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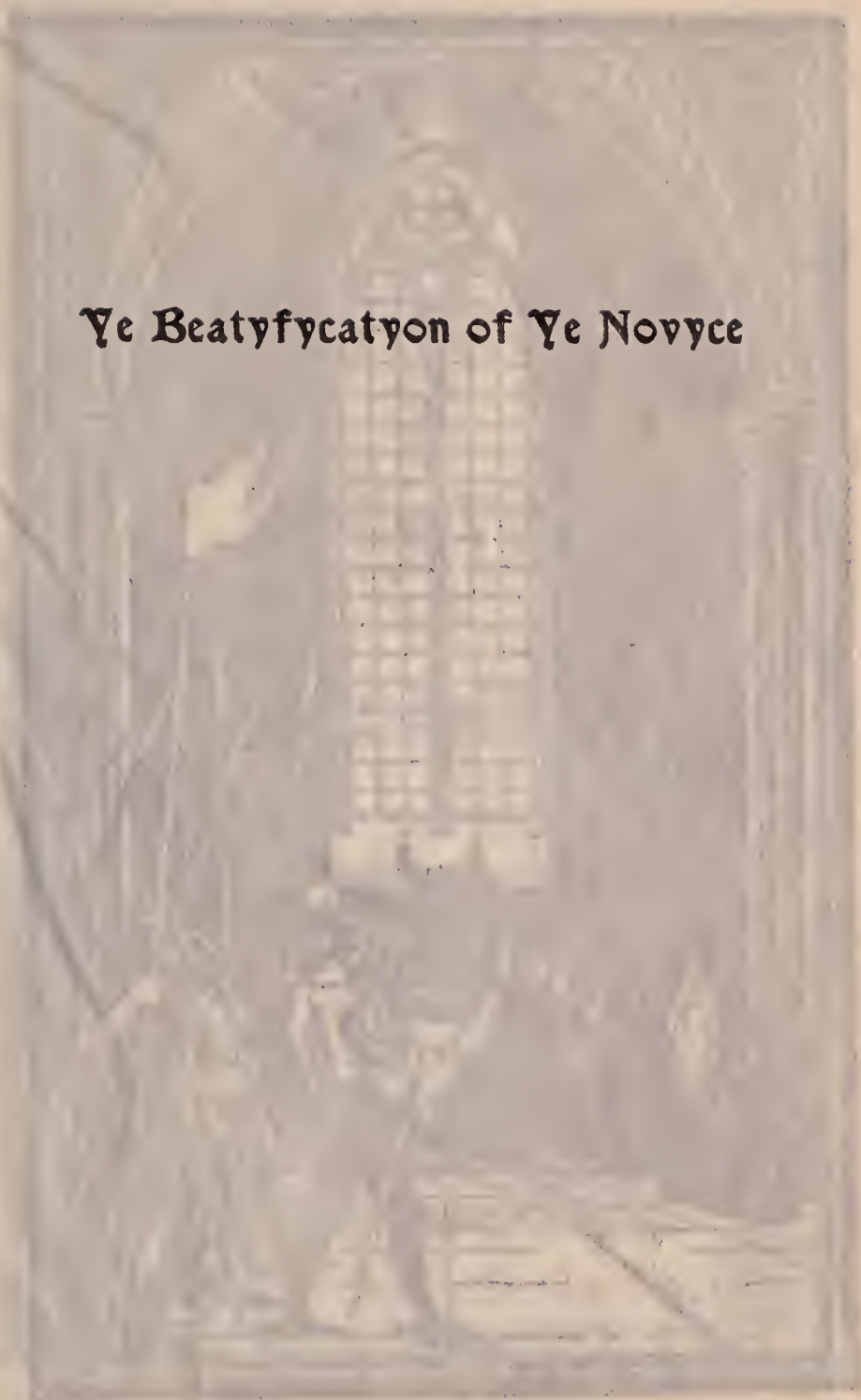
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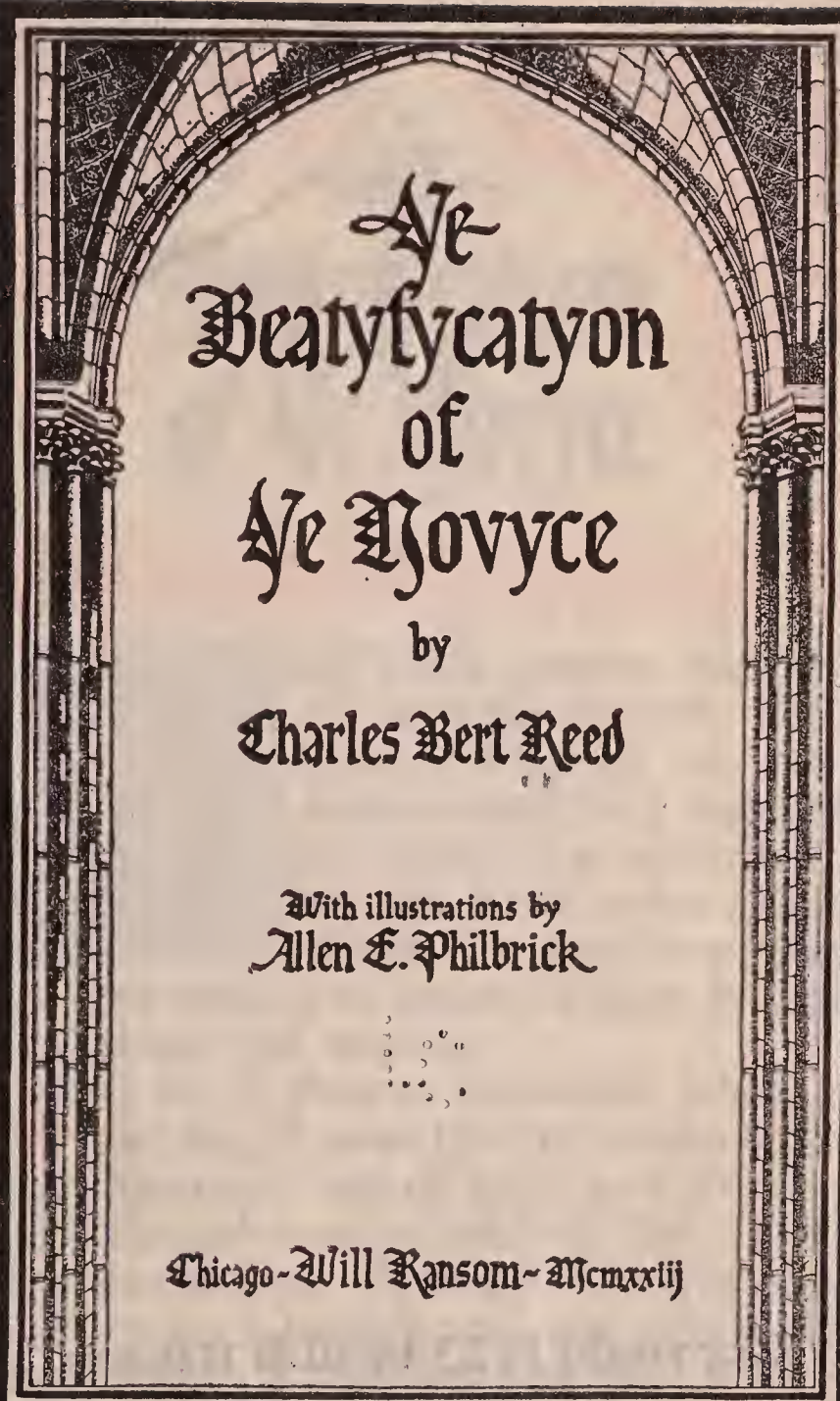
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Ye Beatyfycatyon of Ye Novyce







Ae
Beatyfycatyon
of
Ae Hovyce

by

Charles Bert Reed

With illustrations by
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Ye
Beatyfycatyon
of Ye Hovyce



HVVNG growen olde yn
ye servyce of oure dred
Prynce Henrye, of that
name ye eighth, I beganne
to esteme yt a heavie mat-
ter and hard to remayne a
clarke, for verylie whyles
one may wepe and smart, others live yn
pleasaunce and wealth.

SOE as I, Henrye Tunstall, loked a-
bout mee, I sawe that ye monks ledde
easie lives and waxed fatte and great---
soe fatte and ynsolent yndede that I lust-
ed to become one. Ye more I thought upon
yt, ye more I lusted, and soe yn tyme I
journeyed to a holy Brotherhood wher I
hoped to spend my daies.

WHYLES ye place and ye work wer new meseemeth yt wer not amyss, but anon I was put to labour among ye hynds and thenne I wyst I hadde caught a sprat yn place of a herryng for daie after daie must I swinke and sweat yn ye scullerie whyles ye brethren held hygh revel yn ye common hall. Nedes must thys wekened my stomacke and I cast about for other thyngs but not hurriedlie, for yt ys ye hasty bytch that bryngeth forth blynd whelps. Soe after a long yeare yt fortunéd that I went to Crabhouse Pryorie, an house of closed Nunnes yn Norfolk near ye sea and here, after muche trouble, for I styl bore my bodie upryght, I became ye gardener.

YN thys place I dwelt for a space of three yeares or more & hoped to live tyl ye ende for ye worke was not harde, ye livyng was goode and ye open ayre gave mee a bolde stomacke.

YN ye cellar, too, there wer fine Italian wynes whych ye goode Pryoress had fetched from London and many wethers grazed & fattened on ye grene grass that covered ye broad pastures whych sloped from ye Pryorie doun to ye fennes where ye river runneth gentlie & pleasantlie toward ye sea.

NOTE ye smal heyght whereon ye Pryorie satte amidde ye granaries and barns, trees and boscage, was so sette apart from ye Kyng's hyghway that ye quiet was rarely sturred save by those who had to-do wyth ye holy sisters. Ye most frequent vysitor, and hee came not often, was ye Abbot of Bollyngton who lived not many myles awaye. Whenever hee retourned from London, hee toke occasion to ryde to Crabhouse Pryorie wherein hee was ryght welcome, not onely for hys cherey gossyp of ye cytie and hys merrie jests but also for ye trynkets hee brought. Hys arryval at ye Pryorie was a sign for a great feast for hee was a wyttie man of fyne parts, a jollie felowe whose velvet gown glystened wyth golden cheynes and hys mytered cappe shone wyth great perles.

YT wold do a man good yn hys heart to see how prouddie hee rode and sette forth yn hys gallant appareylle wyth a great route of servants swarmyng about ye housyngs of hys horse.

SOOCH to say, hee caused mucche fluteryng yn our dove cote and aspecially when hee satte at mete wyth ye Pryoress yn ye byg hall, for then ye nunnes scurryed hyther and yon lyke ants to bryng

comforts wyth wyne and swetes of whych
hee was over-fond.

YT was a rare syght to see them all,
both byg and lyttle, double uppe lyke
flayles as they louted low before theyre
betters. I say all, but I should except ye
Novyce for at thys tyme there was but one
and shee only a wysp of a gyrl, an orphan
who hadde bene attached to ye Pryorie by
wyl. Shee was full of young, warm and
lustie blood and her feet travelled faster
than any and on thys account shee came
muche oftener before ye Abbott, but shee
loked hym evenly yn ye eye and bent rare-
lie, beyng as yet untrayned and knowyng
not her ful dutie to ye man of God.

NO proper and fayre was shee, wyth
a comelie red yn her cheks, lyppes
lyke rowan berries and nothyng yn her
body that you would have changed. So
wynsome, too, was shee that ye Abbott yn
hys goodness overloked her lack of man-
ners and one tyme hee patted her cheke ful
fatherlie, whereat ye Pryoress was wroth
and not afterward dyd ye mayd appear yn
ye halle.

THUS wer her faults rebuked, and yn
other waies her trayning as a lad-
de nunne went on apace. Not few wer ye
tymes that I leaned on my spade behynd

ye shraggie boscage and lystened to ye words of wysdom wherewyth ye noble Pryoress gave of her charytie some fruytful admonytion and ledde her charge forward yn ye sanctyfyed lyfe.

YE Pryoress was a sadde, discrete and auncient dame and I, beyng also wel stryken wyth years, wyst her words to bee sooth and wel spoke. Most so when shee cautyoned agaynst ye frayltyes of ye flesh and ye synnes of ye world whych maydens should not know nor never even thynk. These whyles ye Novyce cast down her eyen ful modestlie and anon shee wept sore but methought upon occasyon, for I could not wel hear at al tymes, shee asked shrewd questyons and yn nowise humble. These ye Pryoress answered not but bade her to have fayth, but otherwhyles ye olde dame encouraged her zele and commended her enthusyasm

“A great stress wyl come,” sayd ye Pryoress, “yn whych thy relygyon wyl bee a strong staff & many there bee who have attayned sanctytie and even beatyfycatyon for ryghtousness yn such sore trybulatyon.”

SO spake ye Pryoress and ye Novyce raysed her voyce yn gladness and hoped ye tryal myght come soon. But for

my part I put lytle store by thys sythe I wotte wel a certayne man who walked yn sanctytie and hys upryght lyfe and noble speech brought comfort and compassyon to hys afflycted neyghbors. Thenne yt happed that ye troopers slew hys sow, whereupon hee dropped hys godlie garments and went to ye Deuyl. Styl women are uncertayne and none can say whyther ye catte wyl jump.

YE Pryoress contynued ever her exhortatyon & needs must ye mayd grew ever more godlie therby but shee was styl restless of foot, alert & seeking of countenance, and gayned not peace as one would expect. As touchyng thys I watched and doubted for when ye Novyce passed mee, all woful yn outward seemyng, her dark eyen loked out yn merrie guyse & always as yf shee asked mee also a questyon.

AT ye same tyme I felt warm, youthful and soe stronglie drawne that I bore myself upryght & loked after her as shee pressed down ye sward wyth her dayntie feet. Ofttymes shee made a lytle spryng that was so worldlie and yet so graceful and so featlie done wythal that my heart leaped, my breath came short, and yt happed thereafter that I told not ye Pryoress as my dutie bade.

YN tyme too yt came to mee that beyng so young and stark shee could make my old age verie comfortable. Yn sooth, yt began to appear to mee ryght shameful that soe muche spryghtlyness and youth should be wasted and lost yn an house of close Nunnes for wel I knew that her gay lokes and her comelie chekes would pass wyth tyme and trouble ynto a yellow and wythered old age. But of age shee was unknowyng and of trouble not heedful.

TRIBULACIYON yndede, there was enough and more to follow, for every litle whyle came rumours that oure dred Kyng Henrie, beyng headstrong, lyked not ye Pope to gaynsaie hym and had yt yn mynd to bee hymself ye Holie father to our Englyshe people. But of these thyngs at that tyme there was no certayntie and whosoe conjectureth may as wel aym too farre as too short. Moreover, other troubles lay yet closer for ever and anon came a monk or a nunne wanderyng miserablie who told that oure perylous Prynce hadde sette hys face agaynst ye monasteries and convents. Some hee hadde destroyed out of hand, whyle to others hee hadde sent euyl men for to spie out and bryng tydyngs of euyl thyngs, whereon hee myght myschyeuouslie act.

YOU may wel believe that we at Crabhouse felt the uncertayntie & feared ye loss of our livyngs and justlie for such comforts and larders wer not to be found yn alle England outsyde ye holie places wher God protected hys followers. Beyng but one man yt behooved mee to take noe juopardie yn such noyous tymes and soe I slept yn ye grey stone granarie wyth ye bar pulled across ye door, lest desparate menne should bryng trybulatyon upon us, as yn sooth they dyd yn ye end but al dyd not suffer alyke as you may see.

NYGHTE after nyght dyd I lie awake yn ye granarie thynkyng upon ye Novyce who seemed soe bent on consecratyng her goodlie daies to our holie relygyon. My ynclynatyon ledde mee to consyder waies for weanyng her from thys doubtful doom but when a plan seemed readie I became uneasie and there would fall upon mee a great fere of ye rovyng men-at-arms & so between desyre & dread I slept but lytle.

YN such perplexytie and alarm ye wynter slypped by and such a gay spryng came as one sees onlie yn our fayre land of England. Ye flowers & al ye grene thyngs perked up theyre prettie heads but so alsoe dyd ye vyle weeds whych I cleared out wyth mucche yrksome travaylle.

DURING thys space I saw but lytle of ye Novyce, save at such tymes as shee fared forth among ye flowers & ye trees to take ye ayre and heare ye smal fowles syng. Shee was goodlie to loke upon and shee stepped wyth soe lyght a step and shewed soe blyth a spyryt that I fered for her soul but even so I wyshed shee wer less devoted to ye order of close Nunnes. When shee thought shee was alone oft tymes her laugh was loud & quick but thereafter dyd shee wepe ful sore. By these sygns I wyst yn sooth that her soul was yn payne & I felt stranglie drawn to help her secure ye muche-sought peace yn our blessed relygyon, but I wythheld and approached not leste I lose my livyng and further I hoped that somethyng myght happen to send her to mee.

THUS ye daies passed yn peace to al seemyng untyl one afternoon as ye Novyce trypped by and I bore myself up-ryght to loke after her as my custom was I heard ye olde famylyar sound of clankyng harness.

QUICKLY I loked overland & caught ye glynt of armour through ye lush bracken of ye roadwaie down by ye fennes. Thys euyl syght could bode us noe good and fereyng for ye safetie of al I broke ye

rule of sylence and advysed ye spryghtlie wench to flie to ye house. Shee turned yn surpryse and asked wherefore. Thenne I poynted oute ye ryders & shee was muche moved. Her eyen lyghted uppe & ye redde of her prettie chekes both waxed and waned, but shee fled not, nor dyd shee shew ye fere and dred that such a syght must surelie bryng to one who ys seasoned yn ye fayth and assured of a Heavens lyfe.

“Peradventure,” sayd shee, “thys ys ye crysis of whych ye Mother Superior spoke and nowe, mayhap, I shal goe forward to sanctyfycatyon.”

UPON thys I chyded her & drove her onward untill shee was lost to syght among ye trees around ye Pryorie. I remayned a short space to scan ye ryders, but when they turned ynward I was fylled wyth mysgyvyns and hurried to ye Pryorie wyth ye tydyngs.

YE mayde I saw not at thys tyme but I came upon ye Pryoress yn ye common hall. God wot by nowe I was alle a-tremble and my teeth beate and battered ryght heavylie yette sooth to saie what I then spoke brought muche concern to ye face of ye noble dame & muche confusyon and gryef to ye goode systers who hastened yn wyth a strange bodyng of euyl &

yn and oute they ran & cryed harrow and weylaway, yn ye mydst of whych a companie of lean ryders came clankyng ynto ye yard hedded by a youngysh cavalier.

YE Pryoress, albeyt somewhat pale, flynched not for shee was of noble byrth, and when ye ryders hadde dysmounted shee drew herself uppe & sayd, "Tunstall, go forth and ask theyr busyness for I fere they be foullie sent."

THYS dutie I myslyked, knowyng wel ye waies of hardie knaves wyth men lyke mee, but as I held back, consyderyng what I myght saie or how I myght escape, her ladieshippe loked at mee fiercelie and stamped her foot whereupon I went forward hastylie onlie to meet ye master captayn comyng ynto ye common hall.

HYS hat swept ye floor yn a courtlie guyse as hee ynquyred, "Have I ye honour to haylsaie ye noble Pryoress?"

"That ye do," sayed her ladieshippe, "but prythee tell mee by what ryght you thus yntrude upon oure sacred pryvacie."

"Symplie enough my ladie," replied ye captayn, takyng a great roll from under hys cloke, "for I bryng to ye a greetyng from master Cromwell, ye servant of oure Perylous Prynce, whych greetyng ye are to rede to ye chapiter."

UPON thys ye Pryoress drew up her shoulders as proude ladies do when dystressed and turned to assemble all of ye nunnes, onlie to dyscover that alle wer gathered, not exceptyng ye Novyce who had crept yn from behynd stealthylie just as master Captayn's hat swept ye rushes from ye floor.

YE redyng toke but a short tyme & was yndede nothyng other than oure feres warranted. Yt commanded ye closyng of ye Pryorie, ye dyssolutyon of ye membershpye & announced ye confyscatyon of ye estate to ye Crown.

TO women whose lives hadde al been spent yn ye shelter of those walls, deth would seeme easyer, natheless each toke ye blow accordyng to her stomacke. Some wrung theyr hands and wept and others laughed aloud and then fell down. But ye Pryoress stode staunch, beyng of hygh byrth, and I marvelled mucche at her corage as shee chered her flock, for I, too, hadde lost an easie place wyth but scant warnyng. Yet yt came to mee that wyth ye breakyng uppe of ye Pryorie, ye Novyce would be sette adrift, & ye affayre myght go forward to my advantage. Wyth thys yn mynde I sought for her among ye nunnes. As ye pent flock ys scattered by ye

ravenyng wolf, soe that doleful companie ranne hyther and yon yn gryef and dysarray. But as I loked from one to another of ye waylyng women I saw that among them alle ye Novyce alone was not greatlie cast down but seemed yndede more ynterested than afered. And soothe to saie her chekes flamed from ye eager turmoyl whyle her bryght lokes scarce left ye upryght fygure of ye young Captayne.

FOR a Kyng's ryder, forsooth, hee was not bad to see, for he hadde a proude porte and was wel fetured, and of bodie strong & clene made. As I turned agayne from ye Novyce I sawe hym shrewedlie runne hys eyen over ye wepyng nunnes untyl they reached ye mayde and there they clung lyke a bee to a flower. Then after a tyme hee announced slowlie that havynge come a long waie hee and hys men would staie over nyght at ye convent. Thys news, as ye maie wel belyeve was sore dyspleasyng, but depryved of power as wel as her convent, ye Pryoresse could not gaynsaie hym, soe shee left ye common halle wyth her women, & quicke thereyn thronged ye men-at-arms.

YN ye hall was then a scene of wyld dysorder for ye troopers overranne everythyng lyke dogges seekyng a scent.



Some brought freshe mutton up from ye fields or poultrie from ye barns whyle ye others stode at ye fyre and turned spyts on whych they rosted haunches, saddles, and joynts soe fatte & savourie that anie man's mouth woulde water that was not drie wyth fere. Others, menewhyle, carryed flagons of wyne from ye cool cellars and pyllaged from ye kytchyn so that yn noe long tyme ye tables wer loaded down wyth vytayles and drynk, and every one thenne sette to.

THROUGHOUT al dyd mucche tryb-
ulatyon fall upon mee for they spar-
ed not my age. farre & fast was I dryven
by ye troopers, and fetched and carryed
wythout stynt. Thys I dyd unwyllinglie
as you can know. But I hydde thys feel-
yng carefullie syth ye good Kyng's troop-
ers are ever harsh yn theyr dealyngs wyth
servyng menne, & ye waie to Heaven from
al places ys of lyke length and dystance.

HOURE after houre they satte at mete
and wyth goode and dayntie foods
they fylled theyr bellyes. At tymes I heard
them laugh and boast of theyr euyl dedes.
How they burned Hardscrabble Monaster-
ie because ye monks wer lordlie and con-
temed them, and how they hadde pyllled ye
Abbie of Bollyngton and left ye goode

Abbott and hys fellowes half dead wyth fryght. Suche tales left mee weke of back and bent of knee though none other harm came of yt. Soone darkness fell & ye candles shone dym, and ye cressets smoked and flared whyle yet they shouted, sang, smoked & bantered theyr coarse jests after ye maner of troopers.

AT length whenne theyr veynes werre heted and swollen wyth vytayles and wyne these drunken and desperate knaves waxed wanton, & wandered off around ye convent wythoute anie let or hyndrance.

TO mee who remayned yn ye hall wyth ye Captayne and a few other heavie swashbucklers who loved best ye goode wyne of ye Pryoress, there came ever and anon a shryek from some tymorous syster. Wayles of despayre myngled wyth loud praiers to ye Vyrgyn told of foule dedes, but these made no mark yn ye hall, yf yn sooth ye noyse was heard by those wassaylyng. As for mee, I kept oute of syght lyke an owle and sayd nought for yt was not my house that was burnyng.

THENNE betymes arose an overlustie crie whych remynded mee of ye Novyce & lykewyse dydde yt affect ye Captayne, for whyle I was consyderyng what best to do hee strode forth, lystened a

certayne short space, and then as another
crie rang out hee went quychlie among ye
crooked passages of ye convent. I saw
hym noe more, but soon thereafter a sod-
den loute swayed ynto ye hall & seyzed a
great flagon of fyne Italian wyne. Thys
hee emptyed wyth manie myghtie oathes,
yn whych hee abused ye Captayne ryght
roundlie. Whyl styl muttering hys slym-
se words hee sunk to ye floor and fell a-
slepe. Strayghtwaie I knew ye fayth of ye
Novyce hadde proved a strong armour, &
greatlie I fered yn my soul that from thys
success shee woulde bee resolved to goe
forward yn sanctyfycatyon. I mused on
thys as one after another of ye troopers
dropped theyr muzzie hedds on ye table,
or fell aslepe beneath yt.

SO ye nyght waned whyl I stode about
straytlie, feryng to stop yn ye halle
and feryng yet more to go to bedde.

MORNYNG came at last & I felt my
corage ryse as ye troopers gathered
at ye blare of ye trumpet. frowsyer knaves
I never saw. Some there wer who ate and
some who drank but al were slepie & con-
fused from ye nyght's wantonyng. Many
cursed whyl a few chuckled drunklie, and
al wer uglie soe I toke goode heede to stay
pryvylie & secretlie and to come not nygh.

YE young Captayne at fyrst I saw not, but at length ye horses stode by and ye trumpet blew. Thenne al mounted and eche trooper bore wyth hym ye spoyle hee hadde---al that hys horse could carrie and mucche of thys was from ye chapel---ryche cuppes and gold cheynes and chalices cunninggly wrought and suche-lyke.

SO they made reddie and I was rejoyced to see them goe, albeyt I hadde lost nothyng but my livyng. To my mynde ye affayre hadde reached an outgate, and my thoughts nowe beganne to turn to ye dys-traught Novyce. Now fyrst wythout jeopardie I could entreat wyth her craftylie, & thenne afterwards I thought to take lodgings wythe a fryend connected wythe ye court. Hys house was large and yn syk-erness I could sytte wel and warm by ye fyre, wyth a cuppe and a tosted crabbe, & whyle I weaned her from her relygyous bent I could talk and dryvel and drynk.

WHYL these thyngs wer passyng ye May sonne shone doun and master Captayne rode oute from behynd ye convent to ye hedde of hys troop.

AS I loked I was astonied and almost stode forth from my hydyng, for on ye horse's croupe satte ye Novyce, wyth her arms arounde ye Captayne's wayst,

smylyng a selie smyle. Hee gave ye word
& ye troop went forward. Thus they rode
off, and as ye Novyce passed I saw that
under her tousled hayre her eyen danced
wyth lyghts of joie yn whych there was no
sygn of questyon, nor yet of relygyon, but
onlie of knowledge, love, content, & blyss.



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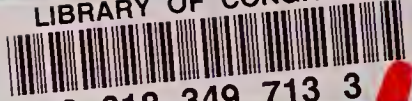
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