

"Who is she, master? and where be'st going to take her?" asked a motherly-looking woman in a large white cap, and an apron and bib that covered her all up.

"Faith, we have but just come into the town, and she's tired with her journey," said Jasper. "Can any of ye tell me where Captain Frank Audley lodges? The place has clean slipped out o' my head." But no one knew, and Jasper looked up and down the street in sad perplexity, while the woman took hold of Dorothy's hands, and rubbed them hard, trying to bring her to herself.

"Come along with me to my house," she said to Jasper. "I've a baker's shop just by, and I'll give you shelter for the night. This pretty lady can't stay in the gateway here. Come on, master, this way."

Dorothy was small and very light, and Jasper carried her easily in his arms along the street, till they came to the good woman's little dark shop. There was a parlour behind, and here they laid Dorothy on the settle in front of the fire, and set to work to restore her to consciousness; perhaps she would hardly have thanked them for their pains, poor child. But the warmth and the rubbing, and the cordial drops, soon did their work, and brought her out of her fainting-fit, back into the cruel, heartless world. Her first words, as soon as she knew where she was, were of thanks to her kind hostess; then she thought of Jasper.

"You are tired and hungry, my friend. Get food and wine. I will lie here quite still and wait,—unless I incommode you, good mistress?"

Dorothy half rose, but the kind bakeress begged her to lie down again. So she lay there in the ruddy firelight; and their hostess, taking Jasper into the outer room, set before him the best her house could afford. Dorothy, meanwhile, lay still and thought. She had hardly realized the hope which had brought her so bravely through her journey, till it was dashed to the ground with that sudden blow. Alas! there was no faith in the world, no truth in man. Henry Corbet's words and looks had meant nothing after all. He was ready enough to be her friend

and lover while she was mistress of Dering, but now, when she came, a weary wanderer, into the city of Oxford, he had nothing but a careless glance for her to whom he had vowed so much. Dorothy's face was wet with bitter tears, as she lay gazing at the fire, too tired for anything but disappointment.

Just then, there rose a noise of cheering in the street, and a sound of clattering hoofs, and she heard a distant cry of "The King, the King!" Old Jasper opened the low half-door of the shop, and went out bare-headed on the pavement. King Charles, attended by a gallant group of gentlemen, came riding by, often raising the broad hat that shadowed his pale and noble face, in answer to the salutations of the crowd. He had just beckoned forward an officer of his suite, and was talking to him in a low voice; the young man had taken off his hat, and his long fair hair fell down about his face. A few torches were flaming in the twilight, lights were beginning to shine in the houses, and the passengers were pressing to the right and left, making way for the King. Suddenly Jasper, to the good woman's great astonishment, dashed into the crowd, and seized the bridle of the cavalier to whom King Charles was talking.

"Captain Frank! you know me sir?"

"Jasper! wait, good fellow. Come to my lodgings in half-an-hour."

"Ay, sir! I crave your pardon. But Mistress Dorothy is in yonder house, in sore need of help."

Frank Audley flushed crimson as he turned to the King,—

"I pray your majesty to pardon me, and this fellow too. But it is my cousin Mistress Lyne, Sir Marmaduke's sister, and I fear she is in distress."

Jasper fell on his knees among the horse's hoofs, and the King answered with a smile:

"Go to your cousin, sir. Heaven forbid that a lady should be in need of help here in our good town. Bear our greetings to Mistress Lyne."

So Dorothy, as she lay there in the little dark room behind the shop, suddenly saw the flashing of gold and steel in the firelight, and became aware that her cousin Frank was kneeling by her side.