A Queen of Nine Days

A Queen of Nine Days

Margaret Brown

1903
England

Contents

PROLOGUE

It has been laid upon me as a very solemn duty by the late Lady Jane Dudley, or Grey as she is usually called, to whom I owe obedience and fealty born of love, which is all the more insistent because she is no longer here to claim it, that I should set forth, in the best language possible to one of my limited education, the stirring events that my eyes have witnessed and the true story, as it is known to me, of the short, sad tragedy of her life and death. And this being so, I will make no excuse for my boldness and presumption in attempting work which might well be left to learned and authoritative historians, especially as I remember that my dear lady said to me, Margery, others may write more learnedly on the matter, but *loving eyes see further and more truly* than those of the mere critic, and I would fain be represented to posterity as I am rather than as I am supposed to be. And, fear not, child, for though you are weak and humble in your own eyes, His grace and help are to be had for the asking, Who gives power to the faint, and to such as have no might increases strength.' For my lady knew that this is a righteous task which she was setting me—the representation of truth, as we know it, is always righteous—and to those who do the like His promises never fail.
MARGARET BROWN.

CHAPTER I
Leaving Home

It was in the month of May, in the year 1553, and I was a young girl, only seventeen, when my dear father—my mother being dead—astonished me beyond measure by disclosing the fact that I was to leave my home in Sussex and proceed to the city of London, there to become gentlewoman to a lady of high degree.

That was not the sort of life I should have chosen by any means, for my freedom was as dear to me as to any of God's creatures of earth, or sea, or sky. Having no mother, and with a most easy-going father and a brace of madcap young brothers, I had run wild all my life, and could ill brook the idea of being confined within four walls for the most part of my days, attired in the fine clothing of a grand lady. What compensations should I have for such joys as lying for hours on the soft turf of the Downs, looking up to the blue sky and making out pictures in the white clouds flitting across it, whilst I listened to the singing of the skylarks, or sitting beneath an overturned boat on the seashore, hearing the lapping of the waves and gazing across the Channel, with wondering speculations of the lands beyond those fair blue waters, or, on the other hand, rowing out upon the sea with my brothers, or riding with them at breakneck paces over hill and dale? What would they do without me, little Hal with his endless scrapes and foolhardy schemes, and Jack with his love of fighting and passionate essays to assert the manhood latent in him? Notwithstanding my wildness, I was a softening influence in their lives, for there was in me ever, even then, the consciousness which is not very far from any of us that there is a Higher Law than even the sweetest promptings of our own fond wills. I never talked about it—father used to say, 'Many words show weakness in a cause'—much less preached to the boys, but I knew it was so and they were aware I knew it, and that was quite enough. They were good lads, and, as the serving men and women said, I had them at a word.

I did not like the thought of leaving my brothers, or my father, or, as I have said, my freedom and the skylarks, turf, sky, clouds, seashore and mystery of wild sea-waves, with the unknown lands beyond, but never thought of opposing my father's will, and, easygoing though he was,

dared not question it; however, I went down to the parsonage to speak to Master Montgomery, our curate, of the matter, and, after listening to all I had to say, and cheering me with descriptions of wondrous sights to be seen in London, he uttered wise words, which stilled my trouble mightily.

'Child,' he said, laying his hand gently on my head, 'listen to me. This call which has come to you is not of your own seeking, therefore it must be from Him Who alone was found worthy to hold the Book of Life—the lives of His people—in His hands. He Who called Rebekah from her water-pot and David from his sheep, Elisha from his ploughing and the praying women of Jerusalem to follow Him to the Cross, is surely calling you to do some special work. It may be lowly in its nature, or it may be great, but whatever it be, it is surely work that you and no one else can do. Like the little maid who was carried away into captivity and did great things for her master Naaman, the Syrian, so, it may be, you, too, may carry help and healing to some afflicted one amongst those whom the world calls mighty. And remember,' he added very earnestly, 'remember that you can do nothing in your own strength, but that with the help of the Holy Spirit, which is given to those who ask for it, all things will be possible.'

I went away, feeling very solemn and almost more frightened than encouraged, and it was a relief to my over-charged heart when, as I was going home with great soberness, I encountered Hal, bareback on his black pony, tearing along like wildfire, and calling to me to follow, as there was a ship passing in the Channel, and so I ran after him down to the beach; and what with one thing and another, I did not give Master Montgomery's words their full consideration until the time came when, being far away from him, I found my thoughts recurring to them.

Before I set off to London City there was great to-do amongst the women servants in making me sufficient garments for a lady's wardrobe, and it was a wonderful sight to see the things they got together and the way they wished to dress me. I did not like it very much, for I did not think I should ever be able to skip and play and ride bareback attired in that fashion, but my father said I was a child and knew nothing about it, and they were women and ought to know what they were doing; so we left it all to them, and I put off the thought of wearing their handiwork as long as possible.

The day before I went my father informed me about those to whom I was going. It seemed the Duke of Northumberland, knowing my father, Sir Henry Brown, with whom he had been in battles in their

younger days, had sent for me to come and be one of the gentlewomen of his daughter-in-law, the young Lady Jane Grey, newly married to his fourth son, Lord Guildford Dudley, in London City. My father said that it was a great distinction for me to be selected out of scores of other country maidens for the work, and that if ever I had speech with the noble duke I was to thank him heartily for his favour towards us—this I promised readily, not knowing what manner of man that was whose doings were afterwards an enormous factor in working dire woe to those I loved. And then my father went on to say that business of importance would prevent his going with me on this my entrance into the big world—oh, father! I saw through that, for was it not from you I inherited the nature which loved home and freedom better than the life among great people of exalted rank?—but he said he would send me with old and trusty servants, who would take me safely in a horse-litter from our town of Brighthelmstone[**1**] on the south coast, all the long way to Sion House, in Isleworth, near London City, where my Lady Grey was residing at that time.

[**1**] Now called Brighton.—ED.

And the next day, after a troubled leave-taking from all I loved so dearly, I suffered him to bestow on me his blessing, which he did with many words of touching kindness, and put me in the litter.

I must confess that I did not perceive very much of the road we went over during the first part of my journey, owing to a weakness which came on in my eyes and a sickness and dejection of spirit such as I had never previously known, and my good maid Betsy proved to be very annoying for talking over much, which was indeed her wont when excited, and making doleful laments about the dangers of the way and the roughness of the roads that, without doubt, somewhat impeded our progress.

But afterwards, after a long while, I felt better and could think less miserably of my father's tender blessing and of the sudden breakdown and loud crying of poor Jack and the afflicting disappearance of Hal, who I knew had hidden himself in order that he might get over the parting in secret, and the crying of the woman servants we left behind, and solemn faces of the men and the waving of Master Montgomery's old hat as we passed the parsonage, so that by the time we neared a neighbouring castle I could even look admiringly upon it. We stayed that night at Horsham, in a queer little inn kept by a monstrously fat innkeeper and his exceedingly thin wife, who at another time would

have amused me greatly by her fussiness and servility.
And the next day we proceeded on our way, passing many strange and curious places, but meeting with no brigands and no mishap at all until it chanced that, on the King's highway, we came upon a group of unruly, wild-looking men and boys, who were dragging a poor old woman, with great violence, towards a large pond.
'What is the matter? Oh, Betsy, see!' I cried. 'What are those men doing to that poor old woman? Look! they are dragging her to that pond! Poor creature! They will hurt her!'
'Mistress, 'tis only a witch!' cried Betsy, who had been told to call me Mistress now that I was going to be a great lady. 'Suchlike do much harm,' she continued. 'They sell their souls to the devil for gold; they meet each other on broomsticks riding through the air, and plot mischief. From such may we be delivered!' she went on fervently. 'They had better be drowned!' she concluded.
'No, no. 'Tis cruel! Tell Humphrey to stop.' And I myself called to the men to stay the horses bearing my litter, and looked out full of sympathy with the poor old creature. Was there no one to stand up for her, no one to stay this rough horse-play which was going on? Master Montgomery had always taught us to treat the aged with reverence, and therefore it seemed truly shocking to me, as also most alarming.
'Forsooth, Mistress Marg'et,' said Joseph, my lacquey, coming to my litter, "tis the country roughs that are just wild to drown yon old witch.'
'But they shall not!' declared I vigorously; 'they shall not! Stop it, Joseph! Stop it at once!'
'Mistress, I cannot! The men are just mad! Hark at their shouts! They are wild to do it.'
'They shall not do it!' cried I. 'Tell them, Joseph, that Mistress Margaret Brown forbids it.'
Joseph and Timothy, the head man, and John, the other lacquey, looked timidly towards the crowd of excited men and boys who were shouting, gesticulating and urging on each other to drag along the old woman with cuffs and kicks.
I got out of my litter and looked round. It was such a beautiful country, on one side great woods just bursting into leaf, on the other green meadowland, threaded by a silvery stream and studded here and there with blossoming hawthorn trees. Nowhere could I see a house, yet some there must be not far distant, judging from the crowd of men and boys. Alone, with my few servants, what could I do? Who

would have suspected that in such a lovely place there could be doings so outrageous?
'I must speak to them, Betsy,' I said, and across my mind flashed the thought that perhaps Master Montgomery was thinking of some such work as this when he spoke of that to which he believed I was being called.[**2**]

[**2**] Young people are usually in haste. They always aim to reach the end of things at once; they cannot wait.—ED.

'Oh, no, mistress! You must not, indeed you must not interfere!' cried the terrified woman.
'Hold thy tongue, Betsy,' said I. 'I shall go to them and speak,' and in my heart I prayed for help where Master Montgomery said it would never be denied.
And then I advanced towards the roughs, who turned to look at me in amazement.
In a tone and in a manner of authority, for my father always said that it was no use speaking otherwise to knaves, I bade them cease from persecuting a poor old woman who might be innocent of all offence, and passionately adjured them to refrain from violence.
The effect of this was marvellous. Releasing their victim, they fell back, and she, poor soul, knelt on the grass before me, crying out for mercy and catching hold of the border of my gown.
'What has she done?' I asked.
A Babel of voices answered. The old woman had brought disease on Farmer North's cattle. She had turned her evil eye on a young woman who had straightway sickened and died. She had looked on a man as he rode to market and his horse had run away, thrown him off and killed him. Last of all she had spirited away her own orphan grandson, a boy of great promise, who had been committed to her care by his deceased parents and of whom she had professed to be very fond. This young man was believed to have been sent through the earth to the abodes of the lost.
'I did not do it, lady! I did not! Saul was the darling of my old age. I know no more than they where he has gone. I am no witch. Ask the minister; he knows.'
This and much more cried the poor old dame in quavering tones.
'Listen to her. She is innocent,' I said authoritatively to the rascals, who were recovering themselves and again holding out threatening hands. 'She is a poor old woman, very lame and infirm.'

That did not touch them, so I seized a weightier argument.
'Have you not heard,' I said, 'of One Who laid His hands upon the sick and lame and made them whole? Jesus had compassion on the multitude. He took pity on the infirm. He laid His hands on them and blessed them. He——'
'He sent the devils into the swine, so that they ran into the sea,' interposed a man's voice grimly.
'The devils? Yes. But not the man out of whom they were driven. He sat at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind.'
'True! true!' cried several voices.
It really seemed as if mercy were going to win the day. But at that moment, with a tremendous noise, a number of men and boys came round a bend in the road, dragging forward a wretched object whose head was hidden in a man's jacket.
'A witch! A witch!' yelled the newcomers, brandishing their sticks.
'And we have another! Ha! ha! ha!' laughed and shrieked the men and boys beside me.
Then I perceived that the newcomers were led on by as evil-looking a young man as you could see anywhere. His dress showed him to be a knight, but anything more unknightly than his manner and his conduct could not well be found; he seemed just like the knaves who formed his company, and an ill-looking lot they were, with scarcely a whole garment among them.
'Oh, mistress,' said Timothy, who had left his horses that he might have speech with me. 'Yon is Sir Claudius Crossley, who is said to be your father's sworn enemy. I pray you make haste and get into the litter before he recognizes you. Then we will drive away as fast as the horses can take us.'
'Save me! Save me, lady!' cried the old woman, clinging to my feet, as my hands tried to drag her away.
How could I desert her? It was hard on my servants, but I would not listen to their advice. For I saw nothing, heard nothing but that pitiful old woman, with her despairing cries to me to save her, and the menacing crowd of villains thirsting for her life.

CHAPTER II
My Champion

I began to speak again to the villains, repeating much that I had said before, with even greater earnestness.

Sir Claudius Crossley stared at me, and listened for a moment or two with a bewildered air. Then perceiving the drift of my words, he rudely shouted to me to shut my mouth, and, signing to his men, they caught up the old woman at my feet and bundled her along to the side of the other victim, interposing several of their broad backs between me and the poor old creatures.

The road being now completely blocked by the shouting men and boys, my servants closed round me and literally carried me back to the litter. In truth they were themselves of the opinion that the old women were witches, who had sold themselves to the devil for a term of years, and ought therefore to be put to death.

I was perforce obliged to sit in my litter, but it could not proceed because of the crowd which blocked the way. I would not look towards the wretched scene, but Betsy would not refrain from telling me every detail of what was taking place with the supposed witches and their enemies.

'Both old women are witches, mistress,' she cried. 'I thought so, and now I know it; they are ugly as sin. The men are making them confess. The way they do it is to pull their hair and screw their wrists until they say for what sum the devil has bought their souls, and for what length of time they have bound themselves to serve him. No, mistress, Timothy will not allow you to interfere. He promised Sir Henry that he would take you safely to Sion House, near London, and he means to do it. Now, mistress, they are tying the witches' thumbs together—the two of them are being tied together by the thumbs, I mean—and now they are going to throw them into the water. If they do not sink, they will know they are witches, and will force them under; if they sink, they will drown, so there will be an end of them in any case.'

'Oh, this is terrible—terrible!' I cried. Putting my head out of my litter, I called to the ruffians to cease their cruelty. 'It is murder,' I said; 'it is nothing but murder! "Thou shalt do no murder."'

But I might as well have spoken to the wind, which was beginning to

rise in fitful gusts.
The mob—for by this time the crowd had become a howling mob—was in no mood to be stayed from proceeding to extremities. A shower of mud and stones was flung at my litter and its attendants, one of the men-servants receiving a blow upon the shoulder, which might have put it out of joint, being most violent.
'Wait till we have drowned the witches, then we will come for you!' shouted Sir Claudius cruelly.
'Ay, ay, sir!' chorused many voices.
This was alarming. My servants put their heads together, muttering their fears. I overheard them saying that they had seen the witch looking hard at me as she begged for mercy, and that I might be doomed, and what could three men and a woman do against more than a hundred ruffians?
'Mistress,' said old Timothy to me at length. 'We can do nothing against so many, and unfortunately we have already incurred their anger. Far better would it be, therefore, for us to turn and flee whilst they are occupied in drowning the witches.'
'Flee! Do you mean that?' exclaimed I.
'Yes. Yes, mistress dear. And quickly—quickly! It is our only chance.'
And Timothy looked affrightedly at the angry faces of the mob.
'Nay. But that is cowardly!' I cried, 'to run away and think only of our own skins when the weak and old are being murdered!'
'We shall be murdered ourselves in a few more minutes if we stay here,' muttered the old man. 'Child,' he said, forgetting my new dignity, which indeed profited me nothing just then, 'it is to save our lives—*yours*, the most precious of all. How could I face Sir Henry again if you were killed?'
And his voice shook.
'Killed! Killed? Are they threatening that? Oh, but, Timothy, we have never done them any harm.'
'Ay, but you have!' cried the loud, domineering voice of Sir Claudius, as he thrust himself forward to get between Timothy and me. 'You have tried to stop our sport!'
'Sport!' cried I, with the most mighty contempt I ever felt in all my life. 'Sport! Call you it sport to torture and kill poor feeble old women?'
Angered by my words, the miscreant was about to lay hold of me with his great hands, when the lacquey Joseph gave him a blow of the fist which sent him staggering into the midst of his men.
Alas, that was, as it were, a signal for hostilities to commence. Men

and boys rushed on us from all sides. My men-servants were seized by overpowering numbers and hurled to the ground, and I myself was lifted bodily out of the litter and set on a bank by the roadside, so that all might see me.

The two old women were drowned now—their murderers thirsted for more blood, and Sir Claudius, smarting from the treatment he had received from the hands of my good Joseph, yearned above all things for revenge.

'Eh, lads! What shall we do to my lady?' he asked mockingly, pointing to me.

'Drown her also,' suggested one, with a hoarse laugh.

'Strangle her,' cried another.

'Carry her away to some remote country place, and then get money from her friends before we will tell them where she is,' said a third.

Cries of approval and many alternative suggestions arose from the mob.

Looking from one to the other, I could see no pity, no relenting anywhere, least of all in Sir Claudius. I spoke to him.

'I am a lady,' I said; 'where is your chivalry?'

The man had not any, but I thought it as well to cry out for what ought to have been there.

'You tried to save those witches,' he began.

'And you will try to save me, will you not?' I asked, looking at him, with the vain hope that I should see something which was not there.

'That I will not!' cried the churl.

'Shall we drown her, Sir Claudius? Shall we drown her, too?' demanded many voices.

'Help! Help for a lady! Help for Mistress Brown!' shouted the lacquey Joseph with his loud, stentorian voice. The honest fellow had been bound hand and foot; he had nothing left but his voice with which to serve me, and the next moment it was silenced with a blow and a gag; but it had done good work.

Noiselessly over a soft fallow field a little group of horsemen had approached, and at the sound of that loud, manly cry of my poor Joseph's they charged into the mob, calling out lustily:—

'Disperse, in the King's name! In the King's name I say disperse!'

Bullies are cowards all the world over. The men who had drowned old women and were threatening a defenceless girl with a like fate, took to their heels with one accord, knocking down each other and falling over each other in their flight, whilst, alarmed and struck, first on this side and then on that, my horses set off galloping, and dashed, with

the litter, amongst the crowd, treading down some and crushing others. The damage they did was appalling. Curses, shouts, groans and screams filled the air on every side.

In a few moments none of the roughs remained near me, and I was enabled to look up at my deliverer.

He was a handsome knight of medium size and frank, soldier-like deportment and bearing; as I found afterwards, he was scarcely twenty-six, yet he looked much older, having seen service in the profession of arms from his boyhood. He was dressed in crimson velvet, very worn and travel-stained. Indeed, both he and his horse bore traces of a rapid journey across country, as did also his followers and their horses.

'How shall I thank you?' I said gratefully. 'Sir, you have saved my life.'

'I thank God that I came in time,' he said. 'I fear those rascals have terrified you much.'

'I fear they have hurt my good serving-men,' I said, looking round for them.

My champion, desirous of serving me still more, picked up my poor Timothy, who, having been thrown down and trampled upon, was in no little pain. He breathed better, however, when his arms were freed and his legs unbound, and began to lament the loss of the horses and litter, which made us think he was coming round finely. We left him, therefore, to look to Joseph, who was in a desperate state, having been almost smothered by the gag which was tied over his mouth and nostrils. His face, swollen and discoloured, was fearful to look upon, but I took his poor head on my lap and endeavoured to induce him to drink from a flask my rescuer had put in my hand.

The good knight stood by me, with the kindest eyes it seemed to me that I had ever seen.

'Give him time,' he said; 'give him time. There is no hurry.'

It seemed to me, as I glanced at him, that he would have stood there all day with great content, so long as he could watch me doing things, and no doubt he was tired, having ridden far.

'But look after the others, please,' I said, feeling anxious about Betsy and John.

'They are all right,' he answered. 'They have picked themselves up bravely. And your man is coming round.'

Then one of his followers came up to him, saying, 'Sir Hubert, we do wrong to linger here. Those villains will return with greater numbers, bent upon wreaking vengeance. There was one amongst them of good birth, and a knight, but of low nature, who is notorious for crime. He

will return, if no one else does; and the lady——'
The rest of the sentence I could not hear, but it seemed to mightily excite my brave deliverer.
Joseph was sitting up whilst this was going on, and begging my pardon for the liberty he had taken in lying down with his head on my lap. At the same moment John and Betsy declared themselves recovered.
'Lady,' said the knight, "tis necessary that we hurry on. Say, could you ride my horse? Or stay, Smith,' turning to one of his men, 'you have a quiet nag; bring her here for the lady.'
'Is there no hope of recovering my litter?' I asked, adding, 'I am going all the way to Sion House, near London, where the Duke of Northumberland's daughter-in-law awaits me.'
'The litter is lost to you,' was the startling answer. 'If we wait here for its return, or pursue those runaway horses, we shall be lost too. Madam,' the knight bent his head to speak softly in my ear, 'I will not hide it from you. These are fearful times for a lady to be travelling alone with so small a retinue. Lawless men, such as those that have just been routed, might carry you off where your friends would never hear of you again——'
'Why frighten us?' I interrupted, but had no time to say more, for the noise of brawling again broke upon my ear.
The knight turned to his men, saying, 'They are coming. They are many, we are few. We must ride back the way we came, across the fields. Take up the lady's men and woman.'
And with that he lifted me hastily from the ground, and, placing me upon his own horse, vaulted lightly into the saddle behind me.
'Hold fast, madam,' he said in my ear. 'Put your arms round my neck; so. That is it. Now, Sultan, good horse, gallop thy fastest!'
Whinnying low, the horse tore off across the fallow fields, and away we went like the wind, but I did not know even so much as the name of the valiant knight to whom I was clinging as for life.

CHAPTER III
Hiding from the Enemy

I had been carried off in such haste as left me no time to look back and see if my servants were equally well mounted, and for some time all I could do was to cling to my cavalier. I felt his heart beating as I did so and his warm breath fanning my cheeks. Moments seemed hours as they passed.

And now shouts and the sound of pursuing horsemen entering the fields in full career after us sounded in our ears, and, looking back, we saw a company of riders as well as foot-runners.

'Hold tight, madam; we take the fence. Hurrah! old Sultan has done it!' cried my knight, and we were over and speeding across a meadow long before any one else had reached the fence.

Presently I heard shooting, and, looking back, perceived that my knight's men, hampered by the wounded servants and unable to leap the fence, were obliged to turn and fight. This kept back the pursuers and gave us a better chance of escape.

My cavalier drew rein and looked back across the meadow. Alas, four horsemen, having separated themselves from the others, had just leaped the fence and were galloping after us.

'Sultan, good horse!' cried my knight encouragingly, and his steed answered with a low whinny, and galloped along as before. 'Cling to me, madam. Hold tight!'

Again I clung to him convulsively, not venturing to speak about my fears for my poor servants and our own perilous position.

Another higher and thicker fence was leaped, not quite so successfully this time, for poor Sultan was just done and, floundering, caught his hoof in a long hawthorn branch. Down he fell upon his knees, and I saw stars and thick darkness.

When I came to myself, I found I was being carried in the strong arms of the good knight. I said nothing, for indeed what could I say? What he was doing for me that day I should never forget, never in all my life. But I could not speak of it.

Presently I could see that we were passing through a plantation of young trees, on a path so narrow that my rescuer had much difficulty in carrying me through it. He was exceedingly careful lest I should

receive a knock from some too prominent bough or tree-trunk, yet I noticed he bruised his own hands more than once in his endeavour to protect me. I thought I should never feel the same about those hands again; they had suffered for me. Once as he carried me on I tried to wipe off the blood that flowed from a scratch on his neck with my neckerchief, torn off for the purpose, much to his concern.

'Do not,' he said. 'It does not matter about me.'

But I persisted that it did, and bound his neck with the neckerchief, begging him to permit the liberty I was taking.

He looked at me then very kindly, saying, 'No one ever took so much trouble about me before,' and that seemed to me the most extraordinary shame that ever was.

When we were through the plantation we found a wooden shanty, or covered shed, in the field at the other side of the trees. The door of the place was not locked, and my knight set me down upon my feet and opened it. Then he led me in, and we found there was an old cart in it, full of cut grass.

'We must hide here a little while,' said my rescuer. 'Perhaps our pursuers will not come to this side of the trees.'

'I am afraid they will,' returned I, 'if they saw us entering the wood.'

'Then we must hide,' said he. 'Madam, can you get into the cart?'

'Easily,' I answered. 'My name,' I added shyly, for it was awkward for us not to know each other's names, 'is Margaret Brown.'

'Mistress Margaret Brown,' said he, pronouncing the words so beautifully that it seemed to me my cognomen had never sounded half so well before. Then he added, 'And mine is Hubert Blair.'

'Sir Hubert Blair?' said I thoughtfully, thinking what a very nice name it was and how well it seemed to suit the man.

'Yes,' answered he with a smile. 'But now, Mistress Brown, please to get into the cart and lie down. Then I will cover you with the cut grass which half fills it.'

'Will you hide yourself too?'

'Aye, aye.'

He assisted me into the cart and piled the grass over me, even putting a thin layer of it over my head. Then, perceiving a heap of grass in the corner of the shed, and, thinking he could conceal himself more quickly in it, he told me that he was going to do so, beseeching me, whatever happened, to make no sound, but to lie still where I was hidden.

'You may rely upon me,' I said. 'You, Sir Hubert, are the captain of this adventure, and I know how to obey.'

Sir Hubert then hid himself as well as he could in the heap of cut grass in the corner of the shed, and scarcely had he done so when the noise of men and horses was to be heard outside.
Presently a man pushed the door open and entered.
'What's in here?' he said aloud. 'A queer sort of a shed! Better call the others. But no, it seemeth empty, except for this grass. What have we here?'
He had approached the cart, and was peering in cautiously.
'Bad farming to leave so much stuff in a cart!' he went on, poking the grass a little with his stick, or weapon.
I trembled, and was fearful that my trembling would cause the grass to move. Indeed, he must have seen something of the sort, for he said in a low tone, 'Thou needst not fear. As sure as my name is Jack Fish, I will keep the other men out of this place.'
With that he went away, returning, however, in a moment to add, 'Thou hadst best keep here a little while longer before thou attemptest to go away. I am a true man. I will keep thy secret.'
With that he crossed over to the heap of grass in the corner of the shed, behind which Sir Hubert was hidden. Then, being of a playful humour, he began to poke the grass heap gently with his foot, blustering a little as he did so.
'Hullo!' said he, "tis strange how men and grass become mixed in these days! Easy now, don't show thyself! I am a truthful man, and I want to say I have seen no one. Thou needst not fear.'
'Thanks. You are a good man.'
The words came out of the grass with weird effect.
'I'll get the others away from here directly; I really joined them to prevent their doing mischief. But do not stir for half an hour or so. Then keep well to the right and thou wilt regain the high road, and perchance find thy litter awaiting thee.'
Now Sir Hubert was so delighted to hear this, and so certain that the man was a friend, that he threw the grass off him and sat up, but was instantly almost smothered with the quantity of green stuff the other immediately threw over him.
The next instant another voice at the door inquired: 'Is any one hidden here, Jack Fish?'
"Twas a fancy of mine to search the shanty. However, I might have known those fugitives would not have ventured to stay here,' returned Master Fish.
'Well, there is no place to hide in here, unless it be the cart. Have you looked into that grass on it?'

'Aye, aye. I've poked about it rarely, but nothing bigger than a mouse ran out of it.'
'Well, come on then, if there is nothing here,' cried the other impatiently.
They left the shed, Jack Fish lingering a moment to close the door and to say noisily to those within and those without, 'All right! All right!'
We were still for the next ten minutes, which seemed an age; then Sir Hubert said:
'He was a good old fellow yon, and I liked his hint about your litter. It will be a fine thing indeed if we can find it on the high road when we get there.'
'Yes indeed,' I said, 'and my servants too, which last is a matter of more importance, for they are very dear to me.'
I had raised my head out of the grass, and was sitting up.
'Do you think I can get out of the cart now?' I asked.
'Not yet. Wait a little longer where you are. I will look round outside;' and shaking off the grass sticking to him on all sides, Sir Hubert proceeded to the door, at which he listened cautiously before attempting to open it.
The next moment he stepped back quickly to his place in the corner, saying, 'Some one is coming.'
Then he hid himself under the grass as before.
An old man entered, with a large two-pronged hay fork in his hand.
'They will have stolen my cart, I'll be bound!' he said aloud.
He looked suspiciously around, but gave a grunt of satisfaction upon seeing the cart.
Approaching it, he was about to plunge his fork into the grass, when Sir Hubert sprang up, caught hold of the tool and wrenched it from his grasp.
'Your pardon, master,' said the knight hastily to the man. 'But I have placed something in your cart which you might unwittingly have damaged had you plunged your fork into it.'
'Cannot a man do as he likes in his own shed?' cried the old countryman. 'And who art thou,' he demanded, 'and what business hast thou here?'
'I am Sir Hubert Blair, of Harpton Hall, in Sussex. I was travelling in these parts with but a few retainers, when I met with a lady and her servants set upon by roughs and in danger of their lives. I carried the lady on my own horse across the fields until a mischance happened to my horse in leaping the last fence before we came to the wood close by. He fell down on his knees, throwing us off; the lady fainted and I

carried her through the wood, and then in here. She is in your cart.'
I sat up in the cart, smiling at the old farmer's astonishment.
'Well, well,' he said, leaning on his fork and looking hard at me. 'These are troublous times! Vagabonds roam the country, and we never know what they will be up to, and a knight and a lady hide in an old cart-shed. The King, God bless him, is young and not by any means strong, but it is to be hoped he and Parliament will do something to make the highways safer.'
'Did you see any signs of the ruffians as you came here?' asked Sir Hubert.
'Nay, not I. But then I was not looking for them. I was thinking of the new calf that came this morning. Do you not know, young sir, that what we are thinking of, that is what we see?'
'Aye, aye.'
Sir Hubert looked at me, and I knew he was reflecting that he could see little else for thinking of me and my unfortunate plight.
'It seems a sorry tale for a knight to be running away from low country rabble,' muttered the old farmer.
Sir Hubert coloured.
'I feel ashamed of myself,' he said. 'But it was for the lady's sake. How would it have been with her if I had been killed? I was obliged to think of her precious life.'
'Well, well. I'm thinking you must both be pretty hungry. Will you come with me to my house, where my wife shall give you food?'
This was too good an offer to be refused, and we thankfully accepted it, and accompanied the old man to his farmhouse.
It was but a poor place, yet we were as glad to find ourselves in it, with the door bolted to keep out vagrants, as if we were in a palace. And very thankful we were to the farmer's wife when she placed milk and meat before us. I felt almost ashamed of the wonderful appetite I had; but indeed I was very, very hungry when I sat down to the table.
Sir Hubert helped me to everything before he would touch food himself, and I felt a wonderful happiness when his big, strong hands—which had been bruised for me—were serving me. Sweet it was to be so tenderly cared for by him, with words and manner showing the most reverent esteem. I had never experienced aught like it before. At home I was treated by my father as a child and by my brothers as if I were one of themselves; the servants were more deferential, but then they were poor folk, not like this fine gentleman, who seemed to lift me higher than himself that he might look up to me with a sort of loving worship. It was very delightful and very, very

beautiful. I felt ennobled.
Sir Hubert seemed to be extremely happy, and would like to have lingered talking over the meal, but the old man grew uneasy and fidgetty.
'It would well nigh ruin me,' he said, 'if those rascals who attacked you should come over here and find you on my premises. They might sack the house and possibly maltreat us too. My old woman is not very strong, and there's a young serving-lass also. Of course I don't mind for myself, but——'
'We will go,' I said, rising at once. 'You have been very kind, and we should be sorry to bring you into trouble.'
Then I stopped short. Where could we go? It was all very well to say we would depart, but we had not even Sir Hubert's horse to convey us away. The knight aroused himself to look the situation in the face. He seemed somewhat dazed, for the fact was, as he told me afterwards, he had been so extraordinarily happy sitting at the same table, ministering to my wants, and watching the colour return to my face and the light to my eyes, that he had forgotten all else.
'Supposing I leave the lady here a little whilst I go to try and find her coach?' he said to the farmer.
But the latter answered sharply, 'Nay, sir, nay. Thou art not going to leave her on our hands, just to bring the wrath of the country-side upon us——'
'If you go, Sir Knight, she must go too,' interrupted the old farmer's wife. 'It is bad enough for us to have to shelter you both when you are here to help to fight if the rascals come, but without you! Why, they might string us up to the rafters, and leave us hanging like dried herrings, as easy as anything. My old man has not any fight in him, bless you! When he thought there was a thief in the house the other night, he made me go first to look for him!'
'Well, well,' said the old man. 'I'm getting old, and am not much stronger than thee, Susannah. But thou canst scream rarely, and 'tis a weapon of a sort, which sometimes is unexpectedly powerful.'
Sir Hubert laughed. Then he turned to me, saying with rare tenderness, 'I could not leave you, Mistress Margaret, with these people. Will you come with me?'
I said I would, and indeed I felt as if I could go with him anywhere, anywhere in the world, and he a knight whom half a dozen hours before I had never seen.
'Come then,' he said, and after throwing some silver on the table to pay for our meal, he offered me his arm, and we went out together

into the night, now fast coming on.
'The darkness is our friend,' said Sir Hubert, 'for it will hide us from our enemies.'
'Yes,' returned I, with great content, for I had no fear of darkness when he was by my side, holding me with his firm, strong arm.
And in my heart I prayed to our Father in heaven to protect us both and bring us in safety out of all danger.

CHAPTER IV
Better Happenings

In all the vicissitudes of my lot the memory of that first walk with Sir Hubert Blair through the Sussex lanes was ever one of unalloyed sweetness.

The stars came out one by one in the heavens, glimmering down upon us, and a young moon arose, whilst a soft night wind stirred the hedgerows, making the slumbering violets breathe forth their sweetness. I could scarcely help leaning on my companion, for I had been much shaken that day, and far from resenting it, as Jack and Hal would have done most heartily, he begged me to lean more heavily, declaring that he was very strong and not at all fatigued, as he sought tenderly to conduct me over the smoothest places.

Very soon, however, we reached the high road and had scarcely begun to walk upon it when, to our joy and satisfaction, we heard the tramping of horses and were presently overtaken by my horse-litter, conducted by my men, Timothy, John and Joseph. Betsy was seated inside, and they all cried for joy when they discovered me with Sir Hubert Blair, entirely unhurt and in the best of spirits.

We had a great deal to say to each other; but scarcely had we begun to explain how we came there, and to relate our experiences, before Sir Hubert Blair interrupted by bidding us defer the talk until we had reached a place of safety.

'I strongly advise you, Mistress Margaret,' he said, 'to press forward at once, lest those ruffians who attacked you should again come in your way.'

'And you?' I said, as he put me into the litter, 'will you not come with us, too?'

'I wish that I could,' he answered. 'But it is not for me to ride at my ease by a lady's litter. I have other work to do.'

'But—but,' faltered I, for at the idea of losing him a feeling of despair came over me, 'you are a true knight, Sir Hubert, and as such will not desert a lady in her need——'

'Certainly not in her need,' returned he. 'But, madam, you have your own trusty servants back again and your litter, and the villains who molested you have gone.'

'Still, I fear,' I said, 'I fear much that Sir Claudius, with his odious followers, may again find us. His father and my father are at enmity, and he may carry on the feud against me.'
'There is no knowing what such a cur may do,' rejoined Sir Hubert Blair. 'He will lose his knighthood if he goes on as he is doing. But are you really afraid, Mistress Margaret?' And then he added, 'I thought you were so brave.'
Thereupon I did a very foolish thing, but one which was perhaps natural considering my youth and the rough experiences I had just passed through—I began to cry, as if my heart would break, hiding my face against Betsy's shoulder and giving way completely.
'Oh! Do not! Do not weep!' cried Sir Hubert, his resolution vanquished by my tears. 'I will escort you to your destination, indeed I will, if only you will not weep.'
'Hearken, mistress, hearken. The noble gentleman will accompany us,' said Betsy in my ear.
And still I wept, for having given way I gave way utterly and could not stop my tears.
'Poor child! Poor child!' I heard Sir Hubert say. And then he turned to Timothy, and began some talk about the horses.
When I felt a little better I heard Timothy telling the knight that his men had captured his horse and were seeking him in all directions.
When he heard this Sir Hubert whistled three times, and then waited, listening intently.
In the distance we heard a faint sound as of whistling in answer.
Then Sir Hubert came to my coach door and spoke to me.
'Mistress Margaret Brown,' he said, 'I am pleased to find that I can escort you as an outrider, as far as you are going. When my men come up with my horse, which they have recovered, we will ride by your coach. Then I think, even if that scoundrel, Sir Claudius, and his men encounter us again, we shall be equal to them.'
I was overjoyed at that, and I don't know what I answered, but he seemed quite satisfied, and presently his men came up with Sultan, whom they had captured, and he and they rode before and alongside our coach, to my extreme content and satisfaction.
Betsy chattered on about the escape she and the men had been able to make, whilst the rabble fought with Sir Hubert's men. She could not fight, having no weapon, and therefore, when they were brought to a standstill in the field and the fighting commenced, she slid off the horse on which she had been placed and ran away as fast as her feet could carry her; upon which John, who was her cousin, could not

refrain from following, and Timothy and Joseph being dropped by the men who had taken them up and feeling too ill to fight, crept away into the shelter of a hedge, where the other two found them after all the combatants had gone. They could not discover me, and therefore returned to the high road, where presently they came upon the litter and horses, the latter feeding on the grass by the wayside. Then they drove up and down, hoping that I should find my way back to the road, and that the enemy would not again appear.

I fell into a doze at last, lulled by the sound of Betsy's untiring voice and the steady trampling of the horses' feet, and when I awoke again the moon was shining brightly down upon Sir Hubert riding by the litter, making the small gold cross he wore upon his breast gleam in its light.

He seemed to know in a moment when I awoke.

'Are you better, Mistress Margaret?' he asked, with such tender, chivalrous feeling in his voice as made my heart bound with delight.

'Yes,' I answered shyly, and meant to have thanked him, but could say no more, for thinking of the tears he had seen me shed and that I was too small a person and too babyish to be lifted up so high as he was lifting me above himself.

'I am glad of that,' he said. 'I want to tell you something. We are coming to a castle, where a friend of mine dwells. He will give us lodging for the night, and indeed I think we had better stay a day or two for you to rest.'

'Will you stay, too?' I asked, as simply as a little child.

He bent his head over his horse and appeared to be busy examining the bridle. I could not see his face and began to fear that I might have said something wrong. But he did not blame me when he spoke again.

'Sir William Wood,' he said, 'who lives at this castle we are approaching, is a great friend of mine, and indeed it was to stay with him that I came into this neighbourhood—we had certain business of importance to discuss——' he broke off, and began again, 'He was in Spain with us, when I went there with some friends on an embassy, and he and I were knighted at the same time. He has a fair young wife, Lady Caroline, who will be good to you.'

'I should like to go to them for the night,' said I, 'for I am weary.' And I could not prevent a sob from escaping from my breast.

'Poor child! I *know* you are,' he answered, with infinite compassion.

Betsy began to vociferate that my father had bidden them to conduct me straight to Sion House, London, with no lingering on the way, but Sir Hubert silenced her.

'Some lingerings are needful,' he said. 'Your young mistress is worn out, and unless she rest upon the way she may never reach her destination.'
'I wish we could let my father know,' I said; 'but it would take a couple of days to reach him,[**1**] and a couple for his answer to return to me, even if I sent one of the men, and by that time I should have stayed the full time for which I craved his leave.'

[**1**] How slow were all modes of sending messages in those days may be gathered by the fact, recorded in history, that when Queen Mary died, the news was not known in York, until four days after her death in London,—EDITOR.]

Sir Hubert smiled.
'We shall have to do without it,' he said. Then he added more seriously, 'You will act upon my advice, will you not, and rest awhile with these friends?'
'Certainly I will,' said I, for I felt sure Sir Hubert was one of the wisest and best of men.
We seemed a long while getting to the castle after that, for the way led up a steep hill, and I was again overpowered by sleep; but I have a dim recollection of waking up to find myself being welcomed by a fair and gracious lady, whilst a big young man shook Sir Hubert by the hand as if he would never let him go, and many servants moved silently about, and Betsy was too overawed to speak and did nothing but what they bade her.
Soon I was lying on a huge bed, the posts of which were reaching up to the ceiling of my room, and then I fell asleep and knew no more.

CHAPTER V
Lady Caroline Talks With Me

I slept soundly that first night of my stay at Woodleigh Castle, being altogether worn out and in the utmost need of Nature's kind restorer, and it was very late on the following day when I awoke to find Betsy at my side with hot broth and bread and sundry other articles of food.
'Mistress,' said my woman, 'you must eat and drink, for there are great happenings here, and you will need your strength, aye and your wits about you, too. Timothy says he does not like you to be alone amongst strange leaders of whom your father may not approve, and he hopes that you will not be led to feelings which will unfit you for being the companion of the high and noble lady to whom your father is sending you, though indeed I think he might have come with you himself if he had known how dangerous it was.'
I could not help smiling at Betsy's speech, as I sat up to take the refreshment she brought me. The first part of her speech was laboured and unnatural, as if she were the unwilling mouthpiece of poor old Timothy, but the last bit was certainly her own, for it bore Betsy stamped all over it.
'Yes, mistress, you can smile now that the danger is over,' said my maid, much aggrieved, 'but I can tell you we have had a narrow escape, a very narrow escape indeed. The people here say that we might have been all killed, as likely as not, by the highwaymen whom Sir Claudius consorts with and leads. They say that he got knighted by mistake, and that he is to be unknighted again—the knowledge of which makes him desperate. And they say, too, which indeed our men and I think also, that you brought all our misfortunes upon us, mistress, by interposing to save those witches, which was directly interfering with Providence that was about to send them back to where they came from.'
'I never did think you were wise, Betsy,' said I, 'but now I know you are most foolish. And I will not listen to you any more.' And with that I turned my back upon her, and took my food looking the other way, with the vague feeling that I would not cast the pearls of my wiser thoughts before the swine of Betsy's foolishness.
Betsy, however, was not to be suppressed. She went on talking as she

looked over my dress, repairing it in places where it had been torn and making it ready for me to put on. And, by-and-by I heard her say words which caused me to turn round and ask, 'What is that? What did the men say Sir Claudius cried as he rode off?'

'He vowed,' she cried, 'he vowed that he would have you yet. Aye, he said that he would never rest until he had won you for his own, that he might vanquish your proud and haughty spirit!'

I was rather frightened, but endeavoured not to show it.

"Tis a little cock,' I said, 'that crows the loudest.'

Then Betsy approached the bed, and fell down on her knees before me.

'Mistress,' she said imploringly, 'promise me that you will not interfere with witches and such like again. It is that which gives the Evil One power over you, and makes you take rank with his creatures——'

'Fie upon you, Betsy!' I exclaimed indignantly. 'I know what you are thinking. In your naughty thoughts you are limiting the power of our Heavenly Father to take care of me His child, and you are believing that Satan is as mighty, or mightier than He.' Then, as she was silent, I went on, 'Don't you remember that Master Montgomery used to say, "There are no people common or unclean now, since the Gentiles are called to salvation, and our Heavenly Father cares for us all with the utmost tenderness." You know, Betsy, even those poor old women you despised were His dear children. And Master Montgomery said, too, which indeed we know well, that, strong though Satan may be, there is One who is stronger than he.'

Betsy was silenced then. She arose, wiped her eyes and turned meekly away to her work, and I saw it was better to instruct and teach her right notions than to be so contemptuous as at first I was in heart, and told myself I must remember that Master Montgomery said, 'A Christian should always be gentle and "apt to teach."'

Scarcely had I settled that in my mind, when the door opened to admit Lady Caroline Wood, who approached me with great kindness, asking how I had slept and if I were recovered from my fatigue.

When I had answered that my night's sleep was good and my health as well as usual, she asked if my woman might withdraw as she wished to converse with me in private.

'Certainly,' I replied, a little wonderingly, and then I bade Betsy leave the room; and Lady Caroline, who was not much older than myself—though by wearing a large head-dress and elaborate garments she looked so—sat down on the edge of my bed, and talked long with me.

'I have heard,' she began—'Sir Hubert has told us—what a brave girl

you were yesterday in withstanding alone, with your few servants, the cruelties a crowd of men and boys were practising on two old women. It was noble of you, Mistress Margaret, and I honour you for it with all my heart.'

Thereupon she took up my right hand and pressed it for a moment to her lips.

'You are a heroine,' she said, 'and I admire and love you.'

'Indeed it was nothing,' I rejoined; 'moreover I was powerless to avert their cruel death,' and the tears rose to my eyes as I thought of what those poor old women endured.

But Lady Caroline, stooping over me, kissed my tears away.

'You did your best,' she said, 'and may well trust that the good God would receive them through that painful—if haply short—gate into His glorious kingdom.'

She was silent for a moment or two, and my heart warmed to her, for I recognized that she loved Him whom I served, and thought not small things of Him, but the very best.

Then she began again—

'They were taken away from the evil, and your precious life was saved for further and it may be greater work. You are going, I hear, to attend the noble lady who has married Guildford Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland's fourth son?'

'Yes,' replied I, 'Lady Jane Grey, to call her by her maiden name. Do you know aught about her, Lady Caroline?' and there was some anxiety in my tone, for indeed it mattered much to me what sort of a lady that was to whom I was making so long and hazardous a journey.

'Indeed I do. She is a very, very great lady. Some think she will even become queen when our King Edward dies.'

'Queen!' exclaimed I, 'but the king has sisters. Princess Mary will be our sovereign after him.'

Lady Caroline sighed deeply.

'That would be very sad for England were it to happen,' she said. 'Princess Mary is a Papist, you know, and if she became queen she would plunge the kingdom into papistry and persecutions, so that rivers of blood would flow——'

'And the good curates, and Master Montgomery,' I asked, 'what would become of them?' For my thoughts had flown to the limited circle in which I had been brought up and the good old man from whose teachings I was fresh.

'They would be martyred—perchance he would be burned at the stake,' said Lady Caroline.

'No, no,' I cried. 'God would not allow it.'
'God often works by means of man,' the lady answered solemnly, 'and it may be in the power of the more enlightened of the people of England to prevent those calamities from happening.'
'May it? But how?' I asked, my eyes opening wide with wonder. 'What power in the world can prevent Princess Mary from becoming queen upon the death of our young king?'
'Some of the wisest of our nobility, and our poor sick king himself, have thought upon a way,' replied Lady Caroline, adding, 'Mistress Brown, it may be in your power to help to bring it about.'
'How? How?' I cried. 'Explain. Explain.'
Then Lady Caroline explained. She said that to save the country from horrors innumerable, which would fall upon it in the event of a Papist succeeding to the throne, it was deemed expedient that the king should be induced to make a will, or sign letters patent, to appoint that after his death the crown should be placed upon the head of his young relative, Lady Jane Grey, in which case the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth would be pronounced illegitimate and would therefore be passed over.
I did not know what to say to that. It did not seem to me to be quite right, and yet Lady Caroline said it in such a manner as showed that she was completely convinced it was so.
'The king is very ill now,' she continued, after a slight pause, 'and the Duke of Northumberland is with him.'
'Is the duke one of those who favour Lady Jane Grey's being made queen?' I asked.
'Yes. And I will tell you why. He sees so clearly what devastation and woe will come upon this kingdom if a Papist is again upon the throne; and on the other hand how blessed and prosperous it will become under good Protestant governance.'
'Lady Jane Grey is a Protestant, then?' I asked.
'Certainly, and withal so wise and virtuous as to stand out far above all other women in the world.'
I thought if that were so she would not like to step before the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, but I dared not say it, for, with all her sweetness there was something imperious about Lady Caroline so that I felt she would not brook dissent from a young girl like me.
She seemed to be a little piqued with my silence, and getting off the bed, stood beside it to say, as if closing the discussion—
'For the enlightenment of the people in our neighbourhood and to instil the truth into their minds my husband has invited Sir Hubert

Blair here, purposely to speak to a congregation to-night, which he intends getting together, of our tenantry and people in the neighbourhood.'
That touched me more nearly than the other matter, and I felt myself colouring deeply. 'Has Sir Hubert skill thus to speak?' I asked.
'Certainly; he is a very able man, and always speaks out manfully for the right. In Spain, when he went with his friend, Sir Thomas Wyatt, who accompanied his father on an embassy, he saw much of the horrors of papistry and the terrible Inquisition, and he is going to tell the people about it to-night, that every one present may be stirred to do his utmost to keep it far from our land.'
She paused.
'I should like to hear what he has to say,' I said. 'Are you going to be present, Lady Caroline?'
'Yes, yes,' she said, 'and I will take you with me; indeed, we think you ought to come to it—for you ought to know everything, then you can tell Lady Jane all that you have heard.'
I was rather alarmed at the idea of doing that, not knowing then that she was even sweeter and more easy to get on with than Lady Caroline herself. But I have often noticed that the higher up in the scale of society a person is so much the more courteous and gentle we are sure to find him or her. For it is ever the greater man, the greater courtesy.
After Lady Caroline had gone I dressed and went downstairs into the large hall, where she came to me again, and the rest of that day was spent very quietly with her alone, none of the gentlemen coming near us, as they were all busy preparing for the meeting and riding far to bid folk come to it. I was constantly hoping to see Sir Hubert Blair again, and I think Lady Caroline discovered this, for she said not unkindly—
'You cannot see Sir Hubert until the meeting, which is to be held in the courtyard after the ringing of the curfew bell. And there you will not be able to speak to him—at least not until the gathering is over—but you will hear all he has to say.'
Then, I began to long exceedingly for the time of the meeting to come, as I wished, above all things, to see my brave champion again, and hear the words he had to say.

CHAPTER VI
Papistry or Protestantism

It was a strange weird sight, that large assembly, crowded together in a fore-court of the fine old Castle, in the gathering gloom of night. All sorts and descriptions of people had been gathered in from every side, both rich and poor, high and low, gentle and simple, good and bad, wise and unwise, those that were handsome and those that were uncomely. They stood together in a mass, eager to hear of matters of vital importance to them all, and heeding little the petty class distinctions about which at another time their feelings might be rancorous.

Here and there the light of a lantern or a flaming torch enlivened the scene; but nearly all the torches and candles that could be got together were grouped at one end of the court, where, upon a roughly made platform, the chief landowners and the clergy were gathered around Sir Hubert Blair, who was dressed richly in velvet and lace, as befitted his rank, and who seemed to be the cynosure of all eyes.

As I saw him there, so young, yet looking wiser than his years would warrant, and so handsome, yet humble withal, and remembered how he had saved my life but yesterday, bearing me in his arms as if I were a child, and bruising his own hands rather than suffer me to touch the trees, my heart glowed within me and a wordless prayer rose from it that his friendship for me and mine for him might be blessed and strengthened mightily.

Just for a moment he caught my eye, as his keen glance swept over the audience, and I could not be sure, but I thought a wave of colour passed over his pale, proud features. Yet he turned his eyes resolutely away from me, and I knew that just then, for the time being, he existed only for the people with whom he was about to plead and for whose sake he was there.

I did not hear much of what the first speaker, a white-haired venerable old bishop, was saying, for his voice was feeble, and Lady Caroline, who stood near me, whispered that it was only because of his age and high position that the opening speech was apportioned to him.

But, after having spoken a little while, the people listening at first with reverence and then beginning to show signs of some impatience, he

seemed to call upon the audience for a hymn, for suddenly, in most excellent voice, the whole assembly began to sing the psalm—

To Sion's Hill I lift my eyes,
    From thence expecting aid;
From Sion's Hill and Sion's God,
    Who Heaven and earth has made.
Then thou, my soul, in safety rest,
    Thy Guardian will not sleep;
His watchful care that Israel guards,
    Will Israel's monarch keep.

And so on to the finish—

At home, abroad, in peace, in war,
    Thy God shall thee defend;
Conduct thee through life's pilgrimage
    Safe to thy journey's end.

The last words had scarcely died away when a stout curate, with a fine, clear voice, began to speak about the Reformation, relating in brief its history and the gross errors from which it had freed the people, causing the abolition of so much that intervened between themselves and God, for instance the jurisdiction of the Pope, the doctrine of trans-substantiation, the withdrawal of the Holy Scriptures from the people, the refusal of liberty to worship in a tongue understood by the people, confession to a priest, penance and the like.

I did not understand it all, not by a long way, but Timothy's graphic comment—for he had found his way to my elbow—enlightened me not a little.

"Tis just,' said he, 'as if those monks and cardinals of old had busied themselves with setting up a lot of stone walls between folks and their Maker, so that they might keep their distance; and it was the same sort of thing the disciples of our Lord wanted to do when they tried to keep the children off Him that the mothers brought. "Go away," said they, "you are troubling the Master." But what did He do? He called the little ones to Him and laid His hands upon them and blessed them. That is *His* fashion, and I reckon He is the same now as He was then.'

And then, after that introductory speech, Sir Hubert Blair stepped forward; and looking down upon the crowd with shining eyes, and it seemed to me a light upon his face, he began to speak, at first slowly and with laboured distinctness, but presently more rapidly, with glowing words, and, ever and anon, gestures of great significance.

'I have been,' said he, 'to a land where the blessings of the Reformation do not exist, and I will tell you what sort of thing is going on there. Bigotry, intolerant bigotry, holds the kingdom of Spain in adamantine fetters. There, where the healing breath of the Reformation, with its God-sent tolerance has not come, cruelty, death and desolation are stalking through the land, leaving behind them a track of blood and tears, broken hearts and mourners weeping for their dear ones, whose innocent lives have been plucked from them by the cruel and relentless hands of torture——' He broke down for a moment or two, covering his face with his hands, and shuddering violently as if at some awful recollection, and a whisper went round among the more intelligent of the audience to the effect that he was speaking about the Inquisition, which was rampant in Spain, and of which traders and diplomatists had brought home many rumours.

'Yes, it is the Inquisition of which I am speaking,' Sir Hubert continued, 'and God grant that it may never come to this country of ours! I will tell you what it is. In brief, it is a court, or tribunal, established in a Roman Catholic country for the examination and punishment of heretics—heretics meaning persons holding or teaching opinions repugnant or opposite to the Roman Catholic faith. The way in which it is actually worked is like this: Many thousands of people, called familiars, are employed as spies and informers, to find out and inform the Holy Inquisition, as it is named, if they know any one, living or dead, present or absent, who has wandered from the faith, or who observes, or has once observed, the Jewish laws or even spoken favourably of them, or any one who follows, or has followed, the teaching of Martin Luther, or any one who has formed an alliance with the devil, or who possesses a heretical book, aye, even the Bible in the Spanish language, or, finally, any one who has harboured, received, or favoured heretics. It is a wide field, you see, my friends, as wide as the views of the Inquisitors are narrow, and the thousands—some of high rank—who are acting as spies do so on account of the privileges connected with the office.'

He paused a moment or two, and then went on to draw a graphic picture of an honest man pursuing his daily avocation, and then, on his way home to his wife and family, being seized by the officers of the Inquisition and carried away, there and then, and from that moment being entirely cut off from the world.

The prison into which the unhappy man would be thrust he described vividly, as one who had seen it. 'In the upper cells of these prisons of the Inquisition,' he said, 'a dim ray of light falls through a grate, the

lower cells are smaller and darker. Each dungeon has two doors, the inner one, bound with iron, having a grate through which food is introduced for the wretched prisoner. A prisoner of the Inquisition is allowed no visits from relatives nor friends, and is not permitted to have books, but is compelled to sit motionless and silent. Unless for the purpose of obtaining evidence, only one prisoner is placed in each cell.

'At his trial there is no hope for the prisoner of the Inquisition. If he says he is innocent, he is threatened with torture, indeed he is often subjected to torture in order to extort a confession. Those who escape death by repentance and confession are obliged to swear they will submit to all the pains and penalties the court orders.'

Then Sir Hubert described some of these fearful punishments, and they, he said, were not the worst, but they were sufficiently dreadful to make the audience groan and cry 'Shame! Shame!' whilst, as for me, I felt as if I should faint.

Sir Hubert next went on to describe what the Spanish call the Holy Auto-da-fé, which takes place on a Sunday, between Trinity Sunday and Advent.

'When sentence of death is pronounced on a man,' said he, 'the Auto-da-fé is ordered, and at daybreak the big bell of the cathedral is tolled, and people come in crowds to see the fearful procession.

'The Dominicans walk first, with the banner of the Inquisition. Then come the penitents, who are to be punished in various ways, and after them, a cross is borne, following which walk the condemned men. The effigies of those who have fled, and the bones of the dead who, having been condemned after death, are not allowed to rest in their graves, but are brought in black coffins, are carried next. Then more monks and priests follow, and the dreadful procession passes on through the streets of the city to the church, where a sermon is preached and the sentences are pronounced. And then follow other dreadful ordeals, which end in death by being strangled or burned alive.

'My friends'—Sir Hubert glanced at me for the first time since he began to speak—'I am cutting short the awful details, for I see that some of you have not strength to endure the hearing of them. If it is so, what must it be to live in a land where such doings are customary, and where the condemned may be our own familiar friends or loving relations? My friends, this is a danger which is menacing England.' He paused.

'Menacing England!' The cry was caught up by many voices. 'England!

How can that be? England is now a Protestant country.'
'This island of ours—this happy England,' said Sir Hubert earnestly, 'if one of the firmest lands in the Continent of Europe to resist papistry and the Inquisition, is in danger of yielding to that which will bring in both, with all their attendant evils and all their gruesome horrors.'
'But how?' cried the people. 'How can that be? The Reformed Church is now our Church. King Edward VI., our dear young king, is for the reformed faith.'
'Yes. Yes. So he is. But my friends'—Sir Hubert lowered his voice as one who spoke of secret matters—'you must know this: Edward, our king, is very ill, far gone in consumption, and even now dying.'
'Dying!' cried the people with deep groans. 'Dying? Edward, our king, dying? Oh, say not so! say not so!' they wailed.
'It is a fact. I come from Hampton Palace, where, the other day, I had an interview with him in his bedroom. "I am very young to die," he said, and he looked so sad I could have wept for him, but, the doctors having said I was to keep a cheerful countenance, I restrained myself. However, he is dying, I saw it plainly. Edward VI is dying.'
'Edward is dying,' echoed the audience, and then such lamentable sighs, groans and sounds of weeping ensued as touched me strangely, whilst Lady Caroline sobbed upon my shoulder.'
'And after he has gone,' Sir Hubert asked in grievous tones, 'what will become of England, if his Roman Catholic sister, Princess Mary, succeeds to the throne?'
In an instant the sound of weeping ceased, and an angry murmur passed like a wave through the dense crowd.
'A Papist! To rule over us? Never! Never!' cried a voice, which recalled to my mind all at once the smell of newly cut grass and the aspect of an old covered shed and a big roughly made cart within it, whilst again, I trembled, yet breathed more feebly because of the kindness of the tones.
Jack Fish it was indeed, and he continued to ejaculate—
'A Roman Catholic Queen! God forbid we should come to such straits as that! A Papist!' and such like, until the people caught it up and cried with one voice, 'A Papist? To rule over us? Never! Never! Never!'
'What do you mean?' asked Sir Hubert. 'Is this only sentiment? Or does your heart go with your cry? Answer me. Yes or no.'
'Yes! Yes! Yes!' shouted all, or almost all.
'It is well,' said Sir Hubert. 'It is well for you, people of England, that you feel like this. With Mary for its queen this country would be

plunged back into Roman Catholicism. Perchance Mary would wed the King of Spain——'

He was interrupted by angry and excited cries.

'We will not have Mary to reign over us!' shouted loud voices. 'We will not! We will not!'

When they were a little calmer Sir Hubert said—

'I rejoice that your voices ring true and that your hearts are in the right place, while your intellects recognize the enormity of the affliction into which this country would be plunged if a woman steeped in Papistry and so benighted, so bigoted that Edward, our king, tried in vain to win her to the true Faith, were to ascend the throne. Let me tell you that there are good and great statesmen round our king who will do all in their power to secure the succession to a true Protestant who, like yourselves, abhors Papistry and all its attendant evils.' After saying that, being thoroughly exhausted, he sat down.

And the people cried with one voice, 'A Protestant, and none but a Protestant, shall rule over us!'

Jack Fish and other countrymen then made short emphatic speeches, which so stirred the audience that they began to grow overpoweringly noisy, whereupon my men and Lady Caroline's made a way through the people for us, and we retired into the castle, leaving the gentlemen to close the meeting in the best way they could.

I did not see them return to the castle that night, for Lady Caroline would have me go to bed at once, declaring that I looked thoroughly worn out. I therefore went to my room, and suffered Betsy to take off my fine clothes and replace them by a warm gown, after which I sent her away, and sat by the lancet-shaped window looking out into the night, listening to the distant shoutings of the people and watching their lanterns and torches presently leaving the courtyard and glimmering away into the darkness beyond. They were going to their homes, carrying with them big thoughts, pregnant with meaning, given to them chiefly by Sir Hubert Blair; and soon I, too, should be gone to a very different sphere, near London, taking with me also new ideas imparted by him and Lady Caroline, and what would be the end of it all?

I could not tell. But it seemed to me that I had left my childhood behind me in my father's house, with Hal and Jack, and was entering into the new untried life of a woman, in times which bid fair to be troubled and tempestuous, and I felt afraid.

But just then, from the garden below my window, proceeded the sound of a sweet-toned lute, played so exquisitely that I could have

wept for joy.

I leaned out of a window and looked down upon the player, and he looked up to me, the while he played even more beautifully than before. And I felt soothed and comforted, for, whatever had happened and was going to happen, there was Sir Hubert Blair, and he was my friend and I his, and I prayed in my heart for him—for him and for myself—that God would bless us, and bless our friendship, so that nothing but good might come of it. When he had gone away, which he did in a few minutes after playing for me that lovely strain, I went to bed; and the feeling of happiness which that music had brought to me was such that I fell asleep the moment my head touched the pillow, and knew no more till it was time to rise the next morning.

CHAPTER VII
Sir Hubert and I

What a wonderful thing is love—the love, I mean, of man for woman and woman for man! It is so bewitching and alluring, yet withal so tyrannical and imperious. No wonder that it has been the theme of poets and historians in all times, and will be as long as the world remains. Love enters so largely into our lives, for weal or woe, that to ignore it is to wilfully shut our eyes to facts and blind ourselves to one of the greatest realities of existence, which must be reckoned with and allowed for, whatever else is omitted. The story of the love of man and woman commenced in the Garden of Eden, runs all through the pages of history, sacred and profane, and is to be seen in all the haunts of men. It is only the very young into whose thoughts and calculations it does not enter, until they wake up suddenly to find themselves its subjects.

I was wandering about in Lady Caroline's garden, within the castle's precincts, the next day—her ladyship had left me to amuse myself whilst she was busy with the steward of her household—thinking about Sir Hubert Blair, when he came to me, saying wistfully, as he took my hand in his—

'May I have a little talk with you, Mistress Brown? We may not have such a good opportunity again.'

A sudden shyness fell upon me, as glancing up, I caught the look in his dark eyes, and I could not answer in words, though he must have read my meaning, for he thanked me very much, and we walked on side by side, stooping ever and anon to look into a flower, or smell an early rose, but scarcely speaking at all, until he began in feverish haste—

'Lady Caroline sent me to talk to you of matters political and religious. You heard what I said at the meeting yesterday, and she wishes me to enlighten you still further about the desires and intentions of the boldest and perhaps the most farseeing statesmen near our dying king. But methinks, though politics may be of importance, and kings and queens demand our unswerving allegiance and devotion, yet there is something nearer my heart just now, something which affects mine own self more closely——' He broke off, and began again: 'Mistress

Margaret, this is a rare opportunity for a quiet talk with you, and I must seize it'——He paused.
'Yes,' I said, trying to help him on, 'you must seize it!'
'Exactly,' he rejoined. 'Oh, but you may think it intolerable presumption on my part. And yet I cannot help it. Margaret—Margaret, I love you, I love you with all my heart.'
He took my hands in his, and held them to him.
I fancy sometimes, after all the far different aspects in which I have seen his dear face and fine figure, that never did he look so handsome and so lovable as then, when he was telling me for the first time of his dear love, and my heart bounded with joy as I realized that he to the full reciprocated my tender affection.
Perhaps he read my answer in my face—I have often been told it is like an open book that he who runs may read—or perhaps he perceived the difficulty I had in finding words, and wished to spare me, for he went on, without awaiting for any rejoinder, to tell me that ever since we first met—he spoke as if that were years and years ago, though it was barely fifty hours before—he felt convinced that I was his affinity, his kindred soul, his wife that ought to be. 'We have been made for each other,' he said, and much more to that effect, whilst I listened as if I were in a happy dream, and thought that it was all too good and beautiful to be true.
And then, long before it was time for her to return—to my thinking, at least—Lady Caroline came into the garden, and, hastening up to me, inquired of what I thought of all Sir Hubert had been telling me.
I felt myself blushing as I answered rather falteringly—
'It is very nice—very—very nice.'
'My dear Mistress Margaret,' she said in a puzzled tone.
'I mean—I mean it is beautiful,' I hastily corrected myself.
'Why, Sir Hubert,' exclaimed Lady Caroline, 'what have you been talking about to her instead of telling her all that I enjoined upon you to say about our poor young king and his successor?'
Sir Hubert looked rather confused. 'The fact was,' said he, 'this garden of yours is so beautiful. We admired the flowers, and conversed of them until——'
'You admired each other and conversed of that instead,' she interrupted merrily. 'Oh! Sir Hubert, fie! You a diplomatist! You a soldier! You a lover of your country——'
'I am a lover of one in it, if you like, madam,' he said, and forthwith we took Lady Caroline into our confidence and confessed that we were in love.

'I am delighted to hear it,' said Lady Caroline, adding: 'By your valour in defending Mistress Margaret Brown the other day, and perchance saving her life, Sir Hubert, you have earned the right to aspire to her hand; still I think you must remember that her father ought to be consulted before you become really betrothed to her.'

'Her father!' cried Sir Hubert, taken aback. 'Where is he?'

I explained where my home was, adding dutifully that my father said business of importance prevented his personally conducting me to London, yet I could see, even as I said it, that my companions thought it very remiss of him to leave the care of me on the long journey to servants, however trustworthy, and not wishing them to blame him, I went on to say that he was somewhat delicate and his life was a very valuable one. They seemed to think better of him after that, and not by any means worse of me, and I have ever noticed that judicious praise of and speaking up for others endears ourselves to those to whom we speak.

Lady Caroline went away presently, and Sir Hubert and I spent a blissful hour or two in that quaint little garden amongst the primroses and early wallflowers, violets and wood anemones.

Our happy time together came to an end only too soon, for we were summoned to dinner, and afterwards Sir William himself came to me and Lady Caroline as we sat in the drawing-room, and carefully instructed me as to the way in which, should opportunity occur, I was to talk to Lady Jane Grey, touching the matter of her possible succession to the crown.

'You must tell her,' said Sir William, 'that the welfare of English Protestants all over the kingdom rests in her hands. There will be no religious freedom if Princess Mary becomes queen. Tell Lady Jane she must not think of herself, for, student as she is, no doubt the cares and the pomps and ceremonies of royalty will be distasteful to her; but she must be willing to sacrifice her own wishes to the good of the people. Yes, that is the way you must put it; for they tell me she is exceedingly good and kind, self-denying and merciful.'

I agreed that, if able to do so, I would repeat all this to my mistress when I joined her, and then I was further instructed upon the difference between a Roman Catholic Government and a Protestant one, and the great superiority of the latter.

I listened to everything that was said and endeavoured to give my mind to it, whilst yet longing much to have a further talk alone with Sir Hubert. However, it seemed that could not be, and I retired to bed early; and with the hope of hearing him play once more, sat by the

window in the moonlight after Betsy had left me for the night.
And again Sir Hubert came under my window with his lute, and played so excellently that his lute seemed to speak to me of love until, enraptured, I leaned out of the window towards the player. Then in a moment the playing ceased and a small tightly folded note was thrown into my lap.
'Good night! Good night!' said Sir Hubert softly, yet so distinctly that his words were plainly audible, and then he went away and I read my first love letter.
'Queen of my heart,' it said; 'my dearest love, as soon as I have escorted you safely to Sion House I will travel to your father's house, and tell him of your welfare and beseech him to allow me to become betrothed to you. I think he will, for I can take him letters from people of importance testifying to my prowess in battle and my worthiness of character, and I can show him that I possess no mean share of this world's goods, together with my estate and Hall of Harpton in Sussex. But, the best of all, I would have you, my love, write to him, with your own hand, and that is to say that I am not wholly uncared for by you. Such a letter, written and sealed, I would carefully deliver into his hand. Then, if he consents to our betrothal, I will return to you in all haste to acquaint you with the good news.'
The letter ended with some most fond terms of endearment and assurances of undying affection, and I slept with it under my pillow that night—as many a girl has done with her lover's letters before and since—and I dreamt of Sir Hubert Blair, but how he looked and what he said I must reserve for myself, it being of a purely personal and private nature. I can only add that I was very happy when I slept, and still happier when I awoke, and knew that the best of what had happened was not a dream, because there was the letter under my pillow, a tangible, visible proof of its reality. And I thanked God that He had heard my prayer and was causing something very good indeed to result from our friendship and love for each other. For I believed then, as indeed I believe still, that two are better than one, and that man and woman united are better than man and woman separate, if they be rightly mated and their feet are treading in the same direction, whilst the golden cord of love binding heart to heart binds each one also to the mightier heart of God.

CHAPTER VIII
Lady Jane Grey

The next day I recommenced my journey to London with my servants, Sir Hubert accompanying us as an outrider. He was well-armed and followed by his men, also equipped with arquebusses, and that was well, for we had not long left Guildford before we encountered Sir Claudius, with a number of his rascally followers. However, fortunately for us, Sir Hubert and his men were able to beat them, insomuch that they were compelled to retreat most ignominiously.

Betsy, who had keen ears, asserted that she heard Sir Claudius vow, as he retired from the field, that he would not let the grass grow under his feet before he gained possession of the haughty madam, whose house and his had been for many years at loggerheads, that he might humble her pride and lay her low in the dust; which affrighted me for a while. But Sir Hubert, when I told him, said that the words were but the vain babbling of an empty-headed braggart, and that I was to take them for what they were worth, which was less than nothing; moreover he bade me rebuke Betsy for endeavouring to affright me, which I did, though timidly, or I should never have heard the last of it—the woman has such a tongue.

After that we went on unmolested through Esher, Kingston and to Isleworth, in which town Sion House, a magnificent riverside residence, is situated.

There Sir Hubert Blair had to take leave of me for the time being, but before going away he pointed out the great river Thames, to the banks of which he bade me often resort. 'For,' said he, 'when I am in London 'tis a very great amusement of mine, and a most pleasant way of passing the time, to take a boat and two or three men and row up stream. I have been,' said he, 'as far as Hampton Court Palace, which was built by Cardinal Wolsey and given by him to King Henry, our King Edward's father, and even twice I went past there as far as Staines, and once beyond that, even to Windsor Castle.'

I had read of those places in history, and I knew they were some distance from London, and thought Sir Hubert must have rare fun in rowing so far with a few men in a small boat; and then I began to

wonder if I should ever see him in his boat passing up the river.
'I shall be lonely sometimes, I doubt not,' said I, 'when my servants, all except Betsy, have gone home, and every one else will be strange to me here. It would be nice to see you passing by.'
'I will come,' he said. 'You will see me in my boat, rowing up the river.'
'Ah, how glad I shall be!' I said.
'And I—ah! how glad I shall be when I see you coming sauntering along the footpath by the river! Shall I tell you what I shall do?'
'Yes.'
'I shall come up to the bank and hold out my hand, you will give me yours, and then you will step into the boat and I shall take you for a row!'
I was delighted. "Twill be a rare pleasure,' I said.
'And perhaps'—he lowered his voice—'perhaps the day will come when I will take you away in my boat and never, never bring you back.'
After he had gone—carrying with him a short letter from me to my father—and he was perforce obliged to leave me soon, for it would not do to keep the servants waiting—I treasured the memory of those last words of his in my heart, and thought of them many times when feeling homesick or afraid of the troublous days to come. They comforted me, too, when my menservants left me and went home with the horses and litter, which seemed like burning my boats behind me.
I was received with kindness by Lady Jane's servants and others of the household of the Duke of Northumberland, her father-in-law. For he was the owner of the house, although he was allowing his son, Lord Dudley, and Lady Jane to live there. Particularly Mistress Ellen, Lady Jane's other gentlewoman, was good to me and welcomed me right heartily as her fellow lady-in-waiting. Mistress Ellen was older than I was, and much older than Lady Jane, who was a few months my junior, which I was rather glad of at the time, thinking that then thought, I need not be afraid of her.
Mistress Ellen would not allow me to see lady Jane that first night; she said I was too tired and too much overcome by the vastness of the house and its grandeur to appear at my best before her mistress. 'Sleep will restore your strength,' she said, 'and give you the quiet confidence, which perhaps more than anything else betokens a true gentlewoman, who knows what she is, although perhaps others do not at the time. And I should like you to stand well, child,' she said kindly, 'in the

regard of Lady Jane, for she has few friends of her own age, being so learned and bookish as to find little sympathy amongst other girls—and, although she is married, she is but a girl, poor young thing!' and she sighed.

Mistress Ellen, I should think, was thirty years old, and looked older, because of her manner of dress, which was handsome but exceedingly cumbrous, especially in regard to her coif, or bonnet, which concealed a large portion of her face and head. She was very kind to me, and when I cried that first night, being so weary and thinking of my father and the boys so far away, and Sir Hubert gone, too, for a while, she comforted me with loving words, saying I was to take courage, for the future might have great things in store for me, and the past was past and I should never again have that first bitterness of homesickness to live through, as every day of my new life would make it easier for me.

And when I fell asleep that first night at Sion House, I dreamt about Sir Hubert coming for me in a boat, which I saw gliding, gliding through the water, ever nearer, ever nearer, yet, alas! never coming quite up to the bank on which I stood, waiting with outstretched arms. They say it is unlucky to dream about water, and I felt rather low spirited when I awoke, but not so much because of that as because, with my first waking thoughts, my homesickness and loneliness returned, and I turned my face to the wall and cried a little, wishing I was a child again at home with Hal and Jack and my father and good old Master Montgomery at the parsonage near by, to say nothing of the serving men and women.

But I never felt like that again in her home after I had once seen Lady Jane Grey, as she was still often called, although her married name was Dudley.

I remember so well the first time I saw her. She was sitting in her favourite corner of the great drawing-room, with a book in her hand, waiting for her husband, Lord Dudley, to go out with her, and was richly dressed in black velvet and white satin. Her skirt, which was very full, was bordered down the sides with ermine, as was also her bodice, which was pointed at the waist and square in the neck, with a chemisette of satin quilted with pearls. She wore a close honeycomb ruff at the throat and a velvet coif, pointed and bordered with pearls, and long hanging velvet sleeves over tighter ones of white satin, with ruffles of cloth of gold, whilst the richest jewels added lustre to her handsome clothing. But she was not thinking of her dress, for her sweet and lovely countenance was poring over her book so closely that she did not hear me approach or heed the murmur of Mistress

Ellen's voice saying to me aside, 'She is reading Plato. 'Tis a work for which she has an immense liking.'

I dared not speak, but looked wistfully at the beautiful girl whose thoughts were so riveted on the book she read that she had none to spare for a poor young stranger, and then I sighed deeply, and that aroused her, who had always a tender ear for the suffering of others.

She raised her eyes slowly from the open page, and, as they rested on my face, gave a little cry of glad surprise.

'My new gentlewoman!' she exclaimed. 'And one so young and pretty! Oh, this is a pleasure!' and she held out both her hands and kissed me, saying, 'We shall be great friends, you and I.'

I thought so too, for my heart went out to her then as it never did before or since to one of my own sex, and I felt that she was worthy of my love, and that all I could do for her would be too little to express the loving service I should like to offer.

Mistress Ellen went away and left us together—in that showing her usual discretion—and my dear lady asked me many questions relating to my home and kindred, the long journey I had come upon and the dangers of the way. I answered readily, experiencing a rare pleasure in finding her responsive nature understand, appreciate and sympathize with everything I said.

'Oh,' said she, when at length I had told her all that I could think of just then—except indeed what I had heard at Woodleigh Castle relating to her future, which I dared not mention—not omitting the valiant deeds that Sir Hubert Blair had done for my assistance, 'how I have enjoyed hearing you talk! What you have told me is so different from anything that has ever happened to me. It is all so interesting and so like a poem, only more real and life-like than any poetry, and it is true, that is the best of all.'

'Yes; it is true,' I said. 'And I could not talk like that to any one else. There is something in you, madam, which draws out my innermost thoughts.'

Lady Jane smiled, and told me that in that case I should have to be very careful always to have good thoughts, adding that I ought to read much in the Bible and in such books as the one she was perusing, and also that I ought to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide me unto all truth.

I was going to inquire about the book she was reading when we were interrupted by the entrance of a gentleman richly dressed in crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and silk stockings.

'Dudley, this is my new gentlewoman,' said Lady Jane, turning to him, and then formally introducing her husband to me.

The young man, who was handsome, manly, and withal most courteous in manner and bearing, spoke a kindly word or two to me, and then requested Lady Jane to allow him to take her to her litter which was waiting at the door.

'I shall see more of you to-morrow, Margery—I may call you Margery, may I not?' she said prettily, and, upon my assenting with pleasure, gave so sweet a smile that it seemed to linger after she had gone, filling me with a strange new happiness. I was fascinated with my dear lady, and stood in the empty room looking at the place where she had been and the chair where she sat, as if I were in a dream.

My eyes fell upon the book which she had left upon the table and I picked it up. But, alas! the words contained in it were written in a strange language and I could not read a line. But I raised the little volume to my lips and kissed the place where her dear eyes had rested.

CHAPTER IX
Plato

I was wonderfully fascinated by the whole personality of Lady Jane, her youth, beauty, sweetness of disposition, charming manner, and last but not least, her richly cultured mind and the true religion revealed not so much by what she said as by her every act and deed. Indeed this new love of mine bid fair to outrival even my recently sprung-up affection for Sir Hubert Blair, and I did not go down to the river bank to look out for him for several weeks owing to the great content with which the presence of my mistress filled me and the enjoyment I felt in her society. It was not so much that I was with her every minute, for her husband and other relations often engaged hours of her time, but it was my duty and my pleasure to linger near, that if by any chance she wished for me, or the others left her alone, I might be close as hand and ready to bear her company.[**1**]

[**1**] We have all of us seen, occasionally, the fascination with which an older, or more gifted young woman has over a girl of similar inclinations but less ability, and so can understand this new and ardent attachment of Margaret Brown's.—ED.

I remember so well and vividly what she said to me one day about her beloved Plato. We were in the garden, seated in an arbour shaded by pink and white hawthorn trees in full flower, the scent of which came to us pleasantly as we talked, whilst our eyes rested on the well-kept lawns and the trees in the park with the mighty river beyond flowing silently on its way.
'Is your book so very interesting?' I asked, for her eyes fell often upon it while we conversed as if it were enticing her back to its pages.
'Yes, dear,' she answered, 'it is most interesting, for it deals with the great truths of life. You will have to learn to read it for yourself, Margery, and you will like it, too.'
'But it is written in Greek,' said I with a sigh, 'and that would take such a lot of learning.'
'I would help you,' said Lady Jane kindly, 'and you would soon learn.'
But I shook my head.

'Why should I be at so much trouble,' said I, 'when you can tell me all about it—what it says, you know?'
'What we acquire without trouble does not do us much good,' was the gentle answer. 'However, you must know Plato was the founder of a great school of Greek philosophy. He was a disciple of Socrates. You have heard of him?'
'A little,' said I. 'Master Montgomery, our good curate, told me he was a man who taught truths which the people were not educated enough to receive; therefore they killed him.'
'Yes; they killed him, much as others killed Christ our Lord, because they could not receive His teaching. Killing the body is the *extreme penalty of the law*,' and Lady Jane shuddered. '"Tis a cruel thing,' she said, 'for men to crush out and destroy the life they cannot give, and 'tis a savage idea to murder the body for what they imagine is a crime of the mind.'
I thought of her words long afterwards, when her own fate gave to them a mournful significance. At the time I could not bear to see sadness in her face, and therefore, to change the subject, asked—
'When did Plato live?'
'In the fifth century before Christ. He was a great teacher——' she paused. How could she explain it all to one so ignorant as me?
'Tell me,' I said earnestly, 'tell me one thing that he said?'
A wistful expression came into the sweet face on which I looked, and, turning over the leaves of her book, she seemed to seek for something suitable for me. It was not, however, until she reached the last page of her volume that she opened her dear lips to translate, in quaint sweet accents, these words of Plato's—
'"If the company will be persuaded by me, accounting the soul immortal—*we shall always hold to the road that leads above, and justice with prudence we shall by all means pursue*, in order that we may be friends both to ourselves and to the gods, both whilst we remain here and when we receive its rewards, so we shall, like victors, both here and there enjoy a happy life." It is like our dear Lord's teaching,' she said, 'though it was uttered more than four centuries before He came to live as a man on earth.'
'They are good words,' said I, 'and I wish that I could remember them always.'
'I will write them out for you,' said Lady Jane. 'And you must learn them by heart, and never, never forget them.'
And she was as good as her word, and wrote them out for me in her beautiful handwriting, and I learned them every one, so that

sometimes when we were sitting together in the gloaming, before the candles were lighted, I could say them to her without a book; and she would talk about them, telling me, too, what her dear old tutors, Master Ascham, and Master Aylmer, afterwards Bishop of London, used to teach about prudence, justice and kindred virtues.

One day the latter gentleman came to see her, to her intense delight, and I was much struck with his fine scholarly appearance and gentle manners. Lady Jane hung upon his lips, and treasured up everything he said, to discuss it with me afterwards and think over it many and many a time.

These tutors had indeed a great claim upon my dear lady's devotion, for they had instructed her so well that she spoke and wrote with correctness Greek, Latin, Italian and French, and also understood not a little of Hebrew, Chaldee and Arabic; moreover, she was, with all that learning, so modest and humble that you might have thought her a very simple ignorant maid at first sight, though, speaking for myself, I have ever noticed that large-minded people who are cultured and educated finely are more chary in expressing their feelings and meeker in their bearing than the empty-headed braggarts who think by much speaking and loud boasting they will carry all before them. 'Tis an empty whistle that makes most sound,' my father used to say, and he knew much of life, though he had buried himself latterly in the country.

It was very quiet at Sion House for a month or six weeks after I went there, and the life that we led would have seemed, though stately, tame and monotonous after the wild freedom of my home and the lively companionship of my young brothers if it had not been for the great beauty and fascination with which Lady Jane endowed it. Following her about, listening to her footsteps when she was absent, looking at her when she was present, wondering what I could do to please her, studying to comfort her when she was cast down—for she had troubles, even then, owing to the severity of her parents who, though she was married and apart from them (they lived at Sheen House at the other side of the Thames), by no means showed her kindness and consideration—so filled my time and thoughts that every moment of the days was full of interest and sped by with lightning speed.

Then, on the ninth of July, all at once, as a storm breaks out after a calm, or a tumult after a time of torpor and almost unnatural quiescence, the peaceful quietude of Sion House was broken up by the arrival of an illustrious company with their followers.

Mistress Ellen brought the news to Lady Jane, with whom I was sitting in the drawing-room, that the Duke of Northumberland, the Marquis of Northampton and the Earls of Arundel, Huntingdon, and Pembroke had arrived and were desirous of seeing her.

'What does this portend?' exclaimed my dear lady in the utmost dismay, and methought she had some idea of the truth, for she turned as pale as a corpse and wrung her hands. The Duchess of Northumberland, her mother-in-law, had dropped some hints in her letters of wonderful good fortune in store for her, and Lady Jane had spoken of it to me. But I had never ventured to acquaint her with my knowledge of the schemes of those who meant to place her on the throne when anything happened to our king. I felt instinctively that anything of that sort would distress her infinitely, and there was, besides, a dignity about her and a gracious reserve which caused me always to allow her to take the lead in our conversations. My heart smote me now, however, that I had not striven in some sort to prepare her mind for what was manifestly in store for her, and I wished that I had kept my promise to Lady Caroline Wood and had spoken of all that I had seen and heard at Woodleigh Castle in relation to Protestantism and Papacy, the kingdom and herself. It was too late now to say anything; I could only whisper to her to take courage and hope for the best.

'But, Margery,' she said, 'I fear this visit of noble dukes and lords betokens no good. I would that I were a simple country maid,' she added wistfully, 'that I might be left alone with my books and studies. However,' she pulled herself together, 'whatever happens, "I must hold to the road that leads above, and justice with prudence always pursue,"' and, with those words of her beloved Plato on her lips, she went forward to meet her fate and the visitors who were its harbingers.

CHAPTER X
Queen of England

I and Mistress Ellen stood in the background of the great hall as Lady Jane advanced with quiet dignity to meet her guests. Her fair young face was troubled, but she smiled pleasantly as she looked up at her father-in-law and his companions.

'To what,' she inquired, 'to what do I owe the honour of this visit?'

'We are a deputation,' said the Duke of Northumberland, whom I saw for the first time—he was a handsome man, with fine strongly marked features and a gallant, soldierly bearing, and he was richly apparelled in black velvet.

'A deputation to whom?' queried my mistress as he paused.

'To you, madam,' was the instant response. 'You see here,' waving his hand towards those that accompanied him, 'the Marquis of Northampton and the Earls of Arundel, Huntingdon and Pembroke. We have come to announce to you the sorrowful tidings of the death of the king, your cousin.'

'Dead! Is he dead?' exclaimed Lady Jane sadly.

'Yes, madam, he is dead.'

'Ah! poor Edward! Kings as well as paupers have to die.' The tears came into her eyes.

'Yes, madam,' said the Marquis of Northampton. 'Death comes to all alike. High and low, rich and poor, good and bad, all have to die.'

'Death is the last enemy,' observed the Earl of Arundel sententiously.

'I like better to think of him as a friend,' said Lady Jane, 'who comes when all others fail us, like a nurse saying, "My child, lie down and sleep. You are tired now, therefore all goes wrong. You will awake by and bye to a new life where everything is well."'

Her voice became lower and lower as she spoke, and a beautiful look shone in her face, as of one whose faith is great. One or two of the gentlemen seemed impressed, but the Duke of Northumberland frowned impatiently.

'We have no time to stand sentimentalizing here,' he said. Then, addressing Lady Jane more particularly, he continued, 'Madam, we have much to say to you, and there are great matters to consider. The king is dead, but there is the kingdom.'

'True. Our dear England.'
'For which the late king did so much,' said the Earl of Pembroke. (Mistress Ellen whispered their names or I should never have known one from the other.) 'Strengthening the Protestant cause and abolishing Roman Catholicism from the land.'
'Yes, indeed,' assented Lady Jane.
'Before he died,' said the Duke of Northumberland, 'the king was in great concern that the Church should continue in the form and spirit in which it now is.' He paused, looking meaningly at my mistress.
If I had only prepared her mind, as I had been told to do, she would have understood, but, as it was, she looked startled and bewildered.
'Surely,' she said at length, seeing that they waited for her to speak, 'surely nothing can disturb our Church, which in its present form is so deeply rooted in the affections of all Protestant people?'
'Of all Protestants, yes,' said the Duke of Northumberland. 'But what of the Papists? You know, madam, there are many Papists in England who are waiting, longing, and watching for an opportunity to restore their creed and ritual to the whole land.'
'But they can never do that,' said Lady Jane. 'England would not tolerate it now.'
'Our late king,' continued the Duke of Northumberland solemnly, 'was well aware that if his sister, Princess Mary, who is a bigoted Papist, were to succeed to the throne, all his efforts for the established Church would be annulled and overthrown. Feeling this deeply, and knowing well what misery and woe would come upon his people if this happened, he took steps, whilst yet he was alive, to put aside his sisters, who had indeed been declared illegitimate by Act of Parliament, and secure the succession to one whose Protestantism is beyond dispute.' He paused.
Lady Jane started and looked at him with widely opened eyes. No word, however, escaped from her pale lips.
'Madam,' said the duke, 'actuated by that reason and also by the wish to preserve the kingdom from the disputes the illegitimacy of his sisters might occasion, our late monarch made his will, passing them over and bequeathing the crown to his true legitimate heir who, he was well aware, held the true faith. He, therefore, in his will ordered the Council to proclaim you queen.'
Every vestige of colour left my dear lady's face, and she looked round affrightedly as if for some way of escape, making a gesture of dissent, though no word fell from her lips.
She was only sixteen years of age, and anything more opposed to her

disposition and love of retirement and study could not well have been proposed.
'And in the case of your having no children your sisters Catherine and Mary are to succeed you,' went on the Duke of Northumberland.
Still Lady Jane said not a word, but the look in her eyes made me press forward nearer to her, saying in my heart, 'If I had only prepared you for this!'
The attendant nobles fell upon their knees, declaring that Lady Jane Grey was queen, and vowing that they would defend her rights to the death, if necessary.
It was such a sight as you have never seen, all those high-born lords upon their knees before a slim young girl, who only a year before was a child, and she staring at them with wide eyes out of a fear-stricken, pallid countenance.
The tension only lasted a few moments and then, with a piercing cry, my dear Lady Jane fell to the floor.
I was on my knees by her side before any one else, and was trying to raise her head when there was another commotion in the hall caused by the entrance of her mother, the Duchess of Suffolk, who had come over from Sheen House, on the other side of the river, accompanied by the Duchess of Northumberland and the Marchioness of Northampton. These great ladies swept down upon us, and would have ordered me away, there and then, if looks could have done it, but I would not leave my mistress to their tender mercies, and continued to support her head on my lap, so that I could not be removed without disturbing her.
In a little while she came round out of her swoon, and then, seeing her mother and mother-in-law, began to entreat them and the Duke of Northumberland very pitifully not to lay the burden of royalty upon her, declaring herself to be a most unfit person to reign in Edward's place, and saying over and over again that, in spite of all that had been said, the Princess Mary and, after her, the Princess Elizabeth were the rightful heirs to the throne.
It was in vain that the duke and duchess urged considerations of the harm which would befall Protestantism if Princess Mary reigned, and of the dissensions which might rend the land if the legitimacy of the queen were doubtful; the Lady Jane only said—
'Other wrongs do not make a wrong right. I am sure Princess Mary is the rightful queen, and I should be a usurper if I were to take her place.'
Again and again she said the same thing, praying and beseeching them

not to force her to become queen.
'Think you,' she said, 'that the great God who made heaven and earth cannot take care of Protestantism and this beloved England of ours without the help of a young girl like me? Do you think that by doing what my conscience tells me is wrong I can advance the cause of the High and Holy One?'
But it was all in vain. They would not listen to her. Their minds were set upon making her queen, more for their own advancement than for the good of their country, and in their eyes she was a child who was to be made to do the thing that they pleased.
When she became ill with terror and distress and crying we took her to her bedroom, and when she implored that they would leave her there alone with me the Duchess of Suffolk said, 'No, I shall stay with you myself.'
'And so shall I,' said the Duchess of Northumberland.
Then they turned me out of the room, together with Mistress Ellen, that they might the better take poor Lady Jane in hand, and we heard a pitiful cry from her as the bolt of the door was slid, leaving us on the outside and her within alone with them.

CHAPTER XI
By the River

My heart was wrung with seeing my dear lady's affliction, and when the Duchess of Northumberland and the Duchess of Suffolk, her mother, peremptorily turned me out of the bedroom, scarcely knowing what I did I ran downstairs and out of the big house by a side door.

A great longing to escape from those wealthy hard-hearted magnates, who for ambition were willing and even wishful to sacrifice the happiness of the sweetest being on earth, made me flee from their presence and, what was almost worse, the presence of their proud and haughty retainers. In the garden I thought I should have solitude, but, alas, it was already thronged with lords and ladies, talking together in groups, and meaner folk gossiping as they went hither and thither at their masters' bidding. Seeing that I must go further away if I would be alone, I hurried across the park to presently find myself amongst the willows by the river side.

There was a slight breeze, and it stirred the leaves and even branches, making a soft sound which seemed to whisper to me some message which yet I could not catch.

Leaning back against a tree, I gazed wearily across the water gleaming so brightly in the sunshine, feeling worn by the strong emotions I had been through and scarcely knowing what I was looking for; I knew, however, when it came, for even as I stood there, silently up the river glided a boat in which a young man was seated.

Sir Hubert Blair it was, and he gave a start of glad surprise upon seeing me there, and then waved his hat in the air, and called out a hearty greeting and an earnest entreaty that I would stay where I was until he landed. For my first instinct was to flee like a startled fawn, and that although I had the strongest wish to be with him once more and tell him all my trouble.

With the utmost possible speed my lover sculled across to the little landing-stage and made fast the painter of his boat. Then he climbed the bank until he stood by my side and was holding my hands and looking down into my face with the tenderest love.

'What is it, sweetheart?' he asked, reading trouble in my eyes, and

then, as I could not immediately answer him, he went on to tell me that he had been past Sion House several times in his boat, but without seeing me. 'I looked for you, dear. But you were not here,' he said. 'However, all is well that ends well, and now that I have you at last I shall not spoil the time by regretting what is past.'

He paused.

And still I could not talk, having enough to do to keep from breaking down and weeping. He therefore continued, 'I have been to your home in Sussex, and have asked your father's permission to become betrothed to you, and, after he had heard all I had to say, he willingly gave it and said that he would write to you. Has he written?'

'No,' said I, shaking my head. 'But he is ever slow to write about anything. He promises, and then he puts off doing it, for writing is ever irksome to him.'

'Ah, well, it does not matter, does it, sweet one? We understand each other, and he has consented to our betrothal, and that is quite enough,' and he pressed my hand.

'Enough truly,' said I. 'But oh!——' and I stopped short, sighing heavily, for indeed it did seem most heartless of us to be settling up our own happiness, as it were, when my poor mistress was in such dire distress.

And again Sir Hubert, reading my trouble in my face, besought me to tell him all that was distressing me.

I told him everything, not omitting my own negligence in failing to prepare my mistress for what was in store for her upon the king's death.

He knew of the latter sad event, and of course regarded the matter of Lady Jane's unhappiness quite differently from what I did.

'They are right,' he said, 'who want to make Lady Jane queen instead of the Papist Mary. Think of the horrors that would befall this land if Roman Catholicism prevailed. Have you forgotten all I told you about the awful Inquisition? Consider what it would be if established here in England. No one would be safe. You might be talking to me one half hour and the next that which is worse than the grave might have swallowed me up for ever, or perchance you. No one is secure where secret deaths and tortures pervade the land. Oh, the misery, the weeping of loving relations for their friends who have vanished from them in that way! You have no idea what it is like. And even,' he continued earnestly, 'even if Lady Jane does not want to be queen, it is expedient that one should suffer a little rather than many a great deal. And she ought to be glad,' he concluded zealously, 'she ought to be

glad that she is chosen to do a great work for England. As a true-hearted woman, she will be ready and willing to sacrifice herself for others.'

'Yes,' said I, 'she will, I know, if she can be brought to look at it in that way. No discomfort to herself will in her mind militate against doing the thing that is right.'

'Therefore she will do it.'

'But the question is, would it be right for her to accept the crown?' said I. 'She has a great love of justice, and she thinks the Princess Mary ought to be queen.'

Sir Hubert, upon that, gave utterance to the usual arguments about the alleged illegitimacy of the royal princesses, and said, moreover, that to his mind the last will and testament of King Edward, making Lady Jane Grey heir to the crown, settled the matter. Yet I was not convinced that my mistress would accept such reasoning, and, although I hesitated to say so, my lover read that also in my face, and looked disappointed.

'They say a woman never can be convinced against her will,' he said at length, adding, 'Would that I could talk to her on the subject!'

'That would be best,' said I, 'for you have such a wise way of putting it, Sir Hubert.'

'Oh, you must not call me Sir Hubert,' said he, and then a little fond, affectionate lovers' talk ensued, which I am not so foolish as to write down here. For, though it is the loveliest language to those concerned, it spelleth out ridiculously to the critical ears of others, who wholly lack the key to unravel its correct meaning.

And then, all too soon, we had to part, Sir Hubert to mingle with some lords and knights on the great lawn, there to await the Duke of Northumberland's commands—for to the latter all men's eyes were directed of those who hoped for a Protestant succession—whilst I had to hasten back to the neighbourhood of my mistress' bedroom, that I might take advantage of the first chance of entering it.

CHAPTER XII
In the Tower

The Duchesses of Northumberland and Suffolk did their best to make my mistress give in to their will and consent to be made queen, but her pure, brave heart could not be forced by severity and harsh treatment; those ambitious, callous-hearted women might kill her body—it was a frail one—but they could not conquer her mind or bend her spirit; it required another force, the holier one of love, with its softening, penetrating influence to do that; and love, her love for her husband, Lord Dudley, and obedience to his commands it was which finally succeeded where all else had failed.

'I could not resist my dear lord, Margery,' she confessed to me, when early the next morning I at last obtained access to her bedroom. 'God forgive me if I am doing wrong,' she said. 'But Paul the Apostle taught us that the head of the woman is the man, and that a wife's duty is to obey——' She paused, looking at me piteously, and I saw that in her own mind, in spite of her words, she was not yet convinced.

'And it is for the good of the nation, madam,' said I.

'It is for no good I fear, Margery,' said my mistress, sighing deeply. 'And it is neither prudent nor just.'

I knew that she was thinking of Plato's words, 'Justice with prudence we shall by all means pursue,' and my heart ached for her.

'How can I wear the crown which lawfully belongs to another?' she moaned. 'But it will not be for long. Princess Mary is away from London just now, having fled for her life, until she can rally her party. But she will return, I know, and the justness of the nation will place her at its head—for it is idle talk about the slur on her birth. Her mother was lawfully married to King Henry, and it was only for his own vicious ends that he put her away. However, Margery, we must leave all this, for it is no use dwelling upon it now that I have promised Lord Dudley to obey his wishes.'

She sobbed again and again, as we dressed her regally for the grand doings of that day, and every sob went to my heart and made me echo it, until she ceased weeping to wipe my tears away, and Mistress Ellen said I was nothing but a hindrance, and began to rate me sorely.

When Lady Jane was dressed for the ceremony—I had almost said

sacrifice—she looked wondrously young and lovely. Her figure was tall, slight and well proportioned, giving promise of great beauty. Her dress—which the duchesses had brought with them for the occasion—was a gown of cloth of gold trimmed with pearls, a stomacher blazing with diamonds and other precious stones, and a surcoat of purple velvet bordered with ermine. Her train was of purple velvet and was also edged with ermine and richly embroidered in gold. Her slender and swan-like throat was encircled with a carcanet of gold set with rubies and pearls, from which hung one almost priceless pearl. Her headdress was a coif of velvet adorned with rows of pearls and bound together by a circlet of gold.

I had never seen such grand attire in my life and was feeling quite overwhelmed by it, when Mistress Ellen said in my ear, 'I like not so many pearls. It is said they mean tears, and truly our mistress was tearful enough in the putting of them on. God grant that she may not also take them off in tears!'

Lady Jane lingered a little in her room when we had dressed her, as if reluctant to quit it.

'I have been often very happy here,' she said wistfully, 'and I know not what the future may have in store for me.'

I wished then, and I wished often afterwards, that I could have spoken out and told her all that Sir Hubert would have said to her if he had had the chance, but could only think of some of his words and of those Lady Caroline Wood had made me promise to say, and therefore faltered—

'Dear madam, do not think of yourself now, but only of the people of England. You know it is for their good that you are going to sacrifice your own wishes.'

'For their good!' she exclaimed. 'Oh, Margery, if I could think it was for their real good I could go cheerfully to death if needs be!'

'Who is talking of going to death on this joyful occasion?' exclaimed Lord Guildford Dudley, entering the room after a hasty knock at the door. 'For shame, Jane, to croak in that way at the very moment of your elevation to the first place in the land.'

Lady Jane flushed a little at the reproof, but instantly smiled with her usual sweetness, then a look of admiration came into her eyes as they fell upon her husband.

He was magnificently attired in white cloth of gold, and wore a collar of diamonds, and his handsome face and manly figure, with the indefinable air of chivalry which characterized both him and his father, made him appear to us to look truly regal.

His eyes swept appraisingly over his young wife's beauty and her gorgeous dress, then, with a little bow and a whispered compliment, he offered his arm and took her downstairs into the great hall thronged with highborn gentlemen and ladies.

Mistress Ellen and I were perforce separated from Lady Jane, as our place was taken by great Court ladies, but when the cavalcade, of which Lord Guildford Dudley and Lady Jane were the centre started for London, we formed part of the vast following of servants and dependants.

So they took my precious mistress in great state, first of all to Northumberland House in the Strand, the residence of her father-in-law, where she received the homage of many of her chief subjects, and afterwards, with her husband and the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk, and other magnates, partook of a great State banquet, the grandeur of which seemed to me truly amazing and like unto a fairy tale.

In the midst of it all, having been overlooked and being bewildered and afraid, Mistress Ellen and I would perchance actually have suffered hunger if Sir Hubert Blair and Sir William Wood, who were among the Duke of Northumberland's following, had not found us out and got a place for us among some fine Court ladies, with whom, to my joy, was Lady Caroline Wood.

'This is a great day,' she said, 'Mistress Margaret, for England and for her,' and she looked across the table to Lady Jane's pale though beautiful face.

'Yes, indeed,' I rejoined, beginning my repast with all haste, for many of those present were finishing, and the claims of hunger made themselves felt.

'It was one to which we were looking forward when you visited our castle,' she went on, 'and one for which that visit prepared you.'

I coloured a little as I ate my soup, fearing lest she should inquire if I had done my best to prepare Lady Jane's mind for the part she was to play, but a true lady is careful not to embarrass another, so my companion went on chatting pleasantly while I ate and drank, and it was only when I ended that she inquired if my father's consent had been obtained to my betrothal to Sir Hubert Blair. I answered in the affirmative, and thereupon she fell to praising Sir Hubert with such zest that I loved her dearly and thought, after my dear mistress, she was the nicest kindest woman I had ever seen.

And then, the banquet being over, and the Duke of Northumberland having collected his retinue, the whole cavalcade, of which Queen

Jane, as they now called her, and her consort were the centre, proceeded in a grand procession to the Tower of London, where it is customary for the monarchs of England to begin their reign.

I cannot describe all the details of what made the most gorgeous state-procession that I ever saw, as I only caught glimpses of part of it from where I had my place beside Lady Caroline Wood and Mistress Ellen. But I know a troop of halberdiers, wearing velvet caps and fine doublets embroidered with the royal blazon woven in gold, and bearing staves covered with crimson velvet and adorned with golden tassels, in two long files lined the way from Northumberland House to the Thames, where the royal barge awaited us, for we were to go to the Tower by water. Cloth was laid down between these files of halberdiers for the procession to walk over, trumpets blew a great flourish, the sound of which met and mingled with the music of musicians on the water. The City Guard, the Garter King-at-Arms, the Knights of the Bath, in their accoutrements, the Judges in their scarlet and coifs, the Bishop of Ely who, being Lord Chancellor, wore a robe of scarlet, the Lord Mayor in crimson velvet, with many more illustrious, gaily-dressed persons, were followed by two venerable ecclesiastics, Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ridley, Bishop of London, in their surplices and snowy lawn sleeves, and then the Dukes of Northumberland and Suffolk, richly dressed, and the royal party.

It was a brilliant scene, although the sun was overclouded and the day gloomy with the signs of an approaching storm, and the air was full of music and trumpeting and the sounds of movement and revelry. One thing, however, smote us to the heart, and that was that although the streets were packed with onlookers no joyful cries of greeting to Queen Jane, no caps thrown in the air, no waving of hands and handkerchiefs betokened the joy of a people catching sight of its sovereign for the first time. True, murmurs of sympathy and admiration were to be heard when the youth and beauty of the royal lady were perceived. But it was only too evident that she was not the queen the nation desired.

'The silence of the people is ominous,' whispered Lady Caroline to me, 'I trust our queen does not observe it.'

'She cannot fail to notice it,' I returned. 'Oh, why could they not let her remain a private lady as she was before? Why need they drag her into this prominent position? She did not want to be a queen. She swooned when first the idea was made known to her——'

'But you had prepared her mind,' began Lady Caroline.

I did not heed the interpretation, but went on to describe how, on coming out of her swoon, my mistress begged and implored that she might not be made queen. I only spoke in a whisper, but my companions, fearful of my being overheard, made haste to stop me, and I could see that they did not wish to hear what I was telling them, their hearts being set upon Queen Jane's accession to the throne.
As our barge, following the royal barge, slowly passed along the river, I was greatly struck by the beauty and grandeur of the mighty city through which we were passing. I had never seen London before, and its gardens and stately palaces, spires and towers of churches, gateways, towers, drawbridges, houses, mills and chapels, and, last but not least, the noble old cathedral of St. Paul's,[**1**] presented to me a panorama of picturesque and beautiful scenes.[**2**]

[**1**] The old cathedral which was burnt to the ground.—ED.
[**2**] London in the old days must have been strikingly beautiful and picturesque, the gardens of the fine old mansions and palaces extending down to the riverside, and the air being clear and clean, undimmed and unpolluted by smoke.—ED.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when Queen Jane arrived at the Tower, her advent to that fortress being heralded by a deafening roar of ordnance, coming from the batteries, which was answered by the guns of several ships at anchor in the river.
Trumpets blew and bells rang, also, as Queen Jane landed, but there was still the same ominous silence of onlookers, who, in small and large boats, hovered around.
As the young queen walked into the Tower the Duchess of Suffolk, her mother, bore her train, the Lord Treasurer presented to her the crown, and her relations saluted her on their knees.
The thunder crashed, and the storm without spent itself upon the lingering sightseers, but Queen Jane was in the Tower, and when I caught sight of her face for a moment I saw that all traces of fear and sorrow had passed from it, leaving only the calm and lofty expression of one who, possessing her own soul in patience, 'holds to the road that leads above' in spite of every earthly distraction.

CHAPTER XIII
At St. Paul's Cross

'Oh, Margery! Margery! I am in sore trouble!'

It was the next morning, and Queen Jane turning away from all her grand Court ladies, seized the first opportunity of being alone with me to sob out her griefs in my arms, which held her tightly and with great affection.

I gathered, with a little difficulty, for she would not say one word against her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, that he, at whose bidding she was making so great a sacrifice, not satisfied with that, was becoming even more exacting. At first all his ambition seemed to be centred in the desire that his wife should be Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and that in spite of her firm conviction that she would be usurping the throne which rightly belonged to Princess Mary. But now, not content with seeing her made queen, he desired to be crowned also, that he might be king with equal rights to hers. This, however, my dear mistress could not agree to, for if she had a slender claim to the crown, being only the granddaughter of Henry VII's youngest daughter, Mary, he had even less, being no relation at all. It seemed that his father, the Duke of Northumberland, had persuaded the Council, who being in the Tower were practically in his power, to say that they would make Guildford Dudley king; but Lady Jane reminded the latter that she only had the power to confer the title upon him, adding that it would be impossible for her to do it, as it would not be right; moreover, the people, who were unwilling to see her queen, would be actually incensed if a son of the Duke of Northumberland—who was by no means popular—likewise mounted the throne.

Lord Guildford Dudley, however, would not perceive the justice of these asseverations. He took it ill that Jane, whom he had assisted to the throne, should dislike the idea of sharing it with him, and, after quarrelling with her bitterly, departed alone for Sion House, leaving her to get on as well as she could without him. Then his mother was very angry with her, upbraiding and reproaching her, as did also her own mother, the Duchess of Suffolk.

Poor Queen of England! Every step of the way was a bitter one for

her. Was ever a young creature, standing where childhood and womanhood meet, so sorely tried? The evening before, at six o'clock, she had been proclaimed queen in London, the announcement meeting with sullen silence on the part of the people, one of whom, a vintner's lad, even daring to vindicate the rights of the Princess Mary—for which he was afterwards severely punished.

'It was mainly at the desire of my husband that I consented to be queen,' sobbed my mistress, 'yet he has left me in anger, and his father and mother are mightily incensed with me. It is all so miserable, and my own conscience afflicts me, for all that they have said to me has not quietened its doubts about the equity of my position. I cannot help suspecting—especially after what has just happened—that my father-in-law's ambition has been the pivot on which we have all turned. And in the fierce light which all that has been occurring has thrown over everything concerning me, I cannot fail to see that the Duke of Northumberland in causing his son Guildford to marry me was but preparing for this. I believe my dear lord loves me,' she added wistfully, 'but perhaps his father's ambition hurried on our marriage.'

I thought that was likely enough, having heard much during the last day or two about Northumberland's ambition, but hastened to assure my mistress in all sincerity that her charms of person, disposition and mind were such that no young man could possibly be intimate with her without being susceptible to the tender passion, whereupon she smiled through her tears, exclaiming—

'You little flatterer! But if that be so you must by all means keep your own chosen lover away from my presence.'

I blushed very much at that, which caused Queen Jane to insist upon my telling her all about my own love story and the name of the man who had won my heart; and, when she heard that it was the same brave knight who escorted me to Sion House when I came to live with her, she was very pleased, and said that it was a pretty romance in real life and she trusted that God would bless us and give us a very happy future together in His own good time.

We were interrupted by the entrance of the Duchess of Suffolk, who bade her daughter sternly, though in stilted Court language, to prepare to transact business with her father and the Duke of Northumberland and the Council. Indeed, there were many matters for the young queen to deal with and papers of importance for her to sign, and she addressed herself bravely to the task of taking up the burden of royalty at the call of duty. For, having consented to be made queen, she knew that she must fulfil the obligations attached to the high

office, to the best of her ability.
'I am happier when I am busily employed,' she said to me later in the day. 'It is when I have time to think, Margery, that my doubts and fears return. Dear one,' she continued, 'I am told that on Sunday next Dr. Ridley, the Bishop of London, is going to preach at St. Paul's Cross, and I want you to do me this favour. You must go and hear him, that you may tell me everything he says. I would fain know, Margery,' she went on very wistfully, 'for it may throw light on what I am at present unable to see.'
I knew she meant the entire justice of her accession to the throne, and readily promised that, if I could leave the Tower and go to hear the bishop, I would tell her every word he said. I doubted not that one of my friends, Sir William Wood or Sir Hubert Blair, would escort me through the crowds which would congregate to hear the eloquent divine.
In my own mind I was full of uneasiness now about the position of my dear lady, for a messenger had arrived at the Tower from Princess Mary, the late king's elder sister, to say that she commanded the Council to see that she was duly proclaimed, and warning them to desist from their treasonable purposes. The Council, with small courtesy, refused to do this, and scarcely had the messenger gone when news came pouring in that Princess Mary had taken up her position at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk, where the nobility, gentry and people were flocking to her standard. It was therefore necessary that forces should be sent out to overcome and disperse Mary's army, and the Council and the Duke of Northumberland were much exercised as to who should lead them. It was rumoured amongst us that the Duke of Northumberland wanted the Duke of Suffolk to go, whilst the Council wished Northumberland himself to head the expedition. If he went it was a question whether the Council, left to themselves, would remain true to Queen Jane, for they had been coerced and over-persuaded by him, though secretly, like most of the people, in favour of Mary. There were intrigues on all sides, and several of the Council so worked upon my mistress's apprehensions that she begged that her father might stay with her. It was therefore settled that Northumberland should lead an army of 2,000 horsemen and 6,000 foot soldiers against Mary's forces.
Accordingly, on the thirteenth, after exhorting the Council to remain true to Queen Jane, he left the Tower for Durham House, where he stayed a night, and then, on the fourteenth, he and his men marched out of the city. We were told by Sir William Wood, who had gone

with many others to see them depart, that the Duke of Northumberland was heard observing to some one that though numbers watched them go, there was not one to say, 'God speed you!' Our hearts were full of apprehension upon hearing this; and also Sir William's tidings that the silence of the multitude watching the troops go was something marvellous and most terrifying in its significance.

And yet again my dear lady said to me—

'Margery, you must go to hear what Dr. Ridley has to say about my claims, for I should fear nothing if only I were absolutely certain that they are just and equitable.'

Upon the Sunday, therefore—July 16 it was—I left the Tower with Lady Caroline and Sir William Wood and went to St. Paul's Cross, where a very great congregation was assembled to hear the bishop's preaching.

Sir William found us a place, with some difficulty, where we could stand without being pushed and hustled by the crowd, but we could hear nothing at first except the talking and moving about of the multitude, the cries of those who were hurt or pushed, and the endeavours of those in authority to induce order and quiet.

When, at length, I was able to hear what the venerable bishop was saying, I found that his eloquence was being exerted on a theme so much to my mind that I could have listened all day. He was speaking of the virtues and abilities of my dear mistress, and praising her exceedingly for her goodness and her learning, dwelling much upon the beneficent effect her Protestant rule would be certain to have upon the people of England, and maintaining her right and her title to the throne by the best arguments he could devise—I noticed among these none that were new, however, which I could carry home to Queen Jane. The fact was, he said nothing but what had been already employed, only being an orator, he said it more emphatically and more beautifully, and being a bishop, his words had to my thinking more weight, and he spoke them as one having great spiritual authority.

I was listening eagerly, with my eyes fixed on the preacher and ears intent only upon his words, when a man wrapped in a long foreign-looking cloak pressed so closely against me that I was pushed a little way from my companions. Glancing at the man with indignation, I perceived that his face was concealed partly by the collar of his coat and partly by a large felt hat pulled low over his brow. It was impossible, therefore, to distinguish his features, and yet I knew I had seen him before.

'Allow me,' I said, 'to step nearer to my friends.'

The fellow pretended not to hear. He stuck his hands in his pockets and straightened his broad back between me and my companions. I thought he was a boor, but no worse, and, giving up the attempt to move him, became speedily absorbed again in the preaching, if preaching it could be called, which was now a speech inveighing against the claims of the late King Henry's daughters, and especially of the Princess Mary, and representing, moreover, that if the latter succeeded to the throne it would mean certain destruction to the reformed religion, which, on the other hand, the amiable and pious Queen Jane would maintain in its entirety. He spoke, too, of the likelihood of Mary's contracting a marriage with a prince of the house of Spain, where the Inquisition, with all its ghastly horrors, was maintained. Then he went on to tell of an interview he had had with Mary before the late king's death. He had ridden over to visit her at Hundson, and she invited him to stay to dinner.

After the meal was over he told her that on the Sunday he intended coming to preach before her, upon which she replied that the Church would be open to him, but he must not expect to see her and her household there. He answered by expressing the hope that she would not refuse God's Word, to which she replied that she did not know what they called God's Word now, as it certainly was not the same as in her father's time.

'God's Word, said I,' cried the preacher, 'was the same at all times, though better understood and practised in some ages than others.'

On his retiring, the princess thanked him for coming to see her, but not at all for his proposal to preach before her.

The bishop paused, after relating the anecdote, as if sure that on hearing of Mary's bigotry his audience would wish to repudiate the idea of their wanting her to be their queen.

But, once again, silence and unresponsiveness chilled the hearts of those who loved Queen Jane.

'You see they are convinced that, in spite of everything, Mary should be queen,' said a woman standing near me.

'The boy who scarcely said more than that the other day was cruelly maltreated for it,' muttered the man in the long cloak,' and I shall inform of you, madam, unless you,' he ended by whispering something into the woman's ear.

Immediately, with a look of terror, she put her arm in mine and began to draw me away from my friends, the man taking hold of my other arm, and almost pushing me along.

I called to Sir William Wood, who had his back towards me and did

not hear. I entreated Lady Caroline for help, but she was whispering with some ladies, and I could not attract her attention. Then I appealed to the bystanders, but the man, looking threateningly at them, declared that he would knock down the first who interfered. As he said the words I recognized his voice. He was Sir Claudius Crossley.

And I was in his power, for now we were surrounded by men whom I also recognized, as they were some of those who had drowned the poor old women they called witches.

'No harm will be done to you if you come with us quietly,' said Sir Claudius in my ear.

But I did not believe him, and in desperation struggled to free myself, and cried aloud for help.

The next moment Sir Hubert Blair rode up, and, dashing towards me into the crowd, scattered it on all sides, then, springing from his horse, he seized my adversary in his powerful arms and, hurling him to the ground, administered not a few blows with the butt-end of his riding-whip.

This done, he turned to me, but I had already fled towards my friends and, seeing I was safe, he only smiled and waved his hand, and rode off in another direction, having evidently business of importance in hand.

I saw no more of Sir Claudius Crossley that day, but the incident had shown that he was still my active enemy, bent upon fulfilling his vow, which Betsy had reported to me, that he would win me for his own and vanquish my proud and haughty spirit.

CHAPTER XIV
The Crown Resigned

Lady Caroline and Sir William Wood were much concerned when, on my return to them, I related the misadventure which had befallen me, and blamed themselves for being so much occupied with others that they had not heard my cries for succour. However, they were glad that Sir Hubert Blair effected my rescue, and were very kind to me and sympathizing, making me walk and drive between them all the remainder of the time until we were safely back in the Tower.

A great commotion was going on there, armed men and servants hurrying about, and lords and ladies making hasty preparations for departure.

'What is it? What has happened?' cried Sir William, but for some time no one could or would answer him.

A little later we learned the truth. The Lord Treasurer had left the Tower, contrary to the positive order of the Duke of Northumberland who, before departing, had strictly impressed upon the Duke of Suffolk the necessity of keeping the whole Council within its walls, and it was an open secret that this step was the beginning of the end of what some one irreverently termed 'the miserable farce of Queen Jane's reign.'

It seemed to me that every one except the queen knew this, and she, misled by the representations of her father, who was himself duped by the Council, was wholly ignorant that the downfall which she had at the first apprehended was really beginning to take place.

I found her in tears, it is true, when I went to her bedroom where she was lying ill, but that was, as I speedily discovered, because her mother-in-law had been upbraiding her severely and telling her that Lord Guildford justly refused to come near after her conduct towards him.

'And Margery, Margery, put your dear little head quite near to me, I want to whisper something,' said the young queen pitifully. 'Nearer still, Margery,' she went on, 'for the very walls have ears.' And when my ear was close to her sweet lips, she said low into it, 'I am so ill, I have such indescribable sensations, like none that I have ever had in illness before. Do you think it is possible that they are poisoning me?'

I told her No. I scouted the idea as unworthy of her noble mind. I vehemently declared that she was giving way to imagination. I besought her not to be so childish. I implored her to think of Plato's lofty reasonings. I entreated that she would stay her mind on God's promises to His dear children. I began to quote whole passages of the Bible—the words flew from my lips as fast as I could think them, whilst my dear lady listened spell-bound, and then, suddenly I spoilt it all by bursting out into passionate tears and sobs, in the midst of which I cried, 'They will kill you! They will kill you! They have made you their puppet for a day and set you upon a throne and crowned you, and then—being unable to keep you there, and maddened by failure—they *will kill you*!' And with that I wept uncontrollably, shaking the great bed on which my dear lady was lying with the sobs that rent and tossed my whole frame.

'My poor child! My dear little Margery!' It was Queen Jane who was comforting me now and holding me in her arms whilst she tried to wipe away my tears. 'How you love me! I believe your love is the sweetest, next to my husband's, and the most disinterested that has ever been given me. Darling one, it was a shame to bring you away from your happy home in the country to share my troubled life! But you are wise, you have spoken of the Bible promises, we will stay our hearts on them, and in prayer we will implore for grace that we may be sustained with heavenly consolation and enabled to do our duty whatever happens.'

In reading the Bible and in prayer, therefore, we sought to find true help and consolation in our time of trouble, but were not left long in peace to perform such exercises, there were so many about us, maids of honour, the Duchess of Suffolk and the Duchess of Northumberland, besides the queen's younger sister, the Lady Herbert, and her young sister-in-law, Lady Hastings, to the former of whom she was tenderly attached.

I cannot describe—for it would make too dismal reading—the way in which Queen Jane's relations and her husband's relations harassed her continually—Lord Guildford Dudley, perhaps, by his absence and treatment of her, the most of all, as he was the best beloved. For it is ever those whom we love most who have it in their power to inflict upon us the bitterest pain. By our love we give them a key admitting them into the holiest, warmest recesses of our hearts, and when they prove unkind they are able to inflict there the most exquisite suffering.

On the Wednesday of that fatal week the Council, following the example of the Lord Treasurer, left the Tower for Baynard's Castle,

and upon arriving there they unanimously declared that Princess Mary should be queen, sending for the Lord Mayor and aldermen of the city and emphatically declaring to them that Mary should be queen. The announcement was received with pleasure, and the gentlemen rode to St. Paul's Cross, where the Garter king-at-arms proclaimed Mary Queen of England, France and Ireland.

No dismal silence greeted this proclamation, but cries of triumph and delight, and the day was ended with bonfires, illuminations and loud rejoicings.

Immediately after proclaiming the new queen the Council sent word to the Duke of Suffolk to surrender the Tower, but he did not wait for these instructions, the shouts and acclamations of the people in the streets reached the Tower before their messengers arrived, and the duke went immediately to his daughter's room and imparted the news to her as gently as he could, adding that she must lay aside the state and dignity of a queen and must become again a private person.

'This is better for me to bear,' she answered, 'than my former advancement to royalty. Out of obedience to you and my mother I have grievously sinned and hurt my own inclinations. Now I willingly relinquish the crown, and trust that by so doing immediately and willingly the offence that has been committed may be a little lessened.'

Thus contentedly and even gladly did my dear lady give up the brief sovereignty which had been to her in every way a most distressing period.

'We will go home, Margery,' she said to me, when her maids of honour and the other Court ladies had hurried off to see to the packing of their finery and the safe escort of their persons out of the Tower. 'We will go home to Sion House, where God grant we may once more rest in body and mind, enjoying our books and studying from the fair field of nature, as shown in the lovely gardens, the wide park, and last, but not least, the glorious river.'

'Yes, yes; let us return to Sion House,' I cried eagerly. 'We were happy there.'

'Yes; we were indeed. And my dear lord is there.' A sweet smile lighted up her face. 'Me-thinks,' she added tenderly, 'he will forgive me everything when he sees me once more a private person and no queen.' And she began to sing a tender little love song, still with that charming smile upon her face.

She was so beautiful and so good, my love went out to her then in the hour of her outward humiliation and inward peace, more than it had ever done before, and I threw myself on the floor at her feet and,

clasping my hands upon her knees, said—
'Madam, we are all kings and priests to God, and yours is the best royalty of all, for you rule your own spirit with wisdom and grace. Oh, if you only knew how I admire and love you!'
'Dear!' she laid her hand caressingly upon my head, 'Plato says that greater is the one who admires than the one who is admired. You must therefore be greater than I. So get up at once—at once, Margery,' she repeated, 'And let us pack up our things, for we are going home.'
Yes, we were going to her home, and were about to leave the grandeur and the gloom of those royal apartments in the palace of the great Tower with far more gladness than we had felt on entering them.
Lady Jane's friends and partisans mourned that she was a fallen queen, but we, she and I, knew that, far from falling, she had risen in all that went to make her life more truly happy, beneficent and noble.

CHAPTER XV
At Sion House Again

Lady Jane returned to Sion House the next day, and her manner of doing so was as humble and lowly as her leaving for the Tower had been grand and ostentatious. She who had been a queen nine days—which, by the way, is said to have given rise to the saying, 'A nine days' wonder'—laid down her royalty, as we have seen, without a sigh, and returned to Isleworth in a hired litter, attended only by myself and Mistress Ellen, and escorted by a few of the Duke of Suffolk's followers and Sir William Wood, whom nothing would hinder from paying his last token of respect and ready service to her vanished queendom. The Duke and Duchess of Suffolk followed to Sheen House, Richmond, later on, the former well nigh distraught with grief and vexation, and the latter in a state of peevishness and anger, which boded ill for her daughter when once she was within reach of her tongue.

But Lady Jane and I rejoiced that, at length, the right was prevailing and the lawful queen was coming to her own, though I think if we had known of the misery and bloodshed which she would bring upon the Protestants in this country, our joy would have been turned into sorrow.

Isleworth, where Sion House is situated, is about twelve miles from London City, in a sweet country of green trees and verdant meadows. It is two miles from Richmond, where the magnificent palace—a favourite seat of royalty[1]—faces the river and imparts grandeur to the scene.

[1] This was in 1553. The palace has been pulled down now.—ED.

The country looked fresh and beautiful to us after the stone walls and roofs and chimneys of the city, and the air was sweet and pleasant after the closer atmosphere of the metropolis; though certainly in the Tower we got breezes from the river as well as the ill odours of the town. We thought that now we could return to the quiet, studious life we led before, and my lady spoke of teaching me Greek and Latin that I might share her studies—but, alas, such things were not to be.

Lord Guildford Dudley, though bitterly disappointed at the turn of events, and anxious for the safety of his father, of whom we had no certain tidings, became reconciled to Lady Jane, and they spent more time together than before, which necessarily deprived me of the society of my dear mistress and threw much idle time upon my hands.

After the stirring events through which we had been passing, and whilst they were still happening in the great city we had turned our backs upon, I could not settle down to sewing and embroidering, as Mistress Ellen would fain have made me, but took to wandering about the grounds of Sion House and especially down by the river, with vague yearnings which I scarcely put into clear thoughts; but seeing that they had their root in witnessing the happiness my mistress felt in being once more the cherished companion of her lord, and that my gaze was ever fixed upon the river up which Sir Hubert Blair once came to me in his boat, it was evident that he was the loved object of my every thought and wish. Where was he in the great and exciting events that were taking place? I had never seen him since the day of the preaching at St. Paul's Cross, when he rescued me from Sir Claudius Crossley's hands. It seemed strange to me afterwards that he had not joined his friend, Sir William Wood, in escorting Lady Jane back to Sion House, but I had not an opportunity of inquiring of Sir William about him. And now he stayed away. What did it mean? I spent hours in vague conjectures and in wondering what course he was pursuing in the present state of affairs. Of one thing I was certain. He would not, like the Council, have gone over to Mary's side, now that the Duke of Northumberland was away and people were acknowledging her on all sides. He was too true a man to forsake the weaker cause, and too valiant to give in because others were succumbing, and yet if he did the opposite and kept his standard raised for Queen Jane, what danger he would be in! Imprisonment and even death might befall my prince of men.

I was thinking of this one evening, with tear-dimmed eyes gazing on the river, brilliant just then with the reflected light of a most gorgeous sunset, when, hearing the gentle splashing of oars, I turned quickly and perceived Sir Hubert in a boat being rapidly rowed towards me by two strong boatmen. Sir Hubert was sitting in the stern of the boat, with keen eyes scanning the riverside, and upon perceiving me he took off his hat and waved it, whilst his face, so grave a moment before, lighted up with smiles.

He said something to the boatmen, and immediately after, the boat having been run to our little landing-stage, he jumped out, and they

pulled away, leaving him coming up the steps and walking towards me.
I was so glad to see him, he looked so strong and brave that all my fears and anxieties regarding his safety disappeared, and with joy I hurried forward to place both my hands in his.
'Welcome! welcome!' I said, and could say no more of all the words of love and greeting crying out in my mind for utterance.
He, too, seemed to find a difficulty in speech, but he led me to a seat near the water, and we sat down, hand in hand, in silence, which was more eloquent than any words.
After a little while, he told me the news of what had been occurring in the City and the open field, where the Duke of Northumberland led the forces, and as he spoke of treachery and cowardice, I scarcely knew my lover in the pale, indignant man.
'You must know, Margery,' he said to me, 'that the Council, after proclaiming Mary Queen, sent the herald, Richard Rose, to the Duke of Northumberland with a message commanding him to disband his army and acknowledge Queen Mary, under penalty of being declared a traitor. But, even before receiving these orders, he had himself submitted in a cowardly, undignified manner. He had withdrawn from Bury St. Edmunds to Cambridge, where, on the Sunday, he caused the Vice-Chancellor of the University to preach a sermon against the rights and the religion of Mary, and the following day, when the news arrived from London of the revolution that had taken place there, he went to the Market place and declared aloud that Mary whom they had been denouncing, was the rightful queen. Moreover, he flung up his cap, as if in joy, whilst tears of mortification and regret rolled down his face. "Queen Mary is a merciful woman," he said to the Vice-chancellor, "and doubtless all will receive the benefit of her generous pardon." The Vice-chancellor, however, gave him no hope, for he said if the queen were ever so inclined to pardon, those who ruled her would destroy him, whoever else was pardoned. Immediately afterwards he was arrested and sent off to the Tower.'
'What a fall for the proud Northumberland!' exclaimed I.
'Proud no longer!' said Sir Hubert. 'His behaviour, when arrested, was abject in the extreme. He fell on his knees before the Earl of Arundel, who arrested him, and begged for his life.'
'Where was his dignity?' cried I, and then, the next instant I asked, 'will they kill him?'
'Yes. He will be executed for high treason.'
'How dreadful!' said I, adding 'How grieved my dear lady will be,

although he has been so cruel to her!'
'And many others, braver than he, were sent to the Tower,' continued my lover, 'and amongst them even Bishop Ridley.'
'Bishop Ridley!'
'Yes. For preaching that sermon at St. Paul's Cross. They say it is like to cost him his life.'
'His life! Will Mary be so wicked as to kill a clergyman because of what he said in his sermon?' asked I.
'Yes,' answered Sir Hubert. 'She is capable of doing far more than that. Did I not tell you what a Papist's rule in England would mean, Margery? Rivers of blood will flow. And they will be Protestants on whom Mary will wreak her vengeance. There is no animosity in the world so bitter, as what is called religious animosity. Remember what they did to our Lord. Think you the Jews of old would have crucified so cruelly an innocent man if it had not been a matter of religion that was at issue?'
'True! true!' I said, wondering at the astuteness of my dear one. 'But, alas!' I sobbed, the next moment. 'If Mary will be so bitter against her Protestant enemies, what, oh! what will be the fate of my dear Lady Jane?'
Sir Hubert looked very grave.
'I can see no hope for her,' he said, 'if Mary is allowed to reign.'
'Why do you say, if Mary is allowed to reign,' I exclaimed, 'when she is reigning already?'
'Not yet!' cried Sir Hubert, in confident tones. 'Not yet! There are some who will never lay down their swords whilst they can wield them on behalf of Lady Jane.'
'A few doubtless,' exclaimed I. 'But, oh, what can a few do against so many, many others?'
'It is on the rightfulness of our cause that we rely,' said my dear knight. 'There is a saying, Margery, that if you give a man rope enough he will hang himself, and of course it holds good with a woman also. Mary has already pounced on a bishop and imprisoned him—or her followers have—and soon she will begin to burn Protestants alive. Then, by that blaze, the nation will awake to see what they are doing and the whole of Protestant England will rise as one man, and deposing Mary, put down papistry with an iron hand.'
'And meanwhile,' I said, 'my dear Lady Jane? And Master Montgomery, too,' my thoughts reverting to the good curate, who had taught me so many lessons of truth and righteousness at home, 'and you, my dear one, what will become of you?'

'If Mary reigns, the life of Lady Jane hangs on single thread,' Sir Hubert answered, oracularly. 'If papistry is upheld by the ruling power, your friend, Master Montgomery's life is not secure for a single day, or an hour. And, as for me, I am well aware that by refusing to submit myself to Mary, I am liable at any moment to be apprehended for high treason!'

I gave a great cry, for I knew that the penalty for high treason is death, and it took my beloved some time to quieten me. When, at last, I was calmer he said, 'if it were not for you, I should not care about myself. But, in any case, I am sure you would not wish to hold me back from doing my utmost to re-establish Lady Jane as Queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland.'

'But the thing is beyond you!' I cried. 'You and a few others can never, never compass it—you will only spend your life, your precious life in the vain effort.'

And I looked around, with a frantic desire to see some one who might come to my help and assist me to persuade this dear, hot-headed, valiant knight not to cast himself into the gulf yawning between my dear Lady Jane and her crown.

The glory of the sunset was over now, the monarch of the skies having sunk out of sight, and the radiance of his setting was momentarily waning. A slight river mist was rising and stealing over the land, like a hazy veil obscuring, though not concealing its rich and brilliant green. Rooks cawed in the trees hard by, as if they were having some earnest debate upon affairs of importance in bird-land, and the distant baying of the watch-dogs up at the house reminded us that, though apparently alone, we were not far from a big residence. No one, however, appeared to be in sight on land, and looking across the darkening water I only perceived a barge, which seemed to be stationary on our side of the river, a little higher up. A few men were upon it, but they were too far apart and too insignificant in appearance to avail me anything, and I looked up to Sir Hubert, whose eyes were resting upon me, with a yearning look of love.

'For my sake,' I said, tremulously.

But he shook off the temptation and began—

'Whilst I have power to wield a sword——'

He was interrupted. An iron hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice of thunder demanded—

'Are you for Queen Mary? Speak. Answer, yea or nay?'

It was Sir Claudius Crossley's ugly face that leered upon us as we looked round, and it was his hand that gripped my beloved one's

shoulder, whilst behind him stood a little band of wild, ruffianly men. Silently along the riverpath they had come from the barge, creeping up behind us, whilst we were absorbed in the momentous questions occupying our attention; and now, shielding himself behind the name of Mary, Sir Claudius was ready for any deed of violence.

'I do not answer ruffians!' cried Sir Hubert, grasping his sword.

The next moment there was a scuffle; the men, some half dozen in number, threw themselves upon Sir Hubert and caught hold of me, and whether from fear, or from some blow that was dealt by a coward, not above fighting women, I know not, but I immediately lost consciousness and knew no more.

CHAPTER XVI
In the Power of Sir Claudius

'I will never marry you! Never! I would rather die!' I cried passionately. Sir Claudius laughed in a very insolent manner. We were talking in the big, bare drawing-room of his great hall, near Chichester, where his two sisters had been keeping guard over me ever since I arrived the day before.

When I came out of my swoon it was to find myself being carried on a roughly extemporized litter, and then, in a cart which jolted horribly. I was so sick and ill I scarcely cared what was happening to me, but, by and bye, anxiety for my lover's safety caused me to ask the man who drove the cart and sat sideways on the cart-shafts, if Sir Hubert Blair was also a prisoner. For some time the man did not answer, but after a while said, 'Yes.' That was all the information I could extract, and it made me exceedingly uneasy. The country was in a very lawless, unsettled state; the attention of all the upper classes being concentrated on the Government and the Royal family. While it was being settled who should reign over England there was scanty attention paid to the doings of such rascals as Sir Claudius Crossley, who, under the mask of a knighthood which he violated, roved over the country to spoil and ravage it for his own aggrandizement. Upon our arriving at Crossley Hall, Sir Claudius himself came forward and personally handed me over to his sisters, with the sneering remark that they were to see to it that I did not escape. The women were hard-featured and angular. They resembled their brother in appearance and character, and obeyed him so well that I was not left a moment unattended; and, lest I should escape whilst they slept, even the bedroom door was locked and the key kept under the pillow of the one who was *pro tem.* my jailer. When I had recovered from my sickness and was able to get up and dress, they took me into the big barn-like apartment they called the drawing-room that their brother might come to me. When he entered, they withdrew to a distant window, whilst he, immediately and without any preparation, began to assure me of his undying love, and to promise me my freedom if I would marry him.

It was a strange wooing, and I was so greatly indignant that I refused

him with more haste than politeness, declaring that death itself would be preferable to living as his wife.
This made him angry, and in anger he was even more detestable than before; his frown being so terrible that I believed, in spite of his so-called love, he could almost have laid his hands upon me to wreak a fearful vengeance.
However he merely said—
"'Tis a pity that you cannot love me, Mistress Brown,' and, taking a chair near me, endeavoured to grasp my hand, which I held back. 'For, let me tell you,' he continued, 'great harm will be done to an unlucky friend of yours unless you do.'
'Is this a threat?' I asked haughtily, showing no sign of fear, although my heart was beating quickly and wordlessly, and with exceeding earnestness a prayer for help and succour ascended from it.
'Call it what you please,' answered he, with a gesture of irritability. 'I tell you that if you will not marry me, your precious lover, Sir Hubert Blair—you start! Had you forgotten that we took him prisoner, too?—Sir Hubert Blair, I repeat, shall die?'
'How can you say that?' cried I. 'You have no right to kill him.'
And with that I began trembling so violently as to shake the chair in which I was sitting.
He perceived it, and drew nearer.
'Sir Hubert is in my power,' he said, in low, meaning tones. 'He is in fact a prisoner in this house, even now lying in our dungeon. For, let me tell you, we have a dungeon down amongst the cellars. Aye, and a gallows, too, in the inner yard. If I hold up my hand, so——' he made a gesture, 'my men will bear him to the gallows, where he will die.'
I interrupted him with a cry of terror-stricken anguish.
'You can save him,' he said quickly. 'You have it in your power to save him. Dear Margaret,' and again he endeavoured to take my hand, whilst a fawning, obsequious tone succeeded the fiercer one, 'you, and no one else, can prevent his terrible fate.'
'How? How can I prevent it?' and I looked up appealingly into the hardest and most cruel face it has ever been my lot to encounter.
Sir Claudius took my hand, my most unwilling hand, in his, pressing it tenderly.
'My dear, I love you,' he said. 'Nay, don't wince, for in that fact lies the man's salvation. If you will try ever so little to return my love, if you will promise to marry me, Sir Hubert shall live. Nay, more, upon the day on which we are married he shall be liberated.'
'Oh, but I cannot! I cannot marry you!' I sobbed distractedly. 'I

cannot!'
An ugly look came into his face.
'Sir Hubert will hang on our gallows to-morrow morning,' said he, slowly.
'No! no!' I cried. 'You dare not do such a thing! The law——'
'Has no power against me here, in this lonely country, amongst my servants and dependents,' he interrupted. 'The officers of the law will have their eyes directed towards Queen Mary, and that other foolish young woman, who aped——'
'Do not speak about Queen Jane in that way!' exclaimed I. 'Unless,' I added, 'you mean me to hate you even more than I do.'
'I shall speak as I please,' he muttered sulkily, 'What I mean to tell you is this. Out here in my own country, at this time when all the fighting-men are otherwise engaged, I can do almost what I like, and if I choose that Sir Hubert shall die, he shall.'
The horrible conviction came upon me as he spoke, that it was true; in the then distracted state of England, even a big crime, such as murdering Sir Hubert, could be done by a powerful miscreant like Sir Claudius, with impunity.
Still in desperation I cried out—
'You dare not! You dare not!'
'I dare,' he returned, 'for, look you, if he appealed to the law, I could but turn him over to the law, accusing him as I did so of high treason. They would behead him then, sure enough. Yes, I say, they would behead him.'
'No! no! no!' I cried.
'But I repeat, they would,' he said. 'The penalty of high treason is execution——'
'Oh, what must he do? How can he be saved?' wailed I, for it seemed to me my beloved, between the villainy of Sir Claudius and the vengeance of Queen Mary's adherents, was like one between Scylla and Charybdis, bound to perish in any case.
'He ought to have a friend,' said the wily voice of Sir Claudius, 'a friend who would set him free and counsel him to quit the country, and procure him a secret passage to Holland——'
'Will you do it?' I interrupted, falling upon my knees before him. 'You say you love me. Then do this thing for me. I will believe you, if you will do it for me,' I went on, beseechingly. 'Set Sir Hubert free, let him leave the country, get him across to Holland, and I will——' I paused. I was going to say, 'esteem you highly and pray for you all my life,' but recognized that would not content him, that indeed he would not care

for that.
'You will what?' he asked sharply.
'I will——' again I paused. He would not be content with that which I would promise.
'I will do it on one condition,' he said, 'and only one.'
'And that is?'
But I knew, and my heart almost ceased beating, whilst a giddiness to which I was never subject made my head swim.
When I could understand him again, he was telling me that if I would promise to marry him he would do all that I wished for Sir Hubert, and more, he would guarantee his safety until he reached Holland, and, if needs be, would personally conduct him to a port from which he could sail.
'But, be generous,' besought I, 'do all that without the heavy price being paid that you have named.'
'Heavy?'
He frowned.
'Yes. Most heavy. I cannot pay it! I cannot! But be generous,' I pleaded, 'be generous!'
Sir Claudius, seeing me so exceedingly concerned about his rival, fell into an awful rage.
'Generous!' cried he. 'Not I. It is for you to be generous to me—and to him. For I swear unless you promise to marry me—unless I have your promise before night, he shall hang to-morrow morning.'
And with that he went out, slamming the door behind him.
I fell back in my chair, weeping bitterly.
Was ever a more hideous snare laid for a poor girl? I thought with horror of the woes and threatened death of my dear knight. I imagined I saw him lying in the dungeon of which Sir Claudius had been speaking. How very hard was his fate! Not a prisoner of war, he had simply been kidnapped by brigands, as a girl, or a child might have been! Six to one, they had overcome him by sheer physical strength. And he had the misery of knowing that I also was a captive in their power. How he would chafe at the confinement which kept him from my side! What would be his feelings when his jailer told him that he must prepare to die upon the morrow? And on the gallows, too! Despair would be his portion, horror and despair.
And I might save him. It was in my power, by submitting to my imperious captor and promising to marry him, to save my own beloved from a truly awful death. I could do it, and no one else. And it did not so much matter what happened to me, if his precious life

was saved. If he died I should be miserable, wherever I was; if he lived I should have the consolation of knowing that, to lighten my own dark lot.

I was in poor health, my spirits depressed and my soul sickened by my captivity and the knowledge that my absence would afflict my dear mistress and make her very anxious. No one was at hand to advise me—no one but Sir Claudius' sisters, and I could not consult them. What was I to do? 'Sacrifice myself,' answered my heart, 'sacrifice myself for him I love.'

Sir Claudius did not leave me long to think it over.

'I must press for an answer now, immediately,' he said, returning.

'Oh, but please wait a little,' said I, tearfully. 'I cannot answer you now, not just now,' I pleaded. 'Give me a little time. Give me at least until the evening.'

'No, you must promise now,' said he imperiously.

'But—but——'

I sobbed, putting up both my hands to my face, like a child, and crying as if my heart would break.

'Now, or never? It is the only chance you can have of saving Sir Hubert Blair's life. And, look you, Madam, if you do not——' leaning forward he whispered that the gallows was waiting for its prey.

I shrank back. My heart felt frozen. I laughed with bitter recklessness. Thus talked he who said he loved me!

I wrung my hands.

'Why was I born?' I lamented. 'And why did my father send me away from home?'

'Do you consent, madam?' demanded the ruffian who had me in his power.

I started violently. The outlook was appalling.

'May I see Sir Hubert Blair once? Just once, that I may take my leave of him?' I asked beseechingly.

'No, no. That is too much to ask.'

'But, unless I see him I cannot consent,' I said, temporizing. 'You see,' a little hope came into my heart, 'I am not sure whether you are speaking the truth about him, or not. He was certainly in a desperate state—one against six—when I saw him last, but he is tremendously strong and he had his sword, therefore he may have escaped.'

'I tell you we took him prisoner with you.'

'Unless I see him, I cannot believe he is a prisoner here,' I persisted.

'Ho! So you doubt me?'

'Yes.' I bowed my head. 'I doubt you altogether.'

'And you do not think Sir Hubert is here?'
'I do not know. I do not know anything. Allow me to see him—allow me only to see him for one minute—and then, then, if I see him here, in your power, and if you will vow that you will not only liberate him but also send him safely across to Holland, I will consent to do as you wish.'
'To marry me.'
'Yes.'
Sir Claudius looked hideously triumphant.
'It won't be such a bad bargain,' he said, leering at me.
I shuddered. But then, next instant, derived hope from the reflection that if he could not show me Sir Hubert Blair it would be because he lied in saying Sir Hubert was a prisoner in his dungeon, moreover I should then be free from my promise.
This hope was dashed, however, by Sir Claudius saying—
'Very well. You shall see Sir Hubert—not to speak to, mind—but you shall see him. I will go now, and return for you in half an hour. Will that satisfy you?'
'Yes.'
He left the room, closing the door roughly after him, as was his wont.
His sisters, who had been listening all the time, and must have heard every word he said, for his voice was loud and harsh, came forward, asking,—
'What? Is he going to show you the secret dungeon?'
I made no answer. Perhaps I could not at that moment, for thoughts of agony and fear were surging through my mind. My dread was terrible; it obscured all things, including my faith in my Heavenly Father's care.
'He must have you entirely in his power, or he must trust you completely,' said the women.
I made no rejoinder, and they, looking at me askance, withdrew again to a little distance, and began a low-toned conversation.
I was left to myself. And my thoughts were bitter.

CHAPTER XVII
The Prisoner in the Dungeon

Sir Claudius, returning in about half an hour, bade me gruffly follow him, and then led the way down many steps and through gloomy passages until we reached a huge dark subterranean hall, the extreme chilliness of which was deathly and vaultlike in its nature.

'Pleasant, is it not?' sneered my guide. Thereupon he whistled, and a pale-faced lad, dressed in garments made of skins, came quickly out of the darkness and ran towards him.

'Prisoner ready, Saul?' interrogated Sir Claudius.

'Yes, master,' answered the lad, looking from him to me with startled eyes. He added something which I did not catch.

Sir Claudius hesitated a moment before saying to the lad, with a frown, 'Stay here with this lady and take care of her; you understand?'

'Yes, master. I must not let her escape.'

The man nodded.

'I shall soon return,' he said, and vanished into the darkness.

A few moments of intense silence followed. Full of apprehension and dread about my own safety and that of Sir Hubert Blair, I was not thinking at all about the boy, when he startled me by saying in low tones—

'I think you must be the lady who tried to save my grandmother's life?'

'Your grandmother's life?' I asked wonderingly. 'When? Where?'

'I have heard about you since you came here, from the servants, and I think you must be the lady,' continued the lad slowly. 'It was many weeks ago, not very far from Horsham. Wicked men made out that my grandmother was a witch and drowned her. My dear old grandmother!' he sobbed. 'But you tried to save her life.'

'Was she your grandmother?' asked I, thinking of the so-called witch, who had implored me frantically to save her.

'Yes, lady. She was one of the best of women,' answered Saul sorrowfully. 'I knew it was you,' he added, 'who was so good to her, because he who told me all about it said that the lady who tried to save her looked like an angel, with hair of gold, a face like pink wild roses and eyes like big speedwells. Your face is rather too white, but the other part of you answers to the description exactly.'

'I certainly tried to protect a poor old woman from her wicked enemies,' said I; 'and I remember now one of the charges against her was that she had done away with her own grandson. I suppose that was you?'
'Yes, lady. And it was a wicked lie. My master it was who stole me away from home and brought me here to be his slave and turnkey. I hate him. He is cruel as death. He has a gallows, and he kills people without any trial, or with only a mock trial.'
'Terrible!' I exclaimed, and was just beginning to ask questions about Sir Hubert when footsteps were to be heard returning, and Saul whispered—
'I will try to save you, for the sake of what you did for my dear, good grandmother——' he broke off, for, alas! he had said too much.
'Dog!' cried Sir Claudius, kicking him so brutally that the poor lad fell upon his knees with a cry of pain.
'You do that in my presence!' exclaimed I. 'And yet you profess to love me?'
'Silence, in the lad's presence!' commanded Sir Claudius gruffly. 'What business had he to whisper to you? What was he saying?'
'Does it matter what a young boy says?' asked I, remembering just in time that it might be better policy to soothe than to anger him.
'You dare to whisper to a prisoner in my castle?' exclaimed Sir Claudius, turning again upon the lad and beginning to kick and cuff him unmercifully.
Every cry of the poor boy's went to my heart. I seemed to feel each blow myself, and begged pitifully for mercy. But I might as well have spoken to the great stone walls. Sir Claudius did not stop until poor Saul lay motionless upon the ground; then, leaving him stunned, the tyrant seized my hand and drew me from the spot, through the darkness to the far side of the hall, where there was an immense circular opening in the ground.
'Look down. Look into the dungeon below,' he said.
I peered into the gloomy depths and saw a man lying on some straw with his back toward us; but it was so dark that I could discern neither his clothes, nor exact size, nor the colour of his hair. I simply saw that there was a man and that he was lying down in a helpless, hopeless attitude, as if too weak to stand.
'That is Sir Hubert Blair,' said Sir Claudius. 'He has not fared so well as you. He has scarcely had such sumptuous lodgings. He is ill. Ha! ha! If we do not bring him to the gallows quickly, or release him, he will spare us the trouble.'

A bitter cry fell from my lips. I seemed to be in a hideous nightmare.
The man in the dungeon started, but did not turn round.
'Hubert! Hubert!' I called.
No answer. The prisoner lay quite still now.
'He does not hear,' said the harsh voice by my side. 'He is farther off than you think.'
I knew he lied, for had I not seen the man start when I first cried out? Was he Sir Hubert? I strained my eyes, but could not see if it was he. Why did he not turn round? Sir Hubert would have turned in a moment at my cry.
'Sir Hubert Blair,' I shouted, 'it is I—Margery Brown—will you not look at me? Turn round. Please—please turn round.'
I spoke in vain. The prisoner did not turn. He stayed in the same position.
'Oh, why does he not turn? I want to see his face,' I said.
Sir Claudius regarded me sternly.
'I said you might see, but not speak to him,' he said; 'and I only meant you to look at him.'
'But I want to see his face,' I said. 'I must see his face. Please ask him to turn towards us.'
Sir Claudius looked annoyed. At last he said with evident reluctance—
'He cannot turn round. He is chained in that position to an iron staple in the wall.'
I burst into tears. It is a woman's refuge when words fail her, and sometimes it softens the beholder, but not in this case; the man standing by my side possessed a heart of stone.
'Tears do no good, madam,' said he. 'It is perfectly useless for you to stand there weeping.'
'How long has he been chained there?' I asked at length.
'A day or two,' answered Sir Claudius airily. 'If you really wish him to be liberated,' he said, 'you have it in your power to set him free—otherwise, as I said, to-morrow morning—the gallows.'
'Oh, no! No!' cried I. 'Not that! Not that!'
'But I say it must be that, unless——'
'Tell me,' said I, 'does he know what fate is in store for him?'
'No. He does not know yet. But I can tell him now. He will hear my voice if I shout.'
'Oh, but do not shout it,' I exclaimed heroically, resolving that if I could prevent it Sir Hubert should never hear that dreadful sentence.
'Then you consent to marry me?'
'Will Sir Hubert be liberated immediately if I do?' asked I.

By this time I was certain that the prisoner was indeed my poor lover, for my straining eyes could discern that he had black hair and that his size and figure corresponded exactly. Moreover his dress appeared to be exactly the same as that Sir Hubert wore when last I saw him. My one desire, therefore, was to save him from the gallows.

'Immediately. I guarantee that he shall be set free immediately.'

'If I consent, may I be allowed to tell him the good news about his freedom?'

The other was silent. He seemed to be weighing the pros and cons of the matter.

'Please allow me,' I entreated.

'Very well. If you promise to become my wife?'

I bowed—not being able to speak. The next moment I cried triumphantly—

'Hubert! Hubert! You are about to be set free. You are about to be liberated. I, your Margery, have effected this. Never forget me.' My voice broke into sobs, and, weeping bitterly, I suffered my companion to lead me away.

Was it imagination, or did I really hear an anxious voice calling after us as Sir Claudius led me away from the subterranean hall and up a steep flight of stone steps? My companion declared that it was nothing but the echo of our own footsteps, yet I had my doubts.

CHAPTER XVIII
On the Point of being Wed

I will not attempt to describe my misery during the weeks which intervened between my consenting to become the wife of Sir Claudius and the dawning of the dreadful day upon which he claimed the fulfilment of my promise.

As a lover, it can easily be understood, the ruffian who had me in his power was altogether detestable, even his sisters taking pity upon me at last, and exercising a kind of rough guardianship. I was bitterly distressed because of not being allowed to see Sir Hubert for one moment before he left Crossley Hall. If I could only have said farewell to him, I thought I could have borne my position better. Sir Claudius was obdurate and would not allow us to meet for even five minutes. He told me that he was sending Sir Hubert abroad, under a safe escort, and that was all the information I could extract. For the rest, news of the entire surrender of the country to Queen Mary was brought to the house by travellers, as well as fearful tidings of the distinguished men who had passed through the Traitors' Gate into the Tower, with the certain prospect of more or less speedy execution.

Mary had entered London in state, having first dismissed her army that she might show confidence in her people. With the Princess Elizabeth by her side, she rode into the city amidst the acclamations of the multitude. They had entered the Tower, where the queen's first act was one of clemency, for she pardoned the State prisoners who had been imprisoned there during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. But, alas!—and this touched me more nearly—she commanded the Earl of Arundel to seize the Duke of Suffolk and Lady Jane Grey and commit them to the Tower. There were rumours that the Duke of Suffolk was soon liberated, but I did not know what truth was in the tale. I was greatly affected by the thought of my dear lady being imprisoned there, where she had been before in such different, though scarcely happier, circumstances. How she would miss me! No one would quite take my place with her, and having to do without me would add to her many troubles. However, she would be spared the knowledge of my grievous fate, and God would be merciful to her and give her His peace. Of that I was assured.

The end of the time which I insisted must elapse before my marriage came only too soon, notwithstanding its wretchedness, and at last the day arrived which I had been compelled to name as our wedding day. I felt stunned now that it had come, and everything that happened seemed to be happening in a dream.

There was a great commotion in the house, many coming and going and serving-men and women flying hither and thither. There was to be a great breakfast, or dinner after the ceremony, and to it several people were coming from the neighbourhood.

The marriage was to take place in the small chapel adjoining the house by eleven o'clock in the morning. An old clergyman had been brought to the Hall by Sir Claudius—a poor scared-looking old man—and he was to officiate.

Every arrangement for the wedding had been made, a trousseau provided for me and an elderly man found to give me away. The sisters of Sir Claudius were to be my bridesmaids, and children were to scatter flowers before me as I walked to and from the chapel.

I thought that I looked ghastly and quite plain-looking as I surveyed myself in a mirror, in my wedding-dress of white satin embroidered with gold, and a headdress and veil of costly lace, before the ceremony, but felt no regret on that account. Sleepless nights, a poor appetite and troubled thoughts are not calculated to enhance beauty, and I should have rejoiced if the sight of me had frightened away my unloved bridegroom.

The latter, dressed in a doublet of black velvet, embroidered with gold and various other adornments, looked coarser and more vulgar than ever. He strutted about, staring at people to see if they admired him and his bride.

'Did you ever see any one like her?' he said in a loud whisper to more than one of his companions. 'Beautiful as an angel, isn't she? And she is mine, mine, mine! And she is very much in love with me,' he had the audacity to add. 'Oh, yes, very much in love with me!'

The last time he said this was when he was waiting, with his best man, in the prettily decorated chapel.

I overheard him as I walked up the aisle, leaning on the man's arm who was to play the part of father and give me away. Then, for a moment, I awoke out of the stupor in which I was plunged while acting my part mechanically, and, raising my eyes, looked reproachfully at Sir Claudius. He shifted his eyes uneasily, and, with a sudden realization of what I was doing, I looked keenly around for some way of escape. I had prayed so very much that a way of escape

would be opened for me out of the terrible tangle into which my life had got. Surely there must be some way of escape.
The little building was packed with the guests, the followers and the servants of Sir Claudius; behind me stood his sisters, my jailer-bridesmaids; before me was my enemy, soon to be transformed into my husband, unless by some bold stroke I could now, at the eleventh hour, avert the coming calamity. At that moment I perceived the lad Saul, standing by a door, watching me with eager eyes out of an almost colourless face, and as I looked at him I saw his lips saying, 'Wait,' though no sound fell from them.
I was certain that he said 'Wait,' although I was not learned in lip-reading, and, remembering that he had promised to try to save me from Sir Claudius, instantly resolved to delay my progress as much as possible.
For that purpose I stumbled over my dress, and fell upon my knees, in spite of my companion's efforts to keep me up. This occasioned a few moments' delay, for when I was on my feet again I clung to the arm on which I leaned, whispering that I felt faint.
'Water! Fetch water!' the order flew from lips to lips, and no one seemed to be able to carry it out, until a silver tankard of cold water was brought to me by the lad Saul.
Bowing low, as he offered it to me, he said in my ear—
'You have been deceived. Make delay. Do not say the words. Your deliverers are coming. They are on the way.'
The next moment a blow from the bridegroom's fist upon the poor lad's ear laid him senseless on the floor.
'How dare he speak to my bride! The varlet!' thundered Sir Claudius.
But I knelt down in reality now by poor Saul's side, trying to raise his head and open his collar, that he might breathe more freely.
They would not permit me to tend him. He was caught up by others and hurried away out of my sight.
'I refuse to marry you now, you cruel man!' I exclaimed.
But Sir Claudius merely smiled, and bade my conductor bring me forward.
There was a little confusion as the wedding party was being arranged before the Communion table, and I took advantage of it to say, in a low tone, to the old clergyman—
'I will not marry Sir Claudius. My promise to him was made under compulsion, and therefore it is not binding.'
The old man looked bewildered, startled. He had evidently no idea of this, and perhaps he only half heard me, for my voice was weak and

low.
'It is all right. It is all right, I say,' cried Sir Claudius sharply. 'Proceed with the ceremony. Take no heed of a maiden's bashfulness.'
'It is not that,' I appealed to every one. 'I cannot——'
'Silence! Silence!' said more than one big, bullying voice from those who aided Sir Claudius, and they closed around me, making so much noise that my voice could not be heard.
They were all so absorbed that they did not hear loud shouts and cries outside, nor notice the entrance into the chapel of a little band of well-armed strangers, nor hear the call of 'Sir Claudius! Sir Claudius!' from the yard. Least of all did the bridegroom hear the tumult, for he was exerting himself to smother my remonstrances and compel me to take part in the service.
'Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?' asked the clergyman in quavering, uncertain tones. He was weak and old, in terror of Sir Claudius, and more than half persuaded that he had misunderstood me. 'Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her as long as ye both shall live?' The solemn question fell solemnly from the old man's lips, his eyes sought the bridegroom's face with great anxiety.
'I will!' cried Sir Claudius in loud, exultant tones. He looked round smilingly.
It was his hour of triumph.
'Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou obey and serve him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him as long as ye both shall live?'
'No,' I said, but the monosyllable was so low that none heard it. None of those around me I mean. There is One to whom a broken heart appeals more strongly than aught else.
'Say "I will,"' prompted the clergyman.
'No,' I said again more loudly, but again my utterance failed to reach the aged ears bent to listen.
'Say "I will,"' repeated the clergyman.
'I cannot,' I almost shrieked now in my agony and fear.
'You are a wicked, lying girl,' hissed the bridegroom in my ear. 'You promised to marry me.'
'But you deceived me,' ventured I.
'My dear,' said the clergyman gravely, 'try to collect yourself. Did you not come here into this chapel to be wedded to this man?'

'Yes—but——'

I thought of the man I loved, whose safety I imagined I had purchased by that daring promise to Sir Claudius, and, knowing from what Saul had said, that I had been deceived, was altogether overwhelmed with grief and misery. A mist gathered around me, the church grew dark; releasing my hand from the arm that held it, I stretched it towards the old clergyman, and then fell half-unconscious at his feet.

Instantly there was a tremendous noise in the chapel. Swords clashed, men shouted and fought wildly. Some one trod upon my dress almost upon me, and was hurled off by strong arms, which the next instant picked me up and placed me out of danger.

I heard Sir Claudius, in harsh but abject accents, begging for mercy, and, looking down—for I had been lifted into the gallery of the chapel—saw him on his knees before Sir Hubert Blair, who, brave and handsome, stood over him with his drawn sword.

'Are you a man?' asked my beloved with scorn. But, the next moment, before he could strike at him, if that was in his mind, a dozen sturdy men attacked Sir Hubert, and the fighting became so terrible that, in fear and horror, I again lost consciousness.

CHAPTER XIX
Escaping from the Enemy

'Are we quite safe now, Betsy?'
'Yes, my dear mistress, we have got clean away from that gloomy Hall, with its half-wild dependents, who would like to have torn us to pieces I verily believe, and it's a comfort to think that our Sir Hubert gave that wicked Sir Claudius a mark to remember him by that will last all his lifetime——'
'What? What was that?' I asked feebly. For, though conscious now, I was feeling very weak, and the litter in which I lay swayed as it was being borne over bumpy, uneven roads.
'He cut off his left hand with one blow of his sword,' cried my woman exultingly, 'so that hand will never do any more mischief, mistress!'
'Poor wretch!' exclaimed I, shuddering.
'Poor, do you call him? It is not a vile enough word. Why, mistress, it was with that hand he boxed the ear of that poor lad who spoke to you in the chapel, thereby probably making him deaf for life.'
'Oh, I hope not! Poor Saul!'
'I have known of hard blows on the ear like that making people deaf for life,' continued Betsy volubly, 'and it is a cruel shame to give them.'
'Indeed it is! Oh! Betsy, how glad I am that I have escaped from the power of that man!' And I thanked God in my heart for my safe deliverance.
'I am deeply thankful, mistress,' and the tears came into Betsy's eyes, for she had a warm heart, full of affection for me and my brothers, having been our nurse for years before she became my maid.
'Where are we now, Betsy?' I asked presently, after trying in vain to piece together the disjointed fragments of events of which I had been conscious since the interrupted wedding in the chapel at Crossley Hall.
'On the high road to Brighthelmstone. Travelling as fast as we can towards our dear home!' cried Betsy delightedly. 'We have had enough of the great world, you and I, mistress, to last us all our lives. When Sir Hubert came hastily into Sion House that day you disappeared, declaring you had been kidnapped, and demanded a litter, horses and men, aye, and me also to ride inside and nurse you if you were ill—

that he might go after you—Lady Jane saw him herself, and promised everything he asked. Then she added that she was herself expecting hourly to be sent for to the Tower. "It is not likely," she said, "that my cousin, Queen Mary, will suffer me to be at large, when my freedom might, any day, cause danger to herself; therefore if you succeed, as I trust you will, in rescuing my dear Margery, I pray you take her to her father's house, where she will be safer than either here at Sion House, or with me in the Tower. For my own sake," she said, "I would fain have her near me, but for hers I wish her down at Brighthelmstone with her own people.'"

'Did Lady Jane say that?'

'Yes, mistress; I remember every word, and Sir Hubert agreed that he would take you to your home. He is therefore doing so.'

'Where is he?' I asked quickly.

'He is riding on before our litter, to see if the road is clear and safe.'

'I would fain speak with him.'

'Mistress, you cannot just now. He is out of sight and hearing. "Take care of your mistress," he said to me, "and I will ride on in front." There are other riders behind. We are well protected now. It was such a job to get hold of you, mistress,' continued Betsy, 'that we don't mean to lose you again. There was much fighting to do before we could get into the Hall, I can tell you; but, first of all, we found the Duke of Northumberland's men were not much good, and we had to travel ever so far to get some picked men, quite gentlemen some of them, to come over and help.'

'Then Sir Hubert never was a prisoner at Crossley Hall?' asked I, thinking of the man in the dungeon, and of all that I had gone through in order to get him liberated.

Betsy laughed at the idea. 'Sir Hubert said he had had a narrow escape of being taken prisoner when you were,' she said. 'There were six to one, but he fought valiantly, and they could not take him, though he was unable to rescue you.'

Lying there in the litter, listening to Betsy's talk and looking on her familiar face, whilst the sweet country air fanned me pleasantly, bringing with it, too—or I could fancy so—a breath of the salt sea air in which I had grown up and lived most of my life, I could almost fancy that the Wheel of Time had gone back a little, and I was once more in my father's litter with Betsy, leaving home for the first time for Sion House and the service of Lady Jane Grey. I had to pull myself together before I could realize that far from being in my father's litter going to Isleworth, I was in one of the Duke of

Northumberland's litters, returning in it to my old home.
'You will like to see Master Jack and Master Hal again,' said Betsy cheerily, and of course your father and Master Montgomery too, not to mention Timothy and John and Joseph.'
'Yes, that I shall,' I said, but half absently, for though I was returning to them, there was another love drawing my heart away from them back to the more hazardous life in the great metropolis, wherein was my sweet mistress, Lady Jane. 'For my own sake, I would rather have her with me,' those had been her words about me, and it needed not long thinking about them on my part to make of them my law. Lady Jane would rather have me with her, therefore I must go to Lady Jane. I said so to Betsy, much to her amazement and consternation.
'But, mistress, dear mistress, consider,' she cried. 'Before this she has probably been taken to the Tower, where she will be a prisoner. It will be very different from what it was before,' she continued. 'She will be in another part of the Tower, away from the Royal Palace that she was in before, and they will never allow you to go to her, or, once you go,' she went on inconsequently, 'you will never be permitted to return. Your life won't be safe for a minute, when once you are amongst the State prisoners. They will burn you alive and behead you,' she continued wildly, tears rolling down her face at the idea, 'and then where will you be, my sweet, precious Mistress Margery?' and she caught hold of my hands as if she would keep me away from the Tower by main force.
And then my litter suddenly stopped, and Sir Hubert rode alongside, and, stooping over his horse's head, looked earnestly into my face.
'My dearest,' he said to me, lifting his hat with one hand and reining in his horse with the other, 'what is the matter?'
I told him that he was taking me in the wrong direction, for that I desired, above all things, to return to Lady Jane.
'Well, that is what I desire too,' he said instantly, 'or at least I wish to be in the neighbourhood of her father, that we may together discuss and plan measures——' He stopped short, looking suspiciously around. 'You understand?' he said.
Yes, I understood. He was still not without hope that Mary might be dethroned, and Lady Jane reinstated as Queen. What it is to be young! All things seem possible to the very young, especially when they are greatly desired.
'But Lady Jane Grey wished me to take you to your home, Margery,' he said, 'and indeed I know you would be safer there.'
'Yes,' said I, 'but that does not matter.'

'Would you not like to be back with Jack and Hal and your father?' he asked.
For a moment—I was so young and they were so very dear—I wavered. Then I made answer stoutly, 'I want, *above all things, to return to my dear lady. If you love me, dearest, you will take me to her.*'
'And if she chides me for disobedience?'
'I will bear the blame,' I said; 'I will bear all the blame.'
We had a little more talk about it, and then, the language of our hearts being one and the same, straightway turned about and retraced our steps, making a detour, that we might avoid the dangerous neighbourhood of Crossley Hall.
A couple of hours later, Sir Hubert, who had been riding on before, returned to us, saying anxiously, 'Margery, we are pursued. Quite a large company of horsemen have appeared in sight from the direction of Crossley Hall, and they are gaining upon us.'
'Oh,' cried I, 'what shall we do? It would be worse than death to fall again into the hands of Sir Claudius!'
'You never shall,' said Sir Hubert, 'whilst I live and a strong arm can prevent it.'
At that moment a solitary horseman, riding towards us from the opposite direction, stopped short, and, looking hard at us, exclaimed—
'Why, is it thou again? And still pursued by the rabble? Thou wilt be killed yet!'
'Master Jack Fish!' exclaimed I. 'You remember him, Hubert, and what a good friend he was to us when we were in that shed?'
'Oh, yes, I remember him perfectly,' and my dear one greeted him in a very friendly way, rapidly explaining the situation.
'Thou art in great danger,' said Jack Fish gravely. 'Thine enemy will stick at nothing to be revenged on thee. I caught a good glimpse of his horsemen when I was on that hill, and there are four times as many of them as there are of thee.'
'What *shall* we do?' I exclaimed.
Jack Fish looked at me pityingly. 'Madam,' he said, 'thou in that litter art in the position of the greatest danger. Thy litter is a target towards which all will aim. Sir Knight, is it absolutely impossible to separate the lady from her litter?'
'Well, no,' replied Sir Hubert. 'Margery'—he turned to me—'can you ride well? Could you accompany us on horseback?'
'Yes. That I could!' I exclaimed. 'I have been used to riding from my babyhood. A man's saddle? Oh, yes, of course I can ride on that. I can

ride without a saddle, if you like,' and I thought of the many gallops across the downs I had had in the old days with Hal and Jack.

'Hurrah! Bravo!' cried my lover triumphantly. 'Now we shall circumvent the enemy!' He was about to choose me a horse, when the sight of Betsy reminded him of her, and he asked, 'Your maid? Can she ride?'

'That I can, sir,' Betsy answered for herself. 'Am I not a farmer's daughter?'

'You will do well,' exclaimed Master Jack Fish, and with that, setting spurs to his horse, he galloped off, not caring for our pursuers to see him with us.

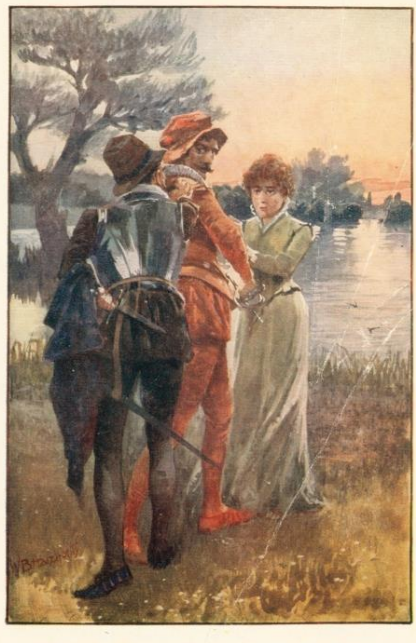
'He is a shrewd man and a good friend,' observed Sir Hubert. Then he quickly arranged that Betsy and I should ride two of his men's horses, whilst their owners rode behind two of the other men.

That done, the party broke up. Sir Hubert, accompanied by me and my woman, and followed by half his company, continuing straight forward on the road to London, whilst the other half of the men took the litter in the direction of Guildford.

In this way we fortunately escaped from our would-be captors, who, we afterwards heard, had a sharp encounter with the company escorting the litter, in which they were only beaten off with tremendous difficulty and the loss of the litter, which fell into their hands.

CHAPTER XX
A Trying Experience

By the time we reached the vicinity of the outlying suburbs of London City another danger menaced. It was impossible for so large a company of horsemen to approach the metropolis unchallenged, and we were brought to a standstill at Ditton by the cry from two police officials—
'Halt, sirs! Halt! Are you for Queen Mary?'



A VOICE OF THUNDER DEMANDED, "ARE YOU FOR QUEEN MARY?"

A VOICE OF THUNDER DEMANDED, "ARE YOU FOR QUEEN MARY?"

Now, we were none of us for Queen Mary, and we were all honest folk and true, who hated and abhorred a lie; there was nothing for it therefore but that we should hold our peace and try to rush from the

position by galloping past our questioners, who, when they found that they were baulked, fired their pistols after us, but fortunately without doing any of our party a mischief.

'We shall have to separate,' said Sir Hubert when, at last, we deemed it safe to slacken our pace and pull up our steeds for a brief confabulation. 'Every moment that we are together now increases our danger, for news of us will fly round in every direction, and any moment we may be apprehended and taken before the magistrates—that is, if they can get hold of us. Once in Court,' he added, gravely, 'our fate is certain—I, for one, will never declare fealty to the Papist Mary.'

'Nor I,' said I, in whispered words, but he heard them, and, turning to me, said earnestly, 'You are a woman, and I pray you do not get mixed up with political matters, which might endanger your dear head.'

I could not make any rejoinder, for Sir Hubert's friends now began to discuss several matters, in which they wanted his guidance before parting from him. A born leader of men was my Hubert, and there was no hesitancy in his firm voice as he gave out peremptory advice and commands.

I fancy that I see him now, sitting erect on his fine horse, with enthusiasm and earnest hope lighting up his countenance, as, after listening to all, he quietly settled every knotty point in as few words as possible. Betsy's objections to being parted from me took him a little longer to overrule than everything else, but he would allow no one except himself to remain with me. It was only for a few hours, he said, and the smaller my party the safer would be my position. And he picked out a worthy man to escort Betsy into London, and take her to London Bridge, where we were to join her. However, Betsy would not consent to the plan until I also bade her authoritatively to say no more, but obey in every particular. Then she left me, weeping and declaring that she should see my face no more, for we should both perish by the dangers of the way.

'And when you arrive in London,' she went on, in her inconsequent way, 'people will recognize that you have been with Lady Jane Grey, when she was queen, and then you will be burnt and beheaded as well for high treason, or whatever they call it, and I shall have all the misery of returning to Sussex alone, to acquaint your father with the fearful tidings!'

When our company was broken up into twos and threes, Sir Hubert and I rode on at a brisk pace, and did not draw rein until we reached the River Thames at Kingston, a very pretty little town.

The glory of the brilliant summer day was waning then; the sunset was obscured and clouded over by dark clouds; only its reflection lingered a little over the silvery waters of the Thames.

'We cannot reach London to-day,' said I, looking inquiringly at my companion.

I had been so happy riding along by his side that I had not realized that even the longest day comes to an end at last and night will follow. But he—he should have thought of that.

'No. Of course not. I have ascertained that Sir William Wood and Lady Caroline are staying with some friends at a house at Kingston. It is somewhere near the river. I thought that you would like to stay the night with Lady Caroline.'

'Oh, yes, I should,' I replied, cheerfully, for it was very pleasant to think of being with a gentlewoman again, after all the rough experiences I had been through.

'If only I could find the place!' exclaimed Sir Hubert. 'We shall attract observation if we go about on horseback seeking it. News will arrive here, if it has not already arrived, of what happened at Ditton, and we shall be arrested on suspicion.'

'What shall we do then?'

'Leave our horses at an inn, and take a walk along the riverside until we find the house where our friends are. I know it is a house by the river because I have been there.'

I made no objection to this, and we went to an inn, where they were pleased to take our horses, as also to serve us with light refreshment, of ale and bread and cheese for Sir Hubert and milk and cake for me, after hurriedly partaking of which we went out and walked down the street.

As we did so I noticed a little group of men standing near the river were regarding my companion with great curiosity, but concluded that this was due to the fine manly presence and dignified mien of Sir Hubert.

It was a little startling, however, to find that, while we were searching for the house we wanted, we occasionally encountered one or another of these individuals, apparently watching us with interest.

'Those men get upon my nerves,' I said at last. 'We meet them everywhere.'

Sir Hubert laughed.

'I have been thinking that the men of Kingston have a strange similarity of appearance,' he said. 'Can they possibly be the same men?'

I answered, 'Yes, I am sure of it. And I do not like to see them so

frequently.'
'But who is this?' exclaimed Sir Hubert with delight.
It was Sir William Wood, who, coming suddenly round a corner, almost ran into my dear knight's arms.
'The very man I want!' cried he. 'You have been long in coming, Hubert, my friend!'
'And now that I am here, before we discuss anything, there is this lady, Mistress Margery Brown, to bring to a place of safety for the night. I hope Lady Caroline is at Kingston.'
'She is,' replied Lady Caroline's husband, shaking hands cordially with me, 'but I must tell you that we are hiding here. Our hostess, Lady Mary Peterson, dared not have us staying with her openly. Even now I have only ventured to leave the house by a subterranean passage from the cellars to yonder clump of willows by the river, and if you wish to remain over the night with us you will have to accompany me that way. But who are those men?' He asked the question with anxiety, pointing as he did so to two of the men who were following us about.
They stood near a thick hedge, which partly screened them from observation.
'Oh, those! I have an account to settle with them,' cried Sir Hubert angrily, at once giving chase to the rascals.
There was a spice of boyishness always about Sir William, and now, like a boy, he forgot all about me and ran off to aid Sir Hubert in the pursuit.
I was left alone, and neither Sir Hubert nor Sir William heard my pitiful little cry—
'Oh, do not leave me!'
By the light of the moon, which had now risen, I saw my escort disappear, with feelings of great misgiving, and sat down disconsolately upon a big boulder by the river side.
It was very lonely there. The water flowed placidly by, with scarcely a murmur. A corncrake in a field behind made mournful music, with monotonous persistence. A dog howled somewhere on the other side of the river. From the town behind us proceeded subdued sounds of horses' hoofs, men's voices, the clashing of steel and, presently, the ringing of the curfew bell.
What a long time my knights were in catching, or frightening, or punishing the spies, if the men were spies, and it seemed evident that they were. Supposing that they had run in the direction of their fellows, and the two knights following them were caught in a trap, overpowered by numbers and taken to prison for rebelling against

Queen Mary, what could I do all by myself?
I was horribly frightened, and clasped my hands and strained my eyes in my endeavour to see one or other of my knights returning for me. But in vain. No one was visible. Should I go forward and look for them? No; better to remain where they had left me, lest I missed them altogether.
I sat still, leaning my head upon my hand, and tried to wait as patiently as I could. Would that dog never cease howling? What was that approaching on the river? A boat? It must be, for now the soft beating of oars upon the water was plainly to be heard.
Oh, why did not Sir Hubert, or at least Sir William, return? There were men in the boat—four men, two were rowing. Why, at a gesture from the one sitting in the stern of the boat, did the oarsmen stop rowing? Now they were approaching the bank where I sat. They must have seen me, and indeed my figure, silhouetted against the sky, must have been conspicuous.
They were getting out now—at least two of the men were—and coming towards me.
But what was this? Oh joy! The men whom I now saw more clearly were none other than my two good knights, returning to me in all haste.
Sir Hubert seized my trembling hands.
'You have been left too long, my love!' he said. 'But indeed we could not help it. What do you think? The men we ran after were no foes, after all. Far from it, they were friends. When we had knocked them down, and they found out who we were, mostly from Sir William, whom they had seen before, they informed us that they belonged to a small party of men that the Duke of Suffolk had sent out here to look for me. They had come down to Kingston by boat, and were hoping to meet with me and take me to London City by water.'
'Then that was why they stared so hard at us, and followed us about?' I said inquiringly.
'Exactly. They were not sure that it was I, until Sir William and I had knocked a little sense into them!'
'Shall you go with them?' I asked. 'And I, what shall I do?'
'Well, you mast come too. You want to be with Lady Jane. I think that I had better take you to her father, whom the queen has pardoned and set free. He will know best how to get you into the Tower, and to his daughter.'
'But it is night,' I said.
Sir Hubert was eager to go that very moment to the Duke, but,

looking down upon me, he suddenly perceived my weariness and weakness.

'Poor Margery!' he said, with infinite tenderness, 'you are worn out! What shall we do with her, Sir William?'

'Leave her with me,' said Sir William at once. 'I will take her straight to Lady Caroline, and we will all three follow you to London to-morrow, probably by water, as that will attract the least observation.'

After a hurried discussion we agreed to this, and Sir Hubert, who I saw must have received some political information which greatly excited him, took a hasty, though affectionate, leave of me there, by the Thames, within sight of Kingston Bridge, which was so soon to be the scene of a very daring exploit. And we parted, little knowing what was to happen before we met again, he going to the boat to be rowed down to London City, I going with Sir William through the subterranean passage to the great house, where Lady Caroline received me as a sister, and assisted me to bed with her own hands.

I was so tired that I fell asleep the moment my head touched the pillow. But my dreams were troubled. For in them, over and over again, I saw Sir Hubert in a boat, pulling against the stream, and unable to get on, whilst I, standing on the river bank, besought him to make haste to Lady Jane, who in the Tower was in sore need of succour. And still he tried to go to her, but in vain; the boat heaved and tossed, but did not advance at all, in spite of every effort. And I wept in my sleep, because he could not go to Lady Jane.

CHAPTER XXI
Queen Mary's Boon

'Oh, help me!' I implored. 'Help me to get into the Tower!'
The Court physician to whom I appealed shook his head gravely.
'It is a difficult matter for an outsider to get in there,' he said, 'and, if I mistake not, you are one who would be liable to be suspected, by reason of your having been there before with the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey.'
'Then you remember me? I thought you would. I am Margaret Brown,' I faltered.
'Mistress Margaret Brown,' said he, very gently, 'I will give you one word of advice, and that is, go home to your friends.'
'Alas!' I said, wringing my hands, 'I have no friend—save one—so dear as she who is imprisoned in the Tower. Help me to get to her, Dr. Massingbird, I implore you. She said that it would be a comfort to her to have me there, and she is in sore need of comfort!'
'Poor lady! Poor young lady! So sinned against, and yet so innocent; and made a tool of by that wicked man who has met with his just fate. I mean Northumberland.'
'Yes,' said I. 'It was he and his ambition that ruined my dear lady.'
We were standing talking together in Thames Street, not far from the Bulwark Gate of the great Tower of London. For a week I had been making many endeavours to get into the Tower, but, owing to the great precautions which were being taken against treachery—especially during Queen Mary's residence there—every attempt of mine to effect an entrance was in vain. I had found Betsy all right on London Bridge, where she stayed twelve hours waiting for me, in spite of every effort made to dislodge her from her position, and she and I were lodging, with the Woods, in apartments in the Strand.
Sir William Wood and Lady Caroline had no power to assist me to get into the Tower; they were obliged to keep as quiet as possible, only going out at night, owing to Sir William's partisanship of Lady Jane, whilst, for the same reason, Sir Hubert Blair, too, was compelled to remain hidden until certain plans were matured. He could not help me, and indeed I had not seen him since we parted on Kingston Bridge. As for the Duke of Suffolk, he was quite unable to assist me

to go to his daughter, for, having been liberated after two or three days' imprisonment, owing to the intercession of his wife who prostrated herself before Mary, pleading that he was delicate and that his health would suffer if he were not set free, upon which Her Majesty graciously forgave him, he was most ungratefully busying himself with secret schemes for ousting her from the throne and reinstating Queen Jane. Always careless of the latter's feelings, whether she had her favourite gentlewoman with her in her imprisonment, or not, was a matter of indifference to him. Others who had made my acquaintance during the queen's short reign cut me dead, or treated me with scanty civility upon my reappearing on the scene. There was not one of those fine Court ladies who had formerly professed to admire and love Queen Jane who would lift a hand to help her now that she was in affliction and imprisonment. I was thinking sadly about this, as I returned from my last fruitless effort to gain ingress into the Tower, when I met one of the physicians who had attended Queen Jane during her illness in the royal palace. He was a truly benevolent man, and although he was evidently going somewhere in a hurry, he got out of his coach when I called to him, to inquire what I wanted.

'I am very hurried just now,' he said, temporizing, 'The fact is Queen Mary cannot sleep; evil, unpleasant thoughts trouble her, from the moment in which she lies down in bed until it is well nigh time to rise again, and potions and drugs do not cure the malady. But I bethought me of King Saul, to whom David played when he was distracted in that manner, until the evil spirits no longer troubled him, so I told Her Majesty that I would slip out of the Tower and go and fetch a young female singer, who would sing to her so beautifully that she would fall into a natural sleep. I heard a girl singing very sweetly in a friend's house in the Strand once, but whether I shall be able to find her or not I know not. It is growing late. The curfew bell has rung; the streets will not be very safe to be out in soon, and yet I must try to find the girl, if Queen Mary is to sleep.'

A bold thought came to me as he was speaking. The good physician was in search of a girl who could sing well, who in fact could sing Queen Mary to sleep, and I, who could sing well, wanted above all things to get into the Tower; it therefore seemed conclusive that I must be the girl to sing for the queen. But Queen Mary? I would rather that it had been Queen Jane.

'Doctor,' I said entreatingly, 'I am your girl. Your sweet singer, you know,' I hurriedly explained, seeing that he did not understand. 'I can

sing very sweetly, though I say it myself. Take me to Queen Mary.'
'You!' The good man looked amazed. 'I am afraid it would not do,' he said. 'Supposing now that Her Majesty found out that you had been in the Tower with Queen Jane?'
'I don't think that that would make so much difference,' I said. 'A singer may sing to any one.'
After a little more demur, to my intense satisfaction, Dr. Massingbird consented to take me, only stipulating that I should conceal my real name and position from the queen, and appear before her as a professional singer only. He also made me promise that I would do Queen Mary no harm in any way when admitted into her presence—for these were days in which treachery was common.
Under his care, escorted by him, in scarcely an hour from the time in which we met in Thames Street, I was entering the royal apartments of the ancient palace[**1**] in the mighty Tower of London.

[**1**] This palace of the old kings of England has long since disappeared. It was at the south-east of the Tower.—ED.

I must confess candidly that, whilst outwardly appearing dignified and calm, I was inwardly in a state of great trepidation and timidity. Always overawed by the vastness and gloom of the mighty fortress, even when there with Queen Jane, while she was in power and every effort was made to display its riches and magnificence, it can easily be understood, that I was many times more so now when, late at night under an assumed character, yet at heart an adherent of the imprisoned ex-queen, I ventured alone, except for the presence of the physician, himself a servant, into the palace of the reigning monarch. Curious glances were cast at me by guards and sentinels, squires and dames, lords and ladies, as we ascended the great oaken staircase and passed through a long gallery into a spacious hall, with narrow Gothic windows of stained glass, hung with tarnished cloth of gold curtains. Here the furniture was large and splendid, the windows were in deep recesses, whilst there was a gallery round the upper part of the room.
'Wait a little here, until I return,' said my guide, signing to me to sit down on an old oak chair.
The physician went away, leaving me, as I at first thought, alone, but, in a little while, my eyes became accustomed to the dim light, and I saw that in some of the embrasures by the windows, men and women sat, or stood engaged in earnest conversation. A few of them appeared to be foreigners; from their dress I imagined they were Spaniards, and

two or three of these were monks, the sight of whom there recalled to my mind Sir Hubert Blair's prediction in Woodleigh Castleyard, that if Mary reigned, the country would be plunged into Roman Catholicism and brought into alliance with Spain, upon which a door would be thrown open for the Inquisition, with all its horrors.

At that moment I heard a girl, standing in a recess near, saying to a tall man, who from his dress and bearing seemed to be of noble birth—

'The queen means well. She is cautious about beginning, but in time she will do all that she is bidden by the Holy Church. At present she is racked with indecision and gloomy forebodings——'

'But she has the iron will of her father, King Hal—you see him there in that portrait, painted by Holbein, over the chimneypiece. What a man that was!' exclaimed the other.

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

'Mary has a very different creed from his, fortunately,' she said, 'and she hankers after Spain—all may yet be well for our Church!'

I heard no more, for at that moment Dr. Massingbird, returning, accompanied by a lady of the bedchamber, desired me to go with her to Queen Mary, who had already retired for the night.

'I have done all I could for you,' added the physician, aside, in a low tone. 'I have brought you here. But you will have to get out again as you best can, for I cannot dance attendance upon you any longer.'

I tried to thank him, and to say that I should be all right, but, not listening to me, he said—

'I have announced you as a poor singer named Meg Brown! having clipped off a bit of your name. God grant you may come to no harm, my child!'

Then he hurried away.

I followed the lady to Queen Mary's bedchamber, walking silently after her into the splendidly furnished bedroom, where I had been before with Queen Jane. How it reminded me of her! But this was a very different woman lying upon the great bed, with its silk and gold counterpane.

Mary was about forty years old—a little woman, slender and delicate in appearance. She did not in the least resemble her father, King Henry VIII. Her features were not bad, and her eyes were bright—so bright indeed that they frightened me when, all at once, I discovered them fixed upon my face.

'Who are you?' demanded the queen, in a voice which was thick and loud like a man's.

I was still more alarmed, and felt at that moment as if those bright,

piercing eyes were looking into the very depths of my heart.
I knelt for one moment, but quickly rose from the ground, with a prayer in my heart that I might be forgiven bowing in the house of Rimmon and before the wrong queen.
'I am Meg Brown, madam. At your service,' I said, adding, as she remained quiet, 'a poor young singing-girl.'
'You don't seem to have much boldness in speech, Meg. How, then, can you have the courage to sing?'
I clasped my hands tightly together, with an inward prayer for help, and, in a moment, from the extremity of fear passed to a state of blessed confidence.
'Only hear me,' I said. 'I can sing, madam.'
'Can you?' The piercing eyes sought to read my innermost soul.
'Yes, madam. Once, when I was a child, Master Montgomery, our curate, took me to see a poor woman who had lost her baby and was almost dead with grief. She could not weep, nor sleep, nor eat; the trouble was killing her. But I sang to her, and she cried like a child, and prayed to God and recovered. And another time,' I spoke more clearly now, 'when some serving-men and women had a great quarrel, and were fighting in a truly terrible manner, I stood up and sang, and sang until they fell upon their knees and burst out into tears and prayers. After that, Master Montgomery always fetched me to sing to people when he could do nothing with them.'
'Wonderful!' said Queen Mary, in a rather satirical manner. 'But those were only poor folk; it remains to be seen whether you can sing to a queen.'
'God,' said I, half to myself and half to her, 'Who helped me to sing to His poor, can help me to sing to'—I was going to say His queen, but substituted 'a queen.'
'And is not the poor queen His, too?' asked the woman, who was reading my heart.
'He knows,' I said, trembling a little, lest she should take umbrage at my daring. 'He knows them that are His.'
Mary did not say anything to this. She turned her head away from me with a peevish movement.
I was afraid to speak, and therefore waited in silence until she spoke again.
'Sing to me,' she said.
'What shall I sing?'
'I am greatly troubled,' she replied at length. 'Sing what you sang to that poor mother who had lost her child.'

It was one of Martin Luther's cradle songs, translated for me, when a child, by Master Montgomery, who fitted it to a tender little tune of his own composing. I loved it well, but it seemed a strange song to sing to the mightiest woman in the land, the Queen of England. Perhaps, however, as she said she was greatly troubled, she might be in need of comforting. I thought of that, and standing there, with my hands tightly clasped before me, sang as I had never sung before—

Sleep well, my dear, sleep safe and free;
  The holy angels are with thee,
Who always see thy Father's face,
  And never slumber nights nor days.

There was a quick movement on the bed, and Mary opened wide eyes of amazement, but she did not interrupt, and I went on singing, until, gaining confidence, my voice rang out clearly and triumphantly in the last verse—

Sleep now, my dear, and take thy rest;
  And if with riper years thou'rt blest
Increase in wisdom, day and night,
  Till thou attain'st th' eternal light!

For a little time there was silence in the room, when I ended, and then, with a heaving sigh, the deep voice came from the bed—

'I'm only a frail woman, though I am queen, and I need wisdom. But go on singing, child. Go on singing.'

I began a favourite hymn of Master Montgomery's, and it brought to my mind so many memories that sobs trembled in my voice, as I sang—

When my dying hour must be,
Be not absent then from me;
In that dreadful hour I pray,
Jesus, come without delay,
    See and set me free!
When thou biddest me depart
Whom I cleave to with my heart,
Lover of my soul, be near,
With Thy saving Cross appear,
    Show Thyself to me.

Mary lay so still when I ended that I thought she was asleep; but no, she was awake, and as I looked closely at her, I perceived that tears

were slowly stealing down her face.
I fell on my knees by the bedside, but I was not kneeling to her, as she seemed to think, when opening her eyes and looking at me, she said, in a softer tone than before—
'Child, do you want something?'
Did I want something? Yes, I wanted something so much, that now when the time had come for asking for it, I could not say a word,
'Your singing is marvellously sweet,' continued Queen Mary. 'Yet it has not sent me to sleep. I should like to hear you every night. Will you stay here in the palace and sing to me every night? You shall have a fair wage.'
'I do not want a wage,' I answered, thanking her. 'But I crave a boon at your hands, madam.'
'And that is——'
'That I may be allowed to go to Lady Jane Grey——'
'Lady Jane! My cousin? Methinks that you are a bold girl to ask that,' exclaimed the queen, starting up in bed and speaking very angrily.
I rose slowly, and, with clasped hands, stood before her, pleading my love for her sweet cousin and beseeching that I might be allowed to attend Lady Jane in her prison. I described her youth, her innocence, and the great unwillingness with which she had permitted herself to be dragged into the dangerous position of queen, and also mentioned the quickness and satisfaction with which she abandoned the undesired sovereignty.
'You plead well, Meg,' said the Queen, when I stopped, partly because my breath failed, 'and you have a wonderful voice for singing, aye, and for speaking. If I let you go to Lady Jane, and allow you to attend her in her prison, will you come and sing to me when I require you?'
'I will. I will,' I exclaimed delightedly. 'I will sing you to sleep whenever you like, madam.'
'Nay, not to sleep, Meg, not to sleep,' said Queen Mary. 'As a promoter of sleep you are a failure, for your singing awakens me out of the sleep of years, making me feel as if I should never want to sleep again.'
She then rang a hand-bell, and on the entrance of a gentlewoman, commanded that I should be taken to the Brick Tower, to attend upon the Lady Jane Grey.

CHAPTER XXII
With Lady Jane

I did not find Lady Jane in bed, in the gloomy quarters where she was confined. Separated from her husband, who was imprisoned in the Beauchamp Tower, and left entirely alone, she was passing the time in prayer, meditation, and studying the philosophic and holy writings, from which she imbibed deep draughts of resignation and wisdom.

Like a child exhausted with play after having acted a difficult part, and like one worn with the strain that has been put upon her in the battle of life, she was simply waiting at the foot of the Cross, and I found her on her knees, weeping gently as she prayed.

The warder, who conducted me to her apartment, retired, bolting the door after him, and I stood by it a little while, unwilling to interrupt my dear lady and noticing with dismay the iron-barred windows of the room and the stone walls, partly concealed by tapestry. I saw also that the furniture—a table and some chairs—was of carved oak. and the deep window-seats were covered with velvet, as was also the seat of the oak chair before which the poor young prisoner knelt.

Perhaps she heard some one enter—certainly the warder made noise enough as he closed the door—and therefore, ending her prayer, she arose and looked round.

The next moment I was folded in her arms, and we were crying together.

'Oh, Margery! My poor Margery!' she said, at last, when we were a little calmer. 'Where have you been? Why, dear,' looking at me more closely, 'what have they done to you? You look so pale and thin! How did you get into the Tower?'

'It took me a week to get in,' I said, beginning to answer her last question first, and then, as we sat together on one of the window seats, I proceeded to tell her all that had befallen me since I was carried off from Isleworth.

Lady Jane was very sympathizing when she heard of all my danger, distress and trouble in Crossley Hall, and was delighted that my valiant knight, Sir Hubert Blair, had rescued me, with a strong hand. But when I proceeded to tell her that he was now in London bent upon fighting for her and deep in schemes with her father, to bring about a

change of monarchy, she was greatly concerned and not a little distressed.

'Why did not you stop them, Margery?' she said. 'You know so well that I do not think it right to be queen, when my cousins Mary and Elizabeth are living. You are well aware how I disliked to be queen, and how gladly I gave it up.'

'Yes, madam, I told Sir Hubert Blair all,' replied I, 'but he said that they looked at the matter in this light. There were the people of England to consider, the multitude of human beings who, in the one case, would be plunged back into Roman Catholicism, in the other would enjoy the Reformed faith, and freedom to worship God in their own tongue and read His Divine Word for themselves. He said, madam, that you must not think of your own wishes, but must sacrifice yourself for the good of the people.'

I thought I had stated Sir Hubert's argument clearly and well, yet Lady Jane shook her head.

'We must not do evil that good may come,' she said. 'And have I any right to take another person's possession because it seems to me that I can administer it better than the rightful owner?'

'But think of the suffering that may come upon our good Protestants if Mary reigns?' I urged. 'They say that she will do everything that her Roman Church enjoins, and the horrors—the horrors of the Inquisition—may be brought to this land of ours,' and I poured out all that Sir Hubert had related of that horrible institution.

'God grant that it may never come to England!' said my mistress, when I ended. After which she added, thoughtfully, 'I think that Queen Mary is not so bigoted as some people imagine, and she has behaved very leniently in several ways since her elevation to the throne. She forgave my father and set him free, and, although the Emperor Charles, to whom she looks up so much, has advised her to have me executed, she has refused——'

'I should think so!' I interrupted. 'Oh, dear madam, what a wicked wretch that emperor must be!'

'People always look at things from their own point of view, or the point of view of those dearest to them,' said my mistress. 'The Emperor Charles, considering the welfare of Mary, sees that while I live there will be always a danger of some enthusiasts, like your Sir Hubert, starting up to try and put me on the throne again—and in that case, besides the danger to the reigning monarch, there would be many slain, much blood would be shed, and you must remember Sir Hubert's argument about the duty of considering the welfare of the

many. If my death will put away this danger to so many, then I had better die, dear Margery.'
'No! No! No!' I cried. 'It would be the foulest shame in the world for one so innocent and good as you to be killed—and remember your argument, they must not do evil that good may come.'
Lady Jane smiled.
'Well done, little Margery!' she said, adding, 'Now tell me how you managed to get into the Tower.'
I told her, upon which she remarked—
'You see Mary has a good heart—you touched it with your singing, and she allowed you to come to me,' adding, to my delight, 'To have you with me is the one thing I wanted, next to my natural wish to be with my husband. They have separated us, you know, Margery. He is imprisoned in another tower.'
'It *is* hard,' I said.
'And I have great anxiety about him,' went on my dear lady. 'Doubtless the priests are endeavouring to convert him to Romanism, and since they succeeded with his father——'
'Madame, did the Duke of Northumberland give up his faith?'
'Yes,' she answered sadly. 'He was not brave, not heroic; he gave way on all sides when death was imminent. But they have killed him. He is dead, and we must say nothing, except good, of the dead.'
She quoted a Latin proverb to that effect,[1] but it was strange to my ears, and I have so far forgotten it as not to be able to write it down.

[1] *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*—ED.

I could not help thinking that Northumberland's ambition was in reality his religion, but could not say so after those words of Lady Jane's.
'He was beheaded on Tower Hill,' she continued, 'and oh! God grant that the same fate may not befall my dear lord!'
The days passed slowly and quietly for me and my dear lady in her prison in the Tower. Queen Mary did not send for me to come and sing to her any more. She went to stay for a while at Richmond Palace, and, then again, we heard that she was at Whitehall, and sometimes she was in her palace in the Tower, but that made no difference to us. Certain privileges were accorded by her to Lady Jane, and of course I shared them. For instance, we were allowed to walk across the green to St. Peter's Church occasionally, where Lady Jane much enjoyed the fine music, and liked to join in the services. On

these occasions she would look up at the Beauchamp Tower, as we passed it, wondering how her husband was and what he was doing. My heart ached for her many a time, when I saw her wistful face upturned to the windows of the Tower, as she vainly tried to see the face she loved. At least Mary might have permitted them to meet occasionally, if she could not permit them to enjoy each other's constant society. But a day was coming, though I knew it not then, when they would be allowed to be together, at least for a short time. Lady Jane was also permitted to walk in the queen's garden—this was a pleasure to her, who so dearly loved fresh air and flowers. Sometimes she would talk about the gardens at Sion House, and the Thames flowing by them, and wonder if we should ever go there again. At other times she would tell me about Bradgate, where she had been brought up and where her tutor, Mr. Roger Ascham, used to marvel because she preferred to sit reading Plato to joining her young companions in the sport of hunting. It was well that she preferred books, as they were now her solace when it would not have been possible for her to have had the other pastime.

In the beginning of October Lady Jane was allowed to meet her husband once more, but the occasion was most melancholy, for they were both being conducted to the Guildhall, together with Archbishop Cranmer and Lord Ambrose Dudley, Lord Guildford Dudley's brother, to be tried on the charge of high treason. Lady Jane pleaded guilty, and they were all convicted of high treason and condemned to death as traitors. Lady Jane's sentence was that she was to be beheaded or burnt to death, at the queen's pleasure, and Judge Morgan, who pronounced it, was afterwards so deeply afflicted in his mind at the remembrance that he died, raving.

Many people were exceedingly grieved for the poor young creature, who had been made a tool of by her ambitious relatives, sorely against her will, and the touching grace and meekness of her demeanour, as well as her misfortunes, caused them to follow her weeping and lamenting her hard fate, as she was being reconducted to the Tower.

The queen, however, appears to have had no intention at that time of carrying out Lady Jane's sentence, nor indeed that of the others who were condemned with her, but thought it better to please her partisans by keeping them in prison under sentence of death. To Lady Jane, indeed, Mary granted more indulgences, such as permitting her to walk on Tower Hill, where I always accompanied her.

The autumn passed slowly into winter. I often thought of my beloved, wondering what he was doing and dreading inexpressibly to hear of

his one day being brought into the Tower, through the Traitors' Gate. I wrote to him two or three letters, sending them off as I found opportunity, in which I told him guardedly, lest they should fall into the wrong hands, that Lady Jane, above all things, desired that no effort should be made to replace her in what she felt had been a false position. But I received no sign that my dear knight ever got my poor little epistles, and indeed it would not have been strange if they had never reached his hands.

At length, however, I heard of him. One day there was a great commotion in the Tower, armed men springing up everywhere, guns bristling on all sides, the defences of the whole fortress being looked to, and military commands being called out in all directions.

'What is it, warder? What is happening?' Lady Jane inquired, in her gentle way.

Then the warder informed us that they were expecting that the Tower would be assailed by a large force, which was coming to attack it, under a leader who had begun to carry all before him.

'Who is he?' asked Lady Jane.

'Madam, he is a knight, who owns property and a castle in Kent, where he began the rebellion. His name,' added the man, 'is Sir Thomas Wyatt, and he is accompanied by several gentlemen, and amongst them Sir Hubert Blair, who is notoriously active against the Government.'

'Margery,' said my dear lady, when the warder had retired, 'if we could have prevented this! If we only could have prevented it!'

'I wrote to Sir Hubert Blair again and again after I knew your wishes,' said I, 'but I think he cannot have received my missives, or perchance his friend, Sir Thomas Wyatt, heeds not his advice.'

Even as I spoke I was hoping that these valiant knights, who were carrying all before them, would indeed succeed in their great enterprise.

'There will be a terrible amount of bloodshed!' sighed my mistress.

'God will be on the side of the right,' said I.

'Yes. On the side *of the right*,' she rejoined with emphasis. Then she continued, with another sigh, 'If this fails, my life will be the forfeit, and justly, too, for the words of those who said Queen Mary would not be safe upon her throne whilst I live will have proved true.'

Another time, as we were returning from St. Peter's Chapel, she paused, and, looking at a certain spot on the green, where a scaffold was wont to be erected for the more private execution of State prisoners, the tears came into her eyes, and I knew that she was

apprehending a similar fate.
However, I had every confidence in my brave and valiant hero, and often lay awake at night, thinking of all that would happen when he and the Duke of Suffolk once more placed my Lady Jane upon the throne.
I thought, when all that was settled, and my dear lady, with her husband by her side, no longer depended so entirely on her Margery for companionship and love, and my beloved, with his work accomplished, had leisure to be happy, he and I might have time to get married, and then we would go together to see my home and my dear old father, Hal and Jack, and, too, Master Montgomery in his parsonage, and the villagers and our servants. After which Sir Hubert would take me to his own beautiful place, Harpton Hall, where we should live together in great happiness and prosperity. But I am glad to think that I always said to myself, 'If the Lord will,' and resolved that, even if things went contrary and we did not have quite such a good time, I would be resigned and thankful for smaller mercies.
But of what was really going to happen I had not the faintest conception.

CHAPTER XXIII
Wyatt's Insurrection

I heard full particulars afterwards of the insurrection, but at the time, shut up in the Tower, knew little of its course.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, though professedly a Romanist, having seen the horrors of the Inquisition in Spain, had risen in revolt against Mary because of her Spanish marriage. He first raised the standard of revolt in Kent, where many joined him, and amongst them Sir Hubert Blair, who thought he could thus best serve Lady Jane, whilst the Duke of Suffolk, who was openly for his daughter, was making a similar attempt in the Midlands, and Sir Peter Carew in the West; the latter's object being to place the Princess Elizabeth on the throne.

At Rochester, where Sir Thomas Wyatt, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, Sir Hubert Blair, encamped in the ruins of the old castle, and held the bridge with cannon and well-armed Kentish men, there was a great scene. The Duke of Norfolk, with a detachment of Guards from London, was to have forced the bridge, but a certain Captain Brett, who was deputed by him to lead five hundred men against it, turning, addressed his followers thus—

'Masters, we are about to fight against our native countrymen of England and our friends, in a quarrel unrightful and wicked; for they, considering the great miseries that are like to fall upon us if we shall be under the rule of the proud Spaniards, or strangers, are here assembled to make resistance to their coming, for the avoiding of the great mischiefs likely to alight not only upon themselves, but upon every one of us and the whole realm, wherefore I think no English heart ought to say against them. I and others will spend our blood in their quarrel.'

When they heard this, his men shouted, 'A Wyatt! A Wyatt!' and, instead of turning their guns against the bridge, turned them against their own Duke of Norfolk's forces.

The duke and his officers fled, and Brett and his men, crossing the bridge, joined Wyatt's soldiers, followed by three-fourths of the queen's troops and more.

Meantime, the Duke of Norfolk and his officers galloped to London, which by their news was thrown into a state of alarm and

consternation. There were meetings of the city and military authorities, and Queen Mary, sceptre in hand, addressed them with great spirit, promising that if her contemplated marriage with Philip of Spain did not meet with the approval of Parliament she would give it up. She also offered a reward of lands, with £100 a year, to any one who would take or kill Sir Thomas Wyatt.

For some reason—could it be that Sir Hubert Blair was persuading him not to go on?—the latter did not push forward with that speed which characterized the commencement of his enterprise. His forces had increased to 15,000 men, but he did not reach London until the words of the queen and the news of the dispersion of the two other bands of rebels, under the Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew, had restored the courage of the citizens.

Sir Thomas Wyatt entered Southwark, and proceeded to the end of London Bridge, where he found the drawbridge raised, the gates closed, and a strong armed force ready to resist his entrance. This was a painful surprise for him, as he had been led to believe that the Londoners were on his side; and he must have hoped that they would still come over to him, for he waited two days without beginning the attack.

On the third day, however, the garrison of the Tower began to cannonade him, which resulted in such mischief being done to the houses in the vicinity that the people implored Sir Thomas to go away with his troops.

Unwilling to distress them, and hoping to be able to cross the bridge at Kingston and proceed thence to Westminster and London, where it was not so well defended, Sir Thomas and my dear knight began the march to Kingston.

I was told, afterwards, that a London merchant met them on that march, and that Sir Thomas said to the merchant, 'I pray you commend me to your citizens, and say to them from me, that when liberty was offered to them they would not receive it, neither would they admit me within their gates, who, for their freedom and for relieving them from the oppression of foreigners, would frankly spend my blood in this cause and quarrel.'

Sir Thomas Wyatt reached Kingston about four o'clock in the afternoon, where he found part of the bridge broken down and an armed force waiting to oppose his passage. Bringing up his artillery, however, he swept the enemy from the opposite bank, and, having hastily made the bridge passable again with the help of boats and barges, his troops crossed over it. It was eleven o'clock at night by the

time this was done—had his aide-de-camp a moment to spare for the thought of that other night, when I waited so long for him by the river there?—and his men were thoroughly exhausted; but he pushed on. They marched all through that cold February night, along muddy roads, and, after being delayed by having to remount a heavy gun that had broken down, reached Hyde Park in broad daylight, where the Earl of Pembroke awaited them with the royal forces. Lord Clinton, at the head of the cavalry, had taken up his position, with a battery of cannon, on the rising ground opposite the Palace of St. James.

The morning was dismal, dark clouds gathered overhead, and it rained more or less heavily. Sir Thomas' men were worn out, and many had deserted. Nothing daunted, however, the brave knight divided them into three companies, and at the head of the largest division, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, charged Clinton's cavalry with such effect that it seemed to give way. This, however, was only a stratagem. Clinton allowed Sir Thomas, his aide-de-camp and four hundred of his followers to pass, then he closed his ranks, cutting off the main body from their commander.

'In all Wyatt's proceedings,' says an historian, 'he displayed great bravery, but little military experience or caution.'

His main forces, now without a leader, wavered, but kept together, and endeavoured to reach the city another way. They said afterwards that Sir Thomas Wyatt did not appear to know that, having left the body of his army behind, his enemies were now between him and it, and he dashed along, past Charing Cross and through the Strand to Ludgate, hoping still to be joined by the citizens.

In the Strand the Earl of Courtenay, with his soldiers, was stationed. He had engaged to join Wyatt, but had not the courage to do either one thing or the other, for at the sight of him he fled. Doubly treacherous, he was a traitor to the queen and also to Wyatt.

At Ludgate, Wyatt found the gates were closed, and Lord William Howard appeared above them, crying—

'Avaunt, traitor! Avaunt! You enter not here!'

This was a truly awful reception, instead of the promised welcome. And the brave knight must have felt stunned and bewildered as he turned to assist his troops, only to be met by a crowd of the enemy under Pembroke. In desperation, Sir Thomas, closely followed by Sir Hubert, fought his way back as far as the Temple, where he found that he had only fifty followers remaining. (The other troops, which he had left in Hyde Park, were fighting at Whitehall and Westminster, but of that he knew nothing, having lost touch with them and being

without cognisance of their doings, which came to nothing.)
The King-at-arms called upon Sir Thomas to yield and not madly sacrifice his brave companions, yet he continued fighting desperately.
He was beaten back, by overwhelming numbers, down Fleet Street, until he sank exhausted on a fish-stall, opposite La Belle Sauvage. His sword was broken, and, throwing it away, he surrendered himself to Sir Maurice Berkely. At the same moment, Sir Hubert Blair, his aide-de-camp, overpowered by numbers, was taken prisoner.
So much I was told. At the time, Lady Jane and I knew little of all these happenings, and our suspense was terrible. After the first crashing of our cannonade, when Sir Thomas attempted crossing London Bridge, nothing quite so alarming was to be heard in the Tower, only on the next day there were the booming of guns and the roar of battle in London.
And then news came to us that the brave knights were defeated, that they had been forced to surrender, and that the Guards were bringing them to the Tower.
Lady Jane, knowing how my heart was wrung, did all in her power to sustain me. Forgetting or ignoring the far greater issues she herself had at stake, she endeavoured to fortify my mind and calm it by prayer and wise counsel, and now, when it was all over and they were bringing my lover, with Sir Thomas Wyatt, to the Tower, exerted herself to obtain leave for me to mingle with the spectators and see them brought in.
'Though perhaps,' she said, 'it will be a doubtful benefit for you to see your lover in his defeat.'
But my heart craved for one sight of his dear face, and I answered, 'I can bear it all better, if I see him once more.'
'You shall, dear Margery, if I can possibly compass it,' she said. And success crowned her efforts, for our warder, having leave of absence, took me himself to join the crowd hurrying across the Green, towards the entrance by which those guilty of high treason were brought to the Tower.
And, presently, I saw my dear knight, sitting by Sir Thomas in a boat, between their captors, and being rowed towards the Traitors' Gate.
Thus they brought them to the Tower, heroes vanquished, conquerors conquered, true men and noble knights; albeit considered by many renegades and traitors, by Lady Jane mistaken zealots, but by me the noblest and most estimable champions, who sacrificed all that they had, even their earthly loves, for that which they held to be right and duty towards England and fidelity to true religion. They had done

their part, they could do no more, and they sat in the boat between their captors, with brave countenances and steadfast bearing, as of men dying at their post.

The grim expression on the faces of the Guards around, and the murmurs of the crowd who looked on affected them not; perhaps they did not observe them, or it might be that their thoughts were far away, Sir Thomas' perhaps with his wife and children and Sir Hubert's perchance in the past with me in the farmer's shed in Sussex, or it might be by the Thames at Isleworth, or riding with me again to Kingston; or, on the other hand, they were possibly with me now, wondering if I were among the lookers-on, longing to see me once again, in order to say 'Farewell' before the last dark crossing, and hoping that in another life we might meet to part no more.

It happened that, just as the defeated knights were stepping out of the boat, a lad's voice in the crowd—it was Saul's, who, I afterwards learnt, had run away from his master to join the opposite side—shrill, insistent, daring, broke out into the old cry, 'A Wyatt! A Wyatt!' Sir Thomas did not stir, but Sir Hubert looked round, with a sudden beautiful smile. Then, as every one was searching for the boy, with murmured comments on his imprudence and audacity, I leaned forward, calling out to the prisoners, in a clear, distinct tone of voice—

'Courage! Defeat may be Victory in disguise. What looks like loss down here may be counted as pure gain on high!' For it seemed to me that, however disastrous the result, the fact remained that heroes had done heroically. Yes, and if success had crowned their efforts, all men would have praised them. Of that I was assured.

But the sound of my voice, and the sight of my face, as he cast one swift glance at it, unmanned Sir Hubert, and he had to shade his eyes with his hand, as they hurried him and Sir Thomas out of the boat and through the gate; whilst angry, scowling faces turned on me, and my escort had much difficulty in getting me away uninjured.

I scarcely know how I got back to Lady Jane. Only one thing I clearly heard as I was borne through the crowd—it was a voice saying, 'They will both be executed, and the younger one first, because he did not surrender but was taken prisoner with his sword drawn.'

Mistaken the two men may have been, yet they had the courage of their convictions and did what seemed to them to be right, and, at least, they were self-sacrificing, laying down their lives and the joy of living with their loved ones at the call of duty to their fellow-countrymen.

Queen Mary would kill them for it. What of that? Mankind has often crucified and killed its noblest friends. And, after all, it would only be their bodies that were slain; their souls, the best part of them, stripped of their human dress, would wend their way to the Realms of the Blest, where no grief, pain, nor fighting could ever disturb them again. Nevertheless I fell ill with grief and pain, and was unconscious when they carried me into the house of Sir Thomas Brydges, the lieutenant of the Tower, where Lady Jane had now been removed.

CHAPTER XXIV
Lady Jane's Death Sentence

I wished that I could have died too, as I slowly recovered to find that the very worst results for my dear lady had followed upon Sir Thomas Wyatt's defeat, for within three days of his being brought to the Tower, Queen Mary signed her poor young relative's death warrant. Lady Jane was to be beheaded, as was also her father the Duke of Suffolk.

My dear lady broke the sad news to me herself, as soon as I was well enough to hear it.

I was sitting on the wide window-seat of her bedroom, propped up with pillows, when she came and stood beside me, saying gently—

'Margery, you remember when we were at Sion House that I used to read to you out of my Plato, that we were to hold to the road that leads above and justice with prudence always pursue?'

'Yes. Yes. I remember every word,' I said faintly, still being very weak.

'I failed in the latter part,' continued Lady Jane. 'It was at the bidding of others and sorely against my will; nevertheless I was weak and gave way and failed, therefore now,' she paused, looking at me anxiously, as if to see if I were able to bear it, 'now,' she continued very softly, '*I have to pay the penalty*.'

I opened my eyes widely, and there must have been a look of horror in them, for she said quickly: 'Do not—do not take it so. I am willing to suffer for my fault meekly, that by so doing I may still "hold to the road that leads above," and you must help me, Margery. I rely upon you to help me,' she continued earnestly, 'for this is a hard step that I have to take, and I am very weak.' Her lips trembled. 'But,' she went on bravely, 'a Greater than Plato has said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life." That is the *best Crown*, Margery, and I, who had no right to an earthly one, would fain win this Heavenly Crown.'

'Yes,' I said. 'Yes. But——'

'Nay, dear one, we will have no buts. It is one of the great laws of life that he who sins must suffer. I have sinned,' she added meekly; 'I, therefore, must bear the suffering.'

But it seemed to me the greatest shame that ever was that a being so

sweet and faultless as my dear mistress, who had been domineered over and bullied until, constrained by love and the keeping of her marriage vow of obedience, she allowed herself to be placed on the throne, should for so slight a fault be condemned to suffer death—I knew that the penalty was death, she having been sentenced to that before and only reprieved for a time by the clemency of the queen.

'I have only a short time to live,' continued Lady Jane, 'and there is much to do, for Mary, with a show of kindness, with which I would rather have dispensed, is going to send her own chaplain, Dr. Feckenham, of Westminster Abbey, to try to shake my faith and bring me over to her Church before I die, or perchance because, even at the last hour, if I become a Roman Catholic, I may be pardoned. I must prepare myself to meet some of the arguments of the chaplain, for I would fain convince him that Protestantism is right, rather than that he should damage my belief,' and so saying she arose, and, fetching a Bible, began to study it assiduously.

But I, in my weakness, closed my eyes, resolving to find, if possible, some way of escape for my dear lady, other than the surrender of her Faith—which I knew she would rather die twenty deaths than surrender or disown—yet unable to think clearly, because of the strange buzzing in my ears and thumping of my heart and trembling of my limbs.

Lady Jane left me to myself for a little while, and presently I grew better and began to plan schemes for getting at the queen and softening her heart by my singing, in order that I might implore her to pardon my dear lady, or for assisting the latter to escape from the Tower by inducing my physician to order me change of air and persuading Lady Jane to exchange clothes with me and walk out of the Tower in my stead. And then my mistress, laying down the Bible she was studying, came to sit beside me, and nipped all my plans in the bud by her first words. For I recognized that she had found a more excellent way than any I could devise, as her mind was stayed upon God, and in that Refuge and Strength she was lifted up above all earthly fears and torments.

'Margery,' she said very gently, 'you have been ill, dear, and your mind is weakened, so that as yet you only see indifferently, like the man who, on first being cured of blindness, saw men as trees walking; but I have had time to consider all things, and God has sent His angels (messengers) to comfort me, until now I would not have things different if I could. I will read you part of a letter I have written to my father, who is also condemned to be beheaded, and who, I am told,

grieves more because of having brought me to this pass than because of his own fate.' And, with that, she took a newly-written letter from her bosom and began to read—

'Father,—Although it pleases God to hasten my death by you, by whom my life should rather have been lengthened, yet I can yield God more hearty thanks for shortening my sad days than if all the world had been given into my possession, with life lengthened to my will.' And, after alluding to his grief on her account, the letter continued: 'Though perhaps to you it may seem woeful, to me there is nothing that can be more welcome than, from this vale of misery, to aspire to that Heavenly throne of all joys and pleasures with Christ our Saviour, in whose steadfast faith—if I may be allowed to say so—may the Lord still keep you, that at last we may meet in Heaven.'

'That will comfort him, I think,' said my dear lady, as she folded and put by the letter to await a favourable opportunity for sending it. 'And I mean what I say, Margery. There is no joy this world can give which would compensate for the loss of the Heavenly Home that I now feel to be so near. True, it is a painful gate that I have to pass through, but it will be short, and it leads straight Home.'

Thus she talked, and I saw that to disturb her faith, with any chimerical schemes for escape from it would be cruel in the extreme; also I determined not to sadden her last earthly hours by my grief, for there would be all the years after she had gone in which to mourn, but to do my best to brighten her last short days. Kissing her hand, therefore, I said that she had greatly comforted me, which made her exceedingly glad.

Then she arose, and wrote in Latin, with a pin, on the wall of her room some lines, which she translated thus—

Stand not secure who stand in mortal state;
What's mine to-day shall next day be thy fate.

And again—

If Heaven protect, hell's malice cannot wound;
By Heaven deserted, peace can ne'er be found.
These shadows passed, I hope for light.

'Yes, Margery,' she said, turning to me, 'in spite of all my faults, I have held to the road that leads above, and when the shadows are passed by, then I hope to see the glorious light.'

'If any one ever will see it, you will,' said I, again kissing her hand and looking with the deepest admiration into her sweet young face, which seemed to me to bear the seal of Heaven's own peace.

CHAPTER XXV
Some of Lady Jane's last Words

I do not like to think of how the soul of my dear young mistress was harassed during those last few days by the visits and arguments of Queen Mary's chaplain, Dr. Feckenham.

Mistress Ellen, who had been sent for to keep my dear lady company during my illness, and who remained with us until the end, and I sat, with our needlework, at one end of the apartment, whilst these conferences were going on. We did not hear all that was said, but only enough to show that, learned and clever as was Lady Jane's opponent, he was beaten over and over again by the wise and able manner in which she answered his arguments.

Sometimes a few of her sayings reached us, to be treasured up in our minds, as, for instance, when she replied to his arguments about transubstantiation. Her words were these: 'Where was Christ when He said, "Take, eat, this is My body"? Was He not at the table when He said so? He was at that time alive, and suffered not till the next day.

'What took He but bread? What brake He but bread? Look, what He took He brake, and look, what He brake He gave, and look, what He gave they did eat; and yet all this while He Himself was alive and at supper before His disciples, or else they were deceived.'

But the priest would not admit that she was right in that, or in the other statements she made so clearly and forcibly; he was, however, so won by her gentle and courteous demeanour that he prevailed upon the queen to allow her to live three days longer than the time at first specified, that he might be able more effectually to convince her mind. This short reprieve was the only good he did, to my thinking. But Lady Jane said that having to answer his arguments strengthened and fortified her mind against all doubts, because whilst searching in her Bible for the right answers to give him she gained a deeper insight into the Truth.

'You must remember always, dear Margery,' she said to me, 'that a really good thing does not lose by being examined. For examination only reveals more and more of its intrinsic worth.'

The fact was that she answered all Dr. Feckenham's arguments with such strength and clearness and such firm conviction as showed

plainly that religion had been her chief study, and that now it fortified her, not only against the fear of death, but also against all doubts and apprehensions.
It was always with relief, however, that we saw the priest depart, for the strain of all this arguing upon our lady's mind was extremely great, and indeed she was looking worn and tired out.
On the Sunday evening, which was to be her last in this world, she wrote a letter in Greek to her sister Catherine, and put it with a New Testament in the same language which she was bequeathing to her. At my request she translated for me the first part of her letter, which ran, as nearly as I can remember, as follows;—

'I am sending you, my dear sister Catherine, a book which, though not outwardly trimmed with gold or curious embroidery made by the most artful fingers, yet intrinsically is worth more than all the precious mines of which this world can boast. It is the book, my best loved sister, of the law of the Lord; it is His Testament and last Will, which He has bequeathed to us—it will lead you to the path of eternal joy, if you read it desiring to follow its counsels, and will bring you to an immortal, everlasting life. It will teach you how to live and how to die.'

It was in our last talk together, before the fatal day of her execution, that my dear lady bestowed upon me her beloved Plato, advising that I should learn to read it in the language in which it was written.
'I cannot teach you Greek now, dear Margery,' she said, 'but there will be others.'
I made a gesture of despair. What should I care for others when she had gone? I could not speak without breaking down, so I said nothing. And Lady Jane seemed to understand, for she was very sweet and kind.
'It will always be a consolation to you, Margery,' she said, 'to remember that you have been the greatest comfort to me. Ever since I first saw your sweet face entering the drawing-room at Sion House I have loved you dearly. I had been praying for some one to come to me who was young like me—I feel old now, dear, though it is scarcely a year since then, but so much that is sad has happened.'
I stroked her hand and kissed it, for I could not speak, and if I had spoken my poor words might have spoiled the interview.
And then it was that she asked me to write an account of that last year of her life, relating exactly how it happened that she was made queen, and how the throne passed away from her, leaving in its stead a

scaffold; also describing how it came about that the head which had worn a crown was forfeited, and that for an error of her mind her poor frail body was killed, adding, 'Margery, others may write more learnedly of the matter, but I would fain be represented to posterity as I am rather than as I am supposed to be. And God will help you, if you ask Him,' she said, seeing my fear and dread that I should not be able to do it properly.

'It is not fine writing that is wanted,' she went on, 'but a plain, unvarnished statement of the facts. And, Margery,' she said in conclusion, 'you must also tell the story of brave Sir Thomas Wyatt's insurrection and of your dear knight's gallant efforts to cause me to reign over this land, and to gain back the throne for me. I have been thinking, dear, that I was hard upon them always in my great desire to be left alone. But since you told me that Sir Thomas Wyatt's object was against Queen Mary's Spanish marriage and that Sir Hubert's motive was to save England from bigoted Roman Catholicism and Spain and the Inquisition, I have come to view the matter differently, and so will others, if you tell them exactly what they thought. Come, Margery, look up, dear one, for you have a great work before you, and you must take heart and live to do it. You have to vindicate the honour of two noble knights and of your mistress, and clear their names, which have been smirched and blackened by the tongues of powerful enemies. No one can do it but you, dear, in exactly the same way, for your loving eyes have seen us as we are and not as we are supposed to be; and you possess Love, the master-key, which can explain all that has appeared so wrong and presumptuous and rebellious in our lives. You must do this for me, Margery, and for your dear knight, Sir Hubert, and for Sir Thomas Wyatt.'

I promised that I would, and she blessed and thanked me very solemnly, saying that she was sure that God would give me strength and wisdom for the task.

And I thought then that this must be the special work which Master Montgomery said might be given me to do when I left home and went to London.

CHAPTER XXVI
Lady Jane's Execution

The fatal day of the execution dawned at last, and I would that I could draw a veil over its direful happenings. But my lady's charge is upon me to tell everything exactly as I saw it occur, and so I cannot pick and choose.

It was February 12, a dull, cold morning, and within the Tower people went about with dismal faces, as well they might, for most were sorry for my poor young mistress.

She had passed a great part of the night—her last night—in prayer, and it was only at my earnest entreaty that she at length lay down for an hour or two before morning broke. Then she slept as sweetly as a little child, and Mistress Ellen and I stole on tiptoe to the bedside to look at her, as those look who will not see the loved face any more.

I could fancy once that her lips moved in her sleep, pronouncing the name of Dudley, and doubtless even her sleeping thoughts were with her young husband, who was also that day to suffer the same extreme penalty of the law, but not at the same place. He was to die upon Tower Hill, where the authorities dared not execute his poor young wife, lest the sight should appeal to the hearts of the people, causing them to rise in a mass to prevent the double execution. She therefore was to die upon the scaffold erected before St. Peter's Chapel on the Green, within the Tower.

When the time came for her to rise we shrank from awaking her to such a fate, but at length were obliged to do so; and though for a moment a look of terror crossed her face, it quickly changed to one of the sweetest resignation. She thanked us gently for not allowing her to sleep too long, and, except that she was pale, her manner appeared to be much as usual.

At her request we dressed her in black velvet, with a drooping collar of white lace falling low from her slender neck.

'There is not much of it to sever,' she said pathetically, encircling it for a moment with her right hand, but desisting and throwing her arms round me as she saw my look. 'It will be over so soon,' she said. 'One moment, and then the gates of heaven will open wide, and for my Saviour's sake I, sinful I, washed in His blood, clothed in His

righteousness, will be permitted to enter in.'
That was her belief. And the comfort and the glory of it spread a veil over and shed a halo round all that was coarse and revolting in the manner of her death.
It had been arranged that Sir Thomas Brydges, the lieutenant of the Tower, in whose house we were, was to escort her to the scaffold, but first he had the melancholy task of conducting her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, out of the Tower to the more public scaffold on Tower Hill, where a vast concourse of people were assembled.
Early in the morning the queen had sent Lady Jane permission to have an interview with her husband, but she, thinking that this would be too trying for them both, declined the favour, saying she would meet him within a few hours in heaven.
As she stood at a window looking out, however, she saw Lord Guildford Dudley going to execution, and an hour afterwards beheld men bearing his corpse back to its last resting-place in St. Peter's Chapel.
Immediately after that terrible sight she wrote down in a book three short sentences in Greek, Latin and English.
The first, roughly translated, was—
'If his slain body shall give testimony against me, his blessed soul shall render an eternal proof of my innocence in the presence of God.'
The second said—
'The justice of men took away his body, but the Divine mercy has preserved his soul.'
The English sentence ran as follows—
'If my fault deserved punishment, my youth, at least, and my imprudence were worthy of excuse. God and posterity will show me favour.'
Dr. Feckenham came from the queen to attend her to the scaffold, and I was afraid that he would trouble her; but I noticed as I followed them, with Mistress Ellen, that my lady was not attending to his words, but kept her eyes fixed upon a book of prayers in her hand.
The passing bell began to toll slowly and solemnly. It was almost more than I could bear, and the sound of it seemed to startle Lady Jane, for she looked up; and then, appearing for the first time to perceive the faces around her, she bowed and spoke to them, saying to Dr. Feckenham—
'God will abundantly requite you, good sir, for your humanity to me, though your discourses give me more uneasiness than all the terrors of my approaching death.'

'Look!' whispered Mistress Ellen at that moment. 'Look at those awful birds!'
There were indeed a couple of ravens hovering about in the air, as if waiting for the death that was so soon to take place.
I did not scream, but felt as if my heart would burst, and the physical pain almost overpowered the mental.
Thus we walked across the Green to the scaffold, where there were not so many people assembled, some dreading much to see so sad a sight as the execution of my dear lady.
She was not shedding a tear all the time, but bearing herself with meek and gentle dignity, and Mistress Ellen and I were weeping bitterly behind her.
And now she stood on the scaffold and spoke to the spectators, and this was what she said, as nearly as I can remember—

'My lords, and you good Christian people, which come to see me die, I am under a law, and by that law, as a never-erring judge, I am condemned to die; not for anything I have done to offend the queen's majesty, for I am guiltless—but only that I consented to the thing that I was forced into——' She went on to confess herself a sinner and deserving of death, but thanked God that He had given her time to repent of her sins and to trust herself to her Redeemer. Then she continued—'Pray with me and for me whilst I am yet alive, that God, of His infinite goodness and mercy, will forgive my sins, how numberless and grievous soever against Him; and I beseech you all to bear me witness that I here die a true Christian woman, professing and avouching from my soul that I trust to be saved by the blood, passion and merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour only, and by no other means, casting far behind me all the works and merits of my own actions as things so far short of the true duty I owe that I quake to think how much they may stand up against me. And now I pray you all, pray for me and with me.'

The bell went on tolling, and the great dark birds hovered overhead, while the sound of sobs and bitter weeping was also to be heard.
Only Lady Jane shed no tears, as kneeling, she repeated the Psalm, *Miserere mei, Deus*—
'Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness: according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away with mine offences.
'Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin....'

And so on, the words of penitence, grief and supplication in those clear young tones rising from the slight, black-robed figure and mingling with the louder, harsher sounds of woe and death, went to our hearts and reached more surely still the heart of Him Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and without Whom not even a sparrow can fall to the ground.
When she had repeated the whole Psalm, Lady Jane arose, and turning to Mistress Ellen and me, gave us her gloves and handkerchief, and Sir Thomas Brydges asking for some token, she bestowed upon him her prayer-book, having first written in it a few lines, at his request. These were, as nearly as I can remember them—for she showed them to me, thinking no doubt that they would comfort me, who could scarcely see them for my tears—

'Forasmuch as you have desired so simple a woman to write in so worthy a book, good Master Lieutenant, therefore I shall as a friend desire you, and as a Christian request you, to call upon God to incline your heart to His laws, to quicken you in His way, and not to take the Word of Truth entirely out of your mouth. Live still to die, that by death you may purchase Eternal Life. All have to die. If you were to live as long as Methuselah, yet a time would come when you had to die. As the Preacher saith, "There is a time to be born and a time to die, and the day of our death is better than the day of our birth."
'Yours, as the Lord knows, as a friend,
'JANE DUDLEY.'

And now, with hands that trembled a little, she attempted to undo the fastenings of her heavy black dress, and perceiving that she bungled over it, the executioner offered to assist her, but she turned immediately to us her gentlewomen, upon which we took off her dress, and gave her a handkerchief to bind over her eyes. She did this herself, and then the executioner, kneeling before her, asked her for pardon, which she gave him most willingly.
'I pray you dispatch me quickly,' she added.
'Yes, madam.'
'Will you take it off before I lie down?' she asked, pointing to the handkerchief.
'No, madam.'
She began to feel for the block, asking, 'Where is it?'
Some one guided her to it, and saying, 'Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit,' she laid down her head, which at one stroke was

severed from her body.

* * * * *

'All is over!' I cried miserably, as I recovered from another illness, to find myself being tended by Mistress Ellen, in a poor lodging in Fleet Street. 'There is nothing left—*nothing*!'

'There is God,' said my companion.

It was the first time I had ever heard her speak of Him, or indeed of religion, for she always averred that to *do* is better than to talk; therefore her three words now made all the more impression.

'He has taken my dear lady,' sobbed I rebelliously.

'He gave her to us in the first instance,' was the reply. 'And I know,' gently added the good woman, 'that He has taken her through a quick, though painful, door into the glory beyond. There, doubtless, her joy is so extreme as to have caused her already to forget the pain that went before, and there it behoves us to try and follow her.'

And with that Mistress Ellen ran out of the room, for she was well nigh breaking down herself, in spite of her brave words.

But I turned my face to the wall and lay weeping a long while.

CHAPTER XXVII
CONCLUSION
Home Again

Mistress Ellen was a wise woman; she had brought me out of the Tower that I might recover, away from the scenes which were full of memories of our dear lady; and now, when I was slowly regaining my health in the poor lodgings, which were all we could afford, knowing that the best thing for me would be some useful occupation, she urged that I should begin at once upon the task which my dear lady had left to me.

I therefore sat down before a quantity of clean blank writing paper, a pot of ink and a stock of new quill pens. There were the materials for the framework of my book, and I had the will to do it, yes, and the ability, for I could write a pretty hand and string sentences together, as my lady knew, and my brain was teeming with the facts I had to tell; but there was something lacking, because now I could not write a word. Whenever I lifted up my pen to try and set one down a shadow came between me and the paper, so that I could see nothing except the dear face of my lover as I saw it last when he raised his hand to hide his eyes, and a voice said in my heart, 'He is not dead yet, though he is condemned. He is languishing in the Tower prisons, condemned to death, yes, but not dead yet, and while there is life there is hope.'

Yet I had been told there was none for those who entered the Tower by the Traitors' Gate.

I was sitting one day as usual before my writing materials, unable to set down a word, and thinking over all this again and again, when there was a loud knocking at the house door, and presently our landlady came up to us ushering a visitor into the room.

It was Jack Fish, and the sight of his broad face and burly figure brought to my mind most vividly the times when, with Sir Hubert, I had met with him before. Almost I saw again the half-filled cart in the old shed in Sussex, and, through the dim light, my dear knight's handsome face emerging from the heap of straw in the corner at the sound of this good man's cheery voice, assuring us that he would send our enemies away. Also I seemed to hear again the rolling of the

coach and trampling of horses' feet upon the queen's highway, later on, as Master Fish's voice pointed out our danger and particularly mine in the coach, suggesting that I should leave it and escape on horseback, which advice, being carried out, saved me from again falling into my enemy's hands; and, most of all, the sight of Master Jack Fish brought to my mind vividly my dear imprisoned knight.

'Poor child!' said my visitor, forgetting everything except my youth and sorrow of heart. 'Poor child! Thou hast had a hot place in the battle! Thy loving heart again put thee in the position of the greatest danger!' and he turned his head aside, for big tears were rolling down his honest cheeks.

I wept, too, then, though I had been thinking that I had no more tears to shed, and the page that I was to write upon became wet and bleared.

'What have they done to her?' I heard Master Fish inquiring aside of Mistress Ellen, adding low, 'Don't tell me that they tortured her in the Tower, or——' in his mighty indignation he became inarticulate, but made a gesture as if he could kill some one.

'The torturer was Grief, and the instrument that was used was the child's heart,' answered my companion very softly. 'It is a size too big for her weak frame,' she added.

'Aye, aye.' He muttered something which I could not hear, but Mistress Ellen's rejoinder startled me—

'Hair is a mere detail. It began to grow grey when her lover was brought into the Tower, and became white the day we lost our lady.'

Jack Fish began to walk up and down the room in no little agitation. Suddenly he stopped short and returned to me.

'Would it comfort thee, dear,' he said, with great gentleness, 'to know that thou hast been avenged in Sussex, where that brute, Sir Claudius Crossley, in endeavouring to escape from the just punishment of his ill deeds, came into collision with a party of rough fellows, some of whom had once been his devoted followers in deeds of violence, who, turning upon him when he was down, seized and drowned him in the very same pond by the roadside in which he had himself been used to drown witches?'

I shuddered.

'Poor wretch!' I said. 'May God have prepared him for his end!'

'And now,' said my visitor, 'we must look to thee.' For he perceived that his information about Sir Claudius had scarcely enlivened me. 'We must look to thee,' he repeated. 'Thou hast had it a bit rough,' he added tenderly. 'Sometimes the storm of life gathers and breaks upon

one all at once—but it spends itself—it spends itself,' he faltered and almost broke down, because for the first time I looked up and he saw my eyes, 'and then, for all the future,' he continued hurriedly, 'there is a great calm. God grant that it may be so with thee, my child!' and he laid his hand tenderly upon my poor spoilt head.

Then I opened my heart to the good man, telling him all about my dear lady's execution, and that my true lover, Sir Hubert Blair, still lay in the Tower under sentence of death, adding that it was my dread, night and day, that they would take his life in the same way as that in which they had already taken my poor mistress's.

'If they do I shall die,' I wailed. '*I cannot live! I cannot live if Hubert is beheaded too!*'

Master Jack Fish looked very grave. He was thinking, as he afterwards told me, of the hundreds of rebels who were being condemned to death on all sides, and that the prisons were full, and even the poor men were packed into the churches, to await their turn to hang upon the gibbets set up by the roadsides and elsewhere. Sir Thomas Wyatt was to be beheaded on April 11, and it was not likely that Sir Hubert Blair, who had aided and abetted him in everything, would be set free.

'There is only one person in the land who can do it,' he said at length. 'Queen Mary can pardon your lover, if she likes.'

Queen Mary, the murderer, as she seemed to me, of her poor young relation, my dear mistress, and of many, many more. Was it likely that a heart so hard could be touched by another woman's woe? Was it possible that the hand which signed Lady Jane's death warrant would sign the pardon of a much more aggressive rebel at my request? Yet memory recalled to me a woman, unhappy, lying sleepless on her bed, to whom I sang, with the result that my singing touched her heart, arousing generosity and kindness. Could I possibly obtain the chance once more of singing to her, and then, haply, pleading, pleading as for my life and more than life, that she would spare my lover?

I broke out into eager words, acquainting Master Fish with the manner in which I got into the Tower before to go to my dear lady, by singing to the queen, and then winning the boon from her; and he listened very feelingly, almost as much excited about the matter as I was. When I had told him all, he asked the name of the physician by whose means I had obtained access to the queen, and where he lived; and when I acquainted him with the fact that it was Dr. Massingbird, who had a surgery in the Strand, though he was frequently at Court, he left me in haste, saying that he would go to see what could be done.

* * * * *

They had taken me to the queen, in her palace at Westminster, by Her Majesty's command. She was not now sorrowfully lying on a sleepless bed, but sitting in state, in a magnificent reception-room, and surrounded by great Court ladies. I stood up before her to sing, and every one was silent, waiting to hear the sweet and thrilling sounds which were to proceed from my young lips: and I was bidden to begin, and asked what I was waiting for, and told not to be frightened, and encouraged, kindly enough at first, and then impatiently.

For this terrible thing happened to me. I could not sing a note. Now, in the extremity of my need, when so much depended on my singing, though I opened my mouth, no sound proceeded from it. My voice had gone.

'Sing!' commanded Queen Mary, in her deep voice. 'Begin at once.'

I looked at her, at that awful woman who had killed my lady, and who was killing such large numbers of those who had rebelled against her, and less than ever could I sing; for a feeling of disgust and hatred was surging up within me, whilst my brain teemed with the reproaches I dared not utter, even if I could.

'Massingbird'—the queen's voice seemed to come from a great distance now, as she spoke to the physician who took me to her—'what is the meaning of this? I allowed you to bring here the girl with the wonderful voice, who sang to me in the Tower, that time I suffered so much from sleeplessness, and you have brought this girl who cannot sing, and who cannot be the same girl as the lovely one who sang to me before.'

'Madam, she is the same girl, I assure your Majesty,' said the Court physician in his courtliest tone.

'She cannot be the same!' cried the queen angrily. 'This is no young girl with golden hair and a sweetly pretty rosebud face. This is a woman, with a sad, pale countenance, and—and white hair.'

'It is sorrow,' said the physician gently, 'which has changed the pretty child into the grief-stricken woman, and a terrible anxiety and dread is even now crushing her heart and killing her.'

'Killing her?' cried the queen incredulously.

'Yes, killing her. Death has already laid his hand upon her hair—her pretty golden hair—bleaching it white, then, going downwards, he has taken her voice—we did not know that until she stood up here to sing——'

'Pooh!' exclaimed Mary, still angrily. 'What stuff! She looks a peevish woman,' and, disgustedly, 'she cannot sing.'

Then Dr. Massingbird's indignation overmastering his habitual caution, he exclaimed—

'Can the caged lark sing? Can those whose "tears have been their meat day and night" sing? Can the broken heart burst forth into singing? Can the mourner sing for joy and gladness? This poor young lady,' he turned to me, laying a kind, fatherly hand upon my shoulder, 'this poor young lady has lost her best friend on the scaffold, and her lover, a lad of twenty-one, lies in the Tower under sentence of death. These things have bleached her hair and taken the colour from her face; moreover, as we have just discovered, they have robbed her of her voice.'

'Is this true?' The queen's deep voice asked the question of me, but the effort of trying to answer it, of attempting to express some of the words of pleading for my lover and of beseeching for his life, was more than I could bear, and I fell down unconscious at Queen Mary's feet.

* * * * *

When I came to myself, the queen was holding a cup to my lips, and calling upon me at the same time to wake up and hear some joyful news.

I opened my eyes and looked into her face incredulously. What joyful news could there be for me, who had parted company with joy long since? Sorrow I knew, and pain and disappointment, but not joy. It was so long since joy had visited me that I could scarcely believe in its possibility.

'Come! Come! Try to rouse yourself,' said Dr. Massingbird. 'Her Majesty is going to be very good to you.'

Then my lips moved.

'No,' I said, 'do not deceive me. I could not even sing to her. I lost the opportunity which you were so good as to get for me,' and I sighed heavily, having hoped so much from it.

Then Mary spoke.

'Meg Brown,' she said, and the old assumed name startled me, 'I am going to give your lover, Sir Hubert Blair, a free pardon——'

'What,' I interrupted, turning excitedly to the physician, 'what is her Majesty saying? *I cannot understand, I cannot understand!*' and I put my hand to my head.

The physician explained that the queen was about to pardon my beloved.

'Yes, that I am,' said Mary, quite good-naturedly. 'The rascal does not deserve it. But I do it for your sake, because I think you have suffered

quite enough.'
'And I have not even pleaded for him!' I said to myself, and must have spoken aloud, for the queen answered—
'Your white hair and your sorrowful face, together with your good friend's words, have pleaded for your lover more eloquently than any singing could have done.'
Then, gazing at me, she added—
'Take her away, Dr. Massingbird; she is looking very ill. I will make out the proper papers and send them to Sir Thomas Brydges, who will do the rest. 'Margaret'—she spoke to me—'what you need now, to restore you to health, are happiness and country air. You must let Sir Hubert Blair take you home to your father's house near Brighthelmstone. (These last words disclosed the fact that Queen Mary knew who I was.)
* * * * *
Of the meeting with my dear one, when he came to me out of the Tower, I cannot adequately write—such times are not for strangers' eyes—the relief and joy of it are thrilling my heart even yet, after ten years, as they will no doubt for the whole of my remaining life.
From the Tower Sir Hubert came to me in the poor lodgings in Fleet Street, and they were poor no longer; and praise and thanksgiving ascended from them to Almighty God, who had softened Queen Mary's heart and given back my lover from the jaws of death.
We only remained in London until after the execution of that brave knight, Sir Thomas Wyatt, whom we were allowed to visit first, though unable to obtain any remission of his sentence. Sir Hubert witnessed his execution, and told me afterwards that nis manner to the last was brave and undaunted, and that, far from incriminating others, in order that he might gain favour for himself, as did some, he, being afraid that Princess Elizabeth might be implicated in his insurrection, proclaimed from the scaffold, before he suffered, that she and the Earl of Courtenay had nothing to do with it. His saying that so publicly, in all probability, saved Princess Elizabeth's life; as Queen Mary, incensed and alarmed for her own safety and the safety of her monarchy, was already planning her sister's doom.
Sir William and Lady Caroline Wood, meanwhile, succeeded in escaping to Holland, the former having been too much mixed up with Wyatt's insurrection to hope for safety in a land reeking with the blood of those who had taken part in it.
Hubert took me home to my father's house near Brighthelmstone, where I received a cordial welcome from him and Hal and Jack, and

all the servants, amongst whom I found poor Betsy, who, being excluded from the Tower whilst I was with Lady Jane, and, being left without means, had trudged all the way to my father's house on foot, to beseech him to begin another insurrection by calling upon all Sussex to take up arms, and come to fetch me out of the Tower before I was burned alive and beheaded.

'Betsy has led me such a life with her tongue,' said my father, 'that I have threatened to turn her out of the house many and many a time, but she would not go,' and he laughed, drew me to him, and kissed me. 'I was very anxious about you, Margaret,' he said more gravely, 'and made many inquiries as to your welfare, but I could not deprive poor Lady Jane of your help and the solace of your presence at such a time.'

'Nor did I wish to leave her,' I rejoined. 'Indeed, I could not have done so.'

And then I took my dear Hubert to see Master Montgomery, who was mightily pleased with him, and told us that he had prayed for me every day since first I went to Isleworth, in the old church in which he ministered. He was immensely interested to hear of all that I had passed through, and the work that had been given me to do, and my love for my dear lady, of whose terrible fate he had only hitherto received a garbled and imperfect account. And, as I told him the sad story, lit up here and there with gleams of beauty from my lady's faith and hope, sitting safely there in his quaint study, between him and my dear knight, the whole history took shape in my mind, and I knew how I should best be able to tell it with pen, ink and paper.

A few days after that we heard that Master Montgomery, together with other Protestant ministers, was to be turned out of his benefice; but before that happened he married me and Sir Hubert Blair in the old church, where my mother was buried, and where I had worshipped almost all my life.

The living was then handed over to a Roman Catholic priest, and my father took his good old friend, Master Montgomery, into his own house, where he prayed and preached to the household, in our private chapel, besides instructing my brothers in Greek and Latin, and the way in which they should conduct themselves, and the Faith as it is revealed to us in the Testament of our Lord.

My dear husband carried me off to his beautiful place, Harpton Hall, where I have found a most happy home with him, and where our good friend, Master Jack Fish, often visits us, bringing with him his estimable wife, who is no other than Mistress Ellen: for, after my

departure from London, discovering that they were congenial souls, and she being in great need of a protector, and his chivalrous nature requiring some one to protect, they agreed to marry. Saul, who is Master Fish's servant, usually accompanies them, and always looks for a little kindly notice from me, and a few words, showing that I have not forgotten how he helped me in the past, when I was in danger of what was for me far worse than death.

Here, too, my brothers, Jack and Hal, now bearded men, delight to come. For the shooting, or the fishing, or the hunting, they say, though I know that they like to see their sister incidentally, and her husband too, whom they admire greatly.

And here I have, at length, after long years, completed the task given to me by my dear lady, in memory of whom I have named our little daughter Jane, whilst our boy, our only son, we called Tom, after Sir Thomas Wyatt, in the hope that he may grow as brave and heroic as the knight in, we trust, a far happier cause.

The sun is sinking in the west as I lay down my pen, and the shadows fall across the old stone sundial on the lawn, around which Sir Hubert has had inscribed, in letters of gold—

'Hold to the Road that leads Above; and Justice with Prudence by all means pursue.'

And I think that I hear again the sweet tones of my lady's voice saying—

'It is like our dear Lord's teaching, though it was uttered more than four centuries before He came to live as a Man upon earth.'

And those other words, spoken long afterwards—

'A Greater than Plato said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life." That is the best Crown, Margery.'

THE END

EPILOGUE

My task is done—not brilliantly, not at all brilliantly, but to the best of my poor ability, and I turn away from the thought of this world's little criticisms, which may assail and rend my work, to the consideration of how it looks in my own eyes, how it would look in the serious eyes of Lady Jane, if she surveyed it all as searchingly as she studied her beloved Plato; and lastly, and most importantly, how it may appear in the eyes of our Heavenly Father.

And first, as to myself, I have sighed, smiled, and then again wept over these pages, as in them I relived through the exciting, tragic happenings of the year of my life which changed me from a thoughtless child into an extremely earnest-hearted woman, and I think, as the record has taken such deep hold of me, it will also impress others, and know that it will do so in proportion to the greatness of their souls. For little souls find only small things everywhere, whilst big ones, like my Lady Jane's, find things so great and glorious as to lift them over life's petty details into the vast, wide prospects of the children of God, who see from the Delectable Mountains straight into the Heart of the Kingdom.

As to the way in which Lady Jane would regard this book were she looking at it, I have no fear. She would see that I have in every respect endeavoured to fulfil her wish that I should represent facts as I saw them, and not as they appeared to be to others.

And with regard to the aspect my poor little work has in the eyes of our Heavenly Father, it is impossible to know. I can only pray Him to mercifully grant that what is false and unworthy in this narrative may be forgotten, whilst what is good, true and beautiful, may sink deeply into the hearts of its hearers, and always, always be remembered as long as life shall last.

MARGARET BROWN.

Author/Historical Context

During the time this book was originally written, the world was a very different place. The happenings of the time as well as the personal and professional life of the author produced an effect on how this book was written, worded and the content of the manuscript The following is intended to help the reader better connect with these writings.

Margaret Brown (July 18, 1867 – October 26, 1932), posthumously known as "The Unsinkable Molly Brown", was an American socialite and philanthropist. She unsuccessfully encouraged the crew in Lifeboat No. 6 to return to the debris field of the 1912 sinking of RMS Titanic to look for survivors. During her lifetime, her friends called her "Maggie", but even by her death, obituaries referred to her as the "Unsinkable Molly Brown". The reference was further reinforced by a 1960 Broadway musical based on her life and its 1964 film adaptation which were both entitled The Unsinkable Molly Brown.

Early Life

Margaret Tobin was born in a hospital near the Mississippi River in Hannibal, Missouri, on what is now known as Denkler's alley. Her parents were Irish Catholic immigrants John Tobin (1821–1899) and Johanna (Collins) Tobin (1825–1905). Her siblings were Daniel Tobin (born 1863), Michael Tobin (born 1866), William Tobin (born 1869), and Helen Tobin (born 1871). Both of Margaret's parents had been widowed as young adults. Brown had two half-sisters: Catherine Bridget Tobin (born 1856), by her father's first marriage, and Mary Ann Collins (born 1857), by her mother's first marriage. At age 18, Margaret relocated to Leadville, Colorado, with her siblings Daniel Tobin, Mary Ann Collins Landrigan, and Mary Ann's husband John Landrigan. Margaret and her brother Daniel shared a two-room log cabin, and she found a job in a department store.

Marriage

In Leadville, she met and married James Joseph Brown (1854–1922), nicknamed "J.J.", an enterprising, self-educated man. He was not a

rich man, but she married J.J. for love. She said,
I wanted a rich man, but I loved Jim Brown. I thought about how I wanted comfort for my father and how I had determined to stay single until a man presented himself who could give to the tired old man the things I longed for him. Jim was as poor as we were, and had no better chance in life. I struggled hard with myself in those days. I loved Jim, but he was poor. Finally, I decided that I'd be better off with a poor man whom I loved than with a wealthy one whose money had attracted me. So I married Jim Brown.
Margaret and J.J. were married in Leadville's Annunciation Church on September 1, 1886. They had two children: Lawrence Palmer Brown (1887–1949), known as Larry, and Catherine Ellen Brown (1889–1969), known as Helen.

Mining Success
The Brown family acquired great wealth when in 1893, J.J.'s mining engineering efforts proved instrumental in the exploration of a substantial ore seam at the Little Jonny Mine. His employer, Ibex Mining Company, awarded him 12,500 shares of stock and a seat on the board. In Leadville, Margaret helped by working in soup kitchens to assist miners' families.
In 1894, the Browns bought a $30,000 Victorian mansion in Denver, Colorado, and in 1897, they built a summer house, Avoca Lodge in Southwest Denver near Bear Creek, which gave the family more social opportunities. Margaret became a charter member of the Denver Woman's Club, whose mission was the improvement of women's lives by continuing education and philanthropy. Adjusting to the trappings of a society lady, Brown became well-immersed in the arts and fluent in French, German, Italian, and Russian. Brown co-founded a branch in Denver of the Alliance Française to promote her love of French culture. Brown gave parties that were attended by Denver socialites, but she was unable to gain entry into the most elite group, Sacred 36, who attended exclusive bridge parties and dinners held by Louise Sneed Hill. Brown called her "the snobbiest woman in Denver".
After 23 years of marriage, Margaret and J.J. privately signed a separation agreement in 1909. Although they never reconciled, they continued to communicate and cared for each other throughout their lives. The agreement gave Margaret a cash settlement, and she maintained possession of the house on Pennsylvania Street in Denver and the summer house, Avoca Lodge. She also received a $700 monthly allowance (equivalent to $20,000 in 2020) to continue her

travels and social work.
Brown assisted in fundraising for Denver's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, which was completed in 1911. She also worked with Judge Ben Lindsey to help destitute children and establish one of the United States' first juvenile courts, which helped form the basis of the modern U.S. juvenile courts system.

Passenger on the Titanic

Brown had spent the first months of 1912 traveling in Paris, France, while visiting her daughter and as part of the John Jacob Astor IV party, until she received word from Denver that her eldest grandchild, Lawrence Palmer Brown Jr., was seriously ill. She immediately booked passage on the first available liner leaving for New York, the RMS Titanic. Originally her daughter Helen was supposed to accompany her, but she decided to stay in Paris, where she was studying at the Sorbonne. Brown was conveyed to the passenger liner RMS Titanic as a first-class passenger on the evening of April 10, aboard the tender SS Nomadic at Cherbourg, France.
The Titanic sank early on April 15, 1912, at around 2:20 a.m., after striking an iceberg at around 11:40 p.m. Brown helped others board the lifeboats but was finally persuaded to leave the ship in Lifeboat No. 6. Brown was later called "The Unsinkable Molly Brown" by authors because she helped in the ship's evacuation, taking an oar herself in her lifeboat and urging that the lifeboat go back and save more people. Her urgings were met with opposition from Quartermaster Robert Hichens, the crewman in charge of Lifeboat 6. Hichens was fearful that if they went back, the lifeboat would either be pulled down due to suction or the people in the water would swamp the boat in an effort to get in. After several attempts to urge Hichens to turn back, Brown threatened to throw the crewman overboard. Sources vary as to whether the boat went back and if they found anyone alive. Brown's efforts sealed her place in history, regardless.
Upon being rescued by the ship RMS Carpathia, Brown proceeded to organize a survivors' committee with other first-class survivors. The committee worked to secure basic necessities for the second and third class survivors and even provided informal counseling.

Later Life and Death

Brown ran for the U.S. Senate in 1914 but ended her campaign to return to France to work with the American Committee for

Devastated France during World War I.
At the time of J.J. Brown's death on September 5, 1922, Margaret told newspapers, "I've never met a finer, bigger, more worthwhile man than J.J. Brown." J.J. died intestate, and five years of disputation between Margaret and her two children were required to finally settle the estate. Due to their lavish spending, J.J. left an estate valued at only $238,000, equivalent to $2,903,290 in 2019. Molly was to receive $20,000 in cash and securities (equivalent to $309,225 in 2020), and the interest on a $100,000 trust fund (equivalent to $1,546,123 in 2020) in her name. The sum of $118,000 was to be divided between her two children, who each received a $59,000 (equivalent to $912,213 in 2020) trust fund. A court case against Catherine and Lawrence was settled privately, and Margaret and her children were reconciled at the time of Margaret's death in 1932.
During the last years of her life, she was an actress. Margaret Brown died in her sleep at 10:55 p.m. on October 26, 1932, at the Barbizon Hotel in New York City, New York. Subsequent autopsy revealed a brain tumor. Her body was buried along with J.J. in the Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury, New York, following a small ceremony on October 31, 1932, attended only by close friends and family. There was no eulogy.

Legacy
Margaret's fame as a Titanic survivor helped her promote the issues she felt strongly about: the rights of workers and women, education and literacy for children, historic preservation, and commemoration of the bravery and chivalry displayed by the men aboard the Titanic. During World War I in France, she worked with the American Committee for Devastated France to rebuild areas behind the front line, and helped wounded French and American soldiers. She was awarded the French Légion d'Honneur for her good citizenship, activism, and philanthropy in America.
In 1985, she was inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame.