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LORNA DOONE B. R. D. BLACKMORE. CHAPTER XXXVI

B.R.D. BLACKMORT. CHAPTER XXXVI JOIN RETURNS TO BUSINESS Now November was upon us, and we had kept Allhallownass, with roasting of skewered apples (like so many shuttlecocks) and after that the day of Fawkes, as became good Protestants, and plenty of good feeding in honor of our religion ; and then, while we were at wheat-sowing, another visitor arrived. This was Master Jeremy Stickles, who had been a good friend to me (as earned my mother's gratitude, so far as earer he chose to have it all; for he sad kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call, and kept us quite at his beck and call and coring back at any time of the ready, whether with horse, or man, of maiden, or fire, or provisions. We knew that he never went out, nor even slept has be droom, without heavy fire-arm that he never went out, nor even slept hand; and that he held a great commis sion, under royal signet, requiring and good subjects, all offleers of whatever degree, and especially justices of the prace, to sid him to the utmost, with prace, to sid him to the utmost, with at heir peril. Now Matter Jeremy Stickles, of comment is the there, shall not save thee form yn hand-or one finger is enough for thee." Being carried beyond myself by his furthered beyond myself by his

peace, to aid him to the utmost, with person, heast, and chattel, or to answer it at their peril. Now Master Jeremy Stickles, of course, knowing well what women are, durst not open to any of them the nature of his in-structions. But after a while, perceiv-ing that I could be relied upon, and that it may a creat disconfort not to have me ing that I could be relied upon, and that it was a great discomfort not to have me with him, he took me aside in a lonely place, and told me nearly everything; having bound me first by oath not to impart to any one, without his own per-mission, until all was over. But at this present time of writing, all is over long are: ax, and forcetten

but at this present time of wrings all is over long ago; ay, and forgotten too, I ween, except by those who suf-fered. Therefore may I tell the whole without any breach of confidence. Master Stickles was going forth upon his usual night journey, when he met me his usual night journey, when he met me coming home, and I said something half in jest, about his zeal and secrecy ; upon which the looked all around the yard, and led me to an open space in the

and led me to an open space in the clover-field adjoining. "John," he said, "you have some right to know the meaning of all this, being trusted as you were by the Lord Chief-justice. But he found you scarce-ly supple enough, neither gifted with due heains".

"Thank God for that same," I "Thank God for that same," I answered, while he tapped his head, to signify his own much larger allowance. Then he made me bind myself, which in an evil hour I did, to retain his secret; and after that he went on solemnly, and with much importance. "There be some people fit to plot, and others to be plotted against, and others to unravel plots, which is the highest gift of all. This last hath fallen to my share, and a very thankless gift it is.

gift of all. gift of all. This last hath failen to my share, and a very thankless gift it is, although a rare and choice one. Much of peril, too, attends it. Daring courage and great coolness are as needful for the work as ready wit and spotless honor. Therefore, His Majesty's advisers have chosen me for this high task, and they could not have chosen a hetter man.

"Stick to that, my lad," he answered; so shalt thou be easier. Now, in ten words (without parties, or trying thy poor brain too much.) I am here to watch the gathering of a secret plot, not so much against the King as against the due succession."

hither, shall not save thee from my hand—or one finger is enough for thee." Being carried beyond myself by his insolence about Lorna, I looked at Mas-ter Stickles so, and spake in such a voice, that all his daring courage and his spotless honor quailed within him, and he shrunk—as if I would strike so encell a men. small a man ! Then I left him, and went to work at

small a man ! Then I left him, and went to work at the sacks upon the corn-floor, to take my evil spirit from me before I should see mother. For (to tell the truth) now my strength was full, and troubles were gathering round me; and people took advantage so much of my easy temper sometimes, when I was over-tried, a sudden heat ran over me, and a glowing of all my muscles, and a tingling for a might throw, such as my utmost self-command, and fear of hurting any one, could but ill refrain. Afterward I was always very sadly ashamed of myself, knowing how poor a thing bodily strength is, as compared with power of mind, and that it is a coward's part to misuse it upon wesker folk. For the present, there was a little breach be-tween Master Stickles and me, for which I blamed myself very sorely. But though, in full memory of his kind-ness and faithfulness in London, I asked h is pardon many times for my foolish anger with him, and offered to undergo any penalty he would lay upon me, he on the one way the one to the one of the one

any penalty he would lay upon me, he only said it was no matter, there was nothing to forgive. When people say that, the truth often is that they can

emplified; nothing diverted to alien channels, except a small token of esteem and reverence to an elderly lady, I forgive nothing. So, for the present, a breach was made So, for the present, a breach was made between Master Jeremy and myself, which to me seemed no great loss, inas-much as it relieved me from any privity to his dealings, for which I had small liking. All I feared was lest I might in any way be ungrateful to him ; but when he would have no more of me, what could I do to help it ? However, in a few daye' time I was of good ser and reverence to an elderly lady, 1 presume; and which may or may not be valid, or invalid, on the ground of un-certainty, or the absence of any legal status on the part of the legatee. Ha, ha: Yes, yes ! Few young men are so free from exceptionable entanglements.

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

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That the enterprise now resolved upon was far more dangerous than any hither-to attempted by me, needs no further proof than this: I went and made my will at Porlock, with a middling nonest lawyer there; not that I had much to leave, but that none could say how far the farm, and all the farming stock, might depend on my disposition. It makes me smile when I remember how particular I was, and how for the life of me I was puzzled to bequeath most part Therefore, without more hesitation, I plunged into the middle way, holding a long ash staff before me, shodden at the end with iron. Presently I was in the black darkness, groping along the wall, and feeling a deal more fear than I wished to feel; especially when, upon looking back, I could no longer see the light, which I had forsaken. Then I stumbled over something hard, and particular I was, and how for the life of me I was puzzled to bequeat most part of my clothes, and hats, and things al-together my own, to Lorna, without the shrewd old lawyer knowing who she was and where she lived. At that, indeed, I flattered myself that I had baffled old Tape's curiosity; but his wrinkled smile, and his speech at parting, made me again uneasy. light, which I had forsaken. Then I stumbled over something hard, and sharp, and very cold; moreover, so grievous to my legs that it needed my very best doctrine and humor to for-bear from swearing in the manner they use in London. But when I arose, and felt it, and knew it to be a culverine, I was somewhat reassured thereby. inassmile, and his speech at parting, made me again uneasy. "A very excellent will, young sir. An admirably just and virtuous will; all your effects to your nearest of kin; filial and fraternal duty thoroughly ex-

was somewhat reassured thereby, inas much as it was not likely that they would plant this engine except in the

would plant this engine except in the real and true entrance. Therefore, I went on again, more painfully and wearily, and presenfilly found it to be good that I had received that knock, and borne it with such pati-ence; for otherwise I might have blundered full upon the sentries, and here shot without more ado. As it was been shot without more ado. As it was, I had barely time to draw back, as I Tree trom exceptionable entanglements. Two guineas is my charge, sir; and a rare good-will for the money. Very prudent of you, sir. Does you credit in every way. Well, well, we all must die; and often the young before the old "

been shot without more ado. As it was, I had barely time to draw back, as I turned a corner upon them; and if their I lantern had been in its place, they could scaree have failed to descry me, unless, indeed, I had seen the gleam before I turned the correr. There seemed to be only two of them, of size indeed and stature as all the Doones must be; but I need not have feared to encounter them both, had they been unarmed, as I was. It was plain, however, that each had a long and heavy carbine, not in his hands (as it should have been), but standing close beside him Therefore it behooved me now to be exceeding careful; and even that might scaree avail, without luck in proportion. So I kept well back at the corner, and laid one cheek to the rock face, and kept my outer eye round the jut in the wariest mode I could compass, watching my opportunity, and this is what I saw. The two villains looked very happy— which villains have no right to be, but often are, mescemeth—they were sitting in a niche of rock, with the lantern in

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But Bacchus (of whom I read at school, with great wonder about his meaning— and the same I may say of Venus) that great deity preserved Charlie, his pious worshiper, from regarding consequences. So he led me very kindly to the top of the meadow-land, where the stream from underground broke forth, seething quiet-ly with a little hiss of bubbles. Hence I had fair view and outline of the robbers' township, spread with bushes here and there, but not heavily overshadowed. The moon, approaching now the full, brought the forms in manner forth, cloth-ing each with character, as the moon (more than the sun) does to an eye accustomed. accustomed. I knew that the Captain's house was

I knew that the Captain's house was first, both from what Lorna had said of it, and from my mother's description, and now again from seeing Charlie halt there for a certain time, and whistle on his fingers, and hurry on, fearing con-sequence. The tune that he whistled was strange to me, and lingered in my ears, as having something very new and was strange to me, and lingered in my ears, as having something very new, and striking, and fantastic in it. And I re-peated it softly to myself, while I marked the position of the houses and the beauty of the village. For the stream, in lieu of any street, passing between the houses, and affording perpetual change, and twinkling, and reflections-moreover, by its sleepy murmur, soothing all the dwellers there—this, and the snugness of the position, walled with rock and spread with herbage, made it look, in the quiet moonlight, like a little paradise. And to think of all the inmates there sleeping with good con-sciences, having plied their useful trade of making other's work for them, enjoy-ing life without much labor, yet with

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upon something; you are so quick. Anything you can think of; and then I will go, and not frighten you." "I have been thinking long of some-

decoy of Lorna. The sentinel took me for that vile Carver, who was like enough to be prowling there, for pri-vate talk with Lorna, but not very likely to shout forth his name, if it might be avoided. The watchman, perceiving the danger, perhaps, of intruding on Car-ver s privacy, not only retired along the clift, but withdrew himself to a good dis-tance. Meanwhile he had done me the kind-est service; for Lorna came to the win-dow at once to see what the cause of the shout was, and drew back the curtain timidly. Then she opened the rough lattice; and then she sighed very sadly. "Oh, Lorna, don't you know me?" I whispered from the side, being atraid of startling her by appearing over sud-denly.

startling her by appearing over sud-denly. Quick though she always was of thought, she knew me not from my whisper, and was shuting the window hastily, when I caught it back, and showed myself. "Lob and a start of the start o

showed myself. "John !" she cried, yet with sense enough not to speak aloud; "oh, you "Sally, and my blood grew cold at it: "I have means to stop him, or at least to save myself. If you can come within "without any news of my darling. You knew I would come—of course you did." "Well, I thought, perhaps—you know: now, John, you need not eat my hand. Do you see they have put iron bars across?" "The same of the mail of a set of the same o

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