

NEARER HOME. A cross, sweet thought invades my mind...

THE EVIL MAY DAY. A FOOL AND HIS FOLLY.

A Tale of the Time of Henry VIII. CHAPTER XII. A KING IN A QUAGMIRE.

Life was a rough, thorny thing in the early sixteenth century, strangely divided between thought and folly...

The breaking-in and training of the two new country lads was entirely left to them and to Edmund Burgess...

Poor fellow, he was very miserable in those first weeks. The actual toil, to which he was an absolute novice...

Stephan and Giles, had, however, passed through this ordeal. The letter to John Birkenbush had been despatched by a trusty clerk...

Stephan was thereupon regularly bound apprentice to Master Headley. It was a solemn affair, which took place in the armorer's hall...

Mutual promises were interchanged between him and his master, Stephan on his knees; the indentures were signed, for Quipsome Hal could with much ado produce an autograph signature...

presumption might be punished, the first time, at his master's discretion...

Master Headley was entertained in the place of honor, where he comported himself with great gravity, though he could not resist alarming Stephen with an occasional wink or gesture...

These were drinking of toasts, and marked in the memory of those who had lately been created a Cardinal, and whose hat was on its way from Rome...

So the party in early morning heard their Mass, and then, repairing to St. John's pillar, while the rising sun came pouring through the low eastern window...

Hal Randall and Ambrose had both come up from the little home where Peronnel presided, for the hour was too early for the jester's absence to be regarded...

Hal Randall had already missed his brother, and turning around, he looked at the Cardinal-elect, and his eyes were fixed on the young man's face...

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which he sank deeper every moment, and it was already nearly to his shoulders when with a cry of joy, half-drowned, however, by the mud, he cried: 'His good lad! Are there any more of ye?'

'No, I fear, I fear,' said Ambrose, holding with some dismay the breadth of the shoulders, which were all that appeared above the turbid water.

There was a great struggle, an absolute effort for life, and but for the oar-stump Ambrose would certainly have been dragged into the water...

There was crackling of boughs and filling of bags, and cracking of nuts, and wild cries in pursuit of startled hare or rabbit, and though Ambrose and Stephan indignantly repelled the idea...

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know that a honest craft was better than court favor. 'Yet, maybe, he might do something for thee, friend Ambrose, added the armorer...

'If a foe—if a plain man may be heard when the wise hath spoken,' said Randall, 'he had best abstain.' Kluge would not be minded of mishaps, and our Hal's humor is not to be reckoned...

'Sure our King is of a more generous mould!' exclaimed Mrs. Headley. 'He is like other men, good mistresses, just as you know how to have him, and he is scarce like to be willing to be misled by the taste of mice, or of fowling like a hog in a salt marsh...

'Here is my brother coming, sir,' he said, and he gave his outstretched hand to the stranger to free himself from the mud that clung to him, and which was in some places thick enough to be scraped off with a knife...

'I never was here before, sir,' said Stephan, but yonder lies the Tower, and we keep along by the dyke, it must be some of our countrymen...

'Well said, boy. I must be moving, or the mud will dry on me, and I shall stand here as though turned to stone by the Gorgon's head.'

'Not at all,' replied Stephan. 'Stand by, Ambrose; I'll give the coward his deserts.'

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