

"I wanted to atone," she said. "I wanted to prove to you that I loved you. Besides, I could not believe that you could care for me after what I had said to you at Launceston, and—and—so——" And then she burst out sobbing, but her sobs were not the bursting forth of pent-up sorrow.

"All the time I carried the satchet with me, Roderick," she said presently. "It was hard work not to give it you before; but I was afraid."

"And what took away your fear?" I asked.

"It was what Master Cromwell told me after he had seen you last night. Oh, Roderick, he is a wonderful man. Stern and perhaps cruel, but he has a heart."

And now I have to tell what may seem to some even more wonderful than what I have related. It will show, too, that in fighting for the possession of the King's papers I fought for more than I knew.

That same evening I had fallen asleep (for Rosilana had insisted upon this, and would not even sit with me for fear of keeping me awake), and was just being aroused into a sort of half-consciousness of where I was, when I heard the sound of horses' hoofs.

"Doth Dame Skelton live here?" said a voice which thrilled me through and through.

"Ay, she doth," said the dame, who was sitting by her cottage door.

"And is there in your house a gentleman who was wounded in the fight?"

"Ay, and that there is," she replied; "but he is much better."

Upon that I heard a movement as of a man alighting quickly from his horse, and a moment later my bedroom door opened.