Sala George Augustus

The Strange Adventures of Captain Dangerous. Volume 1

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Содержание

George Augustus Sala
The Strange Adventures of Captain Dangerous, Vol. 1 Who was a sailor, a soldier, a merchant, a spy, a slave among the moors …

PREFACE

In the last century – and many centuries before the last; but it is about the eighteenth that I am specially speaking – long before steamers and railways, or even frigate-built ships and flying coaches were dreamt of, when an Englishman went abroad, he stopped there. When he came back, if at all, it was, as a rule, grizzled and sunburnt, his native habits all unlearnt, and his native tongue more than half forgotten. Even the Grand Tour, with all that money could purchase in the way of couriers and post-horses, to expedite matters for my Lord, his chaplain, his courier, and his dancing master, took as many years as it now does months to accomplish. There were no young novelists in those days to make a flying-trip to the Gaboon country, to ascertain whether the stories told by former tourists about shooting gorillas were fibs or not. There were no English engineers, fresh from Great George Street, Westminster, writing home to the *Athenæum* to say that they had just opened a branch railway up to Ephesus, and that (by the way) they had discovered a præ-Imperial temple of Juno the day before yesterday. Unprotected females didn't venture in "unwhisperables" into the depths of Norwegian forests; or, if they hazarded such undertakings their unprotectedness led them often to fall into cruel hands, and they never returned. A great fuss used to be made, before the days of steam, about the "Fair Sophia," who undertook a journey from Turkey to discover her lover, Lord Bateman; but how long and wearisome was her travail before she reached his lordship's castle in Northumberland, and was informed by the "proud young porter" that he was just then "taking of his young bride in"? Madame Cottin's Elizabeth, when she walked from Tobolsk to St. Petersburg to crave pardon for the exiles of Siberia; Sir Walter Scott's Jeanie Deans, when she tramped from Edinburgh to London on her errand of mercy, were justly regarded as heroines. But what were the achievements of those valorous young women when compared with the Ladies who make tours round Monte Rosa; nay, for the matter of that, "all round the world"? *Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées.* Nay, there are no more Andes, Himalayas, or Rocky Mountains. When the late Mr. Albert Smith wanted to change the attractions of his show, he calmly took a trip from Piccadilly to Hong Kong; it would have been better for him, poor dear fellow, had he remained at home. When her Majesty wanted to show the late Sultan of Turkey a slight act of civility, she sent Sir Charles Young out to Constantinople to invest Abdul Medjid with the Order of the Garter. Thirty years ago, it is possible the estimable King of Arms might have thought a mail-coach journey to York a somewhat serious expedition, yet he took the P. and O. Boat for Stamboul as blithely as though he were bound for a water-party at Greenwich. If an Emperor is to be crowned in Russia, or Prussia, or Crim Tartary, all the London newspapers despatch special correspondents to the scene of the pageant. Mr. Reuter will soon have completed his Overland Telegraph to China. At Liverpool they call New York "over the way." The Prince of Wales's travels in his nonage have made Telemachus a tortoise, and the young Anacharsis a stay-at-home. Married couples spend their honeymoon hippopotamus hunting in Abyssinia, or exploring the sources of the Nile. And the Traveller's Club are obliged to blackball nine-tenths of the candidates put up for election, because now-a-days almost every tolerably educated Englishman has travelled more than six hundred miles in a straight direction from the British Metropolis.

Bearing these facts in mind, the travels of Captain Dangerous, widely extended as they were, may not appear to the present generation as very uncommon or very surprising. But such travellers as my hero, formed, in the last century, a class apart, and were, in most cases, very strange men. Diplomatic agents belonging to the aristocracy rarely ventured beyond the confines of Europe. The Ambassadors sent to eastern climes were usually, although accredited from the English Court, maintained at the charge of great commercial corporations, such as the Turkey and Russia Companies, and were selected less on the score of their having handles to their names, or being born Russells, Greys, and Elliots, than because they had led roving and adventurous lives, and had fought in or traded with the countries where they were appointed to reside. Beyond these, the travelling class was made up of merchants, buccaneers, spies, and, notably, of political adventurers, and English, Scotch, and Irish Romanist Priests. The unhappy political dissensions which raged in this country from the time of the Great Rebellion to the accession of George the Third, and the infamous penal laws against the Roman Catholics, periodically drove into banishment vast numbers of loyal gentlemen and their families, and ecclesiastics of the ancient faith, who expatriated themselves for conscience' sake, or through dread of the bloody enactments levelled at those who worshipped God as their fathers had done before them. The Irish and Scotch soldiers who took service under continental sovereigns sprinkled the army lists of France, of Spain, and of Austria with O's and Macs. There was scarcely a European city without an Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic monastery or nunnery, and scarcely a seaport without a colony of British exiles cast upon foreign shores after the tempests of the Boyne, of Sheriffmuir, of Preston, or of Culloden. When these refugees went abroad it was to remain for ten, for twenty, for thirty years, or for life. The travelling of the present century is spasmodic, that of the last century was chronic.

I do not know whether the "Adventures" I have ascribed to Captain Dangerous will be readily recognised as "strange." To some they may appear exaggerated and distorted, to others merely strained and dull. If truth, however, be stranger than fiction, I may plead something in abatement; for although I am responsible for the thread of the story and the conduct of the narrative, there is not one Fact set down as having marked the career of the Captain that has been drawn from imagination. For the story of Arabella Greenville, for the sketch of the Unknown Lady, for the exploits of the "Blacks" in Charlwood Chase, for the history of Mother Drum, for the voyage round the world, for the details of the executions of Lord Lovat and Damiens, for the description of the state of a Christian captive among the Moors, I am indebted, not to a lively fancy, but to books of travel, memoirs, Acts of Parliament, and old newspapers and magazines. I can scarcely, however, hope that, although the incidents and the language in this book are the result of years of weary plodding and note-taking, through hundreds of dusty tomes, they will succeed in interesting or amusing the public now that they have undergone the process of condensation. The house need not be elegant because the foundations have been laboriously laid. A solid skeleton does not always imply a beautiful skin.

It is possible, nevertheless, that many persons may cry out that what I have written of Captain Dangerous could not have occurred, with any reasonable amount of probability, to any one man. Let me mention the names of a score of men and women recently or still living, and let me ask the reader whether anything in my hero's career was stranger than the adventures which marked theirs? Here is a penful taken at random, – Lord Dundonald, Lola Montes, Raousset-Boulbon, Richard Burton, Garibaldi, Felice Orsini, Ida Pfeiffer, Edgar Poe, Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson (the Siberian travellers), Marshal St. Arnaud, Paul du Chaillu, Joseph Wolff, Dr. Livingstone, Gordon Cumming, William Howard Russell, Robert Houdin, Constantine Simonides, Barnum, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. The life of any one of these personages, truthfully written, would be a thousand times stranger than anything that is set down to Dangerous's account. Let me quote one little example more in point. Two years ago I wrote a story called the "Seven Sons of Mammon," in which there was an ideal character – that of a fair-haired-little swindler, and presumable murderess, called Mrs. Armytage. The Press concurred in protesting that the character in question was untrue to nature, and, indeed, wholly impossible. Some details I had given of her violent conduct in prison were specially objected

to as grossly improbable. I said at the time that I had drawn the woman from nature, and I was sneered at, and not believed. I now again declare, upon my honour, that this Mrs. Armytage, was a compound of two real people; that as regards her murdering propensities, I was, for the matter and the manner thereof, beholden to the French *Gazette des Tribunaux* for the year 1839; and that as respects her achievements in the way of lying, thieving, swindling, forging, and fascinating, I had before me, as a model, a woman whose misdeeds were partially exposed some ten years since in *Household Words*, who, her term of punishment over, is, to the best of my belief, alive at this moment, *and who was re-married less than a year ago:*– the announcement of that fact being duly inserted in the *Times* newspaper. The prison details had been gathered by me years before, in visits to gaols and in conversations with the governors thereof; and months after the publication of the "Seven Sons of Mammon," I found them corroborated in their minutest characteristics in a remarkable work called "Female Life in Prison."

It remains for me to say one word as to the language in which the "Adventures of Captain Dangerous" are narrated. I had originally intended to call it a "Narrative in plain English;" but I found, as I proceeded, that the study of early eighteenth century literature – I mean the ante-Johnsonian period – had led me into the use of very many now obsolete words and phrases, which sounded like anything but plain English. Let me, however, humbly represent that the style, such as it is, was not adopted without a purpose, and that the English I have called "old-fashioned," was not in the remotest degree intended to be modelled upon the diction of Swift, or Pope, or Addison, or Steele, or Dryden, or Defoe, or even Nash or Howel. Such a feat of elegant pedantry has already been accomplished by Mr. Thackeray in his noble story of *Esmond;* and I had no wish to follow up a dignified imitation by a sorry caricature. I simply endeavoured to make Captain Dangerous express himself as a man of ordinary intelligence and capacity would do who was born in the reign of Queen Anne, – who received a scrambling education in that of George the First, – who had passed the prime of his life abroad and had picked up a good many bastard foreign words and locutions, – whose reading had been confined to the ordinary newspapers and chap-books of his time (with perhaps an occasional dip into the pages of "Ned Ward" and "Tom Brown"), – and who in his old age had preserved the pseudo-didactic of his youth. The "Adventures of Captain Dangerous" have been, in every sense, an experiment, and not a very gratifying one. I have earned by them a great many kicks, but a very few halfpence. Should the toe of any friendly critic be quivering in his boot just now, at the bare announcement of "Captain Dangerous'" re-appearance, I would respectfully submit that there could not possibly occur a better opportunity than the present for kicking me *de novo*, as I have been for months very ill, and am weary, and broken.

George Augustus Sala.

Bernard Street, Russell Square,
April, 1863.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.
MINE OWN HOUSE

I, John Dangerous, a faithful subject of his Majesty King George, whose bread, God bless him! I have eaten, and whose battles I have fought, in my poor way, am now in my sixty-eighth year, and live in My Own House in Hanover Square. By virtue of several commissions, both English and foreign, I have a right to call myself Captain; and if any man say that I have no such right, he Lies, and deserves the Stab. It may be that this narrative, now composed only for my own Pleasure, will, long after my Death, see the light in Print, and that some copper Captain, or counterfeit critic, or pitiful creature of that kidney, will question my Rank, or otherwise despitefully use my Memory. Let such treachours and clapper-dudgeons (albeit I value not their leasing a bagadine) venture it at their peril. I have, alas, no heirs male; but to my Daughter's husband, and to his descendants, or, failing them, to their executors, administrators, and assigns, I solemnly commit the task of seeking out such envious Rogues, and of kicking and firking them on the basest part of their base bodies. The stab I forego; I wish not to cheat the hangman of his due, or the Rev. Mr. Villette of a sermon. But let the knaves discover, to the aching of their scald sides, that even the Ghost of John Dangerous is not to be libelled.

There is a knot of these same cittern-headed simpletons who meet at a coffee-house in Great Swallow Street, which I am sometimes minded to frequent, and who imagine that they show their wit and parts by reviling their Church and their King, and even by maligning the Honourable East India Company, – a corporation to which I am beholden for many Favours. "Fellow," I said, only last Saturday, to a whippersnapper from an Inn of Court, – a Thing I would not trust to defend my Tom-Cat were he in peril at the Old Bailey for birdslaughter, and who picks up a wretched livelihood, I am told, by scribbling lampoons against his betters in a weekly Review, – "Fellow," I said, "were I twenty years younger, and you twenty years older, John Dangerous would vouchsafe to pink an eyelet-hole in your waistcoat. Did I care to dabble in your polite conversation or your *belles lettres* (of which I knew much more than ever you will know years before the Parish was at pains to fix your begetting on some one), I would answer your scurrilities in Print; but this I disdain, sirrah. Good stout Ash and good strong Cordovan leather are the things fittest to meet your impertinences with;" and so I held out my Foot, and shook my Staff at the titivilitium coxcomb; and he was so civil to me during the rest of the evening as to allow me to pay his clog-shot for him.

The chief delight I derive from ending my days in Hanover Square is the knowledge that the house is Mine Own. I bought it with the fruit of mine own earnings, mine own moneys – not gotten from grinding the faces and squeezing the vitals of the Poor, but acquired by painful and skilful Industry, and increased by the lawful spoil of War. For booty, as I have heard a great commander say in Russia, is a Holy Thing. I have not disdained to gather moderate riches by the buying and selling of lawful Merchandize; albeit I always looked on mere Commerce and Barter as having something of the peddling and huxtering savour in them. My notion of a Merchant is that of a Bold Spirit who embarks on his own venture in his own ship, and is his own supercargo, and has good store of guns and Bold Spirits like himself on board, and sails to and fro on the High Seas whithersoever he pleases. As to the colour of the flag he is under, what matters it if it be of no colour at all, as old Robin Roughhead used to say to me, – even Black, which is the Negation of all colour? So I have traded in my way, and am the better by some thousands of pounds for my trading, now. That much of my wealth has its origin in lawful Plunder I scorn to deny. If you slay a Spanish Don in fair fight, and the Don wears jewelled rings and carcanets on all his fingers, and carries a great bag of moidores in his pocket, are you to leave him on the field, prithee, or gently ease him of his valuables? Can the crows eat his finery as well as his carcase? If I find a ship full of golden doubloons and silver candlesticks destined for the chapel of St. Jago de Compostella, am I to scuttle the ship and let her go

down with all these good things on board; or am I to convey them to mine own lockers, giving to each of my Valiant Comrades his just and proper share? The governor of Carthagena will never get the doubloons, St. Jago of Compostella will never see his candlesticks; why should not I and my Brave Hearts enjoy them instead of the fishes and the mermaids? They have Coral enough down there, I trow, by the deep, nini; what do they want with Candlesticks? If they lack further ornament, there are pearls enow to be had out of the oysters – unless there be lawyers down below – ay, and pearls, too, in dead men's skulls, and emerald and diamond gimmels on skeleton hands, among the sea-weed, sand, and the many-coloured pebbles of the great Ocean.

There are those who call me an old Pirate. Let them. I was never in trouble with the Admiralty Court. I can pass Execution Dock without turning pale. And no one can gainsay me when I aver that I have faithfully served his Majesty King George, and was always a true friend to the Protestant succession.

There has been a mighty talk, too, about my turning Turk. Why should not I, if I could not Help it? Better to read the Koran, than to sing the Black Sanctus. Better to serve Mahound than Bungy's dog. I never Turned my Tippet, as some fine gentlemen who have never seen Constantinople have done. I never changed my Principles, although I was a Bashaw with three tails. Better to have three tails than to be a Rat with only one. And, let me tell you, it is a mighty fine thing to be a Bashaw, and to have as many purses full of Sequins and Aspers as there are days in the year.

I should have been hanged long ago, should I – hanged for a Pirate, a Spy, and a Renegade? Well, I have escaped the bow-string in a country where hundreds die of Sore Throat every day, and I can afford to laugh at any prospect of a wych round my weasand in mine old age. Sword of Damocles, forsooth! why my life has been hanging on a cobweb any time these fifty years; and here I am at Sixty-Eight safe and sound, with a whole Liver and a stout Heart, and a bottle of wine to give a Friend, and a house of mine own in Hanover Square.

I write this in the great Front Parlour, which I have converted into a library, study, and counting-room. The year of our Lord is seventeen hundred and eighty. His Majesty's subjects have lost eleven days – through some Roguery in high places, you may be sure – since I was a young man; and were I a cocksloch, I might grudge that snipping off of the best part of a fortnight from an Old Man's life. It may be, indeed, that Providence, which has always been good to me, will add eleven days – yea, and twice eleven – to the dwindling span of poor old John Dangerous. I have many Mercies to be thankful for; of sins likewise without blin, and grievous ones, there may be a long list that I shall have to account for; but I can say that I never killed a man in cold blood, that I never wilfully wronged a woman, *so long as she was not obstinate*, that I never spake an unkind word to a child, that I always gave freely from that which I got freely, and never took from him who had little, and that I was always civil to the clergy. Yet Doctor Dubiety of St. George's tells me that I have been a signal sinner, and bids me, now, to repent of my evil ways. Dr. Dubiety is in the right no doubt; – how could a Doctor of Divinity be ever in the Wrong? – but I can't see that I am so much worse than other folks. I should be in better case, perhaps, if these eyes stood wider open. I confess that I have killed many men with Powder and Lead, and the sharp sword; but, then, had I not shot or stabbed them, they would surely have shot or stabbed me. And are not his Majesty's fellow-subjects shooting and stabbing one another at this instant moment[1] in the American plantations? No; I always fought fair, and never refused Quarter when mine enemy threw up his point; nor, unless a foeman's death were required for Lawful Reprisals, did I ever deny moderate Ransom.

There may be some things belonging to my worldly store that trouble me a little in the night season. Should I have given St. Jago de Compostella's candlesticks to Westminster Abbey? Why, surely, the Dean and Chapter are rich enough. But I declare that I had neither art not part in fitting the thumbscrews to the Spanish captain, and putting the boatswain and his mate to the ordeal of flogging

[1] 1780.

and pickling. 'Twas not I, but Matcham, who is Dead, that caused the carpenter to be carbonadoed, and the Scotch purser to walk the Plank. Those were, I grant, deeds worthy of Blackbeard; but I had naught to do with them. John Dangerous had suffered too many tortures in the dungeons of the Inquisition to think of afflicting his fellow-creatures when there was no need for it. Then, as to what became of Doña Estella. I declare that I did my best to save that unhappy lady. I entreated, I protested; but in vain. None of that guilt lies at my door; and in the crime of him who roasted the Bishop, and cut off the Franciscan Monk's great-toes I have no share. Let every man answer for his own deeds. When I went the Middle Passage, I tried to keep the slaves alive as long I could. I was never a Mangoniser. When they died, what was there to do but to fling them overboard? Should I not have done the same by white men? I was not one of those cruel Guinea captains who kept the living and the dead chained together. I defy any one to prove it.

And all this bald chat about sacking towns and gutting convents? War is war all the world over; and if you take a town by Assault, why of course you must Sack it. As to gutting convents, 'tis a mercy to let some pure air into the close, stifling places; and, of a surety, an act of Charity to let the poor captive nuns out for a Holiday. Reverend Superiors, holy sisters, I never did ye any harm. You cannot torment me in the night. Your pale faces and shadowy forms have no need to gather round the bed of John Dangerous. Take, for Pity's sake, those Eyes away! But no more! These thoughts drive me Mad.

I am not Alone in my house. My daughter, my beloved Lilias, my only and most cherished child, the child of my old age, the legacy of the departed Saint her mother, lives with me. Bless her! she believes not a word of the Lies that are whispered of her old Father. If she were to be told a tithe of them, she would grieve sorely; but she holds no converse with Slanderers and those who wag their tongues and say so-and-so of such-a-one. She knows that my life has been wild, and stormy, and Dangerous as my name; but she knows that it has also been one of valour, and honesty, and striving. St. Jago de Compostella's candlesticks never went towards her schooling, pretty creature! My share from the gold in the scuttled ship never helped to furnish forth her dowry. Lilias is my joy, my comfort; my stay, my merciful consolation for the loss of that good and perfect Woman her mother. Dear heart! she has never been crossed in love, never known Love's sorrows, angers, disappointments, and despair. She was married to the Man of her Choice; and I am delighted to know that I never interfered, by word or by deed, with the progress of her Wooing; that he to whom she is wedded is one of the worthiest of youths; and that Heaven has blessed me with the means to enable him to maintain the state and figure of a gentleman.

Thus, although Comfort and Quiet are the things I chiefly desire after the bustle and turmoil of a tempest-tossed career, and the pleasure I take in the gaieties of the Town is but small, it cheers me to see my Son and Daughter enjoying themselves, as those who have youth and health and an unclouded conscience are warranted in doing, and, indeed, called upon to do. I like them on Sundays and Holidays to come to church at St. George's, and sit under Doctor Dubiety, where I, as a little lad, sat many and many a time, more than fifty years ago; but my house is no Conventicle, and on all weekdays and Lawful Occasions my family is privileged to partake to their heart's content of innocent and permitted pastimes. I never set my face against a visit to the Playhouse or to the Concert-room; although to me, who can remember the most famous players and singers of Europe, the King's Theatre and the Pantheon, and even Drury-Lane, are very tame places, filled with very foolish folk. But they please the young people, and that is enough for me. Nor to an occasional junketing at Vauxhall do I ever turn queasy. 'Tis true I have seen Ranelagh and Marylebone Belsize, and Spring Gardens, and seen Folly on the Thames – to say nothing of the chief Continental Tivolis, Spas, Lustgartens, and other places of resort of the Great; but fiddlers are fiddlers, and coloured lamps are coloured lamps, all the world over, I apprehend; and my children have as much delight in gazing on these spangled follies now as I had when I and the eighteenth century were young. Only against Masquerades and Faro-tables, as likewise against the pernicious game of E. O., post and pair, fayles, dust-point, do I

sternly set my face, deeming them as wholly wicked, carnal, and unprofitable, and leading directly to perdition.

It rejoices me much that my son, or rather son-in-law, – but I love to call him by the more affectionate name, – is in no wise addicted to dicing, or horse-racing, or cock-fighting, or any of those sinful or riotous courses to which so many of our genteel youth – even to those of the first Quality – devote themselves. He is no Puritan; (for I did ever hate your sanctimonious Banbury-men); but he has a Proper Sense of what is due to the Honour and Figure of his family, and refrains from soiling his hands with bales of dice and worse implements among the profligate crew to be met with, not alone at Newmarket, or at the "Dog and Duck," or "Hockley Hole," but in Pall-Mall, and in the very ante-chambers of St. James's, no cater-cousin of the Groom-Porter he. He rides his hackney, as a gentleman should, nor have I prohibited him from occasionally taking my Lilias an airing in a neat curricle; but he is no Better on the Turf, no comrade of jockeys and stablemen, no patron of bruisers and those that handle the backsword and are quick at finish with the provant rapier, and agile in the use of the imbrocatto. I would disinherit him were I to suspect him of such practices, or of an over-fondness for the bottle, or of a passion for loose company. He hunts sometimes, and fishes and goes a birding, and he has a pretty fancy for the making of salmon-flies, in the which pursuit, I conclude, there is much ingenuity, and no manner of harm, fish being given to us for food, and the devising how best to snare the creatures entirely Lawful.

Lilias Dangerous has been wedded to Edward Marriner these two years. It was at first my design to buy the youth a Pair of Colours, and to let him see the world and the usages of honourable warfare for a year or two; but my Lilias could not bear the thought of her young Ensign's coming home without an arm or a leg, or perchance being slain in some desperate conflict with savage Indians, or scarcely less savage Americans; and I did not press my plan of giving Edward for a time to the service of the King. He, I am bound to say, was eager to take up a Commission; but the tears and entreaties of my Daughter, who thinks War the wickedest of crimes, and the shedding of human blood a wholly Unpardonable Thing, prevailed. So they were Married, and are Happy; and I am sure, now, that were I to lose either of them, it would break the old man's heart.

My Lilias is tall and slender, her skin is very white, her hair a rich brown, her eyes very large and clear and blue. But that I am too old to be vain, I might be twitted with Conceit when I state that she holds these advantages of person less from her Mother than from myself, her loving Father. Not that I was so comely in my young days; but my Grandmother before me was of the same fair Image that I so delight to look upon in Lilias. She was tall, and white, and brown-haired, and blue-eyed. She had Lilias's small and daintily-fashioned hands and feet, or rather Lilias has hers. To me these features were only transmitted in a meaner degree. I was a big-boned lusty lad, with flowing brown locks, an unfreckled skin, and an open eye; but my Grandmother's Face and Form have renewed themselves in my child. At twenty she is as beautiful as her Great-grandmother must have been at that same sunny time, as I am told and know that Lady was: albeit when I remember her she was nearly Ninety years of age.

Yes; Lilias's eyes are very blue; but they are always soft and tender and pitiful in their regard. Her Great-grandmother's had, when she was moved, a Strange Wild look that awed and terrified the beholders. Only once in the life of my Lilias, when she was very young, and on the question of some toy or sweetmeat which my departed Saint had denied her, did I notice that Terrible Look in her blue eyes. My wife, who, albeit the most merciful soul alive, ever maintained strict discipline in her household, would have corrected the child for what she set down as flat mutiny and rebellion; but I stayed her chastening hand, and bade the young girl walk awhile in the garden until her heat was abated; and as she went away, her little breast heaving, her little hands clenched, and the Terrible Look darting out on me through the silken tangles of her dear hair, I shuddered, and said, "Wife of mine, our Lilias's look is one she cannot help. It comes from Me, you may have seen it fiercer and fiercer in mine own eyes; and She, whom of all women I loved and venerated, looked thus when

anger overcame her. And though I never knew my own dear Mother, she, or I greatly mistake, must have had that look in hers likewise."

I thank Heaven that those pure blue waters, limpid and bright, in my Lilias's orbs were nevermore ruffled by that storm. As she grew up, their expression became even softer and kinder, and she never ceased from being in the likeness of an Angel. She looks like one now, and will be one, I trust, some day, Above, where she can pray for her danger-worn old sire.

My own wife (whose name was Lilias too) was a merry, plump, ruddy-skinned little woman – a very baby in these strong arms of mine. She had laughing black eyes, and coal-black tresses, and lips which were always at vintage-time. Although her only child takes after me, not her, in face and carriage, in all things else she resembles my Saint. She is as merry, as light-hearted, as pure and good, as she was. She has the same humble, pious Faith; the same strong, inflexible will of abiding by Right; the same hearty, outspoken hatred of Wrong, abhorrence of Wrong. She has the same patience, cheerfulness, and obedience in her behaviour to those who are set in authority over her; and if I am by times angered, or peevish, or moody, she bears with my infirmities in the same meek, loving, and forgiving spirit. She has her Mother's grace, her Mother's voice, her Mother's ringing voice. She has her Mother's infinite care of and benevolence to the poor and needy. She has her Mother's love for merry sports and innocent romps. Like my departed Saint, she has an exquisitely neat and quick hand for making pastries and marchpanes, possets and sugared tankards, and confeeding of diapasms, pomanders, and other sweet essences, and cures for the chilblains; and like her she plays excellent well on the harpsichords.

Thus, in a quiet comfort and competence, in the love of my children, and in the King's peace, these my latter days are gliding away. I am somewhat troubled with gout and twitching pains, scotomies in the head, and fulness of humours, with other old men's ailments; and I do not sleep well o' nights owing to vexatious Dreams and Visions, to abate which I am sometimes let blood, and sometimes blistered behind the ears; but beyond these cares – and who hath not his cares? – Captain John Dangerous, of number One hundred Hanover Square, is a Happy Man.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.
THE HISTORY OF AN UNKNOWN LADY, WHO CAME FROM DOVER IN A COACH-AND-SIX

In the winter of the year 1720, died in her house in Hanover Square, – the very one in which I am now finishing my life, – an Unknown Lady nearly ninety years of age. The mansion was presumed to be her own, and it was as much hers as it is mine now; but the reputed landlord was one Doctor Vigors, a physician of the College in Warwick Lane, in whose name the Lease ran, who was duly rated to the poor as tenant, and whose patient the Unknown Lady was given out to be. But when Dr. Vigors came to Hanover Square it was not as a Master, but as the humblest of Servants; and no tradesman, constable, maid, or lacquey about the house or neighbourhood would have ventured for his or her life to question that, from cellar to roof, every inch of the mansion belonged to the Unknown Lady. The vulgar held her in a kind of Awe, and spoke of her as the Lady in Diamonds; for she always wore a number of those precious gems, in rings, bracelets, stomachers, and the like. The gentlefolks, of whom many waited upon her, from her first coming hither unto her death, asked for "my Lady," and nothing more. It was in the year 1714 that she first arrived in London, coming late at night from Dover, in a coach-and-six, and bringing with her one Mr. Cadwallader, a person of a spare habit and great gravity of countenance, as her steward; one Mistress Nancy Talmash, as her waiting-woman; and a Foreign Person of a dark and forbidding mien, who was said to be her chaplain. In the following year, and during the unhappy troubles in Scotland arising out of the treasons of the Earl of Mar, and other Scots Lords, one of his Majesty's messengers came for the Foreign Person, and conveyed him in a coach to the Cockpit at Whitehall; while another messenger took up his abode in the house at Hanover Square, lying in the second best bed-chamber, and having his table apart, for a whole week. From these circumstances, it was rumoured that the Unknown Lady was a Papist and Jacobite; that the seminary Priest, her confederate, was bound for Newgate, and would doubtless make an end of it at Tyburn; and that the Lady herself would be before many days clapt up in the Tower. But Signor Casagiotti, the Venetian Envoy, as a subject of the seignory, claimed the Foreign Person and obtained his release; and it was said that one of the great Lords of the Council came himself to Hanover Square to take the examination of the Unknown Lady, and was so well satisfied with the speech he had with her as to discharge her then and there from Custody, – if, indeed, she had ever been under any actual durance, – and promise her the King and Minister's countenance for the future. The Foreign Person was suffered to return, and thenceforward was addressed as Father Ruddlestone, as though he had some licence bearing him harmless from the penalties and præmunires which then weighed upon recusant persons. And I am given to understand that, on the evening of his enlargement, the same great Lord, being addressed in a jocular manner at the coffee-house by a Person of Honour, and asked if he had not caught the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender in petticoats and diamonds, somewhere in St. George's parish, very gravely made answer, that some degrees of Loyalty were like Gold, which were all the better for being tried in the furnace, and that, although there had once been a King James, and there was now a King George, the lady, of whom perhaps that gentleman was minded to speak, had done a notable Thing before he was born, which entitled her to the eternal gratitude of Kings.

Although so old on her first coming to Hanover Square, and dwelling in it until her waiting-woman avowed that she was close on her Ninetieth year, the Unknown Lady preserved her faculties in a surprising manner, and till within a few days of her passing away went about her house, took the air from time to time in her coach, or in a chair, and received company. The very highest persons of Quality sought her, and appeared to take pleasure in her conversation. To Court, indeed, she never went; but she was visited more than once by an illustrious Prince; and many great nobles likewise

waited upon her in their Birthday suits. On Birthnights there was Play in the great drawing-room, where nothing but gold was permitted to be staked.

Credible persons have described her to me as being, and supplemented mine own memory – in the extremest sunset of her life, when the very fray and pillings of her garment were come to, and no more stuff remained wherewith to piece it, – a person of Signal Beauty. She was of commanding stature, stooped very little, albeit she made use of a crutch-stick in walking, and had a carriage full of graciousness, yet of somewhat austere Dignity. No portion of her hair was visible under the thick folds of muslin and point of Alençon which covered her head, and were themselves half hidden by a hood of black Paduasoy; but in a glass-case in her cabinet, among other relics of which I may have presently to speak, she kept a quantity of the most beauteous chestnut tresses ever beheld. "These were my Love-Locks, child," I remember her saying to me once. I am ashamed to confess that, during my brief commerce with her, the dress she wore, which was commonly of black velvet, and the diamonds which glittered on her hands and arms and bosom impressed themselves far more forcibly on my memory than her face, which I have since been told was Beautiful. My informant bears witness that her eyes were Blue, and of an exceeding brightness, sometimes quite terrible to look upon, although tempered at most times by a Sweet Mildness; yet there were seasons when this brightness, as that of the Sun in a wholly cloudless sky, became Fierce, and burnt up him who beheld it. Time had been so long a husbandman of her fair demesne, had reaped so many crops of smiles and tears from that comely visage, that it were a baseness to infer that no traces of his husbandry appeared on her once smooth and silken flesh, for the adornment of which she had ever disdained the use of essences and unguents. Yet I am told that her wrinkles and creases, although manifold, were not harsh nor rugged; and that her face might be likened rather to a billet of love written on fair white vellum, that had been somewhat crumpled by the hand of him who hates Youth and Love, than to some musty old conveyance or mortgage-deed scrabbled on yellow, damp-stained, rat-gnawed parchment. Her hands and neck were to the last of an amazing Whiteness. The former, as were also her feet, very small and delicate. Her speech when moved was Quick, and she spoke as one accustomed to be obeyed; but at most seasons her bearing towards her domestics was infinitely kind and tender. Towards the Foreign Person, her Director, she always bore herself with edifying meekness. She was cheerful in company, full of ready wit, of great shrewdness, discretion, and observation; could discourse to admiration of foreign cities and persons of renown, even to Kings and Princes, whom she had seen and known; and was well qualified to speak on public affairs, although she seldom deigned to concern herself with the furious madness of Party. Mere idle prattle of Operas, and Play-books, and Auctions, and the like, was extremely distasteful to her; and although at that time a shameful looseness of manners and conversation obtained even among the Greatest persons in the land, she would never suffer any evil or immodest talk to be held in her presence; and those who wished to learn aught of the wickedness of the town and the scandals of High Life were fain to go elsewhere for their gossip.

I have said that her dress was to me the chief point of notice, and is that of which I retain the keenest remembrance. Her diamonds, indeed, had over me that strange fascination which serpents are said to have over birds; and I would sit with my little mouth all agape, and my eyes fixed and staring, until they grew dazed, and I was frightened at the solemn twinkling of those many gems. In my absurd child-way, it was to my fancy as though the Lady were some great Altar or Herse of State in a Church, and her Jewels so many Lamps kindled about her, and to be kept alive for ever. She robed habitually, as I have said, in Black Velvet; but on Birthnights, when more company than usual came, and there was play in the great drawing-room, she would wear a sack of sad-coloured satin; while, which was stranger still, on the thirtieth day of January in every year, at least so long as I can keep it in mind, she wore her sable dress; not her ordinary one, but a fuller garment, which had bows of Crimson Ribbon down the front and at the sleeves, and a great Crimson Scarf over the right shoulder, so as to come in saltire over her Heart. And on the day she made this change she wore no Diamonds, but Rubies in great number, and of great size. On that day, also, we kept an almost entire

fast, and from morning to night I had nothing but a little cake and a glass of Red wine. From sunrise to sunset the Lady sat in her cabinet among her Relics; and I was bidden to sit over against her on a little stool. She would talk much, and, as it seemed to me wildly, in a language which I could not understand, going towards her relics and touching them in a strange manner. Then she would say to me, with a sternness that chilled the marrow in my bones, "Child, Remember the Day: Remember the Thirtieth of January." And she would often repeat that word, "Remember," rocking herself to and fro. And more than once she would say, "Blood for blood." Then Mistress Talmash would enter and assay to Soothe her, telling her that what was past was past, and could not be undone. Then she would take out a great Prayer-Book bound in Red leather, and which had this strange device raised in an embosture of gold, on either cover, and in a solemn voice read out long passages, which I afterwards learned were from that service holden on the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles the First. She would go on to read the Ritual for the King's Touching for the Evil, now expunged from our Liturgy; and then Mistress Talmash would pray her to read the joyful prayers for the twenty-ninth of May, the date of the happy restoration of King Charles the Second. But that she would seldom do, murmuring, "I dare not, I dare not. Tell not Father Ruddlestone." All these things were very strange to me; but I grew accustomed to them in time. And there seems to a solitary child, an immensity of time passing between his first beginning to remember and his coming to eight years of age.

There is one thing that I must mention before this Lady ceases to be Unknown to the reader. She was afflicted with a continual trembling of the entire Frame. She was no paralytic, for to the very end she could take her food and medicine without assistance; but she shook always like a very Aspen. It had to do with her nerves, I suppose; and it was perhaps for that cause she was attended for so many years by Doctor Vigors; but he never did her any good in that wise; and the whole College of Warwick Lane would, I doubt not, have failed signally had they attempted her cure. Often I asked Mistress Talmash why the Lady – for until her death I knew of no other name whereby to call her – shook so; but the waiting-woman would chide me, and say that if I asked questions she would shake me. So that I forebore.

Ours was a strange and solemn household. All was stately and well ordered, and – when company came – splendid; but the house always seemed to me much gloomier than the great Parish-Church, whither I was taken every Sunday morning on the shoulder of a tall footman, and shut up alone in a great Pew lined with scarlet baize, and where I felt very much like a little child that was lost in the midst of the Red Sea. Far over my head hung a gallery full of the children of Lady Viellcastel's charity-school; and these, both boys and girls, would make grimaces at me while the Psalms were being sung, until I felt more frightened than when I was on my little stool in the cabinet of relics, on the thirtieth of January. Just over the ledge of my pew I could see the clergyman, in his large white wig, leaning over the reading-desk, and talking at me, as I thought, in a mighty angry manner; and when he, or another divine, afterwards ascended the pulpit above, I used to fancy that it was only the same parson grown taller, and with a bigger wig, and that he seemed to lean forward, and be angrier with me than ever. The time of kneeling was always one of sore trouble to me, for I had to feel with my foot for the hassock, which seemed to lie as far beneath me as though it were, indeed, sunk at the bottom of the Red Sea. Getting up again was quite as difficult; and I don't think we ever attained the end of the Litany without my dropping my great red Prayer-Book – not the thirtieth-of-January one, but another affected to my especial use – with a Clang. On such occasions the pew-door would open, and the Beadle enter. He always picked up the book, and gave it me with a low bow; but he never omitted to tell me, in a deadly whisper, that if I had been one of Lady Viellcastel's boys, he'd skin me alive, he would.

The Unknown Lady did not attend the parish-church. She, and Mistress Talmash, and the Foreign Person, held a service apart. I was called "Little Master," and went with the footman. The fellow's name, I remember, was Jeremy. He used to talk to me, going and coming, as I sat, in my fine Laced Clothes, and my hat with a plume in it, and my little rapier with the silver hilt, perched

on his broad shoulder. He used to tell me that he had been a soldier, and had fought under Colonel Kirk; and that he had a wife, who washed bands and ruffles for the gentlemen of the Life Guard, and drank strong waters till she found herself in the Roundhouse. Always on a Sunday morning, as the church-bells began to ring, the Unknown Lady would give me a Guinea to put into the plate after service. I remember that the year before she died, when I was big enough to walk with my hand in Jeremy's, instead of being carried, that he told me on Easter-Sunday morning that his wife was dead, and that he had two children in a cellar who had no bread to eat. He cried a good deal; and before we reached the church, took me into a strange room in a back-street, where there were a number of men and women shouting and quarrelling, and another, without his wig and with a great gash in his forehead, sprawling on the ground, and crying out "Lillibulero!" and two more playing cards on a pair of bellows. And they were all drinking from mugs and smoking tobacco. Here Jeremy had something to drink, too, from a mug. He put the vessel to my lips, and I tasted something Hot, which made me feel very faint and giddy. When we were in the open air again, he cried worse than ever. What could I do but give him my guinea? On our return, to Hanover Square, the Lady asked me, according to her custom, what was the text, and whether I had put my money into the plate. She was not strict about the first; for I was generally, from my tenderness of years, unable to tell her more than that the gentleman in the wig seemed very angry with me, and the Pope, and the Prince of Darkness; but she alway taxed me smartly about the Guinea. This was before the time that I had learned to Lie; and so I told her how I had given the piece of gold to Jeremy, for that his wife was no more, and his children were in a cellar with nothing to eat. She stayed a while looking at me with those blue eyes, which had first their bright fierceness in them and then their kind and sweet tenderness. It was the first time that I marked her eyes more than her dress and her diamonds. She took me in her lap, and printed her lips – which were very soft, but cold – upon my forehead.

"Child," she said, "did I use thee as is the custom, thou shouldst be Whipped, not Kissed, for thy folly and disobedience. But you knew not what you did. Here are two guineas to put into the plate next Sunday; and let no rogues cozen you out of it. As for Jeremy," she continued, turning to Mistress Talmash, "see that the knave be stripped of his livery, and turned out of the house this moment, for robbing my Grandson, and taking him on a Sabbath morning to taverns, among grooms, and porters, and fraplers, and bullies."

Yes; the Unknown Lady was my Grandmother. I purpose now to relate to you her History, revealed to me many years after her death, in a manner to be mentioned at the proper time.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.
THE HISTORY OF MY GRANDMOTHER, WHO WAS A LADY OF CONSEQUENCE IN THE WEST COUNTRY

My Grandmother was born at Bristol, about the year 1630, and in the reign of King Charles the First. She came of a family noted for their long lives, and of whom there was, in good sooth, a proverb in the West setting forth that "Bar Gallows, Glaive, and the Gout, every Greenville would live to a hundred." Her maiden name was Greenville: she was baptised Arabella; and she was the only daughter of Richard Greenville, an Esquire of a fair estate between Bath and Bristol, where his ancestors had held their land for three hundred years, on a Jocular Tenure of presenting the king, whenever he came that way, with a goose-pie, the legs sticking through the crust. It was Esquire Greenville's misfortune to come to his patrimony just as those unhappy troubles were fomenting which a few years after embroiled these kingdoms in one great and dismal Quarrel. It was hard for a gentleman of consequence in his own county, and one whose forefathers had served the most considerable offices therein, – having been of the Quorum ever since the reign of King Edward the Third, – to avoid mingling in some kind or another in the dissensions with which our beloved country was then torn. Mr. Greenville was indeed a person of a tranquil and placable humour, to whom party janglings were thoroughly detestable; and although he leant naturally, as beseemed his degree, towards the upholding of his Majesty's Crown and Dignity, and the maintenance in proper Honour and Splendour of the Church, he was too good a Christian and citizen not to shrink from seeing his native land laid waste by the blind savageness of a Civil War. And although, he paid Cess and Ship-money without murmuring, and, on being chosen a Knight of the Shire, did zealously speak up in the Commons House of Parliament on the King's side (refusing nevertheless to make one of the lip-serving crowd of courtiers of Whitehall), and although, when churchwarden in his parish, he ever preserved the laudable custom of Whitsun and Martinmas ales for the good of the poor, and persisted in having the Book of Sports read from the pulpit, – he was averse from all high-handed measures of musketooning, and calivering, and gambriling those of the meaner sort, or those of better degree (as Mr. Hampden, Mr. Pym, and Another whom I shudder to mention), who, for Conscience' sake, opposed themselves to the King's Government. He was in this wise at issue with some of his hotter Cavalier neighbours, as, for instance, Sir Basil Fauconberg, who, whenever public matters were under question, began with "Neighbour, you must first show me Pym, Hampden, Haslerigge, and the rest, swinging as the Sign of the Rogue's Head, and then I will begin to chop Logic with you." For a long time Mr. Greenville, my Great-grandfather (and my enemies may see from this that I am of no Rascal Stock), cherished hopes that affairs might be brought to a shape without any shedding of Blood; but his hope proved a vain and deceiving one; ungovernable passions on either side caused not alone the drawing of the Sword, but the flinging away of the Scabbard; and my Grandmother was yet but a schoolmaid at Madam Ribotte's academy for gentlewomen at Bristol when that dreadful sinful war broke out which ended in the barbarous Murther of the Prince, and the Undoing of these kingdoms.

Mr. Greenville had two children: a son, whose name, like his own, was Richard, and who was born some five years before his sister Arabella. Even as a child this last named person was exceedingly beautiful, very gracious, fair, grave, and dignified of deportment, with abundant brown hair, and large and lustrous blue eyes, which, when the transient tempests of childhood passed over her, were ever remarked as having the wild, fierce look, shared in sometimes by the males of her family. Her mother, to her sorrow, died when she was quite a babe. The Esquire was passionately fond of this his only daughter; but although it was torture for him to part with her, and he retained her until she was thirteen years of age in his mansion-house, where she was instructed in reading and devotion, pickling and preserving (and the distilling of strong waters), sampler work, and such

maidenly parts of education, by the housekeeper, and by a governante brought from London, – he had wisdom enough to discern and to admit that his daughter's genius was of a nature that required and demanded much higher culture than could be given to her in an old Country Seat, and in the midst of talk about dogs, and horses, and cattle, and gunning and ploughing, and the continual disputes of hot-headed Cavaliers or bitter Parliamentarians, who were trying who should best persuade my Great-grandfather to cast in his lot with one or the other of the contending parties. His son Richard had already made his election, and, it is feared, by taking up supplies on post obit from usurious money-scriveners in Bristol and London, had raised a troop of horse for the service of the King. Moreover, Arabella Greenville was of a very proud stomach and unbending humour. She might be Led, but would not be Driven. She adored her father, but laughed at the commands of the governante, and the counsels of the housekeeper, who knew not how either to lead or to rule her. It was thus determined to send her to Madam Ribotte's academy at Bristol, – for even so early as King Charles's time had outlandish and new-fangled names been found for Schools; and thither she was accordingly sent, with instructions that she was to learn all the polite arts and accomplishments proper to her station, that she was to be kept under a strict regimen, and corrected of her faults; but that she was not to be thwarted in her reasonable desires. She was to have her pony, with John coachman on the skewball sent to fetch her every Saturday and holiday; was not to be overweighted with tedious and dragging studies; and was by no means to be subject to those shameful chastisements of the Ferula and the Rod, which, even within my own time, I blush to say had not been banished from schools for young gentlewomen. To sum up, Miss Arabella Greenville went to school with a pocketful of gold pieces, and a play-chest full of sweet-cakes and preserved fruits, and with a virtual charter for learning as little as she chose, and doing pretty well as much as she liked.

Of course my Grandmother ran a fair chance of being wholly spoiled, and growing up to one of those termagant, mammythrept romps we used to laugh at in Mr. Colley Cibber's plays. The schoolmistress fawned upon her, for, although untitled, Esquire Greenville (from whom my descent is plain), and he was so much respected in the West, that the innkeepers were used to beseech him to set up achievements of his arms at the hotels where he baited on his journeys, was one of the most considerable of the County Gentry; the teachers were glad when she would treat them from her abundant store of play-money; and she was a kind of divinity among the schoolmaids her companions, to whom she gave so many cakes and sweetmeats that the apothecary had to be called in about once a week to cure many of surfeit. But this fair young flower-bed was saved from blight and choking weeds, first, by the innate rectitude and nobility of her disposition, which (save only when that dangerous look was in her eyes) taught her to keep a rein over her caprices, and subdue a too warm and vigorous imagination; next, by the entire absence of Vanity and Self-Conceit in her mind, – a happy state, which made her equally alive to her own faults and to the excellences of others; and, last, by her truly prodigious aptitude for polite learning. I have often been told that but for adverse circumstances Mrs. Greenville must have proved one of the most learned, as she was one of the wittiest and best-bred, women of her Age and Country. In the languages, in all manner of fine needlework, in singing and fingering instruments of music, in medicinal botany and the knowledge of diseases, in the making of the most cunning electuaries and syllabubs, and even in Arithmetic, – a science of which young gentlewomen were then almost wholly deficient, – she became, before she was sixteen years of age, a truly wonderful proficient. A Bristol bookseller spoke of printing her book of recipes (containing some excellent hints on cookery, physic, the casting of nativities, and farriery); and some excellent short hymns she wrote are, I believe, sung to this day in one of the Bristol free-schools. But the talent for which she was most shiningly remarkable was in that difficult and laborious art of Painting in Oils. Her early drawings, both in crayons and Chinese ink, were very noble; and there are in this House now some miniatures of her father, brother, and school-companions, limned by her in a most delicate and lovely fashion; but 'twas in oils and in portraiture of the size of life that she most surpassed. She speedily out-went all that the best masters of this craft in Bristol could teach her; and her pictures –

especially one of her Father, in his buff coat and breastplate, as a Colonel of the Militia – were the wonder, not only of Bristol, but of all Somerset and the counties adjacent.

About this time those troubles in the West, with which the name of Prince Rupert is so sadly allied, grew to be of such force and fury as to decide Mr. Greenville on going to London, taking his daughter Arabella with him, to make interest with the Parliament, so that peril might be averted from his estate. For although his son was in arms for King Charles, and he himself was a gentleman of approved loyalty, he had done nothing of an overt kind to favour King or Parliament. He thus hoped, having ever been a peaceable and law-worthy gentleman, to preserve his lands from peril, and himself and family from prosecution; and it is a great error to suppose that many honest gentlemen did not so succeed in the very fiercest frenzy of the civil wars in keeping their houses over their heads, and their heads upon their shoulders. Witness worthy Mr. John Evelyn of Wotton and Sayes Court, and many other persons of repute.

While the Esquire was intent on his business at Westminster, and settling the terms of a Fine, without which it seemed even his peaceable behaviour could not be compounded, he lay at the house of a friend, Sir Fortunatus Geddings, a Turkey merchant, who had a fair house in the street leading directly to St. Paul's Church, just without Ludgate. The gate has been pulled down this many a day, and the place where he dwelt is now called Ludgate Hill. As he had much going to and fro, and was afraid that his daughter might come to hurt, both in the stoppage to her schooling, and in the unquietness of the times, he placed her for a while at a famous school at Hackney, under that notable governante Mrs. Desaguiliers. And here Mrs. Greenville had not been for many weeks ere the strangest adventure in the world – as strange as any one of my own – befel her. The terrible battle of Naseby had by this time been fought, and the King's cause was wholly ruined. Among other Cavaliers fortunate enough to escape from that deadly fray, and who were in hiding from the vengeance of the usurping government, was the Lord Francis V – s, younger son to that hapless Duke of B – m who was slain at Portsmouth by Captain F – n. It seems almost like a scene in a comedy to tell; and, indeed, I am told that Tom D'Urfey did turn the only merry portion of it into a play; but it appears that, among other shifts to keep his disguise, the Lord Francis, who was highly skilled in all the accomplishments of the age, was fain to enter Mrs. Desaguiliers' school at Hackney in the habit of a dancing-master, and that as such he taught corantoes and rounds and qyres to the young gentlewomen. Whether the governante, who was herself a stanch royalist, winked at the deception, I know not; but her having done so is not improbable. Stranger to relate, the Lord Francis brought with him a Companion who was, forsooth, to teach French and the cittern, and who was no other than Captain Richard, son to the Esquire of the West country, and who was likewise inveterately pursued by the Usurper. The brother recognised his sister – to what joy and contentment on both their parts I need not say; but ere the false Dancing-Master had played his part many days, he fell madly in love with Arabella Greenville. To her sorrow and wretchedness, my poor Grandmother returned his Flame. Not that the Lord Francis stands convicted of any Base Designs upon her. I am afraid that he had been as wild and as reckless as most of the young nobles of his day; but for this young woman at least his love was pure and honourable. He made no secret of it to his fast friend, Captain Richard (my Grand-uncle), who would soon have crossed swords with the Spark had any villany been afloat; and he made no more ado, as was the duty of a Brother jealous of his sister's fair fame, but to write his father word of what had chanced. The Esquire was half terrified and half flattered by the honour done to his family by the Lord Francis. The poor young man was under the very sternest of proscriptions, and it was openly known that if the Parliament laid hold on him his death was certain. But, on the other hand, the Esquire loved his daughter above all things; and one short half-hour, passed with her alone at Hackney, persuaded him that he must either let Arabella's love-passion have its vent, or break her heart for ever. And, take my word for it, you foolish parents who would thwart your children in this the most sacred moment of their lives, – thwart them for no reasonable cause, but only to gratify your own pride of purse, avarice, evil tempers, or love of meddling, – you are but gathering up bunches

of nettles wherewith to scourge your own shoulders, and strewing your own beds with shards and pebbles. Take the advice of old John Dangerous, who suffered his daughter to marry the man of her choice, and is happy in the thought that she enjoys happiness; and I should much wish to know if there be any Hatred in the world so dreadful as that curdled love, as that reverence decayed, as that obedience in ruins, you see in a proud haughty daughter married against her will to one she holds in loathing, and who points her finger, and says within herself, "My father and mother made me marry that man, and I am Miserable."

It was agreed amongst those who had most right to come to an agreement in the matter, that as a first step the Lord Francis V – s should betake himself to some other place of hiding, as more in keeping with Mrs. Greenville's honour; but that, with the consent of her father and brother, he should be solemnly betrothed to her; and that, so soon as the troubles were over, or that the price which was upon his head were taken off, he should become her husband. And there was even a saving clause added, that if the national disturbances unhappily continued, Mrs. Greenville should be privately conveyed abroad, and that the Lord Francis should marry her so soon after a certain lapse of time as he could conveniently get beyond sea. My Lord Duke of B – m had nothing to say against the match, loving his brother, as he did, very dearly; and so, in the very roughest of times, this truest of true loves seemed to bid fair to have a smooth course.

But alas the day! My Grandmother's passion for the young Lord was a very madness. On his part, he idolised her, calling her by names and writing her letters that are nonsensical enough in common life, but which are not held to be foolish pleas in Love's Chancery. When the boy and girl – for they were scarcely more – parted, she gave him one of her rich brown tresses; he gave her one of his own dainty love-locks. They broke a broad piece in halves between them; each hung the fragment by a ribbon next the heart. They swore eternal fidelity, devotion. Naught but Death should part them, they said. Foolish things to say and do, no doubt; but I look at my grizzled old head in the glass, and remember that I have said and done things quite as foolish forty – fifty years ago.

Nothing but Death was to part them; and nothing but Death so parted them. The Esquire Greenville, his business being brought to a pleasant termination, having paid his Fine and gotten his Safe-Conduct and his Redemption from Sequestration, betook himself once more to the West. His daughter went with him, nourishing her love and fondling it, and dwelling, syllable by syllable, on the letters which the Lord Francis sent her from time to time. He was in hopes, he said, to get away to Holland.

Then came that wicked business of the King's Murder. Mr. Greenville, as became a loyal gentleman, was utterly dismayed at that horrid crime; but to Arabella the news was as of the intelligence of the death of some loved and revered friend. She wept, she sobbed, she called on Heaven to shower down vengeance on the Murderers of her gracious Prince. She had not heard from her betrothed for many days, and those who loved and watched her had marked a strange wild way with her.

It was on the fourth of February that the dreadful news of the Whitehall tragedy came to her father's house. She was walking on the next day very moodily in the garden, when the figure of one booted and spurred, and with the stains of many days' travel on his dress, stood across her path. He was but a clown, a mere boor; he had been a ploughboy on her father's lands, and had run away to join Captain Richard, who had made him a trumpeter in his troop. What he had to say was told in clumsy speech, in hasty broken accents, with sighs and stammerings and blubberings; but he told his tale too well.

The Lord Francis V – s and Captain Richard Greenville – Arabella's lover, Arabella's brother – were both Dead. On the eve of the fatal thirtieth of January they had been taken captives in a tilt-boat on the Thames, in which they were endeavouring to escape down the river. They had at once been tried by a court-martial of rebel officers; and on the thirtieth day of that black month, by express order sent from the Lord General Cromwell in London, these two gallant and unfortunate gentlemen had

been shot to death by a file of musketeers in the courtyard of Hampton Court Palace. The trumpeter had by a marvel escaped, and lurked about Hampton till the dreadful deed was over. He had sought out the sergeant of the firing party, and questioned him as to the last moments of the condemned. The sergeant said that they died as Malignants, and without showing any sign of Penitence; but he could not gainsay that their bearing was soldier-like.

Arabella heard this tale without moving.

"Did the Captain – did my brother – say aught before they slew him?" she asked.

"Nowt but this, my lady: 'God forgive us all!'"

"And the Lord Francis, said he aught?"

"Ay; but I dunno loike to tell."

"Say on."

"'Twas t' Sergeant tould un. A' blessed the King, and woud hev' t' souldiers drink 's health, but they wouldno'. And a' wouldno' let un bandage uns eyes; an' jest befwoar t' red cwoats foired, a' touk a long lock o' leddy's hair from 's pocket and kissed un, and cried out 'Bloud for Bloud!' and then a' died all straight along."

Mrs. Arabella Greenville drew from her bosom a long wavy lock of silken hair, – his hair, poor boy! – and kissed it, and crying out "Blood for Blood!" she fell down in the garden-path in a dead faint.

She did not Die, however, being spared for many Purposes, some of them Terrible, until she was nearly ninety years of age. But her first state was worse than death; she lying for many days in a kind of trance or lethargy, and then waking up to raving madness. For the best part of that year, she was a perfect maniac, from whom nothing could be got but gibberings and plungings, and ceaseless cries of "Blood for Blood!" The heir-at-law to the estate, now that the Esquire's son was dead, watched her madness with a cautelous avaricious desire. He was a sour Parliament man, who had pinned his faith to the Commonwealth, and done many Awakening things against the Cavaliers, and he thought now that he should have his reward, and Inherit.

It was so destined, however, that my Grandmother should recover from that Malady. On her beauty it left surprisingly few traces. You could only tell the change that had taken place in her by the deathly paleness of her visage, by her never smiling, and by that Fierce Expression in her eyes being now an abiding instead of a passing one. Beyond these, she was herself again; and after a little while went to her domestic concerns, and chiefly to the cultivation of that pleasing art of Painting in Oils in which she had of old time given such fair promise of excellence. Her father would have had several most ingenious examples of History and Scripture pieces by the Italian and Flemish masters bought for her to study by, – such copies being then very plentiful, by reason of the dispersing of the collections of many noblemen and gentlemen on the King's side; but this she would not suffer, saying that it were waste of time and money, and, with astonishing zeal, applied herself to the branch of portraiture. From a little miniature portrait of her dead Lord, drawn by Mr. Cooper, she painted in large many fair and noble presentments, varying them according to her humour, – now showing the Lord Francis in his panoply as a man of war, now in a court habit, now in an embroidered night-gown and Turkish cap, now leaning on the shoulder of her brother, the Captain, deceased. And anon she would make a ghastly image of him lying all along in the courtyard at Hampton Court, with the purple bullet-marks on his white forehead, and a great crimson stain on his bosom, just below his bands. This was the one she most loved to look upon, although her father sorely pressed her to put it by, and not dwell on so uncivil a theme, the more so as, in Crimson Characters, on the background she had painted the words "Blood for Blood," But whatever she did was now taken little account of, for all thought her to be distraught.

By and by she fell to quite a new order in her painting. She seemed to take infinite pleasure in making portraitures of Oliver Cromwell, who had by this time become Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. She had never seen that Bold Bad Man (the splendour of whose mighty achievements must for ever remain tarnished by his blood-guiltiness in the matter of the King's Murther); but from

descriptions of his person, for which she eagerly sought, and from bustos, pictures, and prints cut in brass, which she obtained from Bristol and elsewhere, she produced some surprising resemblances of him who was now the Greatest Man in England. She painted him at full and at half length – in full-face, profile, and three-quarter; but although she would show her work to her intimates, and ask eagerly "Is it like – is it like him?" she would never part with one copy (and there were good store of time-servers ready to buy the Protector's picture at that time), nor could any tell how she disposed of them.

This went on until the summer of the year 1657, when her father gently put it to her that she had worn the willow long enough, and would have had her ally herself with some gentleman of worth and parts in that part of the country. For the poor Esquire desired that she should be his heiress, and that a man-child should be born to the Greenville estate, and thus the heir-at-law, who was a wretched attorney at Bristol, and more bitter against kings than ever, should not inherit. She was not to be moved, however, towards marriage; saying softly that she was already wedded to her Frank in heaven, – for so she spoke of the Lord Francis V – s, – and that her union had been blessed by her brother Dick, who was in Heaven too, with King Charles and all the Blessed Army of Martyrs. And I have heard, indeed, that the unhappy business of the King's death was the means of so crazing, or casting into a Sad Celibacy and Devouring Melancholy, multitudes of comely young women who were born for love and delights, and to be the smiling mothers of many children.

So, seeing that he could do nothing with her, and loth to use any unhandsome pressure towards one whom he loved as the Apple of his Eye, the Esquire began to think it might divert her mind to more cheerful thoughts if she quitted for a season that part of the country (for it was at Home that she had received the dreadful news of her misfortune); and, Sir Fortunatus Geddings and his family being extremely willing to receive her, and do her honour, he despatched Arabella to London, under protection of Mr. Landrail, his steward, a neighbour of his, Sir Hardress Eustis, lending his Coach for the journey.

Being now come to London, every means which art could devise, or kindness could imagine, were made use of by Sir Fortunatus, his wife, and daughter, to make Arabella's life happier. But I should tell you a strange thing that came about at her father's house the day after she left it for the Town. Mr. Greenville chanced to go in a certain long building (by the side of his pleasure-pond) that was used as a boat-house, when, to his amazement, he sees, piled up against the wall, a number of pictures, some completed, some but half finished, but all representing the Lord Protector Cromwell. But the strangest thing about them was, that in every picture the canvas about the head was pricked through and through in scores of places with very fine clean holes, and, looking around in his marvel, he found an arbalist or cross-bow, with some very sharp bolts, and was so led to conjecture that some one had been setting these heads of the Protector up as a target, and shooting bolts at them. He was at first minded to send an express after his daughter to London to question her if she knew aught of the matter; but on second thoughts he desisted, remembering that in the Message, almost, (as the times stood) there was Treason, and concluding that, after all, it might be but some idle fancy of Arabella, and part of the Demi-Craze under which she laboured. For there could be no manner of doubt that the Pictures, if not the Holes in them, were of her handiwork.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.