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## THE LION IN THE PATH

(From the Publisher's advanced sheets.)

CHAPTER XL. BRINGING THINGS TO A POINT.

WHEN Paul left Mistress Preston his brain was bubbling with joyous emotion, his whole nature in a state of delicious intoxication. He trod on air as he swept through the streets. He broke out now and then into a low laugh, which died faintly off into a sweet smile. He felt a wondrous benevolence towards all created beings; he even forgave that minister of civic justice to whom the good knight had proposed to remit the duty of correcting Paul's rebellious temper.

That lasted for a little while. It was no wonder that Paul was exhilarated by the favour of such an exquisite young creature. He refused to think of her as a Millwood, as his master had coarsely designated her, just as he refused to think that he (Paul) was a George Barnwell, prepared to murder her slanderer. She had

been so sweet to him; so forgetful of his lowly origin; of the humiliation he had imposed on her the night of his great temptation; so altogether forgetful of herself! For what had he to offer in exchange for such bounty? Nothing. Dear, sweet, generous, noble-minded girl! How could Paul love her enough?

That was the first phase of the 'prentice's thoughts as he wandered about the streets the whole night, unable to get into his room without confronting Janvers, and being in a mood of utter recklessness as to consequences.

But that phase gradually subsided into another and more inquisitive one. Who was this lady? He really knew nothing about her. Where were her friends? How was it she seemed to have such a command of money? Was it possible that her vocation as a spy was so profitable? Hardly. No, he chose to think of her still as a lady who had embarked, from political enthusiasm, in such a disreputable career—or what was ordinarily thought so. But then, what meant those references to her own self which had more than once dropped from her,

implying she was by no means an angel of goodness permitted to visit earth for Paul's benefit?

Paul's limited experience of the world was still not so limited as to leave him regardless of the fact that young ladies of character, family, and fortune, even if fanatically devoted to a cause, do not wander about the streets of London alone, in order to meet young gentlemen, or to accompany 'prentices to Ranelagh.

He had not cared till now to weigh these things. Why should he? She could have nothing selfish to get out of him; no motive for encouraging him but personal liking. Why then make himself uncomfortable about things he didn't understand? Why, not enjoy the "good the gods provided," and rest content?

These questions, somehow, didn't seem to-night to be as successful as before in satisfying Paul. His growing love naturally made him more earnest, thoughtful, manly; and he began to contemplate with a certain dread the quite new contingency of his falling passionately in love with a woman who was possibly worthless, or,



"Oh, Paul! dear Paul!"