

# WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WAS IN FLOWER

Or, The Love Story of Charles Brandon and Mary Tudor, the King's Sister, and Happening in the Reign of His August Majesty King Henry the Eighth

Rewritten and Rendered into Modern English from Sir Edwin Caskoden's Memoir

By EDWIN CASKODEN [CHARLES MAJOR]

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(CONTINUED).

"After Wolsey had gone Jane said to Mary: "Don't you think it would have been better had you sent a softer answer to your brother? I believe you could reach his heart even now if you were to make the effort. You have not tried in this matter as you did in the others."

"Perhaps you are right, Jane. I will go to Henry."

Mary waited until she knew the king was alone, and then went to him.

On entering the room she said: "Brother, I sent a hasty message to you by the bishop of Lincoln this morning, and have come to ask your forgiveness."

"Ah, little sister, I thought you would change your mind. Now you are a good girl."

"Oh, do not misunderstand me. I asked your forgiveness for the message. As to the marriage, I came to tell you that it would kill me and that I could not bear it. Oh, brother, you are not a woman. You cannot know." Henry flew into a passion and, with oaths and curses, ordered her to leave him unless she was ready to give her consent. She had but two courses to take, so she left with her heart full of hatred for the most brutal wretch who ever sat upon a throne, and that is making an extreme case. As she was going she turned upon him like a fury and exclaimed:

"Never, never! Do you hear? Never!"

Preparations went on for the marriage just as if Mary had given her solemn consent. The important work of providing the trousseau began at once. When the queen went to her with silks and taffetas and fine cloths to consult about the trousseau, although the theme was one which would interest almost any woman, she would have none of it, and when Catherine insisted upon her trying on a certain gown she called her a blackamoor, tore the garment to pieces and ordered her to leave the room.

Henry sent Wolsey to tell her that the 13th day of August had been fixed upon as the day of the marriage, De Longueville to act as the French king's proxy, and Wolsey was glad to come off with his life.

Matters were getting into a pretty tangle at the palace. Mary would not speak to the king, and poor Catherine was afraid to come within arm's length of her. Wolsey was glad to keep out of her way, and she flew at Buckingham with talons and beak upon first sight. As to the battle with Buckingham, it was short, but decisive, and this was the way it came about: There had been a passage between the duke and Brandon, in which the latter had tried to coax the former into a duel, the only way of course to settle the weighty matters between them. Buckingham, however, had had a taste of Brandon's nimble sword play and, bearing in mind Judson's fate, did not care for any more. They had met by accident, and Brandon, full of smiles and as polite as a Frenchman, greeted him.

"Doubtless my lord, having crossed swords twice with me, will do me the great honor to grant that privilege the third time and will kindly tell me where my friend can wait upon a friend of his grace."

"There is no need for us to meet over that little affair. You had the best of it, and if I am satisfied you should be. I was really in the wrong, but I did not know the princess had invited you to her ball."

"Your lordship is pleased to evade," returned Brandon. "It is not the ball-room matter that I have to complain of. As you have rightly said, if you are satisfied I certainly should be, but it is that your lordship, in the name of the king, instructed the keeper of Newgate prison to confine me in an underground cell and prohibited communication with any of my friends. You so arranged it that my trial should be secret both as to the day thereof and the event, in order that it should not be known to those who might be interested in my release. You promised the Lady Mary that you would procure my liberty, and thereby prevented her going to the king for that purpose, and afterward told her that it had all been done, as promised, and that I had escaped to New Spain. It is because of this, my Lord Buckingham, that I now denounce you as a liar, a coward and a perjured knight, and demand of you such satisfaction as one man can give to another for mortal injury. If you refuse, I will kill you as I would a cut-throat the next time I meet you."

I care nothing for your rant, fellow, but out of consideration for the feelings which your fancied injuries have put into your heart, I tell you that I did what I could to liberate you and received from the keeper a promise that you should be allowed to escape. After that a certain letter addressed to you was discovered and fell into the hands of the king, a matter in which I had no part. As to your confinement and noncommunication with your friends, that was at his majesty's command after he had seen the letter, as he will most certainly confirm to you. I say this for my own sake, not that I care what you may say or think."

This offer of confirmation by the king made it all sound like the truth, so much will even a little truth leaven a great lie, and part of Brandon's sails came down against the mast. The whole statement surprised him, and most of all the intercepted letter. What letter could it have been? It was puzzling, and yet he dared not ask.

As the duke was about to walk away Brandon stopped him: "One moment, your grace; I am willing to admit what you have said, for I am not now prepared to contradict it, but there is yet another matter we have to settle. You attacked me on horseback and tried to murder me in order to abduct two ladies that night over in Billingsgate. That you cannot deny. I watched you follow the ladies from Bridewell to Grouche's, and saw your face when your mask fell off during the melee as plainly as I see it now. If other proof is wanting, there is that sprained knee upon which your horse fell, causing you to limp even yet. I am sure now that my lord will meet me like a man, or would he prefer that I should go to the king and tell him and the world the whole shameful story? I have concealed it heretofore thinking it my personal right and privilege to settle with you."

Buckingham turned a shade paler as he replied. "I do not meet such as you on the field of honor, and have no fear of your slander injuring me."

He felt secure in the thought that the girls did not know who had attacked them, and could not corroborate Brandon in his accusations, or Mary, surely, never would have appealed to him for help.

I was with Brandon—at a little distance, that is—when this occurred, and after Buckingham had left we went to find the girls in the forest. We knew they would be looking for us, although they would pretend surprise when they saw us. We soon met them, and the very leaves of the trees gave a soft, contented rustle in response to Mary's low, mellow laugh of joy.

After perhaps half an hour we encountered Buckingham with his lawyer-knight, Johnson. They had evi-

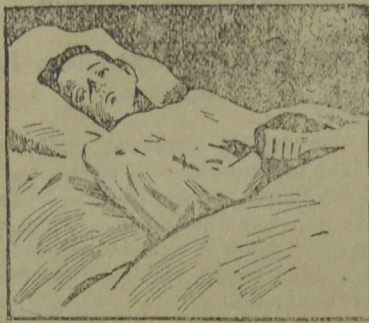


"Kindly tell me where my friend can wait upon a friend of his grace."

dently walked out to this quiet path to consult about the situation. As they approached, Mary spoke to the duke with a vicious sparkle in her eyes.

"My Lord Buckingham, this shall cost you your head. Remember my words when you are on the scaffold, just when your neck fits into the hollow of the block."

He stopped, with an evident desire to explain, but Mary pointed down the path and said: "Go, or I will have Master Brandon spit you on his sword. Two to one would be easy odds compared with the four to one you put against him in Billingsgate. Go!" And the battle was on, the foe never hav-



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ing struck a blow. It hurt me that Mary should speak of the odds being two to one against Brandon when I was at hand. It is true I was not very large, but I could have taken care of a lawyer.

Now it was that the lawyer-knight earned his bread by his wits, for it was he, I know, who instigated the next move, a master stroke in its way and one which proved a checkmate to us. It was this: The duke went at once to the king and in a tone of injured innocence told him of the charge made by Brandon, with Mary's evident approval, and demanded redress for the slander. Thus it seemed that the strength of our position was about to be turned against us. Brandon was at once summoned and promptly appeared before the king, only too anxious to confront the duke. As to the confinement of Brandon and his secret trial, the king did not care to hear. That was a matter of no consequence to him. The important question was, Did Buckingham

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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System was Run Down.

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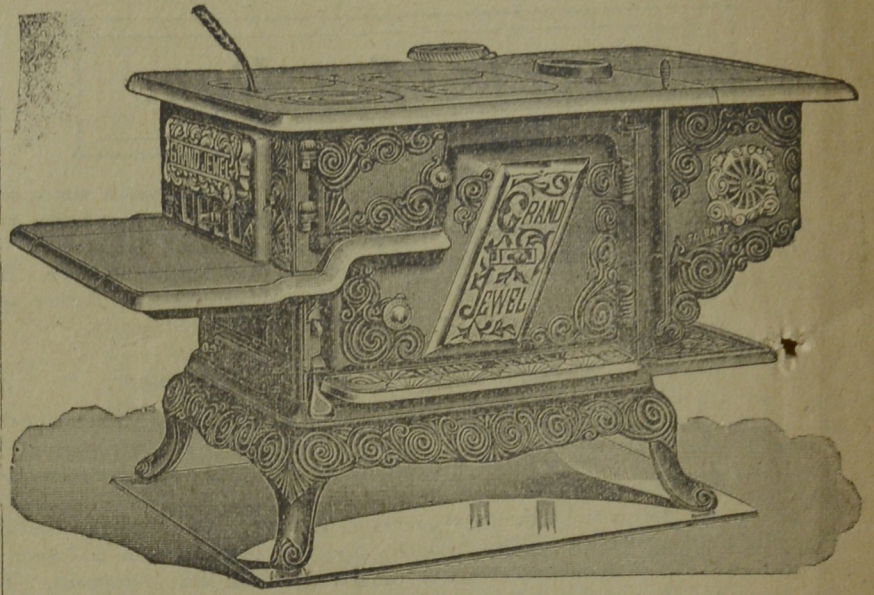
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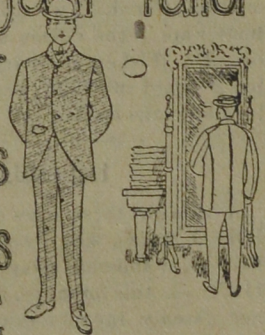
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