

The Civil War and Chinnor extracts from *'To Right the Wrong'* by Edna Lyall. First printed 1893.

The complete novel can be viewed from the Chinnor Heritage trolley in the library.

'The poor beast has been far today and is weary', said Hampden 'yet it is important that we have the key. I would be greatly beholden to you, my boy, if you will ride over to Chinnor. But do not attempt to return till morning, for it will be dark by the time you get there and we could do naught with the money tonight. Still, it is important that the key be found to say nothing of y pocket case, which contains sundry matters I shall need.'

Without a moment's delay Joselyn hurried out of the stable yard of the Hare and Hounds at Watlington and rode off to Chinnor....intense stillness reigned in the quiet countryside: never had the Chiltern hills looked so peaceful than they did one that summer night, and Joselyn who knew that a waggon containing a large sum of money for the army was travelling down from London to Thame, congratulating himself on the calmness of the landscape, arrived in Chinnor found that the quarters in which they had slept on the previous night were already occupied, but the key and the pocket book case had been found and were at once handed over to him. Finding that a bed was not to be had in the village, and having with some difficulty stabled his weary horse, he wrapped himself in his cloak and shifted as best he could in a hayloft just above the stall. He was tired and slept profoundly for some hours, yet it seemed but a short time before he was roused by a most appalling confusion. Starting up from his bed of hay, he listened in great consternation. The whole air seemed full of terrible sounds, shrieks of women, groans of men, trampling of horses, rattle of musketry....

Stringing up to his feet, he tore back a loose piece of boarding in the side of the loft and gazed out upon the village street. It seemed to him like looking into hell. Lurid flames leaped up from the thatched cottages, half clothed women and children struggled madly to escape, while the Parliament soldiers whom Hampden had vainly tried only a few hours before to save, were remorselessly butchered by the Cavaliers. For a moment, Joselyn seemed paralysed, then catching sight of the face of the reneged Hurry, riding past with Prince Rupert fury seemed to restore him to life. Dashing down the ladder to the stable below, saddled his horse in desperate haste, intent only on warning Hampden in time in preventing a similar surprise of Watlington. It was now about four o'clock in the morning, the sun had not yet appeared above the hills, but a vivid ruddy glow lighted the eastern sky. Joselyn cautiously opened the door of the stable. To escape by the street was out of the question and he thought it highly probable that the backs of the houses would be guarded. Even as this thought crossed his mind, a shot fired in the very yard upon which the stable opened proved that his surmise was correct; a couple of Royalist soldiers lying in ambush had fired upon a little group of fugitives who were vainly trying to reach the fields beyond. Joselyn raising his musket promptly took aim at

the nearest Cavalier and avenged the slaughter of his comrades, then seeing that his sole chance of life lay in his horses swiftness, bound over the nearest hedge and amid a shower of bullets, galloped off into the meadows by great good fortune, affecting his retreat from Chinnor.

Civil War in Chinnor extract from *'Fairleigh Hall'* a novel by Charlotte Young first published 1887. The complete novel can be viewed from the Chinnor Heritage trolley in the library.

Prince Rupert and his companions traversed by-roads purposely avoiding the highway were they expected scouts to be on the look-out as indeed they were and passing by Easington and Lewknor struck the main road from Oxford at the foot of the Beacon Hill..... They descended through the defile we have already mentioned and buried themselves in the woodlands near Stokenchurch where they turned to the left and rode parallel to the hills but on the side furthest from Oxford. Their first object was Chinnor and when they arrived opposite the place just on the contrary side to Oxford, whence they would naturally be expected, they all prepared to descend on Captain Faint-not Hewitt and his Puritan soldiery with the suddenness of an electric shock.

They swept down the declivity whence none looked for their advent and Cuthbert marked how Rupert's nostrils dilated and how his teeth clenched as he gave the order. The regiment was divided into four squadrons, and it was not until they were entering the village at each end and on each side, that the trumpets awoke Captain Faint-not Hewitt and his troops from their slumbers the sentinels having been cut down before they could give the alarm. 'Down with the crop-eared dogs' was the cry. All who were met rushing into the street were cut down without mercy and Cuthbert first looked upon violent death when Rupert himself clove the unfortunate captain (who had only his breeches over his nightdress, but was wielding a huge sword manfully) to the breast bone; and he had found his first antagonist to another half-dressed puritan, whose weapon however, was too well managed for a boy to master, till Rupert came to his aid and finished the affair.

Then shots began to issue from the houses, but in the majority of instances, the Parliamentarians had been seized in bed, and were dragged amidst shouts of laughter, half dressed into the street, thus paying for their temerity and neglect of the warning given by Hampden.

Torches were at once applied in all directions and Cuthbert saw the village burst into flame when for the first time the sleepy sentinel Be-faithful Joiner saw what was on foot and fired his tardy beacon on the hill. And now in the lurid light of the flames, Rupert counted his victims: fifty dead bodies lay prostrate in the street, how many were buried in the houses was never known. 'But then such things you know, must be in every famous victory.'

And about 120 prisoners were dragged away half-naked, at the horses' sides to the infantry who were providing for the return to Oxford and securing the main road. Driving men and cattle before them, and bestowing blows with strict impartiality on man and beast, they left the blazing village.