

## The Inglenook.

### A Little Court Lady and a Puritan Maid.

There was a strange hush about the parsonage for the wounded cavalier who had been brought in from the battlefield lay dying. The seven children gathered into the great wash-room farthest from the sick man's chamber, spoke in whispers. Even the baby in Judith's arms was still.

"What will become of Genevieve after her father is dead?" asked rollicking Diccon, in a hushed, unnatural voice.

"The Lady Genevieve will remain with us for the present," answered Judith. "She has no kinsfolk left in England, and it will take long to send a messenger to France. Father says it may be that we shall keep her a whole year."

The demure elder sister spoke soberly, as became a Puritan maid, but her face was full of joy, in spite of the solemnity that hung over the house; for as the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so the heart of the parson's daughter clung to the little court lady who had come to the parsonage to attend her dying father.

Indeed, Lady Genevieve was worth loving, for she had been gifted with rare sympathy and a way of understanding those round her seldom found in princess or peasant. To fifteen-year-old Judith, this little high-born lady, just her own age, was the fairest and dearest creature ever conceived of by any stretch of the imagination. The little head held high like that of a princess, the brown eyes that flashed and beamed and spoke a thousand things, the soft voice trained in the court, and a hundred little gracious ways were so dear to the pastor's daughter that she examined her heart fearfully every night lest it should be a sin to love anyone so much.

Late that evening the cavalier died. He was buried in "God's acre" beside the little church, and Lady Genevieve took her place as a daughter of the pastor's house until word could be sent and brought again from France.

The days that followed were very happy ones to Judith. The hardest time in all her girlish life came when the messenger arrived to take the Lady Genevieve to her far off kindred. The daughter of the loyalists wept sorely at parting with the friends who had been so kind to her. Judith, with Puritan undemonstrativeness, shed no tears, but the sky turned dark to her, and every breath brought a fresh pang of desolation.

The rambling old manor house was full of memories of Genevieve—Genevieve in the hall, walking to and fro with the fretful baby in her arms; Genevieve on the doorstep, singing gay little cavalier songs to the tinkle of a worldly guitar; Genevieve with sleeves rolled up, helping the pastor's wife as any Puritan daughter might have done; Genevieve in her long, white gown, whispering good-night in the spotless little chamber that even six brothers and sisters could not keep from being lonely now! Genevieve! Genevieve!

The days dragged sadly, and the ache in Judith's heart was very hard to bear. Morning, noon and night, she missed Genevieve!

But more serious troubles were coming, when, to the Puritans, even the memory of

happier days was almost obliterated as the passing seasons brought more and more of pain and loss.

The wheel of fortune swung round again and the Puritans were underneath. With all the bitterness engendered by their eighteen years of exile and defeat, the followers of the Merry Monarch exhausted themselves to find measures to crush down their fallen enemies. More than all others they hated the Puritan divines, and Judith's father came under especial displeasure.

The old manor house, which had been the home of her ancestors for generations, was bestowed upon a favorite of the king, and her father, the pious, faithful old pastor, whose kindness to friends and enemies had never failed, lay in prison under sentence of death.

Everything that could be done to save him had been tried in vain.

"If only Diccon were alive, he would find a way," sobbed the mother. But Diccon had fallen at nineteen. There was only Judith and the little ones.

Night after night the pastor's daughter lay staring into the dark with wide open eyes, trying to think of a plan. At last an inspiration came to her.

"Mother," she said, as she crept to her mother's bedside in the chill gray of the morning. "I have thought of one thing more. The duke could save father. I will go to him."

The mother's white face looked ghastly and hopeless in the pale light. "That can avail nothing, my daughter," she said, with despairing gentleness. "The duke was the first to recommend to the king the Act of Uniformity. He hath no sympathy with any dissenter."

"But, mother, I will go to the duchess. The duke is newly married. Surely the heart of a young bride will be touched that such a thing should come to so good a man as father. She will plead with the duke, and a bridegroom will not deny the boon of his bride. Mother, let me go to the duchess!"

It was a forlorn hope, but it was the last. By sunrise, Judith had started on foot to the distant town where the duke and his newly-wedded bride had just taken up their residence. She started bravely, but it was a very forlorn Puritan maiden who limped into the courtyard of the castle five days later, faint with hunger and loss of sleep, and inexpressibly weary and foot-sore.

There was a long delay before she could gain admission, and she could not have done so then had not a homesick young serving-maid of the duchess been touched by her sorrowful plight, and brought the matter to the notice of her lady.

Admitted into the great audience chamber, with its throng of richly clothed ladies with haughty, wearied and indifferent faces, it seemed as if her courage must fail. She was so faint and weak, and the duchess was such a grand personage. The glittering chandeliers flashed darting pains into her aching eyes. The curious, staring faces wavered, and faded before her.

Then some one came swiftly down the long room from the very centre of the gorgeously appareled circle; some one with loving brown eyes, and hands outstretched. It

was Genevieve! Only Genevieve could look like that. Genevieve! And just the same! Genevieve! Genevieve!

With a sudden low cry, Judith fell forward into her friend's arms. When she came to herself, she was in Genevieve's bed, with Genevieve herself bending over her.

She had dreaded lest she could not find words to tell the story; it was easier than it would have been to tell her mother. Genevieve would understand; Genevieve would perceive what, in her incoherence, she left untold; Genevieve, who knew her father, and had been herself an exile, would have no unjust thought.

"But where is the duchess?" cried Judith, rising on her elbow, when the story had been told. "Please, Genevieve, let me get up, and take me to the duchess. I must go now. There is no time for delay."

Into the brown eyes came the light that never shone in any others, as Genevieve's hand pressed her back on to the pillow, and the dear voice said:

"Be not troubled, dear. It will all come right. I will go to the duke now, while you sleep, and, Judith dear, do not fear that he will refuse us, for—I am the duchess."—Sunday-School Visitor.

### Mrs. Woo.

#### A TRUE STORY.

A missionary and his wife were sent to a crowded district in China to establish a station. They had not been there long when they heard of Mrs. Woo. She was a widow of about sixty five years of age, living all alone in a dirty little hut, and earning fifty cents a week by braiding silk. The people said that Mrs. Woo had a demon; and so she had—a demon of an uncontrolled temper. Only angry replies were given to those who spoke to her, and her temper, when fairly aroused, terrified the whole community. The neighbors, poor as they were, said they would gladly bear the expense of a coffin to see her buried.

The missionary's wife frequently passed Mrs. Woo's house, and, whenever she saw the widow sitting by her door, saluted her pleasantly. At first the only reply was a surly muttering or a scowl; but after a while the greeting was returned, and in time the missionary stopped to chat with Mrs. Woo about her silk braiding. It was not long before the missionary began to speak of Christ and to invite Mrs. Woo to the meetings. One Sunday she came to church. Dirty and unkempt, with a defiant scowl. She was a contrast to the women around her. But she learned the Scriptural text, which each week was hung up in front and taught to the entire congregation.

The next Sunday Mrs. Woo was there again, and she continued to attend regularly and to learn the text and hymns. The first change noticed in the woman was a regard for her appearance; then the hard look on her face began to soften, and the outbursts of temper to be less frequent. At the end of a few months Mrs. Woo applied for admission to the church, and was received.

One day she came to the missionary's wife and said: "I want to learn to read the texts that are put up in church every Sabbath. I want to read the hymns and the Bible."

The missionary's wife offered to teach her if she would come to her house every day for one hour. Think of it! an old woman undertaking to learn those difficult Chinese characters, three or four thousand of which must be known in order to read the New Testament! It was a weary task, and one