

"Yes, Excellency," replied the colonel.

"Bring some of the officers,—I think witnesses are needed,—and your regimental book, if there is signing to be done. 'Twill hold them as fast as the parish register, I warrant." Then to the clergyman, "Follow me, sir, and the rest of you."

With that Cromwell strode out and led the way to the chapel, so hastily converted from a storehouse to its former purpose. The old divine took his place with the young people before him, the group of officers in the dimness near the door. Cromwell, however, stood near the girl.

"Slip off one of your rings and give it to this pastor," he whispered to her. "We are short of such gear here, and I doubt if your man ever thought of it."

Frances, without a word, selected from the number on her fingers that which had been her mother's wedding-ring, and handed it to the clergyman.

*"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee."*

As the sonorous words resounded in the ancient chapel, the old man straightened himself, the former anger in his face gave way to a benignant expression, and his attitude took on all the grave dignity of his