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 His August Majesty King Henry the Eighth

Bewritten and Rendered Into Modern English From Sir Edwin Cas-koden's Memoir By Edwin Gaskoden [Charles Major]

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ing for Brandon and would gladly save his life if by so doing he would not interfere with any of his own plans and interests. Wolsey's heart was naturally kind when it cost him nothing, and much has been related of him which, to say the least, tells a great deal more than the truth. Ingratitude always recoils upon the ingrate, and Henry's loss was greater than Wolsey's when Wol-

sey fell. Henry really liked or, rather, admired Brandon, as had often been shown, but his nature was incapable of real affection. The highest point he ever reached was admiration, often quite extravagant for a time, but usually short lived, as naked admiration is apt to be. If he had affection for any one, it was for Mary. He could not but see the justice of his sister's position, but he had no intention of allowing fustice in the sense of right to interfere with justice in the sense of the king's

"You have been playing the devil at a great rate," he said. "You have disobeyed your brother and your king, have disgraced yourself, have probably made trouble between us and France, for if Louis refuses to take you now I will cram you down his throat, and by your own story have led a good man to the block. Quite a budget of evils for one woman to open. But I have noticed that the trouble a woman can make is in proportion to her beauty, and no wonder my little sister has made so much disturbance. It is strange, though, that he should so affect you. Master Wolsey, surely there has been witchery here. He must have used it abundantly to cast such a spell over my sister." Then turning to the princess: "Was it at any time possible for him to have given you a love powier, or did he ever make any signs or passes over you?"

"Oh, no; nothing of that sort. I never ate or drank anything which he could possibly have touched. And as to signs and passes, I know he never made any. Sir Edwin, you were always present when I was with him until after we left for Bristol. Did you ever see anything of the sort?"

I answered "No," and she went on: "Besides, I do not believe much in signs and passes. No one can affect others unless he can induce them to eat or drink something in which he has placed a love powder or potion. Then, again, Master Brandon did not want me to love him, and surely would not have used such a method to gain what he could have had freely without it."

I noticed that Henry's mind had wanlered from what Mary was saying and that his eyes were fixed upon me with a thoughtful, half vicious, inquiring stare that I did not like. I wondered what was coming next, but my curios-My was more than satisfied when the king asked, "So Caskoden was present at all your interviews?"

Ah! Holy Mother! I knew what was coming now and actually began to shrivel with fright. The king continmed, "I suppose he helped you to es-

I thought my day had come, but Mary's wit was equal to the occasion. With an expression on her face of the most dovelike innocence she quickly

"Oh, no! Neither he nor Jane knew anything of it. We were afraid they might divulge it." Shade of Sapphira!

A lie is a pretty good thing, too, now and then, and the man who says that word of Mary's was not a blessed lie must fight me with lance, battleax, sword and dagger till one or the other of us bites the dust in death, be he great or small. "I am glad to learn that you knew

nothing of it," said Henry, addressing me, and I was glad, too, for him to learn it, you may be sure.

Then spoke Wolsey: "If your majesty will permit I would say that I quite agree with you; there has been witchery here-witchery of the most potent kind; the witchery of lustrous eyes, of fair skin and rosy lips; the witchery of all that is sweet and intoxicating in womanhood, but Master Brandon has been the victim of this potent spell, not the user of it. One look upon your sister standing there, and I know your majesty will agree that Brandon had no choice against her."

"Perhaps you are right," returned

Henry. Then spoke Mary, all unconscious of her girlish egotism: "Of course he had not. Master Brandon could not help it"-which was true beyond all doubt. Henry laughed at her naivete, and Wolsey's lips wore a smile as he plucked the king by the sleeve and took him over to the window, out of

our hearing. Mary began to weep and show signs

of increasing agitation. After a short whispered conversation the king and Wolsey came back, and the former said, "Sister, if I promise to give Brandon his life will you consent decently and like a good girl to marry

Louis of France?" . Mary almost screamed: "Yes, yes; gladly. I will do anything you ask," and fell at his feet, hysterically em- | comfort me. You are like a soothing bracing his knees.

As the king stooped and lifted her to her feet he kissed her, saying, "His life shall be spared, my sweet sister." After this Henry felt that he had done a wonderfully gracious act and was the kindest hearted prince in all Christen-

Poor Mary! Two mighty kings and their great ministers of state had at last conquered you, but they had to strike through your love, the vulnerable spot in every woman.

Jane and I led Mary away through a side door, and the king called for De Longueville to finish the interrupted game of cards.

Before the play was resumed Wolsey stepped softly around to the king and asked, "Shall I affix your majesty's seal

to Brandon's pardon?" "Yes, but keep him in the Tower un-HI Mary is off for France."

Wolsey had certainly been a friend to Brandon in time of need; but, as usual, he had value received for his friendliness. He was an ardent advocate of the French marriage, notwithstanding the fact he had told Mary he



"Brother, let me die for him." was not, having no doubt been bribed thereto by the French king.

The good bishop had, with the hely of De Longueville, secretly sent Mary's miniature to the French court in order that it might as if by accident fall into the hands of Louis, and that worthy's little, old, shriveled heart began to flutter just as if there could be kindled

in it a genuine flame. Louis had sent to De Longueville who was then in England, for confirmation of Mary's beauty, and De Longueville grew so eloquent on the theme that his French majesty at once authorized negotiations.

As reports came in Louis grew more and more impatient. This did not, however, stand in the way of his driving a hard bargain in the matter of dower, for "the Father of the People" had the characteristics of his race and was intensely practical as well as inflammable. They never lose sight of the dotbut I do not find fault.

Louis little knew what thorns this lovely rose had underneath her velvet leaves, and what a veritable tartar sne would be, linked to the man she did not love, or he would have given Henry 400,000 crowns to keep her at home.

CHAPTER XIX.

PROSERPINA. O the value received for Wolsey's friendship to Brandon was Mary's promise to marry

once to Brandon, telling him his life | The interview will be the last and may would be spared and that she had help to make her duty easier." Mary made no delay this time-a fact of gave the cardinal a fleeting glance which she was very proud-but the Tower gates would not open until morning, so she had to wait. She compensated herself as well as she could by writing a letter, which I should like to give you here, but it is too long. She told him of his pardon, but not one word upon the theme he so wished yet

feared to hear of-her promise never to wed any other man. Mary had not told him of her final surrender in the matter of the French marriage, for the reason that she dreaded to pain him and feared he might refuse the sacri-

"It will almost kill him, I know," she said to Jane that night, "and I fear it is a false kindness I do him. He would, probably, rather die than that I should marry another. I know that I should rather die or have anything else terrible to happen than for another woman to possess him. promised me he never would, but suppose he should fail in his word, as I have today failed in mine? The thought of it absolutely burns me." And she threw herself into Jane's arms, and that little comforter tried to soothe her by making light of her fears.

"Oh, but suppose he should?" "Well, there is no need to borrow trouble. You said he promised you, and you know he is one who keeps his

"But I promised, too, and think what I am about to do. Mary in heaven, help me! But he is made of different stuff from me. I can and do trust his word, and when I think of all my troubles and when it seems that I cannot bear them the one comforting thought comes that no other woman will ever possess him-no other woman, no other woman. I am glad that my

only comfort comes from him." "I hoped that I might have been some comfort to you. I have tried hard enough," said Jane, who was jeal-

"Oh, yes, my sweet Jane. You do balm to an aching pain." And she kiss-

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we was manus that need ners. This was all that modest little Jane required. She was content to be a humble balm and did not aspire to the dignity of an

The girls then said their prayers in concert, and Mary gently wept herself to sleep. She lay dreaming and tossing nervously until sunrise, when she got up and added more pages to her letter until I called to take it.

I was on hand soon after the Tower gates had opened and was permitted to see Brandon at once. He read Mary's letter and acted like every other lover since love letters first began. He was quick to note the absence of the longed for but not expected assurance, and when he did not see it went straight to the point.

"She has promised to marry the French king to purchase my life. that not true?"

"I hope not," I answered evasively. "I have seen very little of her, and she has said nothing about it."

"You are evading my question, I see. Do you know nothing of it?" "Nothing," I replied, telling an un-

necessary lie. blockhead.'

"Make it a liar, Brandon," said I, laughingly, for I was sure of my place in his heart and knew that he meant no offense.

I never doubt a friend. One would better be trustful of ninety-nine friends who are false than doubtful of one who is true. Suspicion and supersensitiveness are at once the badge and the bane of a little soul.

I did not leave the Tower until noon, and Brandon's pardon had been delivered to him before I left. He was glad that the first news of it had come from

He naturally expected his liberty at once, and when told that he was to be honorably detained for a short time turned to me and said: "I suppose they are afraid to let me out until she is of for France. King Henry flatters me." I looked out of the window up Tower street and said nothing.

When I left, I took a letter to Mary which plainly told her he had divined it all, and she wrote a tear stained auswer, begging him to forgive ber for having saved his life at a cost greater than her own.

For several days I was kept busy carrying letters from Greenwich to the Tower and back again, but soop letters ceased to satisfy Mary, and she made up her mind that she must see blin. Nothing else would do. She must not. could not and, in short, would not go another day without seeing him-no. not another hour. Jane and I opposed her all we could, but the best we could accomplish was to induce her for Brandon's sake-for she was beginning to see that he was the one who had to suffer for her indiscretions - to ask Henry's permission, and if he refused. then try some other way. To determine was to act with Mary, so off she went without delay to hunt the king, taking Jane and me along as escort. How full we were of important business as we scurried along the corridors, one on each side of Mary, all talking excitedly at once! When anything was to be done, it always required three of

us to do it. We found the king, and without any prelude Mary proffered her request. Of course it was refused. Mary pouted and was getting ready for an outburst when Wolsey spoke up: "With your majesty's gracious permission, I would subscribe to the petition of the princess. She has been good enough to give her promise in the matter of so much importance to us, and in so small a thing as this I hope you may see Mary wanted to send a message at | your way clear toward favoring her. from her lustrous eyes full of surprise and gratitude and as speaking as a

Henry looked from one to the other of us for a moment and broke into a boisterous laugh.

"Oh, I don't care, so that you keep it secret. The old king will never know. We can hurry up the marriage. He is getting too much already-400,-000 crowns and a girl like you. He cannot complain if he have an heir. It would be a good joke on the miserly old dotard, but better on 'Ce Gros Garcon.' "

Mary sprang from her chair with a cry of rage. "You brute! Do you think I am as vile as you because I have the misfortune to be your sister, or that Charles Brandon is like you simply because he is a man?" Henry laughed, his health at that time being | don shall go free and shall again have too good for him to be ill natured. He had all he wanted out of his sister, so as a good companion, and really believe

her outbursts amused him. Mary hurriedly left the king and walked back to her room, filled with day to pay the penalty. I am at your shame and rage, feelings actively stimulated by Jane, who was equally indig-

Henry had noticed Jane's frown, but had laughed at her and had tried to catch and kiss her as she left, but she struggled away from him and fled

with a speed worthy of the cause. This insulting suggestion put a stop to Mary's visit to the Tower more effectually than any refusal could have done, and she sat down to pour forth

her soul's indignation in a letter. She remained at home then, but saw Brandon later, and to good purpose, as I believe, although I am not sure about

it even to this day. with Mary's miniature-the one that any use I should have grown suspihad been painted for Charles of Ger- cious-"my dear Caskoden, I know I many, but had never been given-and can trust you; especially when that a curl of her hair, and it looked as if which I have to say is for the happithis was all he would ever possess of

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prutal consent that Mary might see Brandon, and, with a Frenchman's belief in woman's depravity, was exceedingly anxious to keep them apart. To this end he requested that a member of his own retinue be placed near Brandon. To this Henry readily consented, and there was an end to even the letter writing. Opportunities increase in value doubly fast as they drift behind us, and now that the princess could not see Brandon or even write to him she regretted with her whole soul that she had not gone to the Tower when she had permission, regardless of what any one would say or think.

Mary was imperious and impatient by nature, but upon rare and urgent occasions could employ the very smoothest sort of finesse.

Henry's brutal selfishness in forcing upon her the French marriage, together with his cruel condemnation of Brandon and his vile insinuations against berself, had driven nearly every spark of affection for her brother from her heart. But she felt that she might feign an affection she did not feel, and that what she so wanted would be cheap at the price. Cheap? It would "Caskoden, you are either a liar or a be cheap at the cost of her immortal soul. Cheap? What she wanted was life's condensed sweets-the man she loved-and what she wanted to escape was life's distilled bitterness-marriage with a man she loathed. None but a pure woman can know the torture of that. I saw this whole disastrous campaign from start to finish. Mary began with a wide flank movement conducted under masked batteries and skillfully executed. She sighed over her troubles and cried a great deal, but told the king he had been such a dear, kind brother to her that she would gladly do anything to please him and advance his interests. She said it would be torture to live with that old creature. King Louis, but she would do it willingly to help her handsome brother, no matter how much she might suffer.

The king laughed and said: "Poor old Louis! What about him? What about his suffering? He thinks he is making such a fine bargain, but the Lord pity him when he has my little sister in his side for a thorn. He had better employ some energetic soul to prick him with needles and bodkins, for I think there is more power for disturbance in this little body than in any other equal amount of space in all the universe. You will furnish him all the trouble be wants, won't you,

"I shall try," said the princess de murely, perfectly willing to obey everything.

"Devil a doubt of that, and you wil succeed, too, or my crown's a stewpan." And he laughed at the huge joke he was about to perpetrate on his poor old royal brother.

It would seem that the tremendou dose of flattery administered by Mary would have been so plainly self interested as to alarm the dullest perception, but Henry's vanity was so dense and his appetite for flattery so great that he accepted it all without suspicion, and it made him quite affable and gracious.

Mary kept up her show of affection and docile obedience for a week or two until she thought Henry's suspicions were allayed, and then, after having done enough petting and fondling, as she thought, to start the earth itself a-moving-as some men are foolish enough to say it really does she began the attack direct by putting her arms about the king's neck and piteously begging him not to sacrifice her whole life by sending her to France.

Her pathetic, soul charged appea might have softened the heart of Caligula himself, but Henry was not even cruel. He was simply an animal so absorbed in himself that he could not

"Oh, it is out at last!" he said with a laugh. "I thought all this sweetness must have been for something. So the lady wants her Brandon and doesn't want her Louis, yet is willing to obey her dear, kind brother? Well, we'll take her at her word and let her obey. You may as well understand, once and for all, that you are to go to France. You promised to go decently if I would not cut off that fellow's head, and now I tell you that if I hear another whimper from you off it comes, and you will

go to France too." This brought Mary to terms quickly enough. It touched her one vulnerable spot-her love.

"I will go; I promise it again. You shall never hear another word that no harm shall come to him-to him." And she put her hands over her face to conceal her tears as she softly wept.

"The day you sail for France Branhis old post at court. I like the fellow you are more to blame than he."

"I am all to blame, and am ready this disposal to go when and where you choose," answered Mary most pathet-

Poor, fair Proserpina, with no kind mother Demeter to help her. The ground will soon open, and Pluto will have his bride.

That evening Cavendish took me aside and said his master, Wolsey, wished to speak to me privately at a convenient opportunity. So when the bishop left his card table an hour later I threw myself in his way. He spoke gayly to me, and we walked down the corridor arm in arm. I could not imagine what was wanted, but presently It came out: "My dear Caskoden"-had I took this letter to Brandon along I been one for whom he could have had ness of your friends. I am sure you. will never name me in connection with De Longueville heard of Henry's the suggestion I am about to make, and will use the thought only as your

> I did not know what was coming, but gave him the strongest assurance

> of my trustworthiness. "It is this: Louis of France is little better than a dead man. King Henry, perhaps, is not fully aware of this, and if he is he has never considered the

propability of his speedy death. The thought occurred to me that although the princess cannot dissuade her brother from this marriage, she may be able, in view of her ready and cheerful com-



"My dear Caskoden, I know I can trust

pliance, to extract some virtue out of her sore necessity and induce him to promise that in case of the death of Louis she herself shall choose her second husband."

"My lord," I replied, quickly grasping the point, "it is small wonder you rule this land. You have both brain and "I thank you, Sir Edwin, and hope

that both may always be at the service of you and your friends." I gave the suggestion to Mary as my own, recommending that she proffer

her request to the king in the presence of Wolsey, and, although she had little faith or hope, she determined to try. Within a day or two an opportunity offered, and she said to Henry: "I am ready to go to France any time you wish, and shall do it decently and willingly, but if I do so much for you, brother, you might at least promise me that when King Louis is dead I

may marry whomsoever I wish. He

will probably live forever, but let me

have at least that hope to give me what

cheer it may while I suffer." The ever present Wolsey, who was standing near and heard Mary's petition, interposed: "Let me add my prayer to that of her highness. We must give her her own way in something."

Mary was such a complete picture of wretchedness that I thought at the time she had really found a tender spot in Henry's heart, for he gave the promise. Since then I have learned, as you will shortly, that it was given simply to pacify the girl, and without any intention whatever of its being kept, but that, in case of the death of King Louis, Henry intended again to use his sister to his own advantage.

To be a beautiful princess is not to enjoy the bliss some people imagine. The earth is apt to open at any time and Pluto to snatch her away to-the Lord knows where.

Mary again poured out her soul on paper-a libation intended for Brandon. I made a dozen attempts in as many different ways to deliver her letters, but every effort was a failure, and this missive met the fate of the others. De Longueville kept close watch on his master's rival and complained to Henry about these attempts at communication. Henry laughed and said he would see that they were stopped, but paid no more attention to the matter.

If Mary, before her interview with Henry, had been averse to the French marriage, she was now equally anxious to hurry it on, and longed to go upon the rack in order that Brandon might be free. He, of course, objected as strenuously as possible to the purchase of his life by her marriage to Louis, but his better judgment told him-in fact, had told him from the first-that she would be compelled eventually to marry the French king. and common sense told him if it must be she might as well save his life at the same time. Furthermore, he felt a certain sense of delight in owing his life to her, and knew that the fact that she had saved him, that her sacrifice had not all been in vain, would make

it easier for her to bear. The most beautiful feature of the relations between these two lovers was their entire faith in each other. The way of their true love was at least not roughened by cobblestones of doubt, however impassable it was from moun-

tains of opposition. My inability to deliver Mary's letters did not deter her from writing them, and as she was to be married in a few days-De Longueville to act as proxyshe devoted her entire time to her letters and wrote pages upon pages, which she left with me to be delivered "after death," as she called her marriage.

At this time I was called away from court for a day or two, and when I returned and called upon Brandon at the Tower I found him whistling and singing, apparently as happy as a lark. "You heartless dog!" thought I at first, but I soon found that he felt more than happiness-exaltation. "Have you seen her?" I asked.

"Who?" As if there were more than one woman in all the world for him. "The princess." "Not since I left her at Bristol."

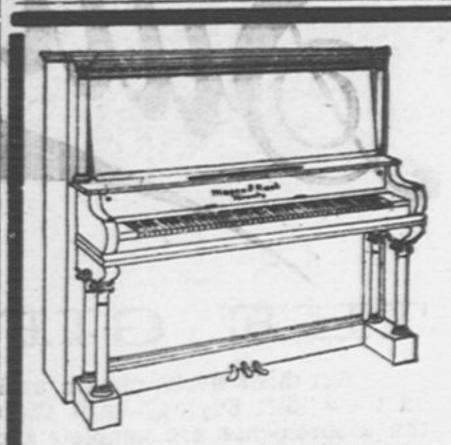
I believed then, and believe now. that this was a point blank falsehood, a very unusual thing for Brandon, but for some reason probably necessary in There was an expression in his face

which I could not interpret, but he wrote, as if carelessly scribbling on a scrap of paper that lay upon the table. the words, "Be careful," and I took the hint-we were watched. There is an unpleasant sensation when one feels that he is watched by unseen eyes, and after talking for awhile on common topics I left and took a boat for Green-

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