

When Knighthood Was In Flower

Or, The Love Story of Charles Brandon and Mary Tudor, the King's Sister, and Happening in the Reign of the August Majesty King Henry the Eighth.

Re-written and Rendered into Modern English from Sir Edwin Cassoden's Memoirs. By Edwin Cassoden [Charles Major]

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to tell you that you have greatly pleased the king with the new dance. Now teach him "honor and ruff" and your fortune is made. He has had some Jews and Lombards in of late to teach him new games at cards, but yours is worth all of them." Then, somewhat hastily and irrelevantly, "I



"But what if I do not wish?"

did not dance the new dance with any other gentleman, but I suppose you did not notice it," and she was gone before he could thank her.

CHAPTER VI. A RARE RIDE TO WINDSOR.

THE princess knew her royal brother. A man would receive quicker reward for inventing an amusement or a gaudy costume for the king than by winning him a battle. Later in life the highroad to his favor was in ridding him of his wife and helping him to a new one, a dangerous way, though, as Wolsey found, in his sorrow, when he sank his glory in poor Anne Boleyn.

Brandon took the hint and managed to let it be known to his play loving king that he knew the latest French games. The French Duc de Longueville had for some time been an honored prisoner at the English court, held as a hostage from Louis XII, but De Longueville was a blockhead, who could not keep his little black eyes off our fair ladies, who hated him, long enough to tell the deuce of spades from the ace of hearts. So Brandon was taken from his duties, such as they were, and placed at the card table. This was fortunate at first, for, being the best player, the king always chose him as his partner, and, as in every other game, the king always won. If he lost, there would soon be no game, and the man who won from him too frequently was in danger at any moment of being rated guilty of the very highest sort of treason. I think many a man's fall under Henry VIII. was owing to the fact that he did not always allow the king to win in some trivial matter of game or joust. Under these conditions everybody was anxious to be the king's partner. It is true he frequently forgot to divide his winnings, but his partner had this advantage at least—there was no danger of losing. That being the case, Brandon's seat opposite the king was very likely to excite envy, and the time soon came, Henry having learned the play, when Brandon had to face some one else, and the seat was too costly for a man without a treasury. It took but a few days to put Brandon hors de combat financially, and he would have been in a bad plight had not Wolsey come to his relief. After that he played and paid the king in his own coin.

This great game of "honor and ruff" occupied Henry's mind day and night during a fortnight. He feasted upon it to satiety, as he did with everything else, never having learned not to cloy his appetite by overfeeding. So we saw little of Brandon while the king's fever lasted, and Mary said she wished she had remained silent about the cards. You see, she could enjoy this new plaything as well as her brother, but the king, of course, must be satisfied first. They both had enough eventually, Henry in one way, Mary in another.

One day the fancy struck the king that he would rebuild a certain chapel at Windsor, so he took a number of the court, including Mary, Jane, Brandon and myself, and went with us up to London, where we lodged over night at Bridewell House. The next morning— as bright and beautiful a June day as ever gladdened the heart of a rose—we took horse for Windsor, a delightful seven league ride over a fair road.

Mary and Jane traveled side by side, with an occasional companion or two, as the road permitted. I was angry with Jane, as you know, so did not go near the girls, and Brandon, without any apparent intention one way or the other, allowed events to adjust themselves and rode with Cavendish and me.

We were perhaps forty yards behind the girls, and I noticed after a time that the Lady Mary kept looking backward in our direction, as if fearing rain from the east. I was in hopes that Jane, too, would fear the rain, but you would have sworn her neck was stiff, so straight ahead did she keep her face. We had ridden perhaps three leagues when the princess stopped her horse and turned in her saddle. I heard her voice, but did not understand what she said.

In a moment she was called out, "Master Brandon is wanted!" So that gentleman rode forward, and I followed him. When we came up to the girls, Mary said, "I fear my girth is loose."

Brandon at once dismounted to tighten it, and the others of our immediate party began to cluster around. Brandon tried the girth.

"My lady, it is as tight as the horse can well bear," he said.

"It is loose, I say," insisted the princess, with a little irritation. "The saddle feels like it. Try the other." Then, turning impatiently to the persons gathered around: "Does it require all of you, standing there like gaping bumpkins, to tighten my girth? Ride on. We can manage this without so much help." Upon this broad hint everybody rode ahead while I held the horse for Brandon, who went on with his search for the loose girth. While he was looking for it Mary leaned over her horse's neck and asked: "Were you and Cavendish settling all the philosophical points now in dispute, that you found him so interesting?"

"Not all," answered Brandon, smiling. "You were so absorbed I supposed it could be nothing short of that."

"No," replied Brandon again. "But the girth is not loose."

"Perhaps I only imagined it," returned Mary carelessly, having lost interest in the girth.

I looked toward Jane, whose eyes were bright with a smile, and turned Brandon's horse over to him. Jane's smile gradually broadened into a laugh and she said, "Edwin, I fear my girth is loose also."

"As the Lady Mary's was" asked I, unable to keep a straight face any longer.

"Yes," answered Jane, with a vigorous little nod of her head and a peal of laughter.

"Then drop back with me," I responded.

The princess looked at us with a half smile, half frown, and remarked, "Now you doubtless consider yourselves very brilliant and witty."

"Yes," returned Jane maliciously, nodding her head in emphatic assent as the princess and Brandon rode on before us.

"I hope she is satisfied now," said Jane sotto voce to me.

"So you want me to ride with you?" I replied.

"Yes," nodded Jane.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because I want you to," was the enlightening response.

"Then why did you not dance with me the other evening?"

"Because I did not want to."

"Short, but comprehensive," thought I, "but a sufficient reason for a maiden."

I said nothing, however, and after a time Jane spoke: "The dance was one thing and riding with you is another. I did not wish to dance with you, but I do wish to ride with you. You are the only gentleman to whom I would have said what I did about my girth being loose. As to the new dance, I do not care to learn it, because I would not dance it with any man but you, and not even with you—yet." This made me glad, and coming from my modest Jane meant a great deal. It meant that she cared for me and would some day be mine, but it also meant that she would take her own time and her own sweet way in being won. This was comforting, if not satisfying, and loosened my tongue. "Jane, you know my heart is full of love for you."

"Will the universe crumble?" she cried, with the most provoking little laugh. Now, that sentence was my rock ahead whenever I tried to give Jane some idea of the state of my affections. It was a part of the speech which I had prepared and delivered to Mary in Jane's hearing, as you already know. I had said to the princess: "The universe will crumble and the heavens roll up as a scroll ere my love shall alter or pale." It was not true, as I was forced to admit, almost with the same breath that spoke it. Jane had heard it and had stored it away in that memory of hers, so tenacious in holding to everything it should forget. It is wonderful what a fund of useless information some persons accumulate and cling to with a persistent determination worthy of a better cause. I thought Jane never would forget that unfortunate, abominable sentence spoken so grandiloquently to Mary. I wonder what she would have thought had she known that I had said substantially the same thing to a dozen others. I never should have won her in that case. She does not know it yet and never shall if I can prevent.

So Jane halted my effort to pour out my heart, as she always did.

"There is something that greatly troubles me," she said.

"What is it?" I asked in some concern.

"My mistress," she answered, nodding in the direction of the two riding ahead of us. "I never saw her so much interested in any one as she is in your friend, Master Brandon. Not that she is really in love with him as yet perhaps, but I fear it is coming, and I dread to see it. That incident of the loose girth is an illustration. Did you ever know anything so bold and transparent? Any one could see through it, and the worst of all is she seems not to care if every one does see. Now look at them ahead of us! No girl is so happy riding beside a man unless she is interested in him. She was dull enough until he joined her. He seemed in no hurry to come, so she resorted to the flimsy excuse of the loose girth to bring him. I am surprised that she even sought the shadow of an excuse, but did not order him forward without any pretense of one. Oh, I don't know what to do! It troubles me greatly. Do you know the state of his feelings?"

"No," I answered, "but I think he is heart whole, or nearly so. He told me he was not fool enough to fall in love with the king's sister, and I really believe he will keep his heart and head, even at that dizzy height. He is a cool fellow, if there ever was one."

"He certainly is different from other

men," returned Jane. "I think he has never spoken a word of love to her. He has said some pretty things, which she has reported to me; he has moralized to some extent, and has actually told her of some of her faults. I should like to see any one else take that liberty. She seems to like it from him, and says he inspires her with higher, better motives and a yearning to be good, but I am sure he has made no love to her."

"Perhaps it would be better if he did. It might cure her," I replied.

"Oh, no, no! Not now! At first, perhaps, but not now. What I fear is that if he remains silent much longer she will take matters in hand and speak herself. I don't like to say that—it doesn't sound well—but she is a princess, and it would be different with her from what it would be with an ordinary girl. She might have to speak first, or there might be no speaking from one who thought his position too far beneath her. She whose smallest desires drive her so will never forego so great a thing as the man she loves only for the want of a word or two."

Then it was that Jane told me of the scene with the note, of the little whispered confidences upon their pillows and a hundred other straws that showed only too plainly which way this worst of ill winds was blowing, with no good in it for any one. Now, who could have foretold this? It was easy enough to prophesy that Brandon would learn to love Mary, excite a passing interest and come off crestfallen, as all other men had done, but that Mary should love Brandon and he remain heart whole was an unlooked for event, one that would hardly have been predicted by the shrewdest prophet.

What Lady Jane said troubled me greatly, as it was but the confirmation of my own fears. Her opportunity to know was far better than mine, but I had seen enough to set me thinking.

Brandon, I believe, saw nothing of Mary's growing partiality at all. He could not help but find her wonderfully attractive and interesting, and perhaps it needed only the thought that she might love him to kindle a flame in his own breast. But at the time of our ride to Windsor Charles Brandon was not in love with Mary Tudor, however near it he may unconsciously have been.

But another trouble could not dim the sunlight in my own heart, and that ride to Windsor was the happiest day of my life up to that time. Even Jane threw off the little cloud over forehead and gathered and chatted and laughed like the creature of joy and gladness she was.

Ahead of us were the princess and Brandon. Every now and then her voice came back to us in a stave of a song, and her laughter, rich and low, wafted on the wings of the soft south wind, made the glad birds hush to catch its silvery note.

We all rode merrily on to Windsor, and when we arrived it was curious to see the great nobles, Buckingham, both the Howards, Seymour and a doz-

ens returned for card playing. But we spent two evenings with only four of us present prior to the disastrous events which changed everything, and of which I am soon to tell you. During these two evenings the "Sailor Lass" was in constant demand.

This pair, who should have remained apart, met constantly in and about the palace, and every glance added fuel to the flame. Part of the time it was the princess with her troublesome dignity, and part of the time it was Mary—simply Mary. Notwithstanding these haughty moods, any one with half an eye could see that the princess was gradually succumbing to the budding woman; that Brandon's stronger nature had dominated her with that half fear which every woman feels who loves a strong man—stronger than herself.

One day the rumor spread through the court that the old French king, Louis XII, who died, had asked Mary's hand in marriage. It was this probably which opened Brandon's eyes to the fact that he had been playing with the very worst sort of fire, and first made him see that in spite of himself, and almost without his knowledge, the girl had grown wonderfully sweet and dear to him. He now saw his danger and struggled to keep himself beyond the spell of her perilous glances and siren song. This modern Ulysses made a masterful effort, but alas, had no ships to carry him away and no wax with which to fill his ears. Wax is a good thing, and no one should enter the siren country without it. Ships, too, are good, with masts to the oneself to and sails and rudder and a gust of wind to waft one quickly past the island. In fact, one cannot take too many precautions when in those enchanted waters.

Matters began to look dark to me. Love had dawned in Mary's breast, that was sure, and for the first time, with all its fierce sweetness, or anything like it. In truth, it might, I hoped, die in the dawn, for my lady was as capricious as a May day, but it was love as plain as the sun at rising. She sought Brandon upon all occasions and made opportunities to meet him—not openly, at any rate; not with Brandon's knowledge, nor with any countenance on his part, but apparently caring little what he or any one else might see. Love lying in her heart had made her a little more shy than formerly in seeking him, but her straightforward way of taking whatever she wanted made her transparent little attempts at concealment very pathetic.

As for Brandon, the shaft had entered his heart, too, poor fellow, as surely as love had dawned in Mary's. He knew the hopeless misery such a passion would bring him, and helped the good Lord, in so far as he could, to answer his prayer and lead him not into temptation. As soon as he saw the truth he avoided Mary as much as possible.

As I said, we had spent several evenings with Mary after we came home from Windsor, at all of which her preference was shown in every movement. Some women are so expressive under strong emotion that every gesture, a turn of the head, a glance of the eyes, the lifting of a hand or the poise of the body speaks with a tongue of eloquence, and such was Mary. Her eyes would glow with a soft fire when they rested upon him, and her whole person told all too plainly what, in truth, it seemed she did not care to hide. When others were present, she would restrain herself somewhat, but with only Jane and myself she could hardly maintain a seemingly reserve. During all this time Brandon remained cool and really seemed unconscious of his wonderful attraction for her. It is hard to understand why he did not see it, but I really believe he did not. Although he was quite at ease in her presence, too much so, Mary sometimes thought, and strangely enough, sometimes told him in a fit of short lived, quickly repented anger that always set him laughing, yet there was never a word or gesture that could hint of undue familiarity.

After these last two meetings, although the invitations came frequently, none was accepted. Brandon had contrived to have his duties, ostensibly at least, occupy his evenings and did honestly what his judgment told him was the one thing to do—that is, remain away from a fire that could give no genial warmth, but was sure to burn him to the quick. I saw this only too plainly, but never a word or a look was spoken between us.

The more I saw of this man the more I respected him, and this curbing of his affections added to my already high esteem. The effort was doubly wise in Brandon's case. After a time Mary began to suspect his attempts to avoid her, and she grew cold and distant through pique. Her manner, however, had no effect upon Brandon, who did not, or at least appeared not to, notice it. This the girl could not endure, and, lacking strength to resist her heart, soon returned to the attack.

Mary had not seen Brandon for nearly two weeks and was growing anxious, when one day she and Jane met him in a forest walk near the river. Brandon was sauntering along reading when they overtook him. Jane told me afterward that Mary's conduct upon coming up to him was pretty and curious beyond the naming. At first she was inclined to be distant and say cutting things, but when Brandon began to grow restive under them and showed signs of turning back she changed front in the twinkling of an eye and was all sweetness. She laughed and smiled and dimpled, as only she could, and was full of bright glances and gracious words.

She tried a hundred little schemes to get him to herself for a moment—the hunting of a wild flower or a four leaved clover or the exploration of some little nook in the forest toward which she would lead him—but Jane did not at first take the hint and kept close at her heels. Mary's impulsive nature was not much given to hinting—she usually nodded, and most emphatically at that—so after a few failures she was invited, with others, to

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CHAPTER VII. LOVE'S FIERCE SWEETNESS. AFTER we had all returned to Greenwich the princess and Brandon were together frequently. Upon several occasions he was invited, with others, to

MAR... THE... Scored... be held... Oakwood... of this... men... Agricult... grateful... 1908... were fa... A few li... which t... fortunat... thing pe... tendanc... being ab... the grou... were the... great m... nington... partment... the exhib... while in... falling g... where th... work, fra... presentat... Pictures... strapping... work of t... prosperous... walls and... The dispos... considerable... articles... for quality... ing of roo... exhibit in... smaller th... In the m... S. Robert... riage man... an exhibi... swaton, M... Mr. Robert... built, nea... demand, M... Mr. Robert... plain-d... good qual... ever seen... sets of h... a heavy s... one. His g... amined an... Arnold, ex... ced "obscu... or. No far... exhibited... Bird fanc... in poultry... showing m... exhibit was... the building... exhibitors—... Graham O... made up... beautiful... were show... beautiful... were inform... ever seen... ship fair b... Grad s... The banner... for having... beautiful l... Marposse, ar... nothing... beautiful h... the groun... draught h... danted but... in the gene... carriage ho... in the wo... ing road w... entered, W... Britain sho... Kewick and... Frank Gray... pretty grey... of Valenti... horses sired... E. J. Little... with his bond...