

"Fine times by my faith," he muttered and growled, "when a wench chooses what she will an' winna do, but not in Grantham Manor, or my name's no longer Richard."

Meanwhile, with a heart that beat fast at her own temerity, Mistress Mary fled across the park as fast as her little high-heeled shoes could carry her. Past the blood-red copper beeches where the June sun made a glory of each leaf. Past the tall aloofness of the cypress trees in the Italian garden, and the fragrant corner of the park where the lilies-of-the-valley made a carpet of scent.

All these things that she loved so dearly did not exist for Mary this morning. Her little form was shaken with sobs as she gained the quaint round steps and high wrought gate that led into her own octagon garden.

All her life this had been the place where she had come with her girlish troubles, but never since her mother left her to battle alone with life and the squire's iron will, had she known a sorrow like this. The bees hummed from rose to rose, the delicate air quivered with the shimmer and magic of June. The quaint wooden seat beside the lilies with the arch of Rambler overhead was just as inviting as it was yesterday, but Mistress Mary threw herself down there, and laid her cheek against the old green wood, knowing not what to do.

"I can't marry Ralph. Because I do love him I will not, *must* not, marry him," she whispered between her sobs. "I would never come to aught but sorrow, an I married one I could not respect. Ralph thinks he loves me now, but he knows why I could not listen yesternight. An I lowered my own standard he would soon lower his thought o' me."

Her lips grew firm as she looked out over the roses of the little garden so dearly loved. It was here she had dreamed all her dreams, and here beside the water lilies she had read love in Ralph's eyes. There was no place in all the wide world that lay so near to her heart as her own little octagon rose garden, neglected and over-run as it had become of late years. Nay! Did she not love it all the more for that? Its very thorns and tangles were interwoven with her own heart.

And now she must be willing to part with it. Mistress Mary knew well it was not only the meadows that were coming within reach of the law. Unless she gave her word in troth to Ralph Boynton, the old home of many generations would probably fall to his keeping without herself as mistress of it.

She looked away to the great elms. She could not bear to rise and say what might be farewell to every winding path in that great old park. But she must rouse herself, for the passing hours would bring duties which nobody else but Mary could do. She gathered up her muslin skirts, and prepared to go, when she heard her name called softly from the rose trees where Andrew had appeared with a huge spade, no longer the immaculate butler, but the handy-man of all work.

"Mistress," he whispered, "Master Wesley preaches at the cross-roads this night, at ten o' the clock. 'Twill be a night o' bright moonlight, please God the clouds dinna rise. I can saddle young Neddy an' tak' ye pillion fashion if so as ye've a mind to hear the good man."

Mary hesitated for a moment, and then nodded her head. Perchance this was the way to help and guidance.

It was shortly after nine that night when Mary donned her plainest cotton frock and drew on her cloak and hood before she stole across the rose garden. The old house was all in darkness, and the squire was already wrapped in the sound sleep which no worries of the land could keep at bay. The moon had not yet risen, and it was very dark as Mistress Mary brushed past the roses and out upon the further side to a deep rutted lane behind the park.

Here she heard a horse's stamp and Andrew's voice speaking in a whisper. Without a word, he placed his hand for her foot, and she sprang lightly into the pillion. Next moment she was steadying herself by a grasp of

the old serving-man's coat, and they were away in the darkness of the still June night to hear John Wesley at the cross-roads.

Meanwhile, a dozen miles away, a huge travelling chaise was lumbering over an unmade road, and lurching from side to side, to the apparent detriment of the one little man who sat within. But he was quite unperturbed, as he gathered his cassock about him and strove by the light of a candle, and in spite of the shaking, to decipher a page of Greek.

The big chaise contained a travelling bookcase stored with volumes that were printed in something very different from pocket editions, and an improvised writing-table held sheets of paper at which John Wesley glanced as he read.

But even for his indomitable spirit the rutted lane was too much. The candle sputtered and left a stream of tallow on his fair white page before it went finally out; and at last, with a sigh, he closed his book and leaned from his carriage window.

As he did so there came a greater lurch than ever, and with one bound the chaise rolled over on to a broken wheel, in the soft mud of the country road.

Using forcible language, the coachman got down, and John Wesley stepped out with a serene face.

"Peace, fellow," he remarked. "I do not doubt this is the Lord's doing, and for some good end of His own." As if in answer to his words, there came the distant trot of a horse in the dark, and at the same moment the full moon rose behind the hills.

"How now! What's happened here?" cried a cheery voice as a handsome man rode up to the side of the coach. "Can I be of any assistance, sir? I see you are a clergyman, possibly on your way to keep some appointment."

"That is so, young man," replied John Wesley. "An you will give me a seat behind you as far as the cross-roads, you will have done a greater service than you know."

Ralph Boynton wheeled round his horse, and presently he was away again, little aware that the notorious Wesley was seated so quietly behind his back. But he had not gone far before he began to listen to a voice that had magnetized many a scoffer into a listener. Puzzled, then interested, and at last arrested, Ralph Boynton began to feel that he was suddenly lifted into an atmosphere new and rare, but with a strangely inspiring quality in its tone. Somehow it reminded him of Mistress Mary Grantham at the moment when she had turned away from his words of love.

As they reached the end of their ride, Ralph saw, to his surprise, a great crowd of people waiting at the cross-roads in the moonlight. He heard a song borne upon the wings of a great faith rising to meet him as he came.

Mary looked up in the moonlight to seek the support of John Wesley's face that it might strengthen her resolve. But she never saw it. There, behind the little man she saw her lover—Ralph Boynton, helping the preacher to his feet with a touched and grateful smile on his own dark face, and obviously with no intention of turning away from the crowd before him.

Mary never heard what was said that night. Somewhere in the distance she knew that a voice was ringing out pleading for repentance, and for lives to be turned to higher uses. It spoke with the authority and the power that only come from experience, and it lifted one man and one woman over the very border of the invisible.

Mary knelt on the short grass by the wayside and prayed for Ralph as she had never prayed for herself. She did not know that the shifting moonlight laid bars of silver light across her radiant face, and aureoled it with the very grace of Heaven.

But John Wesley saw it, and thanked God, and a strong man, whose whole nature was stirred to its depths, looked up from his first heart-broken prayer to catch a glimpse of its strength. From that moment a great reverence,