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THACKERAY

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HENRY ESMOND



'"He is saying his prayers to mamma," says the little girl '—*Page* 9

THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

W. M. THACKERAY



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THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

PREFACE

THE ESMONDS OF VIRGINIA

My dear and honoured father, Colonel Henry Esmond, whose history, written by himself, is contained in the accompanying volume, came to Virginia in the year 1718, built his house of Castlewood, and here permanently settled. After a long stormy life in England, he passed the remainder of his many years in peace and honour in this country; how beloved and respected by all his fellow-citizens, how inexpressibly dear to his family, I need not say. His whole life was a benefit to all who were connected with him. He gave the best example, the best advice, the most bounteous hospitality to his friends; the tenderest care to his dependants; and bestowed on those of his immediate family such a blessing of fatherly love and protection as can never be thought of, by us, at least, without veneration and thankfulness; and my son's children, whether established here in our Republic, or at home in the always beloved mother country, from which our late quarrel hath separated us, may surely be proud to be descended from one who in all ways was so truly noble.

My dear mother died in 1736, soon after our return from England, whither my parents took me for my education; and where I made the acquaintance of Mr. Warrington, whom my children never saw. When it pleased Heaven, in the bloom of his youth, and after but

a few months of a most happy union, to remove him from me, I owed my recovery from the grief which that calamity caused me, mainly to my dearest father's tenderness, and then to the blessing vouchsafed to me in the birth of my two beloved boys.

My children will never forget the appearance and figure of their revered grandfather ; and I wish I possessed the art of drawing (which my papa had in perfection), so that I could leave to our descendants a portrait of one who was so good and so respected. My father was of a dark complexion, with a very great forehead and dark hazel eyes, overhung by eyebrows which remained black long after his hair was white. His nose was aquiline, his smile extraordinary sweet. How well I remember it, and how little any description I can write can recall his image ! He was of rather low stature, not being above five feet seven inches in height ; he used to laugh at my sons, whom he called his crutches, and say they were grown too tall for him to lean upon. But small as he was, he had a perfect grace and majesty of deportment, such as I have never seen in this country, except perhaps in our friend Mr. Washington, and commanded respect wherever he appeared.

Neither my father nor my mother ever wore powder in their hair ; both their heads were as white as silver, as I can remember them. My dear mother possessed to the last an extraordinary brightness and freshness of complexion ; nor would people believe that she did not wear rouge. At sixty years of age she still looked young, and was quite agile. It was not until after that dreadful siege of our house by the Indians, which left me a widow ere I was a mother, that my dear mother's health broke. She never recovered her terror and anxiety of those days, which ended so fatally for me, then a bride scarce six

months married, and died in my father's arms ere my own year of widowhood was over.

Though I never heard my father use a rough word, 'twas extraordinary with how much awe his people regarded him; and the servants on our plantation, both those assigned from England and the purchased negroes, obeyed him with an eagerness such as the most severe taskmasters round about us could never get from their people. He was never familiar, though perfectly simple and natural; he was the same with the meanest man as with the greatest, and as courteous to a black slave-girl as to the Governor's wife. No one ever thought of taking a liberty with him (except once a tipsy gentleman from York, and I am bound to own my papa never forgave him): he set the humblest people at once on their ease with him, and brought down the most arrogant by a grave satiric way, which made persons exceedingly afraid of him. His courtesy was not put on like a Sunday suit and laid by when the company went away; it was always the same; as he was always dressed the same, whether for a dinner by ourselves or for a great entertainment.

But my papa's genius and education are both greater than any woman can be expected to have, and his adventures in Europe far more exciting than his life in this country, which was passed in the tranquil offices of love and duty; and I shall say no more by way of introduction to his Memoirs, nor keep my children from the perusal of a story which is much more interesting than that of their affectionate old mother.

RACHAEL ESMOND WARRINGTON

CASTLEWOOD, VIRGINIA,
November 3, 1778.

CHAPTER I

THE FAMILY OF CASTLEWOOD HALL

When Francis, fourth Viscount Castlewood, came to his title, and presently after to take possession of his house of Castlewood, county Hants, in the year 1691, almost the only tenant of the place besides the domestics was a lad of twelve years of age, of whom no one seemed to take any note until my Lady Viscountess lighted upon him in the Book-room, going over the house with the housekeeper on the day of her arrival.

The new and fair lady of Castlewood found the sad, lonely little occupant of the Book-room busy over his great book, which he laid down when he was aware that a stranger was at hand. And, knowing who that person must be, the lad stood up and bowed before her, performing a shy obeisance to the mistress of his house.

She stretched out her hand—indeed when was it that that hand would not stretch out to do an act of kindness, or to protect grief and ill-fortune? "And this is our kinsman," she said; "and what is your name, kinsman?"

"My name is Henry Esmond," said the lad, looking up at her in a sort of delight and wonder, for she appeared the most charming object he had ever looked on. Her golden hair was shining in the gold of the sun; her complexion was of a dazzling bloom; her lips smiling, and her eyes beaming with a kindness which made Harry Esmond's heart to beat with surprise.

She placed her other fair hand on the lad's head, and saying some words to him, which were so kind, and said in a voice so sweet, that the boy, who had never looked upon so much beauty before, felt as if the touch of a superior being or angel smote him down to the ground, and kissed the fair protecting hand as he knelt on one

knee. To the very last hour of his life, Esmond remembered the lady as she then spoke and looked, the rings on her fair hands, the very scent of her robe, the beam of her eyes lighting up with surprise and kindness, her lips blooming in a smile, the sun making a golden halo round her hair.

As the boy was yet in this attitude of humility, enters behind him a portly gentleman, with a little girl of four years old in his hand. The gentleman burst into a great laugh at the lady and her adorer, with his little queer figure, his sallow face, and long black hair. The lady blushed, and seemed to deprecate his ridicule by a look of appeal to her husband, for it was my Lord Viscount who now arrived, and whom the lad knew, having once before seen him in the late lord's lifetime.

"So this is the little priest!" says my Lord, looking down at the lad. "Welcome, kinsman!"

"He is saying his prayers to mamma," says the little girl, who came up to her papa's knees: and my Lord burst into another great laugh at this, and kinsman Henry looked very silly. He invented a half-dozen of speeches in reply, but 'twas months afterwards when he thought of this adventure: as it was, he had never a word in answer.

"The poor child, he has only us," says the lady in French, looking to her lord; and the boy, who understood her, though doubtless she thought otherwise, thanked her with all his heart for her kind speech.

"And he shan't want for friends here," says my Lord, in a kind voice, "shall he, little Trix?"

The little girl, whose name was Beatrix, and whom her papa called by this diminutive, looked at Harry Esmond solemnly, with a pair of large eyes, and then a smile shone over her face, which was as beautiful as

that of a cherub, and she came up and put out a little hand to him. A keen and delightful pang of gratitude, happiness, affection, filled the orphan child's heart as he received from the protectors, whom Heaven had sent to him, these touching words and tokens of friendliness and kindness.

But an hour since he had felt quite alone in the world; when he heard the great peal of bells from Castlewood church ringing that morning to welcome the arrival of the new lord and lady, it had rung only terror and anxiety to him, for he knew not how the new owner would deal with him; and those to whom he formerly looked for protection were forgotten or dead. Pride and doubt too had kept him within doors, when the Vicar and the people of the village, and the servants of the house, had gone out to welcome my Lord Castlewood—for Henry Esmond was no servant, though a dependant; and in the midst of the noise and acclamations attending the arrival of the new lord (for whom, you may be sure, a feast was got ready, and guns were fired, and tenants and domestics huzzahed when his carriage approached and rolled into the courtyard of the Hall), no one ever took any notice of young Henry Esmond, who sat unobserved and alone in the Book-room, until the afternoon of that day, when his new friends found him.

When my Lord and Lady were going away thence, the little girl, still holding her kinsman by the hand, bade him to come too. "Thou wilt always forsake an old friend for a new one, Trix," says her father to her good-naturedly; and went into the gallery, giving an arm to his lady. They passed thence through the music gallery, long since dismantled, and Queen Elizabeth's Rooms, in the clock tower, and out into the terrace, where was a fine prospect of sunset and the great darkling

woods with a cloud of rooks returning: and the plain and river with Castlewood village beyond, and purple hills beautiful to look at—and the little heir of Castlewood, a child of two years old, was already here on the terrace in his nurse's arms, from whom he ran across the grass instantly he perceived his mother, and came to her.

"If thou canst not be happy here," says my Lord, looking round at the scene, "thou art hard to please, Rachel."

"I am happy where you are," she said, "but we were happiest of all at Walcote Forest." Then my Lord began to describe what was before them to his wife, and what indeed little Harry knew better than he—viz., the history of the house: how by yonder gate the page ran away with the heiress of Castlewood, by which the estate came into the present family; how the Roundheads attacked the clock-tower, which my Lord's father was slain in defending. "I was but two years old then," says he, "but take forty-six from ninety, and how old shall I be, kinsman Harry?"

"Thirty," says his wife with a laugh.

"A great deal too old for you, Rachel," answers my Lord, looking fondly down at her. Indeed, she seemed to be a girl, and was at that time scarce twenty years old.

"You know, Frank, I will do anything to please you," says she, "and I promise you I will grow older every day."

"You mustn't call papa Frank; you must call papa my Lord now," says Miss Beatrix, with a toss of her little head; at which the mother smiled, and the good-natured father laughed, and the little trotting boy laughed, not knowing why—but because he was happy, no doubt—as every one seemed to be there. How those trivial incidents and words, the landscape and sunshine,

and the group of people smiling and talking, remain fixed on the memory!

As the sun was setting, the little heir was sent in the arms of his nurse to bed, whither he went howling; but little Trix was promised to sit to supper that night—"And you will come too, kinsman, won't you?" she said.

Harry Esmond blushed: "I—I have supper with Mrs. Worksop, the housekeeper," says he.

"No," says my Lord, "thou shalt sup with us, Harry, to-night. Shan't refuse a lady, shall he, Trix?"—and they all wondered at Harry's performance as a trencherman, in which character the poor boy acquitted himself very remarkably; for the truth is he had had no dinner, nobody thinking of him in the bustle which the house was in, during the preparations antecedent to the new lord's arrival.

"No dinner! poor dear child!" says my Lady, heaping up his plate with meat, and my Lord, filling a bumper for him, bade him call a health; on which Master Harry, crying "The King," tossed off the wine. My Lord was ready to drink that, and most other toasts: indeed only too ready. He would not hear of Doctor Tusher (the Vicar of Castlewood, who came to supper) going away when the sweetmeats were brought: he had not had a chaplain long enough, he said, to be tired of him: so his reverence kept my Lord company for some hours over a pipe and a punch-bowl; and went away home with rather a reeling gait, and declaring a dozen of times, that his Lordship's affability surpassed every kindness he had ever had from his Lordship's gracious family.

As for young Esmond, when he got to his little chamber, it was with a heart full of surprise and

gratitude towards the new friends whom this happy day had brought him. He was up and watching long before the house was astir, longing to see that fair lady and her children—that kind protector and patron; and only fearful lest their welcome of the past night should in any way be withdrawn or altered. But presently little Beatrix came out into the garden, and her mother followed, who greeted Harry as kindly as before. He told her at greater length the histories of the house (which he had been taught in the old lord's time), and to which she listened with great interest; and then he told her, with respect to the night before, that he understood French, and thanked her for her protection.

"Do you?" says she, with a blush; "then, sir, you shall teach me and Beatrix." And she asked him many more questions regarding himself, which had best be told more fully and explicitly than in those brief replies which the lad made to his mistress's questions.

The first Viscount Castlewood died full of years, and was succeeded by his eldest son, George; and left issue besides, Thomas, a colonel in the King's army, who afterwards joined the Usurper's Government; and Francis, in holy orders, who was slain whilst defending the House of Castlewood against the Parliament, anno 1647.

George Lord Castlewood (the second Viscount), of King Charles the First's time, had no male issue save his one son, Eustace Esmond, who was killed, with half of the Castlewood men beside him, at Worcester fight. The lands about Castlewood were sold and apportioned to the Commonwealth-men, Castlewood being concerned in almost all of the plots against the Protector, after the death of the King, and up to King Charles the Second's restoration. My Lord followed that King's Court about

in its exile, having ruined himself in its service. He had but one daughter, who was of no great comfort to her father; for misfortune had not taught those exiles sobriety of life; and it is said that the Duke of York and his brother the king both quarrelled about Isabel Esmond. She was maid of honour to the Queen Henrietta Maria; she early joined the Roman Church; her father, a weak man, following her not long after.

On the death of Eustace Esmond at Worcester, Thomas Esmond, nephew to my Lord Castlewood, and then a stripling, became heir to the title. His father had taken the Parliament side in the quarrels, and so had been estranged from the chief of his house. Lord Castlewood would have had a match between his daughter Isabel and her cousin, the son of that Francis Esmond who was killed at Castlewood siege. And the lady, it was said, took a fancy to the young man, who was her junior by several years (which circumstance she did not consider to be a fault in him); but having paid his court, and being admitted to the intimacy of the house, he suddenly flung up his suit, when it seemed to be pretty prosperous, without giving a pretext for his behaviour. His uncle Castlewood was never reconciled to him; nor, for some time afterwards, his cousin whom he had refused.

By places, pensions, bounties from France, and gifts from the King, whilst his daughter was in favour, Lord Castlewood, who had spent in the Royal service his youth and fortune, did not retrieve the latter quite, and never cared to visit Castlewood, or repair it, since the death of his son, but managed to keep a good house, and figure at Court, and to save a considerable sum of ready money.

And now, his heir and nephew, Thomas Esmond, began to bid for his uncle's favour. Thomas had served

abroad, and came back to England, like many another English gentleman who has travelled, with a character by no means improved by his foreign experience.

His cousin was now of more than middle age, and had nobody's word but her own for the beauty which she said she once possessed. However, Thomas Esmond determined that she should be his wife. He had a fancy to my Lord Castlewood's savings, the amount of which rumour had very much exaggerated. And, Madame Isabel was said to have Royal jewels of great value; whereas poor Tom Esmond's last coat but one was in pawn.

My Lord had at this time a fine house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, nigh to the Duke's Theatre and the Portugal ambassador's chapel. Tom Esmond, who had frequented the one, as long as he had money to spend among the actresses, now came to the church as assiduously. He looked so lean and shabby, that he passed without difficulty for a repentant sinner; and, becoming converted, took his uncle's priest for a director.

This charitable father reconciled him with the old lord his uncle, and the marriage took place very shortly before King Charles died: whom the Viscount of Castlewood speedily followed.

My Lady was a woman of an intrepid spirit, and, it appears, pursued and rather fatigued His Majesty with her rights and her wrongs. But she always averred that it was her husband's quarrel, and not her own, which occasioned the banishment of the two into the country.

Holding the purse-strings in her own control, to which, indeed, she liked to bring most persons who came near her, Lady Castlewood could command her husband's obedience, and so broke up her establishment at London; she had removed from Lincoln's Inn Fields to Chelsey,

to a pretty new house she bought there; and brought her establishment, her maids, lap-dogs, and gentlewomen, her priest, and his Lordship her husband, to Castlewood Hall, that she had never seen since she quitted it as a child with her father during the troubles of King Charles the First's reign. The walls were still open in the old house as they had been left by the shot of the Commonwealth-men. A part of the mansion was restored and furbished up with the plate, hangings, and furniture brought from the house in London.

My Lady meant to have a triumphal entry into Castlewood village, and expected the people to cheer as she drove over the Green in her great coach, my Lord beside her, her gentlewomen, lap-dogs, and cockatoos on the opposite seat, six horses to her carriage, and servants armed and mounted following it and preceding it. But 'twas in the height of the No-Popery cry, and the folks in the village and the neighbouring town were scared by the sight of her Ladyship's painted face and eyelids, as she bobbed her head out of the coach window, meaning, no doubt, to be very gracious.

But the village people began to be reconciled presently to their lady, who was generous and kind, though fantastic and haughty, in her ways, and whose praises Doctor Tusher, the Vicar, sounded loudly amongst his flock. As for my Lord, he gave no great trouble, being considered scarce more than an appendage to my Lady, who, as daughter of the old lords of Castlewood, and possessor of vast wealth, as the country folks said (though indeed nine-tenths of it existed but in rumour), was looked upon as the real queen of the castle, and mistress of all it contained.

CHAPTER II

PAGE TO ISABELLA

Coming up to London again some short time after this retreat, the Lord Castlewood presently returned bringing with him my Lord's chaplain, Father Holt, and a little boy, Master Harry Esmond, concerning whose parentage little seemed to be known, to be page of honour to my Lady.

One early morning all the party set forth from London for Castlewood, namely my Lord Viscount and Mr. Holt, and Monsieur Blaise, the lacquey, and Harry on a pillion behind them, and two or three other men with pistols leading the baggage-horses. And all along the road Monsieur Blaise told little Harry stories of brigands, which made the child's hair stand on end, and terrified him; so that at the great gloomy inn on the road where they lay, he besought to be allowed to sleep in a room with one of the servants, and was compassionated by Mr. Holt, the gentleman who travelled with my lord, and who gave the child a little bed in his chamber.

His artless talk and answers very likely inclined this gentleman in the boy's favour, for next day Mr. Holt said Harry should ride behind him, and not with the French lacquey; and all along the journey put a thousand questions to the child—as to his foster-brother and relations at Ealing, where little Harry had been living; what his old grandfather had taught him; what languages he knew; whether he could read and write, and sing, and so forth. And Mr. Holt found that Harry could read and write, and possessed the two languages of French and English very well.

That day the boy so pleased the gentlemen by his talk that they had him to dine with them at the inn,

and encouraged him in his prattle ; and Monsieur Blaise, with whom he rode and dined the day before, waited upon him now.

At length, on the third day, at evening, they came to a village standing on a green with elms round it, very pretty to look at ; and the people there all took off their hats, and made curtseys to my Lord Viscount, who bowed to them all languidly ; and there was one portly person that wore a cassock and a broad-leafed hat, who bowed lower than anyone—and with this one both my Lord and Mr. Holt had a few words. "This, Harry, is Castlewood Church," says Mr. Holt, "and this is the pillar thereof, learned Doctor Tusher. Take off your hat, sirrah, and salute Doctor Tusher ! "

"Come up to supper, Doctor," says my Lord ; at which the Doctor made another low bow, and the party moved on towards a grand house that was before them, with many grey towers and vanes on them, and windows flaming in the sunshine ; and a great army of rooks, wheeling over their heads, made for the woods behind the house, as Harry saw ; and Mr. Holt told him that they lived at Castlewood too.

They came to the house, and passed under an arch into a courtyard, with a fountain in the centre, where many men came and held my Lord's stirrup as he descended, and paid great respect to Mr. Holt likewise.

Taking Harry by the hand as soon as they were both descended from their horses, Mr. Holt led him across the court, and under a low door to rooms on a level with the ground ; one of which Father Holt said was to be the boy's chamber, the door on the other side of the passage being the Father's own ; and as soon as the little man's face was washed, and the Father's own dress arranged, Harry's guide took him once more to

the door by which my Lord had entered the hall, and up a stair, and through an ante-room to my Lady's drawing-room—an apartment than which Harry thought he had never seen anything more grand—no, not in the Tower of London which he had just visited. Indeed, the chamber was richly ornamented in the manner of Queen Elizabeth's time, with great stained windows at either end, and hangings of tapestry, which the sun shining through the coloured glass painted of a thousand hues, and here in state, by the fire, sat a lady, to whom the priest took up Harry, who was indeed amazed by her appearance.

My Lady Viscountess's face was daubed with white and red up to the eyes, to which the paint gave an unearthly glare; she had a tower of lace on her head, under which was a bush of black curls—borrowed curls—so that no wonder little Harry Esmond was scared when he was first presented to her—the kind priest acting as master of the ceremonies at that solemn introduction—and he stared at her with eyes almost as great as her own, as he had stared at the player woman who acted the wicked tragedy-queen, when the players came down to Ealing Fair. She sat in a great chair by the fire-corner; in her lap was a spaniel dog that barked furiously; on a little table by her was her Ladyship's snuff-box and her sugar-plum box. She wore a dress of black velvet, and a petticoat of flame-coloured brocade. She had as many rings on her fingers as the old woman of Banbury Cross, and pretty small feet which she was fond of showing, with great gold clocks to her stockings, and white pantofles with red heels; and an odour of musk was shook out of her garments whenever she moved or quitted the room, leaning on her tortoise-shell stick, little Fury barking at her heels.

Mrs. Tusher, the parson's wife, was with my Lady. She had been waiting-woman to her Ladyship in the late Lord's time, and, having her soul in that business, took naturally to it when the Viscountess of Castlewood returned to inhabit her father's house.

"I present to your Ladyship your kinsman and little page of honour, Master Henry Esmond," Mr. Holt said, bowing lowly, with a sort of comical humility. "Make a pretty bow to my Lady, Monsieur; and then another little bow, not so low, to Madame Tusher—the fair priestess of Castlewood."

"Come and kiss my hand, child," said my Lady, and little Harry Esmond took and dutifully kissed the lean old hand, upon the gnarled knuckles of which there glittered a hundred rings.

"To kiss that hand would make many a pretty fellow happy!" cried Mrs. Tusher: on which my Lady crying out, "Go, you foolish Tusher!" and tapping with her great fan, Tusher ran forward to seize her hand and kiss it. Fury arose and barked furiously at Tusher; and Father Holt looked on at this queer scene, with arch, grave glances.

The awe exhibited by the little boy perhaps pleased the lady on whom this artless flattery was bestowed; for having gone down on his knee (as Father Holt had directed him, and the mode then was) and performed his obeisance, she said, "Page Esmond, my groom of the chamber will inform you what your duties are, when you wait upon my Lord and me; and good Father Holt will instruct you as becomes a gentleman of our name. You will pay him obedience in everything, and I pray you may grow to be as learned and as good as your tutor."

The lady seemed to have the greatest reverence for

Mr. Holt, and to be more afraid of him than of anything else in the world. If she was ever so angry, a word or a look from Father Holt made her calm : indeed, he had a vast power of subjecting those who came near him ; and, among the rest, his new pupil gave himself up with an entire confidence and attachment to the good Father, and became his willing slave almost from the first moment he saw him.

He put his small hand into the Father's as he walked away from his first presentation to his mistress, and asked many questions in his artless childish way. " Who is that other woman ? " he asked. " She is fat and round ; she is more pretty than my Lady Castlewood."

" She is Madame Tusher, the parson's wife of Castlewood. She has a son of your age, but bigger than you."

" Why does she like so to kiss my Lady's hand ? It is not good to kiss."

" Tastes are different, little man. Madame Tusher is attached to my Lady, having been her waiting-woman before she was married, in the old lord's time. She married Doctor Tusher the chaplain. The English household divines often marry the waiting-women."

He then talked of other things, and took away Harry Esmond, and showed him the great old house which he had come to inhabit.

It stood on a rising green hill, with woods behind it, in which were rooks' nests, where the birds at morning and returning home at evening made a great cawing. At the foot of the hill was a river, with a steep ancient bridge crossing it ; and beyond that a large pleasant green flat, where the village of Castlewood stood, and stands, with the church in the midst, the parsonage hard by it, the inn with the blacksmith's forge beside it, and the sign of the " Three Castles " on the elm. The London

road stretched away towards the rising sun, and to the west were swelling hills and peaks, behind which many a time Harry Esmond saw the same sun setting, that he now looks on thousands of miles away across the great ocean, in a new Castlewood, by another stream.

The hall of Castlewood was built with two courts, whereof one only, the fountain-court, was now inhabited, the other having been battered down in the Cromwellian wars. In the fountain-court, still in good repair, was the great hall, near to the kitchen and butteries ; a dozen of living rooms looking to the north, and communicating with the little chapel that faced eastwards and the buildings stretching from that to the main gate, and with the hall (which looked to the west) into the court now dismantled. This court had been the more magnificent of the two, until the Protector's cannon tore down one side of it before the place was taken and stormed. The besiegers entered at the terrace under the clock-tower, slaying every man of the garrison, and at their head my Lord's brother, Francis Esmond.

The Restoration did not bring enough money to the Lord Castlewood to restore this ruined part of his house ; where were the morning parlours, above them the long music gallery, and before which stretched the garden-terrace, where, however, the flowers grew again which the boots of the Roundheads had trodden in their assault, and which was restored without much cost, and only a little care, by both ladies who succeeded the second Viscount in the government of this mansion. Round the terrace garden was a low wall with a wicket leading to the wooded height beyond, that is called Cromwell's Battery to this day.

Young Harry Esmond learned the domestic part of his duty, which was easy enough, from the groom of

her Ladyship's chamber: serving the Countess, as the custom commonly was in his boyhood, as page, waiting at her chair, bringing her scented water and the silver basin after dinner—sitting on her carriage-step on state occasions, or on public days introducing her company to her. This was chiefly of the Catholic gentry, of whom there were a pretty many in the country and neighbouring city; and who rode not seldom to Castlewood to partake of the hospitalities there. In the second year of their residence, the company seemed especially to increase. My Lord and my Lady were seldom without visitors, in whose society it was curious to contrast the difference of behaviour between Father Holt, the director of the family, and Doctor Tusher the rector of the parish, Mr. Holt moving amongst the very highest as quite their equal, and as commanding them all; while poor Doctor Tusher, whose position was indeed a difficult one, having been chaplain once to the Hall, and still to the Protestant servants there, seemed more like an usher than an equal, and always rose to go away after the first course.

Also there came in these times to Father Holt many private visitors, whom, after a little, Henry Esmond had little difficulty in recognising as ecclesiastics of the Father's persuasion, whatever their dresses (and they adopted all) might be. These were closeted with the Father constantly, and often came and rode away without paying their devoirs to my Lord and Lady—to the Lady and Lord rather—his Lordship being little more than a cipher in the house, and entirely under his domineering partner. A little fowling, a little hunting, a great deal of sleep, and a long time at cards and table, carried through one day after another with his Lordship. When meetings took place in this second year, which often would happen with closed doors, the page found

my Lord's sheet of paper scribbled over with dogs and horses, and 'twas said he had much ado to keep himself awake at these councils, the Countess ruling over them, and he acting as little more than her secretary.

Father Holt began speedily to be so much occupied with these meetings as rather to neglect the education of the little lad who so gladly put himself under the kind priest's orders. At first they read much and regularly, both in Latin and French; the Father not neglecting in anything to impress his faith upon his pupil, but not forcing him violently, and treating him with a delicacy and kindness which surprised and attached the child, always more easily won by these methods than by any severe exercise of authority.

CHAPTER III

PLOTS TO RESTORE KING JAMES THE SECOND

After being at home for a few months, my Lord and Lady went to London with Mr. Holt, leaving, however, the page behind them. The little man had the great house of Castlewood to himself; or between him and the housekeeper, Mrs. Worksop, an old lady who was a kinswoman of the family in some distant way, and a Protestant, but a staunch Tory and king's-man, as all the Esmonds were. He used to go to school to Dr. Tusher when he was at home, though the Doctor was much occupied too. There was a great stir and commotion everywhere, even in the little quiet village of Castlewood, whither a party of people came from the town, who would have broken Castlewood Chapel windows, but the village people turned out, and even old Sievewright, the Republican blacksmith, along with them: for my

Lady, though she was a Papist, and had many odd ways, was kind to the tenantry, and there was always a plenty of beef, and blankets, and medicine for the poor at Castlewood Hall.

A kingdom was changing hands whilst my Lord and Lady were away. King James was flying, the Dutchmen were coming; awful stories about them and the Prince of Orange used old Mrs. Worksop to tell to the idle little page.

He liked the solitude of the great house very well; he had all the play-books to read, and no Father Holt to whip him, and a hundred childish pursuits and pastimes, without doors and within, which made this time very pleasant.

The family were away more than six months, and when they returned they were in the deepest state of dejection, for King James had been banished, the Prince of Orange was on the throne, and the direst persecutions of those of the Catholic faith were apprehended by my Lady, who said that she did not believe that there was a word of truth in the promises of toleration that Dutch monster made, or in a single word the perjured wretch said. My Lord and Lady were in a manner prisoners in their own house; so her Ladyship gave the little page to know, who was by this time growing of an age to understand what was passing about him, and something of the characters of the people he lived with.

"We are prisoners," says she; "in everything but chains we are prisoners. Let them come, let them consign me to dungeons, or strike off my head from this poor little throat" (and she clasped it in her long fingers). "The blood of the Esmonds will always flow freely for their kings."

The public misfortune had the effect of making my

Lord and his Lady better friends than they had ever been since their courtship. My Lord Viscount had shown both loyalty and spirit, when these were rare qualities in the dispirited party about the King; and the praise he got elevated him not a little in his wife's good opinion, and perhaps in his own. He wakened up from the listless and supine life which he had been leading; was always riding to and fro in consultation with this friend or that of the King's, the page of course knowing little of his doings, but remarking only his greater cheerfulness and altered demeanour.

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated no longer openly as Chaplain; he was always fetching and carrying: strangers, military and ecclesiastic, were continually arriving and departing.

No garrison or watch was put into Castlewood when my Lord came back, but a guard was in the village; and one or other of them was always on the Green keeping a look-out on our great gate, and those who went out and in. 'Twas lucky that we had a gate which their Worships knew nothing about. My Lord and Father Holt must have made constant journeys at night: once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger and discreet aide-de-camp.

One day, it must have been about the month of June, 1690, my Lord, in a great horseman's coat, under which Harry could see the shining of a steel breastplate he had on, called little Harry to him, put the hair off the child's forehead, and kissed him, and bade God bless him in such an affectionate way as he had never used before. Father Holt blessed him too, and then they took leave of my Lady Viscountess, who came from her apartment with a pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, and her gentlewoman and Mrs. Tusher supporting her.

"You are going to—to ride," says she. "O, that I might come too!"

"We kiss my Lady Marchioness's hand," says Mr. Holt.

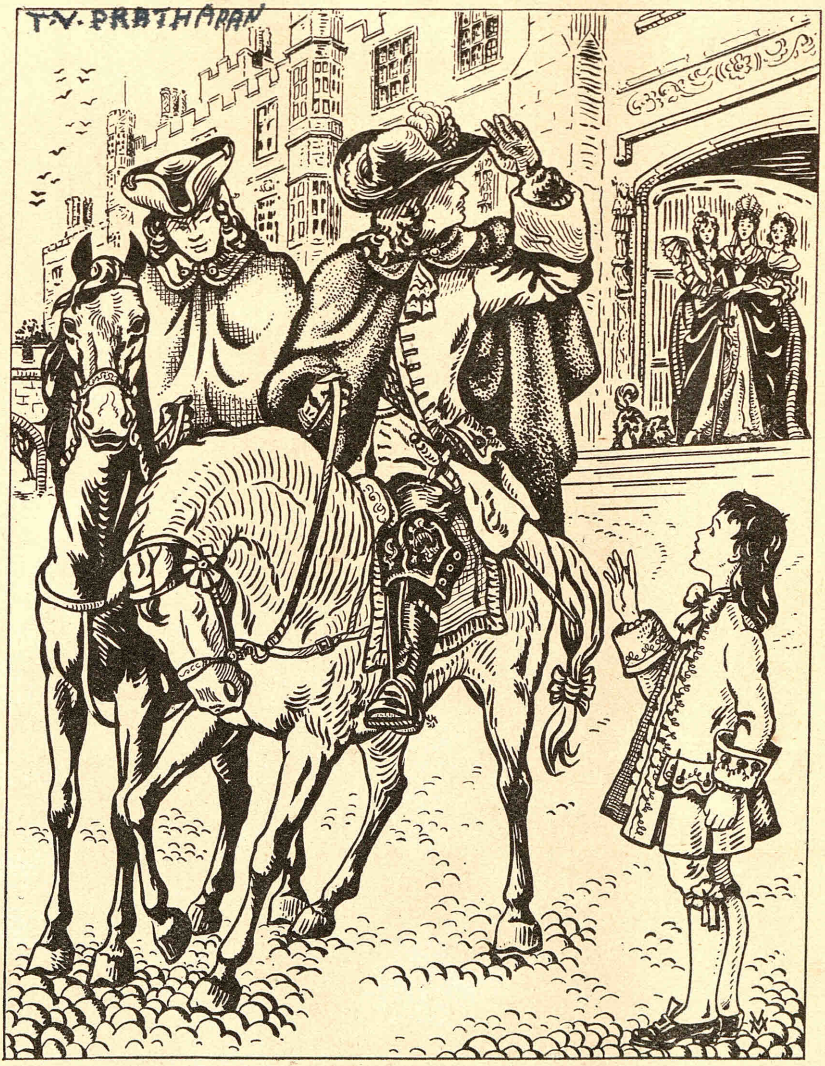
"My Lord, God speed you!" she said, stepping up and embracing my Lord in a grand manner. "Mr. Holt, I ask your blessing"; and she knelt down for that, whilst Mrs. Tusher tossed her head up.

Mr. Holt gave the same benediction to the little page who went down and held my Lord's stirrups for him to mount; there were two servants waiting there too—and they rode out of Castlewood gate.

Next day, a party of soldiers took possession of Castlewood Hall, among whom was a trooper Richard Steele – Dick the Scholar—his friends called him, and during the stay of the soldiers in Castlewood, honest Dick was the constant companion of the lonely little orphan lad, Harry Esmond. My Lady was taken to Hexton Castle, where she was treated with great courtesy, though she repeatedly desired to be led out to execution like Mary Queen of Scots.

The soldiers remained for some months encamped in Castlewood, and Harry learned from them, from time to time, how the lady at Hexton Castle was treated, and the particulars of her confinement there. 'Tis known that King William was disposed to deal very leniently with the gentry who remained faithful to the old King's cause; and no prince usurping a crown, as his enemies said he did (righteously taking it, as I think now), ever caused less blood to be shed. As for women conspirators, he kept spies on the least dangerous, and locked up the others. Lady Castlewood had the best rooms in Hexton Castle, and the gaoler's garden to walk in.

And it appeared she found that some were friends in



'My Lord Viscount and Mr. Holt ride away from Castlewood'

her misfortune, whom she had, in her prosperity, considered as her worst enemies. Colonel Francis Esmond, my Lord's cousin and her Ladyship's, who had married the Dean of Winchester's daughter, and, since King James's departure out of England, had lived not very far away from Hexton town, hearing of his kinswoman's strait, and being friends with Colonel Brice, commanding for King William in Hexton, and with the Church dignitaries there, came to visit her Ladyship in prison, offering to his uncle's daughter any friendly services which lay in his power. And he brought his lady and little daughter to see the prisoner, to the latter of whom, a child of great beauty and many winning ways, the old Viscountess took not a little liking, although between her Ladyship and the child's mother there was little more love than formerly. Little Beatrix was permitted often to go and visit the imprisoned Viscountess, who, in so far as the child and its father were concerned, got to abate in her anger towards that branch of the Castlewood family.

And now there befell an event by which this lady recovered her liberty, and the house of Castlewood got a new owner, and fatherless little Harry Esmond a new and most kind protector and friend. My Lord was wounded at the fatal battle of the Boyne, flying from which field (long after his master had set him an example) he lay for a while concealed in the marshy country near to the town of Trim, and more from catarrh and fever caught in the bogs than from the steel of the enemy in the battle, sank and died. May the earth lie light upon Thomas of Castlewood ! He who writes this must speak in charity, though this lord did him and his two grievous wrongs : for one of these he would have made amends, perhaps, had life been spared him ; but the other lay

beyond his power to repair. A priest of Trim wrote a letter to my Lady to inform her of this calamity.

But in those days letters were slow of travelling, and our priest's took two months or more on its journey from Ireland to England: where, when it did arrive, it did not find my Lady at her own house; she was at the King's house of Hexton Castle when the letter came to Castlewood, but it was opened for all that by the officer in command there.

"Something has happened to Lord Castlewood," the officer said, in a very grave tone—"something which must happen to us all. He is dead of a wound received at the Boyne, fighting for King James."

"I am glad my Lord fought for the right cause," the boy said.

"It was better to meet death on the field like a man, than face it on Tower Hill, as some of them may," continued Mr. Westbury. "I hope he has made some testament, or provided for thee somehow."

The soldiers presently were ordered away from Castlewood, and with many embraces and prayers for his prosperity, Scholar Dick parted from his young friend. He promised he would never forget the little orphan, nor indeed did he: and Harry was sorry when the kind soldiers vacated Castlewood, looking forward with no small anxiety (for care and solitude had made him thoughtful beyond his years) to his fate when the new lord and lady of the house came to live there. He had lived to be past twelve years old now; and had never had a friend, save this wild trooper perhaps, and Father Holt; and had a fond and affectionate heart, tender to weakness, that would fain attach itself to somebody, and did not seem at rest until it had found a friend who would take charge of it.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER GOOD FORTUNE COMES EVIL

The instinct which led Henry Esmond to admire and love the gracious person, the fair apparition of whose beauty and kindness had so moved him when he first beheld her, became soon a devoted affection and passion of gratitude, which entirely filled his young heart, that as yet, except in the case of dear Father Holt, had had very little kindness for which to be thankful. There seemed, as the boy thought, in every look or gesture of this fair creature, an angelical softness and bright pity—in motion or repose she seemed gracious alike; the tone of her voice, though she uttered words ever so trivial, gave him a pleasure that amounted almost to anguish. It cannot be called love, that a lad of twelve years of age, little more than a menial, felt for an exalted lady, his mistress: but it was worship. To catch her glance, to divine her errand and run on it before she had spoken it; to watch, follow, adore her, became the business of his life. Meanwhile, as is the way often, his idol had idols of her own, and never thought of or suspected the admiration of her little pigmy adorer.

My Lady had on her side her three idols: first and foremost, Jove and supreme ruler, was her lord, Harry's patron, the good Viscount of Castlewood. All wishes of his were laws with her. If he had a headache, she was ill. If he frowned, she trembled. If he joked, she smiled, and was charmed. If he went a-hunting, she was always at the window to see him ride away, her little son crowing on her arm, or on the watch till his return. She made dishes for his dinner: spiced his wine for him: made the toast for his tankard at breakfast: hushed the house when he slept in his chair, and watched

for a look when he woke. If my Lord was not a little proud of his beauty, my Lady adored it. She clung to his arm as he paced the terrace, her two fair little hands clasped round his great one ; her eyes were never tired of looking in his face and wondering at its perfection. Her little son was his son, and had his father's look and curly brown hair. Her daughter Beatrix was his daughter and had his eyes—were there ever such beautiful eyes in the world ? All the house was arranged so as to bring him ease and give him pleasure. She liked the small gentry round about to come and pay him court, never caring for admiration for herself ; those who wanted to be well with the lady must admire him. Not regarding her dress, she would wear a gown to rags, because he had once liked it : and, if he brought her a brooch or a ribbon, would prefer it to all the most costly articles of her wardrobe.

My Lord went to London every year for six weeks, and the family being too poor to appear at Court with any figure, he went alone. It was not until he was out of sight that her face showed any sorrow : and what a joy when he came back ! What preparation before his return ! The fond creature had his armchair at the chimney-side—delighting to put the children in it, and look at them there. Nobody took his place at the table ; but his silver tankard stood there as when my Lord was present.

A pretty sight it was to see, during my Lord's absence, or on those many mornings when sleep or headache kept him a-bed, this fair young lady of Castlewood, her little daughter at her knee, and her domestics gathered round her, reading the Morning Prayer of the English Church. Esmond long remembered how she looked and spoke, kneeling reverently before the sacred book, the

sun shining upon her golden hair until it made a halo round about her. A dozen of the servants of the house kneeled in a line opposite their mistress. For a while Henry Esmond kept apart from these mysteries, but Doctor Tusher showing him that the prayers read were those of the Church of all ages, and the boy's own inclination prompting him to be always as near as he might to his mistress, and to think all things she did right, from listening to the prayer in the ante-chamber, he came presently to kneel down with the rest of the household in the parlour; and before a couple of years my Lady had made a thorough convert. Indeed the boy loved his catechiser so much that he would have subscribed to anything she bade him, and was never tired of listening to her fond discourse and simple comments upon the book, which she read to him in a voice of which it was difficult to resist the sweet persuasion and tender appealing kindness. This friendly controversy, and the intimacy which it occasioned, bound the lad more fondly than ever to his mistress. The happiest period of all his life was this; and the young mother, with her daughter and son, and the orphan lad whom she protected, read and worked and played, and were children together.

If the lady looked forward—as what fond woman does not ?—towards the future, she had no plans from which Harry Esmond was left out; and a thousand and a thousand times, in his passionate and impetuous way, he vowed that no power should separate him from his mistress; and only asked for some chance to happen by which he might show his fidelity to her. Now, at the close of his life, as he sits and recalls in tranquillity the happy and busy scenes of it, he can think, not ungratefully, that he has been faithful to that early vow. Such a life is so simple that years may be chronicled in a few

lines. But few men's life-voyages are destined to be all prosperous; and this calm of which we are speaking was soon to come to an end.

As Esmond grew, and observed for himself, he found of necessity much to read and think of outside that fond circle of kinsfolk who had admitted him to join hand with them. He read more books than they cared to study with him; was alone in the midst of them many a time, and passed nights over labours, futile perhaps, but in which they could not join him. His dear mistress divined his thoughts with her usual jealous watchfulness of affection: began to forebode a time when he would escape from his home-nest; and, at his eager protestations to the contrary, would only sigh and shake her head. Before those fatal decrees in life are executed, there are always secret previsions and warning omens. When everything yet seems calm, we are aware that the storm is coming. Ere the happy days were over, two at least of that home-party felt that they were drawing to a close; and were uneasy, and on the look-out for the cloud which was to obscure their calm.

'Twas easy for Harry to see, however much his lady persisted in obedience and admiration for her husband, that my Lord tired of his quiet life, and grew weary, and then testy, at those gentle bonds with which his wife would have held him. All the high-flown raptures and devotional ceremonies with which she treated him, first sent him to sleep, and then drove him out of doors; for the truth must be told that my Lord was a jolly gentleman, with very little of the august or divine in his nature, though his fond wife persisted in revering it—and, besides, he had to pay a penalty for this love which persons of his disposition seldom like to defray: and, in a word, if he had a loving wife, had a very jealous

and exacting one. Then he wearied of this jealousy; then he broke away from it; then came, no doubt, complaints and recriminations; then, perhaps, promises of amendment not fulfilled; then upbraidings not the more pleasant because they were silent, and only sad looks and tearful eyes conveyed them.

One day in the year 1694 (I have good reason to remember it), Dr. Tusher ran into Castlewood House, with a face of consternation, saying that the small-pox had made its appearance at the blacksmith's house in the village, which Henry had visited that very day, and that one of the maids there was down with it.

Little Lady Beatrix screamed out at Dr. Tusher's news, and my Lord cried out, "God bless me!" He was a brave man, and not afraid of death in any shape but this. He was very proud of his pink complexion and fair hair—but the idea of death by small-pox scared him beyond all other ends. "We will take the children and ride away to-morrow to Walcote"; this was my Lord's small house, inherited from his mother, near to Winchester.

To love children, and be gentle with them, was an instinct, rather than a merit, in Henry Esmond; so much so, that he thought almost with a sort of shame of his liking for them, and of the softness into which it had betrayed him; and on this day, the poor fellow had not only had his young friend, the blacksmith's son, on his knee, but had been drawing pictures and telling stories to the little Frank Castlewood, who had occupied the same place for an hour after dinner, and was never tired of Henry's tales, and his pictures of soldiers and horses. As luck would have it, Beatrix had not on that evening taken her usual place, which generally she was glad enough to have, upon her tutor's lap. For Beatrix, from

the earliest time, was jealous of every caress which was given to her little brother Frank. She would fling away even from the maternal arms, if she saw Frank had been there before her; insomuch that Lady Esmond was obliged not to show her love for her son in the presence of the little girl, and embrace one or the other alone. She would turn pale and red with rage if she caught signs of intelligence or affection between Frank and his mother; would sit apart, and not speak for a whole night, if she thought the boy had a better fruit or a larger cake than hers; would fling away a ribbon if he had one; and from the earliest age, sitting up in her little chair by the great fireplace opposite to the corner where Lady Castlewood commonly sat at her embroidery, would utter infantine sarcasms about the favour shown to her brother. These, if spoken in the presence of Lord Castlewood, tickled and amused his humour; he would pretend to love Frank best, and dandle and kiss him, and roar with laughter at Beatrix's jealousy.

So it chanced that upon this very day, when poor Harry Esmond had had the blacksmith's son, and the peer's son, alike upon his knee, little Beatrix, who would come to her tutor willingly enough with her book and her writing, had refused him, seeing the place occupied by her brother, and, luckily for her, had sat at the farther end of the room, away from him, playing with a spaniel dog which she had (and for which, by fits and starts, she would take a great affection), and talking at Harry Esmond over her shoulder, as she pretended to caress the dog, saying that Fido would love her, and she would love Fido, and nothing but Fido, all her life.

When, then, the news was brought that the little boy at the "Three Castles" (the blacksmith besides his forge and irons for horses, had an ale-house for men) was ill

with the small-pox, poor Harry Esmond felt a shock of alarm, not so much for himself as for his mistress's son, whom he might have brought into peril. Beatrix, who had pouted sufficiently, her brother being now gone to bed, was for taking her place upon Esmond's knee: for, though the Doctor was very obsequious to her, she did not like him, because he had thick boots and dirty hands (the pert young miss said), and because she hated learning the Catechism.

But as she advanced towards Esmond from the corner where she had been sulking, he started back and placed the great chair on which he was sitting between him and her—saying in the French language to Lady Castlewood, with whom the young lad had read much, and whom he had perfected in this tongue—"Madam, the child must not approach me; I must tell you that I was at the blacksmith's to-day, and had his little boy upon my lap."

"Where you took my son afterwards," Lady Castlewood said, very angry, and turning red. "I thank you, sir, for giving him such company. Beatrix," she said in English, "I forbid you to touch Mr. Esmond. Come away, child—come to your room. Come to your room—I wish your Reverence good-night—and you, sir, had you better not go back to your friends at the ale-house?" Her eyes, ordinarily so kind, darted flashes of anger as she spoke; and she tossed up her head (which hung down commonly) with the mien of a princess.

"Hey-day!" says my Lord, who was standing by the fireplace—indeed he was in the position to which he generally came by that hour of the evening—"Hey-day! Rachel, what are you in a passion about? Ladies ought never to be in a passion—ought they, Dr. Tusher? —though it does good to see Rachel in a passion."

Her reply was to burst into a flood of tears, and to quit the room. Coming back in a little while, looking very pale, with a handkerchief in her hand, she advanced to Henry Esmond and took his hand. "I beg your pardon, Henry," she said. "I spoke very unkindly. I have no right to interfere with you—with your——"

My Lord broke out into an oath. "Can't you leave the boy alone, my Lady?" She looked a little red, and faintly pressed the lad's hand as she dropped it.

"There is no use, my Lord," she said. "Frank was on his knee as he was making pictures, and was running constantly from Henry to me. The evil is done, if any."

"Not with me," cried my Lord. "I've been smoking,"—and he lighted his pipe again with a coal—"and it keeps off infection; and as the disease is in the village—plague take it!—I would have you leave it. We'll go to-morrow to Walcote, my Lady."

"I have no fear," said my Lady; "I may have had it as an infant: it broke out in our house then; and when four of my sisters had it at home, two years before our marriage, I escaped it, and two of my dear sisters died."

"I won't run the risk," said my Lord. "I'm as bold as any man, but I'll not bear that."

"Take Beatrix with you and go," said my Lady. "For us the mischief is done; and Tucker can wait upon us, who has had the disease."

Harry had brought the contagion with him from the "Three Castles" sure enough, and was presently laid up with the small-pox, which spared the hall no more than it did the cottage.

CHAPTER V

PREPARE TO LEAVE CASTLEWOOD

When Harry Esmond passed through the crisis of that malady, and returned to health again, he found that little Frank Esmond had also suffered and rallied after the disease, and the lady his mother was down with it, with a couple more of the household.

Harry thought that her Ladyship's beauty was very much injured by the small-pox. When the marks of the disease cleared away, they did not, it is true, leave furrows or scars on her face (except one, perhaps, on her forehead over her left eyebrow); but the delicacy of her rosy colour and complexion was gone: her eyes had lost their brilliancy, her hair fell, and her face looked older. It was as if a coarse hand had rubbed off the delicate tints of that sweet picture, and brought it, as one has seen unskilful painting-cleaners do, to the dead colour. Also, it must be owned, that for a year or two after the malady, her Ladyship's nose was swollen and redder.

At length, when the danger was quite over, it was announced that my Lord and his daughter would return. Esmond well remembered the day. The lady his mistress was in a flurry of fear. Her fate was about to be decided. Her beauty was gone—was her reign, too, over? A minute would say. My Lord came riding over the bridge—he could be seen from the great window, clad in scarlet, and mounted on his grey hackney—his little daughter ambled by him in a bright riding-dress of blue, on a shining chestnut horse. My lady ran to her room, and came back with pale cheeks and red eyes—her son in her hand—just as my Lord entered, accompanied by young Esmond, who had gone out to meet his protector,

and to hold his stirrup as he descended from horseback.

"What, Harry, boy!" my Lord said, good-naturedly, "you look as gaunt as a greyhound. The small-pox hasn't improved your beauty, and your side of the house hadn't never too much of it—ho, ho!"

And he laughed, and sprang to the ground with no small agility, looking handsome and red, with a jolly face and brown hair, like a Beefeater. Esmond, kneeling again, as soon as his patron had descended, performed his homage, and then went to greet the little Beatrix, and help her from her horse.

"And now for my Lady," said my Lord, going up the stairs, and passing under the tapestry curtain that hung before the drawing-room door. Esmond remembered that noble figure, handsomely arrayed in scarlet. Within the last few months he himself had grown from a boy to be a man, and with his figure his thoughts had shot up, and grown manly.

My Lady's countenance, of which Harry Esmond was accustomed to watch the changes, and with a solicitous affection to note and interpret the signs of gladness or care, wore a sad and depressed look for many weeks after her lord's return: during which it seemed as if, by caresses and entreaties, she strove to win him back from some ill-humour he had, and which he did not choose to throw off. In her eagerness to please him she practised a hundred of those arts which had formerly charmed him, but which seemed now to have lost their potency. Her songs did not amuse him; and she hushed them and the children when in his presence. My Lord sat silent at his dinner, drinking greatly, his lady opposite to him, looking furtively at his face, though also speechless. Her silence annoyed him as much as her speech; and he would peevishly, and with an oath,

ask her why she held her tongue and looked so glum; or he would roughly check her when speaking, and bid her not talk nonsense. It seemed as if, since his return, nothing she could do or say could please him.

When a master and mistress are at strife in a house, the subordinates in the family take the one side or the other. Harry Esmond stood in so great fear of my Lord, that he would run a league barefoot to do a message for him; but his attachment for Lady Esmond was such a passion of grateful regard that, to spare her a grief, or to do her a service, he would have given his life daily: and it was by the very depth and intensity of this regard that he began to divine how unhappy his adored lady's life was, and that a secret care (for she never spoke of her anxieties) was weighing upon her.

In a couple of years after that calamity had befallen which had robbed Lady Castlewood of a little—a very little—of her beauty, and her careless husband's heart, a great change had taken place in her mind, which, by struggles only known to herself, at least never mentioned to anyone, and unsuspected by the person who caused the pain she endured—had been schooled into such a condition as she could not very likely have imagined possible a score of months since, before her misfortunes had begun.

Meanwhile, it has been said, that for Harry Esmond his benefactress' sweet face had lost none of its charms. It had always the kindest of looks and smiles for him—smiles, not so gay and artless perhaps as those which Lady Castlewood had formerly worn, when, a child herself, playing with her children, her husband's pleasure and authority were all she thought of; but out of her griefs and cares, as will happen I think when these trials fall upon a kindly heart, and are not too unbearable,

grew up a number of thoughts and excellences which had never come into existence, had not her sorrow and misfortunes engendered them.

It happened about Christmas-time, Harry Esmond being now past sixteen years of age, that his old comrade, adversary, and friend, Tom Tusher, Dr. Tusher's son, returned from his school in London, a fair, well-grown, and sturdy lad, who was about to enter college, with an exhibition from his school, and a prospect of after promotion in the Church. Tom Tusher's talk was of nothing but Cambridge now ; and the boys, who were good friends, examined each other eagerly about their progress in books. Tom had learned some Greek and Hebrew, besides Latin, in which he was pretty well skilled, and also had given himself to mathematical studies under his father's guidance, who was a proficient in those sciences, of which Esmond knew nothing ; nor could he write Latin so well as Tom, though he could talk it better, having been taught by his dear friend the Jesuit Father, for whose memory the lad ever retained the warmest affection, reading his books, keeping his swords clean in the little crypt where the Father had shown them to Esmond one night of his visit ; and often of a night sitting in the chaplain's room, which he inhabited, over his books, his verses, and rubbish, with which the lad occupied himself, he would look up at the window, thinking he wished it might open and let in the good Father.

When Tom Tusher was gone, a feeling of no small depression and disquiet fell upon young Esmond, of which, though he did not complain, his kind mistress must have divined the cause : for soon after she showed not only that she understood the reason of Harry's melancholy, but could provide a remedy for it.

She made his three scholars (herself being the chief one), more cheerful than ever they had been before, and more docile, too, all of them learning and reading much more than they had been accustomed to do. "For who knows," said the lady, "what may happen, and whether we may be able to keep such a learned tutor long?"

Frank Esmond said he for his part did not want to learn any more, and cousin Harry might shut up his book whenever he liked, if he would come out a-fishing; and little Beatrix declared she would send for Tom Tusher, and *he* would be glad enough to come to Castlewood, if Harry chose to go away.

At last comes a messenger from Winchester one day, bearer of a letter, with a great black seal, from the Dean there, to say that his sister was dead, and had left her fortune of £2000 among her six nieces, the Dean's daughters; and many a time since has Harry Esmond recalled the flushed face and eager look wherewith, after this intelligence, his kind lady regarded him. She did not pretend to any grief about the deceased relative, from whom she and her family had been many years parted.

When my Lord heard of the news, he also did not make any very long face. "The money will come very handy to furnish the music-room and the cellar, which is getting very low, and buy your Ladyship a coach and a couple of horses, that will do indifferent to ride or for the coach. And Beatrix, you shall have a spinnet; and Frank, you shall have a little horse from Hexton Fair; and Harry, you shall have five pounds to buy some books," said my Lord, who was generous with his own, and indeed with other folks' money. "I wish your aunt would die once a year, Rachel; we could spend your money, and all your sisters', too."

"I have but one aunt—and—and I have another use for the money, my Lord," says my Lady, turning very red.

"Another use, my dear; and what do you know about money?" cries my Lord. "And what is there that I don't give you which you want?"

"I intend to give this money—can't you fancy how, my Lord?"

My Lord swore one of his large oaths that he did not know in the least what she meant.

"I intend it for Harry Esmond to go to college. Cousin Harry," says my Lady, "you mustn't stay longer in this dull place, but make a name to yourself, and for us, too, Harry."

"Harry's well enough here," says my Lord, for a moment looking rather sulky.

"Is Harry going away? You don't mean to say you will go away?" cry out Frank and Beatrix at one breath.

"But he will come back: and this will always be his home," cries my Lady, with blue eyes looking a celestial kindness: "and his scholars will always love him; won't they?"

"Rachel, you're a good woman," says my Lord, seizing my Lady's hand, at which she blushed very much, and shrank back, putting her children before her. "I wish you joy, my kinsman," he continued, giving Harry Esmond a hearty slap on the shoulder. "I won't balk your luck. Go to Cambridge, boy: and when Tusher dies you shall have the living here, if you are not better provided by that time. We'll furnish the dining-room and buy the horses another year. I'll give thee a nag out of the stable: take any except my hack and the coach horses; and God speed thee, my boy!"

CHAPTER VI

I GO TO CAMBRIDGE

My Lord, who said he should like to revisit the old haunts of his youth, kindly accompanied Harry Esmond in his first journey to Cambridge. Their road lay through London, where my Lord Viscount would also have Harry stay a few days to show him the pleasures of the town before he entered upon his University studies, and whilst here Harry's patron conducted the young man to my Lady Dowager's house at Chelsey near London: the kind lady at Castlewood having specially ordered that the young gentleman and the old should pay a respectful visit in that quarter.

Her Ladyship the Viscountess Dowager occupied a handsome new house in Chelsey, with a garden behind it, and facing the river, always a bright and animated sight with its swarms of sailors, barges, and wherries.

She received the young man with even more favour than she showed to the elder, for she chose to carry on the conversation in French, in which my Lord Castlewood was no great proficient, and expressed her satisfaction at finding that Mr. Esmond could speak fluently in that language. "'Twas the only one fit for polite conversation," she condescended to say, "and suitable to persons of high breeding."

My Lord laughed afterwards, as the gentlemen went away, at his kinswoman's behaviour. He said he remembered the time when she could speak English fast enough, and joked in his jolly way at the loss he had had of such a lovely wife as that.

Her ladyship asked Harry what his profession was to be; and my Lord, saying that the lad was to take orders, and have the living of Castlewood when old

Doctor Tusher vacated it, she did not seem to show any particular anger at the notion of Harry's becoming a Church of England clergyman, nay, was rather glad than otherwise that the youth should be so provided for. She bade Mr. Esmond not to forget to pay her a visit whenever he passed through London, and carried her graciousness so far as to send a purse with twenty guineas for him, to the tavern at which my Lord put up (the "Greyhound," in Charing Cross); and, along with this welcome gift for her kinsman, she sent a little doll for a present to my Lord's little daughter Beatrix, who was growing beyond the age of dolls by this time, and was as tall almost as her venerable relative.

After seeing the town, and going to the plays, my Lord Castlewood and Esmond rode together to Cambridge, spending two pleasant days upon the journey. Those rapid new coaches were not established, as yet, that performed the whole journey between London and the University in a single day; however, the road was pleasant and short enough to Harry Esmond, and he always gratefully remembered that happy holiday which his kind patron gave him.

Mr. Esmond was entered a pensioner of Trinity College in Cambridge, to which famous college my Lord had also in his youth belonged. Doctor Montague was master at this time, and received my Lord Viscount with great politeness: so did Mr. Bridge, who was appointed to be Harry's tutor. Tom Tusher, who was of Emmanuel College, and was by this time a junior soph, came to wait upon my Lord, and to take Harry under his protection; and comfortable rooms being provided for him in the great court close by the gate, Harry's patron took leave of him with many kind words and blessings, and an admonition to him to behave better

at the University than my Lord himself had ever done.

'Tis needless in these memoirs to go at any length into the particulars of Harry Esmond's college career. It was like that of a hundred young gentlemen of that day. But he had the ill-fortune to be older by a couple of years than most of his fellow-students; and by his previous solitary mode of bringing up, the circumstances of his life, and the peculiar thoughtfulness and melancholy that had naturally engendered, he was, in a great measure, cut off from the society of comrades who were much younger and higher-spirited than he.

A poem or two in Latin and English, which were pronounced to have some merit, and a Latin oration got him a little reputation both with the authorities of the University and amongst the young men, with whom he began to pass for more than he was worth. Such of the lads as he took into his confidence found him not so gloomy and haughty as his appearance led them to believe; and Don Dismallo, as he was called, became presently a person of some little importance in his college, and was, as he believes, set down by the seniors there as rather a dangerous character.

Don Dismallo was a staunch young Jacobite, like the rest of his family; gave himself many absurd airs of loyalty; used to invite young friends to Burgundy, and give the King's health on King James's birthday; wore black on the day of his abdication; fasted on the anniversary of King William's coronation; and performed a thousand absurd antics, of which he smiles now to think.

These follies caused many remonstrances on Tom Tusher's part, who was always a friend to the powers that be, as Esmond was always in opposition to them. Tom was a Whig, while Esmond was a Tory. Tom never

missed a lecture, and capped the proctor with the profoundest of bows. No wonder he sighed over Harry's insubordinate courses, and was angry when the others laughed at him. But that Harry was known to have my Lord Viscount's protection, Tom no doubt would have broken with him altogether. But honest Tom never gave up a comrade as long as he was the friend of a great man. This was not out of scheming on Tom's part, but a natural inclination towards the great. 'Twas no hypocrisy in him to flatter, but the bent of his mind, which was always perfectly good-humoured, obliging, and servile.

The last term Esmond was to take his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and afterwards, in proper season, to assume the cassock and bands which his fond mistress would have him wear. Tom Tusher himself was a parson and fellow of his college by this time; and Harry felt that he would very gladly cede his right to the living of Castlewood to Tom, and that his own calling was in no way the pulpit. But as he was bound, before all things in the world, to his dear mistress at home, and knew that a refusal on his part would grieve her, he determined to give her no hint of his unwillingness to the clerical office: and it was in this unsatisfactory mood of mind that he went to spend the last vacation he should have at Castlewood before he took orders.

CHAPTER VII

I GO HOME TO CASTLEWOOD

At his third long vacation, Esmond came as usual to Castlewood, always feeling an eager thrill of pleasure when he found himself once more in the house where he had passed so many years, and beheld the kind familiar

eyes of his mistress looking upon him. She and her children (out of whose company she scarce ever saw him) came to greet him. Miss Beatrix was grown so tall that Harry did not quite know whether he might kiss her or no; and she blushed and held back when he offered that salutation, though she took it, and even courted it, when they were alone.

The young lord was shooting up to be like his gallant father in look, though with his mother's kind eyes: the lady of Castlewood herself seemed grown, too, since Harry saw her—in her look more stately, in her person fuller, in her face still as ever most tender and friendly, a greater air of command and decision than had appeared in that guileless sweet countenance which Harry remembered so gratefully. The tone of her voice was so much deeper and sadder when she spoke and welcomed him, that it quite startled Esmond, who looked up at her surprised as she spoke, when she withdrew her eyes from him; nor did she ever look at him afterwards when his own eyes were gazing upon her. A something hinting at grief and secret, and filling his mind with alarm undefinable, seemed to speak with that low thrilling voice of hers, and look out of those clear sad eyes. Her greeting to Esmond was so cold that it almost pained the lad (who would have liked to fall on his knees, and kiss the skirt of her robe, so fond and ardent was his respect and regard for her), and he faltered in answering the questions which she, hesitating on her side, began to put to him. Was he happy at Cambridge? Did he study too hard? She hoped not. He had grown very tall, and looked very well.

"He has got a moustache!" cries out Master Esmond.

"Why does he not wear a peruke like my Lord

Mohun ?" asked Miss Beatrix. "My Lord says that nobody wears their own hair."

"I believe you will have to occupy your old chamber," says my Lady. "I hope the housekeeper has got it ready."

"Why, mamma, you have been there ten times these three days yourself !" exclaims Frank.

"And she cut some flowers which you planted in my garden—do you remember, ever so many years ago ?—when I was quite a little girl," cries out Miss Beatrix, on tiptoe. "And mamma put them in your window."

"I remember when you grew well after you were ill that you used to like roses," said the lady, blushing like one of them. They all conducted Harry Esmond to his chamber, the children running before, Harry walking by his mistress hand-in-hand.

The old room had been ornamented and beautified not a little to receive him. The flowers were in the window in a china vase ; and there was a fine new counterpane on the bed, which chatterbox Beatrix said mamma had made too. A fire was crackling on the hearth, although it was June. My Lady thought the room wanted warming ; everything was done to make him happy and welcome : "And you are not to be a page any longer, but a gentleman and kinsman, and to walk with papa and mamma," said the children. And as soon as his dear mistress and children had left him to himself, it was with a heart overflowing with love and gratefulness that he flung himself down on his knees by the side of the little bed, and asked a blessing upon those who were so kind to him.

The children, who are always house tell-tales, soon made him acquainted with the little history of the house and family. Papa had been to London twice.

Papa often went away now, and many gentlemen came to stop with papa; and the Dowager Lady Castlewood had sent Miss Beatrix a present; and papa had gotten a new chaise, with two little horses, which he drove himself, beside the coach which mamma went in; and Doctor Tusher was a cross old plague, and they did not like to learn from him at all; and papa did not care about them learning, and laughed when they were at their books, but mamma liked them to learn, and taught them.

My Lord would never take the oath of allegiance, nor his seat as a peer of the kingdom of Ireland, where, indeed, he had but a nominal estate; and refused an English peerage which King William's government offered him as a bribe to secure his loyalty.

He might have accepted this, and would, doubtless, but for the earnest remonstrances of his wife, who ruled her husband's opinions better than she could govern his conduct, and who, being a single-hearted woman, with but one rule of faith and right, never thought of swerving from her fidelity to the exiled family, or of recognising any other sovereign but King James; and though she acquiesced in the doctrine of obedience to the reigning power, no temptation, she thought, could induce her to acknowledge the Prince of Orange as rightful monarch, nor to let her lord so acknowledge him. So my Lord Castlewood remained a nonjuror all his life nearly, though his self-denial caused him many a pang, and left him sulky and out of humour.

The year after the Revolution, and all through King William's life, 'tis known there were constant intrigues for the restoration of the exiled family; but if my Lord Castlewood took any share of these, as is probable,

'twas only for a short time, and when Harry Esmond was too young to be introduced into such important secrets.

But in the year 1695, when that conspiracy of Sir John Fenwick,[1] Colonel Lowick, and others, was set on foot, for waylaying King William as he came from Hampton Court to London, and a secret plot was formed, in which a vast number of the nobility and people of honour were engaged, Father Holt appeared at Castlewood, and brought a young friend with him, a gentleman whom 'twas easy to see that both my Lord and the Father treated with uncommon deference. Harry Esmond saw this gentleman, and knew and recognised him in after life, and he has little doubt now that my Lord Viscount was implicated somewhat in the transactions which always kept Father Holt employed and travelling hither and thither, under a dozen of different names and disguises. The Father's companion went by the name of Captain James; and it was under a very different name and appearance that Harry Esmond afterwards saw him.

It was the next year that the Fenwick conspiracy blew up, which is a matter of public history now, and which ended in the execution of Sir John and many more, who suffered manfully for their treason. 'Tis known that when Sir John was apprehended, discovery was made of a great number of names of gentlemen engaged in the conspiracy: when, with a noble wisdom and clemency the Prince burned the list of conspirators furnished to him, and said he would know no more. Now it was after this that Lord Castlewood swore his great oath, that he would never, so help him Heaven, be engaged in any transaction against that brave and merciful man; and so he told Holt when the indefatig-

able priest visited him, and would have had him engage in a further conspiracy. After this my Lord ever spoke of King William as he was—as one of the wisest, the bravest, and the greatest of men.

The last conference which Mr. Holt had with his Lordship took place when Harry was come home for his first vacation from college (Harry saw his old tutor but for a half-hour, and exchanged no private words with him), and their talk, whatever it might be, left my Lord Viscount very much disturbed in mind—so much so, that his wife, and his young kinsman, Henry Esmond, could not but observe his disquiet. After Holt was gone, my Lord rebuffed Esmond, and again treated him with the greatest deference; he shunned his wife's questions and company, and looked at his children with such a face of gloom and anxiety, muttering, "Poor children—poor children!" in a way that could not but fill those whose life it was to watch him and obey him with great alarm.

One of the causes why my Lord Viscount had taken young Esmond into his special favour was a trivial one, that hath not before been mentioned, though it was a very lucky accident in Henry Esmond's life. A very few months after my Lord's coming to Castlewood, in the winter time—the little boy being a child in a petticoat, trotting about—it happened that little Frank was with his father after dinner, who fell asleep over his wine, heedless of the child, who crawled to the fire; and, as good fortune would have it, Esmond was sent by his mistress for the boy just as the poor little screaming urchin's coat was set on fire by a log; when Esmond, rushing forward, tore the dress off the infant, so that his own hands were burned more than the child's, who was frightened rather than hurt by this accident. But

certainly 'twas providential that a resolute person should have come in at that instant, or the child had been burned to death probably, my Lord sleeping very heavily after drinking, and not waking so cool as a man should who had a danger to face.

Ever after this the father, loud in his expressions of remorse and humility for being a tipsy good-for-nothing, and of admiration for Harry Esmond, whom his Lordship would style a hero for doing a very trifling service, had the tenderest regard for his son's preserver, and Harry became quite as one of the family. His burns were tended with the greatest care by his kind mistress, who said that Heaven had sent him to be the guardian of her children, and that she would love him all her life.

My Lady seldom drank wine; but on certain days of the year, such as birthdays and anniversaries, she took a little; and this day, the 29th December, was one. At the end, then, of this year, '96, it might have been a fortnight after Mr. Holt's last visit, Lord Castlewood being still very gloomy in mind, and sitting at table—my lady bidding a servant bring her a glass of wine, and looking at her husband with one of her sweet smiles, said:

"My Lord, will you not fill a bumper too, and let me call a toast?"

"What is it, Rachel?" says he, holding out his empty glass to be filled.

"'Tis the 29th of December," says my Lady, with her fond look of gratitude: "and my toast is, 'Harry—and God bless him who saved my boy's life!'"

My Lord looked at Harry hard, and drank the glass, but clapped it down on the table in a moment, and, with a sort of groan, rose up, and went out of the room. What was the matter? We all knew that some great grief was over him.

Whether my Lord's prudence had made him richer, or legacies had fallen to him, which enabled him to support a greater establishment than that frugal one which had been too much for his small means, Harry Esmond knew not; but the house of Castlewood was now on a scale much more costly than it had been during the first years of his Lordship's coming to the title. There were more horses in the stable and more servants in the hall, and many more guests coming and going now than formerly, when it was found difficult enough by the strictest economy to keep the house as befitted one of his Lordship's rank, and the estate out of debt. And it did not require very much penetration to find that many of the new acquaintances at Castlewood were not agreeable to the lady there; not that she ever treated them or any mortal with anything but courtesy; but they were persons who could not be welcome to her; and whose society a lady so refined and reserved could scarce desire for her children.

CHAPTER VIII

MY LORD MOHUN COMES AMONG US FOR NO GOOD

Among these acquaintances was the Lord Mohun, who was greeted with a great deal of cordiality by the hospitable Lord of Castlewood. He was a person of a handsome presence, with the *bel air*, and a bright daring warlike aspect, which, according to the chronicle of those days, had already achieved for him the conquest of several beauties and toasts. He had fought and conquered in France, as well as in Flanders; he had served a couple of campaigns with the Prince of Baden on the Danube, and witnessed the rescue of Vienna from the Turk. And he spoke of his military exploits pleas-

antly, and with the manly freedom of a soldier, so as to delight all his hearers at Castlewood, who were little accustomed to meet a companion so agreeable.

The intimacy between the Lords Mohun and Castlewood appeared to increase as long as the former remained in the country; and my Lord of Castlewood especially seemed never to be happy out of his new comrade's sight. They sported together, they drank, they played bowls and tennis. His Lordship made himself very welcome to all persons, having a joke or a new game at romps for the children, all the talk of the town for my Lord, and music and gallantry and plenty of the *beau langage* for my Lady, and for Harry Esmond, who was never tired of hearing his stories of his campaigns and his life at Vienna, Venice, Paris, and the famous cities of Europe which he had visited both in peace and war. And he sang at my Lady's harpsichord, and played cards or backgammon, or his new game of billiards with my Lord (of whom he invariably got the better); always having a consummate good-humour, and bearing himself with a certain manly grace that had its charm, and stamped him a gentleman; and his manner to Lady Castlewood was so devoted and respectful, that she soon recovered from the first feelings of dislike which she had conceived against him—nay, before long, began to be interested in his spiritual welfare, and hopeful of his conversion, lending him books of piety, which he promised dutifully to study. With her my Lord talked of reform, of settling into quiet life, quitting the court and town, and buying some land in the neighbourhood—though it must be owned that, when the two lords were together over their Burgundy after dinner, their talk was very different, and there was very little question of conversion on my Lord Mohun's part. When they got

to their second bottle, Harry Esmond used commonly to leave these two noble topers, who, though they talked freely enough, Heaven knows, in his presence, yet they seemed pleased when he went away, and then they had another bottle, and then they fell to cards, and then my Lord Mohun came to her Ladyship's drawing-room, leaving his boon companion to sleep off his wine.

'Twas a point of honour with the fine gentlemen of those days to lose or win magnificently at their horse-matches, or games of cards and dice—and you could never tell, from the demeanour of these two lords afterwards, which had been successful and which the loser at their games. And when my Lady hinted to my Lord that he played more than she liked, he dismissed her with a "pish," and swore that nothing was more equal than play betwixt gentlemen, if they did but keep it up long enough. And these kept it up long enough, you may be sure. A man of fashion of that time often passed a quarter of his day at cards and another quarter at drink: I have known many a pretty fellow, who was a wit, too, ready of repartee, and possessed of a thousand graces, who would be puzzled if he had to write more than his name.

During Esmond's last vacation at Castlewood, my Lady looked so sad and grave, that Harry asked the cause of her disquietude. She said that my Lord, ever since his acquaintance with the Lord Mohun especially, had recurred to his fondness for play, which he had renounced since his marriage.

"I fear he has lost large sums," said my Lady, with a sigh, "and our property, always small, is dwindling away under this reckless dissipation. I heard of him in London with very wild company. Since his return letters and lawyers are constantly coming and going:

he seems to me to have a constant anxiety, though he hides it under boisterousness and laughter. I looked through—through the door last night, and—and before," said my Lady, "and saw them at cards after midnight; no estate will bear that extravagance, much less ours, which will be so diminished that my son will have nothing at all, and my poor Beatrix no portion."

"I wish I could help you, madam," said Harry Esmond, sighing, and wishing that unavailingly, and for the thousandth time in his life.

As my Lord and his friend Lord Mohun were such close companions, Mistress Beatrix chose to be jealous of the latter; and the two gentlemen often entertained each other by laughing, in their rude boisterous way, at the child's freaks of anger and show of dislike. "When thou art old enough, thou shalt marry Lord Mohun," Beatrix's father would say: on which the girl would pout and say, "I would rather marry Tom Tusher." And because the Lord Mohun always showed an extreme gallantry to my Lady Castlewood, whom he professed to admire devotedly, one day, in answer to this old joke of her father's, Beatrix said, "I think my Lord would rather marry mamma than marry me; and is waiting till you die to ask her."

The words were said lightly and pertly by the girl one night before supper, as the family party were assembled near the great fire. The two lords, who were at cards, both gave a start; my Lady turned as red as scarlet, and bade Mistress Beatrix go to her own chamber; whereupon the girl, putting on, as her wont was, the most innocent air, said, "I am sure I meant no wrong; I am sure mamma talks a great deal more to Harry Esmond than she does to papa—and she cried when Harry went away, and she never does when papa goes



'He started up and flung down his cards '—*Page* 60

away! And last night she talked to Lord Mohun for ever so long, and sent us out of the room, and cried when we came back, and——"

"Go out of the room!" cried out my Lord Castlewood, out of all patience, and he started up and flung down his cards.

"Ask Lord Mohun what I said to him, Francis," her Ladyship said, rising up with a scared face, but yet with a great and touching dignity and candour in her look and voice. "Come away with me, Beatrix." Beatrix sprang up too; she was in tears now.

"Dearest mamma, what have I done?" she asked. "Sure I meant no harm." And she clung to her mother, and the pair went out sobbing together.

"I will tell you what your wife said to me, Frank," my Lord Mohun cried. "Parson Harry may hear it; and, as I hope for heaven, every word I say is true. Last night, with tears in her eyes, your wife implored me to play no more with you at dice or at cards, and you know best whether what she asked was not for your good."

"Of course it was, Mohun," says my Lord, in a dry hard voice. "Of course you are a model of a man: and the world knows what a saint you are."

"I am no saint, though your wife is—and I can answer for my actions as other people must for their words," said my Lord Mohun.

"My Lord, you shall!" cried the other, starting up.

"We have another little account to settle first, my Lord," says Lord Mohun. Whereupon Harry Esmond, filled with alarm for the consequences to which this disastrous dispute might lead, broke out into the most vehement expostulations with his patron and his adversary. "Gracious heavens!" he said, "my Lord, are you going to draw a sword upon your friend in your own

house ? Are the idle words of a jealous child to set friends at variance ? Has not my mistress, as much as she dared do, besought your Lordship, as the truth must be told, to break your intimacy with my Lord Mohun, and to give up the habit which may bring ruin on your family ? But for my Lord Mohun's illness, had he not left you ? "

" 'Faith, Frank, a man with a gouty toe can't run after other men's wives," broke out my Lord Mohun, who indeed was in that way, and with a laugh and a look at his swathed limb so frank and comical, that the other, dashing his fist across his forehead, was caught by that infectious good-humour, and said with his oath, " Harry, I believe thee," and so this quarrel was over, and the two gentlemen, at swords drawn but just now, dropped their points and shook hands.

Shortly afterwards the Lord Mohun took leave of Castlewood, proposing to ride to London by easy stages, and lie two nights upon the road. His host treated him with a studied and ceremonious courtesy, certainly different from my Lord's usual frank and careless demeanour ; but there was no reason to suppose that the two Lords parted otherwise than good friends, though Harry Esmond remarked that my Lord Viscount only saw his guest in company with other persons, and seemed to avoid being alone with him. Nor did he ride any distance with Lord Mohun, as his custom was with most of his friends, whom he was always eager to welcome and unwilling to lose ; but contented himself, when his Lordship's horses were announced, and their owner appeared, booted for his journey, to take a courteous leave of the ladies of Castlewood, by following the Lord Mohun downstairs to his horses, and by bowing and wishing him a good-day in the courtyard. " I shall see

you in London before very long, Mohun," my Lord said, with a smile, "when we will settle our accounts together."

"Do not let them trouble you, Frank," said the other good-naturedly, and holding out his hand, looked rather surprised at the grim and stately manner in which his host received his parting salutation; and so, followed by his people, he rode away.

Harry Esmond was witness of the departure. It was very different to my Lord's coming, for which great preparation had been made (the old house putting on its best appearance to welcome its guest), and there was a sadness and constraint about all persons that day, which filled Mr. Esmond with gloomy forebodings, for he could not but have his own apprehension that some serious quarrel was pending between the two gentlemen.

And now for several days the little company at Castlewood sat at table as of evenings: this care, though unnamed and invisible, being nevertheless present alway, in the minds of at least three persons there. My Lord was exceedingly gentle and kind. Whenever he quitted the room, his wife's eyes followed him. He behaved to her with a kind of mournful courtesy and kindness remarkable in one of his blunt ways and ordinary rough manner. He called her by her Christian name often and fondly, was very soft and gentle with the children, and being lax about church generally, he went thither and performed all the offices (down even to listening to Doctor Tusher's sermon) with great devotion.

"He paces his room all night: what is it? Henry, find out what it is," Lady Castlewood said constantly to her young dependant. "He has sent three letters to London," she said another day.

"Indeed, madam, they were to a lawyer," Harry

answered, who knew of these letters, and had seen a part of the correspondence, which related to a new loan my Lord was raising; and when the young man remonstrated with his patron, my Lord said he "was only raising money to pay off an old debt on the property which must be discharged."

Harry Esmond's vacation was just over, and, as hath been said, he was preparing to return to the University for his last term before taking his degree and entering into the Church. He had made up his mind for this office, not indeed with that reverence which becomes a man about to enter upon a duty so holy, but with a worldly spirit of acquiescence in the prudence of adopting that profession for his calling. But his reasoning was that he owed all to the family of Castlewood, and loved better to be near them than anywhere else in the world; that he might be useful to his benefactors, who had the utmost confidence in him and affection for him in return; that he might aid in bringing up the young heir of the house and acting as his governor; that he might continue to be his dear patron's and mistress's friend and adviser, who both were pleased to say that they should ever look upon him as such; and so, by making himself useful to those he loved best, he proposed to console himself for giving up of any schemes of ambition which he might have had in his own bosom. Indeed, his mistress had told him that she would not have him leave her; and whatever she commanded was will to him.

The Lady Castlewood's mind was greatly relieved in the last few days of this well-remembered holiday time, by my Lord's announcing one morning after the post had brought him letters from London, in a careless tone, that the Lord Mohun was gone to Paris, and was about to make a great journey in Europe; and though Lord

Castlewood's own gloom did not wear off, or his behaviour alter, yet this cause of anxiety being removed from his lady's mind, she began to be more hopeful and easy in her spirits, striving too, with all her heart, and by all the means of soothing in her power, to call back my Lord's cheerfulness and dissipate his moody humour.

He accounted for it himself, by saying that he was out of health; that he wanted to see his physician; that he would go to London, and consult Dr. Cheyne. It was agreed that his Lordship and Harry Esmond should make the journey as far as London together; and of a Monday morning, the 11th of October, in the year 1700, they set forwards towards London on horseback.

The result of this visit to London was a duel between the Lord Mohun, who had returned from Paris, and the Lord Castlewood, despite Henry Esmond's effort to avert it. Esmond's dear master was mortally wounded, and Esmond himself received a wound in the right hand.

Before he died the Lord Castlewood made a written confession to a priest that Henry Esmond was the rightful viscount. Previous to his marriage to Isabel Esmond, Thomas, Lord Castlewood, the late viscount, had married abroad a French lady, dead long years since, and Henry Esmond was their son. Wounded at the Battle of the Boyne, Esmond's father had told the truth to the priest at whose house he died, but this priest did not think fit to divulge the story until later, when he met with Father Holt. And it was from Father Holt that Francis Lord Castlewood had learned the story but two years since.

The priest gave the confession to Esmond. He looked at it. It swam before his eyes. There was a fire in the room. He went to the fire and threw the paper into it.

"'Tis only a confession," said the young man. He leaned his head against the mantelpiece: a burst of tears came to his eyes. "Let us go to my Lord," said he. And accordingly they went into the next chamber, where Lord Castlewood lay.

"My Lord Viscount," says the priest, "Mr. Esmond hath burned the paper."

"My dearest master!" Esmond said, kneeling down, and taking his hand and kissing it.

My Lord Viscount sprang up in his bed, and flung his arms round Esmond. "God bl—bless"——was all he said. My dearest Lord was no more. He was gone with a blessing on his lips, and love and repentance and kindness in his manly heart.

After my Lord's death, Henry was visited in prison, where he lay on a charge connected with the duel, by the Lady Castlewood. Ignorant of the great sacrifice which Esmond was making for her and her children my Lady most cruelly and bitterly upbraided him.

"My husband lies in his blood, and you were by and you let him die, Henry," she cried in the wildness of her grief.

Later, she informed Esmond that she never wished to see him more. Castlewood was closed against him, and, old Dr. Tusher dying during his imprisonment, my Lady appointed Tom Tusher to the vacant living.

It seemed to Esmond that he lived years in that prison, and was changed and aged when he came out of it. O dark months of grief and rage! of wrong and cruel endurance! He is old now who recalls you. Long ago he has forgiven and blest the soft hand that wounded him: but the mark is there—no time, tears, caresses, or repentance can obliterate the scar.

Half frantic with grief at the injustice done him and

contrasting it with a thousand soft recollections of love and confidence gone by, that made his present misery inexpressibly more bitter, the poor wretch passed many a lonely day and wakeful night in a kind of powerless despair and rage against his iniquitous fortune. It was the softest hand that struck him, the gentlest and most compassionate nature that persecuted him.

CHAPTER IX

I TAKE THE QUEEN'S PAY IN QUIN'S REGIMENT

The Dowager Lady Castlewood knew the secret of Esmond's birth. She now gave the young gentleman her protection and provided him with money; and it was to her house in Chelsey that he repaired after lying in Newgate prison for some months.

She introduced Esmond to her company, of which she entertained a good deal—of the adherents of King James of course—and a great deal of loud intriguing took place over her card-tables. She presented Mr. Esmond as her kinsman to many persons of honour; she supplied him not illiberally with money. But he had made up his mind to continue at no woman's apron-strings longer; and perhaps had cast about how he should distinguish himself, and make himself a name. A discontent with his former bookish life and quietude—a bitter feeling of revolt at that slavery in which he had chosen to confine himself for the sake of those whose hardness towards him made his heart bleed,—a restless wish to see men and the world,—led him to think of the military profession: at any rate he desired to see a few campaigns, and accordingly he pressed his new patroness to get him a pair of colours; and one day

had the honour of finding himself appointed an ensign in Colonel Quin's regiment of Fusileers on the Irish establishment.

Mr. Esmond's commission was scarce three weeks old when that accident befell King William which ended the life of the greatest, the wisest, the bravest, and most clement sovereign whom England ever knew. 'Twas the fashion of the hostile party to assail this great prince's reputation during his life; but the joy which they and all his enemies in Europe showed at his death, is a proof of the terror in which they held him. Young as Esmond was, he was wise enough (and generous enough too, let it be said) to scorn that indecency of gratulation which broke out among the followers of King James in London, upon the death of this illustrious prince, this invincible warrior, this wise and moderate statesman.

When the Princess Anne succeeded, the wearied nation was glad enough to cry a truce from all these wars, controversies, and conspiracies, and to accept in the person of a Princess of the blood-royal, a compromise between the parties into which the country was divided. The people of England, always liking that their Princes should be attached to their own families, were pleased to think the Princess was faithful to hers; and up to the very last day and hour of her reign, and but for that fatality which he inherited from his fathers along with their claims to the English crown, King James the Third might have worn it. But he neither knew how to wait an opportunity, nor to use it when he had it; he was venturesome when he ought to have been cautious, and cautious when he ought to have dared everything.

The King dead then, the Princess Anne (ugly Anne Hyde's daughter, our Dowager at Chelsey called her) was proclaimed by trumpeting heralds all over the town

from Westminster to Ludgate Hill, amidst immense jubilations of the people.

Next week my Lord Marlborough was promoted to the Garter, and to be Captain-General of Her Majesty's forces at home and abroad. This appointment only inflamed the Dowager's rage, or, as she thought it, her fidelity to her rightful sovereign.

"The Princess is but a puppet in the hands of that fury of a woman, who comes into my drawing-room and insults me to my face. What can come to a country that is given over to such a woman?" says the Dowager. "As for that double-faced traitor, my Lord Marlborough, he has betrayed every man and every woman with whom he had to deal, except his horrid wife, who makes him tremble. 'Tis all over with the country when it has got into the clutches of such wretches as these."

Esmond's old kinswoman saluted the new powers in this way; but some good fortune at last occurred to a family which stood in great need of it, by the advancement of these famous personages, who benefited humbler people that had the luck of being in their favour. Before Mr. Esmond left England in the month of August, and being then at Portsmouth, where he had joined his regiment, and was busy at drill, learning the practice and mysteries of the musket and pike, he heard that a pension had been got for his late beloved mistress, and that the young Mistress Beatrix was also to be taken into Court. So much good, at least, had come of the poor widow's visit to London, not revenge upon her husband's enemies, but reconcilement to old friends, who pitied, and seemed inclined to serve her.

The appointment to his ensigncy, and the preparations necessary for the campaign, presently gave the

young gentleman many matters to think of. His new patroness treated him very kindly and liberally; she promised to make interest and pay money, too, to get him a company speedily; she bade him procure a handsome outfit, both of clothes and of arms, and was pleased to admire him when he made his first appearance in his laced scarlet coat, and to permit him to salute her on the occasion of this interesting investiture. "Red," says she, tossing up her old head, "hath always been the colour worn by the Esmonds." And so her Ladyship wore it on her cheeks very faithfully to the last. She would have him be dressed, she said, as became his father's son, and paid cheerfully for his five-pound beaver, his black buckled periwig, and his fine holland shirts, and his swords, and his pistols mounted with silver.

So Esmond arrived at his regiment with a better equipage than most young officers could afford. He was older than most of his seniors, and had a further advantage which belonged but to very few of the army gentlemen in his day—many of whom could do little more than write their names—that he had read much, both at home and at the University, was master of two or three languages, and had that further education which neither books nor years will give, but which some men get from the silent teaching of Adversity. She is a great schoolmistress, as many a poor fellow knows, that hath held his hand out to her ferule, and whimpered over his lesson before her awful chair.

On the 1st day of July, 1702, a great fleet, of a hundred and fifty sail, set sail from Spithead, under the command of Admiral Shovell, having on board 12,000 troops, with his Grace the Duke of Ormond as the Capt.-General of the expedition. One of these 12,000 heroes having never

been to sea before, or, at least, only once in his infancy, when he made the voyage to England from that unknown country where he was born—one of those 12,000—the junior ensign of Colonel Quin's regiment of Fusileers — was in a quite unheroic state of corporal prostration a few hours after sailing ; and an enemy, had he boarded the ship, would have had easy work of him. From Portsmouth we put into Plymouth, and took in fresh reinforcements. We were off Finisterre on the 31st of July, so Esmond's table-book informs him : and on the 8th of August made the rock of Lisbon. By this time the ensign was grown as bold as an admiral, and a week afterwards had the fortune to be under fire for the first time—and under water too—his boat being swamped in the surf at Toros Bay, where the troops landed. The ducking of his new coat was all the harm the young soldier got in this expedition, for, indeed, the Spaniards made no stand before our troops, and were not in strength to do so.

But the campaign, if not very glorious, was very pleasant. New sights of nature, by sea and land—a life of action, beginning now for the first time—occupied and excited the young man. The many accidents and the routine of shipboard—the military duty—the new acquaintances, both of his comrades in arms and the officers of the fleet—served to cheer and occupy his mind, and waken it out of that selfish depression into which his late unhappy fortunes had plunged him. He felt as if the ocean separated him from his past care, and welcomed the new era of life which was dawning for him.

Our fleet came at length in view of Cadiz but failed to take it, and after the pillage and plunder of a small town, and an assault upon a fort or two, the troops all

took shipping, and finished their expedition, at any rate, more brilliantly than it had begun. Hearing that the French fleet with a great treasure was in Vigo Bay, our Admirals, Rooke and Hopson, pursued the enemy thither; the troops landed and carried the forts that protected the bay, Hopson passing the boom first on board his ship the *Torbay*, and the rest of the ships, English and Dutch, following him. Twenty ships were burned or taken in the port of Redondilla, and a vast deal more plunder than was ever accounted for.

But though Esmond, for his part, got no share of this booty, one great prize which he had out of the campaign was that excitement of action and change of scene, which shook off a great deal of his previous melancholy. He learnt at any rate to bear his fate cheerfully. He brought back a browned face, a heart resolute enough, and a little pleasant store of knowledge and observation from that expedition, which was over with the autumn, when the troops were back in England again. He had leave to go to London, to see if he could push his fortunes any way further, and found himself once more in his dowager aunt's comfortable quarters at Chelsey, and in greater favour than ever with the old lady. He propitiated her with a present of a comb, a fan, and a black mantle, such as the ladies of Cadiz wear, and which my Lady Viscountess pronounced became her style of beauty mightily. My Lady made feasts for him, introduced him to more company, and pushed his fortunes with such enthusiasm and success, that she got a promise of a company for him through the Lady Marlborough's interest, who was graciously pleased to accept of a diamond worth a couple of hundred guineas, which Mr. Esmond was enabled to present to her Ladyship through his aunt's bounty, and who

promised that she would take charge of Esmond's fortune. He had the honour to make his appearance at the Queen's drawing-room occasionally, and to frequent my Lord Marlborough's levees. The great man received the young one with very especial favour, so Esmond's comrades said, and deigned to say that he had received the best reports of Mr. Esmond, both for courage and ability, whereon you may be sure the young gentleman made a profound bow, and expressed himself eager to serve under the most distinguished captain in the world.

Whilst his business was going on thus prosperously, Esmond had his share of pleasure too, and made his appearance along with other young gentlemen at the coffee-houses, the theatres, and the Mall. He longed to hear of his dear mistress and her family: many a time, in the midst of the gaieties and pleasures of the town, his heart fondly reverted to them; and often, as the young fellows of his society were making merry at the tavern, and calling toasts (as the fashion of that day was) over their wine, Esmond thought of persons—of two fair women, whom he had been used to adore almost, and emptied his glass with a sigh.

One night, instead of going to dinner then at the "Rose," Mr. Esmond bade his servant pack a portmanteau and get horses, and was at Farnham, half-way on the road to Walcote, thirty miles off, before his comrades had got to their supper after the play. He bade his man give no hint to my Lady Dowager's household of the expedition on which he was going: and as Chelsey was distant from London, the roads bad, and infested by footpads, and Esmond often in the habit, when engaged in a party of pleasure, of lying at a friend's lodging in town, there was no need that his old aunt should be disturbed at his absence.

My Lord's little house of Walcote—which he inhabited before he took his title and occupied the house of Castlewood—lies about a mile from Winchester, and his widow had returned to Walcote after my Lord's death as a place always dear to her, and where her earliest and happiest days had been spent, cheerfuller than Castlewood, which was too large for her straightened means, and giving her, too, the protection of the ex-Dean her father. The young Viscount had a year's schooling at the famous college there, with Mr. Tusher as his governor. So much news of them Mr. Esmond had had during the past year from the old Viscountess, his own father's widow; from the young one there had never been a word.

Twice or thrice in his benefactor's lifetime, Esmond had been to Walcote; and now, taking but a couple of hours' rest only at the inn on the road, he was up again long before daybreak, and made such good speed that he was at Walcote by two o'clock of the day. He rode to the end of the village, where he alighted and sent a man thence to Mr. Tusher, with a message that a gentleman from London would speak with him on urgent business. The messenger came back to say the Doctor was in town, most likely at prayers in the Cathedral. My Lady Viscountess was there, too; she always went to Cathedral prayers every day.

The horses belonged to the post-house at Winchester. Esmond mounted again and rode on to the "George"; whence he walked, leaving his grumbling domestic at last happy with a dinner, straight to the Cathedral. The organ was playing: the winter's day was already growing grey, as he passed under the street-arch into the Cathedral yard, and made his way into the ancient solemn edifice.

CHAPTER X

THE TWENTY-NINTH DECEMBER

There was scarce a score of persons in the Cathedral besides the Dean and some of his clergy, and the choristers, young and old, that performed the beautiful evening prayer. But Mr. Tusher was one of the officiants, and read from the eagle in an authoritative voice, and a great black periwig ; and in the stalls, still in her black widow's hood, sat Esmond's dear mistress, her son by her side, very much grown, and indeed a noble-looking youth, with his mother's eyes, and his father's curling brown hair. On this day there was not much chance of seeing the beauty of my young Lord's countenance ; for the truth is, he kept his eyes shut for the most part, and, the anthem being rather long, was asleep.

But the music ceasing, my Lord woke up, looking about him, and his eyes lighting on Mr. Esmond, who was sitting opposite him, gazing with no small tenderness and melancholy upon two persons who had so much of his heart for so many years, Lord Castlewood, with a start, pulled his mother's sleeve and said, " Look, mother ! " so loud, that Esmond could hear on the other side of the church, and the old Dean on his throned stall. Lady Castlewood looked for an instant as her son bade her, and held up a warning finger to Frank. Esmond felt his whole face flush, and his heart throbbing, as that dear lady beheld him once more. The rest of the prayers were speedily over ; Mr. Esmond did not hear them ; nor did his mistress, very likely, whose hood went more closely over her face, and who never lifted her head again until the service was over, the blessing given, and Mr. Dean, and his procession of ecclesiastics, out of the inner chapel.

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and running up to Esmond, eagerly embraced him. "My dearest, dearest old Harry!" he said, "are you come back? Have you been to the wars? You'll take me when you go again? Why didn't you write to us? Come to mother!"

Mr. Esmond could hardly say more than a "God bless you, my boy!" for his heart was very full and grateful at all this tenderness on the lad's part: and he was as much moved at seeing Frank as he was fearful about that other interview which was now to take place: for he knew not if the widow would reject him as she had done so cruelly a year ago.

"It was kind of you to come back to us, Henry," Lady Esmond said. "I thought you might come."

"We read of the fleet coming to Portsmouth. Why did you not come from Portsmouth?" Frank asked, or my Lord Viscount, as he now must be called.

Esmond had thought of that too. He would have given one of his eyes so that he might see his dear friends again once more; but believing that his mistress had forbidden him her house, he had obeyed her, and remained at a distance.

"You had but to ask, and you knew I would be here," he said.

She gave him her hand, her little fair hand; there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was passed.

"And Harry's coming home to supper. Huzzay! huzzay!" cries my Lord. "Mother, I shall run home and bid Beatrix put her ribbons on. Beatrix is a maid of honour, Harry. Such a fine set-up minx!"

"Your heart was never in the Church, Harry," the widow said, in her low sweet tone, as they walked away

together. (Now, it seemed they had never been parted, and again, as if they had been ages asunder.) "I always thought you had no vocation that way; and that 'twas a pity to shut you out from the world. You would but have pined and chafed at Castlewood: and 'tis better you should make a name for yourself. I often said so to my dear Lord. How he loved you! 'Twas my Lord that made you stay with us."

"I asked no better than to stay near you always," said Mr. Esmond.

"But to go was best, Harry. When the world cannot give peace, you will know where to find it; but one of your strong imagination and eager desires must try the world first before he tires of it. 'Twas not to be thought of, or if it once was, it was only by my selfishness, that you should remain as chaplain to a country gentleman and tutor to a little boy. You are of the blood of the Esmonds, kinsman; and that was always wild in youth. Look at Francis. He is but fifteen, and I scarce can keep him in my nest. His talk is all of war and pleasure, and he longs to serve in the next campaign. Perhaps he and the young Lord Churchill shall go the next. Lord Marlborough has been good to us. You know how kind they were in my misfortune. 'Tis through my Lady Marlborough's goodness that Beatrix hath her place at Court; and Frank is under my Lord Chamberlain. And the dowager lady has promised to provide for you—has she not?"

Esmond said, "Yes. As far as present favour went, Lady Castlewood was very good to him. And should her mind change," he added gaily, "as ladies' minds will, I am strong enough to bear my own burden, and make my way somehow. Not by the sword very likely. Thousands have a better genius for that than I, but

there are many ways in which a young man of good parts and education can get on in the world; and I am pretty sure, one way or other, of promotion." Indeed, he had found patrons already in the army, and amongst persons very able to serve him too; and told his mistress of the flattering aspect of fortune. They walked as though they had never been parted, slowly, with the grey twilight closing round them.

"And now we are drawing near to home," she continued, "I knew you would come, Harry, if—if it was but to forgive me for having spoken unjustly to you after that horrid—horrid misfortune. I was half frantic with grief then when I saw you. And I know now—they have told me. That wretch, whose name I can never mention, even has said it: how you tried to avert the quarrel, and would have taken it on yourself, my poor child: but it was God's will that I should be punished, and that my dear Lord should fall."

"He gave me his blessing on his death-bed," Esmond said. "Thank God for that legacy!"

"Amen, amen! dear Henry," said the lady, pressing his arm. "I knew it. Mr. Atterbury, of St. Bride's, who was called to him, told me so. And I thanked God, too, and in my prayers ever since remembered it."

As they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome; the supper-table was spread in the oak-parlour; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domestics were on the look-out at the porch—the old housekeeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my lord's livery of tawny and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. "Welcome!" was

all she said, as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet rosy smile blushed on her face; Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming. Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty—she took a hand of her son who was in the hall waiting his mother—she did not quit Esmond's arm.

"Welcome, Harry!" my young lord echoed after her. "Here, we are all come to say so. Here's Jack Lockwood. He'll make a famous grenadier, Jack; and so shall I; we'll both 'list under you, Cousin. As soon as I am seventeen, I go to the army—every gentleman goes to the army. Look! who comes here—ho, ho!" He burst into a laugh. "'Tis Mistress Trix, with a new ribbon; I knew she would put one on as soon as she heard a captain was coming to supper."

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House: in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers: and, from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix —the light falling indeed upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height, and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty, that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible: and that night the great Duke was at the playhouse after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty: that is, her eyes, hair, and



'She came tripping down the stair to greet Esmond'—*Page* 80

eyebrows and eyelashes were dark : her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders ; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine : except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic—there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

" She hath put on her scarlet stockings and white shoes," says my Lord, still laughing. " Oh my fine mistress ! is this the way you set your cap at the Captain ? " She approached, shining smiles upon Esmond, who could look at nothing but her eyes. She advanced holding forward her head, as if she would have him kiss her as he used to do when she was a child.

" Stop," she said. " I am grown too big ! Welcome, Cousin Harry ! " and she made him an arch curtsey, sweeping down to the ground almost, with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile. And if she did not kiss him, she gave him both her hands, and then took one of his in both hands, and said, " Oh, Harry, we're so, *so* glad you're come ! "

"There are woodcocks for supper," says my Lord. "Huzzay! It was such a hungry sermon."

"And it is the 29th of December: and our Harry has come home."

"Huzzay!" again says my Lord; and my dear lady's lips looked as if they were trembling with a prayer. She would have Harry lead in Beatrix to the supper-room, going herself with my young Lord Viscount: and to this party came Tom Tusher directly, whom four at least out of the company of five wished away. Away he went, however, as soon as the sweetmeats were put down, and then, by the great crackling fire, his mistress or Beatrix, with her blushing graces, filling his glass for him, Harry told the story of his campaign, and passed the most delightful night his life had ever known. The sun was up long ere he was, so deep, sweet, and refreshing was his slumber. He woke as if angels had been watching at his bed all night. I dare say one that was as pure and loving as an angel had blessed his sleep with her prayers.

Next morning the Chaplain read prayers to the little household at Walcote, as the custom was; Esmond thought Mistress Beatrix did not listen to Tusher's exhortation much: her eyes were wandering everywhere during the service, at least whenever he looked up he met them. Perhaps he also was not very attentive to his Reverence the Chaplain. "This might have been my life," he was thinking; "this might have been my duty from now till old age. Well, were it not a pleasant one to be with these dear friends and part from 'em no more? Until —until the destined lover comes and takes away pretty Beatrix"—and the best part of Tom Tusher's exposition, which may have been very learned and eloquent, was quite lost to poor Harry by this vision of the destined lover, who put the preacher out.

The second day after Esmond's coming to Walcote, Tom Tusher had leave to take a holiday, and went off in his very best gown and bands to court a young woman whom his Reverence desired to marry. He rode away leaving Esmond to the society of his dear mistress and her daughter, and with his young lord for a companion, who was charmed, not only to see an old friend, but to have the tutor and his Latin books put out of the way.

The boy talked of things and people, and not a little about himself, in his frank artless way. 'Twas easy to see that he and his sister had the better of their fond mother, for the first place in whose affections, though they fought constantly, and though the kind lady persisted that she loved both equally, 'twas not difficult to understand that Frank was his mother's darling and favourite. He ruled the whole household (always excepting rebellious Beatrix) not less now than when he was a child marshalling the village boys in playing at soldiers, and caning them lustily too, like the sturdiest corporal. As for Tom Tusher, his Reverence treated the young lord with that politeness and deference which he always showed for a great man, whatever his age or his stature was. Indeed, with respect to this young one, it was impossible not to love him, so frank and winning were his manners, his beauty, his gaiety, the ring of his laughter, and the delightful tone of his voice. Wherever he went, he charmed and domineered. I think his old grandfather the Dean, and the grim old housekeeper, Mrs. Pincot, were as much his slaves as his mother was: and as for Esmond, he found himself presently submitting to a certain fascination the boy had, and slaving it like the rest of the family. The pleasure which he had in Frank's mere company and converse exceeded that which he ever enjoyed in the society of any other man,

however delightful in talk, or famous for wit. His presence brought sunshine into a room, his laugh, his prattle, his noble beauty and brightness of look cheered and charmed indescribably. At the least tale of sorrow, his hands were in his purse, and he was eager with sympathy and bounty. I remember at Ramillies, when he was hit and fell, a great big red-haired Scotch sergeant flung his halbert down, burst out a-crying like a woman, seizing him up as if he had been an infant, and carrying him out of the fire. This brother and sister were the most beautiful couple ever seen ; though after he winged away from the maternal nest this pair were seldom together.

Three days later as Esmond rode back to town, his servant, coming up to him, informed him, with a grin, that Mistress Beatrix had brought out a new gown and blue stockings for that day's dinner, in which she intended to appear, and had flown into a rage and given her maid a slap on the face soon after she heard he was going away. Esmond peremptorily ordered him to fall back and be silent, and rode on with thoughts enough of his own to occupy him—some sad ones, some inexpressibly dear and pleasant.

His mistress, from whom he had been a year separated, was his dearest mistress again. The family from which he had been parted, and which he loved with the fondest devotion, was his family once more. If Beatrix's beauty shone upon him, it was with a friendly lustre, and he could regard it with much such a delight as he brought away after seeing the beautiful pictures of the smiling Madonnas in the convent at Cadiz, when he was dispatched thither with a flag ; and as for his mistress, 'twas difficult to say with what a feeling he regarded her. 'Twas happiness to have seen her ; 'twas no great pang

to part; a filial tenderness, a love that was at once respect and protection, filled his mind as he thought of her; and near her or far from her, and from that day until now, and from now until death is past, and beyond it, he prays that sacred flame may ever burn.

CHAPTER XI

BROTHER AND SISTER

Esmond did not see his dear mistress again till after the campaign of 1704. During that time, her good father, the old Dean, quitted this life, firm in his principles to the very last, and enjoining his family always to remember that the Queen's brother, King James the Third, was their rightful sovereign. He made a very edifying end, as his daughter told Esmond, and not a little to her surprise, after his death (for he had lived always very poorly) my Lady found that her father had left no less a sum than £3,000 behind him, which he bequeathed to her.

With this little fortune Lady Castlewood was enabled, when her daughter's turn at Court came, to come to London, where she took a small genteel house at Kensington, in the neighbourhood of the Court, bringing her children with her, and here it was that Esmond found his friends.

As for the young lord, his University career had ended rather abruptly. Honest Tusher, his governor, had found my young gentleman quite ungovernable. My Lord worried his life away with tricks; and broke out, as home-bred lads will, into a hundred youthful extravagances, so that Doctor Bentley, the new Master of Trinity, thought fit to write to the Viscountess Castlewood, my Lord's mother, and beg her to remove the

young gentleman from a College where he declined to learn, and where he only did harm by his riotous example. My Lady acquiesced with a sigh, knowing, perhaps, that her refusal would be of no avail to the young lord's desire for a military life. She would have liked him to be in Mr. Esmond's regiment, hoping that Harry might act as a guardian and adviser to his wayward young kinsman; but my young lord would hear of nothing but the Guards, and a commission was got for him in the Duke of Ormond's regiment; so Esmond found my Lord ensign and lieutenant when he returned from Germany after the Blenheim campaign.

The effect produced by both Lady Castlewood's children when they appeared in public was extraordinary, and the whole town speedily rang with their fame: such a beautiful couple, it was declared, never had been seen; the young maid of honour was toasted at every table and tavern, and as for my young lord, his good looks were even more admired than his sister's. You may be sure that he accepted very complacently the town's opinion of him, and acquiesced with that frankness and charming good-humour he always showed in the idea that he was the prettiest fellow in all London.

The old Dowager at Chelsey, though she could never be got to acknowledge that Mistress Beatrix was any beauty at all (in which opinion, as it may be imagined, a vast number of the ladies agreed with her), yet, on the very first sight of young Castlewood, she owned she fell in love with him; and Henry Esmond, on his return to Chelsey, found himself quite superseded in her favour by her younger kinsman. "How had the dear young fellow got such beauty?" she asked. "Not from his father—certainly not from his mother. How had he come by such noble manners, and the perfect *bel air?* That

countrified Walcote widow could never have taught him." Esmond had his own opinion about the countrified Walcote widow, who had a quiet grace and serene kindness, that had always seemed to him the perfection of good breeding, though he did not try to argue this point with his aunt. But he could agree in most of the praises which the enraptured old Dowager bestowed on my Lord Viscount, than whom he never beheld a more fascinating and charming gentleman.

The Mistress of the Robes, the greatest lady in England after the Queen, or even before her Majesty, as the world said, though she never could be got to say a civil word to Beatrix, whom she had promoted to her place as maid of honour, took her brother into instant favour. When young Castlewood, in his new uniform, and looking like a prince out of a fairy tale, went to pay his duty to her Grace, she looked at him for a minute in silence, the young man blushing and in confusion before her, then fairly burst out a-crying, and kissed him before her daughters and company. "He was my boy's friend," she said, through her sobs. "My Blandford might have been like him." And everybody saw, after this mark of the Duchess's favour, that my young Lord's promotion was secure, and people crowded round the favourite's favourite, who became vainer and gayer, and more good-humoured than ever.

Meanwhile Madame Beatrix was making her conquests on her own side, and amongst them was one poor gentleman, who had been shot by her young eyes two years before. But when he returned after Blenheim, the young lady of sixteen, who had appeared the most beautiful object his eyes had ever looked on two years back, was now advanced to a perfect ripeness and perfection of beauty, such as instantly enthralled the poor wretch.

Then he had seen her but for two days, and fled; now he beheld her day after day, and when she was at Court watched after her; when she was at home, made one of the family party; when she went abroad, rode after her mother's chariot; when she appeared in public places, was in the box near her, or in the pit looking at her.

This passion did not escape—how should it?—the clear eyes of Esmond's mistress: he told her all. Day after day he would seek his dear mistress, pour insane hopes, supplications, rhapsodies, raptures, into her ear. She listened, smiled, consoled, with untiring pity and sweetness. Esmond was the eldest of her children, so she was pleased to say; and as for her kindness, who ever had or would look for aught else from one who was an angel of goodness and pity? After what has been said, 'tis needless almost to add that poor Esmond's suit was unsuccessful. What was a penniless lieutenant to do, when some of the greatest in the land were in the field? Beatrix thought no more of him than of the lacquey that followed her chair.

CHAPTER XII.

I COME TO THE END OF MY BATTLES AND BRUISES.

Mistress Beatrix Esmond had been a dozen times on the point of making great matches, so the Court scandal said; but for his part Esmond never would believe the stories against her; and came back, after three years' absence from her at the wars, still hopeful, still kneeling, with his heart in his hand for the young lady to take. We were now got to 1709. She was near twenty-two years old, and three years at Court and without a husband.

"'Tis not for want of being asked," Lady Castlewood

said, looking into Esmond's heart, as she could, with that perceptiveness affection gives. "But she will make no mean match, Harry; she will not marry as I would have her; the person whom I should like to call my son, and Henry Esmond knows who that is, is best served by my not pressing his claim. Beatrix is so wilful that, what I would urge on her, she would be sure to resist. The man who would marry her will not be happy with her, unless he be a great person, and can put her in a great position. Beatrix loves admiration more than love; and longs, beyond all things, for command.

"She likes your fame well enough"—Esmond had been advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel—"and she likes your person. She says you have wit, and fire, and good breeding, and are more natural than the fine gentlemen of the Court. But this is not enough. She wants a commander-in-chief, and not a colonel. Were a duke to ask her, she would leave an earl whom she had promised. I told you so before. I know not how my poor girl is so worldly."

"Well," says Esmond, "a man can but give his best and his all. She has that from me. What little reputation I have won, I swear I cared for it because I thought Beatrix would be pleased with it. What care I to be a colonel, or a general? Think you 'twill matter a few score years hence, what our foolish honours to-day are? I would have had a little fame, that she might wear it in her hat. If I had anything better, I would endow her with it. If she wants my life, I would give it her. If she marries another, I will say God bless him. I make no boast, nor no complaint. I think my fidelity is folly perhaps. But so it is. I cannot help myself. I love her."

The feverish desire to gain a little reputation which

Esmond had had, left him now perhaps that he had attained some portion of his wish, and he desired to quit the army. The kind general coincided in his wish of retirement and helped in the transfer of his commission, which brought a pretty sum into his pocket. But when the Commander-in-Chief came home, and appointed Lieutenant-General Webb to the command of a division of the army in Flanders, the Lieutenant-General prayed Colonel Esmond so urgently to be his aide-de-camp and military secretary, that Esmond could not resist his kind patron's entreaties, and again took the field, not attached to any regiment, but under Webb's orders.

What must have been the continued agonies of fears and apprehensions which racked the gentle breasts of wives and matrons in those dreadful days, when every *Gazette* brought accounts of deaths and battles, and when, the present anxiety over, and the beloved person escaped, the doubt still remained that a battle might be fought, possibly, of which the next Flanders letter would bring the account; so they, the poor tender creatures, had to go on sickening and trembling through the whole campaign. Whatever these terrors were on the part of Esmond's mistress (and that tenderest of women must have felt them most keenly for both her sons, as she called them), she never allowed them outwardly to appear, but hid her apprehension as she did her charities and devotion.

My Lady of Chelsey, when Esmond announced to her Ladyship that he proposed to make the ensuing campaign, took leave of him with perfect alacrity, and was down to piquet with her gentlewoman before he had well quitted the room on his last visit. The game of life was pretty nearly over for the good lady, and three months afterwards she took to her bed, where she

flickered out without any pain, so the Abbé Gauthier wrote over to Mr. Esmond, then with his General on the frontier of France. The Lady Castlewood was with her at her ending, and had written too, but these letters must have been taken by a privateer in the packet that brought them ; for Esmond knew nothing of their contents until his return to England.

The dowager lady had left everything to Colonel Esmond. But her fortune was not much, for it had never been large, and the honest Viscountess had wisely sunk most of the money she had upon an annuity which terminated with her life. However, there was the house and furniture, plate and pictures at Chelsey, and a sum of money lying at her merchant's, which altogether would realise a sum of near three hundred pounds per annum, so that Mr. Esmond found himself, if not rich, at least easy for life. Likewise there were the famous diamonds which had been said to be worth fabulous sums, though the goldsmith pronounced they would fetch no more than four thousand pounds. These diamonds, however, Colonel Esmond reserved, having a special use for them ; but the Chelsey house, plate, goods, etc., with the exception of a few articles which he kept back, were sold by his orders ; and the sums resulting from the sale invested in the public securities so as to realise the aforesaid annual income of three hundred pounds.

Having now something to leave, he made a will and dispatched it home. The army was now in presence of the enemy, and a great battle expected every day. 'Twas known that the General-in-Chief was in disgrace, and the parties at home strong against him, and there was no stroke this great and resolute player would not venture to recall his fortune when it seemed desperate.

Frank Castlewood was with Colonel Esmond, his General having gladly taken the young nobleman on to his staff, and 'tis needless to say that Colonel Esmond had left every penny of his little fortune to this boy.

The gazetteers and writers, both of the French and English side, have given accounts sufficient of that fierce battle of Malplaquet, which was the last and the hardest earned of the victories of the great Duke of Marlborough. In that tremendous combat near upon two hundred and fifty thousand men were engaged, more than thirty thousand of whom were slain or wounded (the Allies lost twice as many men as they killed of the French, whom they conquered). Esmond and Frank Castlewood both escaped without hurt, though the division which our General commanded suffered even more than any other.

We drank my Lord Castlewood's health and majority, the 25th of September, the army being then before Mons; and here Colonel Esmond was not so fortunate as he had been in actions much more dangerous, and was hit by a spent ball just above the place where a former wound was, which caused the old wound to open again, and, in a word, brought him near to death's door. The kind lad, his kinsman, attended his elder comrade with a very praiseworthy affectionateness and care until he was pronounced out of danger by the doctors, when Frank went off, and passed the winter at Bruxelles. Very few lads would have given up their pleasures so long and so gaily as Frank did; his cheerful prattle soothed many long days of Esmond's pain and languor. Frank was supposed to be still at his kinsman's bedside for a month after he had left it, for letters came from his mother at home full of thanks to the younger gentleman for his care of his elder brother (so it pleased Esmond's mistress now affectionately to style him); nor was Mr. Esmond

in a hurry to undeceive her, when the good young fellow was gone for his Christmas holiday.

Esmond quitted the army almost immediately after this, following his General home; and, indeed, being advised to travel in the fine weather and attempt to take no further part in the campaign.

CHAPTER XIII

I GO HOME

While he was waiting for a packet at Ostend, Esmond had a letter from his young kinsman Castlewood at Bruxelles, which informed him that the latter had married a Roman Catholic lady, and asking him to convey the intelligence to Lady Castlewood. 'Twas a difficult embassy; and the Colonel felt not a little tremor as he neared the capital.

He reached his inn late, and sent a messenger to Kensington to announce his arrival and visit the next morning. The messenger brought back news that the Court was at Windsor, and the fair Beatrix absent and engaged in her duties there. Only Esmond's mistress remained in her house at Kensington. She appeared in Court but once in the year; Beatrix was quite the mistress and ruler of the little mansion, inviting the company thither, and engaging in every conceivable frolic of town pleasure; whilst her mother, acting as the young lady's protectress and elder sister, pursued her own path, which was quite modest and secluded.

As soon as ever Esmond was dressed (and he had been awake long before the town), he took a coach for Kensington, and reached it so early that he met his dear mistress coming home from morning prayers. She carried her prayer-book, never allowing a footman to

bear it, as everybody else did; and it was by this simple sign Esmond knew what her occupation had been. He called to the coachman to stop, and jumped out as she looked towards him. She wore her hood as usual, and she turned quite pale when she saw him.

With a sweet sad smile she took his hand and kissed it.

"How ill you have been: how weak you look, my dear Henry!" she said.

'Tis certain the Colonel did look like a ghost, except that ghosts do not look very happy, 'tis said. Esmond always felt so on returning to her after absence, indeed whenever he looked in her sweet kind face.

"I am come back to be nursed by my family," says he. "If Frank had not taken care of me after my wound, very likely I should have gone altogether."

"Poor Frank, good Frank!" says his mother. "You'll always be kind to him, my Lord," she went on. "The poor child never knew he was doing you a wrong."

"My Lord!" cries out Colonel Esmond. "What do you mean, dear lady?"

"I am no lady," says she; "I am Rachel Esmond, Francis Esmond's widow, my Lord. I cannot bear that title. Would we never had taken it from him who has it now! But we did all in our power, Henry; we did all in our power; and my Lord and I—that is——"

"Who told you this tale, dearest lady?" asked the Colonel.

"Have you not had the letter I writ to you? I writ to you at Mons directly I heard it," says Lady Esmond.

"And from whom?" again asked Colonel Esmond—and his mistress then told him that on her deathbed the Dowager Countess, sending for her, had presented her with this dismal secret as a legacy. "'Twas very

malicious of the Dowager," Lady Esmond said. "to have had it so long, and to have kept the truth from me." "Cousin Rachel," she said—and Esmond's mistress could not forbear smiling as she told the story—"Cousin Rachel," cries the Dowager, "I have sent for you, as the doctors say I may go off any day in this dysentery; and to ease my conscience of a great load that has been on it. You always have been a poor creature, and unfit for great honour, and what I have to say won't, therefore, affect you so much. You must know, Cousin Rachel, that I have left my house, plate, and furniture, three thousand pounds in money, and my diamonds that my late revered Saint and Sovereign, King James, presented me with, to my Lord Viscount Castlewood."

"To my Frank?" says Lady Castlewood: "I was in hopes"——

"To Viscount Castlewood, my dear; Viscount Castlewood and Baron Esmond of Shandon in the Kingdom of Ireland, Earl and Marquis of Esmond under patent of His Majesty King James the Second, conferred upon my husband the late Marquis—for I am Marchioness of Esmond before God and man."

"And have you left poor Harry nothing, dear Marchioness?" asks Lady Castlewood (she hath told me the story completely since with her arch way; the most charming any woman ever had: and I have set down the narrative here at length, so as to have done with it). "And have you left poor Harry nothing?"

"Poor Harry!" says the old lady. "So you want something left to poor Harry: he,—he (reach me the drops, Cousin). Well, then, my dear, since you want poor Harry to have a fortune, you must understand that ever since the year 1690, a week after the Battle of the Boyne, where the Prince of Orange defeated his royal

sovereign and father, Henry Esmond hath been Marquis of Esmond and Earl of Castlewood in the United Kingdom, and Baron and Viscount Castlewood of Shandon in Ireland, and a Baronet—and his eldest son will be, by courtesy, styled Earl of Castlewood—he ! he ! What do you think of that, my dear ?

"As for Colonel Esmond, he knows the truth already." ("And then, Harry," my mistress said, "she told me of what had happened at my dear husband's deathbed.") "He doth not intend to take the title, though it belongs to him. But it eases my conscience that you should know the truth, my dear. And your son is lawfully Viscount Castlewood so long as his cousin does not claim the rank."

This was the substance of the Dowager's revelation. Dean Atterbury had knowledge of it, Lady Castlewood said, and Esmond very well knows how, that divine being the clergyman for whom the late lord had sent on his deathbed; and when Lady Castlewood would instantly have written to her son, and conveyed the truth to him, the Dean's advice was that a letter should be writ to Colonel Esmond rather: that the matter should be submitted to his decision, by which alone the rest of the family were bound to abide.

"And can my dearest lady doubt what that will be ?" says the Colonel.

"It rests with you, Harry, as the head of our house."

"It was settled twelve years since, by my dear lord's bedside," says Colonel Esmond. "The children must know nothing of this. Frank and his heirs after him must bear our name. I am the head of the house, dear lady; but Frank is Viscount of Castlewood still. And rather than disturb him, I would turn monk, or disappear in America."

As he spoke so to his dearest mistress, for whom he would have been willing to give up his life, or to make any sacrifice any day, the fond creature flung herself down on her knees before him, and kissed both his hands in an outbreak of passionate love and gratitude, such as could not but melt his heart, and make him feel very proud and thankful that God had given him the power to show his love for her, and to prove it by some little sacrifice on his own part. To be able to bestow benefits or happiness on those one loves is sure the greatest blessing conferred upon a man—and what wealth or name, or gratification of ambition or vanity, could compare with the pleasure Esmond now had of being able to confer some kindness upon his best and dearest friends ?

Before such a partial judge as Esmond's dear mistress owned herself to be, any cause which he might plead was sure to be given in his favour ; and accordingly he found little difficulty in reconciling her to the news whereof he was bearer, of her son's marriage to a foreign lady, Papist though she was, and accordingly she wrote to her new daughter a very pretty, touching letter (as Esmond thought, who had cognisance of it before it went), in which the only hint of reproof was a gentle remonstrance that her son had not written to herself, to ask a fond mother's blessing for that step which he was about taking.

The next mail which came from Bruxelles, after Frank had received his mother's letter there, brought back a joint composition from himself and his wife, full of expressions of thanks, love, and duty to the Dowager Viscountess, as my poor lady now was styled ; and along with this letter there came a private letter for Colonel Esmond from poor Frank, with another commission

for the Colonel to execute, at his best opportunity; and this was to announce that Frank had seen fit, "by the exhortation of Mr. Holt, the influence of his Clotilda, and the blessing of heaven and the saints," says my Lord demurely, "to change his religion, and be received into the bosom of that Church of which his sovereign, many of his family, and the greater part of the civilised world, were members."

If Esmond had wanted to keep this secret, he could not; for a day or two after receiving this letter, a notice from Bruxelles appeared in the *Post-Boy* and other prints, announcing that "a young Irish lord, the Viscount Castlewood, just come to his majority, and who had served the last campaigns with great credit, as aide-de-camp to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, had declared for the Catholic religion at Bruxelles."

CHAPTER XIV

BEATRIX'S NEW SUITOR

One morning, when Beatrix and Esmond were engaged in happy, friendly conversation, the servant, flinging the door open, announced his Grace the Duke of Hamilton. He gave Mr. Esmond just that gracious bow which he would have given to a lacquey who fetched him a chair or took his hat, and seated himself by Miss Beatrix, as the poor Colonel went out of the room with a hang-dog look.

Esmond's mistress was in the lower room as he passed downstairs, and she beckoned him into the apartment.

"Has she told you, Harry, what is going to happen?" Lady Castlewood said.

"What is going to happen?" says Esmond, his heart beating.

"His Grace the Duke of Hamilton has proposed to her," says my Lady. "He made his offer yesterday. They will marry soon; and you have heard his Grace is appointed Ambassador to Paris; and the Ambassadress goes with him."

The gentleman whom Beatrix had selected was, to be sure, twenty years older than the Colonel, with whom she quarrelled for being too old; but this one was but a poor adventurer, and the other the greatest Duke in Scotland, with pretensions even to a still higher title. My Lord Duke of Hamilton had, indeed, every merit belonging to a gentleman, and he had had the time to mature his accomplishments fully, being upwards of fifty years old when Madam Beatrix selected him for a bridegroom. Duke Hamilton, then Earl of Arran, had been educated at the famous Scottish university of Glasgow, and, coming to London, became a great favourite of Charles the Second, who made him a lord of his bedchamber, and afterwards appointed him ambassador to the French King, under whom the Earl served two campaigns as His Majesty's aide-de-camp; and he was absent on this service when King Charles died.

King James continued my Lord's promotion—made him Master of the Wardrobe and Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Horse; and his Lordship adhered firmly to King James, being of the small company that never quitted that unfortunate monarch till his departure out of England; and then it was, in 1688 namely, that he made the friendship with Colonel Francis Esmond, that had always been, more or less, maintained in the two families.

The Earl professed a great admiration for King

William always, but never could give him his allegiance; and was engaged in more than one of the plots in the late great King's reign, which always ended in the plotters' discomfiture, and generally in their pardon, by the magnanimity of the King. Lord Arran was twice prisoner in the Tower during this reign, undauntedly saying, when offered his release upon parole not to engage against King William, that he would not give his word, because "he was sure he could not keep it"; but, nevertheless, he was both times discharged without any trial; and the King bore this noble enemy so little malice, that when his mother, the Duchess of Hamilton, of her own right, resigned her claim on her husband's death, the Earl was, by patent signed at Loo, 1690, created Duke of Hamilton, Marquis of Clydesdale, and Earl of Arran.

When the Whigs went out of office in 1710, the Queen began to show his Grace the very greatest marks of her favour. He was created Duke of Brandon and Baron of Dutton in England; having the Thistle already originally bestowed on him by King James the Second, his Grace was now promoted to the honour of the Garter—a distinction so great and illustrious, that no subject hath ever hitherto borne them together. When this objection was made to her Majesty, she was pleased to say, "Such a subject as the Duke of Hamilton has a pre-eminent claim to every mark of distinction which a crowned head can confer. I will henceforth wear both orders myself."

In October, 1712, his Grace was appointed Ambassador-Extraordinary to France, and his equipages, plate, and liveries commanded, of the most sumptuous kind, not only for his Excellency the Ambassador, but for her Excellency the Ambassadress, who was to accompany

him. Her arms were already quartered on the coach panels, and her brother was to hasten over on the appointed day to give her away.

Esmond brought the case of diamonds which my Lady of Chelsey had bequeathed to him, as a wedding present for the fair Beatrix, and the girl's delight at receiving these trinkets was so great that, after rushing to the looking-glass and examining the effect they produced upon that fair neck which they surrounded, she was running back with her arms extended, and was perhaps for paying her cousin with a price, that he would have liked no doubt to receive from those beautiful rosy lips of hers, but at this moment the door opened, and his Grace the bridegroom elect was announced.

He looked very black upon Mr. Esmond, to whom he made a very low bow indeed, and kissed the hand of each lady in his most ceremonious manner. He had come in his chair from the palace hard by, and wore his two stars of the Garter and the Thistle.

"Look, my Lord Duke," says Mistress Beatrix, advancing to him, and showing the diamonds on her breast.

"Diamonds," says his Grace. "H'm! they seem pretty."

"They are a present on my marriage," says Beatrix.

"From her Majesty?" asks the Duke. "The Queen is very good."

"From my cousin Henry—from our cousin Henry," cried both the ladies in a breath.

"I have not the honour of knowing the gentleman. I thought that my Lord Castlewood had no brother: and that on your Ladyship's side there were no nephews."

"From our cousin, Colonel Henry Esmond, my Lord,"

says Beatrix, taking the Colonel's hand very bravely, "who was left guardian to us by our father, and who has a hundred times shown his love and friendship for our family."

"The Duchess of Hamilton receives no diamonds but from her husband, madam," says the Duke. "May I pray you to restore these to Mr. Esmond?"

"Beatrix Esmond may receive a present from our kinsman and benefactor, my Lord Duke," says my Lady Castlewood, with an air of great dignity. "She is my daughter yet: and if her mother sanctions the gift—no one else hath the right to question it.

"What is a string of diamond stones compared to that affection he hath given us—our dearest preserver and benefactor? We owe him not only Frank's life, but our all—yes, our all," says my mistress, with a heightened colour and a trembling voice. "The title we bear is his, if he would claim it. He sacrificed his name at my dying lord's bedside—sacrificed it to my orphan children; gave up rank and honour because he loved us so nobly. His father was Viscount of Castlewood and Marquis of Esmond before him; and he is his father's lawful son and true heir, and we are the recipients of his bounty, and he the chief of a house that's as old as your own. And if he is content to forego his name that my child may bear it, we love him and honour him and bless him under whatever name he bears"—and here the fond and affectionate creature would have knelt to Esmond again, but that he prevented her; and Beatrix, running up to her with a pale face and a cry of alarm, embraced her and said, "Mother, what is this?"

"'Tis a family secret, my Lord Duke," says Colonel Esmond; "poor Beatrix knew nothing of it; nor did

my Lady till a year ago. And I have as good a right to resign my title as your Grace's mother to abdicate hers to you."

"I should have told everything to the Duke of Hamilton," said my mistress, "had his Grace applied to me for my daughter's hand, and not to Beatrix. I should have spoken with you this very day in private, my Lord, had not your words brought about this sudden explanation—and now 'tis fit that Beatrix should hear it; and know, as I would have all the world know, what we owe to our kinsman and patron."

And then, in her touching way, and having hold of her daughter's hand, and speaking to her rather than my Lord Duke, Lady Castlewood told the story which you know already—lauding up to the skies her kinsman's behaviour. On his side Mr. Esmond explained the reasons that seemed quite sufficiently cogent with him, why the succession in the family, as at present it stood, should not be disturbed; and he should remain as he was, Colonel Esmond.

"And Marquis of Esmond, my Lord," says his Grace, with a low bow. "Permit me to ask your Lordship's pardon for words that were uttered in ignorance; and to beg for the favour of your friendship. I shall esteem it as a favour, my Lord, if Colonel Esmond will give away the bride."

But alas for poor Beatrix, the great marriage was destined never to take place. The ill-omened Mohun appeared in London and a quarrel ensued between him and the Duke of Hamilton. They fought in Hyde Park: the Duke killed Mohun and a friend of Mohun came up and stabbed the Duke as he lay on the ground, and gave him the blow of which he died.

And this was the end of Beatrix's ambition.

CHAPTER XV

A PLAN IS AFOOT

My young Lord Viscount Castlewood had not come to England to keep his majority, and had now been absent from the country for several years. A few months after the horrid catastrophe in Hyde Park, my mistress and her daughter retired to Castlewood, where my Lord, it was expected, would soon join them. But, to say truth, their quiet household was little to his taste; he could be got to come to Walcote but once after his first campaign, and had remained away from his country and was unknown, save amongst the gentlemen of the army, with whom he had served abroad. The fond heart of his mother was pained by this long absence. 'Twas all that Henry Esmond could do to soothe her natural mortification, and find excuses for his kinsman's levity.

In the autumn of the year 1713, Lord Castlewood thought of returning home. The long-debated peace had been proclaimed this year at the end of March; and France was open to us. Just as Frank's poor mother had made all things ready for Lord Castlewood's reception, and was eagerly expecting her son, it was by Colonel Esmond's means that the kind lady was disappointed of her longing, and obliged to defer once more the darling hope of her heart.

Early in July Esmond took horses to Castlewood and opened himself to his mistress of the business he had in hand, and what part Frank was to play in it. He knew he could confide anything to her, and that the fond soul would die rather than reveal it; and bidding her keep the secret from all, he laid it entirely before his mistress (always as staunch a little loyalist as any in the kingdom), and indeed was quite sure that any plan of his was secure

of her applause and sympathy. Never was such a glorious scheme to her partial mind, never such a devoted knight to execute it. An hour or two may have passed whilst they were having their colloquy. Beatrix came out to them just as their talk was over; her tall beautiful form robed in sable (which she wore without ostentation ever since last year's catastrophe), sweeping over the green terrace, and casting its shadows before her across the grass.

She made us one of her grand curtseys smiling, and called us "the young people." She was older, paler, and more majestic than in the year before; her mother seemed the younger of the two. She never once spoke of her grief, Lady Castlewood told Esmond, or alluded, save by a quiet word or two, to the death of her hopes.

The following day, when Beatrix and Esmond were alone together, Esmond spoke out. "Beatrix, if I do something you have at heart; something worthy of me and you; something that shall make me a name with which to endow you; will you take it? If I come back to you and bring you fame, will that please you? If I do what you desire most—what he who is dead desired most—will that soften you?"

"What is it, Henry?" says she, her face lighting up; "what mean you?"

"Ask no questions," he said; "wait, and give me but time; if I bring back that you long for, that I have a thousand times heard you pray for, will you have no reward for him who has done you that service? I say no more now. All I pray of you now is, to wait and to remember."

"You are going out of the country?" says Beatrix, in some agitation.

"Yes, to-morrow," says Esmond.

"To Lorraine, Cousin?" says Beatrix, laying her hand on his arm; 'twas the hand on which she wore the Duke's bracelet. "Stay, Harry!" continued she, with a tone that had more despondency in it than she was accustomed to show. "Hear a last word. I do love you. I do admire you—who would not, that has known such love as yours has been for us all? But I think I have no heart; at least, I have never seen the man that could touch it; and, had I found him, I would have followed him in rags had he been a private soldier, or to sea, like one of those buccaneers you used to read to us about when we were children. I would do anything for such a man, bear anything for him; but I never found one. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart; even my Lord Duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him. I knew that three months after our engagement—and was too vain to break it. Oh, Harry! I cried once or twice, not for him, but with tears of rage because I could not be sorry for him. I was frightened to find I was glad of his death; and were I joined to you, I should have the same sense of servitude, the same longing to escape. We should both be unhappy, and you the most, who are as jealous as the Duke was himself.

"Farewell. Farewell, brother." She gave him her cheek as a brotherly privilege. The cheek was as cold as marble.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRINCE COMES TO ENGLAND

Mr. Esmond did not think fit to take leave at Court, or to inform all the world of Pall Mall and the coffee-houses that he was about to quit England, and chose

to depart in the most private manner possible. He procured a pass as for a Frenchman, and giving out ere he left London that he himself was sick, and gone to Hampshire for country air, departed as silently as might be upon his business.

As Frank Castlewood's aid was indispensable for Mr. Esmond's scheme, his first visit was to Bruxelles, passing by way of Antwerp, where the Duke of Marlborough was in exile, and in the first-named place Harry found his dear young Lord. He was charmed with his kinsman's scheme, when he became acquainted with it; and, in truth, always admired Colonel Esmond with an affectionate fidelity, and thought his cousin the wisest and best of all cousins and men. Frank entered heart and soul into the plan, and liked it the better as it was to take him to Paris, out of reach of his brothers, his father, and his mother-in-law, whose attentions rather fatigued him.

Castlewood was born in the same year as the Prince of Wales; had not a little of the Prince's air, height, and figure; and took no small pride in his resemblance to a person so illustrious; which likeness he increased by all means in his power, wearing fair brown periwigs, such as the Prince wore, and ribbons, and so forth, of the Chevalier's colour.

This resemblance was, in truth, the circumstance on which Mr. Esmond's scheme was founded; and having secured Frank's secrecy and enthusiasm, he left him to continue his journey, and see the other personages on whom its success depended. The place whither Mr. Esmond next travelled was Bar, in Lorraine, where the plan was laid before the Prince, who liked the scheme well enough; 'twas easy and daring, and suited to his reckless gaiety and lively youthful spirit.

From Bar in Lorraine Esmond travelled to Paris and

finally returned to London about May, in the year 1714, very soon after which time my Lady Castlewood and her daughter, likewise returned to London; her Ladyship occupying her house at Kensington, Mr. Esmond returning to his lodgings at Knightsbridge, nearer the town, and once more making his appearance at all public places, his health greatly improved by his long stay in the country, where he was supposed to have been all this time.

At the commencement of the month of June, Beatrix resumed her services at Court, which had been interrupted by the fatal catastrophe of Duke Hamilton's death. She once more took her place, then, in her Majesty's suite and at the Maid's table, being always a favourite with Mrs. Masham, the Queen's chief woman, partly perhaps on account of their bitterness against the Duchess of Marlborough, whom Miss Beatrix loved no better than her rival did. The gentlemen about the Court, my Lord Bolingbroke amongst others, owned that the young lady had come back handsomer than ever, and that the serious and tragic air which her face now involuntarily wore became her better than her former smiles and archness.

All the old domestics at the little house of Kensington Square were changed; the old steward that had served the family any time these five-and-twenty years, since the birth of the children of the house, was dispatched into the kingdom of Ireland to see my Lord's estate there; the housekeeper, who had been my Lady's woman time out of mind, and the attendant of the young children, was sent away grumbling to Walcote, to see to the new painting and preparing of that house, which my Lady Dowager intended to occupy for the future, giving up Castlewood to her daughter-in-law

that might be expected daily from France. Another servant the Viscountess had was dismissed too—with a gratuity—on the pretext that her Ladyship's train of domestics must be diminished; so, finally, there was not left in the household a single person who had belonged to it during the time my young Lord Castlewood was yet at home.

For the plan which Colonel Esmond had in view was that the Prince should travel to England as Baptiste, my Lord Viscount's secretary, and on arrival at Kensington the two travellers should exchange rôles; and the Prince be received into the household at Kensington as my Lord Castlewood, Lady Castlewood's son, while the young Viscount himself assumed the position of Baptiste. 'Twas necessary that the very smallest number of persons should be put in possession of the secret, and it was scarce known except to three or four out of the family.

The scheme worked well. The Prince arrived at my Lady's house at Kensington, and waited upon by Colonel Esmond and my Lord Viscount, visited by his supporters, and entertained by the ladies of Castlewood (the Prince marvelled at the radiant charm and imperial beauty of Beatrix), he awaited the stroke that was preparing.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE QUEEN'S GARDEN

Should any clue be found to the dark intrigues at the latter end of Queen Anne's time, or any historian be inclined to follow it, 'twill be discovered, I have little doubt, that not one of the great personages about the Queen had a defined scheme of policy, independent of that private and selfish interest which each was bent on pursuing; one cause, or one sovereign, was as good as

another to them, so that they could hold the best place under him.

A very great body of Tory clergy, nobility, and gentry, were public partisans of the exiled Prince; and the indifferents might be counted on to cry King George or King James, according as either should prevail. The Queen, especially in her latter days, inclined towards her own family. The Prince was lying actually in London, within a stone's-cast of his sister's palace; the first Minister toppling to his fall, and so tottering that the weakest push of a woman's finger would send him down; and as for Bolingbroke, his successor, we know on whose side his power and his splendid eloquence would be on the day when the Queen should appear openly before her Council, and say:—"This, my Lords, is my brother; here is my father's heir, and mine after me."

During the whole of the previous year the Queen had had many and repeated fits of sickness, fever, and lethargy, and her death had been constantly looked for by all her attendants. The Elector of Hanover had wished to send his son, the Duke of Cambridge—to pay his court to his cousin the Queen, the Elector said;—in truth, to be on the spot when death should close her career. Frightened perhaps to have such a *memento mori* under her royal eyes, Her Majesty had angrily forbidden the young Prince's coming into England. The importunities of her Ministers, and constant turmoil and agitation round about her, had weakened and irritated the Queen extremely; her strength was giving way under these continual trials of her temper, and from day to day it was expected she must come to a speedy end of them. Just before Viscount Castlewood and his companion came from France, Her Majesty was taken ill; there was no hurry for the presentation of the young lord at

Court, or that person who should appear under his name; and my Lord Viscount's wound breaking out opportunely, he was kept conveniently in his chamber until such time as his physician would allow him to bend the knee before the Queen.

On the 27th day of July, the Bishop of Rochester, one of the most active participators in Esmond's plan, was breakfasting with Lady Castlewood and her family, and the meal was scarce over, when the Queen's physician, who also was among the Prince's supporters, drove up to the house in Kensington. "In half-an-hour," says he, "Her Majesty and her favourite lady will take the air in the Cedar Walk behind the new Banqueting House. Her Majesty will be drawn in a garden chair, Madam Beatrix Esmond and *her brother, my Lord Viscount Castlewood* will be walking in the private garden (here is Lady Masham's key), and will come unawares upon the Royal party. The man that draws the chair will retire, and leave the Queen, the favourite, and the Maid of Honour, and her brother together; Mistress Beatrix will present her brother, and then!—and then, my Lord Bishop will pray for the result of the interview, and his clerk will say Amen! Quick, put on your hood, Madam Beatrix. Such another chance may not present itself for months again."

The Doctor, the Bishop, the Maid of Honour, and the Prince went off together in the physician's coach, and had been gone half-an-hour when Colonel Esmond came to Kensington Square.

While Beatrix was away, my Lady, Frank, and Colonel Esmond agreed that after the morning's business was over Beatrix should quit London: that she would be best away from the city until the Prince was acknowledged and had his own house at St. James's or Windsor. For

by a thousand coquetries which she could no more help exercising on every man that came near her, than the sun can help smiling on great and small, Beatrix had provoked the Prince's dangerous admiration and allured him to the expression of it. Her haughty spirit brooked no remonstrance from superiors, much less from her mother, and she was only the more wilful and imperious the more she felt her error.

In half-an-hour more the coach returned, and the Maid of Honour entered the house alone. She came into the drawing-room in a great tremor and very pale; she asked for a glass of water as her mother went to meet her, and after drinking that, and putting off her hood, she began to speak: "We may all hope for the best," says she; "it has cost the Queen a fit. Her Majesty was in her chair in the Cedar Walk, accompanied only by Lady Masham, when we entered by the private wicket from the west side of the garden, and turned towards her, the Doctor following us. He and the Bishop waited in a side walk hidden by the shrubs, as we advanced towards the chair. My heart throbbed so I scarce could speak; but my Prince whispered, 'Courage, Beatrix,' and marched on with a steady step. His face was a little flushed, but he was not afraid of the danger.

"The Prince uncovered," Beatrix continued, "and I saw the Queen turning round to Lady Masham, as if asking who these two were. Her Majesty looked very pale and ill, and then flushed up; the favourite made us a signal to advance, and I went up, leading my Prince by the hand, quite close to the chair: 'Your Majesty will give my Lord Viscount your hand to kiss,' says her lady, and the Queen put out her hand, which the Prince kissed, kneeling on his knee, he who should kneel to no mortal man or woman.

"'You have been long from England, my Lord,' says the Queen: 'why were you not here to give a home to your mother and sister?'

"'I am come, madam, to stay now, if the Queen desires me,' says the Prince, with another low bow.

"'You have taken a foreign wife, my Lord, and a foreign religion; was not that of England good enough for you?'

"'In returning to my father's Church,' says the Prince, 'I do not love my mother the less, nor am I the less faithful servant of your Majesty.'

"Here," says Beatrix, "the favourite gave me a little signal with her hand to fall back, which I did, though I died to hear what should pass; and whispered something to the Queen, which made Her Majesty start and utter one or two words in a hurried manner, looking towards the Prince, and catching hold with her hand of the arm of her chair. He advanced still nearer towards it; he began to speak very rapidly. I caught the words, 'Father, blessing, forgiveness,' and then presently the Prince fell on his knees, took from his breast a paper he had there, handed it to the Queen, who, as soon as she saw it, flung up both her arms with a scream, and took away that hand nearest the Prince, and which he endeavoured to kiss. He went on speaking with great animation of gesture, now clasping his hands together on his heart, now opening them as though to say: 'I am here, your brother, in your power.' Lady Masham ran round on the other side of the chair, kneeling too, and speaking with great energy. She clasped the Queen's hand on her side, and picked up the paper Her Majesty had let fall. The Prince rose and made a further speech as though he would go; the favourite on the other hand urging her mistress, and then, running back to the

Prince, brought him back once more close to the chair. Again he knelt down and took the Queen's hand, which she did not withdraw, kissing it a hundred times, my Lady all the time, with sobs and supplications, speaking over the chair. This while the Queen sat with a stupefied look, crumpling the paper with one hand, as my Prince embraced the other ; then of a sudden she uttered several piercing shrieks, and burst into a great fit of hysteric tears and laughter. 'Enough, enough, sir, for this time,' I heard Lady Masham say : and the chairman, who had withdrawn round the Banqueting-room, came back alarmed by the cries. 'Quick,' says Lady Masham, 'get some help,' and I ran towards the Doctor, who, with the Bishop of Rochester, came up instantly. Lady Masham whispered the Prince he might hope for the very best and to be ready to-morrow ; and he hath gone away to the Bishop of Rochester's house to meet several of his friends there. And so the great stroke is struck," says Beatrix, going down on her knees, and clasping her hands. "God save the King ! God save the King ! "

Beatrix's tale told, and the young lady herself calmed somewhat of her agitation, we asked with regard to the Prince, who was absent with Bishop Atterbury, and were informed that 'twas likely he might remain abroad the whole day. Beatrix's three kinsfolk looked at one another at this intelligence : 'twas clear the same thought was passing through the minds of all.

But who should begin to break the news ? Monsieur Baptiste, that is, Frank Castlewood, turned very red, and looked towards Esmond ; the Colonel bit his lips, and fairly beat a retreat into the window : it was Lady Castlewood that opened upon Beatrix with the news which we knew would do anything but please her.

"We are glad," says she, taking her daughter's hand,

and speaking in a gentle voice, "that the guest is away."

Beatrix drew back in an instant, looking round her at us three, and as if divining a danger. "Why glad?" says she, her breast beginning to heave; "are you so soon tired of him?"

"We think one of us is too fond of him," cries out Frank Castlewood.

"And which is it—you, my Lord, or is it mamma, who is jealous because he drinks my health? or is it the head of the family" (here she turned with an imperious look towards Colonel Esmond), "who has taken of late to preach the King sermons?"

"We think," said Esmond gravely, "that having nobly done your part of this morning, Beatrix, you should retire off the scene awhile, and leave it to the other actors of the play. You were better in the country now. The Prince is here on a great end from which no folly should divert him, and we would but remove from him a dangerous temptation."

As the Colonel spoke with a perfect calmness and politeness, such as 'tis to be hoped he hath always shown to women, his mistress stood by him on one side of the table, and Frank Castlewood on the other, hemming in poor Beatrix, that was behind it, and, as it were, surrounding her with our approaches.

Beatrix's beautiful eyes filled with tears. "I am alone," sobbed she; "you are three against me—my brother, my mother, and you. What have I done, that you should speak and look so unkindly at me? Is it my fault that the Prince should, as you say, admire me? Did I bring him here? Did I do aught but what you bade me, in making him welcome? Did you not tell me that our duty was to die for him? Did you not teach me, mother, night and morning, to pray for the King, before

even ourselves ? What would you have of me ? I will go ; to Castlewood be it. I have been unhappy there and lonely enough ; let me go back. Let me go when you will, but alone, or not at all. You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness, and I will bear it as I have borne it before. Let my gaoler-in-chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long, I'll thank you, and remember you."

She swept out of the room with the air of an empress, flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field, but scared, and almost ashamed of our victory. It did indeed seem hard and cruel that we three should have conspired the banishment and humiliation of that fair creature. We looked at each other in silence ; 'twas not the first stroke by many of our actions in that unlucky time, which, being done, we wished undone. We agreed it was best she should go alone, speaking stealthily to one another, and under our breaths, like persons engaged in an act they felt ashamed of doing.

Beatrix's departure took place within an hour, her maid going with her in the post-chaise, and a man armed on the coach-box to prevent any danger of the road. Esmond and Frank thought of escorting the carriage, but she indignantly refused their company, and another man was sent to follow the coach, and not to leave it till it had passed over Hounslow Heath on the next day.

CHAPTER XVIII

GOD SAVE THE KING !

At noon, on the 30th of July, a message came from the Court to the Prince's friends who were assembled at the " King's Arms," Kensington, " *now or never is the*



'Colonel Esmond bowed down low'—*Page* 119

time." . But the Prince was nowhere to be found. He had fled.

" Can you guess where he is ? " says Castlewood to Esmond.

" Yes," says Colonel Esmond. He knew full well. Frank knew full well ; our instinct told us where the folly of the Prince had led him.

Esmond had courage to turn to the company and say : " Gentlemen, I fear very much that Mr. George (as we called the Prince there) will not be here to-day : something hath happened—and—and—I very much fear some accident may befall him, which must keep him out of the way. Having had your noon's draught, you had best pay the reckoning and go home ; there can be no game where there is no one to play it."

Some of the gentlemen went away without a word, others called to pay their duty to Her Majesty and ask for her health. The little army disappeared ; there had been no writings, no paper to implicate any man. Some few officers and members of Parliament had been invited over night to breakfast at the " King's Arms " at Kensington ; and they had called for their bill and gone home.

Esmond and his kinsman rode post haste to Castlewood, where they arrived at dawn the following day.

They went into the chamber which had been Esmond's for wellnigh five-and-twenty years. A candle was still burning, and the Prince asleep dressed on the bed—Esmond did not care for making a noise. The Prince started up in his bed, seeing two men in his chamber : " Qui est là ? " says he, and took a pistol from under his pillow.

" It is the Marquis of Esmond," says the Colonel, " come to welcome His Majesty to his house of Castle-

wood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the King's orders, I passed the night before last, after leaving His Majesty, in waiting upon the friends of the King. It is a pity that His Majesty's desire to see the country and to visit our poor house should have caused the King to quit London without notice yesterday, when the opportunity happened which in all human probability may not occur again; and had the King not chosen to ride to Castlewood, the Prince of Wales might have slept at St. James's."

"Gentlemen," says the Prince, starting off his bed, whereon he was lying in his clothes, "the Doctor was with me yesterday morning, and after watching by my sister all night, told me I might not hope to see the Queen."

"It would have been otherwise," says Esmond, with another bow; "as by this time, the Queen may be dead in spite of the Doctor. The Council was met, a new Treasurer was appointed, the troops were devoted to the King's cause; and fifty loyal gentlemen of the greatest names of this kingdom were assembled to accompany the Prince of Wales, who might have been the acknowledged heir of the throne, or the possessor of it by this time, had your Majesty not chosen to take the air. We were ready: there was only one person that failed us—your Majesty."

"Thus to lose a crown," says the young Prince, tears starting to his eyes with helpless rage and mortification; "to lose the loveliest woman in the world; to lose the loyalty of such hearts as yours, is not this, my Lords, enough of humiliation?—Marquis, if I go on my knees, will you pardon me?—No, I can't do that, but I can offer you reparation, that of honour, that of gentlemen. Favour me by crossing the sword

with mine. Ah ! you will ? Merci ! Monsieur, Merci ! "

Extremely touched by this immense mark of condescension and repentance for wrong done, Colonel Esmond bowed down so low as almost to kiss the gracious young hand that conferred on him such an honour, and took his guard in silence. The swords were no sooner met, than Castlewood knocked up Esmond's with the blade of his own, and the Colonel falling back a step dropped his point with another low bow, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

At that moment Beatrix entered the room. She started and turned pale at the sight of her brother and kinsman.

" Charming Beatrix," says the Prince, with a blush which became him very well, " these lords have come a horseback from London, where my sister lies in a despaired state, and where her successor makes himself desired. Pardon me for my escapade of last evening. I had been so long a prisoner, that I seized the occasion of a promenade on horseback, and my horse naturally bore me towards you. I found you a queen in your little court, where you deigned to entertain me. Present my homages to your maids of honour. I sighed as you slept, under the window of your chamber, and then retired to seek rest in my own. It was there that these gentlemen agreeably roused me. Yes, milords, for that is a happy day that makes a Prince acquainted, at whatever cost to his vanity, with such a noble heart as that of the Marquis of Esmond. Mademoiselle, may we take your coach to town ? I saw it in the hangar, and this poor Marquis must be dropping with sleep."

" Will it please the King to breakfast before he goes ? " was all Beatrix could say. The roses had shuddered out of her cheeks ; her eyes were glaring ; she looked quite

old. She came up to Esmond and hissed out a word or two :—" If I did not love you before, Cousin," says she, " think how I love you now." If words could stab, no doubt she would have killed Esmond ; she looked at him as if she could.

But keen words gave no wound to Mr. Esmond ; his heart was too hard. As he looked at her he wondered that he could ever have loved her. His love of ten years was over ; it fell down dead on the spot, at the Kensington tavern. The Prince blushed and bowed low, as she gazed at him, and quitted the chamber. I have never seen her from that day.

Horses were fetched and put to the chariot presently. My Lord rode outside, and as for Esmond he was so tired that he was no sooner in the carriage than he fell asleep, and never woke till night, as the coach came into Alton.

As we drove to the " Bell Inn," comes a mitred coach with our old friend Lockwood beside the coachman. My Lady Castlewood and the Bishop were inside ; she gave a little scream when she saw us. The two coaches entered the inn almost together ; the landlord and people coming out with lights to welcome the visitors.

We in our coach sprang out of it, as soon as ever we saw the dear lady, and above all the Doctor in his cassock. What was the news ? Was there yet time ? Was the Queen alive ? These questions were put hurriedly as Boniface stood waiting before his noble guests to bow them up the stair.

The Bishop's news was reassuring : at least all was not lost ; the Queen yet breathed, or was alive when they left London, six hours since. (" It was Lady Castlewood who insisted on coming," the Doctor said.)

And all might be saved, if only the Prince could be at London in time. We called for horses, instantly to return to London. We never went up poor crestfallen Boniface's stairs, but into our coaches again; the Prince and the Bishop in one, Esmond in the other, with only his dear mistress as a companion. Castlewood galloped forwards on horseback to gather the Prince's friends and warn them of his coming.

So we came along the road, the Bishop's coach heading ours; and, with some delays in procuring horses, we got to Hammersmith about four o'clock on Sunday morning the first of August, and half-an-hour after, it being then bright day, we rode down the street of Kensington.

Early as the hour was, there was a bustle in the street, and many people moving to and fro. Round the gate leading to the Palace, where the guard is, there was especially a great crowd. And the coach ahead of us stopped, and the Bishop's man got down to know what the concourse meant.

There presently came from out of the gate—Horse Guards with their trumpets, and a company of heralds with their tabards. The trumpets blew, and the herald-at-arms came forward and proclaimed GEORGE, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. And the people shouted, God save the King!

Among the crowd shouting and waving their hats, I caught sight of one sad face, which I had known all my life, and seen under many disguises. It was no other than poor Mr. Holt's, who had slipped over to England to witness the triumph of the good cause; and now beheld its enemies victorious, amidst the acclamations of the English people. The poor fellow had forgot to

huzzah or to take his hat off, until his neighbours in the crowd remarked his want of loyalty, and cursed him for a Jesuit in disguise, when he ruefully uncovered and began to cheer. Sure he was the most unlucky of men; he never played a game but he lost it; or engaged in a conspiracy but 'twas certain to end in defeat.

With the sound of King George's trumpets all the vain hopes of the weak and foolish young Pretender were blown away; and with that music, too, I may say, the drama of my own life was ended. That happiness, which hath subsequently crowned it, cannot be written in words; 'tis of its nature sacred and secret, and not to be spoken of, though the heart be ever so full of thankfulness, save to Heaven and the One Ear alone—to one fond being, the truest and tenderest and purest wife ever man was blessed with. As I think of the immense happiness which was in store for me, and of the depth and intensity of that love which, for so many years, hath blessed me, I own to a transport of wonder and gratitude for such a boon—nay, am thankful to have been endowed with a heart capable of feeling and knowing the immense beauty and value of the gift which God hath bestowed upon me.

It was at Bruxelles, whither we retreated after the failure of our plot—our Whig friends advising us to keep out of the way—that the great joy of my life was bestowed upon me, and that my dear mistress became my wife. All danger of prosecution, and every obstacle against our return to England, was removed. But we two cared no longer to live in England; and Frank formally and joyfully yielded over to us the possession of that estate which we now occupy, far away from Europe and its troubles, on the beautiful

banks of the Potomac, where we have built a new Castlewood, and think with grateful hearts of our old home. In our Transatlantic country we have a season, the calmest and most delightful of the year, which we call the Indian summer: I often say the autumn of our life resembles that happy and serene weather, and am thankful for its rest and its sweet sunshine. Heaven hath blessed us with a child, which each parent loves for her resemblance to the other. Our diamonds are turned into ploughs and axes for our plantations; and into negroes, the happiest and merriest, I think, in all this country.

NOTES

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5 **Virginia,** one of the eastern states of the United States of America. It was the first permanent English settlement in North America, and was one of the thirteen colonies which in 1776 threw off their allegiance to Britain, and forming a federal republic described themselves as the Thirteen United States of America. *See next note.*

Quarrel. A quarrel began in 1765 between the English Parliament and the American Colonies as to the right of the Home Government to tax the colonies, which had no representation in Parliament. The quarrel led to open war in 1775, and the Declaration of American Independence on July 4, 1776, the independence being recognised by England in 1782.

6 **Mr. Washington.** George Washington (1732–1799), the famous American soldier and statesman, was the first President of the United States of America, 1789–1797.

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12 **Trencherman,** one who has a hearty appetite.

The King. The king referred to is James II, king of England from 1685 to 1688. James's aim on his accession was to be absolute monarch, and to restore the Roman Catholic Church in England. Angered by his tyranny, in 1688, the British people invited William of Orange, who had married James's elder daughter Mary, to come to England to help them against James. James fled to France to the court of St. Germain, where he lived till his death in 1701.

13 **Usurper's Government.** Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War, was Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1653 to 1658.

Worcester fight. At Worcester, on September 3rd, 1651, Oliver Cromwell defeated the Scottish Royalists under Prince Charles. This was the crowning

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victory of the Parliamentarians, and finally ended the great Civil War, which had begun between Charles and Parliament in 1642.

14 The Duke of York, afterwards James II, the son of Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria.

15 Director, confessor.

19 Pantofles, slippers.

24 Tory. In 1679 the Exclusion Bill was brought before Parliament for the purpose of excluding James, the Romanist Duke of York, from the throne, and transferring his rights to his Protestant daughter Mary. The opponents of the Exclusion Bill were at first called *Abhorrers*, because of their abhorrence of the Bill, while those who supported it were named *Petitioners*, by reason of the number of petitions they signed in favour of the new measure. It was not long, however, before these names gave place to Tory and Whig: the Abhorrers were nicknamed *Tories*, the appellation of a horde of Irish outlaws and robbers, and the Petitioners *Whigs*, a shortened form of Whigamore, the name of a sect of Irish covenanters.

25 Prince of Orange. William of Orange—William III of England, 1688–1702—the son of William II of Orange, married James's elder daughter, Mary. He was the champion of Protestantism on the Continent, and was the bitter enemy of James's ally, Louis XIV of France. He was invited to England by seven leading men, and after James's flight to France (1688), the throne was offered to William and Mary, his wife. Queen Mary died in 1694, and William in 1702.

27 Richard Steele (1672–1729), the celebrated essayist and playwright, founded the *Tatler* (1709–11), and was, with Addison, the chief contributor to the *Spectator* (1711–12). He also wrote several plays.

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29 Battle of the Boyne (1690). In 1689 James II landed in Ireland, where he had a strong Jacobite following. He took up a position behind the River Boyne near Dublin, and here his troops were attacked by William III and defeated. James himself fled to France.

40 Beefeater. Beefeaters is the name given to the *Yeomen of the Guard*, a bodyguard of the sovereign, instituted by Henry VII in 1485, whose function it is to attend the sovereign at banquets and on other state occasions. The Beefeaters wear a scarlet uniform of Tudor pattern, decorated with royal emblems, and are armed with partisans (a kind of halberd) and short swords. The Warders of the Tower are also called Beefeaters, and wear an almost identical uniform.

42 Exhibition, an allowance for a term of years given to a student in a school, college, or university.

Jesuit, a member of the *Society of Jesus*, a Roman Catholic order founded in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola.

43 Spinnet, a keyed musical instrument, common in the 18th century, closely resembling the harpischord.

46 Soph, an abbreviation of sophister, a student in his second year.

49 Peruke, wig.

51 Nonjuror, one who refused to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary.

55 Bel air, (French) good deportment.

Prince of Baden. Louis William, Prince of Baden, made a determined stand against the French troops, who ravaged Baden during the wars of Louis XIV.

Rescue of . . . . . Turk. Vienna was besieged by the Turks in 1683, and held out gallantly, until it was relieved by a force of Poles and Germans.

56 Beau langage, (French) fine speech.

Harpsichord, a stringed instrument with keyboard, common in the 16th, 17th,

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and 18th centuries. Its form usually resembled the modern grand pianoforte.

Backgammon, a game played by two persons with fifteen draughtsmen each.

66 **Newgate Prison.** The original prison dated from the reign of Henry I (1100–1135). The prison was pulled down in 1904.

67 **Princess Anne**, the younger daughter of James II, and a Protestant. She was Queen of England from 1702–14.

James the Third. James Francis Edward Stuart, also known as the *Old Pretender*, was born at St. James's Palace, London, in June, 1688. He was the son of James II. When James II fled the realm in 1688, the infant Prince was sent to France, and he resided with his father at the court of St. Germain. In 1701, on the death of James II, Louis XIV of France proclaimed the young Prince as James III, by which title he was also land. He made an unsuccessful attempt to invade Scotland in 1708. After the *Peace of Utrecht* (1713), which ended the war between Endland and France, James removed from French territory to Barle-Duc in Lorraine. He appeared in Scotland in the unsuccessful Jacobite rebellion of 1715. He died at Rome on the 2nd of January, 1766.

For the purposes of the development of his plot, Thackeray deviates from history in the story of Esmond. The Prince was *not* in England at the time of his sister's death, though there were undoubtedly schemes to put James on the throne when his sister, Queen Anne, died. And had he been willing to change his religion—he was a fervent Roman Catholic—there was a great possibility that the schemes would have succeeded. The picture which Thackeray gives of the Prince also is not historically accurate. "As to James's personal character there is abundant evidence to show that he was grave, high-principled, industrious, abstemious and dignified, and that the unflattering portrait drawn of

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him by Thackeray in *Esmond* is utterly at variance with historical facts."

67 **Anne Hyde's daughter.** Anne Hyde was the first wife of James II. She was a Protestant, as were her two daughters, Mary and Anne.

68 **Lord Marlborough.** John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, and one of England's most brilliant generals, was born in 1650. He was for some time page of honour to James, Duke of York (afterwards James II), and after being given a commission in the army speedily achieved distinction as a soldier of great ability. In 1688 he joined William of Orange, and in 1689 he was made Earl of Marlborough. On account of his complicity in Jacobite intrigues he was removed from power in 1692, but was restored to favour by William in 1698. In 1702 he was made Captain-General of all the British Forces, and in 1703 conducted a brilliant campaign against the French. He was created Duke of Marlborough the same year. During the War of the Spanish Succession he displayed extraordinary military talents. In 1704 he won the battle of Blenheim, in 1706 Ramillies, in 1708 Oudenarde, and in 1709 Malplaquet, although in this last battle he lost more men than the French. In 1711 Marlborough was recalled to England and accused of appropriating large sums of money for his own personal use. He retired to the Continent and remained abroad till the reign of George I. He died at his palace of Blenheim in Oxfordshire in 1722.

68 **Garter.** The Order of the Garter, the highest order of knighthood in Britain, was founded by Edward III, about 1348. Its distinctive badge is a garter, consisting of a blue ribbon of velvet with a gold buckle, worn on the left leg.

That fury of a woman. The lady to whom the Dowager is referring is Sarah Jennings, the wife of the Duke of Marlborough, who had been a friend of

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the Princess Anne from her girlhood. The Duchess of Marlborough was a woman of great ambition with a very imperious temper and "had always had the mastery over the yielding Anne."

69 **Duke of Ormond** (1665–1745). James Butler, the second Duke of Ormond was in charge of the troops during the expedition of 1702. On the dismissal of the Duke of Marlborough in 1711, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the British army, but with secret orders that he was to take no active part in supporting the Allies.

70 **Fusileers.** A fusilier (modern spelling) was, originally, a soldier armed with a fusil, i.e. a light musket. The name *Fusiliers* is still retained by certain regiments in the British army.

Cadiz, one of the chief ports of Spain.

71 **Vigo Bay**, on the west coast of Spain. Here in 1702, a combined fleet of British and Dutch, under Sir George Rooke, destroyed a Franco-Spanish fleet, and captured much treasure.

Sir George Rooke (1650–1709), the renowned British admiral. He co-operated with the Duke of Ormond in the attack on Vigo, when the combined British and Dutch fleet destroyed the Franco-Spanish fleet in the harbour there. In 1704 he captured the fortress of Gibraltar.

72 **Levees**, receptions held by persons of rank and importance.

Footpads, robbers who go on foot. Highwaymen were usually mounted.

74 **Eagle**, the brass (or wooden) reading-desk in a church, which is constructed in the form of an eagle with out-stretched wings.

78 **Duke . . . . . after Ramillies.** *See note on Lord Marlborough, page* 68.

86 **The Mistress of the Robes**, the Duchess of Marlborough. *See note, page* 68.

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86 **Blandford.** The Marquess of Blandford, the eldest and only surviving son of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, died of small-pox in Frebruary, 1703, in his seventeenth year.

87 **Chair**, a sedan chair, a closed conveyance to seat one person, carried on two poles by bearers.

89 **Piquet**, a card game for two players.

90 **Privateer**, an armed vessel belonging to some private person and licensed by the State during war-time to attack the enemy's ships.

Packet, a vessel sailing regularly between one port and another for the conveyance of passengers, mails, and merchandise.

Mons, a town of the Netherlands about ten miles north-west of the battlefield of Malplaquet.

97 **Duke of Hamilton.** James Douglas, the 4th Duke of Hamilton (1658–1712), succeeded his mother, who resigned the dukedom to him in 1698. He was created Duke of Brandon in 1711, as our author states, and in November 1712 fought the duel with Lord Mohun, in which both were killed. He had a wife living in 1712 (Thackeray departs from the facts here), having been married a second time in 1693, and his widow survived him many years.

99 **Thistle.** *The Order of the Thistle*, one of the orders of knighthood in Great Britain.

103 **Peace.** *The Peace of Utrecht*, March 1713, brought to an end the *War of the Spanish Succession* which had begun in 1702.

106 **Prince of Wales**, son of James II. *See note on James the Third, page* 67.

109 **The Prince . . . . . in London.** *See note on James the Third, page* 67.

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The first minister . . . . . fall. Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer (1661–1724), resigned his position as Lord High Treasurer, a few days before the death of Queen Anne. His successor was Lord Bolingbroke.

The Elector of Hanover, afterwards George I of England (1714–1727). He was the son of Sophia of Hanover, the grand-daughter of James I, and the next Protestant heir to the English throne.

Memento mori, (Latin) a reminder of death (literally, remember to die).

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115 **Hounslow Heath,** about twelve miles south-west of London, was a noted resort of highwaymen.

117 **Qui est la?** (French) Who is there?

120 **Boniface,** innkeeper (from the ale-drinking landlord *Boniface*, in George Farquhar's play, *The Beaux' Stratagem*).

121 **George, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France . . . King. . . .** Edward III claimed the throne of France in 1340, and British sovereigns assumed the title of King of France until 1802, when George III abandoned it.

EDITOR'S NOTE

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY was born on the 18th of July, 1811. From 1822–1828 he was at Charterhouse School, and from there he went to Trinity College, Cambridge (1828–1829). After spending two years abroad, he began to read for the Bar, but his legal studies proved uncongenial, and in 1833 he purchased the *National Standard*, which, however, was unsuccessful. He then went to Paris to study drawing; there he married, and in 1837 returned to England.

It was with the publication of the novel, *Vanity Fair*, that Thackeray's genius was recognised: here was a writer of great satiric power, and a novelist of the first rank. In 1848–50 appeared *Pendennis*, a novel which gives a picture of the middle and upper class life of the time; in 1852, *Esmond*, by some critics held to be the best of Thackeray's works; in 1853–5, *The Newcomes*, and in 1857–9, *The Virginians*, a sequel to Esmond. Thackeray was now assured of a place amongst the foremost English writers of fiction.

In addition to his novels there came from his pen—among other writings—*The Paris Sketch-Book*, 1840; *The Irish Sketch-Book*, 1843; *The Rose and the Ring*, 1855. *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1853, and *The Four Georges* were given as a series of lectures. Thackeray also wrote a considerable amount of poetry and from 1860–62 was editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*.

He died on the 24th of December, 1863.

Esmond, or to give the book its full title, *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq., Colonel in the Service of Her Majesty, Queen Anne, Written by Himself*, is by general consent held to be one of the finest of historical novels. "It has not been rivalled," says one critic, "as a romance, reproducing with unfailing interest and accuracy, the figures, manners, and phrases of a past time, and it is full of beautiful touches of character." After reading the first portion of the book, Charlotte Brontë wrote in a letter to a friend, "What struck me most was the marvellous way in which the writer throws himself into the spirit and letters of the times whereof he treats, the allusions, the illustrations, the style, all seem to me so masterly in their exact keeping, their harmonious consistency, their nice natural truth." In *Esmond*, Thackeray has re-created the period of Queen Anne with remarkable success. Recapturing the spirit of that age, he has woven an intensely interesting and romantic story, in which the men and women of those times are made to live in a very real way, and which reflects with amazing accuracy, the life and thought of the days of Good Queen Anne.

QUESTIONS

1 There are certain incidents in this story which are at variance with the actual historical facts. Mention them.

2 Contrast the characters of Beatrix and her mother. Which of the two women do you prefer?

3 Do you think that historical novels are helpful or otherwise in the study of history? Write a short essay, giving your views on this question.

4 Relate the circumstances under which Henry Esmond made the acquaintance of "the fair lady of Castlewood."

5 Describe the appearance of the Viscountess Castlewood when Henry Esmond was presented to her as her page.

6 Say what you can about Father Holt, Dick the Scholar, and Tom Tusher. What part do they play in the story?

7 Which scene in the book has interested you most? Describe it as graphically as you can.

8 How did Esmond show his love for the family of Castlewood?

9 Chapter XV is entitled "A Plan is Afoot." What was this plan, and why did it fail?

10 Narrate what occurred in the Queen's Garden on the 27th of July, 1714.

11 Give some account of *two* historical personages who figure in this story.

12 Write a character sketch of Henry Esmond.

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