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For the Sake of Dorothy.

Written for The Western Home Monthly. By A. Mason.

THERE were two families of the Blaines, of Blaine. Both claimed that they were descended from the original Blaine—a Saxon yeoman who had sworn fealty to the conqueror in time to save his lands from some impecunious Norman Knight.

But, naturally enough, it never occurred to Sir Richard Blaine, of Blaine Hall, that he was in any way related to Dick Blaine, the smith. Possibly Dick Richard had never heard of Dick, for he was intimate in the councils of the King, and it was but little thought he ever gave to his tenants and villagers.

As for the Blaines, the smiths, their high heritage of blood had never in the knowledge of the villagers brought forth fruit worthy of the name. In fact, when one morning young Dick Blaine told his father that he had had enough of the smithy, and was going away to seek his fortune, the smith leaned on his hammer and looked at the young man in disgust. "Smithing was good enough for your fathers for generation on generation, Dick," said he, "and if you leave your trade to seek your fortune you may find the old Nick."

"Then I'll find him," said Dick and off he went without further arguing.

The Blaine Arms was a fine old inn on the London road. It was the fourth relaying station for the northern coaches, and mine host, a portly, easy-going man, with a cheery voice and rather obsequious manners, was remembered by travellers as a fine specimen of the old English innkeeper. The inn was the only part of the village, except the church steeple, which could be seen from the road. The rest was thoroughly hidden behind huge elms that had stood for centuries in the park and grounds of Blaine Hall. Mine host and the inn were the links that bound the village to the rest of the world, and the villagers looked up to the innkeeper as the man who knew all the latest news of the French War. In those days of heavy paper duties, only the squire and parson could afford to purchase a journal regularly, and yet it must be owned that rumor, filtered through the brain of mine host of the Blaine Arms, was not more wild than much of the distillation of the modern penny daily newspaper.

One evening, the innkeeper sat in a broad armchair at the hostelry gate, waiting for the evening mail to come lumbering over the hill, when from the opposite direction rode a horseman. Mine host thought he would have ridden by, but he pulled up suddenly and leaped from his saddle. Then he walked up to the innkeeper and offered him his hand.

"Oh, lord!" exclaimed the portly publican in great astonishment, "if it ain't Dick Blaine come home—a real gentleman!"

Dick Blaine's return was a nine-days' wonder in the village. At first the voices were approving, the natural pride among the peasants that "one of us is a gentleman" drowned for a while any owlish note, but later, when it was discovered that the ex-blacksmith had acquired a certain air of aristocratic reserve, calumny and malice began to wag their tongues. These went questioning to mine host of the Arms, but he had far too great a reverence for Dick's promptly paid bills to hint at any shortcoming in such a good customer.

"Where does he get his money and his clothes? Bob Ostler gets a shilling every time he cleans his boots," said calumny.

But mine host pointed to the mare. Feeling her legs for splints which never were there, or stroking her sleek skin,

he would say, "Look at this. No scoundrel could own a mare like this here."

And Bob Ostler shook his head, approving mine host's remarks. In the evening, at the alehouse in the village, Bob had an admiring circle of yokels round him drinking the last shilling he had received from Gentleman Dick. He recounted the latest news of the road; how three times during the preceding month the coach had been held up by a masked highwayman on a black horse and robbed; and how he often found Gentleman Dick's Black Bess covered with mud and sweat in the mornings. "She must have been out all night," suggested one of the yokels.

"Oh, no," said Bob, "she was rid by a witch. Leastways, that's what Dick Blaine says. And you should see the fine pair of silver mounted barkers I found in the holsters. Shot off, too, in the night. And I asked Dick if witches shot pistols. He said nothin', only laughed and gave me a crown."

Dorothy was the heiress to Blaine in the Hollow. The beldams of the village talked of her as caressingly as the yokels gossiped of Dick Blaine maliciously, and the latter had not returned to the village long before his name was so coupled with that of my lady that the gossipers could not mention one without the other creeping in. "It's a wicked shame," said an old lady who had nursed the girl in her childhood and who was on visiting terms with the servants at the Hall. "This Dick, with all his fine clothes and his nag, ain't no better than a smith's son, and some say that he's nothing but a robber."

"What's that to do with you?" asked a girl more charitable than her neighbors.

"Why, he's setting his cap at my lady," said the gossip. "Miss Elaine, her governess, told me that when they were out riding the other day, this Dick came along on his horse, dressed like his betters, and when he passed he took off his hat."

"What did my lady say?"

"She bowed to him and asked Elaine who that gentleman was. He ain't no gentleman," says Elaine; "he's a blacksmith's son turned highwayman." A highwayman? says my lady. "I am very sorry. A highwayman?" says she, and then she didn't say another word for the whole day."

"She was right," said one of the gossips.

"When this Dick Blaine was a little fellow and she was a wee mite of a girl, the two were often together. And he would go through fire and water to save her from a scratch. I remember when she learned to ride the little white pony the Duchess of Portland gave her, the fiery little thing ran away with her. It was this Dick Blaine, himself no more than a child, ran out and stopped the runaway and saved her life."

"I wonder Sir Richard didn't do something for the boy," said the girl who had spoken up for him before.

"He gave him a handful of nuts, and the ungrateful young varmint went and threw them in the pond."

"I don't blame him," said the girl. "A handful of nuts, indeed!"

"Well, you would think he'd know better than set his cap at a real lady," chorused the women, and the one charitable voice was drowned completely.

Poor Dick! Setting his cap? Yes, indeed, if humble and respectful admiration, given feeling, wiling up from a lonely heart were setting his cap. Hour after hour he trudged the country lanes, wandered around in Blaine park to catch a look at her. Sometimes he was rewarded with a glimpse of her; often the way and the lanes were lonely, and then Dick's solace was the beautiful black mare.

Late into the night he galloped her along the grassy-grown wayside, mile