

would not stay then, but will return in a few days and begin his work. I know not where he has lodged, but he seemed anxious to be gone."

"What is he like, good father?" asked Marjorie, bending from the palfrey's back. "Is he a tall, gaunt, shrunken friar, with piercing black eyes, and a cough that makes me think of a requiem mass?"

The vicar shook his head at her; but he smiled at her apt description. "I think that is the person," he said.

"But what knowest thou, Mistress Marjorie?" said her father. "Has he been begging at the castle for food?"

"Nay," she answered, laughing. "He was on the rocks by Trewavas, and methinks he slept in the Giant's Cave last night."

At this moment the other gentlemen turned towards them, and no more was said of the friar, for the master of the castle had an opportunity of bringing his gift to his wife, who received it with a charming delight, which showed how much she valued his loving thought of her.

After they had all examined and admired the side saddle, which was a new invention but lately introduced into England and never before seen in Cornwall, they all passed into the great hall of the castle, where the feast was spread for them, and there was much to hear and to tell.

The country was in a disturbed and unsettled state. All classes were dissatisfied, and scarcely knew what was the remedy to apply. The prodigal extravagance of King Richard, at a time when England was suffering such depression as a result of the terrible plague called the "Black Death," which had desolated the whole country, had made many of the landed gentry take the side of Henry of Lancashire, who was just at this time plotting his utmost to obtain the crown of England.

"In truth, I am tired of it all, sweet wife," said John Pengersek, "and methinks the burgesses of Helstone must take another man for the Parliament. I am sick of parliaments, and kings, and lollards, and, in good truth, I believe I can serve God and the Church better if I bide at home and see to my lands and my duties."

"But the king," suggested his wife, timidly; "if he be weak, he is still our king."

"I fear me it is too late to serve King Richard," said the squire sternly. "He has even now gone to Ireland, and knows not that Henry of Lancaster has been summoned to come from France again. He has left his child-wife, and she is taken to Wallingford; but, sweet wife of mine, we will not speak of these things, which no zeal of ours can abate. Tell me what has befallen thee during my absence, and how has wild Marjorie employed herself, and my quiet Joan?"

In very truth, as John Pengersek said, he was a man made for home and its duties, more than for London and political faction's and parliamentary worries, in these rebellious and turbulent times. He loved his hounds

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and his hawks, his studs and his farms; he loved his labourers, and, above all, he loved his church, his wife, and his vicar. And coming back from the strife, of which his gentle wife in her ignorance and unworldliness knew nothing, to the utter peacefulness of his castle by the sea, John Pengersek felt that he would never return to London for Henry Plantagenet. He knew very well that for his rightful king it was too late.

It was getting dark that evening before the vicar took his homeward way, and the fires were burning brightly on the hills, and through the evening air came the distant shouts and cries of the happy peasants at their games. If it had not been for the unexpected return of John Pengersek, the vicar would have been among them all, and, even now, he bent his steps to the church town instead of to his parsonage, and came where the booths and flaring torches proclaimed that merriment was still at its height.

With a cheery word to each he passed among them, saw that no drunkenness nor debauchery was defiling his little flock, for then, as now, drunkenness was not the prevailing sin of the Cornish people. They were ever, on the whole, a sober, if a wild and independent people. He turned aside into a rough, but clean, lodging-house.

"How fares it with Brother Paul to-night?" he asked of a buxom damsel, standing at the door.

She was begirt with ribbons and laces, and her tall head-dress was heavy and much adorned, as though she had been to the fair.

"He is very low to-night, father," she said, "I have but just come in to tend him, and methinks he is not long for this place."

The priest quietly passed in to where, upon a low truckle bed, his patient lay, tossing to and fro in restless fever.

"It is ever the same, brother," he said gently. "This hour brings unrest; but calm thee."

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And he lay his cool hand upon the hot forehead of the sufferer.

"It will soon be past," he said again, in the same quiet, soothing voice; "and then the gates of pearl—the City of Rest."

The sunken eyes turned to the calm, strong face of God's shepherd, and the weary brow grew calmer. The dying man grasped John Ude's great, loving hand, and the priest sat there by his side far into the summer night.

All the sounds in the village gradually died away, as the folk went off to their homes, and still the vicar sat there, till, in the early morning, the sick man said quietly—

"Bring me the Viaticum, father, for I go."

To his church the vicar hastened, and in a few moments Brother Paul had received, for the last time, the strength for his journey, and had passed beyond the veil, houselled and anealed.

Meanwhile, our friend the friar had made his way across Perrau-Uthnoe to Marazion, or, as it was called in those days, Market Jew. He simply bore a letter from Robert, the abbot of Hales, to Richard Auncell, prior of St. Michael's Mount; and he desired neither to speak to the prior, nor to stay at the Mount. Of any desire to act as a pilgrim he was totally innocent. Full many a time as a lad, he had sat in the Choir at St. Michael; over and over again had he climbed the steep rocks in search of seagulls' eggs, and the way was only too familiar to him.

He had not bargained for the Midsummer Eve festivities, which he found were in full swing at Market Jew. The beacon fires all round were lighted, and booths erected for the whole length of the narrow street; the tar-barrels were ready for the evening, and all wore the look of "Goluan," or "light and joy" of the Cornish. The friar looked, however, neither to right, nor left. Quite unnoticed among the throng of holiday keepers, he made straight for the "Hoar Rock" in front of him.

Towering up to the sky in its ancient grandeur the priory of St. Michael on the Mount goes back beyond history. When the monks first settled there is very uncertain. It is known that in 1046, Edward the Con-

fessor found there monks praising God, and that he gave them by charter the property of the Mount, and certain other lands, first obliging them to conform to the rule of St. Benedict. But hundreds of years before this the place was renowned for holiness, and therefore must have been a religious house. At the latter end of the fifth century, St. Keyne, a holy virgin, the daughter of a Welsh prince, went on a pilgrimage to St. Michael's Mount, and that was five hundred years before Edward the Confessor. All we know is that it was one of the most ancient strongholds of Christianity in Cornwall, and that in this year of our Lord, 1300, of which we are writing, it had fallen into great ruin and disrepair; for in a patent of Henry IV. dated 1403—just four years later—he orders it to be repaired.

Three hundred years before this, in the great flood of 1099, it is supposed to have been isolated from the mainland, at the time that the famed land of Arthur—the Lyonesse of our childish dreams—was buried beneath the waters of the sea. Then the "Hoar Rock in the Wood," was partially separated from the land, and the land beyond it swallowed up.

(To be Continued).

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