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Two Girls, Two Sides, Two Lives, One War

By Ella Bradley

This story taken from two different points of view is told by two girls: Jane Cavendish (daughter of Duke William Cavendish) and Mary Lambert(daughter of John Lambert)

Both of these girls lived through the English Civil War and both of their fathers rose through the ranks but as you will see the two led very different lives.

October 1642

Greetings lowly peasant,
I am the great Jane Cavendish, daughter of the amazing General William Cavendish of the Royalists. Recently parliament has been refusing our venerable King Charles I his taxes and we must crush this resistance towards divine right. It is October 1642 and the men will be near Warwickshire at Edgehill. They will fight hard for our king and will defeat the scurvy Roundheads. On a sadder note this means that we will be limited to one party a day, either evening or afternoon, rather than both, as we are on rations. There is no all-you can eat buffet and only generous helpings of wholesome food. The injustice of it.

Anyway it's been a week and the men have returned. 'A stalemate' they said 'they were better than we thought' and excuses like that. However my father knew the real reason ' There are traitors in the King's army and not just the commoners' he said in a hushed whisper clearly frightened of these people.

On a much more serious note my portrait painter positively ruined my picture, she painted me a tenth of a shade wrong, this is a disgrace to a profession. Of course Daddy sent her packing and burned the offending picture so as not to ruin my peace of mind.

You should hope that I condescend to tell you anything ever again in the future as I am sure that you will not be able to truly understand my truly complex way of life

Lady Jane Cavendish

Venerable reader I hope that my lowly life does not affect your opinion of this book

Sorry reader, that is a force of habit as I feel like I assume only nobles will read books.

Anyway,

I am the daughter of John Lambert, my great father who fights for parliament in the struggle against the Catholic-friendly King. My name is Mary and at the moment I'm with the other women waiting for the men to return from battle against the royalists at Edgehill. We stand clutching medicine and bandages worrying for the men, our fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins. Women who can be usually seen in rivalry are united by the fear for our men.

When we see them approach we see no jubilation of victory, no dejection of loss but just a tired air which told us before any runners that the battle was indecisive. When the men returned they said 'We showed them not to underestimate us and that we fight for God in this holy war'.

There were many injuries and fatalities but fortunately my father came home and regaled us with tales of the battle and how with the help of Trainbands the Royalists were turned away at Turnham Green. We worked late into the night assisting trained doctors by aiding, bandaging and dosing the men.

The commander himself Robert Deveraux is staying with the town tonight to aid his men who fought bravely despite as the Royalists would say 'from too lowly background to be of any military use'.

I hope that you will come again to listen to my life that I am sure is too simple for you to find interesting.

Mary Lambert

October 1643

It appears that I have once again condescended to tell you of my life, it has been a year and several major things have happened. First thing is that we have gained much land from Parliamentarians and the men are off to Berkshire to fight but that is not of much consequence to me. However there are a few major problems such as the fact that my dress tore last week when I went riding on my beautiful horse and she reared at the sound of gunfire - a sign of quite clear murderous intent, she has been dispatched and I have a new horse that wouldn't rear at a thing and is very docile.

At my birthday much to my and my mother's horror it was discovered that due to the war there is no silk or satin to make my birthday dress and I was mortified to find no silk or satin only lace. I'm quite sure that my friends think I'm poor and can't afford the height of fashion. However I had the last laugh as my father put extra money towards the food and venue which were more lavish than all of theirs combined.

Anyway the men are back with the same excuses but more wounds and my father is going mad with keeping the secret of traitors as even the king and commander won't entertain the notion of traitors among the nobility and anyway this new painter is worse than the last one and doesn't understand the notion of beautifying the portrait. So that the world will remember me well.

Au revoir lowly peasant

Lady Jane Cavendish

You came to listen to me again. Me Mary Lambert, a poor daughter of a cavalry man, can entertain you. What a notion, however i do have news we have lost much land and army but the Royalists still advance, it seems like they never take a break. Our men are in Essex and hope to surprise the Royalists with a strong advance and a quick battle at Essex to force them to leave.

We are running out of weaponry supplies and although there are less men to work the fields the women have stepped up more me included. We have had harvest and at the moment eat apples every day as the trees are full of fruit. The men are supposed to return this evening and we are preparing food for them alongside the usual medicine and treatment to use up some of the surplus non preserved food before it spoils. This will be a welcome change from porridge and apples as most of our crop goes to the army and we will share a meal with them.

We work hard for the great cause of ridding this country of Catholics who are corrupt in their worship of god and do not observe his commands. This is why we give food and materials to the army from our land.

The men have returned with a stalemate which is a good outcome after a string of defeats and there were relatively few fatalities and we shall now have time to restock our weaponry and march for god to victory.

I shall write again if anything of great consequence happens.

Mary Lambert

July 1644

It appears that I am bored enough even to come down and tell you what is happening at the moment. There has been a great calamity. The Parliamentarians have won a major battle at Marston Moor! This is a great injustice and all but proves my fathers theory of traitors. However the Roundheads did strike an alliance with the Scots (the traitors to the country) and as well there is a new general called Oliver Cromwell whose army is called the Ironsides and they are so formidable.

Our own star general is Prince Rupert and he is so handsome and has all the latest fashion, although you have to admit that he does get carried away in battle sometimes. But he is a great commander and one whom my father works alongside.

However dreadful this is there are greater problems afoot, someone has been taking things from my room or where I put them and placing them elsewhere. Some of the things are quite priceless and very dear to me . I would get daddy to sack my maids as I'm sure it's one of them and definitely not me being careless and leaving things lying around but he has run away on a self imposed exile and now I must lead my household.

What is worse I now have to protect the family silver as my father's absence has caused the Parliamentarians to march in and now I must protect the finances and send funds to my father but in the darkness there is one light My sisters are here with me and we will face this world of hardship in which we have more limited money and will save the remaining coins from the occupiers.

Lady Jane Cavendish

Thank you for still reading as my life surely is beneath your notice but I have great news to impart, we have had a great victory with the battle at Marston Moor and my father is now a Colonel of a Cavalry section in the New Model Army and works with the great leader of this amazing army - Oliver Cromwell himself. Along with this amazing news my father has returned safely again, the blessing we all pray for every time he marches in the ranks alongside such leaders.

Speaking of praying to thank god for granting us this blessing of victory i will be praying and thanking god in special church service. Such a great victory we have had and Oliver Cromwell has said 'God made them as stubble to our swords'.

Apart from this great victory it has been another few months of tending and sowing crops as well as tending wounded men when they return from minor battles. We have had only porridge but with my father back we have saved milk for cheese and flour for white bread as a simple celebration that god will approve of and then he will grant us the next battle's victory.

But that is for later and I must now go and prepare the pie and prayer books.
I shall write if anything major happens

Mary Lambert

June 1645

I must tell someone what has happened, we have again lost to the Roundheads and they have seized the king's baggage train. Not only this but they decimated our army, the majority of soldiers have been killed or captured and the main funding(the king's baggage) is worth £100,000 and had the king's private correspondence. This could have exposed some of our king's amazing strategies which only his inner circle knows of.

This tragedy would have been enough to keep anyone down but through corresponding with my father the knowledge has come to me that he has taken a new wife, a feisty woman called Margaret and has no desire to return to Welbeck. In my next letter I shall have to give him a piece of my mind.

Further tragedy for our king is that with this decisive battle King Charles has turned himself in to the Scottish as he believes that they will treat him better (probably true) and now we must face the consequences of the war.

One good thing among all these terrible events is that we have had the Parliamentarians routed out of Welbeck .

This should be the last time I make correspondence

Lady Jane Cavendish

Great news we have won the war!

In a clear win at Naseby we crushed the Royalists and seized the King's baggage and private correspondence. However my father has not returned as he was assigned along with some other men to pursue the fleeing king and to bring him back to face justice after betraying God.

The reason we won is the New Model Army in which my father is the Colonel of a Cavalry section. This army is the model of all future armies as it promotes through skill not status like the royalist army. As well this army is the most organised and well led. It also trains its men so it is such a formidable force and we cannot be defeated easily.

Sorry, I sometimes go on a speech, however it is great that the civil war is over but it has given so many poor families a way to money and status in climbing the ranks- my father and Oliver Cromwell.

We hope to catch the King and to replace him or get him to agree with some proposals to stop his betrayal of God. This is necessary to prevent him from sinking further towards hHell. This opportunity to save a soul from Hell is a gift from God himself and must be taken immediately.

All this calls for great celebration, we will observe a week of fast(no meat) and pray every day in Church and sing hymns.

This will be the last time I write as this was an account of the English Civil War

Mary Lambert

September 1651

It has been a long time since I last wrote and as you see I am not the silly spoiled girl I was, the war affected me and made me grow up. And since I am under house arrest and the King is dead it looks like our cause is dead too. The king was handed over by the Scots and imprisoned for not agreeing to parliament's terms but then escaped and started another war with the Scots on his side. It seemed a great idea at the time as parliament had won with them the first decisive battle but that backfired.

Parliament walked us over, it was a complete and utter disaster for the King. He has now, due to the radical acts of parliament, been beheaded, which would not have happened if he had just stayed where he was and negotiated with them.

I now see that I did not always stand in the right place and my only mistake was not letting go of my cowardly father and doubting the king for one second. It is parliament's fault the war was started and King Charles was defending Divine Right in starting the second war so the barbaric Roundheads had no need to execute him.

I hope that you Parliamentarians are happy at getting rid of the Monarchy and if you are one then I say HAVE A LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

Of course I can't just go up to the guards and say that or else I'd be the next one on the chopping block.

Anyway this really is the last piece of correspondence as my secret courier is refusing to do any more after this entry.

Au Revoir

Lady Jane Cavendish

There is good and bad news for me to impart, first the bad, the King has had to be executed as he has clearly sunken to the devil as his private correspondence reveals that he was requesting an invasion on his behalf from multiple Catholic countries. What is worse is that even when he was imprisoned during the negotiations he escaped and started another war. Of course it was an easy win but it showed that he was beyond saving and that mercy through the form of execution was best so that he could possibly escape into Purgatory for a few years rather than Hell for eternity.

And the good news,
Firstly we won the battle of course but we won it with my father as second in command under Oliver Cromwell. Which is an amazing achievement for a previously poor man.

We will now begin a new chapter of history under the rule of democracy without Monarchs which will be an amazing experience for us as my father will help Oliver Cromwell in his endeavours to save England from Catholic corruption.

We are celebrating this by having a week of fast after we put up a new Church in honour of God and Christ.

If you read this in the future I am sure that Oliver Cromwell will be a historical hero and leader that is viewed with the greatest respect and reverence.

Thank you for hearing my story.

Mary Lambert

This collection is written from two very different points of view and it is amazing how much the roles act like a mirror, each reflection changing in line with the other with one starting so confident about a win and the other finishing with the success the other assumed it would have.

The two girls are real people and I have kept to their story as much as possible. As the major events all happened including the house arrest and self imposed exile.

Thank you for reading