

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MESSENGER

"Who makes all this tumult?" shouted the Commissioner. "Why do I see blood and wounds and dead men? And how were you about to handle these women, one of whom by her mien is of no low degree?" and he stared at Cicely.

"The tumult," answered the Abbot, "was caused by yonder fool, Thomas Bolle, a lay-brother of my monastery, who rushed among us armed and shouting 'In the King's name, stay.'"

"Then why did you not stay, Sir Abbot? Is the King's name one to be mocked at? Know that I sent on the man."

"He had no warrant, Sir Commissioner, unless his bull's voice and great axe are a warrant, and I did not stay because we were doing justice upon the three foulest witches in the realm."

"Doing justice? Whose justice and what justice? Say, had you a warrant for your justice? If so, show it me."

"These witches have been condemned by a Court Ecclesiastic, the judges being a bishop, a prior and myself, and in pursuance of that judgment were about to suffer for their sins by fire," replied Maldon.

"A Court Ecclesiastic!" roared Dr. Legh. "Can Courts Ecclesiastic, then, toast free English folk to death? If you would not stand your trial for attempted murder, show me your warrant signed by his Grace the King, or by his Justices of Assize. What! You do not answer. Have you none? I thought as much. Oho, Clement Maldon, you hang-faced Spanish dog, learn that eyes have been on you for long, and now it seems that you would usurp the King's prerogative besides----" and he checked himself, then went on, "Seize that priest, and keep him fast while I make inquiry of this business."

Now some of the Commissioner's guard surrounded Maldon, nor did his own men venture to interfere with them, for they had enough of fighting and were frightened by this talk about the King's warrant.

Then the Commissioner turned to Cicely, and said--

"You are Sir John Foterell's only child, are you not, who allege yourself to be wife to Sir Christopher Harflete, or so says yonder Prioress? Now, what was about to happen to you, and why?"

"Sir," answered Cicely, "I and my waiting-woman and the old sister, Bridget, were condemned to die by fire at those stakes upon a charge of sorcery. Although it is true," she added, "that I knew we should not perish thus."

"How did you know that, Lady? By all tokens your bodies and hot flame were near enough together," and he glanced towards the stakes and the scattered faggots.

"Sir, I knew it because of a vision that God sent to me in my sleep last night."

"Aye, she swore that at the stake," exclaimed a voice, "and we thought her mad."

"Now can you deny that she is a witch?" broke in Maldon. "If she were not one of Satan's own, how could she see visions and prophecy her own deliverance?"

"If visions and prophecies are proof of witchcraft, then, Priest, all Holy Writ is but a seething pot of sorcery," answered Legh. "Then the Blessed Virgin and St. Elizabeth were witches, and Paul and John should have been burnt as wizards. Continue, Lady, leaving out your dreams until a more convenient time."

"Sir," went on Cicely, "we have worked no sorcery, and my crime is that I will not name my child a bastard and sign away my lands and goods to yonder Abbot, the murderer of my father and perhaps of my husband. Oh! listen, listen, you and all folk here, and briefly as I may I will tell my tale. Have I your leave to speak?"

The Commissioner nodded, and she set out her story from the beginning, so sweetly, so simply and with such truth and earnestness, that the concourse of people packed close about her, hung upon her every word, and even Dr. Legh's coarse face softened as he heard. For the half of an hour or more she spoke, telling of her father's death, of her flight and marriage, of the burning of Cranwell Towers, and her widowing, if such it were; of her imprisonment in the Priory and the Abbot's dealings with her and Emlyn; of the birth of her child and its attempted murder by the midwife, his creature; of their trial and condemnation, they being innocent, and of all they had endured that day.

"If you are innocent," shouted a priest as she paused for breath, "what was that Thing dressed in the livery of Satan which worked evil at Blossholme? Did we not see it with our eyes?"

Just then some one uttered an exclamation and pointed to the shadow of the trees where a strange form was moving. Another moment and it came out into the light. One more and all that multitude scattered like frightened sheep, rushing this way and that; yes, even the horses took the bits between their teeth and bolted. For there, visible to all, Satan himself strolled towards them. On his head were horns, behind his back hung down a tail, his body was shaggy like a beast's, and his face hideous and of many colours, while in his hand he held a pronged fork with a long handle. This way and that rushed the throng, only the Commissioner, who had dismounted, stood still, perhaps because he was too afraid to stir, and with him the women and some of the nuns,

including the Prioress, who fell upon their knees and began to utter prayers.

On came the dreadful thing till it reached the King's Visitor, bowing to him and bellowing like a bull, then very deliberately untied some strings and let its horrid garb fall off, revealing the person of Thomas Bolle!

"What means this mummerly, knave?" gasped Dr. Legh.

"Mummerly do you call it, sir?" answered Thomas with a grin. "Well, if so, 'tis on the faith of such mummerly that priests burn women in merry England. Come, good people, come," he roared in his great voice, "come, see Satan in the flesh. Here are his horns," and he held them up, "once they grew upon the head of Widow Johnson's billy-goat. Here's his tail, many a fly has it flicked off the belly of an Abbey cow. Here's his ugly mug, begotten of parchment and the paint-box. Here's his dreadful fork that drives the damned to some hotter corner; it has been death to whole stones of eels down in the marsh-fleet yonder. I have some hell-fire too among the bag of tricks; you'll make the best of brimstone and a little oil dried out upon the hearth. Come, see the devil all complete and naught to pay."

Back trooped the crowd a little fearfully, taking the properties which he held, and handling them, till first one and then all of them began to laugh.

"Laugh not," shouted Bolle. "Is it a matter of laughter that noble ladies and others whose lives are as dear to some," and he glanced at Emlyn, "should grill like herrings because a poor fool walks about clad in skins to keep out the cold and frighten villains? Hark you, I played this trick. I am Beelzebub, also the ghost of Sir John Foterell. I entered the Priory chapel by a passage that I know, and saved yonder babe from murder and scared the murderess down to hell; yes, from the sham devil to the true. Why did I do it? Well, to protect the innocent and scourge the wicked in his pride. But the wicked seized the innocent and the innocent said nothing, fearing lest I should suffer with them, and----O God, you know the rest!

"It was a near thing, a very near thing, but I'm not the half-wit I've feigned to be for years. Moreover, I had a good horse and a heavy axe, and there are still true hearts round Blossholme; the dead men that lie yonder show it. Heaven has still its angels on the earth, though they wear strange shapes. There stands one of them, and there another," and he pointed first to the fat and pompous Visitor, and next to the dishevelled Prioress, adding: "And now, Sir Commissioner, for all that I have done in the cause of justice I ask pardon of you who wear the King's grace and majesty as I wore old Nick's horns and hoofs, since otherwise the Abbot and his hired butchers, who hold themselves masters of King and people, will murder me for this as they have done by better men. Therefore pardon, your Mightiness, pardon," and he kneeled down before him.

"You have it, Bolle; in the King's name you have it," replied Legh, who was more flattered by the titles and attributes poured upon him by the cunning Thomas than a closer consideration might have warranted. "For all that you have done, or left undone, I, the Commissioner of his Grace, declare that you shall go scot free and that no action criminal or civil shall lie against you, and this my secretary shall give to you in writing. Now, good fellow, rise, but steal Satan's plumes no more lest you should feel his claws and beak, for he is an ill fowl to mock. Bring hither that Spaniard Maldon. I have somewhat to say to him."

Now they looked this way and that, but no Abbot could they see. The guards swore that they had never taken eye off him, even when they all ran before the devil, yet certainly he was gone.

"The knave has given us the slip," bellowed the Commissioner, who was purple with rage. "Search for him! Seize him, for which my command shall be your warrant. Draw the wood. I'll to the Abbey, where perchance the fox has gone to earth. Five golden crowns to the man who nets the slimy traitor."

Now every one, burning with zeal to show their loyalty and to win the crowns, scattered on the search, so that presently the three "witches," Thomas Bolle, Mother Matilda, and the nuns, were left standing almost alone and staring at each other and the dead and wounded men who lay about.

"Let us to the Priory," said Mother Matilda, "for by the sun I judge that it is time for evening prayer, and there seem to be none to hinder us."

Thomas went to her horse, which grazed close at hand, and led it up.

"Nay, good friend," she exclaimed, with energy, "while I live no more of that evil beast for me. Henceforth I'll walk till I am carried. Keep it, Thomas, as a gift; it is bought and paid for. Sister, your arm."

"Have I done well, Emlyn?" Bolle asked, as he tightened the girths.

"I don't know," she answered, looking at him sideways. "You played the cur at first, leaving us to burn for your sins, but afterwards, well, you found the wits you say you never lost. Also your manners mended, and yonder captain knave learned that you can handle an axe, so we'll say no more about it, lad, for doubtless that Abbot and his spies were sore task-masters and broke your spirit with their penances and talk of hell to come. Here, lift my lady on to this horse, for she is spent, and let me lean upon your shoulder, Thomas. It's weary work standing at a stake."

Cicely's recollections of the remainder of that day were always shadowy



and tangled. She remembered a prayer of thanksgiving in which she took small part with her lips, she whose heart was one great thanksgiving. She remembered the good sister who had given them the relics of St. Catherine assuring her, as she received them back with care, that these and these alone had worked the miracle and saved their lives. She remembered eating food and straining her boy to her breast, and then she remembered no more till she woke to see the morning sun streaming into that same room whence on the previous day they had been led out to suffer the most horrible of deaths.

Yes, she woke, and see, near by was Emlyn making ready her garments, as she had done these many years, and at her side lay the boy crowing in the sunlight and waving his little arms, the blessed boy who knew not the terrors he had passed. At first she thought that she had dreamed a very evil dream, till by degrees all the truth came back to her, and she shivered at its memory, yes, even as the weight of it rolled off her heart she shivered and whitened like an aspen in the wind. Then she rose and thanked God for His mercies, which were great.

Oh, if the strength of that horse of Thomas Bolle's had failed one short five minutes sooner, she, in whom the red blood still ran so healthily, would have been but a handful of charred bones. Or if her faith had left her so that she had yielded to the Abbot and shortened all his talk at the place of burning, then Bolle would have come too late. But it proved sufficient to her need, and for this also truly she should be thankful to its Giver.

After they had eaten, a message came to them from the Prioress, who desired to see them in her chamber. Thither they went, rejoiced to find that they were no longer prisoners but had liberty to come and go, and found her seated in a tall chair, for she was too stiff to walk. Cicely ran to her, knelt down and kissed her, and she laid her left hand upon her head in blessing, for the right was cut with the chafing of the reins.

"Surely, Cicely," she said, smiling, "it is I who should kneel to you, were I in any state to do so. For now I have heard all the tale, and it seems that we have a prophetess among us, one favoured with visions from on high, which visions have been most marvellously fulfilled."

"That is so, Mother," she answered briefly, for this was a matter of which she would never talk at length, either then or thereafter, "but the fulfilment came through you."

"My daughter, I was but the minister, you were the chosen seer, still let the holy business lie a while. Perhaps you will tell me of it afterwards, and meantime the world and its affairs press us hard. Your deliverance has been bought at no small cost, my daughter, for know that yonder coarse and ungodly man, the King's Visitor, told me as we rode that this Nunnery must be dissolved, its house and revenues seized, and I and my sisters turned out to starve in our old age. Indeed, to bring him here at all I was forced to petition that it might be so in a

writing that I signed. See, then, how great is my love for you, dear Cicely."

"Mother," she answered, "it cannot be, it shall not be."

"Alas! child, how will you prevent it? These Visitors, and those who commission them, are hungry folk. I hear they take the lands and goods of poor religious such as we are, and if these are fortunate, give one or two of them a little pittance to get bread. Once I had moneys of my own, but I spent them to buy back the Valley Farm which the Abbot had seized, and of late to satisfy his extortions," and she wept a little.

"Mother, listen. I have wealth hidden away, I know not where exactly, but Emlyn knows. It is my very own, the Carfax jewels that came to me from my mother. It was because of these that we were brought to the stake, since the Abbot offered us life in return for them, and when it was too late to save us, a more merciful death than that by fire. But I forbade Emlyn to yield the secret; something in my heart told me to do so, now I know why. Mother, the price of those gems shall buy back your lands, and mayhap buy also permission from his Grace the King for the continuance of your house, where you and yours shall worship as those who went before you have done for many generations. I swear it in my own name and in that of my child and of my husband also--if he lives."

"Your husband if he lives might need this wealth, sweet Cicely."

"Then, Mother, except to save his life, or liberty or honour, I tell you I will refuse it to him, who, when he learns what you have done for me and our son, would give it you and all else he has besides--nay, would pay it as an honourable debt."

"Well, Cicely, in God's name and my own I thank you, and we'll see, we'll see! Only be advised, lest Dr. Legh should learn of this treasure. But where is it, Emlyn? Fear not to tell me who can be secret, for it is well that more than one should know, and I think that your danger is past."

"Yes, speak, Emlyn," said Cicely, "for though I never asked before, fearing my own weakness, I am curious. None can hear us here."

"Then, Mistress, I will tell you. You remember that on the day of the burning of Cranwell we sought refuge on the central tower, whence I carried you senseless to the vault. Now in that vault we lay all night, and while you swooned I searched with my fingers till I found a stone that time and damp had loosened, behind which was a hollow. In that hollow I hid the jewels that I carried wrapt in silk in the bosom of my robe. Then I filled up the hole with dust scraped from the floor, and replaced the stone, wedging it tight with bits of mortar. It is the third stone counting from the eastern angle in the second course above the floor line. There I set them, and there doubtless they lie to this day, for unless the tower is pulled down to its foundations none will ever find them in that masonry."

At this moment there came a knocking on the door. When it was opened by Emlyn a nun entered, saying that the King's Visitor demanded to speak with the Prioress.

"Show him here since I cannot come to him," said Mother Matilda, "and you, Cicely and Emlyn, bide with me, for in such company it is well to have witnesses."

A minute later Dr. Legh appeared accompanied by his secretaries, gorgeously attired and puffing from the stairs.

"To business, to business," he said, scarcely stopping to acknowledge the greetings of the Prioress. "Your convent is sequestrated upon your own petition, Madam, therefore I need not stop to make the usual inquiries, and indeed I will admit that from all I hear it has a good repute, for none allege scandal against you, perhaps because you are all too old for such follies. Produce now your deeds, your terrier of lands and your rent-rolls, that I may take them over in due form and dissolve the sisterhood."

"I will send for them, Sir," answered the Prioress humbly; "but, meanwhile, tell us what we poor religious are to do? I am turned sixty years of age, and have dwelt in this house for forty of them; none of my sisters are young, and some of them are older than myself. Whither shall we go?"

"Into the world, Madam, which you will find a fine, large place. Cease snuffing prayers and from all vulgar superstitions--by the way, forget not to hand over any reliquaries of value, or any papistical emblems in precious metals that you may possess, including images, of which my secretaries will take account--and go out into the world. Marry there if you can find husbands, follow useful trades there. Do what you will there, and thank the King who frees you from the incumbrance of silly vows and from the circle of a convent's walls."

"To give us liberty to starve outside of them. Sir, do you understand your work? For hundreds of years we have sat at Blossholme, and during all those generations have prayed to God for the souls of men and ministered to their bodies. We have done no harm to any creature, and what wealth came to us from the earth or from the benefactions of the pious we have dispensed with a liberal hand, taking nothing for ourselves. The poor by multitudes have fed at our gates, their sick we have nursed, their children we have taught; often we have gone hungry that they might be full. Now you drive us forth in our age to perish. If that is the will of God, so be it, but what must chance to England's poor?"

"That is England's business, Madam, and the poor's. Meanwhile I have told you that I have no time to waste, since I must away to London to make report concerning this Abbot of yours, a veritable rogue, of whose villainous plots I have discovered many things. I pray you send a

messenger to bid them hurry with the deeds."

Just then a nun entered bearing a tray, on which were cakes and wine. Emlyn took it from her, and pouring the wine into cups offered them to the Visitor and his secretaries.

"Good wine," he said, after he had drunk, "a very generous wine. You nuns know the best in liquor; be careful, I pray you, to include it in your inventory. Why, woman, are you not one of those whom that Abbot would have burnt? Yes, and there is your mistress, Dame Foterell, or Dame Harflete, with whom I desire a word."

"I am at your service, Sir," said Cicely.

"Well, Madam, you and your servant have escaped the stake to which, as near as I can judge, you were sentenced upon no evidence at all. Still, you were condemned by a competent ecclesiastical Court, and under that condemnation you must therefore remain until or unless the King pardons you. My judgment is, then, that you stay here awaiting his command."

"But, Sir," said Cicely, "if the good nuns who have befriended me are to be driven forth, how can I dwell on in their house alone? Yet you say I must not leave it, and indeed if I could, whither should I go? My husband's hall is burnt, my own the Abbot holds. Moreover, if I bide here, in this way or in that he will have my life."

"The knave has fled away," said Dr. Legh, rubbing his fat chin.

"Aye, but he will come back again, or his people will, and, Sir, you know these Spaniards are good haters, and I have defied him long. Oh, Sir, I crave the protection of the King for my child's sake and my own, and for Emlyn Stower also."

The Commissioner went on rubbing his chin.

"You can give much evidence against this Maldon, can you not?" he asked at length.

"Aye," broke in Emlyn, "enough to hang him ten times over, and so can I."

"And you have large estates which he has seized, have you not?"

"I have, Sir, who am of no mean birth and station."

"Lady," he said, with more deference in his voice, "step aside with me, I would speak with you privately," and he walked to the window, where she followed him. "Now tell me, what was the value of these properties of yours?"

"I know not rightly, Sir, but I have heard my father say about £300 a year."



His manner became more deferential still, since for those days such wealth was great.

"Indeed, my Lady. A large sum, a very comfortable fortune if you can get it back. Now I will be frank with you. The King's Commissioners are not well paid and their costs are great. If I so arrange your matters that you come to your own again and that the judgment of witchcraft pronounced against you and your servant is annulled, will you promise to pay me one year's rent of these estates to meet the various expenses I must incur on your behalf?"

Now it was Cicely's turn to think.

"Surely," she answered at length, "if you will add a condition--that these good sisters shall be left undisturbed in their Nunnery."

He shook his fat head.

"It is not possible now. The thing is too public. Why, the Lord Cromwell would say I had been bribed, and I might lose my office."

"Well, then," went on Cicely, "if you will promise that one year of grace shall be given to them to make arrangements for their future."

"That I can do," he answered, nodding, "on the ground that they are of

blameless life, and have protected you from the King's enemy. But this is an uncertain world; I must ask you to sign an indenture, and its form will be that you acknowledge to have received from me a loan of £300 to be repaid with interest when you recover your estates."

"Draw it up and I will sign, Sir."

"Good, Madam; and now that we may get this business through, you will accompany me to London, where you will be safe from harm. We'll not ride to-day, but to-morrow morning at the light."

"Then my servant Emlyn must come also, Sir, to help me with the babe, and Thomas Bolle too, for he can prove that the witchcraft upon which we were condemned was but his trickery."

"Yes, yes; but the costs of travel for so many will be great. Have you, perchance, any money?"

"Yes, Sir, about £50 in gold that is sewn up in one of Emlyn's robes."

"Ah! A sufficient sum. Too much indeed to be risked upon your persons in these rough times. You will let me take charge of half of it for you?"

"With pleasure, Sir, trusting you as I do. Keep to your bargain and I will keep to mine."

"Good. When Thomas Legh is fairly dealt with, Thomas Legh deals fairly, no man can say otherwise. This afternoon I will bring the deed, and you'll give me that £25 in charge."

Then, followed by Cicely, he returned to where the Prioress sat, and said--

"Mother Matilda, for so I understand you are called in religion, the Lady Harflete has been pleading with me for you, and because you have dealt so well by her I have promised in the King's name that you and your nuns shall live on here undisturbed for one year from this day, after which you must yield up peaceable possession to his Majesty, whom I will beg that you shall be pensioned."

"I thank you, Sir," the Prioress answered. "When one is old a year of grace is much, and in a year many things may happen--for instance, my death."

"Thank me not--a plain man who but follows after justice and duty. The documents for your signature shall be ready this afternoon, and by the way, the Lady Harflete and her servant, also that stout, shrewd fellow, Thomas Bolle, ride with me to London to-morrow. She will explain all. At three of the clock I wait upon you."

The Visitor and his secretaries bustled out of the room as pompously as they had entered, and when they had gone Cicely explained to Mother

Matilda and Emlyn what had passed.

"I think that you have done wisely," said the Prioress, when she had listened. "That man is a shark, but better give him your little finger than your whole body. Certainly, you have bargained well for us, for what may not happen in a year? Also, dear Cicely, you will be safer in London than at Blossholme, since with the great sum of £300 to gain that Commissioner will watch you like the apple of his eye and push your cause."

"Unless some one promises him the greater sum of £1000 to scotch it," interrupted Emlyn. "Well, there was but one road to take, and paper promises are little, though I grudge the good £25 in gold. Meanwhile, Mother, we have much to make ready. I pray you send some one to find Thomas Bolle, who will not be far away, for since we are no longer prisoners I wish to go out walking with him on an errand of my own that perchance you can guess. Wealth may be useful in London town for all our sakes. Also horses and a packbeast must be got, and other things."

In due course Thomas Bolle was found fast asleep in a neighbour's house, for after his adventures and triumph he had drunk hard and rested long. When she discovered the truth Emlyn rated him well, calling him a beer-tub and not a man, and many other hard names, till at last she provoked him to answer, that had it not been for the said beer-tub she

would be but ash-dust this day. Thereon she turned the talk and told them their needs, and that he must ride with them to London. To this he replied that good horses should be saddled by the dawn, for he knew where to lay hands on them, since some were left in the Abbot's stables that wanted exercise; further, that he would be glad to leave Blossholme for a while, where he had made enemies on the yesterday, whose friends yet lay wounded or unburied. After this Emlyn whispered something in his ear, to which he nodded assent, saying that he would bustle round and be ready.

That afternoon Emlyn went out riding with Thomas Bolle, who was fully armed, as she said, to try two of the horses that should carry them on the morrow, and it was late when she returned out of the dark night.

"Have you got them?" asked Cicely, when they were together in their room.

"Aye," she answered, "every one; but some stones have fallen, and it was hard to win an entrance to that vault. Indeed, had it not been for Thomas Bolle, who has the strength of a bull, I could never have done it. Moreover, the Abbot has been there before us and dug over every inch of the floor. But the fool never thought of the wall, so all's well.

I'll sew half of them into my petticoat and half into yours, to share the risk. In case of thieves, the money that hungry Visitor has left to us, for I paid him over half when you signed the deeds, we will carry openly in pouches upon our girdles. They'll not search further. Oh, I

forgot, I've something more besides the jewels, here it is," and she produced a packet from her bosom and laid it on the table.

"What's this?" asked Cicely, looking suspiciously at the worn sail-cloth in which it was wrapped.

"How can I tell? Cut it and see. All I know is that when I stood at the Nunnery door as Thomas led away the horses, a man crept on me out of the rain swathed in a great cloak and asked if I were not Emlyn Stower. I said Yea, whereon he thrust this into my hand, bidding me not fail to give it to the Lady Harflete, and was gone."

"It has an over-seas look about it," murmured Cicely, as with eager, trembling fingers she cut the stitches. At length they were undone and a sealed inner wrapping also, revealing, amongst other documents, a little packet of parchments covered with crabbed, unreadable writing, on the back of which, however, they could decipher the names of Shefton and Blossholme by reason of the larger letters in which they were engrossed. Also there was a writing in the scrawling hand of Sir John Foterell, and at the foot of it his name and, amongst others, those of Father Necton and of Jeffrey Stokes. Cicely stared at the deeds, then said--

"Emlyn, I know these parchments. They are those that my father took with him when he rode for London to disprove the Abbot's claim, and with them the evidence of the traitorous words he spoke last year at Shefton. Yes, this inner wrapping is my own; I took it from the store of worn linen in

the passage-cupboard. But how come they here?"

Emlyn made no answer, only lifted the wrappings and shook them, whereon a strip of paper that they had not seen fell to the table.

"This may tell us," she said. "Read, if you can; it has words on its inner side."

Cicely snatched at it, and as the writing was clear and clerkly, read with ease save for the chokings of her throat. It ran--

"My Lady Harflete,

"These are the papers that Jeffrey Stokes saved when your father fell. They were given for safekeeping to the writer of these words, far away across the sea, and he hands them on unopened. Your husband lives and is well again, also Jeffrey Stokes, and though they have been hindered on their journey, doubtless he will find his way back to England, whither, believing you to be dead, as I did, he has not hurried. There are reasons why I, his friend and yours, cannot see you or write more, since my duty calls me hence. When it is finished I will seek you out if I still live. If not, wait in peace until your joy finds you, as I think it will.

"One who loves your lord well, and for his sake you also."

Cicely laid down the paper and burst into a flood of weeping.

"Oh, cruel, cruel!" she sobbed, "to tell so much and yet so little. Nay, what an ungrateful wretch am I, since Christopher truly lives, and I also live to learn it, I, whom he deems dead."

"By my soul," said Emlyn, when she had calmed her, "that cloaked man is a prince of messengers. Oh, had I but known what he bore I'd have had all the story, if I must cling to him like Potiphar's wife to Joseph. Well, well, Joseph got away and half a herring is better than no fish, also this is good herring. Moreover, you have got the deeds when you most wanted them and what is better, a written testimony that will bring the traitor Maldon to the scaffold."