

There's a tall lean spectre draped in white, With heavy shadows on his face and hair, That hovers around our couches by night, And trembles ere we sleep with ghastly glare; Advancing at the sound of our feet on the floor, For spectres in daylight may not be seen— His wonted will still haunts our ears.

It looks and dwells with its taper hair, As a lithe bird might see for an unpaid debt, And it leaves from the shafts of the moon's hand White clouds of mist and what have you been? Some friend we have slighted, some word or deed, Or some old quarrel we have not mended, And left us to sigh o'er what might have been.

Is there no woe we would have laid to keep? No evil path we would have sought to flee, Or some old quarrel we have not mended, And left us to sigh o'er what might have been? Is not childhood's innocence far from us now, With a woe that down our path has shewn? And can we sit with unclouded brow, And unaltered what we with what might have been?

In every heart there's a tender spot, With some sweet hope lying buried there, A faded dream that once we have loved, Like the sunset-dew with its' sick of hair. The summer days come, and the summer hair goes, But the grave of that hope shall never be green, And the heart that cherish it only know The grief of that which what might have been.

But a mortal fancy, forgetting dead, And over a thing, no grief, no woe, And the loveliest lives will run to weeds, If left to brood on what might have been. Then let us cherish the heart's desire, And escape from this spectre tall and lean; While the heart is kept by that which was, Full in the end what might have been.

HOLMBY HOUSE.

This frank avowal created no small dismay in the little circle then assembled in his Majesty's outer apartment. Herbert turned pale, and trembled. Maxwell, as red as fire, seemed to doubt the evidence of his senses. A mild general Blythe, occupying a side table in the recess of a window, swore fearfully for five consecutive minutes in tones not loud but deep. The King remained totally unmoved. "Let the Commissioners be sent for," said he, in a dignified and collected manner, as he communicated to them.

The Cornet was fast recovering his former audacity. "I have taken measures with them already," said he; "they are in watch and ward even now, and must retreat, will they not, to the Parliament, which they have sworn to defend."

"By whose authority," demanded the King, sternly, but with visible uneasiness. The Cornet shook his head, laughed rudely, and pointed with his forefinger to his own private person.

"I would ask you, sir, as a favor," said the King, "to set them at liberty; and I demand, as a right," he added, drawing himself up, and flushing with a sense of impotent anger and outraged dignity, "to be permitted a sight of your instructions."

"There is every thing," answered the King, "in your Majesty will take the trouble to step up to this window."

And opening the casement, he pointed into the court-yard below, where indeed was drawn up as gallantly a squadron of cavalry as the whole Parliamentary army could boast, well armed, well mounted, bold and bronzed, with stalwart frames and stern, unflinching faces, possessed, moreover, of the self-confidence and disciplined valor inspired by a career of hard-won victories.

The King's heart was sore as he looked down on the court, but he played the part of a royalty too long not to know how to dissemble his feelings, and he turned to the Cornet with a smile and said: "Your instructions, sir, are in fair character, and legible without spelling. The language is dignified, forcible, and sufficiently intelligible, and admits of no further argument. I am ready to attend your good pleasure, with this proviso, that I stir not unless accompanied by the Commissioners. You have had your audience, sir; you may draw."

The Cornet, somewhat to his own surprise found himself making a respectful obeisance and retiring forthwith; but the King's coach was ordered to be got in readiness without delay, and that very day Charles Stuart, accompanied as he was by a retinue of his adherents, commenced the journey which led him, stage by stage, to his final resting place—the fatal window at Whitehall—the scaffold and the block.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"THE DEACON ATAN." Ebenezer the "Deacon Atan" was no bad specimen of the species. He was tall, spare, and somewhat stern and desperate fanatic, who allowed no consideration of fear or mercy to turn him from the path of duty; whose sense of personal danger as of personal responsibility was completely swallowed up in his religious enthusiasm; who would follow such an officer as George Effingham into the very jaws of death; and of whom such a man as Cromwell well knew how to make a rare and efficient instrument. Ebenezer's orders were to hold no communication with his prisoner, to neglect no precaution for his security; and having reported his capture to the general in command at Northampton, to proceed at least one stage further on his road to London ere he halted for the night.

Humphrey's very name was consequently unknown to the party who had him in charge. As he had no papers whatever upon his person when captured, the subaltern in command of the picket at Brixworth had considered it useless to ask a question to which it was so easy to give a fictitious answer; and Ebenezer, although recognized by him personally as an old acquaintance, had neglected to ascertain his name even after their first introduction by means of the flat of the Cavalier's sabre. Through his back had tangled for weeks from the effects of a low fever, and he was, therefore, in a low state of opportunity of learning the style and title of the prisoner whom he had helped to bring before Cromwell at his headquarters, yet, with an idiosyncrasy peculiar to the British soldier, and a degree of saxon interference with his friend George's temper, which he never thought of making inquiry as to who or what was the hard-bitten Malignant that had so nearly knocked him off his horse in the Gloucestershire lane.

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gained—it seemed more like some wild and feverish dream than a likely, clear reality. And the poor sinner! How sincerely he mourned for the good horse; how well he had always carried him; how gentle and gallant and obedient he was; how he turned to his master's hand and sprang to his master's voice. How fond he was of him; and to think of him being taken from him by the water-side! It was hard to bear.

"Strange how a dumb animal can smell itself round the human heart! What associations may be connected with a horse's arching ear or the intelligent glance of a dog's eye. How they can bring back to us the happy 'long, long ago,' the magic time that seems brighter and brighter as we contemplate it from a greater and greater distance; how they can recall the soft tones and kindly glances that are hushed, perhaps, and dim and far for evermore; perhaps, the bitter stroke of all, estrangement and altered now. 'Love me, love my dog!'—there was never a truer proverb. Ay! love my dog, love my horse, love all that came about me; the dress I wore, the words I have spoken, the very ground I tread upon; but do not surprise that I should do so, when I think of the whole subsequent life of Ebenezer's instincts as a soldier predominant over his temptation as an orator, and in less than five minutes he was once more in the saddle, wary and vigilant, closing his files carefully round the captured Royalist as they wound down the stoney street in the direction of the London road.

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The latter worked hard till nightfall. It was his custom now. He seemed never so much as when in repose. He acted like a traveler who esteems his time, and that which leads to the accomplishment of his journey. Enjoying the confidence of Cromwell and the respect of the whole army, won, in despite of his antecedents, by a career of cool and determined bravery, he seemed to be building up for himself a new and independent station, stone by stone as it were, and grudging no amount of sacrifice, no exertion to raise it, only by an inch. The enthusiasm of George's temperament was counterbalanced by sound judgment and a highly perspicacious intellect, and consequently, he was not a fanaticism which had first impelled him to join the Revolutionary party, had become considerably modified by all he saw and heard, and admitted to the councils of the Parliament, and better acquainted with their motives and opinions. He no longer deemed that such men as Fairfax, Irton, even Cromwell, were directly inspired by Heaven, but he could not conceal from himself that their energies and abilities were calculated to win for them the high places of the earth. He knew more of the weaknesses of either side and he could not doubt for a moment which must become the dominant party. If not a better party, if not a better, the *de-vict* Cavalier had become unquestionably a wiser man, and having determined to follow his own path, he contending factions was capable of saving the country, and which was obviously on the high road to power, he never regretted for an instant that he had joined its ranks. Nor looked back as Bosville would have done under similar conditions, he had longed to long to all the illusions of romance and chivalry which shed a glare over the downfall of the dashing Cavaliers. Effingham's we need hardly say, was a temperamental of extraordinary perseverance and uncomprehending devotion to duty. He now proposed to himself a certain aim and end in life. From the direction which led to his attainment he never swerved one inch, as he never halted for an instant by the way. He had seemed to win a high and influential position in the world, and he had at once since all malicious remarks, on his Royalist antecedents, as should raise him, if not to wealth at least to honor, and above all, such as to enable him to throw the shield of his protection over all and any whom he should think it worth his while to shelter and defend. Far in the distance, like some strong swimmer battling successfully against wind and tide, he discerned the beacon which he had resolved to reach, and though he had not the strength and neglected no advantage of any or of another, he never relaxed for an instant from his exertions. He who is not advancing is necessarily losing way. Such tenacity of purpose will be served at last, as indeed it fully merits to be, and this Saxon quality Effingham possessed for good or ill, in the most extreme form.

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The latter worked hard till nightfall. It was his custom now. He seemed never so much as when in repose. He acted like a traveler who esteems his time, and that which leads to the accomplishment of his journey. Enjoying the confidence of Cromwell and the respect of the whole army, won, in despite of his antecedents, by a career of cool and determined bravery, he seemed to be building up for himself a new and independent station, stone by stone as it were, and grudging no amount of sacrifice, no exertion to raise it, only by an inch. The enthusiasm of George's temperament was counterbalanced by sound judgment and a highly perspicacious intellect, and consequently, he was not a fanaticism which had first impelled him to join the Revolutionary party, had become considerably modified by all he saw and heard, and admitted to the councils of the Parliament, and better acquainted with their motives and opinions. He no longer deemed that such men as Fairfax, Irton, even Cromwell, were directly inspired by Heaven, but he could not conceal from himself that their energies and abilities were calculated to win for them the high places of the earth. He knew more of the weaknesses of either side and he could not doubt for a moment which must become the dominant party. If not a better party, if not a better, the *de-vict* Cavalier had become unquestionably a wiser man, and having determined to follow his own path, he contending factions was capable of saving the country, and which was obviously on the high road to power, he never regretted for an instant that he had joined its ranks. Nor looked back as Bosville would have done under similar conditions, he had longed to long to all the illusions of romance and chivalry which shed a glare over the downfall of the dashing Cavaliers. Effingham's we need hardly say, was a temperamental of extraordinary perseverance and uncomprehending devotion to duty. He now proposed to himself a certain aim and end in life. From the direction which led to his attainment he never swerved one inch, as he never halted for an instant by the way. He had seemed to win a high and influential position in the world, and he had at once since all malicious remarks, on his Royalist antecedents, as should raise him, if not to wealth at least to honor, and above all, such as to enable him to throw the shield of his protection over all and any whom he should think it worth his while to shelter and defend. Far in the distance, like some strong swimmer battling successfully against wind and tide, he discerned the beacon which he had resolved to reach, and though he had not the strength and neglected no advantage of any or of another, he never relaxed for an instant from his exertions. He who is not advancing is necessarily losing way. Such tenacity of purpose will be served at last, as indeed it fully merits to be, and this Saxon quality Effingham possessed for good or ill, in the most extreme form.

The weakness of a strong nature, like the flaws in the marble column, are, however, a fit subject for ridicule and remark. The general, despite his grave appearance and his powerful intellect was as childish in some matters as his neighbors. Ever since the concentration of a large Parliamentary force around Northampton, and the investment, so to speak, of Holmby House by the redoubtable Cornet Joyce, it had been judged advisable by the authorities to station a strong detachment of military troops, accompanied by a solitary dragoon as an escort, or even at times entirely alone, the general would gallop over to beat up the Lieutenant Allgood's quarters, and returning leisurely in the dark, would drop the rein on his horse's neck, and suffer him to walk quietly throughout the outskirts of the park at Boughton, whilst the master looked long the wistfully at the casket containing the jewel which he had sternly resolved to win. On this day of Humphrey's capture, the very eagerness on the part of Effingham to prevent an interview with the prisoner, should say, to enjoy the only relaxation he permitted himself, served to render him somewhat impatient of Ebenezer's long-winded communications; and by cutting short the narrative of that verbose official, he had been obliged to interrupt his old friend, which, had he believed in its possibility, he would have been sorry to miss.

A bright moon shone upon the waving fern and fine old trees of Broughton Park as George returned from his customary visit to the out-post. He was later than usual, and the soft southern breeze wafted on his ear the iron tones that were tolling midnight through Northampton, reporting myself to General Effingham by the way, and to push on a stage further without delay ere I halted my party for the night. With regard to the prisoner, the captive, as indeed I may say, of our low and spare, who fell a prey to us under Brixworth, even as a bird falls a prey to the fowler, and who trusted in the aid of

weary, careworn heart; seemed to whisper to him of higher, holier joys than worldly fame and gratified pride, even than successful love—to urge upon him the beauty of humility, and self-sacrifice, and hope full, child-like trust—the triumph of the resignation which far out-shines all the splendors of conquest, which wreaths a victory crown on the jaws of defeat.

"Go to the devil, sir!" exclaimed George Effingham, with an energy of impatience that completely dissipated the thread of the worthy sergeant's discourse; are you to take up my time standing preaching there, instead of attending to your duty, as you are ordered, sir; be off, and comply with them. Your horses are fresh, your journey before you, and the sun going down. I shall take care that the time of your arrival in London is reported to me, and was he to you if you tarry by the way, as you are called in your ridiculous hypocritical jargon. To the right—fare!"

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