

THE MERCY OF A MAIDEN

Continued from Page Eleven.

He choked and the impulsive woman took his hand in her own firm palm and lifted it to her lips.

"I know nothing of ye," she said, doggedly, "but I count it reward to have the opportunity to kiss this hand." She pressed her lips to it, and then yielding to the mother in every woman's heart, she threw her arms about his neck, and gave him a sounding smack on the lips, which he returned with interest.

"God be with ye," she said. "Ye can't get out of this too fast. I must go."

Before Charles or Pendrell could say more she had turned and disappeared.

Pendrell acquainted the king with the cause for their rapid flight and Charles needed no urging to hurry as best he could. He clenched his teeth firmly, and by following, the directions of Tibbie the two made fair enough progress away from the inquisition of Will.

When morning dawned they were nearly at the second turn, but Pendrell deemed it prudent to burrow as deep as they could in the bushes and wait till night.

As soon as it came they set forth again, and thanks to the good cheer of Tibbie they made such good time that it was not far from midnight when they saw the square towers of Paulet Castle looming up.

Pendrell silently reconnoitered. He knew that it was possible the baronet might be entertaining some one who would recognize Charles.

While he was moving cautiously through the grounds, nearing the castle, a swift, light shape suddenly arose from the earth at his feet and confronted him. With a muttered oath, Pendrell drew his sword, but the apparition said, hastily, and with a soft laugh:

"Be not over quick. You are watching the castle to see who is there and I have been watching you for some seconds. I am Paula Stevens. Who are you?"

"That, fair lady," said Pendrell, with a sigh of relief, "is a bit of information that I prefer to keep to myself for a time."

"Of course," said the young lady, moving a step nearer and letting the hood of her cloak fall so that he could see the outlines of an exceedingly beautiful face in the soft glimmering starlight and feel the flash of her lustrous eyes, "you are Royalists. I have just been conducting one to a place of safety. He is now far on his way across the river and may soon bid farewell to England."

"Oh, that we had been here sooner," groaned Pendrell. "Yes, I will trust you. The wit and courage of woman have often saved a nation." He leaned forward and whispered a few words in her ear. She listened without a movement and then said, briefly:

"I will not earn your bad opinion. Bring your friend here at once and I will see that he gets into the castle."

Pendrell hastened back to where he had left Charles and acquainted him with their good fortune, but to his surprise, the king held back.

"Paula Stevens!" he said. "That is the name of the most beautiful maiden in this shire. Don't you remember how the gallants in Worcester were talking of her beauty? I would not appear before her thus—"

"What do you think of," said Pendrell, patiently, "it is the greatest good fortune that we have come upon her and she will be sure to aid you. Come, what matters your garb? It is the king whom she welcomes and who will honor her with his gratitude."

"True," said Charles, irresolutely. "I would there were more visible evidence of the inward divinity."

He stiffly arose, and tried to walk with as jaunty a grace as possible, but it was so wretched a failure that when they saw the tall straight figure waiting for them and it advanced rapidly and gave him the support of an arm, he could not protest, but only murmur thanks.

Paula and Pendrell supported Charles, whom Pendrell privately thought resigned himself rather too willingly to their help, toward the castle. She said nothing and neither of her companions thought it fit to interrupt her silence. Instead of approaching the main part, Paula Stevens skirted the grounds till they came to the north tower. Its base was overrun with ivy, but the girl walked up to the very thickest of the vines, parted them, showing that they had been trained like a screen over a small door and taking a key from her dress inserted it in the lock of the door and threw it open.

"Enter and welcome," She motioned Pendrell to support

the king within and he did so. Then Paula entered and closed the door quickly. She stood a moment as if debating with herself and then turned to her guests:

"You are safe now. There is in the Castle a guest who was one of the king's officers at Worcester. My father is entertaining him and the better that there be no suspicion of the more important one whom we have here, I think it well that you come to table after you have changed your garb. I shall light you up these stairs which are into a room unknown to any, but father and his man and myself. Bertrand shall help you. There is much raiment of various classes. I should advise you to be a pair of merchants from some country town. Then you will not have to be familiar with much that will be current in talk and can keep silence." She lit a taper as she spoke and then pressed a knob in another door to the right. "Here is Bertrand. He will bring you to the table if it is best for you to come. Au revoir. I shall see you with my father."

She disappeared, and in less time than they could collect their thoughts a man of active middle life stood by their side. He took the arm of the king and almost lifted him toward the stairs, while Pendrell, with as much of a prayer of thanksgiving in his heart as he had entertained for weeks, followed. They were ushered into a large low room with a comfortable fire on the hearth.

Pendrell counselled against the to the needs of the king, and with the aid of good cordial, the soothing ointments of the old man, and the marvel of clean soft raiment, Charles was really well enough to go down to the company.

Pendrell counselled against the step but the king was obstinate, and the faithful follower had nothing to do but submit and hope some good might come of the venture.

As they entered the great dining hall they saw that Paula in radiant costume was presiding at the table. She gave them a quick look of caution as she arose and, coming forward, said:

"My father, you will pardon my adding to the company, but a woman must have news of the modes and these traveling merchants have been showing some of their wares. They are so good I bespeak your gentle consideration."

Sir Paulet Stevens, a stout, jovial-looking man with a keen eye and a face full of dignity arose and said heartily:

"Paulet Stevens has ever room for more at his board. Sit ye down, sirs, and have as much of good cheer as the lateness of your coming will give."

Mindful of the difference in their ranks, he did not offer his hand to his guests. Pendrell bowed with a sweep that was a bit too deep for the character he assumed, and it was instantly remarked by the third of the company of four men:

"Upon my word, merchant," he said in a tone of easy insolence, "you have caught the regular court gallantry. Where were you school-"

"In my day," said Pendrell with ready tongue, "many of the gallants did patronize me, and I was ever a mimic."

"Come forward," said Sir Paulet, indicating a place at the lower end of the board, and then turning to the man who had spoken, he said in a low tone:

"You know very well, nephew, that I wish you to observe courtesy in my house to the humblest. Your Parliamentary sympathies are not as old as your manners and there is nothing in devotion to the cause of Cromwell which should make you forget all the outward marks of a gentleman."

The man addressed wore the uniform of a colonel in the Parliamentary army. He was handsome enough of form and feature, but the expression of his countenance was cold and sinister. A flush now overspread his face and a hasty retort seemed trembling on his lip when he thought better of it, and turned to his cousin with a smile:

"We can forgive a lady anything, can't we?" he murmured, "and as I am going in for equality, I surely should not take umbrage. But I am not to be beguiled into losing my wits, and I swear there is something odd in the presence of your merchants."

Paula looked him steadily in the eyes, and smiled:

"The fact that you have come here and found us entertaining one of the king's officers."

"There is no king," interrupted the colonel.

"Pardon, I have one," continued Paula, "has made you suspicious of even me. Now there is one thing that I cannot forgive, lack of confidence in me."

He bent eagerly forward. "If I thought that you cared enough for me to value my opinion—"

ah, Paula, there is nothing that I would not do for your sake." Paula laughed.

"You would leave old Noll and kiss the king's hand if he were to let you?"

"I would kiss the hand of one far superior to any of the Stuarts, did she permit me. No, Paula, much as I love you I must hold to my loyalty to Cromwell."

Paula sighed. "I should not care to have you sacrifice what you thought was principle for me. But why should you take prisoner this poor wretch of a captain who is trying to get out of the country and all mischief? He would be out of your way. My father was entertaining him when you came and he is really his guest."

The Cromwellian glanced at the other man. He saw a look of careless ease on his face as he bent forward in conversation, and the man who did not know their relative positions might have imagined the captor to be pitied rather than he.

The third man was a pale, rather ascetic-looking individual, who lived with Sir Paulet under the vague title of friend. It was rumored he was a priest, and there were many who had had chance to find he was deeply versed in Latin and could wield a sword with the same ease that he turned out a neat sentence. He was looking at the king, and Morton Stevens following his intent gaze was struck by the resemblance of the profile of Charles to his father. He suddenly leaned forward and, addressing the Royalist captain, said:

"Sir Herbert, you were one of those who fought close to Charles Stuart. Saw you ever a man who looked more like him than yonder younger merchant?"

Sir Herbert turned deliberately, and looked at the king, over whose pale face a flood of crimson poured, leaving it yet paler. But his eyes did not falter and something like a smile moved his lips as he met the gaze of all at the table concentrated upon him. Only the quivering of the lips of Pendrell showed that he was moved. Sir Herbert looked long at the face of the king. Then he said deliberately:

"I was in the close company and had the honor of being partly the companion of the king, but there is not much resemblance in this young man's face. King Charles is at least four inches higher and fully a half yard wider in shoulders. I fancy bending over cloths in the haberdasher's does not develop the chest."

"Indeed it does not, my lord," said Charles with well simulated awkwardness, "but I thank the kind gentleman who has honored me by thinking I look like the unfortunate Stuart."

"What nonsense," cried Sir Paulet with a hearty indignation. "The Stuart would be angered did he hear. You may well feel proud, young man."

"Yet I'll be bound the same thought that was in my mind was in yours, Father—I beg your pardon, Mr. Henry," said Morton Stevens, addressing the friend of his uncle.

The latter turned upon him a smile of singular sweetness.

"I was thinking how modest was the lad to show such good manners in such a promotion as the present company must be to him. I have too much honor for my king to trace his features in country boys."

Pendrell laughed heartily: "For myself, I am a man of peace, but I feel that there was more honor paid to us than we are like to receive again in our lives. I crave pardon for having been the subject of your talk."

"I am glad to hear of it," said Sir Paulet, "and I am sure you will find the adventures of which you spoke so largely, but a half hour gone. We can stand listening, whatever our sympathies."

Morton Stevens had by no means relinquished his suspicions, but he knew that it would not help him to further show them, and he was anxious to conciliate Paula all that he could without loss of his own principles. So he cheerfully complied with his uncle's request, and with such good effect that it was long past the midnight hour when the little company separated.

Morton took his candle first and ascended the stairs a few steps, then concealing it in the folds of his cloak he looked down at the company that was separating. As he did so he saw that his prisoner whose word he had taken passed by Charles with no sign of recognition, but as the friend of the house was waiting for the guest to pass out from the dining hall he saw him take the hand of the younger of the two merchants and raise it to his lips. It was enough. Morton Stevens hurried to his own apartment and waited, with a heart that was beating long exultant strokes, for the household to quiet.

He was fully determined to take the young man prisoner, but he did not wish to arouse his uncle if he could do it quietly. He must communicate with his men, and he could not expect to remain in the castle after the deed was done. It was something of a wrench at his heart when he thought of the feelings which Paula would entertain toward him, but there was no setting of love against his fanaticism and ambition and he resolutely thrust aside all tenderness. He had divested himself of his heavy boots and was approaching the door, when it was suddenly pulled shut and the heavy key turned in the lock. He was a prisoner himself. It took a moment to realize this. Then he dashed his shoulder against the door. He might as well have tried to pull down the stone walls.

"I shall overcome you," he shouted, literally grinding his teeth with rage. "I know it is you, Henry, you Jesuit, who have done this, but there is no chance of your getting free from punishment. Nor can you save the king, for I have recognized him."

"Be quiet, cousin," said the voice of Paula. "Do not impugn a man who is probably sleeping the sleep of innocence now. It is I. There is no excuse to be offered, and if you want to denounce me when you are at liberty you may. But this house is not to be the scene of treachery. Be comfortable. Do not rage too much. I will come back and release you in good time."

Before he could answer, she had fitted away and was soon in the apartment to which Bertrand had again conducted the king and his companion. She burst in without ceremony.

"It seems that my cousin has recognized you, sire. There remains but one thing to be done by me now, and that is to conduct you to a place more safe than this. I have confined him in his room, and it will be hours ere any of his men come to get orders. In the meantime with the fleetest horses in the stable and Bertrand as guide you two can be far on the road to safety. He will bring you to friends."

Charles took her hand in his and raised it to his lips:

"Never did I long for the power of my crown as now," he said, "when that alone would let me thank thee fittingly. We may never meet again, but ever thou shalt be shrouded in my heart. There will be joy in the thought that it was to the mercy of a maiden, and such a maiden, that I owed my life."

Paula looked at him with unshed tears.

"Adieu, my king," she murmured, "tis not so much the mercy as the duty of a loyal maiden which hath stirred me. God grant that thou

mayst find safety. Bertrand will guide thee to trusty friends. And the thought that I have been able to help thee will ever be consolation to Paulet Stevens and his daughter."

"Say not adieu but au revoir," said Charles, almost gayly as he prepared to follow Pendrell, already in the passage way. He stooped and kissed her on the brow and was gone.

Paula rose slowly to her feet. "The mercy of a maiden," she repeated. "At what a cost? Nay, nay, love will conquer Morton's anger, and did it not. I have happiness in saving my king."—Charlotte M. Holloway, in Donahoe's Magazine.

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PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, District of Montreal, No. 3007. Dame Elisa Sigouin, wife common as to property of Philias Saulniers, shoemaker, of the City and District of Montreal, duly authorized to "ester en justice," plaintiff, vs. the said Philias Saulniers, defendant. An action for separation as to property has been instituted in this case on the twelfth day of September, nineteen hundred and two. Montreal, 12th September, 1902. Beaudin, Cardinal, Loranger & St. Germain, attorneys for plaintiff.

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NOTES

MORE INTOLERANCE. Irish magistrate hasmons against the resumption Fathers' don, on the application of the Protestant Alliance, who under an old statute have no right to lit Kingdom. A similar time ago under the laws; but it was passed, on the ground that had lapsed in desuetude of the Protestant A have one good effect stir the Catholics Kingdom in a comm the vexatious laws same time an attempt made to secure the anti-Catholic laws vigor—those concern sion out and the h fices of Lord Chanc and Lord Lieutenant example.

EMULE ZOLA'S I den and tragic was French novelist Zola pected and it created Paris, the echo of wh all over the continer side of the Atlantic maxim, old as our e say Christian, that "say naught but god This means that it say aught injurious who have departed fr We have made it a r injunction in as far duties would allow, when there is no pos we can say of the o record, the next say nothing at all a are not sufficiently a the private life of Em and any comments, g different, upon his st passage through this no right to pass any him, for we are in t of knowing the inner his heart. It might be possib ous lessons from the in which this most p of the so-called reali was summoned from in that we might b tice and we prefer, man is concerned, t drop for all time up life.

But if we are not pass judgment upon least we are justified estimate of the imm ar work that he ha itage to humanity most favorable comm been made regardi it is far from a eulog leading French jour has said: "It will b he could have made his own glory, of the vigor and strength w was endowed and of al art that he posses out in striking evide nique of positions, of of customs. Taking tain standpoints, in there is sufficient to with its moral infirm suggest useful reflecti future generations a tury and to impart ries of human docum not contribute to the our fame." In an interview of Dr. Frchette said th of late been living o putation, and that h are not worth readi