LORNA DOONE

B. R. D. Blackmore.

CHAPTER XXIV

A SAFE PASS FOR KING'S MESSENGER

A journey to London seemed to us in those by-gone days as hazardous and dark an adventure as could be forced on any man. I mean, of course, a poor man; for to a great nobleman with ever so many outriders, attendants, and retainers, the risk was not so great, unless the highwaymen knew of their coming beforehand, and so combined against them. To a poor man, however, the risk was not so much from those gentlemen of the road as from the more ignoble footpads, and the landlords of the lesser hostels, and the loose, unguarded soldiers, over and above the pitfalls and the quagmires of the way; so that it was hard to settle, at the first outgoing, whether a man were wise to pray more for his neck or for his head.

But nowadays it is very different. Not that highwaymen are scarce in this the reign of our good Queen Anne, for in truth they thrive as well as ever, albeit they deserve it not, being less upright and courteous—but that the roads are much improved, and the growing use of stage-wagons (some of which will travel as much as forty miles in a summer day) has turned our ancient ideas of distance almost upside down and I doubt whether God be pleased with our flying so fast away from him. However, that is not my business; nor does it lie in my mouth to speak very strongly upon the subject, seeing how much I myself have done toward making of roads upon Exmoor.

To return to my story (and in truth, I lose that road too often,) it would have taken ten king's messengers to get me away from Plover's Barrows without one good-by to Lorna, but for my sense of the trust and reliance which His Majesty had reposed in me. And now I felt most bitterly how the very arrangements which seemed so wise, and indeed ingenious, may by the force of events, become our most fatal obstacles. For lo! I was blocked entirely from going to see Lorna; whereas we should have fixed it so that I as well might have the power of signalling my necessity.

It was too late now to think of that; and so I made up my mind at last to keep my honor on both sides, both to the king and to the maiden, although I might lose everything except a heavy heart for it. And indeed more hearts than mine were heavy; for when it came to the tug of parting, my mother was like, and so was Annie, to break down altogether. But I bade them be of good cheer, and smiled in the briskest manner upon them, and said that I should be back next week as one of His Majesty's greatest captains, and told them not to fear me then. Upon which they smiled at the idea of ever being afraid of me, whatever dress I might have on; and so I kissed my hand once more, and rode away very bravely. But bless your heart, I could no more have done so than flown all the way to London if Jeremy Stickles had not been there.

And not to take too much credit to myself in this matter, I must confess than when we were come to the turn of the road where the moor begins, and whence you see the last of the yard, and the ricks and the poultry round them, and can (by knowing the place) obtain a glance of the kitchen window under the walnut tree, it went so hard with me just here that I even made pretence of a stone in ancient Smiler's shoe, to dismount, and to bend my head a while. Then, knowing that those I had left behind would be watching to see the last of me, and might have false hopes of my coming back, I mounted again with all possible courage, and rode after Jeremy Stickles.

Jeremy, seeing how much I was down, did his best to keep me up with jokes and tales, and light discourse, until, before we had ridden a league, I began to long to see the things he was describing. The air, the weather, and the thoughts of going to a wondrous place, added to the fine company—at least so Jeremy said it was—of a man who knew all London, made me feel that I should be ungracious not to laugh a little. And being very simple, then, I laughed no more a little, but something quite considerable (though free from consideration,) at the strange things Master Stickles told me, and his strange way of telling them. And so we became very excellent friends, for he was much pleased with my laughing.

Not wishing to thrust myself more forward than need be in this narrative, I have scarcely thought it becoming or right to speak of my own adornments. But now, what with the brave clothes I had on, and the better ones still that were packed up in the bag behind the saddle, it is always beyond me to forbear saying that I must have looked very pleasing. And many a time I wished, going along, that Lorna could only be here and there, watching behind a furze-bush, looking at me and wondering how much my clothes had cost. For mother would have no stint in the matter, but had assembled at our house, immediately upon knowledge of what was to be about London, every man known to be a good stitcher upon our side of Exmoor. And for three days they had worked their best, without stint of beer or cider, according to the constitution of each. The result, so they all declared, was such as to create admiration, and defy competition in London. And to me it seemed that they were quite right; though Jeremy Stickles turned up his nose, and feigned to be deaf in the business.

Now be that matter as you please—for the point is not worth arguing—certain it is that my appearance was better than it had been before. For being in the best clothes, one tries to look and to act (so far as may be) up to the quality of them. Not only for the fear of soiling them, but that they enlarge a man's perception of his value. And it strikes me that our sins arise, partly from disdain of others, but mainly from contempt of self, both working the despite of God. But men of mind may not be measured by such paltry rule as this.

By dinner-time we arrived at Porlock, and dined with my old friend, Master Pooke, now growing rich and portly, For though we had plenty of victuals with us, we were not to begin upon them until all chance of victualing among our friends was left behind. And during the first day we had no need to meddle with our store at all; for, as had been settled before we left home, we lay that night at Dunster, in the house of a worthy tanner, first cousin to my mother, who received us very cordially, and undertook to return old Smiler to his stable at Plover's Barrows, after one day's rest.

Thence we hired to Bridgewater; and from Bridgewater on to Bristowe, breaking the journey between the two. But although the whole way was so new to me, and such a perpetual source of conflict, that the remembrance still abides with me, as if it were but yesterday, I must not be so long in telling as it was in travelling, or you will wish me farther; both because Lorna was nothing there, and also because a man in our neighborhood hath done the whole of it since my time, and feigns to think nothing of it. However, one thing, in common justice to a person who has been traduced, I am bound to mention. And this is, that being two of us, and myself of such magnitude, we never could have made our journey without either fight or running, but for the free pass which dear Annie, by some means (I know not what) had procured from Master Faggus. And when I let it be known by some hap, that I was the own cousin of Tom Faggus, and honored with his society, there was not a house upon the road but was proud to entertain me, in spite of my fellow-traveler bearing the red badge of the King.

"I will keep this close, my son Jack," he said, having stripped it off with a carving-knife; "your flag is the best to fly. The man who starved me on the way down, the same shall feed me fat going home."

Therefore we pursued our way in excellent condition, having thriven upon the credit of that very popular highwayman, and being surrounded with regrets that he had left the profession, and sometimes begged to intercede that he might help the road again. For all the landlords on the road declared that now small ale was drunk, nor much of spirits called for, because the farmers need not prime to meet only common riders, neither were these worth the while to get drunk with afterward. Master Stickles himself undertook, as officer of the King's justices, to plead this case with Squire Faggus (as every body called him now), and to induce him, for the general good, to return to his proper ministry.

It was a long and weary journey, although the roads are wondrous good on the farther side of Bristowe, and scarcely any man need be bogged, if he keeps his eyes well open, save, perhaps, in Berkshire. In consequence of the pass we had, and the vintners' knowledge of it, we only met two public riders, one of whom made off straightway when he saw my companion's pistols and the stout carbine I bore; and the other came to a parley with us, and proved most kind and affable, when he knew himself in the presence of the cousin of Squire Faggus. "God save you, gentlemen," he cried, lifting his hat politely; "many a happy day I have worked this road with him. Such times will never be again. But commend me to his love and prayers. King my name is, and King my nature. Say that, and none will harm you." And so he made off down the hill, being a perfect gentleman, and a very good horse he was riding.

The night was falling very thick by the time we were come to Tyburn, and here the King's officer decided that it would be wise to halt; because the way was unsafe by night across the fields to Charing village. I for my part was nothing loath, and preferred to see London by daylight.

And after all, it was not worth seeing, but a very hideous and dirty place, not at all like Exmoor. Some of the shops were very fine, and signs above them finer still, so that I was never weary of standing still to look at them. But in doing this there was no ease; for before one could begin almost to make out the meaning of them, either some of the wayfarers would bustle, and scowl, and draw their swords, or the owner, or his apprentice-boys, would rush out and catch hold of me, crying, "Buy, buy, buy! What d'ye lack, what d'ye lack? Buy, buy, buy!" At first I mistook the meaning of this—or so we pronounce the word "boy" upon Exmoor—and I answered with some indignation, "Sirrah, I am no boy now, but a man of one-and-twenty years: and as for lacking, I lack naught from thee, except what thou hast not—good manners."

The only things that pleased me much were the river Thames, and the hall and church of Westminster, where there are brave things to be seen, and braver still to think about. But whenever I wandered in the streets, what with the noise the people made, the number of the coaches, the running of the footmen, the swaggering of great courtiers, and the thrusting aside of everybody, many and many a time I longed to be back among the sheep again, for fear of losing temper. They were welcome to the wall for me, as I took care to tell them, for I could stand without the wall, which perhaps was more than they could do. Though I said this with the best intention, meaning no discourtesy, some of them were vexed at it; and one young lord, being flushed with drink, drew his sword and made at me. But I struck it up with my holly stick, so that it flew on the roof of a house; then I took him by the belt with one hand, and laid him in the kennel. This caused some little disturbance; but none of the rest saw fit to try how the matter might be with them.

Now this being the year of our Lord, 1683, more than nine years and a half since the death of my father, and the beginning of this history, all London was in great ferment about the dispute between the Court of the King and the city. The king, or rather perhaps his party (for they said that His Majesty cared for little except to have plenty of money and spend it,) was quite resolved to be supreme in the appointment of the chief officers of the corporation. But the citizens maintained that (under their charter) this right lay entirely with themselves; upon which a writ was issued against them for forfeiture of their charter; and the question was now being tried in the court of His Majesty's bench.

This seemed to occupy all the attention of the judges, and my case (which had appeared so urgent) was put off from time to time, while the court and the city contended. And so hot was the conflict and hate between them, that a sheriff had been fined by the King in £100,000,000, and a former lord mayor had even been sentenced to the pillory, because he would not swear falsely. Hence the courtiers and the citizens scarce could meet in the streets with patience, or without railing and frequent blows.

Now, although I heard so much of this matter, for nothing else was talked of, and it seemed to me more important even than the church wardenship of Oare, I could not for the life of me tell which side I should take to. For all my sense of position, and of confidence reposed in me, and of my father's opinions, lay heavily in one scale; while all my reason and my heart went down plump against injustice, and seemed to win the other scale. Even so my father had been, at the breaking out of the civil war, when he was less than my age now, and even less skilled in politics, and my mother told me after this, when she saw how I myself was doubting, and vexed with myself for doing so, that my father used to thank God often that he had not been called upon to take one side or other, but might remain obscure and quiet. And yet he always considered himself to be a good sound Royalist.

But now as I stayed there, only desirous to be heard and to get away, and scarcely even guessing yet what was wanted of me (for even Jeremy Stickles knew not, or pretended not to know), things came to a dreadful pass between the King and all the people who dared to have an opinion. For about the middle of June, the judges gave their sentence, that the City of London had forfeited its charter, and that its franchise should be taken into the hands of the King. Scarcely was this judgment forth, and all men hotly talking of it, when a far worse thing befell. News of some great conspiracy was spread at every corner, and that a man in the malting business had tried to take up the brewer's work, and lop the King and the Duke of York. Everybody was shocked at this, for the King himself was not disliked so much as his advisers; but everybody was more than shocked, grieved indeed to the heart with pain, at hearing that Lord William Russell and Mr. Algernon Sydney had been seized and sent to the Tower of London upon a charge of high treason.

Having no knowledge of these great men, nor of the matter how far it was true, I had not very much to say about either them or it; but this silence was not shared (although the ignorance may have been) by the hundreds of people around me. Such a commotion was astir, such universal sense of wrong, and stern resolve to right it, that each man grasped his fellow's hand, and led him into the vintner's. Even I, although at that time given to excess in temperance and afraid of the name of cordials, was hard set (I do assure you) not to be drunk at intervals, without coarse discourtesy.

However that (as Betty Muxworthy used to say, when argued down and ready to take the mop for it) is neither here nor there. I have naught to do with great history, and am sorry for those who have to write it; because they are sure to have both friends and enemies in it, and cannot act as they would toward them, without damage to their own consciences.

But as great events draw little ones, and the rattle of the churn decides the uncertainty of the flies, so this movement of the town, and eloquence, and passion had more than I guessed at the time to do with my own little fortunes. For in the first place it was fixed (perhaps from downright contumely, because the citizens loved him so) that Lord Russell should be tried neither at Westminster nor at Lincoln's Inn, but at the Court of Old Bailey, within the precincts of the city. This kept me hanging on much longer; because although the good nobleman was to be tried by the Court of Common Pleas, yet the officers of the King's Bench, to whom I daily applied myself, were in counsel with their fellows, and put me off from day to day.

Now, I had heard of the law's delays, which the greatest of all great poets (knowing much of the law himself, as indeed of everything) has specially mentioned, when not expected, among the many ills of life. But I never thought at my years to have such bitter experience of the evil; and it seemed to me that if the lawyers failed to do their duty, they ought to pay people for waiting upon them, instead of making them pay for it. But here I was, now in the second month, living at my own charges, in the house of a worthy fell-monger at the sign of the Seal and Squirrel, abutting upon the Strand road which leads from Temple Bar to Charing. Here I did very well indeed, having a mattress of good skin-dressings, and plenty to eat every day of my life, but the butter was something to cry "but" thrice at (according to a conceit of our school days) and the milk must have come from cows driven to water. However these evils were light compared with the heavy bill sent up to me every Saturday afternoon; and knowing how my mother had pinched to send me nobly to London and had told me to spare for nothing, but live bravely with the best of them, the tears very nearly came to my eyes, as I thought, while I ate, of so robbing her.

At length, being quite at the end of my money, and seeing no other help for it, I determined to listen to clerks no more, but force my way up to the Justices, and insist upon being heard by them, or discharged from my recognizance. For so they had termed the bond or deed which I had been forced to execute, in the presence of a chief clerk or notary, the very day after I came to London. And the purport of it was, that on pain of a heavy fine or escheatment, I would hold myself ready and present, to give evidence when called upon. Having delivered me up to sign this, Jeremy Stickles was quit of me, and went upon other business, not but what he was kind and good to me when his time and pursuits allowed it.

CHAPTER XXV

A GREAT MAN ATTENDS TO BUSINESS

Having seen Lord Russell murdered in the fields of Lincoln's Inn, or rather having gone to see it, but turned away with a sickness and a bitter flood of tears—for a whiter or nobler neck never fell before low beasts—I strode away toward Westminster, cured of half my indignation at the death of Charles the First. Many people hurried past me, chiefly of the more tender sort, revolting at the butchery. In their ghastly faces, as they turned them back, lest the sight should be coming after them, great sorrow was to be seen, and horror and pity and some anger.

In Westminster Hall I found nobody; not even the crowd of crawling varlets, who used to be craving evermore for employment or for payment. I knocked at three doors, one after another, of lobbies going out of it, where I had formerly seen some officers and people pressing in and out; but for my trouble I took nothing, except some thumps from echo. And at last an old man told me that all the lawyers were gone to see the result of their own works in the fields of Lincoln's Inn.

However in a few days' time I had better fortune; for the court was sitting and full of business, to clear off the arrears of work before the lawyers' holiday. As I was waiting in the hall for a good occasion, a man with horse-hair on his head, and a long blue bag in his left hand, touched me gently on the arm, and led me into a quiet place. I followed him very gladly, being confident that he came to me with a message from the Justiciaries. But after taking pains to be sure that none could overhear us, he turned on me suddenly, and asked:

"Now, John, how is your dear mother?"

"Worshipful sir," I answered him, after recovering from my surprise at his knowledge of our affairs, and kindly interest in them, "it is two months now since I have seen her. Would to God that I only know how she is faring now, and how the business of the farm goes!"

"Sir, I respect and admire you," the old gentleman replied, with a bow very low and genteel; "few young court-gallants of our time are so reverent and dutiful. Oh, how I did love my mother!" Here he turned up his eyes to heaven in a matter that made me feel for him, and yet with a kind of wonder.

"I am very sorry for you, sir," I answered most respectfully, not meaning to trespass on his grief, yet wondering at his mother's age; for he seemed to be at least three-score: "but I am no court-gallant, sir; I am only a farmer's son, and learning how to farm a little."

"Enough, John; quite enough," he cried; "I can read it in thy countenance. Honesty is written there, and courage and simplicity. But I fear that, in this town of London, thou art apt to be taken in by people of no principle. Ah me! ah me! The world is bad, and I am too old to improve it."

Then finding him so good and kind, and anxious to improve the age, I told him almost everything; how much I paid the fell-monger, and all the things I had been to see; and how I longed to get away before the corn was ripening; yet how (in spite of these desires) I felt myself bound to walk up and down, being under a thing called "recognizance." In short, I told him everything; except the nature of my summons (which I had no right to tell), and that I was out of money.

My tale was told in a little archway, apart from other lawyers; and the other lawyers seemed to me to shift themselves. And to look askew, like sheep through a hurdle, when the rest are feeding.

"What! Good God!" my lawyer cried, smiting his breast indignantly with a roll of something learned; "in what country do we live? Under what laws are we governed? No case before the court whatever; no primary deposition, so far as we are furnished; not even a King's writ issued—and here we have a fine young man dragged from his home and adoring mother, during the height of agriculture, at his own cost and charges! I have heard of many grievances; but this the very worst of all. Nothing short of a Royal Commission could be warranty for it. This is not only illegal, sir, but most gravely unconstitutional."

"I had not told you, worthy sir," I answered him, in a lower tone, "if I could have thought that your sense of right would be moved so painfully. But now I must beg to leave you sir, for I see that the door again is open. I beg you, worshipful sir, to accept——"

Upon this he put forth his hand and said, "Nay, nay, my son, not two, not two;" yet looking away, that he might not scare me.

"To accept, kind sir, my very best thanks, and most respectful remembrances." And with that I laid my hand in his. "And if, sir, any circumstances of business or of pleasure should bring you to our part of the world, I trust you will not forget that my mother and myself (if ever I get home again) will do our best to make you comfortable with our poor hospitality."

With this I was hasting away from him, but he held my hand and looked round at me. And he spoke without cordiality.

"Young man, a general invitation is no entry for my fee-book. I have spent a good hour of business-time in mastering thy case, and stating my opinion of it. And being a member of the bar, called six-and-thirty years agone by the honorable society of the Inner Temple, my fee is at my own discretion; albeit an honorarium. For the honor of the profession, and my position in it, I ought to charge thee at least five guineas, although I would have accepted one, offered with good-will and delicacy. Now I will enter it two, my son, and half a crown for my clerk's fee."

Saying this, he drew forth from his deep, blue bag a red book having clasps to it, and indorsed in gold letters "Fee-book;" and before I could speak (being frightened so) he had entered on a page of it, "To consideration of case as stated by John Ridd, and advising thereupon, two guineas."

"But, sir, good sir," I stammered forth not having two guineas left in the world, yet grieving to confess it, "I knew not that I was to pay, learned sir. I never thought of it in that way."

"Wounds of God! In what way thought you that a lawyer listened to your rigmarole?"

"I thought that you listened from kindness, sir, and compassion of my grievous case, and a sort of liking for me."

"A lawyer like thee, young curmudgeon! A lawyer afford to feel compassion gratis! Either thou art a very deep knave, or the greenest of all greenhorns. Well, I suppose I must let thee off for one guinea, and the clerk's fee. A bad business, a shocking business!"

Now, if this man had continued kind and soft, as when he heard my story, I would have pawned my clothes to pay him, rather than leave a debt behind, although contracted unwittingly. But when he used harsh language so, I knowing that I did not deserve it, began to doubt within myself whether he deserved my money. Therefore, I answered him with some readiness, such as comes sometimes to me, although I am so slow.

"Sir, I am no curmudgeon; if a young man had called me so, it would not have been well with him. This money shall be paid, if due, albeit I had no desire to incur the debt. You have advised me that the Court is liable for my expenses so far as they be reasonable. If this be a reasonable expense, come with me now to Lord-justice Jeffrys, and receive from him the two guineas, or (it may be) five, for the counsel you have given me to deny his jurisdiction." With these words, I took his arm to lead him, for the door was open still.

"In the name of God, boy, let me go. Worthy sir, pray let me go. My wife is sick, and my daughter dying—in the name of God, sir, let me go."

"Nay, nay," I said, having fast hold of him; "I cannot let thee go unpaid, sir. Right is right; and thou shalt have it."

"Ruin is what I shall have, boy, if you drag me before that devil. He will strike me from the bar at once, and starve me, and all my family. Here, lad, good lad, take these two guineas. Thou has despoiled the spoiler. Never again will I trust mine eyes for knowledge of a greenhorn."

He slipped two guineas into the hand which I had hooked through his elbow, and spoke in an urgent whisper again, for the people came crowding around us—"For God's sake, let me go, boy; another moment will be too late."

"Learned sir," I answered him, "twice you spoke, unless I err, of the necessity of a clerk's fee, as a thing to be lamented."

"To be sure, to be sure, my son. You have a clerk as much as I have. There it is. Now, I pray thee, take to the study of the law. Possession is nine points of it, which thou hast of me. Self-possession is the tenth, and that thou hast more than the other nine."

Being flattered by this, and by the feeling of the two guineas and half-crown, I dropped my hold upon Counselor Kitch (for he was no less a man than that), and he was out of sight in a second of time, wig, blue bag, and family. And before I had time to make up my mind what I should do with his money (for of course I meant not to keep it), the crier of the Court (as they told me) came out, and wanted to know who I was. I told him, as shortly as I could, that my business lay with His Majesty's bench, and was very confidential; upon which he took me inside with warning, and showed me to an under-clerk, who showed me to a higher one, and the higher clerk to the head one.

When this gentleman understood all about my business (which I told him without compaint) he frowned at me very heavily, as if I had done him an injury.

"John Ridd," he asked me, with a stern glance, "is it your deliberate desire to be brought into the presence of the Lord Chief-justice?"

"Surely, sir, it has been my desire for the last two months and more."

"Then, John, thou shalt be. But mind one thing, not a word of thy long detention, or thou mayest get into trouble."

"How, sir? For being detained against my own wish?" I asked him; but he turned away, as if that matter were not worth his arguing, as indeed I suppose it was not, and led me through a little passage to a door with a curtain across it.

"Now, if my lord cross-question you," the gentleman whispered to me, "answer him straight out truth at once, for he will have it out of thee. And mind, he loves not to be contradicted, neither can he bear a hang-dog look. Take little heed of the other two; but note every word of the middle one, and never make him speak twice."

I thanked him for his good advice, as he moved the curtain and thrust me in; but instead of entering, withdrew, and left me to bear the brunt of it.

The chamber was not very large, though lofty to my eyes, and dark, with wooden panels round it. At the farther end were some raised seats, such as I have seen in churches, lined with velvet, and having broad elbows, and a canopy over the middle seat. There were only three men sitting here, one in the center, and one on each side; and all three were done up wonderfully with fur, and robes of state, and curls of thick gray horse-hair, crimped and gathered, and plaited down to their shoulders. Each man had an oak desk before him, set at a little distance, and spread with pens and papers. Instead of writing, however, they seemed to be laughing and talking, or rather the one in the middle seemed to be telling some good story, which the others received with approval. By reason of their great perukes, it was hard to tell how old they were; but the one who was speaking seemed the youngest, although he was the chief of them. A thick-set, burly, and bulky man, with a blotchy broad face, and great square jaws, and fierce eyes full of blazes; he was one to be dreaded by gentle souls, and to be abhorred by the noble.

Between me and the three lord judges, some few lawyers were gathering up bags and papers and pens and so forth, from a narrow table in the middle of the room; as if a case had been disposed of, and no other were called on. But before I had time to look round twice, the stout, fierce man espied me, and shouted out, with a flashing stare:

"How now, countryman, who art thou?"

"May it please Your Worship," I answered him, loudly, "I am John Ridd, of Oare parish, in the shire of Somerset, brought to this London some two months back by a special messenger, whose name is Jeremy Stickles; and then bound over to be on hand and ready, when called upon to give evidence, in a matter unknown to me, but touching the peace of our lord the King, and the well-being of his subjects. Three times I have met our lord the King, but he hath said nothing about his peace, and only held it toward me; and every day save Sunday, I have walked up and down the great hall of Westminster, all the business part of the day, expecting to be called upon; yet no one hath called upon me. And now I desire to ask your worship whether I may go home again."

"Well done, John," replied His Lordship, while I was panting with all this speech; "I will go bail for thee, John, thou hast never made such a long speech before; and thou art a spunky Briton, or thou could not have made it now. I remember the matter well; and I myself will attend to it, although it arose before my time"—he was but newly Chief-Justice—"but I cannot take it now, John. There is no fear of losing thee, John, any more than the Tower of London. I grieve for His Majesty's exchequer, after keeping thee two months or more."

"Nay, my lord, I crave your pardon. My mother hath been keeping me. Not a groat have I received."

"Spank, is it so?" His Lordship cried, in a voice that shook the cobwebs, and the frown on his brow shook the hearts of men, and mine as much as the rest of them—"Spank, is His Majesty come to this, that he starves his own approvers?"

"My lord, my lord," whispered Mr. Spank, the chief-officer of evidence, "the thing hath been overlooked, my lord, among such grave matters of treason."

I will overlook thy head, foul Spank, on a spike from Temple Bar, if ever I hear of the like again. Vile varlet, what art thou paid for? Thou hast swindled the money thyself, foul Spank; I know thee, though thou art new to me. Bitter is the day for thee that ever I came across thee. Answer me not—one word more, and I will have thee on a hurdle." And he swung himself to and fro on his bench, with both hands on his knees; and every man waited to let it pass, knowing better than to speak to him.

"John Ridd," said the Lord Chief-justice, at last, recovering a sort of dignity, yet daring Spank from the corners of his eyes to do so much as look at him, "thou hast been shamefully used, John Ridd. Answer me not, boy; not a word; but go to Master Spank, and let me know how he behaves to thee;" here he made a glance at Spank, which was worth at least ten pounds to me; "be thou here again to morrow; and before any other case is taken, I will see justice done to thee. Now be off, boy; thy name is Ridd, and we are well rid of thee."

I was only too glad to go, after all this tempest, as you may well suppose. For if ever I saw a man's eyes become two holes for the devil to glare from, I saw it that day; and the eyes were those of the Lord Chief-Justice Jeffreys.

Mr. Spank was in the lobby before me, and before I had recovered myself—for I was vexed with my own terror—he came up sideling and fawning to me, with a heavy bag of yellow leather.

"Good Master Ridd, take it all, take it all, and say a good word for me to His Lordship. He hath taken a strange fancy to thee; and thou must make the most of it. We never saw man meet him eye to eye so, and yet not contradict him; and that is just what he loveth. Abide in London, Master Ridd, and he will make thy fortune. His joke upon thy name proves that. And I pray you remember, Master Ridd, that the Spanks are sixteen in family."

But I would not take the bag from him, regarding it as a sort of bribe to pay me such a lump of money, without so much as asking how great had been my expenses. Therefore I only told him that if he would kindly keep the cash for me until the morrow, I would spend the rest of the day in counting (which always is sore work with me) how much it had stood me in board and lodging since Master Stickles had rendered me up; for until that time he had borne my expenses. In the morning I would give Mr. Spank a memorandum, duly signed, and attested by my landlord, including the breakfast of that day, and in exchange for this I would take the exact amount from the yellow bag, and be very thankful for it.

"If that is the way of using opportunity," said Spank, looking at me with some contempt, "thou wilt never thrive in these times, my lad. Even the Lord Chief Justice can be little help to thee; unless thou knowest better than that how to help thyself."

It mattered not to me. The word "approver" stuck in my gorge, as used by the Lord Chief-Justice; for he looked upon an approver as a very low thing indeed. I would rather pay for every breakfast, and even every dinner, eaten by me since here I came, than take money as an approver. And indeed I was much disappointed at being taken in that light, having understood that I was sent for as a trusty subject, and humble friend of His Majesty.

In the morning I met Mr. Spank waiting for me at the entrance, and very desirous to see me. I showed him my bill, made out in fair copy, and he laughed at it, and said, "Take it twice over, Master Ridd; once for thine own sake, and once for His Majesty's, as all his loyal tradesmen do, when they can get any. His Majesty knows and is proud of it, for it shows their love of his countenance; and he says 'Bis dat qui cito dat,' 'Then how can I grumble at giving twice, when I give so slowly?'"

"Nay, I will take it but once," I said; "if His Majesty loves to be robbed, he need not lack of his desire while the Spanks are sixteen in family."

The clerk smiled cheerfully at this, being proud of his children's ability; and then, having paid my account, he whispered:

"He is all alone this morning, John, and in rare good humor. He hath been promised the handling of poor Master Algernon Sidney, and he says he will soon make republic of him; for his state shall shortly be headless. He is chuckling over his joke, like a pig with a nut; and that always makes him pleasant. John Ridd, my lord!" With that he swung up the curtain bravely; and according to special orders, I stood face to face and alone with Judge Jeffreys.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A MODERN JUGGERNAUT

Peter Quesnal tore away yesterday's leaf from his calender, and, with eyes accustomed to note every detail, read the quotation disclosed for that day. He looked at it with a second glance and murmured the words to himself: "Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown . . . no son of mine succeeding."

These words, in conjunction with a certain letter he had received the night before, had a curious effect upon the man, giving a new warmth to his heart, a new interest to his life. A chord was touched, long dormant, almost dead—a chord of love. One of the foremost financiers of the day, reputed to be of enormous wealth, he was still a lonely man—a man, without wife, childless.

He glanced at the memorandum of business awaiting him, and after a few minutes' conference with his chief clerk he dictated a score of letters, attended to innumerable calls upon the telephone, interviewed a dozen fellow-financiers, sent out messages to as many other callers and was soon mentally submerged in the full morning flood of business.

Presently a card was brought to him. He made a sign that the caller was to be admitted, and a few moments later a man about his own age entered—a subdued-looking man, with a weak, irresolute face, but kindly, honest eyes.

The two men looked at one another in silence until the clerk had departed, then the newcomer smiled a sweet, rather sad smile and held out his hand.

"I could hardly believe that it was true when you were pointed out to me a few days ago as Peter Quesnal," he said slowly: "you the man I had known in other days and under a different name."

"Quesnal was my mother's name," returned the financier. "I dropped my own, which seemed unlucky, and took hers in place of it. A superstition, that was all—my sole superstition."

He paused a moment, then added quickly: "I got your letter. Need I say that its contents surprised me? Indeed, I can hardly believe that what you assert is true."

"You know that it is true, for I have never lied to you—except once," replied Stephen Haydon simply. "I thought you must be dead, as I had lost sight of you for so many years, or I should have revealed to you that the son whom I have brought up as my own, and who regards me as his father, is your son, not mine. It is right that you should both know this now, for I am a poor man, with no influence to exert on his behalf; but you—you have everything to give your son, your heir."

"I—I cannot believe it," murmured Quesnal, yet in tones that belied his words. "For if it is true, what could have been your motive in providing for another man's child? Answer me that."

"It was a woman's wish," responded Haydon slowly—"the wish of a dead woman, my wife. You and I, Peter Quesnal, married two sisters. Your own wife died within three years of your marriage—died of a broken heart her sister always declared."

"That is false," he said. "If I neglected Margaret, it was only because I was absorbed in business. But I loved her, and that she knew."

"Perhaps. I rather doubt it myself. At any rate, when your wife died you gave us the charge of your son and went away, forgetting all about him beyond an occasional letter. Isabel and myself grew attached to the boy, and when our own one child died, a boy also, we represented to you that it was yours. Your accepted the news without question—perhaps your were indifferent."

Quesnal crossed over to where Haydon was standing his eyes flaming, his looks satanic. He placed his hands on the other's shoulders, looking them in a grip of steel.

"Is it true?" he demanded huskily. "Is it true? You have admitted one lie to me; is this another?"

"What I have told you is the truth, Peter Quesnal," he replied in unfaltering tones. "And, now that you know," he went on, "is it a welcome gift that I bring you or do you hate the thought of a son? For, if so, Cecil need never be told?"

"Welcome?" Quesnal echoed the word. "Yes, welcome indeed! Man, don't you understand," he continued, "that I have shut myself up in a house of steel—a temple in which gold has

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