

if this be some poor guerdon, let it suffice. But, alas, my birth, the dark secret of my birth forbids——”

“Nay,” cried Mordaunt, leaping now to his feet, “your birth is all right. I have looked into it myself. It is as good—or nearly as good—as my own. Till I knew this, my lips were sealed by duty. While I supposed that you had a lower birth and I an upper, I was bound to silence. But come with me to the house. There is one arrived with me who will explain all.”

Hand in hand the lovers, for such they now were, returned to the Chase. There in the great hall the Marquis and the Marchioness were standing ready to greet them.

“My child!” exclaimed the noble lady, as she folded Winnifred to her heart.

Then she turned to her son. “Let her know all!” she cried.

Lord Mordaunt stepped across the room to a curtain. He drew it aside, and there stepped forth Mr. Bonehead, the old lawyer who had cast Winnifred upon the world.