

John Enderby

by Sir Gilbert Parker, 1862-1932

Published: 1913

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I

Of all the good men that Lincolnshire gave to England to make her proud, strong and handsome, none was stronger, prouder and more handsome than John Enderby, whom King Charles made a knight against his will.

„Your gracious Majesty,“ said John Enderby, when the King was come to Boston town on the business of draining the Holland fen and other matters more important and more secret, „the honour your Majesty would confer is well beyond a poor man like myself, for all Lincolnshire knows that I am driven to many shifts to keep myself above water. Times have been hard these many years, and, craving your Majesty’s pardon, our taxes have been heavy.“

„Do you refuse knighthood of his Majesty?“ asked Lord Rippingdale, with a sneer, patting the neck of his black stallion with a gloved hand.

„The King may command my life, my Lord Rippingdale,“ was Enderby’s reply, „he may take me, body and bones and blood, for his service, but my poor name must remain as it is when his Majesty demands a price for honouring it.“

„Treason,“ said Lord Rippingdale just so much above his breath as the King might hear.

„This in our presence!“ said the King, tapping his foot upon the ground, his brows contracting, and the narrow dignity of the divine right lifting his nostrils scornfully.

„No treason, may it please your Majesty,“ said Enderby, „and it were better to speak boldly to the King’s face than to be disloyal behind his back. My estates will not bear the tax which the patent of this knighthood involves. I can serve the country no better as Sir John Enderby than as plain John Enderby, and I can serve my children best by shepherding my shattered fortunes for their sakes.“

For a moment Charles seemed thoughtful, as though Enderby’s reasons appealed to him, but Lord Rippingdale had now the chance which for ten years he had invited, and he would not let it pass.

„The honour which his Majesty offers, my good Lincolnshire squire, is more to your children than the few loaves and fishes which you might leave them. We all know how miserly John Enderby has grown.“

Lord Rippingdale had touched the tenderest spot in the King’s mind. His vanity was no less than his impecuniosity, and this was the third time in one day he had been defeated in his efforts to confer an honour, and exact a price beyond all reason for that honour. The gentlemen he had sought had found business elsewhere, and were not to be seen when his messengers called at their estates. It was not the King’s way to give anything for nothing. Some of these gentlemen had been benefited by the draining of the Holland fens, which the King had undertaken, reserving a stout portion of the land for himself; but John Enderby benefited nothing, for his estates lay further north, and near the sea, not far from the town of Mablethorpe. He had paid all the taxes which the King had levied and had not murmured beyond his own threshold.

He spoke his mind with candour, and to him the King was still a man to whom the truth was to be told with directness, which was the highest honour one man might show another.

„Rank treason!“ repeated Lord Rippingdale, loudly. „Enderby has been in bad company, your Majesty. If you are not wholly with the King, you are against him. He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.“

A sudden anger seized the King, and turning, he set foot in the stirrup, muttering something to himself, which boded no good for John Enderby. A gentleman held the stirrup while he mounted, and, with Lord Rippingdale beside him in the saddle, he turned and spoke to Enderby. Self-will and resentment were in his tone. „Knight of Enderby we have made you,“ he said, „and Knight of Enderby you shall remain. Look to it that you pay the fees for the accolade.“

„Your Majesty,“ said Enderby, reaching out his hand in protest, „I will not have this greatness you would thrust upon me. Did your Majesty need, and speak to me as one gentleman to another in his need, then would I part with the last inch of my land; but to barter my estate for a gift that I have no heart nor use for—your Majesty, I cannot do it.“

The hand of the King twisted in his bridle-rein, and his body stiffened in anger.

„See to it, my Lord Rippingdale,“ he said, „that our knight here pays to the last penny for the courtesy of the accolade. You shall levy upon his estate.“

„We are both gentlemen, your Majesty, and my rights within the law are no less than your Majesty’s,“ said Enderby stoutly.

„The gentleman forgets that the King is the fountain of all law,“ said Lord Rippingdale obliquely to the King.

„We will make one new statute for this stubborn knight,“ said Charles; „even a writ of outlawry. His estates shall be confiscate to the Crown. Go seek a King and country better suited to your tastes, our rebel Knight of Enderby.“

„I am still an Enderby of Enderby, and a man of Lincolnshire, your Majesty,“ answered the squire, as the King rode towards Boston church, where presently he should pray after this fashion with his subjects there assembled:

„Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold our most gracious sovereign King Charles. Endue him plenteously with Heavenly gifts; grant him in health and wealth long to live; strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies; and, finally, after this life, he may attain everlasting joy and felicity.“

With a heavy heart Enderby turned homewards; that is, towards Mablethorpe upon the coast, which lies between Saltfleet Haven and Skegness, two ports that are places of mark in the history of the kingdom, as all the world knows.

He had never been so vexed in his life. It was not so much anger against the King, for he had great reverence for the monarchy of England; but against Lord Rippingdale his mind was violent. Years before, in a quarrel between the Earl of Lindsey and Lord Rippingdale, upon a public matter which Parliament settled afterwards, he had sided with the Earl of Lindsey. The two Earls had been reconciled afterwards, but Lord Rippingdale had never forgiven Enderby.

In Enderby's brain ideas worked somewhat heavily; but to-day his slumberous strength was infused with a spirit of action and the warmth of a pervasive idea. There was no darkness in his thoughts, but his pulse beat heavily and he could hear the veins throbbing under his ear impetuously. Once or twice as he rode on in the declining afternoon he muttered to himself. Now it was: „My Lord Rippingdale, indeed!“ or „Not even for a King!“ or „Sir John Enderby, forsooth! Sir John Enderby, forsooth!“ Once again he spoke, reining in his horse beside a tall cross at four corners, near Stickford by the East Fen. Taking off his hat he prayed:

„Thou just God, do Thou judge between my King and myself. Thou knowest that I have striven as an honest gentleman to do right before all men. When I have seen my sin, oh, Lord, I have repented! Now I have come upon perilous times, the gins are set for my feet. Oh, Lord, establish me in true strength! Not for my sake do I ask that Thou wilt be with me and Thy wisdom comfort me, but for the sake of my good children. Wilt Thou spare my life in these troubles until they be well formed; till the lad have the bones of a man, and the girl the wise thought of a woman—for she hath no mother to shield and teach her. And if this be a wrong prayer, my God, forgive it: for I am but a blundering squire, whose tongue tells lamely what his heart feels.“

His head was bowed over his horse's neck, his face turned to the cross, his eyes were shut, and he did not notice the strange and grotesque figure that suddenly appeared from among the low bushes by the fen near by.

It was an odd creature perched upon stilts; one of those persons called the stilt-walkers. They were no friends of the King, nor of the Earl of Lindsey, nor of my Lord Rippingdale, for the draining of these fens took from them their means of living. They were messengers, postmen and carriers across the wide stretch of country from Spilsby, even down to the river Witham, and from Boston Deep down to Market Deeping and over to the sea. Since these fens were drained one might travel from Market Deeping to the Wolds without wetting a foot.

„Aw'll trooble thee a moment, maister,“ said the peasant. „A stilt-walker beant nowt i' the woorld. Howsome'er, aw've a worrd to speak i' thy ear.“

Enderby reined in his horse, and with a nod of complaisance (for he was a man ever kind to the poor, and patient with those who fared ill in the world) he waited for the other to speak.

„Thoo'rt the great Enderby of Enderby, maister,“ said the peasant, ducking his head and then putting on his cap; „aw've known thee sin tha wast no bigger nor a bit grass'opper i' the field. Wilt tha ride long, Sir John Enderby, and aw'll walk aside thee, ma grey nag with thy sorrel.“ He glanced down humorously at his own long wooden legs.

Enderby turned his horse round and proceeded on his way slowly, the old man striding along beside him like a stork.

„Why do you dub me Knight?“ he asked, his eyes searching the face of the old man.

„Why shouldna aw call thee Knight if the King calls thee Knight? It is the dooty of a common man to call thee Sir John, and tak off his hat at saying o' it.“ His hat came off, and he nodded in such an odd way that Enderby burst out into a good honest laugh. „Dooth tha rememba little Tom Dowsby that went hoonting wi' thee when tha wert not yet come to age?“ continued the stilt-walker. „Doost tha

rememba when, for a jest, thee and me stopped the lord bishop, tha own uncle, in the highway at midnight, and took his poorse from him, and the rich gold chain from his neck? And doost tha rememba that tha would have his apron too, for tha said that if it kept a bishop clean, wouldna it keep highwaymen clean, whose work was not so clean as a bishop's? Sir John Enderby, aw loove thee better than the King, an' aw loove thee better than my Lord Rippin'dale-ay, there's a sour heart in a goodly body!"

John Enderby reined up his horse and looked the stilt-walker in the face.

"Are you little Tom Dowsby?" exclaimed he. "Are you that scamp?" He laughed all at once as though he had not a trouble in the world. "And do you keep up your evil practices? Do you still waylay bishops?"

"If aw confessed to Heaven or man, aw would confess to thee, Sir John Enderby; but aw'll confess nowt."

"And how know you that I am Sir John Enderby?"

"Even in Sleaford town aw kem to know it. Aw stood no further from his Majesty and Lord Rippin'dale than aw stand from you, when the pair talked by the Great Boar inn. Where doos tha sleep to-night?"

"At Spilsby."

"To-night the King sleeps at Sutterby on the Wolds. 'Tis well for thee tha doost not bide wi' his Majesty. Theer, aw've done thee a service."

"What service have you done me?"

"Aw've told thee that tha moost sleep by Spilsby when the King sleeps at Sutterby. Fare-thee-well, maister.²

Doffing his cap once more, the stilt-walker suddenly stopped, and, turning aside, made his way with an almost incredible swiftness across the fen, taking the ditches with huge grotesque strides. Enderby looked back and watched him for a moment curiously. Suddenly the man's words began to repeat themselves in Enderby's head: "To-night the King sleeps at Sutterby on the Wolds. 'Tis well for thee tha doost not bide wi' his Majesty." Presently a dozen vague ideas began to take form. The man had come to warn him not to join the King at Sutterby.

There was some plot against Charles! These stiltwalkers were tools in the hands of the King's foes, who were growing more powerful every day. He would sleep to-night, not at Spilsby, but at Sutterby. He was a loyal subject; no harm that he could prevent should come to the King.

Before you come to Sutterby on the Wolds, as you travel north to the fenland, there is a combe through which the highway passes, and a stream which has on one side many rocks and boulders, and on the other a sort of hedge of trees and shrubs. It was here that the enemies of the King, that is, some stilt-walkers, with two dishonourable gentlemen who had suffered from the King's oppressions, placed themselves to way lay his Majesty. Lord Rippingdale had published it abroad that the King's route was towards Horncastle, but at Stickney by the fens the royal party separated, most of the company passing on to Horncastle, while Charles, Lord Rippingdale and two other cavaliers proceeded on a secret visit to a gentleman at Louth.

It was dark when the King and his company came to the combe. Lord Rippingdale suggested to his Majesty that one of the gentlemen should ride ahead to guard against surprise or ambush, but the King laughed, and said that his

shire of Lincoln bred no brigands, and he rode on. He was in the coach with a gentleman beside him, and Lord Rippingdale rode upon the right. Almost as the hoofs of the leaders plunged into the stream there came the whinny of a horse from among the boulders. Alarmed, the coachman whipped up his team and Lord Rippingdale clapped his hand upon his sword.

Even as he did it two men sprang out from among the rocks, seized the horses' heads, and a dozen others swarmed round, all masked and armed, and calling upon the King's party to surrender, and to deliver up their valuables. One ruffian made to seize the bridle of Lord Rippingdale's horse, but my lord's sword severed the fellow's hand at the wrist.

„Villain,“ he shouted, „do you know whom you attack?“

For answer, shots rang out; and as the King's gentlemen gathered close to the coach to defend him, the King himself opened the door and stepped out. As he did so a stilt struck him on the head. Its owner had aimed it at Lord Rippingdale; but as my lord's horse plunged, it missed him, and struck the King fair upon the crown of the head. He swayed, groaned and fell back into the open door of the coach. Lord Rippingdale was at once beside him, sword drawn, and fighting gallantly.

„Scoundrels,“ he cried, „will you kill your King?“

„We will have the money which the King carries,“ cried one of his assailants. „The price of three knighthoods and the taxes of two shires we will have.“

One of the King's gentlemen had fallen, and another was wounded. Lord Rippingdale was hard pressed, but in what seemed the last extremity of the King and his party there came a shout from the other side of the stream:

„God save the King! For the King! For the King!“

A dozen horsemen splashed their way across the stream, and with swords and pistols drove through the King's assailants and surrounded his coach. The ruffians made an attempt to rally and resist the onset, but presently broke and ran, pursued by a half-dozen of his Majesty's defenders. Five of the assailants were killed and several were wounded.

As Lord Rippingdale turned to Charles to raise him, the coach-door was opened upon the other side, a light was thrust in, and over the unconscious body of the King my lord recognised John Enderby.

„His Majesty“—began John Enderby.

„His Majesty is better,“ replied Lord Rippingdale, as the King's eyes half opened. „You lead these gentlemen? This should bring you a barony—Sir John,“ my lord added, half graciously, half satirically; for the honest truth of this man's nature vexed him. „The King will thank you.“

„John Enderby wants no reward for being a loyal subject, my lord,“ answered Enderby.

Then with another glance at the King, in which he knew that his Majesty was recovered, he took off his hat, bowed, and, mounting his horse, rode away without a word.

At Sutterby the gentlemen received gracious thanks of the King who had been here delivered from the first act of violence made against him in his reign.

Of the part which Enderby had played Lord Rippingdale said no more to the King than this:

„Sir John Enderby was of these gentlemen who saved your Majesty’s life. Might it not seem to your Majesty that—“

„Was he of them?“ interrupted the King kindly; then, all at once, out of his hurt vanity and narrow self-will, he added petulantly: „When he hath paid for the accolade of his knighthood, then will we welcome him to us, and make him Baron of Enderby.“

Next day when Enderby entered the great iron gates of the grounds of Enderby House the bell was ringing for noon. The house was long and low, with a fine tower in the centre, and two wings ran back, forming the court-yard, which would have been entirely inclosed had the stables moved up to complete the square.

When Enderby came out into the broad sweep of grass and lawn, flanked on either side by commendable trees, the sun shining brightly, the rooks flying overhead, and the smell of ripe summer in the air, he drew up his horse and sat looking before him.

„To lose it! To lose it!“ he said, and a frown gathered upon his forehead.

Even as he looked, the figure of a girl appeared in the great doorway. Catching sight of the horseman, she clapped her hands and waved them delightedly.

Enderby’s face cleared, as the sun breaks through a mass of clouds and lightens all the landscape. The slumberous eyes glowed, the square head came up. In five minutes he had dismounted at the great stone steps and was clasping his daughter in his arms.

„Felicity, my dear daughter!“ he said, tenderly and gravely.

She threw back her head with a gaiety which bespoke the bubbling laughter in her heart, and said:

„Booh! to thy solemn voice. Oh, thou great bear, dost thou love me with tears in thine eyes?“

She took his hand and drew him inside the house, where, laying aside his hat and gloves and sword, they passed into the great library.

„Come, now, tell me all the places thou hast visited,“ she said, perching herself on his arm-chair.

He told her, and she counted them off one by one upon her fingers.

„That is ninety miles of travel thou hast had. What is the most pleasing thing thou hast seen?“

„It was in Stickford by the fen,“ he answered, after a perplexed pause. „There was an old man upon the roadside with his head bowed in his hands. Some lads were making sport of him, for he seemed so woe-begone and old. Two cavaliers of the King came by. One of them stopped and drove the lads away, then going to the old man, he said: ›Friend, what is thy trouble?‹ The old man raised his melancholy face and answered: ›Aw’m afeared, sir.‹ ›What fear you?‹ inquired the young gentleman. ›I fear ma wife, sir,‹ replied the old man. At that the other cavalier sat back in his saddle and guffawed merrily. ›Well, Dick,‹ said he to his friend, ›that is the worst fear in this world. Ah, Dick, thou hast ne’er been married!‹ ›Why do you fear your wife?‹ asked Dick. ›Aw’ve been robbed of ma horse and saddle and twelve skeins o’ wool. Aw’m lost, aw’m ruined and shall raise ma head nevermore. To ma wife aw shall ne’er return.‹ ›Tut tut, man,‹ said Dick, ›get back to your wife. You are master of your own house; you rule the roost. What is a wife? A wife’s a woman. You are a man. You are bigger and stronger, your bones are harder. Get

home and wear a furious face and batter in the door and say: *What, ho, thou huzzy!* Why, man, fear you the wife of your bosom? The old man raised his head and said: 'Tha doost not know ma wife or tha wouldst not speak like that.' At that Dick laughed and said: 'Fellow, I do pity thee'; and taking the old man by the shoulders, he lifted him on his own horse and took him to the village fair. There he bought him twelve skeins of wool and sent him on his way rejoicing, with a horse worth five times his own."

With her chin in her hands the girl had listened intently to the story. When it was finished she said: „What didst thou say was the gentleman's name?“

„His friend called him Dick. He is a poor knight, one Sir Richard Mowbray, of Leicester, called at Court and elsewhere Happy Dick Mowbray, for they do say a happier and braver heart never wore the King's uniform.“

„Indeed I should like to know that Sir Richard Mowbray. And, tell me now, who is the greatest person thou hast seen in thy absence?“

„I saw the King—at Boston town.“

„The King! The King!“ Her eyes lightened, her hands clapped merrily. „What did he say to thee? Now, now, there is that dark light in thine eyes again. I will not have it so!“ With her thumbs she daintily drew down the eyelids and opened them again. „There, that's better. Now what did the King say to thee?“

„He said to me that I should be Sir John Enderby, of Enderby.“

„A knight! A knight! He made thee a knight?“ she asked gaily. She slipped from his knee and courtesied before him, then seeing the heaviness of his look, she added: „Booh, Sir John Enderby, why dost thou look so grave? Is knighthood so big a burden thou dost groan under it?“

„Come here, my lass,“ he said gently. „Thou art young, but day by day thy wisdom grows, and I can trust thee. It is better thou shouldst know from my own lips the peril this knighthood brings, than that trouble should suddenly fall and thou be unprepared.“

Drawing her closely to him he told her the story of his meeting with the King; of Lord Rippingdale; of the King's threat to levy upon his estates and to issue a writ of outlawry against him.

For a moment the girl trembled, and Enderby felt her hands grow cold in his own, for she had a quick and sensitive nature and passionate intelligence and imagination.

„Father,“ she cried pantingly, indignantly, „the King would make thee an outlaw, would seize upon thy estates, because thou wouldst not pay the price of a paltry knighthood!“ Suddenly her face flushed, the blood came back with a rush, and she stood upon her feet. „I would follow thee to the world's end rather than that thou shouldst pay one penny for that honour. The King offered thee knighthood? Why, two hundred years before the King was born, an Enderby was promised an earldom. Why shouldst thou take a knighthood now? Thou didst right, thou didst right.“ Her fingers clasped in eager emphasis.

„Dost thou not see, my child,“ said he, „that any hour the King's troops may surround our house and take me prisoner and separate thee from me? I see but one thing to do; even to take thee at once from here and place thee with thy aunt, Mistress Falkingham, in Shrewsbury.“

„Father,“ the girl said, „thou shalt not put me away from thee. Let the King’s men surround Enderby House and the soldiers and my Lord Rippingdale levy upon the estates of Enderby. Neither his Majesty nor my Lord Rippingdale dare put a finger upon me—I would tear their eyes out.“

Enderby smiled half sadly at her, and answered „The fear of a woman is one of the worst fears in this world. Booh!“

So ludicrously did he imitate her own manner of a few moments before that humour drove away the flush of anger from her face, and she sat upon his chair-arm and said:

„But we will not part; we will stand here till the King and Lord Rippingdale do their worst—is it not so, father?“

He patted her head caressingly.

„Thou sayest right, my lass; we will remain at Enderby. Where is thy brother Garrett?“

„He has ridden over to Mablethorpe, but will return within the hour,“ she replied.

At that moment there was a sound of hoofs in the court-yard. Running to a rear window of the library Mistress Felicity clapped her hands and said:

„It is he—Garrett.“

Ten minutes afterwards the young man entered. He was about two years older than his sister; that is, seventeen. He was very tall for his age, with dark hair and a pale dry face, and of distinguished bearing. Unlike his father, he was slim and gracefully built, with no breadth or power to his shoulders, but with an athletic suppleness and a refinement almost womanlike. He was tenacious, overbearing, self-willed, somewhat silent and also somewhat bad-tempered.

There was excitement in his eye as he entered. He came straight to his father, giving only a nod to Mistress Felicity, who twisted her head in a demure little way, as though in mockery of his important manner.

„Booh!—my lord duke!“ she said almost under her breath.

„Well, my son,“ said Enderby, giving him his hand, „your face has none so cheerful a look. Hast thou no welcome for thy father?“

„I am glad you are home again, sir,“ said young Enderby, more dutifully than cordially.

There was silence for a moment.

„You do not ask my news,“ said his father, eyeing him debatingly.

„I have your news, sir,“ was the young man’s half sullen reply.

His sister came near her father, where she could look her brother straight in the face, and her deep blue eyes fixed upon him intently. The smile almost faded from her lips, and her square chin seemed suddenly to take on an air of seriousness and strength.

„Well, sir?“ asked his father.

„That you, sir, have refused a knighthood of the King; that he insists upon your keeping it; that he is about to levy upon your estates: and that you are outlawed from England.“

„And what think you about the matter?“ asked his father.

„I think it is a gentleman’s duty to take the King’s gifts without question,“ answered the young man.

„Whether the King be just or not, eh? Where would England have been, my son, if the barons had submitted to King John? Where would the Enderbys have been had they not withstood the purposes of Queen Mary? Come, come, the King has a chance to prove himself as John Enderby has proven himself. Midst other news, heard you not that last night I led a dozen gentlemen to the rescue of the King?“

„Twas said in the village that his Majesty would remove his interdict and make you a baron, sir, if you met his levy for the knighthood.“

„That I shall never do. Answer me, my son, do you stand with the King or with your father in this?“

„I am an Enderby,“ answered the youth, moodily, „and I stand with the head of our house.“

That night as candles were being lighted, three score of the King’s men, headed by Lord Rippingdale, placed themselves before the house, and an officer was sent forward to summon forth John Enderby.

Enderby had gathered his men together, and they were posted for defence at the doorways and entrances, and along the battlements. The windows were all heavily shuttered and barred.

The young officer commissioned to demand an interview with Enderby came forward and knocked at the great entrance door. It opened presently and showed within the hallway a dozen men well armed. Enderby came forward to meet him.

„I am Sir Richard Mowbray,“ said the newcomer. „I am sent by Lord Rippingdale, who arrives on a mission from his Majesty.“

Enderby, recognising his visitor, was mild in his reply.

„Sir Richard Mowbray, I pray you tell Lord Rippingdale that he is welcome—as commissioner of the King.“

Mowbray smiled and bowed.

„My lord begs me to ask that you will come forth and speak with him, Sir John?“

„My compliments to Lord Rippingdale, Sir Richard, and say that I can better entertain his Majesty’s commissioner within my own house.“

„And all who wait with him?“ asked the young officer, with a dry sort of smile.

„My lord, and his officers and gentlemen, but not his troopers.“

Mowbray bowed, and as he lifted his head again he saw the face of Mistress Felicity looking through the doorway of the library. Their eyes met. On a sudden a new impulse came to his thoughts.

„Sir John Enderby,“ said he, „I know how honourable a man you are, and I think I know the way you feel. But, as one gentleman to another, permit me a word of counsel. Twere better to humour my Lord Rippingdale, and to yield up to the King’s demands, than to lose all. Lack of money and estate—that is hard enough on a single man like me, but with a gentleman who has the care of a daughter, perhaps—his look again met the young lady’s face—,the case is harder. A little yielding on your part—“

„I will not yield,“ was Enderby’s reply.

Mowbray bowed once more, and retired without more speaking.

In a few moments he returned, Lord Rippingdale with him. The entrance doors were once more opened, and my lord, in a temper, at once began:

„You press your courtesies too far, Sir John Enderby.“

„Less strenuously than the gentlemen of the road pressed their discourtesies upon his Majesty and yourself last night, my lord.“

„I am come upon that business. For your bravery and loyalty, if you will accept the knighthood, and pay the sum set as the courtesy of the accolade, his Majesty will welcome you at Court, and raise you to a barony. But his Majesty must see that his dignity be not injured.“

„The King may have my life and all my goods as a gift, but I will not give either by these indirect means. It does not lie in a poor squire like me to offend the King’s dignity.“

„You are resolved?“

„I am resolved,“ answered Enderby, stubbornly.

„Then you must bear the consequences, and yield up your estates and person into my hands. Yourself and your family are under arrest, to be dealt with hereafter as his Majesty sees fit.“

„I will not yield up my estates, nor my person, nor my son and daughter, of my free will.“

With an incredulous smile, Rippingdale was about to leave and enter upon a siege of the house, when he saw young Enderby and caught a strange look in his face.

„Young gentleman,“ said he, „are you a cipher in this game? A barony hangs on this. Are you as stubborn and unruly as the head of your house?“

Garrett Enderby made no reply, but turned and walked into the library, his father’s and sister’s eyes following him in doubt and dismay, for the chance was his at that moment to prove himself.

A moment afterwards Lord Rippingdale was placing his men to attack the house, disposing of some to secure a timber to batter in the door, and of some to make assaults upon the rear of the building. Enderby had placed his men advantageously to resist attack, giving the defence of the rear of the house to his son. Mistress Felicity he had sent to an upper room in the care of her aunt.

Presently the King’s men began the action, firing wherever a figure showed itself, and carrying a log to batter in the entrance door. Enderby’s men did good work, bringing down four of the besiegers at the first volley.

Those who carried the log hesitated for a moment, and Enderby called encouragingly to his men.

At this exciting moment, while calling to his men, he saw what struck him dumb—his son hurrying forward with a flag of truce to Lord Rippingdale! Instantly my lord commanded his men to retire.

„Great God!“ said Sir John, with a groan, „my son—my only son—a traitor!“ Turning to his men he bade them cease firing.

Throwing open the entrance doors, he stood upon the steps and waited for Lord Rippingdale.

„You see, Sir John Enderby, your son—“ began my lord.

„It was to maintain my rights, and for my son’s sake and my daughter’s, that I resisted the command of the King,“ interrupted the distressed and dishonoured gentleman, „but now—“

„But now you yield?“

He inclined his head, then looking down to the place where his son stood, he said:

„My son—my only son!“ And his eyes filled with tears.

His distress was so moving that even Rippingdale was constrained to say:

„He did it for your sake. His Majesty will—“ With a gesture of despair Enderby turned and entered the house, and passed into the library, where he found his daughter. Pale and tearful she threw herself into his arms.

At eleven o'clock that night as they sat in the same room, while Lord Rippingdale and his officers supped in the dining-room, Sir Richard Mowbray hurriedly entered.

„Come quickly,“ said he; „the way is clear—here by this window. The sentinels are drunk. You will find horses by the gate of the grape-garden, and two of your serving-men mounted. They will take you to a hiding-place on the coast—I have instructed them.“

As he talked he helped them through the window, and bade them good-bye hurriedly; but he did not let Mistress Felicity's hand drop till he had kissed it and wished her a whispered God-speed.

When they had gone he listened for a time, but hearing no sound of surprise or discovery, he returned to the supper room, where Garrett Enderby sat drinking with Lord Rippingdale and the cavaliers.

II

Seven years went by before John Enderby saw his son again or set foot in Enderby House. Escaping to Holland on a night when everything was taken from him save his honour and his daughter, he had lived there with Mistress Felicity, taking service in the army of the country.

Outlaw as he was, his estates given over to his son who now carried a knighthood bestowed by King Charles, he was still a loyal subject to the dynasty which had dishonoured him. When the King was beheaded at Whitehall he mourned and lamented the miserable crime with the best of his countrymen.

It was about this time that he journeyed into France, and there he stayed with his daughter two years. Mistress Falkingham, her aunt, was with her, and watched over her as carefully as when she was a child in Enderby House.

About this time, Cromwell, urged by solicitous friends of the outlaw, sent word to him to return to England, that he might employ him in foreign service, if he did not care to serve in England itself. Cromwell's message was full of comforting reflections upon his sufferings and upon the injustice that had been done to him by the late King. For his daughter's sake, who had never been entirely happy out of England, Enderby returned, and was received with marked consideration by Cromwell at Whitehall.

„Your son, sir,“ said Cromwell, „hath been a follower of the man of sin. He was of those notorious people who cried out against the work of God's servants when Charles paid the penalty of his treason at Whitehall. Of late I have received news

that he is of those children of Belial who are intriguing to bring back the second Charles. Two days ago he was bidden to leave Enderby House. If he be found among those who join the Scotch army to fight for the Pretender, he shall bear the penalty of his offence.“

„He has been ill advised, your Highness,“ said Enderby.

„He shall be advised better,“ was the stern reply. „We will have peace in England, and we will, by the help of the Lord’s strong arm, rid this realm of these recalcitrant spirits. For you, sir, you shall return to your estate at Enderby, and we will use you abroad as opportunity shall occur. Your son has taken to himself the title which the man of sin conferred upon you, to your undoing.“

„Your Highness,“ replied Enderby, „I have but one desire, and that is peace. I have been outlawed from England so long, and my miseries have been so great, that I accept gladly what the justice of your Highness gives thus freely. But I must tell your Highness that I was no enemy of King Charles, and am no foe to his memory. The wrong was done by him to me, and not returned by me to him, and the issue is between our Maker and ourselves. But it is the pride of all Englishmen that England be well governed, and strong and important in the eyes of the nations; and all these things has your Highness achieved. I will serve my country honourably abroad, or rest peacefully here on my own estate, lifting no hand against your Highness, though I hold to the succession in the monarchy.“

Cromwell looked at him steadily and frowningly for a minute, then presently, his face clearing, he said: „Your words, detached from your character, sir, would be traitorous; but as we stand, two gentlemen of England face to face, they seem to me like the words of an honest man, and I love honesty before all other, things. Get to your home, sir. You must not budge from it until I send for you. Then, as proof of your fidelity to the ruler of your country, you shall go on whatever mission I send you.“

„Your Highness, I will do what seems my duty in the hour of your summons.“

„You shall do the will of the Lord,“ answered the Protector, and, bowing a farewell, turned upon his heel. Enderby looked after him a moment, then moved towards the door, and as he went out to mount his horse he muttered to himself:

„The will of the Lord as ordained by Oliver Cromwell—humph!“

Then he rode away up through Trafalgar Square and into the Tottenham Court Road, and so on out into the Shires until he came to Enderby House.

Outside all was as he had left it seven years before, though the hedges were not so well kept and the grass was longer before the house. An air of loneliness pervaded all the place. No one met him at the door. He rode round into the courtyard and called. A man-servant came out. From him he learned that four of Cromwell’s soldiers were quartered in the house, that all the old servants, save two, were gone, and that his son had been expelled the place by Cromwell’s order two days before. Inside the house there was less change. Boon companion of the boisterous cavaliers as his son had been, the young man’s gay hours had been spent more away from Enderby House than in it.

When young Enderby was driven from his father’s house by Cromwell, he determined to join the Scotch army which was expected soon to welcome Charles the Second from France. There he would be in contact with Lord Rippingdale and his Majesty. When Cromwell was driven from his place, great honours might await

him. Hearing in London, however, that his father had returned, and was gone on to the estate, he turned his horse about and rode back again, travelling by night chiefly, and reached Enderby House four days after his father's arrival there.

He found his father seated alone at the dinner-table. Swinging wide open the door of the dining-room he strode in aggressively.

The old man stood up in his place at the table and his eyes brightened expectantly when he saw his son, for his brain was quickened by the thought that perhaps, after all his wrong-doing, the boy had come back to stand by him, a repentant prodigal. He was a man of warm and firm spirit, and now his breast heaved with his emotions. This boy had been the apple of his eye. Since the day of his birth he had looked for great things from him, and had seen in him the refined perpetuation of the sturdy race of the Enderbys. He counted himself but a rough sort of country gentleman, and the courtly face of his son had suggested the country gentleman cast in a finer mould. He was about to speak kindly as of old, but the young man, with clattering spurs, came up to the other end of the table, and with a dry insolence said:

„By whose invitation do you come here?“

The blood fled from the old man's heart. For a moment he felt sick, and his face turned white. He dropped his head a little and looked at his son steadily and mournfully.

„Shall a man need an invitation to his own house, my son?“ he said at last.

The arrogant lips of the young man tightened; he tossed up his head. „The house is mine. I am the master here. You are an outlaw.“

„An outlaw no longer,“ answered the old man, „for the Protector has granted me again the home of which I was cruelly dispossessed.“

„The Protector is a rebel!“ returned the young man, and his knuckles rapped petulantly upon the table. „I stand for the King—for King Charles the Second. When you were dispossessed, his late martyred Majesty made me master of this estate and a knight also.“

The old man's hands clinched, in the effort to rule himself to quietness.

„You are welcome to the knighthood which I have never accepted,“ said he; „but for these estates—“ All at once a fierce anger possessed him, and the great shoulders heaved up and down with emotion—„but for these estates, sir, no law nor king can take them from me. I am John Enderby, the first son of a first son, the owner of these lands since the time my mother gave me birth. You, sir, are the first of our name that ever was a traitor to his house.“

So intent were the two that they did not see or hear three men who drew aside the curtains at the end of the room and stood spying upon them—three of Cromwell's men. Young Enderby laughed sneeringly and answered:

„It was a King of England that gave Enderby Manor to the Enderbys. The King is the source of all estate and honour, and I am loyal to the King. He is a traitor who spurns the King's honour and defies it. He is a traitor who links his fortunes with that vile, murderous upstart, that blethering hypocrite, Oliver Cromwell. I go to Scotland to join King Charles, and before three months are over his Majesty will have come into his own again and I also into my own here at Enderby.“

The old man trembled with the fierceness of his emotions.

„I only am master here,“ he said, „and I should have died upon this threshold ere my Lord Rippingdale and the King’s men had ever crossed it, but for you, an Enderby, who deserted me in the conflict—a coward who went over to the enemies of our house.“

The young man’s face twitched with a malignant anger. He suddenly started forward, and with a sidelong blow struck his father with the flat of his sword. A red ridge of bruised flesh instantly rose upon the old man’s cheek and ear. He caught the arm of the chair by which he stood, staggering back as though he had received a mortal wound.

„No, no, no!“ he said, his voice gulping with misery and horror.—„No, no! Kill me, if you will—I but cannot fight you. Oh, my God, my God!“ he gasped scarcely above a whisper. „Unnatural—unnatural!“ He said no more, for, upon the instant, four men entered the room. They were of Cromwell’s Ironsides. Young Enderby looked round swiftly, ready to fight, but he saw at once that he was trapped. The old man also laid his hand upon his sword, but he saw that the case was hopeless. He dropped into his chair and leaned his head upon his hands.

* * * * *

Two months went by. The battle of Dunbar was fought, and Charles had lost it. Among the prisoners was Garrett Enderby, who had escaped from his captors on the way from Enderby House to London, and had joined the Scottish army. He was now upon trial for his life. Cromwell’s anger against him was violent. The other prisoners of war were treated as such, and were merely confined to prison, but young Enderby was charged with blasphemy and sedition, and with assaulting one of Cromwell’s officers—for on the very day that young Enderby made the assault, Cromwell’s foreign commission for John Enderby was on its way to Lincolnshire.

Of the four men who had captured Garrett Enderby at Enderby House, three had been killed in battle, and the other had deserted. The father was thus the chief witness against his son. He was recalled from Portugal where he had been engaged upon Cromwell’s business.

The young man’s judges leaned forward expectantly as John Enderby took his place. The Protector himself sat among them.

„What is your name, sir?“ asked Cromwell.

„John Enderby, your Highness.“

„It hath been said that you hold a title given you by the man of sin.“

„I have never taken a title from any man, your Highness.“

A look of satisfaction crossed the gloomy and puritanical faces of the officers of the court-martial. Other questions were put, and then came the vital points. To the first of these, as to whether young Enderby had uttered malignant and seditious libels against the Protector, the old man would answer nothing.

„What speech hath ever been between my son and myself,“ he said, „is between my son and myself only.“ A start of anger travelled round the circle of the court-martial. Young Enderby watched his father curiously and sullenly.

„Duty to country comes before all private feeling,“ said Cromwell. „I command you, sir, on peril of a charge of treason against yourself, to answer the question of the Court. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; if thy foot cause thee to

stumble, heave it to the shambles. The pernicious branch of the just tree shall be cloven and cast into the brush-heap.‘ You are an officer of this commonwealth, sir?’ asked Cromwell, again.

„By your Highness’s permission,“ he replied.

„Did your son strike you upon the face with the flat of his sword upon the night recorded in this charge against him?’“

„What acts have passed between my son and myself are between my son and myself only,“ replied Enderby, steadily. He did not look at his son, but presently the tears rolled down his cheeks, so that more than one of his judges who had sons of their own were themselves moved. But they took their cue from the Protector, and made no motion towards the old man’s advantage. Once more Cromwell essayed to get Enderby’s testimony, but, „I will not give witness against my son,“ was his constant and dogged reply. At last Cromwell rose in anger.

„We will have justice in this realm of England,“ said he, „though it turn the father against the son and the son against the father. Though the house be divided against itself yet the Lord’s work shall be done.“

Turning his blazing eyes upon John Enderby, he said: „Troublous and degenerate man, get gone from this country, and no more set foot in it on peril of your life. We recalled you from outlawry, believing you to be a true lover of your country, but we find you malignant, seditious and dangerous.“

He turned towards the young man.

„You, sir, shall get you back to prison until other witnesses be found. Although we know your guilt, we will be formal and just.“

With an impatient nod to an officer beside him, he waved his hand towards father and son.

As he was about to leave the room, John Enderby stretched out a hand to him appealingly.

„Your Highness,“ said he, „I am an old man.“

„Will you bear witness in this cause?’“ asked Cromwell, his frown softening a little.

„Your Highness, I have suffered unjustly; the lad is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. I cannot—“

With an angry wave of the hand Cromwell walked heavily from the room.

Some touch of shame came to the young man’s cold heart, and he spoke to his father as the officers were about to lead him away.

„I have been wrong, I have misunderstood you, sir,“ he said, and he seemed about to hold out his hand. But it was too late. The old man turned on him, shaking his shaggy head.

„Never, sir, while I live. The wrong to me is little. I can take my broken life into a foreign land and die dishonoured and forgotten. But my other child, my one dear child who has suffered year after year with me—for the wrong you have done her, I never, never, never will forgive you. Not for love of you have I spoken as I did to-day, but for the honour of the Enderbys and because you were the child of your mother.“

Two days later at Southampton the old man boarded a little packet-boat bound for Havre.

III

The years went by again. At last all was changed in England. The monarchy was restored, and the land was smiling and content. One day there was a private reading in the Queen's chamber of the palace. The voice of the reader moved in pleasant yet vibrant modulations:

„The King was now come to a time when his enemies wickedly began to plot against him secretly and to oppose him in his purposes; which, in his own mind, were beneficent and magnanimous. From the shire where his labours had been most unselfish came the first malignant insult to his person and the first peril to his life, prefiguring the hellish plots and violence which drove him to his august martyrdom—“

The King had entered quietly as the lady-in-waiting read this passage to the Queen, and, attracted by her voice, continued to listen, signifying to the Queen, by a gesture, that she and her ladies were not to rise. This was in the time when Charles was yet devoted to his Princess of Portugal, and while she was yet happy and undisturbed by rumours—or assurances—of her Lord's wandering affections.

„And what shire was that?“ asked the King at that point where the chronicler spoke of his royal father's „august martyrdom.“

„The shire of Lincoln, your Majesty,“ said the young lady who read, flushing. Then she rose from her footstool at the Queen's feet, and made the King an elaborate courtesy.

Charles waved a gentle and playful gesture of dissent from her extreme formality, and, with a look of admiration, continued:

„My Lord Rippingdale should know somewhat of that *first violence* of which you have read, Mistress Falkingham. He is of Lincolnshire.“

„He knows all, your Majesty; he was present at that *first violence*.“

„It would be amusing for Rippingdale to hear these records—my Lord Clarendon's, are they not? Ah—not in the formal copy of his work? And by order of my Lord Rippingdale? Indeed! And wherefore, my Lord Rippingdale?“

„Shall I read on, your Majesty?“ asked the young lady, with heightened colour, and a look of adventure and purpose in her eyes. Perhaps, too, there was a look of anger in them—not against the King, for there was a sort of eagerness or appealing in the glance she cast towards his Majesty.

The Queen lifted her eyes to the King half doubtfully, for the question seemed to her perilous, Charles being little inclined, as a rule, to listen to serious reading, though he was ever gay in conversation, and alert for witty badinage. His Majesty, however, seemed more than complaisant; he was even boyishly eager.

The young lady had been but a short time in the household, having come over with the Queen from Portugal, where she had been brought to the notice of the then Princess by her great coolness and bravery in rescuing a young lady of Lisbon from grave peril. She had told the Princess then that she was the daughter of an exiled English gentleman, and was in the care of her aunt, one Mistress

Falkingham, while her father was gone on an expedition to Italy. The Princess, eager to learn English, engaged her, and she had remained in the palace till the Princess left for England. A year passed, and then the Queen of England sent for her, and she had been brought close to the person of her Majesty.

At a motion from Charles, who sat upon a couch, idly tapping the buckles on his shoes with a gold-handled staff, the young lady placed herself again at the Queen's feet and continued reading:

„It was when the King was come to Boston town upon the business of the Fens and to confer sundry honours and inquire into the taxes, and for further purpose of visiting a good subject at Louth, who knew of the secret plans of Pym and Hampden, that this shameful violence befel our pious and illustrious prince. With him was my Lord Rippingdale and—“

„Ah, ah, my Lord Rippingdale!“ said Charles, half aloud, „so this is where my lord and secret history meet—my dear, dumb lord.“

Continuing, the young lady read a fair and just account of the King's meeting with John Enderby, of Enderby's refusal to accept the knighthood, and of his rescue of the King at Sutterby.

„Enderby? Enderby?“ interjected the King, „that was not one Sir Garrett Enderby who was with the Scottish army at Dunbar?“

„No, your Majesty,“ said the young lady, scarcely looking up from the page she held, „Sir Garrett Enderby died in Portugal, where he fled, having escaped from prison and Cromwell's vengeance.“

„What Enderby did this fine thing then? My faith, my martyred father had staunch men—even in Lincolnshire.“

„The father of Sir Garrett Enderby it was, your Majesty.“

„How came the son by the knighthood? 'S'death, it seems to me I have a memory of this thing somewhere, if I could but find it!“

„His gracious Majesty of sacred memory gave him his knighthood.“

„Let me hear the whole story. Is it all there, Mistress Falkingham?“ said the King, nodding towards the pages she held.

„It is not all here, your Majesty; but I can tell what so many in England know, and something of what no one in England knows.“

The Queen put out her hand as if to stay the telling, for she saw what an impression her fair reader had made upon the King. But the young lady saw no one save Charles—she did not note the entrance of two gentle men, one of whom looked at her in surprise. This was Sir Richard Mowbray of Leicester. The other was Lord Rippingdale (now lord chamberlain), who had brought Sir Richard thither at the request of the King. Sir Richard had been momentarily expected on his return from a mission to Spain, and my Lord had orders to bring him to the King on the very instant of his arrival.

The King waved his hand when Lord Rippingdale would have come forward, and the young lady continued with the history of John Enderby. She forgot her surroundings. It seemed as though she were giving vent to the suppressed feelings, imaginations, sufferings and wrongs of years. Respectfully, but sadly, when speaking of the dead King; eloquently, tenderly, when speaking of her father; bitterly, when speaking of Oliver Cromwell, she told the story with a point, a force

and a passionate intelligence, which brought to the face of Charles a look of serious admiration. He straightened himself where he sat, and did not let his eyes wander from the young lady's face. As she spoke of Sir Garrett Enderby and his acts—his desertion when Lord Rippingdale laid siege to the house, his quarrel with his father, the trial of the son, the father's refusal to testify against him, and the second outlawing by Cromwell—her voice faltered, but she told the tale bravely and determinedly; for she now saw Lord Rippingdale in the chamber. Whenever she had mentioned his name in the narrative, it was with a slight inflection of scorn, which caused the King to smile; and when she spoke of the ruin of Enderby House, her brother's death and her father's years of exile, tears came into the Queen's eyes, and the King nodded his head in sympathy.

Sir Richard Mowbray, with face aflame, watched her closely. As she finished her story he drew aside to where she could not see him without turning round. But Lord Rippingdale she saw with ease, and she met his eyes firmly, and one should say, with some malicious triumph, were she not a woman.

„My lord Rippingdale,“ said the King, slowly and bitingly, „what shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour?“

„Were I Mordecai I could better answer that question, Sir,“ was my Lord's reply.

„Perhaps my Lord Rippingdale could answer for Haman, then,“ returned his Majesty.

„My imagination is good, but not fifty cubits high, Sir.“

The answer pleased the King. For he ever turned life into jest—his sorrows and his joys. He rose motioning towards the door, and Lord Rippingdale passed out just behind him, followed by Sir Richard Mowbray, who stole a glance at the young chronicler as he went. She saw him, then recognised him, and flushed scarlet.

She did not dare, however, to let him come to her. He understood, and he went his way after the King and Lord Rippingdale.

In all the years that had passed since the night he had helped her father and herself to escape from Enderby House; since he aided them to leave their hiding-place on the coast and escape to Holland, she had never forgotten his last words to her, the laughing look of his eyes, the pressure of his hand. Many a time since she had in her own mind thought of him as she had heard her father call him, even as „Happy Dick Mowbray!“ and the remembrance of his joyous face had been a help to her in all her sufferings. His brown hair was now streaked with grey, but the light in the face was the same; there was the same alertness and buoyant health in the figure and the same row of laughing white teeth.

As she stood watching the departing figure, she scarcely knew that the Queen was preparing to go to her bed-chamber. She became aware of it definitely by the voice of her Majesty, now somewhat petulant.

Two hours later she was walking alone in one of the galleries when, hearing a gentle step behind her, she turned and saw the King. She made an obeisance and was about to move on, when he stopped her, speaking kindly to her, and thanking her for the great pleasure she had given him that afternoon.

„What should be done for this quasi knight of Enderby?“ asked the King.

„He saved the life of the King,“ she said; then boldly, confidently, „your Majesty, for conscience sake he lost all—what can repay him for his dishonoured years and his ruined home!“

„What think you, Mistress, should be done with him? Speak freely of the man whom the King delighteth to honour.“

She felt the sincerity under the indolent courtesy, and spoke as only a woman can speak for those she loves. „Your Majesty, he should have the earldom promised his ancestor by Wolsey, and his estates restored to him as he left them.“

The King laughed dryly.

„He might refuse the large earldom, as he scorned the little knighthood.“

„If your Majesty secured him estates suitable to his rank he could have no reason to refuse. He was solicitous and firm then for his son—but now!“

Her reply was as diplomatic and suggestive as it was sincere, and Charles loved such talents.

„Upon my soul, dear Mistress Falkingham, I love your cleverness,“ said the King, „and I will go further, I—“ He stooped and whispered in her ear, but she drew back in affright and anxiety.

„Oh, your Majesty, your Majesty,“ she said, „I had not thought—“

She moved on distractedly, but he put out his hand and stayed her.

„Ah, a moment, sweetheart,“ he urged.

„I must go to the Queen,“ she answered hurriedly. „Oh, your Majesty, your Majesty,“ she repeated, „would you ruin me?“ Her eyes filled with tears. „Until the Queen welcomed me here I have had nothing but sorrow. I am friendless and alone.“

„No, no,“ said Charles, kindly, „not alone while Charles is King in England.“

„I am little more than an orphan here,“ she said, „for my father is now only a common soldier, your Majesty, and—“

„A common soldier!“ repeated Charles a little stiffly; „they told me he was a gentleman of England doing service in Italy.“

„My father is in your Majesty’s household guard,“ she answered. „He was John Enderby—alas! none would recognise him now as such.“

The King stared at her a moment. „You—you—Mistress—you are John Enderby’s daughter?“

Her reply was scarce above a whisper. „His only child, Sir.“

„Upon my soul! Upon my soul!“ was all Charles said for a moment, and then he added: „Why did you not speak before?“

„My father would not permit me, your Majesty. He is only returned to England these few months.“

„He is here to—?“

„To be near to myself, Sir.“

The King bowed low over her hand.

„Mistress Enderby,“ said he, frankly, „we are honoured by your presence in this place. To-morrow morning at eleven your father shall come to us. You are still but a child in face,“ he said; „and yet—eh?“

„I am twenty-seven years old,“ she answered frankly.

„Quite old enough to be a countess,“ he said charmingly, „and young enough to enjoy the honours thereof.“ So saying he bowed again, and with a gracious smile dismissed her. She went so quickly that she did not see two gentlemen almost at her elbow as she left the gallery. One of them was Lord Rippingdale.

„Ha,“ said my lord, with a wicked smile, „a new violet in the King’s garden!“

His companion turned on him swiftly.

„My lord,“ said he, „this is the second time to-day you have slandered this lady.“
The other lifted his eyebrows.

„Is it a slander to say that the King finds a lady charming at any hour o' the clock?“ he rejoined.

Sir Richard slapped him across the cheek with his glove.

„I take a pleasant duty from John Enderby's shoulders, my lord. I will meet you at your pleasure.“

The next morning at sunrise Lord Rippingdale declared with his last breath that he did not know the lady was John Enderby's daughter, and he begged Sir Richard to carry to Enderby his regret for all past wrongs.

Sir Richard came in upon the King at the moment that his Majesty was receiving John Enderby—a whiteheaded old man, yet hale and strong, and wearing the uniform of the King's Guard. The fire of Enderby's eye was not quenched. The King advanced towards him, and said:

„You are welcome to our Court, Squire Enderby. You have been absent too long. You will honour us by accepting a tardy justice—without a price,“ he added, in a low tone.

„Your Majesty,“ said Enderby, „for me justice comes too late, but for my child—“

„An earldom can never come too late—eh?“ asked the King, smiling gaily.

„For me, your Majesty, all comes too late except—“ his voice shook a little—
„except the house where I was born.“

Charles looked at him gravely.

„Upon my soul, Enderby,“ said he, „you are a man to be envied. We will not rob you of your good revenge on our house or of your independence. But still we must have our way. Your daughter,“—he turned lightly towards Felicity,—„if she will not refuse me, and she cannot upon the ground that you refused my father—she shall be Countess of Enderby in her own right; with estates in keeping.“

Womanlike, Mistress Felicity had no logical argument against an honour so munificently ordained. „And now for your estates—who holds them?“ asked the King.

„Lord Rippingdale, your Majesty,“ answered Enderby.

„Yes, yes, my lord Haman! We have already sent for him. It is long past the time.“ His brow darkened.

Sir Richard Mowbray stepped forward and said: „Your Majesty, Lord Rippingdale is beyond obedience or reparation“; and then he gave the message of the dead man to John Enderby.

A month later Mowbray was permitted to return to Court, and with him came John Enderby and the Countess of Enderby. When Charles was told how matters had gone between the younger two, he gave vent to a mock indignation; and in consequence he made Sir Richard Mowbray an earl also, that, as he said, they might both be at the same nearness to him; for etiquette was tyrannical, and yet he did not know which of them he loved better!

As for the man so long dishonoured, Charles swore that since John Enderby came not to the King at Court, the King would go to him at Enderby. And go he did in good temper and in great friendship for many a year.

