

THE
SORRY CAVALIER

A Novel

By
ALWYN CORISTINE



LONDON
ARTHUR H. STOCKWELL, LTD.
39 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.4

*The characters in this book are all imaginary,
and bear no relation whatsoever to anyone
bearing the same name.*

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DEDICATION

I have been questioned by several, "To whom do you intend the book shall be dedicated?" Well, that's the question!—and it most certainly has to be dedicated, I am emphatically informed. Here's dilemma! Unworthy as it may be, the WORK is still judged dedicatable to somebody—by somebody; and one might so very easily make an entirely wrong guess, thus mortally offending. Frankly, I much fear living reproach.

So this inadequately portrayed history of the Trial, Tribulation, Failure or Triumph—as the case may be—of Ghosts evoked from another day is dedicated to Irish ancestral Ghosts, who, responsible for my very being, I hold justly to blame for that "urge within" insisting on the undertaking.

However, I must also name personally another Ghost—not of my group—to whom I am certainly largely beholden for the living determination urging me on and crying down discouragement until the work was completed—my WIFE's direct ancestor, trusted official under Cromwell, in Ireland—Abraham Hughes, cited in Burke's Landed Gentry (Ireland) under "Hughes of Ballycross", Page 329, section under "Lineage".

A. C.



Approximate course taken by "Sir Christopher" on his trip to the battle-front, showing point of embarkation for Cornwall.

FOREWORD

"Sir Christopher Gardiner" actually was what one might call a legendary character in early New England history, and the poet Longfellow—who invariably based his lyrics on solid background—treats of him and his unfortunate banishment in "The Rhyme of Sir Christopher." Morton of Merry Mount is also mentioned. He was a swashbuckling, merry blade of that era; because of the straight-laced religionists of the period (Longfellow portraying it very truly in his verse), he and his ilk were marked as Satan claimed.

But the Author wishes it to be clearly understood that there is no intent, written or implied, in disparagement of the sect or belief of any person in the past or present. That is rather clearly indicated by the characters themselves, who, the Author insists, are alone accountable for their belief or disbelief—as the case may be.

It is a matter for thankfulness that, in this enlightened day and age, very few individuals are bigoted enough to quarrel with another if he happen to choose a different road towards the same objective.

ALWYN CORISTINE

2036 GREY AVENUE
MONTREAL

THE SORRY CAVALIER

CHAPTER ONE

IT was springtime in the valley of the Ouse; springtime in the year of grace (or disgrace) 1644: that fratricidal war-year in England. Yes, it was springtime, with the scent of thorn-blossom and lilac on the air; and Tris Cardner, a young puritan of St. Ives, Huntingdon, rode purposefully, with his mind made up in at least one particular. He determined to ride right to the battle-front, so that he might find out exactly what the bone of contention was; then he'd take sides.

The young man was recalling rather ruefully having made a statement not quite fact, in the heat of argument with his father. He'd told him that he'd all but decided to espouse the Stuart cause, because his mother had wished him to remain loyal. (As a matter of fact she'd urged him to do just what conscience dictated, always.) Tris was remembering, also, that he'd added, slyly, that the mere fact of his being of the Persuasion and wearing its livery ought not to weigh against a sacred promise. That had been unworthy of him—a mean argument to use—he decided; but, feeling in measure ashamed, he thrust out his squared chin the more determinedly.

As a matter of record, John Cardner had not wished that his son mix in the squabble at all—either side; who felt that having Tris quite out of reach for further bulldozing might irk him. Tris, being the only child, was the only person on whom he might vent, unretaliated, his really spiteful nature. At a given point in their debate he had, therefore, tried to side-track the issue, and had called on Tris to, at once, take hold on a task that ought to so occupy his mind

that the crazy notion must be forgotten. But then, Cardner senior had, undiplomatically, quoted scripture to consolidate the order.

Now Tris had been brought up to reverence quotations from the Good Book; but, latterly, his father's indiscriminate use of texts had failed of the desired reaction in the awakened mind of the son. Quite frequently, he had found out, they had been used calculatedly to back diametrically opposed reasoning—the same ones. So now, once again, John was trying to impress on his son—by that method—that he ought to forego everything aside from looking up a certain quotation which he had made use of, from memory, to back up a statement he'd made to prove a point at Meeting House. This "quotation", Tris, keen student that he was, knew to be faulty.

The parent had gone on to argue that, unless the text were localized and produced before members of the Assembly within the next few days, he, John Cardner, would lose the right to take part in all further debates.

The utter hopelessness of such a task was at once realized, and Tris had of course refused. There had followed heated words—reproaches—recrimination; and the upshot had been that the son had left the parent's presence in dudgeon, to pack the few necessities he would need for his trip to the battle-front. But, before leaving, the old man had released to the boy a modest sum of gold, bequeathed by his mother—to which he'd long been entitled—if grudgingly; for was not Tris well over his majority now?

The keenest regret was being suffered by the musing Tris, as he rode along, when he thought on having had to part from faithful old Peggy, the maid. She had been a veritable mother to him, since his rightful one's decease. Also, there was old Gaarge, the stableman, who would certainly be heartbroken because of the filching of the little mare.

One recalled, now, what a Spartan old Peg had been when going to bid her farewell. That remembrance was reason for added grimness: not by so much as the bat of an eyelid had the old dear betrayed the shattering extent of the blow dealt by his announcement. Anyhow, she'd seemed to grasp

the idea that the decision of her lanky, six-foot "fosterling" was the part of wisdom, who could no longer continue to live in harmony with his sire; and she had not voiced her private opinion of the "master", loyal old thing!—even though sorely tried to do so, he had seen.

Tris, looking almost gauche in the saddle on that small mare, patted her neck and chuckled. His face took on a softer look, as he went on recalling:

"Away!" Peggy had gasped, "'Ee are for farin' away to they horrid war?" She'd wiped nervous hands in her apron. "Alack and adey! But, herk'—'ee! Ere 'ee go, must bide while Peggy puts 'ee up a gran' parcel o' vittles. All I dare say be, may hap t'is best so—an' all—'Ee'll understand, Master Tris?—Belike, an' so it is." Then she had wagged an admonitory finger, adding, "But mind this! 'Ee mus' take care to carry along proper undergarments o' fleece. Then—happen 'ee do get caught i' th' rain—'ee'll so have change o' next-skin wear, so stavin' off an ague, or worse—a distemper. 'Ee are *that* careless, I do declare, that—but for thy Peggy—bless us, 'ee'd a-been food for worms, ere this."

Dear, mothering old soul! He'd miss her ministrations sorely.

Tris had tried to tell himself that his father's nagging had been the real incentive to his departure; but another, sorer motive was the reason. He'd been betrothed to a certain Mistress Hope Scrope, of St. Ives. But he'd found her out in time—coming upon her and a certain Isaac Judson, while walking one day on the heath. He'd renounced her then and there to him. Lacking that true reason, Tris might have endured the pettifogging tyranny of his parent. Luckily, on the subject of Hope's treachery Tris' mind no longer dwelt. That had been a mere infatuation he'd quickly seen—and he well rid of the Jade. No, there was not even a lingering heartache on her score.

Tris was equipped for defence on the road with the long rapier that Jacob Oakes, the fencing master, had taught him to use so well. Besides, he carried a bell-nosed pistol, thrust in his belt, for footpads were numerous as field-berries in season on the King's highway. Slung at his right haunch

