

CHAPTER I

BRISTOL TO LYME

AUGUST, in this fair land of ours, may aptly be likened to a noble dame in the pride of gracious motherhood, the promise of her sweet youth grandly fulfilled, her beauteous children rising up around her and calling her blessed, and her environment a mellowing atmosphere of satisfied, fruitful love. Generous August, serene and stately in all temperate lands, but nowhere to be so enjoyed as in England, and nowhere in England so full of glory as in the brave West Country: Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall. Yet August, 1643, was a sad and sere month, Nature had done her part for the submissive and grateful earth, and man, where unmolested by his brother man, had aided according to his light; but war was in the midst of the country, and surely never does man show to less advantage before the celestial intelligences than when at war. Especially so when at war with his own kindred. The wholesale parricide of civil war was in full operation, for the old bulldog breed of British men had found no other way but this to decide whether Britain should advance or recede, should