundel on the other. Their faces were very pale, but peaceful; and when remembrance returned, I also felt a great and quiet joy diffused in mine heart, such as none, I ween, could believe in who have not known the like. For a while all earthly cares left me; I seemed to soar above this world. Even Basil I could think of with a singular detachment. It seemed as if angels were haunting the house, whispering heavenly secrets. I could not so much as think on those blessed departed souls without an increase of this joy sensibly inflaming my heart.

After Lady Arundel had left us, which she did with many loving words and tender caresses, Muriel and I conversed long touching the future. She told me that when her duty to her father should end with his life, she intended to fulfil the vow she long ago had made to consecrate herself wholly to God in holy religion, and go beyond the seas, to become a nun of the order of St. Augustine.

"May I not leave this world?" I cried; "may I not also, forgetting all things else, live for God alone?"

A sweet sober smile illumined Muriel's face as she answered, "Yea, by all means serve God, but not as a nun, good Constance. Thine I take to be the mere shadow of a vocation, if even so much as that. A cloud hath for a while obscured the sunshine of thy hopes and called up this shadow; but let this thin vapor dissolve, and no trace shall remain of it. Nay, nay, sweet one, 'tis not chafed, nor yet, except in rare instances, riven hearts which God doth call to this special consecration—rather whole ones, nothing or scantily touched by the griefs and joys which this world can afford. But I warrant thee—nay, I may not warrant," she added, checking herself, "for who can of a surety forecast what God's designs should be? But I think thou wilt be, before many years have past, a careful matron, with many children about thy apron-strings to try thy patience."

"O Muriel," I answered, "how should this be? I have made my bed, and I must lie on it. Like a foolish creature, unwittingly, or rather rashly, I have deceived Basil into thinking I do not love him; and if my face should yet recover its old fairness, he shall still think mine heart estranged."

Muriel shook her head, and said more entangled skeins than this one had been unravelled. The next day she resumed her wonted labors in the prisons and amongst the poor. Having procured means of access to Mistress Wells, she carried to her the only comfort she could now taste—the knowledge of her husband's holy, courageous end, and the reports of the last words he did utter. Then having received a charge thereunto from Mr. Genings, she discovered John Genings's place of residence, and went to tell him that the cause of his brother's coming to London was specially his love for him; that his only regret in dying had been that he was executed before he could see him again, or commend him to any friend of his own, so hastened was his death.

But this much-loved brother received her with a notable coldness; and far from bewailing the untimely and bloody end of his nearest kinsman, he betrayed some kind of contentment at the thought that he was now rid of all the persuasions which he suspected he should otherwise have received from him touching religion.

About a fortnight afterward Mr. Congleton expired. Alas! so troublesome were the times, that to see one, howsoever loved, sink peacefully into the grave, had not the same sadness which usually belongs to the like haps.

Muriel had procured a priest for to give him extreme unction—one Mr. Adams, a friend of Mr. Wells, who had sometimes said mass in his house. He also secretly came for to perform the funeral rites before his burial in the cemetery of St. Martin's church.

When we returned home that day after the funeral, this reverend gentleman asked us if we had heard any report touching the brother of Mr. Genings; and on our denial, he said, "Talk is ministered amongst Catholics of his sudden conversion."

"Sudden, indeed, it should be," quoth Muriel; "for a more indifferent listener to an afflicting message could not be met with than he proved himself when I carried to him Mr. Genings's dying words."

"Not more sudden," quoth Mr. Adams, "than St. Paul's was, and therefore not incredible."

Whilst we were yet speaking, a servant came in, and said a young gentleman was at the door, and very urgent for to see Muriel.

"Tell him," she said, raising her eyes, swollen with tears, "that I have one hour ago buried my father, and am in no condition to see strangers."

The man returned with a paper, on which these words were written:

"A penitent and a wanderer craveth to speak with you. If you shed tears, his do incessantly flow. If you weep for a father, he grieveth for one better to him than ten fathers. If your plight is sad, his should be desperate, but for God's great mercy and a brother's prayers yet pleading for him in heaven as once upon earth.

"JOHN GENINGS."

"Heavens!" Muriel cried, "it is this changed man, this Saul become a Paul, which stands at the door and knocks. Bring him in swiftly; the best comfort I can know this day is to see one who awhile was lost and is now found."

When John Genings beheld her and me, he awhile hid his face in his hands, and seemed unable to speak. To break this silence Mr. Adams said, "Courage, Mr. Genings; your holy brother rejoiceth in heaven over your changed mind, and

further blessings still, I doubt not, he shall yet obtain for you."

Then this same John raised his head, and with as great and touching sorrow as can be expressed, after thanking this unknown speaker for his comfortable words, he begged of Muriel to relate to him each action and speech in the dying scene she had witnessed; and when she had ended this recital, with the like urgency he moved me to tell him all I could remember of his brother's young years, all my father had written of his life and virtues at college, all which we had heard of his labors since he had come into the country, and lastly, in a manner most simple and affecting, we all entreating him thereunto, he made this narrative, addressing himself chiefly to Muriel:

"You, madam, are acquainted with what was the hardness of mine heart and cruel indifference to my brother's fate; with what disdain I listened to you, with what pride I received his last advice. But about ten days after his execution, toward night, having spent all that day in sports and jollity, being weary with play, I resorted home to repose myself. I went into a secret chamber, and was no sooner there sat down, but forthwith my heart began to be heavy, and I weighed how idly I had spent that day. Amidst these thoughts there was presently represented to me an imagination and apprehension of the death of my brother, and, amongst other things, how he had not long before forsaken all worldly pleasure, and for the sake of his religion alone endured dreadful torments. Then within myself I made long discourses concerning his manner of living and mine own; and finding the one to embrace pain and mortification, and the other to seek pleasure—the one to live strictly, and the other licentiously—I was struck with exceeding terror and remorse. I wept bitterly, desiring God to illuminate mine understanding, that I might see and perceive the truth. Oh, what great joy and consolation did I feel at that instant! What reverence on the sudden did I begin to bear to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saints of God, which before I had never scarcely so much as heard of! What strange emotions, as it were inspirations, with exceeding readiness of will to change my religion, took possession of my soul! and what heavenly conception had I then of my brother's felicity! I imagined I saw him—I thought I heard him. In this ecstasy of mind I made a vow upon the spot, as I lay prostrate on the ground, to forsake kindred and country, to find out the true knowledge of Edmund's faith. Oh, sir," he ended by saying, turning to Mr. Adams, which he guessed to be a priest, "think you not my brother obtained for me in heaven what on earth he had not obtained? for here I am become a Catholic in faith without persuasion or conference with any one man in the world?"

"Ay, my good friend," Mr. Adams replied; "the blood of martyrs will ever prove the seed of the Church. Let us then, in our private prayers, implore the suffrages of those who in this country do lose their lives for the faith, and take unto ourselves the words of Jeremiah: 'O Lord, remember what has happened unto us. Behold and see our great reproach; our inheritance is gone to strangers, our houses to aliens. We are become as children without a father, our mothers are made as it were widows.'"

These last words of Holy Writ brought to mine own mind private sorrows, and caused me to shed tears. Soon after John Genings departed from England without giving notice to us or any of his friends, and went beyond seas to execute his promise. I have heard that he has entered the holy order of St. Francis, and is seeking to procure a convent of that religion at Douay, in hopes of restoring the English Franciscan province, of which it is supposed he will be first provincial. Report doth state him to be an exceeding strict and holy religious, and like to prove an instrument in furnishing the English mission with many zealous and apostolical laborers.

Muriel and I were solitary in that great city where so many misfortunes had beset us; she with her anchor cast where her hopes could not be deceived; I by mine own folly like unto a ship at sea without a chart. Womanly reserve, mixed, I ween, with somewhat of pride, restraining me from writing to Basil, though, as my face improved each day, I deplored my hasty folly, and desired nothing so much as to see him again, when, if his love should prove unchanged (shame on that word *if!* which my heart disavowed), we should be as heretofore, and the suffering I had caused him and endured myself would end. But how this might happen I foresaw not; and life was sad and weary while so much suspense lasted.

Muriel would not forsake me while in this plight; but although none could have judged it from her cheerful and amiable behavior, I well knew that she sighed for the haven of a religions home, and grieved to keep her from it. After some weeks spent in this fashion, with very little comfort, I was sitting one morning dismally forecasting the future, writing letter after letter to Basil, which still I tore up rather than send them—for I warrant you it was no easy matter for to express in writing what I longed to say. To tell him the cause of my breaking our contract was so much as to compel him to the performance of it; and albeit I was no longer so ill-favored as at the first, yet the good looks I had before my sickness had by no means wholly returned. Sometimes I wrote: "Your thinking, dear Basil, that I do affection any but yourself is so false and injurious an imagination, that I cannot suffer you to entertain it. Be sure I never can and never shall love any but you; yet, for all that, I cannot marry you." Then effacing this last sentence, which verily belied my true desire, I would write another: "Methinks if you should see me now, yourself would not wish otherwise than to dissolve a contract wherein your contentment should be less than it hath been." And then thinking this should be too obscure, changed it to—"In sooth, dear Basil, my appearance is so altered that you would yourself, I ween, not desire for to wed one so different from the Constance you have seen and loved." But pride whispered to restrain this open mention of my suspicious fears of his liking me less for my changed face; yet withal, conscience reproved this misdoubt of one whose affection had ever shown itself to be of the nobler sort, which looketh rather to the qualities of the heart and mind than to the exterior charms of a fair visage.

Alas! what a torment doth perplexity occasion. I had let go my pen, and my tears were falling on the paper, when Muriel opened the door of the parlor.

"What is it?" I cried, hiding my face with mine hand that she should not see me weeping.

"A letter from Lady Arundel," she answered.

I eagerly took it from her; and on the reading of it found it contained an urgent request from her ladyship, couched in most affectionate terms, and masking the kindness of its intent under a show of entreating, as a favor to herself that I would come and reside with her at Arundel Castle, where she greatly needed the solace of a friend's company, during her lord's necessary absences.

"Mine own dear, good Constance," she wrote, "come to me quickly. In a letter I cannot well express all the good you will thus do to me. For mine own part, I would fain say come to me until death shall part us. But so selfish I would not be; yet prithee come until such time as the clouds which have obscured the fair sky of thy future prospects have passed away, and thy Basil's fortunes are mended; for I will not cease to call him thine, for all that thou hast thyself thrust a spoke in a wheel which otherwise should have run smoothly, for the which thou art now doing penance: but be of good cheer; time will bring thee shrift. Some kind of comfort I can promise thee in this house, greater than I dare for to commit to paper. Lose no time then. From thy last letter methinks the gentle turtle-dove at whose side thou dost now nestle hath found herself a nest whereunto she longeth to fly. Let her spread her wings thither, and do thou hasten to the shelter of these old walls and the loving faithful heart of thy poor friend,

"ANNE ARUNDEL AND SURREY."

Before a fortnight was overpast Muriel and I had parted; she for her religious home beyond seas, I for the castle of my Lord Arundel, whither I travelled in two days, resting on my way at the pleasant village of Horsham. During the latter part of the journey the road lay through a very wild expanse of down; but as soon as I caught sight of the sea my heart bounded with joy; for to gaze on its blue expanse seemed to carry me beyond the limits of this isle to the land where Basil dwelt. When I reached the castle, the sight of the noble gateway and keep filled me with admiration; and riding into the court thereof, I looked with wonder on the military defences bristling on every side. But what a sweet picture smiled from one of the narrow windows over above the entrance-door!—mine own loved friend, yet fairer in her matronly and motherly beauty than even in her girlhood's loveliness, holding in her arms the pretty bud which had blossomed on a noble tree in the time of adversity. Her countenance beamed on me like the morning sun's; and my heart expanded with joy when, half-way up the stairs which led to her chamber, I found myself inclosed in her arms. She led me to a settle near a cheerful fire, and herself removed my riding-cloak, my hat and veil, stroked my cheek with two of her delicate white fingers, and said with a smile,

"In sooth, my dear Constance, thou art an arrant cheat."

"How so, most dear lady?" I said, likewise smiling.

"Why, thou art as comely as ever I thee; which, after all the torments inflicted on poor Master Rookwood by thy prophetic vision of an everlasting deformity, carefully concealed from him under the garb of a sudden fit of inconstancy, is a very nefarious injustice. Go to, go to; if he should see thee now, he never would believe but that that management of thine was a cunning device for to break faith with him."

"Nay, nay," I cried; "if I should be ever so happy, which I deserve not, for to see him again, there could never be for one moment a mistrust on his part of a love which is too strong and too fond for concealment. If the feebleness of sickness had not bred unreasonable fears, methinks I should not have been guilty of so great a folly as to think he would prize less what he was always wont most to treasure far above their merits—the heart and mind of his poor Constance — because the casket which held them had waxed unseemly. But when the day shall come in which Basil and I may meet, God only knoweth. Human foresight cannot attain to this prevision."

Lady Arundel's eyes had a smiling expression then which surprised me. For mine own heart was full when I thus spoke, and I was wont to meet in her with a more quick return of the like feelings I expressed than at that time appeared. Slight inward resentments, painfully, albeit not angrily, entertained, I was by nature prone to; and in this case the effect of this impression suddenly checked the joy which at my first arrival I had experienced. O, how much secret discipline should be needed for to rule that little unruly kingdom within us, which many look not into till serious rebellions do arise, which need fire and sword to quell them for lack of timely repression! Her ladyship set before me some food, and constrained me to eat, which I did merely for to content her. She appeared to me somewhat restless: beginning a sentence, and then breaking off suddenly in the midst thereof; going in and out of the chamber; laughing at one time, and then seeming as if about to weep. "When I had finished eating, and a servant had removed the dishes, she sat down by my side and took my hand in hers. Then the tears truly began to roll down her cheeks.

"O, for God's sake, what aileth you, dearest lady?" I said, uneasily gazing on her agitated countenance.

"Nothing ails me," she answered; "only I fear to frighten thee, albeit in a joyful manner."

"Frightened with joy!" I sadly answered. "O, that should be a rare fright, and an unwonted one to me of late."

"Therefore," she said, smiling through her tears, "peradventure the more to be feared."

"What joy do you speak of? I pray you, sweet lady, keep me not in suspense."

"If, for instance," she said in a low voice, pressing my hands very hard,— "if I was to tell thee Constance, that thy Basil was here, shouldst thou not be affrighted?"

Methinks I must have turned very white; leastways, I began to tremble.

"Is he here?" I said, almost beside myself with the fearful hope her words awoke.

"Yea," she said. "Since three days he is here."

For a moment I neither spoke nor moved.

"How comes it about? how doth it happen?" I began to say; but a passion of tears choked my utterance. I fell into her arms, sobbing on her breast; for verily I had no power to restrain myself. I heard her say, "Master Rookwood, come in." Then, after those sad long weary years, I again heard his cheerful voice; then I saw his kind eyes speaking what words could never have uttered, or one-half so well expressed. Then I felt the happiness which is most like, I ween, of any on

earth to that of heaven: after long parting, to meet again one intensely loved—each heart overflowing with an unspoken joy and with an unbounded thankfulness to God. Amazement did so fill me at this unlooked-for good, that I seemed content for a while to think of it as of a dream, and only feared to be awoke. But oh, with how many sweet tears of gratitude—with what bursts of wonder and admiration—I soon learnt how Lady Arundel had formed this kind plot, to which Muriel had been privy, for to bring together parted lovers, and procure to others the happiness she so often lacked herself—the company of the most loved person in the world. She had herself written to Basil, and related the cause of my apparent change; a cause, she said, at no time sufficient for to warrant a desperate action, and even then passing away. But that had it forever endured, she was of opinion his was a love would survive any such accident as touched only the exterior, when all else was unimpaired. She added, that when Mr. Congleton, who was then at the point of death, should have expired, and Muriel gone beyond seas to fulfil her religious intent, she would use all the persuasion in her power to bring me to reside with her, which was the thing she most desired in the world; and that if he should think it possible under another name for to cross the seas and land at some port in Sussex, he should be the welcomest guest imaginable at Arundel Castle, if even, like St. Alexis, he should hide his nobility under the garb of rags, and come thither begging on foot; but yet she hoped, for his sake, it should not so happen, albeit nothing could be more honorable if the cause was a good one. It needed no more inducement than what this letter contained for to move Basil to attempt this secret return. He took the name of Martingale, and procured a passage in a small trading craft, which landed him at the port of a small town named Littlehampton, about three or four miles from Arundel. Thence he walked to the castle, where the countess feigned him to be a leech sent by my lord to prescribe remedies for a pain in her head, which she was oftentimes afflicted with, and as such entertained him in the eyes of strangers as long as he continued there, which did often move us to great merriment; for some of the neighbors which she was forced to see, would sometimes ask for to consult the countess's physician; and to avoid misdoubts, Basil once or twice made up some innocent compounds, which an old gentleman and a maiden lady in the town vowed had cured them, the one of a fit of the gout, and the other of a very sharp disorder in her stomach. But to return to the blissful first day of our meeting, one of the happiest I had yet known; for a paramount affection doth so engross the heart, that other sorrows vanish in its presence like dewdrops in the sunshine. I can never forget the smallest particle of its many joys. The long talk between Basil and me, first in Lady Arundel's chamber, and then in the gallery of the castle, walking up and down, and when I was tired, I sitting and he standing by the window which looked on the fair valley and silvery river Arun, running toward the sea, through pleasant pastures, with woody slopes on both sides, a fair and a peaceful scene; fair and peaceful as the prospect Basil unfolded to me that day, if we could but once in safety cross the seas; for his debtors had remitted to him in France the moneys which they owed him, and he had purchased a cottage in a very commodious village near the town of Boulogne-sur-Mer, with an apple-orchard and a garden stored with gay flowers and beehives, and a meadow with two large walnut-trees in it. "And then bethink thee," he added, "mine own dear love, that right in front of this fine mansion doth stand the parish church, where God is worshipped in a Catholic manner in peace and freedom; and nothing greater or more weighty need, methinks, to be said in its praise."

I said I thought so too, and that the picture he drew of it liked me well.

"But," quoth Basil suddenly, "I must tell thee, sweetheart, I liked not well thy behavior touching thine altered face, and the misleading letter thou didst send me at that time. No!" he exclaimed with great vehemency, "it mislikes me sorely that thou shouldst have doubted my love and faith, and dealt with me so injuriously. If I was now by some accident disfigured, I must by that same token expect thine affection for me should decay."

"O Basil!" I cried, "that would be an impossible thing!"

"Wherefore impossible?" he replied; "you thought such a change possible in me?"

"Because," I said, smiling, "women are the most constant creatures in the world, and not fickle like unto men, or so careful of a good complexion in others, or a fine set of features."

"Tut, tut!" he cried, "I do admire that thou shouldst dare to utter so great a . . ." then he stopped, and, laughing, added, "the last half of Raleigh's name, as the queen's bad riddle doth make it." [Footnote 5]

[Footnote 5: "The bane of the stomach, and the word of disgrace. Is the name of the gentleman with the bold."]

Well, much talk of this sort was ministered between us; but albeit I find pleasure in the recalling of it, methinks the reading thereof should easily weary others; so I must check my pen, which, like unto a garrulous old gossip, doth run on, overstepping the limits of discretion.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Before I arrived, Lady Arundel had made Basil privy to a great secret, with warrant to impart it to me. In a remote portion of the castle's buildings was concealed at that time Father Southwell, a man who had not his like for piety and good parts; a sweet poet also, whose pieces of verse, chiefly written in that obscure chamber in Arundel Castle, have been since done into print, and do win great praise from all sorts of people. Adjoining to his room, which only one servant in the house, who carried his meals to him, had knowledge of, and from which he could not so much as once look out of the window for fear of being seen, was a small oratory where he said mass every day, and by a secret passage Lady Arundel went from her apartments for to hear it. That same evening after supper she led me thither for to get this good priest's blessing, and also his counsel touching my marriage; for both her ladyship and Basil were urgent for it to take place in a private manner at the castle before we left England. For, they argued, if there should be danger in this departure, it were best encountered together; and except we were married it should be an impossible thing for me to travel in his company and land with him in France. Catholics could be married in a secret manner now that the

needs of the times, and the great perils many were exposed to, gave warrant for it. After some talk with Father Southwell and Lady Arundel, I consented to their wishes with more gladness of heart, I ween, than was seemly to exhibit; for verily I was better contented than can be thought of to think I should be at last married to my dear Basil, and nevermore to part from him, if it so pleased God that we should land safely in France, which did seem to me then the land of promise.

The next days were spent in forecasting means for a safe departure, as soon as these secret nuptials should have taken place; but none had been yet resolved on, when one morning I was called to Lady Arundel's chamber, whom I found in tears and greatly disturbed, for that she had heard from Lady Margaret Sackville, who was then in London, that Lord Arundel was once more resolved to leave the realm, albeit Father Edmunds did dissuade him from that course; but some other friend's persuasions were more availing, and he had determined to go to France, where he might live in safety and serve God quietly.

My lady's agitation at this news was very great. She said nothing should content her but to go with him, albeit she was then with child; and she should write to tell him so; but before she could send a letter Lord Arundel came to the castle, and held converse for many hours with her and Father Southwell. When I met her afterward in the gallery, her eyes were red with weeping. She said my lord desired to see Basil and me in her chamber at nine of the clock. He wished to speak with us of his resolve to cross the seas, and she prayed God some good should arise out of it. Then she added, "I am now going to the chapel, and if thou hast nothing of any weight to detain thee, then come thither also, for to join thy prayers with mine for the favorable issue of a very doubtful matter."

When we repaired to her ladyship's chamber at the time appointed, my lord greeted us in an exceeding kind manner; and after some talk touching Basil's secret return to England, our marriage, and then as speedy as possible going abroad, his lordship said: "I also am compelled to take a like course, for my evil-willers are resolved to work my ruin and overthrow, and will succeed therein by means of my religion. Many actions which at the outset may seem rash and unadvised, after sufficient consideration do appear to be just and necessary; and, methinks, my dearest wife and Father Southwell are now minded to recommend what at first they disliked, and to see that in this my present intent I take the course which, though it imperils my fortunes, will tend to my soul's safety and that of my children. Since I have conceived this intent, I thank God I have found a great deal more quietness in my mind; and in this respect I have just occasion to esteem my past troubles as my greatest felicity, for they have been the means of leading me to that course which ever brings perfect quietness, and only procures eternal happiness. I am resolved, as my dear Nan well knoweth, to endure any punishment rather than willingly to decline from what I have begun; I have bent myself as nearly as I could to continue in the same, and to do no act repugnant to my faith and profession. And by means hereof I am often compelled to do many things which may procure peril to myself, and be an occasion of dislike to her majesty. For, look you, on the first day of this parliament, when the queen was hearing of a sermon in the cathedral church of Westminster, above in the chancel, I was driven to walk by myself below in one of the aisles; and another day this last Lent, when she was hearing another sermon in the chapel at Greenwich, I was forced to stay all the while in the presence-chamber. Then also when on any Sunday or holyday her grace goes to her great closet, I am forced either to stay in the privy chamber, and not to wait upon her at all, or else presently to depart as soon as I have brought her to the chapel. These things, and many more, I can by no means escape, but only by an open plain discovery of myself, in the eye and opinion of all men, as to the true cause of my refusal; neither can it now be long hidden, although for a while it may not have been generally noted and observed."

Lady Arundel sighed and said:

"I must needs confess that of necessity it must shortly be discovered; and when I remember what a watchful and jealous eye is carried over all such as are known to be recusants, and also how their lodgings are continually searched, and to how great danger they are subject if a Jesuit or seminary priest be found within their house, I begin to see that either you cannot serve God in such sort as you have professed, or else you must incur the hazard of greater sufferings than I am willing you should endure."

"For my part," Basil said, "I would ask, my lord, those that hate you most, whether being of the religion which you do profess, they would not take that course for safety of their souls and discharge of their consciences which you do now meditate? And either they must directly tell you that they would have done the same, or acknowledge themselves to be mere atheists; which, howsoever they be affected in their hearts, I think they would be loth to confess with their mouths."

"What sayest thou, Constance, of my lord's intent?" Lady Arundel said, when Basil left off speaking.

"I am ashamed to utter my thinking in his presence, and in yours, dearest lady," I replied; "but if you command me to it, methinks that having had his house so fatally and successfully touched, and finding himself to be of that religion which is accounted dangerous and odious to the present state, which her majesty doth detest, and of which she is most jealous and doubtful, and seeing he might now be drawn for his conscience into a great and continual danger, not being able to do any act or duty whereunto his religion doth bind him without incurring the danger of felony, he must needs run upon his death headlong, which is repugnant to the law of God and flatly against conscience, or else he must resolve to escape these perils by the means he doth propose."

"Yea," exclaimed his lordship, with so much emotion that his voice shook in the utterance of the words, "long have I debated with myself on the course to take. I do see it to be the safest way to depart out of the realm, and abide in some other place where I may live without danger of my conscience, without offence to the queen, without daily peril of my life; but yet I was drawn by such forcible persuasions to be of another opinion, as I could not easily resolve on which side to settle my determination. For on the one hand my native, and oh how dearly loved country, my own early friends, my kinsfolk, my home, and, more than all, my wife, which I must for a while part with if I go, do invite me to stay. Poverty awaits me abroad; but in what have state and riches benefited us, Nan? Shall not ease of heart and freedom from haunting fears compensate for vain wealth? When, with the sweet burthen in thine arms which for a while doth detain thee here, thou shalt kneel before God's altar in a Catholic land, methinks thou wilt have but scanty regrets for

the trappings of fortune."

"God is my witness," the sweet lady replied, "that should be the happiest day of my life. But I fear—yea, much I do fear—the chasm of parting which doth once more open betwixt thee and me. Prithee, Phil, let me go with thee," she tearfully added.

"Nay, sweet Nan," he answered; "thou knowest the physicians forbid thy journeying at the present time so much as hence to London. How should it then behoove thee to run the perils of the sea, and nightly voyage, and it may be rough usage? Nay, let me behold thee again, some months hence, with a fair boy in thine arms, which if I can but once behold, my joy shall be full, if I should have to labor with mine hands for to support him and thee."

She bowed her head on the hand outstretched to her; but I could see the anguish with which she yielded her assent to this separation. Methinks there was some sort of presentiment of the future heightening her present grief; she seemed so loth her lord should go, albeit reason and expediency forced from her an unwilling consent.

Before the conversation in Lady Arundel's chamber ended, the earl proposed that Basil and I should accompany him abroad, and cross the sea in the craft he should privately hire, which would sail from Littlehampton, and carry us to some port of France, whence along the coast we could travel to Boulogne. This liked her ladyship well. Her eyes entreated our consent thereunto, as if it should have been a favor she asked, which indeed was rather a benefit conferred on us; for nothing would serve my lord but that he should be at the entire charge of the voyage, who smiling said, for such good company as he should thus enjoy he should be willing to be taxed twice as much, and yet consider himself to be the obliged party in this contract.

"But we must be married first," Basil bluntly said.

Lady Arundel replied that Father Southwell could perform the ceremony when we pleased—yea, on the morrow, if it should be convenient; and that my lord should be present thereat.

I said this should be very short notice, I thought, for to be married the next day; upon which Basil exclaimed,

"These be not times, sweetheart, for ceremonies, fashions, and nice delays. Methinks since our betrothal there hath been sufficient waiting for to serve the turn of the nicest lady in the world in the matter of reserves and yeas and nays."

Which is the sharpest thing, I think, Basil hath uttered to me either before or since we have been married. So, to appease him, I said not another word against this sudden wedding; and the next day but one, at nine of the clock, was then fixed for the time thereof.

On the following morning Lord Arundel and Basil (the earl had conceived a very great esteem and good disposition toward him; as great, and greater he told me, as for some he had known for as many years as his hours) went out together, under pretence of shooting in the woods on the opposite side of the river about Leominster, but verily to proceed to Littlehampton, where the earl had appointed to meet the captain of the vessel—a Catholic man, the son of an old retainer of his family—with whom he had dealt for the hiring of a vessel for to sail to France as soon as the wind should prove favorable. Whilst they were gone upon this business, Lady Arundel and I sat in the chamber which looked into the court, making such simple preparations as would escape notice for our wedding, and the departure which should speedily afterward ensue.

"I will not yield thee," her ladyship said, "to be married except in a white dress and veil, which I shall hide in a chamber nigh unto the oratory, where I myself will attire thee, dear love; and see, this morning early I went out alone into the garden and gathered this store of rosemary, for to make thee a nosegay to wear in thy bosom. Father Southwell saith it is used at weddings for an emblem of fidelity. If so, who should have so good a right to it as my Constance and her Basil? But I will lay it up in a casket, which shall conceal it the while, and aid to retain the scent thereof."

"O dear lady," I cried, seizing her hands, "do you remember the day when you plucked rosemary in our old garden at Sherwood, and smiling, said to me, 'This meaneth remembrance?' Since it signifieth fidelity also, well should you affection it; for where shall be found one so faithful in love and friendship as you?"

"Weep not," she said, pressing her fingers on her eyelids to stay her own tears. "We must needs thank God and be joyful on the eve of thy wedding-day; and I am resolved to meet my lord also with a cheerful countenance, so that not in gloom but in hope he shall leave his native land."

In converse such as this the hours went swiftly by. Sometimes we talked of the past, its many strange haps and changes; sometimes of the future, forecasting the manner of our lives abroad, where in safety, albeit in poverty, we hoped to spend our days. In the afternoon there arrived at the castle my Lord William Howard and his wife and Lady Margaret Sackville, who, having notice of their brother's intent to go beyond seas on the next day, if it should be possible, had come for to bid him farewell.

Leaving Lady Arundel in their company, I went to the terrace underneath the walls of the castle, and there paced up and down, chewing the cud of both sweet and sad memories. I looked at the soft blue sky and fleecy clouds, urged along by a westerly breeze impregnated with a salt savor; on the emerald green of the fields, the graceful forms of the leafless trees on the opposite hills, on the cattle peacefully resting by the river-side. I listened to the rustling of the wind amongst the bare branches over mine head, and the bells of a church ringing far off in the valley. "O England, mine own England, my fair native land—am I to leave thee, never to return?" I cried, speaking aloud, as if to ease my oppressed heart. Then mine eyes rested on the ruined hospital of the town, the shut-up churches, the profaned sanctuaries, and thought flying beyond the seas to a Catholic land, I exclaimed, "The sparrow shall find herself a house, and the turtle-dove a nest for herself—the altars of the Lord of hosts, my king and my God."

When Basil returned, he told me that the vessel which was to take us to France was lying out at sea near the coast. Lord

Arundel and himself had gone in a boat to speak with the captain, who did seem a particular honest man and zealous Catholic; and the earl had bespoken some needful accommodation for Mistress Martingale, he said, smiling; not very commodious, indeed, but as good as on board the like craft could be expected. If the wind remained in the same quarter in the afternoon of the morrow, we should then sail; if it should change, so as to be most unfavorable, the captain should send private notice of it to the castle.

The whole of that evening the earl spent in writing a letter to her majesty. He feared that his enemies, after his departure, would, by their slanderous reports, endeavor to disgrace him with the people, and cause the queen to have sinister surmises of him. He confided this letter to the Lady Margaret, his sister, to be delivered unto her after his arrival in France; by which it might appear, both to her and all others, what were the true causes which had moved him to undertake that resolution.

I do often think of that evening in the great chamber of the castle—the young earl in the vigorous strength and beauty of manhood, his comely and fair face now bending over his writing, now raised with a noble and manly grief, as he read aloud portions of it, which, methinks, would have touched any hearts to hear them; and how much the more that loving wife, that affectionate sister, that faithful brother, those devoted friends which seemed to be in some sort witnesses of his last will before a final parting! I mind me of the sorrowful, dove-like sweetness of Lady Arundel's countenance; the flashing eyes of Lady Margaret; the loving expression, veiled by a studied hardness, of Lord William's face; of his wife my Lady Bess's reddening cheek and tearful eyes, which she did conceal behind the coif of her childish namesake sitting on her knees. When he had finished his letter, with a somewhat moved voice the earl read the last passages thereof: "If my protestation, who never told your majesty any untruth, may carry credit in your opinion, I here call God and his angels to witness that I would not have taken this course if I might have stayed in England without danger of my soul or peril of my life. I am enforced to forsake my country, to forget my friends, to leave my wife, to lose the hope of all worldly pleasures and earthly commodities. All this is so grievous to flesh and blood, that I could not desire to live if I were not comforted with the remembrance of his mercy for whom I endure all this, who endured ten thousand times more for me. Therefore I remain in assured hope that myself and my cause shall receive that favor, conceit, and rightful construction at your majesty's hands which I may justly challenge. I do humbly crave pardon for my long and tedious letter, which the weightiness of the matter enforced me unto; and I beseech God from the bottom of my heart to send your majesty as great happiness as I wish to mine own soul."

A time of silence followed the reading of these sentences, and then the earl said in a cheerful manner:

"So, good Meg, I commit this protestation to thy good keeping. When thou hearest of my safe arrival in France, then straightway see to have it placed in the queen's hands."

The rest of the evening was spent in affectionate converse by these near kinsfolk. Basil and I repaired the while by the secret passage to Father Southwell's chamber, where we were in turn shriven, and afterward received from him such good counsel and rules of conduct as he deemed fitting for married persons to observe. Before I left him, this good father gave me, writ in his own hand, some sweet verses which he had that day composed for us, and which I do here transcribe. He, smiling, said he had made mention of fishes in his poem, for to pleasure so famous an angler as Basil; and of birds, for that he knew me to be a great lover of these soaring creatures:

"The lopped tree in time may grow again.
Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower;
The sorest wight may find release of pain.
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower;
Times go by turn, and chances change by course.
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

"The sea of fortune doth not over flow,
She draws her favors to the lowest ebb;
Her time hath equal times to come and go.
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web;
No joy so great but runneth to an end.
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.

"A chance may win that by mischance was lost.
The well that holds no great, takes little fish;
In some things all, in all things none are crossed.
Few all they need, but none have all they wish;
Unmeddled joys here to no man befall,
Who least have some, who most have never all.

"Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring;
No endless night, yet not eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing;
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay;
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall."

The common sheet of paper which doth contain this his writing hath a greater value in mine eyes than the most rich gift that can be thought of.

On the next morning, Lady Arundel conducted me from mine own chamber, first into a room where with her own hands she arrayed me in my bridal dress, and with many tender kisses and caresses, such as a sister or a mother would bestow, testified her affection for her poor friend; and thence to the oratory, where the altar was prepared, and by

herself in secret decked with early primroses, which had begun to show in the woods and neath the hedges. A small but noble company were gathered round us that day. From pure and holy lips the Church's benison came to us. The vows we exchanged have been faithfully observed, and long years have set a seal on the promises then made.

Basil's wife! Oh, what a whole compass of happiness did lie in those two words! Yea, the waves of the sea might now rage and the winds blow. The haven might be distant and the way thither insecure. Man's enmity or accident might yet rob us each of the other's visible presence. But naught could now sever the cord, strong like unto a cable chain, which bound our souls in one. Anchored in that wedded unity, which is one of God's sacraments, till death, ay, and beyond death also, this tie should last.

We have been young, and now are old. We have lost country, home, and almost every friend known and affectioned in our young years; but that deepest, holiest love, the type of Christ's union with his Church, still doth shed its light over the evening of life. My dear Basil, I am assured, thinks me as fair as when we did sit together fishing on the banks of the Ouse; and his hoary head and withered cheeks are more lovely in mine eyes than ever were his auburn locks and ruddy complexion. One of us must needs die before the other, unless we should be so happy that that good should befall us as to end our days as two aged married persons I have heard of. It was the husband's custom, as soon as ever he unclosed his eyes, to ask his wife how she did; but one night, he being in a deep sleep, she quietly departed toward the morning. He was that day to have gone out a-hunting, and it was his custom to have his chaplain pray with him before he went out. The women, fearful to surprise him with the ill news, had stolen out and acquainted the chaplain, desiring him to inform him of it. But the gentleman waking did not on that day, as was his custom ask for his wife, but called his chaplain to prayers, and, joining with him, in the midst of the prayer expired, and both were buried in the same grave. Methinks this should be a very desirable end, only, if it pleased God, I would wish to have the last sacraments, and then to die just before Basil, when his time cometh. But God knoweth best; and any ways we are so old and so near of an age, one cannot tarry very long behind when the other is gone.

Being at rest after our marriage touching what concerned ourselves, compassion for Lady Arundel filled our hearts. Alas! how bravely and how sweetly she bore this parting grief. Her intense love for her lord, and sorrow at their approaching separation, struggled with her resolve not to sadden their last hours, which were prolonged beyond expectancy. For once on that day, and twice on that which followed, when all was made ready for departure, a message came from the captain for to say the wind, and another time the tide, would not serve; and albeit each time, like a reprieved person, Lady Arundel welcomed the delay, methinks these retardments served to increase her sufferings. Little Bess hung fondly on her father's neck the last time he returned from Littlehampton with the tidings the vessel would not sail for some hours, kissing his face and playing with his beard.

"Ah, dearest Phil!" her mother cried, "the poor babe rejoiceth in the sight of thee, all unwitting in her innocent glee of the shortness of this joy. Howsoever, methinks five or six hours of it is a boon for to thank God for;" and so putting her arm in his, she led him away to a solitary part of the garden, where they walked to and fro, she, as she hath since written to me, starting each time the clock did strike, like one doomed to execution. Methinks there was this difference between them, that he was full of hope and bright forecastings of a speedy reunion; but on her soul lay a dead, mournful despondency, which she hid by an apparent calmness. When, late in the evening, a third message came for to say the ship could not depart that night, I begun to think it would never go at all. I saw Basil looked at the weathercock and shrugged his shoulders, as if the same thought was in his mind. But when I spake of it, he said seafaring folks had a knowledge in these matters which others did not possess, and we must needs be patient under these delays. Howsoever, at three o'clock in the morning the shipman signified that the wind was fit and all in readiness. So we rose in haste and prepared for to depart. The countess put her arms about my neck, and this was the last embrace I ever had of her. My lord's brother and sisters hung about him awhile in great grief. Then his wife put out her hands to him, and, with a sorrow too deep for speech, fixed her eyes on his visage.

"Cheep up, sweetest wife," I heard him say. "Albeit nature suffers in this severance from my native land, my true home shall be wherever it shall please God to bring thee and me and our children together. God defend the loss of this world's good should make us sad, if we be but once so blessed as to meet again where we may freely serve him."

Then, after a long and tender clasping of her to his breast, he tore himself away and getting on a horse rode to the coast. Basil and I, with Mr. William Bray and Mr. Burlace, drove in a coach to the port. It was yet dark, and a heavy mist hung on the valley. Folks were yet abed, and the shutters of the houses closed, as we went down the hill through the town. After crossing the bridge over the Arun the air felt cold and chill. At the steep ascent near Leominster I put my head out of the window for to look once more at the castle, but the fog was too thick. At the port the coach stopped, and a boat was found waiting for us. Lord Arundel was seated in it, with his face muffled in a cloak. The savor of the sea air revived my spirits; and when the boat moved off, and I felt the waves lifting it briskly, and with my hand in Basil's I looked on the land we were leaving, and then on the watery world before us, a singular emotion filled my soul, as if it was some sort of death was happening to me—a dying to the past, a gliding on to an unknown future on a pathless ocean, rocked peacefully in the arms of his sheltering love, even as this little bark which carried us along was lifted up and caressed by the waves of the deep sea.

When we reached the vessel the day was dawning. The sun soon emerged from a bank of clouds, and threw its first light on the rippling waters. A favoring wind filled our sails, and like a bird on the wing the ship bounded on its way till the flat shore at Littlehampton and the far-off white cliffs to the eastward were well-nigh lost sight of. Lord Arundel stood with Basil on the narrow deck, gazing at the receding coast.

"How sweet the air doth blow from England!" he said; "how blue the sky doth appear to-day! and those saucy seagulls how free and happy they do look!" Then he noticed some fishing-boats, and with a telescope he had in his hand discerned various ships very far off. Afterward he came and sat down by my side, and spoke in a cheerful manner of his wife and the simple home he designed for her abroad. "Some years ago, Mistress Constance," he said—and then smiling, added, "My tongue is not yet used to call you Mistress Rookwood—when my sweet Nan, albeit a wife, was yet a simple child, she was wont to say, 'Phil, would we were farmers! You would plough the fields and cut wood in the forest, and I should milk the cows and feed the poultry.' Well, methinks her wish may yet come to pass. In Brittany or

Normandy some little homestead should shelter us, where Bess shall roll on the grass and gather the fallen apples, and on Sundays put on her bravest clothes for to go to mass. What think you thereof, Mistress Constance? and who knoweth but you and your good husband may also dwell in the same village, and some eighteen or twenty years hence a gay wedding for to take place betwixt one Master Rookwood and one Lady Ann or Margaret Howard, or my Lord Maltravers with one Mistress Constance or Muriel Rookwood? And on the green on such a day, Nan and Basil and you and I should lead the brawls."

"Methinks, my lord," I answered, smiling, "you do forecast too great a condescension on your part, and too much ambition on our side, in the planning of such a union."

"Well, well," he said; "if your good husband carrieth not beyond seas with him the best earl's title in England, I'll warrant you in God's sight he weareth a higher one far away—the merit of an unstained life and constant nobility of action; and I promise you, beside, he will be the better farmer of the twain; so that in the matter of tocher, Mistress Rookwood should exceed my Lady Bess or Ann Howard."

With such-like talk as this time was whiled away; and whilst we were yet conversing I noticed that Basil spoke often to the captain and looked for to be watching a ship yet at some distance, but which seemed to be gaining on us. Lord Arundel, perceiving it, then also joined them, and inquired what sort of craft it should be. The captain professed to be ignorant thereof; and when Basil said it looked like a small ship-of-war, and as there were many dangerous pirates about the Channel it should be well to guard against it, he assented thereto, and said he was prepared for defence.

"With such unequal means," Basil replied, "as it is like we should bring to a contest, speed should serve us better than defence."

"But," quoth Lord Arundel, "she is, 'tis plain, a swifter sailer than this one we are in. God's will be done, but 'tis a heavy misfortune if a pirate at this time do attack us, and so few moneys with us for to spare!"

Now none of our eyes could detach themselves from this pursuing vessel. The captain eluded further talk, on pretence for to give orders and move some guns he had aboard on deck; but it was vain for to think of a handful of men untrained to sea-warfare encountering a superior force, such as this ship must possess, if its designs should be hostile. As it moved nigher to us, we could perceive it to be well manned and armed. And the captain then exclaimed:

"'Tis Keloway's ship!"

This man was of a notorious, infamous life, well known for his sea-robberies and depredations in the Channel.

"God yield," murmured the earl, "he shall content himself with the small sum we can deliver to him and not stay us any further."

A moment afterward we were boarded by this man, who, with his crew, thrice as numerous as ours and armed to the teeth, comes on our deck and takes possession of the ship. Straightway he walks to the earl and tells him he doth know him, and had watched his embarkation, being resolved to follow him and exact a good ransom at his hands, which if he would pay without contention, he should himself, without further stop or stay, pass him and his two gentlemen into France, adding, he should take no less from him than one hundred pounds.

"I have not so much, or near unto it, with me," Lord Arundel said.

"But you can write a word or two to any friend of yours from whom I may receive it." quoth Keloway.

"Well," said the earl, "seeing I have pressing occasion for to go to France, and would not be willingly delayed, I must needs consent to your terms, no choice therein being allowed me. Get me some paper," he said to Mr. William Bray.

"Should this be prudent, my lord?" Basil whispered in his ear.

"There is no help for it, Master Rookwood," the earl replied. "Beside, there is honor even amongst thieves. Once secure of his money, this man hath no interest in detaining us, but rather the contrary."

And without further stopping, he hastily wrote a few lines to his sister the Lady Margaret Sackville, in London, that she should speak to Mr. Bridges, *alias* Grately, a priest, to give one hundred pounds to the bearer thereof, by the token that was between them, that *black is white*, and withal assured her that he now certainly hoped to have speedy passage without impediment. As soon as this paper was put into Kelloway's hand, he read it, and immediately called on his men for to arrest the Earl of Arundel, producing an order from the queen's council for to prove he was appointed to watch there for him, and carry him back again to land where her majesty's officers did await him.

An indescribable anguish seized my heart; an overwhelming grief, such as methinks no other event, howsoever sad or tragical, or yet more nearly touching me, had ever wrought in my soul, which I ascribe to a presentiment that this should be the first link of that long chain of woes which was to follow.

"O, my lord!" I exclaimed, almost falling at his feet, "God help you to bear this too heavy blow!"

He took me by the hand; and never till I die shall I lose the memory of the sweet serenity and noble steadfastness of his visage in this trying hour.

"God willeth it," he gently said; "his holy will be done! He will work good out of what seemeth evil to us." And then gaily added, "We had thought to travel the same way; now we must needs journey apart. Never fear, good friends, but both roads shall lead to heaven, if we do but tread them piously. My chief sorrow is for Nan; but her virtue is so great, that affliction will never rob her of such peace as God only giveth."

Then this angelic man, forecasting for his friends in the midst of this terrible mishap, passed into Basil's hands his pocket-book, and said, "This shall pay your voyage, good friend; and if aught doth remain afterward, let the poor have their share of it, for a thank-offering, when you reach the shore in safety."

Basil, I saw, could not speak; his heart was too full. O, what a parting ensued on that sad ocean whose waves had seemed to dance so joyously a short space before! With what aching hearts we pressed the young earl's hand, and watched him pass into the other ship, accompanied by his two gentlemen, which were with him arrested! No heed was taken of us; and Kelloway, having secured his prey, abandoned our vessel, the captain of which seemed uneasy and ill-disposed to speak with us. We did then suspect, which doubt hath been since confirmed, that this seeming honest Catholic man had acted a traitor's part, and that those many delays had been used for the very purpose of staying Lord Arundel until such time as all was prepared for his capture. The wind, which was in our favor, bore us swiftly toward the French coast; and we soon lost sight of the vessel which carried the earl back to the shores of England. Fancy, you who read, what pictures we needs must then have formed of that return; of the dismal news reaching the afflicted wife, the sad sister, the mournful brother, and friends now scattered apart, so lately clustered round him! Alas! when we landed in France, at the port of Calais, the sense of our own safety was robbed of half its joy by fears and sorrowing for the dear friends whose fortunes have proved so dissimilar to our own.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The deep clear azure of the French sky, the lightsome pure air, the quaint houses, and outlandish dresses of the people in Calais; the sound of a foreign tongue understood, but not familiar, for a brief time distracted my mind from painful themes. Basil led me to the church for to give thanks to God for his mercies to us, and mostly did it seem strange to me to enter an edifice in which he is worshipped in a Catholic manner, which yet hath the form and appearance of a church, and resembles not the concealed chambers in our country wherein mass is said; an open visible house for the King of kings, not a hiding-place, as in England. After we had prayed there a short time, Basil put into a box at the entrance the money which Lord Arundel had designed for the poor. A pale thin man stood at the door, which, when we passed, said, "God bless you!" Basil looked earnestly at him, and then exclaimed, "As I live, Mr. Watson!" "Yea," the good man answered, "the same, or rather the shadow of the same, risen at the last from the bed of sickness. O Mr. Rookwood, I am glad to see you!" "And so am I to meet with you, Mr. Watson," Basil answered; and then told this dear friend who I was, and the sad hap of Lord Arundel, which moved in him a great concern for that young nobleman and his excellent lady. Many tokens of regard and interchange of information passed between us. He showed us where he lived, in a small cottage near unto the ramparts; and nothing would serve him but to gather for me in the garden a nosegay of early flowerets which just had raised their heads above the sod. He said Dr. Allen had sent him money in his sickness, and an English lady married to a French gentleman provided for his wants. "Ah! that was the good madame I told you of," Basil cried, turning to me; "who would have harbored . . ." Then he stopped short; but Mr. Watson had caught his meaning, and with tears in his eyes said: "Fear not to speak of her whose death bought my life, and it may be also my soul's safety. For, God knoweth, the thought of her doth never forsake me so much as for one hour;" and thereupon we parted with much kindness on both sides. That night we lay at a small hostelry in the town; and the next morning hired a cart with one horse, which carried us to Boulogne in one day, and thence to this village, where we have lived since for many years in great peace. I thank God, and very much contentment of mind, and no regrets save such as do arise in the hearts of exiles without hope of return to a beloved native country.

The awaiting of tidings from England, which were long delayed, was at the first a very sore trial, and those which reached us at last yet more grievous than that suspense. Lord Arundel committed to the Tower; his brother the Lord William and his sister the Lady Margaret not long after arrested, which was more grief to him, his lady wrote to me, than all his own troubles and imprisonment. But, O my God! how well did that beginning match with what was to follow! Those ten years which were spent amidst so many sufferings of all sorts by these two noble persons, that the recital of them would move to pity the most strong heart.

Mine own sorrows, leastways all sharp ones, ended with my passage into France. If Basil showed himself a worthy lover, he hath proved a yet better husband. His nature doth so delight in doing good that it wins him the love of all our neighbors. His life is a constant exercise of charity. He is most indulgent to his wife and kind to his children, of which it hath pleased God to give him three—one boy and two girls, of as comely visages and commendable dispositions as can reasonably be desired. He hath a most singular affection for all such as do suffer for their religion, and cherishes them with an extraordinary bounty to the limits of his ability; his house being a common resort for all banished Catholics which land at Boulogne, from whence he doth direct them to such persons as can assist them in their need. His love toward my unworthy self hath never decreased. Methinks it rather doth increase as we advance in years. We have ever been actuated as by one soul; and never have any two wills agreed so well as Basil's and mine in all aims in this world and hopes for the next. If any, in the reading of this history, have only cared for mine own haps, I pray them to end their perusal of it here; but if, even as my heart hath been linked from early years with Lady Arundel's, there be any in which my poor writing hath awakened somewhat of that esteem for her virtues and resentment of her sorrows which hath grown in me from long experience of her singular worth; if the noble atonement for youthful offences and follies already shown in her lord's return to his duty to her, and altered behavior in respect to God, hath also moved them to desire a further knowledge of the manner in which these two exalted souls were advanced by long affliction to a high point of perfection—then to such the following pages shall not be wholly devoid of that interest which the true recital of great misfortune doth habitually carry with it. If none other had written the life of that noble lady, methinks I must have essayed to do it; but having heard that a good clergyman hath taken this task in hand, secretly preparing materials whilst she yet lives wherewith to build her a memorial at a future time, I have restrained myself to setting down what, by means of her own writing or the reports of others, hath reached my knowledge concerning the ten years which followed my last parting with her. This was the first letter I received from this afflicted lady after her lord's arrest:

"O MY DEAR FRIEND—What days these have proved! Believe me, I never looked for a favorable issue of this

enterprise. When I first had notice thereof, a notable chill fell on my soul, which never warmed again with hope. When I began to pray after hearing of it, I had what methinks the holy Juliana of Norwich (whose cell we did once visit together, as I doubt not thou dost remember) would have called a foreshowing, or, as others do express it, a presentiment of coming evil. But how soon the effect followed! I had retired to rest at nine of the clock; and before I was undressed Bertha came in with a most downcast countenance. 'What news is there?' I quickly asked, misdoubting some misfortune had happened. Then she began to weep. 'Is my lord taken?' I cried, 'or worse befallen him?' 'He is taken,' she answered, 'and is now being carried to London for to be committed to the Tower. Master Ralph, the port-master, hath brought the news. A man, an hour ago, had reported as much in the town; but Mr. Fawcett would not suffer your ladyship to be told of it before a greater certainty thereof should appear. O woe be the day my lord ever embarked!' Then I heard sounds of wailing and weeping in the gallery; and opening the door, found Bessy's nurse and some other of the servants lamenting in an uncontrolled fashion. I could not shed one tear, but gave orders they should fetch unto me the man which had brought the tidings. From him I heard more fully what had happened; and then, in the same composed manner, desired my coach and horses for to be made ready to take me to London the next day at daybreak, and dismissed everybody, not suffering so much as one woman to sit up with me. When all had retired, I put on my cloak and hood; and listing first if all was quiet, went by the secret passage to the chapel-room. When I got there, Father Southwell was in it, saying his office. When he saw me enter at that unusual hour, methinks the truth was made known to him at once; for he only took me by the hand, and said: 'My child, this would be too hard to bear if it were not God's sweet will; but being so, what remaineth but to lie still under a Father's merciful infliction?' and then he took out the crucifix, which for safety was locked up, and set it on the altar. 'That shall speak to you better than I can,' he said; and verily it did; for at the sight of my dying Saviour I wept. The whole night was spent in devout exercises. At dawn of day Father Southwell said mass, and I received. Then, before any one was astir, I returned to mine own chamber, and, lying down for a few moments, afterward rung the bell, and ordered horses to be procured for to travel to London, whence I write these lines. I have here heard this report of my dear lord's journey from one which conversed with Sir George Carey, who commanded the guard which conducted him, that he was nothing at all daunted with so unexpected a misfortune, and not only did endure it with great patience and courage, but, moreover, carried it with a joyful and merry countenance. One night in the way he lodged at Guildford, where seeing the master of the inn (who sometime was our servant, and who hath written it to one of my women, his sister), and some others who wished well unto him, weeping and sorrowing for his misfortunes, he comforted them all, and willed them to be of good cheer, because it was not for any crime—treason or the like—he was apprehended, but only for attempting to leave the kingdom, the which he had done only for his own safety. He is soon to be examined by some of the council sent to the Tower for this special purpose by the queen. I have sought to obtain access to him, but been flatly reused, and a hint ministered to me that albeit my residence at Arundel House is tolerated at the present, if the queen should come to stay at Somerset House, which she is soon like to do, my departure hence shall be enforced; but while I remain I would fain do some good to persons afflicted as myself. I pray you, my good Constance, when you find some means to despatch me a letter, therewith to send the names and addresses of some of the poor folks Muriel was wont to visit; for I am of opinion grief should not make us selfish, but rather move us to relieve in others the pains of which we feel the sharp edge ourselves. I have already met by accident with many necessitous persons, and they do begin in great numbers to resort to this house. God knoweth if the means to relieve them will not be soon lacking. But to make hay whilst the sun shines is a wise saying, and in some instances a precept. Alas! the sunshine of joy is already obscured for me. Except for these poor pensioners, that of fortune causeth me small concern.—
Thy loving friend, A. A. and S."

"Will and Meg are at present in separate prisons. It is impossible but that she shall be presently released; for against her nothing can be alleged, so much as to give a pretence for an accusation. My lord and Will's joint letter to Dr. Allen, sent by Mr. Brydges—who, out of confidence, mentioned it to Mr. Gifford, a pretended priest, who lives at Paris, and is now discovered to be a spy—is the ground of the charges against them. How utterly unfounded thou well knowest; but so much as to write to Dr. Allen is now a crime, howsoever innocent the matter of such a correspondence should be. I do fear that in one of his letters—but I wot not if of this they have possession—my lord, who had just heard that the Earl of Leicester had openly vowed to make the name of Catholic as odious in England as the name of Turk, did say, in manner of a jest, that if some lawful means might be found to take away this earl, it would be a great good for Catholics in England; which careless sentence may be twisted by his enemies to his disadvantage."

Some time afterward, a person passing from London to Rheims, brought me this second letter from her ladyship, written at Rumford, in Essex:

"What I have been warned of verily hath happened. Upon the queen's coming to London last month, it was signified to me I should leave it. Now that Father Southwell hath been removed from Arundel Castle, and no priest at this time can live in it, I did not choose to be delivered there, without the benefit of spiritual assistance in case of danger of death, and so hired a house in this town, at a short distance of which a recusant gentleman doth keep one in his house. I came from London without obtaining leave so much as once to see my dear husband, or to send him a letter or message, or receive one from him. But this I have learnt, that he cannot speak with any person whatsoever but in the presence and hearing of his keeper or the lieutenant of the Tower, and that the room in which he is locked up has no sight of the sun for the greatest part of the year; so that if not changed before the winter cometh it shall prove very unwholesome; and moreover the noisomeness thereof caused by a vault that is under it is so great that the keeper can scarce endure to enter into it, much less to stay there any time. Alas! what ravages shall this treatment cause on a frame of great niceness and delicate habits, I leave you to judge. By this time he hath been examined twice; and albeit forged letters were produced, the falsity of which the council were forced to admit, and he was charged with nothing which could be substantiated, except leaving the realm without license of the queen, and being reconciled to the Church of Rome, his sentence is yet deferred, and his imprisonment as strict as ever. I pray God it may not be deferred till his health is utterly destroyed, which, I doubt not, is what his enemies would most desire.

"Last evening I had the exceeding great comfort of the coming hither of mine own dear good Meg, who hath been

some time released from prison, with many vexatious restraints, howsoever, still laid upon her. Albeit very much advanced in her pregnancy, nothing would serve her when she had leave to quit London but to do me this good. This is the first taste of joy I have had since my lord's commitment. In her face I behold his; when she speaks I hear him. No talk is ministered between us but of that beloved husband and brother; our common prayers are put up for him. She hath spied his spies for to discover all which relates to him, and hath found means to convey to him—I thank God for it—some books of devotion, which he greatly needed. She is yet a-bed this morning, for we sat up late yester-eve, so sweet, albeit sad, was the converse we held after so many common sufferings. But methinks I grudge her these hours of sleep, longing for to hear again those loved accents which mind me of my dear Phil.

"My pen had hardly traced those last words, when a messenger arrived from the council with an express command to Margaret from her majesty not to stay with me another night, but forthwith to return to London. The surprise and fear which this message occasioned hastened the event which should have yet been delayed some weeks. A few hours after (I thank God, in safety) a fair son was born; but in the mother's heart and mine apprehension dispelled joy, lest enforced disobedience should produce fresh troubles. Howsoever, she recovered quickly; and as soon as she could be removed I lost her sweet company. Thine affectionate friend to command,

"A. A. AND S."

Some time afterward, one Mr. Dixon, a gentleman I had met once or twice in London, tarried a night at our house, and brought me the news that God had given the Countess of Arundel a son, which she had earnestly desired her husband should be informed of, but he heard it had been refused. Howsoever, when he was urgent with his keepers to let him know if she had been safely delivered, they gave him to understand that she had another daughter; his enemies not being willing he should have so much contentment as the birth of a son should have yielded him.

"Doth the queen," I asked of this gentleman, "then not mitigate her anger against these noble persons?"

"So far from it," he answered, "that when, at the beginning of this trouble, Lady Arundel went to Sir Francis Knowles for to seek by his means to obtain an audience from her majesty, in order to sue for her husband, he told her she would sooner release him at once—which, howsoever, she had no mind to do—than only once allow her to enter her presence. He then, her ladyship told me, rated her exceedingly, asking if she and her husband were not ashamed to make themselves papists, only out of spleen and peevish humor to cross and vex the queen? She answered him in the same manner as her lord did one of his keepers, who told him very many in the kingdom were of opinion that he made show to be Catholic only out of policy; to whom he said, with great mildness, that God doth know the secrets of all hearts, but that he thought there was small policy for a man to lose his liberty, hazard his estate and life, and live in that manner in a prison as he then did."

A brief letter from Lady Tregony informed me soon after this that, after a third examination, the court had fined Lord Arundel in £10,000 unto the queen and adjudged him to imprisonment during her pleasure. What that pleasure proved, ten years of unmitigated suffering and slow torture evinced; one of the most grievous of which was that his lady could never obtain for to see him, albeit other prisoners' wives had easy access to them. This touching letter I had from her three years after he was imprisoned:

"MINE OWN GOOD FRIEND—Life doth wear on, and relief of one sort leastways comes not; but God forbid I should repine. For such instances I see in the letters of my dear lord—which when some of his servants do leave the Tower, which, worn out as they soon become by sickness, they must needs do to preserve their lives—he findeth means to write to me or to Father Southwell, that I am ashamed to grieve overmuch at anything which doth befall us—when his willingness and contentment to suffer are so great. As when he saith to that good father, 'For all crosses touching worldly matters, I thank God they trouble me not much, and much the less for your singular good counsel, which I beseech our Lord I may often remember; and to me this dear husband writes thus: 'I beseech you, for the love of God, to comfort yourself whatsoever shall happen, and to be best pleased with that which shall please God best, and be his will to send. I find that there is some intent to do me no good, but indeed to do me the most good of all; but I am—and, thank God, doubt not but I shall be by his grace—ready to endure the worst which flesh and blood can do unto me.' O Constance, flesh and blood doth sometimes rebel against the keen edge of suffering; but I pray you, my friend, how can I complain when I hear of this much, long dearly cherished husband, ascending by steps the ladder of perfection, advancing from virtue to virtue as the psalm saith, never uttering one unsubmitive word toward God, or one resentful one toward his worst enemies; making, in the most sublime manner, of necessity virtue, and turning his loathsome prison into a religious cell, wherein every exercise of devotion is duly practised, and his soul trained for heaven?"

"The small pittance the queen alloweth for his maintenance he so sparingly useth, that most of it doth pass into the hands of the poor or other more destitute prisoners than himself. But sickness and disease prey on his frame. And the picture of him my memory draweth is gradually more effaced in the living man, albeit vivid in mine own portraying of it.

There is now a priest imprisoned in the Tower, not very far from the chamber wherein my lord is confined; one of the name of Bennet. My lord desired much to meet him, and speak with him for the comfort of his soul, and I have found means to bring it to effect by mediation of the lieutenant's daughter, to whom I have given thirty pounds for her endeavors in procuring it. And moreover she hath assisted in conveying into his chamber church-stuff and all things requisite for the saying of mass, whereunto she tells me, to my indescribable comfort, he himself doth serve with great humility, and therein receives the blessed sacrament frequently. Sir Thomas Gerard, she saith, and Mr. Shelly, which are likewise prisoners at this time, she introduces secretly into his lodgings for to hear mass and have speech with him. Alas! what should be a comfort to him, and so the greatest of joys to me, the exceeding peril of these times causeth me to look upon with apprehension; for these gentlemen, albeit well disposed, are not famed for so much wisdom and prudence as himself, in not saying or doing anything which might be an occasion of danger to him; and the least lack of wariness, when there is so much discourse about the

great Spanish fleet which is now in preparation, should prove like to be fatal. God send no worse hap befall us soon.

"In addition to these other troubles and fears, I am much molested by a melancholy vapor, which ascends to my head, and greatly troubles me since I was told upon a sudden of the unexpected death of Margaret Sackville, whom, for her many great virtues and constant affection toward myself, I did so highly esteem and affection."

From that time for a long while I had no direct news of Lady Arundel; but report brought us woful tidings concerning her lord, who, after many private examinations, had been brought from the Tower to the King's Bench Court, in the hall of Westminster, and there publicly arraigned on the charge of high treason, the grounds of which accusation being that he had prayed and procured others to make simultaneous prayer for twenty-four hours, and procured Mr. Bennet to say a mass of the Holy Ghost, for the success of the Spanish fleet. Whereas the whole truth of this matter consisted in this, that when a report became current among the Catholics about London that a sudden massacre of them all was intended upon the first landing of the Spaniards, this coming to the earl's ear, he judged it necessary that all Catholics should betake themselves to prayer, either for the avoiding of the danger or for the better preparing themselves thereunto, and so persuaded those in the Tower to make prayer together for that end, and also sent to some others for the same purpose, whereof one of greater prudence and experience than the rest signified unto him that perhaps it might be otherwise interpreted by their enemies than he intended, wishing him to desist, as presently thereupon he did; but it was then too late. Some which he had trusted, either out of fear or fair promises, testified falsely against him—of which Mr. Bennet was one, who afterward retracted with bitter anguish his testimony, in a letter to his lordship, which contained these words: "With a fearful, guilty, unjust, and most tormented conscience, only for saving of my life and liberty, I said you moved me to say a mass for the good success of the Spanish fleet. For which unjust confession, or rather accusation, I do again and again, and to my life's end, most instantly crave God's pardon and yours; and for my better satisfaction of this, my unjust admission, I will, if need require, offer up both life and limbs in averring my accusation to be, as it is indeed, and as I shall answer before God, angels, and men, most unjust, and only done out of fear of the Tower, torments, and death." Notwithstanding the earl's very stout and constant denial of the charge, and pleading the above letter of Mr. Bennet, retracting his false statement, he was condemned of high treason, and had sentence pronounced against him. But the execution was deferred, and finally the queen resolved to spare his life, but yet by no means to release him. His estates, and likewise his lady's, were forfeited to the crown, and he at that time dealt with most unkindly, as the following letter will show:

"DEAR CONSTANCE—At last I have found the means of sending a packet by a safe hand, which in these days, when men do so easily turn traitors—notable instances of which, to our exceeding pain and trouble, have lately occurred—is no easy matter. I doubt not but thy fond affectionate heart hath followed with a sympathetic grief the anguish of mine during the time past, wherein my husband's life hath been in daily peril; and albeit he is now respited, yet, alas! as he saith himself, and useth the knowledge to the best purpose, he is but a doomed man; reprieved, not pardoned; spared, not released. Mine own troubles beside have been greater than can be thought of; by virtue of the forfeiture of my lord's estates and mine, my home hath been searched by justices, and no room, no corner, no trunk or coffer, left unopened and unransacked. I have often been brought before the council and most severely examined. The queen's officers and others in authority—to whom I am sometimes forced to sue for favor, or some mitigation of mine own or my lord's sufferings—do use me often very harshly, and reject my petitions with scorn and opprobrious language. All our goods are seized for the queen. They have left me nothing but two or three beds, and these, they do say, but for a time. When business requires, I am forced to go on foot, and slenderly attended; my coach being taken from me. I have retained but two of my servants—my children's nurse being one. I have as yet no allowance, as is usual in such cases, for the maintenance of my family; so I am forced to pay them and buy victuals with the money made by the sale of mine own jewels; and I am sometimes forced to borrow and make hard shifts to procure necessary provisions and clothes for the children; but if I get eight pounds a week, which the queen hath been moved to allow me, then methinks I shall think myself no poorer than a Christian woman should be content to be; and I have promised Almighty God, if that good shall befall us, to bestow one hundred marks out of it yearly on the poor. I am often sent out of London by her majesty's commands, albeit some infirmities I do now suffer from force me to consult physicians there. Methinks when I am at Arundel House I am not wholly parted from my lord, albeit my humble petition, by means of friends, to see him is always denied. When I hear he is sick, mine anguish increases. The like favor is often granted to Lady Latimore and others whose husbands are at this time prisoners in the Tower, but I can never obtain it. The lieutenant's daughter, whom I do sometimes see, when she is in a conversible mood doth inform me of my dear husband's condition, and relates instances of his goodness and patience which wring and yet comfort mine heart. What think you of his never having been heard so much as once to complain of the loss of his goods or the incommodities of his prison; of his gentleness and humility where he is himself concerned; of his boldness in defending his religion and her ministers, which was alike shown, as well as his natural cheerfulness, in a conversation she told me had passed between her father, the lieutenant, and him, a few days ago? You have heard, I ween, that good Father Southwell was arrested some time back at Mr. Bellamy's house; it is reported by means of the poor unhappy soul his daughter, whom I met one day at the door of the prison, attired in a gaudy manner and carrying herself in a bold fashion; but when she met mine eye hers fell. Alas! poor soul, God help her and bring her to repentance. Well, now Father Southwell is in the Tower, my lord, by Miss Hopton's melons, hath had once or twice speech with him, and doth often inquire of the lieutenant about him, which when he did so the other day he used the words 'blessed father' in speaking of him. The lieutenant (she said) seemed to take exception thereat, saying, 'Term you him blessed father, being as he is an enemy to his country?' My lord answered: 'How can that be, seeing yourself hath told me heretofore that no fault could be laid unto him but his religion?' Then the lieutenant said: 'The last time I was in his cell your dog, my lord, came in and licked his hand,' Then quoth my lord, patting his dog fondly: 'I love him the better for it.' 'Perhaps,' quoth the lieutenant in a scoffing manner, it might be he came thither to have his blessing.' To which my lord replied, 'It is no new thing for animals to seek a blessing at the hands of holy men, St. Jerome writing how the lions which had digged St. Paul the hermit's grave stood waiting with their eyes upon St. Anthony expecting his blessing.'

'Is it not a strange trial, mine own Constance, and one which hath not befallen many women, to have a fondly loved husband yet alive, and to be sometimes so near unto him that it should take but a few moments to cross the space which doth divide us, and yet never behold him; year after year passing away, and the heart waxing sick with delays? Howsoever, one sad firm hope I hold, which keepeth me somewhat careful of my health, lest I should be disabled when that time cometh—one on which I fix my mind with apprehension and desire to defer the approach thereof, yet pray one day to see it—yea, to live long enough for this and then to die, if it shall please God. When mine own Philip is on his death-bed, when the slow consumptive disease which devoureth his vitals obtaineth its end, then, I ween, no woman upon earth, none that I ever heard of or could think of, can deny me to approach him and receive his last embrace. Oh that this should be my best comfort, mine only hope!"

I pass over many intervening letters from this afflicted lady which at distant intervals I received, in one of which she expressed her sorrow at the execution at Tyburn of her constant friend and guide, Father Southwell, and likewise informed me of Mistress Wells's death in Newgate, and transcribe this one, written about six months afterward, in which she relates the closing scene of her husband's life:

"MINE OWN DEAR CONSTANCE—All is over now, and my overcharged heart casteth about for some alleviation in its excessive grief, which may be I shall find in imparting to one well acquainted with his virtues and my love for him what I have learnt touching the closing scenes of my dear lord's mortal life. For think not I have been so happy as to behold him again, or that he should die in my arms. No; that which was denied me for ten long years neither could his dying prayers obtain. For many months notice had been given unto me by his servants and others that his health was very fast declining. One gentleman particularly told me he himself believed his end to be near. His devout exercises were yet increased—the bent of his mind more and more directed solely toward God and heaven. In those times which were allotted to walking or other recreation, his discourse and conversation either with his keeper or the lieutenant or his own servant, was either tending to piety or some kind of profitable discourse, most often of the happiness of those that suffer anything for our Saviour's sake; to which purpose he had writ with his own hand upon the wall of his chamber this Latin sentence, 'Quanto plus afflictionis pro Christo in hoc saeculo, tanto plus gloriae cum Christo in futuro;' the which he used to show to his servants, inviting them, as well as himself, to suffer all with patience and alacrity.

"In the month of August tidings were brought unto me that, sitting at dinner, he had fallen so very ill immediately upon the eating of a roasted teal, that some did suspect him to be poisoned. I sent him some antidotes, and all the remedies I could procure; but all in vain. The disease had so possessed him that it could not be removed, but by little and little consumed his body, so that he became like an anatomy, having nothing left but skin and bone. Much talk hath been ministered anent his being poisoned. Alas! my thinking is, and ever shall be, the slow poison he died of was lack of air, of sunshine, of kindness, of loving aid, of careful sympathy. When I heard his case was considered desperate, the old long hopes, sustained for ten years, that out of the extremity of grief one hour of comfort should arise, woke up; but now I was advised not to stir in this matter myself, for it should only incense the queen, who had always hated me; whereas my lord she once had liked, and it might be, when she heard he was dying, she should relent. She had made a kind of promise to some of his friends that before his death his wife and children should come unto him; whereupon, conceiving that now his time in the world could not be long, he writ a humble letter to her petitioning the performance of her promise. The lieutenant of the Tower carried this letter, and delivered it with his own hands to the queen, and brought him her answer by word of mouth. What think you, mine own Constance, was the answer she sent that dying man? God forgave her! Philip did; yea, and so do I—not fully at the time, now most fully. His crown should have been less glorious but for the heart-martyrdom she invented.

"This was her message: 'That if he would but once go to the Protestant church his request should not only be granted, but he should moreover be restored to his honor and estate with as much favor as she could show.' Oh, what were estates and honors to that dying saint! what her favor to that departing soul! One offering, one sacrifice, one final withdrawing of affection's thirsty and parched lips from the chalice of a supreme earthly consolation, and all was accomplished; the bitterness of death overpast. He gave thanks to the lieutenant for his pains; he said he could not accept her majesty's offers upon that condition, and added withal that he was sorry he had but one life to lose in that cause. A very worthy gentleman who was present at this passage related it to me; and Lord Mountague I have also had it from, which heard the same from his father-in-law, my Lord Dorset. Constance, for a brief while a terrible tumult raged in my soul. Think what it was to know one so long, so passionately loved, dying nigh onto and yet apart from me, dying unaided by any priest—for though he had a great desire to be assisted by Father Edmund, by whose means he had been reconciled, it was by no means permitted that either he or any other priest should come to him—dying without a kindred face to smile on him, without a kinsman for to speak with him and list to his last wishes. He desired to see his brother William or his uncle Lord Henry; at least to take his last leave of them before his death; but neither was that small request granted—no, not so much as to see his brother Thomas, though both then and ever he had been a Protestant. And all this misery was the fruit of one stem, cruel, unbending hatred—of one proud human will; a will which was sundering what God had joined together. Like a bird against the bars of an iron cage, my poor heart dashed itself with wild throbings against these human obstacles. But not for very long, I thank God; brief was the storm which convulsed my soul. I soon discerned his hand in this great trial—his will above all human will; and while writhing under a Father's merciful scourge, I could yet bless him who held it I pray you, Constance, how should a woman have endured so great an anguish which had not been helped by him? Methinks what must have sustained me was that before-mentioned gentleman's report of my dear lord's great piety and virtue, which made me ashamed of not striving to resemble him in howsoever small a degree. Oh, what a work God wrought in that chosen soul! What meekness, what humility, what nobleness of heart! He grew so faint and weak by degrees that he was not able to leave his bed. His physicians coming to visit him some days before his death, he desired them not to trouble themselves now any more, his case being beyond their skill. They thereupon departing, Sir Michael Blount, then lieutenant of the Tower, who had been ever very hard and harsh unto him, took occasion to come and visit him, and, kneeling down by his bedside, in humble manner desired my dear Phil to forgive him. Whereto mine own beloved husband answered in this manner, 'Do you ask forgiveness, Mr. Lieutenant? Why, then, I

forgive you in the same sort as I desire myself to be forgiven at the hands of God;' and then kissed his hand, and offered it in most kind and charitable manner to him, and holding his fast in his own said, 'I pray you also to forgive me whatever I have said or done in anything offensive to you,' and he melting into tears and answering 'that he forgave him with all his heart;' my lord raised himself a little upon his pillow, and made a brief, grave speech unto the lieutenant in this manner: 'Mr. Lieutenant, you have showed both me and my men very hard measure.' 'Wherein, my lord?' quoth he. 'Nay,' said my lord, 'I will not make a recapitulation of anything, for it is all freely forgiven. Only I am to say unto you a few words of my last will, which being observed, may, by the grace of God, turn much to your benefit and reputation. I speak not for myself; for God of his goodness hath taken order that I shall be delivered very shortly out of your charge; only for others I speak who may be committed to this place. You must think, Mr. Lieutenant, that when a prisoner comes hither to the Tower that he bringeth sorrow with him. Oh, then do not add affliction to affliction; there is no man whatsoever that thinketh himself to stand surest but may fall. It is a very inhuman part to tread on him whom misfortune hath cast down. The man that is void of mercy God hath in great detestation. Your commission is only to keep in safety, not to kill with severity. Remember, good Mr. Lieutenant, that God who with his finger turneth the unstable wheel of this variable world, can in the revolution of a few days bring you to be a prisoner also, and to be kept in the same place where now you keep others. There is no calamity that men are subject unto but you may also taste as well as any other man. Farewell, Mr. Lieutenant; for the time of my short abode come to me whenever you please, and you shall be heartily welcome as my friend.' My dear lord, when he uttered these words, should seem to have had some kind of prophetic foresight touching this poor man's fate; for I have just heard this day, seven weeks only after my husband's death, that Sir Michael Blount hath fallen into great disgrace, lost his office, and is indeed committed close prisoner in that same Tower where he so long kept others.

"And now my faltering pen must needs transcribe the last letter I received from my beloved husband, for your heart, dear friend, is one with mine. You have known its sufferings through the many years evil influences robbed it of that love which, for brief intervals of happiness afterward and this long separation since, hath, by its steady and constant return, made so rich amends for the past. In these final words you shall find proofs of his excellent humility and notable affection for my unworthy self, which I doubt not, my dear instance, shall draw water from your eyes. Mine yield no moisture now. Methinks these last griefs have exhausted in them the fountain of tears.

"Mine own good wife, I must now in this world take my last farewell of you; and as I know no person living whom I have so much offended as yourself, so do I account this opportunity of asking your forgiveness as a singular benefit of Almighty God. And I most humbly and heartily beseech you, even for his sake and of your charity, to forgive me all whereinsoever I have offended you; and the assurance I have of this your forgiveness is my greatest contentment at this present, and will be a greater, I doubt not, when my soul is ready to depart out of my body. I call God to witness it is no small grief unto me that I cannot make you recompense in this world for the wrongs I have done you. Affliction gives understanding. God, who knows my heart, and has seen my true sorrow in that behalf, has, I hope, of his infinite mercy, remitted all, I doubt not, as you have done in your singular charity, to mine infinite comfort.

"Now what remaineth but in a few brief sentences to relate how this loved husband spent his last hours, and the manner of his death? Those were for the most part spent in prayer; sometimes saying his beads, sometimes such psalms and prayers as he knew by heart. Seeing his servants (one of which hath been the narrator to me of these his final moments) stand by his bedside in the morning weeping in a mournful manner, he asked them 'what o'clock it was? they answering that it was eight or thereabout, 'Why, then,' said he, 'I have almost run out my course, and come to the end of this miserable mortal life,' desiring them not to weep for him, since he did not doubt, by the grace of God, but all would go well with him; which being said he returned to his prayers upon his beads again, though then with a very slow, hollow, and fainting voice; and so continued as long as he was able to draw so much breath as was sufficient to sound out the names of Jesus and Mary, which were the last words he was ever heard to speak. The last minute of his last hour being come, lying on his back, his eyes firmly fixed toward heaven, his long, lean, consumed arms out of the bed, his hands upon his breast, laid in cross one upon the other, about twelve o'clock at noon, in a most sweet manner, without any sign of grief or groan, only turning his head a little aside as one falling into a pleasing sleep, he surrendered his soul into the hands of God who to his own glory had created it. And she who writeth this letter, she who loved him since her most early years—who when he was estranged from her waited his return—who gloried in his virtues, doated on his perfections, endured his afflictions, and now lamenteth his death, hath nothing left but to live a widow; indeed with no other glory than that which she doth borrow from his merits, until such time as it shall please God to take her from this earth to a world where he hath found, she doth humbly hope, rest unto his soul."

The Countess of Arundel is now aged. The virtues which have crowned her mature years are such, as her youth did foreshadow. My pen would run on too fast if it took up that theme. This only will I add, and so conclude this too long piece of writing—she hath kept her constant resolve to live and die a widow. I have seen many times letters from both Protestants and Catholics which made unfeigned protestations that they were never so edified by any as by her. As the Holy Scriptures do say of that noble widow Judith, "Not one spoke an ill word of her," albeit these times are extremely malicious. For mine own part I never read those words of Holy Writ, "Who shall find a valiant woman?" and what doth follow, but I must needs think of Ann Dacre, the wife of Philip Howard, earl of Arundel and Surrey.

After the lapse of some years, it hath been my hap to have a sight of this manuscript, the reading of which, even as the writing of it in former days, doth cause me to live over again my past life. This lapse of time hath added nothing notable except the dreadful death of Hubert, my dear Basil's only brother, who suffered last year for the share he had, or leastways was judged to have, in the Gunpowder Plot and treason. Alas! he which once, to improve his fortunes, denied his faith, when fortune turned her back upon him grew into a virulent hatred of those in power, once his friends and tempters, and consorted with desperate men; whether he was privy to their counsels, or only familiar with them previous to their crimes, and so fell into suspicion of their guilt, God knoweth. It doth appear from some good reports that he died a true penitent. There is a better hope methinks for such as meet in this world with open shame and

suffering than for secret sinners who go to their pompous graves unchastised and unabsolved.

By his brother's death Basil recovered his lands; for his present majesty hath some time since recalled the sentence of his banishment. And many of his friends have moved him to return to England; but for more reasons than one he refused so much as to think of it, and has compounded his estate for £700, 8s. 6d.

Our children have now grown unto ripe years. Muriel (who would have been a nun if she had followed her godmother's example) is now married, to her own liking and our no small contentment, to a very commendable young gentleman, the son of Mr. Yates, and hath gone to reside with him at his seat in Worcestershire; and Ann, Lady Arundel's god-daughter, nothing will serve but to be a "holy Mary," as the French people do style those dames which that great and good prelate, M. de Genève, hath assembled in a small hive at Annecy, like bees to gather honey of devotion in the garden of religion. This should seem a strange fancy, this order being so new in the Church, and the place so distant; but time will show if this should be God's will; and if so, then it must needs be ours also.

What liketh me most is that my son Roger doth prove the very image of his father, and the counterpart of him in his goodness. I am of opinion that nothing better can be desired for him than that he never lose so good a likeness.

And now farewell, pen and ink, mine old companions, for a brief moment resumed, but with a less steady hand than heretofore; now not to be again used except for such ordinary purposes as housewifery and friendship shall require.

[THE END]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONSTANCE SHERWOOD: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY ***

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