Or, The Love Story of Charles Brandon and Mary Tudor, the King's Sister, and Happening In the Reign of His August Majesty King Henry the Eighth

Roweltten and Rendered Into Modern English From Sir Edwin By EDWIN CASKODEN [CHARLES MAJOR]

But the winning of Jane was not so easy a matter as my vanity had prompted me to think. I started with a handicap, since Jane had heard my declaration to Mary, and I had to undo all that before I could do anything else. Try the same thing yourself with a spirited girl, naturally faughter lov-



"Don't believe one word she says Sir Edwin."

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ing and coy, if you think it a simple easy undertaking. I began to fear I should need another antidote long before I heard her sweet soul-satisfying "yes." I do not believe, however, could have found in the whole world an antidote to my love for Jane.

In the course of my talk with Brandon I had, as I have said, told him the story of Mary, with some slight variations and coloring, or, rather, discoloring, to make it appear a little less to my discredit than the barefaced truth would have been. I told him also about Jane, and, I grieve and blush to say, expressed a confidence in that direction I little felt.

It had been perhaps a year since my adventure with Mary, and I had taken all that time trying to convince Jane that I did not mean a word I had said to her mistress and that I was very earnest in everything I said to her. But Jane's ears would have heard just as much had they been the pair of beautiful little shells they so much resembled. This troubled me a great deal, and the best I could hope was

that she held me on probation. On the evening of the day Mary came home to Greenwich, Brandon asked: "Who and what on earth is this wonderful Mary I hear so much about? They say she is coming home today, about it. I hear nothing but 'Mary is coming! Mary is coming! Mary! Mary!' from morning until night. They say Buckingham is beside himself for love of her. He has a wife at home, if I am right, and is old enough to be her father. Is he not?" I assented, and Brandon continued: "A man who will make such a fool of himself about a woman is woefully weak. The men of

the court must be poor creatures." He had much to learn about the power of womanhood. There is nothing on earth-but you know, as much about it as I do.

"Wait until you see her," I answered "and you will be one of them also. I flatter you by giving you one hour with her to be heels over head in love. With an ordinary man it takes one-sixtieth of that time. So you see I pay a compliment to your strength of mind."

"Nonsense!" broke in Branden. "Do you think I left all my wits down in Suffolk? Why, man, she is the sister of the king and is sought by kings and emperors. I might as well fall in love with a twinkling star. Then, besides, my heart is not on my sleeve. You must think me a fool-a poor, enervated, simpering fool like-like-well, like one of those nobles of England. Don't put me down with them, Caskoden, if

you would remain my friend." We both laughed at this sort of talk, which was a little in advance of the time for a noble, though an idiot to the most of England was a noble still, God

created and to be adored. Now, when Mary returned the whole court rejoiced, and I was anxious for Brandon to meet her and that they should become friends. There would be no trouble in bringing this meeting about, since, as you know, I was upon terms of intimate friendship with Mary and was the avowed and, as I thought, at least hoped, all but accepted lover of her first lady in waiting and dearest friend, Lady Jane Bolingbroke. Brandon, it is true, was not noble, no even an English knight, while I was both knighted and noble, but he was of as old a family as England boasted and near of kin to some of the best blood of the land. The meeting came about sooner than I expected and was very near a failure. It was on the sec ond morning after Mary's arrival at Greenwich. Brandon and I were walking in the palace park when we met Jane, and I took the opportunity to make these, my two best loved friends,

acquainted. "How do you do, Master Brandon?" said Lady Jane, holding out her plump little hand, so white and soft and dear to me. "I have heard something of you the last day or so from Sir Edwin, but had begun to fear he was not going to give me the pleasure of knowing you. I hope I may see you often now and that I may present you to my mis-

tress." With this her eyes, bright as overgrown dewdrops, twinkled with a mis chievous little smile, as if to say, "Ah, another large handsome fellow to make

Brandon acquiesced in the wish she had made, and after the interchange

ht, 1898 and 1801, by the Bowen-Merrill Company of a few words Jane said her mistress was waiting at the other side of the grounds and that she must go. She then ran off with a laugh and a courtesy and was soon lost to sight behind the shrubbery at the turning of the

walk. In a short time we came to a summer house near the marble boat landing, where we found the queen and some of her ladies awaiting the rest of their party for a trip down the river which had been planned the day before. Brandon was known to the queen and several of the ladies, although he had not been formally presented at an audience. Many of the king's friends enjoyed a considerable intimacy with the whole court without ever receiving the public stamp of recognition socially

which goes with a formal presentation. The queen, seeing us, sent me off to bring the king. After I had gone she asked if any one had seen the Princess Mary, and Brandon told her Lady Jane had said she was at the other side of the grounds. Thereupon her majesty asked Brandon to find the princess and to say that she was wanted.

Brandon started off and soon found a bevy of girls sitting on some benches under a spreading oak, weaving spring flowers. He had never seen the princess, so could not positively know her. As a matter of fact he did know her as 300n as his eyes rested on her, for she could not be mistaken among a thousand. There was no one like her or anything near it. Some stubborn spirit of opposition, however, prompted him to pretend ignorance. All that he had heard of her wonderful power over men and the servile manner in which they fell before her had aroused in him a spirit of antagonism and had begotten a kind of distaste beforehand. He was wrong in this, because Mary was not a coquette in any sense of the word and did absolutely nothing to attract men except to be so beautiful, sweet and winning that they could not let her alone, for all of which surely the prince of fault finders himself could

in no way blame her. She could not help that God had seen fit to make her the fairest being on earth, and the responsibility would have to lie where it belonged-with God. Mary would have none of it. Her attractiveness was not a matter volition or intention on her part. She was too young for deliberate snare setting, though it often begins very early in life, and made no effort to attract men. Man's love was too cheap a thing for her to strive for, and I am sure in her heart she would infinitely have preferred to live without it-that is, until the right one should The right one is always on his way and, first or last, is sure to come to every woman-sometimes, alas, too late—and when he comes, be it late or early, she crowns him, even though he be a long eared ass. Blessed crown, and thrice blessed blindness—else there

were fewer coronations. So Brandon stirred this antagonism and determined not to see her manifold perfections, which he felt sure were exaggerated, but to treat her as he would the queen, who was black and leathery enough to frighten a satyr, with all respect due to her rank, but with his own opinion of her nevertheless safely stored away in the back of

Coming up to the group, Brandon took off his hat and, with a graceful little bow that let the curls fall around his face, asked, "Have I the honor to find the Princess Mary among these

ladies?" Mary, who I know you will at once say was thoroughly spoiled, without turning her face toward him replied: "Is the Princess Mary a person of so little consequence about the court that

she is not known to a mighty captain of the guard?" He wore his guardsman's doublet, and she knew his rank by his uniform.

She had not noticed his face. Quick as a flash came the answer: "I cannot say of what consequence the Princess Mary is about the court. It is not my place to determine such matters. I am sure, however, she is not here, for I doubt not she would have given a gentler answer to a message from the queen. I shall continue my search." With this he turned to leave and the ladies, including Jane, who was there and saw it all and told me of it, awaited the bolt they knew would come, for they saw the lightning gath-

ering in Mary's eyes. Mary sprang to her feet with an angry flush in her face, exclaiming: "Insolent fellow, I am the Princess Mary. If you have a message, deliver it and be gone." You may be sure this sort of treatment was such as the cool headed, daring Brandon would repay with usury; so, turning upon his heel and almost presenting his back to Mary, he

spoke to Lady Jane: "Will your ladyship say to her highness that her majesty the queen awaits her coming at the marble landing?".

"No need to repeat the message Jane," cried Mary. "I have ears and can hear for myself." Then, turning to Brandon, "If your insolence will permit you to receive a message from so insignificant a person as the king's sister. ] beg you to say to the queen that I shall be with her presently."

He did not turn his face toward Mary, but bowed again to Jane.

LAUGH LINES.

Greening-Mrs. Weeleigh's husband has only been dead six weeks, but she is now wearing second mourning, How do you account for that? Browning-Oh, that's all right. She's through misunderstanding has been looking for a second husband, I under-

"May I ask your ladyship further to say for me that if I have been guilty of any discourtesy I greatly regret it. My failure to recognize the Princess Mary grew out of my misfortune in never having been allowed to bask in the light of her countenance. I cannot believe the fault lies at my door, and I hope for her own sake that her highness on second thought will realize how ungentle and unkind some one else has been." And with a sweeping courtesy he walked quickly down the path.

"The insolent wretch!" cried one.
"He ought to hold papers on the pillory," said another. "Nothing of the sort," broke in sensible, fearless little Jane. "I think the Lady Mary was wrong. He could not

have known her by inspiration."

"Jane is might," exclaimed Mary, whose temper, if short, was also short lived and whose kindly heart always set her right if she but gave it a little time. Her faults were rather those of education than of nature. "Jane is right. It was what I deserved. I did not think when I spoke and did not really mean it as it sounded. He acted like a man and looked like one, too, when he defended himself. I warrant the pope at Rome could not run over him with impunity. For once I have found a real live man, full of manliness. I saw him in the lists at Windsor a week ago, but the king said his name was a secret, and I could not learn it. He seemed to know you, Jane. Who is he? Now tell us all you know. The queen can wait."

And her majesty waited on a girl's curiosity

I had told Jane all I knew about Brandon, so she was prepared with full information and gave it. She teld the princess who he was, of his terrible duel with Judson, his bravery and adventures in the wars, his generous gift to his brother and sisters, and, lastly, "Sir Edwin says he is the best read man in the court and the bravest, truest heart in Christendom."

After Jane's account of Brandon they all started by a roundabout way for the marble landing. In a few moments whom did they see coming toward them down the path but Brandon, who had delivered his message and continued his walk. When he saw whom he was about to meet, he quickly turned in another direction. The Lady Mary had seen him, however, and told Jane to run forward and bring him to her. She soon overtook

"Master Brandon, the princess wishes to see you," then maliciously: "You will suffer this time. I assure you she is not used to such treatment. It was glorious, though, to see you resent such an affront. Men usually smirk and smile foolishly and thank her when she smites them."

Brandon was disinclined to return. "I am not in her highness' command," he answered, "and do not care to go back for a reprimand when I am in no way to blame."

"Oh, but you must come. Perhaps she will not scold this time." And she put her hand upon his arm and laughingly drew him along. Brandon of course had to submit when led by so sweet a captor-anybody would. So fresh and fair and lovable was Jane that I am sure anything masculine must have given way.

Coming up to the princess and her ladies, who were waiting, Jane said, "Lady Mary, let me present Master Brandon, who, if he has offended in any way, humbly sues for pardon.' That was the one thing Brandon had no notion on earth of doing, but he let it go as Jane had put it, and this was his reward:

"It is not Master Brandon who should sue for pardon," responded the princess. "It is I who was wrong. I blush for what I did and said. Forgive me, sir, and let us start anew." At this she stepped up to Brandon and offered him her hand, which he, dropping to

his knee, kissed most gallantly. "Your highness, you can well afford to offend when you have so sweet and gracious a talent for making amends. 'A wrong acknowledged,' as some one



"Your highness, you can well afford to offend."

has said, 'becomes an obligation.'" He looked straight into the girl's eyes as he said this, and his gaze was altogether too strong for her, so the lashes fell. She flushed and said, with a smile that brought the dimples: "I thank you. That is a real compli-

ment." Then laughingly: "Much better than extravagant comments on one's skin and eyes and hair. We are going to the queen at the marble landing. Will you walk with us, sir?" And they strolled away together, while the other girls followed in a whispering, laughing group.

Was there ever so glorious a calm after such a storm? "Then those mythological compliments," continued Mary. "Don't you dislike them?"

"I can't say that I have ever received many, none that I recall," replied Bran-

A tinker's dam is a wall of dough of of soft clay raised around a spot which a plumber in repairing, desires to flood with solder. The material of this dam can be used only once and is thrown away after this very temporary period of usefulness. Hence the provery "not worth a tinker's dam," which converted into prefanity by the addition of a final n.

with a smile trying its best to break

"Oh, you have not? Well, how would you like to have somebody always telling you that Apollo was humpbacked and misshapen compared with you; that Endymion would have covered his face had he but seen yours, and so on?" "I don't know, but I think I should fike it from some persons," he replied.

looking ever so innocent. This savored of familiarity after so brief an acquaintance and caused the princess to glance up in slight surprise, but only for the instant, for his innocent look disarmed her.
"I have a mind to see," she returned,

laughing and throwing her head back as she looked up at him out of the corner of her lustrous eyes. "But I will pay you a better compliment. I positively thank you for the rebuke. I do many things like that, for which I am always sorry. Oh, you don't know how difficult it is to be a good princess!" And she shook her head with a gathering of little trouble wrinkles in her forehead, as much as to say, "There is no getting away from it, though." Then she breathed a soft little sigh of tribulation as they walked on.

"I know it must be a task to be good when everybody flatters even one's shortcomings," said Brandon and then continued in a way that, I am free to confess, was something priggish: "It is almost impossible for us to see our own faults even when others are kind enough to point them out, for they are right ugly things and unpleasant to look upon. But, lacking those outside monitors, one must all the more cultivate the habit of constant inlooking and self examination. If we are only brave enough to confront our faults and look them in the face, ugly as they are, we shall be sure to overcome the worst of them. A striving toward good will achieve at least a part of it."

"Oh!" returned the princess. "But what is good and what is wrong? So often we cannot tell them apart until we look back at what we have done, and then it is all too late. I truly wish to be good more than I desire anything else in the world. I am so ignorant and helpless and have such strong inclinations to do wrong that sometimes I seem to be almost all wrong. The priests say so much, but tell us so little. They talk about St. Peter and St. Paul and a host of other saints and holy fathers and what nots, but fail to tell us what we need every moment of our lives; that is, how to know the right when we see it, and how to do it; and how to know the wrong and how to avoid it. They ask us to believe so much and insist that faith is the sum of virtue and the lack of it the sum of sin, that to faith all things are added. but we might believe every syllable of their whole disturbing creed and then spoil it all through blind ignorance of what is right and what is wrong."

"As to knowing right and wrong," replied Brandon, "I think I can give you a rule which, although it may not cover the whole ground, is excellent for everyday use. It is this, Whatever makes others unhappy is wrong, whatever makes the world happier is good. As to how we are always to do this I cannot tell you. One has to learn that by trying. We can but try, and if we fail altogether there is still every futile effort toward the right." Mary bent her head as she walked

along in thought. "What you have said is the only approach to a rule for knowing and doing the right I have ever heard. Now what do you think of me as a flatterer? But it will do no good. The bad is in me too strong. It always does itself before I can apply any rule or even realize what is coming." And again she shook her head, with a bewitching little look of trouble.

"Pardon me, your highness, but there is no bad in you. It has been put on you by others and is all on the outside There is none of it in your heart at all. That evil which you think comes out of you simply falls from you. Your heart is all right or I have greatly misjudged you." He was treating her almost as if she were a child.

"I fear, Master Brandon, you are the nost adroit flatterer of all," said Mary, shaking her head and looking up at him with a side glance. "People have deluged me with all kinds of flattery-I have different sorts listed and labeled -but no one has ever gone to the extravagant length of calling me good. Perhaps they think I do not care for that, but I like it best. I don't like the others at all. If I am beautiful or not, 't is as God made me, and I have nothing to do with it and desire no credit, but if I could only be good it might be my own doing perhaps, and I ought to have praise. I wonder if there is really and truly any good in me and if you have read me aright." Then, looking up at him with a touch of consternation, "Or are you laughing at me?" Brandon wisely let the last sugges-

ion pass unnoticed. "I am sure that I am right. You have glorious capacities for good, but, alas, corresponding possibilities for evil. It will eventually all depend upon the man you marry. He can make out of you a perfect woman or the reverse." Again there was the surprised expression in Mary's face, but Brandon's serious look disarmed her.

"I fear you are right, as to the reverse at any rate, and the worst of it is I shall never be able to choose a man to help me, but shall sooner or later be compelled to marry the creature who will pay the greatest price." "God forbid!" said Brandon rever-

ently. They were growing rather serious, so Mary turned the conversation again into the laughing mood and said, with a half sigh: "Oh, I hope you are right about the possibilities for good, but you do not know. Wait until you have seen more of me."

"I certainly hope I shall not have long to wait."

The surprised eyes again glanced has received from Emperor Nicholas of Russia the decoration of the Order of St. Stanislaus. The honor was given to him through the Russian embassy at Washington, in recognition of his services in behalf of Russia's peasants during the famine of 1891, when as foreign agent at Berlin of the department of agriculture, he started the move-ment for sending shiploads of corn to

don, with a perfectly straight face, but | quickly up to the serious face, but the answer came: "That you shall not. But here is the queen, and I suppose we must have the benediction." Brandon understood her hint, that the preaching was over, and, taking it for his dismissal. playfully lifted his hands in imita tion of the old bishop of Canterbury and murmured the first line of the Latin benediction. Then they both laughed and courtesied, and Brandon walked

CHAPTER IV

away.

A LESSON IN DANCING. LAUGHED heartily when Jane told me of the tilt between Brandon and Princess Mary. the latter of whom was in the habit of saying unkind things and being thanked for them.

Brandon was the wrong man to say them to, as Mary learned. He was not hot tempered-in fact, just the reverse -but he was the last man to brook an affront and the quickest to resent in a cool headed, dangerous way an intentional offense.

He respected himself and made others do the same, or seem to do so at least. He had no vanity, which is but an inordinate desire for those qualities that bring self respect and often the result of conscious demerit, but he knew himself and knew that he was entitled to his own good opinion. He was every inch a man, strong, intelligent and brave to temerity, with a reckless disregard of consequences, which might have been dangerous had it not been tempered by a dash of prudence and caution that gave him ballast.

I was not surprised when I heard of the encounter, for I knew enough of him to be sure that Mary's high handedness would meet its counterpart in my cool friend Brandon. It was, however, an unfortunate victory, and what all Mary's beauty and brightness would have failed to do her honest, open acknowledgment of wrong, following so quickly upon the heels of her fault, accomplished easily. It drew him within the circle of her fatal attractions, and when Jane told me of it I knew his fate was sealed and that sooner or later his untouched heart and cool head would fall victim to the shafts that so surely winged all others.

It might and probably would be "later," since, as Brandon had said, he was not one of those who wear the



"I met your friend. Did he tell you?" heart upon the sleeve. Then he had that strong vein of prudence and caution which, in view of Mary's unattainableness, would probably come to his help. But never was man's heart strong enough to resist Mary Tudor's smile

There was this difference between Brandon and most others—he would be slow to love, but when love should once fairly take root in his intense nature he would not do to trifle with.

The night after the meeting Mary cuddled up to Jane, who slept with her, and whispered, half bashfully:

"Tell me all about Brandon, I am interested in him. I believe if I knew more persons like him I should be a better girl, notwithstanding he is one of the boldest men I ever knew. Ho says anything he wishes and, with all his modest manner, is as cool with me as if I were a burgher's daughter. His modesty is all on the outside, but it is pretty, and pretty things must be on the outside to be useful. I wonder if Judson thought him modest.'

Jane talked of Brandon to Mary, who was in an excellent humor, until the

girls fell asleep. When Jane told me of this, I became frightened, for the surest way to any woman's heart is to convince her that you make her better and arouse in her

breast purer impulses and higher aspirations. It would be bad enough should Brandon fall in love with the princess, which was almost sure to happen, but for them to fall in love with each other meant Brandon's head upon the block and Mary's heart bruised, broken and empty for life. Her strong nature. filled to the brim with latent passion, was the stuff of which love makes conflagration that burns to destruction, and should she learn to love Brandon she would move heaven and earth to possess him.

She whose every desire from childhood up had been gratified, whose every whim seemed to her a paramount necessity, would stop at nothing when the dearest wish a woman's heart can coin was to be gained or lost. Brandon's element of prudence might help him and might forestall any effort on his part to win her, but Mary had never heard of prudence, and man's caution avails but little when set against woman's daring. In case they both should love they were sure to try for each other and in trying were equally sure to find ruin and desola-

A few evenings after this I met the princess in the queen's drawing room. She beckoned me to her and, resting her elbows on the top of a cabinet, her chin in her hands, said: "I met your

"You don't seem to care much for the girls at this summer resort?"

"What became of that girl you were flirting with last summer?" "You mean the girl I thought I was land Leader.

friend, Captain Brandon, a day or two ago. Did he tell you?"

"No," I answered. "Jane told me,

but he has not mentioned it." It was true Brandon had not said a word of the matter, and I had not spoken of it either. I wanted to see how long he would remain silent concerning an adventure that would have set most men of the court boasting at a great rate. To have a tilt with the ever victorious Mary and to come off victor was enough, I think, to loosen any tongue less given to bragging than

"So," continued Mary, evidently somewhat piqued, "he did not think his presentation to me a thing worth mentioning? We had a little passage at arms, and, to tell you the truth, I came off second best and had to acknowledge it too. Now, what do you think of this new friend of yours? And he did not boast about having the better of me. After all, there is more virtue in his silence than I at first thought." And she threw back her head and clapped her hands and laughed with the most contagious little ripple you ever heard. She seemed not to grieve over her defeat, but dimpled as though it were a huge joke, the thought of which rather pleased her than otherwise. Victory had grown stale for her, although so

"What do I think of my new friend?" I repeated after her, and that gave me a theme upon which I could enlarge eloquently. I told her of his learning, notwithstanding the fact that he had been in the continental wars ever since he was a boy. I repeated to her stories of his daring and bravery that had been told to me by his uncle, the master of the horse, and others, and then I added what I knew Lady Jane had already said. I had expected to be brief, but to my surprise found a close and interested listener, even to the twice told parts, and drew my story out a little, to the liking of us both.

"Your friend has an earnest advocate in you, Sir Edwin," said the princess. "That he has," I replied. "There is nothing too good to say of him."

I knew that Mary, with her better, clearer brain, held the king almost in the palm of her hand, so I thought to advance Brandon's fortune by a timely word. "I trust the king will see fit to favor

him, and I hope that you will speak a word in his behalf should the opportunity occur." "What, in the name of heaven, have we to give him?" cried Mary impatiently, for she kept an eye on things political, even if she were only a girl. "The king has given away everything that can be given already, and now, that the war is over and men are coming home there are hundreds waiting for more. My father's great treasure is squandered, to say nothing of the money collected from Empson, Dudley and

as fair a light as you have drawn him for me." Then, throwing back her head, with a laugh, "Ask him." "It would be none too much for his deserts," I replied, falling in with her

We will so arrange it, then," went on Mary banteringly. "Captain Brandon no longer, but Charles Brandon. duke of Suffolk. How sounds it, Master Caskoden?"

"Sweet in my ears," I replied. "I really beffeve you would have the king's crown for him, you absurd man, if you could get it. We must have so interesting a person at court. I shall at least see that he is presented to the queen at once. I wonder if he dances. I suppose not. He has probably been too busy cutting and thrusting." And she laughed again at her own pleas-

When the mirth began to gather in her face and the dimples came responsive to her smiles, when she threw back her perfectly poised head, stretching her soft, white throat, so full and round and beautiful, half closing her big brown eyes till they shone again from beneath the shade of those long, black, sweeping lashes; when her rec lips parted, showing her teeth of pearl, and she gave the little clap of her hands, a sort of climax to the soft, low. rippling laugh, she made a picture of such exquisite loveliness that it is no wonder men were fools about her and caught love as one catches a contagion I had it once, as you already know, and had recovered. All that prevented a daily relapse was my fair, sweet antidote, Jane, whose image rested in my heart, a lasting safeguard.

"I wonder if your prodigy plays cards—that is, such as we ladies play? asked Mary. "You say he has lived much in France, where the game was invented, but I have no doubt he would scorn to waste his time at so frivolous a pursuit when he might be slaughtering armies single handed and

"I do not know as to his dancing and card playing, but I dare venture a wager he does both," I replied, not liking her tone of sarcasm. She had yet to learn who Brandon was. "I will hazard ten crowns," said

Mary quickly, for she loved a wager and was a born gambler. "Taken," said I.

"We will try him on both tomorrow night in my drawing room," she continued. "You bring him up, but tell no one. I will have Jane there with her lute, which will not frighten you away I know, and we will try his step. I will have cards, too, and we shall see what he can do at triumph. Just we four, no one else at all. You and Jane, the new Duke of Suffolk and I. Oh, I can hardly wait!" And she fairly danced with joyous anticipation.

The thing had enough irregularity to give it zest, for while Mary often had a few young people in fler drawing room, the companies were never so small as two couples only, and the king and queen, to make up for greater faults, were wonderful sticklers in the matter of little proprieties.

The ten crown wager, too, gave spice to it, but to do her justice she cared very little for that. The princess loved gambling purely for gambling sake, and with her the next best thing to winning was losing.

When I went to my room that night, flirting with. She married me."-Cleve- I awakened Brandon and told him of the distinguished honor that awaited

"Well, I'll be"— But he did not say what he would "be." He always halted before an oath, unless angry, which was seldom, but then beware. He had learned to swear in Flanders. "How she did fly at me the other morning! I never was more surprised in all my life. For once I was almost caught with my guard down and did not know how to parry the thrust. I mumbled over some sort of a lame retaliation and beat a retreat. It was so unjust and uncalled for that it made me angry. But she was so gracious in her amends that I was almost glad it happened. I like a woman who can be as savage as the very devil when it pleases her. She usually has in store an assortment of possibilities for the other extreme."

"She told me of your er ounter," I returned, "but said she had come off second best, and seemed to think her

overthrow a huge joke." "The man who learns to know what a woman thinks and feels will have a great deal of valuable information," he replied, and then turned over for sleep, greatly pleased that one woman thought as she did.

I was not sure he would be so highly flattered if he knew that he had been invited to settle a wager and to help Mary to a little sport.

As to the former, I had an interest there myself, although I dared not settle the question by asking Brandon if he played cards and danced, and, as to the matter of Mary's sport, I felt there was but little if any danger of her having too much of it at his expense. Brandon being well able to care for

himself in that respect. The next evening at the appointed time we wended our way by an unfrequented route and presented ourselves as secretly as possible at the drawing

room of the princess. The door was opened by Lady Jane. and we met the two girls almost at the threshold. I had told Brandon of the bantering conversation about the title and estates of the late Duke of Suffolk, and he had laughed over it in the best of humor. If quick to retaliate for an intentional offense, he was not thin skinned at a piece of pleasantry, and had none of that stiff, sensitive dignity,

so troublesome to oneself and friends. Now, Jane and Mary were always bantering me because I was short and inclined to be, in fact, round, but I did not care. It made them laugh, and their laughing was so contagious it made me laugh, too, and we all enjoyed it. I would give a pound sterling any time for a good laugh, and that, I think, is why I have always beenround.

So, upon entering, I said: "His grace the Duke of Suffolk, la-

They each made a sweeping courtesy, with hand on breast, and gravely the other commissioners. There is nothsaluted him: ing to give unless it be the titles and

"Your grace, good even." estate of the late Duke of Suffolk. Brandon's bow was as deep and Perhaps the king will give these to graceful, if that were possible, as your paragon if you will paint him in theirs, and when he moved on into the room it was with a little halt in his step and a big blowing out of the cheeks in ludicrous imitation of his late lamented predecessor that sent the girls into peals of soft laughter and put

Ah, what a thing it is to look back upon—that time of life when one finds his heaven in a ready laugh! "Be seated, all," said the princess. "This is to be without ceremony and

only we four. No one knows a word of it. Did you tell any one, Sir Edwin?" "Perish the thought!" I exclaimed. She turned her face toward Brandon "But I know you did not. I've heard how discreet you were about another matter. Well, no one knows it, then, and we can have a famous evening. You did not expect this, Master Brandon, after my reception of you the other morning? Were you not surprised

when Sir Edwin told you?" "I think I can safely say that I was prepared not to be surprised at any-thing your highness might graciously, conclude to do-after my first experi-

ence," he answered, smiling. "Indeed?" returned Mary, with elevated eyebrows and a rising inflection on the last syllable of the word. It was now her turn for a little surprise. "Well, we'll try to find some way to surprise you one of these days." And the time came when she was full of "But let us not talk about the other day. Of what use are 'other days,' any way? Before the evening is over. Master Brandon, we want you to give us another sermon." And she laughed, setting off three other laughs as hearty and sincere as if she had uttered the rarest witticism on earth.

The princess had told Jane and Jane

had told me of the "Sermon in the Park," as Mary called it. "Jane needs it as much as I." said the princess.

"I can't believe that," respon Brandon, looking at Jane with a softening glance quite too admiring and commendatory to suit me, for I was a jealous little devil. The eyebrows went up again.

"Oh, you think she doesn't? Well, in truth, Master Brandon, there is one failing that cannot be laid at your door—you are no flatterer." For answer Brandon laughed, and that gave us the cue, and away we went in a rippling chorus, all about nothing. Some per sons may call our laughter foolish, but there are others who consider it the height of all wisdom. St. George! I'd give my Garter for just one other laugh like that, for just one other hour of youth's dancing blood and glowing soul varmth, of sweet, unconscious, happy heart beat and paradise creating joy in everything!

After a few minutes of gay conversation, in which we all joined, Mary asked: "What shall we do? Will one of you suggest something?"

(To be continued.)

"I'm afraid, sir," said the teacher regretfully, "that your boy will never learn to spell." "Oh, that doesn't matter," repl

the fond parent. "I'm going to make a sign painter of him, anyway." Lever's Y-Z (Wise Head) Disinfectant Soap Powder dusted in the bath, softens the water and figinfects