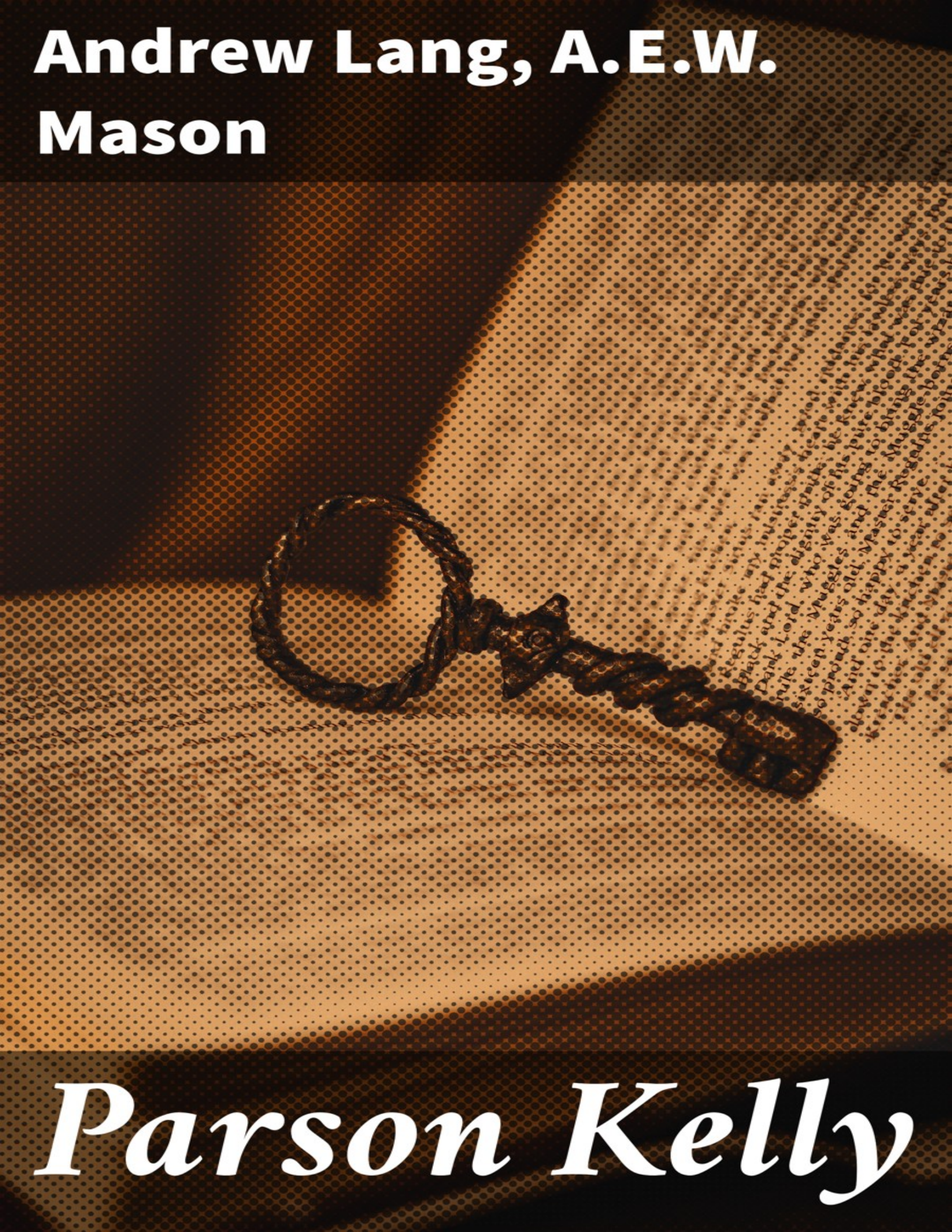
Andrew Lang, A.E.W. Mason



Parson Kelly

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CHAPTER I.

THE PARSON EXPRESSES IRREPROACHABLE SENTIMENTS AT THE MAZARIN PALACE

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"What mighty quarrels rise from trivial things!"

SO wrote Mr. Alexander Pope, whom Nicholas Wogan remembers as a bookish boy in the little Catholic colony of Windsor Forest. The line might serve as a motto for the story which Mr. Wogan (now a one-armed retired colonel of Dillon's Irish Brigade in French Service) is about to tell. The beginnings of our whole mischancy business were trivial in themselves, and in all appearance unrelated to the future. They were nothing more important than the purchase of a couple of small strong-boxes and the placing of Parson Kelly's patrimony in Mr. Law's company of the West. Both of these events happened upon the same day.

It was early in February of the year 1719, and the streets of Paris were deep in snow. Wogan, then plotting for King James's cause, rode into Paris from St. Omer at ten o'clock of the forenoon, and just about the same hour Parson Kelly, plotting too in his way, drove through the Orleans gate.

A few hours later the two men met in the Marais, or rather Nicholas Wogan saw the skirts of Kelly's coat vanishing into an ironmonger's shop, and ran in after him. Kelly was standing by the counter with a lady on either side

of him, as was the dear man's wont; though their neighbourhood on this occasion was the merest accident, for the Parson knew neither of them.

'Sure it's my little friend the lace merchant,' said Wogan, and clapped his hand pretty hard on the small of his friend's back, whom he had not seen for a twelvemonth and more. Kelly stumbled a trifle, maybe, and no doubt he coughed and spluttered. One of the ladies dropped her purse and shuddered into a corner.

'*Quelle bête sauvage!*' murmured the second with one indignant eye upon Nicholas Wogan, and the other swimming with pity for Mr. Kelly.

'Madame,' said Wogan, picking up the purse and restoring it with his most elegant bow, 'it was pure affection.'

'No doubt,' said Kelly, as he rubbed his shoulder; 'but, Nick, did you never hear of the bear that smashed his master's skull in the endeavour to stroke off a fly that had settled on his nose? That was pure affection too.'

He turned back to the counter, on which the shopman was setting out a number of small strong-boxes, and began to examine them.

'Well, you must e'en blame yourself, George,' said Nick, 'for the mere sight of you brings the smell of the peat to my nostrils and lends vigour to my hand.'

This he said with all sincerity, for the pair had been friends in county Kildare long before Kelly went to Dublin University, and took deacon's orders, and was kicked out of the pulpit for preaching Jacobitism in his homilies. As boys they had raced bare-legged over the heather, and spent

many an afternoon in fighting over again that siege of Rathcoffey Castle which an earlier Nicholas Wogan had held so stoutly for King Charles. The recollection of those days always played upon Wogan's foolish heartstrings with a touch soft as a woman's fingers, and very likely it now set George Kelly's twanging to the same tune; for at Wogan's words he turned himself about with a face suddenly illumined.

'Here, Nick, lay your hand there,' said he and stretched out his hand. 'You will be long in Paris?'

'No more than a night. And you?'

'Just the same time.'

He turned again to the counter, and busied himself with his boxes in something of a hurry, as though he would avoid further questioning. Wogan blew a low whistle.

Maybe we are on the same business, eh?' he asked. 'The King's business?'

'Whisht, man,' whispered Kelly quickly, and he glanced about the shop. 'Have you no sense at all?'

The shop was empty at the moment, and there was no reason that Wogan could see for his immoderate secrecy. But the Parson was much like the rest of the happy-go-lucky conspirators who were intriguing to dislodge the Elector from the English throne—cautious by fits and moods, and the more often when there was the less need. But let a scheme get ripe for completion, and sure they imagined it completed already, and at once there would be letters left about here, for all the world to read, and a wink and a sly word there, so that it was little short of a miracle when a plot was launched before it had been discovered by those it

was launched against. Not that you are to attribute to Mr. Wogan any superior measure of reticence. On the contrary, it is very probable that it was precisely Mr. Wogan's tongue which George Kelly distrusted, and if so, small blame to him. At any rate, he pursed up his lips and stiffened his back. Consequence turned him into a ramrod, and with a voice pitched towards the shopman:

'I am still in the muslin trade,' said he, meaning that he collected money for the Cause. 'I shall cross to England to-morrow.'

'Indeed and will you now?' said Wogan, who was perhaps a little contraried by his friend's reserve. 'Then I'll ask you to explain what these pretty boxes have to do with the muslin trade?'

'They are to carry my samples in,' replied Kelly readily enough; and then, as if to put Wogan's questions aside, 'Are you for England, too?'

'No,' said Wogan, imitating Mr. Kelly's importance; 'I am going to visit my Aunt Anne at Cadiz; so make the most of that, my little friend.'

Wogan was no great dab at the cyphers and the jargon of the plots, but he knew that the Duke of Ormond, being then in Spain, figured in the correspondence as my Aunt Anne. It was now Kelly's turn to whistle, and that he did, and then laughed besides.

'I might have guessed,' said he, 'for there's a likely prospect of broken heads at all events, and to that magnet you were never better than a steel filing.'

'Whisht, man,' exclaimed Wogan, frowning and wagging his head preposterously. 'Is it yourself that's the one person

in the world to practise mysteries? Broken heads, indeed!' and he shrugged his shoulder as though he had a far greater business on hand. Kelly's curiosity rose to the bait, and he put a question or two which Wogan waived aside. The Parson indeed had hit the truth. Wogan had no business whatsoever except the mere fighting, but since the Parson was for practising so much dignified secrecy, Wogan would do no less.

To carry the joke a step further, he turned to the counter, even as Kelly had done, and examined the despatch-boxes. He would buy one, to convince Kelly that he, too, was trusted with secret papers. The boxes were as like to one another as peas, but Wogan discovered a great dissimilitude of defects.

'There's not one of them fit to keep a mouldy cheese in,' said he, tapping and sounding them with his knuckles, 'let alone—' and then he caught himself up with a glance at Kelly. 'However, this perhaps may serve—but wait a little.' He felt in his pockets and by chance discovered a piece of string. This string he drew out and carefully measured the despatch-box, depth and width and length. Then he put the tip of his thumb between his teeth and bit it in deep thought. 'Well, and it must serve, since there's no better; but for heaven's sake, my man, clap a stouter lock on it! I could smash this with my fist. A good stout lock; and send it —wait a moment!' He glanced towards Kelly and turned back to the shopman. 'I'll just write down where you are to send it to.'

To Kelly's more complete mystification he scribbled a name and an address on a sheet of paper, and folded it up

with an infinity of precautions.

'Send it there, key and all, by nine o'clock tomorrow morning.'

The name was Mr. Kelly's, the address the inn at which Mr. Kelly was in the habit of putting up. Wogan bought the box merely to gull Kelly into the belief that he, also, was a Royal messenger. Then he paid for the box, and forthwith forgot all about it over a bottle of wine. Kelly, for his part, held his despatch-box in his hand.

'Nick, I have business,' said he as soon as the bottle was empty, 'and it appears you have too. Shall we meet to-night? Mr. Law expects me at the Mazarin Palace.'

'Faith, then I'll make bold to intrude upon him,' said Nicholas, who, though Mr. Law kept open house for those who favoured the White Rose, was but a rare visitor to the Mazarin Palace, holding the financier in so much awe that no amount of affability could extinguish it.

However, that night he went, and so learned in greater particular the secret of the Parson's journey. It was nine o'clock at night when Wogan turned the corner of the Rue Vivienne and saw the windows of the Mazarin Palace blazing out upon the snow. A little crowd shivered and gaped beneath them, making, poor devils! a vicarious supper off the noise of Mr. Law's entertainment. And it was a noisy party that Mr. Law entertained. Before he was half-way down the street Wogan could hear the peal of women's laughter and a snatch of a song, and after that maybe a sound of breaking glass, as though a tumbler had been edged off the table by an elbow. He was shown up the great staircase to a room on the first floor.

'Monsieur Nicholas de Wogan,' said the footman, throwing open the door. Wogan stepped into the company of the pretty arch conspirators who were then mismanaging the Chevalier's affairs. However, with their mismanagement Wogan is not here concerned, for this is not a story of Kings and Queens and high politics but of the private fortunes of Parson Kelly. Olive Trant was playing backgammon in a corner with Mr. Law. Madame de Mezières, who was seldom absent when politics were towards, graced the table and conversed with Lady Cecilia Law. And right in front of Mr. Wogan stood that madcap her sister, Fanny Oglethorpe, with her sleeves tucked back to her elbows, looking gloriously jolly and handsome. She was engaged in mincing chickens in a china bowl which was stewing over a little lamp on the table, for, said she, Mr. Law had aspersed the English cooks, and she was minded to make him eat his word and her chicken that very night for supper. She had Parson Kelly helping her upon the one side, and a young French gentleman whom Wogan did not know upon the other; and the three of them were stirring in the bowl with a clatter of their wooden spoons.

'Here's Mr. Wogan,' cried Fanny Oglethorpe, and as Wogan held out his hand she clapped her hot spoon into it. 'M. de Bellegarde, you must know Mr. Wogan. He has the broadest back of any man that ever I was acquainted with. You must do more than know him. You must love him, as I do, for the broadness of his back.'

M. de Bellegarde looked not over-pleased with the civility of her greeting, and bowed to Wogan with an affectation of ceremony. Mr. Law came forward with an affable word. Olive

Trant added another, and Madame de Mezières asked eagerly what brought him to Paris.

'He is on his way to join the Duke of Ormond at Cadiz,' cried Kelly; 'and,' said this man deceived, 'he carries the most important messages. Bow to him, ladies! Gentlemen, your hands to your hearts, and your knees to the ground! It's no longer a soldier of fortune that you see before you, but a diplomatist, an ambassador: His Excellency, the Chevalier Wogan;' and with that he ducked and bowed, shaking his head and gesticulating with his hands, as though he were some dandified court chamberlain. All the Parson's diplomacy had been plainly warmed out of him in his present company. Mr. Law began to laugh, but Fanny Oglethorpe dropped her spoon and looked at Wogan.

'The Duke of Ormond?' said she, lowering her voice.

'Indeed? and you carry messages?' said Miss Olive Trant, upsetting the backgammon board.

'Of what kind?' exclaimed Madame de Mezières; and then, in an instant, their pretty heads were clustered about the table, and their mouths whispering questions, advice, and precautions, all in a breath. 'It's at Bristol you are to land?' 'The Earl Marischal is for Scotland?' 'You carry 5,000 barrels, Mr. Wogan?' meaning thereby stands of arms. And, 'You may speak with all confidence,' Miss Oglethorpe urged, with a glance this way and that over her shoulders. 'There are none but honest people here. M. de Bellegarde,' and she looked towards the French spark, blushing very prettily, 'is my good friend.'

Mr. Wogan bowed.

'It was not that I doubted M. de Bellegarde,' he replied. 'But 'faith, ladies, I have learnt more of the prospects of the expedition from your questions than ever I knew before. I was told for a certain thing that heads would be broken, and, to be sure, I was content with the information.'

At that Mr. Law laughed. Kelly asked, 'What of the despatch- box, then?' The ladies pouted their resentment; and Mr. Wogan, for the first and last time in his life, wore the reputation of a diplomatist. 'A close man,' said M. de Bellegarde, pursing his lips in approval.

'But sped on an unlikely venture,' added Mr. Law, getting back to his backgammon. 'Oh, I know,' he continued, as the voices rose against him, 'you have grumblings enough in England to fill a folio, and so you think the whole country will hurry to the waterside to welcome you, before you have set half your foot on shore. But, when all is said, the country's prosperous. Your opportunity will come with its misfortunes.'

But Madame de Mezières would hear nothing of such forebodings; and Olive Trant, catching up a glass, swung it above her head.

'May the Oak flourish!' she cried.

Fanny Oglethorpe sprang from her seat. 'May the White Rose bloom!' she answered, giving the counter-word. The pair clinked their glasses.

'Aye, that's the spirit!' cried the Parson. 'Drink, Nick! God save the King! Here's a bumper to him!'

He stood with his face turned upwards, his blue eyes afire. 'Here's to the King!' he repeated. 'Here's to the Cause! God send that nothing ever come between the Cause and

me.' He drained his glass as he spoke, and tossed it over his shoulder. There was a tinkling sound, and a flash of sparks, as it were, when the glass splintered against the wall. George Kelly stood for a moment, arrested in his attitude, his eyes staring into vacancy, as though some strange news had come of a sudden knocking at his heart. Then he hitched his shoulders. 'Bah!' he cried, and began to sing in a boisterous voice some such ditty as

Of all the days that's in the year,
The tenth of June's to me most dear,
When our White Roses do appear
To welcome Jamie the Rover.

Or it may have been

Let our great James come over,
And baffle Prince Hanover,
With hearts and hands in loyal bands,
We'll welcome him at Dover.

It was not the general practice to allow the Parson to sing without protest; for he squeezed less music out of him than any other Irishman could evoke from a deal board with his bare knuckles. When he sang, and may Heaven forgive the application of the word in this conjunction, there was ever a sort of mortal duello between his voice and the tune—very distressing to an audience. But now he sang his song from beginning to end, and no one interrupted him, or so much as clapped a hand over an ear; and this not out of politeness. But his words so rang with a startling fervour; and he stood, with his head thrown back, rigid in the stress

of passion. His voice quavered down to silence, but his eyes still kept their fires, his attitude its fixity. Once or twice he muttered a word beneath his breath, and then a hoarse cry came leaping from his mouth.

'May nothing ever come between the Cause and me, except it be death—except it be death!'

A momentary silence waited upon the abrupt cessation of his voice: Wogan even held his breath; Miss Oglethorpe did not stir; and during that silence, there came a gentle rapping on the door. Kelly looked towards it with a start, as though there was his answer; but the knocking was repeated before anyone moved; it seemed as if suspense had hung its chains upon every limb. It was Mr. Wogan who opened the door, and in stalked Destiny in the shape of a lackey. He carried a note, and handed it to George Kelly.

'The messenger has but this instant brought it,' he said.

Kelly broke the seal, and unfolded the paper.

'From General Dillon,' he said; and, reading the note through, 'Ladies, will you pardon me? Mr. Law, I have your permission? I have but this one night in Paris, and General Dillon has news of importance which bears upon my journey.'

With that he took his hat, and got him from the room. Fanny Oglethorpe sprang up from her chair.

'Sure, my chicken will be ruined,' she cried. 'Come, M. de Bellegarde,' and the pair fell again to stirring in the bowl, and with such indiscriminate vigour that more than once their fingers got entangled. This Mr. Wogan observed, and was sufficiently indiscreet to utter a sly proposal that he should make a third at the stirring.

'There is no need for a third,' said Miss Oglethorpe, with severity. 'But, on the other hand, I want a couple of pats of butter, and a flagon of water; and I shall be greatly obliged if Mr. Wogan will procure me them.' And what with that and other requests which chanced to come into her head, she kept him busy until the famous supper was prepared.

In the midst of that supper back came Mr. Kelly, and plumped himself down in his chair, very full of his intelligence. A glass or two of Mr. Law's burgundy served to warm out of his blood all the reserve that was left over from the morning.

'We are all friends here,' said he, turning to Miss Oglethorpe. 'Moreover, I need the advantage of your advice and knowledge. General Dillon believes that my Lord Oxford maybe persuaded to undertake the muslin trade in Britain.'

'Lord Oxford,' exclaimed Miss Oglethorpe, with a start, for Oxford had lain quiet since he nearly lost his head five years agone. 'He is to collect the money from our supporters?'

'It is the opinion that he will, if properly approached.'

Mr. Law, at the top of the table, shook his head.

'It is a very forward and definite step for so prudential a politician,' said he.

'But a politician laid on a shelf, and pining there,' replied George. 'There's the reason for it. He has a hope of power,—*Qui a bu, boira!* The hope grows real if we succeed.'

'I would trust him no further than a Norfolk attorney,' returned Mr. Law; 'and that's not an inch from the end of my nose. He will swear through a two-inch board to help you, and then turn cat in pan if a Whig but smile at him.'

'Besides,' added Miss Oglethorpe, and she rested, her chin thoughtfully upon her hands. As she spoke, all the eyes in that company were turned on her. 'Besides,' and then she came to a stop, and flushed a little. 'Lord Oxford,' she continued, 'was my good friend when I was in England.' Then she stopped again. Finally she looked straight into M. de Bellegarde's eyes, and with an admirable bravery: 'Some, without reason, have indeed slandered me with stories that he was more than my friend.'

'None, Madame, who know you, I'll warrant,' said M. de Bellegarde, and gravely lifting her hand to his lips, he kissed it.

'Well, that's a very pretty answer,' said she in some confusion. 'So Mr. Kelly may know,' she went on, 'that I speak with some authority concerning my Lord Oxford. It is not he whom I distrust. But he has lately married a young wife.'

'Ah,' said Mr. Law, and 'Oh!' cried Mr. Wogan, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'If a lady is to dabble her tender fingers in the pie—'

'And what of it, Mr. Wogan?' Madame de Mezières took him up coldly.

'Yes, Mr. Wogan, what of it?' repeated Olive Trant hotly, 'provided the lady be loyal.' In an instant Mr. Wogan had the whole nest swarming about his ears, with the exception of Fanny Oglethorpe. It was intimated to him that he had a fine preposterous conceit of his sex, and would he be pleased to justify it?

Madame de Mezières hinted that the ability to swing a shillelagh and bring it down deftly on an offending sconce

did not comprise the whole virtues of mankind. And if it came to the test of dealing blows, why there was Joan of Arc, and what had Mr. Wogan to say to her? Mr. Wogan turned tail, as he always did when women were in the van of the attack.

'Ladies,' he said, 'I do not think Joan of Arc so singular after all, since I see four here who I believe from my soul could emulate her noblest achievements.'

But Mr. Wogan's gallantry went for very little. The cowardice of it was apparent for all that he bowed and laid his hand on his heart, and performed such antics as he thought likely to tickle women into good humour.

'Besides,' put in Lady Cecilia, with a soothing gentleness, 'Mr. Wogan should know that the cause he serves owes, as it is, much to the good offices of women.'

Mr. Wogan had his own opinions upon that point, but he wiped his forehead and had the discretion to hold his tongue. Meanwhile Fanny Oglethorpe, who had sat with frowning brows in silence, diverted the onslaught.

'But it is just the loyalty of Lady Oxford which is in question. Lady Oxford is a Whig, of a Whig family. She is even related to Mr. Walpole, the Minister. I think Mr. Kelly will have to tread very warily at Lord Oxford's house of Brampton Bryan.'

'For my part,' rejoined Mr. Law, 'I think the Chevalier de St. George would do better to follow the example of Mr. Kelly and my friends here.'

'And what is that?' asked Wogan.

'Why, scrape up all the money he can lay hands on and place it in my company of the West.'

Mr. Wogan was not well pleased to hear of his friend's speculation, and, when they left the house together, took occasion to remonstrate with him.

'How much have you placed?' he asked.

'All that I could,' replied George. 'It is little enough— the remnant of my patrimony. Mr. Law lent me a trifle in addition to make up a round sum. It is a very kindly man, and well disposed to me. I have no fears, for all the money in France dances to the tune he fiddles.'

'To his tune, to be sure,' grumbled Wogan; 'but are you equally certain his tune is yours? Oh, I know. He is a monstrous clever man, not a doubt of it. The computation of figures—it is the devil's own gift, and to my nose it smells damnably of sulphur.'

Mr. Wogan has good occasion to reflect how Providence fleers at one's apprehensions when he remembers the sleepless hours during which he tossed upon his bed that night, seeing all the Parson's scanty savings drowned beyond redemption in the China seas. For no better chance could have befallen Kelly than that Wogan's forebodings should have come true. But the venture succeeded. Fanny Oglethorpe made a fortune and married M. de Bellegarde. Olive Trant, the richer by 100,000 pistoles, became Princess of Auvergne. Do they ever remember that night at the Hotel de Mazarin, and how Parson Kelly cried out almost in an agony as though, in the heat of passion, he surmised the future, 'May nothing come between the Cause and me'? Well, for one thing the money came. It placed in his hands a golden key wherewith to unlock the gates of disaster.

CHAPTER II.

MR. WOGAN REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE AN UNDESIRABLE ACQUAINTANCE IN ST. JAMES'S STREET

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Mr. Wogan left Paris early the next morning without a thought for the despatch-box that he had sent to Kelly, and, coming to Cadiz, sailed with the Spaniards out of that harbour on the tenth of March, and into the great storm which dispersed the fleet off Cape Finisterre. In company with the Earl Marischal and the Marquis of Tullibardine, he was aboard one of those two ships which alone touched the coast of Scotland. Consequently, he figured with better men, as Field-Marshal Keith, and his brother the Ambassador, and my Lord George Murray, in that little skirmish at Glenshiel, and very thankful he was when the night shut black upon the valleys and put its limit to the attack of General Wightman's soldiers from Inverness. A council of war was held in the dark upon a hill-side, whence the fires of General Wightman's camp could be seen twinkling ruddily below, but Wogan heard little of what was disputed, for he went to sleep with his back against a boulder and dreamed of his ancestors. He was waked up about the middle of the night by the Earl Marischal, who informed him that the Spaniards had determined to

surrender at discretion, and that the handful of Highlanders were already dispersing to their homes.

'As for ourselves, we shall make for the Western Islands and wait there for a ship to take us off.'

'Then I'll wish you luck and a ship,' said Wogan. He stood up and shook the dew off his cloak. 'I have friends in London, and I'll trust my lucky star to get me there.'

'Your star's in eclipse,' said the Earl. 'You will never reach London except it be with your legs tied under a horse's belly.'

'Well, I'm thinking you have not such a clear path after all to the Western Islands! Did you never hear of my forefather, Thomas Wogan, that rode with twenty-eight Cavaliers through the heart of Cromwell's England, and came safe into the Highlands? Sure what that great man could do with twenty-eight companions to make him conspicuous, his degenerate son can do alone.'

Mr. Wogan began his journey by walking over the hill, near to the top of which his friends had been driven off the road to Inverness by the English fire, which was very well nourished. He made his way to Loch Duich, as they call it, and so by boat round Ardnamurchan, to a hamlet they call Oban. There he changed his dress for the Campbell black and green, and, joining company with a drove of Rob Roy's cattle from the Lennox, travelled to Glasgow. His Irish brogue no doubt sounded a trifle strange in a Highland drover, but he was in a country where the people were friendly. At Glasgow he changed his dress again for a snuff-coloured bourgeois suit, and so rode into England by the old

Carlisle and Preston route, which he had known very well in the year 1715.

Wogan was at this time little more than a lad, though full-grown enough to make a man and a good-sized boy into the bargain, and the exploit of the Cavalier Thomas Wogan, as it had prompted his design, so it exhilarated him in the execution. He went lightly on his way, weaving all manner of chivalric tales about his ancestor, to the great increase of his own vanity, bethinking him when he stopped for an hour at a wayside inn that here, too, perhaps Thomas Wogan had reined in his horse, and maybe had taken a draught from that very pint-pot which Nicholas now held to his lips. Thus the late burst up the hill-side above the Shiel was quickly robbed of its sting, and by the time that he had reached London he was so come to a pitch of confidence in the high destinies of the Wogan family that, after leaving his horse in the charge of Mr. Gunning, of Mussell Hill, whom he knew of old as a staunch friend of George Kelly's, and borrowing from him a more suitable raiment than his stained travelling dress, he must needs walk down St. James's Street with no more disguise than the tilting of his hat over his nose, and the burying of his chin in his cravat.

Soon Mr. Wogan's confidence and, with his confidence, his legs were brought to a sudden check. For when he was come half-way down the hill he saw the figure of one Captain Montague in the uniform of the Guards turn the corner out of Ryder Street and walk towards him. Wogan had met the officer before on an occasion of which he did not wish at this particular moment to be reminded. He wheeled about, took a step or two, and so came again to a

halt. Was it known, he asked himself, that he had sailed from Cadiz and landed in Scotland? If so, and it was a most likely conjecture, then for Wogan to be straggling about St. James's Street was egregious impertinence, and the sooner he got under shelter the better for his neck. Now Wogan's destination was the lodging of George Kelly, not five hundred yards away, in Bury Street. But to reach that lodging it would be necessary for him to turn about again and face the Captain. Would the Captain know him again? Wogan debated the question, and finding no answer, asked himself another. What would Thomas Wogan have done under the like contingency? The answer to that was evident enough. Wogan turned about on the instant, cocked his hat on the back of his head, took his chin out of his cravat, twirled his cane, whistled a tune and sauntered past the Captain, looking him over as if he were so much dirt. The Captain stopped: Wogan felt his heart jump into his throat, whistled a bit louder, and twirled his cane a trifle ferociously. Over his shoulder he saw the Captain draw his brows together and rub a check with the palm of his hand like a man perplexed. The Captain took a step towards Wogan, and stopped again. Wogan sauntered on, expecting every moment to hear his name called, and a clattering run, and then to feel a heavy hand close upon his shoulder. But no voice spoke, no steps clattered on the pavement. Wogan reached the corner and spied up St. James's Street as he turned. The Captain was still standing in the attitude of perplexity; only, instead of smoothing his cheek, he had tilted his peruke aside and was scratching his head to ease the labour of his recollections. At the sight of him the

ancestor and his twenty-eight Cavaliers rode clean out of Mr. Wogan's mind. 'Sure, Thomas wouldn't have done it, but Nicholas will,' said he, and kicking up his heels he ran. He ran along Ryder Street, turned into Bury Street, raced a hundred yards or so up the cobbles, and thundered on the door of Kelly's lodging. Here and there a head was poked from a window, and Mr. Wogan cursed his own noisiness. It seemed an age before the door was opened. Fortunately it was Mrs. Barnes, Kelly's landlady, in person, and not her serving-woman, who stood in the entrance.

'Is the Parson in London?' says Wogan. 'Say that he is, Mrs. Barnes, and say it quick.'

'Why, it's Mr. Wogan!' cries she.

'Whisht, my dear woman!' answered Wogan, pushing through the doorway. 'It's Mr. Hilton. There's no Wogan anywhere in England. Remember that, if you please.'

Mrs. Barnes slammed the door in a hurry.

'Then you are in trouble again,' said she, throwing up her hands.

'Well, there's nothing unusual in that,' said he. 'Sure man is born to it, and who am I that I should escape the inheritance?' and he opened the door of Mr. Kelly's sitting-room. He saw the figure of a man bending over the table. As the door was thrown open, the figure straightened itself hurriedly. There was a sound of an iron lid clanging down upon a box, and the sharp snap of a lock. George Kelly turned and stood between the table and the door, in a posture of defence. Then—

'Nick!' he cried, and grasped his friend's hand. The next moment he let it go. 'What brings you here?' he exclaimed.

'My ancestor,' said Wogan, dropping into a chair. ''Twas his spirit guided me.'

'Then take my word for it,' cried George, 'if there's a Bedlam beyond the grave your ancestor inhabits it.'

Wogan made no reply in words at first. But he rose stiffly from his chair, bowed to Kelly with profuse ceremony, took his hat, and with his hat a step towards the door. Kelly, on the other hand, shut the door, locked it, put the key in his pocket and leaned his back against the panels. Wogan affected to see nothing of these actions, but spoke in a tone of dignity like a man taking his leave.

'Such insults as you are pleased to confer on me,' said he, 'no doubt I deserve, and I take them in all Christian meekness. But when my ancestor Thomas Wogan, God rest his soul for ever and ever, rode with twenty-eight Cavaliers from Dover to Scotland through the thick of his bloodthirsty foes to carry the succour of his presence to the friends of his blessed Majesty of sacred memory King Charles the Second, it was not, I'd have you know, Mr. Kelly, in order that his name should be bespattered after he was dead by a snuffling long-legged surreptitious gawk of a parson who was kicked out of his Dublin pulpit with every circumstance of ignominy because his intellect didn't enable him to compose a homily.'

At this point Wogan drew a long breath, which he sorely needed. It was not at all truth that he had spoken, as he knew—none better. The Parson was indeed stripped of his gown because he preached a very fine homily on the text of 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' wherein he mingled many timely and ingenious allusions to the

Chevalier. Nor was there any particular force in that epithet 'surreptitious,' beyond that it had an abusive twang. Yet it was just that word at which Mr. Kelly took offence.

'Surreptitious,' said he, 'and if you please what is the meaning of that?'

And then surveying Wogan, he began of a sudden to smile.

'Ta-ta-ta,' he said with a grimace.

'It is a pretty though an interjectional wit,' replied Wogan in a high disdain, falling upon long words, as was his fashion on the rare occasions when he cloaked himself with dignity.

'Faith,' continued George, with the smile broadening over his face, 'but it is indeed the very picture of Christian meekness,' and then, breaking into a laugh, 'Will you sit down, you noisy firebrand. As for Thomas Wogan—be damned to him and to all his twenty-eight Cavaliers into the bargain!'

Mr. Wogan will never deny but what the man's laugh was irresistible, for the Parson's features wore in repose something of clerkly look. They were cast in a mould of Episcopal gravity; but when he laughed his blue eyes would lighten at you like the sun from a bank of clouds, and the whole face of him wrinkled and creased into smiles, and his mouth shook a great rumbling laugh out of his throat, and then of a sudden you had come into the company of a jolly man. Wogan put his hat on the table and struggled to preserve his countenance from any expression of friendliness.

'It is the common talk at the Cocoa Tree that you sailed from Cadiz. It is thought that you were one of the remnant

at Glenshiel. Oh, the rumour of your whereabouts has marched before you, and that you might have guessed. But see what it is to know no Virgil, and,' shaking a minatory finger,

'Fama, malum quo non aliud velocius ullum.'

Mr. Wogan bowed before Latin like a sapling before the wind. He seated himself as he was bid.

'And you must needs come parading your monstrous person through the thick of London, like any fashionable gentleman,' continued George. 'What am I to do with you? Why couldn't you lie quiet in a village and send me news of you? Did you meet any of your acquaintance by chance when you came visiting your friend Mr. Kelly? Perhaps you passed the time of day with Mr. Walpole—' and as he spoke the name he stopped abruptly. He walked once or twice across the room, shifting his peruke from one side of his head to the other in the fluster of his thoughts. Then he paused before Wogan.

'Oh, what am I to do with you?' he cried. 'Tell me that, if you please.' But the moment Wogan began,

'Sure, George, it's not you that I will be troubling for my security'—Kelly cut in again:

'Oh, if you have nothing better to say than that, you say nothing at all. It is dribbling baby's talk,' and then he repeated a question earnestly. 'Did you see anyone you knew, or rather did anyone that knows you see you?'

'Why,' replied Wogan meekly, 'I cannot quite tell whether he knows me or not, but to be sure I ran into the arms of

Captain Montague not half a dozen yards from the corner of Ryder Street.'

'Montague!' exclaimed Kelly. Wogan nodded.

'The man who fought against you at Preston siege?'

'The same.'

''Tis a pity you were at so much pains to save his life in that scuffle.'

'Haven't I been thinking that myself?' asked Wogan. 'If only I had left him lying outside the barricades, where he would have been surely killed by the cross-fire, instead of running out and dragging him in! But it is ever the way. Once do a thoroughly good-natured action and you will find it's the thorn in your side that will turn and sting you. But I am not sure that he knew me,' and he related how the Captain had stopped with an air of perplexed recollection, and had then gone on his way. Kelly listened to the account with a certain relief.

'It is likely that he would not remember you. For one thing, he was wounded when you carried him in, and perhaps gave little heed to the features of his preserver. Moreover, you have changed, Nick, in these years. You were a stripling then, a boy of fifteen, and,' here he smiled and laid a hand on Wogan's shoulder, 'you have grown into a baby in four years.'

Then he took another turn across the room. 'Well, and why not?' he said to himself, and finally brought his fist with a bang upon the table. 'I'll hazard it,' said he. 'I am not sure but what it is the safest way,' and, drawing a chair close to Wogan, he sat himself down.

'It was the mention of Mr. Walpole set me on the plan,' he said. 'You heard in Paris that Lady Oxford is a kinsman of his. Well, I go down to Lord Oxford's in two days. It is a remote village in the north of Herefordshire. You shall come with me as my secretary. 'Faith, but I shall figure in my lord's eyes as a person of the greatest importance.'

Mr. Wogan resisted the proposal as being of some risk to his friend, but Kelly would hear of no argument. The plan grew on him, the more he thought of it. 'You can lie snug here for the two days. Mrs. Barnes is to be trusted, devil a doubt. You can travel down with me in safety. I am plain Mr. Johnson here, engaged in smuggling laces from the Continent into England. And once out of London there will be little difficulty in shipping you out of the country until the affair's blown over.'

So it was arranged, and Kelly, looking at his watch, says —

'By my soul, I am late. I should have been with my Lord of Rochester half-an-hour since. The good Bishop will be swearing like a dragoon.'

He clapped his hat on his head, took up his cane, and marched to the door. His hand was on the knob, when he turned.

'By the way, Nick, I have something which belongs to you. 'Twas sent to my lodging in Paris by mistake. I brought it over, since I was sure to set eyes on you shortly.'

'Ah,' said Nick. 'Then you expected me, for all your scolding and bullying.'

'To speak the honest truth, Nick,' said Kelly, with a laugh, 'I have been expecting you all the last week.'

He went into his bedroom, and brought out the strong-box which Wogan had purchased in Paris.

'Sure there was no mistake,' said Wogan. 'I sent it to you as a reward for your discretion.'

'Oh, you did. Well, you wasted your money, for I have no need for it.'

'Nor I,' replied Wogan. 'But it has a very good lock, and will serve to hold your love-letters.'

Kelly laughed carelessly at the careless words, and laid the box aside upon his scrutore. Many a time in the months that followed Wogan saw it there, and the sight of it would waken him to a laugh, for he did not know that a man's liberty, his honour, his love, came shortly to be locked within its narrow space.