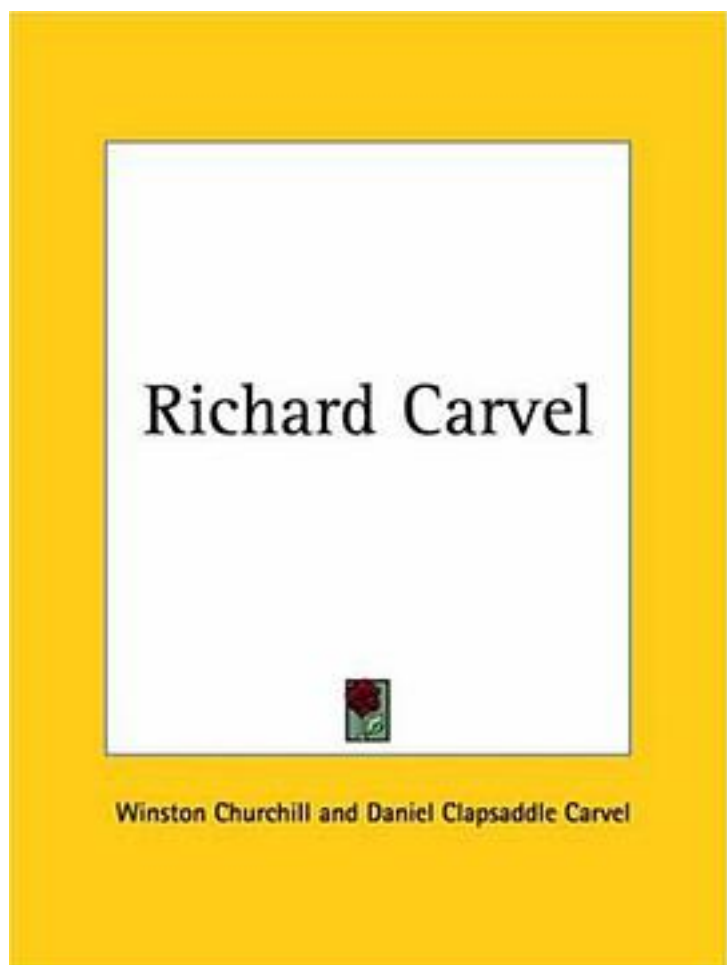


Richard Carvel



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No boyhood could have been happier than mine, and throughout it, ever present with me, were a shadow and a light. The shadow was my Uncle Grafton. I know not what

strange intuition of the child made me think of him so constantly after that visit he paid us, but often I would wake from my sleep with his name upon my lips, and a dread at my heart. The light -- need I say? -- was Miss Dorothy Manners. Little Miss Dolly was often at the Hall after that happy week we spent together; and her home, Wilmot House, was scarce three miles across wood and field by our plantation roads. I was a stout little fellow enough, and before I was twelve I had learned to follow to hounds my grandfather's guests on my pony; and Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Carvel when they shot on the duck points. Aye, and what may surprise you, my dears, I was given a weak little toddy off the noggin at night, while the gentlemen stretched their limbs before the fire, or played at whist or loo. Mr. Carvel would have no milksop, so he said. But he early impressed upon me that moderation was the mark of a true man, even as excess was that of a weak one. And so it was no wonder that I frequently found my way to Wilmot House alone. . . .

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