

**YONGE  
CHARLOTTE  
MARY**

THE PIGEON PIE

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# Charlotte M. Yonge

## The Pigeon Pie

### CHAPTER I

Early in the September of the year 1651 the afternoon sun was shining pleasantly into the dining-hall of Forest Lea House. The sunshine came through a large bay-window, glazed in diamonds, and with long branches of a vine trailing across it, but in parts the glass had been broken and had never been mended. The walls were wainscoted with dark oak, as well as the floor, which shone bright with rubbing, and stag's antlers projected from them, on which hung a sword in its sheath, one or two odd gauntlets, an old-fashioned helmet, a gun, some bows and arrows, and two of the broad shady hats then in use, one with a drooping black feather, the other plainer and a good deal the worse for wear, both of a small size, as if belonging to a young boy.

An oaken screen crossed the hall, close to the front door, and there was a large open fireplace, a settle on each side under the great yawning chimney, where however at present no fire was burning.

Before it was a long dining-table covered towards the upper end with a delicately white cloth, on which stood, however, a few trenchers, plain drinking-horns, and a large old-fashioned black-jack, that is to say, a pitcher formed of leather. An armchair was at the head of the table, and heavy oaken benches along the side.

A little boy of six years old sat astride on the end of one of the benches, round which he had thrown a bridle of plaited rushes, and, with a switch in his other hand, was springing himself up and down, calling out, "Come, Eleanor, come, Lucy; come and ride on a pillion behind me to Worcester, to see King Charles and brother Edmund."

"I'll come, I am coming!" cried Eleanor, a little girl about a year older, her hair put tightly away under a plain round cap, and she was soon perched sideways behind her brother.

"Oh, fie, Mistress Eleanor; why, you would not ride to the wars?" This was said by a woman of about four or five-and-twenty, tall, thin and spare, with a high colour, sharp black eyes, and a waist which the long stiff stays, laced in front, had pinched in till it was not much bigger than a wasp's, while her quilted green petticoat, standing out full below it, showed a very trim pair of ankles encased in scarlet stockings, and a pair of bony red arms came forth from the full short sleeves of a sort of white jacket, gathered in at the waist. She was clattering backwards and forwards, removing the dinner things, and talking to the children as she did so in a sharp shrill tone: "Such a racket as you make, to be sure, and how you can have the heart to do so I can't guess, not I, considering what may be doing this very moment."

"Oh, but Walter says they will all come back again, brother Edmund, and Diggory, and all," said little Eleanor, "and then we shall be merry."

"Yes," said Lucy, who, though two years older, wore the same prim round cap and long frock as her little sister, "then we shall have Edmund here again. You can't remember him at all, Eleanor and Charlie, for we have not seen him these six years!"

"No," said Deborah, the maid. "Ah! these be weary wars, what won't let a gentleman live at home in peace, nor his poor servants, who have no call to them."

"For shame, Deb!" cried Lucy; "are not you the King's own subject?"

But Deborah maundered on, "It is all very well for gentlefolks, but now it had all got quiet again, 'tis mortal hard it should be stirred up afresh, and a poor soul marched off, he don't know where, to fight with he don't know who, for he don't know what."

"He ought to know what!" exclaimed Lucy, growing very angry. "I tell you, Deb, I only wish I was a man! I would take the great two-handled sword, and fight in the very front rank for our Church

and our King! You would soon see what a brave cavalier's daughter—son I mean,” said Lucy, getting into a puzzle, “could do.”

The more eager Lucy grew, the more unhappy Deborah was, and putting her apron to her eyes, she said in a dismal voice, “Ah! 'tis little poor Diggory wots of kings and cavaliers!”

What Lucy's indignation would have led her to say next can never be known, for at this moment in bounced a tall slim boy of thirteen, his long curling locks streaming tangled behind him. “Hollo!” he shouted, “what is the matter now? Dainty Deborah in the dumps? Cheer up, my lass! I'll warrant that doughty Diggory is discreet enough to encounter no more bullets than he can reasonably avoid!”

This made Deborah throw down her apron and reply, with a toss of the head, “None of your nonsense, Master Walter, unless you would have me speak to my lady. Cry for Diggory, indeed!”

“She was really crying for him, Walter,” interposed Lucy.

“Mistress Lucy!” exclaimed Deborah, angrily, “the life I lead among you is enough—”

“Not enough to teach you good temper,” said Walter. “Do you want a little more?”

“I wish someone was here to teach you good manners,” answered the tormented Deborah. “As if it was not enough for one poor girl to have the work of ten servants on her hands, here must you be mock, mock, jeer, jeer, worrit, worrit, all day long! I had rather be a mark for all the musketeers in the Parliamentary army.”

This Deborah always said when she was out of temper, and it therefore made Walter and Lucy laugh the more; but in the midst of their merriment in came a girl of sixteen or seventeen, tall and graceful. Her head was bare, her hair fastened in a knot behind, and in little curls round her face; she had an open bodice of green silk, and a white dress under it, very plain and neat; her step was quick and active, but her large dark eyes had a grave thoughtful look, as if she was one who would naturally have loved to sit still and think, better than to bustle about and be busy. Eleanor ran up to her at once, complaining that Walter was teasing Deborah shamefully. She was going to speak, but Deborah cut her short.

“No Mistress Rose, I will not have even you excuse him, I'll go and tell my lady how a poor faithful wench is served;” and away she flounced, followed by Rose.

“Will she tell mamma?” asked little Charlie.

“Oh no, Rose will pacify her,” said Lucy.

“I am sure I wish she would tell,” said Eleanor, a much graver little person than Lucy; “Walter is too bad.”

“It is only to save Diggory the trouble of taking a crabstick to her when he returns from the wars,” said Walter. “Heigh ho!” and he threw himself on the bench, and drummed on the table. “I wish I was there! I wonder what is doing at Worcester this minute!”

“When will brother Edmund come?” asked Charlie for about the hundredth time.

“When the battle is fought, and the battle is won, and King Charles enjoys his own again! Hurrah!” shouted Walter, jumping up, and beginning to sing—

“For forty years our royal throne  
Has been his father's and his own.”

Lucy joined in with—

“Nor is there anyone but he  
With right can there a sharer be.”

“How can you make such a noise?” said Eleanor, stopping her ears, by which she provoked Walter to go on roaring into them, while he pulled down her hand—

“For who better may  
The right sceptre sway  
Than he whose right it is to reign;  
Then look for no peace,  
For the war will never cease  
Till the King enjoys his own again.”

As he came to the last line, Rose returning exclaimed, “Oh, hush, Lucy. Pray don’t, Walter!”

“Ha! Rose turned Roundhead?” cried Walter. “You don’t deserve to hear the good news from Worcester.”

“O, what?” cried the girls, eagerly.

“When it comes,” said Walter, delighted to have taken in Rose herself; but Rose, going up to him gently, implored him to be quiet, and listen to her.

“All this noisy rejoicing grieves our mother,” said she. “If you could but have seen her yesterday evening, when she heard your loyal songs. She sighed, and said, ‘Poor fellow, how high his hopes are!’ and then she talked of our father and that evening before the fight at Naseby.”

Walter looked grave and said, “I remember! My father lifted me on the table to drink King Charles’s health, and Prince Rupert—I remember his scarlet mantle and white plume—patted my head, and called me his little cavalier.”

“We sat apart with mother,” said Rose, “and heard the loud cheers and songs till we were half frightened at the noise.”

“I can’t recollect all that,” said Lucy.

“At least you ought not to forget how our dear father came in with Edmund, and kissed us, and bade mother keep up a good heart. Don’t you remember that, Lucy?”

“I do,” said Walter; “it was the last time we ever saw him.”

And Walter sat on the table, resting one foot on the bench, while the other dangled down, and leaning his elbow on his knee and his head on his hand; Rose sat on the bench close by him, with Charlie on her lap, and the two little girls pressing close against her, all earnest to hear from her the story of the great fight of Naseby, where they had all been in a farmhouse about a mile from the field of battle.

“I don’t forget how the cannon roared all day,” said Lucy.

“Ah! that dismal day!” said Rose. “Then by came our troopers, blood-stained and disorderly, riding so fast that scarcely one waited to tell my mother that the day was lost and she had better fly.

But not a step did she stir from the gate, where she stood with you, Charlie, in her arms; she only asked of each as he passed if he had seen my father or Edmund, and ever her cheek grew whiter and whiter. At last came a Parliament officer on horseback—it was Mr. Enderby, who had been a college mate of my father’s, and he told us that my dear father was wounded, and had sent him to fetch her.”

“But I never knew where Edmund was then,” said Eleanor. “No one ever told me.”

“Edmund lifted up my father when he fell,” said Walter, “and was trying to bind his wound; but when Colonel Enderby’s troop was close upon them, my father charged him upon his duty to fly, saying that he should fall into the hands of an old friend, and it was Edmund’s duty to save himself to fight for the King another time.”

“So Edmund followed Prince Rupert?” said Eleanor.

“Yes,” said Lucy; “you know my father once saved Prince Rupert’s life in the skirmish where his horse was killed, so for his sake the Prince made Edmund his page, and has had him with him in all his voyages and wanderings. But go on about our father, Rose. Did we go to see him?”

“No; Mr. Enderby said he was too far off, so he left a trooper to guard us, and my mother only took her little babe with her. Don’t you remember, Walter, how Eleanor screamed after her, as she rode away on the colonel’s horse; and how we could not comfort the little ones, till they had cried

themselves to sleep, poor little things? And in the morning she came back, and told us our dear father was dead! O Walter, how can we look back to that day, and rejoice in a new war? How can you wonder her heart should sink at sounds of joy which have so often ended in tears?"

Walter twisted about and muttered, but he could not resist his sister's earnest face and tearful eyes, and said something about not making so much noise in the house.

"There's my own dear brother," said Rose. "And you won't tease Deborah?"

"That is too much, Rose. It is all the sport I have, to see the faces she makes when I plague her about Diggory. Besides, it serves her right for having such a temper."

"She has not a good temper, poor thing!" said Rose; "but if you would only think how true and honest she is, how hard she toils, and how ill she fares, and yet how steadily she holds to us, you would surely not plague and torment her."

Rose was interrupted by a great outcry, and in rushed Deborah, screaming out, "Lack-a-day!

Mistress Rose! O Master Walter! what will become of us? The fight is lost, the King fled, and a whole regiment of red-coats burning and plundering the whole country. Our throats will be cut, every one of them!"

"You'll have a chance of being a mark for all the musketeers in the Parliament army," said Walter, who even then could not miss a piece of mischief.

"Joking now, Master Walter!" cried Deborah, very much shocked. "That is what I call downright sinful. I hope you'll be made a mark of yourself, that I do."

The children were running off to tell their mother, when Rose stopped them, and desired to know how Deborah had heard the tidings. It was from two little children from the village who had come to bring a present of some pigeons to my lady. Rose went herself to examine the children, but she could only learn that a packman had come into the village and brought the report that the King had been defeated, and had fled from the field. They knew no more, and Walter pronouncing it to be all a cock-and-bull story of some rascally prick-eared pedlar, declared he would go down to the village and enquire into the rights of it.

These were the saddest times of English history, when the wrong cause had been permitted for a time to triumph, and the true and rightful side was persecuted; and among those who endured affliction for the sake of their Church and their King, none suffered more, or more patiently, than Lady Woodley, or, as she was called in the old English fashion, Dame Mary Woodley, of Forest Lea.

When first the war broke out she was living happily in her pleasant home with her husband and children; but when King Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, all this comfort and happiness had to be given up. Sir Walter Woodley joined the royal army, and it soon became unsafe for his wife and children to remain at home, so that they were forced to go about with him, and suffer all the hardships of the sieges and battles. Lady Woodley was never strong, and her health was very much hurt by all she went through; she was almost always unwell, and if Rose, though then quite a child, had not shown care and sense beyond her years for the little ones, it would be hard to say what would have become of them.

Yet all she endured while dragging about her little babies through the country, with bad or insufficient food, uncomfortable lodgings, pain, weariness and anxiety, would have been as nothing but for the heavy sorrows that came upon her also. First she lost her only brother, Edmund Mowbray, and in the battle of Naseby her husband was killed; besides which there were the sorrows of the whole nation in seeing the King sold, insulted, misused, and finally slain, by his own subjects. After Sir Walter's death, Lady Woodley went home with her five younger children to her father's house at Forest Lea; for her husband's estate, Edmund's own inheritance, had been seized and sequestered by the rebels. She was the heiress of Forest Lea since the loss of her brother, but the old Mr. Mowbray, her father, had given almost all his wealth for the royal cause, and had been oppressed by the exactions of the rebels, so that he had nothing to leave his daughter but the desolate old house and a few bare acres of land. For the shelter, however, Lady Woodley was very thankful; and there she lived with



her children and a faithful servant, Deborah, whose family had always served the Mowbrays, and who would not desert their daughter now.

The neighbours in the village loved, and were sorry for, their lady, and used to send her little presents; there was a large garden in which Diggory Stokes, who had also served her father, raised vegetables for her use; the cow wandered in the deserted park, and so they contrived to find food; while all the work of the house was done by Rose and Deborah. Rose was her mother's great comfort, nursing her, cheering her, taking care of the little ones, teaching them, working for them, and making light of all her exertions. Everyone in the village loved Rose Woodley, for everyone had in some way been helped or cheered by her. Her mother was only sometimes afraid she worked too hard, and would try her strength too much; but she was always bright and cheerful, and when the day's work was done no one was more gay and lively and ready for play with the little ones.

Rose had more trial than anyone knew with Deborah. Deborah was as faithful as possible, and bore a great deal for the sake of her mistress, worked hard day and night, had little to eat and no wages, yet lived on with them rather than forsake her dear lady and the children. One thing, however, Deborah would not do, and that was to learn to rule her tongue and her temper. She did not know, nor do many excellent servants, how much trial and discomfort she gave to those she loved so earnestly, by her constant bursting out into hasty words whenever she was vexed—her grumbling about whatever she disliked, and her ill-judged scolding of the children. Servants in those days were allowed to speak more freely to their masters and mistresses than at present, so that Deborah had more opportunity of making such speeches, and it was Rose's continual work to try to keep her temper from being fretted, or Lady Woodley from being teased with her complaints. Rose was very forbearing, and but for this there would have been little peace in the house.

Walter was thirteen, an age when it is not easy to keep boys in order, unless they will do so for themselves. Though a brave generous boy, he was often unruly and inconsiderate, apt not to obey, and to do what he knew to be unkind or wrong, just for the sake of present amusement. He was thus his mother's great anxiety, for she knew that she was not fit either to teach or to restrain him, and she feared that his present wild disobedient ways might hurt his character for ever, and lead to dispositions which would in time swallow up all the good about him, and make him what he would now tremble to think of.

She used to talk of her anxieties to Doctor Bathurst, the good old clergyman who had been driven away from his parish, but used to come in secret to help, teach, and use his ministry for the faithful ones of his flock. He would tell her that while she did her best for her son, she must trust the rest to his Father above, and she might do so hopefully, since it had been in His own cause that the boy had been made fatherless. Then he would speak to Walter, showing him how wrong and how cruel were his overbearing, disobedient ways. Walter was grieved, and resolved to improve and become steadier, that he might be a comfort and blessing to his mother; but in his love of fun and mischief he was apt to forget himself, and then drove away what might have been in time repentance and improvement, by fancying he did no harm. Teasing Deborah served her right, he would tell himself, she was so ill-tempered and foolish; Diggory was a clod, and would do nothing without scolding; it was a good joke to tease Charlie; Eleanor was a vexatious little thing, and he would not be ordered by her; so he went his own way, and taught the merry chattering Lucy to be very nearly as bad as himself, neglected his duties, set a bad example, tormented a faithful servant, and seriously distressed his mother. Give him some great cause, he thought, and he would be the first and the best, bring back the King, protect his mother and sisters, and perform glorious deeds, such as would make his name be remembered for ever. Then it would be seen what he was worth; in the meantime he lived a dull life, with nothing to do, and he must have some fun. It did not signify if he was not particular about little things, they were women's affairs, and all very well for Rose, but when some really important matter came, that would be his time for distinguishing himself.

In the meantime Charles II. had been invited to Scotland, and had brought with him, as an attendant, Edmund Woodley, the eldest son. As soon as he was known to have entered England, some of the loyal gentlemen of the neighbourhood of Forest Lea went to join the King, and among their followers went Farmer Ewins, who had fought bravely in the former war under Edmund Mowbray, several other of the men of the village, and lastly, Diggory Stokes, Lady Woodley's serving man, who had lately shown symptoms of discontent with his place, and fancied that as a soldier he might fare better, make his fortune, and come home prosperously to marry his sweetheart, Deborah.

## CHAPTER II

Walter ran down to the village at full speed. He first bent his steps towards the “Half-Moon,” the little public-house, where news was sure to be met with. As he came towards it, however, he heard the loud sound of a man’s voice going steadily on as if with some discourse. “Some preachment,” said he to himself: “they’ve got a thorough-going Roundhead, I can hear his twang through his nose! Shall I go in or not?”

While he was asking himself this question, an old peasant in a round frock came towards him.

“Hollo, Will!” shouted Walter, “what prick-eared rogue have you got there?”

“Hush, hush, Master Walter!” said the old man, taking off his hat very respectfully. “Best take care what you say, there be plenty of red-coats about. There’s one of them now preaching away in marvellous pied words. It is downright shocking to hear the Bible hollaed out after that sort, so I came away. Don’t you go nigh him, sir, ’specially with your hat set on in that—”

“Never mind my hat,” said Walter, impatiently, “it is no business of yours, and I’ll wear it as I please in spite of old Noll and all his crew.”

For his forefathers’ sake, and for the love of his mother and sister, the good village people bore with Walter’s haughtiness and discourtesy far more than was good for him, and the old man did not show how much he was hurt by his rough reception of his good advice. Walter was not reminded that he ought to rise up before the hoary head, and reverence the old man, and went on hastily, “But tell me, Will, what do you hear of the battle?”

“The battle, sir! why, they say it is lost. That’s what the fellow there is preaching about.”

“And where was it? Did you hear? Don’t you know?”

“Don’t be so hasty, don’t ye, sir!” said the old slow-spoken man, growing confused. “Where was it? At some town—some town, they said, but I don’t know rightly the name of it.”

“And the King? Who was it? Not Cromwell? Had Lord Derby joined?” cried Walter, hurrying on his questions so as to puzzle and confuse the old man more and more, till at last he grew angry at getting no explanation, and vowed it was no use to talk to such an old fool. At that moment a sound as of feet and horses came along the road. “Tis the soldiers!” said Walter.

“Ay, sir, best get out of sight.”

Walter thought so too, and, springing over a hedge, ran off into a neighbouring wood, resolving to take a turn, and come back by the longer way to the house, so as to avoid the road. He walked across the wood, looking up at the ripening nuts, and now and then springing up to reach one, telling himself all the time that it was untrue, and that the King could not, and should not be defeated. The wood grew less thick after a time, and ended in low brushwood, upon an open common. Just as Walter was coming to this place, he saw an unusual sight: a man and a horse crossing the down.

Slowly and wearily they came, the horse drooping its head and stumbling in its pace, as though worn out with fatigue, but he saw that it was a war-horse, and the saddle and other equipments were such as he well remembered in the royal army long ago. The rider wore buff coat, cuirass, gauntlets guarded with steel, sword, and pistols, and Walter’s first impulse was to avoid him; but on giving a second glance, he changed his mind, for though there was neither scarf, plume, nor any badge of party, the long locks, the set of the hat, and the general air of the soldier were not those of a rebel. He must be a cavalier, but, alas! far unlike the triumphant cavaliers whom Walter had hoped to receive, for he was covered with dust and blood, as if he had fought and ridden hard. Walter sprung forward to meet him, and saw that he was a young man, with dark eyes and hair, looking very pale and exhausted, and both he and his horse seemed hardly able to stir a step further.

“Young sir,” said the stranger, “what place is this? Am I near Forest Lea?”

A flash of joy crossed Walter. “Edmund! are you Edmund?” he exclaimed, colouring deeply, and looking up in his face with one quick glance, then casting down his eyes.

“And you are little Walter,” returned the cavalier, instantly dismounting, and flinging his arm around his brother; “why, what a fine fellow you are grown! How are my mother and all?”

“Well, quite well!” cried Walter, in a transport of joy. “Oh! how happy she will be! Come, make haste home!”

“Alas! I dare not as yet. I must not enter the house till nightfall, or I should bring danger on you all. Are there any troopers near?”

“Yes, the village is full of the rascals. But what has happened? It is not true that—” He could not bear to say the rest.

“Too true!” said Edmund, leading his tired horse within the shelter of the bushes. “It is all over with us!”

“The battle lost!” said Walter, in a stifled tone; and in all the bitterness of the first disappointment of his youth, he turned away, overcome by a gush of tears and sobs, stamping as he walked up and down, partly with the intensity of his grief, partly with shame at being seen by his brother, in tears.

“Had you set your heart on it so much?” said Edmund, kindly, pleased to see his young brother so ardent a loyalist. “Poor fellow! But at least the King was safe when I parted from him. Come, cheer up, Walter, the right will be uppermost some day or other.”

“But, oh, that battle! I had so longed to see old Noll get his deserts,” said Walter, “I made so sure. But how did it happen, Edmund?”

“I cannot tell you all now, Walter. You must find me some covert where I can be till night fall. The rebels are hot in pursuit of all the fugitives. I have ridden from Worcester by byroads day and night, and I am fairly spent. I must be off to France or Holland as soon as may be, for my life is not safe a moment here. Cromwell is bitterer than ever against all honest men, but I could not help coming this way, I so much longed to see my mother and all of you.”

“You are not wounded?” said Walter, anxiously.

“Nothing to speak of, only a sword-cut on my shoulder, by which I have lost more blood than convenient for such a journey.”

“Here, I’ll lead your horse; lean on me,” said Walter, alarmed at the faint, weary voice in which his brother spoke after the first excitement of the recognition. “I’ll show you what Lucy and I call our bower, where no one ever comes but ourselves. There you can rest till night.”

“And poor Bayard?” said Edmund.

“I think I could put him into the out-house in the field next to the copse, hide his trappings here, and get him provender from Ewins’s farm. Will that do?”

“Excellently. Poor Ewins!—that is a sad story. He fell, fighting bravely by my side, cut down in Sidbury Street in the last charge. Alas! these are evil days!”

“And Diggory Stokes, our own knave?”

“I know nothing of him after the first onset. Rogues and cowards enough were there. Think, Walter, of seeing his Majesty strive in vain to rally them, when the day might yet have been saved, and the traitors hung down their heads, and stood like blocks while he called on them rather to shoot him dead than let him live to see such a day!”

“Oh, had I but been there, to turn them all to shame!”

“There were a few, Walter; Lord Cleveland, Hamilton, Careless, Giffard, and a few more of us, charged down Sidbury Street, and broke into the ranks of the rebels, while the King had time to make off by S. Martin’s Gate. Oh, how I longed for a few more! But the King was saved so far; Careless, Giffard, and I came up with him again, and we parted at nightfall. Lord Derby’s counsel was that he should seek shelter at Boscobel, and he was to disguise himself, and go thither under Giffard’s guidance. Heaven guard him, whatever becomes of us!”

“Amen!” said Walter, earnestly. “And here we are. Here is Lucy’s bank of turf, and my throne, and here we will wait till the sun is down.”

It was a beautiful green slope, covered with soft grass, short thyme, and cushion-like moss, and overshadowed by a thick, dark yew-tree, shut in by brushwood on all sides, and forming just such a retreat as children love to call their own. Edmund threw himself down at full length on it, laid aside his hat, and passed his hand across his weary forehead. "How quiet!" said he; "but, hark! is that the bubbling of water?" he added, raising himself eagerly.

"Yes, here," said Walter, showing him where, a little further off on the same slope, a little clear spring rose in a natural basin of red earth, fringed along the top with fresh green mosses.

"Delicious!" said the tired soldier, kneeling over the spring, scooping it up in his hand to drink, opening his collar, and bathing hands and face in the clear cool fountain, till his long black hair hung straight, saturated with wet.

"Now, Bayard, it is your turn," and he patted the good steed as it sucked up the refreshing water, and Walter proceeded to release it from saddle and bridle. Edmund, meanwhile, stretched himself out on the mossy bank, asked a few questions about his mother, Rose, and the other children, but was too tired to say much, and presently fell sound asleep, while Walter sat by watching him, grieving for the battle lost, but proud and important in being the guardian of his brother's safety, and delighting himself with the thought of bringing him home at night.

More was happening at home than Walter guessed. The time of his absence seemed very long, more especially when the twilight began to close in, and Lady Woodley began to fear that he might, with his rashness, have involved himself in some quarrel with the troopers in the village. Lady Woodley and her children had closed around the wood fire which had been lighted on the hearth at the approach of evening, and Rose was trying by the bad light to continue her darning of stockings, when a loud hasty knocking was heard at the door, and all, in a general vague impression of dread, started and drew together.

"Oh my lady!" cried Deborah, "don't bid me go to the door, I could not if you offered me fifty gold caroluses! I had rather stand up to be a mark—"

"Then I will," said Rose, advancing.

"No, no, Mistress Rose," said Deborah, running forward. "Don't I know what is fit for the like of you? You go opening the door to rogues and vagabonds, indeed!" and with these words she undrew the bolts and opened the door.

"Is this the way you keep us waiting?" said an impatient voice; and a tall youth, handsomely accoutred, advanced authoritatively into the room. "Prepare to—" but as he saw himself alone with women and children, and his eyes fell on the pale face, mourning dress, and graceful air of the lady of the house, he changed his tone, removed his hat, and said, "Your pardon, madam, I came to ask a night's lodging for my father, who has been thrown from his horse, and badly bruised."

"I cannot refuse you, sir," said Lady Woodley, who instantly perceived that this was an officer of the Parliamentary force, and was only thankful to see that he was a gentleman, and enforced with courtesy a request which was in effect a command.

The youth turned and went out, while Lady Woodley hastily directed her daughters and servant.

"Deborah, set the blue chamber in order; Rose, take the key of the oak press, Eleanor will help you to take out the holland sheets. Lucy, run down to old Margery, and bid her kill a couple of fowls for supper."

As the girls obeyed there entered at the front door the young officer and a soldier, supporting between them an elderly man in the dress of an officer of rank. Lady Woodley, ready of course to give her help to any person who had suffered an injury, came forward to set a chair, and at the same moment she exclaimed, in a tone of recognition, "Mr. Enderby! I am grieved to see you so much hurt."

"My Lady Woodley," he returned, recognising her at the same time, as he seated himself in the chair, "I am sorry thus to have broken in on your ladyship, but my son, Sylvester, would have me halt here."

“This gentleman is your son, then?” and a courteous greeting passed between Lady Woodley and young Sylvester Enderby, after which she again enquired after his father’s accident.

“No great matter,” was the reply; “a blow on the head, and a twist of the knee, that is all.

Thanks to a stumbling horse, wearied out with work, I have little mind to—the pursuit of this poor young man.”

“Not the King?” exclaimed Lady Woodley, breathless with alarm.

It was with no apparent satisfaction that the rebel colonel replied, “Even so, madam. Cromwell’s fortune has not forsaken him; he has driven the Scots and their allies out of Worcester.”

Lady Woodley was too much accustomed to evil tidings to be as much overcome by them as her young son had been; she only turned somewhat paler, and asked, “The King lives?”

“He was last seen on Worcester bridge. Troops are sent to every port whence he might attempt an escape.”

“May the God of his father protect him,” said the lady, fervently. “And my son?” she added, faintly, scarcely daring to ask the question.

“Safe, I hope,” replied the colonel. “I saw him, and I could have thought him my dear old friend himself, as he joined Charles in his last desperate attempt to rally his forces, and then charged down Sidbury Street with a few bold spirits who were resolved to cover their master’s retreat. He is not among the slain; he was not a prisoner when I left the headquarters. I trust he may have escaped, for Cromwell is fearfully incensed against your party.”

Colonel Enderby was interrupted by Lucy’s running in calling out, “Mother, mother! there are no fowls but Partlet and the sitting hen, and the old cock, and I won’t have my dear old Partlet killed to be eaten by wicked Roundheads.”

“Come here, my little lady,” said the colonel, holding out his hand, amused by her vehemence.

“I won’t speak to a Roundhead,” returned Lucy, with a droll air of petulance, pleased at being courted.

Her mother spoke gravely. “You forget yourself, Lucy. This is Mr. Enderby, a friend of your dear father.”

Lucy’s cheeks glowed, and she looked down as she gave her hand to the colonel; but as he spoke kindly to her, her forward spirit revived, and she returned to the charge.

“You won’t have Partlet killed?”

Her mother would have silenced her, but the colonel smiled and said, “No, no, little lady; I would rather go without supper than let one feather of Dame Partlet be touched.”

“Nay, you need not do that either, sir,” said the little chatter-box, confidentially, “for we are to have a pie made of little Jenny’s pigeons; and I’ll tell you what, sir, no one makes raised crust half so well as sister Rose.”

Lady Woodley was not sorry to stop the current of her little girl’s communications by despatching her on another message, and asking Colonel Enderby whether he would not prefer taking a little rest in his room before supper-time, offering, at the same time all the remedies for bruises and wounds that every good housekeeper of the time was sure to possess.

She had a real regard for Mr. Enderby, who had been a great friend of her husband before the unhappy divisions of the period arrayed them on opposite sides, and even then, though true friendship could not last, a kindly feeling had always existed.

Mr. Enderby was a conscientious man, but those were difficult times; and he had regarded loyalty to the King less than what he considered the rights of the people. He had been an admirer of Hampden and his principles, and had taken up arms on the same side, becoming a rebel on political, not on religious, grounds. When, as time went on, the evils of the rebellion developed themselves more fully, he was already high in command, and so involved with his own party that he had not the resolution requisite for a change of course and renunciation of his associates. He would willingly have come to terms with the King, and was earnest in the attempt at the time of the conferences at

Hampden Court. He strongly disapproved of the usurpation of power by the army, and was struck with horror, grief, and dismay, at the execution of King Charles; but still he would not, or fancied that he could not, separate himself from the cause of the Parliament, and continued in their service, following Cromwell to Scotland, and fighting at Worcester on the rebel side, disliking Cromwell all the time, and with a certain inclination to the young King, and desire to see the old constitution restored.

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