HENTY GEORGE ALFRED

FRIENDS, THOUGH DIVIDED: A TALE OF THE CIVIL WAR

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Содержание

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PREFACE

My dear lads: Although so long a time has elapsed since the great civil war in England, men are still almost as much divided as they were then as to the merits of the quarrel, almost as warm partisans of the one side or the other. Most of you will probably have formed an opinion as to the rights of the case, either from your own reading, or from hearing the views of your elders.

For my part, I have endeavored to hold the scales equally, to relate historical facts with absolute accuracy, and to show how much of right and how much of wrong there was upon either side. Upon the one hand, the king by his instability, bad faith, and duplicity alienated his best friends, and drove the Commons to far greater lengths than they had at first dreamed of. Upon the other hand, the struggle, begun only to win constitutional rights, ended—owing to the ambition, fanaticism, and determination to override all rights and all opinions save their own, of a numerically insignificant minority of the Commons, backed by the strength of the army—in the establishment of the most

complete despotism England has ever seen.

It may no doubt be considered a failing on my part that one of my heroes has a very undue preponderance of adventure over the other. This I regret; but after the scale of victory turned, those on the winning side had little to do or to suffer, and one's interest is certainly with the hunted fugitive, or the slave in the Bermudas, rather than with the prosperous and well-to-do citizen.

Yours very sincerely,
G.A. HENTY.

CHAPTER I.
THE EVE OF THE WAR

It was a pleasant afternoon in the month of July, 1642, when three young people sat together on a shady bank at the edge of a wood some three miles from Oxford. The country was undulating and picturesque, and a little more than a mile in front of them rose the lofty spire of St. Helen's, Abingdon. The party consisted of two lads, who were about fifteen years of age, and a girl of ten. The lads, although of about the same height and build, were singularly unlike. Herbert Rippinghall was dark and grave, his dress somber in hue, but good in material and well made. Harry Furness was a fair and merry-looking boy; good humor was the distinguishing characteristic of his face; his somewhat bright and fashionably cut clothes were carelessly put on, and it was clear that no thought of his own appearance or good looks entered his mind. He wore his hair in ringlets, and had on his head a broad hat of felt with a white feather, while his companion wore a plain cap, and his hair was cut closely to his head.

"It is a bad business, Harry," the latter said, "but, there is one satisfaction that, come what may, nothing can disturb our friendship. We have never had a quarrel since we first met at the old school down there, six years ago. We have been dear friends always, and my only regret has been that your laziness

has prevented our being rivals, for neither would have grudged the other victory."

"No, indeed, Herbert. But there was never a chance of that. You have always been Mr. Gregory's prize boy, and are now head of the school; while I have always been in his bad books. But, as you say, Herbert, we have been dear friends, and, come what will, we'll continue so. We cannot agree on the state of the kingdom, and shall never do so. We have both taken our views from our parents; and indeed it seems to me that the question is far too difficult a one for boys like us to form any opinion of it. When we see some of the best and wisest in the land ranging themselves on either side, it is clear that even such a wise noddle as yours—to say nothing of a feather brain like mine—cannot form any opinion on a subject which perplexes our elders and betters."

"That is true, Harry; but still—"

"No, no, Herbert, we will have no argument. You have the best of it there, and I fall back upon authority. My father, the colonel, is for the king; yours for the Parliament. He says that there are faults on both sides, and indeed, for years he favored the Commons. The king's acts were unconstitutional and tyrannical, and my father approved of the bold stand which Sir George Elliot made against him. Now, however, all this has been changed, he tells me, and the Commons seek to rule without either king or peers. They have sought to impose conditions which would render them the lords absolute of England, and reduce the king to a mere puppet. They have, too, attacked the Church, would

abolish bishops, and interfere in all matters spiritual. Therefore, my father, while acknowledging the faults which the king has committed, and grieving over the acts which have driven the Parliament to taking up a hostile attitude to him, yet holds it his duty to support him against the violent men who have now assumed power, and who are aiming at the subversion of the constitution and the loss of the country."

"I fear, also," Herbert said, "that the Commons have gone grievously beyond their rights, although, did my father hear me say so, I should fall under his gravest displeasure. But he holds that it is necessary that there should be an ecclesiastical sweep, that the prelates should have no more power in the land, that popery should be put down with an iron hand, and that, since kings cannot be trusted to govern well, all power should be placed in the hands of the people. My own thoughts do incline toward his; but, as you say, when one sees men like my Lord Falkland, who have hitherto stood among the foremost in the ranks of those who demand that the king shall govern according to law, now siding with him against them, one cannot but feel how grave are the difficulties, and how much is to be said on either side. How is one to choose? The king is overbearing, haughty, and untrue to his word. The Parliament is stiff-necked and bent upon acquiring power beyond what is fair and right. There are, indeed, grievous faults on both sides. But it seems to me that should the king now have his way and conquer the Commons, he and his descendants will henceforth govern as absolute monarchs, and

the liberty of the people will be endangered; while on the other hand, should the Parliament gain the upper hand, they will place on a firm basis the liberties of Englishmen, and any excesses which they may commit will be controlled and modified by a future parliament, for the people of England will no more suffer tyranny on the part of the Commons than of the king; but while they cannot change the one, it is in their power to elect whom they will, and to send up men who will govern things moderately and wisely."

"At any rate," Harry said, "my father thinks that there is neither moderation nor wisdom among the zealots at Westminster; and as I hear that many nobles and country gentlemen throughout England are of the same opinion, methinks that though at present the Parliament have the best of it, and have seized Portsmouth, and the Tower, and all the depots of arms, yet that in the end the king will prevail against them."

"I trust," Herbert continued earnestly, "that there will be no fighting. England has known no civil wars since the days of the Roses, and when we see how France and Germany are torn by internal dissensions, we should be happy indeed that England has so long escaped such a scourge. It is indeed sad to think that friends should be arrayed against each other in a quarrel in which both sides are in the wrong."

"I hope," Harry said, "that if they needs must fight, it will soon be over, whichever way fortune may turn."

"I think not," Herbert answered. "It is a war of religion as

much as a war for power. The king and the Commons may strive who shall govern the realm; but the people who will take up arms will do it more for the triumph of Protestantism than for that of Pym and Hampden."

"How tiresome you both are," Lucy Rippinghall interrupted, pouting. "You brought me out to gather flowers, and you do nothing but talk of kings and Parliament, as if I cared for them. I call it very rude. Herbert is often forgetful, and thinks of his books more than of me; but you, Master Harry, are always polite and gentle, and I marvel much that you should be so changed to-day."

"Forgive me," Harry said, smiling. "We have been very remiss, Miss Lucy; but we will have no more of high politics, and will, even if never again," he said sadly, "devote all our energies to getting such a basket of flowers for you as may fill your rooms with beaupots. Now, if your majesty is ready to begin, we are your most obedient servants."

And so, with a laugh, the little party rose to their feet, and started in quest of wild flowers.

The condition of affairs was at the outbreak of the civil war such as might well puzzle older heads than those of Harry Furness or Herbert Rippinghall, to choose between the two powers who were gathering arms.

The foundations of the difficulty had been laid in the reign of King James. That monarch, who in figure, manners, and mind was in the strongest contrast to all the English kings who had

preceded him, was infinitely more mischievous than a more foolish monarch could have been. Coarse in manner—a buffoon in demeanor—so weak, that in many matters he suffered himself to be a puppet in the hands of the profligates who surrounded him, he had yet a certain amount of cleverness, and an obstinacy which nothing could overcome. He brought with him from Scotland an overweening opinion of the power and dignity of his position as a king. The words—absolute monarchy—had hitherto meant only a monarch free from foreign interference; to James they meant a monarchy free from interference on the part of Lords or Commons. He believed implicitly in the divine right of kings to do just as they chose, and in all things, secular and ecclesiastical, to impose their will upon their subjects.

At that time, upon the Continent, the struggle of Protestantism and Catholicism was being fought out everywhere. In France the Huguenots were gradually losing ground, and were soon to be extirpated. In Germany the Protestant princes had lost ground. Austria, at one time halting between two opinions, had now espoused vehemently the side of the pope, and save in Holland and Switzerland, Catholicism was triumphing all along the line. While the sympathies of the people of England were strongly in favor of their co-religionists upon the Continent, those of James inclined toward Catholicism, and in all matters ecclesiastical he was at variance with his subjects. What caused, if possible, an even deeper feeling of anger than his interference in church matters, was his claim to influence the decisions of

the law courts. The pusillanimity of the great mass of the judges hindered them from opposing his outrageous claims, and the people saw with indignation and amazement the royal power becoming infinitely greater and more extended than anything to which Henry VIII. or even Elizabeth had laid claim. The negotiations of the king for a marriage between his son and the Infanta of Spain raised the fears of the people to the highest point. The remembrance of the Spanish armada was still fresh in their minds, and they looked upon an alliance with Spain as the most unholy of contracts, and as threatening alike the religion and liberties of Englishmen.

Thus when at King James' death King Charles ascended the throne, he inherited a legacy of trouble. Unhappily, his disposition was even more obstinate than that of his father. His training had been wholly bad, and he had inherited the pernicious ideas of his father in reference to the rights of kings. Even more unfortunately, he had inherited his father's counselors. The Duke of Buckingham, a haughty, avaricious, and ambitious noble, raised by King James from obscurity, urged him to follow the path of his father, and other evil counselors were not wanting. King Charles, indeed, had an advantage over his father, inasmuch as his person was stately and commanding, his manner grave and dignified, and his private life irreproachable. The conflicts which had continued throughout the reign of his father between king and Parliament speedily broke out afresh. The Commons refused to grant supplies, unless the king granted rights and privileges

which he deemed alike derogatory and dangerous. The shifty foreign policy of England was continued, and soon the breach was as wide as it had been during the previous reign.

After several Parliaments had been called and dissolved, some gaining advantage from the necessities of the king, others meeting only to separate after discussions which imbittered the already existing relations, for ten years the king dispensed with a Parliament. The murder of the Duke of Buckingham by Felton brought no alleviation to the situation. In Ireland, Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, ruled with tyrannical power. He was a man of clear mind and of great talent, and his whole efforts were devoted to increasing the power of the king, and so, as he considered, the benefit of the country. In Ireland he had a submissive Parliament, and by the aid of this he raised moneys, and ruled in a manner which, tyrannical as it was, was yet for the benefit of that country. The king had absolute confidence in him, and his advice was ever on the side of resistance to popular demands. In England the chief power was given to Archbishop Land, a high church prelate, bent upon restoring many of the forms of Catholic worship, and bitterly opposed to the Puritan spirit which pervaded the great mass of the English people.

So far the errors had been entirely upon the side of the king. The demands of the Commons had been justified by precedent and constitutional rule. The doings of the king were in equal opposition to these. When at last the necessity of the situation compelled Charles to summon a Parliament, he was met by

them in a spirit of absolute defiance. Before any vote of supply would he taken, the Commons insisted upon the impeachment of Strafford, and Charles weakly consented to this. The trial was illegally carried on, and the evidence weak and doubtful. But the king's favorite was marked out for destruction, and to the joy of the whole kingdom was condemned and executed. A similar fate befell Laud, and encouraged by these successes, the demands of the Commons became higher and higher.

The ultimatum which at last the Puritan party in Parliament delivered to the king, was that no man should remain in the royal council who was not agreeable to Parliament; that no deed of the king should have validity unless it passed the council, and was attested under their hands; that all the officers of the state and principal judges should be chosen with consent of Parliament, and enjoy their offices for life; that none of the royal family should marry without consent of Parliament or the council; that the penal laws should be executed against Catholics; that the votes of popish lords should not be received in the Peers, and that bishops should be excluded from the House; that the reformation of the liturgy and church government should be carried out according to the advice of Parliament; that the ordinances which they had made with regard to the militia should be submitted to; that the justice of Parliament should pass upon all delinquents, that is, upon all officials of the state and country who had assisted in carrying out the king's ordinances for the raising of taxes; that a general pardon should he granted, with such exceptions as

should he advised by Parliament; that the fort and castles should be disposed of by consent of Parliament; and that no peers should be made but with the consent of both Houses. They demanded also that they should have the power of appointing and dismissing the royal ministers, of naming guardians for the royal children, and of virtually controlling military, civil, and religious affairs.

As it was clear that these demands went altogether beyond the rights of the Commons, and that if the king submitted to them the power of the country would be solely in their hands, while he himself would become a cipher, he had no course open to him but to refuse assent, and to appeal to the loyal nobility and gentry of the country.

It is true that many of these rights have since been obtained by the Houses of Parliament; but it must be remembered that they were altogether alien at the time to the position which the kings of England had hitherto held, and that the body into whose hands they would be intrusted would be composed solely of one party in the state, and that this party would be controlled by the fanatical leaders and the ministers of the sects opposed to the Established Church, which were at that time bitter, narrow, and violent to an extent of which we have now no conception.

The attitude thus assumed by Parliament drove from their ranks a great many of the most intelligent and enlightened of those who had formerly sided with them in their contest against the king. These gentlemen felt that intolerable as was the despotic power of a king, still more intolerable would it be to be governed

by the despotic power of a group of fanatics. The liberty of Englishmen was now as much threatened by the Commons as it had been threatened by the king, and to loyal gentlemen the latter alternative was preferable. Thus there were on both sides earnest and conscientious men who grieved deeply at being forced to draw swords in such a quarrel, and who felt that their choice of sides was difficult in the extreme. Falkland was the typical soldier on the royal side, Hampden on that of the Commons.

It is probable that were England divided to-morrow under the same conditions, men would be equally troubled upon which side to range themselves. At this period of the struggle, with the exception of a few hot-headed followers of the king and a few zealots on the side of the Commons, there was a general hope that matters would shortly be arranged, and that one conflict would settle the struggle.

The first warlike demonstration was made before the town of York, before whose walls the king, arriving with an armed force, was refused admittance by Sir John Hotham, who held the place for the Parliament. This was the signal for the outbreak of the war, and each party henceforth strained every nerve to arm themselves and to place their forces in the field.

The above is but a brief sketch of the circumstances which led the Cavaliers and Puritans of England to arm themselves for civil war. Many details have been omitted, the object being not to teach the history of the time, but to show the general course of events which had led to so broad and strange a division

between the people of England. Even now, after an interval of two hundred years, men still discuss the subject with something like passion, and are as strong in their sympathies toward one side or the other as in the days when their ancestors took up arms for king or Commons.

It is with the story of the war which followed the conversation of Harry Furness and Herbert Rippinghall that we have to do, not with that of the political occurrences which preceded it. As to these, at least, no doubts or differences of opinion can arise. The incidents of the war, its victories and defeats, its changing fortunes, and its final triumph are matters beyond the domain of politics, or of opinion; and indeed when once the war began politics ceased to have much further sway. The original questions were lost sight of, and men fought for king or Parliament just as soldiers nowadays fight for England or France, without in any concerning themselves with the original grounds of quarrel.

CHAPTER II.
FOR THE KING

It was late that evening when Sir Henry Furness returned from Oxford; but Harry, anxious to hear the all-absorbing news of the day, had waited up for him.

"What news, father?" he said, as Sir Henry alighted at the door.

"Stirring news, Harry; but as dark as may be. War appears to be now certain. The king has made every concession, but the more he is ready to grant, the more those Puritan knaves at Westminster would force from him. King, peers, bishops, Church, all is to go down before this knot of preachers; and it is well that the king has his nobles and gentry still at his back. I have seen Lord Falkland, and he has given me a commission in the king's name to raise a troop of horse. The royal banner will be hoisted at Nottingham, and there he will appeal to all his loyal subjects for aid against those who seek to govern the nation."

"And you think, sir, that it will really be war now?" Harry asked.

"Ay, that will it, unless the Commons go down on their knees and ask his majesty's pardon, of which there is, methinks, no likelihood. As was to be expected, the burghers and rabble of the large towns are everywhere with them, and are sending up

petitions to the Commons to stand fast and abolish everything. However, the country is of another way of thinking, and though the bad advisers of the king have in times past taken measures which have sorely tried our loyalty, that is all forgotten now. His majesty has promised redress to all grievances, and to rule constitutionally in future, and I hear that the nobles are calling out their retainers in all parts. England has always been governed by her kings since she was a country, and we are going to try now whether we are to be governed in future by our kings or by every tinker, tailor, preacher, or thief sent up to Westminster. I know which is my choice, and to-morrow I shall set about raising a troop of lads of the same mind."

"You mean to take me, sir, I hope," Harry said.

"Take you?" his lather repeated, laughing. "To do what?"

"To fight, certainly," Harry replied. "I am sure that among the tenants there is not one who could use the small sword as I can, for you have taught me yourself, and I do not think that I should be more afraid of the London pikemen than the best of them."

"No, no, Harry," his father said, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder; "I do not doubt your bravery. You come of a fighting stock indeed, and good blood cannot lie. But you are too young, my boy."

"But if the war goes on for a couple of years, father."

"Ay, ay, my boy; but I hope that it will be ended in a couple of months. If it should last—which God forbid!–you shall have your chance, never fear. Or, Harry, should you hear that aught

has happened to me, mount your horse at once, my boy; ride to the army, and take your place at the head of my tenants. They will of course put an older hand in command; but so long as a Furness is alive, whatever be his age, he must ride at the head of the Furness tenants to strike for the king. I hear, by the way, Harry, that that Puritan knave, Rippinghall, the wool-stapler, is talking treason among his hands, and says that he will add a brave contingent to the bands of the Commons when they march hither. Hast heard aught about it?"

"Nothing, father, but I hope it is not true. I know, however, that Master Rippinghall's thoughts and opinions lie in that direction, for I have heard from Herbert—"

"Ah, the son of the wool-stapler. Hark you, Harry, this is a time when we must all take sides for or against the king. Hitherto I have permitted your acquaintance with the wool-stapler's son, though, in truth, he be by birth no fit companion for you. But times have changed now. The sword is going to be drawn, and friends of the king can no longer be grip hands with friends of the Commons. Did my own brother draw sword for Parliament, we would never speak again. Dost hear?"

"Yes, sir; and will of course obey your order, should you determine that I must speak no more to Herbert. But, as you say, I am a boy yet, too young to ride to the wars, and Herbert is no older. It will be time for us to quarrel when it is time for us to draw the sword."

"That is so, Harry, and I do not altogether forbid you speaking

with him. Still the less you are seen together, the better. I like the lad, and have made him welcome here for your sake. He is a thoughtful lad, and a clever one; but it is your thoughtful men who plot treason, and until the storm be overpast, it is best that you see as little of him as may be. And now I have eaten my supper, and it is long past the time that you should have been in bed. Send down word by Thomas Hardway to Master Drake, my steward, to bid him send early in the morning notices that all my tenants shall assemble here to-morrow at four in the afternoon, and bid the cook come to me. We shall have a busy day to-morrow, for the Furness tenantry never gather at the hall and go out empty. And short though be the notice, they shall not do so this time, which to some of us may, perchance, be the last."

The next day there was bustle and hurry at Furness Hall. The ponds were dragged for fish; the poultry yard was scoured for its finest birds; the keepers were early afield, and when they returned with piles of hares and rabbits, these were seized by the cook and converted into huge pies and pasties. Two sheep were slaughtered, and the scullions were hard at work making confections of currants, gooseberries, plums, and other fruits from the garden. In the great hall the tables were laid, and when this was done, and all was in readiness, the serving men were called up to the armory, and there, throughout the day, the cleaning of swords and iron caps, the burnishing of breast and back pieces, the cleaning of firelocks, and other military work went on with all haste.

The Furness estates covered many a square mile of Berkshire, and fifty sturdy yeomen dismounted before Furness Hall at the hour named by Sir Henry. A number of grooms and serving men were in attendance, and took the horses as they rode up, while the major-domo conducted them to the great picture gallery. Here they were received by Sir Henry with a stately cordiality, and the maids handed round a great silver goblet filled with spiced wine.

At four exactly the major-domo entered and announced that the quota was complete, and that every one of those summoned was present.

"Serve the tables then," Sir Henry said, as he led the Way to the great dining-hall.

Sir Henry took the head of the broad table, and bade Harry sit on his right hand, while the oldest of the tenants faced him at the opposite end. Then a troop of servants entered bearing smoking joints, cold boars' heads, fish, turkeys, geese, and larded capons. These were placed upon the table, with an abundance of French wine, and of strong ale for those who preferred it, to wash down the viands. The first courses were followed by dishes of meats and confections, and when all was finished and cleared away Sir Henry Furness rose to his feet.

"Fill your glasses all," he said; "and bumpers. The toast which I give you to-day is 'The king, God bless him.' Never should Englishmen drink his health more earnestly and solemnly than to-day, when rebels have driven him from his capital, and pestilent traitors threatened him with armed force. Perhaps, my

friends, you, like me, may from time to time have grumbled when the tax-collectors have come round, and you have seen no one warrant for their demands. But if the king has been forced so to exceed his powers, it was in no slight degree because those at Westminster refused to grant him the sums which were needful. He has, too, been surrounded by bad advisers. I myself loved not greatly either Stratford or Laud. But I would rather bear their high-handed ways, which were at least aimed to strengthen the kingdom and for the honor of the king, than be ground by these petty tyrants at Westminster, who would shut up our churches, forbid us to smile on a Sunday, or to pray, except through our noses; who would turn merry England into a canting conventicle, and would rule us with a rod to which that of the king were as a willow wand. Therefore it is the duty of all true men and good to drink the health of his majesty the king, and confusion to his enemies."

Upstanding, and with enthusiastic shouts, the whole of the tenants drank the toast. Sir Henry was pleased with the spirit which was manifested, and when the cheering had subsided and quiet was again restored, he went on:

"My friends, I have summoned you here to tell you what many of you no doubt know already—that the king, driven from London by the traitors of Parliament, who would take from him all power, would override the peers, and abolish the Church, has appealed to his faithful subjects to stand by him, and to maintain his cause. He will, ere a fortnight be past, raise his banner at

Nottingham. Already Sir John Hotham, the rebel Governor of York, has closed the gates of that city to him, and it is time that all loyal men were on foot to aid his cause. Lord Falkland has been pleased to grant me a commission to raise a troop of horse in his service, and I naturally come to you first, to ask you to follow me."

He paused a moment, and a shout of assent rang through the hall.

"There are," he said, "some among you whom years may prevent from yourselves undertaking the hardships of the field, but these can send substitutes in their sons. You will understand that none are compelled to go; but I trust that from the long-standing friendship between us, and from the duty which you each owe to the king, none will hold back. Do I understand that all here are willing to join, or to furnish substitutes?"

A general shout of "All" broke from the tenants.

"Thank you, my friends, I expected nothing else. This will give me fifty good men, and true, and I hope that each will be able to bring with him one, two, or more men, in proportion to the size of his holding. I shall myself bear the expense of the arms and outfit of all these; but we must not strip the land of hands. Farming must still go on, for people must feed, even if there be war. As to the rents, we must waive our agreements while the war lasts. Each man will pay me what proportion of his rent he is able, and no more. The king will need money as well as men, and as all I receive will be at his service, I know that each of you

will pay as much as he can to aid the common cause. I have here a list of your names. My son will take it round to each, and will write down how many men each of you may think to bring with him to the war. No man must be taken unwillingly. I want only those whose hearts are in the cause. My son is grieving that he is not old enough to ride with us; but should aught befall me in the strife, I have bade him ride and take his place among you."

Another cheer arose, and Harry went round the table taking down the names and numbers of the men, and when his total was added up, it was found that those present believed that they could bring a hundred men with them into the field.

"This is beyond my hopes," Sir Harry said, as amid great cheering he announced the result. "I myself will raise another fifty from my grooms, gardeners, and keepers, and from brave lads I can gather in the village, and I shall be proud indeed when I present to his majesty two hundred men of Furness, ready to die in his defense."

After this there was great arrangement of details. Each tenant gave a list of the arms which he possessed and the number of horses fit for work, and as in those days, by the law of the land each man, of whatsoever his degree, was bound to keep arms in order to join the militia, should his services be required for the defense of the kingdom, the stock of arms was, with the contents of Sir Henry's armory, found to be sufficient for the number of men who were to be raised. It was eight o'clock in the evening before all was arranged, and the party broke up and separated

to their homes.

For the next week there was bustle and preparation on the Furness estates, as, indeed, through all England. As yet, however, the Parliament were gathering men far more rapidly than the king. The Royalists of England were slow to perceive how far the Commons intended to press their demands, and could scarcely believe that civil war was really to break out. The friends of the Commons, however, were everywhere in earnest. The preachers in the conventicles throughout the land denounced the king in terms of the greatest violence, and in almost every town the citizens were arming and drilling. Lord Essex, who commanded the Parliamentary forces, was drawing toward Northampton with ten thousand men, consisting mainly of the train-bands of London; while the king, with only a few hundred followers, was approaching Nottingham, where he proposed to unfurl his standard and appeal to his subjects.

In a week from the day of the appeal of Sir Henry two troops, each of a hundred men strong, drew up in front of Furness Hall. To the eye of a soldier accustomed to the armies of the Continent, with their bands trained by long and constant warfare, the aspect of this troop might not have appeared formidable. Each man was dressed according to his fancy. Almost all wore jack-boots coming nigh to the hip, iron breast and back pieces, and steel caps. Sir Henry Furness and four gentlemen, his friends, who had seen service in the Low Countries, and had now gladly joined his band, took their places, Sir Henry himself at the head of the

body, and two officers with each troop. They, too, were clad in high boots, with steel breast and back pieces, thick buff leather gloves, and the wide felt hats with feathers which were worn in peace time. During the war some of the Royalist officers wore iron caps as did their foes. But the majority, in a spirit of defiance and contempt of their enemies, wore the wide hat of the times, which, picturesque and graceful as it was, afforded but a poor defense for the head. Almost all wore their hair long and in ringlets, and across their shoulders were the white scarfs typical of their loyalty to the king. Harry bestrode a fine horse which his father had given him, and had received permission to ride for half the day's march by his side at the head of the troop. The trumpeter sounded the call, Sir Henry stood up in his stirrups, drew his sword and waved it over his head, and shouted "For God and King." Two hundred swords flashed in the air, and the answering shout came out deep and full. Then the swords were sheathed, the horses' heads turned, and with a jingle of sabers and accouterments the troop rode gayly out through the gates of the park.

Upon their way north they were joined by more than one band of Cavaliers marching in the same direction, and passed, too, several bodies of footmen, headed by men with closely-cropped heads, and somber figures, beside whom generally marched others whom their attire proclaimed to be Puritan preachers, on their way to join the army of Essex. The parties scowled at each other as they passed; but as yet no sword had been drawn on

either side, and without adventure they arrived at Nottingham.

Having distributed his men among the houses of the town, Sir Henry Furness rode to the castle, where his majesty had arrived the day before. He had already the honor of the personal acquaintance of the king, for he had in one of the early parliaments sat for Oxford. Disgusted, however, with the spirit that prevailed among the opponents of the king, and also by the obstinacy and unconstitutional course pursued by his majesty, he had at the dissolution of Parliament retired to his estate, and when the next House was summoned, declined to stand again for his seat.

"Welcome, Sir Henry," his majesty said graciously to him, "you are among the many who withstood me somewhat in the early days of my reign, and perchance you were right to do so; but who have now, in my need, rallied round me, seeing whither the purpose of these traitorous subjects of mine leads them. You are the more welcome that you have, as I hear, brought two hundred horsemen with you, a number larger than any which has yet joined me. These," he said, pointing to two young noblemen near him, "are my nephews, Rupert and Maurice, who have come to join me."

Upon making inquiries, Sir Henry found that the prospects of the king were far from bright. So far, the Royalists had been sadly behindhand with their preparations. The king had arrived with scarce four hundred men. He had left his artillery behind at York for want of carriage, and his need in arms was even greater

than in men, as the arsenals of the kingdom had all been seized by the Parliament. Essex lay at Northampton with ten thousand men, and had he at this time advanced, even the most sanguine of the Royalists saw that the struggle would be a hopeless one.

The next day, at the hour appointed, the royal standard was raised on the Castle of Nottingham, in the midst of a great storm of wind and rain, which before many hours had passed blew the royal standard to the ground—an omen which those superstitiously inclined deemed of evil augury indeed. The young noblemen and gentlemen, however, who had gathered at Northampton, were not of a kind to be daunted by omens and auguries, and finding that Essex did not advance and hearing news from all parts of the country that the loyal gentlemen were gathering their tenants fast, their hopes rose rapidly. There was, indeed, some discontent when it was known that, by the advice of his immediate councilors, King Charles had dispatched the Earl of Southampton with Sir John Collpeper and Sir William Uvedale to London, with orders to treat with the Commons. The Parliament, however, refused to enter into any negotiations whatever until the king lowered his standard and recalled the proclamation which he had issued. This, which would have been a token of absolute surrender to the Parliament, the king refused to do. He attempted a further negotiation; but this also failed.

The troops at Nottingham now amounted to eleven hundred men, of which three hundred were infantry raised by Sir John Digby, the sheriff of the county. The other eight hundred were

horse. Upon the breaking off of negotiations, and the advance of Essex, the king, sensible that he was unable to resist the advance of Essex, who had now fifteen thousand men collected under him, fell back to Derby, and thence to Shrewsbury, being joined on his way by many nobles and gentlemen with their armed followers. At Wellington, a town a day's march from Shrewsbury, the king had his little army formed up, and made a solemn declaration before them in which he promised to maintain the Protestant religion, to observe the laws, and to uphold the just privileges and freedom of Parliament.

The Furness band were not present on that occasion, as they had been dispatched to Worcester with some other soldiers, the whole under the command of Prince Rupert, in order to watch the movements of Essex, who was advancing in that direction. While scouring the ground around the city, they came upon a body of Parliamentary cavalry, the advance of the army of Essex. The bands drew up at a little distance from each other, and then Prince Rupert gave the command to charge. With the cheer of "For God and the king!" the troop rushed upon the cavalry of the Parliament with such force and fury that they broke them utterly, and killing many, drove them in confusion from the field, but small loss to themselves.

This was the first action of the civil war, the first blood drawn by Englishmen from Englishmen since the troubles in the commencement of the reign of Mary.

CHAPTER III.
A BRAWL AT OXFORD

News in those days traveled but slowly, and England was full of conflicting rumors as to the doings of the two armies. Every one was unsettled. Bodies of men moving to join one or other of the parties kept the country in an uproar, and the Cavaliers, or rather the toughs of the towns calling themselves Cavaliers, brought much odium upon the royal cause by the ill-treatment of harmless citizens, and by raids on inoffensive country people. Later on this conduct was to be reversed and the Royalists were to suffer tenfold the outrages now put upon the Puritans. But there can be no doubt that the conduct of irresponsible ruffians at that time did much to turn the flood of public opinion in many places, where it would otherwise have remained neutral, against the crown.

To Harry the time passed but slowly. He spent his days in Abingdon hearing the latest news, and occasionally rode over to Oxford. This city was throughout the civil war the heart of the Royalist party, and its loss was one of the heaviest blows which befell the crown. Here Harry found none but favorable reports current. Enthusiasm was at its height. The university was even more loyal than the town, and bands of lads smashed the windows of those persons who were supposed to favor the

Parliament. More than once Harry saw men pursued through the streets, pelted with stones and mud, and in some cases escaping barely with their lives. Upon one occasion, seeing a person in black garments and of respectable appearance so treated, the boy's indignation was aroused, for he himself, both from his conversations with his friend Herbert, and the talk with his father, was, although enthusiastically Royalist, yet inclined to view with respect those who held opposite opinions.

"Run down that alley!" he exclaimed, pushing his horse between the fugitive and his pursuers.

The man darted down the lane, and Harry placed himself at the entrance, and shouted to the rabble to abstain.

A yell of rage and indignation replied, and a volley of stones was thrown. Harry fearlessly drew his sword, and cut at some of those who were in the foreground. These retaliated with sticks, and Harry was forced backward into the lane. This was too narrow to enable him to turn, his horse, and his position was a critical one. Finding that he was a mark for stones, he leaped from the saddle, thereby disappearing from the sight of those in the ranks behind, and sword in hand, barred the way to the foremost of his assailants. The contest, however, would have been brief had not a party of young students come up the lane, and seeing from Harry's attire that he was a gentleman, and likely to be of Cavalier opinions, they at once, without inquiring the cause of the fray, threw themselves into it, shouting "Gown! gown!" They speedily drove the assailants back out of the lane;

but these, reinforced by the great body beyond, were then too strong for them. The shouts of the young men, however, brought up others to their assistance, and a general melee took place, townsmen and gownsmen throwing themselves into the fray without any inquiry as to the circumstances from which it arose. The young students carried swords, which, although contrary to the statutes of the university, were for the time generally adopted. The townspeople were armed with bludgeons, and in some cases with hangers, and the fray was becoming a serious one, when it was abruptly terminated by the arrival of a troop of horse, which happened to be coming into the town to join the royal forces. The officer in command, seeing so desperate a tumult raging, ordered his men to charge into the crowd, and their interference speedily put an end to the fight.

Harry returned to their rooms with some of his protectors and their wounds were bound up, and the circumstances of the fight were talked over. Harry was much blamed by the college men when he said that he had been drawn into the fray by protecting a Puritan. But when his new friends learned that he was as thoroughly Royalist as themselves, and that his father had gone with a troop to Nottingham, they took a more favorable view of his action, but still assured him that it was the height of folly to interfere to protect a rebel from the anger of the townspeople.

"But, methinks," Harry said, "that it were unwise in the extreme to push matters so far here. In Oxford the Royalists have it all their own way, and can, of course, at will assault their

Puritan neighbors. But it is different in most other towns. There the Roundheads have the upper hand and might retort by doing ill to the Cavaliers there. Surely it were better to keep these unhappy differences out of private life, and to trust the arbitration of our cause to the arms of our soldiers in the field."

There was a general agreement that this would indeed be the wisest course; but the young fellows were of opinion that hot heads on either side would have their way, and that if the war went on attacks of this kind by the one party on the other must be looked for.

Harry remained for some time with his friends in Christ church, drinking the beer for which the college was famous. Then, mounting his horse, he rode back to Abingdon.

Two days later, as he was proceeding toward the town, he met a man dressed as a preacher.

"Young sir," the latter said, "may I ask if you are Master Furness?"

"I am," the lad replied.

"Then it is to you I am indebted for my rescue from those who assaulted me in the streets of Oxford last week. In the confusion I could not see your face, but I inquired afterward, and was told that my preserver was Master Furness, and have come over to thank you for your courtesy and bravery in thus intervening on behalf of one whom I think you regard as an enemy, for I understand that Sir Henry, your father, has declared for the crown."

"I acted," Harry said, "simply on the impulse of humanity, and hold it mean and cowardly for a number of men to fall upon one."

"We are," the preacher continued, "at the beginning only of our troubles, and the time may come when I, Zachariah Stubbs, may be able to return to you the good service which you have done me. Believe me, young sir, the feeling throughout England is strong for the Commons, and that it will not be crushed out, as some men suppose, even should the king's men gain a great victory over Essex—which, methinks, is not likely. There are tens of thousands throughout the country who are now content to remain quiet at home, who would assuredly draw the sword and go forth to battle, should they consider their cause in danger. The good work has begun, and the sword will not be sheathed until the oppressor is laid low."

"We should differ who the oppressor is," Harry replied coldly. "I myself am young to discuss these matters, but my father and those who think with him consider that the oppression is at present on the side of the Commons, and of those whose religious views you share. While pretending to wish to be free, you endeavor to bind others beneath your tyranny. While wishing to worship in your way unmolested, you molest those who wish to worship in theirs. However, I thank you for your offer, that should the time come your good services will be at my disposal. As you say, the issue of the conflict is dark, and it may be, though I trust it will not, that some day you may, if you will, return the light service which I rendered you."

"You will not forget my name?" the preacher said —"Zachariah Stubbs, a humble instrument of the Lord, and a preacher in the Independent chapel at Oxford. Thither I cannot return, and am on my way to London, where I have many friends, and where I doubt not a charge will be found for me. I myself belong to the east countries, where the people are strong for the Lord, and I doubt not that some of those I know will come to the front of affairs, in which case my influence may perhaps be of more service than you can suppose at present. Farewell, young sir, and whatever be the issues of this struggle, I trust that you may safely emerge from them."

The man lifted his broad black hat, and went on his way, and Harry rode forward, smiling a little to himself at the promise given him.

The time passed slowly, and all kinds of rumors filled the land. At length beacon fires were seen to blaze upon the hills, and, as it was known that the Puritans had arranged with Essex that the news of a victory was so to be conveyed to London, the hearts of the Royalists sank, for they feared that disaster had befallen their cause. The next day, however, horsemen of the Parliament galloping through the country proclaimed that they had been defeated; but it was not till next day that the true state of affairs became known. Then the news came that the battle had indeed been a drawn one.

On the 26th of October Charles marched with his army into Oxford. So complete was the ignorance of the inhabitants as to

the movements of the armies that at Abingdon the news of his coming was unknown, and Harry was astonished on the morning of the 27th at hearing a great trampling of horsemen. Looking out, he beheld his father at the head of the troop, approaching the house. With a shout of joy the lad rushed downstairs and met his father at the entrance.

"I did not look to be back so soon, Harry," Sir Henry said, as he alighted from his horse. "We arrived at Oxford last night, and I am sent on with my troop to see that no Parliament bands are lurking in the neighborhood."

Before entering the house the colonel dismissed his troop, telling them that until the afternoon they could return to their homes, but must then re-assemble and hold themselves in readiness to advance, should he receive further orders. Then, accompanied by his officers, he entered the house. Breakfast was speedily prepared, and when this was done justice to Sir Henry proceeded to relate to Harry, who was burning with impatience to hear his news, the story of the battle of Edgehill.

"We reached Shrewsbury, as I wrote you," he said, "and stayed there twenty days, and during that time the army swelled and many nobles and gentlemen joined us. We were, however, it must be owned, but a motley throng. The foot soldiers, indeed, were mostly armed with muskets; but many had only sticks and cudgels. On the 12th we moved to Wolverhampton, and so on through Birmingham and Kenilworth. We saw nothing of the rebels till we met at Edgecot, a little hamlet near Banbury,

where we took post on a hill, the rebels being opposite to us. It must be owned," Sir Henry went on, "that things here did not promise well. There were dissensions between Prince Rupert, who commanded the cavalry, and Lord Lindsey, the general in chief, who is able and of great courage, but hot-headed and fiery. In the morning it was determined to engage, as Essex's forces had not all come up, and the king's troops were at least as numerous as those of the enemy. We saw little of the fighting, for at the commencement of the battle we got word to charge upon the enemy's left. We made but short work of them, and drove them headlong from the field, chasing them in great disorder for three miles, and taking much plunder in Kineton among the Parliament baggage-wagons. Thinking that the fight was over, we then prepared to ride back. When we came to the field we found that all was changed. The main body of the Roundheads had pressed hotly upon ours and had driven them back. Lord Lindsey himself, who had gone into the battle at the head of the pikemen carrying a pike himself like a common soldier, had been mortally wounded and taken prisoner, and grievous slaughter had been inflicted. The king's standard itself had been taken, but this had been happily recovered, for two Royalist officers, putting on orange scarfs, rode into the middle of the Roundheads, and pretending that they were sent by Essex, demanded the flag from his secretary, to whom it had been intrusted. The scrivener gave it up, and the officers, seizing it, rode through the enemy and recovered their ranks. There was much confusion and no little

angry discussion in the camp that night, the footmen accusing the horsemen of having deserted them, and the horsemen grumbling at the foot, because they had not done their work as well as themselves. In the morning the two armies still faced each other, neither being willing to budge a foot, although neither cared to renew the battle. The rest of the Parliamentary forces had arrived, and they might have struck us a heavy blow had they been minded, for there was much discouragement in our ranks. Lord Essex, however, after waiting a day and burying his dead, drew off from the field, and we, remaining there, were able to claim the victory, which, however, my son, was one of a kind which was scarce worth winning. It was a sad sight to see so many men stretched stark and dead, and these killed, not in fighting with a foreign foe, but with other Englishmen. It made us all mightily sad, and if at that moment Lord Essex had had full power from the Parliament to treat, methinks that the quarrel could have been settled, all being mightily sick of such kind of fighting."

"What is going to be done now, father?" Harry asked.

"We are going to move forward toward London. Essex is moving parallel with us, and will try to get there first. From what we hear from our friends in the city, there are great numbers of moderate men will be glad to see the king back, and to agree to make an end of this direful business. The zealots and preachers will of course oppose them. But when we arrive, we trust that our countenance will enable our friends to make a good front,

and to overcome the opposition of the Puritans. We expect that in a few days we shall meet with offers to treat. But whether or no, I hope that the king will soon be lodged again in his palace at Whitehall."

"And do you think that there will be any fighting, sir?"

"I think not. I sincerely hope not," the colonel said.

"Then if you think that there will only be a peaceable entry, will you not let me ride with you? It will be a brave sight to see the king enter London again; one to tell of all one's life."

The colonel made no reply for a minute or two.

"Well, Harry, I will not say you nay," he said at length. "Scenes of broils and civil war are not for lads of your age. But, as you say, it would be a thing to talk of to old age how you rode after the king when he entered London in state. But mind, if there be fighting, you must rein back and keep out of it."

Harry was overjoyed with the permission, for in truth time had hung heavily on his hands since the colonel had ridden away. His companionship with Herbert had ceased, for although the lads pressed hands warmly when they met in Abingdon, both felt that while any day might bring news of the triumph of one party or the other, it was impossible that they could hold any warm intercourse with each other. The school was closed, for the boys of course took sides, and so much ill-will was caused that it was felt best to put a stop to it by closing the doors. Harry therefore had been left entirely upon his own resources, and although he had ridden about among the tenants and, so far

as he could, supplied his father's place, the time often hung heavy on his hands, especially during the long hours of the evening. After thanking his father for his kindness, he rushed wildly off to order his horse to be prepared for him to accompany the troop, to re-burnish the arms which he had already chosen as fitting him from the armory, and to make what few preparations were necessary for the journey.

It was some days, however, before any move was made. The king was occupied in raising money, being sorely crippled by want of funds, as well as of arms and munitions of war. At the beginning of November the advance was made, Sir Henry with his troop joining Prince Rupert, and advancing through Reading without opposition as far as Maidenhead, where he fixed his quarters. Two days later he learned that Essex had arrived with his army in London. On the 11th King Charles was at Colnbrook. Here he received a deputation from the Houses of Parliament, who proposed that the king should pause in his advance until committees of both Houses should attend him with propositions "for the removal of these bloody distempers and distractions." The king received the deputation favorably, and said that he would stop at Windsor, and there receive the propositions which might be sent him.

Unfortunately, however, the hopes which were now entertained that peace would be restored, were dashed to the ground by an action which was ascribed by the Royalists to the hotheadedness of Prince Rupert, but which the king's enemies

affirmed was due to the duplicity of his majesty himself. On this point there is no evidence. But it is certain that the advance made after this deputation had been received rendered all further negotiation impossible, as it inspired the Commons with the greatest distrust, and enabled the violent portion always to feign a doubt of the king's word, and great fears as to the keeping of any terms which might be made, and so to act upon the timid and wavering. The very day after the deputation had left, bearing the news to London of the king's readiness to treat, and inspiring all there with hope of peace, Prince Rupert, taking advantage of a very thick mist, marched his cavalry to within half a mile of the town of Brentford before his advance was discovered, designing to surprise the train of artillery at Hammersmith and to push on and seize the Commons and the city.

The design might have been successful, for the exploits of Rupert's horse at the battle of Edgehill had struck terror into the minds of the enemy. In the town of Brentford, however, were lodged a regiment of foot, under Hollis, and these prepared manfully to resist. Very valiantly the prince, followed by his horse, charged into the streets of Brentford, where the houses were barricaded by the foot soldiers, who shot boldly against them. Many were killed, and for three hours the contest was resolutely maintained. The streets had been barricaded, and Prince Rupert's men fought at great disadvantage. At length, as evening approached, and the main body of the Cavaliers came up, the Parliament men gave way, and were driven from the

town. Many were taken prisoners, and others driven into the river, the greater portion, however, making their way in boats safely down the stream. The delay which their sturdy resistance had made saved the city. Hampden was bringing his men across from Acton. Essex had marched from Chelsea Fields to Turnham Green, and the road was now blocked. After it was dark the Train-Bands advanced, and the Parliament regiments, reinforced by them, pushed on to Brentford again; the Royalists, finding that the place could not be held, fell back to the king's quarters at Hounslow.

The chroniclers describe how wild a scene of confusion reigned in London that evening. Proclamations were issued ordering all men to take up arms; shops were closed, the apprentice boys mustered in the ranks, and citizens poured out like one man to defend the town. They encamped upon the road, and the next day great trains of provisions sent by the wives of the merchants and traders reached them, and as many came out to see the forces, the scene along the road resembled a great fair.

In this fight at Brentford Harry Furness was engaged. The Royalists had anticipated no resistance here, not knowing that Hollis held the place, and Sir Henry did not think of ordering Harry to remain behind. At the moment when it was found that Hollis was in force and the trumpets sounded the charge, the lad was riding in the rear of the troop, talking to one of the officers, and his father could take no step to prevent his joining. Therefore, when the trumpets sounded and the troops started off

at full gallop toward the town, Harry, greatly exulting in his good luck, fell in with them and rode down the streets of Brentford. The musketry fire was brisk, and many of the troop rolled from their horses. Presently they were dismounted and ordered to take the houses by storm. With the hilts of their swords they broke in the doors, and there was fierce lighting within.

Harry, who was rather bewildered with the din and turmoil of the fight, did as the rest, and followed two or three of the men into one of the houses, whose door had been broken open. They were assailed as they entered by a fire of musketry from the Parliament men within. Those in front fell, and Harry was knocked down by the butt of a pike.

When he recovered he found himself in a boat drifting down the stream, a prisoner of the Roundheads.

For a long time Harry could hear the sounds of the guns and cannon at Brentford, and looking round at the quiet villages which they passed on the banks, could scarce believe that he had been engaged in a battle and was now a prisoner. But little was said to him. The men were smarting under their defeat and indulged in the bitterest language at the treachery with which, after negotiations had been agreed upon, the advance of the Royalists had been made. They speedily discovered the youth of their captive, and, after telling him brutally that he would probably be hung when he got to London, they paid no further attention to him. The boat was heavily laden, and rowed by two oars, and the journey down was a long one, for the tide met them

when at the village of Hammersmith, and they were forced to remain tied up to a tree by the bank until it turned again. This it did not do until far in the night, and the morning was just breaking when they reached London.

It was perhaps well for Harry that they arrived in the dark, for in the excited state of the temper of the citizens, and their anger at the treachery which had been practiced, it might have fared but badly with him. He was marched along the Strand to the city, and was consigned to a lock-up in Finsbury, until it could be settled what should be done to him. In fact, the next day his career was nearly being terminated, for John Lilburn, a captain of the Train Bands, who had been an apprentice and imprisoned for contumacy, had been captured at Brentford, and after being tried for his life, was sentenced to death as a rebel. Essex, however, sent in word to the Royalist camp that for every one of the Parliament officers put to death, he would hang three Royalist prisoners. This threat had its effect, and Harry remained in ignorance of the danger which had threatened him.

The greatest inconvenience which befell him was that he was obliged to listen to all sorts of long harangues upon the part of the Puritan soldiers who were his jailers. These treated him as a misguided lad, and did their best to convert him from the evil of his ways. At last Harry lost his temper, and said that if they wanted to hang him, they might; but that he would rather put up with that than the long sermons which they were in the habit of delivering to him. Indignant at this rejection of their good offices,

they left him to himself, and days passed without his receiving any visit save that of the soldier who brought his meals.

CHAPTER IV.
BREAKING PRISON

Harry's place of confinement was a cell leading off a guardroom of the Train Bands. Occasionally the door was left open, as some five or six men were always there, and Harry could see through the open door the citizens of London training at arms. Several preachers were in the habit of coming each day to discourse to those on guard, and so while away the time, and upon these occasions the door was generally left open, in order that the prisoner might be edified by the sermons. Upon one occasion the preacher, a small, sallow-visaged man, looked into the cell at the termination of his discourse, and seeing Harry asleep on his truckle bed, awoke him, and lectured him severely on the wickedness of allowing such precious opportunities to pass. After this he made a point of coming in each day when he had addressed the guard, and of offering up a long and very tedious prayer on behalf of the young reprobate. These preachings and prayings nearly drove Harry out of his mind. Confinement was bad enough; but confinement tempered by a course of continual sermons, delivered mostly through the nose, was a terrible infliction. At last the thought presented itself to him that he might manage to effect his escape in the garb of the preacher. He thought the details over and over in his mind,

and at last determined at any rate to attempt to carry them into execution.

One day he noticed, when the door opened for the entry of the preacher, that a parade of unusual magnitude was being held in the drill yard, some officer of importance having come down to inspect the Train Band. There were but four men left in the guardroom and these were occupied in gazing out of the window. The preacher came direct into the cell, as his audience in the guardroom for once were not disposed to listen to him, and shutting the door behind him, he addressed a few words of exhortation to Harry, and then, closing his eyes, began a long prayer. When he was fairly under way, Harry sprang upon him, grasping him by the throat with both hands, and forced him back upon the bed. The little preacher was too much surprised to offer the smallest resistance, and Harry, who had drawn out the cords used in supporting the sacking of the bed, bound him hand and foot, keeping, while he did so, the pillow across his face, and his weight on the top of the pillow, thereby nearly putting a stop to the preacher's prayers and exhortations for all time. Having safely bound him, and finding that he did not struggle in the least, Harry removed the pillow, and was horrified to see his prisoner black in the face. He had, however, no time for regret or inquiry how far the man had gone, and stuffing a handkerchief into his mouth, to prevent his giving any alarm should he recover breath enough to do so, Harry placed his high steeple hat upon his head, his Geneva bands round his throat, and his long black mantle over

his shoulders. He then opened the door and walked quietly forth. The guards were too much occupied with the proceedings in the parade ground to do more than glance round, as the apparent preacher departed. Harry strode with a long and very stiff step, and with his figure bolt upright, to the gate of the parade ground, and then passing through the crowd who were standing there gaping at the proceedings within, he issued forth a free man.

For awhile he walked at a brisk pace, and then, feeling secure from pursuit, slackened his speed; keeping westward through the city, he passed along the Strand and out into the country beyond. He wore his beaver well down over his eyes, and walked with his head down as if meditating deeply, in order to prevent any passers-by from observing the youthfulness of his face. When he arrived at the village of Chelsea, he saw, in front of a gentleman's house, a horse hitched up to a hook placed there for that purpose. Conceiving that for a long journey four legs are much more useful than two, and that when he got beyond the confines of London he should attract less suspicion upon a horse than if striding alone along the road, he took the liberty of mounting it and riding off. When he had gone a short distance he heard loud shouts; but thinking these in no way to concern him, he rode on the faster, and was soon beyond the sound of the voices. He now took a northerly direction, traveled through Kensington, and then keeping east of Acton, where he knew that some Parliament troops were quartered, he rode for the village of Harrow. He was aware that the Royalists had fallen back to Oxford, and that the

Parliament troops were at Reading. He therefore made to the northwest, intending to circuit round and so reach Oxford. He did not venture to go to an inn, for although, as a rule, the keepers of these places were, being jovial men, in no way affected toward the Commons, yet he feared meeting there persons who might question and detain him. He obtained some provision at a small village shop, in which he saw a buxom woman standing behind her counter. She appeared vastly surprised when he entered and asked for a manchet of bread, for the contrast between his ruddy countenance and his Puritan hat and bands was so striking that they could not fail to be noticed. The good woman looked indeed too astonished to be able to attend to Harry's request, and he was obliged to say, "Mother, time presses, and I care not to be caught loitering here."

Divining at once that he was acting a part, and probably endeavoring to escape the pursuit of the Commons, the good woman at once served him with bread and some slices of ham, and putting these in the wallets of the saddle, he rode on.

The next morning, in riding through the village of Wickham, his career was nearly arrested. Just as he passed a sergeant followed by three or four Parliament soldiers came out from an inn, and seeing Harry riding past, addressed him:

"Sir, will it please you to alight, and to offer up a few words of exhortation and prayer?"

Harry muttered something about pressing business. But in his sudden surprise he had not time to think of assuming either the

nasal drone or the scriptural words peculiar to these black-coated gentry. Struck by his tone, the sergeant sprang forward and seized his bridle.

"Whom have we here?" he said; "a lad masquerading in the dress of a preacher. This must be explained, young sir."

"Sergeant," Harry said, "I doubt not that thou art a good fellow, and not one to get a lad in a scrape. I am the son of a London citizen; but he and my mother are at present greatly more occupied with the state of their souls than with the carrying on of their carnal business. Being young, the constant offering up of prayers and exhortations has vexed me almost to desperation, and yesterday, while the good preacher who attends then was in the midst of the third hour of his discourse I stole downstairs, and borrowing his hat and cloak, together with his horse, determined to set out to join my uncle, who is a farmer down in Gloucestershire, and where in sooth the companionship of his daughters—girls of my own age—suits my disposition greatly better than that of the excellent men with whom my father consorts."

The soldiers laughed, and the sergeant, who was not at heart a bad fellow, said:

"I fear, my young sir, that your disposition is a godless one, and that it would have been far better for you to have remained under the ministration of the good man whose hat you are wearing than to have sought the society of your pretty cousins. However, I do not know but that in the unregenerate days of my own youth

I might not have attempted an escapade like yours. I trust," he continued, "you are not tainted with the evil doctrines of the adherents of King Charles."

"In truth," Harry said, "I worry not my head with politics. I hear so much of them that I am fairly sick of the subject, and have not yet decided whether the Commons is composed of an assembly of men directly inspired with power for the regeneration of mankind, or whether King Charles be a demon in human shape. Methinks that when I grow old enough to bear arms it will be time enough for me to make up my mind against whom to use them. At present, a clothyard is the stick to which I am most accustomed, and as plows and harrows are greatly more in accord with my disposition, I hope that for a long time I shall not see the interior of a shop again; and I trust that the quarrels which have brought such trouble into this realm, and have well-nigh made my father and mother distraught, will at least favor my sojourn in the country, for I am sure that my father will not venture to traverse England for the sake of bringing me back again."

"I am not sure," the sergeant said, "that my duty would not be to arrest you and to send you back to London. But as, in truth, I have no instructions to hinder travelers, I must even let you go."

With a merry farewell to the group, and a laugh far more in accordance with his years than with the costume which he wore, Harry set spurs to his horse and again rode forward.

He met with no further adventure on the road. When he found

by inquiries that he had passed the outposts of the Parliament forces, he joyfully threw the hat, the bands, and cloak into a ditch, for experience had taught him that, however useful as a passport they might be while still within the lines of the troops of the Commons, they would be likely to procure him but scant welcome when he entered those of the Royalists. Round Oxford the royal army were encamped, and Harry speedily discovered that his father was with his troop at his own place. Turning his head again eastward, he rode to Abingdon, and quickly afterward was at the hall.

The shout of welcome which the servitor who opened the door uttered when he saw him speedily brought his father to the entrance, and Sir Henry was overjoyed at seeing the son whom he believed to be in confinement in London. Harry's tale was soon told, and the colonel roared with laughter at the thought of his boy masquerading as a Puritan preacher.

"King Charles himself," he said, "might smile over your story, Harry; and in faith it takes a great deal to call up a smile into his majesty's face, which is, methinks a pity, for he would be more loved, and not less respected, did he, by his appearance and manner, do something to raise the spirits of those around him."

When once seated in the hall Harry inquired of his father what progress had been made since he was taken prisoner, for he had heard nothing from his guards.

"Things are as they were," his father said. "After our unfortunate advance we fell back hither, and for six weeks

nothing was done. A fortnight since, on the 2d of January, a petition was brought by deputies from the Common Council of London, asking the king to return to the capital when all disturbance should be suppressed. King Charles, however, knew not that these gentlemen had the power to carry out their promises seeing that the seditious have the upper hand in the capital, and answered them to that effect. His answer was, however, methinks, far less conciliatory and prudent than it might have been, for it boots not to stir up men's minds unnecessarily, and with a few affectionate words the king might have strengthened his party in London. The result, however, was to lead to a fierce debate, in which Pym and Lord Manchester addressed the multitude, and stirred them up to indignation, and I fear that prospects of peace are further away than ever. In other respects there is good and bad news. Yorkshire and Cheshire, Devon and Cornwall, have all declared for the crown; but upon the other hand, in the east the prospects are most gloomy. There, the seven counties, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge, Herts, Lincoln, and Huntingdon, have joined themselves into an association, and the king's followers dare not lift their heads. At Lichfield, Lord Brook, a fierce opponent of bishops and cathedrals, while besieging a party of Cavaliers who had taken possession of the close, was shot in the eye and killed. These are the only incidents that have taken place."

For some weeks no event of importance occurred. On the 22d of February the queen, who had been absent on the Continent

selling her jewels and endeavoring to raise a force, landed at Burlington, with four ships, having succeeded in evading the ships of war which the Commons had dispatched to cut her off, under the command of Admiral Batten. That night, however, the Parliament fleet arrived off the place, and opened fire upon the ships and village. The queen was in a house near the shore, and the balls struck in all directions round. She was forced to get up, throw on a few clothes, and retire on foot to some distance from the village to the shelter of a ditch, where she sat for two hours, the balls sometimes striking dust over them, and singing round in all directions. It was a question whether the small force which the queen brought with her was not rather a hindrance than an assistance to the royal cause, for the Earl of Newcastle, who had been sent to escort her to York, was authorized by the king to raise men for the service, without examining their consciences, that is to say, to receive Catholics as well as Protestants. The Parliament took advantage of this to style his army the Catholic Army, and this, and some tamperings with the Papists in Ireland, increased the popular belief that the king leaned toward Roman Catholicism, and thus heightened the feelings against him, and embittered the religious as well as the political quarrel.

Toward the end of March commissioners from the Parliament, under the Earl of Northumberland, came to Oxford with propositions to treat. It is questionable whether the offers of the Commons were sincere. But Charles, by his vacillation and hesitation, by yielding one day and retracting the next, gave them

the opportunity of asserting, with some show of reason, that he was wholly insincere, and could not be trusted; and so the commission was recalled, and the war went on again.

On the 15th of April Parliament formally declared the negotiations to be at an end, and on that day Essex marched with his army to the siege of Reading. The place was fortified, and had a resolute garrison; but by some gross oversight no provisions or stores had been collected, and after an unsuccessful attempt to relieve the town, when the Royalist forces failed to carry the bridge at Caversham, they fell back upon Wallingford, and Reading surrendered. Meanwhile skirmishes were going on all over the country. Sir William Waller was successful against the Royalists in the south and west. In the north Lord Newcastle was opposed to Fairfax, and the result was doubtful; while in Cornwall the Royalists had gained a battle over the Parliament men under Lord Stamford.

Meanwhile, the king was endeavoring to create a party in the Parliament, and Lady Aubigny was intrusted with the negotiations. The plot was, however, discovered. Several members of Parliament were arrested, and two executed by orders of the Parliament.

Early in June Colonel Furness and his troop were called into Oxford, as it was considered probable that some expeditions would be undertaken, and on the 17th of that month Prince Rupert formed up his horse and sallied out against the outlying pickets and small troops of the Parliament. Several of these he

surprised and cut up, and on the morning of the 19th reached Chalgrove Field, near Thame. Hampden was in command of a detachment of Parliamentary troops in this neighborhood, and sending word to Essex, who lay near, to come up to his assistance, attacked Prince Rupert's force. His men, however, could not stand against the charge of the Royalists. They were completely defeated, and Hampden, one of the noblest characters of his age, was shot through the shoulder. He managed to keep his horse, and ride across country to Thame, where he hoped to obtain medical assistance. After six days of pain he died there, and thus England lost the only man who could, in the days that were to come, have moderated, and perhaps defeated, the ambition of Cromwell.

Essex arrived upon the scene of battle a few minutes after the defeat of Hampden's force, and Prince Rupert fell back, and crossing the Thames returned to Oxford, having inflicted much damage upon the enemy.

Shortly after this event, one of the serving men rushed in to Harry with the news that a strong band of Parliament horse were within three or four miles of the place, and were approaching. Harry at once sent for the steward, and a dozen men were summoned in all haste. On their arrival they set to work to strip the hall of its most valued furniture. The pictures were taken down from the walls, the silver and plate tumbled into chests, the arms and armor worn by generations of the Furnesses removed from the armory, the choicest articles of furniture of a portable

character put into carts, together with some twenty casks of the choicest wine in the cellars, and in four hours only the heavier furniture, the chairs and tables, buffets and heavy sideboards remained in their places.

Just as the carts were filled news came that the enemy had ridden into Abingdon. Night was now coming on, and the carts at once started with their contents for distant farms, where the plate and wine were to be buried in holes dug in copses, and other places little likely to be searched by the Puritans. The pictures and furniture were stowed away in lofts and covered deeply with hay.

Having seen the furniture sent off, Harry awaited the arrival of the Parliament bands, which he doubted not would be dispatched by the Puritans among the townspeople to the hall. The stables were already empty except for Rollo, Harry's own horse. This he had at once, the alarm being given, sent off to a farm a mile distant from the hall, and with it its saddle, bridle, and his arms, a brace of rare pistols, breast and back pieces, a steel cap with plumes, and his sword. It cost him an effort to part with the last, for he now carried it habitually. But he thought that it might be taken from him, and, moreover, he feared that he might be driven into drawing it, when the consequences might be serious, not only for himself, but for the mansion of which his father had left him in charge.

At nine a servitor came in to say that a party of men were riding up the drive. Harry seated himself in the colonel's

armchair, and repeated to himself the determination at which he had arrived of being perfectly calm and collected, and of bearing himself with patience and dignity. Presently he heard the clatter of horses' hoofs in the courtyard, and two minutes later, the tramp of feet in the passage. The door opened, and an officer entered, followed by five or six soldiers.

This man was one of the worst types of Roundhead officers. He was a London draper, whose violent harangues had brought him into notice, and secured for him a commission in the raw levies when they were first raised. Harry rose as he entered.

"You are the son of the man who is master of this house?" the officer said roughly.

"I am his son and representative," Harry said calmly.

"I hear that he is a malignant fighting in the ranks of King Charles."

"My father is a colonel in the army of his gracious majesty the king," Harry said.

"You are an insolent young dog!" the captain exclaimed. "We will teach you manners," and rising from the seat into which he had thrown himself on entering the hall, he struck Harry heavily in the face.

The boy staggered back against the wall; then with a bound he snatched a sword from the hand of one of the troopers, and before the officer had time to recoil or throw up his hands, he smote him with all his force across the face. With a terrible cry the officer fell back, and Harry, throwing down the sword, leaped through

the open window into the garden and dashed into the shrubberies, as half a dozen balls from the pistols of the astonished troopers whizzed about his head.

For a few minutes he ran at the top of his speed, as he heard shouts and pistol shots behind him. But he knew that in the darkness strangers would have no chance whatever of overtaking him, and he slackened his pace into a trot. As he ran he took himself to task for not having acted up to his resolution. But the reflection that his father would not disapprove of his having cut down the man who had struck him consoled him, and he kept on his way to the farm where he had left his horse. In other respects, he felt a wild delight at what had happened. There was nothing for him now but to join the Royal army, and his father could hardly object to his taking his place with the regiment.

"I wish I had fifty of them here," he thought to himself; "we would surround the hall, and pay these traitors dearly. As for their captain, I would hang him over the door with my own hands. The cowardly ruffian, to strike an unarmed boy! At any rate I have spoiled his beauty for him, for I pretty nearly cut his face in two, I shall know him by the scar if I ever meet him in battle, and then we will finish the quarrel.

"I shall not be able to see out of my right eye in the morning," he grumbled; "and shall be a nice figure when I ride into Oxford."

As he approached the farm he slackened his speed to a walk; and neared the house very carefully, for he thought it possible that one of the parties of the enemy might already have taken up

his quarters there. The silence that reigned, broken by the loud barking of dogs as he came close, proved that no stranger had yet arrived, and he knocked loudly at the door. Presently an upper window was opened, and a woman's voice inquired who he was, and what he wanted.

"I am Harry Furness, Dame Arden," he said. "The Roundheads are at the hall, and I have sliced their captain's face; so I must be away with all speed. Please get the men up, and lose not a moment; I want my arms and horse."

The farmer's wife lost no time in arousing the house, and in a very few minutes all was ready. One man saddled the horse, while another buckled on Harry's breast and back pieces; and with a hearty good-by, and amid many prayers for his safety and speedy return with the king's troops, Harry rode off into the darkness. For awhile he rode cautiously, listening intently lest he might fall into the hands of some of the Roundhead bands. But all was quiet, and after placing another mile or two between himself and Abingdon, he concluded that he was safe, drew Rollo's reins tighter, pressed him with his knees, and started at full gallop for Oxford.

CHAPTER V.
A MISSION OF STATE

When Harry rode into Oxford with the news that the Roundheads had made a raid as far as Abingdon, no time was lost in sounding to boot and saddle, and in half an hour the Cavalier horse were trotting briskly in that direction. They entered Abingdon unopposed, and found to their disgust that the Roundheads had departed an hour after their arrival. A party went up to Furness Hall, and found it also deserted. The Roundheads, in fact, had made but a flying raid, had carried off one or two of the leading Royalists in the town, and had, on their retirement, been accompanied by several of the party favorable to the Commons, among others, Master Rippinghall and the greater portion of his men, who had, it was suspected, been already enrolled for the service of the Parliament. Some of the Royalists would fain have sacked the house of the wool-stapler; but Colonel Furness, who had accompanied the force with his troop, opposed this vehemently.

"As long as we can," he said, "let private houses be respected. If the Puritans commence, it will be time for us to retort. There are gentlemen's mansions all over the country, many of them in the heart of Roundhead neighborhoods, and if they had once an excuse in our proceedings not one of these would be safe for a

minute."

Leaving a strong force of horse in Abingdon, Prince Rupert returned to Oxford, and Colonel Furness again settled down in his residence, his troop dispersing to their farms until required, a small body only remaining at Furness Hall as a guard, and in readiness to call the others to arms if necessary. The colonel warmly approved of the steps that Harry had taken to save the valuables, and determined that until the war was at an end these should remain hidden, as it was probable enough that the chances of the strife might again lead the Roundheads thither.

"I hope, father," Harry Furness said the following day, "that you will now permit me to join the troop. I am getting on for sixteen, and could surely bear myself as a man in the fray."

"If the time should come, Harry, when the fortune of war may compel the king to retire from Oxford—which I trust may never be—I would then grant your request, for after your encounter with the officer who commanded the Roundheads here, it would not be safe for you to remain behind. But although you are too young to take part in the war, I may find you employment. After a council that was held yesterday at Oxford, I learned, from one in the king's secrets, that it was designed to send a messenger to London with papers of importance, and to keep up the communication with the king's friends in that city. There was some debate as to who should be chosen. In London, at the present time, all strangers are closely scrutinized. Every man is suspicious of his neighbor, and it is difficult to find one of

sufficient trust whose person is unknown. Then I have thought that maybe you could well fulfill this important mission. A boy would be unsuspected, where a man's every movement would be watched. There is, of course, some danger attending the mission, and sharpness and readiness will be needed. You have shown that you possess these, by the manner in which you made your escape from London, and methinks that, did you offer, your services would be accepted. You would have, of course, to go in disguise, and to accept any situation which might appear conformable to your character and add to your safety."

Harry at once gladly assented to the proposal. He was at the age when lads are most eager for adventure, and he thought that it would be great fun to be living in London, watching the doings of the Commons, and, so far as was in his power, endeavoring to thwart them. Accordingly in the afternoon he rode over with Sir Henry to Oxford. They dismounted in the courtyard of the building which served as the king's court, and entering, Sir Henry left Harry in an antechamber, and, craving an audience with his majesty, was at once ushered into the king's cabinet. A few minutes later he returned, and motioned to Harry to follow him. The latter did so, and the next moment found himself in the presence of the king. The latter held out his hand for the boy to kiss, and Harry, falling on one knee, and greatly abashed at the presence in which he found himself, pressed his lips to King Charles' hand.

"I hear from your father, my trusty Sir Henry Furness, that

you are willing to adventure your life in our cause, and to go as our messenger to London, and act there as our intermediary with our friends. You seem young for so delicate a work; but your father has told me somewhat of the manner in which you escaped from the hands of the traitors at Westminster, and also how you bore yourself in the affair with the rebels at his residence. It seems to me, then, that we must not judge your wisdom by your years, and that we can safely confide our interests in your hands. Your looks are frank and boyish, and will, therefore, excite far less suspicion than that which would attend upon an older and graver-looking personage. The letters will be prepared for you to-morrow, and, believe me, should success finally crown our efforts against these enemies of the crown, your loyalty and devotion will not be forgotten by your king."

He again held out his hand to Harry, and the boy left the cabinet with his heart burning with loyalty toward his monarch, and resolved that life itself should be held cheap if it could be spent in the service of so gracious and majestic a king.

The next morning a royal messenger brought out a packet of letters to Furness Hall, and Harry, mounting with his father and the little body of horse at the hall, rode toward London. His attire was that of a country peasant boy. The letters were concealed in the hollow of a stout ashen stick which he carried, and which had been slightly weighted with lead, so that, should it be taken up by any but its owner, its lightness would not attract attention. Sir Henry rode with him as far as it was prudent to do toward the

outposts of the Parliament troops. Then, bidding him a tender farewell, and impressing upon him the necessity for the utmost caution, both for his own sake and for that of the king, he left him.

It was not upon the highroad that they parted, but near a village some little distance therefrom. In his pocket Harry had two or three pieces of silver, and between the soles of his boots were sewn several gold coins. These he did not anticipate having to use; but the necessity might arise when such a deposit would prove of use. Harry walked quietly through the village, where his appearance was unnoticed, and then along the road toward Reading. He soon met a troop of Parliament horsemen; but as he was sauntering along quietly, as if merely going from one village to another, no attention whatever was paid to him, and he reached Reading without the slightest difficulty. There he took up his abode for the night at a small hostelry, mentioning to the host that his master had wanted him to join the king's forces, but that he had no stomach for fighting, and intended to get work in the town. The following morning he again started, and proceeded as far as Windsor, where he slept. The next day, walking through Hounslow and Brentford, he stopped for the night at the village of Kensington, and the following morning entered the city. Harry had never before been in the streets of London, for in his flight from his prison he had at once issued into the country, and the bustle and confusion which prevailed excited great surprise in his mind. Even Oxford, busy as it was at the time, and full of the

troops of the king and of the noblemen and gentlemen who had rallied to his cause, was yet quiet when compared with London. The booths along the main streets were filled with goods, and at these the apprentices shouted loudly to all passer-by, "What d'ye lack? What d'ye lack?" Here was a mercer exhibiting dark cloths to a grave-looking citizen; there an armorer was showing the temper of his wares to an officer. Citizens' wives were shopping and gossiping; groups of men, in high steeple hats and dark cloak, were moving along the streets. Pack horses carried goods from the ships at the wharves below the bridge to the merchants, and Harry was jostled hither and thither by the moving crowd. Ascending the hill of Ludgate to the great cathedral of St. Paul's, he saw a crowd gathered round a person on an elevated stand in the yard, and approaching to see what was going on, found that a preacher was pouring forth anathemas against the king and the Royal party, and inciting the citizens to throw themselves heart and soul into the cause. Especially severe was he upon waverers, who, he said, were worse than downright enemies, as, while the one withstood the Parliament openly in fair fight, the others were shifted to and fro with each breeze, and none could say whether they were friends or enemies. Passing through the cathedral, where regular services were no longer held, but where, in different corners, preachers were holding forth against the king, and where groups of men strolled up and down, talking of the troubles of the times, he issued at the eastern door, and entering Cheapside, saw the sign of the merchant to whom he

had been directed.

This was Nicholas Fleming, a man of Dutch descent, and well spoken of among his fellows. He dealt in silks and velvets from Genoa. His shop presented less outward appearance than did those of his neighbors, the goods being too rich and rare to be exposed to the weather, and he himself dealing rather with smaller traders than with the general public. The merchant—a grave-looking man—was sitting at his desk when Harry entered. A clerk was in the shop, engaged in writing, and an apprentice was rolling up a piece of silk. Harry removed his hat, and went up to the merchant's table, and laying a letter upon it, said:

"I have come, sir, from Dame Marjory, my aunt, who was your honor's nurse, with a letter from her, praying you to take me as an apprentice."

The merchant glanced for a moment at the boy. He was expecting a message from the Royalist camp, and his keen wit at once led him to suspect that the bearer stood before him, although his appearance in nowise justified such a thought, for Harry had assumed with his peasant clothes a look of stolid stupidity which certainly gave no warrant for the thought that a keen spirit lay behind it. Without a word the merchant opened the letter, which, in truth, contained nearly the same words which Harry had spoken, but whose signature was sufficient to the merchant to indicate that his suspicions were correct.

"Sit down," he said to the lad. "I am busy now; but will talk with you anon."

Harry took his seat on a low stool, while the merchant continued his writing as before, as if the incident were too unimportant to arrest his attention for a moment. Harry amused himself by looking round the shop, and was specially attracted by the movements of the apprentice, a sharp-looking lad, rather younger than himself, and who, having heard what had passed, seized every opportunity, when he was so placed that neither the merchant nor his clerk could observe his face to make grimaces at Harry, indicative of contempt and derision. Harry was sorely tempted to laugh; but, with an effort, he kept his countenance, assuming only a grim of wonder which greatly gratified Jacob, who thought that he had obtained as companion a butt who would afford him infinite amusement.

After the merchant had continued his writing for an hour, he laid down his pen, and saying to Harry "Follow me; I will speak to Dame Alice, my wife, concerning thee," left the shop and entered the inner portion of the house, followed by Harry. The merchant led him into a sitting-room on the floor above, where his wife, a comely dame, was occupied with her needle.

"Dame," he said, "this is a new apprentice whom my nurse, Marjory, has sent me. A promising-looking youth, is he not?"

His wife looked at him in surprise.

"I have never heard thee speak of thy nurse, Nicholas, and surely the lad looks not apt to learning the mysteries of a trade like thine."

The merchant smiled gravely.

"He must be more apt than he looks, dame, or he would never have been chosen for the service upon which he is engaged. Men do not send fools to risk their lives; and I have been watching him for the last hour, and have observed how he bore himself under the tricks of that jackanapes, Jacob, and verily the wonder which I at first felt when he presented himself to me has passed away, and what appeared to me at first sight a strange imprudence, seems now to be a piece of wisdom. But enough of riddles," he said, seeing that his wife's astonishment increased as he went on. "This lad is a messenger from Oxford, and bears, I doubt not, important documents. What is thy true name, boy?"

"I am Harry Furness, the son of Sir Henry Furness, one of the king's officers," Harry said; "and my papers are concealed within this staff."

Thereupon he lifted his stick and showed that at the bottom a piece of wood had been artfully fitted into a hollow, and then, by being rubbed upon the ground, so worn as to appear part of a solid whole. Taking his knife from his pocket, he cut off an inch from the lower end of the stick, and then shook out on to the table a number of slips of paper tightly rolled together.

"I will examine these at my leisure," the merchant said; "and now as to thyself. What instructions have you?"

"I am told, sir, to take up my abode with you, if it so pleases you; to assume the garb and habits of an apprentice; and, moreover, to do such messages as you may give me, and which, perhaps, I may perform with less risk of observation, and with

more fidelity than any ordinary messenger."

"The proposal is a good one," the trader said. "I am often puzzled how to send notes to those of my neighbors with whom I am in correspondence, for the lad Jacob is sharp—too sharp, indeed, for my purpose, and might suspect the purport of his goings and comings. I believe him to be faithful, though overapt to mischief. But in these days one cares not to risk one's neck unless on a surety. The first thing will be, then, to procure for thee a suit of clothes, suitable to thy new position. Under the plea that at present work is but slack—for indeed the troubles of the times have well-nigh ruined the trade in such goods as mine, throwing it all into the hands of the smiths—I shall be able to grant thee some license, and to allow thee to go about and see the city and acquaint thyself with its ways. Master Jacob may feel, perhaps, a little jealous; but this matters not. I somewhat misdoubt the boy, though perhaps unjustly. But I know not how his opinions may go toward matters politic. He believes me, I think, as do other men, to be attached to the present state of things; but even did his thoughts jump otherwise, he would not have opened his lips before me. It would be well, therefore, for you to be cautious in the extreme with him, and to find out of a verity what be his nature and disposition. Doubtless, in time, he will unbosom to you and you may see whether he has any suspicions, and how far he is to be trusted. He was recommended to me by a friend at Poole, and I know not the opinions of his people. I will come forth with you now and order the clothes without delay, and we

will return in time for dinner, which will be at twelve, of which time it now lacks half an hour."

Putting on his high hat, the merchant sallied out with Harry into the Cheap, and going to a clothier's was able to purchase ready-made garments suitable to his new position as a 'prentice boy. Returning with these, he bade the lad mount to the room which he was to share Jacob, to change with all speed, and to come down to dinner, which was now nearly ready.

The meal was to Harry a curious one. The merchant sat at one end of the table, his wife at the other. The scrivener occupied a place on one side, and his fellow-apprentice and himself on the other. The merchant spoke to his wife on the troubles of the times in a grave, oracular voice, which appeared to be intended chiefly for the edification of his three assistants, who ate their dinner in silence, only saying a word or two in answer to any question addressed to them. Harry, who was accustomed to dine with his father, was somewhat nice in his ways of eating. But, observing a sudden look of interest and suspicion upon the face of the sharp boy beside him at his manner of eating, he, without making so sudden a change as to be perceptible, gradually fell into the way of eating of his companion, mentally blaming himself severely for having for a moment forgotten his assumed part.

"I shall not need you this afternoon, Roger," the merchant said; "and you can go out and view the sights of the city. Avoid getting into any quarrels or broils, and especially observe the names writ up on the corner of the houses, in order that you may

learn the streets and so be able to find your way about should I send you with messages or goods."

Harry spent the afternoon as directed, and was mightily amused and entertained by the sights which he witnessed. Especially was he interested in London Bridge, which, covered closely with houses, stretched across the river, and at the great fleet of vessels which lay moored to the wharves below. Here Harry spent the greater portion of the afternoon, watching the numerous boats as they shot the bridge, and the barges receiving merchandise from the vessels.

At five o'clock the shop was shut, and at six supper was served in the same order as dinner had been. At eight they retired to bed.

"Well, Master Roger," said Jacob, when they were done, "and what is thy father?"

"He farms a piece of land of his own," Harry said. "Sometimes I live with him; but more often with my uncle, who is a trader in Bristol—a man of some wealth, and much respected by the citizens."

"Ah! it is there that thou hast learnt thy tricks of eating," Jacob said. "I wondered to see thee handle thy knife and fork so daintily, and in a manner which assuredly smacked of the city rather than of the farm."

"My uncle," Harry said, "is a particular man as to his habits, and as many leading citizens of the town often take their meals at his house, he was ever worrying me to behave, as he said, more like a Christian than a hog. What a town is this London! What

heaps of people, and what wonderful sights!"

"Yes," the apprentice said carelessly. "But you have as yet seen nothing. You should see the giant with eight heads, at the Guildhall."

"A giant with eight heads?" Henry exclaimed wonderingly. "Why, he have five more than the giant whom my mother told me of when I was little, that was killed by Jack, the Giant Killer. I must go and see him of a surety.'"

"You must mind," the apprentice said; "for a boy is served up for him every morning for breakfast."

"Now you are trying to fool me," Harry said. "My mother warned me that the boys of London were wickedly disposed, and given to mock at strangers. But I tell thee, Master Jacob, that I have a heavy fist, and was considered a fighter in the village. Therefore, mind how thou triest to fool me. Mother always said I was not such a fool as I looked."

"You may well be that," Jacob said, "and yet a very big fool. But at present I do not know whether your folly is more than skin deep, and methinks that the respectable trader, your uncle, has taught you more than how to eat like a Christian."

Harry felt at once that in this sharp boy he had a critic far more dangerous than any he was likely to meet elsewhere. Others would pass him unnoticed; but his fellow-apprentice would criticise every act and word, and he felt somewhat disquieted to find that he had fallen under such supervision. It was now, he felt, all-important for him to discover what were the real sentiments

of the boy, and whether he was trustworthy to his master, and to be relied upon to keep the secret which had fallen into his possession.

"I have been," he said, "in the big church at the end of this street. What a pother the preachers do surely keep up there. I should be sorely worried to hear them long, and would rather thrash out a load of corn than listen long to the clacking of their tongues."

"Thou wilt be sicker still of them before thou hast done with them. It is one of the duties of us apprentices to listen to the teachers, and if I had my way, we would have an apprentices' riot, and demand to be kept to the terms of our indentures, which say nothing about preachers. What is the way of thinking of this uncle of yours?"

"He is a prudent man," Roger said, "and says but little. For myself, I care nothing either way, and cannot understand what they are making this pother about. So far as I can see, folks only want to be quiet, and do their work. But even in our village at home there is no quiet now. Some are one way, some t'other. There are the Church folk, and the meeting-house folk, and it is as much as they can do to keep themselves from going at each other's throats. I hear so much about it that my brain gets stupid with it all, and I hate Parliament and king worse than the schoolmaster who used to whack me for never knowing the difference between one letter and another."

"But you can read and write, I suppose?" Jacob said; "or you

would be of little use as an apprentice."

"Yes, I can read and write," Roger said; "but I cannot say that I love these things. I doubt me that I am not fitter for the plow than for a trade. But my Aunt Marjory was forever going on about my coming to London, and entering the shop of Master Nicholas Fleming, and as it seemed an easy thing to sell yards of silks and velvets, I did not stand against her wishes, especially as she promised that if in a year's time I did not like the life, she would ask Master Nicholas to cancel my indentures, and let me go back again to the farm."

"Ah, well," Jacob said, "it is useful to have an aunt who has been nurse to a city merchant. The life is not a bad one, though our master is strict with all. But Dame Alice is a good housewife, and has a light hand at confections, and when there are good things on the table she does not, as do most of the wives of the traders, keep them for herself and her husband, but lets us have a share also."

"I am fond of confections,", Harry said; "and my Aunt Marjory is famous at them; and now, as I am very sleepy, I will go off. But methinks, Jacob, that you take up hugely more than your share of the bed."

After a little grumbling on both sides the boys disposed themselves to sleep, each wondering somewhat over the character of the other, and determining to make a better acquaintance shortly.

CHAPTER VI.
A NARROW ESCAPE

During the next few days Harry was kept hard at work delivering the various minute documents which he had brought in the hollow of his stick. Sometimes of an evening he attended his master to the houses where he had taken such messages, and once or twice was called in to be present at discussions, and asked to explain various matters connected with the position of the king. During this time he saw but little of the apprentice Jacob, except at his meals, and as the boy did not touch upon his frequent absence, or make any allusion to political matters, when in their bedroom alone at night, Harry hoped that his suspicions had been allayed.

One morning, however, on waking up, he saw the boy sitting upright in bed, staring fixedly at him.

"What is the matter; Jacob, and what are you doing?"

"I am wondering who and what you are!" the boy said.

"I am Roger, your fellow apprentice," Harry replied, laughing.

"I am not sure that you are Roger; I am not sure that you are an apprentice," the boy said. "But if you were, that would not tell me who you are. If you were merely Roger the apprentice, Dame Alice would not pick out all the tit-bits at dinner, and put them on your plate, while I and Master Hardwood have to put up with

any scraps which may come. Nor do I think that, even for the purpose of carrying his cloak, our master would take you with him constantly of an evening. He seems mighty anxious too, for you to learn your way about London. I do not remember that he showed any such care as to my geographical knowledge. But, of course, there is a mystery, and I want to get to the bottom of it, and mean to do so if I can."

"Even supposing that there was a mystery," Harry said, "what good would it do to you to learn it, and what use would you make of your knowledge?"

"I do not know," the boy said carelessly. "But knowledge is power."

"You see," Harry said, "that supposing there were, as you say, a mystery, the secret would not be mine to tell, and even were it so before I told it, I should want to know whether you desired to know it for the sake of aiding your master, if possible, or of doing him an injury.

"I would do him no injury, assuredly," Jacob said. "Master Fleming is as good a master as there is in London. I want to find out, because it is my nature to find out. The mere fact that there is a mystery excites my curiosity, and compels me to do all in my power to get to the bottom of it. Methinks that if you have aught that you do not want known, it would be better to take Jacob Plummer into your confidence. Many a man's head has been lost before now because he did not know whom to trust."

"There is no question of losing heads in the matter," Harry

said, smiling.

"Well, you know best," Jacob replied, shrugging his shoulders; "but heads do not seem very firmly on at present."

When he went out with Master Fleming that evening Harry related to him the conversation which he had had with Jacob.

"What think you, Master Furness? Is this malapert boy to be trusted, or not?"

"It were difficult to say, sir," Harry answered. "His suspicions are surely roused, and as it seemed to me that his professions of affection and duty toward yourself were earnest, methinks that you might enlist him in your cause, and would find him serviceable hereafter, did you allow me frankly to speak to him. He has friends among the apprentice boys, and might, should he be mischievously inclined, set one to follow us of a night, and learn whither you go; he might even now do much mischief. I think that it is his nature to love plotting for its own sake. He would rather plot on your side than against it; but if you will not have him, he may go against you."

"I have a good mind to send him home to his friends," the merchant said. "He can know nothing as yet."

"He might denounce me as a Royalist," Harry said; "and you for harboring me. I will sound him again to-night, and see further into his intentions. But methinks it would be best to trust him."

That night the conversation was again renewed.

"You see, Jacob," Harry said, "that it would be a serious matter, supposing what you think to be true, to intrust you with

the secret. I know not whether you are disposed toward king or Parliament, and to put the lives of many honorable gentlemen into the hands of one of whose real disposition I know little would be but a fool's trick."

"You speak fairly, Roger," the boy said. "Indeed, What I said to you was true. I trouble my head in no way as to the politics and squabbles of the present day; but I mean to rise some day, and there is no better way to rise than to be mixed up in a plot. It is true that the rise may be to the gallows; but if one plays for high stakes, one must risk one's purse. I love excitement, and believe that I am no fool. I can at least be true to the side that I engage upon, and of the two, would rather take that of the king than of the Parliament, because it seems to me that there are more fools on his side than on the other, and therefore more chance for a wise head to prosper."

Harry laughed.

"You have no small opinion of yourself, Master Jacob."

"No," the boy said; "I always found myself able to hold my own. My father, who is a scrivener, predicted me that I should either come to wealth or be hanged, and I am of the same opinion myself."

After further conversation next day with the merchant, Harry frankly confided to Jacob that evening that he was the bearer of letters from the king. Of their contents he said that he knew nothing; but had reason to believe that another movement was on foot for bringing about the overthrow of the party of Puritans

who were in possession of the government of London.

"I deemed that such was your errand," the boy said. "You played your part well; but not well enough. You might have deceived grown-up people; but you would hardly take in a boy of your own age. Now that you have told me frankly, I will, if I can, do anything to aid. I care nothing for the opinions of one side or the other; but as I have to go to the cathedral three times on Sunday, and to sit each time for two hours listening to the harangues of Master Ezekiel Proudfoot, I would gladly join in anything which would be likely to end by silencing that fellow and his gang. It is monstrous that, upon the only day in the week we have to ourselves, we should be compelled to undergo the punishment of listening to these long-winded divines."

When Harry was not engaged in taking notes, backward and forward, between the merchant and those with whom he was negotiating, he was occupied in the shop. There the merchant kept up appearances before the scrivener and any customers who might come in, by instructing him in the mysteries of his trade; by showing him the value of the different velvets and silks; and by teaching him his private marks, by which, in case of the absence of the merchant or his apprentice, he could state the price of any article to a trader who might come in. Harry judged, by the conversations which he had with his host, that the latter was not sanguine as to the success of the negotiations which he was carrying on.

"If," he said, "the king could obtain one single victory, his

friends would raise their heads, and would assuredly be supported by the great majority of the population, who wish only for peace; but so long as the armies stood facing each other, and the Puritans are all powerful in the Parliament and Council of the city, men are afraid to be the first to move, not being sure how popular support would be given."

One evening after work was over Harry and Jacob walked together up the Cheap, and took their place among a crowd listening to a preacher at Paul's Cross. He was evidently a popular character, and a large number of grave men, of the straitest Puritan appearance, were gathered round him.

"I wish we could play some trick with these somber-looking knaves," Jacob whispered.

"Yes," Harry said; "I would give much to be able to do so; but at the present moment I scarcely wish to draw attention upon myself."

"Let us get out of this, then," Jacob said, "if there is no fun to be had. I am sick of these long-winded orations."

They turned to go, and as they made their way through the crowd, Harry trod upon the toe of a small man in a high steeple hat and black coat.

"I beg your pardon," Harry said, as there burst from the lips of the little man an exclamation which was somewhat less decorous than would have been expected from a personage so gravely clad. The little man stared Harry in the face, and uttered another exclamation, this time of surprise. Harry, to his dismay, saw that

the man with whom he had come in contact was the preacher whom he had left gagged on the guardroom bed at Westminster.

"A traitor! A spy!" shouted the preacher, at the top of his voice, seizing Harry by the doublet. The latter shook himself free just as Jacob, jumping in the air, brought his hand down with all his force on the top of the steeple hat, wedging it over the eyes of the little man. Before any further effort could be made to seize them, the two lads dived through the crowd, and dashed down a lane leading toward the river.

This sudden interruption to the service caused considerable excitement, and the little preacher, on being extricated from his hat, furiously proclaimed that the lad he had seized, dressed as an apprentice, was a malignant, who had been taken prisoner at Brentford, and who had foully ill-treated him in a cell in the guardroom at Finsbury. Instantly a number of men set off in pursuit.

"What had we best do, Jacob?" Harry said, as he heard the clattering of feet behind them.

"We had best jump into a boat," Jacob said, "and row for it. It is dark now, and we shall soon be out of their sight."

At the bottom of the lane were some stairs, and at these a number of boats. As it was late in the evening, and the night a foul one, the watermen, not anticipating fares, had left, and the boys, leaping into a boat, put out the sculls, and rowed into the stream, just as their pursuers were heard coming down the lane.

"Which way shall we go?" Harry said.

"We had better shoot the bridge," Jacob replied. "Canst row well?"

"Yes," Harry said; "I have practiced at Abingdon with an oar."

"Then take the sculls," Jacob said, "and I will steer. It is a risky matter going through the bridge, I tell you, at half tide. Sit steady, whatever you do. Here they come in pursuit, Roger. Bend to the sculls," and in a couple of minutes they reached the bridge.

"Steady, steady," shouted Jacob, as the boat shot a fall, some eight feet in depth, with the rapidity of an arrow. For a moment it was tossed and whirled about in the seething waves below, and then, thanks to Jacob's presence of mind and Harry's obedience to his orders, it emerged safely into the smooth water below the bridge. Harry now gave up one of the sculls to Jacob, and the two boys rowed hard down the stream.

"Will they follow, think you?" Harry said.

"I don't think," Jacob laughed, "that any of those black-coated gentry will care for shooting the bridge. They will run down below, and take boat there; and as there are sure to be hands waiting to carry fares out to the ships in the pool, they will gain fast upon us when once they are under way."

The wind was blowing briskly with them, and the tide running strong, and at a great pace they passed the ships lying at anchor.

"There is the Tower," Jacob said; "with whose inside we may chance to make acquaintance, if we are caught. Look," he said, "there is a boat behind us, rowed by four oars! I fear that it is our pursuers."

"Had we not better land, and take our chance?" Harry said.

"We might have done so at first," Jacob said; "it is too late now. We must row for it. Look," he continued, "there is a bark coming along after the boat. She has got her sails up already, and the wind is bringing her along grandly. She sails faster than they row, and if she comes up to us before they overtake us, it may be that the captain will take us in tow. These sea-dogs are always kindly."

The boat that the boys had seized was, fortunately, a very light and fast one, while that in pursuit was large and heavy, and the four watermen had to carry six sitters. Consequently, they gained but very slowly upon the fugitives. Presently a shot from a pistol whizzed over the boys' heads.

"I did not bargain for this, friend Roger," Jacob said. "My head is made rather for plots and conspiracies than for withstanding the contact of lead."

"Row away!" Harry said. "Here is the ship just alongside now."

As the vessel, which was a coaster, came along, the crew looked over the side, their attention, being called by the sound of the pistol and the shouts of those in chase.

"Throw us a rope, sir," Jacob shouted. "We are not malefactors, but have been up to a boyish freak, and shall be heavily punished if we are caught."

Again the pistol rang out behind, and one of the Sailors threw a rope to the boys. It was caught, and in a minute the boat was

gliding rapidly along in the wake of the ship. She was then pulled up alongside, the boys clambered on board, and the boat was sent adrift, The pursuers continued the chase for a few minutes longer, but seeing the ship gradually drawing away from them, they desisted, and turned in toward shore.

"And who are you?" the captain of the brig said.

"We are apprentices, as you see," Jacob said. "We were listening to some preaching at Paul's Cross. In trying to get out from the throng—being at length weary of the long-winded talk of the preacher—we trod upon the feet of a worthy divine. He, refusing to receive our apologies, took the matter roughly, and seeing that the crowd of Puritans around were going to treat us as malignant roisterers, we took the liberty of driving the hat of our assailant over his eyes, and bolting. Assuredly, had we been caught, we should have been put in the stocks and whipped, even if worse pains and penalties had not befallen us, for ill-treatment of one of those who are now the masters of London."

"It was a foolish freak," the captain said, "and in these days such freaks are treated as crimes. It is well that I came along. What do you purpose to do now?"

"We would fain be put ashore, sir, somewhere in Kent, so that we may make our way back again. Our figures could not have been observed beyond that we were apprentices, and we can enter the city quietly, without fear of detection."

The wind dropped in the evening, and, the tide turning, the captain brought to anchor. In the morning he sailed forward

again. When he neared Gravesend he saw a vessel lying in the stream.

"That is a Parliament ship," he said.

At that moment another vessel of about the same size as that in which they were was passing her. She fired a gun, and the ship at once dropped her sails and brought up.

"What can she be doing now, arresting the passage of ships on their way down? If your crime had been a serious one, I should have thought that a message must have been brought down in the night for her to search vessels coming down stream for the persons of fugitives. What say you, lads? Have you told me the truth?"

"We have told you the truth, sir," Harry said; "but not the whole truth. The circumstances are exactly as my friend related them. But he omitted to say that the preacher recognized in me one of a Cavalier family, and that they may suspect that I was in London on business of the king's."

"Is that so?" the captain said. "In that case, your position is a perilous one. It is clear that they do not know the name of the ship in which you are embarked, or they would not have stopped the one which we see far ahead. If they search the ship, they are sure to find you."

"Can you swim, Jacob?" Harry asked the other.

He nodded.

"There is a point," Harry said, "between this and the vessel of war, and if you sail close to that you will for a minute or two

be hidden from the view of those on her deck. If you will take your ship close to that corner we will jump overboard and swim on shore. If then your vessel is stopped you can well say that you have no fugitives on board, and let them search."

The captain thought the plan a good one, and at once the vessel's head was steered over toward the side to which Harry had pointed. As they neared the corner they for a minute lost sight of the hull of the man-of-war, and the boys, with a word of thanks and farewell to the captain, plunged over and swam to the bank, which was but some thirty yards away. Climbing it, they lay down among the grass, and watched the progress of the vessel. She, like the one before, was brought up by a gun from the man-of-war, and a boat from the latter put out and remained by her side for half an hour. Then they saw the boat return, the vessel hoist her sails again, and go on her way.

"This is a nice position into which you have brought me, Master Roger," Jacob said. "My first step in taking part in plots and conspiracies does not appear to me to lead to the end which I looked for. However, I am sick of the shop, and shall be glad of a turn of freedom. Now let us make our way across the marshes to the high land. It is but twenty miles to walk to London, if that be really your intent."

"I shall not return to London myself," Harry said; "but shall make my way back to Oxford. It would be dangerous now for me to appear, and I doubt not that a sharp hue and cry will be kept up. In your case it is different, for as you have been long an

apprentice, and as your face will be entirely unknown to any of them, there will be little chance of your being detected."

"I would much rather go with you to Oxford," the lad said. "I am weary of velvets and silks, and though I do not know that wars and battles will be more to my taste, I would fain try them also. You are a gentleman, and high in the trust of the king and those around him. If you will take me with you as your servant I will be a faithful knave to you, and doubt not that as you profit by your advantages, some of the good will fall to my share also."

"In faith," Harry said, "I should hardly like you to be my servant, Jacob, although I have no other office to bestow at present. But if you come with me you shall be rather in the light of a major-domo, though I have no establishment of which you can be the head. In these days, however, the distinctions of master and servant are less broad than before, and in the field we shall be companions rather than master and follower. So, if you like to cast in your fortunes with mine, here is my hand on it. You have already proved your friendship to me as well as your quickness and courage, and believe me, you will not find me or my father ungrateful. But for you, I should now be in the cells, and your old master in no slight danger of finding himself in prison, to say nothing of the upset of the negotiations for which I came to London. Therefore, you have deserved well, not only of me, but of the king, and the adventure may not turn out so badly as it has begun. We had best strike south, and go round by Tunbridge, and thence keeping west, into Berkshire, and so to Oxford. In this

way we shall miss the Parliament men lying round London, and those facing the Royalists between Reading and Oxford."

This order was carried out. The lads met with but few questioners, and replying always that they were London apprentices upon their way home to visit their friends for a short time, passed unsuspected. At first the want of funds had troubled them, for Harry had forgotten the money sewn up in his shoe. But presently, remembering this, and taking two gold pieces out of their hiding-place, they went merrily along the road and in five days from starting arrived at Oxford.

CHAPTER VII.
IN A HOT PLACE

Making inquiries, Harry found that his father was living at a house in the college of Brazenose, and thither he made his way. Not a little surprised was the trooper, who was on guard before the door, to recognize his master's son in one of the two lads who, in the clothes of apprentices shrunk with water and stained with mud and travel, presented themselves before him. Harry ascended at once to Sir Henry's room, and the latter was delighted to see him again, for he had often feared that be had acted rashly in sending him to London. Harry briefly told his adventures, and introduced his friend Jacob to his father.

Sir Henry immediately sent for a clothier, and Harry was again made presentable; while a suit of serviceable clothes adapted to the position of a young gentleman of moderate means was obtained for Jacob. Then, accompanied by his son, Sir Henry went to the king's chambers, and informed his majesty of all that had happened. As, from the reports which had reached the king of the temper of the people of London, he had but small hope that anything would come of the attempt that was being made, he felt but little disappointed at hearing of the sudden return of his emissary. Harry was again asked in, and his majesty in a few words expressed to him his satisfaction at the zeal and prudence

which he had shown, and at his safe return to court.

On leaving the king Harry awaited anxiously what his father would determine concerning his future, and was delighted when Sir Henry said, "It is now a year once these troubles began, Harry, and you have so far embarked upon them, that I fear you would find it difficult to return to your studies. You have proved yourself possessed of qualities which will enable you to make your way in the world, and I therefore think the time has come when you can take your place in the ranks. I shall ask of the king a commission for you as captain in my regiment, and as one of my officers has been killed you will take his place, and will have the command of a troop."

Harry was delighted at this intimation; and the following day received the king's commission.

A few days afterward he had again to ride over to Furness Hall, which was now shut up, to collect some rents, and as he returned through Abingdon he saw Lucy Rippinghall walking in the streets. Rather proud of his attire as a young cavalier in full arms, Harry dismounted and courteously saluted her.

"I should hardly have known you, Master Furness," she said. "You look so fierce in your iron harness, and so gay with your plumes and ribands. My brother would be glad to see you. My father as you know, is away. Will you not come in for a few minutes?"

Harry, after a few moments' hesitation, assented. He longed to see his old friend, and as the latter was still residing at Abingdon,

while he himself had already made his mark in the royal cause, he did not fear that any misconstruction could be placed upon his visit to the Puritan's abode. Herbert received him with a glad smile of welcome.

"Ah, Harry," he said, "so you have fairly taken to man's estate. Of course, I think you have done wrong; but we need not argue on that now. I am glad indeed to see you. Lucy," he said, "let supper be served at once."

It was a pleasant meal, and the old friends chatted of their schooldays and boyish pastimes, no allusion being made to the events of the day, save that Herbert said, "I suppose that you know that my father is now a captain in the force of the Commons, and that I am doing my best to keep his business going during his absence."

"I had heard as much," Harry answered. "It is a heavy weight to be placed on your shoulders, Herbert."

"Yes," he said, "I am growing learned in wools, and happily the business is not falling off in my hands."

It was characteristic of the civil war in England that during the whole time of its existence the affairs of the country went on as usual. Business was conducted, life and property were safe, and the laws were enforced just as before. The judges went their circuits undisturbed by the turmoil of the times, acting under the authority alike of the Great Seals of the King and Parliament. Thus evildoers were repressed, crime put down, and the laws of the land administered just as usual, and as if no hostile armies

were marching and fighting on the fair fields of England. In most countries during such troubled times, all laws have been at an end, bands of robbers and disbanded soldiers have pillaged and ruined the country, person and property alike have been unsafe, private broils and enmities have broken forth, and each man has carried his life in his hand. Thus, even in Abingdon, standing as it did halfway between the stronghold of the crown at Oxford, and the Parliament army at Reading, things remained quiet and tranquil. Its fairs and markets were held as usual, and the course of business went on unchecked.

On his return to Oxford Harry learned that the king, with a portion of the army, was to set out at once for Gloucester, to compel that city, which had declared for the Commons, to open its gates. With a force of thirteen thousand men the king moved upon Gloucester. When he arrived outside its walls, on the 10th of August, he sent a summons to the town to surrender, offering pardon to the inhabitants, and demanding an answer within two hours. Clarendon has described how the answer was returned. "Within less than the time described, together with a trumpeter, returned two citizens from the town with lean, pale, sharp, and bad visages, indeed, faces so strange and unusual, and in such a garb and posture, that at once made the most severe countenances merry, and the most cheerful heart sad, for it was impossible such ambassadors could bring less than a defiance. The men, without any circumstance of duty or good manners, in a pert, shrill, undismayed accent, said that they brought an

answer from the godly city of Gloucester to the king, and were so ready to give insolent and seditious answers to any questions, as if their business were chiefly to provoke the king to violate his own safe-conduct." The answers which these strange messengers brought was that the inhabitants and soldiers kept the city for the use of his majesty, but conceived themselves "only bound to obey the commands of his majesty signified by both houses of Parliament." Setting fire to the houses outside their walls, the men of Gloucester prepared for a resolute resistance. The walls were strong and well defended, and the king did not possess artillery sufficient to make breaches therein, and dreading the great loss which an assault upon the walls would inflict upon his army, he determined to starve the city into submission. The inhabitants, although reduced to sore straits, yet relying upon assistance coming to them, held out, and their hopes were not disappointed, as Essex, at the head of a great army, was sent from London to relieve the place. Upon his approach, the king and his councilors, deciding that a battle could not be fought with advantage, drew off from the town, and gave up the siege.

Both armies now moved in the direction of London; but Prince Rupert, hearing that a small body of Parliament horse were besieging the house of Sir James Strangford, an adherent of the crown, took with him fifty horse, and rode away to raise the siege, being ever fond of dashing exploits in the fashion of the knights of old. The body which he chose to accompany him was the troop commanded by Harry Furness, whose gayety of

manner and lightness of heart had rendered him a favorite with the prince. The besieged house was situated near Hereford; and at the end of a long day's march Prince Rupert, coming in sight of the Roundheads, charged them with such fury that they were overthrown with scarce any resistance, and fled in all directions. Having effected his object, the prince now rode to Worcester, where he slept, and thence by a long day's march to a village where he again halted for the night.

An hour after his arrival, a messenger came in from Lady Sidmouth, the wife of Sir Henry Sidmouth, asking him to ride over and take up his abode for the night at her house. Bidding Harry accompany him, the prince rode off, leaving the troop under the charge of Harry's lieutenant, Jacob, who had proved himself an active soldier, and had been appointed to that rank at Gloucester. The house was a massive structure of the reign of Henry VIII.; but being built at a time when the castellated abodes were going out of fashion, was not capable of standing a siege, and had not indeed been put in any posture of defense. Sir Henry was with the king, and only a few retainers remained in the house. Prince Rupert was received at the entrance by Lady Sidmouth, who had at her side her daughter, a girl of fourteen, whom Harry thought the most beautiful creature he had ever seen. The prince alighted, and doffing his broad plumed hat, kissed the lady's hand, and conducted her into the house again, Harry doing the same to her daughter.

"You must pardon a rough reception," the lady said to

the prince. "Had I had notice of your coming, I would have endeavored to receive you in a manner more befitting; but hearing from one of my retainers, who happened to be in the village when you arrived, of your coming, I thought that the accommodation—poor as it is—would be better than that which you could obtain there."

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