

"No treason and no idolatry are there," interrupted Fabian, his clear boy's voice ringing through the room. "For it is Our Lord Jesus Christ present on the altar in whom I believe, and were I a grown man I would do battle for the same."

Topcliffe gave a coarse laugh in which his followers joined, bidding those latter to take hence at once the stripling and to silence his prating. It was at this moment that a thing most curious happened, for the Judas who had betrayed us came forward with tears upon his cheek.

"I pray you, good master Topcliffe," he begged, "for my reward to let this lad go free, he is but a child; and to seek those who are more worthy of your prowess.

But Topcliffe who was enraged that so far he had been unable to discover any trace of what this informer had led him to suspect, and being further angered that a mere child had dared to flout him to his face, only stared in answer to that prayer and cried:

"So you have turned chicken hearted Chris and shall be no more employed in the Queen's service, and look well to it, my man, that you do not fare worse. For this is in truth a poisonous nest, that casts its venom everywhere and where even the callow fledgelings spout treason. It were a good deed to exterminate the breed.

The fellow in great grief would have struggled with them but was rudely beaten off and bid to mind himself, if he would keep a head upon his shoulders, while Fabian said to him in his gentle voice:

Do not grieve for me, Chris; for even were they to slay me, it would be but a short road to Paradise, and up yonder I will pray for you."

For he did not even yet realize that it was this miscreant, who had brought the priest hunters to Overton.

Then he turned to me: Farewell, my dear good Roderick," he said. "It will be all joyful if I go there. I trow it will be more beautiful than the Holy Grail that shone blood red on the armor of the knight."

"What gibberish is that he speaks?" cried Topcliffe. But Fabian with a smile upon his face as though he saw that glorious vision made no response.

As Topcliffe motioned them to lead him away, I threw myself upon my knees and begged the wretch even to