

**HERPER'S STEREOTYPE
EDITION. HENRY MASTERTON:
OR, THE ADVENTURES OF A
YOUNG CAVALIER**

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GEORGE PAYNE RAINSFORD JAMES

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L Susan Garrison

Harper's Stereotype Edition.

HENRY MASTERTON;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES

OF

A YOUNG CAVALIER.

[*By George Washington Peck*]

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "RICHELIEU," "PHILIP AUGUSTUS," &c.

Nay, droop not: being is not breath:
'Tis fate that friends must part:
But God will bless, in life, in death,
The noble soul, the gentle heart.

J. G. LOCKHART

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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HENRY MASTERTON.

CHAPTER I.

I OPENED my eyes to the light of day on the shores of that part of the British Channel where the narrow seas which interpose between France and England first show an inclination to spread out into the Atlantic Ocean.

My father's house—Oh, what a multitude of thrilling memories, of early years, and happy dreams, and gall-less pleasures, rise up at the very name, mingling with the forms of the loved and the dead, and the tones of sweet voices that are heard no more—My father's house was raised upon the summit of one of those high cliffs which guard the coast of Devonshire; and, sweeping round within view of the windows, was a small beautiful bay, not a league and a half in diameter, within which the blue waters of the sea collected deep and still, as if for the purpose of repose. Bold high rocks, of a similar character to that on which our dwelling was perched, flanked the bay to the east; and on the west a long range of sandy shores extended towards the Atlantic, sloping gradually up into green fertile hills, whose high tops, covered with rich woods of oak and beech, sheltered the calm expanse below from the wild gales that race across the wide ocean beyond. In some places those woods would sweep down the sides of the hills till they almost dipped their branches in the sea; and, following the bend of the bay, at a greater or less distance from the shore, during more than one-half of its extent, they reached un-

broken to the eastern angle of Masterton House, as my parental mansion was called; and then, broken into scattered clumps of fine old trees, planted themselves in the valleys and the dells, and gave a character of antique grandeur to the scenery around.

Through these trees and woods, down the sides of the cliffs, among the valleys inland, and the deep coves and inner bays by the seashore, was a perfect labyrinth of paths and walks, connected in the remembrance of my youth with a thousand childish adventures and exploits; and here, as we often proved in our boyish sports, a person well acquainted with the spot might baffle the pursuit even of others who possessed an intimate knowledge of its intricacies as himself.

The house itself presented nothing particularly worthy of description. It was one of those, many of which were destroyed in the civil wars, sufficiently defensible to bid defiance to a small force, but too weak to resist a regular siege for any length of time. The rooms, the chimneys, and the staircases were numerous; and though all of these, except the chimneys, were small, yet sufficient space had been thrown away to build forty of any such houses as have been constructed in the present day.

Having given so far an account of our dwelling-place and the country round it, I have now to speak of those by whom it was inhabited; and I must begin somewhat prior to my own recollections, in order to render my after history clear and intelligible.

Up to the time of my birth, my father, I have been told, held an office of high trust and honour at the court of King Charles I., and his character greatly assimilating with that of the monarch whom he served, a long prospect of advancement, power, and splendour was laid open before him. Naturally fond of the country, he would have spent his whole time in Devonshire, had not his official station required his presence almost continually in London. My mother, however, whose tastes were better suited to a court than

those of my father, was obliged by his especial wish and command to remain far from the capital; and her husband—who was rather fond of martyrizing his feelings to his duty, sometimes even without much necessity—imagined that by abandoning a country life and domestic joys, he was making an inestimable sacrifice to his king. Thus feeling himself, in his commune with the monarch, less the person obliged than the person obliging, he assumed, it was reported, a certain degree of independence and authority to which no man was in general less inclined to submit than the king. The cause of his giving way to it so long in the case of my father was, probably, that his dignity was always secure in the rigid and somewhat formal respect with which my worthy parent did not fail to accompany his opposition of the royal will, or his obdurate assertion of his own opinion. He would not have deviated from that decorous reverence for the world; and while he was practically telling his majesty that his actions were madness or his words were folly, he was declaring in set terms his profound deference for the royal wisdom. There existed also, as I have said before, a great similarity of feeling in many respects between the monarch and his servant; the very rigid adherence to particular theories, however opposite those theories might be, was a part of the same character. The same imperturbable, almost melancholy calmness existed in both; the same fearlessness of consequences, but in my father's case without the same paroxysms of irresolution which at times unnerved the king; the same devoted desire of doing right, but also the same imperious manner of enforcing what they judged to be so, in opposition to the reasons, prejudices, or feelings of every one else.

Such sources of sympathy did in all probability act in attaching the sovereign to my father; but upon what principle existed the great, undeviating, and devoted friendship which did exist between Lord Masterton and the Earl of Langleigh, I confess I am at a loss to know. From all I have ever heard, there never yet

breathed the air of this globe two people more dissimilar in every respect, except in the basis of unswerving honour and integrity, than Lord Langleigh and my father. The one light, gay, quick, vehement; the other calm, stern, cold, determined. Lord Langleigh, with all his keen good sense and shrewd wit, set high value upon a thousand trifles which my father contemned and despised. He would not have fought a duel for the world without his peculiar and appropriate hat, nor lain down by his wife without his particular and appointed night-cap; and yet, by his bold and reckless spirit, he would often bring himself into situations where he was obliged to fight with any hat that happened to cover him, or sleep without any night-cap at all.

Such conduct, in the eyes of my father, was the acme of human absurdity; and yet for Lord Langleigh he had the most sincere regard and the most genuine respect. They had been early, long, and constant friends; and they had found through life, that while the original uprightness of their intentions generally ensured a similarity of purpose, in any moment of difficulty the quick wit of Lord Langleigh would often suggest an expedient that had not struck the slower mind of my father; while the steady judgment of Lord Masterton would often avert a danger which would have fallen on his more precipitate friend. Thus a mutual confidence and esteem had been born and grown up between them, although a number of the actions of each were matter for jest or reprehension to the other.

A period, however, arrived, towards the time of my birth, which tried their friendship by the test of adversity. The king's determination to support the prerogative of the crown by every effort met the strongest approbation of the two friends, till they found that that determination went farther and menaced the liberty of the subject; but from that moment their opposition was fixed.

The sincere affection which they both felt towards their royal master, and which made them more fearful

perhaps for his honour and safety than even for the freedom of their country, induced them to take those measures of thwarting his most dangerous designs, which were likely, if discovered, to prove perilous to themselves and irritating to him.

It is by no means my purpose to enter here into the well-known historical details of the period. Suffice it to say, that my father and Lord Langleigh became the dupes of their own schemes. They were foolish enough to believe the sincerity of a body of men who professed moderation, to co-operate with a party from which they differed in ultimate objects, to imagine that all men really sought the good of their country who called themselves patriots, and to confide in an individual who talked continually of his honour. Of course they were used as tools, and despised, till they discovered their mistake, and were betrayed at the moment they hoped to retrieve their error.

On finding that two of his privy council had been guilty of the weakness, if not the crime, to which I have alluded, the king called them to his presence; and though a lingering feeling of regard, and the conviction that their intentions were better than their deeds, prevented him from pursuing the stern and unrelenting measures which his harsher counsellors advised, he dismissed them from their offices at once, and forbade them ever to show themselves at his court again.

My father bowed in silence and withdrew, determined to obey the command to the letter. Lord Langleigh replied, that he hoped a year and a day would be sufficient to make his majesty change his counsels, his counsellors, and his commands; and retired as if from the most indifferent conversation.

The mortification, the bitterness, and the humiliation, which my father felt most keenly, he proceeded to bury in the country, where he arrived in time to be present at my birth and to close the eyes of my mother, whose death was the consequence of my existence. Lord Langleigh, on the contrary, proceeded on a tour of pleasure, forgot the disgrace he had suffered, enjoyed

to the full new scenes, new society, and new amusements; married, became a father, and returned to the court within two years.

Though separated during this period, the two friends had not ceased to correspond, and their regard had increased, rather than diminished, under their reverses. But shortly after the return of Lord Langleigh to the court, his letters to my father were interrupted for two months; and at length, the news of his committal to the Tower, his trial, and his condemnation for high-treason reached Lord Masterton in Devonshire. My father instantly set off for London with all speed; and arrived in time to offer consolation and sympathy to his friend, if he could not afford him assistance. His own fate Lord Langleigh had borne with easy firmness. He acknowledged to my father that he had, since his return to London, been more imprudent than before he left it; and, though he solemnly averred that he had never entertained a treasonable design, yet he confessed that the judgment which had been passed upon him had been justified by strong cause of suspicion. Death he looked upon as a man of the most dauntless courage may regard a scarecrow; and all the pomp and circumstance of public execution he spoke of with a jest; but the doom which he feared not had gone with fatal effect to the bosom of his wife. She had done all that woman could do to move an inflexible monarch. She had used prayers, and tears, and influence in vain. She had sunk under the united effects of grief and exertion; and, a week before the time appointed for the death of her husband, her spirit had left a world of sorrow, for a brighter and happier place of dwelling. In regard to her, Lord Langleigh dared not speak with my father, for it was a subject that unmanned him; but of his child—his little Emily—he spoke long and fondly. He gave her into my father's charge, and exacted a promise from him that he would watch, and guard, and cherish her as his own. The promise was willingly made; and, in addition, my father voluntarily