

"Except old Simon," declared Lott; "and he couldn't sleep quiet in the churchyard. That crumbly bit gave way with him the stormy year when I was a lad; and in the morning there was 'Sacred to the Memory' on the beach, and he far out at sea, poor old chap, in his six-foot boat. That was why the sea wall was built. Folks didn't fancy their forbears washed out of their graves."

"I thought Michael had lads of his own," said the farmer. "I made sure this was one of them." He felt sore and taken in by this business of his girl's attachment; he was only a working farmer, and would not be able to leave much to his girls. The young man at the Grange, but for the flaw in his descent, would have been a nice match for 'Lisbeth, Sir John having promised him a lodge, and permission to marry, if only he would not leave his invalid son.

"Michael has three lads besides this un," Lott jerked a finger landwards. "This is how it stands. Perran here goes into his father's—Mike's, I mean—his regiment. So does David, so does Will—a drummer-boy he is—and so will little Jesse by-and-by. Perran often talks to me about 'em. He's rarely fond of the lot; wouldn't have left India but for Captain Mostyn's accident. He was his soldier-servant, you know."

No, Farmer Holt didn't know and didn't care. He must be going to see 'Lisbeth now; he supposed he should have a time of it with her; girls were so set on their own way, or else they took to crying. He sauntered off reluctantly, as men do with an unpleasant business before them.

The Proudfoots, of King's Cobbe, were well known by name and reputation all over the county. They had never of late years been more than ordinary yeomen, working for their daily bread like any one else, but, as Lott said, they had roving blood in their veins, and stay at home they could not.

There was hardly ever a Proudfoot in "The Pale," that odd three-cornered bit of land, with the cottage on it overhanging the sea. They always either went to sea or enlisted after a few years of domestic life; sailors or soldiers they all were. Proudfoots in the churchyard there were few, though there were three or four old monuments, and as many records in the church books telling strange stories of dead ancestors.

This Proudfoot had died fighting the Turks. His bones were whitening in the Holy Land.

Another Proudfoot had changed clothes with a king flying for his life, and had perished by the hand of an enemy rather than betray his royal master.

A Proudfoot family—a father and four sons—had manned a little boat—before lifeboats were—and gone to the rescue of a distressed Spanish galleon off the Cobbe. They had brought the

greater part of the crew safely to land, when they were overtaken by a heavy sea, which swallowed up the little craft and drove on shore, some hours later, the lifeless bodies of father and sons. Two grass-grown hillocks in the churchyard on the cliff finished that story.

A Proudfoot girl had saved the twin babes of the lord of the manor, when the mansion took fire a hundred years back, perishing herself in the flames in an after attempt to rescue a sick servant. To her memory the grateful lord had erected a grim, stiff monument on the north wall of the church. There was a double inscription on it. One taken from the book of Daniel: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." And the second, "Straightforward." The Proudfoot boys asked the meaning of this last.

"It is our motto," said Michael, simply; "the Proudfoot motto."

Perran liked the idea, though he knew that he was not a Proudfoot.

The family had indeed gathered incident enough around it to keep its memory green in King's Cobbe. As a rule, these roving, daring men had ever been ranged on the side of right: "For God and their country" they had ever striven.

Even "the bad Proudfoot," as a lawless character of the last century had been called, who was more than suspected of being a smuggler, had died protecting a French captain's daughter from a rough companion's insults.

No wonder that Michael's boys, fine, well-disposed lads, from Perran downwards, all longed to go out into the world and do likewise. This desire was at first absorbed in entire devotion to their father's regiment, and intense pride in it. They would all be artillerymen too. Despite the tropical climate, Michael and his wife, by dint of common sense and care, had managed to rear strong, sturdy children; and twice, in the period of their twenty years' service, the family had revisited England, taking up their abode in the old Pale cottage, which was kept habitable by the spinster cousin who lived in it rent free.

Only the year before had been the last furlough. Michael had brought his wife, Will, and little Jesse to the old home. David could not get leave, and Perran was already at King's Cobbe with his master, who had returned a few months before. That was a pleasant year to all. Perran ran down to the Pale most evenings to talk over the day's doings; fair-haired little Jesse was always on the great fellow's knee at these times. As lads will, they often made up grand futures for themselves. "Straightforward" they would go, too, through all dangers, serving Queen and country like their forefathers.

Jesse's ambition was to be a martyr. The blue eyes and dimpled features of five years