



## CHAPTER XII

# Stand - Fast and Madam Bubble



**N**ow, when they were almost at the end of this ground, they perceived that, a little before them, was a solemn noise of one that was much concerned. So they went on and looked before them; and behold, they saw, as they thought, a man upon his knees, with hands and eyes lift up, and speaking, as they thought, earnestly to One that was above.<sup>1</sup> They drew nigh, but could not tell what he said. So they went softly till he had done. When he had done, he got up, and began to run towards the Celestial City. Then Mr. Great-heart called after him, saying, Soho! friend, let us have your company, if you go, as I suppose you do, to the Celestial City. So the man stopped, and they came up to him. But so soon as Mr. Honest saw him, he said, I know this man. Then said Mr. Valiant-for-truth, Prithee, who is it? It is one, said he, who comes from whereabouts I dwelt. His name is Stand-fast; he is certainly a right good pilgrim.

**2. STAND-FAST** So they came up one to another; and presently Stand-fast

said to old Honest, Ho, father Honest, are you there?

**3. HONEST** Aye, said he, that I am, as sure as you are there.

**4. STAND-FAST** Right glad am I, said Mr. Stand-fast, that I have found you on this road.

**5. HONEST** And as glad am I, said the other, that I espied you upon your knees.

**6. STAND-FAST** Then Mr. Stand-fast blushed, and said, But why, did you see me?

**7. HONEST** Yes, that I did, quoth the other, and with my heart was glad at the sight.

**8. STAND-FAST** Why, what did you think? said Stand-fast.

**9. HONEST** Think! said old Honest, what should I think? I thought we had an honest man upon the road, and therefore should have his company by and by.

**10. STAND-FAST** If you thought not amiss [said Stand-fast], how happy am I; but if I be not as I should, I alone must bear it. That is true, said the other; but your fear doth further confirm me, that things are right betwixt the Prince of Pilgrims and

<sup>1</sup> He who fears always, will pray evermore. The fear of the heart will bring pilgrims on their knees. He who fears to be or go wrong, will pray to be set right. The Lord will direct the heart, and order the goings of all who cry to Him. Fear and prayer go hand in hand. Joy shall attend them-(Mason).

your soul; for, saith he, "Blessed is the man that feareth always."

**11. VALIANT.** Well, but brother, I pray thee tell us what was it that was the cause of thy being upon thy knees even now? Was it for that some special mercies laid obligations upon thee, or how?

**12. STAND-FAST.** Why, we are, as you see, upon the Enchanted Ground; and as I was coming along, I was musing with myself of what a dangerous road the road in this place was, and how many that had come even thus far on pilgrimage had here been stopped, and been destroyed. I thought also of the manner of the death with which this place destroyeth men. Those that die here, die of no violent distemper. The death which such die is not grievous to them; for he that goeth away in a sleep, begins that journey with desire and pleasure; yea, such acquiesce in the will of that disease.

**13. HONEST** Then Mr. Honest, interrupting of him, said, Did you see the two men asleep in the arbour?

**14. STAND-FAST.** Aye, aye, I saw Heedless and Too-bold there; and, for aught I know, there they will lie till they rot (Prov. 10:7). But let me go on in my tale. As I was thus musing, as I said, there was one, in very pleasant attire, but old, who presented herself unto me, and offered me three things; to wit, her body, her purse, and her bed. Now, the truth is, I was both a-weary and sleepy; I am also as poor as an owlet,<sup>2</sup> and that, perhaps, the witch knew. Well, I repulsed her once and twice, but she put by my repulses, and smiled. Then I began to be angry; but she mattered that nothing at all. Then she made offers

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<sup>2</sup> No more money than an owl loves light. "The antiquarian, who delights to solace himself in the benighted days of monkish owl-light, sometimes passes for a divine."-(Warburton)-(ED).

again, and said, If I would be ruled by her, she would make me great and happy; for, said she, I am the mistress of the world, and men are made happy by me. Then I asked her name, and she told me it was Madam Bubble.<sup>3</sup> This set me further from her; but she still followed me with enticements. Then I betook me as you saw, to my knees; and with hands lift up, and cries, I prayed to Him that had said He would help.<sup>4</sup> So, just as you came up, the gentlewoman went her way. Then I continued to give thanks for this my great deliverance; for I verily believe she intended no good, but rather sought to make stop of me in my journey.<sup>5</sup>

**15. HONEST.** Without doubt her designs were bad. But stay, now you talk

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<sup>3</sup> My soul, what's lighter than a feather? Wind. Than wind? The fire. And what than fire? The mind. What's lighter than the mind? A thought. Than thought? This bubble world. What than this bubble? Naught. -(Quarles).

<sup>4</sup> *Prayer's arrow drawn  
Down to the head by nervous penitence,  
Or meek humility's compliant strings,  
Wings to the destin'd mark its certain way,  
And ne'er was shot in vain!*  
-(Dodd's Epiphany, p. 32, 4to).

<sup>5</sup> O pilgrims, beware of this Madam Bubble! Know and consider well, that ye have a nature exactly suited to accept of her offers, and to fall in love with her promises. The riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, what mortal can withstand? or who can forego them? No one but he who sees more charms in Jesus, more glory in His Cross, and more comfort in the enjoyment of His love and presence; and therefore, is continually looking and crying to Him, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."-(Mason). Many, indeed, are her fair promises and golden dreams. Many hath she brought to the halter, and ten thousand times more to Hell. O for precious faith, to overcome the world; and to pass through it, in pursuit of a nobler portion, as strangers and pilgrims!-(Burder).

of her, methinks I either have seen her, or have read some story of her.

**16. STAND-FAST.** Perhaps you have done both.

**17. HONEST.** Madam Bubble! is she not a tall, comely dame, something of a swarthy complexion?

**18. STAND-FAST.** Right, you hit it, she is just such a one.

**19. HONEST.** Doth she not speak very smoothly, and give you a smile at the end of a sentence?

**20. STAND-FAST.** You fall right upon it again, for these are her very actions.

**21. HONEST.** Doth she not wear a great purse by her side; and is not her hand often in it, fingering her money, as if that was her heart's delight?

**22. STAND-FAST.** It is just so; had she stood by all this while, you could not more amply have set her forth before me, nor have better described her features.

**23. HONEST.** Then he that drew her picture was a good limner, and he that wrote of her said true.<sup>6</sup>

**24. GREAT-HEART.** This woman is a witch, and it is by virtue of her sorceries that this ground is enchanted. Whoever

doth lay their head down in her lap, had as good lay it down upon that block over which the axe doth hang; and whoever lay their eyes upon her beauty, are counted the enemies of God (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15). This is she that maintaineth in their splendour all those that are the enemies of pilgrims. Yea, this is she that hath bought off many a man from a pilgrim's life. She is a great gossipper; she is always, both she and her daughters, at one pilgrim's heels or another, now commending, and then preferring the excellencies of this life. She is a bold and impudent slut; she will talk with any man. She always laugheth poor pilgrims to scorn; but highly commends the rich. If there be one cunning to get money in a place, she will speak well of him from house to house; she loveth banqueting and feasting mainly well; she is always at one full table or another. She has given it out in some places, that she is a goddess, and therefore some do worship her. She has her times and open places of cheating; and she will say and avow it, that none can show a good comparable to hers. She promiseth to dwell with children's children, if they will but love and make much of her. She will cast out of her purse gold like dust, in some places, and to some persons. She loves to be sought after, spoken well of, and to lie in the bosoms of men. She is never weary of commending her commodities, and she loves them most that think best of her. She will promise to some crowns and kingdoms, if they will but take her advice; yet many hath she brought to the halter, and ten thousand times more to hell.

**25. STAND-FAST.** O, said Stand-fast, what a mercy is it that I did resist! for whither might she have drawn me!

**26. GREAT-HEART.** Whither! nay, none but God knows whither. But, in general, to be sure, she would have drawn thee into "many foolish and hurtful lusts,

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<sup>6</sup> Is she not rightly named Bubble? Art thou convinced that she is nothing more? Why then dost thou not break loose from her hold? I ask, Why has the world such hold of thee? Why dost thou listen to her enchantments? For shame! Stir up thy strength, call forth thy powers! What! be convinced that the world is a bubble, and be led captive by her. Shake her off, you ought, you should, it is your duty. Let Mr. Stand-fast answer these questions. His earnest and solemn prayers plainly prove the sense he had of his own weakness and inability to extricate himself from her enchantments. Though some may appear to despise the dominion of sin, I am convinced that it must be a Divine power to deliver me from it-(J.B.).

which drown men in destruction and perdition"-(1 Tim. 6:9). It was she that set Absalom against his father, and Jeroboam against his master. It was she that persuaded Judas to sell his Lord, and that prevailed with Demas to forsake the godly pilgrims' life; none can tell of the mischief that she doth. She makes variance betwixt rulers and subjects, betwixt parents and children, betwixt neighbour and neighbour, betwixt a man and his wife, betwixt a man and himself, betwixt the flesh and the heart. Wherefore, good Master Stand-fast, be as your name is, and "when you have done all, Stand."<sup>7</sup>

**27.** At this discourse there was, among the Pilgrims, a mixture of joy and trembling; but at length they brake out, and sang-

*What danger is the pilgrim in!  
How many are his foes!  
How many ways there are to sin  
No living mortal knows.  
Some of the ditch shy are, yet can  
Lie tumbling in the mire;  
Some, though they shun the frying-pan,  
Do leap into the fire.*

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<sup>7</sup> It was amidst this Enchanted Ground that good Mr. Stand-fast, whom the Pilgrims there found upon his knees, was so hard beset and enticed by Madam Bubble; and indeed it is by her sorceries that the ground itself is enchanted. Madam Bubble is the world, with its allurements and vanities; and whosoever, as Mr. Great-heart said, do lay their eyes upon her beauty are counted the enemies of God; for God hath said that the friendship of the world is enmity against God; and he hath said furthermore, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." So Mr. Stand-fast did well to betake him to his knees, praying to Him that could help him. So if all pilgrims, when worldly proposals and enticements allure them, and they feel the love of the world tempting them, and gaining on them, would thus go to more earnest prayer, and be made more vigilant against temptations, Madam Bubble would not gain so many victories-(Cheever).



## NOTES:

