"SHREWSBURY"

By STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XII.

I suppose that there never was an abrupt change in the government of a nation more quietly, successfully and bloodlessly carried through than our great revolution. But it is the way of the population to swing back and it was not long before those who had been most heartily committed to the event began to reflect and compare not with the example before them of the civil war and the consequent misfortune—that great warning against rebellion—but with periods that for the most part lie in atmosphere of divine right and passive obedience, whether they had imbibed these doctrines or not, was it wonderful if a proportion of them soon turned to repenting at leisure what they had done in haste. The late king's harsh and implacable temper and the severity with which he had suppressed the rising were not calculated to reassure those who they began to doubt the possibility of his return hung over the more timid as a thick cloud, while the favors which the new king showered on his Dutch followers, the wretched state of the country of Ireland and the many disasters that attended the first years of the new government were sufficient to shake the confidence and chill the hearts even of the soundest and most patriotic.

So had did things become that it was more than once rumored that King William would abdicate, and that entertaining the several opportunity, many in high places spoke their fears in a dreadful looking forward to judgment, not over I for I never keep without dreaming of Tower Hill, the axe and the sawdust. The natural result followed. While many hastened to secure to make their peace with St. Germains, others, either as a matter of conscience or for some they felt that they had offended too deeply, remained obedient, but permitting themselves in the end and behaviour, never with the lady fear of treason. Treated nothing but threats and denunciations against the seceders. Before a period of three and counterplots of perjury and intrigue, of denunciations and outlawries real and fancied, such as I believe no other country has ever known. St. Jacobites, considering a restoration certain and the time only doubtful, while the whigs in their hearts were inclined to agree with them, and feared the worst.

During seven such years I worked on quietly with Mr Bruce, who partly I think, because he had regard to his services, partly, I fear, for the sake of his and partly because he knew the tories and Jacobites already had a secret writer in the notorious Mr Dryden—in spite of letters Mr. Dryden, it was said, would accept, these possibilities—remained steadfast to the whig opinions and did not shine in the minority parts to secure the cry which the triumphant complaint a must have valued. I saw much of him and little of others, and being heavily busy and honorably employed—for that my style made any mark in the house, which was scarcely to be expected, since it all passed for Mr Bruce and begin to regard my side before I came to London as an early dream. It had left me, however, with two propositions with are not common at the age which I had then reached, the one a love of solitude and a retired life, which, imposed on me at first by my fear of detection, grew to and by little a habit, the other an aversion for women that amounted almost to fear of them. Mr Bruce, who was a confirmed bachelor, did nothing to alter my views on either point, or reconcile me to the world; and as my life was passed between my lodgings in Bride lane and his apartment in Fleet street, where he had a tolerable library, few were better acquainted with public affairs or had more experience of private than I, or knew more intimately the court of the same and the aspect of the house between the Fleet prison and St Dunstan's church.

Partly out of fear and partly out of a desire to cut myself off from my former life, I made myself known to no one in Hertfordshire, but some five years after my arrival in London, having a sudden craving to see my mother, I walked down one Sunday to Epping. There, making cautious inquiries of the Bishop Stortford carrier, I heard of her death, and on the return journey burst some into a great fit of weeping at the thought of some kind word or other she had spoken to me. But with that relent to nature I dismissed my family, and even that good friend from my mind, going back to my lodging with a contentment which the glimpse of my other life wonderfully augmented.

Of Mr. B. or of the cruel woman who had deceived me, I was not likely to hear, but there was one, and he the only stranger who while Londonium had shown me kindness, whose name my pen was frequently called on to transcribe, and whose fame was even in these days in all men's mouths. With a thrill of pleasure I heard (for my Lord Shrewsbury had been one of the seven, with the youngest) to sign the invitation, that the king had named him one of the two secretaries of state, and then, for two years, during which his doings filled more and more of the public ear, so that he stood for the government, that he had suddenly and mysteriously resigned all his offices and retired into the country. Yet later in the same year, in the sad days which followed the defeat of Beachy Head, when a French fleet sailed the channel, and in the king's absence the most confident quailed, I heard that he had ridden post to Kensington to place his sword and purse at the queen's feet, and then again, but not until 1694, when three years of silence had obscured his memory, I heard with pleasure, and the world with surprise, that he had accepted his old office and stood higher than ever in the king's favor.

The next year Queen Mary died. This, as it left only the king's life between the Jacobites and a restoration, increased as well their activity as the precautions of the government, whose most difficult task lay in sifting the wheat from the chaff and discerning between the friends of a crowd of false witnesses, who thronged the secretary's office and lived by the new trade, and the genuine disclosures of their own spies and informers. In the precarious position in which the government stood they dared neglect nothing, nor even stand on scruples. In moments of alarm, therefore, it was no uncommon thing to close the gates and prosecute a house to house search for Jacobites, the most notorious being seized and the addresses of the less dangerous taken. One of these searches which surprised the city in the month of December, 1695, had for me results so important that I may make it the beginning of a consecutive narrative.

I happened to be sitting in my solitary chamber over a little coal fire, putting into elbow some White refuse on the morrow, but, our eyes better heeding more and more to take the form of a pantomime. A frugal supper, long postponed, stood at my elbow, and, the first I knew of the search, a man without warning opened my door, which was on the latch, and thrust in his head.

Naturally, I rose in alarm and we stared at the another a moment by the light of my one candle. Only the intruder's head was in the room, but I could see that he wore bands and a cassock and a great bushy periwig, which overhung a bear-like head and very bright eyes.

"Sir," said he, after a moment's pause, during which his eyes leaving me glittered to every part of the room, "I see you are alone and have a very handy curtain there."

I gasped, but to my strange astonishment had nothing to say. The stranger looked at me as if satisfied, and slowly edging the body into the room, disclosed to my sight the tallest and most smooth figure imaginable. A long face and a sharp inspiring eye added much to the grotesque spirition of his aspect, in spite of which his features wore a smirk of importance, and though he breathed quickly, like a man pressed and in haste, it was impossible not to see that he was master of himself.

And of me for when I went to ask him his meaning he shut out his great underlip at me and showed me with an apply eye the long barrel of a horse pistol that he carried under his cassock. I remained.

"Good sir," he said, "is an argument I thought would have weight with you. To be short, I have to ask your hospitality. There is a search for Jacobites, and any moment the messengers may be here. I have opposite to you and am a longtime acquaintance, ready to suspected, you are a friend of Mr Thomas Bruce, who is known to be well affected to the government. I propose, therefore, to stand behind the curtain of your bed. Your room will not be searched, nor shall I be found if you play your part. If you fail to play it then I shall be taken, but you, my dear friend, will not see it."

He said the last words with another of his terrible grins and tipped the barrel of his pistol with so much meaning that I felt the blood leave my cheeks. He took this for a proof of his prowess and boasting as well subtly, he stood for a moment in the middle of the floor to listen. Yet with the tail of his eye on me.

He had no reason to watch me however, for I was charmed and cowed beside, nor did we stand much seconds before a noise of voices and weapons with the trampling of feet to let out on the stairs and at once confirmed his story and proved the urgency of his bread. Apparently he was aware of the course things would take and that the officers and messengers would first search the upper floors, for instead of betaking himself further to his place of hiding, he looked curiously round the chamber and roughly thrust one and down to my papers. "Do you say at once that you are Mr. Bruce's writer, he continued with an oath, and remember my man betray me by word or sign and I strew your brains on the floor."

After that threat and though he went then and told his hateful face—which already filled me with fear and repugnance beyond description—behind the curtain, where, between bed and wall, there was a shelter space. I had much ado to keep my seat and my self-control. In the silence which now filled the room I could hear his breathing and I felt sure that the searchers must hear it also when they entered. Assured that the Samorofts and Knox and the honest but misguided folk who followed them did not carry pistols I gave to credit to his statement that he was a conjuring parson; but deemed him some desperate highwayman or pirate, whose presence in my room should be be discovered, and should I by good luck escape his malice would land me at the best in Bridewell or the Marshalsea. By and by the candlewick grew long and settled at the prospect of being left in the dark with him, I went to snuff it. "Sir," a savage word he whispered me to let it be and after that I had to choke but to sit writhing in fear and fear, darkness listening to the hanging of doors below and the interrogating and falling of voices as the search party entered or issued from the successive rooms.

In my chamber, with its four whitewashed walls and few sticks of furniture there was but one place where a man could stand and be unseen, and that was behind the curtain. The more heedless messengers must search there, I thought, and listening to the steps ascending to the last flight I was in an agony foreseeing the moment when the constable would carelessly and perfunctorily draw the curtain—and the flash, the report, the cry, the mad struggle up and down the room which would follow.

So strong was this impression that though I had been waiting minutes for it when the summons came and a hand shook my door I could not at once find voice to speak. The latch was up and the door half open when I cried "Enter" and rose.

In the doorway appeared three or four faces, a couple of lanterns held high, and a gleam of pike-heads. "Richard Prime, servant to Mr. Bruce, newswriter," cried one, reading in a monotonous voice from a paper.

"Well, affirmed," answered a second—evidently the person in command. "Bruce is a good man. I know him. No one hidden here?"

"No," I said, with a loudness and boldness that surprised me.

"No lodger?"

"None."

"Right!" he answered. "Good night, and God save King William!"

"Amen!" quoth I, and then, not before, my knees began to shake. However, it no longer mattered, for before I could believe that the danger was over they were gone and had closed the door, and I caught a scrunching laugh behind the curtain. Still they were on the stairs. I heard them knock at the opposite door and stop in there, and I caught the tones of a woman's voice, young and fresh, answering them. But in a minute they came out again, apparently satisfied and crowded down stairs, whereupon the man behind the curtain laughed again, and swaggering out, Bobbili like, shook his fist with furious gestures after them. "Damn your King William and you, too!" he cried with ferocious exultation. "One of these days God will squeeze him like the rotten orange he is; and if God will not, I will! Trot, for the set of pudding-headed, blindeyed mules that you are! Call yourselves constables! But, as for you, my friend," he continued, turning to me and throwing down his pistol on the table, "you have more spunk than I thought you had, and spoke up like a gentleman of metal. There is my hand on it."

My throat was so dry that I could not speak, but I gave him my hand.

He gripped it and threw it from him with a boastful gesture, and walking to the further side of the room and back again. "There!" cried he. "Now you can say that you have touched hands with Ferguson, the famous Ferguson, the Ferguson on whose head 1,000 guineas have been set. Ferguson, the kingmaker who defied three kings and made three kings and will yet make a fourth! Fire and furies, do a set of boasting dandies think to take the man who outwinded Jeffreys and slipped through Kirke's limbs!"

I stared at him in astonishment, hearing who he was, but in astonishment the more largely leavened with fear and hatred, inasmuch as I knew the reputation he enjoyed and both what he had done and of what he was suspected. That in all his adventures and intrigues he had borne a charmed life, and where Sidney and Russel, Argyle and Monmouth, Rumbold and Aylofte had suffered on the scaffold, had escaped scot free. Was nothing and certain, but that men announced for this in strange ways was another scarcely less certain. His enemies, and men, who were only so for his enemies as they were the enemies of all that was most base in human nature, hinted that in all his plots with Russel and with Monmouth, with Argyle, and with Aylofte he had played the traitor, and tempting men and inviting men to the gibbet, had taken good care to go one step further, and by betraying them to secure his own neck from peril.

CHAPTER XIII.

Such was the man I saw before me, on whose face, as if heaven purposed to warn his fellows against him, malignant passion and all beside vanity were so plainly stamped that party spirit must have gone begging blood before it rendered men blind to his quality. A shambling gait seemed further conveyance for a great swaggering figure, a swagger and amount that when he gave way to denunciation he seemed to be moved by wires, yet, since he looked affable as you, fury and figure were forgotten in the gleam of the eyes that transformed and lifted, lifted at you from the penthouse of his huge, lumbering way.

Nevertheless, I confess that while I hated and loathed the man, he moved me. His latest escape had impressed him and setting on my table or stalking the floor he gave way to his vanity, and pouring out a flood of rhetoric threats at Sunderland, he hinted at the fate which he had never failed to befall those who, directly or indirectly, had brought him to trouble and his hundred intrigues, and now troubled not obviously, an some great danger soon to be executed. He suddenly, on one occasion, thanks to my blunder, he was found out, for if he did not let the one at he told me enough were it true to hang a man. The I took found that he had method in his madness, for while interested with a shamefaced air that big him and meditating infinitely against the moment I was free from the prison, he suddenly turned on me with a hideous grin, and, throwing the muzzle of a pistol against my temple, swore with oaths of ruthless to slay me if I betrayed him.

"You will go to Bruce tomorrow, as usual," he said. "The whiggish old fogeys I could pluck out his jewels—and you will say not one word of Mr. Ferguson! Remark me, sirrah look alone or in company I shall be at your elbow, nor will all Cecil's guards avail to save you. Do you mark me? There, d—n you! down on your knees! Down on your knees, you white-livered dog, and swear by the gamble you will tell no living soul by word or sign that you have seen me."

He pressed the ring of cold steel to my elbow and I knelt and swore. When it was done he roared and peered at me. "You are I have my oath," he cried, "as well as little Hookshanks. And so, good-morrow! Now say, brave, what King William?"

I said it.

"Louder! Louder!" he cried.

I would pity comply.

"Now, write it write it!" he continued, thrusting a piece of paper under my nose and slapping his bare hand upon it. "I'll have it in black and white or white thinks he! That will be better. Are you ready? Write: 'I hereby abjure—my allegiance to Prince William.'

"No," I said faintly, laying down the pen which I had taken up at the bidding. "I will not write it."

"You will write it," he answered in a terrible tone. "And within a very few moments. Write it at once, sirrah: 'I hereby abjure my allegiance to Prince William.'"

I wrote it with a shaking hand after a glance at the pistol muzzle.

"And swear that I regard—King James as my lawful sovereign. And I undertake to obey the rules of the St. Germain's club—and to forward its interests." Good! Now sign it."

I did so.

"Date it!" cried the tyrant, and when I had done so snatched the paper from me and flourished it in the air. "There is my passport!" quoth he, with an exultant laugh. "When I am taken that will be taken, and when that is taken the worse for Mr. Robin and Prime if he is taken. He will taste of the hangman's lash. So! You are a clever fellow, Richard Prime, but Robert Ferguson is your master, as he has been better men."

The man was so much in love with cruelty that even when he had gained his point he could not bear to give up the pleasure of torturing me, and for half an hour he continued to shout and jeer at me, sometimes pulverizing my face if the paper fell into the secretary's hands, and sometimes threatening me with his pistol, and making sport of my alarm. At last reluctantly and after many warnings of what would happen to me if I informed he took himself off, and I heard him go into the opposite rooms and slam the door.

Be sure I was not long in assuming mine after him. I was in a pitiable state of terror shaking at thought of the man's return, and in an agony when I considered the power over me which the paper I had signed gave him. I could hardly believe that in so short a time anything so dreadful could have happened to me. Yet it were hard to say whether with all my terror I did not hate him more than I feared him, for though at one time my heart was water when I thought of betraying him, at another it glowed with rage and loathing and to spite him and to free myself from him I would risk anything. And as I was not wanting in foresight and could picture with little difficulty the slavery in which he would hold me from that day forward, and wherein his cruel spirit would delight, it was the latter mood that prevailed with me and determined my action when morning came.

Reflecting that I could expect no mercy from him, but had little to fear from the government if I told my tale frankly, I determined at all risks to go to the secretary. I would gladly have done so the moment I rose, the thought that at any moment he might burst in upon me keeping me in a cold sweat, but I was prudent enough not to alter my habits or anticipate by a second the hour at which it was my custom to demand. I waited in the utmost trepidation until 7:30 when, with a quaking heart, but a mind made up, I ventured down to the street.

Still, what I held was but a piece of paper bearing a message from a man proscribed, who dared not show his face where I stood. A word to the doorkeepers and I might even now go in and lay my information. But the man's contemptuous power my spirit, terrified me and broke me down. Assured that wherever I went he would know and be warned in time and I gain by my information nothing but the name of a gull or a cheat, I turned from the door. Then, seeing that the girl waited, "There is no answer," I said.

"Will you please to go to the gentleman?" quoth she.

My jaw dropped. "God forbid!" I said, beginning to tremble.

"I think you had better," said she.

And this time there was that in her voice which roused doubts in me and made me waver, lest what I had done prove thoughtless and be heavy sin, though I refrained from informing. Suddenly therefore and after a momentary thought, I asked her where he was.

"I am not to tell you," she answered. "You can come with me if you please."

"Go on," I said.

She cast a glance I thought, at the group about the office, then turned and walking rapidly north by Charing Cross, led me through St. Martin's lane and Bedford Bury to Covent Garden. Skirting this, she threaded Hart street and Red Lion court, and crossing Drury lane conducted me by Duke street into Lincoln's Inn fields, where she turned sharply to the left and through Ralph court to the Turnstile. Seeing that she lingered here and from time to time looked back, I fancied that we were near our destination; but starting afresh, she led me along Holborn and through Staple Inn forward and sent me to the gallows, would you? Answer, answer, or—

"Yes!" I cried, in an agony of terror for he was bringing the pistol nearer and nearer to my face while his fingers toyed with the trigger, and at any moment I thought he might grow in too sharply.

"Ah! And you tell me this to my face, do you?" he answered, eyeing me so triumphantly that I held up my hands and backed to the door. "You dare tell me that, do you? Come here, sirrah!"

I hesitated.

"Come here," he cried, "or, by ——, I will shoot you! For the last time, come here!"

I went nearer.

"Oh, but I would like to see you in the dock," he said. "It would be the finest sight! It would not need the turn of a screw to make you cry out! And mind you," he continued, suddenly seizing my ear in his great hand and twisting it until I screamed, "if a book of some kind or other I shall have you if you play me false! Do you understand, eh? Do you understand, you sheep in wolf's clothing?"

"Yes!" I cried. "Yes, yes!" He had turned me to my knees and brought his cruel, scowling face close to mine.

"Very well. Then get up—if you have learned your lesson. You have had one proof that I know more than others. Do not seek another. But, quick! where have I sent you before, Master Trembler?"

I said humbly, my spirit quite broken that I did not know.

"No?" he answered, staring at me with his face puckered up. "Yet somewhere I have. And some day I shall call it to mind. In the meantime remember that you are my slave, my dog, my servant, to fetch, my any or be merry at my will. You will sleep or wake, go or come as I bid you. And so long as you do that, Richard Prime, you shall live. But on the day you play me false or whisper my name to living soul, on that day or within the week you will hang. Do you hear? Hang. You Etrurian dog! Hang and be damned, with Aylofte and many another good man that would shift me and take no warning."

PART VIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

The secret slavery into which I fell from that day onward, to a man who knew neither pity nor scruple, and wielded his power with the strange enjoyment and the less remorse for the [illegible] contempt it affected to his victim, as a prescribed and hunted traitor to hiding for his life, exceeded all the anticipations of it which I had entertained. Having his favorite lodging in the rooms opposite mine, he was ready at all times, when the crest fallen mood seized him, to sally forth and mock and torment me, while the privacy of his movements and the number of his fastnesses whence it arose that I never knew until I saw him whether he was there or not kept me in a state of suspense and misery well nigh intolerable. Yet much was the spell of fear under which he had contrived to lay me, he being a violent and dangerous man and I no soldier and so crafty were the means, no less that the art, with which he gradually wound a chain about me, that in spite of my hatred I found resistance vain, and for a long time and until a deed of machinate as the accidents say, appeared on the scene, saw no remedy but to bear the yoke and do his bidding.

He had one principal mode of strengthening his hold upon me, which stood the higher in his favor as, besides affecting that object and rendering me serviceable, it amused him with the alertness of my alarm. This consisted in the employing me in his innumerable designs, as in sending me with letters and messages to Sam's coffee house or to the Blue Posts in Spring Gardens, or to more private places where the Jacobites congregated, by making me a go-between to arrange matters and meetings with those of the kidney who dared not stir abroad in daylight, and who came and went between London and the coast of France under cover of night, or by using me to drug [illegible] transmissible papers in the streets or to fetch the same from the secret press in a court off St. James, where they were printed.

He took a special delight in imposing the last task upon me and in frightening when I returned fresh from performing it, and awaiting at every pore, the probabilities of which I had rendered myself liable. It may occur to some that when I passed through the streets with such papers or massive in my hands I had an easy way out of my troubles and could at any moment by delivering the letters to the secretary's office put you the intruder arrest and my own freedom. But besides the fact that he frequent changes of lodging his excellent information, and the legion of spies who served him, rendered it doubtful whether with the best will in the world the messengers would find him where I had left him, he frequently boasted—and the boast, I fondled—added to my terrors of all with whom I came in contact—that the very officers and officers were in his pay, and that Cecil himself dare not arrest him.

In addition to this I think with purposed that after the e case he gave me very black and the attitude harmless or otherwise and that the one and the other were to good pay for the purpose of trying me of out of pure cruelty, and to the end, that when I returned he might describe with such the process of burning, drawing and quartering and gloat over the horror with which I listened to his relation, a practice which he carried to such an extent at last that I was to reduce me to tears of helpless shame and anguish.

Such was my life at home, where if my tyrant was not always at my elbow, I was every hour conscious to the apprehension for early in our connection he forbade me to lock my door. Afraid I was scarcely more easy seeing that beside an impression I had that wherever I went I was watched and dogged, there was scarcely an item of news which it fell to my lot to report that did not throw me into a panic. One day it would be Mr. Bear arrested on a charge of high treason, and in possession of I know not what incriminating letters another the fugitive in the temple of a gentleman to whom I had a week earlier taken a letter, and who had in my presence let fall expressions that led me to think that in the same evil case with me. Another day it would be an announcement that the diverting had discovered a new conspiracy, or that letters going for France had been seized in Romney marshes, or that the Lancashire witnesses were speaking more addily, or that Sir Oakes had been taken up and had to hail for a misdemeanor. All these and many other matters portentous and in hint and things my mind with the keenest apprehension, my mind, in a short time have rendered me miserable.

As it was Mr Bruce within a month saw or great change in me that he would have me take a holiday, advising me to go abroad, either to my relatives or to some village in the Lake in which neighborhood Mr. Isaak Walton's book had given a reputation among the citizens. He tendered the advice with a gift of two guineas that I might spend the money royally, this in a great hurry adding an injunction that I should not waste the money. But I fell wonder for I had the money ready to hand the whole by way I protest and better acquainted by other manner with first with a grim look from me to my fellows, and then made himself merry over the intended time I would now place at his disposal.

"And, do it speedily. Dick, it is speedy," he said, with early pleasantry. "For the good cause we make very sure we dearly love a surprising. Another month and you and I know what will happen. But let we know in the meantime write while it is day Dick. Put your hand to the plough and don't look back. It ain't were as forward as you, our cocks would be in little parts and we might see a cock without thinking of a hen.

"Curse you," I cried, almost beside myself between lassitude and the rage into which his heedless jeering threw me, "cannot you keep your tongue off that? Is it not enough that you—

"Have taught me to sing?" quoth he, winking maliciously. "Here's to Louis James, Mary, and the prince. L. I. M. P., my lad. Oh, we can talk the subject. We have had good teachers.

"I could have burnt into tears. "Some day you'll be caught," I cried.

"Well," he said with a grim "and what then?"

"You'll be hanged! hanged!" I cried, furiously. "And God grant that I may be there to see it."

"You will that," he answered with composure. "Make your mind easy for that. If I am in the first cart you will be in the second! That is my security, friend Dick. If I go, you go. Who carried the letters from France to Mr. Warwick's chambers I would like to know? And who—but the cause" he continued breaking off. "The cause. To business and no more haters. Here's work for you. You shall go, do you hear me Richard, to Covent Garden, to the piazza there, in half an hour's time. It will be full dark then. You will see there a fine gentleman walking up and down, taking his tobacco, with a white handkerchief hanging from his pocket. You will give him that note and say 'Roberts and Gurney are good men,' and say that and no more, and come back to me."

I answered at first, being in a rage and not taking the sound of the errand better than that of others I had done for him, that I would not—I would not, though he killed me, but he had a way with him that I could not long resist, and he presently cowed me and sent me off.

I had so far fallen into the sneaking habits that thought it was dark night when I quarrel I went the furthest way round by Holborn and the now fashionable quarter Soho and passing through King's square passed and before the late Duke of Monmouth's house, the sight of which did not lessen my distaste for my errand, entered Covent Garden by James street which comes into the square between the two piazzas. At the corner I had to turn into the roadway to avoid a party of chairmen who had just moved from the Nigs Head coffee house and were chaffing for a couple and being once in the kennel and observing under the piazza and before the taverns more lights and lish boys than I liked I continued along the gutter, dirty as it was and always in the neighborhood of the market, until I had some sense way into the square where I could turn and reconnoiter at my leisure. Here for a moment, running my eye along the piazza which had its usual fringe of fewer girls and mumpers swearing porters and hackney coaches, I thought my man with the white handkerchief had not come, but shifting my gaze to the little piazza on the other side of James street, which was darker and less frequented, I presently espied him walking to and fro under cover, with a cane in his hand and the air of a gentleman who had supped and was looking out for a pretty girl. He was a tall robust man wearing a large black periwig and a lace cravat and ruffles, and he carried a steel-hilted sword and had somehow the bearing of one who had seen service abroad.

Satisfied that he was the person I wanted, I went to him but, stepping up to him a little hastily, I took him by surprise. I suppose, for he backed from me and laid his hand on his hilt, jerking out an oath. However, a clearer view reassured him and he cocked his hat and swore at me again, but in a different tone. "Sir," said he very rudely, "another time give a gentleman a wider berth unless you want his cane about your shoulders."

For answer I merely pulled out the note I had and held it toward him without a word, being accustomed to such errands and anxious to do it and begone, the more as under the great piazza a number of persons were loitering, and among them link boys and chairmen and the rise who notice everything.

However he made no movement to take it, but only said, "For me?"

"Yes," I answered.

"From whom?" said he roughly.

"You will learn that inside," I said. "I was bidden only to say that Roberts and Gurney are good men."

He reddened and at that took the letter. On which having done my part and not liking the neighborhood, I was for going and had actually had turned to do so when a man slighter than the first and taller came sharply out of the shadow behind him, and striking by his side touched the hat to me. I paused.

"Good evening, my lord," he said, speaking with a sort of dignity. "I little thought to see you here on this business. It is the best news I have had myself, or have had to give to others this many a day. It shall be well rewarded. And the risk you run! And whatever he thought to this tube before me at St. Germain's—

"Hush!" cried the first man, interrupting him at that rather sharply. "I think before he had been too much surprised to speak. "Surely, sir," he continued, "you are too hasty. There must be a mistake here. This gentleman to whom you are speaking—"

"There is no mistake. This gentleman and I know one another," the other responded, coolly, and in the tone of a man who is aware what he is doing. And then to me, and with a different air. "My lord, you may not wish to say your name aloud, that I use underhand, and this is no very safe place for either of us. But if we could meet somewhere, say at—"

"Hush, sir!" the man with the handkerchief cried, and this time almost sharply. "There is a tavern here, and if a message you will say no more. If you have not said it already. This gentleman—he is a gentleman—bringing a letter from R. F. and is no more of a spy than the event than I am."

"Pray, R. F.?"

"Yes, and therefore, if he is the person you think him—but enough, sir. Be recognized, spying the stranger, "what is your name? End the."

I did not wait to tell him, my hand here to refuse. So I nod and on the spot of the moment and Charles Taylor, that being the name of the man who had been with me.

The taller man, thrust my hand into his arm. "Then, Charles, he cried, and looked at my smiling. I have an eye for faces and if you are poor—

"Nay, sir I pray be quiet," the man with the white handkerchief remonstrated, "if you are my partner—" and then he moved hard at me and and frowned as if to beam to feel dust—"and this way and tell me what you think. The gentleman will doubtless excuse us and wait a moment, whether he be whom you think or not."

I was so uneasy and so unwilling to stay as could be, but the man's tone was peremptory and I saw he was not a man to argue with, so I stood where I commanded, and the two, drawing aside together, into the deeper shadow under the piazza, began to confer. The left me to kick my heels impatiently and watch out of the corner of my eye the lounging under the other piazza, to learn, if any observed us. Fortunately they were taken up with a quarrel which had just broken out between two donkey musicians, and though a man came near me trying to a woman, to tell my eyes for me and, rather a relief, their went away again almost immediately.

(To be Continued.)

IMPIETIES.

Rev. Mr. Wilgus—I am informed, Brother Pluck, that you are in the habit of fishing on the Sabbath.

Pluck—I do, a little, but I always wait until Monday to begin lying about the fish.

Count Kinski, uncle of Lueger, Bismarck, recently had a good story at a church festival. He said that he remembered a vicar in front of a town hall dance, which had been restored and made very fine. There was painted over the door, "Ich bin das Thor, Eintreten" and underneath was the large notice, "Es ist nicht der Weg."

When Wilberforce became rector of Brightstone it is the isle of Wight, he was visited by an old farmer who was the sheep in the wife to type the glebe land. "Why," asked Wilberforce, "why, said the old fellow, with a look of Gladstone shrewdness "when father plowed who here he used to farm it, I know it and there being no one of it, he always got in the hay before anybody else. Then he slapped on the prayer for rain."

The Atlanta Constitution says that a Methodist preaching a sermon on the vanity of dress, pointedly alluded to people who were velvet and gold ornaments. After the sermon a distinguished member of the conference approached him and said: "Now, Bishop, I know you were striking at me for I have a velvet vest and a heavy gold watch chain." The bishop smiled, passed his hand over the vest, touched the chain and then said with a merry twinkle in his eye, "No, really Brother B. for the vest you wear is only mixed velvet, and I am half persuaded that your watch chain is brass."

The late Dr. Wilberforce, bishop of Winchester, was a keen sportsman, by inclination, and one day when on a visit at a rural seat was persuaded to join a shooting party. His grace's head keeper was a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, and the bishop tried to engage him in a friendly chat, but finding the keeper's replies were short and reserved, he said: "I suppose, Grant, you think a bishop ought not to go out shooting?" "Well, my lord," said the Scot frankly, "I doubt yell find no warrant for it in the scripture. Did ye ever read of the apostles going out shooting?" "Not, exactly," replied the bishop. "They had no game in Palestine in those days, they went out fishing instead."

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GOSSIP ABOUT NOTED PEOPLE.

Ex-Governor Altgeld tells this story on himself. When he was running for governor last fall one of his supporters asked a Swede to vote for him. The Swede shook his head and said: "No! that man is a bad man. He is an anarchist, socialist and everything that is bad. I will not vote for him." "Oh, he is not as bad as that," said Altgeld's friend. "He is a pretty good man. There are no fines on him." "That is true the fines show they have got some money," immediately replied the Swede.

The Philadelphia Record says: "On the spot where Benjamin Franklin stood when he sent up his kite to draw the lightning from the skies, and where he later laid the corner stone of the old University of Pennsylvania, will be shortly erected a handsome bronze statue of the philosopher as a gift to the city from Justus C. Strawbridge. It will be in bronze of heroic proportions representing Franklin seated in a colonial chair, attired in the same robe which he gives to him in one of his most famous portraits. From the pedestal on which the statue will rest the latter will rise to a height of nine feet and the proportions will be about one and a half life size."

The St. James Budget reports a painful incident in connection with the recent visit of the Empress Eugenie to Athens. When she was leaving the hotel in order to return to her yacht some Freethinkers belonging to the Pan-Hellenic legion who had permanent quarters opposite, impudently, and one of their number advancing a few paces, said to her majesty: "Madame, we come from a war which has proved as unfortunate as yours." The empress was somewhat moved, stopped and handed some money to be distributed to her distressed countrymen. It is thirty years since she was last in Athens.

Von Moltke was in early life and lorded early years. Once when roaming around his Silesian estate in Carbowitz, he found a peasant woman bearing on her back a sack of potatoes which she had just dug, making a loud hearty speech for a child. "Here's a thaler for you," said the great field marshal, "you are the early bird catches the worm." Afterward he found out that she was a night thief who had tempted his fields persistently, but whom his steward had never got up early enough to catch.

It is said that Cardinal Manning used to tell the following story on himself with great glee. Once when he was in Rome he engaged a sculptor to make a bust of him. During one of the sittings the sculptor discovered no phrenology and Manning made him place out on the head he was modeling the supposed seat of the various organs of "humor." At last Manning asked: "Where is the organ of combativeness?" The sculptor walked across the room to where Manning was sitting and touching a certain part of the cardinal's cranium said: "That's where it ought to be."

"One of the sights of Washington," says a correspondent of the Philadelphia Press, "is Senator Cockrell of Missouri taking a street car. He takes a position half-way between the track and the curb and without moving in the direction of the car extends his long arm horizontally in front of him and works it up and down like the arm of a semaphore. He continues his signaling until the car comes to a full stop, when he gets aboard with a look that would indicate that that car never could have been stopped if he had not made of himself a part of a block signal system. The quiet, great form of the Missourian, with his flowing suit of black broadcloth, black slouch hat and 'Uncle Sam' goatee, is picturesque at any time, but is positively unique when the senator is in the act of signaling a street car."

Congressman Jerry Simpson's old-time friends who knew him when he was rockless would hardly have recognized him as he stood leaning against the gilded wall of the rotunda chamber one afternoon last week. Jerry has been visibly lame of late, as a result of a street car accident, and so he turned a cane which added somewhat to his dudish appearance. He was dressed in the efficient outsmarth namely summer style. He wore white duck trousers, rolled two inches at the bottom, rumed shoes, blue sack coat, flaming bosom and small tie, and instead of a cane, wore the regulation summer hat. Some of his friends who have known Simpson ever since his entrance into public life were astonished to walk over and look directly into the face before they could believe it was he. A few years of Washington life has wrought striking changes in many a man but to be taken for the mackerel-backed been more complete than in the case of Jerry Simpson of Medicine Lodge.

Mrs. Sarah B. Collier of Midford is the owner of a certificate calling for $40, issued to the confederation of the United States in 1776. It is a valuable heirloom, having been in the Collier family for over 100 years. The endorsement on the certificate is: "The bearer is entitled to receive forty Spanish milled dollars, or an equal sum in gold or silver, according to a resolution of congress of the 14th of January, 1779." The present value of this piece of paper is said to be $100.

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