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THE KING'S GRATITUDE. A TALE OF KING CHARLES II. AND HIS COURT.

By Henry William Herbert.

CHAPTER VI.

The king was in the highest spirits and good humor, for out of the first five matches his dogs had won three, and the best of his kennel had not yet been slipped. It was about ten o'clock—for our ancestors, if they had many vices, had at least the one virtue of rising early in the morning, and on that day the beauties of King Charles's court were mounted and a field radiant in fresh beauty, almost as soon as Aurora herself—when the king observing that Bellarmyne, according to the duties of his office, followed closely at his heels, called to him, pointing as he spoke to a fair bey of maids-of-honor with their attendant cavaliers, among whom the graceful figure of Rosamond Bellarmyne was conspicuous.

'Major Bellarmyne,' he said, 'for all we have named you, our equery in chief, it is not with the purpose of tying you to our horse's tail, or keeping you dangling after us from matins to midnight. Away with you, sir; yonder is metal more attractive, if I be not the worse mistaken, than the best stag that ever ran upon four legs over lilli-lea or mountain-heather. Away! we will summon you, as if we need your presence.'

De Grammont, with a group of other gentlemen and nobles, was about the king and his princely guest when the courteous words were uttered; but Armitage paused not to see who heard or heard not, but galloped away joyously to join her whom he had already begun to admit to himself the mistress of his heart.

By this time, as was unavoidable from the nature of the sports, the company had become much scattered, many of the chases having been long and straight on end; as each deer was taken, a fresh one was driven up, as fast as four horses could convey the light cart which contained it to the scene of the last capture, so that there was no general rallying point for the straggling groups, but the scene of action varied from point to point over the wide extent of wild heath, open downs, and forest land, which was then included in the royal chase of Blackheath.

In spite of this, however, many minutes did not elapse before Armitage had found his lady, who, infinitely the best rider of the whole field of beauties, though but indifferently mounted, was riding with Miss Bagot, who was but a timid horsewoman and a single cavalier only, the young Lord Dynevor, who greatly affected the society of that graceful nymph; the rest of their party having just separated from them in order to approach nearer to the royal presence.

Scarcely had he exchanged the first salutations with his fair lady before a noble hart, with no less than ten times to his antlers, being what is technically called a *hart royal*, was uncarted, and, taking their direction, came sweeping gracefully past them, followed by three choice greyhounds, and close behind these by the king, his royal guest, and the best mounted of the courtiers.

The fears of Miss Bagot, and the indifference of Rosamond's hunter, soon threw our party far in the rear; for the stag was strong and ran wild, pointing towards the Surrey hills, and, though they contrived to keep the hunt in sight, they were at least a mile distant when the gallant beast was run into and pulled down, on a heathery knoll crowned by a fir tree near to which they might see the straggling hunters as they came up one by one gathering toward the person of the sovereign.

It was during the gallop, which they were forcing to the best powers to both riders and ridden, that the attention of Armitage was attracted to the strange apparition of a carriage and six horses, one of the huge, cumbersome wheeled caravans of the time, followed by two mounted servants, without liveries or badges, manoeuvring hither and thither among the intricate, deep-soiled, and sunken lanes which intersect the surface of the heath; but he thought nothing of the circumstances, except to point it out to the party, with a laughing expression of wonder as to who could be so fond of the chase as to follow a stag-hunt in a coach and six.

He had scarce spoken of it, when the vehicle and its train were lost to sight in the skirts of a wide tract of hazel coppice, which covered the country for many miles of space, in the direction of Buckfield and

St. Leonard's forest; and, almost at the same moment, a man in the royal livery galloped up at full speed, exclaimed—'Major Bellarmyne, Major Bellarmyne! His majesty is instant to see Major Bellarmyne!'

There was nothing for it but, however unwilling, to obey; and bowing low to Rosamond and Miss Bagot—'I leave you, my lord,' he said, 'even as I found you, one cavalier to two fair ladies; a grave grave charge to protect and entertain them.'

And, setting spurs to his fine, thorough bred charger, which was quite fresh, he was soon at a distance; while the servant in royal livery uncovered, as the ladies passed, and dropped into the rear as if to attend them.

Nothing which had passed as yet had excited any surprise in Bellarmyne's mind but as he rode up at full speed, with his horse a little blown, pulled up, and uncovering close to the king's side took evidently waiting orders, the inquiring look of Charles perplexed him.

'So please your majesty, I am here, at your orders.'

'So I perceive, sir,' said Charles laughing. 'To what do I owe the pleasure of your presence?'

'Your majesty sent after me.'

'Not I, sir, on my honor! When? By whom? I have not even thought about you since I sent you to wait on Miss Bellarmyne.'

'Not twenty minutes since, sire, by one of the grooms of the household.'

'There is some trick here, sir; or, at the least, some soury jest. Odds fish! who hath done this, gentlemen?' cried Charles, looking angrily about him. 'I like not such freedoms.'

Bellarmyne's eye glanced half-suspiciously over the group; the Chevalier de Grammont was now no longer near the king's person. An instinct or intuition made him turn his head and go eagerly in the direction where he had last seen the coach and six.

He saw it now issuing, at full gallop, from the coppice, about a quarter of a mile from the spot where he had last seen it, thundering along amid a cloud of dust towards London. Its followers had increased to six persons, and one, who rode the last was evidently a man of distinction.

'By God!' cried Armitage, forgetful of the presence in which he stood, and striking his clenched hand on his thigh—'By God! he has carried her off!'

'Why sir? Carried whom off? What do you mean?' cried Charles, too much excited to observe the breach of etiquette.

'Mistress Bellarmyne's sire—the Chevalier de Grammont! Here comes her horse, and Miss Bagot and my Lord Dynevor to tell us of it.'

'Odds fish! he shall repent it,' cried the king, very angrily. But Bellarmyne had not waited to hear his reply, but had put spurs to his horse and was already a hundred yards distant, riding, as straight as a crow flies, towards the heads of the coach horses, which were forced to describe a sort of semicircle round the hillock on which the king sat, owing to the intricacies of the lane, and the difficult nature of the ground.

'After him, gentlemen!' cried the king. 'Away with you! Crofts, Brouncher, Sydney, Talbot, Tollemache—Ride, ride! my favour to him who stops yonder carriage. Bring them before us, both; and have all care to the lady. Ride, ride, or we shall have hot blood split.'

But it was in vain that they spurred; for Bellarmyne rode as if the devil drove him.

Two or three broad, bright, bankfull brooks crossed his line, but he swept over them in his stroke as if they were cart ruts.

Now a white handkerchief was waved from the window of the carriage. A stiff stone wall, full five feet high, opposed his progress—in went his spurs, down went his elbows, and, with a hard pull at his head, the good horse cleared it. There was now only a smooth slope of two hundred yards, or a little more, between him and the lane, along which the lumbering carriage was rolling and jolting at headlong speed; but the servants who followed it, were spurring out and drawing their swords as if to intercept him.

But he gave his horse the rein and spur, shot ahead of the foremost, and in a moment he was abreast of the leaders, calling vehemently on the postillion to stop if he would save his life. But the boy only spurred on the more fiercely, and struck at the young officer with his whip.

In virtue of his office of equery, holsters were at his saddle bow, with his pistols loaded. He drew one, and without relaxing his speed, shot the horse on which the boy rode through the heart. It bolted upright into the air, and fell dead, the

others plunged over it, one or two stumbled and went down, the coach was over-set.

The next moment De Grammont came up at full speed—

'You have shot my horse—how dare you? You shall answer for it.'

'Think yourself lucky,' he replied, 'that I have not shot you!'

The Chevalier answered by an insulting word in French; and scarcely was it uttered before Armitage's sheathed sword crossed his shoulders with a smart blow.

Both sprang to the ground, drew, and their rapiers were crossed in a moment; but by this time the gentlemen, who had followed at the order of Charles, galloped in, one by one.

'Swords drawn in the king's sight, cried Crofts, who came first. 'Fie! gentlemen! hold your hands! You are under arrest!'

Rosamond had fainted; but by aid of the ladies of the court, she was soon restored to consciousness if not to ease of mind.

The first words Charles spoke when the offenders were brought before him were addressed to De Grammont. 'Chevalier,' he said, 'I have heard that my brother, Louis XIV., desires your return to Paris, Major Bellarmyne, you will surrender yourself to the authorities. You have to learn, sir that swords are not to be drawn in our presence; and that justice and punishment both belong to the king.'

CHAPTER VII.

Whitehall: A Double Marriage.

It scarcely need be stated that Rosamond Bellarmyne's letter, which, as we have seen, caused so much grief and anxiety to stout old Sir Reginald, was composed and sent off on the very morning following the commission of the outrage at Blackheath; and before the agitated girl had recovered from the consternation and excitement into which this, not unprecedented, violence had soon her, and before she had, indeed, learned anything accurate concerning the situation of her own affairs, or the intention of the king.

All, in fact, that she had heard when wrote was an adverse aspect. The very outrageousness of such an attempt in the presence, and almost under the eyes of the king, seemed to carry conviction with it, that the attempt, if not made under his direct sanction, was felt by its perpetrator to be one which could not, at the worst, provoke his anger to evil consequences.

To this consideration De Grammont's long and insolent importunities, the king's undeniable allowance and indulgence of them, until within the last few weeks were naturally added; and the helplessness of her own isolated and friendless condition recurred with tenfold strength.

She had heard nothing, when she wrote of the Chevalier de Grammont's honorary exile from the court of England; but she had heard, so much more quickly does ill news at all times then good, of Major Bellarmyne's imprisonment in Newgate, for breach of privilege; and to this intelligence was added the heart-rending information that the penalty of his offence was no less than mutilation, by the loss of his right hand, and that in his case there was little prospect of any relaxation since in addition to the offence of drawing his sword, constructively, in the king's presence, he had gone so far as to strike a nobleman high in the favor of the crown.

Harassed by these feelings, reports, and imaginations, the poor girl wrote, as may be imagined, a letter which would have harassed almost to madness a father even less loving and less irritable than the broken spirited and failing cavalier. And little she imagined, as she wrote, that the superb chevalier, whom she pictured to herself as flushed with triumph, burning with brilliant hope, ready for new aggression, and backed by the favor of obsequious majesty, was actually at the moment when she was penning her doleful ditty, travelling, as hard as post horses would carry him, towards Calais, without the least idea whether he should next betake himself; since he well knew that so far from wishing his presence, Louis XIV was much more likely to commit him to the Bastille than to welcome him to Paris; while the king, whom she supposed the devoted confidant of De Grammont's pleasures, was in reality plotting against him the bitterest pleasantry of which that easy, laughter-loving prince was ever guilty.

Tired in body, for having no mind to encounter the pleasantries much less the mock condolence of his fellow courtiers, he had taken horse at daybreak on the morning following the stag-hunt, and ridden post without dismounting, except to change horses, discomfited in his project,

vexed with himself, and angry with the world, De Grammont had reached the Crown Inn at Dover late in the evening, and refused all offers of supper, had drunk deeply, contrary to his custom, and retired to bed, with the intent to forget his cares in a good night's rest.

But even in this reasonable hope the unfortunate Frenchman was frustrated; for, before he had been in bed two hours, a prodigious clatter of hoofs in the courtyard awakened him, and the inn was in a bustle, as it seemed to him, until it was almost morning.

At length he fell asleep; and scarce were his eyes closed before his celebrated valet, Termes, the greatest thief, the most impudent liar, but the best valet de chambre living, entered his chamber with the announcement that two gentlemen were below stairs, who had ridden post from London, in order to have the honor of paying him their compliments before sailing; and that they desired the pleasure of his company, so soon as he had made his toilet.

No further information could be obtained from Termes, although De Grammont could perceive by a single glance at the queer grimaces into which that paragon of servants was delighting himself by contorting his nut-cracking nose and chin, that he was thoroughly aware what was in the wind; and moreover, he shrewdly suspected that it boded himself no good.

No; Monsieur Termes knew nothing about it. He had not seen the gentlemen; only the waiter of the hotel. He did not give their names, in fact, he did not know them; they had ridden post, and brought no domestic with them. But *apparemment* they were friends of Monsieur le Comte; otherwise why should they have ridden so far to have the honor of paying their compliments. What suit would it please the count to wear—the morone riding-dress with purple trimmings—or the blue and silver? If it would please the chevalier to bestir himself, for the gentlemen were waiting.

So the chevalier consigned Termes to perdition, and did bestir himself. He put on his blue and silver suit, and his best riding peruke, and his jack-boots and spurs; and so descending to the breakfast-parlor, found there awaiting him his dear friend, Count Antony Hamilton, the witty author of his memories, and his brother George, both like himself, booted and spurred, with their riding-swords at their sides; but, unlike him, each with a pair of long-barreled pistols at his belt.

'Good-morrow to you cavalier,' they both exclaimed in a breath, as he entered, making him profound congees; 'Have you not forgotten something in London?'

'Excuse me, gentlemen,' replied the imperturbable Frenchman, with a low bow. 'I have forgotten—to marry your sister. So lead on, and let us finish that affair. But I fancy it must be finished in the Tower; for our old friend, Rowley, is sure to send me thither, so soon as he learns that I have returned to London, in teeth of his gentle hint at honorable exile.'

'By no means, count,' answered Antony, with a smite and a bow; 'in that case we could not allow you to return, in spite of your anxiety to do us and our sister this honor. We have a license with us from his majesty for your return and reception at court.' And with the words he handed to the count a parchment which was thus inscribed:

'We hereby grant free permission to the Count De Grammont to return to London, and remain there six days, in prosecution of his lawful affairs; and we accord to him the license to be present at our palace at Whitehall, on the occasion of his betrothal to our gracious consort's maid of honor, the beautiful Mistress Elizabeth Hamilton.'

'Given at our palace of Whitehall, this 16th day of September, 1663.'

'CHARLES II.'

Whereupon they breakfasted together, each with what appetite he might; and then rode back to London, with much less velocity and bustle than they had ridden down.

Of this, however, Rosamond Bellarmyne knew nothing; much less did she suspect that the genuine, honest-hearted old London merchant had been closeted nearly three hours *tel-a-tete* with the king, much to the wonder of the courtiers, on matters closely connected with herself, though this was the king's secret; and that hereafter he had gone to Newgate, provided with a document bearing the sign manual on the exhibition of which Major Bellarmyne was immediately discharged, his sword being duly restored to him; whereupon he took horse, within half an hour having his pockets filled with a voluminous epistle, as long as a modern title deed to an estate, and a fat purse, and was riding, when last seen, followed by a

stout couple of serving men, at the deliberate pace of an old traveller who has a long journey before him, out of town by the great North Road.

For the benefit of those, whose imaginations are not lively enough to forbode what ensued, it may be necessary to state, that before Sir Reginald Bellarmyne's touching letter arrived at the house of Nicholas in the Minorities, the emperor's young soldier, now the king's officer, Armitage Bellarmyne, had alighted at the gates of the old Abbey, well furnished credentials, not from his father only, but from the Majesty of England, backing his suit for the fair hand of the maid of honor.

To these also it may be necessary to say that the old chevalier was too implicit a believer in the doctrine of passive obedience, to dream of disputing the will of the king; that the good Dowager of Throcmorton was already in London, when the old baronet, cured of his gout by the best of all remedies, a dose of unexpected happiness, dismounted at the palace gates, to claim the brief possession of his fair child, whom he was soon to give away forever—that the two kinsmen, so long and unnecessarily estranged, were never estranged more; and that on the festive and joyous day, when two marriages were celebrated in the chapel of Whitehall, if the first and most famous was that of the notorious Count de Grammont with the beautiful Miss Hamilton, the most interesting, and, as after days proved, the happiest, was that of Major Armitage Bellarmyne to Rosamond, the no less beautiful daughter of Reginald, first Viscount of Bellarmyne.

To the world who have heard only of the recklessness, the heartlessness, the worldly coldness, ill redeemed by his facile and frivolous good-nature, of the Second Charles of England, it may appear surprising; but the tenants of the old house, so happily reinstated, of Bellarmyne, as well as the restored abbey and the redeemed acres, truthful although mute witnesses, still tell this simple tale of 'The King's Gratitude.'

TOUR TO THE RIVER RESTIGOUCHE.

ATROL HOUSE,

Restigouche County, (N. B.), July, 1853.

Just above Campbellton, but on the Canadian side of the river, is located the largest settlement of Miamic Indians now remaining in the Province of New Brunswick. The reservation which they occupy is called Mission Point, and comprises about twelve hundred acres of the best land in the Restigouche valley, and the owners thereof number three hundred souls. Their houses are built of logs, covered with shingles or boards, and are provided with chimneys or stoves, and to a limited extent, with chairs and beds. Fishing and hunting are the chief employments of the men, although some of the more industrious among them pick up a little money by lumbering, while the women take pleasure in tilling a garden spot, and keeping a cow. They are expert managers of the birch canoe, and the men are almost invariably employed by those who visit the interior of the country for business or pleasure. They are a fine looking race, and some of the women are beautiful, having very small feet and hands. They are devoted followers of the Roman Catholic church, having in the centre of their village quite a respectable chapel, with steeple and bell, whose patron is St. Anne. At the expense of the Canadian government they are supplied with a priest, and as he cannot speak their language, and they know nothing about French, the intercourse between them is chiefly carried on by means of an interpreter. The name of this person is Sam Sucke, and, aside from being a conspicuous member of the community on account of his learning, he is remarkable for being by birth a cross between the negro and the Indian, as well as the chief judge and lawyer in all legal proceedings occurring in the village, belonging to the chapel, a faithful temperance man, a strong wrestler, a good lumberman, a capital story-teller, and a most expert salmon fisher with the spear. But Mr. Sucke is also acknowledged to be extensively informed on the subject of the present condition of the Indian race in New Brunswick and Lower Canada. He says that there are only two tribes now remaining in this region, the Miamic and the Meicetes, numbering in all about fifteen hundred souls.

The former speak a dialect of the ancient Iroquois, from whom they claim to be descended, and inhabit, as a general thing the sea-coasts of the provinces; while the latter speak a dialect of the ancient Delamars, from whom they are descended, and occupy reserves on the interior rivers. The colonial government have made many efforts to ameliorate the condition of these