

ten by the exiled King, Charles II., to the unhappy lady :

Brussels, 20, Oct., 1657.

"It has been my particular care of you, that I have thus long deferred to lament with you the the greates losse that you and I have sustained, least in steade of comforting, I might further expose you to the will of those who will be glad of any occasion to do you farther prejudice, but I am promised that this shall be put safely into your hands, though it may be not so soon as I wish, and I am very willing you should know, which I suppose you cannot doubt, that I beare a greate parte with you, of your affliction, and whenever it shall be in my power to make it lighter, you shall see I retayne a very kinde memory of your frinde, by the care I shall have of you, and all his relations, and of this you may depend upon the word of

Your very affectionate frinde,
CHARLES R."

Nor was Charles unmindful of his pledge. At the restoration, the Oxenham estates reverted to the young heir, and though oaks had been felled, parks ruined, plate melted down, and the fine old mansion used as a barrack by the parliamentary army, yet a short time sufficed to bring back much of the ancient splendors of the family. As a further proof of his gratitude for the father's loyalty, Charles took the youth under his especial protection, and, sending for him to court, bestowed on him a place of profit and honor. The widow, comforted by the kindness of the monarch, lived not long enough to learn that the favor of princes may be more fatal than their frown.

John Oxenham, young, high-spirited and passionate—with a fine person, graceful manners, and an insinuating address, was gifted in an eminent degree with the requisite qualifications for making a brilliant figure in the court of the restored monarch. But the affection of the King, the possession of wealth, and the example of a licentious circle of friends, produced their full effect upon the undisciplined mind of the youth. The fate of his noble father, the lessons of virtue inculcated by his excellent mother, were alike forgotten, and among the profligates of the day, John Oxenham soon became as prominent for his vicious indulgence as for his elegant person and address. Duplicity and hypocrisy were then court virtues, while vice, destitute even of the flimsy veil which refinement throws over its hideous features, was the bosom friend of the prince, as

well as the nobles of England. An adept in all the wild excesses and follies of the times, the fine fortune of the heir of Oxenham melted away like snow before the sun. The morning of his twenty-fifth birth-day saw him involved in debts which threatened to swallow up the noble heritage of his fathers, and leave him a homeless beggar. But the gallants of those times had learned a secret in the art of alchemy, which is not yet forgotten in modern days. If they could not extract wealth from the philosopher's stone, they knew how to win it by the spell of pleasant looks, and the talisman of lovers' vows; so that it was no strange thing for a spendthrift courtier to piece his worn-out 'cloth of gold,' with a scrap from the well-lined 'frieze' jerkin of a city tradesman. Every feeling of John Oxenham's nature revolted at the thought of marriage. His own experience amid the tainted beauties of high life, had taught him a lesson of distrust in the virtue of woman, and he was certain that such an alliance would draw down upon him ridicule, and, perhaps, disgrace. But no alternative remained, save a speedy flight from the harpy claws of his creditors, or a matrimonial connection with some wealthy dame, ambitious enough to barter, for a courtly bridegroom, her fortune and her happiness.

But fortune seemed disposed to favour the heir of Oxenham. In his frequent visits to the Jew money-lender, by whose aid his broad acres had been transmuted into the precious metals, he had, more than once, beheld the dark eyes of a muffled female gazing down upon him, as if by stealth, from an upper casement; and had he been less entangled in more serious matters, he would probably have been induced to penetrate the mystery in which the veiled beauty seemed involved. But perplexed as he was, with pecuniary difficulties, he would scarcely have ventured upon a new and perilous affair of gallantry, had he not accidentally heard a rumor of her history. Born in the wilds of the new world, the daughter of a native princess, and an English adventurer, she had been entrusted to the care of the Jew in her childhood, and in his hands were placed the rich treasures which the mines of El Dorado had afforded to the cupidity of the fortunate sailor. But about the time when the father was expected to return to his native land, tidings of his death arrived, and the youthful Zillah, left an orphan in a country of strangers, was entirely in the power of her covetous guardian. It is true the old man had always treated her as a daugh' er; the secret apartments in