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## HOLMBY HOUSE.

"The Brand" himself was one of the last to leave the vault. The concluding words of the sermon he had just heard seemed to ring in his ears; the wild, eager, imploring face to be still before his eyes. "Why will ye die?" The appeal seemed at once so appropriate and so natural, the admonition so friendly, the warning so well-timed. It was the spark to the train of gunpowder, the corner-stone to the edifice, the appeal to the feelings where the Reason had long ago been satisfied. Effingham had been for months a Puritan from conviction; he was now, as he was forced to confess himself, a Roundhead and a rebel at his heart.

As he ascended the steps leading from the vault into the shop, an arm was thrust under his own, and looking round he discovered that the only remaining individual of the congregation was about to depart in his company, and signified his intention of so doing in this somewhat uncremonious manner. It was the same person who had stood next him on his first entrance, and whose mutilated head bore so fearful a witness to the sincerity of his professions. "You may trust me," said he abruptly, and without any further apology or explanation; "I am a friend and brother. I can read your soul, young man; and you are *with us*, though not *of us*. 'The voice is Jacob's voice, though the hands are the hands of Esau.' I marked you when the shepherd invited you to the flock; and I cannot be deceived. Will you cast in your lot with the children of the congregation?"

Contrary to his wont, Effingham felt confused, and, so to speak, taken by surprise at this sudden reading of his inmost feelings by a thorough stranger. He could not but acknowledge that they were interpreted aright; yet his bold, masculine mind shrank from the avowal that his actual sentiments were so opposed to the profession he had adopted, nay, to the very clothes he wore. A blush, half of eagerness, half of shame, clothed his bronzed features as he replied, "I would fain see a more righteous party at the head of affairs. I would fain see a Godly Government, and a people living in peace and morality, and the enjoyment of civil as well as religious liberty. But I am a soldier of the Crown; I bear the King's commission; what am I to do? And yet," he added abstractedly, and more as it were to himself than to his companion, "I have often thought ere this that Heaven is not on our side."

"Can you doubt it?" eagerly urged the stranger, his features lighting up with enthusiasm and excitement. "Can you doubt that He whom we serve takes care of his own? Have I not survived the degradation of the pillory, despising the shame, and endured the torment, regardless of the pain, in looking for the martyr's crown—the crown that shall be doubly set with brilliants because of this mutilated head? Listen to me, George Effingham. I know you well, and I have watched you long. It was to snatch you like a brand from the burning that I ventured here into Oxford, into the very camp and stronghold of my enemies, and I will save you from destruction—save you for that my heart yearneth towards you as doth a mother's towards her first-born. They took me prisoner as I neared the godless city, and bound me on one of their war-horses, and brought me into their guard-rooms; and mocked me in the ribaldry of their mirth; and I was dumb, and spake not. Then did one of their captains, a young and well-favored Malignant, whom the soldiers accosted with the blasphemous title of Lord Francis, take pity on me, and bade his men of war to scourge me, and let me go. 'Verily the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' I was stripped and bound to their accursed halberds; and two sons of Belial, tall and strong, and stimulated with strong drink, were appointed for my executioners, when the young Malignant again interposed, and I was suffered to depart, an object of derision and scorn, and cruel mockery, which I pray may not be visited on my persecutors in another world. Then did I flee to the vault in which we met, athirst for the living water, of which to-night we have both drunk freely, and yet not athirst for myself alone. It was borne in upon me that he for whom I have prayed and wrestled would be there too, and I found him for whom I looked seeking his portion with the children of the congregation. Verily, my prayers have been answered. Verily, the truth hath prevailed; and now will not *you*, George Effingham, cast in your lot with the elect for time and for eternity?"

They had already reached the street, and were pacing thoughtfully along in the moonlight. One solitary figure walked slowly on before them. It was the preacher; his head bent down, his whole being wrapped in meditation. They neared him rapidly, and were in the act of passing him when Effingham replied to the fervent appeal of his companion:—

"Could I do it with honor, I would shake to-morrow the very dust of the Court from off my feet. And yet what is earthly honor compared to eternal life? My friend!—if indeed you are my friend—I have never sought counsel yet from mortal man. I ask it now in my present strait, in the agony of my doubts. Are ye not too rash—too violent? Is there no possibility of saving our country, ay, and our religion, without bloodshed? Must we be all at each other's throats, in the name of peace and goodwill? Counsel me, I pray, for I am sorely distracted even to the very harrowing of my soul."

The stranger locked at him with a satisfied air. "The seed has fallen on good ground," he muttered; "let it remain there and fructify." Then added aloud, "I will talk with you again on these matters. The night is now far advanced. To morrow I will seek you at your own quarters. I know where you lie; fear not, George Effingham, I will be with you in secret and unobserved."

With these words he turned up a bye-street, and was soon out of sight, leaving Effingham a few paces in advance of the preacher, who now walked quietly up to him, laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, and looking into his face once more with the same wild, imploring, mournful glance, whispered in his ear, "He that is not with me is against me. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" And he, too, disappeared like some unearthly vision that leaves behind it only a feeling of dread uncertainty and supernatural fear.

Effingham paced on, absorbed in meditation. With a strong sense of religion, that wanted but the stimulus of suffering and consciousness of oppression to be fanned into the flame of fanaticism, he likewise entertained the feelings of a soldier on the point of honor and the sacred duty of remaining stanch to the banner under which he had once enlisted. It was a conflict that tore and vexed the strong man's mind to the verge of madness. Combining a wild and dreamy enthusiasm with keen reasoning powers, the imagination of a poet with the acute perspicuity of a logician, his was a nature above all others calculated to suffer from religious doubts, appreciating as it did, on the one hand, the importance of the subject, and on the other, the probability of error, where error was fatal and irremediable. He longed for the solitude of his own chamber, there to compose his powerful mind, and draw his own conclusions, uninterrupted and alone; and he never greeted his friend Bosville with so inhospitable a welcome, as when he found him installed in that bare apartment which he had hoped was to afford him a refuge for the solitary meditation he required.

"What have you been doing?" exclaimed Humphrey, grasping his friend's hand with a cordiality which had in it something ominously suggestive of a desire for advice or assistance. "Where have you been spending the livelong night? I trust you have employed it better than I have. I have been waiting here for hours to see you; and have read through the whole of that blundering tactician's work without understanding a word of it. George, I'm in a devil of a scrape, and I want you to see me through it!"

"A woman, of course," answered Effingham, jumping, at once, like the rest of mankind, to the most charitable conclusion. "Oh, Humphrey! I thought you knew better. I thought that even in Oxford you were too good to be lured like a kestril by the flutter of a petticoat or the flirt of a fan. Young one, I'm ashamed of you!"

"Nay," replied Humphrey, "It's not so bad as that. Hear me. I've got into a quarrel, and we must fight it out according to the laws of the duello, and I want you to be one of my witnesses on the occasion. The worst of it is, it's with Goring, and you see he is the general of our division."

Effingham drew a long breath, as if inexpressibly relieved. "With Goring?" said he, "and you know he's the best swordsman in the Royal army. Must you always fly at the highest game on the wing? Well, well, go thy ways, Humphrey; for a quiet amiable lad with far too much mother's milk still left in his constitution, thou certainly hast an inordinate liking for the whistle of hot lead, and the clink of cold steel. Nevertheless, if we must fight him, we must; and though it's contrary to my principles, and I had rather you had picked a quarrel with any one of them, except Lunsford, who has brought back a curious thrust in tierce from amongst the Puritans, that they boast no Royalist can parry, yet I cannot leave thee, lad, in the lurch. So open that cupboard, where you will find a flask of mine host's canary, and a couple of tall glasses; and let me know all about it. In the first place, hast got the length of his weapon?" Truly, the human mind, like the chameleon, takes its coloring from surrounding objects. A few minutes ago, and George Effingham was pondering deeply upon no less important a subject than his soul's salvation: behold him now, at the spell of a few words busily engaged in planning a *combat a l'outrance* between his dearest friend and his superior officer. So the young men filled their glasses and measured the length of their weapons, and sat till daybreak arranging the preliminaries of the duel.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### MAN TO MAN.

Morning broke with a thick fog, highly favorable to those who meditated such an undertaking as that of Bosville and his friend. Notwithstanding the licence and immorality which pervaded the Court, and which the so-called laws of honor scarce restrained within the bounds of common decency, Charles, in a fit of conscientiousness, had issued a most stringent order against the practice of duelling, and had threatened to inflict the punishment of mutilation by the loss of the right hand on any who should be found bold enough to transgress in this point—nay, under aggravated circumstances the penalty of death was to be exacted from the principals in the transaction. Such a state of things was not calculated to inspire with confidence the anxious belligerent who found himself thus hemmed in by a variety of evils, of which it was scarcely possible for him to decide on choosing the least. The alternative of being scouted for a coward, or run through an empty stomach in the early morning, is sufficiently unpleasant without the further aggravation of a gallows in perspective, should superior "cunning of fence" or strength of body enable the successful combatant to turn the tables on his adversary; and it is no wonder that Bosville wrapped himself in his cloak with a chill consciousness that the misty autumn morning was more than usually raw and lowering, and a sort of dismal foreboding that the tufts of wet grass beneath his feet, saturated with the night dews, might prove a very cold and uncomfortable resting-place after some half a dozen passes with the keenest rapier in the Royal army.

Perhaps it may have been reflections such as these which caused the young officer to hum a loyal air, expressive of great devotion to his Majesty, a trifle louder than common, and to reply to his companion's eager inquiries with a little more than his usual gaiety and carelessness, though to do him justice every note was in tune, and his manner, though excited, was as courteous and kindly as ever. Mist or sunshine, up or down, in his stirrups on the good sorrel, or on his back amongst the wet grass, there was no *white feather* about Humphrey Bosville.

He and Effingham were first upon the ground. It was a secluded spot at all times, and in a fog impervious at a hundred yards, offered every appearance of uninterrupted secrecy. A meadow some two acres square, surrounded by a high blackthorn hedge not yet denuded of its leaves by the early frosts, and teeming with hips and haws and huge ripe blackberries, overshadowed moreover by a deep close copse of hazels, in which the nuts were ripening and the birds fluttering, and the quiet hares stealing about to crop the rank wet herbage, was no likely place for intruders at that early hour. A flat surface of thick, smooth turf afforded an excellent foothold for the combatants, and a distant farmhouse, from which, although its buildings were themselves unseen, the lowing of cows, the cackling of fowls, and other bucolic sounds were distinctly audible, promised shelter and assistance in the event of fatal consequences to the lawless *rencontre*. The two cavaliers looked about them, wrapped themselves closer in their cloaks, and walked to and fro, making foot tracks in the wet grass to keep themselves warm.

"I like a short blade best, after all," quoth George Effingham, after a few minutes of deep cogitation, during which he had been perfectly silent, and his principal had hummed the same bars of his song over and over again. "I like a short blade best against a delicate fighter. You must force Goring to close quarters, Humphrey, as soon as you can."

"A short blade on foot, a long one on horseback," answered his friend sententiously, and then relapsed into a profound silence. It was evident there was something on the minds of both foreign to the question of carte and tierce, and thrust and parry, and all the jargon of polite murder.

"Not here yet," observed Effingham, once more peering through the fog on the lookout for the enemy. "Zounds, Humphrey, I must speak out, lad! Thou and I are no two raw fledgelings to keep up an affectation of courage by pretending to ignore the presence of danger. Young as thou art I have seen thee tried, and I know thy mettle, man—ay, as well as I know my own sword. 'Twas but yesterday, so to speak, we held the old farmhouse against Ireton's pikes, and we've had many a ride together after Waller before our last affair at Newbury. Look ye here, lad; Goring's a good blade. He's always in practice, and he's got a trick of turning his wrist down and coming in here just under your elbow with a pass that has put many a tall fellow on the grass. You may get it in a queer place, Humphrey—mind, I don't say you will. Is there anything I can do for you, lad, any last word I can carry, if you should go back feet foremost into Oxford?"

Bosville's face brightened considerably. He pressed his friend's hand as he replied:

"I have been thinking of it all the morning, George, but it wasn't for me, you know, to begin on such a subject. I don't mind running my chance any more than my neighbors; and somehow, though my life has become dearer to me in the last twenty-four hours than it ever was before, yet I feel as if I could lose it contentedly and happily too. There is one favor you can do me, George, and that I would entrust to no man alive but yourself; one that I would only entrust to you at a moment like the present. George, I can depend upon you, I know. Give me your hand again."

Effingham shook him cordially by the hand. "Name it," he said; "if I'm alive I'll fulfil it for you."

"'Tis but a few words, a short message to deliver," replied Bosville, with a smile that softened his whole face. "If I fall, and *only* if I fall, seek out a lady in the court—you have never seen her, but you know her by name—it is—it is Mistress Mary Cave" (he blushed and hesitated when he mentioned her name); "give her a glove you will find in my doublet, and tell her that I could not as a gentleman avoid this foolish quarrel, and that I regretted it chiefly because I had wished to devote my life wholly and exclusively to my sovereign. Tell her I have not forgotten what she said to me; that I repeated with my last breath, "Loyalty before all!" And now, my dear Effingham, promise me that you will not fight if you can help it. It is a foolish custom, and leads to no good that the seconds should be involved in the quarrel of their principals. Do me this favor—promise me this, quick!—here they come."

Even while he spoke two Cavaliers, cloaked and wrapped up like Humphrey and Effingham, loomed through the fog as they surmounted the stile which gave them admittance at one angle of the orchard. They were talking and laughing loudly. It seemed they had neither regard for consequence nor fear of detection

It was the fashion of the day to affect a haughty carelessness of bloodshed, and to look upon a duel as a pleasant opportunity for the interchange of lively sallies and jocose remarks.

Indeed, until the late Royal edict it had been the practice for each of the original combatants to appear upon the ground attended by two, three, sometimes even as many as four assistants, chosen as a mark of the deepest respect amongst his own intimate friends. As these gentlemen esteemed it a high point of honor and an unpleasant privilege to engage their points with each other on their own accounts, and totally irrespective of the quarrels of their principals, it would sometimes happen that ten couples of reasoning beings, hitherto constant associates and sworn friends, would be doing battle to the death upon such weighty question of dispute as the length of a lady's eyelashes or the color of her breast-knots. Now, however, the threats of death and mutilation issued from the Council, and which extended to all concerned in a duel, whether principals or witnesses, had somewhat damped the ardor of the Royalists for this particular amusement, and Goring had considered himself sufficiently befriended by the single presence of his worthless associate, wicked Tom Lunsford, on whose arm he leaned heavily as he approached the ground, limping along with an affectation of more than his usual lameness, probably with a view of enhancing his adversary's astonishment at the activity which he would too surely display when stripped and with steel in his hand.

He doffed his hat till its plume swept the grass, with a bow of supreme courtesy to his antagonist, who returned the salute with equally studied politeness; it being scrupulously exacted by the laws of arms that the duellist should assume an attitude of the most deferential humility towards the individual whose blood he proposed to shed, whilst to all else on the ground it was considered good taste to behave with a boisterous cordiality bordering upon the jocose. Goring, too, was in the best of humors, for in addition to the natural gratification which he derived from all scenes of this kind, he had passed the two or three previous hours much to his own satisfaction in imbibing burnt canary, and as it was too late to go to bed, in flinging a quiet main or two with his second, which resulted, as usual, in his winning largely. True, Tom Lunsford would never pay him; but still there was the prestige of success, and he now proposed himself the pleasure of running Bosville gracefully through the body, as an appropriate wind-up to his night's amusement and preparation for his day's duties and interview on business with the King.

"I fear we have kept you waiting, Captain Effingham," he remarked with a cordial greeting to that gentleman, for Goring knew every officer in his division, and his private pursuits and habits, better than those who only observed the surface of the general's character would have suspected. "My lameness must be my excuse, though Tom and I have hurried hither as fast as we could. Lunsford, let me present to you Captain George Effingham, with whom, if you mean to try any of your cursed Puritan tricks, you will meet with your match, for he has been with the crop-ears later than yourself."

Effingham started and colored violently; his last night's visit was then known—and to Goring! What if he should be denounced, seized, examined as a traitor! perhaps lose his life without striking another blow on either side. For a moment he forgot the duel and all about it. The image of Caryl and his martyr-friend rose upon his mind. What would those good men think of him now—what was he even now about to do? Nevertheless habit, as it always is, was too strong for conscience; he mastered himself with an effort, returned Goring's malicious leer with a haughty though respectful stare, and saluted Sir Thomas Lunsford with the punctilious politeness due to one whose sword-point might probably that morning be at his throat. The later, with a facetious remark anent the coldness of the weather, and a wish expressed with much unction, for a cup of burnt sack, produced a small piece of tape from beneath his cloak, and proceeded to measure with it the swords of the combatants. "Right to a barley corn," remarked the cavalier, returning to each the rapier he had borrowed of him with a courteous bow. "The morning is too raw to waste your time in any further preliminaries, therefore, gentlemen, if you please, we will strip and get to work at once."

"Hold!" interrupted Effingham, as the duellists stripped to their doublets and hose, first baring their breasts to show that no unfair defences, no secret coat of mail or proof cuirass lurked beneath their garments, took up their positions with watchful eager eyes and bare quivering blades, and an ugly smile on each man's countenance, paler than his wont, though each was brave, and wearing the peculiar set look that may be seen any day on the human face, ay, even in a common street fight, when man is fairly pitted against man. "Hold, gentlemen! this duel is not to the death. Sir Thomas Lunsford, by your leave we will draw and stand across our men; at the first flesh-wound we can then strike their swords up, and proclaim satisfaction given and received!" As he spoke the two principals lowered their points, but etiquette forbade that either should speak a word; strictly, they ought to have appeared totally unconscious that any remark had been made, but although their ground was taken they had not yet crossed swords, and the duel had not begun.

Lunsford laughed loudly as he replied, "Hardly, Captain Effingham; and think what cold work it would be for you and me standing to look on. Besides, sir," he added, in a graver voice, "consider the provocation, a blow struck and not returned! Really, Captain, your notions of honor must have been somewhat tarnished amongst your Puritan friends, when you can talk of bringing out four cavaliers such a long-w alk on such a dark morning for a mere child's-play you describe. No, sir, we decline anything but the last satisfaction. Be good enough to waste no more time about it, but place your man and begin!"

"Their blood be on their own head!" muttered Effingham, as he advanced to Bosville once more, and, squeezing his hand, placed him on the exact spot which the laws of the duello marked out for him; then casting his cloak and plumed hat upon the ground drawing his trusty rapier and talking up his own position, "on guard," exactly six paces—the prescribed distance—on the right of his friend, he called upon Lunsford to do likewise, reminding him that "when a duel is to be fought out to death, it is incumbent on the seconds to mark their sense of the gravity of the business by engaging themselves," and adding, with peculiar courtesy, "I hope Sir Thomas Lunsford will not disappoint me of a lesson in fencing from the best blade now in Oxford."

"At your service, sir," replied Sir Thomas Lunsford, who could scarcely refuse to accept so rational an invitation, but whose secret inclinations for a "pass or two" were but little stimulated by George's square muscular figure, easy attitude of practised swordsmanship and dark determined face, on which a remarkably dangerous look was gathering about the brows. As he spoke he also drew, and placed himself in position, and the four men crossed their thirsty blades at the same moment, with the same terrible expression, the family likeness inherited from Cain coming out fierce and ghastly on each forbidding face.

Humphrey Bosville was a young, active man, a complete swordsman, and of a bold determined nature, but he was no match for his antagonist, who, to the confirmed strength of mature manhood, added the ready facility of incessant practice, and the immovable calmness peculiar to his own cold vigilant nature. Man of pleasure, drunkard, debauchee as he was, Goring's passions, however strongly they might be agitated, worked below the surface; nothing ever seemed to shake his nerve or discompose his equanimity. Even now, fighting to the death, an exasperated enemy in his front, and a glittering small-sword thirsting for his blood within a few inches of the laced bosom of his shirt, his eye was as steady, his color as unvarying, his whole demeanor as cool and insolent, as though he had been standing in the presence-chamber or sitting at the council. In this he had a great advantage over his adversary, who, with all the exciteable feelings of youth, became less and less wary as he warmed to his work, and once or twice laid himself open to a thrust that might have put an end to the combat by inflicting on him a pretty smart-flesh wound, such as should incapacitate him from again holding a sword for a while. This however, was not Goring's object. In a conversation with his second on their way to the ground, he had laid a bet of ten gold pieces that he would run his antagonist through the body without himself receiving a scratch, and he had made up his mind to do so by bringing into play a thrust in tierce for which he was celebrated, and which if unskilfully parried was a certainty. This deadly manœuvre, however, to be successfully carried out, demanded a very exact measurement of space, so, while Humphrey attacked fiercely again and again with all the impetuous ardour of his disposition, the more practised duellist lunged and parried and returned and traversed here and there, and drew his man inch by inch within the fatal distance.

In the mean time, Sir Thomas Lunsford and George Effingham, exchanging, to use the language of the day, "a friendly pass or two," to fill up the time, were sufficiently engaged with their own struggle to have but little observation to share for their principals. The knight, however, weakened by his excesses, and of feebler frame than his antagonist, soon found himself a mere child in the hands of so powerful a fighter as the Cavalier captain. Twice he tried the ruse he had learned amongst the Puritans, and each time he found himself foiled by the iron arm and wrist opposed to him; twice he was driven from his ground, and only regained it by making in turn a furious attack, which left him each time more faint and breathless than before. Wicked Tom Lunsford thought his hour was come; and so it would have come indeed had Effingham been such another as himself; but George's heart, though he knew it not, was softened by his last night's company and conversation. Amidst the struggles of conscience had arisen a stranger—rather sense of responsibility; and even in the heat and hurry of the assault, something seemed to whisper, "Shall this man's blood too be on thy head?" So he contented himself with forcing his adversary to a disadvantage, and then rapidly disarming him by sheer superiority of strength.

As Lunsford's sword flew several paces from his hand, a heavy fall and a deep groan withdrew Effingham's attention from his own helpless enemy. Bosville was down at full length upon the wet grass, and Goring was wiping his bloody rapier carefully upon his glove ere he returned it to its sheath.

It was no time for punctilious courtesy. The accursed thrust had done its duty well. Humphrey's face was deadly pale; there were livid circles round his eyes, and the dark blood was welling up from his chest and saturating the white front of his delicate Flanders shirt. George's heart stopped beating as he knelt over his comrade to examine the wound. Even Goring was touched; and the man who had inflicted the injury—the man who but one short minute ago had hate burning in his eye and murder lurking in his heart—would have given his best horse, little as he valued human life, that he had left the deed undone.

"Take care of him, Tom," said he, wrapping his cloak around him as he prepared to return to Oxford by another route, the only precaution he thought it necessary to take against discovery, "and mind you owe me ten gold pieces fairly won. D——it, I wish I hadn't too," he added, as he strode away; "he was a fine bold lad, and the prettiest horseman I had in my whole division."

Lunsford and Effingham, now fast friends, lifted poor Humphrey between them, and obtaining assistance at the farmhouse, bore him back with them to Oxford. As they entered the old city, morning services had but just concluded, and the bells were ushering in the day with a holy peaceful chime. And yet what a day's work had these men already finished! what a host of evil passions had they called up only to be allayed with blood! and now the blood was spilt, were the passions raging one whit less fiercely than before? Would not fresh provocation produce fresh crime, and so on, *ad infinitum*? Sin seems to be like hunger and thirst, repentance but the lassitude of repletion; anon we hunger and thirst again, and eat and drink our fill once more—only this once more—and then we are sorry for it, and promise faithfully this transgression shall be the last—till the next time—and so *audax omnia perpeti gens humana ruit*; and knowing this, we, who are never weary of requiring forgiveness, can refuse to forgive each other. Oh, man! man! created but a "little lower than the angels," how much higher wouldst thou be than the devils, if left to perish helpless by thyself.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### CROSS PURPOSES.

Sir Giles Allonby, whistling cheerfully as he emerged from his lodgings to commence the military duties of his day, was no less horrified than astonished at the first sight that met his eyes in the street. A limp, helpless body, from which the life seemed to be ebbing rapidly away, covered with a dark cloak, was being borne upon a rude litter, formed hastily of a couple of hurdles, and a hedgestake or two, by four stout rustics, whom Sir Thomas Lunsford, with many oaths and entreaties, was adjuring to move as easily as possible to their burthen. Effingham, with a lace handkerchief in his hand, was wiping the froth from the lips of the sufferer, and the countenance of each Cavalier was darkened with an expression of ominous foreboding as to the result. Sir Giles, who expected to encounter nothing more alarming at that early hour than a tumbril of ammunition, a wagon-load of rations, or a drunken trooper deserving of the guard-room returning from his night's debauch, was fairly startled out of his self command by the ghastly procession. "Zounds, Tom," said he, laying his hand upon Lunsford's arm, "what mischief have you been at already since daybreak? This is some of your accursed tilting-work. I'll be sworn. Your staccatos and passados, and cursed Italian tricks of fence, that leave a good back-swordsman as helpless as a salmon on a gravel walk. Who is it now that your quips and your punctilios, and your feints and your ins-and-outs, have placed heels uppermost, when the King sadly lacks soldiers, and every man's life is due to his sovereign? Who is it? Tell me, man, before I turn the guard out, and bring ye all up before the Council, who will take such order with ye that ye shall never so much as handle a riding-wand again!"

Lunsford, with all his impudence, was fairly brow-beaten by the old man's vehemence. "Hold, Sir Giles," he gasped out, quite humbly. "The fight was a fair fight, and Captain Bosville brought it on himself. There is life in him still, Sir Giles, and leech-craft may bring him round yet. What, man, 'tis but a hole in his doublet, after all, and the fight was a fair fight, and fought with proper witnesses; ask Captain Effingham if 'twas not."

"Bosville!" exclaimed old Sir Giles, the tears filling fast in his keen blue eyes, though with the instinctive repugnance of a good heart to a bad one, he turned from Lunsford, and dashed them away with the back of his hand. "Bosville; the best lad in the whole Royal army. The bravest, the kindest, the cheeriest. Here the old man's voice faltered, and he was forced, as it were, to bully himself into composure again. "Had it been ranting Will Scarthe, now, or fierce Nick Crispe, or thyself, Tom, who art never out of mischief save when the rest of us are fighting, I had said never a word. But Bosville," he muttered under his breath, "Bosville was worth a thousand of ye all. Within, there!" he cried, raising his voice, and turning back towards his own door. "Grace! Mary! make ready the tapestry chamber. He lies nowhere but here. Steady there, men; bear him gently up the steps. Do you, sir," to Effingham, "run for a surgeon; one practises at yonder shop, where you see the pole. Sound a gallop, sir, and hasten, for your life. My service to you, Sir Thomas Lunsford; if this turns out badly, it will be a black day for some of ye when Prince Rupert comes to hear of it, or my name's not Giles Allonby."

As he spoke, the old Cavalier officer busied himself in removing the cloak from Bosville's helpless form, and assisted in bearing him up the steps, and into his own house, where his servants relieved the rustics from their burthen. Those philosophers, having been dismissed with a handsome gratuity, returned to their original obscurity, enlivened as long as the money lasted by a strenuous course of tippling, and many a revised version of the adventure in which they had been engaged; whilst Humphrey, now for the first time exhibiting signs of returning consciousness, was carefully conveyed to the tapestried chamber, and there laid under a magnificent canopy, adorned with ominously funereal feathers, on a huge state bed.

As they bore him upstairs, a pale scared face was seen looking over the banisters, belonging to no less important a person than Faith herself, the conscious cause of all this disturbance and bloodshed. Breathless and trembling, she rushed instinctively to Mary Cave's chamber, to bid her, as the bolder of the two, break the sad news to Grace Allonby; but Mary had not returned from her early service about the person of the Queen, to whom she was again attached, and Faith, beside herself with mingled feelings of terror, pity, and remorse, was fain to seek her own pallet, and bury her face in the pillow in a fit of hysterical weeping, affording but little relief to her own agitation, and calculated to lead to no very decided result.

Thus it came to pass that Grace Allonby, leaving her chamber, neat, well dressed, and composed, to commence her daily duties was met in the passage by three or four servants bearing that which to all appearance was a corpse, and although Sir Giles considerately interposed his tall person between his daughter and the ghastly burthen, one glimpse which she caught was sufficient to assure her loving heart that it was Humphrey, and none but he, who lay stretched out there before her eyes.

Had Grace been a heroine of romance, she would have had two courses open to her. She might either have given vent to one piercing shriek, which would have rung in her listeners' ears till their dying day, and then, letting all her back hair down at once, have clasped both hands upon her heart, and fallen stone dead in the effort, but always with a tasteful regard to the disposition of her draperies, on the floor; or, with a lofty disdain for all feeling in such an emergency, but with a stony glare and a white statue-like face, she might have bled him herself on her own responsibility with her own bodkin, and so, seeing he had already bled nearly to the verge of the next world on his own account, have perfected the sacrifice of the man she loved, and exhibited at the same time her own presence of mind and mistaken notions of the healing art. But Grace Allonby was no heroine, only a loving, timid, trusting young woman, so her knees knocked together, and her lips grew quite white and twitched while she spoke, but she managed to clasp her hands upon Sir Giles's shoulder, and to ask him what she wanted.

"Oh, father, father! he's not quite—" she could not bring herself to say the word—" he's only wounded; only wounded, father!"

And she could not ask if he was dead, so she could not bring herself to think him dead. 'Tis always so with the young, with those who have never known sorrow. There is an elasticity about the heart that has never been broken down, which bears up and protests as it were against the possibility of despair. Who knows how often she had brooded over her love, the love she scarcely confessed even to herself in the depths of her virgin heart; how many probabilities she had calculated, and possibilities she had fancied; how many chances had occurred to her that he might not perhaps care for her; that he might think her too plain, though her glass gave the lie to that; or too ignorant, or too humble and foolish and girlish for such a Paladin as she imagined him; how he might be separated from her by accident or duty, or her father's command, but by death—no, that had never entered her head; it could not be, she loved him so; it could not be. When George Effingham returned with the doctor, and the man of science, after shaking his own head and feeling his patient's pulse, and probing his wound, and otherwise putting him to no small pain and discomfort, declared that life was still hanging by a thread, a thread, moreover, that only required great care, and his own constant skill, to become once more the silver cord which Goring's rapier had so nearly severed, she felt scarcely grateful enough for the good news, she had been so persuaded of it all along. She never seriously thought he was going to die. He would get well, of course, quite well, and she would nurse him and wait upon him; there could be no harm in that, and it would take a long time to restore him, and when he was *quite* strong again, not before, he might leave them and go back to the army, to be wounded perhaps again. All this was consolatory, no doubt; nevertheless she went to her chamber, and prayed her heart out upon her knees, weeping plentifully, you may be sure, and such prayers never hurt a wounded man yet, to our thinking, nor a strong one either, for the matter of that. Happy he for whom such tears are shed, such orisons offered up.

She soon came back, with a pale steady face and red eyes, to take her place in the sick chamber, where, according to the custom of the time, she quickly established herself as nurse and watcher, and general directress of the whole establishment. There was less mock modesty in the days of which we write than in the present; less fancied evil, less of that strange prudish virtue which jumps at once to the most improper conclusions, and which, if there be any truth in the old adage, that "to the pure all things are pure," must have some dark mental spots of its own to justify its suspicions. Though the manners of the Court were sufficiently corrupt, the great bulk of the higher classes were to the full as correct and decorous in their demeanor as those of the present time; while for true purity and kindliness of heart, the charity that thinketh no evil, the generosity that forgiveth wrong, who shall say that the keen, high-minded Cavaliers, and their simple, straightforward dames, had not the best of it, as compared with the framework of our own cold, conventional, and somewhat cowardly state of society? with whose members the prime moral maxim is founded, not on what you do, but what people say of you; who wink conveniently enough at the infraction of every commandment in the Decalogue, provided you are scrupulous to keep the eleventh, which they have themselves added to it, and which says, "thou shalt not be found out!"

George Effingham, returning from the doctor's house, he having accompanied that skilful practitioner home to his surgery, with lint, bandages, divers curiously colored phials, and other munitions of the pharmacopœia, was somewhat startled to find an exceedingly fair and graceful young lady established in supreme command of the sick-room, and issuing her orders with the tact and decision of one to whom such a situation was neither new nor confusing. Indeed shrewd blowsabad been going nowfor sometime between the Cavaliers and Roundheads, and Grace had already been often present at the healing of a broken-head, a sabre-cut, of the dangerous orifice of a musket-ball. Therefore George, as we have said, thrusting his grim face into the half darkened chamber started as though at the presence of an angel of light when his eyes encountered those of the young lady, and it was with a degree of bashfulness somewhat foreign to his nature that he assisted his new acquaintance in the disposition of the coverlets and pillows, and other arrangements for the ease of the sufferer, question and reply passing at the same time in subdued whispers, which promoted a far closer acquaintance in a short half-hour than would have sprung up under ordinary circumstances in a month.

Perhaps a woman never appears to such advantage as when tending the sick, moving gently through the room, or bending tenderly over the couch of the sufferer. George followed her about with his eyes, and wondered as he gazed. This was the sort of woman he had never seen before, or, if he had, only in the conventional circles of society, never as now in her own home, that home's prime ornament and chiefest blessing. Like many another, he had not arrived at manhood without experiencing certain partialities for those of the other sex,—here dazzled by a sparkling eye, there wooed by a saucy smile; but his experience had hitherto lain amongst women of a far different class and character from Grace Allonby. Phyllis was all he could wish, nay, more boisterous in her glee than accorded with George's melancholy temperament; but Phyllis must first of all have a purse of gold chucked into her lap—after that who so kind as Phyllis? Lalage, again, required constant devotion; but it must be offered at her shrine in public for all the world to see, or it was valueless, and he who would win her smiles must be content to take them as they came, share alike with fifty rivals. So George's higher feelings soon revolted from free, flaunting, flirting Lalage. He had got tired of woman's society altogether, had devoted himself ardently to his profession, was plunged heart and soul in the whirlpool of controversy, engaged in a struggle of conscience against habit, prejudice, loyalty, and worldly honor; and now, just at the moment when of all times in his career he had least leisure and least inclination to wear a woman's chain, burst upon him the vision of what had been his ideal all his life—a pure, high-bred, high-minded girl, simple and sincere as the veriest wild flower in the woodland, yet cultivated and refined as the most fashionable lady about the court. Alas, poor George Effingham! It was in short and broken whispers that he explained to her the origin of the duel which had terminated so seriously. For once George Effingham found himself quite eloquent as he defended his friend, and threw all the blame of the affair on the aggressor. "It was your maid as I understand, Mistress Grace, who was so shamefully insulted by Goring, and Humphrey could not do otherwise, as a man of honor and a gentleman, than interpose in her behalf. Had it been any other swordsman in the army we should have had the best of it; but I knew from the first that trick in tierce of the General's would be too much for the young one. You see he feinted twice, doubled, disengaged, and then came in under the arm—thus. Pardon me, madam," said George, interrupting himself as he caught the bewildered expression of his listener's countenance, and half laughing that his own clumsy enthusiasm should have betrayed him into a disquisition on swordsmanship with a young lady. "Pardon me, you cannot be interested in such details, but indeed it was no fault of Humphrey's that he was led into this embroilment. He was always a chivalrous lad, and a gallant, and one who would face any odds to defend the weak against the strong." And then he went on to tell her how the young soldier now stretched out so pale and helpless on that bed had saved the child in a deadly cross fire at the attack of a small redoubt in Flanders, and had held the back door of the farm-house in Wiltshire so gallantly with his single rapier against half a score of Ireton's pikes; and how he had given quarter to the tall corporal that thrust at him from behind after he had taken him prisoner at Kineton; and sundry other anecdotes illustrative of Humphrey's chivalry and Humphrey's tender heart.

Grace listened with clasped hands and streaming eyes. "I was sure it could not be his fault," she said; and equally sure she would have been doubtless, had all the witnesses sworn and all the juries in England found the reverse. Will any amount of proof destroy a woman's faith in the man she has once taken into her heart? On the contrary, it seems that the worse he behaves, the closer she huddles him up and hides him there, and defies all truth and reason to make her think ill of her nestling. Verily he who has a place in that sanctum should strive to bear himself worthily of such unbounded faith and constancy. "I was *sure* it could not be his fault," she repeated, and removed the locks that had fallen across his brow, and propped the cushion under his shoulders with such a tender caressing hand that George Effingham turned away his head to hide his emotion; yet there was a strange feeling as of pain creeping about *his* heart too.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## WONDERFUL SCRIPTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC FACTS FROM THE GREAT PYRAMID.

**Carefully Selected from the Most Eminent Learned and Scientific Writers on the Subject, viz., Prof. Piazzi Smyth Astronomer Royal of Scotland, Rev. J. A. Seiss, D. D., of Philadelphia, W. H Wilson, etc., and Other Scientific Investigators.**

"Aside from the theory advanced by many learned men throughout Europe, that the real architect of the Great Pyramid, under King Cheops, was none other than Melchisedek, and that the mysterious mass was constructed by Divine inspiration, it is nevertheless true that it contains an infinite number of curious facts, embracing the mathematical, physical, astronomical, geographical, and meteorological sciences, seemingly unknown at the date of its construction—2,170 years before the advent of Christ—and which have only been revealed to us four thousand years later. Among those facts which have recently excited much attention and speculation among the learned, we may quote the following:—1. The relation of the circumference of the circle to its diameter, the solution as near as possible of the great problem of the quadrature of the circle. 2. The length of the rotatory axis of the earth. 3. The exact distance of the earth from the sun (a little less than 92 millions) in computing which modern astronomy, only a few years ago made an error of many million miles. 4. The mean density, and consequently the weight of the earth. 5. The station of its own date, and of the singular astronomical circumstances which accompanied it at the time when the first of the Pleiades was at the equinox of spring, and when one of the most remarkable stars of the Egyptian firmament—removed ninety degrees from the Dragon—was the most brilliant or the most visible star in the neighborhood of the pole. 6. A measure of latitude, it being exactly thirty degrees latitude north. 7. The geographical centre of the earth's surface. 8. The geometrical centre of that great Delta of the Nile, perhaps the greatest and most fertilizing watercourse in the known world. 9. An exact and logical system of weights and measures, constructed in accordance with invariable principles, differing little from the British system actually in force. 10. A clearly established prophecy foretelling the exodus from Egypt, the precise year of our Savi